

The Examination of William Thorpe

Anonymous (trial record of William Thorpe)

Radical Reformation · Late Medieval · Dialogue

STROMATA 186

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INTRODUCTION

William Thorpe's own account of his 1407 interrogation by Archbishop Thomas Arundel is one of the few surviving first-person records of a Lollard under examination for heresy. Structured as a back-and-forth dialogue, it captures Thorpe defending his beliefs on the Eucharist, images, pilgrimage, and clerical authority point by point against an increasingly impatient archbishop, ending with Thorpe's own imprisonment. First printed around 1530 with Tyndale's likely involvement and later absorbed into Foxe's Acts and Monuments, the text has a vividness that comes from its closeness to the actual event, a rare window into what a real interrogation, not just a theological treatise, sounded like.

Penned By His Own Hand

Introduction

Known be it to all men who read or hear this writing, that on the Sunday after the feast of St. Peter, which we call Lammas, in the year of our Lord, 1407, I William Thorpe, being in prison in the castle of Saltwood, was brought before Thomas Arundel, archbishop of Canterbury, then chancellor of England. When I came to him, he stood in a great chamber, and many people about him; and when he saw me, he went fast into a closet, bidding all secular men that followed him to go forth from him soon, so that no man was left then in that closet but the archbishop himself, and a physician who was called Malveren, the parson of St. Dunstan's in London, and two other persons unknown to me, who were ministers of the law.

And I standing before them, the archbishop said to me; William, I know well that you have this twenty winters and more, travelled about busily in the north country, and in divers other countries of England, sowing about false doctrine, having great business if you might, with thine untrue teaching and shrewd will to infect and poison all this land. But through the grace of God you art now withstood and brought into my ward, so that I shall now sequester you from thine evil purpose, and hinder you to envenom the sheep of my province. Nevertheless, St. Paul saith, If it may be, as much as in us is, we ought to have peace with all men. Therefore, William, if you will now meekly and of good heart, without any feigning, kneel down, and lay your hand upon a book and kiss it, promising faithfully as I shall here

charge you, that you will submit yourself to my correction, and stand to mine ordinance, and fulfil it duly by all your skill and power, you shalt yet find me gracious unto you.

William confesses his faith

Then said I to the archbishop, Sir, since ye deem me a heretic, and out of belief, will you give me here audience to tell my belief? And he said. Yea, tell on. And I said, I believe that there is but one God almighty, and in this Godhead, and of this Godhead are three persons, that is, the Father, the Son, and the soothfast *Holy Ghost*. *And I believe that all these three persons are even in power and in knowledge, and in might, full of grace and of all goodness. For whatsoever the Father doth, or can, or will, that also the Son doth and can and will; and in all their power, knowledge, and will, the Holy Ghost is equal to the Father, and to the Son.*

Beside this, I believe, that through counsel of this most blessed Trinity, in most convenient time, before ordained, for the salvation of mankind, the second Person of the Trinity was ordained to take the form of man, that is the kind of man. And I believe, that this second Person, our Lord Jesus Christ, was conceived through the Holy Ghost of the most blessed virgin Mary. And I believe that Christ was born of this most blessed virgin.

And I believe that Christ our Saviour was circumcised on the eighth day after his birth, in fulfilling of the law; and his name was called Jesus, which was so called of the angel before he was conceived of Mary his mother.

And I believe that Christ, when he was about thirty years old, was baptized in the flood of Jordan by John Baptist; and in the likeness of a dove, the Holy Ghost descended there upon him, and a voice was heard from heaven, saying, you art my well-beloved Son, in you I am full pleased. And I believe that Christ was moved then by the Holy Ghost to go into the desert, and there he fasted forty days and forty nights without bodily meat and drink. And I believe that by and by, after his fasting, when the manhood of Christ hungered, the fiend came to him, and tempted him in gluttony, in vain glory, and in covetousness. But in all those temptations Christ withstood the fiend, and overcame him. And then, without tarrying, Jesus began to preach, and to say unto the people, *Do ye penance, for the realm of heaven is now at hand.*

I believe that Christ in all his time here lived most holily, and taught the will of his Father most truly; and I believe that he suffered therefore most wrongfully, greatest reproofs and despisings. And after this, when Christ would make an end of this temporal life, I believe that in the next day before he suffered in the morn, in the form of bread and wine he ordained the sacrament of his flesh and his blood; that is his own precious body, and gave it to his apostles to eat; commanding them, and by them all their after comers, that they should do it in this form that he showed to them, use themselves, and teach and commune forth to other men and women this most worshipful and holiest sacrament, in mindfulness of his holiest living, and of his most true preaching, and of his willing and patient suffering of the most painful passion.

And I believe that this Christ our Saviour, after he had ordained this most worthy sacrament of his own precious body, went forth willingly against his enemies; and he suffered them most patiently to lay their hands most violently upon him, and to bind him, and to lead him forth as a thief, and to scorn him and buffet him, and to defile him with their spittings. Besides this, I believe that Christ suffered most meekly and patiently his enemies to ding out with sharp scourges the blood that was between the skin and his flesh. Yea, without grudging, Christ suffered the cruel Jews to crown him with most sharp thorns, and to strike him with a reed. And afterwards, Christ suffered wicked Jews to draw him out upon the cross, and to nail him thereupon hand and foot. And so through his pitiful nailing, Christ shed willingly for man's life, the blood that was in his veins. And then Christ gave willingly his spirit into the hands or power of his Father, and so, as he would, and when he would, Christ died willingly for man's sake upon the cross. And notwithstanding that Christ was wiLLingly, painfully, and most shamefully put to death, as to the world; there was left blood and water in his heart, as before ordained that he should shed this blood and this, water for man's salvation. And therefore he suffered the Jews to make a blind knight to thrust him in the heart with a spear; and this blood and water that was in his heart, Christ would shed for man's love; and after this, I believe that Christ was taken down from the cross and buried. And I believe that on the third day, by the power of his Godhead, Christ rose again from death to life. And the fortieth day thereafter, I believe that Christ ascended into heaven, and that he sits at the right hand of the Father almighty. And the fiftieth day after his upgoing, he sent his apostles the Holy Ghost, that he had promised them before; and I believe that Christ shall come and judge all mankind, some to everlasting peace, and some to everlasting pains.

And as I believe in the Father, and in the Son, that they are one God almighty, so I believe in the Holy Ghost, that he is also with them the same God almighty. And I believe a holy church, that is, all they that have been, and that now are, and always to the end of the world shall be, a people which shall endeavour to know and to keep the commandments of God; dreading above all things to offend God, and loving and seeking most to please him. And I believe, that all they that have had, and yet have, and all they that yet shall have, the aforesaid virtues, surely standing in the belief of God, hoping steadfastly in his merciful doings, continuing to their end in perfect charity, willingly, patiently, and gladly suffering persecutions, by the example of Christ chiefly, and his apostles; all these have their names written in the book of life. Therefore I believe, that the gathering together of these people, living here in this life, is the holy church of God, fighting here on earth against the fiend, the prosperity of the world, and their fleshly lusts. Wherefore, seeing that all the gathering together of this church before said, and every part thereof, neither coveteth, nor willeth, nor loveth, nor seeks any thing but to eschew the offence of God, and to do his pleasing will meekly, gladly, and willingly, with all my heart, I submit myself unto this holy church of Christ, to be ever submissive and obedient to the ordinance of it, and of every member thereof, according to my knowledo:e and power, by the help of God. Therefore I acknowledge now, and evermore shall, if God will, that with all my heart, and with all my might, I will submit me only to the rule and governance of them, whom after my knowledge I may perceive, by having and using of the aforesaid virtues, to be members of the holy church. Wherefore these articles of belief and all others, both of the old law and the new, which after the commandment of God any man ought to believe, I believe verily in my soul, as a sinful mortal wretch, of my knowledge and power, ought to believe; praying the Lord God for his holy name to increase my belief, and to help my unbelief.

And because to the praising of God's name, I desire above all things to be a faithful member of holy church, I make this protestation before you all four that are now here present, coveting that all men and women who now are absent knew the same. That is, what thing soever before this time I have said or done, or what I shall do or say at any time hereafter, I believe, that all the old law and new law, given and ordained by counsel of the three persons of the Trinity, were given and written for the salvation of mankind. And I believe that these laws are sufficient for man's salvation. And I believe every article of these laws, to the intent that these articles, ordained and commanded of these three persons of the most blessed Trinity are to be believed.

And therefore to the rule and the ordinance of these God's laws, meekly, gladly, and willingly, I submit me with all mine heart; that whosoever can or will, by the authority of God's law, or by open reason, tell me that I have erred or now err, or any time hereafter shall err in any article of belief, from which inconvenience God keeps me for his goodness, I submit me to be reconciled, and to be submissive and obedient unto those laws of God, and to every article of them. For by authority especially of these laws I will, through the grace of God, be united charitably unto these laws. Yea, sir, and over this, I believe and admit all the sentences, authorities, and reasons of the saints and doctors, according unto holy scripture, and declaring it truly.

I submit me willingly and meekly, to be ever obedient, after my knowledge and power, to all these saints and doctors, as they are obedient in work and in word, to God and to his law, and further not, to my knowledge, not for any earthly power, dignity or state, through the help of God.

But, sir, I pray you tell me, if after your bidding I shall lay my hand upon the book, to what intent — to swear thereby?

And the archbishop said to me. Yea, wherefore else? And I said to him. Sir, a book is nothing else but a thing coupled together of divers creatures, and to swear by any creature, both God's law and man's law is against it. But, sir, this thing I say here to you before these your clerks, with my aforesaid protestation, how, where, when, and to whom, men are bound to swear or to obey in any wise after God's law, and saints, and true doctors, according to God's law, I will through God's grace be ever ready thereto, with all my knowledge and power. But I pray you, sir, for the charity of God, that you will, before I swear, as I have here rehearsed to you, tell me how or whereto I shall submit myself; and show me whereof you will correct me, and what is the ordinance that you will thus oblige me to fulfil.

The Archbishop demands the condemnation of Lollard beliefs

And the archbishop said unto me, I will shortly have you swear here to me, that you shalt forsake all the opinions which the sect of Lollards hold, and is slandered with. So that after this time, neither privily nor openly, you hold any opinion which I shall, after you have sworn, rehearse to you here. Nor shall you favour any man or woman, young or old, that holds any of these aforesaid opinions; but after your knowledge and power you shalt force them to withstand all such troublers of holy church in every diocese that you comest in. And those that will not leave their false and damnable opinions, you shalt put them up, publishing them and their names, and make them known to the bishop of the diocese that they are in, or to the bishop's ministers. And over this, I will that you preach no more until the time that I know by good witness and true, that your conversation is such, that your heart and your mouth accord truly in one, contrarying all the lewd learning that you have taught here before. I, hearing these words, thought in my heart that this was an unlawful asking; and deemed myself cursed of God if I consented hereto, and I thought how Susanna said, Anguish is to me on every side. And in that I stood still and spake not, the archbishop said to me. Answer one way or another. And I said. Sir, if I consented to you thus as you have here before rehearsed to me, I should become an appealer, or every bishop's spy, summoner of all England. For if I should thus put up and publish the names of men and women, I should herein deceive full many persons. Yea, sir, it is likely by the doom of my conscience I should herein be cause of death, both men and women, yea both bodily and spiritually. For many men and women who stand in the way of salvation, if I should, for their learning and reading, or their belief, publish them therefore up to the bishops or to their un pitying ministers, I know by experience that they should be so troubled and tormented with persecution or otherwise, that many of them, I think, would rather choose to forsake the way of truth than to be travailed, scorned, slandered, or punished, as bishops and their ministers now use to constrain men and women to consent to them.

But I find in no place in holy scripture, that this office, which ye would now endow me with, accords to any priest of Christ's sect, nor to any other christian man : and therefore to do this were to me a full noxious bond to be bounden with, and over grievous charge. I suppose that if I did thus, many men and women would, yea, sir, might justly to my confusion say to me, that I was a traitor to God and to them; since, as I think in mine heart, many men and women trust in this case, that I would not do this to them to save my life. For if I thus should do, full many men and women would, as they might full truly, say that I had falsely and cowardly forsaken the truth, and slandered shamefully the word of God. For if I consented to you, to do hereafter your will, for boncheffe or mischief, that may befall unto me in this

life, I deem in my conscience, that I were worthy to be cursed of God and also of all his saints; from which inconvenience keep me and all christian people, almighty God, now and ever for his holy name.

Then the archbishop said unto me. Oh, thine heart is full hard indurate, as was the heart of Pharaoh; and the devil hath overcome you, and perverted you, and he hath so blinded you in all your understanding, that you have no grace to know the truth, nor the measure of mercy that I have proffered to you. Therefore, as I perceive now by your foolish answer, you have no will to leave thine old errors. But I say to you lewd losel, (Ignorant, good-for-nothing fellow) either you quickly consent to my ordinance, and submit yourself to stand to my decrees, or, by St. Thomas, you shalt be degraded, and follow your fellow into Smithfield (This is a reference to the Roman Catholic Priest and Lollard Martyr William Sawtre who was burnt at Smithfield in London).

