

**A** long I had went of I that I had proued  
 you playnely that they kepe it not from  
 the. For I haue thewed you y they kepe  
 none fro the, but such translation as be  
 either not yet approued for good, or such  
 as be alredi reprovod for naught, as wy-  
 Kliffes was & Lindals. For as for other  
 olde ones, y wer before wicliffes daies  
 remain lawful, & be in some folkes han-  
 des had and read. We save well, quod he.  
 But yet as wemen save, some what it  
 was alway that y cat wnter wba a bet  
 eye was oute. Sure ye so is it not for  
 nought that y english byble is in so few  
 mens handes, whan so many woulde so  
 fayne haue it. That is very trouth of I:  
 For I thinke y though the fauourers of  
 a secte of heretics be so fervent in y set-  
 ting furth of their secte, that they let not  
 to say their maney together and make a  
 purse among them, for the printing of  
 an euill made, or euill translated booke:  
 which though it happe to be forboden &  
 burned, yet some be sold ere they be spy-  
 ed, and eche of them lese but the part:  
 yet I thinke ther will no printer lightly  
 be so hote to put anye byble in prynte at  
 hys owne charge, wherof y losse shoulde  
 lye hole in his owne necke, & than hang  
 vpon a doubtful trayal, whether y first co-  
 py of hys translation, was made before  
 wicliffes daies or since. For if it were  
 made synce, it must be approued before  
 the prynting. And surely howe it hath  
 happed that in all this whyle God hath  
 epher not suffered, or not prouided that  
 any good heretious man hath hadde the  
 mynde in faithful wise to translate it, &  
 therupon ether y clergie, or at y least wise  
 some one bishop to approue it, thys can  
 I nothing tell. But howe loeuer it be, I  
 haue hearde and heare so muche spoken  
 in the matter, and so muche doute made  
 therin, that peraduenture it woulde let &  
 withdrawe any one bishop from the ad-  
 mitting therof, without the assent of the  
 remenant. And whereas many thinges  
 be laid against it: yet is ther in my mind  
 not one thyng that more pisseth good  
 men of the clergie in doute to suffer it,  
 than thys: that they see sometime much  
 of the worse sort more fervent in the cal-  
 ling for it, than the whom we find farre  
 better. Which maketh them to feare less  
 such men desyre it for no good, & lest if it  
 wer hadde in euery mannes hand, there  
 woulde great peril arise, & that sedicious  
 people shoulde doe more harme ther with  
 than good and honest folke shoulde take  
 fruite thereby. Whiche feare I promise

you nothing feareth, but y whosoer  
 ner woulde of thes malice or folwe take  
 harme of that thing that is of it selfe or  
 deyned to doe al men good, I woulde ne-  
 ner let y auoyding of their harme, take  
 from other the profit, which they might  
 take, & nothing deserue to lese. For elles  
 if the abuse of a good thing shoulde cause  
 y taking away therof fro other y woulde  
 vse it well, Christ shoulde hymself neuer  
 haue been bozne, nor brought hys sayth  
 into y world, nor god shoulde neuer haue  
 made it neither, if he shoulde for the losse  
 of those that woulde be dained wretches,  
 haue kept away the occasion of reward  
 from them that woulde with helpe of his  
 grace endeuoze them to deserue it. I am  
 sure quod your friend, ye doubt not but  
 that I am full and hole of your mynde  
 in this matter, that the byble shoulde be  
 in euery englishe tong. But yet that the  
 clergie is of the contrary, and woulde not  
 haue it so, that appeareth well, in that  
 they suffer it not to be so. And ouer that  
 I heare in euerye place almost wher I  
 find any learned man of the, their min-  
 des all set theron to kepe y scripture fro  
 be. And they seke out for that parte en-  
 ry rotten reason that they can find, & set  
 them furth solenely to the shew, though  
 syne of those reasons bee not worth a  
 figge. For they begynne as farre as our  
 first father Adam, and shew vs that his  
 wyfe and he fell out of paradise with de-  
 syre of knowledge and cunning. Howe  
 if thys woulde letue, it must from the  
 knowlege and studie of scripture, byue  
 enery man, priest and other, lest it dzyne  
 all out of paradise. Than saye they that  
 god taught his disciples many thynges  
 aparte, because y people shoulde not heare  
 it. And therefore they woulde the people  
 shoulde not now be suffered to reade all.  
 Yet they say further y it is hard to trans-  
 late y scripture out of one tong into an-  
 other, and specially they say into ours,  
 which they call a tong vulgare & barba-  
 rous. But of all thing specially they say  
 that scripture is the foode of the soule.  
 And that the romen people be as infan-  
 tes y must be fedde but w milke & pappe  
 And if we haue anye fronger meate, it  
 must be chammed afoze by the nurse, &  
 so putte into the babes mouth. But me  
 think though they make vs al infantes,  
 they shall fynde many a shetwode brayn  
 among vs, that can perceiue chalke fro  
 chele well ynough, and if they woulde  
 once take vs our meate in our owne had-  
 we be not so euil tothed but that wthyn  
 a while

what maner  
 of englishe by-  
 bles are kept  
 from men.

ys

e

D

why the cler-  
 gie doth not  
 suffer the by-  
 ble to be had  
 in englishe.

f

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Gene. 2.

