

The Practice of Prelates

William Tyndale

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INTRODUCTION

Tyndale's furious 1530 pamphlet argues, from Christ's own words, that no churchman may hold temporal power or wield the sword of civil authority, and then turns that argument directly on Cardinal Wolsey and Henry VIII's divorce proceedings, naming names. It is at once a theological treatise on the nature of Christ's kingdom and a piece of live political pamphleteering, written from exile by a man the English church wanted dead. The prose is dense, allusive, and occasionally difficult to follow across five centuries of changed reference points, but it captures something the more polished Tyndale of the Bible translations doesn't: a reformer using every rhetorical weapon he had against power he considered corrupt.

Prelates appointed to preach Christ may not leave God's word, and minister temporal offices; but ought to teach the lay-people the right way, and let them alone with all temporal business

Our Saviour Jesus Christ answered Pilate, that his Kingdom (John 8) was not of this world. And (Matthew 10) he saith, the disciple is not greater than his master; but it ought to suffice the disciple, that he be as the master is. Wherefore if Christ's Kingdom is not of this world, nor any of his disciples doctrine may be otherwise than he was; then Christ's vicars, which minister his Kingdom here in his bodily absence, and have the oversight of his flock, may be none Emperors, Kings, dukes, lords, knights, temporal judges, or any temporal officer, or under false names have any such dominion, or minister any such office as requireth violence.

And, (Matthew 6) "No man can serve two masters." where Christ concludeth, saying, "Ye cannot serve God and mammon;" that is, riches, covetousness, ambition, and temporal dignities.

And (Matthew 20) Christ called his disciples unto him, and said: "Ye know that the lords of the heathen people have dominion over them; and they that be great do exercise power over them. Howbeit, it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you shall be your minister; and he that will be chief shall be your servant : even as the Son of man came not that men should minister unto him, but for to minister and give his life for the redemption of many." Wherefore the officers in Christ's Kingdom may have no temporal dominion Kingdom or jurisdiction, nor execute any temporal authority or law of violence, nor may have any like manner among them: but clean contrary, they must cast themselves

down under all, and become servants unto all, suffer, and bear the burden of every man's infirmities, and go before them, and fight for them against the world with the sword of God's word, even unto the death, after the example of Christ.

And (Matthew 18), when the disciples asked who should be greatest in the Kingdom of heaven, Christ "called a young child unto him, and set him in the midst among them, saying: "Except ye turn back, and become as children, ye shall not enter the Kingdom of heaven." Now young children bear no rule one over another, but all is fellowship among them. And he said moreover: "Whosoever humbleth himself after the example of this child, he is the greatest in the Kingdom of heaven." that is, to be (as concerning ambition and worldly desires) so childish that thou couldst not heave thyself above thy brother, is the very bearing of rule, and to be great in Christ's Kingdom. And, to describe the very fashion of the greatness of his Kingdom, he said, "He that receiveth one such child in my name, to receive receiveth me." What is that, to receive a child in Christ's name? Verily, to submit, to be meek, and to humble thyself, it is. and to cast thyself under all men; and to consider all men's infirmities and weaknesses; and to help to heal their diseases with the word of truth, and to live purely, that they see no contrary example in thee to whatsoever thou teachest them in Christ; that thou put no stumbling-block before them, to make them fall while they be yet young and weak in the faith: but that thou abstain, as Paul teacheth, (1 Thessalonians 5.) 'ab omni specie mala' from all that might seem evil, or whereof a man might surmise amiss; and that thou so love them, that whatsoever gift of God in thee is, thou think the same theirs, and their food, and for their sakes given unto thee, as the truth is; and that all their infirmities be thine, and that thou feel them, and that thine heart mourn for them; and that with all thy power thou help to amend them, and cease not to cry to God for them, neither day nor night; and that thou let nothing be found in thee, that any man may rebuke, but whatsoever thou teachest them, that be thou; and that thou be not a wolf in a lamb's skin, as our holy father the Pope is, which cometh unto us in the name of hypocrisy, and in the title of cursed Cham, or Ham, calling himself 'servus servorum' the servant of all servants, and is yet found 'Tyrannus tyrannorum' of all tyrants the most cruel. This is to receive young children in Christ's name; and to receive young children in Christ's name is to bear rule in the Kingdom of Christ. Thus ye may see, that Christ's Kingdom is altogether spiritual; and the bearing of rule in it is clean contrary unto the bearing of rule temporally. "Wherefore none that beareth rule in it may have any temporal jurisdiction, or minister any temporal office that requireth violence to compel withal.

Peter was not greater than the other apostles by any authority given him of Christ

They say that Peter was chief of the apostles: verily, as why Apelles was called chief of painters for his excellent cunning above other, even so Peter may be called chief of the apostles for his activity and boldness above the other. But that Peter had any authority or rule over his brethren and fellow apostles, is false, and contrary to the scripture. Christ forbade it the last even before his passion, and in divers times before, and taught always the contrary, as I have rehearsed.

Thou wilt say, ' thou canst not see how there should be any good order in that Kingdom, where none were better than the other, and where the superior had not a law and authority to compel the inferior with violence.' The world, truly, can see no other way to rule than with violence : for there no man

abstain from evil, but for fear; because the love of righteousness is not written in their hearts. And The Pope therefore the Pope's Kingdom is of the world : for there one sort are your grace, your holiness, your fatherhood; another, my lord bishop, my lord abbot, my lord prior; another, master doctor, father, bachelor, master parson, master vicar, and at the last cometh in simple sir John. And every man reigneth over other with might; and have every ruler his prison, his jailor, his chains, his torments; even so much as the friars Observants observe that rule, and compel every man other with violence above the cruelty of the heathen tyrants: so that what cometh once in may never out, for fear of telling tales out of school. They rule over the body with violence, and compel it, whether the heart will or not, to observe things of their own maKing.

