

# ERASMUS DESIDERIUS

A DIALOGUE OR  
COMMUNICATION OF  
TWO PERSONS

**Desiderius Erasmus**  
**A dialoge or communication**  
**of two persons**

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# Содержание

A dialoge	5
To the reder	7
A pylgremage, for pure deuocyō	13
Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.	21



# **Desiderius Erasmus**

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**A dialoge**

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**two persons, deuysyd**

# **Newly trāslatyd into Englishe**

## To the reder

Mongest the writings of all men, dearly belouyd reder, not onely of the diuersyte of tongues, but also the noble drawghts of so articyall paynted figures, whiche haue so lyuely expressed to y<sup>e</sup> quicke ymage, the nature, ordre, & proporcyon of all states, as concernynge the gouernaunce of a Christen comêwalthe, that ther is (as I suppose) no parte of the scripture, which is not so enpowndyde, furnysshed, and set forthe, but that euery Christen man, therby may lerne his dewty to god, hys prynce, and hys nebure, and so consequently passe thourough the strayte pathe of the whiche scripture doth testyfye vpō, very fewe can fynde y<sup>e</sup> entrye, wherby thorough faythe in the redêptyon of the worlde thorowe y<sup>e</sup> bloode of Christe the sone of god, to rayne with the father and the holy goste eternally, accordynge to the promyse of Christe, sayinge. In my fathers hawse ther be many placys to dwell in, we wyll come to hym and make a mansyon place with hym and I haue and shall open thy name vnto them, that the same loue with the whiche thou louydest me, may be in theym, and I in thê, and thys is the kyngdome of god so often mouyd to vs in holy scripture, whiche all faythfull shall possesse and inheret for euermore: where as y<sup>e</sup> vnfaythfull, vnryghtswye, and synner shall not entre in to the kyngdome of god, bycause, of chaûgynge the glory of gode immortall in to the ymage of a

corruptible man, and therefore to incontinently he hath suffered them to wander in their cloudes of ignorance, preferringe the lies and corrupte iudgements of man the veritye and the truth of god, rather servinge the creature then the creator, amongst all the parties of the which (as was spoken at the beginning) this alwaye not alonely in the newe law, but also in the olde Testament was as a thinge most abhominable and displeasing in the sight of gode prohibited and forbidden: but our nature which hath in hym, the damnable repugnance of synne agaynst the omnipotent power of gode, lest euen frome owre first father Adam, is so enclined to vices, amongst the which it hath not gyven the least parte to this desperate synne of ydolatrie, agaynst the immaculate, and fearefull commandement of god. Thou shalt haue no straunge Gods in my sight, that it is sore to be dreaded the same iudgement to be gyven vpon vs that was gyven vpon the citye of Ninive to be absorbed of the yerre in to the yre and vengeance of gode, which hath ben the cause that so many wryters bothe of late dayes, and many yeres passed, haue euen to deathe, resisted these damnable bolsterers of ydolatrie, gyven their selues to the crosse in example of reformacion to their bretherne, bothe in wrytinge and counsell, exhortyng the flocke of Christe frome soche prophane doctryne, amongst whome the noble and famous clerke *Desiderius Erasmus* hath setforthe to the quicke ymage, before mennys eyes, the superstitious worshype and false honor gyven to bones, heddes, iawes, armes, stockes, stones, shyrtes, smokes, cotes, cappes, hattes, shoes,

