The Thomas More / William Tyndale Polemic:

A Selection

Edited, with an introduction and notes by

Matthew DeCoursey

Hong Kong Institute of Education



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Comments or corrections may be sent to matthew@ied.edu.hk

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Introduction

From the beginning of the Reformation in 1517, philology was a crucial element of Protestant thought. Sola scriptura, "the scripture alone" was a Reformation slogan, and the nature of that scripture was defined in philological terms. Luther used Erasmus's edition of the Greek New Testament with a revised Latin translation in an effort to reach the sources of biblical thought. When Luther understood the original languages well enough, he translated the text into German for the common reader. William Tyndale followed his example in English, laying the foundations for most of our King James Version. These new translations were arguably consistent with the original languages, but certainly inconsistent with the Latin Vulgate, the Bible of the Roman church. This break with the past was controversial because it implied a discontinuity in the church, a separation between the church and God. It breached a vision of the church as a unified consensus of the faithful existing continuously since the time of Christ, a vision that motivated More to write the polemical texts excerpted in this edition. Each of the two could discredit the other on his own terms: Tyndale argued that mistranslations of particular words in the Bible had created an illusion that the Bible supported the visible church and its hierarchy; More argued that no one in an imperfect world can reason so well as to justify opposition to a visibly sacred church.

When this controversy began, no Lutheran had yet been executed in England for propagating his or her beliefs, but all knew that the questions involved were matters of life and death. In *Obedience*, Tyndale showed his awareness of the danger, and More in his *Dialogue Concerning Heresies* (1529) defended the execution of heretics (107 infra). At the same time,

More knew that his own life was at risk, one way or another. He remarked of Henry, according to his son-in-law, "If my head would win him a castle in France, it should not fail to go" (Roper, 21).

For us today, the content of the debate is of more than usual interest. The Reformation in general, of course, changed the course of European and ultimately global history. Nor did these two men merely repeat the conventional arguments made for and against Luther on the Continent. More was a writer of great stature in 1529: at a time when fewer than ten books a year were published either in English, or in Latin by Englishmen, More had published six, all but one in Latin. Tyndale would ultimately affect the course of the English language through his deep influence on subsequent English versions of the Bible. They wrote these works in the shadow of violence: besides the threat of execution, the Peasants' War had already taken place, and the relation between theology and violence was an important issue here, as we shall see. Through their stature with their respective religious communities, both of these two writers would be reprinted frequently in future centuries.

The importance of this exchange has been recognized by historians and literary historians for many years, but it has never received the scholarly attention its significance would justify. The main reason for this is simply that it is tremendously long, at almost 2,000 pages, and the parts are not all of equal interest. Specialists in Thomas More or William Tyndale work on their author for decades or entire careers without reading the controversy all the way through. Even when one does read these works, it is difficult to keep track of the flow and exchange of ideas because of the enormous bulk of the material and the forbidding hostility of some of the exchange: the two authors accuse each other of "railing," and each is right about parts of the

other's work. More's writings in particular have attracted negative comment even from those who specialize in them. Timothy D'Alton writes that the *Dialogue* is a "long, often tedious work" (52), and Richard Marius writes that the *Confutation of Tyndale's Answer* is

an interminable desert, stretching to a hellish horizon under the untempered sun, and we find burning on every page a monotonous fury that deadens the soul. (425)

Anne O'Donnell and Jared Wicks wonder whether the *Confutation* "has ever had more than a dozen readers in any generation" (xxvii). These are typical responses among those few who have read this massive work, but the strength of repulsion masks the virtues of More's accomplishment: it is in the *Confutation* that More offers his most cogent criticisms of the Protestant program. Tyndale's writings were of necessity more concise—they were smuggled, after all—but much of what is in them is responsive. A nuanced understanding of what Tyndale has to say is dependent on a reading of More.

The goal of this edition is to bring the major points of the controversy within the reach of both students and specialists. Through this selection, readers can gain an understanding of the relations between the two writers' ideas, and the ways in which they tried to respond to each other. It also becomes possible to relate the ideas presented here to those in other readings, as for example in the debate between Erasmus and Luther.² In the interest of accessibility, the text is modernized, and headnotes are supplied to situate each extract, which point out how different parts of the polemic relate together. Scholars, for their part, will find this edition useful when the More-Tyndale controversy is significant but not central to their concerns: as if, for example, they

wished to relate the *Utopia* to its author's religious commitments. Those who wish to go further in the study of this fascinating conflict may refer to the full, original-spelling editions of the works, More's from Yale University Press (now complete) and Tyndale's from Catholic University of America Press (in progress).

Both sides of this controversy can be viewed as responses to Martin Luther. Famously, he first came to the attention of Christian Europe when he published his ninety-five theses against the use of indulgences. In this brief work, he already questioned whether the sacrament of penance was of any value, and whether the pope had any power of his own over time spent in purgatory.³ Separately, but shortly after the theses, he also denied the authority of the Scholastic theologians. The principal motivation for these rejections, it seems, was in his view of justification. The church taught that all human beings were born with original sin, but that the sacrifice of Christ wipes out that stain. After that, human beings sinned, and they required the sacrament of penance to gain absolution for their crimes. Luther's objection was not simply to the use of the penitential process to raise money for Rome: he objected to the entire system. To him, the sacrament of penance could have no power over the state of a believer's soul, which had to do with his or her own faith in God. Where the church taught that each one must do what he or she can to fulfill the law, Luther believed that no one could even take a step toward fulfilling the law. Everyone deserved to be damned, but God would save those who had a true and sincere faith in him. Therefore, there was no need for a priest to offer absolution. Further, where the church taught that good works such as going to Mass or visiting the sick contribute to salvation, Luther believed that faith alone brings salvation. Certainly, a church that had taught such wrong things for such a length of time was not to be respected, and thus he replaced the authority of the

church with the exclusive authority of the Bible, which, by philological method, he translated into German so that all might read it.

More was involved in refuting Luther from the beginning. He participated in the production of Henry's Assertio septem sacramentorum (Assertion of the Seven Sacraments, 1521; Marius, Thomas More, 278). By his own account, he had an editorial role, but he may have been responsible for more, given the obvious wisdom of ceding credit to kings. He went on from there to write a Responsio ad Lutherum (Response to Luther, 1523) and an extended letter to Johann Bügenhagen (1526 or 27), also in Latin, which last was not published until much later. In March, 1528, Cuthbert Tunstall, Bishop of London, wrote a letter authorizing More to read heretical books in order to refute them in English. Tyndale's Obedience must have come into More's hands later the same year. The *Dialogue* appeared in 1529, and More became Lord Chancellor in October of the same year. Clearly, much of what More said had the blessing of the King, but More's safety was not to last. Henry was increasingly determined to divorce Queen Catherine and marry Anne Boleyn, thus distancing himself from the Roman church dear to More. Finding the Pope obdurate on the matter, Henry moved toward an assertion that he was himself the head of the Church in England. More could not square this with his religious convictions, and he refused to swear the Oath of Supremacy. When the first volume of the *Confutation* appeared in 1532, More was still Lord Chancellor. When the second appeared in 1533, he was a private citizen, already in the shadow of the Tower.

Like many other Lutherans, Tyndale was first a Catholic humanist before he took up the cause of the Reformation. The little evidence we have about his life before he began to publish all refers to Erasmus and not Luther: Tyndale chose to speak to Bishop Cuthbert Tunstall about

his projected translation because Erasmus had praised him, and in seeking to put out an English version of the Bible, he was doing as Erasmus had recommended in the "Paraclesis" (see below). By the time the Cologne Fragment, an aborted translation of the New Testament, appeared in 1525, things had changed. The preface to the Cologne Fragment is an expanded translation of Luther's preface to his 1522 New Testament in German. *The Parable of the Wicked Mammon*, which appeared in 1528, was an expansion of Luther's *Sermon von dem unrechten Mammon* (1522). More treats Tyndale almost as Luther's messenger, and in the early stages, there is some justification for this.

The earliest salvo in the controversy between the two was Tyndale's *Obedience of a Christian Man*. For the most part, Tyndale's *Obedience* deals with the most urgent aspect of this disagreement: the relation of the new doctrine to political rebellion. The treatise is primarily an effort to construct a view of political authority on biblical terms. Tyndale argues from his philological understanding of the Greek and Hebrew Bible that scripture does not support the existence of a church hierarchy, let alone mandate obedience to it; but it does support the authority of kings (*Obedience* D5r-E2r). Part of the purpose of the treatise is to counter the accusation against Lutherans that their doctrine is destructive of all authority. Catholic polemicists had maintained that Luther's denial of ecclesiastical hierarchy would lead to the downfall of all hierarchy, and the Peasants' War had greatly strengthened their position. In the passages included here, Tyndale asserted that it was the church hierarchy that encouraged disobedience to kings, by refusing them full sovereignty over their clerical subjects and maintaining a separate kingdom (67 infra). Like Luther, Tyndale condemned rebellion against established rulers, but he argued that those who were newly aware of the crimes perpetrated

against them were not so much to be blamed if they thought it legitimate to wield a sword in God's name. He told of James and John, who wished that fire should come from heaven to consume the Samaritans, and were rebuked by Christ. "If Christ's disciples were so long carnal what wonder is it, if we be not all perfect the first day?" Tyndale even blames the church itself for the violence of the rebels, since it had encouraged "bloody imaginations" of violence against heretics, Turks and Jews, and that this bloodiness was now almost justly turning on its authors (p. 67 infra).

We can also perceive in this treatise Tyndale's fondness for typology, and its polemical use to support the Lutheran cause. In the first pages, Tyndale presents the situation of Protestants as identical with that of Christ and his disciples in the time of the Gospels. In so far as Tyndale and his followers were rebellious, they were, Tyndale implies, neither more nor less so than was Christ when he was on earth. The church authorities were behaving like the scribes and pharisees of the stories, collaborating in the deaths of martyrs as the Jewish religious authorities collaborated in the death of Christ. He presents the scribes and pharisees as plotting to deceive the people and Christ as revealing the genuine truth of the Hebrew scripture.

In the *Obedience*, Tyndale offers a quotation that would resonate throughout the controversy: "By their fruits ye shall know them." For Tyndale, that meant that believers should examine the lives of flesh-and-blood clerics among them, and ask themselves whether this life was the result of a true and pure faith in God, or of a "belly wisdom" that taught them how to satisfy their bodily hungers by deceiving the people. He condemned the involvement of priests like Thomas Wolsey in secular power: "To preach God's word is too much for half a man" (*Obedience*, G8v). Anticipating the charge of lust against Luther and others who married despite

previous religious vows, he presented priests as taking any number of prostitutes, but hypocritically remaining unmarried (129 infra). In the Prologue (reprinted here) and elsewhere, priests appear as warmongers, creating wars between princes to preserve their own power (67 infra). He ironically lists the many rituals of the church, suggesting that their main point is to raise money for priests. He asks why the Mass is in Latin, and replies that it is to keep the people mystified by revealing nothing, and charging money, too, for a ceremony that almost none of the flock could understand (157 infra). By this means, the clergy succeeded in cheating the people at once of their worldly goods and of their salvation.

More's *Dialogue Concerning Heresies* answers the *Obedience* with four kinds of arguments.

One group of arguments disputes Protestant characterization of church corruption, arguing in effect that Protestant assertions about the "fruits" of clerical sin carried the force only of rumour. More argued that while corruption existed, as it must exist in any human entity, there was no firm evidence that the church was integrally corrupt. To show that the orthodox had always known of such frauds, More told the story of Duke Humphrey exposing a false miracle. More is sure that God will not allow his church to accept anything fraudulent for long, so if a story is old, its age is evidence of truth.

Subordinate to this point, but argued at great length, is a discussion of the nature of evidence. Through a series of thought-experiments, More asks what justifies the fixation of belief. For example, he suggests that a "black" man in India might hear of the existence of white people. Would he believe it? By such illustrations, More builds up a skepticism about the possibility of knowing anything, especially by the reading of texts, and concludes from this

skepticism that the only thing to do is accept the authority of the Holy Church, which alone can know certainly. The legitimacy and continued occurrence of miracles is for him a crucial point: God blesses the established church by granting miracles at shrines and on pilgrimages, but no such blessing comes to the Lutherans. This kind of argument takes up much of Books I and II.

Secondly, More argues in Book III against Tyndale's translations of key terms. In spite of More's earlier defence of Erasmus, his arguments are noticeably non-Erasmian, proceeding as if More's friend had never existed. More and Tyndale disagreed, as we shall see below, on the words *presbyteros* and *hiereus*. More and the Roman church viewed both as meaning "priest," but Tyndale drew a distinction. More fails to discuss the philological question, noting only that Tyndale reserves the word "priest" for Jewish priests, and takes the refusal of the word to Christians as evidence of bad faith. More's argumentation here more closely resembles that of other Catholic polemicists than it does that of Erasmus: that is, he argues that the practice and traditional understanding of the church cannot be wrong,.

Thirdly, he challenges the rationality of Tyndale's trust in *sola scriptura*, "the scripture alone." More's position is that the only way he or Tyndale can know that the scripture is the scripture is from the authority of the church, and that the church therefore has logical precedence. It has the authority to interpret the Bible just has it has the authority to say what the Bible is. He repeatedly quotes Matthew 28:20, "Lo, I am with you all the days to the world's end," to show that Jesus is still guiding the church. ¹⁰

Finally, More presented a vision of the origin and fate of heresy which served to underpin a negative view of Protestant character, supplying a motivation for the irrationality of Protestant claims. He deals with such Englishmen accused of heresy as Richard Hunne and Thomas Bilney,

but the model case is that of Luther. More presents Luther as a man of irrational pride, who received a license to sell indulgences from the pope and saw it taken away again. He "fell to railing" against "all pardons," contradicting himself at every turn. In spite of his irrationality, Luther's ravings were persuasive. The people quickly realized that Luther's heresies freed them from the normal obligations and duties of civilized society, and forgot that the social disorder resulting from this indiscipline would hurt them. Lords found it advantageous to use Luther's ideas as an excuse to seize church lands, and so the heresy grew. The doctrine of predestination was part of this devilish mix, and led the Lutheran soldiers in Italy to believe that they were not responsible for their own actions, but might impute any sin to God. When they took Rome, then, as forces of the Holy Roman Empire, they committed all kinds of horrors, some of which More describes: old men are hung up by their "privy members," women raped, and children roasted on spits.

Tyndale's *Answer to Sir Thomas More's Dialogue* stresses the importance of philology, setting out detailed arguments for each of his translations. Besides that technical argument, his introduction presents a vision of the philological man as spiritual, since the one who genuinely accepts and loves God's law never stops studying it, to see what it really is, what it means. He says the spiritual man

never leaveth searching till he come at the bottom, the pith, the quick, the marrow and very cause why, and judgeth all thing. (116 infra)

Tyndale takes a phrase from More to represent the opposite tendency: More had written that we

must "captive and subdue our understanding to serve and follow faith." ¹¹ In the introduction and throughout the book, Tyndale returns to this phrase in order to present More as wilfully brainless, ready to accept the most illogical rule, as long as authority enjoins it. Later in the treatise, Tyndale further develops the process by which he believed church ceremonies first came about, and then were emptied of their meaning.

It is also in the *Answer* that Tyndale develops the very characteristic notion of "feeling faith," which he had adapted from Melancthon. When had criticized Lutheran adherence to "faith alone," saying that it is very easy to believe in the words of the Gospel, but this would not prevent people from committing crimes. Tyndale answers that he is not referring to intellectual assent, as More seems to think, but rather to the powerful conviction that comes of true experience (146-8 infra). Intellect and emotion, then, relate differently for our two authors: Tyndale sees the development of understanding as intellectual, but the results of developing faith as emotional. That is, one arrives at faith through intellect (combined with the grace of God), but the proof of true faith is in emotional conviction. For More, faith is a simpler matter of trust, and intellect enters into the question thereafter. He values emotional conviction, but it is not a consequence of faith as it is for Tyndale. He depicts the faithful Christian developing emotion in faith by the contemplation of images, by a process of self-persuasion, as Erasmus had recommended. He

This tension between views of emotion and faith is congruent on each side of the debate with views of philology. For Tyndale, if a reader is first intellectual, philological analysis is a natural way of arriving at the truth of a text's meaning, and it is after the "spiritual man" analysis that "feeling faith" emerges. More's trust in the visible church means that the common

believer should first of all trust the teachings of the church, as they come down from the larger church through the parish priest. For More, independent philological analysis of the biblical text must take place with the guidance of the church. More had believed in philology, but only as a way of reinforcing the unity between the Bible and the church: to use philology to split the church is to miss the heart of the matter.

It is only in the last treatise, the Confutation of Tyndale's Answer, that More comes to the strongest part of his case against Tyndale, in the impracticality of Tyndale's vision for ordinary people. They cannot be the "spiritual man" demanded by the reformer, as they have lives to live, and may not be very educated anyway. More creates a fictional dialogue between two ordinary women and Tyndale's fellow reformer Robert Barnes. They ask him a series of questions about the significance of his program for them. Since they are not learned people, and since they cannot spend all their time scrutinizing the Scripture, how are they to know truth from falsehood? At the outset, the first woman claims to trust Barnes, but wants to know how she is to stay on the right path once he is gone. The second woman, who is illiterate, is more hostile. The standard Protestant answer to their question, which Barnes gives, would be that a good preacher will give them doctrine that is consistent with the scripture. In the *Obedience*, Tyndale had recommended a program of teaching to enable them to make good judgements. More's women point out that this will not do-and here More's understanding of language comes into play in a way that conflicts strongly with Tyndale's. More does not believe that certain knowledge can arise from a text, analyzed by philological means or not. His women are not only the unlearned, but all humanity. At the same time, the inferiority of their femaleness serves to disgrace Protestants: even women can confute the reformers.

More also comes to his best arguments on the philological front in the *Confutation*. He takes the problems of translation seriously here. Where in the *Dialogue* he argues that the established tradition must be right, he now begins to discuss the problems of interpreting words that have been appropriated from another context: in this case from a pagan to a Christian context. We will examine these questions later in this introduction.

Looking globally at the arguments and responses here, it is noticeable that this is not a dialogue of the deaf. The two men understand the nature of each other's arguments very well.

Nor is this surprising, for both were Erasmians.

It is More's relationship with Erasmus that is best known to the world. More first met Erasmus in 1499, during the older man's first stay in England. The two had such parallel interests, and got on so well that they published a book together, a volume of translations of Lucian into Latin, with original orations on the topic of tyrannicide. Erasmus began to write *Encomium moriae* (The Praise of Folly) in More's house, and the title is a pun on More's name. The relationship between the two went beyond personal friendship to common ideas: between 1515 and 1520, More published three very long letters in defence of the Erasmian program, which together make up most of volume 15 of the *Complete Works of More*. More defended Erasmus' use of humour and his project of publishing a Greek New Testament edited according to modern methods, and a translation into Latin that would correct the errors of the Vulgate.

Tyndale's relationship to Erasmus was not personal—as far as we know, he never met Erasmus—but it was very significant to Tyndale's thought and methods. Tyndale had been educated at Magdalen College School in Oxford, then perhaps the only humanist school in England. When he was an Oxford student at Magdalen Hall (now Hertford College, ca.

1508-1515), the influence of Erasmus was strong on the student body. The sales records of an Oxford bookshop show that five years later in 1520, Erasmus outsold all others, defeating Cicero by a ratio of four to one. ¹⁶ Tyndale's first recorded statement on translating the Bible contains an allusion to Erasmus. John Foxe reports that Tyndale, being then the tutor to the children of Sir John Walsh of Gloucestershire, was having dinner with the local priest, who praised the decretals of the Pope. Tyndale replied:

I defy the Pope and all his laws ... if God spare my life ere many years, I will cause boy that driveth the plough, shall know more of the scripture than thou dost.¹⁷

Compare this with Erasmus's words, in a preface to his edition of the New Testament:

I would that even the lowliest women read the Gospels and the Pauline Epistles. And I would that they were translated into all languages so that they could be read and understood not only by Scots and Irish but also by Turks and Saracens. Surely the first step is to understand in one way or another. It may be that many will ridicule but some may be taken captive. Would that, as a result, the farmer sing some portion of them at the plow, the weaver hum some parts of them to the movement of the shuttle, the traveler lighten the weariness of the journey with stories of this kind! (Olin 101)

In a passage of the *Obedience* included here, Tyndale recommends this brief treatise, the "Paraclesis," to all who wish to understand why the Bible should be translated into the

vernacular ($\underline{62}$ infra).

Foxe also reports that Tyndale translated Erasmus' Enchiridion militis christiani (Handbook of the Christian Soldier, 1503). This work also had much in it to appeal to a young person disenchanted with the established church. It presented a vision of the Christian life that had very little to do with priests and the established hierarchy: all the stress is on the individual soul's struggle with sin. In one of the best known passages, Erasmus presented the need to interpret the Mass—rather than believing blindly in its good effects—which, as we have seen, Tyndale also stressed in his writing. Erasmus, like Tyndale, was contemptuous of superstitious views of the Mass that attributed power to mere presence at the ceremony or to the uncomprehended Latin words: both believed that the value of ritual lay in its signification. Further, by this time, Erasmus had added a preface to the work that was sharply critical of the Church hierarchy, the "Letter to Paul Volz." In this work, he compared the true spirit of religion to the wells of Abraham, filled in by the malicious Philistines, and there can be little doubt that the Philistines here are conservative clerics in the established church (Olin 115). Tyndale echoes exactly this passage in The Parable of the Wicked Mammon. 19 Where Tyndale went beyond Erasmus was in the significance he gave these observations: for Erasmus, the elements of corruption and superstition were parasitic upon the true religion inherent in the church; for Tyndale, they were symptoms of a rot that went to the core.

Many readers, from Tyndale on to the present day, have thought that More abandoned his Erasmianism when he became a defender of the church. It is certain that with the publication of the *Dialogue*, More wavered in his commitment to the philological program, for More knew that Luther and Tyndale both used Erasmus's New Testament as a basis for their work. Yet he made

a real effort in the *Confutation* to deal with the real philological issues. Two serious critics, Heinz Holoczek and Germain Marc'hadour, maintain that More was a better philologist in the end than was Tyndale. Further, the other side of the Erasmian program lay in the application of eloquence to the improvement of society and religious life. It may be said that the evidence of that commitment is here in these pages. It shows more strongly yet in More's very beautiful *De tristitia christi (CWM* 14), written at the end of his life as a prisoner in the Tower of London, in which he follows Erasmus's advice, taking the circumstances of the Bible stories to persuade one's soul to courage and commitment.

Both differ from Erasmus in being very much concerned with political reality and the stability of society. They owed this concern to the earlier history of the debates—for Luther's critics had forced a concern with social stability onto him—and to the concrete history of events. Luther's critics had claimed that his attack on the authority of the church hierarchy would lead to the erosion of all authority and ultimately to anarchy. They claimed victory on the point, not unreasonably, when the Peasants' War broke out in 1524 (Bagchi, 108). Tyndale arrived in Germany the same year, so he must have been there and either seen its effects, or heard of them at close quarters. It was Tyndale, then, who brought up the question of social stability, holding that social order should be determined by the Bible.

More responded with his own version of proper authority, what it should govern, and who should hold it. He believed that the established and visible church was the expression of God's truth in the world, and held legitimate sway over the lives of humanity. He viewed the position of the pope as divinely instituted, and the pope's pronouncements as harmonious at once with the Bible and with the "consensus of all the faithful" as expressed in General Councils of the western

church. (This is not to say that he believed in the infallibility of the pope, which was not received doctrine at the time.) Militating in More's favour on this matter was the great longevity of the papacy. The original pope was said to have been St. Peter, invested to his position by Jesus Christ in the words, "Thou art Peter, and on this rock I will build my church" (Matthew 16:18). Even if one insisted on hard historical evidence, the papacy was still at least a thousand years old, and such durability seemed to imply a divine blessing. More than the pope, however, what mattered to More was the sense of unity, of a continuous tradition of belief through the centuries.

In the course of writing against Protestants, More found it increasingly important to develop the ways in which God communicates truth to his church. Brian Gogan has shown that More began to develop his ideas even before this controversy began, as he was writing the Responsio ad Lutherum, but only set them out fully in the Confutation of Tyndale's Answer. God spoke to the world in the words of Christ, as written in the Bible and as preserved in church tradition, but also in "secret inspiration," as Simon Peter knew without being told that Jesus was the son of God. Jesus replied to Peter, "Thou art blessed, Simon the son of John, for neither flesh nor blood hath revealed and showed this to thee, but my father that is in heaven" (Mt 16: 5-7 translation More's, modernized, CWM 6:143). More argued that this same secret inspiration had shown itself in the church throughout its history. That is why the practices of the church are to be viewed as inspired, even if there is no biblical basis for them, since God's people have been moved to a practice by inner inspiration. This is how he accounts, for example, for the church's practice of adding water to wine during the Eucharist. Similarly, doctrine develops not by reason alone, as Tyndale seemed to imply in his rational figure of the "spiritual man," but by reason under the guidance of the Spirit. Certainly, a false prophet may emerge at any time, falsely

claiming to have divine guidance, but for More the question was resolved in the *consensus* omnium fidelium, the consensus of all the faithful. All those whose hearts are open to divine inspiration are in time brought to agree, and the heretical branches of the church, deprived of the divine sap, eventually die as old heresies like Arianism had died. That is why More frequently presents lists of saints who he says agreed with the point that More is making at the time (112 and others *infra*), and why in the *Confutation* he presents a vision of the church assembled on Salisbury Plain, unanimous in its condemnation of Luther, Tyndale and the other Protestants (195ff. *infra*).

In the passage of the women and Barnes in the *Confutation*, More exploits an important weakness of the Protestant position: if the church is invisible, how can anyone know what church to follow? More has an answer for this question, and a huge body of texts to refer to, while the sincere questioner tending toward the Lutheran position is left making a complex judgement that might escape doctors of the Sorbonne: which preacher is most rational and most faithful to Scripture?

To Tyndale, the hierarchy of the church from the papacy to the parish priest was a thoroughly human institution, dedicated to perpetuating its own prestige, power, and wealth. A good deal of space in his polemical writings was taken up with the effort to present familiar elements of religious life as parts of a large plot to prevent Christians from understanding that they are being cheated at once of their religious inheritance and of their worldly goods. He asked why the Mass was in Latin, and answered that the papacy believed in the need to keep the people ignorant and unquestioning. He tried to defamiliarize the Mass by speaking of "mumming": it was a theatrical presentation intended not to communicate, but to keep the people fascinated by

revealing nothing (*Obedience* O1r-v). He noted the people's belief that presence at mass brings luck and personal security. Like Erasmus, he denounced far-fetched allegorical interpretation; unlike him, he consistently presented allegory as a conscious means of ensuring that the people did not understand. It seemed significant to Tyndale that the Bible passages supporting the power of the popes had to be read allegorically in order to carry this meaning. (*Obedience* H7r).

For Tyndale, the hope of genuine Christians in the face of this plotting lay in the persistence of God's truth embedded in the institutional fabric of the Catholic church. The church was constantly plotting against religion, but God had not allowed his scriptures to be entirely changed and lost, but only wickedly interpreted and presented with significant flaws. In Tyndale's view, even the ceremonies of the Roman church carried elements of symbolism which came down from a less corrupt time, and which could be used to recover the truth of Christianity (159 infra).

It is for this reason that philology was a central concern for Tyndale. What is now called philology is a set of techniques developed by the Renaissance humanists for the understanding of classical texts. Sometimes the words on the page had been corrupted in transmission, but might be reconstructed by the comparison of texts and close reasoning. Sometimes the words had been correctly transmitted, but had been misunderstood because language change had not been properly taken into account: a word in a particular text might be understood as carrying a meaning that had arisen long after the text had been written. Martin Luther had applied such techniques to the interpretation of the Bible: for instance, he used Johannes Reuchlin's comments on the Hebrew word *sadaq* to inform his thought on the key concept of justification (Cummings 66-7).²⁰

When More came to criticize Tyndale's New Testament, he focused his attack on six

glosses. Tyndale rendered *ekklesia* as "congregation" rather than "church"; *presbyteros* as "elder" rather than "priest"; *agape* as "love" rather than "charity"; *charis* as "favour" rather than "grace"; *homologia* as "knowledging" rather than "confession"; *metanoia* as "repentance" or "forethinking" rather than "penance." In each case, Erasmus had raised questions in his commentaries, pointing out that the Vulgate translations were problematic, as they did not match known pre-Christian usage. Erasmus had pointed out the problems, but had reaffirmed his commitment to the unified and universal church. Tyndale, consistently with what we have seen, regarded these translations as showing a plot to prevent the people from perceiving that the visible church had not support in scripture.

In three cases out of six, these terms had direct consequences for the nature of the priesthood. Tyndale points out in the *Answer* that the word "church" had in his own time come to refer to the church as a hierarchical organization, characterized by the domination of the clergy, or even as the clergy alone. He used an English version of Erasmus' Latin word *congregatio* to indicate that the word referred to a group of believers, without any reference to hierarchy. *Presbyteros* in classical Greek had referred to an older man, a leader of the community, and that is why Tyndale first used "senior," then resurrected the old-fashioned word "elder" for the translation. He continued to use "priest" to translate *hiereus*, which occurs in reference to the Jewish priesthood. Thus, Tyndale indicated a restriction of the role of a priest: on the Roman model, ordination conferred on a man the ability to forgive sins, or truly to change bread and wine into the flesh and blood of Christ, while an "elder" remains only a human being, wiser, able to teach, but with no powers beyond the natural. *Metanoia* (*paenitentia*) in the system of the Roman church, was the penance done as directed by the priest in order to obtain absolution. Here

again, Tyndale's translations detach the process from the priesthood: for him, *homologia* might be the acknowledging of sins to oneself, or to God, and *metanoia* was the internal sorrow of recognition.

With *homologia*, Tyndale seems to have a weaker point than with the other words. He implies that *homologia* is the confession of sins to a priest, and that in writing "knowledging" he is once again dealing with the individual's soul rather than the ceremony of the church. In fact, the word almost invariably refers to the confession of faith.

The other two words *agape* and *charis* are less closely associated with the powers of the church hierarchy. Nevertheless, each had an attachment to church institutions that Tyndale may have found troubling. *Agape* in Latin was *caritas* and this transferred into English as "charity." By Tyndale's account, "charity" had a strong overtone of "giving alms," and where it was a spiritual value, it was restricted to "mercy," whereas the Greek word refers to any holy love. Richard Marius suggests that Tyndale preferred the word because it sorted better with his emphasis on emotion as a sign of salvation:

It ["love"] was the word commonly used in the great English mystical tradition represented by books like *The Cloud of Unknowing*. It seems likely that this tradition is the source of Tyndale's own passionate teaching that true Christians feel their faith. (322)

The first sense (which indeed it still carries) might suggest to a reader that the giving of alms to a religious charity was of itself an obligation enjoined by the Bible, whereas the real stress is on the love within. *Charis* was (and is) conventionally rendered as "grace," and Tyndale asserts in

the *Answer* that this smacks too much of "being in my lady's grace"—too close, that is, at once to secular power structures and to the sins of the flesh.

Tyndale's treatment of these questions has the great advantage of textual support from Erasmus. In the cases of *prebyteros* and *ekklesia*, Lorenzo Valla had already raised concerns in annotations on the New Testament. In each case, there is a genuine problem of translation. More significantly, in three of six cases, there are genuine consequences for the structure of the church. When we combine these changes in translation with Tyndale's denial that the office of the Pope is referred to in the Bible, the result is a Bible that offers no support for hierarchical church government, and has no priests in the conventional sense.

In the *Confutation*, More makes a much more serious effort to respond to Tyndale's philological points than he had done in the *Dialogue*. As with the passage of the women and Barnes, the philological argument in the *Confutation* is better than anything along the same lines he had previously written. Yet the passages are so long and the expression so obscure that it proved impossible to include any meaningful extract of the argument in this book. ²¹

In the *Confutation*, More recognizes the problems raised by philological scholarship. More veers between mocking Tyndale on tendentious grounds and raising serious questions about philological method. With *presbyteros*, for example, More now recognizes that the Gospels use different Greek words for Jewish and Christian clergy, and that *presbyteros* does not, before the New Testament, carry any religious overtones (*CWM* 8-1, pp. 182-95). He now raises a passage from Erasmus' *Adnotationes* on the New Testament criticizing the Old Latin versions of the Bible for using expressions which allude only to age, whereas *presbyteros*, Erasmus says, carries an idea of respect (*CWM* 8-1: 185). More thus suggests that Tyndale has quoted Erasmus'

findings selectively. More further argues that if the secular nature of *presbyteros* should disqualify priests from a sacred status, invalidating the sacrament of ordination, so too should the Greek *baptisma* similarly invalidate baptism, as this word, before its Christian usage, carried no idea of holiness either. Where Tyndale, like Erasmus, supposes that the Gospel writers used words they already knew in the usual senses, More argues that the apostles "did apply and approper" known words to a new situation and new institutions (190). Nevertheless, More still skirts the issue of the distinction between *presbyteros* and *hiereus*, which must exist as the application of the words is far from random. Finally, More argues that in Latin chronicles of English affairs, aldermen of London may be called *seniores* or *senatores* (187), and that one should translate these terms into English, not as "seniors" and "senators," but rather according to the custom of the English language as "aldermen." This is not valid in dealing with an ancient text, as it comes down to using a code from a later time to interpret a text from an earlier one. Here, More is slipping back into the non-humanist view that what is customary is correct. More is still not working at as high a level of philological reasoning here as Tyndale.

The power of philology and translation to affect one's basic understanding of religion and politics made these, in More's view, dangerous things to give individuals. More distrusted the goodwill, virtue and intelligence of the ordinary citizen, and consequently, he tended to authoritarian ideas on public morality. In the *Utopia*, published before Luther's name was known, More had made his Utopians prescribe severe penalties for fornication, saying that no one would ever get married if pleasure were available freely. His *History of King Richard III*, even earlier, had presented the mass of humanity as gullible and prone to wrong judgements in political matters. So in the *Dialogue Concerning Heresies*, More favours the translation of the Bible into

English, but suggests that bishops should keep a tight control over all copies of the translations. Some people, More thinks, should see only a few of the safer parts of the Bible, and the truly foolish and rash should not see any of it. Only a few of the wisest might be trusted with the whole book. In More's view, it would have been far better if Luther had remained ignorant, unable to use the Bible to support his own pride, ambition and especially lust.

Tyndale, in contrast, had a belief in the capacity of the ordinary Christian which might well seem excessive today. In a passage of the *Obedience* included here, he asks that the clergy should teach Christians not only the biblical text, but also

I would have you to teach them also the properties and manner of speakings of the scripture, and how to expound proverbs and similitudes. And then if they go abroad and walk by the fields and meadows of all manner doctors and philosophers they could catch no harm. (59 *infra*)

Perhaps there are few Protestant members of clergy—today, or ever—who could confidently say that their flocks understand Hebrew and Greek idiom, and the problems of interpreting idiom in translation. Philological competence is a key issue.

Stylistically, the texts included here differ considerably. Most evidently, both More's extracts are in the form of dialogues, and Tyndale's are treatises, but that does not mean that More wrote colloquially. Tyndale wrote with a vocabulary that remains reasonably close to what we would use today. This is partly because his diction was already closer to common speech at the time than More's, and partly because Tyndale, through his translations, has been much more

deeply influential on the formation of modern English. His sentences are also appreciably shorter than More's, which often run to four or five lines. One Proustian sentence included here has 710 words (pp. 108-10). The two authors use punctuation in widely varying ways. All texts but the *Confutation* use virgules (/) in place of commas and other punctuation within sentences, and that text uses both commas and virgules. In Tyndale, and especially in the extract from the *Obedience*, the punctuation is noticeably rhetorical in nature: that is, it does not function primarily to make logical divisions in the text, but rather to indicate where the pauses would be if the text were read aloud. In More's long sentences, the punctuation serves to mark necessary logical divisions.

There are dangers in editing these texts, because the issues they discuss are still alive. Protestants may object that More has more pages in this book, or Catholics that I have not included the best of More's arguments. Any selection is contentious, and I have included less than ten percent of the total. I hope that this selection will give access to an important exchange to many who would not have read the nearly 2000 pages of the original.

A Note on the Text

The texts in this edition are modernized versions of single texts. All are first editions from copies found in the Folger Shakespeare Library, except *The Obedience of a Christian Man*, which was originally transcribed from a facsimile edition (*The Obedience of a Christen Man* [Amsterdam: Theatrum Orbis Terrarum, 1977]), drawn from the Bodleian Library copy 8o.Rawl.753. The transcription was subsequently compared to copy 1 of this book at the Folger Shakespeare Library, and found to be identical in the passages concerned, apart from a slight

shifting in the spacing between letters. In three of four cases, the first edition was the only edition in the author's lifetime, so the problem of choosing an edition does not arise. There were two editions of *A Dialogue Concerning Heresies*, the second of which includes some additional material. I have used the first because it is the one that Tyndale answered, and the flow from one extract to another is thus more historically straightforward.

The original texts all have marginal notes, which I have omitted here for the sake of simplicity of presentation. They carry little or no information beyond what is in the text. They serve essentially for indexing, and this edition is electronically searchable.

Some archaisms have been retained without comment. When each writer quotes in Latin, he generally uses medieval spelling, which I have retained. In English, many verbs that end in "t" sounds omit the –ed ending in the past participle (e.g. "institute" for modern "instituted"). These forms are not glossed.

In modernizing the spelling, I have tried to keep the rhetorical impact of the original intact as much as possible, while keeping the texts accessible. In Tyndale, the sound of words makes a great difference. For example, on p. 34, I have rendered Tyndale as follows: "Finally, when they had done all they could and that they thought sufficient, and when Christ was in the heart of the earth and so many bills and pole-axes about him, to keep him down, and when it was past man's help: then holp God." Here, the series of subordinate clauses beginning "when ... when ... when has a crescendo effect, ending on three stressed syllables: "then holp God." To modernize "holp" as "helped" would be to weaken the effect considerably, besides causing an unfortunate repetition with the word "help," just two beats earlier. With More, sound matters much less, and the problem is to convey to the reader what is going on in frequently long and convoluted

sentences. Further, as we have seen, More's vocabulary is much less familiar to us than Tyndale's. With the passages from More, I have looked for clarity above all, and have been rather more interventionist with punctuation. At the same time, I have kept the modernization of spelling consistent between the two authors. I initially typed in a transcription of the original-spelling text, and modernized spelling using the search function of my word-processing software.

There are two levels of notes: Biblical references are given as footnotes.^a Other notes appear as endnotes.

Symbols in the style B2v refer to the printer's signatures in the original books, which are more reliable than the page numbers. The capital letter refers to the gather, generally four or eight leaves. The numeral is the leaf within the gather, and "r" and "v" are "recto" and "verso."

Annotated Bibliography

Thomas More: The Yale Edition of the Complete Works of St. Thomas More (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1963-1997) gives critical, original-spelling texts of all More's works, with English translations of works in Latin and extensive commentary. One of the participants in that edition, Richard Marius, has given us the best biography of More, Thomas More (New York: Collins, 1984). The student should realize, however, that some More scholars disapprove intensely of this biography, finding it excessively negative toward More and overly concerned with psychoanalyzing his attitudes toward sex (see Louis Martz, Thomas More: The Search for the Inner Man [New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990]). John Guy examines the positions of major biographers on the issues of More's life and takes a pessimistic view of the possibility of knowing the truth in *Thomas More (Reputations Series)* (London: Hodder Arnold, 2000). A recent survey of major issues in More studies is A. D. Cousins and Damian Grace, eds., A Companion to Thomas More (Madison: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2009). The single most useful book of critical commentary remains Richard S. Sylvester and G.P. Marc'hadour, eds., Essential Articles for the Study of St. Thomas More (Hamden, Conn.: Archon, 1977). For more recent scholarship, the journal of the Amici Thomae Mori, *Moreana*, is indispensable, especially the festschrift volume for Germain Marc'hadour entitled Miscellanea Moreana (Moreana 26 [1988]). Other works: Peter Ackroyd, The Life of Thomas More (New York: Random House, 1998) is of value for its evocation of More's London, but there is nothing new here either on More the man or the writer; R.W. Chambers, *Thomas More* (London: Cape, 1938) is still interesting, but is marred by a complete

commitment to a belief in More's saintly character; Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984) contains an influential chapter on More.

