

A Dialogue of Comfort against Tribulation

made by a Hungarian in Latin, and
translated out of Latin into French,
and out of French into English

by

Sir Thomas More

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Spelling standardized, punctuation modernized, and glosses added
by Mary Gottschalk

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Punctuation

The only punctuation marks found in the original printed version of *A Dialogue of Comfort* are the period, comma, question mark, slash, or “virgule” (/), and parentheses. Quotation marks, 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. Many commas needed to be inserted and many removed in deference to current rules about restrictive and nonrestrictive phrases. Italics are added for titles and, occasionally, for emphasis. As for the suspension points (...), these are substitutes for many of More’s slashes. He often used a slash where we would use 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 quite often 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.

*A Dialogue of Comfort against
Tribulation, made by a
Hungarian in Latin, and
translated out of Latin into
French, and out of French into
English*

1. Preface

Anthony and Vincent

Vincent

Who would have went, O my good Uncle, before a few years past,
 10 that such as in this country would visit their friends lying in disease
 and sickness should come, as I do now, to seek and fetch comfort of *them*—
 or in giving comfort to them, use the way that I may well use to
 you? For albeit that the priests and friars be wont to call upon
 sick men to remember death... yet we worldly friends, for fear of
 15 discomforting them, have ever had a guise, in Hungary, to lift up
 their hearts and put them in hope of life. But now, my good Uncle,
 the world is here waxen such, and so great perils appear here to fall
 at hand, that methinketh the greatest comfort that a man can have
 is when he may see that he shall soon be gone. And we that are
 20 likely long to live here in wretchedness have need of some comfortable
 counsel against tribulation... to be given us by such as you be, good
 Uncle, that have so long lived virtuously, and are so learned in the law
 of God, as very few be better in this country here—and have had of
 such things as we now do fear, good experience and assay in yourself,
 25 as he that hath been taken prisoner in Turkey two times
 in your days... and now likely to depart hence ere long. But that may

1 *of*: concerning // *comfort*: strengthening; encouragement 1, 21 *against*: in the face of
 2 *made*: written 9 *went*: thought // *past*: ago 10, 14 *friends*: relatives and friends; loved ones
 11 *of*: from 12 *use to*: use toward 14 *worldly*: secular; lay 15 *discomforting*: discouraging
 15 *guise*: custom; habit 17 *waxen*: become 17–18 *fall at hand*: be imminent
 18 *methinketh*: it seems to me 19 *may*: can 20 *comfortable*: encouraging; strengthening
 24 *assay*: testing 25 *he that*: someone who 26 *now*: i.e., is now // *hence*: from here
 26 *ere*: before

be your great comfort, good Uncle, since you depart to God. But us
 here shall you leave, of your kindred, a sort of very comfortless orphans—
 to all whom your good help and counsel and comfort hath long been
 a great stay... not as an uncle to some, and to some as one further
 5 of kin... but as though unto us all you had been a natural father.

Anthony

Mine own good Cousin, I cannot much say nay but that there is
 indeed, not here in Hungary only, but almost in all places of
 Christendom, such a customable manner of un-Christian comforting...
 10 which albeit that in *any* sick man it doth more harm than good—
 withdrawing him in time of sickness, with the looking and longing for
 life, from the meditation of death, judgment, heaven, and hell, whereof he
 should beset much part of his time even all his whole life, in his best
 health—yet is that manner in my mind more than mad where such
 15 kind of comfort is used to a man of mine age. For as we well wot that
 a young man may die soon... so be we very sure that an old man cannot
 live long. And yet since there is, as Tully saith, no man, for
 all that, so old but that he hopeth yet that he may live one year
 more... and of a frail folly delighteth to think thereon, and comfort
 20 himself therewith: other men's words of like manner comfort, adding
 more sticks to that fire, shall, in a manner, burn up quite the pleasant
 moisture that most should refresh him—the wholesome dew, I mean, of
 God's grace, by which he should wish (with God's will) to be hence,
 and long to be with him in heaven. Now, whereas you take my departing
 25 from you so heavily... as of him of whom ye recognize, of your goodness,
 to have had herebefore help and comfort—would God I had to you, and to
 others more, done half so much as myself reckoneth had been my
 duty to do! But whensoever God take me hence, to reckon yourselves
 then *comfortless*... as though your *chief* comfort stood in me—therein

1 *you depart*: you are going 4–5 *further of kin*: more distantly related 7 *Cousin*: Nephew
 7 *say nay*: deny 9 *customable*: customary 12 *whereof*: on which 13 *beset*: spend
 13 *much*: a large // *even*: actually 15 *to*: toward // *wot*: know 17 *Tully*: Cicero
 19 *frail folly*: weak foolishness 20 *like manner*: a similar kind of 21 *in a manner*: so to speak
 21 *quite*: completely 23 *hence*: out of here 25 *so heavily*: so hard; as such a distressing thing
 25 *him*: someone 27 *myself*: my own self

1. Preface

make ye, methinketh, a reckoning very much like as though ye would
 cast away a strong staff and lean upon a rotten reed. For *God* is
 and must be your comfort, and not I. And *he* is a *sure* comfort, that, as
 he said to his disciples, *never* leaveth his servants in case of comfortless
 5 orphans—not even when he departed from his disciples by
 death... but both, as he promised, sent them a Comforter, the Holy Spirit of
 his Father and himself, and made them also sure that to the world's
 end he would ever dwell with them himself. And therefore, if ye be part
 of his flock, and believe his promise, how can ye be comfortless
 10 in *any* tribulation... when Christ and his Holy Spirit—and with them
 their inseparable Father—if you put full trust and confidence in them...
 be never one fingerbreadth of space nor one minute of time from
 you?

Vincent

15 O my good Uncle, even these same-self words wherewith ye well
 prove that because of God's own gracious presence, we cannot be
 left comfortless... make me now feel and perceive what a miss of much
 comfort we shall have when ye be gone! For albeit, good Uncle, that
 while ye do tell me this, I cannot but grant it for true... yet if I
 20 now had not heard it of you, I had not remembered it... nor it had
 not fallen in my mind. And over that, like as our tribulations shall
 in weight and number increase... so shall we need not only one such
 good word, or twain, but a great *heap* thereof, to stable and strengthen
 the walls of our hearts against the great surges of the tempestuous
 25 sea!

Anthony

Good Cousin, trust well in God, and he shall provide you teachers abroad,
 convenient in every time—or else shall himself sufficiently teach
 you within.

3–8: See John 14:16–18; 25–26; Matthew 28:20. 4 *case*: the position
 7 *made them also sure*: also assured them 12 *from*: away from 15 *same-self*: very same
 16 *gracious*: grace-filled 17 *miss*: lack 19 *while*: when
 20 *of*: from // *had not remembered*: would not have remembered
 20–21 *nor . . . mind*: nor would it have occurred to me 21 *over that*: furthermore 22 *only*: just
 23 *word*: i.e., word of advice // *stable*: stabilize 27 *abroad*: out there; outside yourself
 28 *convenient*: suitable

Vincent

1. Preface

- Very well, good Uncle—but yet if we would leave the seeking of outward learning where we might have it... and look to be inwardly taught only by God... then should we thereby tempt God and displease him. And since that I now see the likelihood that when ye be gone, we shall be sore destitute of any such other like: therefore thinketh me that God of duty bindeth me to sue to you now, good Uncle, in this short time that we have you, that it may like you against these great storms of tribulations... with which both I and all mine are sore beaten already... and now, upon the coming of this cruel Turk, fear to fall in far more, I may learn of you such plenty of good counsel and comfort that I may, with the same laid up in remembrance, govern and stay the ship of our kindred and keep it afloat from peril of spiritual drowning.
- You be not ignorant, good Uncle, what heaps of heaviness hath of late fallen among us already—with which some of our poor family be fallen into such dumps that scantly can any such comfort as my poor wit can give them, anything assuage their sorrow. And now, since the tidings have come hither so breme of the great Turk's enterprise into these parts here, we can almost neither talk nor think of any other thing else than of his might and our mischief, there falleth so continually before the eyes of our hearts a fearful imagination of this terrible thing—his mighty strength and power, his high malice and hatred, and his incomparable cruelty, with robbing, despoiling, burning, and laying waste all the way that his army cometh; then killing or carrying away the people far hence, from home... and there sever the couples and kindred asunder, every one far from the other... some kept in thralldom, and some kept in prison... and some, for a triumph, tormented and killed in his presence; then send his people hither, and his false faith therewith... so that such as are here and remain still... shall either both lose all and be lost too... or forced to forsake the faith of our Savior Christ and fall to the

2 *leave*: leave off; stop 3 *might have*: could get 4 *tempt God*: put God to the test
 4 *displease*: offend 7 *sue to*: petition; make appeal 8 *like*: please 15 *heaviness*: grief
 18 *wit*: intelligence // *anything*: at all 19 *breme*: much spoken about
 20 *enterprise*: plan to come 21 *mischief*: misfortune 28 *thralldom*: servitude; slavery
 29 *triumph*: victory rite // *tormented*: tortured 30 *hither*: over here
 32 *forced*: i.e., be forced // *forsake*: renounce

false sect of Muhammad. And yet which we more fear than all the remnant, no small part of our own folk that dwell even here about us are, as we hear, fallen to him, or already confederated with him; which, if it so be, shall haply keep this quarter from the Turk's incursion... but then shall they that turn to his law leave all their neighbors nothing... but shall have our goods given them, and our bodies, both... but if we turn as they do, and forsake our Savior too. And then (for there is no born Turk so cruel to Christian folk as is the false Christian that falleth from the faith) we shall stand in peril, if we persevere in the truth, to be more hardly handled and die more cruel death by our own countrymen at home than if we were taken hence and carried into Turkey.

These fearful heaps of peril lie so heavy at our hearts, while we wot not into which we shall fortune to fall, and therefore fear all the worst... that as our Savior prophesied of the people of Jerusalem, many wish among us already, before the peril come, that the mountains would overwhelm them, or the valleys open and swallow them up and cover them.

Therefore, good Uncle, against these horrible fears of these terrible tribulations... of which some, you wot well, our house already hath, and the remnant stand in dread of... give us, while God lendeth you us, such plenty of your comfortable counsel as I may write and keep with us, to stay us when God shall call you hence.

Anthony

Ah, my good Cousin, this is a heavy hearing! And likewise as we that dwell here in this part fear that thing so sore now... which few years past feared it not at all... so doubt I that ere it long be, they shall fear it as much that think themselves now very sure because they dwell further off. Greece feared not the Turk when that I was born... and within a while after, all the whole empire was his. The Great Sultan of Syria thought himself more than his match... and long since ye

2, 21 *remnant*: rest 2 *even*: right // *about*: around 4 *haply*: perhaps // *quarter*: area; region
 7 *but if*: unless // *forsake*: renounce 9 *false*: disloyal / despicable
 10 *hardly handled*: harshly treated 13 *while*: since 14 *wot not*: don't know // *fortune*: turn out
 15–18: See Luke 23:28–30. 20 *of which some*: i.e., some of which tribulations // *house*: family
 21 *stand*: i.e., we stand // *lendeth you us*: lets us still have you with us 23 *stay*: support
 25 *a heavy hearing*: distressing to hear 26 *part*: area
 26 *sore*: terribly // *which*: who 26–27 *few years past*: a few years ago 27 *doubt I*: I fear
 28 *sure*: safe 29 *when that*: when; at the time when 30 *all the whole*: the whole entire

were born hath he that empire too. Then hath he taken Belgrade, the
 fortress of *this* realm. And since hath he destroyed our noble young,
 goodly king. And now strive there twain for us—our Lord send
 the grace that the third dog carry not away the bone from them
 5 both! What should I speak of the noble, strong city of Rhodes? The
 winning thereof he counteth as a victory against the whole corps of
 Christendom... since all Christendom was not able to defend that
 strong town against him. Howbeit, if the princes of Christendom
 everywhere about would, whereas need was, have set to their
 10 hands in time, the Turk had never taken any one place of *all* these
 places. But, partly dissensions fallen among ourselves, partly that
 no man careth what harm other folk feel, but each party suffer other
 to shift for itself... the Turk is in few years wonderfully
 increased, and Christendom, on the other side, very sore decayed. And
 15 all this worketh *our unkindness*—with which God is not content!

But, now, whereas you desire of me some plenty of comfortable
 things... which ye may put in remembrance, and comfort therewith
 your company—verily, in the rehearsing and heaping of your
 manifold fears... *myself* began to feel that there should much need,
 20 against so many troubles, many comfortable counsels. For surely,
 Cousin, a little before your coming, as I devised with myself upon
 the Turk's coming... it happed my mind to fall suddenly from that
 into the devising upon mine own departing; wherein, albeit that I
 fully put my trust and hope to be a saved soul, by the great mercy
 25 of God... yet since there is here no man so sure that, without revelation,
 may clean stand out of dread, I bethought me also upon the pains
 of hell; and after, I bethought me then upon the Turk again. And
 first methought his terror nothing when I compared it with
 the joyful hope of heaven. Then compared I it, on the other side, with
 30 the fearful dread of hell; and therein casting in my mind those terrible

3 *strive*: fight; compete // *twain*: i.e., two kings 5 *speak of*: say about 8 *howbeit*: however
 9 *whereas*: wherever 9–10 *set to their hands*: actively involved themselves
 10 *had never*: would never have 11 *dissensions*: i.e., because of dissensions 12 *suffer*: allow
 13 *wonderfully*: amazingly 14, 29 *side*: hand // *sore decayed*: badly diminished
 15 *worketh*: is accomplished by; is the result of // *unkindness*: coldheartedness; inhumanity
 15 *content*: pleased 16 *desire*: ask // *plenty*: store; good amount // *comfortable*: encouraging
 18 *your company*: your companions; the people around you // *rehearsing*: mentioning
 19 *myself*: I myself // *much need*: be much needed 20 *against*: in the face of
 21 *devised with*: was conferring with; was thinking to // *upon*: about
 23 *devising upon*: thinking about 25 *sure*: safe; secure // *without*: i.e., barring some special
 26 *clean* . . . *dread*: be completely free of fear 30 *casting*: revolving

devilish tormentors, with the deep consideration of that
 furious endless fire... methought that if the Turk, with all his whole
 host, and his trumpets and his timbrels too, were, to kill me
 in my bed, come to my chamber door—in respect of the other
 5 reckoning, I regard him not a rush.

And yet when I now heard your lamentable words, laying forth, as
 it were present before my face, that heap of heavy, sorrowful tribulations
 that, besides those that are already fallen, are in short space likely
 to follow... I waxed therewith myself suddenly somewhat aflight. And
 10 therefore I well allow your request in this behalf, that you would have
 store of comfort beforehand ready by you, to resort to and to lay up in
 your heart as a treacle against the poison of all desperate dread that
 might rise of occasion of sore tribulation. And herein shall I be
 glad (as my poor wit will serve me) to call to mind with you such
 15 things as I before have read, heard, or thought upon, that may
 conveniently serve us to this purpose.

The First Chapter

*That the comforts devised by the old
 paynim philosophers were insufficient;
 20 and the cause wherefore*

First shall ye, good Cousin, understand this: that the naturally wise
 men of this world, the old moral philosophers, labored much in this
 matter... and many natural reasons have they written... whereby they might
 25 encourage men to set little by such goods, or such hurt either, the
 going and coming whereof are the matter and cause of tribulation; as

3 *host*: army // *timbrels*: tambourines 4 *chamber*: bedroom // *respect of*: comparison with
 5 *regard him not a rush*: don't care a straw about him 6 *lamentable*: mournful
 6 *as*: as if 9 *waxed*: became // *afight*: nervous; agitated 10 *allow*: approve
 12 *treacle*: antidote // *desperate*: hopeless; despairing 16 *conveniently*: appropriately
 19 *paynim*: pagan 20 *cause wherefore*: reason why 25 *set little by*: place little importance on

are the goods of fortune—richesse, favor, and friends, fame, worldly worship, and such other things—or of the body... as beauty, strength, agility, quickness, and health. These things, ye wot well, coming to us, are matter of worldly wealth; and taken from us (by fortune or by force), or the fear of the losing, be matter of adversity or tribulation. For “tribulation” seemeth generally to signify nothing else but some kind of grief—either pain of the body or heaviness of the mind.

Now, the body not to feel that it feeleth, all the wit in the world cannot bring about. But that the mind should not be grieved neither with the pain that the body feeleth nor with the occasions of heaviness offered and given unto the soul itself—this thing labored the philosophers very much about. And many goodly sayings have they toward the strength and comfort against tribulation... exhorting men to the full contempt of all worldly loss, and despising of sickness and all bodily grief, painful death and all. Howbeit, in very deed, for anything that ever I read in them, I never could yet find that ever these natural reasons were able to give sufficient comfort of themselves; for they never stretch so far but that they leave untouched (for lack of necessary knowledge) that special point which is not only the chief comfort of all... but without which, also, all other comforts are nothing: that is to wit, the referring the final end of their comfort unto God, and to repute and take for the special cause of comfort that by the patient sufferance of their tribulation, they shall attain his favor... and for their pain receive reward at his hand in heaven. And for lack of knowledge of this *end*, they did (as they needs must) leave untouched also the very special *means* without which we can never attain to this comfort: that is to wit, the gracious help and aid of God, to move, stir, and guide us forward in the referring all our ghostly comfort—yea, and our worldly comfort, too—all unto that heavenly end. And therefore, as I say, for lack of these things, all their comfortable counsels are very far insufficient. Howbeit, though they

1 *richesse*: wealthiness; affluence 2 *worship*: honor; prestige 3 *quickness*: liveliness
 4 *wealth*: well-being; prosperity 7, 11 *heaviness*: distress 8 *that*: what; that which
 8 *wit*: ingenuity 14 *contempt of*: lack of concern about // *despising*: making little
 17 *reasons*: arguments 26 *untouched*: undiscussed 28 *ghostly*: spiritual
 29 *worldly*: earthly 30 *comfortable*: encouragement-giving

be far unable to cure our disease of themselves, and therefore are not
sufficient to be taken for our *physicians*, some good drugs have
they yet in their shops, for which they may be suffered to dwell among
our *apothecaries*—if the medicines be not made of their own brains,
5 but after the bills made by the Great Physician; God prescribing
the medicines himself, and correcting the faults of their erroneous
receipts. For without this way taken with them, they shall not fail
to do as many bold blind apothecaries do... which, either for lucre or of
a foolish pride, give sick folk... medicines of their own devising... and
10 therewith kill up in corners many such simple folk as they find
so foolish to put their lives in such lewd and unlearned blind bayards’
hands.

We shall, therefore, neither fully receive those philosophers’ reasons in
this matter... nor yet utterly refuse them... but, using them in such
15 order... as shall beseem *them*, the principal and the effectual medicines
against these diseases of tribulation shall we fetch from the high,
great, and excellent Physician without whom we could never be healed
of our very deadly disease of damnation; for our necessity
wherein, the Spirit of God spiritually speaketh of himself, to us, and
20 biddeth us of all our health give him the honor... and therein thus
saith unto us: “Honora medicum... propter necessitatem enim ordinavit eum
Altissimus” (“Honor thou the physician... for him hath the High God
ordained for thy necessity”).

Therefore, let us require that high Physician, our Blessed Savior
25 Christ—whose holy *manhood* God ordained for our necessity... to cure our
deadly wounds with the medicine made of the most wholesome blood
of his own blessed body—that likewise as he cured by that incomparable
medicine our mortal malady... it may like him to send us and
put in our minds such medicines at this time... as against the sickness
30 of sorrows and tribulations may so comfort and strengthen us in his grace...

1 *of*: by 4, 8 *apothecaries*: pharmacists 4 *made of*: concocted by 5 *after*: according to
5 *bills*: prescriptions 6 *their*: i.e., the pagan philosophers’ 7 *receipts*: formulas
8 *lucre*: monetary gain 10 *up*: off // *corners*: secret, out-of-the-way places
11 *to*: as to // *lewd*: bungling // *blind bayards*: cockily self-confident ignoramuses’
13 *receive*: accept // *reasons*: arguments 14 *refuse*: reject
14 *using them*: i.e., using the philosophers’ arguments
15 *them*: i.e., the “principal . . . medicines” // *effectual*: effective
20–23: Sirach 38:1. 24 *require*: ask; request of 28 *like*: please

as our deadly enemy the devil may never have the power by his
poisoned dart of murmur, grudge, and impatience to turn our short
sickness of worldly tribulation into the endless, everlasting death of
infernial damnation.

1.2

5

The Second Chapter

*That for a foundation men must needs
begin with faith*

Since all our principal comfort must come of God, we must first
presuppose in him to whom we shall with any ghostly counsel
10 give any effectual comfort... one ground to begin with, whereupon
all that we shall build must be supported and stand: that is
to wit, the ground and foundation of *faith*—without which had
already before, all the spiritual comfort that any man may speak
of can never avail a fly. For likewise as it were utterly vain to
15 lay natural reasons of comfort to him that hath no wit, so were it
undoubtedly frustrate to lay spiritual causes of comfort to him
that hath no faith. For except a man first believe that Holy Scripture
is the word of God, and that the word of God is true, how
can a man take any comfort of that that the Scripture telleth him
20 therein? Needs must the man take little fruit of the Scripture if he
either believe not that it were the word of God or else ween that
though it were, it might yet be, for all that, untrue. This faith as it is
more faint or more strong, so shall the comfortable words of Holy
Scripture stand the man in more stead or less. This virtue of faith
25 can neither any man give himself nor yet any one man another,
but, though men may with preaching be ministers unto God
therein, and the man with his own free will obeying freely the inward
inspiration of God, be a weak worker with Almighty God therein,
yet is the faith indeed the gracious gift of God himself. For as Saint
30 James saith, “Omne datum optimum, et omne donum perfectum, de sursum
est, descendens a Patre luminum” (“Every good gift, and every perfect gift, is
given from above, descending from the Father of lights”). Therefore,

2 *grudge*: complaint 8 *of*: from 9 *ghostly*: spiritual

14 *were*: would be // *vain*: in vain; futile 15, 16 *lay*: present 15 *wit*: intelligence

16 *frustrate*: useless 21 *ween*: think 22 *though*: even if

23 *comfortable*: encouragement-giving; strengthening

24 *stand . . . less*: do the person the more good or the less 29–32: James 1:17.

feeling our faith by many tokens very faint, let us pray to him
 that giveth it, that it may please him to help and increase it. And
 let us first say with the man in the Gospel, “Credo, Domine; adiuva incredulitatem
 meam” (“I believe, good Lord, but help thou the lack of my
 5 belief”). And after, let us pray with the apostles, “Domine, adauge nobis
 fidem” (“Lord, increase our faith”). And finally, let us consider, by
 Christ’s saying unto them, that if we would not suffer the strength
 and fervor of our faith to wax lukewarm, or, rather, key-cold,
 and in manner lose its vigor, by scattering our minds abroad about
 10 so many trifling things that of the matters of our faith we very
 seldom think; but that we would withdraw our thought from the
 respect and regard of all worldly fantasies, and so gather our faith
 together into a little, narrow room, and, like the little grain of
 mustard seed (which is of nature hot), set it in the garden of our
 15 soul, all weeds pulled out for the better feeding of our faith—then shall
 it grow, and so spread up in height that the birds (that is to
 wit, the holy angels of heaven) shall breed in our soul, and bring
 forth virtues in the branches of our faith. And then, with the faithful
 trust that, through the true belief of God’s word, we shall put
 20 in his promise, we shall be well able to command a great mountain
 of tribulation to void from the place where it stood in our heart;
 whereas with a very feeble faith and a faint, we shall be scant able
 to remove a little hillock. And therefore, as for the first conclusion,
 as we must of necessity before any spiritual comfort presuppose the
 25 foundation of faith: so, since no man can give us faith but only God,
 let us never cease to call upon God therefor.

Vincent

Forsooth, good Uncle, methinketh that this foundation of faith,
 which, as you say, must be laid first, is so necessarily requisite that
 30 without it all spiritual comfort were utterly given in vain. And
 therefore now shall we pray God for a full and a fast faith. And I pray

1 *tokens*: indications 2 *help*: remedy 3–6: Mark 9:24; Luke 17:5. 8 *wax*: become
 12 *fantasies*: attachments 13 *narrow room*: compact space 14 *of nature*: by nature
 17 *breed*: set up a flourishing residence 19 *of*: in
 21 *void*: disappear 24 *as*: since 26 *therefor*: for it 30 *were*: would be

you, good Uncle, proceed you farther in the process of your matter
of spiritual comfort against tribulation.

1.3

Anthony

That shall I, Cousin, with good will!

5 *The first comfort in tribulation may a
man take in this: when he feeleth in himself
a desire and longing to be comforted by God*

The Third Chapter

10 I will, in my poor mind, assign for the first comfort the desire and
longing to be by God comforted; and not without some reason call I
this the first cause of comfort. For like as the cure of that person
is in a manner desperate that hath no will to be cured... so
is the discomfort of that person desperate that desireth not his own
comfort.

15 And here shall I note you two kinds of folk that are in tribulation
and heaviness: one sort that will seek for no comfort; another sort that
will. And yet of these that will not, are there also two sorts. For first,
one sort there are that are so drowned in sorrow that they fall into
a careless deadly dullness, regarding nothing—*thinking* almost on
20 nothing—no more than if they lay in a lethargy; with which it may
so fall that wit and remembrance were away, and fall even fair
from them. And this comfortless kind of heaviness in tribulation is
the highest kind of the deadly sin of sloth. Another sort are
there that will seek for no comfort, nor yet none receive, but are
25 in their tribulation (be it loss or sickness) so testy, so fuming, and so
far out of all patience, that it booteth no man to speak to them.
And these are, in a manner, with impatience so furious as though they

1 *process*: discussion // *matter*: topic 12, 13 *desperate*: hopeless
12 *that*: who (referring to "person") // *will*: wish 13 *discomfort*: distress
15 *note you*: point out to you; call to your attention
21 *so fall*: so happen // *wit*: good judgment // *even fair*: quite completely
25 *fuming*: irascible 26 *booteth no man*: does no good for anyone
27 *in a manner*: as it were // *so furious*: as worked up; as maddened

were half in a frenzy—and may, with a custom of such-fashioned behavior, fall in thereto full and whole. And this kind of heaviness in tribulation is even a mischievous high branch of the mortal sin of ire. And then is there, as I told you, another kind of folk,
 5 which fain *would* be comforted; and yet are they of two sorts too. One sort are those... that in their sorrow, seek for worldly comfort. And of them shall we now speak the less... for the divers occasions that we shall after have to touch them, in more places than one. But this will I here say, that I learned of Saint Bernard: He that in tribulation
 10 turneth himself unto worldly vanities, to get help and comfort by them, fareth like a man that in peril of drowning catcheth whatsoever cometh next to hand, and that holdeth he fast, be it never so simple a stick; but then that helpeth him not... for that stick he draweth down under the water with him, and there lie they drowned
 15 together.

So, surely, if we accustom ourselves to put our trust of comfort in the delight of these peevish worldly things... God shall, for that foul fault, suffer our tribulation to grow so great that all the pleasure of this world shall never bear us up... but all our peevish pleasure
 20 shall in the depth of tribulation drown with us.

The other sort is, I say, of those that long and desire to be comforted of God. And as I told you before, they have an undoubted great cause of comfort even in that point alone—that they consider themselves to desire and long to be of Almighty God comforted.

25 This mind of theirs may well be cause of great comfort to them, for two great considerations. The one is that they see themselves seek for their comfort where they cannot fail to find it. For God both *can* give them comfort and *will*. He can for he is almighty; he will for he is all good and hath promised himself, “Petite et accipietis” (“Ask
 30 and you shall have”). He that hath faith (as he must needs have

1 *frenzy*: fit of temporary insanity // *custom*: habit 3 *even*: nothing less than

3 *mischievous*: calamitous 7 *for*: on account of // *divers*: sundry; various

8 *after*: later // *touch*: discuss 9 *of*: from

9–15: Saint Bernard of Clairvaux, *Sermon on the Advent of the Lord and Its Six Circumstances*, 1.

13 *simple*: small; insignificant 17, 19 *peevish*: foolish; silly 18 *suffer*: allow

22, 24 *of*: by 23 *even*: just 29–30: John 16:24.

that shall take comfort) cannot doubt but God will surely keep this promise; and therefore hath he a great cause to be of good comfort, as I say, in that he considereth that he longeth to be comforted by him... which his faith maketh him sure will not fail to comfort him.

5 But here consider this: that I speak here of him that in tribulation longeth to be comforted by God. And that is he that referreth the manner of his comforting to God... holding himself content... whether it be by taking away, or diminishment, of the tribulation itself... or
10 by the giving of him patience and spiritual consolation therein. For him that only longeth to have God take his trouble from him—we cannot so well warrant that mind for a cause of so great comfort; for both may he desire that, that never mindeth to be the better... and may miss also the effect of his desire, because his request
15 is haply not good for himself. And of this kind of longing and requiring we shall have occasion further to speak hereafter. But he that referring the manner of his comfort unto God... desireth of God to be comforted, asketh a thing so lawful and so pleasant unto God... that he cannot fail to speed; and therefore hath he, as I say, great cause
20 to take comfort in the very desire itself. Another cause hath he to take of that desire a very great occasion of comfort: for since his desire is good, and declareth unto himself that he hath in God a good faith, it is a good token unto him that he is not an abject, cast out of God's gracious favor... while he perceiveth that God hath put such
25 a virtuous, well-ordered appetite in his mind. For as every evil mind cometh of the world and ourselves and the devil... so is every such good mind, either immediately or by the means of our good angel or other gracious occasion, inspired into man's heart by the goodness of God himself. And what a comfort may, then, this be unto us—when we
30 by that desire perceive a sure, undoubted token that toward our final salvation our Savior is himself so graciously busy about us!

4 *which*: who // *maketh him sure*: assures him 7–8 *referreth . . . to*: leaves . . . up to
12 *warrant*: guarantee // *mind*: disposition 13 *never . . . better*: has no intention of improving
14 *may*: i.e., he may // *miss*: fail to obtain 15 *haply*: perhaps // *himself*: him
16 *requiring*: requesting 18 *lawful*: legitimate // *pleasant*: pleasing; agreeable
19 *speed*: have his request granted 22 *declareth*: shows 23, 30 *token*: indication; sign
23 *abject*: pariah; persona non grata 24 *while*: when 25 *appetite*: inclination
25 *evil mind*: bad disposition 26 *of*: from 27 *immediately*: directly
28 *gracious*: godly 30 *undoubted*: definite

*That tribulation is a means to draw man
to that good mind to desire and long
for the comfort of God*

1.4

The Fourth Chapter

5

Vincent

Forsooth, good Uncle—this good mind of longing for God’s comfort...
is a good cause of great comfort indeed; our Lord in tribulation
send it us! But by this I see well... that woe may they be which in
tribulation lack that mind, and that desire not to be comforted by
10 God... but are either of sloth or impatience discomfortless... or of
folly seek for their chief ease and comfort anywhere else.

Anthony

That is, good Cousin, very true as long as they stand in that state;
but then must ye consider that tribulation is yet a means to drive
15 him *from* that state—and that is one of the causes for the which
God sendeth it unto man. For albeit that pain was ordained of God
for the punishment of sin—for which, they that can never now but
sin can never be but ever punished in hell—yet in *this* world, in
which his high mercy giveth men space to be better... the punishment
20 by tribulation that he sendeth serveth ordinarily for a means
of amendment.

Saint Paul was himself sore against Christ till Christ gave him
a great fall... and threw him to the ground and struck him stark-blind.
And with that tribulation he turned to him at the first word... and
25 God was his physician and healed him soon after—both in body and
soul—by his minister Ananias... and made him his blessed apostle.

Some are in the beginning of tribulation very stubborn and stiff
against God... and yet at length tribulation bringeth them home. The
proud king Pharaoh did abide and endure two or three of the first plagues,

9 *that desire not*: who do not desire 10 *of*: because of; out of
10 *discomfortless*: undistressed; undismayed 11 *folly*: foolishness 16 *ordained of*: set up by
17 *for which*: on account of which; for which reason // *but*: i.e., do anything but
22–26: See Acts 9:1–20. 22 *sore*: terribly 29 *abide*: withstand
17/29—18/7: See Exodus 9.

and would not once stop at them; but then God laid on a sorer lash, that
made him cry to him for help—and then sent he for Moses
and Aaron, and confessed himself for a sinner... and God for good
and righteous... and prayed them to pray for him and to withdraw that
5 plague... and he would let them go. But when his tribulation was
withdrawn, then was he naught again. So was his tribulation occasion
of his profit... and his help again cause of his harm. For his
tribulation made him call to God... and his help made hard his heart
again.

10 Many a man that in an easy tribulation falleth to seek his ease in
the pastime of worldly fantasies... findeth in a greater pain all these
comforts so feeble that he is fain to fall to the seeking of God's
help. And therefore is, as I say, the very tribulation itself many
times a means to bring the man to the taking of the foreremembered
15 comfort therein; that is to wit, to the desire of comfort given by God—
which desire of God's comfort ... is, as I have proved you, great cause
of comfort itself.

*The special means to get this first comfort
in tribulation*

20 The Fifth Chapter

Howbeit, though the tribulation itself be a means oftentimes to
get man this first comfort in it... yet itself sometimes *alone* bringeth
not a man to it. And therefore, since without this comfort first had, there
can in tribulation no other good comfort come forth, we must
25 labor the means that this first comfort may come. And thereto seemeth
me that if the man of sloth or impatience, or hope of worldly
comfort, have no mind to desire and seek for comfort... of *God*: those
that are his friends that come to visit and comfort him must before
all things put that point in his mind... and not spend the time, as they
30 commonly do, in trifling and turning him to the fancies of the world.

5 *prayed*: asked 7 *naught*: bad 11 *easy*: not hard to bear
12 *fantasies*: fancies; whims 13 *fain*: forced 15 *foreremembered*: previously mentioned
26 *labor*: employ; put to work // *that*: by which 27 *of sloth*: out of laziness
29 *friends*: relatives and friends 31 *trifling*: engaging in small talk

They must also move him to pray *God* to put this *desire* in his mind; which when he getteth once, he then hath the first comfort... and without doubt, if it be well considered, a comfort marvelously great. His friends also, that thus counsel him, must unto the attaining thereof help
 5 to pray for him themselves, and cause him to desire good folk to help him to pray therefor. And then, if these ways be taken for the getting, I nothing doubt but the goodness of God shall give it.

1.6

10 *It sufficeth not that a man have a desire
 to be comforted by God... only by the
 taking away of the tribulation*

The Sixth Chapter

Vincent

Verily methinketh, good Uncle, that this counsel is very good. For except the person have first a desire to be comforted by God... else
 15 can I not see what it can avail to give him any further counsel of any spiritual comfort. Howbeit, what if the man have this desire of God's comfort: that is to wit, that it may please God to comfort him in his tribulation by taking that tribulation from him? Is not
 20 this a good desire of God's comfort, and a desire sufficient for him that is in tribulation?

Anthony

No, Cousin, that is it not! I touched before a word of this point, and passed it over... because I thought it would fall in our way again. And so wot I well it will offer than once; and now am I glad that
 25 ye move it me here yourself.

A man may many times well and without sin desire of God the tribulation to be taken from him; but neither may we desire that in every case... nor yet very well in no case (except very few) but under a certain condition either expressed or implied. For tribulations
 30 are, ye wot well, of many sundry kinds: some by loss

3 *marvelously*: extremely 5 *cause* . . . *desire*: get him to ask 6 *therefor*: for it
 7 *nothing* . . . *but*: have no doubt that 18 *from*: away from
 22 *touched* . . . *of*: said before a little something on
 24, 30 *wot*: know 24 *offer*: more often 25 *move it me*: bring it up to me
 26, 27 *desire*: ask

of goods or possessions, and some by the sickness of ourselves... and some
 by the loss of friends... or by some other pain, put unto our bodies;
 some by the dread of the losing of those things that we fain would
 save—under which fear fall all the same things that we have spoken of
 5 before. For we may *fear* loss of goods or possessions... or the loss
 of our friends; their grief and trouble... or our own... by sickness,
 imprisonment, or other bodily pain; we may be troubled with the
 dread of death; and many a good man is troubled most of all with the
 fear of that thing... which he that most need hath, feareth least of all:
 10 that is to wit, the fear of losing through deadly sin the life of his
 seely soul. And this last kind of tribulation... is the sorest tribulation
 of all. Though we touch here and there some pieces thereof before...
 yet the chief part and principal point will I reserve, to treat apart,
 effectually, that matter in the last end.

15 But, now, as I said, whereas the kinds of tribulation are so diverse—
some of these tribulations a man may pray God to take from him...
 and take some comfort in the trust that God will so do. And therefore,
 against hunger, sickness, and bodily hurt, and against the loss of either
 body or soul... men may lawfully many times pray to the goodness
 20 of God, either for themselves or for their friend. And toward this
 purpose... are expressly prayed many devout orisons in the Common
 Service of our mother Holy Church. And toward our help in some of
 these things... serve some of the petitions in the Pater Noster... wherein
 we pray for our daily food, and to be preserved from the fall in temptation
 25 and to be delivered from evil.

But yet may we not *always* pray for the taking away from us of *every*
 kind of temptation. For if a man should in *every* sickness pray for his
 health again... when should he show himself content to die and depart
 unto God? And that mind a man must have, ye wot well, or else it
 30 will not be well.

One tribulation is it unto good men, to feel in themselves the

2, 6, 20 *friend(s)*: loved one(s) 3 *fain would*: would very much like to 10 *deadly*: mortal
 11 *seely*: poor 12 *touch*: touch upon; discuss 14 *effectually*: thoroughly // *last*: very
 15 *whereas*: given that 21 *orisons*: prayers 24 *in*: into
 27–28 *for his health again*: to get his health back 28 *content*: willing

conflict of the flesh against the soul... the rebellion of sensuality
 against the rule and governance of reason... the relics that
 remain in mankind of our old original sin... of which Saint Paul
 so sore complaineth in his epistle to the Romans. And yet may we
 5 not pray while we stand in this life to have this kind of tribulation
 utterly taken from us. For it is left us by God's ordinance to
 strive against it and fight withal... and by reason and grace to master
 it... and use it for the matter of our merit.

For the salvation of our soul may we boldly pray. For grace may
 10 we boldly pray; for faith... for hope... and for charity... and for every such
 virtue as shall serve us to-heaven-ward. But as for all other things
 before-remembered in which is contained the matter of every kind of
 tribulation, we may never well make prayer so precisely but that we
 must express, or imply, a condition therein: that is to wit, that if
 15 God see the contrary better for us, we refer it whole to his will... and instead
 of our grief taken away... pray that God of his goodness may send
 us either spiritual comfort to take it gladly, or strength, at the least
 way, to take it patiently. For if we determine with ourselves... that
 we will take no comfort in nothing but in the taking of our tribulation
 20 from us... then either prescribe we to God that we will
 he shall no better turn do us though he would, than we will ourselves
 appoint him... or else we declare that what thing is best for us... ourselves
 can better tell than he.

And therefore, I say, let us in tribulation desire this help and comfort,
 25 and let us remit the *manner* of that comfort unto his own high pleasure;
 which when we do, let us nothing doubt... but that like as his high
 wisdom better seeth what is best for us than we can see ourselves...
 so shall his sovereign goodness give us the thing that shall indeed
 be best. For else, if we will presume to stand unto our own choice
 30 (except it so be that God offer us the choice himself... as he did to
 David in the choice of his own punishment after his high pride

3–4: See Romans 7:14–25. 5 *stand*: remain 7 *withal*: therewith

11 *serve us to-heaven-ward*: help us get to heaven 12 *before-remembered*: previously mentioned

15 *see the contrary better*: i.e., see the opposite to be better // *refer it whole to*: leave it entirely up to

18 *determine with ourselves*: make up our minds

20–21 *that . . . would*: that we will have him do us no better favor even if he wants to

22 *appoint*: assign 24 *desire*: request 25 *remit*: leave // *unto*: up to

26 *nothing doubt*: have no doubt 29 *stand unto*: go by

21/30—22/1: See 1 Chronicles 21:1–13.

conceived in the numbering of his people), we may foolishly choose the worse... and by the prescribing unto God ourselves so precisely what we will that he shall do for us... except that of his gracious favor he reject our folly... he shall for indignation grant us our own request...
 5 and after shall we well find that it shall turn us to harm. How many men attain health of body... that were better for their soul health, their body were sick still?

How many men get out of prison... that hap on such harms abroad... as the prison should have kept them from? How many have there
 10 been loath to lose their worldly goods—have in keeping of them soon after lost their life? So blind is our mortality, and so unaware what will fall—so unsure, also, what manner mind we will ourselves have tomorrow—that God could not lightly do man a more vengeance... than in this world to grant him his own foolish wishes.

What wit have we poor fools to wit what will serve us... when the
 15 blessed Apostle himself, in his sore tribulation praying thrice unto God to take it away from him, was answered again by God, in a manner, that he was but a fool in asking that request... but that the help of God's grace in that tribulation to strengthen him was far
 20 better for him than to take the tribulation from him. And therefore, by experience perceiving well the truth of that lesson, he giveth us good warning not to be too bold of our own mind when we require aught of God, nor to be precise in our asking, but refer the choice to God at his own pleasure... for his own Holy Spirit so
 25 sore desireth our weal... that, as man might say, he groaneth for us in such wise as no tongue can tell. "Nos autem," saith Saint Paul, "quid oremus... ut oportet nescimus, sed ipse Spiritus postulat pro nobis gemitibus inenarrabilibus" ("What may we pray that were behovable for us, cannot ourselves tell... but the Spirit himself desireth for us with unspeakable
 30 groanings").

And therefore I say for conclusion of this point, let us never ask of

2 worse: less good 3 will that he shall do: will have him do // except that: unless
 6–7 that . . . health: who would be better off spiritually if
 8 hap on: run into // abroad: on the outside 12 fall: happen
 13 could not lightly: probably could not // more: greater 15–20: See 2 Corinthians 12:1–10.
 15 what wit: what mental capacity // to wit: to know // serve: be good for
 23 require aught: ask anything // refer: leave 25 sore: strongly // weal: well-being
 26–30: Romans 8:26. 28 pray: pray for; ask for 28 were behovable: would be good
 28–29 cannot ourselves: we ourselves cannot 29 desireth: does the asking

God precisely our own ease by delivery from our tribulation... but pray for his aid and comfort by which ways himself shall best like.

1.7

And then may we take comfort even of our such request; for both are we sure that this mind cometh of God... and also be we very sure
 5 that as he beginneth to work with us... so (but if ourselves flit from him) he will not fail to tarry with us. And then, he dwelling with us, what trouble can do us harm? “Si Deus nobiscum, quis contra nos?” “If God be with us,” saith Saint Paul, “who can stand against us?”

10 *A great comfort it may be in tribulation,
 that every tribulation is (if we will ourselves)
 a thing either medicinal or
 else more than medicinal*

The Seventh Chapter

15 Vincent

You have, good Uncle, well opened and declared the question that I demanded you; that is to wit, what manner comfort a man might pray for in tribulation. And now proceed forth, good Uncle... and show us yet further some other spiritual comfort in tribulation.

20 Anthony

This may be, thinketh me, good Cousin, great comfort in tribulation: that every tribulation which anytime falleth unto us... is either sent to be medicinal if men will so take it... or may become medicinal if men will so make it... or is better than medicinal
 25 but if we will forsake it.

Vincent

Surely this is very comfortable, if we may well perceive it.

4 *mind*: disposition // *of*: from 5, 25 *but if*: unless 6 *tarry*: remain 7–9: Romans 8:31.
 11 *if we will ourselves*: if we ourselves want it to be 13 *more*: better 16 *opened*: explained
 16 *declared*: cleared up 17 *demanded*: asked // *might*: i.e., could rightly
 25 *forsake*: decline; refuse 27 *comfortable*: encouraging // *may*: can // *perceive*: understand

Anthony

1.8

These three things that I tell you, we shall consider thus: Every tribulation that we fall in... cometh either by our own known deserving deed bringing us thereunto (as the sickness that followeth
 5 our intemperate surfeit... or the imprisonment or other punishment put upon a man for his heinous crime); or else it is sent us by God without any certain deserving cause open and known unto ourselves, either for punishment of some sins past (we certainly know not for which) or for preserving us from some sins in which we were else likely to
 10 fall; or, finally, for no respect of the man's sin at all, but for the profit of his patience and increase of his merit. In all the former cases, tribulation is (if we will) medicinal; in this latter case of all, it is yet better than medicinal.

*The declaration larger concerning them
 15 that fall in tribulation by their own well-known
 fault... and that yet such tribulation
 is medicinal*

The Eighth Chapter

Vincent

20 This seemeth me very good, good Uncle... saving that it seemeth somewhat brief and short... and thereby, methinketh, somewhat obscure and dark.

Anthony

25 We shall, therefore, to give it light withal, touch every member somewhat more at large.

One member is, ye wot well, of them that fall in tribulation through their own certain, well-deserving deed, open and

3, 9, 15, 26 *in*: into 5 *surfeit*: excessive consumption of food or drink 7, 27 *open*: evident
 8 *we . . . which*: we don't know with certainty for which ones
 10 *for no respect of*: for no reason having anything to do with 12 *will*: want it to be
 14 *declaration larger*: expanded explanation 24 *withal*: therewith // *touch*: discuss
 24, 26 *member*: section; part 25 *somewhat more at large*: at somewhat greater length
 26 *of*: about

known to themselves—as where we fall in a sickness following upon our own gluttonous feasting; or a man that is punished for his own open fault.

1.8

5 These tribulations, lo, and such other like... albeit that they may seem
discomfortable, in that a man may be sorry to think himself the
cause of his own harm... yet hath he good cause of comfort in them...
if he consider... that he may make them medicinal for himself...
if himself will.

10 For whereas there was due to that sin, except it were purged
here, a far greater punishment after this world in another place:
this-worldly tribulation, of pain and punishment by God's good provision
for him... put upon him here in this world before, shall
by the means of Christ's Passion (if the man will in true faith and
good hope, by meek and patient sufferance of his tribulation, so make
15 it) serve him for a sure medicine to cure him and clearly discharge him
of all his sickness and disease of those pains that else he should suffer
after; for such is the great goodness of Almighty God that
he punisheth not one thing twice. And albeit so that this punishment
is put unto the man not of his own election and choice... but
20 so by force as he would fain avoid it... and falleth in it against his
will... and therefore seemeth worthy no thank: yet so far passeth the great
goodness of God the poor, unperfect goodness of man... that though men
make their reckoning one here with another such... God yet, of his
bounty, in man's account toward him alloweth it far otherwise.
25 For though that a man fall in his pain by his own fault... and also
first against his will: yet as soon as he confesseth his fault... and
applieth his will to be content to suffer that pain and punishment
for the same... and waxeth sorry, not for that only that he shall
sustain such punishment... but for that also that he hath offended
30 God... and thereby deserved much more—our Lord from that time
accounteth it not for pain taken against his will... but it shall be a marvelously
good medicine, and work as a *willingly* taken pain...
the purgation and cleansing of his soul, with gracious remission of

1 *as*: such as 1, 20, 25 *in*: into 3 *open fault*: obvious transgression

5 *discomfortable*: causing of discomfort 9 *whereas*: given that

18 *one*: the same // *albeit so*: although it is true 20 *so*: as much // *fain*: like to

21 *worthy no thank*: deserving of no credit // *passeth*: exceeds 24 *bounty*: generosity

24 *alloweth*: takes 26 *first*: at first 27 *content*: willing 28 *waxeth*: becomes

his sin... and of the far greater pain that else had been prepared therefor, peradventure forever in hell.

1.8

For many there are, undoubtedly, that would else drive forth and die in their deadly sin... which yet in such tribulation feeling their own frailty so effectually... and the false, flattering world failing them so fully... turn goodly to God and call for mercy... and by grace make virtue of necessity... and make a medicine of their malady, taking their trouble meekly, and make a right godly end.

Consider well the story of Achan, that committed sacrilege at the great city of Jericho... whereupon God took a great vengeance upon the children of Israel, and after told them the cause, and bade them go seek the fault and try it out by lots. When the lot fell upon the very man that did it—being tried by the falling first upon his tribe... and then upon his family, and then upon his house, and finally upon his person—he might well see that he was deprehended and taken against his will. But yet, at the good exhortation of Joshua saying unto him, “Fili mi, da gloriam Deo Israel, et confiteri et indica mihi quid feceris, et ne abscondas” (“Mine own son, give glory to the God of Israel, and confess and show me what thou hast done, and hide it not”), he confessed humbly the theft, and meekly took his death therefor, and had, I doubt not, both strength and comfort in his pain, and died a very good man... which if he had never come in the tribulation, had been in peril never, haply, to have had just remorse thereof in all his whole life... but might have died wretchedly and gone to the devil eternally. And thus made this thief a good medicine of his well-deserved pain and tribulation. Consider the well-converted thief that hung on Christ’s right hand: did not he by his meek sufferance and humble acknowledgement of his fault, asking forgiveness of God, and yet content to suffer for his sin, make of his just punishment and well-deserved tribulation a very good special medicine to cure him of all the pain in the other world and win him eternal salvation? And thus I say that this kind of tribulation, though it seem the most base and

3 *drive forth*: keep right on going 4 *deadly*: mortal 5 *effectually*: strongly
 9–26: See Joshua 7:1–26. 9 *that*: who
 12 *seek the fault*: i.e., find out who had committed what transgression
 12 *try* . . . *lots*: bring it to the fore by drawings of lots 15 *might*: could
 15 *deprehended*: found out / *taken*: caught 22 *in*: into // *had*: would have
 26–31: See Luke 23:33, 39–43. 27 *on*: at

the least comfortable, is yet (if the man will so make it) a very marvelous wholesome medicine, and may therefore be to the man that will so consider it, a great cause of comfort and spiritual consolation.

1.9

5 *The second point: that is to wit, that
tribulation that is sent us by God without
any open deserving cause known unto
ourselves; and that this kind of tribulation...
is medicinal if men will so take it, and
therefore great occasion of comfort*

10 The Ninth Chapter

Vincent

Verily, mine Uncle, this first kind of tribulation have you to my mind opened sufficiently; and therefore I pray you resort now to the second.

15 Anthony

The second kind was, ye wot well, of such tribulation as is so sent us by God that we know no certain cause deserving that present trouble... as we certainly know that upon such a surfeit, we fell in such a sickness... or as the thief knoweth that for such a certain theft, he is fallen into such a certain punishment.

20 But yet, since we seldom lack faults against God worthy, and *well* deserving, great punishment indeed... we may well think—and wisdom is so to do—that with sin we *have* deserved it... and that God for *some* sin sendeth it, though we certainly know not ourselves for which. And therefore as yet, thus far forth, is this kind of tribulation somewhat, in effect, in comfort, to be taken like unto the other. For this, as ye see, if we will thus take it well—reckoning it to be sent for our sin, and suffering it patiently therefore—is medicinal against the

1 *comfortable*: admissible of encouragement 6 *open*: evident 13 *opened*: explained
13 *pray you resort now*: ask you now to go on 16 *wot*: know 18, 19, 20 *such*: such and such
18 *surfeit*: overindulgence // *in*: into 21 *faults*: transgressions // *worthy*: meriting
24 *we . . . ourselves*: we ourselves don't know with certainty

pain in the other world to come... for our sins in this world past;
which is, as I showed you, a cause of right great comfort.

1.9

But yet may then this kind of tribulation be to some men of more
sober living... and thereby of the more clear conscience... somewhat a
5 little more comfortable. For though they may none otherwise reckon
themselves than sinners—for as Saint Paul saith, “Nullius mihi
consciens sum... sed non in hoc iustificatus sum” (“My conscience grudgeth me
not of anything... but yet am I not thereby justified”), and Saint John
saith, “Si dixerimus quia peccatum non habemus, ipsi nos seducimus, et
10 veritas in nobis non est” (“If we say that we have no sin in us, we
beguile ourselves, and truth is there not in us”)—yet, forasmuch as
the cause is to them not so certain as it is to the others foreremembered,
in the first kind... and that it is also certain that God sometimes
sendeth tribulation for keeping and preserving a man from such sin as
15 he should else fall in, and sometimes also for exercise of their patience
and increase of merit: great cause of increase in comfort have these
folk of the clearer conscience in the fervor of their tribulation, in
that they may take the comfort of a double medicine, and of a thing
also that is of the kind which we shall finally speak of, that I call
20 better than medicinal. But as I have before spoken of this kind of
tribulation, how it is medicinal in that it cureth the sin past,
and purchaseth remission of the pain due therefor... so let us somewhat
consider how this tribulation sent us by God is medicinal in
that it preserveth us from the sin into which we were else likely to
25 fall.

If that thing be a good medicine that restoreth us our health when
we lose it... a good medicine must this needs be, that preserveth our
health while we have it, and suffereth us not to fall into that painful
sickness that must after drive us to a painful plaster.

30 Now seeth God sometimes that worldly wealth is, with one that is
yet good, coming upon him so fast... that, foreseeing how much weight

4 *somewhat*: something 5 *comfortable*: admissible of consolation and encouragement
6–11: 1 Corinthians 4:4; 1 John 1:8. 7–8 *grudgeth me not of*: does not trouble me about
12 *foreremembered*: previously mentioned 15 *in*: into 17 *fervor*: heat; intensity
29 *plaster*: treatment 30 *wealth*: well-being

of worldly wealth the man may bear... and how much will overcharge
 him... and enhance his heart up so high that grace should fall from him
 low—God of his goodness, I say, preventeth his fall and sendeth him
 tribulation betimes, while he is yet good, to gar him to ken his
 5 Maker, and by less liking the false, flattering world, set a cross upon
 the ship of his heart, and bear a low sail thereon, that the boistous
 blast of pride blow him not under the water.

Some young lovely lady, lo, that is yet good enough, God seeth a storm
 coming toward her... that would, if her health and her fat feeding should
 10 a little longer last, strike her into some lecherous love... and instead
 of her old-acquainted knight... lay her abed with a new-acquainted
 knave. But God, loving her more tenderly... than to suffer her fall
 into such shameful, beastly sin, sendeth her in season a goodly,
 fair, fervent fever, that maketh her bones to rattle, and wasteth away
 15 her wanton flesh, and beautifieth her fair fell with the color of the
 kite's claw... and maketh her look so lovely that her lover would have
 little lust to look upon her... and maketh her also so lusty that if her
 lover lay in her lap, she should so sore long to break unto him the
 very bottom of her stomach that she should not be able to refrain it
 20 from him, but suddenly lay it all in his neck.

Did not, as I before showed you, the blessed Apostle himself
 confess... that the high revelations that God had given him might
 have enhanced him into so high pride that he might have caught
 a foul fall, had not the provident goodness of God provided for his
 25 remedy? And what was his remedy... but a painful tribulation,
 so sore that he was fain to call thrice to God to take the tribulation
 from him. And yet would God not grant his request... but let him
 lie so long therein... till himself, that saw more in Saint Paul
 than Saint Paul saw in himself, wist well the time was come
 30 in which he might well, without his harm, take it from him.

And thus ye see, good Cousin, that tribulation is double medicine—

1 *overcharge*: overload 2, 23 *enhance(d)*: lift(ed); elevate(d) 3 *preventeth*: forestalls
 4 *betimes*: in good time // *gar him to ken*: make him know
 6–7 *boistous blast*: strong wind 12 *suffer*: let 13 *in season*: in time // *goodly*: nice
 14 *fair*: beautiful // *fervent*: high 15 *fair fell*: beautiful skin
 15–16 *color of the kite's claw*: i.e., yellowish-white (A kite is a kind of hawk.)
 19 *refrain*: keep 21 *showed*: said to // *the blessed Apostle*: i.e., Saint Paul
 26 *sore*: severe // *fain*: constrained 29 *wist*: knew

both a cure for the sin past and a preservative from the sin that
 is to come. And therefore in this kind of tribulation is there good
 occasion of a double comfort. But that is, I say, diversely to sundry
 diverse folk, as their own conscience is with sin encumbered or
 clear. 1.10

5 Howbeit, I will advise no man to be so bold as to think that their
 tribulation is sent them to keep them from the pride of their holiness.
 Let men leave *that* kind of comfort, hardily, to Saint Paul, till their
 living be like. But of the remnant may men well take great comfort,
 10 and good besides.

*Of the third kind of tribulation, which is
 not sent a man for his sin... but for
 exercise of his patience and increase of his
 merit; which is better than medicinal*

15 The Tenth Chapter

Vincent

 The third kind, Uncle, that remaineth now behind—that is
 to wit, which is sent a man by God, and not for his sin neither
 committed nor which would else come... and therefore is not medicinal,
 20 but sent for exercise of our patience and increase of our merit, and
 therefore better than medicinal—though it be, as you say (and as
 indeed it is), better for the man than any of the other kinds, in
 another world, where the reward shall be received... yet can I not see
 by what reason a man may in *this* world, where the tribulation is
 25 suffered, take any more comfort therein than in any of the other twain,
 that are sent a man for his sin... since he cannot here know whether
 it be sent him for sins before committed, or sin that else should
 fall... or for increase of merit and reward after to come; namely since

8 *hardily*: by all means; indeed 9 *remnant*: rest 21 *though*: even if
 28 *fall*: occur // *namely*: especially

every man hath cause enough to fear and to think that his sin
already past *hath* deserved it, and that it is not without peril a man
to think otherwise.

1.10

Anthony

- 5 This that ye say, Cousin, hath place of truth in far the most part
of men; and therefore must they not envy nor disdain, since they
may take in their tribulation consolation for their part sufficient,
that some others, that more be worthy, take yet a great deal more.
For as I told you, Cousin, though the best man must confess himself
10 a sinner... yet be there many men (though to the multitude few) that
for the kind of their living, and thereby the clearness of their conscience,
may well and without sin have a good hope that God sendeth
them some great grief for exercise of their patience and for
increase of their merit; as it appeareth not only by Saint Paul, in
15 the place before-remembered... but also by that holy man Job... which
in sundry places of his dispicions with his “burdensome comforters”
letted not to say that the clearness of his own conscience declared and
showed unto himself that he deserved not the sore tribulation that
he then had. Howbeit, as I told you before, I will not advise every
20 man at adventure to be bold upon this manner of comfort. But yet
some men know I such... as I durst for their more ease and comfort
in their great and grievous pain, put them in right good hope that
God sendeth it unto them not so much for their punishment as for
exercise of their patience. And some tribulations are there also
25 that grow upon such causes... that in these cases I would never
let, but always would without any doubt give that counsel and
comfort to any man.

Vincent

What causes, good Uncle, be those?

- 1 *cause*: reason 6 *disdain*: take offense; resent
10 *to the multitude*: relative to the total number of people there are
11 *for . . . living*: because of the way they live 15 *place*: passage (i.e., 2 Corinthians 12:1–10)
16 *dispicions*: debates // “burdensome comforters”: See Job 16:2.
17 *letted not*: did not forbear 20 *at adventure*: at random 25 *grow upon*: come about by
26 *let*: hesitate // *doubt*: fear; misgiving

Anthony

1.10

- Marry, Cousin, wheresoever a man falleth in tribulation for the maintenance of justice or for the defense of God's cause. For if I should hap to find a man that had long lived a very virtuous life...
 5 and had at last happened to fall into the Turk's hands... and there did abide by the truth of his faith, and with the suffering of all kinds of torments taken upon his body... still did teach and testify the truth; if I should in his passion give him a spiritual comfort: might I be bold to tell him no further but that he should take patience in
 10 this pain... and that God sendeth it him for his sin, and that he is well worthy to have it although it were yet much more? He might well answer me and such other comforters as Job answered his—"Onerosi consolatores estis vos"; "Burdensome and heavy comforters be you!" Nay, I would not fail to bid him boldly (while I should see him in
 15 his passion) cast sin and hell and purgatory and all upon the devil's pate... and doubt not but likewise as if he gave over his hold, all his merit were lost, and he turned into misery... so if he stand and persevere still in the confession of his faith, all his whole pain shall turn all into glory.
- 20 Yet more shall I yet say you than this; that if there were a Christian man that had among those infidels committed a very deadly crime... such as were worthy death... not only by their law, but by Christ's too (as manslaughter, adultery, or such other thing like), if when he were taken... he were offered pardon of his life upon condition that he should
 25 forsake the faith of Christ—if this man would now rather suffer death than so do... should I comfort him in his pain but as I would a malefactor? Nay! This man though he should have died for his sin... dieth now for Christ's sake... while he might live still if he would forsake him. The bare patient taking of his death should have served for
 30 the satisfaction of his sin—through the merit of Christ's Passion, I

2 marry: indeed 8, 15 passion: suffering

8-9 might . . . that: is this all that I could dare tell him—that

10-11 is well worthy: well deserves to 11 although: even if 12-14: Job 16:2.

16 pate: head 22 worthy death: deserving of punishment by death

23 as: such as // manslaughter: murder 24 taken: arrested 25, 28 forsake: renounce

27 malefactor: criminal 27, 29 should: would

28 while . . . still: when he could go on living 29 the bare: just a

mean, without help of which no pain of our own could be satisfactory. 1.10
 But now shall Christ, for his forsaking of his own
 life in the honor of his faith, forgive the pain of all his sins... of
 his mere liberality, and accept all the pain of his death for merit
 5 of reward in heaven... and shall assign no part thereof to the payment
 of his debt in purgatory... but shall take it all as an offering, and requite
 it all with glory. And this man among Christian men, all had he been
 before a devil—nothing would I after doubt to take him for a martyr.

Vincent

10 Verily, good Uncle, methinketh this is said marvelously well; and
 it especially delighteth and comforteth me to hear it because of our
 principal fear that I first spoke of—the Turk's cruel incursion into
 this country of ours.

Anthony

15 Cousin, as for the matter of that fear, I purpose to touch last of all;
 nor I meant not here to speak thereof... had it not been that the vehemence
 of your objection brought it in my way; but rather would I
 else have put some example, for this place, of such as suffer tribulation
 for maintenance of right and justice... and that rather choose to take harm
 20 than do wrong in *any* manner of matter. For surely if a man may
 (as indeed he may) have great comfort in the clearness of his conscience,
 that hath a false crime put upon him, and by false
 witness proved upon him, and he falsely punished and put to worldly
 shame and pain therefor: a hundred times more comfort may he have
 25 in his heart... that where white is called black... and right is called wrong...
 abideth by the truth and is persecuted for justice.

Vincent

Then if a man sue me wrongfully for my land, in which myself

1 *be satisfactory*: serve to make satisfaction for sin 2 *forsaking*: renouncing; giving up
 7 *all had he been*: even if he had been 8 *nothing*: not at all
 8 *doubt to take*: hesitate to take; have any qualms about taking
 15 *purpose to touch*: intend to discuss it 22 *that*: who // *crime*: charge 23 *falsely*: wrongfully

have good right... it is a comfort yet to defend it well, since God shall
give me thank therefor?

1.10

Anthony

5 Nay, Cousin, nay! There walk ye somewhat wide; for there you
defend *your* right, for your temporal avail. And since Saint
Paul counseleth, “Non vosmet defendentes, carissimi” (“Defend not yourselves,
most dear friends”), and our Savior counseleth, “Si qui vult
tecum in iudicio contendere et tunicam tuam tollere, dimitte ei et pallium”
10 (“If a man will strive with thee at law and take away thy coat... leave him
thy gown too”), the defense, therefore, of *our* right asketh no reward. Say
you speed well if ye get leave—look hardily for no thank.

But on the other side... if you do as Saint Paul biddeth, “quaerentes
non quae sua sunt, sed quae aliorum” (“seek not for your own profit, but
for other folks”)... but defend, therefore, of pity, a poor widow, or a poor
15 fatherless child, and rather suffer sorrow by some strong extortion...
than suffer them take wrong; or if ye be a judge and will have such
zeal to justice that ye will rather abide tribulation by the malice
of some mighty man... than judge wrong for his favor: such tribulations,
lo, be those... that are better than only medicinal; and every
20 man upon whom they fall may be bold so to reckon them... and in his
deep trouble may well say to himself the words that Christ hath
taught him for his comfort—“Beati misericordes... quia misericordiam
consequentur” (“Blessed be the merciful men, for they shall have mercy
given them”); “Beati qui persecutionem patiuntur propter iustitiam, quoniam
25 ipsorum est regnum caelorum” (“Blessed be they that suffer persecution for
justice... for theirs is the kingdom of heaven”). Here is a high comfort,
lo, for them that are in the case. And in this case their own conscience
can show it them, and so may fulfill their hearts with spiritual joy that

2 *give me thank therefor*: reward me for that 4 *walk . . . wide*: you to some extent miss the point
5–10: Romans 12:19; Luke 6:29. 10 *asketh no*: does not call for any
11 *speed*: fare; come out // *get leave*: are permitted to
11 *look . . . thank*: by no means expect any reward
12–14: See Philippians 2:4 and 1 Corinthians 10:24. 14 *of pity*: out of compassion
22–26: Matthew 5:7, 10. 27 *the case*: that situation 28 *fulfill*: fill up

the pleasure may far surmount the heaviness and the grief of all their
temporal trouble. But God's nearer cause, of faith against the Turks,
hath yet a far passing comfort, and by many degrees far excelleth
this; which, as I have said, I purpose to treat last; and for this time
5 this sufficeth concerning the special comfort that men may take in
the third kind of tribulation. 1.11

*Another kind of comfort yet in the base
kind of tribulation sent for our sin*

The Eleventh Chapter

10 Vincent

Of truth, good Uncle, albeit that every of these kinds of tribulation
have cause of comfort in them, as ye have well declared, if men
will so consider them... yet hath this third kind above all a special
prerogative therein.

15 Anthony

That is undoubtedly true. But yet is there not, good Cousin, the most
base kind of them all but that yet hath more causes of comfort than
I have spoken of yet. For I have, ye wot well, in that kind that is sent
us for our sin... spoken of no other comfort yet but twain; that
20 is to wit, one, that it refraineth us from the sin that else we would
fall in—and in that, serveth us, through the merit of Christ's Passion, as
a means by which God keepeth us from hell—and serveth for the satisfaction
of such pain as else we should endure in purgatory.

Howbeit, there is therein another great cause of joy besides this.
25 For surely these pains sent us here for our sins, in whatsoever
wise they hap unto us—be our own sin never so sore... nor never
so open and evident unto ourselves and all the world too—yet if we pray

1 *heaviness*: depressingness 3 *passing*: exceeding 11 *every*: each; every one
12 *declared*: explained 21 *fall in*: fall into 26, 26–27 *never so*: no matter how
26 *sore*: serious; terrible 27 *open*: clearly known

for grace to take it meekly and patiently, and... confessing to God that it
 is far over little for our fault... beseech him yet, nevertheless, that
 since we shall come hence so void of all good works whereof we should
 have any reward in heaven, to be not only so merciful unto us as to
 5 take that, our present tribulation, in release of our pain in purgatory...
 but also so gracious unto us as to take our patience therein for a matter
 of merit and reward in heaven: I verily trust and nothing doubt it but
 God shall of his high bounty grant us our boon. For likewise as
 in hell pain serveth only for punishment, without any manner of
 10 purging, because all possibility of purging is past... and in purgatory
 punishment serveth for only purging, because the place of deserving
 is past: so while we be yet in this world—in which is our place and
 our time of merit and well deserving—the tribulation that is
 sent us here for our sin shall, if we faithfully so desire, besides the
 15 cleansing and purging of our pain serve us also for increase of
 reward.

And so shall, I suppose and trust in God's goodness, all such penance
 and good works as a man willingly performeth enjoined by his ghostly
 father in confession... or which he willingly further do of his own
 20 devotion besides. For though man's penance, with all the good works
 that he can do, be not able to satisfy of themselves for the least
 sin that we do... yet the liberal goodness of God through the merit
 of Christ's bitter Passion (without which all our works could neither
 satisfy nor deserve; nor yet do not, indeed, neither merit nor satisfy
 25 so much as a spoonful to a great vesselful, in comparison of the
 merit and satisfaction that Christ hath merited and satisfied for us himself)—
 this liberal goodness of God, I say, shall yet at our faithful
 instance and request cause our penance and tribulation patiently
 taken in *this* world to serve us in the *other* world both for release
 30 and reward, tempered after such rate as his high goodness and wisdom
 shall see convenient for us... whereof our blind mortality cannot
 here imagine nor devise the extent. And thus hath yet even the

2 *over*: too // *fault*: guilt 8 *high bounty*: great generosity

8 *our boon*: our request; the favor we are asking 11 *deserving*: meriting

14 *faithfully*: with faith / perseveringly 18 *ghostly*: spiritual

28 *instance*: solicitation 31 *convenient*: as being fitting 32 *devise*: guess

first kind of tribulation and the most base, though not fully so great as the second, and very far less than the third... far greater cause of comfort yet than I spoke of before.

1.12

*A certain objection against the things
aforesaid*

5

The Twelfth Chapter

Vincent

Verily, good Uncle, this liketh me very well. But yet is there, ye wot well, some of these things now brought in question. For as for any pain due for our sins to be diminished in purgatory by the patient sufferance of our tribulation here... there are, ye wot well, many that utterly deny that... and affirm for a sure truth that there is no purgatory at all. And then is (if they say true) the cause of that comfort gone... if the comfort that we shall take be but in vain and need not. They say, ye wot well, also that men merit nothing at all... but God giveth all for faith alone... and that it were sin and sacrilege to look for any reward in heaven, either for our patient and glad suffering for God's sake... or for any other good deed. And then is there gone, if this be thus, the other cause of our further comfort, too.

20

Anthony

Cousin! If some things were as they be not, then should some things be as they shall not! I cannot indeed say nay but that some men of late have brought up some such opinions... and many more than these besides, and have spread them abroad. And, albeit that it is a right heavy thing to see such variance in our belief rise and grow among ourselves... to the great encouraging of the common enemies of us all... whereby

8 *liketh*: pleases // *wot*: know 14 *need not*: not needed 16 *were*: would be
22 *say nay but*: deny 24 *abroad*: around // *right*: very
25 *heavy*: depressing // *variance*: divergence; discord

they have our faith in derision and catch hope to overwhelm us all—
yet do there three things not a little comfort my mind.

1.12

The first is that in some communications had of late together,
hath appeared good likelihood of some good agreement to grow in one
5 accord of our faith.

The second, that in the meanwhile till this may come to pass,
contentions, dispicions with uncharitable behavior, is prohibited
and forbidden in effect upon all parts—all such parts, I mean, as
fell before to fight for it.

10 The third is that all Germany, for all their diverse opinions... yet
as they agree together in profession of Christ's name... so agree they
now together in preparation of a common power in defense
of Christendom against our common enemy the Turk. And I trust
in God that this shall not only help us here, to strengthen us in this
15 war... but also that as God hath caused them to agree together in the
defense of his name... so shall he graciously bring them to agree
together in the truth of his faith.

Therefore will I let God work, and leave off contention, and nothing shall
I now say... but that with which they that are themselves of the contrary
20 mind shall in reason have no cause to be discontent. For first,
as for purgatory, though they think there be none... yet since they deny
not that all the corps of Christendom by so many hundred years
have believed the contrary (and among them, all the old interpreters
of Scripture from the apostles' days down to our own time, of
25 whom they deny not many for holy saints) that I dare not now
believe these men against all those, these men must of their courtesy
hold my poor fear excused. And I beseech our Lord heartily for them
that when they depart out of this wretched world, they find no
purgatory at all... so God keep them from hell. And as for the
30 merit of man in his good works... neither are they that deny it fully

7 *dispicions*: disputations 29 *so*: provided that

agreed among themselves... nor any man is there almost of them all,
 that since he began to write, hath not somewhat changed and varied from
 himself. And far the more part are thus far agreed with us: that,
 like as we grant them that no good work is aught worth to-heaven-ward
 5 without faith... and that no good work of man is rewardable
 in heaven of its own nature, but through the mere goodness of God, that
 list to set so high a price upon so poor a thing, and that this price God
 setteth through Christ's Passion; and for that, also, that they be his *own*
 works *with* us (for good works to-God-ward worketh no man without
 10 God work with him); and as we grant them also that no man may
 be proud of his works, for his own unperfect working... and for that that
 in all that man may do, he can do God no good... but is a "servant
 unprofitable" and doth but his "bare duty"—as we, I say, grant unto
 them these things... so this one thing or twain do they grant us
 15 again—that men are bound to work good works, if they have time
 and power, and that whoso worketh in true faith most shall be
 most rewarded. But then set they thereto that all his reward shall be
 given him for his faith alone, and nothing for his works at all... because
 his faith is the thing (they say) that forceth him to work well. Strive
 20 will I not with them for this matter now... but yet this I trust to the
 great goodness of God: that, if the question hang on that narrow point,
 while Christ saith in the Scripture (in so many places!) that men *shall*
 in heaven be rewarded for their *works*... he shall never suffer our souls
 that are but mean-witted men, and can understand his words but as
 25 himself hath set them, and as old holy saints hath construed them
 before, and as all Christian people this thousand years have believed...
 to be damned for lack of perceiving such a sharp, subtle thing...
 especially since some men that have right good wits, and are, besides
 that, right well learned too... can in no wise perceive for what cause or
 30 why these folk that from good works take away the reward and
 give the reward all whole to faith alone... give the reward to faith rather
 than to charity. For this grant they themselves: that faith
 serveth of nothing... but if she be accompanied with her sister charity.

2 *varied*: dissented 3 *far the more part*: the vast majority 4 *ought worth*: worth anything
 4 *to-heaven-ward*: toward heaven 6 *that*: who 7 *list*: chooses 9 *without*: unless
 11 *for his*: because of his // *for that that*: because 12–13: See Luke 17:10.
 15 *again*: in return // *bound*: obliged 16 *power*: the ability 22 *while*: since; given that
 23–24 *our . . . men*: the souls of those of us who are of only average intelligence
 25 *old holy saints*: holy saints of old 27 *sharp*: fine-pointed // *subtle*: abstruse
 28 *right good wits*: very good minds 29 *right well learned*: very well educated
 29 *wise*: way 30 *why*: reason 33 *but if*: unless // *with*: by

And then saith the Scripture too, “Fides... spes... caritas... tria haec,
maior autem horum... caritas”; “Of the three virtues faith, hope, and
charity, of all these three the greatest is charity”—and therefore as worthy
to have the thank as faith. Howbeit, as I said, I will not strive therefor;
5 nor, indeed, as our matter standeth, I shall not greatly need. For if
they say that he which suffereth tribulation or martyrdom for the
faith shall have his high reward, not for his work but for his well-working
faith... yet since they grant that *have* it he *shall*, the cause
of the high comfort in the third kind of tribulation standeth. And that
10 is, ye wot well, the effect of all my purpose.

Vincent

Verily, good Uncle, this is truly driven and tried out to the uttermost,
as it seemeth me. I pray you proceed at your pleasure.

15 *That a man ought to be comfortable to
himself, and have good hope, and be joyful
also, in tribulation, appeareth well by this:
that a man hath great cause of fear and
heaviness, that continueth always still in
wealth discontinued with no tribulation*

20 The Thirteenth Chapter

Anthony

Cousin, it were too long work to peruse every comfort that a man
may well take in tribulation; for as many comforts, ye wot well, may a
man take thereof as there be good commodities therein—and *that* be there
25 surely so many that it would be very long to rehearse and treat of them.
But meseemeth we cannot lightly better perceive what profit and

1–3: See 1 Corinthians 13:13. 3–4 *worthy* . . . *thank*: deserving of getting the credit
10 *effect* . . . *purpose*: gist of my whole argument 12 *truly driven*: correctly deduced
12 *tried out*: ascertained 14 *comfortable*: encouraging 18 *heaviness*: distress // *that*: who
19 *wealth*: prosperity 22 *peruse*: examine one by one 24 *commodities*: advantages
25 *rehearse*: name 26 *lightly*: readily

commodity, and thereby what comfort, they may take of it that have it,
 than if we well consider what harm the lack is, and thereby what discomfort
 the lack thereof should be, to them that never have it. So it is,
 now, that all holy men agree, and all the Scripture is full, and our own
 5 experience proveth at our eye... that we be not come into this wretched
 world to dwell here... nor have not, as Saint Paul saith, our “dwelling
 city” here... but “we be seeking for that city that is to come.” And therefore
 Saint Paul showeth us that we *do* seek for it—because he would put us
 in mind that we *should* seek for it, as they that are good folk and fain
 10 would come thither do.

For surely whoso setteth so little thereby that he lusteth not to *seek*
 therefor, it will be, I fear me, long ere he come thereat—and
 marvelous great grace if *ever* he come thither. “Sic currite,” saith Saint
 Paul, “ut comprehendatis”—“Run so that ye may get it.” If it must, then,
 15 be gotten with *running*, when shall he come at it that list not once to
 step toward it?

Now, because this world is, as I tell you, not our eternal dwelling
 but our little-while wandering... God would that we should in such wise
 use it as folk that were weary of it... and that we should in this vale
 20 of labor, toil, tears, and misery... not look for rest and ease... game,
 pleasure... wealth, and felicity. For they that so do... fare like a fond
 fellow that, going toward his own house... where he should be wealthy,
 would for a tapster’s pleasure become a hostler by the way... and die
 in a stable and never come at home.

And would God that those that drown themselves in the desire of this
 world’s wretched wealth were not yet more fools than so! But alas,
 their folly as far passeth the foolishness of that other fond fellow as
 there is distance between the height of heaven and the very depth of
 hell. For as our Savior saith, “Ve vobis qui ridetis nunc, quia lugebitis et
 30 flebitis” (“Woe may you be that laugh now... for you shall
 wail and weep”). “Est tempus flendi,” saith the Scripture, “et est tempus

1 *commodity*: benefit 6–7: Hebrews 13:14. 8 *showeth*: says to
 9–10 *fain would*: would like to 11 *setteth so little thereby*: places so little value on that
 11 *lusteth not*: does not wish 12 *therefor*: for it // *I fear me*: I’m afraid
 13–14: 1 Corinthians 9:24. 15 *come at*: reach // *that . . . to*: does not care to take one
 19 *weary*: sick and tired 20 *game*: fun 21 *wealth*: prosperity
 21, 27 *fond*: foolish 22 *be wealthy*: prosper; do well 23 *tapster’s*: tavern keeper’s
 23 *hostler*: horsekeeper // *by the way*: en route 24 *come at*: arrive
 41/29—42/1: Luke 6:25; Ecclesiastes 3:4.

ridendi” (“There is time of weeping, and there is time of laughing”); but as you see... he setteth the weeping time *before*; for that is the time of this wretched world, and the laughing time shall come after, in heaven. There is also a time of sowing, and a time of reaping, too. Now must
 5 we in this world sow, that we may in the other world reap; and in this short sowing time of this weeping world must we water our seed with the showers of our tears, and then shall we have in heaven a merry laughing harvest forever. “Euntes ibant et flebant,” saith the prophet, “mittentes semina sua” (“They went forth sowing their seeds weeping”)—
 10 but what saith he shall follow thereof? “Venientes autem venient cum exultatione, portantes manipulos suos”—“They shall come again more than laughing, with great joy and exultation, with their handfuls of corn in their hands.”

Lo, they that in their going home toward heaven sow their seeds
 15 with weeping shall at the Day of Judgment come to their bodies again with everlasting plentiful laughing. And for to prove that this life is no laughing time, but rather, the time of weeping... we find that our Savior himself wept twice or thrice... but never find we that he laughed so much as once. I will not swear that he never
 20 did... but at the leastwise he left us no examples of it. But on the other side, he left us example of weeping. Of weeping have we matter enough, both for our own sins and other folks’ too; for surely so should we do—*bewail* their wretched sins, and not be glad to detract *them*... nor envy them, neither. Alas, seely souls, what cause is there to envy them that
 25 are ever wealthy in this world and ever out of tribulation... which, as Job saith, “ducunt in bonis dies suos, et in puncto ad inferna descendunt” (“lead all their days in wealth, and in a moment of an hour descend into their grave and be painfully buried in hell”)? Saint Paul saith to the Hebrews that God, “those that he loveth, he chastiseth”... “et flagellat omnem
 30 filium quem recipit” (“and he scourgeth every son of his that he receiveth”). Saint Paul saith also, “Per multas tribulationes oportet nos

8–13: Psalm 126:6. 11 *again*: back 12 *corn*: wheat; grain

15 *come . . . again*: come back to their bodies 21 *side*: hand

23 *them*: i.e., the sinners 24 *seely*: poor 25 *wealthy*: prosperous

42/25—43/2: Job 21:13; Hebrews 12:6; Acts 14:22.

intre in regnum Dei” (“By many tribulations must we go into the kingdom of God”). And no marvel; for as our Savior said of himself unto his two disciples that were going into the castle of Emmaus, “An nesciebatis quia oportebat Christum pati et sic introire in regnum suum?”

