

**WRITINGS**  
**AND**  
**EXAMINATIONS**  
**OF**  
**BRUTE, THORPE, COBHAM, HILTON,**  
**PECOCK, BILNEY, AND OTHERS;**  
  
**WITH**  
  
**THE LANTERN OF LIGHT,**  
  
**WRITTEN ABOUT A. D. 1400.**

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## THE DISCIPLES OF WICKLIFF.

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THE appellation of Lollard was early given to the followers of Wickliff. There are various opinions respecting the origin of this name, but that of Mosheim appears the most probable. He considers that it was derived from a German word, *lollen*; signifying to sing with a low voice. It originated upon the continent, and from the middle of the eleventh century was applied to persons distinguished for their piety: they were generally remarkable for devotional singing.

The number of Wickliff's disciples at the time of his decease is described by Knighton, a canon of Leicester, his contemporary.\* He says, "The number of those who believed in Wickliff's doctrine very much increased, and were multiplied like suckers growing from the root of a tree. They every where filled the kingdom; so that a man could scarcely meet two people on the road but one of them was a disciple of Wickliff." Knighton also says, "They so prevailed by their laborious urging of their doctrines, that they gained over the half of the people, or a still greater proportion, to their sect. Some embraced their doctrines heartily, others they compelled to join them from fear or shame." In another place he accuses them of causing divisions in families—the followers of the truth ever have been opposed by "parents, and brethren, and kinsfolk, and friends." The testimony of Knighton is valuable. It is the evidence of an enemy who fails in bringing forward any just cause of accusation. That a people so persecuted could compel others to belong to them, is a charge too improbable to need refutation.

In reality, the followers of the Reformer were of two classes. The first included those who felt disgust at the usurpations of the popedom, and the vices of the Romish priesthood, while they cared little for the doctrinal errors of that church, though they could not but perceive their opposition to scripture, and even to common sense. When we remember the conflicts in which the king and parliament of England had been engaged with the papacy during many years, and the impunity with which ecclesiastics were allowed to pursue their profligate courses, we may well suppose that a large portion of the community entertained the sentiments just described; so that Knighton's statement of every second

\* Twysden, *Decem Scriptores*, col. 2663.

person in the kingdom being a disciple of Wickliff, may scarcely have been an exaggeration when so understood.

2 But there was another class whose attachment to the doctrines of the Reformer was of a more spiritual nature; who felt the evil of sin, and desired to live holy unto God: these were far less numerous. They are described by Reinher, an inquisitor of those times. He says, "The disciples of Wickliff are men of a serious, modest deportment; they avoid all ostentation in dress, mix little with the busy world, and complain of the debauchery of mankind. They maintain themselves entirely by their own labour, despising wealth, being fully content with mere necessaries. They follow no traffic, because it is attended with so much lying, swearing, and cheating. They are chaste and temperate, never seen in taverns, nor amused by vain pleasures. You find them always employed, either learning or teaching. They are concise and devout in their prayers, blaming lifeless tediousness. They never swear, they speak little; in public preaching they lay the chief stress upon charity. They disregard the canonical hours, saying that the Lord's prayer repeated with devotion is better than tedious hours (Romish services) without devotion. They explain the scriptures differently from the interpretations of the holy doctors and church of Rome. They speak little, and with humility; they are well behaved in appearance."

The writings of Wickliff fully demonstrate that he wished his followers to be such as the Romish inquisitor describes them. The nominal followers of Wickliff, those who merely opposed the outward errors of the papacy, will not require our particular notice, although they left many valuable testimonies against the errors of popery, and some in favour of the Lollards. In this number may be included the poets, Chaucer and Gower. Langland, the author of the bold reproofs on the vices of ecclesiastics, contained in the Visions of Piers Plowman, also wrote during the early life of Wickliff.

Among those actuated by higher motives, there were many individuals of rank and influence, who although not separated from the world to the extent above described, yet were sufficiently decided to incur censure from the Roman ecclesiastics. The high rank of one, however, prevented this so far as regarded herself. Ann of Bohemia, the consort of Richard II., evidenced her attachment to the scriptures, copies of which she possessed, and constantly studied. Even the Romish prelate Arundel speaks of her piety and knowledge of the bible, as reflecting shame upon the ignorance of many ecclesiastics. She interfered in behalf of Wickliff; and to the intercourse established between England and her native land, as means, may be ascribed the progress of the gospel in Bohemia, with the subsequent opposition to the errors of popery in that country. The history of the reformation in Bohemia, and the

affecting narratives respecting the Waldenses at this period, should be perused in connection with the accounts of the English Lollards.

Fox, Lewis, and others, mention sir Thomas Latimer, sir Lewis Clifford, the queen mother, John of Gaunt, lord Henry Percy, sir John Montague, the earl of Salisbury, and others, among the protectors of the Lollards, apparently upon principle. But LORD COBHAM was the most illustrious in this respect among the British nobility. He laid down his life for the truth. The particulars of his history are given in the following pages. John of Northampton, mayor of London, in 1382, and the following year, was characterised as a Lollard on account of his bold proceedings against persons of wicked life. The terms of reproach applied to the inhabitants of London, on account of the proceedings of their mayor, show that the principles of Wickliff had made considerable progress in the chief city of the land.

Some other adherents of Wickliff claim more distinct notice. Their history presents many interesting particulars of that period. NICHOLAS HEREFORD was of Queen's college, Oxford. He was included in some of the proceedings against the Reformer, both at Oxford and in London. The accounts given of him are inconsistent and confused. This is not surprising, as almost the only particulars we possess are given by Romish writers. It appears that he went to Rome, and there defended his opinions in the presence of the pope, by whom he was imprisoned. Being liberated by a popular tumult, he returned to England, where he was imprisoned by the archbishop of Canterbury. From the statement of Thorpe, he seems to have submitted to the church of Rome. Hereford is supposed to have assisted Wickliff in the translation of the scriptures. He was one of the most learned of the followers of the Reformer, but did not possess firmness or consistency. He sat among the clergy who passed judgment, in 1391, upon Walter Brute, and yet, in the following year, he again needed and obtained the royal protection against his enemies.

JOHN ASHTON was also included in the proceedings against the Reformer. He was a zealous preacher. Knighton describes him, as "travelling on foot, with a staff in his hand, visiting the churches throughout the kingdom." His vigilance is thus characterised, "He was like a dog raised from sleep, ready to bark at every noise, and as expeditious in passing from one place to another, as if he had been a bee; full of arguments, ready to dogmatize or spread his opinions. He boldly, to the utmost of his power, declared the doctrines of his master Wickliff at the tables of sinful hearts, that he might increase his sect. Nor was he contented with the enticing conclusions of his master, nor ashamed out of his own novel, subtle invention, to add many others, sowing tares among the wheat wherever he

preached." Ashton's fate is uncertain, but it would appear that he retained his profession of the faith, while by some concession he was permitted to resume his scholastic engagements. To Ashton and Hereford, Wickliff is supposed to allude in one of his homilies, which has been quoted in the life of Wickliff, but may be here repeated. "He (Courtney) pursueth a certain priest, because he writeth to men this English, and summoneth him and travaileth him, so that it is hard for him to bear it. And thus he pursueth another priest, by the help of pharisees, because he preacheth Christ's gospel freely and without fables. O men who are on Christ's behalf, help ye now against anti-christ, for the perilous times are come which Christ and Paul foretold." Vaughan adds, "We can readily believe that Wickliff's auditory would sympathize with their pastor at this foreboding moment."

PHILIP REPINGDON was a canon of Leicester, and a noted preacher at Oxford. He also was included in the proceedings against Wickliff. For a time he preached very boldly respecting the sacrament, and against the Romish ecclesiastics. But his fall was a decided one. Terrified by the prospect of sufferings, or allured by promotion, he forsook the Lollards, and became a bitter persecutor of the truth. He was afterwards bishop of Lincoln and a cardinal! A sufficient proof that the papists would gladly have induced the principal followers of Wickliff to join their party, had the usual worldly inducements availed for that purpose.

JOHN PURNEY, or PURVEY, was an active preacher like Ashton. Knighton describes him as a simple priest of grave aspect and behaviour, with an appearance of greater sanctity than others. In his dress and habits a common man; giving himself no rest of body, he was unwearied in his endeavours by travelling up and down, to persuade the people and bring them over to his views. He adds, "Being an invincible disciple of his master, John Wickliff, Purney conformed to his opinions, and fearlessly confirmed them like an able executor. For that he boarded with his master when alive, and so having drunk more plentifully of his instructions, he more abundantly sucked them in, and always, even to his dying day, as an inseparable companion, followed both him and his opinions and doctrines, being unwearied in his labours and endeavours to propagate them." Walden calls him, "the library of the Lollards, and the glosser (annotator) upon Wickliff."

Purney was curate to Wickliff during the latter abode of the Reformer at Lutterworth. He is supposed to have written the prologue to the English bible which has by some been attributed to his master, an extract from which will be found in the following pages. It is also conjectured, that to his care we are indebted for a considerable part of the homilies of Wickliff which have been preserved. He was afterwards



imprisoned by Arundel, and by tortures induced to recant at Paul's Cross, in 1396. A small living was then given to him. He is mentioned in Thorpe's examinations as living in conformity to the manners of the world. But his conscience did not allow him to pursue this course. He was imprisoned again in 1421, by archbishop Chicheley, and is supposed to have died in confinement.

Knighton mentions several other active Lollards; among them was WILLIAM SWINDERBY. He was originally a hermit. Coming to Leicester he preached against the corruptions of the age, particularly reproving the pride and vanity of females, until, as we are told, "the good and grave women, as well as the bad, threatened to stone him out of the place!" He then addressed the merchants and rich men, denouncing those who neglected heavenly riches for worldly wealth; so often dwelling thereon, that, as the Romish chronicler remarks, had not the divine clemency interposed, he had driven some honest men of the town into despair! Swinderby then became a recluse, but after a short time resumed his preaching, directing his discourses against the errors and vices of popery. Knighton, of course, stigmatizes his doctrines as erroneous, but adds, "He so captivated the affections of the people, that they said they never had seen or heard any one who so well explained the truth." Being excommunicated, and forbidden to preach in any church or churchyard, he made a pulpit of two millstones in the high-street of Leicester, and there preached "in contempt of the bishop." "There," says Knighton, "you might see throngs of people from every part, as well from the town as the country, double the number there used to be when they might hear him lawfully." Swinderby was cited to appear before the bishop at Lincoln, when he was convicted of heresy and errors, for which it is said, "he deserved to be made fuel for the fire." Many of his hearers had accompanied him, and lamented his danger, but the duke of Lancaster being at Lincoln interposed in his behalf; he was allowed to escape upon promising to recant his opinions, and publicly acknowledging them to be errors. He afterwards settled at Coventry, where he preached and taught with greater success than before. Walsingham, another Romish historian, says, that the multitude raged in his behalf, so as to deter the bishop of Lincoln from further measures against him.

Swinderby then retired to Herefordshire, where proceedings were instituted against him by the bishop of the diocese, in 1391. Fox has given them at length from the registers of the bishop. They show that Swinderby taught the same doctrines as Wickliff, and was active in preaching the truth. One of the articles against him states, that "The same William, unmindful of his own salvation, hath many and often times come into a certain desert wood, called Dorvallwood.

and there, in a certain chapel not hallowed, or rather in a profane cottage, hath, in contempt of the keys,\* presumed of his own rashness to celebrate, nay rather to profanate." He was also accused of similar "doings" elsewhere. Already had the poor Lollards resorted to village worship in private houses, then considered a crime worthy of death! This accusation was denied by Swin Derby in his replies to the articles alleged against him, but rather on the ground of the facts being wrongly stated, than as admitting such conduct to be contrary to God's law. From the registers it appears that Swin Derby being cited to appear again, absented himself, when he was excommunicated. He addressed a letter to the parliament, urging an examination into the errors and abuses then prevalent, but no particulars are recorded of the subsequent events of his life.

WALTER BRUTE, or BRITTE, was a layman. He studied at Oxford, and graduated there. In 1360 he opposed the favourite tenet of the friars, that Christ obtained his livelihood by begging. He was of the diocese of Hereford, where he was accused of heresy in October, 1391. The tenets objected to him are those usually attributed to the Lollards. He was also accused as a favourer of Swin Derby. His answers were clear and decisive as to his belief, that he approved Swin Derby's answers, that real bread remained after the consecration of the sacrament, and that the pope was antichrist. He further presented some written declarations of the doctrines he held, which were entered in the bishop's register, and have been copied by Fox. They present an interesting record of his sentiments, extending to thirty folio pages. Some extracts will be found in the present volume.

It appears that Brute was a man of some consequence, from the pains taken by the Romanists to bring him to their views: they probably were more earnest on account of his descent from the ancient Britons. The proceedings lasted for two years, when after an examination of three days' continuance, before a number of prelates and other ecclesiastics, among whom was his late associate Nicholas Hereford, Brute made a submission in general terms, which, however, did not imply a recognition of the errors of the church of Rome. The register also contains a letter sent to Nicholas Hereford by some Lollard, faithfully rebuking his apostacy. Swin Derby and Hereford were deemed of sufficient importance for royal proclamations to be issued, denouncing them by name. What became of Brute is not known. If he survived till the persecutions became more severe he probably perished in prison.

Many other disciples of Wickliff are enumerated by Lewis and Fox. Among them was THOMAS THORPE, whose examinations are an important document in the history of the

\* Or ecclesiastical authority.

**Reformation.** They were written by himself, and printed by Tindal and Fox. They will be found in the present selection. The Acts and Monuments of Fox contain interesting particulars of many others of the faithful band who constituted the church of Christ in England, till the brighter days of the Reformation commenced. To insert the narratives here would make the present work a martyrology rather than a collection of the writings of the British Reformers. It is, however, much to be regretted that they are so little known, having been almost entirely unnoticed in the numerous imperfect extracts from Fox which have issued from the press. A correct reprint of that truly national work is most desirable.

The industry of the martyrologist has not left much for those who come after him, but in the present volume will be found the *Lantern of Light*, a piece to which he has only adverted by name, the contents of which will amply repay the perusal.

We have now to take a brief view of the course pursued to suppress the English Lollards.

Of this period, Milton well observes in his discourse of the Reformation in England. "When I recall to mind, how the bright and blissful Reformation, by divine power, strook through the black and settled night of ignorance and antichristian tyranny, after so many dark ages, wherein the huge overshadowing train of error had almost swept all the stars out of the firmament of the church, methinks a sovereign and reviving joy must needs rush into the bosom of him that reads or hears; and the sweet odour of the returning gospel, imbathe his soul with the fragraney of heaven. Then was the sacred BIBLE sought out of the dusty corners, where profane falsehood and neglect had thrown it; the schools opened; divine and human learning were raked out of the embers of forgotten tongues; the princes and cities came trooping apace to the newly erected banner of salvation; the martyrs, with the unresistable might of weakness, shaking the powers of darkness, and scorning the fiery rage of the old red dragon."

The doctrines of the truth were so widely diffused, at the time of Wickliff's decease, that the Romish ecclesiastics found prompt and decisive measures alone would preserve their power. To reformation they were utterly averse. As they would not relinquish their vices and errors, the only course was to establish their authority so fully, that whatever they chose to sanction or permit, should not be gainsaid. The dictates of the church of Rome were to be received as equal in authority to the faith builded on Christ, set forth in the scriptures; every opponent, therefore, of the papal doctrines, was to be treated as an infidel, and as an enemy to christianity.

Various measures were adopted to repress the obnoxious doctrines. As early as 1387, commissioners were appointed in many

parts of the kingdom, who were directed to search for and seize the books and tracts of Wickliff, Hereford, and Ashton, and to send them up to the council. All persons were forbidden to defend, maintain, or teach, openly or privately, the opinions set forth in those books; or to keep, copy, buy, or sell them, under pain of imprisonment and forfeiture of all their property. Many were apprehended in consequence of these measures, and compelled to abjure, or to suffer imprisonment, perhaps death. Knighton, however, expresses regret that these edicts were slowly and faintly executed. The numerous copies of portions of Wickliff's writings still extant, are evidences to confirm his statement as to the nonsuppression of the Reformer's writings, but the indisputable authority of the bishops' registers show that very active exertions were made against the Lollards.

The contest between the English government and the papal court was still kept alive by the encroachments of the latter. This encouraged the Lollards, or rather those who were the outward adherents of Wickliff, to make a bold attack upon the ecclesiastics. A parliament was held in 1394, at which they presented twelve articles of complaint. These chiefly attacked the power and profligacy of the clergy, but the more gross errors of popery were also adverted to. A variety of small satirical papers exposing these errors and vices, were actively circulated. The clergy were much alarmed at these open proceedings. They sent some of their number to the king, then in Ireland, who induced him to return without delay. He summoned Clifford, Latimer, Montague, and others, and by threats prevented them from giving encouragement to the Lollards. The pope was not wanting on such an occasion. He addressed a letter to the king and prelates; the latter were especially admonished that they must no longer be slothful, but must make strenuous efforts "to root out and destroy" their heretical opponents.

The clergy, in truth, did not deserve these reproaches. Courtney had been active in his proceedings, and Arundel, who succeeded to the primacy in 1396, followed his example. Immediately after his accession, he held a council at London, when eighteen conclusions taken from Wickliff's *Triologus* were condemned. By order of the prelate, a friar named Woodford drew up a long reply to the opinions thus deduced from the writings of the Reformer.\*

In the same year, a royal brief was directed to the university

\* It is printed in the *Fasciculus Rerum*. The date at the conclusion is 1396, but some passages show that it was not completed till the commencement of the reign of Henry IV. Arundel's occupation of the see of Canterbury was interrupted, in consequence of his political intrigues, till the accession of Henry replaced him in power. He attributed his restoration to the especial interference of the virgin Mary in his behalf, and ordered new acts of worship to her honour!

of Oxford, directing the removal of all Lollards and others suspected of heretical pravity. The *Triologus* of Wickliff was also to be examined, that the errors contained therein might be pointed out. In the following year, letters patent were issued, forbidding the university to plead any exemption to the prejudice of the royal authority, or in favour and support of Lollards and heretics. Some unwillingness to proceed against the followers of Wickliff probably had been evinced, for archbishop Arundel wrote to the chancellor that he was informed almost the whole university was touched with heretical pravity. To avert the dangers consequent upon such a charge, twelve delegates were appointed, who from fourteen of Wickliff's tracts selected three hundred conclusions as worthy of censure. These they sent to the archbishop and the convocation.

A darker hour was at hand, although the civil discords, which terminated in the dethronement and death of Richard II., checked the proceedings against the Lollards for a brief interval, and the accession of the son of John of Gaunt, their most zealous patron, excited hopes of protection. These, however, were speedily disappointed. Henry IV. was a usurper; he felt that he needed the support of the Romish clergy, and at once entered decisively into their views. In his first message to the convocation, October, 1399, he declared that he never would demand money from them except in the most urgent necessity: he also promised to protect their immunities, and to assist them in exterminating heretics. Arundel and the ecclesiastics lost no time in availing themselves of the royal disposition in their favour. In the next parliament a law was enacted, at the instance of the clergy, forbidding any one to preach without leave of his diocesan, and ordaining "that none should from thenceforth preach, hold, teach, or instruct, openly or privily, or make or write any book contrary to the catholic faith or determination of holy church, or make any conventicles or schools." All books of heresy were to be delivered up within forty days. Whoever offended was to be arrested by the diocesan, proceeded against according to the canons, to be kept in prison, and fined at the discretion of the diocesan. "If he refused to abjure, or relapsed, he was to be delivered to the sheriff or chief magistrate, to be BURNED ALIVE, in a conspicuous place, for the terror of others!"

Thus the liberties and immunities of the Romish clergy, or in other words, their errors, usurpations, and profligacies, were protected by a statute which constituted them sole judges in their own cause, and compelled the civil power to put to death any one whom they might denounce as differing from themselves in opinion! It is unnecessary to say that such measures evidently originated with the Romish clergy; in fact this law, though, as Fox observes, it "cost many a christian man his life," never was legally enacted—it was the act of the

king, the nobility, and the clergy, without the concurrence of the commons.

The ecclesiastics did not suffer this bloody law to remain an idle letter. During the session wherein it was enacted, William Sawtree, priest of St. Osyth's, in London, was condemned for heresy, chiefly for denying the doctrine of transubstantiation, and refusing to worship the cross. He was burned alive in Smithfield, in February, 1401, and was the first of the noble band who sealed the truth with their blood, and rejoiced in the flames, in the metropolis of our land.

These cruel proceedings, with the activity used by Arundel against the doctrines of truth, by degrees repressed the outward manifestations of attachment to Wickliff or his opinions. Titled and distinguished leaders no longer appeared among the Lollards, but their sentiments were entertained in secret by great numbers in almost every part of England. In Fox's Acts and Monuments will be found details of numerous sufferers, taken from the bishops' own registers; and many documents reprinted at length by Wilkins, show both the cruelty and the superstition of the prelates of that day. While the Lollards were persecuted with unceasing severity, the Romish service-book was loaded with additional ceremonies and acts of worship to the virgin and saints.\*

The principal measures which followed may be briefly noticed. In 1408, Constitutions were made by archbishop Arundel, forbidding any one to call in question what the church had determined; and again prohibiting the perusal of Wickliff's writings. Severe measures were taken to clear the university of Oxford from Lollards. It was also ordained, "that no one thereafter should, by his own authority, translate any text of holy scripture into English, or any other language, by way of a book, little book, or tract.† And that no such publication composed in the time of John Wickliff, or since, should be read, under pain of excommunication, until approved by the diocesan, or a provincial council."‡

\* Among other documents may be mentioned a papal bull, in 1494, to inquire respecting miracles said to have been worked by Henry VI. with a view to his canonization! The expense, more than 1500 golden ducats, probably interfered with this design to make a saint of "the meek usurper." A manuscript in the British Museum contains a list of more than fifty miracles (so called) said to have been performed by Henry!

† It has long been the policy of the church of Rome to impede or prevent translations of the bible, while its own legends are freely circulated in many languages. The lying falsehoods respecting the chapel of Loretto are printed for the convenience of pilgrims; they are provided even in such languages as are not likely to be called for by many pilgrims—as, for instance, the Welsh!

‡ In these Constitutions of Arundel, the heretics were described as the tail of the black horse in the apocalypse!

In the preface to Arundel's Constitutions, the pope is said to carry the keys of eternal life and eternal death; and to be the vicegerent of the true God, to whom God had committed the government of the kingdom of heaven! At that time there were two popes, each of whom had denounced the other as a child of Satan, and shortly after both were deposed by the council of Pisa as heretics!

The desire to diminish the unnecessary wealth of the ecclesiastics was not extinguished. In 1409, it was represented to the king in parliament, that if the estates of the bishops, abbots, and priors, which they spent in unnecessary pomp and luxury, were taken away, the king might support from their revenues, 15 earls, 1500 knights, 6200 esquires, and 100 hospitals, in addition to those which then existed; leaving a further surplusage of £20,000 yearly to the king. Nor was this a vague computation. Various abbeys and other ecclesiastical endowments were enumerated, amounting to 322,000 marks yearly.\* In addition to this large sum, other "houses of religion" possessed endowments sufficient to maintain 15,000 priests. Such a measure was not listened to at that time. When renewed at the commencement of the following reign, the prelates engaged Henry V. in war with France, to divert his attention from the subject. But the stone was loosened, and a hundred and twenty years after, this important measure respecting the ecclesiastical revenues was partly carried into effect.

In 1411, forty-five articles, attributed to Wickliff, were condemned at London by the prelates and doctors. The first of these was, that the substance of bread and wine remain in the sacrament of the altar.

Henry IV. died in 1413, and archbishop Arundel in the following year; but the proceedings against the Lollards were urged forward with still greater activity by Henry V. and primate Chichely. In 1415, enactments yet more severe were made. All officers at their admission were ordered to take an oath to destroy Lollardy. It has been observed, that "these wholesome severities," or "pious rigours," as they were called, show that the Romish clergy at this time ceased not to rage and roar after christian blood, like roaring lions. Whosoever did the fault, all horrible mischiefs whatsoever were imputed to the poor Lollards. Lord Cobham was one of the first victims of this reign.

Further active measures were directed in 1416, whereby inquisitors were appointed to search after persons suspected of heresy; also to inform against all who asserted heresies or errors, or had suspected books, or "who differed in life and manners from the common conversation of the faithful." What that conversation commonly was, is sufficiently shown, not only by the writings of Wickliff, but by the public documents and

\* A mark was 13s. 4d.; equal to about £12 of our present money.

histories of the Romish church ! As Lewis observes, " Now an inquisition was set up in every parish, and men were set at variance against their own fathers and mothers and nearest relations. So that often a man's greatest foes were those of his own household. Bishop Longland's registers, a century later, show sisters and brothers detecting their own brothers and sisters, the husband the wife, children their own father and mother, the parents their own sons and daughters, masters and servants accusing each other." In fact every bond of relative and social life was dissolved by these measures ; general distrust became prevalent. Perhaps much of the proceedings during the civil wars of York and Lancaster, with the easy transfer of allegiance from " the meek Henry," enthralled by the priesthood, may be attributed to the deep felt abhorrence excited by these persecutions.

Lewis continues, " But though these barbarities, so reproachful to the christian name and religion, terrified men's minds, and forced them to great submission ; yet they no way contributed to alter their judgments or settle their belief. Nay, it was very plain, that, though by authority or the secular arm, they were devoted to destruction, the Wickliffites were *oppressed* but not *extinguished*. Though it was made more than capital to have even a line of Wickliff's writings, there were those who had courage enough to preserve them, although for the crime of having them, some were burned alive with their little books. And, indeed, how little these cruelties served to convince men, very plainly appeared, when at the Reformation, about one hundred years after, these restraints were moderated or quite taken off. The whole nation, whatever their outward profession was before, unanimously, as it were, embraced these principles, and showed themselves very earnest in their defence. Although we are now unhappily fallen into an age that has lost its first love, and is so generally corrupted both in principle and practice, as to suffer the opposition then made to popish tyranny and superstition to be condemned, and the cruelties used to force men to approve of them, to be palliated and discredited."\* The details of these cruelties will be found in the martyrologists.

In 1415, the council of Constance sat, when the articles prepared by the Oxford delegates were presented. Forty-four conclusions were drawn up, said to be found in Wickliff's writings, which were condemned as false, heretical, and erroneous. He was declared to have been an obstinate heretic. His bones were ordered to be dug up and cast upon a dung-hill, if they could be separated from the bones of the faithful.

\* Lewis' Life of Wickliff, ch. viii. These observations were written in 1719, but are in some respects applicable at the present day. The desire for the writings of the Reformers which has of late been evinced, is, however, an encouraging circumstance



This sentence was not executed till 1428, when pope Martin V. sent renewed orders to Fleming, bishop of Lincoln, once a professed favourer of the reformer's doctrine! The bishop's officers accordingly took the mouldering remains from the grave, where they had quietly lain for more than forty years, and burned them! The ashes were cast into an adjoining rivulet called Swift. As Fuller beautifully observes, "This brook conveyed his ashes into the Avon; Avon into Severn; Severn into the narrow seas, they into the main ocean. And thus the ashes of Wickliff are the emblem of his doctrine, which now is dispersed all the world over."

Chicheley held the primacy till 1443. The extent of his scriptural knowledge appears from a decree, in which he speaks of the Lord's day as the seventh day of the week, on which God rested after the work of creation! Although he did not so much delight in the open execution of heretics as his predecessor, several martyrs were committed to the flames, and he was not less active in using other means of extermination. Some faint attempts at outward reformation were made, but these were scarcely more than nominal. A commission, of this nature, granted by archbishop Bourchier, in 1455, speaks of many of the clergy as ignorant and illiterate, profligate, negligent of their cures, while they strolled about the country with abandoned females, spending their revenues in luxury and debauchery. During this period the error of transubstantiation was farther established in England by the withholding of the cup from the laity. These documents, and others referred to in the present sketch, will be found in Wilkins's Concilia. On the accession of Edward IV., in 1462. he obtained the support of the clergy by granting them a charter of immunity, whereby all civil magistrates were forbidden to take any notice of treasons, murders, rapes, robberies, thefts, or other crimes committed by archbishops, bishops, priests, deacons, or any person in holy orders. What must have been the general character of a class of men who could desire, or even accept, such immunities? What would have been the reply of Wickliff and his associates, had such privileges been offered to them? Nor was this all; it was referred to the clergy at all times, to decide whether any person claiming exemption was of their number or not! Many purchased holy orders when accused of crimes they had committed, and thus escaped with impunity. The ruling ecclesiastics were, as might be supposed, lenient in the punishment of vice among the clergy, while the fate of bishop Pecock, and others, shows how little favour was extended to those who differed as to views of doctrine.

Edward IV. addressed letters to the university of Oxford, urging the suppression of Wickliff's and Pecock's doctrines. This letter, with the reply of the university, are among archbishop Parker's manuscripts in the library of Corpus Christi

College, Cambridge. The former is printed in the present collection.

Morton succeeded to the archbishopric of Canterbury in 1486. He called a synod for the reformation of the manners of the clergy, but his efforts were mostly directed against irregularities in dress—the preachers of the order of St. John were censured, but it was for reproving the vices of the clergy in their sermons! That there was occasion for them to do so is evident from a bull of Innocent VIII. in 1490, grievously complaining of the dissolute lives of the monastic orders in England. Morton's admonitory letter to the abbot of St. Alban's shows that the monks were most detestable miscreants. This primate, finding his journeys to London impeded by the ruinous state of Rochester bridge, granted remission of the punishment incurred for sins for a certain term, to all who assisted in repairing it! Still there were many in the land who bowed not to Baal, as appears from the records of martyrs suffering at the close of this century, and in the early years of the next.

During the unsettled state of affairs in the middle of the fifteenth century, we do not find that many had suffered publicly for the truth; as Fuller observes, "The very storm was their shelter, and the heat of these intestine commotions cooled the persecutions against them." Towards its close the scenes of persecution were renewed. The annals of martyrdom then become more full; they present numerous records of suffering.

The divine judgments might well be expected to fall heavily upon a land where evil so much abounded; where the doctrines of the truth had been so plainly set forth and rejected; and where the blood of the followers of Christ was so freely shed. Judgments came upon England. Famine, pestilence, and war, foreign and domestic, depopulated the country to a terrific extent. This is proved by parliamentary enactments, and the testimony of eye-witnesses to the ruined villages, uncultivated fields, and decayed towns. There is good reason to believe that the whole population of England and Scotland, at the termination of the civil wars of York and Lancaster, did not amount to three millions! Rich and powerful families experienced sudden reverses; those who had revelled at home in pomp and luxury, were seen begging their bread in foreign lands. We may easily suppose the misery of the lower classes, where neither person nor property were secure.\* Yet such

\* The civil power in the dark ages was unable to preserve public peace. This led to deadly feuds, and pretexts for plunder were easily found where sufficient power existed. The council of Clermont ordered that all violence should be suspended from sunset on Wednesday to sunrise on Monday, calling it the truce of God. Grateful, indeed, were the people at large for an enactment by which they passed so large a portion of the week in peace, instead of being in peril every hour. The scenes which took place on the other two days and nights of the week, may be better supposed than described.

times are described by Romish historians of the present day with unblushing effrontery, as days of happiness in England almost equalling the golden ages of poetic fiction ! But it may be asked, wherein were they superior to preceding centuries or to those that have followed ?—They were the reverse, as appears from the public documents of the Romish ecclesiastics themselves, which have been preserved. We know from divine authority that the poor will never cease from out of the land ; in the mysterious but wise dispensations of providence, much outward suffering will exist at all times in this world of sin and sorrow, and true history never yet has recorded a people as prosperous or happy, when sinning as a nation against the Most High, or when suffering under divine judgments deservedly sent upon their country.

In the following pages will be found some pieces relative to the Lollards, and the proceedings of their oppressors during the fifteenth century. Among the most valuable are the history of lord Cobham and the examinations of Thorpe. The Lantern of Light will also be read with interest, as a production of the immediate followers of the Reformer. Other pieces in this volume carry us to that period when the light of the German reformation shone upon the plants which had sprung up from the seeds so widely sown by Wickliff.

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Meanwhile, as in former ages, the operations of divine grace were not limited to any one class of men. Although the Lollards were the main instruments of diffusing the truth, and of preparing the way for the English Reformation of the sixteenth century, there were some, even within the Romish church in England, who loved the Saviour, and looked to him alone for salvation ; and others who opposed the cruel persecutions urged forward by their associates.

A brief specimen of the first of these will be found in the extract from the writings of Walter Hilton, a monk who lived soon after Wickliff. Of the latter class was bishop Pecock, whose melancholy history shows us one of those who allow their prejudices or connexions to lead them to oppose and keep aloof from the real followers of Christ, on account of outward differences, while they are inwardly convinced of the religious truths they maintain, and, there is ground to hope, partakers of like precious faith.

Another and still more valuable character, connected with the church of Rome, but in reality a forerunner of the Reformation, was DR. JOHN COLET ; a narrative respecting him is given by Fox, with which this sketch of the disciples of Wickliff and the precursors of the British Reformers may be concluded.

“ About this time, A.D. 1519, died doctor John Colet ; to whose sermons the known men (or Lollards) about Buckinghamshire,

had great mind to resort. After he came from Italy and Paris, he first began to read the epistles of St. Paul openly in Oxford, instead of Scotus and Thomas Aquinas. From thence he was called by the king and made dean of Paul's; where he preached much to great auditories of the king's court, the citizens, and others. His diet was frugal, his life upright, in discipline he was severe. So that his canons, because of their straiter rule, complained that they were made like monks. The honest and honourable state of matrimony he ever preferred before the unchaste singleness of priests. At his dinner, commonly was read either some chapter of St. Paul, or of Solomon's Proverbs. He never used to sup. And although the blindness of that time carried him away after the common errors of popery, yet in ripeness of judgment he seemed to incline from the common manner of that age. The orders of monks and friars he fancied not. Neither could he greatly favour the barbarous divinity of the school doctors, as of Scotus, but least of all of Thomas Aquinas. Insomuch that when Erasmus, speaking in praise of Thomas Aquinas, commended him that he had read many old authors, and had written many new works, to prove and to know his judgment, Colet, supposing that Erasmus meant good faith, burst out in great vehemence, saying, 'What tell you me of the commendation of that man, who except he had been of an arrogant and presumptuous spirit, would not define and discuss all things so holdly and rashly; and also except he had been rather worldly minded than heavenly, would never have so polluted Christ's whole doctrine with man's profane doctrine, in such sort as he hath done.'

"The bishop of London at that time was Fitzjames, aged no less than eighty; who, bearing long grudge and displeasure against Colet, with other two bishops taking his part, like to himself, complained against Colet to archbishop Warham. The complaint was divided into three articles. The first was for speaking against worshipping of images. The second was about hospitality, for that he in treating upon the place of the gospel, 'Feed, feed, feed,' John xxi. when he had expounded the two first, for feeding with example of life and with doctrine, in the third, which the schoolmen expound for feeding with hospitality, he left out the outward feeding of the belly, and applied it another way. The third crime wherewith they charged him, was for speaking against such as used to preach only by bosom sermons,\* declaring nothing else to the people, but as they bring in their papers with them. Which, because the bishop of London then used much to do, for his age, he took it as spoken against him, and therefore bare him this displeasure. The archbishop, more wisely weighing the matter, and being well acquainted with Colet, so took his part against his accusers, that he at that time was rid out of trouble.

\* Written sermons, carried about in the bosoms of the preachers.

“ William Tindal, in his book answering master More, testifies that the bishop of London would have made dean Colet a heretic for translating the Paternoster into English, had not the archbishop of Canterbury holpen the dean !

“ But yet the malice of bishop Fitzjames ceased not ; he practised how to accuse Colet unto the king. The king (Henry VIII.) was preparing for war against France. Whereupon the bishop, with his coadjutors, taking occasion upon certain words of Colet, wherein he seemed to prefer peace before any kind of war, were it ever so just, accused him therefore. And upon Good Friday, Dr. Colet, preaching before the king, treated of the victory of Christ, exhorting all christians to fight, under the standard of Christ, against the devil ; adding moreover what a hard thing it was to fight under Christ's banner, and that all they who upon private hatred or ambition took weapon against their enemy one christian to slay another, such did not fight under the banner of Christ, but rather of Satan ; and therefore concluding his matter, he exhorted that christian men in their wars would follow Christ their Prince and Captain, in fighting against their enemies, rather than the example of Julius or Alexander, &c. The king, fearing lest by his words the hearts of his soldiers might be withdrawn from his war, took Colet, and talked with him alone in his garden walking. His enemies thought now that Colet must be committed to the Tower, and waited for his coming out. But the king with great gentleness entertaining Dr. Colet, bidding him familiarly to put on his cap, in long courteous talk much commended his learning and integrity of life, agreeing with him in all points, only he required him, for that the rude soldiers should not rashly mistake that which he had said, more plainly to explain his words and mind in that behalf, which after he did ; and so after long communication and great promises, the king dismissed Colet with these words, saying, ‘ Let every man have his doctor as him liketh ; this shall be my doctor,’ and so departed. Whereby none of his adversaries durst ever trouble him after that time.

“ Among many other memorable acts left behind him, he erected a worthy foundation of the school of Paul's ; I pray God the fruits of the school may answer the foundation, for the cherishing of youth in good letters. He provided a sufficient stipend as well for the master as for the usher, whom he willed rather to be appointed out of the number of married men, than of single priests with their suspected chastity. The first master of the school was William Lily.”

Dr. Colet was born in London, A. D. 1466. He was of Magdalen-college, Oxford, and held various ecclesiastical preferments, but his wealth was chiefly patrimonial. Some of his writings have been preserved ; the principal is a faithful sermon preached before the convocation in 1511.

## DECLARATIONS

OF

# WALTER BRUTE.

A. D. 1391.

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THE examinations of Walter Brute, or Britte, extend to considerable length. Fox has printed them in his Acts and Monuments, from the registers of the bishop of Hereford. They exhibit the accusations of his enemies, and his written replies. These accusations principally consist of allegations that he opposed the power and usurpations of the Romish ecclesiastics, he also preached from holy scripture, he exposed the errors of transubstantiation, and taught that the pope's pardons and other devices of the ecclesiastics could not profit for the salvation of souls. The greater part of Brute's answers relate to points which now would little interest the reader, but some extracts may be given that refer to the more important doctrines taught by Wickliff and his followers. After recording the accusations, and stating the substance of some verbal communications with the accused, which statements contain numerous misrepresentations, the register proceeds.

“At the last, Walter Brute did present and cause to be presented to us, at divers places and times assigned by us to the same Walter, to answer to the former conclusions and articles, divers scrolls of paper, written with his own proper hand, for his answers to the same articles and conclusions above written; he partly appearing by his own self, before us sitting in our judgment seat, and partly by his messengers, specially appointed to that purpose; of which scrolls, the tenour does follow in order, word by word, on this manner.

“In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Amen. I Walter Brute, sinner, layman, husbandman, and a christian of the Britons, having my offspring of the Britons, both by my father's and mother's side,\*

\* An instance of the strong national feeling which even to that day existed amongst the Britons, appears in one passage of Brute's declarations. He says, that from scriptures, (which he quotes,) it appears most probable to him, that “Antichrist shall be destroyed by the most mighty persons of the Gentiles, through the sword of the word of God.” He then states, that amongst the Gentiles there have been none more strong than the Britons, either in body or in faith, and refers to history in proof of the first; that they were never

have been accused to the bishop of Hereford, that I did err in many matters concerning the catholic christian faith ; by whom I am required that I should write an answer in Latin to all those matters. Whose desire I will satisfy to my power, protesting first of all, before God and before all the world, that like as it is not my mind, through God's grace, to refuse the known truth, for any reward greater or smaller, yea, be it ever so big, nor yet for the fear of any temporal punishment ; even so it is not my mind to maintain any erroneous doctrine for any commodity's sake. And if any man, of what state, sect, or condition soever he be, will show me by the authority of the sacred scripture, or by probable reason grounded in the sacred scripture, that I err in my writings or sayings, I will humbly and gladly receive his information. But, as for the bare words of any teacher, Christ only excepted, I will not simply believe, except he shall be able to establish them by the truth of experience, or of the scripture. Because that, in the holy apostles elected by Christ, there hath been found error by the testimony of the holy scripture ; because that Paul himself doth confess that he rebuked Peter, for that he was worthy to be rebuked, Galatians, the 2d chapter. There have been errors found in the holy doctors, that have been before us, as they themselves confess of themselves. And oftentimes it falleth out, that there is error found in the teachers in our age ; who are of contrary opinions among themselves, and some of them sometimes determine one thing for truth, and others condemn the self-same thing to be heresy and error. Which protestation premised, I will here place two suppositions or cases for a ground, and a foundation of all things that I shall say, out of which I would gather two probable conclusions established upon the same, and upon the sacred scripture. By which conclusions, when they shall be declared, it shall plainly appear what my opinion and judgment is concerning all matters that I am accused of. But because I am ignorant and unlearned, I will get me under the mighty defences of the Lord : O Lord, I will remember thine only righteousness.

overcome but by their own sedition, or treason, or when weakened by pestilence and famine. And that "by no tribulation could they be compelled to forsake the faith." (See History of the Church of Christ, vol. iii. p. 52, et seq.) He adds, "By these things it may plainly appear, why at this time, rather than in time past, this matter is stirred up, and why in this kingdom, rather than in other kingdoms, the calling of the Gentiles is treated of, to the verifying of the gospel, through the disclosing of antichrist."

“I. God the Father almighty uncreate, the Maker of heaven and earth, hath sent his Son, that was everlastingly begotten, into this world, that he should be incarnated for the salvation and redemption of mankind—who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, everlastingly proceeding from the Father and the Son, and was born of Mary the virgin, to the end that we might be born anew. He suffered passion under Pontius Pilate for our sins, laying down his life for us, that we should lay down our life for our brethren. He was crucified, that we should be crucified to the world, and the world to us. He was dead, that he might redeem us from death, by purchasing for us forgiveness of sins. He was buried, that we, being buried together with him into death by baptism, and that we being dead to sins, should live to righteousness. He descended into hell, thereby delivering man from thralldom, and from the bondage of the devil, and restoring him to his inheritance, which he lost by sin. The third day he rose from the dead, through the glory of his Father, that we also should walk in newness of life. He ascended up to the heavens, to which nobody hath ascended, saving he that descended from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven. He sitteth at the right hand of God the Father almighty, until his enemies are made his footstool; he, being in very deed so much better than the angels, as he hath obtained by inheritance a more excellent name than they. From thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead, according to their works, because the Father hath given all judgment to the Son. In whose terrible judgment we shall rise again, and shall all of us stand before his judgment seat, and receive joy, as well bodily as spiritually, for ever to endure, if we are of the sheep placed at the right hand; or else punishment both of body and soul, if we shall be found amongst goats, placed on the left hand, &c.

“II. Jesus Christ the Son of God, very God and very man, a king for ever, by establishing an everlasting kingdom, breaking to powder all the kingdoms of the world, Daniel ii. a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec, whereby also he is able evermore to save such as by him come unto God, and always liveth to entreat for us, Heb. vii. He, offering one sacrifice for our sins, hath made perfect for ever by one oblation those that be sanctified, Heb. x. Being the Wisdom that cannot be deceived, and the Truth that cannot be uttered, he hath in this world taught the will of the Godhead



of his Father, which will he hath in work fulfilled, to the intent that he might faithfully instruct us ; and hath given the law of charity to be observed by his faithful people, which he hath written in the hearts and minds of the faithful, with the finger of God, where is the Spirit of God, searching the inward secrets of the Godhead. Wherefore his doctrine must be observed above all other doctrines, whether of angels or of men, because that he could not or would not err in his teaching. But in men's doctrine there oftentimes is error ; and therefore we must forsake their doctrines, if cloakedly or expressly they are repugnant to the doctrine of Christ. Men's doctrines being made for the people's profit must be allowed and observed, so that they are grounded on Christ's doctrine, or at least not repugnant to his words."

Brute then proceeds at considerable length to argue that "If the high bishop of Rome, calling himself the servant of the servants of God, and the chief vicar of Christ in this world, does make and maintain many laws contrary to the gospel of Jesus Christ, then is he of those that have come in Christ's name, saying, I am Christ, and have seduced many a one, as appears by the testimony of our Saviour, Matt. xxiv. and he is the idol of desolation sitting in the temple of God." He then cites many passages of scripture that refer to antichrist, and describe the spiritual Babylon, which latter he says is the city of Rome, if she allow the traditions of antichrist, and disallow Christ's holy commandments and Christ's doctrine.

The bishop of Hereford objected to this writing as too short and obscure, and required Brute to write more plainly and at large. He complied, prefacing as follows.

"Reverend father, forsomuch as it seemeth to you that my motion in my two suppositions or cases, and in my two conclusions, is too short and somewhat dark ; I will gladly now satisfy your desire, according to my small learning, by declaring the same conclusions. In opening whereof, it shall plainly appear, what I do judge in all matters that I am accused of to your reverence ; desiring you first of all, that your discretion would not believe that I do enterprize of any presumption to handle the secrets of the scriptures, which the holy, and just, and wise doctors have left unpounded. It is not unknown to many, that I am in all points far inferior to them, whose holiness of life and profoundness in knowledge is manifold ways allowed. But

as for mine ignorance, and multitude of sins, they are to myself and others sufficiently known; wherefore I judge not myself worthy to unloose or to carry their shoes after them. Do you therefore no otherwise deem of me, than I do of mine own self. But if you shall find any goodness in my writings, ascribe it to God only; who according to the multitude of his mercy doth sometimes reveal those things to idiots and sinners, which are hidden from the holy and wise, according to this saying: I will praise and confess thee, O Father, for that thou hast hidden these things from the wise and prudent, and hast disclosed them to the little ones. Even so, O Father, because it hath thus pleased thee. And in another place; I am come to judgment in this world, that they which see not, may see, and that they which see, may be made blind. And Paul saith, that God hath chosen the weak things of the world, to confound the mighty, that no man shall boast in himself, but that all men should give the honour to God."

Brute then quotes various passages of the bible. He brings them forward with much caution, refuting the things that have been "applied unfitly to the imagined antichrist, and not truly grounded upon the scripture." He enters into various explanations and calculations deduced from the periods mentioned in prophecy, and points out the pope, as proving by his conduct, that his laws are opposed to the gospel of Christ, and therefore he is antichrist. These arguments Brute enforces, by showing that the law of Christ is charity, which is the perfect love of God and Christ, and quoting the words of our Lord. "Christ being demanded of a certain doctor of the law, What is the greatest commandment in the law? answered, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. That is the principal and greatest commandment. And as for the second it is like unto this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thine own self. In these two commandments, doth the whole law and the prophets depend. Also the words of our Lord, John vii. xiii. and xv. All manner of things therefore that ye would that men should do to you, the same also do you unto them. For this is the law and the prophets.—And, Now do I say unto you, I give you a new commandment, that you should love each other; as I loved you, in like manner that you also should love one another. In this shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you shall have love one towards another.—And,

This is my commandment, that you love together as I have loved you. Greater love than this hath no one, that a man should give his life for his friends." Brute also quotes 1 Peter iv. 8—11. James ii. 8, 9, 12, 14, 15, 17. 1 John iii. 11, 14, 16, 18. iv. 7—12, 19—21. Rom. xiii. 8—10. 1 Cor. xiii. 1—3. Gal. v. 13, 14. Eph. iv. 1—3. v. 1, 2. Phil. i. 27, 30. ii. 1—4. Col. iii. 12—16. 1 Thess. iv. 9, 10. Having thus firmly grounded his arguments on scripture, Brute proceeds thus,

"Out of all these and many other places of the holy scripture it sufficiently appears, that the law of Christ is charity; neither is there any virtue commanded of Christ, or any of his apostles, to be observed of the faithful people, but it cometh out of charity, or else doth nourish charity.

"The law is given by Moses, and the truth by Christ. Christ came not to unloose the law and the prophets, but to fulfil them. But yet many things were lawful, and might have been observed in the time of the law, which in the time of grace must not be observed. And many things were unlawful to them that were under the law, which in the time of grace are lawful enough. After what sort then he did not loose the law, but did fulfil it, it is necessary to declare, for those things which hereafter must be said. For amongst christians many things are judged to be lawful, because in the former testament in the law they were lawful; and yet they are expressly contrary to Christ's gospel. But the authors of such things argue and reason thus; Christ came not to loose the law or the prophets. Now after what sort he did not unloose them, it is manifest by the holy scripture. The law given by Moses, was written on tables of stone, to declare the hardness of the people's heart towards the love of God, or of Christ. But Christ hath written his law in the hearts and in the minds of his, that is to say, the law of perfect love of God, and of Christ. Which law whosoever observeth, he doth observe the law of Moses, and doth much greater works of perfection, than were the works of the law. Thus therefore were the morals of the old law fulfilled in the law of charity of Christ, and not unloosed; because they are much more perfectly observed, than by the Jews. This I say, if the christians do observe the commandments of Christ in such sort, as he commanded the same to be observed. Christ hath fulfilled the laws moral of the old testament, because that the morals and judicials were ordained, that on

person should not do injury to another, and that every man should have that which is his paid him. Now they that are in charity, will do no injury to others, neither do they take other men's goods away from them. Nay, it seeketh not her own things. For charity seeketh not the things that are her own. Wherefore, by a stronger reason, much less ought it to seek for other men's goods. And when as the judicials and morals were ordained, Christ did not by the works of the law justify the believers in him, but by grace justified them from their sins. And so did Christ fulfil that by grace which the law could not by justice.

“ Paul to the Romans declares in a godly discourse, and to the Galatians likewise, that none shall be justified by the works of the law, but by grace in the faith of Jesus Christ. As for the morals and ceremonies of the law, as circumcision, sacrifices for offences, and for sins, first fruits, tenths, vows, divers sorts of washings, the sprinkling of blood, the sprinkling of ashes, abstaining from unclean meats, which are ordained for the sanctifying and cleansing of the people from sin, no nor yet the prayers of the priests, neither the preachings of the prophets, could cleanse a man from his sin. For death reigned even from Adam to Moses, and sin from Moses to Christ, as Paul declares to the Romans in the fifth chapter. But Christ willing to have mercy and not sacrifice, being a Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec, and a High-Priest of good things to come, did neither by the blood of goats, or calves, but by his own blood, enter in once into the holy places, when as everlasting redemption was found. Neither did Jesus enter into the holy places that were made with hands, which are the examples of true things, but unto the very heaven, that now he may appear before the countenance of God for us. Nor yet did he so, that he should offer up himself oftentimes, as the high-priest entered into the holy place every year with strange blood; for otherwise he must needs have suffered oftentimes since the beginning of the world; but now in the latter end of the world hath he once appeared, by his own sacrifice, for the destruction of sin. And like as it is decreed for men once to die, and after that cometh judgment, even so was Christ once offered up to consume away the sins of many. The second time shall he appear without sin to the salvation of such as look for him. For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image or substance itself of the things, can never

by those sacrifices which they offer, of one selfsame sort continually year by year, make them perfect that come unto it. Otherwise men would leave off offering, because that those worshippers being once cleansed, should have no more pain of conscience for sin afterwards. But in them there is remembrance made of sins every year. For it is impossible that by the blood of goats and bulls sins should be taken away. Wherefore, he, entering into the world, doth say, As for sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not have, but a body hast thou framed unto me. And sacrifices for sin have not pleased thee. Then said I, Behold, I come; in the head, or principal part, of the book it is written of me, that I should do thy will, O God. Wherefore he said before, that sacrifices, oblations, and burnt offerings for sin thou wouldest not have; neither were those things pleasant to thee which are offered according to the law; then said I, Behold, I come, that I may do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish that which followed. In which will we are sanctified and made holy, by the offering up of the body of Jesus Christ once. And verily, every priest is ready every day ministering, and oftentimes offering the selfsame sacrifices, which never can take away sins. But this man, offering one sacrifice for sins, doth for ever and ever sit at God's right hand, looking for the rest to come, till that his enemies are placed to be his footstool. For with one offering hath he for ever made perfect those that be sanctified. By which things it plainly appeareth, that Christ by one offering hath cleansed his from their sins; who could not be cleansed from the same by all the ceremonies of the law, and so did fulfil that which the priesthood of the law could not. Wherefore, only the morals and judicials he fulfilled by the law of charity, and by grace; and the ceremonials, by one offering up of his body on the altar of the cross. And so it is plain that Christ fulfilled the whole law."

Brute then refers to the accusation against him, that he had said "tithes were mere alms, and in case the curates shall be evil, they may be lawfully bestowed upon others by the temporal owners." It has been already stated that on this subject much was objected against Wickliff and his followers; it need not be here noticed farther than to say that Brute urged, that if priests claimed tithes under the authority of the Mosaic law, they were bound to

conform to the law of Moses in not having possessions and lordships among their brethren. As Fox notes in the margin, "He proves not to the contrary, but that tithes are due by the profitable law of man; although not by the ceremonial law of Moses." Beyond this few will wish to go at the present day.

Brute soon leaves this subject; he then treats largely of the patience and long suffering of Christ, and the example therein left us to follow, not taking away the lawfulness of wars in case of necessity, but asking, "How can a man say that they may lawfully make war and kill their brethren for the temporal goods which peradventure they unjustly occupy, or unjustly intend to occupy?" He adds, "If he go forward without charity to make war, then doth he evil, and to his own damnation." This brings him to a subject then of considerable importance, the wars or crusades stirred up by the popes against infidels, or against the followers of the truth who opposed their mandates. Brute condemns them in strong terms. We may here again observe the marginal annotations of Fox. "This proposition of Walter Brute concerning the war of christians not to be lawful, is not to be taken universally, but in particular case as he meaneth, which is this, That such wars, allowed of the pope, not for the necessary defence of public peace, liberty, and the safeguard of our countries, or against public injuries offered, but only to go and kill the infidels, because they believe not, having no other cause, those wars of the pope he liketh not."

Brute then proceeds to declare the doctrine of christian mercy. By this rule the pope and his clergy are tried, and again found wanting. He here evidently speaks not of temporal crimes, but of what were called spiritual offences or "causes of religion, which the pope and his prelates are wont to punish with death, taking many times for tares that which indeed is pure wheat." (Fox, margin.) He says,

"It is manifest, that Christ will have mercy showed unto sinners, even unto the end of the world, and will have them to remain mingled with the good. Lest peradventure when a man thinketh that he doth right well to take away the tares, he take away the wheat. For how great a sinner soever a man be, we know not but that his end shall be good, and that in the end he shall obtain mercy of God. Neither are we certain of the time, wherein God will, by grace, judge him whom we abhor as a sinner. And peradventure such a one shall more profit after his conversion

in the church, than he whom we think to be just; as it came to pass in Paul. And if God justifieth a man by grace, although at his end, why darest thou be so bold to be his judge, and to condemn him? Yea, rather, although a man seem to be obstinate and hardened in his evil, so that he is not corrected by a secret correction, correct him before one alone; if he do not receive open correction being done before two or three witnesses, neither passeth upon a manifest correction when his sin is made known unto the church, even then Christ doth not teach to punish such a one with the punishment of death. Yea, rather he saith, If he hearken not unto the church, let him be unto thee as a heathen and a publican."

After quoting the advice of St. Paul, 1 Cor. v. Brute says, "Wherefore they do ill understand Paul, who by this saying do confirm the killing of men. And forsomuch as heresy is one of the most grievous sins, for a heretic leadeth men in errors, whereby they are made to stray from faith, without which they cannot be saved, it doth most great hurt in the church."

Brute then shows that the example of Peter in the case of Ananias and Sapphira is wrongly applied by the papists, reminding them also that Peter did not kill Ananias and his wife, nor command them to be put to death, but that it proceeded of God. This he enforces by reference to the conduct of Peter in the case of Simon Magus.

Brute next proceeds to show how falsely the pope's usurped power is founded upon the scriptures,—that Christ only is the Head of the church; and that other apostles had like power with Peter. This brings him to consider the popish doctrine of absolution. Here he says,

"As concerning the judicial authority of the clergy, many things are written thereof in the canons of decrees, greatly to be marvelled at, and far from the truth of the scripture. The authors of the canons say, That Christ gave unto the priests judicial power over sinners that confess their sins unto them. And this they ground upon the text of Christ; I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatsoever thou loosest, &c. Matt. xvi. 19. And these keys of the kingdom of heaven, they call the knowledge to discern, and the power to judge, which they say only belongeth to the priests, except in case of necessity; then they say a layman

may absolve a man from sin. And, as touching absolution, they say there are three things to be required on the sinners' part; first, hearty contrition, whereby the sinners ought to bewail their offending of God through sins; the second is, auricular confession, whereby the sinner ought to show unto the priest his sins, and the circumstances of them; the third is satisfaction through penance enjoined unto him by the priest for his sins committed. And of his part that giveth absolution there are two things, say they, to be required; that is to say, knowledge to discern one sin from another, whereby he ought to make a difference of sins, and appoint a convenient penance, according to the quantity of the sins. The second is authority to judge, whereby he ought to enjoin penance to the offender. And further they say, that he who is confessed ought with all humility to submit himself to this authority, and wholly and voluntarily to do those penances which are commanded him by the priest, except the said penance be released by a superior power; for all priests, as they say, have not equal authority to absolve sins. The chief priest, whom they call Peter's successor, hath power fully and wholly to absolve. But the inferior priests have power, some more, some less. The more as they are near him in dignity, the less as they are farther from the degree of his dignity.

“All this is declared by process in the decrees, (*Decret de pœnitentia*) but not by the express doctrine of Christ, or any of his apostles. For, although Christ absolved men from their sins, I do not find that he did it after the manner of a judge, but of a Saviour. For Christ saith, God sent not his Son into the world to judge sinners, but that the world should be saved by him, John iii. Whereupon he spake unto him whom he healed of the palsy, Behold thou art made whole, go thy ways and sin no more. And, to the woman taken in adultery Christ said, Woman, where be thy accusers? hath no man condemned thee? She said, No man, Lord. To whom then Jesus thus said, No more will I condemn thee; go now and sin no more.

“By which words and deeds of Christ, and many other places of the scripture, it appeareth, he was not as a judge at his first coming, to punish sinners according to the quantity of their offences; but that day shall come hereafter, wherein he shall judge all men according to their works, as in Matt. xxv. where he saith, When the Son of man shall come in his majesty, and all his angels with him; then



shall he sit upon the seat of his majesty, and all nations shall be gathered together before him, and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd separateth the sheep from the goats," &c.

Brute then disproves the popish doctrine that children dying unbaptized shall be tormented with eternal fire, and proceeds to consider the things which the canons of decrees affirm to be requisite for the remission of sins of those that sin after baptism. First, auricular confession; his examination of this point is perhaps the most able that we have upon the subject among the writings of the Reformers.

"I cannot find in any place in the gospel, where Christ commanded that this kind of confession should be done unto the priest; nor can I find that Christ assigned any penance unto sinners for their sins, but that he willed them to sin no more. If a sinner confess that he hath offended God through sin, and sorroweth heartily for his offences, minding hereafter no more to sin; then is he truly repentant for his sin, and then he is converted unto the Lord. If he shall then, humbly and with good hope, crave mercy at God and remission of his sins, what is he that can hinder God to absolve that sinner from his sin? And as God absolveth a sinner from his sin, so hath Christ absolved many, although they confessed not their sins unto the priests, and although they received not due penance for their sins. And if Christ could after that manner once absolve sinners, how is he become now not able to absolve? Except some man will say that he is above Christ, and that his power is diminished by the ordinances of his own laws. How were sinners absolved of God in the time of the apostles, and always heretofore, unto the time that these canons were made? I speak not these things as though confession to priests were wicked; but that it is not of necessity requisite unto salvation. I believe verily that the confession of sins unto good priests, and likewise to other faithful Christians, is good, as witnesseth St. James the apostle: Confess ye yourselves one to another, and pray ye one for another, that ye may be saved: for the continual prayer of the just availeth much. Elias was a man that suffered many things like unto you, and he prayed that it should not rain upon the earth, and it rained not in three years and six months. And again he prayed, and it rained from heaven, and the earth yielded forth her fruit. This kind of confession is

good, profitable, and expedient. For if God peradventure heareth not a man's own prayer, he is helped with the intercession of others. Yet nevertheless the prayers of the priests seem too much to be extolled in the decrees, where it treateth of penitence, and that saying is ascribed unto pope Leo, (Cap. multiplex misericordia Dei, &c.). And it followeth, 'So is it ordained by the providence of God's divine will, that the mercy of God cannot be obtained but by the prayer of the priests,' &c. The prayer of a good priest doth much avail a sinner, confessing his faults unto him. The counsel of a discreet priest is very profitable for a sinner, to give the sinner counsel to beware hereafter to sin, and to instruct him how he shall punish his body by fasting, by watching, and such like acts of repentance, that hereafter he may be better preserved from sin.

"After this manner I esteem confession to priests very expedient and profitable to a sinner. But to confess sins unto the priest, as unto a judge, and to receive of him corporal penance for a satisfaction unto God for his sins committed; I see not how this can be founded upon the truth of the scripture. For, before the coming of Christ, no man was sufficient, or able to make satisfaction unto God for his sins, although he suffered ever so much penance for his sins. And therefore it was needful that He who was without sin, should be punished for sins, as witnesseth Isaiah, chap. liii. where he saith, He took our griefs upon him, and our sorrows he bare. And again, He was wounded for our iniquities, and vexed for our wickedness. And again, The Lord put upon him our iniquity. And again, For the wickedness of my people have I stricken him. If therefore Christ through his passion hath made satisfaction for our sins, whereas we ourselves were unable to do it; then, through him have we grace and remission of sins. How can we say now, that we are sufficient to make satisfaction unto God by any penance enjoined unto us by man's authority, seeing that our sins are more grievous after baptism, than they were before the coming of Christ? Therefore, as in baptism the pain of Christ in his passion was a full satisfaction for our sins, even so is it after baptism, if we confess that we have offended, and are heartily sorry for our sins, and minded not to sin again afterwards.

"Hereupon John writeth in his first epistle, chap. i. If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, God is faithful and

just, he will remit them, and cleanse us from all our iniquities. If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us. My well beloved children, this I write unto you that ye sin not ; but if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and he is the propitiation for our sins, and not for our sins only, but for the sins of the whole world. Therefore we ought to confess ourselves chiefly unto God, even from the heart, for that he chiefly doth remit sins ; without whose absolution little availeth the absolution of man. This kind of confession is profitable and good. The authors of the canons say, that although auricular confession made unto the priest, be not expressly taught by Christ, yet, say they, it is taught in that saying which Christ said unto the diseased of the leprosy, whom he commanded, Go your ways and show yourselves unto the priests, because as they say, the law of cleansing lepers, which was given by Moses, signified the confession of sins unto the priest. And whereas Christ commanded the lepers to show themselves unto the priests, they say, that Christ meant, that those who were unclean with the leprosy of sin, should show their sins unto the priests by auricular confession. I marvel much at the authors of the canons ; for even from the beginning of their decrees unto the end, they ground their sayings upon the old law, which was the law of sin and death, and not, as witnesseth Paul, upon the words of Christ, which are spirit and life. Christ saith, The words which I speak unto you, are the spirit and life. They ground their sayings in the shadow of the law, and not in the light of Christ ; for every evil doer hateth the light, and cometh not into it, that his deeds be not reprov'd ; but he that doth the truth cometh into the light, that his works may be openly seen, because they are done in God, John iii.

“ Now let us pass to the words that Christ spake to the leper, who said, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. And Jesus stretching forth his hand touched him, saying, I will, be thou clean : and straightway he was cleansed of his leprosy. And Jesus said unto him, See thou tell no man, but go and show thyself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded for a witness of these things. This gospel witnesses plainly, that the diseased of the leprosy were cleansed only by Christ, and not by the priests, neither did Christ command the leper to show himself unto the priests, for any help of cleansing that he should receive of

the priests, but to fulfil the law of Moses in offering a sacrifice for his cleansing, and for a testimony unto the priests, who always of envy accused Christ as a transgressor of the law. For if Christ, after he had cleansed the leper, had licensed him to communicate with others that were clean, before he had showed himself cleansed unto the priests, then might the priests have accused Christ as a transgressor of the law; because it was a precept of the law, that the leper after he was cleansed, should show himself unto the priests. And they had signs in the book of the law, whereby they might judge whether he were truly cleansed or not. If he were cleansed, then would the priests offer a gift for his cleansing; and if he were not cleansed, then would they segregate\* him from the company of others that were clean.

“Seeing every figure ought to be assimuled† unto the thing that is figured; I pray you then what agreement is there between the cleansing of lepers by the law, and the confession of sins? By that law the priest knew better whether he were leprous than he himself that had the leprosy. In confession, the priest knows not the sins of him that was confessed, but by his own confession. In that law the priest did not cleanse the leprous. How therefore ought the priests now to cleanse sinners from their sin, and to say that without them they cannot be cleansed? In that law the priest had certain signs, by the which he could certainly know whether a man were cleansed from his leprosy or not. In confession, the priest is not certain of the cleansing of sins, because he is ignorant of his contrition. He knoweth not also whether he wills not to sin any more; without the which contrition and granting to sin no more, God hath not absolved any sinner. And if God hath not absolved a man, without doubt then is he not made clean. And how then is confession figured under that law? Doubtless so it seems to me, under the correction of them that can judge better in the matter, that this law bears rather a figure of excommunication, and reconciliation of him that hath been obstinate in his sin, and is reconciled again. For so it appears by the process of the gospel, that when the sinner doth not amend for the private correction of his brother, nor for the correction of two or three, neither yet for the public correction of the whole church; then is he to be counted as a heathen and a publican, and as a certain (or confirmed) leper, to be avoided out of the company of all men. Which

\* Separate.

† Like, made similar.

sinner, notwithstanding, if he shall yet repent, is then to be reconciled, because he is then cleansed from his obstinacy.

“ But he which pretends himself to be the chief vicar of Christ, and the high priest, saith that he hath power to absolve *à pœna* and *à culpa*.\* Which I do not find how it is founded in the scripture; but that of his own authority he enjoins to sinners penance for their sins. And grant that from their sins he may well absolve them, yet from the pain which they call *à pœna*, he does not simply absolve, as in his indulgences he promises. But if he were in charity, and had such power as he pretendeth, he would suffer none to lie in purgatory for sin, forsomuch as that pain far exceeds all other pain which we suffer here. What man is there, being in charity, but if he see his brother to be tormented in this world, if he may, he will help him and deliver him? Much more ought the pope then to deliver out of pains of purgatory, indifferently as well rich as poor.† And if he sell to the rich his indulgences, double wise, yea triple wise, he seduces them. First, In promising them to deliver them out of the pain from whence he does not, neither is able to deliver them; and so makes them falsely to believe that which they ought not to believe. Secondly, He deceives them of their money, which he takes for his indulgences. Thirdly, He seduces them in this, that promising to deliver them from pain, he induces them into grievous punishment indeed, for the heresy of simony, which both of them do commit, and therefore both are worthy of great pain to fall upon them; for so we read that Jesus cast out buyers and sellers out of his temple. Also Peter said unto Simon, the first author of this heresy, Thy money, said he, with thee be destroyed, for that thou hast thought the gift of God to be possessed for money. Moreover, whereas Christ saith, Freely you have received, freely give: and whereas on the contrary, the pope sells that which he hath taken; what doubt is there, but that he grievously deserves to be punished, both he that sells and he that buys, for the crime of simony which they commit. Over and besides, by many reasons and authorities of the scripture it may be proved, that he doth not absolve a man contrite for his sin, although he do absolve him from the guilt.