William Tyndale: Tyndale's Bible translations have appeared in two modern-spelling editions edited by David Daniell, Tyndale's New Testament (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989) and Tyndale's Old Testament (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992). These are not collated, but edit the last text available from Tyndale's hand. The New Testament is available in an original-spelling edition, The New Testament 1526, trans. By William Tyndale, Original Spelling Edition, ed. W.R. Cooper (London: British Library, 2000). The most recent complete edition of Tyndale's independent works dates back 160 years (Henry Walter, ed. Doctrinal Treatises and Introductions to Sundry Portions of Holy Scriptures [Cambridge: Parker Society-Cambridge University Press, 1848]; Expositions and Notes on Sundry Portions of Holy Scriptures together with The Practice of Prelates [1849]; An Answer to Sir Thomas More's Dialogue, The Supper of the Lord ... and William Tracy's Testament Expounded [1850]). This edition, also in modern spelling, has notes that often have more to do with Victorian religious preoccupations than with scholarship, and the text is even expurgated in a few places. One should also realize that *The Supper of the Lord*, included in the third volume, is no longer thought to be by Tyndale. Fortunately, a critical edition in original spelling is in progress, The Independent Works of William Tyndale (Anne M. O'Donnell, S.N.D., ed., Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press). The first volume, An Answer to Sir Thomas More's Dialogue, has appeared (Anne M. O'Donnell and Jared Wicks, eds. [2000]). The Obedience of a Christian Man is now available in a modern-spelling paperback edited by David Daniell (London: Penguin, 2000). The best biography is David Daniell, William Tyndale: A Biography (New Haven:

Yale University Press, 1994), which also comments considerably on Tyndale's writings. Scholarship on Tyndale is much sparser than on More. A representative selection of recent work is in John T. Day, Eric Lund and Anne M. O'Donnell, S.N.D., eds., Word, Church and State: Tyndale Quincentenary Essays (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 1998). See also the special issue of Moreana 28, nos. 106-7 (July 1991). The Tyndale Society has an excellent annual journal, Reformation. See also Stephen Greenblatt, Renaissance Self-Fashioning (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984) for a chapter on Tyndale; Gerald Hammond, The Making of the English Bible (New York: Philosophical Library, 1982) deals with Tyndale's translations; Janel Mueller, The Native Tongue and the Word: Developments in English Prose Style (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984) deals with prose style; on theological issues, see William A. Clebsch, England's Earliest Protestants (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1964); and an answer to Clebsch in Michael J. McGiffert, "William Tyndale's Conception of Covenant," Journal of Ecclesiastical History 32 (1981): 167-84; Donald Dean Smeeton, in Lollard Themes in the Reformation Theology of William Tyndale (Kirksville, Missouri: Sixteenth Century Journal, 1986) proposes a close link between Tyndale and the Lollards. Allan K. Jenkins and Patrick Preston place the More/Tyndale controversy in a wider historical context in Biblical Scholarship and the Church (Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2007).

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Extract from The Obedience of a Christian Man (1528)

William Tyndale

Preface

[The Obedience of a Christian Man was first published in 1528, two years after Tyndale had successfully published a complete New Testament. It appeared as a small octavo, made easy to smuggle, with a false colophon giving the printer as Hans Luft of Marburg, whereas it was really printed in Antwerp by Johannes Hoochstraten. In this introduction, Tyndale seeks to encourage the Lutheran reader by showing that all the holy people of the Bible suffered tribulation, and that the persecution of Protestants in England was no different. The subsequent polemic in favour of the Bible in the vernacular leads him to the mistreatment, as he sees it, of the Bible by the established church.]

[A2r]

William Tyndale, otherwise called William Hychens, unto the Reader.

Grace, peace and increase of knowledge in our Lord Jesus Christ be with thee, Reader, and with all that call on the name of the Lord unfeignedly and with a pure conscience. Amen.²³

Let it not make thee despair neither yet discourage thee, O Reader, that it is forbidden thee in pain of life and goods, or that it is made breaking of the king's peace or treason unto his highness to read the word of thy soul's health.²⁴ But much rather be bold in the Lord and comfort thy soul. Forasmuch° as thou art sure and hast an evident token through such persecution that it is the true

word of God, which word is ever hated of the world^a—neither was ever without persecution (as thou seest in all the stories of the Bible both of the New Testament and also of the Old) neither can be—no more than the sun can be without his light. And forasmuch° as contrariwise thou art sure that the pope's doctrine is not of God which (as thou seest) is so agreeable unto the world, and is so received of the world or which rather so [A2v] receiveth the world and the pleasures of the world, and seeketh no thing but the possessions of the world, and authority in the world, and to bear a rule in the world, and persecuteth the word of God and with all wiliness driveth the people from it, and with false and sophistical reasons maketh them afeared° of it—yea, curseth them and excommunicateth them, and bringeth them in belief that they be damned, if they look on it, and that it is but doctrine to deceive men—and moveth the blind powers of the world to slay with fire, water and sword all that cleave unto it. For the world loveth that which is his, and hateth that which is chosen out of the world to serve God in the spirit. As Christ saith to his disciples (John 15) If ye were of the world, the world would love his own. But I have chosen you out of the world and therefore the world hateth you.^b

Another comfort hast thou, that as the weak powers of the world defend the doctrine of the world so the mighty power of God defendeth the doctrine of God. Which thing thou shalt evidently perceive, if thou call to mind the wonderful deeds which God hath ever wrought° for his word in extreme necessity since the world began beyond all man's reason. Which are written as saith Paul (Romans 15) for our learning [A3r] (and not for our deceiving) that we through patience, and

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^a Cf. John 17:14 and others.

^b John 15:19.

comfort of the scripture might have hope.^a The nature of God's word is to fight against hypocrites.^b It began at Abel and hath ever since continued and shall—I doubt not—until the last day. And the hypocrites have alway° the world on their sides, as thou seest in time of Christ. They had the elders—that is to wit the rulers of the Jews—on their side. They had Pilate and the emperor's power on their side. They had Herod also on their side. Moreover, they brought all their worldly wisdom to pass and all that they could think or imagine to serve for their purpose. First, to fear^o the people withal, they excommunicated all that believed in him, and put them out of the temple, as thou seest (John 9). 25 Secondly, they found the means to have him condemned by the Emperor's power and made it treason to Caesar to believe in him. ^c Thirdly, they obtained to have him hanged as a thief or murderer,^d which after their belly wisdom²⁶ was a cause above all causes, that no man should believe in him. For the Jews take it for a sure token of everlasting damnation if a man be hanged. For it is written in their law (Deuteronomy 21) cursed is whosoever hangeth on a tree. e Moses also in the same place commandeth, if any man be [A3v] hanged, to take him down the same day and bury him, for fear of polluting or defiling the country, that is, lest they should bring the wrath and curse of God upon them. And therefore the wicked Jews themselves, which with so venomous hate persecuted the doctrine of Christ and did all the shame that they could do unto him (though they would fain° have had Christ to hang still on the cross and there to rot, as he should have done by the

^a Romans 15:4.

^b Cf. Matthew 23:13-33.

^c Acts 17:7.

^d John 19:15.

^e Deuteronomy 21:23.

Emperor's law, yet for fear of defiling their sabbath and of bringing the wrath and curse of God upon them) begged of Pilate to take him down (John 19)—which was against themselves.^a Finally, when they had done all they could and that they thought sufficient, and when Christ was in the heart of the earth and so many bills° and pole-axes° about him, to keep him down, and when it was past man's help: then holp° God. When man could not bring him again—God's truth fet° him again. The oath that God had sworn to Abraham, to David^b and to other holy fathers and prophets raised him up again, to bless and to save all that believe in him. Thus became the wisdom of the hypocrites foolishness.²⁷ Lo, this was written for thy learning and comfort.

How wonderfully were the children of Israel locked in Egypt! In what tribulation, [A4r] cumbrance° and adversity were they in!° The land also that was promised them, was far off and full of great cities walled with high walls up to the sky and inhabited with great giants.^d Yet God's truth brought them out of Egypt and planted them in the land of the giants. This was also written for our learning—for there is no power against God's neither any wisdom against God's wisdom: he is stronger and wiser than all his enemies. What holp° it Pharaoh to drown the men children?^e So little, I fear not, shall it at the last help the pope and his bishops to burn our men children which manfully confess that Jesus is the Lord and that there is no nother° name given unto men to be saved by, as

^a John 19:31.

^b Genesis 15:5; 2 Samuel 7:4-17.

^c Exodus 1:11-14.

^d Exodus 3:7-10.

e Exodus 1:22.

Peter testifieth (Acts in the fourth chapter).^a Who dried up the Red Sea? Who slew Goliath? Who did all those wonderful deeds which thou readest in the Bible? Who delivered the Israelites evermore from thralldom and bondage, as soon as they repented and turned to God? Faith verily and God's truth and the trust in the promises which he had made. Read the eleventh chapter to the Hebrews for thy consolation.²⁸

When the children of Israel were ready to despair for the greatness and the multitude of the giants, Moses comforted them ever saying, Remember what your Lord God hath done for you in [A4v] Egypt, his wonderful plagues, his miracles, his wonders, his mighty hand, his stretched-out arm, and what he hath done for you hitherto. He shall destroy them—he shall take their hearts from them and make them fear and flee before you. He shall storm them and stir up a tempest among them and scatter them and bring them to nought. He hath sworn—he is true—he will fulfill the promises that he hath made unto Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. This is written for our learning. For verily he is a true God, and is our God as well as theirs, and his promises are with us as well as with them, and he present with us as well as he was with them. If we ask we shall obtain—if we knock he will open—if we seek we shall find—if we thirst, his truth shall fulfill our lust. Christ is with us until the world's end (Matthew the last). Let little flock be bold therefore.

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^a Acts 4:10-12.

^b Deuteronomy 1:29-33.

^c Genesis 17:1-14, 26:4, 28:13-15.

^d Matthew 7:7, Luke 11:9.

e i.e. Matthew 28:20.

^f Luke 12:32.

side, what matter maketh it who be against us—be they bishops, cardinals, popes or whatsoever names they will.^a

Mark this also—if God send thee to the sea and promise to go with thee and to bring thee safe to land, he will raise up a tempest against thee, to prove whether thou wilt abide by his word, and that thou mayest feel thy faith and perceive his goodness.^b For [A5r] if it were always fair weather and thou never brought into such jeopardy whence his mercy only delivered thee, thy faith should be but a presumption and thou shouldst be ever unthankful to God and merciless unto thy neighbour.

If God promise riches, the way thereto is poverty. Whom he loveth, him he chasteneth—whom he exalteth, he casteth down—whom he saveth, he damneth first. He bringeth no man to heaven except he send him to hell first. If he promise life he slayeth first—when he buildeth, he casteth all down first. He is no patcher—he cannot build on another man's foundation. He will not work until all be past remedy and brought unto such a case, that men may see how that his hand, his power, his mercy, his goodness and truth hath wrought° altogether. He will let no man be part-taker with him of his praise and glory. His works are wonderful and contrary to man's works. Who ever, save he, delivered his own son—his only son—his dear son unto the death and that for his enemy's sake—to win his enemy—to overcome him with love, that he might see love and love again and of love to do likewise to other men, and to overcome them with well doing?^c

^a Romans 8:31.

b Acts 27.

^c John 3:16.

Joseph saw the sun and the moon and [A5v] eleven stars worshipping him. Nevertheless ere° that came to pass, God laid him where he could neither see sun nor moon neither any star of the sky, and that many years and also undeserved, to nurture him, to humble, to meek° and to teach him God's ways—and to make him apt and meet° for the room and honour against he came to it that he might perceive and feel that it came of God,²⁹ and that he might be strong in the spirit to minister godly.^a

He promised the children of Israel a land with rivers of milk and honey.^b But brought them for the space of forty years into a land where not only rivers of milk and honey were not, but where so much as a drop of water was not, to nurture them and to teach them as a father doth his son, and to do them good at the later end, and that they might be strong in their spirits and souls to use his gifts and benefits godly and after his will.

He promised David a kingdom and immediately stirred up King Saul against him, to persecute him, to hunt him as men do hares with greyhounds and to ferret him out of every hole and that for the space of many years to tame him, to meek° him, to kill his lusts, to make him feel other men's diseases, to make him merciful, to make him understand that he was made king to minister [A6r] and to serve his brethren and that he should not think that his subjects were made to minister unto his lusts, and that it were lawful for him to take away from them life and goods at his pleasure.^c

O that our kings were so nurtured nowadays—which our holy bishops teach of a far other manner saying, your grace shall take his pleasure: yea, take what pleasure ye lust—spare nothing.

^a Genesis 37, 39-50.

^b Exodus 3:8, and many others.

^c 1 Samuel 16-19.

We shall dispense with you: we have power—we are God's vicars.³⁰ And let us alone with the realm. We shall take pain for you and see that nothing be well. Your grace shall but defend the faith only.³¹

Let us therefore look diligently whereunto we are called, that we deceive not ourselves. We are called—not to dispute as the pope's disciples do—but to die with Christ that we may live with him, and to suffer with him that we may reign with him. We be called unto a kingdom that must be won with suffering only, as a sick man winneth health. God is he that doth all things for us and fighteth for us and we do but suffer only. Christ saith (John 20): Amy father sent me, so send I you^a--and (John 15): If they persecute me then shall they persecute you.^b And (Matthew 10) saith Christ: I send you forth as sheep among wolves.^c The sheep fight not—but the shepherd fighteth for them and ca[A6v]reth for them. Be harmless as doves therefore, saith Christ, and wise as serpents.^d The doves imagine no defence nor seek to avenge themselves. The serpent's wisdom is to keep his head and those parts wherein his life resteth. Christ is our head and God's word is that wherein our life resteth. To cleave therefore fast unto Christ and unto those promises which God hath made us for his sake is our wisdom. Beware of men (saith he) for they shall deliver you up unto their councils and shall scourge you. And ye shall be brought before rulers and kings for my sake.^e The brother shall betray or deliver the brother to death and the father the son. And the children shall rise against

^a John 20:21.

^b John 15:20.

^c Matthew 10:16.

^d Matthew 10:16.

^e Matthew 10:17.

father and mother—and put them to death.^a Hear what Christ saith more. The disciple is not greater than his master neither the servant greater or better than his lord. If they have called the goodman of the house Beelzebub, how much rather shall they call his household servants so?^b And (Luke 14) saith Christ, Which of you disposed to build a tower, sitteth not down first and counteth the cost whether he have sufficient to perform it? Lest when he hath laid the foundation and then not able to perform it, all that behold begin to mock him saying, this man began to build and was not able to make [A7r] an end. So likewise none of you that forsaketh not all that he hath can be my disciple.^c Whosoever therefore casteth not this aforehand—I must jeopard° life, goods, honour, worship and all that there is for Christ's sake—deceiveth himself and maketh a mock of himself unto the godless hypocrites and infidels. No man can serve two masters, God and Mammon—that is to say, wicked riches (also Matthew 6).^d Thou must love Christ above all things. But that dost thou not if thou be not ready to forsake all for his sake—if thou have forsaken all for his sake, then art thou sure that thou lovest him. Tribulation is our right baptism and is signified by plunging into the water—we that are baptised in the name of Christ (saith Paul, Romans 6) are baptised to die with him.^c

The spirit through tribulation purgeth us and killeth our fleshly wit—our wordly° understanding and belly wisdom—and filleth us full of the wisdom of God. Tribulation is a blessing that cometh of God, as witnesseth Christ (Matthew 5): Blessed are they that suffer persecution for

^a Matthew 10:21.

^b Matthew 10:24-25.

^c Luke 14:28-30.

d Matthew 6:24.

e Romans 6:3.

rightwiseness's° sake, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.^a Is this not a comfortable° word? Who ought not rather to choose and desire to be blessed with Christ in a little tribulation, than to be cursed perpetually with the world for a little pleasure? [A7v] Prosperity is a right curse and a thing that God giveth unto his enemies. Woe be to you rich saith Christ (Luke 6): Lo, ye have your consolation—woe be to you that are full, for ye shall hunger--woe be to you that laugh, for ye shall weep—woe be to you when men praise you. For so did their fathers unto the false prophets—yea, and so have our fathers done unto the false hypocrites.^b The hypocrites with worldly preaching have not gotten the praise only, but even the possessions also and the dominion and rule of the whole world.

Tribulation for righteousness is not a blessing only. But also a gift that God giveth unto none save his special friends. The apostles (Acts 5) rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer rebuke for Christ's sake.^c And Paul in the second epistle and third chapter to Timothy saith: All that will live Godly in Christ Jesus must suffer persecution.^d And in the first chapter of his epistle to the Philippians he saith: Unto you it is given not only to believe in Christ—but also to suffer for his sake.^e Here seest thou that it is God's gift to suffer for Christ's sake. And Peter in the fourth chapter of his first epistle saith: Happy are ye, if ye suffer for the name of Christ, for the glorious spirit of

^a Matthew 5:10.

^b Luke 6:24-26.

^c Acts 5: 41.

^d 2 Timothy 3:12.

^e Philippians 1:29.

God resteth in you.^a Is it not an happy thing to [A8r] be sure that thou art sealed with God's spirit unto everlasting life? And verily thou art sure thereof, if thou suffer patiently for his sake. By suffering art thou sure. But by persecuting canst thou never be sure.

For Paul in the fifth chapter to the Romans saith: Tribulation maketh feeling, that is, it maketh us feel the goodness of God and his help and the working of his spirit.^b And in the twelfth chapter of the second epistle to the Corinthians the Lord said to Paul, my grace is sufficient for thee. For my strength is made perfect through weakness. Lo, Christ is never strong in us, till we be weak.^c As our strength abateth, so groweth the strength of Christ in us—when we are clean° emptied of our own strength, then are we full of Christ's strength. And look how much of our own strength remaineth in us, so much lacketh there of the strength of Christ. Therefore saith Paul in the said place of his second epistle to the Corinthians: Very gladly will I rejoice in my weakness, that the strength of Christ may dwell in me. Therefore have I delectation, saith Paul, in infirmities, in rebukes, in need, in persecutions and in anguish for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then am I strong, meaning that the weakness of the flesh is the strength of the spirit.^d And by flesh understand wit, wisdom [A8v] and all that is in a man before the spirit of God come, and whatsoever springeth not of the spirit of God and of God's word. And of like testimonies is all the scripture full.

Behold God setteth before us a blessing and also a curse.^e A blessing verily and that a glorious

^a 1 Peter 4:14.

^b Romans 5:3-5.

^c 2 Corinthians 12:9.

^d 2 Corinthians 9-10.

^e Deuteronomy 11:26.

and an everlasting, if we will suffer tribulation and adversity with our lord and saviour Christ. And an everlasting curse, if for a little pleasure's sake we withdraw ourselves from the chastising and nurture of God—wherewith he teacheth all his sons and fashioneth them after his godly will and maketh them perfect (as he did Christ) and maketh them apt and meet° vessels to receive his grace and his spirit, that they might perceive and feel the exceeding mercy which we have in Christ and the innumerable blessings, and the unspeakable inheritance whereunto we are called and chosen and sealed in our saviour Jesus Christ, unto whom be praise for ever, Amen.

Finally, whom God chooseth to reign everlastingly with Christ him sealeth he with his mighty spirit and poureth strength into his heart to suffer afflictions also with Christ for bearing witness unto the truth. And this is the difference between the children of God and of salvation and between [B1r] the children of the devil and of damnation^a—that the children of God have power in their hearts to suffer for God's word which is their life and salvation, their hope and trust and whereby they live in the soul and spirit before God. And the children of the devil in time of adversity flee from Christ whom they followed feignedly, their hearts not sealed with his holy and mighty spirit, and get them to the standard of their right father the devil, and take his wages, the pleasures of this world. Which are the earnest of everlasting damnation. Which conclusion the twelfth chapter to the Hebrews well confirmeth, saying: My son, despise not the chastising of the Lord, neither faint when thou art rebuked of him. For whom the Lord loveth him he chastiseth: yea, and he scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.^b Lo, persecution and adversity for the truth's sake is God's scourge and

^a 1 John 3:10.

^b Hebrews 12:5-6. The rest of this paragraph is also based on Hebrews 12:1-12.

God's rod and pertaineth unto all his children indifferently. For when he saith, he scourgeth every son, he maketh none exception. Moreover, saith the text, if ye shall endure chastising, God offereth himself unto you, as unto sons. What son is it that the father chastiseth not? If ye be not under correction (whereof all are part-takers) then are ye bastards and not [B1v] sons.

Forasmuch, then, as we must needs be baptised in tribulations and through the Red Sea and a great and a fearful wilderness and a land of cruel Giants into our natural country: yea, and inasmuch as it is a plain earnest, that there is no nother way into the kingdom of life, than through persecution and suffering of pain and of very death, after the example of Christ. Therefore let us arm our souls with the comfort of the scriptures. How that God is ever ready at hand in time of need to help us. And how that such tyrants and persecutors are but God's scourge and his rod to chastise us. And as the father hath alway° in time of correction the rod fast in his hand, so that the rod doth nothing but as the father moveth it: even so hath God all tyrants in his hand and letteth them not do whatsoever they would—but as much only as he appointed them to do and as far forth as it is necessary for us. And as when the child submitteth himself unto his father's correction and nurture and humbleth himself altogether unto the will of his father, then the rod is taken away: even so when we are come unto the knowledge of the right way and have forsaken our own will and offer ourselves clean° unto the will of God, to walk which way soever he will have us—[B2r] then turneth he the tyrants. Or else if they enforce to persecute us any further, he putteth them out of the way according unto the comfortable° examples of the scripture.

Moreover, let us arm our souls with the promises both of help and assistance and also of the glorious reward that followeth. Great is your reward in heaven saith Christ (Matthew 5).^a And he

^a Matthew 5:12.

that knowledgeth° me before men him will I knowledge° before my father that is in heaven (Matthew 10).^a And call on me in time of tribulation and I will deliver thee (Psalm 65).^b And behold the eyes of the Lord are over them that fear him and over them that trust in his mercy—to deliver their souls from death and to feed them in time of hunger (Psalm 46).^c And in the forty-seventh Psalm saith David: The Lord is nigh them that are troubled in their hearts, and the meek in spirit will he save. The tribulations of the righteous are many, and out of them all will the Lord deliver them. The Lord keepeth all the bones of them, so that not one of them shall be bruised. The Lord shall redeem the souls of his servants.^d And of suchlike consolation are all the Psalms full: would to God when ye read them ye understood them, and (Matthew 10): When they deliver you take no thought what ye shall say. It shall be given you the same hour what ye shall say. For it is not ye that speak—but the [B2v] spirit of your father which speaketh in you.^e The very hairs of your heads are numbered saith Christ also (Matthew in the tenth).^f If God care for our hairs, he much more careth for our souls which he hath sealed with his holy spirit. Therefore saith Peter (1 Peter 4), Cast all your care upon him: for he careth for you.^g And Paul (1 Corinthians 10) saith: God is

^a Matthew 10:32.

^b Psalm 50:15.

^c Psalm 34:15.

^d Psalm 34:20.

^e Matthew 10:19-20.

f Matthew 10:30.

^g 1 Peter 5:7.

true—he will not suffer you to be tempted above your might.^a And Psalm 71: Cast thy care upon the Lord.^b

Let thy care be to prepare thyself with all thy strength for to walk which way he will have thee and to believe that he will go with thee and assist thee and strength° thee against all tyrants and deliver thee out of all tribulation. But what way or by what means he will do it, that commit unto him and to his godly pleasure and wisdom and cast that care upon him. And though it seem never so unlikely or never so impossible unto natural reason, yet believe steadfastly that he will do it. And then shall he according unto his old use change the course of the world, even in the twinkling of an eye, and come suddenly upon our giants as a thief in the night, and compass them in their wiles and worldly wisdom, when they cry peace and all is safe, then shall their sorrows begin, as the pangs of a woman that travaileth with child. And then [B3r] shall he destroy them, and deliver thee, unto the glorious praise of his mercy and truth. Amen.

And as pertaining unto them that despise God's word, counting it as a fantasy or a dream, and to them also that for fear of a little persecution fall from it, set this before thine eyes: How God since the beginning of the world, before a general plague, ever sent his true prophets and preachers of his word, to warn the people, and gave them space to repent. But they for the greatest part of them hardened their hearts and persecuted the word that was sent to save them.^e And then God destroyed

^a 1 Corinthians 10:13.

^b Psalm 55:22.

^c Cf. Jeremiah 15:21, Matthew 6:13.

^d 1 Thessalonians 5:2-3.

e 1 Samuel 6:6.

them utterly and took them clean° from the earth. As thou seest what followed the preaching of Noah in the old world—what followed the preaching of Lot among the Sodomites and the preaching of Moses and Aaron among the Egyptians—and that suddenly against all possibility of man's wit. Moreover, as oft as the children of Israel fell from God to the worshipping of images, he sent his prophets unto them. And they persecuted and waxed° hardhearted. And then he sent them into all places of the world captive. Last of all he sent his own son unto them. And they waxed° more hardhearted then ever before. And see what a fearful example of his wrath and cruel vengeance he [B3v] hath made of them unto all the world now almost fifteen hundred years.

Unto the old Britons also—which dwelled where our nation now doth--preached Gildas and rebuked them of their wickedness and prophesied both unto the spiritual (as they will be called) and unto the laymen also, what vengeance would follow except they repented. But they waxed° hardhearted. And God sent his plagues and pestilences among them, and sent their enemies in upon them on every side and destroyed them utterly.³³

Mark also how Christ threateneth them that forsake him for whatsoever cause it be—whether for fear, either for shame, either for loss of honour, friends, life or goods: He that denieth me before men, him will I deny before my father that is in heaven. He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me. All this saith he Matthew the tenth. And in the eighth of Mark he saith: Whosoever is ashamed of me or my words among these adulterers and sinful generation, of him shall the son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his father with his holy angels.

^a Matthew 10:37.

^b Mark 8:38.

And Luke 9 also: None that layeth his hand to the plough and looketh back, is meet° for the Kingdom of Heaven.^a [B4r]

Nevertheless yet if any man have resisted ignorantly—as Paul did^b—let him look on the truth which Paul wrote after he came to knowledge. Also if any man clean° against his heart, but overcome with the weakness of the flesh for fear of persecution, have denied—as Peter did^c—or have delivered his book or put it away secretly. Let him (if he repent) come again and take better hold and not despair or take it for a sign that God hath forsaken him. For God ofttimes° taketh his strength even from his very° elect,° when they either trust in their own strength or are negligent to call to him for his strength. And that doth he to teach them and to make them feel that in the fire of tribulation for his word's sake nothing can endure and abide, save his word and that strength° only which he hath promised, for which strength he will have us to pray unto him night and day with all instance.

That thou mayest perceive how that the scripture ought to be in the mother tongue and that the reasons which our spirits make for the contrary are but sophistry° and false wiles to fear thee from the light that thou mightest follow them blindfold and be their captive, to honour their ceremonies and to offer to their belly.³⁴

First, God gave the children of Israel a law by the hand of Moses in their mother tongue. And all of the prophets wrote in their mother tongue. And all [B4v] the Psalms were in the mother tongue. And there was Christ but figured and described in ceremonies, in riddles, in parables and in

^a Luke 9:62.

^b Acts 8:1-3.

^c Matthew 26:69-75.

dark prophecies. What is the cause that we may not have the Old Testament with the New also which is the light of the Old and wherein is openly declared before the eyes that there was darkly prophesied? I can imagine no cause verily except it be that we should not see the work of Antichrist and juggling of hypocrites.³⁵ What should be the cause that we which walk in the broad day, should not see, as well as they that walked in the night, or that we should not see as well at noon, as they did in the twilight? Came Christ to make the world more blind? By this means Christ is the darkness of the world and not the light, as he saith himself (John 8).^a

Moreover, Moses saith (Deuteronomy 6), Hear, Israel, let these words which I command thee this day stick fast in thine heart, and wheto them on thy children and talk of them as thou sittest in thine house, and as thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up, and bind them for a token to thine hand, and let them be a remembrance between thine eyes, and write them on the posts and gates of thine house.^b This was commanded generally unto all [B5r] men. How cometh it that God's word pertaineth less unto us than unto them? Yea, how cometh it that our Moseses³⁶ forbid us and command us the contrary, and threat° us if we do, and will not that we once speak of God's word? How can we whet God's word (that is put it in practice, use and exercise) upon our children and household, when we are violently kept from it and know it not? How can we (as Peter commandeth) give a reason of our hope^d when we wot^o not what it is that God hath promised or what to hope? Moses also commandeth in the said chapter: If the son ask

^a John 8:12.

^b Deuteronomy 6:4-9.

^c Apparently Hebrews 4:12.

^d 1 Peter 3:15.

what the testimonies, laws and observances of the Lord mean, that the father teach him. If our children ask what our ceremonies (which are more than the Jews' were) mean, no father can tell his son.^a And in the eleventh chapter he repeateth all again for fear of forgetting.

They will say haply,° the scripture requireth a pure mind and a quiet mind. And therefore the layman, because he is altogether cumbered° with worldly business, cannot understand them. If that be the cause, then it is a plain case that our prelates understand not the scriptures themselves. For no layman is so tangled with wordly° business as they are. The great things of the world are ministered by them. Neither do the lay people [B5v] any great thing, but at their assignment.

If the scripture were in the mother tongue, they will say, then would the lay people understand it every man after his own ways. Wherefore serveth the curate but to teach them the right way? Wherefore were the holydays made, but that the people should come and learn? Are ye not abominable schoolmasters, in that ye take so great wages, if ye will not teach? If ye would teach how could ye do it so well and with so great profit, as when the lay people have the scripture before them in their mother tongue? For then should they see by the order of the text, whether thou juggledest or not. And then would they believe it—because it is the scripture of God—though thy living be never so abominable. Where now because your living and your preaching are so contrary, and because they grope out in every sermon your open and manifest lies, and smell your insatiable covetousness, they believe you not, when you preach truth. But alas, the curates themselves (for the most part) wot° no more what the New or Old Testament meaneth, than do the Turks. Neither know they of any more than that they read at Mass, Matins and Evensong which yet they understand not. Neither care they but even to mumble up so much every day (as the pie and popinjay° speak they

^a Deuteronomy 6:20.

wot° not [B6r] what) to fill their bellies withal.³⁷ If they will not let the layman have the word of God in his mother tongue, yet let the priests have it, which for a great part of them do understand no Latin at all: but sing and say and patter all day, with the lips only, that which the heart understandeth not.

Christ commandeth to search the scriptures (John 5). Though that miracles bore record unto his doctrine, yet desired he no faith to be given either unto his doctrine or unto his miracles, without record of the scripture. When Paul preached (Acts 17), the other searched the scriptures daily, whether they were as he alleged them. Why shall not I likewise see, whether it be the scripture that thou allegest: yea, why shall I not see the scripture and the circumstances and what goeth before and after, that I may know whether thine interpretation be the right sense, or whether thou jugglest and drawest the scripture violently unto thy carnal and fleshly purpose? Or whether thou be about to teach me or to deceive me.

Christ saith that there shall come false prophets in his name and say that they themselves are Christ, that is, they shall so preach Christ that men must believe in them in their holiness and things of their imagination without God's word: yea, and that against-Christ or Antichrist that [B6v] shall come is no thing but such false prophets that shall juggle with the scripture and beguile the people with false interpretations as all the false prophets, scribes and pharisees did in the Old Testament. How shall I know whether ye are that against-Christ or false prophets or no, seeing ye will not let

^a John 5:39.

^b Acts 17:11.

^c Matthew 24:24: Mark 13:22.

me see how ye allege° the scriptures? Christ saith: By their deeds ye shall know them. Now when we look on your deeds, we see that ye are all sworn together and have separated yourselves from the lay people, and have a several° kingdom among yourselves and several° laws of your own making, wherewith ye violently bind the lay people that never consented unto the making of them. A thousand things forbid ye which Christ made free, and dispense with them again for money. Neither is there any exception at all, but lack of money. Ye have a secret council by yourselves. All other men's counsels and secrets know ye and no man yours. Ye seek but honour, riches, promotion, authority and to reign over all, and will obey no man. If the father give you aught° of courtesy, ye will compel the son to give it violently whether he will or not by craft of your own laws. These deeds are against Christ.

When an whole parish of us hire a schoolmaster to teach our children, what reason is it that we should be compe[B7r]lled to pay this schoolmaster his wages, and he should have license to go where he will and to dwell in another country and to leave our children untaught? Doth not the pope so? Have we not given up our tithes of courtesy unto one for to teach us God's word? And cometh not the pope and compelleth us to pay it violently to them that never teach? Maketh he not one parson which cometh never at us? Yea, one shall have five or six or as many as he can get and wotteth° oftentimes where never one of them standeth.³⁹ Another is made vicar to whom he giveth a dispensation to go where he will and to set in a parish priest which can but minister a sort of dumb ceremonies. And he because he hath most labour and least profit polleth° on his part and fetteth° here a mass penny there a trental,° yonder dirige money° and for his bede-roll° with a confession penny and suchlike.⁴⁰ And thus are we never taught and are yet nevertheless compelled—yea,

^a Matthew 7:20.

compold^o to hire many costly schoolmasters. These deeds are verily against Christ. Shall we therefore judge you by your deeds, as Christ commandeth? So are ye false prophets and the disciples of Antichrist or of against-Christ.

The sermons which thou readest in the Acts of the apostles and all that the apostles preached were no doubt preached in the mother [B7v] tongue. Why then might they not be written in the mother tongue? As if one of us preach a good sermon why may it not be written? Saint Jerome also translated the Bible into his mother tongue. Why may not we also? They will say it cannot be translated into our tongue it is so rude. It is not so much rude as they are false liars. For the Greek tongue agreeth more with the English than with the Latin. And the properties of the Hebrew tongue agreeth a thousand times more with the English than with the Latin. The manner of speaking is both one so that in a thousand places thou needest not but to translate it into the English word for word when thou must seek a compass in the Latin, and yet shalt have much work to translate it well-favouredly, so that it have the same grace and sweetness, sense and pure understanding with it in the Latin, as it hath in the Hebrew. A thousand parts better may it be translated into the English than into the Latin. Yea, and except my memory fail me and that I have forgotten what I read when I was a child thou shalt find in the English Chronicle how that king Athelstan caused the holy scripture to be translated into the tongue that then was in England and how the prelates exhorted him thereunto.41

Moreover, seeing that one of you ever pre[B8r]acheth contrary to another. And when two of you meet, the one disputeth and brawleth with the other, as it were two scolds.° And forasmuch° as one holdeth this doctor and another that. One followeth Duns, another Saint Thomas, another Bonaventure, Alexander de Hales, Raymond, Lyre, Brygot, Dorbell, Holcott, Gorran, Trumbett,

Hugo de Sancto Victore, de Monte Regio, de Nova Villa, de Media Villa and suchlike out of number. So that if thou hadst but of every author one book thou couldst not pile them up in any warehouse in London, and every author is one contrary to another. In so great diversity of spirits how shall I know who lieth and who saith truth? Whereby shall I try them and judge them? Verily by God's word which only is true. But how shall I that do when thou wilt not let me see the scripture?

Nay, say they, the scripture is so hard that thou couldst never understand it but by the doctors. That is, I must measure the mete° yard by the cloth. 43 Here be twenty cloths of diverse lengths and of diverse breadths. How shall I be sure of the length of the mete° yard by them? I suppose rather I must be first sure of the length of the mete° yard, and thereby measure and judge the cloths. If I must first believe the doctor, then is the doctor first true and the truth of the scripture dependent of his truth [B8v] and so the truth of God springeth of the truth of man. Thus Antichrist turneth the roots of the trees upward. What is the cause that we damn some of Origen's works and allow some? How know we that some is heresy and some not? By the scripture, I trow. How know we that Saint Augustine (which is the best or one of the best that ever wrote upon the scripture) wrote many things amiss at the beginning—as many other doctors do? Verily, by the scriptures—as he himself well perceived afterward when he looked more diligently upon them, and revoked many things again. He wrote of many things which he understood not when he was newly converted, ere° he had thoroughly seen the scriptures, and followed the opinions of Plato and the common persuasions of man's wisdom that were then famous.

They will say yet more shamefully, that no man can understand the scriptures without philautia,° that is to say philosophy. 46 A man must first be well seen in Aristotle ere° he can

understand the scripture, say they. Aristotle's doctrine is, that the world was without beginning and shall be without end, and that the first man never was and the last shall never be. And that God doth all of necessity neither careth what we do, neither will ask any accounts of [C1r] that we do. Without this doctrine how could we understand the scripture that saith, God created the world of nought, and God worketh all things of his free will and for a secret purpose, and that we shall all rise again, and that God will have accounts of all that we have done in this life. Aristotle saith: Give a man a law and he hath power of himself to do or fulfil the law and becometh righteous with working righteously. But Paul and all the scripture saith, that the law doth but utter sin only and helpeth not. Neither hath any man power to do the law, till the spirit of God be given him through faith in Christ. Is it not a madness then to say that we could not understand the scripture without Aristotle? Aristotle's righteousness and all his virtues spring of a man's free will. And a Turk and every infidel and idolater may be righteous and virtuous with that righteousness and those virtues. Moreover, Aristotle's felicity and blessedness standeth in avoiding of all tribulations, and in riches, health, honour, worship, friends and authority, which felicity pleaseth our spirituality° well. Now without these and a thousand suchlike points, couldst thou not understand scripture which saith that righteousness cometh by Christ and not of man's will and how that virtues are the fruits and the [C1v] gift of God's spirit and that Christ blesseth us in tribulations, persecution and adversity? How, I say, couldst thou understand the scripture without Philosophy, inasmuch as Paul, in the second to the Colossians warned them to beware lest any man should spoil them (that is to say, rob them of their faith in Christ) through Philosophy and deceitful vanities, and through the traditions of men and ordinances after the world and not after Christ.^a

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^a Colossians 2:8.

By this means then, thou wilt that no man teach another, but that every man take the scripture and learn by himself? Nay, verily, so say I not. Nevertheless, seeing that ye will not teach, if any man thirst for the truth, and read the scripture by himself desiring God to open the door of knowledge unto him, God for his truth's sake will and must teach him. Howbeit,° my meaning is that as a master teacheth his prentice° to know all the points of the mete° yard, first how many inches, how many feet and the half yard, the quarter and the nail, and then teacheth him to mete° other things thereby 47: even so will I that ye teach the people God's law, and what obedience God requireth of us unto father and mother, master, lord, king and all superiors, and with what friendly love he commandeth one to love another. And teach them to know that natural venom and birth poison which [C2r] moveth the very hearts of us to rebel against the ordinances and will of God, and prove that no man is righteous in the sight of God, but that we are all damned by the law. And then (when thou hast meeked° them and feared° them with the law) teach them the testament and promises which God hath made unto us in Christ, and how merciful and kind he is, and how much he loveth us in Christ. And teach them the principles and the ground of the faith and what the sacraments signify and then shall the spirit work with thy preaching and make them feel. So would it come to pass, that as we know by natural wit what followeth of a true principle of natural reason: even so by the principles of the faith and by the plain scriptures and by the text, should we judge all men's exposition and all men's doctrine, and should receive the best and refuse the worst. I would have you to teach them also the properties and manner of speakings of the scripture, and how to expound proverbs and similitudes.° And then if they go abroad and walk by the fields and meadows of all manner doctors and philosophers, they could catch no harm. They should discern the poison from the honey and bring home nothing but that which is wholesome. [C2v]

But now do ye clean° contrary. Ye drive them from God's word and will let no man come thereto, until he have been two years master of art. First they nosel° them in sophistry° and in benefundatum. 48 And there corrupt they their judgements with apparent arguments and with alleging unto them texts of logic, of natural philautia,° of metaphysic and moral philosophy and of all manner doctors which they yet never saw. Moreover, one holdeth this, another that. One is a real, another a nominal.⁴⁹ What wonderful dreams have they of their predicaments, universals, second intentions, quiddities, haecceities and relatives.⁵⁰ And whether species fundata in chimera be vera species. And whether this proposition be true: Non ens est aliquid. Whether ens be equivocum or univocum. Ens is a voice only say some. Ens is univocum saith another and descendeth into ens creatum and into ens increatum per modos intrinsecos.⁵¹ When they have this wise brawled eight, ten, twelve or more years and after that their judgements are utterly corrupt—then they begin their Divinity. Not at the scripture—but every man taketh a sundry° doctor, which doctors are as sundry° and as diverse, the one contrary unto the other, as there are diverse fashions and monstrous shapes, none like [C3r] another, among our sects of religion. Every religion, every university and almost every man hath a sundry° divinity. Now whatsoever opinions every man findeth with his doctor, that is his Gospel and that only is true with him and that holdeth he all his life long, and every man to maintain his doctor withal, corrupteth the scripture and fashioneth it after his own imagination as a potter doth his clay. Of what text thou provest hell, will another prove purgatory, another limbo patrum, and another the assumption of our lady. And another shall prove of the same text that an ape hath a tail. And of what text the grey friar proveth that our lady was without original sin, of the same shall the black friar prove that she was conceived in original sin.⁵² And all this do they with apparent reasons with false similitudes° and likenesses, and with arguments and persuasions of man's wisdom. Now there is no other division or heresy in the world save man's wisdom and when man's foolish wisdom interpreteth the scripture, man's wisdom scattereth, divideth and maketh sects, while the wisdom of one is that a white coat is best to serve God in, and another saith a black, another a grey, another a blue—and while one saith that God will hear your prayer in this place, another saith in that place—and wh[C3v]ile one saith this place is holier, and another that place is holier, and this religion is holier than that, and this saint is greater with God than that and an hundred thousand like things. Man's wisdom is plain idolatry—neither is there any other idolatry than to imagine of God after man's wisdom. God is not man's imagination, but that only which he saith of himself. God is no thing but his law and his promises, that is to say, that which he biddeth thee do and that which he biddeth thee believe and hope. God is but his word: as Christ saith (John 8) I am that I say unto you, that is to say, that which I preach am I.^a My words are spirit and life. God is that only which he testifieth of himself and to imagine any other thing of God than that, is damnable idolatry. Therefore saith the eighteenth Psalm, happy are they which search the testimonies of the lord, that is to say, that which God testifieth and witnesseth unto us.^b But how shall I that do when ye will not let me have his testimonies or witnesses in a tongue which I understand? Will ye resist God? Will ye forbid him to give his spirit unto the lay as well as unto you? Hath he not made the English tongue? Why forbid ye him to speak in the English tongue then, as well as in the Latin? [C4r]

Finally, that this threatening and forbidding the lay people to read the scripture is not for love of your souls (which they care for as the fox doth for the geese) is evident and clearer than the sun,

a Apparently John 8:25.b Psalm 119:2.

inasmuch as they permit and suffer you to read Robin Hood and Bevis of Hampton, Hercules, Hector and Troilus with a thousand histories and fables of love and wantonness° and of ribaldry as filthy as heart can think, to corrupt the minds of youth withal, clean° contrary to the doctrine of Christ and of his apostles.⁵³ For Paul (Ephesians 5) saith: See that fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness be not once named among you, as it becometh saints: neither filthiness, neither foolish talking, nor jesting which are not comely.^a For this ye know that no whoremonger other unclean person or covetous person (which is the worshipper of images) hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. And after, saith he, through such things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of unbelief. Now seeing they permit you freely to read those things which corrupt your minds and rob you of the Kingdom of God and Christ and bring the wrath of God upon you how is this forbidding for love of your souls?