At this saying I stood still and spake not, but I thought in mine heart, that God did to me great grace, if he would of his great mercy bring me to such an end. And in my heart I was nothing afraid at this menacing of the archbishop. And I considered there two things in him. One, that he was not yet sorrowful that he had made William Sautre wrongfully to be burnt : and, as I considered that the archbishop thirsted yet after more shedding of innocent blood. And fast therefore I was moved in my judgment, to hold the archbishop neither for prelate nor for priest of God. And for that mine inward man was thus altogether departed from the archbishop, methought I should not have any dread of him. But I was right heavy and sorrowful, for that there was no audience of secular men by; but in my heart I prayed the Lord God to comfort me and strengthen me against those that there were against the truth. And I purposed to speak no more to the archbishop and his clerks than needed; and all thus I prayed to God for his goodness to give me, then and always, grace to speak with a meek and an easy spirit; and whatsoever thing I should speak, that I might thereto have true authorities of the scriptures or open reason. And for that I stood thus still and nothing spake, one of the archbishop's clerks said unto me. What musest thou? Do you as my lord hath now commanded to you here?

And yet I stood still and answered him not; and then soon after the archbishop said to me. Art you not yet bethought, whether you will do as I have said to you? And I said then to him, Sir, my father and my mother, on whose souls God have mercy if it be his will, spent much money in divers places about my learning, for the intent to have made me a priest to God. But when I came to years of discretion, I had no desire to be a priest, and therefore my friends were right heavy to me, and then methought their grudging against me was so painful to me, that I purposed thereby to have left their company. And when they perceived this in me, they spake sometime full fair and pleasant words to me. But for that they might not make me to consent of good heart to be a priest, they spake to me full oftentimes very grievous words, and menaced me in divers manners, showing to me full heavy cheer. And thus one while in a fair manner, another while in grievous, they were long' time, as methought, full busy about me, ere I consented to them to be a priest.

But at last, when in this matter they would no longer suffer mine excuses, but either I should consent to them, or I should ever bear their indignation, yea their curse, as they said, then I, seeing this, prayed them that they would give me license to go to them that were said to be wise priests, and of virtuous conversation, to have their counsel, and to know of them the office and the charge of priesthood. And

hereto my father and my mother consented full gladly, and gave me their blessing, and good leave to go, and also money to spend in this journey. And so I went to those priests whom I heard to be of best name, and of most holy living, and best learned, and most wise of heavenly wisdom; and so I communed with them unto the time, that I perceived, by their virtuous and continual occupations, that their honest and charitable works passed their fame which I had heard before of them.

Wherefore, sir, by the example of the doctrine of them, and especially for the godly and innocent works which I perceived then of them, and in them, after my skill and power, I have exercised me then and in this time, to know perfectly God's law, having a will and desire to live thereafter, which wills that all men and women should exercise themselves faithfully thereabout. If then, sir, either for pleasure of them that are neither so wise, nor of so virtuous conversation to my knowledge, nor by common fame to any other men's knowledge in this land, as these men were of whom I took my counsel and information, I should now forsake thus suddenly, and shortly, and unwarned, all the learning that I have exercised myself in, these thirty winters and more, my conscience should ever be herewith out of measure unquieted; and, sir, I know well that many men and women should be therethrough greatly troubled and slandered. And as I said, sir, to you before, for mine untruth and false cowardness, many a one should be put into full great reproof. Yea, sir, I dread that many a one, as they might then justly do, would curse me full bitterly. And, sir, I fear not, but the curse of God, which I should deserve herein, would bring me to a full evil end, if I continued thus. And if through remorse of conscience I repented me any time, returning into the way which you do your diligence to constrain me now to forsake; yea, sir, all the bishops of this land, with full many other priests, would defame me, and pursue me as a relapse. And they now have, though I am unworthy, some confidence in me, hereafter would never trust to me, though I could teach and live ever so virtuously, more than I can or may. For if, after your counsel, I left utterly all my learning, I should hereby first wound and defile mine own soul, and also I should herethrough give occasion to many men and women of full sore hurting. Yea, sir, as it is likely to me, if I consented to your will, I should herein by mine evil example in it, as far as in me were, slay many folk spiritually, that I should never deserve to have grace of God to the edifying of his church, neither myself, nor of any other man's life, and should be undone both before God and man.

But, sir, by example chiefly of some, whose names I will not now rehearse, of H, of I. P, and B, (Probably the former Lollard associates Nicholas Hereford, John Purvey, and John Becket) and also by the present doing of Philip Rampington, that now is become bishop of Lincoln, I am now learned, as many more hereafter through God's grace shall be learned, to hate and to flee all such slander as these aforesaid men chiefly have defiled principally themselves with. And in it that in them is, they have envenomed all the church of God, for the slanderous revoking at the cross of Paul's, of H. P. and of B., and how now Philip Rampington pursues Christ's people I And the feigning whereby these men dissemble by worldly prudence, keeping them cowardly in their preaching and communing within the bonds and terms, which without blame may be spoken and showed out of the most worldly livers, will not be unpunished of God. For to the point of truth, that these men showed out sometime, they will not now stretch forth their lives. But by example each one of them, as their words and their works show, busy them, through their feigning, to slander and to pursue Christ in his members, rather than they will be pursued.

And the archbishop said to me. These men, the which you speak of now, were fools and heretics, when they were counted wise men of you and other such losels. But now they are wise men, though you and other such deem them unwise. Nevertheless, I never wist any that rightly said, that any while were envenomed with your contagiousness, that is, contaminated and spotted doctrine.

I said to the archbishop, Sir, I think that these men and others are now wise as to this world. But as their words sounded sometime, and their works showed outwardly, it was like to move me that they had earnest of the wisdom of God; and that they should have deserved much grace of God to have saved their own souls and many other men's, if they had continued faithfully in willing poverty, and in other simple virtuous living. And especially if they had with these aforesaid virtues continued in their busy fruitful sowing of God's word; as to many men's knowledge they occupied them a season in all their skill, full busily to know the pleasant will of God, travailing all their members full busily to do thereafter, purely and chiefly to the praising of the most holy name of God, and for the grace of edification and salvation of christian people. But woe worth false covetousness, and evil counsel and tyranny, by which they and many men and women are led blindly into an evil end.

Then the archbishop said unto me. Thou, and such other losels (good-for-nothings) of your sect, would shave your beards full near to get a benefice. For, by, I know none more covetous shrews than ye are, when that ye have a benefice. For lo, I gave to John Purvey a benefice but a mile out of this castle, and I heard more complaints about his covetousness for tithes, and other misdoings, than I did of all men that were advanced within my diocese. And I said to the archbishop. Sir, Purvey is neither with you now for the benefice that you gave him, nor holds he faithfully with the learning that he taught and wrote before time. Thus he shows himself neither hot nor cold, and therefore he and his fellows may sorely dread, that if they turn not hastily to the way that they have forsaken, peradventure they be put out of the number of Christ's chosen people.

And the archbishop said. Though Purvey be now a false harlot, I quit me now to him. But come he more for such cause before me, ere we part I shall know with whom he holdeth. But I say to you, Which are these holy men and wise, of whom you have taken thine information?

I said, Sir, master John Wycliffe was holden of full many men the greatest clerk that they knew then living, and therewith he was named a passing; ruly (orderly) man, and an innocent in his living. Therefore great men communed oft with him, and they loved so his learning, that they wrote it, and busily inforced them to rule themselves thereafter. Therefore, sir, this aforesaid learning of master John Wickliff is yet holden, of full many men and women, the learning most agreeable unto the living and teaching of Christ, and of his apostles, and most openly showing and declaring how the church of Christ hath been and yet should be ruled and governed. Therefore so many men and women covet this learning, and purpose through God's grace, to conform their living like this learning of Wycliffe. Master John Ashton taught and wrote accordingly and full busily, where, and when, and to whom that he might, and he used it himself right perfectly unto his life's end. And also Philip of Rampington, while he was a canon of Leicester, Nicholas Hereford, David Gotray of Packer, monk of Byland, and a master of divinity, and John Purvey, and many others which were holden right wise men and prudent, taught and wrote busily this afore said learning, and conformed them thereto. And with all these men I was right homely,

and condemned with them for a long time and often. And so before all other men I chose willingly to be informed of them and by them, and especially of Wycliffe himself, as of the most virtuous and godly wise man that I heard of or knew. And therefore of him especially, and of these men I took the learning that I have taught; and purpose to live thereafter, if God will, to my life's end. For though some of those men now are contrary to the learning that they taught before, I know well that their learning was true which they taught; and therefore, with the help of God, I purpose to hold and to use the learning which I heard of them, while they sat on Moses's chair, and especially while they sat on the chair of Christ. But according to the works that they now do, I will not do, with God's help. For they feign, and hide, and contrary to the truth, which before they taught out plainly and truly. For as I know well, when some of those men have been blamed for their slanderous doing, they grant not that they have taught amiss or erred before time, but that they were constrained by pain to leave to tell the truth, and thus they choose now rather to blaspheme God, and to suffer a while here persecution bodily, for the truths that Christ shed his heart blood for.

And the archbishop said, That learning which you call truth and verity is open slander to holy church, as it is proved of holy church. For albeit that Wycliffe, your author, was a great clerk, and though many men held him to be a perfect liver, yet his doctrine is not approved of holy church, but many sentences of his learning are condemned, as they well worthy are. But as touching Philip of Rampington, that was first canon, and after abbot of Leicester, which is now bishop of Lincoln, I tell you, that the day is coming, for which he fasted the even. For neither he holds now, nor will hold the learning that he taught, when he was a canon of Leicester. For no bishop of this land pursues now more sharply those that hold your way, than he doth. I said. Sir, full many men and women wonder upon him, and speak much shame on him, and hold him for a cursed enemy of the truth.

The archbishop said to me. Wherefore you tarry me here with such fables; will you shortly, as I have said to you, submit yourself to me or not?

I said. Sir, I tell you at one word; I dare not for the dread of God submit myself to you, after the tenure and sentence that you have above rehearsed to me.

Then, as if he had been wroth, he said to one of his clerks. Fetch hither quickly the certification that came to me from Shrewsbury under the bailiffs' seal, witnessing the errors and heresies which this losel hath venomously sown there.

William's charges are read out

Then hastily the clerk took out, and laid forth on a cup board divers rolls and writings, among which there was a little one, which the clerk delivered to the archbishop. And by and by the archbishop read this roll, containing this sentence: —

"The third Sunday after Easter, the year of our Lord 1407, William Thorpe came unto the town of Shrewsbury, and through leave granted unto him to preach, he said openly in St, Chad's church, in his sermon, that the sacrament of the altar, after the consecration, was material bread. And that images

should in no way be worshipped. And that men should not go on pilgrimages. And that priests have no title to tithes. And that it is not lawful to swear in any wise."

And when the archbishop had read thus this roll, he rolled it up again, and said to me, Is this wholesome learning to be among the people?

I said, Sir, I am both ashamed on their behalf, and right sorrowful for them that have certified you these things thus untruly; nor I never preached nor taught thus, privily nor openly.

And the archbishop said, I will give credence to these worshipful men which have written to me, and witnessed under their seals there among them. Though now you deny this, weenest you that I will give credence to you? Thou, losel, have troubled the worshipful communities of Shrewsbury, so that the bailiffs and communities of that town have written to me, praying me, that am archbishop of Canterbury, primate and chancellor of England, that I will vouchsafe to grant them, that if you shalt be made, as you art worthy, to suffer open penance for thine heresies, that you may have your iouresse openly there among them. So that all they whom you and such other losels have there perverted, may through fear of your deed be reconciled again to the unity of holy church; and also they that stand in true faith of holy church, may through your deed be more established therein. And as if this asking well pleased the archbishop, he said. By my thrift this hearty prayer and fervent request shall be thought on.