5 (“Know you not that Christ must suffer and so go into his kingdom?”). And would we that are servants look for more privilege in our Master’s house than our Master himself? Would we get into his kingdom with ease, when himself got not into his own but by pain? His kingdom hath he ordained for his *disciples*; and he saith

10 unto us all, “Qui vult meus esse discipulus, tollat crucem suam et sequatur me” (“If any man will be my disciple, let him learn at me to do as I have done—take his cross of tribulation upon his back and follow me”). He saith not here, lo, “Let him laugh and make merry.”

Now, if heaven serve but for Christ’s disciples, and they be those that

15 “take their cross of tribulation”... when shall these folk come there that never have tribulation? And if it be true that Saint Paul saith—that God chastiseth all them that he loveth, and scourgeth every child that he receiveth... and to heaven shall none come but such as he loveth and receiveth—when shall they, then, come thither whom he never

20 chastiseth, nor never do vouchsafe to defile his hands upon them and give them so much as one lash? And if we cannot (as Saint Paul saith we cannot) come to heaven but by *many* tribulations, how shall they come thither, then, that never have none at all?

Thus see we well by the very Scripture itself how true the words

25 are of the old holy saints, that with one voice, in a manner, say all one thing: that is to wit, that we shall not have both continual wealth in this world and in the other too. And therefore, since that they that in this world without any tribulation enjoy their long continual course of never-interrupted prosperity have a great cause of fear, and of discomfort,

30 lest they be far fallen out of God’s favor and stand deep

2 *marvel*: wonder 3 *castle*: village 4–5: Luke 24:26.

6–9: See Matthew 10:24–25 and John 15:18–20. 10–12: See Matthew 16:24 and Luke 14:27.

20 *vouchsafe*: deign 25 *old holy saints*: holy saints of old // *that*: who

25 *in a manner*: as it were // *say all one*: all say the same

in his indignation and displeasure, while he never send them tribulation... 1.14
 which he is ever wont to send them whom he loveth—they,
 therefore, I say, that *are* in tribulation have, on the other side, a great
 cause to take in their grief great inward comfort and spiritual
 5 consolation.

A certain objection, and the answer thereto

The Fourteenth Chapter

Vincent

Verily, good Uncle, this seemeth so indeed. Howbeit, yet methinketh
 10 that you say very sore in something concerning such persons as
 are in continual prosperity—and they be, ye wot well, not a few.
 And those are they also that have the rule and authority of
 this world in their hand. And I wot well that when they talk with
 such great, cunning men as I trow can tell the truth... and when they
 15 ask them whether, while they make merry here in earth all their life,
 they may not yet, for all that, have heaven after, too... they do tell them,
 “Yes, yes, well enough!” For I have heard them tell them so myself.

Anthony

I suppose, good Cousin, that no very wise man, and especially none
 20 that very good is therewith, will tell any man fully of that fashion;
 but surely such as so say to them... I fear me that they flatter them
 either for lucre or fear. Some of them think peradventure thus:
 “This man maketh much of me now, and giveth me money also to fast and
 watch and pray for him; but so, I fear me, would he do no more if I
 25 should go tell him now... that all that I do for him will not serve him
 but if he go fast and watch and pray for himself too. For if I should set
 thereto, and say further, that my diligent intercession for him should, I

1 *while*: as long as 10 *you . . . something*: you’re coming down awfully hard in something you say
 11, 13 *wot*: know 14 *cunning*: learned // *trow*: suppose
 22 *lucre*: monetary gain // *peradventure*: perhaps 24, 26 *watch*: keep vigil
 25 *serve him*: do him any good 26 *but if*: unless 26–27 *set thereto*: add to that

- trust, be the *means* that God should the sooner give *him* grace to *amend*...
 and fast and watch and pray and take affliction in his own body for the
 bettering of his sinful soul—he would be wondrous wroth with
 that; for he would be loath to have any such grace at all as should make
 5 him go leave off any of his mirth and so sit and mourn for his sin.” Such
 mind as this is, lo... have there some of those that are not unlearned and
 have worldly wit at will... which tell great men such tales as perilously
 beguile them... rather than the flatterer that so telleth them,
 would with a true tale jeopard to lose his lucre.
- 10 Some are there also, that such tales tell them for consideration of
 another fear: for seeing the man so sore set on his pleasure that they
 despair any amendment of him whatsoever they should show him.
 And then seeing also, besides, that the man doth no great harm... but
 of a genteel nature doth some good men some good, they pray God
 15 themselves to send him grace... and so they let him lie lame still in his
 fleshly lusts “ad probaticum piscinam, expectantes aquae motum”—at the
 pool that the Gospel speaketh of, beside the Temple, wherein they
 washed their sheep for the sacrifice—and they tarry to see the water
 stirred... and when his good angel coming from God shall once begin
 20 to stir the water of his heart, and move him to the lowly
 meekness of a simple sheep... *then* if he call them to him, they will
 tell him another tale, and help to bear him and plunge him into the
 pool of penance, over the hard ears. But in the meanwhile... for
 fear lest when he would wax never the better, he would wax much the
 25 worse... and from genteel, smooth, sweet, and courteous, wax angry, rough,
 froward, and sour, and thereupon be troublesome and tedious to the
 world—to make fair weather withal, they give him fair words for
 the while, and put him in good comfort... and let him for the remnant
 stand at his own adventure. And in such wise deal they with him
 30 as the mother doth sometimes with her child... which when the little
 boy would not rise for her in time, but lie still abed and slug... and

3 *wondrous wroth with*: terribly enraged by 5 *so*: in that way (i.e., by fasting, etc.)
 7 *wit*: wisdom // *at will*: at their disposal // *which*: who 9 *jeopard to lose*: risk losing
 12 *show*: tell 16–23: See John 5:2–9. 22 *bear*: carry 23 *hard*: very
 24, 25 *wax*: become 25 *smooth*: affable; amiable // *sweet*: agreeable
 26 *froward*: contrary; cantankerous // *tedious*: irksome 27 *fair*: nice // *withal*: therewith
 28 *remnant*: rest 29 *stand at his own adventure*: take his own chances 31 *slug*: be lazy

- when he is up, weepeth because he hath lain so long... fearing to be beaten
 at school for his late coming thither—she telleth him it is but early-days...
 and he shall come time enough... and biddeth, “Go, good son; I warrant
 thee, I have sent to thy master myself. Take thy bread and butter
 5 with thee; thou shalt not be beaten at all.” And so thus she may
 send him merry forth at door that he weep not in her sight at home...
 she studieth not much upon the matter, though he be taken tardy
 and beaten when he cometh to school. Surely thus, I fear me, fare there
 many friars, and states’ chaplains too, in comfort giving to great men...
 10 when they be loath to displease them. I cannot commend their thus
 doing; but surely thus, I fear me, they do.

Other objections

The Fifteenth Chapter

Vincent

- 15 But yet, good Uncle, though that some do thus... this answereth not
 fully the matter. For we see that the whole Church in the Common Service
 use divers Collects... in which all men pray specially for the princes and
 prelates, and generally every man for other, and for himself too... that
 God would vouchsafe to send them all perpetual health and prosperity.
 20 And I can see no good man pray God send another sorrow; nor no such
 prayers are there put in the priest’s porteous, as far as I can hear.
 And yet if it were as you say, good Uncle—that perpetual prosperity
 were to the soul so perilous, and tribulation, thereto, so
 fruitful—then were, as meseemeth, every man bound of charity, not
 25 only to pray God send their neighbors sorrow... but also to help thereto
 themselves... and when folk are sick, not pray God send them health...
 but when they come to comfort them, they should say, “I am glad, good

2 *it is but early-days*: it’s still early in the day 3 *come time enough*: arrive in plenty good time
 4 *sent*: i.e., sent word // *master*: teacher 5 *so thus she may*: as long as she can thus
 6 *merry*: happy // *forth at door*: out the door 8 *cometh to*: arrives at
 9 *states’*: noblemen’s 17 *divers*: various 20 *another*: i.e., another man
 21 *porteous*: breviary 23 *thereto*: moreover

- gossip, that ye be so sick! I pray God keep you long therein!” And
 neither should any man give any medicine to other—nor take any
 medicine himself, neither. For by the diminishing of the tribulation,
 he taketh away part of the profit from his soul, which can by no
 5 bodily profit be sufficiently recompensed.
- And also this wot ye well, good Uncle: that we read in Holy Scripture
 of men that were wealthy and rich and yet very good withal. Solomon
 was, ye wot well, the richest and wealthiest king that any man
 could in his time tell of... and yet was he well beloved with God.
- 10 Job was also no beggar, pardie... nor no wretch otherwise... nor lost
 his riches and his wealth for that God would not that his friend should
 have wealth... but for the show of his patience, to the increase of his
 merit and confusion of the devil. And for proof that prosperity may
 stand with God’s favor, “reddidit Deus Iob omnia duplicia”—“God restored
 15 him double of all that ever he lost”—and gave him, after, long life to take
 his pleasure long. Abraham was eke, ye wot well, a man of great
 substance... and so continued all his life, in honor and in wealth; yea, and
 when he died, too, he went unto such wealth that Lazarus, which died
 in tribulation and poverty, the best place that he came to was that
 20 rich man’s bosom. Finally, good Uncle, this we find at our eye, and every
 day we perceive it by plain experience: that many a man is right
 wealthy and yet therewith right good... and many a man a miserable
 wretch as evil as he is wretched. And therefore it seemeth hard, good
 Uncle, that between prosperity and tribulation the matter should go thus:
 25 that tribulation should always be given by God to all those he loveth, for
 a sign of salvation; and prosperity sent for displeasure, as a token of
 eternal damnation.

1 *gossip*: buddy 5 *recompensed*: made up for 7 *wealthy*: prosperous // *withal*: as well
 10 *pardie*: a euphemism (borrowed from the French) for “by God”; i.e., by golly; by George
 11 *richesse*: affluence 11, 12 *wealth*: prosperity 13 *confusion*: confounding
 14 *stand*: coexist 14–20: See Job 42:10, 16–17; Genesis 13:2; Luke 16:19–22.
 16 *eke*: also 18 *which*: who 23 *hard*: problematic; hard to accept

The answer to the objections

1.16

The Sixteenth Chapter

Anthony

5 Either I said not, Cousin, or else meant I not to say, that for an undoubted
rule... worldly pleasure were always displeasing to God...
or tribulation evermore wholesome to every man. For well wot I that
our Lord giveth in this world unto every sort of folk either sort of
fortune. “Et facit solem suum oriri super bonos et malos... et pluit super iustos
et iniustos” (“He maketh his sun to shine both upon the good and
10 the bad, and the rain to rain both upon the just and unjust”). And
on the other side, “Flagellat omnem filium quem recipit” (“He scourgeth every
son that he receiveth”)—and yet he beateth not only good folk that
he loveth... but “multa flagella peccatoris”; there are many scourges
for sinners also.

15 He giveth evil folk good fortune in this world both to call them
by kindness—and if they thereby come not, the more is their unkindness!
And yet where wealth will not bring them... he giveth them sometimes
sorrow. And some that in prosperity cannot to God creep forward...
in tribulation they run toward him apace. “Multiplicate sunt infirmitates
20 eorum; postea acceleraverunt”—“Their infirmities were multiplied,”
saith the prophet,” and after that, they made haste.”

To some that are good men God showeth wealth here also,
and they give him great thanks for his gift... and he rewardeth them
for that thanks, too. To some good folk he sendeth sorrow... and they
25 thank him thereof too. If God should give the goods of this world only
to evil folk... then would men ween that God were not lord thereof;
if God would give the goods only to good men, then would folk take
occasion to serve him but for them.

Some will in wealth fall to folly. “Homo cum in honore esset, non intellexit;

4 *undoubted*: absolute; hard-and-fast 7 *every sort*: each kind // *either sort*: each kind

8–14: Matthew 5:45; Hebrews 12:6; Psalm 32:10. 15, 26 *evil*: bad

16 *unkindness*: lack of humanity; coldheartedness 17, 22, 29 *wealth*: prosperity

19 *apace*: at full speed 19–21: Psalm 16:4. 26 *ween*: think 48/29—49/3: Psalm 49:12.

comparatus est iumentis insipientibus, et similis factus est illis” (“When man was in honor, his understanding failed him; then was he compared with beasts, and made like unto them”).

1.16

5 Some man with tribulation will fall into sin; and therefore saith the prophet, “Non relinquet Dominus virgam peccatorum super sortem iustorum, ut non extendant iusti ad iniquitatem manus suas” (“God will not leave the rod of wicked men upon the lot of righteous men... lest the righteous peradventure hap to extend and stretch out their hands to iniquity”).

10 So say I not nay but that in either state—wealth or tribulation—may be matter of virtue and matter of vice also. But this is the point, lo, that standeth here in question between you and me: not whether *every* prosperity be a perilous token... but whether *continual* wealth in this world, without any tribulation, be a fearful sign of God’s indignation. And therefore, this mark that we must
15 shoot at set up well in our sight, we shall now mete for the shoot, and consider how near toward or how far off your arrows are from the prick.

Vincent

20 Some of my bolts, Uncle, will I now take up myself, and prettily put them under your belt again; for some of them I see well be not worth the meting. And no great marvel though I shoot wide, while I somewhat mistake the mark.

Anthony

25 These that make toward the mark and light far too short... when the shoot is meted shall I take up for you. To prove that perpetual wealth should be no evil token, you lay first that for princes and prelates and every man for other, we pray all for perpetual prosperity—and that in the common prayers of the Church, too.

2–3 *compared with*: similar to 5–8: Psalm 125:3. 15 *mete*: do the measurements
17 *prick*: bull’s eye 19 *bolts*: arrows // *prettily*: quietly; unobtrusively
20 *under your belt again*: back under your belt 21 *meting*: measuring // *marvel*: wonder
21 *though*: if 22 *while*: when 24 *light*: land 26 *evil token*: bad sign // *lay*: allege

Then say you, secondly, that if prosperity were so perilous, and tribulation so profitable... every man ought then to pray God to send other sorrow.

1.16

5 Thirdly, ye further your objections with examples of Solomon, Job, and Abraham.

And fourthly, in the end of all, you prove by experience of our own time daily before our face, that some wealthy folk are good, and some needy very naught. That last bolt, since I lie the same myself, you may be content to take up, it lieth so far wide.

10

Vincent

That will I with good will, Uncle.

Anthony

15 Well, do so, then, Cousin; and we shall mete for the remnant. First must you, Cousin, be sure... that you look well to the mark. And that can you not but if ye know what thing tribulation is. For since that is one of the things that we principally speak of, but if you consider well what thing that *is*... you may miss the mark again.

20 I suppose now that you will agree that tribulation is every such thing as troubleth and grieveth the man, either in body or in mind; and is, as it were, the prick of a thorn, a bramble, or a briar, thrust into his flesh or into his mind. And surely, Cousin, the prick that very sore pricketh the mind... as far, almost, passeth in pain the grief that paineth the body... as doth a thorn that sticketh in the heart pass and exceed in pain the thorn that is thrust in the heel.

25 Now, Cousin, if tribulation be this that I call it... then shall you soon consider this: that there be more kinds of tribulation than peradventure ye thought on before. And thereupon it followeth also that

7 *wealthy*: prosperous 8 *naught*: bad // *bolt*: arrow

8 *lie the same*: am in the same place; i.e., agree with you 14 *be sure*: make sure

16 *but if*: unless 26 *peradventure*: perhaps

since every kind of tribulation is an interruption of wealth... prosperity (which is but of wealth another name) may be discontinued by more ways than you would before have went.

1.16

5 Then say I thus unto you, Cousin: that since tribulation is not only such pains as pain the body, but every trouble also that grieveth the *mind*, many good men have many tribulations that every man marketh not... and, consequently, their wealth interrupted therewith when other men are not aware. For trow you, Cousin, that the temptations of the devil, the world, and the flesh, soliciting the mind of a
10 good man to sin, is not a great inward trouble and secret grief in his heart?

To such wretches as care not for their conscience, but like unreasonable beasts follow their foul affections, many of these temptations be no trouble at all... but matter of their beastly pleasure. But unto
15 him, Cousin, that standeth in the dread of God, the tribulation of temptation is so painful... that to be rid thereof, or sure of the victory therein... be his substance never so great, he would gladly give more than half.

Now, if he that careth not for God think this trouble but a trifle, and with such tribulation prosperity not interrupted: let him cast in
20 his mind... if himself hap upon a fervent longing for the thing which get he cannot... and as a good man will not—as, percase, his pleasure of some certain good woman that will not be naught—and then let him tell me whether the ruffle of his desire shall so torment
25 his mind as all the pleasure that he can take beside shall, for lack of that one, not please him of a pin. And I dare be bold to warrant him that the pain in resisting, and the great fear of falling, that many a good man hath in his temptation, is an anguish and a grief every deal as great as his.

30 Now say I further, Cousin, that if this be true (as in very deed true it is), that such trouble is tribulation... and thereby, consequently, an interruption of prosperous wealth... no man precisely meaneth to pray for

3 *went*: thought 6–7 *every man marketh not*: not everyone notices

8 *trow*: think; believe 12, 19 *for*: about 12 *unreasonable*: irrational

13 *affections*: inclinations 17 *substance*: wealth; net worth 20 *cast*: consider

22 *will not*: does not want to // *percase*: perhaps 23 *naught*: immoral 24 *ruffle*: turbulence

25 *beside*: otherwise 29 *deal*: bit 32 *precisely*: literally

other to keep him in continual prosperity, without any manner of discontinuance or change, in this world. For that prayer without any other condition added or implied were inordinate and very childish; for it were to pray that either they should never have temptation... or else that if they had, they might follow it and fulfill their affection.

5 Who dare, good Cousin, for shame or for sin, for himself or any man else make this manner kind of prayer? Besides this, Cousin, the Church, ye wot well, adviseth every man to fast, to watch and pray,
 10 both for taming of his fleshly lusts and also to mourn and lament his sin before committed, and to bewail his offenses done against God. And, as they did at the city of Nineveh, and as the prophet David did, for their sin put affliction unto their flesh. And when a man so doth, Cousin, is this no tribulation to him because he doth it himself?—
 15 for I wot well ye would agree that it were if another man did it against his will. Then is tribulation, ye wot well, tribulation still, though it be taken well in worth. Yea, and though it be taken with very right good will, yet is pain, ye wot well, pain; and therefore so is it though a man do it himself.

20 Then, since the Church adviseth every man to take tribulation for his sin: whatsoever words you find in any prayer... they never mean, ye may be fast and sure, to pray God to keep every good man, nor every bad man, neither, from every manner kind of tribulation.

Now, he that is not in some kind of tribulation as, peradventure,
 25 in sickness or in loss of goods, is not, yet, out of tribulation if he have his ease of body or of mind inquieted, and thereby his wealth interrupted, with another kind of tribulation... as is either temptation, to a good man... or voluntary affliction, either of body, by penance, or of mind, by contrition and heaviness for his sin and offense against
 30 God.

And thus, I say, for precise perpetual wealth and prosperity in this wretched world—that is to say, for the perpetual lack of all

3, 4, 15 *were*: would be 3 *inordinate*: out of line 6 *affection*: inclination
 9, 15, 16, 18 *wot*: know 9 *watch*: keep vigil 10 *lusts*: passions; desires
 12–13: See Jonah 3:6–10; 2 Samuel 12:1–24. 17 *well in worth*: with a good attitude
 22 *fast and*: good and; quite 26, 31 *wealth*: well-being 29 *heaviness*: sorrow
 31 *precise*: literal

trouble and all tribulation—there is no wise man that either prayeth for himself or for any man else. And thus answer I your first objection.

1.16

Now, before I meddle with your second... your third will I join unto this; for upon this answer will the solution of your examples conveniently depend. As for Solomon—was, as you say, all his days a marvelously wealthy king... and much was he beloved with God, I wot well, in the beginning of his reign. But that the favor of God persevered with him as his prosperity did, that can I not tell... and therefore will I not warrant it. But surely we see that his continual wealth made him fall, first, into such wanton folly... in multiplying wives to a horrible number, contrary to the commandment of God given in the Law by Moses... and secondly, taking to wife among others such as were infidels, contrary to another commandment of God's written law also... that finally, by the means of his miscreant wife, he fell into the maintenance of idolatry himself; and of this find we no amendment or repentance... as we find of his father. And therefore though he were buried where his father was... yet whether he went to the rest that his father did, through some secret sorrow for his sin at last—that is to say, by some kind of tribulation—I cannot tell... and am therefore content to trust well and pray God he did so. But surely we be not sure... and therefore the example of Solomon can very little serve you. For you might as well lay it for a proof that God favored idolatry... as that he favored prosperity; for Solomon was, ye wot well, in both.

As for Job, since our question hangeth upon *perpetual* prosperity... the wealth of Job, that was with so great adversity so sore interrupted, can, as yourself seeth, serve you for no example. And that God gave him here in this world allthing double that he lost, little toucheth my matter... which did deny not prosperity to be God's gift and given to some good men too, namely such as have tribulation too.

4 *meddle*: deal 5 *solution of*: answer to 6 *conveniently*: properly // *was*: i.e., he was
10–16: See 1 Kings 3:13–14; 10:14–27; 11:1–10; and Deuteronomy 7:1–4; 17:15–17.
15 *miscreant*: unbelieving 29 *allthing*: everything // *toucheth*: impairs
30 *my matter*: the case made by me // *which*: who 31 *namely*: particularly

But *Abraham*, Cousin, I suppose is all your chief hold... because that you not only show riches and prosperity perpetual in him through the course of all his whole life in this world, but that after his death, also, Lazarus—the poor man that lived in tribulation and died for pure hunger and thirst—had after *his* death his place, comfort, and rest in Abraham the wealthy, rich man's bosom. But here must you consider... that Abraham had not such continual prosperity... but that yet it was discontinued with divers tribulations. Was it nothing to him, trow ye, to leave his own country... and at God's sending, to go into a strange land which God promised him and his seed forever... but in all his whole life he gave himself never a foot?

Was it no trouble that his cousin Lot and himself were fain to part company because their servants could not agree together?

Though he recovered Lot again from the three kings, was his taking no trouble to him, trow you, in the meanwhile?

Was the destruction of the five cities no heaviness to his heart? A man would ween yes... that readeth in the story what labor he made to save them.

His heart was, I dare say, in no little sorrow when he was fain to let Abimelech the king have his wife; whom though God provided to keep undefiled, and turned all to wealth, yet was it no little woe to him for the meantime!

What a continual grief was it to his heart, many a long day, that he had no child of his own body begotten! He that doubteth thereof shall find it in Genesis, of his own moan made unto God.

No man doubteth but Ishmael was great comfort to him at his birth. And was it no grief, then, when he was cast out—the mother and the child both?

1 *hold*: support 2 *richesse*: affluence 5 *pure*: sheer

9, 15 *trow ye / trow you*: do you suppose 9–11: See Genesis 12:1–7; 17:8; Acts 7:1–5.

10 *strange*: foreign 11 *himself*: i.e., Abraham himself

11 *never a foot*: i.e., not one square foot of that land

12–18: See Genesis 13:5–12; 14:1–16; 18:20–19:29; Wisdom 10:6–8; Jude 7.

12 *cousin*: nephew 12, 19 *fain*: forced 13 *agree together*: get along

17 *ween*: think // *labor*: effort 19–28: See Genesis 20:1–16; 15:2–3; 16:1–7.

Isaac, that was the child of promission: although God kept his life,
 which was unlooked for—yet while the loving father bound him and
 went about to behead him, and offer him up in sacrifice... who but himself
 can conceive what heaviness his heart had then? I would ween in
 5 my mind—because you speak of Lazarus—that Lazarus’ own death panged
 not him so sore. Then, as Lazarus’ pain was patiently borne... so was
 Abraham’s taken not only patiently, but—which is a thing much
 more meritorious—of obedience, willingly. And therefore, though Abraham
 had not—as he did indeed, far excel Lazarus in merit of reward
 10 for many other things besides... and especially for that he was a special
 patriarch of the faith—yet had he far passed him even by the merit
 of tribulation well taken here for God’s sake, too. And so serveth
 for your purpose no man less than Abraham.

But now, good Cousin, let us look a little longer here upon the rich
 15 Abraham... and Lazarus the poor... and as we shall see Lazarus sit in
 wealth somewhat under the rich Abraham... so shall we see another
 rich man lie full low beneath Lazarus, crying and calling out of his
 fiery couch that Lazarus might, with a drop of water falling from his
 finger’s end, a little cool and refresh the tip of his burning tongue.

20 Consider well, now, what Abraham answered to the rich wretch:
 “Fili, recordare quia recipisti bona in vita tua... et Lazarus, similiter, mala; nunc
 autem hic consolatur, tu vero cruciaris” (“Son, remember that thou hast
 in thy life received wealth, and Lazarus, in like wise, pain; but now
 receiveth he comfort, and thou sorrow, pain, and torment”).

25 Christ describeth his wealth and his prosperity: gay and soft apparel,
 with royal, delicate fare continually, day by day. “Epulabatur,” saith
 our Savior, “quotidie splendide”; “he did fare royally every day.” His wealth
 was continual, lo—no time of tribulation between. And
 Abraham telleth him the same tale: that he had taken his wealth in
 30 this world, and Lazarus in like wise his pain... and that they had now
 changed each to the clean contrary... poor Lazarus from tribulation
 into wealth, and the rich man from this continual prosperity into perpetual
 pain.

1–4: See Genesis 22:1–18. 1 *promission*: the promise // *kept*: preserved
 2 *unlooked for*: unexpected 4 *ween*: surmise 8 *though*: even if
 11 *yet had he*: he still would have // *even*: just 14–33: See Luke 16:19–31.
 16 *wealth*: prosperity // *under*: below 25 *gay*: brightly colored
 26 *delicate fare*: sumptuous food 27 *fare*: dine

Here was laid expressly to Lazarus no very great virtue by name—
 nor to this rich glutton no great, heinous crime... but the taking
 of his own continual ease and pleasure, without any tribulation or grief.
 Whereof grew sloth and negligence to think upon the poor man's
 5 pain; for that ever himself saw Lazarus and *wist* him die for hunger
 at his door—that laid neither Christ nor Abraham to his charge. And
 therefore, Cousin, this story, lo... of which, by occasion of Abraham and Lazarus,
 you put me in remembrance... well declareth what peril is in
 continual worldly wealth—and, contrariwise, what comfort cometh of
 10 tribulation. And thus, as your other examples, of Solomon and Job,
 nothing for the matter further you, so your example of the rich Abraham
 and poor Lazarus hath not a little hindered you.

An answer to the second objection

The Seventeenth Chapter

15 Vincent

Surely, Uncle, you have shaken mine example sore, and have in
 meting of your shoot removed me these arrows, methink, further from
 the prick than methought they stuck when I shot them... and I shall
 now be content to take them up again. But yet meseemeth surely
 20 that my second shaft may stand. For of truth, if every kind of tribulation
 be so profitable that it be good to have it, as you say it is, I
 cannot see wherefore any man should wish or pray, or any manner thing
 do, to have any kind of tribulation withdrawn, either from himself
 or any friend of his.

25 Anthony

I think in very deed tribulation so good and so profitable... that
 I should haply doubt as ye do, wherefore a man might labor or pray

2 *heinous*: high; serious 5 *wist him die*: knew him to be dying
 6 *that . . . charge*: i.e., neither Christ nor Abraham accused him of that 8 *declareth*: shows
 12 *hindered you*: set you back 17 *meting*: measuring // *removed me*: moved for me
 17 *methink*: it seems to me 18 *prick*: bull's eye 22 *wherefore*: why
 24 *friend*: relative or friend; loved one 27 *doubt*: wonder // *wherefore*: for what reason
 27 *might*: could rightly

- to be delivered of it... saving that God, which teacheth us the one, teacheth us also the other; and as he biddeth us take our pain patiently, and exhort our neighbor to do also the same... so biddeth he us also not let to do our devoir to remove the pain from us both. And
- 5 then, when it is God that teacheth both... I shall not need to break my brain in devising wherefore he would bid us do both, the one seeming to resist the other.
- If he send the scourge of scarcity and great famine... he will we shall bear it patiently... but yet would he that we should eat our meat
- 10 when we can hap to get it.
- If he send us the plague of pestilence... he will we shall patiently *take* it; but yet will he that we let us blood, and lay plasters, to draw it... and ripen it... and lance it... and so get it *away*. Both these points teacheth God in Scripture, in more than many places.
- 15 Fasting is better than eating, and more thank hath of God... and yet will God that we shall eat. Praying is better than drinking, and much more pleasant to God... and yet will God that we drink. Waking in good business is much more acceptable to God than sleeping... and yet will God that we shall sleep.
- 20 God hath given us our bodies here to keep, and will that we maintain them to do him service with, till he send for us hence. Now can we not surely tell how much tribulation may mar it... or peradventure hurt the soul also; wherefore the Apostle, after that he had commanded the Corinthians to deliver to the devil the abominable
- 25 fornicator that forbore not the bed of his own father's wife, yet after that he had been a while accursed and punished for his sin... the Apostle commanded them charitably to receive him again, and give him consolation, "ut non a magnitudine doloris absorbeatur"—"that the greatness of his sorrow should not swallow him up."
- 30 And therefore when God sendeth the tempest... he will that the shipmen shall get them to their tackling and do the best they can for themselves...

1 *saving*: except // *which*: who 4 *our devoir*: what we can; our best
 6 *devising*: trying to figure out // *wherefore*: for what reason 7 *resist*: go against; contradict
 8–9, 11 *will we shall*: will have us 9 *meat*: food
 12 *lay plasters*: use curative applications 12, 13 *it*: i.e., the disease
 15 *thank*: reward // *of*: from 17 *pleasant*: pleasing // *waking*: being awake
 18 *business*: activity 20 *keep*: take care of 22 *mar*: damage
 23, 26 *the Apostle*: i.e., Saint Paul 23–29: See 1 Corinthians 5:1–5; 2 Corinthians 2:1–11.
 26 *accursed*: excommunicated

- that the sea eat them not up; for help ourselves as well as we
 can, he can make his plague as sore and as long-lasting as himself
 list. And as he will that we do for ourselves, so will he that we do
 for our neighbor too... and that we shall in this world be each to
 5 other piteous, and not “sine affectione”—for which the Apostle rebuketh
 them, that lack their tender affections. So that of charity, sorry
 should we be for their pain too... upon whom for cause necessary
 we be driven ourselves to put it. And whoso saith that for pity of
 his neighbor’s soul, he will have none of his body—let him be sure
 10 that, as Saint John saith he that “loveth not his neighbor whom he
 seeth... loveth God but a little, whom he seeth not,” so he that hath no
 pity on the pain that he feeleth his neighbor feel before him, pitieth
 little, whatsoever he saith, the pain of his soul, that he seeth not
 yet. God sendeth us also such tribulation, sometimes, because his
 15 pleasure is to have us pray unto him for help. And therefore when
 Saint Peter was in prison, the Scripture showeth that the whole Church
 without intermission prayed incessantly for him... and at their fervent
 prayer, God by miracle delivered him.
- When the disciples in the tempest stood in fear of drowning, they
 20 prayed unto Christ and said, “Salva nos, Domine—perimus!” (“Save us, Lord—we
 perish!”)... and then, at their prayer, he shortly ceased the tempest. And
 now see we proved often that in sore weather or sickness, by general processions
 God giveth gracious help. And many a man in his
 great pain and sickness... by calling upon God is marvelously made whole.
- 25 This is God’s goodness, that because in wealth we remember him
 not, but forget to pray to him, sendeth us sorrow and sickness to force us
 to draw toward him, and compelleth us to call upon him and pray
 for release of our pain, whereby when we learn to know him and seek
 to him, we take a good occasion to fall after into a further grace.

2 *sore*: severe; terrible // *himself*: he himself 3 *list*: pleases 5 *piteous*: compassionate
 5 “*sine affectione*”: See Romans 1:28–32; 2 Timothy 3:2–3. 6 *affections*: feelings
 9 *have none of*: take none on 10–11: 1 John 4:20. 15–18: See Acts 12:5–11.
 16 *showeth*: says; tells us 19–21: See Mark 4:35–39.
 22 *sore*: extremely bad 25 *wealth*: prosperity 26 *sendeth*: i.e., he sends

*Of them that in tribulation seek not unto
God, but some to the flesh and some to the
world, and some to the devil himself*

1.18

The Eighteenth Chapter

5

Vincent

Verily, good Uncle, with this good answer am I well content.

Anthony

- Yea, Cousin... but many men are there (with whom God is not
content!) which abuse this great, high goodness of his; whom neither
10 fair treating nor hard handling can cause them to remember their
Maker... but in wealth they be wanton—forget God and follow their lust—
and when God with tribulation draweth them toward him... then
wax they wood and draw back all that ever they may... and
rather run and seek help at any other hand than to go fetch it at his.
15 Some for comfort seek to the flesh, some to the world, and some to
the devil himself.
Some man that in worldly prosperity is very full of wealth, and hath
deep stepped into many a sore sin, which sins when he did them,
he accounted for part of his pleasure—God, willing of his goodness to
20 call the man to grace, casteth a remorse into his mind among, after his
first sleep... and maketh him lie a little while and bethink him. Then
beginneth he to remember his life... and from that he falleth to think
upon his death, and how he must leave all this worldly wealth within a
while behind here in this world... and walk hence alone, he wotteth not
25 whither, nor how soon he shall take his journey thither, nor can tell
what company he shall meet there. And then beginneth he to think
that it were good to make sure and to be merry so that we be wise

9 *content*: pleased 10 *fair*: nice // *cause them to*: get them to
11 *be wanton*: run wild // *lust*: appetite 13 *wax they wood*: they get furious
13 *all that ever they may*: as hard as they possibly can 18 *sore*: grievous
20 *among*: now and then 25 *whither*: to where // *thither*: to there
27 *were*: would be // *merry*: happy 27 *so*: in such a way

therewith, lest there hap to be such black bogeys indeed... as folk call devils, whose torments he was wont to take for poets' tales.

1.18

These thoughts, if they sink deep, are a sore tribulation...
 and surely if he take hold of the grace that God therein offereth him, his
 5 tribulation is wholesome, and shall be full comfortable to remember that
 God by this tribulation calleth him and biddeth him come home
 out of the country of sin that he was bred and brought up so long
 in, and come into the Land of Behest, that floweth milk and honey.
 And then if he follow this calling (as many one full well doth), joyful
 10 shall his sorrow be... and glad shall he be to change his life, leave his
 wanton lusts, and do penance for his sins, bestowing his time
 upon better business. But some men, now, when this calling of God
 causeth them to be sad, they be loath to leave their sinful lusts that
 hang in their hearts. And especially if they have any such kind of living
 15 as they must leave off or fall deeper in sin... or if they have done so
 many great wrongs that they have many amends to make, that
 must (if they follow God) diminish much their money... then are those
 folk, alas, woefully bewrapped. For God pricketh upon them oft, of his
 great goodness, still... and the grief of this great pang pincheth them by
 20 the heart, and of wickedness they wry away; and from this tribulation
 they turn to their flesh for help, and labor to shake off this thought.
 And then they amend their pillow and lay their head softer, and assay
 to sleep... and when that will not be, then they find a talk a while with
 them that lie by them. If that cannot be neither, then they lie and
 25 long for day, and then get them forth about their worldly wretchedness...
 the matter of their prosperity, the selfsame sinful things with
 which they displease God most. And at length, with many times
 using this manner, God utterly casteth them off... and then they set naught

1 *hap*: turn out 5 *shall*: i.e., it will // *full comfortable*: very consoling

8 *Land of Behest*: Promised Land // *floweth*: flows with (See Exodus 3:8.)

11 *bestowing*: spending 12 *upon*: on 13 *be sad*: get serious

18 *woefully bewrapped*: put in a terrible bind // *pricketh upon*: pokes at; prods

20 *wry*: swerve; turn 22 *amend*: adjust // *assay*: try

61/28—62/1 *set . . . devil*: care nothing about either God or the devil

neither by God nor devil. “Peccator cum in profundum venerit... contemnit”—
 “When the sinner cometh into the depth, then he contemneth,”
 and setteth naught by nothing saving worldly fear that may fall by
 chance, or that needs must (they wot well) fall once by death.

1.18

5 But alas, when death cometh... then cometh again their sorrow.
 Then will no soft bed serve, nor no company make him merry; then
 must he leave his outward worship and comfort of his glory, and lie
 panting in his bed as he were on a pinebank. Then cometh his
 fear of his evil life, and of his dreadful death; then cometh the
 10 torment of his encumbered conscience and fear of his heavy judgment. Then
 the devil draweth him to despair with imagination of hell... and
 suffereth him not then to take it for a fable. And yet if he do, then
 findeth it the wretch no fable. Ah, woe worth the while that folk think
 not of this in time!

15 God sendeth to some man great trouble in his mind, and great
 tribulation, about his worldly goods, because he would, of his
 goodness, take his delight and his confidence from them; and yet the man
 withdraweth no part of his fond fantasies... but falleth more fervently
 to them than before, and setteth his whole heart, like a fool, more upon
 20 them; and then he taketh him all to the devices of his worldly counselors,
 and without any counsel of God, or any trust put in him,
 maketh many wise ways, as he weeneth... and all turn at length to folly...
 and one subtle drift driveth another to naught.

25 Some have I seen even in their last sickness, sit up in their deathbed
 underpropped with pillows, take their playfellows to them, and comfort
 themselves with cards. And this, they said, did ease them well to
 put “fantasies” out of their head. And what “fantasies,” trow you?
 Such as I told you right now—of their own lewd life and peril of their
 soul, of heaven and of hell, that irked them to think of. And therefore

1–2: Proverbs 18:3. 2 *contemneth*: thinks nothing of it; shrugs his shoulders

3 *setteth . . . saving*: has no concern about anything except

6 *make him merry*: cheer him up 7 *outward*: external // *worship*: prestige

8 *as*: as if // *pinebank*: rack 10 *heavy*: grievous 12 *suffereth*: allows

12 *yet if he do*: if he still does 13 *findeth . . . fable*: the wretch finds it to be no fable

14 *woe . . . that*: woe betide the occasions on which 17 *from*: away from

18 *fond fantasies*: foolish attachments 20 *devices*: opinions; notions 22 *weeneth*: thinks

23 *one . . . naught*: one clever scheme makes another come to nothing

26 *ease them well*: make it very easy for them 27 *fantasies*: crazy thoughts

27 *trow you*: do you suppose 28 *right*: just // *lewd*: evil

cast it out with card play as long as ever they might, till the pure pangs of death pulled their heart from their play and put them in the case they could not reckon their game. And then left them their gamers and slyly slunk away, and long was it not ere they galped up the ghost. And what game they came then to—that God knoweth, and not I. I pray God it were good... but I fear it very sore.

Some men are there also, that do as did King Saul—in their tribulation go seek unto the devil. This king had commanded all such to be destroyed as use the false, abominable superstition of this ungracious witchcraft and necromancy; and yet fell he to such folly afterward himself... that ere he went to battle, he sought unto a witch and besought her to raise up a dead man to tell him how he should speed.

Now had God showed him *before* by Samuel, that he should come to naught; and he went about no amendment... but waxed worse and worse... so that God list not to look to him. And when he sought by the prophet to have answer of God, there came no answer to him; which thing he thought strange. And because he was not with God heard at his pleasure... he made suit to the devil... desiring a woman by witchcraft to raise up dead Samuel. But speed had he such thereof as commonly they have, all that in their business meddle with such matters; for an evil answer had he, and an evil speed thereafter—his army discomfited and himself slain. And as it is rehearsed in Paralipomenon (the tenth chapter of the First Book), one cause of his fall was for lack of trust in God... for which he left to take counsel of God and fell to seek counsel of the witch, against God's prohibition in the Law... and against his own good deed by which he punished and put out all witches so late before. Such speed let them look for that play the same part—as I see many do... that in a great loss, send to seek a conjurer to get their gear again, and marvelous things there they see, sometimes, but never groat of their good.

1 *pure*: unmitigated 3 *case*: condition in which // *reckon*: keep track of

4 *gamers*: fellow game-players // *galped*: gave

6 *fear it very sore*: am very apprehensive about it

7–28: See 1 Samuel 15:1–29; 18:1–29; 28:3–19; 31:1–6. 9 *false*: despicable

10 *ungracious*: ungodly; wicked // *necromancy*: conjuring of the spirits of the dead

13 *speed*: fare 15 *naught*: a bad end // *waxed*: became 16 *list*: chose

16 *look to him*: regard him with favor 17 *the prophet*: i.e., Samuel

17 *have answer of*: get an answer from 18 *strange*: rude 19 *with*: by 20 *desiring*: asking

20, 22, 28 *speed*: (an) outcome 22 *evil*: bad 23 *discomfited*: defeated

24 *Paralipomenon*: Chronicles 25 *left*: ceased 28 *late*: recently // *look for*: expect

30 *get . . . again*: get their stuff back // *marvelous*: remarkable

31 *groat . . . good*: a nickel of their money

- And many fond fools are there... that when they be sick, will meddle
 with no physic, in no manner wise... nor send his water to no cunning
 man... but send his cap or his hose to some wise woman otherwise
 called a witch. Then sendeth she word again... that she hath spied
 5 in his hose... where when he took no heed, he was taken with a
 spirit between two doors as he went in the twilight... but the spirit
 would not let him feel it in five days after... and it hath the while
 festered in his body... and that is the grief that paineth him so sore.
 But let him go to no leechcraft... nor any manner physic other than
 10 good meat and strong drink; for syrups should sour him up. But
 he shall have five leaves of valerian, that she enchanted with a charm
 and gathered with her left hand; let him lay those five leaves to his
 right thumb... not bound fast to... but let it hang loose thereat, by a
 green thread. He shall never need to change it; look it fall not
 15 away, but let it hang till he be whole... and he shall need no more.
- In such wise witches, and in such mad medicines, have their souls more
 faith a great deal than in God. And thus, Cousin, as I tell you, all these
 kind of folk in their tribulation call not upon God... but
 seek for their ease and help otherwise—to the flesh and the world, and to
 20 the flinging Fiend. The tribulation that God's goodness sendeth
 them for good, themselves by their folly turn into their harm. And
 they that, on the other side, seek unto God therein, both comfort and
 profit they greatly take thereby.

1 *fond*: idiotic 1–2 *meddle* . . . *physic*: have nothing to do with any natural remedy

2 *in no manner wise*: in no kind of way // *water*: urine // *cunning*: knowledgeable

4 *again*: back (to him) 9 *go to no leechcraft*: resort to no medical science

10 *meat*: food // *syrups*: (sweet) liquid medicines

14–15 *look* . . . *away*: make sure it doesn't fall off 15 *whole*: well 19 *ease*: relief

20 *flinging*: raging; savage

Another objection, with the answer thereunto

1.19

The Nineteenth Chapter

Vincent

I like well, good Uncle, all your answer herein. But one doubt yet
 5 remaineth there in my mind, which riseth upon this answer that
 you make. And that doubt assoiled, I will, as for this time, mine own good
 Uncle, encumber you no further. For methink I do you very much
 wrong to give you occasion to labor yourself so much... in matter of
 some study, with long talking at once. I will, therefore, at this time move
 10 you but one thing... and seek some other time for the remnant, at
 your more ease.

My doubt, good Uncle, is this. I perceive well, by your answers gathered
 and considered together, that you will well agree that a man may both
 have worldly wealth and yet well go to God; and that, on the
 15 other side, a man may be miserable and live in tribulation, and yet go
 to the devil; and as a man may please God by patience in adversity,
 so may he please God by thanksgiving in prosperity.

Now, since you grant these things to be such that either of them
 both may be matter of virtue or else matter of sin... matter of damnation
 20 or matter of salvation... they seem neither good nor bad of their
 own *nature*, but things of themselves equal and indifferent... turning to
 good or the contrary after as they be taken. And then, if this be
 thus, I can perceive no cause why you should give the preeminence
 unto tribulation... or wherefore you should reckon more cause of *comfort*
 25 therein than you should reckon to stand in prosperity... but rather a
 great deal *less*—by, in a manner, half—since that in prosperity the man
 is well at ease, and may also by giving thanks to God get good unto his
 soul... whereas in tribulation though he may merit by patience... as

4, 6, 12 *doubt*: difficulty 6 *assoiled*: resolved; cleared up 7 *encumber*: burden; impose on
 9 *move*: bring up to 22 *after as*: according to how 24 *wherefore*: for what reason

in abundance of worldly wealth the other may by thanks... yet 1.19
 lacketh he much comfort that the wealthy man hath, in that he is sore
 grieved with heaviness and pain; besides this also: that a wealthy man, well
 at ease, may pray to God quietly and merrily, with alacrity and great quietness
 5 of mind... whereas he that lieth groaning in his grief cannot
 endure to pray, nor think almost upon nothing but upon his pain.

Anthony

To begin, Cousin, where you leave—the prayers of him that is in
 wealth... and him that is in woe—if the men be both naught, their
 10 prayers be both like. For neither hath the one list to pray nor the
 other neither; and as the one is let with his pain... so is the other
 with his pleasure; saving that the pain stirreth him sometimes to
 call upon God in his grief, though the man be right bad... whereas the
 pleasure pulleth his mind another way, though the man be meetly
 15 good.

And this point, I think there are few that can, if they
 say true, say that they find it otherwise. For in tribulation—which
 cometh, you wot well, in many sundry kinds—any man that is not
 a dull beast or a desperate wretch calleth upon God, not hoverly but
 20 right heartily, and setteth his heart full whole upon his request... so sore
 he longeth for ease and help of his heaviness.

But when men are wealthy and well at their ease, while our tongue
 pattereth upon our prayers apace... good God, how many mad ways
 our mind wandereth the while!

25 Yet wot I well that in some tribulation, the while such sore
 sickness there is... or other grievous bodily pain, that hard it were for a
 man to say a long pair of Matins. And yet some that lie a-dying
 say full devoutly the seven psalms and other prayers with the priest
 at their own aneling. But those that for the grief of their pain cannot

3, 21 *heaviness*: anxiety; distress 4 *may*: can // *quietly*: calmly // *merrily*: happily
 4 *quietness*: peace 8 *leave*: leave off 9 *naught*: bad 10 *list*: a desire
 11 *let*: hindered 11, 12 *with*: by 12 *saving*: except 13 *right*: quite 14 *meetly*: fairly
 17 *say true*: tell the truth 19 *dull*: stupid // *desperate*: despairing / far-gone
 19 *hoverly*: superficially; perfunctorily 22 *wealthy*... *ease*: doing well and feeling fine
 23 *apace*: at a high speed 25 *wot*: know 26 *pair*: set
 27 *Matins*: a part of the Divine Office, formerly starting at midnight
 29 *aneling*: anointing; last rites

endure to do it, or that be more tender and lack that strong heart
and stomach that some others have, God requireth no such long
prayers of them; but the lifting up of their heart alone, without any
word at all, is more acceptable to him of one in such case... than long
5 service so said as folk use to say it in health.

The martyrs in their agony made no long prayers aloud; but one
inch of such a prayer so prayed in that pain was worth a whole ell
and more... even of their own prayers prayed at some other time.

Great learned men say that Christ—albeit that he was very God, and as
10 God, was in eternal equal bliss with his Father—yet as man, merited
not for us only, but for himself too. For proof whereof they lay in these
words the authority of Saint Paul: “Christus humiliavit semet ipsum,
factus obediens usque ad mortem... mortem autem crucis, propter quod et Deus
15 exaltavit illum, et donavit illi nomen quod est super omne nomen... ut in nomine
Iesu omne genu flectatur, caelestium, terrestrium, et infernorum, et omnis lingua
confiteatur quia Dominus Iesus Christus in gloria est Dei Patris” (“Christ hath humbled
himself, and became obedient unto the death, and that unto the
death of the cross; for which thing God hath also exalted him and given
him a name which is above all names, that in the name of Jesus
20 every knee be bowed, both of the celestial creatures and the terrestrial...
and of the infernal, too... and that every tongue shall confess that our Lord
Jesus Christ is in the glory of God his Father”).

Now, if it so be as these great learned men upon such authority of
Holy Scripture say—that our Savior merited as man... and as man
25 deserved reward not for us only, but for himself also—then were
there in his deeds, as it seemeth, sundry degrees and difference of deserving...
and not his Maundy like merit as his Passion; nor his sleep like
merit... as his watch and his prayer; no, nor his prayers, peradventure,
all of like merit neither... but though there none was nor none
30 could be in his most blessed person but excellent and incomparably
passing the prayer of any pure creature... yet his own not all alike...

2 *requireth*: asks 4 *of*: from // *case*: condition 5 *use*: are wont

7 *ell*: a measure of length equivalent to about forty-five inches 11 *lay*: put forward

25 *deserved*: earned 27 *Maundy*: Washing of the Feet 28 *watch*: vigil-keeping

31 *passing*: surpassing // *pure*: mere

but some one far above some other. And then, if it thus be, of all his holy prayers the chief seemeth me those that he made in his great agony and pain of his bitter Passion.

1.19

5 The first when he thrice fell prostrate in his agony, when the heaviness of his heart with fear of death at hand so painful and so cruel as he well beheld it, made such a fervent commotion in his blessed body that the bloody sweat of his holy flesh dropped down on the ground.

10 The others were the painful prayers that he made upon the cross... where, for all the torment that he hung in, of beating... nailing... and stretching out all his limbs... with the wresting of his sinews... and breaking of his tender veins... and the sharp crown of thorns so pricking him into the head that his blessed blood streamed down all his face—in all these hideous pains... in all their cruel despites—
15 yet two very devout and fervent prayers he made: the one for their pardon that so despiteously put him to this pain... and the other about his own deliverance, commending his own soul unto his holy Father in heaven. These prayers of his among all that ever he made... made in his most pain... reckon I for the chief. And these prayers
20 of our Savior at his bitter Passion... and of his holy martyrs in the fervor of their torment... shall serve us to see that there is no prayer made at pleasure, so strong and effectual as in tribulation.

Now come I to the touching of the reason you make where you tell
25 me that I grant you that both in wealth and in woe some man may be naught and offend God, the one by impatience, the other by fleshly lust; and on the other side, both in tribulation and prosperity too, some man may also do very well and deserve thank of God by thanksgiving to God, as well of his gift of riches, worship, and wealth, as of need... penury... imprisonment... sickness and pain; and that therefore you cannot
30 see for what cause I should give any preeminence in comfort unto tribulation, but rather allow prosperity for the thing more comfortable... and that not a little, but, in a manner, by double, since therein hath

6 *fervent*: intense 14 *despites*: insults 15–16 *their pardon that*: the pardon of those who
16 *dispiteously*: cruelly 21 *fervor*: heat 21 *serve us to*: help us 22 *effectual*: effective
23 *touching*: discussing // *reason*: argument 24, 28 *wealth*: well-being 25 *naught*: bad
27 *deserve thank of*: merit a reward from 28 *of his*: for his // *richesse*: wealthiness
28 *of his*: for his // *worship*: prestige // *of need*: for need 29 *penury*: poverty
31 *allow*: (you think I should) grant // *comfortable*: admissible of comfort
28 *in a manner*: as it were

the soul comfort and the body both—the soul by thanksgiving unto God for his gift, and then the body by being well at ease—whereas the person pained in tribulation taketh no comfort but in his soul alone.

- 5 First, as for your double comfort, Cousin... you may cut off the one. For a man in prosperity... though he be bound to thank God of his gift... wherein he feeleth ease... and may be glad also that he giveth thanks to God—yet for that he taketh his ease here, hath he little cause of comfort... except that the sensual feeling of bodily pleasure,
- 10 you list for to call by the name of comfort. Nor I say not nay but that sometimes men use so to take it... when they say, “This good drink comforteth well my heart.” But “comfort,” Cousin, is properly taken, by them that take it right, rather for the consolation of good hope that men take in their heart... of some good growing *toward* them... than for
- 15 a present pleasure with which the body is delighted and tickled for the while. Now, though a man without patience can have no reward for his pain... yet when his pain *is* patiently taken for God’s sake, and his will conformed to God’s pleasure therein... God rewardeth the sufferer after the rate of his pain. And this thing appeareth by many a
- 20 place in Scripture—of which some have I showed you and yet shall I show you more. But never found I any place in Scripture, that I remember, in which though the wealthy man thank God for his gift... our Lord promised any reward in heaven because the man took his ease and pleasure here. And therefore, since I speak but of such comfort as is
- 25 very comfort indeed, by which a man hath hope of God’s favor and remission of his sins, with diminishing of his pain in purgatory—or reward else in heaven—and such comfort cometh of tribulation, and for tribulation well taken... but not for pleasure, though it be well taken: therefore of your comfort that you double by prosperity... you may, as I
- 30 told you, cut very well away the half.

Now, why I give prerogative in comfort unto tribulation far *above*

6 *of*: for 9 *except that*: unless 10 *list for*: wish; want 11 *use*: are wont

14 *growing*: coming 19 *after the rate*: according to the amount // *appeareth*: is shown

20, 21 *place*: passage 22 *though*: even if

prosperity... though a man may do well in both: of this thing will I
show you causes two or three. For (as I before have at length showed you),
out of all question, continual wealth interrupted with no tribulation
is a very discomfortable token of everlasting damnation; whereupon
5 it followeth that tribulation is one cause of comfort unto a
man's heart in that it dischargeth him of the discomfort that he might
of reason take of overlong-lasting wealth.

Another is... that *Scripture* much commendeth tribulation as
occasion of more profit than wealth and prosperity... not to them only
10 that are therein, but to them, too, that resort unto them. And therefore
saith Ecclesiastes, "Melius est ire ad domum luctus quam ad domum convivii.
In illa enim finis cunctorum admonetur homo, et vivens cogitat quid
futurum sit" ("Better it is to go to the house of weeping and wailing for
some man's death, than to the house of a feast; for in that house of heaviness
15 is a man put in remembrance of the end of every man... and while he
yet liveth he thinketh what shall come after"). And yet he further saith,
"Cor sapientium ubi tristitia est, et cor stultorum ubi laetitia" ("The heart of wise
men is thereas heaviness is... and the heart of fools is thereas is mirth and
gladness"). And verily, thereas you shall hear worldly mirth seem to
20 be commended in Scripture, it is either commonly spoken, as in
the person of some worldly-disposed people, or understood of rejoicing
spiritual, or meant of some small, moderate refreshing of the
mind against a heavy, discomfortable dullness.

Now, whereas prosperity was to the children of Israel promised in
25 the Old Law as a special gift of God—that was, for their imperfection
at that time, to draw them to God with gay things and pleasant; as
men, to make children learn, give them cakebread and butter. For, as
the Scripture maketh mention, that people were much after the
manner of children, in lack of wit and in waywardness; and therefore was
30 their master Moses called *pedagogus*—that is, a "teacher of children,"
or, as they call such one in the grammar schools, an "usher," or a "master

4 *discomfortable*: discomforting; distressing // *token*: sign 6 *dischargeth*: disburdens; relieves
7 *wealth*: worldly success 10 *resort unto*: visit; betake themselves to 11–19: Ecclesiastes 7:2, 4.
14, 18 *heaviness*: sorrow; sadness 18, 19 *thereas*: wherever 23 *heavy*: oppressive
23 *discomfortable*: miserable // *dullness*: listlessness 25 *for*: because of
26 *gay*: attractive 27 *cakebread*: bread made in flattened cakes
28 *that people*: i.e., the Israelites 29 *wit*: mental capacity

of the *petits*.” For as Saint Paul saith, “*Nihil ad perfectum duxit lex*” (“The Old Law brought nothing to perfection”).

1.19

And God also threateneth folk with tribulation in this world for sin... not for that worldly tribulation is *evil*, but for that we should
 5 be well wary of the sickness of sin... for fear of that thing to follow... which, though it be indeed a very good, wholesome thing if we will well take it, is yet, because it is painful, the thing that we be loath to have.

But this I say yet again and again: that as for the far better
 10 thing in this world toward the getting of the very good that God giveth in the world to come, the Scripture undoubtedly so commendeth tribulation... that in respect and comparison thereof, it discommendeth this worldly, wretched wealth and discomfortable comfort utterly. For to what other thing soundeth the words of Ecclesiastes that I rehearsed you
 15 now, that it is “better to be in the house of heaviness than to be at a feast”? Whereto soundeth this comparison of his, that “the wise man’s heart draweth thither as folk are in sadness, and the heart of a fool is thereas he may find mirth”? Whereto draweth this threat of the Wise Man, that he that delighteth in wealth shall fall into woe? “*Risus,*” saith he,
 20 “*dolore miscebitur, et extrema gaudii luctus occupat*” (“Laughter shall be mingled with sorrow, and the end of mirth is taken up with heaviness”). And our Savior saith himself, “*Ve vobis qui ridetis, quia lugebitis et flebitis*” (“Woe be to you that laugh... for you shall weep and wail”). But he saith on the other side, “*Beati qui lugent, quoniam illi consolabuntur*” (“Blessed be they
 25 that weep and wail, for they shall be comforted”); and he saith to his disciples, “*Mundus gaudebit; vos autem dolebitis; sed tristitia vestra vertetur in gaudium*” (“The world shall joy, and you shall be sorry; but your sorrow shall be turned into joy”). And so is it, you wot well, now, and the mirth of many that then were in joy is now turned all to sorrow. And
 30 thus you see by the Scripture plain, that in matter of very comfort... tribulation is as far above prosperity as the day is above the night.

1 *petits* (pronounced, and sometimes also spelled, as “petties”): little schoolboys

1–2: Hebrews 7:19. 4 *not for that*: not because // *but for that*: but in order that

14, 16 *soundeth*: refer(s) 14 *rehearsed*: quoted 15 *now*: just now 16, 18 *whereto*: to what

17 *draweth*: betakes itself // *thither as*: to the place where // *thereas*: wherever

18 *may*: can // *the Wise Man*: the Sage; i.e., the author of Proverbs 19 *wealth*: prosperity

19–21: Proverbs 11:28; 14:13. 22–28: Luke 6:25; Matthew 5:4; John 16:20. 27 *joy*: rejoice

27 *sorry*: sorrowful 28 *wot*: know 30 *in . . . comfort*: when it comes to true comfort

Another preeminence of tribulation over wealth in occasion of merit and reward shall well appear upon certain considerations well marked in them both.

5 Tribulation meriteth in patience, and in the obedient conforming of the man's will unto God, and in thanksgiving to God for his visitation.

If you reckon me now, against these, many other good deeds that a wealthy man may do—as by riches give alms, by authority labor in doing many men justice, or if you find further any such other thing like—first I say that the patient person in tribulation hath in 10 all those virtues of a wealthy man an occasion of merit too, the which a wealthy man hath not againward in the afore-rehearsed virtues of his. For it is easy for the person that is in tribulation to be well willing to do the selfsame if he could... and then shall his good will, where the power lacketh, go very near to the merit of the deed.

15 But now is not the wealthy man in a like case, with the will of patience and conformity and thanks given to God for tribulation... since it is not so ready for the wealthy man to be content to be in the tribulation that is the occasion of the patient's desert... as for the troubled to be content to be in prosperity... to do the good deeds that 20 the wealthy man doth.

Besides this, all that the wealthy man doth, though he could not do them without those things that are accounted for wealth and called by that name... as not do great alms without great riches, nor do those many men right by his labor without authority—yet may he 25 do these things being not in wealth indeed... as where he taketh his wealth for no wealth, nor his riches for no riches, nor in heart setteth by neither nother... but secretly liveth in a contrite heart and a life penitential; as many times did the prophet David, being a great king... so that worldly wealth was no wealth unto him. And therefore it is not 30 of necessity worldly wealth to be *cause* of these good deeds, since he may

1 *wealth*: prosperity 7, 15, 17, 20, 21 *wealthy*: prosperous; successful 7 *may*: can
 7 *richesse*: affluence 11 *againward*: contrariwise // *afore-rehearsed*: previously mentioned
 12 *well*: quite 15 *like case*: similar situation 17 *so ready*: as easy 17, 19 *content*: willing
 18 *patient's desert*: patient man's meriting // *troubled*: troubled man 23 *richesse*: wealthiness
 26 *setteth by*: makes much of 27 *neither nother*: neither the one nor the other
 28–29: See Psalm 35:13–14. 29–30 *it . . . cause*: i.e., worldly prosperity is not necessarily the cause

do them—and doth them best, indeed—to whom the thing that worldly folk call wealth is yet, for his godly-set mind drawn from the delight thereof, no pleasure, in manner, nor no wealth, at all.

1.19

Finally, whensoever the wealthy man doth those good, virtuous deeds...
 5 if we consider the nature of them right... we shall perceive
 that in the doing of them, he doth ever, for the rate and portion of those
 deeds, diminish the matter of his worldly wealth; as in giving great
 alms, he parteth with so much of his worldly goods which
 are in that part the matter of his wealth. In laboring about the doing
 10 of many good deeds, his labor diminisheth his quiet and his rest... and for
 the rate of so much... it diminisheth his wealth—if pain and wealth be
 each to other contrary, as I ween ye will agree they be.

Now, whosoever, then, will well consider the thing... he shall, I doubt
 not, perceive and see therein—in these good deeds that the wealthy man
 15 doth—though he doth it by that that his wealth maketh him able,
 yet in the doing of them he departeth, for the portion, from the nature
 of wealth toward the nature of some part of tribulation. And therefore
 even in those good deeds themselves that prosperity doth in goodness,
 the prerogative of tribulation above wealth appears. Now, if it hap
 20 that some man cannot perceive this point because the wealthy
 man, for all his alms, abideth rich still, and for all his good labor
 abideth still in his authority... let him consider that I speak but
 after the *portion*. And because the portion of all that he giveth of his
 goods is very little in respect of that he leaveth... therefore is the
 25 reason haply with some folk little perceived. But if it so were that he
 went forth with giving... till he had given out all, and left himself
 nothing... then would a very blind man see it; for as he were from
 riches come to poverty... so were he from wealth willingly fallen
 into tribulation. And between labor and rest the reason goeth alike;

2 *for . . . from*: i.e., because of his having his mind set on God and withdrawn 3 *in manner*: in a way
 6, 11 *rate*: amount 7, 9, 11, 15, 28 *wealth*: prosperity 12 *other*: i.e., the other // *ween*: think
 24 *in . . . leaveth*: in comparison to that which he leaves ungiven 25, 29 *reason*: argument
 25 *perceived*: understood; seen as valid 27 *were*: would be 28 *richesse*: affluence; wealthiness
 28 *were he*: would he be // *willingly*: voluntarily 29 *alike*: the same

which who can so consider, shall see that for the *portion*, in *every* good deed done by the wealthy man the matter is all one. Then, since we have somewhat weighed the virtues of prosperity... let us consider, on the other side, the afore-named things that are the matter of merit and reward in tribulation; that is to wit, patience, conformity, and thanks.

Patience the wealthy man hath not *in* that that he is wealthy; for if he be pinched in any point... wherein he taketh patience, in that part he suffereth some tribulation; and so not by his prosperity but by his tribulation hath the man that merit.

Like is it if we would say that the wealthy man hath another virtue in the stead of patience; that is to wit, to keep himself from pride, and from such other sins as wealth would bring him to. For the resisting of such motions is, as I before told you, without any doubt a diminishing of fleshly wealth... and is a very true kind, and one of the most profitable kinds, of tribulation. So that all that good merit groweth to the wealthy man not by his wealth, but by the diminishing of his wealth with wholesome tribulation.

The most color of comparison is in the other twain; that is to wit, in the conformity of man's will unto God, and in the thanksgiving unto God. For like as the good man in tribulation sent him by God conformeth his will to God's will in that behalf, and giveth God thanks therefor: so doth the wealthy man, in his wealth which God giveth him, conform his will to God's in that point... since he is well content to take it of his gift... and giveth God again also right hearty thanks therefor.

And thus, as I said, in these two things may you catch the most color to compare the wealthy man's merit with the merit of tribulation. But yet that they be not matches... you may soon see by this: for in tribulation can there none conform his will unto God's and give him thanks therefor... but such a man as hath in that point a very specially good mind. But he that is very naught... or hath in

1 *who*: whoever 2 *all one*: entirely the same 7 *in . . . wealthy*: in his prosperousness
 17 *groweth*: comes 19 *most color of comparison*: greatest appearance of comparability
 23, 26 *therefor*: for it 25 *gift*: giving // *again*: in return
 27–28 *catch the most color*: find the most plausible justification
 28 *compare . . . with*: liken . . . to 32 *mind*: disposition; attitude // *naught*: bad

his heart but very little good... may well be content to take wealth at
 God's hand... and say, "Marry, I thank you, sir, for this with all my
 heart, and will not fail to love you well while you let me fare no worse."
 "Confitebitur tibi cum benefeceris ei"!

1.19

- 5 Now, if the wealthy man be very good... yet in conformity of his
 will, and thanks given to God for his wealth, his virtue is not like, yet, to
 his that doth the same in tribulation. For, as the philosophers said in
 that thing very well of old, virtue standeth in things of hardness
 and difficulty. And then, as I told you, much less hardness and less
 10 difficulty there is, by a great deal, to be content and to conform our
 will to God's will—and to give him thanks, too—for our ease... than for
 our pain; for our wealth than for our woe. And therefore is the conforming
 of our will unto God's... and the thanks that we give him for our tribulation,
 more worthy thank again, and more reward meriteth in
 15 the very fast wealth and felicity of heaven, than our conformity with our
 thanks given for and in our worldly wealth here.

- And this thing saw the devil when he said unto our Lord of Job...
 that it was no marvel though Job had a reverent fear unto God,
 God had done so much for him and kept him in prosperity; but the
 20 devil wist well that it was a hard thing for Job to be so loving, and
 so to give thanks, to God, in tribulation and adversity. And therefore was
 he glad to get leave of God to put him in tribulation... and thereby trusted
 to cause him murmur and grudge against God with impatience. But
 the devil had there a fall in his own turn. For the patience of Job
 25 in the short time of his adversity got him much more favor and
 thank of God, and more is he renowned and commended in Scripture
 for that... than for all the goodness of his long prosperous life.

- Our Savior saith himself also that if we say well by them, or yield
 them thank, that do us good, we do no great thing therein... and therefore
 30 can we with reason look for no great thank again.

And thus have I showed you, lo, no little preeminence that tribulation

2 *marry*: indeed 3 *while*: as long as

4: Vulgate, Psalm 48:19 ("He will praise you when you benefit him"). 12 *wealth*: well-being

14 *more* , , , *again*: more deserving of credit in return 15 *fast*: secure 17 *of*: about

18 *marvel*: wonder // *though*: if 20 *wist*: knew 22 *leave of*: permission from

23 *cause him*: get him to // *grudge*: grumble 26, 30 *thank*: reward 26 *of*: from

28 *say well by*: speak well of 28–29 *yield them thank*: reward them 30 *again*: in return

hath in merit... and therefore no little preeminence of comfort in hope of heavenly reward... above the virtues, the merit, and cause of good hope and comfort that cometh of wealth and prosperity.

1.20

A summary: comfort of tribulation

5

The Twentieth Chapter

And therefore, good Cousin, to finish our talking for this time... lest I should be too long a let unto your other business: If we lay first, for a sure ground, a very fast faith... whereby we believe to be true all that the Scripture saith—understanding truly, as the old holy doctors
 10 declare it, and as the Spirit of God instructeth his Catholic Church—then shall we consider tribulation as a gracious gift of God; a gift that he specially gave his special friends; the thing that in Scripture is highly commended and praised; a thing whereof the contrary long continued is perilous; a thing which but if God send it, men have
 15 need by penance to put upon themselves and seek it; a thing that helpeth to purge our sins past; a thing that preserveth us from sin that else would come; a thing that causeth us set less by the world; a thing that exciteth us to draw more toward God; a thing that much diminisheth our pains in purgatory; a thing that much
 20 increaseth our final reward in heaven; the thing by which our Savior entered his own kingdom; the thing with which all his apostles followed him thither; the thing which our Savior exhorteth all men to; the thing without which, he saith, we be not his disciples; the thing without which no man can get to heaven.
 25 Whoso these things thinketh on, and remembereth well, shall in his tribulation neither murmur nor grudge... but first by patience take his

7 *let*: hindrance 8 *fast*: firm; steadfast 9 *truly*: correctly
 9 *old holy doctors*: early doctors of the Church 10 *declare*: explicate
 14 *but if*: unless 17 *causeth*: makes // *set less by*: have less regard for
 18 *exciteth*: spurs 26 *grudge*: grumble

pain in worth... and then shall he grow in goodness and think himself well worthy; then shall he consider that God sendeth it for his weal; and thereby shall he be moved to give God thanks therefor.

1.20

- Therewith shall his grace increase... and God shall give him such comfort
- 5 by considering that God is in his trouble evermore near unto him—
 “quia Deus iuxta est iis qui tribulato sunt corde” (“God is near,” saith the prophet, “to them that have their heart in trouble”)—that his joy thereof shall diminish much of his pain. And he shall not seek for vain comfort elsewhere... but specially trust in God and seek for help of him,
- 10 submitting his own will wholly to God’s pleasure, and pray to God in his heart, and pray his friends to pray for him, and especially the priests, as Saint James biddeth; and begin first with confession, and make us clean to God and ready to depart and be glad to go to God, putting purgatory in his pleasure. If we this do... this dare I boldly
- 15 say: we shall never live here the less of half an hour... but shall with this comfort find our hearts lightened, and thereby the grief of our tribulation lessened, and the more likelihood to recover and to live the longer. Now, if God will we shall hence... then doth he much more for us; for he that this way taketh cannot go but well. For of him that is loath to
- 20 leave this wretched world, my heart is much in fear lest he die not well. Hard it is for him to be welcome that cometh against his will; that saith unto God when he cometh to fetch him, “Welcome, my Maker, maugre my teeth.” But he that so loveth him that he longeth to go to him... my heart cannot give me but he shall be welcome... all were it so
- 25 that he should come ere he were well purged; for “charity covereth a multitude of sins,” and “he that trusteth in God cannot be confounded.” And Christ saith, “He that cometh to me, I will not cast him out.” And therefore let us never make our reckoning of long life. Keep it while we may, because God hath so commanded; but if God give the
- 30 occasion that with his goodness we may go, let us be glad thereof and long to go to him. And then shall hope of heaven comfort our heaviness...

1 *in worth*: in stride; with a good attitude 2 *worthy*: deserving (of the pain) 3 *weal*: good
 3 *therefor*: for it 6–7: Psalm 34:19. 11–12: James 5:14. 15 *the less of*: a shorter time by
 18 *we shall hence*: i.e., that we will go to the next world
 23 *maugre my teeth*: in spite of myself; despite how strongly I’d prefer that you hadn’t come
 24 *my . . . but*: I cannot help but feel that // *all . . . so*: even if it were the case
 25–28: 1 Peter 4:8; Romans 10:11; John 6:37. 27–28 *cast him out*: reject him
 28 *make our reckoning of*: count on having a 31 *heaviness*: sadness; despondency

and out of our transitory tribulation shall we go to everlasting glory;
to which, my good Cousin, I pray God bring us both.

1.20

Vincent

5 Mine own good Uncle, I pray God reward you! And at this time
will I no longer trouble you. I trow I have this day done you much
tribulation, with mine importunate objections of very little substance.
And you have even showed me an example of sufferance, in bearing my
folly so long and so patiently. And yet shall I be so bold upon you
further, as to seek some time to talk forth of the remnant: the
10 most profitable point of tribulation, which you said you reserved to
treat of last of all.

Anthony

Let that be, hardily, very shortly, Cousin, while this is fresh in mind.

Vincent

15 I trust, good Uncle, so to put this in remembrance that it shall never
be forgotten with me. Our Lord send you such comfort as he knoweth
to be best!

Anthony

20 That is well said, good Cousin; and I pray the same good for you, and
for all our other friends that have need of comfort—for whom, I
think, more than for yourself, you needed of some counsel.

Vincent

I shall with this good counsel that I have heard of you do them
some comfort, I trust in God—to whose keeping I commit you.

25 Anthony

And I you also. Farewell, mine own good Cousin.

5 *I trow*: I'm sure 7 *even*: just 9 *remnant*: rest 10 *reserved*: were saving
13 *hardily*: by all means 16 *with*: by 20 *friends*: loved ones
21 *needed*: were in need 23 *of*: from // *do*: give

The Second Book

2.Preface

Vincent

It is to me, good Uncle, no little *comfort*... that as I came in here,
 I heard of your folk... that you have had since my last being here, God
 5 be thanked, meetly good rest... and your stomach somewhat more come
 to you. For verily, albeit I had heard before that in respect of the
 great grief that for a month's space had held you, you were a
 little before my last coming to you somewhat eased and relieved—for
 else would I not, for no good, have put you to the pain to talk so much
 10 as you then did—yet after my departing from you, remembering how
 long we tarried together, and that we were all that while in talking...
 and all the labor yours, in talking so long together, without interpausing
 between... and that of matter studious and displeasing, all of
 disease and sickness and other pain and tribulation... I was, in good faith,
 15 very sorry, and not a little wroth with myself, for mine own oversight,
 that I had so little considered your pain; and very afeard I was, till I heard
 other word, lest you should have waxed weaker and more sick thereafter.
 But now I thank our Lord, that hath sent the contrary. For else—
 a little casting back were, in this great age of yours, no little danger
 20 and peril!

Anthony

Nay, nay, good Cousin! To talk much—except some other pain let
 me—is to me little grief. A fond old man is often so full of words as
 a woman. It is, you wot well, as some poets paint us—all the lust of
 25 an old fool's life to sit well and warm with a cup and a roasted crab
 and drivel and drink and talk.

But in earnest, Cousin, our talking was to me great comfort, and

4 *of your folk*: from your servants 5 *meetly*: fairly // *stomach*: appetite
 6 *in respect of*: with regard to 7 *grief*: illness 11 *tarried*: remained
 12–13 *interpausing between*: pausing in the midst at intervals 13 *of matter*: about things
 13 *studious and displeasing*: worrisome and unpleasant // *all of*: all about
 14 *in good faith*: in all honesty; truth be told 15 *wroth*: angry // *oversight*: obliviousness
 17 *other word*: word to the contrary // *lest* . . . *waxed*: that you might have become 18 *that*: who
 19 *casting back*: relapse // *were*: would be // *in*: at 22, 27 *Cousin*: Nephew
 22–23 *let me*: gets in my way 23 *grief*: trouble // *fond*: foolish // *so*: as
 24 *wot*: know // *lust*: desire 27 *in earnest*: seriously

nothing unpleasant at all. For though we communed of sorrow and
 heaviness... yet was the thing that we chiefly thought upon... not the
 tribulation itself, but the comfort that may grow thereon. And
 therefore am I now very glad that you be come to finish up the
 5 remnant.

Vincent

Of truth, my good Uncle, it was comfortable to me, and hath
 been since to some others of your friends, to whom, as my poor wit and
 remembrance would serve me, I did... and not needlessly... report and rehearse
 10 your most comfortable counsel. And now come I for the
 remnant... and am very joyful that I find you so well refreshed and so
 ready thereto. But yet this one thing, good Uncle, I beseech you heartily:
 that if I, for delight to hear you speak in the matter, forget myself and
 you both, and put you to too much pain—remember you your own
 15 ease, and when you list to leave, command me to go my way and
 seek some other time.

Anthony

Forsooth, Cousin, many words if a man were very weak... spoken
 (as you said right now) without interpausing... would, peradventure, at
 20 length somewhat weary him. And therefore wished I the last time, after
 you were gone... when I felt myself, to say the truth, even a little
 weary... that I had not so told you still a long tale, alone... but that
 we had more often *interchanged* words, and parted the talk
 between us with oft enterparling upon your part—in such
 25 manner as learned men use between the “persons” whom they devise
 disputing in their feigned dialogues. But yet in that point I soon
 excused you, and laid the lack even where I found it—and that was even
 upon mine own neck. For I remembered that between you and me it
 fared as it did once between a nun and her brother.

1 *nothing*: in no way // *communed of*: talked about 2 *heaviness*: distress
 3 *grow thereon*: come of it 5 *remnant*: rest
 7, 10 *comfortable*: consoling 8 *some . . . friends*: some of your other loved ones
 8 *wit*: mental capacity 9 *rehearse*: reiterate 15 *list*: wish // *leave*: stop 19 *right*: just
 19 *peradventure*: perhaps 21 *even*: just 22 *so . . . tale*: thus gone on giving you a long speech
 23 *interchanged*: exchanged // *parted*: divided 24 *oft*: more frequent
 24 *enterparling*: taking part in the conversation 26 *feigned*: fictional
 27 *laid the lack*: put the blame // *even*: right

Very virtuous was this lady, and of a very virtuous place—a close religion—and therein had been long. In all which time she had never seen her brother; which was in like wise very virtuous too, and had been far off at a university, and had there taken the degree of Doctor in

5 Divinity. When he was come home, he went to see his sister... as he that highly rejoiced in her virtue. So came she to the grate that they call, I trow, the locutory; and after their holy watchword spoken on both the sides (after the manner used in that place), the one took the other by the tip of the finger (for hand would there none be

10 wrung through the grate), and forthwith began my lady to give her brother a sermon of the wretchedness of this world, and the frailty of the flesh, and the subtle sleight of the wicked Fiend... and gave him surely good counsel (saving somewhat too long) how he should be well wary in his living, and master well his body for saving of his soul. And yet,

15 ere her own tale came all at an end, she began to find a little fault with him, and said, “In good faith, brother, I do somewhat marvel that you, that have been at learning so long, and are a Doctor, and so learned in the law of God, do not now at our meeting—while we meet so seldom!—to me, that am your *sister*, and a simple, unlearned soul, give

20 of your charity some fruitful exhortation. And as I doubt not but you can say some good thing yourself”—“By my troth, good sister,” quoth her brother, “I cannot for you... for your tongue have never ceased, but said enough for us both.” And so, Cousin, I remembered that when I was once fallen in, I left you little space to say aught between. But now

25 will I, therefore, take another way with you; for I shall of our talking drive you to the one half.

Vincent

Now, forsooth, Uncle, this was a merry tale! But, now, if you make me take the one half... then shall you be contented... far otherwise than

1–2 *close religion*: cloistered religious order 5–6 *he that*: one who 7 *trow*: believe
 7 *watchword*: password 10 *wrung*: squeezed // *forthwith*: immediately
 11 *of the*: on the 12 *subtle*: treacherously cunning // *sleight*: trickery
 15 *tale*: speech 16 *do . . . marvel*: am somewhat surprised 18 *while*: when
 21 *troth*: honor // *quoth*: said 23–24 *when . . . in*: once I’d gotten started // *ought*: anything
 28 *merry tale*: funny story

there was of late a kinswoman of your own—but which, will I not tell you; guess her and you can. Her husband had much pleasure in the manner and behavior of another honest man, and kept him, therefore, much company; by the reason whereof, he was at his mealtime the more oft from home. So happened it, on a time, that his wife and he together dined or supped with that neighbor of theirs. And then she made a merry quarrel to him for making her husband so good cheer out of doors that she could not have him at home. “Forsooth, mistress,” quoth he (as he was a dry-merry man), “in my company no thing keepeth him but one. Serve you him with the same, and he will never be from you.” “What gay thing may that be?” quoth our cousin then. “Forsooth, mistress,” quoth he, “your husband loveth well to talk... and when he sitteth with me, I let him have all the words.” “*All* the words?” quoth she. “Marry, that am I content he shall have—all the words, with good will, as he hath ever had. But I speak them all myself, and give them all to him; and for aught that I care for them, so shall he have them still. But otherwise to say that he shall have them all—you shall keep him still rather than he get the half!”

Anthony

Forsooth, Cousin, I can soon guess which of our kin she was! I would we had none therein, for all her merry words, that less would let their husbands for to talk!

Vincent

Forsooth, she is not so merry but she is as good! But whereas you find fault, Uncle, that I speak not enough... I was, in good faith, ashamed that I spoke so much... and moved you such questions as I found, upon

2 *and*: if 3 *honest*: honorable 4–5 *the more oft*: more often than not
 5, 10 *from*: away from 5 *on a time*: one day 7 *made . . . to*: facetiously picked a fight with
 7 *making . . . cheer*: giving her husband such good entertainment 8 *have*: keep
 8, 11 *mistress*: ma’am 9 *dry-merry man*: a man with a dry sense of humor
 11 *gay*: fine // *cousin*: kinswoman 12 *loveth well*: really loves 14 *marry*: indeed
 16 *ought*: anything // *for*: about 20 *would*: wish 21 *therein*: i.e., among our kinfolk
 21 *merry*: hilarious 21–22 *let . . . talk*: keep their husbands from talking
 24 *is . . . good*: i.e., is every bit as good as she is funny 25 *in good faith*: in all honesty
 26 *moved you*: presented you with

your answer, might better have been spared, they were so little worth.
 But now... since I see you be so well content that I shall not forbear boldly
 to show my folly... I will be no more so shamefast, but ask you what me
 list.

