

The Bible in the Time of the Reformation

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Summary

In the first part of the article, the use of the Latin Bible and the Bibles translated in vernacular languages at the time of the Reformation is discussed. In the second part, questions regarding the literal application of the Reformation's rule, sola Scriptura, are considered, among which questions are included about the canon, authority, sufficiency, perspicuity and understanding of the Bible. In the paper, deliberations of the leading theologians of the Reformation are considered, including each individual question and adopted teachings of particular traditions of the Reformation, as well as the counter-Reformation as recorded in their foundational documents. In the conclusion, it is highlighted that the main message of the Bible is perspicuous even for the illiterate layman; therefore, every person can come to the Bible directly to search for and find truth. The Reformation has reaffirmed that the Bible is the only authority for preaching, theology and daily living, to or from which people should not add or subtract.

Key words: *authority, Bible, Christian doctrine, preaching, Reformation, sola Scriptura, Scripture*

Introduction

Christian humanists of the 15th and beginning of the 16th centuries, by an invitation to return to the sources (*ad fontes*), started a movement of studying the Bible and comparing contemporary translations with the original Hebrew, Greek and Latin texts. With these critical editions of the Bible and the church Fathers, they prompted a great spiritual/creative impulse of the renewal of biblical theology in

the life of the church. The Reformation became a movement of the book, especially the Bible.

Since Johannes Gutenberg from Mainz started to use mobile print (1450), the printing press became the most powerful means for distribution and exchange of knowledge and ideas, spreading throughout Europe like fire. The use of the printing press unleashed “the Bible from the chain”,¹ making it available not only to scholars, clergy and friars, but also to the peasants in the fields and the servants in the manors.²

The first Bible was printed in 1455, and by the end of the century more than 120 editions of the whole Bible had been printed, and the Bible became the book in highest demand.³ Bibles were printed mostly in Latin, but also in Greek, Hebrew, German, French, Italian and other vernacular languages.

During the time of the Reformation, the Bible was rarely read in the Roman Catholic Church. Only a very few knew what the Scripture says and means. Faith implied compliance with the declarations about God, man, the church, the saints, etc. Between the believers and the Bible, there were usually church teachers – the Pope, the bishops and priests – who assumed their right to expose and interpret the Word of God. The Bible was written in Latin which was only familiar to educated people. For the common people, only a deficient interpretation of the Word of God provided by the hierarchy remained. The reformers, of whom many were linguists and scholars, believed that the Bible spoke equally to the intellectuals of their time as well as to the common people. Therefore, along with the use of critical editions of the Bible in Latin, they set about translating and editing the Bible in vernacular languages in order to appropriate it to all who could read and understand the Word of God.

- 1 Locking the Bible to a chain was a medieval practice of the church in order to protect it from thieves. There are two opposing narratives about the Bible being locked to a chain. According to one of them, the Bible was chained in order to prevent the believers from using it, and to reserve that right only for the priests. Thus, the priests were able to prevent laymen from reading the Bible, and easily embellishing and introducing various traditions that were not in accordance with the Bible into the life of the church. The other narrative points out that the church chained the Bible to a desk, wishing to make it available to all who knew how to read while still insuring it against loss because, before the advent of printing, books were extremely expensive, especially the Bible, since it was transcribed by hand.
- 2 The statement of Campano, Bishop of Teramo, about the printer Ulrich Han, serves as a perfect contribution to this assertion: “He prints as much in a day as was formerly written in a year” (Black, 1976:408).
- 3 Andrew Gottlieb Masch describes 8,000 editions of the Bible printed from 1450 to 1778 in various languages in his work entitled *Bibliotheca Sacra*, written in Latin in four volumes from 1778 to 1785 at Halle in Germany. Masch’s work is still indispensable for the study of early editions of printed Bibles (Lenhart, 1946:416).



Gutenberg's Bible, completed in 1455, Latin Bible on 1,282 folios in two columns of 42 lines, in 100-200 (180?) copies printed, partially on paper, partially on vellum, ("Bible of 42 lines").

Use of the Bible in Latin during the Reformation

John M. Lenhart (1946:416) points out that the 16th century was the century of the Latin Bible. He published the data of Walter A. Copinger⁴ according to which 94 complete Latin editions of the Bible were published from 1450 to 1500, and 438 editions from 1501 to 1600. From 1501 to the beginning of the Reformation in 1517, 43 editions of the Latin Bible were printed. From the beginning of the Reformation to Luther's death in 1546, 163 editions were issued, and in the period of 1546 to 1600, 232 editions of the whole Latin Bible were printed.

It could be asked why, at the height of translating the Bible in vernacular languages, 438 editions of the Bible were still printed in Latin. Or, it could be asked why the reformers used the Latin Bible the most. The answer to these qu-

4 Walter Arthur Copinger. *Incunabula Biblica*. London: 1892. pp. IV-V, 207-221.

estions is complex. The reformers used the Latin Bible for many reasons. First, influenced by the invitation of the humanists to return to the source (*ad fontes*), the reformers seldom compared or corrected the Vulgate text according to the older versions of Latin manuscripts, rather more often according to the original Hebrew and Greek texts of the Bible. While Roman Catholic theologians invested tremendous effort in making their copies of the Vulgate faithful to the best and oldest Latin manuscripts, Protestant theologians insisted on renewing the Latin text according to the Hebrew and Greek originals. Second, by means of the Latin Bible, they reached many European humanists, intellectuals and theology students who were proficient in the use of Latin.⁵ Third, the Latin Bible was an excellent means for evangelizing Roman Catholics as well as, as Lenhart points out (426), for Protestant propaganda among the Catholics. Protestant theologians wrote their commentaries along with the biblical text and printed them without a name or under a pseudonym in order to make the editions plausible to the Catholics.⁶ Fourth, the reformers did not change the medieval educational system, at least at the beginning, but instead continued to educate children in accordance to the centuries-old church methods. Therefore, they continued to educate children in the Latin schools.

Many humanists and reformers considered that proficiency in the use of Latin was very important because it provided a way of correcting the many mistakes in the Vulgate. Some scholars believed that the purification of the Latin style would lead to an expurgation and renewal in theology (Hall, 1976:41). The publishing of Lorenzo Valla's book *Elegantiae Latini Sermonis* (first edition in 1444) and the Latin grammar *Institutiones Grammaticae* (1501) of the printer Aldus Manutius

- 5 In the preface of the incomplete edition of the Latin Bible (Genesis – 2 Kings and the New Testament) published by the reformers in 1529 in Wittenberg, Luther writes, "The text of the Pentateuch was corrected in many places according to the Hebrew original. I wish to remind readers that we undertook this effort for the benefit of students of the Bible and not for reception in the churches. In this way our work can be profitable to students at home or to preachers in delivering sermons on Scripture; for in public service it is better to retain the old version (Latin Vulgate) everywhere or a similar text" (Lenhart, 426).
- 6 Lenhart (426-427) brings a number of examples, of which I have abstracted the following: In 1529, Martin Butzer published an edition of the Psalter with text and commentary in Latin. The book was printed in Strasburg under the pseudonym of Aretius Felinus, and it was successfully distributed throughout France and Italy until the real name of the author was exposed. Then the book was adapted to agree with Calvinism and passed through ten editions until 1667. The printer William Rovillus from Lyon issued several Protestant Bibles in Latin, but in order to avoid proscription for distribution of the issues from 1569 and 1573, he placed a false notice on the title pages stating that the Bibles were revised in Rome. In his edition of the Latin Bible issued at Geneva in 1557, Robert Stephanus printed Beza's annotations to the New Testament under the name of the Catholic Bible student, Vatablus.