But, certainly, neither the prayer of the men of Shrewsbury, nor the menacing of the archbishop made me afraid. But, in rehearsing of this malice, and in the hearing of it, my heart greatly rejoiced, and yet doth. I thank God for the grace that I then thought, and yet think shall come to all the church of God here through, by the especially merciful doing of the Lord. And as having no dread of the malice of tyrants, by trusting steadfastly in the help of the Lord, with full purpose to acknowledge the truth, and to stand thereby after my skill and power, I said to the archbishop, Sir, if the truth of God's word might now be accepted as it should be, I doubt not to prove by likely evidence, that they who are feigned to be out of the faith of holy church in Shrewsbury, and in other places also, are in the true faith of holy church. For as their words sound, and their works show to man's judgment, dreading and loving; faithfully God, their will, their desire, their love, and their business are most set to dread to offend God, and love to please him in true and faithful keeping of his commandments. And ag-ain, they that are said to be in the faith of holy church in Shrewsbury and in other places, by open evidence of their proud, envious, malicious, covetous, lecherous, and other foul words and works, neither know, nor have the will to know, nor to occupy their minds truly and effectually in the right faith of holy church. Wherefore, neither all these, nor any that follow their manners, shall any time come verily in the faith of holy church, except they enforce them more truly to come in the way which now they despise. For these men and women, that are now called faithful and holden just, neither know, nor will exercise themselves to know faithfully the commandment of God. And thus full many men and women now, and especially men that are named to be principal limbs of holy church, stir God to great wrath, and deserve his curse for that they call or hold them just men, which are full unjust, as their vicious words, their great customable swearing, and their slanderous and shameful works show openly and witness. And therefore such vicious men and unjust, to their own confusion, call them unjust men and women, who after their power and judgment busy themselves to live justly after the commandment of God. And, sir, you say that I have troubled the commonalty of Shrewsbury, and many other men and women with my teaching. If it thus be, it is not to be wondered at of wise men; since all the commonality of the city of Jerusalem was troubled at Christ's own person, who was very God and man, and the most prudent preacher that ever was or shall be. And also all the synagogue of Nazareth was moved against Christ, and so fulfilled with ire towards him for his preaching, that the men of the synagogue rose up and cast Christ out of their city, and led him up to the top of a mountain to cast him down there headlong. Also accordingly hereto the Lord witnessed by Moses, that he shall put dissension be twixt his people, and the people that contrary and pursue his people, Who, sir, is he that shall preach the truth of God's word to the unfaithful people, and shall hinder the truth of the gospel, and the prophecy of God almighty to be fulfilled? And the archbishop said to me, It follows of these your words, that you and such other, think that you do right well to preach and teach as you do, without authority of any bishop. For you presume that the Lord hath chosen you only to preach, as faithful disciples and followers of Christ.

On the Priesthood

I said. Sir, by the authority of God's law, and also of saints and doctors, I am taught to consider, that it is every priest's office and duty to preach busily, freely, and truly, the word of God. For no doubt every priest should purpose first in his soul, and covet to take the order of priesthood, chiefly to make known to the people the word of God, after his judgment and power; approving his words ever to be true by his

virtuous works. And for this intent we suppose that bishops and other prelates of holy church should chiefly take and use their prelacy, and for the same cause bishops should give to priests their orders. For bishops should accept no man to priesthood, except that he had good will and full purpose, and were well disposed, and well learned to preach. Wherefore, sir, by the bidding of Christ, and by the example of his most holy living, and also by the witnessing of his holy apostles and prophets, we are bound, under full great pain, to exercise us after our judgment and power, as every priest is likewise charged of God, to fulfil duly the office of priesthood. We presume not here of our selves to be esteemed, either in our own reputation, or in any other man's, faithful disciples, and especial followers of Christ. But, sir, as I said to you before, we deem this by authority chiefly of God's word, that it is the chief duty of every priest to busy him faithfully to make the law of God known to his people; and so to commune the commandment of God charitably, how that we may best, where, when, and to whom that ever we may, is our very duty. And for the will and business that we owe of due debt, to do justly our office through the stirring and especial help, as we trust, of God, hoping steadfastly in his mercy, we desire to be faithful disciples of Christ; and we pray this gracious Lord for his holy name, that he make us able to please him with devout prayers, and charitable priestley works, that we may obtain of hiin to follow him thankfully.

The archbishop said to me, Lewd losel, whereto makes you such vain reasons to me? Asks not St. Paul, how should priests preach except they be sent? But I never sent you to preach. For your venomous doctrine is so well known throughout England, that no bishop will admit you to preach by witnessing of their letters. Why, then, lewd idiot, will you presume to preach, since you are not sent, nor licensed of your sovereign to preach? St. Paul saith, that subjects ought to obey their sovereigns, and not only good and virtuous, but also tyrants that are vicious.

And I said to the archbishop. Sir, as touching' your letter of licence, or other bishop's, which, as you say, we should have to witness that we are able to be sent to preach, we know well that neither you, sir, nor any other bishop of this land will grant to us any such letters of license, unless we should oblige us to you, and to other bishops, by unlawful oaths, not to pass the bounds and terms which ye, sir, or other bishops, will limit to us. And since in this matter your terms are some too large, and some too strait, we dare not oblige us thus to be bounden to you to keep the terms, which you will limit to us, as you do to friars and such other preachers. And therefore, though we have not your letter, sir, nor letters of any other bishops written with ink on parchment, we dare not therefore leave the office of preaching; to which preaching all priests after their skill and power are bound, by divers testimonies of God's law, and great doctors, without any mention making of bishops' letters. Forasmuch as we have taken upon us the office of priesthood, though we are unworthy thereto, we came and purpose to fulfil it, with the help of God, by authority of his own law, and by witness of great doctors and saints, accordingly hereto trusting steadfastly in the mercy of God. For that he commanded us to do the office of priesthood, he will be our sufficient letters and witness, if we by example of his holy living and teaching", especially occupy us faithfully to do our office justly. Yea, the people to whom we preach, be they faithful or unfaithful, shall be our letters, that is, our witness-bearers; for the truth where it is sown may not be unwitnessed. For all that are converted and saved by learning of God's word, and by working there after, are witness-bearers, that the truth and verity, which they heard and did after, is the cause of their salvation. And again, all

unfaithful men and women which heard the truth told to them, and would not do thereafter — also all they that might have heard the truth, and would not hear it, be cause that they would not do thereafter; all these shall bear witness against themselves. And the truth which they would not hear, or else heard it, and despised to do thereafter through their unfaithfulness, is and shall be cause of their damnation. Therefore, sir, since this aforesaid witnessing of God, and of divers saints and doctors, and of all the people, good and evil, suffices to all true preachers, we think that we do not the office of priesthood, if we leave our preaching, because we have not, or may not have duly bishops' letters, to witness that we are sent of them to preach. This sentence St. Paul approves, where he speaks of himself and of faithful apostles and disciples; saying thus; We need no letters of commendation as some preachers do, which preach for covetousness of temporal goods, and for men's praising. And where you say, sir, that Paul bids subjects obey their sovereigns, that is truth, and may not be denied.

On the nature of authority

But there are two manners of sovereigns — virtuous sovereigns, and vicious tyrants. Therefore to these last sovereigns neither men nor women, that are subject, owe to obey in two manners. To virtuous and charitable sovereigns subjects owe to obey willingly and gladly, in hearing of their good counsel, in consenting to their charitable biddings, and in working after their fruitful works.

This sentence Paul approves, where he saith to subjects, Be ye mindful of your sovereigns, that speak to you the word of God, and follow the faith of them, whose conversation you know to be virtuous. For, as Paul saith after, these sovereigns to whom subjects ought to obey in following of their manners, work busily in holy studying, how they may withstand and destroy vices, first in themselves and in all their subjects, and how they may best plant in them virtues. Also these sovereigns make devout and fervent prayers to purchase grace of God, that they and their subjects may over all things dread to offend him, and love to please him. Also these sovereigns to whom Paul bids us obey, as it is said before, live so virtuously, that all they that will live well, may take of them good example, to know and to keep the commandments of God. But in this aforesaid manner, subjects ought not to obey not to be obedient to tyrants, while they are vicious tyrants, since their will, their counsel, their biddings, and their works are so vicious that they ought to be hated and left. And though such tyrants are masterful and cruel in boasting and menacing; in oppressions and divers punishings; St. Peter bids the servants of such tyrants, to obey meekly such tyrants, suffering patiently their malicious cruelties. But Peter counsels not any servant or subject to obey any lord, or prince, or sovereign, in any thing that is not pleasing to God.

And the archbishop said, If a sovereign bid his subject do that thing that is vicious, this sovereign herein is to blame; but the subject for his obedience deserves the reward of God. For obedience more pleases God, than any sacrifice. I said, Samuel the prophet said to Saul the wicked king, that God was more pleased with the obedience of his commandments, than with any sacrifice of beasts. But David saith, and St. Paul and St. Gregory accordingly together, that not only they that do evil are worthy of death and damnation, but also they that consent to evil doers. And, sir, the law of the holy church teaches in the decrees, that no servant to his lord, nor child to the father or mother, nor wife to her husband, nor monk to his abbot, ought to obey, except in allowable things, and lawful.

The archbishop said to me. All these allegations that you bringest forth, are nothing else but proud presumptuousness. For hereby you enforced yourself to prove that you and such other are so just, that ye ought not to obey to prelates. And thus against the learning of St. Paul, who teaches you not to preach unless you were sent, of your own authority, ye will go forth and preach, and do what ye list.

I said, Sir, represents not every priest the office of the apostles, or the office of the disciples of Christ? And the archbishop said, Yea. And I said. Sir, as the tenth chapter of Matthew, and the last chapter of Mark witness, Christ sent his apostles to preach. And the tenth chapter of Luke witnesses, that Christ sent seventy disciples two and two, to preach in every place that he was to come to. And St. Gregory in the common law saith, that every man who goes into the priesthood, takes upon him the office of preaching; for as he saith, That priest stirs God to great wrath, of whose mouth is not heard the voice of preaching. And as other more glosses upon Ezekiel witness, the priest who preaches not busily to the people, shall be partaker of their damnation who perish through his default. And though the people are saved by other special grace of God, than by the priests' preaching, yet the priests, in that they are ordained to preach, and preach not, in the sight of God they are manslaughterers. For as far as in them is, such priests as preach not busily and truly, slay all the people spiritually, in that they withhold from them the word of God, which is the life and sustenance of men's souls. And St. Isidore said, priests shall be damned for wickedness of the people, if they teach not them that are ignorant, or blame not them that are sinners. For all the work or business of priests stands in preaching and teaching, that they edify all men as well by knowledge of faith, as by discipline of works, that is, virtuous teaching. And as the gospel witnesses, Christ said in his teaching, I am born and come into this world, to bear witness to the truth, and he that is of the truth hears my voice. Then, sir, since by the word of Christ especially, that is, by his voice, priests are commanded to preach; whatsoever priest it be, that hath not good will and full purpose to do thus, and enables not himself after his cunning and power to do his office by the example of Christ and his apostles, whatsoever other thing he doth, displeases God. For lo, St. Gregory saith, that thing left which a man is bound chiefly to do, whatsoever other thing a man doth, it is unthankful to the Holy Ghost; and therefore saith Lincoln, " The priest that preaches not the word of God, though he be seen to have none other default, he is antichrist and satan, a night thief, and a day thief, a slayer of souls, and an angel of light turned into darkness." Wherefore, sir, these authorities and others well considered, I deem myself condemnable, if I either for pleasure or displeasure of any creature, apply me not diligently to preach the word of God. And in the same condemnation I deem all those priests, who of good purpose and will, enforce themselves not busily to do thus, and also all them that have purpose or will to hinder any priest of this business.

And the archbishop said to those three clerks that stood before him, Lo, sirs, this is the manner and business of this losel and such others, to pick out such sharp sentences of holy scripture and doctors, to maintain their sect and lore against the ordinance of holy church. And therefore, losel, it is you that covetest to have again the psalter that I made to be taken from you at Canterbury, to record sharp verses against us. But you shall never have that psalter nor any other book, till that I know that your heart and your mouth accord fully to be governed by holy church.

I said. Sir, all my will and power is, and ever shall be, I trust to God, to be governed by holy church.

On the Church

The archbishop asked me, what was holy church.

I said, Sir, I told you before what was holy church. But, since ye ask me this demand, I call Christ and his saints holy church.

And the archbishop said unto me, I wot well that Christ and his saints are holy church in heaven, but what is the holy church on earth?

I said. Sir, though holy church be every one in charity, yet it hath two parts. The first and principal part hath perfectly overcome all the wretchedness of this life, and reigns joyfully in heaven with Christ. And the other part is here yet on earth, busily and continually fighting day and night against temptations of the fiend; forsaking and hating the prosperity of this world, despising and with standing their fleshly lusts; which only are the pilgrims of Christ, wandering toward heaven by steadfast faith, and grounded hope, and by perfect charity. For these heavenly pilgrims may not, and will not be hindered of their good purpose, by reason of any doctors discording from holy scripture, nor by the floods of any temporal tribulation, nor by the wind of any pride, of boast, or of menacing of any creature. For they are all fast grounded upon the sure stone Christ, hearing his word and loving it, exercising them faithfully and continually in all their judgment to do there after.

The archbishop said to his clerks. See ye not how his heart is indurate, and how he is travailed with the devil, occupying him busily to allege such sentences to maintain his errors and heresies. Certain, thus he would occupy us here. all day, if we would suffer him.

One of the clerks answered, Sir, he said just now, that this certification, which came to you from Shrewsbury, is untruly forged against him. Therefore, sir, oppose him now here in all the points which are certified against him, and so we shall hear of his own mouth his answers, and witness them.

