

Enchiridion militis christiani

the manuell of the christen knyght

A booke called in latyn Enchiridion militis christiani / and in englysshe the manuell of the christen knyght / replenysshed with moste holsome precepts / made by the famous clerke Erasmus of Roterdame / to which is added a newe and meruaylous profitable preface. Imprinted at London by Wynkyn de Worde / for Iohan Byddell / otherwise Salisbury / the xv. daye of Nouembre. And be for to sell at the sygne of our Lady of pytie next to Flete bridge. 1533. Cum privilegio regali.

Enchiridion militis christiani is Erasmus's first major work, first edition in English in 1533 and first published in Latin in Antwerp in 1503. The English translation is by William Tyndale (1494-1536). The printing is by Wynkyn de Worde who died in 1534/5 yet who printed with William Caxton and took over Caxton's printing business upon his death in 1492.

Desiderius Erasmus (1466-1536) is the Dutch theologian and scholar who started teaching Latin to the Cambridge-educated William Blount, Lord Mountjoy in 1498. His pupil told him much about the English humanists of the day and shortly thereafter Erasmus traveled to England where he met the acquaintance of Thomas More, John Colet and Hugh Latimer who became his lifelong friends as well as important influences on his thought. Colet lent him manuscripts which he used in his monumental edition of the New Testament in Greek and Latin, 1516.

An important predecessor of the Greek New Testament is his earlier work Enchiridion or Handbook of the Christian Soldier. In it he outlines his views on how a Christian should lead his life, a topic on which he spent the rest of his own life elaborating. He felt that the chief evil of his day was formalism, going through the motions of tradition without understanding the basic teachings of Jesus. He goes on to discuss monasticism, the worship of saints, war, the spirit of class and the foibles of society. He felt that the clergy should be teachers who shared their knowledge with the common man. He emphasised personal spiritual discipline and the personal reading and understanding of the scripture. The Enchiridion was and is very influential and was often reprinted from the sixteenth century to the current day.

William Tyndale studied at Magdalen Hall, Oxford, where he was exposed often to the teachings of Erasmus. Erasmus's Oxford home some years before had been Magdalen College. Oxford notes 'Although Tyndale was brought up in God's Gloucestershire, a county historically known for biblical preaching, the source of his vocation to the cause of reform is most likely to have been the arrival of this [Erasmus's] printing of the original Greek New Testament. It is very probable that it was from this influential volume that Tyndale led those private studies.' Tyndale of course published his celebrated translation of the New Testament into English in 1525/6.

Enchiridion is pronounced IN SHA RID EON!

Enchiridion militis christiani, 1533, is quite a rare book; six copies in the U.K. and seven in the U.S. No copy has been at auction since 1975 though a second edition, 1534, was at auction in 1977.

Size: 5.75 x 4.5 x 1.5, Octavo, 340 pp.

Font: Gothic.

Appraised Value: \$125,000.00 USD.

Sold Price: \$15,000.00 USD.