Biblia Polyglotta Complutensia

provided a strong impulse for the renewal of the Latin language.⁷

Biblia Polyglotta Complutensia

The polyglot Bible called *Complutensian Polyglot* brought great success to pre-Reformation scholarship. In 1502, the archbishop of Toledo, Francisco Ximénez de Cisneros, Cardinal and a founder of the trilingual university in the city of Alcalá de Henares (Latin: Complutum), started to work on the polyglot Bible gathering numerous experts under the leadership of Diego López de Zuñiga (died 1531). The Bible was prepared on the basis of the manuscripts that Cardinal Ximénez had borrowed or bought from the St. Mark library in Venice and the Vatican library in Rome (without the *Codex Vaticanus*) (Hall, 1976:57). This polyglot Bible, known as *Biblia Polyglotta*, *Biblia Polyglotta Complutensia*, *Complutensian Polyglot*, was prepared and printed from 1514 to 1517 and published in six volumes in 1521-1522.⁸ The Old Testament was edited in four volumes with

7 In 1526, Philipp Melancthon published a Latin grammar and morphology, which provided a great advancement in his earning the honorary title, the “Preceptor of Germany”.

8 This Bible was printed in Spain, in the city of Alcalá de Henares in the printing house of Arnald Guillén de Brocara. Its title *Complutensian Polyglot* was given from the Latin name Complu-

the Latin text in the middle of the page between the text in Hebrew from the left, and the Septuagint on the right side. *Targum Onkelos* (an Aramaic translation) was printed of the Pentateuch along with the Latin translation. The fifth volume includes a New Testament in Greek, and the sixth includes various indices and tools for study.

Novum Testamentum

The most significant and influential edition of the New Testament in Latin, *Novum Testamentum*, was edited at the beginning of the 16th century by the humanist Erasmus of Rotterdam (1469-1536). He had translated the New Testament from the Greek original into Latin and edited it in March, 1516 under the title *Novum instrumentu[m] omne* as the parallel text in Greek and Latin. It was the first printed New Testament in Greek.⁹ The title of the second edition was changed in 1519 to *Novum Testamentum*. Erasmus used several (six to seven) Greek manuscripts for his translation. His translation served as a fundamental text (*Textus Receptus*) for Luther's translation of the New Testament into German, Tyndale's into English, the King James Version, and for translation into other languages.¹⁰

tum by the city of Alcalá de Henares. Although the New Testament was prepared and printed on January 10, 1514, and the entire Bible was printed on July 10, 1517, four months before the cardinal's death (November 8, 1517), the Spanish humanists had difficulties in obtaining the Pope's permission for publishing, therefore the Bible was bound and published as late as 1521/1522 after the approval of Pope Leo X, *proprio motu* on March 22, 1520 (Mass, 1909).

- 9 Although known as the first printed New Testament in Latin, Erasmus' text of the New Testament was not the first one. The New Testament in Latin, *Biblia Polyglotta Complutensia*, was already collected and printed in January, 1514, while the whole Bible was printed in 1517, but the binding and publishing was postponed until 1521/1522 most probably under the influence of Erasmus, his humanistic circle of people, or the printer Froben.
- 10 According to G. W. and D. E. Anderson, the term *Textus Receptus* is generically applied to all editions of the Greek New Testament which follow the early printed editions of Desiderius Erasmus. The term was first used, however, to refer to the edition of the Greek New Testament published by the Elzevirs in 1633. The preface to this edition, written by Daniel Heinsius, includes the Latin phrase "textum ... receptum". Because of this, the 1633 edition became known as the "Textus Receptus", or the Received Text. This term has been expanded to include numerous editions of the Greek New Testament which come from the same Byzantine textual family representing the majority of the handwritten Greek manuscripts before the 16th century. There were approximately thirty distinct editions of the *Textus Receptus* from the 16th to 20th centuries. These editions bear names of numerous men who produced the editions and the years in which they were published. These include: the edition of Stunica as published in the *Biblia Polyglotta Complutensia* (printed in 1514, bound and published 1521/1522); the Erasmus editions of 1516, 1519, 1522, 1527 and 1535; the Colinaeus edition of 1534 which was made from the editions of Erasmus and the *Biblia Polyglotta Complutensia*; the Stephens editions (Robert Estienne, Stephanus or Stephens) of 1546, 1549, 1550 and 1551; the nine editions of Theodore Beza, an associate of John Calvin, produced between 1565 and 1604, with a tenth

Circulation and Editions of the Latin Bible

Circulations of the Bible and parts of the Bible in Latin were larger than the circulations of the edited Bibles and parts of the Bible in vernacular languages. The Latin Bibles were sold throughout Europe,¹¹ while the Bibles in vernacular languages were sold only in the region of the individual language.¹² Average circulations were between one and two thousand copies. The biblical text was usually accompanied by concise commentaries, notes and summaries of the doctrine, as well as by prefaces, introductions and epilogues. These summaries often represent teachings of the Old and New Testaments, and prefaces and commentaries printed in individual brochures without a biblical text.

List of Editions of the Protestant Bibles and Parts of the Bible in Latin from 1521 to 1570¹³

	Editions
Complete Bibles issued in Catholic cities and placed on the Index	80
Complete Bibles published by Protestant editors and printers	58
Incomplete Bibles (10 or 11 O.T. Books and N.T.)	2
Complete Old Testaments	3
Incomplete Old Testaments (only Protocanonical Books)	2
Complete New Testaments	158
Collections of selected O.T. and N.T. Books	6
Erasmus* Paraphrases of N.T. except Apocalypse by Prot, printers	14
Gospels unharmonized	19
Gospels harmonized	16
Gospels harmonized in Latin verses	8
Acts of the Apostles in prose	18
Acts of the Apostles in verse	2
Pauline and Canonical Epistles	4

published posthumously in 1611; the Elzevir editions of 1624, 1633 and 1641.

- 11 According to Lenhart (1946:432), during the fifty years from 1521-1570, comprising a generation and a half, hardly 105 million people lived and died in Western Europe, the area of the Latin book production. By far the larger part of this population was Catholic.
- 12 For example, Tyndale began by printing just 300 copies of his English New Testament. Luther, for his part, published the first edition of his German New Testament in 5000 copies which sold out within three months (Lenhart, 1946:432).
- 13 Lenhart's list (1946:430-431) of editions of the Protestant Bibles in Latin is incomplete because the bibliographical sources are incomplete.