mytres, slyppers, sadles, rynges, bedes, gyrdles, bolles, belles, bokes, gloues, ropes, taperes, candelles, bootes, sporres, (my breath was almost past me) with many other soche dampnable allusyones of the deuylle to use theme as goddes contrary to the immaculate scripture of gode, morouer he notethe as it were of arrogancye the pryuate iudgment of certayne that of theyr owne brayne wolde cast out ymages of the temple, with out a comen consent and authoryte, some there be that alway seke halowes, and go vpon pylgramages vnder a pretense of holynes, whervpon thes brotherhoodes and systerhoodes be now inuented, morouer they that haue ben at Hierusalem be called knightes of the sepulcre, and call one an other bretherne, and vpon palme-sondaye they play the foles sadely, drawynge after them an asse in a rope, when they be not moche distante frome the woden asse that they drawe. The same do they conterfayte that haue ben at saynt Iames in Compostella. But they be more pernycyouse, that set forthe vncertayn relyques, for certayne, and attrIBUTE more to them than they oughte to haue, and prostytute or sett them forthe for fylthye lukre. But now whan they perceyue, that this theyr dāpnable  Corbane dothe decay, and that theyr most to be lamented blyndnes and longe accustomed errors shuld be redressed, they, all fayre bothe of god and man set asyde, rebelle and make insurrectyones contrary to the ordynaunce of gode, agaynst theyr kynge and liege lorde, prouokynge and alluryng the symple comynaitye to theyre dampnable ypocrysye and conspyracy, myndyng and goynge about to preunte our

most soueraigne lordes iudgment, not yet gyuê vpon theyr Sodomiticall actes, and most horryble yprocrysy. But the worde of the lorde whiche they so tyrannously go aboute to suppress w<sup>t</sup> all the fauerours therof shall ouercome & destroy all soch most to be abhorred & deceyuable inuegelers & dysturbers of y<sup>e</sup> symple people to soch detestable treason. And that it may so do to the terryble example of thes and a l l other rebelles and most dysloyal subiectes, and to y<sup>e</sup> greate comforthe & cōsolacyō of his gracys faythfull and true comens. I requyre him which brethethe where he willithe and raygnethe eternall gode to graût vnto our seyde most dradde soueraygne lorde whose maiesty as it euydently appereth onely applieth his diligence to the aduaunsynge & lettynge forthe of the most holsome documenth and teachyng of almyghty god, to the redres of long accustome euyls and damnable sectes, to the supportacion and mayntenaunce of godly and allowable ceremonyes, to the suppressynge and most to be desired abolishyng of the deuelische and detestable vsurped aucthoryties, dampnable errours and prophane abuses brought in by that myghty Goliath, that obdurated Phareo, that proude Nembroth (whome god amêde) the byshope of Rome, to graunte (I say) vnto hys hyghnes, suche hys godly ayde and assistence, that hys grace with hys moost honorable counsell (agaynst whome this arrogant conspyracy is nowe moued and begonne) may ouercome and debelle the stud traytres as in tymes paste hys maiesty hath prudently do other, that haue hertofore attempted

to perpetrate and brynge to passe like sedicyous mishief, and so to establishe the hartes of hys gracys true subiectes that they may wyllingly and according to theyr dueties, obey and fulfyll hys most lawfull and godly ordered lawes and commaundements wherby they shall not onely do the thyng agreable to goddes wyлле and teachynges, in y<sup>t</sup> he willeth euery soule to be subiected to the hygher power and obedyent to theyr prynce, but also (to theyr greate laude and prayse) shall shewe them selfe to be redy and confirmable to do theyr dueties in aydyng hys excellent hyghnes to the reformacyon of all pernicious abuses & chiefly of detestable ydolatrie, whiche is so muche prohibited in holy scripture and most displeasent to god, for whiche intent and purpose the sayd most noble and famous clarke *Desiderius Erasmus*, compiled & made this dialoge in Laten, as it foloweth hereafter nowe lately translated into our mother the Englishhe tonge. Auoyd therefore, most deare readere, all abuses whereby any inconuenyence may growe, other to the hynderaunce of godes worde, to the displeasure of thy prynce, (whome thou arte so straytly commaunded to obaye, or to the damage of a publike weale, whiche aboue all vices is noted most to be abhorred, not alonely of the most holy wryteres and expownderes of scripture, but also of prophane gentylls, whiche neuer perceyuyd other thinge than nature enclyned theyr hartes vnto, and so consequently to obtayne the fruytion of the godhode thorowe the faythe that was



A tresure boxe of y<sup>e</sup> Iewes.

