

## *The Supplication of Souls*

made by Sir Thomas More—Knight, Councillor  
to our Sovereign Lord the King, and  
Chancellor of his Duchy  
of Lancaster—  
against *The Supplication of Beggars*.

Page and line numbers correspond to  
*The Complete Works of St. Thomas More*  
(Yale University Press), volume 7.

A complete concordance to this work can be found at  
<https://thomasmorestudies.org/concordance-home/#supplication>

Spelling standardized, punctuation modernized, and glosses added  
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### **Punctuation**

The only punctuation marks found in the original printed version of *The Supplication of Souls* are the period, colon, question mark, slash, or “virgule” (/), and parentheses. Quotation marks, commas, semicolons, dashes, exclamation points, italics, and suspension points have been added with the goal of making the text more readily understood by present-day readers. As for the suspension points ( ... ), these are substitutes for many of More’s slashes. He often used a slash where we would use a comma, a semicolon, a dash, or italics; but he also, quite often, used one to indicate whether a certain phrase was meant to be connected more closely with the one preceding it or with the one following it; to call attention to parallel elements in different phrases; or simply to facilitate serious reflection. He also sometimes used a slash for dramatic purposes—to indicate, perhaps, a coming sly comment, or some possibly surprising conclusion. The evident thoughtfulness with which More punctuated this book leads one to suspect that he anticipated its being often read aloud, and wanted to make sure the reader got the cadence right. He writes as though he were speaking.



*To All Christian People*

In most piteous wise continually calleth and crieth upon your devout charity and most tender pity, for help, comfort, and relief, your late acquaintance—kindred, spouses, companions,  
 5 playfellows, and friends—and now your humble and *unacquainted* and half forgotten suppliants, poor prisoners of God... the seely souls in purgatory, here abiding and enduring the grievous pains and hot cleansing fire... that fretteth and burneth out the rusty and filthy spots of our sin... till the mercy of Almighty  
 10 God (the rather by your good and charitable means!) vouchsafe to deliver us hence.

From whence if ye marvel why we more now molest and trouble you with our writing than ever we were wont before, it may like you to wit and understand that hitherto—though  
 15 we have been with many folk much forgotten, of negligence—yet hath always good folk remembered us; and we have been recommended unto God, and eased, helped, and relieved, both by the private prayers of good, virtuous people... and especially by the daily Masses and other ghostly suffrages of priests, religious,  
 20 and folk of Holy Church. But *now*, since that of late there are sprung up certain *seditionous* persons... which not only travail and labor to destroy them by whom we be much helped, but also to sow and set forth such a pestilent opinion against ourselves... as once received and believed among the  
 25 people... must needs take from us the relief and comfort that ever should come to us by the charitable alms, prayer, and good works of the world—ye may take it for no wonder though we seely souls that have long lain and cried so far from you

4 *late*: former    6, 28 *seely*: poor    8 *hot*: i.e., terribly hot  
 8 *fretteth*: scours; scrubs    9 *spots*: stains    10 *rather*: sooner  
 11 *deliver us hence*: take us out of here    12 *whence*: where  
 12 *marvel*: wonder // *molest*: bother  
 14 *it may like you to wit*: you might want to know // *hitherto*: up till now  
 15 *with*: by    17 *recommended*: commended; put in a good word for  
 19 *ghostly*: spiritual    21 *which*: who    22 *them*: i.e., priests and religious  
 23 *pestilent*: noxious; extremely detrimental  
 27 *the world*: i.e., lay people // *though*: if; i.e., that    28 *cried*: cried out

that we seldom break your sleep... do *now*... in this our great fear  
of our utter loss forever of your loving remembrance and  
relief... not, yet, importunately bereave you of your rest with  
crying at your ears at unseasonable time, when ye would (as we  
5 do never!) repose yourselves and take ease, but only procure to  
be presented unto you this poor book, this humble supplication  
of ours, which it may please you parcelmeal, at your leisure,  
to look over for all seely souls' sake; that it may be as a wholesome  
treacle at your heart against the deadly poison of their  
10 pestilent persuasion... that would bring you in that error to  
ween there were no purgatory. Of all which cruel persons so  
procuring... not the *diminishment* of your mercy toward us, but  
the utter *spoil* and *robbery* of our *whole* help and comfort that  
should come from you, the very worst (and thereby the most  
15 deadly) deviser of our pains and heaviness (God forgive him!)  
is that dispiteous and despiteful person which of late, under  
pretext of pity, made and put forth among you a book  
that he named *The Supplication for the Beggars*: a book in  
deed nothing *less* intending than the pity that it pretendeth;  
20 nothing minding the *weal* of *any* man, but, as we shall  
hereafter show you, much *harm* and *mischief* to *all* men...  
and, among others, great sorrow, discomfort, and heaviness unto *us*—  
your even Christians and nigh kin, your late neighbors and  
pleasant companions upon earth, and now poor prisoners  
25 here.

And albeit that his unhappy book doth for our own part  
touch us very near, yet we be much more moved to give the  
world warning of his venomous writing for the dear love and  
charity that we bear to *you*... than for the respect of our own  
30 relief. For as for *us*, albeit that the gracious help of your  
prayer, almsdeed, and other good works for us may be  
the means of relieving and releasing of our present pains,  
yet such is the merciful goodness of God... that though the whole  
world would clean forget us, yet would his mercy so remember us...

1 *this our great fear*: this great fear of ours      4 *crying*: crying out  
4 *at your ears*: audibly      7 *parcelmeal*: piecemeal; a little at a time  
8 *seely*: poor      9 *treacle*: antidote  
9–10 *their* . . . *would*: the pernicious persuasion of those who wish to  
10–11 *in* . . . *ween*: into the error of believing that purgatory does not exist  
13 *spoil*: spoliation; despoiling      15, 22 *heaviness*: grief; distress  
16 *dispiteous*: pitiless; cruel // *despiteful*: spiteful; malicious // *which*: who  
16 *of late*: recently      17 *made*: wrote      19 *deed*: fact; actuality  
19 *intending*: meaning // *pretendeth*: professes  
20 *nothing* . . . *weal*: its aim being not the well-being      23 *even*: fellow  
23 *nigh kin*: close relatives // *late*: former      24 *pleasant*: pleasing (to you)  
26 *unhappy*: sorry; wretched      27 *touch*: affect // *near*: closely  
34 *his mercy*: i.e., his merciful self

that after temporal punishment and purging here, he will  
 not finally forget to take us hence... and, wiping all the tears out  
 of our eyes, translate us (at sundry times, as his high wisdom  
 seeth convenient) into that eternal heavenly bliss... to which  
 5 his holy, blessed blood hath bought us! But surely to you worldly  
 people, living there upon earth—not only for this present  
 time, but also for as long as this world shall endure—the  
 wretched maker of that ungracious book (whom God give once  
 the grace to repent and amend!), if folk were so fond to follow  
 10 him, should not fail to work... as well much *worldly* trouble  
 to *every* kind of people... as, over that, which most loss were of  
 all, to bring many a good simple soul, for lack of belief of  
 purgatory, the very straight way to *hell*.

And the case so standing, there would, we think, no man  
 15 doubt but though the man that made the book were well  
 known among you, and in hold, also—whereby, his heinous  
 treason to God and the world disclosed and declared by us,  
 he might be in peril of exquisite painful punishment—yet  
 we both might and *ought* rather to put him in the danger of  
 20 his own demeanor... than for the sparing of his just correction...  
 to suffer him abuse the people with his pestilent writing,  
 to the inestimable harm of the whole world in goods,  
 body, and soul. And since we so *might* of reason, and so *should* of  
 charity, though the man were known and taken: how much  
 25 may we now more frankly tell you all, and nothing shall need  
 to spare him, since his book is nameless... and so himself among  
 you unknown, and thereby out of the peril of any punishment  
 for his unhappy deed?

But for that both ye and he shall well perceive that we desire  
 30 but your weal and ours by giving you warning of his malice,  
 and nothing intend to procure his punishment—  
 which we rather beseech our Lord, of his mercy, to remit—ye  
 shall understand that neither is his name nor person  
 unknown among *us*, and therefore we might well discover him  
 35 if we were so minded. For there is not only some of his acquaintance

2 *hence*: out of here    3 *translate*: transport // *his*: i.e., he in his  
 4 *convenient*: fit; to be suitable    5–6 *worldly people*: people in the world  
 7–9, 26: The author of *The Supplication for the Beggars* was Simon Fish, and he  
 did die (of the plague, in 1530) reconciled to the Church.    8 *maker*: author  
 8 *ungracious*: ungodly // *once*: one day  
 9 *fond to follow*: foolish as to go along with    10 *worldly*: earthly  
 11 *over*: on top of    12 *belief of*: belief in    15, 24 *though*: (that) even if  
 15 *made*: wrote    16 *hold*: custody // *heinous*: high  
 17 *the world*: i.e., to everyone in the world  
 18 *exquisite*: acutely; extremely    19, 23, 34 *might*: could  
 19–20 *in . . . demeanor*: i.e., at risk of suffering the consequences of his own behavior  
 20 *correction*: punishment    21 *suffer*: let // *abuse*: deceive; mislead  
 21 *pestilent*: noxious; pernicious    24 *taken*: caught / in custody  
 26 *nameless*: published anonymously    28 *unhappy*: wretched  
 30 *weal*: well-being    34 *discover him*: disclose his identity

and counsel (whom God gave at their death the  
 grace to repent) come hither to purgatory—nothing more  
 now lamenting *among* us than their cruel unkindness *toward*  
 us in giving counsel *against* us to the making of that  
 5 ungracious book... with infidelity and lack of belief of the  
 purging fire which they now find and feel—but he is also  
 named and boasted among us by that evil angel of his... our  
 and your ghostly enemy the devil. Which as soon as he had set  
 him a-work with that pernicious book... ceased not to come  
 10 hither and boast among us, but, with his enmious and envious  
 laughter, gnashing the teeth and grinning, he told  
 us that his people had by the advice and counsel of him and  
 of some heretics almost as evil as he... made such a book for  
 beggars... that it should make us beg long ere we get aught.  
 15 Whereby he trusted that some of us should not so soon creep out of  
 our pain as we had hoped.

Wit ye well, these words were heavy tidings to us. But yet,  
 because the devil is wont to lie, we took some comfort in that we  
 could not believe him—especially telling a thing so far incredible.  
 20 For who could ever have thought that any Christian man  
 could, for very pity, have found in his heart to seek and study  
 the means... whereby a Christian man should think it labor lost  
 to pray for all Christian souls? But alack the while, we found  
 soon after... that the falsehood and malice of the man... proved the  
 25 devil true. For by some that died soon after the book put forth,  
 we have heard and perceived the wretched contents thereof... well  
 and plainly declaring what evil spirit inspired him  
 while it was in the making. For albeit that it is so contrived, and  
 the words so couched, that, by the secret, inward working of  
 30 the devil that helped to devise it, a simple reader might by  
 delight in the reading be deadly corrupted and envenomed: yet if a  
 wise man well warned... advisedly will weigh the sentence, he  
 shall find the whole book nothing else... but falsehood under pretext  
 of plainness, cruelty under the cloak of pity, sedition

5 *ungracious*: ungodly; wicked // *belief of*: belief in    8 *ghostly*: spiritual

8 *which*: who    10 *enmious*: inimical // *envious*: malicious

14 *long*: for a long time // *ere*: before // *aught*: anything    17 *wit*: know

17 *heavy tidings*: bad news

21 *could* . . . *found*: i.e., could be so devoid even of basic compassion as to find it

22 *labor lost*: i.e., a waste of time and effort    23 *alack the while*: alas the day

25 *true*: i.e., to have been telling the truth // *put forth*: (was) published

26–27 *well and plainly declaring*: quite clearly making known

29 *secret*: hidden; unperceived    30 *simple*: lowbrow / naïve

31 *deadly*: lethally    32 *wise*: intelligent // *advisedly*: carefully

32 *the sentence*: the meaning; what is being said

under the color of counsel, proud arrogance under the name  
of “supplication,” and under the pretense of favor unto poor folk...  
a devilish desire of *noyance* both to poor and rich... priest,  
religious, and layman—prince, lord, and people—as well quick as  
5 dead.

He deviseth a piteous bill of complaint and “supplication,”  
feigned to be by the poor sick and sore beggars put up to the  
King, lamenting therein their number “so sore increased” that,  
good folks’ alms not half sufficing to find them meat,  
10 they be constrained heavily to “die for hunger.” Then layeth he the  
cause of all these poor beggars, both their increase in number and  
their default in finding; all this he layeth to the only fault of the  
*clergy*—naming them, in his beadroll, “bishops, abbots, priors,  
deacons, archdeacons, suffragans, priests, monks,  
15 canons, friars, pardoners, and summoners.” All these he calleth  
mighty, “sturdy” “beggars” and “idle holy thieves”... which, he saith, hath  
“begged so importunately that they have gotten into their  
hands” the “third part” of all the realm of England... besides tithes,  
20 “privy tithes,” “probates of testaments,” and “offerings,” with Mass-pennies  
and mortuaries, blessing and accursing, citing, suspending, and  
assoiling. Then cometh he particularly to friars; to whom he  
maketh, as he thinketh, a plain and open reckoning... that they  
receive, by begging through the realm, yearly 43,333  
pounds, 6 shillings, 8 pennies, sterling. Then showeth he that all  
25 this cast together... amounteth, yearly, far above the half of the  
whole substance of the realm. After this, presupposing as  
though he had proved it that the clergy hath the half, he then, to  
prove the two-hundredth part of that they have were more than  
sufficient for them, taketh for his ground that if the number of  
30 them be compared with the number of lay men, the clergy be  
not the hundredth part; and that if they be compared with the lay  
men, women, and children, the clergy is not then the “four-hundredth  
person” of that number. And then intendeth he thereby to  
prove and conclude that since they have (as he saith) more than the

3 *noyance*: harm    4 *quick*: living    7 *feigned*: fictitiously made out  
7 *sore*: afflicted; i.e., disabled    9 *find them meat*: provide them with food    10 *heavily*: tragically  
12 *default in finding*: lack of being provided for // *to the only*: solely to the    13 *beadroll*: list  
14 *suffragans*: auxiliary bishops    15 *pardoners*: These were priests authorized to grant papal  
indulgences.    15 *summoners*: Ecclesiastical officers who summoned people to appear in the  
bishop’s court.    16 *sturdy*: ruthless; unscrupulous // *holy*: arrant  
18 *the “third part”*: one-third    19 *privy tithes*: Tithes levied on such items as eggs and fruit.  
19 *testaments*: wills // *Mass-pennies*: Mass stipends    20 *mortuaries*: A mortuary was a gift  
that the priest presiding at a funeral service was by custom considered entitled to receive from the  
estate of the deceased.    20 *accursing*: excommunicating // *citing*: summoning to appear  
before an ecclesiastical court    20 *suspending*: i.e., the suspending of a priest’s faculties  
21 *assoiling*: absolving (either from sin or from ecclesiastical censure)    22 *open*: obviously correct  
22 *reckoning*: calculation    25 *cast*: put // *far above the*: to far more than  
26 *substance*: capital; wealth    28 *the . . . that*: i.e., that 0.5 percent of what // *were*: would be  
29 *ground*: basis    31 *the hundredth part*: one to a hundred; 1 percent of that number  
32–33 *the “four-hundredth person”*: (even) 0.25 percent    34 *as he saith*: according to him

half of altogether, and be themselves not fully the four-hundredth part: therefore, if that better half that they have were divided into two hundred parts, then were yet one part of those two hundred parts, as he thinketh, too much for them—especially  
 5 because they labor not. After this he gathereth a great heap of “evils”... wherewith he *belieth* the clergy, to bring them in displeasure of the King and hatred of the people. *And*, lest men should anything esteem the clergy for the suffrages of their prayer in relief of us seely Christian souls in purgatory, to take  
 10 away that good mind out of good Christian men’s hearts... he laboreth to make the world ween that there were no purgatory at all. Wherein when he hath done what he can, then laboreth he to the King for a license to rail upon the clergy— saying that there is none other effectual remedy against  
 15 them... but that it might please the King to give him and such others free license and liberty... to defame the clergy at their pleasure among the people. For he saith that if any of them be punished anything in the temporal laws, then they sore trouble the laborers thereof by the spiritual law... and then  
 20 the heads of the clergy do so highly more than recompense the loss of their fellows... that they may be bold to do the like offense again at their pleasure. And for to prove that it is *always* so, he layeth that it hath been so thrice; and, as it shall after be showed, he lieth in all three. The first, he layeth that  
 25 the bishop of London was in a great rage “for indicting of certain curates of extortion and incontineny the last year, in the wardmote inquests.” And for the second he layeth that Dr. Alen, after that he was punished by praemunire for his contempt committed against the King’s temporal law, was therefor by  
 30 the bishops highly recompensed in benefices. And for the third he layeth that Richard Hunne because he had sued a praemunire against a priest for suing him in the spiritual court in a matter determinable in the king’s court... was accused of heresy

1 *altogether*: everything // *fully*: i.e., even    3 *were yet*: would be even  
 5 *because*: since // *labor not*: don’t do manual labor    6 *evils*: disasters  
 6 *belieth*: slanders    9 *seely*: poor    11 *ween*: think  
 12–13 *laboreth* . . . *for*: he endeavors to get from the King    18, 29 *temporal*: civil  
 19 *sore* . . . *thereof*: i.e., terribly harass the inflictors of that punishment by way of  
 19, 32 *spiritual*: ecclesiastical    21 *fellows*: i.e., fellow clergymen  
 23, 24, etc. *layeth*: alleges; puts forward    26 *curates*: parish priests  
 26 *incontineny*: unchastity    27 *wardmote*: precinct-meeting  
 27 *Dr.*: An honorary title for a higher-ranking priest.  
 28 *Alen*: John Alen (1476–1534), at that time Cardinal Wolsey’s commissary; later, Archbishop of Dublin and Lord Chancellor of Ireland.  
 28, 31 *praemunire*: (A charge of violation of) the statute that forbade appealing to any foreign entity (in this case, the Vatican) in an attempt to override civil authority.  
 29 *therefor*: for that    31 *sued*: i.e., filed



and committed to Bishop's Prison; where he saith that "all the world knoweth" that he was murdered by Dr. Horsey with his accomplices—then the bishop's chancellor. And that the same Dr. Horsey (he saith upon other men's mouths)

5 "paid six hundred pounds for him and his accomplices"—and after obtained the King's "most gracious pardon." Whereupon, he saith, the "captains" of the spirituality, because he had "fought so manfully" against the King's "crown" and "dignity," "promoted" him forth "with benefice upon benefice, to the value of four

10 times as much." And by these examples he concludeth there will no such punishment serve against the spirituality... and also, who that justly punish a priest by the temporal law... is unjustly troubled again in the spiritual law. Whereof he would conclude that of necessity, for a special remedy, the King must needs grant a

15 license to such lewd fellows to rail upon them. Then cometh he at last unto the device of some remedy for the poor beggars. Wherein he would in no wise have none hospitals made—because he saith that therein the profit goeth to the priests. What remedy, then, for the poor beggars? He deviseth nor desireth

20 nothing to be given them, nor none other alms or help requireth for them, but only that the King's Highness would first take from the whole clergy all their whole living... and then set them "abroad in the world" to "get them wives" and to "get their living" with the labor of their hands and "in the

25 sweat of their faces" (as he saith it is the "commandment" of God in the first chapter of Genesis)—and, finally, to tie them to the carts, to be whipped naked about every market town till they fall to labor. And then, if these petitions were once granted and performed, he showeth many great commodities

30 that would (as he saith) ensue thereupon... both to the King and the people... and to the poor beggars. Which things we shall, ere we leave, in such wise repeat and ponder that your wisdoms may consider and perceive in yourselves what good fruit would follow the speed of his goodly "supplication," whereof we have rehearsed

35 you the whole sum and effect.

2, 4 *Dr.*: See note for 116/27.    2 *with*: and    3 *then*: i.e., he being at that time  
 4 *upon other men's mouths*: on the basis of what other people said; on hearsay  
 5 *him*: himself    7, 11 *spirituality*: clergy    12 *who that*: i.e., whoever does  
 12 *temporal*: civil    13 *troubled*: beset; gone after // *again*: in return; as payback  
 13 *in*: by way of // *spiritual*: ecclesiastical    14 *special*: stopgap; ad hoc  
 15 *lewd*: vile // *fellows*: lowlifes    16 *device*: thinking up  
 17 *in no wise*: by no means    21 *requireth*: requests  
 22 *all their whole*: their whole entire    23 *abroad*: out there  
 24–26: See Genesis 3:19.    28 *fall to labor*: start doing manual labor  
 29 *performed*: put into effect // *commodities*: advantages; benefits  
 30 *as he saith*: according to him    31 *ere*: before  
 32 *your wisdoms*: you sensible people    34 *speed*: success  
 34 *goodly*: splendid // *rehearsed*: related to

Truth it is that many things wherewith he flourisheth his matters to make them seem gay to the readers at a sudden show... we leave out for the while, because we would ere we come thereto... that ye should first have the matter itself in short set forth  
 5 before your eyes. And then shall we peruse his proofs, and in such wise consider everything apart... that we nothing doubt but whoso shall read his worshipful writing after... shall soon perceive therein... flourishing without fruit, subtlety without substance, rhetoric without reason, bold babbling without  
 10 learning, and wiliness without wit. And finally, for the foundation and ground of all his proofs... ye shall find in his book not half so many leaves as lies, but almost as many lies as lines.

And albeit we lie here in that case that about the examination and answering of such a mad, malicious book we have neither  
 15 lust nor leisure to bestow the time... whereof misspent in our life we give now a hard and a heavy reckoning: yet not only the necessity of our cause driveth us to declare unto you the feebleness of his reasons wherewith he would bring you in the case to care nothing for *us*, believing that there were no purgatory;  
 20 but also, most especially, doth our charity toward *you*... stir us to show you the mischief that he mindeth to yourselves... as well in that point of infidelity... as in all the remnant of his seditious book. In answering whereof we would gladly let his folly and lack of learning pass... if it were not more than necessary that all folk  
 25 should *perceive* his little learning and less wit, lest simple folk, weening him wise and well learned, might unto their harm esteem his evil writing the better for their wrong opinion of his wit and learning. As for his malicious mind and untruth, there can no man look that we should leave untouched... but he that  
 30 would rather the man were believed than answered, and would wish his bill sped were it never so malicious and false.

For where he so deviseth his introduction... as all his purpose should have a great face of charity, by that he speaketh all in the name of the poor beggars: this is nothing else but the devil's  
 35 drift—always covering his poison under some taste of sugar. As

1 *flourisheth*: embellishes    2 *matters*: theses; contentions  
 2 *seem gay*: seem plausible; look good    3 *leave*: are leaving // *while*: time being  
 4 *matter*: thesis; contention    5 *peruse*: examine one by one; go through  
 6 *everything apart*: each thing by itself    6–7 *nothing doubt but*: have no doubt that  
 7 *whoso*: whoever // *worshipful*: impressive    8 *flourishing*: florid language  
 10 *wit*: good sense    12 *leaves*: i.e., pages    13 *that case*: such a condition  
 14 *answering*: refuting    15 *lust*: desire    16 *hard*: rigorous // *heavy*: hard-to-endure  
 17 *necessity of our cause*: direness of our situation // *declare unto*: show; make clear to  
 18 *feebleness*: weakness // *reasons*: arguments  
 18–19 *in . . . us*: into the state of mind of having no concern about us  
 21 *the . . . mindeth*: the harm he intends to do    22 *remnant*: rest    23 *folly*: idiocy  
 25, 28 *wit*: intelligence    26 *weening*: thinking // *wise*: intelligent // *learned*: educated  
 28 *mind*: intent // *untruth*: untruthfulness; dishonesty  
 29 *look . . . untouched*: expect us to leave that unnoted    30 *answered*: refuted  
 31 *sped*: expedited // *never . . . false*: no matter how malicious and false it was  
 33 *face*: appearance; veneer    35 *drift*: ruse; stratagem

for *us*, we trust there will no wise man doubt what favor *we*  
 bear to beggars, as folk of their own fellowship and faculty... and of  
 all whom... there be nowhere in the world neither so needy nor so  
 sore and so sick, nor so impotent and so sore in pains, as we.  
 5 And that so far forth that if ye might see them all on the one side...  
 and but one of us on the other side, we be very sure that the  
 world would pity one of us... more than them all. But although we  
 be more beggars than your beggars be, as folk daily begging  
 our alms of you and them both: yet envy we not them, as one of  
 10 them doth another; but we pray and require you to give them  
 for our sakes—whereby your gift greatly comforteth us both. And  
 they be also our proctors and beg in our name... and in our  
 name receive your money; whereof we receive both your  
 devotion and their prayers. So that ye may be well assured,  
 15 there could be put no bill nor supplication forth for their  
 advantage... which we would in any wise *hinder*—but very  
 gladly *further* in all that ever we might. But, in good faith, as our  
 poor brethren the beggars be for many causes greatly to be  
 pitied—for their disease and sickness, sorrow, pain, and poverty—so  
 20 do we much in this case sorrow their mishap... that they have  
 not had at the leastwise so much fortune... as to fall upon a  
 wiser scrivener to make their supplication, but upon such a  
 one as under his great wiliness showeth so little wit... that, beginning  
 with a cloak of *charity*, doth by and by no less disclose  
 25 his *hatred* and *malice*... than if he nothing else had intended  
 but to cast off the cloak and set out his malice naked to  
 the show. Wherein, like a beggars' proctor, he goeth forth so  
 nakedly... that no beggar is there so bare of cloth or money... as he  
 showeth himself bare of faith, learning, troth, wit, or  
 30 charity. Which thing, as it already well appeareth to wise men, so  
 will we make it evident to *all* men, taking our beginning at  
 the declaration of his untruth; which one thing well perceived...  
 will be sufficient to answer and overturn all his whole  
 enterprise. Howbeit, we neither shall need nor do purpose to  
 35 encumber you with rehearsal and reproof of *all* his lies; for that

1 *no wise man*: no one with any sense    2 *fellowship*: company // *faculty*: profession  
 4 *sore and*: disabled and // *sick*: unwell // *impotent*: helpless  
 4 *sore in*: extremely in    5, 17 *might*: could    10 *pray*: beseech // *require*: urge  
 10 *give*: i.e., give to    11 *us both*: i.e., both them and us  
 12, 27 *proctor(s)*: representative(s)    17 *might*: could  
 17 *in good faith*: in all seriousness; really and truly    19 *disease*: discomfort  
 19 *sorrow*: disability    20 *sorrow*: lament    21 *fall upon*: come across  
 22 *wiser scrivener*: more intelligent notary // *make*: write up    23, 29 *wit*: good sense  
 24 *by and by*: immediately    29 *troth*: integrity    30 *well appeareth*: is quite obvious  
 30 *wise*: intelligent; perceptive  
 31–32 *taking* . . . *untruth*: taking as our starting point the exposing of his untruthfulness  
 33 *answer*: confute // *all his whole*: his whole entire    35 *encumber*: burden  
 35 *rehearsal*: recounting // *reproof*: rebuttal

were too long a work, whereof we fear ye should be weary to abide  
the hearing. But of so many we shall pray you take patience  
while we show you *some*... and such as for the matter be required  
to be known, forasmuch as all his proofs be specially  
5 grounded upon them.

And first, to begin where he beginneth, when he saith that  
the number of such beggars as he pretendeth to speak for—that  
is, as himself calleth them, the “wretched, hideous monsters”  
 (“on whom,” he saith, “scarcely . . . any eye dare look”)... the “foul, unhappy  
10 sort of lepers and other sore people, needy, impotent, blind,  
lame, and sick, living only off alms”—“have their number  
now so sore increased... that all the alms of all the well-disposed  
people of the realm is not half enough to sustain  
them, but that for very constraint they die for hunger”: unto  
15 all those words of his, were it not that, though we well wist ourselves  
he said untrue, yet would we be loath so to lay as a *lie* to his  
charge anything whereof the untruth were not so plainly  
perceived... but that he might find some favorers which  
might say he said true, else would we peradventure not let to tell  
20 him... that for a beginning, in these few words he had written  
two lies at once. If we should tell you what number there was of  
poor sick folk in days passed long before your time... ye were at  
liberty not to believe us. Howbeit, *he* cannot, yet, on the other side,  
for his part, neither, bring you forth a beadroll of their names;  
25 wherefore we must for both our parts be fain to remit you  
to your own time—and yet not from your childhood (whereof  
many things men forget when they come to far greater age),  
but unto the days of your good remembrance. And so doing,  
we suppose if the sorry sights that men *have* seen... had left as great  
30 impression still remaining in their hearts... as the sight maketh  
of the present sorrow that they *see*: men should think and say that they  
have in days past seen as many sick beggars as they see now.  
For as for other sicknesses, they reign not, God be thanked, but after  
such rate as they have done in times past; and then of the  
35 French pox, thirty years ago went thereabout sick... five

1, 22 *were*: would be    2 *pray you*: ask you to    3 *show*: point out to  
4 *specially*: expressly    7 *pretendeth*: professes    8 *monsters*: monstrosities  
9 *unhappy*: infelicitous; repugnant    10 *sort*: assortment // *sore*: afflicted  
10 *impotent*: incapacitated    12 *sore*: badly    15 *wist*: knew  
16 *he said untrue*: (that) what he said is not true    17 *untruth*: untruthfulness  
18 *favorers*: supporters // *which*: who    19 *he said*: what he said is true  
19 *peradventure*: perhaps // *let*: forbear    22 *passed*: gone by  
23 *side*: hand    24 *beadroll*: list    25 *fain*: obliged // *remit*: refer  
29 *sorry*: distressing    31 *sorrow*: affliction; distress    33 *sicknesses*: diseases  
33 *reign not*: do not hold sway    34–35 *the French pox*: syphilis  
35 *thereabout*: around there (where the other beggars were)

against one that beggeth with them now. Whereof whoso list to say  
 that he seeth it otherwise, we will hold no great dispicions  
 with him thereupon... because we lack the names of both the  
 sides to make the trial with. But surely whoso shall say the  
 5 contrary... shall, as we suppose, either say so for his pleasure... or  
 else shall it fare by his sight as folks fare with their feeling; which  
 what they *feel*, they whine at, but what they *have* felt, they have  
 more than half forgotten—though they felt it right late. Which  
 maketh one that hath but a poor boil upon his finger... think  
 10 the grief more great... than was the pain of a great botch that  
 grieved his whole hand little more than a month before. So that  
 in this point, of the number of sick beggars so sore increased so  
 late, albeit we will forbear so to say to him as we might well say,  
 yet will we be so bold to deny it him till he bring in some better  
 15 thing than his bare word for the proof.

And in good faith, if he be put to the proof of the other point  
 also—that is to wit, that “for very constraint” those poor sick folk  
 “die for hunger”—we verily trust and think he shall seek far and  
 find very few, if he find any at all. For albeit that poor householders  
 20 have these dear years made right hard shift for corn—  
 yet, our Lord be thanked, men have not been so far from all  
 pity... as to suffer poor, impotent persons die at their doors for  
 hunger.

Now, whereas he saith that “the alms of all well-disposed people  
 25 of this realm is not half enough to sustain them”; and the “well-disposed  
 people” he calleth, in this matter, all them that giveth  
 them alms; and he speaketh not of one year nor twain, but of  
 these *many* years now past, for neither be the number of the  
 clergy nor their possessions nor the friars’ alms—in which  
 30 things he layeth the cause why the alms of good people is not  
 half sufficient to keep and sustain the poor and sick beggars from  
 famishing—any great thing increased in these ten or twelve  
 or twenty years last passed; and therefore, if that he said were true:  
 then by all these *twenty* years at the *least*, the alms of good people  
 35 hath not been half able to sustain the poor and sick beggars from  
 famishing. And surely if that were so... that in four or five years in  
 which was *plenty* of corn, the poor and sick beggars, for lack of  
 men’s alms, died so fast for hunger: though many should

1, 4 *whoso*: whoever    1 *list*: chooses    2 *dispicions*: debates    8 *right*: very  
 8, 13 *late*: recently    9 *poor boil*: little blister    10 *great botch*: big swelling  
 12 *sore*: badly    14 *bold*: i.e., bold as    15 *bare*: mere  
 16 *in good faith*: in all seriousness    20 *dear years*: years of scarcity  
 20 *made . . . corn*: found grain very hard to come by    22 *suffer*: let  
 22 *impotent*: helpless    27 *twain*: two    33 *passed*: gone by // *that*: what  
 37 *was plenty*: i.e., there was an abundance // *corn*: grain  
 38 *so fast*: in such quick succession    121/38—122/1 *though . . . again*: even if it  
 should never again happen that many came down sick in such quick succession

fall sick never so fast again, yet had they in the last two *dear* years  
died up of likelihood almost every one. And whether this be  
true or not we purpose not to dispute; but to refer and report  
ourselves to every man's eyes and ears... whether any man hear  
5 of so many dead... or see so many the fewer.

When he hath laid these sure stones to begin the ground and  
foundation of his building with—that sore and sick beggars be so  
“sore increased” that the alms of all the good people of this  
realm “is not half enough to sustain them,” and that therefore by  
10 “very constraint” they daily “die for hunger”—upon them he  
layeth another stone: that the cause of all this evil is the great  
possessions of the spirituality... and the great alms given to the  
friars. But herein first he layeth that—besides tithes and all such  
15 other profits as rise unto the Church by reason of the  
spiritual law or of men's devotion—that they have the third  
part of all the temporal lands of the realm. Which whoso  
can tell as much of the revenues of the realm as he can tell little  
that made the book... doth well know that though they have  
20 much, yet is the “third part of all” far another thing, and that he  
saith in this point untrue. Then goeth he to the poor friars.  
And there, as we told you, he showeth that the alms given them...  
of certainty amounteth yearly unto 43,333  
pounds, 6 shillings, 8 pennies, sterling. Peradventure men would ween the man  
25 were some apostate, and that he never could be so privy to the  
friars' reckoning... but if he had been long their limiter... and  
seen some general view of all their whole accounts. But surely,  
since the man is bad enough beside, we would be loath folk should  
reckon him for apostate; for surely he was never friar, for aught  
that we know—for we never wist that ever in his life he was half  
30 so well disposed. And also, when ye hear the ground of his  
reckoning, ye will yourselves think that he neither knoweth much  
of *their* matters... and of all the realm beside make as though he  
knew many things for true... which many men know for false.

For first he putteth for the ground of his reckoning that  
35 there are in the realm... two-and-fifty thousand parish

1–2 *had* . . . *one*: in the last two years of *scarcity* probably almost every one of them  
would have died off 3 *report*: betake; entrust 6 *sure*: sound; reliable  
7 *sore*: disabled 8 *sore*: badly 11 *all this evil*: this whole disaster  
12 *spirituality*: clergy 13 *layeth*: alleges 14 *Church*: i.e., clergy  
15 *spiritual*: ecclesiastical 15–16, 19 *the third part*: one-third  
16 *temporal*: secular // *whoso*: whoever 17 *as much of*: as much about  
18 *made*: wrote // *though*: even if 21 *showeth*: says 23 *peradventure*: perhaps  
23 *ween*: suppose 24, 28 *apostate*: runaway religious  
25 *reckoning*: bookkeeping / financial status // *but if*: unless  
25 *limiter*: friar licensed to beg within certain boundaries 27 *beside*: otherwise  
28 *aught*: anything 29 *wist*: knew 30 *so*: that 30, 34 *ground*: basis  
31, 34 *reckoning*: calculation 32 *of their matters*: about their affairs  
32 *of* . . . *make*: about all the rest of the realm makes

churches; which is one plain lie, to begin with. Then he putteth that every parish, one with another, hath ten households in it—meaning besides such poor houses as rather ask alms than give; for of such, ye wot well, the friars get no quarterage.

5 And that point, albeit that the ground be not sure—yet because it may to many men seem likely, therefore we let it pass. But then he showeth further, for a sure truth, a thing that all men know surely for a great lie: that is to say, that of every household in every parish, “every of the five orders of friars

10 hath every quarter a penny.” For we know full well... and so do many of you too... first, that the common people speak but of *four* orders—the White, the Black, the Augustinian, and the Grey—and which is the fifth, in many parts of the realm few folk can tell you. For if the question were asked about, there would be, peradventure,

15 found many more (the more pity it is) that could name you the Green friars than the Crutched. Ye know right well also that in many a parish in England, of forty households ye shall not find four pay neither five pence a quarter nor four neither; and many a parish never a penny. And as for the five pence

20 quarterly, we dare boldly say that ye shall find it paid in very few parishes through the realm, if ye find it paid in any. And yet this thing being such a stark lie as many men already knoweth... and every man shortly may find it... he putteth as a plain, well-known truth, for a special post to bear

25 up his reckoning. For upon these grounds now maketh he a clear reckoning in this manner ensuing... which is good also to be known for folk that will learn to cast account: “There be 52,000 parishes; and in each of them 10 households. So have ye the whole sum of the households: 5 hundred thousand and 20

30 thousand.” Even just. Go now to the money, then. “Every order of the five orders of friars hath of every of these households a penny a quarter. *Summa*: For every house, among all the five orders, every quarter, five pence.” And hereby may ye learn that 5 times

1 *plain*: obvious    2 *with*: the same as    4, 8 *of*: from    4 *wot*: know  
 4 *quarterage*: quarterly payment    7 *showeth*: states    8 *surely*: with certainty  
 8 *great*: big    9, 31 *every of*: each of; every one of    10, 31 *hath*: receives  
 12 *White*: Whitefriars; i.e., Carmelites // *Black*: Blackfriars; i.e., Dominicans  
 12 *Grey*: Greyfriars; i.e., Franciscans    14 *about*: around // *peradventure*: perhaps  
 16 *Green friars*: i.e., Franciscan friars at Greenwich // *Crutched*: i.e., Holy Cross  
 20 *boldly*: confidently    27 *will learn*: want to learn how  
 27 *cast account*: do accounting    30 *even just*: just exactly    31 *hath of*: gets from  
 32 *summa*: total

1 maketh 5. “Now this is,” he showeth you, “among the five orders,  
of every house, for the whole year, twenty pence”; and so learn ye there  
that 4 times 5 maketh 20. “*Summa*,” saith he: “5 hundred  
thousand and 20 thousand quarters of angels.” Here we  
5 would not that because the realm hath no coin called the  
“quarter angel,” ye should therefore so far mistake the man as  
to ween that he meant so many quarter *sacks* of angels. For indeed  
(as we take him), by the naming and counting of so many  
“quarters of angels” he meaneth nothing else but to teach you a  
10 point of reckoning, and to make you perceive and know... that  
20 pennies is the fourth part of 6 shillings, 8 pennies. For after that rate it  
seemeth that he valueth the angel noble. Then goeth he forth  
with his reckoning and showeth you that 5 hundred thousand  
and 20 thousand quarters of angels... maketh 2 hundred  
15 threescore thousand half angels. And by this, lo, ye may  
perceive *clearly* that he meant not quarter sacks of angels; for  
then they would have held, ye wot well, many more pieces of  
forty pence... than forty times this whole sum cometh to.  
Then he showeth you further that 260,000 half  
20 angels... amount just unto 130,000 angels.  
Wherein every man may learn that the half of 60 is 30 and  
that the half of twain is one. Finally, then, he casteth it all together  
and bringeth it into pounds. “*Summa totalis*: 43  
thousand pounds, 3 hundred and 33 pounds, 6 shillings, 8 pennies.” But  
25 here, to continue the plainness of his reckoning... he forgot to  
tell you that 3 nobles make 20 shillings, and that 20 shillings make a pound.  
But who can now doubt of this reckoning, when it cometh  
so round... that of so great a sum he leaveth not out the odd  
noble? But, now, since all this reckoning is grounded upon two  
30 false grounds (one, upon 52,000 parish churches;  
the other, that every of the “five” orders hath, every quarter, of  
every household a penny), this reckoning of 43,333  
pounds, 6 shillings, 8 pennies, seemeth to come much like to pass as if he

1, 13, 19 *showeth*: tells    2 *of*: from    3 *summa*: total    7 *ween*: suppose  
7 *so*: that    11 *the fourth part*: one-fourth    14–15 2 *hundred . . . thousand*: 260,000  
17 *wot*: know    20 *just*: exactly    22 *casteth*: puts    23 *summa totalis*: sum total  
25 *plainness*: clarity; spelling out  
27 *doubt of*: be skeptical of; have any misgiving about  
28 *so round*: to such a perfect finish    31 *every*: every one // *hath*: receives  
31 *of*: from    33 *pass*: completion



would make a reckoning with you that every ass hath eight ears.  
 And for to prove it with, bear you first in hand that every  
 ass hath four heads... and then make "*Summa*: four heads."  
 Then might he boldly tell you further... that every ass head  
 5 hath two ears; for that is commonly true, except any be cut  
 off. "*Summa*, then: two ears. And so, *summa totalis*: eight ears." At  
 this account of eight ears of one ass ye make a lip and  
 think it so mad that no man would make no such. Surely it  
 were a mad account indeed; and yet, as mad as it were, it were  
 10 not so mad by half as is his sad and earnest account that he  
 maketh you now so solemnly of the friars' quarterage. For  
 this should he ground but upon *one* lie, whereas he groundeth the  
 other upon twain as open lies as this, and as great. Now might  
 we, and we would, say that all his reckoning were naught... because  
 15 he reckoneth 20 pennies for the quarter of the angel... and all  
 the remnant of his reckoning followeth forth upon the same  
 rate. But we would be loath to put him in the fault that he  
 deserve not. For surely it might be that he was not aware of the  
 new valuation; for he ran away before the valuation  
 20 changed. But now, upon this great sum of 43,333  
 pounds, 6 shillings, 8 pennies—upon these good grounds  
 heaped up together—he bringeth in his ragman's roll of his rude  
 rhetoric against the poor friars, beginning with such a great  
 exclamation that we heard him hither!... and suddenly were all  
 25 afraid when we heard him cry out so loud, "O grievous and  
 painful exactions thus yearly to be paid, from the which  
 the people of your noble progenitors, ancient Britons, ever  
 stood free!" And so goeth he forth against the poor friars with  
 "Danes" and "Saxons" and "noble King Arthur," and "Lucius the  
 30 emperor," the Romans, the Greeks, and the great Turk,  
 showing that all these had been utterly marred and never had been  
 able to do nothing in the war... if their people had given  
 their alms to friars.

