

Dialogue Concerning Tyndale Intro-1.3

THE FIRST BOOK

INTRODUCTORY

ONE BUSINESS BEGETTETH ANOTHER

It is an old said saw that one business begetteth and bringeth forth another. Which proverb as it happeth I find very true by myself, which have been fain by occasion, first of one business, after to take the second, and upon the second now to take the third. For whereas a right worshipful friend of mine sent once unto me a secret sure friend of his with certain credence to be declared unto me touching many such matters, as being indeed very certain and out of doubt, [which] be nevertheless of late by lewd people put in question, the specialities whereof do so far forth in the first chapter of this book appear, that we shall here need no rehearsal thereof, I thought it, first, enough to tell the messenger my mind by mouth, accounting that after our communication ended I should never need further business therein. But after that the messenger was departed, and I felt my stomach well eased in that I reckoned all my labour done, bethinking myself a little while thereon, my business that I took for finished I found very far from that point and little more than begun. For when I considered what the matters were, and how many great things had been treated between the messenger and me, and in what manner fashion, albeit I mistrusted not his good will and very well trusted his wit (his learning well serving him to the perceiving and reporting of our communication), yet finding our treaty so diverse and so long, and sometimes suchwise intricate that myself could not without labour call it orderly to mind, methought I had not well done, without writing, to trust his only memory, namely, since some parts of the matter be such of themselves as rather need to be attentively ⁊ read and advised than lightly ⁊ heard and passed over. And over this I considered that though I nothing suspect the messenger, as in good faith I do not, and to say the truth, am of myself so little mistrusting that he were like very plainly to show himself naught, whom I should take for bad: yet, since no man can look into another's breast,

DEEM THE BEST

as it is therefore well done to deem the best, so were it not much amiss in such wise to provide for the worst, as (if a man happen to be worse than we take him for) our good opinion turns us to none harm. For this cause methought, that for the more surety, my part were to send our communication to my said friend in writing, whereby, if it had happed that his messenger had (for any sinister favour borne toward the wrong side) purposely mangled the matter, his master should not only know the truth, but also have occasion the better to beware of his messenger, which else might hap to hurt while he were mistaken for good. Now when I had upon this deliberation taken with myself, written all the matter and sent it to my friend, then had I, methought, all done and my mind full set at rest. But that rest rested not long; for soon after it was showed me that of all my writings were written diverse copies, and one also carried over the sea, where, when I remembered what a shrewd sort of our apostates are assembled (part run out of religion, and all run out of the right faith), methought great peril might arise, if some of that

company (which are confederated^s and conspired together in the sowing and setting forth of Luther's pestilent heresies in this realm) should maliciously change my words to the worse, and so put in print my book, framed after their fantasies, which when I would afterwards reprove and show the difference, I might peradventure seem, for the colour of my cause, to have amended mine own upon the sight of theirs. For eschewing whereof I am now driven, as I say, to this third business of publishing and putting my book in print myself: whereby their enterprise (if they should any such intend) shall, I trust, be prevented and frustrate. And this have I done, not all of my own heed, but after the counsel of others more than one, whose advice and counsel for their wisdom and learning I asked in that behalf, and which have at my request vouchsafed to read over the book ere I did put it forth. For albeit that I dare be somewhat bold to commune^e in familiar manner with such as for their fantasies like to ask me of such matters any question, according to the counsel of St. Peter, bidding us be ready to give a reckoning and show a reasonable cause to every man of the faith and hope that we have, yet to make and put forth any book (wherein were treated any such things as touch our faith) would I not presume but if better learned than myself, should think it either profitable or, at the leastwise, harmless. To whose examination and judgment, I did the more studiously submit this work, for two things in special, among divers other; the one for the liberal allegations of the messenger for the wrong part so laid out at large that of myself I stood half in a doubt whether it were convenient to rehearse the words of any man so homely, and in manner sometime unreverently spoken against God's holy hallows^e and their reverent memories; the other was certain tales and merry words which he mingled with his matter, and some such on mine own part among, as occasion fell in communication. In which albeit I saw no harm, yet somewhat doubted I lest they should unto sad men seem over light and wanton for the weight and gravity of such an earnest matter. Wherefore in these two points though I had already seen some ensamples of right holy men which, in their books answering to the objections of heretics in their time, have not letted to rehearse the very formal words of them whose writings they made answer to, being sometime of such manner and sort as a good man would not well bear, and have not also letted to write a merry word in a right earnest work, of which two things I could out of godly men's books and holy saints' works gather a good sort; yet in mine own work I determined that I would nothing allow nor defend that the judgment of other virtuous and cunning men would in any wise mislike. And therefore, after that such had read it and severally said their advice, I found, as it often happeth, that something which one wise and well learned man would have out, twain of like wisdom and learning specially would have in, neither side lacking good and probable reasons for their part. Wherefore, since it became not me to be judge over the judgment of them whom I took and chose for my judges—being such of themselves as hard it were for any man to say which of them before the other he could in erudition, wit, or prudence

LEAN TO THE MORE PART

anything prefer—I could no further go but lean to the more part; which I so far forth have followed, that likewise as I divers things put out or changed by their good advice and counsel, so let I nothing stand in this book but such as twain advised me specially to let stand against any one that any doubt moved me to the contrary.

And thus much have I thought necessary for my declaration and excuse to advertise you all that shall happen to read this rude, simple work—praying you of patience and pardon, whom God of His especial grace grant as much profit in the reading as my poor heart hath meant you and intended in the making.

THE FIRST CHAPTER

The letter of credence sent from his friend by a trusty secret messenger. With the letter of the author answering the same. The declaration of the credence by the mouth of the Messenger whereupon the matter of all the whole work dependeth.

THE LETTER OF CREDESCENCE

MASTER CHANCELLOR,⁷

As heartily as I possibly can, I recommend me to you, not without a thousand thanks for your good company, when we were last together. In which forasmuch as it liked you to spend some of your time with me in familiar communication, whereof some part I trust so to remember as myself shall be the better and some other never the worse, which shall have cause and have already to give you great thanks therefore, I am bold at this time to send you my special secret friend, this bearer, to break with you somewhat further, partly of the same matters, partly of some other, such as are happed there since, whereof great speech and rumour runneth here, whereby ye shall have occasion more at length (if your leisure will serve) to touch certain doubts, moved since, of the matters treated between us before, wherein, were it not for your other business I would be bold on your goodness to desire you to take good time with him. And yet nevertheless do require you heartily, as your leisure will serve you, to satisfy him at the full.

For he shall (how long soever he tarry therefore) give attendance unto you days and hours, as you may spare him time, which cannot in these things be but well bestowed, considering that the matters be such,

IN MATTERS CONCERNING GOD, SET WORLDLY BUSINESS ASIDE

and so touching to God, as they were well worthy to set worldly business aside, specially in such need. For I assure you, some folk here talk very strangely of the things that he shall move you; not only for such words as they tell, that [are] from thence, but also most specially through the occasion of some letters lewdly written hither out of London by a priest or two, whom they take here for honest. But whatsoever any man tell or write I shall, for the confidence and trust that I have in you, surely take and tell forth for the very truth whatsoever ye shall affirm unto my friend, whom I send unto you not so much because I may not come myself (howbeit therefore too) as for because I long to have him talk with you. To whom, whatsoever you say, reckon it said to myself, not only for his truth and secretness, but also for his memory, with whom to commune I trust shall not mislike you. For either mine affection blindeth me, or ye shall find him wise, and as others say, that can better judge it than I, more than meanly learned, with one thing added wherewith ye be wont well to be content, a very merry wit. He is of nature nothing tongue-tied. And I have in these matters bidden him be bold, without any straining of courtesy—whereof the ceremonies in disputation marreth much of the matter while one studieth more how he may behave him than what he shall say. I have, I say, therefore bidden him more to mind his matter than his courtesy, and freely to lay forth not only what he thinketh, but also what him list, giving no foot in disputing unto your authority but if he be borne back with reason. Thus may ye

see I am bold on your goodness to put you to labour and business and send one to face you in your own house. But so much am I bolder for that in such challenges I know you for a ready and sure defender. And of such labour your wisdom well seeth that God is the rewarder, Who long preserve you and all yours.