**spoken of at the begynnyng to the**

**whiche the lorde Iesus Chri-**

**ste brynge vs all with a**

**perfaycte quyetnes,**

**So be it**



# A pylgremage, for pure deuocyõ

**Enedemus.**



What new thyng ys it, that I se? doo I nat see *Ogygyus* my neybur, whom no mā could espie of all thes sex monthes before? yt was a sayng that he was deed, It is euen he, except that I be ferre deceyuyd. I wyll go to hym, & byd hym good morow.

Good morow  *Ogygyus*. Good morow to you Menedemus.



Signifieth to forsake.



was faynyd of an old kynge of Thebanes.

**Mene.** I pray you frome what contray do you come to vs ayen so saffe. For here was a great comunicacyõ that you dyd sayle streght to hell.

**Ogy.** No, thankyd be god, I haue faryd as well syns I went hens, as euer I dyd in all my lyffe.

**Me.** Well, a man may well perceyue that all soche rumours be but vanytye. But I pray you what araye is this that you be in, me thynke that you be clothyd with cokle schelles, and be ladê on euery syde with bruches of lead and tynne. And you be pretely garnyshyd w<sup>t</sup> wrethes of strawe & your arme is full of  snakes egges.



Signifyeth bedes. Malsyngam ys callyd parathalassia

by cause it is ny to y<sup>e</sup> see.

**Ogy.** I haue bene on pylgremage at saynt Iames in Compostella, & at my retourne I dyd more relygyously vysyte our lady of Walsyngā in England, a very holy pylgremage, but I dyd rather vysyte her. For I was ther before within this thre yere.

**Me.** I trowe, it was but for your pleasure.

**Ogy.** Nay, it was for pure deuocyon.

**Me.** I suppose you learnyd that relygyō of the Greцыanes.

**Ogy.** My mother in law dyd make a vowe that if her doughter shuld be delyueryd of a man chyld alyue, than that I shuld go to saynt Iames on pylgremage, and ther to salute and thāke hym.

**Me.** Dyd you salute saynt Iames alonly in your name, and your mothers.

**Ogy.** No, in the name of all owre house.

**Me.** Verely I thynke y<sup>t</sup> your howshold as well shold haue prosperd, in case you had not salutyd hym at all. But I pray you what answer dyd he make to your salutacyon.

**Ogy.** Nothyng at all. But whā I dyd offre, me tought he dyd lawghe vpon me, and becke at me with hedde, & dyd reche to me this cokleshell.

**Me.** Wherefore dothe he gyue rather suche schelles, than other thynges.

**Ogygy.** For the see, whiche is nye vnto hym dothe mynystre plenty of suche.

**Me.** O holy saynt Iames, that bothe is a mydwyffe to women

with chyld, and also dothe helpe his pylgrymes. But I pray you what new kynd of making vowe is that that whan a mā is ydle he shall put the burden upon an other mannes bakke? In case that you doo bynd youre selffe with a vowe, that yf y<sup>e</sup> matter chaunche happily whiche you haue in hande, that I for you shall fast twyse in on weke, do you beleue y<sup>t</sup> I can fulfyl youre vow?

**Ogy.** No, I doo not beleue it if that you dyd vowe it in youre awne name. It is but a sport with yow to mokke sayntes. But this was my mother in law, I must nedys obey her, you know womenes affectyones, & I must obaye heres.

**Me.** If that you had not perfourmyd your vowe, what iopertye had you be in?

**Ogy.** I graunt, he could not haue had an accyon ayenst me in y<sup>e</sup> law, but he myght from hensforthe be deafe to my vowe, orels pryuyly send some calamytye or wretchednes amongste my housholde, yow know well enuffe the maneres of great men.