2 *bear you first in hand*: first assert to you     4 *boldly*: with assurance  
 5 *except*: except if; unless     7 *ears of*: ears on // *lip*: face  
 9 *were*: would be     10 *sad*: serious     11 *quarterage*: quarterly payment  
 13 *open*: manifest; obvious     14 *naught*: worthless     16 *remnant*: rest  
 17 *put him in the fault*: put on him blame  
 19 *ran away*: i.e., ran away from England  
 22 *ragman's roll*: rambling repertoire // *rude*: amateurish  
 24 *hither*: here (in purgatory)     31 *showing*: saying  
 31 *had*: would have // *marred*: ruined

After his railing rhetoric ended against the friars, then  
 this sum of “43,333 pounds, 6 shillings, 8 pennies” he  
 addeth unto all the others that he said before that all the clergy  
 hath besides; which he summeth not, but saith that this and that  
 5 together amount unto “more” between them “than half” of the  
 whole “substance of the realm.” And this he affirmeth as boldly  
 as though he could reckon the whole revenues and substance of  
 all England... as readily as make the reckoning of his beggars’  
 purse.  
 10 Then showeth he that this better half of the whole substance  
 is shifted among fewer than the four-hundredth part of the  
 people. Which he proveth by that he saith that all the clergy  
 “compared unto the remnant of the men only” be “not the  
 hundredth person”; and if they be compared unto the remnant  
 15 of “men, women, and children,” so “are they not,” he saith,  
 “the four-hundredth person.” But, now, some folk that have not  
 very long ago, upon great occasions, taken the reckoning of  
 priests and religious places in every diocese... and, on the other  
 20 side, the reckoning and the number of the temporal men in  
 every county... know well that this man’s mad reckoning  
 goeth very far wide... and seemeth that he hath heard these wise  
 reckonings at some congregation of beggars. And yet, as  
 though because he hath said it he had therefore proved it, he  
 runneth forth in his railing rhetoric against the whole clergy—  
 25 and that in such a sort and fashion that very hard it were to  
 discern whether it be more false or more foolish. For first, all  
 the faults that any lewd priest or friar doth—all that layeth he  
 to the whole clergy; as well and as wisely as though he would lay  
 the faults of some lewd lay people to the default and blame of all  
 30 the whole temporalty. But this way liketh him so well that, thus  
 laying to the whole clergy the faults of such as be simple and faulty  
 therein; and yet not only laying to their charge the breach of  
 chastity, and abuse in fleshly living, of such as be naught... but  
 also madly, like a fond fellow, laying much *more* to their charge,

6, 7, 10 *substance*: capital; wealth    9 *purse*: income / money pouch. (A play on  
 the proverb “A beggar’s purse is bottomless.”)    10 *showeth*: asserts  
 11 *shifted*: distributed // *the four-hundredth part*: 0.25 percent; one out of four hundred  
 13, 14 *remnant*: rest    13–14 *the hundredth person*: one to ninety-nine; i.e., even 1 percent  
 17, 19 *reckoning*: count; census    19 *side*: hand // *temporal men*: lay people  
 21 *goeth very far wide*: is way off // *wise*: brilliant    25 *were*: would be  
 27 *faults*: bad things    27, 29 *lewd*: bad    27–28 *all . . . clergy*: he accuses the whole  
 clergy of all that    28 *well*: justifiably // *wisely*: sensibly  
 28–29 *lay the faults . . . to the*: i.e., adduce the wrongdoings . . . as evidence of  
 29–30 *default . . . temporalty*: i.e., wrongdoing and blameworthiness on the part of the whole  
 entire laity    30 *way*: approach // *liketh*: pleases  
 31 *laying to . . . the faults*: accusing . . . of the wrongdoings  
 31–32 *simple and faulty*: undeniably guilty    32 *therein*: in the clergy / of those wrongdoings  
 32–33 *the breach of chastity*: the breaking of their vow of celibacy  
 33 *abuse*: corrupt practice // *such as be naught*: the ones who are bad  
 34 *fond fellow*: foolish good-for-nothing

and much more earnestly reproving, the good and honest living of those that be *good*; whom he rebuketh and abhorreth because they keep their vows and persevere in chastity... for he saith that they be the marrers and destroyers of the realm, 5 bringing the land into wilderness for lack of generation, by their abstaining from wedding: then aggrieveth he his great crimes with heinous words, gay repetitions, and grievous exclamations, calling them “blood-suppers” and “drunken in the blood of holy martyrs and saints”—which he meaneth for the condemning 10 of holy heretics. “Greedy golofers” he calleth them, and “insatiable whirlpools,” because the temporalty hath given them possessions... and give to the friars their alms. And all virtuous, good priests and religious folk he calleth “idle holy thieves”... because they spend their time in preaching and 15 prayer. And then saith he, “These be they that make so many sick and sore beggars. These be they that make these whores and bawds. These be they that make these thieves. These be they that make so many idle persons. These be they that corrupt the generations. And these be they that with the abstaining from 20 wedding hinder so the generation of the people... that the realm shall at length fall in wilderness but if they wed the sooner.” And now, upon these heinous crimes laid unto the whole clergy—and laid, as every wise man seeth, some very falsely and some very foolishly—after his goodly repetitions he falleth to his great 25 and grievous exclamations, crying out upon the “great, broad, bottomless ocean sea of evils,” and upon the “grievous shipwreck of the commonwealth,” the “translating” of the King’s kingdom, and the “ruin” of the King’s “crown.” And therewith rolling in his rhetoric from figure to figure, he falleth to a vehement invocation of the King... and giveth him warning of 30 his great “loss,” asking him fervently, “Where is your sword, power, crown, and dignity become?”—as though the King’s Grace had clean lost his realm... especially for lack of people to reign upon... by cause that priests have no wives. And surely

1 *honest*: upright; respectable // *living*: way of living; conduct  
 2 *rebuketh*: finds fault with // *abhorreth*: detests 3 *chastity*: celibacy  
 4 *marrers*: ruiners 5, 20 *generation*: procreation; reproduction  
 6 *aggrieveth*: aggravates 7 *crimes*: charges // *heinous*: vitriolic  
 7 *gay*: showy 7, 25 *grievous*: melodramatic 8 *blood-suppers*: bloodsuckers  
 10, 13 *holy*: arrant; out-and-out // *golofers*: gluttons; gobblers 11 *temporalty*: laity  
 15, 16, etc. *make*: cause there to be 16 *sore*: disabled  
 17 *bawds*: brothel keepers; procurers 18–19 *the generations*: i.e. procreation (by committing adultery) 21 *in*: into // *but if*: unless  
 21 *at length*: eventually // *the sooner*: before then 22 *upon*: on top of  
 22 *heinous*: high 22, 23 *laid*: attributed  
 23 *every wise man*: everyone with any sense 24 *goodly*: grandiose  
 25, 26 *upon*: about 26 *ocean sea*: ocean // *evils*: disasters  
 26 *grievous*: calamitous; tragic 27 *translating*: taking away 28 *kingdom*: kingship  
 30 *vehement*: histrionic; dramatic 31 *fervently*: impassionedly  
 31–32 *where is . . . dignity become*: what has become of . . . dignity  
 34 *upon*: over // *by cause*: by reason of the fact

the man cannot fail of such eloquence; for he hath gathered these goodly flowers out of Luther's garden, almost word for word, without any more labor but only the translating out of the Latin into the English tongue.

5 But to inflame the King's Highness against the Church... he saith that the clergy laboreth "nothing" else but to make the King's subjects "fall into disobedience and rebellion" against His Grace.

10 This tale is a very likely thing! As though the clergy knew not that there is nothing earthly that so much keepeth themselves in quiet, rest, and surety... as doth the due obedience of the people to the virtuous mind of the Prince! Whose high goodness must needs have much more difficulty to defend the clergy and keep the Church in peace... if the people fell to disobedience and rebellion against their prince. And therefore every child  
15 may see that the clergy would never be so mad as to be glad to bring the people to disobedience and rebellion against the prince... by whose goodness they be preserved in peace... and were in such rebellion of the people likely to be the first that  
20 should fall in peril. But neither is there desired by the clergy nor never shall, by God's grace, happen... any such rebellion as the beggars' proctor and his fellows, whatsoever they say, long full sore to see.

25 But this man against the clergy fetcheth forth old, fern years and runneth up to King John's days, spending much labor about the praise and commendation of that good, gracious king, and crying out upon the pope that then was, and the clergy of England, and all the lords and all the commons of the realm... because King  
30 John, as he saith, made the realm "tributary" to the pope; wherein he meaneth, peradventure, the Peter pence. But surely therein is all his whole accusation a very cold tale when the truth is known. For so is it in deed that, albeit there be writers that say the Peter pence were granted by King John for the release of the  
35 interdiction, yet were they paid in deed ere ever King John's great-grandfather was born; and thereof is there proof enough. Now, if he say, as indeed some writers say, that King

1 *fail of*: want for; suffer any lack of    2 *goodly*: resplendent; impressive  
6 *laboreth*: strive for    9 *this . . . thing*: i.e., what a likely story  
11 *quiet . . . surety*: peace and quiet and safety    12 *the Prince*: i.e., King Henry  
15 *prince*: sovereign    16 *may*: can // *glad*: disposed    19 *were*: would be  
22 *proctor*: spokesman // *fellows*: cohorts    23 *full sore*: very badly  
24 *fern*: far bygone    25 *runneth up*: goes back  
26–27 *crying out upon*: denouncing    28 *commons*: commoners  
29 *saith*: puts it    30 *peradventure*: perhaps    31 *cold*: unconvincing; lame  
32 *deed*: actuality    34 *paid . . . ere*: in fact being paid before

John made England and Ireland tributary to the pope and the See Apostolic by the grant of a thousand marks: we dare surely say again that it is untrue... and that all Rome neither can show such a grant nor never could... and if they could, it were right naught worth. For never could any king of England give away the realm to the pope, or make the land tributary, though he would; nor no such money is there paid nor never was. And as for the Peter pence, if he mean them: neither was the realm *tributary* by them... nor King John never granted them. For they were paid before the Conquest, to the Apostolic See toward the maintenance thereof, but only by way of gratitude and alms. Now, as for the archbishop Stephen... whom, he saith, being a traitor to the king... the pope made Archbishop of Canterbury against the king's will: therein be there, as we suppose, two lies at once. For neither was that Stephen ever traitor against the king, as far as ever we have heard, nor the pope none otherwise made him archbishop than he made all others at that time; but the same Stephen was well and canonically chosen Archbishop of Canterbury by the convent of the monks at Christ's Church in Canterbury, to whom, as the king well knew and denied it not, the election of the Archbishop at that time belonged. Nor the king resisted not his election because of any treason that was laid against him, but was discontented therewith—and after that his election was passed and confirmed by the pope, he would not of long season suffer him to enjoy the bishopric—because himself had recommended another unto the monks... whom they rejected, and preferred Stephen. And that this is as we tell you, and not as the beggars' proctor writeth for a false foundation of his railing, ye shall may perceive not only by divers chronicles... but also by divers *monuments* yet remaining, as well of the election and confirmation of the said Archbishop... as of the long suit and process that after followed thereupon.

Now showeth he himself very wroth with the spiritual

3 *surely*: with certainty // *again*: in reply

5 *were right naught worth*: would be worth absolutely nothing

7 *though he would*: even if he wanted to 9 *by*: on account of

10 *Conquest*: i.e., Norman Conquest 12 *Stephen*: Stephen Langton (d. 1228).

18 *well and*: quite; good and 23 *laid*: alleged // *discontented*: unhappy

24 *therewith*: i.e., with the monks' choosing of Langton

25 *of long season*: for a long time // *suffer*: allow 26 *himself*: he himself

27 *preferred*: put forward 28 *proctor*: spokesman 29 *may*: be able to

30 *divers*: several // *chronicles*: historical accounts

30 *monuments*: documents; official records 32 *suit*: litigation

32 *process*: legal proceeding 34 *wroth*: angry // *spiritual*: ecclesiastical

jurisdiction, which he would in any wise were clean taken  
 away, saying that it must needs destroy the jurisdiction  
 temporal; whereas the good princes past have *granted*...  
 and the nobles in their times, and the people too, have by  
 5 plain parliaments *confirmed* them, and yet hitherto, blessed  
 be God, they agree better together... than to fall at variance for  
 the wild words of such a malicious makebate—which for  
 to bring the spirituality into hatred... saith that “they call”  
 their jurisdiction a “kingdom.” In which word he may say his  
 10 *pleasure*; but of *truth*, he seldom seeth any spiritual man at  
 this day that so calleth any spiritual jurisdiction that he useth.

Now, where this man useth as a proof thereof... that the  
 spirituality nameth themselves always before the temporalty:  
 this manner of naming cometh not of *them*, but of the good  
 15 mind and devotion of the *temporalty*—so far forth  
 that at the parliament, when that any acts be conceived, the  
 words be commonly so couched that the bill saith it is enacted  
 first by “our Sovereign Lord the King,” and by the lords “spiritual  
 and temporal,” and the commons, in that present parliament assembled.  
 20 And these bills be often drawn, put forth, and passed  
 first in the Commons House, where there is not one spiritual  
 man present.

But such truth as the man useth in this point... such useth  
 he where he calleth the poor friars’ alms an “exaction,” surmising  
 25 that it is exacted by force and the people compelled to  
 pay it; whereas every man well wotteth that they have, poor men,  
 no way to compel no man to give them aught, not though they  
 should die for default. But this good, honest, true man saith that  
 whoso will not pay the friars their quarterage, they will make  
 30 him be taken as a heretic. We be well content that ye take  
 this for no lie... as many as ever have known it true. But who  
 heard ever yet that any man taken for a heretic... did so  
 much as once say that he thought it conveyed by the malice of

1 *in any wise were clean*: by all means have completely 3, 19 *temporal*: secular  
 5 *plain*: plenary; fully assembled // *them*: i.e., the legal rights of the Church  
 5 *yet hitherto*: still to this day 6 *they*: i.e., the clergy and all these lay people  
 6 *agree better together*: better get along with one another // *at*: into  
 6 *variance*: discord; dissension // *for*: because of 7 *makebate*: troublemaker  
 7–8 *which* . . . *hatred*: who in order to make the clergy hated  
 9 *kingdom*: kingship; sovereignty // *word*: statement  
 9–10 *his pleasure*: what he wants to 10, 21–22 *spiritual man*: clergyman  
 11, 18 *spiritual*: ecclesiastical 11 *useth*: exercises 13 *spirituality*: clergy  
 13 *nameth*: mention 13, 15 *temporalty*: laity 15 *mind*: attitude  
 19 *commons*: commoners 20 *drawn*: drawn up 24 *surmising*: implying  
 26 *wotteth*: knows 27 *ought*: anything // *though*: even if  
 28 *default*: lack of it // *true*: truthful 29 *whoso*: whoever  
 29 *quarterage*: quarterly payment 29–30 *make him be*: have him; cause him to be  
 30, 32 *taken*: arrested and taken into custody 32 *for*: as  
 33 *conveyed*: brought about

any friar for refusing to pay the friar's quarterage? This lie, lo, is a little too loud for any man that were not waxen shameless!

5 Like truth is there in this that he saith: if any man trouble a priest for any temporal suit, the clergy forthwith will make him a heretic and burn him... but if he be content to "bear a fagot for their pleasure." The falsehood of this cannot be unknown. For men know well in many a shire how often that many folk indict priests of rape at the sessions. And as there is sometimes a rape committed indeed—so is there *ever* a rape  
10 *surmised*, were the women never so willing... and oftentimes where there was nothing done at all. And yet of any such that so procured priests to be indicted, how many have men heard taken and accused for heretics? Ye see not very many sessions pass but in one shire or other this pageant is played;  
15 whereas through the realm, such as be put to penance for heresy... be not so many in many years as there be priests indicted in few years. And yet of all such so taken, for heresy, he shall not find four this fourscore years—peradventure not this four *hundred* years—that ever pretended themselves so  
20 troubled for indicting of a priest. So that his lie is herein too large to get any cloak to cover it!

Now, where he saith that the "captains" of Dr. Alen's "kingdom" have "heaped" him up "benefice upon benefice," and have "rewarded" him "ten times as much" as the "five hundred pounds"  
25 which he "paid" for a fine by the praemunire; and that thus hath the spirituality rewarded him "because he fought so manfully" against the King's "crown" and his "dignity": all that know the matter do well perceive that the man doth in this matter as he doth in others—either lieth for his pleasure... or else little wotteth how that the matter stood. For it is well known that  
30 Dr. Alen was in the praemunire pursued only by *spiritual* men—and had much less favor, and much more rigor, showed him therein by the greatest of the clergy... than by any temporal men.

2 *loud*: blatant // *waxen*: gone    3 *trouble*: cause trouble to  
4 *for any temporal suit*: i.e., by filing any charge against him in a secular court  
5 *make him*: make him out to be // *but if he be content*: unless he is willing  
6 *bear a fagot*: carry (around his neck) a bundle of sticks; i.e., publicly recant  
8 *at the sessions*: i.e., when the courts are in session    9 *ever*: always  
10 *surmised*: alleged // *never so*: no matter how    13, 17 *taken*: (were) arrested  
14 *pageant*: charade    17 *yet*: even    18 *fourscore*: A score is twenty.  
18 *peradventure*: perhaps    19 *pretended*: professed  
19–20 *so troubled*: (to have been) put through that ordeal  
22 *Dr. Alen's*: See note for 116/27–28.  
25 *for . . . praemunire*: for his praemunire fine. (See note for 116/28.)  
26 *spirituality*: ecclesiastical authorities  
27–28 *the matter*: i.e., the facts of the matter    30 *wotteth*: knows  
31 *pursued*: prosecuted // *spiritual*: ecclesiastical    33 *temporal*: lay

He saith also to the King's Highness, "Your Grace may see what a work there is in London—how the bishop rageth for indicting of certain curates of extortion and incontinency the last year, in the wardmote inquest." Would not upon these  
 5 words every stranger ween that there had been in London many curates indicted of extortion and rape, and that the bishop would labor sore to defend their faults, and that there were about that matter a great commotion in all the city? How shameless is he that can tell this tale... in *writing*, to the *King's*  
 10 *Highness*, for a *truth*... whereof neither bishop nor curate, nor mayor, nor alderman, nor any man else... ever heard word *spoken*? It were hard to say whether we should take it for wiliness or lack of wit... that he saith all this work was in the City "the last year"—and then his book neither was put up to the King...  
 15 nor beareth any date. So that a man would ween he were a fool that so writeth of "the last year" that the reader cannot wit which year it was. But yet ween we he doth it for a wiliness. For since he knoweth his tale false, it is wisdom to leave the time unknown, that his lie may be uncontrolled. For he would that men should ween  
 20 alway that it was in one year or other.

But finally, for a special point, he bringeth in Richard Hunne, and saith that if he had not "commenced an action of praemunire against a priest, he had been yet alive and none heretic at all." Now is it of truth well known... that he was  
 25 detected of heresy before the praemunire sued or thought upon. And he began that suit to help to stop the other with; as indeed it did for the while. For albeit that he that was sued in the praemunire was nothing belonging to the bishop of London, before whom Richard Hunne was detected of  
 30 heresy: yet, lest such as would be glad sinisterly to misconstrue everything toward the blame of the clergy... might have occasion to say that the matter were hotly handled against him to force him to forbear his suit of the praemunire, the bishop therefore did the more *forbear*... till it appeared clearly  
 35 to the temporal judges and all that were anything learned in the

1 *may*: can    2, 13 *work*: to-do; ruckus    3, 6, 10 *curate(s)*: parish priest(s)  
 3 *incontinency*: unchastity    4 *wardmote*: precinct-meeting  
 4 *upon*: on the basis of; from    5 *stranger*: foreigner  
 5, 15, etc. *ween*: suppose; think    7 *would labor sore*: was trying hard  
 7 *faults*: wrongdoings    8 *great*: big    12 *were*: would be    13 *wit*: sense  
 13 *all this*: this whole // *the City*: i.e., London    14 *put up*: presented  
 16 *wit*: tell    18 *wisdom*: a wise thing to do    19 *be uncontrolled*: go unchecked  
 20 *alway*: in any event; at any rate    21 *in*: up  
 23, 25, etc. *praemunire*: See note for 116/28.    23 *had*: would have // *yet*: still  
 25, 29 *detected*: accused    25 *sued*: i.e., suit was filed // *upon*: about  
 28 *nothing belonging to*: not at all under the jurisdiction of    30 *glad*: disposed  
 30 *sinisterly*: disingenuously; deviously    33 *forbear*: give up; drop  
 34 *forbear*: hold back // *appeared clearly*: became completely evident  
 35 *temporal*: secular // *anything*: at all



temporal law... that his suit of the praemunire was nothing worth in the king's law, forasmuch as by plain statute the matter was out of question that the pleas to be held upon *mortuaries* belong unto the *spiritual* court. After which

5 thing well appearing, the matter went forth before the bishop... and he there well proved naught, and his books after brought forth... such, and so noted (with his own hand, in the margins), as every wise man well saw what he was... and was full sorry to see that he was such as they there saw him proved.

10 Now goeth he further and asketh the King, "Did not Dr. Horsey and his accomplices most heinously, as all the world knoweth, murder in prison that honest merchant Richard Hunne... for that he sued your writ of praemunire against a priest that wrongfully held him in plea in a spiritual court... for

15 a matter whereof the knowledge belonged unto *your* high courts? And what punishment hath he for it? After that he had paid, as it is said, six hundred pounds for him and his accomplices—as soon as he had obtained your most gracious pardon, he was immediately promoted by the captains of his

20 kingdom with benefice upon benefice, to the value of four times as much! Who is he of their kingdom that will not rather take courage to commit like offense, seeing the promotions that fell to such men for their so offending? So weak and blunt is your sword to strike at one of the offenders of this

25 crooked and perverse generation!" We have here somewhat encumbered you with a piece of his own words... because ye should have a show of his vehement eloquence... with which the bold beggars' proctor so arrogantly presumeth in his bill to ask the King a question... and to bind His Highness to answer as His

30 Mastership appointed him. For if His Grace say nay: then he telleth him before... that "all the world" wotteth *yes*. But surely if he call "all the world" all that ever God made, then is there three parts that knoweth the contrary. For we dare be bold to warrant you that in heaven, hell, and here among us in purgatory,

1 *temporal*: secular    3 *out of*: beyond // *upon*: about  
 3 *mortuaries*: See note for 115/20.    4, 14 *spiritual*: ecclesiastical  
 6 *he*: i.e., Hunne (was) // *naught*: wicked    7 *noted*: annotated  
 7 *with his own hand*: in his own handwriting  
 8 *every wise man*: everyone with any sense // *full*: very  
 10 *Dr.*: See note for 116/27.    12 *honest*: respectable    24 *blunt*: dull  
 25 *encumbered*: burdened    26 *piece*: section; chunk // *because*: so that  
 27 *vehement*: dramatic    28 *proctor*: spokesman    31 *wotteth*: knows  
 32–33 *three parts*: i.e., three-fourths of it  
 33 *be bold to warrant*: venture to guarantee

of all that this man so boldly affirmeth... the contrary is well  
 and clearly known. And if he call “the world” but only men  
 among you there living upon middle earth: yet so shall he peradventure  
 find in some part of “the world,” if he seek it well,  
 5 more than four or five good, honest men... that never heard speak of  
 the matter. And of such as have heard of the matter and know it  
 well, he shall find enough—and specially, we think, the King’s  
 Grace himself (whose Highness he is so homely to ask the question  
 and appoint him his answer himself!)—that of all five  
 10 things which he hath here in so few lines affirmed... there is  
 not one true, but lies every one. For first, to begin where he  
 leaveth: when he saith that the clergy have, since the death of  
 Richard Hunne, “promoted” Dr. Horsey with “benefice upon  
 benefice,” “four times as much” as “six hundred pounds”—the plain  
 15 untruth of this point may every man soon know that will soon  
 inquire. For he liveth yet at *Exeter*... and there liveth upon  
 such as he had before, without that new heap of benefices  
 given him by the “captains” of his “kingdom” for killing of  
 Richard Hunne—or thank, either, save only of God for his long  
 20 patience in his undeserved trouble. But to the end that ye may see  
 how little this man forceth how loud the lie, consider that he  
 saith that the clergy gave unto Dr. Horsey, after he came out  
 of prison, “benefice upon benefice, to the value of four times as  
 much” as “six hundred pounds.” Now, if this be true, then hath Dr.  
 25 Horsey had in benefices—besides all such as he had before  
 his trouble—the value of two thousand four hundred pounds! We trust  
 that the man, his substance, and his livelihood is so well known  
 that we need not to tell that the beggars’ proctor in this point  
 hath made one loud lie. Another is that he saith that Hunne  
 30 was kept in plea in the spiritual law for a matter determinable in  
 the king’s court: for the matter was for a *mortuary*, which by  
*plain statute* is declared to pertain to the *spiritual* law. The  
 third is that Hunne was “honest”—except heresy be honest. The  
 fourth is that “Dr. Horsey and his accomplices” murdered him

1–2 *well and*: quite; good and    3 *middle earth*: i.e., that place (earth) that is  
 between the one on high (heaven) and the nether regions (hell and purgatory)  
 3 *peradventure*: perhaps    4 *seek*: search    5 *speak*: anyone speak; i.e., any mention  
 6 *matter*: affair; case    6–7 *know it well*: are very knowledgeable about it  
 7 *specially*: in particular    8 *is so homely*: takes such liberty with  
 12 *leaveth*: i.e., leaves off    14 *plain*: patent    19 *thank*: (getting any) credit  
 19 *of*: from    21 *forceth*: cares    21, 29 *loud*: blatant  
 27 *substance*: financial worth    28 *proctor*: spokesman  
 29 *made*: told    30, 32 *spiritual*: ecclesiastical    31 *matter*: case // *for a*: about a  
 31 *mortuary*: See note for 115/20.    33 *honest*: respectable // *except*: unless

in prison; for thereof is the contrary well known, and that the man hanged *himself*, for despair, despite, and for lack of grace. We might, and we would, lay for the fifth... the payment which he speaketh of: the “six hundred pounds” with which money he  
5 would men should ween that he bought his pardon. Wherein he layeth a good great sum... to the end that folk well witting that Dr. Horsey was not likely to have so much money of his own... should ween therewith that the clergy laid out the money among them... and then gave him benefices whereof he might pay them  
10 again. But this layeth he from himself... and showeth not to whom; for he saith “it is said” so. And yet were it no wrong that it were accounted his own... till he put it better from him... and prove of whom he heard it. Howbeit, since there is other store enough, we shall leave *this* lie in question between him and we  
15 wot ne’er whom else... and we shall for the fifth lay you that lie that he layeth forth himself: that is to wit, where he saith that the chancellor purchased the King’s “most gracious pardon” for the murdering of Hunne. For this is the truth: that he never sued any pardon therefor; but after that the matter  
20 had been by long time and great diligence so far forth examined... that the King’s Highness at length (as time always trieth out the truth) well perceived his innocence, and theirs also that were accused and indicted with him, his noble Grace when they were arraigned upon that indictment and thereto  
25 pleaded that they were not guilty... commanded his attorney general to confess their plea to be true; which is the thing that His Highness, as a most virtuous prince, useth for to do... when the matter is not only just, but also *known* for just, upon the part of the party defendant. By cause that, like as  
30 where the matter appeareth doubtful he doth, as reason is, suffer it to go forth and letteth the truth be tried, so where he seeth and perceiveth the right to be on the other side, His Highness will in no wise have the wrong set forth or maintained in his

2 *despite*: spite    3, 9 *might*: could    3 *would*: would like to  
5 *men should ween*: have people think    6 *layeth*: alleges  
6 *good great*: nice big // *witting*: knowing    8 *ween*: suppose  
8 *laid out*: put up    10 *again*: back // *this*: i.e., this supposition  
10 *layeth he from*: he distances from / he ascribes not to // *showeth*: says  
11 *were it no wrong*: would it be no injustice    12 *from*: away from  
13 *of*: from    15 *wot ne’er*: have no idea  
16 *himself*: i.e., as coming from himself    19 *sued*: petitioned; tried to get  
19 *therefor*: for that // *matter*: charge    22 *trieth*: sifts  
26 *confess*: acknowledge // *true*: correct    27 *useth for*: makes it his practice  
28 *matter*: claim    29 *by cause*: by reason of the fact    30 *matter*: case  
30 *as reason is*: as stands to reason // *suffer*: allow  
31 *tried*: ascertained (by means of a trial)    33 *in no wise*: by no means  
33 *set forth*: advanced // *maintained*: upheld

name. Now, when it was, then, thus indeed—that neither  
 the chancellor nor any man else ever sued any charter of  
 pardon for the matter—this is, then, the fifth lie that this man hath  
 made in so few lines. Which things whoso well consider... cannot  
 5 but marvel of the sore pithy point wherewith he knitteth  
 up all his heavy matter, saying to the King, “Who is there  
 of their kingdom that will not take courage to commit like offense,  
 seeing the promotions that fall to such men for their  
 offending? So weak and so blunt is your sword to strike at one  
 10 of the offenders of this crooked and perverse generation!” Lo  
 how this great zelator of the commonwealth crieth out upon  
 the King... that his sword is not strong and sharp to strike off  
 innocents’ heads! He hath of likelihood ransacked up all Dame  
 Rhetoric’s rolls to find out this goodly figure—to call upon  
 15 the King and ask His Highness, “Where is your sword?” and tell  
 him his sword is too dull—as though he would bid him bear it to  
 the cutlers to grind... that he might strike off *Dr. Horsey’s*  
 head... whom His Grace had found faultless... and testified him  
 himself for an innocent! If this man were *here* matched with  
 20 some such as he is himself, that hath the eloquence that he  
 hath; that could find out such comely figures of rhetoric  
 as he findeth, set forth and furnished with such vehement  
 words as he thundereth out like thunderblasts; that hath no  
 less matters in his mouth than the “great, broad, bottomless  
 25 ocean sea full of evils,” the “weakness” and dullness of the King’s  
 “sword,” the “translation” of the King’s “kingdom,” the “ruin” of  
 the King’s “crown”—with great exclamations (“O grievous  
 and painful exactions!” “O case most horrible!” “O grievous  
 shipwreck of the commonwealth!”)—what might one that had suchlike  
 30 eloquence say *here* to him? Surely so much, and in such  
 wise, as we seely, poor, puling souls neither can devise nor  
 utter. But verily, two or three things we see and may well say:  
 that neither be these great matters meet for the mouth of the

2 *sued*: tried to obtain    4 *made*: told // *whoso*: whoever (will)    5 *of*: at  
 5 *sore*: terribly    5–6 *knitteth* . . . *matter*: wraps up his whole weighty case  
 9 *blunt*: dull    11 *zelator*: zealous supporter // *upon*: against  
 14, 21 *find out*: come up with    14 *goodly figure*: splendid metaphor  
 16 *bear*: take    17 *grind*: sharpen    18 *faultless*: not guilty  
 19, 30 *here*: i.e., here in purgatory    21 *find out*: come up with  
 21 *comely*: felicitous    22 *vehement*: dramatic    24 *less*: lesser  
 25 *ocean sea*: ocean // *evils*: disasters    26 *translation*: taking away  
 26 *kingdom*: kingship; sovereignty    28 *case*: situation // *grievous*: tragic  
 31 *seely, poor, puling*: poor, pitiful, crying // *devise*: think of    33 *meet*: fitting

5 beggars' proctor... nor such preaching of reformation and  
 amendment of the world meet matters for him to meddle with  
 which with open heresies and plain, pestilent errors busily  
 goeth about to poison and infect the world; nor very convenient  
 10 for him to take upon him to give *counsel* to a *king*...  
 when he showeth himself to have so much presumption and  
 so little wit... as to ask the King a question and appoint him  
 his answer—and therein to tell him that “all the world” knoweth that  
 15 thing to be true... which the King hath himself already, by  
 his attorney and his judges in open judgment, and in his high  
 court of record, testified and confessed for false. If that man  
 were not for malice as mad... not as a March hare, but as a mad  
 20 dog that runneth forth and snatcheth he seeth not at whom—  
 the fellow could never else with such open folly so suddenly  
 15 oversee himself. But it were wrong with the world if  
 malice had as much wit, circumspection, and providence in  
 the pursuit of an ungracious purpose... as it hath haste, evil  
 will, and wiliness in the first enterprising. For as an ape hath  
 20 some similitude of a man, and as a fox hath a certain wiliness  
 somewhat resembling an imperfect wit: so fareth  
 this fellow, that beginneth, as one would ween, at good zeal and  
 charity borne toward the poor beggars, but forthwith he  
 25 showeth himself that he nothing else intendeth... but openly  
 to destroy the clergy, first... and after that, covertly, as many as  
 25 have aught above the state of beggars. And whereas he would in  
 the beginning, by the touching of great matters, fain seem very  
 wise—within a while in the progress he proveth himself a very  
 stark fool. And whereas he would seem to show many notable  
 30 things which no man had marked but he—he provideth wisely  
 that no man may believe him, he maketh so many lies... and all  
 that ever he doth further, he buildeth upon the same.

He layeth that the living which the clergy hath is the  
 only cause that there be so many beggars that be sick and sore.  
 Very well and wisely; as though the clergy by their substance  
 35 made men blind and lame! The clergy also is the

1 *proctor*: spokesman    2 *meet*: suitable // *meddle*: involve himself  
 3 *which*: who // *open*: manifest // *pestilent*: noxious; spiritually life-threatening  
 4 *convenient*: appropriate    7, 16 *wit*: sense    10 *open judgment*: a public trial  
 11 *testified*: attested // *confessed*: acknowledged    14, 21 *fellow*: sorry man  
 14 *open folly*: patent foolishness // *suddenly*: rashly  
 15 *oversee himself*: make such blunders // *it were*: i.e., something would be  
 16 *providence*: prudent foresight    17 *pursuit*: following through with; carrying out of  
 17 *ungracious*: ungodly; wicked // *purpose*: plan // *haste*: rashness // *evil*: ill  
 18 *first enterprising*: initial undertaking (of it)    19 *similitude of*: similarity to  
 20 *imperfect wit*: incomplete intelligence    21 *ween*: think // *at*: with  
 22 *forthwith*: right away    22–23 *he showeth himself*: he himself makes it clear  
 25 *auhgh*: anything    26 *touching*: treating // *fain*: i.e., like to  
 28 *would* . . . *show*: wants to appear to be pointing out  
 29 *marked*: observed; been aware of    30 *may*: can // *maketh*: tells  
 32 *layeth*: claims    33 *sore*: disabled    34 *substance*: wealth

cause, he saith, why they “die for hunger.” As though every layman gave to beggars all that ever he could... and the clergy gave them never a groat. And as though there would not more beggars walk abroad if the clergy left off such laymen as they  
5 find.

But he proveth you that the clergy *must* needs be the cause why there be so many poor men and beggars. For he saith that before the clergy came in, there were but few poor people—and yet they begged not, neither, but men, he saith, gave them  
10 “enough unasked.” But, now, where sat he when he saw the people give poor folk so fast their alms unasked that no man needed to beg, before the clergy began? This man of likelihood is of great age... and ere e’er the clergy began was wont to sit at St. Savior’s with a sore leg; but he begged not, men gave him so much  
15 unasked. For whereas he allegeth the Bible for him, in the Acts of the Apostles... verily we marvel much what the man meaneth. For there he may see that the apostles and the deacons, which were then the clergy, had altogether in their own hands... and distributed to every man as themselves thought good. And therefore  
20 we wonder what he meaneth, to speak of that book. For we think that he meaneth not to hurt the clergy so now... as to put all into their hands. And surely but if he mean so... else is this place nothing for his purpose.

Now, herein he showeth also a high point of his wit: where  
25 he saith that the great living that the clergy hath—which he layeth (and lieth) to be more than half of the whole revenues and substance of the realm—is shifted among fewer than the four-hundredth part of the people. As though that of the clergy’s part there had no lay people their living—no servant any  
30 wages, none artificer any money for working, no carpenter, no mason, any money for building—but all the money that ever cometh in their hands, they put it by and by in their own bellies, and no layman hath any relief thereof. And therefore this point was wisely written, ye see as well as we. Now, for the truth thereof:  
35 if it were true that he saith, that the clergy compared to the

3 *groat*: A coin worth about a nickel.    4 *walk abroad*: be walking around; be out there  
4 *left off*: let go    5 *find*: provide a living for (by having them in their employ)  
9 *yet*: even    13 *ere e’er*: before ever    14 *sore*: bum  
15 *allegeth the Bible for him*: claims that the Bible backs him up  
15–16 *in the Acts of the Apostles*: See Acts 4:34–35.    16 *marvel much*: much wonder  
17 *may*: can // *which*: who    18 *had altogether in*: received everything into  
22 *but if*: unless    23 *place*: text // *nothing for*: not at all to  
24 *wit*: perspicacity; astuteness    26 *layeth*: alleges    27 *substance*: capital; wealth  
27 *shifted*: distributed    27–28 *the four-hundredth part*: 0.25 percent; one out of four hundred  
30 *artificer*: craftsman    32 *in their*: into their // *by and by in*: directly into  
33 *hath*: gets // *relief*: aid    34 *wisely*: brilliantly

residue of the men only... be not one to a hundred, then shall ye not need to fear the great Turk and he came tomorrow—except ye suffer among you to grow in great number these Lutherans that favor him. For we dare make you the warranty that if his lie  
 5 be true... there be more men a great many in London and within four shires next adjoining... than the great Turk bringeth into Hungary. But in this ye must hold him excused... for he meddleth not much with algorism, to see to what sum the number of men ariseth that is multiplied by a hundred. All his practice in  
 10 multiplication meddleth with nothing but lies; and therein, match him with whom ye will, he will give you a hundred for one. Whereof if ye lack, let this be the example: that he saith, “If the abbot of Westminster should sing every day as many Masses for its founders as he is bound to do by its foundation, a thousand  
 15 monks were too few.” Ye doubt not, we think, but he can tell you who hath bound them, to how many... and so can make ye the plain reckoning that the abbot is bound in the year to no fewer Masses than 365,000. He knoweth what is every man’s duty save his own. He is meet to be a beggars’ proctor... that can so prowl  
 20 about and can tell allthing.