2.1

5 *Whether a man may not in tribulation use some
 worldly recreation for his comfort*

The First Chapter

And first, good Uncle, ere we proceed further, I will be bold to move
 you one thing more... of that we talked when I was here before. For
 10 when I revolved in my mind again the things that were here concluded
 by you... methought you would in no wise that in any tribulation,
 men should seek for comfort either in worldly thing or fleshly.
 Which mind, Uncle, of yours, seemeth somewhat hard. For a merry tale
 with a friend refresheth a man much... and without any harm lighteneth
 15 his mind and amendeth his courage and his stomach; so that it seemeth
 but well done to take such recreation. And Solomon saith, I trow,
 that men should in heaviness give the sorry man wine to make him forget
 his sorrow. And Saint Thomas saith that proper pleasant talking,
 which is called εὐτραπέλεια, is a good virtue, serving to refresh the
 20 mind and make it quick and lusty to labor and study again... whereas
 continual fatigue would make it dull and deadly.

Anthony

Cousin, I forgot not that point... but I longed not much to
 touch it. For neither might I well utterly forbear it where the case
 25 might hap to fall that it should not hurt... and on the other side, if
 the case so should fall... methought yet it should little need to give any
 man counsel to it, folk are prone enough to such fancies of their

3 *shamefast*: embarrassed 3–4 *what me list*: whatever I want to
 8 *ere* . . . *further*: before we go any further // *move*: bring up to
 9 *that we talked*: what we discussed 11, 26 *methought*: it seemed to me that
 11 *would in no wise*: would in no way have it 13 *mind*: way of thinking
 13 *somewhat hard*: a little extreme // *merry tale*: funny story 15 *amendeth*: restores
 15 *stomach*: spirit 16–21: Proverbs 31:6–7; *Summa Theologica* II–II, q. 168, art. 2.
 16 *trow*: believe 17 *in heaviness*: when someone is heavy of heart // *sorry*: sorrowful
 19 εὐτραπέλεια (*eutrapelia*): lively, witty conversation / *good*: bona fide
 21 *fatigation*: activity causing weariness // *deadly*: lifeless; dreary
 23–24 *longed not much to touch it*: didn't much want to discuss it 26 *it should*: there should be

own mind. You may see this by ourselves, which coming now
 together to talk of as earnest, sad matter as men can devise... were fallen
 yet, even at the first, into wanton, idle tales. And of truth, Cousin—
 as you know very well—myself am of nature even half a giglot and
 5 more! I would I could as easily mend my fault as I well know it! But
 scant can I refrain it, as old a fool as I am. Howbeit, so partial will I
 not be to my fault as to praise it. But for that you require my mind
 in the matter, whether men in tribulation may not lawfully seek
 recreation, and comfort themselves with some honest mirth: First agreed
 10 that our chief comfort must be of God—and that with him we must
 begin, and with him continue, and with him end also—a man to take
 now and then some honest worldly mirth, I dare not be so sore as utterly
 to forbid it... since good men and well learned have in some cases allowed
 it, especially for the diversity of diverse men's minds. For else, if we
 15 were all such as I would God we were, and such as natural wisdom
 would we should be—and is not all clean excusable that we be not indeed!—
 I would then put no doubt but that unto any man, the most comfortable
 talking that could be, were to hear of heaven; whereas now,
 God help us, our wretchedness is such that in talking a while thereof,
 20 men wax almost weary... and as though to hear of heaven were a
 heavy burden... they must refresh themselves after with a foolish
 tale!

Our affection toward heavenly joys waxeth wonderfully cold. If
 dread of hell were as far gone... very few would fear God; but that yet a
 25 little sticketh in our stomachs. Mark me, Cousin, at the sermon—and
 commonly toward the end—somewhat the preacher speaketh of hell and
 of heaven. Now, while he preacheth of the pains of hell, still they stand
 and yet give him the hearing; but as soon as he cometh to the joys of
 heaven, they be busking them backward and flockmeal fall away. It is in
 30 the soul somewhat as it is in the body. Some are there of nature... or
 of evil custom come to that point... that a worse thing sometimes
 more steadeth them than a better. Some man if he be sick... can away

1 *mind*: accord 2 *sad*: serious // *devise*: think of 3 *even*: right // *wanton*: frivolous
 4 *even*: fully // *giglot*: giggle box 5 *would*: wish 7 *for that*: since
 7 *require my mind*: ask my opinion 8 *lawfully*: legitimately 9 *honest mirth*: good clean fun
 12 *sore*: severe; strict 13 *allowed*: sanctioned 14 *for the*: on account of the // *minds*: dispositions
 15 *would*: wish to 16 *would we should*: would have us // *is*: i.e., it is // *clean*: completely
 17 *comfortable*: consoling 18 *were*: would be 20 *wax*: become
 23 *affection toward*: sensibility toward; feeling for // *waxeth*: is becoming // *wonderfully*: terribly
 26 *somewhat . . . of*: the preacher says something about 27 *stand*: stay
 28 *yet . . . hearing*: keep listening to him 29 *busking them*: hustling themselves; scooting
 29 *flockmeal*: in droves 29, 30 *in*: with 31 *evil custom*: bad habit // *worse*: less good
 32 *more steadeth them*: does them more good 83/32—84/1 *away with*: get down

with no wholesome meat, nor no medicine can go down with them, but if it be tempered with some such thing, for his fancy, as maketh the meat or the medicine less wholesome than it should be. And yet while it will be no better, we must let him have it so.

- 5 Cassian, that very good, virtuous man, rehearseth in a certain collation of his that a certain holy father, in making of a sermon, spoke of heaven, and of heavenly things, so celestially that much of his audience with the sweet sound thereof began to forget all the world and fall asleep; which when the father beheld, he dissembled their sleeping and
- 10 suddenly said unto them, “I shall tell you a merry tale”—at which word they lifted up their heads and hearkened unto that. And after the sleep therewith broken, heard him tell on of heaven again. In what wise that good father rebuked then their untoward minds... so dull unto the thing that all our life we labor for... and so quick and lusty toward
- 15 other trifles... I neither bear in mind nor shall here need to rehearse. But thus much of that matter sufficeth for our purpose: that whereas you demand me whether in tribulation men may not sometimes refresh themselves with worldly mirth and recreation... I can no more say but he that cannot long endure to hold up his head and
- 20 hear talking of heaven except he be now and then between (as though heaven were heaviness) refreshed with a foolish merry tale—there is no other remedy but you must let him have it. Better would I wish it, but I cannot help it.

- Howbeit, let us, by mine advice, at the leastwise make these kinds
- 25 of recreation as short and seldom as we can—let them serve us but for sauce, and make them not our meat—and let us pray unto God, and all our good friends for us, that we may feel such a savor in the delight of heaven... that in respect of the talking of the joys thereof, all worldly recreation be but a grief to think on. And be sure, Cousin, that if we
- 30 might once purchase the grace to come to that point... we never of

1, 3, 26 *meat*: food 2 *but if*: unless // *tempered*: modified 4 *while*: as long as
 5 *rehearseth*: mentions // *collation*: conference; discourse
 9 *dissembled*: pretended not to notice 10, 21 *merry tale*: funny story 13 *untoward*: perverse
 15 *rehearse*: repeat 17 *demand*: ask 21 *heaviness*: something depressing
 25 *seldom*: infrequent 26–27 *all . . . friends*: i.e., ask all our good friends to pray
 27 *feel . . . in*: have such a taste for 28 *in respect of*: in comparison with

worldly recreation had so much comfort in a year as we should find in
bethinking us of heaven in less than half an hour.

2.2

Vincent

5 In faith, Uncle, I can well agree to this; and I pray God bring
us once to take such a savor in it. And surely, as you began the
other day, by faith must we come to it... and to faith by prayer.
But now I pray you, good Uncle, vouchsafe to proceed in our principal
matter.

10 *Of the short, uncertain life in extreme age
or sickness*

The Second Chapter

Anthony

15 Cousin, I have bethought me somewhat of this matter since we were
last together... and I find it (if we should go some way to work) a thing
that would require many more days to treat of than we should haply
find meet thereto... in so few as myself ween that I have now to live...
while every time is not like with me... and among many painful, in
which I look every day to depart, my mending days come very
seldom and are very shortly gone. For surely, Cousin, I cannot liken myself
20 more meetly now than to the snuff of a candle that burneth
within the candlestick nose; for as that snuff burneth down so low...
that who that looketh on it would ween it were quite out... and yet
suddenly lifteth a leam half an inch above the nose, and giveth
a pretty, short light again... and thus playeth divers times till at last,
25 ere it be looked for, out it goeth altogether—so have I, Cousin, divers
such days together... as every day of them I look even for to die... and

4 to: with 5 savor: relish // began: said at the outset 7 pray: ask
7 vouchsafe: be so good as to 14 go . . . work: go into it in any depth 15 require: take
16 meet: suitable // myself ween: I myself think 17 while: when // like: the same
17 painful: i.e., times when I am in pain 18 look: expect
18 mending days: days when I get better 19 liken: compare 20 meetly: fittingly
22 who that: whoever // on: at // ween: think // quite: completely
23 leam: gleam; flame 24 pretty: nice 25 looked for: expected // divers: several
26 together: in a row // look even for: fully expect

yet have I then, after that, some such few days again... as you see me
 now have yourself... in which a man would ween that I might yet well
 continue. But I know my lingering not likely to last long... but out will
 my soul suddenly someday within a while. And therefore will I with
 5 God's help, seem I never so well amended, nevertheless reckon every
 day for my last. For though that to the repressing of the bold
 courage of blind youth... there is a very true proverb that "as soon
 cometh a young sheep's skin to the market as an old," yet this difference
 there is, at the least, between them: that as the young man may hap, sometimes,
 10 to die soon—so the old man can never live long. And therefore,
 Cousin, in our matter here, leaving out many things that I would else
 treat of... I shall for this time speak but of very few. Howbeit, hereafter,
 if God send me more such days... then will we, when you list, further talk
 of more.

15 *He divideth tribulation into three kinds; of which three
 the last he shortly passeth over*

The Third Chapter

All manner of tribulation, Cousin, that any man can have, as far as for
 this time cometh to my mind, falleth under some one, at the least, of
 20 these three kinds: either is it such as himself willingly taketh, or,
 secondly, such as himself willingly suffereth... or, finally, such as he cannot
 put from him.

This third kind I purpose not much more to speak of now; for
 thereof shall, as for this time, suffice these things that we have
 25 treated between us this other day. What kind of tribulation this is, I
 am sure yourself perceive. For sickness, imprisonment, loss of good,
 loss of friends, or such bodily harm as a man hath already caught

3 *out*: i.e., go out 5 *seem . . . amended*: no matter how much better I seem to have gotten
 13 *list*: like; please 22 *put from him*: rid himself of 26 *yourself*: you yourself
 26 *good*: money 27 *friends*: loved ones

and can in no wise avoid—these things and such like are the “third kind of tribulation” that I speak of, which a man neither willingly taketh in the beginning... nor can, though he would, put willingly away.

Now think I that, as to the man that lacketh wit and faith... no
5 comfort can serve, whatsoever counsel be given: so to them that have both, I have as to this kind said in manner enough already.

And considering that suffer it needs he must (while he can by no manner of means put it from him), the very necessity is half counsel enough to take it in good worth and bear it patiently, and rather of his
10 patience to take both ease and thank... than by fretting and by fuming to increase his present pain... and by murmur and grudge to fall into further danger after, by displeasing of God with his froward behavior. And yet, albeit that I think that that is said sufficeth—yet here and there I shall in the second kind show some such comforts
15 as shall well serve unto this last kind too.

The Fourth Chapter

The first kind also will I shortly pass; for the tribulation that a man taketh himself willingly, which no man putteth upon him against his own will, is, you wot well, as I somewhat touched the last
20 day, such affliction of the flesh, or expense of his goods, as a man taketh himself, or willingly bestoweth, in punishment of his own sin and for devotion to God.

Now, in this tribulation needeth the man none to comfort him; for while no man troubleth him but himself (which feeleth how far forth
25 he may conveniently bear... and of reason and good discretion shall not pass that; wherein if any doubt arise, counsel needeth, and not comfort), the courage that for God’s sake and his soul health kindleth his heart and inflameth it thereto shall, by the same grace that put it in his mind,

1 *wise*: way 3 *though he would*: even if he wants to

3 *put willingly away*: of his own volition get rid of 4 *as*: i.e., just as // *wit*: good sense

6 *in manner*: very nearly; pretty much 7 *suffer* . . . *must*: he necessarily must suffer it

7 *while*: as long as 8 *put it from him*: get rid of it 9 *in good worth*: with a good attitude

10 *thank*: credit 11 *grudge*: complaint 12 *froward*: refractory; rebellious

13 *that that is*: that what has been 17 *pass*: go over 19 *wot*: know // *touched*: discussed

23 *none*: no one 24 *while*: when

24–25 *which* . . . *bear*: who senses how much he can reasonably take

26 *pass*: go beyond // *needeth*: is needed

2.4
 give him such comfort and such joy therein that the pleasure of his
 soul shall pass the pain of his body. Yea, and while he hath in heart
 also some great heaviness, for his sin, yet when he considereth the
 joy that shall come of it, his soul shall not fail to feel then that
 5 strange case which my body felt once in a great fever.

Vincent

What strange case was that, Uncle?

Anthony

Forsooth, Cousin, even in this same bed—it is now more than fifteen
 10 years ago—I lay in a tertian, and had passed, I trow, three or four fits. But
 after fell there on me one fit out of course... so strange and so marvelous
 that I would in good faith have thought it impossible. For
 I suddenly felt myself verily both hot and cold throughout all my
 body! Not in some part the one and in some part the other—for that
 15 had been, you wot well, no very strange thing, to feel the head hot
 while the hands were cold—but the *selfsame* parts, I say... so God
 save my soul!... I sensibly felt (and right painfully, too!) all in one instant
 both hot and cold at once.

Vincent

20 By my faith, Uncle, this *was* a wonderful thing, and such as I never
 heard happen any man else in my days! And few men are there of whose
 mouths I could have believed it.

Anthony

25 Courtesy, Cousin, peradventure letteth you to say that you believe
 it not yet of my mouth neither. And surely for fear of that... you should
 not have heard it of me neither... had there not happed me another
 thing soon after.

2 *pass*: surpass; exceed 3 *heaviness*: sorrow 4 *feel*: experience 5, 7 *case*: thing; sensation
 9 *even*: right 10 *a tertian*: an intermittent fever, coming on every other day
 10 *passed*: gone through // *trow*: believe 10, 11 *fit(s)*: bout(s) 11 *after*: afterward
 11 *marvelous*: astonishing 12 *in good faith*: in all honesty 13 *verily*: literally
 15 *had*: would have // *wot*: know 17 *sensibly*: physically 20 *wonderful*: amazing
 21, 25, 26 *of*: from 21 *happen*: happen to
 24 *peradventure* . . . *say*: perhaps keeps you from saying

Vincent

2.4

I pray you, what was that, Uncle?

Anthony

5 Forsooth, Cousin, this: I asked a physician or twain that then looked
unto me... how this should be possible—and they twain told me, both,
that it could not be so... but that I was fallen in some slumber and
dreamed that I felt it so.

Vincent

This hap hold I little cause... you to tell the tale the more boldly.

10

Anthony

No, Cousin—that is true, lo. But then happed there *another*: that a
young girl here in this town—whom a kinsman of hers had begun
to teach physic—told me that there was such a kind of fever indeed.

Vincent

15

By our Lady, Uncle, save for the credence of *you*—the tale would *I* not
tell again upon that hap of the maid. For though I know her *now*
for such as I durst well believe her... it might hap her very well at
that time to lie... because she would ye should take her for
cunning.

20

Anthony

Yea, but yet happed there another hap thereon, Cousin: that a work
of Galen, *De differentiis febrium*, is ready to be sold in the booksellers'
shops—in which work she showed me then the chapter where Galen
saith the same!

2 *pray*: ask 5 *unto*: after 9 *hap* . . . *cause*: occurrence I consider little reason for
13 *physic*: medical science 15 *the credence of you*: your credibility; the fact that I believe you
16 *hap of*: occurrence with // *maid*: young lady
17 *durst*: dare 18 *would ye should*: would have you 19 *cunning*: knowledgeable
21–24: See Galen, *On the Different Kinds of Fever*, book 2, chapter 6.

Vincent

2.4

Marry, Uncle, as you say, that hap happed well... and that maid
 had, as hap was, in that one point more cunning than had both
 your physicians besides—and hath, I ween, at this day in many points
 5 more.

Anthony

In faith, so ween I too—and that is well wared on her. For she is very
 wise and well learned, and very virtuous, too. But see, now, what age is, lo—I
 have been so long in my tale that I have almost forgotten for
 10 what purpose I told it. Oh, now I remember, lo—likewise, I say, as myself
 felt my body then both hot and cold at once... so he that is contrite
 and heavy for his sin... shall have cause to be, and shall be indeed,
 both sad and glad and both twain at once... and shall do as I remember
 Saint Jerome biddeth: “Et doleas et de dolore gaudeas”; “Both
 15 be thou sorry,” saith he, “and be thou also of thy sorrow joyful.” And
 thus, as I began to say, of comfort to be given unto him that is in this
 tribulation (that is to wit, in fruitful heaviness and penance for his
 sin) shall we none need to give, other than only to remember and
 consider well the goodness of God’s excellent mercy, that infinitely
 20 passeth the malice of all men’s sins; by which he is ready to receive
 every man... and did spread his arms abroad upon the cross lovingly
 to embrace all them that will come... and even there accepted the
 thief at his last end, that turned not to God till he might steal no longer...
 and yet maketh more feast in heaven at one that from sin turneth, than
 25 of fourscore and nineteen good men that sinned not at all. And
 therefore of that first kind will I make no longer tale.

3 as hap was: as it turned out // cunning: expertise 4, 7 ween: think

7 that . . . wared: i.e., that compliment is well bestowed 12 heavy: sorrowful

14–15: In *Summa Theologica* III, q. 84, art. 9, this quotation is ascribed to Saint Augustine. It is based (loosely) on a passage in *De vera et falsa poenitentia*, a work whose actual authorship is unknown.

15 sorry: sorrowful 17 heaviness: sadness; sorrow 20 passeth: exceeds 21 abroad: out

22 even: right 23 might: could 24 feast: festivity 26 of: on // tale: (a) speech

*An objection concerning them that turn not
to God till they come at the last cast*

2.5

The Fifth Chapter

Vincent

- 5 Forsooth, Uncle, this is, unto that kind, comfort very great—and so great
also that it may make many a man bold to abide in his sin even
unto his end... trusting to be then saved, as that thief was!

Anthony

- 10 Verily, sooth you say, Cousin... that some wretches are there such, that
in such wise abuse the great goodness of God that the better that he is,
the worse again be they. But, Cousin, though there be more joy made
of his turning... that from the point of perdition cometh to salvation—
for pity that God had and his saints all, of the peril of perishing
that the man stood in—yet is he not set in like state in heaven as he
15 should have been if he had lived better before... except it so fall that he
live so well after, and do so much good... that he therein outrun in the
shorter time those good folk that yet did not so much in much longer.

- As it proved in the blessed apostle Saint Paul, which of a persecutor
became an apostle, and last of all came in into that office... and yet
20 in the labor of sowing the seed of Christ's faith... outran all the
remnant, and so far forth that he letted not to say of himself,
“Plus omnibus laboravi” (“I have labored more than all the remnant
have”).

- But yet, my Cousin, though God, I doubt not, be so merciful unto them
25 that in any time of their life turn and ask his mercy and trust therein...
though it be at the last end of a man's life; and hireth him as well
for heaven that cometh to work in his vineyard toward night

2 *at the last cast*: to death's door 6–7 *even unto*: right up to
9 *sooth you say*: what you say is true // *some . . . such*: there are some such wretches
11 *again*: in return 12 *his . . . that*: the turning of one who
15 *except it so fall*: unless it so turn out 17 *so*: as 18 *proved in*: turned out with
21, 22 *remnant*: rest 21 *letted not*: did not forbear 22–23: 1 Corinthians 15:10.
26 *last*: very

(at such time as workmen leave work and go home!), being then in will to work if the time would serve, as he hireth him that cometh in the morning: yet may there no man upon the trust of this parable be bold all his life to lie still in sin. For let him remember that into

- 5 God's vineyard there goeth no man but he that is called thither. Now, he that in hope to be called toward night will sleep out the morning, and drink out the day, is full likely to pass at night unspoken to... and then shall he with shrewd rest go supperless to bed.

- 10 They tell of one that was wont always to say that all the while he lived he would do what he list... for three words when he died should make all safe enough. But then so happed it that long ere he were old, his horse once stumbled upon a broken bridge; and as he labored to recover him, when he saw it would not be... but down into the flood headlong needs he should... in a sudden flight he cried out in the falling,
15 "Have all to the devil!" And there was he drowned, with his "three words ere he died" whereon his hope hung all his wretched life. And therefore let no man sin in hope of grace; grace cometh but at God's will... and that mind may be the let that grace of fruitful repenting shall never after be offered him, but that he shall either graceless
20 go linger on careless or with a care fruitless fall into despair.

*An objection of them that say the tribulation of
penance needeth not but is a superstitious folly*

The Sixth Chapter

Vincent

- 25 Forsooth, Uncle, in this point methinketh you say very well. But then are there some again that say on the other side... that heaviness

7 *full*: quite 8 *shrewd*: poor; not at all good 9 *one . . . always*: someone who always used to say
10 *list*: wanted to // *should*: would 14 *needs he should*: he would have to go
14 *flight*: state of agitation; fluttery fright 15 *have all to the devil*: the devil take all
18 *mind*: attitude; disposition // *let*: obstructing reason 20 *careless*: without worry or anxiety
21 *of*: from 22 *needeth not*: is not necessary 26 *heaviness*: sorrow

for our sins we shall need none at all, but only change our intent and purpose to do better... and for all that that is past, take no thought at all.

And as for fasting and other affliction of the body, they say we should
 5 not do it but only to tame the flesh when we feel it wax wanton and begin to rebel. For fasting, they say, serveth to keep the body in temperance; but for to fast for penance, or to do any other good work, almsdeed or other, toward satisfaction of our own sin—this thing they call plain injury to the Passion of Christ... by
 10 which only are our sins forgiven, freely, without any recompense of our own; and they that would do penance for their own sins... look to be their own Christs and pay their own ransoms, and save their souls themselves. And with these reasons, in Saxony many cast fasting off, and all other bodily affliction, save only where need requireth to
 15 bring the body to temperance. For other good, they say, can it none do to ourselves, and then to our neighbor can it do none at all—and therefore they condemn it for superstitious folly.

Now, heaviness of heart and weeping for our sins—this they reckon shame, almost, and womanish peevishness. Howbeit, thanked be God, their women
 20 wax there now so mannish... that they be not so peevish, nor so poor of spirit, but that they can sin on as men do, and be neither afraid nor ashamed, nor weep for their sins at all.

And surely, mine Uncle, I have marveled the less ever since I heard the manner of their preachers there. For, as you remember, when I
 25 was in Saxony these matters were, in manner, but in a mammering; nor Luther was not then wedded yet... nor religious men out of their habit... but suffered were those that would be of the sect, freely to preach what they would unto the people. And, forsooth, I heard a religious man there myself—one that had been reputed and taken for very good,
 30 and which, as far as the folk perceived, was of his own living

2 *purpose*: resolve 5 *wax wanton*: get unruly 8 *almsdeed*: almsgiving
 9 *injury*: insult 10 *only*: alone // *recompense*: atonement 13 *reasons*: arguments
 19, 20 *peevish(ness)*: foolish(ness) 20 *wax*: are becoming
 25 *in manner*: so to say // *in a mammering*: up in the air; not yet settled
 26, 28 *religious men/man*: religious-order priest(s) 27 *suffered*: allowed
 30 *of his own living*: in his own way of living

somewhat austere and sharp... but his preaching was wonderful. Methink
 I hear him yet, his voice was so loud and shrill—his learning
 less than mean. But whereas his matter was much part against
 fasting and all affliction for any penance, which he called “men’s inventions,”
 5 he cried ever out upon them to keep well the “laws of
 Christ,” let go their “peevish penance,” and purpose them to amend,
 and seek nothing to salvation but the death of Christ. “For *he* is our
justice, and *he* is our *Savior*, and our *whole satisfaction* for *all* our deadly
 sins! *He* did *full penance* for us *all*, upon his *painful cross*! He
 10 *washed* us there all *clean* with the water of his *sweet side*, and brought
 us out of the devil’s danger with his *dear, precious blood*! *Leave*,
 therefore—*leave*, I *beseech* you!—these *inventions of men*, your foolish
 Lenten fasts and your peevish penance! Diminish never *Christ’s thank*,
 nor look to save yourselves! It is *Christ’s death*, I tell you, that must save
 15 us all! *Christ’s death*, I tell you yet again, and not our own deeds! Leave
 your own fasting, therefore, and lean to *Christ alone*, good Christian people, for
Christ’s dear, bitter Passion!”

Now, so loud and so shrill he cried “Christ” in their ears... and so
 thick he came forth with “Christ’s bitter Passion”—and that so bitterly
 20 spoken... with the sweat dropping down his cheeks—that I marveled
 not though I saw the poor women weep. For he made my hair
 stand up upon my head! And with such preaching were the people
 so brought in that some fell to break the fasts on the fasting days...
 not of frailty or of malice first... but almost of devotion, lest they should
 25 take from Christ the thank of his bitter Passion. But when they were a
 while nuzzled in that point first, they could endure and abide after
 many things more... with which had he begun, they would have pulled
 him down.

1 *sharp*: ascetic // *wonderful*: astonishing 3 *mean*: average

3 *whereas . . . against*: i.e., the content of his homily being in great part about 6, 13 *peevish*: foolish

6 *purpose them*: make up their minds; resolve 13, 25 *thank*: credit 16 *lean to*: depend on

19 *so bitterly*: with such intense emotion; so melodramatically

20–21 *I . . . saw*: I was not surprised to see 23 *brought in*: taken in; deceived

24 *of*: out of // *first*: at first 26 *nuzzled*: nurtured; indoctrinated // *after*: afterward

27–28 *pulled him down*: i.e., pulled him down from the pulpit

Anthony

2.6

Cousin, God amend that man, whatsoever he be, and God keep
all good folk from such manner of preachers. Such one preacher much
more abuseth the name of Christ, and of his bitter Passion, than five
5 hundred hazarders that in their idle business swear and forswear
themselves by his holy, bitter Passion at the dice.

They carry the minds of the people from the perceiving of their craft,
by the continual naming of the name of Christ, and crying his Passion
so shrilly into their ears.

10 They forget that the Church hath ever taught them that all our
penance without Christ's Passion were not worth a pea. And they
make the people ween that *we* would be saved by our own deeds without
Christ's death... whereas we confess that his only Passion meriteth
incomparably more for us than all our own deeds do. But his pleasure
15 is that we shall also take pain our own selves, *with* him. And therefore
he biddeth all that will be his disciples, take their crosses on their back,
as he did, and with their crosses follow him.

And whereas they say that fasting serveth but for temperance,
to tame the flesh and keep it from wantonness... I would, in good
20 faith, have went that Moses had not been so wild... that for taming
of his flesh he should have needed to fast whole forty days together. No,
nor Elijah neither; nor yet our Savior himself... which began, and the
apostles followed, and all Christendom have kept, the Lenten forty-days'
fast that these folk now call so foolish. King Ahab was not disposed to
25 be wanton in his flesh, when he fasted and went clothed in sackcloth and
all besprent with ashes.

Nor no more was in Nineveh the king and all the city... but they
wailed and did painful penance for their *sin*, to procure God to
pity them and withdraw his indignation. Anna, that in her widowhood
30 abode so many years with fasting and praying in the Temple till the

3 *such one*: one such 5 *hazarders*: gamblers // *forswear*: perjure
10 *forget*: willfully disregard the fact; purposely fail to mention 11 *were not*: would not be
12 *ween*: think // *we*: i.e., we Catholics // *would be*: want to be; would have ourselves
13 *his only Passion*: his Passion alone 15–17: See Matthew 16:24; Luke 14:27.
19–29: See Exodus 34:28; 1 Kings 19:1–8; Luke 4:1–2; 1 Kings 21:17–29; Jonah 3:3–10.
20 *went*: thought 21 *whole*: i.e., a whole // *together*: in a row 26 *besprent*: besprinkled
28 *procure*: get 29 *pity*: take pity on 95/29–96/2: Luke 2:36–38.

birth of Christ, was not, I ween, in her old age so sore disposed to the wantonness of her flesh that she fasted all therefore. Nor Saint Paul, that fasted so much, fasted not all therefore neither. The Scripture is full of places that prove the fasting not to be the “invention of man,”
 5 but the institution of God, and that it hath many more profits than one.

And that the fasting of one man *may* do good to another, our Savior showeth himself, where he saith that some kinds of devils cannot be by one man cast out of another “nisi in oratione et ieiunio”
 10 (“without prayer and fasting”). And therefore I marvel that they take this way against fasting and other bodily penance.

And yet much more I marvel that they mislike the sorrow and heaviness and displeasure of mind that a man should take in forthinking of his sin. The prophet saith, “Scindite corda vestra, et non vestimenta”;
 15 “Tear your hearts,” saith he, “and not your clothes.” And the prophet David saith, “Cor contritum et humiliatum Deus non despiciet”; “A contrite heart and a humbled”—that is to say, a heart broken, torn, and with tribulation of heaviness for his sin laid a-low, underfoot—“shall thou not, good Lord, despise.” He saith also of his own contrition, “Laboravi in gemitu meo;
 20 lavabo per singulas noctes lectum meum; lacrimis meis stratum meum rigabo” (“I have labored in my wailing; I shall every night wash my bed with my tears; my couch will I water”).

But what should I need in this matter lay forth one place or twain? The Scripture is *full* of those places by which it *plainly* appeareth
 25 that God looketh of duty not only that we should amend and be better in the time to come... but also be sorry and weep and bewail our sins committed before. And all the old holy doctors be fully and wholly of that mind that men *must* have for their sins contrition and sorrow in heart.

1 *ween*: think // *sore*: terribly 2–3: See 2 Corinthians 11:27. 4 *places*: passages; texts
 7 *may*: can 8–10: Mark 9:29. 11 *way*: stance 12 *mislike*: disapprove of
 13, 18 *heaviness*: grief; sadness 13 *forthinking*: repenting
 14–22: Joel 2:13; Psalm 51:19; Psalm 6:7. 19 *despise*: spurn
 21 *labored*: worn myself out 23 *what*: why 23–24 *lay . . . twain*: to cite one text or two
 25 *looketh of duty*: i.e., regards as a duty on our part, that he expects us to carry out
 27 *old holy doctors*: early doctors of the Church 28 *mind*: opinion

that for his sin sorroweth in his heart, be glad and rejoice in his sorrow:
 so would I counsel him that cannot be sad for his sin, to be
 sorry yet at the least that he cannot be sorry.

2.7

Besides this, though I would in no wise any man should despair,
 5 yet would I counsel such a man while that affection lasteth, not to be
 too bold of courage, but live in double fear.

First for it is a token either of faint faith... or of a dull diligence.
 For surely if we well believe in God, and therewith deeply consider his *majesty*,
 with the peril of our sin, and the great *goodness* of God, also:
 10 either should dread make us tremble and break our stony heart... or love
 should for sorrow relent it into tears.

Besides this, I can scant believe but since so little misliking of
 our old sin is an affection not very pure and clean, and no unclean
 thing shall enter into heaven... cleansed shall it be, and purified, before that
 15 we come there. And therefore would I further advise one in that case,
 the counsel which Master Gerson giveth every man: that since the
 body and the soul together make the whole man... the less affliction that
 he feeleth in his soul, the more pain, in recompense, let him put upon
 his body, and purge the spirit by the affliction of the flesh.
 20 And he that so doth, I dare my life, shall have his hard heart after
 relent into tears... and his soul in a wholesome heaviness and heavenly gladness
 too—especially if (which must be joined with every good thing) he
 join faithful prayer therewith.

But, Cousin, as I told you the other day before: in these matters with
 25 these new men I will not dispute; but surely, for mine own part, I cannot
 well hold with them, for as far as mine own poor wit can perceive,
 the Holy Scripture of God is very plain against them, and the whole
 corps of Christendom in every Christian region... and the very places in
 which they dwell themselves, have ever unto their own days clearly
 30 believed against them, and all the old holy doctors have evermore
 taught against them, and all the old holy interpreters have construed
 the Scripture against them. And therefore if these men have now
 perceived so late... that the Scripture hath been misunderstood all this

5 *while*: as long as 5, 13 *affection*: state of mind 6 *courage*: spirit 7 *token*: sign
 7 *dull diligence*: lack of due heedfulness 11, 21 *relent*: dissolve 12 *misliking*: disliking
 15 *advise* . . . *case*: give as advice to someone in that situation 16 *Master Gerson*: Jean Gerson
 16–19: More may have had in mind a passage in *The Imitation of Christ* (see book 2, chapter 12), which
 in his day was attributed to Gerson. 18 *recompense*: compensation 25 *new*: modern
 26 *hold*: side // *wit*: mind 33 *so late*: so recently; at such a late date

while... and that of all those old holy doctors... no man could understand
 it... then am I too old at this age to begin to study it now; and
 trust these men's cunning, Cousin, that dare I not in no wise... since I
 cannot see nor perceive no cause wherefore I should think that these
 5 men might not now, in the understanding of Scripture, as well
 be deceived themselves... as they bear us in hand that all those others
 have been all this while before.

Howbeit, Cousin, if it so be that their way be not wrong, but that
 they have found out so easy a way to heaven as to take no thought...
 10 but make merry, nor take no penance at all... but sit them down and
 drink well for our Savior's sake—set cock a-hoop and fill in all the
 cups at once, and then let Christ's Passion pay for all the scot—I am
 not he that will envy their good hap... but surely counsel dare I
 give no man to adventure that way with them. But such as fear
 15 lest that way be not sure, and take upon them willingly tribulation of
 penance... what comfort they do take, and well may take, therein—that
 have I somewhat told you already. And since these other folk sit so
 merry without such tribulation, we need to talk to them, you
 wot well, of no such manner comfort. And therefore of this kind of tribulation
 20 will I make an end.

*Of that kind of tribulation which though they not
 willingly take... yet they willingly suffer*

The Eighth Chapter

Vincent

25 Verily, good Uncle, so may you well do; for you have brought it
 unto a very good pass. And now I require you to come to the other
 kind, of which you purposed always to treat last.

3 *cunning*: learning; erudition 6 *deceived*: mistaken
 6 *bear us in hand*: try to convince us; would have us believe
 11 *set cock a-hoop*: turn on the tap and let the liquor flow 12 *for all the scot*: the whole tab
 13 *he*: one // *hap*: fortune 14 *adventure*: venture upon 15 *sure*: safe 19 *wot*: know
 26 *pass*: completion // *require*: ask 27 *purposed always*: always intended

Anthony

2.9

That shall I, Cousin, very gladly do. The other kind is this which I rehearsed second, and sorting out the other twain, have kept it for the last. This kind of tribulation is, you wot well, of them that willingly
 5 suffer tribulation though that of their own choice they took it not, at the first. This kind, Cousin, divide we shall into twain. The first might we call temptation; the second, persecution. But here must you consider that I mean not *every* kind of persecution, but that kind only which though the sufferer would be loath to fall in... yet will he
 10 rather abide it and suffer it than by the flitting from it fall in the displeasure of God... or leave God's pleasure unprocured. Howbeit, if we well consider these two things, temptation and persecution, we may find that either of them is incident to the other. For both by temptation the devil persecuteth us and by persecution the devil also
 15 tempteth us. And as persecution is tribulation to every man, so is temptation tribulation to every good man. Now, though the devil, our spiritual enemy, fight against man in both, yet this difference hath the common temptation from the persecution: that temptation is, as it were, the Fiend's train... and persecution, his plain, open
 20 fight. And therefore will I now call all this kind of tribulation here by the name of "temptation," and that shall I divide into two parts. The first shall I call the devil's trains; the other, his open fight.

*First, of temptation in general, as it is common to
 both*

25 The Ninth Chapter

To speak of every kind of temptation particularly, by itself—this were, ye wot well, in manner an infinite thing; for under that, as I told

3 *rehearsed*: mentioned 9, 10 *in*: into 10 *abide*: put up with
 13 *incident to*: consequent upon 19, 22 *train(s)*: snare(s) 27 *were*: would be
 28 *in manner*: practically

you, fall persecutions and all. And the devil hath of his trains a thousand subtle ways... and of his open fight as many poisoned darts.

2.9

He tempteth us by the world, he tempteth us by our own flesh; he tempteth us by pleasure, he tempteth us by pain; he tempteth us by our foes, he tempteth us by our own friends—and under color of kindred, he maketh many times our next friends our most foes. For as our Savior saith, “*Inimici hominis domestici eius.*”

But in all manner of so diverse temptations, one marvelous comfort is this: that with the more we be tempted, the gladder have we cause to be. For Saint James saith, “*Omne gaudium existimate, fratres, cum in tentationes varias incideritis*”; “Esteem it and take it,” saith he, “my brethren, for a thing of all joy when you fall into diverse and sundry manner of temptations.” And no marvel, for there is in this world set up, as it were, a game of wrestling, wherein the people of God come in on the one side, and on the other side come mighty, strong wrestlers and wily—that is to wit, the devils, the accursed, proud, damned spirits. For it is not our flesh alone that we must wrestle with, but with the devil too. “*Non est nobis colluctatio adversus carnem et sanguinem... sed adversus principes et potestates tenebrarum harum; adversus spiritalia nequitiae in caelestibus*”; “Our wrestling is not here,” saith Saint Paul, “against flesh and blood... but against the princes and potentates of these dark regions; against the spiritual wicked ghosts of the air.”

But as God unto them that on his part give his adversary the fall, hath prepared a crown... so he that will not wrestle shall none have; for as Saint Paul saith, “*Nemo coronabitur nisi qui legitime certaverit*” (“There shall no man have the crown but he that doth his devoir therefor, according to the law of the game”). And then, as holy Saint Bernard saith, how couldst thou fight or wrestle therefor, if there were no challenger against thee that would provoke thee thereto? And therefore may it be a great comfort... as Saint James saith, to every man that seeth himself challenged and provoked by temptation; for thereby

2 *subtle*: insidiously sly 5, 6 *friends*: relatives and friends; loved ones 5 *color*: the guise

6 *next*: closest // *most foes*: worst enemies

7: Matthew 10:36 (“A man’s enemies are members of his own household”).

8 *marvelous*: tremendous 10–12: James 1:2. 18–22: Ephesians 6:12.

25–27: 2 Timothy 2:5. 26–27 *doth . . . therefor*: strives for it; does what he can to get it

27 *law*: rules 27–29: See Saint Bernard’s seventeenth sermon on the Song of Songs.

perceiveth he that it cometh to his course to wrestle... which shall be,
but if he willingly will play the coward or the fool, the matter of
his eternal reward.

2.10

A special comfort in all temptation

5

The Tenth Chapter

But now must this needs be to man an inestimable comfort in all
temptation, if his faith fail him not: that is to wit, that he may
be sure that God is always ready to give him strength against the
devil's might, and wisdom against the devil's trains. For as the
10 prophet saith, "Fortitudo mea et laus mea est Dominus; factus est mihi
in salutem" ("My strength and my praise is our Lord; he hath been my
safeguard"). And the Scripture saith, "Pete a Deo sapientiam et dabit
tibi" ("Ask wisdom of God and he shall give it thee")... "ut possitis," as Saint
Paul saith, "deprehendere omnes artes"—"that you may spy and perceive all
15 the crafts."

A great comfort may this be in all kinds of temptation: that God
hath so his hand upon him that is willing to stand and will trust in
him and call upon him... that he hath made him sure, by many faithful
promises in Holy Scripture, that either he shall not fall... or if he
20 sometime through faintness of faith stagger or hap to fall, yet if he call
upon God betimes, his fall shall be no sore bruising to him... but as the
Scripture saith, "Iustus si ceciderit non collidetur, quia Dominus supponit manum"—
"The just man, though he fall, shall not be bruised, for our Lord
holdeth under his hand."

25 The prophet expresseth a plain comfortable promise of God against
all temptation, where he saith, "Qui habitat in adiutorio Altissimi,
in protectione Dei caeli commorabitur"; "Whoso dwelleth in the help of the

2 *but if*: unless // *willingly*: deliberately // *matter*: ground 6 *inestimable*: incalculable
7 *may*: can 9 *trains*: snares 10–13: Psalm 118:14; James 1:5. 13–15: See Ephesians 3:18.
15 *crafts*: arts; techniques 18 *made him sure*: assured him
18 *faithful*: earnest; made in all seriousness 21 *betimes*: in good time
22–24: Psalm 37:23–24. 24 *holdeth under his hand*: supports him by the hand
25 *comfortable*: encouragement-giving // *against*: regarding 102/26—103/2: Psalm 91:1.

Highest God, he shall abide in the protection”—or “defense”—“of the God of heaven.” Who dwelleth now, good Cousin, in the help of the High God?

2.10

Surely he that through a good faith abideth in the trust and confidence of God’s help, and never for lack of that faith and trust
 5 in *his* help falleth desperate of *all* help—nor departeth from the hope of *his* help... to seek himself help, as I told you the other day, of the flesh, the world, or the devil.

Now, he, then, that by fast faith and sure hope dwelleth in God’s help and hangeth always thereupon, never falling from that hope—he shall,
 10 saith the prophet, “ever dwell and abide in God’s defense and protection”; that is to say that while he faileth not to believe well and hope well, God will never fail in all temptation to defend him. For unto such a faithful, well-hoping man, the prophet in the same psalm saith further, “Scapulis suis obumbrabit tibi, et sub pennis eius sperabis”—
 15 “With his shoulders shall he shadow thee, and under his feathers shalt thou trust.” Lo, here hath every faithful man a sure promise... that in the fervent heat of temptation or tribulation (for as I have said divers times before, they be in such wise coincident that *every* tribulation the devil useth for temptation to bring us to impatience, and thereby to
 20 murmur and grudge, and blasphemy; and *every* kind of temptation, to a good man that fighteth against it and will not follow it, is a very painful tribulation)—in the fervent heat, I say therefore, of every *temptation*, God giveth the faithful man that hopeth in him, the shadow of his holy shoulders, which are broad and large, sufficient to
 25 refrigerate and refresh the man in that heat... and in every *tribulation* he putteth his shoulders for a defense between. And then what weapon of the devil may give us any deadly wound, while that impenetrable pavis of the shoulder of God standeth always between?

Then goeth the verse further and saith unto such a faithful man,
 30 “Et sub pennis eius sperabis”—“Thy hope shall be under his feathers.” That is to wit, “For the good hope thou hast in his help, he will take thee so near him into his protection that as the hen, to keep her young chickens from the kite, nestleth them together under her own wings...

5 *desperate*: i.e., into despair 8 *fast*: steadfast; firm 9 *hangeth*: depends
 11 *while*: as long as 13, 16 *faithful*: believing; full of faith 14–16: Psalm 91:4.
 15 *shadow thee*: give you shade 17, 22 *fervent*: intense 17 *divers*: several
 20 *grudge*: grumbling 24 *shadow*: shade 25 *refrigerate*: cool
 27 *may*: can // *while*: when 28 *pavis*: shield 33 *kite*: a kind of hawk

so from the devil's claws, the ravenous kite of this dark air, will the God of heaven gather the faithful, trusting folk near unto his own sides, and set them in surety, very well and warm, under the covering of his heavenly wings."

- 5 And of this defense and protection our Savior spoke himself unto the Jews (as mention is made in the twenty-third chapter of Saint Matthew), to whom he said in this wise: "Ierusalem, Ierusalem, quae occidis prophetas et lapidas eos qui ad te missi sunt, quotiens volui congregare te quemadmodum gallina congregat pullos suos sub alas suas, et noluisti";
- 10 that is to say, "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, that killest the prophets and stonest unto death them that are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy sons together as the hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and thou wouldst not!"

- Here are, Cousin Vincent, words of no little comfort unto every
- 15 Christian man... by which we may see with how tender affection God, of his great goodness, longeth to gather under the protection of his wings, and how often like a loving hen he clucketh home unto him, even those chickens of his that willfully walk abroad into the
- 20 kite's danger and will not come at his clucking... but ever the more he clucketh for them, the further they go from him. And therefore can we not doubt if we will *follow* him, and with faithful hope come *run* to him, but that he shall in all matter of temptation take us near unto him and set us even under his wing. And then are we safe if we will tarry there; for against our will can there no power pull us thence...
- 25 nor hurt our souls there. "Pone me," saith the prophet, "iuxta te, et cuiusuis manus pugnet contra me"—"Set me near unto thee, and fight against me whose hand that will!"

3 *surety*: safety // *well*: good 7–13: Matthew 23:37. 15 *may*: can 18 *abroad*: out
 23 *even*: right 24 *tarry*: stay // *thence*: away from there
 25–27: This is actually from Job 17:3 (Vulgate).

And to show the great safeguard and surety that we shall have
 while we sit under his heavenly feathers, the prophet saith yet a great
 deal further: “Sub umbra alarum tuarum exultabo”; that is to wit, that we
 shall not only when we sit by his sweet side under his holy wing...
 5 sit in safeguard... but that we shall also under the covering of his
 heavenly wings with great exultation rejoice. 2.11

*Of four kinds of temptation—and therein, both the parts
 of that kind of tribulation that men willingly suffer—
 touched in two verses of the Psalter*

10 The Eleventh Chapter

Now, in the two next verses following, the prophet briefly comprehendeth
 four kinds of temptation, and therein all the tribulation that we
 shall now speak of, and also some part of that which we have spoken
 of before. And therefore I shall peradventure, except any further thing
 15 fall in our way, with treating of those two verses finish and end all our
 matter.

The prophet saith in the psalm, “Scuto circumdabit te veritas eius;
 non timebis a timore nocturne, a sagitta volante in die, a negotio perambulante
 in tenebris, ab incursu et daemonio meridiano”; “The truth of God shall compass
 20 thee about with a pavis; thou shalt not be afeard of the night’s
 fear, nor of the arrow flying in the day, nor of the busyness walking
 about in the darkneses... nor of the incursion” (or “invasion”) “of
 the devil in the midday.”

First, Cousin, in these words “the truth of God shall compass thee
 25 about with a pavis,” the prophet for the comfort of every good man

1 *surety*: security 2 *while*: as long as 3: Psalm 63:8. 9 *touched*: mentioned
 11 *comprehendeth*: takes in 14 *peradventure*: perhaps // *except*: unless
 15–16 *all our matter*: our whole discussion 17–23: Psalm 91:4–6. 20, 25 *pavis*: shield
 21–22 *walking about*: roaming around

- in all temptation and in all tribulation, besides those other things
 that he said before (that the shoulders of God should shadow them, and
 that also they should sit under his wing)—here saith he farther, that “the
 truth of God shall compass thee with a pavis”; that is to wit, that *as*
 5 God hath faithfully *promised* to protect and defend those that faithfully
 will dwell in the trust of his help, so will he truly *perform* it...
 and thee that such one art, will the truth of his promise defend, not
 with a little round buckler that scant can cover the head, but with a
 long, large pavis that covereth all along the body, made, as holy
 10 Saint Bernard saith, broad above with the Godhead, and narrow beneath
 with the manhood... so that this pavis is our Savior Christ himself.
 And yet is not this pavis like other pavises, of this world, which
 are not made but in such wise as while it defendeth one part, the
 man may be wounded upon the other; but this pavis is such... that,
 15 as the prophet saith, it shall round about enclose and *compass* thee...
 so that thine enemy shall hurt thy soul on *no* side! For
 “scuto,” saith he, “circumdabit te veritas eius”—“with a pavis shall his truth
 environ and compass thee round about.” And then, continently
 following, to the intent that we should see that it is not without *necessity*
 20 that the pavis of God should compass us about upon every side,
 he showeth in what wise we be by the devil with trains and
 assaults—by four kinds of temptations and tribulations—environed upon
 every side; against all which compass of temptations and tribulations...
 that round, compassing pavis of God’s truth shall in such wise
 25 defend us, and keep us safe, that we shall need to dread none of them
 all.

2 *shadow them*: give them shade 8 *buckler*: hand-held shield

9–11: See Saint Bernard’s *In Psalmum XC*, 5:2. 18, 22 *environ(ed)*: surround(ed)

18 *continently*: with continuity; without interruption 21 *showeth*: says // *trains*: snares

25 *need to dread none*: i.e., not need to dread any

The first kind of the four temptations

2.12

The Twelfth Chapter

First he saith, “Non timebis a timore nocturno” (“Thou shalt not be afeard of the fear of the night”). By “the night” is there in Scripture sometimes
 5 understood tribulation, as appeareth in the thirty-fourth chapter of Job: “Novit enim Deus opera eorum; idcirco inducet noctem”—“God hath known the work of them, and therefore shall he bring night upon them”; that is to wit, tribulation for their wickedness.

And well you wot that the night is of the nature of itself discomfortable
 10 and full of fear. And therefore by the “night’s fear,” here I understand the tribulations by which the devil (through the sufferance of God), either by himself or others that are his instruments, tempteth good folk to impatience—as he did Job. But he that, as the prophet saith, dwelleth and continueth faithfully in the hope of God’s help,
 15 shall so be clipped in on every side with the shield or pavis of God, that he shall have no need to be afeard of such tribulation that is here called the “night’s fear.” And it may be also conveniently called the “night’s fear” for two causes: the one, for that many times the cause of his tribulation is, unto him that suffereth, dark and unknown—and
 20 therein varieth it and differeth from that tribulation by which the devil tempteth a man by open fight and assault... for a good known thing from which he would withdraw him... or for some known evil thing into which he would drive him by force of such persecution. Another cause for which it is called the “night’s fear” may be for that the
 25 night is so far out of courage, and naturally so casteth folk in fear, that of everything whereof they perceive any manner dread, their fantasy doubleth their fear, and maketh them often ween that it were much

5–7: Job 34:25. 9 wot: know // *discomfortable*: conducive to uneasiness
 11–12 *the sufferance of God*: God’s allowing this to happen
 15 *clipped in*: closely surrounded 17 *conveniently*: fittingly; appropriately
 19 *dark*: obscure 25 *far out of*: much depleted of 26 *fantasy*: imagination
 27 *ween*: think

worse than indeed it is. The prophet saith in the Psalter, “Posuisti tenebras, et facta est nox, in illa pertransibunt omnes bestiae silvarum, catuli leonum rugientes quaerentes a Deo escam sibi”—“Thou hast, good Lord, set the darkness, and made was the night; and in the night walk all the beasts of the woods... the whelps of the lions roaring and calling unto God for their meat.”

Now, though that the lions’ whelps walk about roaring in the night and seek for their prey... yet can they not get such meat as they would, always... but must hold themselves content with such as God suffereth to fall in their way. And though they be not aware thereof, yet of God they ask it... and of him they have it.

And this may be comfort to all good men in their “night’s fear,” in their dark tribulation: that though they fall into the claws or the teeth of those lions’ whelps... yet shall all that they can do, not pass beyond the body—which is but as the garment of the soul. For the soul itself, which is the substance of the man, is so surely fenced in round about with the shield or pavis of God, that as long as he will abide faithfully “in adiutorio Altissimi” (“in the hope of God’s help”), the lions’ whelps shall not be able to hurt it; for the great lion himself could never be suffered to go further in the tribulation of Job than God from time to time gave him leave. And therefore the deep darkness of the midnight maketh men that stand out of faith and out of good hope in God to be in their tribulation far in the greater fear, for lack of the light of faith, whereby they might perceive that the uttermost of their peril is a far less thing than they take it for.

But we be so wont to set so much by our body, which we see and feel, and in the feeding and fostering whereof we set our delight and our wealth... and so little (alas!), and so seldom, we think upon our soul, because we cannot see that but by spiritual understanding, and most especially by the eye of our faith (in the meditation whereof we bestow, Got wot, little

1 *indeed it is*: it actually is 1–6: Psalm 104:20–21. 6, 8 *meat*: food 8 *would*: would like to
 9 *suffereth*: allows // *fall in*: come 13 *though*: even if 14 *pass*: go 22 *out of*: outside
 30 *bestow*: spend // *wot*: knows

time)... that the loss of our body we take for a sorer thing, and for a greater tribulation a great deal, than we do the loss of our soul. And whereas our Savior biddeth us that we should not fear those lions' whelps that can but kill our bodies, and when that is done... have no further
 5 thing in their power wherewith they can do us harm; but biddeth us stand in dread of him which when he hath slain the body... is able then besides to cast the soul into everlasting fire—we be so blind in the dark night of tribulation, for lack of full and fast belief of God's word, that whereas in the "day" of prosperity we very little fear God for our
 10 soul... our "night's fear" of adversity maketh us very sorely to fear the lion and his whelps for dread of loss of our bodies.

And whereas Saint Paul in sundry places showeth us that our body is but as the garment of the soul... yet the faintness of our faith to the Scripture of God maketh us with the "night's fear" of tribulation more
 15 to dread, not only the loss of our body than of our soul—that is to wit, of the clothing... than of the substance that is clothed therewith—but also of the very outward goods that serve for the clothing of the body. And much more foolish are we in that dark night's fear than were he that would forget the saving of his body for fear of losing of
 20 his old rain-beaten cloak, that is but the covering of his gown or his coat.

Now consider further yet, that the prophet, in the afore-rehearsed verses, saith not that in the night walk only the lions' whelps, but also "omnes bestiae silvarum"—*all* the beasts of the wood. Now wot you
 25 well that if a man walk through the wood in the night, many things may make him afeard, of which in the day he would not be afeard a whit. For in the night, every bush, to him that waxeth once afeard, seemeth a thief.

I remember that when I was a young man, I was once in the war with the king then my master (God assoil his soul),
 30 and we were camped within the Turk's ground, many a mile beyond

1 *sorer*: more grievous 8 *fast*: firm

12–13: See 1 Corinthians 15:51–55; 2 Corinthians 5:1–4; Philippians 1:23–24.

12 *showeth*: tells 13 *to*: in 22 *afore-rehearsed*: previously cited

24 *wot*: know 27 *waxeth*: becomes 30 *assoil*: rest

Belgrade—which would God were ours now as well as it was then!
 But so happened it that in our camp, about midnight, there suddenly
 rose a rumor and a scry that the Turk's whole army was secretly
 stealing upon us; wherewith our whole host was warned to arm them
 5 in haste, and set themselves in array to fight; and then were the scourers of
 ours that brought those sudden tidings examined more leisurely by
 the council... what surety, or what likelihood, they had perceived
 therein. Of whom one showed that by the glimmering of the moon he
 had espied and perceived and seen them himself, coming on softly and
 10 soberly in a long range, all in good order... not one farther forth than
 the other in the forefront... but as even as a thread, and in breadth further
 than he could see in length.

His fellows, being examined, said that he was somewhat pricked
 forth before them, and came so fast back to tell it them that they thought
 15 it rather time to make haste and give warning to the camp... than to go
 nearer unto them. For they were not so far off but that they had yet
 themselves somewhat an unperfect sight of them too.

Thus stood we watching all the remnant of the night, evermore
 hearkening when we should hear them come with "Hush, stand still,
 20 methink I hear a trampling"... so that at last many of us thought we
 heard them ourselves also. But when the day was sprung and that we
 saw no man... out was the scourer sent again, and some of our captains
 with him, to show whereabout the place was in which he
 perceived them. And when they came thither, they found that
 25 great, fearful army of the Turks so soberly coming on... turned,
 God be thanked, into a fair long hedge standing even stone-still.
 And thus fareth it in the "night's fear" of tribulation; in which
 the devil, to bear down and overwhelm with dread the faithful
 hope that we should have in God, casteth in our imagination much
 30 more fear than cause. For—while there walk in that night not only
 the lions' whelps, but over that, all the beasts of the wood besides—the

1 *would God*: I wish to God 3 *scry*: clamor 4 *host*: company // *them*: themselves
 5, 22 *scourer(s)*: scout(s) 7 *surety*: hard evidence // *likelihood*: ground of probable inference
 8 *showed*: said 13–14 *was . . . before*: had gotten something of a headstart on
 16 *them*: i.e., the Turks 18 *watching*: on the alert // *remnant*: rest 26 *fair*: nice
 26 *even*: just 30 *than cause*: i.e., than there is just cause for // *while*: given that
 31 *over that*: moreover

beast that we hear roar in the dark night of tribulation, and fear it
 for a lion, we sometimes find well afterward, in the day, that it was
 no lion at all... but a seely rude, roaring ass. And the thing that on
 the sea seemeth sometimes a rock, is indeed nothing else but a
 5 mist. Howbeit, as the prophet saith, he that faithfully dwelleth in
 the hope of God's help—the pavis of his truth shall so fence
 him round about... that be it an ass... colt... or a lion's whelp... or a
 rock of stone or a mist... *non timebit a timore nocturno*; the "night's fear"
 thereof shall he nothing need to dread.

10

Of pusillanimity

The Thirteenth Chapter

Therefore find I that in the "night's fear" one great part is the fault of
 pusillanimity; that is to wit, faint and feeble stomach... by which a
 man for faint heart is afeard where he needeth not; by the reason whereof
 15 he fleeth oftentimes for fear of that thing... of which, if he fled
 not, he should take no harm. And some man doth sometime by
 his fleeing make his enemy bold on him... which would if he fled not,
 but durst abide thereby, give over and flee from *him*.

This fault of pusillanimity maketh a man in his tribulation for
 20 feeble heart first impatient, and afterward oftentimes driveth him by
 impatience into a contrary affection... making him frowardly stubborn
 and angry against God, and thereby to fall into blasphemy as do the damned
 souls in hell. This fault of pusillanimity and timorous mind
 letteth a man also, many times, from the doing of many good things...
 25 which if he took a good stomach to him in the trust of God's help,
 he were well able to do. But the devil casteth him in a cowardice,
 and maketh him take it for humility, to think himself unmeet

3 *seely*: mere 9 *nothing*: in no way 13 *stomach*: spirit; disposition

18 *durst abide. thereby*: dared to stay there with him // *give over*: give up; desist

21 *contrary*: opposite // *affection*: disposition; attitude // *frowardly*: perversely

24 *letteth*: keeps 25 *stomach*: courage; valor 26 *were*: would be 27 *unmeet*: unfit; unsuited

and unable thereto, and therefore to leave the good thing undone whereof
God offereth him occasion and had made him convenient thereto.

2.14

But such folk have need to lift up their hearts and call upon God...
and by the counsel of other good, ghostly folk, cast away the cowardice
5 of their own conceit which the “night’s fear” by the devil hath
framed in their fantasy... and look in the Gospel upon him which laid
up his talent and left it unoccupied, and therefore utterly lost it, with a
great reproach of his pusillanimity... by which he had went he should
have *excused* himself, in that he was *afeard* to put it forth in ure and
10 occupy it. And all this fear cometh by the devil’s drift wherein he
taketh occasion of the faintness of our good and sure trust in God. And
therefore let us faithfully dwell in the good hope of his help, and then
shall the pavis of his truth so compass us about that of this “night’s
fear” we shall have no fear at all.

15 *Of the daughter of pusillanimity: a scrupulous conscience*

The Fourteenth Chapter

This pusillanimity bringeth forth by the “night’s fear” a very timorous
daughter: a seely, wretched girl, and ever puling, that is called
scrupulosity, or a scrupulous conscience. This girl is a meetly good
20 pucelle in a house, never idle, but ever occupied and busy... but albeit
she hath a very gentle mistress that loveth her well, and is well content
with that she doth—or if it be not all well (as all cannot always be
well), content to pardon her, as she doth others of her fellows...
and so letteth her know that she will—yet can this peevish girl never
25 cease whining and puling for fear lest her mistress be always angry
with her, and that she shall shrewdly be shent. Were her mistress,
ween you, likely to be content with this condition? Nay, surely!

1 *unable*: unqualified 2 *convenient*: fit; suitable 4 *ghostly*: devout
5 *conceit*: idea; notion 6 *framed*: formed // *fantasy*: imagination
6 *upon him which*: at that man who 7 *unoccupied*: not put to work 8 *went*: thought
9 *ure*: use 10 *occupy it*: put it to work // *drift*: scheme 18 *seely*: poor
18, 25 *puling*: whimpering 19 *meetly*: fairly 20 *pucelle*: maid 22 *that*: what
23 *content*: willing // *fellows*: coworkers; companions 24 *peevish*: silly
26 *shrewdly be shent*: get a bad scolding 27 *ween you*: do you suppose // *content*: happy
27 *condition*: mentality

I knew such one myself, whose mistress was a very wise woman...
 and (which thing is in women very rare) very mild also, and meek, and liked very
 well such service as she did her in the house. But this continual discomfortable
 fashion of hers... she so much disliked that she would
 5 sometimes say, “Ay, what aileth this girl? The elvish urchin weeneth
 I were a devil, I trow! Surely if she did me ten times better service
 than she doth... yet with this fantastical fear of hers—I would be loath
 to have her in my house!”

Thus fareth, lo, the scrupulous person, which frameth himself, many
 10 times, double the fear that he hath cause... and many times a great
 fear where there is no cause at all. And of that that is indeed no
 sin, maketh a venial... and that that is venial, imagineth to be deadly...
 and yet, for all that, falleth in them... being, namely, of their nature such as
 no man long liveth without. And then he feareth that he be never fully
 15 confessed, nor never fully contrite, and then that his sins be never fully
 forgiven him; and then he confesseth and confesseth again, and encumbereth
 himself and his confessor both. And then every prayer that he saith,
 though he say it as well as the frail infirmity of the man will
 suffer, yet is he not satisfied but if he say it again, and yet after that
 20 again; and when he hath said one thing thrice—as little is he satisfied
 at the last as with the first. And then is his heart evermore in heaviness,
 unquiet, and in fear, full of doubt and of dullness, without comfort or spiritual
 consolation.

With this “night’s fear” the devil sore troubleth the mind of many
 25 a right good man, and that doth he to bring him to some great inconvenience.
 For he will, if he can, drive him so much to the minding
 of God’s rigorous justice that he will keep him from the comfortable
 remembrance of God’s great, mighty mercy, and so make him do
 all his good works wearily, and without consolation or quickness.

3 *discomfortable*: miserable 4 *misliked*: disliked 5 *what aileth*: what is the matter with
 5–6 *weeneth* . . . *trow*: thinks I’m a devil, I suppose 7 *fantastical*: irrational 9 *which*: who
 9 *frameth*: forms for 12 *deadly*: mortal 13 *being, namely*: i.e., especially those that are
 19 *suffer*: allow 21 *heaviness*: despondency 22 *dullness*: listlessness 25 *inconvenience*: harm
 27 *comfortable*: comforting 29 *quickness*: enthusiasm

2.14

- Moreover, he maketh him to take for sin something that is none... and for deadly, some such as are but venial... to the intent that when he shall fall into them, he shall by reason of his scruple sin where else he should not... or sin deadly, while his conscience in the deed
- 5 doing so gave him, where indeed he had offended but venially.
Yea, and further, the devil longeth to make all his good works and spiritual exercise so painful and so tedious unto him that with some other suggestion, or false, wily doctrine of a false spiritual liberty, he should, for the false ease and pleasure that he should suddenly
- 10 find therein, be easily conveyed from that evil fault into a much worse... and have his conscience as wide and as large after, as ever it was narrow and strait before. For better is yet, of truth, a conscience a little too strait than a little too large.
- My mother had, when I was a little boy, a good old woman that
- 15 took heed to her children. They called her Mother Maud—I trow you have heard of her.

Vincent

Yea, yea, very much.

Anthony

- 20 She was wont, when she sat by the fire with us, to tell us that were children many childish tales. But, as Pliny saith that there is no book lightly so bad but that some good thing a man may pick out thereof, so think I that there is almost no tale so foolish but that yet in one matter or other, to some purpose it may hap to serve. For I
- 25 remember me that among others of her fond tales, she told us once that the ass and the wolf came upon a time to confession, to the fox. The poor ass came to shrift in the Shrovetide, a day or two before Ash Wednesday; but the wolf would not come to confession till he saw

2, 4 *deadly*: mortal(ly) 4 *while*: since
 5 *so gave him*: so told him (i.e., that the thing he was doing was a mortal sin)
 5 *indeed*: i.e., objectively // *offended*: sinned 7 *tedious*: irksome 10 *evil*: bad
 11, 13 *large*: permissive; accommodating 12, 13 *strait*: rigorous; exacting
 15 *heed to*: care of // *trow*: think 21–23: See Pliny, *Epistles*, 3:5 (letter to Baebius Macer).
 21–22 *no book lightly*: probably no book 25 *remember me*: recall // *fond*: foolish
 26 *upon a time*: i.e., once upon a time 27 *shrift*: confession

- first Palm Sunday past, and then foded yet forth farther, till Good Friday. 2.14
 The fox asked the ass, before he began “Benedicite,” wherefore
 he came to confession before Lent began, so soon. The poor beast answered
 him again: for fear of deadly sin, if he should lose his part of any
 5 of those prayers that the priest in the cleansing days pray for them
 that are then confessed already. Then, in his shrift, he had a marvelous
 grudge in his inward conscience: that he had one day given his
 master a cause of anger, in that that with his rude roaring before his
 master arose, he had awakened him out of his sleep... and bereaved him
 10 of his rest. The fox for that fault, like a good, discreet confessor,
 charged him to do so no more, but lie still and sleep like a good son
 himself, till his master were up and ready to go to work... and so should
 he be sure that he should not wake him no more.
- To tell you all the poor ass’s confession, it were a long work; for
 15 everything that he did was deadly sin with him, the poor soul
 was so scrupulous. But his wise, wily confessor accounted them for
 trifles, as they were... and swore after unto the badger that he was so weary,
 to sit so long and hear him, that saving for the manner sake, he had liefer
 have sat all that while at breakfast with a good fat goose.
- 20 But when it came to the penance-giving, the fox found that the
 most weighty sin in all his shrift was gluttony; and therefore he discreetly
 gave him in penance that he should “never for greediness” of his
 meat “do any other beast any harm or hindrance”... and then eat his
 meat and study for no more.
- 25 Now, as good Mother Maud told us, when the wolf came to Father
 Reynard (that was, she said, the fox’s name) to confession upon Good
 Friday... his confessor shook his great pair of beads upon him
 (almost as big as bowls!), and asked him wherefore he came so late. “Forsooth,
 Father Reynard,” quoth he, “I must needs tell you the truth—I come,

1 *foded yet forth*: put it off even 2 *before* . . . “*Benedicite*”: i.e., before the ass said “Bless me, Father”
 2, 28 *wherefore*: why 3–4 *answered him again*: said to him in reply 4, 15 *deadly*: mortal
 5 *the cleansing days*: Shrovetide 6–7 *marvelous grudge*: terrible qualm 9 *bereaved*: deprived
 10 *fault*: transgression // *discreet*: sensible; judicious 14 *were*: would be // *work*: production
 15 *with*: to 18 *saving* . . . *sake*: except for the sake of appearances // *had liefer*: would rather
 21 *all his shrift*: his whole confession // *discreetly*: prudently 23, 24 *meat*: food
 24 *study for no more*: not worry about anything else
 27 *great pair of beads*: big set of beads (i.e., rosary) // *upon*: at
 28 *bowls*: balls used in the game of bowls 29 *quoth*: said

you wot well, therefor—I durst come no sooner... for fear lest you would for
my gluttony have given me in penance to fast some part of this Lent.” 2.14
“Nay, nay,” quoth the father-fox, “I am not so unreasonable; for I fast
none of it myself. For I may say to thee, son, here in confession, between
5 us twain... it is no commandment of God, this fasting, but an
invention of man. The priests make folk fast, and put them to pain
about the moonshine in the water, and do but make folk fools... but they
shall make me no such fool, I warrant thee, son. For I eat flesh all
this Lent myself, I. Howbeit, indeed, because I will not be occasion of
10 slander, I therefore eat it secretly in my chamber, out of sight of all
such foolish brethren as for their weak, scrupulous conscience would
wax offended withal. And so would I counsel you to do.” “Forsooth,
Father Fox,” quoth the wolf, “and so, I thank God, I *do*, as near as I can.
For when I go to my meat, I take no other company with me
15 but such sure brethren as are of mine own nature—whose consciences
are not weak, I warrant you... but their stomachs as strong as mine.” “Well,
then, no force,” quoth Father Fox.

But when he heard after, by his confession, that he was so great a
ravener that he devoured and spent sometimes so much victual at
20 one meal as the price thereof would well find some poor man, with his
wife and his children, almost all the week... then he prudently reprov'd
that point in him, and preached him a process of his own
temperance, which never used, as he said, to pass upon himself
the value of sixpence at a meal—no, nor yet so much, neither. “For
25 when I bring home a goose,” quoth he, “not out of the poulterer’s shop,
where folk find them out of the feathers already plucked, and see which is
the fattest, and yet for sixpence buy and choose the best... but out of the housewife’s
house, at the first hand, which may somewhat better cheap afford
them, you wot well, than the poulterer may; nor yet cannot be suffered
30 to see them plucked, and stand and choose them by day... but am fain by

1, 29 *wot*: know 1 *therefor*: i.e., to do just that // *durst come no*: did not dare come any
3 *so*: that 6 *put them to pain*: make them worry 8 *flesh*: meat
9–10 *will* . . . *slander*: don’t want to be a cause of scandal 10 *chamber*: bedroom
11 *for*: on account of 12 *wax offended withal*: get injured by this
13 *as near as I can*: to the best of my ability 14 *meat*: food 15 *sure*: unfaltering; confident
16 *stomachs*: spirits 17 *force*: problem 19 *ravener*: voracious eater 20 *find*: provide
22 *process of*: discourse on 22–23 *his* . . . *which*: i.e., the restraint practiced by his own self, who
23 *pass upon himself*: spend more on himself than; go beyond for himself 24 *yet so*: even that
25, 29 *poulterer*: poultry dealer 28 *which* . . . *them*: who can offer them at a somewhat lower price
29 *may*: can // *nor* . . . *suffered*: i.e., nor can I even be allowed
116/30—117/1 *am* . . . *venture*: have to take them at night, at random

2.14

night to take at a venture, and when I come home, am fain to do the
 labor to pluck her myself, too—yet, for all this, though it be but lean...
 and I ween not well worth a groat, serveth it me sometimes, for all that,
 both dinner and supper too. And therefore, as for that you live of ravin,
 5 therein can I find no fault; you have used it so long that I think you
 can do none other. And therefore were it folly to forbid it you—and, to
 say the truth, against good conscience, too. For live you must, I wot
 well, and other craft can you none. And therefore—as reason is—must you
 live by that. But yet, you wot well, too much is too much... and measure is
 10 a merry mean... which I perceive by your shrift, you have never
 used to keep. And therefore surely this shall be your penance: that
 you shall all this year never pass upon yourself the price of sixpence
 at a meal, as near as your conscience can guess the price.”

Their shrift have I showed you as Mother Maud showed it us. But
 15 now serveth for our matter the conscience of them both in the true
 performing of their penance.

The poor ass after his shrift, when he waxed ahungered, saw a
 sow lie, with her pigs, well lapped in new straw. And near he drew, and
 thought to have eaten of the straw... but anon his scrupulous conscience
 20 began therein to grudge him. For while his penance was that for
 greediness of his meat he should do no other body no harm... he
 thought he might not eat one straw there, lest for lack of that straw,
 some of those pigs might hap to die for cold. So held he still his
 hunger till one brought him meat—but when he should fall thereto,
 25 then fell he yet in a far further scruple. For then it came in his mind
 that he should yet break his penance if he should eat any of that
 either... since he was commanded by his ghostly father that he should
 not for his own meat hinder any other beast; for he thought that if
 he ate not that meat, some other beast might hap to have it... and so
 30 should he by the eating of it, peradventure hinder another. And
 thus stood he, still fasting, till when he told the cause, his ghostly father
 came and informed him better, and then he cast off that scruple
 and fell mannerly to his meat, and was a right honest ass many a fair
 day after.

- 1 *at a venture*: at random // *am fain to*: have to 3 *ween*: think
 3 *groat*: a coin roughly equivalent to a nickel 4 *that*: i.e., the fact that // *of ravin*: by preying
 5 *used*: practiced 6 *can . . . other*: can't do otherwise
 8 *craft . . . none*: you don't have any other skill // *as reason is*: as is reasonable
 9 *measure*: what is commensurate or adequate 10 *merry mean*: happy medium
 10 *perceive . . . shrift*: can tell from what you've confessed
 11 *used to keep*: made a practice of sticking to // *surely*: assuredly
 12–13 *pass . . . meal*: eat more at one meal than could be bought for sixpence 14 *shrift*: confession
 14 *showed*: told 15 *true*: actual 17 *waxed ahungered*: got hungry 18 *lapped*: covered
 19 *thought to have eaten*: thought about eating // *anon*: soon 20 *grudge*: trouble
 20 *while*: given that 21, 24, 28, 29, 33 *meat*: food 24 *one*: someone
 24 *should fall thereto*: was about to start eating it 25 *in a*: into a
 27, 31 *ghostly*: spiritual 33 *mannerly*: in a seemly manner // *honest*: proper

The wolf, now, coming from shrift clean assoiled from his sins...
 went about to do as a shrewd wife once told her husband that she
 would do when she came from shrift. "Be merry, man," quoth she now,
 "for this day, I thank God, was I well shriven; and I purpose now, therefore,
 5 to leave off all mine old shrewdness and begin even afresh!" 2.14

Vincent

Ah, well, Uncle, can you report her so? That word heard I her speak—
 but she said it in sport, to make her husband laugh.

Anthony

10 Indeed, it seemed she spoke it half in sport. For that she said she
 would cast away all her shrewdness—therein I trow she sported. But in
 that she said she would begin it all afresh, her husband found *that*
 good earnest!

Vincent

15 Well, I shall show her what you say, I warrant you!

Anthony

Then will you make me make my word good! But whatsoever
 she did, at the leastwise so fared now this wolf, which had
 cast out in confession all his old ravening, and then hunger pricked him
 20 forward that (as the shrewd wife said) he should begin all afresh.
 But yet the prick of conscience withdrew and held him back, because
 he would not, for breaking of his penance, take any prey for his mealtide
 that should pass the price of sixpence.

25 It happed him then, as he walked prowling for his gear about, he
 came where a man had in few days before cast off two old lean and
 lame horses, so sick that no flesh was there left upon them. And the

1 *clean assoiled*: completely absolved 2, 20 *shrewd*: shrewish; given to faultfinding and scolding
 3 *be merry*: cheer up 5 *even*: completely 7 *that . . . speak*: I heard her say that
 8, 10 *sport*: jest 11 *trow*: think // *sported*: was joking
 13 *good earnest*: to be meant quite seriously
 15 *show*: tell 17 *make me . . . good*: have it proved by me that what I'm saying is true
 19 *ravening*: preying // *pricked*: spurred 20 *that*: so that
 22 *for breaking of*: so as not to break 23 *pass*: exceed
 24 *walked . . . about*: went prowling around for his sustenance

one, when the wolf came by, could scant stand on his legs; and the other... already dead, and his skin ripped off and carried away. And as he looked upon them suddenly, he was first about to feed upon them and whet his teeth on their bones. But as he looked aside, he spied a fair
 5 cow in a close, walking with her young calf by her side... and as soon as he saw them, his conscience began to grudge him against both those two horses. And then he sighed and said to himself, "Alas! Wicked wretch that I am, I had almost broken my penance ere I was aware! For yonder dead horse, because I never saw dead horse sold in the
 10 market... and I should die therefor, by the way that my sinful soul shall to, I cannot devise what price I should set upon him. But in my conscience I set him far above sixpence, and therefore I dare not meddle with him.

"Now, then, is yonder quick horse of likelihood worth a great deal of
 15 money. For horses be dear in this country—especially such soft amblers. For I see by his pace, he trotteth not... nor can scant shift a foot, and therefore I may not meddle with him, for he far passeth my sixpence. But kine this country here hath enough... but money have they very little. And therefore... considering the plenty of the kine, and the scarcity
 20 of the money... as for yonder peevish cow, seemeth unto me, in my conscience, worth not past a groat, and she be worth so much. Now, then, as for her calf, is not so much as she by half... and therefore, while the cow is in my conscience worth but fourpence, my conscience cannot serve me, for sin of my soul, to appraise her calf above twopence; and so pass they not
 25 sixpence between them both. And therefore they twain may I well eat at this one meal and break not my penance at all." And so thereupon he did, without any scruple of conscience. If such beasts could speak now as Mother Maud said they could then... some of them would, I ween, tell a tale almost as wise as this; wherein, save for the diminishing of old
 30 Mother Maud's tale, else would a shorter process have served.

But yet, as peevish as the parable is, in this it serveth for our purpose: that the "night's fear" of a conscience somewhat scrupulous, though it

1, 16 *scant*: hardly 3 *upon*: at // *suddenly*: early on // *first*: at first // *about*: going
 4 *spied*: caught sight of // *fair*: nice-looking 5 *close*: enclosed field 6 *grudge*: trouble
 6 *against*: about 10 *and*: even if // *therefor*: for this // *by*: because of 11 *to*: take
 11 *devise*: guess 12, 17 *meddle*: mess; have anything to do 14 *quick*: live 15 *dear*: scarce
 15 *soft*: slow 17 *passeth*: exceeds 18, 19 *kine*: cattle 18 *enough*: plenty of
 19 *plenty*: abundance 20 *peevish*: piddling; paltry 21 *past a groat*: more than a nickel
 21 *and*: if // *so*: that 22 *while*: since 23 *serve*: allow 24 *pass*: exceed
 29 *wise*: sensible 30 *process*: narrative 31 *peevish*: silly

be painful and troublesome to him that hath it (like as this poor ass
had here), is less harm, yet, than a conscience overlarge... or
such as for his own fantasy the man list to frame himself—now
drawing it narrow, now stretching it in breadth, after the manner of a
cheverel point, to serve on every side for his own commodity—as did
here the wily wolf.

2.14

But such folk are out of tribulation; and comfort need they none;
and therefore are they out of our matter.

But those that are in the “night’s fear” of their own scrupulous
conscience, let them be well wary, as I said, that the devil for weariness
of the one draw them not into the other... and while he would flee from
Scylla, drive him into Charybdis. He must do as doth a ship that should
come into a haven in the mouth whereof lie secret rocks under the
water on both the sides; if he be by mishap entered in among
them that are on the one side, and cannot tell how to get out... he must
get a substantially cunning pilot that so can conduce him from the
rocks on that side, that yet he bring him not into those that are on
the other side... but can guide him in the midway. Let them, I say,
therefore, that are in the troublesome fear of their own scrupulous conscience,
submit the rule of their own conscience to the counsel of
some other good man, which after the variety and the nature of the
scruples may temper the advice. Yea, although a man be very
well learned himself, yet let him in this case learn the custom used
among physicians. For be one of them never so cunning, yet in his own
disease and sickness he never useth to trust all to himself... but send
for such of his fellows as he knoweth meet, and putteth himself in
their hands, for many considerations, whereof they assign the causes.
And one of the causes is *fear*—whereof, upon some tokens, he may conceive

2 *overlarge*: too permissive 3 *for his own fantasy*: to his own liking // *list*: chooses
3 *frame*: fashion for 5 *cheverel point*: a fastener on a stretchy clothing attacher
5 *commodity*: advantage 7, 8 *out of*: outside of 8 *matter*: subject under discussion
12 *Scylla*: A mythological monster living on one side of a very narrow channel off the coast of Sicily.
12 *Charybdis*: A whirlpool on the other side of that same narrow channel. 13 *secret*: hidden
16 *substantially cunning*: thoroughly knowledgeable // *conduce him from*: steer him away from
21 *which*: who // *after*: according to 22 *may*: can // *although*: even if
24 *never so cunning*: no matter how knowledgeable 25 *disease*: illness
25 *useth*: makes it his practice // *send*: i.e., will send 26 *fellows*: colleagues
26 *meet*: (to be) qualified 27 *assign*: name 28 *tokens*: symptoms

in his own passion a great deal more than needeth. And then
were good for his health... that for the time, that he knew no such thing
at all.

2.14

I knew once in this town, one of the most cunning men in that faculty,
5 and the best expert, and therewith the most famous, too, and he that the
greatest cures did upon other men... and yet when he was himself
once very sore sick, I heard his fellows that then looked unto him—
of all which every one would in their own disease have used his help
before any other man—wish yet that for the time of his own sickness,
10 being so sore as it was, he had known no physic at all. He took so
great heed unto every suspicious token, and feared so far the worst,
that his fear did him sometimes much more harm than the sickness
gave him cause.