Apocalypse	1
Epistles and Gospels of Sundays and Feast-Days (some incomplete)	43
Collections of O.T. Books (2-12 books)	57
Single O.T. Books except Psalter	292
Editions Psalters in prose (some containing two, three, and four different Latin translations placed side by side)	149
Psalters metrical	60
Erasmus* Paraphrases of several N.T. Books (1-21 in number) by Protestant printers	24
Collections of one or two Gospels and a few other N.T. Books	9
Three Gospels (except John)	3
Single Gospels in prose	75
Single Gospels metrical	12
Fourteen Epistles of St. Paul	19
Thirteen Epistles of St. Paul	5
Ten Epistles of St. Paul	14
Four Epistles of St. Paul	2
Three Epistles of St. Paul	11
Two Epistles of St. Paul	13
Seven Canonical Epistles	6
Three Canonical Epistles	5
Single Epistles (Pauline and Canonical)	87
Parts of two and a few more O.T. Books except Psalms	7
Parts of single O.T. Books except Psalms	21
Collection of from two to one hundred Psalms, some metrical	58
Single Psalms	26
Parts of Gospels and Acts	3
Parts of all Four Gospels	3
Parts of single Gospels	16
Parts of single Epistles	5
Parts of Apocalypse	3
Parts of the whole Bible arranged into prayer-books	9
Breviary issued by Henry VIII in Latin	1
Book of Common Prayer or Prymnners in Latin for English Protestants...	13
Concordantiae Majores arranging all passages in alphabetical form	9
Smaller Latin concordances of selected passages	22
Pictorial Bibles with detached biblical quotations in Latin	17

From the beginning, the reformers understood that the printed Bibles and commentaries in Latin were excellent means for reaching the educational classes of the society of Catholic Europe with the Gospel, those who found little value in the vernacular languages. While printed Bibles, books and brochures in vernacular languages reached the masses, publications in Latin had a great influence on educated Europeans. The intellectuals of that time were not won over to the Reformation through reading and studying the Bible and texts in vernacular languages, rather by reading and studying the Bible and religious literature edited in Latin (Lenhart, 1964:425).

Translations into Vernacular Languages

The Scripture was written in the language spoken by the Jews and the believers of the early church. The public worship and gatherings of the early church mainly consisted of, along with prayer and worship, the reading and interpreting of Scripture. The believers were obedient to Christ's commission, and preached the gospel. They proclaimed and interpreted the Word of God wherever they lived or went. Therefore, translation and the spreading of the Bible historically went along with the spreading of the Christian faith.

Jesus' commission for the gospel to be taken to all nations¹⁴ and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 1:5.8; 2:1-12)¹⁵ made the translation of Scripture foundational to the Christian identity. From that point on, the translation of the Bible - the written Word of God - has always been related to missionary work, and often intensified in movements of Christian awakening and spiritual renewals. Fenn asserts that the Bible was central during the two millennia of missionary activity in the church for mainly three reasons: first, the Bible was the source of inspiration and spiritual food for the missionaries; second, the Bible was the foundation of the worship of the church into which

14 Jesus said to his disciples: "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age" (Matthew 28:18-20).

15 Upon the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, the disciples who were Galileans spoke of God's magnificent works in different languages. On that day, many God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven were staying in Jerusalem. The disciples proclaimed the gospel to them and each one heard them speaking in his own language. Not only did the disciples speak, but the listeners also heard and understood the message. On that day, about three thousand people were added to the church (Acts 2:41). The listeners heard the good news, and then praised God in their own languages.

missionaries endeavored to incorporate pagan and non-Christian tribes and individuals; third, the Bible itself was a means for evangelism. The missionary was, therefore, bound to the Bible by a threefold bond: his spiritual life and authority as the announcer of the gospel depended on his knowledge of the Scriptures; the message he proclaimed and the church into which he incorporated new believers were focused on the Bible; Scripture was a means through which the gospel could reach the minds and hearts of people often more efficiently than any word of the missionary (Fenn, 1976:383).

The reasons for translating the Bible into vernacular languages are multiple. The primary and most significant of them is evangelism, the proclamation, spreading and establishing of the faith. Evangelism is the spread, proclamation and preaching of the gospel (the good news), the message of salvation, by believing in the representative death and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth (Romans 4:24-25; 10:9-10), the Savior of humanity, that is to be accepted and followed by repentance or a changed way of thinking and acting in accordance with the Scripture, the confession of sins, conversion and surrender of a person's own life to God (Jambrek, 2007:62). Another reason lies in the spiritual renewal and the liturgical needs of the church.¹⁶ As a movement for spiritual renewal of the church, the Reformation strongly encouraged evangelism.

The reformers emphasized that, by his grace, God presents a person with salvation, and he or she is to accept it by faith, thus initiating a dynamic relationship between God and that person. The goal of the Christian life is a personal relationship of the believer with God. This relationship is built in the mutual communication between God and the individual through words. God reveals himself to the individual, and the individual responds by faith and living a holy life. Since God speaks to a person and reveals himself through Scripture, the reformers believed that it was important for every person to be able to read and understand the Scriptures, responding to God's encouragements by faith. That is why the Scriptures are being translated into vernacular languages and printed in undreamed of numbers, as well as distributed not only among intellectuals and clergy, but also to every person regardless of education because the Holy Spirit has inspired the Scriptures and continues to interpret them.¹⁷

16 Other reasons may include proclamation and protection of the denominational doctrine, financial profit, as well as personal intellectual challenges for the translator (Jambrek, 2007:62).

17 Matthias Flacius perfectly sums up the theological stands of the reformers: One should ask two goods of God, especially the greatest – understanding of his word... It is also Christ's gift to reveal the Scriptures to us and to enlighten our hearts to understand the Scriptures (Luke 24:25). We should all receive from his fullness. This occurs when we acknowledge and receive him by faith. The Holy Spirit is the author and interpreter of the Scriptures. His task is to lead us into

The reformers, who were aware that the gospel is “the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes” (Romans 1:16), endeavored to proclaim the gospel by means of the spoken and the written Word to every person, so that he or she could believe and enjoy an active relationship with God. They understood that the best and most efficient way of proclaiming the gospel is to proclaim it in the language each person understands the best. Therefore, the preaching and writing was done in both Latin and vernacular languages.

Until the advent of printing and the first printed book, the Bible was translated in 33 world languages. The new era in the area of culture and religion was marked by the advent of the print, on one side, and the reform of Christianity on the other. They both placed the Bible in the first place, thus it became a more demanded and available book. By the end of the 15th century, the entire Bible was printed in 11 languages, and in the 12th language, ancient Aramaic, only the New Testament. During the time of the Reformation in the 16th century, which inspired the translation of the Bible in vernacular languages, certain translations were printed in 26 additional languages; in the 17th century, in 13 languages; in the 18th century, in 16 languages.