**Me.** Tell me now what that same honest mā saynt Iames dothe, and howe he farythe.

**Ogy.** Moche colder thā he was wontyd to do.

**Me.** What is the cause of it? His age?

**Ogy.** Oh you scoffer, yow know wel enoghe that sayntes wax nat olde. But this new learnynge, whiche runnythe all the world ouer now a dayes, dothe cause hym to be vysytyd moche lesse than he was wontyd to be, for if any doo come thay salute him alonly, but they offre lytle or nothings, and say that theyr monaye

may better be disposed amongst the poor people.

**Me.** O a wicked communication.

**Ogy.** Ye & so great an Apostle which was worthy to stand all in precious stones & gold, now steadily all of wood hanging before him scarcely a wax candle.

**Me.** If it be true that I here, it is great jeopardy lest that same chance to all the rest of the sayntes.

**Ogy.** I think it well, for there is an epistle abroad which our lady did write upon the same matter.

**Me.** What lady?

**Ogy.** She y<sup>t</sup> hath her name of a stone.

 Our lady of stone in Raurachia which is a certain countree.

**Me.** I trow it is in Raurachia.

**Ogy.** That same is it.

**Me.** you tell me of a stony lady, But to whom did she write?

**Ogy.** The epistle doth playnely shew his name.

**Me.** By whom was it sent?

**Ogy.** No doubt but by an angel, which did lay the writings upon the altar, whereof he preached to whom it was sent. And lest there should be any suspicion of crafty concealance in you, you shall see the epistle written w<sup>t</sup> his own hand.

**Me.** Do you know so well the hand of the angel which is secretary to our lady?

**Ogy.** Yee why not?

**Me.** By what argumēt?

**Ogy.** I haue redde y<sup>t</sup>  Epithaphe of Bede which was grauyd of the angell: and the letteres agre in all thynges. I haue redde also y<sup>e</sup> obligacyō whiche was sent to saynt Gyles as dothe aper. Dothe not thes argumentes proue that mater to be good enoghe.



Is a scripture wryten on a graue.

**Me.** May a man loke upon them?

**Ogy.** ye and if you wyll swere to kepe it preuy.

**Me.** Oh you shall speake to a stone.

**Ogy.** Ther be stones now a dayes of that name very slawnderous, that wyll hyde nothyng.

**Me.** you shall speake to a domme man, & yow trust nat a stone.

**Ogy.** Apon y<sup>e</sup> condycyon I wyll tell it, loke that you here with bothe youre eyares.

**Me.** So I doo.

**Ogy.**

Mary the mother of Iesu to  Glaucoplutus sēdythe gretynge. Insomoche as you folowe Luther, you nobly perswade, that it is but in vayne to call apō sayntes, do y<sup>e</sup> well know for that to be grettly in my fauore. For vntyll thys day I haue almost be slayne w<sup>t</sup> the importunate prayers of men. Of me alone they askyd althynges, as who shuld say my sone were alway a babe, because he is so faynyd and payntyd apō my breste, that yet he wold be at my commaudemēt and durst nat denye my petycyon,

dredynge that if he denye my petycyon, that I shuld denye hym my teate whan he is a thurst: and very oft thay requyre that of me, whiche a shamfast yongman dare scantly aske of a Bawde, yee they be suche thynges as I am ashamyd to put in wrytynge.