THE LETTER OF THE AUTHOR SENT WITH THE BOOK

RIGHT WORSHIPFUL SIR,

After most hearty recommendation, albeit that of late I sent you my poor mind by the mouth of your trusty friend to whom you desired me by your letters to give no less credence than to yourself concerning all such things as he brake of, and communed with me in your behalf (and that for the confidence that you have in him, the wit and learning that I found in him, and honesty, that I so much the more think him to be of, in that I perceive you being of such wisdom and virtue to have him in so special trust), I neither do nor can believe the contrary but that he hath of all our communication made you faithfully plain and full report. Yet since I suppose in myself, that if we had been able conveniently to [have] come together, ye would rather have chosen to have heard my mind of my own mouth than by the mean of another, I have since in these few days, in which I have been at home, put the matter in writing, to the end ye may not only hear it by the mouth of your friend, but also (which better is than suddenly once to have it of mine own mouth) read it, if ye list, more often at your best leisure advisedly from mine own pen. Which thing I verily thought myself so much the more bound to do, for that it liked you of your special favour and affection toward me so greatly to regard and esteem my mind and answer in those matters, that no rumour there running or tales in your country told, or letters thither written, nor reasons nor arguments there made to the contrary, should let or withstand but that ye would, as ye wrote, take that thing for undoubted truth that I should, by your friend, ascertain you. And surely, Sir, in this point, ye may make yourself sure, that I shall never willingly deceive your trust. And lest I might hap to do it of oversight unaware, albeit I nothing said unto your friend by mouth but that I was right well informed of the truth, yet forasmuch as I perceived by him that some folk doubted lest many things were laid to the charge not only of that man ye wrote of, but also of Luther himself, otherwise than could be proved, I did so much therein that I was suffered to see and show him as well the books of the one, as the very acts of the court concerning the other, that we might both by so much the more surely warrant you the truth, wherein if ye find any man that yet doubteth, whether he told you, and I write you the truth or not, I shall, if he understand the Latin tongue, find the means at your pleasure, that he shall so see the books himself that, were he never so full of mistrusting, he shall not fail to be fully content and satisfied. And this warrantise will I make you as far forth as concerneth any act done here. But as for things reasoned and disputed between us, the conclusions (them) selves be so sure truths that they be not disputable. But whether the reasons by me made in them be effectual or insufficient (albeit your friend, either for that of truth he thought so, or that of courtesy he said so, accepted them for good) yet without prejudice of the principle matters ye may yourself be judge. And thus I pray you take in good worth the little labour and great goodwill of him whom, in anything that may do you pleasure, ye may to the uttermost of his little power well and boldly command. And thus our Lord send you with my good lady, your bedfellow, and all yours, as heartily well to fare as you would all wish.

Your friend first after your letter read (when I demanded him his credence) showed me that you

had sent him to me, not for any doubt that yourself had in many of those things that he should move unto me, but for the doubt that you perceived in many other, and in some folk plain persuasion to the contrary, whom ye would be glad to answer with the truth, albeit some things he said were also there so talked, that ye wist not well yourself which part ye might believe. For it was there not only spoken, but also thither written by divers honest priests out of London, that the man ye write of ⁊ was of many things borne wrong in hand, and therein so sore handled that he was forced to forswear and abjure certain heresies, and openly put to penance therefore, where he never held any such. And all this done for malice and envy, partly of some freres (against whose abusions he preached) partly for that he preached boldly against the pomp and pride and other inordinate living—that more men speak of than preach of—used in the clergy. And they take for a great token that he should not mean evil, the proof and experience which men have had of him that he lived well and was a good, honest, virtuous man, far from ambition and desire of worldly worship, chaste, humble, and charitable, free and liberal in almsdeeds, and a very goodly preacher, in whose devout sermons the people were greatly edified. And therefore the people say that all this gear is done but only to stop men's mouths, and to put every man to silence that would anything speak of the faults of the clergy. And they think that for no other cause was also burned at Paul's Cross the new testament late translated into English by Master William Huchin, otherwise called Master Tyndale, who was (as men say) well known, before ⁊ he went over the sea, for a man of right good living, studious and well learned in scripture, and in divers places in England was very well liked and did great good with preaching. And men mutter among themselves that the book was not only faultless, but also very well translated; and was devised to be burned because men should not be able to prove that such faults as were at Paul's Cross declared to have been found in it were never found there indeed but untruly surmised. And yet such as they were some men say were no faults at all, if they had been so translated indeed, but blame laid and fault found with things nothing faultworthy, only to deface that holy work to the end that they might seem to have some just cause to burn it—and that for none other intent, but for to keep out of the people's hands all knowledges of Christ his gospel, and of God his law, except so much only as the clergy themselves list now and then to tell us, and that little as it is and seldom showed, yet, as it is feared, not well and truly told, but watered with false glosses, and altered from the truth of the very words and sentence of scripture only for the maintenance of their authority.

And the fear lest this thing should evidently appear to the people, if they were suffered to read the scripture themselves in their own tongue, was (as it is thought) the very cause not only for which the new testament translated by Tyndale was burned, but also that the clergy of this realm hath before this time by a constitution provincial ⁊ prohibited any book of scripture to be translated into the English tongue, fearing men with fire as heretics who so should presume to keep them as though it were a heresy for a christian man to read Christ's gospel.

And surely Sir, quod he, some folk that think this dealing of the clergy to be thus, and good men to be mishandled for declaring the truth, and the scriptures self to be pulled out of the people's hands, lest they should perceive the truth [and] be led in their minds to doubt whether Luther himself (of whose opinions or at the least of whose works all this business began) wrote indeed so evil as he is borne in hand. And many men there be that think he never meant such things. But that because he wrote against the abusions of pardons and spake somewhat liberally against the court of Rome, and generally against the vices of the clergy, therefore he was brought in hatred

and first cited to Rome. And when that for fear of bodily harm with wrong—whereof it would have been too late to look for remedy after, if he had once been burned up before—he durst not come thither, then was he accursed, and his books damned and under great pains forbidden to be read. And that thing done because it should not be knowen what wrong he had, and that he neither meaneth nor sayeth such odious and abominable heresies—as the people be borne in hand to induce them to hatred of him—as it would peradventure appear if his books were suffered to be read. And they say that it were no mastry (mastery) to make it seem that a man should be a heretic if he may be borne in hand that he sayeth the thing which he never said, or peradventure one line taken out among many and misconstrued not suffering the remnant to be seen whereby it might more clearly appear what he meaneth. By which manner of dealing a man, they say, might lay heresies to St. Paul and find a fault in St. John's gospel. And yet they say the worst of all is this that the clergy cease not hereby nor hold themselves content with the condemning of Luther, and forbidding of his books, but further abuse the hatred of his name against every man that is (in preaching of the word of God) anything such as should be, that is, to wit, plain and bold without gloss or flattering, where if they find a man faulty, let them lay his fault to his charge, what needeth to call him a Lutheran? Though Luther were a devil, yet might a man percase say as he sayeth in some things, and say true enough. For never was there heretic, that said all false. Nor the devil himself lied not when he called Christ God's son. ¹⁴ And therefore men think that this name of a Lutheran serveth the clergy for a common cloak of a false crime, that where they lack special matter to charge one with by judgment, they labour to bring him first into the infamy of that name, that compriseth (as they make it seem) a confused heap of heresies, no man can tell what.

And yet in such dealing they wound their own matter another way. For while they defame for Lutherans men that be of known virtue and cunning, what do they thereby but one of the twain, either cause the people (that have for good living and learning those men in great reputation) to think that the clergy for malice and envy doth untruly defame them, or else that Luther's doctrine is good, while so cunning men and good men lean thereto. And therefore it were wisdom not to call them Lutherans, but rather when they teach and hold any such opinions as the people know for Luther's let it either be dissimuled, ¹⁵ or they secretly by fair ways induced to the contrary, if the points that they teach of his be nought. Lest by calling good and cunning men Lutherans, they may peradventure bring themselves in suspicion of malice and envy, and Luther among the people into good opinion, thinking, as they begin to do already, that either Luther said not so evil as is surmised upon him, or else that those things that he saith, as odious as they seem, be good enough indeed.