But in the Kingdom of God it is contrary. For the Spirit that bringeth them thither maketh them willing, and giveth them lust unto the law of God; and love compelleth them to work and love maketh every man's good, and all that he can do, common unto his neighbour's need. And as every man is strong in that Kingdom, so love compelled him to take the weak by the hand, and to help him, and to take him that cannot go upon his shoulders and bear him. And so to do service unto the weaker is to bear rule in that Kingdom.

And because Peter did exceed the other apostles in fervent service toward his brethren, therefore, is he called, not in scripture, but in the use of speaKing, the chiefest of the apostles; and not that he had any dominion over them. Of which truth thou mayest see also the practice in the Acts of the Apostles, after the resurrection. For when Peter had been and preached in the house of Cornelius, an heathen man, the other that were circumcised chode him, because he had been in an uncircumcised man's house, and ate with him : for it was forbidden in the law, neither wist they yet that the heathen should be called. And Peter was fain to give accounts unto them (which is no token of superiority) and to shew them how he was warned of the Holy Ghost so to do. And (Acts 15) when a council was gathered of the apostles and disciples about the circumcision of the heathen, Peter brought further, not his commandment and the authority of his vicarship, but the miracles that the Holy Ghost had shewed for the heathen; how at the preaching of the gospel the Holy Ghost had lighted upon them, and purified their hearts through faith; and therefore proved that they ought not to be circumcised.

And Paul and Barnabas brought forth the miracles that God had shewed by them among the heathen through preaching of faith. And then James brought forth a prophecy of the old Testament for the said part: and therewith the adversaries gave over their hold, and they concluded with one assent, by the authority of scripture and of the Holy Ghost, that the heathen should not be circumcised; and not by the commandment of Peter, under pain of cursing, excommunication, and interdicting, and like bugs, to make fools and children afraid withal.

And (Acts 8) Peter was sent of the other apostles unto the Samaritans: which is an evident token that he had no jurisdiction over them, (for then they could not have sent him,) but rather (as the truth is,) that the congregation had authority over him, and over all other private persons, to admit them for ministers, and send them forth to preach, whithersoever the Spirit of God moved them, and as they saw occasion.

And in the epistle to the Galatians thou seest also how Paul corrected Peter, when he walked not the straight way after the truth of the gospel.

So now thou seest that in the Kingdom of Christ, and in his church or congregation, and in his councils, the ruler is the scripture, approved through the miracles of the Holy Ghost, and men be servants only; and Christ is the head, and we all brethren. And when we call men our heads, that we do not because they be shorn or shaven, or because of their names, parson, vicar, bishop, Pope; but only because of the word which they preach. If they err from the word, then may whomsoever God moveth his heart, play Paul, and correct him. If he will not obey the scripture, then have his brethren authority by the scripture to put him down, and to send him out of Christ's church among the heretics, which prefer their false doctrine above the true word of Christ.

How the gospel punished trespassers, and how, by the gospel, we ought to go to law with our adversaries

Though that they of Christ's congregation be willing; yet, because the most part is always weak, and because also that the occasions of the world be ever many and great, insomuch that Christ, which wist all things beforehand, saith, (Matthew 6) " Woe be unto the world by reason of occasions of evil?" and saith also, that it cannot be avoided but that occasions shall come, therefore it cannot be chosen but that many shall overfall; when a weak brother hath trespassed, by what law shall he be punished? Verily, by the law of love whose properties thou readest in the thirteenth of the first to the Corinthians. If the love of God, which is my profession, be written in mine heart, it will not let me hate my weak brother when he hath offended me, no more than natural love will let a mother hate her child when it trespasses against her. My weak brother hath offended me; he is fallen, his weakness hath overthrown him. It is not right by the law of love, that I should now fall upon him, and tread him down in the mire and destroy him utterly : but it is right by the law of love, that I run to him and help him up again.

By what process we should go to law with our trespassers, Christ teacheth us, Matthew 18. Tell him his fault between him and thee with all meekness, remembering thou art a man, and mayest fall also : if he repent and thou love him, ye shall soon agree, and then forgive him. And when thou forgivest thy neighbour, then thou art sure that God forgiveth thee thy trespasses by his holy promise (Matthew 6)

If he hear thee not, then take a neighbour or two. If he heard them not, then tell the congregation, where thou art : and let the preacher pronounce God's law against him, and let the sad and discreet men rebuke him, and exhort him according to thy profession, ye shall soon agree. If he hears not the congregation, then let him be taken as a heathen.

If he that is offended be weak also, then let them be strong go between, and help them. And in a like manner, if any sin against the doctrine of Christ and the profession of a christian man, so that he could be a drunkard and an whore-keeper, or whatsoever open sin he does, or if he teaches false learning; then let such be rebuked openly, before the congregation, and by the authority of the scripture. And if they repent not, let them be put out of the congregation as heathen people. If they then be not ashamed, we have no remedy but patiently to abide what God will do; and to pray in the meantime, that God will open their hearts, and give them repentance. Other law than this Christ's gospel knoweth not, nor the officers thereof.

It is manifest, therefore, that the Kingdom of Christ is a spiritual Kingdom, which no man can minister well, and a temporal Kingdom too, as it is sufficiently proved; because no man which putteth his hand to the plough, and looketh back, is apt for the Kingdom of heaven; as Christ answered (Luke 9) unto him that would have followed him, but would first have taken leave of his household. If a man put his hand to the plough of God's word to preach it, and look also unto worldly business, his plough will surely go awry. And therefore, saith Christ unto another, that would likewise follow him, but desired first to go and bury his father, " Let the dead bury the dead: but come thou and shew, or preach, the Kingdom of God." As who should say, He that will preach the Kingdom of God (which is Christ's gospel) truly, must have his heart nowhere else.