“ But at this I marvel me, that he in his indulgences promises to absolve men from all manner of deadly sins, and

\* From punishment and blame.

† Mark this.

yet cannot absolve a man from debt ; forasmuch as the debt which we owe to God, is of much greater importance than is the debt of our brother. Wherefore if he be able to remit the debt due to God, much more it should seem that he is able to forgive the debt of our brother !

“ Another thing there is that I marvel at, for that the pope showeth himself more strait in absolving a priest for not saying, or negligently saying his matins, than for transgressing the commandment of God ; considering that the transgression of the commandment of God is much more grievous than the breach of man’s commandment.

“ For these and many other errors concurring in this matter of the pope’s absolutions ; blessed be God, and honour be unto him for the remission of our sins. And let us firmly believe and know, that He doth and will absolve us from our sins, if we are sorry from the bottom of our hearts that we have offended him, having a good purpose and will to offend him no more. And let us be bold to resort unto good and discreet priests, who with wholesome discretion and sound counsel can instruct us, how to avoid the corruption of sin hereafter. And which, because they are better than we, may pray to God for us ; whereby we may both obtain sooner the remission of our sins past, and also may learn better how to avoid the danger of sin to come.” \*

\* The doctrine of the church of Rome respecting confession and absolution, as confirmed by the Council of Trent in the sixteenth century, is, That our Lord Jesus Christ, when he ascended to heaven, constituted priests to be his vicars, as judges, to whom the judgment of all mortal crimes should be referred, that by the power of the keys, they may pronounce the remission, or the retaining, of the guilt of sin. Therefore it behoves penitents to declare in confession, all their mortal sins, which can be ascertained by most diligent examination of their consciences, even thoughts against the least commandment. Sins called venial, which do not exclude from the mercy of God, may be concealed and otherways expiated, although they ought to be revealed in confession. This distinction is wholly unscriptural, (see Matt. v. 19. Gal. iii. 10. James ii. 10.) and through it weak minds are often enslaved by their confessors, while by the casuistry of Romish theologians, most flagrant violations of the commandments, even murder and adultery, are often represented as only venial transgressions.

The decree of the Council of Trent then teaches that the power of the keys belongs to *priests only*, to whom is committed, “ not merely a naked ministration or preaching of the gospel, or declaration of the remission of sins,” but a *judicial act*, whereby sentence is pronounced as by a judge. “ Therefore the penitent must not flatter himself concerning his faith, so as to think that on account of his faith only, he is absolved truly and in the sight of God, if there be no contrition, or the intention of the priest to absolve him be wanting.” Heidegger (Tumulus Concil. Trident.) well observes, “ Confession is the band that tieth together the kingdom of the papacy.”

Walter Brute then proceeds to the matter of the sacraments. He says,

“Touching the matter of the sacrament of the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, divers men have divers opinions, as the learned know. As concerning my judgment upon the same, I firmly believe whatsoever the Lord Jesus taught implicitly or expressly to his disciples, and faithful people, to be believed. For he is, as I believe and know, the true Bread of God which descended from heaven, and giveth life to the world. Of which Bread whosoever eateth, shall live for ever; as it is in the sixth of John declared. Before the coming of Christ in the flesh, although men did live in body, yet in spirit they did not live; because all men were then under sin, whose souls thereby were dead. From the which death, no man by the law, nor with the law was justified. For by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified, Gal. ii. And again in the same epistle, chap. iii. that by the law no man is justified before God it is manifest. For the just man shall live by his faith; the law is not of faith; but whosoever hath the works thereof, shall live in them. And again, in the same chapter, If the law had been given, which might have justified, then our righteousness had come by the law. But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise might be sure by the faith of Jesus Christ to all believers. Moreover, before that faith came, they were kept and concluded all under the law, until the coming of that faith which was to be revealed. For the law was our schoolmaster in Christ Jesus, that we should be justified by faith. Also the said Paul, Rom. v. saith, That the law entered in the mean time, whereby that sin might more abound. Where then sin hath more abounded, there hath also grace superabounded; that like as sin hath reigned unto death, so that grace might also reign by righteousness unto eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Whereby it is manifest, that by the faith which we have in Christ, believing him to be the true Son of God who came down from heaven to redeem us from sin, we are justified from sin; and so do live by him who is the true bread and meat of our souls. And the bread which Christ gave is his flesh, given for the life of the world, John vi. For he, being God, came down from heaven, and being truly carnal man,\* did suffer in the flesh for our sins,

\* Really having man's nature.

which in his divinity he could not suffer. Wherefore, like as we believe by our faith that he is true God ; so must we also believe that he is a true man. And then do we eat the bread of heaven, and the flesh of Christ. And if we believe that he did voluntarily shed his blood for our redemption, then do we drink his blood. And thus, except we eat the flesh of the Son of man, and shall drink his blood, we have not eternal life in us ; because the flesh of Christ verily is meat, and his blood is drink indeed ; and whosoever eateth the flesh of Christ and drinketh his blood, abideth in Christ, and Christ in him, John, chap. vi."

The subject of the sacrament of the altar has been so fully treated by Wickliff and other reformers, that there is no occasion to give the arguments of Walter Brute upon this head. It is sufficient to say that he exposes many of the errors and superstitions of the church of Rome : among them he censures priests who bargain to sing mass for souls departed, thus he boldly attacked a main pillar of popery. Selling of prayer he notes as abominable, and says, " Many are deceived in buying or selling of prayers, as in the buying of pardons that they might be delivered from pain, when commonly they pay dearer for the prayers of proud and vicious prelates, than for those of devout women and devout men of the lay people."

Brute proceeds to expose the covetousness of the monastic orders, and writes with great boldness against the spiritual traffic of the church of Rome. He appears to have anticipated the downfall of the monastic establishments on account of their abuses, so that " taking away of temporalities from the clergy shall come to pass for the multitude of their sins." He concludes his long and able declarations in the following words :—

" Thus, reverend father, have I made mine answer to the matter whereof I am accused ; beseeching you that as I have been obedient to your desire, and that even as a son, declaring unto you the secrets of my heart in plain words, although rudely, so I desire to know your opinion. And I crave your fatherly benevolence, that now your labour may be for my instruction and amendment, and not to accusation and condemnation. For like as in the beginning I have promised you, that if any man, of what state, sect, or condition soever he be, can show me any error in any of my writings, by the authority of holy scripture, or by any probable reason



grounded on the scriptures ; I will receive his information willingly and humbly.”

Fox proceeds, “After all the aforesaid things were exhibited and given by Walter Brute unto the bishop of Hereford, he appointed the third day of the month of October, at Hereford, with the continuance of the days following, to hear his opinion. Which day, being Friday, 1393, Walter Brute appeared before him, sitting in commission in the cathedral church of Hereford, at six o'clock ; having for his assistants, divers prelates and abbots, and twenty bachelors of divinity, whereof twelve were monks, and two doctors of the law. Amongst these was Nicholas Hereford, formerly a follower of Wickliff, accompanied with many other prelates and worshipful men, and wise graduates in sundry faculties. Now was Walter apposed\* of his writings aforesaid, and the contents therein. Earnest were they in picking out of those writings, his heresies, and in showing his schisms, sundry errors, and divers other things. After that they had continued all that day and the two days following, that is, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, in their informations and examinations, Walter Brute submitted himself to the determination of the church, and to the correction of the bishop, as it appears in a scroll written in the English tongue ; the tenour of which is as follows :—‘I Walter Brute submit myself principally to the evangely of Jesus Christ, and to the determination of holy church, and to the general councils of holy church. And to the sentence and determination of the four doctors of holy writ, that is, Augustine, Ambrose, Jerome, and Gregory. And I meekly submit me to your correction, as a subject ought to his bishop.’

“Which scroll in the English tongue, Walter Brute read with a loud and intelligible voice, at the cross in the churchyard on Monday, the sixth of the said month of October, before the sermon made unto the people in presence of the bishop of Hereford and others above written, also other barons, knights, and noblemen, and clergy, and a great multitude of people. After which reading of the scroll, Thomas Crawlay, bachelor of divinity, made a sermon unto the people, and took for his theme the words of the apostle to the Romans, in the eleventh chapter : ‘Be not over wise in your own conceits, but stand in fear,’ &c.

“Out of these declarations and writings of Walter Brute,

the bishop with the monks and doctors gathered and drew certain articles, to the number of thirty-seven, which they sent to the university of Cambridge to be confuted, unto two learned men, master Colwill, and master Newton, bachelors of divinity. Who both laboured in the matter, to the uttermost of their cunning, in replying and answering to the said thirty-seven articles.

“ Besides them also, William Woodford, a friar, who wrote likewise against the articles of Wickliff, labouring in the same cause, made a solemn and a long tractation, against the articles of the said Brute.

“ What after this became to this Walter Brute, or what end he had, I find it not registered ; but like it is, that he for this time escaped. Other writings I find, which albeit they bear no name of this Walter, nor of any certain author, yet because they are in the same register adjoined to the history of him, I thought fit to be inserted. Of which one was a letter sent to Nicholas Hereford a little above specified ; who being at the first a great follower of John Wickliff, was now in the number of them which sat upon this Walter, as is above recorded.”

This letter is given by Fox, but need not be here inserted, nor another which follows, written under the name and character of Lucifer, prince of darkness, addressed to the persecuting prelates of the popish clergy, in which their wicked conduct is strongly depicted, and they are highly praised for their malpractices, and urged to go forward with increased energy in wresting the scriptures and persecuting the Lollards !\* The followers of Wickliff were not yet openly put to death, but the latter part of this advice gives us information of the conduct of the popish prelates of that day. “ If any man preach or teach otherwise than ye will, oppress them violently with the sentence of excommunication, and by your censures heaped one upon another, by the consent of your brethren. *Let him be kept in a most strait prison, and there tormented till he die, for a terrible example to all such as confess Christ.*”

\* Several such letters are found among the writings of that day ; it is worth noticing that they probably suggested to John Bunyan the idea of the epistles from Diabolus and his princes to their adherents in Mansoul, which are inserted in his inimitable treatise, the Holy War.

THE  
EXAMINATIONS  
OF  
THE CONSTANT SERVANT OF GOD,  
WILLIAM THORPE,  
BEFORE ARCHBISHOP ARUNDEL.

Written by himself, A.D. 1407, and originally printed by William Tindal.

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NEXT comes to our hands the worthy history of master William Thorpe, a valiant warrior, under the triumphant banner of Christ, with the process of his examinations before Thomas Arundel, archbishop of Canterbury, written by the said Thorpe, and storied by his own pen, at the request of his friends, as by his own words in the process hereof may appear. In whose examination, which seems first to begin, anno 1407, good reader, thou shalt have both to learn and to marvel. To learn, in that thou shalt hear truth discoursed and disussed, with the contrary reasons of the adversary dissolved. To marvel, for that thou shalt behold in this man, the marvellous force and strength of the Lord's might, Spirit, and grace, working and fighting in his soldiers, and also speaking in their mouths, according to the word of his promise, Luke *xxi*.

To the text of the story we have neither added nor diminished; but as we have received it copied out, and corrected by master William Tindal, who had it in Thorpe's own hand-writing, so we have here sent it, and set it out abroad. Although for the more credit of the matter, I rather wished it in his own natural speech, wherein it was first written. Notwithstanding, to put away all doubt and scruple herein, this I thought before to premonish and testify to the reader, touching the certainty hereof, that they are yet alive who have seen the selfsame copy in his own old English, resembling the true antiquity both of the speech, and of the time. The name of whom, as for record of the same to avouch, is M. Whitehead; who as he hath seen the true ancient copy in the hands of George Constantine, so hath he given credible relation of the same, both to the printer, and to me. What the causes were why this good man and servant of Christ, William Thorpe, did write it, and pen it out himself, is sufficiently declared in his own preface, set before his book, which here is prefixed in manner as follows.—*Fax, Acts and Monuments*.

This tract was condemned and prohibited by the Romish clergy, in the reign of Henry VIII., and frequent mention is made of persons who were censured for reading it. Constantine assisted Tindal in his translation of the new testament. Whitehead was one of the persons recommended by Cranmer for archbishop of Armagh. He was an exile in the reign of queen Mary. During the early part of the reign of Elizabeth, he was highly respected, and employed in several public matters respecting the reformation, but was afterwards sequestered for nonconformity.

THE  
PREFACE OF WILLIAM THORPE.

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THE Lord God that knoweth all things, knoweth well that I am right sorrowful to write or make known this sentence beneath written; whereby of my fellow christian, set in high state and dignity, so great blindness and malice may be known, that they which do presume of themselves to destroy vices, and to plant virtues in men, neither dread to offend God, nor desire to please him, as their works do show. For certes the bidding of God and his law, which in the praising of his most holy name he commandeth to be known and kept of all men and women, young and old, after the skill and power that he hath given to them, the prelates of this land and their ministers, with the covent\* of priests chiefly consenting to them, enforce themselves most busily to withstand, and destroy the holy ordinance of God. And therethrough God is greatly wroth and moved to take hard vengeance, not only upon them that do the evil, but also on them that consent to these limbs of antichrist, which know, or might know their malice and falsehood, and dress them not to withstand their malice and their great pride. Nevertheless, four things move me to write this sentence.

The first is this; that whereas it was known to certain friends, that I came from the prison of Shrewsbury, and as it befell that I should be had to the prison of Canterbury, then divers friends in divers places spake to me full heartily and full tenderly, and commanded me if it so were that I should be examined before the archbishop of Canterbury, that if I might in any wise, I should write mine opposing, and mine answering. And I promised to my special friends, that if I might, I would gladly do their bidding as I might.

The second thing that moves me to write this sentence is this: divers friends, who have heard that I have been examined before the archbishop, have come to me in prison, and counselled me busily, and coveted greatly that I should do the same thing. And other brethren have sent to me, and required on God's behalf, that I should write out and make known both mine opposing and mine answering, for the profit that, as they say, upon my making it known may

come thereof. But this they bade me, that I should be busy in all my skill, to go as near the sentence and the words as I could, both that were spoken to me, and that I spake; peradventure this writing may come another time before the archbishop and his counsel. And of this counselling I was right glad, for in my conscience I was moved to do this thing, and to ask hitherto the special help of God. And so then I, considering the great desire of divers friends of sundry places, according all in one, I occupied all my mind and my wits so busily, that through God's grace I perceived, by their meaning and their charitable desire, some profit might come therethrough. For soothfastness and truth hath these conditions; wherever it is impugned, it has a sweet smell, and thereof comes a sweet savour. And the more violently the enemies dress themselves to oppress and to withstand the truth, the greater and the sweeter smell comes thereof. And therefore this heavenly smell of God's word, will not as a smoke pass away with the wind; but it will descend and rest in some clean soul that thirsteth thereafter. And thus by this writing may be somewhat perceived through God's grace, how that the enemies of the truth, standing boldly in their malice, enforce them to withstand the freedom of Christ's gospel; for which freedom, Christ became man and shed his heart's blood. And therefore it is great pity and sorrow, that many men and women do their own wayward will, and busy them not to know nor to do the pleasant will of God.

The men and women that hear the truth, and hear or know of this, perceiving what is now in the church, ought herethrough to be the more moved in all their skill to able themselves to grace, and to set lesser price by themselves, that they, without tarrying, forsake wilfully and bodily all the wretchedness of this life, since they know not how soon, nor when, nor where, nor by whom, God will teach them and assay their patience. For no doubt, whoever will live piteously, that is charitably in Christ Jesus, shall suffer now here in this life persecution, in one wise or another. That is, if we shall be saved, it behoves us to imagine full busily the vileness and foulness of sin, and how the Lord God is displeased therefore; and so of this vileness and hideousness of sin, it behoves us to busy us in all our wits, ever to abhor and hold in our mind a great shame of sin, and so then we ought to sorrow heartily therefore, and ever flee all occasion thereof. And then it behoves us to take upon us sharp

penance, (repentance,) continuing therein, to obtain of the Lord forgiveness of our foredone sins, and grace to abstain us hereafter from sin. And if we enforce us not to do this willingly, and in convenient time, the Lord, if he will not utterly destroy and cast us away, will in divers manners move tyrants against us; to constrain us violently to do penance, which we would not do willingly. And trust that this doing is a special grace of the Lord, and a great token of life and mercy. And no doubt whoever will not apply himself, as is said before, to punish himself willingly, neither will suffer patiently, meekly, and gladly the rod of the Lord, howsoever he shall punish him; their wayward wills and their impatience are unto them earnest of everlasting damnation. But because there are but few in number that do endeavour thus faithfully to obtain grace, to live here so simply and purely, and without gall of malice and of grudging, therefore the lovers of this world hate and pursue them that they know to be patient, meek, chaste, and willingly poor, hating and fleeing all worldly vanities and fleshly lusts. For surely their virtuous conditions are even contrary to the manners of this world.

The third thing that moves me to write this sentence is this. I thought I shall busy me in myself to do faithfully, that all men and women, occupying all their business in knowing and in keeping of God's commandments, strive so to grace, that they might understand truly the truth, and have and use virtue and prudence, and so deserve to be lightened from above with heavenly wisdom; so that all their words and their works may be hereby made pleasant sacrifices unto the Lord God; and not only for help of their own souls, but also for edification of all holy church. For I doubt not, but all they that will apply them to have this aforesaid business, shall profit full well both to friends and foes. For some enemies of the truth, through the grace of God, shall through charitable folks be made astonished in their conscience, and peradventure be converted from vices to virtues; and also, they that labour to know and to keep faithfully the biddings of God, and to suffer patiently all adversities, shall hereby comfort many friends.

And the fourth thing that moveth me to write this sentence is this. I know by my sudden and unwarned opposing and answering, that all they that will of good heart, without feigning, endeavour willingly and gladly, after their skill and their power, to follow Christ patiently, labouring

busily, privately and openly, in work and in word, to withdraw whomsoever they may from vices, planting in them, if they may, virtues, comforting them and furthering them that stand in grace; so that therewith they be not borne up in vain glory through presumption of their wisdom, nor inflamed with any worldly prosperity, but ever be meek and patient; purposing to abide steadfastly in the will of God, suffering willingly and gladly, without any grudging, whatsoever rod the Lord will chastise them with—that then this good Lord will not forget to comfort all such men and women, in all their tribulations, and at every point of temptation that any enemy purposed for to do against them. To such faithful lovers especially, and patient followers of Christ, the Lord sendeth by his wisdom from above, that which the adversaries of the truth may not know nor understand. But through their old and new unshamefaced sins, those tyrants and enemies of the truth shall be so blinded and obstinate in evil, that they shall think themselves to do pleasant sacrifices unto the Lord God in their malicious and wrongful pursuing and destroying of innocent men's and women's bodies. Which men and women, for their virtuous living, and for their true acknowledging of the truth, and their patient, willing, and glad suffering of persecution for righteousness, deserve, through the grace of God, to be heirs of the endless bliss of heaven. And for the fervent desire and great love that these men have, as to stand in the truth, and witness of it, though they are suddenly and unwarnedly brought forth to be opposed of their adversaries; yet the Holy Ghost, who moveth and ruleth them through his charity, will in that hour of their answering speak in them, and show his wisdom, that all their enemies shall not againsay, nor againstand, lawfully.

And therefore, all they are steadfast in the faith of God, who through diligent keeping of his commandments, and for their patient suffering of whatsoever adversity cometh to them, hope surely in his mercy, purposing to stand continually in perfect charity. For those men and women dread not so the adversities of this life, that they will fear, after their knowledge and their power, to acknowledge prudently the truth of God's word, when, where, and to whom they think their acknowledging may profit. Yea, and though therefore persecution come to them in one wise or another, certes, they patiently take it, knowing their conversation to be in heaven. It is a high reward and a

special grace of God, to have and enjoy the everlasting inheritance of heaven, for the suffering of one persecution in so short time as is the term of this life. For lo, this heavenly heritage and endless reward is the Lord God himself, which is the best thing that may be. This sentence the Lord God himself witnesseth, whereas he said to Abraham, I am thy reward: and as the Lord said, he was and is the reward of Abraham, so he is of all other his saints. This most blessed and best reward, may he grant to us all for his holy name, who made us of nought, and sent his only most dear worthy Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, to redeem us with his most precious heart's blood. Amen.

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THE

EXAMINATION OF WILLIAM THORPE.\*

FENNED WITH HIS OWN HAND.

KNOWN be it to all men who read or hear this writing, that on the Sunday next after the feast of St. Peter, which we call Lammas, in the year of our Lord, 1407, I William Thorpe, being in prison in the castle of Saltwood, was brought before Thomas Arundel, archbishop of Canterbury, then chancellor of England. When I came to him, he stood in a great chamber, and much people about him; and when he saw me, he went fast into a closet, bidding all secular men that followed him to go forth from him soon, so that no man was left then in that closet but the archbishop himself, and a physician who was called Malveren, the parson of St. Dunstan's in London, and two other persons unknown to me, who were ministers of the law.

And I standing before them, the archbishop said to me; William, I know well that thou hast this twenty winters and more, travelled about busily in the north country, and in divers other countries of England, sowing about false doctrine, having great business if thou might, with thine untrue teaching and shrewd will to infect and poison all this land.\* But through the grace of God thou art now withstood and brought into my ward, so that I shall now

\* Thorpe had written a tract in which he complained much of the wickedness of the popish clergy.



sequester thee from thine evil purpose, and hinder thee to envenom the sheep of my province. Nevertheless, St. Paul saith, If it may be, as much as in us is, we ought to have peace with all men. Therefore, William, if thou wilt now meekly and of good heart, without any feigning, kneel down, and lay thy hand upon a book and kiss it, promising faithfully as I shall here charge thee, that thou wilt submit thee to my correction, and stand to mine ordinance, and fulfil it duly by all thy skill and power, thou shalt yet find me gracious unto thee.

Then said I to the archbishop, Sir, since ye deem me a heretic, and out of belief, will you give me here audience to tell my belief? And he said, Yea, tell on. And, I said, I believe that there is but one God almighty, and in this Godhead, and of this Godhead are three persons, that is, the Father, the Son, and the soothfast\* Holy Ghost. And I believe that all these three persons are even in power and in knowledge, and in might, full of grace and of all goodness. For whatsoever the Father doth, or can, or will, that also the Son doth and can and will; and in all their power, knowledge, and will, the Holy Ghost is equal to the Father, and to the Son.

Beside this I believe, that through counsel of this most blessed Trinity, in most convenient time, before ordained, for the salvation of mankind, the second Person of this Trinity was ordained to take the form of man, that is the kind† of man. And I believe, that this second Person, our Lord Jesus Christ, was conceived through the Holy Ghost of the most blessed virgin Mary. And I believe that Christ was born of this most blessed virgin.

And I believe, that Christ our Saviour was circumcised on the eighth day after his birth, in fulfilling of the law; and his name was called Jesus, which was so called of the angel, before that he was conceived of Mary his mother.

And I believe that Christ, when he was about thirty years old, was baptized in the flood of Jordan by John Baptist; and in the likeness of a dove, the Holy Ghost descended there upon him, and a voice was heard from heaven, saying, Thou art my well-beloved Son, in thee I am full pleased.

And I believe that Christ was moved then by the Holy Ghost to go into the desert, and there he fasted forty days and forty nights without bodily meat and drink. And I believe that by and by, after his fasting, when the manhood

\* True.

† Nature.

of Christ hungered, the fiend came to him, and tempted him in gluttony, in vain glory, and in covetousness. But in all those temptations Christ withstood the fiend, and overcame him. And then, without tarrying, Jesus began to preach, and to say unto the people, Do ye penance,\* for the realm of heaven is now at hand.

I believe that Christ in all his time here lived most holily, and taught the will of his Father most truly; and I believe that he suffered therefore most wrongfully, greatest reproofs and despisings. And after this, when Christ would make an end of this temporal life, I believe that in the day next before he suffered in the morn, in form of bread and of wine he ordained the sacrament of his flesh and his blood; that is his own precious body, and gave it to his apostles to eat; commanding them, and by them all their after comers, that they should do it in this form that he showed to them, use themselves, and teach and commune forth to other men and women this most worshipful and holiest sacrament, in mindfulness of his holiest living, and of his most true preaching, and of his willing and patient suffering of the most painful passion.

And I believe that this Christ our Saviour, after he had ordained this most worthy sacrament of his own precious body, went forth willingly against his enemies; and he suffered them most patiently to lay their hands most violently upon him, and to bind him, and to lead him forth as a thief, and to scorn him and buffet him, and to defile him with their spittings. Besides this, I believe that Christ suffered most meekly and patiently his enemies to ding out with sharp scourges the blood that was between the skin and his flesh. Yea, without grudging, Christ suffered the cruel Jews to crown him with most sharp thorns, and to strike him with a reed. And afterwards, Christ suffered wicked Jews to draw him out upon the cross, and to nail him thereupon hand and foot. And so through his pitiful nailing, Christ shed willingly for man's life, the blood that was in his veins. And then Christ gave willingly his spirit into the hands or power of his Father, and so, as he would, and when he would, Christ died willingly for man's sake upon the cross. And notwithstanding that Christ was willingly, painfully, and most shamefully put to death, as to the world; there was left blood and water in his heart, as before ordained, that he should shed out this blood and this

\* By penance the reformers mean repentance, not the Romish penance.

water for man's salvation. And therefore he suffered the Jews to make a blind knight\* to thrust him in the heart with a spear; and this blood and water that was in his heart, Christ would shed out for man's love; and after this, I believe that Christ was taken down from the cross and buried. And I believe that on the third day, by the power of his Godhead, Christ rose again from death to life. And the fortieth day thereafter, I believe that Christ ascended up into heaven, and that he there sitteth on the right hand of the Father almighty. And the fiftieth day after his up-going, he sent to his apostles the Holy Ghost, that he had promised them before; and I believe that Christ shall come and judge all mankind, some to everlasting peace, and some to everlasting pains.

And as I believe in the Father, and in the Son, that they are one God almighty, so I believe in the Holy Ghost, that he is also with them the same God almighty.

And I believe a holy church, that is, all they that have been, and that now are, and always to the end of the world shall be, a people which shall endeavour to know and to keep the commandments of God; dreading above all things to offend God, and loving and seeking most to please him. And I believe, that all they that have had, and yet have, and all they that yet shall have, the aforesaid virtues, surely standing in the belief of God, hoping steadfastly in his merciful doings, continuing to their end in perfect charity, willingly, patiently, and gladly suffering persecutions, by the example of Christ chiefly, and his apostles; all these have their names written in the book of life.

Therefore I believe, that the gathering together of this people, living now here in this life, is the holy church of God, fighting here on earth against the fiend, the prosperity of the world, and their fleshly-lusts. Wherefore, seeing that all the gathering together of this church before said, and every part thereof, neither coveteth, nor willeth, nor loveth, nor seeketh any thing but to eschew the offence of God, and to do his pleasing will meekly, gladly, and willingly, with all mine heart, I submit myself unto this holy church of Christ, to be ever submissive and obedient to the

\* The Golden Legend relates that the soldier who pierced Christ's side was blind, but some of the blood running down upon his hands, he touched his eyes and saw clearly; after which he abode with the apostles. He is reckoned among the Romish saints as St. Lougius, applying a Greek word, which signifies spear, to the person who wielded it!

ordinance of it, and of every member thereof, according to my knowledge and power, by the help of God. Therefore I acknowledge now, and evermore shall, if God will, that with all my heart, and with all my might, I will submit me only to the rule and governance of them, whom after my knowledge I may perceive, by the having and using of the beforesaid virtues, to be members of the holy church. Wherefore these articles of belief and all others, both of the old law and of the new, which after the commandment of God any man ought to believe, I believe verily in my soul, as a sinful mortal wretch, of my knowledge and power, ought to believe; praying the Lord God for his holy name to increase my belief, and to help my unbelief.

And because to the praising of God's name, I desire above all things to be a faithful member of holy church, I make this protestation before you all four that are now here present, coveting that all men and women who now are absent knew the same. That is, what thing soever before this time I have said or done, or what I shall do or say at any time hereafter, I believe, that all the old law and new law, given and ordained by counsel of the three persons of the Trinity, were given and written for the salvation of mankind. And I believe, that these laws are sufficient for man's salvation. And I believe every article of these laws, to the intent that these articles, ordained and commanded of these three persons of the most blessed Trinity are to be believed.

And therefore to the rule and the ordinance of these God's laws, meekly, gladly, and willingly, I submit me with all mine heart; that whosoever can or will, by authority of God's law, or by open reason, tell me that I have erred or now err, or any time hereafter shall err in any article of belief, from which inconvenience God keep me for his goodness, I submit me to be reconciled, and to be submissive and obedient unto those laws of God, and to every article of them. For by authority especially of these laws I will, through the grace of God, be united charitably unto these laws. Yea, sir, and over this, I believe and admit all the sentences, authorities, and reasons of the saints and doctors, according unto holy scripture, and declaring it truly.

I submit me willingly and meekly, to be ever obedient, after my knowledge and power, to all these saints and doctors, as they are obedient in work and in word, to God and to his law, and farther not, to my knowledge, not for any earthly power, dignity or state, through the help of God.

But, sir, I pray you tell me, if after your bidding I shall lay my hand upon the book, to what intent—to swear thereby?

And the archbishop said to me, Yea, wherefore else? And I said to him, Sir, a book is nothing else but a thing coupled together of divers creatures, and to swear by any creature, both God's law and man's law is against it. But, sir, this thing I say here to you before these your clerks, with my aforesaid protestation, that how, where, when, and to whom, men are bound to swear or to obey in any wise after God's law, and saints, and true doctors, according with God's law, I will through God's grace be ever ready thereto, with all my knowledge and power. But I pray you, sir, for the clarity of God, that you will, before I swear, as I have here rehearsed to you, tell me how or whereto I shall submit me; and show me whereof you will correct me, and what is the ordinance that you will thus oblige me to fulfil.

And the archbishop said unto me, I will shortly that now thou swear here to me, that thou shalt forsake all the opinions which the sect of Lollards hold, and is slandered with. So that after this time, neither privily nor openly, thou hold any opinion which I shall, after thou hast sworn, rehearse to thee here. Nor shalt thou favour any man or woman, young or old, that holdeth any of these aforesaid opinions; but after thy knowledge and power thou shalt force thee to withstand all such troublers of holy church in every diocese that thou comest in. And those that will not leave their false and damnable opinions, thou shalt put them up, publishing them and their names, and make them known to the bishop of the diocese that they are in, or to the bishop's ministers. And over this, I will that thou preach no more until the time that I know by good witness and true, that thy conversation is such, that thy heart and thy mouth accord truly in one, contrarying all the lewd\* learning that thou hast taught here before.

I, hearing these words, thought in my heart that this was an unlawful asking; and deemed myself cursed of God if I consented hereto, and I thought how Susanna said, Anguish is to me on every side. And in that I stood still and spake not, the archbishop said to me, Answer one way or other. And I said, Sir, if I consented to you thus as you have herebefore rehearsed to me, I should become an appealer, or every bishop's spy, summoner of all

\* Foolish.

England.\* For if I should thus put up and publish the names of men and women, I should herein deceive full many persons. Yea, sir, it is likely by the doom of my conscience I should herein be cause of the death, both of men and women, yea both bodily and spiritually. For many men and women who stand now in the way of salvation, if I should, for their learning and reading, or their belief, publish them therefore up to the bishops or to their unpituous ministers, I know by experience that they should be so troubled and tormented with persecution or otherwise, that many of them, I think, would rather choose to forsake the way of truth than to be travailed, scorned, slandered, or punished, as bishops and their ministers now use to constrain men and women to consent to them.

But I find in no place in holy scripture, that this office, which ye would now endow me with, accords to any priest of Christ's sect, nor to any other christian man: and therefore to do this were to me a full noious† bond to be bounden with, and over grievous charge. For I suppose, that if I did thus, many men and women would, yea, sir, might justly to my confusion say to me, that I was a traitor to God and to them; since, as I think in mine heart, many men and women trust in this case, that I would not for saving of my life do thus to them. For if I thus should do, full many men and women would, as they might full truly, say that I had falsely and cowardly forsaken the truth, and slandered shamefully the word of God. For if I consented to you, to do hereafter your will, for bonchefe or mischief,‡ that may befall unto me in this life, I deem in my conscience, that I were worthy to be cursed of God and also of all his saints; from which inconvenience keep me and all christian people, almighty God, now and ever for his holy name.

Then the archbishop said unto me, Oh, thine heart is full hard indurate,§ as was the heart of Pharaoh; and the devil hath overcome thee, and perverted thee, and he hath so blinded thee in all thy understanding, that thou hast no grace to know the truth, nor the measure of mercy that I have proffered to thee. Therefore, as I perceive now by thy foolish answer, thou hast no will to leave thine old errors. But I say to thee lewd losel,|| either quickly consent

\* An appealer is one who gives evidence against his accomplices.

† Hurtful.

‡ Good or evil.

§ Hardened.

|| Ignorant, good-for-nothing fellow.

thou to mine ordinance, and submit thee to stand to my decrees, or, by St. Thomas, thou shalt be degraded, and follow thy fellow into Smithfield.\*

At this saying I stood still and spake not, but I thought in mine heart, that God did to me great grace, if he would of his great mercy bring me to such an end. And in mine heart I was nothing afraid at this menacing of the archbishop. And I considered there two things in him. One, that he was not yet sorrowful that he had made William Sautre wrongfully to be burnt: and, as I considered, that the archbishop thirsted yet after more shedding out of innocent blood. And fast therefore I was moved in my judgment, to hold the archbishop neither for prelate nor for priest of God. And for that mine inward man was thus altogether departed from the archbishop, methought I should not have any dread of him. But I was right heavy and sorrowful, for that there was no audience of secular men by; but in my heart I prayed the Lord God to comfort me and strengthen me against those that there were against the truth. And I purposed to speak no more to the archbishop and his clerks than needed; and all thus I prayed God for his goodness to give me, then and always, grace to speak with a meek and an easy spirit; and whatsoever thing I should speak, that I might thereto have true authorities of the scriptures or open reason. And for that I stood thus still and nothing spake, one of the archbishop's clerks said unto me, What musest thou? Do thou as my lord hath now commanded to thee here?

And yet I stood still and answered him not; and then soon after the archbishop said to me, Art thou not yet be-thought, whether thou wilt do as I have said to thee? And I said then to him, Sir, my father and my mother, on whose souls God have mercy if it be his will, spent much money in divers places about my learning, for the intent to have made me a priest to God. But when I came to years of discretion, I had no will to be priest, and therefore my friends were right heavy to me, and then methought their grudging against me was so painful to me, that I purposed therefore to have left their company. And when they perceived this in me, they spake sometime full fair and pleasant words to me. But for that they might not make me to consent of good heart to be a priest, they spake to me full oftentimes very grievous words, and menaced me in divers

\* He meaneth God's martyr, William Sautre.—Fenle

manners, showing to me full heavy cheer. And thus one while in fair manner, another while in grievous, they were long time, as methought, full busy about me, ere I consented to them to be a priest.

But at the last, when in this matter they would no longer suffer mine excusations, but either I should consent to them, or I should ever bear their indignation, yea their curse, as they said, then I seeing this, prayed them that they would give me license to go to them that were said to be wise priests, and of virtuous conversation, to have their counsel, and to know of them the office and the charge of priesthood. And hereto my father and my mother consented full gladly, and gave me their blessing, and good leave to go, and also money to spend in this journey. And so I went to those priests whom I heard to be of best name, and of most holy living, and best learned, and most wise of heavenly wisdom ; and so I communed with them unto the time, that I perceived, by their virtuous and continual occupations, that their honest and charitable works passed their fame which I had heard before of them.

Wherefore, sir, by the example of the doctrine of them, and especially for the godly and innocent works which I perceived then of them, and in them, after my skill and power, I have exercised me then and in this time, to know perfectly God's law, having a will and desire to live thereafter, which willeth that all men and women should exercise themselves faithfully thereabout. If then, sir, either for pleasure of them that are neither so wise, nor of so virtuous conversation to my knowledge, nor by common fame to any other men's knowledge in this land, as these men were of whom I took my counsel and information, I should now forsake thus suddenly, and shortly, and unwarned, all the learning that I have exercised myself in, these thirty winters and more, my conscience should ever be herewith out of measure unquieted ; and, sir, I know well, that many men and women should be therethrough greatly troubled and slandered. And as I said, sir, to you before, for mine untruth and false cowardness, many a one should be put into full great reproof. Yea, sir, I dread that many a one, as they might then justly do, would curse me full bitterly. And, sir, I fear not, but the curse of God, which I should deserve herein, would bring me to a full evil end, if I continued thus. And if through remorse of conscience I repented me any time, returning into the way which you do your



diligence to constrain me now to forsake ; yea, sir, all the bishops of this land, with full many other priests, would defame me, and pursue me as a relapse. And they that now have, though I am unworthy, some confidence in me, hereafter would never trust to me, though I could teach and live ever so virtuously, more than I can or may. For if, after your counsel, I left utterly all my learning, I should hereby first wound and defile mine own soul, and also I should herethrough give occasion to many men and women of full sore hurting. Yea, sir, as it is likely to me, if I consented to your will, I should herein by mine evil example in it, as far as in me were, slay many folk spiritually, that I should never deserve to have grace of God to the edifying of his church, neither of myself, nor of any other man's life, and should be undone both before God and man.

But, sir, by example chiefly of some, whose names I will not now rehearse, of H., of I. P., and B.,\* and also by the present doing of Philip Rampington,† that now is become bishop of Lincoln, I am now learned, as many more hereafter through God's grace shall be learned, to hate and to flee all such slander as these aforesaid men chiefly have defiled principally themselves with. And in it that in them is, they have envenomed all the church of God, for the slanderous revoking at the cross of Paul's, of H. P. and of B., and how now Philip Rampington pursues Christ's people ! And the feigning whereby these men dissemble by worldly prudence, keeping them cowardly in their preaching and communing within the bonds and terms, which without blame may be spoken and showed out of the most worldly livers, will not be unpunished of God. For to the point of truth, that these men showed out sometime, they will not now stretch forth their lives. But by example each one of them, as their words and their works show, busy them, through their feigning, to slander and to pursue Christ in his members, rather than they will be pursued.

And the archbishop said to me, These men, the which thou speakest of now, were fools and heretics, when they were counted wise men of thee and other such losels. But now they are wise men, though thou and other such deem them unwise. Nevertheless, I never wist any that rightly

\* Probably Nicholas Hereford, John Purvey, and John Becket.

† Philip Repington made bishop, and a persecutor, on that account afterwards called of the brethren Rampington.—*For. See Life of Wickliff*

said, that any while were envenomed with your contagiousness, that is, contaminated and spotted doctrine.

I said to the archbishop, Sir, I think well that these men and such others are now wise as to this world. But as their words sounded sometime, and their works showed outwardly, it was like to move me that they had earnest of the wisdom of God; and that they should have deserved much grace of God to have saved their own souls and many other men's, if they had continued faithfully in willing poverty, and in other simple virtuous living. And especially if they had with these aforesaid virtues continued in their busy fruitful sowing of God's word; as to many men's knowledge they occupied them a season in all their skill, full busily to know the pleasant will of God, travailing all their members full busily to do thereafter, purely and chiefly to the praising of the most holy name of God, and for grace of edification and salvation of christian people. But wo worth false covetousness, and evil counsel and tyranny, by which they and many men and women are led blindly into an evil end.

Then the archbishop said unto me, Thou, and such other losels of thy sect, would shave your beards full near to have a benefice. For, by —, I know none more covetous shrews than ye are, when that ye have a benefice. For lo, I gave to John Purvey a benefice but a mile out of this castle, and I heard more complaints about his covetousness for tithes, and other misdoings, than I did of all men that were advanced within my diocese.

And I said to the archbishop, Sir, Purvey is neither with you now for the benefice that you gave him, nor holdeth he faithfully with the learning that he taught and wrote before time. Thus he showeth himself neither to be hot nor cold, and therefore he and his fellows may sorely dread, that if they turn not hastily to the way that they have forsaken, peradventure they be put out of the number of Christ's chosen people.

And the archbishop said, Though Purvey be now a false harlot,\* I quit me now to him. But come he more for such cause before me, ere we part I shall know with whom he holdeth. But I say to thee, Which are these holy men and wise, of whom thou hast taken thine information?

\* Or knave. This name was originally applied to a pretended religious sect, from whence it became a term of reproach.

I said, Sir, master John Wickliff was holden of full many men the greatest clerk that they knew then living, and therewith he was named a passing ruly\* man, and an innocent in his living. Therefore great men communed oft with him, and they loved so his learning, that they wrote it, and busily inforced them to rule themselves thereafter. Therefore, sir, this aforesaid learning of master John Wickliff is yet holden, of full many men and women, the learning most agreeable unto the living and teaching of Christ, and of his apostles, and most openly showing and declaring how the church of Christ hath been and yet should be ruled and governed. Therefore so many men and women covet this learning, and purpose through God's grace, to conform their living like to this learning of Wickliff. Master John Ashton taught and wrote accordingly and full busily, where, and when, and to whom that he might, and he used it himself right perfectly unto his life's end. And also Philip of Rampington, while he was a canon of Leicester, Nicholas Hereford, David Gotray of Packering, monk of Byland, and a master of divinity, and John Purvey, and many others which were holden right wise men and prudent, taught and wrote busily this aforesaid learning, and conformed them thereto. And with all these men I was right homely,† and communed with them long time and oft. And so before all other men I chose willingly to be informed of them and by them, and especially of Wickliff himself, as of the most virtuous and godly wise man that I heard of or knew. And therefore of him especially, and of these men I took the learning that I have taught; and purpose to live thereafter, if God will, to my life's end. For though some of those men now are contrary to the learning that they taught before, I know well that their learning was true which they taught; and therefore, with the help of God, I purpose to hold and to use the learning which I heard of them, while they sat on Moses's chair, and especially while they sat on the chair of Christ. But according to the works that they now do, I will not do, with God's help. For they feign, and hide, and contrary the truth, which before they taught out plainly and truly. For as I know well, when some of those men have been blamed for their slanderous doing, they grant not that they have taught amiss or erred before time, but that they were

\* Quiet, orderly.

† Familiar.

constrained by pain to leave to tell out the truth, and thus they choose now rather to blaspheme God, and to suffer awhile here persecution bodily, for the truths that Christ shed out his heart blood for.

And the archbishop said, That learning which thou callest truth and verity is open slander to holy church, as it is proved of holy church. For albeit that Wickliff, your author, was a great clerk, and though many men held him to be a perfect liver, yet his doctrine is not approved of holy church, but many sentences of his learning are condemned, as they well worthy are. But as touching Philip of Rampington, that was first canon, and after abbot of Leicester, which is now bishop of Lincoln, I tell thee, that the day is coming, for which he fasted the even. For neither he holdeth now, nor will hold the learning that he taught, when he was a canon of Leicester. For no bishop of this land pursueth now more sharply those that hold thy way, than he doth.

I said, Sir, full many men and women wonder upon him, and speak much shame on him, and hold him for a cursed enemy of the truth.

The archbishop said to me, Wherefore tarriest thou me thus here with such fables; wilt thou shortly, as I have said to thee, submit thee to me or no?

I said, Sir, I tell you at one word; I dare not for the dread of God submit me to you, after the tenour and sentence that ye have above rehearsed to me.

Then, as if he had been wroth, he said to one of his clerks, Fetch hither quickly the certification that came to me from Shrewsbury under the bailiffs' seal, witnessing the errors and heresies which this losel hath venomously sown there.

Then hastily the clerk took out, and laid forth on a cupboard divers rolls and writings, among which there was a little one, which the clerk delivered to the archbishop. And by and by the archbishop read this roll, containing this sentence:—

“The third Sunday after Easter, the year of our Lord 1407, William Thorpe came unto the town of Shrewsbury, and through leave granted unto him to preach, he said openly in St. Chad's church, in his sermon, that the sacrament of the altar, after the consecration, was material bread. And that images should in no wise be worshipped. And

that men should not go on pilgrimages. And that priests have no title to tithes. And that it is not lawful to swear in any wise."

And when the archbishop had read thus this roll, he rolled it up again, and said to me, Is this wholesome learning to be among the people?

I said, Sir, I am both ashamed on their behalf, and right sorrowful for them that have certified you these things thus untruly; for I never preached nor taught thus, privily nor openly.

And the archbishop said, I will give credence to these worshipful men which have written to me, and witnessed under their seals there among them. Though now thou deniest this, weenest thou that I will give credence to thee? Thou, losel, hast troubled the worshipful commonalty of Shrewsbury, so that the bailiffs and commonalty of that town have written to me, praying me, that am archbishop of Canterbury, primate and chancellor of England, that I will vouchsafe to grant them, that if thou shalt be made, as thou art worthy, to suffer open iouresse\* for thine heresies, that thou may have thy iouresse openly there among them.† So that all they whom thou and such other losels have there perverted, may through fear of thy deed be reconciled again to the unity of holy church; and also they that stand in true faith of holy church, may through thy deed be more established therein. And as if this asking well pleased the archbishop, he said, By my thrift this hearty prayer and fervent request shall be thought on.

But, certainly, neither the prayer of the men of Shrewsbury, nor the menacing of the archbishop made me anything afraid. But, in rehearsing of this malice, and in the hearing of it, my heart greatly rejoiced, and yet doth. I thank God for the grace that I then thought, and yet think shall come to all the church of God herethrough, by the especial merciful doing of the Lord. And as having no dread of the malice of tyrants, by trusting steadfastly in the help of the Lord, with full purpose to acknowledge the truth, and to stand thereby after my skill and power, I said to the archbishop, Sir, if the truth of God's word might now be accepted as it should be, I doubt not to prove by likely

\* Pain or punishment—penance. Perhaps from the French *jouer*.

† O Shrewsbury, thou hast a cause to repent thee, in that thou wouldest not receive the truth when it was offered thee.—*For*

evidence, that they who are feigned to be out of the faith of holy church in Shrewsbury, and in other places also, are in the true faith of holy church. For as their words sound, and their works show to man's judgment, dreading and loving faithfully God, their will, their desire, their love, and their business are most set to dread to offend God, and to love to please him in true and faithful keeping of his commandments. And again, they that are said to be in the faith of holy church in Shrewsbury and in other places, by open evidence of their proud, envious, malicious, covetous, lecherous, and other foul words and works, neither know, nor have will to know, nor to occupy their minds truly and effectually in the right faith of holy church. Wherefore, neither all these, nor any that follow their manners, shall any time come verily in the faith of holy church, except they enforce them more truly to come in the way which now they despise. For these men and women, that are now called faithful and holden just, neither know, nor will exercise themselves to know faithfully the commandment of God.

And thus full many men and women now, and especially men that are named to be principal limbs of holy church, stir God to great wrath, and deserve his curse for that they call or hold them just men, which are full unjust, as their vicious words, their great customable swearing, and their slanderous and shameful works show openly and witness. And therefore such vicious men and unjust, to their own confusion, call them unjust men and women, who after their power and judgment busy themselves to live justly after the commandment of God. And, sir, you say that I have troubled the commonalty of Shrewsbury, and many other men and women with my teaching. If it thus be, it is not to be wondered at of wise men; since all the commonalty of the city of Jerusalem was troubled at Christ's own person, who was very God and man, and the most prudent preacher that ever was or shall be. And also all the synagogue of Nazareth was moved against Christ, and so fulfilled with ire towards him for his preaching, that the men of the synagogue rose up and cast Christ out of their city, and led him up to the top of a mountain to cast him down there headlong. Also accordingly hereto the Lord witnesseth by Moses, that he shall put dissension betwixt his people, and the people that contrary and pursue his people. Who, sir, is he that shall preach the truth of

God's word to the unfaithful people, and shall hinder the truth of the gospel, and the prophecy of God almighty to be fulfilled?

And the archbishop said to me, It follows of these thy words, that thou and such other, think that you do right well to preach and teach as you do, without authority of any bishop.\* For you presume that the Lord hath chosen you only to preach, as faithful disciples and especial followers of Christ.

I said, Sir, by authority of God's law, and also of saints and doctors, I am taught to consider, that it is every priest's office and duty to preach busily, freely, and truly, the word of God. For no doubt every priest should purpose first in his soul, and covet to take the order of priesthood, chiefly to make known to the people the word of God, after his judgment and power; approving his words ever to be true by his virtuous works. And for this intent we suppose that bishops and other prelates of holy church should chiefly take and use their prelacy, and for the same cause bishops should give to priests their orders. For bishops should accept no man to priesthood, except that he had good will and full purpose, and were well disposed, and well learned to preach. Wherefore, sir, by the bidding of Christ, and by the example of his most holy living, and also by the witnessing of his holy apostles and prophets, we are bound, under full great pain, to exercise us after our judgment and power, as every priest is likewise charged of God, to fulfil duly the office of priesthood. We presume not here of ourselves to be esteemed, either in our own reputation, or in any other man's, faithful disciples, and especial followers of Christ. But, sir, as I said to you before, we deem this by authority chiefly of God's word, that it is the chief duty of every priest to busy him faithfully to make the law of God known to his people; and so to commune the commandment of God charitably, how that we may best, where, when, and to whom that ever we may, is our very duty. And for the will and business that we owe of due debt, to do justly our office through the stirring and especial help, as we trust, of God, hoping steadfastly in his mercy, we desire to be the faithful disciples of Christ; and we pray this gracious Lord for his holy name, that he make us able to please him with

\* In the constitutions of archbishop Arundel, made by him about this time, and sanctioned by the convocation, A. D. 1408, it was ordered that none of the clergy should preach without a bishop's license. The mendicant orders, however, were privileged to preach without episcopal sanction.

devout prayers, and charitable priestly works, that we may obtain of him to follow him thankfully.

The archbishop said to me, Lewd losel, whereto maketh thou such vain reasons to me? Asketh not St. Paul, how should priests preach except they be sent? But I never sent thee to preach. For thy venomous doctrine is so known throughout England, that no bishop will admit thee to preach by witnessing of their letters. Why, then, lewd idiot, wilt thou presume to preach, since thou art not sent, nor licensed of thy sovereign to preach? St. Paul saith, that subjects ought to obey their sovereigns, and not only good and virtuous, but also tyrants that are vicious.

And I said to the archbishop, Sir, as touching your letter of licence, or other bishop's, which, you say, we should have to witness that we are able to be sent to preach, we know well that neither you, sir, nor any other bishop of this land will grant to us any such letters of license, unless we should oblige us to you, and to other bishops, by unlawful oaths, not to pass the bounds and terms which ye, sir, or other bishops, will limit to us. And since in this matter your terms are some too large, and some too strait, we dare not oblige us thus to be bounden to you to keep the terms, which you will limit to us, as you do to friars and such other preachers. And therefore, though we have not your letter, sir, nor letters of any other bishops written with ink upon parchment, we dare not therefore leave the office of preaching; to which preaching all priests after their skill and power are bound, by divers testimonies of God's law, and great doctors, without any mention making of bishops' letters. Forasmuch as we have taken upon us the office of priesthood, though we are unworthy thereto, we came and purpose to fulfil it, with the help of God, by authority of his own law, and by witness of great doctors and saints, accordingly hereto trusting steadfastly in the mercy of God. For that he commandeth us to do the office of priesthood, he will be our sufficient letters and witness, if we by example of his holy living and teaching, especially occupy us faithfully to do our office justly. Yea, the people to whom we preach, be they faithful or unfaithful, shall be our letters, that is, our witness-bearers; for the truth where it is sown may not be unwitnessed. For all that are converted and saved by learning of God's word, and by working thereafter, are witness-bearers, that the truth and verity, which they heard and did after, is cause of their salvation. And



again, all unfaithful men and women which heard the truth told out to them, and would not do thereafter—also all they that might have heard the truth, and would not hear it, because that they would not do thereafter; all these shall bear witness against themselves. And the truth which they would not hear, or else heard it, and despised to do thereafter through their unfaithfulness, is and shall be cause of their damnation. Therefore, sir, since this aforesaid witnessing of God, and of divers saints and doctors, and of all the people, good and evil, suffices to all true preachers, we think that we do not the office of priesthood, if we leave our preaching, because that we have not, or may not have duly bishops' letters, to witness that we are sent of them to preach. This sentence St. Paul approves, where he speaks of himself and of faithful apostles and disciples; saying thus; We need no letters of commendation as some preachers do, which preach for covetousness of temporal goods, and for men's praising. And where you say, sir, that Paul bids subjects obey their sovereigns, that is truth, and may not be denied. But there are two manner of sovereigns—virtuous sovereigns, and vicious tyrants. Therefore to these last sovereigns neither men nor women, that are subject, owe to obey in two manners. To virtuous and charitable sovereigns subjects owe to obey willingly and gladly, in hearing of their good counsel, in consenting to their charitable biddings, and in working after their fruitful works.

This sentence Paul approves, where he saith to subjects, Be ye mindful of your sovereigns, that speak to you the word of God, and follow the faith of them, whose conversation you know to be virtuous. For, as Paul saith after, these sovereigns to whom subjects ought to obey in following of their manners, work busily in holy studying, how they may withstand and destroy vices, first in themselves and after in all their subjects, and how they may best plant in them virtues. Also these sovereigns make devout and fervent prayers to purchase grace of God, that they and their subjects may over all things dread to offend him, and love to please him. Also these sovereigns to whom Paul bids us obey, as it is said before, live so virtuously, that all they that will live well, may take of them good example, to know and to keep the commandments of God. But in this aforesaid manner, subjects ought not to obey nor to be obedient to tyrants, while they are vicious tyrants, since

their will, their counsel, their biddings, and their works are so vicious, that they ought to be hated and left. And though such tyrants are masterful and cruel in boasting and menacing; in oppressions and divers punishings; St. Peter bids the servants of such tyrants, to obey meekly such tyrants, suffering patiently their malicious cruelties. But Peter counsels not any servant or subject to obey any lord, or prince, or sovereign, in any thing that is not pleasing to God.

And the archbishop said, If a sovereign bid his subject do that thing that is vicious, this sovereign herein is to blame; but the subject for his obedience deserveth reward of God. For obedience more pleases God, than any sacrifice.

I said, Samuel the prophet said to Saul the wicked king, that God was more pleased with the obedience of his commandments, than with any sacrifice of beasts. But David saith, and St. Paul and St. Gregory accordingly together, that not only they that do evil are worthy of death and damnation, but also they that consent to evil doers. And, sir, the law of the holy church teaches in the decrees, that no servant to his lord, nor child to the father or mother, nor wife to her husband, nor monk to his abbot, ought to obey, except in allowable things, and lawful.

The archbishop said to me, All these allegings that thou bringest forth, are nothing else but proud presumptuousness. For hereby thou enforcest thee to prove, that thou and such other are so just, that ye ought not to obey to prelates. And thus against the learning of St. Paul, who teaches you not to preach unless you were sent, of your own authority, ye will go forth and preach, and do what ye list.

I said, Sir, represents not every priest the office of the apostles, or the office of the disciples of Christ? And the archbishop said, Yea. And I said, Sir, as the tenth chapter of Matthew, and the last chapter of Mark witness, Christ sent his apostles to preach. And the tenth chapter of Luke witnesses, that Christ sent seventy disciples two and two, to preach in every place that he was to come to. And St. Gregory in the common law saith, that every man who goeth into the priesthood, takes upon him the office of preaching; for as he saith, That priest stirreth God to great wrath, of whose mouth is not heard the voice of preaching. And as other more glosses upon Ezekiel witness, the priest

who preaches not busily to the people, shall be partaker of their damnation who perish through his default. And though the people are saved by other especial grace of God, than by the priests' preaching, yet the priests, in that they are ordained to preach, and preach not, in the sight of God they are manslayers. For as far as in them is, such priests as preach not busily and truly, slay all the people spiritually, in that they withhold from them the word of God, which is the life and sustenance of men's souls. And St. Isidore said, priests shall be damned for wickedness of the people, if they teach not them that are ignorant, or blame not them that are sinners. For all the work or business of priests stands in preaching and teaching, that they edify all men as well by knowledge of faith, as by discipline of works, that is, virtuous teaching. And as the gospel witnesses, Christ said in his teaching, I am born and come into this world, to bear witness to the truth, and he that is of the truth heareth my voice.

Then, sir, since by the word of Christ especially, that is, by his voice, priests are commanded to preach; whatsoever priest it be, that hath not good will and full purpose to do thus, and enables not himself after his cunning and power to do his office by the example of Christ and of his apostles, whatsoever other thing he doth, displeases God. For lo, St. Gregory saith, that thing left which a man is bound chiefly to do, whatsoever other thing a man doth, it is unthankful to the Holy Ghost; and therefore saith Lincoln,\* "The priest that preaches not the word of God, though he be seen to have none other default, he is antichrist an I satan, a night thief, and a day thief, a slayer of souls, and an angel of light turned into darkness." Wherefore, sir, these authorities and others well considered, I deem myself condemnable, if I either for pleasure or displeasure of any creature, apply me not diligently to preach the word of God. And in the same condemnation I deem all those priests, who of good purpose and will, enforce themselves not busily to do thus, and also all them that have purpose or will to hinder any priest of this business.

And the archbishop said to those three clerks that stood before him, Lo, sirs, this is the manner and business of this losel and such others, to pick out such sharp sentences

\* Grossthead, bishop of Lincoln, who lived in the preceding century, and opposed the Romish corruptions.—See *History of the Church of Christ*.

of holy scripture and doctors, to maintain their sect and lore against the ordinance of holy church. And therefore, losel, it is thou that covetest to have again the psalter that I made to be taken from thee at Canterbury, to record\* sharp verses against us. But thou shalt never have that psalter nor any other book, till that I know that thy heart and thy mouth accord fully to be governed by holy church.

I said, Sir, all my will and power is, and ever shall be, I trust to God, to be governed by holy church.

The archbishop asked me, what was holy church.

I said, Sir, I told you before what was holy church. But, since ye ask me this demand, I call Christ and his saints holy church.

And the archbishop said unto me, I wot well that Christ and his saints are holy church in heaven, but what is holy church in earth?

I said, Sir, though holy church be every one in charity, yet it hath two parts. The first and principal part hath perfectly overcome all the wretchedness of this life, and reigneth joyfully in heaven with Christ. And the other part is here yet in earth, busily and continually fighting day and night against temptations of the fiend; forsaking and hating the prosperity of this world; despising and withstanding their fleshly lusts; which only are the pilgrims of Christ, wandering toward heaven by steadfast faith, and grounded hope, and by perfect charity. For these heavenly pilgrims may not, and will not be hindered of their good purpose, by the reason of any doctors discording from holy scripture, nor by the floods of any temporal tribulation, nor by the wind of any pride, of boast, or of menacing of any creature. For they are all fast grounded upon the sure stone Christ, hearing his word and loving it, exercising them faithfully and continually in all their judgment to do thereafter.

The archbishop said to his clerks, See ye not how his heart is indurate, and how he is travailed with the devil, occupying him thus busily to allege such sentences to maintain his errors and heresies. Certain, thus he would occupy us here all day, if we would suffer him.

One of the clerks answered, Sir, he said just now, that this certification, which came to you from Shrewsbury, is untruly forged against him. Therefore, sir, appose you him now here in all the points which are certified against him,

\* Repeat.

and so we shall hear of his own mouth his answers, and witness them.

And the archbishop took the certification in his hand, and looked thereon a while, and then he said to me, Lo here it is certified against thee by worthy men and faithful of Shrewsbury, that thou preachedst there openly in St. Chad's church, that the sacrament of the altar is material bread after the consecration, what sayest thou? Was this truly preached?

I said, Sir, I tell you truly that I touched nothing there of the sacrament of the altar, but in this wise as I will with God's grace tell you here. As I stood there in the pulpit, busying me to teach the commandment of God, there knelled a sacring bell,\* and therefore much people turned away hastily, and with noise ran from me. And I, seeing this, said to them thus, Good men, ye were better to stand here still and to hear God's word. For certainly the virtue and the meed of the most holy sacrament of the altar standeth much more in the belief thereof, that you ought to have in your soul, than it doth in the outward sight thereof. And therefore, you were better to stand still quietly to hear God's word, because through the hearing thereof, men come to very true belief. And otherwise, sir, I am certain I spake not there of the worthy sacrament of the altar.

And the archbishop said, I believe thee not, whatsoever thou sayest, since such worshipful men have witnessed thus against thee. But since thou deniest that thou saidst thus there, what sayest thou now? Resteth there after the consecration in the host, material bread or no?†

I said, Sir, I know in no place in holy scripture where this term material bread is written; and therefore, sir, when I speak of this matter, I use not to speak of material bread.

Then the archbishop said, How teachest thou men to believe in this sacrament?

I said, Sir, as I believe myself, so I teach other men.

He said, Tell out plainly thy belief thereof.

I said, with my protestation, Sir, I believe that the night before that Christ Jesus would suffer, willingly, his passion for mankind on the morning after, he took bread in his holy and most worshipful hands, lifting up his eyes and giving

\* A bell rung at the mass.

† From the days of Wickliff to the reign of queen Mary, this was made the test to discover heretics. The reader will remember that the doctrine of transubstantiation is a main support of the fabric of error reared by the church of Rome.

thanks to God his Father, he blessed this bread, and brake it, and gave it to his disciples, saying to them, Take and eat of this all you, this is my body. And that this is and ought to be all men's belief, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and Paul witness. Other belief, sir, I have none, nor will have, nor teach; for I believe, that this suffices in this matter. For in this belief, with God's grace, I purpose to live and die, acknowledging as I believe and teach other men to believe, that the worshipful sacrament of the altar is the sacrament of Christ's flesh and his blood in the form of bread and wine.

And the archbishop said, It is truth that this sacrament is very Christ's body in form of bread. But thou and thy sect teach it to be substance of bread. Think you this true teaching?

I said, Neither I, nor any other of the sect that ye condemn, teach any otherwise than I have told you, nor believe otherwise to my knowing. Nevertheless, sir, I ask of you for charity, that you will tell me here plainly, how you shall understand the text of St. Paul, where he saith thus, This thing feel you in yourself that is in Christ Jesus, while he was in the form of God. Sir, calleth not Paul here the form of God, the substance or kind of God? Also, sir, saith not the church in the hours of the most blessed virgin\* accordingly hereto, where it is written thus, Thou author of health remember, that sometime thou took of the undefiled virgin the form of our body? Tell me for charity therefore, whether the form of our bodies be called here the kind of our body or no?

And the archbishop said, Wouldest thou make me to declare this text after thy purpose, since the church now hath determined, that there abideth no substance of bread, after the consecration, in the sacrament of the altar? Believest thou not this ordinance of the church?†

I said, Sir, whatsoever prelates have ordained in the church, our belief standeth ever whole. I have not heard, that the ordinance of men under belief ‡ should be put into belief.

And the archbishop said, If thou hast not learned this

\* The service of the virgin. A devotional book used in the church of Rome.

† The papists have none other defence for them, but only the church. Every ordinance of churchmen bindeth not our faith.—*Far.*

‡ "Under belief," refers to those whose duty it is rather to believe what is taught, than to advise matter for others to believe.

before, learn now to know that thou art out of belief, if in this matter and other thou believest not as the holy church believe. What say doctors treating of this sacrament?

I said, Sir, St. Paul, who was a great doctor of holy church, speaking to the people, and teaching them in the right belief of this most holy sacrament, calleth it bread that we break. And also in the canon of the mass, after the consecration, this most worthy sacrament is called holy bread. And every priest in this land, after that he hath received this sacrament, saith thus, That thing which we have taken with our mouth, we pray God that we may take it with a pure and clean mind. That is, as I understand, we pray God that we may receive, through very belief, this holy sacrament worthily. And, sir, St. Augustine saith, "That which is seen is bread; but that which men's faith asketh to be informed of is very Christ's body." And also Fulgence, an ententive\* doctor, saith, "As it were an error to say that Christ was but a substance, that is, very man, and not very God; or to say that Christ was very God, and not very man: so is it, this doctor saith, an error to say, that the sacrament of the altar is but a substance;" and also, sir, accordingly hereto, in the secret† of the mid mass on Christmas-day, it is written thus, *Idem refulsit Deus, sic terrena substantia nobis conferat quod divinum est;* which sentence, sir, with the secret of the fourth ferie, (*feria quarta*) *quatuor temporum Septembris*, I pray you, sir, declare here openly in English.‡

And the archbishop said, I perceive well enough whereabout thou art, and how the devil blindeth thee, that thou mayest not understand the ordinance of holy church, nor consent thereto. But I command thee now, answer me shortly; Believest thou, that, after the consecration of this aforesaid sacrament, there abideth substance of bread, or not?

I said, Sir, as I understand, it is all one to grant or believe that there dwelleth substance of bread, and to grant and to believe, that this most worthy sacrament of Christ's own body is accident without subject. But, sir, forasmuch

\* Earnest, attentive. Fulgentius lived in the sixth century. He wrote against the Arians and Pelagians.

† The secret of the mass is a prayer, said by the priest privately to himself, during that service; it is stated to signify the private discourse of our Lord with his disciples.

‡ God is manifested therein, thus a terrene (or earthly) substance imparts to us that which is divine. The service referred to is in the ember week in September.

as your asking passeth my understanding, I dare neither deny it, nor grant it;\* for it is school matter, about which I never busied me to know; and therefore I commit this term, accident without subject, to those clerks who delight them so in curious and subtle sophistry, because they determine oft such difficult and strange matters, and wade and wander so in them from argument to argument, with for and against, till they know not where they are, and understand not themselves. But the shame that these proud sophisters have to yield them to men, and before men, oft makes them fools, and to be concluded shamefully before God.

The archbishop said, I purpose not to oblige thee to the subtle arguments of clerks, since thou art unable thereto; but I purpose to make thee obey to the determination of holy church.

I said, Sir, by open evidence and great witness, a thousand years after the incarnation of Christ, the determination, which I have here before you rehearsed, was accepted of holy church as sufficient for the salvation of all them that would believe it faithfully, and work thereafter charitably. But, sir, the determination of this matter was brought in, since the fiend was loosed, by friar Thomas, again,† especially calling the most worshipful sacrament of Christ's own body, an accident without subject; which term, since I know not that God's law approves it in this matter, I dare not grant, but utterly I deny to make this friar's sentence, or any such other, my belief; do with me, God, what thou wilt.

The archbishop said, Well, well, thou shalt say otherwise ere I leave you. But what sayest thou to this second point that is recorded against thee by worthy men of Shrewsbury, saying, that thou preachedst there, that images ought not to be worshipped in anywise?

I said, Sir, I never preached thus, nor, through God's grace, will I at any time consent to think, or to say thus, either privily or openly. For lo, the Lord witnesseth by Moses, that the things which he made were right good, and

\* To grant the real being of the body without bread, is as much as to grant the accident to be without the subject.—*For.* The Lollards usually adopted the plan of keeping merely to the words of scripture, when examined respecting the mass, and avoided entering into discussions upon the subject.