He said, also, that it seemed unto many men a sore thing and far unreasonable that poor, simple and unlearned men—although they fell into errors and were led out of the right way, by that they leaned to the authority of such men as they believed to be virtuous and cunning—should, instead of teaching, be beaten cruelly with abjurations and open shame, with peril of burning also, if a few false witness shall after such abjuration depose that they have heard him fall in relapse.

Finally, he said that many good and well learned men thought plainly that the clergy seemeth far out of all good order of charity, and that they do contrary to the mildness and merciful mind of their master, and against the ensample of all the old holy fathers, in that they cause for any error or wrong opinion in the faith any man one or other to be put to death. For they say that the old

holy fathers used only to dispute with heretics, teaching them and convicting them by scripture, and not by faggots, and that by that way the faith went well toward, and one heretic so turned did turn many other; whereas now men abhor this cruelty in the church, and they that seemed turned think still the things

OF THE ASHES OF ONE HERETIC SPRINGETH UP MANY

that they dare not say, and of the ashes of one heretic springeth up many, and that now we make the fashion of christendom to seem all turned quite upside down.

For whereas Christ made infidels the persecutors and his christian people the sufferers, we make the christian man the persecutor and the infidels the sufferers; whereby men think that secretly Christ's order yet standeth still, though it be not so taken and so perceived. For the people take it that still those that persecute be the miscreants, and those poor people that suffer it, be, under the false name of heretics, the true believing men and very christian martyrs.

Christ also, they say, would never have any men compelled by force and violence to believe upon his faith, nor would that men should fight for him or his matters. In so far forth that he would not suffer St. Peter to fight for his own self, but reprov'd him for striking Malchus. Nor would not defend himself but healing the ear again of Malchus, his persecutor, which Peter had smitten off, and giving all his holy body to the patient sufferance of all the painful torments that his cruel enemies would put to it, showed us as well by his effectual ensample of his death as by his godly counsel in his life, and after that confirmed by the continual passion and martyrdoms of his holy martyrs, that his will and pleasure is that we should not so much as defend ourself against heretics and infidels were they pagans, Turks or Saracens. And much less, then, should we fight against them and kill them; but that we should persevere in setting forth his faith against miscreants and infidels by such ways as himself began it, (and) keep it and increase it as it was gotten, and that was by patience and sufferance, by which the faith was divulged and spread almost throughout the whole world in a little while—not by war and fighting, which way hath, as they say, well near already lost all that the other way won.

When your friend had thus declared his credence, he desired me both on your behalf and on his own, in such things as were percase not well said, to take them, as they were indeed, the mind of other whom ye would fain answer and satisfy with reason, which ye trusted to be the better able to do by mine answer, and neither the mind nor opinion of you nor him which did and would in all things stand and abide by the faith and belief of Christ's catholic church. But as for such parts of this matter as concerned not any part of our belief, but the dealing of this world, as the justice or injustice of some spiritual persons in the pursuing and condemning men for heretics, or their works for heresies, he thought, he said, as of himself, that men might without any peril of heresy, for their own part, notwithstanding any man's judgment given, yet well and reasonably doubt therein. For though he thought it heresy to think the opinions of any man to be good and catholic which be heresies indeed, yet might a man, he thought, without any peril of heresy doubt whether he were an heretic or no that were by man's judgment condemned for one; since it might well happen that he never held those opinions that were put upon him, but that he was either by false depositions of wrongful witness, or by the error or malice of unjust judges condemned. And that sometime, percase, the ignorance of some judges would condemn for heresy such articles as wiser and better learned would in point of judgment allow for good and catholic, and of the other judgment discern and judge the contrary.

Howbeit he said that ye had in me and my learning so special trust and confidence that in any of all these things whatsoever ye had heard or should hear elsewhere ye were fully determined to give full credence to me, and take for the truth such answers as he should bring you from me, wherein ye right heartily desired me to take some pain that ye might in these matters by his mouth know my mind at large.

After this, ere I made any answer to his words, I demanded him what manner acquaintance was between him and you. And thereupon perceiving him to have your sons at school, enquiring further of him to what faculty he had most given his study, I understood him to have given diligence to the latin tongue. As for other faculties he recked ^u not of. For he told me merrily that Logic he reckoned but babbling, Music to serve for fingers, Arithmetic mete for merchants, Geometry for masons, Astronomy good for no man, and as for Philosophy, the most vanity of all—and that it and Logic had lost all good divinity with the subtleties of their questions and babbling of their disputations, building all upon reason, which rather giveth blindness than any light. For man, he said, hath no light but of holy scripture. And therefore he said that beside the latin tongue, he had been, which I much commend, studious in holy scripture, which was, he said, learning enough for a christian man, with which the apostles held themselves content. And therein he said he laboured not only to can ^v many texts thereof by heart, but also to ensearch the sentence and understanding thereof as far as he might perceive by himself. For as for interpreters, he told me that neither his time would well serve him to read, and also he found so great witness in the text's self, that he could not find in his heart to lose any time in the glosses. And as touching any difficulty, he said that he found by

THE SUREST INTERPRETATION OF SCRIPTURE

experience that the best and surest interpretation was to lay and confer one text with another, which fail not among them well and sufficiently to declare themselves. And this way, he said, that he used, which he found sufficient and surest. For so should it most surely tarry, when it were found out and learned by a man's own labour. And that he said every man was able enough to do with help of God, which never faileth them that faithfully trust in his promise. And he hath promised that if we seek we shall find, ^u and if we knock we shall have it opened to us. And what shall be opened but that book which, as St. John saith in the Apocalypse, ^v is so shut with seven clasps that it cannot be opened but by the lamb, that when he shutteth then can no man open it, and when he openeth it then can no man shut it?

Upon these words and other like, when I considered that your friend was studious of scripture, and although I now have a very good opinion of him nor at that time had not all the contrary, yet, to be plain with you and him both, by reason that he set the matter so well and lustily forward, he put me somewhat in doubt whether he were, as young scholars be sometimes prone to new fantasies, fallen into Luther's sect, and that ye, peradventure, somewhat fearing the same, did of good mind the rather send him to me with such a message for that ye trusted he should be somewhat answered and satisfied by me. I, therefore, thought it not metely in so many matters and weighty to make him an unadvised answer, but with good words welcoming him for the time, pretending lack of leisure for other present business, required him to return on the morrow. Against which time I would so order mine affairs that we would have conference together of all his errand at length. And he in this wise being departed, I began to gather in mind the whole effect as my remembrance would serve me of all that he had purposed.

And because I would have it the more ready at mine eye, so that I might the more fully and effectually answer it, leaving no part untouched in such order as he had purposed it, that is to wit after the manner that I have above rehearsed, I briefly committed it to writing.

THE SECOND CHAPTER

Here summarily is declared what order the author intendeth to treat of the matters purposed unto him. Whereof, because the first was an opinion conceived in some men's heads, that a certain person late abjured of heresy for preaching against pilgrimages, and images, and prayers made to saints, was therein greatly wronged, the author briefly declareth his mind, concerning the confutation of those perilous and pernicious opinions.

On the morrow when he was come again somewhat before seven of the clock—for so I appointed him—taking him with me into my study, and my servants warned, that if any other should happen to desire to speak with me, certain except of whom I gave them knowledge, they should defer them till another leisure, I set him down with me, at a little table. And then I showed unto him, that where he had purposed on your behalf in short words many long things, whereof the rehearsal were loss of time, to him that so well knew them already, I would, all superfluous recapitulation set apart, as briefly as I conveniently could, show him my mind in them all.

And first begin where he began at the abjuration of the man he spoke of. Secondly, would I touch the condemnation and burning of the new testament, translated by Tyndale. Thirdly, somewhat would I speak of Luther, and his sect in general. Fourthly and finally, the thing that he touched last, that is to wit the war and fighting against infidels, with the condemnation of heretics unto death, which two points, himself had combined and knit together.

And, first, as touching the matter of the man's abjuration, where it is reported, that the spirituality did him wrong. And for to make that seem likely, there is laid in them displeasure, malice and envy towards him, for preaching (as ye say, quod I) against their vicious living. And in him is, on the other side, alleged much cunning, virtue, and goodness. I will neither enter into the praise of them, nor into the dispraise of him, wherein standeth nothing the effect of this matter. For if there did, I would not pass over some part thereof so shortly.