A thousand reasons more might be made (as thou mayest see in *Paraclesis Erasmi* and in his preface to the Paraphrase of Matthew⁵⁴) [C4v] unto which they should be compelled to hold their peace or to give shameful answers. But I hope that these are sufficient unto them that thirst the truth. God for his mercy and truth shall well open thee more: yea, and other secrets of his godly wisdom, if they be diligent to cry unto him, which grace grant God. AMEN.

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^a Ephesians 5:3.

Prologue to The Obedience of a Christian Man

[This second introduction deals more directly with the topic of the book: the nature of Christian obedience. It seeks to vindicate Lutherans from the charge of encouraging anarchy by placing the blame for disobedience to kings on the church.]

[C5r]

The Prologue unto the book

Forasmuch° as our holy prelates and our ghostly° religious, which ought to defend God's word, speak evil of it and do all the shame they can to it, and rail° on it and bear their captives in hand that it causeth insurrection and teacheth the people to disobey their heads and governors, and moveth them to rise against their princes and to make all common and to make havoc of other men's goods—therefore have I made this little treatise that followeth containing all obedience that is of God. In which whosoever readeth it shall easily perceive, not the contrary only and that they lie: but also the very° cause of such blasphemy and what stirreth them so furiously to rage and to belie the truth.

Howbeit,° it is no new thing unto the word of God to be railed° upon, neither is this the first time that hypocrites have ascribed to God's word the vengeance whereof they themselves were ever cause. For the hypocrites with their false doctrine and idolatry have evermore laid the wrath and vengeance of God upon the people, so sore that God could no longer forbear° nor defer his punishment. Yet God, which [C5v] is always merciful, before he would take vengeance, hath ever sent his true prophets and true preachers, to warn the people that they might repent. But the people

for the most part and namely the heads and rulers through comfort and persuading of the hypocrites, have ever waxed° more hardhearted than before, and have persecuted the word of God and his prophets. Then God which is also righteous, hath always poured his plagues upon them without delay. Which plagues the hypocrites ascribe unto God's word saying: See what mischief is come upon us since this new learning come up and this new sect and this new doctrine. This seest thou (Jeremiah 49) where the people cried to go to their old idolatry again saying: Since we left it, we have been in all necessity and have been consumed with war and hunger.^a But the prophet answered them, that their idolatry went unto the heart of God, so that he could no longer suffer the maliciousness of their own imaginations or inventions, and that the cause of all such mischiefs was, because they would not hear the voice of the Lord and walk in his law, ordinances and testimonies. The scribes and the pharisees laid also to Christ's charge (Luke 23) that he moved the people to sedition.^b And said to Pilate, we have foun[C6r]d this fellow perverting the people and forbidding to pay tribute to Caesar, and saith that he is Christ a king. And again in the same chapter, he moveth the people (said they) teaching throughout all Jewry and began at Galilee even to this place. So likewise laid they to the Apostle's charge, 55 as thou mayest see in the Acts. Saint Cyprian also and Saint Augustine and many other more made works in defence of the word of God against such blasphemies: So that thou mayest see, how that it is no new thing, but an old and accustomed thing with the hypocrites to wite° God's word and the true preachers of all the mischief which their lying doctrine is the very cause of?

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^a Jeremiah 44:18.

^b Luke 23:1-10.

^c Acts 24:5.

Neverthelater° in very° deed, after the preaching of God's word, because it is not truly received, God sendeth great trouble into the world—partly to avenge himself of the tyrants and persecutors of his word and partly to destroy those worldly people which make of God's word no thing but a cloak of their fleshly liberty. They are not all good that follow the Gospel. Christ (Matthew in the twenty-third chapter) likeneth the Kingdom of Heaven unto a net cast in the sea that catcheth fishes both good and bad.^a The Kingdom of Heaven is the preaching of the Gospel, unto which come both good and bad. But the good are few. Christ calleth them therefore a [C6v] little flock (Luke 12).^b For they are ever few that come to the Gospel of a true intent seeking therein nothing but the glory and praise of God and offering themselves freely and willingly to take adversity with Christ for the Gospel's sake and for bearing report unto the truth, that all men may hear it. The greatest number come and ever came and followed even Christ himself for a worldly purpose. As thou mayest well see (John 6) how that almost five thousand followed Christ and would also have made him a king, because he had well fed them. Whom he rebuked saying: Ye seek me not, because ye saw the miracles—but because ye ate of the bread and were filled, and drove them away from him with hard preaching.c

Even so now (as ever) the most part seek liberty. They be glad when they hear the insatiable covetousness of the spirituality° rebuked—when they hear their falsehood and wiles uttered—when tyranny and oppression is preached against—when they hear how kings and all Officers should rule Christianly and brotherly and seek no other thing save the wealth of their subjects—and when they

^a Matthew 13:47.

^b Luke 12:32.

^c John 6:26-65.

hear that they have no such authority of God so to pillo and pollo as they do and to raise up taxes and gatherings to maintain their fantasies and [C7r] to make war they wot° not for what cause. And therefore because the heads will not so rule, will they also no longer obey, but resist and rise against their evil heads. And one wicked destroyeth another. Yet is God's word not the cause of this, neither yet the preachers. For though that Christ himself taught all obedience, how that it is not lawful to resist wrong (but for the officer that is appointed thereunto) and how a man must love his very enemy and pray for them that persecute him and bless them that curse him, and how that all vengeance must be remitted to God and that a man must forgive, if he will be forgiven of God. Yet the people for the most part received it not. They were ever ready to rise and to fight. For ever when the scribes and pharisees went about to take Christ they were afraid of the people. Not on the holy day (said they Matthew 26), lest any rumour arise among the people.^a And Matthew 21: They would have taken him, but they feared the people.^b And Luke 20: Christ asked the Pharisees a question unto which they durst not answer, lest the people should have stoned them.^c

Last of all, forasmuch° as the very° disciples and Apostles of Christ after so long hearing of Christ's doctrine were yet ready to fight for Christ clean° against Christ's teaching. As Peter (Matthew 26) drew his swor[C7v]d but was rebuked.^d And Luke 9: James and John would have had fire to come from heaven to consume the Samaritans and to avenge the injury of Christ—but were

^a Matthew 26:5.

^b Matthew 21:46.

^c Luke 20:4-7.

^d Matthew 26:51-52.

likewise rebuked.^a If Christ's disciples were so long carnal, what wonder is it, if we be not all perfect the first day? Yea, inasmuch as we be taught even of very babes, to kill a Turk, to slay a Jew, to burn an heretic, to fight for the liberties and right of the church as they call it: yea, and inasmuch as we are brought in belief if we shed the blood of our even Christian or if the son shed the blood of his father that begat him, for the defence—not of the pope's godhead only—but also for whatsoever cause it be, yea, though it be for no cause but that his holiness commandeth it only, that we deserve as much as Christ deserved for us when he died on the cross—or if we be slain in the quarrel that our souls go, nay fly, to heaven, and be there ere° our blood be cold. Inasmuch (I say) as we have sucked in such bloody imaginations into the bottom of our hearts even with our mothers' milk, and have been so long hardened therein, what wonder were it, if while we be yet young in Christ, we thought that it were lawful to fight for the true word of God? Yea, and though a man were thoroughly persuaded that it were not lawful to resist his king, though he would wr[C8r]ongfully take away life and goods—yet might he think that it were lawful to resist the hypocrites and to rise, not against his king—but with his king to deliver his king out of bondage and captivity, wherein the hypocrites hold him with wiles and falsehood, so that no man may be suffered to come at him, to tell him the truth.

This seest thou, that it is the bloody doctrine of the pope which causeth disobedience, rebellion and insurrection. For he teacheth to fight and to defend his traditions and whatsoever he dreameth with fire, water and sword and to disobey father, mother, master, lord, king and Emperor—yea, and to invade whatsoever land or nation that will not receive and admit his godhead. Where the peaceable doctrine of Christ teacheth to obey and to suffer for the word of God and to remit the

^a Luke 9:54.

vengeance and the defence of the word to God which is mighty and able to defend it, which also as soon as the word is once openly preached and testified or witnessed unto the world, when he hath given them a season to repent, is ready at once to take vengeance of his enemies and shooteth arrows with heads dipped in deadly poison at them and poureth his plagues from heaven down upon them and sendeth the murrain° and pestilence among them, and sinketh the cities of them and maketh the earth swallow them, and compasseth them in their wiles [C8v] and raketh them in their own traps and snares, and casteth them into the pits which they digged for other men, and sendeth them a-dazing in the head and utterly destroyeth them with their own subtle counsel. Prepare thy mind therefore unto this little treatise and read it discreetly and judge it indifferently, and when I allege° any scripture, look thou on the text, whether I interpret it right which thou shalt easily perceive, by the circumstance and process of them, if thou make Christ the foundation and ground and build all on him and referest all to him, and findest also that the exposition agreeth unto the common articles of the faith and open scriptures. And God the father of mercy which for his truth's sake raised our saviour Christ up again to justify us, give thee his spirit to judge what is righteous in his eyes and give thee strength to abide by it and to maintain it with all patience and longsuffering, unto the example and edifying of his congregation and glory of his name. AMEN.

Extracts from A Dialogue Concerning Heresies (1529)

Thomas More

[More published this dialogue in 1529, in answer to a request from Cuthbert Tunstall, Bishop of London. By 1529, three of Tyndale's books were circulating in England, the New Testament, *The Parable of the Wicked Mammon* (1528) and *The Obedience of a Christian Man* (1528). More also tries to deal with the arrest and imprisonment of Thomas Bilney for heresy, and persistent rumours about the death of Richard Hunne in 1514 while in prison for heresy. The book is set up as a conversation between "More," the "I" of the text, and "the Messenger." The latter is called "your friend," because the book is fictionally a long letter to a man in the North of England. The absent addressee had become worried about a young relation who was tempted by heresy, and had sent him to More to be argued out of it. More explained at the beginning that he had written this account in order to be sure that the addressee would know just what had gone on. The first two books are primarily concerned with the purported corruption of the church, and long passages are devoted in philosophical terms to the fixation of belief.]

3.8 [The Interpretation of the Bible]

[In this passage, More turns specifically to the translation of the Bible, discussing philological issues for the first time in the dialogue. More emphasizes here the radical implications of these translations for the established order of the church.]

[O3v:fo. 79v]

The author showeth why the New Testament of Tyndale's translation was burned, and showeth for a

sample certain words evil and of evil purpose changed.

But now, I pray you, let me know your mind concerning the burning of the New Testament in English, which Tyndale lately translated, and (as men say) right well, which maketh men much marvel of the burning.

It is, quoth I, to me great marvel, that any good Christian man having any drop of wit in his head, would anything marvel or complain of the burning of the book if he know the matter. Which whoso calleth the New Testament calleth it by a wrong name, except they will call it Tyndale's testament or Luther's testament. For so had Tyndale, after Luther's counsel, corrupted and changed it from the good and wholesome doctrine of Christ to the devilish heresies of their own, that it was clean° a contrary thing.

That were marvel, quoth your friend, that it should be so clean° contrary. For to some that read it, it seemed very like.°

It is, quoth I, nevertheless contrary, and yet the more perilous. For like as to a true silver groat a false copper groat is nevertheless contrary though it be quicksilvered over, but so much the more false in how much it is counterfeited the more like° to the truth, so was the translation so much the more contrary in how much it was craftily devised like,° and so much the more perilous, in how much it was to folk unlearned more hard to be discerned

Why, quoth your friend, what faults were there in it?

To tell you all that, quoth I, were in a manner to rehearse you all the whole book, wherein there were founden,° and noted wrong and falsely translated, above a thousand texts by tale.°

I would, quoth he, fain hear some one.

He that should, quoth I, study for that, should study where to find water in the sea. ⁵⁶ But I will show you for example two or three such as every one of the three is more than thrice three in one.

That were, quoth he, very strange, except ye mean more in weight. For one can be but one in number.

Surely, quoth I, as weighty be they as any lightly can be. But I mean that every one of them is more than thrice three in number.

That were, quoth he, somewhat like a riddle.

This riddle, quoth I, will soon be read. For he hath mistranslated three words of great weight and every one of them is, as I suppose, more than thrice three times repeated and rehearsed in the book.

Ah, that may well be, quoth he, but that was not well done. But I pray you what words be they? The tone° is, quoth I, this word *priests*. The tother,° the *church*. The third, *charity*. For *priests*, wheresoever he speaketh of the priests of Christ's church he never calleth them *priests* but alway° *seniors*, the church he calleth alway° the *congregation*, and charity he calleth alway° *love*. Now do these names in our English tongue neither express the things that be meant by them, and also there appeareth (the circumstances well considered) that he had a mischievous mind in the change. For first as for priests and priesthood though that of old they used commonly to choose well elderly men to be priests, and therefore in the Greek tongue priests were called *presbyteri*, as we might say elder men, yet neither were all priests chosen old as appeareth by Saint Paul writing to Timothy, *nemo inuentutem tuam contemnat*, let no man contemn° thy youth, a nor every elder man is not a priest. And in our English tongue this word *senior* signifieth nothing at all, but is a French word used in

^a 1 Timothy 4:12.

English more than half in mockage, when one will call another *my lord* in scorn. And if he mean to take the Latin word *senior*, the word in the Latin tongue [O4r] never signified a priest but only an elder man. By which name of elder men if he would call the priests Englishly, then should he rather signify their age than their office. And yet the name doth in English plainly signify the aldermen of the cities, and nothing the priests of the church. And thus may we perceive that rather than he would call a priest by the name of a priest, he would seek a new word he neither wist° nor cared what.

Now where he calleth the church alway° the *congregation*, what reason had he therein? For every man well seeth that though the *church* be indeed a *congregation*, yet is not every *congregation* the *church* but a *congregation* of Christian people, which *congregation* of Christian people hath been in England alway° called and known by the name of the *church*. Which name what good cause or colour could he find to turn into the name of *congregation*, which word is common to a company of Christian men or a company of Turks?

Like° wisdom was there in the change of this word *charity* into *love*. For though charity be alway° love, yet is not, ye wot° well, love alway° charity.

The more pity, by my faith, quoth your friend, that ever love was sin. And yet it would not be so much so taken, if the world were no more suspicious than they say that good Saint Francis was, which, when he saw a young man kiss a girl once in way of good company, kneeled down and held up his hands into heaven, highly thanking God that charity was not yet gone out of this wretched world.

He had, quoth I, a good mind and did like a good man, that deemed all things to the best.

So say I too, quoth he. But how far be folk fallen from the good mind now. Men be nowadays waxen° so full of mistrust, that some man would in faith ween° his wife were naught,° if he should

but find her in bed with a poor friar.

Forsooth,° ye be a wanton,° quoth I. But yet in earnest how like you the change of these words?

Surely, quoth he, very naught.° And that it was not well nor wisely done, there will, I trow,° no good wise man deny. But yet whether Hychens had in the translation thereof any malicious purpose or not, therein will I, till I see further, play Saint Francis' part, and judge the man no worse than the matter requireth. ⁵⁷

First, quoth I, would ye that the book should go forth and be read still in that fashion?

Nay, in good faith, quoth he, that would I not, if he use it so very often.

With that word, quoth I, ye hit the nail on the head.⁵⁸ For surely if he changed the common known word into the better, I would well allow it. If he changed it into as good I would suffer it. If somewhat into worse, so he did so he did it seld,° I would wink at it. But now when he changeth the known usual names of so great things, into so far the worse, and that not repeateth seldom, but so often and so continually inculketh,° that almost in the whole book his lewd° change he never changeth, in this manner could no man deem other, but that the man meant mischievously, scant such a good silly° soul as would ween° all were well when he found his wife where ye said right now. If he called charity sometime by the bare name of love, I would not stick thereat. But now, whereas charity signifieth in Englishmen's ears, not every common love, but a good virtuous and well-ordered love, he that will studiously flee from that name of good love, and alway° speak of love, and alway° leave out good, I would surely say that he meaneth naught.°

In good faith, quoth he, so is it not unlikely.

Then, quoth I, when ye see more ye shall say it is much more than likely. For now it is to be

considered that at the time of this translation Hychens was with Luther in Wittenberg, and set certain glosses° in the margent,° framed for the setting [O4v] forth of the ungracious sect.⁵⁹

By Saint John, quoth your friend, if that be true that Hychens were at that time with Luther, it is a plain token that he wrought° somewhat after his counsel, and was willing to help his matters forward here. But whether Luther's matters be so bad as they be made for, that shall we see hereafter.

Very true, quoth I. But as touching the confederacy between Luther and him, it is a thing well known and plainly confessed, by such as have been taken and convicted here of heresy coming from thence, and some of them sent hither to sow that seed about here, and to send word thither from time to time how it sprang.

But now, the cause why he changed the name of *charity* and of the *church* and of *priesthood*, is no very great difficulty to perceive. For sith° Luther and his fellows among other their damnable heresies have one, that all our salvation standeth in faith alone, and toward our salvation nothing force° of good works, ⁶⁰ therefore it seemeth that he laboureth of purpose to minish° the reverent mind that men bear to charity, and therefore he changeth that name of holy virtuous affection, into the bare name of *love* common to the virtuous love that man beareth to God, and to the lewd° love that is between Flekke and his make. ⁶¹ And for because that Luther utterly denieth the very° catholic° church in earth, and saith that the church of Christ is but an unknown congregation of some folk here two and there three no man wot° where having the right faith, which he calleth only his own new forged faith, therefore Hychens in the New Testament cannot abide the name of the *church*, but turneth it into the name *congregation*, willing that it should seem to Englishmen, either that Christ in the gospel had never spoken of the church, or else that the church were but such a

congregation as they might have occasion to say, that a congregation of some such heretics were the church that God spake of.

Now as touching the cause why he changed the name of *priest* into *senior*, ye must understand that Luther and his adherents hold this heresy, that all holy order is nothing. And that a priest is nothing else, but a man chosen among the people to preach, and that by that choice to that office he is priest by and by° without any more ado, and no priest again when so ever the people choose another in his place, and that a priest's office is nothing but to preach. For as for saying mass and hearing of confession and absolution thereupon to be given, all this he saith that every man, woman and child may do as well as any priest. Now doth Hychens therefore to let forth this opinion withal after his master's heresy put away the name of priest in his translation, as though priesthood were nothing. Wheresoever the scripture speaketh of the priests that were among the Jews, there doth he in his translation call them still by the name of priests. But wheresoever the scripture speaketh of the priests of Christ's church, there doth he put away the name of *priest* in his translation, because he would make it seem that the scripture did never speak of any priests different from laymen among Christian people. And he saith plainly in his book of *Obedience* that priesthood and all holy orders among Christian people be but feigned inventions, and that priests be nothing but officers chosen to preach, and that all the consecration whereby they be consecrate is nothing worth. 62 And for this cause, in all his translation, wheresoever he speaketh of them, [O5r] the name of priest which to us in our own tongue hath alway° signified an anointed person and with holy orders consecrated unto God, he hath changed into the name of senior no word of our language, but either used half in mockage when we speak French in sport, Dieu vous garde senior, 63 or at the furthest nothing betokening but elder. So that it is ethe° to see what he meant in the turning of these names.

In good faith, quoth your friend, it seemeth verily that he meant not well.

Surely, quoth I, ye would well say so if ye saw all the places which I shall cause you to see when ye will, and ye shall soon judge them yourself. For it were too long to rehearse them all now. Nor these have I not rehearsed you as for the chief, but for that they came first to mind.⁶⁴ For else I might shortly rehearse you many things more, as far out of tune as these be. For he changeth commonly the name of grace into this word favour, whereas every favour is not grace in English, for in some favour is there little grace. Confession he translateth into knowledging.° Penance into repentance. 65 A contrite heart he changeth into a troubled heart. And many more things like, o and many texts untruly translated for the maintenance of heresy as I shall show you some when we look in the book. Which things we shall not now reason upon for they be not worthy to be brought in question. But I tell you this much only for this cause, that ye may perceive that he hath thus used himself in his translation, to the intent that he would set forth Luther's heresies and his own thereby. For first he would make the people believe that we should believe nothing but plain scripture, in which point he teacheth a plain pestilent heresy. And then would he with his false translation make the people ween° further, that such articles of our faith as he laboureth to destroy, and which be well proved by holy scripture, were in holy scripture nothing spoken of, but that the preachers have all this fifteen hundred year misreported the Gospel and Englished the scripture wrong, to lead the people purposely out of the right way.

3.16 [The Availability of the Bible]

[In this passage, More declares himself in favour of a Bible in the vernacular, but sets limits on who should receive it, and under what conditions. Between the chapter on Bible translation and this one,

More has examined the highly significant matter of Richard Hunne, who refused a priest his fee for the burial of his baby son and was afterwards murdered in prison on the ecclesiastical charge of denying the authority of the church.]

[Q5v]

The messenger rehearseth some causes which he hath heard laid by some of the clergy, wherefore the scripture should not be suffered in English. And the author showeth his mind that it were convenient to have the Bible in English. And therewith endeth the third book.

Sir, quoth your friend, yet for all this can I see no cause why the [Q6r]clergy should keep the Bible out of laymen's hands, that can° no more but their mother tongue. 66

I had went,° quoth I, that I had proved you plainly, that they keep it not from them. For I have showed you that they keep none from them, but such translation as be either not yet approved for good, or such as be already reproved for naught,° as Wycliffe's was and Tyndale's. ⁶⁷ For as for other old ones, that were before Wycliffe's days, remain lawful, and be in some folk's hands had and read.

Ye say well, quoth he. But yet as women say, somewhat it was alway° that the cat winked when her eye was out. 68 Surely so is it not for naught that the English Bible is in so few men's hands, when so many would so fain° have it.

That is very° truth, quoth I. For I think that, though the favourers of a sect of heretics be so fervent in the setting forth of their sect, that they let° not to lay their money together and make a purse among them for the printing of an evil-made or evil-translated book, which, though it hap° to be forbidden and burned yet some be sold ere° they be spied, and each of them lose but their part,

yet I think there will no printer lightly be so hot to put any Bible in print at his own charge, whereof the loss should lie whole in his own neck, and then hang upon a doubtful trial whether the first copy of his translation was made before Wycliffe's days or since. 69 For if it were made since, it must be approved before the printing. And surely how it hath happed that, in all this while, God hath either not suffered or not provided that any good virtuous man hath had the mind in faithful wise to translate it, and thereupon either the clergy or at the leastwise some one bishop to approve it, this can nothing tell. But howsoever it be, I have heard and hear so much spoken in the matter, and so much doubt made therein, that peradventure° it would let° and withdraw any one bishop from the admitting thereof, without the assent of the remnant. And whereas many things be laid against it, yet is there in my mind not one thing that more putteth good men of the clergy in doubt to suffer it, than this, that they see sometime much of the worse sort more fervent in the calling for it, than them whom we find far better. Which maketh them to fear lest such men desire it for no good, and lest, if it were had in every man's hand, there would great peril arise, and that seditious people should do more harm therewith, than good and honest folk should take fruit thereby. 70 Which fear, I promise you, nothing feareth° me, but that whosoever would of their malice or folly take harm of that thing that is of itself ordained to do all men good, I would never for the avoiding of their harm, take from other the profit which they might take, and nothing deserve to lose. For else, if the abuse of a good thing should cause the taking away thereof from other that would use it well, Christ should himself never have been born, nor brought his faith into the world, nor God should never have made it neither, if he should for the loss of those that would be damned wretches, have kept away the occasion of reward from them that would with help of his grace endeavour them to deserve it.

I am sure, quoth your friend, ye doubt [Q6v] not but that I am full and whole of your mind in

this matter that the Bible should be in our English tongue. But yet that the clergy is of the contrary and would not have it so, that appeareth well in that they suffer it not to be so. And over that, o I hear in every place almost where I find any learned man of them, their minds all set thereon to keep the scripture from us. And they seek out for that part every rotten reason that they can find, and set them forth solemnly to thee show, though five of those reasons be not worth a fig. ⁷¹ For they begin as far as our first father Adam, and show us that his wife and he fell out of paradise with desire of knowledge and cunning. Now if this would serve, it must from the knowledge and study of scripture drive every man, priest and other, lest it drive all out of paradise. Then say they that God taught his disciples many things apart, because the people should not hear it. And therefore they would the people should not now be suffered to read all. Yet they say further that it is hard to translate the scripture out of one tongue into another, and specially they say into ours. Which they call a tongue vulgar and barbarous. But of all things specially they say that scripture is the food of the soul. And that the common people be as infants that must be fed but with milk and pap. And if we have any stronger meat, it must be chammedo afore by the nurse and so put into the baby's mouth. But methinks° though they make us all infants, they shall find many a shrewd brain among us, that can perceive chalk from cheese well enough.⁷² And if they would once take us our meat in our own hand, we be not so evil-toothed but that within a while, they shall see us chamo it ourselves as well as they. For let them call us young babies ano they will, yet by God they shall for all that well find in some of us that an old knave is no child.

Surely, quoth I, such things as ye speak is the thing that as I somewhat said before, putteth good folk in fear to suffer the scripture in our English tongue. Not for the reading and receiving, but

^a Hebrews 5:12-14.

for the busy chamming° thereof, and for much meddling with such parts thereof as least will agree with their capacities. For undoubtedly as ye spake of our mother Eve, inordinate appetite of knowledge is a means to drive any man out of a paradise. And inordinate is the appetite when men unlearned, though they read it in their language, will be busy to ensearch and dispute the great secret mysteries of scripture, which, though they hear, they be not able to perceive. This thing is plainly forbidden us that be not appointed nor instructed thereto. And therefore holy Saint Gregory Nazianzus, that great solemn doctor, sore toucheth and reproveth all such bold busy meddlers in the scripture; and showeth that it is in Exodus by Moses ascending up upon the hill where he spake with God and the people tarrying beneath signified that the people be forbidden to presume to meddle with the high mysteries of holy scripture, but owe to be content to tarry beneath and meddle none higher than is meet° for them; 73 but receiving from the height of the hill by Moses that is delivered them, that is to wit the laws and precepts that they must keep, and the points they must believe, look well thereupon, and often, and meddle well therewith, not to dispute it but to fulfil it. ⁷⁴ And as [R1r] for the high secret mysteries of God, and hard texts of his holy scripture, let us know that we be so unable to ascend up so high on that hill, that it shall become us to say to the preachers appointed thereto as the people said unto Moses, hear you God and let us hear you.^a And surely the blessed holy doctor Saint Jerome greatly complaineth and rebuketh that lewdo homely manner, that the common lay people men and women were in his days so bold in the meddling, disputing, and expounding of holy scripture. 75 And showeth plainly that they shall have evil proof therein, that will reckon themselves to understand it by themselves without a reader. ⁷⁶ For it is a thing that requireth good help, and long time, and an whole mind given greatly thereto. And surely sith° as the holy

^a Exodus 20:19; Deuteronomy 5:27.

apostle Saint Paul in diverse of his epistles saith, God hath by his holy spirit so instituted and ordained his church, that he will have some readers and some hearers, some teachers and some learners, we do plainly pervert and turn up-so-down the right order of Christ's church, when the tone part meddleth with the tother's office. Plato the great philosopher specially forbiddeth such as be not admitted thereunto nor men meet therefor, to meddle much and embusy themselves in reasoning and disputing upon the temporal laws of the city, which would not be reasoned upon but by folk meet therefore and in place convenient.

For else they that cannot very well attain to perceive them, begin to mislike, dispraise, and contemn° them. Whereof followeth the breach of the laws and disorder of the people. For till a law be changed by authority, it rather ought to be observed than contemned.° Or else the example of one law boldly broken and set at naught, waxeth° a precedent for the remnant to be used like.° And commonly the best laws shall worst like° much of the common people, which most long (if they might be heard and followed) to live all at liberty under none at all. Now if Plato, so wise a man, so thought good in temporal laws, things of men's making, how much is it less meet° for every man boldly to meddle with the exposition of holy scripture, so devised and indited° by the high wisdom of God, that it far exceedeth in many places the capacity and perceiving of man. It was also provided by the emperor in the law civil, that the common people should never be so bold to keep dispitions° upon the faith or holy scripture, nor that any such thing should be used among them or before them. And therefore, as I said before, the special fear in this matter is, lest we would be too busy in chamming° of the scripture ourselves, which ye say we were able enough to do. Which undoubtedly the wisest and the best learned, and he that therein hath by many years bestowed his

^a 1 Corinthians 12:27-31; Ephesians 4:2-16.

whole mind, is yet unable to do. And then far more unable must he needs be, that boldly will upon the first reading because he knoweth the words, take upon him therefore to teach other men the sentence with peril of his own soul and other men's too, by the bringing men into mad ways, sects, and heresies, such as heretics have of old brought up and the church hath condemned. And thus in these matters if the common people [R1v] might be bold to cham° it as ye say and to dispute it, then should ye have the more blind, the more bold; the more ignorant, the more busy; the less wit, the more inquisitive; the more fool, the more talkative of great doubts and high questions of holy scripture and of God's great and secret mysteries; and this not soberly of any good affection, but presumptuously and unreverently at meat and at meal. And there when the wine were in and the wit out, would they take upon them with foolish words and blasphemy to handle holy scripture in more homely manner than a song of Robin Hood. And some would, as I said, solemnly take upon them, like as they were ordinary readers, to interpret the text at their pleasure, and therewith fall themselves, and draw down others with them into seditious sects and heresies, whereby the scripture of God should lose his honour and reverence, and be by such unreverent and unsuiting demeanour among much people quite and clean° abused, unto the contrary of that holy purpose that God ordained it for. Whereas, if we would no further meddle therewith but well and devoutly read it, and in that is plain and evident as God's commandments and his holy counsels endeavour ourselves to follow with help of his grace asked thereunto; and in his great and marvellous miracles consider his godhead; and in his lowly birth, his godly life, and his bitter passion, exercise ourselves in such meditations, prayer, and virtues, as the matter shall minister us occasion, knowledging° our own ignorance where we find a doubt; and therein leaning to the faith of the church, wrestle with no such text as might bring us in a doubt and werestye⁷⁹ of any of those articles wherein every good

Christian man is clear, by this manner of reading can no man nor woman take hurt in holy scripture. Now then, the things on the tother side that unlearned people can never by themselves attain, as in the Psalms and the Prophets and diverse parts of the gospel: where the words be sometime spoken as in the person of the prophet himself; sometime as in the person of God; sometime of some other as angels, devils or men; and sometime of our saviour Christ—not alway° of one fashion, but sometime as God, sometime as man, sometime as head of this mystical body his church militant here in earth, sometime as head of his church triumphant in heaven, sometime as in the person of his sensual parts of his own body, otherwhile in the person of some particular part of his body mystical; and these things with many other oftentimes interchanged, and suddenly sundry° things of diverse matters diversely mingled together; 80 all these things which is not possible for unlearned men to attain unto, it were more than madness for them to meddle withal; but leave all these things to them whose whole study is beset° thereupon, and to the preachers appointed thereunto, which may show them such things in time and place convenient with reverence and authority, the sermon so tempered, as may be meet° and convenient alway° for the present audience. Whereunto it appeareth that our saviour himself and his apostles after him, had ever a special respect. And therefore as I say, forsooth,° I can in no wise agree with you that it were meet° for men unlearned to be busy with the chamming° of holy scripture, but to have [R2r] it chammed° unto them. For that is the preacher's part and theirs, that after long study are admitted to read and expound it. And to this intent weigh all the words, as far as I perceive, of all holy doctors that anything have written in this matter. But never meant they, as I suppose, the forbidding of the Bible to be read in any vulgar tongue. Nor I never yet heard any reason laid, why it were not convenient to have the Bible translated into the English tongue, but all those reasons, seemed they never so gay and glorious at the first sight, yet

when they were well examined, they might in effect, for aught° that I can see, as well be laid against the holy writers that wrote the scripture in the Hebrew tongue, and against the blessed evangelists that wrote the scripture in Greek, and against all those in like° wise that translated it out of every of those tongues into Latin, as to their charge that would well and faithfully translate it out of Latin into our English tongue. For as for that our tongue is called barbarous, is but a fantasy. For so is, as every learned man knoweth, every strange language to other. And if they would call it barren of words, there is no doubt but it is plenteous enough to express our minds in anything whereof one man hath used to speak with another. Now as touching the difficulty which a translator findeth in expressing well and lively the sentence° of his author, which is hard alway° to do so surely, but that he shall sometime minish° either of the sentence° or of the grace that it beareth in the former tongue, that point hath lain in their light that have translated the scripture already either out of Greek into Latin or out of Hebrew into any of them both, as by many translations which we read already to them that be learned appeareth. Now, as touching the harm that may grow by such blind bayards⁸¹ as will, when they read the Bible in English, be more busy than will become them: They that touch the point harp upon the right string, 82 and touch truly the great harm that were likely to grow to some folk, howbeit° not by the occasion yet of the English translation, but by the occasion of their own lewdness° and folly; which yet were not, in my mind, a sufficient cause to exclude the translation and to put other folk from the benefit thereof, but rather to make provision against such abuse; and let a good thing go forth. No wise man were there that would put all weapons away because man-quellers° misuse them. Nor this letted° not, as I said, the scripture to be first written in a vulgar tongue: For the scripture, as I said before, was not written but in a vulgar tongue, such as the whole people understood, nor in no secret ciphers but such common letters as almost every man

could read. For neither was the Hebrew nor the Greek tongue nor the Latin neither, any other speech than such as all the people spake. And therefore, if we should lay that it were evil done to translate the scripture into our tongue, because it is vulgar and common to every Englishman, then had it been as evil done to translate it into Greek, or into Latin, or to write the New Testament first in Greek, or the Old Testament in Hebrew, because both those tongues were as very vulgar as ours. And yet should there by this reason also not only the scripture be kept out of our tongue, but over that, o should the reading thereof be forbidden both all such lay people and all such priests too, as can° no more than their grammar and very scantly that. All which company though they [R2v] can understand the words, be yet as far from the perceiving of the sentence° in hard and doubtful texts, as were our women if the scripture were translated to our own language. Howbeit,° of truth, seldom hath it been seen that any sect of heretics hath begun of such unlearned folk as nothing could else but the language wherein they read the scripture, but there hath alway° commonly these sects sprongen° of the pride of such folk, as had with the knowledge of the tongue some high persuasion in themselves of their own learning beside. To whose authority, some other folk have soon after, part of malice, part of simpleness, and much part of pleasure and delight in newfangleness, fallen in and increased the faction. But the head hath ever commonly been either some proud learned man, or at the least beside the language, some proud smatterer in learning. So that if we should for fear of heretics that might hap° to grow thereby keep the scripture out of any tongue, or out of unlearned men's hands, we should for like° fear be fain° to keep it out of all tongues, and out of learned men's hands too, and wot° not whom we might trust therewith. Wherefore, there is, as methinketh,° no remedy but if any good thing shall go forward, somewhat must needs be adventured.° And some folk will not fail to be naught.° Against which things provision must be made, that as much good

may grow, and as little harm come as can be devised, and not to keep the whole commodity from any whole people, because of harm that, by their own folly and fault, may come to some part. As though a lewd° surgeon would cut off the leg by the knee to keep the toe from the gout, or cut off a man's head by the shoulders to keep him from toothache. There is no treatise of scripture so hard but that a good virtuous man, or woman either, shall somewhat find therein that shall delight and increase their devotion besides this, that every preaching shall be the more pleasant and fruitful unto them when they have in their mind the place of scripture that they shall there hear expounded. For though it be, as it is indeed, great wisdom for a preacher to use discretion in his preaching and to have a respect unto the qualities and capacities of his audience, yet letteth° that nothing, but that the whole audience may without harm have read and have ready the scripture in mind, that he shall in his preaching declare and expound. For no doubt is there, but that God and his holy spirit hath so prudently tempered their speech through that whole corpus of scripture, that every man may take good thereby and no man harm, but he that will in the study thereof, lean proudly to the folly of his own wit. For albeit that Christ did speak to the people in parables and expounded them secretly to his especial disciples; and sometime forbore° to tell some things to them also because they were not as yet able to bear them; and the apostles in like wise did sometime spare to speak to some people the things that they did not let° plainly to speak to some other; yet letteth° all this nothing the translation of the scripture into our own tongue, no more than in the Latin. Nor it is no cause to keep the corpus of the scripture out of the hands of any Christian people so many years fastly confirmed in faith, because Christ and his apostles used such provision in their utterance of so strange and unheard mysteries, either unto Jews, paynims° or newly christened folk, except we would say that all the expo[R3r]sitions which Christ made himself upon his own parables unto his secret servants

and disciples withdrawn from the people, should now at this day be kept in like° wise from the commons, and no man suffered to read or hear them but those that in his church represent the state and office of his apostles. Which there will, I wot^o well, no wise man say, considering that those things which were then commonly most kept from the people, be now most necessary for the people to know. As it well appeareth by all such things in effect, as our saviour, at the time taught his apostles apart. Whereof I would not for my mind withhold the profit that one good devout unlearned layman might take by the reading, not for the harm that an hundred heretics would fall in by their own wilful abusion, no more than our saviour letted° for the weal of such as would be with his grace of his little chosen flock, to come into this world and be lapis offensionis, et petra scandali, the stone of stumbling, and the stone of falling, and ruin to all the wilful wretches in the world beside. Finally, methinketh that the Constitution Provincial of which we spake right now hath determined this question already.⁸³ For when the clergy therein agreed that the English Bibles should remain which were translated afore Wycliffe's days, they consequently did agree that to have the Bible in English was none hurt. And in that they forbade any new translation to be read till it were approved by the bishops it appeareth well thereby that their intent was that the bishop should approve it if he found it faultless, and also of reason amend it where it were faulty, but if the man were an heretic that made it, or the faults such and so many, as it were more ethe° to make it all new than mend it. As it happed° for both points in the translation of Tyndale.

Now if it so be that it would haply be thought not a thing meetly to be adventured, to set all on a flush at once, and dash rashly out holy scripture in every lewd fellow's teeth; yet thinketh me there might such a moderation be taken therein, as neither good virtuous lay folk should lack it, nor

^a 1 Peter 2:8.

rude and rash brains abuse it. For it might be with diligence well and truly translated by some good catholic° and well learned man, or by diverse dividing the labour among them, and after conferring their several° parts together each with other. And after that might the work be allowed and approved by the ordinaries,° and by their authorities so put unto print, as all the copies should come whole unto the bishop's hand. Which he may after his discretion and wisdom deliver to such as he perceiveth honest, sad° and virtuous, with a good monition and fatherly counsel to use it reverently with humble heart and lowly mind, rather seeking therein occasion of devotion than of dispition.° And providing as much as may be, that the book be, after the decease of the party, brought again and reverently restored unto the ordinary.° So that as near as may be devised, no man have it but of the ordinary's° hand, and by him thought and reputed for such, as shall be likely to use it to God's honour and merit of his own soul. Among whom, if any be proved after to have abused it, then the use thereof to be forbidden him, either forever, or till [R3v] he be waxen° wiser.

By our lady, quoth your friend, this way misliketh° not me. But who should set the price of the book?

Forsooth,° quoth I, that reckon I a thing of little force. For neither were it a great matter for any man in manner to give a groat or twain above the mean price for a book of so great profit, nor for the bishop to give them all free, wherein he might serve his diocese with the cost of ten pounds,° I think, or twenty marks.° Which sum, I dare say, there is no bishop but he would be glad to bestow about a thing that might do his whole diocese so special a pleasure with such a spiritual profit.