But now were all his painted process, ye wot well, nothing worth but if he devised against all these mischiefs some good and wholesome help. It is, therefore, a world to see what politic devices he findeth against the “great, broad, bottomless ocean sea of  
 25 evils”—what remedies to repair the “ruin” of the King’s “crown,” to restore and uphold his honor and “dignity,” to make his “sword” sharp and strong, and, finally, to save all the “shipwreck of the commonwealth.” Ye would peradventure ween that the man would now devise some good, wholesome laws for help of all these matters.  
 30 Nay, he will none thereof. For he saith he doubteth that the King is not able to make any law against them. For he saith that the clergy is “stronger” in the Parliament than the King himself. For in the higher house... he reckoneth that the spirituality is more in number and stronger than the temporalty. And in the

1 *residue*: rest    2 *and*: if // *except*: except if; unless    3 *suffer*: allow  
 4 *warranty*: guarantee    7 *meddleth*: messes    8 *algorism*: arithmetic  
 10 *meddleth*: has to do    14 *foundation*: foundationary charter  
 15 *were*: would be    18 *save*: except    19 *meet*: fit // *proctor*: spokesman  
 20 *about*: around // *allthing*: all things  
 21 *all his painted process*: his whole specious line of argument // *wot*: know  
 22 *mischiefs*: calamities    23 *help*: remedy // *politic devices*: sagacious expedients  
 24 *findeth*: comes up with; provides // *ocean sea*: ocean    25 *evils*: disasters  
 27 *save*: avert // *all the*: the entire    28 *peradventure*: perhaps // *ween*: think  
 30 *will none thereof*: will have none of that // *doubteth*: fears  
 33 *spirituality*: clergy    34 *temporalty*: laity

Commons House he saith that “all the learned men of the realm”  
 except the King’s “learned council” be feed with the Church to  
 “speak” “against” the King’s “crown” and “dignity” in the Parliament,  
 “for them”... and therefore he thinketh the King unable to make  
 5 any law against the faults of the clergy.

This beggars’ proctor would fain show himself a man of great  
 experience, and one that had great knowledge of the manner and  
 order used in the King’s parliaments. But then he speaketh so  
 savorly thereof... that it well appeareth, of his wise words, he  
 10 neither can any skill thereof... nor never came in the house.  
 For as for the higher house, first, the King’s own royal person alone  
 more than counterpoiseth all the lords spiritual present with  
 him—and the temporal, too. And over this, the spiritual lords  
 can never in number exceed the lords temporal, but must  
 15 needs be far underneath them, if it please the King. For His  
 Highness may call thither by his writ many more temporal lords  
 at his own pleasure. And being as they be... there was never yet  
 seen that the spiritual lords banded themselves there as a  
 party against the temporal lords. But it *hath* been seen that  
 20 the thing which the spiritual lords have moved and thought  
 reasonable... the temporal lords have denied and refused; as  
 appeareth upon the motion made for legitimation of the  
 children born before the marriage of their parents. Wherein  
 albeit that the reformation which the lords spiritual moved...  
 25 was a thing that nothing pertained to their own commodity;  
 and albeit that they laid also for their part the constitution  
 and ordinance of the Church and the laws of other Christian  
 countries: yet could they not obtain against the lords temporal,  
 that nothing alleged to the contrary but their own  
 30 wills. And therefore in the higher house the spiritual party  
 never appeared yet so strong that they might overmatch the  
 temporal lords. And then how much are they too feeble for them  
 and the King too—whose Highness alone is over strong for them  
 both... and may by his writ call to his parliament more temporal  
 35 lords when he will. Now, where he saith that in the Commons House

2 *feed with*: bribed by    5 *faults*: wrongdoings    6 *proctor*: spokesman  
 6 *fain*: i.e., like to    7 *manner*: convention; etiquette  
 8 *order*: protocol; mode of procedure    9 *savorly*: perspicaciously; expertly  
 9 *of*: from // *wise*: brilliant  
 10 *can any skill thereof*: knows anything about it  
 12 *counterpoiseth*: equals in power    12, 13, etc. *spiritual*: ecclesiastical  
 13, 14, etc. *temporal*: secular    13 *over this*: furthermore  
 15 *underneath*: fewer than  
 17 *being as they be*: i.e., these lords being *spiritual* ones  
 20, 24 *moved*: proposed    21 *refused*: rejected  
 22 *appeareth upon*: is evidenced by  
 25 *nothing . . . commodity*: there was nothing in for them    28 *obtain*: win out  
 29 *that*: who // *alleged*: adduced    31 *might*: could    33 *over*: too



“all the learned men” of the realm are feed to speak for the clergy  
 except the King’s “learned council”: there be two follies at once. For  
 neither be all the learned men of the realm knights or burgesses  
 in the Commons House... and the King’s “learned council” is  
 5 not there at all. And therefore it seemeth that he hath heard somewhat  
 of some men that had seen as little as himself. And surely if  
 he had been *in* the Commons House (as some of us have been), he  
 should have seen the spirituality not gladly spoken for. And we  
 little doubt but that ye remember acts and statutes passed at  
 10 sundry parliaments... such, and in such wise, and some of them so  
 lately, as yourselves may see that either the clergy is not the stronger  
 part in the King’s Parliament... or else have no mind to strive.  
 And for the further proof that the King’s Highness is not so weak  
 and unable in his own Parliament as this beggars’ proctor so  
 15 presumptuously telleth him, His Grace well knoweth, and all his  
 people too, that in their own convocations His Grace never devised  
 nor desired anything in his life... that ever was denied  
 him. And therefore this gay invention of this beggars’ proctor—  
 that he feigneth the King’s Highness to be in his high  
 20 court of Parliament more weak and feeble than the clergy—is a  
 very feeble device.

But, now, since he will have no *law* devised for the remedy of  
 his great complaints, what help hath he devised else? The  
 help of all this gear is, he saith, none other thing... but to let  
 25 him and such royal railers... rail and jest upon the Church... and  
 tell the people the priests’ faults—and for the lewdness of *part*,  
 bring the *whole* clergy in contempt and hatred among all the  
 temporal folk. Which thing he saith the King must needs suffer...  
 if he “will eschew the ruin of [his] crown and dignity.” And  
 30 this thing, he saith, shall be more “speedful” and effectual in the  
 “matter”... “than all the laws that ever can be made, be they never so  
 strong.” Lo, good lords and masters, then shall ye need no more  
 parliaments! For here is, God be thanked, an easy way, wisely  
 found, to remedy—with railing!—the “great, broad, bottomless

1 *feed*: bribed    2 *follies*: idiocies    5–6 *somewhat of*: something from  
 8 *spirituality*: clergy // *gladly*: regularly; as a matter of course  
 11 *lately*: recently    12 *part*: element  
 12 *no mind to strive*: no wish to put up a fight    14 *unable*: powerless  
 14, 18 *proctor*: spokesman    18 *gay invention*: showy contrivance  
 21 *device*: ploy    23, 24 *help*: solution  
 24 *of all this gear*: to this whole mess    25 *royal*: first-rate  
 25 *jeer upon*: jeer at    26 *faults*: wrongdoings // *lewdness*: badness  
 28 *temporal*: lay // *suffer*: allow    29 *eschew*: avoid  
 30 *speedful*: successful    31 *matter*: issue; problem // *never so*: no matter how  
 32 *masters*: sirs    33 *wisely*: ingeniously; brilliantly

ocean sea of evils,” and to save the commonwealth from shipwreck, and the King’s crown from ruin.

5 But now to the poor beggars. What remedy findeth their proctor for them? To make hospitals? Nay, beware of that; thereof he will none, in no wise. For thereof he saith “the more the worse”... because they be profitable to priests. What remedy, then? Give them any money? Nay, nay, not a groat. What other thing, then? Nothing in the world will serve but this: that if the King’s Grace “will build a sure hospital that never shall fail to relieve” all the sick beggars forever, let him give nothing to them... but look what the clergy hath, and take all that from them. Is not here a goodly mischief for a remedy? Is not this a royal feast, to leave these beggars meatless... and then send more to dinner with them? Oh, the wise! Here want we voice and eloquence to set out an exclamation in the praise and commendation of this special, high provision. This bill putteth he forth in the poor beggars’ name. But we verily think if themselves have as much wit as their proctor lacketh, they had liefer see their bill-maker burned... than their supplication sped. For they may soon perceive that he mindeth not their alms... but only the spoil of the clergy. For so that the clergy lose it—he neither deviseth further... nor further forceth who have it.

25 But it is easy to see whereof springeth all his displeasure. He is angry, and fretteth, at the spiritual jurisdiction... for the punishment of heretics and burning of their erroneous books. For ever upon that string he harpeth—very angry with the burning of Tyndale’s Testament. For these matters he calleth them “blood-suppers drunk in the blood of holy saints and martyrs.” Ye marvel, peradventure, which “holy saints and martyrs” he meaneth. Surely by his “holy saints and martyrs” he meaneth their holy schismatics and heretics... for whose just punishment these folk that are of the same sect fume, fret, froth, and foam... as fierce and as angrily as a new-hunted sow. And for the rancor conceived upon this displeasure... cometh up all his complaint of the possessions of the clergy. Wherein he spareth and forbeareth the nuns yet, because they have no jurisdiction

1 *ocean sea*: ocean // *evils*: disasters 4, 18 *proctor*: spokesman 5 *will*: wants  
 5 *in no wise*: by no means 7 *groat*: i.e., nickel 9 *will*: wants to  
 9 *sure*: trustworthy 12 *goodly*: huge; big fat // *mischief*: evil  
 13 *meatless*: without food 14 *the wise*: i.e., what genius // *want*: lack  
 16 *high*: superb 17 *wit*: sense 18 *had liefer*: would rather  
 19 *sped*: expedited 20 *he mindeth not*: his objective is not (an increasing of)  
 20 *spoil*: despoiling 21 *so that*: so long as  
 21–22 *deviseth further*: thinks beyond that 22 *forceth*: cares  
 24, 32 *fret(teth)*: chafe(s) 24 *spiritual*: ecclesiastical // *for*: because of  
 27 *Testament*: i.e., translation of the New Testament // *matters*: things  
 28 *blood-suppers*: bloodsuckers 29 *marvel*: wonder  
 29 *peradventure*: perhaps 31 *holy*: arrant; flagrant // *for*: on account of  
 32 *sect*: heretical belief system 33 *new-hunted*: just-now hunted  
 36 *forbeareth*: leaves alone // *yet*: as yet; so far

upon heretics; for else he would have cried out upon their possessions too. But this is now no new thing, nor the first time that heretics have been in hand with the matter. For first was there, in the eleventh year of King Henry IV, one John  
 5 Badby burned for heresy. And forthwith thereupon was there at the next parliament, held the same year, a bill put in... declaring how much temporal land was in the Church; which reckoning the maker thereof guessed at by the number of knights' fees, of which he had went he had made a very just account.  
 10 And in this bill was it devised to take their possessions out again. Howbeit, by the bill it appeared well unto them which well understood the matter... that the maker of the bill neither wist what land there was, nor how many knights' fees there was, in the Church... nor well what thing a knight's fee *is*; but the bill  
 15 devised of rancor and evil will by some such as favored Badby, that was burned, and would have his heresies fain go forward.  
 And so that bill, such as it was, such was it esteemed... and set aside for naught. So happed it then, soon after, that in the first year  
 20 of the King's most noble progenitor King Henry V, those heresies secretly creeping on still among the people, a great number of them had first covertly conspired and after openly gathered and assembled themselves... purposing by open war and battle to destroy the king and his nobles and subvert  
 25 the realm. Whose traitorous malice that good Catholic king prevented, withstood, overthrew, and punished—by many of them taken in the field... and after, for their traitorous heresies, both hanged and burned. Whereupon forthwith, at the parliament held the same year, likewise as that  
 30 royal prince, his virtuous nobles, and his good Christian commons... devised good laws against heretics: so did some of such as favored them... eftsoons put in the bill against the spirituality. Which eftsoons considered for such as it was and coming of such malicious purpose as it came... was again  
 35 rejected and set aside for naught. Then was there long after

1 *upon heretics*: over heretics // *upon their*: about their  
 3 *been . . . matter*: taken up this matter    7 *declaring*: stating // *temporal*: secular  
 9 *went*: thought // *just*: accurate // *account*: computation  
 10–11 *out again*: back out    12 *wist*: knew    14 *well*: exactly    15 *evil*: ill  
 16 *fain*: i.e., by gum; darn well    18 *esteemed*: regarded  
 19, 35 *for naught*: as worthless    26 *prevented*: anticipated  
 27 *taken in the field*: taken captive on the battlefield    30 *royal*: first-rate  
 30 *commons*: commoners    32, 33 *eftsoons*: for a second time  
 32 *spirituality*: clergy

that... one Richard Howndon burned for heresy. And then  
 forthwith were there a rabble of heretics gathered themselves  
 together at Abingdon... which not intended to lose any more  
 labor by putting up of bills in the parliaments, but to make  
 5 an open insurrection and subvert all the realm... and then to  
 kill up the clergy and sell priests' heads as good cheap as  
 sheep's heads—three for a penny, buy who would. But God saved the  
 Church and the realm both, and turned their malice upon their  
 own heads. And yet after their punishment, then were  
 10 there some that renewed the bill *again*. And yet long after this  
 was there one John Goose roasted at the Tower Hill; and thereupon,  
 forthwith, some other John goose began to bear that bill abroad  
 again... and made some gagging a while, but it availed him  
 not. And now, because some heretics have been of late  
 15 abjured, *this* gosling therefore hath made this beggars' bill...  
 and gaggleth again upon the same matter—and that, as he  
 thinketh, by a proper invention likely to speed now: because he  
 maketh his bill in the name of the *beggars*... and his bill couched  
 as full of lies as any beggar swarmeth full of lice.

20 We neither will nor shall need to make much business about  
 this matter. We trust much better in the goodness of good  
 men... than that we should need for this thing to reason against  
 an unreasonable body. We be sure enough that good men were  
 they that *gave* this gear into the Church... and therefore naught  
 25 should they be, of likelihood, that would pull them out thence again. To  
 which ravin and sacrilege our Lord, we trust, shall never suffer  
 this realm to fall.

Holy Saint Augustine in his days, when he perceived that  
 some evil people murmured at the possessions that then were  
 30 given into his church, did, in an open sermon, among all the  
 people, offer them their lands again... and that his church  
 and he would forsake them... and bade them take them who  
 would. And yet was there not found in all the town... albeit  
 that the people were (as these Africans be) very barbarous,  
 35 fierce, and boisterous... yet was there none, as we say, found—any

3–4 *which . . . labor*: who intended not to waste any more time and effort

6 *up*: off // *as good cheap*: for as good and cheap; at as good a bargain

12 *bear*: tote // *abroad*: around 13 *made some gagging*: did some cackling

15 *abjured*: made to recant 17 *proper*: fine; excellent

17 *invention*: contrivance // *speed*: succeed 20 *business*: ado

23 *unreasonable body*: irrational person 24 *gear*: stuff // *naught*: bad

25 *pull . . . again*: i.e., yank back out of there these things donated to the Church

26 *ravin*: pillage // *suffer*: allow 30 *given into*: donated to *open*: public

31 *again*: back 32 *forsake them*: give them up

32–33 *bade . . . would*: told them to take them, whoever wanted to

35 *boisterous*: savage // *any*: i.e., not even

one!—so bad... that his heart would serve him to enter into one foot.

When Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, bought up in the dear years  
 all the lands that were in every man's hand... so that all the  
 5 people were fain to sell their inheritance, for hunger: yet,  
 idolater as he was, he would never suffer for any need the possessions  
 of the *priests* to be sold, but made provision for them  
 beside... and suffered them to keep their lands still, as the  
 Bible beareth witness. And we verily trust that the good  
 10 Christian princes of the Christian realm of England shall never  
 fail of more favor toward the clergy of Christ... than had  
 that prince idolater to the priests of his idols. Yet is it not  
 enough to the cruel mind of *this* man to take from the whole  
 clergy all that ever they have... but that he would further have  
 15 them bound unto carts and whipped, to drive them to  
 labor.

Of all thieves is this one of the worst and most cruel kind.  
 For of all thieves men most abhor them that when they have  
 taken a man's money from him... then take and bind him  
 20 and beat him, too. But yet is this wretch much worse. For he  
 fareth as a cruel thief that would without respect of his own  
 commodity... take a man's money from him and cast it  
 he care not where... and then bind the man to a tree and beat  
 him for his pleasure. Oh, the charity!

But he saith he would have them whipped to compel them  
 to "labor and get their living in the sweat of their faces."  
 And this would he not, good man, but for fulfilling of God's  
 "commandment." For he saith that it is *commanded* them in  
 the first chapter of Genesis. And therefore is he therein so indifferent  
 30 that he excepteth *none*, but calleth the best but "idle holy  
 thieves"... and so would have them all robbed and despoiled, bound  
 and beaten, to compel them to work with their hands, to  
 "get their living in the sweat of their faces" for the fulfilling  
 of God's "commandment." Among this company that he  
 35 would suddenly send forth new-robbed, with right naught  
 left them, is there many a good man that hath lived full godly

2 *foot*: i.e., square foot of any of those properties      3–9: See Genesis 47:20–22.

3 *dear years*: years of dearth; years of famine      5 *fain*: forced

6, 8 *suffer(ed)*: allow(ed)      8 *beside*: separately      11 *fail of*: i.e., fail to show

16 *labor*: i.e., manual labor      18 *abhor them that*: detest those who

19 *bind him*: tie him up      21 *fareth as*: acts like // *respect*: consideration

22 *commodity*: interest      28–29: See Genesis 3:19.

29 *indifferent*: impartial; nondiscriminating      30 *holy*: arrant; out-and-out

35 *suddenly*: instantly // *new-robbed*: just-now robbed

35 *right naught*: absolutely nothing      36 *full godly*: in a very godly way

many a fair day... and duly served God and prayed for *us* (which we have well found!): many an old man, many a sore sick man, and many blind and many lame, too. All which as soon as they be driven out of their own doors... this charitable man would  
 5 be very well content to see them bound and beaten too... because they be of the clergy. For exception maketh he none in this world.

He layeth unto the charge of the clergy that they live idle *all*, and that they be all bound to “labor and get their living in the sweat of their faces” by the precept that God gave to Adam in the first chapter of Genesis. Here this man showeth his cunning.  
 10 For if this be so—then were the priests in the Old Law bound thereto as well as is the clergy now. And then how happed it that of this point there was no mention made by Moses?  
 15 How happed it that God in that law provided them much larger living than he did the lay people? And that, such kind of living as declared that his pleasure was that they should live *out* of labor, and upon the labor of *other* men’s hands? The holy apostle Saint Paul... although himself in some places  
 20 forbore to take his living freely, but rather chose to live off his own labor than to be in their danger which would haply have said that he preached because he would live at ease thereby—and this did he especially to put such false apostles to silence... as for such desire of idle living fell somewhere to  
 25 false preaching—yet neither did he so in *every* place... and also confessed and said that he might well and lawfully have done the contrary, affirming it for good reason that he that serveth the altar should live off the altar, and saying also, “If we sow unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we reap your carnal things?” Now, Christ his own mouth said unto the people... that they should not leave their duties unpaid unto the priests. And this good Christian man would have them all clean taken from them... and, yet, the priests well beaten, too.

He reckoneth all the clergy “idle” because they labor not with their hands till their faces sweat. But our Savior Christ  
 35

2 *sore sick*: seriously ill 9–11: See Genesis 3:19. 11 *cunning*: learnedness  
 15–18: See Numbers 5:9–10, 18:20–21, 35:2–8; and Deuteronomy 18:1–4.  
 17 *declared*: made it clear 18 *out of labor*: i.e., *not* by manual labor  
 18–30: See 1 Corinthians 9:6–18, Acts 20:33–34, 2 Corinthians 11:7–13, and Philippians 4:15–16. 20 *take . . . freely*: get . . . for free  
 21 *be in their danger which*: be vulnerable to those who // *haply*: perhaps  
 22 *would live at ease thereby*: wanted to live thereby a life of ease  
 24 *fell somewhere*: resorted in some places 26 *confessed*: acknowledged  
 26 *might well and lawfully*: could quite legitimately  
 27 *for good reason*: to make good sense 29 *great thing*: big deal  
 29 *carnal*: material 30–31: See Matthew 8:4. 30 *his*: i.e., with his  
 33 *yet*: moreover

reckoned far otherwise in blessed Mary Magdalene. Whose  
 idle sitting at her ease and hearkening... he accounted and declared  
 for better busyness than the busy stirring and walking about  
 of his good hostess, Martha—which was yet of all worldly business  
 5 occupied about the best; for she was busy about alms  
 and hospitality... and the guesting of the best poor man,  
 and most gracious guest, that ever was guested in this world.

Now, if this cannot yet content this good man, because of  
 God's "commandment" given unto Adam that he should eat  
 10 his bread in the sweat of his face: then would we fain wit whether  
 himself never go to meat... till he have wrought so sore with his  
 hands that his face sweateth. Surely we believe he laboreth not  
 so sore before every meal. But yet it were not good to trust his  
 answer; for he will haply say yes... and not let for one lie  
 15 among so many. Howbeit, he thinketh it, peradventure,  
 enough for him... that he sitteth and studieth till he sweat in  
 seeking out old heresies, and devising new. And verily, if he  
 look that such busyness should serve him for a discharge of hand  
 labor, much better may we think discharged thereof... many  
 20 *good* men whom he would have beaten thereto, living their lives  
 in fasting, prayer, and preaching—and studying about—the *truth*.

But it is good to look betimes what this beggars' proctor  
 meaneth by this "commandment" of hand labor that he  
 speaketh of. For if he confess that it bindeth not *every* man:  
 25 then is it laid to no purpose against the clergy. For there  
 was a small clergy when that word was said to our first father,  
 Adam. But, now, if he call it a precept, as he doth... and then will  
 that it extend unto all the whole kind of man... as a thing by God  
 commanded unto Adam and all his offspring: then, though he  
 30 say little now, he meaneth to go further hereafter than he speaketh  
 of yet. For if he might first have the clergy put out of their  
 living... and all that they have clean taken from them... and  
 might have them joined to these beggars that be now; and,

2 *hearkening*: listening with eager and respectful attention    4 *which*: who  
 4 *worldly*: earthly    10 *fain wit*: like to know    11 *himself*: he himself  
 11 *meat*: dinner // *wrought so sore*: worked so hard    13 *so sore*: that hard  
 13 *were not*: would not be    14 *haply*: maybe  
 14 *let for one*: scruple over one; forbear to tell one more  
 15 *peradventure*: perhaps    17 *seeking out*: digging up; reviving  
 17 *devising new*: thinking up new ones  
 18 *look*: expect // *discharge of*: dispensation from    18, 23 *hand*: manual  
 19 *discharged thereof*: dispensed from it    22 *betimes*: in good time  
 22 *proctor*: spokesman    24 *confess*: admit    26 *said*: i.e., given  
 27–28 *will that it*: will have it    28 *all . . . man*: the whole entire human race

over that, added unto them and sent a-begging too... all those that the  
 clergy find now full honestly—this pageant once played, and  
 his beggars' bill so well sped—then, when the beggars should  
 have so much less living and be so many more in multitude,  
 5 surely likewise as for the beggars he now maketh his bill to the  
 King's Highness against bishops, abbots, priors, prelates,  
 and priests, so would he then, within a while after, make another  
 bill to the people against merchants, gentlemen,  
 kings, lords, and princes... and complain that they have  
 10 all... and say that they do nothing for it, but live idle... and that  
 they be commanded in Genesis to live by the labor of their  
 hands "in the sweat of their faces," as he saith by the  
 clergy now. Wherein if they ween that they shall stand in  
 other case than the clergy doth now, they may peradventure  
 15 sore deceive themselves. For if they will think that their case  
 shall not be called all one because *they* have *lands* and *goods* to  
 live upon—they must consider so hath the clergy too. But that is  
 the thing that this beggars' proctor complaineth upon... and would  
 have them taken away. Now, if the landed men suppose that  
 20 their case shall not seem one with the case of the clergy...  
 because they shall haply think that the *Church* hath their  
 possessions given them for causes which they fulfill not; and  
 that if their possessions happen to be taken from them, it  
 shall be done upon that ground; and so the lay landed men  
 25 out of that fear, because they think that suchlike occasion  
 and ground and consideration faileth and cannot be found  
 in them and their inheritance—surely if any man, clerical or lay,  
 have lands in the gift whereof hath been any condition adjoined  
 which he fulfilleth not, the giver may well with reason use  
 30 therein such advantage as the law giveth him. But, on the other  
 side, whoso will advise princes or lay people to take from the  
 clergy their possessions... alleging matters at large—as laying to  
 their charge that they "live not as they should," nor "use not well  
 their possessions"—and that therefore it were well done to take  
 35 them from them by force and "dispose them better": we dare  
 boldly say whoso giveth this device, as now doth this beggars'

1 *over*: on top of    2 *find now full honestly*: provide with a quite respectable living  
 2 *pageant*: charade    3 *sped*: expedited  
 8 *gentlemen*: men belonging to the landed gentry    12 *by*: about    13 *ween*: think  
 14 *other*: a different    14, 15, 20 *case*: situation    14 *peradventure*: perhaps  
 15 *sore deceive*: be badly deluding    16 *all one*: entirely the same // *goods*: assets  
 18 *proctor*: spokesman // *upon*: about    21 *haply*: maybe // *Church*: i.e., clergy  
 22, 23, etc. *possessions*: holdings    26 *faileth*: is lacking    27 *surely*: certainly  
 31 *side*: hand    31, 36 *whoso*: whoever    31 *people*: i.e., nonroyals  
 32 *alleging matters at large*: making (only) general allegations  
 32 *as*: such as    34 *were well done*: would be a justifiable thing to do  
 35 *dispose them better*: make a better disposition of them    36 *device*: advice



proctor, we would give you counsel to look well what will follow. For he shall not fail, as we said before, if this bill of his were sped... to find you soon after, in a new supplication, new bald reasons enough that should please the people's ears... wherewith  
 5 he would labor to have lords' lands and all honest men's goods to be pulled from them by force and distributed among beggars. Of which there should, in this wise that he deviseth, increase and grow so many... that they should be able for a sudden shift to make a strong party. And surely as the fire ever creepeth  
 10 forward and laboreth to turn all into fire—so will such bold beggars as this is... never cease to solicit and procure all that they can... the spoil and robbery of all that aught have... and to make all beggars as they be themselves.

We be content that ye believe us not... but if it have so proved already  
 15 by those uplandish Lutherans that rose up in Almaine. Which, being once raised by such seditious books as is this "Beggars' Supplication"... and such seditious heretics as is he that made it, set first upon spiritual prelates. But shortly thereupon they so stretched unto the *temporal* princes... that  
 20 *they* were fain to join, in aid of themselves, with those whom they laughed at first to see them put in the peril—hoping to have had the profit of their loss... till they saw that they were likely to lose their own with them. And for all the punishment that they pursued upon those rebellious persons—of  
 25 whom there were in one summer slain above sixty thousand—yet is that fire rather covered than quenched, because they suffered it creep forth so far at first... that dissension grew thereby among the lords themselves, as there can never lack some needy, ravenous landed men... that shall be ready to be captains in all such rebellions;  
 30 as was the Lord Cobham called Oldcastle... sometime a captain of heretics in England, in the days of King Henry V. And surely there would soon follow some sore change in the temporality... if this beggars' proctor have his malicious supplication sped against the spirituality.

1, 33 *proctor*: spokesman      3, 34 *sped*: expedited  
 4 *bald reasons*: meritless arguments      5 *labor*: strive  
 5–6 *honest men's goods*: the goods of all men who are in positions of honor  
 6 *pulled*: expropriated      8–9 *for a sudden shift*: in a hasty, makeshift way  
 10 *laboreth*: tries      12 *spoil*: spoliation; despoiling // *aught have*: have anything  
 14 *but if*: unless      15 *uplandish*: rustic; rural // *rose up*: took part in a rebellion  
 15 *Almaine*: Germany      16 *which*: who // *raised*: stirred up  
 18 *made*: wrote // *set first upon*: first attacked // *spiritual*: Church  
 19 *temporal*: secular      20 *fain*: forced      24 *pursued*: visited; inflicted  
 25 *above*: more than      26 *suffered*: let      30 *called*: i.e., whose name was  
 30 *sometime*: at one time      32 *sore*: extreme / distressing      33 *temporality*: laity  
 34 *sped against the spirituality*: against the clergy expedited

But yet, lest folk should abhor his hard heart and cruelty, the  
 man tempereth his matter with a goodly visage of the sore inward  
 sorrow that he taketh for the diminishment of mankind... and  
 with the great zeal that he beareth to generation for the good  
 5 increase of Christian people in the land. For he would for that cause  
 in any wise that all the clergy should have wives. For he asketh the  
 King's Highness (as the man hath caught a great pleasure to  
 appose the King... wherein he useth a figure of rhetoric that men  
 call "sauce malapert") "what an infinite number of people might  
 10 have been increased to have peopled your realm... if this sort  
 of folk had been married like other men." This matter that priests  
 must needs have wives he bringeth in diversely in three or four  
 places. And among others he hath one... wherein he showeth in  
 railing against the clergy a principal part of his excellent  
 15 eloquence. For there he useth his royal figure of rhetoric  
 called "repetition," repeating often, by the whole clergy, "these be  
 they" in the beginning of his clause: "These be they that have made  
 a hundred thousand idle whores in your realm"; "These be they that corrupt the  
 generation of mankind in your realm"; "These be they that draw  
 20 men's wives into incontineny in your realm." And after  
 divers of such "these be they"s, he concludeth and knitteth up the  
 matter with his accustomed vehemence fetched out of Luther's volumes,  
 asking, "Who is able to number the great, broad, bottomless  
 ocean sea full of evils... that this mischievous and sinful  
 25 generation bringeth up upon us?" As though all the whole clergy  
 were of this condition, and no man else but they. But among all  
 his "these be they"s, this is one which, as the sorest and the most  
 vehement, he setteth in the forefront of them all: "These be  
 they that by their abstaining from marriage... do let the generation  
 30 of the people; whereby all the realm at length, if it should be  
 continued, shall be made deserted and uninhabitable."

Lo the deep insight that this beggars' proctor hath in the  
 "broad, bottomless ocean sea full of evils" to save the "grievous

1 *abhor*: be horrified by    2, 22 *matter*: argumentation  
 2 *goodly visage*: good-looking appearance // *sore*: intense // *inward*: inner  
 3 *for*: over; on account of    4, 19, 29 *generation*: procreation; reproduction  
 6 *in any wise*: by all means (have it)    7-8 *to appose*: i.e., in confronting  
 9 *sauce malapert*: impudent sauciness // *infinite*: incalculable    10 *sort*: set  
 11 *matter*: contention    12 *bringeth in diversely*: brings up in different ways  
 15 *royal*: magnificent; first-rate    16 *by*: with reference to    17 *in*: at  
 17 *clause*: sentence // *made*: caused there to be    19 *generation*: reproducing  
 20 *incontineny*: unchastity    21 *divers*: several // *knitteth up*: finishes off  
 22 *vehemence*: histrionics; melodrama    24, 33 *ocean sea*: ocean  
 24, 33 *evils*: disasters    24 *mischievous*: pernicious    26 *condition*: caliber  
 27 *sorest*: worst    28 *vehement*: tragic    29 *let*: hinder  
 30 *at length*: eventually    32 *lo*: behold    33 *save*: avert // *grievous*: tragic

shipwreck of the commonwealth"! He seeth far farther than ever  
 Christ was aware of... or any of his blessed apostles... or any of the old  
 holy fathers of Christ's faith and religion since his holy Ascension  
 hitherto... till now that Luther came of late, and Tyndale after  
 5 him, and spied out this great secret mystery that neither God  
 nor good man could espy. If their abstaining from marriage  
 should make all the land "deserted" and "uninhabitable," how happeth it  
 that habitation endureth therein so long? For the land hath  
 10 lasted since the beginning of their abstaining from marriage,  
 ye wot well, many a fair day! And now if, their abstaining  
 from marriage notwithstanding, the land hath been upheld  
 with the generation of you that are the temporalty, so long: ye shall  
 likewise hereafter, by God's grace and the help of good  
 15 prayers for keeping the land from wilderness, be able to beget  
 children still yourselves... and shall not need to call neither  
 monks nor friars to help you.

Now, if it be so that the clergy be, as he saith, but the hundredth  
 part of the men... and yet not so much neither: there is not, then, so  
 great peril of the land to fall to wilderness... but that the ninety-nine  
 20 parts may maintain it populous... though the hundredth part  
 abstain. But he, for to show that he hath not left his anxious  
 favor toward his native country though he be run away from  
 it for heresy, feareth sore lest, the hundredth part forbearing marriage,  
 all the ninety-nine parts shall not be able so to preserve it  
 25 with generation... but that it shall wax not only deserted... but also  
 (whereof we most wonder) uninhabitable; that is to say, such as of itself  
 shall not be able for man's habitation. But he peradventure  
 taketh "uninhabitable" for deserted, desolate, and not inhabited...  
 because men should see that he can so roll in his rhetoric... that he  
 30 wotteth not what his own words mean.

And somewhat yet is it to be considered that in such part of  
 his book that he would have it appear that their living is too  
 much—there he would make it seem that they were very few. And  
 where he would have them take wives—he would have them seem  
 35 so many... that their abstaining from marriage were able to  
 bring all the land into desolation and wilderness. And thus he

5 *great*: big // *secret*: esoteric 10, 30 *wot(teth)*: know(s)  
 12, 25 *generation*: reproducing; procreating 12 *temporalty*: laity // *so*: this  
 14–15 *beget children still*: go on begetting children  
 17–18, 20, 23 *the hundredth part*: (the) 1 percent  
 18 *yet not so much*: not even that much  
 19–20, 24 *ninety-nine parts*: (other) 99 percent 20 *may maintain*: can keep  
 21 *left*: lost 22 *favor*: partiality 23 *sore*: terribly // *lest*: i.e., that  
 25 *wax*: become  
 27 *able for man's habitation*: capable of being inhabited by human beings  
 27 *peradventure*: perhaps 29 *because*: so that  
 29 *roll*: luxuriate; revel 32 *living*: financial wherewithal

handleth either part so wisely... that there lacketh him nothing  
 earthly therein... but even a pennyweight of wit. For fault whereof,  
 his wily folly foreseeth not that one part of his process ever  
 impugneth another. For they that were right now so small a  
 5 part of people that a little would suffice for their living... be  
 now suddenly so many that if they were married, “infinite  
 number of people,” he saith to the King, would “increase,” to people his  
 realm with. Now, if that be true, that of them alone, if they were  
 married, so infinite number of people would increase... that it  
 10 would make the realm populous: then either are they, contrary to  
 his count, more than the hundredth part (for one out of a hundred is no  
 very perceivable miss, nor one added to a hundred no very perceivable  
 increase)... or else, if they be but the hundredth part, as he  
 made his reckoning right now, yet if it be then true that he  
 15 saith since—that of the hundredth part married, so infinite  
 number of people might increase to people the realm—then  
 can he not deny but that of the ninety-nine parts there may grow  
 ninety-nine times infinite number of people. And then, that being  
 so: though the clergy, being (as he saith) but the hundredth part,  
 20 never marry, yet shall the poor fool not need to wake and wax lean  
 for fear of the realm falling to wilderness. In which he seeth that  
 there may of the ninety-nine parts residue... grow and increase  
 ninety-nine times infinite number of people to make the land  
 populous.  
 25 Yet marvel we much of one thing: that in all his fear that generation  
 should fail because the clergy marrieth not... he seeth  
 no man unmarried in all the realm but them. How many  
 servants? How many tall serving men are there in the  
 realm that might if men saw such a sudden necessity... rather  
 30 marry than the *clergy*, that have vowed to God the contrary? But he  
 forceth not so much for the matter that he maketh his *pretext*...  
 as he doth indeed to have all vows void... that he might get  
 Luther some lewd companions in England.

1 *either*: each // *wisely*: intelligently / sensibly    2 *pennyweight*: penny's worth  
 2 *wit*: intelligence / sense // *fault*: lack    3 *folly*: idiocy // *process*: line of argument  
 4 *impugneth*: calls into question    4, 14 *right*: just  
 5 *part of people*: percentage of the population    6, 9, etc. *infinite*: incalculable  
 11, 13, etc. *the hundredth part*: (the) 1 percent  
 17, 22 *ninety-nine parts*: (other) 99 percent    19 *as he saith*: according to him  
 20 *wake*: lose sleep // *wax*: become    22 *residue*: remainder    25 *of*: at  
 25 *generation*: procreation    26 *fail*: come to an end    28 *tall*: handsome  
 31 *forceth* . . . *for*: cares . . . about // *matter*: thing    32 *void*: nullified

But, now, what if this good man had the rule of this matter...  
 and would put out all the clergy and bid them go wed? He should  
 peradventure find some that would not much stick thereat; but  
 they should be of the worst sort, and such as now be slander of  
 5 their order... and whom it were most need to keep *from* generation,  
 lest evil crows bring you forth evil birds. But as for  
 the good priests and good religious whose children were likely  
 to be best and to be best brought up: *they* would *not* marry, for  
 breach of their vows. And thus should ye have the naughty  
 10 generations increase—whereof there be too many already—and of  
 the better never the more.

What would this good man do now with good folk of the clergy,  
 that would not marry? He would of likelihood bind them to carts and  
 beat them... and make them wed in the waniand. But, now, what  
 15 if women will not wed them? Namely since he sendeth them out  
 with right naught... saving slander, shame, and villainy! What  
 remedy will he find therefor? He will of likelihood *compel* the  
 women to wed them; and if the wench be nice and play the  
 wanton and make the matter strange... then will he beat her to  
 20 bed too.

Surely we cannot but here confess the truth: these nice and  
 wanton words do not very well with us. But we must pray God  
 and you to pardon us. For in good faith, his matter of monks'  
 "marriages" is so merry and so mad that it were able to make one  
 25 laugh that lieth in the fire; and so much the more... in how much he  
 more earnestly presseth upon the King in this point... to have, in  
 any wise, the clergy robbed, despoiled, bound, beaten... and  
 wedded. Whereby what opinion he hath of wedding... ye may  
 soon perceive; for ye see well that if he thought it good, he  
 30 would not wish it them.

Many that read his words... ween that he were some merry  
 mad guest; but he seemeth us far otherwise. For except he  
 were a wondrous sad man of himself, he could never speak  
 so earnestly in so mad a matter.

3 *stick thereat*: balk at that      4 *slander of*: a disgrace to  
 5 *generation*: reproducing      6 *evil*: bad // *birds*: chicks  
 8–9 *for breach of*: i.e., being unwilling to break  
 9–10 *naughty generations*: immoral acts of procreation / bad offspring  
 14 *wed in the waniand*: get married already; by gum get married  
 15 *namely*: especially      16 *right naught*: absolutely nothing // *saving*: except  
 16 *slander*: disgrace // *villainy*: insulting degradation  
 17 *therefor*: for that      18 *nice*: coy      19 *wanton*: loose woman  
 19 *and . . . strange*: i.e., while also playing hard to get  
 21 *nice*: silly / double entendre      22 *wanton*: risqué / playful  
 22 *with us*: i.e., become us // *pray*: beg      23 *in good faith*: in all honesty  
 23 *matter of*: bid for      24 *merry*: funny      24, 32, 34 *mad*: crazy  
 26–27 *in any wise*: by all means      31 *ween that he were*: suppose him to be  
 31 *merry*: facetiously      32 *guest*: fellow // *except*: unless  
 33 *a . . . himself*: by nature a terribly serious man      34 *in*: i.e., of

Yet one thing would we very fain wit of him. When he had robbed, despoiled, bound, beaten, and wedded all the clergy, what would he then? Should any of them be curates of men's souls, and preach, and administer the sacraments to the people,  
5 or not?

If they *should*—it were a very strange fashion to rob him, bind him, and beat him on the one day... and then kneel to him, and confess to him, and receive the Sacrament of his hand, on the other day; reverently hear him preach in the  
10 pulpit... and then bid him go get him home and clout shoes. Either he must mean to have it thus (which none honest man could endure to see) or else (of which twain we wot ne'er well whither is the worse) he intendeth to have all  
15 holy orders accounted as nothing, and to have no more sacraments administered at all, but whereas soon after Christ's Ascension his Church buried the ceremonies of the Jews' synagogue with honor and reverence... so would he now that Christian people should kill and cast out on a dunghill the blessed sacraments of  
20 Christ with rebuke and shame. And surely, to tell you the truth, this *is* his very final intent and purpose, and the very mark that he shooteth at—as a special point and foundation of all Luther's heresies, whereof this man is one of the banner bearers. And therefore here would his own high, sore words have good  
25 place against himself. For this mischievous device of his... is in deed a "great, broad, bottomless ocean sea full of evils" wherein would not fail the "grievous shipwreck" of the commonwealth—which God *would* soon forsake if the people once forsook his *faith* and contemned his holy *sacraments*, as this beggars' proctor laboreth to bring about. Which thing his device  
30 and conveyance well declareth, although he forbear expressly to say so far... because of the good and gracious Catholic mind that he well knoweth, and by His Grace's excellent writings perceiveth, to be borne by the King's Highness... to the Catholic faith. For which he covereth his malicious intent

1 *very fain wit*: very much like to inquire    2 *wedded*: married off  
3 *then*: i.e., have happen then // *curates*: pastors    6 *were*: would be  
6 *fashion*: way of acting    7 *bind him*: tie him up  
8 *the Sacrament*: Holy Communion // *of*: from    10 *clout*: mend  
12 *honest*: decent // *twain*: two things    13 *wot ne'er well*: don't really know  
13 *whither*: which    14 *holy orders*: ordination    19 *rebuke*: vilification  
19 *shame*: degradation // *surely*: assuredly    20 *very*: actual // *final*: ultimate  
21 *mark . . . at*: goal he is aiming at    23 *high*: high-flown; dramatic  
23 *sore*: strong    24 *mischievous*: wicked; iniquitous  
24, 29 *device*: idea; proposal    25 *deed*: fact // *ocean sea*: ocean  
25 *evils*: disasters    26 *fail*: i.e., fail to occur // *grievous*: tragic  
28 *contemned*: scornfully eschewed    29 *proctor*: spokesman // *laboreth*: strives  
30 *conveyance*: manner of expressing it // *well declareth*: make very clear  
31 *say so far*: go that far in what he says // *gracious*: godly  
32 *mind*: disposition; attitude    33–34 *to the*: toward the

and purpose toward the *faith*... under the cloak of many *temporal* benefits... that he saith should succeed and follow to the King's Highness and his realm... if these his high, politic devices were once by His Grace agreed.