What officers the apostles ordained in Christ's church; and what their offices were to do

Wherefore the apostles, following and obeying the rule, doctrine, and commandment of our Saviour Jesus Christ, their master, ordained in his Kingdom and congregation two officers: one called, after the Greek word, bishop, in English an overseer; which same was called priest after the Greek, elder in English, because of his age, discretion, and sadness; for he was, as nigh as could be, always an elderly man : as thou seest both in the new and old Testament also, how the officers of the Jews be called the elders of the people, because (as thou mayest well think) they were ever old men, as nigh as could be. For unto age do men naturally obey, and unto age doth God command to give honour, saying, (Leviticus 19) "Rise up before the hoar head, and reverence the face of the old man." And also experience of things, and coldness, without which it is hard to rule well, is more in age than in youth. And this overseer did put his hands unto the plough of God's word, and fed Christ's flock, and tended them only, without looking unto any other business in the world.

Another officer they chose, and called him deacon after the Greek, a minister in English, to minister the alms of the people unto the poor and needy. For in the congregation of Christ love maketh every man's gift and goods common unto the necessity of his neighbour. "Wherefore, the love of God being yet hot in the hearts of men, the rich that had the substance of this world's goods brought of their abundance great plenty unto the sustentation of the poor, and delivered it unto the hands of the deacons. And unto the help of the widow, deacons were widows of sixty years old, holy, virtuous, and destitute of friends, chosen to tend and wait upon the sick, and to wash the saints' feet, that came from one congregation unto another, whether for any business, or for fear of persecution. And those common goods of the church, offered for the succour of the poor, grew in all churches so exceedingly, that in some congregation it was so much, that it was sufficient to maintain a host of men; insomuch that tyrants did oft-times persecute the Christians for those common goods, as thou seest in the life of St Laurence, the deacon of Rome.

And, moreover, the covetousness of the prelates was the decay of Christendom, and the increasing of the Kingdom of Mahomet. For by the first springing of the empire of Mahomet, the Emperors Kings, and great lords of Christendom had given their treasure so mightily unto the church, what after great victories, and what at their deaths, that their successors were not able to maintain battle against the Saracens and Turks, (for the world was not yet in such captivity that they could make their subjects swear on books what they were worth, and raise up taxes at their pleasure;) so that a certain writer of stories saith: "The prelates gaped when the alymen would take the war upon them against the Turks; and the laymen looked when the prelates would lay out their money, to make the war withal, and not spend it in worse use, as the most part of them were wont to do; spending the money that was gotten with alms and blood of martyrs upon goodly plate, and great vessels of gold and silver, without care of things to come, despising God, whom they worshipped for their belly's sake only, and also man." Moreover, it was the custom even then, saith the author, to ask what the bishoprick was worth; yea, and to leave a worse for a better, or to keep both with a union. And at the same time Isacius, the deputy of the Emperor, came to Rome to confirm the Pope in his see with the Emperor's authority; for the election of the Pope was then nothing worth, except it had been confirmed by the Emperor : and he found so great treasure in the church of St John Lateran, that for disdain which he had, that they should have such treasure in store, and not to help the Emperor in his wars against the Turks, seeing his soldiers lacked wages, he took it away with violence against the will of the prelates, of which he exiled some, and paid his own men of war with one part, and took another part unto himself, and sent the third part unto the Emperor : which must needs have been a great treasure in one church.

By what means the prelates fell from Christ

The office of a bishop was a room, at the beginning, that no man coveted; and that no man durst take upon him, save he only which loved Christ better than his own life. For as Christ saith, that no man might be his disciple, except that he were ready to forsake life and all; even so might that officer be sure that it would cost him his life at one time or another, for bearing record unto the truth. But after that the multitude of the Christen were increased, and many great men had received the faith; then both lands and rents, as well as other goods, were given unto the maintenance, as well of the clergy, as of the

poor : because they gave then no tithes to the priests, nor yet now do, save in certain countries. For it is too much to give alms, offerings, lands, and tithes also. And then the bishops made them substitutes under them to help them, which they called priests, and kept the name of bishop unto themselves.

But out of the deacons sprang all the mischief: for through their hands went all things; they ministered unto the clergy, they ministered unto the poor, they were in favour with great and small. And when the bishop's office began to rest, and to be honourable, then the deacons, through favour and gifts, climb up thereunto; as lightly he that hath the old abbot's treasure succeeded with us. And by the means of their practice and acquaintance in the world they were more subtle and worldly wise than the old bishops, and less learned in God's word; as our prelates are when they come from stewardships in gentlemen's houses, and from surveying of great men's lands, lord's secrets, King's councils, ambassadorship, from war and ministering all worldly matters, yea, worldly mischief. And yet now they come not thence, but receive all, and bide there still; yea, they have enacted by plain parliament that they must bide in the court still, or else they may not have plurality of benefices. And then little by little they enhanced themselves, and turned all to themselves, minishing the poor people's part, and increasing theirs, and joining acquaintance with great men, and with their power climb up, and entitled them to the choosing and confirming of the Pope and all bishops, to flatter and purchase favour and defenders; trusting more unto their worldly wisdom than unto the doctrine of Christ, which is the wisdom of God, and unto the defence of man than of God. Then, while they that had the plough by the tail looked back, the plough went awry; faith waxed feeble and faint; love waxed cold; the scripture waxed dark; Christ was no more seen. He was in the mount with Moses; and therefore the bishops would have a god upon the earth whom they might see, and thereupon they began to dispute who should be greatest.