D

a while

**A** while they shall see vs cham it our self as well as they, for let the call vs pong babes and they wil, yet by god they shal for al that well fynde in some of vs y an gibe knowe is no chyld. Surely quod I suche thynges as ye speake, is the thyng that as I somewhat sayd befoze putteth god folke in feare to suffer the scripture in our englishe tong. Not for y reading & receiuing: but for the busy chammynge therof, and for much meddling with such partes thereof, as least will agree with their capacities. For vndoubtedly as ye spake of our mother Cuc: inordinate appetite of knowledge is a meane to driue any mā out of paradise. And inordinate is y appetite, whā mē vnlearned, though they reade it in theyr language, will be busy to enserche & dyspute y great secret mysteries of scripture, whiche though they heare, they be not hable to perceiue. Whys thing is playnely sayd vs that be not appoynted nor instructed therto. And therfoze holi saint Gregoꝝ nazianzenus, that great solenne doctour, soze toucheth & reprooueth al such bolde busy medlers in the scripture, & sheweth that it is in Crodis by Moyses ascending by vpon the hill where he spake with God, and the people taryng beneath, signified y the people bee forboden to presume to medle with the hygh mysteries of holy scripture, but ought to be contente to tary beneath, & medle none higher than is meete for them, but receiuyng fro the height of the hill by Moyses that, that is deliuered them, that is to witte, y lawes and pꝛeceptes that they must kepe, and the poyntes they must beleue, loke well therupon, and ofte, and medle wel therwith: not to dispute it, but to fulfill it. And as for the high secrete mysteries of God, and hard tertes of hys holy scripture: let vs knowe that we be so vnable to ascende by so high on that hill, that it shall become vs to saye to the preachers appoynted therto as the people sayd vnto Moyses. Heare you god, & let vs heare you. And surely the blessed holy doctour saynt Hierome greatelye complayneth & rebuketh that lewde homely maner, y the common ley peple, men and woome, wer in his daies so bold in the meddling, disputing, and expounding of holi scripture. And sheweth playnly that they shall haue euil prese therein, that will reken themself to vnderstand it by them selfe without a reader. For it is a thing that requireth god help, and long time, and an whole mynde geuen greatelye

Holy scripture is not suffred in our englishe tong.

**B**

**C**

**D**

Holy scripture can not be vnderstanded without a reader.

thereto. And surely, sꝛth as the holpe Apostle Saynt Poule, in diuers of hys epistles sayth: God hath by his holy spirite so instituted & ordeyned his church, that he will haue some readers, & some hearers, some teachers, and some learners, we do plainly peruert & tꝛurne vp so down y right order of christes church whan y one part medleth with y others office. Plato the great phylosopher specially forbiddeth suche as be not admitted therunto, nor men mete therfoze, to medle much and embusie the self in reasoning and dysputyng vpon the temporall lawes of the cite, which would not be reasoned vpon, but by folke mete therfoze, and in place conuenient. For elles they that cannot very wel attain to perceiue them, begin to mislike, dyspaysse, and contemne them. Wherof so foloweth the breach of the lawes, and disorder of the people. For toll a lawe be chaunged by auzhoritte, it rather ought to be obserued than cōtemned. Or elles the example of one lawe boldly broken and sette at naughte, wareth a pꝛecident for the remenaunte to be vled lyk. And commonlye, the best lawes shall woꝛse lyke muche of the common people, whiche moiste longe (if they myght be heard and folowed) to liue al at libertie vnder none at all. Howe if Plato sawe a man so thought good in temporall lawes, thynges of mennes makynge howe muche is it lesse meete for euery manne boldelye to meddle with the expolition of holpe scripture, so deuyled and endoyted by the hyghe wisdom of God, that it farre exceedeth in many places the capacities and perceiuing of mā. It was also provided by the Emperour in the lato ciuile, that the common people shoulde neuer be so bolde to kepe dyspicions vpon y sayth, or holy scripture, nor that anye such thing shoulde be vled among them or befoze them. And therfoze as I said befoze, the special feare in this matter is, lest we would be to busy in chammynge of the scripture our self, whiche ye saye we were hable ynoughe to dooe. Whiche vndoubtedlye, the wyldest, and the best learned, and he that therein hath by manye veres bestowed hys whole minde, is yet vnable to dooe. And than farre moze vnhable muste he nedes be, that boldly will vpon the spꝛyng reading, because he knoweth y woꝛdes, take vpon him therfoze to teche other mens the sentence with peril of his own soule and other mennes too, by the bringyng

Ephest. 4.

Note:

The common people's long to liue at libertie.