On the Mass

And the archbishop took the certification in his hand, and looked thereon a while, and then he said to me, Look here it is certified against you by worthy men and faithful of Shrewsbury, that you preached there openly in St. Chad's church, that the sacrament of the altar is material bread after the consecration, what sayest thou? Was this truly preached?

I said. Sir, I tell you truly that I touched nothing there of the sacrament of the altar, but in this wise as I will with God's grace tell you here. As I stood there in the pulpit, busying myself to teach the commandment of God, there knelled a sacring bell, (A bell rung in mass) and therefore many people turned away hastily, and with noise ran from me. And I, seeing this, said to them thus. Good men, ye were better to stand here still and to hear God's word. For certainly the virtue and the need of the most holy sacrament of the altar stands much more in the belief thereof, that you ought to have in your soul, than it doth in the outward sight thereof. And therefore, you were better to stand still quietly to hear

God's word, because through the hearing thereof, men come to very true belief. And otherwise, sir, I am certain I spake not there of the worthy sacrament of the altar.

And the archbishop said, I believe you not, whatsoever you sayest, since such worshipful men have witnessed against you. But since you deny that you said thus there, what sayest you now? Rests there after the consecration in the host, material bread or no?

I said, Sir, I know in no place in holy scripture where this term material bread is written; and therefore, sir, when I speak of this matter, I use not to speak of material bread.

Then the archbishop said. How teachest you men to believe in this sacrament?

I said, Sir, as I believe myself, so I teach other men.

He said, Tell out plainly your belief thereof.

I said, with my protestation. Sir, I believe that the night before that Christ Jesus would suffer, willingly, his passion for mankind on the morning after, he took bread in his holy and most worshipful hands, lifting up his eyes and giving thanks to God his Father, he blessed this bread, and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying to them. Take and eat of this all you, this is my body. And that this is and ought to be all men's belief, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and Paul witness. Other belief, sir, I have none, nor will have, nor teach; for I believe, that this suffices in this matter. For in this belief, with God's grace, I purpose to live and die, acknowledging' as I believe and teach other men to believe, that the worshipful sacrament of the altar is the sacrament of Christ's flesh and his blood in the form of bread and wine.

And the archbishop said. It is truth that this sacrament is very Christ's body in the form of bread. But you and your sect teach it to be substance of bread. Think you this true teaching?

I said, Neither I, nor any other of the sect that ye condemn, teach any otherwise than I have told you, nor believe otherwise to my knowing. Nevertheless, sir, I ask of you for charity, that you will tell me here plainly, how you shall understand the text of St. Paul, where he saith thus, This thing feel you in yourself that is in Christ Jesus, while he was in the form of God. Sir, calls not Paul here the form of God, the substance or kind of God? Also, sir, saith not the church in the hours of the most blessed virgin (A service book) accordingly hereto, where it is written thus. you author of health remember that sometime you took of the undefiled virgin the form of our body? Tell me for charity therefore, whether the form of our bodies be called here the kind of our body or no?

And the archbishop said, Wouldest you make me to declare this text after your purpose, since the church now has determined that there abides no substance of bread, after the consecration, in the sacrament of the altar? Believest you not this ordinance of the church?

I said, Sir, whatsoever prelates have ordained in the church, our belief stands ever whole. I have not heard, that the ordinance of men under belief (those under responsibility to believe what is taught rather than teach) should be put into belief.

And the archbishop said, If you have not learned this before, learn now to know that you art out of belief, if in this matter and other you believest not as the holy church believe. What say doctors treating of this sacrament?

I said, Sir, St. Paul, who was a great doctor of holy church, speaking to the people, and teaching them in the right belief of this most holy sacrament, calls it bread that we break. And also in the canon of the mass, after the consecration, this most worthy sacrament is called holy bread. And every priest in this land, after that he hath received this sacrament, saith thus. That thing which we have taken with our mouth, we pray God that we may take it with a pure and clean mind. That is, as I understand, we pray God that we may receive, through very belief, this holy sacrament worthily. And, sir, St. Augustine saith, "That which is seen is bread; but that which men's faith asks to be informed of is very Christ's body." And also Fulgence, an attentive doctor, saith, "As it was an error to say that Christ was but a substance, that is, very man, and not very God; or to say that Christ was God, and not very man : so is it, this doctor saith, an error to say that the sacrament of the altar is but a substance;" and also, sir, accordingly hereto, in the secret of the mid mass on Christmas-day, it is written thus, *Idem refulsit Deus, sic terrena substantia nobis conferat quod divinum est*; which sentence, sir, with the secret of the fourth ferie, (*feria quarta*) *quatuor temporum Septembris*, I pray you, sir, declare here openly in English. (God is manifested therein, thus a terrene (or earthly) substance imparts to us that which is divine. The service referred to is in the ember week in September.)

And the archbishop said, I perceive well enough where about you art, and how the devil blinded you, that you mayest not understand the ordinance of holy church, nor consent thereto. But I command you now, answer me shortly; Believest thou, that, after the consecration of this aforesaid sacrament, there abides substance of bread, or not?

I said. Sir, as I understand, it is all one to grant or believe that there dwells substance of bread, and to grant and to believe, that this most worthy sacrament of Christ's own body is accident without a subject. But, sir, forasmuch as your asking passes my understanding, I dare neither deny it, nor grant it; for it is school matter, about which I never busied myself to know; and therefore I commit this term, accident without subject, to those clerks who delight them so in curious and subtle sophistry, because they determine oft such difficult and strange matters, and wade and wander so in them from argument to argument, for and against, till they know not where they are, and understand not themselves. But the shame that these proud sophisters have to yield them to men, and before men, often makes them fools, and to be concluded shamefully before God.

The archbishop said, I purpose not to oblige you to the subtle arguments of clerks, since you art unable there to; but I purpose to make you obey to the determination of holy church.

I said. Sir, by open evidence and great witness, a thousand years after the incarnation of Christ, the determination, which I have here before you rehearsed, was accepted of holy church as sufficient for the salvation of all them that would believe it faithfully, and work thereafter charitably. But, sir, the determination of this matter was brought in, since the fiend was loosed (this is a reference to Revelation 20:3), by friar Thomas (Aquinas), against especially calling the most worshipful sacrament of Christ's own body, an accident without subject; which term, since I know not that God's law approves it in this matter, I dare not grant, but utterly I deny to make this friar's sentence, or any such other, my belief; do with me, God, what you wilt.

On the worship of Images

The archbishop said. Well, well, you shalt say otherwise there I leave you. But what say you to this second point that is recorded against you by worthy men of Shrewsbury, saying, that you preached there, that images ought not to be worshipped in anywise?

I said. Sir, I never preached thus, nor, through God's grace, will I at any time consent to think, or to say thus, either privily or openly. For lo, the Lord witnesses by Moses, that the things which he made were right good, and so then they were, and yet they are and shall be good and worshipful in their kind. And therefore, to the end that God made them, they are all praiseable and worshipful, and especially man, that was made after the image and likeness of God, is full worshipful (respected, revered) in his kind, yea, this holy image, that is man, God worshipped. And therefore every man should worship other, in kind, and also for heavenly virtues that men use charitably. And also I say, wood, tin, gold, silver, or any other matter that images are made of, all these creatures are worshipful in their kind, and to the end that God made them for. But the carving, casting, and painting of an imagery, made within man's hand, albeit this doing be accepted of men of highest state and dignity, and ordained of them to be

a calendar to unlearned men, who neither can, nor will be learned to know God in his word, neither by his creatures, nor by his wonderful and divers workings; yet this imagery ought not to be worshipped in form, nor in the likeness of man's craft. Nevertheless, that every matter the painters painted with, since it is God's creature, ought to be worshipped in the kind, and to that end that God made and ordained it to serve man.

Then the archbishop said to me, I grant well that nobody ought to do worship to any such images for themselves. But a crucifix ought to be worshipped for the passion of Christ that is painted therein, and so brought there by to man's mind; and thus the images of the blessed Trinity, and of the virgin Mary, Christ's mother, and other images of saints ought to be worshipped. For lo, earthly kings and lords who used to send their letters sealed with their arms, or with their privy signet to them that are with them, are worshipped of these men. For when these men receive their lords' letters, in which they see and know the wills and biddings of the lords, in worship of their lords, they do off their caps to these letters. Why not then, since in images made with man's hand, we may read and know many, and divers things of God, and of his saints; shall we not worship their images?

I said, With my aforesaid protestation I say, that these worldly usages of temporal laws that ye speak now of, may be done in some cases without sin. But this is no similitude to worship images, made by man's hand; since that Moses, David, Solomon, and other saints in the bible forbid so plainly the worshipping; of all such images.

Then the archbishop said, Lewd losel, in the old law before that Christ took mankind, was no likeness of any person of the Trinity, neither showed to man, nor known of man. But now since Christ became man, it is lawful to have images to show this manhood, yea, though many men who are right great clerks, and others also, held it an error to paint the Trinity; I say, it is well done to make and to paint the Trinity in images. For it is great moving of devotion to men, to have and to behold the Trinity and other images of saints carved, cast, and painted. For beyond the sea are the best painters that ever I saw. And, sirs, I tell you, this is their manner, and it is a good manner — When an image-maker shall carve, cast in mould, or paint any images, he shall go to a priest, and shrive him as clean, as if he should then die; and take penance, and make some certain vow of fasting or of praying, or pilgrimages doing, praying the priest especially to pray for him, that he may have grace to make a fair and a devout image.

I said. Sir, I doubt not if these painters that ye speak of, or any other painters, understood truly the text of Moses, David, of the wise man, of Baruch, and of other saints and doctors; these painters should be moved to shrive them to God with full inward sorrow of heart, taking upon them to do right sharp penance for the sinful and vain craft of painting, carving, or casting they had used; promising God faithfully never to do so after; acknowledging openly before all men their reprobable learning. And also, sir, these priests that shrive, as you do say, painters, and enjoin them to do penance, and pray for their speed, promising to them help of their prayers to be curious in their sinful crafts, sin herein more grievously than the painters. For these priests do comfort and give them counsel to do that thing, which of great pain, yea under the pain of God's curse, they should utterly forbid them. For certainly, sir, if the wonderful working of God, and the holy living and teaching of Christ, and of his apostles and prophets, were made known to the people by holy living, and true and busy teaching of priests; these things, sir,

were sufficient books and calendars to know God by, and his saints, with out any images made with man's hand. But certainly, the vicious living of priests and their covetousness, are the chief cause of this error; and all other viciousness that reigns among the people.

Then the archbishop said, I hold you a vicious priest and accursed, and all they that are of your sect; for all priests of holy church, and all images that move men to devotion, you and such other go about to destroy. Losel, were it a fair thing to come into the church, and see therein none image?

I said, Sir, they that come to the church, to pray devoutly to the Lord God, may in their inward mind be the more fervent, that all their outward senses be closed from all outward seeing and hearing, and from all disturbance and lettings. And since Christ blessed them that saw him not bodily, and have believed faithfully in him; it suffices then to all men, through hearing and knowing God's word, and thereafter, to believe in God, though they never see images made with man's hand, after any person of the Trinity, or of any other saint.

And the archbishop said to me with a fervent spirit, I say to you, losel, that it is right well done to make and to have an image of the Trinity; yea, what sayest thou? is it not a stirring thing to behold such an image?

I said, Sir, you said right now that in the old law, there Christ took mankind, no likeness of any person of the Trinity was showed to men; wherefore, sir, you said it was not then lawful to have images; but now you say, since Christ is become man, it is lawful to have and to make an image of the Trinity, and also of other saints. But, sir, this thing would I learn of you — since the Father of heaven, yea and every person of the Trinity, was without beginning God almighty, and many holy prophets who were mortal men, were martyred violently in the old law, and also many men and women then died confessors — Why was it not then as lawful and necessary as now, to have made an image of the Father of heaven, and to have made and had other images of martyrs, prophets, and holy confessors, to have been calendars to advise men and move them to devotion, as ye say that images now do?

The archbishop said. The synagogue of the Jews had not authority to approve those things, as the church of Christ hath now.

I said, Sir, St. Gregory was a great man in the new law, and with great dignity, and, as the common law witnesses, he commended greatly a bishop, in that he forbade utterly that the images made with man's hand should be worshipped (Epistle 105: To Serenus, Bishop of Massilia (Marseilles)).

The archbishop said, Ungracious losel, you savourest no more truth than a hound. Since at the rood at the north door at London, at our lady at Walsingham, and many other places in England, are many great and praisable miracles done; should not the images of such holy saints and places at the reverence of God, and of our lady, and other saints, be more worshipped than other places and images, where no such miracles are done?