How the bishop of Rome became greater than other, and called himself Pope

Then, quoth worldly wisdom, Jerusalem must be the Jerusalem greatest, for that was Christ's seat: Et factum est: so it came to pass for a season. And in conclusion, where a great city was, and much riches, there was the bishop ever greater than his fellows. Alexandria in Egypt, and Antioch in Greece, were greater than their neighbours. Then, those decaying, Constantinople and Rome waxed great, and strove who should be greater. And Constantinople said. Where the Emperor is, there ought to be the greatest seat and chiefest bishop : for the Emperor lay most at Constantinople, because it was (I suppose) nigh the midst of the empire; therefore I must be the greatest, said the bishop of Constantinople. Nay, quoth the bishop of Rome, though the Emperor lie never so much at Constantinople, yet he is called Emperor of Rome, and Rome is the head of the empire; wherefore of right I must be the father of all whatsoever. And thus, whether they challenged their title by the authority of God or man, or by Peter or polling [taxation], it was all one, so they might be greatest.

And great intercession was made unto the Emperors of both parties; but in vain a great season: for the Emperors stopped their ears at such ambitious requests long time; till at last there came an Emperor called Phocas, which lay long in Italy, and was a very soft man, and a prey for prelates : in whose time Boniface III was bishop of Rome, a man ambitious and greedy upon honour, and of a very subtle wit, nothing inferior unto Thomas Wolfsee, Cardinal of York.

This Boniface was great with the Emperor Phocas, and with his wily persuasions and great intercession together obtained of Phocas to be called the chiefest of all bishops, and that his church should be the chief church : which authority as soon as he had purchased, he sent immediately his commandment, with the Emperor's power, unto all the bishops of Almany, commanding that every bishop should call all the priests of his diocese, and charge them that every man should put away his wife under pain of excommunication; which tyranny, though great resistance was made against it, he yet brought to pass with the Emperor's sword and his own subtilty together. For the bishops were rich, and durst not displease the Pope, for fear of the Emperor.

As soon as Nemroth, that mighty hunter, had caught this prey, that he had compelled all bishops to be under him, and to swear obedience unto him, then he began to be great in the earth; and called himself Papa', with this interpretation, Father of fathers. And when the Pope had exalted his throne above his fellows, then the unity that ought to be among brethren in Christ's church brake; and division began between us and the Greeks; which Greeks (I suppose) were at that time the one half of Christendom. And when any Pope since exhorteth them to unity, they answer, 'That he which will reign over his brethren with violence, breaketh unity, and not they; and that they will not be under his tyranny, whereunto he calleth them under a colour of unity.' And from henceforth, with the help of his bishops, which were sworn to be true liegemen unto him, when before they were admitted to their bishoprics of the Emperors and Kings, he began to lay a bait to catch the whole empire into his hands also.

By what means the Pope invaded the empire

At that same season Mahomet, the author of the sect of the Turks and Saracens, began. And as soon as he had got much people unto him with wiles and feigned miracles, he invaded the empire of Rome in those quarters. And look, how busy Mahomet was in those parts, so busy was the Pope in these quarters, to invade the empire, (with the help of his sworn bishops, which preached all of none other God than the Pope,) while the Emperor was occupied afar off in resisting of Mahomet.

And within a few years after, when the Kings of Italy now and then vexed our holy fathers for their covetous ambition, then Gregory III. joined amity with the Frenchmen, and called them to help; by whose power they get all they have, and also maintain it unto this day. For if any man, since that time hither, displeased the Pope never so little, he immediately cursed him, and excommunicated him, and proclaimed him no right inheritor, and that it was not lawful to hold of him, and absolved his lords and subjects of their allegiance, and sent his blessing into the French King and remission of sins to go and conquer his land; the Pope and French King always dividing the spoils between them : the bishops, and all that served God for the belly, preaching the Pope's might, how that he had power so to do, and all things to bind and loose at his will; wresting the scriptures to serve their purpose, corrupting all the laws, both of God and man, to prove his godhead withal.

Then came Pope Zacharias the first, in whose time Hildericus was King of France, a man that governed his realm (as it often chanceth) by a deputy (as parsons preach), one Pipine, a lord of his own, and his sworn subject. This Pipine sent a holy bishop to Pope Zacharias, that he should help to make him King of France, and he would be his defender in Italy (as the manner of scaled horses is, the one to claw the other); and Zacharias answered that he was more worthy to be King, that ruled the realm and took the labours, than an idle shadow that went up and down, and did nought. And so upon that, the lords of France, by the persuasions of the prelates, consented unto Pipine, and thrust down their right King unto whom they were sworn, and made a monk of him; and both the lords, and also Pipine, took dispensations for their oaths of our holy father, and were forsworn. Thus was our holy father, the Pope, crept up into the consciences of men with his false interpretation of binding and loosing, good eight hundred years were gone.

Then came Pope Stephanus the second, out of whose hands Estulphus, King of Lombardy, would fain have scratched somewhat; for he thought that the holy fathers gathered too fast, and had already raked too much unto them. But the new King, Pipine of France, warned of his duty and service promised, and mindful of old friendship, and hoping for part of the prey, came to succour the Pope : and when he had subdued the King of Lombardy, he gave unto our holy father, or rather to St Peter, that hungry beggar, great provinces and countries in Lombardy and in Italy, with the isle Corsica, and many great cities, of which some pertain unto the Emperor, being then at Constantinople; and yet the Emperor had sent before unto King Pipine, that he should not give of his towns unto the Pope. But Pipine answered that he came for the same intent, and to enhance our holy father. And our holy father received them'.

And thus the empire was divided into two parts; the Pope and the French King parting the one half between them. And as the Emperor decayed, the Pope grew. And as the Pope grew, so the sect of Mahomet grew; for the Emperor (half his empire lost) was not able to defend himself against the infidels. And the Pope would suffer no help hence to come, for two causes; one, lest the Emperor should recover his empire again; and another, because the prelates of the Greeks would not submit themselves unto his godhead, as the prelates of these quarters of the world had done.