And therefore, as I say, whoso hath such a trouble of his scrupulous
15 conscience, let him for a while forbear the judgment of himself,
and follow the counsel of some other whom he knoweth for well learned
and virtuous—and especially in the place of confession. For there is God
especially present with his grace, assisting his sacrament. And let
him not doubt to acquiet his mind, and follow that that he is there
20 bade, and think for a while less of the fear of God's justice, and be more
merry in remembrance of his mercy, and persevere in prayer for grace,
and abide and dwell faithfully in the sure hope of his help... and then
shall he find, without any doubt, that the pavis of God's truth shall,
as the prophet saith, so compass him about that he shall not dread
25 the "night's fear" of scrupulosity, but shall have his conscience established
in good quiet and rest.

1 *passion*: suffering // *needeth*: is called for 4 *cunning*: knowledgeable // *faculty*: profession
5 *best*: most 7 *sore sick*: seriously ill // *fellows*: colleagues // *unto*: after
8 *of all which every one*: every one of whom // *in their own disease*: in an illness of their own
9 *before any*: i.e., before that of any 10 *sore*: serious // *physic*: medical science
11 *token*: sign; symptom 18 *assisting*: actively taking part in
19 *doubt*: fear // *acquiet*: calm 21 *merry*: cheerful 23 *pavis*: shield 26 *quiet*: peace

*Another kind of the “night’s fear”; another daughter of
pusillanimity; that is to wit, that horrible temptation by
which some folk are tempted to kill
and destroy themselves*

2.15

5

The Fifteenth Chapter

Vincent

Verily, good Uncle, you have in my mind well declared these kinds of the “night’s fear.”

Anthony

10

Surely, Cousin; but yet are there many more than I can either remember or find. Howbeit, one yet cometh now to my mind, of which I before nothing thought, and which is yet, in mine opinion, of all the other fears the most horrible: that is to wit, Cousin, where the devil tempteth a man to kill and destroy himself.

15

Vincent

Undoubtedly this kind of tribulation is marvelous and strange; and the temptation is of such a sort that some men have opinion that such as once fall in that fantasy can never fully cast it off.

Anthony

20

Yes! *Yes*, Cousin—many a hundred! And else God forbid! But the thing that maketh men so say... is because that of those which finally do destroy themselves... there is much speech and much wondering—as it is well worthy. But many a good man and woman hath sometime—yea, divers years, one after other, continually—been tempted thereto... and yet have, by grace and good counsel, well and virtuously withstood

25

7 declared: explained 10 surely: indeed 11 find: think of 16 marvelous: astonishing
18 fall in that fantasy: get that idea (i.e., to commit suicide) 22 much speech: a lot of talk
22 much wondering: a lot of speculation 22–23 as it is well worthy: as well there should be
24 divers: several 25 well and: quite

it, and been in conclusion clearly delivered of it... and their tribulation
 nothing known abroad, and therefore nothing talked of. But surely,
 Cousin, a horrible, sore trouble it is to any man or woman that the
 devil tempteth therewith. Many have I heard of... and with some have
 5 I talked myself, that have been sore encumbered with that temptation,
 and marked have I not a little the manner of them.

Vincent

I require you, good Uncle, show me somewhat of such things as you
 perceive therein.
 10 For first, whereas you call this kind of temptation the daughter of
 pusillanimity, and thereby so near of sib unto the “night’s fear,” methinketh,
 on the other side, that it is, rather, a thing that cometh of a
 great courage and boldness... when they dare their own hands put themselves
 to *death*; from which we see almost every man shrink and flee—
 15 and that, many such as we know by good proof and plain experience
 for men of great heart and excellent, hardy courage.

Anthony

I said, Cousin Vincent, that of pusillanimity cometh this temptation—
 and very truth it is... that indeed so it doth—but I meant it not that
 20 of *only* faint heart and fear it cometh and groweth *always*; for the devil
 tempteth sundry folks by sundry ways. But the cause wherefore I
 spoke of no other kind of that temptation than of only that which
 is the daughter that the devil begetteth upon pusillanimity... was for
 that that those other kinds of that temptation fall not under the
 25 nature of tribulation and fear—and therefore fall they far out of our matter
 here... and are such temptations as only need counsel, and not comfort
 or consolation—for that the persons therewith tempted be with that
 kind of temptation not troubled in their mind, but verily well content,
 both in the tempting and following. For some hath there been,
 30 Cousin, such that they have been tempted thereto by means of a foolish

1 *in conclusion*: finally 2 *nothing*: not at all // *known*: known about // *abroad*: out there
 2 *surely*: assuredly 3 *sore*: terrible 5 *sore encumbered*: severely burdened
 8 *require you . . . of*: would like for you . . . to tell me something about
 11 *near of sib*: closely akin 12 *on the other side*: to the contrary 13 *their*: i.e., with their
 14 *shrink*: recoil 15 *good proof*: reliable evidence 21 *sundry*: different
 25 *matter*: subject under discussion 27 *for that*: because

pride, and some by the means of anger, without any dread at all—and very
 glad to go thereto; to this I say not nay. But whereas you ween that
none fall thereto by *fear*... but that they have *all* a strong, mighty stomach—
 that shall ye well see the contrary, and that, peradventure, in those
 5 of whom you would ween the stomach most strong and their heart and
 courage most hardy.

Vincent

Yet is it marvel unto me that it should be as you say it is—that this
 temptation is unto them that do it for pride or for anger no tribulation,
 10 nor that they should need in so great a distress and peril
 both of body and soul to be lost, no manner of good ghostly comfort.

Anthony

Let us therefore, Cousin, consider an example or two; for thereby shall we
 the better perceive it.
 15 There was here in Buda, in King Ladislaus's days, a good poor honest
 man's wife. This woman was so fiendish... that the devil, perceiving
 her nature, put her in the mind that she should anger her husband
 so sore that she might give him occasion to kill her... and then should
 he be hanged for her.

20 Vincent

This was a strange temptation indeed! What the devil should she
 be the better then?

Anthony

Nothing... but that it eased her shrewd stomach before, to think
 25 that her husband should be hanged after. And peradventure if you
 look about the world and consider it well... you shall find more such
 stomachs than a few. Have you never heard no furious body

2, 5 *ween*: think 3, 5, 24, 27 *stomach(s)*: spirit(s) 4 *that shall ye*: i.e., of that you will
 11 *ghostly*: spiritual 15 *honest*: honorable 22 *the better*: i.e., the better off for
 24 *shrewd*: malicious

plainly say that to see some such man have a mischief, he would
with good will be content to lie as long in hell as God liveth in heaven?

2.15

Vincent

Forsooth, and some such have I heard.

5

Anthony

This mind of his was not much less mad than hers... but rather,
haply the more mad of the twain; for the woman peradventure did
not cast so far peril therein. But to tell you now to what good pass
the charitable purpose came: as her husband (the man was
10 a carpenter) stood hewing with his chip axe upon a piece of timber,
she began after her old guise so to revile him that the man waxed
wroth at last... and bade her get her in... or he would lay the helm of
his axe about her back—and said also that it were little sin even
15 with that axe head to chop off that unhappy head of hers that carried
such an ungracious tongue therein. At that word the devil took his
time and whetted her tongue against her teeth; and when it was well
sharpened, she swore to him in very fierce anger, “By the Mass, whoreson
husband, I would thou wouldst! Here lieth my head, lo!”—and therewith,
down she laid her head upon the same timber log—“If thou smite
20 it not off, I beshrew thy whoreson heart!” With that, likewise as the devil
stood at her elbow... so stood (as I heard say) his good angel at his, and
gave him ghostly courage, and bade him be bold and do it. And so the
good man up with his chip axe and at a chop chopped off her
head indeed. There were standing other folk by... which had a good
25 sport to hear her chide... but little they looked for this chance till it was
done, ere they could let it. They said they heard her tongue babble in her
head and call “Whoreson! Whoreson!” twice after that the head was from the body.
At the leastwise afterward unto the king thus they reported, all except
only one... and that was a woman... and she said that she heard it
30 not.

1 *have a mischief*: suffer a misfortune 2 *good will*: cheerful acquiescence // *content*: willing

4 *and*: also 6 *mind*: thinking 7 *haply*: perhaps

8 *cast so far peril therein*: in her thinking take into account that far-reaching a penalty

8 *pass*: resolution; outcome 9 *purpose*: intention 11 *after*: according to // *guise*: habit

11–12 *waxed wroth at last*: finally got irate 12 *bade her*: told her to

13 *were little*: wouldn't be much of a 14 *unhappy*: miserable; sorry

15 *ungracious*: ungodly; wicked 16 *time*: opportunity 17, 20, 27 *whoreson*: bastard

18 *I . . . wouldst*: I wish you would 20 *beshrew*: curse 22 *ghostly*: holy

24–25 *which had a good sport*: who found it very entertaining 25 *chide*: rail; i.e., cuss him out

25 *looked for*: expected // *chance*: i.e., this thing to happen

26 *ere*: before // *let*: prevent 27 *from*: off of

Vincent

2.15

Forsooth, this was a wonderful work! What became, Uncle, of the man?

Anthony

5 The king gave him his pardon.

Vincent

Verily, he might in conscience do no less!

Anthony

10 But then was further, almost, at another point—that there should have been a statute made that in such case, there should never after pardon be granted... but, the truth being able to be proved, no husband should need any pardon... but should have leave by the law to follow the example of the carpenter and do the same.

Vincent

15 How happed it, Uncle, that that good law was left unmade?

Anthony

How happed it? As it happeth, Cousin, that many more be left unmade... as well as it... and within a little as good as it, too... both here and in other countries, and sometimes some worse made in their stead.
20 But as they say, the let of *that* law was the Queen's Grace, God forgive her soul. It was the greatest thing, I ween, good lady, that she had to answer for when she died. For surely, save for that one thing, she was a full blessed woman.

25 But letting now that law pass, this temptation in procuring her own death was unto this carpenter's wife no tribulation at all, as far as ever men could perceive; for it liked her well to think thereon, and she even longed therefor. And therefore if she had told you or me

1 *a wonderful work*: an amazing event 7 *might*: could
18 *within a little*: very nearly 20 *let*: obstructor 21 *ween*: suppose
23 *full blessed*: very holy 26 *liked*: pleased 27 *therefor*: for it

before, her mind, and that she would so fain bring it so to pass, we
could have had no occasion to comfort her as one that were in
tribulation. But, marry, *counsel* her (as I told you before) we might...
to refrain and amend that malicious, devilish mind.

2.15

5

Vincent

Verily, that is truth—but such as are well willing to do any
purpose that is so shameful, will never tell their mind to nobody, for
very shame.

Anthony

10 Some will not, indeed. And yet are there some again that, be their
intent never so shameful, find some yet whom their heart serveth
them to make of their counsel therein. Some of my own folk here can
tell you that no longer ago than even yesterday, one that came out of
Vienna showed us, among other talking, that a rich widow (but I
15 forgot to ask him where it happed), having all her life a high,
proud mind and a fell (as those two virtues are wont always to keep
company together), was at debate with another neighbor of hers in
the town. And on a time she made of her counsel a poor neighbor of
hers, whom she thought for money she might induce to follow her
20 mind. With him she secretly broke, and offered him ten ducats for his
labor to do so much for her... as in a morning, early, to come to her
house, and with an axe—unknown, privily—strike off her head; and when
he had so done, then convey the bloody axe into the house of
him with whom she was at debate, in some such manner wise as it
25 might be thought that he had murdered her for malice; and then
she thought she should be taken for a martyr. And yet had she further
devised that another sum of money should after be sent to Rome, and
there should be means made to the pope that she might in all haste be
canonized.

1, 4, 7 *mind*: intention 1 *would* . . . *pass*: so much wanted to carry it out in that way
3 *marry*: indeed 4 *refrain*: restrain 6 *well*: quite // *do*: carry out 7 *purpose*: plan
7 *so*: that 11 *serveth*: allows 12 *folk*: servants 13 *even*: just // *one*: someone
14 *showed*: told 15 *high*: haughty 16 *fell*: cruel 17, 24 *at debate*: at odds; in conflict
18 *on a time*: one day // *made of her counsel*: took into her confidence
19–20 *follow her mind*: do what she wanted him to 20 *broke*: let out her thoughts
24 *manner wise*: kind of way

2.15

This poor man promised... but intended not to perform it. Howbeit,
 when he deferred it, she provided the axe herself, and he appointed
 with her the morning when he should come and do it. And thereupon, into
 her house he came. But then set he such other folk as he would should
 5 know her frantic fantasy, in such place appointed as they might well
 hear her and him talk together. And after that he had talked with
 her thereof... what he would, so much as he thought was enough... he made
 her lie down, and took up the axe in his one hand, and with the other
 hand he felt the edge and found a fault—that it was not sharp... and that
 10 therefore he would in no wise do it till he had ground it sharper. He
 could not else, he said, for pity; it would put her to so much pain. And
 so, full sore against her will, for that time she kept her head still. But
 because she would no more suffer any more deceive her so, and feed her
 forth with delays—ere it was very long after, she hanged herself, her
 15 own hands.

Vincent

Forsooth, here was a tragic story whereof I never heard the like!

Anthony

Forsooth, the party that told it me swore that he knew it for
 20 a truth. And himself is, I promise you, such as I reckon for
 right honest and of substantial truth.

Now, here she letted not... as shameful a mind as she had, to make
 one of her counsel yet—and yet, as I remember, another too, whom
 she entrusted with the money that should procure her canonization.

25 And here I wot well that her temptation came not of fear, but of
 high malice and pride. But then was she so glad in the pleasant device
 thereof... that, as I showed you, she took it for no tribulation... and therefore,

2 deferred it: put it off *4 would should:* would have; wanted to *5 frantic fantasy:* insane idea
7 made: had *13 would . . . deceive:* didn't want to let anyone thus disappoint her anymore
13–14 feed her forth: string her along *14 her:* i.e., with her
21 right . . . truth: very honorable and thoroughly honest *22 letted not:* did not forbear
22 mind: intention *22–23 make . . . yet:* take someone into her confidence nevertheless
26 pleasant: pleasurable // *device:* devising; contriving

comforting of her could have no place; but if men should anything
 give her toward her help, it must have been, as I told you, good counsel.
 And therefore, as I said, this kind of temptation to a man's own
 destruction—which requires *counsel*, and is out of tribulation—was
 5 out of our matter, that is to treat of *comfort* in *tribulation*. 2.16

*Of him that were moved to kill himself by illusion of
 the devil, which he reckoneth for a revelation*

The Sixteenth Chapter

But lest you might reject both these examples, weening they were
 10 but feigned tales—I shall put you in remembrance of one which I
 reckon yourself have read in the *Collations* of Cassian; and if you
 have not, there may you soon find it. For myself have half forgotten
 the thing, it is so long since I read it. But thus much I remember:
 that he telleth there of one that was many days a very especially holy
 15 man in his living... and among the other virtuous monks and
 anchorites that lived there in wilderness, was marvelously much esteemed...
 saving that some were not all out of fear of him lest his “revelations”
 whereof he told many by himself would prove illusions of the devil.
 And so proved it after indeed. For the man was by the devil's subtle
 20 suggestions brought into such a high spiritual pride that in conclusion
 the devil brought him to that horrible point that he made
 him go kill himself. And (as far as my mind giveth me now, without
 new sight of the book) he brought him to it by this persuasion: that
 he made him believe that it was God's will he should so do... and that
 25 thereby should he go straight to heaven.

And then, if it were by that persuasion, with which he took very
 great comfort in his own mind himself—then was it, as I said, out of
 our case... and needed not comfort, but counsel against giving credence
 to the devil's persuasion.

4 *requires*: calls for 4–5 *out*: outside 5 *matter*: concern // *that*: which
 9 *weening*: thinking 10 *feigned tales*: made-up stories 11 *yourself*: you yourself
 12 *may you soon*: you can easily // *myself*: I myself 14 *one that*: someone who
 16 *marvelously*: extremely 17 *all . . . him*: entirely free of apprehension about him
 18 *by*: about // *prove*: turn out to be // *of*: from
 19 *proved it after*: it later turned out to be // *subtle*: insidiously sly
 20 *in conclusion*: finally; in the end 22 *as . . . me*: as well as I can remember

But marry, if he made him first perceive how he had been deluded...
 and then tempted him to his own death by shame and by despair—then
 was it within our matter, lo; for then was his temptation fallen down
 from pride to pusillanimity... and was waxen that kind of the “night’s fear”
 5 that I speak of, wherein a good part of the counsel that were to be
 given him should have need to stand in good comforting. For then
 was he brought into right sore tribulation.

But as I was about to tell you, strength of heart and courage is there
none therein—not only for that very strength, as it hath the name of
 10 virtue in a reasonable creature, can never be without prudence, but
 also for that, as I said, even in them that seem men of most hardiness...
 it shall well appear, to them that well weigh the matter, that the mind
 whereby they be led to destroy themselves groweth of pusillanimity and
 very foolish fear.

15 Take for the example Cato Uticensis, which in Africa killed himself
 after the great victory that Julius Caesar had. Saint Augustine well
 declareth (in his work *De Civitate Dei*) that there was no strength nor
 magnanimity therein, but plain pusillanimity and impotency of stomach...
 whereby he was forced to the destruction of himself... because
 20 his heart was too feeble for to bear the beholding of another man’s glory...
 or the suffering of other worldly calamities that he feared should fall on
 himself. So that, as Saint Augustine well proveth, that horrible deed
 is no act of strength, but an act of a mind either drawn from the
 consideration of itself with some devilish fantasy... wherein the man
 25 hath need to be called home by good counsel... or else oppressed by
 faint heart and fear, wherein a good part of the counsel must stand in
 lifting up his courage with good consolation and comfort.

And therefore, if we found any such religious person as was that

1 marry: indeed 8 courage: spirit 9, 11 for that: because 9 very: true
 10 reasonable: rational 13 groweth: comes 16–22: *City of God*, book 1, chapter 23.
 17 declareth: explains 18 magnanimity: fortitude; courage // stomach: spirit
 19 forced: driven 24 fantasy: delusion 25 called home: brought back to his senses
 26 stand: consist 27 lifting . . . courage: lifting his spirits / bolstering his courage
 28 religious person: person belonging to a religious order

father which Cassian writeth of, that were of such austerity and
 apparent ghostly living... that he were, with such as well knew him,
 reputed for a man of singular virtue; and that it were perceived that
 he had many strange visions appearing unto him; if it should now be
 5 perceived after that... that the man went about secretly to destroy himself:
 whoso should hap to come to the knowledge thereof, and intended
 to do his devoir in the let—first must he find the means to search and
 find out whether the man be, in his manner and his countenance,
 lightsome, glad, and joyful... or dumpish, heavy, and sad; and whether he go
 10 thereabout as one that were full of the glad hope of heaven... or as one
 that had his breast farced full of tediousness and weariness of the world.
 If he were found in the first fashion, it were a token that the devil
 hath by his fantastical “apparitions” puffed him up in such a peevish
 pride that he hath finally persuaded him, by some illusion showed
 15 him for the proof, that God’s pleasure is... that he shall for his sake
 with his own hands kill himself.

2.16

Vincent

Now, if a man so found it, Uncle—what counsel should a man give
 him then?

20

Anthony

That were somewhat out of our purpose, Cousin... since, as I told you
 before, the man were not then in sorrow and tribulation—whereof our
 matter speaketh—but in a perilous merry mortal temptation; so that
 if we should, besides our own matter that we have in hand, enter into that
 25 too... we might make a longer work, between them both, than we
 could well finish this day. Howbeit, to be short, it is soon seen that
 therein... the sum and the effect of the counsel must in manner rest in
 giving him warning of the devil’s sleights... and that must be done
 under such sweet, pleasant manner as the man should not abhor to

2 *ghostly*: holy 5 *went about secretly*: was secretly planning 6 *whoso*: whoever
 7 *his devoir in the let*: his utmost toward the prevention 9 *lightsome*: lighthearted
 9 *dumpish*: down in the dumps // *heavy*: despondent 11 *farced*: stuffed // *tediousness*: boredom
 12 *were a token*: would be an indication 13 *fantastical*: imagined; supposed
 13 *peevish*: foolish 21 *out*: outside // *purpose*: matter in hand
 22–23 *whereof our matter speaketh*: which is what our discussion is about 26 *short*: brief
 27 *in manner rest*: basically consist 28 *giving him warning*: making him aware
 28 *sleights*: ruses; cunning tricks

hear it. For while it could lightly be none other but that the man
 were rocked and sung asleep by the devil's craft... and his mind
 occupied, as it were, in a delectable dream... he should never have good
 audience for him that would rudely and boistously shog him and
 5 wake him, and so shake him out thereof. Therefore must you fair and
 easily touch him, and with some pleasant speech awake him... so that
 he wax not wayward, as children do that are wakened ere they list
 to rise.

But when a man hath first begun with his praise (for if he be
 10 proud, ye shall much better please him with a commendation than
 with a dirge), then, after favor won therewith, a man may a little
 and little insinuate the doubt of such revelations—not, at the first, as it
 were for any doubt of *his*, but of some others', that men in some other
 places talk of. And peradventure it shall not miscontent himself
 15 to show great perils that may fall therein in another man's case than
 his own, and shall begin to preach upon it.

Or if you were a man that had not so very great scrupulous conscience
 of a harmless lie devised to do good with—which kind
 Saint Augustine, though he take always for sin, yet he taketh but for venial,
 20 and Saint Jerome (as by divers places in his books appeareth) taketh not
 fully for so much—then may you feign some secret friend of yours to
 be in such case, and that yourself somewhat fear his peril... and have
 made, of charity, this voyage for his sake, to ask this good father's
 counsel. And in that communication, upon these words of Saint
 25 John, "Nolite omni spiritui credere... sed probate spiritus, si ex Deo sint" ("Give
 not credence to every spirit, but prove the spirits, whether they be
 of God"), and these words of Saint Paul, "Angelus Satanae transfiguratur
 se in angelum lucis" ("The angel of Satan transfigureth himself into

1 *while*: given that // *lightly* . . . *but*: could hardly be otherwise than 2 *were*: was
 2 *asleep*: to sleep // *craft*: trickery 3 *should* . . . *that*: would never listen well to anyone who
 4 *boistously shog*: roughly jog 5–6 *fair and easily*: nice and gently 6 *pleasant*: agreeable
 7 *wax not wayward*: not get recalcitrant 7–8 *ere* . . . *rise*: before they want to get up
 11–12 *a little and little*: little by little 12 *insinuate*: bring up indirectly // *as*: as if
 13 *his*: i.e., his revelations 14 *it* . . . *himself*: he himself will not be unwilling
 15 *show*: point out 18 *of*: with regard to 20 *divers places*: several passages
 20 *appeareth*: is made evident 21 *fully*: in all cases 22 *case*: a situation
 23 *voyage*: pilgrimage 24 *communication*: conversation 24–27: 1 John 4:1.
 26 *prove*: test 132/27—133/1: 2 Corinthians 11:14.

the angel of light”), you shall take occasion—the better if they hap to come in on his side... but yet not lack occasion neither, if those texts, for lack of his offer, come in upon your own—occasion, I say, you shall not lack to enquire by what sure and undeceivable tokens a man may discern the true revelations from the false illusions; whereof a man shall find many, both here and there in divers other authors... and whole together, divers goodly treatises of that good, godly doctor Master John Gerson, entitled *De probatione spirituum*.

As whether the party be natural-wise, or anything seem fantastical.

Whether the party be poor-spirited or proud—which will somewhat appear by his delight in his own praise. Or if of wiliness... or of another pride, for to be praised of humility... he refuse to hear thereof: yet any little fault found in himself... or diffidence declared, and mistrust of his own “revelations” and doubtful “tokens” told... wherefore himself should fear lest they be the devil’s illusions—such things, as Master Gerson saith, will make him spit out somewhat of his spirit, if the devil lie in his breast.

Or if the devil be yet so subtle that he keep himself close in his warm den, and blow out never a hot word—yet is it to be considered... what end his “revelations” draw to: whether to any spiritual profit to himself or other folk... or only to vain marvels and wonders.

Also whether they withdraw him from such other good, virtuous business as by the common rules of Christendom, or any rules of his profession, he was wont to use, or were bound to be occupied in.

Or whether he fall into any singularity of opinions against the Scripture of God, or against the common faith of Christ’s Catholic Church.

Many other tokens are there in that work of Master Gerson spoken of, to consider by... whether the person, never having revelations of

2 *come in on his side*: be brought up by him 4 *undeceivable tokens*: unmistakable signs

5 *may discern*: can distinguish 9 *natural-wise*: acting normal

9–10 *anything seem fantastical*: seem at all irrational 12 *of*: out of 13 *of*: for

14 *diffidence*: skepticism // *declared*: expressed 15 *doubtful “tokens”*: dubious “signs”

19 *subtle*: crafty // *close*: concealed 21 *his*: i.e., the man’s

26 *use*: engage in // *were bound*: was obliged 30 *tokens*: indications

God *nor* illusions from the devil, do, either for winning of money or worldly favor, feign his “revelations” himself and delude the people withal. But, now, for our purpose, if among any of the marks by which the true revelations may be known from false illusions,

- 5 that man himself bring forth for one mark the doing or teaching of anything against the Scripture of God or the common faith of the Church—then have you an entry made you, by which when you list you may enter into the special matter, wherein he can never well flit from you.
- 10 Or else may you yet... if you list, feign that your secret friend (for whose sake you come to him for counsel) is brought in that mind, by a certain apparition showed unto him (as himself saith, by an angel; as you fear, by the devil), that he can be by you none otherwise persuaded as yet... but that the pleasure of God is that he shall go
- 15 kill himself... and that if he so do, then shall he be thereby so specially participant of Christ’s Passion that he shall forthwith be carried up with angels into heaven; for which is he so joyful that he firmly purposeth upon it... no less glad to do it... than another man would be glad to avoid it. And therefore may you desire his good counsel to
- 20 instruct you... with some substantial good advice wherewith you may “turn him from this error, that he be not, under hope of God’s true revelation, in body and soul destroyed by the devil’s false illusion.”

- If he will in this thing study and labor to instruct you, the things that himself shall find of his own invention, though they be
- 25 less effectual, shall peradventure more work with himself toward his own amendment, since he shall of likelihood better like them... than shall double so substantial told him by another man.

If he be loath to think upon that side, and therefore shrink from the

2 *feign*: fake 3 *withal*: therewith 7 *made*: made for 7, 10 *list*: want to
 8, 10 *may*: can 10 *feign*: pretend 12 *himself*: i.e., the friend himself 17 *with*: by
 19 *desire*: request 24 *himself*: he himself // *invention*: coming up with
 25 *effectual*: forceful; persuasive

2.16
 matter: then is there no other way but adventure after the plain
 fashion to fall into the matter and show what you hear, and to give
 him counsel and exhortation to the contrary—but if you list to say
 that thus-and-thus hath the matter been reasoned already between your
 5 friend and you. And therein may you rehearse such things as should prove
 that the vision which moveth him is no true revelation, but a very
 false illusion.

Vincent

10 Verily, Uncle, I well allow this—that a man should, as well in this thing
 as every other wherein he longeth to do another good, seek such
 a pleasant way as the party should be likely to like... or at the leastwise,
 well to take in worth... his communication; and not so to enter in thereunto
 as he whom he would help should abhor him and be loath to hear
 him, and therefore take no profit by him. But, now, Uncle, if it come, by
 15 the one way or the other, to the point that hear me he will or shall—
 what be the reasons effectual with which I should by my counsel
 convert him?

Anthony

20 All those by which you may make him perceive that himself
 is deceived, and that his visions be no godly revelations, but very devilish
 illusions. And those reasons must you gather of the man, of
 the matter, and of the law of God, or of some one of these. Of the man,
 if you can peradventure show him that in such a point or such, he
 is waxen worse since such “revelations” have haunted him than he was
 25 before; as in those that are deluded, whoso be well acquainted with
 them shall well mark and perceive. For they wax more proud, more
 wayward, more envious... suspicious... misjudging and depraving
 other men, with the delight of their own praise, and such other spiritual
 vices of the soul.

1 *adventure*: venture; attempt 2 *fall*: go // *show*: tell 3 *but if you list*: unless you want
 5 *rehearse*: relate 9 *allow*: grant 12 *well to take in worth*: to take in good part; to take well
 12 *his communication*: what he has to say 13, 15 *hear*: listen to 15 *will*: wants to
 16 *be the reasons effectual*: are the sound considerations 17 *convert him*: turn him around
 20 *deceived*: mistaken 21, 22 *of*: from 24 *is waxen*: has gotten 26 *wax*: become
 27 *wayward*: contrary // *depraving*: disparaging; running down

- Of the matter may you gather if it have happed his “revelations”
before to prove false... or that they be things rather strange than
profitable; for that is a good mark between God’s miracles and the
devil’s wonders. For Christ and his saints have their miracles always
5 tending to fruit and profit; the devil and his witches and necromancers,
all their wonderful works draw to no fruitful end, but to a fruitless
ostentation and show... as it were a juggler that would, for a show before
the people, play masteries at a feast.
- Of the law of God you must draw your reasons in showing by the
10 Scripture that the thing which he weeneth God by his angel biddeth...
God hath his own mouth forbidden. And that is, you wot well, in the
case that we speak of, so easy to find that I need not to rehearse it to
you, since there is plainly among the commandments forbidden the
unlawful killing of any man—and therefore of himself (as Saint Augustine
15 saith, all the Church teacheth), except himself be no man.

Vincent

- This is very true, good Uncle; nor I will not dispute upon any glossing
of that prohibition; but since we find not the contrary but that God
may dispense with that commandment himself, and both license
20 and command also, if himself list, any man to go kill either
another man or himself either: this man that is now by such a
marvelous vision induced to believe that God so biddeth him, and therefore
thinketh himself in that case... of that prohibition discharged,
and charged with the contrary commandment—with what reason
25 may we make him perceive that his vision is but an illusion and not a
true revelation?

Anthony

Nay, Cousin Vincent, ye shall in this case not need to require those

2 *strange*: novel; singular 3 *mark*: distinction 5 *necromancers*: wizards
6 *wonderful works*: amazing acts 7 *juggler*: magician 8 *play . . . feast*: perform tricks at a party
9 *reasons*: considerations 10 *weeneth*: thinks 11 *his*: i.e., by his
12 *rehearse*: tell 13–15: See *City of God*, book 1, chapter 20.
17 *nor . . . glossing*: nor will I argue on the basis of any interpreting 20 *himself list*: he wants to
22 *marvelous*: wondrous 23 *in that case*: (to be) in that situation
23 *of that prohibition discharged*: of being exempted from that prohibition
24 *reason*: consideration 25 *may*: can // *perceive*: realize 28 *require*: ask

reasons of me; but taking the Scripture of God for a ground for this
 matter... you know very well yourself, you shall go somewhat a shorter
 way to work if you ask this question of him: that since God hath once
 forbidden the thing himself... though he may dispense therewith if he
 5 will... yet since the devil may feign himself God, and with a marvelous
 vision delude one and make as though God did it—and since the devil
 is also more likely to speak against God's commandment than God
 against his own—you shall have good cause, I say, to demand of
 the man himself whereby he knoweth that his vision is God's true
 10 revelation and not the devil's false delusion.

Vincent

Indeed, Uncle, I think that would be a hard question to him. May
 a man, Uncle, have in such a thing even a very sure knowledge of his own
 mind?

15 Anthony

Yea, Cousin, God may cast into the mind of man, I suppose, such an
 inward light of understanding that he cannot fail but be sure thereof.
 And yet he that is deluded by the devil may think himself as sure,
 and yet be deceived indeed. And such a difference is there, in a manner,
 20 between them, as is between the sight of a thing while we be waking
 and look thereon, and the sight with which we see a thing in our
 sleep, while we dream thereof.

Vincent

This is a pretty similitude, Uncle, in this thing! And then is it easy for
 25 the monk that we speak of to declare how he knoweth his vision for
 a true revelation and not a false delusion, if there be so great difference
 between them.

4, 5, 12, 16 *may*: can 5 *feign himself*: make himself appear to be // *marvelous*: wondrous
 8–9 *demand of the man himself*: make the man himself tell you 9 *whereby*: how
 21 *thereon*: at it 22 *while we dream thereof*: when we're dreaming about it
 24 *pretty similitude*: nice comparison 25 *declare*: explain

Anthony

2.16

Not so easy, Cousin, as you ween it were. For how can you now prove unto me that you be awake?

Vincent

- 5 Marry! Lo—do I not now wag my hand, shake my head, and stamp with my foot here in the floor?

Anthony

Have you never dreamed ere this that you have done the same?

Vincent

- 10 Yes, that have I—and more, too, than that. For I have ere this in my sleep dreamed that I doubted whether I were asleep or awake, and have in good faith thought that I did thereupon even the same things that I do now indeed... and thereby determined that I was not asleep. And yet have I dreamed, in good faith, further, that I have been afterward
15 at dinner, and there, making merry with good company, have told the same dream at the table, and laughed well thereat... that while I was asleep, I had, by such means of moving the parts of my body, and considering thereof, so verily thought myself waking.

Anthony

- 20 And will you not now soon, trow you, when you wake and rise, laugh as well at yourself... when you see that you lie now in your warm bed asleep again, and dream, all this time while you ween so verily that you be waking and talking of these matters with me?

Vincent

- 25 God's Lord, Uncle, you go now merrily to work with me

2 *ween*: suppose 5 *marry*: an expression of surprise, like "Good heavens!" // *lo*: look
6 *in*: on 11 *doubted*: was in doubt as to 12, 14 *in good faith*: really and truly
12 *even*: exactly 13 *that I do now indeed*: that I'm now actually doing 14 *yet have I*: I have even
18, 23 *waking*: (to be) awake 20 *trow you*: don't you suppose 22 *while*: when // *ween*: think
25 *God's Lord*: an expression like "good Lord"
138/25—139/1 *you . . . indeed*: now you're really just having fun trying to confuse me

indeed... when you look and speak so sadly, and would make me ween I
were asleep!

2.16

Anthony

It may be that you *be* so, for anything that you can say or do
5 whereby you may, with any reason that you make, drive me to confess
that yourself be sure of the contrary—since you can do nor say nothing
now... whereby you be sure to be waking... but that you have ere this, or
hereafter may, think yourself as surely to do the selfsame things
indeed, while you be all the while asleep and nothing do but lie
10 dreaming!

Vincent

Well... well, Uncle, though I *have* ere this thought myself awake while
I was indeed asleep... yet, for all that, this I know well enough—that I
am awake now—and so do you too... though I cannot find the words
15 by which I may with reason force you to confess it... but that always
you may drive me off by the example of my dream.

Anthony

This is, Cousin, as me seemeth, very true. And likewise seemeth me the
manner and difference between some kinds of true revelations and some
20 kinds of false illusions as it standeth between the things that *are*
done, waking, and the things that in our dreams *seem* to be done, while
we be sleeping; that is to wit, that he which hath that kind of revelation
from *God* is as sure of the truth as we be of our own deed while
we be waking... and he that is illuded by the devil is in such wise
25 deceived, and worse, too, than be they by their dream... and yet reckoneth,
for the time, himself as sure as the other; saving that the one
falsely weeneth, the other truly knoweth.

1 *speaks so sadly*: sound so serious // *make me ween*: have me think 5 *reason*: argument
5, 15 *confess*: admit 6 *yourself*: you yourself 7 *to be waking*: that you're awake
9 *indeed*: for real // *while*: when 13 *indeed*: actually 14 *though*: even if
21 *waking*: when we're awake 24 *illuded*: tricked 27 *truly*: correctly

But I say not, Cousin, that this kind of sure knowledge cometh in *every* kind of revelation. For there are many kinds—whereof were too long to talk now. But I say that God doth, or may do, to man in some thing certainly send some such.

2.16

5

Vincent

Yet then may this religious man of whom we speak, when I show him the scripture against his “revelation,” and therefore call it an illusion, bid me with reason go care for myself... for he knoweth well and surely himself that his *revelation* is very good and true... and not any false “illusion”... since, for all the general commandment of God in the Scripture, God may dispense where he will and when he will, and may command him to do the contrary, as he commanded Abraham to kill his own son... and as Samson had by inspiration of God commandment to kill himself, with pulling down the house upon his own head at the feast of the Philistines.

Now, if I would then do as you bade me right now—tell him that such apparitions may be illusions, and since God’s word is in the Scripture against him plain for the *prohibition*, he must prove me the truth of his “revelation,” whereby that I may know it is not a false illusion—then shall he bid me again tell him whereby that I can prove myself to be awake and talk with him, and not to be asleep and dream so... since in my dream I may as surely *ween* so, as I know that I *do* so. And thus shall he drive me to the same bay to which I would bring him!

25

Anthony

This is well said, Cousin, but yet could he not escape you so. For the dispensation of God’s common precept... which dispensation

6 *religious man*: monk or friar 8 *care for myself*: mind my own business

8 *well and*: good and; quite 11 *may*: can 12–15: See Genesis 22:2; Judges 16:23–30.

16 *right*: just 23 *bay*: position of being trapped; impasse

he must say that he hath by his private revelation... is a thing
of such sort as sheweth itself naught and false. For it never hath had
any example like, since the world began unto now, that ever man hath
read or heard of among faithful people commended.

2.16

- 5 First, in Abraham, touching the death of his son—God *intended* it not,
but only tempted the towardness of the father's obedience. In Samson,
all men make not the matter very sure whether he be saved or not;
but yet therein some matter appeareth. For the Philistines being enemies
to God, and using Samson for their mockingstock in scorn of God,
10 it is well likely that God gave him the mind... to bestow his own life
upon the revenging of the displeasure that those blasphemous Philistines
did unto God. And that appeareth meetly clear by this: that though
his strength failed him when he wanted his hair... yet had he not, as
it seemeth, that strength evermore at hand while he *had* his hair...
15 but at such times as it pleased God to give it him. Which thing
appeareth by these words that the Scripture (in some place) of that matter
saith: "Irruit virtus Domini in Samsonem"—"The power" (or "might") "of God
rushed into Samson." And so, therefore, while this thing that he did, in
the pulling down of the house, was done by the special gift of
20 strength then at that point given him by God... it well declareth that
the strength of God, and therewith the Spirit of God, entered into him
therefor.

- Saint Augustine also rehearseth that certain holy, virtuous virgins in
time of persecution, being by God's enemies infidel pursued
25 upon to be deflowered by force, ran into a water and drowned themselves,
rather than they would be bereaved of their virginity. And albeit that
he thinketh it is not lawful for any other maiden to follow their example—
but, rather, suffer other to do her any manner violence by force, and
commit sin of his own upon her against her will, than willingly and
30 thereby sinfully herself become a homicide of herself—yet he
thinketh that in *them* it happed by the special instinct of the Spirit

2 *naught*: evil 4 *faithful people*: people believing in the true God 5, 6 *in*: about
5 *touching*: regarding 6 *tempted*: tested // *towardness*: docility 7 *make*: consider
7 *sure*: certain 8 *therein*: i.e., in the biblical account // *matter*: i.e., basis for thinking that he was
9 *mockingstock*: laughingstock 10 *well*: quite // *mind*: thought; idea 11 *revenging*: avenging
12 *appeareth meetly clear*: is made fairly clear 13 *wanted*: lacked 15 *but*: i.e., but only
16 *appeareth*: is shown 17–18: See Judges 14:6; 15:14. 18 *while*: given that
20 *declareth*: shows 22 *therefor*: for that purpose 23 *rehearseth*: relates 25 *water*: river
28 *suffer other*: i.e., she should allow someone else 30 *homicide*: murderer
31 *instinct*: prompting 141/23—142/3: See *City of God*, book 1, chapters 25 and 26.

of God, that, for causes seen unto himself, would rather that they should avoid it with their own temporal death than abide the defiling and violation of their chastity.

2.16

- But, now, this good man neither hath any of God's enemies to be by
 5 his own death revenged on... nor any women that violently pursue him
 by force to bereave him of his virginity; nor never find we that God
 proved any man's obedient mind by the commandment of his own
 slaughter of himself. Therefore is his case both plainly against God's
 open precept... and the dispensation strange and without example, no
 10 cause appearing or well imaginable... but if he would think that God
 could neither any longer live without him nor take him to him in
 such wise as he doth other men... but command him to come by a
 forbidden way, by which without other cause we never heard that ever
 he bade any man else before.
- 15 Now, whether you think if you should after this bid him tell you
 by what way he knoweth that his intent riseth upon a true
 revelation and not upon a false illusion... he would bid you then again
 tell him by what means you know that you be talking with him
 well waking, and not dream it sleeping: you may tell him again that
 20 men thus to talk together as you do, and in such manner wise, and to
 prove and perceive that they so do by the moving of themselves, with
 putting the question thereof unto themselves for their pleasure, and the
 marking and considering thereof, is in waking a daily, common thing
 that every man doth or may do when he will... and when they do it,
 25 they do it but of pleasure; but in sleep it happeth very seldom, that
 men dream they so do... nor in the dream never put the question
 but for doubt. And therefore it is more reason that since his "revelation" is
 such also as happeth so seldom, and after happeth that men dream of such

5 *revenged*: avenged 7 *proved*: tested 9 *strange*: singular 10 *but if*: unless
 16 *riseth*: is based 19 *well waking*: while you're fully awake // *again*: in response
 25 *but of pleasure*: just for fun
 27 *is more reason*: is more called for by reason 28 *after*: (it) more often

than have such indeed—therefore it is more reason, you may tell him,
that he show you whereby he knoweth in such a rare thing... and a thing
more like a dream... that himself is not asleep, than you, in such a
common thing among folk that are waking and so seldom happing
5 in a dream, should need to show him whereby you know that you be not
asleep.

2.16

Besides this, himself to whom you should show it seeth and perceiveth
the thing that he would bid you prove; but the thing that he
would make you believe—the truth of his “revelation,” which you bid
10 him prove—you see not, he wotteth well himself. And therefore, ere you
believe *it* against the *Scripture*, it were well consonant unto reason
that he should show you whereby he knoweth it for a true,
waking revelation, and not a false, dreaming delusion.

Vincent

15 Then shall he peradventure say to me again that whether I
believe him or not maketh him no matter; the thing toucheth himself
and not me... and himself is in himself as sure that it is a true revelation...
as that he can tell that he dreameth not but talketh with me
waking.

20 Anthony

Without doubt, Cousin, if he abide at that point, and can be by no
reason brought to do so much as doubt... nor can by no means be
shogged out of his deep sleep, but will needs take his dream for a very
truth... and, as some by night rise and walk about their chamber in their
25 sleep, will so rise and hang himself: I can then no other way see
but either bind him fast in his bed... or else assay whether that might
hap to help him with which the common tale goeth that a carver's
wife in such a frantic fantasy helped her husband. To whom, when

2, 5, 7, 12 *show*: tell 4, 19 *waking*: awake 10 *wotteth*: knows 15 *again*: in reply
16 *maketh him no matter*: doesn't matter to him // *toucheth*: has to do with
21 *abide*: stands firm 22 *reason*: reasoning
23 *shogged*: shaken 24 *about their chamber*: around in their bedroom
25 *will so*: is determined so to 26 *assay*: see 28 *frantic fantasy*: crazy idea

he would upon a Good Friday needs have killed himself for Christ's sake
 as Christ was killed for him, she would not in vain plead against his
 mind... but well and wisely put him in remembrance that if he would
 die for Christ as Christ did for him, it were then convenient for him
 5 to die even after the same fashion. And that might not be by his own
 hands, but by the hand of some other; for Christ, pardie, killed not
 himself.

And because her husband should need to make no more of counsel
 (for that would he not in no wise), she offered him that, for God's
 10 sake, she would secretly crucify him herself, upon a great cross
 that he had made to nail a newly carved crucifix upon. Whereof
 when he was very glad... yet she bethought her that Christ was
 bound to a pillar and beaten first, and after crowned with thorns. Whereupon
 when she had, by his own assent, bound him fast to a post...
 15 she left not beating, with holy exhortation to suffer, so much and so long
 that ere ever she left work and unbound him—praying, nevertheless,
 that she might put on his head, and drive it well down, a crown of thorns
 that she had wreathed for him and brought him—he said he thought
 this was enough for that year; he would pray God forbear him of the
 20 remnant till Good Friday come again. But when it came again
 the next year... then was his lust passed; he longed to follow Christ no
 further.

Vincent

Indeed, Uncle, if this help him not, then will nothing help him, I
 25 throw!

Anthony

And yet, Cousin, the devil may peradventure make him toward such

2 *in vain plead*: futilely argue 3 *mind*: intention
 3 *well . . . remembrance*: quite sensibly reminded him 4 *convenient*: appropriate
 5 *even . . . fashion*: in exactly the same way // *might*: could
 6 *but*: i.e., but would have to be // *some other*: someone else
 6 *pardie*: by golly (See note for 47/10.) 8 *because*: so that
 8 *need . . . counsel*: not need to take anyone else into his confidence
 10 *great*: large 11 *crucifix*: figure of the crucified Christ
 15 *left not beating*: i.e., unceasingly kept beating him
 19–20 *pray . . . remnant*: ask God to let him wait with the rest
 21 *lust*: craving // *passed*: gone 25 *throw*: suppose

a purpose first gladly suffer other pain... yea, and diminish his feeling, too,
 therein... that he may thereby the less fear his death. And yet are peradventure
 sometimes such things, and many more, to be assayed. For as
 the devil may hap to make him suffer, so may he hap to
 5 miss; namely if his friends fall to prayer for him against his
 temptation—for that can himself never do while he taketh it for
 none. But for conclusion, if the man be surely proved so inflexibly
 set upon the purpose to destroy himself, “as commanded thereto
 by God,” that no good counsel that men can give him... nor any other
 10 thing that men may do to him can refrain him, but that he would
 surely shortly kill himself—then, except only good prayer by his
 friends made for him, I can find no further shift but either have him
 ever in sight or bind him fast in his bed. And so must he needs of
 reason be content to be ordered. For though himself take his fantasy
 15 for a true revelation: yet since he cannot make *us* perceive it for such,
 likewise as he thinketh himself by his secret commandment
 bound to follow it... so must he needs agree that since it is against the
 plain, open prohibition of God, we be by the plain, open precept
 bound to keep him from it.

20 Vincent

In this point, Uncle, I can go no further. But, now, if he were, upon
 the other side, perceived to mind his destruction and go thereabout with
 heaviness of heart, and thought, and dullness—what way were there to be used
 to him then?

25 Anthony

Then were his temptation, as I told you before, properly pertaining

3 *assayed*: tried 5 *namely*: especially 5, 11–12 *his friends*: the man’s relatives and friends
 5 *fall to prayer*: start praying 10 *refrain*: restrain 12 *find*: think of // *shift*: expedient; tactic
 14 *ordered*: dealt with // *fantasy*: delusion 21–22 *upon . . . side*: on the other hand
 22 *mind*: intend 23 *thought*: anxiety; distress // *dullness*: dejection; lack of enthusiasm
 24 *to*: on

to our matter; for then were he in a sore tribulation, and a very
 perilous. For then were it a token that the devil had either, by
 bringing him into some great sin, brought him in despair... or,
 peradventure by his "revelations" found false and reprov'd, or by some
 5 secret sin of his dep'rehended and divulged, cast him both in despair
 of heaven, through fear, and in a weariness of this life, for shame... since he
 seeth his estimation lost among other folk, of whose praise he was
 wont to be proud. And therefore, Cousin, in such case as this is, the
 man is to be fair handled, and sweetly, and with *douce* and tender loving
 10 words to be put in good courage and comfort in all that men goodly
 may.

Here must they put him in mind that if he despair not,
 but pull up his courage and trust in God's great mercy... he shall have
 in conclusion great cause to be glad of this fall. For before, he stood
 15 in greater peril than he was aware of, while he took himself for
 better than he was. And God, for favor that he beareth him, hath
 suffered him to fall deep into the devil's danger to make him
 thereby know what he was while he took himself for so sure. And
 therefore, as he suffered him then to fall for a remedy against overbold
 20 pride: so will God now—if the man meeken himself, not with fruitless
 despair, but with fruitful penance—so set him up again upon
 his feet... and so strengthen him with his grace... that for this one fall that
 the devil hath given him, he shall give the devil a hundred. And here
 must he be put in remembrance of Mary Magdalene, of the prophet
 25 David, and especially of Saint Peter... whose high, bold courage took a foul
 fall... and yet, because he despaired not of God's mercy, but wept and called
 upon it... how highly God took him into his favor again,
 is in his Holy Scripture well testified, and well through Christendom
 known.

30 And now shall it be charitably done if some good, virtuous folk—

3, 5, 6 *in*: into 4 *reprov'd*: disproved 5 *dep'rehended*: found out about

6 *weariness of*: state of being sick and tired of 7 *estimation*: reputation

9 *fair handled*: treated nicely // *douce*: gentle; soothing 10 *goodly*: with propriety

11 *may*: can 14 *in conclusion*: in the end 17, 19 *suffered*: allowed 17 *danger*: power

18 *while*: when // *sure*: steadfast 19 *overbold*: overly confident

such as himself somewhat esteemeth... and hath before longed to stand in
estimation with—do resort sometime unto him... not only to give
him counsel... but also to ask advice and counsel of him in some
cases of their own conscience... to let him thereby perceive that they
5 no less esteem him now... but, rather, *more* than they did before... since
they think him now, by his fall, better expert of the devil's craft... and
thereby not only better instructed himself, but also better able to
give good advice and counsel unto others. This thing will, in my mind,
well amend and lift up his courage from the peril of that desperate
10 shame.

Vincent

Methink, Uncle, that this *were* a perilous thing. For it may peradventure
make him set the less by his fall, and thereby cast him into
his first pride or into his other sin again... the falling whereinto
15 drove him into this despair.

Anthony

I do not mean, Cousin, that every fool should adventure to fall in
hand with him; for so, lo, might it hap for to do harm indeed. But,
Cousin, if a cunning physician have a man in hand... he can well discern
20 when and how long some certain medicine is necessary, which at another
time administered, or at that time overlong continued, might
put the patient to peril.

If he have his patient in an ague, to the cure whereof he needeth his
medicines, in their working, cold: yet if he hap, ere that fever be fully
25 cured, to fall into some such other disease... as except it were
helped with hot medicines, were likely to kill the body before the
fever could be cured—he would for the while have his most care to the
cure of that thing... wherein were most present peril, and when that

2 *resort sometime unto him*: come see him sometime 3–4 *in some cases*: about some matters
6 *expert of*: experienced regarding // *craft*: cunning 8 *mind*: opinion
9 *courage*: spirit // *desperate*: despair-inducing 12 *methink*: it seems to me
12 *were*: would be 13 *set the less by*: be less concerned about; make less of // *cast*: throw
17 *adventure*: venture 17–18 *fall in hand with him*: take him in hand
19 *cunning*: knowledgeable 22 *to peril*: in danger 23 *ague*: an illness involving fever
25 *disease*: illness 27 *for the while*: for the time being

were once out of jeopardy, do then the more exact diligence after about the further cure of the fever.

2.16

And likewise, if the ship were in peril to fall into Scylla, the fear of falling into Charybdis on the other side... shall never let any wise master thereof to draw him from Scylla toward Charybdis first, in all that ever he may. But when he hath him once so far away from Scylla that he seeth him safely out of *that* danger, *then* will he begin to take good heed to keep him well from the other. And in like wise, while this man is falling down to despair, and to the final destruction of himself... a good, wise spiritual leech will first look unto that, and by good comfort lift up his courage... and when he seeth that peril well past, care for the cure of his other faults after. Howbeit, even in the giving of his comfort... he may find ways enough in such wise to temper his words that the man may take occasion of good courage, and yet far from occasion giving of new recidivation into his former sin... since the great part of his counsel shall be to encourage him to *amendment*—and that is, pardie, far from falling unto sin again.

Vincent

I think, Uncle, that folk fall into this ungracious mind through the devil's temptation... by many more ways than one.

Anthony

That is, Cousin, very true; for the devil taketh his occasions as he seeth them fall meet for him. Some he stirreth to it for weariness of themselves after some great loss; some for fear of horrible bodily harm; and some, as I said, for fear of worldly shame. One wist I myself that had been long reputed for a right honest man, which

3 *in peril to fall*: in danger of falling 3–4 *Scylla . . . Charybdis*: See the notes for 120/12.
 4–5 *let . . . draw*: keep any sensible captain thereof from drawing
 5–6 *in . . . may*: as hard as he possibly can 10 *leech*: physician
 11–12 *care for*: worry about; concern himself with 15 *recidivation*: relapse; backsliding
 16 *great*: major 17 *pardie*: by golly 19 *ungracious mind*: evil state of mind
 22 *occasions*: opportunities 23 *fall meet*: become suitable
 23–24 *weariness of*: a wanting to get rid of 25 *wist*: knew
 26 *right honest*: very respectable // *which*: who

was fallen in such a fantasy that he was well near worn away therewith;
 but what he was tempted to do, *that* would he not tell *no* man;
 but he told unto me that he was sore encumbered, and that it always ran
 in his mind that folks' fantasies were fallen from him... and that they
 5 esteemed not his wit as they were wont to do... but ever his mind gave
 him that the people began to take him for a fool. And folk of truth
 nothing so did at all... but reputed him both for wise and honest.

2.16

Two others knew I that were marvelously afeard that they should kill
 themselves, and could tell me no cause wherefore they so feared it... but only
 10 that their own mind so gave them. Neither loss had they any had...
 nor no such thing toward them; nor no occasion of any worldly
 shame; the one in body very well-liking and lusty; but wondrous
 weary were they both twain, of that mind. And always they thought
 that do it they would not for nothing; and nevertheless, ever they feared
 15 they should; and wherefore they so feared, neither of them both could
 tell. And the one, lest he should do it, desired his friends to bind him.

Vincent

This is, Uncle, a marvelously strange manner!

Anthony

20 Forsooth, Cousin, I suppose many of them are in this case. The devil,
 as I said before, seeketh his occasions; for as Saint Peter saith,
 "Adversarius vester diabolus quasi leo rugiens circuit, quaerens quem
 devoret" ("Your adversary the devil as a roaring lion goeth about, seeking
 whom he may devour"). He marketh well, therefore, the state and condition
 25 that every man standeth in... not only concerning these outward

1 *in*: into // *fantasy*: idea; impression 3 *sore encumbered*: terribly burdened
 4 *folks'* . . . *him*: people didn't like him anymore 5 *wit*: intelligence 6 *began*: were starting
 7 *honest*: respectable 8 *marvelously*: terribly 8, 15 *should*: would 9, 15 *wherefore*: why
 10 *gave*: intimated to 11 *toward them*: was coming their way 12 *well-liking*: fit
 12 *lusty*: vigorous // *wondrous*: extremely 13 *weary*: worn out // *of that mind*: by that inclination
 16 *desired*: asked // *bind him*: tie him up 17 *marvelously*: terribly
 17 *manner*: way to be 20 *case*: situation 21 *occasions*: opportunities 21–24: 1 Peter 5:8.

things (lands, possessions, goods, authority; fame, favor... or hatred of the world), but also men's complexions within them—health or sickness, good humors or bad—by which they be lighthearted or lumpish... strong-hearted, or faint and feeble of spirit... bold and hardy, or
 5 timorous and fearful of courage. And after, as these things administer him *matter* of temptation, so useth he himself in the *manner* of his temptation.

2.16

Now, likewise as such folk as are full of young, warm, lusty blood and other humors exciting the flesh to filthy voluptuous living, the
 10 devil useth to make those things his instruments in tempting them and provoking them thereunto; and where he findeth some folk full of hot blood and choler, he maketh those humors his instruments to set their heart on fire in wrath and fierce, furious anger: so where he findeth some folk which through some dull, melancholic humors are naturally
 15 disposed to *fear*, he casteth sometimes such a fearful imagination in their mind that without help of God, they can never cast it out of their heart. Some at the sudden falling of some horrible thought into their mind have not only had a great abomination thereat (which abomination they well and virtuously had thereat),
 20 but the devil, using their malicious humor... and thereby their natural inclination to fear... for his instrument, hath caused them to conceive therewith such a deep dread besides, that they ween themselves with that abominable thought to be fallen into such an outrageous sin that they be ready to fall into despair of grace... weening that God hath
 25 given them over forever... whereas that thought—were it never so horrible and never so abominable—is yet, unto them that never like it, but ever still abhor it and strive still thereagainst, matter of conscience and merit, and not any sin at all.

Some have with holding a knife in their hand, suddenly thought

2 *complexions*: conditions 3, 9, 12, 14 *humors*: internal mood-producing physical elements
 3 *by*: on account of 4 *lumpish*: melancholy 5 *courage*: spirit 6 *useth he*: he conducts
 9 *filthy*: base // *voluptuous*: sensual; sexual 10 *useth*: is wont
 12 *choler*: bile (which was believed to cause irritability) 16 *help of*: help from
 20 *malicious*: malignant; toxic 22 *ween*: believe; consider 23 *outrageous*: egregious
 24 *weening*: thinking 27 *conscience*: conscientiousness; good conscience

upon the killing of themselves; and forthwith, in devising what a
horrible thing it were... if they should mishap so to do, have fallen in
a fear that they should so do indeed; and have, with long and often thinking
thereon, imprinted that fear so sore in their imagination... that
5 some of them have not after cast it off without great difficulty... and some
could never in their life be rid thereof... but have after in conclusion
miserably done it indeed. But likewise as where the devil useth the
blood of a man's own body toward his purpose in provoking him to
lechery, the man must and doth with grace and wisdom resist it: so
10 must that man do whose malicious humors the devil abuseth toward
the casting of such a desperate dread into his heart.

Vincent

I pray you, Uncle, what advice were to be given him in such
case?

15 Anthony

Surely methinketh his help standeth in two things: counsel
and prayer. First, as concerning counsel, likewise as it may be
that he hath two things that hold him in his temptation—that is to
wit, some evil humors of his own body, and the accursed devil that
20 abuseth them to his pernicious purpose—so must he need against
them *twain* the counsel of two manner of folk: that is to wit,
physicians for the body and physicians for the soul. The bodily
physician shall consider what abundance the man hath of those
evil humors that the devil maketh his instrument in moving the
25 man toward that fearful affection—and as well by diet convenient
and medicines meet therefor, to resist them, as by purgations to disburden
the body of them.

Nor let no man think strange that I would advise a man to take

1 *upon the killing of*: about killing // *devising*: thinking about 2 *were*: would be // *in*: into
4 *sore*: deep 10 *malicious*: malignant 10, 19, 24 *humors*: physical predispositions
10, 20 *abuseth*: exploits 11 *desperate*: despair-inducing 13 *pray*: ask 19, 24 *evil*: bad
20 *to*: for 21 *manner*: kinds 25 *affection*: state of mind // *convenient*: appropriate
26 *meet*: suitable // *therefor*: for this 28 *think strange*: think it odd

counsel of a physician for the body in such a spiritual passion.
 For since the soul and the body be so knit and joined together that
 they both make between them one *person*, the distemperance of
 either other engendereth sometimes the distemperance of both
 5 twain.

2.16

And therefore, like as I would advise every man in every sickness of the
 body, be shriven and seek of a good spiritual physician the sure health
 of his soul, which shall not only serve against peril that may
 peradventure further grow by that sickness than in the beginning
 10 men would ween were likely... but the comfort thereof, and God's favor
 increasing therewith, shall also do the body good—for which cause
 the blessed apostle Saint James exhorteth men that they shall
 in their bodily sickness induce the priests... and saith that it shall do
 them good both in body *and* soul—so would I sometimes advise some
 15 men in some sickness of the soul, besides their spiritual leech, take
 also some counsel of the physician for the body. Some that are
 wretchedly disposed and yet long to be more vicious than they be... go
 to physicians and apothecaries and enquire what things may serve to make
 them more lusty to their foul fleshly delight. And were it, then,
 20 any folly upon the other side, if he that feeleth himself *against* his
 will much moved unto such uncleanness, should enquire of the physician
 what thing without diminishing of his health were meet for the
 diminishing of such foul fleshly motion?

Of spiritual counsel the first is to be shriven, that by reason of
 25 his other sins the devil have not the more power upon him.

Vincent

I have heard some say, Uncle, that when such folk have been at
 shrift, their temptation hath been the more breme upon them
 than it was before!

1 *passion*: affliction 3, 4 *distemperance*: disordered condition
 4 *either other*: either the one or the other 7, 24 *be shriven*: go to confession (and receive absolution)
 10 *ween*: suppose 12–14: James 5:14–15. 13 *induce*: bring in; summon
 15 *leech*: physician 17 *vicious*: vice-ridden; immoral 18 *apothecaries*: pharmacists
 18–19 *make . . . to*: increase their appetite and readiness for 22 *meet*: suitable 25 *upon*: over
 27–28 *at shrift*: to confession 28 *breme*: fierce; raging

Anthony

2.16

That think I very well—but that is a special token that shrift is wholesome for them, while the devil is with that most wroth! You find in some places of the Gospel that the devil... the person whom he possessed, did most trouble when he saw that Christ would cast him out. We must else let the devil do what he will... if we fear his anger; for with *every* good deed will he wax angry!

Then is it *in* his shrift to be showed him... that he not only feareth more than he needeth... but also feareth where he needeth not.

10 And over that, is sorry of that thing whereof, but if he will willingly turn his good into his harm, he hath more cause to be glad.

First, if he have cause to fear... yet feareth he more than he needeth. For there is no devil so diligent to destroy him... as God is to preserve him; nor no devil so near him to do him harm... as God is to do
15 him good; nor all the devils in hell so strong to invade and assault him... as God is to defend him—if he distrust him not, but faithfully put his trust in him.

He feareth also where he needeth not; for whereas he dreadeth that he were out of God's favor... because such horrible thoughts fall in his
20 mind against his will... they be not imputed unto him. He is, finally, sad of that he may be glad. For since he taketh such thoughts displeasantly and striveth and fighteth against them... he hath thereby a good token that he is in God's favor... and that God assisteth him and helpeth him—and may make himself sure that so will God never cease to
25 do... but if himself fail and fall from him first. And over that... this conflict that he hath against his temptation shall (if he will not fall where he need not) be an occasion of his merit, and of a right great reward in heaven; and the pain that he taketh therein... shall for so much (as Master Gerson well showeth) stand him in stead of his
30 purgatory. The manner of the fight against this temptation must

2, 23 *token*: sign 3 *while*: given that // *wroth*: enraged 4 *places*: passages
4–5 *the devil . . . trouble*: i.e., the devil gave the most trouble to the person whom he possessed
5 *would*: was going to 7 *wax*: get 8 *showed*: pointed out to 10, 25 *over*: besides
10 *sorry of*: sorrowful about // *but if*: unless // *willingly*: deliberately
21 *of that*: about something of which // *displeasantly*: without pleasure
23 *assisteth*: is actively present with 24 *may make himself sure*: can rest assured
25 *but if himself*: unless he himself

stand in three things: that is to wit, in resisting, and in contemning,
and in the invocation of help.

2.16

- Resist must a man for his own part with reason, considering
what a folly it were to fall where he need not—while he is not
5 driven to it in avoiding of any other pain, or in hope of winning
any manner of pleasure... but, contrariwise, should by *that* pain lose
everlasting life and fall into *everlasting* pain. And if it *were* in avoiding
of other great pain—yet could he avoid none so great thereby
as he should thereby fall into.
- 10 He must also consider that a great part of this temptation is in
effect but the fear of his own fantasy—the dread that he hath lest he
shall once be driven to it. Which thing he may be sure that (but if
himself will, of his own folly) all the devils in hell can never drive
him to... but his own foolish imagination may. For likewise as some
15 man going over a high bridge waxeth so afeard through his own fantasy,
that he falleth down indeed... which were else able enough to pass
over without any danger; and as some man shall upon such a
bridge, if folk call upon him, “You fall! You fall!” fall, with the
fantasy that he taketh thereof... which bridge if folk looked merrily upon
20 him and said, “There is no danger therein,” he would pass over well
enough... and would not let to run thereon if it were but a foot from the
ground—thus fareth it in this temptation. The devil findeth the man
of his own fond fantasy afeard... and then crieth he in the ear of his heart,
“Thou fallest! Thou fallest!” and maketh the fond man afeard that he
25 should at every foot fall indeed. And the devil so wearie him with
that continual fear (if he give the ear of his heart unto him) that
at the last he withdraweth his mind from due remembrance of
God, and then driveth him to that deadly mischief indeed.
Therefore, like as against the vice of the flesh the victory standeth not
30 all whole in the fight... but sometimes also in the flight (saving that it is

1 *contemning*: scorning 4 *while*: when 10–11 *in effect*: in reality
11 *fantasy*: thought // *lest*: that 12 *once*: one day // *but if*: unless
13 *will*: i.e., wills this 15 *waxeth*: becomes 16 *which*: who
19–20 *merrily upon him*: at him cheerfully 21 *let*: hesitate
23, 24 *fond*: foolish 23 *fantasy*: imagination 28 *mischief*: evil act / disaster

- indeed a part *of* a wise warrior's fight... to flee from his enemy's trains):
 so must a man in this temptation, too, *not* only resist it, always, with
 reasoning thereagainst... but sometimes set it clear at right naught
 and cast it off when it cometh... and not once regard it so much as to vouchsafe
 5 to think thereon. Some folk have been clearly rid of such pestilent
 fantasies with very full contempt thereof—making a cross upon
 their heart and bidding the devil avaunt, and sometimes laugh him to
 scorn, too... and then turn their mind to some other matter. And when
 the devil hath seen that they have set so little by him... after certain
 10 assays, made in such times as he thought most meet... he hath given
 that temptation quite over—both for that the proud spirit cannot
 endure to be mocked... and also lest with much tempting the
 man to the sin whereto he could not in conclusion bring him, he
 should much increase his merit.
- 15 The final fight is by invocation of help unto God; both praying for
 himself and desiring others also to pray for him, both poor folk for
 his alms and other good folk of *their* charity—especially good priests,
 in that holy, sacred service of the Mass. And not only them... but
 also his own good angel and other holy saints, such as his devotion
 20 specially stand unto; or if he be learned, use then the Litany, with the
 holy suffrages that follow. Which is a prayer in the Church of marvelously
 old antiquity—not made first, as some ween it were, by that holy
 man Saint Gregory (which opinion rose of that that in the
 time of a great pestilence in Rome, he caused the whole city go in
 25 solemn procession therewith), but it was in use in the Church many
 years before Saint Gregory's days, as well appeareth by the books of
 other holy doctors and saints that were dead hundreds of years before

1 *trains*: snares 3 *set . . . naught*: just utterly disregard it 4 *vouchsafe*: deign
 5 *have . . . rid*: have gotten completely rid 5 *with*: i.e., by showing 6 *fantasies*: thoughts
 7 *bidding*: telling // *avaunt*: to be off; to scam 9 *set so little by*: had so little regard for
 10 *assays*: attempts // *meet*: suitable; favorable to him 16 *desiring*: asking
 20 *Litany*: i.e., Litany of the Saints 21 *suffrages*: short intercessory prayers
 21 *marvelously*: extremely 22 *ween it were*: believe it was 24 *caused*: had
 27 *holy doctors*: doctors of the Church

Saint Gregory was born. And holy Saint Bernard giveth counsel that every man should make suit unto angels and saints to pray for him to God in the things that he would have sped at his holy hand. If any man will stick at that and say it needeth not, because God can hear us himself, and will also say that it is perilous so to do... because, they say, we be not so counseled by no scripture—I will not dispute the matter here; he that will not do it, I let him not to leave it undone. But yet for mine own part, I will as well trust to the counsel of Saint Bernard, and reckon him for as good and as well learned in the Scripture, as any man that I hear say the contrary. And better dare I jeopard my soul with the soul of Saint Bernard than with his that findeth that fault in his doctrine.

Unto God himself every good man counseleth to have recourse above all. And, in this temptation, to have special remembrance of Christ's Passion, and pray him for the honor of his death—the ground of man's salvation—keep this person thus tempted from that damnable death. Special verses may there be drawn out of the Psalter against the devil's wicked temptations—as, for example, “Exsurgat Deus, et dissipentur inimici eius, et fugiant qui oderunt eum a facie eius,” and many others—which are in such horrible temptation to God pleasant and to the devil very terrible. But none more terrible nor more odious to the devil than the words with which our Savior drove him away himself—“Vade, Satanas!”—nor no prayer more acceptable unto God... nor more effectual for the matter... than those words which our Savior hath taught us himself: “Ne nos inducas in tentationem... sed libera nos a malo.”

And I doubt not, by God's grace, but he that in such a temptation will use good counsel and prayer, and keep himself in good, virtuous business and good, virtuous company, and abide in the faithful hope of God's help, shall have the truth of God (as the prophet saith in the verse afore-rehearsed) so compass him about with a pavis... that

2 *make suit unto*: petition 3 *sped*: brought to success 4 *stick at*: object to
 4 *needeth not*: is unnecessary 7 *will not*: does not want to
 7 *let . . . undone*: won't stand in the way of his leaving it undone
 10–11 *jeopard my soul with*: i.e., risk having my soul end up with 15 *pray*: beseech
 16 *keep*: i.e., to keep 18–19: Psalm 68:1–2 (“Let God arise, and let his enemies be scattered; let those who hate him flee before him!”). 20 *pleasant*: pleasing
 21 *terrible*: terrifying 23: Matthew 4:10 (“Begone, Satan!”).
 25–26: Matthew 6:13 (“And lead us not into temptation... but deliver us from evil”).
 31 *afore-rehearsed*: previously cited // *pavis*: shield

he shall not need to dread this “night’s fear” of this wicked temptation. 2.16
 And thus will I finish this piece of the “night’s fear.” And glad am I
 that we be past it and come once unto the day, to those other words
 of the prophet, “a sagitta volante in die”; for methinketh I have made
 5 it a long night!

Vincent

Forsooth, Uncle, so *have* you; but we have not slept in it, but been very
 well occupied. But now I fear that except you make here a pause till
 you have dined, you shall keep yourself from your dinner
 10 overlong.

Anthony

Nay, nay, Cousin; for both broke I my fast even as you came in... and
 also, you shall find this night and this day like a winter day and a winter
 night. For as the winter hath short days and long nights, so shall you
 15 find that I made you not this fearful night so long... but I shall make
 you this light, courageous day as short. And so shall the matter require
 well of itself, indeed; for in those words of the prophet
 “Scuto circumdabit te veritas eius a sagitta volante in die” (“The truth of God
 shall compass thee round about, with a pavis, from the arrow flying
 20 in the day”), I understand the arrow of pride, with which the devil
 tempteth a man... not in the “night,” that is to wit, in tribulation and adversity...
 for that time is too discomfortable and too fearful for pride...
 but in the “day,” that is to wit, in prosperity—for that time is full of
 lightsome lust and courage. But surely this worldly prosperity wherein a
 25 man so rejoiceth, and whereof the devil maketh him so proud, is but
 even a very short winter day.

For we begin, many, full poor and cold, and up we fly like an arrow

4: Psalm 91:5 (“from the arrow that flies by day”). 8 *except*: unless
 12 *broke . . . in*: i.e., did I have my breakfast just as you were coming in
 16–17 *require well of itself*: well call for in itself 22 *discomfortable*: miserable
 24 *lightsome*: lighthearted // *lust*: verve; vigor

that were shot up into the air; and yet, when we be suddenly shot
up into the highest... ere we be well warm there, down we come unto
the cold ground again, and then even there stick we still. And yet
for the short while that we be upward and aloft—Lord, how lusty and
5 how proud we be, buzzing above busily, like as a bumblebee flieth
about in summer, never aware that she shall die in winter. And so fare
many of us, God help us; for in the short winter day of worldly wealth
and prosperity, this flying arrow of the devil—this high spirit of
pride shot out of the devil's bow and piercing through our heart—beareth
10 us up, in our affection, aloft into the clouds, where we ween we sit
on the rainbow... and overlook the world under us... accounting, in
the regard of our own glory, such other poor souls as were, peradventure,
wont to be our fellows, for seely, poor pismires and
ants.

15 But this arrow of pride, fly it never so high in the clouds, and be
the man that it carrieth up so high never so joyful thereof... yet let him
remember... that be this arrow never so light, it hath yet a heavy
iron head... and therefore, fly it never so high... down must it needs come
and on the ground must it light... and falleth, sometimes, not in a very
20 clean place... but the pride turneth into rebuke and shame, and there is
then all the glory gone.

Of this arrow speaketh the Wise Man in the fifth chapter of Sapience,
where he saith in the person of them that in pride and vanity passed the
time of this present life, and after that so spent... passed hence into hell,
25 “‘Quid profuit nobis superbia; aut divitiarum iactantia, quid contulit nobis? Transierunt
omnia illa tamquam umbra . . . aut tamquam sagitta emissa in locum destinatum,
divisus aer continuo in se reclusus est, ut ignoretur transitus illius. Sic et
nos nati continuo desinimus esse, et virtutis quidem nullum signum valuimus
ostendere... in malignitate autem nostra consumpti sumus.’ Talia dixerunt in
30 inferno hi qui peccaverunt”; “‘What hath pride profited us, or what good hath

3 *even*: right 4 *lusty*: exhilarated; vivacious 7 *wealth*: well-being

10 *affection*: feeling // *ween*: think 13 *fellows*: companions

13–14 *seely* . . . *ants*: i.e., poor, pitiful ants and bugs. (A pismire is an ant. More presumably had in mind
either two kinds of ants or else ants and other insects.)

19 *light*: land 22 *Wise Man*: Sage; i.e., the author of the wisdom books of the Old Testament

22 *Sapience*: the Book of Wisdom 24 *hence*: from here

158/25—159/10: Wisdom 5:8–9, 12–14.

the glory of our riches done us? Passed are all those things
like a shadow . . . or like an arrow shot out into the place appointed.
The air that was divided is by and by returned into the place, and in
such wise closed together again that the way is not perceived in which
5 the arrow went. And in like wise we, as soon as we were born,
by and by vanished away, and have left no token of any good virtue behind
us, but are consumed and wasted and come to naught in our
malignity.’

10 “They, lo, that have lived here in sin—such words have they
spoken when they lay in hell.”

Here shall you, good Cousin, consider that whereas the Scripture
here speaketh of the arrow shot into its place “appointed” (or “intended”),
in shooting of this arrow of pride there be divers purposings and
appointings. For the proud man himself hath no certain purpose,
15 or “appointment” at any mark, butt, or prick upon earth...
whereat he determineth to shoot and there to stick and tarry; but ever he
shooteth as children do that love to shoot up a-cop-high, to see how
high their arrow can fly up.

But, now, doth the *devil* intend and appoint a *certain* prick, surely
20 set in a place into which he purposeth... fly this arrow never so high,
and the proud heart thereon... to have them light both at last. And that
place is in the very pit of hell. There is set the devil’s well-acquainted
prick and his very just mark down... upon which prick with his
pricking shaft of pride, he hath by himself a plain proof and experience
25 that (but if it be stopped by some grace of God by the way) the
soul that flieth up therewith can never fail to fall. For when himself
was in heaven and began to fly up a-cop-high with that lusty light
flight of pride, saying, “Ascendam super astra, et ponam solium meum ad
latera Aquilonis, et ero similis Altissimo” (“I will sty up above the stars,
30 and set my throne on the sides of the North, and will be like unto the

1 *richesse*: wealthiness 2 *appointed*: aimed at 3 *by and by*: immediately
5 *soon*: quickly 6 *by and by*: soon; before long // *token*: trace; evidence
15 *mark*: target // *butt*: thing on which the target is set up 15, 19, 23 *prick*: bull’s-eye
16 *tarry*: remain 17, 27 *a-cop-high*: high as can be 19 *surely*: securely
21 *light*: land 23 *just*: suitable; appropriate 25 *but if*: unless 27 *lusty*: exhilarating
29 *sty*: rise 159/28—160/1: Isaiah 14:13–14.

Highest”)—long ere he could fly up half so high as he said in his heart he would... he was turned from a bright, glorious angel into a dark, deformed devil... and from flying any further upward... down was he thrown into the deep dungeon of hell.

2.16

- 5 Now may it peradventure, Cousin, seem that since this kind of temptation of pride is no tribulation or pain, all this that we speak, of this arrow of pride flying forth in the “day” of prosperity, were beside our matter.

Vincent

- 10 Verily, mine Uncle; and so seemed it unto me, and somewhat was I minded so to say to you, too—saving that, were it properly pertaining to the present matter or somewhat digressing therefrom, good matter methought it was, and such as I had no lust to let.

Anthony

- 15 But now must you, Cousin, consider that though prosperity be contrary to tribulation, yet unto many a good man the devil’s temptation unto pride in prosperity is a greater tribulation, and more need hath of good comfort and good counsel both, than he that never felt it would ween. And that is the thing, Cousin, that maketh me speak thereof
20 as of a thing proper to this matter. For, Cousin, as it is a thing right hard to touch pitch and never defile the fingers, to put flax unto fire and yet keep them from burning, to keep a serpent in thy bosom and yet be safe from stinging... to put young men with young women without danger of foul fleshly desire: so is it hard for any person, either man
25 or woman, in great worldly wealth and much prosperity, so to withstand the suggestions of the devil, and occasions given by the world, that they keep themselves from the deadly desire of ambitious glory. Whereupon there followeth (if a man fall thereto) a whole flood of all unhappy mischief: arrogant manner... high, sullen, solemn port...

6 *of*: to 7–8 *beside our matter*: outside our concern 13 *no lust to let*: no wish to keep out
19 *ween*: suppose 25 *wealth*: well-being 27 *ambitious*: ostentatious
29 *unhappy mischief*: (kinds of) trouble-causing evils // *solemn*: grand // *port*: bearing

overlooking the poor... in word and countenance displeasing, and disdainful behavior... ravin... extortion... oppression... hatred and cruelty.

2.16

Now, many a good man, Cousin, come into great authority, casting in his mind the peril of such occasions of pride as the devil taketh
 5 of prosperity to make his instruments of, wherewith to move men to such high point of presumption as engendereth so many great inconveniences... and feeling the devil therewith offering to themselves suggestions thereto—they be sore troubled therewith. And some fall so
 10 afraid thereof that even *in* the “day” of prosperity, they fall into the “night’s fear” of pusillanimity... and doubting overmuch lest they should misuse themselves, leave the things undone wherein they might use themselves well... and mistrusting the aid and help of God in holding them upright in their temptations... give place to the devil in the contrary temptation... whereby, for faint heart, they leave off good business
 15 wherein they were well occupied... and under pretext (as it seemeth to themselves) of humble heart and meekness and serving God in contemplation and silence, they seek their own ease and earthly rest unawares; wherewith (if it so be) God is not well content.

Howbeit, if it so be that a man feel himself such indeed as, by
 20 the experience that he hath of himself, he perceiveth that in wealth and authority he doth his own soul harm, and *cannot* do therein the good that to his part appertaineth... but seeth the things that he should set his hand to sustain... decay through his default and fall to ruin under him... and that to the amendment thereof he leaveth his own duty undone:
 25 then would I in any wise advise him to leave off that thing—be it spiritual benefice that he have (parsonage... or bishopric) or temporal room and authority—and rather give it over quite and draw himself aside, and serve God, than take the worldly worship and commodity for himself with incommodity of them whom his duty
 30 were to profit. But on the other side, if he see not the contrary but that he *may* do his duty conveniently well, and feareth nothing but that

1 *overlooking*: looking down on; treating with contempt // *displeasing*: offensive

2 *ravin*: plundering 3 *casting*: pondering 6 *inconveniences*: improprieties; unseemly behaviors

8 *suggestions*: incitements 10 *doubting*: fearing // *lest they should*: that they would

11 *misuse*: misconduct 15 *pretext*: excuse 18 *well content*: very happy 20 *wealth*: prosperity

23 *decay*: deteriorate // *default*: failure to act; neglect 25 *in any wise*: by all means

27 *temporal*: secular // *room*: office; position // *quite*: completely

28 *worship*: honor // *commodity*: advantage 29 *with incommodity*: to the disadvantage

31 *conveniently*: reasonably

- the temptations of ambition and pride *may* peradventure turn
 his good purpose and make him decline unto sin—I say not nay
 but that well done it is to stand in moderate fear always; whereof the
 Scripture saith, “Beatus homo qui semper est pavidus” (“Blessed is the man
 5 that is always fearful”)... and Saint Paul saith, “Qui stat videat ne cadat”
 (“He that standeth... let him look that he fall not”). Yet is overmuch fear
 perilous... and draweth toward the mistrust of God’s gracious help;
 which immoderate fear and faint heart Holy Scripture forbiddeth,
 saying, “Noli esse pusillanimis”; “Be not feeble-hearted,” or “timorous.”
 10 Let such a man therefore temper his fear with good hope... and think...
 that since God hath set him in that place (if he think that God have
 set him therein), God will assist him with his grace to the well using
 thereof. Howbeit, if he came thereto by simony or some such other
 evil means... then were that thing one good reason wherefore he should
 15 the rather leave it off. But else let him continue in his good business...
 and against the devil’s provocation unto evil—bless himself and
 call unto God and pray. And look what thing the devil tempteth him to—
 lean the more to the contrary. Let him be piteous and comfortable
 to those that are in distress and affliction. I mean not... to let every
 20 malefactor pass forth unpunished and freely run out and rob at rovers—
 but in his heart be sorry to see that of necessity, for fear of decaying the
 commonweal, men are driven to put malefactors to pain. And yet
 where he findeth good tokens and likelihood of amendment... there, in
 all that he may, help that mercy may be had. There shall never lack
 25 desperately disposed wretches enough besides... upon whom for example
 justice may proceed. Let him think in his own heart every poor
 beggar his fellow.

