ERASMUS AND BIBLE TRANSLATION

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Category: Bible Translation

I'm grateful to my colleague Alan Gibson for the following about Erasmus:

Erasmus argued that Christian truth was not so complicated that it had to be hidden among a handful of men. Unlike other philosophies, Christianity suited itself to every need and person and was â€˜within the reach of the lowest, just as it is the admiration of the greatest.â€™ The knowledge of Christ was the way of truth for all and Erasmus utterly condemned any restriction of the Scriptures to Latin. His plea that all should read them in the vernacular was eloquent:

> *I wish that even the most humble women should read the Gospel and the Epistles of St Paul. And these should also be translated into every tongue, so that they might be read and known not only by the Scots and Irish but also by the Turks and Saracens â€¦.*
>
> *…Would that the ploughboy recited something from them at his plough, that the weaver sang from them at his loom and the traveller whiled away the tedium of his journey with their tales, indeed, that the speech of Christian men were drawn from them.â€™*

It is wonderful to see Erasmus' setting out the need for mother tongue Scriptures. It is also interesting to see his attitude to both men and women reading and learning from the Bible. For a more contemporary take on this issue, you might want to look at Better Bibles.