By my troth, quoth he, yet ween° I that the people would grudge to have it on this wise delivered them at the bishop's hand, and had liever° pay for it to the printer than have it of the bishop free.

It might so happen with some, quoth I. But yet in mine opinion there were in that manner more wilfulness, than wisdom or any good mind in such as would not be content so to receive them. And therefore I would think in good faith that it would so fortune in few. But fore God, the more doubt would be, lest they would grudge and hold themselves sore grieved, that would require it and were haply° denied it. Which I suppose would not often happen unto any honest householder to be by his discretion reverently read in his house. But though it were not taken to every lewdo lad in his own hands to read a little rudely when he list, and then cast the book at his heels, or among other such as himself to keep a quodlibet° and a pot parliament° upon, I trow° there will no wise man find a fault therein. We spake right now of the Jews, among whom the whole people have, ye say, the scripture in their hands. And ye thought it no reason that we should reckon Christian men less worthy thereto than them. Wherein I am, as ye see, of your own opinion. But yet would God we had the like° reverence to the scripture of God that they have. For I assure you I have heard very worshipful folk say which have been in their houses, that a man could not hire a Jew to sit down upon his Bible of the Old Testament, but he taketh it with great reverence in hand when he will read, and reverently layeth it up again when he hath done. Whereas we, God forgive us, take little regard to sit down on our Bible with the Old Testament and the New too. Which homely handling as it proceedeth of little reverence, so doth it more and more engender in the mind a negligence and contempt of God's holy words. We find also that among the Jews, though all their whole Bible was written in their vulgar tongue, and those books thereof wherein their laws were written were usual in every man's hands, as things that God would have commonly known, repeated, and kept in remembrance, yet were there again certain parts thereof which the common people of the Jews of old time, both of reverence and for the difficulty did forbear° to meddle with. But now, sith° the veil of the temple is broken asunder

that divided among the Jews, the people from the sight of the secrets, and that God had sent his holy spirit to be assistant with his whole church to teach all necessary truth; though it may therefore be the better suffered that no part of holy scripture were kept out of honest laymen's hands, yet would [R4r] I that no part thereof should come in theirs, which to their own harm and haply° their neighbours' too, would handle it overhomely,° and be too bold and busy therewith. And also though holy scripture be as ye said a while ere, o a medicine for him that is sick, and food for him that is whole, yet sith° there is many a body sore soul-sick that taketh himself for whole; and in holy scripture is an whole feast of so much diverse viand,° that after the affection and state of sundry° stomachs, one may take harm by the selfsame that shall do another good, and sick folk often have such a corrupt tallage 84 in their taste that they most like the meat that is most unwholesome for them. It were not therefore, as methinketh,° unreasonable that the ordinary° whom God hath in the diocese appointed for the chief physician, to discern between the whole and the sick, and between disease and disease, should after his wisdom and discretion appoint everybody their part, as he should perceive to be good and wholesome for them. 85 And therefore as he should not fail to find many a man, to whom he might commit all the whole, so to say the truth, I can see none harm therein, though he should commit unto some man the gospel of Matthew, Mark or Luke, whom he should yet forbid the gospel of Saint John, and suffer some to read the Acts of the Apostles, whom he would not suffer to meddle with the Apocalypse. Many were there, I think, that should take much profit by Saint Paul's epistle ad Ephesios. Wherein he giveth good counsel to every kind of people, and yet should find little fruit for their understanding in his epistle ad Romanos, containing such high difficulties as very few learned men can very well attain. 86 And in like° wise would it be in diverse other parts of the Bible, as well in the Old Testament as the New, so that as I say though the

bishop might unto some layman betake and commit with good advice and instruction the whole Bible to read, yet might be to some man well and with reason restrain the reading of some part, and from some busybody the meddling with any part at all, more than he shall hear in sermons set out and declared unto him, and in like° wise to take the Bible away from such folk again, as be proved by their blind presumption to abuse the occasion of their profit unto their own hurt and harm. And thus may the bishop order the scripture in our hands, with as good reason as the father doth by his discretion appoint which of his children may for his sadness° keep a knife to cut his meat, and which shall for his wantonness° have his knife taken from him for cutting of his fingers. And thus am I bold, without prejudice of other men's judgement, to show you my mind in this matter, how the scripture might, without great peril and not without great profit, be brought into our tongue and taken to laymen and women both, not yet meaning thereby but that the whole Bible might for my mind be suffered to be spread abroad in English. But if that were so much doubted that percase° all might thereby be letted them, would I rather have used such moderation as I speak of or some such other as wiser men can better devise. Howbeit,° upon that I read late in the epistle that the king's highness translated into English, of his own which his grace made in Latin answe[R4v]ring to the letter of Luther, 87 my mind giveth me that his majesty is of his blessed zeal so minded to move this matter unto the prelates of the clergy, among whom I have perceived, some of the greatest and of the best of their own minds well inclinable thereto already, that we lay people shall in this matter ere° long time pass except the fault be founden° in ourselves, be well and fully satisfied and content.

In good faith, quoth he, that will in my mind be very well done. And now am I for my mind in all this matter fully content and satisfied.

Well, quoth I, then will we to dinner, and the remnant will we finish after. And therewith went

we to meat.

The end of the third book.

4.3 [How Luther Came to be a Heretic]

[This passage presents More's understanding of a heretic's psychology. Some details are exact: Luther's position did radicalize between 1517 and 1521, and More was not alone in charging him with inconsistency. There is no substance, however, to the notion that Luther had been a frustrated seller of indulgences.]

[S2v]

The author showeth by what occasion that Luther first fell to the devising of these heresies. And that the occasion was such as well declareth, that he was pricked° thereto by malice, and ever proceeded from evil to worse, not witting where to hold him, and that he refuseth to stand to the judgement of any folk earthly [S3r] concerning the truth or falsehood of his opinions save only himself.

Now that is somewhat worth° to consider, how this lewd° friar began to fall in these mischievous matters. Ye shall understand that there was a pardon° obtained in Saxony, for which pardon,° as the manner is there, Luther was the preacher and preached to the people, exhorting them thereto, and advancing the authority thereof all that he possibly might, not without his great advantage therefor.

So happed° it then soon after, that the setting forth of the pardon,° with the advantage thereof, was taken from him and set to another. For anger whereof he fell into such a fury, that forthwith he began to write against all pardons. ⁸⁸ Howbeit, because the matter was new and strange, he began first by way of doubts and questions only, submitting himself and his writing to the judgement of the pope, ⁸⁹ and desiring to be informed of the truth whereupon, when he was by writing answered by the master of the pope's palace, then waxed he more wood and fell to railing against him, [and] made also another book against the power of the pope, affirming that his power upon the church was never institute of God, but ordained only by the common consent of Christian people for avoiding of schisms. But yet he said that all Christian men were bounden° to stand and obey thereunto, and that the Bohemes° were damnable heretics for doing the contrary. 90 But soon after, when he was in such wise answered by good and cunning men, that he perceived himself unable to defend that he had affirmed, then fell he from reasoning to railing,° and utterly denied that he had before affirmed. And then began to write that the pope had no power at all, neither by God nor man. And that the Bohemes, whom he had in his writings before called damnable heretics, were good Christian men, and all their opinions good and catholic. ⁹¹ Then when he was cited by the pope's holiness to appear, he appealed to the next general council which should be gathered in the holy ghost. So that, whatsoever general council were after assembled, he might jest and rail° thereon, and say it was not it that he appealed unto, for it was not assembled in the holy ghost.

He took, quoth your friend, a good wily way.

As wily as it was, quoth I, yet would he not stand thereby, but fled from that to another. Now shall ye understand, that yet soon after this in the book by which he not answereth but raileth° against that book wherein our sovereign lord the king, like a most faithful virtuous and most erudite

prince, evidently and effectually revinced° and confuted° the most venomous and pestilent book of Luther entitled *The Captivity of Babylon*, in which he laboureth to destroy the holy sacraments of Christ's church. In that book, I say, Luther, which had before appealed to the next general council, utterly denieth the authority of all general councils, and setteth them all at naught. 92

By my troth, quoth your friend, either was the man very negligent before, or very naught° after, when he changeth so often, and writeth ever the longer the more contrary, not to his adversary only, but also to himself. But I pray you, how excuseth he his inconstance?

Marry, quoth I, he saith that he seeth further than he saw before. [S3v] Whereunto the king's grace showeth him that it were unlikely that he should see better through a pair of evil spectacles of ire° and envy.

Very true, quoth your friend, by my troth. But yet I hear say that he hath offered to stand at the judgement of learned men in all his matters, if his offer had been taken in time.

Indeed, quoth I, once he promised to stand to the judgement of the University of Paris, and thereupon was there open dispitions° kept, and the very° words written by notaries sworn for both the parties. But when his opinions were after at Paris by the university condemned, then he refused to stand to their judgement, and fell again to his old craft of railing.°

He appeared also at Worms before the emperor and the princes of the empire by a safe conduct. ⁹³ And there recognised and knowledged° as well the said pestilent book written against the sacraments, as many other of like° sort to be his own, and offered to abide by them. Which he might boldly do, being by the safe conduct in good surety of himself that he could take none harm. Then was he moved to dispitions° upon the articles, so that he should agree upon some persons virtuous and well-learned, that should be judges of that dispitions,° and that he should be content to stand to

their judgement upon the same. Whereupon he agreed to come to dispitions,° but he would in no wise agree to make any men living judges upon it, nor stand to no man's judgement earthly.

4.7 [The Sack of Rome]

[In May, 1527, two years before these words were written, an army of Emperor Charles V entered Rome, where they burned, pillaged, raped and killed. The soldiers involved were German, Spanish and Italian, and the commander was the renegade Frenchman, the Duke of Bourbon. In this passage, More argues that the German soldiers lost all sense of morality and acted as they did because Luther had set them free from moral constraint. Eyewitnesses reported scenes of horror, but did not report that the Germans, whether Lutheran or Catholic, were more brutal than the others. Specific details presented here may or may not derive from lost eyewitness accounts. Quintilian's *Institutio oratoriae* (Institutes of Oratory) had recommended vivid description as a form of argumentation, and had used the sack of a city as an example, with fictional details (8.3.67-69). More, in humanist fashion, may be using fiction for vividness. See Gilman, "Dramatic Debate" 42-3.]

The author showeth what things caused the people to fall into Luther's fond° and furious sect. And he showeth also what mischief the followers of that sect have done in Almain,° Lombardy, and Rome.

It is, quoth your friend, a wonder to me, that the people being before brought up in the right belief, could find in their hearts to give him audience in some such heresies as these be.

Ye must understand and may perceive, quoth I, that he did not set forth all at once. But as Tyndale hath begun here in England with the thing that had a good visage, though he had corrupted it and meant naught° indeed, putting forth first the New Testament in such wise handled, that unlearned folk were likely to take harm and conceive diverse heresies in their hearts, ere° they could perceive his falsehood, and then hath since by two other books openly showed himself to lack nothing of Luther, but that he hath not yet married a nun; so did Luther also put forth in the beginning no more but the matter of pardons° as I told you, and therein nothing affirmed neither against the determination of the church, but submitted himself thereto. Now with this demeanour was there no man offended. But yet did he that time intend a further mischief, which he little and little pursued and brought to pass. And one special thing with which he spiced all the poison, was the liberty that he so highly commended unto the people, bringing them in believe that, having faith, they needed [S5v] nothing else. For as for fasting, prayer, and such other things, he taught them to neglect and set at naught° as vain and unfruitful ceremonies, teaching them also that being faithful Christians, they were so near cousins to Christ, that they be in a full freedom and liberty discharged of all governors and all manner laws spiritual or temporal, except the gospel only. And albeit he said that of a special perfection it should be well done to suffer and bear the rule and authority of popes,

princes and other governors, which rule and authority he calleth but only tyranny, yet he saith that the people be so free by faith, that they be no more bounden° thereto, than they be bounden° to suffer wrong. And this doctrine also teacheth Tyndale, as the special matter of his holy book of disobedience. Now was this doctrine in Almain^o of the common uplandish^o people so pleasantly heard, that it blinded them in the looking [upon] the remnant and could not suffer them to consider and see what end the same would in conclusion come to. The temporal lords were glad also to hear this gere against the clergy, and the people as glad to hear it against the clergy, and against the lords too, and against all their governors of every good town and city. And finally, so far went it forward, that at the last it began to brast° out and fall to open force and violence. For intending to begin at the feeblest, there gathered them together for the setting forth of these ungracious heresies, a boisterous company of that unhappy sect and first rebelled against an abbot, and after against a bishop, wherewith the temporal lords bade good game and sport and dissembled the matter, gaping after the lands of the spirituality, of till they had almost played as Aesop telleth of the dog, which to snatch at the shadow of the cheese in the water, let fall and lost the cheese that he bore in his mouth. 95 For so was it shortly after, that those uplandish° Lutherans took so great boldness and so began to grow strong, that they set also upon the temporal lords. Which had they not set hand thereto the sooner, while they looked for other men's lands, had been like° shortly to lose their own. But so quit they themselves, that they slew upon the point of seventy thousand Lutherans in one summer, and subdued the remnant in that part of Almain° to a right miserable servitude. Howbeit,° in the mean while many mischievous deeds they did.

And yet in diverse other parts of Almain^o and Switzerland, this ungracious sect, by the negligence of the governors in great cities, is so far forth grown, that finally the common people

have compelled the rulers to follow them, whom if they had take heed in time, they might have ruled and led.

And now is it too piteous a sight to see the dispiteous despites° done there in many places to God and all good men, with the marvellous change from all face and fashion of Christendom, into a very tyrannous persecution, not only of all good Christian people quick and dead, but also of Christ himself. For there shall ye see now the goodly monasteries destroyed, the places burned up, the religious people put out and sent to seek their living, or in many cities the places yet standing, with more despite° to God than if they [S6r] were burned up to ashes. For the religious people, monks, friars, and nuns, be clean° drawn and driven out, except such as would agree to forsake their vows of chastity and be wedded. And the places dedicated to cleanness and chastity, left only to these apostates and brothels to live there in lechery. Now the parish churches in many places not only defaced, all ornaments withdrawn, the holy images pulled down, and either broken or burned, but also the holy sacrament cast out, and the abominable beasts (which abhorreth me to think on) not abhorred in despite° to file° in the pyxes,° and use in many places continually the churches for a common siege.° And that in so despiteful° wise, that when a stranger of other places where Christ is worshipped resorteth to these cities, some of those unhappy wretched citizens fail not, as it were for courtesy and kindness, to accompany them in walking abroad to show them the pleasures and commodities of the town, and then bring them to no place lightly but only the churches, to show them in derision what uses the churches serve for.

Of this sect was the great part of those ungracious people also, which late entered into Rome with the duke of Bourbon, not only robbing and spoiling the city as well their own friends as the contrary part, but like very beasts did also violate the wives in the sight of their husbands, slew the

children in the sight of the fathers. 96 And to extort the discovering of more money, when men had brought out all that ever they had to save themselves from death or further pain, and were at pacts and promises of rest without further business, then the wretched tyrants and cruel tormenters, as though all that stood for nothing, ceased not to put them eftsoons° to intolerable torments. And old ancient honourable men, those fierce heretics letted° not to hang up by the privy members,° and from many they pulled them off and cast them in the street. And some brought out naked with his hands bounden° behind him, and a cord tied fast unto his privy members.° Then would they set before him in his way other of those tyrants with their Moorish pikes the points toward the breasts of these poor naked men. And then one or two of those wretches would stand behind those Moorish pikes, and draw the poor souls by the members° toward them. Now then was all their cruel sport and laughter either to see the silly naked men in shrinking from the pikes to tear off their members. Or for pain of that pulling to run their naked bodies in deep upon the pikes. Too piteous and too abominable were it to rehearse the villainous pain and torments that they devised on the sillyo women, to whom, after that they had beastly abused them, wives in the sight of their husbands, and the maidens in the sight of their fathers, they were reckoned for piteous that did no more but cut their throats. And very certain is it, that not in Rome only, but also in the country of Milan that they kept and oppressed, after torments used and money feto out that way, than some calling himself a gentleman in Almain° or Spain, would fain° himself fallen in love of his host's daughter, and that he would marry her in any wise, and then make [S6v] much earnest business for to have some money with her. And whether he gat^o aught^o or gat^o naught by that device, he letted^o not soon after to put the father, the mother, the fair daughter and all the whole house to new torments, to make them tell where any more money were, were there any or none. And some failed not to take the child and

bind it to a broche,° and lay it to the fire to roast, the father and mother looking on. And then begin to common° of a price for the sparing of the child, asking first an hundred ducats, then fifty, then forty, then twenty, then ten, then five, then twain, when the silly° father had not one left, but these tyrants had all before. Then would they let the child roast to death. And yet in derision as though they pitied the child they would say to the father and the mother, Ah, fie, fie for shame what marvel is it though God send a vengeance among you. What unnatural people be you that can find in your hearts to see your own child roasted afore your face, rather than ye would out with one ducat to deliver it from death.

Thus devised these cursed wretches so many diverse fashions of exquisite cruelties, that I ween° they have taught the devil new torments in hell, that he never knew before, and will not fail to prove himself a good scholar, and surely render them his lesson when they come there, where it is to be feared that many of them be by this. For soon after that they had in Rome exercised a while this fierce and cruel tyranny, and entered into the holy churches, spoiled the holy relics, cast out the blessed sacrament, pulled the chalice from the altar at mass, slain priests in the church, left no kind of cruelty or spite undone, but from hour to hour imbruing° their hands in blood, and that in such wise as any Turk or Saracen would have pitied or abhorred, our lord sent soon after such a pestilence among them that he left not of them the third part alive. For this purpose I rehearse you this their heavy mischievous dealing, that ye may perceive by their deeds, what good cometh of their sect. For as our saviour saith ye shall know the tree by the fruit.^a

4:12 [The consequences of Luther's doctrine of destiny]

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^a Matthew 12:33.

[This passage focuses on the doctrine of predestination: that is, that the elect,° who will go to heaven, and the reprobate, who will go to hell, are predestined to be what they are. That is, each person may or may not be inspired with faith in God, according to God's own will. Luther was responding to the medieval notion that if one does *quod in se est* (what is in one's own power), God will supply the rest. For Luther, God supplied all, and no one knew why he gave the gift of faith to one and not to another.]

[U3v]

The author inveigheth against the most pestilent sect of these Lutherans, which ascribe our salvation and damnation and all our deeds to destiny.

But now for to say as that heretic said, after all his shifts at last, that all that shall be saved only because that God from the beginning hath chosen them, and because of that choice all their deeds be good; or if they be evil, yet God for cause of his eternal choice taketh them well in worth and imputeth no blame unto them; and that all other people whom God hath created shall be damned only because he would not choose them; and that all their deeds either be naught° or not well accepted, because God list not in the beginning to choose them; and that he worketh both in the tone° sort and in the tother° all their deeds himself alone; and they do nothing therein themselves; and so that God whose goodness is inestimable doth damn so huge a number of people to intolerable and interminable tormen[U4r]ts only for his pleasure, and for his own deeds wrought° in them only by himself, this false opinion is, as the king's highness most virtuously writeth in his

epistle to Luther, the most abominable heresy that ever was. And surely it is so far against all holy scripture well understanden,° so far against all natural reason, so utterly subverting all virtue and all good order in the world, so highly blaspheming the goodness and majesty of almighty God in heaven, that it is more than wonder how any man earthly that hath either one spark of wit in his head, or toward God or man one drop of goodwill in his heart, should not abhor to hear it. For this execrable heresy maketh God the cause of all evil, and such cruel appetite as never tyrant and tormenter had, ascribe they to the benign nature of almighty God. For whereas our saviour Christ took upon himself all our sin, and of his endless pity bore the pain of them for our sake, this damnable heresy holdeth, that God should be first so untrue that he should lay unto us the weight and blame of his own faults; that is to wit the evil works which as they say be not wrought° by us, but in us by God; and thereunto they make him so dispiteous and cruel, that for his own deeds so done he should have a perpetual delight and pleasure to torment us. Now turn they the treacle of holy scripture quite into poison. For this false error once taken for truth, whereof should all scripture serve? Whereof should serve the exhortations to good works if men neither any do, nor any can do, neither of themselves nor with help of grace? Or if any be done by them which be not chosen, their deeds be not accepted of God, because he hath not chosen their persons, whereof shall serve the preachings and exhortations to the faith, if the hearers have no liberty of their own will, by which they may together with God's grace labour to submit and subdue the rebellion of their reason to the obedience of faith and credence of the word of God? Whereof shall serve all the dehortations° and comminations° and threats in scripture, by which God calleth men from sin and evil works, if the world were once of mind that they believed after Luther, that no man doth any evil deed himself, but God doth them all himself. And that every man is either chosen or unchosen?⁹⁷ And if we be of

the chosen sort, none evil deed can damn us. And if we be of the unchosen sort, no good deed can avail us. He that thus believeth, what careth he what he doth, except for the fear of temporal laws of this world? And yet if his false faith be strong, he forceth° little of them also. For he shall think, dying in his bed or on the gallows, cometh not after his deserving but hangeth all upon destiny. And therefore all laws they set at naught. And they hold that no man is bounden° to obey any, but would be at liberty to believe what they list, as they say that God doth with us not what we deserve but what himself list.

Whereof shall reason serve if man had no power of himself toward the direction of his own works, but that all our works were brought forth of us without our will, worse than the works be indeed out of a brute beast, by the appetite of his sensual motion? [U4v] For ours should be by this opinion brought forth, as the leaves come out of the tree, or as a stone falleth downward, and the smoke upward by the power of nature, so should I say all our deeds, good or bad, ascend or descend by the violent hand of God maugre° our minds and thus the beasts be not ashamed to say, when they prove hourly by their own experience in themselves, that when they will do a thing they do it. And when they list, they leave it. I say not by themselves alone without God. But his assistance is alway° at hand, if we be willing to work therewith, as the light is present with the sun if we list° not wilfully to set our eyen° and wink.

Whereof should serve all laws? And where were become all good order among men, if every misordered wretch might allege that his mischievous deed was his destiny?

If free will serve for naught, and every man's deed is his destiny, why do these men complain upon any man? Except they will say they do it because it is their destiny to do so? And why will they be angry with them that punish heretics, except they will say because it is their destiny to be so?

For if they will hold them to their own sect, and say men do them wrong to burn them for their heresies because it was their destiny to be heretics, they may be then well answered with their own words, as one of their sect was served in a good town in Almain° which, when he had robbed a man and was brought before the judges, he could not deny the deed, but he said it was his destiny to do it and therefore they might not blame him, they answered him after his own doctrine that if it were his destiny to steal, and that therefore they must hold him excused, then it was also their destiny to hang him, and therefore he must as well hold them excused again. And undoubtedly among men these takers away of free will may never avoid that answer by reason. But then fall the wretches to the desperate ways of devils and damned souls. Then fall they to railing° and reproving the justice of God and say that himself hath wrought° their evil works, and wrongfully punished them, and cruelly created them to wretchedness. Our mother Eve laid the weight of her sin to the serpent, and God was offended that she took not her own part to herself.^a But these wretches excuse themselves and the devil and all, and lay both their own faults and the devil's too, to the blame of almighty God. But surely what so they say, they little care indeed of hell or of heaven, but would in this world live in lewd° liberty, and have all run to riot. And sith° they see that they cannot so be suffered, nor their sect allowed in judgement, they devise by all the ways they can to get so many to fall into their sort, that they may be able to turn the world up-so-down,° and defend their folly and false heresy by force. And this they call the liberty of the gospel, to be discharged of all order and of all laws, and do what they list, which, be it good, be it bad, is as they say nothing but the works of God wrought in them. But they hope that by this mean, God shall for the while work in them many merry pastimes. Wherein if their heresy were once [U5r] received, and the world changed thereby, they

^a Genesis 3:13.

should find themselves sore deceived. For the laws and orders among men, with fear of punishment once taken away, there were no man so strong that could keep his pleasure long, but that he should find a stronger take it from him. But after that it were once come to that point, and the world once ruffled and fallen in a wildness, how long would it be, and what heaps of heavy mischiefs would there fall, ere° the way were founden° to set the world in order and peace again?

4.18 [The eternal struggle between orthodoxy and heresy]

[This is the final chapter of the *Dialogue*, wherein More presents a vision of the legitimate church as one, and unified, standing against the recurring scourge of heresy. He defends the burning of heretics.]

[Y2r]

The author showeth that in the condemnation of heretics, the clergy might lawfully do much more sharply than they do, and that indeed the clergy doth now no more against heretics, than the apostle counseleth, and that old holy doctors did.

For as for the clergy whom they labour to bring in hatred under the false accusation of cruelty, do no more therein than Saint Austin,° Saint Jerome and other holy fathers have been wont° to do before, nor no further than the apostle adviseth himself. For they do no more but when one heretic after warning will not amend but waxeth° worse, eschew him then and avoid him out of Christ's flock. Which is the very thing that Saint Paul counseleth where he writeth to Titus, *hereticum hominem post primam and secundam correctionem deuita*. ⁹⁹ And this is much less that the clergy doth to heretics, than Saint Peter did unto Ananias and Saphyra for a far smaller matter, that is to wit, for their untrue saving and keeping aside a portion of their own money, when they made semblance as though they brought to the apostle all together. For though they were not killed by his own hand, yet appeareth it well that God killed them both twain by Saint Peter, his means as governor of his

church, to the fearful example of all such as would after that break their promise and vow to God willingly made of themselves or their own good.^a Which thing Luther and Tyndale would have all men do now. Did not Saint Paul write unto the Corinthians, that they should deliver to the devil him that had defiled his father's wife, to the punishment of his body that the spirit might be saved in the day of judgement?^b What say we of Hymenaeus and Alexander, of whom he writeth unto the Corinthians also [Y2v] Hymeneum et Alexandrum tradidi sathane, vt discant non blasphemare: I have, quoth he, betaken Hymenaeus and Alexander to the devil, to teach them to leave their blasphemy. 100 In which words we may well learn, that Saint Paul, as apostle and spiritual governor in that country, finding them twain fallen from the faith of Christ into the blasphemy of that they were bounden° to worship, did cause the devil to torment and punish their bodies, which every man may well wit was no small pain, and peradventure° not without death also. For we find nothing of their amendment. And this bodily punishment did Saint Paul, as it appeareth, upon heretics, so that if the clergy did unto much more blasphemous heretics than I ween° they twain were, much more sorrow than Saint Paul did to them, they should neither do it without good cause nor without great authority, and evident example of Christ's blessed apostles. And surely when our saviour himself calleth such heretics wolves cloaked in sheep's skins, c and would that his shepherds the governors of his flock should in such wise avoid them as very shepherds would avoid very wolves, there is little doubt, but as an honourable prelate of this realm in his most erudite book answereth unto Luther, the prelates of Christ's church rather ought temporally to destroy those ravenous wolves,

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^a Acts 5:1-5.

^b 1 Corinthians 5:1-5.

^c Matthew 7:15.

than suffer them to worry and devour everlastingly the flock that Christ hath committed unto their cure, and the flock that himself died for to save it from the wolf's mouth. But now, though it well appear, as methinketh° it doth, that the clergy might in this case right sore procure against heretics, yet do they indeed no further than the old holy fathers did in their time, and the blessed apostle counseleth them to do. But all the sore punishment of heretics wherewith such folk as favour them would fain° defame the clergy, is and hath been for the great outrages and temporal harms that such heretics have been alway° wont° to do, and seditious commotions that they be wont° to make, beside the far passing spiritual hurts that they do to men's souls, devised and executed against them of necessity by good Christian princes and politic rulers of the temporality, forasmuch° as their wisdoms well perceived that the people should not fail to fall into many sore and intolerable troubles, if such seditious sects of heretics were not by grievous punishment repressed in the beginning, and the sparkle well quenched ere° it were suffered to grow to overgreat a fire.

Forsooth,° quoth your friend, it appeareth well that the clergy is not in this matter to be blamed as many men reckon. For it seemeth that the sore punishment of heretics is devised not by the clergy, but by temporal princes and good lay people, and not without great cause.

Well, quoth I, and to the intent that ye shall perceive it much the better, and over that,° believe your own eyen° and not my words in many things that ye have heard of my mouth, we will not part this night but I shall deliver into your hands here more books than ye will read over till tomorrow. But for that ye shall neither need to read all, nor lose time in seeking for that ye should see, I have laid you the places ready with rushes between the leaves, and notes marked in the margents,° where the matter is touched.

So caused I to be borne into his chamber a book of decrees, and certain works of Saint Cyprian,

Saint Austin,° [Y3r] and some other holy doctors, and therewithal a work or twain of Luther, and as many of Tyndale. And in this wise went we to supper, and on the morrow forbore° I to speak with him till near dinner time. At which our meeting, he showed me that in the decrees where the rushes lay, namely *in causa xxii. questione quinta*, 102 and diverse other of the questions consequently following, he had seen at full that the clergy doth at this day no further for the punishment of heretics, than did the old fathers and holy doctors and saints in time past, as by their own words there alleged° doth open and plain appear. And that as well the clergy in the persecution of heretics lawfully may do, as the temporal princes in war against infidels be dearly bounden° to do, much more than they now do, or of long time have done, or as yet as it seemeth go about to do. And over this,° he said that he had seen of Luther's own words worse than he had ever heard rehearsed, and in Tyndale worse yet in many things than he saw in Luther himself. And in Tyndale's book of *Obedience* he said that he had founden° what thing Tyndale saith against miracles and against the praying to saints.

Marry, quoth I, and these two matters made us two much business before your going to the university. I would it had happed° you and me to have read over that book of his before. Howbeit,° in good faith if ye will, we shall yet peruse over his reasons in those points, and consider what weight is in them.

Nay, by my troth, quoth your friend, we shall need now to lose no time therein. For as for miracles, he saith nothing in effect but that which I laid against them before, that the miracles were the works of the devil. Saving that where I said that it might peradventure° be said so, he saith that indeed it is so, and proveth it yet less than I did. And therefore as for that word of his without better proof is of little weight.

Forsooth,° quoth I, Tyndale's word alone ascribing all the miracles to the devil, ought not to weigh much among Christian men, against the writing of holy Saint Austin,° Saint Jerome, Saint Ambrose, Saint Chrysostom, Saint Gregory, and many another holy doctor, writing many a great miracle done at holy pilgrimages and saints' relics, done in open presence of many substantial folk, and diverse done in their own sight. All which miracles all those blessed saints do ascribe unto the work of God, and to the honour of those holy saints that were worshipped at those pilgrimages. Against all whom, when Tyndale ascribeth them all to the devil, he plainly showeth himself as faithful as he would seem, very near sib° to the infidelity of those Jews that ascribed Christ's miracles to the devil, saying that he did cast out devils by the power of Beelzebub, prince of devils.

Surely, quoth your friend, and as for that he reasoneth against praying to saints is very bare.

It must needs, quoth I, be bare, except he well avoid the miracles. Whereto, when he hath nothing to say but to ascribe God's works to the devil, he showeth himself driven to a narrow strait. For he and his fellows as touching miracles, neither have God willing, nor the devil able, to show any for the proof of their part, nor, I trust in God, never they shall.

In faith, quoth your friend, as for reasoning the matter of praying to saints, he is not worth the reading now. For all the substance in effect that ye prove it by, is by him clean° untouched. [Y3v]

That is, quoth I, no marvel, for he hath not heard it.

In faith, quoth your friend, and of his own making he layeth arguments for it such as he list.° Which he layeth forth faintly, and then doth answer them so slenderly, and all his whole matter in those points and other so plainly confuted° by the old holy fathers, that if I had seen so much before, it had been likely to have shorted much part of our long communication.

For my truth, quoth he, when I consider both the parts well, and read Luther's words and

Tyndale's in some places where ye laid me the rushes, I cannot but wonder that either any Almain° could like the tone,° or any Englishman the tother.°

I cannot much marvel, quoth I, though many like them well. For sith^o there is no country wherein there lacketh plenty of such as be naught,° what wonder is it that vicious folk fall to the favour of their like? And then as for such, when their hearts are once fixed upon their blind affections, a man may with as much fruit preach to a post, as reason with them to the contrary. For they nothing ponder what is reasonably spoken to them, but whereto their fond affection inclineth, that thing they lean to and that they believe, or at the least wise that way they walk and say they believe it. For in good faith that they so believe indeed, their matters be so mad that I believe it not. And yet make they semblance as though they believed that no man were able to confute Luther or Tyndale, where methinketh, of for these matters of their heresies, that they so set forth if the audience were indifferent, there were not in this world a man more meet° to match them both twain in dispitions,° than were mad Collins 103 alone, if he were not of the same sect. For he lasheth out scripture in Bedlam° as fast as they both in Almain,° and in good faith they both expound it as madly as he. And so help me God as methinketh° that man is as mad as any of all three, which, when he seeth the right faith of Christ continued in his catholic° church so many hundred years, and on that side so many glorious martyrs, so many blessed confessors, so many godly virgins, and in all that time virtue had in honour, fasting, prayer, and alms had in price, God and his saints worshipped, his sacraments had in reverence, Christian souls tenderly prayed for, holy vows kept and observed, virginity preached and praised, pilgrimages devoutly visited, every kind of good works commended; and seeth now suddenly start up a new sect, setting forth clean° the contrary, destroying Christ's holy sacraments, pulling down Christ's cross, blaspheming his blessed saints, destroying all

devotion, forbidding men to pray for their fathers' souls, contemning° fasting days, setting at naught the holy days, pulling down the churches, railing° against the mass, villainously demeaning the blessed sacrament of the altar the sacred body of our saviour Christ. And seeth the tone° side and the continuance thereof so clearly proved by many a thousand miracles, so clearly testified by the virtuous and erudite books of all the old holy doctors from the apostles' time to our days, and seeth on the tother° side a fond° friar and his fellows without wit or grace bear us in hand that all those holy fathers never understood the scripture, but only these beasts that teach us vice as fast as ever the tother° taught us virtue; and that seeth on the tone° side Saint Cyprian, Saint Jerome, Saint Ambrose, Saint [Y4r] Austin, Saint Basil, Saint Chrysostom, Saint Gregory, and all the virtuous and cunning doctors by row from the death of Christ and the time of his apostles till now; and seeth among all these neither priest, monk, nor friar that ever did after his profession made, marry and take a wife, or any suffered to break their vowed chastity in all their time; and seeth on the other side none other doctors of this new sect but Friar Luther and his wife, Priest Pomeranius and his wife, Friar Oecolampadius and his wife, Priest Carlostadius and his wife, Dan Othomonke and his wife, Friar Lambert and his wife, frantic° Collins, and more frantic° Tyndale that saith they must needs have wives, ¹⁰⁴ that man were, I say, as frantic° as they both, that would rather send his soul with such a sort as these be, than with all those holy saints that ever since Christ's days have testified by their holy handwriting, that they died in the same faith that the church believeth yet, and all this fifteen hundred year hath done, and shall do till the world's end, go there never so many heretics out thereof, and leave it never so little, yet shall it remain and be well known alway° by the profession of the faith, and those holy sacraments that have continued therein from the beginning thereof, and the holy doctors thereof ever had in honour and reverence, and their acceptation with God

incessantly testified by miracles, which never one sort of so many sects of heretics could yet allege° for any doctor of theirs, nor never shall, I think, till the great indignation of God, provoked by our sin and wretchedness, shall suffer the head of all heretics Antichrist (of whom these folk be the forewalkers) to come into this wretched world, and therein to work such wonders, that the sight thereof shall be able to put rightwise° men and good men in great doubt of the truth, seeing false Antichrist proving his preaching by miracles, whereas now neither good man nor wise man can have any colour of excuse, if men were so mad to believe these mad masters of whom they see the principal archheretics and first authors of the sect, neither show miracle for the proof of their doctrine, and yet their teaching and their living all set upon sin and beastly concupiscence, and so clean° contrary to the doctrine of all the old holy doctors, for whom God hath and doth show so many miracles in his church, which, as I said, shall not fail to be conserved and his right faith therein to be preserved, in despite of all the heretics that ever shall spring, Antichrist and all, and in spite of the Devil, the great master of them all, whom Christ shall at the last restrain, and destroy his idol Antichrist with the spirit of his holy mouth, repairing and dilating his church again, and gathering thereinto as well the remnant of the Jews, as all other sects abroad about the world, shall make all folk one flock under himself the shepherd and shall deliver a glorious kingdom to his father of all the saved people from our former father Adam to the last day, from thenceforth to reign in heaven in joy and bliss infogyttable 105 one everlasting day with his father himself and the holy ghost, which send these seditious sects the grace to cease, and the favourers of those factions to amend, and us the grace that stopping our ears from the false enchantments of all these heretics, we may by the very faith of Christ's catholic church so walk with charity in the way of good works in this wretched world, that we [Y4v] may be partners of the heavenly bliss, which the blood of God's

own son hath bought us unto. And this prayer, quoth I, securing us for grace, let us now sit down to dinner. Which we did.

And after dinner departed he home toward you, and I to the court.

Finis.

Extract from An Answer to Sir Thomas More's Dialogue (1531)

William Tyndale

[More's *Dialogue* likely reached Tyndale soon after its publication in 1529. In 1530, he published *The Practice of Prelates* and the Pentateuch. By March of 1531, he had substantially written the *Answer*, since Stephen Vaughan, the King's agent, obtained a copy of it then and sent it to the King. Henry passed it on to More, who used it in producing a second edition of the *Dialogue*. Vaughan's account of the book differs from what we have, and it seems likely that Tyndale revised it again before publishing it later the same year. The book consists of two parts: one deals with those topics from the *Dialogue* most important to Tyndale in the order that suited him, beginning with the problems of Bible translation. Anne O'Donnell and Jared Wicks refer to this section as Tyndale's "Foundational Essay," the most important part of his writings for understanding his thought. The second part goes through the *Dialogue* answering More point by point. The only part of the latter reproduced here is Tyndale's response to More's argument on predestination.]

[A1v]

The grace of our Lord, the light of his spirit to see and to judge, true repentance towards God's law, a fast faith in the merciful promises that are in our saviour Christ, fervent love toward thy neighbour after the example of Christ and his saints, be with thee, O reader, and with all that love the truth and long for the redemption of God's elect.° Amen. ¹⁰⁶

Our saviour Jesus in the sixteenth chapter of John at his last supper when he took his leave of

his disciples, warned them saying, the holy ghost shall come and rebuke the world of judgement.^a That is, he shall rebuke the world for lack of true judgement and discretion to judge, and shall prove that the taste of their mouths is corrupt, so that they judge sweet to be sour and sour to be sweet, and their eyes to be blind, so that they think that to be the very° service of God which is but a blind superstition, for zeal of which yet they persecute the true service of God: and that they judge to be the law of God which is but a false imagination of a corrupt judgement, for blind affection of which yet they persecute the true law of God and them that keep it. 107 And this same is it that Paul saith in the second chapter of the first epistle to the Corinthians, how that the natural man that is not born again and created anew with the spirit of God, be he never so great a philosopher, never so well seen in the law, never so sore studied in the scripture, as we have examples in the pharisees, yet he cannot understand the things of the spirit of God^b: but sa[A2r]yeth he, that spiritually judgeth all things and his spirit searcheth the deep secrets of God, so that whatsoever God commandeth him to do, he never leaveth searching till he come at the bottom, the pith, the quick, the life, the spirit, the marrow and very° cause why, and judgeth all thing. Take an example, in the great commandment, love God with all thine heart, the spiritual searcheth the cause and looketh on the benefits of God and so conceiveth love in his heart And when he is commanded to obey the powers and rulers of the world, d he looketh on the benefits which God showeth the world through them and therefore doth it

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^a John 16:8.

^b 1 Corinthians 2:14.

^c Matthew 22:37; Mark 12:30; Luke 10:27.

d Ephesians 6:12.

gladly. And when he is commanded to love his neighbour as himself, he searcheth that his neighbour is created of God and bought with Christ's blood, and so forth, and therefore he loveth him out of his heart, and if he be evil forbeareth him, and with all love and patience draweth him to good: as elder brethren wait on the younger and serve them and suffer them, and when they will not come they speak fair and flatter and give some gay thing and promise fair, and so draw them and smite them not, but if they may in no wise be holp, refer the punishment to the father and mother, and so forth. And by these, judgeth he all other laws of God and understandeth the true use and meaning of them. And by these, understandeth he in the laws of man, which are right and which tyranny.

If God should command him to drink no wine, as he commanded in the Old Testament that the priests should not:^b when they ministered in the temple and forbade diverse meats, [A2v] the spiritual (because he knoweth that man is lord over all other creatures and they his servants made to be at his pleasure, and that it is not commanded for the wine or meat itself that man should be in bondage unto his own servant, the inferior creature) ceaseth not to search the cause. And when he findeth it, that it is to tame the flesh and that he be alway° sober, he obeyeth gladly, and yet not so superstitiously that the time of his disease he would not drink wine in the way of a medicine to recover his health, ¹⁰⁸ as David ate of the hallowed bread^c and as Moses for necessity left the children of Israel uncircumcised forty years,^d where of likelihood some died uncircumcised and

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^a Matthew 22:39; Mark 12:31.

b Numbers 6:3.