5 For in the end of all his bill, he gathereth his high commodities together, saying that if the King take all from the clergy, set them abroad at the wide world with right naught to wed and take wives, and make them labor for their living till they sweat; bind them to carts and beat them well—he  
10 saith to the King in the beggars' names, "Then shall as well the number of our aforesaid monstrous sort... as of the bawds, whores, thieves, and idle people decrease. Then shall these great yearly exactions cease. Then shall not your sword, power, crown, dignity, and obedience of your people be translated  
15 from you. Then shall you have full obedience of your people. Then shall the idle people be set a-work. Then shall matrimony be much better kept. Then shall the generation of your people be increased. Then shall your commons increase in riches. Then shall none take our alms from us. Then shall the  
20 Gospel be preached. Then shall we have enough and more. Then shall be the best hospital that ever was founded for us. Then shall we pray to God for your noble estate long to endure."

Lo, here hear ye heaped up many great commodities... if they  
25 were all true. But we showed you before, and have also proved you, that his bill is much grounded upon many great *lies*; whereof he by and by began with some, and after went forth with more. And now, to the intent that the end should be somewhat suitly to the remnant, as he began with lies and went forth  
30 with lies... so will he with lies likewise make an end—saving that in the beginning he gave them out by tale, and in the end he bringeth them in by heaps. For first he saith that then shall the number of sore and sick beggars decrease. How so? Shall there by the robbing, wedding, binding, and beating  
35 of the clergy... blind beggars get their sight again, or lame

3–4 *these . . . devices*: these superb, sagacious proposals of his  
4 *agreed*: i.e., agreed to    5 *all his*: his whole // *high*: great  
5, 24 *commodities*: benefits; improvements    7 *abroad at*: out there in  
7 *right naught*: absolutely nothing    11 *monstrous*: grotesque  
11 *bawds*: brothel keepers; procurers    14 *translated*: taken  
16 *matrimony*: the marital covenant    18 *commons*: commoners  
19 *none*: no one    22 *estate*: position    25 *showed*: told  
27 *by and by*: right away; at the outset    29 *suitly to*: congruent with  
29 *remnant*: rest    31 *by tale*: one at a time    33 *sore*: disabled  
34 *wedding*: marrying off    35 *again*: back

5      beggars their legs? Is there no man in all the clergy sick and  
 sore, that shall be by this way sent unto them? Should there not  
 many that now be in good health wax shortly sick and sore...  
 and sit and beg with them? Were this a diminishment of  
 5      sick and sore beggars—to make more and send to them?  
         Then shall, he saith, “bawds” and “whores, thieves, and idle people”  
 “decrease.” This man weeneth he were cousin to God and could do as  
 he did: “Dixit et facta sunt.” For as soon as he hath devised it...  
 now weeneth he that if they were all put out and so served by and by,  
 10     then were all forthwith in good order. As soon as he saith “Let  
 them wed”... now he weeneth that forthwith, every priest,  
 monk, and friar hath a wife. As soon as he hath said “Bind them  
 and beat them to work”... forthwith, he weeneth, every man is at his  
 work. And all this he reckoneth sure ere ever he provide work  
 15     for them... or where they shall dwell... or who shall take so many  
 to work at once that never were wont to work before; and this  
 where he seeth many walk idle already... that either no beating  
 can drive to work... or else no man will take to work. First,  
 we trust that among the clergy there be many men of that  
 20     goodness and virtue... that scant a devil could find in his  
 heart to handle them in such despiteous and spiteful  
 manner. But go to, let their honest living and virtue lie still in  
 question—yet at the leastwise he will grant they be good  
 or naught. Now, then, if they be good: he is too very a villain that  
 25     would serve good men so. And on the other side, if they be all as  
 he would have them all seem—unthrifty, lewd, and naught—  
 how can it be that by the reason of so many so naughty... so  
 suddenly set out at large, ye should have bawds, harlots,  
 thieves, and idle people decrease? Except he think that those  
 30     whom he calleth naught already, being, as they now be, kept  
 in, and in honest fashion refrained—and many kept up in  
 cloisters—will be better ruled abroad, running at the wild world as  
 bucks broken out of a park. Over this, how can there be by the  
 “marriages” of priests, monks, and friars... be fewer whores and  
 35     bawds, when by the very “marriage” itself—being as it were

2, 3, 5 *sore*: disabled    2 *way*: course of action    3 *wax shortly*: soon become  
 4 *were this*: would this be    5 *send to them*: i.e., send them to join the others  
 6, 28, 35 *bawds*: procurers    7, 9, etc. *weeneth*: thinks    7 *he were*: i.e., he's a  
 8 “*Dixit et facta sunt*”: “He spoke and they were made”; see Psalm 33:9.  
 8 *devised it*: thought it up    9 *served*: done to // *by and by*: immediately  
 10 *were all forthwith*: would everything instantly be    11, 13 *forthwith*: presto  
 15–16 *take . . . work*: employ so many    18 *drive*: induce // *take to work*: hire  
 19 *of that*: i.e., of such    20 *scant*: scarcely    21 *handle*: treat  
 21 *dispiteous*: pitiless; cruel // *despiteful*: insulting / vicious    22 *go to*: all right  
 22 *honest*: upright    24 *naught*: bad    25 *serve . . . so*: do good men that way  
 26 *unthrifty*: dissolute // *lewd*: lascivious    26, 30 *naught*: wicked  
 27 *naughty*: immoral    30 *as*: to the extent that    30–31 *kept in*: confined  
 31 *honest*: honorable // *refrained*: restrained // *kept up*: kept locked up  
 32 *ruled*: kept in line / behaved // *abroad*: on the outside; on the loose  
 32 *as*: like    33 *park*: reserve // *over this*: moreover  
 35 *being as it were*: given that it would be



incestuous and abominable—all were stark harlots that “married” them, and all stark bawds that should help to bring them together?

5 “Then shall,” he saith, “these great yearly exactions cease.” How can such things cease as never yet began? Ye remember what things he called exactions: the friars’ “quarterage”... which he said that they exact of “every household”... and compel them to pay it upon pain of heresy—bearing of a fagot or burning. Can he among so many as payeth it not... lay you one example that  
10 ever any said he was so served this seven years, this *sevencore* years, this seven *hundred* years? Can he say that ever it was exacted of *himself*? We know where he dwelled... and that if he had had none other cause to run away, surely for any fear of friars that ever exacted of him “quarterage”... he would not have been afraid to  
15 dwell by the best of their beards.

“Then shall idle folk,” he saith, “be set a-work.” By what means? Whom hath he devised more to set idle men a-work?—  
20 but if he look that idle men shall be set a-work by them whom he sendeth out of their own houses without money or ware, neither he nor they wot whither.

“Then shall matrimony be much better kept.” Why so? Because there be more men unmarried sent out abroad to break it? Who (if they be such as he calleth them) were (if they went all  
25 abroad) well likely to break many another man’s marriage ere they made all their own.

“Then shall the generation of your people be increased.” Is that the greatest fault he findeth—the lack of generation? If he saw as far as he would seem to see... then should he spy that it were  
30 first more need to provide houses to dwell in—with land laid thereto, for tillage; or else experience teacheth that there is generation enough for the corn that the ground beareth. And that thing once well provided for, there will enough be found to multiply more generation... of such as may lawfully wed and would wed... if they wist where, after wedding, their  
35 wife and their children should dwell.

1 *incestuous*: So considered because in canon law, these men are regarded as siblings to everyone else. 1 *were*: would be 2 *bawds*: procurers  
6, 14 *quarterage*: quarterly payment 8 *heresy*: i.e., a heresy charge and punishment  
8 *bearing of a fagot*: See note for 131/6. 9 *lay*: adduce 10 *any*: i.e., any one of them  
10 *served*: done to // *sevencore*: A score is twenty. 18 *but if*: unless  
18 *look*: expects 20 *ware*: goods; inventory // *wot whither*: know where  
21 *matrimony*: the marital covenant 22, 24 *abroad*: at large; on the loose  
23 *were*: would be // *went all*: all went 24 *ere*: before 25 *made all*: all made  
27 *fault*: lack; deficiency 28 *would*: wants to 29 *laid*: adjoined 31 *corn*: grain  
32 *enough*: i.e., enough men 34 *wist*: knew // *wedding*: i.e., after the getting married

“Then shall not your sword, power, crown, and dignity,  
 and obedience of your people, be taken from you.” Who hath  
 taken it away now? Who hath his sword borne but His Highness  
 himself, or such his deputies as he appointeth it unto? His  
 5 crown no man weareth but himself, as far as ever any of us  
 heard. And yet if His Highness have any crowned kings under  
 him, *his* “sword, power, crown, and dignity” is nothing defaced  
 nor diminished, but honored and enhanced by that. But all the  
 mischief is that the spiritual court hath examination of *heretics*;  
 10 this is all the grief. For as for obedience of the King’s  
 people, His Highness findeth none taken from him. Was there  
 ever king in this realm better obeyed than he? Hath His Highness  
 of any part of his realm been better obeyed, or more humbly  
 served, than of his clergy? Was there ever *any* king in the realm  
 15 that had his crown translated from him... because the clergy  
 had lands given them? Or because men gave alms to the  
 poor friars? In good faith, ye may trust us, we never knew none  
 such. When the beggars’ proctor proveth any such, ye may then  
 believe him; and in the meantime, ye may well believe he lieth.  
 20 “Then shall ye have obedience of your people.” Yet again? Till  
 he find in the King’s realm some that dare disobey him, it  
 were not much against reason that, harping so much upon  
 that string... that every man’s ear perceiveth so false and so  
 far out of tune, he should confess himself a fool.  
 25 “Then shall your people increase in riches.” Wherefor the  
 rather? Not one halfpenny, for aught that he hath spoken yet—  
 except he mean when he taketh the land from the clergy...  
 then to divide it among the people, and make a dole of the  
 friars’ alms too. And if he mean so—when he saith it out  
 30 plainly, then will we tell you what he meaneth more. But in the  
 mean season, to prove him both false and foolish... it is  
 enough to tell him that the people cannot wax rich by their  
 coming to them that are sent out naked and bring naught  
 with them.  
 35 “Then shall none beg our alms from us.” No, pardie—none  
 but all they that ye will have sent out naked to you. Which

4 *his deputies*: deputies of his      6 *yet*: even      7 *nothing*: not at all  
 7 *defaced*: effaced; discredited      8, 10 *all the*: the whole  
 9 *mischief*: woe; vexation // *spiritual*: ecclesiastical      10 *grief*: trouble  
 13 *of any*: by any      14 *of*: by      15 *translated*: taken  
 17 *in good faith*: in all seriousness      18 *proctor*: spokesman  
 22 *were not*: would not be      25 *richesse*: wealth // *wherefor*: by what  
 26 *rather*: more // *aught*: anything // *spoken yet*: mentioned thus far  
 27 *except*: unless      29 *mean so*: means that      31 *mean season*: meantime  
 31 *false*: untruthful      32 *wax*: grow  
 32–33 *their . . . that*: the coming to them of people who  
 33 *naught*: nothing      35 *none*: no one // *pardie*: by George

would be more than ye would be glad to see sit and beg with  
you—and see them ask *your* alms *from* you... that were wont to  
give alms *to* you.

5 “Then shall the Gospel be preached.” Yea, marry, that; *that*. *There* is  
the great matter that all this gaping is for! For undoubtedly all the  
gaping is for a *new* gospel. Men have been wont this many  
years to preach the gospel of Christ in such wise as Saint  
Matthew, Saint Mark, Saint Luke, and Saint John hath written  
10 it... and in such wise as the old holy doctors—Saint Jerome, Saint  
Augustine, Saint Ambrose, Saint Gregory, Saint Chrysostom,  
Saint Basil, Saint Cyprian, Saint Bernard, Saint Thomas,  
and all the old holy fathers since Christ’s days until your own  
days—have understood it. This gospel hath been, as we say,  
always thus preached. Why saith he now that if the clergy were  
15 cast out for naught, that then the Gospel should be preached?  
Who should then be these preachers? He meaneth not that the *clergy*  
shall; ye may see that well. Who, then? Who but some *lay Lutherans*?  
And what gospel shall they preach? Not your *old* gospel,  
of *Christ*; for that is it which was wont to be preached unto you.  
20 And he would ye should now think that “the Gospel” shall *begin* to  
be preached—and yet not begin to be preached among you... till the  
clergy be cast out. What gospel shall that be, then, that shall then  
be preached? What gospel but *Luther’s* gospel, and *Tyndale’s* gospel?—  
telling you that “only faith” sufficeth you for salvation, and  
25 that there needeth no good works; but that it were sacrilege and  
abomination to go about to please God with any good works.  
And that there is no purgatory; nor that the sacraments be  
nothing worth. Nor that no law can be made by man to bind you;  
but that by your “only faith” ye may do what ye will—and that if ye  
30 obey any law or governor, all is of your own courtesy, and not of  
any duty at all, faith hath set you in such a lewd liberty.

This and many a mad, frantic folly shall be the gospel that then  
shall be preached... whereof he boasteth now as of one of the most  
special *commodities* that shall succeed upon his goodly and  
35 godly devices.

4 *yea, marry*: oh yes indeed    5 *great matter*: big thing  
5, 6 *gaping*: craving; hankering    9 *holy doctors*: biblical exegetes  
10 *Saint Gregory*: i.e., Pope Saint Gregory the Great (Pope Gregory I)  
15 *cast out for*: thrown out as // *naught*: bad / worthless  
20 *would ye should*: would have you    24, 29 *only faith*: faith alone  
27, 28 *nor*: i.e., and    29 *what ye will*: whatever you want to  
31 *lewd*: licentious    32 *frantic*: frenzied; delirious // *folly*: idiocy  
34 *special*: superb // *commodities*: benefits; improvements  
34 *succeed*: follow // *goodly*: splendid    35 *devices*: ideas; suggestions

Will ye plainly perceive that he meaneth thus? After all his mischiefs rehearsed against the Church, he hath another matter in his mind... which he dare not yet speak of, but he maketh thereof a secret overture, leaving it in such wise at large...  
 5 as he would that men should guess what he meant... and yet he reserveth himself some refuge to flit therefrom when he list. For if he should see that men should mislike it... he would in such case say that he meant some other thing. And therefore he purposeth it under these words: "Here leave we out the greatest matter of  
 10 all, lest we, declaring such a horrible carrion of evil against the ministers of iniquity, should seem to declare the one only fault—or, rather, the ignorance—of our best-beloved minister of righteousness. Which is to be hidden till he may be learned by these small enormities that we have spoken of... to know it plainly  
 15 himself."

This thing put forth like a riddle, hard to read what it should signify, we have had since (by such as we before showed you, that died and came hither) plainly declared unto us. And surely whoso well adviseth his words, and well pondereth  
 20 his whole purpose... and the summary effect of his book, shall may soon perceive what he meaneth in that place. For what should that thing be that he leaveth out... that should be the "greatest of all," and that should be laid against the "ministers of iniquity" (which he meaneth and calleth the whole clergy),  
 25 and that should be "such a horrible carrion of evil"... that it should pass and exceed any mischievous matter that he had already spoken against before? What manner of mischievous matter should this be? This "horrible carrion of evil" that he "leaveth out" since it is, he saith, the "greatest matter of all"... must needs, ye wot  
 30 well, be greater against the clergy... than all that "great, broad, bottomless ocean sea of evils"; more than all his "these be they"; more than the making of such great number of "beggars," of "idle men, bawds, whores, and thieves"; more than the

1 *will ye plainly perceive*: do you want to see clearly

1–2 *his* . . . *Church*: the charges of wrongdoing he levels against the clergy

2, 9, etc. *matter*: thing    3 *in*: on    4 *secret overture*: surreptitious intimation

4 *at large*: unspecified    5 *would that men should*: would have people

6 *flit*: scoot to // *list*: wants    7 *mislike*: dislike    8 *purposeth*: presents

9, 29 *greatest*: most serious    10 *declaring*: i.e., in declaring as an accusation

12 *fault*: misdeed    13 *be*: i.e., have // *by*: by way of

14 *enormities*: irregularities; aberrations    16 *read*: interpret

18 *showed you*: told you about // *hither*: here // *declared*: explained

19 *whoso*: whoever // *adviseth*: considers    20 *summary*: general

20 *effect*: drift; tenor    21 *may soon*: readily be able to    23 *laid*: charged

26 *pass*: surpass    26, 27 *mischievous*: iniquitous    27 *against*: about

29 *wot*: know    30 *greater*: i.e., a bigger thing // *all that*: that whole

31 *ocean sea*: ocean // *evils*: disasters    33 *bawds*: brothel keepers; procurers

hindering of matrimony, “corrupting” of generation; more than  
 “translating” the King’s “kingdom”; more than bringing the  
 King’s “crown” to “ruin”; more than bringing the “commonwealth” to  
 “shipwreck,” and all the realm to wilderness. What thing can this  
 5 “horrible carrion” be that the clergy doth, that he “leaveth out” for  
 the while, that so far exceedeth these mischievous matters  
 before remembered... that in comparison of it he calleth them all  
 “small enormities,” and as a man would say, little pretty peccadilloes?  
 10 Verily, by this thing meaneth he none other... but the preaching  
 of the very, whole corpus and body of the blessed faith of Christ...  
 and the administering of the blessed sacraments of our Savior  
 Christ—and of all those, in especial the consecrating of the  
 Sacred Body, the Flesh and Blood, of our Savior Christ. For the  
 15 teaching and preaching of all which things, this beggars’ proctor—  
 or, rather, the *devil’s* proctor—with other beggars that lack  
 grace and neither beg nor look for none... bear all this their  
 malice and wrath to the church of Christ. And seeing there is  
 no way for attaining their intent but one of the twain—that is to  
 wit, either plainly to write against the faith and the sacraments  
 20 (wherein if they got them credence and obtained, they  
 then see well the Church must needs fall therewith) or else to labor  
 against the Church alone... and get the clergy destroyed, whereupon  
 they perceive well that the faith and sacraments would not  
 fail to decay—they, perceiving this, have therefore first assayed  
 25 the first way already, sending forth Tyndale’s translation  
 of the New Testament: in such wise handled as it should have been  
 the fountain and wellspring of all their whole heresies. For he  
 had corrupted and purposely changed in many places the text...  
 with such words as he might make it seem to the unlearned  
 30 people... that the Scripture affirmed their heresies itself.  
 Then came, soon after, out in print the dialogue of Friar Roy and  
 Friar Jerome... between the father and the son, against the Sacrament  
 of the Altar; and the blasphemous book entitled *The*  
*Burying of the Mass*. Then came forth, after, Tyndale’s wicked

2 *translating*: taking away // *kingdom*: kingship

6–7 *mischievous matters before remembered*: above-mentioned iniquitous things

7 *of*: with 8 *enormities*: irregularities; aberrations // *a man would*: one might

8 *little pretty peccadilloes*: cute little foibles 10 *very*: true

12 *in especial*: in particular 14, 15 *proctor*: spokesman

16–17 *this* . . . *wrath*: this malice and wrath of theirs 17 *to*: toward

18 *the twain*: i.e., these two ways 19 *plainly*: openly and directly

20 *them*: themselves // *obtained*: succeeded

24 *decay*: crumble // *assayed*: tried out 25, 34 *forth*: out

26 *handled*: manipulated // *as it should have been*: i.e., as to make it appear to be

31–33 *the* . . . *Altar*: I.e., Friar William Roy’s English adaptation (*A Brief Dialogue between a Christian Father and His Stubborn Son*) of a book by Wolfgang Capito.

33–34 *The Burying of the Mass*: Better known as *Read Me and Be Not Wroth*, this book is an adaptation (done by Friar Jerome Barlowe, possibly with Friar Roy, and published in 1528) of Niklaus Manuel’s *Die Krankheit der Messe* (*The Illness of the Mass*).

book of *Mammona*; and after that, his more wicked book of *Obedience*.  
 In which books afore-specified they go forth plainly  
 against the faith and holy sacraments of Christ's church—and  
 most especially against the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar,  
 5 with as villainous words as the wretches could devise. But when  
 they have perceived by experience that good people abhorred  
 their abominable books, then they, being thereby learned that the  
 first way was not the best for the furtherance of their purpose,  
 have now determined themselves to assay the second way: that  
 10 is to wit, that forbearing to write so openly and directly  
 against all the faith and the sacraments as good Christian men  
 could not abide the reading, they would, with little touching  
 of their other heresies, make one book specially against the  
 Church, and look how that would prove. Which if it succeeded after  
 15 their appetites—that they might with false crimes laid unto  
 some... or with the *very* faults of some... bring the whole Church  
 in hatred and have the clergy destroyed—then should they more  
 easily win their purpose that way. For when the preachers  
 of the faith and very gospel were destroyed or far out of  
 20 credence with the people... then should they have their own  
 false gospels preached; as ye may perceive that this man  
 meaneth where he saith that “then shall the Gospel be preached.”  
 And therefore this is the thing which this man as yet “leaveth  
 out” against them: that is to wit, the preaching of the right  
 25 faith and the sacraments; which thing he reckoneth in the  
 clergy a more “horrible” “carrion” than all the crimes wherein he  
 hath belied them before. And therefore saith he that he leaveth it  
 out lest he should “seem to declare the one and only fault” of  
 the King's Highness. Which “one only fault” he meaneth His  
 30 Grace's most famous and most gracious book... that His  
 Highness, as a prince of excellent erudition, virtue, and devotion  
 toward the Catholic faith of Christ, made—of *The Assertion of  
 the Sacraments*—against the furious book of Martin Luther.  
 This godly deed done by His Highness, with the acceptance of  
 35 his godly, well-deserved title of Defensor of the Faith, given

1 *Mammona*: I.e., *The Parable of the Wicked Mammon* (1528).

1 *Obedience*: I.e., *The Obedience of a Christian Man* (1528).

2 *books afore-specified*: afore-mentioned books // *plainly*: openly and directly

5 *devise*: think of; come up with 6 *abhorred*: were horrified by / loathed

7 *being*: i.e., having 9 *determined themselves*: decided // *assay*: try out

12–13 *touching of*: touching upon; discussing of 13 *make*: write

13 *specially*: specifically 14 *look . . . prove*: see how that turned out

14–15 *succeeded after their appetites*: turned out the way they wanted it to

15, 26 *crimes*: accusations of wrongdoing 15 *laid unto*: made against

16 *very*: actual 16, 28, 29 *fault(s)*: misdeed(s) 17 *have*: get

18 *win their purpose*: achieve their goal 19 *very*: true

27 *belied*: slandered 29 *which*: i.e., by which 30 *gracious*: godly

32 *made*: wrote // *assertion*: defense 33 *furious*: insane

His Grace by the See Apostolic—*this* calleth this beggars' proctor  
 the King's "one and only fault," and "ignorance" of their  
 false faith (in estimation of these heretics); which this beggars'  
 proctor saith that he will for the while hide and cover  
 5 under his cloak of silence... till the King may by these "enormities"  
 wherewith he belieth the Church in his beggars' bill  
 (which enormities he calleth "small" enormities in comparison  
 of the preaching of the Catholic faith and the sacraments) be  
 learned... what lesson, trow ye? None other, surely, but that they  
 10 hope that as well His Highness as his people... may by such beggars'  
 bills be first allured, and brought in, to contemn, hate,  
 and destroy the Church; and then, thereby, learn the other lesson,  
 which he now "leaveth out" for the while: that is to wit, to set  
 at naught the Catholic faith and all the blessed sacraments...  
 15 after the teaching of Luther's and Tyndale's gospel. And therefore  
 saith he, as we told you before, that "then shall the  
 Gospel be preached."

And in the meantime the man useth, as he weeneth himself,  
 toward the King's Grace a very wise fashion of flattery, calling  
 20 him their "best-beloved minister of righteousness." Yet be they  
 not only run away for fear of the righteousness of their "best-beloved  
 minister of righteousness"... but also would it should seem  
 that His Highness were such a minister of righteousness as either  
 set so little by righteousness that he would wittingly suffer... or else  
 25 had so little insight in righteousness that he could not perceive...  
 so "great" a matter, and "such a horrible carrion of evil" committed  
 by the Church, as were so heinous, so huge and so great,  
 that in comparison thereof... the "translating" of his "kingdom,"  
 the "ruin" of his "crown," the "shipwreck" of his "commonwealth," the  
 30 dispeopling of his realm, and bringing all his land into desolation  
 and wilderness... were but slight matters and "small enormities."  
 And that His Highness should toward this great, horrible,  
 and intolerable mischievous demeanor of the Church... be  
 aiding and assistant, either of evil mind or of "ignorance,"  
 35 till that... by their beggarly bill... being turned into the hatred and the  
 destruction of the Church, he might thereby be illumined to  
 learn and perceive that the faith which His Grace had before

1, 4 *proctor*: spokesman    2 *fault*: misdeed // *their*: i.e., the Apostolic See's having a  
 3 *estimation*: i.e., the view    4, 13 *while*: time being    5 *by*: by way of  
 5, 7, 31 *enormities*: irregularities; aberrations    6 *belieth*: slanders  
 6, 12, etc. *Church*: i.e., clergy    7-8 *comparison of*: comparison to    8 *be*: i.e., have  
 8 *trow ye*: do you think    9 *surely*: assuredly    11 *contemn*: scorn  
 15 *after*: in accord with    18 *he weeneth himself*: he himself believes    19 *wise*: astute  
 22 *would it should*: (this man) would have it    24 *set . . . by*: cared . . . about  
 24 *wittingly suffer*: knowingly tolerate  
 25 *insight in righteousness*: i.e., understanding of what righteousness is  
 26, 27 *great*: serious    28 *translating*: removal // *kingdom*: kingship  
 33 *mischievous*: iniquitous // *demeanor*: behavior    34 *evil mind*: ill intent  
 35-36 *turned . . . Church*: i.e., converted to hating the Church and being bent on its destruction  
 36 *illumined*: enlightened

both learned and taught, and whereof himself is the Defensor, is false and feigned... and that the sacraments be but men's inventions; and that thereupon he should be content to learn the gospel of Luther and the testament of Tyndale. And thus ye may see what the beggars' proctor meant by his proper invented riddle; by which, as ye see, under a fond face of flattery he useth toward his prince and sovereign lord (whose Majesty, both by the law of God and the duty of his allegiance, he were highly bound to *reverence*) an open, plain despite and contumely.

10 Now, to the intent that ye may yet farther perceive and see that they by the destruction of the clergy... mean the clear abolition of Christ's faith: it may like you to confer and compare together two places of his beggars' bill. In one place, after that he hath heaped up together all his lies against the whole clergy (and thereto

15 adjoined his grievous exclamation "O the grievous shipwreck of the commonwealth!"), he saith that "in ancient time, before the coming" of the clergy, there were "but few poor people, and yet they did not beg, but there was given them enough unasked," because "at that time," he saith, "there was" no clergy—whom he calleth always

20 "ravenous wolves"—"to ask it from *them*"; and this, saith he, appeareth in the book of the Acts of the Apostles. In this place we let pass his threefold folly. One, that he would by that there were no beggars in one place... prove thereby that there were none in all the world beside. For as he, for lack of wit and understanding, mistaketh

25 the book, he weeneth that there were none that begged in Jerusalem. Which if it were true... yet might there be enough in other places. Another of his follies is in that he allegeth a book for him that nothing proveth his purpose. For in all that whole book shall he neither find that there was at that time few

30 poor people... nor that poor people at that time begged not. For of truth, there were poor people and beggars, idle people, and thieves too... good plenty, both then and always before... since almost as long as Noah's flood—and yet peradventure seven years before that, too. And so were there, in deed, in Jerusalem also,

2 *feigned*: made up    3 *content*: willing    5 *proctor*: spokesman  
 5 *proper*: own / fine    6 *fond*: lovey-dovey // *face*: façade // *useth*: i.e., shows  
 9 *open*: manifest // *plain*: obvious // *despite*: contempt // *contumely*: insolence  
 11 *mean*: intend; mean to bring about // *clear*: complete  
 12 *it . . . together*: you may want to bring together and compare  
 13, 21 *place(s)*: passage(s)    15 *grievous*: melodramatic  
 17 even    23–24 *the world beside*: the rest of the world  
 24 *wit*: good sense // *understanding*: i.e., reading comprehension    25 *weeneth*: thinks  
 27 *follies*: idiocies    27–28 *allegeth . . . him*: cites in support of himself a book  
 28 *nothing proves his purpose*: in no way proves his point    33 *long*: i.e., long before  
 33 *yet peradventure*: maybe even    34 *deed*: fact



among them all... till Christendom came in; and yet remained  
then among such people there as turned not to the faith of  
Christ. The third folly is... he layeth that book *for* him which in  
deed proveth plain *against* him. For where he saith it appeareth  
5 there that the clergy was not then come, we cannot in the  
world devise of what people he speaketh: paynims, Jews, or  
Christian men. If he mean among paynims... his folly and his  
falsehood both is too evident. For who knoweth not that among  
10 the paynims they had always their priests—whose living was  
well and plenteously provided for; as ye may perceive not  
only by many other stories, but also by many places in the  
*Bible*, and especially in the forty-seventh chapter of Genesis. If he  
speak of the Jews... every man wotteth well that they had a clergy  
15 thousands of years before the book that he allegeth—and their  
living far more largely provided for... than any part of the  
people beside; and that by God's own ordinance. Now, if he  
speak of the *Christian* people that was at that time in Jerusalem—  
where the faith began—his book maketh *sore* against him.  
For there was a clergy as soon as there was any Christian people.  
20 For the clergy began then. And that clergy had not a *part* of  
the Christian people's substance, but had it *altogether*... and did  
distribute it as they saw *need*; which no man doubteth but that  
the parties *showed* them—or else in some needs they must  
needs have lacked. So that here were *many* poor men... if they be  
25 poor that have naught left; and all they *beggars*... if they be  
beggars that be fain to show their need and ask; and the *clergy*  
had *altogether*. And yet layeth this wise man this book *for* him...  
being such as, if he should have sat and studied therefor,  
he could not have found a book that made more *against* him.  
30 But as we said before, we shall let his false folly pass... and  
pray you to consider what he would have you believe. He saith,  
and would ye should ween, that there were few poor folk—and no  
beggars nowhere—before the clergy of Christendom came in; but  
that all the poverty and beggary came into the world with the Christian  
35 clergy. Now knoweth every man that the Christian *clergy* and the

1, 33 *Christendom*: Christianity    2 *turned not*: did not convert  
2–3 *faith of Christ*: Christian faith    3, 7, 30 *folly*: idiocy  
3 *layeth* . . . *him*: cites as being on his side that book    4 *deed*: fact; actuality  
5–6 *in the world*: i.e., for all the world    6 *devise*: figure out  
6, 7, 9 *paynims*: pagans    8 *falsehood*: dishonesty    10 *well and*: quite  
11 *stories*: historical accounts // *places*: passages  
12–16 *if* . . . *ordinance*: See note for 146/15–18.    13 *wotteth*: knows  
14 *allegeth*: cites    16 *people beside*: rest of the people  
18 *maketh*: militates; goes // *sore*: strongly    20, 21, 27 *had*: received  
23 *showed*: told to; made known to    25 *naught*: nothing    26 *be fain to*: have to  
26 *show*: state; make known    27 *altogether*: everything  
27 *layeth* . . . *him*: this brilliant man cites as being *for* him this book  
28 *therefor*: for this    29 *made*: went; worked    31 *pray*: ask  
32 *would ye should ween*: would have you believe

Christian *faith* came into the Christian people *together*; so that in effect his words weigh to this: that all poverty and beggary came into the world with the Christian faith!

5 Set now to this place the other place of his, in the end and conclusion of his book, where he saith that after the clergy despoiled once, and cast out, “then shall the Gospel be preached”... and “then shall we [beggars] have enough and more.” Lo, like as in the one place he showeth that all beggary came in with the clergy that brought in the faith: so showeth he in the other that there should  
10 with the clergy all beggary go forth again... if they were so clean cast out that Christ’s gospel being cast out with them and the faith which came in with them, they might have that gospel preached—as they say they should, and as indeed they should—which they call “the Gospel”; that is to wit, Luther’s gospel, and Tyndale’s  
15 testament, preaching the destruction of Christ’s very faith and his holy sacraments, advancing and setting forth all boldness of sin and wretchedness, and, under the false name of “Christian freedom,” spurring forward the devilish unbridled appetite of lewd, seditious, and rebellious “liberty”... that slew in one  
20 summer, as we showed you before, above sixty thousand of the poor uplandish Lutherans in Almaine. And this is all that these heretics look for as the fruit of their seditious books and beggars’ bills—trusting by some such ways to be eased of their beggary... which they now sustain being run out of the realm for  
25 heresy. For if they might (as they fain would) have the clergy cast out, and Christ’s gospel cast off, and their own gospel preached: then hope they to find that word true where he saith, “Then shall we have enough and more.”

30 For of all that ever he hath said, he hath not, almost, said one true word save this. And surely this word would after their gospel once preached and received be found over true. For then should the beggars—not such beggars as he *seemeth* to speak for, that be sick, sore, and lame, but such bold, presumptuous beggars as he *is* indeed... whole and strong in body, but weak and sick in  
35 soul, that have their bodies clean from scabs and their souls

2 *weigh*: amount    4 *set*: add    4, 8 *place*: passage    8, 9 *showeth*: asserts  
10 *go forth again*: go back out // *clean*: completely    12, 25 *might*: could  
13, 32 *should*: would    15 *very*: true    18 *of*: for    19 *lewd*: licentious  
20 *showed*: told // *above*: over // *uplandish*: rustic; rural  
21 *Almaine*: Germany    23 *eased*: relieved  
25 *fain would*: so want to    27, 30 *word*: statement  
29–30 *said* . . . *this*: made one true statement except this one  
31 *received*: accepted // *over*: (only) too    33 *sore*: afflicted

foul infected with ugly great pocks and leprosy—*these* beggars would hope to have, and except good men take good heed would not fail to have, enough and a *great* deal more. For after that they might, the clergy first destroyed, bring in once after that the  
 5 preaching of Luther’s gospel and Tyndale’s testament, and might with their heresies and false faith infect and corrupt the people... causing them to set the blessed sacraments aside, to set holy days and fasting days at naught, to contemn all good works; to jest and rail against holy, vowed chastity; to blaspheme  
 10 the old holy fathers and doctors of Christ’s church, to mock and scorn the blessed saints and martyrs that died for Christ’s faith; to reject and refuse the faith that those holy martyrs lived and died for, and in the stead of the true faith of Christ continued this fifteen hundred years, to take now the false faith of  
 15 a fond friar... of old condemned and of new reforged, within so few days... with contempt of God and all good men, and obstinate rebellious mind against all laws, rule, and governance; with arrogant presumption to meddle with every man’s substance, with every man’s land, and every man’s  
 20 matter nothing pertaining to them—it is, we say, no doubt but that such bold, presumptuous beggars *will*, if ye look not well to their hands, not fail to have, as he writeth, “enough and more too.” For they shall gather together at last, and assemble themselves in plumps and in great routs, and from  
 25 asking fall to the taking of their alms themselves... and under pretext of reformation (bearing every man that aught hath... in hand that he hath too much) shall assay to make new division of every man’s land and substance—never ceasing, if ye suffer them, till they make all beggars as they be  
 30 themselves... and at last bring all the realm to ruin; and this not without butchery and foul bloody hands.

And therefore this beggars’ proctor... or, rather, the proctor of *hell*... should have concluded his “supplication” not under the manner that he hath done—that after the clergy cast out, “then

2 *except*: unless    4, 5 *might*: could    4 *once*: at some time  
 7–8 *set holy* . . . *naught*: pay no heed to holy days and days of fasting  
 8 *contemn*: disdain; disparage    9 *jest*: jeer at // *chastity*: celibacy  
 12 *refuse*: renounce    15 *fond*: foolish    16 *of*: for  
 19 *substance*: monetary wealth    20 *matter*: affair; business  
 21–22 *if* . . . *hands*: if you do not keep a close eye on them  
 24 *plumps*: bands // *great routs*: large mobs  
 26–27 *bearing* . . . *hand*: making against every man who has anything the accusation  
 27 *assay*: attempt    29 *suffer*: tolerate    32 *proctor*: spokesman  
 34 *cast*: i.e., has been thrown

shall the Gospel be preached; then shall beggars and bawds  
 decrease; then shall idle folk and thieves be fewer; then shall the  
 realm increase in riches,” and so forth—but he *should* have  
 said, “After that the clergy is thus destroyed and cast out,  
 5 then shall Luther’s gospel come in, then shall Tyndale’s testament  
 be taken up; then shall false heresies be preached; then  
 shall the sacraments be set at naught; then shall fasting and  
 prayer be neglected; then shall holy saints be blasphemed;  
 then shall Almighty God be displeased; then shall he withdraw  
 10 his grace and let all run to ruin; then shall all  
 virtue be had in derision; then shall all vice reign and  
 run forth unbridled; then shall youth leave labor and  
 all occupation; then shall folk wax idle and fall to unthriftiness;  
 then shall whores and thieves, beggars and bawds, increase;  
 15 then shall unthrifts flock together and swarm about,  
 and each bear him bold of other; then shall all laws be  
 laughed to scorn; then shall the servants set naught by  
 their masters, and unruly people rebel against their rulers;  
 then will rise up rifling and robbery, murder and mischief,  
 20 and plain insurrection... whereof what would be the end, or when you  
 should see it, only God knoweth.” All which mischief may yet be  
 withstood easily, and with God’s grace so shall it, if ye  
 suffer no such bold beggars to seduce you with seditious  
 bills, but, well perceiving that their malicious purpose is to  
 25 bring you to destruction, ye, like good Christian people,  
 avoiding their false trains and grins, give none ear to  
 their heinous heresies, nor walk their seditious ways,  
 but persevering in your old faith of *Christ*... and observing  
 his laws with good and godly works and obedience  
 30 of your most gracious king and governor... go forth  
 in goodness and virtue; whereby ye cannot fail to flower and  
 prosper in riches and worldly substance; which well employed,  
 with help of God’s grace, about charitable deeds to  
 the needy—and the rather in remembrance and relief of *us*,

1 *beggars*: i.e., the number of beggars      1, 14 *bawds*: brothel keepers; procurers  
 3 *richesse*: wealth      7 *set at naught*: regarded as worthless  
 11 *had*: held      13 *wax*: become // *unthriftiness*: dissoluteness  
 15 *unthrifts*: lowlives      16 *each . . . other*: behave aggressively toward one another  
 17 *set naught by*: flout      19 *rifling*: ransacking and plundering  
 19 *mischief*: vandalism      20 *plain*: outright      21 *mischief*: evil  
 23 *suffer*: allow      26 *false trains and grins*: treacherous lures and snares  
 31 *flower*: flourish      34 *the rather*: preferably

whose need is relieved by your charity showed for our sake to  
 your neighbor—be able to purchase you much pardon of the  
 bitter pain of this painful place, and bring you to the joyful  
 bliss... to which God hath with his blessed blood bought you  
 5 and with his holy sacraments ensigned you. And thus will we  
 leave the man's malicious folly... tending to the destruction,  
 first, of the clergy, and after of yourselves... wherein his mad  
 reckoning hath constrained us to trouble you with many trifles,  
 God wot, full unmeet for us; and now will we turn us to the  
 10 treating of that one point... which though it specially pertaineth  
 to ourselves, yet much more specially pertaineth it unto  
 you: that is to wit, the impugnation of that uncharitable heresy  
 wherewith he would make you, to our great harm and much  
 more your own, believe that we need none help and that there  
 15 were no purgatory.