Luther's Translation of the Bible in German

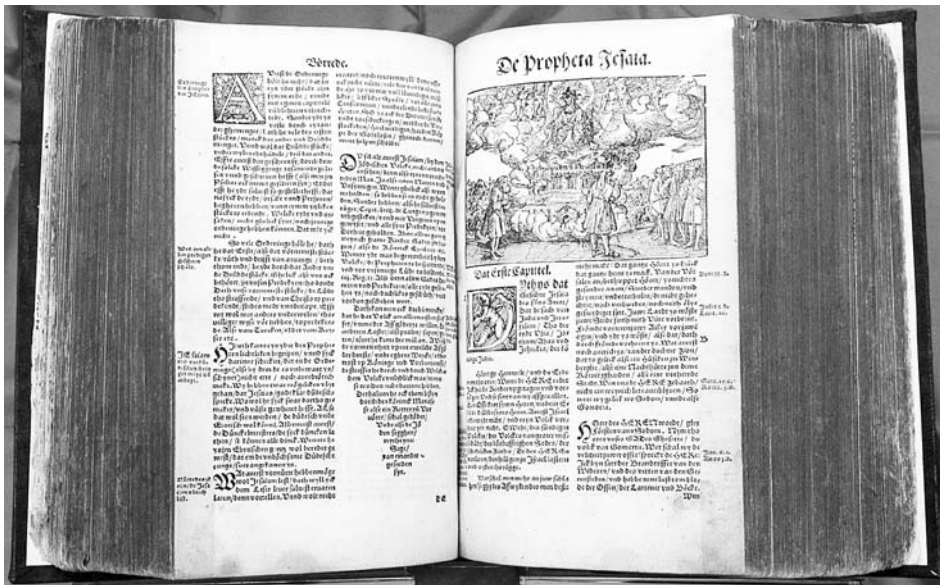
Germany has the oldest tradition of translating the Bible in a vernacular language (Black, 1976:423). Before Luther's translation, there were, altogether, 13 translations of the Bible in German. The Bible printed by Johannes Mentelin in Strasburg, in 1466, is among the first printed books in the German language and the first Bible printed in German.¹⁸ Until the publication of Luther's Bible, it was printed in 14 editions by various printers.¹⁹

Luther's books were successfully distributed throughout Europe. When he published his New Testament in German, *Das Neue Testament Delitzsch*, in October, 1522, more than 250 thousand copies were distributed in Europe. The New Testament, printed in a circulation of 3,000 to 4,000 copies, was sold out in several weeks, and in December of the same year, another edition was issued. Until

the whole truth (John 16:13). His task is to engrave the Scriptures into our hearts (Jeremiah 31:33). Prophecy, specifically, and the whole of Scripture (as evidenced in 1 Peter 1:20) are not a matter of one's mind or reasoning, but should be interpreted in their own light, as witnessed by the prophets through the Holy Spirit (Vlačić, 1993:67).

18 The translation was prepared in 1350, and printed for the first time in 1466. The translation was done according to the Vulgate, and regardless of the numerous revisions, especially in 1475 and 1483, it did not meet Luther's linguistic standards.

19 It has been calculated that 8,000 to 10,000 copies were printed which reveals the high level of interest for the Bible. Moreover, the Bible was considerably expensive; it is estimated that early editions cost the equivalent of a townhouse, or fourteen fattened oxen (Black, 1976:423).



Luther's Bible from 1545.

1533, 83 editions of Luther's translation of the New Testament in German were printed (Greenslade, 1976:477). His Bible from 1534, the Old and New Testaments in German, was published in 11 editions, and until 1546, while he was still alive, there were 430 editions of the whole Bible or individual books of the Bible. During Luther's life, new revised editions of the Bible were issued - 1534, 1535, 1536, 1539, 1541, 1545, and posthumously in 1546.²⁰ In Wittenberg alone, more than 60 editions of the German Bible were published between 1546 and 1600 with an average circulation of 2,000 copies each.²¹

Luther influenced more people through the Bible than through his other publications altogether. His conviction that the Bible should be translated from the original languages had formed the public opinion, and the possession of a Bible

20 It is assumed that the 1546 edition was significantly altered; therefore the elector of Saxony, August I, gathered a group of scholars and assigned them the task of revising the Bible. By the revision of the text from 1546, it was concluded that the only unchanged text of Luther's translation of the Bible is in the edition from 1545. This edition was used for preparing the Wittenberg edition of the Bible in 1581 that was approved by the elector of Saxony. The Bible from 1545 was given a certain canonical status which is still evident.

21 It is assumed that the printer Hans Lufft printed and sold almost 100 thousand copies of the Bible between 1534 and 1574 (Greenslade, 1976:478).

revealed the cultural level of the individual. Under the influence of humanism, a strong biblical movement developed in Europe in the 16th century which, along with the study of the Bible in the original languages – Hebrew, Greek and Latin – inspired the translation of the Bible in many more vernacular languages. During the time of the Reformation, editions of the Bible were published in Dutch (1522), French (1530), German (1534), English (1535), Swedish (1541), Danish (1550), Spanish (1553), Polish (1561), ancient Slavic (1581), Slovenian (1584), Icelandic (1584), Welsh (1588), and Hungarian (1590).²² The first Bibles in vernacular languages were often richly illustrated.

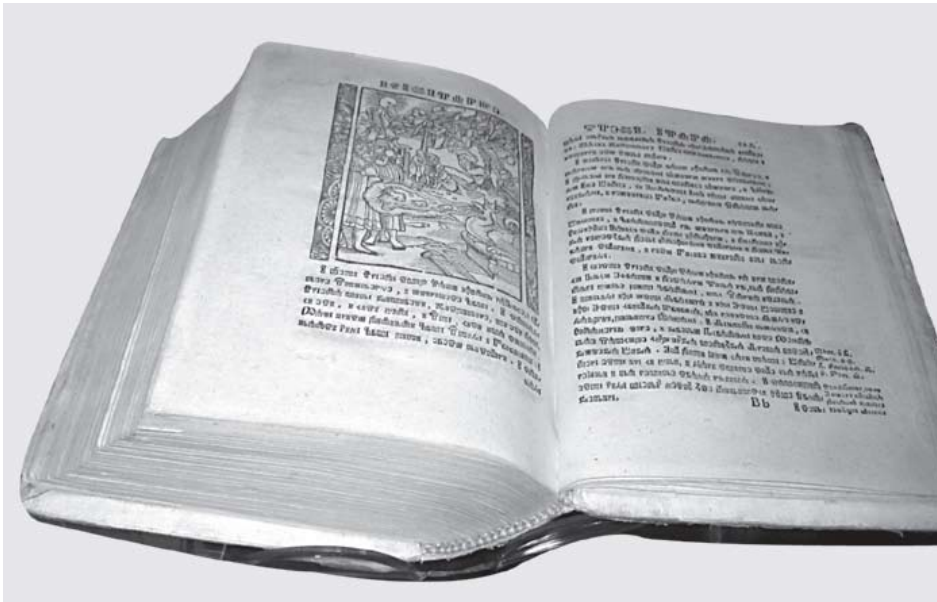
Translation of the Bible into Croatian

The first printed New Testament in the Croatian language, translated by Antun Dalmatin, Stipan Konzul and their collaborators, Juraj Cvečić and Juraj Jurčić, was published in 1562/1563 at the Bible Institute in Urach near Tübingen, established for the purpose of translating, publishing and distributing Bibles and other Reformation works in Croatian. The reformers endeavored to spread the influence of the Reformation, proclaim the gospel by means of the written Word, and change the spiritual condition within the historically Croatian lands and beyond. The goal of the Bible Institute included the publishing of the entire Bible, writings of the church Fathers and other instructive literature. The reformers believed that the Bible and the instructive literature would be read in Croatia and Dalmatia as well as in Bosnia, Serbia, and Bulgaria – all the way to Constantinople. Part of their vision was also the evangelization of south-east Europe. They did not succeed in printing the entire Bible in Croatian, only the New Testament and the Book of Prophets from the Old Testament. The Books of Moses (Pentateuch) and the Book of Psalms were translated, maybe other books of the Old Testament as well, but they were not printed because the Bible Institute ceased its activity as a result of the untimely death of its founder, Ivan Ungnad (1493-1564).