^c 1 Samuel 21:1-6.

d Joshua 5:2-9.

were yet thought to be in no worse case than they that were circumcised, which examples might teach us many things if there were spirit in us. And likewise of the holy day, he knoweth that the day is servant to man, and therefore when he findeth that it is done because he should not be let from hearing the word of God, he obeyeth gladly, and yet not so superstitiously that he would not help his neighbour on the holy day and let the sermon alone for one day, or that he would not work on the holiday, need requiring it, at such time as men be not wont to be at church, and so throughout all laws. And even likewise in all ceremonies and sacraments he searcheth the significations and will not serve the visible things. It is as good to him, that the priest say mass in his gown as in his other apparel, if they teach him not somewhat and that his soul be edified thereby. And as soon [A3r] will he gape while thou puttest sand as holy salt in his mouth, if thou show him no reason thereof. He had as lief be smeared with unhallowed butter as anointed with charmed oil if his soul be not taught to understand somewhat thereby, and so forth.

But the world captivateth his wit and about the law of God maketh him wonderful imaginations unto which he so fast cleaveth that ten John Baptists were not able to dispute them out of his head. He believeth that he loveth God because he is ready to kill a Turk for his sake that believeth better in God than he, whom God also commandeth us to love and to leave nothing unsought, to win him unto the knowledge of the truth, though with the loss of our lives. He supposeth that he loveth his neighbour as much as he is bound, if he be not actually angry with him, whom yet he will not help freely with an halfpenny but for advantage, or vainglory or for a worldly purpose. If any man have displeased him, he keepeth his malice in and will not chafe himself about

^a Mark 2:23.

it till he see an occasion to avenge it craftily and thinketh that well enough. And the rulers of the world he obeyeth, thinketh he, when he flattereth them and blindeth them with gifts and corrupteth the officers with rewards and beguileth the law with cautels° and subtleties. And because the love of God and of his neighbour, which is the spirit and the life of all laws and wherefore all laws are made, is not written in his heart, therefore in all inferior laws and in all worldly ordinances is he beetle blind. 111 If he be commanded to abstain from wine, that will he observe unto the death too, as the Charterhouse monks [A3v] had liever° die than eat flesh: and as for the soberness and chastising of the members° will he not look for, but will pour in ale and beer of the strongest without measure and heat them with spices, and so forth. And the holiday will he keep so strait that if he meet a flea in his bed he dare not kill her, and not once regard wherefore the holiday was ordained, to seek for God's word, and so forth in all laws. And in ceremonies and sacraments, there he captivateth his wit and understanding to obey holy church without asking what they mean or desiring to know but only careth for the keeping and looketh ever with a pair of narrow eyes and with all his spectacles upon them, lest aught° be left out. 112 For if the priest should say mass, baptise or hear confession without a stole about his neck, he would think all were marred and doubt whether he had power to consecrate, and think that the virtue of the mass were lost, and the child not well baptised or not baptised at all, and that his absolution were not worth a mite He had liever that the bishop should wag two fingers over him, than that another man should say God save him, and so forth. Wherefore, beloved reader, inasmuch as the holy ghost rebuketh the world for lack of judgement, and inasmuch also as their ignorance is without excuse before whose faces enough is set to judge by, if they would open their eyes to see, and not captivate their understanding to believe lies: and inasmuch as the spiritual judgeth all thing, even the very bottom of God's secrets, that is to say, the causes of the

things which God commandeth, how much more ought we to judge our holy father's secrets and not to be as an ox [A4r] or an ass without understanding?

Judge therefore, reader, whether the pope with his be the church, whether their authority be above the scripture: whether all they teach without scripture be equal with the scripture: whether they have erred, and not only whether they can. And against the mist of their sophistry take the examples that are past in the Old Testament, and authentic stories, and the present practice which thou seest before thine eyes. Judge whether it be possible that any good should come out of their dumb ceremonies and sacraments into thy soul. Judge their penance, pilgrimages, pardons,° purgatory, praying to posts, dumb blessings, dumb absolutions, their dumb pattering and howling, their dumb strange holy gestures with all their dumb disguisings, their satisfactions and justifyings. And because thou findest them false in so many things, trust them in nothing but judge them in all things. Mark at the last the practice of our fleshly spirituality° and their ways by which they have walked above eight hundred years, 113 how they stablish their lies, first with falsifying the scripture, then through corruptings with their riches whereof they have infinite treasure in store: and last of all with the sword. Have they not compelled the emperors of the earth and the great lords and high officers to be obedient unto them, to dispute for them and to be their tormenters, and the samsumims themselves do but imagine mischief and inspire them?¹¹⁴ Mark whether it were ever truer than now, the scribes, pharisees, Pilate, Herod, Caiaphas and Annas, are gathered together against God and Christ. But yet I trust in vain, and that he that brake the [A4v] counsel of Achitophel shall scatter theirs. Mark whether it be not true in the highest degree, that for the sin of the people hypocrites shall reign over them. What shows, what faces and contrary pretenses are made, and all to stablish^o

^a 2 Samuel 15-17.

them in their theft, falsehood and damnable lies, and to gather them together for to contrive subtlety to oppress the truth and to stop the light and to keep all still in darkness. Wherefore it is time to awake and to see every man with his own eyes and to judge, if we will not be judged of Christ when he cometh to judge. And remember that he which is warned hath none excuse, if he take no heed. Herewith, farewell in the lord Jesus Christ whose spirit be thy guide and doctrine thy light to judge withal. Amen. [A5r]

What the church is

This word *church* hath diverse significations. First it signifieth a place or house, whither Christian people were wont° in the old time to resort at times convenient, for to hear the word of doctrine, the law of God and the faith of our saviour Jesus Christ, and how and what to pray and whence to ask power and strength to live goodly. For the officers thereto appointed preached the pure word of God only and prayed in a tongue that all men understood. And the people hearkened unto his prayers, and said thereto Amen and prayed with him in their hearts, and of him learned to pray at home and everywhere, and to instruct every man his household.

Where now we hear but voices without signification and buzzings, howlings and cryings, as it were the hallowings of foxes or baitings of bears, and wonder at disguisings and toys whereof we know no meaning.^a

By reason whereof we be fallen into such ignorancy, that we know of the mercy and promises which are in Christ nothing at all.

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^a 1 Corinthians 14:10.

And of the law of God we think as do the Turks, and as did the old heathen people, how that it is a thing which every man may do of his own power, and in doing thereof becometh good and waxeth° righteous and deserveth heaven: yea and are yet more mad than that. For we imagine the same of fantasies and vain ceremonies of our own making, neither needful unto the taming of our own flesh, neither profitable unto our neighbour, neither honour unto God.

[A5v]

And of prayer we think that no man can pray but at church, and that is nothing else but to say pater noster° unto a post. Wherewith yet and with other observances of our own imagining, we believe, we deserve to be sped of all that our blind hearts desire.

In another signification it is abused and mistaken for a multitude of shaven, shorn and oiled, ¹¹⁶ which we now call the spirituality° and clergy. As when we read in the chronicles, King William was a great tyrant and a wicked man unto holy church and took much lands from them. King John was also a perilous man and a wicked unto holy church, and would have had them punished for theft, murder and whatsoever mischief they did, as though they had not have been people anointed, ¹¹⁷ but even of the vile rascal and common lay people.

And Thomas Becket was a blessed and an holy man for he died for the liberties (to do all mischief unpunished) and privileges of the church. ¹¹⁸ Is he a layman or a man of the church? Such is the living of holy church. So say men of holy church, ye must believe in holy church and do as they teach you. Will ye not obey holy church? Will ye not do the penance enjoined you by holy church? Will ye not forswear° obedience unto holy church? Beware lest ye fall into the indignation of holy church, lest they curse you, and so forth. In which all, we understand but the pope, cardinals, legates, patriarchs, archbishops, bishops, abbots, priors, chancellors, archdeacons, commissaries,

officials, priests, monks, friars, black, white, pied, grey, and so forth, by (I trow°) a thousand names of blasphemy and of hypocrisy and as many sundry° fashions of disguisings. [A6r]

It hath yet, or should have, another signification little known among the common people nowadays. That is to wit, it signifieth a congregation, a multitude or a company gathered together in one, of all degrees of people. As a man would say, the church of London, meaning not the spirituality° only (as they will be called for their diligent serving of God in the spirit and so sore eschewing to meddle with temporal matters) but the whole body of the city, of all kinds, conditions, and degrees. And the church of Bristol, all that pertain unto the town generally. And what congregation is meant, thou shall alway° understand by the matter that is entreated of and by the circumstances thereof.

And in this third signification is the church of God or Christ taken in the scripture, even for the whole multitude of all them that receive the name of Christ to believe in him, and not for the clergy only. For Paul saith (Galatians 1) I persecuted the church of God above measure.^a Which was not the preachers only, but all that believed generally, as it is to see (Acts 22) where he saith, I persecuted this way, even unto the death, binding and putting in prison both men and women.^b And, (Galatians 1) I was unknown concerning my person unto the congregations of the Jews which were in Christ.^c And, (Romans 16) I commend unto you Phebe the deaconess of the church of Cenchrae.^d

^a Galatians 1:13.

^b Acts 22:4.

^c Galatians 1:22.

d Romans 16:1.

And the churches of Asia salute you (1 Corinthians the last).^a And if a man cannot rule his own house, how shall he take the care of the church of God (1 Timothy 3)^b? If any faithful man or woman have widows, let them find° them, that the church be not charged (1 Timothy 5).^c [A6v] And, (Matthew 18) if thy brother hear thee not, tell the church or congregation, and so forth.^d In which places and throughout all the scripture, the church is taken for the whole multitude of them that believe in Christ, in that place, in that parish, town, city, province, land or throughout all the world, and not for the spirituality° only.

Notwithstanding yet, it is sometimes taken generally for all that embrace the name of Christ though their faiths be naught° or though they have no faith at all. And sometimes it is taken specially for the elect° only in whose hearts God hath written his law with his holy spirit and given them a feeling faith of the mercy that is in Christ Jesus our lord.

Why Tyndale used this word *congregation* rather than *church* in the translation of the New Testament.

Wherefore, inasmuch as the clergy (as the nature of those hard and indurate adamant stones is, to draw all to them) had appropriated unto themselves the term that of right is common unto all the

^a 1 Corinthians 16:19.

^b 1 Timothy 3:5.

^c 1 Timothy 5:16.

^d Matthew 18:17.

whole congregation of them that believe in Christ, and with their false and subtle wiles had beguiled and mocked the people and brought them into the ignorance of the word, making them understand by this word *church*, nothing but the shaven flock, of them that shove° the whole world: therefore in the translation of the New Testament where I found this word *ecclesia*, I interpreted it, by this word *congregation*. Even therefore did I it, and not of any mischievous mind or purpose to stablish° heresy, as Master More untruly reporteth of me in his *Dialogue* where he raileth° on the translation of the New Testament. [A7r]¹¹⁹

And when Master More saith, that this word *church* is known well enough, I report me unto the consciences of all the land, whether he say truth or otherwise, or whether the lay people understand by *church* the whole multitude of all that profess Christ, or the juggling spirits only. And when he saith that *congregation* is a more general term, if it were, it hurteth not. For the circumstance doth ever tell what congregation is meant. Nevertheless, yet saith he not the truth. For wheresoever I may say a congregation, there may I say a church also as the church of the Devil, the church of Satan, the church of wretches, the church of wicked men, the church of liars, and a church of Turks thereto.

For Master More must grant (if he will have *ecclesia* translated throughout all the New Testament by this word *church*) that *church* is as common as *ecclesia*. Now is *ecclesia* a Greek word and was in use before the time of the apostles and taken for a congregation among the heathen, where was no congregation of God or of Christ. And also Luke himself useth *ecclesia* for a church or congregation of heathen people thrice in one chapter, even in the nineteenth of the Acts, where Demetrius the goldsmith or silversmith had gathered a company against Paul for preaching against

images.a

Howbeit,° Master More hath so long used his figures of poetry, that (I suppose) when he erreth most, he now by the reason of a long custom, believeth himself, that he saith most true. Or else (as the wise people which, when they dance naked in nets, believe that no man seeth them) even so Master More thinketh that his errors [A7v] be so subtly couched that no man can espy them. ¹²⁰ So blind he counteth all other men in comparison of his great understanding. But charitably I exhort him in Christ to take heed for though Judas were wilier than his fellows to get lucre,° yet he proved not most wise at the last end. ¹²¹ Neither though Balaam the false prophet had a clear sight to bring the curse of God upon the children of Israel for honour's sake, yet his covetousness did so blind his prophecy, that he could not see his own end. ^b Let therefore Master More and his company awake betimes,° ere° ever their sin be ripe, lest the voice of their wickedness ascend up and awake God out of his sleep, to look upon them and to bow his ears unto their cursed blasphemies against the open truth, and to send his harvestmen and mowers of vengeance to reap it.

But how happeth° it that Master More hath not contended in like° wise against his darling Erasmus all this long while? Doth not he change this word *ecclesia* into *congregation* and that not seldom in the New Testament?¹²² Peradventure° he oweth him favour because he made *Moria* in his house.¹²³ Which book, if were in English, then should every man see, how that he then was far otherwise minded than he now writeth. But verily I think that as Judas betrayed not Christ for any love that he had unto the high priests, scribes and pharisees, but only to come by that wherefore he thirsted: even so Master More (as there are tokens evident) wrote not these books for any affection

^a Acts 19:32.

b Numbers 22-24.

that he bore unto the spirituality° or unto the opinions which he so barely defendeth, but to obtain only that which he was an-hungered for: I pray God that he eat not too hastily lest he be cho[A8r]ked at the latter end, but that he repent and resist not the spirit of God which openeth light unto the world.^a

Why he useth this word elder and not priest

Another thing which he rebuketh is that I interpret this Greek word *presbyteros* by this word *senior*. Of a truth, *senior* is no very good English, though *senior* and *junior* be used in the universities: but there came no better in my mind at that time. Howbeit, or I spied my fault since, long ereo Master More told it me, and have mended it in all the works which I since made and call it an elder. And in that he maketh heresy of it, to call *presbyteros* an *elder*, he condemneth their own old Latin text of heresy also, which they use yet daily in the church and have used, I suppose, this fourteen hundred years. ¹²⁴ For that text doth call it an *elder* likewise. In the fifth chapter of the first of Peter, thus standeth it in the Latin text: *Seniores qui in vobis sunt, obsecro ego consenior, pascite qui in vobis est gregem Christi*, the elders that are among you I beseech which am an elder also that ye feed the flock of Christ, which is among you. There is *presbyteros* called an *elder*. And in that he saith feed Christ's flock, he meaneth even the ministers that were chosen to teach the people and to inform them in God's word and no lay persons. And in the second epistle of John saith the text,

^a Acts 6:10.

^b 1 Peter 5:1.

senior electe domine et filijs eius, the elder unto the elect° lady and to her children. And in the third epistle of John, Senior Gaio dilecto, the elder unto the beloved Gaius. In these two epistles presbyteros is called an elder. And in the twentieth of the Acts, the text saith: Paul sent for maiores natu ecclesie, the [A8v]elders in birth of the congregation or church, and said unto them, take heed unto yourselves and unto the whole flock, over which the holy ghost hath made you episcopos ad regendum ecclesiam dei, bishops or overseers to govern the church of God. There is presbyteros called an elder in birth which same is immediately called a bishop or overseer, to declare what persons are meant. Hereof ye see that I have no more erred than their own text which they have used since the scripture was first in the Latin tongue, and that their own text understandeth by presbyteros nothing save an elder. And they were called elders, because of their age, gravity and sadness, as thou mayest see by the text: and bishops or overseers by reason of their offices. And all that were called elders (or priests if they so will) were called bishops also, though they have divided the names now. Which thing thou mayest evidently see by the first chapter of Titus and the twentieth of the Acts and other places more.

And when he layeth Timothy unto my charge, how he was young, then he weeneth° that he hath won his golden spurs. But I would pray him to show me where he readeth that Paul calleth him *presbyteros*, priest or elder. I durst not then call him *episcopus* properly. For those overseers which we now call bishops after the Greek word, were alway° biding in one place, to govern the

^a 2 John 1.

^b 3 John 1.

^c Acts 20:17, 28.

^d Titus 1:5-7: Acts 20:28.

congregation there. Now was Timothy an apostle, and Paul also writeth that he come shortly again. Well, will he say, it cometh yet all to one. For if it becometh the lower minister to be of a sad° and discreet age, much more it becometh the higher. It is truth. [B1r] But two things are without law, God and necessity. If God, to show his power, shall shed out his grace more upon youth than upon age at a time, who shall let° him? Women be no meet° vessels to rule or to preach (for both are forbidden them) yet hath God endoted° them with his spirit at sundry° times, and showed his power and goodness upon them, and wrought° wonderful things by them, because he would not have them despised. We read that women have judged all Israel and have been great prophetesses and have done mighty deeds. ¹²⁵ Yea, and if stories be true, women have preached since the opening of the New Testament.

Do not our women now christen and minister the sacrament of baptism in time of need? Might they not by as good reason preach also, if necessity required? If a woman were driven into some island, where Christ was never preached, might she there not preach him, if she had the gift thereto? Might she not also baptise? And why might she not, by the same reason, minister the sacrament of the body and blood of Christ, and teach them how to choose officers and ministers? O poor women, how despise ye them! The viler the better welcome unto you. An whore had ye liever than an honest wife. If only shaven and anointed may do these things, then Christ did them not nor any of his apostles, nor any man in long time after. For they used no such ceremonies.

Notwithstanding, though God be under no law and necessity lawless: yet be we under a law and ought to prefer the men before the women and age before youth, as nigh as we can. For it is against the law of nature that young men shou[B1v]ld rule the elder, and as uncomely as that women should rule the men, but when need requireth. And therefore, if Paul had had other shift and

a man of age as meet° for the room,° he would not have put Timothy in the office. He should no doubt have been kept back until a fuller age and have learned in the meantime in silence. And whatsoever thou be, that readest this, I exhort thee in our lord, that thou read both the epistles of Paul to Timothy, that thou mayest see how diligently (as a mother careth for her child, if it be in peril) Paul writeth unto Timothy, to instruct him, to teach him, to exhort, to courage° him, to stir him up, to be wise, sober, diligent, circumspect, sad,° humble and meek, saying: these I write, that thou mayest know how to behave thyself in the house of God which is the church or congregation.^a Avoid lusts of youth, beware of ungodly fables and old wives' tales^b, and avoid the company of men of corrupt minds which waste their brains about wrangling questions.^c Let no man despise thine youth. d As who should say, youth is a despised thing of itself, whereunto men give none obedience naturally or reverence. See therefore that thy virtue exceed, to recompense thy lack of age, and that thou so behave thyself, that no fault be found with thee. And again, rebuke not an elder sharply, but exhort him as thy father, and young men as thy brethren, and the elder women as thy mothers, and the young women as thy sisters, and suchlike in every chapter.^e Admit none accusation against an elder under less than two witnesses. And Paul chargeth him in the sight of God and of the lord Jesus Christ and of his elect° angels, to do nothing rashly or of af[B2r]fection. And shortly whereunto youth is most prone and ready to fall, thereof warneth he him with all diligence, even almost or

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^a 1 Timothy 6:10.

^b 1 Timothy 4:7.

^c 1 Timothy 6:5; 2 Timothy 2:23.

^d 1 Timothy 4:12.

^e 1 Timothy 5:1-2.

altogether half a dozen times of some one thing. And finally, as a man would teach a child that had never before gone to school, so tenderly and so carefully doth Paul teach him. It is another thing to teach the people and to teach the preacher. Here Paul teacheth the preacher, young Timothy.

And when he affirmeth that I say, how that the oiling and shaving is no part of the priesthood, that improve he not nor can do. And therefore I say it yet. And when he hath ensearched the uttermost that he can, this is all that he can lay against me, that of an hundred there be not ten that have the properties which Paul requireth to be in them. Wherefore, if oiling and shaving be no part of their priesthood, then evermore of a thousand, nine hundred at the least should be no priests at all. And quoth-your-friend would confirm it with an oath and swear deeply, that it would follow and that it must needs so be. Which argument yet, if there were no nother shift I would solve after an Oxford fashion, with *concedo consequenciam et consequens*. And I say moreover that their anointing is but a ceremony borrowed of the Jews, though they have somewhat altered the manner, and their shaving borrowed of the heathen priests, and that they be no more of their priesthood, than the oil, salt, spittle, taper and chrism cloth of the substance of baptism. Which things, no doubt, because they be of their conjuring, they would have preached of necessity unto the salvation of the child, except necessity had driven them unto the contrary. [B2v]

And seeing that the oil is not of necessity, let Master More tell me what more virtue is in the oil of confirmation, inasmuch as the bishop sacreth one as well as the other: yea, and let him tell the reason why there should be more virtue in the oil wherewith the bishop anointeth his priests. Let him tell you from whence the oil cometh, how it is made, and why he selleth it to the curates wherewith they anoint the sick, or whether this be of less virtue than the other.

And finally why used not the apostles this Greek word hiereus or the interpreter 128 this Latin

word *sacerdos*, but alway° this word *presbyteros* and *senior*, by which was at that time nothing signified than an elder? And it was no doubt taken of the custom of the Hebrews, where the officers were ever elderly men as nature requireth, as it appeareth in the Old Testament and also in the New. The scribes, pharisees and the elders of the people, saith the text, which were the officers and rulers, so called by the reason of their age.

Whether the church were before

the gospel or the gospel be-

fore the church.

Another doubt there is, whether the church or congregation be before the gospel or the gospel before the church. Which question is as hard to solve as whether the father be elder than the son or the son elder than his father. For the whole scripture and all believing hearts testify that we are begotten through the word. Wherefore if the word beget the congregation, and he that begetteth is before him that is begotten, then is the gospel before the church. Paul also (Romans 9) saith, how shall they call on whom they believe not? And how shall they believe without a preacher?^a That is, Christ must first be preached ere° men can believe in him. And then it followeth, that the word of the preacher must be before the faith of the believer. And therefore inasmuch as the word is before the faith, and faith maketh the congregation, therefore is the word or gospel before the congregation. And again as the air is dark of itself and receiveth all her light of the sun: even so are all men's hearts of themselves dark with lies and receive all their truth of God's word, in that they consent thereto. And moreover, as the dark air giveth the sun no light, but contrariwise the light of the sun in respect of the air is of itself and lighteneth the air and purgeth it from darkness: even so the lying heart of man can give the word of God no truth, but contrariwise the truth of God's word is of herself and [B5v] lighteneth the hearts of the believers and maketh them true, and cleanseth them

^a Romans 10:14.

from lies, as thou readest (John 15) ye be clean by reason of the word.^a Which is to be understand,^o in that the word had purged their hearts from lies, from false opinions and from thinking evil good, and therefore from consenting to sin. And (John 17) sanctify them O father through thy truth.^b And thy word is truth. And thus thou seest that God's truth dependeth not of man. It is not true because man so saith or admitteth it for true, but man is true because he believeth it, testifieth and giveth witness in his heart that it is true. And Christ also saith himself (John 5) I receive no witness of man.^c For if the multitude of man's witness might make aught^o true, then were the doctrine of Mohammed truer than Christ's.

[C6v]

Whether the pope and his

sect be Christ's church or no

That the pope and his spirits be not the church may thiswise be proved. He that hath no faith to be saved through Christ, is not of Christ's church. The pope believeth not to be saved through Christ. For he teacheth to trust in holy works for the remission of sins and salvation: as in the works of penance enjoined, in vows, in pilgrimage, in chastity, in other men's prayers and holy living, in friars and friars' coats, in saints' merits, and the significations put out, he teacheth to believe in the deeds of the ceremonies and of the sacraments ordained at the beginning to preach unto us and to do

^b John 17:17.

^a John 15:3.

^c John 5:34.

us service, and not that we should believe in them and serve them. And a thousand such superstitiousnesses setteth he before us instead [C7r] of Christ, to believe in, neither Christ nor God's word, neither honourable to God nor serviceable unto our neighbour nor profitable unto ourselves for the taming of the flesh, which all are the denying of Christ's blood.

Another reason is this. Whosoever believeth in Christ, consenteth that God's law is good. The pope consenteth not that God's law is good. For he hath forbidden lawful wedlock unto all his, over whom he reigneth as a temporal tyrant with laws of his own making and not as a brother exhorting them to keep Christ's. And he hath granted unlawful whoredom unto as many as bring money. As through all Dutchland,° every priest paying a gelden° unto the archdeacon shall freely and quietly have his whore and put her away at his pleasure and take another at his own lust. As they do in Wales, in Ireland, Scotland, France and Spain. And in England thereto they be not few which have licenses to keep whores, some of the pope and some of their ordinaries.° And when the parishes go to law with them to put away their whores, the bishops' officers mock them, poll° them and make them spend their thrifts, and the priests keep their whores still. Howbeit,° in very° deed, since they were rebuked by the preaching of Wycliffe, our English spirituality° have laid their snares unto men's wives to cover their abominations, though they bide not alway° secret. 129

Thereto all Christian men if they have done amiss repent when their faults be told them. The spirituality° repent not, but of very° lust and consent to sin, persecute both the scripture wherewith they be rebuked and also them that [C7v] warn them to amend and make heretics of them and burn them. And besides that, the pope hath made a plain decree in which he commandeth saying, though the pope sin never so grievously and draw with him to Hell by his example thousands innumerable, yet let no man be so hardy to rebuke him. For he is head over all and none over him (Distinction 40:

Si papa...). 130

And Paul saith (Romans 13) Let every soul obey the higher powers that are ordained to punish sin.^a The pope will not, nor let any of his.

And Paul chargeth (1 Corinthians 5) if he that is a brother be an whorekeeper, a drunkard, covetous, an extortioner or a railer,° and so forth, that we have no fellowship with him, no, not so much as to eat in his company.^b But the pope with violence compelleth us to have such in honour, to receive the sacraments of them, to hear their masses and to believe all they say, and yet they will not let us see whether they say truth or no. And he compelleth ten parishes to pay their tithes and offerings unto one such to go and run at riot at their cost and to do naught therefor. And a thousand suchlike doth the pope contrary unto Christ's doctrine.

The arguments wherewith the pope would prove himself the church are solved.

Notwithstanding, because as they be all shaven they be all shameless to affirm that they be the right church and cannot err, though all the world seeth that not one of them is in the right way and that they have with utter defiance forsaken both the doctrine and living of [C8r] Christ and of all his apostles, let us see the sophistry° wherewith they would persuade it. One of their high reasons is this. The church, say they, was before the heretics and the heretics came ever out of the church and left it. And they were before all them which they now call heretics and the Lutherans came out of them etc.

a Romans 13:1.

^b 1 Corinthians 5:11.

Wherefore, they be the right church and the other heretics indeed as they be called. Well, I will likewise dispute. First, the right church was under Moses and Aaron, and so forth in whose rooms° sat the scribes, pharisees and high priests in the time of Christ. And they were before Christ. And Christ and his apostles came out of them and departed from them and left them. Wherefore the scribes pharisees and high priests were the right church, and Christ and his apostles and disciples heretics and a damnable sect. And so the Jews are yet in the right way and we in error. And of truth, if their blind reason be good, then is this argument so too. For they be like° and are both one thing.

But inasmuch as the kingdom of God standeth not in words, as Paul saith (1 Corinthians 4), but in power,^a therefore look unto the marrow and pith of the thing's self, and let vain words pass. Under Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob was the church great in faith and small in number, so it decreased in faith until the time of Moses. And out of those unbelievers, God stirred up Moses and brought them unto the right faith again. And Moses left a glorious church and in faith and cleaving unto the word of God, and delivered them unto Joshua, Eleazar, Phinehas and Caleb. ¹³¹ [C8v]

But as soon as the generation of them that saw the miracles of God were dead, they fell to idolatry immediately, as thou seest in the Bible. And God, when he had delivered them into captive for to chastise their wickedness, stirred them up a prophet evermore, to call them unto his testament again. And so he did well nigh an hundred times, I suppose, ere° Christ came, for they never bode° any space in the right faith. And against the coming of Christ the scribes, pharisees, Caiaphas, Annas, and the elders, were crept up into the seat of Moses, Aaron and the holy prophets and patriarchs, and succeeded them lineally, and had the scripture of God but even in captive, to make merchandise of it and to abuse it unto their own glory and profit. And though they kept the people

^a 1 Corinthians 4:20.

from outward Idolatry of worshipping of images with the heathen: yet they brought them into a worse inward Idolatry of a false faith and trust in their own deeds and in vain traditions of their own feigning. And they had put out the significations of all the ceremonies and sacraments of the Old Testament and taught the people to believe in the work's self, ¹³² and had corrupt the scripture with false glosses.° As thou mayest see in the gospel, how Christ warneth his disciples to beware of the leaven of the pharisees which was their false doctrine and glosses. ^{o133} And in another place he rebuked the scribes and the pharisees saying: woe be to them, because they had taken away the key of knowledge and had shut up the kingdom of heaven and neither would enter in themselves nor suffer them that would. How had they shut it up? Verily, with their traditions and false glosses, of the ceremonies and sacrifices and teaching to believe in the work.

And our hypocrites are in like° manner crept up into the seat of Christ and of his apostles, by succession: not to do the deeds of Christ and his apostles, but for lucre° only (as the nature of the wily fox is, to get him an hole made with another beast's labour ¹³⁴) and to make merchandise of the people with feigned words, as Peter warned us before, and to do according as Christ and all his apostles prophesied, how they should beguile and lead out of the right way, all them that had no love to follow and live after the truth.

And in like° manner have they corrupt the scripture, and blinded the right way with their own constitutions, with traditions of dumb ceremonies, with taking away the significations of the sacraments, to make us believe in the work of the sacraments first, whereby they might the better make us believe in works of their setting up afterward, and with false glosses° which they have

^a Matthew 23:13.

patched to the scripture in plain places to destroy the literal sense for to set up a false feigned sense of allegories, when there is none such. And thereby they have stopped up the gates of heaven, the true knowledge of Christ, and have made their own bellies the door. For through their bellies must thou creep and there leave all thy offal behind thee. And such blind reasons as ours make against us, made they against Christ saying: Abraham is our father, we be Moses' disciples, how knoweth he the understanding of the scripture, seeing he never learned of any of us? Only the cursed [D1v] unlearned people that know not the scripture believe in him. Look whether any of the rulers or pharisees do believe in him.

Wherefore the scripture, truly understand° after the plain places and general articles of the faith which thou findest in the scripture, and the examples that are gone before, will alway° testify who is the right church. Though the pharisees succeeded the patriarchs and prophets and had the scripture of them, yet they were heretics and fallen from the faith of them and from their living. And Christ and his disciples and John the Baptist departed from the pharisees which were heretics, unto the right sense of the scripture and unto the faith and living of the patriarchs and prophets and rebuked the pharisees. As thou seest how Christ calleth them hypocrites, dissimulars,° blind guides and painted sepulchres.^b And John called them the generation of vipers and serpents.^c Of John, the angel said unto his father (Luke 1) he shall turn many of the children of Israel unto their lord God. Which yet before John believed after a fleshly understanding in God and thought themselves in the

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^a John 8:31-59.

^b Matthew 3:7.

^c Matthew 3:7.

right way. And he shall turn the hearts of the fathers unto the children.^a That is, he shall with his preaching and true interpreting of the scripture make such a spiritual heart in the children as was in their father, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. And he shall turn the disobedient unto the obedience of the righteous and prepare the lord a perfect people.^b That is, them that had set up a rightwiseness° of their own and were therefore disobedient unto the rightwiseness° of faith, shall be convert from their blindness unto the wisdom of them that believed in God to be made righ[D2r]twise,° and with those fathers shall he give the children eagles' eyes to spy out Christ and his rightwiseness° and to forsake their own and so to become perfect.

And after the same manner, though our popish hypocrites succeed Christ and his apostles and have their scripture, yet they be fallen from the faith and living of them and are heretics and had need of a John Baptist to convert them. And we depart from them unto the true scripture and unto the faith and living thereof, and rebuke them in like° manner. And as they which depart from the faith of the true church are heretics, even so they that depart from the church of heretics and false feigned faith of hypocrites, are the true church, which thou shalt alway° know by their faith examined by the scripture and by their profession and consent to live according unto the laws of God.

Another argument

Another like° blind reason they have, wherein is all their trust. As we come out of them and

^a Luke 1:16-17.

^b Luke 1:17.

they not of us, so we receive the scripture of them and they not of us. How know we that it is the scripture of God and true but because they teach us so? How can we that believe, except we first believe that they be the church and cannot err in anything that pertaineth unto our soul's health? For if a man tell me of a marvellous thing, whereof I can have no nother knowledge than by his mouth only, how should I give credence except I believed that the man were so honest that he could not lie or would not lie? Wherefore we must believe that they be the right church that cannot err or else we can believe naught at all. [D2v]

This wise reason is their shot-anchor° and all their hold, their refuge to flight and chief stone in their foundation, whereon they have built all their lies and all their mischief that they have wrought° these eight hundred years. And this reason do the Jews lay unto our charge this day, and this reason doth chiefly blind them and hold them still in obstinacy. Our spirits first falsify the scripture to stablish° their lies. And when the scripture cometh to light and is restored unto the true understanding and their juggling spied, and they like° to suffer shipwreck, then they cast out this anchor, they be the church and cannot err, their authority is greater than the scripture, and the scripture is not true, but because they say so and admit it. And therefore whatsoever they affirm, is of as great authority as the scripture.

Notwithstanding, as I said, the kingdom of heaven standeth not in words of man's wisdom, but in power and spirit.^a And therefore look unto the examples of the scripture and so shalt thou understand. And of an hundred examples between Moses and Christ, where the Israelites fell from God and were ever restored by one prophet or other, let us take one: even John the Baptist. John went before Christ to prepare his way, that is, to bring men unto the knowledge of their sins and

^a 1 Corinthians 2:4.

unto repentance, through true expounding of the law, which is the only way unto Christ. For except a man knowledge° his sins and repent of them, he can have no part in Christ. Of John, Christ saith (Matthew 17) that he was Elijah that should come and restore all thing.^a That is, he should restore the scripture unto the right sense again, which [D3r] the pharisees had corrupt with the leaven of their false glosses° and vain fleshly traditions. ^b He made crooked things straight, as it is written, and rough smooth.^c Which is also to be understand^o of the scripture, which the pharisees had made crooked wresting them unto a false sense with wicked glosses,° and so rough that no man could walk in the way of them. For when God said, honour father and mother, meaning that we should obey them and also help them at their need, the pharisees put this gloss° thereto, out of their own leaven saying: God is thy father and mother. Wherefore, whatsoever need thy father and mother have, if thou offer to God, thou art hold excused. For it is better to offer to God, than to thy father and mother and so much more meritorious as God is greater than they: yea, and God hath done more for thee than they and is more thy father and mother than they. As ours now affirm, that it is more meritorious to offer to God and his holy dead saints, than unto the poor living saints. And when God had promised the people a saviour to come and bless them and save them from their sins, the pharisees taught to believe in holy works to be saved by as if they offered and gave to be prayed for. As ours, as oft as we have a promise to be forgiven at the repentance of the heart through Christ's bloodshedding, put to, thou must first shrive thyself to us of every syllable and we must lay our hands on thine head and whistle out thy sins and enjoin the penance to make satisfaction. And

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^a Matthew 17:12.

^b Matthew 16:11-12.

^c Luke 3:5.

yet art thou but loosed from the sin only that thou shalt not come into hell, but thou must yet suffer for every sin seven years in purgatory which is as hot as hell, ex[D3v]cept thou buy it out of the pope. And if thou ask by what means the pope giveth such pardon,° they answer, out of the merits of Christ. And thus at the last they grant against themselves, that Christ hath not only deserved for us the remission of our sins, but also the forgiveness of that gross and fleshly imagined purgatory, save thou must buy it out of the pope. And with such traditions they took away the key of knowledge and stopped up the Kingdom of Heaven that no man could enter in.^a

And as I said, they taught the people to believe in the deeds of the ceremonies which God ordained, not to justify, but to be signs of promises by which they that believed were justified. But the pharisees put out the significations and quenched the faith and taught to be justified by the work, as ours have served us.¹³⁷

For our sacraments were once but signs partly of what we should believe, to stir us up unto faith, and partly what we should do, to stir us up to do the law of God, and were not works to justify.

Now make this reason unto John¹³⁸ and unto many prophets that went before him and did as he did, yea, and unto Christ himself and his apostles, and thou shalt find them all heretics, and the scribes and pharisees good men, if that reason be good. Therefore thiswise thou mayest answer. No thanks unto the heads of that church that the scripture was kept, but unto the mercy of God. For as they had destroyed the right sense of it for their lucre's° sake, even so would they have destroyed it also had they could, ¹³⁹ rather than the people should have come unto the right understanding of it, as they slew [D4r] the true interpreters and preachers of it. And even so no thanks unto our hypocrites that the scripture is kept, but unto the bottomless mercy of God.

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^a Luke 11:52.

For as they have destroyed the right sense of it with their leaven, and as they destroy daily the true preachers of it, and as they keep it from the lay people, that they should not see how they juggle with it, even so would they destroy it also, could they bring it about, rather than we should come by the true understanding of it, were it not that God provided otherwise for us. For they have put the stories, that should in many things help us, clean° out of the way, as nigh as they could. They have corrupt the legend and lives almost of all saints. They have feigned false books and put them forth, some in the name of Saint Jerome, some in the name of Saint Augustine, in the name of Saint Cyprian, Saint Dionysius and other holy men. 140 Which are proved none of theirs, partly by the style and Latin, and partly by authentic stories. And as the Jews have set up a book of traditions called Talmud, to destroy the sense of the scripture, unto which they give faith and unto the scripture none at all be it never so plain, but say it cannot be understand,° save by that Talmud: even so have ours set up their Duns, their Thomas and a thousand like° draff,° to stablish° their lies, through falsifying the scripture, and say that it cannot be understand° without them, be it never so plain. And if a man allege° an holy doctor against them they gloss° him out as they do the scripture, or will not hear, or say the church hath otherwise determined.

Now therefore, when they ask us how we know [D4v] that it is the scripture of God, ask them how John Baptist knew, and other prophets which God stirred up in all such times as the scriptures was in like° captivity under hypocrites? Did John believe that the scribes, pharisees and high priests were the true church of God, and had his spirit and could not err? Who taught the eagles to spy out their prey? Even so the children of God spy out their father and Christ's elect° spy out their lord, and trace out the paths of his feet and follow, yea, though he go upon the plain and liquid water which

will receive no step^a: and yet there they find out his foot, his elect° know him, but the world knoweth him not (John 1).^b If the world know him not, and thou call the world pride, wrath, envy, covetousness, sloth, gluttony and lechery, ¹⁴¹ then our spirituality° know him not. Christ's sheep hear the voice of Christ (John 10) where the world of hypocrites as they know him not,^c even so the wolves hear not his voice, but compel the scripture to hear them and to speak what they lust°. And therefore, except the lord of Sabaoth had left us seed, we had been all as Sodom and Gomorrah, said Isaiah in his first chapter. ¹⁴² And even so said Paul in his time. And even so say we in our time, that the lord of the hosts hath saved him seed and hath gathered him a flock to whom he hath given ears to hear, that the hypocritish wolves cannot hear, and eyes to see, that the blind leaders of the blind cannot see, ^d and an heart to understand, that the generation of poisoned vipers can neither understand nor know.^c

If they allege° Saint Augustine which saith, I had not believed the Gospel, except the authority [D5r] of the church had moved me. I answer, as they abuse that saying of the holy man, even so they allege° all the scripture and all that they bring for them, even in a false sense. Saint Augustine before he was converted was an heathen man and a philosopher full of worldly wisdom unto whom the preaching of Christ is but foolishness, saith Paul (1 Corinthians 1). And he disputed with blind

^a Matthew 14:25.

^b John 1:10.

^c John 10:16.

^d Matthew 15:14; Luke 6:39.

^e Matthew 3:7.

f 1 Corinthians 1:23.

reasons of wordly° wisdom against the Christian. Nevertheless, the earnest living of the Christian according unto their doctrine and the constant suffering of persecution and adversity for their doctrine's sake moved him and stirred him to believe that it was no vain doctrine, but that it must needs be of God, in that it had such power with it. For it happeneth that they which will not hear the word at the beginning, are afterward moved by the holy conversation of them that believe. As Peter warneth Christian wives that had heathen husbands that would not hear the truth preached, to live so godly that they might win their heathen husbands with holy conversation. And Paul saith, How knowest thou, Christian wife, whether thou shalt win thine heathen husband?—with holy conversation meant he. For many are won with godly living, which at the first either will not hear or cannot believe. And that is the authority that Saint Augustine meant. But if we shall not believe, till the living of the spirituality° convert us, we be like° to bide long enough in unbelief.