The end of the  
First Book

9 *wot*: knows // *full unmeet*: highly inappropriate  
 10, 11 *specially*: particularly      12 *impugnation*: refutation

## The Second Book

**W**hen we consider in ourselves, dear brothers and sisters in  
 our Savior Christ, the present painful pangs that we feel... and  
 therewith ponder, upon the other part, the perilous estate of  
 5 you that are our friends there living in that wretched world: wit you  
 very surely that this pestilent opinion begun against purgatory...  
 not so much grieveth us for the lack that we should find thereby in  
 the relief of our own intolerable torments... as doth, for the love  
 that we bear you, the fear and heaviness that we take for that peril and  
 10 jeopardy that should everlastingly fall to your own souls thereby.  
 Nor of all the heavy tidings that ever we heard here... was there  
 never none so sore smote us to the heart as to hear the world wax  
 so faint in the faith of Christ... that any man should need  
 15 now to prove purgatory to Christian men—or that *any* man could  
 be found which would in so great a thing so fully and fastly  
 believed for an undoubted article this fifteen hundred years... begin now  
 to stagger and stand in doubt... for the unwise words of any such  
 malicious person as is he that made *The Beggars' Supplication*.  
 For whose answer and full confutation it seemeth us sufficient...  
 20 that ye may clearly perceive his words to be of little weight...  
 while ye see that the man hath neither learning, wisdom, nor  
 good intent, but all his bill utterly grounded upon error,  
 evil will, and untruth. And surely this were to us great wonder:  
 if Christian men should need any other proof in this world to  
 25 reprove such seditious folk with... than the only token of  
 the devil's badge which themselves bear ever about them; the  
 badge, we mean, of malice, and of a very deadly devilish hate.  
 For whereas our Savior Christ hath so left love and charity  
 for the badge of his Christian people... that he commandeth  
 30 every man so largely to love other... that his love should extend

2, 15 *in*: with regard to      4 *estate*: situation  
 5 *friends*: relatives and friends; loved ones // *wit*: know  
 6 *pestilent*: pernicious      9 *heaviness*: heavyheartedness  
 9 *take*: feel      9, 17 *for*: on account of      11 *heavy tidings*: bad news  
 12 *so sore smote*: that so badly cut // *wax*: become  
 13 *faith of Christ*: Christian faith  
 14 *purgatory*: i.e., the existence of purgatory      15 *which*: who  
 15 *fastly*: steadfastly; firmly      17 *stagger*: waver  
 17 *unwise*: insane; nonsensical      18 *made*: wrote      21 *while*: when  
 23 *evil*: ill // *were to us*: would be to us a      25 *reprove*: confute  
 25 *the only*: just the // *token*: indicator      26 *themselves*: they themselves

and stretch unto his *enemy*; nor there is no natural man, neither  
 paynim, Jew, Turk, nor Saracen, but he will rather spare his  
 foe than hurt his friend: *this* kind of folk is so far fallen not  
 only from all Christian charity, but also from all humanity and  
 5 feeling of any good affection natural, and so changed into a  
 wild, fierce, cruel appetite more than brutish and bestial,  
 that they first, without ground or cause, take their friends  
 for their foes—hating the Church deadly because it willeth  
 their weal and laboreth to amend them—and after, to do the  
 10 Church hurt, whom they take for their enemies, they labor to do  
*us* much more hurt whom they call still for their *friends*. For  
 they, to get pulled from the clergy the frail commodities of a  
 little worldly living, labor to have *us*—their fathers, their  
 mothers, their friends and all their kin—left lying in the fire  
 15 here helpless and forgotten, they little force how long. And in  
 this they show their affection much more unnatural and  
 abominable than he that would with his sword thrust his friend  
 through the whole body, to the hard haft... to give his enemy behind  
 him a little prick with the point. This way of theirs were very  
 20 naught and detestable... although they truly meant indeed as much  
 good as they falsely pretend. For whereas they cloak their cruel  
 purpose and intent... under color of a great zeal toward the commonwealth,  
 which they lay to be sore impaired by great pomp and  
 inordinate living used in the Church—we be so far from the  
 25 mind of defending any such spiritual vice, carnal uncleanness,  
 or worldly pomp and vanity used in the clergy... that we would to  
 God it were much less than it is... not in them only, but also in the  
 temporalty. And there is none of neither sort but if he were here  
 with us but one half hour, he would set little by all such worldly  
 30 vanities all his life after, and little would he force or reckon whether he  
 wear silk or sackcloth.

But surely this man, if he meant well, the faults of evil folk he  
 would lay to themselves, and not unto the whole clergy. He would also  
 labor for amendment and bettering; not for destruction and

1 *natural man*: i.e., non-Christian person with normal sensibilities    2 *paynim*: pagan  
 5 *affection*: attachment / sensibility    8, 10, 24 *Church*: i.e., clergy  
 8 *deadly*: to death; with a passion    9 *weal*: well-being; good  
 9, 10, 13 *labor(eth)*: strive(s)    10, 11 *hurt*: harm    12 *pulled*: taken away  
 12 *frail*: ephemeral; short-lived // *commodities*: comforts    15, 30 *force*: care  
 16 *affection*: disposition; attitude // *much*: i.e., to be much  
 16 *unnatural*: abnormal; inhuman    18 *haft*: handle    19 *were*: would be  
 20 *naught*: wicked // *although*: even if    21 *pretend*: claim (to mean)  
 23 *lay*: allege // *sore*: terribly    24 *inordinate*: out-of-line / exorbitant  
 24 *living*: conduct / lifestyle    24, 26 *used in*: engaged in by; indulged in by  
 25 *mind*: intention    26 *would*: wish    28 *temporalty*: laity // *none*: no one  
 28 *sort*: group    29 *set little by*: place little value on; care little about  
 30 *reckon*: take account of    32 *faults*: wrongdoings // *evil*: bad    33 *lay*: ascribe

undoing finally. He would hold himself within his bounds,  
 only devising against men's *vices*—and not start out therewith  
 into plain and open *heresies*! But surely so hath it ever hitherto  
 proved... that never was there any that showed himself an enemy  
 5 to the *church*... but, though he covered it never so close for the  
 while, yet at the last always he proved himself, in some part of  
 his works, so very an enemy to the Catholic *faith* of Christ... that  
 men might well perceive that his malice toward the clergy  
 grew *first*, and *sprang*, of infidelity and lack of right belief. And of  
 10 this point was there never a clearer example than this beggars'  
 proctor, which was so far forth farced, stuffed, and swollen with  
 such venomous heresies... that albeit he longed sore to keep  
 them in for the season, and only to rail against the clergy and  
 hide his enmious intent toward the faith—yet was he not able  
 15 to contain and hold, but was fain, for bursting, to puff out one  
 blast of his poisoned sect against us seely souls; the goodness of  
 God driving him to the disclosing and discovering of his malicious  
 heresy... to the intent ye should thereby perceive out of  
 20 what ungracious ground his enmity sprang that he bore  
 against the Church. Which things once perceived and considered...  
 must needs diminish and bereave him his credence  
 among all such as are not affectionate toward his errors, and  
 infected and envenomed with his mortal heresies—and of such  
 folk we trust he shall find very few.

25 For surely not only among Christian people and Jews, of  
 whom the one hath, the other hath had, the perceiving and  
 light of faith, but also among the very miscreant and  
 idolaters—Turks, Saracens, and paynims—except only  
 such as have so far fallen from the nature of man into a  
 30 brutish, bestly persuasion as to believe that soul and body die  
 both, at once, else hath always the remnant commonly thought and  
 believed that after the bodies dead and deceased, the souls of  
 such as were neither deadly damned wretches forever... nor, on  
 the other side, so good but that their offenses done in this

3 *open*: manifest    4 *proved*: turned out // *any*: anyone    5, 20 *church*: i.e., clergy  
 5 *covered* . . . *close*: i.e., kept it no matter how well hidden    7 *very*: actually  
 10 *example*: illustration    11 *proctor*: spokesman // *which*: who  
 11 *farced*: crammed    12 *sore*: badly    13 *season*: time being  
 14 *enmious*: inimical    15 *fain*: forced // *for*: in order to keep from  
 16 *poisoned*: poisonous // *sect*: heretical belief system // *seely*: poor  
 17 *discovers*: uncovering    19 *ungracious*: ungodly  
 21 *bereave him*: i.e., bereave him of    22 *affectionate toward*: partial to  
 23 *mortal*: lethal / mortally sinful    27 *miscreant*: misbelieving  
 28 *paynims*: pagans    31 *remnant*: rest    33 *deadly*: intransigent / spiritually dead  
 34 *offenses done*: sins committed



world hath deserved more punishment than they had suffered  
and sustained there... were punished and purged by pain after  
the death ere ever they were admitted unto their wealth and rest.

5 This faith hath always not only faithful people had; but also,  
as we say, very miscreants and idolaters have ever had a  
certain opinion and persuasion of the same—whether that of  
the first light and revelation given of such things to our  
former fathers... there hath always remained a glimmering that  
hath gone forth from man to man, from one generation to another,  
10 and so continued and kept among all people... or else  
that nature and reason have taught men everywhere to perceive  
it. For surely that they *have* such belief... not only by such  
as have been traveled in many countries among sundry sects,  
but also by the old and ancient writers that have been among  
15 them, we may well and evidently perceive. And in good faith,  
if never had there been revelation given thereof, nor other  
light than reason: yet, presupposed the immortality of man's  
soul, which no reasonable man distrusted; and thereto agreed  
the righteousness of God, and his goodness, which scant the devil  
20 himself denieth... purgatory must needs appear. For since that  
God, of his righteousness, will not leave sin unpunished;  
nor his goodness will perpetually punish the fault after the man's  
conversion: it followeth that the punishment shall be temporal.  
And, now, since the man often dieth before such  
25 punishment had... either at God's hand, by some affliction  
sent him, or at his own, by due penance done—which the most  
part of people wantonly doth forsloth—a very child, almost,  
may see the consequent: that the punishment at the death remaining  
due and undone... is to be endured and sustained after. Which... since  
30 his majesty is so excellent whom we have offended... cannot of  
right and justice be but heavy and sore.

Now, if they would, peradventure as in magnifying of  
God's high goodness, say that after a man's conversion  
once to God again... not only all his *sin* is forgiven, but all the

1 *deserved*: merited      3 *wealth*: felicity

4 *faithful people*: people having the light of right faith; i.e., Jews and Christians

5 *miscreants*: infidels; unbelievers      8 *former fathers*: earliest ancestors

13 *been traveled*: done some traveling // *sundry sects*: various religious groups

14 *old*: early // *ancient*: time-honored; classical      15, 28 *may*: can      15 *well and*: quite

15 *evidently*: clearly // *in good faith*: really and truly      18 *reasonable*: rational

18 *distrusted*: doubted // *thereto*: along with that // *agreed*: granted

19 *scant*: scarcely      20 *appear*: i.e., be a part of the picture      21 *of*: on account of

22 *nor his goodness will*: i.e., nor, on account of his goodness, will he

22 *fault*: offense; sin      23 *conversion*: turnaround (to God); i.e., repentance of that sin

24–25 *such punishment had*: i.e., having undergone such punishment

26–27 *most part*: majority      27 *wantonly*: blithely; nonchalantly

27 *forsloth*: shirk out of laziness; slough off

28 *the consequent*: i.e., what follows from all this

30 *his . . . offended*: i.e., the majesty of him whom we have offended is so superlative

31 *sore*: severe      32 *peradventure*: perhaps // *magnifying*: lauding; glorifying

33–34 *after . . . again*: once a person has turned back to God

whole *pain*, also; or that they will under color of enhancing the merit and goodness of Christ's Passion tell us that *his* pain suffered for us standeth in stead of all our pain and penance, so that neither purgatory can have place nor any penance need to be done by ourselves for our own sins: these folk that so shall say... shall, under pretext of magnifying his mercy, not only sore diminish his virtue of *justice*, but also much hinder the opinion and persuasion that men have of his *goodness*. For albeit that God of his great mercy may forthwith forgive some folk freely their sins and pain both, without prejudice of his righteousness, either of his liberal bounty... or for some respect had unto the fervent, sorrowful heart that fear and love with help of special grace have brought into the penitent at the time of his return to God; and also that the bitter Passion of our Savior besides the remission of the perpetuity of our pain do also lessen our purgatory and stand us here in marvelous high stead: yet if he should use this point for a general rule—that at every conversion from sin with purpose of amendment and recourse to confession... he shall forthwith fully forgive, without the party's pain or any other recompense for the sins committed save only Christ's Passion paid for them all—then should he give great occasion of lightness and bold courage to sin.

For when men were once persuaded that be their sins never so sore, never so many, never so mischievous, never so long continued... yet they shall never bear pain therefor; but, by their "only faith" and their baptism, with a short return again to God... shall have all their sin, and pain also, clean forgiven and forgotten—nothing else but only to cry him "Mercy!" as one woman would that treadeth on another's train—this way would, as we said, give the world great occasion and courage not only to fall boldly to sin and wretchedness, but also careless to *continue* therein, presuming upon that thing that such heretics have persuaded unto some men already: that three or four words ere they die shall sufficiently serve them to bring them straight to heaven. Whereas, besides the fear that

1, 10, 28 *pain*: penalty    1 *color*: pretext // *enhancing*: extolling  
 3 *standeth in stand*: takes the place    4 *place*: i.e., any reason to exist  
 6 *magnifying*: praising // *sore*: badly    7 *diminish*: minimize; underestimate  
 7 *hinder*: impair; damage    10 *of*: to    11 *bounty*: generosity  
 11 *respect*: consideration // *had*: taken    15 *the remission*: i.e., its remitting  
 15, 28 *pain*: punishment    18 *conversion*: turning away  
 20 *pain or*: i.e., being punished or there being made    22 *lightness*: readiness  
 22 *bold*: brazen    24–25, etc. *never so*: no matter how    25 *sore*: serious  
 25 *mischievous*: iniquitous; evil  
 26 *bear pain therefor*: undergo any punishment for them  
 27 *only faith*: faith alone // *short*: quick    28 *again*: back    29 *cry*: call out to  
 29 *mercy*: i.e., pardon me    31 *the world*: everyone  
 34 *persuaded unto some men*: convinced some people of    35 *ere*: (just) before

they should have lest they shall lack at last the grace to turn at  
 all... and so, for fault of those three or four words, fall to the fire of  
 hell; if they believe therewith the thing that truth is besides—that  
 is to wit, that though they hap to have the grace to repent and be  
 5 forgiven the sin, and so to be delivered of the endless pain of  
 hell, yet they shall not so freely be delivered of purgatory... but  
 that, besides the general relief of Christ's holy Passion (extended  
 unto every man not after the value thereof, but after the  
 stint and rate appointed by God's wisdom), great and long  
 10 pain abideth them here among us (whereof their willingly  
 taken penance in the world, and affliction there put unto them  
 by God... and there patiently borne and suffered, with other good  
 deeds there in their life done by them... and, finally, the merits  
 and prayers of other good folks *for* them... may diminish and  
 15 abridge the pain; which will else hold them here with us in  
 fire and torments intolerable, only God knoweth how long)—  
 this thing, we say, as it is true indeed... so if the world well and  
 firmly for a sure truth believe it... cannot fail to be to many  
 20 folk a good bridle and a sharp bit to refrain them from  
 sin. And, on the other side, the contrary belief would send  
 many folk forward to sin... and thereby, instead of purgatory, into  
*everlasting* pain.

And therefore is this place of our temporal pain of purgatory  
 not only consonant unto his righteous justice, but also  
 25 the thing that highly declareth his great mercy and goodness—  
 not only for that the pain thereof, huge and sore as it is, is yet  
 less than our own sin deserveth, but also, most especially, in that  
 by the fear of pain to be suffered and sustained here, his goodness  
 refraineth men from the boldness of sin and negligence  
 30 of penance... and thereby keepeth and preserveth them from  
 pain everlasting; whereas the light forgiveness of altogether...  
 would give occasion by boldness of sin and presumption  
 of easy remission... much people to run down headlong  
 thither. And therefore were, as we said, that way very far contrary

1 *at last*: in their final moment // *turn*: repent    2 *fault*: lack  
 3 *truth is besides*: i.e., also is true    4 *though*: even if  
 8 *after*: according to    9 *stint*: measure    10 *pain*: punishment  
 10 *abideth*: awaits // *willingly*: voluntarily    11 *taken*: undertaken  
 15 *abridge*: shorten the duration // *which*: i.e., which punishment  
 15 *hold*: keep    19 *refrain them*: hold them back  
 23 *temporal*: temporary    25 *declareth*: shows; manifests  
 26 *for*: by reason of the fact // *sore*: severe  
 27 *deserveth*: merits    28 *his goodness*: he in his goodness  
 29–30 *refraineth . . . penance*: i.e., deters people from sinning brazenly and  
 from neglecting to do penance    31 *light*: ready; easy  
 31 *altogether*: the whole thing (i.e., both the sin and the penalty for it)  
 32 *boldness of sin*: i.e., brazen sinning

not only to God's justice and righteousness, but also to his goodness and mercy. Whereupon, as we said before, it must needs follow that since the pain is always *due* to sin... and is not always clean forgiven without convenient penance  
 5 done or other recompense made; nor pain is not always done, nor any recompense made, in the man's life... and yet the man discharged of hell by his conversion: all the pain that remaineth must needs be sustained here with us in purgatory.

10 But, now, if these heretics, as they be very self-willed and willful, will set at naught the common opinion and belief and persuasion of almost all the world; and, as they be very unreasonable, make little force of reason, and ever ask for Scripture... as though they believed Holy Scripture... and yet when it maketh against them, they then with false and fond glosses of  
 15 their own making... do but mock and shift over in such a trifling manner that it may well appear they believe not Scripture neither—yet, since they *make* as they believed Scripture and nothing else, let us therefore see whether that purgatory do not appear opened and revealed unto Christian people in Holy Scripture  
 20 itself.

And first, it seemeth very probable and likely that the good king Hezekiah for none other cause wept at the warning of his death given him by the prophet... but only for the fear of purgatory. For albeit that divers doctors allege divers  
 25 causes of his heaviness and loathness at that time to depart and die, yet seemeth there none so likely as the cause that *ancient* doctors allege: that is to wit, that he was loath to die for the fear of his estate after his death, forasmuch as he had offended God by overmuch liking of himself—wherewith he wist that God was  
 30 displeased with him, and gave him warning, by the prophet, that he should live no longer. Now considered he so the weight of his offense... that he thought and esteemed the only loss of this present life far under the just and condign punishment thereof; and therefore fell in great dread of far sorer punishment  
 35 after. But being as he was a good-faithful king, he could not lack

3, 5, 7 *pain*: punishment    4 *convenient*: suitable  
 10 *set at naught*: count for nothing // *common*: shared  
 11 *all*: i.e., everyone in    12 *unreasonable*: irrational  
 12 *make little force of*: make little account of; attach little importance to  
 14 *maketh*: goes; militates // *fond*: foolish  
 15 *mock and shift over*: i.e., make light of and get around it  
 16 *trifling*: offhand; dismissive // *may well appear*: is quite evident (that)  
 17 *as*: i.e., as though    18 *purgatory*: i.e., the existence of purgatory  
 19 *opened*: manifested    21–24: See Isaiah 38, 2 Kings 20, and 2 Chronicles 32.  
 21 *probable*: tenable    23, 30 *the prophet*: i.e., Isaiah  
 24 *divers*: various    24, 27 *doctors*: (biblical) scholars  
 25 *heaviness*: dejection    28 *estate*: situation  
 29 *liking of*: being pleased with // *wist*: knew    32 *only*: mere  
 34 *sorer*: more severe    35 *being as*: considering that  
 35 *good-faithful*: right-believing

sure hope, through his repentance, of such forgiveness... as should preserve him from hell. But since his time should be so short that he should have no leisure to do penance for his fault—he therefore feared that the remnant of his righteous punishment should be performed in purgatory. And therefore wept he tenderly, and longed to live longer... that his satisfaction done there in the world, in prayer and other good, virtuous deeds, might abolish and wear out all the pain that else were toward him here among us. To which his fervent boon and desire, at the contemplation of his penitent heart, our Lord of his high pity condescended, and granted him the lengthening of his life for fifteen years—making him, for his further comfort, sure thereof by the show of a manifest miracle. But *whereto* granted our Lord that longer life? To be bestowed upon worldly delight and pleasure? Nay; *nay*, verily! But to the intent it might appear that it was, of God's great mercy, granted for the redeeming of his purgatory by good works for his satisfaction: he was promised by the prophet not only that he should within three days be recovered and whole... but also that he should go into the Temple to pray. So that it may thereby appear for what end and intent he longed so sore for a longer life.

Now, if the beggars' proctor, or Tyndale or Luther either, list to say that in this point we do but guess at that good king's mind... and therefore purgatory thereby rather somewhat *reasoned* than well and surely *proved*: thereto may we well answer and say that the circumstance of the matter considered, with the virtuous holiness and cunning of such as so long ago have taken the Scripture thus, that place alone is a far better proof *for* purgatory than ever any of them could hitherto lay *against* it yet. For albeit this beggars' proctor saith that right wise and cunning men will say that there is no purgatory at all... by which wise men he meaneth Luther and Tyndale and himself—yet was there never any of them all that yet laid any substantial thing, either reason or authority, for them... but only jest and rail, and say that purgatory is a thing of the pope's own making, and that souls do nothing till Doomsday but lie still and sleep.

1 *preserve him from*: keep him out of    3 *leisure*: opportunity // *fault*: offense; sin  
 4 *remnant*: rest // *righteous*: rightful    5 *performed*: carried out // *tenderly*: bitterly  
 7 *abolish*: do away with; cancel    7–8 *wear out*: i.e., work off    8 *pain*: punishment  
 8 *were toward*: would be coming to    9 *his fervent boon and desire*: fervent entreaty and desire of his  
 10 *condescended*: acceded    12 *comfort*: encouragement // *sure*: assured  
 13 *whereto*: for what    15, 19 *appear*: be seen    16 *redeeming*: compensation  
 17 *his satisfaction*: i.e., the making of his satisfaction // *the prophet*: i.e., Isaiah  
 18 *whole*: well; in good health    19 *may*: can    20 *sore*: badly    21, 29 *proctor*: spokesman  
 22 *list*: wants    23 *mind*: thinking // *purgatory*: i.e., the existence of purgatory is  
 23 *reasoned*: argued for    24 *well and surely*: good and solidly    26 *cunning*: learnedness  
 27 *place*: text    28 *them*: those people (i.e., Tyndale, Luther, and the beggars' spokesman)  
 29–30 *right . . . men*: very sensible and knowledgeable men. (Fish's wording is "men of great literature and judgment.")    32 *laid*: adduced; presented    33 *reason*: argument // *jest*: jeer

And thus telling such wise tales for their own part... and making mocks and mows at everything that maketh against their folly for our part, they go forth in their evil will and obstinacy, and with murmur and grudge of their own conscience...

5 content themselves with the only feeding of their malicious minds by the increase of their faction... of such as fall into their fellowship rather of a light mind, and lewd pleasure to take a part, than of any great credence that they give unto them—or greatly force which way they believe. For surely if  
10 these folk were reasonable and indifferent—as it is not well possible for them to be, after that they refuse once to believe the Catholic Church, and in the understanding of Scripture lean only to their own wits—but else, as we say, if they could with an equal and indifferent mind consider and weigh what they hear,  
15 they should soon see their heresy reprov'd and purgatory surely confirm'd... not only by probable reason taken of the Scripture, as in the place that we rehearsed you of Hezekiah, but also by plain and evident texts.

For have ye not the words of Scripture, written in the book of  
20 the Kings, “Dominus deducit ad inferos et reducit” (“Our Lord bringeth folk down into hell and bringeth them thence again”)? But they that be in that hell where the damned souls be—they be never delivered thence again. Wherefore it appeareth well that they whom God delivereth and “bringeth thence  
25 again” be in that part of hell that is called purgatory.

What say they to the words of the prophet Zechariah, “Tu quoque in sanguine testamenti tui eduxisti vinctos tuos de lacu in quo non erat aqua” (“Thou hast in the blood of thy testament brought out thy bound prisoners out of the pit,” or “lake,”  
30 “in which there was no water”)? In that they whom the prophet there speaketh of were “bound”... we may well perceive that they were in a prison of *punishment*. And in that he calleth them the “prisoners” of *God*, it is easy to perceive that he meaneth not any that were taken and imprisoned by any other than the

1 *wise*: sensible      1, 3 *part*: side of the argument  
2 *making* . . . *at*: making derisive faces and gestures at; i.e., derisively making fun of  
3 *folly*: nonsense // *for*: i.e., and for // *evil*: ill      4 *grudge*: misgiving; uneasiness  
5 *the only*: just the; the mere      6 *fall*: come      7 *light*: shallow // *lewd*: base  
9 *force*: care      10 *reasonable*: rational      10, 14 *indifferent*: objective  
12–13 *lean only to*: rely only on; only go by      14 *equal*: unbiased  
15 *reprov'd*: proved incorrect      16 *surely*: solidly  
16 *probable reason*: logical reasoning // *taken of*: based on      17 *place*: text  
17 *rehearsed*: cited // *of*: about      18 *evident*: conclusive  
19–22: See 1 Samuel 2:6.      21–22, 23, 24–25 *thence again*: back out of there  
23–24 *appeareth well*: is quite evident      26–30: See Zechariah 9:11.  
28 *testament*: covenant

damned spirits, the very jailers of God. And in that he saith that there is in that “lake” no “water”... we may well perceive that he spoke it in description of that dry pit of fire... wherein there is no refreshing. For as hot are we here as they are in hell. And  
 5 what heat is in the pit where there lacketh water... our Savior himself declareth by the words of the rich glutton lying in such a lake; from whence, at sight of poor Lazarus in Abraham’s bosom, he desired heavily to have him sent unto him with one drop of water to refresh his tongue—that after all the delicates  
 10 that it had tasted in his life... lay there then sore burning, and never set half so much by twenty tons of wine... as he set by one poor drop of water. So that, as we show you, these words of the prophet Zechariah, “Thou hast brought out thy bound prisoners out of the lake wherein is no water,” do right well  
 15 appear to be spoken of these poor imprisoned souls whom Christ after his bitter Passion, by his precious blood wherewith he consecrated his church in his new testament, delivered out of the lake of fire wherein they lay bound for their sins. But now is there no man that doubteth whether Christ  
 20 delivered the damned souls out of hell or not. For in *that* hell is there no redemption; and in *limbus patrum* the souls were in rest. Wherefore it appeareth clearly that those prisoners whom he brought out of their pain... he brought only out of purgatory. And so see these heretics purgatory clearly proved  
 25 by the plain words of this holy prophet.

Another place is there also in the Old Testament that putteth purgatory quite out of question. For what is plainer than the places which in the book of the Maccabees make *mention* of the devout remembrance, prayer, alms, and sacrifice...  
 30 to be done for souls, when the good and holy man Judas Maccabeus gathered money among the people to buy sacrifice with... to be offered up for the souls of them that were dead in the battle? Doth not this place of Scripture so openly declare the need that we souls have in purgatory... and the relief that we

1 *jailers*: prison officials      5–12: See Luke 16:19–31.

6, 33 *declare(th)*: show(s)      8 *desired heavily*: wanted desperately

9 *that*: which // *delicates*: choice foods and drinks      10 *sore*: terribly

11 *set*: placed // *much*: much value // *by*: on      12 *poor*: little; measly

12 *show*: tell      17 *testament*: covenant      19 *doubteth*: wonders; is in doubt as to

21 *limbus patrum*: the limbo of the fathers; the place in which good departed souls

were detained until Jesus ascended into heaven      22 *appeareth clearly*: is clear to see

26, 33 *place*: text      27 *out of*: beyond      28 *places*: passages

28 *the book of the Maccabees*: See 2 Maccabees 12:38–45.

32 *them that were dead*: those who had died      33 *openly declare*: manifestly show

find by the prayer and suffrages of good people upon earth...  
that all the heretics that bark so fast against us can find  
neither gloss nor color to the contrary?

What shift find they here? Surely a very shameless shift...

5 and are fain to take them to that tackling that is their sheet  
anchor always... when they find the storm so great that  
they see their ship goeth all to wreck. For first they use to set some  
false gloss to the text that is laid against them, and deny the  
right sense.

10 But, now, if the text be so plain that they can have no such  
color—then, when they can have no more hold, but see that  
their part goeth all to naught, they fall to a shameless boldness  
and let not to deny the Scripture and all, and say the holy scripture  
which is laid against them is none holy scripture at all; as  
15 Luther playeth with the godly epistle of Christ's blessed apostle  
Saint James. And even the same do those heretics with the  
authority of this holy book of Maccabees: they be not ashamed  
to say that it is not Scripture. But upon what ground do they  
deny it for Scripture? Because it is not found and accounted  
20 for Holy Scripture among the Jews? They neither do nor can  
deny but that it *is* taken for Holy Scripture by the church of  
Christ. For if they would deny that, both the whole Church  
beareth witness against them at this day... and it also appeareth plainly  
by Saint Jerome, Saint Augustine, and other old holy doctors  
25 that the Church so took it also in their days and before. Then  
would we gladly wit of these new men—these enemies, we mean, of  
ours—whether the church of Christ be not of as great authority  
and as much to be believed in the choice and election of Holy  
Scripture as the Jews. If they will say yes: then answer they  
30 themselves; for then is the book of the Maccabees by the choice of  
the Church proved Holy Scripture though the Jews never accounted  
it so. Now, if they will say no... and will contend that it  
cannot be accounted Holy Scripture, though the church of Christ

1 *suffrages*: liturgical intercessory petitions    2 *fast*: zealously  
3, 8 *gloss*: interpretation (to give it)    3, 11 *color*: spin (to put on it)  
4 *shift*: dodge; escape hatch    5 *fain*: forced // *take them*: betake themselves  
7 *goeth all to wreck*: is about to be totally wrecked // *use*: are wont  
10 *have*: get    11 *hold*: shelter    12 *part*: side of the argument  
12 *goeth all to naught*: is all coming to nothing // *fall*: resort    13 *let*: scruple  
16 *even*: exactly    24 *old holy doctors*: early biblical scholars  
26 *wit*: inquire // *new*: modern    28 *in*: with regard to  
28 *choice*: identifying; determining // *election*: selecting  
30 *choice*: determination    31, 33 *though*: even if



so take it, but if the Jews so took it too: then go they near to

put out Saint John's Gospel out of Scripture too; for the Jews never took it for none. And surely if they admit for Scripture that book that the Jews admitted, and deny that book to be Scripture which the church of Christ receiveth for Scripture:

5 then do they say that the Spirit of God was more effectually present and assistant unto the synagogue of the Jews in the law of his prophet Moses... than unto the church of his own only-begotten Son in the law of Christ's Gospel!

10 If they consider well the books of the Maccabees, they shall find such things therein as may give them good occasion to put little doubt but that it should be of great and undeniable authority. For they shall find there that the great, good and godly, valiant captain of God's people did institute and ordain the great feast of the Dedication of the Temple of  
15 Jerusalem, called *Festum encaeniorum*; of the annual institution of which feast... we read nowhere else but in the book of the Maccabees. And yet find we that feast ever after continued and had in honor until Christ's own days; and our  
20 Savior himself went to the celebration of that same feast, as appeareth in the Gospel of Saint John. So that it may well appear that the books of that noble history whereof remaineth so noble a monument and remembrance... continually kept and reserved so long after, and honored by Christ's own precious  
25 Person, and testified by his holy evangelist in the book of his holy Gospel... cannot be but undoubted truth and of divine authority.

And surely if they deny the book of the Maccabees for Holy Scripture because the Jews account it not for such—then shall they by the same reason refuse the authority of the book of  
30 Sapience... and prove themselves insipients. And likewise if

1 *but if*: unless // *go they near*: they come close    2 *put out*: i.e., booting

5 *receiveth for*: accepts as    8 *his*: i.e., God's    13 *good and*: quite

16 *Festum encaeniorum*: the Feast of Lights; Hanukkah    19 *had*: held

19–21 *our . . . John*: See John 10:22–23.

21–22 *may well appear*: is quite evident    23 *monument*: record

24 *reserved*: preserved    25 *testified*: vouched for    26 *undoubted*: indisputable

30 *reason*: reasoning // *refuse*: deny // *authority*: i.e., scripturalness

31 *Sapience*: Wisdom // *insipients*: unwise persons

they take all Scripture beside the New Testament to be of none other force and authority than it is accounted in the rule and canon of the Jews—then shall the whole psalter of David (the very sum of clear and lightsome prophecies!) lose among  
 5 them great part of its authority, since it is not taken in like force and strength among the Jews as it is in Christ’s church.

Finally, for the book of the Maccabees: since the church of Christ accounteth it for Holy Scripture, there can no man doubt thereof but he that will take away all credence and authority  
 10 from the whole Scripture of God—the very Gospels and all. For if these heretics deny for Holy Scripture *any* book that the church of Christ accounteth for Holy Scripture, then deny they one of the greatest foundations of all Christian faith—and the thing which their master, Martin Luther, himself hath already  
 15 confessed for true. For he affirmeth himself that God hath given unto the church of Christ that gift... that the Church cannot fail surely and certainly to “discern between the words of God and the words of men,” and that it cannot be deceived in the choice of Holy Scripture and rejecting of the contrary; so far  
 20 forth that he confesseth (as he needs must, of necessity) that the noble doctor and glorious confessor Saint Augustine said very well... when he said that he should not have believed the Gospel but for the authority of the Church. For he had not known which had *been* the very book of the Gospels, and which not,  
 25 among so many as were written, but by the authority of the *Church*, whom the Spirit of God assisted as it ever doth and ever shall... in the choice and receiving of Holy Scripture and rejection of the counterfeit and false. Whereby it appeareth clearly, not only by that holy doctor Saint Augustine, but also by  
 30 the confession of the archheretic Luther himself, that the Church cannot be deceived in the choice of Holy Scripture and rejection of the contrary—so far forth that it neither can receive as Holy Scripture any book that is none... nor reject for other

1 *beside*: other than    4 *sum*: summit; acme // *lightsome*: luminous  
 18, 31 *be deceived*: make a mistake    19, 27, 31 *choice*: identifying; determining  
 21 *confessor*: A male saint who gave heroic witness to the faith but was not martyred.  
 21–23: Saint Augustine, *Against the Fundamental Epistle of Manichaeus* 5:6.  
 21–22 *said very well*: spoke very correctly    22 *should*: would  
 23 *had not*: would not have    24 *had been*: i.e., qualified as being  
 24 *the very . . . Gospels*: i.e., one of the bona fide, scriptural Gospels  
 27 *receiving*: admitting    30 *confession*: acknowledgment; admission  
 32 *receive*: accept    33 *for*: i.e., as

than Holy Scripture any book that is Holy Scripture indeed. And surely if the Church might so be deceived in the choice of Holy Scripture that they might take and approve for Holy Scripture any book that were none: then stood all Christendom

5 in doubt and unsurety whether Saint John's Gospel were Holy Scripture or not; and so forth, of all the New Testament.

And therefore, since, as we have showed you, by the heretics' own confessions... the church of Christ cannot be deceived in the choice and election of Holy Scripture; by which their  
10 confession they must needs abide and not flit therefrom (as they daily do change, and vary from, their own words in many other things) except that they will, in the falling from that point, refuse the strength and authority of the New Testament of Christ; and since, as yourselves well perceiveth also, the  
15 church of Christ receiveth and taketh and (as ye see by Saint Jerome and other old holy doctors this thousand years) hath approved and firmly believed the holy book of the Maccabees to be one of the volumes of Holy Scripture; and then in that book ye see so manifestly purgatory proved... that none heretic,  
20 as shameless as they be, can yet for shame say the contrary, but are by the plain and open words of that holy book so driven up to the hard wall... that they can no further, but are fain to say that the book is no part of Scripture; which shift they must needs forsake again or else revoke their own words  
25 and therewith also the authority of all Christ's Gospel: there shall, if either reason or shame can hold, never need any further thing for the proof of purgatory to stop the mouths of all the heretics that are or shall be to the world's end.

But yet, since they be so shameless and unreasonable that the  
30 thing which they can in no wise defend... they cannot, yet, find in their proud heart to give over; but when it is proved by divers plain texts of the Old Testament... then, having no probable reason for their part, they never the more give place to truth, but stick to their obstinate nay: let us see

2 *surely*: certainly    2, 3 *might*: could    2, 8 *be deceived*: err    2, 9 *choice*: identifying  
3 *for*: i.e., as    4 *stood all Christendom*: all of Christendom would stand  
5 *unsurety*: uncertainty (as to)    6 *so forth, of*: i.e., the same goes for  
7 *showed*: told    8 *confessions*: acknowledgments  
9 *election*: selecting    9–10 *their confession*: admission of theirs  
11 *vary*: deviate    11, 24 *words*: statements    11 *in*: with regard to  
12 *except that they will*: unless they want to    13 *refuse*: deny  
15 *receiveth*: accepts    16 *holy doctors*: theologians / biblical exegetes  
19, 27 *purgatory*: i.e., the existence of purgatory  
20 *for shame*: i.e., be so shameless as to    21 *open*: clear  
22 *can*: i.e., can go // *fain*: constrained    23 *shift*: subterfuge; ploy  
24 *forsake*: give up // *revoke*: negate    26 *shame*: i.e., fear of embarrassment  
26 *hold*: prevail; hold sway with them    27 *stop*: shut    29 *unreasonable*: irrational  
30 *wise*: way    31 *give over*: admit defeat regarding    32 *divers*: several  
33 *probable reason*: plausible argument; argument that holds any water  
33 *for their part*: on their side; supporting their position

whether our purpose be not proved by good and substantial authority in the New Testament also.

5 And first let us consider the words of the blessed apostle and evangelist Saint John, where he saith, “Est peccatum usque ad mortem; non dico ut pro eo roget quis.” “There is,” saith he, “some sin that is unto the death; I bid not that any man shall pray for that.” This sin, as the interpreters agree, is understood of desperation and impenitence; as though Saint John would say that whoso depart out of this world impenitent or in despair, any prayer after made can never stand him in  
10 stead. Then appeareth it clearly that Saint John meaneth that there be others which die *not* in such case, for whom he *would* men should pray... by cause that prayer in such souls *may* be profitable. But that profit can no man take neither being in heaven, where it needeth not, nor being in hell, where it booteth  
15 not. Wherefore it appeareth plainly that such prayer helpeth only for purgatory; which they must therefore needs grant... except they deny Saint John.

20 What say they to the words of Saint John in the fifth chapter of the Apocalypse: “I have heard,” saith he, “every creature that is in heaven, and upon the earth, and under the earth, and that be in the sea... and all things that be in them—all these have I heard say, ‘Benediction and honor and glory and power forever be to him that is sitting in the throne, and unto  
25 the Lamb.’”

Now wotteth every man well that in hell, among damned souls, is there none that giveth glory to Christ for the redemption of man. For they, for anger that (by their own default) they have lost their part thereof—and cannot, for proud heart, take  
30 their fault to themselves—fall to blasphemy as the devil doth himself... and impute their sin to the fault of God’s grace, and their damnation to the blame of his creation. So that the praise and glory that is given by creatures in hell unto the Lamb for man’s redemption... is only by the souls in *purgatory*,  
35 that be, and shall be, partners of that redemption; as the creatures walking upon earth or sailing in the sea... that give the

1 *purpose*: position; case    3–7: See 1 John 5:16.    7 *for*: about  
8 *of*: i.e., to be // *desperation*: despair  
10–11 *stand him in stead*: do him any good  
11 *appeareth it clearly*: it is clear to see    12 *which*: who  
12 *case*: condition; a state    12–13 *would men should*: would have people  
13 *cause*: reason of the fact // *in*: i.e., to    15 *needeth not*: is not needed  
15–16 *booteth not*: is of no avail    17 *grant*: i.e., grant the existence of  
18 *except*: unless // *deny*: reject    20–25: See Revelation 5:13.  
23 *benediction*: blessing    24 *in*: on    26 *wotteth*: knows  
28 *default*: fault    29 *cannot*: i.e., because they cannot  
29–30 *take their fault to themselves*: admit that they are the ones to blame  
31 *the fault*: a lack    35 *partners of*: partakers of; sharers in

honor to Christ for man's redemption... be only the Christian people, which look and hope to be partners thereof, and not infidels, that believe it not. But the blessed creatures in heaven give honor to Christ for man's redemption... for that joy and pleasure that their charity taketh in the society and fellowship of saved souls. And in this place it is a world to see the folly of some heretics—what evasion they seek to void from this place of Scripture. They say that it is no more to be understood by souls here in purgatory, nor Christian men living upon earth, than by fishes in the sea, and the devil and damned souls in hell... because the text saith that *every* creature in the sea, and in hell, spoke that laud and honor to the Lamb. But by this wise way might they prove that when ye pray for “all Christian souls,” ye mean to pray for our Lady's soul, and for Judas's too; and that our Savior, when he sent his apostles and bade them preach his Gospel to “every creature”—they may bear you in hand that he bade them preach to oxen and cows, and their calves too... because all they be creatures. But as they were sent to none other creature... than such as he meant of, though he spoke of “all”; nor ye mean to pray for no souls but such as have need and may have help, though ye speak of “all”: so, though Saint John spoke of “every” creature in hell giving honor to Christ for man's redemption, yet meant he but such as be in that hell in which they rejoice therein and shall be partners thereof; which be only we in purgatory, and not the devils and damned souls, that blaspheme him—though their just punishment redound, against their will, to the glory of God's righteousness.