† The friar here referred to is Thomas Aquinas, whose writings were a main support of the doctrine of transubstantiation. The loosing "again," refers to the belief then general among the opposers of the *heresy*, that Satan had been bound the first thousand years after the fall, but was then loosed, Rev. xx. 1—3. See Wickliff, p. 32. 47.



so then they were, and yet they are and shall be good and worshipful in their kind. And therefore, to the end that God made them to, they are all praiseable and worshipful, and especially man, that was made after the image and likeness of God, is full worshipful\* in his kind, yea, this holy image, that is man, God worshippeth. And therefore every man should worship other, in kind, and also for heavenly virtues that men use charitably. And also I say, wood, tin, gold, silver, or any other matter that images are made of, all these creatures are worshipful in their kind, and to the end that God made them for. But the carving, casting, and painting of an imagery, made within man's hand, albeit this doing be accepted of men of highest state and dignity, and ordained of them to be a calendar to unlearned men, who neither can, nor will be learned to know God in his word, neither by his creatures, nor by his wonderful and divers workings; yet this imagery ought not to be worshipped in form, nor in the likeness of man's craft. Nevertheless, that every matter the painters paint with, since it is God's creature, ought to be worshipped† in the kind, and to that end that God made and ordained it to serve man.‡

Then the archbishop said to me, I grant well that nobody ought to do worship to any such images for themselves. But a crucifix ought to be worshipped for the passion of Christ that is painted therein, and so brought thereby to man's mind; and thus the images of the blessed Trinity, and of the virgin Mary, Christ's mother, and other images of saints ought to be worshipped. For lo, earthly kings and lords who use to send their letters sealed with their arms, or with their privy signet to them that are with them, are worshipped of these men. For when these men receive their lords' letters, in which they see and know the wills and biddings of the lords, in worship of their lords, they do off their caps to these letters. Why not then, since in images made with man's hand, we may read and know many, and divers things of God, and of his saints; shall we not worship their images?

I said, With my aforesaid protestation I say, that these worldly usages of temporal laws that ye speak now of, may be done in some cases without sin. But this is no similitude

\* To be revered or respected.

† Respected.

‡ Though man accept the painting or carving of images, yet is it not the right way to learn to serve God.—*For.*

to worship images, made by man's hand ; since that Moses, David, Solomon, and other saints in the bible forbid so plainly the worshipping of all such images.

Then the archbishop said, Lewd losel, in the old law before that Christ took mankind, was no likeness of any person of the Trinity, neither showed to man, nor known of man. But now since Christ became man, it is lawful to have images to show this manhood, yea, though many men who are right great clerks, and others also, held it an error to paint the Trinity ; I say, it is well done to make and to paint the Trinity in images. For it is great moving of devotion to men, to have and to behold the Trinity and other images of saints carved, cast, and painted. For beyond the sea are the best painters that ever I saw. And, sirs, I tell you, this is their manner, and it is a good manner—When an image-maker shall carve, cast in mould, or paint any images, he shall go to a priest, and shrive him as clean, as if he should then die ; and take penance, and make some certain vow of fasting or of praying, or pilgrimages doing, praying the priest especially to pray for him, that he may have grace to make a fair and a devout image.

I said, Sir, I doubt not if these painters that ye speak of, or any other painters, understood truly the text of Moses, of David, of the wise man, of Baruch, and of other saints and doctors ; these painters should be moved to shrive them to God with full inward sorrow of heart, taking upon them to do right sharp penance for the sinful and vain craft of painting, carving, or casting they had used ; promising God faithfully never to do so after ; acknowledging openly before all men their reprobable learning. And also, sir, these priests that shrive, as you do say, painters, and enjoin them to do penance, and pray for their speed, promising to them help of their prayers to be curious in their sinful crafts, sin herein more grievously than the painters. For these priests do comfort and give them counsel to do that thing, which of great pain, yea under the pain of God's curse, they should utterly forbid them. For certainly, sir, if the wonderful working of God, and the holy living and teaching of Christ, and of his apostles and prophets, were made known to the people by holy living, and true and busy teaching of priests ; these things, sir, were sufficient books and calendars to know God by, and his saints, without any images made with man's hand. But certainly, the covetous living of priests and their covetousness, are chief

cause of this error ; and all other viciousness that reigneth among the people.

Then the archbishop said, I hold thee a vicious priest and accursed, and all they that are of thy sect ; for all priests of holy church, and all images that move men to devotion, thou and such other go about to destroy. Losel, were it a fair thing to come into the church, and see therein none image?\*

I said, Sir, they that come to the church, to pray devoutly to the Lord God, may in their inward mind be the more fervent, that all their outward senses be closed from all outward seeing and hearing, and from all disturbance and lettings. And since Christ blessed them that saw him not bodily, and have believed faithfully in him ; it suffices then to all men, through hearing and knowing God's word, and doing thereafter, to believe in God, though they never see images made with man's hand, after any person of the Trinity, or of any other saint.

And the archbishop said to me with a fervent spirit, I say to thee, losel, that it is right well done to make and to have an image of the Trinity ; yea, what sayest thou ? is it not a stirring thing to behold such an image ?

I said, Sir, you said right now that in the old law, ere Christ took mankind, no likeness of any person of the Trinity was showed to men ; wherefore, sir, you said it was not then lawful to have images ; but now you say, since Christ is become man, it is lawful to have and to make an image of the Trinity, and also of other saints. But, sir, this thing would I learn of you—since the Father of heaven, yea and every person of the Trinity, was without beginning God almighty, and many holy prophets who were mortal men, were martyred violently in the old law, and also many men and women then died confessors—Why was it not then as lawful and necessary as now, to have made an image of the Father of heaven, and to have made and had other images of martyrs, prophets, and holy confessors, to have been calendars to advise men and move them to devotion, as ye say that images now do ?

The archbishop said, The synagogue of the Jews had not authority to approve those things, as the church of Christ hath now.

I said, Sir, St. Gregory was a great man in the new law, and

\* A better sight, my lord, than to see blind stocks there to be worshipped.—*Fax.*

of great dignity, and, as the common law witnesses, he commended greatly a bishop, in that he forbad utterly that the images made with man's hand should be worshipped.

The archbishop said, Ungracious losel, thou savourest no more truth than a hound. Since at the rood at the north door at London, at our lady at Walsingham, and many other places in England, are many great and praisable miracles done; should not the images of such holy saints and places at the reverence of God, and of our lady, and other saints, be more worshipped than other places and images, where no such miracles are done?

I said, Sir, there is no such virtue in any imagery, that any image should heretofore be worshipped; wherefore I am certain that there is no miracle done of God in any place in earth, because that any images made with man's hand should be worshipped. And therefore, sir, as I preached openly at Shrewsbury and other places, I say now here before you, that nobody should trust that there were any virtue in imagery made with man's hand; and therefore nobody should vow to them, nor seek them, nor kneel to them, nor bow to them, nor pray to them, nor offer any thing to them, nor kiss them, nor incense them.\* For lo the most worthy of such images, the brazen serpent made by Moses at God's bidding, the good king Hezekiah destroyed worthily and thankfully, and all because it was incensed. Therefore, sir, if men take good heed to the writing and the learning of St. Augustine, of St. Gregory, and of St. John Chrysostom, and of other saints and doctors, how they spake and wrote of miracles, that shall be done now in the last end of the world. It is to be feared, that for the unfaithfulness of men and women, the fiend hath great power to work many of the miracles that now are done in such places. For both men and women delight now, more to hear and know miracles, than they do to know God's word, or to hear it effectually. Wherefore, to the great confusion of all them that do thus, Christ saith, the generation of adulterers require tokens, miracles, and wonders. Nevertheless, as divers saints say, now when the faith of God is published in christendom, the word of God suffices to man's salvation, without such miracles; and thus also the word of God suffices to all faithful men and women without any such images. But, good sir, since the Father of heaven, that is God in his Godhead, is the most unknown thing

\* Burn incense before them.

that may be, and the most wonderful Spirit, having in it no shape nor likeness, and members of any mortal creature; in what likeness or what image may God the Father be showed or painted?\*

The archbishop said, As holy church hath suffered the images of the Trinity, and all other images to be painted and showed; it sufficeth to them that are members of holy church.† But since thou art a rotten member, cut away from holy church, thou favourest not the ordinance thereof. But, since the day passes, leave we this matter.

Then he said to me, What sayest thou to the third point that is certified against thee, preaching openly in Shrewsbury, that pilgrimage is not lawful? And beside this thou saidst that those men and women that go on pilgrimages to Canterbury, to Beverley, to Karlington, to Walsingham, and to any other such places, are accursed and made foolish, spending their goods in waste.

I said, Sir, by this certification I am accused to you that I should teach, that no pilgrimage is lawful. But I said never thus. For I know that there are true and lawful pilgrimages, and full pleasant to God; and therefore, sir, howsoever mine enemies have certified you of me, I told at Shrewsbury of two manner of pilgrimages.

And the archbishop said to me, Whom callest thou true pilgrims?

I said, Sir, with my protestation, I call them true pilgrims travelling toward the bliss of heaven, who in the state, degree, or order that God calls them to, busy themselves faithfully to occupy all their judgment bodily and ghostly, to know truly, and to keep faithfully, the biddings of God, hating and fleeing all the seven deadly sins, and every branch of them. Ruling themselves virtuously, as it is said before, with all their abilities; doing discreetly, willingly, and gladly, all the works of mercy, bodily and ghostly, after their knowledge and power, abling them to the gifts of the Holy Ghost, disposing them to receive them in their souls, and to hold therein the right blessings of Christ, busying them to know and to keep the seven principal virtues, and so then they shall obtain herethrough grace, to use thankfully to God all the conditions of charity. And

\* Many of these blasphemous representations are to be seen in missals, and even in some printed books of Romish devotion. One of them is copied in Lewis's life of Pecoock.

† Holy church of your own building.—*For.*

then they shall be moved with the good Spirit of God, to examine oft and diligently their conscience, that neither wilfully nor wittingly they err in any article of belief, having continually, as frailty will suffer, all their business, to dread and to fly the offence of God, and to love over all, and to seek ever to do his pleasant will. Of these pilgrimages I said, whatsoever good thought they at any time think, what virtuous word they speak, and what fruitful work they work—every such thought, word, and work is a step numbered of God towards himself into heaven. These aforesaid pilgrims of God, delight greatly when they hear of saints or of virtuous men and women, how they forsook willingly the prosperity of this life, how they withstood the suggestion of the fiend, how they restrained their fleshly lusts, how discreet they were in their penance doing, how patient they were in all their adversities, how prudent they were in counselling of men and women, moving them to hate all sins, and to fly them, and to shame ever greatly thereof, and to love all virtues, and to draw to them, imagining how Christ and his followers by example of him suffered scorns and slanders, and how patiently they abode and took the wrongful menacing of tyrants; how homely\* they were, and serviceable to poor men to relieve and comfort them bodily and ghostly, after their power and skill, and how devout they were in prayers; how fervent they were in heavenly desires, and how they absented themselves from spectacles of vain sayings and hearings, and how stable they were to prevent and destroy all vices, and how laborious and joyful they were to sow and to plant virtues? These heavenly conditions and such others have pilgrims, or endeavour to have them, whose pilgrimage God accepteth.

And again, I said, as their works show, the most part of men and women, that go now on pilgrimages, have not these aforesaid conditions, nor love to busy them faithfully to have them. For as I well know, since I have full oft assayed, examine whosoever will twenty of these pilgrims, and he shall not find three men or women that know surely a commandment of God, nor can say their paternoster and ave maria, nor their creed readily in any manner of language.† And as I have learned and also know somewhat

\* Friendly.

† Dr. Wordsworth gives the following extract from a book called "Dialogue or Familiar Talk," printed in 1554. "Twenty years ago who could say the Lord's prayer in English? Who could tell any one

by experience of these same pilgrims, telling the cause why many men and women go hither and thither now on pilgrimage, it is more for the health of their bodies, than of their souls; more to have riches and prosperity of this world, than to be enriched with virtues in their souls; more to have here worldly and fleshly friendship, than to have friendship of God, and of his saints in heaven. For whatsoever man or woman doth, the friendship of God, or of any saint, cannot be had, without keeping of God's commandments. Further with my protestation, I say now, as I said in Shrewsbury, though they that have fleshly wills, travel far their bodies, and spend much money, to seek and to visit the bones or images, as they say they do, of this saint or of that; such pilgrimage going is neither praisable nor thankful to God nor to any saint of God, since in effect all such pilgrims despise God and all his commandments and saints. For the commandments of God they will neither know, nor keep, nor conform them to live virtuously by example of Christ and of his saints. Wherefore, sir, I have preached and taught openly, and so I purpose all my lifetime to do, with God's help, saying that such foolish people waste blamefully God's goods in their vain pilgrimages, spending their goods upon vicious hostellers,\* which are oft unclean women; and at the least, those goods with which they should do works of mercy, after God's bidding, to poor needy men and women.

These poor men's goods and their livelihood, these runners about offer to rich priests, who have much more livelihood than they need. And thus those goods they waste wilfully, and spend them unjustly, against God's bidding, upon strangers, with which they should help and relieve according to God's will their poor needy neighbours at home. Yea, and over this folly, oftentimes divers men and women, of these runners thus madly hither and thither into pilgrimage, borrow hereto other men's goods; yea, and sometimes they steal men's goods hereto, and they pay them never again! Also, sir, I know well that when divers men

article of his faith? Who had once heard of any of the ten commandments? Who knew what catechism meant? Who understood any point of holy baptism? If we were sick of the pestilence, we ran to St. Rook, if of the ague to St. Pernel, or master John Shorne. If men were in prison they prayed to St. Leonard. If the Welchman would have a purse, he prayed to Darvel Gathorne. If a wife were weary of her husband, she offered oats at Paul's in London to St. Uncumber."

\* Persons who kept inns or houses to receive travellers.

and women will go thus after their own wills, and finding out, on pilgrimage; they will ordain with them before, to have with them both men and women, that can well sing wanton songs, and some other pilgrims will have with them bagpipes. So that every town that they come through, what with the noise of their singing, and with the sound of their piping, and with the jangling of their Canterbury bells, and with the barking out of dogs after them, they make more noise, than if the king came there away with all his clarions, and many other minstrels. And if these men and women are a month out in their pilgrimage, many of them shall be half a year after great janglers, tale-tellers, and liars.\*

The archbishop said to me, Lewd losel, thou seest not far enough in this matter, for thou considerest not the great travel of pilgrims, therefore thou blamest that thing which is praisable. I say to thee, that is right well done, that pilgrims have with them both singers and also pipers, that when one of them that goeth barefoot striketh his toe upon a stone, and hurteth him sore, and maketh him to bleed, it is well done that he or his fellow begin then a song; † or else take out of his bosom a bagpipe, to drive away with such mirth the hurt of his fellow. For with such solace the travel and weariness of pilgrims is lightly and merrily borne out.

I said, St. Paul teaches men to weep with them that weep.

And the archbishop said, What! janglest thou against men's devotion? Whatsoever thou or such other say, I say that the pilgrimage that now is used, is to them that do it a praisable and a good mean to come the rather to grace. ‡

\* Thus the host in Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* says, "Truly comfort and mirth is there none, To ride by the way as dumb as a stone." And the author of *Piers Ploughman's* visions, describing some pilgrims, says, "They went forth their way with many wise tales, And had leave to lie all their life after." In the *Salisbury* ritual there is a regular service or form of benediction for the pilgrims, their scrips and staves, previously to their going on pilgrimage, with a prayer that they might deserve to come to the joys of the eternal mansion. The follies and vices resulting from these pilgrimages are well exposed by Erasmus, in his dialogue *Peregrinatio Religionis ergo*. He therein describes the shrine of the virgin at *Walsingham* in *Norfolk*.

† Why then blamed *Bonner Philpot* for singing in the stocks? — *For*.

‡ *Archbishop Sudbury*, predecessor to *Arundel*, had a more scriptural idea respecting pilgrimages. In 1381, meeting a great many pilgrims on their way to *Thomas à Becket's* shrine, he told them that the plenary indulgence they hoped for at *Canterbury* was of no profit or value. Some were amazed at such a declaration, others openly imprecated curses upon him, and wished he might die a shameful death for saying so. A few months after, he was slain by the *Kentish* rebels, and his death was considered as a judgment for this declaration.



But I hold thee unable to know this grace, for thou enforcest thee to hinder the devotion of the people; since by authority of holy scripture, men may lawfully have and use such solace as thou reprovest. For David, in his last psalm, teacheth men to have divers instruments of music to praise God therewith.

I said, Sir, by the sentence of divers doctors expounding the psalms of David, that music and minstrelsy which David and other saints of the old law spake of, ought now neither to be taken nor used by the letter, but these instruments with their music ought to be interpreted spiritually; for all those figures are called virtues and grace, with which virtues men should please God, and praise his name. For St. Paul saith, all such things befell to them in figure. Therefore, sir, I understand, that the letter of this psalm of David, and of such other psalms and sentences, slay them that take them now literally. This sentence, as I understand, sir, Christ himself approved, putting out the minstrels, when he would quicken the dead damsel, Matt. ix.

And the archbishop said to me, Lewd losel, is it not lawful to us to have organs in the church to worship therewithal God? And I said, Yea, sir, by man's ordinance; but by the ordinance of God, a good sermon, to the people's understanding, were much more pleasant to God.

The archbishop said, that organs and good delectable songs quickened and sharpened men's wits more than should any sermon.\*

But I said, Sir, lusty men and worldly lovers, delight, and covet, and travail, to have all their wits quickened and sharpened with divers sensible solaces. But all the faithful lovers and followers of Christ, have all their delight to hear God's word, and to understand it truly, and to work thereafter faithfully and continually. For no doubt, to dread to offend God, and to love to please him in all things, quickeneth and sharpeneth all the powers of Christ's chosen people; and enableth them so to grace, that they joy greatly to withdraw their ears and all their understanding and members from all worldly delight, and from all fleshly solace. For St. Jerome, as I think, saith, Nobody may joy with this world and reign with Christ.

\* Instrumental and artificial music had then been introduced into divine service, so as to do away proper devotional feeling. Erasmus complained of this in his annotations, 1 Cor. xiv. Even the Council of Trent censured the curious and artificial singing then prevalent. Wickliff wrote against it in strong terms.

And the archbishop, as if he had been displeased with my answer, said to his clerks, What guess ye that this idiot will speak there where he hath no dread ; since he speaks thus now here in my presence ? Well, well, by —, thou shalt be ordained for. And then he spake to me all angrily, What sayest thou to this fourth point, that is certified against thee, preaching openly and boldly in Shrewsbury, that priests have no title to tithes ?

And I said, Sir, I named there no word of tithes in my preaching. But more than a month after I was arrested there in prison, a man came to me into the prison, asking me what I said of tithes ? And I said to him, Sir, in this town are many clerks and priests, of whom some are called religious men, though many of them are seculars ; therefore ask ye of them this question. And this man said to me, Sir, our prelates say, that we also are obliged to pay our tithes of all things that come to us ; and that they are accursed who withdraw any part designedly from them of their tithes. And I said, sir, to that man, as with my protestation I say now before you, that I wonder that any priest dare say men are accursed, without the ground of God's word. And the man said, sir, Our priests say, that they curse men thus by the authority of God's law. And I said, Sir, I know not where this sentence of cursing is authorized now in the bible. And therefore, sir, I pray you that you will ask the wisest clerk of this town, that ye may know where this sentence of cursing them that tithe not, is now written in God's law.\* For if it were written there, I would right gladly be learned where. But shortly, this man would not go from me to ask this question of any other body, but required me there, as I would answer before God, if in this case that cursing of priests were lawful and approved of God ? And shortly herewith came to my mind the learning of St. Peter, teaching priests especially to hallow the Lord Christ in their hearts ; being evermore ready, as far as in them is, to answer through faith and hope to them that ask of them a reason. And this lesson Peter teaches men to use with a meek spirit, and with dread of the Lord. Wherefore, sir, I said to this man in this wise,

\* The general sentence of the curse, which was read four times a year, included, " also all those that for malice or wrath of (against) parson, vicar, or priest, or of any other, or for wrongful covetousness of himself, withholdeth rightful tithes and offerings, rents or mortuaries, from their own parish church."—*Bacon's Reliquæ of Rome*, 12mo. ed.

v. 47. See also Chaucer's Jack Upland.

In the old law, which ended not fully till the time that Christ rose up again from death to life, God commanded tithes to be given to the levites, for the great business and daily travail that pertained to their office. But priests, because their travail was much more easy and light, than was the office of the levites, God ordained the priests should take for their livelihood to do their office, the tenth part of those tithes that were given to the levites. But now, I said, in the new law, neither Christ nor any of his apostles took tithes of the people, nor commanded the people to pay tithes, neither to priests, nor to deacons. But Christ taught the people to do alms, that is, works of mercy, to poor needy men, of surplus, that is, superfluous of their temporal goods, which they had more than they needed reasonably to their necessary livelihood. And thus, I said, not of tithes, but of pure alms of the people, Christ lived and his apostles, when they were so busy in preaching of the word of God to the people, that they might not otherwise work to get their livelihood. But, after Christ's ascension, and when the apostles had received the Holy Ghost, they worked with their hands to get their livelihood, when that they might thus do for busy preaching. Therefore by example of himself, St. Paul teacheth all the priests of Christ to work with their hands, when for busy teaching of the people they might thus do. And thus all these priests, whose priesthood God accepteth now, or will accept, or did in the apostles' time, and after their decease, will do to the world's end. But, as Cisterciensis tells, in the year of our Lord Jesus Christ, 1271, one pope Gregory the tenth ordained new tithes first to be given to priests now in the new law. But St. Paul in his time, whose trace or example all priests of God enforce them to follow, seeing the covetousness that was among the people, desiring to destroy that foul sin through the grace of God and true virtuous living and example of himself, wrote and taught all priests to follow him as he followed Christ, patiently, willingly, and gladly in high poverty. Wherefore Paul saith thus, The Lord hath ordained that they that preach the gospel, shall live of the gospel. But we, saith Paul, that covet and busy us to be faithful followers of Christ, use not this power. For lo, as Paul witnesses afterward, when he was full poor and needy, preaching among the people; he was not chargeable unto them, but with his hands he worked, not only to get his own living, but also the living of other poor and needy

creatures.\* And since the people was never so covetous, nor so avaricious, I guess, as they are now, it were good counsel that all priests took good heed to this heavenly learning of Paul, following him here in wilful poverty, nothing charging the people for their bodily livelihood. But, because that many priests do contrary to Paul in this aforesaid doctrine, Paul biddeth the people take heed to those priests that follow him as he had given them example. As if Paul would say thus to the people, Accept ye none other priests than they that live after the form that I have taught you. For certain, in whatsoever dignity or order any priest is in, if he conform him not to follow Christ and his apostles, in willing poverty, and in other heavenly virtues, and especially in true preaching of God's word, though such a one be named a priest, yet he is no more than a priest in name, for the work of a very priest in such a one is wanting. This sentence approveth Augustine, Gregory, Chrysostom, and Lincoln† plainly.

The archbishop said to me, Thinkest thou this is wholesome learning, to sow openly, or yet privily among the people? Certainly, this doctrine contraries plainly the ordinance of holy fathers, who have ordained, granted, and licensed priests to be in divers degrees, and to live by tithes and offerings of the people, and by other duties.

I said, Sir, if priests were now in measurable measure and number, and lived virtuously, and taught busily and truly the word of God, by example of Christ and of his apostles, without tithes, offerings, and other duties that priests now challenge and take, the people would give them freely sufficient livelihood.

And a clerk said to me, How wilt thou make this good, that the people will give freely to priests their livelihood; since that now by the law every priest can scarcely constrain the people to give them their livelihood?

I said, Sir, it is now no wonder though the people grudge to give priests the livelihood that they ask. Many people know now, how that priests should live, and how that they live contrary to Christ and to his apostles. And therefore the people are full heavy to pay, as they do, their temporal goods to parsons, and to other vicars and priests, who should be faithful dispensators of the parish's goods; taking

\* This rule with the rule of begging friars cannot stand together.—*For.*

† Grotthead.

to themselves no more but a scarce living of tithes, or of offerings, by the ordinance of the common law. For whatsoever priests take of the people, be it tithe or offering, or any other duty or service, the priests ought to have thereof no more than a bare living; and to depart the residue to the poor men and women, especially of the parish of which they take this temporal living. But the most of priests now waste their parish's goods, and spend them at their own will, after the world, in their vain lusts. So that in few places poor men have duly, as they should have, their own sustenance, neither of tithes, nor of offerings, nor of other large wages and foundations that priests take of the people; in divers manners above what they need for needful sustenance of meat and clothing. But the poor needy people are forsaken and left of priests to be sustained of the parishioners, as if the priests took nothing of the parishioners to help the people with.

And thus, sir, unto over great charges of the parishioners they pay their temporal goods twice, where once might suffice, if priests were true dispensators. Also, sir, the parishioners that pay their temporal goods, be they tithes or offerings, to priests that do not their office among them justly, are partners of every sin of those priests; because that they sustain those priests' folly in their sin, with their temporal goods. If these things be well considered, what wonder is it then, sir, if the parishioners grudge against these dispensators?

Then the archbishop said to me, Thou that shouldest be judged and ruled by holy church, presumptuously thou deemest holy church to have erred in the ordinance of tithes and other duties to be paid to priests. It shall be long ere thou thrive, losel, that despisest thy ghostly mother. How dardest thou speak this, losel, among the people? Are not tithes given to priests to live by?

I said, Sir, St. Paul saith, that tithes were given in the old law to levites and to priests, that came of the lineage of Levi. But our priests, he saith, came not of the lineage of Levi, but of the lineage of Judah, to which Judah no tithes were promised to be given, Heb. vii. Therefore Paul saith, Since the priesthood is changed from the generation of Levi to the generation of Judah, it is necessary that changing also be made of the law. So that priests live now without tithes and other duties that they claim, following Christ and his apostles in willing poverty, as they have given them

example. For since Christ lived, all the time of his preaching, by pure alms of the people; and by example of him his apostles lived in the same manners, or else by the labour of their hands, as it is said above. Every priest, whose priesthood Christ approves, knows well, and confesses in word and in work, that a disciple ought not to be above his master, but it suffices to a disciple to be as his master, simple and pure, meek and patient; and by example especially of his master Christ every priest should rule him in all his living; and so, after his skill and power, a priest should busy him to inform and to rule whomsoever he might charitably.

And the archbishop said to me with a great spirit, God's curse have thou and mine for this teaching; for thou wouldst hereby make the old law more free and perfect than the new law. For thou sayest that it is lawful to levites and to priests to take tithes in the old law, and so to enjoy their privileges; but to us priests in the new law, thou sayest it is not lawful to take tithes; and thus thou givest to levites of the old law more freedom than to priests of the new law.

I said, Sir, I marvel that ye understand this plain text of Paul thus. Ye wot well, that the levites and priests in the old law that took tithes, were not so free nor so perfect, as Christ and his apostles who took no tithes. And, sir, there is a doctor, I think that it is St. Jerome, who saith thus, The priests that challenge now in the new law tithes, say in effect, that Christ is not become man, nor hath yet suffered death for man's love. Wherefore this doctor saith this sentence, Since tithes were the hires and wages limited to levites and to priests of the old law for bearing about of the tabernacle, and for slaying and flaying of beasts, and for burning of sacrifice, and for keeping of the temple, and for blowing the trumpet of battle before the host of Israel, and other divers observances that pertained to their office—those priests that will challenge or take tithes, deny that Christ is come in the flesh, and do the priest's office of the old law, for whom tithes were granted, for else, as this doctor saith, priests take now tithes wrongfully.

And the archbishop said to his clerks, Heard you ever losel speak thus? Certainly this is the learning of them all, that wheresoever they come, and they may be suffered, they enforce them to impugn the freedom of holy church.

I said, Sir, why call ye the taking of tithes, and of such other duties, that priests challenge now wrongfully, the freedom of holy church; since neither Christ nor his apostles challenged or took such duties? Therefore these takings of priests now are not justly called the freedom of holy church, but all such giving and taking ought to be called and holden the slanderous covetousness of men of the holy church.

And the archbishop said to me, Why, losel, wilt not thou and others that are confederate with thee, seek out of holy scripture, and of the sentences of doctors, all sharp authorities against lords, knights, and squires, and against other secular men, as thou dost against priests?

And I said, Sir, whatsoever men, or women, lords, or ladies, or any others, that are present in our preaching specially, or in our communing, after our knowledge, we tell out to them their office and their charges. But, sir, since Chrysostom saith, that priests are the stomach of the people, it is needful in preaching, and also in communing, to be most busy about this priesthood. Since by the viciousness of priests both lords and commons are most sinfully infected, and led into the worst. And because that the covetousness and pride of priests, and the boast that they have and make of their dignity and power, destroys not only the virtues of priesthood in priests themselves, but also over this, it stirreth God to take great vengeance both upon the lords, and the commons, who suffer these priests charitably.

And the archbishop said to me, Thou judgest every priest proud that will not go arrayed as thou dost. By —, I deem him to be more meek that goeth every day in a scarlet gown, than thou in thy threadbare blue gown.\* Whereby knowest thou a proud man?

And I said, Sir, a proud priest may be known when he denies to follow Christ and his apostles in willing poverty, and other virtues; and coveteth worldly worship, and taketh it gladly, and gathers together with pleading, menacing, or with flattering, or with simony, any worldly goods; and most, if a priest busy not himself to withstand sin chiefly in himself, and after in all other men and women after his knowledge and power.

The archbishop said to me, Though thou knewest a priest to have all these vices, and though thou sawest a

\* Wickliff and his fellows were usually accustomed in their preaching to go barefoot, and in simple russet gowns.—Fox, *Life of Wickliff*

priest commit sins of the flesh,—wouldst thou therefore condemn this priest as damnable? I say to thee, in the turning about of thy hand, such a sinner may be verily repented.

And I said, Sir, I will not condemn any man for any sin that I know done or may be done, so that the sinner leave his sin. But, by authority of holy scripture, he that sinneth thus openly as you show here, is damnable for doing of such a sin; and most specially a priest who should be example to all others to hate and fly sin. And in how short time soever ye say that such a sinner may be repented, he ought not of him that knoweth his sinning, to be judged verily repentant, without open evidence of great shame and hearty sorrow for his sin. For whosoever, and especially a priest, uses pride, envy, covetousness, lechery, simony, or any other vices, shows not as open evidence of repentance as he hath given evil example and occasion of sinning, if he continue in any such sin as long as he may; it is likely that sin leaveth him, and he not sin. And, as I understand, such a one sinneth unto death, for whom nobody oweth to pray, as St. John saith.

And a clerk said then to the archbishop, Sir, the longer that ye oppose him, the worse he is; and the more you busy you to amend him, the waywarder he is. For he is of so shrewd a kind, that he shames not only to be himself a foul nest, but without shame he busies him to make his nest fouler.

Then the archbishop said to his clerk, Suffer awhile, for I am at an end with him; for there is another point certified against him, and I will hear what he saith thereto.

Then he said to me, Lo, it is here certified against thee, that thou preachedst openly at Shrewsbury, that it is not lawful to swear in any case.

I said, Sir, I never preached so openly, nor have I taught in this wise in any place. But, sir, as I preached in Shrewsbury, with my protestation I say to you now here; that by the authority of the epistle of St. James, and by witness of divers saints and doctors, I have preached openly in one place or other, that it is not lawful in any case to swear by any creature. And over this, sir, I have also preached and taught by the aforesaid authorities, that nobody should swear in any case, if that without oath, in anywise, he that is charged to swear might excuse himself them that have power to compel him to swear in things



lawful. But if a man may not excuse himself, without oath, to them that have power to compel him to swear, then he ought to swear only by God, taking him only that is Truth for to witness the truth.\*

Then a clerk asked me if it were not lawful to a subject, at the bidding of his prelate, to kneel down and touch the holy gospel book, and kiss it, saying, So help me God and this holy dome † for he should after his skill and power do all things that his prelate commands him.

I said to them, Sirs, ye speak here full generally or largely. What if a prelate commanded his subject to do an unlawful thing, should he obey thereto?

And the archbishop said, A subject ought not to suppose that his prelate will bid him do an unlawful thing. For a subject ought to think that his prelate will bid him do nothing but what he will answer for before God, that it is lawful. And then, though the bidding of the prelate be unlawful, the subject hath no peril to fulfil it, since he thinketh and judgeth that whatsoever his prelate bids him do, that it is lawful to him for to do it.

I said, Sir, I trust not thereto. But to our purpose : sir, I tell you that I was once in a gentleman's house, and there were then two clerks there, a master of divinity, and a man of law, which man of law was also communing in divinity. And among other things, these men spake of oaths, and the man of law said, At the bidding of his sovereign who had power to charge him to swear, he would lay his hand upon a book, and hear his charge. And if his charge to his understanding were unlawful, he would hastily withdraw his hand upon the book, taking there only God to witness that he would fulfil that lawful charge, after his power. And the master of divinity said then to him thus : Certainly he that lays his hand upon a book in this wise, and

\* This imputation was cast upon Thorpe, and many who were of his sentiments, on account of their bearing testimony against the profane swearing which then abounded, even more than in our days, and with a horrid variety of oaths. Wickliff describes the abbots or priors riding in state and great splendour, swearing by all the members of Christ. The parson in the Canterbury Tales, having reproved the host for swearing, the latter exclaims, " I smell a Lollard in the wind." In solemn or judicial oaths they objected to being sworn by, or upon, any created or formed substance, such as relics of the saints. Articles of this description were sometimes concealed in the altars upon which men made their oaths, and their engagements were deemed the more binding when they learned this. William duke of Normandy acted thus to Harold.

† Judgment, opinion.

makes there a promise to do that which he is commanded, is obliged thereby by book oath then to fulfil his charge. For, no doubt, he that chargeth him to lay his hand thus upon a book, touching the book, and swearing by it, and kissing it, promising in this form to do this thing or that, will say and witness that he who touches thus a book, and kisses it, has sworn upon that book. And all other men who see that man thus do, and also all those who hear hereof, in the same manner will say and witness, that this man hath sworn upon a book. Wherefore the master of divinity said, it was not lawful either to give or to take any such charge upon a book; for every book is nothing else but divers creatures of which it is made. Therefore to swear upon a book, is to swear by creatures, and this swearing is ever unlawful. This sentence Chrysostom witnesses plainly, blaming them greatly that bring forth a book to swear upon, charging clerks that in no wise they constrain any body to swear, whether they think a man to swear true or false.

And the archbishop and his clerks scorned me, and blamed me greatly for this saying. And the archbishop menaced me with great punishment and sharp, except I left this opinion of swearing.

I said, Sir, this is not mine opinion, but it is the opinion of Christ our Saviour, and of St. James, and of Chrysostom, and of other divers saints and doctors.

Then the archbishop had a clerk read this homily of Chrysostom; which homily this clerk held in his hand, written in a roll; which roll the archbishop caused to be taken from my fellow at Canterbury. And so then this clerk read this roll, till he came to a clause where Chrysostom saith, that it is sin to swear well.

Then a clerk, Malveren, as I guess, said to the archbishop, Sir, I pray you learn of him, how he understands Chrysostom here, saying it to be sin to swear well.

So the archbishop asked me, how I understood here Chrysostom.

And certain I was somewhat afraid to answer hereto. For I had not busied me to study about the sense thereof, but lifting up my mind to God, I prayed of him grace. And as fast as I thought how Christ said to his apostles, When for my name ye shall be brought before judges, I shall give into your mouth wisdom that your adversaries shall not againstsay; and, trusting faithfully in the word of God, I

said, Sir, I know well that many men and women have now swearing so in custom, that they neither know nor will know, that they do evil to swear as they do. But they think and say, that they do well to swear as they do, though they know well that they swear untruly. For they say, they may by their swearing, though it be false, avoid blame or temporal harm, which they should have if they swear not thus. And, sir, many men and women maintain strongly that they swear well, when that is truth which they swear for. Also full many men and women say now, that it is well done to swear by creatures, when they may not, as they say, otherwise be believed. And also, full many men and women now say, that it is well done to swear by God, and by our lady, and by other saints, to have them in mind. But, since all these sayings are but excusations, and sin, methinks, sir, that this sense of Chrysostom may be alleged well against all such swearers; witnessing that all these sin grievously, though they think themselves to swear in this aforesaidwise well. For it is evil done, and great sin to swear truth, when in any manner a man may excuse himself without oath.

And the archbishop said, that Chrysostom might be thus understood.

Then a clerk said to me, Wilt thou tarry my lord no longer, but submit thee here meekly to the ordinance of holy church, and lay thy hand upon a book, touching the holy gospel of God, promising not only with thy mouth, but also with thine heart, to stand to my lord's ordinance?

And I said, Sir, have I not told you here, how that I heard a master of divinity say that in such case it is all one to touch a book, and to swear by a book.

The archbishop said, There is no master of divinity in England so great, but if he hold this opinion before me, I shall punish him as I shall do thee, except thou swear as I shall charge thee.

I said, Sir, is not Chrysostom an ententive doctor? And the archbishop said, Yea.

I said, If Chrysostom proves him worthy of great blame that brings forth a book to swear upon, it must needs follow, that he is more to blame who swears on that book.

And the archbishop said, If Chrysostom meant accordingly to the ordinance of holy church, we will accept him.

Then said a clerk to me, Is not the word of God, and

God himself, equivalent, that is, of one authority? And I said, Yea.

Then he said to me, Why wilt thou not swear then by the gospel of God, that is, God's word, since it is all one to swear by the word of God, and by God himself?

I said, Sir, since I may not now otherwise be believed, but by swearing, I perceive, as Augustine saith, that it is not speedful that ye, who should be my brethren, should not believe me; therefore I am ready by the word of God, as the Lord commanded me by his word, to swear.

Then the clerk said to me, Lay then thine hand upon the book, touching the holy gospel of God, and take thy charge. And I said, Sir, I understand that the holy gospel of God may not be touched with man's hand.

The clerk said, I fonded,\* and that I said not truth. And I asked this clerk, whether it were more to read the gospel, than to touch the gospel?

He said, it was more to read the gospel.

Then I said, Sir, by authority of St. Jerome, the gospel is not the gospel for reading of the letter, but for the belief that men have in the word of God. It is the gospel that we believe, and not the letter that we read; because the letter that is touched with man's hand, is not the gospel; but the sentence that is verily believed in man's heart, is the gospel. For so Jerome saith, the gospel, that is the virtuet† of God's word, is not in the leaves of the book, but it is in the root of reason. Neither the gospel, he saith, is in the writing alone of the letters, but the gospel is in the marking of the sentence of scripture. This sentence St. Paul approves, saying thus, The kingdom of God is not in word, but in power. And David saith, The voice of the Lord, that is, his word, is in power. And after David saith, Through the word of God the heavens were formed, and in the Spirit of his mouth is all the power of them. And I pray you, sir, understand ye well how David saith then, in the Spirit of the mouth of the Lord is all the power of angels and of men.

The clerk said to me, Thou wouldest make us to trifle with thee. Say we not that the gospel is written in the mass book?

And I said, Sir, though men use to say thus, yet it is an imperfect speech. For the principal part of a thing is

\* Trifled.

† Power.

properly the whole thing. For lo, man's soul that may not now be seen here, nor touched with any sensible thing, is properly man. And all the virtue of a tree is in the root thereof which may not be seen; for, do away the root and the tree is destroyed. And, sir, as you said to me right now, God and his word are of one authority. And, sir, St. Jerome witnesses that Christ, very God and very man, is hid in the letter of his law; thus also the gospel is hid in the letter. For as it is full likely that many, and divers men and women here in the earth, touched Christ and saw him, and knew his bodily person, who neither touched, nor saw, nor knew his Godhead spiritually, right thus, many men now touch, and see, and write, and read the scriptures of God's law, who neither see, touch, nor read effectually the gospel. For as the Godhead of Christ, that is, the power of God, is known by the virtue of belief, so is the gospel, that is, Christ's word.

A clerk said to me, These are full misty matters and unsavoury, that thou showest here to us.

And I said, Sir, if you that are masters know not plainly this sentence, you may sorely dread that the kingdom of heaven be taken from you, as it was from the princes of priests, and from the elders of the Jews.

Then a clerk, as I guess, Malveren, said to me, Thou knowest not thine equivocations; for the kingdom of heaven hath divers understandings. What callest thou the kingdom of heaven in this sentence that thou showest here?

I said, Sir, by good reason and sentence of doctors, the realm of heaven is called here the understanding of God's word. And a clerk said to me, From whom thinkest thou that this understanding is taken away?

I said, Sir, by authority of Christ himself, the effectual understanding of Christ's word is taken away from all them chiefly which are great lettered men, and presume to understand high things, and will be holden for wise men, and desire mastership and high state and dignity; but they will not conform them to the living and teaching of Christ and of his apostles.

Then the archbishop said, Well, well, thou wilt judge thy sovereigns. By —, the king doth not his duty, unless he suffer thee to be condemned.

Then another clerk said to me, Why, on Friday that last was, counselledst thou a man of my lord's that he should not shrive him to any man, but only to God?

With this asking I was abashed ; and then by and by I knew that I was subtilly betrayed of a man who came to me in prison on the Friday before, communing with me in this matter of confession. And certainly, by his words I thought that this man came then to me of full fervent and charitable will ; but now I know he came to tempt me, and to accuse me. God forgive him, if it be his will ; and with all my heart. When I had thought thus, I said to this clerk, Sir, I pray you that you would fetch this man hither ; and all the words, as near as I can repeat them, which I spake to him on Friday in the prison, I will rehearse now here before you all, and before him,

And, as I guess, the archbishop said then to me, They that are now here suffice to repeat them. How saidst thou to him ?

I said, Sir, that man came and asked me in divers things, and after his asking I answered him what was good as I understood. And as he showed to me by his words he was weary of his living in court, and right heavy for his own vicious living ; and also for the viciousness of other men, and especially of priests' evil living ; and therefore he said to me with a sorrowful heart, as I guessed, that he purposed fully within short time to leave the court, and to busy him to know God's law, and to conform all his life thereafter. And when he had said to me these words, and others more which I would rehearse if he were present, he prayed me to hear his confession. And I said to him, Sir, wherefore come ye to me to be confessed of me ? Ye know well that the archbishop putteth and holdeth me here as one unworthy either to give or to take any sacrament of holy church.

He said unto me, Brother, I know well, and so many others more know, that you and such others are wrongfully vexed, and therefore I commune with you the more gladly. And I said to him, Certainly, I know well that many men of this court, and especially the priests of this household, would be full evil apaid\* both with you and me, if they knew that you were confessed of me. And he said, that he cared not therefore, for he had full little affection in them. And, as methought, he spake these words and many others of so good will and of so high desire to have known and done the pleasant will of God. And I said to him, as with my aforesaid protestation I say to you now here ; Sir,

\* Ill satisfied.

I counsel you to absent you from all evil company, and to draw you to them that love and busy them to know and to keep the precepts of God. And then the good Spirit of God will move you to occupy busily all your understanding in gathering together of all your sins, as far as you can bethink you, shaming greatly of them, and sorrowing heartily for them. Yea, sir, the Holy Ghost will then put in your heart a good will and a fervent desire to take and to hold a good purpose, to hate ever and to flee, after your judgment and power, all occasion of sin; and so then wisdom shall come to you from above, enlightening with divers beams of grace and of heavenly desire all your understanding, informing you how you shall trust steadfastly in the mercy of the Lord, acknowledging to him only all your vicious living, praying to him ever devoutly of charitable counsel and continuance, hoping without doubt that if you continue thus, busying you faithfully to know and to keep his biddings, he will, for he only may, forgive you all your sins.

And this man said to me, Though God forgive men their sins, yet it behoves men to be assoiled\* of priests, and to do the penance that they enjoin them. And I said to him, Sir, it is all one to assoil men of their sins, and to forgive men their sins. Wherefore, since it pertains only to God to forgive sin, it suffices in this cause to counsel men and women to leave their sin, and to comfort them that busy themselves thus to do, to hope steadfastly in the mercy of God. And again, priests ought to tell sharply to customizable sinners, that if they will not make an end of their sin, but continue in divers sins while they may sin, all such deserve pain without end. And therefore priests should ever busy them to live well and holily, and to teach the people busily and truly the word of God, showing to all folk in open preaching and in privy counselling, that the Lord God only forgiveth sin. And therefore, those priests that take upon them to assoil men of their sins, blaspheme God; since it pertains only to the Lord to assoil men of all their sins. For no doubt a thousand years after that Christ was man, no priest of Christ durst take upon him to teach the people, neither privily nor openly, that they needed to come to be assoiled of them as priests now do. But by authority of Christ's word, priests bound indurate

\* Absolved.

customable sinners to everlasting pains, who in no time of their lives would busy them faithfully to know the biddings of God, nor to keep them. And again, all they that would occupy all their mind to hate and to fly all occasion of sin, dreading over all things to offend God, and loving to please him continually, priests showed to these men and women how the Lord assoiled them of all their sins; and thus Christ promised to confirm in heaven all the binding and loosing that priests, by authority of his word, bind men in sin that are indurate therein, or loose them out of sin here upon earth that are truly repentant.

This man hearing these words, said that he might well in conscience consent to this sentence. But he said, Is it not needful to the lay people that cannot thus do, to go shrive them to priests? And I said, If a man feel himself so distroubled with any sin, that he cannot by his own skill avoid this sin without counsel of them that are herein wiser than he, in such a case, the counsel of a good priest is full necessary. And if a good priest fail, as they do now commonly, in such a case, St. Augustine saith, that a man may lawfully commune and take counsel of a virtuous secular man. But certainly, that man or woman is overladen and too brutish who cannot bring their own sins into their mind, busying them night and day to hate and to forsake all their sins, doing a sigh for them after their knowledge and power. And, sir, full accordingly to this sentence, upon Midlent Sunday, two years, as I guess now agone, I heard a monk of Feversham, that men called Morden, preach at Canterbury at the cross within Christchurch abbey, saying thus of confession, That as through the suggestion of the fiend, without counsel of any other, of themselves many men and women can imagine and find means and ways enough to come to pride, to theft, to lechery, and other divers vices; in contrariwise, (this monk said,) since the Lord God is more ready to forgive sin than the fiend is or may be of power to move any body to sin, then whosoever will shame and sorrow heartily for their sins, acknowledging them faithfully to God, amending them after their power and ability, without counsel of any other body than of God and of himself, through the grace of God, all such men and women may find sufficient means to come to God's mercy, and so to be fully assoiled of all their sins. This sentence I said, sir, to this man of yours, and the very words as near as I can guess.



The archbishop said, Holy church approves not this learning.

I said, Sir, holy church, of which Christ is head in heaven and in earth, must needs approve this sentence. For lo, hereby all men and women may, if they will, be sufficiently taught to know and to keep the commandments of God, and to hate and to fly continually all occasion of sin, and to love and to seek virtues busily, and to believe in God stably, and to trust in his mercy steadfastly, and so to come to perfect charity, and continue therein perseveringly. And more the Lord asks not of any man here now in this life. And certainly, since Jesus Christ died upon the cross, willingly, to make men free, men of the church are too bold and too busy to make men thralls, binding them under the pain of endless curse, as they say, to do many observances and ordinances which neither the living nor teaching of Christ nor of his apostles approves.

A clerk said then to me, Thou showest plainly here thy deceit, which thou hast learned of them that travelled to sow the popple among the wheat. But I counsel thee to go quite away from this learning, and submit thee lowly to my lord, and thou shalt find him yet to be gracious to thee.

And as fast then, another clerk said to me, How wast thou so bold at Paul's Cross, in London, to stand there with thy tippet bounden about thine head, and to reprove in his sermon the worthy clerk Alkerton, drawing away all that thou mightest? Yea, and the same day at afternoon, thou, meeting the worthy doctor in Watling-street, calledst him false flatterer and hypocrite.

I said, Sir, I think certainly that there was no man nor woman that verily hated sin, and loved virtues, hearing the sermon of the clerk at Oxford, and also Alkerton's sermon, but they said, or might justly say, that Alkerton reprov'd that clerk untruly, and slandered him wrongfully and uncharitably. For, no doubt, if the living and teaching of Christ chiefly, and of his apostles, be true, nobody that loveth God and his law will blame any sentence that the clerk then preached there; since by authority of God's word, and by approved saints and doctors, and by open reason, this clerk approved all things clearly that he preached there.

And a clerk of the archbishop said to me, His sermon was false, and that he showed openly, since he dare not

stand forth and defend his preaching that he then preached there.

I said, Sir, I think that he purposes to stand steadfastly thereby, or else he slanders himself foully, and also many others who have great trust, that he will stand by the truth of the gospel. For I wot well, this sermon is written both in Latin and English, and many men have it and they set great price thereby. And, sir, if you were present with the archbishop at Lambeth when this clerk appeared, and was at his answer before the archbishop, you know well that this clerk denied not there his sermon, but two days he maintained it before the archbishop and his clerks.

Then the archbishop, or one of his clerks, said, That harlot shall be met with for that sermon. For no man but he and thou, and such other false harlots, praise any such preaching.

Then the archbishop said, Your cursed sect is busy, and it joys greatly, to contrary and to destroy the privilege and freedom of holy church.

I said, Sir, I know no man that labours so busily as this sect doth, which you reprove, to make rest and peace in holy church. For pride, covetousness, and simony, which trouble most the holy church, this sect hates and flees, and labours busily to move all other men in like manner, unto meekness and willing poverty, and charity, and free ministering of the sacrament. This sect loveth and useth, and is full busy to move all other folks thus to do. For these virtues all members of holy church owe to their head, Christ.

Then a clerk said to the archbishop, Sir, it is far day, and you have far to ride to night; therefore make an end with him, for he will make none; but the more, sir, that you busy you to draw him toward you, the more contumacious he is made, and the further from you.

Then Malveren said to me, William, kneel down, and pray my lord's grace, and leave all thy fantasies, and become a child of holy church.

I said, Sir, I have prayed the archbishop oft, and yet I pray him for the love of Christ, that he will leave his indignation that he hath against me, and that he will suffer me after my knowledge and power, to do mine office of priesthood, as I am charged of God to do it. For I covet nought else but to serve my God, to his pleasing, in the state that I stand in, and have taken me to.

And the archbishop said to me, If of good heart thou wilt submit thee now here meekly, to be ruled from this time forth by my counsel, obeying meekly and willingly to my ordinance, thou shalt find it most profitable and best to thee to do thus. Therefore tarry thou me no longer, grant to do this that I have said to thee now here shortly, or deny it utterly.

I said to the archbishop, Sir, ought we to believe that Jesus Christ was and is very God and very man? And the archbishop said, Yea.

I said, Sir, ought we to believe that all Christ's living and his teaching is true in every point? He said, Yea.

I said, Sir, ought we to believe that the living of the apostles and the teaching of Christ and all the prophets, which are written in the bible for the health and salvation of good people, are true? He said, Yea.

I said, Sir, ought all christian men and women, after their knowledge and power, to conform all their living to the teaching specially of Christ, and also to the teaching and living of his apostles and of prophets, in all things that are pleasant to God, and for the edification of his church? He said, Yea.

And I said, Sir, ought the doctrine, the bidding, or the counsel of any body to be accepted or obeyed unto, except this doctrine, these biddings, or this counsel, may be granted and affirmed by Christ's living and his teaching specially, or by the living and teaching of his apostles and prophets?

The archbishop said to me, Other doctrines ought not to be accepted, nor ought we to obey to any man's bidding or counsel, except we can perceive that his bidding or counsel accords with the life and teaching of Christ, and of his apostles and prophets.

I said, Sir, are not all the learning, and biddings, and counsels of holy church, means and healthful remedies to know and to withstand the private suggestions, and the open temptations of the fiend? And also ways and healthful remedies to slay pride and all other deadly sins, and the branches of them, and sovereign means to purchase grace to withstand and overcome all the fleshly lusts and movings? And the archbishop said, Yea.

I said, Sir, whatsoever thing ye or any other body bid or counsel me to do, according to this aforesaid learning, after my knowledge and power, through the help of God, I will meekly, with all my heart, obey thereto.

And the archbishop said to me, Submit thee then now here meekly and wilfully to the ordinance of holy church, which I shall show to thee.

I said, Sir, accordingly as I have here now before you rehearsed, I will now be ready to obey full gladly to Christ the head of the holy church, and to the learnings and biddings and counsels of every pleasing member of him.

Then the archbishop, striking with his hand fiercely upon a cupboard, spake to me with a great spirit, saying, By —, but if thou leave not such additions, obliging thee now here, without any exception, to mine ordinance, before that I go out of this place, I shall make thee as sure as any thief that is in the prison of Lanterne; advise thee now what thou wilt do. And then, as if he had been angered, he went from the cupboard where he stood to a window.

Then Malveren and another clerk came nearer me, and they spake to me many words full pleasantly; and another while they menaced me, and counselled full busily, to submit me, or else they said I should not escape punishing over measure; for they said I should be degraded, cursed, and burned, and so then damned. But now, they said, thou mayest avoid all these mischiefs, if thou wilt submit thee willingly and meekly to this worthy prelate, that hath cure of thy soul. And, for the pity of Christ, said they, bethink thee, how great clerks the bishop of Lincoln, Hereford, and Purvey were, and yet are, and also B., who is a well understanding man. Which also have forsaken and revoked all the learning and opinions that thou and such others hold. Wherefore, since each of them is much wiser than thou art, we counsel thee for the best; that by the example of these four clerks thou follow them, submitting thee as they do.

One of the bishop's clerks said then there, that he heard Nicholas Hereford say, that since he forsook and revoked all the learning and Lollards' opinions, he hath had much greater favour and more delight to hold against them, than ever he had to hold with them, while he held with them.

Therefore Malveren said to me, I understand if thou wilt take thee to a priest, and shrive thee clean, forsake all such opinions, and take thy penance of my lord here, for the holding and teaching of them, within short time thou shalt be greatly comforted in this doing.

I said to the clerks, who thus busily counselled me to

follow these aforesaid men, Sirs, if these men, of whom ye counsel me to take example, had forsaken benefices of temporal profit and of worldly worship, so that they had absented themselves, and avoided all occasions of covetousness and of fleshly lust, and had taken upon them simple living and willing poverty; they had herein given good example to me and to many other, to have followed them. But now, since all these four men have slanderously and shamefully done the contrary, consenting to receive and to have and to hold temporal benefices, living now more worldly and more fleshly than they did before, conforming them to the manners of this world, I forsake them herein, and in all their foresaid slanderous doing. For I purpose, with the help of God, in remission of my sins, and of my foul cursed living, to hate and to flee, privately and openly, to follow these men, teaching and counselling whomsoever I may, to flee and to avoid the way that they have chosen to go in, which will lead them to the worst end, if in convenient time they repent them not, verily forsaking and revoking openly the slander that they have put, and every day yet put to Christ's church. For certain, so open blasphemy and slander as they have spoken and done in their revoking and forsaking of the truth, ought not and may not privily be amended duly. Wherefore, sirs, I pray you that you busy not to move me to follow these men in revoking and forsaking the truth, as they have done, and yet do; wherein by open evidence they stir God to great wrath, and not only against themselves, but also against all those who favour them, or consent to them herein, or who commune with them, except it be for their amendment. For whereas these men first were pursued of enemies, now they have obliged them by oath to slander and pursue Christ in his members. Wherefore, as I trust stedfastly in the goodness of God, the worldly covetousness, and the lusty living and the sliding from the truth of these runagates, shall be to me and to many other men and women an example and an evidence to stand more stiffly by the truth of Christ.

For certainly many men and women do mark and abhor the foulness and cowardness of these aforesaid untrue men, how they are overcome and stopped with benefices, and withdrawn from the truth of God's word, forsaking utterly to suffer therefore bodily persecution. For by this unfaithful doing and apostacy of them, especially that are great lettered men, and have acknowledged openly the truth, and

now either for pleasure or displeasure of tyrants, have taken hire and temporal wages to forsake the truth, and to hold against it, slandering and pursuing them that covet to follow Christ in the way of righteousness, many men and women therefore are now moved. But many more, through the grace of God, shall be moved hereby to learn the truth of God to do thereafter, and to stand boldly thereby.

Then the archbishop said to his clerks, Busy you no longer about him, for he, and other such as he is, are confederate together that they will not swear to be obedient, and to submit themselves to prelates of holy church. For now, since I stood here, his fellow also sent me word that he will not swear, and that this fellow counselled him that he should not swear to me. And, losel, in that thing which in thee is, thou hast busied thee to lose this young man; but, blessed be God, thou shalt not have thy purpose of him. For he has forsaken all thy learning, submitting him to be pliant and obedient to the ordinance of holy church, and weeps full bitterly, and curses thee full heartily, for the venomous teaching which thou hast shown to him, counselling him to do thereafter.

And for thy false counselling of many others and him, thou hast great cause to be right sorry. For long time thou hast busied thee to pervert whomsoever thou mightest. Therefore, thou art worthy of as many deaths, as thou hast given evil counsels. And therefore, by —, thou shalt go thither, where Nicholas Hereford and Thomas Purvey were harboured. And I undertake ere this day eight days, thou shalt be right glad to do what thing soever I bid thee to do. And, losel, I shall assay if I can make thee there as sorrowful, as it was told me, thou wast glad at my last going out of England.\* By St. Thomas, I shall turn thy joy into sorrow.

I said, Sir, there can nobody prove lawfully that ever I joyed of the manner of your going out of this land. But, sir, to say the truth, I was joyful when you were gone; for the bishop of London, in whose prison you left me, found in me no cause to hold me longer in his prison, but at the request of my friends, he delivered me to them, asking of me no manner of submitting.

Then the archbishop said to me, Wherefore I went out of

\* Archbishop Arundel was tried for treason and banished, A. D. 1397, in less than twelve months after he had been appointed to the see of Canterbury. He was recalled about two years after.

England is unknown to thee; but be this well known to thee, that God, as I know well, hath called me again, and brought me into this land, to destroy thee and the false sect that thou art of; as, by —, I shall pursue you so narrowly, that I shall not leave a slip of you in this land.

I said to the archbishop, Sir, the holy prophet Jeremiah said to the false prophet Hananiah, When the word that is the prophecy of a prophet, is known or fulfilled, then it shall be known, that the Lord sent the prophet in truth.

And the archbishop, as if he had not been pleased with my saying, turned him away hither and thither, and said, By —, I shall set upon thy shins a pair of pearls, that thou shalt be glad to change thy voice.

These and many more wondrous and blameful words were spoken to me, menacing me and all others of the same sect to be punished and destroyed unto the uttermost.

And the archbishop called then to him a clerk, and whispered with him; and that clerk went forth, and soon he brought in the constable of Saltwood castle, and the archbishop spoke privately a good while with him; and then the constable went forth, and then came in divers seculars, and they scorned me on every side, and menaced me greatly, and some counselled the archbishop to burn me speedily, and some others counselled him to drown me in the sea, for it is near hand there.

And a clerk standing beside me there, kneeled down to the archbishop, praying him that he would deliver me to him to say matins with him, and he would undertake, that within three days I should not resist any thing that was commanded me to do of my prelate.

The archbishop said, that he would ordain for me himself. And then afterwards came again the constable, and spake privately to the archbishop; and the archbishop commanded the constable to lead me forth thence with him, and so he did. And when we were gone forth thence, we were sent after again. And when I came in again before the archbishop, a clerk bade me kneel down and ask grace, and submit me lowly, and I should find it for the best.

I said then to the archbishop, Sir, as I have said to you divers times to-day, I will willingly and lowly obey and submit me to be ordained ever, after my knowledge and power, to God and to his law, and to every member of holy church, as far as I can perceive that these members accord

with their head Christ, and will teach me, rule me, or chastise me by authority, especially of God's law.

And the archbishop said, I knew well he would not without such additions submit him.

Then I was rebuked, scorned, and menaced on every side; and yet after this divers persons cried upon me to kneel down and submit me; but I stood still, and spake no word. Then there was spoken of me, and to me, many great words, and I stood and heard them menace, curse, and scorn me, but I said nothing.

Then a while after the archbishop said to me, Wilt thou not submit thee to the ordinance of holy church?

I said, Sir, I will full gladly submit me, as I have showed you before.

Then the archbishop bade the constable to have me forth thence in haste.

So then I was led forth, and brought into a foul, dishonest prison, where I came never before. But, thanked be God, when all men were gone forth then from me, and had sparr'd fast the prison door after them; by and by after, I therein by myself, busied me to think on God, and to thank him for his goodness. And I was then greatly comforted in all my senses, not only for that I was then delivered for a time from the sight, from the hearing, from the presence, from the scorning, and from the menacing of mine enemies; but much more I rejoiced in the Lord, because that through his grace he kept me so, both among the flattering especially, and among the menacing of mine adversaries, that without heaviness and anguish of my conscience, I passed away from them. For, as a tree laid upon another tree, overthwart or cross-wise, so were the archbishop and his three clerks always contrary to me, and I to them.

Now, good God, for thine holy name, and to the praising of thy most blessed name, make us one together, if it be thy will, by authority of thy word, that is true perfect charity, and else not. And that it may thus be, all that read or hear this writing pray heartily to the Lord God, that he for his great goodness, which cannot be expressed with tongue, grant to us, and to all other, who in the same wise, and for the same cause especially, or for any other cause, are at a distance, to be knit and made one in true faith, in stedfast hope, and in perfect charity. Amen.



Besides this examination here above described, came another treatise also to our hands of the same William Thorpe, under the name and title of his testament; which rather, by the matter and handling thereof, might seem to be counted a complaint of vicious priests.

The commencement of this testament is as follows.—

Matthew an apostle of Christ, and his gospeller, witnesses truly in the holy gospel, the most holy living, and the most wholesome teaching of Christ. He rehearses how that Christ likeneth them that hear his words and keep them, to a wise man that buildeth his house upon a stone, that is, a stable and a sure ground. This house is man's soul, in whom Christ delighteth to dwell, if it be grounded, that is, established faithfully in his living and in his true teaching, adorned or made fair with divers virtues, which Christ used and taught, without any meddling of any error, as are chiefly the conditions of charity.

This aforesaid stone is Christ, upon which every faithful soul must be builded, since upon none other ground, than upon Christ's living and his teaching, any body may make any building or housing wherein Christ will come and dwell. This sentence witnesseth St. Paul to the Corinthians, showing to them that nobody may set any other ground than is set, that is, Christ's living and teaching. And, because that all men and women should give all their business here in this life to build them virtuously upon this sure foundation, St. Paul acknowledging the fervent desire, and the good will of the people of Ephesus, wrote to them comfortably, saying, Now ye are not strangers, guests, nor yet comelings;\* but ye are the citizens, and of the household of God, builded above upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets. In which foundation, every building that is builded or made through the grace of God, it increaseth or groweth into a holy temple—that is, every body that is grounded or builded faithfully in the teaching and living of Christ, is therethrough made the holy temple of God.

This is the stable ground and stedfast stone, Christ, which is the sure corner stone, fast joining and holding mightily together two walls. For through Christ Jesus, the mean or middle person of the Trinity, the Father of heaven is pitous, or mercifully joined and made one together to mankind. And, through dread to offend God, and fervent love to please him, men are inseparably made one to God, and

\* Foreigners.

defended surely under his protection. Also this aforesaid stone, Christ, was figured by the square stones of which the temple of God was made. For, as a square stone, where-soever it is cast or laid, it abideth and lieth stably, so Christ and every faithful member of his church by example of him, abideth and dwelleth stably in true faith, and in all other heavenly virtues, in all adversities that they suffer in the valley of tears.

For lo, when these aforesaid square stones were hewn and wrought to be laid in the walls or pillars of God's temple, no noise or stroke of the workman was heard. Certainly, this silence in working of this stone figureth Christ chiefly and his faithful members, who by his example have been, and yet are, and ever to the world's end shall be so meek and patient in every adversity, that no sound, nor yet any grudging shall any time be perceived in them.\*

What was the end of this good man and blessed servant of God, William Thorpe, I find in no story specified. By all conjectures it is to be thought that the archbishop Thomas Arundel, being so hard an adversary against those men, would not let him go. Much less is it to be supposed, that he would ever retract his sentence and opinion, which he so valiantly maintained before the bishop; neither doth it seem that he had any such recanting spirit. Again, neither is it found that he was burned, wherefore it remains most likely to be true, that he, being committed to some strait prison, according as the archbishop in his examination before threatened him; there, as Thorpe confesseth himself, was so straitly kept, that either he was secretly made away, or else there he died by sickness.

The like end also I find to happen to John Ashton, another good follower of Wickliff, who, for the same doctrine of the sacrament, was condemned by the bishops, and because he would not recant, he was committed to perpetual prison, wherein the good man continued till his death. Anno 1382.

\* Thorpe then proceeds to expose the ill life and sinful conduct of the ecclesiastics of that day. He concludes by declaring his readiness to suffer for the truth.

EXTRACT  
FROM  
PROLOGUE TO THE BIBLE.

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WRITTEN ABOUT A. D. 1408.

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This little work has been incorrectly ascribed to Wickliff: from some references to historical events it evidently was not written till after his decease. The doctrines of the reformer, however, are so explicitly set forth, that it must have been the production of one of his disciples; and from the account given of the English translation of the scriptures, it is supposed to have been written by PURVEY, or some other person closely connected with Wickliff. A brief notice of Purvey has been already given at page 4.

The prologue contains a summary of the books of the old testament, with various doctrinal statements, and was, doubtless, intended by the writer as a prologue to Wickliff's bible, or more probably to a revision of his work. Lewis, in his history of the English translations of the bible, gives some account of a new or revised version, which was not so strictly verbal as that of Wickliff, "but more according to the sense," to a copy of which this prologue has been found appended. He adds, that a manuscript of this version, in the library of Trinity college, Dublin, has the name of Purvey written upon it.

This Prologue was printed in the time of the Reformation, first in 1536, under the title of *The Door of Holy Scripture*, and afterwards, in 1550, as *The Pathway to Perfect Knowledge*. From both editions it appears to have been found by the editors affixed or appended to manuscript copies of English bibles; one of them "in the king's chamber." The following pages contain an extract relative to the English version of the scriptures, with some observations respecting the method of translating, which will be interesting to those who value the contents of holy writ.

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FORASMUCH as Christ saith that the gospel shall he preached in all the world, and David saith of the apostles and their preaching, The sound of them go out into each land, and the words of them went out into the ends of the world. And, again, David saith, The Lord shall tell, in the scriptures, of peoples, and of these princes that were in it,

that is, in holy church. As Jerome saith in that verse, Holy writ is the scripture of peoples, for it is made that all peoples should know it; and the princes of the church who were therein, are the apostles who had authority to write holy writ, for by that same that the apostles wrote their scriptures by authority, and confirming of the Holy Ghost, it is holy scripture, and faith of christian men. And this dignity hath no man after them, be he ever so holy, ever so wise, as Jerome witnesses on that verse. Also Christ saith of the Jews who cried hosanna to him in the temple, that though they were still, stones should cry; and by stones he understandeth heathen men that worship stones for their gods; and we Englishmen are come of heathen men, therefore we are understood by these stones that should cry after holy writ; and, as Jews interpreted acknowledging, signify clerks that should acknowledge to God by repentance of sins, and by voice of God's commands; so our unlearned men, following the corner-stone, Christ, must be signified by stones that are hard and abiding in the foundation; for though covetous clerks moved by simony, heresy, and many other sins, despise and stop holy writ as much as they may, yet the unlearned people cry after holy writ to know it and keep it, with great cost and peril of their life. For these reasons, and others, with common charity to save all men in our realm, which God will have saved, a simple creature hath translated the BIBLE out of Latin into English.

First, this simple creature had much travail with divers fellows, and helpers, to gather many old bibles, and other doctors and common glosses, and to make one Latin bible some deal true, and then to study it anew, the text with the gloss, and other doctors as he might get; and especially Lyra on the old testament, that helped full much in his work. The third time, to counsel with old grammarians and old divines, of hard words and hard sentences, how they might best be understood and translated. The fourth time, to translate as clearly as he could to the sentence, and to have many good fellows, and wise, at the correcting of the translation. First, it is to know that the best translating out of Latin into English, is to translate after the sentence, and not only after the words. So that the sentence be as open, or opener, in English as in Latin, and go not far from the letter. And if the letter may not be followed in the translating, let the sentence ever be whole and open.