But now for this matter, although the whole spirituality—wherein no man doubteth to be many a right virtuous and godly man—were in their living far worse than devils, yet, if they did that man no wrong, there hath for this matter no man against them any cause to complain. And over this, if that man were in all his other living as innocent as a saint, yet if he were infected and faulty in these heresies, he had then in this matter no wrong. And yet beside all this, if he not only were in all other things very virtuous, but also were in all these heresies whereof he was detected utterly clean and faultless, yet if it were by sufficient witness—were they never so false indeed, seeming honest and likely to say true—proved in open court that he was faulty therein, albeit in such case his witnesses had wronged him, yet had his judges done him but right. And therefore letting pass, as I say, the praise or dispraise of either his judges or him, as things impertinent to the point, I

will show you that they not only did him no wrong, but also showed him in my mind the greatest favour, and used towards him the most charitable mercy that ever I wist used to any man in such case. And first, as for any wrong that his judges did him, I marvel me much wherein they that report it could assign it. For if any were done him, it must needs have been in one of the two things, either in that he was untruly judged to have preached such articles as he was detected of, where he preached none such indeed; or else in that some such articles as he preached, were judged and condemned for heresies, where they were none indeed. Except that any man would say that though he were proved and convicted of heresy, yet he should have been put to no penance at all, or else to no such as he was. And of that point, if any man so think, I shall speak in the fourth part where we shall touch in general the order that the church taketh in the condemnation of heretics. But as for the other points; first, if any priest wrote out of London into your country that any such article of his preaching was by his judges declared for heresy, as were indeed good and not against the faith of Christ's church, let him name what article. And either ye shall find that he shall name you such as the man was not charged withal, or else shall you find that such as he shall name you were such indeed as yourself shall perceive for heresies at your ears. For the articles wherewith he was charged were

THREE MANIFEST HERISIES

that we should do no worship to any images, nor pray to any saints, or go on pilgrimages—which things, I suppose, every good christian man will agree for heresies. And therefore we shall let that point pass, and so resort to the second, to see whether it were well proved that he preached them or no.

Sir, quod your friend, I would for my part well agree them for heresies; but yet have I heard some ere *this that would not do so. And therefore when we call them heresies, it were well done to tell why; since some men would I ween, if they might be heard, stiffly say nay, which now hold their peace and bear themselves full coldly that would take the matter more hot save for burning of their lips.

Now forsooth, quod I, whosoever will say that these be no heresies, he shall not have me to dispute it, which have no cunning in such matters,

WHAT BECOMETH A LAYMAN

but as it best becometh a layman to do in all things, lean and cleave to the common faith, and belief of Christ's church. And thereby do I plainly know it for an heresy, if an heresy be a sect and a side way, taken by any part of such as be baptized, and bear the name of christian men, from the common faith, and belief of the whole church beside. For this am I very sure and perceive it well, not only by experience of mine own time and the places where myself hath been, with common report of other honest men from all other places of christendom, but by books also and remembrances left of long time, with writing of the old holy fathers and now saints in heaven, that from the apostles time hitherto this manner hath been used, taught and allowed and the contrary commonly condemned through the whole flock of all good christian people.

And as touching such texts, as these heretics allege against the worshipping of images, praying to saints, and going on pilgrimages, as they lay the law given to the Jews: *Non facies tibi sculptile*, Thou shalt carve thee none image (Apoc. 20), and the Psalm (II3), *In exitu Israel de Agypto*, and *Soli deo honor et gloria*, Only to God be honor and glory (I Tim. I), and *Maledictus qui confidit*

in homine, Accursed is he that putteth his trust in man (Hier. 17), with many such other like, which heretics have of old ever barked against Christ's catholic church, very sure am I that St. Austin, St. Jerome, St. Basil, St. Gregory, with so many a godly cunning man, as hath been in Christ's church from the beginning hitherto, understood those texts as well as did those heretics. Namely, having as good wits, being far better learned, using in study more diligence, being an heap to an handful, and, which most is of all, having—as God by many miracles beareth witness—beside their learning, the light and clearness of His especial grace, by which they were inwardly taught of his only spirit to perceive that the words spoken in the old law to the Jews, people prone to idolatry—and yet not to all them either; for the priests then had the images of the angel cherubim in the secret place of the temple—should have no place to forbid images among his christian flock, where his pleasure would be to have the image of his blessed body hanging on his holy cross had in honour and reverent remembrance,

KING ABGARUS

where he would vouchsafe to send unto the king Abgarus, the image of

THE VERNACLE

his own face, where he liked to leave the holy vernacle, the express image also of his blessed visage, as a token to remain in honour among such as loved him from the time of his bitter passion hitherto. Which, as it was by the miracle of his blessed holy hand expressed and left in the sudary, so hath it been by like miracle in the thin corruptible cloth kept and preserved uncorrupted this fifteen hundred year, fresh and well perceived, to the inward comfort, spiritual rejoicing, and great increase of fervour and devotion in the hearts of good christian people.

Christ also taught his holy evangelist St. Luke to have another manner mind towards images than have these heretics, when he put in his mind to counterfeit and express in a table the lovely visage of our blessed

S. AMPHIBALUS

lady his mother. He taught also St. Amphibalus, the master and teacher

S. ALBANUS

of the holy first martyr of England St. Alban, to bear about and worship the crucifix. Who shewed also St. Alban himself in a vision the image of the crucifix: but God which thing wrought in that holy man so strongly, that he with few words of St. Amphibalus, at the sight of the blessed image which our Lord had before shewn him in his sleep, was clean turned to christendom. And in the worshipping of the same image was taken and brought forth to judgment, and afterwards to martyrdom.

THE NAME OF JESUS

I would also fain wit whether these heretics will be content that the blessed name of Jesus be had in honour and reverence or not. ²¹ If not, then need we no more to show what wretches they be, which dare despise that holy name the devil trembleth to hear of. And on the other side, if they agree that the name of Jesus is to be revered and had in honour, then since that name of Jesus is nothing else but a word which by writing or by voice representeth unto the hearer the person of our Saviour Christ, fain would I wit of these heretics if they give honour to the name of our Lord, which name is but an image representing his person to man's mind and imagination, why and with what reason can they despise a figure of him carved or painted, which representeth him and his acts, far more plain and more expressly?

Sir, quod he, as touching the coste done upon the ark, and the temple, and the priest's apparel by

the commandment of God, there is a proper book and a very contemplative written in English, and entitled the *Image of love*, which was made as it seemeth by some very virtuous man contemplative and well learned, in which book the reason of yours is not only well answered, but also turned again against you. For therein that good holy man layeth sore against these carved and painted images, giving them little praise, and specially least commending such as be most costly, curiously, and most workmanly wrought. And he showeth full well that

IMAGES LAYMEN'S BOOKS

images be but laymen's books, ²² and therefore that religious men and folk of more perfect life, and more instructed in spiritual wisdom, should let all such dead images pass, and labour only for the lively quick image of love and charity. And very sore he speaketh there against all this costly ornament of the church, whereof the money were, as he saith, better bestowed upon poor folk. And he showeth that the saints and holy doctors of old time would suffer no such superfluity in the paramentes ²³ of the church, but only see that they were clean and pure, and not costly. And therefore he saith that in their time they had treen ²⁴ chalices and golden priests, and now have we golden chalices and treen priests.

Surely, quod I, that book have I seen, whereof who was the maker I know not, but the man might peradventure mean well and run up so high in his contemplation spiritual, that while he thought he sat in God Almighty his bosom up on high in heaven, he contemned and set at nought all earthly things, and all temporal service done to God here beneath among poor silly men in earth.