If all this will not satisfy them... will ye see yet another clear place, and such as none heretic can avoid? Doth not the blessed apostle Saint Peter, as appeareth in the second chapter of the Apostles' Acts, say of our Savior Christ in this wise: “*Quem Deus suscitavit, solutis doloribus inferni*”? In these words he showeth that pains of hell were loosed. But these pains were neither pains of that hell in which the damned souls be pained—which neither were loosed then nor never be loosed, but

2, 24 *partners*: partakers      2 *which*: who

3 *that . . . not*: who do not believe in it      6, 7, 29 *place*: text; passage

6 *world*: wonder      7 *to*: in order to // *void*: escape

8, 10 *by*: as referring to      12 *wise way*: brilliant tack

16 *bear you in hand*: assert to you; try to get you to believe

19 *meant of*: had in mind      20 *may have help*: can be helped

25 *that*: which      28 *will ye*: would you like to      29 *avoid*: get around

31 *say*: speak // *wise*: way      31–32 “*Quem . . . inferni*”: “Whom God has raised up, having loosed the sorrows of hell” (Acts 2:24).

33 *showeth*: asserts      35 *pained*: punished / put to pain

be and shall be, as our Savior saith himself, everlasting—nor these pains that were then loosed were not the pains in *limbus patrum*; for *there* were none to *be* loosed; for the good souls were there, as our Savior showeth himself, in quiet, comfort, and rest. And so appeareth it evidently... that the pains of hell that *were* loosed... were only the pains of *purgatory*—which is also called “hell,” by occasion of the Latin word and the Greek word both. For in these tongues (forasmuch as before the resurrection of our Savior Christ there was never none that ascended up into heaven) there was no people that any otherwise spoke of souls... than that they were gone down “beneath,” into the “low place.” And therefore in the words of the Common Creed is it said of our Savior Christ after his Passion, “Descendit ad inferna”; that is to say, “He descended down beneath, into the low places.” In stead of which “low places” the English tongue hath ever used this word “hell.” And certain is it and very sure... that Christ descended not into *all* these “low places,” nor into *every* place of “hell,” but only into *limbus patrum* and purgatory. Which two places, because they be parts of habitations of souls beneath (all which habitations beneath have in English been always called “hell”), therefore are these two places (among others) taken and comprehended under the name of “hell.” Which word “hell” nothing else signifieth unto us in its *general* signification but “the habitations of souls beneath” ( or “under”) “us, in the low places under the ground.” Albeit, because *limbus patrum* and purgatory be called in English also by their special names besides, therefore is most commonly this word “hell” restrained to the special signification of that low place beneath... in which the damned souls be punished. This much have we showed you of this word “hell”... because we would not that the common taking thereof might bring you into any error. So that by this place ye see proved, by the plain words of Saint Peter, that Christ at his resurrection did loose and unbind pains in hell... which, as we have showed you, could be nowhere there but in purgatory. For in the special hell of damned souls the pains were not loosed.

2–3, 18, 25 *limbus patrum*: See note for 179/21.    3–5: See Luke 16:20–22, 25.  
 4 *showeth*: makes known    5 *evidently*: conclusively  
 9 *none that*: anyone who    12 *Common*: i.e., Apostles’    15 *stead*: place  
 26, 28, 35 *special*: specific; particular    27 *restrained*: restricted  
 29, 34 *showed*: explained to    30 *of*: about  
 30–31 *would not that . . . might*: i.e., would not want . . . to  
 31 *place*: text (Acts 2:24)

And in *limbus patrum* was no pains to *be* loosed. And therefore except they deny Saint Peter... they cannot deny purgatory.

And yet if they deny Saint Peter—we shall then allege them Saint *Paul*; whom they be best content to hear of, by cause that  
 5 of the difficulty of his writing they catch, sometimes, some matter of contention for the defense of their false exposition. This blessed apostle, in his First Epistle to the Corinthians (the third chapter), speaking of our Savior Christ (the very foundation, and the only foundation, of all our faith and salvation),  
 10 saith: “If any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, or straw—every man’s work shall be made open; for the Day of our Lord shall declare it. For in the fire it shall be showed, and the fire shall prove, what manner of thing every man’s work is. If any man’s work that he hath  
 15 built thereon do abide: he shall have a reward. If any man’s work burn: he shall suffer harm, but he shall be safe—but yet as by fire.” In these words the Apostle showeth that likewise as some men abiding upon Christ and his very, lively faith... build up thereupon such good works as are so good and so pure that they be  
 20 like fine gold, fine silver, or such fine precious stones... as when they be cast in the fire it can find no filth to fetch out of them, and therefore they remain in the fire safe and undiminished: so are there some, on the other side, which though they do not (as many others do) with mortal sins and lack of good works  
 25 wound their faith unto the death and fall from Christ, the foundation that they must build upon—yet do they, abiding upon that foundation, build up thereupon many such simple and frail and corruptible works as can never enter heaven. And such be venial sins... as idle words, vain and wanton mirth, and such other  
 30 things like, which be but like wood, hay, or straw. Which works when the soul after his departing out of the world bringeth hither into purgatory, he cannot so get through it as doth the soul whose works were wrought clean, or fully purged by penance ere he died. For *that* soul in the fire can feel no  
 35 harm—like as fine gold can in the fire nothing lose of its

2 *except*: unless    2, 3 *deny*: reject    3 *yet*: even  
 3 *allege*: quote    4 *of*: from    4–5 *by cause that of*: because from  
 6 *contention*: debate // *exposition*: interpretation    8 *very*: actual  
 12 *open*: manifest // *declare it*: make it known    15 *abide*: survive  
 17 *the Apostle*: i.e., Saint Paul // *showeth*: asserts    18 *very*: true  
 18 *lively*: living    23 *side*: hand // *which*: who  
 27 *simple*: poor; defective // *frail*: transitory / unsubstantial  
 27 *corruptible*: perishable    29 *as*: such as // *idle*: careless  
 29 *vain*: useless // *wanton*: off-color

weight. But *this* soul, that bringeth with him such frail works...  
 either wrought by themselves or inserted, peradventure, and mixed,  
 amidst of some good and virtuous work—as, for example, some  
 lack (peradventure sufficient attention and heed, taken by some  
 5 sudden wavering of the mind) in time of prayer, or some  
 surreption and creeping in of vainglory and liking of their own  
 praise in their alms given or other good deed done... not  
 forthwith resisted and cast out, but kept and fed upon too  
 long... and yet neither so long, peradventure, nor so great, as  
 10 our Lord will for that thought deprive him the merit and  
 reward of his work—lo, in such cases, as the Apostle saith, the Day  
 of our Lord (which is to the whole world the day of the general  
 judgment, and to every man particular... the day of his own  
 judgment after his death) shall show his work; what manner  
 15 thing it is, the fire shall prove and declare. For here in purgatory,  
 like as the fire can in the clean souls take none hold...  
 but they shall be therein without any manner pain or grief: so  
 shall it in the souls that are uncleansed and have their  
 works imperfect, unclean, and spotted... hastily catch, hold,  
 20 and keep them fast and burn them with incessant pain, till the  
 filthiness of their sins be clean purged and gone; and that shall be in  
 some sooner, in some later... as their sins, or the spots remaining  
 thereof, be more easy or more hard to get out. And that is  
 the thing that Paul signifieth by the “wood,” “hay,” and “straw”—of  
 25 which the one is a light flame, soon ended; the other  
 smoldereth much longer; and the third is hottest and endureth  
 longest. But yet hath it an end; and so shall have, at length, all  
 the pains of them that shall be purged here. But whatsoever  
 soul mishap to die in deadly sin and impenitent: since he  
 30 is thereby fallen off forever from our Savior Christ (that was his  
 foundation)—and hath built up wretched works upon your  
 ghostly enemy the devil... wherewith he hath so thoroughly  
 poisoned himself that he can never be purged—the fire shall  
 therefore lie burning upon him forever, and his pain never  
 35 lessened, nor his filthy spots never the more diminished.  
 And forasmuch as ye never can conceive a very right imagination

1 *frail*: unsound    2, 4, 9 *peradventure*: perhaps  
 4 *sufficient*: i.e., of sufficient    6 *surreption*: sudden onset  
 8 *forthwith*: promptly    10 *deprive him*: deprive him of; deny him  
 11 *the Apostle*: i.e., Saint Paul    12, 13 *to*: for    15 *prove*: put to the test  
 15 *declare*: make known    19 *spotted*: morally blemished; stained by sin  
 21 *clean*: completely    22, 35 *spots*: stains    25 *light*: quick  
 29 *mishap*: have the misfortune // *deadly*: mortal    32 *ghostly*: spiritual



of these things which ye never felt; nor it is not  
 possible to find you any example in the world very like unto  
 the pains that seely souls feel when they be departed thence:  
 we shall therefore put you in remembrance of one kind of  
 5 pain... which though it be nothing like for the quantity of  
 the matter, yet may it somewhat be resembled by reason of the  
 fashion and manner. If there were embarked many people at once  
 to be by ship conveyed a long journey by sea, of such as never  
 came thereon before... and should hap all the way to have the seas  
 10 rise high, and sore wrought... and sometime, soon upon a storm, to  
 lie long after, wallowing at an anchor: there should ye find diverse  
 fashions of folk. Some peradventure (but of them very few)  
 so clean from all evil humors, and so well attempered of themselves,  
 that they shall be, all that long voyage by sea, as lusty and as  
 15 jocund as if they were on land. But far the most part shall  
 ye see sore sick... and yet in many sundry manners: some more, some  
 less; some longer time diseased, and some much sooner  
 amended. And divers that a while had went they should have  
 died for pain... yet after one vomit or twain so clean rid  
 20 of their grief... that they never feel displeasure of it after.  
 And this happeth after as the body is more or less disposed in  
 itself thereto. But then shall ye sometimes see there some others  
 whose body is so incurably corrupted... that they shall walter and  
 25 tolter, and wring their hands, and gnash the teeth... and  
 their eyes water, their head ache, their body fret, their  
 stomach wamble, and all their body shiver for pain... and yet  
 shall never vomit at all; or if they vomit, yet shall they  
 vomit still and never find ease thereof. Lo, thus fareth it, as a  
 30 small thing may be resembled to a great, by the souls  
 deceased and departed the world: that such as be clean and  
 unspotted can in the fire feel no disease at all; and, on the  
 other side, such as come thence so deadly poisoned with sin  
 that their spots be indelible and their filthiness unpurgeable...  
 lie fretting and frying in the fire forever; and  
 35 only such as neither be fully cleansed nor, yet, sore defiled, but  
 that the fire may fret out the spots of their sin—of this

3 *seely*: poor    5–6 *nothing . . . matter*: i.e., nothing like it in terms of magnitude  
 6, 29 *resembled*: likened (to it)    6 *by reason of the*: in terms of    10 *sore*: extremely  
 10 *wrought*: turbulent    11 *wallowing*: rolling around; being tossed back and forth  
 13 *clean from*: free of // *evil humors*: i.e., negative physical tendencies  
 13 *well attempered of themselves*: naturally well-balanced    14 *lusty*: healthy  
 14–15 *as jocund*: in as good spirits // *far the most part*: the vast majority  
 16 *sore*: very    17 *diseased*: indisposed; unwell    18 *divers*: some // *went*: thought  
 19 *clean*: completely    20 *grief*: ailment // *displeasure*: (any) discomfort // *of*: from  
 21 *after*: according // *disposed*: susceptible    22 *thereto*: i.e., to seasickness  
 23 *corrupted*: messed up    23–24 *walter and tolter*: toss and turn    25 *fret*: writhe  
 26 *wamble*: convulse // *all their*: their whole    28 *vomit still*: keep vomiting  
 28 *ease*: relief    29 *by*: with    31 *unspotted*: unstained (by sin)  
 31 *disease*: discomfort    32 *side*: hand // *thence*: there // *deadly*: lethally  
 33, 36 *spots*: stains    34 *fretting*: writhing    35 *sore*: terribly    36 *fret*: eat; scour

sort only be we that here lie in purgatory. Which these cruel heretics would make you believe that we feel none harm at all; whereof the blessed Apostle, as we have showed you, writeth unto the Corinthians the contrary.

5 Now, if they would bear you in hand that because some doctors do construe those words of the Apostle in divers other senses (as they do construe in divers senses almost every text in Scripture, sometimes after the letter, sometimes moral, and sometimes otherwise... and all to the profit and edifying of the hearers); if these heretics would therefore pretend that Saint Paul in that place meant nothing of purgatory, but the fire that shall be sent before the Doom, or worldly tribulation, or some such other thing: ye shall well understand that though his words may be verified, and well and profitably applied, unto such things *also*, yet letteth that nothing these words to be properly by Saint Paul spoken of purgatory; no more than it letteth these words to be properly spoken by Christ—“Ego in flagella paratus sum”—and many another verse in the Psalter also, though the same words may be well applied and verified of many another man offering himself patiently to the sufferance of unjust punishment. And therefore, lest these heretics should with any such inventions beguile you and make you believe that we, for the furtherance of our own cause, expound the Apostle’s words wrong, and so make them seem to say for our part: ye shall understand that those words have been expounded and understood of purgatory this thousand years, and more, by the ancient holy doctors of Christ’s church, as well Greeks as Latins. And, among others, the great clerk Origen, in more places of his works than one, declareth plainly that the fore-remembered words of the Apostle are spoken by the pains of purgatory. The holy confessor and great pillar of Christ’s church Saint Augustine, in divers of his godly and erudite books, expoundeth that place of Saint Paul to be clearly spoken of purgatory. And over this, the blessed pope Saint Gregory, in

1 *sort*: group; class // *which*: i.e., in which  
 3, 6, etc. *the (blessed) Apostle*: i.e., Saint Paul  
 5 *bear you in hand*: assert to you; make to you the claim  
 5, 27 (*holy*) *doctors*: theologians / biblical exegetes 6, 7 *divers*: various  
 8 *after the letter*: in accord with the literal meaning // *moral*: allegorical  
 10 *pretend*: claim 11 *place*: passage 11, 34 *of*: about  
 12 *Doom*: Last Judgment 14, 19 *may*: can  
 14 *verified*: proved true with regard // *well and*: quite 15, 17 *letteth*: hinders  
 15 *nothing*: not at all 15, 17 *to be*: i.e., from being  
 16, 17 *properly*: specifically; directly 17, 30 *by*: with reference to  
 17–18 “*Ego in flagella paratus sum*”: “I am ready for scourges” (Vulgate, Psalm 37:18).  
 19 *applied and verified of*: applied to and borne out by 20 *sufferance*: undergoing  
 22 *inventions*: contrivances 24 *say for our part*: speak on our side; be backing us up  
 27 *ancient*: venerable 28 *clerk*: scholar 29 *fore-remembered*: above-cited  
 32 *divers*: several 33 *place of*: text from  
 34 *over this*: furthermore // *Gregory*: i.e., Gregory the Great

the fourth book of his godly *Dialogues*, beareth witness that the  
 Apostle in the place aforesaid wrote those words of purgatory.  
 So that ye may plainly perceive that this exposition is  
 neither our device nor any newfound fantasy, but a very  
 5 truth well perceived and witnessed by great, cunning men, and  
 holy, blessed saints, more than a thousand years ago.

Now, if these heretics will be so mad to flit in this case  
 from Saint Paul... and say they be bound to believe nothing  
 but only the *Gospel*: let us then yet see further whether we may  
 10 not plainly prove you purgatory by the very words of the Gospel  
 itself. Doth not our blessed Savior himself say that there is a  
 certain sin which a man may so commit “against the Holy  
 Ghost”... that it shall never be remitted nor forgiven “neither in this  
 world nor in the world to come”? Now, as for to dispute what  
 15 manner sin that should be—both the matter were very hard... and  
 also, we shall here nothing need to touch it. But of one thing  
 both ye and we may make us very sure: that there is nor can be any  
 sin committed in the world so sore, so grievous, nor so  
 abominable... but that if a man work with God’s grace, by  
 20 contrition and heaviness of heart... with humble confession of  
 mouth and good endeavor of penance and satisfaction in deed,  
 against his thought, word, and deed by which God was offended—  
 he shall obtain of God’s goodness remission, forgiveness,  
 and pardon.

But it may peradventure so befall that by some kind of  
 unkindness used toward God extending to the blasphemy of his  
 Holy Spirit—the committer of *that* sin may so far offend that  
 he shall, for his desert and demerit, have the grace of Almighty God  
 so clearly withdrawn from him that our Lord shall never offer  
 30 his grace after, nor nevermore call upon him. And then, his  
 grace once clearly withdrawn from a man—he can never be able  
 to repent and return again to God. For grace is the light wherewith  
 men see the way to walk out of sin, and grace is the staff  
 without help whereof no man is able to rise out of sin, according  
 35 to the words of Holy Writ spoken to man in the person of

1 *beareth witness*: i.e., corroborates this view    1–2 *the Apostle*: i.e., Saint Paul  
 2 *place*: text // *of*: with reference to    3 *exposition*: interpretation    4 *device*: idea  
 4 *newfound*: newly come up with // *fantasy*: figment of the imagination  
 4 *very*: bona fide; actual    5 *witnessed*: vouched for // *cunning*: erudite  
 7 *to*: i.e., as to // *case*: instance    11–14: See Matthew 12:31–32.  
 14 *dispute*: debate  
 15 *matter . . . hard*: i.e., would that be a very tough debate topic  
 16 *nothing need to touch it*: have no need to discuss it  
 17 *may make us very sure*: can rest quite assured // *is*: i.e., neither is  
 18 *sore*: terrible    20–21 *of mouth*: i.e., in speech    25 *peradventure*: perhaps  
 25 *befall*: happen    26 *unkindness*: vileness // *used*: shown  
 26 *blasphemy*: i.e., blaspheming  
 28 *for his desert and demerit*: i.e., as he deserves and has merited  
 29, 31 *clearly*: completely

our Lord God, “Ex te perditio tua; ex me salvatio tua”; “Thy perdition cometh of thyself; but thy salvation cometh of me, by the aid and help of my grace.” Which grace, as we tell you, being from some man utterly withdrawn for some manner unkind behavior  
 5 toward God and blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, *that* sin— for lack of repentance, which can never come where grace is clean gone—shall “never be forgiven in this world nor in the world to come.” And in such a manner kind of unkindness toward  
 10 God and blasphemy toward the Holy Ghost... fall also all such wretches as have the grace of God ever calling and knocking upon them for repentance all the days of their life... and yet, all that notwithstanding, will not use it, nor work therewith, nor turn to God... but willingly will die desperate and impenitent wretches.

15 This kind of blasphemers of God’s goodness and his Holy Spirit... have in the miserable passing of their sinful souls out of their sensual bodies the grace of God so fully and so finally withdrawn from them *forever*... that they be thereby fixed and confirmed in an unchangeable malice... which, eternally  
 20 dwelling with them, is the very special cause of their everlasting torment. But in this matter, as we said, we wade out of our purpose... saving that it seemed us yet necessary, since our Savior, in the place that we speak of, doth himself show that there is a certain sin so touching the Holy Ghost  
 25 that it shall “never be forgiven, neither in this world nor in the world to come”—it seemed, as we say, somewhat necessary to say somewhat therein, lest some that read it might conceive a wrong opinion and a false fear drawing them toward despair... that if they mishappened (which our Lord forbid!) to fall into  
 30 blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, they could never after be forgiven how sore soever they repented, or how heartily and how busily soever they should pray therefor. In which thing since we have showed you what we take for truth, we shall leave

1–3: See Hosea 13:9 (Vulgate).    4 *some man*: someone  
 4 *manner*: kind of // *unkind*: vile    8 *in*: into  
 8 *manner*: dispositional; habitual // *unkindness*: vileness  
 13 *willingly*: deliberately // *desperate*: (as) despairing  
 20 *special*: proximate    21–22 *wade out of*: veer off from  
 22 *purpose*: subject; point at issue    23 *place*: passage  
 24 *show*: state // *touching*: concerning  
 26–27 *say somewhat therein*: i.e., go into that passage a little  
 28 *false*: erroneous; unfounded    29 *mishappened*: had the misfortune  
 31 *how sore soever*: no matter how intensely    32 *busily*: assiduously  
 32 *therefor*: for that // *in*: regarding  
 33 *showed*: told; made known to

*that* matter, and show you how those words of Christ prove you our *principal* purpose: that is to say, that there is a purgatory. Howbeit, we shall scanty need to *show* you that; for the very words be plain and evident of themselves. For when our Lord saith that the “blasphemy against the Holy Ghost” shall not be forgiven “neither in this world nor in the world to come,” he giveth us clear knowledge that of *other* sins, some *shall* be forgiven in “this world”—and some in “the world to come.”

Now are there in “this” world every sin forgiven in such as shall be saved souls... except such venial sins and such temporal pain as, yet due to the deadly sins, rest and remain to be purged here in purgatory. For none other place is there than this in the world to come after man’s life... in which either sin or pain due to any sin shall be remitted. For into heaven shall neither sin nor pain enter; and in hell shall never none be released. And therefore when Christ, by showing that *some* kind of sin shall *not* be remitted in the “world to come”—doth give men knowledge that, on the other side, *some* sins *shall* in the “world to come” be remitted and forgiven. And then, since no man doubteth but that neither in hell shall any sins be forgiven nor in heaven: very reason teacheth that the place in which some sins shall be forgiven after this life... can be none other but purgatory.

There is, as we suppose, no Christian man living but he will think that any one place of Holy Scripture is enough to the proof of any truth. Now have we proved you purgatory by the plain texts of more places than one, two, or three. And yet shall we give you another... so plain, as we suppose, and so evident for the proof of purgatory, as none heretic shall find any good color of escape. For our Savior Christ saith, as it is rehearsed in the twelfth chapter of Matthew, that men shall “yield a reckoning of every idle word”... and that shall be after this present life. Then wotteth every man that by that “reckoning” is

2 *purpose*: point    3 *scantly*: scarcely    4, 28 *evident*: conclusive  
 4 *of*: in    11 *pain*: penalty // *deadly*: mortal    14, 15 *pain*: punishment  
 16 *showing*: stating    18 *doth*: i.e., this does // *side*: hand  
 21 *very reason*: reason itself    25, 27 *place(s)*: passage(s)  
 25 *is enough to*: suffices for    30 *color*: semblance // *rehearsed*: related  
 31–32: Matthew 12:36.    32, 33 *reckoning*: account    32 *idle*: careless  
 33 *wotteth*: knows

understood a *punishment* therefor—which shall not be in hell... and much less in heaven. And therefore can it be nowhere else but in purgatory.

Lo, thus may ye see purgatory clearly proved by the very Scripture  
 5 itself: by the book of the Kings; by the prophet Zechariah; by  
 the holy book of the Maccabees; by the words of Saint John; by  
 the apostle Saint Peter; by the writing of our Savior Christ himself.  
 So that we not a little marvel either of the ignorance or  
 shameless boldness of all such as having any learning... dare  
 10 call themselves Christian men and yet deny purgatory. For if they  
 have learning and perceive not these clear and open texts... we  
 marvel of their ignorance. With which while they join a  
 proud pretense of learning... they fall into the reproof that Saint  
 Paul spoke of the paynim philosophers: “Dicentes se esse sapientes,  
 15 stulti facti sunt” (“While they called themselves wise, they  
 proved stark fools”). Now, if they perceive well these texts of  
 Holy Scripture so plainly proving purgatory... and yet themselves  
 stick stiff in the denying: we then marvel much more  
 that they dare for shame call themselves Christian men... and then  
 20 deny the thing which the blessed apostles of Christ—the sacred  
 majesty of our Savior *himself*, in the *Holy Scripture*,  
 in his holy *Gospels*, so manifestly and so plainly affirmeth.

And yet many another plain text is there in Holy Scripture...  
 that, as the old holy doctors bear witness, well proveth our  
 25 purpose for purgatory... which we speak here nothing of, since  
 fewer texts than we have already showed you... both might and  
 ought to suffice you. For any *one* plain text of Scripture  
 sufficeth for the proof of any truth, except any man be of the  
 mind that he will have God tell his tale twice ere he believe  
 30 him.

Now, if these heretics fall to their accustomed frowardness...  
 and, as they be wont to do, will rather deny that the  
 swan is white and the crow black... than agree that any text in  
 Holy Scripture hath any other sense than themselves list to say;  
 35 and will in this point, for the maintenance of their heresy,

1 *therefor*: i.e., for that careless word 5–7: See 1 Samuel 2:6; Zechariah 9:11;  
 2 Maccabees 12:38–45; 1 John 5:16; Acts 2:24; Matthew 12:31–32.  
 7 *writing*: i.e., written words 8, 12 *of*: at 11, 16 *perceive*: understand  
 11 *open*: obvious; manifest 12 *while*: when 13–16: See Romans 1:22.  
 13 *pretense of learning*: claim of being learned  
 13 *fall into*: bring upon themselves // *reproof*: stinging criticism  
 14 *spoke*: i.e., made // *paynim*: pagan  
 19 *for shame*: i.e., be so shameless as to 24 *old*: early  
 24 *holy doctors*: theologians / biblical exegetes // *bear witness*: corroborate  
 25 *purpose*: case 26 *showed*: pointed out to // *might*: could  
 28 *except*: unless 29 *tell his tale*: make his statement; give his account  
 31 *accustomed*: customary // *frowardness*: willful obstinacy  
 33 *agree*: grant 34 *hath* . . . *say*: i.e., means anything other than what they  
 themselves want to say it means 35 *maintenance*: upholding

set at naught Saint Augustine, Saint Jerome, Saint Ambrose,  
 Saint Gregory, Saint Chrysostom, Saint Basil, Saint  
 Cyprian, and finally *all* the old holy fathers and blessed  
 saints that anything say against them: yet can they neither  
 5 deny that the Catholic Church of Christ hath always believed  
 purgatory, condemning for heretics all such as would  
 hold the contrary, nor, if they grant that, can they then by any  
 manner means avoid it but that the thing is true that all the  
 Church so full and whole, so long, hath in such wise believed, although  
 10 there were not found in all Holy Scripture one text that  
 so plainly proved it as they might find many that  
 seemed to say the contrary—except they will not only say that  
 our blessed Lady lost her virginity after the birth of Christ... but,  
 over that, be driven further, to diminish the strength and authority  
 15 of the very Gospel itself; which if the Church may err in  
 the right faith... had clearly lost its credence.

And therefore, as we say, whereas we by plain Scripture *have*  
 proved you purgatory, yet if there were therein not one text that  
 anything seemed to say *for* it, but divers and many texts  
 20 which as far seemed unto the misunderstanders to speak  
*against* purgatory... as many divers texts of the Gospel appeared  
 unto the great heretic Helvidius to speak against the  
 perpetual virginity of Christ's blessed mother: yet since the Catholic  
 Church of Christ hath always so firmly believed it for a  
 25 plain truth... that they have always taken the obstinate  
 affirmers of the contrary for plain, erroneous heretics—*it* is  
 a proof full and sufficient for purgatory to any man that will be  
 taken for a member of Christ's church, and is alone a thing  
 sufficient in any good Christian audience to stop the mouths  
 30 of all the proud, high-hearted, malicious *heretics* that anything  
 would bark against us.

But when they be so confuted and concluded... that they have  
 nothing to say: yet can they not hold their peace... but fall to  
 blasphemy and ask why there cometh none of us out of purgatory

1 *set at naught*: dismiss as of no account

2 *Saint Gregory*: i.e., Pope Saint Gregory the Great

3 *finally*: ultimately // *old holy fathers*: early fathers of the Church

6 *purgatory*: i.e., that purgatory exists 8 *manner*: kind of

8 *avoid it but*: i.e., get out of acknowledging 9 *although*: even if

12 *except*: unless 14 *over*: on top of 15 *may*: could

16 *had clearly lost its credence*: i.e., would completely lose its credibility

19 *divers*: various 21 *divers*: different 22 *great*: flagrant; egregious

26 *it*: i.e., this fact 29 *stop*: shut 30 *high-hearted*: arrogant

32 *concluded*: trounced 33 *fall*: resort

and speak with them. By which blasphemous question they may as well deny hell, and heaven too, as they deny purgatory. For there cometh as many to them out of purgatory... as out of either of the other twain. And surely if there came one  
 5 out of any of them all three... unto folk of such incredulity as those heretics be: yet would they be never the better. For if they believe not now them whom they *should* believe, no more would they believe him neither that should come out of purgatory to tell it them—as Abraham answered the rich man that required  
 10 the same in hell; and as it well appeared also by the miscreant Jews which were so little amended by the coming again of Lazarus out of *limbus patrum*... that lest others should believe him, they devised to destroy him. And yet if the thing that they require *would* content them—it hath not lacked.  
 15 For there hath in every country and in every age apparitions been had, and well known and testified, by which men have had sufficient revelation and proof of purgatory... except such as list not to believe them; and they be such as would be never the better if they saw them.  
 20 For whoso listeth to believe that altogether is lies that he heareth so much people speak of and so many good men write of—for no country is there in Christendom in which he shall not *hear*, credibly reported, of such apparitions divers times there seen and appearing; and in the books of many a holy saint's  
 25 *writing* shall he find such apparitions in such wise told and testified as no good man could in any wise mistrust them. And, over this, when the apostles at Christ's appearing to the Eleven in the house... took him at the first for a *spirit*, it well appeareth that apparitions of spirits was no new thing among the Jews.  
 30 Which ye may well perceive also by that the better sort of them said in excusing of Saint Paul, "What if some angel or some spirit have spoken to him?"—as is mentioned in the Apostles' Acts. So that, as we say, whoso list to take all this for lies... and is so faithless, and so proudly curious, that he looketh ere he believe

2 *may as well*: could as rightly      4 *one*: someone  
 5 *them all three*: all three of them // *incredulity*: skepticism  
 6, 19 *never the better*: no better off      9–10: See Luke 16:27–35.  
 9–10 *required the same*: made the same request      10–13: See John 12:9–11.  
 11 *miscreant*: unbelieving // *which*: who      12 *again*: back  
 12 *limbus patrum*: See note for 179/21.      13 *devised*: plotted  
 14 *require*: ask for / make a requisite (for their belief) // *lacked*: been lacking  
 16, 26 *testified*: authenticated      18, 20, 33 *list(eth)*: choose(s)  
 18, 34 *believe*: i.e., believe in      20, 33 *whoso*: whoever  
 20 *altogether is*: i.e., it is all a pack of      23 *divers*: various  
 26 *in . . . them*: in any way be skeptical of them      27 *over this*: moreover  
 27–28: See Luke 24:37.      28 *well appeareth*: is clear to see  
 30–32: See Acts 23:9.      31 *excusing*: defending      34 *faithless*: devoid of faith  
 34 *curious*: cautious; leery // *believe*: i.e., believe in



them to have such apparitions specially showed unto himself,  
and miracles wrought in his presence... would wax the *worse* and he  
saw them, and would ascribe it either to some fantasy or to the  
devil's work—as did those Jews that ascribed Christ's miracles  
5 to Beelzebub.

For surely if such people were in the case of Saint Thomas  
of India—that they were otherwise very virtuous and good,  
having in that only point some hardness of belief as he had in  
Christ's resurrection—our Lord, we doubt not, would of his special  
10 goodness provide some special way, for their satisfaction, to  
recover them with. But, now, since they be plain carnal, high-hearted,  
and malicious, longing for miracles as did these  
crooked-hearted Jews which said unto Christ that they longed to  
see him show some miracle—he doth, therefore, with *these* folk as  
15 Christ did with *them*. For as he answered *them*, by the example of  
Jonas the prophet, that he would none show before that perverse  
and faithless people till he were dead: so answereth he *these*  
perverse and crooked, malicious people... that he will show them no  
such apparition till *they* be dead. And then shall he send  
20 them where they shall see it so surely—and, to their pain, see such a  
grisly sight as shall so grieve their hearts to look thereon—that  
they shall say as Christ said to Saint Thomas of India: “Beati qui  
non viderunt et crediderunt”; “Blessed and happy be they that  
believed this gear and never saw it.” For surely in this world the  
25 goodness of God so tempereth such apparitions... as his high  
wisdom seeth it most profitable for help and relief of the dead  
and instruction and amendment of the quick—keeping such  
apparitions, of his great mercy, most commonly from the sight of  
such as would turn his goodness into their own harm. And  
30 surely of his tender favor toward you... doth his great goodness  
provide that such apparitions, revelations, and miracles  
should not be too copious and common—whereby good men,  
seeing the thing at eye, should lose the great part of that they  
now merit by faith; and evil folk, when they were once familiar

1 *specially*: personally      2 *wax*: become // *and*: if  
3 *fantasy*: hallucination      4–5: See Matthew 12:24.      6 *case*: situation  
6–7, 22 *Saint Thomas of India*: I.e., the apostle Thomas, who is believed to  
have established the Church in what is now called Kerala.  
7–9: See John 20:24–25.      8 *hardness of belief*: difficulty believing  
9, 10 *special*: exceptional      11 *recover them*: come to their rescue  
11 *carnal*: unspiritual // *high-hearted*: arrogant      14, 16 *show*: perform  
14 *he*: i.e., our Lord God      15 *with them*: i.e., with those Jews  
17 *faithless*: unbelieving      22 *as*: i.e., what      22–24: See John 20:29.  
24 *this gear*: i.e., in this thing      25 *tempereth*: regulates      27 *quick*: living  
28 *from*: away from      33 *at eye*: with their own eyes  
33 *great part*: greater part; lion's share // *that*: that which      34 *evil*: bad

with it, would then as little regard it as they now little believe it.

Now it is a world to see with what folly they fortify their false belief... and into what fond fantasies they fall while they  
5 decline from the truth. For while they deny purgatory... they now affirm (and especially Luther himself) that souls unto Doomsday do nothing else but *sleep*. Woe would they be if they fell into such a sleep as many a soul sleepeth here—and as Judas hath already slept fifteen hundred years in hell!

10 Then say they that if there *were* any purgatory... out of which the pope might deliver any soul by his pardon: then were he very cruel in that he delivereth them not without money; and also that he riddeth them not hence all together, at once. The first is a great folly: that—since our Lord sendeth them  
15 thither for satisfaction to be made in some manner for their sin—the pope should rather, against God's purpose, deliver them free... than change the manner of their satisfaction from pain unto prayer, almsdeed, or other good works to be done by their friends for them, in some point profitable and  
20 necessary for the whole corps of Christendom or some good member of the same.

Now is there in the second not only much *more* folly, but it importeth also plain and open blasphemy. For presupposed that the pope may deliver all souls out of purgatory: yet if he  
25 were therefore cruel as often as he leaveth any there—this unreasonable reason layeth cruelty to the blame of *God*, which may *undoubtedly* deliver all souls thence, and yet he leaveth them there. This blasphemy should also touch his high Majesty for keeping any soul in *hell*; from whence no man doubteth but that he might, if  
30 he list, deliver them all forever. But as he will not deliver any thence: so will he not without good order deliver any soul hence. For as of his justice *they* be worthy to lie *there forever*: so be *we* worthy to lie *here* for the *while*... and in God no cruelty though he suffer his mercy to be, commonly, suspended and  
35 tempered with the balance of his justice. And though he take us not hence all at once, orderless and at adventure: his high

3 *a world*: a wonder; an amazing thing // *folly*: nonsense  
4 *fond fantasies*: ridiculous notions // *while*: when 5 *decline*: fall away  
6 *unto*: until 11, 29 *might*: could 11 *his pardon*: i.e., granting an indulgence  
12 *were he*: would he be 13 *that*: i.e., in that // *riddeth*: clears; gets  
13, 36 *hence*: out of here 14, 22 *folly*: idiocy 14 *since*: given that  
15 *thither*: there 19 *friends*: relatives and friends; loved ones  
23 *importeth*: involves // *plain and open*: clear and obvious 24, 26 *may*: could  
25 *unreasonable*: irrational 26 *reason*: argument // *which*: who  
27, 31 *thence*: from there 28 *touch*: cast aspersions on 29 *whence*: where  
30 *list*: wanted to 31 *order*: protocol 32 *hence*: from here  
32 *as of*: i.e., just as in accord with // *they*: i.e., the souls in hell  
32 *be worthy*: deserve 33 *be we worthy*: do we deserve 34 *suffer*: allow  
34 *commonly*: ordinarily 36 *orderless*: i.e., without any protocol or criterion  
36 *at adventure*: indiscriminately

wisdom is praiseworthy, and not worthy blame. Our Lord forbid  
 that ever we so should (and such is his grace that we never shall, for  
 any pain possible that we can suffer here) hold ourselves content to  
 hear such foolish words as imply so plain blasphemy against  
 5 God's high, merciful Majesty. For surely these folk in putting  
 forth of this their unwise argument... make a countenance to  
 throw it against the pope, but in very deed they cast it at  
 God's head.

10 For as for the pope—whoso consider it well—goeth farther  
 from the example of God that is set for Christ's vicar in his Church...  
 by giving over-liberal pardon... than by being therein too scarce  
 and strait. For God remitteth not here at *adventure* (though he  
 may do his *pleasure*), but observeth right good and great respect—  
 15 as the prayers and intercessions made for us, or other  
 satisfaction done for us, by some other men. And this order  
 useth, and of reason ought to use, his vicar also in the dispensing  
 toward our relief... the precious treasure of our  
 comfort that Christ hath put in his keeping. For else, if either  
 20 the pope or God should always forthwith deliver every man here—  
 or, rather, keep every man hence, as these heretics would make  
 men believe that God doth indeed... and would that the world  
 should so take it—then should God or the pope, as we somewhat  
 have said before, give a great occasion to men boldly to fall  
 in sin... and little to care or force how slowly they rise again.  
 25 Which thing neither were meet for the pope's office... nor  
 agreeable to the great wisdom of God—and much less meet  
 for his mercy. For by that means should he give innumerable  
 folk great occasion of damnation... which, presuming upon  
 such easy, short remission, would lustily draw to lewdness  
 30 with little care of amendment.

And so appeareth it that the thing which these wise men  
 would have ye take for cruel... is of truth most *merciful*; and  
 the thing which they would have to seem very benign and  
 piteous is in very deed most rigorous and most cruel;  
 35 likewise as a sharp master that chastiseth his servant... is in

1 *worthy*: deserving of    2 *for*: despite    4 *imply*: involve as a necessary consequence  
 4 *so plain*: such obvious    5 *surely*: certainly    6 *this their unwise argument*: this  
 nonsensical argument of theirs    6–7 *make a countenance to throw*: make it look as though  
 they were throwing    7, 34 *very deed*: actual fact    7 *cast*: are throwing  
 9 *whoso consider it well*: i.e., whoever really thinks about it will see this  
 9 *goeth*: i.e., he would go    11 *by* . . . *pardon*: i.e., by granting indulgences too liberally  
 11–12 *therein* . . . *strait*: too sparing and strict in this regard    12 *at adventure*: capriciously  
 13 *may*: can // *his pleasure*: as he pleases // *observeth* . . . *respect*: i.e., takes some things  
 into quite good and great consideration    14 *as*: such as    15 *order*: protocol  
 20 *hence*: out of here    21–22 *would* . . . *should*: would have everyone  
 22 *somewhat*: more or less    24 *in*: into // *care or force*: worry or care  
 25 *neither were meet*: would be neither fitting    26 *agreeable to*: in keeping with  
 26–27 *meet for*: congruous with    28 *which*: who    29 *short*: quick  
 29 *lustily*: cheerfully; enthusiastically // *draw to*: go in for // *lewdness*: licentiousness  
 30 *of*: about    31 *wise*: sensible    32 *of truth*: in actuality    33 *benign*: kind; gracious  
 34 *piteous*: compassionate // *rigorous*: unbending; stringent    35 *sharp*: severe

that point more favorable than is an easy one that for lack of punishment letteth them run on the bridle and giveth them occasion of hanging. Which thing hath place also between the father and the child. And therefore in Holy Scripture  
 5 that father is not accounted for unloving and cruel... that beateth his child; but rather, he that leaveth it undone. For “he that spareth the rod,” saith Holy Writ, “hateth the child.” And God, therefore, that is of all fathers the most tender-loving, and most benign and merciful, leaveth no child of his uncorrected, but  
 10 “scourgeth every child that he taketh to him.” And therefore neither God remitteth at adventure the pains of purgatory... nor no more must the pope neither... but if that he will, while he laboreth to do good and be piteous to us that are dead, be cruel and do much more harm to them that be quick... and while  
 15 he will draw us out of purgatory... drive many of them into hell. From desire of which kind of “help” we so far abhor... that we would all rather choose to dwell here long, in most bitter pain, than by such way to get hence as might give occasion of any man’s damnation.