Prvi del Novoga Testamenta (The First Part of the New Testament) consisting of the Gospels and the Book of Acts was printed in the Glagolitic alphabet in 1562, and the *Drugi del Novoga Teštamenta (Second Part of the New Testament)*, along with the epistles and the *Book of Revelation* were printed in 1563.²³ The text of John's *Revelation* was illustrated with 26 illustrations. The parts were printed in

22 In the time prior to the Reformation, Bibles were printed in several vernacular languages such as Czech, Catalanian, Dutch and French. For a more detailed review, see: Greenslade, 1976:478 and Arapović, 2002:44-46.

23 A reprint of the Glagolitic New Testament was published in 2007 by the Theological faculty "Matija Vlačić Ilirik", Zagreb. The reprint was prepared by Alojz Jembrih who also wrote the epilogue.



Prvi i drugi del Novoga Testamenta (First and Second parts of the New Testament), Glagolitic script, 1562-1563. Photo: National and University Library in Zagreb, (binding from 1572). Format 15.5 x 20.5 cm.



Prvi i drugi del Novoga Testamenta (First and Second parts of the New Testament), Cyrillic script, 1563. Photo: National and University Library in Zagreb. Format 14.5 x 19.5 cm.

Title page from the *Book of the prophet Joel* in Croatian. Taken from the book *Proroczi MDLXIII: Prvotisak Proroka Staroga zavjeta na hrvatskom jeziku, studija i preslik*, University of Mostar, 2002. The reprint was prepared by Borislav Arapović who also wrote the preface.



2,000 copies and 1,000 copies respectively. The translation was dedicated to the Emperor Maximilian II (1527-1576), and the inscription was written in German by a Goth.

1,000 copies of the same translation of the *First*, and the *Second part of the New Testament* in Croatian were printed in the Cyrillic alphabet at the Bible Institute in 1563.²⁴ The text of John's *Revelation* was illustrated with 27 illustrations. The edition was dedicated to the Bavarian Duke Wolfgang.

The Croatian Protestants at the Bible Institute rapidly worked on the translation of the entire Bible. The Old Testament book *Proroczi*, was prepared for prin-

24 A reprint of the Cyrillic New Testament was published in 2008 by the Theological faculty "Matija Vlačić Ilirik", Zagreb. The reprint was prepared by Alojz Jembrih who also wrote the epilogue.

ting in Latin and Glagolitic script. In 1564, 50 representative copies were printed in Latin script.²⁵ There is no data about the destiny of the prepared translation in the Glagolitic script.

Scripture, as the written Word of God

While the Catholic Church considered the translating, publishing and spreading of the Bible to be a great threat for the Word of God, and the Council of Trent prohibited the printing of biblical texts without church permission, restricting the reading of the Bible in living languages (Tomić, 1986:267),²⁶ the reformers clearly emphasized that Scripture is the Word of God and that it revives those who believe it. The Holy Spirit makes it alive.

Contrary to Roman Catholic theology, whose idea of the true faith and church was based on the continuity of the Church Magisterium and structures, with the Pope and the bishops at the head, the Protestant thought and practice regarding the true faith and church was based on the continuity of the Word of God. The true faith and church are where the Word of God is proclaimed, heard, accepted and cherished.²⁷

The Reformation's principle *sola Scriptura* sprang from a range of questions regarding the Scriptures that the reformers revolved around, and then wrote and preached on them based on the Scriptures. These questions included the question about the canon, authority, adequacy, perspicuity and the comprehension of the Bible. In this article, deliberations of leading theologians of the Reformation

25 The book *Proroczi MDLXIII: Prvotisak Proroka Staroga zavjeta na hrvatskom jeziku, studija i preslik (Prophets)* was published by the University of Mostar in 2002. Borislav Arapović prepared the reprint and wrote a detailed study on the Bible Institute in Urach, as well as on the translation of the Bible into Croatian.

26 In the document *Ten Rules Concerning the Question of Forbidden Books* produced by the council fathers chosen at the Council of Trent (25th session) and confirmed by Pope Pius IV, the books of the reformers were altogether prohibited, and reading a translation of a book of the Old Testament could, by the discretion of the Bishop, be allowed only for studied and pious people. Such translations could be used only for clarification of the Vulgate to understand the Scriptures, but not as an orthodox text. Translations of the New Testament that were made by the reformers in national languages were forbidden because, from their careful reading, the council fathers concluded, usually came great danger and very little use or gain (Jambrek, 2007:53).

27 The Scriptures should be read in the fear of God, so that we can firmly decide to never turn right or left, whether it concerns the faith, moral, or any other action (Joshua 1:7-8; Deuteronomy 5:32). Namely, God is the wisest, so he alone knows the way and he is rightfully to be obeyed in his house as the ultimate master" (Vlačić, 1993:71).

will be considered, including each individual question and adopted teachings of particular traditions of the Reformation, as well as the counter-Reformation as recorded in their foundational documents. For the Lutheran tradition of the Reformation, we will follow the *Augsburg Confession* (1530), for the Reformed tradition of the Reformation we will follow the *Second Helvetic Confession* (1556), for the Anglican tradition of the Reformation, the *Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion of the Anglican Church* (1563) and the *Westminster's Confession* (1647) which represents a reflection of the stands that are proximate to those of the moderate Anabaptist's wing of the radical tradition of the Reformation. The documents of the Council of Trent are authoritative for the counter-Reformation and the Catholic renewal.

The Canon of Scripture

Ad fontes, the humanist's appeal to return to the origin, strongly resounded among the reformers and raised a range of questions including the question of the canon of Scripture.²⁸ The return to the source was understood differently. The question was raised as to which text of Scripture was original. Erasmus of Rotterdam published a critical text of the New Testament, a parallel of the revised Latin text with the Greek original. Slightly overtaken by the rise of the question about the canon of Scripture, the reformers agreed upon the canon of Scripture that consists of 66 books: 39 books of the Old Testament, and 27 books of the New Testament. The foundation for the Christian canon of the Old Testament is the canon of the Hebrew Bible presumably established in the 4th century, the latest in the 2nd century BC, and confirmed by the Jews in Palestine in the 1st century.²⁹ Over the centuries, the Catholic Church has added to this canon, and officially

28 The word *canon* (Greek, *kanōn*, the rule, norm, measure) in Christendom refers to the standard to which something is compared to see if it is inspired by God or among the collection of books which passed this test and which the early church recognized as a "measure of the faith."

29 The Rabbinical Council in Jamnia, near Haifa disputed in AD 90 about the right of some books to remain in the canon of the Hebrew Bible. The dispute in the council didn't address the acceptance of some list of books into the canon as much, rather, their right to remain there. The canon of the Hebrew Bible traditionally has 24 books divided into three groups: the Law, the Prophets and the Writings. The Christian canon of the Old Testament is identical to the canon of the Hebrew Bible, but the number of books differs because in the Christian canon, the *Book of Samuel*, the *Book of Chronicles* and *Ezra-Nehemiah* are all divided into two books and the individual books of the Minor Prophets, which in the canon of the Hebrew Bible are all under the title of *The Twelve*, are also divided into individual books. In the Christian canon of the Old Testament, the order of the books is different from the canon of the Hebrew Bible because the subject grouping of the books was accepted instead of the official order (McDowell, 26).

confirmed at the Council of Trent (1546), the Apocryphal books³⁰ (known in the Catholic Church as deuterocanonical books) as well as parts of the *Book of Esther* and the *Book of the prophet Daniel*.³¹ The reformers in the 16th century accepted the canon of the Hebrew Bible and renounced the Apocrypha, or the deuterocanonical books, although many of them quoted them long after the adoption of the Hebrew Bible.³²

Luther abstracted the Apocrypha from the canon of the Old Testament, and placed it among the 39 books of the Old Testament and the New Testament with the annotation that the Apocrypha is not equal to Scripture, although it is useful for reading. Luther marked from 1 to 23, the New Testament books he considered as canonical, and then he sequenced the last four books without numerical marks (*Hebrews, The Epistle of James, the Epistle of Jude and the Revelation*), and in the commentaries to these books, he evaluated them as books of lower value.