**B**

men

**M**en into mad wayes, sectes, heresies, such as heretikes haue of olde brought vp, & þe church hath condemned. And thus in these matters if þe comen peple might be bold to cham it as ye say: to dispute it, than should ye haue, the more blind þe more bold: the more ignoraunt the more busie: the lesse witte the more inquisitive: the more fool the more talkative of great doubt, and bygh questions of holy scripture, and of Goddes great and secret misteries, and this not sobzely of any good affection, but presumptuously and vnreuerently eat meate: & at meale. And there wha the wyne wer in and the witte out, woulde they take vpon them with foolish wordes and blasphemie to handle holie scripture in more homely manner than a song of Robin hode. And some woulde as I said solemnely take vpon them like as thei wer ordinarie readers to interpret þe text at their pleasure, & therewith fall themselves and othel down ether with them into sedicious sectes & heresies, whereby the scripture of God should lese his honour and reverence, & be by suche vnreuerente and vnspytting demeanour, among mache people quite and cleane abused, vnto the contrary of that holie purpose that God ordayned it for. **W**here as if we woulde no further meddle therewith, but well and deuoutely reade it: and in that that is playne and euident as Gods commaundementes and his holy counsaile endeuour our self to folow with helpe of his grace asked therunto, and in his greate & merueilous miracles consider his godhead: & in his lowly birth, his godly life, and his bitter passion, exercise our selfe in suche meditations, prayer, and vertues, as the matter shall minister vs occasion, knowledging our owne ignoraunce where we fynd a dout, and therein leaning to the faythe of the church, wrestle with no such text as might bring vs in a doubt and weteftye of anpe of those articles wherof every good christen man is cleve: by thys manner of reading can no mā nor womā take hurt in holy scripture. **N**owe than the thinges on the other syde that vnlearned people can neuer by themselves attayne, as in the psalmes and the prophetes & diuers parties of the gospel, where the wordes bee some time spoken as in the persone of þe prophete himselfe, sometime as in the persone of god, sometime of some other as angels, deuils, or men, & sometime of our sauioz Christ, not alway of one fa-

Wion, but sometime as God, sometime as mā, sometime as head of this mystical body his church militant here in earth, sometime as head of his church triumphant in heaue, sometime as in þe persone of his sensuall parties of his own body, otherwhyle in þe person of some particular part of his body mystical, & these thinges with many other, oftentimes interchanged, & so detaily sundrye thinges of diuers matters diuersly mingled together, at these thinges which is not possible for vnlearned men to attayn vnto, it wer moze than madnes for the to meddle wth it, but leane al these thinges to the whose hole study is beset therupon, & to þe preachers appointed therunto whiche may wete the such thinges in time and place conuenient to reuerence & authority, the sermō to be preched, as māy be made & conuenient alwaye for þe present audience. **W**herunto it appereth vnto our sayour himself, & his apostles after him, had euer speciall respect: & therfore as I say forsoth I can in no wise agree with you if it wer mete for men vnlearned to be busy with the chāming of holy scripture, but to haue it chāmed vnto them. **F**or that is þe preachers part and theirs that after longe studye are admytted to reade and expoun it. And to this entent haue al þe wordes as farre as I perceue of al holy doctors that any thing haue written in this matter. **B**ut neuer ment they as I suppose the forbidding of the bible to be reade in any vulgare tong. **F**or I neuer yet heard any reason sayd why it were not conuenient to haue the bible translated into the englische tong, but al those reasons seemed they neuer to saye & glorious at the first sight: yet wher they were well examined they myght in effect, for ought that I can see, as wel be layde agaynst þe holy writers that wrote the scripture in the hebreue tongue, and agaynst the blessed euāgelistes þe wrote the scripture in Greke, and agaynst all those in like wyse that translated it out of euery of those tonges into latine, as to their charge that would well & faithfully translate it out of latine into our englische tong. **F**or as for that our tong is called barbarous, is but a fantasie. **F**or so is, as euery lerned mā knoweth, euery straunge language to other. **A**nd if they would call it barayn of wordes, there is no doubt but it is plenteous enough to expresse our myndes in any thing wherof one mā hath bled to speke with another. **N**owe as touchynge the

Note.

B

C

Howe they men  
shoulde reade  
the scripture.

Temper the  
sermon after  
the audience,

C

There can be  
no reason why  
the bible  
shoulde not be  
translated into  
to englische.

B

The thinges  
that the vn-  
learned can  
not attayne  
vnto.