20 Now, where they likewise object—in countenance against the clergy, but yet in very deed they strike the stroke at *us*, whom they would bereave the suffrages of good people—objecting that no man may satisfy for another... nor that the prayer nor alms nor other good deed done by one man may  
 25 stand another in stead, but that every man must needs allthing that he will have help of... do it, every whit, himself; and so, that no man’s good deed done among you for us in relief of our pain could in any manner serve us: this opinion, as it is toward us very pestilent and pernicious, so is it of itself  
 30 very false and foolish. For first, if all that ever must avail any man... must needs be done by himself, and no man’s merit may be applied to the help of another: then were wiped away from all men all the merits of Christ’s bitter Passion; in which though it be true that *God* died on the cross,

1 *point*: respect // *favorable*: kind / beneficial // *easy*: lenient  
 2 *run on the bridle*: have free rein; run wild    3 *hath place*: holds true  
 6–7: See Proverbs 13:24.    7–10: See Hebrews 12:5–6.  
 8 *that*: who    9 *benign*: kind; gracious // *uncorrected*: unpunished  
 11 *at adventure*: capriciously; indiscriminately    12 *but if*: unless  
 12 *will*: wants to    13 *laboreth*: is trying // *piteous*: compassionate  
 14 *quick*: alive    16 *abhor*: recoil    18 *hence*: out of here  
 20 *in countenance*: seemingly    21 *very deed*: actual fact  
 21 *strike the stroke at*: land the blow on  
 22 *bereave*: i.e., bereave of; deprive of    23, 24, 32 *may*: can  
 23 *satisfy for*: make satisfaction for  
 25 *stand another in stead*: stand in for another’s; be done on another’s behalf  
 25 *needs*: necessarily // *allthing*: everything  
 29 *pestilent*: injurious; detrimental    32 *were*: would be

because of the unity of God and man in person—yet had his tender *manhood* all the pain for us, and his impassible Godhead felt no pain at all. Whereof serveth also the prayers that every man prayeth for other? Wherefore did Saint Paul pray for all  
 5 other Christian men—and desire them all to pray for him also, and each of them for other—that they might be saved?

And why is there so special a mention made, in the Acts of the Apostles, that at the delivery of Saint Peter out of prison the Church made continual prayer and intercession for him... but  
 10 for to show that God the rather delivered him for other men's prayers? And think ye that if God have pity upon one man for another's sake... and delivereth him at another man's petition from a little pain or imprisonment in the world there upon earth, he hath not at other men's humble  
 15 and hearty prayer much more pity upon such as lie in much more heavy pain and torment here in the hot fire of purgatory?

Then find these folk another knot hard, as they think, to undo. For they say that "if another man's merits may serve me,  
 20 whereto should I need to do any good myself?" This objection is much like as if they would say, "If other men may take me out of the fire, whereto should I labor to rise myself?" Very truth it is that sometimes the good works of one man, wrought with good affection, may purchase another man grace for to amend and  
 25 work for himself. But surely, of common course, he that will not himself work *with* them... getteth little good of other men's good deeds. For if thyself do still draw backward while other, good men with their prayer labor to pull thee forward, it will be long ere thou make any good day's journey. And therefore  
 30 that holy doctor Saint Augustine, in the blessed book that he made of the cure and care that men should have of us seely departed souls, toucheth quickly the very point that there can none take profit of other men's good deeds... but only such as have deserved by some good thing in their own deeds... that other

2 *tender*: sensitive // *impassible*: incapable of experiencing suffering

4 *wherefore*: why 4–6: See Romans 10:1; Ephesians 1:15–18 and 6:18–20; Philippians 1:9–10; 2 Thessalonians 1:11–12; and 1 Timothy 2:1–4.

7–11: See Acts 12:5–12. 10 *rather*: sooner // *for*: on account of

11, 14 *have*: takes 16 *hot*: i.e., terribly hot 19, 21, 24 *may*: can

20, 22 *whereto*: to what end; why 20 *good*: i.e., good thing

22 *labor to rise*: go to the trouble of getting up // *very truth it is*: it is indeed true

23 *wrought*: done 23–24 *good affection*: a good disposition

25 *work for himself*: i.e., to do good deeds his own self // *surely*: certainly

25 *of common course*: as a rule 28 *labor*: strive

30 *the blessed book*: i.e., *On Care to Be Had for the Dead* (6).

31 *made of*: wrote about // *cure and care*: care and concern // *of us*: for us

31 *seely*: poor 32 *toucheth quickly*: strikingly makes

men's deeds should help them. And that hath every man done, at the leastwise by his final repentance and purpose of amendment, that departeth the world in the state of grace.

5 For he that is *out* of that state cannot take the profit of other men's merits done for him. And therefore damned souls cannot by other men's merits be delivered of damnation; nor, in like wise, he that intendeth to persevere in sin and do no good for himself. But since that *we* be not in that case, but have with help of God's grace deserved to be partners  
10 of such good deeds as ye that are our friends will of your goodness do for us, ye may by your merits highly relieve us here and help to get us hence. And surely great wonder were it if we should not be able to take profit of your prayers. For there will no wise man doubt but that the prayer of any member of  
15 Christendom... may profit any other that it is made for... which hath need and is a member of the same. But none is there yet living that is more very member of Christ's mystical body—that is, his church—than we be; nor no man living that hath more need of help than we. For in surety of salvation we be fellows with  
20 angels; in need of relief we be yet fellows with you. And therefore, being so sure members of one body with angels, holy saints, and you; and having necessity both of their help and yours: there is no doubt but since every member that need hath may take good by other, we stand in the case that both  
25 angels' and saints' intercessions and your good prayers and almsdeed done for us, whatsoever these heretics babble, may do us marvelous much good.

How many have by God's most gracious favor appeared unto their friends after the death and showed themselves  
30 helped and delivered hence by pilgrimage, almsdeed, and prayer—and especially by the sacred oblation of that Holy Sacrament offered for them in the Mass! If these heretics say that all such things be lies, then be they much worse yet than

5 *done*: i.e., earned    6 *of*: from    8 *good*: i.e., good thing  
9, 24 *case*: position; situation    9 *deserved*: merited // *partners*: partakers  
10, 29 *friends*: relatives and friends; loved ones    11, 15, etc. *may*: can  
12 *hence*: out of here // *surely* . . . *it*: certainly it would be a great wonder  
14 *no wise man*: no one with any sense    15 *which*: who  
17 *very*: truly a    19, 20 *in*: with respect to    19 *surety*: certainty  
19, 20 *fellows*: peers; on a par    20 *yet*: still  
21 *so sure*: such firmly established; so certainly    22 *necessity*: need  
27 *marvelous much*: a tremendous amount of  
29 *showed themselves*: i.e., made it known that they were  
30 *hence*: from here

their master was—Luther himself—as long as any spark of  
 shame was in him. For he confesseth in his sermons that many  
 such apparitions be true; and his heart could not for very  
 shame serve him... that so many so often told in so many places,  
 5 so faithfully reported by so many honest folk, and so substantially  
 written by so many blessed saints... should be all false.  
 Wherein if these men list, like lusty scholars, to pass and overgo  
 their mad master in this point, and deny these things altogether—  
 yet shall there stick in their teeth... the scripture of the  
 10 Maccabees whereof we told you: that Judas Maccabeus gathered  
 and sent a great offering to Jerusalem, for to buy sacrifice to be  
 offered for them that he found slain in the field... and certain  
 things about them, taken of the idols, forbidden them by the  
 Law; which caused him to fear lest they were for their sins  
 15 fallen after their death into pain; and therefore made that  
 gathering, that alms and offering, as himself saith, that they  
 might thereby be loosed and delivered of their sins. So that  
 there appeareth *plainly* by *Scripture*... that such suffrages stand  
 us seely souls in stead. Against which authority if they will  
 20 with their master labor to break out, and deny that book for Holy  
 Scripture—we have stopped them that gap already, with such  
 a bush of thorns as will prick their hands through a pair of  
 hedging gloves ere they pull it out.

And finally, for this point that the suffrages of the Church  
 25 and the prayers of good Christian people stand us here in relief  
 and comfort, there needeth in this world (as Saint Augustine saith,  
 and Saint Damascene) none other manner proof than that all Christendom  
 hath ever used to do so, and have thought themselves  
 always so *bound* to do, damning always for heretics all them  
 30 that would affirm the contrary.

And in this point may they have a marvelous great thing  
 against them in the judgment of every good man: the great  
 antiquity of the service of Christ's church... by which the Church  
 hath so long ago customably recommended in their prayers all

2 *confesseth*: acknowledges; admits      4 *serve him*: give him to think  
 5 *faithfully*: earnestly / convincingly // *honest*: respectable  
 5 *substantially*: soundly      7 *list*: want // *lusty scholars*: ambitious students  
 7 *pass*: surpass // *overgo*: outdo      8, 20 *master*: teacher      8, 31 *in*: on  
 9–17: See 2 Maccabees 12:38–45.      12 *in the field*: on the battlefield  
 12 *and*: i.e., with      13 *about them*: i.e., on or near their bodies  
 13 *taken of the idols*: idol-related      15 *pain*: punishment  
 15 *made*: i.e., he made      18–19 *stand . . . stead*: do benefit us poor souls  
 20 *labor*: try      27 *manner*: kind of  
 28 *ever used to do so*: always habitually done this (i.e., pray for the souls in purgatory)  
 29 *damning*: condemning      31 *may*: can // *marvelous*: terrifically  
 33 *service*: liturgy // *by*: in // *Church*: i.e., clergy      34 *so*: i.e., from so  
 34 *customably*: customarily // *recommended*: commended

Christian souls to God. For we trust that though these heretics  
 find many men both glad to hear and light to believe every  
 lewd tale that can be surmised against the Church that now is—  
 yet trust we that they shall find few or none so far out of all  
 5 frame... but that they will at the least believe that there hath been  
 some good and godly men, wise and well learned too, among the  
 clergy in days past, one time or other. Go, then, to the *old* time,  
 and to the good men that then were, and hear what they said, and  
 see what they did, and believe and follow them. There remaineth  
 10 yet, and books enough thereof, the very Mass in the very form and  
 fashion... as Saint Basil, and Saint Chrysostom, and other holy  
 fathers in that virtuous time, said it—in which ye shall find  
 that in their daily Masses they prayed ever for all Christian souls.

Ye shall also perceive clearly by Saint Chrysostom in a sermon  
 15 of his... that in his time there were in the funeral service, at  
 the burying of the corpse, the selfsame psalms sung that ye  
 sing now at the Dirge. Whereby it well appeareth that it is no newfound  
 thing; for his time was far above a thousand years ago—and yet  
 was that thing long used before his days. And because ye shall  
 20 know that the more surely: he saith that the guise and custom to  
 pray for souls... was instituted and begun in the Church by the  
 blessed apostles themselves. And so, while so good men so long ago  
 began it... and good folk hath ever since continued it, ye  
 may soon guess whether they be good men or no that now provoke  
 25 you to break it.

Now, where they say that if the Mass could do us any good,  
 that then the priests be very cruel that will say none for us but  
 they be waged: this word is as true as their intent is fraudulent  
 and false. For their purpose is in those words to make the  
 30 world ween that the clergy were so covetous, and cruel therewith,  
 that there will no priest pray for us poor souls here...  
 without he be hired thereto; whereof, our Lord be thanked, we  
 find full well the contrary. For albeit that of *Luther's*  
 priests we can have *none* help, since their “Masses” offer not up  
 35 the Sacrament to God neither for quick nor dead—nor make no  
 very priests among them, since they take priesthood for no sacrament—

1 *though*: even if    2 *glad to hear*: willing to listen to // *light*: quick

3 *lewd*: salacious // *surmised*: alleged

3 *the Church that now is*: i.e., the present-day clergy

4–5 *out of all frame*: from all right thinking    6 *wise*: intelligent

6 *well learned*: well educated    9 *follow*: go along with

14–15 *a sermon of his*: I.e., his third homily on Philipians.

17 *the Dirge*: The prayer service (taken from the Office for the Dead) which preceded  
 the funeral Mass.    17 *well appeareth*: is clear to see // *newfound*: newly established

18 *far above*: well over    19 *used*: i.e., done // *because*: so that    20 *guise*: practice

22 *while*: since; given that // *so good*: such good    27 *but*: unless

28 *waged*: paid (to) // *word*: statement    29–30 *the world*: everyone    30 *ween*: think

30 *covetous*: avaricious    32 *without . . . thereto*: unless he is bribed to    35 *quick*: living

35–36 *nor . . . priests*: i.e., nor are any real priests made among Lutherans



yet of good Christian priests we find great relief, as well  
 in their Dirges and much other suffrages by old institution  
 of the Church specially said for us... though no man give  
 them one penny through the year. And so may all the world wit  
 5 that this word of these heretics hath much malice and little  
 effect therein.

But, now, though the priests pray for us of their own  
 charity—yet when good people desire them thereto and give  
 them their alms therefor, then are they doubly bound...  
 10 and then riseth there much more good and profit upon all  
 sides. For then take we fruit both of the prayer of the one and  
 the alms of the other. And then taketh the priest benefit of  
 his own prayer made both for the giver and for us. The  
 giver also getteth fruit both of his own merciful alms...  
 15 and of double prayer also—that is to wit, both the prayer of  
 the priest that prayeth for us, which commonly prayeth for him  
 too, and also the prayer of *us*, which with great fervor of  
 heart pray for our benefactors incessantly... and are so far forth  
 20 in God's undoubted favor... that very few men living upon  
 earth are so well heard as we—besides that of all kinds of alms  
 that any man can give, the most meritorious is that which is  
 bestowed upon us, as well for that it is unto the most needy... and  
 also to them that are absent, and finally, for that of all manner  
 alms it is most grounded upon the foundation of all  
 25 Christian, virtuous faith. For as for to poor folk, a natural man  
 will give alms, either for pity of some piteous sight... or for  
 weariness of their importunate crying. But as for us poor  
 souls past the world, whom he that giveth alms neither  
 seeth nor heareth—would never bestow one penny upon us but if  
 30 he had a faith that we live still, and that he feared that we lie in  
 pain... and hoped of his reward in heaven. Which kind of  
 faith and good hope joined with his gift and good work... must  
 needs make it one of the best kinds of almsdeed that any man  
 can do in the world.

35 And since that it so is (as indeed it is!), what uncharitable and

1 *good*: bona fide    2 *Dirges*: See note for 204/17.    3 *though*: even if  
 4 *wit*: know    5 *word*: i.e., claim    8 *desire*: solicit    9 *therefor*: for that  
 10 *riseth there*: there results    16, 17 *which*: who  
 18–19 *are . . . favor*: i.e., are so definitely and so much in favor with God  
 22, 23 *for that*: because    23 *manner*: the kinds of    24 *is*: i.e., is the one  
 25 *a natural man*: i.e., even a non-Christian    26 *piteous*: pitiful  
 27 *importunate*: persistent / pesky // *crying*: pleading  
 29 *would*: i.e., he would // *but if*: unless  
 31 *of his reward*: i.e., to be rewarded    35 *since*: given

what unfaithful folk are these... that for hatred which they owe to  
 priested... would make you believe that there were no purgatory...  
 and would rather wish, by their wills, that their own fathers should  
 lie here in fire till the Day of Doom... than any man should give  
 5 a priest one penny to pray for them!

And yet is there here one thing well to be considered: that  
 they rather hate priests for hatred of Christ's faith... than speak  
 against purgatory for hatred of priests. Which thing though it  
 seem you dark at the first hearing, ye shall yet, if ye look  
 10 well, very well perceive. For if it so were that this kind of  
 people did speak against purgatory only for the hatred of the  
 pope and the clergy, then would they grant that saved souls are yet  
 purged in the fire here for their sins unsatisfied in the  
 world, and it should then suffice them to say for their purpose...  
 15 that neither priest nor pope nor any man else, nor any  
 man's alms or prayer, can in this place of punishment anything  
 relieve us. For this were enough, ye see well, to serve their  
 purpose against the clergy. But yet, because they have a far  
 farther purpose against all good Christian faith, they be not content,  
 20 therefore, to leave at this point, but step them forth  
 farther and deny purgatory utterly... to the end that men should  
 take boldness to care the less for their sins. And if they  
 might once be believed therein—then would they step yet farther and  
 deny hell and all; and after that, heaven too. But as for heaven,  
 25 albeit that as yet they deny it not—yet pull they many a simple  
 soul thence... which were it not for their mischievous doctrines  
 were else well likely to be there a full bright and glorious saint.

And surely the more that wise men advise themselves upon  
 this matter, the more shall they marvel of the mad mind of  
 30 them that deny purgatory... or say that the prayers or good  
 works of men living in the world can do us here no good. For  
 every man that any wit hath... wotteth well that the surest way  
 were in every doubt best to be taken. Now, suppose, then, that  
 purgatory could in no wise be proved... and that some would yet say

1 *unfaithful*: unbelieving // *owe*: bear

2 *priested*: the ordained; those who have been made priests

3 *by their wills*: if the choice was theirs to make // *fathers*: parents

4 *the Day of Doom*: Judgment Day // *than*: i.e., than that 7 *rather*: more

7 *Christ's*: the Christian 8 *though*: even if 9 *you*: i.e., to you

9 *dark*: hard to see (as being true); hard to believe

13 *unsatisfied*: not made satisfaction for; not made up for 16 *anything*: at all

17 *were*: would be 18, 19 *purpose*: design(s) 19 *good*: bona fide; authentic

22 *take boldness*: be emboldened // *care*: worry // *for*: about

26 *thence*: away from there // *mischievous*: iniquitous / destructive

28 *wise*: sensible / sane // *advise themselves upon*: reflect on 29 *of the*: at the

29 *mind*: mentality; way of thinking 32 *any wit hath*: has any sense

32 *wotteth*: knows

32–33 *the . . . taken*: i.e., when in doubt, it's always best to take the safest route

34 *wise*: way // *say*: state

plainly that there were one, and some would say plainly nay. Let us  
 now see whither sort of these twain might take most harm if  
 their part were the wrong. First, he that believed there *were*  
 purgatory, and that his prayer and good works wrought for  
 5 his friends' souls might relieve them therein, and because  
 thereof used much prayer and alms for them: he could not  
 lose the reward of his good will... although his opinion were  
 untrue, and that there were no purgatory at all; no more than he  
 loseth his labor now that prayeth for one whom he feareth to lie in  
 10 purgatory, whereas he is already in heaven. But on the other side,  
 he that believeth there is none... and therefore prayeth for none:  
 if his opinion be false, and that there be purgatory indeed (as  
 indeed there is!), he loseth much good, and getteth him also  
 much harm; for he both feareth much the less to sin and to  
 15 lie long in purgatory—saving that his heresy shall save him  
 thence and send him down deep into hell.

And it fareth between these two kinds of folk as it fared  
 between a lewd gallant and a poor friar. Whom when the gallant  
 saw going barefoot in a great frost and snow, he asked him  
 20 why he did take such pain. And he answered that it was very  
 little pain if a man would remember hell. “Yea, Friar,” quoth the  
 gallant, “but what and there be none hell? Then art thou a great  
 fool!” “Yea, Master,” quoth the friar, “but what and there *be* hell? Then  
 is Your Mastership a much *more* fool!”

Moreover, there was never yet any of that sort... that could  
 for shame say that any man is in peril for believing that there  
 is purgatory. But they say only that there is none in deed...  
 and that they may without any sin affirm their opinion  
 for truth. But, now, upon the other side, many a hundred  
 30 thousand—that is to wit, all the whole church of Christ that is or  
 ever hath been—affirm that the affirming of their opinion  
 against purgatory... is a plain, damnable heresy. Wherefore it  
 well and plainly appeareth, and every wise man well seeth, that  
 it is the far surer way to believe in such wise as both the parties  
 35 agree to be out of all peril... than that way which so far the  
 greater party, and much farther the better party, affirm to be

1 *plainly*: flatly; categorically // *were*: i.e., is // *say*: state  
 2 *whither sort of these twain*: which of these two groups 2, 5 *might*: could  
 2 *take*: suffer (the) 3 *part*: side of the argument 4 *wrought*: done  
 5 *his friends' souls*: the souls of his relatives and friends  
 6 *used much prayer and alms*: did a lot of praying and almsgiving  
 7 *lose the reward of*: i.e., fail to be rewarded for // *although*: even if  
 7, 12, etc. *opinion*: stance 8 *untrue*: incorrect 9 *loses his labor*: wastes his effort  
 9 *one*: someone 10 *side*: hand 16 *thence*: i.e., from going there  
 18 *lewd*: licentious; morally loose  
 18, 22 *gallant*: dashing upper-crust man / ladies' man 22, 23 *and*: if  
 26 *for shame*: i.e., be so shameless as to 27 *deed*: actuality  
 33 *well and plainly appeareth*: is quite clear and obvious  
 33 *every wise man*: everyone with any sense 34 *surer*: safer  
 36 *greater*: more numerous

undoubted deadly sin. And, now, whereas every fool may see that any wise man will take the surest way—which is, as ye see doubly proved, to believe that there *is* purgatory—yet said the wise proctor of beggars that wise men will say there is none.

5 For he saith that many great learned men, and right cunning men, will not let to put themselves in jeopardy of shame, and of death also, to show their minds, that there is no purgatory. He is loath to say that these be heretics; but he saith these be they that men “call” heretics. Wherein he speaketh much like as if he would  
10 point with his finger to a flock of fat wethers and say, “These be such beasts as men call sheep.”

But now would we fain see which *be* these wise men and well learned—which shall not fail upon their own confession to agree that their adversaries take the sure way and farthest  
15 out of peril... and themselves the most dangerous and farthest from all surety. But yet would we for the while fain hear who they be. Surely none other but Luther and Tyndale... and this beggars’ proctor, and a few such of that sect—men of such virtue, wisdom, and learning... as their lewd writing, and  
20 much more their lewd living, showeth.

But now are they far another manner sort—both in number, wisdom, learning, truth, and good living—which affirm and say the contrary. And surely if three or four hundred good and learned men would faithfully come forth and tell one that some of his  
25 friends were in a far country, for debt, kept in prison... and that his charity might relieve them thence; if then three or four fond fellows would come and say the contrary, and tell him plain there is no such prison at all as he is borne in hand that his friends are imprisoned in; if he would now be so light to believe those three  
30 or four naughty persons... against those three or four hundred good and honest men—he then should well decipher himself... and well declare thereby that he would gladly catch hold of some small handle to keep his money fast, rather than help his friends in their necessity.

35 Now, if ye consider how lately this lewd sect began which among Christian men barketh against purgatory, and how few,

1 *undoubted*: i.e., definitely // *deadly*: mortal // *may*: can 2, 4, 12 *wise*: sensible  
2 *surest*: safest 2, 14 *way*: route 4, 18 *proctor*: spokesman 4 *of*: for 5 *right*: very  
5 *cunning*: knowledgeable // *let*: forbear // *in jeopardy*: at risk // *shame*: disgrace  
7 *show their minds*: say what they think 10 *wethers*: rams 11 *beasts*: animals  
12, 16 *fain*: i.e., like to 13 *learned*: educated // *confession*: admission 14 *sure*: safe  
16 *surety*: safety // *for the while*: in the meantime 18 *sect*: heretical belief system  
19, 20, 35 *lewd*: sorry 20, 22 *living*: conduct  
21 *far another manner*: a very different kind (of) // *sort*: set; group 22 *truth*: honesty  
24 *faithfully*: earnestly // *one*: someone 26 *might*: could  
26 *relieve them hence*: i.e., get them released from there 26–27 *fond fellows*: silly lowlifes  
27 *plain*: flatly (that) 28 *borne in hand*: being led to believe 29 *light*: unthinking (as)  
30 *naughty*: no-account 31 *honest*: respectable // *decipher himself*: give himself away  
32 *declare*: show // *some small handle*: any little excuse 33 *fast*: tightly in his grip  
34 *necessity*: hour of need 35 *lately*: recently

alway for very shame of their folly, hath hitherto fallen into  
 them; and then if ye consider, on the other side, how full and  
 whole the great corps of all Christian countries so many hundred  
 years... have ever told you the contrary: ye shall, we be very sure,  
 5 for every person speaking against purgatory... find for the  
 other part more than many a hundred.

Now, if these men will, peradventure, say that they care not for  
 such comparison... neither of time with time, number with  
 number, nor company with company; but since some one man is  
 10 in credence worth some sevenscore, if they will therefore call us to  
 some other reckoning and will that we compare of the best choice on  
 both sides a certain, and match them man for man: then have we  
 (if we might for shame match such blessed saints with a sort  
 as far unlike) Saint Augustine against Friar Luther; Saint  
 15 Jerome against Friar Lambert; Saint Ambrose against Friar  
 Huessgen; Saint Gregory against priest Pomeranus; Saint  
 Chrysostom against Tyndale; Saint Basil against the beggars'  
 proctor.

Now if our enemies will, for lack of other choice, help forth  
 20 their own part with their *wives*—then have they some  
 advantage indeed; for the other, holy saints had none. But yet  
 shall we not lack blessed, holy women against these friars' wives.  
 For we shall have Saint Anastasia against Friar Luther's wife;  
 Saint Hildegard against Friar Huessgen's wife; Saint Bridget  
 25 against Friar Lambert's wife; and Saint Catherine of Siena  
 against priest Pomeranus' wife. Now, if they will have in these  
 matches the *qualities* of either side considered: then have we  
 wisdom against folly; cunning against ignorance; charity  
 against malice; true faith against heresies; humility against  
 30 arrogance; revelations against illusions; inspiration of God  
 against inventions of the devil; constancy against wavering;  
 abstinence against gluttony; continence against lechery; and  
 finally every kind of virtue against every kind of vice. And  
 over this, whereas we be not yet very sure whether that all these  
 35 naughty persons whom we have rehearsed you of the worse side...  
 be fully fallen so mad as utterly to deny purgatory (saving in that

1 *alway*: at any rate; at least

1 *shame of their folly*: i.e., fear of being shamed for their foolishness

1 *fallen into*: fallen in with; joined    2 *side*: hand

6, 20 *part*: side    7 *peradventure*: perhaps    9 *company*: party; band

10 *sevenscore*: A score is twenty. // *call*: challenge

11 *will that we*: will have us    12 *certain*: i.e., certain one

13 *might*: could // *for shame*: without being shameful; with propriety

13 *a sort*: a kind (of saints) / an assortment (of people)    14 *as*: so

14 *unlike*: unlike them / unlike blessed saints

16 *Saint Gregory*: i.e., Pope Saint Gregory the Great    18 *proctor*: spokesman

28 *cunning*: learnedness    32 *continence*: chastity    33 *finally*: ultimately

34 *over this*: furthermore // *yet*: even    35 *naughty*: wicked

35 *rehearsed*: named    36 *be fully fallen so mad*: are gone quite so crazy

we see them, in many things, all of one sect)—yet if there were of them far many such more, they shall not, yet, find of that simple suit half so many... as for our part remaineth holy, blessed saints to match them. For likewise as many their holy works, eruditely written and by the help of the Holy Ghost indited, evidently declare that not only Saint Augustine, Saint Jerome, Saint Ambrose, and that holy pope Saint Gregory, with Saint Chrysostom, and Saint Basil, fore-remembered... and those holy women also that we have spoken of... but, over that, the great, solemn doctor Origen, all the three great doctors and holy saints of one name in Greece—Gregory Nazianzen, Gregory Nyssene, Gregory Emissene—Saint Cyril, Saint Damascene, the famous doctor and holy martyr Saint Cyprian, Saint Hilary, Saint Bede, and Saint Thomas, and finally all such as are of that suit and sort, either Greeks or Latins... have ever taught and testified and exhorted the people to pray for all Christian souls and preached for purgatory: so doth there no man doubt but that all good and devout Christian people from Christ's days hitherto... hath firm and fast been of the same belief, and with their daily prayers and almsdeed done for us have done us great relief. So that, as we said, both for number of many folk and goodness of chosen folk our enemies are far under us. And yet have we for the vantage, as we have before declared you, the fear of Hezekiah, the book of the Kings, the words of the prophet Zechariah, the faith of Maccabeus, the authority of Saint John, the words of Saint Peter, the sentence of Saint Paul, the testimony of Saint Matthew, and the plain sentence of our Savior Christ.

Now, if these heretics be so stiff and stubborn that rather than they will confess themselves concluded, they will hold on their old ways and fall from worse to worse... and like as they have already against their former promise first rejected reason and after law, and then all the doctors and old holy fathers of Christ's church, and finally the whole Church itself... so if they will at length, as we greatly fear they will, reject all Scripture and cast off Christ and all—now, as we say, if they so do—yet

1, 11 *one*: the same      1 *sect*: heretical belief system      2 *simple*: ignoble  
 3, 15 *suit*: ilk; stripe      3 *part*: side      4 *many*: i.e., many of  
 5 *indited*: composed      6 *evidently*: conclusively      6, 23 *declare(d)*: show(n)  
 8 *fore-remembered*: i.e., as was mentioned before      9 *over that*: moreover  
 10 *solemn*: august      10, 13, 33 *doctor(s)*: biblical exegete(s)  
 15 *finally*: ultimately // *sort*: assortment; number      16 *ever*: always  
 16 *testified*: told      19 *firm*: firmly // *fast*: steadfastly  
 20 *done us*: i.e., gained us      22 *chosen*: select      23 *for the vantage*: in addition  
 24–28: See Isaiah 38; 1 Samuel 2:6; Zechariah 9:11; 2 Maccabees 12:38–45;  
 1 John 5:16; Acts 2:24; 1 Corinthians 3:11–15; Matthew 12:31–32, 36.  
 26, 27 *sentence*: statement; pronouncement      27 *plain*: direct; straight-out  
 30 *concluded*: trounced; proved wrong      30–31 *hold on*: stick to  
 31 *fall from worse*: i.e., go from bad      35 *at length*: eventually; in the end

have we left at the worst way... Luther against Luther, Huessgen  
 against Huessgen, Tyndale against Tyndale, and finally every  
 heretic against himself. And then when these folk sit in  
 Almaine, upon their bare bench, in judgment on us and our matters,  
 5 we may as the knight of King Alexander appealed from  
 Alexander to Alexander... from Alexander the drunk to Alexander  
 the sober: so shall we appeal from Luther to Luther—from  
 Luther the drunken to Luther the sober, from Luther the heretic  
 to Luther the Catholic—and likewise in all the remnant.  
 10 For this doth no man doubt, but that every one of them all,  
 before they fell drunk of the dregs of old poisoned heresies...  
 in which they fell a-quaffing with the devil, they did full sadly  
 and soberly pray for all Christian souls. But since that they be  
 fallen drunk in wretched and sinful heresies, they neither care  
 15 for other men's souls nor for their own neither. And on the  
 other side, if ever they work with grace to purge themselves of  
 those poisoned heresies wherewith they be now so drunk, they  
 will then give sentence on our side, as they did before. It were  
 not evil that we showed you somewhat for example whereby ye  
 20 may see what soberness they were in before... and in what drunkenness  
 the devil's draught hath brought them. And in whom  
 should we show it better than in Luther himself, archheretic  
 and father abbot of all that drunken fellowship? First  
 this man was so fast of our side, while he was well and sober, that  
 25 yet when he began to be well washed... he could not find in his  
 heart utterly to fall from us, but when his head first began to daze  
 of that evil drink, he wrote that purgatory could not be  
 proved by Scripture... and yet, that notwithstanding, he wrote in  
 this wise therewith: "I am very sure that there *is* purgatory, and it  
 30 little moveth me what heretics babble. Should I believe a heretic  
 born of late, scant fifty years ago, and say the faith were  
 false that hath been held so many hundred years?" Lo, here  
 this man spoke well upon our side. But yet said he therewith  
 one thing or twain that could not stand therewith... and thereby  
 35 may ye see that he began to reel. For he both affirmed that

1 *at the worst way*: if worst comes to worst    2 *finally*: ultimately  
 4 *Almaine*: Germany // *bare*: paltry; inconsequential  
 4 *matters*: contentions; tenets    9 *in all the remnant*: with all the rest  
 11, 17 *poisoned*: noxious; toxic    12 *full sadly*: quite seriously  
 14 *care*: have concern    15 *for*: about    16 *side*: hand  
 18 *sentence*: judgment; verdict    18–19 *it . . . example*: i.e., it would not  
 be a bad idea for us to give you something by way of example  
 20 *in what*: into what    21 *draught*: drink; libation    23 *all that*: that whole  
 23 *first*: at first    24 *fast of*: firmly on // *while*: when  
 24 *well and*: good and; quite    25 *yet*: even  
 25 *well washed*: well soaked; quite inebriated    26 *fall*: fall away  
 27 *of*: from // *evil*: bad    28–29 *in this wise*: words to this effect  
 31 *scant*: scarcely    34 *twain*: two    35 *began*: was starting

purgatory could not be proved by Scripture... and affirmed further that nothing could be taken for a sure and certain truth but if it appeared by “clear and evident Scripture.” Which two things presupposed, how could any man be sure of purgatory?

5 But the help is that both those points be false. For both *is* purgatory proved by Scripture... and the Catholic faith of Christ’s church were sufficient to make men sure thereof albeit there were not in all Scripture one text for it, and divers that seemed against it, as we have showed you before.

10 But here, as we say, ye see how shamefully he staggered and began to reel. Howbeit, soon after, being so dizzy-drunk that he could neither stand nor reel, but fell down sow-drunk in the mire—then, like one that nothing remembered what he had said, nor heard not his own voice, he began to be himself that babbling  
 15 heretic against whom he had written before... and being not fully fifty years old... began to gainsay the faith of almost fifteen hundred years before his days in the church of Christ, besides fifteen hundred years three times told... among other faithful folk before. For now, in his drunken sermon that he wrote upon the Gospel of the rich  
 20 man and Lazarus, whereas he had, in his other books before, framed of his own fantasy new, fond fashions of purgatory... and told them forth for as plain matters as though he had been here and seen them—now, in this mad sermon of his, he saith plainly that there is none at all, but that all souls lie still and  
 25 sleep, and so sleep shall until the Day of Doom. O sow-drunken soul!—drowned in such an insensible sleep that he lieth and routeth... whilc the apostles, the evangelists, all the doctors of Christ’s church, all the whole Christian people, and among them Christ himself, stand and cry at his ear... that we seely  
 30 Christian souls lie and burn in purgatory; and he cannot hear, but lieth still in the mire and snorteth, and there dreameth that we lie still and sleep as he doth.

1 *further*: also    2–3 *but if*: unless    3 *appeared*: was shown (to be such)  
 3 *evident*: conclusive    5 *help*: remedy    7 *were*: would be  
 7 *albeit*: even if    8 *and*: i.e., and were // *divers*: several  
 13 *one that nothing remembered*: someone who remembered nothing of  
 16 *gainsay*: speak against    18 *faithful*: right-believing  
 19 *Gospel*: i.e., Gospel account    21 *framed of*: concocted from  
 21 *fantasy*: imagination // *fond*: foolish    22 *plain matters*: patent realities  
 23–24 *saith plainly*: states straight-out    25 *the Day of Doom*: Judgment Day  
 27 *routeth*: snores    29 *cry*: shout // *seely*: poor



And thus, whereas the beggars' proctor writeth that wise men say there is no purgatory—ye see now yourselves how wise is he whom they take for the wisest of all that sort, as him that is now the very wellspring and archheretic of all their sect. Of all which wise men we leave it to your wisdom to consider... whether ye find any whom your wisdoms would in wisdom compare with any of those old holy doctors and saints whom we have rehearsed before. But this man, we wot well, for another of these wise men meaneth William Tyndale. Whose wisdom well appeareth in that matter by that he layeth against it nothing but scoffing; wherein he saith that the pope may be bold in purgatory... because it is, he saith, a thing "of his own making"—whereas we have proved you by Scripture that purgatory was perceived and taught, and dead men's souls prayed for, so long ere ever any pope began.

But forasmuch as he saith that wise men will say there is no purgatory, among which wise men we doubt not but the wise man accounteth himself (for he layeth for that part, as himself weeneth, very wise and weighty reasons... the wisdom whereof we have already proved you very plain frantic folly): we will now finish the dispicions of all this debate and question... with the declaration of one or two points of his especial wisdom; and with one of which himself wisely destroyeth all his whole matter!

First, ye see well that albeit in deed he intendeth to go further if his bill were once well sped, yet he pretendeth nothing in visage but only the spoil, wedding, and beating of the clergy; to whom he layeth not all only such faults as ye have heard—and hath proved his purpose with such grounds as we have proved false—but also layeth one great necessity to take all from them... because they break the statute made of mortmain, and purchase more lands still against the provision thereof. And then saith he that any land which once cometh in their hands... cometh never out again. For he saith that they have such laws concerning their lands... as they may neither give any nor sell.

1 *proctor*: spokesman 1, 2, etc. *wise*: intelligent / sensible 3–4 *as . . . is*: he being  
 4–5 *all their sect*: their whole heretical belief system 5, 7, 10 *wisdom*: intelligence / good sense  
 6 *your wisdoms*: you sensible people 7 *holy doctors*: theologians 9 *wot*: know  
 11, 18 *layeth*: puts forth 11–13: Tyndale, *Obedience of a Christian Man*.  
 12 *be bold in*: do whatever he wants with regard to 17 *the wise*: the brilliant  
 18 *part*: side of the controversy 19 *weeneth*: thinks // *reasons*: arguments // *wisdom*: brilliance  
 20 *plain frantic folly*: evident insane idiocy 21 *dispicions*: disputations // *all this*: this whole  
 22 *declaration*: elucidation 24 *all his whole matter*: his whole entire case  
 25 *deed*: actuality 26 *once well sped*: ever to meet with good success  
 26–27 *pretendeth nothing in visage*: ostensibly proposes nothing 27 *spoil*: despoiling  
 27 *wedding*: marrying off 28 *layeth*: ascribes // *faults*: wrongdoings  
 29 *purpose*: case 30 *layeth one great necessity*: i.e., alleges as one big reason it is necessary  
 30 *all*: everything 31 *the statute made of mortmain*: I.e., the statute forbidding transfer of  
 lands into the inalienable ownership of any entity without license of the Crown.  
 32 *purchase . . . against*: keep purchasing more lands in violation of 33 *in*: into  
 34 *out again*: back out

For which cause lest they should at length have all... he deviseth to let them have nothing.

Now, first, where he maketh as though there came yet, for all the statute, daily much land into them, and that there can none at all  
 5 come *from* them: neither is the one so much as he would make it seem... and the other is very false. For truly there may come, and doth come, land from them by escheat—as we be sure many of you have had experience—and also, what laws soever they have of  
 10 their own that prohibit them to sell their lands, yet of this are we very sure: that, notwithstanding all the laws they have, they may sell in such wise, if they will, *all* the lands they have... that they can never recover foot again. And besides all that, albeit there be laws made by the Church against such sales as shrewd husbands would else boldly make of the lands of their monasteries—  
 15 yet is there not so precise provision made against *all* sales of their lands... but that they be alienated for cause reasonable, approved by the advice and counsel of their chief head. And many a man is there in the realm that hath lands given or sold out of abbeys and out of bishoprics both; so that this part is a plain lie.  
 20 The other part is also neither very certain nor very much to purpose. For truly, though that in the city of London, to which there is granted by authority of Parliament that men may there devise their lands into mortmain by their testaments, there is somewhat among given into the Church—and  
 25 yet not *all* to them, but the great part unto the companies and fellowships of the crafts—in other places of the realm there is nowadays no great thing given... but if it be, sometimes, some small thing for the foundation of a chantry. For as for abbeys, or such other great foundations, there be not nowadays  
 30 many made, nor have been of good while... except somewhat done in the universities. And yet whoso consider those great foundations that have this great while been made anywhere... shall well perceive that the substance of them be not all founded upon temporal lands newly taken out of the temporal  
 35 hands into the Church, but of such as the Church had long before...