Vincent

That will be very hard, Uncle, for an honorable man to do... when

4–6: Proverbs 28:14; 1 Corinthians 10:12. 9: Sirach 7:10 (Vulgate, 7:9).
 17 *look what*: whatever 18 *piteous*: compassionate // *comfortable*: comforting
 20, 22 *malefactor(s)*: criminal(s) // *at rovers*: at will 21 *decaying*: causing a deterioration of
 23 *tokens*: signs // *likelihood*: evidence 25 *desperately disposed*: hardcore
 27 *fellow*: equal 29 *an honorable man*: a man holding a position of honor

he beholdeth himself richly appareled, and the beggar rigged in his rags!

2.16

Anthony

If here were, Cousin, two men that were beggars both, and afterward a
 5 great rich man would take the one unto him and tell him
 that for a little time he would have him in his house; and thereupon
 arrayed him in silk and gave him a great bag by his side, filled even
 full of gold... but giving him this knot therewith—that within a little
 while, out he should in his old rags again, and bear never a penny with
 10 him—if this beggar met his fellow now, while his gay gown were
 on... might he not, for all his gay gear, take him for his fellow still?
 And were he not a very fool if for a wealth of a few weeks he would
 ween himself far his better?

Vincent

15 Yes, Uncle—if the difference of their state were none other.

Anthony

Surely, Cousin, methinketh that in this world, between the richest
 and the most poor, the difference is scant so much. For let the highest
 look on the most base... and consider how poor they came both into this
 20 world, and then consider further therewith, how rich soever he be now...
 he shall yet within a while, peradventure less than one week, walk
 out again as poor as that beggar shall. And then, by my troth, methinketh
 this rich man much more than mad if for the wealth of a
 little while, haply less than one week, he reckon himself in earnest
 25 any better than the beggar's fellow. And less than thus can no man
 think that hath any natural wit and well useth it.

But, now, a *Christian* man, Cousin, that hath the light of *faith*—he cannot
 fail to think on this thing much further. For he will not think
 only upon his bare coming hither and his bare going hence again...

7 *great*: large 7–8 *even full*: chock-full 8 *knot*: catch 9 *should*: i.e., would go
 9 *bear never a*: take not one 10, 11 *gay*: fine 11 *gear*: apparel 11, 25 *fellow*: equal
 19 *base*: lowly 21–22 *walk out again*: go back out
 2 *by my troth*: by my word; in all seriousness 26 *natural wit*: common sense

but also upon the dreadful judgment of God, and upon the fearful
 pains of hell... and the inestimable joys of heaven. And in the considering
 of these things, he will call to remembrance that
 peradventure when this beggar and he be both departed hence, the beggar
 5 may be suddenly set up in such royalty... that well were himself
 that ever was he born... if *he* might be made *his* fellow. And
 he that well bethinketh him, Cousin, upon these things, I verily
 think that the arrow of pride flying forth in the “day” of worldly
 wealth shall never so wound his heart... that ever it shall bear him up
 10 one foot.

But now, to the intent he may think on such things the better, let
 him use often to resort to confession... and there open his heart... and by
 the mouth of some virtuous ghostly father have such things oft
 renewed in his remembrance.

15 Let him also choose himself some secret, solitary place in his own
 house... as far from noise and company as he conveniently can. And
 thither let him sometimes secretly resort alone... imagining himself
 as one going out of the world, even straight unto the giving up
 his reckoning unto God of his sinful living. Then let him there, before
 20 an altar or some pitiful image of Christ’s bitter Passion... the
 beholding whereof may put him in remembrance of the thing and
 move him to devout compassion, kneel down or fall prostrate as at
 the feet of Almighty God... verily believing him to be there invisibly
 present... as without any doubt he is. There let him open his heart
 25 to God and confess his faults... such as he can call to mind, and pray God
 of forgiveness. Let him call to remembrance the benefits that God
 hath given him... either in general, among other men, or privately to
 himself... and give him humble, hearty thanks therefor.
 There let him declare unto God the temptations of the devil... the
 30 suggestions of the flesh... the occasions of the world, and of his worldly
 friends—much worse, many times, in drawing a man from God than

9 *wealth*: prosperity 12 *use often*: make it a frequent practice 12, 17 *resort*: betake himself; go
 13 *ghostly*: spiritual 15 *secret*: secluded 16 *conveniently*: reasonably
 18 *even*: just 19 *reckoning*: account 20 *pitiful*: touching; poignant 25 *faults*: transgressions
 27–28 *privately to himself*: to himself personally 30 *suggestions*: incitements to evil
 31 *friends*: relatives and friends

are his most mortal enemies; which thing our Savior witnesseth himself, where he saith, “*Inimici hominis domestici eius*” (“The enemies of a man are they that are his own familiars”).

2.16

5 There let him lament and bewail unto God his own frailty, negligence, and sloth in resisting and withstanding of temptation, his readiness and proneness to fall thereunto.

10 There let him lamentably beseech God of his gracious aid and help to strengthen his infirmity withal—both in keeping himself from falling... and when he by his own fault misfortuneth to fall, then with the helping hand of his merciful grace to lift him up and set him on his feet in the state of his grace again.

15 And let this man not doubt but that God heareth him and granteth him gladly his boon. And so dwelling in the faithful trust of God’s help, he shall well use his prosperity and persevere in his good, profitable business... and shall have therein the truth of God so compass him about with a pavis of his heavenly defense... that of the devil’s arrow flying in the day of worldly wealth, he shall not need to dread.

Vincent

20 Forsooth, Uncle, I like this good counsel well; and I would ween that such as are in prosperity and take such order therein may do, both to themselves and other folk about, much good.

Anthony

25 I beseech our Lord, Cousin, put this and better in the mind of every man that needeth it. And now will I touch one word or twain of the third temptation, whereof the prophet speaketh in these words: “*a negotio perambulante in tenebris*” (“from the busyness walking in the darkness”). And then will we call for our dinner, leaving the last temptation—that is to wit, “*ab incursu et daemonio meridiano*” (“from the incursion and the devil of the midday”)—till afternoon; and then shall we therewith, God willing, 30 make an end of all this matter.

2–3: Matthew 10:36. 7 *lamentably*: lamentingly 8 *withal*: therewith
 13 *boon*: prayed-for favor 16 *pavis*: shield 20 *order*: measures 23 *put*: i.e., to put
 24 *touch* . . . *of*: say a word or two about 25–26, 28–29: Psalm 91:6.
 26 *walking*: roaming 28 *incursion*: invasion; raid

Vincent

2.17

Our Lord reward you, good Uncle, for your good labor with me.
But for our Lord's sake, take good heed, Uncle, that you forbear not
your dinner overlong.

5

Anthony

Fear not that, Cousin, I warrant you; for this piece will I make you
but short.

*Of the devil named "negotium perambulans in tenebris";
that is to wit, "Busyness Walking in the Darkness"*

10

The Seventeenth Chapter

The prophet saith in the said psalm, "Qui habitat in adiutorio Altissimi,
in protectione Dei caeli commorabitur, . . . scuto circumdabit te veritas eius; non
timebis a timore . . . a negotio perambulante in tenebris" ("He that dwelleth
in the faithful hope of God's help, he shall abide in the protection
15 and safeguard of the God of heaven. [And thou that art such one] shall the
truth of him so compass about with a pavis that thou shalt not
be afeard of . . . the busyness walking about in the darknesses").

Negotium is here, Cousin, the name of a devil that is ever full of busyness
in tempting folk to much evil business. His time of tempting is in
20 the darknesses. For you wot well that besides the very full night,
which is the deep dark, there are two times of darknesses: the one
ere the morning wax light; the other when the evening waxeth
dark.

Two times of like manner darkness are there also in the soul of
25 man: the one ere the light of grace be well in the heart sprung

3 *forbear not*: not go without 6 *fear not*: i.e., you need not fear 9, 17 *walking*: roaming
20 *wot*: know 22 *wax(eth)*: grows

up; the other when the light of grace out of the soul beginneth
to walk fast away.

2.17

In these two darknesses the devil that is called Busyness busily walketh
about... and such folk as will follow him, he carrieth about with him,
5 and setteth them a-work with many manner bumbling business.

He setteth, I say, some to seek the pleasures of the flesh... in eating,
drinking, and other filthy delight. And some he setteth about *incessant*
seeking for these worldly goods.

And of such busy folk whom this devil called “Busyness Walking About
10 in the Darkness” setteth a-work with such busyness... our Savior saith
in the Gospel, “Qui ambulat in tenebris nescit quo vadit” (“He that walketh
in darknesses wotteth not whither he goeth”). And surely in such case
are they—they neither wot which way they go nor whither. For
verily they walk round about as it were in a round maze; when
15 they ween themselves at an end of their business, they be but at the
beginning again. For is not the going about the serving of the
flesh a business that hath no end... but evermore from
the end cometh to the beginning again? Go they never so full-fed
to bed... yet evermore on the morrow as new be they to be fed again
20 as they were the day before.

Thus fareth it by the belly; thus fareth it by those parts that are
beneath the belly. And as for covetousness, fareth like the fire; the more
wood that cometh thereto, the more fervent and the more greedy it is.

But now hath this maze a center, or middle place, into which sometimes
25 they be conveyed suddenly... when they ween they were not yet
far from the brink.

The center, or middle place, of this maze is hell. And into that place
be these busy folk that with this devil of busyness walk about in this
busy maze in the darknesses suddenly sometimes conveyed—nothing

2 *walk fast*: go quickly 7 *filthy*: base; low-level 11–12: John 12:35.

12, 13 *whither*: to where 14 *as*: as if 19 *new*: fresh

21 *thus fareth it by*: that’s how it goes with 26 *brink*: perimeter 29 *nothing*: not at all

aware whither they be going... and even while they ween that they were not far walked from the beginning... and that they had yet a great way to walk about before they should come to the end. But of these fleshly folk walking in this busy pleasant maze, the Scripture declareth the end: “Ducunt in bonis dies suos, et in puncto ad inferna descendunt”—“They lead their life in pleasure... and at a pop, down they descend into hell.”

Of the covetous men saith Saint Paul, “Qui volunt divites fieri, incidunt in tentationem, et in laqueum diaboli, et desideria multa inutilia et nociva, quae mergunt homines in interitum et perditionem”—“They that long to be rich... do fall into temptation, and into the grin of the devil, and into many desires unprofitable... and harmful... which drown men into death and into destruction.”

Lo, here is the middle place of this busy maze: the grin of the devil; the place of perdition and destruction that they fall and be caught and drowned in ere they be aware.

The covetous rich man also, that our Savior speaketh of in the Gospel, that had so great plenty of corn that his barns would not receive it... but intended to make his barns larger, and said unto himself that he would make merry many days... had went, you wot well, that he had had a great way yet to walk; but God said unto him, “Stulte, hac nocte tollent a te animam tuam; quae autem parasti, cuius erunt?”—“Fool, this night shall they take thy soul from thee; and then all this good that thou hast gathered, whose shall it be?” Here you see that he fell suddenly into the deep center of this busy maze... so that he was fallen full therein long ere he had went he should have come near thereto.

Now, this wot I very well—that those that are walking about in this busy maze take not their busyness for any tribulation. And yet are there many of them forwearied as sore, and as sore panged and pained, therein; their pleasures being so short, so little, and so few, and their displeasures and their griefs so great, so continual, and so many, that it maketh me think upon a good worshipful man... which, when he

4 *pleasant*: pleasurable 5–12: Job 21:13; 1 Timothy 6:9. 10, 13 *grin*: snare; trap
11 *drown*: sink 16–23: Luke 12:16–20. 17 *so . . . corn*: such a great abundance of grain
19, 25 *went*: thought 29 *forwearied as sore*: as badly worn out
30 *little*: small 32 *worshipful*: high-ranking // *which*: who

divers times beheld his wife, what pain she took in straitly binding
up her hair to make her a fair large forehead, and with strait
bracing in her body to make her middle small—both twain to her
great pain... for the pride of a little foolish praise—he said unto her,
5 “Forsooth, madam, if God give you not hell, he shall do you great
wrong. For it must needs be your own of very right; for you buy it
very dear, and take great pain therefor.”

They that now lie in hell for their wretched living here... do now
perceive their folly in the more pain that they took here for the less
10 pleasure. There confess they now their folly and cry out, “Lassati sumus
in via iniquitatis!” (“We have been wearied in the way of wickedness!”). And
yet while they were walking therein, they would not rest themselves, but
run on still in their weariness... and put themselves still unto more
pain and more, for that little, peevish pleasure, short and soon gone, that
15 they took all that labor and pain for, besides the everlasting pain
that followed it for their further advantage after.

So help me God, and none otherwise, but as I verily think that
many a man buyeth hell here with so much pain that he might have
bought heaven with less than the one half!

20 But yet, as I say, while these fleshly- and worldly-busy folk are walking
about in this round, busy maze of this devil that is called “Busyness
that walketh about in these two times of darkness,” their wits are so
by the secret enchantment of the devil bewitched that they mark
not the great, long, miserable weariness and pain that the devil maketh
25 them take and endure about naught; and therefore they take it for
no tribulation, so that they need no comfort; and therefore it is not for
their sakes that I speak all this—saving that it may serve them for
counsel toward the perceiving of their own foolish misery through
the good help of God’s grace beginning to shine upon them
30 again. But there are very good folk and virtuous that are in the
daylight of grace... and yet because the devil tempteth them busily to

1 *divers*: several 1, 2 *strait(ly)*: tight(ly) 2 *fair*: nice 7 *very dear*: at great cost
7 *therefor*: for it 10–11: Wisdom 5:7. 14 *peevish*: foolish 22 *wits*: minds
23–24 *mark not*: take no notice of 25 *naught*: wickedness / nothing

such fleshly delight... and since they see plenty of worldly substance fall
unto them, and feel the devil in like wise busily tempt them to set their
heart thereupon... they be sore troubled therewith... and begin to fear
thereby that they be not with God in the light... but with this devil that
5 the prophet calleth *negotium* (that is to say, Busyness) walking about in
these two times of darkness.

2.17

Howbeit, as I said before of those good folk and gracious that are
in the worldly wealth of great power and authority... and thereby fear the
devil's arrow of pride, so say I now here again of these that stand
10 in dread of fleshly foul sin and covetousness. Since they be but *tempted*
therewith, and follow it not... albeit that they do well to stand ever in
moderate fear, lest with waxing overbold and setting the thing over-light,
they might peradventure mishap to fall in thereto... yet sore to
vex and trouble themselves with the fear of loss of God's favor
15 therefor, is without necessity and not always without peril. For as I said
before, it withdraweth the mind of a man far from spiritual consolation
of the good hope that he should have in God's help. And as for
those temptations, while he that is tempted followeth them not... the
fight against them serveth a man for matter of merit and reward in
20 heaven—if he not only flee the deed, the consent, and the delectation, but
also (in that he conveniently may) flee from all occasions thereof. And
this point is in those fleshly temptations easy to perceive and meetly
plain enough. But in these worldly businesses pertaining unto covetousness,
therein is the thing somewhat more dark, and in the perceiving more
25 difficult. And very great, troublesome fear doth there oftentimes
arise thereof in the hearts of very good folk when the world falleth
fast unto them, because of the sore words and terrible threats that God
in Holy Scripture speaketh against those that are rich; as where Saint
Paul saith, “Qui volunt divites fieri, incidunt in tentationem, et in laqueum
30 diaboli” (“They that will be rich, fall into temptation, and into the grin
of the devil”). And where our Savior saith himself, “Facilius est camelum
per foramen acus transire... quam divitem intrare in regnum Dei”; “It is more

1 *plenty*: an abundance // *substance*: wealth 7 *gracious*: godly; righteous
12 *waxing overbold*: getting too confident // *setting the thing over-light*: taking the thing too lightly
15 *therefor*: on account of it 18 *while*: as long as 20 *flee*: shun; eschew
20 *delectation*: enjoyment 21 *in . . . may*: to the extent that he reasonably can
22, 23 *in*: with regard to 23 *businesses*: activities 24 *dark*: obscure
26–27 *falleth fast unto them*: quickly comes into their hands 27 *sore*: harsh 28 *as*: such as
29–31: 1 Timothy 6:9. 30 *they that will*: those who desire to
30 *grin*: snare 170/31—171/3: Mark 10:25.

easy for a camel”—or, as some say (for *camelus* so signifieth in the Greek tongue), “for a great cable rope”—“to go through a needle’s eye... than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.”

2.17

- No marvel, now, though good folk that fear God... take occasion of
- 5 great dread at so dreadful words... when they see the worldly goods fall to them. And some stand in doubt whether it be lawful for them to keep any goods or no. But evermore in all those places of Scripture, the having of the worldly goods is not the thing that is rebuked and threatened... but the affection that the haver unlawfully beareth thereto.
- 10 For where Saint Paul saith, “Qui volunt divites fieri” (“They that will be made rich”), he speaketh not of the *having*, but of the will and the desire... and affection to have, and the longing for it. For that cannot be lightly without sin. For the thing that folk sore long for... they will make many shifts to get, and jeopard themselves therefor. And to
- 15 declare that the having of riches is not forbidden... but the inordinate affection of the mind sore set thereupon, the prophet saith, “Divitie si affluent, nolite cor apponere” (“If riches flow unto you, set not your heart thereupon”). And albeit that our Lord by the said example of the camel, or cable rope, to come through the needle’s eye... said that it is not
- 20 only hard but also *impossible* for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven—yet he declared that though the rich man cannot get into heaven of himself... yet God, he said, can get him in well enough. For unto *men*, he said, it was impossible, but not unto *God*; for “unto God,” he said, “all things are possible.” Yet over that, he told
- 25 of which manner rich men he meant that could not get into the kingdom of heaven, saying, “Filioli, quam difficile est confidentes in pecuniis regnum Dei introire”—“My babes, how hard is it for them that put their trust and confidence in their money, to enter into the kingdom of God!”

2 *great*: big 4 *no marvel*: it’s no wonder // *though*: if 5 *so dreadful*: such terrifying

6 *fall to them*: become theirs 7 *places*: passages 9, 12 *affection*: liking

13 *be lightly*: well be; easily be 14 *shifts*: maneuvers

14 *jeopard*: put themselves at risk // *therefor*: for it 15 *declare*: show // *richesse*: wealth

16 *affection*: liking / attachment // *the mind*: i.e., the mind which is 16–18: Psalm 62:11.

21 *declared*: explained 23–29: Mark 10:23–27.

Vincent

2.17

This I suppose very true; and else God forbid! For else were the world in a very hard case... if every rich man were in such danger and peril.

5

Anthony

That were it, Cousin, indeed; and so, I ween, is it yet. For I fear me that to the multitude, there be very few but that they long sore to be rich; and of those that so long to be, very few reserved also but that they set their heart *very* sore thereon.

10

Vincent

This is, Uncle, I fear me, very true—but yet not the thing that I was about to speak of. But the thing that I would have said was this: that I cannot well perceive—the world being such as it is... and so many poor people therein—how any man may be rich, and keep him rich,
 15 without danger of damnation therefor. For all the while that he seeth poor people, so many, that lack, while himself hath to give them, and whose necessity (while he hath therewith) he is bound, in such case, of duty to relieve—so far forth that holy Saint Ambrose saith that whoso that die for default where we might help them, we kill them—I cannot
 20 see but that *every* rich man hath *great* cause to stand in *great* fear of damnation; nor I cannot perceive, as I say, how he can be delivered of that fear as long as he keepeth his riches. And therefore, though he might keep his riches if there lacked poor men... and yet stand in God's favor therewith—as Abraham did, and many another holy
 25 rich man since—yet in such abundance of poor men as there be now in every country, any man that keepeth any riches, it *must* needs be that he *hath* an inordinate affection thereunto, while he giveth it not out unto the poor, needy persons... that the duty of charity bindeth

3 *hard case*: tough predicament 6 *that were it*: that it would be 6, 11 *I fear me*: I'm afraid

7 *to the multitude*: compared to the majority; out of all the people there are

8 *reserved*: excepted 14 *may*: can // *keep him*: keep himself; stay

16 *himself* . . . *them*: i.e., he himself has the means to be able to give them something

17 *necessity*: dire need; poverty // *while* . . . *therewith*: when he has the means there with him

17 *case*: a situation 18–19: In *Summa Theologica* III, q. 32, art. 5, Saint Thomas Aquinas says, "For in such cases the words of Ambrose apply, 'Feed him that dies of hunger: if thou hast not fed him, thou hast slain him.'" There the source for this quote is given as "Canon *Pesce*, dist. lxxxvi."

19 *default*: (our) failure to act 19, 23 *might*: could 22, 23 *richesse*: wealthiness

25 *in*: with 26 *richesse*: wealth 27 *affection*: attachment // *while*: when

and straineth him to. And thus, Uncle, in this world, at this day,
meseemeth your comfort unto good men that are rich and troubled
with fear of damnation for the keeping, can very scanty serve.

2.17

Anthony

5 Hard is it, Cousin, in many manner things, to bid or forbid, affirm
or deny, reprove or allow, a matter nakedly proposed and put forth;
or precisely to say “This thing is good,” or “This thing is naught,” without
consideration of the circumstances.

10 Holy Saint Augustine telleth of a physician that gave a man a medicine
in a certain disease... that helped him. The selfsame man at another
time... in the selfsame disease took the selfsame medicine
himself, and had thereof more harm than good. Which thing when
he showed unto the physician, and asked him whereof that harm should
hap: “That medicine,” quoth he, “did thee no good, but harm, because
15 thou tookest it when I gave it thee not.” This answer Saint Augustine very
well alloweth... for that though the *medicine* were one, yet might
there be, peradventure, in the *sickness* some such difference as the
patient perceived not; yea, or in the man himself... or in the place, or
the time of the year—many things might make the let for which the
20 physician would not then have given him the selfsame medicine that
he gave him before. To peruse every circumstance that might,
Cousin, in this matter be touched and were to be considered and weighed,
would indeed make this part, of this devil of Busyness, a very busy
piece of work and a long. But I shall a little open the point that
25 you speak of... and shall show you what I think thereon, with as few
words as I conveniently can—and then will we go to dinner.

First, Cousin, he that is a rich man and keepeth all his good—he hath, I
think, very good cause to be very afeard indeed. And yet I fear me that
such folk fear least. For they be very far from the state of good men...
30 since if they keep still *all*... then are they very far from charity... and do,
you wot well, alms either little or none at all. But now is our question,
Cousin... not in what case the rich man standeth that keepeth *all*...

1 *straineth*: constrains 2 *meseemeth*: it seems to me that 5 *bid*: command
6 *reprove*: censure // *allow*: sanction // *nakedly*: baldly; without amplification
7 *precisely*: absolutely // *naught*: bad 9–21: See Augustine, *Letter to Marcellinus*, 1:3.
10, 11 *disease*: illness 13 *showed*: told 16 *alloweth*: accepts as a good one
16 *for that though*: because although // *one*: the same
19 *make the let*: constitute the drawback // *for*: on account of
21 *peruse*: mention specifically // *might*: could 22 *touched*: discussed
23 *of this*: concerning this 24 *open*: explain 25 *show*: tell
26 *conveniently*: with propriety 27 *good*: money

but whether we should suffer men to stand in a perilous dread and fear
for the keeping of any great part; for that if by the keeping still of
so much as maketh a rich man still... they stand in the state of damnation,
then are the curates bound plainly to tell them so...

2.17

- 5 according to the commandment of God given unto them all in the
person of Ezekiel: “Si dicente me ad impium morte morieris, non annuntiaveris
ei,” etc.; “If when I say to the wicked man, ‘Thou shalt die,’ thou do
not show it unto him... nor speak unto him... that he may be turned
from his wicked way and may live—he shall soothly die in his wickedness,
10 and his blood shall I verily require of thy hand.”

- But, Cousin, though God invited men unto the following of himself
in willful poverty, by the leaving of altogether at once for his sake,
as the thing whereby, with being out of the solicitude of worldly
business and far from the desire of earthly commodities, they may the
15 more speedily *get*, and attain, the state of spiritual perfection,
and the hungry desire and longing for celestial things—yet
doth he not command every man so to do upon the peril of damnation.
For where he saith, “Qui non renunciaverit omnibus quae possidet
non potest meus esse discipulus”—“He that forsake not all that ever he hath
20 cannot be my disciple”—he declareth well, by other words of his own
in the selfsame place a little before, what he meaneth. For there saith
he more, “Si quis venit ad me, et non odit patrem suum et matrem, et
uxorem et filios et fratres et sorores, adhuc autem et animam suam, non
potest meus esse discipulus”—“He that cometh to me, and hateth not his
25 father and his mother, and his wife and his children, and his brethren and
his sisters... yea, and his own life, too, cannot be my disciple.”

- Here meaneth our Savior Christ that no one can be his disciple but
if he love him so far above all his kin, and above his own life, too,
that for the love of him, rather than to forsake *him*, he shall forsake
30 them all. And so meaneth he by those *other* words that whosoever
do not so renounce and forsake all that ever he hath in his own heart
and affection, that he will rather lose it all and let it go every whit...

1 *suffer*: allow 2 *for that*: because 3 *a rich man still*: i.e., someone still a rich person
4 *curates*: parish priests 6–10: Ezekiel 3:18. 8 *show*: tell 9 *soothly*: certainly
10 *require of thy hand*: request from your hand; i.e., hold you responsible for
12 *willful*: voluntary // *altogether*: everything 18–26: Luke 14:33; Luke 14:26.
20 *declareth*: explains 27–28 *but if*: unless 32 *let . . . whit*: let every bit of it go

than deadly displease God with the reserving of any one part thereof—
he cannot be Christ's disciple, since Christ teacheth us to love God
 above allthing, and he loveth not God above allthing that contrary
 to God's pleasure, keepeth any thing that he hath; for that thing he
 5 showeth himself to set more by than by God... while he is better content
 to lose God than it. But as I said, to give away all... or that no man
 should be rich or have substance—*that* find I no commandment of.
 There are, as our Savior saith, in the house of his Father
 many mansions. And happy shall he be that shall have the grace to
 10 dwell even in the lowest.

It seemeth, verily, by the Gospel, that those which for God's sake
 patiently suffer penury shall not only dwell above those, in heaven,
 that live here in plenty in earth, but also that heaven in some manner of
 wise more properly *belongeth* unto them, and is more especially prepared
 15 for them than it is for the rich... by that that God in the Gospel
 counseleth the rich folk to buy, in a manner, heaven of them, where he
 saith unto the rich men, "Facite vobis amicos de mammona iniquitatis, ut
 cum defeceritis recipiant vos in aeterna tabernacula"—"Make you friends of
 the wicked riches... that when you fail here, they may receive you
 20 into the everlasting tabernacles."

But, now, although this be thus in respect of the riches and the poverty
 compared together... yet, they being good men both, there may be
 some other virtue beside, wherein the rich man may so, peradventure,
 excel... that he may in heaven be far above that poor man that was
 25 here in earth in other virtues far under him; as the proof appeareth
 clear in Lazarus and Abraham.

Nor I say not this to the intent to comfort rich men in heaping up of
 riches—for a little comfort is bent enough thereto for them, that be not
 so proudhearted and obstinate but that they would, I ween, to that counsel
 30 be with right little exhortation very conformable—but I say this

1 *deadly displease*: mortally offend // *reserving*: keeping in one's possession
 3 *allthing*: everything 5 *set*... *God*: care more about than about God // *while*: when
 5 *better content*: more willing 7 *substance*: capital 8-9: John 14:2. 12 *penury*: poverty
 16 *in a manner*: so to speak // *of*: from 17-20: Luke 16:9. 18 *of*: by means of
 19 *wicked riches*: tainted wealth 21 *in respect of*: with respect to // *richesse*: wealthiness
 23 *beside*: i.e., other than that of poverty chosen and lived for the sake of God
 25 *in earth*: on earth 28 *bent*: encouragement // *that*: who 30 *conformable*: submissive

for that those good men to whom God giveth substance and the mind to dispose it well, and yet not the mind to give it all away at once... but for good causes to keep some substance still, should not despair of God's favor... for the not doing of the thing which God hath given them no commandment of... nor drawn by any special calling thereunto.

5 Zacchaeus, lo, that climbed up into the tree for desire that he had to behold our Savior, at such time as Christ called aloud unto him and said, "Zacchaeus, make haste and come down... for this day must I dwell in thy house!" was so glad thereof, and so touched inwardly with special grace, to the profit of his soul, that—whereas all the people murmured much that Christ would call him and be so familiar with him as of his own offer to come unto his house, considering that they knew him for the chief of the publicans, that were customers, or toll gatherers, of the emperor's duties (all which whole company were among the people sore infamed of ravin, extortion, and bribery), and then Zacchaeus not only the chief of that fellowship... but also grown greatly rich, whereby the people accounted him in their own opinion for a man very sinful and naught—he forthwith, by the instinct of the Spirit of God, in reproach of all such temerarious, bold, and blind judgment... given upon a *man*, whose inward mind and sudden change they cannot see, shortly proved them all deceived... and that our Lord had, at those few words outwardly spoken to him, so wrought in his heart within... that whatsoever he was before, he was then, unawares unto them all, suddenly waxen good. For he *made* haste and *came* down, and gladly received Christ, and said, "Lo, Lord, the one half of my goods, here I give unto the poor people. And yet over that—if I have in anything deceived any man, here am I, ready to recompense him fourfold as much."

1 *for that*: so that 7–29: Luke 19:1–10. 14 *customers*: customs agents
 16 *infamed of*: strongly accused of // *ravin*: fleecing 19 *naught*: wicked
 19 *instinct*: prompting 20 *temerarious*: rash 22 *deceived*: wrong
 25 *waxen*: become 28 *deceived*: cheated

Vincent

2.17

- This was, Uncle, a gracious hearing. But I marvel me somewhat...
 wherefore Zacchaeus used his words in that manner of order. For methinketh
 he should *first* have spoken of making restitution unto those
 5 whom he had beguiled... and speak of giving of his alms *after*. For
 restitution is, you wot well, duty, and a thing of such necessity that
 in respect of restitution, almsdeed is but voluntary. Therefore, it
 might seem that to put men in mind of their duty in making restitution
 first and doing their alms after... Zacchaeus should have said more
 10 conveniently... if he had said first that he would make every man
 restitution whom he had wronged, and *then* give half in alms of that
 that remained after; for only that might he call clearly his own.

Anthony

- This is true, Cousin, where a man hath not enough to suffice both.
 15 But he that hath... is not bound to leave his alms ungiven to the
 poor man that is at his hand, and peradventure calleth upon
 him... till he go seek up all his creditors and all those that he hath
 wronged—so far, peradventure, asunder that leaving the one good
 deed undone the while, he may before they come together change
 20 that good mind again and do neither the one nor the other. It is
 good always to be doing some good out of hand, while we think
 thereon; grace shall the better stand with us, and increase also to go the
 further in the other after. And this I answer if the man had there
done the one out of hand—the giving, I mean, half in alms—and
 25 not so much as *spoken* of restitution till after; whereas now, though
 he spoke the one in order before the other... and yet all at one time...
 the thing remained still in his liberty to put them both in execution
 after such order as he should then think expedient. But, now, Cousin,

2 *gracious hearing*: good thing to hear // *marvel me somewhat*: kind of wonder
 3 *wherefore*: why // *used*: spoke 5 *beguiled*: cheated 7 *in respect of*: compared to
 7 *voluntary*: optional 9 *should have said*: would have spoken 10 *conveniently*: properly
 15 *bound*: obliged 17 *seek up*: look up 18 *so far*: i.e., who are so far
 18 *asunder*: away from him 20 *mind*: intention 21 *some good*: i.e., some good thing
 21 *out of hand*: here and now; on the spot 21–22 *while we think thereon*: when we think of it
 22 *stand*: remain 24 *out of hand*: then and there; immediately 26 *one*: the same
 28 *think expedient*: see fit

- did the Spirit of God temper the tongue of Zacchaeus, in the utterance of these words, in such wise... as it may well appear... the saying of the Wise Man to be verified in them where he saith, “Domini est gubernare linguam”—“To God it belongeth to govern the tongue.” For here—when he said
- 5 he would give half of his whole good unto poor people... and yet besides that, not only recompense any man whom he had wronged... but more, and recompense him by three times as much again—he doubly reproveth the false suspicion of the people that accounted him for so evil... that they reckoned in their mind *all* his good gotten in effect
- 10 with wrong, because he was grown to substance in that office that was commonly misused extortionately. But his words declared that he was ripe enough in *his* reckoning... that if half his good were given away... yet were he well able to yield every man his duty with the other half... and yet leave himself no beggar, neither; for he said not
- 15 he would give away all.
- Would God, Cousin, that every rich Christian man that is reputed right worshipful—yea, and (which yet in my mind more is) reckoned for right honest, too—would and were able to do the thing that little Zacchaeus, that same great publican (were he Jew... or were he paynim), said; that
- 20 is to wit, with less than half his goods recompense every man whom he had wronged, four times as much; yea, yea, Cousin, as much for as much... hardly. And then they that shall receive it shall be content, I dare promise for them, to let the other thrice-as-much go, and forgive it, because it was one of the hard points of the Old Law... whereas Christian men
- 25 must be full of forgiving, and not use to require and exact their amends to the uttermost. But, now, for our purpose here, notwithstanding that he promised not neither to give away all... nor to become a beggar, neither; no, nor yet to leave off his office, neither, which albeit that he had not used before peradventure in every point so pure as
- 30 Saint John the Baptist had taught them the lesson—“Nihil amplius quam constitutum

1 *temper*: guide; direct 3 *Wise Man*: Sage; i.e., the author of the wisdom books of the Old Testament
 3–4: Proverbs 16:1. 5 *his whole good*: all his money 7 *reproved*: proved wrong
 8 *false*: unjustified 9–10 *all . . . wrong*: practically all his money to have been gotten wrongfully
 10 *was grown to substance*: had become wealthy 11 *declared*: showed
 12 *ripe . . . reckoning*: in a good enough position as he saw it // *good*: money
 16 *would God*: I wish to God 16, 17 *right*: very 17 *worshipful*: high-ranking
 17–18 *honest*: honorable 18 *would*: wanted to 19 *paynim*: pagan
 22 *hardly*: barely // *content*: willing 24 *hard*: severe / difficult to carry out
 25 *use to require*: be wont to ask 28 *yet*: even 178/30—179/1: Luke 3:13.

est vobis faciatis” (“Do no more than is appointed unto you”)—
 yet forasmuch as he might both lawfully use his substance that he
 minded to reserve, and lawfully might use his office, too, in receiving the
 prince’s duty according to Christ’s express commandment “Reddite
 5 quae sunt Caesaris Caesari” (“Give the emperor those things that
 be his”), refusing all extortion and bribery beside: our Lord, well allowing
 his good purpose, and exacting no further forth of him concerning
 his worldly behavior, answered and said, “Hodie salus facta est
 huic domui, eo quod et ipse filius sit Abrahae” (“This day is health come to
 10 this house, for that he too is the son of Abraham”).

But now forget I not, Cousin, that in effect thus far you condescended
 unto me—that a man may be rich and yet not out of the state of grace,
 nor out of God’s favor. Howbeit, you think that though it may be
 so in *some* time, or in *some* place, yet at *this* time and in *this* place,
 15 or any such other like, wherein be so many poor people upon whom
 they be (you think) bound to bestow their good, they can keep no
 riches with conscience.

Verily, Cousin, if that reason would hold, I ween the world was never
 such anywhere, in which any man might have kept any
 20 substance without the danger of damnation. As for since Christ’s
 days to the world’s end, we have the witness of his own word that
 there hath never lacked poor men nor never shall; for he said himself,
 “Pauperes semper habebitis vobiscum, quibus cum vultis benefacere
 potestis” (“Poor men shall you always have with you, whom when you
 25 will you may do good unto”). So that, as I tell you, if your rule should
 hold... then were there, I ween, no place in no time since Christ’s days
 hither—nor, as I think, in as long before that, neither... nor never
 shall there hereafter—in which there would abide any man rich
 without the danger of eternal damnation even for his riches alone,
 30 though he demeaned it never so well. But, Cousin, men of substance

3 *minded to reserve*: intended to keep in his possession 4–6: Mark 12:17.

6 *refusing*: keeping clear of // *allowing*: approving of 7 *purpose*: resolve

11 *in effect*: in fact 11–12 *condescended unto*: concurred with 16 *good*: money

17 *richesse*: wealth // *with conscience*: i.e., with a good conscience

18 *reason*: reasoning 18, 26 *ween*: suppose 19 *might*: could 20 *substance*: capital

23–25: Mark 14:7. 24–25 *when you will*: whenever you want to 27 *hither*: till now

29 *even*: just // *richesse*: wealthiness 30 *though . . . well*: no matter how well he used it

30 *of substance*: i.e., who have capital

must there be; for else more beggars shall you have, pardie, than there be, and no man left able to relieve another. For this I think in my mind a very sure conclusion: that if all the money that is in this country were, tomorrow next, brought together out of every man's hand, and laid all upon one heap, and then divided out unto every man alike—it would be on the morrow after worse than it was the day before. For I suppose when it were all equally thus divided among all... the best should be left little better then than almost a beggar is now; and yet he that was a beggar before, all that he shall be the richer for that he should thereby receive... shall not make him much above a beggar still; but many one of the rich men, if their riches stood but in movable substance, shall be safe enough from riches haply for all their life after.

Men cannot, you wot well, live here in this world but if that some one man provide a means of living for some other many. Every man cannot have a ship of his own, nor every man be a merchant without a stock. And these things, you wot well, must needs be had; nor every man cannot have a plough by himself. And who might live by the tailor's craft, if no man were able to put a gown to make? Who by the masonry—or who could live a carpenter—if no man were able to build neither church nor house? Who should be the makers of any manner cloth, if there lacked men of substance to set sundry sorts a-work? Some man that hath but two ducats in his house were better forbear them both and leave himself not a farthing, but utterly lose all his own, than that some rich man by whom he is weekly set a-work should of his money lose the one half; for then were himself likely to lack work. For surely the rich man's substance is the wellspring of the poor man's living. And therefore here would it fare by the poor man as it fared by the woman in one of Aesop's fables,

1 *pardie*: by George; by golly 3 *sure conclusion*: safe supposition

4 *tomorrow next*: day after tomorrow 8 *the best . . . better*: i.e., the best-off . . . better off

10 *that*: what 11 *many one*: i.e., many a one // *richesse*: wealth

12 *movable substance*: liquid assets // *richesse*: wealthiness

18 *by himself*: of his own // *might*: could

19 *put a gown to make*: commission the making of a gown 20 *live a*: make a living as a

23–24 *were better forbear*: would be better off if he were to part with 27 *substance*: capital

which had a hen that laid her every day a golden egg... till on
a day she thought she would have a great many eggs at once... and
therefore she killed her hen, and found but one or twain in her belly;
so that for a few, she lost many.

2.17

- 5 But, now, Cousin, to come to your doubt how it may be that a man
may with conscience keep riches with him when he seeth so many
poor men upon whom he may bestow it—verily, that might he *not*
with conscience do if he must bestow it upon as many as he may.
And so must, of truth, every rich man do... if all the poor folk that
10 he seeth be so specially by God's commandment committed unto
his charge alone... that because our Savior saith, “Omni petenti te da”
(“Give every man that asketh thee”), therefore he be bound to give out
still to every beggar that will ask him, as long as any penny lasteth
in his purse. But verily, Cousin, that saying hath (as Saint saith
15 other places in Scripture hath) need of interpretation; for as Saint Augustine
saith, —“Though Christ saith,
‘Give every man that asketh thee,’ he saith not, yet, ‘Give them *all* that
they will ask thee.’” But surely all were one if he meant to bind me by
commandment to give every man without exception somewhat; for
20 so should I leave myself nothing.

- Our Savior in that place of the sixth chapter of Saint Luke speaketh
both of the contempt that we should in heart have of these worldly
things... and also of the manner that men should use toward their
enemies. For there he biddeth us love our enemies... give good
25 words for evil... and not only suffer injuries patiently—both by taking
away of our good... and harm done unto our body—but also be ready to
suffer the *double*, and, over that, to do them good again that do us the
harm. And *among* these things, he biddeth us “give every man that

1–2 *on a day*: one day 5 *doubt*: question 5, 6, 7, 8 *may*: can
6, 8 *with conscience*: with a good conscience 6 *richesse*: wealth 7 *might*: could
10 *specially*: particularly 11–12: Luke 6:30. 12–13 *give out still*: keep giving out
13 *lasteth*: remains 14, 16: The blank spaces were left by More.
15–18: Augustine, *On the Sermon on the Mount*, part 1, chapter 20.
18 *all were one*: it would all amount to the same thing 19 *somewhat*: something
21 *place*: part 22 *contempt* . . . *of*: detachment . . . from 25 *for evil*: in return for bad
26 *good*: money 27 *over*: in addition to // *do* . . . *that*: pay back with good those who

asketh”; meaning that in the thing that we may conveniently do a man good, we should not refuse it, what manner of man soever he be, though he were our mortal enemy; namely where we see that but if we help him ourselves, the person of the man should stand in peril of perishing; and therefore saith, “Si esurierit inimicus tuus, da illi cibum”—“If thine enemy be in hunger, give him meat.” But, now, though I be bound to give every manner man, in some manner, of his necessity, were he my friend or my foe, Christian man or heathen: yet am I not unto all men bound alike, nor unto any man in every case alike... but, as I began to tell you, the differences of the circumstances make great change in the matter. Saint Paul saith, “Qui non providet suis est infidelis deterior”—“He that provideth not for those that are his is worse than an infidel.” Those are ours that are belonging to our charge either by nature or by law... or any commandment of God; by nature, as our children; by law, as our servants in our household; so that, albeit these two sorts be not ours all alike, yet would I think that the least ours of the twain... that is to wit, our servants... if they need or lack, we be bound to look to them and provide for their need... and see, so far forth as we may, that they lack not the things that should serve for their necessity, while they dwell in our service. Meseemeth also if they fall sick in our service, so that they cannot do the service that we retain them for... yet may we not in any wise turn them then out of doors, and cast them up comfortless while they be not able to labor and help themselves. For this were a thing against all humanity. And surely if he were but a wayfaring man that I received into my house as a guest: if he fall sick therein, and his money gone, I reckon myself bound to keep him still... and rather to beg about for his relief than cast him out in that case, to the peril of his life—what loss soever I should hap to sustain in the keeping of him. For when God hath by such chance sent him to me, and there

1–2 *in . . . good*: whatever thing we can reasonably do somebody some good by giving them
 2 *though*: even if 3 *namely*: especially // *but if*: unless 4 *person*: body
 5–6: Romans 12:20. 6 *meat*: food 7 *of his necessity*: what he is in need of
 9 *case*: situation // *began*: started 11–13: 1 Timothy 5:8. 15 *as*: such as
 18 *look to*: look after 19 *so . . . may*: to the extent that we can 20 *necessity*: needs
 20 *while*: as long as // *dwell*: remain 28 *case*: condition 30 *chance*: a happenstance

once matched me with him... I reckon myself surely charged with him till I may without peril of his life be well and conveniently discharged of him.

2.17

By God's commandment are in our charge our parents; for by
 5 nature we be in theirs... since, as Saint Paul saith, it is not the children's part to provide for the parents, but the parents' to provide for the children—provide, I mean, conveniently good learning... or good occupations to get their living by, with truth and the favor of God...
 10 but not to make provision for them of such manner living as to-God-ward they should live the worse for; but rather, if they see by their manner that too much would make them naught... the father should then give them a great deal the less. But although that nature put not the parents in the charge of the children... yet not only God commandeth, but the order of nature also compelleth, that the children
 15 should both in reverent behavior honor their father and mother and also in all their necessity maintain them. And yet, as much as God and nature both bindeth us to the sustenance of our own father, his need may be so little (though it be somewhat), and a fremd man's so great, that both nature and God also would I should, in such unequal
 20 need, relieve that urgent necessity of a stranger—yea, my foe and God's enemy too, the very Turk or Saracen!—before a little need, and unlikely to do great harm, in my father and my mother too. For so ought they both twain themselves to be well content I should.

But, now, Cousin, out of the case of such extreme needs well perceived
 25 and known unto myself... I am not bound to give every beggar that will ask... nor to believe every faitour that I meet in the street that will say himself that he is very sick... nor to reckon all the poor folk committed by God only so to my charge alone, that no other man should give them nothing of his till I have first given out all
 30 mine; nor am not bound, neither, to have so evil opinion of all other folk save myself... as to think that but if I help, the poor folk shall all fail at once... for God hath left in all this quarter no more good folks now but me. I may think better by my neighbors and

1 *reckon*: consider // *surely charged with*: definitely responsible for 2 *may*: can
 2–3 *well . . . him*: good and properly relieved of that responsibility 7 *conveniently*: reasonably
 8 *truth*: integrity; uprightness 11 *naught*: bad 13 *in the charge*: under the responsibility
 16 *necessity*: need // *maintain*: support 18 *somewhat*: something // *fremd*: unrelated
 19 *would I should*: would have me 20 *stranger*: nonrelative 26 *faitour*: faker
 27 *say . . . is*: claim to be 30 *so evil*: such a bad 31 *but if*: unless
 32 *all this quarter*: this whole region 33 *by*: of

worse by myself than so... and yet come to heaven by God's grace well enough.

2.17

Vincent

- 5 Marry, Uncle—but some man will peradventure be right well content, in such case, to think his neighbors very charitable... to the intent that he may think himself at liberty to give nothing at all!

Anthony

- 10 That is, Cousin, very true. So will there some be content either to think or make as though they thought. But those are they that are content to give naught because they be naught! But our question is, Cousin, not of them... but of *good* folk, that by the keeping of worldly good stand in great fear to offend God. For the acquieting of their conscience speak we now, to the intent that they may perceive what manner of having of worldly good and keeping thereof may stand with
15 the state of grace. Now think I, Cousin, that if a man keep riches about him for a glory and royalty of the world, in the consideration whereof he taketh a great delight, and liketh himself therefor... taking the poorer, for the lack thereof, as one far worse than himself—such a mind is very vain, foolish pride, and such a man is very naught indeed. But on
20 the other side, if there be a man (such as would God were many!) that hath unto riches no love... but, having it fall abundantly unto him, taketh to his own part no great pleasure thereof... but as though he had it not, keepeth himself in like abstinence and penance privily as he would do in case he had it not... and in such
25 things as he doth openly (bestow somewhat more liberally upon himself in his house, after some manner of the world... lest he should give other folk occasion to marvel and muse and talk of his manner, and misreport him for a hypocrite)—therein, between God and him, doth truly protest and testify as did the good queen Esther, that he doth it

1 *worse by*: less well of 4 *marry*: indeed 10 *naught* . . . *naught*: nothing . . . wicked
12, 14 *good*: advantage 12 *to offend*: of offending 14 *stand*: coexist
15, 21 *richesse*: wealth 16 *royalty*: regal splendor
17 *liketh himself therefor*: is pleased with himself on account of it
18 *worse than*: inferior to; beneath 19 *naught*: wicked
20 *side*: hand // *would God*: I wish to God 22 *to*: on
24 *privily*: in private 25 *bestow*: spend 29 *truly* . . . *testify*: truthfully assert and attest
29 *as* . . . *Esther*: See Esther 14:16–19.

- not for any desire thereof in the satisfying of his own pleasure... but
 would with as good will or better forbear the possession of riches, saving
 for the commodity that other men have by his possessing thereof; as,
 percase, in keeping a good household, in good Christian order and fashion...
 5 and in setting other folk a-work with such things as they gain
 their living the better by his means: this man's having of riches I
 might, methinketh, in merit match, in a manner, with another man's
 forsaking of all... if there were no other circumstance more pleasant
 unto God added further unto the forsaking beside; as, percase, far the
 10 more fervent contemplation, by reason of the solicitude of all worldly
 business left off; which was the thing that made Mary Magdalene's
 part the better. For else would Christ have canned her much more
 thank to go about and be busy in the helping her sister Martha
 to dress his dinner, than to take her stool and sit down at her ease and do
 15 naught.
- Now, if he that have this good and riches by him have not haply
 fully so perfect a mind... but somewhat loveth to keep himself from
 lack... and not so fully as a pure Christian fashion requireth, determined
 to abandon his pleasure... well, what will you more? The man *is* so
 20 much the less perfect than I would he were, and haply than himself
 would wish if it were as easy to be it as to wish it; but yet not
 by and by in state of damnation, for all that—no more than every
 man is forthwith in state of damnation that, forsaking all and entering
 into religion, is not yet always so clear depurated from all worldly affections...
 25 as he himself would very fain he were, and much bewaileth
 that he is not. Of whom some man that hath in the world willingly
 forsaken the likelihood of right worshipful rooms... hath afterward
 had much ado... to keep himself from the desire of the office of cellarer
 or sexton—to bear yet at the leastwise *some* rule and authority though
 30 it were but among the bells! But God is more merciful to man's

2 *forbear*: give up 2, 6 *richesse*: wealth 3 *commodity*: benefit
 4, 9 *percase*: perhaps 8 *pleasant*: pleasing 11–15: See Luke 10:38–42.
 12–13 *canned* . . . *thank*: thanked her a lot more 14 *dress*: prepare 15 *naught*: nothing
 16 *good* . . . *him*: advantage and wealth with him 18 *not*: i.e., is not // *requireth*: calls for
 19 *abandon*: give up // *what will you more*: what more do you want 20 *would*: wish
 22 *by and by*: forthwith; i.e., just for that 24 *religion*: religious life // *clear*: completely
 24 *depurated from*: purified of // *affections*: attitudes / aspirations
 25 *would very fain*: very much wishes
 26–27 *willingly* . . . *rooms*: voluntarily renounced the prospect of very prestigious positions

- imperfection—if the man know it and acknowledge it and mislike it... and little
and little labor to amend it—than to reject and cast to the devil him that
after as his frailty can bear and suffer... hath a general intent and purpose
to please him, and to prefer, or set by, nothing in all this world
5 before him. And therefore, Cousin, to make an end of this piece with,
a negotio perambulante in tenebris; of this devil, I mean, that
the prophet calleth “Busyness walking in the darkneses”: if a man
have a mind to serve God and please him, and rather lose all the good
he hath... than wittingly to do deadly sin; and would without murmur
10 or grudge give it every whit away in case that God should so command
him; and intend to take it patiently... if God would take it from
him; and glad would be to use it unto God’s pleasure; and do his diligence
to know and to be taught what manner using thereof God would be pleased
with, and therein from time to time be glad to follow the counsel of
15 good, virtuous men; though he neither give away all at once nor give
every man that asketh him, neither—let every man fear and think
in this world that all the good that he doth or can do is a great deal
too little—but yet, for all that fear, let him dwell therewith in the faithful
hope of God’s help; and then shall the truth of God so compass
20 him about (as the prophet saith) with a pavis... that he shall not so
need to dread the trains of, and the temptations of, the devil that the
prophet calleth “Busyness walking about in the darkneses,” but that he
shall, for all the having of riches and worldly substance, so avoid
his trains and his temptations that he shall in conclusion, by the
25 great grace and almighty mercy of God, get into heaven well enough.
And now was I, Cousin, about, lo, after this piece thus ended, to bid them
bring in our dinner. But now shall I not need, lo... for here they come
with it already.

Vincent

- 30 Forsooth, good Uncle, God disposeth and timeth your matter and your
dinner both, I trust! For the end of your good tale (for which our Lord

1 *mislike*: dislike 1–2 *little and little*: little by little 3 *after as*: according to what
4 *set by*: care about 8 *lose*: i.e., to lose // *good*: money 9 *wittingly*: deliberately
9 *do deadly sin*: commit a mortal sin 10 *grudge*: complaint // *it every whit*: every bit of it
20 *pavis*: shield 21, 24 *trains*: snares 24 *in conclusion*: in the end
30 *your matter*: what you have to say 31 *tale*: talk

reward you!) and the beginning here of your good dinner too (from which it were more than pity that you should any longer have tarried) meet even at the close together.

2.17

Anthony

- 5 Well, Cousin, now will we say grace; and then for a while will we leave talking... and assay how our dinner shall like us, and how fair we can fall to feeding; which done, you know my customable guise (for “manner” I may not call it... because the guise is unmannerly): to bid you not farewell... but steal away from you to sleep. But, you wot well, I
10 am not wont at afternoon to sleep long... but even a little to forget the world; and when I wake, I will again come to you. And then is, God willing, all this long day ours... wherein we shall have time enough to talk much more than shall suffice for the finishing of this one part of our matter which only now remaineth.

- 15 Vincent

- I pray you, good Uncle, keep your customable *manner*; for “manner” may you call it well enough. For as it were against good manner to look that a man should kneel down for courtesy when his knee is sore, so is it very good manner that a man of your age—aggrieved with such
20 sundry sicknesses, besides, that suffer you not always to sleep when you should—let this sleep not slip away, but take it when you may. And I will, Uncle, in the meanwhile steal from you too, and speed a little errand and return to you again.

Anthony

- 25 Tarry while you will; and when you have dined, go at your pleasure—but I pray you tarry not long.

Vincent

You shall not need, Uncle, to put me in mind of that, I would so fain have up the remnant of our matter.

2 *were more than*: would have been more than a // *tarried*: been detained
3 *meet . . . together*: come right smack together 6 *leave*: stop
6 *assay*: see // *like*: please // *fair*: directly 7 *fall to feeding*: start eating
7, 16 *customable*: customary 7, 8 *guise*: way 10 *even*: just
11 *again come to you*: come back to you 14 *only*: alone 17 *were*: would be
18 *look that a man should*: expect a man to
20 *suffer you not always*: don’t always allow you 22 *may*: can // *from*: away from
22 *speed*: run 25 *tarry while you will*: stay as long as you like
25 *at your pleasure*: when you please 26 *pray . . . long*: ask that you not stay gone for long
28 *put . . . that*: remind me of that 28–29 *I . . . remnant*: I am so eager to take up the rest

The Third Book (and the last)
of consolation and comfort
in tribulation

3. Preface

Vincent

5 Somewhat have I tarried the longer, Uncle... partly for that I was loath
to come over-soon... lest my soon coming might have happed to have
made you wake too soon; but especially by reason that I was letted with
one that showed me a letter dated at Constantinople... by which letter
it appeareth that the great Turk prepareth a marvelously
10 mighty army. And yet whither he will therewith—that can there yet
no man tell. But I fear in good faith, Uncle, that his voyage shall be
hither. Howbeit, he that wrote the letter saith that it is secretly
said in Constantinople that great part of his army shall be shipped and
sent either into Naples or into Sicily.

15 Anthony

It may fortune, Cousin, that the letter of the Venetian dated at Constantinople was devised at Venice. From thence come there some among, and sometimes from Rome, too, and sometimes also from some other places, letters all farced full of such tidings—that the Turk is ready to do some great exploit—which tidings they blow about for the furtherance of some such affairs as they then have themselves in hand.

25 The Turk hath, also, so many men of arms in his retinue at his continual charge... that lest they should lie still and do nothing... but, peradventure, fall in devising of some novelties among themselves, he is fain yearly to make some assemblies, and some changing of them from one place to another, and part some sort

2 *of*: about // *comfort*: strengthening; encouragement 5 *tarried*: stayed gone // *for that*: because
 7 *letted with*: detained by 8 *one that*: someone who 8, 16 *dated at*: marked as having come from
 9 *marvelously*: terribly 10 *whither . . . therewith*: where he intends to take it to
 11 *in good faith*: in all honesty // *voyage*: military expedition 12 *hither*: to here
 16 *fortune*: turn out // *Cousin*: Nephew 17 *devised in*: written in // *thence*: there
 18 *among*: now and then 19 *farced*: stuffed 24 *lie still*: remain idle
 25 *fall in devising of*: start thinking up // *novelties*: new activities
 26 *is fain*: finds it necessary 27 *sort*: company

asunder, that they wax not over-well acquainted by dwelling over-long together.

By these ways also he maketh those that he mindeth suddenly to invade indeed... the less to look therefor—and thereby the less preparation to make before—while they see him so many times make a great visage of war... when he mindeth it not. But then, at one time or other, they suddenly feel it when they fear it not.

Howbeit, full likely, Cousin, it is, of very truth, that into this realm of Hungary he will not fail to come. For neither is there any country through Christendom that lieth for him so meet... nor never was there any time till now in which he might so well and surely win it.

For now call we him in ourselves (God save us!) as Aesop telleth that the sheep took in the wolf unto them to keep them from the dogs.

15 Vincent

Then are there very likely, good Uncle, all those tribulations to fall upon us here that I spoke of in the beginning of our first communication here the other day!

Anthony

20 Very truth it is, Cousin, that so there will, of likelihood, in a while; but not forthwith all at the first. For while he cometh under the color of aid for the one against the other... he will somewhat see the proof before he fully show himself. But in conclusion if he be able to get it for him... you shall see him so handle it that he shall not fail to get it *from* him—and that forthwith, out of hand; ere ever he suffer him settle himself over-surely therein.

Vincent

Yet say they, Uncle, that he useth not to force any man to forsake his faith.

1 *wax*: become 3, 6 *mindeth*: intends 4 *look therefor*: expect it 5 *while*: when
 6 *visage*: semblance 10 *lieth for him so meet*: is as conveniently located for him
 17 *communication*: conversation 21 *while*: when / since 22 *color of aid for*: pretext of aiding
 22 *the one*: i.e., one of the two kings vying for the rule of Hungary; see 8/1–5.
 23–24 *the proof*: how that turns out 24 *for him*: i.e., for that one king
 25 *out of hand*: immediately; without delay // *suffer*: let 26 *over-surely*: too securely
 28 *useth not*: is not wont // *forsake*: renounce; give up

Anthony

3. Preface

- Not *any* man, Cousin? They say more than they can make good, that tell you so. He maketh a solemn oath—among the ceremonies of the feast in which he first taketh upon him the authority!—that he shall,
- 5 in all that he possibly may, diminish the faith of Christ, and dilate the faith of Muhammad. But yet hath he not used to force every whole country at once to forsake their faith; for of some countries hath he been content only to take a tribute yearly, and let them then live as they list.
- 10 Out of some he taketh the whole people away—dispersing them, for slaves, among many sundry countries of his very far from their own, without any sufferance of regress.
- Some country so great and populous that they cannot well be carried and conveyed thence, he destroyeth the gentlemen, and giveth
- 15 the lands, part to such as he bringeth... and part to such as willingly will renege their faith; and keepeth the others in such misery that they were in manner as good be dead at once. In rest he suffereth else no Christian man almost... but those that resort as merchants... or those that offer themselves to serve him in his war.
- 20 But as for those Christian countries that he useth not for only tributaries (as he doth Chios, Cyprus, or Candia), but reckoneth for clear conquest and utterly taketh for his own... as Morea, Greece, and Macedonia, and such other like—and as I verily think he will Hungary if he get it—in all those useth he Christian people after sundry fashions. He
- 25 letteth them dwell there, indeed, because they were too many to carry all away, and too many to kill them all, too... but if he should either leave the land dispeopled and desolate... or else some other countries of his own, from whence he should (which would not well be done) convey the people thither... to people that land with.
- 30 There, lo, those that will not be turned from their faith, of which

2 *make good*: prove true 3 *so*: that 4 *him*: himself
 5 *in . . . may*: in every way that he possibly can 5 *dilate*: spread 6 *yet*: as yet; thus far
 6 *used*: made it his practice 9 *list*: please 12 *sufferance*: allowing // *regress*: return
 14 *gentlemen*: upper class 15 *willingly*: voluntarily 16 *renege*: renounce
 17 *were . . . be*: would be practically as well-off being // *rest*: peace // *suffereth*: leaves
 18 *resort*: are in residence 22 *as*: such as 24 *useth*: treats 26 *but if*: unless
 27 *dispeopled*: unpopulated 28 *which . . . done*: which couldn't very well be done

God keepeth (lauded be his holy name!) very many, he suffereth to dwell still in peace; but yet is their peace, for all that, not very peaceable. For lands he suffereth them to have none of their own; office or honest room they bear none; with occasions of his wars he pilloeth
 5 them with taxes and tallages unto the bare bones. Their children he chooseth where he list, in their youth, and taketh them from their parents, conveying them whither he list, where their friends never see them after, and abuseth them as he list. Some young maidens, maketh harlots; some young men he bringeth up in war, and some young
 10 children he causeth to be gelded—not their stones cut out, as the custom was of old... but cutteth off their whole members by the body. How few escape and live he little forceth... for he will have enough. And all that he so taketh young to any use of his own, are betaken to such Turks or false renegades to keep, that they be turned from the
 15 faith of Christ every one... or else so handled that as for this world they come to an evil chieving. For—besides many other contumelies and despites that the Turks and the false renegade Christians many times do to good Christian people that still persevere and abide by the faith—they find the means sometimes to make some false shrews say... that
 20 they heard such a Christian man speak opprobrious words against Muhammad. And upon that point falsely testified, will they take occasion to compel him forsake the faith of Christ, and turn to the profession of their shameful superstitious sect... or else will they put him unto death with cruel, intolerable torments.

25

Vincent

Our Lord, Uncle, for his mighty mercy, keep those wretches hence!
 For by my troth, if they hap to come hither, methink I see many more tokens than one that we shall have of our own folk here ready to

1 *lauded*: praised 4 *honest room*: position of honor // *pilleth*: fleeces 5 *tallages*: levies
 6 *where*: wherever 6, 7, 8 *list*: pleases 7 *friends*: families 9 *bringeth up*: trains
 9–10 *some young children* . . . *gelded*: he has some of the young children castrated
 11 *by*: from 12 *forceth*: cares 14, 17 *false*: treacherous / despicable
 14, 17 *renegade(s)*: apostate(s) 16 *an evil chieving*: a bad end
 16–17 *contumelies and despites*: insults and injuries 19 *false shrews*: lying scoundrels
 20 *such*: such and such 22 *forsake*: (to) renounce 26 *hence*: away from here
 27 *by my troth*: by my word; in all truthfulness 28 *tokens*: indications // *of*: some of

fall in unto them. For like as before a great storm the sea beginneth
sometimes to work and roar in itself, ere ever the wind waxeth
boistous: so methink I hear at mine ear some of our own here among
us, which within these few years could no more have

- 5 borne the name of a Turk than the name of the devil, begin now to
find little fault therein; yea, and some to praise them, too, little and little, as
they may; more glad to find faults at every state of Christendom—
priests, princes; rites... ceremonies... sacraments; laws and customs
spiritual, temporal, and all.

10 Anthony

- In good faith, Cousin, so begin we to fare here indeed—and that
but even now, of late. For since the title of the crown hath come
in question, the good rule of this realm hath very sore decayed... as
little while as it is. And undoubtedly Hungary shall never do well as
15 long as it standeth in this case—that men's minds hearken after novelties,
and have their hearts hanging upon a change. And much the
worse I like it when their words walk so large toward the favor of
the Turk's sect—which they were ever wont to have in so great abomination,
as every true-minded Christian man, and Christian woman
20 too, must have.

- I am of such age as you see; and verily from as far as I can remember,
it hath been marked, and oftentimes proved true, that when
children have in Buda fallen in a fantasy by themselves to draw
together and in their playing make as it were corpses carried to
25 church... and sing, after their childish fashion, the tune of the Dirge,
there hath great death there shortly followed after. And twice or thrice
I may remember in my days when children in divers parts of this
realm have gathered themselves in sundry companies and made as it
were parties and battles... and after their battles in sport (wherein some
30 children have yet taken great hurt), there hath fallen very battle and
deadly war indeed.

These tokens were somewhat like your example of the sea... since they

1 *fall in unto*: give in to 2 *work*: seethe; churn // *in itself*: of its own accord
2–3 *waxeth boistous*: gets rough 4 *which*: who 6 *little and little*: little by little
7, 27 *may*: can 7 *at*: with // *state*: segment 12 *even*: just 13 *in*: into
13 *sore decayed*: badly deteriorated 15 *standeth in this case*: remains in this situation
17 *walk*: go // *large*: unrestrainedly; intemperately 21 *verily*: literally // *far*: far back
23 *fallen . . . themselves*: taken a notion of their own accord // *draw*: come
25 *the Dirge*: Probably the “Dies Irae.” 28–29 *as it were*: pretend; make-believe
29 *battles in sport*: play battles 30 *taken great hurt*: gotten seriously injured
30 *fallen*: taken place 32 *tokens*: portents; omens

be of things that after follow tokens foregoing, through some secret
 motion or instinct whereof the cause is unknown. But by Saint Mary,
 Cousin, *these* tokens like I much worse—these tokens, I say, not of
 children's plays... nor of children's songs... but old shrews' large, open
 5 words so boldly spoken in the favor of Muhammad's sect in this
 realm of Hungary, that hath been ever hitherto a very sure key of
 Christendom. And out of doubt, if Hungary be lost, and that the
 Turk have it once fast in his possession... he shall ere it be long after
 have an open, ready way into almost the remnant of all Christendom.
 10 Though he win it not all in a week, the great part will be
 won after, I fear me, within very few years.

Vincent

But yet evermore I trust in Christ, good Uncle, that he shall not
 suffer that abominable sect of his mortal enemies in such wise
 15 to prevail against his Christian country!

Anthony

That is very well said, Cousin. Let us have our sure hope in him—
 and then shall we be very sure that we shall not be deceived; for
 either shall we have the thing that we hope for... or a better thing in
 20 the stead. For as for the thing itself that we pray for, and hope to have,
 God will not always send us. And therefore, as I said in our first communication,
 in allthing save only for heaven, our prayer nor our
 hope may never be too precise, although the thing be lawful to require.

Verily, if we people of the Christian nations were such as would God
 25 we were, I would little fear all the preparations that the great Turk
 could make. No, nor yet being as bad as we be, I nothing doubt at
 all but that in conclusion, how base soever Christendom be brought,
 it shall spring up again, till the time be come very near to the Day
 of Doom; whereof some tokens, as me thinketh, are not come yet.
 30 But somewhat before that time shall Christendom be straited
 sore, and brought into so narrow a compass that, according to Christ's
 words, "Filius hominis cum venerit putas, inveniet fidem in terra?" ("When

3 *worse*: less 4 *plays*: games // *shrews*: scoundrels // *large*: unrestrained; intemperate
 6 *key*: place so located as to give its possessors control over passage into or from the surrounding areas
 9 *almost* . . . *all*: almost all the rest of 18 *deceived*: disappointed; let down
 21 *send us*: i.e., send us that // *communication*: conversation 22 *allthing*: everything
 23 *although*: even if // *lawful*: legitimate // *require*: request; ask for
 24 *would God*: I wish to God 26–27 *nothing doubt at all*: have no doubt at all
 27 *how base soever*: no matter to how low a point 28–29 *the Day of Doom*: Judgment Day
 29 *tokens*: portents 30–31 *straited sore*: terribly contracted 193/32—194/2: Luke 18:8.

the Son of Man shall come again, that is to wit, to the day of general judgment, weenest thou that he shall find faith in the earth?"—as who say, but a little; for as appeareth in the Apocalypse and other places of Scripture, the faith shall be at that time so far faded that he shall for the
 5 love of his elects, lest they should fall and perish too, abridge those days and accelerate his coming.

But as I say, methinketh I miss yet in my mind some of those tokens that shall, by the Scripture, come a good while before that; and among others, the coming in of the Jews, and the dilating of
 10 Christendom again, before the world come to that strait. So that, I say, for mine own mind, I little doubt but that this ungracious sect of Muhammad shall have a foul fall, and Christendom spring and spread, flower and increase again. Howbeit, the pleasure and the comfort shall they see that shall be born after that we be buried... I
 15 fear me both twain. For God giveth us great likelihood that for our sinful, wretched living, he goeth about to make these infidels, that are his openly professed enemies, the sorrowful scourge of correction over evil Christian people that *should* be *faithful*, and are of truth his falsely professed friends. And surely, Cousin, albeit that methinketh
 20 I see divers evil tokens of this misery coming to us... yet can there not in my mind be a worse prognostication thereof than this ungracious token that you note here yourself. For undoubtedly, Cousin, this new manner here of men's favorable fashion in their language toward these ungracious Turks... declareth plainly that
 25 not only their minds give them that hither in shall he come... but also that they can be content both to live under him and, over that, from the true faith of Christ to fall into Muhammad's false, abominable sect.

2 *weenest thou*: do you suppose 2–3 *as who say*: in other words

3 *Apocalypse*: Book of Revelation 3–6: See Revelation 2:14–15; 3:14–17; Matthew 24:22.

4 *faded*: on the decline; diminished 5 *abridge*: shorten the number of

8 *tokens*: portents // *by*: according to 9 *dilating*: expanding

11, 22, 24 *ungracious*: ungodly 15 *great likelihood*: strong indications 18, 20 *evil*: bad

20, 22 *token(s)*: omen(s) 24 *declareth plainly*: shows clearly

25 *not . . . come*: not only do they think he will come in here 26 *over*: in addition to

Vincent

3.Preface

Verily, mine Uncle, as I go more about than you, so must I needs
 more hear—which is a heavy hearing in mine ear—the manner of men
 in this matter... which increaseth about us here. I trust in other places
 5 of this realm, by God's grace, it is otherwise; but in this quarter
 here about us, many of these fellows that are meet for the war, first
 were wont as it were in sport... and in a while after, half between game
 and earnest... and, by our Lady, now not far from fair, flat earnest indeed,
 talk as though they looked for a day when with a turn unto the
 10 Turk's faith, they should be made masters here of true
 Christian men's bodies, and owners of all their goods.

Anthony

Though I go little abroad, Cousin, yet hear I sometimes, when I say
 little, almost as much as that. But while there is no man to complain
 15 to for the redress, what remedy but patience, and fain to sit still and
 hold my peace? For of these two that strive whither of them both shall
 reign upon us—and each of them calleth himself king... and both
 twain put the people to pain—the one is, you wot well, too far
 from our quarter here to help us in this behalf, and the other, while
 20 he looketh for the Turk's aid, either will not or, I ween, well dare not
 find any fault with them that favor the Turk and his sect. For of
 Turks natural this country lacketh none now, which are here
 conversant under divers pretexts, and of everything advertise the
 great Turk, full surely. And therefore, Cousin, albeit I would advise
 25 every man pray still and call unto God to hold his gracious hand
 over us and keep away this wretchedness, if his pleasure be—yet would I
 further advise every good Christian body to remember and consider
 that it is very likely to come, and therefore make his reckoning and cast his
 pennyworths before... and every man and every woman both, appoint
 30 with God's help in their own mind beforehand... what thing they
 intend to do if the very worst fall.

2 *go . . . you*: get out more than you do 3 *which . . . ear*: which distresses me to hear
 3 *manner*: attitude 4 *in this*: regarding this // *increaseth*: is on the rise // *about*: around
 7 *sport*: jest // *game*: joking 8 *earnest*: seriousness // *fair*: plain // *flat*: unmitigated; dead
 9 *looked for*: looked forward to 10 *true*: faithful 13 *go little abroad*: don't get out much
 14, 19 *while*: since 15 *fain to*: (my) having to 16 *strive*: are fighting over // *whither*: which
 17 *upon*: over 20 *looketh*: is hoping 22 *Turks natural*: native Turks
 23 *conversant*: resident // *advertise*: notify 25 *pray still and call*: keep praying and calling
 28–29 *cast his pennyworths*: do his cost-benefit analysis 29 *appoint*: determine; decide
 31 *fall*: happens

*Whether a man should cast in his mind and
appoint in his heart before, that if he were taken
with Turks, he would rather die than forsake the faith*

3.1

The First Chapter

5

Vincent

Well fare your heart, good Uncle, for this good counsel of yours!
For surely methinketh that this is marvelously good. But yet heard I
once a right cunning and a very good man say that it were great
folly, and very perilous, too, that a man should think upon any such
10 thing, for fear of double peril that may follow thereupon. For either
shall he be likely to answer himself, to that case put by himself,
that he will rather suffer any painful death than forsake his faith—and
by that bold appointment should he fall in the fault of Saint Peter...
that of oversight made a proud promise and soon had a foul fall—or
15 else were he likely to think that rather than abide the pain... he
would forsake God indeed... and by that mind should sin deadly through
his own folly, where he needeth not... as he that shall peradventure
never come in the peril to be put thereunto. And that therefore it were
most wisdom never to think upon any such manner case.

20

Anthony

I believe well, Cousin, that you have heard some man that would so
say. For I can show almost as much as that left of a very good man—
and a great, solemn doctor!—in writing. But yet, Cousin, although I
should hap to find one or two more as good men, and as well learned, too,
25 that would, both twain, say and write the same: yet would I not fear,
for my part, to counsel my friend to the contrary. For, Cousin, if his
mind answer him as Saint Peter answered Christ... that he would rather
die than forsake him: though he say therein more unto himself than
he should be peradventure able to make good if it came to the point...

1 *cast*: ponder 2 *appoint*: determine; decide // *before*: ahead of time 3 *with*: by
3, 12, 16, 28 *forsake*: renounce 8 *cunning*: knowledgeable 13 *appointment*: resolve
13 *in*: into 14 *that*: who // *of oversight*: out of rash imprudence 16 *deadly*: mortally
17 *he that*: one who 22 *of*: by 23 *solemn*: renowned // *doctor*: i.e., doctor of the Church
23 *although*: even if 29 *make good*: carry out; prove true

yet perceive I not that he doth in that *thought* any deadly displeasure
 unto God. Nor Saint Peter, though he said more than he could perform—
 yet in his so *saying* offended not God greatly neither; but his offense
 was when he *did not after* so well as he *said before*. But now may
 5 this man be likely never to fall in the peril of breaking that appointment...
 since of some ten thousand that so shall examine themselves,
 never one shall fall in the peril; and yet to have that good purpose
 all their life seemeth me no more harm the while... than a poor beggar
 that hath never a penny... to think that if he had great substance,
 10 he would give great alms for God's sake.

But now is all the peril... if the man answer himself that he would
 in such case rather forsake the faith of Christ with his mouth, and keep
 it still in his heart... than for the confessing of it, to endure a
 painful death. For by this mind he falleth in deadly sin; which while he
 15 never cometh in the case indeed... if he never had put himself the
 case, he never had fallen in. But in good faith, methinketh that he
 which upon that case put unto himself by himself, will make
 himself that answer... hath the habit of faith so faint, and so cold,
 that to the better knowledge of himself and his necessity to pray
 20 for more strength of grace, he had *need* to have the question put
 him, either by himself or some other man. Besides this: to
 counsel a man never to think on that case is, in my mind, as much
 reason... as the medicine that I have heard taught one for the toothache—
 to go thrice about a churchyard “and never think on a foxtail.”
 25 For if the counsel be not given them... it cannot serve them; and
 if it be given them, it must put the point of the matter in their mind...
 which by and by to reject, and think therein neither one thing nor
 other, is a thing that may be sooner bidden than obeyed.

I ween also that very few men can escape it... but that, though they
 30 would never think thereon by themselves—but that yet, in one place or
 other where they shall hap to come in company, they shall have the

1, 14 *deadly*: mortal 1 *displeasure*: offense 5 *in the peril*: into the danger
 5 *appointment*: resolve 7 *never one*: not a one 12 *forsake*: renounce 14 *in*: into
 14 *while*: when 15–16 *put himself the case*: proposed to himself the hypothetical situation
 16 *had fallen in*: would have fallen into // *in good faith*: in all honesty
 22–23 *is . . . as much reason*: makes . . . as much sense 23 *medicine*: remedy
 24 *on*: about 25 *serve them*: do them any good 27 *by and by*: immediately
 29 *ween*: suppose // *though*: even if 30 *by themselves*: of their own accord

question by adventure so proposed and put forth that... like as, while he heareth one talking to him, he may well wink if he will... but he cannot make himself sleep: so shall he, whether he will or no, think one thing or other therein.

- 5 Finally, when Christ spoke so often and so plainly of the matter—that every man should, upon pain of damnation, openly confess his faith if men took him and by dread of death would drive him to the contrary—it seemeth me in a manner implied therein that we be bound conditionally to have evermore that mind (actually sometimes, and evermore habitually) that if the case so should fall, then with God's help so we would. And thus much thinketh me necessary for every man and woman: to be always of this mind, and often to think thereupon... and where they find in the thinking thereon, their hearts agrise and shrink in the remembrance of the pain
- 10 that their imagination representeth to the mind... then must they call to mind and remember the great pain and torment that Christ suffered for them, and heartily pray for grace... that if the case should so fall, God should give them strength to stand. And thus, with exercise of such meditation, though men should never stand full out of fear
- 15 of falling... yet must they persevere in good hope, and in full purpose, of standing. And this seemeth me, Cousin, so far forth the mind that every Christian man and woman must needs have, that methinketh every curate should often counsel all his parishioners, and every man and woman their servants and their children, even beginning in their tender
- 20 youth, to know this point and think thereon, and little and little, from their very childhood, to accustom them dulcely and pleasantly in the meditation thereof. Whereby the goodness of God shall not fail so to aspire the grace of his Holy Spirit into their hearts, in reward of that virtuous diligence, that through such actual meditation he shall conserve them
- 25 in such a sure habit of spiritual, faithful strength, that all the devils in hell, with all the wrestling that they can make, shall never be able to wrest it out of their heart.

1 *by adventure*: i.e., happen to be 2 *one*: someone // *wink*: shut his eyes 2, 3 *will*: wants to
3 *no*: not 5–8: See Matthew 10:32–33; Mark 8:38; Luke 9:26; 12:9.

9 *actually*: actively; consciously 10 *habitually*: latently; implicitly

14 *arise*: tremble; shudder with terror // *shrink*: recoil 15 *representeth*: presents

19 *full out of*: completely without 23 *curate*: pastor 25 *little and little*: little by little

26 *them dulcely* . . . *in*: themselves sweetly . . . to 27 *aspire*: breathe 29 *actual*: active

Vincent

3.1

By my troth, Uncle, methinketh that you say very well.

Anthony

5 I say surely, Cousin, as I think; and yet all this have I said concerning
 them that dwell in such places as they be never likely in their
 lives to come in the danger to be put to the proof. Howbeit,
 many a man may ween himself far therefrom... that yet may fortune,
 by some one chance or other, to fall in the case that, either for
 the truth of faith or for the truth of justice (which go almost all
 10 alike), he may fall in the case. But now be you and I, Cousin, and all
 our friends here, far in another point. For we be so likely to fall in
 the experience thereof, so soon... that it had been more time for us, all
 other things set aside, to have devised upon this matter, and firmly
 to have settled ourselves upon a fast point, long ago... than to begin
 15 to commune and counsel upon it now.

Vincent

In good faith, Uncle, you say therein very truth; and would God it *had*
 come sooner in my mind. But better is it, yet, late than never. And I
 trust God shall yet give us respite and time—whereof, Uncle, that we
 20 lose no part, I pray you proceed now with your good counsel therein.

Anthony

Very gladly, Cousin, shall I now go forth in the fourth temptation,
 which only remaineth to be treated of, and properly pertaineth wholly
 unto this present purpose.