The development of Christianity and the adoption of the canon of Scripture during and after the Reformation were greatly influenced by the reformers themselves, but after a period of time, when particular traditions of the Reformation developed and strengthened, their opinions regarding the canon of Scripture were clearly defined in the confessional documents of the particular traditions. In the early specific confessional documents, for example, in the Anabaptist's *Schleithem's Confession* (1527) and the Lutheran *Augsburg Confession* (1530), there is no mention of the canon of Scripture.

30 The Apocryphal books of the Old Testament are *1 Esdras, 2 Esdras, Tobit, Judith*, additions to the *Book of Esther, the Wisdom of Solomon*, or the *Book of Wisdom, Ecclesiasticus* (this book is known as *the Wisdom of Jesus the Son of Sirach* or the *Book of Sirach*), *Baruch, Letter of Jeremiah, the Prayer of Azariah, the Song of Three Youths (Children)*, (additions to the *Book of Daniel*), *Susana, the Prayer of Manasseh, 1 Maccabees and 2 Maccabees*. The Jews did not accept the canonical status of these books and so they were never included in the canon of the Hebrew Bible. However, the LXX manuscripts (Septuagint) includes them as an addition to the canon of the Old Testament. The first Latin Bibles, translated during the second century AD based on the LXX, included the Apocrypha. The Vulgate, the Latin translation of the Bible, because of the difference between *libri ecclesiastici* and *libri canonici* awarded the Apocrypha a different status. Jerome, the translator of the Vulgate, threw out the apocryphal books as not part of the canon, but under pressure translated some of them (Tobit and Judith), and after his death, the apocryphal books were included in the Vulgate from old Latin translations (Vetus Latina).

31 The Dominican, Sixtus of Siena (+1569), introduced a division to the proto-canonical or *primary canonical* books which all Christian churches considered as canonical and inspired by God, and *deuterocanonical* which some churches added because of various historical reasons and "which were not always and in every place in the canon" (Tomić, 1986:149).

32 Calvin, for example, quoted Baruch, The book of Wisdom and the Book of Sirach. Martin Luther, Philipp Melancthon, Matthias Flacius Illyricus and many other reformers have quoted from the Apocrypha.

Novum Testamentum Jesu Christi filii Dei or ***Glossa compendiaria*** was a revised and improved edition of the New Testament of Matthias Flacius Illyricus. This work includes Flacius' redaction of the Greek text of the New Testament in one column, and the revised and completed Latin translation of Erasmus of Rotterdam in a parallel column; under both parallel texts, a detailed commentary is given, with an explanation of the New Testament words and illustrations. *Glossa compendiaria* was used as a manual for studying and interpreting the New Testament. The first edition was printed in Basel in 1570, and the second (photo) in Frankfurt on Main in 1659.



In Article IV of the *Belgic Confession* (1561), the canonical books of the Old and New Testaments are listed, and it is asserted, “They are canonical books with which there can be no quarrel at all.”

Article VI brings a list of the Apocrypha and asserts:

The church may certainly read these books and learn from them as far as they agree with the canonical books. But they do not have such power and virtue that one could confirm from their testimony any point of faith or of the Christian religion. Much less can they detract from the authority of the other holy books.

The first chapter of the *Second Helvetic Confession* (1566) entitled, “Of the Holy Scripture Being the True Word of God,” the canonical books are spoken of in Article I, and the Apocrypha in Article IX:

We believe and confess the canonical Scriptures of the holy prophets and apostles of both Testaments to be the true Word of God, and to have sufficient authority of themselves, not of men. For God himself spoke to the fathers, prophets, apostles, and still speaks to us through the Holy Scriptures.

The *Westminster Confession of Faith* (1647) teaches about Scripture in its first chapter, and in the second, it indicates that Scripture, the written Word of God consists of 39 specified books of the Old Testament and 27 specified books of the New Testament. All these books are given and inspired by God as a single standard for faith and life. In Article III, it gives an explanation about the Apocrypha:

The books commonly called Apocrypha, not being of divine inspiration, are no part of the canon of the Scripture, and therefore are of no authority in the Church of God, nor to be any otherwise approved, or made use of, than other human writings.

The radical reformers followed Luther for a while at the beginning of the Reformation. When Luther emphasized the rule *only Scripture* above the tradition of the church or the Pope’s authority, as well as the rule *only faith* over good deeds, many radical reformers accepted him as their teacher and followed him. But when Luther seriously criticized particular books within the canon of Scripture as lacking an adequate emphasis on faith, the majority of the radical reformers accepted the counter-Reformation’s position and partially used the Apocrypha (Williams, 1962:819). After the discordance with Luther, the radical tradition of the Reformation, including all its variations, did not have a clear and strong stand about the canon of Scripture. Preachers steadily accepted the Hebrew canon of the Old Testament, and at times, some still quoted the Apocrypha in their writings and sermons.³³ Regarding the question of the use of the Apocrypha, some radical reformers were closer to the Catholic view than to the Protestant.

Most of the leading Protestant reformers renounced the Apocrypha as untruthful and a heresy, or at least as less valuable. The Anglican Church accepted the Apocrypha as an instructive reading that could be read. Article VI from the

33 Pilgram Marpeck quoted *The Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs*, and Michael Sattler often quoted *The Forth Book of Ezra* in his letter (1527) to the Anabaptists in Horba (Williams, 1962:819). Peter Riedemann, in his confession, quoted the canonical books of Scripture about a thousand times, while he quoted the Apocrypha only about 40 times, 20 times from the Book of Wisdom (Estep, 1977:144).

Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion of the Anglican Church (1563) explains the adequacy of the Scripture regarding salvation: “In the name of Holy Scripture, we do understand those Canonical books of the Old and New Testament, of whose authority was never any doubt in the Church.” It then lists the 39 canonical books of the Old Testament, as well as the deuterocanonical books (the Apocrypha). As for the deuterocanonical books, “(as Hierome [Jerome] said) the Church reads for example of life and instruction of manners; but yet it does not apply them to establish any doctrine.”

At the Council of Trent (1546), the Catholic Church recognized, defined and pronounced the Apocryphal books canonical. The sequence of the books follows the listing of the Council of Florence (1442) according to the plan of the Septuagint. At the fourth session, on April 8, 1546, the Council of Trent drew up the *Decree on the Publication and use of the Holy Scriptures*, from which is conveyed the first section,

The Holy Synod, seeing that it would be very useful to the Church of God, if among all of the Latin versions of the holy books, which are being spread around, to mark those which need to be held as authentic, determine and make known in public lectures, discussions, sermons and display as authentic this old edition of the Vulgate, which has over the ages of long term use in the Church been approved, and let no one under any kind of pretense dare to or attempt to exclude it” (Tomić, 1986:267).