For the words ought to serve to the intent and sentence, and else the words are superfluous or false.

[He then states various rules of grammar observed in translating the bible.]

At the beginning I purposed with God's help to make the sentence as true and open in English as it is in Latin; or more true and more open than it is in Latin. And I pray for charity and common profit of christian souls, that if any wise man find any default of the truth of the translation, let him set in the true sentence and open the holy writ. But look that he examine truly his Latin bible; for no doubt he shall find many bibles in Latin full false, if he look at many. And namely new and the common Latin bibles have more need to be corrected, as many as I have seen in my life, than hath the English bible lately translated. And where the Hebrew, by witness of Jerome,\* of Lyra, and set other expositors, discordeth from our Latin bibles, I have in the margin by manner of a gloss, what the Hebrew hath, and how it is understood. And I did this most in the Psalter, which of all our books discordeth most from Hebrew. For the church readeth not the Psalter by the last translation out of Hebrew into Latin, but by another translation of other men that had much less wisdom and holiness than Jerome had, as it may be proved by the proper originals of Jerome which he glossed. And where I have translated as openly and openlier in English as in Latin, let wise men judge that know well both languages, and know well the sentence of holy scripture. And, whether I have done thus or not, no doubt, they that know well the sentence of holy writ, and English together, and will travail with God's grace thereabout, must make the bible as true and as open; yea, and openlier in English than it is in Latin. And, no doubt, to a simple man, with God's grace, and great travail, men might expound much openlier and shortlier the bible in English, than the old great doctors have expounded it in

\* Jerome is distinguished among the early fathers of the church for his biblical labours. Towards the close of the fourth century he revised the Latin scriptures by the hexaplar text of Origen, which included a literal version of the Hebrew text, and the new testament he revised after the original. Afterwards he completed a translation of the old testament from Hebrew into Latin, which is that called the vulgate; from this Wickliff made his English version. The Latin vulgate is allowed to be in general a faithful version. It sometimes preserves the true readings where the modern Hebrew copies are corrupted.

Latin, and much sharper and groundlier than many late postillators or expositors have done.

But God of his great mercy give to us grace to live well, and to say the truth in a becoming manner, and acceptable to God and his people, and spill not our time, be it short, be it long, at God's ordinance. But some that seem wise and holy say thus; If men now were as holy as Jerome was, they might translate out of Latin into English, as he did out of Hebrew and Greek into Latin; and else they should not translate now, as they think, for default of holiness and knowledge. Though this reply seem colourable, it has no good ground; neither reason, neither charity. For why? This reply is more against St. Jerome, and against the first seventy translators, and against holy church, than against simple men that translate now into English. For St. Jerome was not so holy as the apostles and evangelists, whose books he translated into Latin; neither had he such high gifts of the Holy Ghost as they had. And much more the seventy translators were not so holy as Moses and the prophets, and especially David. Neither had they such great gifts of God as Moses and the prophets had.

Furthermore, holy church\* approves, not only the true translation of mean christian men, stedfast in christian faith, but also of open heretics that did away many mysteries of Jesus Christ by guileful translation, as Jerome witnesses in one prologue on Job, and in the prologue on Daniel. Much more let the church of England approve the true and holy translation of simple men, that will for no good on earth with their knowledge and power put away the least truth, yea, the least letter or tittle of holy writ, that bears substance or charge. And dispute they not of the holiness of men now living in this mortal life, for they know not thereon, and it is reserved only for God's doom. If they know any notable fault of the translators, or the helpers of them, let them blame the default with charity and mercy; and let them never condemn a thing that may be done lawfully by God's law, as wearing of a good cloth for a time, either riding on a horse for a great journey, when they know not wherefore it is done. For such things may be done by simple men with as great charity and virtue, as by some that hold them great and wise, and can ride in a gilt saddle, or use cushions and beds, and clothes of gold and of silk, with other vanities of the world.

\* The church of Rome. Digitized by Google

May God grant pity, mercy, and charity, and love of common profit, and put away such dooms as are against reason and charity.

Yet worldly clerks ask greatly, What spirit maketh idiots hardy to translate now the bible into English, since the four great doctors durst never do this? This reply is so ignorant that it needs no answer, nought but stillness, or courteous scorn. For these great doctors were not Englishmen, neither were they conversant among Englishmen, neither knew they the language of Englishmen. But they never ceased till they had holy writ in their mother tongue of their own people. For Jerome, who was a Latin man of birth, translated the bible, both out of Hebrew and out of Greek, into Latin, and expounded full much thereto. And Augustine, and many more Latins, expounded the bible for many parts into Latin, to Latin men, among whom they dwelled. And Latin was a common language to their people about Rome, and beyond; as English is common language to our people. And at this day the common people in Italy speak a corrupt Latin, as true men say that have been in Italy. And the number of translators out of Greek into Latin passes man's knowing, as Augustine witnesses in the second book of christian teaching, and saith thus; "The translators out of Hebrew into Greek may be numbered; but Latin translators, or they that translated into Latin, may not be numbered in any manner." For in the first times of faith, each man, as a Greek book came to him, and as he seemed to himself to have some knowledge of Greek and of Latin, was bold to translate. And this thing helped more than it hindered understanding, if readers were not negligent. For why? The beholding of many books hath showed oft, or declared some darker sentences. Thus saith Augustine there. Therefore Grosthead saith, that it was God's will that divers men translated, and that divers translations are in the church; for where one said darkly, one or more said the same openly.

Since, in the beginning of faith, so many men translated into Latin, and to great profit of Latin men, let one simple creature of God translate into English for the profit of Englishmen. For if worldly clerks look well to their chronicle and books, they shall find that Bede translated the bible, and expounded much in Saxon, that was English, or the common language in this land in his time. And not

only Bede, but also king Alfred, who founded Oxford, translated in his last days the beginning of the Psalter into Saxon, and would have done more if he had lived longer. Also Frenchmen, Bemers, and Britons, have the bible and other books of devotion, and of exposition, translated in their mother language. Why should not Englishmen have the same in their mother language? I cannot tell. Only for falseness and negligence of clerks, or that our people is not worthy to have so great grace and gift of God in pain of their old sins. God for his mercy amend these evil causes, and make our people to have and know and keep truly holy writ, in life and death.

But in translating of words that have many significations under one letter, may be peril. Therefore a translator hath great need to study well the sentence, both before and after, and look that such words accord with the sentence. And he hath need to live a holy life, and to be full devout in prayers; and have not his mind occupied about worldly things, that the Holy Spirit, author of wisdom, and knowledge, and truth, lead him in his work, and suffer him not to err.

Many adverbs, conjunctions, and prepositions are set oft one for another, and sometimes at free choice of authors. And now these should be taken as accords best to the sentence. By this manner, with good living and great travail, men may come to truth and clear translating, and true understanding of holy writ, seem it ever so hard at the beginning. God grant to us all to learn well and keep well holy writ, and to suffer joyfully some pain for it at the last. Amen.



THE  
EXAMINATION AND DEATH

OF THE BLESSED MARTYR OF CHRIST,

SIR JOHN OLDCASTLE, LORD COBHAM,

ABRIDGED FROM THE COLLECTION OF JOHN BALE OUT OF THE  
BOOKS AND WRITINGS OF THOSE POPISH PRELATES  
THAT WERE PRESENT AT HIS CONDEMNATION  
AND JUDGMENT.

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In the latter time shall many be chosen, proved and purified by fire, yet shall the ungodly live wickedly still, and have no understanding, Dan. xii.

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Fox mentions that the book of John Bale, "then newly come over," was put into the hands of Hall, when engaged in compiling his chronicle; who was so satisfied by the statements of Bale and the authorities alleged by him, as to cancel what he had written before against sir John Oldcastle and his fellows. The history was compiled principally from the register of archbishop Arundel, which is printed in Fox, and still remains in the library at Lambeth palace. Other documents equally authentic and indisputable were referred to. In the following pages a few passages of the original work, chiefly historical reflections, are omitted

THE EXAMINATION AND DEATH OF THE BLESSED  
MARTYR OF CHRIST,

SIR JOHN OLDCASTLE, THE LORD COBHAM.

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AFTER the death of Wickliff, archbishop Arundel and the romish clergy of England used their utmost efforts in support of the popish errors. They concluded that "it was almost impossible for them to make whole Christ's coat without seam," (as they said, meaning thereby their patched popish synagogue,) unless certain great men were brought out of the way, who seemed to be the chief maintainers of the disciples of Wickliff.

Sir John Oldcastle, lord Cobham, was well known to be a mighty maintainer of suspected preachers, and they resolved to proceed against him as a pernicious heretic. Him they accused first as a mighty maintainer of suspected preachers in the diocese of London, Rochester, and Hereford, also to have assisted them there by force of arms, notwithstanding their synodical constitutions made to the contrary. Lastly, they accused him that he was far otherwise in belief of the sacrament of the altar, of penance, pilgrimage, image worshipping, and the ecclesiastical power, than the holy church of Rome had taught many years before.

Considering that the lord Cobham was a man of great birth, and in favour at that time with the king, their counsel was first to know the king's mind. The archbishop, Thomas Arundel, with his other bishops, and a great part of the clergy, went to the king, and laid most grievous complaints against lord Cobham.\* The king gently heard those blood-thirsty prelates; and far otherwise than became his princely dignity; but he earnestly desired them, that, in respect of his noble stock and knighthood, they should yet favourably deal with him; and that they would, if it were possible, without rigour, or extreme handling, reduce him again to the church's unity. He promised them also, that in case they were not contented to take some deliberation, he would seriously commune with him. Afterwards the king sent for lord Cobham; and, as he was come, he called

\* A book of Wickliff's belonging to lord Cobham was discovered at this time at a limner's in Paternoster-row, where it had been sent to  
d and ornamented.

him secretly, admonishing him to submit himself to his mother the holy church, and, as an obedient child, to acknowledge himself culpable.

Unto whom the christian knight made this answer, You, most worthy prince, said he, I am always prompt and willing to obey, for so much as I know you to be a christian king, and the appointed minister of God, bearing the sword to the punishment of all evil doers, and for the safeguard of them that be virtuous. Unto you, next to my eternal God, owe I my whole obedience, and submit me thereunto, as I have done ever, all that I have, either of fortune or nature, ready at all times to fulfil whatsoever you shall in that Lord command me. But as touching the pope, and his spirituality, truly I owe them neither suit nor service; for so much as I know him by the scriptures to be the great antichrist, the son of perdition, the open adversary of God, and the abomination standing in the holy place. When the king had heard this, with such like sentences more, he would talk no longer with him, but left him utterly.

And, as the archbishop resorted again unto the king for an answer, he gave him full authority to cite the lord Cobham, examine him, and punish him, according to the decrees, which they call the laws of holy church. Then the said archbishop, by the counsel of his other bishops and clergy, appointed to call before him lord Cobham. So sent he forth his chief summoner, with a very sharp citation unto the castle of Cowling. And when the said summoner was come thither, he durst in no case enter the gates of so noble a man, without his license, and therefore he returned home again, his message not done. Then called the archbishop one John Butler unto him, who was then the doorkeeper of the king's privy chamber, and with him he covenanted, through promises and rewards, to have this matter craftily brought to pass under the king's name. Whereupon the said John Butler took the archbishop's summoner with him, and went unto lord Cobham, showing him, that it was the king's pleasure that he should obey that citation, and so cited him fraudulently. Then said he unto them in few words, that in no case would he consent to those most devilish practices of the priests. As they had informed the archbishop of that answer, and that it was for no man privately to cite him after that, without peril of life; he decreed by and by to have him cited by public process, or open commandment. And in all the haste possible, in September,

1413, he commanded letters citatory to be set upon the great gates of the cathedral church of Rochester, which was but three English miles from thence, charging lord Cobham to appear personally before him at Leeds in the eleventh day of the same month and year, all excuses to the contrary set apart. Those letters were taken down soon after, by such as bore favour unto the lord Cobham, and so conveyed aside. After that the archbishop caused new letters to be set up on the nativity day of our lady, which also were rent down, and utterly consumed.

Then, as he did not appear at the day appointed at Leeds castle, (in Kent,) the archbishop judged him, denounced him, and condemned him of contumacy.

This most constant servant of the Lord, and worthy knight, sir John Oldcastle, the lord Cobham, beholding the unappeasable fury of antichrist, thus kindled against him, perceiving himself also compassed on every side with deadly dangers, took paper and pen in hand, and wrote a christian confession of his faith, which follows hereafter, and both signed and sealed it with his own hand. Wherein he also answered to the chief articles the archbishop laid against him. That done, he took the copy with him, and went therewith to the king, trusting to find mercy and favour at his hand. That confession of his was none other than the common belief, or sum of the church's faith, called the apostle's creed, of all christian men then used. As thus :

*The Christian Belief of the lord Cobham.*

I believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth. And in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord, which was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, crucified, dead and buried; went down to hell, the third day rose again from death, ascended up to heaven, sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty, and from thence shall come again to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost, the universal holy church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the uprising of the flesh, and everlasting life. Amen.

And for a more large declaration of this my faith in the catholic church, I stedfastly believe that there is but one God Almighty, in and of whose Godhead are these three persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, and these three persons are the selfsame God Almighty. I believe

also that the second person of this most blessed Trinity, in the most convenient time appointed thereunto, took flesh and blood of the most blessed virgin Mary, for the safeguard and redemption of the universal kind of man, which was before lost in Adam's offence. Moreover I believe that the same Jesus Christ our Lord, thus being both God and man, is the only head of the whole christian church, and that all those that have been or shall be saved, are members of this most holy church. And this holy church I think to be divided into three sorts or companies.

Whereof the first sort are now in heaven, and they are the saints from hence departed. These, as they were here conversant, conformed always their lives to the most holy laws and pure examples of Christ, renouncing Satan, the world, and the flesh with all their concupiscences and evils. The second sort are in purgatory, if any such there be by the scriptures, abiding the mercy of God and a full deliverance of pain.\* The third sort are here upon the earth, and are called, The church militant; for day and night they contend against the crafty assaults of the devil, the flattering prosperities of this world, and the rebellious filthiness of the flesh.

This latter congregation, by the just ordinance of God, is also severed into three divers estates; that is to say, into priesthood, knighthood, and the commons. Among whom the will of God is, that the one should aid the other, but not destroy the other. The priests, first of all, secluded from all worldliness, should conform their lives wholly to the examples of Christ and his apostles. Evermore should they be occupied in preaching and teaching the scriptures purely, and in giving wholesome examples of good living to the other two degrees of men. More modest also, more loving, gentle, and lowly in spirit should they be than any other sorts of people.

In knighthood, are all they which bear sword by law of office. These should defend God's laws, and see that the gospel is purely taught, conforming their lives to the same, and secluding all false preachers.† Yea, these ought rather to hazard their lives than to suffer such wicked decrees as either blemish the eternal testament of God, or

\* From Walden it appears that lord Cobham wrote against the doctrine of purgatory. See also Wickliff, p. 40.

† The knights or military men of rank were taught that it was their particular duty to defend the church.

yet hinder the free passage thereof, whereby heresies and schisms might spring in the church. For of none other arise they, as I suppose, than of erroneous constitutions, craftily first creeping in under hypocritical lies, for advantage. They ought also to preserve God's people from oppressors, tyrants, and thieves, and to see the clergy supported, so long as they teach purely, pray rightly, and minister the sacraments freely. And, if they see them do otherwise, they are bound, by law of office, to compel them to change their doings, and to see all things performed according to God's prescript ordinance.

The latter fellowship of this church are the common people, whose duty is to bear their good minds and true obedience to the aforesaid ministers of God, their kings, civil governors, and priests. The right office of these, is justly to occupy every man in his faculty, be it merchandise, handicraft, or the tilling of the ground. And so one of them to be as a helper to another, following always in their sorts the just commandments of their Lord God.

Over and besides all this, I most faithfully believe that the sacraments of Christ's church are necessary to all christian believers, this always seen to, that they are truly ministered according to Christ's first institution and ordinance. And forsomuch as I am maliciously and most falsely accused of a misbelief in the sacrament of the altar, to the hurtful slander of many, I signify here unto all men, that this is my faith concerning that. I believe in that sacrament to be contained very Christ's body and blood under the similitudes of bread and wine, yea, the same body that was conceived of the Holy Ghost, born of Mary the virgin, done on the cross, died, that was buried, arose the third day from the death, and is now glorified in heaven. I also believe the universal law of God to be most true and perfect, and they which do not follow it in their faith and works, at one time or other, can never be saved. Whereas, he that seeketh it in faith, accepteth it, learneth it, delighteth therein, and performeth it in love, shall taste for it the felicity of everlasting innocence.

Finally, This is my faith also, that God will require no more of a christian believer in this life, than to obey the precepts of that most blessed law. If any prelate of the church require more, or any other kind of obedience, than this to be used, he contemns Christ, exalting himself above God, and so becomes an open antichrist. All these premises

I believe particularly, and generally all that God hath left in his holy scriptures that I should believe. Instantly desiring you, my liege lord and most worthy king, that this confession of mine may be justly examined by the most godly, wise, and learned men of your realm. And, if it be found in all points agreeing to the verity, then let it be so allowed, and I thereupon holden for none other than a true christian. If it be proved otherwise, then let it be utterly condemned; provided always, that I am taught a better belief by the word of God, and I shall most reverently, at all times, obey thereunto.

This brief confession of his faith the lord Cobham wrote, and took it to the court, offering it with all meekness unto the king to read. The king would not receive it, but commanded it to be delivered unto them that should be his judges. Then desired he in the king's presence, that an hundred knights and esquires might be suffered to come in upon his purgation, who, he knew, would clear him of all heresies. Moreover, he offered himself after the law of arms, to fight for life or death with any man living, christian or heathen, in the quarrel of his faith, the king and the lords of his council excepted.\* Finally, with all gentleness he protested before all who were present, that he would refuse no manner of correction which should, after the laws of God, be ministered unto him; but that he would at all times with all meekness obey it.

Notwithstanding all this, the king suffered him to be summoned personally in his own privy chamber. Then said lord Cobham to the king, that he had appealed from the archbishop to the pope of Rome, and therefore he ought, he said, in no case to be his judge. And, having his appeal there at hand ready written, he showed it with all reverence to the king. Wherewith the king was then much more displeased than before, and said angrily unto him, that he should not pursue his appeal; but rather he should tarry in hold,† till such time as it were of the pope allowed. And then, willed he or nilled he, the archbishop should be his judge. Thus was there nothing allowed that the good lord Cobham had lawfully required. But as he would not be sworn in all things to submit himself to the church, and

\* This offer, strange as it may appear, was quite consistent with the practice and the laws of that age.

† In prison.

so to take what penance the archbishop would enjoin him, he was arrested again, at the king's commandment, and led to the tower of London, to keep his day, which the archbishop had appointed him in the king's chamber.

Then caused he the aforesaid confession of his faith to be copied again, and the answer also, which he had made to the four articles propounded against him, to be written in manner of an indenture, in two sheets of paper; that, when he should come to his answer, he might give the one copy unto the archbishop, and reserve the other to himself. As the day of examination was come, which was the twenty-third day of September, the Saturday after the feast of St. Matthew, Thomas Arundel, the archbishop, sitting in the chapter-house of Paul's, with Richard Clifford, bishop of London, and Henry Bolingbroke, bishop of Winchester; sir Robert Morley, knight, and lieutenant of the Tower, brought personally before him lord Cobham, and there left him for the time, unto whom the archbishop said these words:

*The first examination of the lord Cobham.*

Sir John, in the last general convocation of the clergy of this our province, you were detected of certain heresies, and by sufficient witnesses found culpable. Whereupon you were by form of spiritual law cited, and would in no case appear. In conclusion, upon your rebellious contumacy, you were both privately and openly excommunicated. Notwithstanding, we never yet showed ourselves unready to have given you your absolution, nor yet do we to this hour, would ye have meekly asked it.

Unto this the lord Cobham showed as though he had given no ear, having his mind otherwise occupied; and so desired no absolution. But he said, he would gladly, before him and his brethren, make rehearsal of that faith, which he held and intended always to stand to, if it would please them to license him thereunto. And then he took out of his bosom a certain writing indented, concerning the articles whereof he was accused, and so openly read it before them, giving it unto the archbishop, as he had made thereof an end.—Whereof this is the copy.

I John Oldcastle, knight, lord of Cobham, will all christian men to understand, that Thomas Arundel, archbishop of Canterbury, hath not only laid it to my charge



maliciously, but also very untruly by his letter and seal. written against me in most slanderous wise, that I should otherwise feel and teach of the sacraments of the church, assigning especially the sacrament of the altar, the sacrament of penance, the worshipping of images, and the going of pilgrimage unto them, far otherwise than either believeth or teacheth the universal holy church. I take almighty God unto witness, that it hath been and now is, and evermore, with the help of God, it shall be, my full intent and will, to believe faithfully and wholly, all the sacraments that ever God ordained to be ministered in the holy church.

And moreover for to declare me in these four points, afore rehearsed—I believe that, in the most worshipful sacrament of the altar, is Christ's very body in form of bread, the same body that was born of the blessed virgin Mary, done on the cross, dead, and buried, and that the third day arose from death to life, the which body is now glorified with the Father in heaven. And as for the sacrament of penance, I believe that it is needful to all them that shall be saved, to forsake their sin and to do penance for it, with true contrition to God, confession of their faults, and due satisfaction in Christ, like as God's laws limit and teach, else can they have no salvation. This penance I desire all men to do.

And, as for images, I understand that they pertain nothing to our christian belief, but were permitted, long since the faith was given us of Christ, by sufferance of the church, for to be as calendars unto laymen to represent or bring to mind the passion of our Lord Jesus Christ, with the martyrdom and good living of the saints. I think also that whatsoever he is which doth that worship to dead images, that is duly belonging unto God, or that putteth faith, hope, or confidence in the help of them, as he should do only in his eternal living God, or that hath affection in one more than in another, he perpetrateth, in so doing, the abominable sin of idolatry.

Moreover, in this am I fully persuaded, that every man dwelling on this earth is a pilgrim, either towards bliss or else towards pain. And that he which knoweth not, nor will know, nor yet keep the holy commandments of God in his living here, albeit that he goeth on pilgrimage into all quarters of the world, if he departeth so, he shall surely be damned. Again, he that knoweth the holy commandments of God, and so performeth them to the end of his life to his

power, shall without fail be saved in Christ,\* though he never in his life go on pilgrimage, as men use now-a-days, to Canterbury, Walsingham, Compostella, and Rome, or to any other places.

This answer to his articles thus ended and read, lord Cobham delivered to the bishops. Then counselled the archbishop with the other two bishops and divers of the doctors, what was to be done, commanding him to stand aside.

In conclusion, by their assent and information, the archbishop said thus unto him :

Come hither, sir John. In this your writing are many good things contained, and right catholic also, we deny it not ; but ye must consider that this day was appointed you to answer to other points concerning those articles, whereof as yet no mention is made in this your bill ; and therefore you must yet declare us your mind more plainly. As thus, whether that ye hold, affirm, and believe, that in the sacrament of the altar, after the consecration rightly done by a priest, remaineth material bread or not ? Moreover, whether ye do hold, affirm, and believe that as concerning the sacrament of penance, where there are a competent number of priests, every christian man is necessarily bound to be confessed of his sins to a priest ordained by the church, or not ?

After certain other communication, this was the answer of the good lord Cobham ; That none otherwise would he declare his mind, nor yet answer unto his articles, than was expressly in his writing there contained.

Then said the archbishop, Sir John, beware what you do ; for, if ye answer not clearly to those things that are here objected against you, especially at the time appointed you only for that purpose, the law of holy church is, that, compelled† once by a judge, we may openly proclaim you a heretic.

Unto whom he gave this answer : Do as ye shall think it best, for I am at a point.

Whatsoever he or the other bishops did ask him after that, he bade them resort to his bill, for thereby would he stand to the very death. Other answer would he not give that day, wherewith the bishops and prelates were in a

\* Note, here is no mention of purgatory ; we are saved in Christ without purgatory.—*Fox*. This reply of lord Cobham, in *Fox*, has some verbal differences from the copy in *Bale* which is here followed.

† Being examined.

manner amazed and wonderfully disquieted. At the last, the archbishop counselled again with his other bishops and doctors. And in the end thereof declared unto him, what the holy church of Rome, following the sayings of Augustine, Jerome, Ambrose, and of other holy doctors, had determined in the said matter, no manner of mention once made of Christ; which determination he said all christian men ought both to believe and to follow.

Then said lord Cobham, that he would gladly both believe and observe whatsoever the holy church of Christ's institution had determined, or whatsoever God had willed him either to believe, or to do. But that the pope of Rome, with his cardinals, archbishops, bishops, and other prelates of that church, had lawful power to determine such matters as stood not with God's word throughly, that would he not, he said, at that time affirm. The archbishop bade him then take good advisement till the Monday next following, which was the twenty-fifth day of September, and then justly to answer, especially unto this point, Whether there remained material bread in the sacrament of the altar, after the words of consecration, or not? He promised him also to send unto him, in writing, those matters clearly determined, that he might be the more perfect in his answer-making. And all this was for nothing else but to blind the multitude with somewhat. The next day following, according to his promise, the archbishop sent unto him, into the Tower, this foolish and blasphemous writing, made by him, and by his unlearned clergy.

“The faith and determination of the holy church, touching the blissful sacrament of the altar, is this, That, after the sacramental words are once spoken by a priest, in his mass, the material bread, that was before bread, is turned into Christ's very body; and the material wine, that was before wine, is turned into Christ's very blood. And so there remaineth in the sacrament of the altar from thenceforth, no material bread, nor material wine, which were there before the sacramental words were spoken. How believe ye this article?

“Holy church hath determined, that every christian man, living here bodily upon earth, ought to be shriven\* to a priest, ordained by the church, if he may come to him. How feel ye this article?

\* Confessed.

“Christ ordained St. Peter the apostle to be his vicar here in earth, whose see is the holy church of Rome. And he granted, that the same power, which he gave unto Peter, should succeed to all Peter’s successors, whom we call now popes of Rome. By whose special power, in particular churches are ordained prelates, as archbishops, bishops, parsons, curates, and other degrees more; unto whom christian men ought to obey, after the laws of the church of Rome. This is the determination of holy church. How feel ye this article?”

“Holy church hath determined that it is meritorious to a christian man to go on pilgrimage to holy places, and there especially to worship holy relics, and images of saints, apostles, martyrs, confessors, and all other saints besides, approved by the church of Rome. How feel ye this article?”

As the good lord Cobham read over this most wretched writing, he marvelled greatly at their ignorance. He perceived hereby, that their uttermost malice was purposed against him, howsoever he should answer; and therefore he put his life into the hands of God, desiring his only Spirit to assist him in his next answer. When the 25th day was come, Thomas Arundel, the archbishop of Canterbury, commanded his judicial seat to be removed from the chapter-house of Paul’s to the Dominican Friars, within Ludgate, at London. And as he was there set with the bishops, he called unto him his council and his officers, with divers other doctors and friars; also two notaries, appointed there purposely to write all that should be said or done. All these, with a great sort more of priests, monks, canons, friars, parish clerks, bell-ringers, and pardoners, disdained lord Cobham with innumerable mocks and scorns, reckoning him to be a horrible heretic, and a man accursed before God.

Anon, the archbishop called for a mass-book, and caused all those prelates and doctors to swear thereupon, that every man should faithfully do his office and duty that day. And that neither for favour nor fear, love nor hate, of the one party nor the other, any thing should there be witnessed, spoken, or done, but according to the truth, as they would answer before God, and all the world, at the day of doom. Then were the two aforesaid notaries sworn also to write and to witness the words and process, that there should be uttered on both parties, and to say their minds, if they

otherwise knew, before they should register it. And all this dissimulation was but to colour their mischief before the ignorant multitude.

After that came before them sir Robert Morley, knt. lieutenant of the Tower, and he brought with him the good lord Cobham, there leaving him among them, as a lamb among wolves, to his examination and answer.

*The latter examination of the lord Cobham.*

Then said the archbishop, Lord Cobham, you are advised, I am sure, of the words and process which we had unto you, upon Saturday last past, in the chapterhouse of Paul's; which process were now too long to be rehearsed again. I said unto you then, that you were accursed\* for your contumacy and disobedience to holy church, thinking that you should, with meekness, have desired your absolution.

Then spake the lord Cobham, with a most cheerful countenance, God saith by his holy prophet, I shall curse, where you bless

The archbishop continued his tale, saying: Sir, at that time I gently proffered to have assoiled† you, if you would have asked it; and yet I do the same, if you will humbly desire it in due form and manner, as holy church hath ordained.

Then said lord Cobham, Nay, forsooth, will I not; for I never yet trespassed against you, and therefore I will not do it. And with that he kneeled down on the pavement, holding up his hands towards heaven, and said, I confess me here unto thee, my eternal, living God, that, in my frail youth, I offended thee, O Lord, most grievously in pride, wrath, and gluttony, in covetousness and lechery. Many men have I hurt in mine anger, and have done many other horrible sins—Good Lord, I ask THEE mercy. And therewith, weepingly, he stood up again, and said, with a mighty voice, Lo, good people, lo; for the breaking of God's law, and HIS great commandments, they‡ never yet cursed me; but, for their own laws and traditions, most cruelly do they handle both me and other men; and therefore, both they and their laws, by the promise of God, shall utterly be destroyed.

At this, the archbishop and his company were not a little abashed. Notwithstanding he took courage again, after

\* Excommunicated.

† Pardoned, or absolved.

‡ The popish ecclesiastics.

certain words had in excuse of their tyranny, and examined the lord Cobham of his christian belief.

Lord Cobham made this godly answer: I believe fully and faithfully the universal laws of God. I believe that all is true which is contained in the holy sacred scriptures of the bible. Finally, I believe all that my Lord God would I should believe.

Then demanded the archbishop an answer of the bill, which he and the clergy had sent him into the Tower the day before, of a determination of the church concerning the four articles whereof he was accused, especially for the sacrament of the altar, how he believed therein?

Whereunto lord Cobham said, that with that bill he had nothing to do. But this was his belief, he said, concerning the sacrament: That his Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, sitting at his last supper, with his most dear disciples, the night before he should suffer, took bread in his hand, and, giving thanks to his eternal Father, blessed it, brake it, and so gave it unto them, saying, Take it unto ye, and eat thereof all; this is my body which shall be betrayed for you; do this hereafter in my remembrance. This do I thoroughly believe, said he, for this faith am I taught of the gospel, in Matthew, in Mark, and in Luke, and also in the first epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians.

Then asked the archbishop, if he believed that it were bread after the consecration or sacramental words spoken over it.

The lord Cobham said, I believe that in the sacrament of the altar is Christ's very body, in form of bread, the same that was born of the virgin Mary, done on the cross, dead and buried, and that the third day arose from death to life, which now is glorified in heaven.

Then said one of the doctors of the law, After the sacramental words are uttered, there remaineth no bread, but only the body of Christ.

Lord Cobham said then to one master John Whitehead, You said once unto me in the castle of Cowliug, that the sacred host was not Christ's body; but I held then against you, and proved that therein was his body, though the seculars and friars could not therein agree, but held each one against other in that opinion. These were my words then, if ye remember it.

Then shouted a number of them together, and cried with a great noise, We say all, it is God's body. And divers of

them asked him in great anger, Whether it were material bread after the consecration, or not?

Then looked the lord Cobham earnestly upon the archbishop, and said, I believe surely that it is Christ's body in form of bread. Sir, believe not you thus?

And the archbishop said, Yes, truly do I.

Then asked the doctors, Whether it were only Christ's body after the consecration of a priest, and no bread, or not?

And he said unto them, It is both Christ's body and bread. I shall prove it as thus; for like as Christ, dwelling here upon the earth, had in him both Godhead and manhood; and had the invisible Godhead covered under that manhood, which was only visible and seen in him; so, in the sacrament of the altar, is Christ's very body and very bread also, as I believe the bread is the thing that we see with our eyes; the body of Christ, which is his flesh and his blood, is thereunder hidden, and not seen but in faith. To this he added other words from Gelasius.

Then smiled they each one upon the other, that the people should judge him taken in a great heresy. And with a great brag divers of them said, It is a foul heresy.

Then asked the archbishop, What bread it was? The doctors also inquired of him, Whether it were material or not?

Lord Cobham said unto them, The scriptures make no mention of this word, "material," and therefore my faith hath nothing to do therewith; but this I say and believe, that it is Christ's body and bread, for Christ said in the sixth of John's gospel, I, which came down from heaven, am the living and not the dead bread. Therefore, I say now again, like as I said before, as our Lord Jesus Christ is very God and very man, so, in the most blessed sacrament of the altar, is Christ's very body and bread.

Then said they all with one voice, It is a heresy.

One of the bishops stood up by and by, and said, What! It is a manifest heresy to say that it is bread after the sacramental word is once spoken, but Christ's body only.

Lord Cobham said, St. Paul the apostle was, I am sure, as wise as you are now, and more godly learned; and he called it bread, writing to the Corinthians, 1 Cor. x. The bread that we break, saith he, is it not the partaking of the body of Christ? Lo, he calleth it bread and not Christ's body, but a mean whereby we receive Christ's body.

Then said they again, Paul must be otherwise understood;

for it is surely a heresy to say that it is bread after the consecration, but only Christ's body.

Lord Cobham asked, How they could make good that sentence? They answered, It is against the determination of the holy church.

Then said the archbishop unto him, Sir John, we sent you a writing concerning the faith of this blessed sacrament, clearly determined by the church of Rome our mother, and by the holy doctors.

Then said Lord Cobham, I know none holier than is Christ and his apostles; and as for that determination, it is none of theirs, for it standeth not with the scriptures, but manifestly against them. If it be of the church, as ye say it is, it hath been hers only since she received the great poison of worldly possessions, and not before.

Then asked they him, to stop his mouth therewith, If he believed not in the determination of the church?

And he said unto them, No, forsooth, for it is no God. In all our creed *IN* is but thrice mentioned, concerning belief; *IN* God the Father, *IN* God the Son, *IN* God the Holy Ghost, three persons and one God. The birth, the death, the burial, the resurrection, and ascension of Christ, hath none *IN* for belief, but *IN* him. Neither yet hath the church, the sacraments, the forgiveness of sin, the latter resurrection, nor yet the life everlasting any other *IN*, than *IN* the Holy Ghost.

Then said one of the lawyers, Tush, that was but a word of office. But what is your belief concerning holy church?

Lord Cobham answered, My belief is, as I said before, that all the scriptures of the sacred bible are true. All that is grounded upon them I believe thoroughly; for I know, it is God's pleasure that I should so do. But in your lordly laws and idle determinations have I no belief; for ye are no part of Christ's holy church, as your open deeds show. But ye are very antichrists, obstinately set against his holy law and will. The laws, that ye have made, are nothing to his glory, but only for your vain glory and abominable covetousness.

This they said, and that in a great fume, was an exceeding heresy, not to believe the determination of holy church. Then the archbishop asked, what he thought holy church was.

He said, My belief is, that holy church is the number of them which shall be saved, of whom Christ is the head. This church, one part is in heaven with Christ, another in



purgatory, you say, and the third is here in earth. This latter part standeth in three degrees, in knighthood, priesthood, and the commonalty, as I said before plainly, in the confession of my belief.

Then said the archbishop, Can you tell me, who is of this church ?

Lord Cobham answered, Yea, truly can I.

Then said doctor Walden, the prior of the Carmelites, It is a doubt unto you who is thereof; for Christ saith in Matthew, Presume to judge no man. If ye here are forbidden the judgment of your neighbour or brother, much more the judgment of your superior.

Lord Cobham made him this answer, Christ saith also in the same chapter of Matthew, that, like as the evil tree is known by its evil fruit, so is a false prophet by his works, appear they ever so glorious; but that ye left behind ye. And in John he hath this text, Believe you the outward doings? And in another place of John, When we know the thing to be true, we may so judge it, and not offend; for David saith also, Judge rightly always, ye children of men. And as for your superiority, were ye of Christ, ye should be meek ministers, and no proud superiors.

Then said doctor Walden unto him, Ye make here no difference of judgments; ye put no diversity between the evil judgments, which Christ hath forbidden, and the good judgments, which he hath commanded us to have; rash judgment and right judgment, all is one with you; so is judgment presumed, and judgment of office; so swift judges always are the learned scholars of Wickliff.

Unto whom lord Cobham thus answered; It is well sophistered of you; preposterous are your judgments evermore; for, as the prophet Isaiah saith, Ye judge evil good, and good evil; and therefore the same prophet concludeth, that your ways are not God's ways, nor God's ways your ways. And as for that virtuous man Wickliff, whose judgments ye so highly disdain, I shall say here for my part, both before God and man, that before I knew that despised doctrine of his, I never abstained from sin. But since I learned therein to fear my Lord God, it hath otherwise, I trust, been with me; so much grace could I never find in all your glorious instructions.

Then said doctor Walden, It were not well with me, so many virtuous men living, and so many learned men teaching, the scriptures being also so open, and the examples of

fathers so plenteous, if I had no grace to amend my life till I heard the devil preach! St. Jerome saith, that he which seeketh such suspected masters, shall not find the mid-day light, but the mid-day devil.

Lord Cobham said, Your fathers, the old pharisees, ascribed Christ's miracles to Beelzebub, and his doctrine to the devil; and you, as their natural children, have still the same judgment, concerning his faithful followers. They that rebuke your vicious living must needs be heretics! and that must your doctors prove when ye have no scriptures to do it. Then said he to them all, To judge you as ye are, we need no further go than your own proper acts. Where do ye find in all God's laws, that ye should thus sit in judgment on any christian men, or yet sentence any other man unto death, as ye do here daily? No ground have ye in all the scriptures so lordly to take it upon ye, but in Annas and in Caiaphas, who sat thus upon Christ, and upon his apostles after his ascension. Of them only have ye taken to judge Christ's members, as ye do, and not of Peter or John.

Then said some of the lawyers, Yes, forsooth, sir, for Christ judged Judas.

Lord Cobham said, No, Christ judged him not, but he judged himself, and thereupon went forth, and so did hang himself. But, indeed, Christ said, "Wo unto him," for that covetous act of his—as he doth yet still unto many of you; for since his venom was shed into the church, ye never followed Christ; neither yet have ye stood in the perfection of God's law.

The archbishop asked, what he meant by that venom.

Lord Cobham said, Your possessions and lordships. For then cried an angel in the air, as your own chronicles mention, "Wo, wo, wo, this day is venom shed in the church of God."\* Before that time all the bishops of Rome were martyrs, in a manner; and since that time we read of very few. But indeed, since that same time one hath put down another, one hath poisoned another, one hath cursed another, and one hath slain another, and done much more mischief besides, as all the chronicles tell. And let all men consider well this, that Christ was meek and merciful; the pope is proud and a tyrant. Christ was poor and forgave; the pope is rich and a most cruel manslayer, as his daily

\* Ranulphus Cestrensis in Polychron. lib. iv. c. 26. The venom alluded to was the grant of privileges and worldly possessions to the church by the emperor Constantine. It is often mentioned by the early reformers.

acts do prove him. Rome is the very nest of antichrist ; and out of that nest come all his disciples. Of whom prelates, priests, and monks are the body, and these shorn friars are the tail, which covereth his most filthy part.

Then said the prior of the friars Augustines, Alack, sir, why do ye say so ? That is uncharitably spoken.

Lord Cobham said, Not only is it my saying, but also of the prophet Isaiah, long before my time. The prophet saith, He which preacheth lies, is the tail behind, Isa. ix. As you friars and monks are like the pharisees, divided in your outward apparel and usages, so make ye division among the people ; and thus you, with such other, are the very natural members of antichrist. Christ saith in his gospel, " Wo to you scribes and pharisees, hypocrites ; for ye close up the kingdom of heaven before men, neither enter ye in yourselves, nor yet suffer any other that would enter into it." But ye stop up the ways thereunto with your own traditions, and therefore are ye the household of antichrist ; ye will not permit God's verity to have passage, nor yet to be taught of his true ministers, fearing to have your wickedness reprov'd. But, by such vain flatterers as uphold you in your mischiefs, ye suffer the common people most miserably to be seduced.

Then said the archbishop, By our lady, sir, there shall none such preaching within my diocese, if God will, nor yet in my jurisdiction, if I may know it, as either make division or dissension among the poor commons.

Lord Cobham said, Both Christ and his apostles were accused of sedition making, yet were they most peaceable men. Both Daniel and Christ prophesied, that such a troublous time should come, as hath not been yet since the world's beginning. And this prophecy is partly fulfilled in your days and doings. For many have ye slain already, and more will ye slay hereafter, if God fulfil not his promise. Christ saith also, If those days of yours were not shortened, scarcely should any flesh be saved. Therefore look for it justly, for God will shorten your days. Moreover, though priests and deacons, for preaching of God's word, and for ministering the sacraments, with provision for the poor, are grounded in God's law, yet have these other sects no manner of ground thereof, so far as I have read.

Then a doctor of law, master John Kemp, plucked out of his bosom a copy of that bill, which they had before sent him into the Tower, by the archbishop's counsel, thinking

thereby to make shorter work with him. For they were so amazed with his answers, not unlike to them which disputed with Stephen, that they knew not well how to occupy the time, their wits and sophistry, as God would, so failed them that day.

My lord Cobham, said this doctor, we must briefly know your mind concerning these four points here following. The first of them is this—and then he read upon the bill. The faith and the determination of holy church, touching the blessed sacrament of the altar, is this: that after the sacramental words are once spoken by a priest in his mass, the material bread, that was before bread, is turned into Christ's very body. And the material wine that was before wine, is turned into Christ's very blood. And so there remaineth in the sacrament of the altar from thenceforth no material bread, nor material wine, which were there before the sacramental words were spoken. Sir, believe ye not this?

Lord Cobham said, This is not my belief. But my faith is, as I said to you before, that in the worshipful sacrament of the altar, is very Christ's body in form of bread.

Then said the archbishop, Sir John, ye must say otherwise.

Lord Cobham said, Nay, that I shall not, if God be upon my side, as I trust he is, but that there is Christ's body in form of bread, as the common belief is.

Then read the doctor: The second point is this. Holy church hath determined that every christian man living here bodily upon earth, ought to be shriven to a priest ordained by the church, if he may come to him. Sir, what say ye to this?

Lord Cobham, said, A diseased or sorely wounded man had need to have a wise and true surgeon, knowing both the ground and the danger of the same. Most necessary were it, therefore, to be first shriven unto God, who only knoweth our diseases and can help us. I deny not in this the going to a priest, if he be a man of good life and learning; for the laws of God are to be required of the priest, who is godly learned. But if he be an idiot or a man of vicious living that is my curate, I ought rather to flee from him, than to seek unto him. For sooner might I catch evil of him that is nought, than any goodness towards my soul's health.

Then read the doctor: The third point is this. Christ ordained St. Peter the apostle to be his vicar here in earth, whose see is the church of Rome. And he granted that the same power, which he gave unto Peter, should succeed

to all Peter's successors, whom we call now popes of Rome. By whose special power in churches particular are ordained prelates, as archbishops, parsons, curates and other degrees more. Unto whom christian men ought to obey, after the laws of the church of Rome. This is the determination of holy church. Sir, believe ye not this?

Lord Cobham answered, He that followeth Peter most nigh in pure living, is next unto him in succession. But your lordly order esteemeth not greatly the lowly behaviour of poor Peter, whatsoever ye prate of him. Neither care ye greatly for the humble manners of them that succeeded him till the time of Sylvester,\* who for the more part were martyrs, as I told ye before. Ye can let all their good conditions go by you, and not hurt yourselves with them at all! All the world knoweth this well enough, by you, and yet ye can make boast of Peter.

One of the other doctors asked him; Then what do ye say of the pope?

Lord Cobham answered, As I said before: he and you together make complete the great antichrist. Of whom he is the great head, you bishops, priests, prelates, and monks are the body, and the begging friars are the tail, for they cover the filthiness of you both, with their subtle sophistry. Never will I in my conscience obey any of you all, till I see you, with Peter, follow Christ in conversation.

Then read the doctor: The fourth point is this. Holy church hath determined that it is meritorious to a christian man to go on pilgrimage to holy places. And there especially to worship holy relics and images of saints, apostles, martyrs, confessors, and all other saints besides, approved by the church of Rome. Sir, what say ye to this?

Lord Cobham answered, I owe them no service by any commandment of God, and therefore I mind not to seek them for your covetousness. It were best ye swept them fair from cobwebs and dust, and so laid them up for catching of scathe;† or else bury them fair in the ground, as ye do other aged people, who are God's images. It is a wonderful thing, that saints, now being dead, should become so covetous and needy, and thereupon so bitterly beg, who all their life-time hated all covetousness and begging!

\* Sylvester I. was pope from A. D. 314 to 335, in the time of Constantine the great, whose favour and liberality stimulated the ambition of the bishops of Rome.

† Harm.

But this I said unto you, and I would all the world should mark it, That with your shrines and idols, your feigned ab-solutions and pardons, ye draw unto you the substance, wealth, and chief pleasure of all christian realms.

Why, sir, said one of the clerks, will ye not worship good images?

What worship should I give unto them? said lord Cobham.

Then said friar Palmer unto him, Sir, ye will worship the cross of Christ, that he died upon?

Where is it? said lord Cobham.

The friar said, I put the case, sir, that it were here even now before you?

Lord Cobham answered, This is a great wise man, to put me an earnest question of a thing, and yet he himself knoweth not where the thing itself is! Yet once again ask I you, what worship I should do unto it?

A clerk said unto him, Such worship as Paul speaketh of, and that is this: God forbid that I should joy but only in the cross of Jesus Christ.

Then said lord Cobham, and spread his arms abroad, **THIS\*** is a real cross, yea, and so much better than your cross of wood, in that it was created of God. Yet, I will not seek to have it worshipped.

Then said the bishop of London, Sir, ye wot well that he died on a material cross?

Lord Cobham said, Yea, and I wot also, that our sal- vation came not in by that material cross, but alone by Him who died thereupon. And well I wot that holy St. Paul rejoiced in none other cross, but in Christ's passion and death only, and in his own sufferings of like persecu- tion with him, for the selfsame verity that he had suffered for before.

Another clerk asked him, Will ye then do no honour to the holy cross?

He answered, Yes, if he were mine, I would lay him up honestly, and see to him, that he should take no more scathes abroad, nor be robbed of his goods as he is now a-days.

Then said the archbishop, Sir John, ye have spoken here many wonderful words to the slanderous rebuke of the whole spirituality, giving a great evil example unto the common sort, here, to have us in the more disdain. Much

\* The human body. The Lollards frequently spoke of it as the only true image of God.

time have we spent here, about you, and all in vain, so far as I can see. Well, we must be now at this short point with you, for the day passeth away ; ye must either submit yourself to the ordinance of holy church, or else throw yourself, no remedy, into most deep danger. See to it in time, for else anon it will be too late.

Lord Cobham said, I know not to what purpose I should otherwise submit me. Much more have you offended me, than ever I offended you, in thus troubling me before this multitude.

Then said the archbishop, We once again require you to remember yourself well, and to have none other opinion in these matters, than the universal faith and belief of the holy church of Rome is. And so, like an obedient child to return again to the unity of your mother. See to it, I say, in time, for yet ye may have remedy, whereas anon it will be too late.

Lord Cobham said expressly before them all, I will none otherwise believe in these points, than I have told ye here before. Do with me what ye will.

Finally, the archbishop said, Well then I see none other, but we must needs do the law; we must proceed forth to the sentence definitive, and both judge you and condemn you for a heretic.

With that the archbishop stood up, and read there a bill of his condemnation, all the clergy and laity putting off their bonnets.

After that the archbishop had thus read the bill of his condemnation before the whole multitude, lord Cobham said, with a most cheerful countenance, Though ye judge my body, which is but a wretched thing, yet am I certain and sure, that ye can do no harm to my soul, no more than could Satan upon the soul of Job. He who created that, will of his infinite mercy and promise, save it, I have therein no manner of doubt. And, as concerning these articles before rehearsed, I will stand to them, even to the very death, by the grace of my eternal God.

And therewith he turned him unto the people, casting his hands abroad, and saying with a very loud voice, Good christian people, for God's love be well aware of these men ; for they will else beguile you, and lead you blindly into hell with themselves. For Christ sayeth plainly unto you, " If one blind man leadeth another, they are like both to fall into the ditch."

After this, he fell down upon his knees, and thus, before them all, prayed for his enemies, holding up both his hands and his eyes towards heaven, and saying, Lord God eternal, I beseech thee, for thy great mercies' sake, to forgive my pursuers, if it be thy blessed will. And then he was delivered to sir Robert Morley, and so led forth again to the Tower of London. And thus there was an end of that day's work.

While lord Cobham was thus in the Tower, he sent out privily unto his friends. And they, at his desire, wrote this little bill here following, causing it to be set up in divers quarters of London, that the people should not believe the slanders and lies that his enemies, the bishops' servants and priests, had made on him abroad. And this was the letter :

“ Forasmuch as sir John Oldcastle, knight, and lord Cobham, is untruly convicted and imprisoned, falsely reported and slandered among the common people by his adversaries, that he should otherwise both feel and speak of the sacraments of the church, and especially of the blessed sacrament of the altar, than was written in the confession of his belief, which was indented and taken to the clergy, and so set up in divers open places in the city of London. Known be it here to all the world, that he never since varied in any point therefrom ; but this is plainly his belief, that all the sacraments of the church are profitable and expedient also to all them that shall be saved, taking them after the intent that Christ and his true church hath ordained. Furthermore, he believeth that in the blessed sacrament of the altar is verily and truly Christ's body in form of bread.”

After this, the bishops and priests were in much obloquy, both of the nobility and commons, partly for that they had so cruelly handled the good lord Cobham ; and partly again, because his opinion, as they thought at that time, was perfect concerning the sacrament. As they feared this to grow to farther inconvenience towards them both ways, they drew their heads together, and, at the last, consented to use another practice somewhat contrary to that they had done before.

They caused it by and by to be blown abroad by their feed servants, friends, and babbling sir Johns,\* that the said lord Cobham was become a good man, and had lowly submitted himself in all things unto holy church, utterly changing his opinion concerning the sacrament. And

\* A general name for the priests in those days.



thereupon, they counterfeited an abjuration in his name that the people should take no hold of that opinion, by any thing they had heard of him before, and to stand so in the more awe of them, considering him to be so great a man, and yet by them subdued.\*

*The complaint of the clergy and the tyrannous act thereupon made.*

This abjuration never came to the hands of the lord Cobham, neither was it compiled of them for that purpose, but only therewith for a time to blear the eyes of the unlearned multitude. And when they perceived that policy would not help, but made more and more against them, then sought they out another false practice. They went unto the king with a most grievous complaint, like as they did before in his father's time, that in every quarter of the realm, by reason of Wickliff's opinions, and the said lord Cobham, were wonderful contentions, rumours, tumults, uproars, confederations, dissensions, divisions, differences, discords, harms, slanders, schisms, sects, seditious, perturbations, perils, unlawful assemblies, variances, strifes, fightings, rebellious ruffings, and daily insurrections. The church, they said, was hated; the diocesans were not obeyed; the ordinaries were not regarded; the spiritual officers, as suffragans, archdeacons, chancellors, doctors, commissaries, officials, deans, lawyers, scribes, and summoners, were every where despised; the laws and liberties of holy church were trodden under foot; the christian faith was ruinously decayed; God's service was laughed to scorn; the spiritual jurisdiction, authority, honour, power, policy, laws, rites, ceremonies, curses, keys, censures, and canonical sanctions of the church, were had in utter contempt.

So that all, in a manner, was come to nought.

And the cause of this was, that the heretics and Lollards of Wickliff's opinion were suffered to preach abroad, so boldly to gather conventicles unto them, to keep schools in men's houses, to make books, compile treatises, and write ballads; to teach privately in angles and corners, as in woods, fields, meadows, pastures, groves, and in caves of the ground. This would be, they said, a destruction to the commonwealth, a subversion to the land, and an utter decay of the king's estate royal, if remedy were not sought

\* The abjuration is printed by Bale and Fox.

in time. And this was their policy to couple the king's authority with that they had done in their former counsel of craft, and so to make it thereby the stronger. For they perceived themselves else very far too weak to follow against their enemies, what they had so largely enterprised. Upon this complaint, the king immediately called a parliament at Leicester. It might not in those days be holden at Westminster, for the great favour that the lord Cobham had both in London and about the city, yet were they deceived. What they doubted most, lighted there soonest upon them.

A bill was put in there by the commons, against their continual wasting of the temporalities, like as it had been twice before by procurement of the said lord Cobham, both in the days of king Richard II., anno 1395, and also of king Henry IV., anno domini 1410, but this was workmanly defeated by another proper practice of theirs.

They put the king in remembrance to claim his right in France, and granted him thereunto a tenth, with other great subsidy of money. Thus were Christ's people betrayed every way, and their lives bought and sold by these most cruel thieves. For in the said parliament the king made this most blasphemous and cruel act, to be as a law for ever: That whatsoever they were, that should read the scriptures in the mother tongue, which was then called Wickliff's learning, they should forfeit land, cattle, body, life, and goods, from their heirs for ever, and so be condemned for heretics to God, enemies to the crown, and most arrant traitors to the land.\* Besides this, it was enacted, that no sanctuary, or privileged ground, within the realm, should hold them, though they were still permitted both to thieves and murderers. And if in case they would not give over, or were relapsed after their pardon, they should suffer death in two manners, they should first be hanged for treason against the king, and then burned for heresy against God; though neither of them were committed.

Anon after, that act was proclaimed throughout the realm, and then had the bishops, the priests, the monks, and the friars a world somewhat to their minds. For then were

\* It was nevertheless enacted in this parliament, that a general pardon should for the present be granted to all Lollards, excepting sir John Oldcastle, and some others therein mentioned. — *Bale*.

many taken in divers quarters, and suffered most cruel death. And many fled out of the land into Germany, Bohemia, France, Spain, Portugal, and into Scotland, Wales, and Ireland, working there many marvels against their false kingdom too long to write. In the Christmas following was sir Roger Acton, knight, master John Browne, sir John Beverley, a learned preacher, and divers others imprisoned for quarrelling with certain priests. For all men at that time could not patiently suffer their blasphemous brags.

The complaint was made unto the king of them, that they had made a great assembly in St. Giles'-field at London, purposing the destruction of the land, and the subversion of the commonwealth. As the king was thus informed, he erected a banner, saith Walden, with a cross thereupon, as the pope doth commonly by his legates, when he pretendeth to war against the Turk, and with great number of men entered the same field, where he found no such company. Yet was the complaint judged true, because the bishops had spoken it, at the information of their priests. In the mean season, the lord Cobham escaped out of the Tower of London in the night,\* and fled into Wales, where he continued more than four years after.

In January following, was the before-named sir Roger Acton, master John Browne, sir John Beverley, and thirty-six more, of whom the more part were gentlemen of birth, convicted of heresy by the bishops, and condemned of treason by the temporalty, and, according to the act, were first hanged, and then burned in the said St. Giles'-field. In the same year, also, one John Claydon, a skinner, and one Richard Turming, a baker, were both hanged and burned in Smithfield by that act, besides what was done in all other quarters of England; which was no small number, if it were thoroughly known.†

\* About 28th October, 1413; and on 10th January following a commission was issued out to the lord mayor of London, for apprehending him, &c. At the same time, he was indicted for treason, and in Hilary term he was outlawed for treason.

† The Romanists objected much to the account of lord Cobham given by Bale and Fox. Harpsfield, under the name of Alan Cope, wrote representing the Lollards as rebels. Fox, in his later editions, replied very fully to these cavils and refuted them. He stated therein, that among the causes which withdrew his mind from the papists' faction, was hardly any greater than because he saw them so regardless of truth, when their own interests were concerned.

*The latter imprisoning and death of lord Cobham.*

In the year of our Lord 1413, died Thomas Arundel, who had been archbishop of Canterbury during many years, to the great destruction of christian belief.\* Yet his prodigious tyranny died not with him, but succeeded with his office in Henry Chicheley, and in a great sort more of the spiteful spirituality. For their malice was not yet settled against the good lord Cobham. But they confederated with the lord Powys, who was at that time a great governor in Wales, feeding him with lordly gifts and promises to accomplish their desire. He, at the last, thus monied like Judas, and outwardly pretending him great amity and favour, most cowardly and wretchedly took him, and in conclusion so sent him up to London, where he remained a month or two imprisoned again in the Tower. And, after long process, they condemned him again of heresy and treason, by the before-named act; he rendering thanks unto God that he had so appointed him to suffer for his name's sake.

And, upon the day appointed, he was brought out of the Tower, with his arms bound behind him, having a very cheerful countenance. Then was he laid upon a hurdle, as though he had been a most heinous traitor to the crown, and so drawn forth into St. Giles'-field, where they had set up a new pair of gallows. As he was come to the place of execution, and was taken from the hurdle, he fell down devoutly upon his knees, desiring Almighty God to forgive his enemies. Then stood he up, and beheld the multitude, exhorting them, in most godly manner, to follow the laws of God, written in the scriptures, and in any wise to beware of such teachers as they see contrary to Christ in their conversation and living, with many other special counsels. Then was he hanged up there by the middle in chains of iron, and so consumed alive in the fire, praising the name of God so long as his life lasted. In the end, he commended his soul into the hands of God, and so departed hence most christianly, his body being resolved into ashes.

And this was done in the year of our Lord 1418, which was the sixth year of king Henry V., the people there present showing great dolour. How the priests that time fared, blasphemed, and cursed, requiring the people not to pray

\* It was reported that he was attacked by his last illness when pronouncing sentence upon lord Cobham.

for him, but to judge him damned in hell, for that he departed not in the obedience of their pope, it were too long to write. This terrible kind of death, with gallows, chains, and fire, appears not very precious in the eyes of men that are carnal, no more than did the death of Christ, when he was hanged up among thieves. "The righteous seemeth to die," saith the wise man, "in the sight of them which are unwise, and their end is taken for very destruction. Ungodly fools think their lives very madness, and their passage hence without all honour. But though they suffer pain before men," saith he, "yet is their expectation full of immortality. They are accounted for the children of God, and have their just portion among the saints. As gold in the furnace doth God try his elect, and as a most pleasant burnt-offering receiveth he them to rest."

The more hard the passage is, the more glorious shall they appear in the latter resurrection. Not that the afflictions of this life are worthy of such a glory, but that it is God's heavenly pleasure so to reward them. Never are the judgments and ways of men like unto the judgments and ways of God, but contrary evermore, unless they be taught of him. "In the latter time," saith the Lord unto Daniel, "shall many be chosen, proved, and purified by fire; yet shall the ungodly live wickedly still, and have no understanding, that is, of faith." By an angel from heaven was John earnestly commanded to write, that Blessed are the dead, which hence depart in the Lord. Right dear, saith David, in the sight of God is the death of his true servants. Thus resteth this valiant christian knight, sir John Oldcastle, under the altar of God, which is Jesus Christ, among that godly company, which in the kingdom of patience suffered great tribulation, with the death of their bodies, for his faithful word and testimony; abiding there with them the fulfilling of their whole number, and the full restoration of his elect. The which He grant in effect, at his time appointed, who is one God eternal. Amen.

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#### THE WORSHIP OF SAINTS AND IMAGES, AND PILGRIMAGE.

DURING the examinations of Thorpe and lord Cobham, considerable discussion arose respecting the worship of images, the adoration of the cross and pilgrimages. As the reader will have seen, these idolatrous practices were boldly defended, and although much ingenious sophistry

has been resorted to by modern Romanists, their church still maintains these abominations, asserting that image worship has been customary from the times of the apostles; thus it is constituted a point for historical inquiry. The texts from holy writ and the apocryphal books, with the passages from the fathers adduced by the church of Rome, have been fully examined by protestant writers, who have shown that there is no historical evidence in support of image worship earlier than the time of Constantine, when many corruptions had crept into the church.

The practice of the church of Rome is as decidedly idolatrous now, as in the fifteenth century. In books of devotion printed by authority for the use of English papists, we find the same prayers to saints, and "Hail Mary, lady and mistress of the world, to whom *all power* has been given, both in heaven and earth." The Breviary still contains direct prayers to the cross, one will suffice, "Hail, O cross, our only hope in this season of the passion, increase righteousness to the pious, and grant pardon to the guilty." (Brev. Rom. temp. Quadrages.) The worship of Mary and other saints must not be considered as a trifling error, Luther has stated the fatal consequences in forcible terms, that, like many others, he was induced to look upon Christ as an angry judge, while he regarded Mary as the throne of grace. See History of the Church of Christ, vol. vi. ch. iii.

The principle upon which pilgrimages are founded, is shown by Lewis (life of Pecoek) in a quotation from Peter de Mediano, who states that to the virgin a privilege is granted of being present, physically and really, in certain of her images—that in them she might receive adoration from faithful worshippers. Upon this principle, one block of wood or stone is deemed preferable to another; one chapel is crowded with riches, and its priests enjoy every luxury, while another shrine remains in obscurity, the image in rags, waited upon by poverty-stricken attendants, until some deep laid fraud or unexpected occurrence, raises it to fame and wealth. Hence the eagerness of Romish priests even now, in a part of the British isles, to advocate pilgrimages.

The shrine of the virgin, at Walsingham in Norfolk, is often referred to in the preceding examinations; the licentious practices common among its votaries, are recorded by writers of those times. Erasmus in the following century, describes it minutely with all its paraphernalia of relics and mysteries, the nodding image, the virgin's milk, &c.; he copies the prayers then offered up to the senseless block! Erasmus also mentions the abundance of pieces of the cross; he says, that enough to load a ship might be collected, "yet our Lord bore the whole cross when entire!" Lewis has also described the manner in which the adoration of the cross was then practised, "men coming to it in lowest wise," creeping on their knees, and kissing it in the devoutest manner. One of the most celebrated till the time of the Reformation, was the rood of Northern, a crucifix at the north door of St. Paul's cathedral; to this offerings were abundantly made, men swore by it, and made pilgrimages to it. But the pilgrimages to the shrine of Thomas à Becket were the most frequented, and the offerings made there the most considerable. The annual amount in one year, was a sum equal to ten thousand pounds at the present day, while not a penny was offered at a shrine in the same cathedral dedicated to the Lord Jesus Christ, and only an inconsiderable sum to that of the virgin. In another year the offerings to this rebellious prelate were equal to twenty thousand pounds of our money!

**THE**  
**LANTERN OF LIGHT,**

Written about the year 1400,

NOW PUBLISHED FROM EARLY MANUSCRIPTS.

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Take ye of our gracious God this little treatise that here is offered, which is called a Lantern of Light, for ye shall see these things thereby :—

CHAP. I. Of a Prologue.

II. Of a Petition.

III. What is Antichrist in general.

IV. What is Antichrist in special with his three parties.

V. What is Antichrist in special, with five conditions.

VI. What is the Church belonging to God, with her names, likenesses, and conditions.

VII. What the material Church, with her ornaments.

VIII. Of good and evil coming to the material Church.

IX. Of discretion to know the good from the evil.

X. How the good of the second Church accords with the good of the first.

XI. Of joy in tribulation.

XII. Of the Fiend's deceits, by which he pursueth in his members, the keepers of God's commands.

XIII. What is the Fiend's church, with her properties.

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The Lantern of Light was printed by Robert Redman, but without date—he printed from A. D. 1523 to A. D. 1540. The type shows it to have been among the early books of the Reformation. It is now one of the scarcest of that period. A copy was obtained for the present collection, but as the printed work contains some additions probably made when preparing for the press, it was thought desirable to follow the original manuscripts which contain the work in the form circulated among the Lollards, excepting in the correction of a few errors.

An interesting notice of **THE LANTERN OF LIGHT** is found in the history of John Claydon, skinner of London, who was accused before archbishop Chichely, A. D. 1415, "for the suspicion of heresy." It is given by Fox from the archbishop's own registers. Claydon, when accused, openly confessed, that for the preceding twenty years he had been suspected for Lollardy and heresy, and had been imprisoned five years by the late bishop of London. He had twice abjured all doctrines contrary to the catholic faith, and the determination of the church.

Being asked whether he ever had in his house, since his abjuration, any books written in English, he confessed that he had many which were now in possession of the mayor of London. The mayor said, that he had them, and that they were the worst and most perverse he ever saw or read. He produced one of them which was well bound in red leather, written in a good English hand on parchment, entitled, **THE LANTERN OF LIGHT**. Claydon confessed that he knew it very well, because he caused it to be written at his own costs and charges, for he spent much money thereupon since his abjuration. Being asked who wrote it, he answered, one John Grime. Farther, being required what John Grime was, he answered, he could not tell. Being questioned whether he ever read it, he replied that he could not read, but had heard the fourth part read by one John Fuller. Being asked whether he thought the contents to be catholic, profitable, good, and true, he answered, that many things which he had heard in the same book were both profitable, good, and healthful to his soul, and he had great affection for the same book, for a sermon preached at Horsleydown, written therein.

The books were then delivered to Dr. Lindewood and other examiners; fifteen articles or points, which were noted for heresies and errors, were taken out of the **Lantern of Light**, which are printed by Fox. The books were condemned and burned; and Claydon himself being condemned for having relapsed into heresy, was burned in Smithfield with one Turning, a baker.

From the above particulars it is evident that **THE LANTERN OF LIGHT** was written soon after Wickliff's decease; the contents of the work show that it was not compiled till after the burning of the Lollards had commenced. The name of the author is not known, as it does not clearly appear whether John Grime was the author, or only the copyist. Tanner mentions a John Gryme as author of a work on the mass, but gives no farther notice of any one of that name connected with those times. Herbert mentions that his printed copy had a manuscript note, ascribing it to a William Hardy, curate of Barling in Essex. It is equal, if not superior, to most of the writings of that day, even to those of Wickliff.



# THE LANTERN OF LIGHT.

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## CHAPTER I.

### *The Prologue.*

God, that is good in himself, fair in his angels, marvelous in his saints, and merciful upon sinners, have mercy on us, now and ever, and give us grace to hold the way of truth in these days of great tribulation. For now, many that seemed to have been stable in virtue, fall from their holy purpose, dreading loss of goods and bodily pain. As Christ said, Matt. xxiv. The great plenty and abundance of wickedness shall make cold the charity of many. For now the fiend hath marred the world by his lieutenant antichrist, that men be borne about in divers doubts, as waves of the sea, wretchedly divided in opinions, each neighbour with others. But St. Paul saith, there is but one Lord, whom all men should dread and love; one faith, that all men should believe without changing; one baptism or christendom, that all men should keep without defouling. Alas! how is this unity broken, that men unru'ed, walk after their lusts, as beasts in the corn! Certes the wicked man that Christ speaketh of, Matt. xiii. hath done this deed. The enemy of God hath sown tares among the seed of Jesus Christ. This wicked man is ANTICHRIST, who clouteth his laws, as rotten rags, to the clean cloth of Christ's gospel; and waketh in malice as a child of Judas, while Simon sleepeth and taketh no heed. O thou wicked man, is there any other that may save souls than Jesus Christ? Holy and true Jesus Christ hath the key of David, which openeth and no other closeth, closeth and then no other openeth, (Rev. iii.) who casteth down, and then no man reareth, who seateth and then no man casteth down. And, therefore, in the virtue of this name JESUS, standeth all man's salvation, as it is written, Acts iv. St. Peter saith, There is none other name under heaven given to men, but this name Jesus. In which it behoves us

to be made safe; for only in virtue of this name, cometh remission of sins. As it is written, Luke xxiv. It behoveth to be preached among all folks, penance,\* and remission of sins in the name of Jesus. Art not thou a wicked man, a foulted† shepherd, a cruel beast, the son of perdition, and antichrist himself, who pretendest in thee and in thy members, to bind and loose, to bless and curse beside this name Jesus? People without number, following thee and thy divided laws, are divided from Christ Jesus, and go with the blindlings to hell for evermore. And this is greatly to sorrow, so that Christ maketh mourning thereupon, and saith, John v. I have come in the name of my Father, and ye have not taken me, when another comes in his own name, him ye shall take. And this is antichrist, as St. John Chrysostom saith upon this gospel, "He that will not receive Christ in pain of sin, he is constrained to receive antichrist."