1 *at length*: eventually // *all*: everything 1–2 *deviseth to let*: proposes letting

4 *into them*: i.e., into the possession of the clergy 6, 21 *truly*: actually

7 *escheat*: Reversion of property to the Crown when there are no legal heirs.

11 *wise*: a way // *will*: want to

12 *recover foot again*: get back one square foot (of any of those properties)

13 *shrewd husbands*: crooked managers 15 *precise*: literal

16 *alienated*: parted with; transferred to other ownership

19, 20 *part*: contention; claim 19 *plain*: manifest; patent

20–21 *very much to purpose*: very pertinent 23 *devise*: bequeath

23 *mortmain*: See note for 213/31. // *testaments*: wills 24, 30 *somewhat*: something

24 *among*: now and then 25 *great*: i.e., greater 27, 29, 31 *great*: big

28 *chantry*: A chapel endowed for the daily singing of Masses for certain souls.

30, 32 *made*: built 30 *of*: in a 31 *whoso*: whoever

33 *substance*: subsistence; capital 34 *temporal*: secular 35 *of*: on

and now the same translated from one place unto another.  
 And over this shall he find that many an abbey whose whole  
 living this man weeneth stood all by temporal lands given  
 them in their foundation... have the great part thereof in *benefices*  
 5 given in and impropriated unto them. So that if he consider  
 the substance of all the great foundations made this  
 great while... and all that hath into any such, these many days,  
 been given; and then consider well therewith how cold the charity  
 of Christian people waxeth by the means of such devil's proctors  
 10 as under pretext of begging for the poor... intend and  
 labor to quench the fervor of devotion to-God-ward in simple  
 and soon-led souls: he shall not need to fear that all the  
 temporal land in the realm shall come into the spirituality.  
 And yet if men went now so fast to give in still to the Church  
 15 as they did before, while devotion was fervent in the people  
 and virtue plenteous in the Church: yet might it be—and in other  
 countries is provided for well enough—both that men's devotion  
 might be favored... and yet not the Church have all.  
 But this wise man, lest they should have all, would leave  
 20 them right naught. For his wisdom weeneth there were no  
 mean way between *every* whit and *never* a whit but nothing  
 at all. And surely where that he layeth so sore to them the  
 new *purchasing* of more temporal lands—either bought or  
 given them—it appeareth well he would say sore to them if they  
 25 *pulled* the land from men by *force*... which now layeth so highly  
 to their charge because they take it when men *give* it them;  
 which thing we suppose himself, as holy as he is, would not  
 much refuse. Nor they be not much to be blamed if they  
 receive men's devotion, but if they *bestow* it not well. And  
 30 yet where he saith there can no statute hold them, but they  
 purchase still and break the statute—wherein he would seem  
 cunning because he had a little smattering in the law—it  
 were good, ere he be so bold to put his ignorance in writing,  
 that he should see the statute better. Which when he list to look

1 *the same*: i.e., the same capital // *translated*: (has simply been) transferred  
 2 *over this*: additionally 3, 20 *weeneth*: thinks 3 *stood all by*: depended entirely on  
 3, 13, 23 *temporal*: secular 4 *thereof*: i.e., of their living  
 6 *substance*: (means of) subsistence; capital // *made*: built (in) 9 *waxeth*: is becoming  
 9 *proctors*: spokesmen 11 *labor*: strive // *to-God-ward*: toward God  
 13 *into*: i.e., into the possession of // *spirituality*: clergy 14 *went . . . still*: now went in  
 as much for keeping giving 15 *while*: when  
 18 *favored*: countenanced; i.e., given a green light 19 *wise*: sensible / brilliant  
 20 *right naught*: absolutely nothing // *wisdom*: brilliant self // *were*: i.e., is  
 21 *mean way*: middle ground  
 22 *layeth so sore to them*: levels against them as such a serious charge  
 24 *appeareth well*: is clear to see (that) // *say sore*: really lay into  
 25 *pulled*: seized; expropriated // *which*: who  
 25–26 *layeth . . . charge*: so highly blames them 28 *refuse*: i.e., refuse to do  
 29 *receive*: accept // *bestow*: expend 30 *hold*: deter; stop 31 *break*: violate  
 31 *would*: wants to 32 *cunning*: learned // *because he had*: i.e., because of his having  
 33 *were*: would be // *bold to*: confident as to 34 *list*: cares

upon again and let some wiser man look with him, if he  
 consider well what remedy the statutes provide, and for whom, he  
 shall find that the makers of the statute not so much feared the great,  
 high point that pricketh him now—lest the whole temporal  
 5 lands should come into the Church—as they did the loss of  
 their wards, and their unlikelihood of escheats and some other  
 commodities that they lacked when their lands were alienated into  
 the Church; and yet not into the Church only, but also into *any*  
 mortmain. And for this they provided that if any more were  
 10 alienated into the Church or into *any* manner of mortmain, the  
 king or any other lord, mediate or immediate, that might take  
 loss thereby might enter thereinto; to the intent that ere ever the  
 purchase were made, they should be fain in such wise to sue to  
 every one of them for his license and good will... that each of them  
 15 should be arbiter of his own hurt or loss and take his  
 amends at his own hand. And this statute is not made only  
 for the advantage of the temporal lords against the clergy,  
 but it is made indifferently against *all* mortmain—which is as  
 well temporal folk as spiritual, and for the benefit as well of  
 20 spiritual men as temporal. For as well shall a bishop or an  
 abbot have the advantage of that statute if his tenant alienate  
 his lands into any mortmain... as shall an earl or a duke. And,  
 now, when the Church *pulleth* not away the land from the owner,  
 by force, but hath it of his *devotion*... and his gift given of his  
 25 own offer, unasked—and yet not without license of all such as the  
 statute limiteth—where is this great fault of theirs, for which,  
 lest they should take more in the same manner, he would they should  
 lose all that they have already? What wisdom is this: when he  
 layeth against them their deed wherein they break no law? *And*,  
 30 yet, since they cannot take it without the King and the lords,  
 his words, if they weighed aught, should run to the reproach and  
 blame of them whom he would fain flatter... without fault found  
 in them whom he so sore accuseth! But, now, the special, high  
 point of his wisdom, for which we be driven to speak of this  
 35 matter, he specially declareth in this. Ye see well that he would that  
 the temporal men should take from the clergy... not only all these

1 *upon*: at // *wiser*: more intelligent and sensible    4 *the whole*: all of the  
 4 *temporal*: secular    6 *wards*: minors entrusted to their guardianship  
 6 *escheats*: See note for 214/7.    7 *commodities*: benefits  
 9, 10, etc. *mortmain*: See note for 213/31.    13 *fain*: obliged // *wise*: a way  
 14, 25 *license*: permission    16 *amends*: recompense // *hand*: discretion  
 18 *indifferently*: impartially; neutrally    19, 20, 36 *temporal*: lay  
 19, 20 *spiritual*: clerical; ordained    23 *pulleth not away*: does not expropriate  
 24 *hath*: receives    26 *limiteth*: specifies // *fault*: offense; wrongdoing  
 27 *would they should*: would have them    28, 34 *wisdom*: intelligence and good sense  
 29 *layeth*: levels as a charge    30 *yet*: furthermore // *without*: i.e., without the permission of  
 31 *weighed aught*: carried any weight; amounted to anything // *should*: would  
 32, 33 *them*: those    32 *would fain*: is trying to    33 *sore*: strongly  
 35 *declareth*: shows    36 *temporal men*: i.e., secular authorities

lands purchased since the statute of mortmain, but also all  
 that ever they had before, too... and yet over this, all the whole  
 living that ever they have by any manner means besides... because he  
 thinketh that they have too much by altogether. And when he  
 5 hath given his advice thereto and said that they have too much:  
*then* saith he, by and by, that if there were any purgatory in  
 deed, it were well done to give them yet *more*—and that they  
 have then a great deal too little. But, now, so is it that purgatory  
 there *is* in deed; nor no good Christian man is there but he will  
 10 and must believe and confess the same. Whereof it plainly  
 followeth that, his own agreement added unto the truth (that is  
 to say, that the Church hath, as he saith, too little if there be a  
 purgatory, added unto the truth that there *is* a purgatory... and  
 that every true Christian man doth and must confess it), then hath,  
 15 lo, the wise man brought all his purpose so substantially to  
 pass... that, by his own plain agreement added unto the  
 undoubtable truth, no man may do that he would have all men  
 do—despoil and pillage the Church—but he that will first plainly  
 profess himself a plain and undoubted heretic!  
 20 And therefore, since ye now see the wit of this wise man that  
 laboreth to bring us out of your remembrance; since ye see  
 the simple ground of his proud “supplication,” and ye perceive  
 the rancor and malice that his matter standeth on—for  
 fulfilling whereof he would, by his will, bring all the world in  
 25 trouble—and since ye see that he hateth the *clergy* for the *faith*,  
 and *us* for the *clergy*... and in reproving purgatory proveth  
 himself an infidel; since we have made it you clear that your  
 prayers *may* do us good, and have showed it you, so plainly  
 that a child may perceive it, not only by the common opinion  
 30 of all people and the fast, infallible faith of all Christian  
 people from Christ’s days until your own time... confirmed  
 by the doctrine of all holy doctors, declared by good reason,  
 and proved by the Scripture of God, both apostles and evangelists,  
 and our Savior Christ himself: we will encumber  
 35 you no further with disputing upon the matter, nor argue  
 the thing as doubtful, that is undoubted and questionless.

1 *mortmain*: See note for 213/31.      4 *altogether*: the whole amount; 100 percent  
 6 *by and by*: immediately after      7, 9 *deed*: actuality; reality  
 7 *it were well done*: i.e., then the right thing to do would be      10, 14 *confess*: acknowledge  
 11, 16 *agreement*: concession      12, 18 *Church*: i.e., clergy      14 *true*: orthodox  
 15, 20 *wise*: brilliant      15 *all his*: his whole // *purpose*: case // *substantially*: soundly  
 16 *pass*: completion // *plain*: explicit      17 *that*: that which      19, 36 *undoubted*: indubitable  
 20 *wit*: intelligence; acuity      22 *simple ground*: imbecilic basis      23 *matter*: plea; appeal  
 24 *by his will*: intentionally      26 *reproving*: rejecting; arguing against      28 *may*: can  
 29 *may*: could // *common*: shared // *opinion*: conviction      30 *fast*: steadfast  
 32 *holy doctors*: the Church’s theologians // *declared*: demonstrated  
 32 *good reason*: sound reasoning      34 *encumber*: burden      35 *disputing upon*: discussing  
 36 *as*: as if it were // *doubtful*: debatable; unsettled // *questionless*: beyond question

But letting pass over such heretics as are our malicious  
 mortal enemies; praying God of his grace to give them  
 better mind—we shall turn us to *you*, that are faithful folk  
 and our dear, loving friends, beseeching your goodness, of your  
 5 tender pity, that we may be remembered with your charitable  
 alms and prayer. And in this part, albeit we stand in  
 such case that it better becometh us to beseech and pray  
 every man... than to find any fault with any man—yet are we  
 somewhat constrained... not to make any matter of quarrel or complaint  
 10 against any man's unkindness, but surely to mourn  
 and lament our own hard fortune and chance in the lack of  
 relief and comfort... which we miss from our friends... not of  
 evil mind withdrawn us, or of unfaithfulness, but of negligence  
 forslothed, and foded forth of forgetfulness. If ye that are  
 15 such (for ye be not all such) might look upon us and behold in  
 what heavy plight we lie, your sloth would soon be quickened, and  
 your oblivion turn to fresh remembrance.

For if your father, your mother, your child, your  
 brother, your sister, your husband, your wife, or a very  
 20 stranger, too... lay in your sight somewhere in fire... and that  
 your means might help him—what heart were so hard, what  
 stomach were so stony, that could sit in rest at supper, or sleep  
 in rest abed, and let a man lie and burn? We find, therefore,  
 full true that old-said saw “Out of sight, out of mind.”  
 25 And yet surely, to say the truth, we cannot therein with reason  
 much complain upon you. For while we were with you there...  
 for wantonness of that wretched world we forgot in like wise our  
 good friends here. And therefore can we not marvel much  
 though the justice of God suffer us to be forgotten of you as others  
 30 have been before forgotten of us. But we beseech our Lord for  
 both our sakes to give you the grace to mend for your part that  
 common fault of us both... lest when ye come hither hereafter, God  
 of like justice suffer you to be forgotten of them that ye leave  
 there behind you, as ye forget us that are hither before  
 35 you. But albeit that we cannot well, as we say, for the like fault in ourselves,

1 *over*: by    3 *better mind*: a better frame of mind // *faithful*: right-believing  
 4, 12, 28 *friends*: relatives and friends    4 *your goodness*: you good people  
 7 *case*: a situation; a position // *pray*: entreat    9 *any matter of*: anything by way of  
 10 *surely*: certainly    11 *hard*: bad // *chance*: happenstance  
 12 *miss*: are missing; are failing to get    13 *evil mind*: bad intent  
 13 *unfaithfulness*: a lack of faith    14 *forslothed*: sloughed off  
 14 *foded forth*: put off; deferred    15 *might*: could // *upon*: at  
 16 *heavy*: grievous    17 *oblivion*: obliviousness    22 *stomach*: disposition; temperament  
 22, 23 *rest*: peace    24 *full*: quite // *old-said saw*: old saying    25 *surely*: assuredly  
 27 *wantonness*: i.e., the obliviousness that is typical    28 *marvel much*: be too surprised  
 29 *though*: if // *the justice of God*: i.e., God in his justice    29, 33 *suffer*: allow(s)  
 29, 30 *of*: by    32 *common fault of*: fault common to    32, 34 *hither*: here  
 33 *of them*: by those    35 *for*: on account of

greatly rebuke or blame this negligence and forgetfulness  
 in you—yet would we for the better wish you that ye might  
 without your pain... once, at the least wise, behold, perceive,  
 and see what heaviness of heart, and what a sorrowful shame, the seely  
 5 soul hath at his first coming hither... to look his old friends  
 in the face here... whom he remembereth himself to have so foully  
 forgotten while he lived there. When, albeit that in this place no  
 man can be *angry*, yet their piteous look and lamentable  
 countenance casteth his unkind forgetfulness into his mind—  
 10 wit ye well, dear friends, that among the manifold great and  
 grievous pains which he suffereth here... whereof God send you  
 the grace to suffer either none or few!... the grudge and grief of  
 his conscience in the consideration of his unkind forgetfulness  
 is not of all them the least. Therefore, dear friends, let our  
 15 folly learn you wisdom. Send hither your prayer, send  
 hither your alms before you; so shall we find ease thereof...  
 and yet shall ye find it still. For as he that lighteth another the  
 candle hath never the less light himself; and he that bloweth the  
 fire for another, to warm him, doth warm himself also therewith:  
 20 so surely, good friends, the good that ye send hither before  
 you... both greatly refresheth us... and yet is wholly reserved here  
 for you, with our prayers added thereto for your further  
 advantage.

Would God we could have done ourselves as we now counsel you!  
 25 And God give you the grace which many of us refused... to make  
 better provision while ye live than many of us have done! For  
 much have we left in our executors' hands... which would God we  
 had bestowed upon poor folk for our own souls and our  
 friends'... with our own hands. Much have many of us bestowed  
 30 upon rich men in gold rings and black gowns; much in  
 many tapers and torches; *much* in worldly pomp and high, solemn  
 ceremonies about our funerals... whereof the brittle  
 glory standeth us here, God wot, in very little stead; but hath, on the  
 other side, done us great displeasure. For albeit that the kind

3 *your pain*: pain on your part    4 *seely*: poor    5, 15, etc. *hither*: here  
 8 *piteous*: heartrending // *lamentable*: plaintive    10 *wit*: know  
 12 *grudge*: uneasiness; pangs    15 *learn*: teach    16 *ease*: relief  
 27 *would God*: i.e., we wish to God    31 *tapers*: candles // *high*: magnificent  
 31 *solemn*: grand    32 *about*: connected with; surrounding    33 *wot*: knows  
 34 *other side*: contrary // *done us great displeasure*: caused us a lot of grief

solicitude and loving diligence of the quick used about the burying of the dead... is well allowed and approved before the face of God: yet much superfluous charge used for boast and ostentation—namely devised by the dead before his death—is

5 of God greatly misliked; and most especially that kind and fashion thereof wherein some of us have fallen... and many besides us, that now lie damned in hell. For some hath there of us while we were in health... not so much studied how we might die penitent and in good Christian plight... as how we might be solemnly

10 borne out to burying—have gay and goodly funerals, with heralds at our hearses... and offering up our helmets, setting up our escutcheon and coat armors on the wall... though there never came harness on our backs, nor never ancestor of ours ever bore arms before. Then devised we some doctor

15 to make a sermon at our Mass in our Month's Mind... and there preach to our praise, with some fond fantasy devised of our name; and after Mass, much feasting, riotous and costly; and finally, like madmen, made men merry at our death... and take our burying for a bridal. For special punishment

20 whereof, some of us have been by our evil angels brought forth full heavily, in full great despite, to behold our own burying... and so stood, in great pain, invisible, among the press... and made to look on our carrion corpse carried out with great pomp... whereof our Lord knoweth we have taken heavy

25 pleasure.

Yet would ye peradventure ween that we were in one thing well eased: in that we were, for the time, taken hence, out of the fire of our purgatory. But in this point if ye so think... ye be far deceived. For likewise as good angels and saved souls

30 in heaven... never lose nor lessen their joy by changing of their places, but, though there be any special place appointed for heaven (furthest from the center of the whole world, or wheresoever it be; be it bodily or above all bodily space), the blessed, heavenly spirits, wheresoever they be come, be either still in

35 heaven or in their heavenly joy; nor Gabriel when he came down

1 *quick*: living // *used*: observed; exerted      2 *allowed*: sanctioned  
 3 *charge used*: expense put out // *boast*: pomp      4 *namely*: especially  
 4 *devised*: arranged for // *dead*: deceased      5 *of*: by // *misliked*: disliked  
 9 *plight*: condition // *solemnly*: grandly      10 *gay*: resplendent  
 10 *goodly*: large-scale / impressive  
 11 *hearses*: Pagoda-like structures decorated with banners, heraldic devices, and lighted candles, sometimes bearing complimentary verses attached by loved ones.  
 12 *coat armors*: coats of arms // *escutcheon*: shield with armorial bearings  
 13 *harness*: armor      14 *devised we*: we arranged for // *doctor*: eloquent priest  
 15 *Month's Mind*: A memorial Mass celebrated a month after the person's death.  
 16 *fond*: foolish; silly // *fantasy*: fanciful composition; flight of fancy  
 16 *devised of*: contrived from      17 *riotous*: lavish      18 *finally*: ultimately  
 19 *bridal*: wedding feast // *special*: specific      21 *full heavily*: in utter misery  
 21 *in full great despite*: out of very great spite      23 *press*: crowd  
 24 *heavy*: an awful lot of / miserable      26 *peradventure*: perhaps // *ween*: think  
 29 *far deceived*: very much mistaken      33 *bodily*: physical // *above*: beyond



to our Lady... never forbore any part of his pleasure, but he had  
 it, peradventure, with some new degree *increased*, by the comfort  
 of his joyful message... but *diminished* might it *never* be,  
 not and he had an errand into *hell*: right so fareth it, on the other  
 5 side, that neither damned wretches at any time... nor we for  
 the space of our cleansing time—though we have, for the generality,  
 our common place of pain appointed us here in purgatory,  
 yet if it please our Lord that at any season our guardians  
 convey some of us to be, for some considerations, any time elsewhere...  
 10 as some, perchance, to appear to some friend of ours, and show  
 him how we stand... and, by the sufferance of God's sovereign  
 goodness, to tell him with what alms, prayer, pilgrimage,  
 or other good deed done for us he may help us hence; in  
 15 which thing the devil is loath to walk with us, but he may not  
 choose, and can no further withstand us than God will give him  
 leave; but whithersoever he carry us, we carry our pain with us,  
 and like as the body that hath a hot fever as fervently burneth if  
 he ride on horseback as if he lay lapped in his bed, so carry we  
 still about no less heat with us... than if we lay bound here.  
 20 And yet, the despiteful sights that our evil angels bring  
 us to behold abroad... so far *augmenteth* our torment... that we  
 would wish to be drowned in the darkness that is here, rather  
 than see the sights that they show us there.

For among they convey us into our own houses... and there  
 25 double us our pain with sight, sometimes, of the selfsame  
 things which while we lived was half our heaven to behold.  
 There show they us our substance and our bags stuffed with  
 gold; which when we now see, we set much less by them  
 than would an old man that found a bag of cherry stones which he  
 30 laid up when he was a child. What a sorrow hath it been to some  
 of us when the devils hath in despiteful mockage cast in our  
 teeth our old love borne to our money... and then showed us our  
 executors as busily rifling and ransacking our houses as though  
 they were men of war that had taken a town by force.

35 How heavily hath it, think you, gone unto our heart when

1 *forbore*: gave up; was without    2 *peradventure*: perhaps // *with*: to  
 2 *comfort*: thrillingness    3 *might it*: it could    4 *and*: even if  
 4 *an errand*: a mission    5 *side*: hand    6 *space*: duration  
 6 *for the generality*: as a rule    7 *common*: ordinary; usual  
 8 *season*: appointed time    10 *perchance*: perchance // *show*: make it known to  
 11 *sufferance*: allowance; leave    13 *may*: can // *hence*: get out of here  
 16 *whithersoever*: wherever    17 *hot*: i.e., high  
 17 *fervently*: hotly    18 *lapped*: covered up  
 18–19 *so . . . us*: so do we continue to carry around with us no less heat  
 20 *yet*: moreover // *despiteful*: cruel    21 *abroad*: out there  
 24 *among*: on occasion; now and then    27 *substance*: possessions  
 28 *set . . . by*: care . . . about    31 *despiteful*: scornful / cruel  
 31 *mockage*: derision

our evil angels have grinned and laughed and showed us  
 our late wives so soon waxen wanton... and forgetting us, their old  
 husbands that have loved them so tenderly and left them so  
 rich, sit and laugh and make merry (and more too, sometimes)  
 5 with their new wooers... while our keepers in despite keep us  
 there in pain to stand still... and look on. Many times would we  
 then speak if we could be suffered, and sore we long to say to her,  
 “Ah, wife, wife! Iwis this was not covenant, wife... when ye  
 wept and told me that if I left you to live by, ye would never  
 10 wed again!” We see there our children, too... whom we loved so  
 well... pipe, sing, and dance, and no more think on their  
 fathers’ souls than on their old shoes; saving that sometimes  
 cometh out “God have mercy on all Christian souls.” But it cometh  
 out so coldly, and with so dull affection, that it lieth but  
 15 in the lips and never came near the heart. Yet hear we sometimes  
 our wives pray for us more warmly. For in chiding with  
 her second husband, to spite him with, “God have mercy,”  
 saith she, “on my first husband’s soul! For he was iwis an  
 honest man, far unlike you!” And then marvel we much, when  
 20 we hear them say so well by us. For they were ever wont to  
 tell us otherwise.

But when we find in this wise our wives, our children, and  
 friends... so soon and so clearly forget us; and see our executors  
 rap and rend unto themselves—catch every man what he can,  
 25 and hold fast that he catcheth—and care nothing for us: Lord  
 God, what it grieveth us that we left so much behind us... and had  
 not sent hither more of our substance before us, by our own  
 hands! For happy find we him among us... that sendeth before  
 all that may be forborne. And he that is so loath to part with aught,  
 30 that hoardeth up his good and had as lief die, almost, as to break  
 his heap; and then at last, when there is none other remedy but  
 that *he* must needs leave *it*, repenteth himself suddenly, and  
 lacketh time to dispose it, and therefore biddeth his friends to  
 bestow it well for him—our Lord is yet so merciful that, of his  
 35 goodness, he accepted the good deeds that his executors do in performing

2 *late*: former // *waxen*: become    5 *keepers*: guardians // *in despite*: cruelly  
 7 *suffered*: allowed (to) // *sore*: badly  
 8 *iwis this was not covenant*: i.e., this certainly is not the pact we made  
 9 *to live by*: enough to live on    11, 12 *on*: about    12 *fathers’*: parents’  
 14 *so dull affection*: such a lack of feeling    15 *in*: on    18 *iwis*: certainly  
 19 *honest*: honorable; decent // *marvel we much*: we are very surprised  
 20 *say . . . by*: speak . . . of    22 *find in this wise*: thus find    23 *clearly*: completely  
 24 *rap*: snatch; seize // *rend*: wrench away    25 *hold fast*: keep a tight grip on  
 25 *that*: that which; what // *nothing*: not at all // *for*: about    26 *what*: how  
 27 *hither*: here // *substance*: estate    27, 28 *before*: ahead (of)    29 *may*: can  
 29 *forborne*: done without // *aught*: anything    30 *good*: money  
 30 *had as lief*: would as soon // *break*: break up; cut into    31 *remedy*: choice  
 32 *repenteth himself*: changes his mind / repents    35 *performing*: carrying out

his device. And since that late is better than never, our Lord somewhat alloweth the man's mind... by which he would his goods that he hath immoderately gathered and greedily kept together as long as he might... were yet at the leastwise  
 5 well bestowed at last, when he must needs go from them. Which mind yet more pleaseth God than that a man cared not what were done with them. And therefore, as we say, the goodness of God somewhat doth accept it. But yet surely, since we might and ought to have done it ourselves, and of a filthy affection toward  
 10 our goods could not find in our heart to part from any part of them: if our executors now deceive us and do no more for us than we did for ourselves, our Lord did us no wrong though he never gave us thank of all our whole testament, but imputed the frustration and not-performing of our last will unto our  
 15 own fault, since the delay of our good deeds—driven off to our death!—grew but of our own sloth and fleshly love to-the-world-ward... with faintness of devotion to-God-ward, and of little respect and regard unto our own soul. And over this, if our executors do these good things indeed that we do thus at  
 20 last devise in our testament, yet our default (driving all to our death, as we told you before)—though God, as we said, of his high goodness leaveth not all unrewarded—yet this warning will we give you, that ye deceive not yourselves: we that have so died have thus found it... that the goods disposed after us...  
 25 get our *executors* great thank, and be toward-us-ward accounted before God much less than half our own; nor our thank nothing like to that it would have been if we had in our health given half as much for God's sake with our own hands. Of which we give you this friendly warning not for that we  
 30 would discourage you to dispose well your goods when ye die, but for that we would advise you to dispose them better while ye live.

And among all your alms... somewhat remember us. Our wives there, remember here your husbands. Our children

1 *device*: will; intent // *since*: given 2 *alloweth*: approves of  
 2, 6 *mind*: disposition 4, 8 *might*: could 5 *go from*: depart from; part with  
 7 *the goodness of God*: i.e., God in his goodness  
 8 *accept it*: commend it; regard it with favor 9 *filthy*: disgraceful  
 9 *affection toward*: attachment to 10 *from*: with  
 11 *deceive us*: play us false / let us down  
 12 *did us no wrong*: would be doing us no injustice // *though*: if  
 13 *thank of*: (any) credit for // *all our whole*: our whole entire  
 13, 20 *testament*: will 14 *frustration*: thwarting 15 *driven*: put  
 15 *to*: till 16 *to-the-world-ward*: directed toward the world  
 17 *to-God-ward*: directed toward God 18 *respect*: consideration  
 18 *over this*: furthermore 20 *devise*: stipulate // *default*: sin of omission  
 20 *driving all to*: putting off everything till 23 *deceive not*: not fool  
 25, 27 *thank*: credit 25 *toward-us-ward*: in relation to us 27 *that*: what

there, remember here your parents. Our parents there, remember  
 here your children. Our husbands there, remember  
 here your wives. Ah, sweet husbands! While we lived there in  
 that wretched world with you; while ye were glad to please us... ye  
 5 bestowed much upon us and put yourselves to great cost—and did  
 us great harm therewith! With gay gowns and gay kirtles, and  
 much waste in apparel—rings and ouches, with partlets and  
 pastes garnished with pearls—with which proud picking up,  
 both ye took hurt and we too, many more ways than one, though we  
 10 told you not so then. But two things were there special... of  
 which yourselves felt then the one... and we feel now the other.  
 For ye had us the higher-hearted and the more stubborn to you...  
 and God had us in less favor—and that, alack, we feel. For now  
 that gay gear burneth upon our backs, and those proud pearled  
 15 pastes hang hot about our cheeks, those partlets and  
 those ouches hang heavy about our necks and cleave fast, fire-hot...  
 that woe be we there, and wish that while we lived... ye  
 never had followed our fantasies, nor never had so cockered us,  
 nor made us so wanton; nor had given us other ouches than  
 20 onions or great garlic heads, nor other pearls for our partlets  
 and our pastes than fair orient peas. But, now, forasmuch as  
 that is past and cannot be called again, we beseech you, since ye  
 gave them us, let us have them still; let them hurt none other  
 woman, but help to do us good. Sell them for our sakes to set in  
 25 saints' copes... and send the money hither by Mass-pennies, and by  
 poor men that may pray for our souls.  
 Our fathers also, which while we lived fostered us up so tenderly...  
 and could not have endured to see us suffer pain: now open  
 your hearts and fatherly affection... and help us at the leastwise with  
 30 a poor man's alms. Ye would not when we were with you have  
 letted to lay out much money for a great marriage. Which if ye  
 meant for our sakes and not for your own worldly worship, give us  
 now some part thereof and relieve us here with much less cost than  
 one marriage... and more pleasure than fifteen, though every one were  
 35 a prince or a princess of a realm.

6, 14 *gay*: snazzy; show-offy      6 *kirtles*: outer petticoats  
 7 *apparel*: adornments; accessories      7, 16, 19 *ouches*: pendants  
 7, 15, 20 *partlets*: add-on collars  
 8, 15, 21 *pastes*: decorative headdresses (made with a foundation of pasteboard)  
 8 *picking up*: acquiring      9 *hurt*: harm      10 *special*: in particular  
 11 *yourselves*: you yourselves      12 *higher-hearted*: haughtier; more full of ourselves  
 12 *to*: toward      13 *had*: held      14 *gear*: clothing      17 *while*: as long as  
 18 *followed*: gone along with; indulged // *fantasies*: inclinations; fancies  
 18 *cockered*: pampered      19 *wanton*: spoiled      20 *great*: big      21 *fair*: nice  
 21 *orient*: lustrous      22 *called again*: taken back; retracted      25 *cofes*: vaults  
 25 *by*: by way of // *Mass-pennies*: Mass stipends      27 *which*: who // *fostered*: brought  
 31 *letted*: hesitated // *lay out much*: put out a lot of      32 *worship*: prestige  
 34 *though*: even if // *were*: i.e., were to

Finally, all our other friends... and *every* good Christian man and woman, open your hearts and have some pity upon us! If ye believe not that we need your help, alas the lack of faith! If ye believe our need and care not for us, alas the lack of pity! For whoso pitieth  
 5 not *us*, whom *can* he pity? If ye pity the poor... there is none so poor as we, that have not a brat to put on our backs. If ye pity the blind... there is none so blind as we, which are here in the dark—saving for sights unpleasant and loathsome—till some comfort come. If ye pity the lame... there is none so lame as we, that  
 10 neither can creep one foot out of the fire... nor have one hand at liberty to defend our face from the flame. Finally, if ye pity any man in pain... never knew ye pain comparable to ours, whose fire as far passeth in heat all the fires that ever burned upon earth... as the hottest of all those passeth a feigned fire  
 15 painted on a wall. If ever ye lay sick and thought the night long, and longed sore for day while every hour seemed longer than five—bethink you, then, what a long night we seely souls endure... that lie sleepless, restless, burning and broiling in the dark fire one long night of many days, of many weeks, and some of  
 20 many *years*, together. You walter, peradventure, and toltor in sickness from side to side, and find little rest in any part of the bed; *we* lie *bound* to the *brands*, and cannot lift up our heads. You have your physicians with you, that sometimes cure and heal you; *no* physic will help *our* pain, nor no plaster cool our heat.  
 25 Your keepers do you great ease and put you in good comfort; *our* keepers are such as God keep you from!—cruel damned spirits, odious, envious, and hateful; despiteous enemies and despiteful tormentors... and their company more horrible and grievous to us... than is the pain itself and the intolerable  
 30 torment that they do us wherewith from top to toe they cease not continually to tear us.

But, now, if our other enemies these heretics (almost as cruel as they!), procuring to their power that we should be long left in the devil's hands, will (as their usage is to rail instead of reasoning)

1 *friends*: near and dear ones; relatives and friends    2 *have*: take  
 4 *for*: about // *whoso*: whoever    6 *brat*: rag; scrap of clothing  
 7 *which*: who    13, 14 *passeth*: surpasses    14 *feigned*: fictive  
 16 *sore*: terribly    17 *seely*: poor    20 *together*: on end; in succession  
 20 *walter, peradventure, and toltor*: perhaps toss and turn  
 24 *physic*: doctoring; medical treatment // *help*: remedy // *plaster*: salve  
 25, 26 *keepers*: caretakers    25 *do you great ease*: give you a lot of relief  
 27 *envious*: malicious // *dispiteous*: pitiless    28 *despiteful*: vicious  
 33 *their power*: the best of their ability    34 *as*: since // *usage*: wont; habit

make a game and a jest now of our heavy pain, and peradventure  
 laugh at our lamentation... because we speak of our  
 “heads,” our “hands,” our “feet,” and such our other gross,  
 5 bodily members as lie buried in our graves; and of our garments  
 that we did wear, which come not hither with us: we beseech  
 you, for our dear Lady’s love, to let their folly go by, and to  
 consider in your own wisdom that it were impossible to make  
 any mortal man living perceive what manner pain, and in what  
 10 manner wise, we bodiless souls do suffer and sustain—or to  
 make any man upon earth perfectly to conceive in his imagination  
 and fantasy... what manner of substance we be; much  
 more impossible than to make a born-blind man to perceive in  
 his mind the nature and difference of colors. And therefore,  
 except we should of our painful state tell you nothing at all (and  
 15 there would they have it), we must of necessity use you such  
 words as yourself understand, and use you the similitudes of  
 such things as yourself is in ure with. For since neither God,  
 angel, nor soul... is in such wise blind, dumb, deaf, or lame...  
 as be those men that for lack of eyes, legs, hands, tongue, or  
 20 ears... be weak and impotent in the powers that proceed from them; but  
 have in themselves a far more excellent sight, hearing, deliverness,  
 and speech... by means incogitable to man... than any  
 man can have living there on earth: therefore doth Holy Scripture  
 in speaking of such things... use to represent them to the  
 25 people by the names of such powers, instruments, and members...  
 as men in such things use and occupy themselves.  
 Which manner of speaking in such case whosoever have in  
 derision... declareth very well how little faith he hath in Christ’s  
 own words; in which our Savior, himself, speaking of the  
 30 souls of the rich glutton and poor, needy Lazarus, and of the  
 patriarch Abraham also, speaketh in like manner as we do—of “finger,”  
 and “tongue” too, whereof they had neither nother there. And therefore  
 whoso maketh a mock at our words in this point, ye may  
 soon see what credence ye should give him; wherein we be content

1 *a game*: an object of ridicule // *a jest*: an idle tale // *heavy*: grievous  
 1 *peradventure*: perhaps    3 *gross*: material    4 *bodily*: physical  
 6 *for our dear Lady’s love*: for love of our dear Lady  
 6 *let their folly go by*: ignore their foolishness    7 *wisdom*: good sense  
 7 *that*: i.e., the fact that // *were*: would be    8, 9, 11 *manner*: kind of  
 9 *wise*: way    11 *fantasy*: conceptualization; ideation  
 15 *and there would they*: i.e., which is the way they would    15, 16 *use*: use for  
 17 *in ure*: familiar    18 *wise*: a way    20 *weak*: lacking  
 21 *deliverness*: agility    24 *use to*: habitually    25 *members*: parts of the body  
 26 *occupy*: employ    27 *have*: hold    28 *declareth*: shows  
 32 *neither nother*: neither the one nor the other

ye give him even as much as ye see yourselves that he giveth to God. For more ye ought not, and surely less ye cannot. For he giveth God not a whit, but taketh in his heart that story told by God for a very fantastic fable.

5 And therefore, as we say, passing over such jesting and railing of those uncharitable heretics (mortal enemies unto us and to themselves both!): consider you our pains, and pity them in your hearts, and help us with your prayers, pilgrimages, and other almsdeeds; and of allthing, in special procure us the  
10 suffrages and blessed oblation of the Holy Mass—whereof no man living so well can tell the fruit as we that here feel it.

The comfort that we have here, except our continual hope in our Lord God, cometh at seasons from our Lady... with such glorious saints as either ourselves, with our own devotion  
15 while we lived, or ye with yours for us since our decease and departing, have made intercessors for us. And among others, right especially be we beholden to the blessed spirits our own proper good angels. Whom when we behold coming with comfort to us, albeit that we take great pleasure and greatly  
20 rejoice therein—yet is it not without much confusion and shamefastness... to consider how little we regarded our good angels, and how seldom we thought upon them, while we lived. They carry up our prayers to God and good saints for us; and they bring down from them the comfort and consolation to us. With which when  
25 they come and comfort us—only God and we know what joy it is to our hearts, and how heartily we pray for you. And therefore, if God accept the prayer after his own favor borne toward him that prayeth, and the affection that he prayeth with: our prayer must needs be profitable, for we stand sure of his grace... and our  
30 prayer is for you so fervent that ye can nowhere find any such affection upon earth. And therefore, since we lie so sore in pains, and have in our great necessity so great need of your help, and that ye may so well do it... whereby shall also rebound upon yourselves an inestimable profit: let never any slothful oblivion

1 *even*: just    4 *fantastic*: imaginative; unreal    5 *jesting*: jeering  
9 *allthing*: all things // *in special*: in particular    12 *except*: other than  
13 *at seasons*: at appointed times / every so often    17 *right*: very  
18 *proper*: respective    18, 21 *good*: i.e., guardian  
20 *confusion*: discomfiture; embarrassment // *shamefastness*: shame  
22 *upon*: about    27 *after*: in accord with    28, 31 *affection*: feeling  
31 *sore*: terribly    33 *may*: can    34 *oblivion*: obliviousness

erase us out of your remembrance, or malicious enemy of ours  
 cause you to be careless of us, or any greedy mind upon your  
 good withdraw your gracious alms from us. Think how soon  
 ye shall come hither to us. Think what great grief and rebuke  
 5 would then your unkindness be to you; what comfort, on the contrary  
 part, when all we shall thank you; what help ye shall have  
 here of your good sent hither. Remember what kin ye and we be  
 together; what familiar friendship hath ere this been between us;  
 what sweet words ye have spoken, and what promise ye have  
 10 made us. Let now your words appear and your fair promise be  
 kept. Now, dear friends, remember how nature and Christendom  
 bindeth you to remember us. If any point of your old favor,  
 any piece of your old love, any kindness of kindred, any care of  
 acquaintance, any favor of old friendship, any spark of charity,  
 15 any tender point of pity, any regard of nature, any  
 respect of Christendom... be left in your breasts, let never the  
 malice of a few fond fellows—a few *pestilent* persons—borne toward  
 priesthood, religion, and your Christian faith... erase out  
 of your hearts the care of your kindred, all force of your old  
 20 friends, and all remembrance of all Christian souls. Remember  
 our thirst while ye sit and drink; our hunger while ye be feasting;  
 our restless watch while ye be sleeping; our sore and grievous  
 pain while ye be playing; our hot-burning fire while ye be in  
 pleasure and sporting. So mote God make your offspring after  
 25 remember you. So God keep you hence, or not long here, but  
 bring you shortly to that bliss... to which, for our Lord's love,  
 help you to bring us... and we shall set hand to help you thither  
 to us.

*Finis*

*Cum privilegio*

2 *careless of*: unconcerned about // *mind upon*: disposition toward  
 3, 7 *good*: money    4, 7 *hither*: here    4 *rebuke*: shame  
 6 *all we*: all of us    8 *familiar friendship*: warm closeness; close ties  
 10 *appear*: come into (your) view    11, 16 *Christendom*: Christianity  
 13 *kindness*: natural feeling // *kindred*: kinship // *care*: heed  
 14 *favor of*: partiality toward    15 *tender point*: soft spot  
 15 *regard of nature*: natural regard  
 16 *respect of Christendom*: Christian sensibility  
 17 *fond fellows*: idiotic good-for-nothings // *pestilent*: noxious; poisonous  
 19 *care of*: concern for // *force of*: care about    22 *watch*: wakefulness  
 22 *sore*: intense    24 *sporting*: having fun // *mote*: may  
 25 *hence*: out of here    27–28 *thither to us*: join us there  
 29 *finis*: the end    30 *cum privilegio*: i.e., copyrighted