And verily of his intent and purpose I will not much meddle. For a right good man may hap at a time, in a fervent indiscreet, to say something and write it too, which when he considereth after more advisedly, he would be very fain to change. But this dare I be bold to say, that his words go somewhat further than he is able to defend. For I doubt it not but that in the days of those holy saints, ornaments in churches of Christ were not only pure and clean, but also very costly. And it might well be, and so have I read that it hath been, in some great dearth of corn and famine of people, that some good holy bishops have relieved poor people with the sale of some of the vessels and plate of the church. But I suppose he shall never find, except in some such great urgent cause chancing upon some occasion, that ever those holy men refused to have God served in his churches with the best and most precious of such metals as his goodness giveth unto man, of which it is very right and good reason that man serve him again with the best, and not do as Cain did, keep all that aught is for himself, and serve his master and his maker with the worst. ²⁵ And because he nameth St. Ambrose, I ween there will no man doubt of the Emperor Theodosius, a man so devout unto God as he was, that he would be served himself in cups of gold, and suffer his and our saviour Christ in the church of Milan where himself resorted and St. Ambrose was bishop, to be served in chalices of tree. Nor verily I can scant believe that any christian people, all were they very poor, would at this day suffer the precious blood of our Lord to be consecrate and received in tree, where it should cleave to the chalice and sink in and not be clean received out by the priest. But that word I ween he set in for the pleasure that he had in that proper comparison between treen chalices and golden priests of old and now golden chalices and treen priests. But of truth I think he saith truth, that the chalices were made of treen when the priests were made of gold, and shall find that there were of old time many more chalices made of gold than he findeth now priests made of tree. If he look well in Platina, *de vitis pontificum*, I ween he shall well perceive that Christ was served with silver and gold in the vessels utensils and ornaments of his church, long time or St. Ambrose was born, or the eldest of those old doctors he

speaks of. And I dare make me bold to warrant that they themselves used not to say mass in chalices of tree. And methinketh that the pleasure of God cannot in this point better appear, than by his own words written in holy scripture, as in the ark of the testament and the ornaments of the priest, and the cost and riches bestowed about the temple of Solomon.

Marry, quod he, that is the thing that is in the book of the images of love, as I was about to tell you, very well and clearly answered.

In what wise, quod I. Marry, quod he, for first when the ark was made, there were no poor men to bestow that wealth upon. For while the children of Israel were in desert * they were fed with manna, and their clothes never wasted nor were the worse in all that forty year. And as for the riches of the temple made by Solomon (they) could make no matter to the people, for there was then no poor folk neither. For as the very words of the scripture showeth there was in his days so great plenty of gold, * that silver was not set by.

Forsooth, quod I, the man maketh a proper answer for the ark. But I would fain wit of him though there were no poor folk among them at the time of the making, was there never none among them after the time of the keeping. I ween he will not say nay. And then if there were, since God would by his reason rather have commanded to give that gold to poor men if there had been such then to make it in the ark, he would by the same reason after, when there were such, have commanded then to break it again and give it them rather than to keep it in the ark. And as for the riches bestowed upon the temple of Solomon, where he said that there were then no poor men because there were so great plenty of gold, that silver was not set by, every man may well wit, that if every man had in his time been rich, he had not had so many workmen. But weeneth he that because there was in his days so much gold, that therefore all the people had enough thereof? I rather fear me that because he was so rich his people were the poorer. For albeit he had great gifts sent him, and also used not his own people of the children of Israel for bondmen and slaves, yet it is likely that he set great and sore impositions upon them, whereby he gathered great riches, and they grew in great poverty. And if any man think the contrary, let him then look after Solomon's death in the beginning of his son's reign, whether all the people did not so sore complain thereof, that—because they could not get a promise of amendment, as sad men advised the king, but, by the lewd counsel of young lads * that then led the young king to folly, were with a proud rigorous answer put in fear of worse—of the twelve tribes of Israel ten fell clearly from him, and left him no more but twain. And therefore, by the riches and royalty of the prince, to prove that there was no poor people in his realm, is a very poor proof. For so may it hap that the prince may be most rich when his people be most poor, and the riches of the one causing the poverty of the other, if the people's substance be gathered into the prince's purse. And for conclusion it is little doubt but Solomon might have found poor folk enough to have given his gold unto that he bestowed on the temple of God. And therefore that answer answereth not well the matter.

Well, quod your friend, yet hath that book one answer that assoileth all the whole matter. For, as it is said there, all those things that were used in the old law were but gross and carnal, and were all as a shadow of the law of Christ; and therefore the worshipping of God with gold and silver and such other corporal things ought not to be used among christian people; but leaving all that shadow, we should draw us to the spiritual things, and serve our Lord only in spirit and spiritual

things. For so he saith himself that God, as himself is spiritual, so seeketh he such worshippers as shall worship him in spirit and in truth ²⁹ —that is in faith, hope and charity of heart, not in the hypocrisy and ostentation of outward observance, bodily service, gay and costly ornaments, fair images, goodly song, fleshly fasting, and all the rabble of such unsavoury ceremonies, all which are now gone as a shadow. And our Saviour himself, whose faith is our justification, calleth upon our soul and our good faithful mind and setteth all those carnal things at nought.

The book, quod I, saith not fully so far as ye rehearse, howbeit indeed many other men do. But these men that make themselves so spiritual, God send grace that some evil spirit inspire not to their hearts a devilish device, which, under a cloak of special zeal to spiritual service, go first about to destroy all such devotion, as ever hath hitherto showed itself, and uttered the good affection of the soul by good and holy works unto God's honour wrought with the body. These men be come ³⁰ in to so high point of perfection that they pass all the good men that served God in old time. For as for the good godly man Moses, he thought that to pray not only in mind but with mouth also was a good way. The good king David thought it pleasant to God not only to pray with his mouth but also to sing, and dance too, to God's honour, ³¹ and blamed his foolish wife, which did at that time, as these foolish heretics do now, mocking that bodily service.

Holy St. John the Baptist not only baptised and preached, but also fasted, watched, prayed and wore hair. ³² Christ our Saviour himself, not only prayed in mind, but also with mouth, which kind of prayer these holy spiritual heretics now call lippe labour in mockage. And the fasting which they set at nought, our Saviour himself set so much by, that he continued it forty days ³³ together. Now as for the images which ye call one of the shadows.

Nay, by St. Mary, quod he, I called gay ornaments of the church and such other outward observances and bodily ceremonies, as the *Image of love* calleth them, such things I called, as the book doth, shadows of the old law. But as for images, the book adviseth men either clean let pass and leave off or, if we will needs have any, care not how simple it be made. For as well may the most rude image, and the most simply wrought, put us in mind of Christ, and our Lady, and any other saint, as may the most costly and most curious that any painter or carver can devise.

And verily, to say the truth, as for images they be no shadows of the old law but things therein plainly and dearly forbid, as well in divers other places of scripture as in the text lately remembered by yourself, *Non facies tibi sculptile*, Thou shalt carve thee nor grave thee none image. ³⁴ And by all the whole Psalm, *In exitu Israel de Egypto* ³⁵ it is with great execration and malediction prohibited.

First, quod I, ye may not take those words for such a precise prohibition as should forbid utterly any images to be made. For as I showed you before, they had in the temple the images of cherubim. But it was

WHAT IMAGES WERE PROHIBITED

prohibited to make such images as the Egyptians and other paynims did, that is, to wit, the idols of false gods—for that appeareth in the psalm's self, where he layeth forth the cause of the prohibition, *Quoniam omnes dii gentium daemonia, dominus autem caelos fecit*, For all the gods of the paynims be devils, but our Lord hath made the heavens. Doth it not by these words well appear what images were in that psalm forbidden, that is, to wit, the images and idols only of

those paynim gods? For else, I pray you tell me what reason were this, if one would say. "Make none image of Christ, nor of our Lady; nor of any christian saint in no wise, for all the gods of the paynims be but devils?" Were not this a wise reason well concluded?

There is also in these prohibitions intended that no man shall worship any image as God. For if he should, then should he fall in the contempt of the precept of God by which we be commanded to worship only one God, and forbidden to worship any false gods. And therefore where it is written, *non facies tibi sculptile*, thou shalt grave thee none image, it goeth next before, *Non habes deos alienos*, thou shalt have no false gods. ³⁶ And it is also written, *nolite converti ad idoles neque deos conflatiles facietis vobis*, turn not to idols, nor make not for yourself any gods of metal cast in a mould. ³⁷ And where it is forbidden to worship any image, there is the word that signifieth the honour and service only pertaining to God. And therefore neither may we do worship to any image and idol of any false paynim, with honour and service done as to God may we neither worship image of any saint, nor yet the saint itself. But I suppose neither scripture nor natural reason doth forbid that a man may

HOW IMAGES MAY BE REVERENCED

do some reverence to an image, not fixing his final intent in the image, but referring it further to the honour of the person that the image representeth, since that in such reverence done unto the image there is none honour withdrawn neither from God nor good man, but both the saint honoured in his image and God in his saint. When a mean man and an ambassador to a great king hath much honour done him, to whom doth that honour redound, to the ambassador or to the king?