The Revelation of God in Scripture

The reformers of the 16th century distinguished three forms of the Word of God. The first form is the living Word of God, or Jesus Christ, the second is the written Word of God, or Scripture (the Bible), and the third is the spoken Word of God, or the sermon.³⁴ God has revealed himself by the Word and he still reveals himself to humankind. Understanding what has been revealed does not only include knowing the Truth, but establishing a dynamic relationship with God who reveals himself. The Bible as the Word of God, the reformers agreed, brings a person into a direct relationship with God. Writing about the means for understanding the Scripture, Matthias Flacius wrote:

Thus, let the means we need to seek in the first place and with the greatest fervor, be the very source of every good, the heavenly Father, who leads us to his Son; The Son, who reveals himself from the Father’s bosom, who is our access, truth and a way to the Father; finally, the Holy Spirit himself, whose

34 The *Second Helvetic Confession*, for example, begins its first chapter with a teaching about Scripture as the True Word of God. From article 4 to article 7 in the first chapter, it explains the teaching that the preaching of the Word of God is the Word of God.

special task is to lead us into the whole truth and to make us *θεοδιδάκτοι*, or instructed by God, as well as to give us adequate and saving thoughts in every endeavor and attempt (Vlačić, 1993:61).

The reformers believed that God continued to speak through the words he gave to the prophets and the apostles. In that personal encounter, God speaks in love to humankind and renews the hearts of people who respond to him in faith. In his Word – Scripture (the Bible) – and through the power of the Holy Spirit, God reveals himself and his plan for people, and he convinces people of their sin and of truth. To the reformers, the Word of God implied the living Word which speaks to daily situations because God reveals himself in specific situations. God's revelation is always an event, an experiential event with the living God who reveals his message of salvation to humankind, reveals the truth about humankind, our dignity and commission, our purpose in life, sinful state, salvation and hope of eternal life. The revelation is a dialogue between God and human in the form of life's fellowship, and fellowship with the Father and his Son Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit (Jambrek, 1999:54-62).

Scripture is Inspired by the Holy Spirit

After acting in history, God did not let the human understanding of those events and the witness about them depend merely on the incidents themselves, rather he inspired the writers of the Bible to record the events. The biblical writers were not left alone in their investigation and penetration, but, in fact, the Spirit of Christ was in them (1 Peter 1:10-12). The reformers, like the Apostle Paul, consistently maintained that "All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness" (2 Timothy 3:16). They believed that God is the primary author of Scripture; he inspired the minds and the words of chosen and prepared people who spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit in freedom and faithfulness (2 Peter 1:21). Therefore, they firmly maintained that what the Bible says, God says. Scripture is the written Word of God, and Jesus Christ is the living Word, therefore they believed that what the Scripture says, Christ says.

The Authority of Scripture

An interest in teachings about the church spread in the 14th century, coinciding with the comprehensive institutional changes within the church, and the social and political crises of European society at the beginning of the 16th century. Reforming theological deliberations highlighted questions of the authority of the church and the interrelationship between God and a person as the most important question. The answers to these questions, as well as their practical application in the believer's life, significantly determined the course of the Reformation (Jambrek, 1999).

During its fifteen-centuries-long history, the church changed in its understanding of authority. In the 1st century, although to a lesser degree, canonical authority³⁵ represented a solid foundation for the life and activity of the church. The Word of God was proclaimed, taught, and applied in life. During the following centuries, the theological authority strengthened,³⁶ especially in the time of the seven ecumenical councils. In the time prior to the Reformation, ecclesial authority was especially emphasized.³⁷ The Reformation's theologians stressed the principle *sola Scriptura* (only Scripture) in order to emphasize the authority of the Scriptures (canonical authority) as the inerrable Word of God above any human's opinion or conclusions (theological authority) and the church tradition (ecclesial authority). The reformers believed that the authority applied in the church must be derived from the Scriptures, because Scripture is the written revelation of God.

By the principle of *sola Scriptura*, Luther emphasized that Scripture is the source and the standard of the Christian life, faith and living. Scripture is the source from which people realize God and learn about him and his will; God's Word is the only source of theology. By applying the principle of *sola Scriptura*, the reformers "removed the Pope from the throne" and inaugurated the Bible (Bainton, 1976:1).

During the Reformation (same as before and after), the Roman Catholic Church accepted the authority of the Bible, but in practice, the standards of faith and life were equally drawn from Scripture and the church tradition. In the 14th and the 15th centuries, namely, church tradition and mystical experience were respected as much as Scripture. Roman Catholic theologians spoke about the parallel sources of truth, about the church tradition that continues in the history of the church. The Scriptures and the oral traditions were considered to be of equal value. Throughout history, the Roman Catholic Church has established the tradition and general belief that the traditions of the church supplement Scripture. The reformers, however, decidedly maintained that there is only one source of revelation – the Scriptures. The reformers believed the church to be under the Word of God. Martin Luther firmly posed the Reformation's thesis that Scripture

35 Canonical authority maintains that the Bible or Scripture is God's authoritative revelation. The Bible is the Word of God, inspired by the Holy Spirit, inerrable and ultimate in authority in all the standards of the faith and life. Thus, the overall Christian belief and life must be biblically based, lead by the Word of God and judged by it.

36 Theological authority is based on the doctrinal beliefs or "creeds" as the sources of faith and life.

37 Ecclesial authority implies that the church, with the Pope as the head, holds ultimate authority in all standards of faith and life.

is the judge and the maker of the church; thereby, he did not mean to devalue the church, rather to point out that the church must be a servant of Scripture, not a master. Zwingli pointed out that the true church “reclines only on the Word of God and God’s will... Such Church cannot fail... That is the true Church, the bride of Jesus Christ, without a spot, and one that is guided and refreshed by the Spirit of God” (Bloech, 1989).

The *Second Helvetic Confession* asserts:

We believe and confess the canonical Scriptures of the holy prophets and apostles of both Testaments to be the true Word of God, and to have sufficient authority of themselves, not of men. For God himself spoke to the fathers, prophets, apostles, and still speaks to us through the Holy Scriptures.

And in this Holy Scripture, the universal Church of Christ has the most complete exposition of all that pertains to a saving faith, and also to the framing of a life acceptable to God; and in this respect it is expressly commanded by God that nothing be either added to or taken from the same.

Scripture is not trusted because of the church, nor by human reason, rather, it is trusted because of the one of whom it witnesses and who is its living center, Jesus Christ. By relying on biblical records (Luke 24:32; Romans 1:16, 2 Timothy 3:15.16), the reformers asserted that Scripture can make an impression on readers and hearers, that its message is reliable and that it is important to accept it. The *Westminster Confession of Faith* asserts,

The authority of the Holy Scripture, for which it ought to be believed, and obeyed, depends not upon the testimony of any man, or Church; but wholly upon God (who is truth itself) the author thereof: and therefore it is to be received, because it is the Word of God (1,4).