And when they ask whether we received the scripture of them., I answer, that they which come after receive the scripture of them that go before. And when they ask whether we belie[D5v]ve not that it is God's word by the reason that they tell us so. I answer that there are two manner faiths, an historical faith and a feeling faith. The historical faith hangeth of the truth and honesty of the teller or of the common fame and consent of many. As if one told me that the Turk had won a city and I believed it moved with the honesty of the man. Now if there come another that seemeth more honest or that hath better persuasions that it is not so, I think immediately that he lied and lose my faith again. And a feeling faith is, as if a man were there present when it was won and there were

^a 1 Peter 3:1.

^b 1 Corinthians 7:16.

wounded and had there lost all that he had and were taken prisoner there also. That man should so believe that all the world could not turn him from his faith. Even likewise if my mother had blown on her finger and told me that the fire would burn me, I should have believed her with an historical faith, as we believe the stories of the world, because I thought she would not have mocked me. And so I should have done if she had told me that the fire had been cold and would not have burned, but as soon as I had put my finger in the fire, I should have believed, not by the reason of her, but with a feeling faith, so that she could not have persuaded me afterward the contrary. So now with an historical faith I may believe that the scripture is God's by the teaching of them, and so I should have done though they had told me that Robin Hood had been the scripture of God. Which faith is but an opinion and therefore abideth ever fruitless and falleth away, if a more glorious reason be made unto me or if the preacher live contrary. [D6r]

But of a feeling it is written (John 6) They shall be all taught of God.^a That is, God shall write it in their hearts with his holy spirit. And Paul also testifieth (Romans 8) the spirit beareth record unto our spirit, that we be the sons of God.^b And this faith is none opinion, but a sure feeling, and therefore ever fruitful. Neither hangeth it of the honesty of the preacher but of the power of God and of the spirit, and therefore if all the preachers of the world would go about to persuade the contrary, it would not prevail, no more than though they would make me believe the fire were cold, after that I had put my finger therein.

Of this ye have an example (John 4) of the Samaritanish wife, which left her pitcher and went into the city and said, come and see a man that hath told me all that ever I did, is not he Christ? And

^a John 6:45.

b Romans 8:16.

many of the Samaritans believed because of the saying of the woman, how that he had told her all that ever she did, and went out unto him and desired him to come in, which faith was but an opinion and no faith that could have lasted or have brought out fruit, but when they had heard Christ, the spirit wrought and made them feel. Whereupon they came unto the woman and said: we believe not now because of thy saying, but because we have heard ourselves and know that he is Christ the saviour of the world. For Christ's preaching was with power and spirit that maketh a man feel and know and work, too, and not as the scribes and the pharisees preached, and as ours make a man ready to cast his gorge [D6v] to hear them rave and rage as madmen. And therefore saith the scripture, Cursed is he that trusteth in man and maketh flesh his arm, that is to say, his strength. And even so cursed is he that hath no nother belief but because men so say. Cursed were he that had no nother why to believe than that I so say. And even so cursed is he that believeth only because the pope so saith, and so forth throughout all the men in the world.

.....

[E3v]

Of worshipping of sacraments, ceremonies,

images, relics, and so forth

Now let us come to the worshipping or honouring of sacraments, ceremonies, images and relics. First, images be not God, and therefore no confidence is to be given them. They be not made after the image of God nor are the price of Christ's blood, but the workmanship of the craftsman and the

^a John 4:28-29.

^b John 4:39-42.

price of money and therefore inferior to man.^a

Wherefore, of all right, man is lord over them, and the honour of them is to do man service, and man's dishonour it is to do them honourable service, as unto his better. Images, then, and relics, yea, and as Christ saith, the holy day, too, are servants unto man. And therefore it followeth that we cannot, but unto our damnation, put on a coat worth an hundred coats upon a post's back, and let the image of God and the price of Christ's blood go up and down, thereby naked. For if we care more to clothe the dead image made by man and the price of silver than the lively image of God and price of Christ's blood, then we dishonour the image of God and him that made him and the price of Christ's blood and him that bought him.

Wherefore the right use, office and honours of all creatures inferiors unto man, is to do man service, whether they be images, relics, ornaments, signs or sacraments, holidays, ceremonies or sacrifices. And that may be on this manner and no doubt it so once was. If (for an example) I take a piece of the cross of Christ and make a little cross thereof and bear it about me, to look thereon with a repenting heart, at times when I am moved thereto, to put me in remembrance that the body of Christ was broken and his blood [E4r] shed thereon, for my sins, and believe steadfastly that the merciful truth of God shall forgive the sins of all that repent for his death's sake and never think on them more than it serveth me and I not it and doth me the same service as if I read the testament in a book, or as if the preacher preached it unto me. And in like manner, if I make a cross in my forehead, in a remembrance that God hath promised assistance unto all that believe in him, for his sake that died on the cross, then doth the cross serve me and I not it. And in like manner, if I bear on me or look upon a cross of whatsoever matter it be, or make a cross upon me, in remembrance

^a Genesis 1:26-27.

that whosoever will be Christ's disciple must suffer a cross of adversity, tribulation and persecution, so doth the cross serve me and I not it. And this was the use of the cross once, and for this cause it was at the beginning set up in the churches.

And so if I make an image of Christ or of anything that Christ hath done for me, in a memory, it is good and not evil until it be abused.

And even so, if I take the true life of a saint and cause it to be painted or carved, to put me in remembrance of the saint's life, to follow the saint as the saint did Christ, and to put me in remembrance of the great faith of the saint to God and how true God was to help him out of all tribulation, and to see the saint's love toward his neighbour, in that he so patiently suffered so painful a death and so cruel martyrdom to testify the truth for to save other, and all to strength° my soul withal and my faith to God and love to my neighbour, then doth the image serve me and I not it. And this was the use of images at the beginning and of relics also. [E4v]

And to kneel before the cross unto the word of God which the cross preacheth is not evil. Neither to kneel down before an image in a man's meditations, to call the living of the saint to mind for to desire God of like° grace to follow the example, is not evil. But the abuse of the thing is evil, and to have a false faith: as to bear a piece of the cross about a man, thinking that so long as that is about him, spirits shall not come at him, his enemies shall do him no bodily harm, all causes shall go on his side even for bearing it about him, and to think that if it were not about him it would not be so, and to think, if any misfortune chance, that it came for leaving it off or because this or that ceremony was left undone, and not rather because we have broken God's commandments, or that God tempteth us to prove our patience. This is plain idolatry, and here a man is captive, bond and servant unto a false faith and a false imagination, that is neither God nor his word. Now am I God's

only, and ought to serve nothing but God and his word. My body must serve the rulers of this world and my neighbour (as God hath appointed it) and so must all my goods: but my soul must serve God only, to love his law and to trust in his promises of mercy in all my needs. And in like manner it is that thousands, while the priest pattereth Saint John's Gospel in Latin over their heads, cross themselves with, I trow, a legion of crosses, behind and before and with reverence on the very arses and (as Jack-a-napes when he claweth himself¹⁴³) pluck up their legs and cross so much as their heels and the very soles of their feet, and believe that if it be done in [E5r] the time that he readeth the gospel (and else not) that there shall no mischance happen then that day, because only of those crosses. 144 And where he should cross himself, to be armed and to make himself strong to bear the cross with Christ, he crosseth himself to drive the cross from him, and blesseth himself with a cross from the cross. And if he leave it undone, he thinketh it no small sin, and that God is highly displeased with him and if any misfortune chance, thinketh it is therefor, which is also idolatry and not God's word. And such is the confidence in that place or image or whatsoever bodily observance it be: such is Saint Agatha's letter written in the gospel time. And such are the crosses on Palm Sunday made in the passion time. And such is the bearing of holy wax about a man. And such is that some hang a piece of S. John's gospel about their necks. And such is to bear the names of God with crosses between each name about them. Such is the saying of Gospels unto women in childbed. 145 Such is the limiter's saying of in principio erat verbum^a from house to house. Such is the saying of Gospels to the corn in the field in the procession week that it should the better grow. And such is holy bread, holy water and serving of all ceremonies and sacraments in general without signification. 146 And I pray you, how is it possible that the people can worship images, relics,

^a John 1:1.

ceremonies and sacraments, save superstitiously, so long as they know not the true meaning, neither will the prelates suffer any man to tell them: yea, and the very meaning of some and right use, no man can tell?

And as for the riches that is bestowed on ima[E5v]ges and relics they cannot prove but that it is abominable, as long as the poor are despised and uncared for and not first served, for whose sakes and to find preachers, offerings tithes, lands, rents and all that they have was given the spirituality.° They will say we may do both. May or not may, I see that the one most necessary of both, is not done, but the poor are bereaved of the spirituality° of all that was in time past offered unto them. Moreover, though both were done, they shall never prove that the sight of gold and silver and of precious stones should move a man's heart to despise such things after the doctrine of Christ. Neither can the rich coat help to move thy mind, to follow the example of the saint, but rather if he were portrayed as he suffered, in the most ungoodly wise. Which thing taken away, that such things with all other service as sticking up candles, move not thy mind to follow the example of the saint, nor teach thy soul any godly learning: then the image serveth not thee, but thou the image, and so art thou an idolater, that is to say in English, a serve-image. And thus it appeareth that your ungodly and belly doctrine wherewith ye so magnify the deeds of your ceremonies and of your pilgrimages and offering for the deed itself, to please God and to obtain the favour of dead saints (and not to move you and to put you in remembrance of the law of God and of the promises which are in his son and to follow the example of the saint) is but an exhorting to serve images, and so are ye image-servers, that is, idolaters. And finally the more devotion men have unto such deeds, the less they have unto God's commandment, [E6r] in so much that they which be most wont° to offer to images and to show them, be so cold in offering to the poor, that they will scarce give them the

scraps which must else be given dogs, or their old shoon,° if they may have new brooms for them.

[F1v]

How ceremonies sprang among us

[F2r]

Understand also (to see how we came into like° blindness) that before the coming of Christ in the flesh, the Israelites and Jews were scattered throughout all the world, to punish their image-service, both east, west, south and north, as ye read in the Chronicles how England was once full: 147 so that there was no province or great city in the world where no Jews were: God so providing for the speedy preaching of the gospel among the heathen throughout the world. Now Christ, as he was promised, so was he sent, unto the Jews or Israelites. And what by Christ's preaching and the apostles after his resurrection, there were innumerable Jews converted, haply° an hundred thousand or more in Jerusalem and Jewry and in the countries about, and abode° still in the land. Then Paul rose up and persecuted them in Jerusalem and throughout all Jewry and Damascus, slaying all that he could catch or making them forswear° Christ. For fear of which persecution they fled into all coasts and preached unto the Jews that were scattered, proving that Jesus was Christ the saviour of the world, both by the scripture and also by miracles: so that a great part of the Jews came to the faith everywhere, and we heathen came in shortly after, and part abode° still in unbelief as unto this day.

Now the Jews, being born and bred up rooted and noseled° in ceremonies as I have showed, and as ye may better see in the five books of Moses, if ye would read them, could but with great

^a Acts 8.

difficulty, depart from them as it is to see in all the epistles of Paul, how he fought against them. But in process, [F2v] they gat° the upper hand. And thereto the first that were christened and all the officers and bishops of the church, even so much as the great God of Rome were Jews for the most part a great season.

And moreover, as Paul saith (Romans 9), not all that came of Israel are right Israelites neither are all they Abraham's sons that are Abraham's seed. Why so? Because they followed not the steps of the faith of their grandfathers. Even so, not all they that were called, and also came unto the marriage which God the Father made between Christ his son and all sinners, brought their marriage garment with them, that is to wit, true faith wherewith we be married unto Christ and made his flesh and his blood and one spirit with him, his brethren and heirs with him and the sons of God also.^b But many of them (to fulfil the saying of Christ, that the Kingdom of Heaven, which is the gospel, is like a net that catcheth good and bad^c) were driven into the net and compelled to confess that Jesus was Christ, and that seed that was promised Abraham and Messiah that should come: not of any inward feeling that the spirit of God gave them, neither of any lovely consent that they had unto the law of God, that it was good, mourning, both because they had broken it and because also they had no power to fulfil it and therefore to obtain mercy and power came to Christ and unto the father through him, with the heart of natural children which receive all thing freely of their father's bounteous liberality and of love become servants unto their brethren for their father's sake, but were compelled only [F3r] with violence of the scripture which everywhere bore witness unto Christ and

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^a Romans 9:6-7.

^b Matthew 22:1-14.

^c Matthew 13:47-48.

agreed unto all that he did, and overcome also with the power of miracles that confirmed the same. That is to say, they came with a story faith, a popish faith, a faithless faith and a feigned faith of their own making, and not as God in the scripture describeth the faith, so believing in Christ, that they would be justified by their own deeds, which is the denying of Christ. As our papists believe. Which more mad than those Jews, believe nothing by the reason of the scripture, but only that such a multitude consent thereto, compelled with violence of sword, with falsifying of the scripture and feigned lies. Which multitude yet is not the fifth part so many as they that consent unto the law of Mohammed. And therefore, by their own arguments, the faith of the Turks is better than theirs. And their faith thereto may stand by their own confession, with all mischief (as it well appeareth by them) and with yielding themselves to work all wickedness with full delectation, after the example of the faith of their father the devil, and without repentance and consent unto the law of God, that it is good. Which popish thereto so believe in Christ, and so will be his servants, that they will be bond unto dumb ceremonies and dead works, putting their trust and confidence in them, and hoping to be saved by them, and ascribing unto them the thank of their salvation and rightwiseness.°

And therefore because, as I said, the Jews, yea, and the heathen too, were so accustomed unto ceremonies and because such a multitude came with a faithless faith, they went and clean° [F3v] contrary unto the mind of Paul, set up ceremonies in the New Testament, partly borrowing them of Moses and partly imagining like,° as ye now see, and called them sacraments: that is to say, signs (as it is plain in the stories) the sacrament of holy water, of holy fire, holy bread, holy salt, and so forth. And they gave them significations. As holy water signified the sprinkling of Christ's blood for our redemption. Which sacrament or sign (though it seem superfluous, inasmuch as the sacrament of Christ's body and blood signifieth the same daily) yet as long as the signification bode,° it hurted

not. And the kissing of the pax was set up to signify, that the peace of Christ should be ever among us, one to love an other after his example as the word itself well declareth. For pax is as much to say as peace.¹⁴⁸

And as for confirmation, it is no doubt, but that it came this wise up and that this was the use, which the word itself well declareth. We read in the stories, that they which were converted unto the faith of the age of discretion, were full taught in the law of God (as right is) and in the faith of our saviour Jesus, ere° they were baptised, and upon the profession or promising to keep that law and faith, were baptised. And then for the succour and help of young children, baptised before the age of discretion, to know the law of God and faith of Christ, was confirmation institute, that they should not be alway° ignorant and faithless, but be taught the profession of their baptism. And this, no doubt, was the manner as we may well gather by probable conjectures and evident tokens. When the children were of [F4r] six or seven years old, their elders brought them unto the priest or deacon in every parish, which officer taught the children what their baptism meant and what they had professed therein: that is to wit, the law of God and their duty unto all degrees, and the faith of our saviour. And then because it should not be neglect or left undone, an higher officer as the archdeacon (for it hath not been, I suppose, in the bishop's hands alway° as now, neither were it meet°) came about from parish to parish, at times convenient. And the priests brought the children unto him at eleven or twelve year old, before they were admitted to receive the sacrament of Christ's body haply.° And he apposed° them of the law of God and faith of Christ, and asked them, whether their hearts were to follow it. And they answered yea.

And he apposed° them in the articles of our faith, and asked them, whether they put their hope and trust in Christ, to be saved through his death and merits. And they answered yea. Then

confirmed he their baptism saying: I confirm you, that is, I denounce° and declare, by the authority of God's word and doctrine of Christ, that ye be truly baptised within in your hearts and in your spirits, through professing the law of God and the faith of our saviour Jesus, which your outward baptism doth signify, and thereupon I put this cross in your foreheads, that ye go and fight against the devil, the world and the flesh, under the standard of our saviour, in the name of the father, the son, and the holy ghost. Amen. Which manner I would to God for his tender mercy were in use this day. [F4v]

But after that, the devil was broken loose and the bishops began to purchase, and the deacons to scratch all to them, and the spirituality° to climb on high, ¹⁵⁰ then because the labour seemed too tedious and painful, to appose° the children one by one, they asked the priests that presented them only, whether the children were taught the profession of their baptism. And they answered yea. And so upon their words they confirmed them without apposing.° When they no longer apposed° them, the priests no longer taught them, but committed the charge to their godfather and godmothers, and they to the father and mother, discharging themselves by their own authority within half an hour.

And the father and mother taught them a monstrous Latin paternoster° and an Ave and a creed. Which gibberish every popinjay° speaketh with a sundry° pronunciation and fashion, so that one paternoster° seemeth as many languages almost as there be tongues that speak it. Howbeit,° it is all one, as long as they understand it not. And in process as their ignorance grew, they brought them to confirmation straight from baptism so that now ofttimes° they be volowed and bishopped both in one day, that is, we be confirmed in blindness to be kept from knowledge forever. And thus are we come into this damnable ignorance and fierce wrath of God through our own deserving, because when the truth was told us we had no love thereto. And to declare the full and set wrath of

God upon us, our prelates whom we have exalted over us to whom we have given almost all we had, have persuaded the wordly° princes (to whom we have [F5r] submitted ourselves and given up our power) to devour up body and soul, and to keep us, down in darkness, with violence of sword, and with all falsehood and guile. Insomuch that if any do but lift up his nose to smell after the truth, they swap° him in the face with a fire brand to singe his smelling, or if he open one of his eyes to once look toward the light of God's word, they blear and daze his sight with their false juggling: so that if it were possible, though he were God's elect,° he could not but be kept down and perish for lack of knowledge of the truth.

And in like° manner, because Christ had institute the sacrament of his body and blood, to keep us in remembrance of his body breaking and blood shedding for our sins, therefore went they and set up this fashion of the mass and ordained sacraments in the ornaments thereof to signify and express all the rest of his passion. The amice° on the head is the kerchief that Christ was blindfolded with, when the soldiers buffeted him and mocked him saying: prophet unto us who smote thee? But now it may well signify that he that putteth it on, is blind and hath professed to lead us after him in darkness, according unto the beginning of his play. And the flap thereon is the crown of thorn. And the alb° is the white garment that Herod put on him, saying he was a fool because he held his peace and would not answer him. And the two flaps on the sleeves and the other two on the alb° beneath, over against his feet behind and before, are the four nails. And the fanon° on his hand, the cord that his hands were bound with: And the stole the rope wherewith he was [F5v] bound unto the pillar, when he was scourged: And the corporis cloth,° the sindon° wherein he was buried: and the altar is the cross or haply° the grave, and so forth. And the casting abroad of this hands, the splaying of Christ upon the cross. And the light and sticking up of candles and bearing of candles or tapers in

procession haply° signified this text, (Matthew 5) Ye be the light of the world, and let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your father which is in heaven.^a And the salt signifieth the wisdom of Christ's doctrine, and that we should therewith salt our deeds and do nothing without the authority of God's word. So that in one thing or other, what in the garments and what in the gestures all is played, in so much that before he will go to mass, he will be sure to sell him, lest Judas's part should be left out.

And so throughout all the sacraments, ceremonies or signs (three words of one signification) there were significations unto them at the beginning. ¹⁵³ And so long as it was understand° what was meant by them and they did but serve the people and preach one thing or another unto them, they hurted not greatly, though that the free servant of Christ ought not to be brought violently into captivity under the bondage of traditions of men. As Saint Augustine complaineth in his days, how that the condition and state of the Jews was more easy than the Christians under traditions: so sore had the tyranny of the shepherds invaded the flock already in those days. 154 And then what just cause have we to complain our captivity now, unto whose yoke [F6r] from that time hitherto, even twelve hundred years long, hath ever somewhat more weight been added to, for to keep us down and to confirm us in blindness: howbeit,° as long as the significations bode,° they hurted not the soul, though they were painful unto the body. Neverthelater, I impute this our grievous fall into so extreme and horrible blindness (wherein we are so deep and so deadly brought asleep) unto nothing so much as unto the multitude of ceremonies. For as soon as the prelates had set up such a table of ceremonies, they thought it superfluous to preach the plain text any longer and the law of God, faith of Christ, love toward our neighbour and the order of our justifying and salvation, forasmuch° as all

^a Matthew 5:14.

such things were played before the people's faces daily in the ceremonies and every child wist° the meaning: but got them unto allegories, feigning them every man after his own brain, without rule, almost on every syllable, and from thence unto disputing and wasting their brains about words, not attending the significations until at the last the lay people had lost the meaning of the ceremonies and the prelates the understanding of the plain text, and of the Greek, Latin and specially of the Hebrew, which is most of need to be known, and of all phrases, the proper manner of speakings and borrowed speech of the Hebrews. ¹⁵⁵

Remember ye not how within this thirty years and far less, and yet dureth unto this day, the old barking curs, Duns's disciples and like° draff° called Scotists, the children of darkness, raged in every pulpit against [F6v] Greek, Latin and Hebrew, and what sorrow the schoolmasters that taught the true Latin tongue had with them, some beating the pulpit with their fists for madness and roaring out with open and foaming mouth, that if there were but one Terence or Virgil in the world and that same in their sleeves and a fire before them, they would burn them therein, though it should cost them their lives, affirming that all good learning decayed and was utterly lost since men gave them unto the Latin tongue? Yea, and I daresay, that there be twenty thousand priests curates this day in England and not so few, that cannot give you the right English unto this text in the paternoster,° fiat voluntas tua sicut in celo and in terra and answer thereto. 157

And as soon as the signification of the ceremonies was lost, and the priests preached Christ no longer, then the common people began to wax° mad and out of their minds upon the ceremonies. And that trust and confidence which the ceremonies preached, to be given unto God's word and Christ's blood, that same they turned unto the ceremony itself as though a man were so mad to forget that the bush at the tavern door did signify wine to be sold within, but would believe that the

bush itself would quench his thirst. And so they became servants unto the ceremonies, ascribing their justifying and salvation unto them, supposing that it was nothing else to be a Christian man, than to serve ceremonies, and him most Christian that most served them, and contrariwise him that was not popish and ceremonial, no Christian man at all. For I pray you, for what cause worship we our spirituality° so highly, or wherefore think [F7r] we their prayers better than the poor laymen's, than for their disguisings and ceremonies? Yea, and what other virtue see we in the holiest of them, than to wait upon dumb superstitious ceremonies?

Yea, and how cometh it that a poor layman having wife and twenty children and not able to find° them, though all his neighbours know his necessity, shall not get with begging for Christ's sake, in a long summer's day, enough to find° them two days honestly, when if a disguised monster come, he shall with an hour's lying in the pulpit, get enough to find thirty or forty sturdy labourers a month long, of which the weakest shall be as strong in the belly when he cometh unto the manger, as the mightiest porter in the wayhouse or best courser that is in the king's stable? Is there any other cause than disguising and ceremonies? For the deeds of the ceremonies we count better than the deeds which God commandeth to be done to our neighbour at his need. Who thinketh it as good a deed to feed the poor, as to stick up a candle before a post or as to sprinkle himself with holy water? Neither is it possible to be otherwise, as long as the signification is lost. For what other thing can the people think, than that such deeds be ordained of God, and because as it is evident, they serve not our neighbour's need, to be referred unto the person of God and he though he be a spirit, yet served therewith? And then he cannot but forth on dispute in his blind reason, that as God is greater than man, so is that deed that is appointed to serve God greater than that which serveth man. And then, when it is not possible to think them ordained for naught, what can I [F7v] otherwise think than that

they were ordained to justify and that I should be holy thereby, according to the pope's doctrine, as though God were better pleased when I sprinkle myself with water or set up a candle before a block, than if I fed or clothed or holp° at his need him, whom he so tenderly loveth that he gave his own son unto the death for him, and commanded me to love him as myself?^a

And when the people began to run that way, the prelates were glad and holp° to hew after° with subtle allegories and falsifying the scripture, and went and hallowed the ceremonies, to make them more worshipful, that the lay people should have them in greater estimation and honour, and be afraid to touch them for reverence unto the holy charm that was said over them, and affirmed also that Christ's death had purchased such grace unto the ceremonies to forgive sin and to justify. O monster, Christ's death purchased grace for man's soul, to repent of evil and to believe in Christ for remission of sin, and to love the law of God and his neighbour as himself, which is the true worshipping of God in the spirit, and he died not to purchase such honour unto unsensible things, that man to his dishonour should do them honourable service and receive his salvation of them.

This I have declared unto you, that ye might see and feel everything sensibly. For I intend not to lead you in darkness. Neither though twice two cranes make not four wild geese, would I therefore that ye should believe that twice two made not four. Neither intend I to prove unto you that Paul's steeple is the cause why Thames is broke in about Erith, or that Tenterden steeple is the cause of the decay of Sandwich haven as Master Mo[F8r]re jesteth. Nevertheless this I would were persuaded unto you (as it is true) that the building of them and suchlike, through the false faith that we have in them, is the decay of all the havens in England and of all the cities, towns, highways and shortly of the whole commonwealth. For since these false monsters crope° up into our

^a Leviticus 19:18, quoted at Mattthew 19:19 and *passim* in the New Testament.

consciences and robbed us of the knowledge of our saviour Christ, making us believe in such popeholy° works and to think that here was no nother° way unto heaven, we have not ceased to build them abbeys, cloisters, colleges, chantries and cathedral churches with high steeples, striving envying one another, who should do most. And as for the deeds, that pertain unto our neighbours and unto the commonwealth, we have not regarded at all, as things which seemed no holy works or such as God would once look upon. And therefore we left them unseen to, until they were past remedy or past our power to remedy them, inasmuch as our slow bellies with their false blessings had juggled away from us, that wherewith they might have been holpen° in due season. So that that silly° poor man, though he had haply° no wisdom to express his mind, or that he durst not, or that Master More fashioneth his tale, as he doth other men's, to jest out the truth, so that neither Goodwin Sands nor any other cause alleged° was the decay of Sandwich haven, so much as that the people had no lust° to maintain the commonwealth, for blind devotion which they have to popeholy° works.

[Tyndale's Answer to More on Predestination]

[The last three-fifths of the *Answer* consists of chapter-by-chapter replies to More's *Dialogue Concerning Heresies*. Reproduced here is Tyndale's answer to More's picture of predestination.]

From Tyndale's Reply to Book 4, Chapter 2

[O4r]

M[ore]: Item, that we have no free will to do aught° therewith, though the grace of God be joined

^a Titus 1:12.

thereto, and that God doth all in us, both good and bad, and we do but suffer as wax doth of the workman.

T[yndale]: First, when he affirmeth that we say our will is not free to do good and to help to compel the members,° when God hath given us grace to love his laws, is false. But we say that we have no free will to captivate our wits and understanding for to believe the Pope in whatsoever he saith without reason giving, when we find in the scripture contrary testimony, and see in him so great falsehood and deeds so abominable and thereto all the signs by which the scripture teacheth us to know Antichrist.

And we affirm that we have no free will to prevent° God and his grace, and before grace prepare ourselves thereto, neither can we consent unto God before grace be come. For until God have prevented° us and powered the spirit of his grace in to our [04 v] souls, to love his laws, and hath graven them in our hearts by the outward ministration of his true preacher and inward working of his spirit or by inspiration only, we know not God as he is to be known, nor feel the goodness or any sweetness in his law. How then can we consent thereto? Saith not the text, that we can do no good while we be evil, and they which seek glory and to climb in honour above their brethren cannot believe the truth, and that horsethieves, murderers, extortioners and suchlike have no part in the Kingdom of God and Christ nor any feeling thereof? And who shall take those diseases from them? God only through his mercy, for they cannot put off that complexion of themselves, until they be taught to believe and to feel that it is damnable and to

a Romans 7:18.

^b John 5:44.

^c Cf. Ephesians 5:5.

consent unto the contrary living.

And unto the second part, I answer that in respect of God, we do but suffer only and receive power to do all our deeds, whether we do good or bad—as Christ answered Pilate that he could have no power against him except it were given him from above^a and no more could Judas neither.^b But in respect of the thing wherein or wherewith we work and shed out again the power that we have received, we work actually. As the axe doth nothing in respect of the hand that heweth^o save receive, but in respect of the tree that is cut, it worketh actually and powereth out again the power that it hath received.

From Tyndale's Reply to Book 4, Chapter 10

[P6r]

In the tenth, he inveigheth and raileth° against that which neither he nor any fleshly-minded papist can understand, as they have no power to consent unto the laws of God. Which herein appeareth, that they compel their brethren, which be as good as they, to do and believe what they lust° and not what God commandeth. He affirmeth that Martin saith how that we do no sin ourselves with our own will, but that God sinneth in us and useth us as a deed° instrument, and forceth us thereunto, and damneth us, not for our own deeds but for his, and for his own pleasure, as he compelleth unto sin for his pleasure, or rather, he for his pleasure sinneth in us. I say that a man sinneth voluntarily. [P6v] But the power of the will and of the deed is of God and every will and deed are good in the nature of the deed and the evilness

^a John 19:11.

^b Cf. John 6:65-71.

is a lack that there is, as the eye, though it be blind, is good in nature in that it is such a member° created for such a good use: but it is called evil for lack of sight. And so are our deeds evil because we lack knowledge and love to refer them unto the glory of God. Which lack cometh of the devil that blindeth us with lusts and occasions that we cannot se the goodness and rightwiseness° of the law of God and the means how to fulfill it. For could we see it and the way to do it we should love it naturally, as a child doth a fair apple. For as a child, when a man showeth him a fair apple and will not give it him, weepeth, so should we naturally mourn when the members° would not come forward to fulfill the law according to the desire of our hearts. For Paul saith (2 Corinthians 4), if our Gospel be hid, it is hid unto them that perish, among which the God of this world hath blinded the wits of the unbelievers, that the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ should not shine to them.^a And Christ saith that the birds eat up the seed sown upon the way and interpreteth by the seed, the word, and by the fowls, the devil.^b So that the devil blindeth us with falsehood and lies, which is our worldly wisdom, and therewith stoppeth out the true light of God's wisdom, which blindness is the evilness of all our deeds.

And on the other side, that another man loveth the laws of God and useth the power that he hath of God well, and referreth his will and his deeds unto the honour of God, cometh of the mercy of God which hath opened his [P7r] wits and showed him light to see the goodness and rightwiseness° of the law of God and the way that is in Christ to fulfill it. Whereby he loveth it naturally and trusteth to do it. Why doth God open one man's eyes and not another's? Paul

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^a 2 Corinthians 4:3.

^b Luke 8:5, 12.

(Romans 9) forbiddeth to ask that why.^a For it is too deep for man's capacity. God, we see, is honoured thereby and his mercy set out, and the more seen in the vessels of mercy. But the popish can suffer God to have no secret hid to himself. They have searched to come to the bottom of his bottomless wisdom, and because they cannot attain to that secret, and be too proud to let it alone, and to grant themselves ignorant with the apostle that knew no nother han God's glory in the elect, they go and set up free will with the heathen philosophers, and say that a man's free will is the cause why God chooseth one and not another, contrary unto all the scripture. Paul saith it cometh not of the will nor of the deed, but of the mercy of God. And they say that every man hath at the least way power in his free will to deserve that power should be given him of God to keep the law. But the scripture testifieth that Christ hath deserved for the elect even then, when they hated God, that their eyes should be opened to see the goodness of the law of God and the way to fulfill it, and forgiveness of all that is passed to hate sin.

I ask the popish one question, whether the will can prevent° a man's wit and make the wit see the rightwiseness° of the law and the way to fulfill it in Christ? If I must first see the reason why, ere° I can love, how shall I with my will do that good thing that I know not of? How [P7v] shall I thank God for the mercy that is laid up for me in Christ ere° I believe it? For I must believe the mercy ere° I can love the work. Now faith cometh not of our free will, but is the gift of God given us by grace ere° there be any will in our hearts to do the law of God. And why God giveth it not every man, I can give no reckoning of his judgements. But well I wot,° I never

^a Romans 9:19-20.

^b Romans 9:16.

deserved it nor prepared myself unto it, but ran another way clean° contrary in my blindness, and sought not that way, but he sought me and found me out and showed it me and therewith drew me to him. And I bow the knees of mine heart unto God night and day, that he will show it all other men. And I suffer all that I can to be a servant to open their eyes.

For well I wot,° they cannot see of themselves before God have prevented° them with his grace. For Paul saith (Philippians 1), he that began a good work in you shall continue or bring it unto a full end, so that God must begin to work in us. And (Philippians 2) God it is that worketh both the willing and also bringing to pass. And it must needs be, for God must open mine eyes and show me somewhat° and make me see the goodness of it, to draw me to him, ere° I can love, consent or have any actual will to come. And when I am willing, he must assist me and help to tame my flesh, and to overcome the occasions of the world, and the power of the fiends. God therefore hath a special care for his elect,° in so much that he will shorten the wicked days for their sakes in which no man, if they should continue, might endure. And Paul suffereth all for the elect° (2 Timothy 2). And God's sure foundation standeth, saith Paul, God knoweth his. So [P8] that refuse the truth who shall, God will keep a number of his mercy, and call them out of blindness to testify the truth unto the rest, that their damnation may be without excuse.

The Turk, the Jew and the popish build upon free will and ascribe their justifying unto their works. The Turk, when he hath sinned, runneth to the purifyings or ceremonies of Mohammed,

^b Philippians 2:13.

^a Philippians 1:6

^c 2 Timothy 2:10.

^d 2 Timothy 2:19.

and the Jew to the ceremonies of Moses, and the Pope unto his own ceremonies, to fet^o forgiveness of their sins. And the Christian goeth through repentance toward the law, unto the faith that is in Christ's blood.

And the Pope saith that the ceremonies of Moses justified not, compelled with the words of Paul. And how then should his justify? Moses' sacraments were but signs of promises of faith, by which faith the believers are justified, and even so be Christ's also. And now, because the Jews have put out the significations of their sacraments and put their trust in the works of them, therefore they be idolaters, and so is the Pope for like purpose. The Pope saith that Christ died not for us but for the sacraments, to give them power to justify. O Antichrist.

Extract from The Confutation of Tyndale's Answer (1532-33)

Thomas More

[In the Confutation, More reproduces the early pages of Tyndale's Answer, with extensive arguments against each point, running to many times the length of the original. The first volume appeared before More's resignation as Chancellor and the second afterward. This passage, although it is formed as an answer to another Protestant, Robert Barnes (1495-1540), brings out many of More's strongest arguments against Tyndale. Robert Barnes was one of a Cambridge group of Protestants that also included William Latimer. He preached a reforming sermon there in 1525, was tried for heresy and recanted in 1526, but in 1528 barely escaped being burned as a heretic for distributing Tyndale's New Testament. He faked his own suicide and fled to the Continent. As this passage suggests, he returned to England under the king's safe conduct in 1531, and came back to live in 1534, but Henry burnt him at the stake in 1540. The passage of Barnes immediately in question attempts to answer the question, "How may we know if a congregation is of the invisible true church, and therefore dependable as an interpreter of the Bible?" Barnes answers that there are two tokens by which we may know. If there are good works done, there is a probability that there are members of the invisible true church present—but this is not infallible, as good works may be done hypocritically. If the Bible is interpreted straightforwardly and honestly, and is well received by the congregation, the true church is certainly present. At the time of the supposed events narrated here, Barnes had overstayed a safe-conduct from the King, and was travelling in disguise as a merchant. More calls him "Friar Barnes" in order to taunt him with his broken vows, since, like Luther, he had been a member of a religious order and had left it at the time of his conversion to Protestant beliefs.]

[Qq1v]

But now, good Christian readers, to the intent that the folly of Friar Barnes' invention may the more clearly appear concerning his tokens with which he teacheth us to know his unknown church, let us yet a little consider his lesson better. Let us suppose that some good honest merchant's wife, a woman honest of her conversation, being by some shrewd gossips of hers brought in acquaintance with some false wily heretic, had begun to fall in some doubt and fear, lest the faith that she had before learned of the church, concerning the seven sacraments, and praying to saints, and praying for souls, and many things more, were untrue and dangerous to live and die in; and that she were not yet so far fallen to the wrong side, but that she stood still in a doubt and in a mammering° which way she might take, and fain° would take the best. And being thus brought into this doubt, had by some proctor of the evangelical fraternity, secretly brought unto her Friar Barnes' book. After which, secretly read over by herself in a corner, for many things that she partly liked, partly misliked in the reading, perceiving that he was then upon his passage over the sea again, longed sore to speak with himself ere° he went; and thereupon being by some good brother and sister brought together where there were none present but such as were toward the fraternity, after solemn salutations and ghostly° greetings of the congregation in osculo charitatis, 161 she would break her mind unto him, and show him that by the good gracious motion of such a man or such a woman, she had begun to enter into the consideration of her soul's health, [Qq2r] and not to be so negligent as she had before been, to believe every priest's tale that standeth up in a pulpit; but to seek some sure way how she may surely be taught the truth and not deceived. And for because she had read his book, wherein she found diverse doubts, of which she would fain,° if he might have tarried, be somewhat satisfied, and also

have used his ghostly° counsel for her further instruction and sure setting forth in the way of the truth, sith God had so disposed that he should so soon depart, that she could not have that full fruit and comfort of his person, she would not, for the short time of that their present assemble, cumber° him with her questions, which were like° to be but frivolous and womanish; nor be a let° and impediment unto the fervent desires of the other brethren and sisters of the congregation, whereof every one longed to be comforted with his ghostly° communication at that time specially, which was as it seemed the last in which they were likely to be fed with the pleasant conversation of his bodily presence. And therefore she would no more desire of him for the time, but that he would, as our saviour when himself went his way, did send his holy spirit to teach his apostles, and his apostles to teach the wide, wild, ignorant world: So may it please you, good Father Barnes, while ye depart hence, to assign some mean and show me some way, by which I may be sure alway° to have some good gracious spiritual man, some true member of the very° church, of whom I may be sure to learn the very° true faith, that our saviour first by himself, and after by his holy spirit taught his blessed apostles, and by them the world that would learn, and yet by the same spirit teacheth his very° holy church still, as ye show to my simple mind full well and clerkly° in your goodly process, wherein ye declare which is the very church. I beseech you therefore do no more for me for this once, but lest I be, when ye be gone, deceived by some false teacher, set me now before your going in some way, whereby I may be sure ever of a true.

To this would Friar Barnes of likelihood make her great congratulation, and tell all the congregation that they have all great cause to joy and rejoice in the lord, whose high mercy hath so goodly begun to pour in the lively liquor of his grace into the dying heart of that good sister, and hath thereby so revived it with the warm breath of his holy spirit, that he maketh it begin to quicken

and look [Qq2v] up; and to long to behold and see the bright sun of his verity written in the holy scripture of God; and to rub her eyen,° and shake off the false imaginations of all the damnable dreams of men, and that himself is very sorry that he cannot, according to his hope that brought him hither, have his evangelical doctrine accepted of the king and openly received in the realm, which he so sore hath travailed to regender again unto God in the true faith, but is by the means of the false scribes and pharisees rejected and rebuked, and saving for the king's safe conduct, should have standen in peril to be burned and his books with him. Which safe conduct because it was granted but for six weeks now more than almost past, for which cause he changed his notable monstrous apparel that he came in with, and shove° his beard and went like a merchant, that he might be the less marked in tarrying after the safe conduct and visiting the congregation, without whose liberal aid and alms he should neither have been able to sustain and bear, nor to recover and get again the money that he spent about his printing of his book and his coming hither and going over again. Wherefore, sith he may not safely tarry here, but must, except he would be burned, go get him over again, both that good sister and all the holy congregation, and himself also which is as sorry to part from them as they from him, must conform their wills on all sides unto the will of God, and as for the absence bodily, he would recompense upon his part, with being mindful of them in his prayer to the Lord, and trusted they would in like wise do, and so would he pray them to do, pray to the Lord for him, and so should either part by their praying each for other, according to the counsel of Saint James, a much more each profit other, than if Our Lady and all the saints in heaven if there be any there, would pray for them both, because the saints be all departed hence and dead and be no longer of our function. And yet would he for his part to their further consolation, make and send them over

^a James 5:16.

some new books of the evangelical doctrine in their mother tongue, for the better edifying of their silly° simple souls. And this would he say for the comfort of the whole fraternity and sorority in general. And then for answer to the good sister in special, he would peradventure° [Qq3r] advise her to take the New Testament of Tyndale's translation, and other books of his, and of his own, and of George Joye¹⁶², and therein should she find the truth whereunto if she said that she might not for fear of her husband's loss and her own peril, adventure° to keep these books because of the king's proclamation, he would tell her and persuade her plainly, that the books of the scripture she must needs keep spite of all the prince's proclamation, to die therefor.¹⁶³ (For that he writeth plainly already, but as for the tother° books, he layeth not expressly so sore a charge upon them) wherefore he would enjoin her at the least wise to keep the scripture in English, and tell her that therein she should learn all truth.