Now comythe y<sup>e</sup> marchauntman and he redy to sayle into Spayne for a vantage, dothe cōmytte hys wyues honesty to me. Than comythe thet lytle preaty Nunne and she castythe away her vayne redy to runne away, she leuythe with me the good name of her vyrgynytye, whiche shortly she entendythe to take monay for. Than cryeth the wykyd soudyer purposyd to robbe & saythe, blessyd lady send me a good praye. Now cōmythe the vnthryfty dyasser and cryethe, send me good chance Lady & thou shalt haue parte of my wynnynges: and if the dyasse runne ayenst hym, he blasphemes, and cursythe me, bycause I wyll nat fauor his noghtynes. Now cryeth she that sellythe her selffe for fylthye lukre & saythe, swete lady send me some costumers, & if I denye it, they exclame ayenst me & say, thou arte not the mother of marcy. Moreouer the vowes of some women be no lesse wykyd thā folishe. The mayd cryeth & saythe, O swet Mary send me a fayre and riche husbond. The maryed womā saythe send me goodly chylderen. Now laborythe the woman with chyld, and cryeth dere lady dylyuer me of my bondes. Than cōmythe y<sup>e</sup> olde wyffe, and saythe flowre of all women send me to lyue longe without coghe and drynes. Now crepythe the the dotynge old man & saythe, lady send me for to wax yonge ayê. Thā cōmythe forth the phylosopher and cryethe send me some argumêtis that

be isoluble. The great prest cryeth send me a fat benefyce. Thā saythe the bysshope kepe well my churche. Thā cryethe y<sup>e</sup> hye Iustyce shew me thy sone or I passe out of this worlde. Thā saythe y<sup>e</sup> Cowrtyer send me trwe confession at the howre of my deathe. The husbondman saythe send vs temperate wether. The mylke wyffe cryethe owt blessyd lady saue our catell. Now if I denye anythyng by & by I am crwell. If I cōmytte it to my sone, I here them say, he wyll what so euer you wyll. Shall I than alone bothe a woman and a mayd helpe maryneres, sawdyeres, marchantmen, dyasseres, maryed mē, women with chyld, iudges, kynges, and husbondmen? ye and this that I haue sayd is the least parte of my payne. But I am nat now so moche trobled with soche busynes, for that I wold hartely thanke you, but that this commoditye dothe brynge a greater discōmoditye with hym. I haue now more ease, but lesse honor & profett. Before this tyme I was callyd quene of heuen, lady of the world, but now any man wyll skarsly say aue Maria or hayle Mary. Before I was clothyd with precyous stones and gold, and had my chaunges, and dayly ther was offeryd gold and precyous stones, now I am skarsly coueryd with halffe a gowne and that is all beeyten with mysse. My yerly rentes be now so smalle y<sup>t</sup> I am skarsly able to fynde my pore quere kepar to light a wax cādle before me. Yet all this myght be sufferyd, but you be abowt to pluke away greater thynges, you be abowt (as they say) that what so euer any saynte hathe in any place, to take hyt frome the churches, but take hede

what you doo. For ther is no saynte without a way to reuêge his wronge. If you cast saynt Petre forthe of the church, he may serue you of the same sauce, and shite vp heuyngates ayenst you. y<sup>e</sup> saynt Paule hathe his sworde. Barthylmew is nat w<sup>t</sup>owt his great knyffe. Saynt Wylliam is harnysyd vnder his monkes cloke, nat without a greate speare. What canst thou doo ayenst saynt George whiche is bothe a knyght & all armyd with hys longe spere and his fearfull sword? Nor saynt Antony is nat without hys weapenes for he hathe holy fyre w<sup>t</sup> hym. Ye the rest of the sayntes haue theyr weapones or myschefues, whiche they send upon whome they liste. But as for me thou canst not cast owt, except thou cast owt my sone, whiche I hold in myne armes. I wyll nat be seperat frome hym, other thou shalt cast hym owt with me or els thou shalt let vs bothe be, except that you wold haue a temple without a Christe. These be the thynges that I wold yow shall know ymagyne you therefore what shal be your answer. For this thinge pleasythe me very well. Frome oure stony church the calendes of Auguste, the yere frome my sonnes passyon a M. CCCCC. xiiii. I stony lady subscribyd thys with myne owne hande.

The epistle of our Lady.

 Glaucoplut<sup>9</sup> desirus of ryches.

**Me.** Trewly that was a soro and fearfull epistle, I suppose that Glaucoplutus wyll beware frō hêsforthe.

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