By placing the authority of the Bible above the Church (the Pope and Church Councils), the reformers did not dismiss all tradition, but in fact, only the tradition that was opposed to the teachings of Scripture.³⁸ Luther believed the adequacy

38 By emphasizing the authority and the adequacy of Scripture in the standards of faith and daily life, the Reformation staggered the theological foundations of countless Roman Catholic teachings which could not be confirmed by the unequivocal teaching of the Scriptures. The reformers deliberated and aligned the contemporary teaching and the tradition of the Roman Catholic Church with the Word of God. They maintained the teachings and the tradition that were in accordance with the Scriptures, and dismissed the rest. Thus, for example, they dismissed the Roman Catholic teaching about the saints because Jesus Christ is the only mediator between God and people, therefore it is not allowed - and it is groundless - to invoke the saints or to worship them. Since, according to the Scriptures, a person is saved by faith in Christ and he or she enjoys an eternal blessedness - while those who do not believe in him perish eternally - there is no scope in the Christian church or a biblical foundation for a teaching about

of the Scripture functions in the context in which the Bible is regarded as a book that is given to the Church - the community of the believers - gathered and lead by the Holy Spirit (George, 81).

Our full persuasion and assurance of the infallible truth and divine authority thereof, is from the inward work of the Holy Spirit bearing witness by and with the Word in our hearts (*Westminster Confession*, 1,5).

Jean Calvin said that the Bible is the inspired Word of God, announced by the virtue of human language and confirmed to the believer by the inner witness of the Holy Spirit.³⁹ Calvin, like Luther, asserted that Scripture is, in fact, the “womb” by which the church was “born”, and not the opposite. The Pope, the Councils, even the early Fathers which Calvin often quoted, can be and often are in the wrong. By the inner witness of the Holy Spirit, Scripture confirms its authenticity and announces its true interpretation to the diligent believer.

Holy Scripture contains all things necessary to salvation: so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an article of the faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation (*39 Articles of Religion*, 6).

The Perspicuity of the Scriptures

The reformers have often pointed out the main message of the Scriptures is perspicuous even for the illiterate layman; therefore, every person can come to the Bible directly to search for and find the truth.

All things in Scripture are not alike plain in themselves, nor alike clear unto all: yet those things which are necessary to be known, believed, and observed for salvation are so clearly propounded, and opened in some place of Scripture or other, that not only the learned, but the unlearned, in a due use of the ordinary means, may attain unto a sufficient understanding of them (*Westminster Confession*, 1,7).

By highlighting the biblical teaching about the priesthood of all believers, the reformers emphasized the personal responsibility of every believer to have a relationship with God. They believed God has called people into various professions by which they are to serve God, naturally, if they know him and have accepted him by faith. As every priest, the believers have the right and duty to read and

purgatory. Purgatory is an invention of the Roman Catholic Church by which the Pope and the bishops wish to gather material resources from credulous people.

39 Calvin's detailed thoughts about the Scriptures can be found in his work *Institutes of Christian Religion*, especially in the *First book*, from chapters 6-10.



Clavis Scripturae Sacrae (*A Key for the Scripture*) of Matthias Flacius Illyricus (Hafniae, 1721). The first part of the book includes Flacius' discussion on the biblical model for expression, as well as a complete review of biblical names, concepts, words and terms. The second part includes seven discussions, with the emphasis on those that speak on the interpretation of the Scripture. This work was used for years as a foundational manual for understanding of the whole Bible. It was printed in several editions. Photo: National and University Library, Zagreb.

proclaim the Word of God. Therefore, in his *Small Catechism*, intended for use in families, Luther particularly explains the way a father should teach and train his children and servants in the faith in God, as well as in the knowledge and keeping of the Word of God.⁴⁰

40 Luther's *Small Catechism* has been translated, prepared, and published by Croatian Protestants in the Bible Institute at Urach in Glagolitic (1561) and in Latin script (1564). Alojz Jembrih prepared the reprint of the edition and wrote the epilogue, while the IKD "Juraj Dobrila" in Pazin published it (Latin, 1991; Glagolitic, 1994). Luther's *Large* and *Small Catechisms* were translated into Croatian by Marina Miladinov, and published in 2010 by the Theological Faculty, "Matija Vlačić Ilirik", Zagreb.

During the Reformation, severe discussions were lead about the faith and the church. In order to protect themselves from the reformers and to prevent the believers from passing over into Protestantism, Roman Catholics often asserted that the Protestant faith is a new faith, that it is not the faith of their fathers and great fathers, and that it should be dismissed as faulty. The reformers, however, emphasized that the faith they preached is the old faith, founded on the Scriptures and on the teachings of the early Fathers. They invited Christians to examine every belief, preaching and way of life according to of the teachings of the Scriptures.

Conclusion

Christian humanists of the 15th and beginning of the 16th centuries, by their invitation to returning to the source (*ad fontes*), started a movement of studying the Bible and comparing contemporary translations with the original Hebrew, Greek and Latin texts. Under their influence, a large number of Latin editions of the Scripture – the Old and New Testaments – were published and revised according to the original ancient Latin, Greek and Hebrew manuscripts. Although translation into vernacular languages were done even before Luther's edition of the Bible in German, his edition served as a strong impulse to the translation, publishing and distribution of the Bible into many other vernacular languages, including Croatian.

The application of the Reformation's principle *sola Scriptura* raised a range of questions that the reformers deliberated, then, based on the Scriptures, preached and wrote about, confirming and accepting them by their confessions. They confirmed the Christian canon of Scripture, based on the canon of the Hebrew Bible, and dismissed the Apocryphal books (deuterocanonical books) as non-canonical. They emphasized that Scripture does not obtain its reliability from the church, neither from human reason, but from Jesus Christ. Relying on the biblical accounts, the reformers asserted, by the power of the Holy Spirit, that Scripture is the living Word of God that changes people and revives those who believe in it.

The theological thought of the reformers and the adopted confessions point out that the Bible – the inspired Word of God, announced through human language and confirmed to the believer by the inner witness of the Holy Spirit – contains all that is necessary for salvation, that the main message of the Scriptures is perspicuous even to the illiterate layman, so that each person can come directly to the Bible to search for and find the truth. Scripture is the ultimate authority for preaching, theology and daily life, and all Christian teaching should spring from the Scriptures, to or from which people should not add or subtract.

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Biblija u vrijeme reformacije

Sažetak

U prvome dijelu članka razmatra se uporaba latinske Biblije i Biblija prevedenih na narodne jezike u vrijeme reformacije. U drugome se dijelu razmatraju temeljna pitanja proizašla iz dosljedne primjene reformacijskog načela sola Scriptura, među kojima je pitanje kanona, autoriteta, dostatnosti, jasnoće i razumijevanja Biblije. U radu se iznose promišljanja vodećih teologa reformacije po pojedinom pitanju i usvojena učenja pojedine tradicije reformacije i protureformacije kako su zapisana u njihovim temeljnim dokumentima. U zaključku se ističe da je glavna poruka Svetoga pisma jasna čak i neobrazovanom laiku, pa stoga svaki čovjek može neposredno doći k Bibliji da bi tražio i našao istinu. Reformacija je iznova potvrdila da je Sveto pismo jedini autoritet za propovijedanje, teologiju i svakodnevno življenje, te da sav nauk mora potjecati iz Svetoga pisma, a da se ništa ne dodaje ili oduzima.

Ključne riječi: autoritet, Biblija, kršćanski nauk, propovijedanje, reformacija, sola Scriptura, Sveto pismo