But then is it likely that she might say, that the scripture is hard for her to understand, and therefore show him that the thing which she desireth of him, is to know of him (sith° himself goeth away) how she might be sure to have a good true teacher, that might in every necessary point of belief, expound the scripture and teach it her truly.

Then would he peradventure° assign her some special sped man in the sects, and tell her she may learn of him. But then were she likely to say that he might haply° be driven away for fear of persecution, yea, or peradventure° die before she should be fully learned and instructed in the necessary truths by the scripture: which she could not think herself to be, till she did in every such truth understand all the places of scriptures that either made for it or seemed to say against. And therefore would she fain° know now of him, by what mean she might alway° be sure of a true teacher.

Then would he peradventure° tell her, that whosoever preach truly the word of God, according to that scripture she might be sure that he were a true preacher, and of him she might surely learn.

But unto that she were likely to say: Father Barnes, this same scripture is very hard, and in the most necessary points diverse preachers expound it diversely, some for the sacraments, and some against them, some for the vow of chastity and some against it, some for good works, and some for faith alone, some for purgatory and some against it, and so in such other things, so that except I may be sure of the true teacher, unto whose credence I [Qq3v] may trust in the construction, I shall alway° remain still in like° doubt, and not understand the scripture. And therefore shall I not be able by the scripture to try the true preacher, but must by the knowledge of the true preacher try which is the understanding of the scripture. And therefore, I would have the true preacher to teach me truly to understand the same scripture. And for that intent would I know him, to the end that I might, by that I know him for a true preacher, be sure that by his teaching I do not damnably misunderstand the scripture, but am truly taught it. And now you tell me that whoso teach the scripture truly is a teacher. And then must I by this tale of yours, bring with me to him or else I cannot know him, the thing that I cannot get but if I know him first.

What were Friar Barnes here likely to say to this woman that might reasonably satisfy her? In good faith I cannot say, taking an unknown church as he doth. For if he would say, good daughter, the goodness of God shall ever sufficiently provide you a true teacher, as he provided Saint Peter for Centurio, she might tell him that Centurio was warned by God that he was a true preacher, and if I had such warning of any that shall come, then were I satisfied.^a

If Friar Barnes would say, whensoever the true preacher cometh, ye shall know him and

^a Acts 10:1-8.

perceive his doctrine to be true, by the inward unction of the holy ghost, that shall teach you inwardly as saith Saint John, for as our lord saith: They that are mine hear my voice, and hear not the voice of a stranger, and I know mine and mine know me^b—and of this have we a sample of Eunuchus, which as he was reading in the scripture and could not understand it by himself, God provided that Saint Philip should go by him and teach him, and anon Eunuchus believed him and was christened, c and how did Eunuchus know that Philip was a true preacher, but by the inward unction° and inspiration of God? And so, good sister, shall you be moved inwardly to perceive the true scripture: surely methinketh° that unto this the woman were well likely to him, that one example at one time of one man's deed, as Eunuchus was, giveth us not for every man in every time a general rule. For though he were therein not deceived then, yet some other, that would so [Qq4r] readily now take for the true preacher every man that came first to hand, might be sore deceived therein, and ween° that God gave him the motion when it came of the suggestion of his enemy. For at that time it was well likely, that Eunuchus had heard of Christ, and of his living, and of his miracles, and of his death, and of his resurrection to life, and such things as were then done and past before the meeting had between Saint Philip and him. And then was that prophecy with diverse other, which Philip there expounded unto him, so plain and open with his doctrine, his death, his rising again, and his miracles, and his other conversation in his life, so clear to make it open that Christ was he that was common to save the world and teach the truth, and should and ought to be believed that God inwardly working with those good outward occasions, he rejoiced highly the

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^a 1 John 2:20.

^b John 10:27.

^c Acts 8:26-40.

meeting with Christ's disciple that had so well known him, and been so conversant with him.

But now hath God established his faith and his doctrine by the space of fifteen hundred year, and sendeth not lightly any such one man to preach and teach as was Saint Philip, that can in teaching make the scripture so plain and open to me, as Saint Philip did unto Eunuchus, nor that hath learned it so fully and so surely, as the apostles had of the mouth of the great master Christ. And therefore should I not have so great occasion to believe and to take for the true teacher any one man that would construe me the scripture now, namely construing it in such wise many of his own fellows, professing the faith of Christ as he doth, will say that he constructh it false, which happed not in the constructions that Saint Philip made Eunuchus.

And therefore, though our saviour say, that such as are his do hear his voice and not the voice of strangers: seemeth to mean therein to give us warning to do so, that is to wit, that we should hear and obey him, and not other against him. For whoso will hear heretics and not him, be none of his.

And that the unction° and inward inspiration of God, teacheth us and maketh us perceive, that is very true. For God inwardly worketh with the will of man walking with God, in well using and applying convenient occasions [Qq4v] toward it outwardly given by God. But it meaneth not that by and by,° upon everything that we hear, we should without consideration give ourselves to the consent of the tone° side or the tother,° in matter of eternal death or everlasting life, and think that whatsoever we forthwith unadvisedly list° to believe is the unction° of the spirit and inspiration of God. For God biddeth us that we should not be light of belief, nor by and by° believe every spirit, but prove the spirits, whether they be of God. And then if we be not only simple as doves, but also prudent and wise as serpents,^a his inward unction° will work with our diligence, but not if we be

^a Matthew 10:16.

slothful, or will be willingly beguiled and suffer the devil make us mad fools. And therefore he saith not, believe at adventure, but biddeth us take heed and be well ware, that we be not beguiled by false prophets, that will come to us in such wise that outwardly they shall seem sheep, and inwardly be ravenous wolves.^a

To this would Friar Barnes say, Forsooth,° dear daughter in the Lord, those wolves be these monks, and friars, and priests that be the common preachers of this carnal church, that they falsely call the catholic° church, which do teach beside the scripture damnable dreams of men, and make men believe that dumb sacraments and ceremonies, and good works, should do good to the soul: which false preachers with all their carnal church that hath now been this eight hundred year led out of the right way, we new preachers of the very° true church which is spiritual, do now by the word of God written in holy scripture, convict and reprove.

To this were she well likely to say again, Verily, Father Barnes, here ye bring me now even to the very° point. For sith° that the apostles of Christ began that learned of his own mouth, and no one man left now nor never since their time, whom men might so surely take for an undoubted teacher as them: it seemeth that God hath left the sure credence of doctrine in no one man, but in his whole church. And therefore that man which agreeth in doctrine with the very° church, I may reckon sure that his doctrine is very true in the necessary exposition of scripture, not for his own authority or surety of his person, nor for the surety that I can have that his doctrine agreeth well with scripture, for I cannot know that but by that I know him for [Rr1r] a true teacher: but for the surety that I have that the doctrine of the whole catholic° very° true church, with which his teaching agreeth, cannot

^a Matthew 7:15.

be false. For if it might, then were there no sure true church at all, and that must there needs be, as all sorts of sects agree as I hear say. And therefore this true church being known, if you show me how I may get a teacher whose teaching agreeth with that, then dare I believe him well, and else it will be hard for any such as I am, to think with reason that she should give sure credence to any man, or that she can be by the scripture sure of so many sects of contrary construers, which one construeth truly when all the tother say nay and be all ready to swear that he construeth false. And therefore, good Father Barnes, will she say, I like it well that ye declare so well at length which is the very church, because we should not be deceived with the false prophets of the false church, of whom Christ bode us take heed and beware. For the very true church once known, we shall, as our saviour saith, if we take good heed, know these false prophets by their fruits. For look they never so simply, and speak they never so saintly, yet if their living or their teaching be contrary to the doctrine of the very true holy church, it is then very true that their fruit is rotten and false, and themselves false prophets of some false church, and for all their sheepish semblance outwardly, right ravenous wolves are they within.

And therefore, good Father Barnes, I would have wished that ye had taken a little more pain in declaring and making open by what means the very° true holy church which ye do assign, might be perceived and known, to the intent that by the knowledge of her and of her preachers, which must needs have credence and be known for true teachers, because they be members of her that is true, and their doctrine agreeth with hers, whom God will not suffer to say damnably false, we may

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^a Matthew 7:15.

b Matthew 7:16.

^c Matthew 7:15.

perceive and reprove the false preachers of all other churches. For I am sure, good Father Barnes, that when ye went about to give us tokens whereby we might have some knowledge of this church, ye perceived well that of necessity it is a thing that need were to be known for the good that may follow if it be known, and the harm that would ensue if it remained unknown. For else ye would have taken no labour about it, to seek us out such tokens by which we might have knowledge of it.

And surely methinketh° that the chief commodity [Rr1v] that I can have of the knowledge of it is this, that I may, when I know her, be learned and instructed by her, and be surely nourished by her in the spiritual food. For holy church is our mother, as ye call her yourself, and therefore is it that which engendereth us to God, and which both with milk and stronger meat, must feed us and foster us up, and none other nurse is there by whom we can be truly and faithfully brought up. And therefore if we might not know her, we were in danger either to be hunger-starven, or else instead of wholesome food to be fed with poison.

But now, peradventure° Friar Barnes would answer to this, that it maketh no matter though we know not her. It is enough that she know us, and come and give us good and faithful food, and preach truly to us, though we know not that it is she. But unto this the woman would, I ween,° never stick for an answer, but would shortly tell him that he said,° if every man were as a young babe that lieth swaddled in a cradle, to whom only the mother might have recourse to feed her own child.

But now be we (would she say) such as be thus far well warned, that not only our mother holy church is only she that can and will feed us well, and will gladly offer to give us good wholesome food, but that also there be a great many of other wicked women which go about to poison us, and which, because they know that we be well advertised that they so intend, and that only our mother

^aHebrews 5:12-14.

will feed us well, each of them laboureth by all the means that their wily malice can devise, to make us mistake our mother, and each of them calleth herself our mother, and laboureth to be believed, and out of one self good ground of holy scripture, ¹⁶⁴ both our very° mother bringeth and offereth us wholesome fruit, and these false feigned mothers out of the selfsame ground of scripture, by their false handling bring us and offer us poisoned fruit, and yet so subtly handled that it is hard for us to perceive either by sight or taste which is the good food and which is the poisoned, till he that taketh it come to his death by the infection.

But now if we may once know which of all these is our very° mother, then are we safe and sure. For then are we sure that as all the remnant will give us no meat but naught,° so will she give us none but good. And therefore whoso love his life, will take all that she offereth us, although it be bitter and sour in taste and not very se[Rr2r]emly in sight, and refuse all that the tother° offer us, be it never so pleasant to the eye, nor never so delicious to the mouth.

And I verily think that the thing standing in such case, our father in heaven so mighty, so merciful, and so wise as he is, and so tenderly loving his children as he doth, perceiving the peril that might and must needs fall upon them by the mistaking of some such false malicious woman instead of our very° mother, will not leave us in such case, but that he will cause our very° mother to be well known from all the false counterfeits, to such as list° to look and attend well thereto, both by tokens of her and also tokens of them.

And verily, good Father Barnes, it seemeth that ye saw this yourself full well. For it appeareth upon your words, that there is no true preacher but there as is the very° church. ¹⁶⁵ For ye show for a perfect token of the true church, that there as is the true preaching, there be alway° some of the true church. And ye write that this token is perfect. Now then, if wheresoever is true preaching, there is

alway° some of the very° church, it must needs follow to my poor wit that am but a woman, that wheresoever be none of the very° church, there is no true preaching. And then if there be no true preaching but where there are some of the very° church, ye see what need it is that the very° church be known, to the intent we may be sure where to have the true preaching, without which we can never, ye wot° well, learn the true faith, nor truly to be taught to understand the scripture. Which till we do, we be never able to judge which preacher of so many contrarious expoundeth and declareth it right.

Now would Friar Barnes peradventure° answer her and say: Therefore have I showed you, lo, by what tokens ye may perceive where some of the very° church be.

But unto that were she likely to say again: Yea, verily, Father Barnes, well favouredly, for so far as ye go. But I would as I said have wished you to have gone therein somewhat further, which I think verily ye would have done if your leisure would have served you. For now of your two tokens, the tone° yourself confesseth to be but faint and insufficient, that is to wit good works that are commended in scripture, because that though it be well done in every doubt to [Rr2v] deem the best, ¹⁶⁶ yet hypocrisy may deceive us, and make us take for a good man and a member of the very° holy church, some false feigning hypocrite that is a very° deed° member of some false church, and a limb of the very° Devil indeed.

And yet over this° as well that same unperfect token whereby I should have knowledge of the very° church, that is to wit works according to scripture, as also the tother° token that ye call the perfect token, that is to wit that in what company soever I hear the word of God truly preached, that is to wit the scripture truly declared without any damnable dreams of men, there I may be sure that in that congregation be some of the very° holy church: both these tokens serve but for cunning folk

that are sufficiently learned in the understanding of the scripture already, and these be they that have least need to know the very° church. But none of these tokens can serve such beginners as I am, that have need to know the very° church, to learn of her the right understanding of the scripture, because she is our very° mother as yourself calleth her. And therefore we have the need to know her, that we may be bold to take the food of doctrine at her hand, because we wot° well our very° mother will give us but good, where we stand else in peril of poisoning, if by mistaking our mother we take the meat of doctrine at the hand of any of those venomous harlots, that counterfeit their countenance and would we should take one of them for our mother.

And also, though the tokens both twain were sure and perfect for so far as they go, that is to wit, though that I were sure indeed that in such a company be some of the very° true church: yet sith° I cannot know by them which persons of that company they be as ye confess I cannot, what should this knowledge avail me? It may peradventure° hinder and hurt me. For if I doubted lest there were haply° no such true members of the very° church in that company, I would be the more ware° of anything that they should teach me. But now, while though I know not who, yet I ween° myself that I know well some of them be true, I may percase° the more boldly and with the less fear, take that the false shall offer me for the hope I may have, that I have peradventure° by hap° fortuned upon that person that is one of the true. For why, to use dili[Rr3r]gence and forbear° haste, and be ware° and believe not till I surely find and know the true, that were by your words utterly vain. For ye say I shall never know them, nor never know farther, but that there be some of them.

Now, good readers, what hath Barnes holding his heresy of his unknown church, what hath he to say more to this woman? In good faith, nothing that will be worth a fly. But the woman may soon find more yet to say to him. For she may say to him further: Yet I remember me now, Father Barnes,

another thing. Ye will that I shall know the church by the true declaration of scripture. But how shall I be sure which be the very° books of scripture? For you say plainly that the epistle of Saint James is not holy scripture, and other men say yes. ¹⁶⁷ And ye say that ye can prove that epistle false by words of Saint Paul, and then were ye likely to make me to doubt as well of Saint Paul as of Saint James. For why should I better believe the tone° than the tother,° while they were both Christ's approved apostles? For though ye say that it was of old doubted by some folk whether that epistle were written of Saint James or not: yet after that doubt moved, the whole church hath firmly believed it to be his, without any doubt of any man in a thousand year together, till within this twenty year.

And then, as ye say now by that piece, so may there another come and say by another piece, and so go about to prove every piece false by other, wheresoever any seem to say anything which the words of some other part seemeth contrary. And then, when they shall in this wise contend and strive thereupon, whereas ye say I shall by the true construction of the scripture perceive where be some of the very° true church: how will ye first make me know which of them all assigneth me the very° true scripture.

To this, when Friar Barnes would answer and falsely bear her in hand that the epistle of Saint James hath been alway° doubted of, and that such books as have been alway° by the whole church taken and accepted for holy scripture, of those may she be sure that they be holy scripture, for God giveth his church that gift, that it can truly discern the words of God from the words of man: this will I wot° well Friar Barnes say. For this saith not only his old master Saint Austin,° out of whose rule and religion Friar Barnes is run away, but his new master al[Rr3v]so Friar Luther, after whom he runneth out of religion and out of rule now.

But when Barnes would answer her so, then would she soon bring him to the bay, and tell him that the church by which she knoweth which is the scripture is not any unknown church, but the known catholic° church of all Christian nations remaining in the common, well-known faith. And then, sith° she may boldly believe that church in the great point, and learneth that lesson of none other church but that, which is the first lesson of all the faith, and whereupon, as Friar Barnes agreeth all the whole remnant dependeth, sith° that by him there is nothing any sure truth but if it be written in scripture—she may therefore, would she say, take that church for the teacher of all the remnant, and him for a true teacher, whose faith agreeth with that church, and those folk whose faith is contrary to that church, which shall soon be known, for they be forthwith accused and reproved upon their false preachings heard, them she may and will take for the false teachers and false expounders of scripture, till Father Barnes can give her better knowledge of his holy true church unknown, whereof she is never the nearer yet.

Lo, thus might a wise woman, that could no more but read English, rebuke and confound Friar Barnes upon the sight of his own rial° process, in which he would now teach us to know which is the very° church.

Howbeit,° to confound him, we shall not greatly need to seek one that can read. For what hath he to say to a poor woman that could not read?

If his own secret hostess, the goodwife of the Bottle of Botolph's Wharf, ¹⁶⁸ that, but if she be better amended, ¹⁶⁹ halteth both in body and soul, were in the congregation present at this commoning, and then would himp forth among them and say, by Saint Malkin, Father Barnes, all your tokens of the very° true church will not stand me in the stead° of a tavern token nor of a mustard token neither. For I may, for the tone,° be sure of a new baken bun, and for the tother° I

may be sure of a pot of mustard, but for your two tokens of your holy church, I cannot be sure of one farthing worth of true doctrine for them both. For how shall I perceive that any true members of your holy church, in [Rr4r] only whom ye say is the true faith be present in company, when your tokens be the true preaching of scripture, and the good leving° after the scripture, how can I get any good by those two tokens when I cannot read at all: what could Friar Barnes say to his hostess here? Surely nothing hath he, but should in the end be fain to fall to the destiny of God's election, and say as he signifieth and somewhat muttereth in his book, but then should he be fain to speak it out and say, that when they come to the preaching, all those that are elect^o of God shall be secretly moved and taught inwardly, and shall by the instinct of the spirit of God, though they know not whether the person be good or no that preacheth, perceive yet the true word of God upon the hearing, and shall understand it as Tyndale saith that the eagle perceived her prey. 170 And the tother sort whom God hath not chosen, though they hear it, shall not understand it, but whether the preacher be good or bad, they shall be never the better, nor shall not discern the true preacher from the false, but be deceived by the false and not perceive the true for anything that they can do. And therefore every man, will Barnes say, that shall be saved, shall attain the salvation by the only election° of the Lord, without any part of their own devoir^o anything doing thereto, live they never so long. For though that all be called, yet only those that God hath elected° shall be saved, and shall, as our saviour saith, be but a very few. And anything that the tone sort or the tother shall or can work, shall neither help toward° nor froward,° but election° and destiny shall do altogether. And here this anchor, in conclusion, shall he be fain to cast out, with which, when he would ween to stay the ship, he draweth it quite under the water. For I ween° his hostess would soon have said somewhat thereto.

^a Matthew 20:16.

For I wot° well she is not tongue-tied: I have heard her talk myself. She would, I ween,° therefore have said unto him thus much at the least wise: Why, Father Barnes, when God calleth upon us all, and we come together at his calling, and my neighbour and I come both to church with one purpose to learn the right way to heaven, would ye make me ween° that God were so partial, that without any difference of cause between her and me, I being as well willing to learn to please him as she, that when I have at his calling followed him so far as well as she, and with some[Rr4v]what more pain too, for I halt,° ye wot° well, he will for all that I halt° make her perceive the truth and go forth farther with him, till he bring her to heaven, and leave me still in darkness and ignorance, and let me fall into hell, for none other cause but only for he list° to choose her, and leave me unchosen.

If he gave her more than me for his only pleasure, I could find no fault. But marry, sir, that he would give her all and me not only nothing, but also condemn me to perpetual fire because himself would not cause me to perceive the truth, and no cause why he would not, but because he would not choose me, and no cause why he would not choose me, but only because he would not: in good faith I take God for so good that I can never believe you therein.

Yet methinketh° that these common preachers, whom you dispraise, say better. For they tell us that it is in scripture, that God would all folk should be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth if they will themselves, and that therefore by one means or other, he calleth all. But he chooseth only those that will come and hear and learn and do thereafter, and who would so do, he saw ere° he made them, and therefore even then chose them.

But for because they be but few in respect of them that will not, therefore there are few chosen though many be called,^a and not because God will call all, and then of those that come and are

^a Matthew 20:16, 22:14.

willing to learn, will cause some to be taught and some not, without other cause or difference, but because himself list° to choose the tone° and refuse the tother,° as though it were an evil master that would call many children to school, and when he had them there, then set diverse ushers under him to teach them, and would make some whom he favoured causeless, to be taught right, and suffer some whom he hated as causeless to be taught wrong, and after come and hear all their lessons himself, and those that have been taught right make much of them and cherish them because they say right, and those that have been wrong taught, all to chide them and beat them because they say wrong. In good faith, Father Barnes, I take God for so good, that I cannot believe that he will so do, but rather as these common preachers say, that God hath provided sufficient learning for all sorts, of which they may be sure if they will come to it, and also that of such as come [Ss1r] and learn well indeed, yet all do not well indeed, but by the true teaching believe and perceive the things that they should do, and yet do it not, but do many things even clean° the contrary. And therefore I have heard them preach, that it is in scripture that the bond servant which knoweth not the will of his lord and do it not, shall be beaten because of his negligence, but except he will not know it of purpose else he shall be beaten but a little. But he which knoweth the will of his lord and then do it not, shall be sore beaten. And when I heard this preached, methought it went sore against the doctrine of our brother Tyndale, that saith, as our own brethren report, in his Answer to Sir Thomas More, that when the wit perceiveth a thing, the will cannot choose but follow. ¹⁷¹ For that is plain false, if the scripture be true that saith that a man may know the will of his lord and yet leave it undone.

And meseemeth also that the same scripture maketh much against our brother Tyndale and our brother Frith, and against the preaching of all our evangelical brethren concerning purgatory. For I

doubt not but that many which have known the will of the lord and left it undone, and yet were never sore beaten therefor in this life, do yet ere° they die so repent that they escape from hell, and therefore do receive the beating nowhere but if there be a purgatory.

Nor it will not help that I heard once one of our brethren answer and say, that when he repenteth then he doth the will of his lord, and therefor shall not be beaten at all. For if that scripture be as they preach it, then though he shall not be beaten for the tother° times in which he left his lord's will undone.

But surely, Father Barnes, as I told you, methinketh° that these common preachers say well in that point, that they say that God hath provided surety of doctrine, that is to say of true preaching the word of God, and making it to be so understanden,° as men may be sure that they may avoid all damnable error if they will, or else they were not to be blamed for falling in thereto.

And they that tell us that we shall be damned but if we believe right, and then tell us that we cannot know that but by the scripture, and then the scripture cannot be so learned but of a true teacher, and they tell us we cannot be [Ss1v] sure of a true teacher, and so cannot be sure to understand it right, and yet say that God will damn us for understanding it wrong or not understanding at all: they that thus tell us, put me in mind of a tale that they tell of Master Henry Patenson, a man of known wisdom in London and almost everywhere else, which when he waited once on his master in the emperor's court at Bruges, and was there soon perceived upon the sight for a man of special wit by himself and unlike the common sort, they caught a sport in angering of him, and out of diverse corners hurled at him such things as angered him, and hurt him not. Thereupon he gathered up good stones, not gunstones, but as hard as they, and those he put apace into his bosom, and then stood him up upon a bench and made a proclamation aloud that every man might hear him.

in which he commanded every man upon their own perils, to depart except only those that hurled at him, to the intent that he might know them and hurl at them again and hurt none other body but his enemies. For whosoever tarried after his proclamation made, he would take him for one of the hurlers or else for one of their counsellors, and then have at their heads whosoever they were that would abide. Now was his proclamation in English and the company that heard him were such as understood none, but stood still and gaped upon him and laughed at him. And by and by° one hurled at him again. And anon as he saw that, What whoresons, quoth he, ye stand still everychone,° I ween,° and not one of you will remove a foot for all my proclamation, and thereby I see well ye be hurlers or of counsel with the hurlers, all the whole many of you, and therefore have at you all again. And with the word he hurled a great stone out at adventure° among them, he neither wist° nor wrought° 172 at whom, but lighted upon a Burgundian's head and brake his pate that the blood ran about his ears, and Master Henry bade him stand to his harms hardly, for why would he not beware then and get him thence betime, when he gave him before so fair courteous warning.

Now, good Father Barnes, would his halting° hostess say, ye seem now by your tale to make as though God almighty would use of a strange affection the same fashion that Master Henry used of folly, that is to wit to make us a pro[Ss2r]clamation on in such wise indited,° as we cannot understand without we may be sure of a true interpreter, and then give some of us such as him listeth,° a secret privy knowledge of such one, and all the remnant that fain° would and cannot find out and know the true expounder of his proclamation, for lack of that token which he keepeth from them, hurl stones at their heads because they fulfil it not. In good faith, Father Barnes, methinketh° therefore that this lesson that ye teach us herein is a very perilous plasphemy. 173

And yet abide. I remember me, lo, Father Barnes upon another thing, would she say, that if ye

bring all to this point in conclusion, that there is no more but every man go where he will, and hear whom he list,° and alway° he that is elect° shall by the inward inspiration happen upon the true preacher, and the true preaching, and the true knowledge of the very word of God, and the true understanding thereof, and only thereby get heaven; and all the remnant for the only lack of God's election° to the getting whereof themselves ye say can nothing do, shall fail of all these things and fall in continual error, out of which they can have no means possible to escape, but thereby must needs fall into eternal fire: if it thus be, ye may put up again both your tokens into your purse, for any need that any man hath of them. For they that be sure by the secret inspiration, that they be truly taught and thereby know themselves for elects,° and so be sure they shall be saved: What need they to care whether any of the very° church be in that congregation or not: and on the tother° side, those whose destiny shall be for lack of election° to be damned, and therefore shall not learn the truth in the congregation be there never so many of the very° church therein, they, lo, to know whether there be any therein or no, can stand them in no stead° at all. And thus, Father Barnes, taking your secret unknown spiritual church, ye might spare all the labour that ye have hitherto taken in giving us tokens to know it by, for any stead° that your tokens can stand us in. And therefore, if ever any church here in earth shall stand us in any stead° toward any surety of true doctrine, as indeed it must, if any man may tell another how he may surely taught the truth, it must needs be in any wise some such church as needs must be known, for such that a man may be sure to learn thereof. [Ss2v]

What would Friar Barnes have answered unto his hostess, if she had told him this, and that he then had seen the tother goodwife, her neighbour, begin to gape again, as she that were yet ready to bring in some other fault yet founden further in his tale, as there might in good faith, meseemeth, many be founden, not only by learned men but even by unlearned women too, such faults as

neither Friar Barnes nor all the learned heretics of all their hundred sects should be well able to avoid, so strong a thing is truth, and so feeble a thing is falsehood, and so hard to be borne out and defended.

But then would Friar Barnes have waxed° a little warm, and bid them sit still and hold their babble, and tell them that Saint Paul wist full well what he did when he would not suffer women to take upon them to preach and teach in the church, nor so much as ask a question among the congregation, but if they doubted of anything that they would learn, let them ask it of their own husbands at home. And so would Friar Barnes bid those wives do with sorrow. For if they might be suffered to begin once in the congregation to fall in disputing, those aspen leaves of theirs would never leave wagging.

But then would the wife of the Bottle have answered him again quickly, and tell him that she had alway° taken him for wiser, and would have weened° he could have taught better. And some sorrow, would she say, have I had for the favour of the sects, and so hath my husband had, too. And my lord Chancellor¹⁷⁴ told me that I was little better than a bawd,° because I received two nuns in by night, that John Byrt brought me, otherwise called Adrian, specially because I kept them close in an high garret in mine house, and suffered two men to resort up thither to them. Howbeit,° in good faith I had provided, that if they list° to sleep, the two men might if they would lie together by themselves, and let the nuns alone. For there were two beds in the garret. But yet as folk be ready to deem the worst, I was with some folk taken for half a bawd° there and all for the furtherance of love between the brethren and the sistern° of the evangelical sect, methought they were in so good a way. Howbeit,° since I see now that you Father Barnes that were once a doctor can say no better for it, by

^a 1 Corinthians 14:34-35.

our lady I begin so to mistrust all the matter, that, [Ss3r] save for selling of mine ale and uttering of my chaffer to get a penny by them, ¹⁷⁵ I wrought° never though there came never none of them any more within my door. ¹⁷⁶

Now would with this the tother good honest wife of likelihood have resorted again unto her example of her very on mother and of these false witches, of which every one would be taken for her mother, to grow first in trust with her, and then after poison her. And then would she conclude: if it be, Father Barnes, such an unknown thing which church is my mother holy church, and then one there is with whom I was christened and hitherto brought up, and though I see many things in her which I would wish were amended—yet for all that she counseleth me to be good, and she telleth what I must do if I will be good. Howbeit, therein, of truth, all you other churches vary with her, and tell me she teacheth me wrong. But then so do you also each of you with other, and each of you telleth me that other teacheth wrong. And she telleth me the scripture proveth for her part, and each of you saith that the scripture proveth for your own part, and that she lieth, and each of you saith also that other lieth, and she saith that ye lie everychone.° And which of you declare the scripture truly and which untruly, passeth my capacity to perceive. But then I see that the scripture which each of you would seem to construe truly, and yet each contrary to other, you do not so much as know which it is but by the mean of her. And I see also that all you were once with her, and be fallen at variance with her, and so be common from her for anger. And I see that though she be not so good as I would she were, yet for anger and envy since ye be come from her, ye misreport her in many things, and would make her appear much worse. And I see also that such vices as are well known for vice, which ye find and rebuke in her, be rife and well known in yourselves. And I see also that many such holy men have been brought up with her, as yourself confess for saints, and

among all your churches I never heard of any one. And I see also that some thing ye teach among you, almost every one, such as all those holy saints abhorred and had in abomination, as for example the wedding of friars and nuns. And I see also that in our church as bad as we be, yet God continueth his miracles, and among all your churches that be gone from ours, he worketh never one. [Ss3v] And I see also that each of your churches would fain seem to be the true churches, for each of yours affirmeth that only itself hath the truth, and the true church is it which only church hath the truth. And then again, each of you seeth his own part so feeble and so far unable to be defended in that point, that sith on one church of all yours may be match to our church out of which ye all came, and then that each church of yours or all your churches together being each to other so contrarious and repugnant, should be the true church, were, ye wot° well, yourself a thing more than impossible: ye be fain for this cause to send us to an unknown church. By which sending, while ye would withdraw me from ours, yet ye confess the contrary of all that ye go about. For ye would seem each of you to have the very° truth, and then were you the true church and the sure teachers. But now, sith° ye say the true church is unknown, and each of your churches is known, it appeareth by your own tale that none of all your churches is the true church. And if it be not the true church then hath it not the true doctrine which it pretendeth, but is one of the false churches and hath the false doctrine. And therefore if it so were indeed, that our church were not the true church, nor were not my right mother indeed, but that the very° church and my very° mother were only some one such as ye would send me to seek, that is to say some unknown church: yet, Father Barnes, by your own tale° it were none of all your churches. And therefore I were but a fool to leave the known catholic° church, whom I have hitherto taken for my very° mother, and come from her to yours, which as yourself confesseth is not the true church, and therefore not my very° mother, but that my very°

mother were one whom ye neither tell me where I may find her, saving that ye bid me go seek her, and ye say she is somewhere abroad in the wild world, which world is a place too wide, ye wot° well, for a woman to overwalk well (and at that word would himp-halt° his hostess hop forth again, and say, Marry, sir, that it were indeed for me) and also if I would wander all about to look her, yet if I happed to come in her company, ye tell me no sure mark whereby I might well know her, but only that I should perceive her to be there, but I should not yet wit which were she, and then were she for me, almost as good by thence. And [Ss4r] therefore, Father Barnes, in good faith, till ye can tell me a wiser tale of my new mother, I might think myself a fool, if for such a tale as you tell I would leave of mine old.

And thus are we now, good readers, with these only women using no reason but such as a woman might find, and yet such as no man may soil, common to a point of Friar Barnes' unperfect tokens, by which we may so know his church, as we be never the nearer for the knowledge of it, for any knowledge that he giveth us of it.

.....

[Uu4v]

But now, because Friar Barnes saith that the cause why the Councils may err, is because they be not the whole catholic° church, but only by way of representation, and saith that the whole universal church standeth in the election° of all faithful men, and that all faithful men of the world make the universal church, whose head and spouse is Christ Jesus, and the pope vicar under Christ, and confesseth and saith that this church cannot err: letting now pass therefore for the while that he seemeth before to say the contrary, where he saith of this same church, that by falling from her spouse she may err, let us now for Barnes' pleasure imagine that this same church that he speaketh

of, that is to wit, all the faithful people from all parts of the world, and because we would be sure there should be none of them all thence, let us take it that all the Christian nations were from all places upon one fair day common^o into some one fair plain field, whereof I know none fairer than the plain of Salisbury, providing that for fear of a rain the whole plain have a fair roof set upon it, for less I ween then the whole plain were too little, for we must put that there were not only all the men, but also all the women too, for they be part of this universal church, and we will not only take in here all the Christian nations, but also whosoever Christian man or woman were in any na[Xx1r]tion yet unchristened, or whosoever in any such place had a Christian purpose, and favoured the name and faith of Christ with intent to be christened. And yet, because I would be out of all brabbling with Barnes, we would take into the number, not only all false secret heretics openly professing the Christian faith and secretly muttering the contrary, of which wretches there be some in the known catholic° church alway°, but also all false open heretics, and schismatics, which by plain profession of their schisms and heresies, are gone out or cast out of the known catholic° church, and are known for her mortal enemies. Lest Barnes would, as I say, pretend that all they or some of them, were of the very° church, we will take in them too. And now I trow° we have a full assembly of the whole church, and rather more too, than left any one out.

But yet this General Council would I not have holden° at this day. For although I mistrust not, but that God would work all well enough by the mean of the good men though there were many bad therein: yet to the intent that Friar Barnes should the more fully be satisfied and put the less doubt therein, I would the Council were in some time, before the time that these folk say the church was led into error. And sith° they call that time the time of this eight hundred years last past: let us take the time in which Saint Gregory was pope, for that is now more than nine hundred year ago. ¹⁷⁷ And

Saint Gregory was a good man and a good pope, and so good that I think none heretic dare for shame say the contrary.

Now let us then suppose also that there had in the same time been a fond° frantic° friar, and that his name had been Luther, and that there had then also been a naughty° nun, and that her name had been Cate, and that this fond° frantic° friar had wedded this naughty° nun, and that there had been then one William Tyndale, that had been so mad as to say they did well, because the friar himself for the defence of his own lechery, had told him that by the scripture he might lawfully do it, and that there had been then also another friar called Robert Barnes, that misliked it not, but was himself also run out of religion, abjured of heresy, and perjured by relapse, [Xx1v] and roiled° about like a layman, railing° against religion and all the known catholic° church, in contempt of his vow and his oath too, and of all good Christian people upon earth, and withdrawing their honour from all the saints in heaven.

Suppose me now that in this full General Council of the whole universal church assembled, this matter were proponed,° and there the same Friar Frappe and Kit Cat his mate, and those other that would allow them were brought forth to be heard, being at that time but these persons that I have rehearsed you, what they would say thereto. And thereupon Luther himself, having the words whereof he would never lack plenty (till frenzy lack folly) would there not only defend, but also boast his beastly marriage, and say that vows of chastity could bind no man, for no man ought to make them, but it were sin and presumption for any man to make them, but if he had that gift given him of God, for it is a thing which every man cannot do, and a gift which no man can give himself, but if it be given him of God. And therefore whoso maketh any such vow, weening° that he have the gift because he feeleth no contrary grudge at that time, yet whensoever he feeleth after any fleshly

motion in his frail members,° he may then perceive well and be very sure, that he hath not the gift, and that therefore he was deceived by the devil, when he made himself a friar. And that he may now therefore run out of his religion, and follow the flesh. And when he findeth a nun that feeleth the like, and that each of them feel other, and like well each other for their feeling faith, then may they both be sure that they may boldly break both their vows, and wed themselves together. And thereby shall they feel by their fleshly feeling faith, that they two be two special elects° predestinate by God before the world was wrought° to go together in this world and bring forth holy fruit to serve the devil at his dinner.

What would the General Council of the whole church have said unto that friar, and what unto Flekke his make, and what unto that devilish doctrine? There would Saint Gregory have used those words that he writeth of Ananias and Saphyra, a saying: Ananias vowed his money [Xx2r] unto God, which money afterward he being overcome by the persuasion of the devil kept back, ye know with what manner death he was punished. Wherefore, sith he was death-worthy that withdrew from God the money which himself had given to God: consider how great jeopardy thou shalt be worthy at the divine judgement, that withdrawest not money, but thyself from almighty God, unto whom thou hast vowed thyself under a religious habit. 178

And I dare boldly say that all that whole General Council of all the whole catholic° church of all faithful folk with all the secret unfaithful folk that then were lurking in it, and all the faithless heretics that were at that time gone from it or accursed out of it, except the friar and his nun and his few foolish adherents, would with one voice, with *mandamus*, *mandamus*, *precipimus*, *precipimus*, *excommunicamus*, ¹⁷⁹ have condemned that abominable heresy to the very devil

^a Acts 5:1-5.

of hell. And I am sure that so would it have been, if any man durst there have holden° any one of many other heresies, that these fellows hold now.

Glossary

abode: remained.

abusion: abuse.

acceptation: acceptance.

a-dazing: dazed, dizzy.

adventure: "At adventure": at random.

alb: an ecclesiastical robe of white cloth, reaching to the feet.

allege: give as an example.

Almain: Germany, German.

Almany: Germany.

alway: always.

amice: an ecclesiastical vestment, of white linen, then worn like a hood over the head, together

with an alb.

an: if.

anything (as adverb): at all.

appose: ask questions, catechize.

aught: anything.

bawd: obtainer of sexual favours for others.

bear her in hand: maintain a statement against her.

bede-roll: a list of donors to the church, read out on Sundays.

Bedlam: then still a concrete reference to Bethlehem hospital, an insane asylum in London.

beset: set.

betake: commit.

betake oneself: go.

betimes: early.

bill: a spear with a large hook attached like a blade.

bode: either = abode, i.e. remained, or = bade, i.e. told.

Boheme: Bohemian; in this context, Hussite.

bounden: bound.

brabble: babble.

brast out: burst out.

broche: spit.

brothel: prostitute.

by and by: immediately.

can: to be able to do, as "such priests ... can no more than their grammar and very scantly that"

(49). Cf. modern German kann.

catholic: orthodox. The word was not yet used to mean "Roman Catholic."

cautel: crafty device, artifice, stratagem.

chafe: vex.

cham: chew.

chrism cloth: A white robe worn by a child at a baptism.

clean (as adverb): completely.

clerkly: scholarly, well-learned.

comfortable: comforting.

commination: threatening of divine punishment or vengeance, both generally and as a part of

the liturgy.

common: talk, discuss.

compold: past participle of "compell."

confute: refute.

contemn: have contempt for.

corporis cloth: now called "corporal cloth." A cloth, usually linen, on which the consecrated

elements are placed during the Eucharist.

courage: encourage.

crope: crept.

cumbered: encumbered.

cumbrance: trouble

deed: "very deed member": condensed form of "member in very deed" i.e. "certainly and

genuinely a member."

dehortation: exhortation.

denounce: announce.

despite: offence, contempt.

devoir: duty, as in French, but pronounced dev-er.

dirige money: payment for a funeral.

dispiteous: lacking pity.

dispition or dispitions: disputation, i.e. a formal dispute between theologians or philosophers.

"Dispitions" appears as singular.

dissimular: dissimulator.

draff: dregs, pig-swill.

Dutchland: Germany.

eftsoons: soon afterwards.

elect: to choose; chosen, either as adjective or as plural noun, especially "the elect," those whom

God has chosen for salvation.

election: choice, especially a choice made by God.

embusy oneself: busy oneself.

endote: provide with a dowry. OED lists this word only in Tyndale.

enforce: strive.

ere: before.

ethe: easy, easier.

even: equal. "Our even Christian": a Christian equal to ourselves, or who is a Christian even as

we are.

everychone: every one.

eyen: eyes.

fain: "to be fain to," "would fain": wish to, want to.

fanon: an embroidered band attached to a celebrating priest's left wrist.

fear: to frighten.

fet: fetch, fetched.

file: to render foul, i.e. to defecate.

find: provide for.

flush: "all on a flush," suddenly, like a sudden flow of water.

fool (v): be foolish.

founden: found.

forasmuch as: inasmuch as.

forbear to (past:forbore): abstain from.

force: to be of importance; to trouble oneself about.

fore: before.

forewalker: one who walks before.

forsooth: truly.

forswear: to renounce someone or something with an oath; in an opposite sense, to swear to bring something about. Past participle "forsworn."

forth on: immediately.

frantic: insane.