2 *you say very well*: what you say is quite true 6 *proof*: test 11 *friends*: relatives and friends
 11 *far in another point*: in a far different situation 12 *more time*: more the time
 13 *devised upon*: thought about 14 *fast point*: firm resolution 22 *in*: into
 23 *only*: alone 24 *this present purpose*: i.e., the matter we have in hand

*Of the fourth temptation, which is persecution for
the faith; touched in these words of the prophet, “ab
incursu et daemonio meridiano”*

3.2

The Second Chapter

5 The fourth temptation, Cousin, that the prophet speaketh of in the
foreremembered psalm “Qui habitat in adiutorio Altissimi [etc.],” is plain,
open persecution; which is touched in these words: “ab incurso et daemonio
meridiano.” And of all his temptations, this is the most perilous,
the most bitterly sharp, and the most rigorous. For whereas in other
10 temptations he useth either pleasant allectives unto sin...
or other secret sleights and trains... and cometh in the night, and stealeth
on in the dark unawares; or in some other part of the day, flieth and
passeth by like an arrow—so shaping himself, sometimes in one
fashion, sometimes in another, and so dissembling himself and his
15 high, mortal malice, that a man is thereby so blinded and beguiled that
he may not, sometimes, perceive well what he is—in *this* temptation,
this plain, open persecution for the faith, he cometh even in the
very midday... that is to wit, even upon them that have a high
light of faith shining in their heart... and openly suffereth himself
20 so plainly be perceived, by his fierce, malicious persecution against
the faithful Christians for hatred of Christ’s true, Catholic faith,
that no man having faith can doubt what he is. For in *this* temptation
he showeth himself such as the prophet nameth him—“daemonium
meridianum” (“the midday devil”)—he may be so lightsomely seen with
25 the eye of a faithful soul by his fierce, furious assault and incursion.
For *therefore* saith the prophet that the truth of God shall compass
that man round about “that dwelleth in the faithful hope of his
help” with a pavis “ab incurso et daemonio meridiano” (“from the incursion
and the devil of the midday”)—because this kind of persecution is not
30 a wily temptation... but a furious force and a terrible incursion. In
others of his temptations he stealeth on like a fox; but in this Turk’s

2, 7 *touched*: touched upon 2–3, 7–8 “*Ab . . . meridiano*”: See 28–29.

6 “*Qui . . . Altissimi*”: “You who dwell in the shelter of the Most High”; i.e., Psalm 91

9 *rigorous*: violent 10 *pleasant*: pleasurable // *allectives*: enticements

11 *sleights*: sly tricks // *trains*: snares 17 *even*: right 18 *even upon*: right at

19 *suffereth*: lets 24 *may*: can 24 *lightsomely*: clearly; manifestly 28 *pavis*: shield

persecution for the faith, he runneth on roaring with assault, like a ramping lion.

3.2

This temptation is of all temptations also the most perilous. For whereas in temptations of prosperity he useth only delectable allectives
 5 to move a man to sin... and in other kinds of tribulation and adversity he useth only grief and pain to pull a man into murmur, impatience, and blasphemy: in this kind of persecution for the faith of Christ, he useth both twain—that is to wit, both his allective of quiet and rest by deliverance from death and pain, with
 10 other pleasures also of this present life... and, besides that, the terror and infliction of intolerable pain and torment.

In other tribulation, as loss, or sickness, or death of our friends, though the pain be, peradventure, as great, and sometimes greater, too, yet is not the peril nowhere nigh half so much. For in other tribulations,
 15 as I said before, that *necessity*—that the man *must*, of fine force, abide and endure the pain, wax he never so wroth and impatient therewith—is a great reason to move him to keep his patience therein... and be content therewith, and thank God thereof... and of necessity to make a virtue, that he may be rewarded for. But in *this* temptation—this
 20 persecution for the faith, I mean, not by fight in the field, by which the faithful man standeth at his defense and putteth the faithless in half the fear and half the harm, too... but where he is taken and in hold... and may for the forswearing or the denying of his faith be delivered and suffered to live in rest, and some in great worldly wealth also—in *this*
 25 case, I say: this thing, that he needeth not to suffer this trouble and pain but he will, is a marvelously great occasion for him to fall into the sin that the devil would drive him to; that is to wit, the forsaking of the faith. And therefore, as I say, of all the devil's temptations is this temptation, this persecution for the faith, the most
 30 perilous.

Vincent

The more perilous, Uncle, that this temptation is—as, indeed, of all

4 *delectable*: enjoyable 4, 9 *alleective(s)*: enticement(s) 9 *quiet and rest*: peace and quiet
 12 *as*: such as // *friends*: loved ones 14 *nigh*: near 15 *fine force*: absolute necessity
 16 *wax* . . . *therewith*: no matter how angry and impatient he gets with it
 17 *reason*: consideration; realization 21 *faithful man*: man of faith 24 *suffered*: allowed
 24 *rest*: peace // *wealth*: prosperity 26 *but he will*: unless he chooses to // *marvelously*: terribly
 28 *forsaking*: renouncing; giving up

3.2

temptations the most perilous it *is*—the more need have they that
stand in peril thereof to be before with substantial advice and good
counsel well armed against it... that we may with the comfort and
consolation thereof the better bear that tribulation when it cometh,
5 and the better withstand the temptation.

Anthony

You say, Cousin Vincent, therein very truth, and I am content to
fall, therefore, in hand with it. But forasmuch, Cousin, as methinketh
that of this tribulation somewhat you be more afeard than I—and of
10 truth, somewhat more excusable it is in you than it were in me, mine
age considered... and the sorrow that I have suffered already... with some
other considerations upon my part besides—rehearse you, therefore, the
griefs and the pains that you think in this tribulation possible to fall
unto you; and I shall against each of them give you counsel, and
15 rehearse you such occasion of comfort and consolation, as my poor wit
and learning can call unto my mind.

Vincent

In good faith, Uncle, I am not allthing afeard in this case only for
myself... but well you wot I have cause to care also for many more, and
20 that folk of sundry sorts, men and women both—and that not all of
one age.

Anthony

All that you have cause to fear for, Cousin, for all them have I cause
to fear with you, too, since all your kinfolk and allies-within-a-little
25 be likewise unto me. Howbeit, to say the truth, every man hath cause
in this case to fear both for himself and also for every other. For
since, as the Scripture saith, “*unicuique dedit Deus curam de proximo suo*” (“God
hath given every man cure and charge of his neighbor”), there is no man
that hath any spark of Christian love and charity in his breast but that in
30 a matter of such peril as this is... wherein the soul of man standeth

3 *comfort*: encouragement 10 *were*: would be 12 *rehearse you*: name; state
14 *against*: with regard to 15 *rehearse*: name // *wit*: intelligence 18 *allthing*: altogether
19 *care also for*: be concerned also about 21 *one*: the same
24 *allies-within-a-little*: close relatives 27–28: Sirach 17:12. 28 *cure*: custody (of)
28 *charge of*: responsibility for

in so great danger to be lost... he must needs care and take thought...
 not for his friends only... but also for his very foes. We shall, therefore,
 Cousin, not rehearse *your* harms or *mine* that may befall in this persecution,
 but all the great harms in general, as near as we can call
 5 to mind, that may hap unto *any* man. 3.3

The Third Chapter

Since a man is made of the body and the soul, all the harm that
 any man may take... it must needs be in one of these two; either immediately
 or by the means of some such thing as serveth for the
 10 pleasure, weal, or commodity of the one of these two. As for the
 soul, first, we shall need no rehearsal of any harm that by this
 kind of tribulation may attain thereto... but if that by some inordinate
 love and affection that the soul bear to the body... she consent
 to slide from the faith, and thereby doth *her* harm *herself*.
 15 Now remain there the body and these outward things of fortune
 which serve for the maintenance of the body, and administer matter
 of pleasure to the soul also, through the delight that she hath in the
 body for the while that she is matched therewith.
 Consider, then, first the loss of those outward things, as somewhat
 20 the less in weight... than is the body itself. In them what may a
 man lose, and thereby what pain may he suffer?

Vincent

He may lose, Uncle—of which I should somewhat lose myself—money...
 plate... and other movable substance; then offices, authority, and,
 25 finally, all the lands of his inheritance forever... that himself and
 his heirs perpetually might else enjoy. And of all these things,
 Uncle... you wot well that myself have some; little in respect of that
 that some others have here—but somewhat more, yet, than he that hath
 most here would be well content to lose.

2 *friends*: relatives and friends 3 *rehearse*: name 10 *weal*: good // *commodity*: advantage
 12 *attain thereto*: happen to it (i.e., the soul) // *but if that*: unless 14 *from*: away from
 24 *plate*: bullion; bars of gold or silver / objects plated with gold or silver
 27 *in respect of*: in comparison with

Upon the loss of these things follow neediness and poverty... the pain of lacking, the shame of begging—of which twain I wot not well which is the most wretched necessity!—besides the grief of heart, and heaviness, in beholding good men and faithful, and his dear friends, bewrapped in like misery, and ungracious wretches and infidels, and his mortal enemies, enjoy the commodities that himself and his friends have lost.

Now, for the body, very few words shall serve us. For therein I see none other harm but loss of liberty... labor... imprisonment, painful and shameful death.

Anthony

There needeth not much more, Cousin, as the world is now; for I fear me that less than a fourth part of this will make many a man sore stagger in his faith—and some fall quite therefrom—that yet at this day, before he come to the proof, weeneth himself that he would stand very fast. And I beseech our Lord that all they that so think, and would yet, when they were brought unto the point, swerve therefrom for fear or for pain, may get of God the grace to ween still as they do, and *not* to be brought to the assay, where pain or fear should show them (as it showed Saint Peter) how far they be deceived now.

But, now, Cousin, against these terrible things, what way shall we take in giving men counsel of comfort? If the faith were in our days as fervent as it hath been ere this, in time before passed... little counsel and little comfort would suffice. We should not much need with words and reasoning to extenuate and diminish the vigor and asperity of the pains... but the greater, the more bitter that the passion were... the more ready was of old time the fervor of faith to suffer it.

And surely, Cousin, I doubt it little in my mind but that if a man had in his heart so deep a desire and love-longing to be with God in heaven, to have the fruition of his glorious face, as had those holy

2–3 *wot not well*: don't really know 3 *necessity*: hardship 4 *heaviness*: depression
 5 *ungracious*: wicked 8 *serve*: suffice 13 *a fourth part*: one-fourth
 13–14 *sore stagger*: badly falter 14 *quite*: completely (away) 15 *proof*: test 18 *of*: from
 19 *assay*: test 20 *how far they be deceived*: how badly mistaken they are
 21 *against*: with regard to 26 *passion*: suffering 27 *suffer*: endure
 30 *fruition of*: enjoyment of seeing

men that were martyrs in old time... he would no more now
 stick at the pain that he must pass between... than at that time
 those old holy martyrs did. But alas, our faint and feeble faith, with
 our love to God less than lukewarm by the fiery affection that we
 5 bear to our own filthy flesh, make us so dull in the desire of heaven
 that the sudden dread of every bodily pain woundeth us to the
 heart and striketh our devotion dead. And therefore hath there every man,
 Cousin, as I said before, much the more need to think upon this
 thing many times and oft beforehand, ere any such peril fall; and by
 10 much devising thereupon before they see cause to fear it—while the
 thing shall not appear so terrible unto them—reason shall better enter,
 and, through grace working with their diligence, engender and set sure...
 not a sudden, slight affection of sufferance for God's sake... but, by
 a long continuance, a strong, deep-rooted habit; not like a reed ready to
 15 wave with every wind... nor like a rootless tree scant up on end in a
 loose heap of light sand, that will with a blast or two be blown
 down.

The Fourth Chapter

For if we now consider, Cousin, these causes of terror and dread
 20 that you have recited... which in this persecution for the faith... this
 midday devil may by these Turks rear against us to make his incursion
 with: we shall well perceive, weighing them well with reason,
 that... albeit somewhat they be indeed... yet, every part of the matter
 pondered, they shall well appear in conclusion things nothing so
 25 much to be dreaded and fled from as to folk at the first sight they do
 suddenly seem.

2 *stick at*: be deterred by // *pass between*: go through between now and then

3 *old holy martyrs*: holy martyrs of old 4 *by*: compared to 5 *filthy*: measly; sorry

10 *devising*: meditating 13 *sudden*: spur-of-the-moment; impetuous

13 *affection of sufferance*: inclination toward suffering 16 *blast*: gust

23 *somewhat . . . indeed*: they are indeed something 26 *suddenly*: on the spur of the moment

Of the loss of the goods of fortune

3.5

The Fifth Chapter

For first, to begin at the outward goods, that neither are the proper goods of the soul nor of the body... but are called the

5 “goods of fortune,” that serve for the sustenance and commodity of man for the short season of this present life... as worldly substance, offices, honor, and authority: what great good is there in these things of themselves... for which they were worthy so much as to bear the name by which the world, of a worldly favor, customably calleth

10 them? For if the having of strength make a man strong... and the having of heat make a man hot... and the having of virtue make a man virtuous: how can those things be verily and truly *good* which he that hath them may by the having of them as well be the worse as the better?—and, as experience proveth, more oft *is* the worse than

15 the better? What should a good man greatly rejoyce in that... that he daily seeth most abound in the hands of many that be naught? Do not now the great Turk and his pashas, in all these advancements of “fortune,” surmount very far above any Christian estate and any lords living under him? And was there not yet hence upon twenty

20 years the great sultan of Syria, which many a year together bore as great a port as the great Turk... and after, in one summer, unto the great Turk the whole empire was lost? And so may all *his* empire now, and shall hereafter by God’s grace, be lost into Christian men’s hands likewise, when Christian people shall be amended and grow in God’s

25 favor again. But when that whole kingdoms and mighty, great empires are of so little surety to stand... but be so soon translated from one man unto another: what great thing can you or I... yea, or any lord, the greatest in the land... reckon himself to have by the

3 *at*: with 5 *commodity*: benefit 6 *as*: such as 9 *customably*: by custom
 14, 15 *the better*: i.e., the better for 15 *what*: why 16 *naught*: wicked 18 *surmount*: rise
 18 *estate*: nobleman 19–20 *hence upon twenty years*: twenty years ago 20 *which*: who
 20 *a year together*: years in a row 20–21 *bore as great a port*: had as high a standing
 24–25 *grow in God’s favor again*: come back into God’s favor 26 *translated*: transferred

possession of a heap of silver or gold?—white and yellow metals not so profitable of their own nature, save for a little glistening, as the rude, rusty metal of iron!

3.6

Of the unsurety of lands and possessions

5

The Sixth Chapter

Lands and possessions many men yet much more esteem than money... because the lands seem not so casual as money is, or plate... for that though their other substance may be stolen and taken away... yet evermore they think that their land will lie still where it lay.
 10 But what are we the better that our land cannot be stirred but will lie still where it lay... while ourselves may be removed and not suffered to come near it?

What great difference is there to us whether our substance be movable or unmovable, since we be so movable ourselves that
 15 we may be removed from them both and lose them both twain?—saving that sometimes in the money... is the surety somewhat more. For when we be fain ourselves to flee, we may make shift to carry some of our money with us... whereas of our land we cannot carry one inch.

20 If our land be of more surety than our money... how happeth it, then, that in this persecution we be more afeard to lose it? For if it be a thing of more surety, then can it not so soon be lost!

In the translation of these two great empires—Greece first (since myself was born), and after, Syria (since you were born too)—the land was
 25 lost before the money was found.

Oh, Cousin Vincent! If the whole world were animated with a reasonable soul, as Plato had went it were... and that it had wit and understanding to mark and perceive allthing—Lord God, how the ground on which a prince buildeth his palace would loud laugh his lord to scorn
 30 when he saw him proud of his possession, and heard him boast himself

2 *rude*: crude; unrefined 7 *casual*: precarious; losable // *plate*: See note for 203/24.

10 *what*: how // *the better that*: the better off in that 11 *while*: when

11, 15 *removed*: moved away 11 *suffered*: allowed 16, 20, 22 *surety*: security

17 *we . . . flee*: we find it necessary to flee of our own accord // *make shift*: manage

23 *translation*: transference of rule 26 *reasonable*: rational

27 *had went it were*: believed it to be // *wit*: intelligence 28 *allthing*: everything

30 *boast*: congratulate

that he and his blood are forever the very lords and owners of
 that land. For then would the ground think the while in himself,
 “Ah, thou seely, poor soul, that weenest thou were half a god...
 and art, amid thy glory, but a man in a gay gown! I that am the
 5 ground here, over whom thou art so proud, have had a hundred
 such owners of me as thou callest thyself—more than ever thou hast
 heard the names of. And some of them that proudly went over my
 head... lie now low in my belly, and my side lieth over them. And many
 one shall as thou dost now... call himself mine owner after thee, that
 10 neither shall be sib to thy blood... nor any word hear of thy name.”
 Who owned your castle, Cousin, three thousand years ago?

Vincent

Three thousand, Uncle? Nay, nay; in any king, Christian or heathen,
 you may strike off a third part of that well enough—and as far as I
 15 ween, half of the remnant, too. In far fewer years than three thousand, it
 may well fortune that a poor ploughman’s blood may come up
 to a kingdom... and a king’s right royal kin, on the other side, fall
 down to the plough and cart—and neither that the king know
 that ever he came from the cart... nor the carter know that ever he
 20 came from the crown.

Anthony

We find, Cousin Vincent, in full antique stories, many strange
 changes... as marvelous as that, come about in the compass of very
 few years, in effect. And be such things then in reason so greatly to be
 25 set by that we should esteem the loss at so great, when we see that in
 the keeping our surety is so little?

2 *in himself*: to itself 3 *seely, poor*: poor, pitiful 4 *gay*: fancy; swanky
 8–9 *many one*: many a one 10 *sib to thy blood*: related to you 14 *a third part*: one-third
 15 *ween*: think likely // *remnant*: rest 16 *blood*: kin 17 *side*: hand
 22 *full antique stories*: very old historical accounts // *strange*: surprising
 23 *marvelous*: remarkable 24 *in effect*: in fact 25 *set by*: regarded; cared about
 25 *esteem* . . . *great*: regard the loss as so great

Vincent

3.7

Marry, Uncle—but the less surety that we have to keep it, since it is a great commodity to have it... the further by so much, and the more loath, we be to forgo it!

5

Anthony

That reason shall I, Cousin, turn against yourself. For if it be so as you say—that since the things be commodious... the less surety that you see you have of the keeping, the more cause you have to be afraid of the losing—then, on the other side, the more
 10 that a thing is of its nature such that the commodity thereof bringeth a man little surety and much fear... that thing, of reason, the less have we cause to love. And then the less cause that we have to love a thing... the less cause have we to care therefor... or fear the loss thereof, or be loath to go therefrom.

15 *These outward “goods” or “gifts” of “fortune” are by two manner wise to be considered*

The Seventh Chapter

We shall yet, Cousin, consider in these outward “goods of fortune,” as riches... good name... honest estimation... honorable fame, and authority—
 20 in all these things we shall, I say, consider... that either we love them and set by them as things commodious unto us for the state and condition of this present life... or else as things that we purpose by the good use thereof to make them matter of our merit, with God’s help, in the life after to come. Let us, then, first consider them as
 25 things set by and beloved for the pleasure and commodity of them for this present life.

2 marry: indeed 3, 10 commodity: advantage; benefit 3 further: i.e., more unhappy
 4 forgo: lose 6 reason: reasoning 7, 21 commodious: beneficial
 13 care therefor: worry about it 19 as: such as // riches: wealthiness
 19 good... fame: See 211/7–15.

*The little commodity of riches, being set by but
for this present life*

3.8

The Eighth Chapter

- Now, riches loved and set by for such—if we consider it well, the commodity
- 5 that we take there, thereof, is not so great as our own fond
affection and fantasy maketh us imagine it. It maketh us (I say not
nay) go much more gay and glorious in sight, garnished in silk—but
cloth is within a little as warm. It maketh us have great plenty of
many kinds of delicate and delicious victual, and thereby to make more
- 10 excess; but less exquisite and less superfluous fare, with fewer
surfeits and fewer fevers growing thereonto, were within a little as
wholesome. Then the labor in the getting... the fear in the
keeping, and the pain in the parting from... do more than counterpoise
a great part of all the pleasure and commodity that they bring.
- 15 Besides this: that riches is the thing that taketh, many times, from
its master all his pleasure and his life too; for many a man is for his
riches slain. And some that keep their riches as a thing pleasant
and commodious for their life... take no other pleasure, in a manner,
thereof, in all their life, than as though they bore the key of another
- 20 man's coffer; and rather are content to live in neediness, miserably, all their
days, than they could find in their heart to diminish their hoard, they
have such fantasy to look thereon. Yea, and some men, for fear lest thieves
should steal it from them... be their own thieves and steal it from themselves,
while they dare not so much as let it lie where themselves may look
- 25 thereon, but put it in a pot, and hide it in the ground, and there let it lie
safe till they die... and sometimes seven years after! From which place
if the pot had been stolen away five years before his death... all the same
five years that he lived after, weening always that his pot lay safe still—
what had he been the poorer, while he never occupied it after?

1, 4, 14 *commodity*: benefit 5 *fond*: foolish 6 *affection*: liking 6, 22 *fantasy*: desire
6–7 *say not nay*: don't deny it 7 *gay*: splendid 8 *cloth*: woolen fabric
8, 11 *within a little*: nearly 11 *surfeits*: overindulgences
11 *growing thereonto*: resulting therefrom // *were*: would be 13 *counterpoise*: counterbalance
17 *pleasant*: pleasurable 18 *commodious*: beneficial // *in a manner*: just about 19 *of*: to
24 *while*: when 28 *weening*: thinking
29 *what had he*: by how much would he have // *while*: since // *occupied it*: put it to use

Vincent

3.9

By my troth, Uncle, not one penny, for aught that I perceive.

*The little commodity of fame, being desired but
for worldly pleasure*

5 The Ninth Chapter

Anthony

Let us now consider good name, honest estimation, and honorable fame; for these three things are of their own nature one... and take their difference, in effect, but of the manner of the common speech in diversity
10 of degrees. For a “good name” may a man have be he never so poor. “Honest estimation,” in the common taking of the people, belongeth not unto any man but him that is taken for one of some countenance and haviour, and among his neighbors had in some reputation. In the word of “honorable fame,” folk conceive the renown of great
15 estates... much and far spoken of by reason of their laudable acts.

Now, all this gear used as a thing pleasant and commodious for this present life—pleasant it may seem to him that fasteneth his fantasy therein; but of the nature of the thing itself, I perceive no great commodity that it hath. I say “of the nature of the thing itself” because
20 it may be, by chance, some *occasion* of commodity; as if it hap that for the good name the poor man hath... or for the honest estimation that a man of some haviour and substance standeth in among his neighbors... or for the honorable fame wherewith the great estate is renowned—if it hap, I say, that any man bearing them the better
25 will therefor... do them therefore any good. And yet, as for that, like as it may sometimes so hap... and sometimes so happeth indeed: so may it hap sometimes on the other side—and on the other side so it sometimes

2 *aught*: anything 9 *in diversity*: concerning difference 11, 21 *honest*: honorable
12 *countenance*: standing 13, 22 *haviour*: means 13 *had*: held // *reputation*: repute
14 *word*: term; expression 14, 23 *honorable*: illustrious 15, 23 *estate(s)*: person(s) of high rank
16 *gear*: stuff 16, 17 *pleasant*: pleasurable 17 *fantasy*: ambition; delight

happeth indeed—that such folk are of some others envied and hated... and as readily by them that envy them and hate them take harm, as they take by them that love them, good.

3.10

But, now, to speak of the thing itself in its own proper nature: what
 5 is it but a blast of another man's mouth, as soon past as spoken;
 whereupon he that setteth his delight, feedeth himself but with wind;
 whereof be he never so full, he hath little substance therein. And many
 times shall he much deceive himself. For he shall ween that many
 praise him that never speak word of him. And they that do... say it
 10 much less than he weeneth, and far more seldom, too; for they spend not
 all the day, he may be sure, in talking of him alone. And
 whoso commend him most will yet, I ween, in every four-and-twenty
 hours wink and forget him once. Besides this: that while one talketh
 well of him in one place... another sitteth and saith as shrewdly of
 15 him in another. And, finally, some that most praise him in his
 presence, behind his back mock him as fast, and loud laugh him to
 scorn, and sometimes slyly to his own face, too. And yet are there some
 fools so fed with this fond fantasy of fame that they rejoice and glory
 to think how they be continually praised all about... as though all
 20 the world did nothing else, day nor night, but ever sit and sing *Sanctus*,
Sanctus, *Sanctus* upon them.

Of flattery

The Tenth Chapter

And into this pleasant frenzy of much foolish vainglory be there
 25 some men brought sometimes by such as themselves do, in a manner, *hire*
 to flatter them, and would not be content if a man should do otherwise...
 but would be right angry, not only if a man told them truth when
 they do naught indeed... but also if they praise it but slenderly.

Vincent

30 Forsooth, Uncle, this is very truth! I have been ere this—and not very

1 *of*: by 5 *blast*: sound produced by a blowing of air // *of*: from
 9–10 *say it much less*: i.e., praise him much less highly and at much less length
 13 *wink*: close his eyes 14 *saith as shrewdly*: speaks as ill 16 *fast*: vigorously
 18 *fond*: foolish 24 *pleasant*: pleasurable // *frenzy*: mania 25 *in a manner*: as it were
 27 *truth*: the truth 28 *naught*: wrong // *slenderly*: slightly; faintly

long ago—where I saw so proper experience of this point, that I must stop your tale for so long, while I tell you mine.

3.10

Anthony

I pray you, Cousin, tell on!

5

Vincent

When I was first in Almaine, Uncle, it happed me to be somewhat favored with a great man of the Church, and a great state; one of the greatest in all that country there. And indeed, whosoever might spend as much as he might in one thing and other, were a right great estate in
10 *any* country of Christendom. But glorious was he very far above all measure—and that was great pity; for it did harm, and made him abuse many great gifts that God had given him. Never was he satiated of hearing his own praise.

So happed it one day that he had in a great audience made an
15 oration in a certain manner... wherein he liked himself so well... that at his dinner he sat, him thought, on *thorns* till he might hear how they that sat with him at his board would commend it. And when he had sat musing a while, devising (as I thought after) upon some pretty, proper way to bring it in with—at the last, for lack of a better,
20 lest he should have letted the matter too long... he brought it even bluntly forth... and asked us all that sat at his board's end (for at his own mess in the middle, there sat but himself alone) how well we liked his oration that he had made that day. But in faith, Uncle, when that problem was once proposed... till it was fully answered, no man,
25 I ween, ate one morsel of meat more, every man was fallen in so deep a study for the finding of some exquisite praise. For he that should have brought out but a vulgar and a common commendation would have thought himself shamed forever. Then said we our sentences by row as we sat... from the lowest unto the highest... in good
30 order... as it had been a great matter of the commonweal in a right

1 *so proper experience*: such an apt demonstration 2 *tail*: account 6 *Almaine*: Germany
7 *with*: by // *great state*: high-ranking political figure 8, 9 *might*: could 9 *were*: would be
9 *right great estate*: person with a very high social standing 10 *glorious*: vainglorious
14 *in a great*: before a large 15 *liked . . . well*: was so pleased with himself
17 *board*: table 18 *devising . . . upon*: trying to think . . . of 19 *pretty*: nice
20 *letted*: delayed 20–21 *brought . . . forth*: just bluntly brought it up
21 *his board's end*: the end of his table 22 *mess*: (four-place) section
25 *one . . . more*: one more morsel of food // *in*: into
29 *sentences*: opinions; judgments 30 *as*: as if

solemn council. When it came to my part (I will not say it, Uncle,
 for no boast), methought, by our Lady, for my part I acquitted myself
 meetly well; and I liked myself the better because methought my
 words... being but a stranger... went yet with some grace in the Almain
 5 tongue, wherein, letting my Latin alone, me listed to show my
 cunning. And I hoped to be liked the better because I saw that he
 that sat next me and should say his sentence after me... was an unlearned
 priest; for he could speak no Latin at all. But when he came forth
 for his part with my lord's commendation, the wily fox had been so
 10 well accustomed in court with the craft of flattery... that he went beyond
 me to too far. And then might I see by him what excellence a
 right mean wit may come to in one craft, that in all his whole life
 studieth and busieth his wit about no more but that one. But I made after
 a solemn vow to myself that if ever he and I were matched together
 15 at that board again... when we should fall to our flattery, I would flatter
 in Latin, that he should not contend with me no more; for though
 I could be content to be outrun of a horse—yet would I no more
 abide it to be outrun of an ass. But, Uncle, here began now the
 game. He that sat highest, and was to speak last, was a great beneficed
 20 man—and not a doctor only, but also somewhat learned, indeed, in
 the laws of the Church. A world it was to see how he marked every
 man's word that spoke before him. And it seemed that every word,
 the more proper that it was, the worse he liked... for the encumbrance
 that he had to study out a better to pass it. The man even sweat
 25 with the labor, so that he was fain in the while now and then to
 wipe his face. Howbeit, in conclusion, when it came to his course, we
 that had spoken before him had so taken up all among us, before,
 that we had not left him one wise word to speak after.

Anthony

30 Alas, good man! Among so many of you, some good fellow should
 have lent him one!

3 *meetly*: fairly // *liked* . . . *better*: was all the more pleased with myself 4 *being*: i.e., I being
 4 *stranger*: foreigner // *Almain*: German 5 *me listed*: I chose 6 *cunning*: learning
 6 *liked the better*: the more highly thought of 7 *say his sentence*: state his opinion
 11 *might I*: I could 12 *right mean wit*: person of quite low intelligence // *may*: can
 12 *craft*: skill 13 *wit*: mind 15 *board*: table 16 *contend*: (be able to) compete
 17, 18 *of*: by 19 *beneficed*: holding an ecclesiastical position providing income and/or property
 20 *not . . . only*: not only a theologian 21 *marked*: took note of 23 *proper*: apt
 23 *worse*: less // *encumbrance*: burden 24 *study out*: figure out // *a better*: a better one
 24 *pass*: (with which to) surpass 25 *was fain*: found it necessary 26 *course*: turn
 28 *wise*: brilliant 31 *lent*: spared

Vincent

3.10

It needed not, as hap was, Uncle; for he found out such a shift
that in his flattering he passed us all the meinie!

Anthony

5 Why, what said he, Cousin?

Vincent

By our Lady, Uncle, not one word! But like as, I trow, Pliny telleth,
that when Apelles the painter, in the table that he painted of the
sacrifice and the death of Iphigenia, had in the making of the sorrowful
10 countenances of the other noblemen of Greece that beheld it, spent
out so much his craft and his cunning... that when he came to make
the countenance of King Agamemnon, her father, which he reserved
for the last (lest, if he had made his visage before, he must in some of
the others after, either have made the visage less dolorous than he
15 could, and thereby have forborne some part of his praise... or, doing
the uttermost of his craft, might have happed to make some other
look more heavily for the pity of her pain than her own father... which
had been yet a far greater fault in his painting)—when he came, I
say, to the making of his face, therefore, last of all, he could devise no
20 manner of new heavy cheer or countenance for her father... but that he
had made there already in some of the others a much more heavy
before. And therefore, to the intent that no man should see what manner
countenance it was that her father had... the painter was fain to
paint him holding his face in his handkerchief.

25 The like pageant, in a manner, played us there this good ancient,
honorable flatterer. For when he saw that he could find no
words of praise that would pass all that had been spoken before already...
the wily fox would speak never a word, but, as he that were ravished
unto-heaven-ward with the wonder of the wisdom and eloquence

2 *it* . . . *was*: there turned out to be no need for that // *found out*: came up with
2 *shift*: tactic 3 *passed us all the meinie*: surpassed the whole lot of us 7 *trow*: believe
8–24: Pliny, *Natural History* 35:73–74.

8 *Apelles*: More (or at least Vincent) is remembering wrong; it was Timanthes. // *table*: picture
10–11 *spent* . . . *cunning*: used up so much of his skill and his ingenuity 12 *reserved*: saved
14 *dolorous*: sorrowful-looking 17, 20, 21 *heavily/heavy*: grief-stricken
20 *cheer*: expression 23 *was fain to*: had to 25 *pageant*: performance; part in the play
25 *in a manner*: so to speak // *ancient*: venerable 26 *honorable*: illustrious
27 *pass*: surpass

that my lord's Grace had uttered in that oration, he fetched a long sigh with an "Oh!" from the bottom of his breast, and held up both his hands, and lifted up his head, and cast up his eyes into the welkin, and wept.

3.10

Anthony

- 5 Forsooth, Cousin, he played his part very properly!
 But was that great prelate's oration, Cousin, anything praiseworthy?
 For you can tell, I see well. For you would not, I ween, play as Juvenal
 merrily describeth the blind senator, one of the flatterers of Tiberius
 the emperor, that among the remnant so magnified the great
 10 fish that the emperor had sent for them to show them—which this
 blind senator (Montanus, I trow, they called him) marveled of as much
 as any that marveled most, and many things he spoke thereof, with
 some of his words directed thereunto, looking himself toward his left
 side, while the fish lay on his right side—you would not, I trow, Cousin,
 15 have taken upon you to praise it so... but if you had heard it.

Vincent

- I heard it, Uncle, indeed; and to say the truth, it was not to dispraise.
 Howbeit, surely... somewhat less praise might have served it; by more, a
 great deal, than the half. But this am I sure: had it been the worst
 20 that ever was made... the praise had not been the less of one hair.
 For they that used to praise him to his face... never considered how
 much the thing deserved... but how great a laud and praise
 themselves could give his good Grace.

Anthony

- 25 Surely, Cousin, as Terence saith, such folk make men of fools even
 stark mad; and much cause have their lords to be right angry with
 them.

3 *welkin*: heavens 5 *properly*: admirably 6 *anything*: at all 7 *ween*: suppose
 7 *merrily*: humorously 9 *that*: who // *remnant*: rest // *magnified*: extolled
 11 *trow*: believe 14 *trow*: trust 15 *but if*: unless 18 *served*: sufficed
 19 *this*: i.e., of this 20 *had not*: would not have // *of*: by 21 *used*: were wont
 25–26: Terence, *Eunuchus* 2:254.
 25–26 *make . . . mad*: turn men from being fools to being just plain crazy

Vincent

3.10

5 *God* hath indeed, and is, I ween. But as for “their lords,” Uncle, if
they would after wax angry with them therefor, they should in my mind
 do them very great wrong, when it is one of the things that they
 specially keep them for! For those that are of such vainglorious
 mind (be they lords, or be they meaner men) can be much better
 contented to have their devices commended than amended; and require
 they their servant and their friend never so specially to tell
 them the very truth, yet shall they better please them... if he speak
 10 them fair than if he telleth them truth. For they be in the case that
 Martial speaketh of in an epigram unto a friend of his that required
 his judgment, how he liked his verses.... but he prayed him in any wise
 to tell him even the very truth. To whom Martial made answer in
 this wise:

15 The very truth of me thou dost require.
 The very truth is this, my friend dear:
 The very truth thou wouldst not gladly hear.

And in good faith, Uncle, the selfsame prelate that I told you my
 tale of—I dare be bold to swear it, I know it so surely—had on a time
 20 made, of his own drawing, a certain treaty that should serve for a
 league between that country and a great prince; in which treaty himself
 thought that he had devised his articles so wisely, and indited them
 so well, that all the world would allow them. Whereupon,
 longing sore to be praised, he called unto him a friend of his—a man
 25 well learned and of good worship, and very well expert in those matters, as
 he that had been divers times ambassador for that country, and had
 made many such treaties himself. When he took him the treaty,
 and that he had read it... he asked him how he liked it... and said, “But
 I pray you heartily, tell me the very truth”; and that he spoke so
 30 heartily... that the other had went he would fain have heard the

2 *ween*: suppose 3 *wax*: get // *therefor*: for that 6 *meaner*: less distinguished

7 *devices*: contrivances

7–8 *require . . . tell*: no matter how explicitly they ask their servant and their friend to tell

9–10 *speak them fair*: say nice things to them; i.e., tell them what they want to hear

11–17: Martial, *Epigrams* 8:76. 11–12 *required his judgment*: asked his opinion

12 *prayed*: implored 12–13 *in . . . truth*: to tell him just the plain truth regardless

15 *require*: request 19 *on a time*: at some time 20 *drawing*: i.e., drawing up

22 *indited*: composed; worded 23 *allow them*: view them with approval

25 *good worship*: high standing 26 *he that*: one who 30 *went*: believed; thought

30 *fain*: really want to

truth. And in trust thereof, he told him a fault therein; at the hearing whereof, he swore in great anger, “By the Mass, thou art a very fool!” The other afterward told me that he would never tell him truth again.

3.10

5

Anthony

Without question, Cousin, I cannot greatly blame him. And thus themselves make every man mock them, flatter them, and deceive them—those, I say, that are of such vainglorious mind. For if they be content to hear the truth, let them then make much of them that tell them the truth, and withdraw their ear from them that falsely flatter them... and they shall be more truly served than with twenty requests praying men to tell them true.

King Ladislaus, our Lord assoil his soul, used much this manner among his servants: When one of them praised any deed of his, or any condition in him... if he perceived that they said but the truth... he would let it pass by, uncontrolled. But when he saw that they set a gloss upon it, for his praise, of their own making besides... then would he shortly say unto them, “I pray thee, good fellow, when thou say grace at my board, never bring in ‘Gloria Patri’ without a ‘sicut erat.’ Any act that ever I did, if thou report it again to mine honor with a ‘Gloria Patri,’ never report it but with a ‘sicut erat’—that is to wit, even as it was, and none otherwise—and lift me not up with no lies; for I love it not.”

If men would use this way with them that this noble king used, it would diminish much of their false flattery. I can well allow that men should commend (keeping them within the bounds of truth) such things as they see praiseworthy in other men, to give them the greater courage to the increase thereof. For men keep still in that point one condition of children: that praise must prick them

3 *truth*: the truth 7 *themselves*: they themselves 9 *content*: willing

12 *praying . . . true*: asking people to tell them the truth 13 *assoil*: absolve; i.e., rest

15, 29 *condition*: characteristic 16 *uncontrolled*: undisputed; not called into question

18 *shortly*: curtly 19 *board*: table

19 “*Gloria Patri*”: the prayer that translates as, “Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.”

22 *even*: just 25 *allow*: grant 26 *them*: themselves

28 *courage*: encouragement 29 *prick*: spur

forth. But better it were to do well and look for none. Howbeit, they
that cannot find in their heart to commend another man's good deed...
show themselves either envious or else of nature very cold and dull.

3.11

5 But out of question, he that putteth his pleasure in the praise of the
people hath but a fond fantasy. For if his finger do but ache of a
hot blain, a great many men's mouths blowing out his praise
will scantily do him among them all half so much ease as to have
one boy blow upon his finger.

10 *The little commodity that men have of rooms, offices,
and authority... if they desire them but for their
worldly commodity*

The Eleventh Chapter

15 Let us now consider in like wise what great worldly wealth ariseth
unto men by great offices, rooms, and authority—to those worldly-disposed
people, I say, that desire them for no better purpose; for
of them that desire them for better, we shall speak after, anon.

The great thing that they chiefly like all, therein, is that they may
bear a rule—command and control other men, and live uncommanded
and uncontrolled themselves. And yet this commodity took I so little
20 heed of that I never was aware it was so great... till a good friend
of ours merrily told me once that his wife once in a great
anger taught it him. For when her husband had no list to grow
greatly upward in the world... nor, neither, would labor for office of
authority... and, over that, forsook a right worshipful room when it
25 was offered him—she fell in hand with him, he told me, and allto
berated him, and asked him, “What will you do, that you list not to
put forth yourself, as other folk do? Will you sit still by the fire and
make goslings in the ashes with a stick, as children do? Would God

5 *fond*: foolish // *fantasy*: aspiration 6 *blain*: inflammation 7 *ease*: good
9, 11, 19 *commodity*: advantage 9 *rooms*: (high) positions 13 *wealth*: prosperity
16 *anon*: in a little while 22 *list*: desire; ambition // *grow*: go
24 *forsook*: turned down // *right worshipful room*: very prestigious position
25 *fell in hand with him*: took him in hand // *allto*: soundly 26 *will you*: do you want to
26 *list not*: don't care 27 *will . . . still*: do you want to just sit 28 *goslings*: baby geese

I were a man, and look what I would do!" "Why, wife," quoth her husband, 3.11
 "what would you do?" "What? By God, go forward with the best! For as
 my mother was wont to say (God have mercy on her soul), it is evermore
 better to rule than to be ruled. And therefore, by God, I would not,
 5 I warrant you, be so foolish to be ruled where I might rule!" "By my
 troth, wife," quoth her husband, "in this I dare say you say truth; for
 I never found you willing to be ruled yet."

Vincent

10 Well, Uncle, I wot where you be now well enough! She is indeed a
 stout master-woman. And in good faith, for aught that I can see,
 even that same womanish mind of hers... is the great commodity
 that men reckon upon in rooms and offices of authority.

Anthony

15 By my troth; and methinketh very few there are of them that
 attain any great commodity therein. For, first, there is in every kingdom
 but one that can have an office of such authority... that no man
 may command him or control him. No officer can there stand in
 that case... but the king himself, which, only, uncontrolled or uncommanded
 may control and command all. Now, of all the
 20 remnant, each is under him; and yet besides him, almost every
 one is under more commanders, and controllers, too, than one. And some
 man that is in a great office commandeth fewer things, and less
 labor, to many men that are under him... than some one that is
 over him commandeth him alone.

25 Vincent

Yet it doth them good, Uncle, that men must make courtesy to them,
 and salute them with reverence, and stand bareheaded before them, or unto
 some of them kneel, peradventure, too.

5 *to*: as to // *might*: could 10 *stout master-woman*: formidable boss lady // *aught*: anything
 11 *even that same*: that very same 17, 19 *may*: can 18 *which, only*: who, alone
 26 *courtesy*: obeisance

Anthony

3.11

Well, Cousin, in some part they do but play at Gleek—receive reverence...
and to their cost pay honor again therefor. For except, as I said,
only a king—the greatest in authority *under* him receiveth not so
5 much reverence of no man... as according to reason himself doth
honor to him. Nor twenty men's courtesies do him not so much pleasure
as his own once kneeling doth him pain, if his knee hap to be sore.

And I wist once a great officer of the king's say—and in good faith,
I ween he said but as he thought—that twenty men standing bareheaded
10 before him kept not his head half so warm as to keep on his own
cap. Nor he took never so much ease with their being bareheaded
before him... as he caught once grief with a cough that came upon
him by standing bareheaded long before the king.

But let it be that these commodities be somewhat such, as they be—
15 yet then consider whether that any incommunities be so joined therewith
that a man were almost as good lack both as have both.

Goeth allthing evermore as every one of them would have it? That
were as hard as to please all the people at once with one
weather... while in one house the husband would have fair weather for
20 his corn, and his wife would have rain for her leeks. So, while they
that are in authority be not all evermore of one mind... but sometimes
variance among them, either for the respect of profit, or for contention
of rule... or for maintenance of matters, sundry parties for their
sundry friends—it cannot be that both the parties can have their
25 own mind. Nor often are they content which see their conclusion
quail... but ten times they take the missing of their mind more displeasantly
than other, poor men do. And this goeth not only to men
of mean authority, but unto the very greatest. The princes themselves
cannot have, you wot well, all their will. For how were it possible...
30 while each of them almost would, if he might, be lord over all the
remnant? Then many men under their princes in authority... are
in that case that privy malice and envy many bear them in heart, falsely
speak them full fair, and praise them with their mouth... which when

2 *Gleek*: Three of a Kind; a card game in which an ace or a face card is called an "honor."

5 *of*: from // *himself*: he himself // *doth*: gives 6 *to him*: i.e., to the king

6 *courtesies*: obeisances 8 *wist*: knew // *say*: to say 9 *ween*: think

11 *ease*: pleasure; enjoyment 13 *long*: for a long time 14 *let it be*: let's say

15 *incommunities*: disadvantages

16 *were . . . have both*: would be almost as well-off lacking both as having both

17 *goeth allthing evermore*: does everything always go

18 *were as hard*: would be as hard to make happen // *one*: the same kind of

19 *while in one house*: when in one same house 20 *while*: given that 22 *variance*: dissension

23 *maintenance of matters*: supporting of causes 25 *mind*: way // *conclusion*: proposition

26 *quail*: fail // *the . . . displeasantly*: more offense at not getting their way 27 *to*: for

28 *mean*: low-level // *unto*: for even 29 *all their will*: everything they want

30 *while*: when // *might*: could 32 *that case that*: that situation in which

32 *privy . . . heart*: many bear them secret malice and envy in their hearts

33 *speak them full fair*: say very nice things to them

there happeth any great fall unto them, bawl and bark and bite upon them like dogs.

3.11

Finally, the cost and charge, the danger and peril, of war, wherein their part is more than a poor man's is... since the matter more dependeth
 5 upon them; and many a poor ploughman may sit still by the fire, while they must arise and walk. And sometimes their authority falleth by change of their master's mind. And of that see we daily, in one place or other, examples such and so many that the parable of the philosopher can lack no testimony... which likened the servants
 10 of great princes unto the counters with which men do cast a count. For like as that counter that standeth sometimes for a farthing is suddenly set up and standeth for a thousand pounds... and after as soon set down eftsoons beneath, to stand for a farthing again: so fareth it, lo, sometimes, with those that seek the way to rise and grow
 15 up in authority by the favor of great princes—that as they rise up high, so fall they down again as low.

Howbeit, though a man escape all such adventures and abide in great authority till he die... yet then, at the leastwise, every man must leave it at the last. And that which we call "at last" hath no very long
 20 time to it. Let a man reckon his years that are past of his age ere ever he can get up aloft, and let him when he have it first in his fist, reckon how long he shall be likely to live after... and I ween that then the most part shall have little cause to rejoyce, they shall see the time likely to be so short... that their honor and authority by *nature*
 25 shall endure... besides the manifold chances whereby they may lose it more soon. And then when they see that they must needs leave it, the thing which they did much more set their heart upon than ever they had reasonable cause—what sorrow they take therefor, that shall I not need to tell you. And thus it seemeth unto me, Cousin, in good faith,
 30 that since in the having, the profit is not great, and the displeasures neither small nor few... and of the losing, so many sundry chances... and that by no means a man can keep it long... and that to part therefrom

1 *bite upon*: snap at 3 *charge*: expense 8–16: See Polybius, *Histories* 5:26:12–13.
 10–11 *cast a count*: tally up a total 13 *after as soon*: afterward is as readily
 13 *eftsoons*: for a second time // *beneath*: below 14 *grow*: come
 17 *adventures*: vicissitudes 20 *age*: probable lifespan 22 *ween*: think
 23 *most part*: majority 24 *honor*: prestige 25 *endure*: last
 30 *displeasures*: troubles; vexations

is such a painful grief: I can see no very great cause for which,
as a high worldly commodity, men should greatly desire it.

3.12

*That these outward goods, desired but for worldly
wealth, be not only little good for the body, but are
also much harm for the soul*

5

The Twelfth Chapter

And thus far have we considered, hitherto, in these outward
goods that are called the “gifts of fortune,” no further but the
slender *commodity* that worldly-minded men have by them. But, now,
10 if we consider further what *harm* to the *soul* they take by them,
that desire them but only for the wretched wealth of this world...
then shall we well perceive how far more happy is he that well loseth
them than he that evilly findeth them.

These things, though they be such as are of their own nature indifferent
15 (that is to wit, of themselves things neither good nor bad... but
are matter that may serve to the one or the other, after as men will
use them), yet need we little to doubt it but that they that desire them
but for their worldly pleasure, and for no further, godly purpose—the
devil shall soon turn them from things indifferent unto them, and
20 make them things very naught. For though that they be indifferent
of their *nature*, yet cannot the *use* of them lightly stand indifferent...
but determinately must either be good or bad. And therefore... he that
desireth them but for worldly pleasure desireth them not for any
good... and for better purpose than he desireth them—to better use is
25 he not likely to put them... and therefore not unto good, but, consequently,
to naught.

As, for example, first consider it in riches. He that longeth for them
as for thing of temporal commodity, and not for any godly purpose...
what good they shall do him, Saint Paul declareth where he writeth unto
30 Timothy, “Qui volunt divites fieri incidunt in tentationem, et in laqueum

4, 11 *wealth*: well-being 9 *slender*: tenuous; meager 9, 28 *commodity*: advantage
13 *evilly*: in a bad way 16 *after as*: according to how 20, 26 *naught*: bad
21 *lightly stand*: well remain 22 *determinately*: ultimately; in the end
24 *good*: i.e., good purpose 27 *in*: with regard to 29 *declareth*: makes clear
223/29—224/4: 1 Timothy 6:9.

diaboli, et desideria multa inutilia et noxia, quae mergunt homines in interitum et perditionem” (“They that long to be rich fall into temptation and into the grin of the devil, and into many desires unprofitable and noxious, which drown men into death and into perdition”). And
 5 the Holy Scripture saith also, in the twentieth chapter of the Proverbs, “Qui congregat thesauros . . . impingetur ad laqueos mortis” (“He that gathereth treasures . . . shall be shoved into the grin of death”). So that whereas by the mouth of Saint Paul, God saith that they shall *fall* into the devil’s grin... he saith in the other place that they shall be pushed and
 10 shoved in, by violence. And of truth, while a man desireth riches not for any good, godly purpose, but for only worldly wealth... it must needs be that he shall have little conscience in the getting... but by all evil ways that he can invent, shall labor to get them; and then shall he either niggardly heap them up together (which is, you wot
 15 well, damnable) or wastefully misspend them about worldly pomp, pride, and gluttony, with occasion of many sins more. And that is yet much more damnable!

As for fame and glory desired but for worldly pleasure—doth unto the soul inestimable harm. For that setteth men’s hearts upon high
 20 devices and desires of such things as are immoderate and outrageous... and, by help of false flatterers, puff up a man in pride, and make a brittle man lately made of earth... and that shall again shortly be laid full low in earth... and there lie and rot and turn again into earth... take himself in the meantime for a god here upon earth, and ween to
 25 win himself to be lord of all the earth.

This maketh battles between these great princes, and with much trouble to much people, and great effusion of blood, one king to look to reign in five realms, that cannot well rule one. For
 30 how many hath now this great Turk?—and yet aspireth to more; and those that he hath, he ordereth evil, and yet himself worse.

Then offices and rooms of authority—if men desire them only for

3, 7, 9 *grin*: snare

4 *noxious*: injurious (But a pun may also be intended, since “noyer” is the French word for “drown.”)

4 *perdition*: final damnation 5–7: Proverbs 21:6.

10 *while*: when 11 *wealth*: well-being 13 *invent*: think of

14 *niggardly*: in miserly fashion 15 *about*: on 19–20 *high devices*: high-flown notions

20 *of*: for // *immoderate*: excessive // *outrageous*: inordinate 24 *ween*: think

30 *ordereth evil*: governs badly 31 *rooms*: positions

their worldly fantasies, who can look that ever they shall occupy
 them well... but abuse their authority... and do thereby great hurt? For
 then shall they fall from indifferency and maintain false matters of
 their friends; bear up their servants, and such as depend upon
 5 them, with bearing down of other, innocent folk not so able to
 hurt as easy to take harm. Then the laws that are made against malefactors
 shall they make, as an old philosopher said, to be much like
 unto cobwebs, in which the little gnats and flies stick still and hang
 fast... but the great bumblebees break them and fly quite through.
 10 And then the laws that are made as a buckler in the defense of
 innocents, those shall they make serve for a sword to cut and sore
 wound them with; and therewith wound they their own souls sorer.
 And thus you see, Cousin, that of all these outward goods which men
 call the “goods of fortune,” there is never one that unto them which
 15 long therefor not for any godly purpose, but only for their worldly
 wealth, hath any great commodity to the body... and yet are they all (in
 such case), besides that, very deadly destruction unto the soul.

20 *Whether men desire these outward goods for their
 own worldly wealth... or for any good, virtuous purpose,
 this persecution of the Turk against the faith will
 declare; and the comfort that both twain may take
 in the losing them thus*

The Thirteenth Chapter

Vincent

25 Verily, good Uncle, this thing is so plainly true that no man may by
 any good reason deny it. But I ween, Uncle, also, that there

1 *fantasies*: ambitions // *look*: expect 3 *fall*: fall away // *indifferency*: impartiality
 3 *maintain false matters*: support non-legitimate causes 4 *bear up*: elevate
 4–5 *such . . . them*: their dependents 5 *with bearing down*: by the oppressing
 6 *hurt*: inflict harm // *easy*: easily made // *malefactors*: evildoers
 6–9: See Plutarch, *Life of Solon* 5, where this saying is attributed to Anacharsis.
 9 *great*: big 10 *buckler*: shield 11 *sore*: badly 12 *sorer*: worse
 14 *never one*: not a one 16, 19 *wealth*: well-being 16 *commodity*: usefulness
 21 *declare*: make clear 25 *plainly*: obviously // *may*: can
 26 *good reason*: valid argument // *ween*: suppose

will no man say nay. For I see no man that will, for very shame, confess
 that he desireth riches, honor and renown, offices and rooms
 of authority, for his own worldly pleasure; for every man would
 fain seem as holy as a horse; and therefore will every man say—and would
 5 it were believed, too—that he desireth these things, though for his
 own worldly wealth... a *little* so, yet principally to merit thereby, through
 doing some good therewith. 3.13

Anthony

This is, Cousin, very surely so—that so doth every man say. But, first, he that
 10 in the desire thereof hath his respect therein unto his worldly wealth...
 as you say, but a “little” so—so much as himself weeneth were but a
 little may soon prove a great deal too much. And many men will
 say so, too, that have indeed their *principal* respect therein unto their
 worldly commodity, and unto-God-ward therein little or nothing at all, and
 15 yet they pretend the contrary—and that unto their own harm; *quia*
 “Deus non irridetur”; “God cannot be mocked.”

And some peradventure know not well their own affection themselves...
 but there lieth more imperfection secret in their affection than
 themselves are well aware of, which only God beholdeth. And therefore
 20 saith the prophet unto God, “Imperfectum meum viderunt oculi tui” (“Mine
 imperfection have thine eyes beheld”). For which the prophet prayeth,
 “Ab occultis meis munda me, Domine” (“From my hidden sins cleanse thou
 me, good Lord”).

But, now, Cousin, this tribulation of the Turk—if he so persecute us
 25 for the faith that those that will forsake their faith shall keep their
 goods... and those shall lose their goods that will not leave their faith—
 this manner of persecution, lo, shall like a touchstone try
 them, and show the feigned from the true-minded, and teach also them that
 ween they mean better than they do indeed, better to discern themselves.

1 *confess*: admit 2 *honor*: prestige // *rooms*: positions 6, 10 *wealth*: well-being
 14 *commodity*: advantage 15 *pretend*: claim; profess 15–16: Galatians 6:7. 15 *quia*: for
 17, 18 *affection*: state of mind 18 *secret*: hidden 20–23: Psalm 138:16 (Vulgate); Psalm 19:13.
 29 *discern*: know

- For some there are that ween they “mean well” while they frame themselves a conscience, and ever keep still a great heap of superfluous substance by them... thinking ever still that they will bethink themselves upon some good deed... whereon they will well bestow it
- 5 once... or that else their executors shall. But, now, if they lie not unto themselves... but keep their goods for any good purpose to the pleasure of God indeed—then shall they in this persecution, for the pleasure of God in keeping of his faith, be glad to depart from them.
- 10 And therefore, as for all these things (the loss, I mean, of all these outward things that men call the gift of fortune), this is, methinketh, in this Turk’s persecution for the faith, consolation great and sufficient: that (since every man that hath them either setteth by them for the world or for God) he that setteth by them for the world hath, as I have showed you, little profit by them to the body, and great harm unto the
- 15 soul... and therefore may well (if he be wise) reckon that he winneth by the loss... although he lost them but by some common chance; and much more happy, then, while he loseth them by such a meritorious means!—and, on the other side, he that keepeth them for some good purpose, intending to bestow them for the pleasure of God, the loss
- 20 of them in this Turk’s persecution for keeping of the faith can be no manner grief unto him... since that by his so parting from them, he bestoweth them in such wise unto God’s pleasure that at the time when he loseth them, by no way could he bestow them unto his high pleasure better. For though it had been peradventure better
- 25 to have bestowed them well before... yet since he kept them for some good purpose... he would not have left them unbestowed if he had foreknown the chance. But being now prevented so by persecution that he cannot bestow them in that other good way that he would... yet while he parteth from them because he will not part from the faith...
- 30 though the devil’s escheator violently take them from him... yet *willingly* giveth he them to God.

1 *ween*: think 1, 17, 29 *while*: when 1 *frame*: fashion for 2 *still*: continually
 3 *substance*: wealth 5 *once*: one day 8 *depart from*: part with
 12–13 *setteth by them for the world*: cares about them for worldly considerations
 16 *although*: even if // *chance*: happenstance 18 *side*: hand 21, 29 *from*: with
 27 *the chance*: what was going to happen 30 *escheator*: confiscator

*Another cause for which any man should be content
to forgo his goods in the Turk's said persecution*

3.14

The Fourteenth Chapter

Vincent

- 5 I cannot, in good faith, good Uncle, say nay to none of this. And indeed,
unto them that by the Turk's overrunning of the country were
happed to *be* despoiled and robbed, and all their substance, movable and
unmovable, bereft and lost *already*, their persons only fled and safe...
I think that these considerations—considered therewith that, as you
10 lately said, their sorrow could not amend their chance—might unto
them be good occasion of comfort... and cause them, as you said, make
a virtue of necessity. But in the case, Uncle, that we now speak of—
that is to wit, where they have yet their substance untouched, in their
own hands... and that the keeping or the losing shall hang, both, in
15 their own hands, by the Turk's offer, upon the retaining or the
renouncing of the Christian faith—here, Uncle, I find it as you said: that
this temptation is most sore and most perilous. For I fear me
that we shall find few, of such as have much to lose, that shall find in
their hearts so suddenly to forsake their good, with all those other
20 things afore-rehearsed... whereupon their worldly wealth dependeth.

Anthony

- That fear I much, Cousin, too; but thereby shall it well, as I said, appear...
that seemed they never so good and virtuous before, and flattered they
themselves with never so gay a gloss of good and gracious purpose
25 that they keep their good for... yet were their hearts inwardly, in
the deep sight of God, not sound and sure such as they should be, and as
peradventure some had themselves went they had been... but like a puff
ring of Paris—hollow, light, and counterfeit indeed.

1 *content*: willing 2 *forgo*: forfeit; give up 8 *only*: alone
10 *lately*: recently // *chance*: misfortune 11 *make*: to make 19 *forsake*: part with
19, 25 *good*: money 20 *afore-rehearsed*: previously mentioned // *wealth*: well-being
22 *well*... *appear*: as I said, be made quite evident 24 *gay*: plausible // *gloss*: pretext
24 *gracious*: godly 27 *went*: thought 28 *of Paris*: made of plaster of Paris

And yet, they being even such... this would I fain ask one of them...
 and I pray you, Cousin, take you his person upon you... and in this case
 answer for him: What letteth you, would I ask (for we will take no
 small man for an example in this part; nor him that had little to lose;
 5 for such one were, methink, so far from all frame... that would cast
 away God for a little, that he were not worthy to talk with)—what
 letteth, I say therefore, *Your Lordship*, that you be not gladly content
 without any deliberation at all... in this kind of persecution... rather
 than to leave your faith... to let go all that ever you have at once?

10

Vincent

Since you put it, Uncle, unto me, to make the matter the more plain,
 that I should play that great man's part that is so wealthy and hath so
 much to lose: albeit I cannot be very sure of another man's
 mind... nor what another man would say... yet as far as mine own mind
 15 can *conjecture*, I shall answer in his person what I ween would be
 his let.

And therefore, to your question I answer that there letteth me the
 thing that yourself may lightly guess: the losing of the manifold
 commodities which I now have—richesse... and substance... lands
 20 and great possessions of inheritance... with great rule and authority
 here in my country—all which things the great Turk granteth
 me to keep still in peace... and have them enhanced, too... so that I
 will forsake the faith of Christ. Yea, I may say to you... I have a
 motion secretly made me further, to keep all this yet better cheap:
 25 that is to wit, not be compelled utterly to forsake Christ... nor all the
whole Christian faith, but only some such parts thereof as may not
 stand with Muhammad's law; and only granting Muhammad for a
 true prophet, and serving the Turk truly in his wars against all
 Christian kings, I shall not be letted to praise Christ also, and to
 30 call him a good man, and worship him and serve him too.

1 *fain*: like to 2 *pray* . . . *take*: ask . . . to take // *case*: guise 3 *letteth you*: holds you back
 4 *small*: low-ranking 5 *frame*: right thinking; sanity // *cast*: throw
 6 *were* . . . *with*: would not be worth talking with 7 *letteth*: holds back // *content*: willing
 12 *wealthy*: well-to-do 15 *ween*: think 16 *let*: difficulty 17 *letteth me*: holds me back
 18 *may lightly*: can easily 19 *richesse*: affluence // *substance*: means; capital
 22 *enhanced*: increased // *so that*: provided that 23, 25 *forsake*: renounce
 23–24 *a* . . . *this*: i.e., a further offer secretly made to me, by which I could keep all this
 24 *yet better cheap*: for an even lower price 27 *stand*: be compatible
 28 *truly*: sincerely and with steadfast allegiance 29 *letted*: forbidden 30 *worship*: honor

Anthony

3.14

Nay, nay, my lord! Christ hath not so great need of Your Lordship
 as, rather than to lose your service, he would fall at such covenants
 with you... to take your service at halves, to serve him and his
 5 enemy both! He hath given you plain warning already, by Saint Paul,
 that he will have in your service no parting fellow: “Quae societas lucis
 ad tenebras, . . . Christi ad Belial?”—“What fellowship is there between light and
 darkness, . . . between Christ and Belial?” And he hath also plainly showed
 you himself by his own mouth, “Nemo potest duobus dominis servire”—
 10 “No man may serve two lords at once.” He will have you believe
all that he telleth you... and do *all* that he biddeth you, and forbear *all*
 that he forbiddeth you, without any manner exception. Break one
 of his commandments and break all... forsake one point of his faith,
 and forsake all... as for any thank you get of him for the remnant.
 15 And therefore, if you devise, as it were, indentures between God and you,
 what thing you will do for him... and what thing you will not do, as
 though he should hold him content with such service of yours as yourself
 list to appoint him—if you make, I say, such indentures, you shall
 seal both the parts yourself... and you get thereto none agreement
 20 of him.

And this I say though the Turk would make such an appointment
 with you as you speak of, and would when he had made it keep it; whereas
 he would *not*, I warrant you, leave you so... when he had once brought
 you so far forth... but would little and little after, ere he left you, make you
 25 deny Christ altogether, and take Muhammad in his stead. And so doth
 he in the *beginning*, when he will not have you believe him to
 be God. For surely if he were not God... he were no good man
 neither... while he plainly said... he was God.

But though he would never go so far forth with you—yet Christ will
 30 (as I said) not take your service to halves... but will that you shall
 love him with *all* your *whole* heart. And because that while he was
 living here fifteen hundred years ago, he foresaw this mind of yours that you

3 *fall at*: be drawn into // *covenants*: contracts 6 *parting fellow*: partner
 6–10: 2 Corinthians 6:14–15; Matthew 6:24. 8 *showed*: told 10 *may*: can
 13, 14 *forsake*: renounce 14 *thank*: credit // *of*: from // *remnant*: rest
 15, 18 *indentures*: service contracts 18 *list*: choose // *appoint*: grant 20 *of*: from
 21 *appointment*: agreement 24 *and*: by 28 *while*: since 29 *though*: even if
 29 *so*: that

- have now... with which you would fain serve him in some such fashion
 as you might keep your worldly substance still, but rather forsake
 his service than put all your substance from you: he telleth you
 plainly, fifteen hundred years ago, his own mouth, that he will no such
 5 service of you, saying, “Non potestis servire Deo et mammonae”—“You cannot
 serve both God and your riches together.” And therefore, this thing
 established for a plain conclusion which you must needs grant... if
 you have faith—and if you be gone from that ground of faith already...
 then is all our disputation, you wot well, at an end. For whereto
 10 should you then rather lose your goods than forsake your faith... if
 you have lost your faith and let it go already? This point, I say, therefore,
 put first for a ground between us both twain agreed—that you
 have yet the faith still... and intend to keep it always still in your
 heart... and are but in doubt whether you will lose all your worldly
 15 substance rather than forsake your faith in your only word—now
 shall I reply to the point of your answer... wherein you tell me the
 loathness of your loss, and the comfort of the keeping, letteth you to
 forgo them, and moveth you rather to forsake your faith.
- I let pass all that I have spoken of the small commodity of them
 20 unto your body, and of the great harm that the having of them doth to
 your soul. And since the promise of the Turk made unto you for
 the keeping of them is the thing that moveth you and maketh you thus
 to doubt... I ask you first whereby you wot that when you have done
 all that he will have you do against Christ, to the harm of your soul—
 25 whereby wot you, I say, that he will keep you his promise in these
 things that he promiseth you concerning the retaining of your
 well-beloved worldly wealth... for the pleasure of your body?

Vincent

- 30 What surety can a man have of such a great prince *but* his promise,
 which for his own honor it cannot become him to break?

1 *fain*: gladly 4 *will*: will have 5 *of*: from 9, 23, 25 *wot*: know
 9 *whereto*: to what end 10, 15, 18 *forsake*: renounce 15 *only word*: word only
 16 *point*: part 17 *loathness* . . . *loss*: unpleasantness of your loss (of them)
 17 *letteth you to forgo them*: deters you from letting them go
 19 *commodity of them*: amount of good they do 23 *doubt*: be undecided
 23 *whereby*: how 29 *surety*: guarantee // *have of*: get from

Anthony

3.14

I have known him, and his father before him, too, break more promises
 than five as great as this is that he should make with you. Who shall
 come and cast it in his teeth, and tell him it is a shame for him to be so fickle
 5 and so false of his promise? And then what careth he for those words,
 that he wotteth well he shall never hear? Not very much... although they
 were told him, too. If you might come after and complain your grief
 unto his own person yourself... you should find him as shamefast as a
 friend of mine, a merchant, found once the sultan of Syria—to whom,
 10 being certain years about his merchandise in that country, he
 gave a great sum of money for a certain office meet for him there
 for the while; which he scant had him granted and put in his hand...
 but that, ere ever it was aught worth unto him, the sultan suddenly
 sold it to another of his own sect, and put our Hungarian out. Then
 15 came he to him and humbly put him in remembrance of his grant
 passed his own mouth and signed with his own hand. Whereunto the
 sultan answered him, with a grim countenance, “I will thou
 wit it, losel, that neither my mouth nor my hand shall be master over
 me, to bind all my body at their pleasure; but I will so be lord and
 20 master over them both that whatsoever the one say or the other
 write... I will be at mine own liberty to do what me list myself, and ask
 them both no leave. And therefore go get thee hence out of my country,
 knave!”

Ween you now, my lord—that sultan and this Turk being both
 25 of one false sect—you may not find them both like false of their
 promise?

Vincent

That must I needs jeopard; for other surety can there none be had.

2 *break*: to break 4 *cast it in his teeth*: throw it in his face 5, 25 *false of*: untrue to
 5 *for*: about 6 *although*: even if 7 *might*: could // *after*: afterward
 7 *complain your grief*: state your grievance 8 *shamefast*: ashamed
 10 *merchandise*: buying and selling 11 *meet*: suitable 16 *passed*: pledged with
 17–18 *I will thou wit it*: I'll have you know // 18 *loسل*: scoundrel
 19 *all my body*: my whole body 21 *what me list myself*: what I myself want to
 21–22 *ask . . . leave*: ask the permission of neither of them 24 *ween you*: don't you suppose
 25 *one*: the same 28 *that . . . jeopard*: that's a risk I'll have to take // *surety*: guarantee

Anthony

3.14

An unwise jeoparding, to put your soul in peril of damnation
for the keeping of your bodily pleasures!—and yet, without surety thereof,
must jeopard them too!

- 5 But yet go a little further, lo: suppose me that you might be very
sure that the Turk would break no promise with you. Are you then
sure enough to retain all your substance still?

Vincent

Yea, then!

- 10 Anthony

What if a man should ask you how long?

Vincent

How long? As long as I live!

Anthony

- 15 Well, let it be so, then. But yet, as far as I can see, though the
great Turk favor you never so much... and let you keep your goods
as long as ever you live—yet if it hap that you be this day fifty
years old... all the favor he can show you cannot make you one day
younger tomorrow... but every day shall you wax elder than other, and
20 then within a while must you, for all his favor, lose all.

Vincent

Well, a man would be glad, for all that, to be sure not to lack while
he liveth!

Anthony

- 25 Well, then, if the great Turk give you your goods—can there then
in all your life none other take them from you again?

2, 4 *jeopard(ing)*: risk(ing) 3 *surety*: guarantee 5 *me*: for me // *might*: could
19 *wax elder than other*: become older than you were the day before
22 *while*: as long as 26 *none other*: no one else

Vincent

3.14

Verily, I suppose no.

Anthony

5 May he not lose this country again unto Christian men, and you,
with the taking of this way, fall in the same peril then that you
would now eschew?

Vincent

Forsooth, I think that if he get it once, he will never lose it again
in our days.

10 Anthony

Yes—by God’s grace! But yet if he lose it *after* your days, there
goeth your children’s inheritance away again! But be it now
that he could *never* lose it... could none take your substance from
you then?

15 Vincent

No; in good faith, none.

Anthony

No? None at all? Not God?

Vincent

20 *God?* What? Yes, pardie; who doubteth of that?

Anthony

25 Who? Marry, he... that doubteth whether there be any God or no!
And that there lacketh not some such, the prophet testifieth, where he
saith, “Dixit insipiens in corde suo non est Deus” (“The fool hath said in his
heart there is no God”). With the mouth the most foolish will forbear

5 *in*: into 13, 16, 18 *none*: no one 20 *pardie*: of course // *doubteth*: has any doubt
22 *marry*: indeed 24–25: Psalm 14:1.

- to say it unto other folk... but in the heart they let not to say it softly
to themselves. And I fear me there be many more such fools than every
man would ween there were... and would not let to say it openly, too, if
they forbore it not more for dread or shame of men than for any fear
5 of God. But, now, those that are so frantically foolish as to ween there
were no God... and yet in their words confess him, though that, as
Saint Paul saith, in their deeds they deny him—we shall let them
pass till it please God show himself unto them... either inwardly,
betimes, by his merciful grace, or else outwardly, but over late for
10 them, by his terrible judgment.
- But unto you, my lord, since you believe and confess (like as a wise man
should) that though the Turk keep you promise in letting you keep
your substance because you do him pleasure in the forsaking of
your faith, yet God—whose faith you forsake... and therein do him
15 displeasure—may so take them from you that the great Turk, with
all the power that he hath, is not able to keep you them: why will you be
so unwise with the loss of your soul to please the great Turk for
your goods... while you wot well that God, whom you displease
therewith, may take them from you too?
- 20 Besides this, since you believe there is a God... you cannot but believe
therewith that the great Turk cannot take your goods from you without
his will or sufferance—no more than the devil could from Job.
And think you then... that if he will suffer the Turk take away your
goods albeit that by the keeping and confessing of his faith, you please
25 him... he will when you displease him by forsaking his faith, suffer
you of those goods that you get or keep thereby, to rejoice or enjoy
any benefit?

Vincent

- 30 God is gracious; and though that men offend him, yet he suffereth
them many times to live in prosperity long after.

1, 3 *let*: forbear 3 *ween*: suppose; suspect 5 *frantically*: insanelly // *ween*: believe
6–7: Titus 1:16. 8 *show*: to show 9 *betimes*: in time (for them to amend) // *over*: too
12 *keep you promise*: keep his promise to you 13 *do . . . forsaking*: gratify him by the renouncing
14–15 *do him displeasure*: offend him 15, 19 *may*: can 16 *keep you them*: keep them yours
18 *while . . . well*: when you well know // *displease*: offend 22 *sufferance*: his letting this happen
23 *suffer*: let 24 *albeit that*: even if 25, 29 *suffer(eth)*: allow(s) 26 *rejoice*: get any use

Anthony

3.14

Long after? Nay, by my troth, my lord, that doth he no man! For how
 can that be, that he should suffer you live in prosperity long after... when
 your whole life is but short in altogether, and either almost half thereof
 5 or more than half (you think yourself, I dare say) spent out already
 before? Can you burn out half a short candle... and then have a long
 one left of the remnant? There cannot be in this world a worse
 mind than that a man to delight and take comfort in any commodity
 that he taketh by sinful means. For it is the very straight
 10 way toward the taking of boldness and courage in sin—and, finally, to
 fall into infidelity, and think that God careth not nor regardeth not
 what things men do here, nor what mind we be of.

But unto such-minded folk speaketh Holy Scripture in this wise:
 “Noli dicere, peccavi et nihil mihi accidit triste; patiens enim redditor est
 15 Dominus” (“Say not, ‘I have sinned and yet there hath happed me no harm;
 for God suffereth before he strike’”)... but as Saint Augustine saith, the
 longer that he tarrieth ere he strike, the sorer is the stroke when he
 striketh.

And therefore, if ye will well do, reckon yourself very sure that when
 20 you deadly displease God for the getting or the keeping of your goods,
 God shall not suffer those goods to do you good... but either shall he
 take them shortly from you... or suffer you to keep them for a little
 while to your more harm, and after shall he, when you least look therefor,
 take *you* away from *them*. And then what a heap of heaviness will
 25 there enter into your heart... when you shall see that you shall so
 suddenly go from your goods, and leave them here in the earth in one
 place... and that your body shall be put in the earth in another place...
 and (which then shall be most heaviness of all) when you shall fear (and not
 without great cause) that your soul shall first, forthwith, and after
 30 that, at the final judgment, your body too, be driven down deep toward

4 *altogether*: the whole thing 7 *remnant*: rest 11 *infidelity*: unbelief 14–16: Sirach 5:4.

16–18: See Augustine, *Letter 138* (a letter to Marcellinus), 2:14.

17 *tarrieth*: waits; delays // *sorer*: more severe 20 *deadly displease*: mortally offend

23 *look therefor*: expect it 24, 28 *heaviness*: grief 26 *suddenly*: abruptly // *from*: away from

28 *most heaviness*: the greatest grief 29 *forthwith*: immediately

the center of the earth, into the very pit and dungeon of the devil of
hell, there to tarry in torment world without end. What goods of
the world can any man imagine, whereof the pleasure and commodity
could be such in a thousand years... as were able to recompense that intolerable
5 pain that there is to be suffered in one year; yea, or one *day*,
or one hour, either. And then what a madness it is for the poor
pleasure of your worldly goods of so few years, to cast yourself both
body and soul into the everlasting fire of hell... whereof there is not
diminished the amount of a moment by the lying there
10 the space of a hundred thousand years!

And therefore our Savior, in few words, concluded and confuted all
those follies of them that, for the short use of this-worldly substance,
forsake him and his faith and sell their souls unto the devil forever...
where he saith, “*Quid prodest homini si universum mundum lucretur, animae*
15 *vero suae detrimentum patiatur?*”—“What availeth it a man if he won
all the whole world and lost his soul?” This were, methinketh, cause and
occasion enough to him that had never so much part of this world in
his hand... to be content rather to lose it all than for the retaining,
or increasing, of his worldly goods, to lose and destroy his soul.

20 Vincent

This is, good Uncle, in good faith, very true. And what other thing
any of them that would not for this be content... have for to allege in
reason for the defense of their folly, that can I not imagine; nor
list in this matter to play their part no longer; but I pray God give me
25 the grace to play the contrary part indeed, and that I never for any
good or substance of this wretched world forsake my faith toward
God... neither in heart nor tongue; as I trust in his great goodness I never
shall.

2 *tarry*: remain 3 *commodity*: usefulness 13, 26 *forsake*: renounce 14–16: Matthew 16:26.
17 *never so much part*: no matter how big a part 18 *content*: willing
22 *them . . . content*: those who would not be willing to do this 24 *list*: (do I) care

*This kind of tribulation trieth what mind men have to
their goods; which they that are wise will at the fame
thereof, see well and wisely laid up safe before*

3.15

The Fifteenth Chapter

5

Anthony

Methinketh, Cousin, that this persecution shall not only, as I said
before, try men's hearts when it cometh, and make them know their
own affections... whether they have a corrupt, greedy, covetous mind,
or not; but also the very fame and expectation thereof may teach
10 them this lesson ere ever the thing fall upon them itself—to their
no little fruit... if they have the wit and the grace to take it in time, while
they may. For now may they find sure places to lay their
treasure in, so that all the Turk's army shall never find it out.

Vincent

15

Marry, Uncle, that way they will, I warrant you, not forget, as near
as their wits will serve them! But yet have I known some that
have, ere this, thought that they had hidden their money safe and sure
enough... digging it full deep in the ground... and have missed it, yet,
when they came again, and have found it dug out and carried away
20 to their hands.

Anthony

25

Nay, *from* their hands, I ween you would say. And it was no marvel;
for some such have I known too... but they have hidden their
goods foolishly—in such place as they were well warned before that
they should not. And that were they warned by him that they well
knew for such one as wist well enough what would come thereon.

2, 9 *fame*: rumor 8 *affections*: dispositions; attitudes 11 *fruit*: profit
11 *wit*: good sense 12 *may*: can // *sure*: safe; secure 15 *marry*: indeed
15–16 *as near as*: however little; no matter how poorly 18 *full*: quite 19 *again*: back
20 *to their hands*: without exertion on their part 22 *ween*: suppose // *marvel*: wonder
26 *wist*: knew // *thereon*: of that

Vincent

3.15

Then were they more than mad! But did he tell them, too, where they *should* have hidden it, to have it sure?

Anthony

- 5 Yea, by Saint Mary did he! For else had he told them but half a tale.
But he told them a whole tale, bidding them that they should in no
wise hide their treasure in the ground—and he showed them a good
cause: for there, thieves use to dig it out and steal it away.

Vincent

- 10 Why, where *should* they hide it then, said he? For thieves may hap
to find it out in any place!

Anthony

- Forsooth, he counseled them to hide their treasure in *heaven*, and there
lay it up; for there it shall lie safe. For thither, he said, there can no
15 thief come... till he have left his theft and be waxen a true man first.
And he that gave this counsel wist what he said well enough; for it
was our Savior himself, which in the sixth chapter of Saint Matthew
saith, “Nolite thesaurizare vobis thesauros in terra, ubi erugo et tinea
demolitur, et ubi fures effodiunt et furantur; thesaurizate vobis thesauros in
20 caelo... ubi neque erugo neque tinea demolitur... et ubi fures non effodiunt nec
furantur. Ubi enim est thesaurus tuus, ibi est et cor tuum” (“Hoard not up your
treasures in earth, where the rust and the moth fret it out, and where
thieves dig it out and steal it away; but hoard up your treasures in heaven—
where neither the rust and the moth fret them out... and where thieves

3 *sure*: secure 5, 6 *tale*: story; instruction 7 *showed*: told

8 *cause*: reason // *use*: are likely to 15 *left his theft*: quit his thieving // *waxen*: become

15 *true*: honest 16 *wist* . . . *enough*: knew well enough what he was talking about 17 *which*: who

22, 24 *fret it out*: eat it away 239/18—240/2: Matthew 6:19–21.

dig them not out... and steal them away—for whereas is thy treasure,
there is thy heart too”).

3.15

If we would well consider these words of our Savior Christ, we
should, as me think, need no more counsel at all, nor no more comfort,
5 neither, concerning the loss of our temporal substance in this
Turk’s persecution for the faith. For here our Lord, in these words,
teacheth us where we may lay up our substance safe before the
persecution come.

If we put it into the poor men’s bosoms, there shall it lie safe. For
10 who would go search a beggar’s bag for money? If we deliver it to the
poor for Christ’s sake, we deliver it unto Christ himself. And then
what persecutor can there be so strong as to take it out of *his* hand?

Vincent

15 These things are, Uncle, undoubtedly so true that no man may with
words wrestle therewith. But yet ever there hangeth in a man’s heart
a loathness to lack a living!

Anthony

There doth indeed... in theirs that either never or but seldom
hear any good counsel thereagainst... and when they hear it, hearken
20 it but as though they would an idle tale—rather for a pastime, or for
the manner sake, than for any substantial intent and purpose to follow
good advertisement and take any fruit thereby. But verily, if we would
not only lay our ear but also our heart thereto... and consider
that the saying of our Savior Christ is not a poet’s fable... nor a harper’s
25 song... but the very, holy word of Almighty God himself... we would,
and well we might, be full sore ashamed in ourselves, and full sorry, too,
when we felt in our affection those words to have in our hearts no
more strength and weight... but that we remain still of the same dull
mind as we did before we heard them.

30 This manner of ours... in whose breasts the great, good counsel
of God no better settleth, nor taketh no better root, may well declare

1 *whereas*: wherever 7, 14, 31 *may*: can 10, 11 *deliver it*: hand it over
16 *loathness*: reluctance 19 *hearken*: listen to 21 *manner sake*: sake of appearances
22 *advertisement*: advice 24 *the . . . Christ*: what Christ our Savior said
26 *in*: of // *sorry*: sorrowful 27 *in our affection*: with regard to our mental state
28–29 *dull mind*: stupid way of thinking 31 *well declare*: make it quite clear to

us that the thorns and the briars and the brambles of our worldly substance grow so thick, and spring up so high, in the ground of our hearts... that they strangle (as the Gospel saith) the word of God that was sown therein. And therefore is God very good lord to us when he
 5 causeth, like a good husbandman, his folk come on field (for the persecutors be his folk to this purpose) and with their hooks and their stocking irons grub up these wicked weeds and bushes of our earthly substance, and carry them quite away from us... that the word of God sown in our hearts may have room therein... and a glade round about
 10 for the warm sun of grace to come to it and make it grow. For surely those words of our Savior shall we find full true—"Ubi thesaurus tuus, ibi est et cor tuum" ("Whereas thy treasure is... there is also thy heart"). If we lay up our treasures in earth... in earth shall be our hearts; if we send our treasure into heaven... in heaven shall we have
 15 our hearts. And surely the greatest comfort that any man may have in his tribulation... is to have his heart in heaven.