When a man, at the receipt of his prince's letter, putteth off his cap and kisseth it, doth he this reverence to the paper or to his prince?

In good faith, to say the truth, these heretics rather trifle than reason in this matter. For where they say that images be but laymen's books, they cannot yet say nay but that they be necessary if they were but so. Howbeit methinketh that they be good books, both for laymen and for the learned too. For as I somewhat said unto you before, all the words that be either written or spoken be but images representing the things that the writer or speaker conceiveth in his mind: likewise as the figure of the thing framed with imagination, and so conceived in the mind, is but an image representing the very thing itself that a man thinketh of. As for ensample, if I tell you a tale of my good friend your master, the imagination that I have of him in my mind, is not your master himself but an image that representeth him. And when I name you him, his name is neither himself nor yet the figure of him, which figure is in my imagination, but only an image representing to you the imagination of my mind.

Now if I be too far from you to tell it you, then is the writing not the name itself but an image representing the name. And yet all these names spoken, and all these words written, be no natural signs or images but only made by consent and agreement of men, to betoken and signify such thing, whereas images painted, graven, or carved, may be so well wrought, and so near to the quick and to the truth, that they shall naturally, and much more effectually represent the thing than shall the name either spoken or written. For he that never heard the name of your master, shall if ever he saw him be brought in a rightful remembrance of him by his image well wrought and touched to the quick. And surely saving that men cannot do it, else, if it might

commodiously be done, there were not in this world so effectual writing as were to

EFFECTUAL WRITING

express all things in imagery. And now likewise as a book well made and well written better expresseth the matter than doth a book made by a rude man that cannot well tell his tale and written with an evil hand, so doth an image well workmanly wrought better express the thing than doth a thing rudely made but if ³⁸ it move a man for some other special cause, as peradventure for some great antiquity or the great virtue of the workman, or for that God showeth at that place some special assistance of his favour and grace. But now, as I began to say, since all names written or spoken be but images, if ye set aught by the name of Jesus written or spoken, why should ye set nought by his image painted or carven that representeth his holy person to your remembrance, as much and more too, as doth his name written? Nor these two words *Christus crucifixus*, do not so lively represent (to) us the remembrance of his bitter passion, as doth the blessed image of the crucifix, neither to (a) layman nor unto a learned (man). And this perceive these heretics

WHY HERETICS SPEAK AGAINST IMAGES

themselves well enough, nor they speak not against images for any furtherance of devotion, but plainly for a malicious mind, to minish and quench men's devotions. For they see well enough that there is no man but if he love another, but he delighteth in his image or anything of his. And these heretics that be so sore against the images of God, and his holy saints, would be yet right angry with him that would dishonestly handle an image made in remembrance of one of themselves, where the wretches forbear not villainously to handle and cast dirt in despite upon the holy crucifix, an image made in remembrance of our Saviour himself, and not only of his most blessed person, but also of his most bitter passion.

Now as touching prayer made unto the saints, and worship done unto them, much marvel is it what cause of malice these heretics have to them. We see it common, in the wretched condition of this world, that one man of a pride in himself hath envy at another, or for displeasure done, beareth to some other malice and evil will. But this must needs

A DEVILISH HATRED

be a devilish hatred, to hate him whom thou never knewest, which never did thee harm, which if he could now do thee no good where he is, yet either with his good ensample gone before thee, or his good doctrine left behind him, doth thee—but if thou be very naught of thyself—great good in this world for thy journey towards heaven. And this must needs be an envy coming of an high devilish pride, and far passing the envy of the devil himself, for he never envied but such as he saw and was conversant with, as when he saw man and the glory of God. But these heretics envy them whom they never shall see but when they shall be sorry and ashamed in themselves of that glorious sight.

For where they pretend the zeal of God's honour himself, as though God, to whom only all honour and glory is to be given, were dishonoured in that some honour is done to his holy saints, they be not so mad nor childish as they make themselves. For if all honour were so to be given only to God that we should give none to no creature, where were then God's precept of honour to be given to our father and mother, ³⁹ to princes, governours and rulers here on earth, and as St. Paul saith, Every man to another. ⁴⁰

HOW THE CHURCH WORSHIPPETH SAINTS

And well they wot that the church worshippeth not saints as God, but as God's good servants;

and, therefore, the honour that is done to them redoundeth principally to the honour of their master, like as in common custom of people we do reverence sometime and make great cheer to some men for their master's sake, whom else we would not haply bid once good morrow.

And surely if any benefit or alms done to one of Christ's poor folk for his sake, be by his high goodness reputed and accepted as done unto himself, and that whoso receiveth one of his apostles or disciples receiveth himself, every wise man may well consider that in likewise whoso doth honour his holy saints for his sake, doth honour himself—except these heretics ween that God were as envious as they be themselves, and that he would be wroth to have any honour done to any other, though it thereby redounded unto himself. Whereof our Saviour Christ well declareth to the contrary, for he showed himself so well content that his holy saints shall be partners of his honour, that he promised his apostles that at the dreadful doom, when he shall come in his high majesty, they shall have their honourable seats, and sit with himself upon the judgment of the world. Christ also promised that St. Mary Magdalene should be worshipped through the world, and have here an honourable remembrance, for that she bestowed that precious ointment upon his holy head: which thing, when I consider it, maketh me marvel at the madness of these heretics that bark against the old ancient customs of Christ's church, mocking the setting up of candles and with foolish facetiousness ^a and blasphemous mockery demand whether God and his saints lack light or whether it be night with them that they cannot see without candle. They might as well ask what good did that ointment to Christ's head. But the heretics grudge at the cost now, as their brother Judas did then, ^a and say it were better spent in alms upon a poor folk; and this say many of them which can neither find in their hearts to spend upon the one nor the other. And some spend sometime upon the one for none other intent but to the end that they may the more boldly rebuke and rail against the other. But let them all by that ensample of the holy woman, and by these words of our Saviour, learn that God delighteth to see the fervent heat of the heart's devotion boil out by the body, and to do him service with all such goods of fortune as God hath given a man. What riches devised our Lord God himself in the making and garnishing of the temple, and in the ornaments of the altar and the priest's apparel? What was himself the better for all this? What for the beasts that himself commanded to be offered him in sacrifice? What for the sweet odour and frankincense? Why do these heretics more mock at the manner of Christ's church, than they do at the manner of the Jews' synagogue, but if they be better Jews than christian men? If men will say that the money were better spent among poor folk—by whom he more setteth, being the quick temples of the holy ghost made by his own hands, ^a than by the temples of stone made by the hand of man—this would be, perchance, very true, if there were so little to do it with that we should be driven of necessity to leave the one undone. But God giveth enough for both; and giveth divers men divers kinds of devotion, and all to his pleasure. In which, as the apostle Paul saith, let every man for his part abound and be plenteous in that kind of virtue, ^a that the spirit of God guideth him to. And not to be of the foolish mind that Luther is, which wished in a sermon of his that he had in his hand all the pieces of the holy cross, and saith that if he so had he would throw them there as never sun should shine on them.