Friar Frappe: apparently a figure from a folktale.

froward: unfavourable, moving away from oneself.

gat: got.

gelden: Unit of currency, related to modern Dutch "guilder."

gere: outburst of feeling.

ghostly: spiritual.

gloss: a marginal note, with special reference to the *Glossa ordinaria* (see note 133); to write a glosses on a text.

gossip: friend. groat: fourpence. hallow: chase or pursue with shouts. hap: happen; "by hap": by chance. haply: perhaps. hardy: brave. hew: cut wood. hew after: cut something to shape roughly. himp: limp. holden: held. holp: helped. homely: unpolished, rough, rude. howbeit: however. imbrue: stain, defile. inculk: inculcate. indite: formulate, compose. indurate: obdurate. instance: insistence. ire: anger. jeopard: jeopardize.

knowledge (as verb): acknowledge.

let: obstruct; omit; obstruction.

leve: believe.

lewd: vulgar; bad.

lief: "I had as lief": I had rather.

liever: Comparative of "lief."

like: suit; e.g. "the best laws shall worst like some of the common people"; similar.

limbo patrum: The part of Hell for the virtuous heathen, who may not go to heaven because they are not Christian, but who are not so evil as to suffer eternal punishment. Cf. Dante's *Inferno*.

limiter: a friar authorized to beg within a given territory.

list: choose, wish.

lucre: money.

lust: Sometimes simply "desire," not lust as a sin.

make: mate.

mammering: uncertainty, doubt, perplexity.

man-queller: murderer.

margent: margin.

mark: thirteen shillings fourpence, or two-thirds of a pound.

maugre: in spite of. Cf. French malgré.

meat: food.

meet: fitting.

member: part of the body, especially sexual organs, either male or female.

mete: to measure; of measurement.

methinketh: it seems to me.

minish: diminish.

mockage: mockery.

monition: warning.

murrain: plague, pestilence.

naught: naughty, worthless, sinful; sin, worthlessness.

naughty: sinful.

neverthelater: nevertheless

newfangleness: a negative expression for "innovation."

nosel: to train, educate or nurture in some habit. The word was applied primarily to animals,

such as horses or hawks.

nother: other, in phrase "no nother."

ofttimes: often.

ordinary: bishop.

other: or.

otherwhile: other times.

overhomely: with excessive familiarity.

over this, over that: on this or that point.

pardon: indulgence, a document shortening the length of time a person will spend in Purgatory.

paternoster: The Lord's Prayer in Latin, from the first words Pater noster, Our father. See

Matthew 6:9-13.

paynim: pagan.

peradventure: perhaps. **percase**: perhaps. philautia: "self-love" from the Greek, used as a pun on "philosophy." pie: magpie. pill: pillage. **pole-axe**: battle-axe. **poll**: shear, as a sheep. popeholy: falsely religious. popinjay: parrot. pot parliament: (ironic): a drunken parody of a parliament. **pound**: twenty shillings. prevent: act before, in anticipation of. privy member: penis. prentice: apprentice. prick: spur. **process**: flow, proceeding. proctor: supervisor, person in authority. **propone**: set forward. put to: assert. pyx: container for the reserved host, i.e. for consecrated bread that is not immediately used for communion.

quodlibet: a kind of disputation, involving questions to bachelors and doctors from the audience.

rail: talk or write abusively. rake: catch, trap. regender: engender. revince: refute. rial: rare. rightwise: wise and righteous. rightwiseness: wisdom and righteousness. roil about: to wander about, roam about, with a denigrating connotation. room: position, office. sacre: consecrate. sad: grave, serious. scant: scarcely. scold: woman who uses abusive language. seld: seldom. sentence: meaning. several: separate, distinct. **shoon**: shoes. **shore**: past tense of "shear." **shot-anchor**: sheet-anchor, i.e. a large, strong anchor, kept in reserve for emergencies. **shove**: shaved. **shrive**: give absolution, i.e. forgive sins. sib: sibling.

siege: toilet. silly: pitiable, defenceless. similitude: comparison, simile. **sindon**: shroud. sistern: sisters. sith, sith as, sith that: since. something (as adverb): somewhat. **sooth:** truth. sophistical: having a deceptive appearance of rationality, but also recalls the Oxford textbook Liber sophistarum. sophistry: deceptive false logic. sprongen: sprung. stablish: establish. stead: place. "in some stead": giving some advantage. stole: the ornamented long strip of cloth which the priest wears around his neck. strength (as verb): strengthen. sundry: distinct, various. swap: hit. tale: count, enumeration. thiswise: in this way. threat (as verb): threaten. tone: one, in "the tone."

tother: other, in "the tother."

toward: forward, advancing.

trental: a series of thirty masses.

troth: faith. "By my troth" is a mild oath.

trow: believe.

twain: two.

unction: anointing, inspiration of the Spirit.

understand, understanden: past participles of "understand."

uplandish: rude, uncultivated, boorish.

up-so-down: upside down.

usher: undermaster in a school.

very: true, genuine; truly.

viand: meat.

wanton: undiscplined, ungoverned; undisciplined or ungoverned person.

wantonness: indiscipline.

ware: aware, wary.

wax: grow, become. Past participle "waxen."

weal: good, benefit.

ween: think, believe; intend to.

went: past participle of "ween."

whet: urge.

while ere: some time ago.

whoso: whosoever

wist: know.

wit (v): know; "to wit": that is to say.

wite: to lay the blame for something on someone.

wont: accustomed.

wood: insane, crazy.

wordly: dealing in, consisting of, mere words; also a form of "worldly."

worth: worthwhile.

wot: know.

wrought: past tense or past participle of "work" including obsolete senses "to exert oneself to do something" and (of God) "to create."

Notes

¹ More's published books were: *Translations of Lucian* (with Erasmus, 1506), *Life of John Picus* (translated from Italian, 1510), *Utopia* (1516), *Epigrammata* (1518), *Letter Against Brixius* (1520), and *Responsio ad Lutherum* (1523). He had also produced three book-length treatises published by Erasmus in his *Epistolae aliquot eruditorum* (1520).

² See Luther and Erasmus, *Luther and Erasmus: Free Will and Salvation*.

³ A clear, basic exposition of Luther's views on justification and indulgences may be found in Alister E. McGrath, *Reformation Thought: An Introduction*, Ch. 6, "The Doctrine of Justification by Faith" 101-131. Another account, with an up-to-date bibliography is Markus Wriedt, "Luther's Theology."

⁴ The most notable previous effort to construct a biblical political science was the Defensor pacis of Marsilius of Padua (1324). It seems possible that Tyndale had read it.

⁵ See Bagchi, 95-8.

⁶ Matthew 12:33.

⁷ *CWM* 6:1, 86-7.

⁸ CWM 6:1, 65.

⁹ See Richard Marius' discussion of a parallel problem in More's *Reponsio ad Lutherum* (*Thomas More*, 287-9).

¹⁰ CWM 6: 109, 110, 114, 115, 118, 147, 177 and others. Translation More's.

¹¹ *CWM* 6:1, 254, modernized.

More points out the origin of this idea in Melanchthon in CWM 8:2, 741. See Loci communes (CWM).

¹³ CWM 6: 382-3.

¹⁴ CWM 6: 55-6. Erasmus, Enchiridion, Holborn 58, Himelick 102, CWE 66: 57.

¹⁵ 1506. See *CWM* 3.

¹⁶ Madan, ed. "The Day-Book of John Dorne." Dorne sold 174 copies of books by Erasmus, 39 by Cicero and 28 by Virgil. The next best-selling modern author was Lorenzo Valla at 23. Luther only sold 14.

¹⁷ John Foxe, Acts and Monuments V, 117.

¹⁸ See introduction to Erasmus, *Enchiridion militis christiani*, *An English Version*.

[&]quot;Wherefore I have taken in hande to expounde this gospel & certaine other places of the newe testamente & (as ferforth as God shall lende me grace) to bringe the scripture vnto the right sence & to digge againe the wells of Abraham & to purge & clense them of the erth of wordly wisdom / wherewith these Philistenes have stopped them." (A6v; PS 1:46).

 $^{^{20}\,}$ David Weil Baker makes relevant remarks on the relation between historical investigation and purified faith in "The Historical Faith of William Tyndale."

See, for instance More's discussion of the Greek *mysterion*, mistranslated, in More's view, as "great secret," whereas More held that the passage supported the institution of marriage as a sacrament. CWM 8:1, 85-7. See Morna D. Hooker, "Tyndale's 'Heretical' Translation," 134. See also More's view of *presbyteros* (184-5), discussed by Richard Marius in *CWM* 8.3, 1851.

²² See *CWM* 4: 186.

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Parallels the opening formulas of Paul in his epistles. Cf. for example Galatians 1:3-5: "Grace be with you and peace from God the father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ, which gave himself for our sins, to deliver us from the present evil world, through the will of God our father, to whom be praise for ever and ever. Amen." (T) Cf. also 1 Corinthians 1:3; 2 Corinthians 1:2; Ephesians 1:2; Philippians 1:2; Colossians 1:2; 1 Thessalonians 1:1; 2 Thessalonians 1:2; 1 Timothy 1: 2; 2 Timothy 1:2; Philemon 3. Also 2 Peter 1:2: "Grace with you, and peace be multiplied in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord." Also Revelation 1:4: "Grace be with you, and peace, from him which is and him which was. and which is to come..." The "increase of knowledge" is Tyndale's own addition.

- John 9:22. In his translation, Tyndale has "For the Jews had conspired already that if any man did confess that he [Jesus] was Christ, he should be excommunicate out of the synagogue" (T). No doubt More would have felt that the ecclesiastical term "excommunicate" is invidiously used here. The KJV has "he should be put out of the synagogue."
- ²⁶ "Belly wisdom": the purported wisdom decreed by the greed of the clergy, and not by their calling. This expression is frequent in Tyndale, and also appears in the works of William Roye.
- ²⁷ 1 Corinthians 3:19 "For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, he compasseth the wise in their craftiness" (T). Erasmus wrote variations on this theme in the last section of *Encomium moriae* (The Praise of Folly). See Michael Screech, *Erasmus: Ecstasy and the Praise of Folly*.
- This chapter defines faith as "a sure confidence of things which are hoped for, and a certainty of things which are not seen" (T, Hebrews 11:1). It reviews deeds of faith in the Old Testament, as Tyndale does in this passage, and in the course of the review asserts: "And they all died in faith, and received not the promises: but saw them afar off, and believed them, and saluted them" (T, Hebrews 11:13). The chapter ends with an account of the tribulations of the faithful.
- ²⁹ "against he came to it ..." So that, in the case that the worship should in fact come to him, he would be able to perceive and feel that it came from God.
- Then and now, the pope or sometimes another ecclesiastical official could issue a document declaring a relaxation from the usual ecclesiastical law. For example, if first cousins wished to marry, they would normally be considered too close in blood, but a dispensation from the pope could allow the marriage. In Tyndale's time, the use of dispensations was indeed quite corrupt.
- ³¹ Pope Leo X awarded Henry VIII the title Defensor fidei, defender of the faith, for writing the *Assertio septem sacramentorum* (Assertion of the Seven Sacraments) against Luther.
- ³² The reference is to the Flood in Genesis 7 and to the destruction of Sodom in Genesis 19—but

²⁴ See Daniell, *Tyndale*, 174-81.

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it is not obvious that Noah or Lot preached. Moses and Aaron did preach before the plagues: see Exodus 5:1.

- ³³ Gildas (ca. 500 ca. 570) was, as Tyndale notes, a historian and writer among the ancient Britons. See Gildas, *The Ruin of Britain and Other Works*. As I write, a translation is available online at http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/basis/gildas-full.html.
- ³⁴ This sentence is ungrammatical in the original, and functions rather as a section heading.
- The origin of the term "antichrist" is in the epistles of John, as 1 John 2:18: "Ye have heard how that Antichrist shall come" (T). This Antichrist is commonly identified with the "beast" of Revelation 11:7. The enemies of the pope had identified him with the Antichrist even before the Reformation. This epithet was the common currency of the late medieval heresies, including the Waldensians, the Albigensians and the Lollards. Luther called the defenders of papal supremacy "Antichrist" in *An den christlischen Adel deutscher nation* (Address to the Christian Nobility of Germany).
- ³⁶ Moses, plural. Ironic for the false prophets of the church.
- ³⁷ Cf. Erasmus, Preface to the Paraphrase of Matthew (LB VII, unnumbered introductory pages, [iii]b). See also n. 54.
- On the need of the people to consent to their laws, see Sir John Fortescue, *De laudibus legum anglie*, trans. by Richard Mulcaster as *A Learned Commendation of the Politique Laws of England* (London, 1573), STC 11195. Discussed in Marius, *Thomas More*, 28-33.
- ³⁹ "One priest shall have five or six parishes, and pay so little attention to them, that he does not know where they are." It was usual at the time, and was the cause of widespread complaint, that a priest would receive the tithes of a given parish, and hire another priest to do the work.
- ⁴⁰ Various sorts of fees charged for services by parish priests. The bede-roll was the list of donors to the church, read out every Sunday so that the people could pray for the donors. A trental was a set of thirty masses, frequently paid for by relatives of a deceased person in the hope of reducing the soul's time in purgatory. Dirige money was payment for a funeral. It was a frequent Protestant view that such customs only existed to raise money for the clergy. See Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars*, 134, 294.
- ⁴¹ Tyndale's memory has failed him slightly. The king in question is Alfred. See Michael Alexander, *Old English Literature* 153-4.
- Some of these names can be identified confidently and others not. A number were the founders of medieval schools of thought in theology and philosophy which remained strong in Tyndale's day. "Duns" is Duns Scotus (ca. 1266-1308) and "Saint Thomas" is Thomas Aquinas (1224-1274). These were not only conflicting Scholastic theologians, but representatives of

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different religious orders, as Scotus was a Franciscan and Aquinas a Dominican. St. Bonaventure (ca. 1217-1274) was a Franciscan, and a defender of his order from attacks on its legitimacy. Alexander of Hales (1185-1245) was the founder of late medieval scholastic theology, in so far as he made the Sententiae (Sentences) of Peter Lombard the standard text and wrote the first important commentary on it. "Raymond" is likely Ramon Lull (ca. 1232-1316), a Catalan mystic, Christian polemicist and expert on Arab civilization and Islam. His followers, the "Lullists" became so powerful in Spain that they founded chairs at the universities of Barcelona and Valencia to propagate his doctrines. There was a renewal of interest in Lull in Tyndale's time: the eminent humanist Lefèvre d'Étaples had published some of his works (see Charles G. Nauert, Humanism and the Culture of Renaissance Europe 114). "Lyre" is Nicholas of Lyra (ca. 1270-1349), a Franciscan converted from Judaism whose commentary on the Bible known as the Postillae (Afterwords) exerted great influence in biblical studies. "Brygot" is probably Thomas Bricot (d. 1516), the author of commentaries on Aristotle. Henry Walter, the Victorian editor of Tyndale, suggests that it is St. Brigetta, but her works were exclusively devotional. Bricot fits better with the context. "Dorbellus" is Nicolas D'Orbellis (1400-1475), a Franciscan theologian and philosopher who expounded and commented upon Duns Scotus and wrote a commentary on Lombard's *Sententiae*. Robert Holcott (ca. 1290-1349) was a Dominican theologian and preacher, the author of quodlibetal quaestiones and Bible commentaries. Nicholas of Gorran (1232-ca. 1295) was a French Dominican, author of commentaries on the Bible and on the Sententiae. "Trumbett," according to a credible suggestion of Walter, is Antonius Trombeta (ca. 1436-1518), a Franciscan theologian, who published two treatises, one on Scotus and one arguing against the Averroists. "Hugo de Sancto Victore" is now generally known as Hugh of St. Victor (d. 1141) a French Augustinian canon who founded the Victorine school of thought and spirituality. He is now best known for his encyclopedic work on the structure of human knowledge, the Didascalicon, but his De sacramentis christiane fidei (On The Sacraments of the Christian Faith) was of some contemporary interest, as Henry VIII had cited it as an authority in his Assertio septem sacramentorum (Assertion of the Seven Sacraments). "De Monte Regio" is a mystery, as to my knowledge the only scholarly figure of this name was a mathematician, Joannes de Regio Monte, or Johann Müller of Königsberg (1436-1476). Perhaps he wrote a lost work in theology or biblical scholarship. "De Nova Villa" is probably St. Thomas of Villanova (1488-1555), the only living figure on this list, a Spanish Augustinian and teacher of Scholastic theology. Richard de Mediavilla, or Middleton (fl. 1280), was a Franciscan theologian who taught at Paris and at Oxford. He worked to harmonize the work of Thomas Aguinas with that of Bonaventure.

The image of the ruler which could be altered to suit the thing measured is that of the Lydian or Lesbian rule. Here and subsequently, Tyndale suggests that the Catholic tradition encourages people to regard the interpretations of learned men as the standard, and that the Bible should be twisted to suit what they say, whereas it would be more logical to check their interpretations against the authoritative source, the Bible. Erasmus had set out and expounded the image in his *Adagia* (1.5.93, ASD II-1, 563-4), citing as his source Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics (V, 1137b 29-32) Thomas More used this image in his *Letter to Martin Dorp* defending Erasmus (*CWM*, 15:88, 5-6). Consistently with his later position, the true, rigid rule is the tradition of the church, not the Bible. The same image later appears in Erasmus' own works (where the Bible is the true

rule) and in the short life of Erasmus by Beatus Rhenanus (Olin, 62, 103; Holborn 144).

- Origen was a very fundamental early Christian thinker, but was an Arian, and so taken to be a heretic by both the orthodox and the reformers. More had tried to deal with the issue in *CWM* 6:1, 136-7, and suggests in the *Confutation*, *CWM* 8:1, 153-4, that the heretical passages were interpolated into his writings.
- ⁴⁵ Augustine, *Retractationum libri II*, ed. Almut Mutzenbecher.
- ⁴⁶ "Self-love," used here as a pun on "philosophy." Erasmus had used the word in the same way in the *Encomium moriae* (Praise of Folly), *CWE* 28: 89, 117 and others.
- ⁴⁷ See n. 43 above.
- ⁴⁸ "Sophist" was often used as a term of abuse for a philosopher who misused his skills to present illogical arguments credibly. At the same time, the standard introductory text in logic at Oxford was called the *Liber sophistarum* (Book of Sophists). *Benefundatum* means "that which is well founded" in Latin. Tyndale is implying that the term is more specific, but the databases of medieval and Renaissance texts show no trace of such a meaning, and no colleague I have contacted has heard of one.
- ⁴⁹ Realism and nominalism were differing schools of philosophy and theology at the time. William of Ockham was taken to be the founder of nominalism, and the logician Jean Buridan (ca. 1300-ca. 1358) was a chief exponent. Buridan's view of nominalism involved a rejection of universals as existing outside the mind. Both Duns Scotus and Thomas Aquinas are taken to be moderate realists: that is, they assert the existence of universals outside the mind, but as inherent in particular beings.
- A list of technical terms used by philosophers to define their problems. "Quiddity" is "whatness," and "haecceity" is "thisness." Both terms are associated with Duns Scotus, but also used by the nominalists. There is a nearly identical list of terms, similarly satirical, in Erasmus, *Ratio verae theologiae*, Holborn, 191.
- This flood of terminology, not meant to be understood by the reader, satirizes the technical nature of philosophical discussions in the universities of Tyndale's time. *Ens* translates as "Being," and stood at the centre of the disagreement between Realists and Nominalists. "Ens is a voice only" is a rough statement of the nominalist position, while the sentence beginning "Ens is univicom" encapsulates a Scotist position taken in opposition to Aquinas. One *locus classicus* for issues connected with *ens* is Thomas Aquinas, *De ente et essentia*. The humanist view of these debates was that philosophers made uselessly fine distinctions about nonexistant objects while ignoring the practical problems of living and the value of common sense. The word *ens* itself was postclassical, being coined for the purposes of medieval philosophy: the humanists consequently thought it meaningless and barbaric.

This passage continues the earlier theme of conflicts within the theoretically unified Roman church. The "grey friars" are the Franciscans and the "black friars" the Dominicans. The Franciscans promoted the notion that Mary had been conceived and born without original sin, that is, they promoted the notion of the Immaculate Conception. The Dominicans opposed it, and it did not become an article of faith until the nineteenth century.

- In Tyndale's time, printed ballads were sold on single sheets for low prices. Very few of these broadsheets have survived, but on the present evidence, they told both English folktales (Robin Hood, Bevis) and classical or classically-based tales (Hercules, Hector, Troilus). Robin Hood, for both Tyndale and More, was representative of the light-mindedness of unreligious people. They both imply a pornographic quality to Robin Hood stories not known in surviving ballads and romances. See the online bibliographies for Robin Hood Studies at http://www.lib.rochester.edu/camelot/rh/rhhome.htm.
- The "Paraclesis" appears in English in Olin, 97-108 and in Latin in Holborn, 139-49. The preface to the Paraphrase of Matthew is available in volume 45 of the *CWE*, and may be read in Latin in *LB* VII: unnumbered introductory pages.

- Tilley lists this as the first occurrence of this proverb (W113), though it is closely related to "as mickle as water in the sea," listed in Whiting much earlier (W58).
- William Tyndale was also known as William Hychens, as he notes in the first line of *The Obedience of a Christian Man*. This was not by way of deception, as he was open about it, and his family had had a double name before his birth. David Daniell suggests that the name "commemorates an inheritance brought in through marriage" and that More used this name "when he wished to sneer at William Tyndale" as it seems to have smacked of a lower origin (*William Tyndale*, 12). The Messenger is very easily convinced here, as no evidence has yet been presented. Both seem to take the Catholic view that the usage of the Church is infallible, and that the base meanings of these words, as commonly known in England, are right ones.

- ⁵⁹ The Cologne Fragment had marginal glosses, though not primarily polemical ones. The Worms Testament had none.
- ⁶⁰ i.e. good works can do nothing toward our salvation. The connection made here between charity and good works tends to suggest that "charity" then, as today, was connected with donations to good causes.
- ⁶¹ "Flekke or Fleck and his make" is "a contemptuous designation for a man and his paramour," of unknown origin. It is first recorded in this text, and More uses it again in the Confutation

⁵⁵ i.e. Paul's.

⁵⁸ Tilley N16, Whiting N9.

(OED).

- ⁶² Tyndale, *Obedience of a Cristen Man*, sig. M3r-M5r.
- ⁶³ God save you, my lord.
- ⁶⁴ In spite of what More says, these words were key points for the governance of the Church, and not chosen at random.
- These last two concern the legitimacy of confession as a sacrament. If the Greek *metanoia* is rendered as "penance," it appears that the sacrament of penance has a warrant in Scripture, but if it is a psychological event, acknowledging one's sin in prayer, then the sacrament may be a human innovation after the New Testament was written. Cf. Luther's *De babylonica captivitate ecclesiae* (On the Babylonian Captivity of the Church), *LW* 36: 11-126, and Tyndale's *Obedience*, M6v-7v.
- The reference here, and throughout this discussion, is to the Constitutions of Oxford of 1408, which forbade the "Wycliffe" translation of the Bible, and any made later that lacked the prior approval of the Bishops. "Can," here, means, "be competent in." Cf. modern German *kann*.
- ⁶⁷ John Wycliffe (d. 1384) was the effective founder of the Lollard sect, and was also deeply influential on the development of Hussitism in Bohemia. He excoriated the vices of the clergy, emphasized spiritual communion over the visible church, rejected the doctrine of transubstantiation, and encouraged Bible-reading in the vernacular. The Lollard translation of the Bible, from the Latin Vulgate into English, was often called "Wycliffe's Bible," though it is doubtful if any of the translation is his own.
- ⁶⁸Tilley C152, Whiting C92, first occurrence here. The meaning is made clearer in the later form "Though the cat winks a while, yet sure she is not blind" (Tilley C169, dated to 1570).
- More is explaining how, given the very good principles of the church, the promised good translations may nevertheless be unavailable. The bad translations are available, since fanatical heretics do not mind losing their money when the books are seized, but more substantial printers are reluctant to print the good translations allegedly in circulation, since they do not know if they are old, and therefore permitted, or new, and therefore forbidden.
- More explains why, after 120 years, no new translation has emerged with the approval of the bishops, as foreseen in the Constitutions of Oxford. He does not know, but thinks that particular bishops are unwilling to move alone in this matter, and that there have always been some bishops who are put off by the bad character of those demanding a new translation. They are afraid that they want the Bible for bad purposes.

⁷¹ Tilley F211, Whiting F137, dated to 1470.

- ⁷² Tilley C218, Whiting C34, dated in Gower to 1393.
- "Owe to be content" = "it is their lot to be content," i.e. it is what they both "own" and "owe."
- Gregory of Nazianzus (c. 325-89) was a Greek father of the church. The reference is to his second oration "In Defence of His Flight to Pontus," pph. 92 which may be found online at www.newadvent.com/fathers. (Migne, Patrologia graeca, vol. 35: 495-96).
- ⁷⁵ Jerome, Epistle 22, section 29 (Migne, Patrologia latina, vol. 22:415).
- ⁷⁶ i.e. not just one who can read, but one who is authorized to interpret.
- There seems to be no exactly matching text in Plato. *CWM* suggests several passages "in which the people are committed to the care of their betters." See Republic 479D-480A, 484A-499E, 539C-539D, 590D-592A (CWM 6-2: 696).
- ⁷⁸ The reference could be to a number of passages in the *Codex Justiniani*, but the first is book 1, title 1, law 4 (ed. Paul Krueger [Berlin: Weidmann, 1877]). James A. Brundage, personal communication.
- ⁷⁹ This word is otherwise unattested, but must derive from "were," meaning "perplexity" (OED).
- This passage is concerned with the interpretive questions addressed in the Rules of Tychonius, as Augustine had set them out in *De doctrina christiana*, 515-97. When the biblical text says "I," who is that? Prophets sometimes speak in the person of God, and Jesus refers to himself as God, as man, and as the head of the mystical church. More is saying that common people can never get this straight.
- 81 A "bayard" is a bay-coloured horse. For some reason, the word was used in proverbial phrases as the type of blindness (OED).
- 82 Whiting S839, Tilley S936, dated to 1385.
- i.e. the Constitutions of Oxford, restricting the translation of the Bible.
- ⁸⁴ Unknown. A "tallage" is a tax.
- The figure of corrupt taste probably derives from Erasmus' *Enchiridion*. See Himelick, 43; in Latin in Holborn, 26. Tyndale uses the same figure in the preface to *An Answer to Sir Thomas More's Dialogue* (p. 116 *infra*).
- ⁸⁶ It was Luther's reading of the Book of Romans that led to his central doctrine of justification by faith alone. See introduction, p. 7.

- ⁸⁷ In 1525, Luther wrote a conciliatory letter to Henry VIII, acting on the belief that the *Assertio septem sacramentorum* had not been written by Henry, and by that time did not represent his views. Henry responded by publishing Luther's letter with a scathing reply in 1526.
- ⁸⁸ The reference is presumably to the ninety-five theses of 1517.
- ⁸⁹ Luther, *Resolutiones* (1518), *WA* 1.535.
- The "Bohemes" are the Hussites of Bohemia, who based their beliefs on Wycliffe, whose doctrines were so feared in England. The assertion that Luther had condemned their schismatic qualities seems based on Hieronymus Emser's pamphlet on the Leipzig disputation of 1519, between Luther and his allies on the one hand and Johannes Eck on the other. See Bagchi, *Luther's Earliest Opponents*, 73.
- ⁹¹ See An den christlischen Adel, WA 6:454-7, LW 44:195-200.
- ⁹² The king's book was *Assertio septem sacramentorum* (Assertion of the Seven Sacraments, 1521). Luther's answer was *Contra Henricum, regem anglorum* (Against Henry, King of the English, 1522)
- ⁹³ April, 1521.
- ⁹⁴ Richard Marius, one of the editors of the *Dialogue* for the *CWM*, searched for parallels in contemporary documents without result (personal communication).
- ⁹⁵ From the fable of "the dog and his shadow," where the object dropped is not cheese but meat: Aesop et al., *Aesopica*, no. 133; cf. Babrius no. 79 in *Babrius and Phaedrus*. Also Book I, Fable V in *Caxton's Aesop*.
- ⁹⁶ See André Chastel, *The Sack of Rome*.
- ⁹⁷ Brian Cummings focuses a very interesting chapter on More and Tyndale on this very problem in *Literary Culture*, 187-231.
- 98 i.e. He shall think, as he is dying ..., that his fate does not derive from his own character or deeds, but from the inscrutable will of God.
- ⁹⁹ "A man that is an heretick after the first and second admonitions reject" (Titus 3:10, KJV).
- ¹⁰⁰ Not from Corinthians, in fact, but 1 Timothy 1:19-20.
- ¹⁰¹ Probably John Fisher, "Sermon Against Luther, 1521".

¹⁰² The reference is to Gratian, *Corpus Iuris Canonici*, ed. Emil Friedberg (Leipzig 1879). [*IWT*]

- ¹⁰³ *CWM* suggests that the reference is to a man called Collins, a contemporary of More, who became a heretic apparently because his wife's infidelity had driven him insane. He mocked the Eucharist by raising his little dog as the priest elevated the Host. It seems he was already under arrest when these words were written in 1529, and was burnt in 1538. Foxe, *Acts and Monuments* 5:251. See *CWM* 6-2, 724.
- ¹⁰⁴ "Pomeranius" was Johann Bügenhagen (1485-1558); "Carlostadius" was Andreas Bodenstein von Karlstadt (1486-1541); "Othomonke" was Otho Bunfels (c. 1488-1534); and "Lambert" was François Lambert (1486?-1530). All were prominent Protestants.
- 105 "Infogyttable" is unknown.
- This opening again recalls Paul, as in the closing of 2 Corinthians at 13:14: "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the holy ghost, be with you all. Amen." Tyndale adapts the formula to suit his present topic, while recalling another passage in Paul, at 2 Corinthians 4:6: "For it is God that commanded the light to shine out of darkness, which hath shined in our hearts, for to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ" (T).
- ¹⁰⁷ See n. 85 above.
- 108 Cf. 1 Timothy 5:23: "Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thy often diseases" (T).
- ¹⁰⁹ The reference seems to be to baptismal salt, which, "cleansed and sanctified by special exorcisms and prayers, is given to the catechumen before entering church for baptism" (Catholic Encyclopedia online at http://newadvent.org/cathen/, "salt").
- ¹¹⁰ Blessed oil was and is used in the church for a wide range of ceremonies, including ordination, confirmation, sometimes baptism, and especially blessings for the sick and extreme unction.
- ¹¹¹ Beetles were taken as a type of blindness, apparently because they sometimes fly blindly against obstacles. This occurrence is earlier than the earliest in the OED.
- ¹¹² The first of many references to More's assertion in the Dialogue that we should "captive and subdue our understanding to serve and follow faith" *CWM* 6, 254, modernized.
- 113 i.e. from the time of Pope Gregory III. Tyndale believed that this date marked the beginning of an alliance between the Pope and the Frankish kingdom against the Emperor which survived

to his own day. He thereby accounts for the longevity of the papacy without believing in the blessing of God on it.

- The Zamzummims were giant enemies of the Israelites. Cf. Deut. 2:20. [IWT]
- "Pater noster": the first words of the Lord's Prayer in Latin. See Matthew 6:9-15.
- Priests of the Roman church ordinarily did not have beards, and their heads were shaven before or during the ceremony of ordination. The ceremony itself included anointing of hands.
- i.e. just as if they had not been anointed as clergy.
- Thomas à Becket (c. 1118 1170) was Archbishop of Canterbury in the reign of Henry II. As archbishop, Becket resisted the king's desire to tax the clergy and try them for criminal offences in secular courts. After a series of conflicts with the king, four knights murdered Becket in Canterbury Cathedral. His shrine in Canterbury was a major site of pilgrimage until the Reformation. Becket continued to be a hero to Catholics, but Tyndale is expressing a wide Protestant consensus here: that Becket was to blame for opposing the legitimate authority of the king without biblical warrant.
- ¹¹⁹ See p. 70-73 *infra*.
- ¹²⁰ Tilley N130, Whiting N92, dated to 1475.
- ¹²¹ In the end, Judas hanged himself, and so, according to Christian theology, went to hell unredeemed (Matthew 27:5).
- ¹²² See Erasmus' rendition of Acts 2:47, 5:11, 11:26, Romans 16:5, 1 Corinthians 14:4, Colossians 4:15, Philemon 2, and the annotations of these passages in *LB* VI or the editions of the *Annotationes* by Anne Reeve.
- Erasmus, *Encomium moriae* (The Praise of Folly). See Introduction, p. 6.
- The reference is to the Old Latin translations of the Bible, which predated the Vulgate. As Tyndale implies, parts of the Latin liturgy used Old Latin versions rather than the Vulgate.
- ¹²⁵ Tyndale is referring, for example, to Deborah, in Judges 4-5.
- ¹²⁶ The Messenger. See headnote to first selection from the Dialogue 68 *infra*.
- ¹²⁷ "I concede the conclusion and what follows from it." Tyndale is suggesting that More's logic makes Tyndale's own case for him.

- 128 "The interpreter" the translator of the Vulgate, traditionally thought to be St. Jerome.
- ¹²⁹ Tyndale regarded Wycliffe as a distinguished predecessor, and some have argued that Tyndale was deeply influenced by him. See Donald Dean Smeeton, *Lollard Themes*.
- ¹³⁰ See Gratian, *Corpus Iuris Canonici*, 1: 146. [*IWT*].
- Joshua and Caleb were two of the spies sent by Moses to investigate Canaan. They alone advocated an invasion, according to the will of God (Numbers 13-14). Joshua went on to become the successor of Moses (Deuteronomy 31:23) and the leader of the Israelites in conquering Canaan. Eleazar was a younger son of Aaron who succeeded him as High Priest (Numbers 20:25-29). His own son Phinehas commanded a successful campaign against the Midianites (Numbers 31:6-8). All are seen in the Bible as men of faith blessed by God.
- i.e. they taught the people to believe that salvation lay in works and not in faith.
- Matthew 16:6, 11, 12; Mark 8:15; Luke 12:1. The "leaven" of the Bible is "the doctrine of the Pharisees and the Saducees" (Matthew 16:12) or "hypocrisy" (Luke 12:1). Tyndale adds "glosses," with reference to the *Glossa ordinaria*, a massive reference work with notes on each verse of the Bible. In Tyndale's view, the glosses had displaced the word of God, replacing the text with a commentary that did not truly derive from the text.
- Not listed in Tilley or Whiting. Stevenson dates the following to 1732: "Foxes dig not their own holes."
- Tyndale's views on allegory are set out in a passage of *The Obedience of a Christian Ma*n not included here (R1ff. in the 1528 edition). He thought allegories were capable of affecting the feelings, but were not logical: one may persuade with them, but not prove. This quality made them useful to the Roman church hierarchy, in Tyndale's view, since allegories which appeared to base themselves in the Bible could be made to show the legitimacy of the Pope's power. If made strong enough, the allegory as supplement to the literal sense could eclipse the literal sense, so that an inattentive reader of the Bible might think that it made statements inimical to true religion, but favourable to the established authorities.
- The text has "fall," emended to "offal" here, following a suggestion of O'Donnell [IWT].
- ¹³⁷ Tyndale's position on ceremonies is more completely set out at p. 147 ff. *infra*.
- i.e. John the Baptist.
- i.e. if they had been able.
- $^{140}\,$ In Tyndale's lifetime, scholars like Erasmus had shown that a large number of books which

had been attributed to saints were forgeries. See the edition of Erasmus' prefaces to Jerome in *CWE* 61. This passage is essential for understanding Tyndale's view of philology.

- 141 These are the Seven Deadly Sins.
- i.e. we would all have been condemned to destruction as Sodom and Gomorrah were, if God had not left us his word in the form of scripture (Isaiah 1:9). The passage is quoted at Romans 9:29.
- ¹⁴³ "Jack-a-napes" was a name for a tame monkey or ape.
- ¹⁴⁴ For information on these practices see Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars*. On the reputed magical powers of the Gospel of John, see 215-17.
- ¹⁴⁵ The point here is not that it is wrong to read the Gospel to women giving birth, but rather that the sound of the uncomprehended Latin words was thought to protect her and her child.
- ¹⁴⁶ These topics are covered in Duffy. "Procession week" is an allusion to the "beating of the parish bounds" in Rogationtide, on which see Duffy, *Stripping*, 136.
- Anne O'Donnell suggests in her commentary on the *Answer* that the reference is to Ch. 165 of *The cronicles of Englond* (London: William Caxton, 1480), RSTC 9991. The passage relates how Edward I expelled the Jews from England in 1290 because they charged usury. [*IWT*]
- The paxbread was a loaf of bread baked by one of the parishioners with a holy emblem on it, such as the cross or the lamb of God. The priest would kiss the cloth on which the Host rested, the lip of the chalice and then the paxbread, and it would then be distributed to parishioners in the order of their priority in the parish. It was believed to bring well-being, and was sometimes taken to be a sufficient substitute for the Eucharist. See Duffy, *Stripping*, 125.
- ¹⁴⁹ This is a paraphrase of the baptism liturgy.
- ¹⁵⁰ Tyndale gives an extensive account of these events as he understood them in *The Practice of Prelates*.
- ¹⁵¹ Standard prayers. *Pater noster* ("Our father," otherwise called the Lord's Prayer), *Ave Maria* ("Hail, Mary"), and the statement of faith, which began *credo*, hence "creed." Biblical versions of "Our father" are found at Matthew 6:9-13 and Luke 11:2-4.
- ¹⁵² "Volowed" derives from the liturgy of baptism, which begins volo, "I wish." "Bishoping" was confirmation, so called because the bishop had to be present to carry out the ceremony.
- ¹⁵³ Etymologically, "sacrament" does not mean "sign," but the word was commonly said to

carry this meaning, even in Catholic sources, perhaps because of a passage of Augustine: "signa, cum ad res divinas pertinent, sacramenta appellantur" (Ep. 138), "signs are called sacraments when they pertain to divine things" (translation mine).

- 154 IWT gives the reference to Augustine's letter to Januarius, ep. 19, l. 35, but suggests that the immediate source is Bodius, ed., Unio dissidentium, 1.15.
- 155 "Manners of speakings" are figures of speech and the patterns they make. This expression translates Erasmus' sermonis habitus (see Ratio verae theologiae, Holborn 259), but for Erasmus the habitus was a question of individual style, where for Tyndale it was an element of social convention. "Borrowed speech" means allegory, not as imposed from outside the Bible, but as used within the Bible, as when Jesus uses an allegorical story to make a point.
- ¹⁵⁶ For Duns Scotus, see n. 42 above. It was for the cause of Greek scholarship that More had written in his Letter to Oxford University of 1518, and Tyndale likely knew this. Still, his figure of thirty years puts the battle he is recalling further in the past than More's. Terence and Virgil were standard Latin writers. In England, "Terence" was shorthand for the study of classical literature (see Nauert, Humanism and the Culture of Renaissance Europe, 118).
- ¹⁵⁷ "Let thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." From the Lord's Prayer (*Pater noster*).
- ¹⁵⁸ In a passage of the *Dialogue Concerning Heresies* not included here, More had told the story of a man who believed that a new church steeple in the town of Sandwich had caused the harbour to silt up, because the silting had occurred after the steeple had been built (CWM 6:1, 412-13). This was to illustrate More's belief that Tyndale and other heretics lacked logic. "Twice two makes four" is from CWM 6:1, 168.
- See Note 112.
- i.e. has passed, has come to pass.
- 161 "in the kiss of charity."
- George Joye (c. 1495-1553) was another member of the Antwerp English Protestant community, who produced the first published English translations of the Psalms, Isaiah and Jeremiah. He is best known for his guarrel with Tyndale in 1534 over revisions he made to a pirated edition of Tyndale's New Testament.

 163 i.e. even if she should die for it.
- i.e. out of a single, self-same holy scripture.
- i.e. a true preacher can only exist where the true church exists.
- i.e. it is a good deed, when in doubt, to believe the best [of a person].
- Luther doubted that the epistle of James was legitimate scripture, but Tyndale did not. Apparently Barnes agreed with Luther.

- ¹⁶⁸ "The Bottle" is the name of an inn, and Botolph's Wharf was on the banks of the Thames.
- i.e. unless she is doing better than she was.
- ¹⁷⁰ See pp. 135, 139 infra.
- ¹⁷¹ The point is accurate. See Tyndale's answer to More's Book IV, Chapter 12, *An Answer to Sir Thomas More's Dialogue*.
- ¹⁷² That is, he neither knew whom he hit, nor did he exert himself to find out. Patenson was More's household fool. His picture appears in the More family portrait by Holbein in the National Portrait Gallery, London.
- 173 She means "blasphemy," of course, but the expression may be an intentional malapropism to paint the character.
- i.e. More himself.
- ¹⁷⁵ "Uttering of my chaffer" means "selling my wares."
- i.e. "I did not exert myself to consider whether any of them would ever come back again."
- ¹⁷⁷ Gregory I (the Great) reigned as pope 590-604.
- ¹⁷⁸ See Migne, *Patrologia latina* 77, 487-8 (CWM).
- "We command, we instruct, we excommunicate."

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