After Pipine reigned his son the great Charles, whom we call Charlemagne, which knew no other god but the Pope, nor any other way to heaven than to do the Pope pleasure. For the Pope served him for two purposes : one, to dispense with him for whatever mischief he did; another, to be established in the empire by his help : for without his favour he wist it would not be; so great a god was our holy father become already in those days.

This Pope Stephen' in his latter days fell at variance with Dosiderius, King of Lombardy about the archbishop of Ravenna.

After Stephen succeeded Adrian the first; with whom Desiderius, the King of Lombardy, would fain have made peace, but Pope Adrian would not. And shortly after that, the brother of this Charlemagne, which reigned with him in half the dominion of France, died; whose wife, for fear of Charles, fled with her two sons unto Desiderius, King of Lombardy for succour. Desiderius was glad of their coming, trusting by the means of these two children to obtain favour among many of the Frenchmen, and so to be able to resist Charles, if he would meddle, and to bring Italy unto the right Emperor again, and would have had that Pope Adrian should have anointed them Kings in their father's room. But Adrian refused to do, (for he saw Charles mighty and meet for his purpose,) and was as wily as Desiderius; and thought to keep out the right Emperor, and be Emperor of Rome himself, though he gave another name for a season, till a more convenient time came.

Then Desiderius warred upon the Pope's jurisdiction; and Adrian sent to Charles : and Charles came with his army, and drove out Desiderius and his son; which son fled unto the right Emperor to Constantinople. And Charles and the Pope divided the Kingdom of Lombardy between them : and Charles came to Rome; and the Pope and he were sworn together, that whosoever should be enemy unto the one, should be enemy also unto the other.

This Adrian gathered a council immediately of an hundred and fifty-three bishops, abbots, and religious persons, and gave unto Charles and his successors the empire of Rome; and ordained that the right and power to choose the Pope should be his, and that no bishop should be consecrate till he had obtained of him both consent and the ornaments of a bishop also, (which they now buy of the Pope,) under pain of cursing, and to be delivered unto black Satan the devil, and loss of goods. (Dist. Ixiii.)

And Leo the third, which succeeded Adrian, confirmed the same; and crowned Charles Emperor of Rome for like service done imto him. And then there was appointment made between the Emperors of Constantinople and of Rome, and the places assigned, how far the borders of either empire should reach. And thus of one empire was made twain; and therefore the empire of Constantinople, for lack of help, was shortly after subdued of the Turks.

The said Leo also called Charles "The most christian King," because of his good service; which title the Kings of France use unto this day, though many of them be never so unchristened : as the last Leo called our King "The defender of the faith;" and as this Pope Clemens calleth the duke of Guelder "The eldest son of the holy see of Rome," for no other virtue nor property that any man can know, save that he hath been all his life a pick-quarrel and a cruel and unrighteous blood shedder, as his father, that sitteth in that holy see, is. So now, above seven hundred years to be a christian King is to fight for the Pope; and most christian, that most fighteth, and slayeth most men for his pleasure.

This Charles was a great conqueror; that is to say, a great tyrant, and overcame many nations with the sword : as the Turk compelleth us unto his faith, so he compelled them with violence unto the faith of Christ, say the stories. But, alas! Christ's faith, whereunto the Holy Ghost only draweth men's hearts through preaching the word of truth, and holy living according thereto, he knew not; but unto the Pope he subdued them, and unto this superstitious idolatry which we use clean contrary unto the scripture.

Moreover, at the request and great desire of his mother, he married the daughter of Desiderius, King of Lombardy; but after one year, unto the great displeasure of his mother, he put her away again; but not without the false subtlety of the Pope, thou mayest be sure, neither without his dispensation. For how could Charles have made war for the Pope's pleasure with Desiderius her father, and have thrust him out of his Kingdom, and banished his son for ever, dividing his Kingdom between him and the Pope, as long as she had been his wife? And therefore the Pope, with his authority of binding and loosing, loosed the bonds of matrimony (as he hath many other since, and daily doth for like purposes), to the intent that he would with the sword of the French King put the Kingdom of Lombardy, that was somewhat too nigh him, out of the way; by the reason of whose Kings his fatherhood could not reign alone, nor assign or sell the bishopricks of Italy to whom he lusted, and at his pleasure.

He kept also four concubines, and lay with two of his own daughters thereto. And though he wist how that it was not unknown, yet, his lusts being greater than great Charles, he would not wete, nor yet refrain.

And beyond all that, the saying is, that in his old age a whore had so bewitched him with a ring and a pearl in it, and I wot not what imagery graven therein, that he went a salt after her as a dog after a bitch, and the dotehead was beside himself, and whole out of his mind : insomuch that when the whore was dead, he could not depart from the dead corpse, but caused it to be embalmed, and to be carried with him whithersoever he went, so that all the world wondered at him; till at last his lords accombered with carrying her from place to place, and ashamed that so old a man, so great an Emperor, and such a most christian King, on whom and whose deeds every man's eyes were set, should dote on a dead whore, took counsel what should be the cause : and it was concluded that it must needs be by enchantment. Then they went unto the coffin, and opened it, and sought and found this ring on her finger; which one of the lords took off, and put it on his own finger. When the ring was off, he commanded to bury her, regarding her no longer. Nevertheless, he cast a fantasy unto this lord, and began to dote as fast on him, so that he might never be out of sight; but where our Charles was, there must that lord also be; and what Charles did, that must he be privy unto: until that this lord, perceiving that it came because of this enchanted ring, for very pain and tediousness took and cast it into a well at Acon in Dutchland. And after that the ring was in the well, the Emperor could never depart from the town; but in the said place where the ring was cast, though it were a foul morass, yet he built a goodly monastery in the worship of our lady, and thither brought relics from whence he could get them, and pardons to sanctify the place, and to make it more haunted. And there he lieth, and is a saint, as right is: for he did for Christ's vicar as much as the great Turk for Mahomet; but to save his holiness, that he might be canonised for a saint, they feign in his life, that his abiding there so continually was for the hot-baths' sakes which be there.