If thy heart were indeed out of this world and in heaven, all the kinds of torment that all the world could devise could put thee to no pain here. Let us then send our hearts hence thither, in such manner
 20 as we may, by sending thither our worldly substance hence... and let us never doubt it but we shall (that once done) find our hearts so conversant in heaven, with the glad consideration of our following the gracious counsel of Christ, that the comfort of his Holy Spirit inspired us therefor... shall mitigate, diminish, assuage, and, in manner, quench
 25 the great, furious fervor of the pain that we shall hap to have by his loving sufferance... for our further merit in our tribulation. And therefore, like as if we saw that we should be within a while driven out of this land and fain to flee into another... we would ween that man were mad which would not be content to forbear his goods

1–4: Matthew 13:7, 22. 5 *causeth*: has // *husbandman*: farmer 5, 6 *folk*: servants
 6 *hooks*: weed hooks 7 *stocking irons*: iron tools for uprooting trees or plants
 11–13: Matthew 6:21. 12 *whereas*: wherever 15, 20 *may*: can
 19, 20 *hence*: from here // *thither*: to there 22 *so conversant*: so much living; so at home
 28 *fain*: forced // *ween*: think 29 *content*: willing // *forbear*: do without

here for the while... and send them into that land before him, where he
 saw he should live all the remnant of his life: so may we verily
 think ourselves much more mad—seeing that we be *sure* it cannot
 be long ere we shall be sent, spite of our teeth, out of this world—if the
 5 fear of a little lack, or the love to see our goods here about us... and the
 loathness to part from them for this little while which we may keep
 them here, shall be able to let us from the sure sending them before us
 into the other world... in which we may be sure to live wealthily with
 them... if we send them thither... or else shortly leave them here behind
 10 us... and then stand in great jeopardy there to live wretches forever.

Vincent

In good faith, good Uncle, methinketh that concerning the loss
 of these outward things, these considerations are so sufficient comforts
 that for mine own part, save only grace well to remember
 15 them, I would, methink, desire no more.

*Another comfort, and courage, against the loss of
 worldly substance*

The Sixteenth Chapter

Anthony

20 Much less than this may serve, Cousin... with calling and trusting
 upon God's help; without which, much more than this
 cannot serve. But the fervor of the Christian faith so sore fainteth,
 nowadays, and decayeth—coming from hot unto lukewarm, and from
 lukewarm almost to key-cold—that men must now be fain, as at
 25 a fire that is almost out, to lay many dry sticks thereto... and use much
 blowing thereat. But else would I ween, by my troth, that unto a warm-faithful

2 *remnant*: rest 4 *spite of our teeth*: despite all our resistance 6 *from*: with 7 *let*: keep
 8 *wealthily*: prosperously 10 *live*: live as 16 *courage*: encouragement // *against*: regarding
 20 *may*: can 20, 22 *serve*: suffice
 22–23 *so sore fainteth . . . and decayeth*: is so badly declining . . . and deteriorating 24 *fain*: obliged
 25 *use much*: do a lot of 26 *ween*: think // *by my troth*: in all truthfulness
 242/26—243/1 *a warm-faithful man*: someone whose faith is fervent

man, one thing alone, whereof we spoke yet no word, were
comfort enough in this kind of persecution, against the loss of all his
goods.

3.16

Vincent

5 What thing may that be, Uncle?

Anthony

In good faith, Cousin, even the bare remembrance of the poverty
that our Savior willingly suffered for us. For I verily suppose that if
there were a great king... that had so tender a love to a servant of
10 his... that he had, to help him out of danger, forsaken and left off all his
worldly wealth and royalty, and become poor and needy for his sake—that
servant could scant be found that were of such an unkind, villainous
courage... that if himself came after to some substance... would not
with better will lose it all again... than shamefully to forsake such a
15 master.

And therefore, as I say, I do surely suppose that if we would well remember
and inwardly consider the great goodness of our Savior
toward us... not yet being his poor, sinful *servants*, but rather his
adversaries and his enemies... and what wealth of this world that he willingly
20 forsook for our sake, being indeed universal king thereof... and so
having the power in his own hand to have used it, if he had
would; instead whereof—to make us rich in heaven!—he lived here in neediness
and poverty all his life... and neither would have authority nor keep
neither lands nor goods: the deep consideration and earnest advisement
25 of this one point alone... were able to make any kind Christian
man or woman well content rather for his sake again to give up
all that ever God hath lent them (and *lent* them hath he all that ever
they have) than unkindly and unfaithfully to forsake him. And *him*
they forsake if that for fear they forsake the confessing of his Christian
30 faith. And therefore, to finish this piece with, concerning the dread

1, 25 *were*: would be 7 *even*: just 10 *forsaken*: renounced // *left off*: given up
11 *wealth*: prosperity 12 *unkind*: inhuman; coldhearted 12 *villainous*: base
13 *courage*: disposition 14 *with better will*: be more willing to 22 *would*: wanted to
24 *earnest advisement*: serious pondering 25 *kind*: warmhearted
26 *well content*: quite willing 28 *unkindly*: cold-bloodedly; heartlessly

of losing our outward, worldly goods: let us consider... the slender
commodity that they bring; with what labor they be bought; how
little while they abide with whomsoever they abide longest; what
pain their pleasure is mingled with; what harm the love of them
5 doth unto the soul; what loss is in the keeping, Christ's faith refused
for them; what winning in the loss, if we lose them for
God's sake; how much more profitable they be well given than evil
kept; and, finally, what unkindness it were... if we would not rather
forsake them for Christ's sake... than unfaithfully forsake Christ for
10 them—which while he lived for *our* sake, *forsook all the world*... besides
the suffering of shameful and painful death; whereof we shall speak
after. If we these things, I say, will consider well... and will pray God
with his holy hand to imprint them in our hearts... and will abide and dwell
still in the hope of his help: his truth shall, as the prophet saith,
15 so compass us about with a pavis that we shall not need to be afeard
“*ab incursu et daemonio meridiano*”—of this incursion of this midday
devil, this open, plain persecution of the Turk—for any
loss that we can take by the bereaving from us of our wretched worldly
goods... for whose short and small pleasure in this life forborne... we shall
20 be with heavenly substance everlastingly recompensed of God in
joyful bliss and glory.

*Of bodily pain... and that a man hath no cause to take
discomfort in persecution though he feel himself in a
horror at the thinking upon bodily pain*

25 The Seventeenth Chapter

Vincent

Forsooth, Uncle, as for these outward goods, you have so far forth
said... that, albeit no man can be *sure* what strength he shall have, or

1, 27 *outward*: external 1 *slender*: insignificant; unsubstantial 2 *commodity*: advantage
5 *refused*: renounced; given up 7 *evil*: ill 8 *unkindness*: coldheartedness
9 *unfaithfully*: disloyally 10 *which*: who 12 *after*: later
13–14 *abide and dwell still*: keep abiding and dwelling 15 *pavis*: shield
16–17: Psalm 91:6. 18 *bereaving*: violent taking away 20 *of*: by
22–23 *take discomfort*: lose heart; become discouraged
27–28 *you . . . said*: i.e., you have said such a good amount on this subject

how faint and how feeble he may hap to find himself, when he shall
 come to the point... and therefore I can make no warrantise of myself
 (seeing that *Saint Peter* so suddenly fainted... at a woman's word, and so
 cowardly forsook his Master... for whom he had so boldly fought
 5 within so few hours before; and, by that fall in forsaking, well perceived
 that he had been too rash in his promise, and was well worthy to
 take a fall for putting so full trust in himself)—yet, in good faith, methinketh
 now (and God shall, I trust, help me to keep this thought
 still) that if the Turk should take all that I have, unto my very shirt,
 10 except I would forsake my faith; and offer it me all again, with five
 times as much thereto, to fall into his sect: I would not once stick thereat
 rather to forsake it every whit... than of Christ's holy faith to forsake
 any point. But surely, good Uncle, when I bethink me further, on the
 grief and the pain that may turn unto my *flesh*—here find I the
 15 fear that forceth my heart to tremble.

Anthony

Neither have I cause thereof to marvel... nor you, Cousin, cause to
 be dismayed therefor. The great horror and the fear that our Savior
 had in his own flesh against his painful Passion maketh me
 20 little to marvel; and I may well make you take that comfort too, that
 for no such manner of grudging felt in our sensual parts, the flesh
 shrinking at the meditation of pain and death, your reason shall give
 over... but resist it and manly master it. And though you would fain flee
 from the painful death, and be loath to come thereto... yet may the meditation
 25 of his great, grievous agony move you—and himself shall, if you so
 desire him, not fail to work with you therein... and get and give you the
 grace—that you shall submit and conform your will therein unto his...
 as he did his unto his Father, and shall thereupon be so comforted with
 the secret, inward inspiration of his Holy Spirit... as he was with the

1 *faint*: weak; lacking in courage 2 *warrantise of*: guarantee about 3 *fainted*: lost courage
 6 *was well worthy*: well deserved 9 *still*: continually 10 *except*: unless
 10, 12 *forsake*: renounce; give up 10 *offer it me all again*: offer to give it all back to me
 11 *thereto*: added to that // *stick*: hesitate 19 *against*: right before / in anticipation of
 20–21 *that for*: so that on account of 21 *grudging*: protest 22 *meditation of*: thinking about
 23 *fain*: like to 24–25 *meditation of*: meditating on 26 *desire*: ask

personal presence of that angel that after his agony came and comforted him... that you shall as his true disciple follow him... and with good will, without grudge, do as he did... and take your cross of pain and passion upon your back... and die for the truth with him, and thereby
 5 reign with him, crowned in eternal glory. And this I say to give you warning of the thing that is truth... to the intent when a man feeleth such a horror of death in his heart, he should not thereby stand in outrageous fear that he were falling. For many a such man standeth, for all that fear, *full fast*, and finally better abideth the brunt... when God
 10 is so good unto him as to bring him thereto and encourage him therein... than doth some other that in the beginning feeleth no fear at all. And yet may it be—and most often, so it is, for God, having many mansions, and all wonderfully wealthful, in his Father’s house, exalteth not every good man up to the glory of a martyr... but foreseeing their infirmity...
 15 that though they be of good will before, and peradventure of right good courage too... would yet play Saint Peter if they were brought to the point, and thereby bring their souls into the peril of eternal damnation—he provideth otherwise for them before they come thereat... and either findeth a way that men shall not have the mind to
 20 lay any hands upon them (as he found for his disciples... when himself was willingly taken), or that if they set hand on them, they shall have no power to hold them (as he found for Saint John the Evangelist, which let his sheet fall from him; whereupon they caught hold, and so fled himself naked away and escaped from them), or though they hold
 25 him and bring him to prison, too... yet God sometimes delivereth them thence (as he did Saint Peter). And sometimes he taketh them to him out of the prison into heaven, and suffereth them not to come to their torment at all; as he hath done by many a good, holy man. And some he suffereth to be brought into the torments... and yet suffereth them
 30 not to die therein, but live many years after and die their natural death—as he did by Romanus, that should have been beheaded, as Eusebius telleth [*Blandina et, apud Divus Ciprianus, quidam et relictus pro mortuo*],

3 *grudge*: protest 5–6 *give you warning of*: call your attention to 6 *truth*: the truth
 7 *outrageous*: excessive; undue 14 *their infirmity*: the weakness of those 15 *that*: who
 22–24: See Mark 14:51–52. (Saint Ambrose and some of the other early fathers of the Church identified the “young man” as Saint John.) 23 *which*: who 27–28 *come to their torment*: be tortured
 31 *that . . . been*: who was going to be 31–32 *as . . . telleth*: See Eusebius, *Church History* 5:1.
 32 *Blandina . . . mortuo*: “Blandina and, in the works of Saint Cyprian, a certain person also left for dead”; apparently a note written by More to himself.

Saint John the Evangelist, and by many another more—as we may well see both by sundry stories and in the epistles of Saint Cyprian also.

- And therefore, which way God will take with us, we cannot tell. But surely if we be true Christian men... this can we well tell: that without
- 5 any bold warrantise of ourselves... or foolish trust in our own strength... we be bound upon pain of damnation that we be not of the contrary mind but that we will with his help... how loath soever we feel our flesh thereto... rather, yet, than forsake him or his faith before the world (which if we do, he hath promised to forsake us before his Father
- 10 and all his holy company of heaven)—rather, I say, than we would so do... we would with his help endure and sustain for his sake all the tormentry that the devil with all his faithless tormentors in this world would devise. And then—when we be of this mind... and submit our will unto his, and call and pray for his grace—we can tell well enough that
- 15 he will never suffer them to put more upon us... than his grace will make us able to bear... but will also with their temptation provide for us a sure way. For “*fidelis est Deus*,” saith Saint Paul, “*qui non patitur nos temptare... supra id quod potestis, sed dat etiam cum tentatione proventum ut possitis ferre*”; “God is,” saith the Apostle, “faithful, which suffereth you
- 20 not to be tempted above that you may bear... but giveth also with the temptation a way out.” For either, as I said, he will keep us out of their hands (though he before suffered us to be feared with them, to prove our faith withal; that we may have, by the examination of our own mind, some comfort in hope of his grace... and some fear of our own
- 25 frailty, to drive us to *call* for grace), or else, if we fall in their hands...

2 *stories*: historical accounts 5 *bold warrantise of*: presumptuous making of guarantees about
 8, 9 *forsake*: repudiate 9–10: See Matthew 10:33; Luke 12:9. 12 *faithless*: unbelieving
 17–21: 1 Corinthians 10:13. 20 *that*: what // *may*: can 22 *feared with*: frightened by
 22 *prove*: test 23 *withal*: thereby 25 *in*: into

- so that we fall not from the trust of him, nor cease to call for his help... 3.17
 his truth shall, as the prophet saith, so compass us about “with a
 pavis” that we shall not need to fear this incursion of this midday
 devil; for either shall these Turks, his tormentors, that shall enter
 5 this land and persecute us—either they shall, I say, not have the power...
 to touch our bodies at all... or else the short pain that they shall put
 unto our bodies... shall turn us to eternal profit... both in our souls
 and in our bodies too. And therefore, Cousin, to begin with... let us be of
 good comfort. For since we be by our faith very sure that Holy Scripture
 10 is the very word of God... and that the word of God cannot be but
 true; and that we see that both by the mouth of his holy prophet and
 by the mouth of his blessed apostle also, God hath made us so faithful
 promises, both that he will not suffer us to be tempted
 above our power... but will both provide a way out for us *and* that he
 15 will *also* round about so compass us with his pavis, and *defend* us,
 that we shall have no cause to fear this midday devil with all his
 persecution: we *cannot* now but be very sure (except we be very
 shamefully cowardly of heart... and toward God in faith, out of measure
 faint... and in love, less than lukewarm... or waxen even key-cold)—we
 20 may be very sure, I say, that either God shall not suffer the Turks
 to invade this land... or if they do, God shall provide such resistance
 that they shall not prevail; or if they prevail, yet if we take
 the way that I have told you, we shall by their persecution take little
 harm. Or, rather, no harm at all... but that that shall *seem* harm...
 25 shall indeed be to us no harm at all... but good. For if God make us
 and keep us good men—as he hath promised to do if we pray well
 therefor—then, saith Holy Scripture, “bonis omnia cooperantur in bonum”;
 “unto good folk, all things turn them to good.”
 And therefore, Cousin, since that God knoweth what shall happen, and not
 30 we... let us in the meanwhile, with a good hope in the help of God’s
 grace, have a good purpose with us of sure standing by his holy faith
 against all persecutions. From which if we should (which our Lord
 forbid!) hereafter either for fear or pain, for lack of his grace (lost in

1 *so that*: provided that // *from*: away from 3, 15 *pavis*: shield
 12 *apostle*: i.e., Saint Paul // *so faithful*: such earnest 17 *except*: unless
 18 *out of measure*: exceedingly 19 *faint*: weak // *waxen even*: gone utterly 25 *indeed*: actually
 27 *therefor*: for that 27–28: Romans 8:28. 31 *purpose*: resolve
 248/33–249/1 in . . . *default*: through our own fault

our own default!), mishap to decline—yet had we both won the well-spent time in this good purpose before, to the diminishment of our pain... and were also much the more likely that God should lift us up after our fall, and give us his grace again. Howbeit, if
 5 this persecution come, we be by this meditation and well-continued intent and purpose before, the better strengthened and confirmed, and much the more likely for to stand indeed. And if it so fortune (as with God's grace, at men's good prayers and amendment of our evil lives, it may fortune full well) that the Turks shall either be well withstood
 10 and vanquished... or, peradventure, not invade us at all—then shall we, pardie, by this good purpose get ourselves of God a very good cheap thank.

And on the other side, while we now think thereon (as not to think thereon in so great likelihood thereof... I ween no wise man can), if we
 15 should for the fear of worldly loss, or bodily pain, framed in our own minds... think that we would give over, and to save our goods and our lives... forsake our Savior by denial of his faith—then whether the Turks come or come not... we be gone from God the while. And then if they come not indeed... or come and be driven to flight, what a
 20 shame should this be to us before the face of God: in so shameful, cowardly wise to forsake him for fear of that pain... that we never felt... nor never was falling toward us!

Vincent

By my troth, Uncle, I thank you! Methinketh that though you
 25 never said more in the matter, yet have you even with this that you have of the fear of bodily pain in this persecution spoken here already, marvelously comforted my heart.

Anthony

I am glad, Cousin, if your heart have taken comfort thereby. But and

1 *mishap*: have the misfortune // *decline*: fall away 2, 6, 11 *purpose*: resolve
 3 *pain*: punishment 6 *confirmed*: stabilized 7 *fortune*: turn out
 9 *fortune full well*: very well turn out 11 *pardie*: by George (See note for 47/10.) // *of*: from
 11–12 *good cheap thank*: inexpensive reward 13 *side*: hand 14 *ween*: believe
 16 *give over*: give in; capitulate 22 *falling toward us*: coming our way
 24 *by my troth*: by my word; truly // *though*: even if
 25 *more in*: anything more on // *even*: just 249/29—250/1 *and if*: if
 :

if you so have... give God the thank, and not me; for that work is
 his, and not mine. For neither am I able any good thing to say... but
 by him; nor all the good words in the world—no, not the holy words
 of God himself... and spoken also with his own holy mouth—can be
 5 able to profit the man with the sound entering at his ear... but if the
 Spirit of God therewith inwardly work in his soul. But that is his
 goodness ever ready to do... except the let be through the untowardness
 of our own froward will. 3.18

10 *Of comfort against bodily pain; and first, against
 captivity*

The Eighteenth Chapter

And therefore, now being somewhat in comfort and courage before,
 whereby we may the more quietly consider everything (which is
 somewhat more hard and difficult to do when the heart is before taken
 15 up and oppressed with the troublesome affection of heavy, sorrowful fear),
 let us examine the weight and the substance of those bodily pains
 as the sorest part of this persecution which you rehearsed before—which
 were, if I remember you right, thralldom... imprisonment... painful
 and shameful death. And first let us (as reason is) begin with the thralldom;
 20 for that was, as I remember, the first.

Vincent

I pray you, good Uncle, say, then, somewhat thereof. For methinketh,
 Uncle, that captivity is a marvelously heavy thing, namely when they
 shall (as they most commonly do) carry us far from home into a strange,
 25 uncouth land.

1 *thank*: credit // *work*: doing 5 *but if*: unless 7 *except*: unless // *let*: hindrance
 7 *untowardness*: uncooperativeness 8 *froward*: perverse; contrary
 13 *quietly*: calmly; peacefully 15 *affection*: feeling; emotion // *heavy*: despondent
 17 *as . . . before*: which you mentioned before as being the worst part of this persecution
 18, 19 *thralldom*: enslavement; servitude 19 *as reason is*: as it makes good sense to do
 22 *somewhat thereof*: something about that 23 *marvelously heavy*: terribly distressing
 23 *namely*: especially 24 *strange*: foreign 25 *uncouth*: unfamiliar

Anthony

3.18

I cannot say nay but that grief it is, Cousin, indeed. But yet, as unto
 me, not half so much as it would be if they could carry me out into
 any such unknown country... that God could not wit where, nor find
 5 the means, to come at me. But in good faith, Cousin, now if my transmigration
 into a strange country should be any great grief
 unto me, the fault should be much in myself. For since I am very sure
 that whithersoever men convey me, God is no more verily here than
 he shall be there: if I get (as I may if I will) the grace to set my whole
 10 heart upon him and long for nothing but him, it can then make me
 no great matter to my mind whether they carry me hence or leave me
 here. And then if I find my mind much offended therewith, that I
 am not still in mine own country: I must consider that the cause
 of my grief is mine own wrong imagination... whereby I beguile myself
 15 with an untrue persuasion, weening that *this* were mine own
 country... whereas of truth it is not so. For as Saint Paul saith, “Non
 habemus hic civitatem manentem, sed futuram inquirimus”—“We have here no
 city nor dwelling country at all... but we seek for one that we shall
 come to.” And in what country soever we walk in this world, we
 20 be but as pilgrims and wayfaring men. And if I should take any
 country for mine own... it must be the country to which I come,
 and not the country from which I came.

That country that shall be to me, then, for a while so strange, shall
 yet, pardie, be no more strange to me—nor longer strange to me,
 25 neither—than was mine own native country when I came first
 into it. And therefore if that point, of my being far from hence, be
 very grievous to me, and that I find it a great pain that I am not
 where I would be: that grief shall great part grow for lack of sure
 setting and settling my mind in God, where it should be; which fault
 30 of mine... when I mend, I shall soon ease my grief.

4 *wit*: know 5 *come at*: reach 6 *strange*: foreign 9 *may*: can // *will*: want to
 10–11 *make me no great matter*: be of no great concern 12 *offended*: pained 13 *consider*: realize
 15 *weening*: thinking; supposing 16–19: Hebrews 13:14. 23, 24 *strange*: unfamiliar
 24 *pardie*: certainly 26 *from hence*: away from here 28 *would*: want to
 28 *great part grow for*: in great part come from a

Now, as for all other griefs and pains that are in captivity, thralldom, and bondage—I cannot deny but many there are, and great. Howbeit, they seem yet somewhat—what say I somewhat? I may say *a great deal*—the more because we take our former liberty...

5 for more, a great deal, than indeed it was. Let us, therefore, consider the matter thus.

Captivity, bondage, or thralldom, what is it but the violent restraint of a man... being so subdued, under the dominion, rule, and power of another, that he must do what the other list to command him,
10 and may not do at his liberty such things as he list himself?

Now, when we shall be carried away with a Turk, and be fain to be occupied about such things as he list to set us... here shall we lament the loss of our liberty, and think we bear a heavy burden of our servile condition. And so to do we shall have, I grant well, many times
15 great occasion. But yet should we, I suppose, set thereby somewhat the less... if we would remember well what liberty that was that we lost... and take it for no larger than it was indeed. For we reckon as though we might before do what we would. But therein we deceive ourselves. For what free man is there so free—that can be suffered to do what him
20 list? In many things God hath restrained us by his high commandment; so many that of those things which else we would do... I ween it be more than the half. Howbeit, because (God forgive us!) we let so little therefor... but do what we list as though we heard him not, we reckon our liberty never the less for that.

25 But then is our liberty much restrained by the laws made by men for the quiet and politic governance of the people. And these would, I ween, let our liberty but a little neither... were it not for fear of the pains that fall thereupon.

Look, then, whether other men that have authority over us... command

1, 7 *thralldom*: slavery 3 *what*: why do 5 *than . . . was*: than it actually was
9, 18 *what*: whatever 9, 12 *list*: chooses 10 *he list himself*: he himself wants to do
11 *with*: by // *fain*: forced 15 *great occasion*: very good reason // *should*: would
15–16 *set . . . less*: mind this somewhat less; be somewhat less upset by this 18 *might*: could
18 *would*: wanted // *deceive*: delude 19 *so free*: i.e., who is that free
19–20 *be . . . list*: get away with doing whatever he pleases
21–22 *of . . . do*: i.e., of all those things which we would do if they weren't forbidden by God, I think
more than half are 22–23 *let . . . therefor*: so little let that stop us 23 *what we list*: as we please
24 *never*: not at all 26 *quiet*: peaceful // *politic*: prudent 27 *ween*: suspect // *let*: curb
28 *pains . . . thereupon*: i.e., penalties attached to breaking them

us never no business which we dare not but do... and therefore do
it, full oft, full sore against our wills. Of which things some service is
sometimes so painful, and so perilous, too, that no lord can lightly command
his bondman worse... nor seldom doth command him half

5 so sore.

Let every free man that reckoneth his liberty to stand in doing what
he list, consider well these points... and I ween he shall then find
his liberty much less than he took it for before. And yet have I left untouched
the bondage that almost every man is in that boasteth himself
10 for free: the bondage, I mean, of sin. Which to be a very
bondage... I shall have our Savior himself to bear me good record;
for he saith, “Qui facit peccatum servus est peccati”—“He that committeth
sin is the thrall” (or “bondman”) “of sin.” And then, if this be thus
(as it must needs be so, since God saith it is so), who is there, then, that
15 may make so much boast of his “liberty”... that he should take it for so sore
a thing, and so strange, to become through chance of war... bond
unto a man... while he is already through sin... become willingly thrall
and bond unto the devil?

Let us look well how many things, and of what vile, wretched sort, the
20 devil driveth us to do daily, through the rash braids of our blind
affections... which we be, for our faultful lack of grace, fain to follow,
and are too feeble to refrain; and then shall we find in our natural
“freedom” our bondservice such that never was there any man lord of
any so vile a villein, that ever would for very shame command him
25 so shameful service. And let us in the doing of our service to the
man that we be slave unto... remember what we were wont
to do about the same time of the day, while we were at our free liberty
before, and were well likely, if we were at liberty, to do the like again...
and we shall peradventure perceive... that it were better for us to do this
30 business than that.

Now shall we have great occasion of comfort if we consider that
our servitude, though in the account of the world it seem to come by

2 *full oft*: quite often // *full sore*: quite strongly 3 *perilous*: dangerous // *can lightly*: is likely to
6 *stand*: consist 6–7 *what he list*: as he pleases 7 *ween*: think 8 *yet*: as yet
8 *untouched*: unmentioned 11 *record*: witness 12–13: John 8:34.
15 *may . . . of*: can so glory in; can make such a big deal of // *sore*: terrible
16 *strange*: unfamiliar // *chance*: fallout; outcome 17 *while*: when
20 *braids*: outbursts // *blind*: irrational 21 *affections*: feelings // *for*: on account of
19 *faultful*: culpable 21 *fain*: constrained 22 *refrain*: restrain
24 *vile*: lowly; low-class // *villein*: serf

chance of war, cometh yet in very deed unto us by the provident
send of God... and that for our great good (if we will take it well), both
in remission of sins and also matter of our merit.

3.18

- 5 The greatest grief that is in bondage or captivity is this, as I trow:
that we be forced to do such labor as with our good will we would
not. But then against that grief Seneca teacheth us a good remedy:
“Semper da operam ne quid invitus facias”—“Endeavor thyself evermore
that thou do nothing against thy will. . . . But that thing that we see we
shall needs do... let us use always... to put our good will thereto.”

10 Vincent

That is, Uncle, soon said... but it is hard to do.

Anthony

- Our froward mind maketh every good thing hard; and that to our
own more hurt and harm. But in this case, if we will be good Christian
15 men, we shall have great cause gladly to be content, for the great
comfort that we take thereby... while we remember that in the
patient and glad doing of our service unto that man for God’s sake,
according to his high commandment by the mouth of Saint Paul,
“Servi, obedite dominis . . .”—we shall have our thank and our reward of God.
20 Finally, if we remember the great humble meekness of our
Savior Christ himself—that he, being very Almighty God, “humiliavit
semet ipsum formam servi accipiens” (“humbled himself and took the form
of a bondman,” or “slave”) rather than his Father should forsake us—we
may think ourselves very unkind caitiffs, and very frantic fools, too,
25 if rather than to endure this worldly bondage for a while, we would
forsake him... that hath by his own death delivered us out of everlasting
bondage of the devil, and will for our short bondage give us everlasting
liberty.

1 *chance*: outcome 4 *trow*: imagine 5–6 *with . . . not*: we would not do voluntarily
6–9: Seneca, *Letter 61* (to Lucilius): 2–3. 9 *use always*: always make it our practice
11 *soon*: easily 13 *froward mind*: rebellious disposition 16 *while*: when
19 “Servi . . . dominis”: “Servants, obey your masters”; see Ephesians 6:5–8.
19 *thank*: credit // *of*: from 21–23: Philippians 2:6–8. 24 *unkind caitiffs*: ungrateful wretches
24 *frantic*: crazy

Vincent

3.19

Well fare you, good Uncle; this is very well said. Albeit that bondage is a condition that every man of any courage would be glad to eschew and very loath to fall in... yet have you well made it open that it is a thing
 5 neither so strange nor so sore as it before seemed unto me—and especially far from such as any man that any wit hath should for fear thereof shrink from the confession of his faith. And now, therefore, I pray you somewhat speak of your imprisonment.

Of imprisonment, and comfort thereagainst

10 The Nineteenth Chapter

Anthony

That shall I, Cousin, with good will. And first, if we would consider what thing imprisonment is of its own nature... we should not, methinketh, have so great horror thereof. For of itself it is, pardie, but
 15 a restraint of liberty which letteth a man from going whither he would.

Vincent

Yes—by Saint Mary, Uncle!—methinketh it is *much* more sorrow than so! For besides the let and restraint of liberty, it hath many
 20 more displeasures, and very sore griefs, knit and joined thereto!

Anthony

That is, Cousin, very true indeed; and those pains, among many sorer than those, thought I not after to forget. Howbeit, I purpose now to consider first imprisonment... but as imprisonment only;
 25 without any other incommodity besides. For a man may be,

3 *condition*: circumstance; situation // *of any courage*: with any spirit 4 *in*: into
 4 *open*: evident 5 *strange*: unfamiliar 5, 20 *sore*: terrible 6 *wit*: sense
 8 *pray* . . . *imprisonment*: ask you to say something about your take on imprisonment
 9 *thereagainst*: regarding it 12 *with good will*: quite willingly 14 *pardie*: indeed
 15 *letteth*: keeps // *whither*: where 16 *would*: wants to
 18–19 *more* . . . *so*: more of a suffering than that 19 *let*: obstruction
 20 *displeasures*: unpleasant things 23 *sorer*: worse
 23 *thought* . . . *forget*: I wasn't planning to leave out mention of later on
 25 *incommodity*: discomfort

pardie, imprisoned, and yet not set in the stocks, nor collared fast by the neck; and a man may be let walk at large where he will, and yet a pair of fetters fast riveted on his legs; for in this country (ye wot well), and in Seville and Portugal too, so go all the slaves.

3.19

5 Howbeit, because that for such things men's hearts have such horror thereof; albeit that I am not so mad as to go about to prove that bodily pain were no pain... yet since that because of these manner of pains, we so specially abhor the state and condition of prisoners: We should, methinketh, well perceive... that a great part of
10 our horror groweth of our own fantasy, if we would call to mind and consider the state and condition of many other folk... in whose state and condition we would wish ourselves to stand... taking them for no prisoners at all, that stand yet, for all that, in much part of the selfsame points that we abhor imprisonment for. Let us, therefore, consider
15 these things in order.

 And first, as I thought to begin, because those other kinds of griefs that come *with* imprisonment are but accidents thereunto—and yet neither such kinds of accidents as either be proper thereunto, but that they may, almost all, fall unto a man without it... nor are not
20 such accidents thereunto as are inseparable therefrom, but that imprisonment may fall to a man and none of all them therewith—we will, I say, therefore begin with the considering what manner pain or incommodity we should reckon imprisonment to be of itself and of its own nature alone. And then, in the course of our communication,
25 you shall, as you list, increase and aggrieve the cause of your horror with the terror of those painful accidents.

Vincent

 I am sorry that I did interrupt your tale. For you were about, I see well, to take an orderly way therein. And as yourself have devised,
30 so I beseech you proceed. For though I reckon imprisonment much the sorer thing by sore and hard handling therein... yet reckon I not the

1 *pardie*: indeed 2 *let*: allowed to 5 *that for*: on account of
6 *thereof*: i.e., of imprisonment // *go about*: attempt 9 *should*: would
10 *groweth of our own fantasy*: comes from our own imagination
13 *in much part of*: to a great extent in 14 *points*: circumstances
17, 18, 26 *accidents*: adjuncts 18 *proper thereunto*: exclusive to it 19, 21 *fall*: happen
23 *incommodity*: discomfort 24 *communication*: conversation 25 *list*: wish to
25 *increase . . . of*: augment and strengthen the case for 28 *tale*: discourse
30 *much*: i.e., to be made 31 *sorer*: worse // *sore . . . handling*: bad and rough treatment

imprisonment of itself any less than a thing very tedious... all were 3.19
 it used in the most favorable manner that it possibly might. For, Uncle,
 if it were a great prince that were taken prisoner upon the field, and
 in the hand of a Christian king, which use in such case (for the consideration
 5 of their former estate... and mutable chance of the war)
 to show much humanity to them and in very favorable wise treat
 them—for these infidel emperors handle, oftentimes, the princes that
 they take, more villainously than they do the poorest men; as the great
 Tamburlaine kept the great Turk, when he had taken him, to tread
 10 on his back always while he leapt on horseback. But as I began to
 say by the example of a prince taken prisoner: Were the imprisonment
 never so favorable... yet were it in my mind no little grief in itself
 for a man to be penned up, though not in a narrow chamber; but
 although his walk were right large—and right fair gardens too, therein—
 15 it could not but grieve his heart to be restrained by another man
 within certain limits and bounds, and lose the liberty to be where
 him list.

Anthony

20 This is, Cousin, well considered of you. For in this you perceive well
 that imprisonment is of itself, and its own very nature alone,
 nothing else but the retaining of a man's person within the circuit
 of a certain space, narrower or larger, as shall be limited unto him,
 restraining his liberty from the further going into any other place.

Vincent

25 Very well said, as me thinketh.

Anthony

Yet forgot I, Cousin, to ask you one question.

1 *tedious*: irksome 1–2 *all were it*: even if it were 2 *used*: carried out // *might*: could be
 3 *field*: battlefield 4 *which*: who (referring to Christian kings) // *use*: are wont
 5 *their*: i.e., that of the great princes taken on the battlefield // *estate*: (high) position
 5 *mutable* . . . *war*: the fact that the way the war is going could change 8 *villainously*: degradingly
 10 *always while*: whenever 12 *never so*: no matter how 13 *although*: even if
 14 *his walk*: the space that he could walk in 16–17 *where him list*: wherever he pleases
 19 *well* . . . *of*: well thought out by 22 *limited*: assigned

Vincent

3.19

What is that, Uncle?

Anthony

5 This, lo: if there be two men kept in two separate chambers of one
great castle... of which two chambers, the one is much more large
than the other... whether be they prisoners both, or but the one that
hath the less room to walk in.

Vincent

10 What question is it, Uncle, but that they be prisoners both... as I
said myself before... although the one lay fast locked in the stocks,
and the other had all the whole castle to walk in.

Anthony

15 Methinketh verily, Cousin, that you say the truth. And then if
imprisonment be such a thing as yourself here agree it is—that is to
wit, but a lack of liberty to go if we list—now would I fain wit of you...
what any one man you know that is at this day out of prison.

Vincent

What *one* man, Uncle? Marry, I know almost none other! For surely
prisoner am I none acquainted with, that I remember.

20

Anthony

Then I see well you visit poor prisoners seldom.

Vincent

25 No, by my troth, Uncle—I cry God mercy—I send them sometimes
mine alms... but, by my troth, I love not to come myself where
I should see such misery.

10 *although*: even if // *fast*: securely 13 *you say the truth*: what you say is true
15 *go if we list*: leave if we want to // *fain wit of*: like to know from
18 *marry*: goodness; good heavens 23, 24 *by my troth*: truth to tell // *cry God*: beg God for
24 *love not*: don't like

Anthony

3.19

In good faith, Cousin Vincent, though I say it before you... you have many good conditions; but surely, though I say it before you too, *that* condition is none of them. Which condition if you would amend,
 5 then should you have yet the more good conditions by one... and peradventure the more by three or four. For I assure you, it is hard to tell how much good to a man's soul the personal visiting to poor prisoners doth.

But, now, since you can name me none of them that are in prison... I
 10 pray you name some one of all them that you be, as you say, better acquainted with: men, I mean, that are out of prison. For I know, methinketh, as few of them as you know of the others.

Vincent

That were, Uncle, a strange case! For every man is, Uncle, out of
 15 prison, that may go where he will—though he be the poorest beggar in the town. And in good faith, Uncle (because you reckon imprisonment so small a matter of itself), the poor beggar... that is at his liberty, and may walk where he will, is, as me seemeth, in better case than is a king kept in prison, that cannot go but where men give him leave.

20 Anthony

Well, Cousin, whether every way-walking beggar be by this reason out of prison or no... we shall consider further when ye will. But in the meanwhile... I can by this reason see no prince that seemeth to be out of prison. For if the lack of liberty to go where a man will,
 25 be imprisonment... as yourself say it is... then is the great Turk, by whom we so fear to be put in prison, in prison already himself; for he may not go where he will. For and he might, he would into Portugal... Italy... Spain... France... Almaine and England... and as far on another quarter, too—both Prester John's land and the Great Khan's too.

2, 3 *though I say it before you*: even if I say it in front of you 3 *conditions*: qualities
 4 *none*: not one 10 *pray you*: ask you to 14 *were*: would be // *case*: thing
 18 *in better case*: in a better situation; better off 19 *kept*: i.e., who is 21 *way-walking*: vagrant
 23 *reason*: reasoning 27 *where he will*: wherever he wants to // *and he might*: if he could
 27 *would*: would go 28 *Almaine*: Germany 29 *quarter*: part of the globe
 29 *Prester John's land*: A legendary place, in More's day generally identified with Ethiopia; hence, countries in Africa. // *Great Khan's*: i.e., China

Now, the beggar that you speak of—if he be, as you say he is, by reason of his liberty to go where he will... in much better case than a king kept in prison, because *he* cannot go but where men give him leave—then is that beggar in better case not only than a prince in prison... but also than many a prince out of prison, too. For I am sure there is many a beggar that may without let walk further upon other men's ground than many a prince at his best liberty may walk upon his own. And as for walking out abroad upon other men's, that prince might hap to be said nay, and held fast, where that beggar with his bag and his staff should be suffered to go forth and hold on his way. But forasmuch, Cousin, as neither the beggar nor the prince is at free liberty to walk where they will... but that if they would walk in some place, neither of them both should be suffered, but men would withstand them and say them nay: therefore, if imprisonment be (as you grant it is) a lack of liberty to go where we list... I cannot see but, as I say, the beggar and the prince whom you reckon both at liberty, be, by your own reason, restrained in prison, both.

Vincent

Yea; but Uncle, both the one and the other have way enough to walk—the one in his own ground, the other in other men's or in the common highway—where they may walk till they be both weary of walking ere any man say them nay.

Anthony

So may, Cousin, that king that had, as yourself put the case, all the whole castle to walk in. And yet you say not nay but that he is prisoner, for all that; though not so straitly kept... yet as verily prisoner as he that lieth in the stocks.

Vincent

But *they* may go, at the leastwise, to every place that they need, or

2, 4 *in (much) better case*: in a (much) better situation; (much) better off 6, 7 *may*: can
 6 *let*: obstruction; hindrance 9 *said nay*: said no to; denied permission 10, 13 *suffered*: allowed (to)
 13 *would*: wanted to 15 *where we list*: wherever we please
 17 *by your own reason*: according to your own reasoning 20 *in*: on
 26 *so straitly kept*: as tightly kept; kept in as close quarters

that is commodious for them; and therefore they do not will to go but where they may go. And therefore be they at liberty to go where they will.

3.19

Anthony

- 5 Me needeth not, Cousin, to spend the time about the impugning every part of this answer. For letting pass by... that though a prisoner were with his keeper brought into every place where need required... yet since he might not when he would, go where he would for his only *pleasure*... he were, ye wot well, a prisoner still; and letting
- 10 pass over also this... that it were to this beggar need, and to this king commodious, to go into divers places where neither of them both may come; and letting pass also that neither of them both is lightly so temperately determined... but that they both fain so would do indeed: if this reason of yours put them out of prison... and set
- 15 them at liberty and make them free (as I will grant it doth)... if they so do indeed (that is to wit, if they have no will to go but where they may go indeed), then let us look on our other prisoners enclosed within a castle... and we shall find that the straitest kept of them both... if he get the wisdom and the grace to quiet his own
- 20 mind, and hold himself content with that place... and long not, like a woman with child, for her lusts, to be gadding out anywhere else... is by the same reason of yours, while his will is not longing to be anywhere else—he is, I say, at his free liberty to be where he will... and so is out of prison too.
- 25 And, on the other side, if, though his will be not longing to be anywhere else, yet because that if his will so *were* he should not so be *suffered*... he is therefore not at his free liberty, but a prisoner still: so, since your free beggar that you speak of and the prince that you call out of
- 30 prison too... though they be (which I ween very few be) by some special wisdom so temperately disposed that they have not the will to be but where they see they may be suffered to be... yet since that if they *would* have that will, they could not then be where they would—they lack the effect of free liberty... and be, both twain, in prison too.

1, 11 *commodious*: beneficial 1, 3 *will*: want (to) 5 *impugning*: assailing as erroneous
 8 *might*: could // *when*: whenever // *would*: wanted to // *where*: wherever 11 *divers*: several
 13 *lightly*: likely to be // *determined*: disposed 13–14 *fain so would do*: would like so to do
 14, 22 *reason*: reasoning; argument 17 *on*: at 18 *straitest*: most tightly 21 *lusts*: cravings
 22 *while*: since 23 *will*: wants (to be) 27, 31 *suffered*: allowed 29 *ween*: suppose
 30, 32 *will*: wish; desire

Vincent

3.19

Well, Uncle, if every man, universally, be by this reason in prison already, after the very propriety of imprisonment—yet to be imprisoned in this special manner which manner is, only, commonly *called*
 5 imprisonment... *is* a thing of *great* horror and fear, both for the straitness of the keeping and the hard handling that many men have therein; of all which griefs and pains and displeasures, in this other, general imprisonment that you speak of we feel nothing at all. And therefore every man abhorreth the one, and would be loath to come into
 10 it; and no man abhorreth the other, for they feel no harm, nor find no fault, therein. Wherefore, Uncle, in good faith, though I cannot find answers convenient wherewith to avoid your arguments... yet to be plain with you and tell you the very truth, my mind findeth not itself satisfied in this point... but that ever methinketh that these
 15 things wherewith you rather convince and conclude me than induce a credence and persuade me, that every man is in prison already, be but sophistic fantasies... and that except those that are commonly *called* prisoners, other men are not in any prison at all.

Anthony

20 Well fare thy heart, good Cousin Vincent! There was, in good faith, no word that you spoke since we talked of these matters, that half so well liked me as this that you speak now! For if you had assented in words... and in your mind departed unpersuaded, then if the thing be true that I say... yet had you lost the fruit; and if it be, peradventure,
 25 false, and myself deceived therein... then, while I should ween that it liked you too, you should have confirmed me in my folly. For in good faith, Cousin, such an old fool am I, that this thing in the persuading whereof unto you I had went I had acquitted me well... and, when I have all done, appeareth to your mind but a trifle and a “sophistic
 30 fantasy”—myself have so many years taken for so very substantial

3 *after*: according to // *propriety*: nature 6 *straitness*: tightness; constrictedness
 6 *hard handling*: rough treatment 12 *convenient*: appropriate; suitable // *avoid*: refute
 15 *convince*: force me to admit // *me*: for me 17 *fantasies*: speculations
 22, 25 *liked*: pleased 25 *deceived*: mistaken // *while*: when // *ween*: think
 28 *went*: thought

- truth... that as yet, my mind cannot give me to think it any
 other. Wherefore, lest I play as the French priest played, that had so long
 used to say “Dominus” with the second syllable long... that at last he
 thought it must needs be so... and was ashamed to say it short—to the intent
 5 you may the better perceive me... or I the better myself... we shall
 here between us a little more consider the thing. And hardly spit well
 on your hands and take good hold, and give it not over against your
 own mind. For then were we never the nearer.

Vincent

- 10 Nay, by my troth, Uncle, that I intend not; nor nothing did yet,
 since we began. And that may you well perceive by some things which
 without any great cause... save for the further satisfaction of mine
 own mind, I repeated and debated again.

Anthony

- 15 That guise, Cousin, hold on hardily still! For in this matter I purpose
 to give over my part... except I make yourself perceive... both
 that every man, universally, is a very prisoner in very prison plainly—
 without any sophistication at all—and that there is also no prince
 living upon earth but he is in worse case prisoner by this general
 20 imprisonment that I speak of... than is many a lewd, simple wretch by
 that special imprisonment that you speak of. And, over this, that in
 this general imprisonment that I speak of, men are, for the time that
 they be therein, so sore handled, and so hardly, and in such painful
 wise, that men’s hearts have with reason great cause as sore to abhor
 25 the hard handling that is in this imprisonment, as the other that is
 in that.

Vincent

By my troth, Uncle—these things would I fain see well
 proved!

8 *were . . . nearer*: would we have gotten nowhere 10 *nothing*: not at all
 15 *guise*: habit; practice // *hold on hardily*: by all means keep up // *purpose*: intend
 16 *give over my part*: give up my side of the dispute; i.e., admit defeat // *except*: unless
 18 *sophistication*: sophism; specious reasoning 20 *lewd*: low-class // *simple*: common
 23 *so sore handled*: treated so severely // *hardly*: roughly 24 *sore*: intensely
 25 *hard handling*: rough treatment

Anthony

3.19

Tell me, then, Cousin, first, by your troth: if there were a man
 attainted of treason or felony, and after, judgment given of his death;
 and that it were determined that he should die... only the time of his
 5 execution delayed till the king's further pleasure known... and he thereupon
 delivered to certain keepers, and put up in a sure place, out of
 which he could not escape—were this man a prisoner, or no?

Vincent

10 *This* man, quoth he? Yea, marry, that he were in very deed, if ever any
 man were!

Anthony

But, now, what if for the time that were mean between his
 attainder and his execution, he were so favorably handled that he were
 suffered to do what he would as he was while he was abroad... and to have
 15 the use of his lands and his goods, and his wife and his children license
 to be with him... and his friends leave at liberty to resort unto him...
 and his servants not forbidden to bide about him; and add yet
 thereunto that the place were a great castle royal... with parks, and
 other pleasures therein, a very great circuit about; yea, add yet, and ye
 20 will, that he were suffered to go and ride also... both when he would and
 whither he would... only this one point always provided and foreseen:
 that he should ever be surely seen to and safely kept from escaping; so that
 took he never so much, of his own mind, in the meanwhile, all other
 ways save escaping... yet he well knew that escape he could not... and that
 25 when he were called for... to death and execution he should. Now, Cousin
 Vincent, what would you call this man? A prisoner, because he is kept
 for execution? Or no prisoner, because he is in the meanwhile so
 favorably handled, and suffered to do all that he would save escape? And
 I bid you not here be hasty in your answer... but advise it well,

3 *attainted*: convicted // *felony*: treachery // *after*: afterward // *judgment*: sentence // *of*: regarding
 6 *delivered*: handed over // *sure*: secure 7 *were this man*: would this man be
 9 *marry*: of course 12 *mean*: intermediate; intervening 13 *attainder*: conviction
 14 *abroad*: on the outside 16 *leave*: permission // *resort unto*: come visit
 19–20 *and ye will*: if you like 20, 28 *suffered*: allowed 20 *when*: whenever
 20, 21 *would*: wanted 21 *whither*: to wherever 23 *mind*: volition 25 *should*: would go
 28 *handled*: treated 29 *advise*: consider

that you grant no such thing in haste as you would after mislike by
leisure, and think yourself deceived.

3.19

Vincent

- 5 Nay, by my troth, Uncle, this thing needeth no study at all, in my
mind; but that, for all this favor showed him... and all this
liberty lent him, yet being condemned to death... and being kept
therefor... and kept with such sure watch laid upon him that he cannot
escape—he is all that while a very plain prisoner still.

Anthony

- 10 In good faith, Cousin, methinketh you say very true. But then one
thing must I yet desire you, Cousin, to tell me a little further. If there
were another laid in prison for a fray... and, through the jailer's displeasure,
were bolted and fettered and laid in a low dungeon, in the
stocks, where he might hap to lie, peradventure, for a while, and
15 abide in the mean season some pain, but no danger of death at all...
but that out again he should come well enough: whither of these two
prisoners stood in worse case—he that hath all this favor, or he that
is thus hardly handled?

Vincent

- 20 By our Lady, Uncle, I ween the most part of men, if they should needs
choose, had liefer be such prisoners in every point as he that so sorely
lieth in the stocks... than in every point such as he that at such liberty
walketh about the park.

Anthony

- 25 Consider then, Cousin, whether this thing seem any sophistry to
you that I shall show you now; for it shall be such as seemeth, in good

2 *deceived*: gotten the better of by trickery 5 *mind*: opinion 11 *desire*: ask
12 *fray*: fight; brawl 13 *bolted*: shackled 15 *abide*: endure; sustain
15 *mean season*: meantime 16 *whither*: which
17 *stood in worse case*: would be in the worse situation
18 *is thus hardly handled*: is getting all this rough treatment 20 *ween*: think // *most part*: majority
21 *had liefer*: would rather // *point*: aspect 26 *show*: say to
265/26—266/1 *in good faith*: in all honesty

faith, substantially true to me. And if it so happen that you think
 otherwise... I will be very glad to perceive which of us both is beguiled.
 For it seemeth to me, Cousin, first, that every man coming into this
 world here upon earth, as he is created by God... so cometh he
 5 hither by the providence of God. Is this any sophistry, first, or not?

Vincent

Nay, verily; this is very substantial truth.

Anthony

Now take I this also for very truth in my mind: that there cometh
 10 no man nor woman hither into the earth... but that ere ever
 they come quick into the world out of the mother's womb... God condemneth
 them unto death by his own sentence and judgment,
 for the original sin that they bring with them—contracted in the
 corrupted stock of our forefather Adam. Is this, Cousin, think you,
 15 verily thus, or not?

Vincent

This is, Uncle, very true indeed.

Anthony

Then seemeth *this* true, further, unto me: that God hath put every
 20 man here upon earth... under so sure, and under so safe, keeping... that of
 all the whole people living in this wide world... there is neither
 man, woman, nor child, would they never so fain wander about and
 seek it, that possibly can find any way whereby they may escape from
 death. Is this, Cousin, a fond, imagined fantasy, or is it very truth
 25 indeed?

1, 7 *substantial(ly)*: solid(ly) 11 *quick*: alive 20 *sure*: secure

21 *all the whole people*: the whole entire population

22 *would they never so fain*: no matter how eagerly they might 24 *fond*: foolish // *fantasy*: notion

Vincent

3.19

Nay, this is none imagination, Uncle... but a thing so clearly proved true that no man is so mad to say nay.

Anthony

5 Then need I no more, Cousin; for then is all the matter plain and
open, evident truth... which I said I took for truth. Which is yet more
a little now than I told you before, when you took my proof yet but for
a “sophistic fantasy” and said that for all my reasoning that every man
is a prisoner, yet you thought that except these whom the common
10 people call prisoners, there is else no man a very prisoner indeed.
And now you grant yourself again, for very substantial, open
truth, that every man is here (though he be the greatest king upon
earth) *set* here, by the ordinance of God, in a place, be it never so
large—a place, I say, yet (and you say the same) out of which no man
15 can escape... but that therein is every man put under sure and safe keeping
to be readily fetched forth when God calleth for him, and that then he
shall surely die. And is not then, Cousin, by your own granting before,
every man a very prisoner... when he is put in a place to be
kept to be brought forth... when he would not, and himself wot not
20 whither?

Vincent

Yes, in good faith, Uncle, I cannot but well perceive this to be so.

Anthony

25 This were, you wot well, true although a man should be but taken by
the arm and in fair manner led out of this world unto his judgment.
But, now, while we well know that there is no king so great but that
all the while he walketh here... walk he never so loose... ride he with

3 *to say nay*: as to deny it 5 *all the matter*: the whole thing 8 *fantasy*: speculation
11 *substantial*: solid // *open*: evident 13, 27 *never so*: no matter how
19 *would not*: does not want to be 20 *whither*: to where 22 *in good faith*: in all honesty
24 *were*: would be // *although*: even if 25 *fair manner*: a nice way 26 *while*: when
27 *loose*: freely

never so strong an army for his defense... yet himself is very sure...
 though he seek in the mean season some other pastime to put it out
 of his mind...yet is he very sure, I say, that escape he cannot; and very
 well he knoweth that he hath already sentence given upon him to
 5 die... and that verily die he shall... and that himself, though he hope
 upon long respite of his execution—yet can he not tell how soon. And
 therefore, but if he be a fool, he can never be without fear that either
 on the morrow or on the selfsame day, the grisly, cruel hangman
 Death, which from his first coming in hath ever hovered aloof and looked
 10 toward him, and ever lain in a wait on him, shall amidmong all
 his royalty and all his main strength, neither kneel before him nor
 make him *any* reverence... nor with any good manner desire him to
 come forth... but rigorously and fiercely grip him by the very
 breast, and make all his bones rattle... and so, by long and diverse sore torments,
 15 strike him stark dead in this prison... and then cause his body
 to be cast into the ground in a foul pit within some corner of the
 same, there to rot and be eaten with wretched worms of the earth;
 sending yet his soul out further, unto a more fearful judgment,
 whereof at his temporal death his success is uncertain. And therefore,
 20 though by God's grace not out of good hope... yet, for all that, in the
 meanwhile in very sore dread and fear... and peradventure
 in peril inevitable of eternal fire.

Methinketh therefore, Cousin, that, as I told you, this keeping of every
 man in this wretched world for execution of death, it is a very plain
 25 imprisonment indeed. And that, as I say, such that the greatest king
 is in this prison in much worse case, in all his wealth, than many a
 man is by the other imprisonment, that is therein sore and hardly
 handled. For whereas some of those lie not there attainted nor condemned
 to death... the greatest man of this world, and the most wealthy,
 30 in this universal prison is laid in to be kept undoubtedly for death.

2 *mean season*: meantime 6 *upon long respite*: for a long stay 7 *but if*: unless
 9 *aloof*: at a distance 10 *amidmong*: in the midst of 11 *main strength*: mighty military forces
 12 *reverence*: obeisance // *good manner*: politeness // *desire*: ask 17 *with*: by
 19 *success*: outcome 24 *execution*: carrying out 26 *much worse case*: a much worse situation
 26 *wealth*: prosperity 28 *attainted*: convicted 29 *wealthy*: prosperous; well-off

Vincent

3.19

But yet, Uncle, in that case is the other prisoner too; for he is as sure that he shall die too, pardie.

Anthony

- 5 This is very true, Cousin, indeed; and well objected, too. But then you must consider that he is not in danger of death by *reason* of that prison into which he is put, peradventure, but for a light fray... but his danger of death is by the *other* imprisonment, by which he is prisoner in the great prison of this whole earth; in which prison all
- 10 the princes thereof be prisoners as well as he. If a man condemned to death were put up in a large prison... and while his execution were respited, he were, for fighting with his fellows, put up in a strait place part of the same... he is in danger of death in that prison, but not *by* the being in that—for therein he is but for the fray—but his
- 15 *deadly* imprisonment was the *other*; the larger, I say, into which he was put for death. So, the prisoner that you speak of is besides that narrow prison... a prisoner of the broad world—and all the princes thereof therein prisoners with him. And by *that* imprisonment, both they and he in like danger of death; not by that strait imprisonment that
- 20 is commonly *called* imprisonment, but by that imprisonment... which, because of the large walk, men call liberty. And which prison you therefore thought but a fantasy sophistic to prove it any prison at all. But now may you, methinketh, very plainly perceive that this whole earth... is not only for all the whole kind of man a
- 25 very plain prison indeed... but also that every man without exception—even those that are most at their liberty therein, and reckon themselves great lords and possessors of a very great parcel thereof... and thereby wax with wantonness so forgetful of their own state that

2 *case*: situation 3 *pardie*: by George 5 *objected*: adduced; brought into the argument
 7 *light fray*: minor fight 12 *respited*: stayed 12, 19 *strait*: constricted
 13 *part*: i.e., that was part 17 *broad*: wide 21 *walk*: distance that can be walked
 24 *kind*: species 27 *parcel*: portion 28 *wax*: become // *wantonness*: arrogance

they ween they stand in great wealth—do stand, for all that, indeed, by the reason of that imprisonment in this large prison of the whole earth, in the selfsame condition that others do stand... which in the narrow prisons which only be called prisons, and which only be
 5 reputed prisons in the opinion of the common people, stand in the most fearful and in the most odious case; that is to wit, condemned already to death.

3.20

And now, Cousin, if this thing that I tell you seem but a sophistic
 10 fantasy to your mind... I would be glad to know what moveth you so to think. For in good faith, as I have told you twice, I am no wiser but that I verily ween that the thing is thus of very plain truth, in very deed.

The Twentieth Chapter

Vincent

15 In good faith, Uncle, as for this far forth, I not only can make with any reason no resistance thereagainst, but also see very clearly proved that it can be none otherwise... but that every man is in this world a very prisoner, since we be all put here into a sure hold to be kept till we be put to execution, as folk already condemned, all,
 20 unto death. But yet, Uncle, that strait keeping... collaring... bolting... and stocking... with lying in straw, or on the cold ground... which manner of hard handling is used in these special imprisonments that only be called commonly by that name... must needs make that imprisonment which only beareth among the people that name, much
 25 more odious and dreadful than the general imprisoning wherewith

1, 11 *ween*: think 1 *wealth*: well-being // *indeed*: actually 3 *stand*: i.e., stand in
 4, 23, 24 *only*: alone 6 *case*: situation 20 *strait*: constricted // *bolting*: shackling
 21 *stocking*: putting in the stocks 22 *hard handling*: harsh treatment // *special*: particular

we be, every man universally, imprisoned at large... walking where we will, round about the wide world; in which broad prison, out of those narrow prisons, there is with the prisoners no such hard handling used.

3.20

5

Anthony

I said, I trow, Cousin, that I purposed to prove you further yet, that in this general prison—the large prison, I mean, of this whole world—folk be, for the time that they be therein, as sore handled and as hardly, and wrenched and wrung and broken in such painful wise that our
 10 hearts (save that we consider it not) have with reason good and great cause to grudge against, and (as far forth as pertaineth only to the respect of pain) as much horror to conceive against, the hard handling that is in this prison, as the other that is in that.

Vincent

15

Indeed, Uncle, truth it is that this you said you would prove.

Anthony

Nay, so much said I not, Cousin; but I said I would if I *could*—and if I could not... then would I therein give over my part. But that trust I, Cousin, I shall not need to do, the thing seemeth me so plain. For,
 20 Cousin, not only the *prince* and *king*... but also, though he hath both angels and devils that are jailers under him, yet the chief *jailer* over this whole broad prison the world... is, as I take it, God. And that, I suppose, ye will grant me too.

Vincent

25

That will I not, Uncle, deny.

2 *out*: outside 6 *trow*: believe 9 *wrung*: squeezed 10 *consider it not*: don't think about it
 11 *grudge*: complain 11, 12, *against*: about
 18 *give over my part*: give up my side of the dispute; i.e., admit defeat 19 *plain*: evident

Anthony

3.20

If a man be, Cousin, committed to prison for no cause but to be kept:
 though there be never so great charge upon him, yet his keeper, if
 he be good and honest, is neither so cruel that would pain the man
 5 of malice... nor so covetous that would put him to pain to make him
 seek his friends to pay for a pennyworth of ease. Else, if the
 place be such that he be sure to keep him safe otherwise... or that he
 can get surety for the recompense of more harm than he seeth he
 should have if he escaped, he will never handle him in any such hard
 10 fashion as we most abhor imprisonment for. But marry, if the place
 be such as the keeper cannot otherwise be sure—then is he compelled
 to keep him after the rate the straiter.

And also, if the prisoner be unruly and fall to fighting with his
 fellows, or do some other manner of shrewd turns—then useth the
 15 keeper to punish him sundry wise, in some of such fashions as yourself
 have spoken of.

So is it now, Cousin, that God—the chief jailer, as I say, of this
 broad prison the world—is neither cruel nor covetous. And this
 prison is also so sure, and so subtly built, that albeit that it lieth open
 20 on every side, without any wall in the world—yet, wander we never
 so far about therein, the way to get out at... shall we never find;
 so that he needeth not to collar us, nor to stock us, for any fear of escaping
 away. And therefore... except he see some other cause than our
 only keeping for death, he letteth us in the meanwhile (for as long as
 25 he list to respite us) walk about in the prison, and do therein what we will,
 using ourselves in such wise... as he hath, by reason and revelation, from
 time to time told us his pleasure.

And hereof it cometh, lo... that by reason of this favor for a time,
 we wax (as I said) so *wanton* that we forget where we be—weening

3 *never* . . . *him*: no matter how serious a charge made against him 4 *honest*: honorable

4–5 *that* . . . *malice*: that he would inflict pain on the man out of malice 5 *that would*: that he would

6 *seek*: try to get // *friends*: loved ones // *ease*: relief 8 *surety*: a pledge or bond

10 *marry*: indeed 12 *after the rate*: commensurately; correspondingly

12 *the straiter*: under the tighter security 14 *fellows*: fellow inmates

14 *shrewd turns*: malicious deeds 14–15 *useth the keeper*: the keeper is wont

19 *sure*: secure // *subtly*: cleverly 22 *stock us*: put us in the stocks

25 *list to respite us*: cares to prolong our stay of execution

29 *wax*: become // *wanton*: arrogant // *weening*: thinking

that we were lords at large... whereas we be indeed, if we would consider
 it, even seely, poor wretches in prison. For of very truth, our
 very prison this earth is. And yet thereof we cant us out—part by covenants
 that we make among us... and part by fraud, and part
 5 by violence, too—diverse parts diversely to ourselves... and change the
 name thereof... from the odious name of prison, and call it our own land
 and our livelihood.

Upon our prison we build our prison; we garnish it with gold and
 make it glorious. In this prison they buy and sell; in this prison they
 10 brawl and chide; in this they run together and fight; in this they dice;
 in this they card. In this they pipe and revel. In this they sing and
 dance. And in this prison many a man reputed right honest letteth
 not for his pleasure in the dark privily to play the knave.

And thus, while God, our king and our chief jailer too, suffereth us
 15 and letteth us alone... we ween ourselves at liberty... and we abhor the
 state of those whom we call prisoners, taking ourselves for no prisoners
 at all.

In which false persuasion of wealth, and forgetfulness of our own
 wretched state (which is but a wandering about for a while in this
 20 prison of the world, till we be brought unto the execution of death),
 where we forget, with our folly, both ourselves and our jail, and our underjailers,
 angels and devils both, and our chief jailer, God, too—*God*,
 that forgetteth not us, but seeth us all the while well enough! And being
 sore discontent, too, to see so shrewd rule kept in the jail: besides that
 25 he sendeth the hangman Death to put to execution here and there, sometimes,
 by the thousands at once... he handleth many of the remnant...
 whose execution he forbearth yet unto a further time... even

2, 27 *even*: just 2 *seely, poor*: poor, pitiful 3 *cant*: parcel; apportion // *covenants*: pacts; contracts
 9 *glorious*: grandiosely beautiful 10 *chide*: wrangle; quarrel loudly
 12 *reputed*: i.e., reputed to be // *honest*: honorable // *letteth*: forbears 14 *suffereth*: tolerates
 15 *ween*: think; consider 18 *wealth*: well-being 24 *sore discontent*: extremely vexed
 24 *so shrewd rule*: such bad order 26 *remnant*: rest 27 *even*: just

as hardly, and punisheth them as sore, in this common prison of the world, as there are any handled in those special prisons which for the hard handling used (you say) therein, your heart hath in such horror and so sore abhorreth.

3.20

5

Vincent

The remnant will I not gainsay; for methinketh I see it so indeed. But that God, our chief jailer in this world, useth any such prisonly fashion of punishment—that point must I needs deny. For I neither see him lay any man in the stocks or strike fetters on his legs—or so much as shut him up in a chamber, either.

10

Anthony

Is he no minstrel, Cousin, that playeth not on a harp? Maketh no man melody but he that playeth on a lute? He may be a minstrel and make melody, you wot well, with some other instrument, some strange-fashioned, peradventure, that never was seen before. God, our chief jailer, as himself is invisible... so useth he in his punishments invisible instruments... and therefore not of like *fashion* as the other jailers do—but yet of like effect, and as painful in feeling, as those. For he layeth one of his prisoners, with a hot fever, as evil at his ease in a warm bed... as the other jailer layeth his on the cold ground. He wringeth them by the brows with a migraine; he collareth them by the neck with a quinsy; he bolteth them by the arms with a palsy, that they cannot lift their hands to their head. He manacleth their hands with the gout in their fingers; he wringeth them by the legs with the cramp in their shins; he bindeth

15

20

25

1 *hardly*: roughly // *sore*: severely 2 *special*: particular // *for*: on account of

3 *hath*: holds 6 *remnant*: rest // *gainsay*: deny

15–16 *some strange-fashioned*: some unusually fashioned one 20 *evil*: ill

22, 25 *wringeth*: squeezes 23 *a quinsy*: an abscess in the tissue surrounding a tonsil

23 *bolteth*: shackles 24 *palsy*: paralysis // *that*: such that

them to the bed board with the crick in the back... and layeth one there along, and as unable to rise as though he lay by the feet fast in the stocks.

3.20

- Some prisoner of another jail singeth and danceth in his
 5 fetters, and feareth not his feet for stumbling at a stone... while God's
 prisoner that hath his one foot fettered with the gout lieth groaning...
 on a couch... and quaketh and crieth out if he fear there would fall on
 his foot no more but a cushion. And therefore, Cousin, as I said, if
 we consider it well... we shall find this general prison of this whole
 10 earth a place in which the prisoners be as sore handled as
 they be in the other. And even in the other... some make as merry,
 too, as there do some in this that are very merry at large out of that.
- And surely, like as we ween ourselves out of prison now... so if there
 were some folk born and brought up in a prison... that never came on
 15 the wall... nor looked out at the door... nor never heard of other world
 abroad... but saw some, for their shrewd turns done among themselves,
 locked up in some straiter room, and heard them only called prisoners
 that were so served... and themselves ever called free folk at large—the
 like opinion would they have there of themselves then that we have
 20 here of ourselves now. And when we take ourselves for other than
 prisoners now—as verily be we now deceived as those prisoners should
 there be then.

Vincent

- I cannot, Uncle, in good faith say nay but that you have performed
 25 all that you have promised. But yet, since that, for all this, there appeareth
 no more... but that as they be prisoners, so be we too... and that as
 some of them be sore handled, so be some of us too; since we wot well,
 for all this, that when we come to *those* prisons, we shall not fail to be
 in a *straiter* prison than we be now, and to have a door shut upon us

2 *along*: at full length 5 *feareth . . . at*: doesn't fear for his feet if he stubs them on
 14 *on*: upon 16 *abroad*: out there; on the outside // *shrewd turns*: malicious deeds
 17 *straiter room*: smaller space // *heard . . . prisoners*: heard called prisoners only those
 18 *served*: treated; done to 21 *deceived*: mistaken; in error 24 *in good faith*: in all honesty

where we have none shut on us now—*this* shall we be sure of at the leastwise, if there come no worse. And then *may* there come worse, ye wot well; it cometh there so commonly. Wherefore, for all this, it is yet little marvel though men's hearts grudge much thereagainst.

3.20

5

Anthony

- Surely, Cousin, in this you say very well. Howbeit, somewhat had your words touched me the nearer... if I had said that imprisonment were no displeasure at all. But the thing that I say, Cousin, for our comfort therein, is that our fantasy frameth us a false opinion by
 10 which we deceive ourselves and take it for sorer than it is.
 And that do we by the reason that we take ourselves before for more free than we be, and imprisonment for a stranger thing to us than it is indeed. And thus far forth... as I *said*, have I proved very truth indeed. But, now, the incommodities that you repeat again—those, I say, that are
 15 proper to imprisonment of their own nature... that is to wit, to have less room to walk in, and to have the door shut upon us—these are, methinketh, so very slender and slight... that in so great a cause... as to suffer for God's sake... we might be sore ashamed so much as once to think upon them.
- 20 Many a good man there is, you wot well, which without any force at all... or *any* necessity wherefore he should so do, suffereth these two things willingly, of his own choice, with much other hardness more—holy monks, I mean, of the Charterhouse Order... such as never pass their cells... but only to the church set fast by their cells... and thence to
 25 their cells again; and Saint Bridget's order... and Saint Clare's, much like; and in a manner all close religious houses. And yet anchorites and anchoresses most especially—all whose whole room is less than a meetly large chamber. And yet are they there as well content many long

4 *marvel*: wonder // *though*: that // *grudge*: grumble

6–7 *somewhat* . . . *nearer*: your words would have hurt my argument somewhat more

9 *fantasy*: imagination 10 *sorer*: worse 12 *stranger*: more foreign; less familiar

14 *incommodities*: disadvantages; discomforts 17 *slender*: insignificant

22 *willingly*: voluntarily 23 *Charterhouse Order*: the Carthusians

24 *fast*: right 24–25 *thence* . . . *again*: from there back to their cells

26 *in a manner*: practically // *close*: cloistered

27 *room*: living space // *meetly*: fairly 28 *chamber*: bedroom

- years together... as are other men (and better too) that walk about the world. And therefore you may see that the loathness of less room, and the door shut upon us... while so many folk are so well content therewith, and will for God's love live so to choose... is but a horror
- 5 enhanced of our own fantasy.
- And indeed I wist a woman once that came into a prison to visit of her charity a poor prisoner there, whom she found in a chamber... to say the truth, meetly fair; and at the leastwise it was strong enough. But with mats of straw the prisoner had made it
- 10 so warm, both under the foot and round about the walls, that in these things, for keeping of his health, she was on his behalf glad and very well comforted. But among many other displeasures that for his sake she was sorry for, one she lamented much in her mind: that he should have the chamber door upon him by night made fast by the jailer,
- 15 that should shut him in. "For by my troth," quoth she, "if the door should be shut upon me, I would ween it would stop up my breath!" At that word of hers, the prisoner laughed in his mind... but he durst not laugh aloud, nor say nothing to her. For somewhat, indeed, he stood in awe of her... and had his finding there, much part, of her charity, for
- 20 alms. But he could not but laugh inwardly... while he wist well enough that she used on the inside to shut every night full surely her own chamber to her, both door and windows too, and used not to open them of all the long night. And what difference then as to the stopping of the breath, whether they were shut up within or without? And
- 25 so, surely, Cousin, these two things that you speak of are neither nother of so great weight that in Christ's cause ought to move a Christian man... and the one of the twain is so very a childish fantasy, that in a matter almost of three chips (but if it were in chance of fire) never should move any man.
- 30 As for those other accidents, of hard handling therein: so mad am

1 *together*: without interruption; on end

1 *better too*: i.e., some of these very confined religious are even more content than the people who go all over the place 2 *may*: can // *loathness*: unpleasantness 3 *while*: when

5 *enhanced of our own fantasy*: intensified by our own imagination 6, 20 *wist*: knew

8 *chamber*: room // *meetly fair*: pretty nice 9 *strong enough*: secure enough against break-ins

10 *in*: with regard to 17 *word*: statement 19 *finding*: support; maintenance

19 *much part*: in great part 20 *while*: since 21, 22 *used*: was wont

21 *full surely*: very securely 23 *of*: in 25 *neither nother*: neither the one nor the other

27 *fantasy*: thought 28 *chips*: wood scraps // *but . . . fire*: except in the event of fire

30 *accidents*: incidental features, not belonging to imprisonment as such

I not to say they be *no* grief; but I say that our fear may imagine
 them much greater grief than they be. And I say... that such
 as they be, many a man endureth them—yea, and many a woman, too—
 that after fare full well. And then would I wit what determination we
 5 take: whether for our Savior's sake to suffer some pain in our bodies...
 since he suffered in his blessed body so great pain for us... or else to give
 him warning to be at a point... rather utterly to forsake him than
 suffer any pain at all? He that cometh in his mind unto this latter
 point—from which kind of unkindness God keep every man!—comfort
 10 he none needeth; for he will flee the need. And counsel, I fear, availeth
 him little... if grace be so far gone from him. But on the other
 side, if rather than forsake our Savior... we determine ourselves to
 suffer any pain at all: I cannot then see that the fear of hard
 handling should anything stick with us, and make us so to shrink as
 15 we rather would forsake his faith than to suffer for his sake so much as
 imprisonment... since the handling is neither such in prison but that
 many men many years, and many women, too, live therewith and sustain
 it and afterward yet fare full well... and yet that it may well fortune
 that besides the very bare imprisonment... there shall hap us no
 20 hard handling at all; nor that same, haply, but for a short while,
 neither—and yet, besides all this, peradventure not at all—and especially
 since which of all these ways shall be taken with us lieth all in his will
 for whom we be content to take it... and which for that mind of ours
 favoreth us, and will suffer no man to put more pain unto us
 25 than he well wotteth we shall be well able to bear. For he will give us
 the strength thereto himself, as you have heard his promise already...
 by the mouth of Saint Paul: “Fidelis Deus, qui non patitur vos tentari supra id
 quod potestis ferre, sed dat etiam cum tentatione proventum”—“God is faithful,

4 *after*: afterward // *would I wit*: I want to know

7 *warning to be at a point*: notice that we have come to the decision 7, 12, 15 *forsake*: renounce

9 *point*: decision // *unkindness*: ingratitude / coldheartedness 12 *side*: hand

12 *determine ourselves*: make up our minds; resolve 14 *anything stick with*: at all deter

20 *that same*: i.e., that bare imprisonment, with no rough treatment 22 *his will*: the will of him

23 *which*: who 25 *wotteth*: knows 278/27—279/2: 1 Corinthians 10:13.

which suffereth you not to be tempted above that you may bear... but
 giveth also with the temptation a way out.” But, now—if we have not
 lost our faith already, before we come to forsake it for fear—we know
 very well by our faith that by the forsaking of our faith we fall into
 5 the state to be cast into the prison of hell. And that can we not tell how
 soon; but as it may be that God will suffer us to live a while here upon
 earth... so may it be that he will throw us in that dungeon beneath before
 the time that the Turk shall once ask us the question. And
 therefore, if we fear imprisonment so sore... we be much more than mad
 10 that we fear not most for the more sore. For out of *that* prison shall
 no man never get... and in this other shall no man abide but a while.

In prison was Joseph while his brethren were at large; and yet afterward
 were his brethren fain to seek upon him for bread.

In prison was Daniel, and the wild lions about him; and yet even
 15 here God kept him harmless, and brought him safe out again.

If we think that he will not do the likewise for us... let us not doubt
 but he will do for us either the like or better. For better may
 he do for us if he suffer us there to die. Saint John the Baptist was, you
 wot well, in prison while Herod and Herodias sat full merry at the
 20 feast, and the daughter of Herodias delighted them with her dancing...
 till with her dancing... she danced off Saint John’s head. And now sitteth
 he with great feast in heaven, at God’s board, while Herod and Herodias
 full heavily sit in hell burning, both twain... and, to make them
 sport withal, the devil with the damsel dance in the fire before
 25 them.

Finally, Cousin, to finish this piece with: Our Savior was himself
 taken prisoner for our sake, and prisoner was he carried, and prisoner
 was he kept; and prisoner was he brought forth before Annas, and
 prisoner from Annas carried unto Caiaphas; then prisoner was he
 30 carried from Caiaphas unto Pilate... and prisoner was he sent from Pilate

1 *which*: who 6, 18 *suffer*: allow 8 *once*: ever 9 *so sore*: that badly; that terribly
 10 *sore*: terrible (imprisonment) 11 *abide*: stay 12–13: Genesis 37:12–28; 39:6–23; 42:1–7.
 13 *fain*: obliged // *seek unto*: come to 14–15: Daniel 6:17–24. 15 *harmless*: unharmed
 18–21: Mark 6:17–28. 22 *feast*: festivity // *board*: table
 23 *full heavily*: very despondently 23–24 *make . . . withal*: entertain them therewith
 279/26—280/1: John 18:12–14, 24, 28–29; Luke 23:6–16.

to King Herod... prisoner from Herod unto Pilate again... and so kept,
as prisoner, to the end of his Passion.

3.21

- 5 The time of his imprisonment, I grant well, was not long. But as
for hard handling (which our hearts most abhor), he had as much in
that short while... as many men among them all in much longer time.
And surely then if we consider of what estate he was... and therewith
that he was prisoner in such wise for *our* sake... we shall, I trow, but
if we be worse than wretched beasts, never so shamefully play the unkind
cowards as for fear of imprisonment sinfully to forsake him;
10 nor so foolish, neither, as by forsaking of him, to give him the
occasion again to forsake us; and with the avoiding of an
easier prison, fall into a worse; and instead of a prison that cannot keep
us long, fall into that prison out of which we can never come... whereas
the short imprisonment would win us everlasting liberty.

15 *The fear of shameful and painful death*

The Twenty-first Chapter

Vincent

- Forsooth, Uncle—our Lord reward you therefor!—if we feared not further,
besides imprisonment, the terrible dart of shameful and painful death...
20 as for imprisonment, I would verily trust that, remembering these
things which I have here heard of you, rather than I should forsake
the faith of our Savior I would with help of grace never shrink
thereat. But now are we come, Uncle, with much work, at the last,
unto the last and uttermost point of the dread that maketh “*incursum*
25 *et daemonium meridianum*,” this incursion of this midday devil, this
open invasion of the Turk and his persecution against the faith, seem

6 *estate*: (high) rank 7 *I trow*: I am sure 7–8 *but if*: unless
8 *unkind*: villainous 9, 11, 21 *forsake*: repudiate 21 *of*: from

so terrible to men's minds that although the respect of God vanquish
 all the remnant of the troubles that we have hitherto
 perused (as loss of goods, lands, and liberty), yet when we remember
 the terror of shameful and painful death, that point so suddenly putteth
 5 us in oblivion of all that should be our comfort... that we feel—all men, I
 fear me, for the most part—the fervor of our faith wax so cold, and
 our hearts so faint, that we feel ourselves at the point to fall even
 therefrom for fear. 3.21

Anthony

10 To this I say not nay, Cousin, but that indeed in this point is the
 sore pinch. And yet you see, for all this, that even this point
 too taketh increase and diminishment of dread after the difference of
 the affections that are before fixed and rooted in the mind; so far forth
 that you see some man set so much by his worldly substance that he
 15 less feareth the loss of his life than the loss of lands. Yea, some man
 shall you see that abideth deadly torment—and such as some other had
 liefer die than endure—rather than he would bring forth the money
 that he hath hidden.

And I doubt not but you have heard of many, by right antique
 20 stories, that... some for one cause, some for other... have not letted
 willingly to suffer death; diverse in diverse kinds... and some both with
 despiteful rebuke and painful torment, too. And therefore, as I say,
 we may see that the affections of men's minds... toward the increase or
 decrease of dread maketh much of the matter.

25 Now are the affections of men's minds imprinted by diverse
 means. One way, by the means of the bodily senses, moved by such
 things, pleasant or displeasing, as are outwardly, through sensible,

1 *although*: even if // *respect*: consideration 3 *perused*: examined // *as*: such as
 6 *wax*: go 7 *faint*: lacking in courage // *at the point to fall*: (to be) on the verge of falling
 7–8 *even therefrom*: completely away from it (i.e., our faith) 12 *after*: according to
 13, 23, 25 *affections*: feelings / attachments 14 *set so much by*: care so much about
 16–17 *had liefer*: would rather 16, 22 *torment*: torture
 19–20 *right antique stories*: very old historical accounts 20 *letted*: forborne
 22 *despiteful rebuke*: insulting disgrace 23 *may*: can 27 *sensible*: perceptible by the senses

- worldly things, offered and objected unto them. And this manner of receiving of impression of affection is common unto men and beasts. Another manner of receiving affections is by the means of reason, which both ordinately tempereth those affections that the bodily
- 5 five wits imprint... and also disposeth a man, many times, to some spiritual virtues very contrary to those affections that are fleshly and sensual. And those reasonable dispositions be the affections spiritual, and proper to the nature of man, and above the nature of beast. Now, as our ghostly enemy the devil enforceth himself to make
- 10 us lean unto the sensual affections and beastly... so doth Almighty God, of his goodness, by his Holy Spirit inspire us good motions, with aid and help of his grace, toward the other affections, spiritual. And by sundry means instructeth our reason to lean unto them—and not only to receive them as engendered and planted in our soul, but also in
- 15 such wise water them, with the wise advertisement of godly counsel and continual prayer, that they may be habitually radicate and surely take deep root therein. And after, as the one kind of affection or the other beareth the strength in our heart... so be we stronger or feebler against the terror of death in this cause.
- 20 And therefore will we, Cousin, assay to consider what things there are for which we have cause in reason to master that affection fearful and sensual, and though we cannot clean avoid it and put it away, yet in such wise to bridle it at the least... that it run not out so far, like a headstrong horse, that spite of our teeth, it carry us out unto the
- 25 devil.
- Let us therefore now consider and well weigh this thing that we dread so sore; that is to wit, shameful and painful death.