difficult

**A** difficulte which a translator synbeth in expressing well and liuely the sentece of his author, whiche is hard alwaye to doe so surely but that he shall sometime minythe epyther of the sentence or of the grace that it bereth in the formar tong: that poynt hath lye in their lyght that haue translated the scrypture alreadye epyther out of greke into latine, or out of hebzeue into any of them both, as by many translacons which we reue already, to them that be learned appereth. Now as touching the harme that may growe by suche bynde bayardes as will whan they reade the byble in englishe be moze busy than will become them: They that touche that poynt harpe vpon the right string, & touche truely the great harme that wer likely to growe to some folke: howe be it not by the occasion yet of the english translacon, but by the occasion of theyr own lewdnes and foly, whiche yet were not in my mynde a sufficiente cause to exlude the translacon, and to put other folke from the benefite therof: but rather to make prouision agaynst such abuse, & let a good thing goe furth. No wise manne wer there that woulde put al weapōs a way because manquellers misuse them. Noz this letted not as I sayd the scrypture to be first witten in a bulgare tong. For scrypture, as I said before was not witten but in a bulgare tonge, suche as the whole people vnderstode, noz in no secrete cyphers but such common letters as almost euery man could reue. For neither was the hebzeue noz the greke tong, noz the late, neither any other speche than such as all y peple spake. And therfore if we shold lay that it wer euil done to translate y scrypture into our tong, because it is bulgare and comen to euery englishe man, than had it been as euill done to translate it into greke or into latin, or to wryte the new testament first in greke, or the old testament in hebzeue, because both those tonges wer as verue bulgare as ours. And yet shoulde there by this reason also, not onely the scrypture be kepte out of oure tong, but ouer that, shoulde the reading therof be forboden, both al such ley people and all suche priestes too, as can no moze than theyr grammer, and verue scanty that. All which cōpanye though they can vnderstande the wordes, be yet as farre from the perceiuing of the sentece in harde and doubtfull tertes, as were our weomen if the scrypture were translated to oure own language. How

No good thing ought to be put a waye because of the misdele thereof.

be it of trouth seldome hath it been seen that any secte of heretikes hath begōne of suche vnlearned folke as nothyng could elles but the language wherein they reade the scrypture: but there hathe alway comonly these sectes spzongen of the pryde of such folke, as had with the knowledge of y tōg, some high perswasion in themselfe of their owne learning beside. To whose authoritie some other folke haue sone after, parte of malice, parte of symplenesse, and muche parte of pleasure and delighte in new fangle nesse fallen in, and encreased the facti on. But y head hath ener comonly been epyther some proude learned man, or at the least beside y language some proude sinaterer in learning. So y if we shoulde for feare of heretikes that might hap to growe thereby, kepe the scrypture out of any tōg, or out of vnlearned mens hādes we shoulde for like feare be fayne to kepe it out of al tōges, & out of vnlearned mens handes to, and wot not why we mighte trust therewith. Wherfore ther is as me thinketh no remedie but if any god thig shall goe forward some what must nedes be aduentured. And some folke will not saye to be naughte. Agaynst which thinges prouision must bee made, that as muche good maye growe, and as little harme come as canne bee deupsed, and not to kepe the whole commoditie from any hole people, because of harme that by their owne foly and faulte may come to some part, as though a lewde surgion woulde cutte of the legge by the auee to kepe the toe from the gout, or cut of a mans head by the shoulders to kepe him from the tothe ache. There is no treatice of scrypture so hard but y a god vertuous man or woman cyther, shal somewhat find therein that shal deuyse and encrease their deuotion, besydes this that euerye preachinge shall be the moze pleasant and fruitefull vnto the whan they haue in their mind the place of scrypture that they shall there heare expownd. For though it bee as it is in dede, great wisdom for a preacher to vse discrecion in hys preachinge and to haue a respecte vnto the qualities and capacities of his audiance, yet letteth y nothyng, but that the whole audiance maye without harme haue read & haue readye the scrypture in mynde, that he shall in hys preachinge declare and expowne. For no route is there, but that god & his helpe spirite hath so prudently tempered theyr speche thozowe the whole

A commadment oughte not to be keppe backe for the harme that may come of it.

A preacher shal vse discrecion in his preachinge and to haue a respecte vnto the qualities and capacities of his audiance.

**A** whole cozps of scripture, that euery mā may take good therby & no man harme, but he that wil in the study therof leane proudly to the soly of hys own wit. For albeit that Chryſt did ſpeake to the people in parables, and expoyned them ſecretly to hys eſpeciall diſciples, & ſometyme ſo bare to tell ſome thynges to the alſo, becauſe they were not as yet habile to heare them: and the apoſtles in lyke wyſe dydde ſometyme ſpare to ſpeake to ſome people the thynges that they dydde not let playnly to ſpeake to ſome other, yet letteſh all thys nothing the tranſlation of the ſcripture into our own tong

**B** no more than in the latine. For it is no cauſe to kepe the cozps of ſcripture out of the handes of anye chriſten people ſo many peres faſtly confirmed in fayth, becauſe Chryſt & hys apoſtles vſed ſuche prouiſion in their utterance of ſo ſtraſe and vnherd miſeries, either vnto Jewes, Paynims, or newly chriſtened ſolk, except we would ſay that all the expoſitions which Chryſt made himſelf vpon hys owne parables vnto hys ſecret ſeruauntes and diſciples withdrawen fro the people, ſhoulde nowe at thys day be kept in lyke wyſe from the comons, and no man ſuffred to reade or heare them,