After Charlemagne Lewis the mild was Emperor, which was a very patient man, (another Phocas, and another prey for the Pope,) and so meek and soft, that scarcely he could be angry at any thing at all. When our holy fathers had seen his water, and spied what complexion he was, they chose Stephen, the fourth of that name, Pope, without his knowledge, and bade him neither good morrow, nor good even, nor once Godspeed about the matter, against their own grant unto his father for his good service. And his softness was yet some-what displeased therewith, inasmuch as the election of the Pope pertain unto his right. But the Pope sent ambassadors, and wrote all the excuses that he could, and came after himself to France to him, and peaced him, and crowned him Emperor, and passed the time a season with him, and they became very familiar together.

After that they chose Paschalis Pope, of the same manner; which Paschalis sent immediately legates unto the Emperor soft Lewis, excusing himself, and saying that it was not his fault, but that the clergy and the common people had drawn him thereto with violence against his will. Then the Emperor was content for that once, and bade they should no longer do so, but that the old ordinance ought to be kept. The softness of this Lewis did him much care : for he was after prisoned of his own son, with the help of Pope Gregory the fourth.

After this man's days the Popes never regarded the Emperors, nor did the clergy of Rome sue any more to the Emperor, either for the election or confirmation of the Pope. Moreover, after this Lewis, there was never Emperor in Christendom of any power, or able of his own might to correct any Pope; neither was there any King that could correct the outrageous vices of the spirituality of his own realm after this time. For this Lewis left three sons, among which he divided the realm of France and all Dutchland

: which same, for pride and disdain that one should have more than another, fell together (as we say) by the ears, each destroying other's power, so that France was afterward of no might to do any great thing. And then the Pope reigned in Italy alone, without care of any Emperor : insomuch that Nicholas the first decreed that no secular prince or Emperor should have aught to do, or be at the councils of the clergy.

And after that Adrian the second was chosen Pope; the Emperor's deputy being in Rome, and not once spoken to of the matter. And when the Emperor's ambassadors disdained, they answered, 'Who can resist the rage of the people?' and prayed for them to be content, and to salute him as Pope'. And Adrian the third decreed that they should not abide or tarry for the Emperor's confirmation or authority in choosing the Pope, and that the Pope only should call a general council, and not the Emperor; or, if the Emperor would presume that to do, the council should be of none effect, though all the prelates of Christendom were there, and though whatsoever they did were but God's word. So mighty was the beast now waxed, when he once began to reign alone. And from this time hitherto perished the power of the Emperors and the virtue of the Popes, saith Platina, in the life of Popes. For since that time, as there was none Emperor of might, so was there no Pope of any virtue.

After this Lewis, the empire of France and of all Dutchland was divided between his three sons; which, as I said, fought one with another, and destroyed the strength of the empire of France. And from that time to this, which is above seven hundred years, thou shalt read of few Popes that have not led their lives in bloodshedding; insomuch that if thou consider the stories well, thou shalt easily perceive that there hath been slain about their cause far above forty hundred thousand men; besides that there hath been but few princes in Christendom that hath not been busied and cumbered, a great part of his life, about their matter; either in wars begun at their setting on; either in ceasing schisms or division that hath been among the clergy, who should be Pope; or striving of bishops, who should be greatest, as between the bishop of York and Canterbury in England, and between the bishops of England and Wales, whereof all the chronicles be full; or in reforming friars or monks, or in slaying them that uttered their false hypocrisy with God's word.

When the Emperor was down, and no man in Christendom of any power to be feared, then every nation fell upon other, and all lands were at variance between themselves. And then, as the Danes came into England, and vexed the Englishmen, and dwelt there in spite of their hearts; even so came strange nations whose names were scarce heard of before in these Vandals. quarters, (as the Vandals, Huns, and Goths,) and ran through Goths, out all Christendom by hundred thousands together, and subdued the lands and dwelt therein maugre the inhabitants; as thou mayest see in Dutchland, how diverse nations are enclosed in the midst of the land, of a strange tongue which no Dutchmen understand; and that rule continued well eight or nine score, or two hundred years. And in all this season, whosoever won the mastery, him the spirituality received, and him they crowned King, and to him they clave. And whatsoever any tyrant had robbed all his life, that, or the most part thereof, must he deal among them at his death, for fear of purgatory. The spirituality all that season preached the Pope mightily, built abbies for recreation and quietness, shrining them always for saints which purchased them privileges, or fought for their liberties, or disputed for the Pope's power, howsoever they lived, (but after fifty years, when their lives were forgotten;) and if any resisted them, whatsoever mischiefs they went about, him they noted

in the chronicles as a cruel tyrant: yea, and whatsoever misfortune chanced any of his posterity after him, that they noted also, as though God had plagued them, because their forefather was disobedient unto holy church; and ever put the stories that uttered their wickedness out of the way; and gathered relics from whence they could get them, and feigned miracles, and gave themselves only unto poetry [fiction] and shut up the scripture: so that this was the very time of which Christ speaketh, [Matthew 24]. in which false prophets should arise, and shew miracles and wonders, to deceive the very elect, if it had been possible.

Finally, in this busy world, the Kings of Lombardy got a little might, and came up again, and were divers times Emperors, though of no great might. And one Beringarius, King of Lombardy, began to meddle with our holy father's business. Wherefore the Pope fled unto Otho King of the Saxons, which by that time had gotten might, and brought him into Italy against Beringarium; which Otho overcame Beringarium, and was made Emperor for his labour, and thus came the empire first unto Dutchland.