Therefore, in this time of hideous darkness, some seek the LANTERN OF LIGHT, of which spake the prophet, Psal. cxix. Lord, thy word is a lantern to my feet. For as far as the light of this Lantern shineth, so far darkness of sin, and clouds of the fiend's temptations vanish away, and may not abide. And always, when the Lantern giveth light into the heart, it cleanseth from corruption, and suageth and healeth spiritual sores. As the wise man saith, (in the Book of Wisdom,) "Neither herb nor plaster hath healed them, but, Lord, thy mighty word that healeth all things." For, Lord, when thou diedst upon the cross, thou putttest in thy word the Spirit of life, and gavest to it power of quickening by thy own precious blood, as thou thyself sayest, The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and life.

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## CHAPTER II.

### *Of a Petition.*

DEAR friends, help me with your prayer with almighty God, for St. James saith, The busy prayer of the righteous is much worth. This your asking and your desire is a charge unto me, but with God nothing is impossible, as Christ saith, Matt. xix. Mark x. Luke xviii. And in this

\* Repentance.

faith Isaiah saith, (xxvi.) The Lord God himself worketh all our works in us. Fail we not then God in good living, and he may not fail to give us such wisdom as is needful to us, and also to constrain our tongue, and to give us true organ of ready eloquence, to edifying of our neighbour, as Christ saith, Matt. x. Forsooth it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father that speaketh in you. For the apostles of Christ and his other followers were not graduate men in schools, but the Holy Ghost suddenly inspired them, and made them plenteous of heavenly lore. And they that have laboured in mortal learning, humbled themselves as simple men, as St. Jerome saith, "Preachers unlettered are sent to preach, that the faith of true believers should be hoped to be brought in, not by man's virtue, but by speech and doctrine of God." And so saith St. Augustine, writing to Simplician, "Untaught men rise and catch heaven, and we, with our clergy, are drowned to hell." And St. Gregory saith, "Right as truth incarnate, that is, Christ in his manhood, chose poor simple men for his preaching, so antichrist is to choose sturdy and double-minded men, having the wisdom of this world, to preach his falsehood." Have we then full faith in this Lord Jesus, with perfect living, and this Lord, through your prayer, shall lead this work after his own pleasure, and bring it to a perfect end, to his own worship, and the profit of his servants.

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### CHAPTER III.

#### *What is Antichrist in general; with six conditions.*

To speak in general, antichrist is every man that liveth against Christ; as St. John saith, Forsooth now there are many antichrists. And therefore saith St. Augustine, "Whoso liveth contrary to Christ, he is an antichrist." Be thou within, be thou without, if thou live contrary to Christ, thou art but chaff. Of which Christ saith, Matt. iii. The chaff shall burn with fire that may not be quenched. And the soul that is chaff, shall ever suffer, and never die, as the prophet saith, Isaiah ix. Six sins there are against the Holy Ghost, that turn the wretched soul into this chaff. The philosopher saith, "There is no evil fled unless it be known." Therefore we shall name them in this little treatise for the more learning of small understanders.

The first of these sins is presumption—that is high swelling of the spirit, without dread of God's righteousness. And of this sin all manner of malice and wickedness taketh root, that reigneth among mankind, in ignorant or learned. In whomsoever this sin of presumption hath no lordship, in him the devil is overcome.

The second sin is desperation or despair—that is, too little trust on the mercy of God. St. Augustine saith, "Dread of God's righteousness, and hope of God's mercy, are two gates of life." For by them we enter, here into grace, and after into bliss, as the prophet saith, Ps. cxlvii. It is well pleasing unto the Lord upon them that dread him, and in them that trust on his mercy. And again, presumption and desperation are two gates of death, by which men enter into sin and trouble, and afterwards into the pains of hell without end. St. John teacheth against this sin, and saith, My little sons, these things I write unto you, that ye sin not in the sin of despair; but if it be so that any of us have sinned, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, our just Lord; and he is the mercy-asker for our sins; not only for our sins, but also for the sins of all the world. Jesus is, as to say "a Saviour," in our tongue. For he hath plenty of medicine to save all mankind, if they would take this medicine and be safe. For Gregory saith, "He slayeth himself that will not keep the bidding of his leech." (physician.)

The third sin is, obstinacy or hardness of heart, which will not be contrite for compunction, nor made soft with pity, nor moved with prayers or preachings, and setteth nought by beatings. It is unkind against good deeds, unfaithful to counsels, fierce and raging against judgments, unshamefaced in foul things, neither fearful in perils, nor manful in manhood, foolhardy against God, forgetful of time that is past, negligent in time that is present, not providing for time that is to come. And, to speak shortly, this is that sin which neither dreadeth God nor shameth man. Thus saith St. Bernard. And a medicine for this hard heart, Lincoln (Grosthead) teaches, when he says, "A hard heart should be brayed in a mortar of stone with a heavy pestle." This mortar is the body of Christ, wounded in his passion. This pestle is the dread of damnation that follows this sin. Thus then, thou obstinate man, thou man indurate in sin, thou hard-hearted wretch! Come thou nigh to the body of Christ. For dread of damnation conform thee to Christ's passion.

The fourth sin is, finally unrepentant. That is he that will never do true penance, [or be sorrowful for his sins,] but leadeth his life continually after the desires of his flesh, overcome with the fiend, and the false world. For no man doeth true penance to God, but he that fully leaveth that sin for which he suffereth penance. Thus saith St. Augustine, "They make a feigned shrift to a priest, and take part of sacraments; they build churches, and find priests to read and sing. They relieve the poor needy, and mend places that are perilous, but still they are hard congealed as frost, in old custom of sin." Upon this saith Gregory, "He that giveth meat or clothing to the poor needy, and is defouled in wickedness of body and soul, that which is most, he giveth to sin, that which is least, he giveth to righteousness." His goods he giveth to God, himself to the devil. For he setteth more price by worldly riches, than he doth by the body or the soul, and loveth most that which God loveth least; wherefore his love is turned to hate.

God hath given to man five precious gifts. The least of all is worldly goods; better than these is man's body which God hath endowed with natural strength, and granted in reason to use this world, himself to chastise, clothe, and feed. Above these two is man's soul, which beareth God's image and his likeness. Lord! what profit were it to win this world, and put loss to this soul? and the body is a hateful carrion when the soul is gone therefrom. But God's grace passeth these three. For where this faileth, no wisdom availeth. Look these are not spent amiss, nor work beside their order; but that they stretch all to one end, to win the fifth, that is, the bliss of heaven, for ever. Thou that changest this order upside down, St. Paul asketh this question of thee; Whether despisest thou the riches of the goodness and patience, and long abiding of thy God? Knowest thou not that the goodness of God leadeth or ordaineth thee to penance? (repentance.) Yet after thine hardness, and unrepentant heart, thou treasurest to thee wrath in the day of wrath, and showing of righteous judgment of God, that shall yield to each man after his works, Rom. ii.

The fifth sin is, envy of thy brother's grace, [as when thy neighbour is wise, well governed, praised, or borne up, rich, wealthy, strong, fair or virtuous in abundance of grace, then this envious man slanders, upbraids, reproves, despises, hates, hinders, scorns, and pursues to defoul his brother's grace as much as he may,] as the wise man saith, A man

walking in the highway, and dreading God, is despised of him that walketh in the wrong way.

When Jesus Christ cast out a devil from a man that was dumb, then scribes and pharisees, envious sects, that were a false private religion, slandered, that Christ wrought this miracle in Beelzebub that was prince of devils. Since these sects durst say thus to Christ, the head of man's soul, how much worse should they dare to his followers? Thus prelates and friars in these days shamefully slander their simple brethren, that travail through Christ's holy law to cast evil manners from their souls, preaching the gospel according to Christ's intent, to turn the people to virtuous living. They have brought their malice about to slander for LOLLARDS, those that speak of God, and they drive the people from the faith, that they dare not work or speak for slander. But assuredly they are not worthy Christ, that stay for the barking of these hounds. For none is worthy to be with this Lord who is ashamed to be in his service, in weal or in wo. And such men show themselves traitors to God, who with their slanders hinder their brethren, and say, the fiend may and will make wise his members that serve him in sin, but so will not Christ his loved servants, who live in cleanness, to serve him in virtue. This dispute stretches unto the Godhead, to be punished in the day of judgment. That a priest should not be hindered to preach the truth, nor God's people to speak of their belief, is openly taught in the book of Numbers xi. There it is read that Eldad and Medad prophesied, although they were not licensed by Moses. Joshua grudged against these men, and made his plaint unto Moses; and Moses said, Why art thou envious for me? Who may forbid that all the people prophesy? and God grant his Spirit unto them. This is confirmed in the gospel. St. John said unto Christ, We have seen a man casting out devils in thy name, who followeth not us, and we have forbidden him. Jesus said, Forbid him not. Alas! how dare our bishops for shame offend against these God's laws. Here the enemies of truth object, and bring Paul, where he saith, Rom. x. How shall they preach unless they are sent? With this they blind many folk, cutting the meaning from the words. For Paul meaneth that priests should preach, for they are sent both of God and of the bishop, to do that office. How shall these bishops maintain their constitutions against their God, and holy sects? It shall be more sufferable to Sodom and

Gomorrhah, than to this people that disturb God's ordinance.

The sixth sin is, fighting against the truth which a man knoweth. That is, when the truth is told to the guilty who disposes himself not to be amended, then he makes blind ungrounded reasonings, with subtle arguments and foul sophistications, and damneth the truth against his conscience, with a bold forehead that cannot shame, as the prophet saith, Jeremiah iii. As Jannes and Jambres againstood Moses in the sight of Pharaoh, so these againstand the truth, men corrupted in their minds. St. Peter calleth these men by name, when he saith, These are master-liars that shall bring in among the people sects of perdition. Though ye rise with Lucifer, and make yourselves nests among the stars, from thence ye shall be drawn and thrown to the ground. When will ye mark the words of Christ, who curseth you for your apostacy, and for that ye pull children from their fathers? \* Christ saith unto you, Matt. xxiii. Wo to you, scribes and pharisees, hypocrites, that compass about the sea and the land, to make you a novice ; † and when ye have found him, ye make him a hell-brand double than yourselves. As the foolishness of Pharaoh's philosophers was made known, so the false impugning of the truth by these subtle hypocrites shall speedily be made open. All men take heed of these six sins.

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## CHAPTER IV.

*What is Antichrist, in special, with his three parties.*

OF the great chief antichrist, that in a special manner bringeth forth false laws against Jesus Christ, and pretendeth himself to be most holy, the Lord God thus teacheth by the prophet Isaiah ix. (ver. 15.) A man of great age, and worshipful, holden of the world, he is head and chief antichrist. A prophet or a preacher teaching leasing, he is the tail of this antichrist. Of this tail speaketh St. Peter more plainly, and saith, These are spiritual merchants that shall chaffer with the people in feigned words, and with their sugar-likeros speech, they beguile the hearts of

\* This is an allusion to the arts of the friars, who induced children to forsake their parents and family duties, and even laudable studies, to become members of their orders. See the life of Wickliff, p. 12.

† One just entered into monastic orders.

innocents.\* For Jude saith, They shall worship the persons of men because of winning. This tail of antichrist shall not preach freely.

[Various passages are then quoted, Rev. xiii. 16, 17. xiv. 9—11. Zech. xi. 15. 17. Rom. viii. 9. Rev. xvi. 10, 11. with an application of them to the Romish prelates of that day. Then follows,] Lincoln† saith, “I quake, I dread, I am in horror, I am afraid, but I dare not be still, lest peradventure that sentence fall on me which the prophet saith, Isaiah vi. Wo to me, for I have stilled. The well, the beginning, and the cause of all ruin and mischief, is **THE COURT OF ROME.**” Now, by the one authority of God, and one accordance of his holy saints, follows an open conclusion firmly grounded in true belief, that in the court of Rome is the head of antichrist, and in prelates is the body of antichrist, but in these clouted sects, as monks, canons, and friars, is the venomous tail of antichrist.

How this antichrist shall be destroyed, God himself teacheth by the prophet Daniel, and saith, This antichrist shall be destroyed without hands, that is, without power of man. For Paul saith, 2 Thess. ii. Christ shall slay antichrist with the spirit of his mouth, that is, with the holy word of his law. And the Lord shall destroy him with the shining of his coming, that is, with turning of men’s hearts by his grace, to his law, a little before the doom.

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## CHAPTER V.

### *What is Antichrist in special, with five conditions.*

HOLY David the king, had given to him the full spirit of prophecy; and he, seeing the coming of antichrist, his living, and his fall, marked five hideous assaults which he shall commit against the servants of God. The first assault of antichrist, is constitution, as the prophet saith, Lord, suffer thou to ordain a law maker upon thy people, in pain of their sin, for they will not consent to the truth. That is to mean, antichrist uses false, lucrative, or winning laws, as absolutions, indulgences, pardons, privileges, and all other

\* Simple people.

† Grossthead. He resisted the pope’s profligate demand that he should allow an Italian boy to hold a benefice in his diocese. For this he was cited to Rome; the near view he had of the papal court fully convinced him it was antichrist. See History of the Church of Christ, vol. iv.



heavenly treasure that is brought to sale, to spoil the people of their worldly goods ; and principally these new constitutions, by whose strength antichrist interdicts churches, examines preachers, and deprives them of their benefices ; curses hearers, and takes away the goods of them that further the preaching of a priest, yea, though it were an angel of heaven, unless that priest show the mark of the beast, which is turned into a new name, and called a special letter of license, for the more blinding of ignorant people.\*

The second assault of antichrist, is tribulation, as the prophet saith, antichrist vexes the people by might, and hunting them to doing of idolatry. God saith by the prophet, Isaiah v. Wo to you that say good is evil, and evil is good, putting light into darkness, and darkness into light, turning sweet into bitter, and bitter into sweet. And thus doth antichrist, when he transposes virtues into vices, and vices into virtues ; as pilgrimage into outrage, and outrage into pilgrimage.†

The third assault of antichrist is, inquisition, as the prophet saith, antichrist inquires, searches, hearkens where he may find any man or woman that writes, reads, learns, or studies God's law, in their mother tongue, to lead their life after the pleasing will of God, and soon he catches them in his censures, and afterwards smites, as he may most grievously hurt them. But he shall not make this inquisition after the greatness of his wrath, for God shall refrain, and abridge the power of his malice, so that he shall do no more than God shall suffer him.

The fourth assault of antichrist is, persecution. Antichrist sitteth and sotteth in the peace of this world, with rich men in their dens. But the poor, meek, simple, and lowly, them he espies and pursues, and destroys them both bodily and spiritually. Ever in a country that is fat and abounding with worldly goods, there antichrist with his clerks build their nests, and if thou look about thee thou shalt find them among woods and waters.‡ [The writer then applies Rev. xvi. 13. as betokening the monastic orders.] They purchase

\* Allusion probably is here made to archbishop Arundel's constitutions, enacted A. D. 1406.

† The crusades undertaken at the instigation of the popes ; particularly those against the Albigenses in the twelfth century, when the pope's troops were called pilgrims.

‡ The sites of the principal ancient abbeys and monasteries, in the parts of the country then most fertile, sufficiently prove the truth of this statement.

of lords that are above them much part of their goods, with the tongue of flattering and feigned hypocrisies; and of the commons about them, they beguile into their hands much part of their goods. What they have won they hold fast against the authority of God's laws; and with these riches they nourish wild, sturdy, and lawless men, who pursue those that say ought against this cursed sin. But God, in this persecution, comforts his servants, and saith, Psalm xlvi. Our God is help in tribulations. True men shall not be abashed, though proud fleshly men are confedered to antichrist, and help him and his persecutions.

The fifth assault of antichrist is, execution. When he seeth that he avails not in these torments, then he executes his malice against Christ's chosen. In this time of execution, the vicious part of the laity, from the highest to the lowest, shall consent to execute the wickedness of this vicious part of the clergy. Then shall this prophecy be fulfilled, Ps. lxxix. They shall shed out innocent blood, and no man shall dare to bury their bodies. But, as St. Augustine declares, "When antichrist deems that he has lordship over all the servants of God, roaring upon them, with divers devices of tormenting, then shall he fall to open reproof for evermore." [Various references to the period of three years and a half, the time of the slaying of the witnesses, Rev. xi. then follow.] Let no man look after Enoch and Elijah in person, for then he may be beguiled, but in spirit and in power, now they are come to make men's hearts ready before Christ's doom, to whom be glory, now and for ever. Amen.

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## CHAPTER VI.

*What is the Church only belonging to God, with her names, likenesses, and conditions.*

To speak of holy church, first we take ground of the gospel, where Christ saith, Matt. xvi. The gates of hell shall not have might against holy church. For the more clear declaring of this matter, and avoiding of objections that may be put forth, understand that there are three churches, of which God's law often makes mention, and much they differ from each other, to them that take good heed.

The first is called a little flock, as Christ saith in Luke xii. Dread ye nothing, my little flock, it pleaseth your

**F**ather to give you a kingdom; and this church is called the chosen number of them that shall be saved. Also Paul saith, Eph. v. Christ hath chosen him a glorious church, neither having spot, nor blain, nor any other such thing, but that this church may be holy and undefiled. This church is called Christ's spouse. She is likened to a woman clad in the sun, as St. John saith in the Apocalypse. This church is likened to Peter's little boat, which was in the midst of the sea, Matt. xiv. Mark vi. The little boat was cast about in the midst of the sea with the waves. This boat both sank and swam, but never might it drown. So holy church suffers many perils, and sometimes bodily death, by the pursuit of enemies, but it shall never be damned.

This church is likened to paradise. The trees that bear fruit are good holy livers here on earth. The fruits of those trees are the works of holy saints. The tree of life is our Lord Jesus Christ. The tree of knowing good and evil, is the free choice of man's will. But however we speak in diverse names or likenesses of this holy church, they teach nought else but this one name, that is to say, the congregation or gathering together faithful souls that lastingly keep faith and truth, in word and in deed, to God and to man, and raise their life and sure hope of mercy, and grace, and bliss, at their end, and cover over this building in perfect charity that shall not fail in weal or in woe. Of this Paul spake to the Corinthians, and in them to all others, saying, The temple of God is holy, and that are ye. And by this we understand that the soul of a righteous man is the seat of God. Well ought such a man to be watchful and wise, that hath the great Lord God of Israel dwelling in his soul; and so saith St. Augustine, "O thou christian soul, awake, and if there be in thee any power of charity, that sustaineth all things, follow thou the steps of thy Lord. Take heed how many thousands of martyrs have made a smooth, plain way, to thee. There have passed before thee children and young damsels, and yet thou darest! Arise thou soul, for He shall lead thee who is the Way, Truth, and Life; the Way not erring; the Truth not beguiling; and the Life not failing! Way in example, Truth in promission, and Life in need."

Thus wandereth holy church in earth, in prayers, fastings, and wakings; in abstinence, tribulations, and anguish; in persecutions, in much need, and in prisons; in bonds,

in cold, and in much heaviness ; in thirst, in hunger, and in blamings ; in reprovings, in slanders, and in patience ; in long abiding, in simpleness, and in weeping ; in forgiving, in soberness, and in chastity ; in speediness, in largeness, and in charity. These are groanings of man's soul that longeth in love after Christ her spouse, till she have brought herself, a child of God, to bliss without end. And then for greatness of God's reward, the more she suffered, the more is her joy. For so saith St. Paul, Rom. viii. The sufferings of this time that we suffer in this mortal life, are as no sufferings in comparison to the glory that is to come, that shall be showed in us.

For then we shall be endowed with four dowers in our body, of which St. Paul speaketh, 1 Cor. xv. The body that is sown in corruption shall rise without corruption, in this chosen church at the day of doom, and this is called immortality. The body that is sown unworthy, shall rise in glory, and this is called clerte.\* The body that is sown in infirmity, shall rise in power, and this is called agility. The body that is sown earthly, shall rise spiritual, and this is called subtilty.†

But there are four other substantial rewards with which we shall be endowed in our souls. In plain speech, the first is knowledge without error ; the second, mind without forgetting ; the third, will without gainsaying ; the fourth, fruition or enjoyment of the Godhead, and love of God everlasting. Oh a wonderful joy is this, when the soul shall be fed with the sight of the Godhead, clad in the light of the Godhead, and ever occupied in the worship of the Godhead ! Paul, 1 Cor. ii. saith, Bodily eye hath never seen, neither ear hath heard, neither hath entered into man's heart, those things that God hath ordained to them that love him. Who should not move his feeble understanding to think on the choir that praiseth in heaven the goodness of this unsearchable Godhead, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost ?

[Then follows a description of the glories of heaven ; also an allegorical exposition of Rev. xii. 1. respecting the woman that appeared in heaven, clothed with the sun, the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars ; it contains some striking references to the work of Christ, and his union with his church.]

Other lights borrow their shining from the sun, both moon

learnness, brightness, glory.

Digitized by Google † Or spirituality.

and stars in their due course, else they are obscured with darkness that may not comfort night or day. So all men's work, in word or deed, borrow their light at Christ Jesus; for he is the Sun of righteousness. David declares, Ps. cxii. what this light meaneth, Light is sprung up to the righteous, that wandereth in the darkness of this life; and this is our Lord Jesus Christ, who of his own mercy hath showed it to his people.

Whatever any man doeth that has not this light, it leads blindlings to the dungeon of hell. But when this Sun shineth in his works, he grows by heat of God's grace, and ripens in virtue, as does the corn, to be reaped in his time to God's barn. Oh with how much diligence should this Lord be served for this gift of great price! Moses said, Deut. iv. There is no nation under heaven that hath their God so nigh to them, as our God is to us. For Christ saith, Matt. xxviii. Lo, I am with you all the days of your life, unto the end of the world.

Worthily is holy church likened to a woman, for she hath both sons and daughters; but not without the help and grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, as the gospel witnesses, John xv. Without me, saith Christ, ye may do nothing—that is to say, nothing thankworthy. Here some object, that the gospel is not of authority, but inasmuch as the church hath authorized it. For they say that no man knoweth such words to be the gospel, but as the church hath determined. This conclusion seems to savour of heresy, by the witness of St. Augustine, who says, "Heresy is a false teaching, contrary to holy writ, fool-hardily defended; most because of worship and worldly winning." And since all these are found in this objection, it is full suspect of heresy.—St. James destroyeth this objection, and saith, God hath of his own free will begotten us through the word of truth, that we may be some beginning of his creature. And this creature is holy church, that was chosen in the time of grace, by the water of cleansing, by Christ's blood of again-buying,\* and by power of the Holy Ghost hallowing. Were it not then against reason, and open heresy, to maintain that the word of God, which hath gotten this creature, holy church, should not be of authority, without the authority of this creature, holy church? Wherefore, this conclusion being approved, we grant of belief that the church is inferior to Christ and his gospel, in four

\* Redemption.

manners. 1. As the moon to the sun, of which it is enlightened. The church is fair as the moon, Cant. vi. 2. As the earth to the firmament, of which it is watered or made fruitful. As dew cometh down from the firmament, and turneth not thither again, but watereth the earth, and maketh it plenteous of fruits, so the word of God nourisheth holy church, and maketh it to bring forth good virtues. 3. As the flesh to the Spirit, of whom it is quickened. It is the Spirit that quickeneth, and giveth life, John vi. 4. As the body is to the head, of whom it is governed, God the Father, hath made his Son, Christ, head of the church, Eph. v. Christ is head of the body of the church, and every chosen man and woman is called a son or daughter of this church, but all together are the full body of this church, as Paul saith, Rom. xii. We may be one body in Christ, as each of us are other's members. But some children of this woman are simple labourers, and for that they impart of their true travail, therefore they represent the good love of the Holy Ghost. And these dread the Lord, and walk in the way of his commandments, as the prophet saith, Ps. cxxviii. Blessed are all labourers that dread the Lord, and walk in his ways. For thou shalt live by the labour of thine hands. Thou art blessed, and well shall be to thee. And this is the lowest estate, which we call the commons.

Some of this woman's children take the material sword, and are made ministers of Christ's Godhead, having power and dread unto wrath and vengeance of them that do evil, and praising of them that do well. And so by the authority of St. John Baptist, Luke iii. of St. Peter, 1 Pet. ii. and of St. Paul, Rom. xiii. it pertains to the order of knight-hood to defend God's law, to maintain good livers, and sorely to punish misdoers. And this is called the second estate in holy church.

But some children of this woman ascend into the highest order of priesthood, and are made ministers of Christ's manhood; and these have knowledge and wisdom to open to the people the way of truth. St. Augustine saith, "Knight-hood represents the might and the power of the Father, as the vicar of the Godhead;\* and priesthood represents the wisdom of the Son, as the vicar of Christ's manhood." These knights teach to us the dread of God's righteousness, that punisheth obstinate sinners who turn from his law in the evil of their hearts; and priests by their office teach us

\* Rom. xiii. 4.

the love that God hath to his people, who forgiveth them all their sins when they come to him and do true penance; then help priests with sacraments to please God and win his love. For Paul admonishes the priest Timothy, and in him all other priests, to take good heed to five things in which their office standeth. 1. Awake thou priest in busy prayer, praying for the people devoutly. 2. Travail thou priest in the lessons of holy writ, studying God's law only. 3. Do thou the work of the gospel, preaching God's word truly. 4. Fulfil thou thy ministry, ministering the sacraments freely. 5. Be thou sober in word and deed, doing and suffering lastingly.

Upon these three estates standeth the church of God; and by the virtue of Christ's incarnation it groweth in meed\* to come to bliss. Odo saith, that Christ Jesus took flesh and blood, and was born both God and man, to unite our nature to his Godhead. For when he took our manhood he granted us his Godhead, and in that time, in special manner, he first gave earnest to his church. After this was Jesus Christ baptized in the river Jordan; and thrice tempted of the fiend, to teach us meekly to suffer temptation. And he took death upon a cross, by the cruel judgment of the Jews, and then the church was troth plighted to Christ, and called by name his fair, holy spouse. And as she had grace, by devotion of faith, so hath she worthiness of this name. But when this church is brought to heaven, and resteth in bliss with Christ, then is this marriage fully solemnized. While this life endures in earth, the church is called militant, and when it sleeps in purgatory, she is called slepand.† But when she hath rest of all her travail, then is she called the church triumphant.

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## CHAPTER VII.

### *What is the material church, with her ornaments.*

THE second church is the coming together of good and evil, in a place that is hallowed, far from worldly occupation. There sacraments should be ministered, and God's law both read and preached. In this place our gracious Lord heareth our prayers in special manner, and boweth his ear to his

\* Merit.

† Sleeping. Respecting this error, see Wickliff, p. 40, 59.

servants, as he granted to Solomon, 1 Kings ix. 2 Chron. vii. Mine eyes, saith God, shall be open, and mine ears shall be lift up to the prayer of him that hath justly prayed in this place. And this is called a material place, for it is made by man's craft, of lime, of timber, and of stone, &c.

For man's profit this place is made, but not so man for the place, as Christ marketh in his gospel, for man should not be beguiled, Matt. xii. Mark ii. Luke vi. The sabbath is made for man, and not man for the sabbath. Man, by virtue of God's word, halloweth this place, but this place may not hallow man. Alas! what madness is this, to boast of holy places, and we ourselves to be such vicious fools! Lucifer was in heaven, and that is most holy place, but for his sin he fell to hell; the place could not hold him. Adam was in paradise, the happiest place, and for his sin he was driven out; the place might not defend him. Thou that art neither in heaven nor in paradise, but in this wretched world, where thinkest thou to find a place to hallow thee that leavest not thy sin? Be thou sure, as God is in heaven, that it will not be; for God is fair served in no place but where his law is fair kept of the people.

Much people deem it a good work to deceive men's eyes with curious buildings, and many vain staring sights in their churches; but Jerome forbids this, and condemns it utterly for great sin, now in this time of Christ's gospel. Many build arches and pillars of the church, they pave with shining marble stones, the beams glisten all in gold, the altars are diversely arrayed with precious stones, but of the ministers of God there is no choice. Let no rich man allege the temple in Jewry, boards, lamps, censers, pans, cups, and such other things made of gold, for then these things were approved of the Lord, when priests offered sacrifices, and blood of beasts was remission of sins—though all these things went before in figure, nevertheless they are written for us unto whom the ends of the world are come. But now Christ, our poor Lord, hath hallowed the house or the church of our poverty. Let us bear the cross of Christ, and account riches as clay. Bernard saith, "O vanity among all vanities! and no greater vanity. The church shineth in buildings, and she needeth in the poor. She lappeth her stones in gold, and her sons she forsaketh naked. Of the stores for the needy is made a vain service for rich men's eyes."

But our new, feigned sects, in this are most to blame,



that make great buildings, their least need were of them, as monks, canons, and friars, [nuns, sisters, and hospitalers.] For people should draw to parish churches, and hear the word of God there as God's law hath limited, else they are to blame. What mean these waste places of these hidden hypocrites, but to tell men by their synagogues where Satan's seat is! There lurk together many ravening wolves that despoil the people with many false signs.\*

Four reasons of holy writ declared by doctors, shall teach you this great fault if ye will amend. But here I dread, as Paul saith, 2 Cor. iv. that the God of this world, who is called mammon, hath cast his powder before your eyes, and blinded your spiritual sight, that it may not know the gospel, to the true understanding. Each corruptible work, or each work that is rotten in the root, shall fail in the end. And he that is founder of such ungrounded work shall fail, and be worth to nought therewith in the last days. God never planted these new sects in either of his laws, neither approved such manner of life; for Christ in his living pulled them up by the roots that were in his days, as essenes, sadducees, and pharisees, and condemned their ordinances. Each plant, saith Christ, Matt. xv. which my Father of heaven hath not planted, shall be rent up utterly, the roots and all.

The first reason is, These sects are dead from the world, as they say in word. St. Paul teaches in his epistle to the Colossians, Ye that are dead from the manners of this world,

\* Langland thus describes a convent of the preaching friars :—

When I came to the court I gaped about,  
Such a bild bold\* ybuilt upon earth high, (\* Grond seat.)  
Saw I not for certain, since a long time.  
I thought upon that house, and earnest thereon looked,  
How the pillars were pointed and pulched† full clean, († Beautifled.)  
And quaintly ycarved with curious knots,  
With windows well wrought, wide up aloft.

He then minutely describes the expensive ornaments he beheld, and the grandeur of the buildings, and proceeds thus :—

I saw halls full high, and houses full noble,  
Chambers with chimneys, and chapels gay,  
And kitchens for a high king in castles to hold.  
And the dortour‡ ydight with doors full strong, (‡ Dormitory.)  
And all strong stone walls, stern upon height,  
With gay garites and great, and each hole yglazed,  
And other houses, enough to harbour the queen.  
And yet these builders will beg a bag full of wheat,  
Of a pure poor man, that can scarcely pay  
Half his rent in a year, and half is behind!

your life is hid with Christ in God ; and therefore mortify or make dead your members that are upon earth, which are fornication, foul desires, with corrupt liking of fleshly lusts, and foul covetousness of your heart, and avarice of greedy gathering. For of these cometh the wrath of God upon the sons of misbelief. If ye sects forsake this lore, the wrath of God shall soon assail you.

The second reason against such building is, that business about such costly buildings, with manifold worldly occupation to repair and hold them up, brings in negligence of good manners, quenching virtues and good qualities. Bernard saith, " I see what may not be seen without great sorrow. Some men after they have entered into the knight-hood of Christ, that is to forsake this world, and willingly endure painful living, often drown themselves in earthly covetousness, and are employed with worldly deeds, in great business. They rear up houses, but they are negligent in good qualities. What profit is it to have high temples, and their houses gilded with gold, when the Spirit of God is wanting? God hath no delight in such wretched, sinful sects. But God willeth that your temples, which are your own souls, be honoured with holy virtues, and continue to the end in good works."\*

The third reason is mighty and strong, it springs with the others from God's law. That such as part themselves from the common life of other men, should always be in this way, as strangers that are far from home, and pilgrims in their pilgrimage. As Paul speaks to the Hebrews, xiii. We have here no dwelling place, but we seek that which is to come.—How dare these men, for shame, with poor men's goods, and pillage of lords, defend their foul apostacy against their God and holy saints, and tell ignorant people by words of hypocrisy that they do thus to God's worship. †

\* The principal architects and superintendents of buildings in the middle ages, were monks.

† Langland represents a friar urging a layman to give him money :

We have forsaken the world and in woe live,  
 And in poverty pray for all our pertainers  
 That give us any good, God to honour,  
 Either bell, either book, or bread for our food,  
 Or cattels, or cloth to cover our bones,  
 Money, or money-worth, their meed is in heaven !  
 For we build a burrough, a broad and a large ;  
 A church and a chapter-house, with chambers aloft,  
 With wide windows ywrought, and walls well high :—  
 And mightest thou amend us with money of thine own,

The fourth reason is this, God's law chargeth to love thy neighbour as thyself. But this love is best made known by good example in word and deed. In what may these sects profit that here reverse Christ's rule, and give evil example to their neighbours in pride and covetousness, and show themselves richest and most worldly, in meat, clothes, and curious building. Bernard forbids this, saying, "Lowly houses and poor restrain covetousness, and we ought rather to marvel at the sight of heaven, than at the sight of buildings of man's handiwork. Much more should we marvel at the great works of God, than at the works of mortal men that endure but for a time."

All holy saints agree that our material churches, which are for parishioners when they come together, shall be made with virtuous means and in an honest measure. But it must be avoided that in this church there be show or pride, or passing over the bounds of poverty, either in the building or in the ornaments. And diligently this must be marked, that they avoid vain glory of this world, and glorify the cross of God. But this word of Christ's cross is folly to them that shall be damned. Paul commends the coming of Christ and his humbling in his manhood, Ye ought to know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ; for when he was rich in all things, he was made poor as man for you, that ye should be rich in spiritual things through this virtuous need of Christ. Christ who blameth all vicious means in the service of his people, will not authorize it to himself or in his house, as saith Matthew xxiv. Mark xiii. and Luke xxi. Christ wept over the city, for man's building stood full strong, but body and soul, which he made to be his own dwelling place, were fallen from keeping of his law, into sin. Christ said, Wo to you scribes and pharisees, that cleanse all that is outward, but within ye are replete with ravening and uncleanness. Ye build the tombs of holy prophets, and wonderfully honour their graves; but ye follow your father's footsteps in pursuing of righteous blood. And these sects do the same, but with more malice in word and deed. How shall ye flee the judgment of hell? Thus saith our Lord Jesus Christ. Whereto make ye shrines for saints, and yet ye draw, hang, and burn them that hold the way of

Thou couldest kneel before Christ in compass of gold,  
In the wide window westward, well nigh in the middle;

And St. Francis himself shall fold thee in his cope,

And present thee to the Trinity, and pray for thy sin.

See the extract from Chaucer, Wickliff, p. 76.

Christ, and follow after his holy saints; and though this appear not in outward deed, ye do this slaughter in word and will. As pharisees, with priests, in the third hour, forejudged our Lord with their tongues, and afterwards knights at the sixth hour hanged his body upon the cross; so these sects go before to smite the people with their tongues, and afterwards knights of Herod's house, are full ready to make an end.\* But stint thou not, though thou art slandered, if thou live just life; to mend this put to thy hand, and think on Christ's reward, Matt. x. Who that hath lost his life for me, and for the gospel, he shall make his soul safe into the bliss of heaven.

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## CHAPTER VIII.

### *Of good and evil coming to the material church.*

WE shall now speak of two diverse parties that come together to this church, both of good and evil. First we take for our ground where Christ speaketh in parable to his own disciples, Matt. xiii. The kingdom of heaven is like to a net that is sent into the sea, and gathereth together of all kinds of fishes. When this net was full of fishes, the fishers drew it to the land, and they, sitting beside the sea brink, chose the good into their vessels, the evil they sent out, and cast them again into the sea. The second church here on earth is like to a net sent into the sea of this world.†—The fishes that swim in this sea, are all the people that live in this world, both good and evil, of every degree, of each state, temporal or spiritual. And as the great fishes eat the small, so mighty rich men of this world devour the poor.—And thus saith God by the prophet Habakkuk. The prophet seeing in his spirit how rich men waste the poor needy, he maketh mourning to his God; Lord, shalt thou suffer men to be made as fishes that swim in the sea, &c. But for that fishes dread not the hideous waves, whether they rise high or fall low, in this place they shall betoken true belief of man's heart. Christ in the gospel, Luke xi. stirreth us to prayer, saying, Which of you being asked

\* The usual course of proceeding against the Lollards, was that after being examined by the ecclesiastics, and sentence pronounced against them, they were delivered to the secular or civil power, and burned alive.

† The author then gives an allegorical exposition of the parable.

of his son, My father, give me a fish, shall he for this fish give him an adder? Nay, plainly, Chrysostom saith upon this text, that this fish is man's faith; and after this we should pray to our Father that is in heaven, that he will stablish us in true belief, and in the articles that belong thereto; for then we shall be well disposed, in the waters of tribulation, to do and to suffer as pleases God, lively joying for this belief; and though there seem peril of death, our conscience shall not abash. For succour is kept for all the faithful, in the treasure of Christ's passion.

The fishers that draw this net, are angels sent before the doom, that shall rightly do God's message, and bring all folks before God almighty, as is written, Joel iii. (12—14.) and there shall he make with them a righteous reckoning upon his people Israel, that is his own heritage. And then shall Christ, with his saints, part the evil from the good. Christ chooseth the good of his church into the vessel of bliss, but the evil they cast out into the furnace of fire; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

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## CHAPTER IX.

### *Of discretion to know the good from the evil.*

NONE may discern these two parties verily from each other, wandering in this second church, for their likeness, and that they have in common many heavenly things. For our Lord hath in his church, labourers about his vineyard, fasters, prayers, and wakers: alms doers are in this church, with preachers, and readers of lessons, and singers also, with ministers of sacraments, with studiers in God's law, and men that make love days.\* And the like servants hath the fiend in the third church, but they do their service in a strange manner. Nevertheless they are hard to know, therefore we shall mark how wonderfully they vary in these aforesaid conditions.

*Fasters* in Christ's church abstain from lusts, to abate their rebel flesh, and keep their bodies clean, and subject to their soul. The soul is not a debtor to follow the life after the flesh, but on contrariwise, the flesh must needs be mortified; and when thou leavest foul desires then is thy flesh mortified. This is the deed that we shall do, this is the office of our warfare. But fasters in the fiend's church fast for ungrounded cause; some fast for hypocrisy, and show

\* Times appointed for the settlement of differences.

themselves sorrowful to the people. Such Christ blameth, and calleth them sorrowful hypocrites, Matt. vi. For of the vain praises of man's mouth, they have received all their reward. Some deny themselves both meat and drink, to spare their purse; and Gregory saith, this fasting is for their satchel and not for God! And this is to pain our flesh, and lose our reward, as the wise man saith, Ecclesiasticus vi. Some fast for a medicine, to get them bodily health, neither for God, nor for the soul, but to cleanse their beauty. St. Jerome blames this fasting. "Abstinence of body is holiness to God when the mind fasteth from vices. What profits it to tear the body with hunger, when the mind within swells with pride? What fasting is this to withdraw food, and to rage in envy or foul hastiness?" God saith by the prophet Isaiah lviii. When ye fast ye make strife and debates among yourselves; this is not the fasting that I choose, saith the Lord God. The fiend neither eateth nor drinketh, neither is wrapped in clothes, yet he shall be ever in pain, for he lacketh charity. This then is an evidence that all such reckless fasters are members of the fiend's church in following their father.

X *Prayers\** that are in Christ's church pray with devotion, with all the strength of their hearts, and their mouths accordingly. Freshly bringing to their minds the kindness of God; how he hath ruled them in this life, and kept them from mischief, as though he had no more than one: so he saveth all them that love him. Then they think on their foul sins, and feel that they have done both wittingly and wilfully against God's will. They have been careless in God's service, and that grieves them sorely. And when they think on this world, how it passes suddenly, and of the torment in hell that damned souls shall suffer, and on the bliss that God hath ordained for his true servants, they find a well that springeth from the heart, and runs forth from their eyes by many warm streams. But prayers\* in the fiend's church make much noise, mumbling with their lips. As Christ saith, Matt. xv. This people worship me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. When thy body is in the church, but thy heart in the world, or cumbered with unclean thoughts, and with vain fantasies, and thy tongue in minstrelsy or foolish jangling, and thy wits overset with worldly cares, art not thou then wretchedly divided in thyself? St. James saith, Suppose not, vain

\* Those that pray.

man, that he may take any thing of the Lord that suffereth his heart to sleep in sin. And God saith to wicked livers, *Isaiah i.* When ye have multiplied your prayers, I shall not hear you graciously. Christ saith, *Matt. xxiii.* Wo to you, scribes and pharisees, hypocrites, that eat the houses of widows by your long prayers; for this ye shall have the larger judgment. Upon this saith *Chrysostom*, "The sleights or wiles of hypocrites, women may not easily know; and because of their religion they will soon bow to them; for they are tender and wave about as the wind." These flattering glossers most haunt widows' houses. Christ wisheth them wo, and warneth priests that they forsake this sinful manner. For it is too cursed a deed to hide sin under a painted religion, and to clothe wickedness in hypocrisy, till it is believed, for very pity; and in the armour of Jesus Christ. They do the fiend's work of hell when they enlarge their long prayers as nets that are spread abroad, and with craft they catch away the goods of these simple widows. These widows we shall understand both for women and for men that want wisdom of Jesus Christ, who is the spouse of man's soul. For Jesus Christ nowhere delights but in them that love his law.

*Wakers* that are in Christ's church, wake in virtue and devout prayer, and avoid all devices; for they will not be negligent, but keep awake their inward eye, which faithfully sees the works of God, and then rises up, as *St. Paul* saith, a new man formed after God, and serves him in righteousness, truth, and holiness. This is waking to God's worship and their own salvation, and profits their fellow christian. For *St. Paul* means, this work chases the fiend, so that he flees from all such wakers, and has no power to hurt body or soul. Certainly the thought foreknown turns away the mind from sin, and great infirmity makes a sober soul.

But wakers in the fiend's church use a fleshly watch, for they are ever slumbering. When any good deed is to be done, they are overcome with the dead sleep that brings them to mischief, as the wise man saith, *Proverbs vi.* Napping, slumbering, and dead sleep are the fiend's officers. Men nap when they consent to do the fiend's stirring. When they work openly what the fiend desires, in the sight of the world, they are slumbering. But when they maintain boldly whatever they do amiss, then they are in dead sleep, and wake in their sins, changing night into day.

*Alms doers* in Christ's church, relieve in due time, with

their plenty, them that suffer need, as St. Paul saith, 2 Cor. viii. Look that your abundance fulfil the need of others; for ye, thus doing, shall receive the blessing of God; as Psalm xli. Blessed be he that taketh heed on the needy and poor. In four things God's servants meedfully do their alms. 1. They seek God's will, and do it to his worship. 2. Of true gotten goods, clearly in their conscience. 3. That they know their brother lives a gracious life. 4. That he suffers need without any feigning.

But alms doers in the fiend's church feed many wretches, as strong stiff beggars, and strikers over the land, and groaners without cause, that need not their goods. Yea, to minstrels, to jugglers, and other vain japers, they deal largely their goods and call it alms. But true men say goods are thus dispended all amiss. And if they do any thing as need is, presently they seek vain glory, and lose all their reward. St. Isidore saith, "When the poor man is fed because of vain glory, then the work of mercy is turned into sin." When thine intent is not well ruled, thou gettest no reward whatsoever thou do.

*Preachers* that are in Christ's church, come freely among the people, as Christ came from heaven, and gave this charge to his disciples, Matt. x. Freely ye have your wisdom, freely give it again. And these preachers preach truly to edify the people in virtue, as Christ commanded his disciples, Mark xvi. Going forth into all the world, preach ye the gospel to each creature, that is to each man.

And they live virtuously themselves, according to their preaching, to strengthen their holy words by the spirit of life, when they give a true example, according to their saying. And this is the teaching of Jesus Christ, Matt. v. Look that your light so shine before men of this world, that they may see your good works, and glorify not you, but your Father that is in heaven, of whom cometh all your grace.

But preachers in the fiend's church, preach under pretence, to take gifts. And they preach chronicles with dreamings, and many helpless tales that are of no avail. They clout falsehood to the truth with much ungrounded matter, hindering the people from true belief. And these preachers waver about in many fleshly lusts, as Jude saith, These are spots, feasting and feeding themselves without any dread, worshipping the persons of men for gain.\*

\* The like complaints were made of the Romish priests who outwardly conformed to the Reformation, in the reign of Edward VI.



*Readers* in Christ's church read holy lessons, and attend to their reading with devotion: as Jerome saith, "So read thou holy writ, that thou ever have mind that the words thou readest are God's blessed law, who commanded it not only to be read, but also that the readers should keep it in their works. What profit is it to read things to be done, and not fulfil them in deed? As a clean mirror of life, the lesson of holy writ is to be had, that all which is good may be made better, and that which is evil may be amended." And these readers read diligently that which is treatable, and openly, without interruption, without corrupting, or passing over letter, word, or syllable, and do all things in order.

But readers in the fiend's church jangle their lesson, as jays chatter in the cage, and wot not what they mean; striving for nought of rules of their ordinal\* and many vain questions. And if they understand the lesson when it is read, or any part of God's law when it is declared, soon they tread it under foot in their works. God saith by Jeremiah (xlviii.) to these vain readers, Cursed be he that doeth the work of God fraudulently, that is to say, falsely, or deceivably. And Gregory saith, "Only that man doeth no fraud in God's service, who waketh in study of good deeds, and neither boweth to reward of bodily things, nor seeketh the word of man's praising, neither looketh after favour of foolish judgment."

*Singers* in Christ's church are they that sing heavenly songs, and with their sweet melody please God. As Paul saith, Col. iii. Suffer ye the word of God to dwell plentifully among you in all manner of heavenly wisdom, increasing you in virtue, teaching and admonishing yourselves in psalms and hymns, and spiritual songs, singing in grace with fervent devotion in your hearts to your God. And whatever ye shall do in word or in work, do ye that perfectly in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, yielding thanks to the Father by that same Jesus Christ. He that is occupied in heavenly desires, though his tongue be still, and make no noise, he sings a song, as St. Augustine saith, that God liketh best.

But singers in the fiend's church break curious notes. And that is but a puff of wind, as saith St. Bernard wisely, "To please the people with their voice, and to fill their ears with vain din." But St. Gregory saith, according with St. Bernard, "When fair and glosing voice is sought, perfect

\* The Romish service book, which was very complicated.

life is forsaken, and the people are led into sin;" as God saith by his prophet Ezekiel xxxiii. (31, 32.) And again by Amos v. Do thou away from me the pride of thy chanting, and I shall not hear the songs of thy harp. What may this mean that priests in the churches give themselves so much to song, and so little to preaching? In few places or none of the new testament shall we ground this manner of song, neither among our doctors. But they are often charged to preach, under great pain, and always that they do what they may that the people be truly taught to lead a sober life. Therefore Gregory smote them with a curse that busied themselves in the court of Rome about such feigned singing, whereby the office of preaching was hindered.

† *Ministers of sacraments* that are in Christ's church, be-think them how these sacraments come of Christ and of his holy passion, taken of his blessed body for treasure of his church, and they are salve and medicine for all those sick members that will show their sores to God's priests of wise discretion, and use these sacraments in their kind. As St. Paul teaches, 1 Cor. v. Christ is offered our Passover, that nourisheth us with his sacraments, and therefore let us rejoice in this spiritual food, not in anger, and malice, and wickedness; but in the fair, pure, bread of holiness and of truth. These two virtues teach us to cleanse body and soul, whether we give or take these sacraments.\*

But ministers that are in the fiend's church, minister these sacraments, and treat them unworthily, and all such, both learned and ignorant, are in spirit children of Judas. Thus it is with the fiend's children when they receive the sacraments; they go to them unworthily, and so to their damnation—some there are, as Simon's heirs, that sell these sacraments; and some are ready with their money, as chapmen in a fair, to buy of these merchants, merit, as they suppose. But both the buyers and the sellers merit endless pain. Some make letters for the more subtle hypocrisy, to sell all their suffrages; † wherever they find chapmen that will pay largely, then is the bargain made. How study these limbs of the fiend in the deeds of the apostles, where such merchandise is condemned, as it is said of Simon Magus, Acts viii? These that we have

\* The seven sacraments of the church of Rome are then specified.

† Prayers. The writer enlarges on the sale of the sacraments in the church of Rome.

marked are Simon's heirs, for they think when they have money to grant the people these spiritual gifts. But Peter blamed this man, and gave a rule that ever shall last, that curses and condemns both the givers and the takers. Judas made a covenant with the Jews and sold his master, Jesus Christ, whose death is our redemption; but therefore his name is, cursed Judas; but his children do much worse in selling the sacraments, and for less price, that are not mortal, and may not suffer. Neither any profits come of such sale, but vengeance here and elsewhere. Alas! when will these wretches beware?

*Studiars* in Christ's church, study day and night, in the law of the Lord, as the prophet saith, Psalm i. Well is it with him that so may study to find these precious fruits, to make fair their own soul with flowers of holy writ. Then Christ will take his resting place in the chamber of their conscience. St. Jerome counsels in his prologue upon the bible, "I pray thee, brother, that thou have thy study in thy mind, among the lessons that are in holy writ; busy thee nothing else to know, nothing else to seek. Set thine heart in holy study, and pursue after with all thy strength, and thou shalt in short while find it more sweet than the honeycomb."

But *studiars* in the fiend's church study in their made laws, all for riches, and for pride, and for their worldly worship. Yea, so far that scarcely any man is found who abideth with God's law clear without meddling, but draweth him to man's law, for that savours of gain, and there they study earnestly and sorely. But at their last end this shall be their payment, as God saith by his prophet Jeremiah, Cursed must that man be that setteth his faith in man, and suffereth his heart to go away from his Lord God, &c. (xvii. 5, 6.)

Such men slander Christ, who is both God and man, and hath both hallowed his laws with his precious death, and hath put in them the Spirit of life by the quickening of his blood, to rear souls from death, and bring them again to life. Christ saith, John xi. Whoso believeth in me, yea, though he be dead he shall live again, both in grace and in glory. But it is not in man's law, that may give this power. Then is this foul slander of them that study in man's law as if it were the better, and therefore such forward thoughts part their souls from God. Of all these Jeremiah speaks, vi. (13—15.)

*Peacemakers* in Christ's church move men to the rest

that Christ promised to his disciples when he was here among them, John xiv. My peace I give you, my peace I leave with you. His peace he left with us when he went to heaven. His peace he shall give us in the world's end. His peace he gave to us, to help us in this world. His peace he shall grant to us, to solace us in bliss. He hath left us his peace to be our trusty clothing, for if we are clad therein we shall overcome our enemies. He shall grant us his peace, and then we shall be sure to reign, world without end, without any enemies. He hath left us his peace that we deem not falsely of our neighbours beside us, of things that are uncertain. He shall give to us peace, when he shall make known the hidden thoughts of man's heart; and then shall be praising of every man to God, after he hath discerned. Christ hath left among us peace, that we should love together, hating sin and loving virtue, for thus he loved us. For there is no charity unless sin be hated and plucked up by the roots in us and all others. Then Christ shall give us full peace when we may never be at discord. Thus saith St. Augustine.

Now ground we upon this in our minds that these peacemakers, for that they would have this peace among them, stand armed at all pieces, for dread of their enemies, in the armour of Jesus Christ, that Paul teaches, Eph. vi. Six armours the apostle rehearses that arm the soul, five to defend, the sixth to assail. 1. A girdle of chastity, (truth,) and thereby we may know that Paul speaks of the knowledge of the soul, and leaves bodily armour. Take up this girdle, that ye may stand perfect in the peace of your soul, against all fleshly stirrings. 2. An habergeon of righteousness is the second armour, that is thick mailed, for falsehood should not enter to grieve God or man, or disturb this true peace. 3. Leg harness, or showing of affections in the gospel of Jesus Christ, and then they are disposed to make peace among men. Not as the world asketh, but that they stand perfectly in all adversity, with Christ and his gospel to the death day. 4. A shield of faith. In this they shall quench all the fiend's burning darts, that are his temptations. Then may no deadly blow steal upon that man who hath the shield of true belief hanging on his heart. 5. A helm of health,\* which is called trusty hope; for it bears off the strokes the fiend throws at man's soul, with pitiless gins;† the one is

\* Helmet of salvation.

obstination or hardness of heart, the other is desperation or wanhope.\* But whoso hath the helm of hope, though strokes light on him, they shall in no wise burst his head-piece or sink into his soul. Therefore he liveth peaceably in hope of God's mercy. 6. Is the sword of the Spirit, that is God's word. With this sword Jesus Christ assailed the fiend of hell, when Christ said, Go, Satan; and he fled away. For this sword is full sharp, and biteth on both sides; it parteth at a stroke the soul from the body; and it parteth in this life virtue from sin; and it shall part at doomsday the good from the evil. God give us grace to take this sword, for all that take up this sword, and stand in this armour, Christ our Captain blesseth them, and calleth them his children, Matt. v. Blessed are the peace-makers, for they shall be called the sons of God. And Christ saith, Love ye your enemies; do ye well to them that hate you, and pray for your pursuers and your slanderers; that ye may be the sons of your Father that is in heaven.

But peace-makers in the fiend's church confederate together in a false peace, after the manner of this world. This Christ's gospel condemns, Matt. x. Luke xii. where he saith, I come not to maintain vicious peace. And this, sinful wretches throw under feet. Faith, truth, and righteousness, they count at no price; for they lead the country after their own pleasure. David sorrowed for this mischief, Ps. xiii. But priests and knights are most to blame for this sin. Priests that should be spiritual physicians, and reconcile the people by good counsels to their God, and heal them with his law; what with pride and covetousness, and many fleshly lusts, they are so blinded that they know no wisdom. And they fail spiritual sight and wisdom to search into any spiritual sickness; or to search about the peril of a wound; yet they are presumptuous to offer false medicine, and undertake great cures to make men whole. But they hurt them much sorer than they were before, as the Lord moveth by the prophet Jeremiah, viii. (11, 12.) And he saith, xxiii. Hear ye not the words of these preachers, that preach and deceive you; they speak the vision of their heart, but not of the Lord's mouth; they say to those that blaspheme me, The Lord speaketh that peace shall be to you. And they have said to each that walketh in the wickedness of his heart, There shall no evil come upon you. The gospel beareth witness, Matt. xv. When the blind lead the blind, fall they not both

\* Despair.

into the lake? Yes, plainly. These preachers are no preachers, but only in name, as a lushborne\* is called a penny that is worth nought.

Knights also are to blame, that misuse their power and will not read in God's law, nor learn their office, and therefore the wise man blameth them in the sixth chapter of the book of Ecclesiasticus. How should ye knights maintain peace when ye forsake it yourselves? These priests and knights, through their vicious deeds, lead the commons in their ways, and hold them in sin, so that all this world is set in uproar, in battle, and in war. But now are proved the words that God hath said by the prophet Jeremiah, ix. to teach his chosen servants, And shall I not visit upon these things, saith the Lord God, shall not my will be venged upon such a folk?

But haply here some will say, God will not take vengeance upon his christian people; God will not lose that which he dearly bought with his precious blood. To the first we answer by the mouth of the prophet Jeremiah, xvi. The Lord saith, Your fathers have forsaken me, and gone after strange gods—but ye do much worse than your fathers ever wrought. Lo, each of you walketh after the wickedness of his evil heart, that he hears not me, saith the Lord God, and I shall cast you away into a land that is unknown to you, and to your fathers, and there ye shall do service to alien gods, that shall give no rest to you, day nor night.

To the second we answer, as Christ saith, Matt. xxii. Friend, how enteredst thou hither, not having the bridal garment? And he was dumb. Then this king, Jesus Christ, said to his ministers, Bind this wretch hand and foot, and send him into the utter darkness, there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Understand by this, both man and woman that hold the name, but want the works of true belief. Therefore Christ awardeth them to the pains of hell.

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## CHAPTER X.

*How the Good of the second Church, accord with the first Church.*

FAITH, hope, and charity, as we have said, unite God and man together in the unity of this church. This knot

\* Or Lushburgh.—Base money coined abroad in the reign of Edward III., to counterfeit the English coin.—*Leake's Account of English Money.*

is knit so surely, that it shall never more fail, neither here nor elsewhere. As the wise man saith, Ecc. iv. A three-fold cord full loth is brosten.\*—Then we shall draw nigh to our God, through grace, mercy, and righteousness, till we see God in Trinity, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Every member of this church helpeth what it may to work a part of this cord, for the common profit.

All the members of a man travail in their order, each to succour the other; and none to hinder, but to do their common help to the profit of the body. Thus it is of the members that are in Christ's church. For it is a godly body, that groweth with her members. One faileth, but another helpeth. Some have much wisdom to know holy writ; some have fair eloquence to preach to the people; some have much spiritual strength to suffer tribulation; some have pity, and relieve their poor needy neighbours; some attend virtuously to ministrations; some rise highly in heavenly desires. But all such things are in common to them that shall be saved; as in Psalm cxix. the prophet speaketh in the person of the general church, Lord, I am partner of all that dread thee, and of all that keep thy holy commandments. This is also taught in the creed of the apostles, of the communing of saints.

Whoever separates from the unity of stedfast faith, and the fellowship of this church, he may neither be absolved from the bonds of his sins, neither may he come into the bliss of heaven. See now then, both learned and unlearned, how prayers and all other suffrages† are in common to this spiritual church. Whence then comes this outcry that is heard? the keen sale in every church to sell these spiritual things, with suffrages and absolutions, with many years of pardon, and a plenary indulgence from fault and punishment?‡ Certainly they come from beneath, of the fiend's

\* Broken.

† The united voice of persons in public prayer.

‡ The sale of indulgences was carried to a very great extent; they were vended in shops in Lombard-street like any other commodity, and pardoners travelled about the country selling them in the churches, wherever they could find purchasers. See note Wickliff, p. 131. Hollinshed mentions the sale of indulgences by the cardinal of Praxed who visited England in 1381. "He was very liberal in bestowing of them upon all such as would come with money. Indulgences which the pope had used to reserve for himself only to bestow, this man granted with the same liberality." After mentioning some instances of this "liberality," and that the monks of the Cisteaux obtained a general license to eat flesh any where for forty pounds, he adds, "To those that were excommunicate he gave absolution—to be brief,

tempting, and are borne about of his accursed members, to poison the people in misbelief, and drive them to endless pain.

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## CHAPTER XI.

### *Of Joy and Tribulation.*

BUT for that we reprove these sins, this evil party grudges and pursues with strong hand, to imprison, and to slay. Therefore must we learn the lore of Christ's holy gospel, Matt. v. Ye are blessed when men have cursed you, and have pursued you, and said all evil against you falsely for my sake; joy and be merry, for your reward is great in heaven. And also St. Peter saith, 1 Pet. iii. When ye suffer any thing for righteousness, blessed must ye be. St. Paul affirms this sentence, that God's true servants shall have pain in this life, to keep them in virtue, 2 Tim. iii. All that ever will live meekly in Christ Jesus, shall suffer persecution. And St. Luke saith of the words of Paul, in the Deeds of the Apostles, By many tribulations it behoves us to enter into the realm of God. And thus saith the prophet in the Psalms; Many are the tribulations that fall to the righteous, and from them all, when time cometh, God shall deliver them. Christ promised this manner of life to his own disciples, and gave them comfort, that they should have a gracious deliverance. For then shall bliss be much the sweeter, when they come thereto, John xvi. Truly I say unto you the truth, Ye shall lament and weep, but this world shall have joy; and ye shall be heavy; and afterwards your heaviness shall be turned into joy; and your joy shall be so sure that no man shall take it from you.

And that this joy should savour well to them that love him, he shall send them tribulation. As St. Gregory saith, "God showeth to his chosen, sharpness in this journey, lest if they delighted them in this earthly way, they might forget

nothing could be asked, but for money he was ready to grant it.—At length his mails were so filled with silver, that his servants disdained to make answer to any except they brought gold, saying, Bring us gold, for we are full of your silver. But at his departure he took all away with him, both gold and silver in such abundance as was marvellous. This hath been the practice of the Romanists from time to time." Sometimes pardons were to be had upon cheaper terms, as the "Hours of the virgin, ad usum Sarum," contains prayers, on saying of which before an image, 32,750 years of pardon were granted! Sixtus IV., pope A. D. 1471, added two more prayers, and liberally doubled the pardon!



the things that are in the heavenly country." Tribulations that bruise us down in this wretched world, constrain us to go to God, who else might easily be in condemnation. For the eyes that sin closes, pain makes open; and many a man that followeth theft, with many other sins, if by God's visitation he were lame, blind, or crooked, he should cease, and serve his God, and do penance full truly. The flesh dreads not spiritual pains to come, but it dreads to suffer any pains in this life. Therefore the evil cease not to do sin, unless judgments upon their flesh constrain them to be still. And for this cause the Lord shall send upon his servants sore punishing to their flesh, and other tribulations. The lust of the flesh may be swelled from the coveting of evil. We must needs break the nut if we will have the kernel. We must needs suffer travail if we desire rest. So must we needs suffer pain if we will come to bliss. He is a false coward knight that fleeth and hideth his head, when his master is in the field, beaten, among his enemies. But our Lord Jesus Christ was beaten of the Jews, and afterwards died in the field, on the mount of Calvary, to pay our ransom. He took his death, for he was nothing guilty; and his body when it was offered, made a satisfaction at full, in redemption of mankind. Therefore the wise man saith in the book of Ecclesiasticus, Forget not thou the kindness of thy surety, for he hath given his life for thee. This surety is our Lord God, who without meed (freely) came from heaven into this world to redeem his people. And in taking flesh and blood of the virgin Mary, he showed us grace and kindness, both in word and working. But in giving of his life he laid his body in pledge, yea to the death he would not spare to suffer extreme pain, so much he loved his people. If faith be true in us, this may not be forgotten.

Some men forsake sins and follow Christ in virtue, and this is a great kindness, though they go no higher. Some wake in abstinence and study holy lessons; this is kindness, if they flee from sin. Some are ready, when they are called of the Holy Ghost, to suffer death for Jesus Christ, and in witness of his law; and when they have holiness of life, this is the greatest kindness, as the gospel shows, John xv. A greater love or charity may no man have, than to lay down his life in saving of his friend's soul. We were pleasing and dear to God when we took baptism, but we are much dearer when we do the works that God hath bidden in his law, without any grudging. And if we maintain this

belief, and will not go therefrom, neither become renegades for pain that may befall, but think on Christ's passion, which assuages all heaviness, then are we most dear-worthy, and worthy highest merit.

Therefore saith St. Paul to the Galatians, Far be it from me to make any glory, but in the cross (that is the passion) of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom this world is crucified to me, and I am crucified to the world. For this world despised Paul, and he despised the world. Some are not crucified to the world, but the world is crucified to them; for they despise this world, but the world despises not them. Some are crucified to the world, but not so the world to them; for though the world despise them, they despise it not again. Some are neither crucified to the world, nor the world to them; for neither do they despise the world, nor the world them. In the first degree were the apostles; and in the second are other good livers. But in the third and fourth degree are those that shall be damned. And therefore we should understand that as some suffer pain to save the people when they might not save themselves, so did Jesus Christ, and showed his great kindness. Some suffer pain, and enlarge their reward as did Christ's apostles, and many other martyrs. Some suffer pain to cleanse them of their past sins, and cry to God for mercy. Some suffer pain to keep them from sin, with which they should be encumbered if there were no pain. But some suffer pain because they haunt sin; and as they make no end thereof, the pain shall last without end. Join we then the cross of Christ to our bare flesh, that our part may be found among those holy saints who willingly forsook themselves, and joyed in tribulation; as St. James saith, My brethren, hope ye all joy when ye have slidden among divers temptations, knowing that the proving of your faith worketh patience; since patience hath a perfect work; that ye may be perfect in soul, and whole in body, and in nothing failing.

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## CHAPTER XII.

*Of the Fiend's contrivances, by which, in his members, he pursues the keepers of God's commands.*

THE evil part of this church shall never cease to pursue good livers with what malice they may. •But, for his chosen

children, God shall abridge the days of their madness, and that shall men well know, as St. John saith to the church, and giveth it good comfort, Rev. ii. Dread thou not those things that thou art to suffer. Lo, the devil is to send some of you into the prison, and ye shall have tribulation ten days. Be thou faithful unto death, and I shall give to thee a crown of life. He that hath ears of hearing, hear he what the Spirit saith to the churches. Whoso hath overcome, shall not be hurt of the second death. By this devil, understand all the evil people that shall pursue good livers unto the world's end, sometimes more, sometimes less, with divers pains of tormenting. And understand by these ten days the ten commandments; for they are light to man's understanding in the darkness of this world. And here it seems good to tell the fiend's contrivances that he uses in his members, against God's commands, and as clouds obscure the day, so he marreth men's understanding.

[The author then proceeds to explain the ten commandments, stating the errors of the church of Rome in regard to each. This occupies more than a fourth part of his whole work, but only an abstract is here given.]

*The first (and second) Command.*

Against this command, the fiend lays two snares; the first is the obedience that he claims to himself or his lieutenants. Under the latter appellation is included the Romish prelates and priests, who claim obedience to their will, rather than to the word of God. Obedience to superiors is enforced, excepting when their commands are opposed to the divine will. "The second trap of the fiend is called pilgrimage." "The painter maketh an image, forged with divers colours, till it seem to fools' eyes a living creature. This is set in the church in a solemn place, fast bound with bonds that it should not fall. Priests of the temple beguile the people with the foul sin of Balaam\* in their open preaching. They say that God's power in working of his miracles, abides in one image more than in another, and therefore, Come and offer to this, for here is showed much power. How dare these fiends for dread, thus blaspheme their God, and use the sin of Balaam which God's law hath condemned, since Christ and his disciples forsook this world's wealth, and lived a poor life? Why gather ye priests, by

\* Covetousness; "the wages of unrighteousness," 2 Pet. ii. 15.

your painted images, to make yourselves worldly rich by spoiling the people? And yet ye do much worse, for both ye and your consenters, doing thus, are mere idolaters."

Several appropriate passages from scripture, and the fathers, are then quoted against this idolatry.

"Thou shalt not vow to these images, thou shalt not swear by them, neither kneel to them, nor kiss them, nor put faith, hope, or trust, in one image more than another. And thus meaneth God, when he saith, thou shalt not bow down to them nor worship them."\*

Six manners of true pilgrimage are then described. 1. Every citizen of the heavenly country is a pilgrim of this world for all time of this present life. 2. We are pilgrims when we go to church. 3. When we visit the needy. 4. Priests are pilgrims that study holy writ till they have plenty of this heavenly wisdom in their mind; and then they go about in all the broad world to deal this spiritual treasure among the ignorant people. 5. Those that dwell in a town where there is neither priest nor lord, to teach or rule them, and those that go to a place where they may be taught, and ruled under governance. 6. "There is no other pilgrimage that may please God beside these, as all holy men bear witness; for when the body is laid in the grave, and the soul passed forth to bliss or pain, then the sixth is ended."