I said, Sir, there is no such virtue in any imagery, that any image should heretofore be worshipped; wherefore I am certain that there is no miracle done of God in any place on earth, because that any images made with man's hand should be worshipped. And therefore, sir, as I preached openly at Shrewsbury and other places, I say now here before you, that nobody should trust that there were any virtue in imagery made with man's hand; and therefore nobody should vow to them, nor seek them, nor kneel to them, nor bow to them, nor pray to them, nor offer any thing to them, nor kiss them, nor incense them. For lo the most worthy of such images, the brazen serpent made by Moses at God's bidding, the good king Hezekiah destroyed worthily and thankfully, and all because it was incensed. Therefore, sir, if men take good heed to the writing and the learning of St. Augustine, of St. Gregory, and of St. John Chrysostom, and of other saints and doctors, how they spoke and wrote of miracles, that shall be done now in the last end of the world. It is to be feared, that for the unfaithfulness of men and women, the fiend hath great power to work many of the miracles that now are done in such places. For both men and women delight now, more to hear and know miracles, than they do to know God's word, or to hear it effectually. Wherefore, to the great confusion of all them that do thus, Christ saith, the generation of adulterers require tokens, miracles, and wonders. Nevertheless, as divers saints say, now when the faith of God was published in Christendom, the word of God suffices to man's salvation, without such miracles; and thus also the word of God suffices to all faithful men and women without any such images. But, good sir, since the Father of heaven, that is God in his Godhead, is the most unknown thing that may be, and the most wonderful Spirit, having in it no shape nor likeness, and members of any mortal creature; in what likeness or what image may God the Father be showed or painted.

The archbishop said, As holy church hath suffered the images of the Trinity, and all other images to be painted and showed; it suffice to them that are members of holy church. But since you art a rotten member, cut away from holy church, you favourest not the ordinance thereof. But, since the day passes, leave we this matter.

On pilgrimage

Then he said to me. What sayest you to the third point that is certified against you, preaching openly in Shrewsbury, that pilgrimage is not lawful? And beside this you said that those men and women that go on pilgrimages to Canterbury, to Beverley, to Karlington, to Walsingham, and to any other such places, are accursed and made foolish, spending their goods in waste.

I said. Sir, by this certification I am accused to you that I should teach that no pilgrimage is lawful. But I said never thus. For I know that there are true and lawful pilgrimages, and full pleasant to God; and therefore, sir, howsoever mine enemies have certified you of me, I told at Shrewsbury of two manners of pilgrimages.

And the archbishop said to me, who calls you true pilgrims?

I said, Sir, with my protestation, I call them true pilgrims travelling toward the bliss of heaven, who in the state, degree, or order that God calls them to, busy themselves faithfully to occupy all their judgment bodily and ghostly, to know truly, and to keep faithfully, the biddings of God, hating and fleeing all the

seven deadly sins, and every branch of them. Ruling themselves virtuously, as it is said before, with all their abilities; doing discreetly, willingly, and gladly, all the works of mercy, bodily and ghostly, after their knowledge and power, enabling them to the gifts of the Holy Ghost, disposing them to receive them in their souls, and to hold therein the right blessings of Christ, busying them to know and to keep the seven principal virtues, and so then they shall obtain, through grace, to use thankfully to God all the conditions of charity. And then they shall be moved with the good Spirit of God, to examine oil and diligently their conscience, that neither wilfully nor wittingly they err in any article of belief, having continually, as frailty will suffer, all their business, to dread and to fly the offence of God, and to love over all, and to seek ever to do his pleasant will. Of these pilgrimages I said, whatsoever good thought they at any time think, what virtuous word they speak, and what fruitful work they work — every such thought, word, and work is a step numbered of God towards himself into heaven. These aforesaid pilgrims of God, delight greatly when they hear of saints or of virtuous men and women, how they forsook willingly the prosperity of this life, how they withstood the suggestion of the fiend, how they restrained their fleshly lusts, how discreet they were in their penance doing, how patient they were in all their adversities, how prudent they were in counseling of men and women, moving them to hate all sins, and to fly them, and to shame ever greatly thereof, and to love all virtues, and to draw to them, imagining how Christ and his followers by example of him suffered scorns and slanders, and how patiently they abode and took the wrongful menacing of tyrants; how homely they were, and serviceable to poor men to relieve and comfort them bodily and ghostly, after their power and skill, and how devout they were in prayers; how fervent they were in heavenly desires, and how they absented themselves from spectacles of vain sayings and hearings, and how stable they were to prevent and destroy all vices, and how laborious and joyful they were to sow and to plant virtues? These heavenly conditions and such others have pilgrims, or endeavour to have them, whose pilgrimage God accepteth.

And again, I said, as their works show, the most part of men and women, that go now on pilgrimages, have not these aforesaid conditions, nor love to busy them faithfully to have them. For as I well know, since I have full oft assayed, examine whosoever will twenty of these pilgrims, and he shall not find three men or women that know surely a commandment of God, nor can say their paternosters and ave maria, nor their creed readily in any manner of language. And as I have learned and also know somewhat by experience of these same pilgrims, telling the cause why many men and women go hither and thither now on pilgrimage, it is more for the health of their bodies, than of their souls; more to have riches and prosperity of this world, than to be enriched with virtues in their souls; more to have here worldly and fleshly friendship, than to have friendship of God, and of his saints in heaven. For whatsoever man or woman doth, the friendship of God, or of any saint, cannot be had, without keeping of God's commandments. Further with my protestation, I say now, as I said in Shrewsbury, though they that have fleshly wills, travel far their bodies, and spend much money, to seek and to visit the bones or images, as they say they do, of this saint or of that; such pilgrimage going is neither praisable nor thankful to God nor to any saint of God, since in effect all such pilgrims despise God and all his commandments and saints. For the commandments of God they will neither know, nor keep, nor conform them to live virtuously by example of Christ and of his saints. Wherefore, sir, I have preached and taught openly, and so I purpose all my lifetime to do, with God's help, saying that such foolish people blamefully waste God's goods in their vain pilgrimages, spending their goods upon vicious hostlers, which are

often unclean women; and at the least, those goods with which they should do works of mercy, after God's bidding, to poor needy men and women.

These poor men's goods and their livelihood, these runners about offer to rich priests, who have much more livelihood than they need. And thus those goods they waste wilfully, and spend them unjustly, against God's bidding, upon strangers, with which they should help and relieve according to God's will their poor needy neighbours at home. Yea, and over this folly, oftentimes divers men and women, of these runners thus madly hither and thither into pilgrimage, borrow hereto other men's goods; yea, and sometimes they steal men's goods hereto, and they pay them never again ! Also, sir, I know well that when divers men and women will go thus after their own wills, and finding" out, on pilgrimage; they will ordain with them before, to have with them both men and women, that can sing, wanton songs, and some other pilgrims will have with them bagpipes. So that every town that they come through, what with the noise of their singing, and with the sound of their piping, and with the jangling of their Canterbury bells, and with the barking out of dogs after them, they make more noise than if the king came away with all his clarions, and many other minstrels. And if these men and women are a month out in their pilgrimage, many of them shall be half a year after great janglers, tale tellers, and liars.

The archbishop said to me, Lewd losel, you seest not far enough in this matter, for you considered not the great travel of pilgrims, therefore you blamest that thing which is praisable. I say to you, that is right well done, that pilgrims have with them both singers and also pipers, that when one of them goes barefoot strikes his toe upon a stone, and hurt him sore, and makes him to bleed, it is well done that he or his fellow begin then a song or else take out of his bosom a bagpipe, to drive away with such mirth the hurt of his fellow. For with such solace the travel and weariness of pilgrims is lightly and merrily borne out. I said, St. Paul teaches men to weep with them that weep.

And the archbishop said. What! Janglest you against men's devotion? Whatsoever you or such other say, I say that the pilgrimage that now is used, is to them that do it a praisable and a good mean to come the rather to grace.

But I hold you unable to know this grace, for you enforced you to hinder the devotion of the people; since by authority of holy scripture, men may lawfully have and use such solace as you reprovest. For David, in his last psalm, teaches men to have divers instruments of music to praise God therewith.

On Music

I said. Sir, by the sentence of divers doctors expounding the psalms of David, that music and minstrelsy which David and other saints of the old law spake of, ought now neither to be taken nor used by the letter, but these instruments with their music ought to be interpreted spiritually; for all those figures are called virtues and grace, with which virtues men should please God, and praise his name. For St. Paul saith, all such things befell them in figure. Therefore, sir, I understand, that the letter of this psalm of David, and of such other psalms and sentences, slay them that take them now literally. This sentence, as I understand, sir, Christ himself approved, putting out the minstrels, when he would quicken the dead damsel. Matt. 9.

And the archbishop said to me, Lewd losel, is it not lawful to us to have organs in the church to worship there withal God? And I said, Yea, sir, by man's ordinance; but by the ordinance of God, a good sermon, to the people's understanding, were much more pleasant to God.

The archbishop said that organs and good delectable songs quickened and sharpened men's wits more than should any sermon.

But I said, Sir, lusty men and worldly lovers, delight, and covet, and travail, to have all their wits quickened and sharpened with divers sensible solaces. But all the faithful lovers and followers of Christ, have all their delight to hear God's word, and to understand it truly, and to work there after faithfully and continually. For no doubt, to dread to offend God, and love to please him in all things, quickened and sharpened all the powers of Christ's chosen people; and enabled them to grace, that they joy greatly to withdraw their ears and all their understanding and members from all worldly delight, and from all fleshly solace. For St. Jerome, as I think, saith, Nobody may joy with this world and reign with Christ.

On Tithing

And the archbishop, as if he had been displeased with my answer, said to his clerks, What think you that this idiot will speak there where he hath no dread; since he speaks thus now here in my presence? Well, well, by, you shalt be ordained for. And then he spake to me all angrily. What sayest you to this fourth point, that is certified against you, preaching openly and boldly in Shrewsbury, that priests have no title to tithes?

And I said. Sir, I named there no word of tithes in my preaching-. But more than a month after I was arrested there in prison, a man came to me into the prison, asking me what I said of tithes? And I said to him. Sir, in this town are many clerks and priests, of whom some are called religious men, though many of them are seculars; therefore ask ye of them this question. And this man said to me, Sir, our prelates say, that we also are obliged to pay our tithes of all things that come to us; and that they are accursed who withdraw any part designedly from them of their tithes. And I said, sir, to that man, as with my protestation I say now before you, that I wonder if any priest dare say men are accursed, without the ground of God's word. And the man said, sir. Our priests say that they curse men thus by the authority of God's law. And I said, Sir, I know not where this sentence of cursing is authorized now in the bible. And therefore, sir, I pray you that you will ask the wisest clerk of this town, that ye may know where this sentence of cursing them that tithe not, is now written in God's law. For if it were written there, I would right gladly be learned where. But shortly, this man would not go from me to ask this question of any other body, but required me there, as I would answer before God, if in this case that cursing of priests were lawful and approved of God? And shortly herewith came to my mind the learning of St. Peter, teaching priests especially to hallow the Lord Christ in their hearts; being evermore ready, as far as in them is, to answer through faith and hope to them that ask of them a reason. And this lesson Peter teaches men to use with a meek spirit, and with dread of the Lord.

Wherefore, sir, I said to this man in this way, in the old law, which ended not fully till the time that Chiist rose up again from death to life, God commanded tithes to be given to the levites, for the great business and daily travail that pertained to their office. But priests, because their travail was much more easy and light, than was the office of the levites, God ordained priests should take for their livelihood to do their office, the tenth part of those tithes that were given to the levites. But now, I said, in the new law, neither Christ nor any of his apostles took tithes of the people, nor commanded the people to pay tithes, neither to priests, nor to deacons. But Christ taught the people to do alms, that is, works of mercy, to poor needy men, of surplus, that is, superfluous of their temporal goods, which they had more than they needed reasonably to their necessary livelihood. And thus, I said, not of tithes, but of pure alms of

the people, Christ lived and his apostles, when they were so busy in preaching of the word of God to the people, that they might not otherwise work to get their livelihood. But, after Christ's ascension, and when the apostles had received the Holy Ghost, they worked with their hands to get their livelihood, when that they might thus do for busy preaching. Therefore by example of himself, St. Paul teaches all the priests of Christ to work with their hands, when for busy teaching of the people they might thus do. And thus all these priests, whose priesthood God accepts now, or will accept, or did in the apostles' time, and after their decease, will do to the world's end. But, as Cistersiensis tells, in the year of our Lord Jesus Christ, 1271, one pope Gregory the tenth ordained new tithes first to be given to priests now in the new law. But St. Paul in his time, whose trace or example all priests of God enforce them to follow, seeing the covetousness that was among the people, desiring to destroy that foul sin through the grace of God and true virtuous living and example of himself, wrote and taught all priests to follow him as he followed Christ, patiently, willingly, and gladly in high poverty. Wherefore Paul saith thus. The Lord hath ordained that they that preach the gospel, shall live of the gospel. But we, saith Paul, that covet and busy us to be faithful followers of Christ, do not use this power. For lo, as Paul witnesses afterward, when he was full poor and needy, preaching among the people; he was not chargeable unto them, but with his hands he worked, not only to get his own living, but also the living of other poor and needy creatures. And since the people was never so covetous, nor so avaricious, I guess, as they are now, it were good counsel that all priests took good heed to this heavenly learning of Paul, following him here in wilful poverty, nothing charging the people for their bodily livelihood. But, because many priests do contrary to Paul in this aforesaid doctrine, Paul bids the people take heed to those priests that follow him as he had given them an example. As if Paid would say this to the people, Accept ye none other priests than they that live after the form that I have taught you. For certain, in whatsoever dignity or order any priest is in, if he conform him not to follow Christ and his apostles, in willing poverty, and in other heavenly virtues, and especially in true preaching of God's word, though such a one be named a priest, yet he is no more than a priest in name, for the work of a very priest in such a one is wanting. This sentence is approved by Augustine, Gregory, Chrysostom, and Lincoln (Robert Grosseteste 1175-1253) plainly.