1 *objected*: presented 2, 3... *affection(s)*: (a) feeling(s) 2 *impression*: imprinting; infixing
 5 *wits*: senses 7 *reasonable*: rational 9 *ghostly*: spiritual // *enforceth*: exerts
 10, 13 *lean unto*: go along with 11 *inspire*: put into // *motions*: inclinations
 15 *advertisement*: instruction 16 *habitually radicate*: established as habitual 20 *assay*: try
 22 *clean*: completely // *avoid*: expel // *put it away*: get rid of it
 24 *spite of our teeth*: despite our resistance

*Of death considered by itself alone;
as a bare leaving of this life, only*

3.22

The Twenty-second Chapter

- 5 And first, I perceive well by these two things that you join unto
“death”—that is to wit, “shameful” and “painful”—you would esteem death so
much the less... if it shall come alone, without either shame or
pain.

Vincent

- 10 Without doubt, Uncle, a great deal the less! But yet, though it should
come without them both, by itself... whatsoever *I* would, I wot
well many a man would be, for all that, very loath to die.

Anthony

- 15 That I believe well, Cousin; and the more pity it is. For that affection
happeth in very few... but that either the cause is lack of faith, lack of
hope... or, finally, lack of wit. They that believe not the life to
come after this, and ween themselves here in wealth, are loath to leave
this—for then, they think, they lose all. And thereof cometh the
manifold foolish, unfaithful words which are so rife in over many
mouths: “This world we know, and the other we know not”; and that
20 some say in sport and think in earnest—“The devil is not so black as he is
painted; and let him be as black as he will, he is no blacker than a crow”—
with many such other foolish fantasies of the same sort.

- Some that believe well enough... yet through the lewdness of living
fall out of good hope of salvation; and then though they be loath to die...
25 I very little marvel. Howbeit, some that purpose to amend, and would

5 *esteem*: mind 10 *whatsoever I would*: regardless of how *I* would feel 13 *affection*: attitude
14 *happeth*: is found 15 *wit*: good sense // *believe not*: do not believe in
16 *wealth*: well-being 18 *unfaithful*: showing a lack of (the Christian) faith
18 *words*: sayings // *over*: too 19 *that*: that which; what 20 *sport*: jest
22 *fantasies*: sentiments 23 *lewdness*: wickedness // *living*: their way of living 24 *though*: if

3.22
 fain have some time left them longer to bestow somewhat better,
 may peradventure be loath to die also by and by. And that manner
 loathness—albeit a very good will gladly to die, and to be with God, were
 in my mind so thankful... that it were well able to purchase as full
 5 remission both of sin and pain as peradventure he were likely, if he
 lived, to purchase in many years' penance—yet will I not say but
 that such kind of loathness to die may be before God allowable. Some
 are there also that are loath to die, that are yet very glad to die, and
 long for to be dead.

10 Vincent

That were, Uncle, a very strange case!

Anthony

The case, I fear me, Cousin, falleth not very often... but yet sometimes
 it doth. As where there is any man of that good mind that Saint
 15 Paul was, which for the longing that he had to be with God, would
 fain have been dead—but for the profit of other folk, was content to
 live here in pain, and defer and forbear for the while his
 inestimable bliss in heaven. “Cupio dissolvi et esse cum Christo—bonum
 autem mihi manere propter vos.” But of all these kinds, Cousin, of folks
 20 that are loath to die... except the first kind only, that lacketh faith...
 there is, I suppose, none but that except the fear of shame or sharp
 pain joined unto death should be the let, would else, for the bare
 respect of death alone, let to depart hence with good will... in this case
 of the faith—well witting *by* his faith that his death taken *for* the
 25 faith should cleanse him clean of all his sins and send him straight to
 heaven. And some of these (namely the last kind) are such that
 shame and pain both, joined unto death, were unlikely to make them

1, 16 *fain*: like to 1 *bestow*: spend 2 *be . . . and by*: also be loath to die soon
 2 *manner*: kind of 4 *thankful*: deserving of credit 5 *pain*: punishment
 7 *allowable*: approvable 11 *were*: would be 11, 13 *case*: condition 13 *falleth*: occurs
 15 *which*: who 18–19: “*Cupio . . . vos*”: Philippians 1:23–24 (“I long to be dissolved and to be
 with Christ—but for you it is good that I stay”). 22 *let*: hindrance // *bare*: mere
 23 *respect*: consideration // *let*: forbear // *hence*: from here 24 *of*: having to do with
 24 *witting*: knowing 26 *namely*: especially

loath death, or fear death, so sore but that they would suffer death in this case with good will, since they know well that the refusing of the faith for any cause in this world, were the cause never so good in sight, should yet sever them from *God*—with whom, save for other folks’
 5 profit, they so fain would be. And charity can it not be, for the profit of the whole world deadly to displease him that made it! Some are there, I say, also, that are loath to die for lack of wit; which albeit that they believe the world that is to come, and hope also to come thither... yet they love so much the wealth of this world, and such things
 10 as delight them therein, that they would fain keep them as long as ever they might, even with tooth and nail. And when they may be suffered in no wise to keep it no longer... but that death taketh them therefrom—then, if it may be no better... they will agree to be, as soon as they be hence, hanced up in heaven and be with God by and by.

15 These folk are as very idiotic fools as he that had kept from his childhood a bag full of cherry stones, and cast such a fantasy thereto that he would not go from it for a bigger bag filled full of gold.

These folk fare, Cousin, as Aesop telleth in a fable that the snail did.
 20 For when Jupiter (whom the poets feign for the great god) invited all poor worms of the earth to a great, solemn feast that it pleased him (I have forgotten upon what occasion) upon a time to prepare for them... the snail kept her at home, and would not come thereat. And when Jupiter asked her after wherefore she came not at
 25 his feast—where, he said, she should have been welcome, and have fared well, and should have seen a goodly palace... and been delighted with many goodly pleasures—she answered him that she loved no place so well as her own house. With which answer Jupiter waxed so angry that he said since she loved her house so well... she should never after go
 30 from home... but should always bear her house upon her back wheresoever

3–4 *never* . . . *sight*: no matter how good ostensibly 6 *deadly* . . . *that*: mortally to offend the one who
 7 *wit*: good sense // *which*: who 8 *believe*: believe in 11 *suffered*: allowed
 14 *hence*: out of here // *hanced*: lifted; hoisted // *by and by*: immediately
 15 *he that*: someone who 16 *fantasy*: liking 17, 29–30 *go from*: walk away from; leave
 20 *feign for*: in their made-up stories designate as 21 *solemn*: sumptuous
 22 *upon a time*: once upon a time; one day 23 *her*: herself
 24 *wherefore*: why // *at*: to 25 *fares*: dined 26, 27 *goodly*: splendid 28 *waxed*: got

she went. And so hath she done ever since, as they say; and at
the leastwise I wot well she doth so now, and hath done as long time
as I can remember.

3.22

Vincent

- 5 Forsooth, Uncle, I would ween the tale were not all feigned. For I think
verily that so much of your tale is true.

Anthony

- 10 Aesop meant by that feigned fable to touch the folly of such folk
as so set their fantasy upon some small, simple pleasure, that they
cannot find in their heart to forbear it... neither for the pleasure of
a better man... nor for the gaining of a better thing; by which their
fond froward fashion, they sometimes fall in great indignation, and
take thereby no little harm.

- 15 And surely such Christian folk as by their foolish affection
which they have set, like the snail, upon their own house here in
this earth... cannot, for the loathness of leaving that house, find
in their heart with their good will to go to the great feast that God
prepareth in heaven and of his goodness so genteelly calleth them to... be
likely, I fear me, but if they amend that mind in time, to be served as
20 the snail was—and yet much worse, too. For they be likely to have their
house here, the earth, bound fast upon their backs forever... and not
walk therewith where they will, as the snail creepeth about with hers...
but lie fast bound in the midst, with the foul fire of hell about
them.

- 25 For into this folly they bring themselves by their own fault... as the
drunken man bringeth himself into drunkenness... whereby the evil
that he doth in his drunkenness is not forgiven him for his folly... but,
to his pain, imputed to his fault.

5 *feigned*: fictitious; made-up 6 *so much*: that much

8 *touch*: reprehend // *folly*: foolishness 9 *fantasy*: fancy; liking // *simple*: insignificant

11–12 *by*... *fashion*: by which foolish headstrong way of theirs 12 *fall in*: fall into; incur

14 *by*: on account of 16 *the loathness of*: their aversion to 19 *I fear me*: I'm afraid

19 *but if*: unless // *mind*: attitude // *served*: done to

27 *for his folly*: by reason of his foolishness 28 *imputed to his fault*: blamed on him

Vincent

3.22

Surely, Uncle, this seemeth not unlikely; and by their fault they fall in such folly indeed. And yet if this be folly indeed... there are, then, some folk fools that ween themselves right wise.

5

Anthony

That ween themselves wise? Marry, I never saw fool yet that thought himself other than wise! For as it is one spark of soberness left in a drunken head when he *perceive* himself drunk and getteth him fair to bed: so if a fool *perceive* himself a fool, *that* point
 10 is no folly, but a little spark of wit. But, now, Cousin, as for these kind of fools, since they be loath to die... for the love that they bear to their worldly fantasies which they should by their death leave behind them and forsake—they that would for that cause rather forsake the faith than die... would rather forsake it than lose their worldly goods though
 15 there were offered them no peril of death at all. And then, as touching those that are of that mind, we have, you wot well, said as much as yourself thought sufficient, this afternoon, herebefore.

Vincent

Verily, Uncle, that is very true; and now have you rehearsed, as far as I
 20 can remember, all the other kinds of them that would be loath to die for any other respect than the grievous qualities of shame and pain joined unto death. And of all these kinds except the kind of infidelity (whom no comfort can help, but counsel only, to the attaining of faith; which faith must be to the receiving of comfort
 25 presupposed and had already before, as you showed in the beginning of our communication, the first day that we talked of the matter)—but else, I say, except that one kind—there is none of the remnant of those that were before untouched, which were likely to forsake their faith

2 *in*: into 3, 10 *folly*: foolishness 6 *marry*: indeed 9 *fair*: straight; directly
 10 *wit*: good sense 12 *fantasies*: attachments; things they prize 13, 14 *forsake*: give up
 15 *as touching*: regarding; concerning 19 *rehearsed*: mentioned 20, 27 *kind(s)*: class(es)
 21 *respect*: consideration 22–23 *the kind of infidelity*: unbelievers; atheists
 25 *showed*: pointed out 26 *communication*: conversation
 28 *untouched*: not discussed // *which were*: who would be

in the persecution for the fear and dread of death... save for those
grievous qualities (pain, I mean, and shame) that they see well would
come therewith. And therefore, Uncle, I pray you give us some comfort
against those twain. For in good faith, if death should come without
5 them, in such a case as this is, wherein by the losing of this life we
should find a far better... mine own reason giveth me that save for
the other griefs going before the change... there would no man
that wit hath, anything stick at all. 3.23

Anthony

10 Yes, peradventure suddenly, before they gather their wits unto
them and therewith well weigh the matter. But they, Cousin, that *will*
consider the matter well, reason grounded upon the foundation of
faith shall show them very great, substantial causes for which the
dread of those grievous qualities that they see shall come with death—
15 shame, I mean, and pain also—shall not so sore abash
them as sinfully to drive them therefrom. For the proof whereof, let us
first begin at the consideration of the shame.

*Of shame that is joined with the death in the
persecution for the faith*

20 The Twenty-third Chapter

How can any faithful wise man dread the death so sore for any
respect of shame, when his reason and his faith together may shortly
make him perceive that there is therein no piece of *very* shame at
all? For how can that death be shameful that is glorious? Or how can
25 that be but glorious, to die for the faith of Christ, if we die both *for*
the faith and *in* the faith joined with hope and charity?... while the Scripture

3 *pray you*: ask you to 7 *the change*: i.e., the change from the one life to the other

8 *that wit hath*: who has any sense // *anything* . . . *all*: have any hesitation at all

10 *peradventure suddenly*: perhaps fleetingly

15–16 *sore abash them*: knock them so badly off balance; cause them so to lose their self-possession

17 *at*: with 21 *any* . . . *man*: any sane person who has the faith 22 *respect*: consideration

26 *while*: when

so plainly saith, “*Preciosa in conspectu Domini, mors sanctorum eius*”—
 “Precious in the sight of God, the death of his saints.” Now, if the
 death of his saints be glorious in the sight of *God*, it can never be
 shameful in very deed... how shameful soever it seem here in the
 5 sight of men. For here we may see and be sure that not at the
 death of Saint Stephen only, to whom it liked him to show himself
 with the heaven open over his head... but at the death also of *every* man
 that so dieth for the faith, God with his heavenly company beholdeth
 his whole passion and verily looketh on.

3.23

10 Now, if it were so, Cousin, that ye should be brought through the broad
 high street of a great, long city... and that all along the way that ye
 were going, there were on the one side of the way a rabble of ragged
 beggars and madmen that would despise you and dispraise you with all
 the shameful names that they could call you, and all the railing
 15 words that they could say to you; and that there were then all along
 the other side of the same street, where you should come by,
 a goodly company, standing in a fair range a-row, of wise and
 worshipful folk allowing and commending you... more than fifteen
 times as many as that rabble of ragged beggars and railing madmen
 20 are: would you let your way by your will, weening that you went unto
 your shame, for the shameful jesting and railing of those mad,
 foolish wretches... or hold on your way with a good cheer and a glad
 heart, thinking yourself much honored by the laud and approbation
 of that other, honorable sort?

25

Vincent

Nay, by my troth, Uncle, there is no doubt but I would much regard
 the commendation of those commendable folk... and not regard a rush the
 railing of all those ribalds.

1–2: Psalm 116:15. 5–9: See Acts 7:55–58. 6 *liked*: pleased 7 *his*: i.e., Stephen’s
 9 *passion*: martyrdom 11 *high*: main 13 *despise*: insult // *dispraise*: disparage
 17 *goodly company*: huge assembly // *wise*: sane 18 *worshipful*: respectable
 18 *allowing*: approving of 20–21 *would* . . . *shame*: would you, if you had it to choose, stop your
 journey, thinking that you were making it to your shame 21 *for*: on account of // *jesting*: jeering
 27 *not regard a rush*: pay no attention at all to; completely disregard 28 *ribalds*: lowlifes

Anthony

3.23

Then, Cousin, can there no man that hath faith account himself
 shamed here by any manner death that he suffereth for the faith of
 Christ... while how vile and how shameful soever it seem in the sight
 5 here of a few worldly wretches, it is allowed and approved for very
precious and *honorable* in the sight of *God*, and of all the glorious
 company of heaven—which as perfectly stand and behold it... as those
 peevish people do... and are in number more than a hundred to one.
 And of that hundred, every one a hundred times more to be
 10 regarded and esteemed than of the other a hundred such whole
 rabbles! And, now, if a man would be so mad as for fear of the rebuke
 that he should have of such rebukeful beasts, he would be ashamed to
 confess the faith of Christ—then, with fleeing from a *shadow*
 of shame, he should fall into a *very* shame, and a deadly painful shame
 15 indeed. For then hath our Savior made a sure promise... that he will
 show himself ashamed of that man before the Father of heaven and all
 his holy angels; saying (in the ninth chapter of Saint Luke), “Qui me
 erubuerit et meos sermones, hunc Filius hominis erubescet cum venerit in
 maiestate sua et Patris et sanctorum angelorum”; “He that is ashamed of me
 20 and of my words—of him shall the Son of Man be ashamed... when
 he shall come in the majesty of himself and of his Father and of his
 holy angels.” And what manner a shameful shame shall that be then!
 If a man’s cheeks glow sometimes for shame in this world... they
 will fall on *fire* for shame... when Christ shall show himself ashamed
 25 of them there.

To suffer the thing for Christ’s faith... that we worldly, wretched fools
 ween were villainy and shame, the blessed apostles reckoned for great
 glory. For they, when they were with despite and shame scourged, and
 thereupon commanded to speak no more of the name of Christ,

4 *while*: when 5–6: See Psalm 116:15.

5 *allowed and approved for*: taken and authoritatively confirmed as 7 *which*: who

8 *peevish*: foolish / malicious / insane 12 *have of*: get from

12 *rebukeful*: deserving of rebuke; shameful 17–22: Luke 9:26. 27 *villainy*: disgrace

28 *despite*: contempt 290/26—291/8: Acts 5:12–42.

- went their way from the council joyful and glad that God had vouchsafed
to do them the worship to suffer shameful despite for the name
of Jesus. And so proud were they of that shame and villainous pain
put unto them... that, for all the forbidding of that great council
5 assembled, they ceased not every day to preach out the name of
Jesus still, not in the Temple only (out of which they were fetched and
whipped for the same before), but also, to double it with, went preaching
that name about from house to house, too.
- 10 I would, since we regard so greatly the estimation of worldly folk,
we would among many naughty things that they use... regard also
some such as are good. For it is a manner among them, in many
places, that some by handicraft, some by merchandise, some by
other kind of living, arise and come forward in the world... and commonly
15 folk are in youth set forth to convenient masters, under whom they
are brought up and grow; but, now, whensoever they find a servant
such as he disdaineth to do such things as he that is his master did
while he was servant himself—that servant every man
accounteth for a proud unthrift, never likely to come to good
proof.
- 20 Let us, lo, mark and consider this, and weigh well therewith that our
Master, Christ—not the master only, but the maker, too, of all this
whole world—was not so proud to disdain for our sakes the most
villainous and most shameful death, after the worldly account, that then was
used in the world; and the most despiteful mocking therewith,
25 joined to most grievous pain. As crowning him with sharp thorns,
that the blood ran down about his face, then they gave him a
reed in his hand for a scepter and knelt down to him and saluted

2 *the worship to*: i.e., the honor of letting them // *despite*: contemptuous treatment

3, 23 *villainous*: ignominious 3 *pain*: punishment 9 *would*: wish

9 *regard so greatly the estimation*: pay such great heed to the judgment

10 *naughty*: bad // *use*: go in for; make a practice of 11 *a manner*: something customary

12 *merchandise*: trade; buying and selling 14 *convenient*: appropriate 17 *while*: when

18 *unthrift*: good-for-nothing // *never*: not at all

18–19 *to come to good proof*: to turn out well; to ever amount to anything 22 *to*: as to

22 *disdain*: i.e., disdainfully refuse to undergo 23 *after*: according to // *account*: reckoning; view

24 *used*: carried out // *despiteful*: insulting 26 *that*: so that

291/25—292/2: Matthew 27:27–30; Mark 15:16–20.

him like a king, in scorn, and beat then the reed upon the sharp
 thorns about his holy head. Now saith our Savior that the
 disciple or servant is not above his master. And therefore, since our
 Master endured so many kinds of painful shame... very proud
 5 beasts may we well think ourselves... if we disdain to do
 as our Master did. And whereas he through shame ascended into
 glory... we would be so mad that we rather will fall into everlasting
 shame both before heaven and hell than, for fear of a short worldly
 shame, to follow him into everlasting glory?

3.24

10 *Of painful death to be suffered in the Turk's
 persecution for the faith*

The Twenty-fourth Chapter

Vincent

15 In good faith, Uncle... as for the shame, ye shall need to take no
 more pain... for I suppose surely that any man that hath reason in his
 head shall hold himself satisfied with this. But of truth, Uncle, all
 the pinch is in the pain. For as for shame, I perceive well enough...
 a man may with wisdom so master it that it shall nothing move
 him at all; so far forth that it is almost in every country become a
 20 common proverb that shame is as it is taken. But, by God, Uncle,
 all the wisdom in this world can never so master pain but that
 pain will be painful, spite of all the wit in this world.

Anthony

25 Truth it is, Cousin, that no man can, with all the reason he hath,
 in such wise change the nature of pain that in the having of

2-3: Matthew 10:24. 14-15 *need . . . pain*: not need to go to any more trouble
 18 *nothing*: in no way 22 *spite*: in spite // *wit*: wisdom
 24 *reason*: rationality; reasoning ability

pain he feel it not. For but if it be felt, it is, pardie, no *pain*. And
 that is the natural cause, Cousin, for which a man may have his leg
 struck off by the knee and grieve him not... if his head be off but half
 an hour before. But reason may make a reasonable man, though he
 5 would not be so foolish as causeless to fall therein, yet upon good causes—
 either of gaining some kind of great profit... or avoiding
 of some great loss... or eschewing thereby the suffering of far greater
 pain—not to shrink therefrom and refuse it to his more hurt and harm...
 but for his far greater advantage and commodity, content and glad to
 10 sustain it. And this doth reason in many cases where it
 hath much less help to take hold of than it hath in this matter of
 faith. For well you wot, to take a sour and bitter potion is great
 grief and displeasure... and to be lanced and have the flesh cut...
 is no little pain. Now, when such things shall be administered unto a
 15 child... or to some childish man, either... they will by their own wills
 rather let their sickness or their sore grow unto their more grief, till it
 be become incurable, than abide the pain of the curing in time;
 and that for faint heart... joined with lack of discretion. But a man
 that hath more wisdom, though he would without cause no more
 20 abide the pain willingly than would the other—yet since reason
 showeth him what good he shall have by the suffering, and what
 harm by the refusing, this maketh him well content, and glad also,
 for to take it.

Now, then, if reason alone be sufficient to move a man to take
 25 pain for the gaining of some worldly rest or pleasure, and for the
 avoiding of another pain through peradventure more... yet
 endurable but for a short season: why should not reason grounded
 upon the sure foundation of faith, and helped also forward with

1 *but if*: unless // *pardie*: indeed 3 *by*: at 4 *may*: can
 9 *commodity*: benefit // *content*: (be) willing 12 *wot*: know
 15 *by their own wills*: if they have it to choose
 18 *discretion*: the use of reason 22 *well content*: quite willing
 25 *worldly*: earthly; this-worldly 27 *endurable*: capable of lasting

aid of God's grace—as it ever is, undoubtedly, when folk for a good
 mind in God's name come together thereon, our Savior 3.24
 saying himself, “Ubi sunt duo vel tres congregati in nomine meo, ibi et ego
 sum in medio eorum” (“Where there are two or three gathered together
 5 in my name, there am I also, even in the very midst of them”)—why
 should not then reason, I say, thus furthered with faith and grace, be much
 more able, first, to engender in us such an affection... and after, by
 long and deep meditation thereof, so to continue that affection that it
 shall turn into a habitual, fast, and deep-rooted *purpose*, of patiently
 10 suffering the painful death of this body here in earth for the gaining
 of everlasting wealthy life in heaven, and avoiding of everlasting
 painful death in hell?

Vincent

By my troth, Uncle, words can I none find that should have any
 15 reason with them—faith always presupposed, as you protested in the
 beginning, for a ground—words, I say, can I none find wherewith I
 might reasonably counterplead this that you have said here already.
 But yet I remember the fable that Aesop telleth of a great old hart
 that had fled from a little bitch which had made suit after him and
 20 chased him so long that she had lost him and, as he hoped, more than
 half given him over. By occasion whereof, having then some time
 to talk, and meeting with another of his fellows... he fell in deliberation
 with him what were best for him to do—whether to run on still, and
 fly further from her, or turn again and fight with her. Whereunto
 25 the other hart advised him to fly no further, lest the bitch might
 happen to find him again at such time as he should, with the labor
 of farther flying, be fallen out of breath, and thereby all out of strength,
 too, and so should he be killed lying where he could not stir him; whereas
 if he would turn and fight, he were in no peril at all, “for the man

1 *undoubtedly*: undoubtably 2 *mind*: intention 3–5: Matthew 18:20. 5 *even*: right
 7, 8 *affection*: inclination 8 *thereof*: thereon 9 *fast*: firm; steadfast // *purpose*: resolve
 10 *in*: on 11 *wealthy*: prosperous 14 *by my troth*: upon my honor; indeed
 14–15 *have any reason with them*: at all be in accord with reason 15 *protested*: expounded
 17 *counterplead*: argue against 19 *suit*: pursuit 21 *given him over*: given up on him
 24 *again*: back 28 *stir him*: bestir himself 29 *were . . . peril*: would be in no danger

with whom she hunteth is more than a mile behind her... and she is
 but a little body, scant half so much as thou... and thy horns may thrust
 her through before she can touch thy flesh by more than ten times her
 tooth length.” “By my troth,” quoth the other hart, “I like your
 5 counsel well, and methinketh that the thing is even soothly such as
 you say. But I fear me when I hear once that urchin bitch *bark*, I
 shall fall to my feet and forget altogether! But yet and you will go
 back with me—then methink we shall be strong enough against that
 one bitch, between us both.” Whereunto the other hart agreed; and so
 10 they both appointed them thereon. But even as they were about
 to busk them forward to it... the bitch had found the foot again, and
 on she come yearning toward the place—whom as soon as the harts
 heard... they two go, both twain apace.

And in good faith, Uncle, even so I fear it would fare by myself and
 15 many others too... which though we think it reason that you say... and
 in our minds agree that we should do as you say... yea, and do, peradventure,
 think also that we would indeed do as ye say—yet as soon as we
 should once hear these hellhounds, these Turks, come yelping and
 bawling upon us... our hearts should soon fall as clean from us as
 20 those other harts fly from the hounds.

[Here it must be known of some man that can skill of hunting,
 whether that we mistake not our terms; for then are we utterly
 shamed, ye wot well. And I am so cunning that I cannot tell whether
 among them, a bitch be a “bitch” or no. But as I remember, she is no
 25 “bitch,” but a “brach.” This is a high point in a low house. Beware of
barking... for there lacketh another hunting term. At a fox, it is

2 *much*: big // *may*: can

3–4 *can* . . . *length*: i.e., could reach you with teeth more than ten times as long as the ones she has

5 *even soothly*: quite truly 6 *urchin*: pesky 7 *fall to my feet*: take to my heels

7 *altogether*: everything // *and you*: if you

10 *appointed them thereon*: decided on that course of action // *even*: just

11 *busk them*: hasten themselves // *found*: picked up // *foot*: track; scent

12 *yearning*: eagerly crying out 13 *apace*: at full speed

14 *even so*: in just the same way // *fare by*: go with 15 *which*: who

15 *it* . . . *say*: what you say makes sense 19 *upon*: at 21 *known of*: found out from

21 *can skill of*: knows about 23 *cunning*: knowledgeable

25 *brach* (rhymes with “batch”): a female hound

26 *at* . . . *it*: i.e., when it’s being done at a fox, the hound’s barking

called “crying.” I wot not what they call it at a hart; but it shall make
no matter of a fart.]

3.24

Anthony

5 Cousin, in those days that Aesop speaketh of... though those harts,
and other brute beasts more, had (if he saith sooth) the power to speak and
talk... and in their talking, power to talk reason, too; yet to *follow* reason,
and rule themselves thereby—thereto had they never given them the
power. And in good faith, Cousin, as for such things as pertain
toward the conducting of reasonable men to salvation... I think without
10 help of grace, men’s reasoning shall do little more. But then
are we sure, as I said before, that as for grace, if we desire it... God is
at such reasoning always present, and very ready to give it; and but if that
men will afterward willingly cast it away... he is ever still as ready to
keep it—and from time to time glad to increase it. And therefore biddeth
15 us our Lord, by the mouth of the prophet, that we should not
be like such brutish and unreasonable beasts as were those harts,
and as are our horses and mules: “Nolite fieri sicut equus et mulus, in quibus
non est intellectus” (“Be not you like a horse and a mule, that hath none
understanding”). And therefore, Cousin, let us never dread... but that if
20 we will apply our minds to the gathering of comfort and courage
against such persecutions, and hear reason, and let it sink into our heart;
and cast it not out again—vomit it not up—nor even there choke it
up and stifle it with pampering in, and stuffing up our stomachs with
a surfeit of, worldly vanities: God shall so well work therewith... that
25 we shall feel strength therein... and not in such wise have all such shamefully
cowardly hearts as to forsake our Savior, and thereby lose our own
salvation and run into eternal fire, for fear of death joined
with, though bitter and sharp... yet short, for all that, and, in a manner, a
momentary, pain.

1 *wot not*: don’t know 1–2 *shall . . . fart*: won’t make a fart’s worth of difference
5 *if he saith sooth*: if what he says is true 5, 6, 8 *power*: ability 9 *toward*: to
9 *conducting*: leading // *reasonable men*: people with the ability to reason 11 *desire*: ask for
12 *but if that*: except if 13 *willingly*: deliberately // *cast*: throw 14 *keep*: preserve
16 *unreasonable*: irrational 17–19: Psalm 32:9. 19 *dread*: fear 21 *hear*: listen to
22 *even*: right 23 *pampering*: overindulging // *stomachs*: stomachs / spirits
26 *forsake*: renounce; deny 28 *in a manner*: as it were

Vincent

3.24

Every man, Uncle, naturally grudgeth at pain and is very loath to come at it.

Anthony

- 5 That is very truth; nor no man holdeth any man to go run into it... but that if he be taken and may not flee. Then we say that reason plainly telleth us: that we should rather suffer and endure the less and shorter here, than in hell the sorer and so far the longer too.

Vincent

- 10 I heard, Uncle, of late, where such a reason was made as you make me now—which reason seemeth undoubted and inevitable unto me—yet heard I lately, as I say, a man answer it thus. He said that if a man in this persecution should stand still in the confession of his faith, and thereby fall into painful tormentry... he might peradventure hap,
15 for the sharpness and bitterness of the pain, to forsake our Savior even in the midst, and die there with his sin, and so be damned forever; whereas by the forsaking of the faith in the beginning, betimes—and for the time, and yet not but in word, neither, keeping it still nevertheless in his heart—a man may save himself from that painful
20 death, and after ask mercy, and have it, and live long and do many good deeds, and be saved, as Saint Peter was.

Anthony

- That man's reason, Cousin, is like a three-footed stool—so tottering on every side that whoso sit thereon may soon take a foul fall. For
25 these are the three feet of this tottering stool: fantastical fear; false faith; false, flattering hope. First, it is a fantastical fear that the man conceiveth, that it should be perilous to stand in the confession of the faith at the beginning... lest he might afterward, through the bitterness of pain, fall to the forsaking, and so die there in the pain

2 *grudgeth at*: objects to 3 *at*: into 5 *holdeth*: expects 6 *but that if*: unless
6 *say that*: say that which; say what 8 *sorer*: worse 10, 11, 23 *reason*: reasoning; argument
11 *undoubted*: definitely correct // *inevitable*: irrefutable 13 *stand still*: keep standing firm
13, 27 *confession*: profession 14 *tormentry*: torture 16 *even in the midst*: right in the middle of it
16 *with his sin*: i.e., with that mortal sin on his soul 18 *betimes*: early on
18 *for the time*: i.e., just for the time being // *still*: always 20 *after*: afterward
20 *have*: receive 24 *whoso*: whoever // *foul*: bad 25, 26 *fantastical*: irrational; unfounded
26 *false*: unauthentic / wrong 27 *stand*: stand firm 29 *bitterness*: severity

therewith out of hand, and thereby be utterly damned. As though that
 if a man with pain were overcome, and so forsook his faith... God
 could not or would not as well give him grace to repent again, and
 thereupon give him forgiveness... as him that forsook his faith in the
 5 beginning and did set so little by him that he would rather forsake
 him than suffer for his sake any manner pain at all! As though the
 more pain that a man taketh for God's sake... the worse would God be
 to him!

If this reason were not unreasonable—then should our Savior not
 10 have said as he did, “Ne terremini... ab hiis qui occidunt corpus et post haec
 non habent amplius quid faciant” (“Be not afeard of them that kill the
 body and after that have nothing that they can do farther”).
 For he should by this reason have said, “*Dread* and *fear* them that may
 slay the *body*; for they may by the torment of painful death—but
 15 if thou forsake me betimes, in the beginning, and so save thy life and
 get of me thy pardon and forgiveness after—make thee, peradventure,
 forsake me too late, and so to be damned forever.”

The second foot of this tottering stool... is a *false faith*, for it is but
 a feigned faith for a man to say to God secretly that he believeth him...
 20 trusteth him... and loveth him, and then openly—where he should to God's
 honor tell the same tale, and thereby prove that he *doth* so—there, to
 God's dishonor, as much as in him is... flatter God's enemies, and
 do them pleasure and worldly worship, with the forsaking of God's
 faith before the world; and is either faithless in his heart too... or else wotteth
 25 well that he doth God this despite even before his own face. For
 except he lack faith, he cannot but know that our Lord is everywhere
 present... and while he so shamefully forsaketh him, full angrily looketh
 on.

The third foot of this tottering stool... is false, flattering hope, for since
 30 the thing that he doth when he forsaketh his faith for fear is, by the

9, 13 *reason*: reasoning 9 *unreasonable*: irrational 10–12: Luke 12:4.

13 *by*: according to // *may*: can 14–15 *but if*: . . . *betimes*: unless you renounce me in good time

16 *of*: from // *after*: afterward 19 *secretly*: in private // *believeth*: believes in

20 *openly*: in public 21 *tale*: story 22 *as much as in him is*: as much as he possibly can

23 *worship*: honor 24 *wotteth*: knows 25 *despite*: insult // *even*: right 26 *except*: unless

mouth of God, upon the pain of eternal death forbidden: though
the goodness of God forgiveth many folk the fault—yet to be
the bolder in offending for the hope of forgiving is a very false,
pestilent hope, wherewith a man flattereth himself toward his own
destruction.

- 5 He that in a sudden braid, for fear... or other affection, unadvisedly
falleth... and after, in laboring to rise again, comforteth himself
with hope of God's gracious forgiveness... walketh in the ready way toward
his salvation. But he that with the hope of God's
10 mercy to follow doth *encourage* himself to sin, and therewith offendeth
God first—I have no power to shut the hand of God from giving out
his pardon where he list; nor would if I could... but rather, help to pray
therefor. But yet I very sore fear that such a man may miss the grace
to require it in such effectual wise as to have it granted. Nor I
15 cannot suddenly now remember any example or promise expressed in
Holy Scripture that the offender in such a kind shall have the grace
offered after in such wise to seek for pardon that God hath (by his other
promises of remission promised to penitents) bound himself to
grant it. But this kind of presumption-under-the-pretext-of-hope
20 seemeth rather to draw near on the one side... as despair doth on the
other side... toward the abominable sin of *blasphemy* against
the *Holy Ghost*. Against which sin... concerning either the
impossibility or, at the least, the great difficulty, of forgiveness, our
Savior hath showed himself in the twelfth chapter of Saint Matthew and
25 in the third chapter of Saint Mark, where he saith that blasphemy
against the Holy Ghost shall *never* be forgiven, neither in this world
nor in the world to come. And whereas the man that you speak of took
in his reason an example of Saint Peter, which forsook our Savior and got
forgiveness after—let him consider again, on the other side, that he
30 forsook him not upon the boldness of any such sinful trust... but

2 *fault*: transgression; sin 6 *braid*: attack // *affection*: feeling

6 *unadvisedly*: without premeditation 7 *after*: afterward 8 *in the ready way*: on the straight path

11 *shut*: hold back 12 *list*: pleases 13 *very sore fear*: am very much afraid // *miss*: fail to obtain

14 *require*: request 15 *suddenly*: offhand 16 *offender in such a kind*: committer of this kind of sin

21–27: Matthew 12:31–32; Mark 3:28–29. 24 *showed*: spoken

27–28 *took . . . of*: used in his argument as an example 28 *which*: who

299/28—300/5: Matthew 27:69–75; Mark 15:66–72; Luke 22:54–62; John 18:15–17, 25–27.

was overcome and vanquished upon a sudden fear. And yet by
 the forsaking, Saint Peter won but little; for he did but delay his
 trouble but a little while, you wot well. For besides that he repented
 forthwith very sore that he had so done—and wept therefor by
 5 and by, full bitterly—he came forth at the Whitsuntide ensuing, and confessed
 his Master again, and soon after that, he was imprisoned therefor;
 and not ceasing so... was thereupon sore scourged for the confession of
 his faith... and yet after that, imprisoned again afresh; and being
 from thence delivered, stinted not to preach on still... until that, after
 10 manifold labors, travails, and troubles, he was at Rome crucified and
 with cruel torment slain.

And in like wise I ween I might in a manner well warrant that there
 should no man which denieth our Savior once, and after attaineth remission,
 escape through that denying one penny the better cheap... but
 15 that he shall ere he come in heaven full surely pay therefor.

Vincent

He shall peradventure, Uncle, afterward work it out in the fruitful
 works of penance, prayer, and almsdeed done in *true* faith and due
 charity, and attain in such wise forgiveness well enough.

20 Anthony

All his forgiveness goeth, Cousin, you see well, but by “perhaps.” But
 as it may be perhaps yea, so may it be perhaps nay—and where
 is he then? And yet (you wot well), by no manner hap, he shall never
 hap finally to escape from death—for fear of which he forsook his faith.

25 Vincent

No, but he may die his natural death, and escape that violent death;

3–4 *repented forthwith very sore*: right away repented very deeply 4, 6, 15 *therefor*: for it

4–5 *by and by*: immediately

5–11: See Acts 2–5; Tertullian, *Scorpiace* 15; Eusebius, *Church History* 3:1.

5 *Whitsuntide ensuing*: next season of Pentecost

12 *ween . . . warrant*: think I could just about guarantee 13 *after*: afterward

14 *escape . . . better cheap*: come out . . . better off 15 *in*: into 19 *in such wise*: in such a way

23 *wot*: know 24 *forsook*: renounced

and then he saveth himself from much pain, and so winneth therewith much ease. For evermore a violent death is painful.

3.24

Anthony

5 Peradventure he shall *not* avoid a violent death thereby. For God is without doubt displeased... and can bring him shortly to a death as violent by some other way.

Howbeit, I see well that you reckon that whoso dieth a natural death... dieth like a wanton, even at his ease. You make me remember a man that was once in a galley subtile with us on the sea...
10 which while the sea was sore wrought, and the waves rose very high, and he came never on the sea before, and lay tossed hither and thither... the poor soul groaned sore, and for pain he thought he would very fain be dead. And ever he wished, "Would God I were on land, that I might die in rest!" The waves so troubled him there, with tossing him up and
15 down, to and fro... that he thought that trouble letted him to die—because the waves would not let him rest. But if he might get once to land, he thought he should then die there even at his ease.

Vincent

20 Nay, Uncle, this is no doubt, but that death is to every man painful; but yet is not the natural death so painful as is the violent.

Anthony

By my troth, Cousin, methinketh that the death which men call commonly "natural" is a violent death to every man whom it fetcheth hence by force, against his will. And that is every man which when
25 he dieth is loath to die... and fain would yet live longer if he might.

Howbeit, how small the pain is in the natural death, Cousin, fain would I wit who hath told you. As far as I can perceive, those folk that commonly depart of their natural death have ever one disease and sickness or other... whereof if the pain of that whole week or twain
30 in which they lie pining in their bed were gathered together into so

2 *evermore*: always 8 *wanton*: pampered child 8, 17 *even*: quite
8 *make me remember*: call to my mind 9 *galley subtile*: a long, narrow, low ship propelled by oars
10, 24 *which*: who 10 *while*: since // *sore wrought*: extremely turbulent
11 *came*: had never been 12 *for*: on account of the // *very fain*: very much like to
14 *rest*: peace 15 *letted him to*: was the reason he couldn't 16, 25 *might*: could
25 *fain*: gladly 26–27 *fain would I wit*: I'd like to know 28 *of*: by 30 *pinning*: suffering

short a time as a man hath his pain that dieth a violent death... it
 would, I ween, make double the pain that that is. So that he that
 naturally dieth, after suffereth more pain than less... though he
 suffereth it in a longer time. And then would many a man be more
 loath to suffer so long lingering in pain than with a sharper to be
 5 sooner rid.

And yet lieth many a man more days than one in well near
 as great pain continually as is the pain that with the violent death
 riddeth the man in less than half an hour... except a man would
 ween that whereas the pain is great to have a knife cut his
 10 flesh on the outside (from the skin inward), the pain would be much
 less if the knife might begin on the inside and cut from the midst
 outward.

Some we hear in their deathbed complain that they think they
 feel sharp knives cut a-two their heartstrings. Some cry out and
 think they feel within the brainpan their head pricked even
 15 full of pins. And they that lie in a pleurisy think that every
 time they cough, they feel a sharp sword swap them to the heart.

*The consideration of the pains of hell, in which we
 fall... if we forsake our Savior, may make us set all the
 20 painful death of this world at right naught*

The Twenty-fifth Chapter

Howbeit, what should we need to make any such comparison—
 between the natural death and the violent—for the matter that we be
 in hand with here? We may put it out of doubt that he which for the
 25 fear of the violent death forsaketh the faith of Christ putteth himself

2 *ween*: suspect; think likely 3 *after*: more often // *though*: even if
 4 *in a longer time*: over a longer period of time 5 *rid*: dispatched 8 *riddeth*: dispatches
 8 *except*: unless 9 *ween*: think 13 *in*: on 15 *brainpan*: cranium
 15–16 *even full*: chock-full 17 *swap*: strike 18 *in*: into
 19, 25 *forsake(th)*: renounce(s) 19 *may*: can
 19–20 *set . . . at right naught*: consider . . . absolutely nothing 22 *what*: why
 24 *may put it out of doubt*: can take it as undoubtable // *which*: who

in the peril to find his natural death more painful a thousand
times! For his natural death hath his everlasting pain so suddenly
knit unto it that there is not one moment of an hour between, but
the end of the one is the beginning of the other, that after never shall
5 have end. And therefore was it not without great cause that Christ
gave us so good warning before, when he said, as Saint Luke (in the twelfth
chapter) rehearseth, “Dico autem vobis amicis meis, ne terreamini ab hiis qui
occidunt corpus, et post haec non habent amplius quid faciant. Ostendam autem
vobis quem timeatis: Timete eum qui, postquam occiderit, habet potestatem
10 mittere in Gehennam. Ita dico vobis: hunc timete” (“I say to you that
are my friends, be not afeard of them that kill the body... and which,
when that is done, are able to do no more. But I shall show you
whom you should fear: Fear him which, when he hath killed, hath
in his power further to cast him whom he killeth into everlasting
15 fire. So I say to you: be afeard of him!”).

God meaneth not here that we should nothing dread at all any
man that can but kill the body; but he meaneth that we should not
in such wise dread any such, that we should for dread of them displease
him, that can everlastingly kill both body and soul—with a
20 death ever dying, and that yet never die. And therefore he addeth and repeateth
in the end again, the fear that we should have of him, and saith,
“Ita dico vobis: hunc timete”—“So I say to you: fear *him*.”

Oh, good God, Cousin, if a man would well weigh those words, and
let them sink, as they should do, down deep into his heart, and often
25 bethink himself thereon—it would, I doubt not, be able enough to
make us set at naught all the great Turk’s threats, and esteem him
not at a straw... but well content to endure all the pain that all the
world would put upon us, for so short while as all they were able to
make us dwell therein... rather than by the shrinking from those pains

2 *suddenly*: immediately 7–15: Luke 12:4–5. 12 *show*: tell 16 *nothing*: in no way
18 *displease*: offend 26 *set at naught*: disregard // *esteem*: appraise; rate
27 *well content*: (be) quite willing 28 *all they*: they all; all of them

though never so sharp, yet but short... to cast ourselves into the pain
of hell, a hundred thousand times more intolerable... and whereof
there shall never come an end. A woeful death is that death in which
folk shall evermore be dying and never can once be dead!—whereof the
5 Scripture saith, “Vocabunt mortem et mors fugiet ab eis” (“They shall call and
cry for death, and death shall fly from them”).

Oh, good Lord, if one of them were now put in choice of the
both... they would rather suffer the whole year together, the most
terrible death that all the Turks in Turkey could devise... than the
10 death that they lie in, for the space of half an hour. In how wretched
folly fall, then, those faithless or feeble-faithed folk that, to avoid the
pain so far the less and so short, fall in the stead thereof into pain
a thousand thousand times more horrible, and of which terrible torment
they be sure they shall never have end!

15 This matter, Cousin, lacketh, as I believe, either full faith or sufficient
minding. For I think on my faith... if we have the grace
verily to *believe* it, and often to think well thereon... the fear of all the
Turks’ persecution—with all this “midday devil” were able to make
them do in the forcing us to forsake our faith—should never be able
20 to turn us.

Vincent

By my troth, Uncle, I think it be as you say. For surely if we
would as often think on these pains of hell... as we be very loath to do
and seek us peevish pastimes of purpose to put such heavy things *out* of
25 our thought—this one point alone were able enough to make, I
think, many a martyr.

1 *never so*: no matter how 6 *fly from*: elude 8 *together*: without interruption
11 *faithless*: unbelieving 16 *minding*: consideration; reflection 19 *forsake*: renounce
22 *troth*: word 24 *peevish*: foolish // *heavy*: distressing 25 *were*: would be

*The consideration of the joys of heaven should make us
for Christ's sake abide and endure any painful death*

3.26

The Twenty-sixth Chapter

Anthony

- 5 Forsooth, Cousin, if we were such as we should be, I would scant, for very shame, in exhortation to the keeping of Christ's faith speak of the pains of hell. I would, rather, put us in mind of the joys of heaven—the pleasure whereof we should be more glad to get... than we should be to fly and escape all the pains in hell.
- 10 But surely God in that thing wherein he may seem most rigorous... is very merciful to us; and that is (which many men would little ween) in that he provided hell. For I suppose very surely, Cousin, that many a man, and woman too, of whom there now sit some... and more shall hereafter sit, full gloriously crowned in heaven—had they not first been
- 15 afraid of hell, would toward heaven never have set foot forward.
- But yet, undoubtedly, were it so that we could as well conceive in our hearts the marvelous joys of heaven as we conceive the fearful pains of hell—howbeit, sufficiently we can conceive neither nother. But if we would in our imagination draw as much toward the perceiving
- 20 of the one as we may toward the consideration of the other... we should not fail to be far more moved and stirred to the suffering for Christ's sake in this world for the winning of the heavenly joys... than for the eschewing of all those infernal pains. But forasmuch as the fleshly pleasures be far less pleasant than the fleshly
- 25 pains be painful: therefore we fleshly folk, that are so drowned in

2 *abide*: submit to 9 *fly*: elude 11 *ween*: think 16 *were it so*: if it were the case
18 *neither nother*: neither the one nor the other 20 *may*: can 24 *pleasant*: pleasurable

these fleshly pleasures, and in the desire thereof, that we can almost
 have no manner savor or taste in any pleasure spiritual, have no
 cause to marvel that our fleshly affections be more abated and
 refrained by the dread and terror of hell... than affections spiritual
 5 imprinted in us and pricked forward with desire and joyful hope of
 heaven.

3.26

Howbeit, if we would somewhat set less by the filthy voluptuous
 appetites of the flesh, and would by withdrawing from them, with help
 of prayer, through the grace of God, draw near to the secret, inward
 10 pleasure of the spirit, we should by the little sipping that our hearts
 should have here now, and that sudden taste thereof... have such an estimation
 of the incomparable and incogitable joy that we shall have
 (if we will) in heaven by the very full draft thereof—whereof it is
 written, “Satiabor cum apparuerit gloria tua” (“I shall be satiatedly satisfied and
 15 fulfilled when thy glory, good Lord, shall appear”; that is to wit, with the
 fruition of the sight of God’s glorious majesty face to face)—that
 the desire, expectation, and heavenly hope thereof shall more encourage
 us, and make us strong, to suffer and sustain for the love of God and salvation
 of our soul, than ever we could be moved to suffer here worldly
 20 pain by the terrible dread of all the horrible pains that damned
 wretches have in hell.

Wherefore in the meantime, for lack of such experimental taste
 as God giveth here sometimes to some of his special servants, to
 the intent we may draw toward spiritual exercise too—for which
 25 spiritual exercise... God with that gift, as with an earnest penny of their
 whole reward after in heaven, comforteth them here in earth—let us not
 so much with looking to have described what *manner* of joys they
 shall be, as with hearing what our Lord telleth us in Holy Scripture... how
 marvelously *great* they shall be, labor by prayer to conceive in our

2 *manner*: kind of // *savor*: delight 3, 4 *affections*: inclinations / feelings 3 *abated*: subdued
 4 *refrained*: restrained; held back 5 *imprinted*: i.e., are imprinted // *pricked*: spurred // *with*: by
 7 *filthy*: low; base // *voluptuous*: sensual 11 *sudden*: momentary
 11 *have such an estimation*: get such an idea of 12 *incogitable*: unthinkable; unimaginable
 13 *draft*: drinking 14–15: Psalm 17:15. 16 *fruition*: enjoyment
 22 *experimental*: experiential 25 *an earnest penny*: a little advance on 29 *labor*: strive

hearts such a fervent longing for them that we may for attaining to them utterly set at naught all fleshly delight, all worldly pleasures... all earthly losses, all bodily torment and pain.

5 Howbeit, some things *are* there in Scripture expressed of the *manner* of the pleasures and joys that we shall have in heaven, as where “fulgebunt iusti sicut sol, et qui erudiunt ad iustitiam tamquam scintillae in arundinetis discurrent”—“righteous men shall shine as the sun, and shall run about like sparks of fire among reeds.”

10 Now, tell some carnal-minded man of this manner pleasure... and he shall take little pleasure therein, and say he careth not to have his flesh shine, he—nor like a spark of fire to skip about in the sky.

Tell him that his body shall be impassible, and never feel harm: yet if he think then therewith that he shall never be ahungred nor athirst... and shall thereby forbear all his pleasure in eating and drinking;
 15 and that he shall never have lust to sleep... and thereby lose the pleasure that he was wont to take in slugging; and that men and women shall there live together as angels, without any manner mind or motion unto the carnal act of generation, and that he shall thereby not use there his old filthy voluptuous fashion—he will say he is better at ease already,
 20 and would not give this world for that. For as Saint Paul saith, “Animalis homo non percipit ea quae sunt Spiritus Dei; stultitia est enim ei.” But when the time shall come that these foul filthy pleasures shall be so taken from him that it shall abhor his heart once to think on them (whereof every man hath, among, a certain shadow of experience
 25 in the fervent grief of a sore painful sickness, while the stomach can scant abide to look upon any meat... and as for acts of the other foul, filthy lust... is ready to vomit if it hap him to think thereon); when men shall, I say, after this life feel that horrible abomination in their heart at the remembrance of those voluptuous

2 *set at naught*: disregard 6–8: Wisdom 3:7. 9, 17 *manner*: kind of
 12 *impassible*: incapable of suffering // *feel*: experience 13 *think*: consider
 14 *forbear*: do without 15 *lust*: the desire // *lose*: i.e., will lose
 16 *slugging*: lying around in bed 17 *as angels*: i.e., as angels live there // *mind*: thought
 17 *motion*: inclination 18 *use there*: behave there in 19, 22, 27 *filthy*: low; base
 19, 29 *voluptuous*: sensual 19 *better at ease*: better off 20–21: 1 Corinthians 2:14 (“The carnal man does not perceive what is of the Spirit of God; to him it is foolishness”).
 24 *among*: now and then 25 *fervent*: intense // *grief*: suffering // *sore*: terribly
 25 *while*: when 26 *upon*: at // *meat*: food 27 *lust*: desire / lasciviousness

pleasures... of which abomination sickness hath here a shadow... for
 which voluptuous pleasures he would here be loath to change with the
 joys of heaven; when he shall, I say, after this life have his
 fleshly pleasures in abomination... and shall of those heavenly joys,
 5 which he set here so little by, have there a glimmering... though far
 from a perfect sight: oh, good God, how fain will he then be—with
 how good will, and how gladly, will he then give this whole world if it
 were his—to have the feeling of some little part of those joys! And
 therefore let us all that cannot now conceive such delight in the consideration
 10 of them as we should, have often in our eyes by reading...
 often in our ears by hearing... often in our mouths by rehearsing...
 often in our hearts by meditation and thinking... those joyful words
 of *Holy Scripture* by which we learn how wonderful, huge, and great
 those spiritual, heavenly joys are... of which our carnal hearts have so
 15 feeble and so faint a feeling... and our dull, worldly wits so little able to
 conceive so much as a shadow of the right imagination. A *shadow*,
 I say; for as for the thing as it is—that can not only no fleshly,
 carnal fantasy conceive... but, over that, no spiritual, ghostly person,
 peradventure, neither, that here is here living still, in this world.
 20 For since the very substance essential of all the celestial joy standeth
 in blessed beholding of the glorious Godhead face to face, there
 may no man presume or look to attain it in this life. For God hath
 so said himself: “Non videbit me homo et vivet”—“There shall no man
 here living behold me.” And therefore we may well know that for
 25 the state of this life, we be not only shut from the fruition of the
 bliss of heaven, but also that the very best man living here upon
 earth (the best man, I mean, being no *more* but a man) cannot, I
 ween, attain the right imagination thereof... but those that are
 very virtuous are yet in a manner as far therefrom as the born-blind
 30 man from the right imagination of colors.

1–2 *for which . . . change with*: which . . . trade for 3 *have*: hold

5 *which . . . by*: which he here cared so little about 6 *fain*: desirous

11 *rehearsing*: repeating; reiterating 18 *fantasy*: imagination // *ghostly*: devout

20 *standeth*: consists 22 *look*: hope 23–24: Exodus 33:20. 25 *shut*: shut off; barred

25 *fruition*: enjoyment; pleasurable possession 27 *but*: than 29 *in a manner*: just about

3.26

The words that Saint Paul rehearseth of the prophet Isaiah... prophesying of Christ's incarnation... may properly be verified of the joys of heaven: "Nec oculus vidit, nec auris audivit, nec in cor hominis ascendit, quae praeparavit Deus diligentibus se." For surely, for this state of this world,

5 the joys of heaven are by man's mouth unspeakable... to man's ears not audible... to men's hearts incogitable—so far forth excel they all that ever men have heard of... all that ever men can speak of... and all that ever any man can by natural possibility think on. And yet whereas the joys of heaven be such prepared for *every* saved soul...

10 our Lord saith yet, by the mouth of Saint John, that he will give his holy martyrs, that suffer for his sake, many a *special* kind of joy. For he saith, "Vincenti dabo edere de ligno vitae"—"To him that overcometh, I shall give him to eat of the tree of life." And also, "He that overcometh shall be clothed in white clothes . . . and I shall confess his name before

15 my Father and before his angels." And also he saith, "Fear none of those things that thou shalt suffer," etc., "but be faithful unto the death... and I shall give thee the crown of life. . . . He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death." He saith also, "Vincenti dabo manna absconditum, et dabo illi calculum candidum. Et in calculo nomen novum scriptum quod nemo scit nisi qui accipit" ("To him that overcometh will I

20 give manna secret and hidden. And I will give him a white suffrage, and in his suffrage a new name written which no man knoweth but he that receiveth it").

25 They used of old in Greece (where Saint John did write) to elect and choose men unto honorable rooms. And every man's assent was called his "suffrages"; which in some place was by the voices... in some place by hands... and one kind of those suffrages was by certain things that are in Latin called *calculi*... because that in some places they used thereto round stones. Now saith our Lord that unto

1 *rehearseth of*: quotes from 2 *verified*: affirmed as true

3–4: 1 Corinthians 2:9 ("Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man conceived, what God has prepared for those who love him"). 6 *incogitable*: unthinkable; unimaginable

12–23: Revelation 2:7; 3:5; 2:10–11; 2:17. 18 *hurt of*: harmed by 21 *in*: on

25 *honorable*: high; prestigious // *rooms*: offices; positions // *assent*: vote

him which overcometh, he will give a *white* suffrage... for those that
 were white signified approving; as the black signifieth reprov-
 ing. And in those suffrages did they use to write the name of him to whom
 they gave their voice. And now saith our Lord that unto him that
 5 overcometh, he will in the suffrage give him a *new* name which no
 man knoweth but he that receiveth it.

3.26

He saith also, "He that overcometh, I will make him a pillar in the
 temple of my God... and he shall go no more out thereof; and I shall write
 upon him the name of my God... and the name of the city of my God,
 10 the new Jerusalem, which descendeth from heaven, from my God; and I
 shall write on him also *my* new name."

If we should dilate, and were able to declare, these special gifts
 with yet others more, specified in the second and the third chapter of
 the Apocalypse... there would it appear how far those heavenly joys shall
 15 surmount above all the comfort that ever came in the mind of any
 man living here upon earth.

The blessed apostle Saint Paul, that suffered so many perils and so
 many passions; he that saith of himself that he hath been "in
 laboribus pluribus, in carceribus abundantius, in plagis supra modum," etc.;
 20 "in many labors, in prisons oftener than others, in stripes above measure,
 at point of death oftentimes; of the Jews had I five times forty
 stripes save one; thrice have I been beaten with rods; once was I
 stoned; thrice have I been in shipwreck; a day and a night
 was I in the depth of the sea; in my journeys oft have I been in
 25 peril of floods, in peril of thieves... in perils by the Jews... in perils
 by the paynims... in perils in the city... in perils in
 desert... in perils in the sea... perils by false brethren; in labor and
 misery... in many nights' watch... in hunger and thirst... in many
 fastings... in cold and nakedness; besides those things, that are outward,
 30 my daily instant labor (I mean my care and solicitude about all the

2 *approving*: approval // *reproving*: disapproval 3, 5 *in*: on 4 *voice*: support

7–11: Revelation 3:12. 12 *dilate*: enlarge upon // *declare*: explicate

14 *Apocalypse*: Book of Revelation 18 *passions*: afflictions; ordeals

20 *oftener than others*: i.e., more often than the other apostles have been

20 *in stripes above measure*: in more than the average number of floggings

21 *of*: from // *had*: received 21–22 *five . . . one*: 199 lashes 26 *paynims*: pagans

28 *nights' watch*: sleepless nights 29 *outward*: external 30 *instant*: pressing

31 *care*: anxiety 310/18—311/1: 2 Corinthians 11:23–28.

- churches)”—and yet saith he more of his tribulations, which for the length, I let pass—this blessed apostle, I say, for all the tribulations that himself suffered in the continuance of so many years, calleth yet *all* the tribulations of this world but light and as short
 5 as a moment in respect of the weighty glory that it after this world winneth us: “Id enim, quod in praesenti est momentaneum et leve tribulationis nostrae, supra modum in sublimitate aeternum gloriae pondus operatur in nobis, non contemplantibus nobis quae videntur, sed quae non videntur. Quae enim videntur, temporalia sunt: quae autem non videntur, aeterna sunt”; “This same
 10 short and momentary tribulation of ours, that is in this present time, worketh within us the weight of glory above measure... *in sublimitate* [on high!], we beholding not those things that we see... but those things that we see not. For those things that we see, be but temporal things; but those things that are not seen are eternal.”
 15 Now, to this great glory can there no man come headless. Our head is Christ; and therefore to him must we be joined... and as members of his must we follow him... if we will come thither. He is our Guide, to guide us thither, and is entered in before us; and he, therefore, that will enter in after, “debet sicut ille ambulavit et ipse ambulare”—“the
 20 same way that Christ walked, the same way must *he* walk.” And what was the way by which he walked into heaven? Himself showeth what way it was (that his Father had provided for him!), where he said unto the two disciples going toward the castle of Emmaus, “Nesciebatis quia oportebat Christum pati, et sic introire in regnum suum?”—“Knew ye not
 25 that Christ must suffer passion, and by that way enter into his kingdom?” Who can for very shame desire to enter into the kingdom of Christ with ease, when himself entered not into his own without pain?

1 *yet . . . of*: he says yet more about 3 *in . . . years*: for so many years on end
 5 *in respect of*: in comparison with 6–14: 2 Corinthians 4:17–18. 11 *worketh*: brings about
 15–17: See Colossians 1:18; Ephesians 1:22–23; 4:15–16. 18–20: 1 John 2:6.
 21, 27 *himself*: he himself 21 *showeth*: states 23 *castle*: village 23–25: Luke 24:26.
 25 *passion*: agony 26 *for very shame*: i.e., be so shameless as to

*The consideration of the painful death of Christ is
sufficient to make us content to suffer painful death
for his sake*

3.27

The Twenty-seventh Chapter

5 Surely, Cousin, as I said before in bearing the loss of worldly goods,
in suffering of captivity, thralldom, and imprisonment, and in the glad
sustaining of worldly shame, that if we would in all those points
deeply ponder the example of our Savior himself... it were of itself,
alone, sufficient to encourage every kind Christian man and
10 woman to refuse none of all those calamities for his sake: so say I
now... for painful death also. That if we could and would with due compassion
conceive in our minds a right imagination and remembrance
of Christ's bitter, painful Passion... of the many sore, bloody
strokes that the cruel tormentors with rods and whips gave
15 him upon every part of his holy, tender body; the scornful crown
of sharp thorns beaten down upon his holy head, so strait
and so deep that on every part his blessed blood issued out and streamed
down; his lovely limbs drawn and stretched out upon the cross, to
the intolerable pain of his fore-beaten and sore-beaten veins and sinews...
20 newly feeling, with the cruel stretching and straining, pain, far
passing any cramp, in every part of his blessed body at once; then
the great, long nails cruelly driven with hammers through his holy
hands and feet; and in this horrible pain, lifted up and let hang with
the peise of all his body bearing down upon the painful wounded
25 places so grievously pierced with nails; and in such torment...
without pity, but not without many despites... suffered to be pinned
and pained the space of more than three long hours... till himself
willingly gave up unto his Father his holy soul; after which yet,
to show the mightiness of their malice, after his holy soul departed...
30 pierced his holy heart with a sharp spear... at which issued out the holy
blood and water whereof his holy sacraments have inestimable secret

2 *content*: willing 5, 6 *in*: about 6 *thralldom*: enslavement 8 *were*: would be
9 *kind*: warmhearted / having normal sensibilities 16 *srait*: hard 17 *part*: side
21 *passing*: worse than 22 *great*: big 24 *peise*: weight 26 *despites*: insults
31 *secret*: hidden

strength—if we would, I say, remember these things in such wise as
 would God we would—I verily suppose that the consideration of his
 incomparable kindness could not fail in such wise to inflame our
 key-cold hearts, and set them on fire in his love, that we should find
 5 ourselves not only *content*, but also *glad* and *desirous*, to suffer death
 for his sake... that so marvelously lovingly letted not to sustain so
 far passing painful death for ours.

3.27

Would God we would here, to the shame of our cold affection again
 toward God for such fervent love and inestimable kindness of God toward
 10 us—would God we would, I say, but consider what hot affection
 many of these fleshly lovers have borne, and daily do, to those
 upon whom they dote. How many of them have not letted to jeopard
 their lives—and how many have willingly lost their lives indeed—
 without either great kindness showed them before... and afterward,
 15 you wot well, they could nothing win. But even that yet contented
 and satisfied their mind: that by their death, their lover should clearly
 see... how faithfully they loved; the delight whereof imprinted in their
 fantasy... not assuaged only, but counterpoised also, they thought, all
 their pain. Of these affections, with the wonderful dolorous effects
 20 following thereon, not only old written stories, but over that, I
 think in every country, Christian and heathen both, experience giveth
 us proof enough. And is it not then a wonderful shame for us... for
 the dread of temporal death, to forsake our *Savior*, that willingly suffered
 so painful death rather than he would forsake us?—considering that
 25 besides that... he shall for our suffering so highly reward us with everlasting
 wealth!

Oh, if he that is content to die for his love, of whom he looketh after
 for no reward, and yet by his death goeth from her, might by his death be
 sure to come to her, and ever after in delight and pleasure to dwell with
 30 her: such a lover would not let here to die for her twice! And how

2, 8, 10 *would God*: I wish to God 5, 27 *content*: willing 6 *his sake*: the sake of him
 6 *that*: who // *letted not*: did not forbear 6–7 *so . . . death*: so far more extremely painful a death
 7 *ours*: i.e., our sake 8 *affection*: feeling // *again*: directed back 12 *letted*: forborne
 12 *jeopard*: risk 14 *kindness*: affection 15 *wot*: know 18 *fantasy*: imagination
 18 *counterpoised also*: also compensated for 19 *affections*: sentiments / passionate devotions
 19 *wonderful*: terribly // *dolorous*: sad; heartbreaking 20 *stories*: historical accounts
 20 *over*: besides 22 *wonderful*: terrible 23 *that*: who 26 *wealth*: well-being; prosperity
 27–28 *of . . . reward*: from whom he expects no reward afterward
 28 *from*: away from // *might*: could 30 *let*: forbear

cold lovers be we, then, unto God... if rather than die for him once,
 we will refuse him and forsake him forever, that both died for us
 before... and hath also provided that if we die here for him, we shall
 in heaven everlastingly both live and also reign with him? For as

5 Saint Peter saith, “*Si compatimur, et conregnabimus*”—“If we suffer with
 him, we shall reign with him.”

How many Romans... how many noble courages of other sundry
 countries... have willingly given their own lives, and suffered great, deadly
 pains and very painful deaths, for their countries, and the respect of
 10 winning by their deaths the only reward of worldly renown and
 fame! And should we then shrink to suffer as much for *eternal*
 honor in *heaven*, and *everlasting* glory? The devil hath also some so
 obstinate heretics that endure, willingly, painful death for vain
 glory; and is it not then more than shame that Christ shall see
 15 his Catholics forsake his faith... rather than suffer the same for
heaven and *very* glory?

Would God, as I many times have said, that the remembrance of
 Christ’s kindness in suffering his Passion for us... the consideration of
 hell, that we should fall in by forsaking of him... the joyful meditation
 20 of eternal life in heaven, that we shall win with this short temporal
 death patiently taken for him, had so deep a place in our breast as
 reason would they should—and as, if we would do our *devoir* toward it and
 labor for it... and pray therefor, I verily think they should. For then
 should they so take up our mind, and ravish it all another way, that as
 25 a man hurt in a fray feeleth not, sometimes, his wound... nor yet is not
 aware thereof... till his mind fall more thereon—so far forth that sometimes
 another man showeth him that he hath lost a hand, before
 that he perceiveth it himself—so the mind ravished in the thinking
 deeply of those other things (Christ’s death... hell and heaven)...
 30 were likely to diminish and put away of our painful death four parts
 of the feeling either of the fear or the pain. For of this am I very

2 *refuse*: renounce / reject // *forsake*: renounce / leave // *that*: who

5–6: See 1 Peter 4:13; Romans 8:17; 2 Timothy 2:11–12. 7 *courages*: spirits

9 *respect*: consideration; thought 10 *only*: sole 19 *in*: into

19–20 *meditation of*: meditating on; thinking about 22 *our devoir*: what we can

23 *labor therefor*: strive for it 25 *fray*: fight 27 *showeth*: tells

28 *that he perceiveth it himself*: he himself realizes it

30–31 *four parts of the feeling*: four times the feeling (that we actually have)

sure: If we had the fifteenth part of the love to Christ that he both
 had and hath to us, all the pain of this Turk's persecution could
 not keep us from him; but that there would be at this day as many
 martyrs here in Hungary as have been before in other countries, of
 5 old.

And of *this* point put I nothing doubt... but that if the Turk stood
 even here with all his whole army about him, and every one of them
 all were ready at our hand with all the terrible torments that they
 could imagine, and but if we would forsake the faith were setting their
 10 torments to us, and, to the increase of our terror, fell all at once in a
 shout, with trumpets, tabrets, and timbrels all blown up at
 once, and all their guns let go therewith, to make us a fearful noise—
 if yon should suddenly then, on the other side, the ground quake and
 rive a-twain, and the devils rise out of hell, and show themselves in such
 15 ugly shape as damned wretches see them... and with that hideous
 howling that those hellhounds should shriek... lay hell open on
 every side round about our feet, that as we stood... we should look
 down into that pestilent pit and see the swarm of seely souls in the
 terrible torments there—we would wax so afeard of *that* sight that as
 20 for the Turk's host, we should scanty remember we saw them.

And, in good faith, for all that, yet think I farther this: that if there
 might then appear the glory of God... the Trinity in his high, marvelous
 majesty, our Savior in his glorious manhood sitting on his throne,
 with his Immaculate Mother... and all that glorious company
 25 calling us there unto them; and that yet our way should lie through marvelous
 painful death before we could come at them—upon the
 sight, I say, of that glory, there would, I ween, be no man that once would
 shrink thereat... but every man would *run* on toward them, in all that
 ever he might, though there lay for malice, to kill us by the way, both
 30 all the Turk's tormentors and all the devils too. And therefore, Cousin,

1 *the . . . that*: one-fifteenth as much love for Christ as 6 *put I nothing doubt*: I have no doubt at all
 7 *even*: right // *all his whole army*: his whole entire army 8, 10 *torments*: tortures
 9 *imagine*: think up // *but if*: unless // *forsake*: renounce
 9–10 *were . . . us*: were going to inflict their tortures on us 11 *tabrets*: small drums
 11 *timbrels*: tambourines // *blown up*: loudly sounded 13 *yon*: yonder
 14 *rive a-twain*: split in two 18 *seely*: poor 19 *wax*: become 25 *marvelous*: terribly
 26 *come at*: reach 27 *ween*: think; suppose 28–29 *in . . . might*: as hard as he possibly could
 29 *by*: along

let us well consider these things, and let us have sure hope in the help
 of God... and then I doubt not but that we shall be sure that, as the prophet
 saith, the truth of his promise shall so *compass* us with a
pavis that of this incursion of this midday devil... this Turk's persecution...
 5 we shall never need to fear. For either, if we trust in *God* well,
 and prepare us therefor, the Turk shall never meddle with us... or else
 if he do, harm shall he none do us... but instead of harm, inestimable
 good. Of whose gracious help wherefore should we so sore now
 despair (except we were so mad men as to ween that either his
 10 power or his mercy were worn out already), when we see so many a
 thousand holy martyrs by his holy help suffered as much before as
 any man shall be put to now? Or what excuse can we have by the
 tenderness of our flesh, when we can be no more tender than were
 many of them—among whom were not only men of strength, but
 15 also weak women and children?

And since the strength of them all stood in the help of *God*, and that
 the very strongest of them all was never able of themselves... and
 with *God*'s help the feeblest of them all was strong enough to stand
 against all the world: let us prepare ourselves with prayer, with our
 20 whole trust in his help, without any trust in our own strength. Let
 us think thereon, and prepare us in our mind thereto, long before; let us
 therein conform our will unto his—not desiring to be brought unto the
 peril of persecution (for it seemeth a proud, high mind, to *desire*
 martyrdom), but desiring help and strength of *God* if he suffer us to
 25 come to the stress, either being sought, found, and brought out
 against our wills... or else being by his commandment...
 for the comfort of our cure bound to abide.

Let us fall to fasting, to prayer, to almsdeed, in time... and give
 that unto *God* that may be taken from us. If the devil put in our

4 *pavis*: shield 6 *us*: ourselves // *therefor*: for it (i.e., the Turk's coming)

6 *meddle*: engage in conflict 7 *inestimable*: incalculable 8 *wherefore*: why

9 *so*: such // *ween*: think; suppose 10 *worn out*: exhausted; used up

23 *high*: puffed-up; conceited // *mind*: state of mind

24 *desiring* . . . *God*: asking *God* to help and strengthen us

25 *stress*: ordeal 27 *comfort*: strengthening

27 *our cure*: the people for whose spiritual well-being we have a particular responsibility

27 *bound to abide*: obliged to stay where we are 28 *fall*: apply ourselves

28–29 *give that unto God that may*: give to *God* whatever could

- mind the saving of our land and our goods... let us remember that
we cannot save them long. If he fear us with exile, and flying from
our country, let us remember that we be born in the broad world,
and not like a tree to stick still in one place, and that whithersoever we go,
5 God shall go with us.
- If he threaten us with captivity... let us tell him again, better is it
to be thrall unto *man* a *while* for the pleasure of God than by displeasing
God be *perpetual* thrall unto the *devil*. If he threaten us with
imprisonment... let us tell him we will rather be *man*'s prisoners a
10 *while* here in *earth*... than by forsaking the faith, be *his* prisoners
ever in *hell*.
- If he put in our minds the terror of the Turks... let us consider
his false sleight therein. For this tale he telleth us to make us forget
him. But let us remember well that in respect of himself, the Turk
15 is but a shadow; nor all that they all can do can be but a flea-biting
in comparison of the mischief that *he* goeth about. The Turks
are but his tormentors; for himself doth the deed. Our Lord saith
in the Apocalypse, "Diabolus mittet aliquos vestrum in carcerem, ut tentemini"—
"The devil shall send some of you to prison, to tempt you." He saith
20 not that *men* shall, but that the devil shall himself; for without
question, the devil's own deed it is—to bring us, by his temptation, with
fear and force thereof into eternal damnation. And therefore saith
Saint Paul, "Non est nobis colluctatio adversus carnem et sanguinem," etc.;
"Our wrestling is not against flesh and blood," etc. Thus may we see that
25 in such persecutions, it is the midday devil himself that maketh
such incursion upon us—by the men that are his ministers... to make
us fall for fear. For till we fall, he can never hurt us. And therefore
saith Saint Peter, "Resistite diabolo, et fugiet a vobis"—"Stand against the
devil, and he shall flee from you." For he never runneth upon a man to
30 seize on him with his claws till he see him down on the

2 *fear us with*: frighten us with the threat of 3 *broad*: wide 4 *stick still*: stay stuck
6 *again*: in reply 7 *thrall*: slave 10 *in*: on // *forsaking*: renouncing
13 *false sleight*: treacherous trickery 14 *in respect of himself*: compared to him
16 *of*: to // *mischief*: harm 17 *tormentors*: hatchet men; goons // *himself*: he himself
18–19: Revelation 2:10. 23–24: Ephesians 6:12. 27 *hurt*: harm
28–29: This is actually from James 4:7. But see 1 Peter 5:8–11.

ground willingly fallen himself; for his fashion is to set his *servants*
 against us, and by *them* to make us, for fear or for impatience,
 to fall. And himself in the meanwhile compasseth us, running and
 roaring like a ramping lion about us, looking who will fall, that he
 5 then may devour him. “Adversarius vester diabolus,” saith Saint Peter,
 “sicut leo rugiens circuit quaerens quem devoret” (“Your adversary the devil
 like a roaring lion runneth about in circuit, seeking whom he
 may devour”). The devil it is, therefore, that if we for fear of men will
 fall, is ready to run upon us and devour us. And is it wisdom, then,
 10 so much to think upon the Turks that we forget the devil? What
 madman is he that when a lion were about to devour him, would
 vouchsafe to regard the biting of a little fisting cur? Therefore, when
 he roareth out upon us by the threats of mortal men... let us tell him
 that with our inward eye we see him well enough, and intend to stand
 15 and fight with him even, hand to hand. If he threaten us that we be too
 weak... let us tell him that our Captain, Christ, is with us, and that we
 shall fight with his strength that hath vanquished him already.

And let us fence us with faith, and comfort us with hope, and smite
 the devil in the face with a firebrand of charity. For surely if we
 20 be of that tender loving mind that our Master was... and not hate them
 that kill us, but pity them and pray for them, with sorrow for the peril
 that they work unto themselves—that fire of charity thrown in his
 face striketh the devil suddenly so blind that he cannot see where
 to fasten a stroke on us.

25 When we feel us too bold... remember our own feebleness. When we
 feel us too faint... remember Christ’s strength. In our fear, let us remember
 Christ’s painful agony—that himself would for our comfort
 suffer before his Passion, to the intent that no fear should make us despair—
 and ever call for his help, such as himself list to send us. And
 30 then need we never to doubt but that either he shall keep
 us from the painful death... or shall not fail so to strengthen us *in* it
 that he shall joyously bring us to heaven *by* it—and then doth he much

5–8: 1 Peter 5:8. 12 *vouchsafe*: deign // *regard*: take notice of // *fisting cur*: pet dog
 15 *even*: directly 17 *his* . . . *hath*: the strength of him who has 18 *fence*: protect
 18, 25, 26 *us*: ourselves 21–22 *the* . . . *themselves*: the danger that they put themselves in
 23 *suddenly*: immediately 24 *fasten a stroke*: land a blow 26 *faint*: lacking in courage
 27 *himself would for our comfort*: he for our encouragement chose to 29 *list*: is pleased

more for us than if he kept us from it. For as God did more for poor Lazarus in helping him patiently to die for hunger at the rich man's door... than if he had brought him, to the door, all the rich glutton's dinner—so, though he be gracious to a man whom he delivereth out of
 5 painful trouble, yet doth he much more for a man... if through right painful death he deliver him from this wretched world into eternal bliss. From which whosoever shrink away with forsaking his faith, and falleth in the peril of everlasting fire—he shall be very sure to repent it ere it be long after. For I ween that whensoever he falleth
 10 sick next, he will wish that he had been killed for Christ's sake before. What folly is it, then, for fear to flee from that death which thou seest thou shalt shortly after wish thou hadst died? Yea, I ween almost every good Christian man would very fain this day that he had been for Christ's faith cruelly killed yesterday... even for the desire
 15 of heaven, though there were no hell. But to fear while the pain is *coming*—there is all our let. But then if we would remember hell pain, on the other side, into which we fall while we flee from this—then should this short pain be no let at all. And yet should we be more pricked forward, if we were faithful, by deep considering of the
 20 joys of heaven, of which the Apostle saith, “Non sunt condignae passioness huius temporis ad futuram gloriam quae revelabitur in nobis”—“The passions of this time be not worthy to the glory that is to come, which shall be showed in us.” We should not, I ween, Cousin, need much more in all this whole matter than that one text of Saint Paul, if we would consider
 25 it well. For surely, mine own good Cousin, remember that if it were possible for me and you alone to suffer as much trouble as the whole world doth together—all that were not worthy, of itself, to bring us to the joy which we hope to have everlastingly. And therefore I pray you let the consideration of that joy put out all worldly

3 *to*: at 7 *which*: i.e., which painful death // *with forsaking*: by renouncing 8 *in*: into
 9, 12 *ween*: think it likely; suppose 9 *falleth*: comes down
 13 *very fain this day*: very much like it today 14 *even*: just 15 *though*: even if
 16 *all our*: our whole 16, 18 *let*: hindrance 17 *while*: when
 19 *pricked forward*: spurred on // *faithful*: full of faith 20 *the Apostle*: i.e., Saint Paul
 20–23: Romans 8:18. 21 *passions*: sufferings 22 *be not worthy to*: don't measure up to
 23 *ween*: think 27 *all that were not worthy*: all of that could not merit

trouble out of your heart... and also pray that it may do the same in
me. And even thus will I, good Cousin, with these words, make a sudden
end of my whole tale, and bid you farewell. For now begin
I to feel myself somewhat weary.

3.27

5

Vincent

Forsooth, good Uncle, this is a good end! And it is no marvel though
you be waxen weary. For I have this day put you to so much labor
that, saving for the comfort that yourself may take of your time so
well bestowed, and for the comfort that I have myself taken (and more
10 shall, I trust) of your good counsel given—else would I be very sorry
to have put you to so much pain. But now shall our Lord reward and
recompense you therefor... and *many* shall, I trust, pray for you. For,
to the intent that the more may take profit by you, I purpose, Uncle, as my
poor wit and learning will serve me, to put your good counsel in
15 remembrance, not in our language only, but in the Almain
tongue too. And thus, praying God to give me, and all others that shall read
it, the grace to follow your good counsel therein, I shall commit you
to God.

Anthony

20 Since you be minded, Cousin, to bestow so much labor thereon, I would
it had happed you to fetch the counsel at some wiser man, that
could have given you better. But better men may set more things,
and better also, thereto. And in the meantime, I beseech our Lord to
breathe of his Holy Spirit into the reader's breast, which inwardly may
25 teach him in heart, without whom little availeth all that all the
mouths of the world were able to teach in men's ears. And thus, good
Cousin, farewell, till God bring us together again, either here or in
heaven. Amen.

Finis

2 *sudden*: quick 6–7 *no . . . weary*: no wonder if you have grown weary 9 *bestowed*: spent
11 *pain*: trouble 15 *Almain*: German 20–21 *I would it had happed you*: I wish you had happened
21 *at*: from 22 *set*: add