### *The second (third) Command.*

Here reference is made to the course then pursued relative to the Lollards. The fiend and his members "constrain men to swear and lay their hands on books, and then put them to open shame; and if they leave his bidding, he saith by law they are relapsed, and then they shall be burned. And this is a hideous cloud upon the shining day, to pain men for keeping God's commandments."† Unnecessary oaths are then condemned by the authority of the

\* The form of oath imposed on four Lollards at Nottingham, may be seen in Wilkin's Concilia. (iii. 225.) It commences thus; "I, William Dynot, before you, worshipful father and lord archbishop of York, and your clergy, with my free will, and full advised, swear to God, and to all his saints upon the holy gospel, that from this day forward, I shall worship images with praying and offering to them, in the worship of the saints that they be made after, and also that I shall never more despise pilgrimages, nor states of holy church, in no degree, &c." See the note on pilgrimages, p. 137.

† This passage shows the work must have been written after the burning of Sawtree, the FIRST who suffered open martyrdom in England. He was condemned as a relapsed heretic.

fathers. "Thou shalt not swear but with three conditions. 1. Truth in the conscience of him that sweareth, without any guile. 2. That it be in doom, to exclude all idle and vain swearing. 3. That it be in righteousness, (or justice,) and in no manner of deceit." Swearing by saints, and all profane oaths are then condemned.

*The third (fourth) Command.*

"Against this commandment, the fiend and his members give leave to chapmen to buy and sell, yea within the sanctuary, on the holy Sunday; and victuallers of the country hold common markets. Yet see more against this command of God. The great fairs of the year, for the most part, are set on the sabbath day, by the fiend's counsel."\* The conduct of Nehemiah in repressing the like evils at Jerusalem is then referred to, and the greater perfection of the christian dispensation is described as enforcing more perfect and spiritual obedience to God's will in this respect. Many passages of scripture are quoted.

*The fourth (fifth) Command.*

The reciprocal duties of parents and children are enforced. The state of the ecclesiastics who had assumed temporal authority is animadverted upon, and their grasping of worldly possessions is shown to be contrary to the word of God. The wide difference between the lives of many of the Romish saints and of St. Peter and St. Paul is then noticed.

*The fifth (sixth) Command.*

"Thou shalt not slay. Neither in malice with pursuing; neither in word with backbiting; neither with deed in unlawful shedding of blood." Passages of scripture are quoted in explanation, showing also how far it is lawful "to smite for the cause of righteousness."

"Against this commandment the fiend and his members watch, and busily spy where they may find any people that will read, in private or openly, God's law in English, that is our mother tongue. And he shall be summoned to come before his judges, to answer what is said to him, and to bring his book with him; and he must forsake his book and reading of English, and forswear ever to speak of holy writ. They say, Live as thy father did, that is enough for thee, or else thou shalt to prison, as if thou wert a

\* Some remains of these still exist.

heretic, and suffer pains many and strange ; and full likely be put to death, unless thou wilt revoke thy word, and make an open wonderment at thy parish church, or in public place.\* And with this they prison many a hungry soul, whereof groweth in this realm a grievous spiritual murrain. For who dare now, in these days, talk of Christ and the doom ? And assuredly the body may not live without bodily food, no more may the seely† soul without God's word. As St. Augustine saith, The soul dieth for hunger, unless it be fed with heavenly bread, and this bread is God's word, as Christ saith in his gospel, Matt. iv. Deut. viii. Luke iv. A man liveth not only in bodily bread, but he liveth a better life after the soul, of each word that passeth from the mouth of God. God told long before, of this hunger to come ; that untaught men should ask this bread, and no man should give it to them, as he saith by the prophet Amos, viii. For though there are many preachers, there are few true preachers ; and if any preach the truth, the multitude shall gainsay him, and thus men abide still in their spiritual hunger, for they know not whom to follow, their preaching is so wonderful, joining in their curious words the truth to the falsehood. Who that goeth to this bread to slake his hunger, though he were as holy as ever was St. John the Baptist, he should not fail to be slandered for a cursed Lollard, or pursued as a heretic, of those cruel enemies." The writer then strongly urges that "priests are much to blame who take from the people the law that God hath written in their heart."

*The sixth (seventh) Command.*

The application of this command to sight, thought, and deed is enforced from scripture. The conduct of the Romish ecclesiastics in suffering those who have been cited

\* The penance or "wonderment" here referred to was no trifle—The sentence pronounced against Pye and Mēndham of Aldborough, in 1428, was, that they should suffer "six fustigations or disciplinings (floggings) about their parish church, before a solemn procession, six several Sundays, and three disciplinings about the market-place of Herelstone three principal market-days, bare necked, head, legs, and feet, their bodies being covered only with their shirts and breeches, each carrying a taper of a pound weight, which were to be offered at the high altar after mass in every of the days. And that each of them, going about the market-place, shall make four several pauses and stays, and at each of the same humbly and devoutly receive three disciplinings." The penances were often still more severe ; and fastings and imprisonment were added.

† Simple, ignorant.

for these evils, to continue therein upon payment of money from their purse to my lord's alms, while a pretence is made in their weekly courts to treat them with severity, is minutely described, and that, "Now they set ordinaries for their worldly profit, that heap their purse with many sold sins."

*The seventh (eighth) Command.*

"Thou shalt not do theft: neither knights by tyranny; nor priests by hypocrisy; nor commons by stealth and robbery." Examples from scripture are then given. The conduct of the ecclesiastics in obtaining large donations to expend in their buildings and monastic endowments is severely censured. "Whoso clothes himself with such goods, or feeds him with such goods, or rears up buildings with such gotten goods, is clad, is fed, and grounds his buildings in poor men's blood. Some men say, It is no sin to take what men will give them. Some men say they will spend their goods where they have most devotion. Some leave house, land, water, and wood to dead hands.\* To you we ask, What profiteth the hand without fingers, or the fingers without hand? If either of them may work his work to men's profit without the other, then may ye say, that devotion may profit without discretion, or else not." The system of monastic life is then censured.

*The eighth (ninth) Command.*

"Thou shalt not speak false witness against thy neighbour. Neither for gifts taking, nor for man's stirring, nor thyself in sin excusing." Several passages of scripture against these sins are then cited. Jurors who take bribes, and false witnesses, are severely censured. The painful state of society at that time is thus described. "There is no officer, temporal or spiritual, but is ready when he may, to take gifts of the poor commons, and pill them continually. Else they shall have no peace from grievous oppressions, as the taking of their beasts, corn, and other victuals; and other payment get they none but a white stick,† till they have lost one half with much more labour." The examples of Jehoshaphat, 2 Chron. xix. and others are referred to.

\* Bequests to monastic establishments—in mortmain.

† Perhaps, tallies given to those from whom provisions had been taken under pretence of supplying the king. So late as the reign of queen Elizabeth, considerable abuses prevailed among the royal purveyors.

*The ninth (tenth, first part) Command.*

“In this command God refraineth the inordinate appetite of man’s desire, in all things that are immovable.” The evils of covetousness are exposed in strong colours. “Some feed their covetousness with lust and delectation in thought, in word, in work, and this most abominable. All these three are against the commandment of God, and are worthy of endless pain; unless God, through his gracious mercy, move them to virtue and to true penance, that are dead in these foul covetings, that is to say, in covetousness of heart, of deed, and of custom. How should he keep himself from a vicious deed, that doth not put out of his heart the coveting thereof? Certainly it is as impossible as to save the house from burning that thou settest on fire with thine own hands. A weed may not be destroyed unless it be drawn up by the roots. No more may sin be left unless the delectable coveting of sin be pulled out of the heart. For if there abide any part of this foul coveting undrawn up in heart, anon there springeth up thereof, theft, false purchase, and such other.” It is then shown that “Covetousness is cause of much blood-shedding.” The conduct of the ecclesiastics, who say, “that they may purchase out of the secular hand, yea, all their livelihood, if they might win it by one way or another, while what they win into their power no man may reclaim into the hands of seculars,” is commented upon severely. The circumstances attending Eve’s temptation are allegorically applied to this sin, also many examples from scripture are mentioned.

*The tenth (second part) Command.*

This command is especially applied to evil desires, the inward sin of the heart, in those things that are movable. “When the strength of our will is set to do righteousness, then we are conformed to do the Father’s bidding; and when the wisdom of our will is turned to mercy, both to ourselves and to others, then we follow Christ’s steps. But when the love of our will speedeth in due order, both in heaven and in earth, as we have said before, then dwelleth the Holy Ghost in our inward man. If this knot be truly knit in the will of our soul, there is no entry from the devil can trouble us from unity. As St. Jerome saith, “The devil fighteth not against us with open face, but with guile; for he uses against us our own will; he takes strength by our own



consent, and he makes war against us with our own sword. He may never overcome us but through our own will, therefore, far be desperation." "Remedy against this devil is study in holy writ. God's commandments are a LANTERN and the law is LIGHT, and the way of life, Prov. vi."

In applying this command to the conduct of the Romish ecclesiastics, the practice of their courts respecting divorces is described and severely censured—he that "goeth to the masters that sit on their seats with furred hoods, and fond\* heads, and giveth them money great plenty, and prayeth them to be his advocates, that his divorce were made," alleging some precontract. "Then the judge, sir Simon,† giveth his doom to dissolve true wedlock, and authorizes both parties to live evil life from that day forward." Examples and counsels from scripture are dwelt upon, and "thinking of the life of our Lord Jesus Christ" is recommended. "This is a special remedy to withhold wicked thoughts, desires, and wills, that they flow not too deeply within, nor fly too far without, and such travails thrive those that God hath chosen."

The observations on the commandments conclude as follows.

St. Hilary saith, "This property hath Christ's church; when it is pursued, it flourisheth; when it is bruised down, it groweth; when it is despised, it profiteth; when it is hurt, it overcometh; when it is blamed, it understandeth; and it standeth most strongly when it seems to man's eye to be overcome." This church is a true soul, as we have said before. Some that are tender and feeble to suffer, cry with the prophet Habakkuk, Lord, how long shall I cry, and thou shalt not hear me? Lord, till when shall I call upon thee thus suffering strong tribulation, and thou shalt not make me safe? Why hast thou showed me wickedness and travail, and sufferest theft and unrighteousness against me? Why beholdest thou despisers, and art still—the wicked man defouling the juster than he? St. Jerome, in his prologue, saith, that these are words of man's impatience, and he setteth an example of a sick man swelling in a fever, who asketh cold water, saying to his physician, "I suffer wo, and am all tormented; I am full nigh dead; how long shall I cry, and thou wilt not hear me?" The wise and the most merciful physician answers him, "I know at what time it behoves me to give thee what thou askest. I have no pity on

\* Foolish.

† Simony.

thee now, for that mercy were cruelty, and thine own will asketh against thyself. Also our Lord God, knowing the weight and the measure of his mercy, sometimes hears not speedily him that crieth, that he may prove and more stir him to pray; and as examined by the fire, that he may make his servant both juster and purer to receive grace and meed."

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## CHAPTER XIII.

### *What is the Fiend's church, with its properties.*

I now speak of the third church, belonging to the devil, which is the number of those that are in bondage to serve him, according to his enticings, against God's commands.

First, we shall take our ground in the words of Ps. xxvi. I have hated the church of malicious livers. These are they that stray away after their own desires, walking in the large way that leadeth them to hell. They will be governed neither by law nor by grace; neither will they for dread nor love cease and go from sin, because this world is full of lusts, and proffers its lovers a joy that soon passeth away; but they that seek after bliss suffer pain here. Therefore, fools without number joy with this world, as Christ saith, Matt. vii. Enter ye by the strait gate; for large is the gate and broad is the way that leadeth to damnation, and many there are that enter by it. How painful is the gate and how strait is the way that leadeth to life, and few there are that find it. For St. John saith, 1 John ii. All this world, that is, all those men and women that are overcome with this world, are set in malice; that is, burning in the fire of foul covetousness. For all that is in this world, either is the covetousness of the eye, or else the desire of the flesh, or else it is the pride of this life. And therefore this church is grounded upon the devil, in the gravel of false covetousness, as Paul saith, 1 Tim. vi. For the root of all evils is covetousness, which some desiring, have erred from true belief, and have joined themselves to many sorrows.

The rearing up of this church is in gluttony and licentiousness, as the wise man saith in the book of Wisdom, (ii.) when rehearsing the words of those that shall be damned. And the raising of this church is pride and highness of life, as the prophet saith, (Ps. xxxvii.) I have seen the unpiteous and the wicked raised and uplifted as the cedar trees of

Libanus, and they are the highest trees of this world. But as smoke rises suddenly, and soon vanishes to nought, so the proud are praised for a time, and presently they fall away, and we know not where they become.

The prophet speaks, (Ps. lv.) of the business and occupation of dwellers of this church. Night and day wickedness shall compass about this church upon her walls, and travail in the midst of it; and unrighteousness, deceit, and treachery have not ceased in her ways. Of this church, with this manner of building, Christ speaks in his gospel, Matt. vii. Luke vi. Whoso heareth my words, and doeth them not, shall be like a foolish man, that hath built his house upon the gravel of covetousness and misbelief. And the rain of gluttony and lechery came down on this church, and the winds of pride blew upon this church; and these sins fell fiercely upon this church and drove it down, and her fall was great, for she fell from grace and glory to pain and mischief without end. As St. Augustine saith, "That is not the body of the Lord which shall not be with him without end; for hypocrites are not said to be with him, though they seem to be in his church."

Certainly the devil is head of all the wicked, which are in some manner his body, to go with him into the torment of everlasting fire. For when they took baptism they promised faith and truth to keep God's commands, as the prophet saith, speaking in the person of all the general church, Ps. cxix. Lord, I have sworn and ordained to keep thy commandments. Upon this covenant Christ took them to his marriage; and with the ring of stedfast faith he solemnized his holy spousal. But now they leave this chaste love, our Lord Jesus Christ, in breaking this covenant, and have chosen the fiend, who is a spouse-breaker. For St. John Chrysostom saith, "Every soul either is Christ's spouse, or an adulteress of the devil." For Christ and the devil may in no wise rest together in man's soul; for they are so contrary, that whatever the one biddeth, the other forbiddeth. Christ seeketh salvation, the fiend damnation; Christ loveth virtue, the fiend loveth sin; Christ gathereth together, the fiend scattereth abroad. As Paul saith, 2 Cor. vi. What participation of righteousness is there with wickedness? What fellowship is there of light to darkness? What communication of Christ with Belial? Or what part is there of a faithful man with an unfaithful man? Or what consent of the temple of God to idols? Certainly none;

for each of these gainsays the other according to its own working.

Now we shall tell what they are that dwell with the fiend, to serve him in his church, that is, in the temple of idols. Paul saith, 1 Cor. vi. These are vile speakers, liars, glossers, backbiters, murderers, swearers, and forswearers. As St. John saith, Rev. xxi. To all liars, their part shall be in the pool burning with fire and brimstone, that is the second death. There are unchaste, robbers and extortioners, tyrants and oppressors. For the prophet saith, Zech. v. There are untruth-tellers, unfaithful servants, reckless hired-men, rebellious disciples, and unprofitable labourers. For Christ saith, Matt. xxv. Cast ye out the unprofitable servant into outward darkneses. There are all unclean men and women, as St. John saith, Rev. xxii. and as Christ saith, Matt. xxiv. The Lord shall put his part with the hypocrites; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. There are all that pray, serve or give gifts for church or spiritual benefices; all false possessioners, all mighty, wilful oppressors, and all their sturdy maintainers. For St. Jude saith, Wo to them that went the way of Cain, and were evil by the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Korah. There are the men that boose out their breasts, pinch in their bodies, part their hose, crakowin (carve) their shoes, and all disguisers of their garments. There are those that nicely dress their faces, that bridle their heads with head-bands, that set above honeycombs, with much other attiring to make themselves keen to sin, and expose themselves to catch men with their lime-twigs. For God saith by the prophet Isaiah, Because the daughters of Zion are become so proud, and come with stretched forth necks, and with vain, wanton eyes, seeing they come in tripping so nicely with their feet, I will make bald and smite the daughters of Zion.\* There are

\* The luxury and absurdity of dress, both of men and women, at that time was carried to great excess. Petrarch describes the young men as "having their bodies so cruelly squeezed with cords, that they suffer as much pain from vanity, as the martyrs suffered for religion." The English beau of the fourteenth century wore long, pointed shoes, fastened to his knees by gold or silver chains, their tops carved in imitation of a church window, hose of two colours, short tight breeches, with a coat also of two colours. The females are described as having their caps wrapt about their heads with cords, their head-dresses remarkably high, sometimes reaching three feet above their heads, in the shape of sugar-loaves, with streamers of silk hanging from them. Chaucer's "Parson" severely reprehends the extravagance of men's dress, which he describes in strong terms. He also remarks upon the "outrageous array of the women."

false law makers, God's law haters, finders of customs, destroyers of virtues, authors of sin. In this church are idolaters, heretics, enchanters, &c., and all those that believe that health may come of using God's word written, but only hanged on or carried about by man, or that so carried or borne about they are profitable to body or to soul.\*

There are merchants, chapmen, victuallers, vintners, changers, buyers, sellers, who use deceit in weight, number, or measure. In this church are usurers, false jurors, and all false witness bearers, as the prophet saith, Ps. xv. In this church are pleaders, lawyers, sequestrators, commissaries, officials, summoners, all such of them as sell truth or sin to take money, as is said, Ps. xxvi. In this church are auditors, receivers, treasurers, procurators, judges, all such as accept persons without a cause.

This church, when it is beaten, it waxes the harder ; when it is blamed, it waxes the duller ; when it is taught, it is the more ignorant ; when it is done well to, it is the more opposed. And it falls down and comes to nought, when in man's eyes it seems most strongly to stand. St. Augustine saith, that Christ's church pursues evil-livers, in charity, by way of amendment. But the fiend's church pursues Christ's church in malice, by way of slander and slaying. And thus Cain, that false, envious, accursed man, slew his brother Abel, that blessed, simple, innocent man. As the expositors say, Cain was the beginning of Babylon, and antichrist shall be the end. And Abel was the beginner of Jerusalem, and Christ shall be the ender. Ishmael persecuted Isaac, but Isaac did not so to Ishmael. Esau pursued his brother Jacob ; but not so Jacob, by the counsel of his mother he fled into Mesopotamia from the wrath of his brother, till it was assuaged. Thus our mother, holy church, counsels her children to flee the malice of the fiend's church, till it be slaked, Matt. x. When the fiend's church shall pursue you in this city, flee ye to another. But this must be done with discretion, that we hurt not our brother's conscience. Christ pursued not the Jews, but the Jews pursued Jesus Christ. Heathen

\* The use of written charms was very common in the days of popish darkness, and even now is prevalent among ignorant persons, far more than commonly is supposed. The faith still placed by many thousands in that blasphemous relic of popery, called the Saviour's Letter, which may often be seen placed on the walls of cottages, in the belief that it will protect from harm, is a painful instance of this. It is to be feared that there are many still in England who carry that, and other papers of a like description about them, believing that they shall thereby be kept from evil !

men slew the apostles, but the apostles slew not heathen men.

See now the frowardness of this world, that hath been from the beginning. When Isaiah, the holy prophet, prophesied and preached unto the people, they would not hear his words, nor suffer him to live. But people that rose after his death, read his books and said, If we had lived in his days, he should not have been put to death. And yet, they slew Jeremiah, who by the Spirit of God told things that were to come, and taught them the truth. His successors took his books, and read them in their temples, and bewailed him for a holy man, that he was so slain amongst them; but they slew Ezekiel and many others more! Then the Jews, such as were scribes and pharisees, made fair the tombs of these prophets, and said in hypocrisy, if they had been in their days, they should not have been slain. But they gave the counsel that Christ, who is the head of all saints, should be dead, with most despiteous death. The fiend's church in these days praise above the clouds Christ and his holy saints, with words and with signs; but they pursue to death the lovers of his law! And thus Christ saith in his gospel, Luke vi. Right as ye do now, so did your fathers to their prophets in their days. And therefore, wo to you, for Christ saith, In this world ye are rich, fat fed, laughing while pursuing others; weep ye, and make ye sorrow, for your pain shall be much in hell. Oh, these shall have a dreadful day when they are arraigned at the bar of judgment, when Christ shall rear up his cross, the banner of his sufferings!\*

Of the day of judgment speaketh the prophet, Zeph. i. The great day of the Lord is nigh, and cometh fast, and wonders approach quickly; it shall not long tarry. In that day, he that is strong and mighty shall be troubled; for the voice of the Lord is bitter to the damned. That day is a

\* This is one of the most affecting appeals in the writings of the reformers. To enter into the spirit and feelings of the writer, we must consider the situation of the followers of the truth in England at the commencement of the fourteenth century. The burning alive the followers of Wickliff was then just begun, and they were hunted out by the Romish prelates with much activity. In the genuine spirit of the gospel, the persecuted Lollard had recourse to scripture; he felt the identity of his case with that of God's people in all former times, and thence he found comfort and support. And we cannot but observe how completely their case has resembled that of those who went before. Are there not many now who profess to venerate the reformers, while in heart they differ from their views, and oppose to the utmost all who now hold the like doctrines?

day of wrath, a day of tribulation ; that is a day of anger, of grief, of ruin, and of wretchedness. It is a day of darkness and of thick smoke, a day of clouds and of the raging whirlwind ; it is a day of the trumpet and of hideous noise. For then they shall see their Judge above them, stirred to wrath. Then shall they see hell open beneath them, angels on their right side hastening them to hell, fiends on their left side drawing them to hell, saints approving God's doom, and all the world accusing ; and then their own conscience open as a book, in which they shall read their own damnation ! These wretches, beholding the great glory of those whom they despised in this world, then shall say, in the words of the wise man, (see the book of Wisdom v.) " These are they whom we sometime had in scorn and upbraiding ; we foolish thought their life to be folly and madness, and we guessed their end should have been without honour. How now, for they are counted among the sons of God, and they take their lot among his saints ? Therefore, we have erred from the way of truth, and the light of righteousness shone not to us : we are weary of the way of wickedness and damnation. What profit hath our pride done to us ? or our great avaunt, or boast of riches ? What hath it given to us ? All those things are passed from us as the shadow !"

Then shall the Judge sternly say unto them, *Matt. xxv.* " Go away from me, ye accursed, into the fire of hell everlasting, which is ordained for the devil and his angels." Then may the soul say to the body these words, " Come, thou accursed carrion, come and go with me, for I am compelled to come again to thee, that we may go again to other shame, to take our reward, as we have deserved pain for evermore. That which we loved, now it is gone from us ! and all that we hated is turned upon us ! Now is our joy turned into sorrow, and our mirth into weeping. Now is our laughter turned into mourning, and all our pleasure into wailing. Nothing remaineth for us but fire, hot, burning horrors everlasting ; fear intolerable, dread unspeakable, always discord without friendship, and full despair of any end !"

Strive in this life to leave the fiend's church, and to bring yourself, both body and soul, into the church of Jesus Christ while grace and mercy may be granted. Ask of Him who offered himself willingly upon the cross, to save us all when we were lost. For thus it is written of the words of God,

which he speaketh to a sinful soul. Turn thee again, turn thee again, thou sinful soul; turn thee again, turn thee again, that we may behold thee, Cant. vi. 13. For God knoweth thy misgovernance, and will not forsake thee, if thou wilt turn again. As he saith in the prophet Jeremiah, iii. Thou hast gone after many lovers, nevertheless turn thee to me, saith the Lord, and I shall receive thee, and take thee to grace. Upon this saith St. Gregory, "Herein God showeth how much he loveth us; for when we forsake him, he forsaketh not us." St. Augustine saith, "O man, mistrust thou not the mercy of God, for more is his mercy than thy wretchedness." And thus Abner said of king David, 2 Sam. iii. Ye that will have king David as a merciful lord to you, ye must bring with you this woman, Michal, if ye will see his gracious face. Here we consider David the king to bear the figure of Jesus Christ, and the name Michal, when it is declared,\* means the water, or sorrow, of all. Let us think it thus to mean—Ye that desire in all your might, to find and to have the mercy of God, and to see his gracious face in bliss, ye must have the sorrow of true repentance from your heart, with full contrition of will, never to turn to sin. And if ye will to be true, and no more to break this covenant, God will not that ye be dead, but that ye have everlasting life.

AMEN, AMEN, SO MAY IT BE.

\* Interpreted. Michal means, Who is complete? or, All is water.



## EXTRACTS FROM THE WRITINGS

OF

## WALTER HILTON.

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WALTER HILTON was a Carthusian monk, of Sheen, in the county of Surry. He was also a doctor in divinity and canon of Thurgarton. He wrote many religious works, from which he appears to have been one of those who entered upon the monastic, or, as they termed it, the contemplative life, with a belief that they were thus best seeking the glory of God and the good of their own souls, and without relinquishing other duties.

His writings, like those of most who remained within the church of Rome, and yet held the doctrines of truth, present a painful mixture. He evidently looked to the only true foundation, even Jesus Christ, for salvation, and in pointing him out as an all-sufficient Saviour, upon whom alone we may trust, he is very clear, but upon this foundation he builds much wood, hay, and stubble, as well as much gold and precious stones. He was, however, free from the common superstitions and vanities of that period; and there is much in his writings which may be useful to the believer at all times. He appears to have been one of that class, who, in a later day, came forward and took a prominent part in the English Reformation; as such it is desirable to give a few specimens of his writings, and we cannot but be convinced that he must have suffered much from the doctrines and practices maintained around him. The first of the following extracts from his writings will show that he had no bigoted predilection for his own class, but considered that a christian might serve his Master faithfully in any station where he was lawfully placed. Had the monastic orders in general been formed of such characters, Wickliff would have spoken and written very differently of them. Such excellences, however, only render more painful the darkness by which they are surrounded; they should make us thankful for the clearer and more steady light of the reformation, and more active to work while that day is continued to us.

Hilton is said to have died in the year 1395; but Pits, apparently with greater probability, considers that he lived about 1433. by Google

# WALTER HILTON.

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## ON THE MIXED LIFE.

[In a treatise "Written to a devout man, of secular estate," Hilton thus advises his friend.] "I am of the mind that the life which I have termed to be mixed is best, and most befitting thee, and thou shouldest accordingly divide and dispose of thy time wisely, and to the satisfaction of the rule of charity. For know thou well, that if thou leave the necessary business or the active life belonging to thee, and art careless, and take no heed of thy worldly goods, as how they are kept and spent, nor lookest after those that pertain to thy charge, to see they do well, nor wilt afford thy help upon the necessity of thy christian brother, by reason of thy love, and the desire thou hast to apply thyself only to solitude and spiritual exercises, imagining that by so doing thou art excused and freed from thy aforesaid obligations—if, I say, thou dost so, thou dost not wisely nor profitably for thy soul; for what are thy works or exercises worth, be they spiritual or corporeal, unless they are done according to justice and reason, to the honour of God, and agreeable to his will? surely they are even nothing worth. Therefore, if thou leave or neglect that which thou art bound unto by the law of charity, justice, or other obligation, and wilt entirely give thee to another thing voluntarily taken on thee, under pretence of better pleasing and serving God, in a thing which thou art not bound unto, in so doing thou doest no discreet or acceptable service to him."

After some further remarks, he proceeds,

Thou "shouldest perform both these works and exercises, that is to say, the internal and external, at divers and several times, and with as good will the one as the other, so far as thou canst. As for example, if thou hast been at thy prayer and spiritual exercise, that finished, thou shalt go and busy thyself in some corporeal or external doing concerning thy christian brethren, and therein spend reasonable time with willingness and gladness of mind. And after that thou hast been busily employed for a time about thy servants, and other men with whom thou

shalt have occasions, and hast profitably spent with them so much time as shall be truly needful, then shalt thou break from these external doings, and shalt return again to thy prayers and devotions, which thou shalt perform according to the grace that God shall give thee for it; and so doing, thou, by the grace of our Lord, shalt put away and avoid sloth, laziness, idleness, and vain rest, which often creep in upon us through the deceitfulness of our nature, under pretence or colour of contemplation, or other spiritual recollections; whereby we come to omit the performance of good and meritorious external affairs and businesses, appertaining to us and our charge, by the appointment or providence of God. And thus thou shalt be always in some good exercise or other, internal or external, by turns and in their proper times." (ch. vi.)

But Hilton knew the danger of too great attention to the world, and in ch. xiv. he thus guards his friend against suffering the love of earthly things to engross his affections. "Many men are covetous of worldly goods, honours, and earthly riches, and think both in dreaming and waking, how, and by what means they may come thereto; and then they forget all care of their soul's good, and all thoughts of the pains of hell, or the joys of heaven. Surely these men are not wise; they are like children that run after butterflies, and because they look not to their feet they sometimes easily fall down, and break their legs. What is all the pomp, honours, riches, and jollity of this world but a butterfly? Surely it is no more, yea, it is much less. Therefore I pray thee be covetous of the joys of heaven, and thou shalt have honour and riches that shall last for ever."

He elsewhere observes, "It is less mastery to forsake worldly goods than to forsake the love of them; peradventure thou hast not forsaken thy covetousness, but only hast changed it from great things unto small; from a pound unto a penny, from a silver dish, to one of a half-penny."

## EXTRACTS FROM

## THE SCALE (OR LADDER) OF PERFECTION.

## BOOK II. PART III. CHAPTER VII.

*How Divine Love, through gracious beholdings of Jesus, slayeth all stirrings of pride; and maketh the soul to lose the savour and delight in all earthly honours.*

NEVERTHELESS, I shall tell thee more particularly how love killeth sins in a soul, and reformeth virtues. And first of PRIDE, and the virtue contrary thereto, namely HUMILITY. Thou must understand there are two kinds of humility. One is had by working of reason; another is felt by the special gift of love. Both are of love, but the former love worketh by, and with the reason of the soul, and the latter love worketh by itself. The first is imperfect, the other is perfect. The first a man feels from beholding his own sins and wretchedness, through the which beholding he thinks himself unworthy to have any gift of grace, or any reward of God, but thinks it enough that He would of his great mercy grant him forgiveness of his sins. And also he thinks himself, because of his sins, to be worse than the greatest sinner that lives, and that every man does better than he. And by such beholding he thrusts himself down in his thoughts under all men. And he is busy to withstand the stirrings of pride as much as he can, both bodily and spiritual pride, and despises himself so, that he assents not to the feelings of pride.

Perfect humility a soul feels from the sight and spiritual knowing of Jesus; for when the Holy Ghost lighteneth the reason to the sight of verity, how Jesus is all, and that he doth all, the soul has so great love, and so great joy in that spiritual sight, (for it is really so indeed,) that it forgets itself, and fully leans to Jesus with all the love that it has, to behold him. It takes no heed of any unworthiness of itself, nor of sins afore done, but sets itself at nought, with all the sins, and all the good deeds that ever it did, as if there were nothing but Jesus.

Also such a soul, in respect to his neighbour has no regard to him, nor judging of him, whether he is better or worse than himself; for he esteems himself and all other

men to be all alike, and to be just nought of themselves in regard of God, and this truly is so. For all the goodness that is wrought in himself or in others is only of God, whom he beholds as all in all. And therefore he sets all other creatures at nought, as he does himself. Thus humble was the prophet Isaiah, xl., when he said thus, All nations are before our Lord as if they were not, and are reputed as nothing, and as a vain thing. That is, in comparison of the endless being, and the unchangeable nature of God, mankind is as nought; for of nought was it made, and to nought shall it return, unless He keep it in its being who made it of nought. This is truth, and this should make a soul humble, if by grace it could see this truth.

Therefore, when once love openeth the inner eye of the soul, to see this truth, with other circumstances that attend it, then the soul begins to be really humble, for then, through the sight of God, it feels and sees itself as it is. And then does the soul forsake the beholding and leaning upon itself, and fully falls to the beholding of Jesus. And when it does so, then the soul sets nought by all the joy and worship of the world; for the joy of worldly worship is so little, and so nought, in regard of that joy and of that love which it feels in the spiritual sight of Jesus, and knowledge of the truth, that though it might have the worldly worship without any sin, he would have nothing to do with it. No, though men would worship him, praise him, and favour him, or set him in great state, it would nothing at all please him. No, though he had great skill in all the liberal sciences, and of all skill under the sun, or had power to work all manner of miracles, yet would the soul take no delight in all this, no more consider it a dainty, or of more savour, than to gnaw upon a dry stick! He had rather forget all this, and be alone, out of the sight of the world, than to think of them, and be worshipped of all men; for the heart of a true lover of Jesus is made so much, and so large, through a little sight of him, and a little feeling of his spiritual love, that all the liking, and all the joy of all the earth cannot suffice to fill a corner of it.

And then it well appears, that these wretched worldly lovers, who are as it were enraptured with the love of their own worship, and pursue after it to have it, with all the might and all the knowledge they have, they have no

taste of this humility, but are wondrous far from it. But the lover of **JESUS** has this humility lastingly, and that not with heaviness and striving for it, but with liking and gladness. This gladness he has, not because he forsakes the worship of the world, for that were a proud humility belonging to a hypocrite; but because he has a sight and a spiritual knowledge of the truth and worthiness of **JESUS**, through the gift of the Holy Ghost. That revering sight, and that lovely beholding of **JESUS**, comforts his love so wonderfully, and bears it up so mightily and with such ease, that it cannot like or fully rest in any earthly joy, nor would he if he could. He makes no matter whether men praise him or dispraise him, worship him or despise him; as to himself, he sets it not to heart, neither to be well pleased (for his greater humiliation) when men despise him, nor to be displeased when men worship (reverence) him or praise him. He had rather forget both the one and the other, and only think on **JESUS**, and get humility by that way. And that way is much the most secure, whosoever can attain to it. Thus **DAVID** did when he said, My eyes are always to the Lord, for he shall pluck my feet out of the net. Ps. xxv. For when he doth so, then forsaketh he utterly himself, and casteth himself wholly under **JESUS**, and then is he in a secure guard; for the shield of truth which he holds, keeps him so well that he shall not be hurt through any stirring of pride, as long as he holds himself within the shield. As the prophet said, Verity shall compass thee with a shield, Ps. xci. And that is, if thou, leaving all other things, only beholdest him; for then shalt thou not dread for the night's dread; that is, thou shalt not fear the spirit of pride, whether he come by night or by day, as the next verse saith, From the arrow that fleeth by day. Pride cometh by night to assail a soul when it is despited and contemned of other men, that thereby it should fall into heaviness and sorrow. It cometh also as an arrow flying in the day, when a man is praised and worshipped of all men, whether it be for worldly doing or spiritual, that he should have vain joy in himself, and to rest therein, and false gladness in things that are passing. This is a sharp arrow, and a perilous, it flees swiftly and strikes softly; but it wounds deadly. But the lover of **JESUS**, who stably beholds him by devout prayers and busy thinking on him, is so lapped around with the safe shield of truth, that he dreads it not, for this arrow cannot enter

into his soul. Nay, though it come, it hurts him not; but glances away, and passes forth.

And thus is the soul made humble, as I understand, by the working of the Holy Ghost, that is the gift of love; for he openeth the eye of the soul to see and love Jesus, and he keepeth the soul in that sight restfully and securely. He slayeth all the stirrings of pride wonderfully, and privately, and softly, and the soul knoweth not how. And also he bringeth in by that way, verily and lovely, the virtue of humility. All this doth divine love, but not in all lovers fully alike; for some have this grace but short and little, as it were in the beginning of it, and a little assaying towards it, for the conscience is not cleansed fully through grace. And some have it more fully, for they have a clearer sight of Jesus, and they feel more of this love.

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BOOK I.—PART III.—CHAPTER II.

*Of the worthiness and excellency of the soul, and how it was lost, and how man may be saved by the passion of Christ, be he ever so wretched.*

THE soul of a man is a life consisting of three powers, memory, understanding, and will, after the image and likeness of the blessed Trinity; inasmuch as the memory was made strong and stedfast—to hold God in perpetual remembrance, without forgetting, or distraction, or the hinderance of any creature. The understanding was made bright and clear, without error or darkness, as perfectly as a soul in a body unglorified could have.—And the will and affections were made pure and clean, burning in love to God, without sensual love of the flesh, or of any creature. This was the dignity and worth of man's soul by nature, at his first creation, which thou hadst in Adam before the first sin. But when Adam sinned, choosing love and delight in himself and in the creatures, he lost all his excellency and dignity, and thou also in him.—For David saith in the Psalms, Man being in honour understood it not, and therefore he lost it, and became like a beast.

See then the wretchedness of thy soul; for as the memory was somewhat established and fixed upon God, so now it hath forgotten him, and seeketh its rest in the creatures; now in one creature, and then in another, and never

can find full rest, having lost Him in whom is full rest. And so it is with the understanding, and the will, and affections, both which were pure in spiritual savour and sweetness, but now it is turned into a foul lust and liking in itself, and in the creatures; both in the senses, as in gluttony and licentiousness; and in the imagination, as in pride, vain glory, and covetousness; insomuch that thou canst do no good deed but it is defiled with vain glory, nor canst thou easily make use of any of thy senses upon any thing that is pleasant, but thy heart will be taken and inflamed with a vain lust and liking of it, which putteth out the love of God from thy heart, so that no feeling of spiritual love or savour may come into it.

Every man that liveth in spirit understandeth well all this. This is the soul's wretchedness, and our mischief for the first man's sin, besides all other wretchedness and sins which thou hast wilfully added thereto. And know thou well that hadst thou never committed any other sin with thy body—but only this which is called original, (for that it is the first sin, and is nothing else but the losing of our righteousness which we were created in,) thou shouldest never have been saved, had not our Lord Jesus Christ by his precious passion delivered thee, and restored thee again.

And therefore, if thou think I have herein spoken too high, because thou canst neither understand it well, nor practise it accordingly as I have delivered, I will now descend to thee, and fall as low as thou canst desire, both for thy profit and my own. Then say thus; though thou art ever so much a wretch, and hast committed ever so great sins, do but forsake thyself, and all thy works done, both good and bad, and cry to God for mercy, and ask for salvation *ONLY* by virtue of Christ's precious passion, and that with a good trust, and without doubt thou shalt have it. And as for original sin, and all other, thou shalt be safe, yea, as safe as an anchorite that is inclosed.\* And not only thou, but all christian souls that trust upon his passion, and humble themselves, acknowledging their wretchedness, asking mercy and forgiveness, and the fruit of this

\* A rare admission to be made by a member of a monastic order. It shows how completely Hilton was free from those superstitions and errors which gave currency to the letters of fraternity in those days, whereby persons of rank were induced to pay large sums that their names might be enrolled in the monastic orders, believing that they should thereby secure their salvation.



precious passion only, and submitting themselves to the sacraments of holy church,\* though they have been encumbered with sin all their life-time, and never had feeling of spiritual savour or sweetness, or spiritual knowledge of God, yet shall they in this faith and good will, by virtue of this precious passion of our Lord Jesus Christ, be safe, and come to the bliss of heaven.

All this thou knowest well, but yet it delights me to recite and speak of it, that thou mayest see the endless mercy of our Lord, how low he falls to thee, and to me, and to all sinful wretches. Ask mercy therefore, and have it. Thus saith the prophet in the person of our Lord, Every one that calleth upon the name of our Lord shall be saved, Joel ii. Rom. x. that is, every one that asketh salvation by Jesus and his passion.

This courtesy of our Lord some men understand aright, and are saved thereby. And others, in trust of this mercy and this courtesy, lie still in their sins, and think to have the benefit of it when they please, but they are mistaken, for they are taken before they are aware, and so damn themselves.

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[In another place Hilton thus speaks of Christ giving peace to the soul, desiring his presence when he hath withdrawn for a season.]

Wonder not though the feelings of grace be sometimes withdrawn from a lover of Jesus; for holy writ saith the same of the spouse, that it fared thus with her, Cant. iii. I sought him, and I found him not; I called, and he answered not. That is, when I fall down to my frailty and sin, then grace withdraweth, for my falling is cause thereof, and not his flying, but then feel I pain of my wretchedness in his absence. And therefore I sought him by great desire of heart, and he gave to me not so much as a feeble answer. And then I cried with all my soul, "Turn again thou my beloved." And yet he seemed as if he heard me not. The painful feeling of myself, and the assailing of fleshly loves; and fears in this time, and the wanting of my spiritual strength is a continual crying of the soul to JESUS. And nevertheless, our Lord maketh strange, and cometh

\* A touch of popery, which shows how difficult it is to become divested of such errors, even where the light of truth is clearly seen.

not, cry I ever so fast, for he is sure enough of his lover, that he will not turn again to worldly loves quite, he can have no savour in them, and therefore stayeth he the longer.

But at the last, when he pleaseth, he cometh again full of grace and faithfulness, and visiteth the soul that languisheth through desire, by sighings of love after his presence; and he toucheth it and anointeth it full softly with the oil of gladness, and maketh it suddenly whole from all pain. And then crieth the soul to Jesus in a spiritual voice, with a glad heart, thus, "Thy name is as oil poured out. Thy name is Jesus, that is, health." Then as long as I feel my soul sore and sick by reason of sin, pained with the heavy burden of my body, sorrowful and fearful for perils and wretchedness of this life, so long, Lord Jesus, thy name is oil shut up, not poured forth. But when I feel my soul suddenly touched with the light of thy grace, healed and cured from all the filth of sin, and comforted in love and in light with spiritual strength and gladness unspeakable, then can I say with strong, loving, and spiritual might to thee; "Thy name, O Jesus, is to me oil poured forth." For, by the effect of thy gracious visitation I feel well the true exposition of thy name, that thou art Jesus, health; for only thy gracious presence healeth me from sorrow and from sin. B. ii. Part 3. ch. xi.\*

\* Hilton elsewhere guards against the error of attributing beneficial effects to the mere use of the name Jesus, as it is employed in many Romish books of devotion. He says, "I mean not this word Jesus painted upon the wall, or written in letters on a book, or formed by lips in sound of mouth, or framed in thy mind by imagination; for in this wise a man that is void of charity may find him." B. i. P. 3. ch. iii. § 2.

He also guards against reliance upon mere feelings; "Bodily feelings, be they ever so comfortable, are not to be desired, nor regarded much if they come; but spiritual feelings should ever be desired; I mean the killing of all workily love, the opening of the spiritual eye, purity of spirit, peace of conscience, and others spoken of before." B. ii. Part 3. ch. xi.

The Scale of Perfection was printed repeatedly between 1494 and 1672.

THE HISTORY  
OF  
REYNOLD PECOCK,

Bishop of Chichester,

AFFLICTED AND IMPRISONED FOR THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST.

A. D. 1457.

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Fox, in his Acts and Monuments, states—In the time of archbishop Bourchier befell the troubles of Reynold Pecock, bishop of Chichester, afflicted by the pope's prelates for his faith and profession of the gospel. Hall in his Chronicle maketh mention of this bishop, declaring that an overthrow (too severe) judgment, as he terms it, was given. This man, saith he, began to move questions, not privately, but openly in the universities, concerning the annates, Peter-pence, and other jurisdictions and authorities pertaining to the see of Rome, and not only put forth the questions, but declared his mind and opinion in the same; wherefore he was for this cause compelled to abjure at Paul's cross. Of whom also recordeth the Polychronicon, but in few words. This bishop, first of St. Asaph, then of Chichester, so long as duke Humphrey lived, by whom he was promoted and much esteemed, was quiet and safe, and also bold to dispute and to write his mind, and wrote, as Leland records, divers books and treatises. But after that good duke was made away, this good man was open to his enemies, and matter was soon found against him. Whereupon, he being complained of, and accused by privy and malignant promoters unto the archbishop, letters first were directed down from the archbishop, dated October 22, A.D. 1457, to cite all men to appear that could say anything against him.

This citation being directed, the bishop upon the summons thereof was brought, or rather came before the judges

and bishops, unto Lambeth, where Thomas, the archbishop, with his doctors and lawyers, were gathered together in the archbishop's court. In which convention, also, the duke of Buckingham was present, accompanied with the bishops of Rochester and of Lincoln. What were the opinions and articles objected against him, after in his revocation shall be specified. In his answering for himself in such a company of the pope's friends, he could not prevail; notwithstanding, he, stoutly defending himself, declared many things worthy great commendation of learning, if learning against power could have prevailed.

But they, on the contrary part, with all labour and travail extended themselves, either to reduce him, or else to confound him. As here lacked no blustering words of terror and threatening, so also many fair flattering words and gentle persuasions were admired withal. There was no stone left unturned, no ways unproved, either by fair means to entreat him, or by terrible menaces to terrify his mind, till at length, he, being vanquished and overcome by the bishops, began to faint, and gave over. Whereupon a recantation was put unto him by the bishops, which he should declare before the people. The copy of which his recantation here follows.

In the name of God, Amen. Before you, the most reverend father in Christ and Lord, the lord Thomas, by the grace of God archbishop of Canterbury, primate of all England, and legate of the apostolic see, I Reynold Pecock, unworthy bishop of Chichester, do purely, willingly, simply, and absolutely confess and acknowledge, that I in times past, that is to say, by the space of these twenty years last past and more, have otherwise conceived, holden, taught, and written, as touching the sacraments, and the articles of the faith, than the holy church of Rome, and universal church; and also that I have made, written, published, and set forth, many and divers pernicious doctrines, books, works, writings, heresies, contrary and against the true catholic and apostolic faith, containing in them errors contrary to the catholic faith, and especially these errors and heresies here under written.

1. First of all, that we are not bound by the necessity of faith, to believe that our Lord Jesus Christ, after his death, descended into hell.

2. Also, that it is not necessary to salvation to believe in the holy catholic church.

3. Also, that it is not necessary to salvation to believe the communion of saints.

4. Also, that it is not necessary to salvation to affirm the body material in the sacrament.

5. Also, that the universal church may err in matters which pertain unto faith.

6. Also, that it is not necessary unto salvation to believe that which every general council universally ordains, approves, or determines, should necessarily for the help of our faith, and the salvation of our souls, be approved and held of all faithful christians.

Wherefore, I, Reynold Pecock, wretched sinner, who have long walked in darkness, and now by the merciful disposition and ordinance of God, am reduced and brought again unto the light and way of truth, and restored unto the unity of our holy mother the church, renounce and forsake all errors and heresies aforesaid.

Notwithstanding, godly reader, it is not to be believed that Pecock did so give over these opinions, howsoever the words of the recantation pretend. For it is a policy and play of the bishops, that when they do subdue or overcome any man, they carry him whither they list, as it were a young steer by the nose, and frame out his words for him beforehand, as it were for a parrot, that he should speak unto the people, not according to his own will, but after their pleasure and fantasy. Neither is it to be doubted but that this bishop repented him afterward of his recantation; which may easily be judged hereby, because he was committed again to prison, and detained captive, where it is uncertain whether he was oppressed with privy and secret tyranny, and there obtained the crown of martyrdom, or no.

Bale states that Thomas Gascoign, writing of Reynold Pecock, makes declaration of his articles containing in them matters of sore heresy. First, saith he, Reynold Pecock at Paul's cross preached openly, that the office of a christian prelate, chiefly above all other things, is to preach the word of God. That man's reason is not to be preferred before the scriptures of the old and new testament. That the use of the sacraments, as they are now handled, is worse than the use of the law of nature. That bishops

who buy their admissions of the bishop of Rome do sin. That no man is bound to believe and obey the determination of the church of Rome. Also that the riches of bishops, by inheritance, are the goods of the poor. Also, that the apostles themselves personally were not the makers of the creed; and that in the same creed once was not the article, he went down to hell.\* Also, that of the four senses of the scripture none is to be taken, but the very first and proper sense. Also, that he gave little estimation, in some points, to the authority of the old doctors. Also, that he condemned the wilful begging of the friars, as a thing idle and needless. Leland also saith, that he, not contented to follow the catholic sentence of the church, in interpreting of the scripture, did not think soundly, as he judged it, of the holy eucharist.

At length, for these and such other articles, the said Reynold Pecock was condemned for a heretic, by the archbishops and bishops of Rochester, Lincoln, and Winchester, with other divines more. Whereupon he, being driven to his recantation, was notwithstanding detained still in prison. Where some say, that he was privily made away by death.

Hall adds, that some say his opinions to be, that spiritual persons by God's law ought to have no temporal possessions. Others write, that he said that personal tithes were not due by God's law. But whatsoever the cause was, he was caused at Paul's cross to abjure, and all his books burnt, and he himself kept in confinement during his natural life.

#### *Farther particulars respecting Bishop Pecock.*

Lewis, in his life of Pecock, has stated many additional particulars respecting this persecuted bishop, some of which may be added to Fox's narrative.

Dr. Pecock was a native of Wales, the time of his birth was about A. D. 1390; he studied at Oriel college, Oxford. His association with Humphrey the "good" duke of Gloucester, shows that he was above the superstitions of the church of Rome, and not one of the common stamp of Romish ecclesiastics. In the year 1431, he was appointed master of Whittington college, in the city of London, and rector of the church of St. Michael Royal. About this time Pecock seems to have begun to study the controversy with the Lollards; we may easily suppose this led to what Leland

\* It was added in the latter part of the fourth century.

points out as the first cause' of his troubles, "that he was not careful enough in his interpretations of scripture to follow the approved opinion of the orthodox, but would make use of his own sense and judgments."

In 1444, Pecock was promoted to the bishopric of St. Asaph; three years after, he preached a sermon at Paul's cross, in which he advanced opinions respecting the preaching of bishops, which implied that it was their duty rather to be occupied in the general care of their dioceses, than in the work of preaching taken in its ordinary acceptation, or as he expresses himself, "in its most famous signification." Herein he certainly favoured the general practice of the Romish prelates rather than the doctrines of the Lollards, who objected much to unpreaching prelates. But we find that the bishops were very much displeased by this discourse, which makes it probable that Pecock had also opposed the style of preaching then commonly used by the friars, namely the setting forth idle romish legends, and tales of purgatory, to induce the people to make pecuniary contributions, and that he urged the importance of each bishop's overseeing the ministers in his charge, that they performed their duties in the cure of souls; or perhaps instead of stating that bishops ought not to preach, he urged that they ought not to preach in the manner then most common. It is difficult to ascertain what were Pecock's precise views, but it is probable that he wished to reconcile the Lollards or followers of the truth, to the church of Rome, by inducing a reformation of its chief malpractices and errors. A work which many others have laboured to effect, but it has always proved to be labouring in the fire for very vanity, Hab. ii. 13. In furtherance of these views, he published a book in 1449, called "The Repressing of over much blaming the Clergy." In the first part of this work, Dr. Pecock wrote against the errors of those, who, while opposing the errors of the church of Rome in asserting that scripture is insufficient for instruction, unless tradition be added, went into a contrary extreme. His views appear to have been very similar to those stated by the excellent and judicious Hooker,\* but

\* "Two opinions there are concerning the sufficiency of holy scripture, each extremely opposite unto the other, and both repugnant unto the truth. The schools of Rome teach scripture to be insufficient, as if, except traditions were added, it did not contain all revealed and supernatural truth, which absolutely is necessary for the children of men in this life to know, that they may in the next be saved. Others justly condemning this opinion, grow likewise unto a dangerous

he expressed them in a manner which would expose him to animadversions, not only from such as maintained either position in the extreme, but from those who had more correct knowledge of the truth. He defended some other popish errors which had been most warmly attacked by the followers of Wickliff, but did this in a manner unsatisfactory to the bigoted papists. About the same time Pecock was translated to the bishopric of Chichester.

Another work published by Dr. Pecock was entitled, "A Treatise of Faith." Here again he urges the Lollards to follow the determinations and holdings of the church in matters of faith, unless they could evidently and plainly show them to be untrue or insufficient, at the same time he disapproves of the principle that "the clergy, or the church of the clergy may not err in matter of faith," though he urges this as a possibility rather than admits that it was the case. Much of his argument is managed with the scholastic subtilities then prevalent. The second part of his treatise is on the rule of faith. In it he attacked the infallibility and supreme authority of the church, then strenuously maintained by the clergy. He says, "Faith is taken in two senses," first to signify the knowledge by which we know the true article; secondly, the same true article in itself known by faith. Or thus, "Faith is a knowing, wherein we consent in our understanding to a truth being above our capacity to find and know, and therefore we know it by this, that God affirmed it; and it is the article or the truth now in this said manner known. Now neither of these two faiths may the clergy, or the whole church, make new or at their own will." He showed that "holy writ is such a ground and foundation of our christian general faith, that there is no greater or better, or to us surer ground, or foundation to us for our christian general faith, than is written in holy writ." And that this writing, containing all our own faith, is precious, and ought not to be set little by, neither to be faintly and unworthily received. He made other important statements with respect to holy scripture. "Very often scripture expoundeth itself, inasmuch as by the reading of scripture in one part, a man shall learn which is the true understanding of scripture in extremity, as if scripture did not only contain all things in that kind necessary, but all things simply, and in such sort, that to do any thing according to any other law, were not only unnecessary, but even opposite to salvation, unlawful and sinful." *Hooker, Ecc. Pol. ii. § 8. See Lewis's Life of Pecock*



all other parts wherein he doubted or was ignorant before. Certain it may be, that one simple person, in fame, or in state, is wiser for to know, judge, and declare, what is the true sense of a certain portion of scripture, and what is the truth of some article, and that for his long studying, labouring, and advising thereupon, than is a great general council." So again, "The writing made and found by God, and by the apostles—may ground sufficiently the same faith in every clerk or layman, notably reasoned for to understand what he readeth in the new testament, though he learn not the same faith by any general council, or any multitude of clerks to be gathered together." But this work is especially to be noted for the testimony it contained against persecution. Objecting to the violent courses then pursued relative to the Lollards, he says, "The clergy shall be condemned at the last day, if they draw not men by clear knowledge into consent of true faith, instead of by ~~fire~~ sword, or hanging." He however qualifies this by adding, "Although I will not deny these second means to be lawful, provided the former be first used." Bishop Pecock's reasonings, though for the most part short of scriptural truth, were sufficient to bring down the displeasure of the ecclesiastics; accordingly we find him opposed by several leading doctors. In 1457, he was expelled the house of lords, and forbidden the king's presence; his works were also submitted to examination. The political events of that period had deprived him of his most powerful supporters.

In the preceding account from Fox particulars are given of the result of this examination of bishop Pecock's writings. It is unnecessary to enter farther into the details, except to observe that there does not appear any ground for an accusation of his enemies, that he did not consider faith in the Holy Ghost necessary for salvation.\* In summing up, or enforcing the charges, the archbishop did not make

\* Lewis supposes that this calumny, for which there is not the least ground apparent in any writings of bishop Pecock's now extant, arose from his denying that belief in the holy catholic church was necessary to salvation; a position since admitted even by the council of Trent. His denial that it was necessary for salvation to believe that our Lord Jesus Christ descended into hell, because this article was not originally in the apostles' creed, but placed there in aftertimes by the ecclesiastics, seemed plainly to show that in bishop Pecock's opinion, the clergy, either in council or out of it, had no power to make articles of faith necessary to be believed for christian men's salvation. Like his successors among the reformers, he disputed against "unwritten verities," or the authority of human traditions.

any reference to this allegation. It was very usual for the Romish church to lay to the charge of those who differed from her, things that they knew not.

Bishop Pecock submitted to the church of Rome, and abjured the articles laid to his charge, as already has been mentioned. Many thousands crowded to witness his public penance. At the conclusion of this humiliating scene he is said to have publicly exclaimed; "My pride and presumption have brought these calamities and reproaches upon me." It is very possible that the bitter lessons he had learned in the school of adversity were blessed to his soul. The lowest abuse was now heaped upon him by the romish zealots, and poetic allusions made to him as a peacock despoiled of his plumage, and changed to an owl!

That his abjuration was forced, and not a willing compliance, there can be no doubt; this is confirmed by the continued persecution of his enemies, and especially from the manner in which those appointed to be his advisers spoke of him nearly a year afterwards.

He was now classed with those whom he had so lately opposed, and the following royal mandate to the university of Oxford, against the writings of Wickliff and Pecock, presents a useful lesson to some who in later days have stood aloof from humbler characters, while they held the same doctrines of truth, though perhaps expressed in different terms.

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*To our right trusty and entirely beloved chaplain, master Thomas Chandler, doctor of divinity, chancellor of our university of Oxford, and to the regents and non regents, and principals also of the colleges and halls of the same university.*

RIGHT trusty and entirely beloved, and trusty and well-beloved, we greet you well. And whereas we doubt not ye have well understood the great injuries and perils that the church and the clergy of England have now of late stood in, by the multiplying and copying of divers erroneous books and works, common to the hands of many mischievous and seditious persons of these our realms, intending almost the subversion of all police, sovereign power, and jurisdiction, as of the articles of our faith. For whose false and mali-

cious conspiracies and purposes to be withstood and repressed, we have and shall put ourself at all times in our uttermost devoir, not sparing to employ our own person in God's cause, as we know ourselves so bound to do. Therefore it is that we write unto you at this time, to the intent that our disposition should be known every where, namely, to you having guiding and governance of our university of Oxford, so that by your effectual support and abilities this new found venomous sect might be the rather suppressed and overthrown, to the honour of God, and exaltation of the true faith of his church. And forasmuch as we verily understand that there remain in divers places of our university many works and books compiled, as well by Reynold Pecock as by Wickliff, containing great and industrious errors and opinions, contrary to the faith, and the holy attestations of the universal church, by which works and books, not only minds are set in frowardness and malice, but also innocent and simple persons may be discouraged by study-taking upon the same books, as now of late it hath been evidently proved and known. We therefore desire and pray you, and not the less in the straitest wise would, and charge you, to command true, due, and whole searches for the said books of Pecock and Wickliff, and all other damnable works, whatsoever they be. So that like as the authors of the same have been by sufficient examination and authorities before these days reprov'd and condemned for their said damnable adjunctions and errors, likewise the same works may therefore be utterly foredoomed and put out of remembrance. Charging moreover that all the said works and books, when and as often as they are found, be wholly brought and conveyed to the hands of you our said chaplain and chancellor there. And the same, without dispensation or sparing any part of them, to be by you committed to the fire, in like manner and form as it hath been done touching the books of Pecock, at another season, yourself being chancellor of Oxford at the same time.

And, if ye find any person or persons, what estate, degree, or condition they be of, within our said university, refusing to obey and perform our commandment in this part, or concealing any of the said books or works, or in any wise hindering the said search to be made, ye proceed against them or him, to their or his most utter punishment, in example to others, certifying us and our council from time to time, of the names of the same. And that ye fail not

hereof as ye intend to do us right singular pleasure, and answer to us at your peril.

Given under our privy seal at Westminster, the 16th day of February.\*

Sentence of deprivation was passed against Pecock, but he had sufficient interest to procure bulls from Rome, ordering his restoration to his diocese. They were objected to. Threats were held out of an embassy being sent to the pope, and that severe punishment should be inflicted upon him unless he renounced his see, while a competent pension was offered him if he would resign. It does not appear whether he complied with these terms, but from the treatment he afterwards experienced, we may suppose that he refused.

Another was promoted to his bishopric, while Pecock was sent to the abbey of Thorney, in an unhealthy part of Cambridgeshire. Instructions were given to the abbot, that Dr. Pecock should "have a secret closed chamber, and that he pass not out of the said chamber." One attendant was allotted him, but no one else was to see or speak to him without leave. The use of pens, ink, and paper were forbidden. His library was restricted to a mass book, a psalter, a legend, and a bible. His diet at first was to be the common allowance of the monks, but after some time might be slightly improved. For these charges, and the fitting up of his "closed chamber," an annual allowance of eleven pounds was ordered to be made to the abbot. Various accounts of his death have been given, but it is most probable that the strictness of such a confinement at his advanced age, soon terminated his days. He fell a sacrifice to the doctrine of the infallible authority of the clergy of the church of Rome. His fate is a proof that skill in the learning then esteemed, knowledge superior to his contemporaries, and even a desire to defend the unity of the outward church, did not avail, when the grosser absurdities of the romish faith and the usurpations of its clergy, were rejected, and their cruel proceedings disapproved.

\* There is another letter from the king to the chancellor, dated April 17th, thanking the university for its ready and speedy execution of the order in the preceding letter, so that all such books as could be found within the university, erroneous, and contrary to the christian faith, had been condemned and burned. Harpsfield, in the reign of queen Mary, expressly speaks of Pecock as entangled in the opinions of Wickliff. These letters are among the MSS. in the library of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge. These proceedings took place in the early part of the reign of Edward IV.

Lewis concludes his life of Pecock with the following prayer, composed by the bishop, in English. "O thou Lord Jesu, God and man, Head of thy christian church, and teacher of christian beliefe, I beseech thy mercy, thy pity, and thy charity, far be this peril (implicit faith) from the christian church, and from each person therein contained. And shield thou that this venom never be brought into thy church, and if thou suffer it any while to be brought in, I beseech thee that it be soon cast out; but suffer thou, ordain, and do, that the law and the faith which thy church at any time keepeth, be received and admitted to fall under examination, whether it be the same true faith which thou and thine apostles taught, or no, and whether it hath sufficient evidences, that it is true faith or not."\*

\* Some additional light may be thrown upon the displeasure of the papists at bishop Pecock's opposition to their interpretation of the clause in the creed respecting Christ's descent into hell, by the following memorandum respecting one of the pieces of puppet-show machinery exhibited by the priests in England at that period.

"Item, That master Canning hath delivered this 4th day of July, in the year of our Lord 1470, to master Nicholas Peters, vicar of St. Mary Redcliffe, (Bristol,) Moses Conterin, (and) Philip Bartholomew, procurators of St. Mary Redcliffe aforesaid; a *new sepulchre* well gilt with gold, and a cover thereto.

"Item, An image of God Almighty rising out of the same sepulchre, with all the ordinance that belongeth thereto, that is to say, a lath made of timber, and the iron work thereof.

"Item, thereto belongeth heaven made of timber and stained cloths.

"Item, hell, made of timber, and iron work thereto, with devils to the number of thirteen.

"Item, four knights armed, keeping the sepulchre, with their weapons in their hands, that is to say, two axes and two spears, with two pavés, (large shields.)

"Item, four pair of angels' wings for four angels, made of timber and well painted.

"Item, the Father, the crown, and visage; the ball with a cross upon it, well gilt with fine gold.

"Item, the Holy Ghost coming out of heaven into the sepulchre.

"Item, belongeth to the four angels, four chevelers (or supports—the angels would be personified by four boys or young females)." *Harrington's Nugæ Antiquæ, by Park.*

It is painful to advert to such blasphemous representations, but we cannot otherwise have a just idea of the spiritual darkness which then prevailed, and the difficulties the reformers had to contend against. Even at the present day, where popery prevails, such representations are general, and to such proceedings the principles of Romanism must lead.

4  
THE  
LOLLARDS OF BUCKINGHAMSHIRE.

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PERSECUTED A. D. 1521.

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WE have seen the extent to which the doctrines of the truth, as taught by Wickliff and his followers, prevailed in England; also that the efforts of the papists were successful in again spreading thick darkness over the people, and preventing the free circulation of the scriptures. But there is sufficient evidence that during the century and a half which elapsed between the death of Wickliff and the more general reformation in the reign of Henry the eighth, there were many thousands who feared the Lord in secret, and who in their hearts bowed not down to the Baal of Romish superstition. This is manifest from numerous particulars recorded in the bishops' registers respecting the martyrs and confessors for the faith; many extracts from which are given by Fox and Wilkins. To recapitulate the details respecting these martyrs, and their sufferings, would be foreign to the design of the present work; but some account of the persecutions in Buckinghamshire, in the early part of the sixteenth century, may be here given, as they exhibit an important link in the history of the Reformation. We do not possess original writings of Lollards in the latter part of the fifteenth century, or the commencement of the sixteenth, but these records incontestably prove that the lessons of truth taught by Wickliff, had taken deep root in England, and continued to be studied, before the doctrines of the German reformers were known in our country. The streams which had risen from different sources, then united and swelled into a mighty river which made glad the city of our God.

Numerous affecting narratives are recorded on indisputable authority. The atrocious scene exhibited at Amersham in 1506, when the daughter of William Tylsworth, a married woman, named Clerk, was compelled to set fire to the fagots which consumed her father alive, while her husband, and sixty

others, stood by doing penance\*—the burning of six men and a woman in one fire at Coventry, for teaching their children the Lord's prayer and the ten commandments in English†—the burning of John Brown, in Kent, near his own house, after his feet had been broiled on hot coals by archbishop Warham and bishop Fisher, till the flesh was consumed to the bone, for a shrewd question put to a priest who pretended to deliver souls from purgatory—the secret murder of Hunn in the Lollard's tower at St. Paul's cathedral, whose sole offence was refusing to pay a fee unlawfully demanded by a Romish priest—all these, and many more, plainly show the extent to which persecution then proceeded, the causes for which it was inflicted, and the atrocious cruelties by which it was accompanied.

The activity of the secret teachers of truth, and the extent of their labours, are shown by many of these details, and may be farther illustrated by the accusations against Thomas Mann. He was apprehended in 1511, and accused of denying several popish errors. Having submitted to the judgment of the Romish church, he was imprisoned in the abbeys of Osney and Frideswide at Oxford, from whence he escaped, and abode chiefly in Essex and Suffolk till 1518, when he was again apprehended, and brought before Fitzjames, bishop of London. The twelfth article alleged against him states, "That since the time of his abjuration, he had said that he and his wife had turned *six or seven hundred* people unto those opinions which he was abjured of." He was burned in Smithfield, March 29, 1518. The particulars of the accusations against him and others also show that Wickliff's tracts, his translation of the scripture, with other similar works, were efficient means of usefulness in that day.

We may now proceed to the record of English professors of the truth above referred to; the reader will find that these poor sufferers were almost all convicted, if such a term may be so applied, on the extorted testimony of their fellows. A

\* Fox narrating this event in 1562, says, "that to stop the mouth of all carping cavillers with as much possibility as I may, be it known to all such persons who by evidence of truth and witnesses will be satisfied, that in the town of Amersham are *yet alive*, both men and women, who can and do witness of the same." Two of them, William Page and Agnes Witherley, he mentions by name. The spot where this deed of horror was perpetrated is still pointed out.

† For the truth of this Fox refers to a woman named Hall, living at Bagington, when his work was printed. All the principal narratives of Fox are fully authenticated, and his authorities mentioned.

more striking exemplification that "a man's foes shall be they of his own household," Matt. x. 36. is not recorded in the pages of history.

We find sons and fathers, daughters and mothers, brothers, sisters, masters, and servants, all accusing each other; the bonds of society, and the common ties of nature, were violently rent asunder by the inquisitorial severities of the Romish prelates. The particulars are here given in a condensed form, from the Acts and Monuments of John Fox; who entitles this painful narrative,

*A Table describing the grievous affliction of good men and women, in the diocese of Lincoln, under John Longland, their bishop, with the names both of the accusers, and of them that were accused; also with the crimes to them objected; out of the Registers of the said diocese. Anno 1521.*

Robert Bartlet, and Richard his brother, were detected by several of their former associates, to be known men, that is, to be of the same company and affinity with others, that had been abjured before, in the time of William Smith, bishop of Lincoln, about the year 1508. And that in the house of Thomas Harding, they were so noted by the words of Harding's wife; who speaking to Robert Bartlet, said that she was glad that he was converted to grace, and chosen to almighty God, requiring him never to forsake that which he was called to, for if he did, there was no sacrifice left for him. Also the said Harding's wife, speaking to Richard Bartlet, coming into her house, said, Here cometh a good man, and I hope he will be a good man, but he hath so much mind of buying and selling and taking of farms, that it putteth his mind from all goodness. By which words it appeared, said they, that he was a known man. Also, that Robert Bartlet, speaking to Harding's wife, said, he had thought to have called William Tylsworth false heretic; but now he was better advised. Also, that they used the lectures and readings of that company.

