



Narrator: Desiderius Erasmus was a northern humanist scholar from The Netherlands. He certainly viewed the practices of the church with a critical eye. He was well educated in classical antiquities, as were his Italian humanist counterparts. He was a deeply spiritual person, and joined a monastery and eventually became a priest. He also traveled extensively during his lifetime, studying and teaching in many important European cities, including Oxford, where he became close friends with Sir Thomas More.

His two most famous works, *Familiar Conversations* and *The Praise of Folly*, are scathingly satiric writings.

Familiar Conversations attacks abuses within the Catholic Church. Charles V of the Holy Roman Emperor was so incensed by this work that he threatened to immediately execute anybody who used it in their classrooms.

The Praise of Folly is a satire, and it pokes fun at the hypocrisy and pretentiousness of the times.

One of the most important distinguishing features of Erasmus in his writings is that he did not propose a break with the church. Although his writings were critical of it, he proposed that to cleanse and purify it from abusive practices as part of an internal reform.

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