The archbishop said to me, Thinkest you this is wholesome learning, to sow openly, or yet privily among the people? Certainly, this doctrine contraries plainly the ordinance of holy fathers, who have ordained, granted, and licensed priests to be in divers degrees, and to live by tithes and offerings of the people, and by other duties.

I said, Sir, if priests were now in measurable measure and number, and lived virtuously, and taught busily and truly the word of God, by the example of Christ and his apostles, without tithes, offerings, and other duties that priests now challenge and take, the people would give them freely sufficient livelihood.

And a clerk said to me, How will you make this good, that the people will give freely to priests their livelihood; since that now by the law every priest can scarcely constrain the people to give them their livelihood?

I said. Sir, it is no wonder though people grudge to give priests the livelihood that they ask. Many people know now, how that priests should live, and how that they live contrary to Christ and his apostles. And therefore the people are full heavy to pay, as they do, their temporal goods to parsons, and to other vicars and priests, who should be faithful dispensators of the parish's goods; taking to themselves no more but a scarce living of tithes, or offerings, by the ordinance of the common law. For whatsoever priests take of the people, be it tithe or offering, or any other duty or service, the priests ought to have thereof no more than a bare living; and to depart the residue to the poor men and women, especially of the parish of which they take this temporal living. But the most of priests now waste their parish's goods, and spend them at their own will, after the world, in their vain lusts. So that in few places poor men have duly, as they should have, their own sustenance, neither of tithes, nor of offerings, nor of other large wages and foundations that priests take of the people, in divers manners above what they need for needful sustenance of meat and clothing. But the poor needy people are forsaken and left of priests to be sustained of the parishioners, as if the priests took nothing of the parishioners to help people with.

And thus, sir, unto over great charges of the parishioners they pay their temporal goods twice, where once might suffice, if priests were true dispensators. Also, sir, the parishioners that pay their temporal goods, be they tithes or offerings, to priests that do not their office among them justly, are partners of every sin of those priests; because that they sustain those priests' folly in their sin, with their temporal goods. If these things be well considered, what wonder is it then, sir, if the parishioners grudge against these dispensators?

Then the archbishop said to me, you that shouldest be judged and ruled by holy church, presumptuously you deemest holy church to have erred in the ordinance of tithes and other duties to be paid to priests. It shall be long ere you thrive, losel that despisest you ghostly mother. How darest you speak this, losel, among the people? Are not tithes given to priests to live by?

I said. Sir, St. Paul saith, that tithes were given in the old law to levites and to priests, that came of the lineage of Levi. But our priests, he saith, came not of the lineage of Levi, but of the lineage of Judah, to which Judah no tithes were promised to be given, Heb. vii. Therefore Paul saith. Since the priesthood is changed from the generation of Levi to the generation of Judah, it is necessary that changing also be made of the law. So that priests live now without tithes and other duties that they claim, following Christ and his apostles in willing poverty, as they have given them example. Since Christ lived, all the time of his preaching, by pure alms of the people; and by example of him his apostles lived in the same manners, or else by the labour of their hands, as it is said above. Every priest, whose priesthood Cinist approves, knows well, and confesses in word and in work, that a disciple ought not to be above his master, but it suffices to a disciple to be as his master, simple and pure, meek and patient; and by example especially of his master Christ every priest should rule him in all his living; and so, after his skill and power, a priest should busy him to inform and to rule whomsoever he might charitably. And the archbishop said to me with a great spirit, God's curse have you and mine for this teaching; for you wouldst hereby make the old law more free and perfect than the new law. For you sayest that it is lawful to levites and priests to take tithes in the old law, and so to enjoy their privileges; but to us priests in the new law, you sayest it is not lawful to take tithes; and thus you given to levites of the old law more freedom than to priests of the new law.

I said. Sir, I marvel that ye understand this plain text of Paul thus. Ye wot well, that the levites and priests in the old law that took tithes, were not so free nor so perfect, as Christ and his apostles who took no tithes. And, sir, there is a doctor, I think that it is St. Jerome, who saith thus. The priests that challenge now in the new law tithes, say in effect, that Christ is not become man, nor hath yet suffered death for man's love. Wherefore this doctor saith this sentence. Since tithes were the hires and wages limited to levites and to priests of the old law for bearing about of the tabernacle, and for slaying and flaying of beasts, and for burning of sacrifice, and for keeping of the temple, and for blowing the trumpet of battle before the host of Israel, and other divers observances that pertained to their office — those priests that will challenge or take tithes, deny that Christ is come in the flesh, and do the priest's office of the old law, for whom tithes were granted, but else, as this doctor saith, priests take now tithes wrong fully.

And the archbishop said to his clerks. Heard you ever losel speak thus? Certainly this is the learning of them all, that wheresoever they come, and they may suffer, they enforce them to impugn the freedom of holy church.

I said, Sir, why call ye the taking of tithes, and of such other duties, that priests challenge now wrongfully, the freedom of holy church; since neither Christ nor his apostles challenged or took such duties? Therefore these takings of priests now are not justly called the freedom of holy church, but all such giving and taking ought to be called and holden the slanderous covetousness of men of the holy church.

And the archbishop said to me, Why, losel, will not you and others that are confederate with you, seek out of holy scripture, and of the sentences of doctors, all sharp authorities against lords, knights, and squires, and against other secular men, as you dost against priests?

And I said, Sir, whatsoever men, or women, lords, or ladies, or any others, that are present in our preaching especially, or in our communing, after our knowledge, we tell out to them their office and their charges. But, sir, since Chrysostom saith, that priests are the stomach of the people, it is needful in preaching, and also in communing, to be most busy about this priesthood. Since by the viciousness of priests both lords and commons are most sinfully infected, and led into the worst. And because that covetousness and pride of priests, and boast that they have and make of their dignity and power, destroys not only the virtues of priesthood in priests themselves, but also over this, it stirs God to take great vengeance both upon the lords, and the commons, who suffer these priests charitably.

On Priestly Poverty

And the archbishop said to me you judgest every priest proud that will not go arrayed as you dost. By, I deem him to be more meek that goes every day in a scarlet gown, than you in your threadbare blue gown. Whereby knowest you a proud man?

And I said. Sir, a proud priest may be known when he denies to follow Christ and his apostles in willing poverty, and other virtues; and covetes worldly worship, and takes it gladly, and gathers together with pleading, menacing, or with flattering, or with simony, any worldly goods; and most, if a priest busy not himself to withstand sin chiefly in himself, and after all other men and women after his knowledge and power.

The archbishop said to me. Though you knewest a priest to have all these vices, and though you saw a priest commit sins of the flesh, — wouldst you therefore condemn this priest as damnable? I say to you, in the turning about of your hand, such a sinner may be verily repented.

And I said, Sir, I will not condemn any man for any sin that I know done or may be done, so that the sinner leave his sin. But, by authority of holy scripture, he that sins thus openly as you show here, is damnable for doing of such a sin; and most specially a priest who should be an example to all others to hate and fly sin. And in how short time soever ye say that such a sinner maybe repented, he ought not of him that knows his sinning, to be judged verily repentant, without open evidence of great shame and hearty sorrow for his sin. For whosoever, and especially a priest, uses pride, envy, covetousness, lechery, simony, or any other vices, shows not as open evidence of repentance as he hath given evil example and occasion of sinning, if he continue in any such sin as long as he may; it is likely that sin leaves him, and he not sin. And, as I understand, such a one sins unto death, for whom nobody owes to pray, as St. John saith.

And a clerk said then to the archbishop, Sir, the longer that ye oppose him, the worse he is; and the more you busy you to amend him, the waywarder he is. For he is of so shrewd a kind, that he shames not only to be himself a foul nest, but without shame he busies him to make his nest fouler.

Then the archbishop said to his clerk. Suffer a while, for I am at an end with him; for there is another point certified against him, and I will hear what he saith thereto.

On Oaths

Then he said to me, Lo it is here certified against you, that you preached openly at Shrewsbury, that it is not lawful to swear in any case.

I said, Sir, I never preached so openly, nor have I taught in this wise in any place. But, sir, as I preached in Shrewsbury, with my protestation I say to you now here; that by the authority of the epistle of St. James, and by witness of divers saints and doctors, I have preached openly in oney place or other, that it is not lawful in any case to swear by any creature. And over this, sir, I have also preached and taught by the aforesaid authorities, that nobody should swear in any case, if that without oath, in anywise, he that is charged to swear miglit excuse himself to them that have power to compel him to swear in things lawful. But if a man may not excuse himself, without oath, to them that have power to compel him to swear, then he ought to swear only by God, taking him only that is Truth for to witness the truth.

Then a clerk asked me if it were not lawful to a subject, at the bidding of his prelate, to kneel down and touch the holy gospel book, and kiss it, saying, So help me God and this holy dome? for he should after his skill and power do all the things that his prelate commands him.

I said to them. Sirs, ye speak here full generally or largely. What if a prelate commanded his subject to do an unlawful thing, should he obey thereto? And the archbishop said, A subject ought not to suppose that his prelate will bid him do an unlawful thing. For a subject ought to think that his prelate will bid him do nothing but what he will answer for before God, that it is lawful. And then, though the bidding of the prelate be unlawful, the subject hath no peril to fulfil it, since he thinks and judges that whatsoever his prelate bids him do, that it is lawful to him to do it.

I said. Sir, I trust not thereto. But to our purpose: sir, I tell you that I was once in a gentleman's house, and there were then two clerks there, a master of divinity, and a man of law, which man of law was also communing in divinity. And among other things, these men spake of oaths, and the man of law said. At the bidding of his sovereign who had power to charge him to swear, he would lay his hand upon a book, and hear his charge. And if his charge to his understanding were unlawful, he would hastily withdrew his hand upon the book, taking their only God to witness that he would fulfil that lawful charge, after his power. And the master of divinity said then to him thus : Certainly he that lays his hand upon a book in this wise, and makes a promise to do that which he is commanded, is obliged thereby by book oath then to fulfil his charge. For, no doubt, he that charges him to lay his hand thus upon a book, touching the book, and swearing by it, and kissing it, promising in this form to do this thing or that, will say and witness that he who touches then a book, and kisses it, has sworn upon that book. And all other men who see that man thus do, and also all those who hear hereof, in the same manner will say and witness, that this man hath sworn upon a book. Wherefore the master of divinity said, it was not lawful either to give or to take any such charge upon a book; for every book is nothing else but divers creatures of which it is made. Therefore to swear upon a book, is to swear by creatures, and this swearing is unlawful. This sentence Chrysostom witnesses plainly, blaming them greatly that bring forth a book to swear upon, charging clerks that in no wise they constrain any body to swear, whether they think a man to swear true or false.

And the archbishop and his clerks scorned me, and blamed me greatly for this saying. And the archbishop menaced me with great punishment and sharp, except I left this opinion of swearing.

I said, Sir, this is not my opinion, but it is the opinion of Christ our Saviour, and of St. James, and of Chrysostom, and of other divers saints and doctors.

Then the archbishop had a clerk read this homily of Chrysostom; which homily this clerk held in his hand, written in a roll; which roll the archbishop caused to be taken from my fellow at Canterbury. And so then this clerk read this roll, till he came to a clause where Chrysostom saith, that it is a sin to swear well. Then a clerk, Malveren, as I guess, said to the archbishop. Sir, I pray you learn of him, how he understands Chrysostom here, saying it to be sin to swear well.

So the archbishop asked me how I understood here Chrysostom.

And certain I was somewhat afraid to answer hereto. For I had not busied me to study about the sense thereof, but lifting up my mind to God, I prayed to him for grace. And as fast as I thought how Christ said to his apostles. When for my name ye shall be brought before judges, I shall give into your mouth wisdom that your adversaries shall not against say; and, trusting faithfully in the word of God, I said, Sir, I know well that many men and women have now swearing so in custom, that they neither know nor will know that they do evil to swear as they do. But they think and say that they do well to swear as they do, though they know well that they swear untruly. For they say, they may by their swearing, though it be false, avoid blame or temporal harm, which they should have if they swear not thus. And, sir, many men and women main tain strongly that they swear well, when that is truth which they swear 'for. Also full many men and women say now, that it is well done to swear by creatures, when they may not, as they say, otherwise be believed. And also, full many men and women now say, that it is well done to swear by God, and by our lady, and by other saints, to have them in mind. But, since all these sayings are but accusations, and sin, methinks, sir, that this sense of Chrysostom may be alleged well against all such swearers; witnessing that all these sin grievously, though they think themselves to swear in this aforesaid wise well. For it is evil done, and great sin to swear truth, when in any manner a man may excuse himself without oath.