**C** but thoſe that in hys church represent the ſtate & office of hys apoſtles, whiche ther will I (wote well) no wyſe manne ſay, conſiderpng ȳ thoſe thynges which were than comonly moſt kept from the people, be now moſt neceſſary for ȳ people to knowe. As it well appeareth by al ſuch thynges in effect as our ſauour at ȳ tyme taught his apoſtles a part. Wherof I would not for my mynde withhold the profite that one good deuoute vnlearned ley man might take by the reading, not for the harme that an hundred heretikes would fall in by theyr own wilful abuſion, no more than oure ſauour letted for the weale of ſuche as would bee with hys grace of hys little choſen flock to come into thys worlde and be *lapis offenſionis & petra ſcandali*, the ſtone of ſtumbling and the ſtone of falling, and ruine to all the wilful wretches in the worlde beſide. Finally me thynketh that the conſtitucio prouincial of whiche we ſpake right now, hath determined thys queſtion alreadye. For whan the cleargie therein agreed that the engliſhe bybles ſhould remayne whiche were tranſlated afore Wickliſſes dayes, they conſequently dydde agree that to haue the byble in engliſhe was none hurte. And in that they

ſo bare any new tranſlation to be read till it wer approued by the biſhoppes: it appeareth well therby that theyr intent was that the byſhop ſhould approue it if he found it faultleſſe, and alſo of reaſon amend it where it wer faultye but if the manne wer an heretike that made it, or the faultes ſuch and ſo many, as it were more eth to make it all newe than mend it. As it happed for bothe poyntes in the tranſlation of Tyndall. Now if it ſo be that it woulde happely be thought not a thyng metely to be aduentured to ſet all on a fluthe at ones, and baſte raſhlye out holpe ſcripture in euerye letwede ſelowes teeth: yet thynketh me ther might ſuch a moderacion be taken therein, as neither good verteous ley folke ſhoulde lacke it, nor rude and raſhe byapnes abuſe it. For it might be w̄ diligence well and truelye tranſlated by ſome good catholike and well learned man, or by dyuers diuiding the labour among them, and after conſerring theyr ſeueral parties together eche with other. And after that might the worke be allowed and approued by the ordinaries, and by theyr authorities ſo put vnto p̄ſent, as all the copies ſhould come whole vnto the biſhoppes hande. Which he may after his diſcretion and wiſedom deſtuer to ſuch as he perceiueth honeſt, ſad, & verteous, with a good monicion & fatherly couſell to vſe it reuerently with humble heart & lowly mind, rather ſekpng therein occaſion of deuocion than of deſpicion. And prouiding as much as may be, that the boke be after ȳ deceaſe of the partie brought again & reuerently reſtozed vnto ȳ ordinare. So that as nere as maye be deuiled, no man haue it but of ȳ ordinaries hande, & by hym thought & reputed for ſuch, as ſhal be likly to vſe it to gods honor & merite of his own ſoule. Among whō if any be proued after to haue abuſed it, thā ȳ vſe therof to be ſo bare him, eyther for euer, or till he be warē wyſer. By our lady & your fr̄d this way miſliketh not me. But who ſhould ſette the price of the boke: For ſoth & I that reke I a thing of litle force. For neither wer it a great matter for any man in maner to giue a grote or twain aboute the mene price for a boke of ſo greate profite, nor for the biſhoppe to geue them all free, wherin he myght ſerue his dyoces with the coſt of .x. li. I thynke or .xx. markes. Which ſumme, I dare ſaye there is no biſhop but he wold be glad to beſtow about a thing ȳ might do his hole dyoces ſo ſpe