This Robert Bartlet, and Richard his brother, first being sworn, and yet confessing nothing before the bishop, at last were convicted by witnesses, and noted therefore of perjury. Wherefore incurring greater danger, they were constrained at their next examination to confess what they had both done and said. That is, that the said Robert



had read unto Richard his brother, a parcel of scripture beginning thus, James the servant of God, to the twelve kinds, &c. Also, for that he heard William Tylsworth say, that images of saints were but stocks and stones, and dead things; and that he taught the same to his brother Richard, and concealed the words of William Tylsworth. Also, for that he partly believed Thomas Mastal, teaching him that the true presence of Christ was not in the sacrament: and likewise of images and pilgrimage. Also, for receiving the communion at Easter without shrift, or previous confession to the priest.

Robert Bartlet was brought to examination, and caused by his oath to detect Richard Bartlet, his brother, because he said, his brother Richard had been much conversant with Thurstan Littlepage, and had learned of him the counsels and secrets of those men. Also, that he had learned of him some of the epistle of St. James.

The cause wherein Robert Bartlet detected Isabel his wife was, that when the bishop's servant was come for her husband, she uttered these words, saying, Alas, he was now an undone man, and she but a dead woman. Furthermore, the said Robert, being demanded of the bishop whether he knew Isabel his wife to be of the sect of heretics before he married her, said, Yea. Being asked again, if she had not been of that sect, whether then he would have married her, he granted the same likewise. The said Robert Bartlet detected also his own sister, in that he had twice instructed her not to worship images, and also had taught her in the epistle of St. James.

The aforesaid Robert Bartlet was brought to examination, and caused by his oath to detect Elizabeth Deane, Emme Tylsworth, William Grinder and his wife, John Scrivener, Alexander Mastal, William Tylsworth, Thurstan Littlepage, and John Bartlet his brother, these to be of the number of known men; for that they resorted many times together, reading and conferring among themselves, and talking against worshipping of images, and pilgrimage. And if any came in amongst them, who was not of their side, then they would say no more, but all keep silence, &c.

Richard Bartlet by his oath, was constrained to detect Agnes Wellis, his sister, in three points.

First, for learning the epistle of St. James in English of Thurstan Littlepage. Secondly, for not believing the bodily presence in the sacrament. Thirdly, for speaking

against worshipping of images, and going on pilgrimages. This Richard Bartlet also in his confession, said of his father, that he was a better man than he was taken for. For the other day there came a man to him, as he was threshing, and said, God speed father Bartlet, ye work sore. Yea, said he, I thresh God almighty out of the straw!\*

Against this Agnes Wellis brought and examined before the bishop, were ministered interrogatories, some of which were as follows:—

Whether she knew any other to be suspected of the same heresy or sect, beside them of Amersham so convented; who they were, and how many? Whether she had been, or is now noted, had, holden, or reputed, or defamed, to be of the same sect with Thurstan Littlepage, or others convicted of heresy, and whether she be, or hath been nominated for a known woman among them? Whether Thurstan Littlepage did ever teach her the epistle of St. James, or the epistles of St. Peter or Paul in English? and whether she had repeated oft times the epistle of St. James, unto the said Thurstan, in the presence of Richard Bartlet, her brother? Whether she had been instructed by Thurstan Littlepage, or by any other, in the aforesaid sect, that in the sacrament of the altar was not the true body of Christ, but only the substance of bread? Whether she had been instructed by Thurstan Littlepage, or any other, that pilgrimage was not to be used, nor the images of saints to be adored? Whether that Robert or Richard Bartlet, her brother, did ever teach her the epistle of St. James; and if he did, how often, and where? Whether she knew such a law and custom among them, that such as were of that sort, did contract matrimony only with themselves, and not with other christians? Whether she did ever hear Thurstan, or any other, say, that they only which were of their doctrine, were true christians? When she came to receive, and was confessed, whether she did utter and confess her heresies to the priest? Unto these, and other captious and cruel interrogatory articles, ministered against Agnes Wellis, she answered negatively almost to them all; refusing to utter any person unto the bishop. But soon after, being otherwise schooled, I cannot tell how, by the (Roman) catholics, she was compelled to detect both herself, her brother Robert Bartlet, Thurstan Littlepage, and also Isabel Morwin.

\* Alluding to the Romish transubstantiation of the breaden cake.

The crime laid to Alice Harding was this, when the priest was coming to Richard Bennet, to give him housel she went before, and instructed him what he should do.

Roger Bennet, by like compulsion of his oath, was caused to detect John Jennings and two others for carrying about certain books in English; also W. Smith, wheeler, the wife of J. Milsent, the wife of W. Rogers, R. Stampe and his wife, the wife of R. Bartlet. These good women were detected to the bishop, for that upon the holy days, when they go and come from the church, they use to resort unto one J. Colingworth's house, and there to keep their conventicle.

Agnes Frank. Because she turned away her face from the cross, as it was carried about on Easter day in the morning, at the resurrection.

T. Rowland put to his oath, did detect John Scrivener the elder, for carrying about books from one to another.

James Morden, compelled in like manner by his oath, did detect Thomas Rowland for these words following: "If I lie, curse, storm, swear, chide, fight, or threat, then am I worthy for to be beat. I pray you, good master mine, if I offend in any of these nine, amend me with a good scourging." Also T. Chase, because he heard him twice recite the epistle of St. James. Also these words, "It was by the days of Herod, king of Jews, that there was a priest, Zachary by name, and he came of the sort of Abias, and his wife of the daughter of Aaron: both they were just before God, going in all the commandments," &c.

And Agnes Ashford, of Chesham, for teaching this James Morden the words following: "We be the salt of the earth; if it be putrified and vanished away, it is nothing worth. A city set upon a hill may not be hid. Light ye not a candle and put it under a bushel, but set it on a candlestick, that it may give a light to all in the house. So shine your light before men, as they may see your works, and glorify the Father, that is in heaven. No tittle or letter of the law shall pass over till all things be done." And five times went he to the foresaid Agnes to learn this lesson. Also, that the said Agnes did teach him to say this lesson: "Jesus seeing his people as he went up to a hill, was set, and his disciples came to him: he opened his mouth and taught them, saying, Blessed be the poor men in spirit, for the kingdom of heaven is theirs. Blessed be mild men, for

they shall weld\* the earth." And twice he came to her to learn this lesson.

And these lessons the said Agnes was bid to recite before six bishops, who straitly enjoined and commanded her that she should teach those lessons no more to any man, and especially not to her children.

The aforesaid James Morden detected, among others, Agnes Ashford, and Thomas Chase; because these two did exhort him thrice, that he should keep the things they spake of, as secret as a man would keep a thief in prison.

Also Robert Pope, John Morden and his wife; because they were heard in the presence of this James Morden, their nephew, to recite the ten commandments in their house, in English.

Also Alice Atkins. Because of him she learned the paternoster, ave maria, and creed, in English, and the five marvels of St. Augustine. Also another piece of an English book beginning, "Here followeth four things, by which a man may know whether he shall be saved," &c.

And Marian Morden, his own sister, that she did not worship images. And after these things he intended to teach her of the sacrament.

To this James Morden, with other more abjurers, it was before enjoined by bishop Smith, for seven years, to visit the church of Lincoln twice a year from Amersham. And when divers had got license of the bishop, because of the length of the journey, to visit the image of our lady of Missenden, for the space of five years; this James Morden, when he could not obtain license so to do, yet notwithstanding, for the tediousness of the way, went with them to the same image, and thereupon was charged for violating the bishop's injunction. Also because to get his living, he wrought half a year out of the diocese, when he had been enjoined by the bishop not to go out of the county of Buckingham. This James Morden confessed that he used his paternoster and creed so much in English, that he had forgot many words thereof in Latin, and therefore was enjoined by bishop Smith to say it no more in English, but only in Latin, and because he kept not this injunction, he fell therefore in relapse.

Roger Benet, by compulsion of his oath, was caused to detect twenty-one to be known persons.

\* Govern.

Thomas Halfeaker, sworn upon his oath, detected John Milsent and his wife, Roger Harding and his wife, T. Bernard, T. Africke and his wife, W. Rogers, W. Harding and his wife, K. Bartlet the mother of Robert and Richard Bartle. T. Harding and his wife, W. Franke and his wife. Because they coming to the church, and especially at the elevation time, would say no prayers, but did sit mummy, as he termed it, like beasts. Because Katharine Bartlet, being of good health, came but seldom to the church, but feigned herself sick; and because William Franke married Agnes his wife, she being before abjured.

Thomas Holmes detected seventy-four persons, some of them living at Uxbridge, Hertford, and London. Among them Robert Pope, because he fled away when the great abjuration was at Amersham, A. D. 1511. Also for having certain English books.

Also Henry Miller, who was counted for a great heretic, and learned in the scripture.

Andrew Randall and his wife, of Rickmansworth. Because they received into their house, Thomas Man, flying from persecution, and for reading Wickliff's Wicket.

Benet Ward was also denounced by John Merston, for saying that it booteth no man to pray to our lady, nor to any saint, nor angel in heaven, but to God only, for they have no power of man's soul. Also the wife of Benet Ward and her daughter, for saying that Thomas Pope was the devoutest man that ever came in their house; for he would sit reading in his book even to midnight many times. John Butler, carpenter, R. Butler, W. King, of Uxbridge. These three sat up all the night in the house of Durdant of Ivercourt, by Staines, reading all the night in a book of scripture. John Muckliff, weaver, for speaking against holy bread and holy water. Thomas Man, for saying that Christ was not substantially in the sacrament. Thomas Stilman, for receiving an English book given him by Carder, his father, who after his abjuration before bishop Smith, fell sick and died.

Robert Carder, of Iver, weaver, detected Joan Cocks for desiring of Durdant, her master, that he being a known man, would teach her some knowledge of God's law, and desiring the same also of the Butlers.

Nicolas Durdant of Staines, Davy Durdant of Ankerwike; the wife of old Durdant, and the wife of Nicholas Durdant. These were detected for that old Durdant of Ivercourt.

sitting at dinner with his children and their wives, having bid a boy there standing to depart out of the house, that he should not hear and tell, did recite certain places unto them, out of the epistle of St. Paul, and of the gospels.

R. White was detected to be a known man, because, after the death of bishop Smith, he was heard to say these words, "My lord that is dead, was a good man, and divers known men were called before him, and he sent them home again, bidding them that they should live among their neighbours as good christian men should do. And now, said he, there is a new bishop who is called a blessed man, and if he be as he is named, he will not trouble the servants of God, but will let them be in quiet."

Marian Morden was forced upon her oath to accuse James Morden her own brother, who taught her the paternoster, ave, and creed in English, and that she should not go on pilgrimage, nor should worship saints or images; which she had not done by the space of six years past, following and believing her brother.

James Morden was forced upon his oath to accuse his two brothers, their wives, and eight others.

T. Coupland, forced by his oath, detected Roger Harding, and W. Grinder. Because these two could not say their creed in Latin.

T. Rowland, T. Coupland, R. Stevens, R. Bennet, were forced by their oath to accuse Thomas Harding of Amersham, and Alice Harding his wife. Because, after their abjuration in bishop Smith's time, divers known men, as they then termed them, who were abjured before, had much resort to their house. Also Agnes Squire, for speaking these words: "Men do say I was abjured for heresy, but I will never be ashamed of it."

John Sawcote upon his oath did appeach the vicar of Little Missenden for that he gave to Dr. Wilcocks twenty pounds, to excuse him that he might not be brought to open penance. And R. Sanders of Amersham, because, he ever defended them which were suspected to be known men. Also because he bought out his penance, and carried his badge in his purse.

Bishop Longland seeking how to convict John Phip of perjury, who being charged with an oath did not answer affirmatively to such suspicions as were laid unto him by Thomas Holmes and other accusers, examined Sybil Africke his own sister, upon her oath, to detect her brother of

relapse. But she so answered, that the bishop could take by her no great hold of relapse against him. Wherein is to be noted the singular iniquity and abuse in the church of Rome, which by virtue of oath, setteth the sister to procure the brother's blood. The like also was sought from Thomas Africke, his sister's husband; but they had by him no advantage.

Jenkin Butler appeached John Butler, his own brother, for reading to him in a certain book of the scripture, and persuading him to hearken to the same; also Richard Butler his brother, and others called Richard Nash, and Richard Tredway.

W. Ameriden detected Isabel Tracher, because she came not to the church often on the work days, being admonished both by the church-wardens, by the graduates of the church, and by Dr. Cock's commissary, but followed her business at home. Also because she purposed to set her daughter to Alice Harding, saying that she could better instruct her than many others. Also because she cursed the priest after he was gone, who had given to her the eucharist, saying, that he had given to her bitter gall. Also Alice Holting, for that she did dine before she went to church to take the sacrament, saying, that Isabel Tracher did so tell her, that she might dine before she received the sacrament.

Joan Norman appeached W. Trecher of Amersham for keeping Thomas Grove in his house on Easter and Christmas day, because he would not come to the church. Also R. Cosin, T. Man, and Alice Harding for dissuading from pilgrimage, from worshipping of images, and from vowing her money to saints for the health of her child. Also for saying, that she needed not to confess to a priest; but it would be enough to lift up her hands to heaven. Also for saying, that she might as well drink upon the Sunday, before mass, as any other day, &c.

John Scrivener was forced by his oath to accuse Henry Miller, wire drawer, who fled from Amersham to Chelmsford. That he abjured and did penance in Kent before, and afterward coming to Amersham, taught them many heresies. Also John Barret, goldsmith of London, Joan Barret his wife, and Joan his servant, because he was heard in his own house before his wife and maid, there present, to recite the epistle of St. James; which epistle, with many other things, he had perfectly without book.

And John Merywether, his wife, and his son, because

Joan his wife had lent to this John Scrivener, the gospel of Matthew and Mark, which book he gave to bishop Smith.

And Durdant by Stains, old Durdant, Isabel, wife of T. Harding, Hartop of Windsor, Joan Barret, wife of John Barret of London, Henry Miller, and Stilman Taylor. All these were accused, because at the marriage of Durdant's daughter they assembled together in a barn, and heard a certain epistle of St. Paul read, which reading they well liked, but especially Durdant, and commended the same.

Thomas Grove of London, butcher, William Glasbroke of Harrow on the hill, Christopher Glasbroke of London, W. Tylsworth of London, goldsmith, prentice to John Barret. These were appeached because they used to resort and confer together of matters of religion, in the house of Thomas Man of Amersham, before the great abjuration, which was ten years past.

John Newman was appeached because he was present in the house of J. Barret, at the reading of scripture.

Wily was appeached because he taught the gospel of Matthew to J. Wood and W. Wood after the great abjuration; and father Robert did teach them St. Paul's epistle; which old father was after that burned at Buckingham.

W. Littlepage, forced by his oath, accused Thurstan Littlepage, and Emma his wife. This Thurstan had taught him the saying of Solomon, that wrath raiseth chidings, had taught him also the paternoster and ave, in English. His creed in English he learned of his grandmother. Thurstan also taught him, Christ was not corporeally in the sacrament. He also accused John Littlepage his brother, because he was said to have learned the ten commandments in English of Alice Thurstan's wife, in his father's house. And John Frier, because he taught the said William the ten commandments in English.

John Gardiner appeached Joan Clark of Little Missenden, for saying she never did believe in the sacrament of the altar, nor ever would believe it.

His sister Agnes Ward, because, that when this Gardiner said, God help us and our lady, and all the saints of heaven, then she said, What need is it to go to the feet, when we may go to the head? He also accused sixteen others.

Bishop Longland seeking matter against Isabel Morwin, of whom he could take no great advantage by examination, called Elizabeth Copland, her own sister, and caused her to testify against her as follows. First, because in talk



together, coming from their father, being at the point of death, Isabel said to her sister Elizabeth, that all which die pass either to hell or heaven. Nay, said the other, there is between them purgatory.

Again, when Elizabeth came from the rood of rest, Isabel said, that if she knew so much as she hath heard, she would go no more on pilgrimage while she lived. For all saints, said she, are in heaven. Then Elizabeth asked, wherefore pilgrimage was ordained of doctors and priests. Said the other, For gain and profit. Who hath taught you this, quoth Elizabeth? man or woman? Your curate, I dare say, never taught you so. My curate, said she, will never know so much; and moreover she said to Elizabeth her sister, that if she would keep counsel, and not tell her husband, she would say more. And when Elizabeth answered, that she would not tell. But, saith the other, I will have you to swear, and because she would not swear, the other would not proceed any further.

Alice Brown was forced by her oath to detect John Tracher of Chesham, for that he taught her in the gospel this saying of Jesus, Blessed are they that hear the word of God and keep it. Also, because he taught her the eight beatitudes in English.

Emma Tyllsworth, because she refused to detect others by virtue of her oath, and denied such matter as by witness and by the bishops' acts were proved against her; in pain of relapse the bishop enjoined her to make certain fagots of cloth, and to wear the same, both before her upper garment, and behind, so long as she lived.

W. Phipps was forced by his oath to detect Thomas Africke, for asking how his cousin Widmore Clark the elder, and John Phip did, at Hichenden; whether they kept the laws of God as they were wont?

Also John Phip for saying that images are not to be worshipped, because they are made and carved with man's hand, and that such ought not to be worshipped.

And John Gardiner, for that he said, that all who are burned for this sect, are true martyrs.

John Butler by his oath was forced to detect Thomas Geffrey, first of Uxbridge, then of Ipswich, tailor, for reading and teaching him in the acts and preachings of the apostles. Also for having a scripture book in English, which book the said Geffrey gave to the bishop of London when he was accused. Also that the said Geffrey said,

that true pilgrimage was, barefoot to go and visit the poor, weak, and sick, for they are the true images of God. And Richard Vulford, because he told the said John Butler, that the consecrated host was not the very true body of Christ. In proof whereof, they said, Let a mouse be put in the pix with the host, and the mouse would eat it up. And for more proof, they declared unto the said John Butler, that there were two priests in Essex, who put a mouse in the pix to a consecrated host, and the mouse did eat it. The deed of these priests being known and brought to the bishop, one of the priests was burned for the same.

John Butler also did detect John Clark of Denham. Vulford and Geoffrey told him and John Clark, that holy bread and holy water were but a vain glory of the world, for God never made them, but they were men's inventions.

Moreover, that Thomas Geoffrey caused this John Butler divers Sundays to go to London to hear Dr. Colet.\*

He detected Andrew Fuller of Uxbridge, because he had an old book of Richard Vulford. Also another great book of Andrew Fuller, for which he paid six shillings and fourpence, and another little book of Thomas Man, which he brought to the bishop.

Thomas Man was appeached, because he read to this John Butler ten years before, how Adam and Eve were expelled out of Paradise, and for speaking against pilgrimage and worshipping of images, and against the singing service used then in churches. This Thomas Man was burnt, and died a martyr three years before.

Thomas Carder was accused that he brought this John Butler to Durdant's house at Ivercourt by Stains, where was Richard Butler his brother, and William King reading in a certain English book. At which time Durdant desired them, not to tell that he had any such English book in his house, lest he should be burned for the same. Also another time, John Butler with Richard Butler his brother, and Robert Carder, went to the house of Richard Ashford or Nash, to hear him read in a certain little book, which contained many good things.

Richard Vulman of London was detected, that he would have read to this John Butler a certain English book, and spake against pilgrimage and images.

John Phip was compelled by his oath to detect Radulph

\* The founder of St. Paul's school, a learned and excellent man, who rowly escaped being proceeded against as a heretic. See page 15.

Carpenter of London, for having certain books of the Apocalypse in English. Also for that this Carpenter and his wife brought him and the wife of Henry Ulman to a corner house of Friday-street, where the good man of the house, having a stump foot, had divers such books, to the intent they should hear them read.

Also the wife of Robert Pope, for having certain books in English, one bound in boards, and three with parchment coverings, with four other sheets of paper written in English, containing matter against Romish religion. Also another book of the service of the virgin Mary in English.

Thomas Tredway detected John Morden of Ashly Green, and Richard Ashford his brother, because John Morden had in his house a book of the gospels, and other chapters in English, and read three or four times in the same. In which book his brother Ashford also read once. Also because John Morden spake against images, and spake these words, Our Lord Jesus Christ saith in his gospel, Blessed be they that hear the word of God, and keep it, &c. Thomas Tredway also detected his mother for teaching him that he should not worship the images of saints.

Likewise Joan Bernard. being accused by Robert Cope-land, was sworn by her oath to detect Thomas Bernard, her own natural father, for speaking against pilgrimage, against worshipping of saints, and against dirges and praying for the dead, and for warning his daughter not to utter any of all this to her ghostly father or priest.

The like oath also was forced to Richard Bernard, that he should in like manner detect Thomas Bernard his own natural father, for teaching him not to worship images, nor to believe in the sacrament of the altar, but in God only which is in heaven, and that he should not utter the same to the priest.

Agnes Carder detected Richard Carder her husband, for saying, that if the bishop should call him, he would confess nothing although he burned him. And for saying that he suspected that she was too familiar with the vicar of Iver. And when she answered again, How could he be evil with her, seeing he saith mass every day, and doth not confess himself before; then her husband said, that he could confess himself to a post or to the altar. Where note, that the bishop then examining her of that offence, whether she was culpable, and whether she was commonly in the voice of the people diffamed with him or no; she confessed so to be.

Whereupon no other penalty nor penance for that crime of adultery was enjoined her of the bishop, but only this, that she should frequent the vicar's house no more!

John Clark of Denham was forced by his oath to detect Richard Vulford of Riselip, for speaking against images, pilgrimages, oblations, and against the sacrament of the altar. Also that, when this John Clark had made a weel for fish, Vulford coming by, asked him when he had made his weel, whether the weel now could turn again and make him; and he said, No. Even so, quoth he, God hath made all priests as thou hast made the weel, and how can they turn again and make God?

Robert Rowland, Thomas Hour, T. Rowland, Joan Frank, John Baker, William Frank the elder, William Frank the younger, and Alice Tredway detected Alice, wife of Richard Sanders of Amersham, for giving twelve-pence to Thomas Holmes to buy a certain book in English, for her daughter. To whom Thomas Holmes answered again, that a noble\* would not suffice to buy it. Another time, for giving sixpence to the buying of a certain book in English, which cost five marks.†

Another time, Thomas Hour coming from Owburn, she asked, what news; and he said, that many were there condemned of heresy; and therefore he would lean to that way no more. Then said she, if he did so, he would gain nothing thereby. Whereby he had no more work with her husband, and after was put from his holy water clerkship in that town. Another time, for saying to Thomas Rowland these words; "Ye may see how Thomas Hour and others which laboured to have heretics detected before bishop Smith, are brought now to beggary; you may take example by them."

William Carder upon his oath was forced to detect Isabel Tracher his mistress, for that she, not being sick, but in good health, and being rebuked divers times of her husband for the same, yet would not go to the church, but tarried at home and kept her work, as well holy-day‡ as work-day, the space of three years together.

Isabel Gardiner and John Gardiner were forced by their oath to detect Thomas Rave of Great Marlow, for speaking

\* Six shillings and eight-pence.

† A mark is thirteen shillings and four-pence.

‡ Saints' days. The observance of them is enforced more strictly by the church of Rome, than the keeping holy the sabbath, or Lord's day.

against pilgrimages, in the company of John and Elizabeth Gardiner, as he was going to our lady of Lincoln for his penance enjoined by bishop Smith. Also the same time, as he met certain coming from Saint John Shorne, for saying they were fools, and calling it idolatry. Also in the same voyage, when he saw a certain chapel in decay and ruin, he said, Lo, yonder is a fair milk-house down. Also, when he came to Lincoln, speaking against the sacrament of the altar, he said, that Christ sitteth in heaven at the right hand of the Father almighty; and brought forth this parable, saying, that Christ our Lord said these words, when he went from his disciples, and ascended to heaven, That once he was in sinners' hands, and would come there no more. Also when he came to Wycombe, there to do his penance, he bound his fagot with a silken lace. Also, being demanded of Dr. London, whether he had done his penance in coming to our lady of Lincoln? he answered, that bishop Smith had released him, to come to our lady of Missenden for six years. And three years he came; but whether he came any more, because he did not there register his name, therefore he said he could not prove it.

Roger Benet was forced by his oath to detect the wife of William Tylsworth of Hawkwell, for not thinking catholically, that is, after the tradition of Rome, of the sacrament of the altar. And the wife of Robert Stamp, for not accomplishing her penance enjoined to her by bishop Smith. And John Butler, for having of him a certain book in English, containing a dialogue between a Jew and a christian.

Richard Vulford detected his own wife, deceased, and John Clark of Denham, for communing with him, against images, pilgrimage, and the sacrament of the altar.

Thomas Geffery of Uxbridge, and his wife departed, for communing against the sacrament of the altar, worshipping of saints, pilgrimage, &c. And Henry Vulman of Uxbridge, for speaking and teaching against the sacrament of the altar eleven years ago, and saying it was but a trifle.

John Scrivener the elder, detected Geldener the elder, his two daughters, Emma, sister of W. Tylsworth, martyr, and John Lee, carpenter, of Henley, for being present and hearkening unto Richard Benet reading the epistle of St. James in English.

John Grosar, being put to his oath, was examined whether he had a book of the gospels in English, who

confessed that he received such a book of Thomas Tykill, morrow-mass priest in Milk-street, and afterwards lent the same book to Thomas Spencer. Which Thomas Spencer, with his wife, used to read the same. After that it was lent to John Knight, who at length delivered the book to the vicar of Rickmansworth.

John Funge was forced by his oath to detect his brother Francis Funge, for speaking these words to him, which words he had learned of Thomas Clark: "If the sacrament of the altar be very God and man, flesh and blood, in form of bread, as priests say that it is, then have we many gods, and in heaven there is but one God. And if there were a hundred houseled\* in one parish, and as many in another, then there must be more than one God. I will not deny, but it is a holy thing; but it is not the body of the Lord that suffered passion for us; for he was once in man's hands here, and ill entreated, and therefore he will never come in sinful men's hands again." Also for speaking these words; "The pope hath no authority to give pardon, and to release any man's soul from sin, and so from pain: it is nothing but blinding of the people, to have their money."

Francis Funge, and Alice his wife, were put to their oath to detect Robert Rave of Dorney, for saying, That the sacrament of the altar is not that body which was born of the blessed virgin Mary. Also for saying fourteen years past,† that folks were ill occupied that worshipped things graven with man's hands; for that which is graven with man's hand, is neither God nor our lady, but is made for a remembrance of saints. Nor ought we to worship any thing but God and our lady, and not images of saints, which are but stocks and stones.

Henry Dein was forced by his oath to detect Robert Freeman, parish priest of Orton, by Colebrook, for having and reading a suspected book; which book when he perceived to be seen in his hand, he closed it, and carried it to his chamber.

William Gudgame was forced by his oath to detect Joan Gudgame his own wife, for being in the same opinion of the sacrament that he was of: who notwithstanding did swear the same not to be true that her husband said.

\* Received the sacrament.

† Fox observes, "So subtilly and sleightly these catholic prelates did use their inquisitions and examinations, that nothing was done or said among these 'known men,' fifteen or twenty years before, ever covertly, but it was brought at length to their knowledge."

Thomas Clerke, forced by his oath, detected Christopher, a tinker, of Wycombe. The cause of this tinker's trouble was, for that he, coming to this man's house, and complaining to him of the poverty of the world, had these words, That there was never so misgoverned people, and that they bare themselves so bold upon pardons and pilgrimages, that they cared not whatsoever they did :\* and so he departed. And seven days after that, this tinker coming again, asked him how his communication with him last did please him, and he said, Well. Then the tinker said, he knew more, and that he could tell him more, and bade him that he should believe in God in heaven ; for there are many gods in earth, and there is but one God : and that he was once here, and was ill dealt with, and would no more come here till the day of doom : and that the sacrament of the altar was a holy thing, but not the flesh and blood of Christ, that was born of the virgin ; and charged him not to tell this to his wife, and especially to his wife's brother, a priest.

Afterward, as the priest was drying singing bread, being wet, which his sister had bought, Thomas Clerke said, that if every one of these were a god, then were there many gods. To whom the priest answered, that till the holy words were spoken over it, it was of no power ; and then it was very God, flesh and blood : saying moreover, that it was not meet for any layman to speak of such things. These words of the priest being after recited to the tinker, by the said Clerke, then said he, Let every man say what they will ; but you shall find it as I show you : and if you will take labour to come to my house, I will show you a farther proof of it if you will take heed, &c.

Robert Pope detected these following : Thomas Africke, alias Littlepage, and his wife. To these was objected for that they had communication and conference with this Robert Pope in the gospel of St. Matthew, before the great abjuration, in the town of Amersham.

Thomas Scrivener was detected, for that Pope had of him a book of the epistles in English.

To Benet Ward was laid, that Pope had received a book of the ten commandments from him. He had also the gospels of Matthew and Mark. Of Ward he learned his Christ-cross row : five parts of the eight beatitudes.

Thomas Man, and his wife, were detected because they

\* The demoralizing effects of pardons and pilgrimages cannot be conceived at the present day.

had communed and talked with the said Robert Pope oftentimes in books of scripture and other matters of religion, concerning pilgrimage, adoration of images, and the sacrament of the Lord's body.

Robert Pope of Westenred, being before abjured, now again put to his oath, detected thirty-three: one was Richard Collins of Ginge, who was among them a great reader, and had a book of Wickliff's Wicket, and a book of Luke, and one of Paul, and a gloss of the Apocalypse. Also Thomas Collins, his father, who had a book of Paul, and a book of small epistles.

John Edmunds was charged for having a book, named W. Thorp.\* Also, for reading in an English book after a marriage.

John Clerke of Clanfield was heard to say, that all the world was as well hallowed as the church or churchyard. And that it was as good to be buried in the field, as in the church or churchyard.

John Phip, and William Phip, for reading a certain treatise upon the paternoster, in English, which this John Phip read to him and to his father.

Robert Pope moreover detected Edward Pope, his own father, of Little Missenden, for hearing the gospel of Matthew read unto him, and for communing upon the same with this Robert Pope, his son. He detected likewise Edward Pope, his brother. Furthermore, he detected his own wife, who had before abjured under bishop Smith, to continue still in her opinions.

Robert Pope, before abjured, detected William Halliday, for having in his custody a book of the Acts of the Apostles, in English, which the said Robert Pope brought unto him, at the taking of Roger Dodd.

Thomas Philip, painter, and Laurence Taylor, of London. For that these two being in the house of Richard Collins, at Gynge, there did read, in an English book, the epistle of St. Paul to the Romans, and Laurence read the first chapter of St. Luke's gospel.

John Harris and his wife, Alice Collins, wife of Richard Collins, who being together at Upton, in John Harris's house, talked of the Apocalypse, and of the Acts of the Apostles, and therefore were suspected and thus detected.

\* The examinations of William Thorpe, see p. 39 of the present volume. They were at this time circulated in manuscript, not having been printed till some years after these persecutions.



Robert Collins being sworn upon the evangelists, detected John Harris, who spake against pilgrimage and images, and was heard to talk of seven lean, and seven fat oxen.

Richard Collins of Ginge, read unto the said Robert Collins the ten commandments; and afterwards taught him the epistle of James, and another small epistle of Peter, and after that, took him the gospel of St. John in English, and bade him read therein himself. Also for teaching him not to worship images, nor to set up candles, nor to go on pilgrimage.

Another crime against Richard Collins was, he taught this Robert that in all such things wherein he offended God, he should only shrive himself to God; and in things which offended man, he should shrive him to man. Also for teaching him that the sacrament of the altar is not very God, but a certain figurative thing of Christ in bread, and that the priest hath no power to consecrate the body of Christ. Also, for that the said Richard did teach him in Wickliff's Wicket, that a man may not make the body of our Lord, who made us: and how can we then make him again? The Father is unbegotten and unmade; the Son is only begotten and not made—and how then can man make that which is unmade? said he. And in the same book of Wickliff's Wicket, follow the words of Christ thus speaking, "If my words be heresy, then am I a heretic; and if my words be leasings, then am I a liar," &c. Also, another crime against Richard Collins; for having certain English books, as Wickliff's Wicket, the gospel of St. John, the epistles of St. Paul, James, and Peter, in English, an exposition of the Apocalypse, a book of our lady's matins in English, a book of Solomon in English, a book called the Prick of Conscience.

The aforesaid Robert Collins, being sworn upon the evangelists, detected John Harris for communing with him of the first chapter of St. John's gospel, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and God," &c. Also for communing of a chapter in Matthew of the eight beatitudes. Also for counselling him not to go on pilgrimage to saints, because they were idols.

R. Livord, W. Livord, Bruges and Joan his wife, Harris and his wife, and Richard Collins. All these were detected, for that they being together in Bruges' house, at Burford, were reading together in the book of the exposition of the

Apocalypse,\* and communed concerning the matter of opening the book with seven clasps, &c.

T. Collins was charged for having a book of Paul and James in English.

Stacy, brickmaker, of Coleman-street, for having the book of the Apocalypse.

Thomas Philip, and Laurence, of London, for reading the epistle of St. Peter, in English, in the house of Robert Collins at Asthall. He also accused Joan Collins, his own sister, of Asthall, with several others.

John Collins, of Burford, appeached to the bishop Richard Collins, whose words were these, That the sacrament was not the true body of Christ in flesh and blood, but yet it ought to be revered, albeit not as the true body of Christ.

Also Thomas Collins, of Ginge, his own natural father! The crime against Thomas Collins was, that for eight years past, this Thomas Collins, his father, had taught this John, his son, in the presence of his mother, the ten commandments; and namely, that he should have but one God, and should worship nothing but God alone: and that to worship saints, and to go on pilgrimage, was idolatry. Also, that he should not worship the sacrament of the altar as God, for that it was but a token of the Lord's body. Which so much discontented this John Collins, that he said he would disclose his father's errors, and make him to be burned; but his mother entreated him not so to do.

John Collins also accused Robert Collins, of Asthall, that this Robert read 'to him in a certain thick book of scripture in English. Also John Edmunds and his wife, for that he read to this John the ten commandments; and told him that John Baptist said, that one should come after him whose buckle of his shoe he was not worthy to undo.

John Hakker, of London, coming to Burford, brought a book speaking of the ten plagues of Pharaoh. Also after that, another book, entreating of the seven sacraments.

He accused fourteen others; among them Eleanor Hedges of Burford, that she had burnt the sacrament in an oven.

Roger Dods, of Burford, by his oath was compelled to utter these persons here named. Sir John Drury, vicar of Windrish, in Worcestershire—the crime against this sir

\* A work of Wickliff's on this subject is still extant, also an exposition of the Sermon on the Mount. Many writings of Wickliff and his contemporaries are referred to in these examinations.

John Drury was, for that when Roger Dods came first to him to be his servant, he sware him upon a book to keep his counsels in all things ; and after that he showed him a certain woman in his house, whom he said to be his wife ; counselling moreover the said Roger Dods, upon an embring (or fast) day, to sup with bread and cheese, saying, that which goeth into a man's body defileth not a man's soul, but that which goeth out of the body defileth both body and soul.

Also, the said vicar taught him the A B C,\* to the intent he should have understanding in the Apocalypse, wherein he said that he should perceive all the falsehood of the world, and all the truth. He said furthermore unto him, when he had been at the lady of Worcester, and at the blood of Hales,† which had cost him eighteen pence ; but that he had done as an ill husband, that had ploughed his land and sown it, but nothing to the purpose ; for he had worshipped man's handiwork, and cast away his money, which had been better given to the poor ; for he should worship but one God, and no handiwork of man. Also, when the people would offer candles, where he was vicar, to Mary Magdalen, he would take them away, and say they were fools that brought them thither.

John Phip, of Hichenden, for reading unto the said Roger Dods, a certain gospel in English.

William Phip, of Hichenden. This William had exhorted Roger Dods that he should worship no images, nor commit idolatry, but worship one God ; and told the same Roger, that it was good for a man to be merry and wise ; meaning that he should keep close what was told him ; for else strait punishment would follow.

Roger Parker, of Hichenden, that he was foully to blame for burning of his books, for they were worth a hundred marks. To whom John answered, that he had rather burn his books, than that his books should burn him.

John Ledisdall, of Hungerford, for reading of the bible in Robert Bruges' house, at Burford, upon holy-rood day, with Collins, Livord, Thomas Hall, and others.

Robert Collins and his wife ; John Collins and his wife ;

\* The A B C here mentioned, probably was a short poem, the lines of which began with the letters of the alphabet in regular succession. Fox has copied it from one of the bishop's registers. It is attributed to Thorp, and denounces the pride and other vices of the Romish ecclesiastics.

† See Latimer, p. 65.

for buying a bible of Stacie, for twenty shillings. The father of Robert Collins had been of this doctrine from the year 1480.

Henry Phip, for that he, being asked of this Dods, A. D. 1515, whether he would go to Wycombe or not, answered again, that he was chosen roodman, that is, keeper of the roodloft, saying, that he must go and light a candle before his block almighty.

John Edmunds accused Philip Brabant, servant of Richard Collins, for saying that the sacrament of the altar was made in the remembrance of Christ's own body, but it was not the body of Christ.

The Shepherd's Calendar was also accused and detected; because the same Edmunds said that he was persuaded by this book, reading these words; that the sacrament was made in the remembrance of Christ. The book of William Thorpe likewise was much complained of, both by this John Edmunds, and divers others.

Richard Collins was a great doer among these good men; and was much complained upon by divers, and also by this Edmunds, for bringing with him a book called the King of Beeme, into their company, and did read thereof a great part unto them, in this Edmund's house of Burford.

Alice Collins, wife of R. Collins, likewise was a famous woman among them, and had a good memory, and could recite much of the scriptures, and other good books; and therefore when any conventicle of these men did meet at Burford, commonly she was sent for, to recite unto them the declaration of the ten commandments, and the epistles of Peter and James.

Joan Collins, daughter of Richard and of Alice Collins, following her father's and mother's steps, was noted, for that she had learned with her father and mother the ten commandments, the seven deadly sins, the seven works of mercy, the five wits bodily and ghostly, the eight blessings,\* and five chapters of St. James's epistle.

Agnes Edmunds was detected by her father, that he brought her to the house of Richard Collins, to service, to the intent she might be instructed there in God's law, where she had learned likewise the ten commandments, the five wits bodily and ghostly, and the seven deadly sins.

Thomas White, and Thomas Clerke, did appeach William Dorset, who said, that pilgrimage was of none effect,

\* Short tracts with these titles are found among the writings of Wickliff.

and offering candles, or other things to saints, stood in no stead, and was but cost lost. Also, when his wife was going on pilgrimage, and he asked, Whither? and she said, 'To our lady of Willesdon. Our lady, said he, is in heaven.

John Baker, being urged upon his oath, did disclose John Edmunds, because that he, talking with the said Baker of pilgrimage, bade him go offer his money to the image of God. When the other asked what that was, he said that the image of God was the poor people, blind and lame; and said that he offended almighty God in going on pilgrimage.

William Phip, abjured by his oath, did accuse Henry Phip, his own son, for communing with Roger Dods against pilgrimage and adoration of images.

John Brabant, the elder son of John Brabant, did nominate John Hakker and Robert Pope, for reading the holy scripture in his father's house, and for saying these words, "Christ made his maundy, and said, Take this bread, eat it, this is my body; take this wine, drink it, this is my blood: and priests say by these words, that the sacrament of the altar is the body of Christ."

Also John Brabant his father, and his mother, for being present when Hakker read the scripture in their house.

Concerning this John Brabant, here is to be noted the form and effect of the bishop's examination, asking and demanding thus of the said Brabant; Whether he ever heard John Hakker read the holy scripture against the determination of the church? By the which words, if he mean that it is against the determination of the church to read the holy scripture, it may thereby appear to be a blind church. And if they mean that the holy scripture contains any such thing which is against the determination of the church, then their church appears to be contrary to God, seeing it determines one thing, and God's word another.

John à Lee denounced John à Weedon. When this John à Lee had told the said Weedon how the bishop had said in his sermon these words, 'That all which were of the sect of heretics believed that God was in heaven, but they believed not that the body of Christ on the altar was God: to this he answering again, said, Ye be bold upon that word! deriding the bishop in so saying.

Joan Steventon denounced Alice Collins for teaching the said Joan Steventon, in Lent, the ten commandments, thus beginning, "I am thy Lord God that led thee out of the land of Egypt and brought thee out of the house of

thraldom. Thou shalt not have any alien Gods before me, neither make to thee any image graven with man's hands, that is in heaven above, neither in the earth beneath," &c. Also for teaching her the first chapter of St. John's gospel; "In the beginning was the Word," &c. and John Harris for teaching her the first chapter of Peter.

Sir John, a priest, and also Robert Robertson, detected M. Cotismore, of Brightwell. Also mistress Cotismore, otherwise called mistress Doly, for speaking these words to one John Bainton, her servant: That if she went to her chamber and prayed there, she should have as much merit as though she went to Walsingham on pilgrimage. Also, when the said sir John came to her after the death of master Cotismore, his master, requiring her to send one John Stainer, her servant, to our lady of Walsingham, for master Cotismore, who in his life-time being sick, promised in his own person to visit that place, she would not consent thereto, nor let her servant go. Also, for saying, that when women go to offer to images or saints, they did it to show their new gay gear, and that images were but carpenters' chips; and that folks go on pilgrimage more for the green way\* than for devotion.

John Hakker did detect Thomas Vincent, of London, for giving this Hakker a book of St. Matthew, in English.

Richard Collins, for receiving of the said Hakker a book of the ten commandments in English.

William Gunne, for receiving of Hakker a book of the ten plagues sent of God to Pharaoh. And several others.

Thomas Grove, and also John Reading, being put to their oath, did detect John Heron for having a book of the exposition of the gospels fairly written in English.

And Richard Grace for speaking these words following: That our blessed lady was the godmother to St. Katharine; and therefore the legend is not true in saying, that Christ did marry St. Katharine. Also, for saying of the picture of St. Nicholas, being newly painted, that he was not worthy to stand in the rood-loft, but that it better beseemed him to stand in the belfry, &c.

In the above table, reader, thou hast to see and understand, first, the number and names of these good men and women troubled and molested by the church of Rome, and all in one year; of whom few or none were learned,

\* The pleasure of the journey.

being simple labourers and artificers, but as it pleased the Lord to work in them knowledge and understanding, by reading a few ENGLISH BOOKS, such as they could get in corners. Secondly, what were their opinions we have also described. And, thirdly, herein is to be noted moreover, the blind ignorance and uncourteous dealing of the bishops against them, not only in that they, by their violent oaths, and captious interrogatories, constrained the children to accuse their parents, and parents the children, the husband the wife, and the wife the husband, &c. but especially in that most wrongfully they so afflicted them, without any good reason or cause, only for the sincere verity of God's word, and reading his holy scriptures.

Now it remains, that as you have heard their opinions, which principally in number were four, so also we declare their reasons and scriptures whereupon they grounded, and after that, consequently, the order and manner of penance enjoined to them by the bishop. And first against pilgrimage, and against worshipping of images, they used this text of the Apocal. ix. I saw horses in a vision, and the heads of them, as the heads of lions : smoke, fire, and brimstone, came out of their mouths : with these three plagues the third part of men were slain, of the smoke, and of the fire, and of the brimstone that came out of the mouths of them. They that were not slain of these three plagues, were such as worshipped not devils, and images of gold and silver, of brass, of tree, and of stone, &c. Also they used and alleged the first commandment, that there is but one God, and that they ought not to worship more gods than one, &c.

And as touching the sacrament, and the right doctrine thereof, they had their instruction partly out of Wickliff's Wicket, partly out of the Shepherd's Calendar ; where they read that the sacrament was made in remembrance of Christ, and ought to be received in remembrance of his body, &c. Moreover, they alleged and followed the words of Christ, spoken at the supper, at what time he, sitting with his disciples, and making with them his maundy, took bread, and blessed, and brake, and gave to his disciples ; and said, Eat ye ; this (reaching forth his arm, and showing the bread in his hand, and then noting his own natural body, and touching the same, and not the bread consecrate) is my body, which shall be betrayed for you : do this in remembrance of me. And likewise he took the wine and bade them drink, saying, This is my blood which is of the new testament, &c.

Also, that Christ our Saviour sitteth on the right hand of the Father, and there shall be unto the day of doom. Wherefore they believed that in the sacrament of the altar was not the very body of Christ.

Also, said one of them, "Men speak much of the sacrament of the altar, but this will I bide by, that upon Share Thursday Christ brake bread unto his disciples, and bade them eat it, saying, it was his flesh and blood. And then he went from them, and suffered his passion : and then he rose from death to life, and ascended into heaven, and there sitteth on the right hand of the Father, and there he is to come unto the day of doom, when he shall judge both quick and dead." And therefore how he should be here in the form of bread, he said they could not see.

Such reasons and allegations as these and others like, were taken out of the scripture, and out of the Shepherd's Calendar, Wickliff's Wicket, and out of other books they had amongst them. And although there was no learned man with them to ground them in their doctrine, yet they, conferring and communing together among themselves, did convert one another, the Lord's hand working with them marvellously : so that in short space, the number of these known, or justfast men, as they were then termed, exceedingly increased, in such sort, that the bishop seeing the matter almost past his power, made his complaint to the king, and required his aid for suppression of these men. Whereupon, king Henry being then young, and unexpert in the bloody practices and blind leadings of these apostolical prelates, incensed with his suggestions and cruel complaints, directed down letters to his sheriffs, bailiffs, officers, and subjects, for the aid of the bishop in this behalf.

The bishop, thus being armed no less with the authority of the king's letter, than incited with his own fierceness, foreslaked no time, but speedily to accomplish his moody violence upon the poor flock of Christ, called before him, sitting upon his tribunal seat, both these aforementioned persons, and all others in his diocese who were ever so little noted or suspected to incline toward those opinions ; of whom to such as had but newly been taken, and had not before abjured, he enjoined most strait and rigorous penance. The others in whom he could find any relapse, yea albeit they submitted themselves ever so humbly to his favourable courtesy ; and though also at his request, and for hope of pardon, they had showed themselves great detectors of their brethren, being moreover of him fed and flattered there-



unto; yet notwithstanding, contrary to his fair words, and their expectation, he spared not, but read sentence of relapse against them, committing them to the secular arm to be burnt.\*

[Then follows a list of forty-eight persons, who abjured, living at thirty different places.]

The books and opinions which these forty-eight were charged with, and for which they were compelled to abjure, are partly before expressed, and partly here follows a brief sum of their opinions.

The opinions of many of these persons were, that they never believed in the sacrament of the altar, nor ever would; and that it was not as men did take it. For that he was known of his neighbour, to be "a good fellow," meaning that he was a known man.

Some for saying, that they of Amersham, which had been abjured before by bishop Smith, were good men, and perfect christians, and simple folk which could not answer for themselves, and therefore were oppressed by power of the bishop. Some for hiding others in their barns.

Some for reading the scripture, or treatises of scripture in English: some for hearing the same read. Some for defending, some for marrying with, them which had abjured. Some for saying that matrimony was not a sacrament. Some for saying that worshipping of images was idolatry; some for calling images carpenters' chips; some for calling them stocks and stones; some for calling them dead things. Some for saying that money spent upon pilgrimage, served but to maintain thieves and harlots. Some for calling the image in the rood loft, Block almighty. Others for saying that nothing graven with man's hand was to be worshipped. Some for saying that they which die, pass straight either to heaven or hell, &c. &c.

Isabel Bartlett was brought before the bishop, and abjured for lamenting her husband, when the bishop's man came for him, and saying that he was an undone man, and she a dead woman!† And for saying that Christ departing

\* The peculiar situation in which many stood, whose names have been mentioned as having been previously convicted of heresy, will account for the confessions they made.

† Robert Bartlet has been already mentioned, page 212. He was a rich man, who for his profession of the truth was put out of his farm and goods, and was condemned to be kept in the monastery of Ashridge, where he wore on his right sleeve a square piece of cloth, the space of seven years together.—*For.* When we recollect the

from his disciples into heaven, said, that once he was in sinners' hands, and would come there no more, Heb. ix. 24—28. This persecution, as the reader has seen, began with the Bartlets, and bishop Longland having obtained informations against them, proceeded step by step till he had made a full discovery.

Some for receiving the sacrament at Easter, and doubting whether it was the very body of Christ, and did not confess their doubt to their spiritual father, the priest.

Some for saying that the pope had no authority to give pardon, or to release man's soul from sin, and so from pain, and that it was nothing but blinding of the people, and to get their money.

The penance enjoined to these parties by this John Longland, bishop of Lincoln, was almost uniform, and all after one condition, save only that they were separately committed and divided into several monasteries there to be kept and found of alms all their life, except they were otherwise dispensed by the bishop. For example, I have here adjoined the bishop's letter for one of the said number, who was sent to the abbey of Evesham, there to be kept in perpetual penance. By which one, an estimation may be taken of the rest, who were bestowed likewise to Osney, to Frideswide, to Abingdon, to Tame, to Bisseter, to Dorchester, to Notley, to Ashridge, and divers more. The copy of the bishop's letter sent to the abbot of Evesham, here follows under written.

*The Bishop's letter to the Abbot of Evesham.*

“ My loving brother, I recommend me hastily unto you ; and whereas I have, according to the law, put this bearer R. T. to perpetual penance within your monastery of Evesham, there to live as a penitent, and not otherwise, I pray you, and nevertheless, according unto the law, command you to receive him, and see ye order him there, accordingly to his injunctions which he will show you if ye require the same. As for his lodging, he will bring it with him.\* And his meat and drink, he may have such as ye give of your alms. And if he can so order himself by his labour within your house in your business, whereby he

general character of the inmates of the monasteries, we may readily suppose the painful life an unprotected Lollard would lead within the walls of those establishments.

He must sleep on the bare ground !

may deserve his meat and drink, so may you order him, as ye see convenient to his deserts, so that he pass not the precinct of your monastery. And thus fare you heartily well. From my place," &c.

The residue of the penances and punishments inflicted on these men, little or nothing disagree, but had one order in them all. The manner and form whereof in the said bishop's register proceed as follows.

*Penance enjoined under pain of relapse by John Longland, bishop of Lincoln, the 19th day of December, A. D. 1521.*

"That every one of them shall upon a market-day, such as shall be limited unto them, in the market time, go thrice about the market at Burford, and then stand upon the highest greece (step) of the cross there, a quarter of an hour, with a fagot of wood every one of them upon his shoulder; and every one of them once to bear a fagot of wood upon their shoulders before their procession upon a Sunday, which shall be limited unto them at Burford, from the quire door going out, to the quire door going in; and all the high mass time to hold the same fagot upon their shoulders, kneeling upon the greece before the high altar there, and every of them likewise to do likewise in their own parish church, upon such a Sunday as shall be limited unto them: and once to bear a fagot at a general procession at Uxbridge, when they shall be assigned thereto: and once to bear a fagot at the burning of a heretic, when they shall be admonished thereto.

"Also every one of them to fast on bread and ale only, every Friday during their life, and every eve of Corpus Christi every one of them to fast on bread and water, during their life, unless sickness unfeigned hinder the same. Also to say every of them every Sunday and every Friday during their life, our lady's psalter once, and if they forget it one day, to say as much another day for the same.\* Also, they nor any of them, to hide their mark upon their heek,† neither with hat, cap, hood, kerchief, napkin, nor

\* One hundred and fifty ave marias interspersed with fifteen paternosters, all in Latin.

† The manner of their burning in the cheek was this:—Their necks were tied fast to a post or stay, with towels, and their hands holden that they might not stir; and so the iron, being hot, was put to their cheeks, and thus bare they the prints and marks of the Lord Jesus about them.—*Fox*. When Bernard and Morden were burned at Amersham, thirty persons were branded at the same time. Some who were thus marked were living when *Fox's* history was published.

otherwise, nor shall they suffer their beards to grow past fourteen days, nor ever haunt again together with any suspect person or persons, unless it be in the open market, fair, church, or common inn, or alehouse, where other people may see their conversation. And all these injunctions they and every of them, to fulfil with their penance, and every part of the same, under pain of relapse.”\*

And thus have you the names, with the causes and the penance of them which were at this present time abjured. By which word “abjured,” is meant that they were constrained by their oath, swearing upon the evangelists, and subscribing with their hand, and a cross to the same, that they did utterly and voluntarily renounce, detest, and forsake, and never should hold hereafter these, or any other like opinions, contrary to the determination of the holy mother church of Rome; and farther, that they should detect unto their ordinary whomsoever they should see, or suspect hereafter to teach, hold, or maintain the same. Then follows the names of them, which were condemned for relapse, and committed unto the secular power.

Among these aforementioned persons, which thus submitted themselves, and were put to penance, certain there were who because they had abjured before, as is under bishop Smith, were now condemned for relapse, and had sentence read against them, and so were committed to the secular arm, to be burned. Whose names here follow, Thomas Bernard, James Morden, Robert Rave, and John Scrivener. To these may be joined also Joan Norman and Thomas Holmes.

This Thomas Holmes, although he had disclosed and detected many of his brethren, thinking thereby to please the bishop, and to save himself, and was thought to be a feed man of the bishop for the same; yet notwithstanding, in the same bishop’s register appears the sentence of relapse, and condemnation written against him; and most likely he was also adjudged and executed with the other.

As touching the burning of John Scrivener, here is to be noted, that his children were compelled to set fire unto their father, in like manner as Joan Clark, the daughter of William Tylsworth, was constrained to give fire to the burning of her own father. The example of which cruelty, as it is contrary both to God and nature, so it hath not been seen nor heard of in the memory of the heathen.

\* Being burned as relapsed heretics.

The extracts from the bishops' registers, printed by Fox, contain many other names and further particulars respecting the persecuted Lollards from A. D. 1508 to 1528. Enough, however, has been given to show how widely the doctrines of truth were diffused in Buckinghamshire, and there is sufficient evidence that other parts of the kingdom had been blessed with the like influences. The reader will bear in mind that these records prove that the light of divine truth was not extinguished in our land from the time of Wickliff to that of Luther. In reference to this important fact, Fox has observed as follows :

“This was before the name of Luther was heard of among the people in these countries. Wherefore, they are much beguiled and misinformed which condemn this kind of doctrine, now received, of novelty, asking, Where was this church and religion before Luther's time? To whom it may be answered, that this religion and form of doctrine, first planted by the apostles, and taught by true bishops, afterwards decayed, and now reformed again, although it was not received or admitted of the pope's clergy before Luther's time, neither yet is received, yet it was received of others, in whose hearts it pleased the Lord secretly to work, and that of a great number who both professed and suffered for the same.”

Fox adds, “The church of England hath not lacked great multitudes, which tasted and followed the sweetness of God's holy word, almost in as ample manner, for the number of well-disposed hearts, as now.\* Although public authority to maintain the open preaching of the gospel then was wanting, yet the secret multitude of true professors was not much unequal. Certainly, the fervent zeal of those christian days seemed much superior to these our days and times, as manifestly may appear by their sitting up all night in reading and hearing. Also by their expenses and charges in buying books in English; some gave five marks, some more, some less, for a book; some gave a load of hay for a few chapters of St. James or of St. Paul in English. In which rarity of books and want of teachers, I greatly marvel and muse to note in the registers, and to consider how the word of truth notwithstanding did multiply so exceedingly as it did among them. Wherein is to be seen, no doubt, the marvellous working of God's mighty power. For so I find and observe in considering the registers, how

\* The early part of the reign of queen Elizabeth.

one neighbour resorting and conferring with another, est-  
soons\* with a few words of their first or second talk, did  
win and persuade their minds to that wherein they desired  
to persuade them, touching the truth of God's word and his  
sacraments. To see their travails, their earnest seeking,  
their burning zeal, their readings, their watchings, their  
sweet assemblies, their love and concord, their godly living,  
their marrying with the faithful, MAY MAKE US NOW IN  
THESE OUR DAYS OF FREE PROFESSION TO BLUSH FOR  
SHAME."

To these simple but impressive remarks of the martyr-  
ologist, it may be well to add, that if the reader has not found in  
the preceding examinations the full declarations of justifica-  
tion by faith in Christ alone, which he may have expected, he  
should remember that the bishops' registers only record the  
points upon which the followers of the truth were chiefly called  
to give an account. They of course were those wherein the  
conduct of the Lollards differed from the practices of the  
Romish church. The procedure of that church ever has  
been, not directly to deny the efficacy of the blood of Christ,  
but to endeavour to render it of none effect by human ad-  
ditions. These additions, we have seen, the Lollards op-  
posed, and earnestly studied the scriptures; there could be  
no other reason WHY they should have done so in the  
manner, and to the extent to which they proceeded, but that  
the knowledge of the truth as it is in Christ Jesus, was  
revealed among them by the teaching of the Holy Spirit.  
Doubtless they were persecuted, because the root of the  
matter was found in them.

\* Speedily.

# THE HISTORY

OF

## THOMAS GARRET,

AND OF HIS TROUBLE IN OXFORD, A. D. 1526, TESTIFIED AND  
RECORDED BY ANTHONY DALABER, WHO WAS THERE  
PRESENT AT THE SAME TIME.\*

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ABOUT the year of our Lord, 1526, Master Garret, or Garrard, curate of Honey Lane, in London, came unto Oxford, and brought with him sundry books in Latin, treating of the scripture, and Tindal's first translation of the new testament in English, which books he sold to divers scholars in Oxford.

After he had been there a while, and had disposed of those books, news came from London that he was searched for through all London, to be apprehended and taken as a heretic, and to be imprisoned for selling of those heretical books, as they termed them, because they spake against the usurped authority, and erroneous doctrine of the bishop of Rome, and his no less impure and filthy synagogue. For it was not unknown to cardinal Wolsey, and to the bishop of London, and to others of that ungodly generation, that master Garret had a great number of those books, and that he was gone to Oxford to make sale of them there to such as he knew to be lovers of the gospel. Wherefore they determined forthwith to make a private search through all Oxford to apprehend and imprison him, and to burn all his aforesaid books, and him too, if they could, so burning hot was their charity. But at that time one of the aforesaid proctors, called master Cole, of Magdalen college, who after was cross-bearer unto cardinal Wolsey, was well acquainted with master

\* When cardinal Wolsey founded Frideswide college, (now Christ Church,) at Oxford, he appointed several able scholars of Cambridge to his new foundation, some of whom were inclined to the protestant doctrines. This being discovered, they were accused of heresy, and so severely treated, that three died in consequence of their imprisonment. Frith and others escaped for a time. The narrative of Dalaber refers to that period, and shows the progress which the doctrines of truth had begun to make in Oxford so early as A. D. 1526.

Garret, and therefore he gave secret warning unto a friend or two of master Garret's, of this private search, and willed that he should forthwith, as secretly as he could, depart out of Oxford. For if he were taken in the same search, no remedy but he should be forthwith sent up unto the cardinal, and so he should be committed unto the tower.

The Christmas before that time, I, Anthony Dalaber, then scholar of Alborne Hall, who had books of master Garret's, had been in my country in Dorsetshire at Stalbridge, where I had a brother, the parson of that parish, who was very desirous to have a curate out of Oxford, and willed me to get him one there if I could. This just occasion being offered, it was thought good among the brethren, for so did we not only call one another, but were indeed so one to another, that master Garret, changing his name, should be sent with my letters into Dorsetshire unto my brother, to serve him there for a time, until he might secretly from thence convey himself somewhere over the sea. According hereunto I wrote in all haste possible unto my brother, for master Garret to be his curate, but not declaring what he was, for my brother was a rank papist, and afterwards was the most mortal enemy that ever I had for the gospel's sake.

So the Wednesday in the morning before Shrovetide, master Garret departed out of Oxford, towards Dorsetshire, with my letters for his new service. How far he went, and by what occasion he so soon returned, I know not. But the Friday next, in the night time, he came again to Radley's house, where he lay before, and so after midnight, in the private search which was then made for him, he was apprehended and taken there in his bed by the two proctors, and on the Saturday in the morning was delivered unto one Dr. Cotisford, master of Lincolu college, then being commissary of the university, who kept him as prisoner in his own chamber. There was great joy and rejoicing among all the papists for his apprehension, and especially with Dr. London, warden of the New college, and Dr. Higdon, dean of Frideswides, two archpapists. Who immediately sent their letters in post haste unto the cardinal, to inform him of the apprehension of this notable heretic; for which their doing, they were well assured to have great thanks. But of all this sudden hurly burly I was utterly ignorant, so that I knew neither of master Garret's sudden return, neither that he was so taken, until



that afterward he came unto my chamber, being then in Gloucester college, as a man amazed, and as soon as he saw me, he said he was undone, for he was taken. Thus he spake unadvisedly in the presence of a young man that came with him. When the young man was departed, I asked him what he was, and what acquaintance he had with him. He said he knew him not, but he had been to seek a monk of his acquaintance in that college, who was not in his chamber, and thereupon desired his servant, not knowing my chamber, for I was newly removed thither, to bring him to me; and so forthwith declared how he was returned and taken that night in the private search, as ye have heard, and that now, when the commissary and all his company were gone to evensong, and had locked him alone in his chamber, he hearing nobody stirring in the college, put back the bar of the lock with his finger, and so came straight unto Gloucester college, to speak with that monk, if he had been within, who had also bought books of him.

Then said I unto him, "Alas, master Garret, by this your uncircumspect coming unto me, and speaking so before this young man, you have disclosed yourself, and utterly undone me." I asked him why he went not unto my brother with my letters accordingly. He said, after that he was gone a day's journey and a half, he was so fearful, that his heart would no other, but that he must needs return again unto Oxford, and so he came again on Friday at night, and then was taken, as ye heard before. But now, with deep sighs, and plenty of tears, he prayed me to help to convey him away, and so he cast off his hood and his gown, wherein he came unto me, and desired me to give him a coat with sleeves, if I had any, and told me that he would go into Wales, and thence convey himself into Germany, if he might. Then I put on him a sleeved coat of mine. He would also have had another manner of cap of me, but I had none but priestlike, such as his own was.

Then kneeled we both down together on our knees, and lifted up our hearts and hands to God our heavenly Father, desiring him with plenty of tears, so to conduct and prosper him in his journey, that he might well escape the danger of all his enemies, to the glory of his holy name, if his good pleasure and will so were, and then we embraced and kissed one the other, the tears so abundantly flowing out from both our eyes, that we all bewet both our faces.

and scarcely for sorrow could we speak one to the other, and so he departed from me, apparelled in my coat, being committed to the tuition of our almighty and merciful Father.

When he was gone down the stairs from my chamber, I straightways did shut my chamber door, and went into my study, and took the new testament in my hands, kneeled down on my knees, and with many a deep sigh and salt tear, I did with much deliberation read over the tenth chapter of St. Matthew's gospel; and when I had so done, with fervent prayer I did commit unto God that our dearly beloved brother Garret; earnestly beseeching him, in and for Jesus Christ's sake, his only begotten Son our Lord, that he would vouchsafe, not only safely to conduct and keep our said dear brother from the hands of all his enemies, but also that he would endue his tender and lately born little flock in Oxford, with heavenly strength, by his Holy Spirit, that they might be well able thereby valiantly to withstand to his glory, all their fierce enemies; and also might quietly, to their own salvation, with all godly patience, bear Christ's heavy cross, which I now saw was presently to be laid on their young and weak backs, unable to bear so huge a burden, without the great help of his Holy Spirit.

This done, I laid aside my book safe, folded up master Garret's gown and hood, and laid them in my press among my apparel, and so having put on my short gown, shut up my study and chamber doors, and went towards Frideswides,\* to speak with that worthy martyr of God, master Clarke, and others, and to declare unto them what had happened that afternoon. But of purpose I went by St. Mary's church, to go first unto Corpus Christi college, to speak with Dyet and Udall, my faithful brethren and fellows in the Lord there. But I met by the way with a brother of ours, one master Eden, fellow of Magdalen college, who, as soon as he saw me, came with a pitiful countenance unto me, saying, that we were all undone, for master Garret was returned again to Oxford, and taken the last night in the privy search, and was in prison with the commissary. I said it was not so. He said it was so. I told him it could not be so, for I was sure he was gone. He answered me and said, I know he was gone with your letters, but he came again yesterday in the evening, and was taken in his bed at Radley's this night in the private

\* Now part of Christ Church. Google

search. "For," quoth he, "I heard our proctor, master Cole, say and declare the same this day in our college to divers of the house." But I told him again, that I was well assured Garret was now gone, for I spake with him later than either the proctor or commissary did. And then I declared the whole matter unto him; how and when he came unto me, and how he went his way, willing him to declare the same unto others our brethren whom he should meet with, and to give God hearty thanks for his wonderful deliverance, and to pray him also that he would grant him safely to pass away from all his enemies, and told him that I was going unto master Clarke, of Frideswides, to declare unto him this matter, for I knew and thought verily that he, and divers others there, were in great sorrow for this matter. Then I went straight to Frideswides, and evensong was begun, and the dean and the other canons were there in their grey amices; they were almost at Magnificat before I came thither; I stood at the choir door and heard master Taverner play, and others of the chapel there sing, with and among whom I myself was wont to sing; but now my singing and music was turned into sighing and musing.

As I thus and there stood, in came Dr. Cotisford, the commissary, as fast as ever he could go, bareheaded, as pale as ashes, (I knew his grief well enough,) and to the dean he goeth into the choir, where he was sitting in his stall, and talked with him very sorrowfully: what I know not, but whereof, I might and did well and truly guess. I went aside from the choir door, to see and hear more. The commissary and dean came out of the choir wonderfully troubled, as it seemed. About the middle of the church Dr. London met them, puffing, blustering, and blowing, like a hungry and greedy lion seeking his prey. They talked together awhile, but the commissary was much blamed of them for keeping of his prisoner so negligently, insomuch that he wept for sorrow: and it was known abroad that master Garret was escaped, and gone out of the commissary's chamber at evensong time, but whither no man could tell. These doctors departed, and sent abroad their servants and spies everywhere. Master Clarke about the middle of Compline,\* came forth of the choir. I followed him to his chamber, and declared what was happened that afternoon, of master Garret's escape. He

\* A Romish service, the last at night, by which the daily service was completed.

was glad, for he knew of his foretaking. Then he sent for one master Summer and master Bets, fellows and canons there. In the mean while he gave me a very good exhortation, praying God to give me and all the rest of our brethren, the wisdom of the serpent and the simplicity of the dove, for we should have shortly much need thereof, as he verily thought. When master Summer and master Bets were come unto him, he caused me to declare again the whole matter unto them two, and they were very glad that master Garret was so delivered, trusting that he should escape all his enemies. Then desiring them to tell unto our other brethren what was happened, for there were divers others in that college, I went to Corpus Christi college to comfort our brethren there being in like heaviness. There I tarried and supped with them. At which supper, we were not very merry, considering our state and peril at hand.

When we had ended our supper, and committed our whole cause with fervent sighs and hearty prayers unto God our heavenly Father, I went to Alborne Hall, and there lay that night. In the morning I was up very early, and so soon as I could get out of the door, I went straight towards Gloucester college to my chamber. It had rained that morning, and with my going I had besprinkled my hose and shoes with mire. And when I was come unto Gloucester college, which was about six of the clock, I found the gates fast shut. Whereat I much marvelled, for they were wont to be opened daily long before that time. Then I walked up and down by the wall there, a whole hour before the gates were opened. In the mean while my musing head being full of forecasting cares, and my sorrowful heart flowing with doleful sighs, I fully determined in my conscience before God, that if I should be taken and examined, I would accuse no man, nor declare any thing further than I did already perceive was manifestly known before. And so when the gate was opened, thinking to shift myself, and to put on a longer gown, I went in towards my chamber, and going up the stairs would have opened my door, but I could not for a long time do it. Whereby I perceived that my lock had been meddled with, and therewith was somewhat altered. Yet at last, with much ado, I opened the lock and went in. When I came in, I saw my bed all tossed and tumbled, my clothes in my press thrown down, and my study door open. Whereof I was much amazed, and thought verily that

some search was made there that night for master Garret, and that it was known of his being with me, by the monk's man that brought him to my chamber.