And the archbishop said that Chrysostom might be thus understood.

He is told to swear on oath to submit to the teaching of the Church

Then a clerk told me. Will you tarry my lord no longer, but submit yourself here meekly to the ordinance of holy church, and lay your hand upon a book, touching the holy gospel of God, promising not only with your mouth, but also with thine heart, to stand to my lord's ordinance?

And I said. Sir, have I not told you here, how that I heard a master of divinity say that in such case it is all one to touch a book, and to swear by a book. The archbishop said, There is no master of divinity in England so great, but if he hold this opinion before me, I shall punish him as I shall do you, except you swear as I shall charge you.

I said. Sir, is not Chrysostom an attentive doctor? And the archbishop said. Yea.

I said. If Chrysostom proves him worthy of great blame that brings forth a book to swear upon, it must needs follow, that he is more to blame who swears on that book.

And the archbishop said. If Chrysostom meant accordingly to the ordinance of holy church, we will accept him.

Then said a clerk to me, Is not the word of God, and God himself, equivalent, that is, of one authority? And I said. Yea.

Then he said to me. Why will you not swear then by the gospel of God, that is, God's word, since it is all one to swear by the word of God, and by God himself? I said. Sir, since I may not now otherwise be believed, but by swearing, I perceive, as Augustine saith, that it is not speedful that ye, who should be my brethren, should not believe me; therefore I am ready by the word of God, as the Lord commanded me by his word, to swear.

Then the clerk said to me. Lay then thine hand upon the book, touching the holy gospel of God, and take your charge. And I said. Sir, I understand that the holy gospel of God may not be touched by man's hand.

The clerk said, I trifled, and that I said not the truth. And I asked this clerk, whether it were more to read the gospel, than to touch the gospel? He said, it was more to read the gospel.

Then I said, Sir, by authority of St. Jerome, the gospel is not the gospel for reading of the letter, but for the belief that men have in the word of God. It is the gospel that we believe, and not the letter that we read; because the letter that is touched with man's hand, is not the gospel; but the sentence that is verily believed in man's heart, is the gospel. For so Jerome saith, the gospel, that is the virtue of God's word, is not in the leaves of the book, but it is in the root of reason. Neither the gospel, he saith, is in the writing alone of the letters, but the gospel is in the marking of the sentence of scripture. This sentence St. Paul approves, saying thus. The kingdom of God is not in word, but in power. And David saith, The voice of the Lord, that is, his word, is in power. And after David saith, Through the word of God the heavens were formed, and in the Spirit of his mouth is all the power of them. And I pray you, sir, understand ye well how David saith then, in the Spirit of the mouth of the Lord is all the power of angels and of men.

The clerk said to me you wouldest make us to trifle with you. Say we not that the gospel is written in the mass book?

And I said. Sir, though men use to say thus, yet it is an imperfect speech. For the principal part of a thing is properly the whole thing. For lo, man's soul that may not now be seen here, nor touched with any sensible thing, is properly man. And all the virtue of a tree is in the root thereof which may not be seen; for, do away the root and the tree is destroyed. And, sir, as you said to me right now, God and his word are of one authority. And, sir, St. Jerome witnesses that Christ, very God and very man, is hid in the letter of his law; thus also the gospel is hid in the letter. For as it is full likely that many, and divers men and women here in the earth, touched Christ and saw him, and knew his bodily person, who neither touched, nor saw, nor knew his Godhead spiritually, right thus, many men now touch, and

see, and write, and read the scriptures of God's law, who neither see, touch, nor read effectually the gospel. For as the Godhead of Christ, that is, the power of God, is known by the virtue of behef, so is the gospel, that is, Christ's word.

A clerk said to me, These are full misty matters and unsavoury, that you showest here to us.

And I said, Sir, if you that are masters know not plainly this sentence, you may sorely dread that the kingdom of heaven be taken from you, as it was from the princes of priests, and from the elders of the Jews.

Then a clerk, as I guess, Malveren, said to me. you knowest not thine equivocations; for the kingdom of heaven hath divers understandings. What callest you the kingdom of heaven in this sentence that you showest here?

On God's Word

I said, Sir, by good reason and sentence of doctors, the realm of heaven is called here the understanding of God's word. And a clerk said to me. From whom thinkest you that this understanding is taken away?

I said, Sir, by authority of Christ himself, the effectual understanding of Christ's word is taken away from all them chiefly which are great lettered men, and presume to understand high things, and will be holden for wise men, and desire mastership and high state and dignity; but they will not conform them to the living and teaching of Christ and his apostles.

Then the archbishop said. Well, well, you will judge your sovereigns. By, the king doth not his duty, unless he suffer you to be condemned.

Then another clerk said to me, Why, on Friday that last was, counselled you a man of my lord's that he should not shrive him to any man, but only to God?

With this asking I was abashed; and then by and by I knew that I was subtly betrayed by a man who came to me in prison on the Friday before, communing with me in this matter of confession. And certainly, by his words, I thought that this man came to me of full fervent and charitable will; but now I know he came to tempt me, and to accuse me. God forgive him, if it be his will; and with all my heart. When I had thought thus, I said to this clerk, Sir, I pray you that you would fetch this man hither; and all the words, as near as I can repeat them, which I spake to him on Friday in the prison, I will rehearse now here before you all, and before him.

And, as I guess, the archbishop said then to me, They that are now here suffice to repeat them. How saidst you to him?

I said, Sir, that man came and asked me in divers things, and after his asking I answered him what was good as I understood. And as he showed to me by his words he was weary of his living in court, and right heavy for his own vicious living, and also for the viciousness of other men, and especially of priests' evil living; and therefore he said to me with a sorrowful heart, as I guessed, that he purposed fully within a short time to leave the court, and to busy him to know God's law, and to conform all his

life thereafter. And when he had said to me these words, and others more which I would rehearse if he were present, he prayed me to hear his confession. And I said to him. Sir, wherefore come ye to me to be confessed of me? Ye know well that the archbishop puts and holds me here as one unworthy either to give or to take any sacrament of holy church. He said unto me, Brother, I know well, and so many others more know that you and such others are wrongfully vexed, and therefore I commune with you the more gladly. And I said to him, Certainly, I know well that many men of this court, and especially the priests of this household, would be full evil satisfied both with you and me, if they knew that you were confessed of me. And he said, that he cared not therefore, for he had full little affection in them. And, as methought, he spake these words and many others of good will and of so high desire to have known and done the pleasant will of God. And I said to him, as with my aforesaid protestation I say to you now here; Sir, I counsel you to absent you from all evil company, and to draw you to them that love and busy them to know and to keep the precepts of God. And then the good Spirit of God will move you to occupy busily all your understanding in gathering together of all your sins, as far as you can bethink you, greatly shaming for them, and grieving heartily for them. Yea, sir, the Holy Ghost will then put in your heart a good will and a fervent desire to take and to hold a good purpose, to hate ever and to flee, after your judgment and power, all occasion of sin; and so then wisdom shall come to you from above, enlightening with divers beams of grace and of heavenly desire all your understanding, informing you how you shall trust steadfastly in the mercy of the Lord, acknowledging him only all your vicious living, praying to him ever devoutly of charitable counsel and continuance, hoping without doubt that if you continue thus, busying you faithfully to know and to keep his biddings, he will, for he only may, forgive you all your sins.

On Priestly Absolution

And this man said to me. Though God forgive men their sins, yet it behoves men to be absolved by priests, and to do the penance that they enjoin them. And I said to him, Sir, it is all one to absolve men of their sins, and to forgive men their sins. Wherefore, since it pertains only to God to forgive sin, it suffices in this cause to counsel men and women to leave their sin, and to comfort them that busy themselves thus to do, to hope steadfastly in the mercy of God. And again, priests ought to tell sharply to custom able sinners, that if they will not make an end of their sin, but continue in divers sins while they may sin, all such deserve pain without end. And therefore priests should ever busy them to live well and holily, and to teach the people busily and truly the word of God, showing to all folk in open preaching and in privy counselling, that the Lord God only forgives sin. And therefore, those priests that take upon them to assoil men of their sins, blaspheme God; since it pertains only to the Lord to absolve men of all their sins. For no doubt a thousand years after that Christ was a man, no priest of Christ durst take upon him to teach the people, neither privately nor openly, that they needed to come to be absolved of them as priests now do. But by authority of Christ's word, priests bound obdurate customable sinners to everlasting pains, who in no time of their lives would busy them faithfully to know the biddings of God, nor to keep them. And again, all they that would occupy all their mind to hate and to fly all occasion of sin, dreading over all things to offend God, and loving to please him continually, priests showed to these men and women how the Lord absolved them of all their sins; and thus Christ promised to confirm in heaven all the binding and loosing that priests, by authority of his word, bind men in sin that are indurate therein, or loose them out of sin here upon earth that are truly repentant. This man hearing these words, said that he might well in conscience consent to this sentence. But he said, Is it not needful to the lay people that cannot thus do, to go shrive them to priests? And I said, If a man feel himself so distroubled with any sin, that he cannot by his own skill avoid this sin without counsel of them that are herein wiser than he, in such a case, the counsel of a good priest is full necessary. And if a good priest fail, as they do now commonly, in such a case, St. Augustine saith, that a man may lawfully commune and take counsel of a virtuous secular man. But certainly, that man or woman is over laden and too brutish who cannot bring their own sins into their mind, busying them night and day to hate and to forsake all their sins, doing a sigh for them after their knowledge and power. And, sir, full accordingly to this sentence, upon Midlent Sunday, two years, as I guess now agone, I heard a monk of Feversham, that men called Morden, preach at Canterbury at the cross within Christ church abbey, saying thus of confession. That as through the suggestion of the fiend, without counsel of any other, of themselves many men and women can imagine and find means and ways enough to come to pride, to theft, to lechery, and other divers vices; contrariwise, (this monk said,) since the Lord God is more ready to forgive sin than the fiend is or may be of power to move any body to sin, then whosoever will shame and sorrow heartily for their sins, acknowledging them faithfully to God, amending them after their power and ability, without counsel of any other body tian of God and of himself, through the grace of God, all such men and women may find sufficient means to come to God's mercy, and so to be fully assoiled of all their sins. This sentence I said, sir, to this man of yours, and the very words as near as I can guess. The archbishop said, Holy church approves not this learning.

I said, Sir, holy church, of which Christ is head in heaven and in earth, must needs approve this sentence. For lo, hereby all men and women may, if they will, be sufficiently taught to know and to keep the commandments of God, and to hate and to fly continually all occasion of sin, and to love and to seek

virtues busily, and to believe in God stably, and to trust in his mercy steadfastly, and so to come to perfect charity, and continue therein perseveringly. And more the Lord asks not of any man here now in this life. And certainly, since Jesus Christ died upon the cross, willingly, to make men free, men of the church are too bold and too busy to make men thralls, binding them under the pain of endless curse, as they say, to do many observances and ordinances which neither the living nor teaching of Christ nor his apostles approves.

A clerk said then to me. you showest plainly here your deceit, which you have learned of them that travelled to sow the poppy among the wheat. But I counsel you to go quite away from this learning, and submit yourself lowly to my lord, and you shall find him yet to be gracious to you.

And as fast then, another clerk said to me. How wast you so bold at Paul's Cross, in London, to stand there with your tippet bound about thine head, and to reprove in his sermon the worthy clerk Alkerton, drawing away all that you mightest? Yea, and the same day in the afternoon, thou, meeting the worthy doctor in Watling-street, called him a false flatterer and hypocrite.

I said, Sir, I think certainly that there was no man nor woman that verily hated sin, and loved virtues, hearing the sermon of the clerk at Oxford, and also Alkerton's sermon, but they said, or might justly say, that Alkerton re proved that clerk untruly, and slandered him wrongfully and uncharitably. For, no doubt, if the living and teaching of Christ chiefly, and of his apostles, be true, nobody that loves God and his law will blame any sentence that the clerk then preached there; since by authority of God's word, and by approved saints and doctors, and by open reason, this clerk approved all things clearly that he preached there.

And a clerk of the archbishop said to me, His sermon was false, and that he showed openly, since he dared not stand forth and defend his preaching that he then preached there.

On Preaching in the Vernacular

I said, Sir, I think that he purposes to stand steadfastly thereby, or else he slanders himself foully, and also many others who have great trust, that he will stand by the truth of the gospel. For I wot well, this sermon is written both in Latin and English, and many men have it and they set great price thereby. And, sir, if you were present with the archbishop at Lambeth when this clerk appeared, and was at his answer before the archbishop, you know well that this clerk denied not there his sermon, but two days he maintained it before the archbishop and his clerks.