And Otho received the empire of one Pope John (say they) with this oath: "I Otho do promise and swear unto the The oath of lord John, by the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, and by this wood of the cross that maketh living and by these relics of saints, that if I come to Rome, with God's help I will exalt the holy church of Rome, and thee the governor of the same unto my power. Neither shalt thou lose life nor members, or that honour that thou hast, by my will, counsel, consent, or setting a work. Moreover, I will make in Rome no constitution or ordinance, of anything that pertaineth unto thee, or unto the Romans, without thy counsel. And whatsoever of the lands of St Peter cometh unto our hands, I will deliver it thee. And unto whosoever I shall commit the rule of Italy, I will make him swear that he shall help thee to defend the lands of St Peter unto his power."

And Gregory the fifth (when they had got at the last that which they long gaped for) made this ordinance of choosing the Emperor, to establish it withal; that six lords of Almany, three of the spirituality, and three of the temporalty, with the King of Bohemia the seventh, to be the odd man and umpire, should choose him for ever, and send him to the Pope to receive his oath, and to be crowned. Nevertheless, the Pope, to keep the Emperor afar off, sendeth him his coronation home to him oft-times, much lever than that he should come any nearer, as a meek spirited man that had lever live solitary and alone, than have his holiness seen.

A proper similitude to describe our holy Father.

And to see how our holy father came up, mark the ensample of an ivy tree : first it springeth out of the earth, and awhile creepeth along by the ground till it find a great springeth. Then it joineth itself beneath unto the body of the tree, and creepeth up little by little, fair and softly. And at the beginning, while it is yet thin and small, that the burden is not perceived, it seemeth glorious to garnish the tree in the winter, and to bear off the tempests of the weather. But in the mean season it thrusteth roots into the bark of the tree, to hold fast withal; and ceaseth not to climb up, till it be at the top and above all. And then it sendeth his branches along the branches of the tree, and overgrows all, and waxeth great, heavy, and thick; and sucketh the moisture so sore out of the tree and his branches, that it choked and stifled

them. And then the foul stinKing ivy waxeth mighty in the stump of the tree, and becometh a seat and a nest for all unclean birds, and for blind owls, which hawk in the dark, and dare not come at the light.

Even so the bishop of Rome, now called Pope, at the beginning crept along upon the earth; and every man trod upon him in this world. But as soon as there came a christian Emperor, he joined himself unto his feet and kissed them, and crept up a little with begging now this privilege, now that; now this city, now that; to find poor people withal. The choosing and the necessary ministers of God's word. And he entitiled the Emperor with choosing the Pope and other bishops; and promoted in the spirituality, not whom virtue and learning, but whom the favour of great men commended; to flatter, to get friends, and defenders withal. And the alms of the congregation which was the food and patrimony of the poor and necessary preachers, that he called St Peter's patrimony, St Peter's rent, St Peter's lands, St Peter's right; to cast a vain fear and a heathenish superstitiousness into the hearts of men, that no man should dare meddle with whatsoever came once into their hands for fear of St Peter, though they ministered it never so evil; and that they should think it none alms to give them any more (because they had too much already) should yet give St Peter somewhat, (as Nebecudnezzar gave his god Baal) to purchase an advocate and an intercessor of St Peter, and that St Peter should at the first knock let them in. And thus, with flattering and feigning, and vain superstition, under the name of St Peter, he crept up and fastened his roots in the heart of the Emperor, and with his sword climb up above all his fellow-bishops, and brought them under his feet. And as he subdued them with the Emperor's sword, even so by subtilty and help of them (after that they were sworn faithful) he climbed above the Emperor, and subdued him also, and made him stoop unto his feet and kiss them another while. Yea, Pope Celestinus crowned the Emperor Henry the fifth [sixth], holding the crown between his feet: and when he had put the crown on, he smote it off with his feet again, saying that he had might make Emperors and to put them down again.

And he made a constitution, that no layman should meddle with their matters, nor be in their councils, or wit what they did; and that the Pope only should call the council and the Emperor should but defend the Pope; provided always that the council should be in one of the Pope's towns, and where the Pope's power was greater than the Emperor's. Then, under a pretence of condemning some heresy, he called a general council, where he made one a patriarch, another Cardinal, another legate, another primate, another archbishop, another bishop, another dean, another archdeacon, and so forth, as we now see.

And as the Pope played with the Emperor, so did his branches and his members, the bishops, play in every Kingdom, dukedom, and lordship; insomuch that the heirs of them by whom they came up, hold now their lands of them, and take them for their chief lords. And as the Emperor is sworn to the Pope, even so every King is sworn to the bishops and prelates of his realm : and they are the chiefest in all parliaments; yea, they and their money, and they that be sworn to them, and come up by them, rule altogether.

And thus the Pope, the father of all hypocrites, hath with falsehood and guile perverted the order of the world, and turned the roots of the trees upward, and hath put down the Kingdom of Christ, and set up the Kingdom of the devil, whose vicar he is; and hath put down the ministers of Christ, and hath set up the ministers of Satan, disguised yet in names and garments like unto the angels of light and ministers of righteousness. For Christ's Kingdom is not of this world (John 18.); and the Pope's Kingdom is all over the world.

And Christ is neither judge nor divider in this world (Luke 12) : but the Pope judgeth and divideth all the world, and taketh the empire and all Kingdoms, and giveth them to whom he lusteth.

Christ saith, "Blessed are the poor in spirit;" so that the first step in the Kingdom of Christ is humbleness, or humility; that thou canst find in thine heart to do service unto all men, and to suffer that all men tread thee.