LUTHER'S VILLAINY TO THE HOLY CROSS

And for what worshipful reason would the wretch do such villainy to the cross of Christ? Because as he saith that there is so much gold now bestowed about the garnishing of the pieces of the cross, that there is none left for poor folk. Is not this an high reason? As though all the gold that is now bestowed about the pieces of the holy cross would not have failed to have been given to poor men if they had not been bestowed about the garnishing of the cross. And as

though there were nothing lost but that that is bestowed about Christ's cross. Take all the gold that is spent about all the pieces of Christ's cross through christendom (albeit many a good christian prince, and other godly people have honourably garnished many pieces thereof) yet if all the gold were gathered together, it would appear a poor portion in comparison of the gold that is bestowed upon cups, what speak we of cups in which the gold, albeit that it be not given to poor men yet is it saved, and may be given in alms when men will, which they never will, how small a portion ween we were the gold about all the pieces of Christ's cross, if it were compared with the gold that is quite cast away, about the gilting of knives, swords, sporrres, * arras, and painted clothes; and, as though these things could not consume gold fast enough, the gilting of pasts and whole roofs, not only in the palaces of princes and great prelates, but also many right mean men's houses. And yet among all these things could Luther spy no gold that grievously glittered in his bleared eyes, but only about the cross of Christ. For that gold, if it were thence, the wise man weeneth it would be straight given to poor men, and that where he daily seeth that such as have their purse full of gold give to the poor not one piece thereof; but if they give ought, they transake * the bottom among all the gold to seek out here an halfpenny, or in his country a brass penny whereof four make a farthing, such goodly causes find they that pretend holiness for the colour of their cloaked heresies.

THE THIRD CHAPTER

The objections of the Messenger made against praying so saints, worshipping of images, and going on pilgrimages, with the answer of the author unto the same. And incidentally is it by the Messenger moved that there should seem no necessity for christian folk to resort to any churches; but that all were one to pray thence or there. And that opinion by the author [is] answered and confuted.

At this point your friend desiring me that whatsoever he should say should not reckon it as spoken of his own opinion, but that he would partly show me what he had heard some other say therein, to the end that he might the better answer them with that he should hear of me. This protestation and profession made, he said that albeit no good man would agree that it were well done to do unto saints or their images despite or dishonour, yet to go in pilgrimages to them or to pray to them, not only seemed in vain, considering that all they—if they can anything do—can yet do no more for us among them all than Christ can Himself alone, that can do all; nor be not so ready at our hand, to hear us—if they hear us at all—as Christ that is everywhere; nor bear us half the love and longing to help us, that doth our Saviour that died for us, whom, as Saint Paul saith, we have for our advocate afore the father. * But over this, it seemeth to smell of idolatry when we go on pilgrimage to this place and that place. As though God were not alike strong, or not alike present, in every place. But as the devil were of old, under the false name of gods, present and assistant in the idols and mammets of the pagans, so would we make it seem that God and his saints stood in this place and that place, bound to this post and that post, cut out and carved in images. For when we reckon ourself to be better heard with our Lord in Kent than at Cambridge, at the north door of Poules than at the south door, at one image of our Lady than at

another, is it not an evident token, and in manner a plain proof, that we put our trust and confidence in the image self, and not in God or our Lady, which is as good in the one place as in the other, and the one image no more like her than the other, nor cause why she should favour the one before the other. But we blind people, instead of God and his holy saints themselves, cast our affections to the images self, and thereto make our prayers, thereto make our offerings, and ween these images were the very saints self of whom our help and health should grow, putting our

NECROMANCERS

full trust in this place and that place, as necromancers put their trust in their circles, within which they think themselves sure against all the devils in hell. And ween if they were one inch without that then the devil would pull them in pieces; but as for the circle he dare not, for his ears, once put over his nose.

And men reckon that the clergy is glad to favour these ways and to nourish this superstition, under the name and colour of devotion, to the peril of the people's souls, for the lucre and temporal advantage that themselves receive of the offerings.

When I had heard him say what he liked, I demanded if he minded ever to be priest; whereunto he answered, nay verily; for methinketh, quod he, that there be priests too many already but if they were better. And therefore when God shall send time I purpose, he said, to marry.

TWICE MARRIED CANNOT BE A PRIEST

Well, said I, then since I am already married twice, and therefore never can be priest, and ye be so set in mind of marriage that ye never will be priest, we two be not the most meetly to ponder what might be said in this matter for the priestes part.

Howbeit, when I consider it, methinketh surely that if the thing were, such as ye say, so far from all frame of right religion and so perilous to men's souls, I cannot perceive why that the clergy would for the gain they get thereby suffer such abusion to continue. For first, if it were true that no pilgrimage ought to be used, none image offered unto, nor worship done, nor prayer made, unto any saint; then, if none of all these things had ever been in use, or now were all undone, if that were the right way, as I wot well it were wrong, then were it to me little question, but christian people being in the true faith, and in the right way to godward, would thereby nothing slake their good minds toward the ministers of his church, but their devotion should toward them more and more increase. So that if they now get by this way one penny, they should—if this be wrong and the other right—not fail, instead of a penny now, then to receive a groat. And so should no lucre give them cause to favour this way, and it be wrong, while they could not fail to win more by the right.

Moreover look me through christendom; and I suppose ye shall find the fruit of those offerings a right small part of the living of the clergy. And such as though some few places would be glad to retain, yet the whole body might without any notable loss easily forbear.

Let us consider our own country here and we shall find of these pilgrimages for the most part in the hands of such religious persons, or such poor parishes as bear no great rule in convocations. And beside this ye shall not find, I suppose, that any bishop in England hath the profit of one groat of any such offering within his diocese. Now standeth then the continuance or the breaking

of this manner and custom, specially in them which take no profit thereby, which, if they believed it to be, such as ye call it, superstitious and wicked, would never suffer it to continue to the perishing of men's souls, whereby themselves should destroy their own souls, and neither in body nor goods take any commodity? And over this we see that the bishops and prelates themselves visit those holy places and pilgrimages with as large offerings and as great cost in coming and going as other people do; so that they not only take no temporal advantage thereof, but also bestow of their own therein.

THE CHURCH

And surely I believe this devotion so planted by God's own hand in the hearts of the whole church, that is, to wit, not the clergy only, but the whole congregation of all christian people, that if the spirituality were of the mind to leave it, yet would not the temporality suffer it.

Nor if it so were that pilgrimages hanged only upon the covetise of evil priests—for evil must they be that would for covetise help the people forward to idolatry—then would not good priests and good bishops have used them themselves. But I am very sure that many an holy bishop, and therewith excellently well learned in scripture and the law of God, have had high devotion thereto.

For whereas, ye say, men reckon that it smelleth of Idolatry, to visit this place and that place, as though that God were more mighty or more present in one place than in another, or that God or his saints had bounden themselves to stand at this image or that image, and that by men's demeanour thereby should appear that the pilgrims put their trust in the place or the image itself, taking that for very God, or for the very saint of whom they seek for help, and so fare like necromancers that put their trust in their circle.

Surely holy saint Austin, in an epistle of his which he wrote to the clergy and the people, takes the pilgrimages for a more earnest and a far more godly thing. And saith that though the cause be to us unknown why God doth in some place miracles and in some place none, yet it is no doubt but he so doth. And therein had that good holy doctor so great confidence that, as he saith himself, he sent two of his priests in pilgrimage for the trial of the truth of a great matter in contention and debate between them out of Hyppona in Affrike, unto saint Stephen's church in Myllayne, where many miracles were wont to be showed, to the end that God might there, by some means, cause the truth to be declared and made open by his power, which, by no means known to man, he could well find out.

Nor they that go on pilgrimage do nothing like to those necromancers, to whom ye resemble them, that put their confidence in the roundell and circle on the ground, for a special belief that they have in the compass of that ground by reason of foolish characters and figures about it, with invocations of evil spirits and familiarity with devils, being

NECROMANCERS BY GOD FORBODEN

enemies to God, and the craft and ways of all that work by God himself, prohibited and forbidden, * and that upon the payne of death. What likeness hath that unto the going of good men unto holy places, not by enchantment dedicate to the devil, but by God's holy ordinance with his holy words consecrated unto himself? Which two things, if ye would resemble together, so might ye blaspheme and have in derision all the devout rites and ceremonies of the church, both in the divine services as incensing, hallowing of the fire, of the font, of the pascal lamb,

and, over that, the exorcisms, benedictions and holy strange gestures used in consecration or ministration of the blessed sacraments, all which holy things—great part whereof was from hand to hand left in the church from the time of Christ's apostles and by them left unto us as it was by God taught unto them—men might, now by that means follyly * misliken unto the superstitious demeanour and fond fashion of jugglery.