Then the archbishop, or one of his clerks, said, That harlot shall be met with for that sermon. For no man but he and thou, and other such false harlots, praise any such preaching.

Then the archbishop said, Your cursed sect is busy, and it joys greatly, to the contrary and to destroy the privilege and freedom of holy church.

I said. Sir, I know no man that labours so busily as this sect doth, which you reprove, to make rest and peace in holy church. For pride, covetousness, and simony, which trouble most the holy church, this sect hates and flees, and labours busily to move all other men in like manner, unto meekness and willing

poverty, and charity, and free ministering of the sacrament. This sect loves and uses, and is full busy to move all other folks thus to do. For these virtues all members of holy church owe to their head, Christ.

Then a clerk said to the archbishop, Sir, it is far day, and you have far to ride to night; therefore make an end of him, for he will make none; but the more, sir, that you busy you to draw him toward you, the more contumacious he is made, and the further from you.

William will not forsake his convictions

Then Malveren said to me, William, kneel down, and pray my lord's grace, and leave all your fantasies, and become a child of holy church.

I said, Sir, I have prayed the archbishop oft, and yet I pray to him for the love of Christ, that he will leave his indignation that he hath against me, and that he will suffer me after my knowledge and power, to do mine office of priesthood, as I am charged of God to do it. For I covet nought else but to serve my God, to his pleasing, in the state that I stand in, and have taken me to.

And the archbishop said to me, If of good heart you will submit yourself now here meekly, to be ruled from this time forth by my counsel, obeying meekly and willingly to my ordinance, you shall find it most profitable and best for you to do this. Therefore tarry you me no longer, grant to do this that I have said to you now here shortly, or deny it utterly.

I said to the archbishop. Sir, ought we to believe that Jesus Christ was and is very God and very man? And the archbishop said, Yea.

I said. Sir, ought we to believe that all Christ's living and his teaching is true in every point? He said. Yea.

I said. Sir, ought we to believe that the living of the apostles and the teaching of Christ and all the prophets, which are written in the bible for the health and salvation of good people, are true? He said. Yea.

I said. Sir, ought all christian men and women, after their knowledge and power, to conform all their living to the teaching especially of Christ, and also to the teaching and living of his apostles and prophets, in all things that are pleasant to God, and for the edification of his church? He said. Yea.

And I said. Sir, ought the doctrine, the bidding, or the counsel of any body to be accepted or obeyed unto, except this doctrine, these biddings, or this counsel, may be granted and affirmed by Christ's living and his teaching specially, or by the living and teaching of his apostles and prophets? The archbishop said to me. Other doctrines ought not to be accepted, nor ought we to obey to any man's bidding or counsel, except we can perceive that his bidding or counsel accords with the lite and teaching of Christ, and of his apostles and prophets.

I said, Sir, are not all the learning, and biddings, and counsels of holy church, means and healthful remedies to know and to withstand the private suggestions, and the open temptations of the fiend? And also ways and healthful remedies to slay pride and all other deadly sins, and the branches of them, and

sovereign means to purchase grace to withstand and overcome all fleshly lusts and movings? And the archbishop said. Yea.

I said. Sir, whatsoever things ye or any other body bid or counsel me to do, according to this aforesaid learning, after my knowledge and power, through the help of God, I will meekly, with all my heart, obey thereto.

Christ, not man, is the head of the Church

And the archbishop said to me, Submit yourself then now here meekly and willingly to the ordinance of holy church, which I shall show to yourself. I said, Sir, accordingly as I have here now before you rehearsed, I will now be ready to obey full gladly to Christ the head of the holy church, and the learnings and biddings and counsels of every pleasing member of him.

Then the archbishop, striking with his hand fiercely upon a cupboard, spake to me with a great spirit, saying, By, but if you leave not such additions, obliging you now here, without any exception, to mine ordinance, before that I go out of this place, I shall make you as sure as any thief that is in the prison of Lanterne; advise you now what you will do. And then, as if he had been angered, he went from the cupboard where he stood to a window.

William refuses to abandon his beliefs like others

Then Malveren and another clerk came nearer to me, and they spake to me many words full pleasantly; and another while they threatened me, and counselled full busily, to submit me, or else they said I should not escape punishing over measure; for they said I should be degraded, cursed, and burned, and so then damned. But now, they said, you mayest avoid all these mischiefs, if you will submit you willingly and meekly to this worthy prelate, that hath cure of your soul. And, for the pity of Christ, said they, bethink yourself, how great clerks the bishop of Lincoln, Hereford, and Purvey were, and yet are, and also B., who is a well under standing man. Which also have forsaken and revoked all the learning and opinions that you and others hold. Wherefore, since each of them is much wiser than you art, we counsel you for the best; that by the example of these four clerks you follow them, submitting yourself as they do.

One of the bishop's clerks said then there, that he heard Nicholas Hereford say, that since he forsook and revoked all the learning and Lollards' opinions, he hath had much greater favour and more delight to hold against them, than ever he had to hold with them, while he held with them.

Therefore Malveren said to me, I understand if you will take yourself to a priest, and shrive you clean, forsake all such opinions, and take your penance of my lord here, for the holding and teaching of them, within a short time you shalt be greatly comforted in this doing.

I said to the clerks, who thus busily counselled me to follow these aforesaid men, Sirs, if these men, of whom ye counsel me to take example, had forsaken benefices of temporal profit and of worldly worship, so that they had absented themselves, and avoided all occasions of covetousness and of fleshly lust, and had taken upon them simple living and willing poverty; they had herein given good example to me and to many others, to have followed them. But now, since all these four men have slanderously and shamefully done the contrary, consenting to receive and to have and to hold temporal benefices, living now more worldly and more fleshly than they did before, conforming them to the manners of this world, I forsake them herein, and in all their aforesaid slanderous doing. For I purpose, with the help of God, in remission of my sins, and of my foul cursed living, to hate and to flee, privately and openly, to follow these men, teaching and counselling whomsoever I may, to flee and to avoid the way that they have chosen to go in, which will lead them to the worst end, if in convenient time they repent them not, verily forsaking and revoking openly the slander that they have put, and every day yet put to Christ's church. For certain, so open blasphemy and slander as they have spoken and done in their revoking and forsaking of the truth, ought not and may not privily be amended dully. Wherefore, sir, I pray you that you busy not to move me to follow these men in revoking and forsaking the truth, as they have done, and yet do; wherein by open evidence they stir God to great wrath, and not only against themselves, but also against all those who favour them, or consent to them herein, or who commune with them, except it be for their amendment. For whereas these men first were pursued of enemies, now they have obliged them by oath to slander and pursue Christ in his members. Wherefore, as I trust steadfastly in the goodness of God, the worldly covetousness, and the lusty living and sliding from the truth of these renegades, shall be to me and to many other men and women an example and an evidence to stand more stiffly by the truth of Christ.

For certainly many men and women do mark and abhor the foulness and cowardness of these aforesaid untrue men, how they are overcome and stopped with benefices, and withdrawn from the truth of God's

word, forsaking utterly to suffer therefore bodily persecution. For by this unfaithful doing and apostasy of them, especially that are great lettered men, and have acknowledged openly the truth, and now either for pleasure or displeasure of tyrants, have taken hire and temporal wages to forsake the truth, and to hold against it, slandered and pursuing them that covet to follow Christ in the way of righteousness, many men and women therefore are now moved. But many more, through the grace of God, shall be moved hereby to learn the truth of God to do thereafter, and to stand boldly thereby.

Then the archbishop said to his clerks, Busy you no longer about him, for he, and other such as he is, are confederate together that they will not swear to be obedient, and to submit themselves to prelates of holy church. For now, since I stood here, his fellow also sent me word that he will not swear, and that this fellow counselled him that he should not swear to me. And, losel, in that thing which in you is, you have busied yourself to lose this young man; but, blessed be God, you shalt not have your purpose of him. For he has forsaken all your learning, submitting him to be pliant and obedient to the ordinance of holy church, and weeps full bitterly, and curses you full heartedly, for the venomous teaching which you have shown to him, counselling him to do thereafter.

And for your false counselling of many others and him, you have great cause to be right sorry. For a long time you have busied yourself to pervert whomsoever you might. Therefore, you are worthy of as many deaths, as you have given evil counsels. And therefore, by, you shalt go thither, where Nicholas Hereford and Thomas Purvey were harboured. And I undertake ere this day eight days, you shalt be right glad to do whatsoever thing I bid you to do. And, losel, I shall assay if I can make yourself there as sorrowful, as it was told to me, you were glad at my last going out of England. By St. Thomas, I shall turn your joy into sorrow.

I said, Sir, there can nobody prove lawfully that ever I joyed of the manner of your going out of this land. But, sir, to say the truth, I was joyful when you were gone; for the bishop of London, in whose prison you left me, found in me no cause to hold me longer in his prison, but at the request of my friends, he delivered me to them, asking of me no manner of submitting.

Then the archbishop said to me, wherefore I went out of England is unknown to you; but be this well known to you, that God, as I know well, hath called me again, and brought me into this land, to destroy you and the false sect that you art of; as, by, I shall pursue you so narrowly, that I shall not leave a slip of you in this land.

I said to the archbishop. Sir, the holy prophet Jeremiah said to the false prophet Hananiah, When the word that is the prophecy of a prophet, is known or fulfilled, then it shall be known, that the Lord sent the prophet in truth. And the archbishop, as if he had not been pleased with my saying, turned him away hither and thither, and said.

By, I shall set upon your shins a pair of pearls, that you shalt be glad to change your voice.

These and many more wondrous and blameful words were spoken to me, menacing me and all others of the same sect to be punished and destroyed unto the uttermost.

William is threatened with death before being sent to Prison

And the archbishop called then to him a clerk, and whispered with him; and that clerk went forth, and soon he brought in the constable of Saltwood castle, and the archbishop spoke privately a good while with him; and then the constable went forth, and then came in divers seculars, and they scorned me on every side, and menaced me greatly, and some counselled the archbishop to burn me speedily, and some others counselled him to drown me in the sea, for it is near hand there.

And a clerk standing beside me there, kneeled down to the archbishop, praying him that he would deliver me to him to say matins with him, and he would undertake, that within three days I should not resist anything that was commanded of me by my prelate.

The archbishop said that he would ordain for me himself And then afterwards came again the constable, and spake privately to the archbishop; and the archbishop commanded the constable to lead me forth thence with him, and so he did. And when we were gone forth thence, we were sent after again. And when I came in again before the archbishop, a clerk bade me kneel down and ask grace, and submit me lowly, and I should find it for the best.

I said then to the archbishop, Sir, as I have said to you divers times today, I will willingly and lowly obey and submit me to be ordained ever, after my knowledge and power, to God and to his law, and to every member of holy church, as far as I can perceive that these members accord with their head Christ, and will teach me, rule me, or chastise me by authority, especially of God's law. And the archbishop said, I knew he would not without such additions submit him. Then I was rebuked, scorned, and menaced on every side; and yet after this divers persons cried upon me to kneel down and submit me; but I stood still, and spake no word. Then there was spoken of me, and to me, many great words, and I stood and heard them menace, curse, and scorn me, but I said nothing. Then a while after the archbishop said to me, Will you not submit you to the ordinance of holy church?

I said, Sir, I will full gladly submit me, as I have showed you before. Then the archbishop bade the constable to have me forth thence in haste. So then I was led forth, and brought into afoul, dishonest prison, where I came never before. But, thank God, when all men were gone forth then from me, and had spared fast the prison door after them; by and by, I therein by myself, busied me to think on God, and to thank him for his goodness. And I was then greatly comforted in all my senses, not only for that I was then delivered for a time from the sight, from the hearing, from the presence, from the scorning, and from the menacing of mine enemies; but much more I rejoiced in the Lord, because that through his grace 'he kept me so, both among the flattering especially, and among the menacing of mine adversaries, that without heaviness and anguish of my conscience, I passed away from them. For, as a tree laid upon another tree, over thwart or crosswise, so were the archbishop and his three clerks always contrary to me, and I to them.

Now, good God, for thine holy name, and to the praise of your most blessed name, make us one together, if it be your will, by authority of your word, that is true perfect charity, and else not. And that it may thus be, all that read or hear this writing pray heartily to the Lord God, that he for his great goodness, which cannot be expressed with tongue, grant to us, and to all other, who in the same wise, and for the

same cause especially, or for any other cause, are at a distance, to be knit and made one in true faith, in steadfast hope, and in perfect charity. Amen.

Source: First printed at Antwerp c. 1530 (STC 24045), reprinted by John Foxe in Acts and Monuments (1563 and later editions).

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Translation: Original English composition (William Thorpe's own account, examined 1407; no translation involved). Text is Foxe's public-domain Acts and Monuments reprint of the 1530 Antwerp edition. One modern editorial parenthetical (a Golden Legend/Longinus gloss, absent from the 1530/Foxe text) was found embedded mid-sentence in the source .docx and has been removed as an editing error, not part of the original.

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