Good counſell

**A** so special a pleasure w<sup>ch</sup> such a spirituall profit. W<sup>ch</sup> my trowth q<sup>ue</sup> he yet wene I y<sup>e</sup> p<sup>er</sup>ple wou<sup>ld</sup> grudge to haue it on this wise deiuered th<sup>at</sup> at y<sup>e</sup> bishops hande, & had leuer pay for it to y<sup>e</sup> priester, th<sup>an</sup> haue it of the byshop free. It might so happen w<sup>ch</sup> some q<sup>ue</sup> I. But yet in myne opinion th<sup>at</sup> wer in that maner moze wilfulnes th<sup>an</sup> wisedom o<sup>r</sup> any good mind in suche as wou<sup>ld</sup> not be conter so to receiue th<sup>at</sup>. And therfoze I wou<sup>ld</sup> think in good faith y<sup>e</sup> it wou<sup>ld</sup> so fortune in few. But fo<sup>r</sup> god the moze dout wou<sup>ld</sup> be, lest they wou<sup>ld</sup> grudge & hold themself soze greued, that wou<sup>ld</sup> require it & wer happely denied it: which I suppose wou<sup>ld</sup> not often happ<sup>e</sup> vnto any honest housholder to be by his discretio<sup>n</sup> reuerently red in his house. But though it wer not taken to euery lewde lad in his own h<sup>an</sup>des to rede a litle rudely wh<sup>er</sup> he list, & than cast the boke at his heeles, o<sup>r</sup> amog<sup>o</sup> other such as himselfe to kepe a quotlibet & a pot parlamet vpo<sup>n</sup>, I trow there wil no wise ma<sup>n</sup> find a faulte therin. We spake right now of y<sup>e</sup> Jewes, among wh<sup>o</sup> y<sup>e</sup> hole peple haue ye say, the scripture in their h<sup>an</sup>ds. And ye thought it no reason y<sup>e</sup> we shou<sup>ld</sup> reken christe melesse wo<sup>r</sup>thy therto than th<sup>at</sup>. Wherin I am as ye see of pour own opinion. But yet wou<sup>ld</sup> god we had y<sup>e</sup> like reuerence to y<sup>e</sup> scripture of god y<sup>e</sup> they haue. Fo<sup>r</sup> I assure you I haue heard very wo<sup>r</sup>thyfull folke say which haue been in their houses, y<sup>e</sup> a man could not hyze a Jewe to sit down vpon his byble of y<sup>e</sup> olde testamēt, but he taketh it w<sup>ch</sup> gret reuerence in h<sup>an</sup>d whan he wil rede, & reuerently layeth it vp agayn whan he hath done. Wheras we (god soz gene vs) take a litle regarde to sit down on our byble w<sup>ch</sup> the old testamēt & the new to. Which homely handling, as it pcedeth of litle reuerēce, so doth it moze & moze engēdre in y<sup>e</sup> mind a negligēce & contēpt of gods holi wo<sup>r</sup>ds. We find also y<sup>e</sup> among y<sup>e</sup> Jewes, though al their whole byble was writē in their bulgare tōg, & those boke therof wherin their lawes wer writē, wer vsuall in euery mans handes, as thinges y<sup>e</sup> God wou<sup>ld</sup> haue cōmonly knowen, repeted, & kept in remēbrance: yet wer ther again certain parts therof which y<sup>e</sup> cōmon peple of y<sup>e</sup> Jewes of old time, both of reuerence & fo<sup>r</sup> the difficltye did fo<sup>r</sup>beare to medle w<sup>ch</sup>. But now sith y<sup>e</sup> veyle of the temple is broken a sunder y<sup>e</sup> diuided among y<sup>e</sup> Jewes, y<sup>e</sup> peple from y<sup>e</sup> sight of y<sup>e</sup> secretes and y<sup>e</sup> god had set his holy spirit to be assistent w<sup>ch</sup> his hole church to teche all ne-

**A pot parlamet.**

**How reuerently the Jewe doeth use the scripture.**

**The veyle of the temple is broken a sunder.**

cessary trowth, though it maye therfoze be y<sup>e</sup> better sustred y<sup>e</sup> no part of holy scripture wer kept out of honest ley mens h<sup>an</sup>des, yet wou<sup>ld</sup> I y<sup>e</sup> no part therof shou<sup>ld</sup> be cōe in theirs, which to their own harme & happely their neybouris to, wou<sup>ld</sup> h<sup>an</sup>dle it ouer homely, & be to bold and busy therw<sup>ch</sup>. And also though holpe scripture be as ye saide whyleere, a medicine fo<sup>r</sup> him y<sup>e</sup> is sick, & soze fo<sup>r</sup> him y<sup>e</sup> is hole: yet sith ther is many a body soze soule sicke y<sup>e</sup> taketh himself fo<sup>r</sup> hole, & in holy scripture is an whole feast of so much diuers byand, that after y<sup>e</sup> affection & state of so<sup>r</sup>dy stomakes, one may take harme by y<sup>e</sup> selfsame that th<sup>at</sup> shall do another good, and sicke folke often haue such a corrupt talage in their talk, y<sup>e</sup> they most like y<sup>e</sup> mete that is most vnholosome fo<sup>r</sup> th<sup>at</sup>, it were not therfoze as me thinketh vnreasonable that y<sup>e</sup> o<sup>r</sup>dinary wh<sup>o</sup> god hath in the dyoces appointed fo<sup>r</sup> y<sup>e</sup> chief phisicid, to discerne betwene y<sup>e</sup> hole & the sicke, & betwene disease & disease, shou<sup>ld</sup> after hys wisdom & discretio<sup>n</sup> appoynt euery body their part, as he shou<sup>ld</sup> pceiue to bee good & holosome fo<sup>r</sup> th<sup>at</sup>. And therfoze as he shou<sup>ld</sup> not sayle to find many a man to wh<sup>o</sup> he might commit all y<sup>e</sup> hole, so to say y<sup>e</sup> trowth I can see none harme therein, though he shou<sup>ld</sup> cōmit vnto some ma<sup>n</sup> the gospel of Mathew, Marke, o<sup>r</sup> Luke, whome he shou<sup>ld</sup> yet fo<sup>r</sup>bydde the gospel of S. John, and suffer some to reade y<sup>e</sup> actes of y<sup>e</sup> apostles, wh<sup>o</sup> he wou<sup>ld</sup> not suffer to medle w<sup>ch</sup> the Apocalips. Manys wer there I thinke y<sup>e</sup> shou<sup>ld</sup> take much profit by saint Pauls epistle ad Ephesios, wherein he geueth good counsaile to euery kind of people, & yet shou<sup>ld</sup> find litle fruit fo<sup>r</sup> their vnderstanding in hys epy<sup>st</sup>le ad Romanos, conteynyng suche hygh dyfficulties as verpe fewe lerned men can very wel attayne. And in likewise wou<sup>ld</sup> it be in diuers other partes of the byble, as well in the olde testamēt as the newe: so that as I say: though the bishop might vnto some ley man betake and commit with god aduise & instruction the hole byble to rede: yet might he to some manne well and with reason strayne the readyng of some parte, and from some busy body the medling with any parte at al, moze than he sh<sup>al</sup> heare in sermons lette out and declared vnto hym, and in lykewise to take the byble away from such folke agayn, as be proued by their blynde presumption to abuse the occasyon of they<sup>r</sup> profite vnto they<sup>r</sup> owne hurte and harme. And thus may

