

☞ To the moſte hygh and

vertuous Princeſſe, MARY by the grace of GOD, quene of
Englande, Spayne, Fraunce, both Sicilles, Ieruſalem, and Ireland, defen-
dour of the fayth, Archeducheffe of Austria, Ducheffe of Burgondy,
Myllayne, and Brabant, Counteſſe of Haſpurge, Flaunders, and
Tyroll, her highneſſe moſte humble and obedient ſubiect,
Wyllyam Raſtell ſeriant at lawe, wiſſeth health,
wealth, honour, and felicitie, worldely and
euerlaſtyngly.



When I conſidered with my ſelfe (moſt
gracious ſoueraigne) what greate elo-
quence, excellent learninge, and morall
vertues, were and be conteyned in the
workes and bookes, that the wyſe and
godlie man, ſir Thomas More knyghte,
ſometyme lorde Chauncellour of Eng-
land (my dere vncl) wrote in the En-
glyſh tonge, ſo many, and ſo well, as no
one Engliſhman (I ſuppoſe) euer wrote
the like, whereby his workes be worthy to be hadde and redde of euerye
Engliſhe man, that is ſtudious or deſirous to know and learne, not onelye
the eloquence and propertie of the Engliſh tonge, but alſo the trewe do-
ctryne of Chriſtes catholike fayth, the confutacion of deteſtable hereſyes,
or the godly morall vertues that appertaine to the framinge and four-
minge of mennes maners and conſciences, to liue a vertuous and deuout
chriſten life, and when I further conſidered, that thoſe workes of his
were not yet all imprinted, and thoſe that were imprinted, were in ſeue-
rall volumes and bokes, whereby it were likely, that aſwell thoſe bokes
of his that were already abrode in print, as thoſe y were yet vnprinted,
ſhould in time percaſe periſh and vtterly vaniſh away (to the great loſſe
and detriment of many) vnleſſe they were gathered together and printed
in one whole volume, for theſe cauſes (my moſt gracious liege Lady) I dyd
diligently collect and gather together, as many of thoſe his workes, bokes,
letters, and other writinges, printed and vnprinted in y Engliſh tonge, as
I could come by, and the ſame (certain yeres in the euil world paſt, keeping
in my handes, very ſurely and ſafely) now lately haue cauſed to be imprim

ted in this one volume, to thintent, not onely that euery man ſhall now in our dayes, maye haue and take commoditie by them, but also that they may be preſerued for the profit likewiſe of our poſteritie. Which workes who ſo will take paines diligently and aduiſedly to peruſe and rede, ſhall therby ſhortly attain gret knowledge, aſwel for the increſing of al kindes of godly vertues and holy liuinge, as for the confirming of his owne faith, and eſchuing and confuting of all peruerſe opinions, falſe doctrine, and de uillyſhe hereſies, if he be not vtterly deſtitute of Gods grace, and blinded both with obſtinate and ſtubburne malice, and alſo with proude and arrogant preſumptiō. And this volume thus finiſhed the laſt day of Aprill in this yeare of oure Lorde G O D. 1557. I youre graces humble obediēte and faithfull ſubiect, do dedicate vnto your moſt excellent maieſtie, as to that perſon, to whom ſpecially of all worldelye creatures, I truſte this boke ſhalbe moſte aꝑceptable, both for that (I thinke) that it beinge red of many, as it is likely to be, ſhall much helpe forwarde youre Maieſties moſt godly purpoſe, in purging this youre realme of all wicked hereſies, (which are, thankes be to almighty God, thorowe his great goodnes and your Maieſties meanes, very much abated, and as I truſt, if it may pleaſe god to graunt your highnes lōg to reigne ouer vs, which I beſeche him of his moſt mercifull goodnes to do, in time ſhalbe clearly extinct) and for that alſo that ſyr Thomas More (the aucthor of theſe workes) whyle he lyued, dyd beare towarde your highneſſe a ſpeciall zeale, an entier affection, and reuerent deuocion: and on thother ſyde lyke wyſe your grace (as it is well knowen) had towarde him in his life time, a beneuolent mynde and ſynguler fauoure, not onely for his great learnynge, but alſo for his moch more vertue. And I am fully perſwaded, ſ your highnes good affectiō towarde him, is no whyt mynyſhed now after his death, but rather by his worthy workes and godly ende more and more encreaſed, who now (beyng with almyghtie G O D, and lyuinge in heauen with hym) with mucche greater zeale and deuocion towarde your maieſtie, than he had whyle he lyued here in earth, ceaſeth not to praye to God for the kinges maieſtie, for your hyghneſſe, your ſubiectes, your realmes, and domynions, and for the common welth, and catholyke religion of the ſame, and for all chriſten realmes alſo. And this cōmodious and profytable boke thus beyng dedicated vnto your hyghnes, I your obedient ſubiect moſt humblye praye and beſeche your maieſtie, to be the patrone and defendour of the ſame, wherby I am well aſſured, it ſhall mucche the rather, be ioyouſly embraced and had in eſtymacion of all trewe Englyſhe hartes.