Now was there lying in the next chamber unto me a monk, who as soon as he heard me in the chamber, came to me, and told how master Garret was sought for in my chamber that night, and what ado there was made by the commissary and the two proctors, with bills and swords thrust through my bed straw, and how every corner of my chamber was searched for master Garret. And albeit his gown and his hood lay there in my press with my clothes, yet they perceived them not. Then he told me he was commanded to bring me as soon as I came in, unto the prior of the students, named Anthony Dunstan, a monk of Westminster. This so troubled me that I forgot to make clean my hose and shoes, and to shift me into another gown; and therefore so all bedirted as I was, and in my short gown, I went with him to the said prior's chamber, where I found the said prior standing and looking for my coming. He asked me where I had been that night. I told him I lay at Alborne Hall, with my old bedfellow Fitzjames, but he would not believe me. He asked me if master Garret were with me yesterday, I told yea. Then he would know where he was, and wherefore he came unto me: I told him I knew not where he was, except he were at Woodstock. For so, said I, he had showed me that he would go thither, because one of the keepers there, his friend, had promised him a piece of venison to make merry with all the Shrovetide, and that he would have borrowed a hat and a pair of high shoes of me, but I had none to lend him. This tale I thought meetest.\* Then had he spied on my forefinger a big ring of silver very well double gilt, with two letters A. D. engraved in it for my name: I suppose he thought it to be gold. He required to see it. I took it unto him. When he had it in his hand, he said it was his ring, for therein was his name; an A. for Anthony, and a D. for Dunstan. When I heard him so say, I wished in my heart to be as well delivered from and out of his company, as I was assured to be delivered from my ring for ever.

\* Nothing can justify the false account given by Dalaber, and his repeating it again afterwards. By this untruth he seems to have increased his own difficulties, and it was of no avail to his friend. This duplicity may be noticed as almost a solitary instance of the kind among the reformers.

Then he called for pen, ink, and paper, and commanded me to write when and how Garret came unto me, and where he was become. I had not written scarcely three words, but the chief beadle with two or three of the commissary's men, were come unto master prior, requiring him straight-ways to bring me away unto Lincoln college, to the commissary, and to Dr. London. Whither when I was brought into the chapel, there I found doctor Cotisford, commissary, doctor Higdon, then dean of the Cardinal's college, and doctor London, warden of the New college, standing together at the altar in the chapel. When I was brought unto them, after salutations given and taken between them, they called for chairs and sat down, and called for me to come to them. And first they asked what my name was. I told them that my name was Anthony Dalaber. Then they also asked me how long I had been student in the university, and I told them almost three years. And they asked me what I studied. I told them that I had read sophistry and logic in Alborne Hall, and now was removed unto Gloucester college to study the civil law, the which the aforesaid prior of the students affirmed to be true. Then they asked me whether I knew master Garret, and how long I had known him. I told them I knew him well, and had known him almost a twelvemonth. They asked me when he was with me. I told them, yesterday at afternoon.

Now by this time, whilst they had me in this talk, one came unto them which was sent for, with pen, ink, and paper. I believe it was the clerk of the university. As soon as he was come, there was a board and trestles, with a form for him to sit on, set between the doctors and me, and a great mass book laid before me, and I was commanded to lay my right hand on it, and to swear that I should truly answer unto such articles and interrogatories as I should be by them examined upon. I made danger of it a while at first, but afterward being persuaded by them, partly by fair words, and partly by great threats, I promised to do as they would have me, but in my heart nothing so meant to do. So I laid my hand on the book, and one of them gave me my oath, and that done commanded me to kiss the book. Then made they great courtesy between them who should examine me, and minister interrogatories unto me. At the last, the rankest papistical pharisee of them all, Dr. London, took upon him to do it.

he asked me again by my oath, where master

Garret was, and whither I had conveyed him? I told him I had not conveyed him, nor yet wist where he was, nor whither he was gone, except he were gone to Woodstock, as I had before said, as he showed me he would. Then he asked me again, when he came to me, how he came to me, what and how long he talked with me, and whither he went from me? I told him as before. All this the scribe wrote in a paper book.

Then they earnestly required me to tell them whither I had conveyed him, for surely, they said, I brought him going somewhither this morning, for that they might well perceive by my foul shoes and dirty hose, that I had travelled with him the most part of this night. I answered plainly that I lay at Alborne Hall with sir Fitzjames, and that I had good witness thereof there. They asked me where I was at evensong. I told them at Frideswides, and that I saw first master commissary, and then master doctor London come thither at that time unto master dean of Frideswides, and that I saw them talking together in the church there. Doctor London and the dean threatened me, that if I would not tell the truth, where I had done him, or whither he was gone, I should surely be sent unto the Tower of London, and there be racked, and put into little ease. But master commissary prayed me with gentle words to tell him where he was, that he might have him again, and he would be my very great friend, and deliver me out of trouble straightway. I told him I could not tell where he was, nor whither he was become. Thus did they occupy and toss me almost two hours in the chapel, sometimes with threatenings and foul words, and then with fair words and fair promises flattering me. Then was he that brought master Garret unto my chamber brought before me, and caused to declare what master Garret said unto me at his coming to my chamber, but I said plainly I heard him say no such thing, for I thought my nay to be as good as his yea, seeing it was to rid and deliver my godly brother out of trouble and peril of his life.\*

At the last, when they could get nothing of me whereby to hurt or accuse any man, or to know any thing of the which they sought, they all three together brought me up a long stairs into a great chamber over master commissary's

\* This indefensible sophistry, so contrary to scripture, that the end or object justifies the means, is a doctrine of the church of Rome, and never was maintained or acted upon by any of the principal reformers.

chamber, wherein stood a great pair of very high stocks. Then master commissary asked me for my purse and girdle, took away my money and my knives, and then they put both my legs into the stocks, and so locked me fast in them; in which I sat, my feet being almost as high as my head, and so departed they, I think to their abominable mass, locking fast the chamber door, and leaving me alone. When all they were gone, then came unto my remembrance the worthy forewarning and godly declaration of that most constant martyr of God, master John Clark, my father in Christ, who well nigh two years before that, when I did earnestly desire him to grant me to be his scholar, and that I might go with him continually when and wheresoever he should teach or preach, the which he did daily, said unto me much after this sort, "Dalaber, you desire you know not what, and that you are, I fear me, unable to take upon you. For though now my preaching be sweet and pleasant unto you, because there is yet no persecution laid on you for it, yet the time will come, and that peradventure shortly, if ye continue to live godly therein, that God will lay on you the cross of persecution to try you withal, whether you can as pure gold abide the fire, or as stubble and dross be consumed therewith. For the Holy Ghost plainly affirmeth by St. Paul, that all who will to live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. Yea, you shall be called and judged a heretic, you shall be abhorred of the world, your own friends and kinsfolk will forsake you, and also hate you, and you shall be cast into prison, and no man sha'll dare to help or comfort you, and you shall be accused and brought before the bishops, to your reproach and shame, to the great sorrow of all your faithful friends and kinsfolk. Then will ye wish ye had never known this doctrine. Then will ye curse Clark, and wish that ye had never known him, because he hath brought you to all these troubles. Therefore, rather than that you should do this, leave off from meddling of this doctrine, and desire not to be and continue in my company."

At which words I was so grieved, that I fell down on my knees at his feet, and with abundance of tears, and sighs even from the very bottom of my heart, I earnestly besought him, that for the tender mercy of God showed unto us in our Lord Jesus Christ, he would not refuse me, but receive me into his company, as I had desired; saying that I trusted verily, that He who had begun this in me,



would not forsake me, but would give me grace to continue therein unto the end. When he heard me say so, he came to me, and took me up in his arms, kissed me, the tears trickling down from his eyes, and said unto me, "The Lord almighty grant you so to do, and from henceforth for ever take me for your father, and I will take you for my son in Christ." Now were there at this time in Oxford, divers graduates and scholars of sundry colleges and halls, whom God had called to the knowledge of his holy word, who all resorted unto master Clark's disputations and lectures in divinity, at all times as they might; and when they might not come conveniently, I was by master Clark appointed to resort to every one of them weekly, and to know what doubts they had in any place of the scriptures, that by me from him they might have the true understanding of the same; which exercise did me most good and profit, to the understanding of the holy scriptures, which I most desired.

This aforesaid forewarning and godly declaration, I say, of this most godly martyr of God, master Clark, coming to my remembrance, caused me with deep sighs to cry unto God from my heart, to assist me with his Holy Spirit, that I might be able patiently and quietly to bear and suffer whatsoever it should please him of his fatherly love to lay on me, to his glory and the comfort of my dearly beloved brethren, whom I thought now to be in great fear and anguish, lest I would be an accuser of them all, for unto me they all were well known, and all their doings, in that matter. But, God be blessed, I was fully bent never to accuse any of them, whatsoever should happen of me. Before dinner master Cotisford came up to me, and requested me earnestly to tell him where master Garret was, and if I would so do, he promised me straightways to deliver me out of prison. But I told him I could not tell where he was; no more indeed I could. Then he departed to dinner, asking me if I would eat any meat, and I told him, Yea, right gladly. He said he would send me some. When he was gone, his servants asked me divers questions, which I do not now remember, and some of them spake me fair, and some threatened me, calling me heretic, and so departed, locking the door fast upon me.—

Fox adds, Thus far Anthony Dalaber prosecuted this story, who before the finishing, departed this life in the year 1562 in the diocese of Salisbury; the residue thereof as we

could gather it of ancient and credible persons, so have we added here unto the same.

After this, Garret was apprehended or taken by master Cole, the proctor, or his men, going westward, at a place called Hinksey, a little beyond Oxford, and so being brought back again, was committed to ward. That done, he was convented before the commissary, Dr. London, and Dr. Higdon, dean of Frideswides, now called Christ's college, at St. Mary's church, where they, sitting in judgment, convicted him according to their law as a heretic, as they said, and afterwards compelled him to carry a fagot in open procession from St. Mary's church to Frideswides, and Dalaber likewise with him, Garret having his red hood on his shoulders like a master of arts. After that, they were sent to Osney, there to be kept in prison till further orders.

There were suspected besides, a great number to be infected with heresy, as they called it, for having such books of God's truth, as Garret sold unto them; as master Clark, who died in his chamber, and could not be suffered to receive the communion. Being in prison, he said these words, Believe, and thou hast eaten. Divers others there were, (Fox enumerates many of them,) who were forced and constrained to forsake their colleges, and sought their friends. Against the procession time there was a great fire made upon the top of Carfax, whereunto all such as were in the said procession, either convicted or suspected of heresy, were commanded in token of repentance and renouncing of their errors, every man to cast a book into the fire as they passed by.

After this, master Garret, flying from place to place, escaped their tyranny until that he was again apprehended and burned with Dr. Barnes, with whom also W. Hierom, sometime vicar of Stepney, was likewise drawn to Smithfield, and there, together with them, constantly endured martyrdom in the fire.\*

\* "When at the stake he (Garret) cleared himself from having preached contrary to God's word, and concluded by saying, "Now I yield up my soul unto almighty God, trusting and believing that he of his infinite mercy, for his promise made in the blood of his Son our most merciful Saviour Jesus Christ, will take it, and pardon me of all my sins, whereby I have most grievously from my youth offended his majesty; wherefore I ask him mercy, desiring you all to pray with me, and for me, that I may patiently suffer this pain, and die steadfastly in true faith, perfect hope, and charity."—Fox.

A  
BRIEF ACCOUNT  
OF  
THOMAS BILNEY;  
TO WHICH ARE SUBJOINED HIS LETTERS TO  
BISHOP TONSTAL.

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THOMAS BILNEY was brought up in the university of Cambridge from an early age. He made considerable proficiency in study, particularly in the civil and canon law. But, as Fox expresses it, "Having gotten a better school-master, even the Holy Spirit of Christ, who endued his heart by secret inspiration, with the knowledge of better and more wholesome things, he came at the last unto this point, that forsaking the knowledge of man's laws, he converted his study to those things which tended more to godliness than gain."

He was anxious to teach others the truths he had learned. Among other seals to his ministry was that faithful servant of Christ Hugh Latimer. In the Acts and Monuments of John Fox, the reader will find a particular account of the life and martyrdom of Bilney; in these pages only a brief notice can be inserted, as an introduction to the small, yet important written remains of this martyr, which have been preserved by the enemies of the truth.

Leaving the university, Bilney travelled into several parts of the country, accompanied by Thomas Arthur, another of the seals to his ministry. The scriptural doctrines he taught were frequently attacked by the Romanists and were powerfully defended by him. One memorial of these controversies has been preserved by his opponent, a friar Brusierd of Ipswich, who wrote down their conference to make it a ground of accusation against Bilney. We cannot suppose that this singular document does full justice to

the reformer, but it contains sufficient proof of the scriptural origin of the doctrines he taught, while it shows the fallacies advanced by the popish advocate.

The friar objected to Bilney, "Whereas you have said that none of the saints make intercession for us, nor obtain for us any thing, you have blasphemed the efficacy (power) of the church, consecrated with the precious blood of Christ; which, nevertheless, you are not able to deny, seeing they (the church) incessantly knock at the gates of heaven, through the continual intercession of the saints, as is plainly set forth in the seven-fold Litany."

Bilney referred to the text, "There is but one Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus;" and asked, "If there be but one Mediator between God and man, even Christ Jesus, where is our blessed lady? where is St. Peter, and the other saints?"

The friar admitted that such was the doctrine of the primitive church, and that St. Paul was right in making such a statement, "when as yet there was no saint canonized, nor put into the calendar!" But "now the church assuredly knew and believed, that the blessed virgin, and the other saints, were placed in the bosom of Abraham; and that the church, like a good mother, diligently taught her children to praise the omnipotent Jesus in his saints, and also to offer up by the same saints our petitions to God!"

To this sophistical argument, Bilney replied, by quoting the words of our Saviour, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father, in my name, he will give it unto you;" adding, "He saith not, Whatsoever ye ask the Father in the name of St. Peter, St. Paul, and other saints; but *in my name*. Let us, then, ask help in the name of Him who is able to obtain for us of the Father whatsoever we ask; lest, at the day of judgment, we should hear him say, "Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name." The friar could not evade the force of this reasoning, but endeavoured to entangle Bilney in a scholastic argument, and a discussion respecting the authority of the church of Rome. Bilney, however, was too well informed to be so caught; and again referred to scripture, inquiring if the friar knew the ten commandments. His answer deserves notice: "According as the catholic doctors do expound them, I know them." The remainder of their conference was very similar to what is already given.

As Fox states, "The whole sum of Bilney's preaching

and doctrine proceeded chiefly against idolatry, invocation of saints, vain worship of images, false trust to men's merits, and such other gross points of religion, as seemed prejudicial and derogatory to the blood of our Saviour Jesus Christ. As touching the mass and sacrament of the altar, he never differed thereon from the grossest (Roman) catholics."

In November, 1527, Bilney and Arthur were apprehended by command of cardinal Wolsey, who after a short examination committed their further examination to Tonsal, bishop of London, a decided Romanist, though milder than his brethren in his proceedings against the protestants.\* Fox gives the particulars of their examinations from the bishop's own register, wherein Tonsal, with scrupulous fidelity, caused several letters written to him by Bilney to be inserted. Fox states,

"The third day of December, the bishop of London with the other bishops, assembling at the house of the bishop of Norwich, after that Bilney had denied utterly to return to the church of Rome, the bishop of London in discharge of his conscience, as he said, lest he should hide any thing that had come to his hands, exhibited unto the notaries, in the presence of Bilney, five letters or epistles, with a schedule in one of the epistles,† containing his articles and answers folded therein, and another epistle folded in manner of a book, with six leaves; which all and every one he commanded to be written out and registered, and the originals to be delivered to him again. This was done in the presence of Bilney, desiring a copy of them; and the bishop bound the notaries with an oath, for the safe keeping of the copies, and true registering of the same. Which articles and answers, with three of the same epistles, with certain depositions deposed by the aforesaid witness, here follow, truly drawn out, partly of his own hand-writing, and partly out of the register."

A brief account of some of the depositions against Bilney will present awful proofs of the spiritual darkness which then prevailed, and shows the blindness in which the church of Rome sought to retain its votaries.

It was deposed, that in his sermon in Christ's church in Ipswich, Bilney preached and said, Our Saviour Christ is our Mediator between us and the Father. What should we

\* See the life of Bernard Gilpin in the *Christian Biography*.

† Only three of these letters are printed by Fox.

need then to seek any saint for remedy? Wherefore, it is great injury to the blood of Christ, to make such petitions, and blasphemeth our Saviour.

That man is so unperfect of himself, that he can in no wise merit by his own deeds.

Also, that the coming of Christ was long prophesied before, and desired by the prophets. But John Baptist being more than a prophet, did not only prophesy, but with his finger showed him, saying, Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world. Then if this were the very Lamb which John did demonstrate, that taketh away the sins of the world, what an injury is it to our Saviour Christ, to say that to be buried in St. Francis's cowl,\* should remit four parts of penance: what is then left to our Saviour Christ, which taketh away the sins of the world? This I will justify to be a great blasphemy to the blood of Christ.

Also, that it was a great folly to go on pilgrimage, and that preachers in times past have been antichrists, and now it hath pleased God somewhat to show forth their falsehood and errors.

Also, that the miracles done at Walsingham, at Canterbury, and there in Ipswich, were done by the devil, through the sufferance of God, to blind the poor people; and that the pope hath not the keys that Peter had, except he follow Peter in his living.

Moreover, it was deposed against him, that he was notoriously suspected as a heretic, and twice pulled out of the pulpit in the diocese of Norwich.

Also it was deposed against him, that he should in the parish church of Willesdon, exhort the people to put away their gods of silver and gold, and leave their offerings unto them, for that such things as they offered have been known oftentimes afterward to have been given to harlots. Also that Jews and Saracens would have become christian men long ago, had it not been for the idolatry of christian men in offering of candles, wax, and money, to stocks and stones.

Tonstal was particularly desirous not to proceed to

To be buried in a friar's cast-off habit, accompanied by letters, enrolling the deceased in a monastic order, was accounted a sure deliverance from eternal condemnation! In Piers the Ploughman's creed a friar is described as wheedling a poor man out of his money, by assuring him that if he will contribute to his monastery,

St. Francis himself shall fold thee in his cope,

And present thee to the Trinity, and pray for thy sins.

King John was buried in a monk's cowl! See note, p. 158.

extremities with Bilney. He repeatedly remanded him to give time for reflection, and even after reading a part of the sentence deferred the remainder. These continued attacks upon the constancy of Bilney were seconded by several friends of the reformer, and probably were of greater efficacy than severer measures. We find that at length he recanted; he was released after carrying a fagot in a Romish procession, and standing bareheaded before the preacher at Paul's cross, during the sermon. In this recantation he admitted the worship of saints, and prayer to them, also that men could merit by their deeds.

Bilney returned to Cambridge after his abjuration, deeply lamenting and sorrowing for his weakness. He was almost brought into a state of utter desperation, as Latimer described in his sermons.\* He relates that Bilney's agony of mind was so great, "that his friends dared not suffer him to be alone day or night. They comforted him as they could, but no comforts would serve. And as for the comfortable places of scripture, to bring them to him was as though a man should run him through the heart with a sword."

Fox, or rather archbishop Parker,† whose narrative of Bilney's martyrdom he inserts, proceeds thus:—

By this it appears how vehemently this good man was pierced with sorrow and remorse for his abjuration, the space almost of two years, that is, from the year 1529, to the year 1531. It followed then, that by God's grace and good counsel he came at length to some quiet of conscience, being fully resolved to give his life for the confession of that truth, which before he had renounced. And thus being fully determined in his mind, and setting his time, he took his leave in Trinity Hall at ten of the clock at night, of certain of his friends, and said that he would go to Jerusalem; alluding belike to the words and example of Christ in the gospel, going up to Jerusalem,‡ what time he was appointed to suffer his passion. And so Bilney, meaning to

\* See Latimer, p. 56, 115, 260.

† Archbishop Parker, then resident at the university, went from Cambridge to Norwich to witness the martyrdom of Bilney, for whom he entertained a warm affection. He was thus enabled to bear testimony to the faithful adherence of the martyr to the truth during his last moments, in contradiction to the assertions of sir Thomas More, who falsely declared that Bilney had recanted at the stake. A particular statement respecting this is given by Fox, supported by several undoubted testimonies.

‡ Or probably to the words of St. Paul, Acts xix. 21. xx. 22. Digitized by Google

give over his life for the testimony of Christ's gospel, told his friends that he would go up to Jerusalem, and so would see them no more, and immediately departed to Norfolk, and there preached, first privately in households to confirm the brethren and sisters, and also to confirm the anchoress\* whom he had converted to Christ. Then preached he openly in the fields, confessing his fact, and preaching publicly that doctrine which he before had abjured, to be the very truth, and willed all men to beware by him, and never to trust to their fleshly friends in causes of religion. And so setting forward in his journey toward the celestial Jerusalem, he departed from thence to the anchoress in Norwich, and there gave her a new testament of Tindal's translation, and *The Obedience of a Christian Man*; whereupon he was apprehended and carried to prison, there to remain, till the blind bishop Nix† sent up for a writ to burn him.

In the mean season, the friars and religious men, with the residue of their doctors, civil and canon, resorted to him, busily labouring to persuade him not to die in those opinions, saying, he should be damned body and soul, if he so continued. Among whom, first were sent to him of the bishop, doctor Call, minister, as they call him, or provincial of the Gray Friars: and doctor Stokes, an Augustine friar, who lay with him in prison in disputation, till the writ came that he should be burned. Doctor Call, by the word of God, through the means of Bilney's doctrine, and good life, whereof he had good experience, was somewhat reclaimed to the gospel's side.

The order of his martyrdom was this, as follows:—

Thomas Bilney, after his examination and condemnation, was degraded, according to the popish custom, by the assistance of all the friars and doctors of the same suit. Which done, he was immediately committed to the lay power, and to the two sheriffs of the city, of whom Thomas Necton was one. This Thomas Necton was Bilney's special good friend, and sorry to accept him to such execution

\* A sort of nun, or female hermit.

† Nix, bishop of Norwich, was a bitter persecutor, and ever ready to send the followers of the truth to the fire, telling them when brought before him, that they smelt of the frying-pan. He endeavoured to prevent the circulation of the reformers' books, especially Tindal's new testament, "which he could not endure to be read." At this time he was fourscore years of age, infirm and blind, "blind both in body and soul."



as followed. But such was the tyranny of that time, and the dread of the chancellor and friars, that he could no otherwise do, but needs must receive him ;\* who notwithstanding, as he could not bear in his conscience himself to be present at his death : so, for the time that he was in his custody, he caused him to be more friendly looked unto, and more wholesomely kept, concerning his diet, than he was before.

After this, the Friday following, at night, which was before the day of his execution, being St. Magnus day and Saturday, the said Bilney had divers of his friends resorting unto him in the guildhall, where he was kept. Amongst whom one of the said friends finding him eating of an ale-brew† with such a cheerful heart and quiet mind as he did, said that he was glad to see him at that time, so shortly before his heavy and painful departure, so heartily to refresh himself. Whereunto he answered, “ I follow the example of the husbandmen of the country, who having a ruinous house to dwell in, yet bestow cost as long as they may, to hold it up ; and so do I now with this ruinous house of my body, and with God’s creatures, in thanks to him, refresh the same as ye see.” Then sitting with his said friends in godly talk, to their edification, some put him in mind, that though the fire which he should suffer the next day, should be of great heat unto his body, yet the comfort of God’s Spirit should cool it to his everlasting refreshing. At this word Bilney putting his hand toward the flame of the candle burning before them (as also he did divers times besides) and feeling the heat thereof, said, “ I feel by experience, and have known it long by philosophy, that fire, by God’s ordinance is naturally hot ; but yet I am persuaded by God’s holy word, and by the experience of some spoken of in the same, that in the flame they felt no heat, and in the fire they felt no consumption : and I constantly believe. that howsoever the stubble of this my body shall be wasted by it, yet my soul and spirit shall be purged thereby : a pain for the time, whereon notwithstanding followeth joy unspeakable.” And then he much treated of this place of scripture : “ Fear not, for I have redeemed thee, and called

\* Master More being lord chancellor, when the message was sent to him for a writ of discharge to burn Bilney, speaks in this wise to the messengers that came : “ Go your ways, and burn him first, and then afterward come to me for a bill of my hand.”—*For.*

† Or posset.

thee by thy name, thou art mine own. When thou goest through the water, I will be with thee, and the strong floods shall not overflow thee. When thou walkest in the fire it shall not burn thee, and the flame shall not kindle upon thee, for I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel," Isaiah xliii. Which he did most comfortably entreat of, as well in respect of himself, as applying it to the particular use of his friends there present, of whom some took such sweet fruit therein that they caused the whole said sentence to be fairly written in tables, and some in their books. The comfort whereof, in divers of them, was never taken from them to their dying day.

The Saturday next following, when the officers of execution, as the manner is, with their gleaves and halberds were ready to receive him, and to lead him to the place of execution without the city gate, called Bishop's gate, in a low valley, commonly called the Lollard's pit, under St. Leonard's hill, environed about with great hills—which place was chosen for the people's quiet sitting to see the execution—at the coming forth of Bilney out of the prison door, one of his friends came to him, and with few words, as he durst, spake to him, and prayed him in God's behalf to be constant, and to take his death as patiently as he could. Whereunto the said Bilney answered, with a quiet and mild countenance: "Ye see when the mariner is entered his ship to sail on the troublous sea, how he for a while is tossed in the billows of the same; but yet in hope that he shall once come to the quiet haven, he beareth in better comfort the perils which he feeleth: so am I now toward this sailing, and whatsoever storms I shall feel, yet shortly after shall my ship be in the haven; as I doubt not thereof by the grace of God, desiring you to help me with your prayers to the same effect."

And so he going forth in the streets, giving much alms by the way by the hands of one of his friends, and accompanied with one doctor Warner, doctor of divinity, and parson of Winterton, whom he did choose as his old acquaintance, to be with him for his spiritual comfort; came at the last to the place of execution, and descended down from the hill to the same, apparelled in a layman's gown, with his sleeves hanging down, and his arms out, his hair being piteously mangled at his degradation; a little single\* body in person, but always of a good upright countenance, and drew near to

\* Slight.

the stake prepared ; and somewhat tarrying the preparation of the fire, he desired that he might speak some words to the people, and there standing, thus he said :

“ Good people, I am come hither to die, and born I was to live under that condition, naturally to die again ; and that ye might testify that I depart out of this present life as a true christian man, in a right belief towards almighty God, I will rehearse unto you in a fast faith, the articles of my creed.” He then began to rehearse them in order as they are in the common creed, often elevating his eyes and hands to almighty God ; and at the article of Christ’s incarnation, having a little meditation in himself, and coming to the word, crucified, he humbly bowed himself and made great reverence ; and so he proceeded on, without any manner of words of recantation, or charging any man for procuring him to his death.

This once done, he put off his gown, and went to the stake, and kneeling upon a little ledge coming out of the stake, whereon he should afterward stand to be better seen, he made his private prayer with such earnest elevation of his eyes and hands to heaven, and in so good quiet behaviour, that he seemed not much to consider the terror of his death, and ended at the last his private prayers with the cxliiii psalm, beginning, “ Hear my prayer, O Lord, consider my desire :” and the next verse he repeated in deep meditation, thrice, “ And enter not into judgment with thy servant, for in thy sight shall no man living be justified :” and so finishing that psalm, he ended his private prayers.

After that, he turned himself to the officers, asking them if they were ready, and they answered, Yea. Whereupon he put off his jacket and doublet, and stood in his hose and shirt, and went unto the stake, standing upon that ledge, and the chain was cast about him ; and standing thereon, the said doctor Warner came to him to bid him farewell, who spake but few words for weeping.

Upon whom the said Thomas Bilney did most gently smile, and inclined his body to speak to him a few words of thanks, and the last were these : “ O master doctor, “ Feed your flock, feed your flock, that when the Lord cometh he may find you so doing : and farewell, good master doctor, and pray for me ;” and so he departed without any answer, sobbing and weeping.

And while he thus stood upon the ledge at the stake,

certain friars, doctors, and priors of their houses, being there present, as they were uncharitably and maliciously present at his examination and degradation, &c. came to him, and said, "O master Bilney, the people are persuaded that we are the causers of your death, and that we have procured the same, and thereupon it is like that they will withdraw their charitable alms from us all, except you declare your charity towards us, and discharge us of the matter." Whereupon the said Thomas Bilney spake with a loud voice to the people, and said, "I pray you, good people, be never the worse to these men for my sake, as though they should be the authors of my death; it was not they." And so he ended.

Then the officers put reeds and fagots about his body and set fire on the reeds, which made a very great flame that sparkled and deformed the visor of his face, he holding up his hands, and knocking upon his breast, crying sometimes "Jesus," sometimes "I believe." Which flame was blown away from him by the violence of the wind, which was that day, and two or three days before, notably great, in which it was said that the fields were marvellously plagued by the loss of corn: and so for a little pause he stood without flame, the flame departing and recursing thrice ere the wood took strength to be the sharper to consume him: and then he gave up the ghost, and his body being withered, bowed downward upon the chain. Then one of the officers, with his halberd, smote out the staple in the stake behind him, and suffered his body to fall into the bottom of the fire, laying wood on it, and so he was consumed.\*

\* From Bilney's first letter to bishop Tonstal, it will be seen that his conversion was rather by the direct influences of the Holy Spirit, opening his mind to study the scriptures, than by any human instruction as means. Several articles exhibited against him indicate a greater similarity in his tenets to those of the followers of Wickliff, than to the German reformers, we may therefore class him with the former, although he differed from them in some respects

# BILNEY'S LETTERS

TO

BISHOP TONSTAL.

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*To the reverend father in Christ, Cuthbert, bishop of London, Thomas Bilney wisheth health in Christ, with all submission due unto such a prelate.*

IN this respect, most reverend father in Christ, I think myself most happy, that it is my lot to be called to examination before your reverence, for that you are of such wisdom and learning, of such integrity of life, which all men do confess to be in you, that even yourself cannot choose, if you do not too lightly esteem God's gifts in you, as often as you shall remember the great things which God hath done unto you, but straightways secretly in your heart, to his high praise, say, "He that is mighty hath done great things unto me, and holy is his name!" I rejoyce that I have now happened upon such a judge, and with all my heart give thanks unto God, which ruleth all things.

And albeit, God is my witness, I know not myself guilty of any error in my sermons, neither of any heresy or sedition, which divers slander me of, seeking rather their own lucre and advantage, than the health of souls. Notwithstanding I do exceedingly rejoyce, that it is foreseen by God's divine providence, that I should be brought before the tribunal seat of Tonstal, who knoweth as well as any other, that there will never be wanting Jannes and Jambres, who will resist the truth: that there shall never be lacking some Elymas, who will go about to subvert the straight ways of the Lord: and, finally, that some Demetrius, Pythoness, (Acts ix.) Balaams, Nicolaitanes, Cains, and Ishmaels, will be always at hand, who will greedily hunt and seek after that which pertaineth unto themselves, and not that which pertaineth to Jesus Christ. How can it then be that they can suffer Christ to be truly and sincerely preached? For if the people begin once wholly in every place, to put their confidence in Christ, who was crucified for them, then straightways that which they have hitherto embraced instead of Christ, shall utterly decay in the hearts of the faithful. Then they shall understand that Christ is not in this place, or in that place, but the kingdom of

God is in themselves. Then shall they plainly see that the Father is to be worshipped, neither in the mount of Samaria, neither at Jerusalem, but in all places, in spirit and truth. Which if it come once to pass, the beasts of the field will think all their gain and lucre lost. In whom the saying of Ezekiel is fulfilled, "My sheep are dispersed because they had no shepherd, and are devoured of the beasts of the field, and strayed abroad; my flock hath erred and wandered in every mountain, and upon every high hill, and is dispersed throughout all the earth, and there is no man which hath sought to gather them together: no, there was no man which once sought after them." But if any man would seek to reduce those which were gone astray, into the fold of Christ, that is, the unity of faith: speedily there rise up certain against him, which are named pastors; but indeed are wolves, who seek nothing of their flock, but the milk, wool, and fell, leaving both their own souls, and the souls of their flock, unto the devil.

These men, I say, rise up like unto Demetrius, crying out, This heretic dissuadeth and seduceth much people every where, saying, That they are not gods, which are made with hands. These are they, these, I say, most reverend father, are they, who, under the pretence of persecuting heretics, follow their own licentious life; enemies unto the cross of Christ, who can suffer and bear anything, rather than the sincere preaching of Christ crucified for our sins. These are they unto whom Christ threateneth eternal damnation, where he saith, Woe be unto you, scribes, pharisees, and hypocrites, which shut up the kingdom of heaven before men, and you yourselves enter not in, neither suffer those which would enter, to come in. These are they which have come in another way, to the charge of souls, as it appeareth, For if any man, saith Christ, come in by me, he shall be saved, and shall come in and go out, and find pasture. These men do not find pasture, for they never teach, and draw others after them, that they should not enter by Christ, who alone is the door whereby we must come unto the Father; but they set before the people another way, persuading them to come unto God through good works, oftentimes speaking nothing at all of Christ, thereby seeking rather their own gain and lucre, than the salvation of souls; in this point being worse than they which upon Christ, being the foundation, do build wood, hay, and straw. These men confess that they know Christ, but by their deeds they deny him.

These are those physicians, upon whom that woman which was twelve years vexed, had consumed all that she had, and felt no help, but was still worse and worse, until such time as at the last, she came unto Christ, and after she had once touched the hem of his vesture through faith, she was so healed, that presently she felt the same in her body. Oh mighty power of the Most Highest! which I also, miserable sinner, have often tasted and felt. Who before that I could come unto Christ, had even likewise spent all that I had upon those ignorant physicians, that is to say, unlearned hearers of confession, so that there was but small force of strength left in me, which of nature was but weak, small store of money, and very little knowledge or understanding; for they appointed me fastings, watching, buying of pardons, and masses: in all which things, as I now understand, they sought rather their own gain, than the salvation of my sick and languishing soul.

But at the last I heard speak of Jesus, even then when the New Testament was first set forth by Erasmus. Which when I understood to be eloquently done by him, being allured rather for the Latin, than for the word of God, for at that time I knew not what it meant; I bought it even by the providence of God, as I do now well understand and perceive. And at the first reading, as I well remember, I chanced upon this sentence of St. Paul, (Oh most sweet and comfortable sentence to my soul! in his first epistle to Timothy, and first chapter,) It is a true saying, and worthy of all men to be embraced, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the chief and principal. This one sentence, through God's instruction and inward working, which I did not then perceive, did so exhilarate my heart, being before wounded with the guilt of my sins, and being almost in despair, that immediately I felt a marvellous comfort and quietness, insomuch that my bruised bones leapt for joy, Psal. l.

After this, the scripture began to be more pleasant unto me than the honey or the honeycomb; wherein I learned that all my labours, all my fasting and watching, all the redemption of masses and pardons, being done without truth in Christ, who alone saveth his people from their sins; these, I say, I learned to be nothing else but even, as St. Augustine saith, a hasty and swift running out of the right way, or else much like to the vesture made of fig leaves, wherewithal Adam and Eve went about in vain, to cover

themselves, and could never before obtain quietness and rest, until they believed in the promise of God, that Christ, the Seed of the woman, should tread upon the serpent's head. Neither could I be relieved or eased of the sharp stings and bitings of my sins, before that I was taught of God that lesson which Christ speaketh of in the third chapter of John, Even as Moses exalted the serpent in the desert, so shall the Son of man be exalted, that all which believe on him should not perish, but have life everlasting.

As soon as, according to the measure of grace given unto me of God, I began to taste and savour of this heavenly lesson, which no man can teach but only God, who revealed the same unto Peter, I desired the Lord to increase my faith; and at last, I desired nothing more, than that I, being so comforted by him, might be strengthened by his Holy Spirit and grace from above, that I might teach the wicked his ways, which are mercy and truth, and that the wicked might be converted unto him by me, who sometime was also wicked. Which thing, whilst that with all my power I did endeavour before my lord cardinal and your fatherhood, Christ was blasphemed in me, and this is my only comfort in these my afflictions, whom with my whole power I do teach and set forth, being made for us by God his Father, our wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, and finally, our satisfaction. Who was made sin for us, (that is to say, a sacrifice for sin,) that we, through him, should be made the righteousness of God. Who became accursed for us, to redeem us from the curse of the law; who also came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. The righteous, I say, which falsely judge and think themselves so to be, for all men have sinned and lack the glory of God; whereby he freely forgiveth sins unto all believers, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, because that all mankind was grievously wounded in him which fell among thieves between Jerusalem and Jericho. 1 Cor. i. 2 Cor. v. Gal. ii. Matt. ix. Rom. iii.

And therefore with all my whole power I teach, that all men should first acknowledge their sins and condemn them, and afterwards hunger and thirst for that righteousness, whereof St. Paul speaketh: The righteousness of God by faith in Jesus Christ, is upon all them which believe in him, for there is no difference, all have sinned, and lack the glory of God; and are justified freely through his grace, by the redemption which is in Jesus Christ, Rom. iii. The



which, whosoever doth hunger or thirst for, without doubt, they shall at the length so be satisfied, that they shall not hunger and thirst for ever.

But, forsomuch as this hunger and thirst was wont to be quenched with the fulness of man's righteousness, which is wrought through the faith of our own elect and chosen works, as pilgrimages, buying of pardons, offering of candles, fasts chosen, and oftentimes superstitious, and finally all kind of voluntary devotions, as they call them, against the which God's word speaketh plainly in the fourth of Deuteronomy and in the twelfth, saying, Thou shalt not do that which seemeth good unto thyself, but that which I command thee for to do, that do thou, neither adding to, neither diminishing any thing from it; therefore, I say, oftentimes have I spoken of those works, not condemning them, as I take God to be my witness, but reproving their abuse, making the lawful use of them manifest, even unto children, exhorting all men not so to cleave unto them, that they being satisfied therewith, should loath or wax weary of Christ, as many do. In whom I bid your fatherhood most prosperously well to fare.

And this is the whole sum.—If you will appoint me to dilate more at large on the things here touched, I will not refuse to do it, so that you will grant me time. For to do it out of hand I am not able, for the weakness of my body; being ready always if I have erred in any thing, to be better instructed.

THOMAS BILNEY.

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*Another letter or epistle of master Bilney to Cuthbert  
Tonstal, bishop of London.*

ALBEIT I do not remember, reverend father in Christ, whether I have either spoken or written that the gospel hath not been sincerely preached now of long time, which your lordship seemeth to have gathered either by some sinister hearers of my sermons, (who like Malchus, having their right ear cut off, Matt. xxvi. only bring their left ear to sermons) or else by some words or writings of mine, which have rashly passed me, rather than upon any evil intent. Yet, forsomuch as in this behalf, your reverence doth command me, and that of a good mind I trust, (for how can I think that in Tonstal any craft or doubleness to

dwell!) I will briefly declare unto you what I have learned of God through Christ, in the scriptures, and how that the doctors, even of great name and renown, have not taught the same of late in their sermons; referring, or rather submitting all things unto your fatherly judgment, which is more quick and sharp, than that it can by any means be blinded, and so sincere, that it will not in any point seek slander or discord. Therefore, I do confess that I have often been afraid that Christ hath not been purely preached now a long time. For who hath been now a long season offended through him? Who hath now these many years suffered any persecution for the gospel's sake? Where is the sword which he came to send upon the earth? And, finally, where are the rest of the sincere and uncorrupt fruits of the gospel? which, because we have not a long time seen, is it not to be feared that the tree which bringeth forth those fruits hath now a long time been wanting in our region or country? much less is it to be believed that it hath been nourished amongst us. Have we not seen all things quiet and peaceable a long time? But what saith the church? My grief most bitter, is turned to peace, &c. Isa. xxxviii. But the malignant church saith, Peace, peace, and there is no peace, Jer. vi. but only that whereof it is written, When the mighty armed man keepeth his gates, he possesseth all things in quiet, Luke xi. But when he seeth that he shall be vanquished of a stronger than he himself is, he spoileth and destroyeth all things. What now-a-days beginneth again to be attempted, I dare not say. God grant us grace that we do not refuse and reject, if it be Christ, him that cometh unto us, lest that we do feel that terrible judgment against us; Because, saith he, they have not received the love of truth, that they might be saved; therefore God will send upon them the blindness of error, that they shall give credit unto lies, 2 Thess. ii. Oh terrible sentence, which God knoweth whether a great number have not already incurred; that all they might be judged which have not given credit unto the truth, but consented unto iniquity. The time shall come, saith he, when that they will not suffer the true doctrine to be preached. And what shall we then say of that learning, which hath now so long time reigned and triumphed, so that no man hath once opened his mouth against it? Shall we think it sound doctrine? Truly iniquity did never more abound, nor was charity ever so cold. And what should

we, say to be the cause thereof? Hath the cause been for lack of preaching against the vices of men, and exhorting to charity? That cannot be, for many learned and great clerks sufficiently can witness to the contrary. And yet, all these notwithstanding, we see the life and manners of men do greatly degenerate from true christianity, and seem to cry out indeed, that it is fulfilled in us, which God in times past threatened by his prophet Amos, saying, Behold, the day shall come, saith the Lord, that I will send hunger upon the earth, not hunger of bread, neither thirst of water, but of hearing the word of God; and the people shall be moved from sea to sea, and from the west unto the east, and shall run about seeking for the word of God, but shall not find it. In those days the fair virgins and young men shall perish for thirst, &c. But now, to pass over many things, whereby I am moved to fear, that the word of God hath not been purely preached; this is not the least argument—that they which come and are sent, and endeavour themselves to preach Christ truly, are evil spoken of for his name, which is the rock of offence, and stumbling block unto them which stumble upon his word, and do not believe on him, on whom they are builded.

But you will ask, Who are those men, and what is their doctrine? Truly I say, whosoever entereth in by the door Christ, into the sheepfold which all such shall do as seek nothing else but the glory of God, and salvation of souls; of all such it may be truly said, that whom the Lord sendeth, he speaketh the word of God. And why so? Because he representeth the angel of the church of Philadelphia, unto whom St. John writeth, saying; This saith He, which is holy and true, which hath the keys of David, which openeth and no man shutteth, shutteth and no man openeth, Rev. iii. Behold, saith he, speaking in the name of Christ, who is the door and doorkeeper, I have set before thee an open door, that is to say, of the scriptures opening thy senses, that thou shouldst understand the scriptures, and that, because thou hast entered in by me which am the door. For whosoever entereth in by me which am the door, shall be saved; he shall go in and come out and find pasture; for the doorkeeper openeth the door unto him, and the sheep hear his voice, John x. But contrariwise, they which have not entered in by the door, but have climbed in some other way, by ambition, avarice, or desire of rule, they shall even in a moment go down into hell,

except they repent. And of them is the saying of Jeremiah verified: All beauty is gone away from the daughter of Sion, because her princes are become like rams, not finding pasture, Lam. i. And why so? Because like thieves and robbers they have climbed up another way, not being called nor sent. And what marvel is it, if they do not preach, when they are not sent, but run for lucre, seeking their own glory, and not the glory of God, and salvation of souls? And this is the root of all mischief in the church, that they are not sent inwardly of God. For without this inward calling, it helpeth nothing before God, to be a hundred times elect and consecrate, by a thousand bulls, either by pope, king, or emperor. God beholdeth the heart, whose judgments are according to truth, howsoever we deceive the judgment of men for a time; which also at the last shall see their abomination. This, I say, is the original of all mischief in the church, that we thrust in ourselves into the charge of souls, whose salvation, and the glory of God, which is to enter in by the door, we do not thirst or seek for, but altogether our own lucre and profit.

Hereupon it cometh, that we know not how to preach Christ purely. For how should they preach Christ, saith the apostle, except they be sent? for otherwise many thieves and robbers do preach him, but with their lips only, for their hearts are far from him. Neither yet do we suffer those which do know how to preach, but persecute them, and go about to oppress the scriptures now springing, under the pretence of godliness, fearing, as I suppose, lest the Romans should come and take our place. Ah thou wicked enemy Herod, why art thou afraid that Christ should come? He taketh not away mortal and earthly kingdoms, which giveth heavenly kingdoms. Oh blindness, Oh our great blindness, yea more than that of Egypt! of the which if there be any, that would admonish the people, by and by saith Pharaoh, Moses and Aaron, why do ye cause the people to cease from their labours? and truly called their labours! Get you to your burdens. Lay more work upon them, and cause them to do it, that they hearken not unto lies. Thus the people were dispersed throughout all the land of Egypt, to gather up chaff—I say, to gather up chaff. Who shall grant unto us, that God shall say, I have looked down, and beholden the affliction of my people, which is in Egypt, and have heard their sighs, and am come down to deliver them? But whither hath this zeal carried me? whether after

knowledge or not, I dare not say ; it appertaineth to you, reverend father, to judge thereupon.

Now you do look that I should show unto you at large, as you write, how that they ought sincerely to preach, to the better edifying hereafter of your flock. Here I confess I was afraid, that you had spoken in some derision, until that I well perceived, that you had written it with your own hand. Then again, I began to doubt for what intent Tonsal should require that of Bilney ; an old soldier, of a young beginner ; the chief pastor of London, of a poor silly sheep. But for what intent soever you did it, I trust it was of a good mind. And albeit that I am weak of body, yet through the grace of Christ given unto me, I will attempt this matter, although it does far pass my power ; under the which burden, if I be oppressed, yet I will not deceive you, for I have promised nothing, but a prompt and ready will to do that which you have commanded.

As touching that which pertaineth to the preaching of the gospel, I would to God you would give me leave privately to talk with you, that I might speak freely that which I have learned in the holy scriptures, for the consolation of my conscience ; which if you will so do, I trust you shall not repent you. All things shall be submitted unto your judgment ; who, except I be utterly deceived, will not break the reed that is bruised, and put out the flax that is smoking ; but rather, if I shall be found in any error, as indeed I am a man, you as spiritual, shall restore me through the spirit of gentleness, considering yourself, lest that you also be tempted. For every bishop which is taken from among men, is ordained for men, not violently to assault those which are ignorant and do err ; for he himself is compassed with infirmity, that he, being not void of evils, should learn to have compassion upon other miserable people, Heb. v.

I desire you that you will remember me to-morrow, that by your aid, I may be brought before the tribunal seat of my lord cardinal ; before whom I had rather stand, than before any of his deputies.

Yours,                    THOMAS BILNEY.

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*Another letter of master Bilney, fruitful and necessary for all ministers to read.*

Most reverend father, salutations in Christ. You have required me to write to you at large, wherein men have not

preached as they ought, and how they should have preached better. This is a burden too heavy for my strength ; under the which if I shall faint, it belongeth to you who have laid this burden upon my shoulders, to ease me thereof. As touching the first part, they have not preached as they ought, who, leaving the word of God, have taught their own traditions ; of which sort there are not a few, as it is very evident, in that they do report those which preach the word of God sincerely, to teach new doctrine. This also is no small testimony thereof, that in all England you shall scarce find one or two that are mighty in the scriptures ; and what marvel is it if all godly things do seem new unto them unto whom the gospel is new and strange, being nurtured in men's traditions now a long time ? Would to God these things were not true, which I utter unto you ; but alas they are too true.

They have also preached evil, which either have wrested the scriptures themselves, or have rashly gathered them out of old rotten papers, being wrested by others. And how should it be but that they should wrest them ; or else how should they judge them, being falsely interpreted by others, when they have not once read over the bible orderly ? Of this sort there is truly a very great number, from which number many great rabbins or masters shall hardly excuse themselves, whom the people have hitherto revered instead of gods. And these are they who now serve their bellies, seeking their own glory, and not the true glory of God, which might be set forth even by Balaam's ass : much less then ought we to contemn such abjects as preach the word of God. We have, saith St. Paul, this treasure in brickle\* vessels, that the glory of the power might be of God, and not of us. God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise ; and the weak things God hath chosen to confound the mighty ; and vile things of the world and despised, hath he chosen, and things that are not, to bring to nought things that are, that no flesh should glory in his sight, 1 Cor. i. But now all men in a manner will be wise, and therefore they are ashamed of the simple gospel ; they are ashamed truly to say with Paul, and to perform it indeed ; I brethren, when I came unto you, did not come with excellency of words, or of wisdom, preaching the testimony of Christ ; for I esteemed not myself to know anything amongst you, but only Jesus Christ and him cru-

\* Earthen, clay.

cified, 1 Cor. ii. Oh voice of a true evangelist! But now we are ashamed of this foolish preaching, by the which it hath pleased God to save all those which believe in him; and being puffed up with our own fleshly mind, choose rather proudly to walk in those things which we have not seen, preaching fables and lies, and not the law of God, which is undefiled, converting souls, Ps. xix.

But how should they teach the law of God, which they have not once read in the books, much less learned at the mouth of God? But in a pastor, and a bishop this is required; Thou son of man, saith God, lay up in thy heart all my words which I do speak unto thee, Ezek. iii., &c. And shortly after he saith, Thou son of man, I have ordained and given thee a watchman unto the house of Israel. I have given thee, saith he, not coming in by ambition, nor thrusting in thyself, nor climbing in another way, but I gave thee when thou lookedst not for it, that thou shouldst attend thereupon, and give warning from the top of the watch-tower, if any enemies should approach. I have given thee unto the house of Israel, and not the house of Israel unto thee, that thou shouldst acknowledge thyself to be the servant of the sheep, and not their lord. For I have not given the sheep for the shepherd, but the shepherd for the sheep. He that sitteth down is greater than he that doth minister and serve unto him. Which thing was well known of him who truly said, We are your servants for Christ's cause.

But for what purpose have I given thee unto the house of Israel? That thou shouldst only minister the sacraments, consecrate wood, stones, and church-yards? This, I take God to witness, with great sighs and groans I write unto you, pouring out before you the grief of my heart—No truly. What then? First, followeth the office of the bishop: Thou shalt hear the word out of my mouth. This is but a short lesson, but such as all the world cannot comprehend, without they be inwardly taught of God.

And what else meaneth this, Out of my mouth thou shalt hear the word, but that thou shalt be taught of God? Therefore, as many as are not taught of God, although they be ever so well exercised in the scriptures by man's help, yet are they not watchmen given by God, and much less they which do not understand and know the scriptures. And therefore such as these are, lest they should keep

silence and say nothing, are always harping upon the traditions and doctrines of men, that is, upon lies. For he that speaketh of himself, speaketh lies. Of these it is written: They would be doctors of the law, not understanding what they speak, neither of whom they speak, 1 Tim. i. Such of necessity they must all be, who speak that with their mouth which they do not believe, because they are not inwardly taught of God, neither are persuaded in their hearts that it is true; and therefore they are not to be accounted as sheep, although they boast themselves to be shepherds. But contrariwise, touching the true and learned pastors given by God, it may be truly said, We speak that which we know, and that which we have seen, 1 John i. even with the infallible eyes of our faith, we do witness; and these are neither deceived, neither do deceive. Moreover, the deceivers proceed to worse and worse, erring themselves, and bringing others also to error; and because they are of the world, the world doth willingly hear them. They are of the world, saith St. John, and therefore they speak those things which are of the world, and the world giveth ear unto them, 1 John iv.

Behold, reverend father, this is the touchstone of our daily preaching. Hath not the world given ear unto them now a long time with great pleasure and delight? But the flesh could never suffer the preaching of the cross, nor yet the wisdom of the flesh, which is enemy unto God, neither is subject unto his law, nor can be. And why then are they accused to be heretics and schismatics, who will not seek to please men, but only to their edifying? being mindful of that place of scripture; God hath dispersed the bones of them which please men, saying unto them, Speak unto us pleasant things, Isa. xxx. But now, letting these matters pass, we will come unto the second point, wherein you ask, how a man should preach better? Forsooth, if we had heard him of whom the Father spake, saying, This is my dearly beloved Son in whom I am well pleased, hear him. Who also, speaking of himself, said, it was meet that Christ should suffer and rise again the third day from death, and that in his name repentance and remission of sins should be preached unto all people. What other thing is that, than the same which the other evangelists do write? Go ye into the whole world and preach the gospel unto every creature: he that believeth and is baptized, shall be.



saved, Matt. xxviii. What can be more pleasant, sweet, or acceptable unto afflicted consciences, being almost in despair, than this most joyful tidings?

But here, whether Christ have been a long time heard I know not, for I have not heard all the preachers of England; and if I had heard them, yet till within this year or two, I could not sufficiently judge of them. But this I dare be bold to affirm, that as many as I have heard of late preach, I speak even of the most famous, they have preached such repentance, that if I had heard such preachers of repentance in times past, I should utterly have been in despair. And to speak of one of those famous men, not uttering his name, after he had sharply inveighed against vice, wherein he pleased every godly man, forasmuch as it could not be sufficiently cried out upon, he concluded, "Behold, thou hast lien rotten in thine own lusts, by the space of these sixty years, and wilt thou presume in one year, to go forward toward heaven, and that in thine age, as much as thou wentest backwards from heaven towards hell in sixty years?" Is not this, think you, a goodly argument? Is this the preaching of repentance in the name of Jesus? or rather is it not to tread down Christ with antichrist's doctrine? for what other thing did he speak in effect, than that Christ died in vain for thee? He will not be thy Jesus or Saviour, thou must make satisfaction for thyself, or else thou shalt perish eternally. Then doth St. John lie who saith; Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world. And in another place; His blood hath cleansed us from all our sins. And again, He is the propitiation for the sins of the whole world. Besides an infinite number of other places, what other thing is this, than that which was spoken by the Holy Ghost, by the mouth of Peter, saying; There shall be false teachers that shall deny the Lord Jesus, which hath redeemed them? And what followeth upon such doctrine of devils speaking lies through hypocrisy? a conscience despairing and without all hope, and so given over unto all wicked lusts, according to the saying of St. Paul. After that they are come to this point that they sorrow no more, they give themselves over unto wantonness, to commit all kind of filthiness, even with a greedy desire. For, seeing that it is impossible for them to make satisfaction to God, either they murmur against God, or else they do not believe him to be so cruel as they do preach and declare him to be. The want of paper will not suffer me to write

any more, and I had rather to speak it in private talk unto yourself. Whereunto if you would admit me, I trust you should not repent you thereof; and unto me, I take Christ to be my witness, it would be a great comfort; in whom I wish you, with all your flock, heartily well to fare.

Your prisoner, and humble beadman unto God for you,

THOMAS BILNEY.

*The State of the Church of Christ at the commencement of the Reformation, as described by John Fox in his Acts and Monuments.*

ALTHOUGH it cannot be sufficiently expressed with tongue or pen of man, into what miserable ruin and desolation the church of Christ was brought in these latter days; yet partly by the reading of these stories aforepast, some intelligence may be given to them which have judgment to mark, or eyes to see, in what blindness and darkness the world was drowned during the space of four hundred years heretofore and more. By the viewing and considering of which times and histories, thou mayest understand, gentle reader, how the religion of Christ, which only consisteth in spirit and verity, was wholly turned into outward observations, ceremonies, and idolatry. So many saints we had, so many gods, so many monasteries, so many pilgrimages. As many churches, as many reliques, forged and feigned we had. Again, so many reliques, so many lying miracles we believed. Instead of the only living Lord, we worshipped dead stocks and stones. In place of Christ immortal, we adored mortal bread. Instead of his blood, we worshipped the blood of ducks; how the people were led, so that the priests were fed, no care was taken. Instead of God's word, man's word was set up. Instead of Christ's testament, the pope's testament, that is, the canon law. Instead of Paul, the master of sentences\* took place, and almost full possession. The law of God was little read; the use and end thereof was less known. And as the end of the law was unknown so the difference between the gospel and the law was not understood, the benefit of Christ not considered, the effect of faith not expended. Through the ignorance whereof, it cannot be told what infinite errors, sects, and religions crept into the church, overwhelming the

\* Thomas Aquinas, see Wickliff, p. 183.

world, as with a flood of ignorance and seduction. And no marvel, for where the foundation is not well laid, what building can stand and prosper? The foundation of all our christianity is ONLY this,—the promise of God in the blood of Christ his Son, giving and promising life unto all that believe in him. GIVING, saith the scripture, unto us, and not bargaining or indenting with us? And that FREELY, saith the scripture, for Christ's sake, and not conditionally, for our merits' sake.

Furthermore, Freely, saith the scripture, by grace, that the promise might be firm and sure, and not by the works that we do, which always are doubtful. By grace, saith the scripture, through promise to all and upon all that believe, and not by the law upon them that do deserve. For if it come by deserving, then is it not of grace. If it be not of grace, then is it not of promise. And, contrariwise, if it be of grace and promise, then it is not of works, saith St. Paul. Upon this foundation of God's free promise and grace, first builded the patriarchs, kings, and prophets. Upon the same foundation also Christ the Lord builded his church. Upon the which foundation the apostles likewise builded the church apostolical or catholical.

This apostolical and catholic foundation, so long as the church did retain, so long it continued sincere and sound; which endured a long season after the apostles' time. But after, in process of years, through wealth, and negligence crept into the church, so soon as this foundation began to be lost, came in new builders, who would build, upon a new foundation, a new church more glorious, which we call now the church of Rome. Who, being not contented with the old foundation and the head corner stone, which the Lord by his word had laid; in place thereof, they laid the ground-work upon the condition and strength of the law and works. Although it is not to be denied, but that the doctrine of God's holy law, and of good works according to the same, is a thing most necessary to be learned and followed of all men; yet it is not that foundation, whereupon our salvation consisteth, neither is that foundation able to bear up the weight of the kingdom of heaven; but it is rather the thing, which is builded upon the foundation; which foundation is Jesus Christ, according as we are taught of St. Paul, saying, No man can lay any other foundation, beside that which is laid, Christ Jesus, &c.

But this ancient foundation, with the old ancient church

of Christ, as I said, hath been now of long time forsaken, and instead thereof, a new church with a new foundation hath been erected and framed; not upon God's promise and his free grace in Christ Jesus, nor upon free justification by faith, but upon merits and deserts of men's working. And hereof have they planted all these their new devices, so infinite that they cannot well be numbered, as masses-trecenaries, dirges, obsequies, matins, and hours singing service, vigilis, midnight-rising, barefoot-going, fish-tasting, lent-fast, ember-fast, stations, rogations, jubilees, advocacy of saints, praying to images, pilgrimage walking, works of supererogation, application of merits, orders, rules, sects of religion, vows of chastity, wilful poverty, pardons, relations, indulgences, penance, and satisfaction, with auricular confession, founding of abbeys, building of chapels, giving to churches. Who is able to recite all their laborious buildings, falsely framed upon a wrong ground, and all for ignorance of the true foundation, which is the free justification by faith in Christ Jesus the Son of God?

Moreover to note, that as this new found church of Rome was thus deformed in doctrine, so no less was it corrupted in order of life and deep hypocrisy; doing all things only under pretences and dissembled titles. So, under the pretence of Peter's chair, they exercised a majesty above emperors and kings; under the visor of their vowed chastity, reigned adultery; under the cloak of professed poverty, they possessed the goods of the temporality; under the title of being dead unto the world, they not only reigned in the world, but also ruled the world; under the colour of the keys of heaven to hang under their girdle, they brought all the states of the world under their girdle, and crept not only into the purses of men, but also into their consciences. They heard their confessions, they knew their secrets, they dispensed as they were disposed, and loosed what them listed. And finally, when they had brought the whole world under their subjection, yet did their pride neither cease to ascend, neither could their avarice be ever satisfied.

In these so blind and miserable corrupt days of darkness and ignorance, thou seest, good reader, I doubt not, how necessary it was, and high time, that reformation of the church should come, which now most happily and graciously began to work, through the merciful and no less needful providence of almighty God. Who although he suffered his church to wander and start aside through the seduction

of pride and prosperity for a long time, yet at length it pleased his goodness to respect his people, and to reduce his church into the pristine foundation and frame again, from whence it was piteously decayed.

And herein we have first to behold the admirable work of God's wisdom. For as the first decay and ruin of the church, before began of rude ignorance, and lack of knowledge in teachers; so to restore the church again by doctrine and learning, it pleased God to open to man **THE ART OF PRINTING**, the time whereof was shortly after the burning of Huss and Jerome, A. D. 1416. Printing being opened, instantly ministered unto the church the instruments and tools of learning and knowledge, which were good books and authors, which before lay hid and unknown. The science of printing being found, immediately followed the grace of God; which stirred up good wits aptly to conceive the light of knowledge and of judgment; by which light, darkness began to be espied, and ignorance to be detected, truth from error, religion to be discerned from superstition.

Furthermore, after these men stirred up of God, followed others more, increasing daily more and more in science, in tongues, and perfection of knowledge; who now were able, not only to discern in matters of judgment, but also were so armed and furnished with the help of good letters, that they encountered also with the adversary, sustaining the cause and defence of learning against barbarity—of verity against error—of true religion against superstition. And here began the first push and assault to be given against the ignorant and barbarous faction of the pope's pretended church. Who after that, by their learned writings and laborious travail, they had opened a window of light unto the world, and had made, as it were, a way more ready for other to come after, immediately, according to God's gracious appointment, followed **MARTIN LUTHER**, with others after him, by whose ministry it pleased the Lord to work a more full reformation of his church.

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*The Benefit and Invention of Printing described by  
John Fox.*

WE find the year of our Lord 1450 to be famous and memorable, for the divine and miraculous inventing of printing. What man soever was the instrument, witho

all doubt God himself was the ordainer and disposer thereof, as he was of the gift of tongues. And well may this gift of printing be resembled to the gift of tongues: for as God then spake with many tongues, and yet all that would not turn the Jews; so now, when the Holy Ghost speaketh to the adversaries in innumerable sorts of books, yet they will not be converted, nor turn to the gospel.

Now to consider to what end and purpose the Lord hath given this gift of printing to the earth, and to what great utility and necessity it serves, it is not hard to judge, whose wisely considers both the time of the sending, and the sequel which thereof ensueth.

And first, touching the time of this faculty given to the use of man, this is to be marked, that when the bishop of Rome with all the whole and full consent of the cardinals, patriarchs, archbishops, bishops, abbots, priors, lawyers, doctors, provosts, deans, archdeacons, assembled together in the council of Constance, had condemned poor John Huss and Jerome of Prague to death for heresy, notwithstanding they were no heretics, and after they had subdued the Bohemians and all the world under the supreme authority of the Romish see; and had made all christian people obedienciaries and vassals unto the same, having, as one would say, all the world at their will, so that the matter now was past not only the power of all men, but the hope also of any man to be recovered—in this very time so dangerous and desperate, where man's power could do no more, there the blessed wisdom and omnipotent power of the Lord began to work for his church; not with sword and target to subdue his exalted adversary, but with printing, writing, and reading, to convince darkness by light, error by truth, ignorance by learning. So that, by this means of printing, the secret operation of God hath heaped upon that proud kingdom a double confusion. God of his secret judgment, seeing it was time to help his church, found a way by this faculty of printing, not only to confound his life and conversation, which before he could not abide to be touched, but also to cast down the foundation of his standing, that is, to examine, confute, and detect his doctrine, laws, and institutions most detestable in such sort, that though his life were ever so pure, yet his doctrine standing as it doth, no man is so blind but he may see, that either the pope is antichrist, or else that antichrist is near cousin to the pope; and all this hath and will hereafter more and more appear by printing.

The reason whereof is, that hereby tongues are known, knowledge groweth, judgment increaseth, books are dispersed, the scripture is seen, the doctors are read, stories are opened, times compared, truth discerned, falsehood detected, and with finger pointed, and all, as I said, through the benefit of printing. Wherefore, I suppose, that either the pope must abolish printing, or he must seek a new world to reign over; for else, as this world standeth, **PRINTING DOUBTLESS WILL ABOLISH HIM.** But the pope, and all his college of cardinals, must understand, that through the light of printing the world beginneth now to have eyes to see, and heads to judge. He cannot walk so invisible in a net, but he will be spied. And although through might he stopped the mouth of John Huss before, and of Jerome, that they might not preach, thinking to make his kingdom sure; yet, instead of J. Huss and others, God hath opened the press to preach, whose voice the pope is never able to stop with all the puissance of his triple crown. By this printing, as by the gift of tongues, and as by the singular organ of the Holy Ghost, the doctrine of the gospel soundeth to all nations and countries under heaven, and what God revealeth to one man, is dispersed to many, and what is known in one nation, is opened to all.

The first and best were for the bishop of Rome, by the benefit of printing, to learn and know the truth. If he will not, let him well understand that printing is not set up for nought. To strive against the stream it availeth not. What the pope hath lost, since printing and the press began to preach, let him reckon. First, when Erasmus wrote, and Frobenius printed, what a blow thereby was given to all friars and monks in the world! And who seeth not that the pen of Luther following after Erasmus, and set forward by writing, hath set the triple crown so awry on the pope's head, that it is never likely to be set straight again?

Briefly, if there were no demonstration to lead, yet by this one argument of printing, the bishop of Rome might understand the counsel and purpose of the Lord to work against him, having provided such a way in earth, that almost how many printing presses there are in the world, so many block-houses there are against the high castle of St. Angelo; so that either the pope must abolish knowledge and printing, or printing at length will root him out. For of a man wisely consider the hold and standing of the pope,

thus he may repute with himself, that as nothing made the pope strong in time past, but lack of knowledge and ignorance of simple christians; so contrariwise, now nothing doth debilitate and shake the high spire of his papacy so much as reading, preaching, knowledge, and judgment, that is to say, the fruit of printing. Whereof some experience we see already, and more is like, by the Lord's blessing, to follow. For although, through outward force and violent cruelty, tongues dare not speak, yet the hearts of men daily, no doubt, are instructed through the benefit of printing. And though the pope doth now hold by cruelty, and in times past by ignorance, had all under his possession: yet neither must he think that violence will always continue, neither must he hope for that now, which he had then; forsomuch as in former days books were scarce, and of such excessive price, that few could attain to the buying fewer to the reading and studying, which books now, by means of this art, are made easy unto all men.

Moreover, for defect of books and good authors, universities were decayed, and good understandings kept in ignorance, while begging friars, scraping all the wealth from other priests, heaped up all books that could be gotten into their own libraries; where either they did not diligently apply them, or else did not rightly use them, or at least kept them from such as more fruitfully would have perused them. In this then so great rarity, and also dearth of good books, when neither they which could have books would well use them, nor they that would could have them to use, what marvel if the greediness of a few prelates abused the blindness of those days, to the advancement of themselves? Wherefore, almighty God of his merciful providence, seeing both what lacked in the church, and how also to remedy the same, for the advancement of his glory, gave the understanding of this excellent art or science of printing, whereby three singular commodities at one time came to the world. First, the price of all books is diminished. Secondly, the speedy help of reading more furthered. And thirdly, the plenty of all good authors enlarged. By reason whereof, as printing of books ministered matter of reading; so reading brought learning, learning showed light, by the brightness whereof blind ignorance was suppressed, error detected, and finally, God's glory, with the truth of his word, advanced.