**The epistle to the Romanes conteyneth hygh difficultis.**

¶ May the bilhoppe order the scripture in our handes, with as good reason as the father doeth by his discretion appoynte which of his childre may for hys sadnes kepe a knife to cut his meate, and which shal for his wantones haue his knife taken fro him for cutting of hys syngers. And thus am I bold wout p̄iudice of other mens iudgement, to shew you my mind in this matter, how the scripture might without great perill, & not without great profite, be brought into oure tong, & taken to ley men & women both, not yet meaning therby but ȳ the whole byble might for my minde be suffered to be spred abrode in englische. But if that wer so much doubted, ȳ percase al might there by be letted: then woulde I rather haue bled such moderacion as I speake of, or some such other as wyser men can better deuise. Howbeit, byō that I read late in the yffle that the kinges highnes translated into englisch of his own, which hys grace made in latine, aunsweryng to the letter of Luther: my mind geueth me that his maiestie is of his blessed zeile so mynded to moue thys matter. vnto ȳ p̄elates of the clergie, among whom I haue perceued some of the greatest and of the best of their own mindes well inclinable thereto alreedy, that we ley people shal in this matter ere lōg time passe except the faulte be founde in oure selfe, be well and fully satisfiēd and content. In good fayth quod he, that will in my mynde be very well done. And now am I for my mind in al this matter fully content & satisfiēd. Wel q̄ I, than wil we to diner, & the remenant wil we finishe after diner. And ther to went we to meate.

¶ The end of the thirde booke.

## ¶ The fourth booke.

¶ The. 1. Chapter.

¶ The authoz sheweth wherfore it wer not wel done to suffer Luthers bookes or any other heretikes, to goe abrode & be read among the people, though ther wer some good thinges in the amog the bad.

**W**Hē we had after diner a little paused, your frend & I drewe our self astide into the garden. And there sitting down in an herber, he began to entre farth into the mater, saying that he had wel perceued ȳ not in his coutrey onely, but also in ȳ vniuersitie where he had ben, thers wer that had none euil opinio of Luther, but

thought that his bookes wer by ȳ clergie for bope of malice & euil wil, to the end ȳ folk shold not surely see & perfitly p̄ceue what he saith: or at ȳ least what thing he meaneth by his wordes, which will not appere, they thinke, by a line taken oute in ȳ middes of a lese, but by the diligent consideracion of ȳ hole matter. Without which mē might impute a wrog blame, they saie, to ȳ best wryters ȳ euer wrote in this world. But they think ȳ the clergie wil not haue his bookes read, because ȳ in the ley men may rede ȳ p̄iesses fautes, which was they say, ȳ very cause of ȳ condemnacion. For elles whether he had wryten wel or euil, yet they say hys bookes had ben kept in menues handes & read. For these is they thinke therein, though soe part wer naught, many thinges yet wel said, whers of ther was no reason ȳ men shold lese ȳ pit for ȳ had. And also reason men thinke it wer, ȳ all wer heard ȳ can be said touchyng ȳ truet̄h to be knowē, concerning ȳ matters of our saluaciō, to ȳ entent ȳ all heard & perceiued mē may for their own suretie ȳ better chese & hold ȳ right way. Forsoth q̄ I, if it wer nowe doutful & ambiguous whether the church of Christ wer in the right rule of doctrine or no: than wer it very necessary to geue the al good audience ȳ could & would any thing dispute on either partie for it or against it, to ȳ end that if we wer now in a wrog way, we might leaue it & walk in some better. But now on the other syde, if it so be as in dede it is, ȳ Christs church hath the true doctrine alreedy, & the self same that S. Paule wold not geue an angel of heuē audience to ȳ contrary: what wisdom wer it nowetherin to shewe our selfe so mistrustful & wauerig, that for to see the whether our faith wer false or true, we should geue hearing not to an angel of heuē, but to a fond frere, to an apostate, to an open incessuous lechour, a playne kinnē of ȳ deuill, & a manifest messēger of hel. In which wordes if ye wold happily thinke ȳ I ble my selfe to soze to call him by such odious names, ye must cōsider that he spareth not worthe vntruely & without necessitie in his rayling bookes to call by as euill, them whom hys due tie wer highly to reuerēce, wheras I do betwene vs twain call hi but as himself hath shewed hi in his wryting, in his liuing, & in his mad mariage. And yet I neither doe it, nor wold, wer it not that the matter selfe of reason doeth requyre it. For my parte is it of necessitie to tell how

Gala. 2

Luther is paynted accordyngly.