REVERENCE TO IMAGES

Nor the flock of Christ is not so foolish as those heretics bear them in hand, that whereas there is no dog so mad but he knoweth a very coney from a coney carved and painted, christian people that have reason in their heads, and thereto the light of faith in their souls, should ween that the images of our lady were our lady herself. Nay they be not. I trust, so mad but they do reverence to the image for the honour of the person whom it representeth, as every man delighteth in the image and remembrance of his friend. And albeit that every good Christian man hath a remembrance of Christ's passion in his mind, and conceiveth by devout meditation a form and fashion thereof in his heart, yet is there no man I ween so good nor so well learned, nor in meditation so well accustomed, but that he findeth himself more moved to pity and compassion, upon the beholding of the holy crucifix, than when he lacketh it. And if there be any that for the maintenance of his opinion will peradventure say that he findeth it otherwise in himself, he should give me cause to fear that he hath of Christ's passion neither the one way nor the other, but a very faint feeling, since that the holy fathers before us did—and all devout people about us do—find and feel in themselves the contrary.

Now for the reason that you allege, quod I, where ye say that in resorting to this place and that place, this image and that image, we seem to reckon as though God were not in every place like mighty, or not like present, this reason proceedeth no more against pilgrimages than against all the churches in Christendom. For God is as mighty in the stable as in the temple. And as he is not comprehensible nor

GOD IS EVERYWHERE PRESENT

circumscribed nowhere, so is he present everywhere. But this letteth not heaven, be it a corporal thing or not, to be the place of a special manner and kind of his presence, in which it liketh him to show his glorious majesty to his blessed heavenly company, which he showeth not unto damned wretches in hell, and yet is he never thence. So liked it his goodness to go with his chosen people through the desert in the cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night; * yet was he not bounden, as ye resemble it, like the damned spirits to the old idols of the paynims.

It liked him also to choose the ark that was carried with his people, at which ark, specially by miracle, he divers times declared his especial assistance, the ark being translated from place to place.

Was it not also his pleasure to be specially present in his temple of Jerusalem, till he suffered it to be destroyed for their sin? And instead of that one place of prayer (to which he would before that all his people should come) he hath vouchsafed to spread himself abroad into many temples, and, in more acceptable wise, to be worshipped in many temples throughout his Christian flock.

CHRIST'S VERY TEMPLE

Here, said your friend, that the temple of Christ is, as saint Poule saith, ⁵¹ man's heart, and that God is not included nor shut in any place. And so himself said to the woman of Samary, [that] very worshippers should worship in spirit and in truth, not in the hill, or in Jerusalem or any

other temple of stone.

Whereunto I showed him that I would well agree that no temple of stone was unto God so pleasant as the temple of man's heart, but yet that nothing letteth or withstandeth but that God will that his Christian people have in sundry places, sundry temples and churches, to which they should, beside their private prayers, assemble solemnly and resort in company to worship him together, such as dwell so near together, that they may conveniently resort to one place.

For albeit our Saviour said, quod I, unto the woman of whom ye spake, that the time should come in which they should neither worship God in that hill of Gezera, nor in Jerusalem neither, which places were after destroyed and desolate, and the pagan manner of worshipping of the one, and the Jews' manner of worshipping in the other, turned both into the manner of worshipping of Christian faith and religion. Yet said he not to her that they should never after worship God in none other temple. But he said that the time should come, and then was come ^s already, when the very true worshippers should worship God in spirit and truth. ^s And that as God is a spiritual substance, so looked he for worshippers that should in such wise worship him. In which words our Saviour reproveth all false worship, as was used after paganism in that hill in Samaria, and all such worship as was done in any place with opinion that God might not be worshipped elsewhere. Those that so believe, they be such as bind God to a place, which our Lord reproveth,

GOD IN HEART MAY EVERYWHERE BE WORSHIPPED

showing that God may in heart truly and spiritually be worshipped everywhere. But this excludeth not that besides that he will be worshipped in his holy temple, no more than when he gave counsel that for avoiding of vainglory a man shall not stand and pray in the street to gather worldly praise but rather secretly pray in his chamber. ^s This counsel forbad not the Jews, to whom he gave it, that they should never after come into the temple and pray. And surely albeit that some good man here and there, one among ten thousand, as saint Poule and saint Antony, and a few such other like, do live all heavenly, far out of all fleshly company as far from all occasion of worldly wretchedness, as from the common temple or parish church, yet, if churches and congregations of Christian people resorting together to God's service were once abolished and put away, we were like to have few good temples of God in men's souls, but all would within a while wear away clean and clearly fall to nought. And this prove we by experience that those which be the best temples of God in their souls, they most use to come to the temple of stone. And those that least come there, be well known

WHAT THEY ARE THAT COME NOT TO THE CHURCH

for very ribaundes ^s and unthriftes, and openly perceived for temples of the devil. And this is not in our days only, but so hath been from Christ's days hither. I trow no man doubteth but that Christ's apostles were holy temples of God in their souls and well understood the words of their master, spoken to the woman of Samary, as the thing which their master after told them himself; or else how could some of them have written that communication which none of them heard as appeareth by the gospel? But they not in their master's days only, but also after his resurrection, and after that they had received the holy ghost and were by him instructed of every truth longing to the necessity of their salvation, were not content only to pray secretly by themself in their chambers, but also resorted to the temple to make their prayers. And in that place, as a place pleasant to God, did they pray in spirit and in truth, as well appeareth in the book of saint Luke written of the acts of Christ's holy apostles. ^s So that no doubt is there but that yet unto this day, and so forth to the world's end, it is and shall be pleasant unto God that this chosen people pray

to him and call upon him in temple and church. Whereof himself witnesseth with the prophet, *Domus mea domus orationis vocabitur*, ⁵⁷ My house shall be called a house of prayer.

Now maketh your reason, as I said, no more against pilgrimages than against every church. For God is not bounden to the place, nor our confidence bounden to the place, but unto God—though we reckon our prayer more pleasant to God in the Church than without because his high goodness accepteth it so—in likewise do not we reckon our Lord bounden to the place or image where the pilgrimage is, though we worship God there because himself liked so to have it.

¹ attentely.

² hoverly.

³ confedered.

⁴ commmen.

⁵ I *Pet.* 3. 15.

⁶ saints.

⁷ More was Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster from July 1525 to October 25th, 1529. But he was Lord Chancellor when the second edition appeared in 1531.

⁸ if wee had mought convenient come together.

⁹ Bilney. (*See Dictionary of National Biography.*)

¹⁰ ben.

¹¹ Bilney.

¹² Or.

¹³ Arundel's constitution of 1408.

¹⁴ Mark I. 24.

¹⁵ Dissimulated.

¹⁶ Rought.

¹⁷ Con.

¹⁸ Matt. 7 .7.

¹⁹ Apoc. 5. 1-3.

²⁰ Or.

²¹ Phil. 2. 10.

²² St. Gregory seems to be the original authority for this saying.

²³ Furniture.

²⁴ Wooden.

²⁵ Gen. 4-5.

²⁶ Exod. 16. 15.

²⁷ I Kings 10. 21.

²⁸ I Kings. 12. 8.

²⁹ John 4. 24.

³⁰ Commen.

³¹ 2 Sam. 6. 14.

³² Matt. 3. 4.

³³ Luke 4. 2.

³⁴ Exod. 20. 4.

³⁵ Ps. II3.

³⁶ Ex. 20. 3, 4.

³⁷ Ex. 34. 17.
³⁸ But if=unless.
³⁹ Mark 7. 10.
⁴⁰ Rom. 12. 10.
⁴¹ Facecies.
⁴² Matt. 26. 8.
⁴³ 1557 that
⁴⁴ I Thess. 4. I.
⁴⁵ Spurs.
⁴⁶ Ransack.
⁴⁷ Rom. 8. 34.
⁴⁸ Hier. 27 .9.
⁴⁹ foolishly.
⁵⁰ Ps. 77. 14.
⁵¹ *Cor. 6. 19.*
⁵² Commen.
⁵³ John 4. 23.
⁵⁴ Matt. 6. 6.
⁵⁵ Ribalds.
⁵⁶ Acts 2. 46.
⁵⁷ Is. 56. 7.