**A** howe nougth he is, because y<sup>e</sup> the worse the man is, the more madnes wer it for wise men to geue his false fables harkening agaynst goddes vndoubted trowth by his holi spirit taught vnto his church and by suche multitude of miracles, by so muche blood of holpe martirs, by the vertuous liuing of so many blessed confesso<sup>r</sup>s, by the puritie and cleennes of so manye chaste wiewdowes and vndespyled byrgins, by the hole some doctrine of so many holy doctours, and finally by the whole consent and agreement of al christen people thys fisticne hundred yere composed. And therefore not any respecte vnto hys rapling agaynst the clergy, is as some would haue it seme the cause of hys condemnation and suppressyon of hys bookes. For the good menne of the clergie be not so sore grieved with them that to che the faultes of the bad, nor the bad themself be not so tender eared, that for the only talking of their faultes they would banish the bookes that were good in other thinges besyde. For elles could not the bookes of many old holpe fathers haue endured so long, wherin the byces of them that in the clergie be naught, be very behemently rebuked. But the very cause why his bookes be not suffred to be read, is because his heresies be so many, and so abhominable, & the p<sup>r</sup>oues wherewith he pretendeth to make them probable, be so farre from reason and trowth, and so farre agaynst the right vnderstanding of holy scripture, wherof vnder colour of great zeale and affectio he laboureth to destroye the credence & good ble, and finally so farre stretcheth all thyng agaynst good maner and vertue, prouoking the worlde to wrong oppinions of god, and boldnes in sinne and wretchednes, that there can no good, but muche harme growe by the reding. For if ther were the substance good, and of errour or oversight, some cokle among y<sup>e</sup> corn, which might be sifted out and the remnant stand in stede, men woulde haue been content therewith as they be with such other. But now is his not besyent with a few spottes, but with more than halfe venome poisoned the whole wine, and that right rotten of it self. And this doone of purpose and malice, not without an euil spirite in such wise walking with hys woordes, that the contagion therof wer likely to infect a feble soule, as the sauour of a sickenes sore infecteth an whole body. For the trowth is not to be lerned of every mans mouth. For as

The cause why Luthers bookes be not suffred to be readde.

Christe was not content that the deuyll should call hym goddes sonne though it wer true, so is he not content that a deuilles limme as Luther is or Tyndall, should teache hys flocke the trowth, for infecting them with their false deuillish heresies besydes. For lykewyse as the holy scripture of god because of y<sup>e</sup> good spirit that made it, is of his own nature apte to purge & amend the reder, though some that rede it of their inuincible mallice tourne it to their harme, so doe such wytynges as Luthers is, in the making wherof the deuill is of counsayl, and geueth therewith a b<sup>r</sup>eth of hys assillence, though the goodnes of some men may ster the make therof, walking harme lesse with goddes helpe as the prophete sayth vpon the serpent and the cockea tryce, and treading vpon the lyon & the dragon: yet be such wo<sup>r</sup>kes of themselfe alway right vnhole som to medle with, mete and apte to corrupt and infect the reder. For y<sup>e</sup> p<sup>r</sup>ose wherof we rede none other example, than this y<sup>e</sup> we be in had withal, if we consider what good the reding of his bookes hath done in Sarony. And this fynde we more than to muche proued here amog vs, that of .x. that ble to reade hys bookes, ye shal scantly fynde twayne, but that they not onely cast prayer and fasting, and al suche godlye vertues as holy scripture commendeth and the church commaundeth, and vertuous peple haue euer had in gret p<sup>r</sup>ice, but also fall in playn contempte & hatred therof. So that what fruite shoulde growe of the reding ye may some geasse.

The deuill in making of Luthers wo<sup>r</sup>kes was of consayle.

Psalm. 90.

What fruite doth growe of reading Luthers wo<sup>r</sup>kes?

### The. 2. Chapter,

The autho<sup>r</sup> sheweth manye of Luthers heresies to be so abhominable, & some part also so peuis, that the very bare rehearfall is ynough without any ferther despicion therup<sup>o</sup>, to cause anye good manne abhorre them, and to be ashamed also to seme so foolyshe as to holde them. And for a saumple y<sup>e</sup> autho<sup>r</sup> reherseth diuers, wherof some be new set forth by Tyndale in his englishe bookes, worse yet in some parts than his maister Luther is himselfe.



And in good sayth I woulde wene that any good man except some reasonable necessitie shoulde copel him ther to elles would (if he hearde but hys opinions once rehearsed) bee veryp loth to lose hys time in the reading, either of