The Pope saith, 'Blessed be the proud and high-minded, that can climb and subdue all under them, and maintain their right, and such as will suffer of no man:' so that he which was yesterday taken from the dunghill and promoted this day by his prince, shall to-morrow, for the Pope's pleasure, curse him, and excommunicate him, and interdict his realm.

Christ saith, " Blessed are the meek," or soft, that be harmless as doves.

The Pope blesses them that can set all the world together by the ears, and fight, and slay manfully for his sake, that he may come hot from blood-shedding to a bishoprick; as our Cardinal did and as St Thomas of Canterbury did, which was made bishop in the field, in complete harness on his horseback, and his spear bloody in his hand.

Christ hath neither holes for foxes, nor nests for birds, nor yet whereon to lay his head, nor promised aught in this world unto his disciples, nor took any to his disciple but him that had forsaken all.

The ivy-tree, the Pope, hath under his roots throughout all Christendom, in every village, holes for foxes, and nests for unclean birds in all his branches, and promises unto his disciples all the promotions of the world. Christ The nearer unto Christ a man cometh, the lower he must descend, and the poorer he must wax. But the nearer unto the Pope ye come, the higher ye must climb, and the more riches ye must gather, whatsoever ye can get them, to pay for your bulls, and to purchase a glorious name, and licence to wear a mitre, and a cross, and a pall, and goodly ornaments.

How the Pope receiveth his Kingdom of the devil, and how he distributed it again.

Shortly, the Kingdoms of the earth and the glory of them, which Christ refused, (Matthew 4) did the devil proffer unto the Pope; and he immediately fell from Christ, and worshipped the devil, and received them. For by falsehood (as he maintained them) came he thereto; and by falsehood do all his disciples come thereto. Who of an hundred one is Pope, bishop, or any great prelate, but either by necromancy, or simony, or waiting on great men's pleasures, and with corrupting of God's word, and fashioning it after their lusts?

And the Pope, after he had received the Kingdom of the world of the devil, and was become the devil's vicar, took up in like manner all Christendom on high, and brought them from the meekness of Christ unto the high hill of the pride of Lucifer, and shewed them all the Kingdoms of the earth, saying: 'Fall down and worship me, and I will give you these.' Unto the spirituality he saith : 'Fall from Christ, and preach me, and take thou that Cardinalship, thou that bishoprick, thou that abbotship, and so forth; thou as many benefices as thou wilt, and a dispensation for what thou wilt.' And to monks and friars in like

manner : 'Take thou that hole, and thou that nest, with what privileges ye will desire, and dispensations of your rules, if ye will preach me.'

And unto the temporalty he saith, first to the Emperor : 'If thou wilt fall down and kiss my feet, and swear to hold of me, and to defend me, I give thee empire.'

And to all Kings, in a like manner, if they will swear to defend his liberties, and to hold of him, he crowneth them. And even so all temporal lords, from the highest to the lowest, and all officers, and all manner of subjects, if they will enjoy lands, rents, offices, goods, and their very lives, they must run the same way.

The very whores (God's honour unregarded), as long as they despise not him and his ordinances, they will nest in his rents and among his prelates. And the thieves and murderers shall have dens in his sanctuaries, whatsoever they do against God, so long as they hang on him.

The apostles chose priests to preach Christ only, other things laid apart, and choose none but learned and virtuous. The Pope shaved whosoever cometh, lever out of the stews than from study : and when they be sworn, he sendeth them unto all great men's houses to preach his godhead, to be stewards, surveyors, receivers, and counsellors of all manner mischief; to corrupt wife, daughter, and maid, and to betray their own master, as often as it needeth to promote their falsehood withal: for thereto are they sworn together. And when they have done all the mischief, there shall no man wot whence it cometh.

The apostles chose deacons to minister the alms of the rich unto the poor; and to help the deacons, they chose widows of sixty years old, holy, and destitute of friends, to tend the sick. And the Pope instead of such widows maketh whosoever cometh, whether she be young or old, but none save them that be rich and able to pay twenty, thirty, or forty pound for their profession; to whom, for as much more, he will give a dispensation on the morrow to marry again. And instead of such deacons, he maketh both deacons and sub-deacons, which do nothing at all, but are vain names without office; except it be that on some holy day, instead of ministering the goods of the church unto the poor, they sing an epistle or gospel, to beg more from the poor.

And as his deacons minister the goods of the church unto the poor, even so do his priests preach Christ's gospel unto the flock.

And the alms that was given to the sustentation of the poor, which thou shalt read in stories that it was in some cities above twenty, thirty, and forty, yea, a hundred thousand pound, and all the lands given for the same purpose, they have stolen from them, and have divided it among themselves. And therewith did they at the beginning corrupt the great men of the world, and climb up to this height, where they now be. And for that they have striven among themselves this eight hundred years : and, to maintain that which they have falsely gotten, hath the Pope stirred up a sword of war in all Christendom this eight hundred year, and hath taken peace clean out of the world.

When the bishops, priests, and deacons were fallen, and had received of the Pope the Kingdom that pertain unto the poor people, and had robbed them, and parted their patrimony among themselves, then sprang the orders of monks; whose profession was, to abstain from flesh all their lives to wear vile

raiment, to eat but once in the day, and that but butter, cheese, eggs, fruits, roots, and such things that were not costly, and might everywhere be found. And they wrote books, and wrought divers things, to get their living withal. When the layman saw that the priests were fallen into such covetousness, and that the monks were so holy, they thought, ' These meet men to minister our alms unto the poor people : for their profession is so holy that they cannot deceive us as the priests do: and made the monks tutors' and ministers unto the poor; and gave great lands and riches into their hands, to deal it unto the poor. When the monks saw such abundance, they fell after the cnsample of the priests; and took dispensations of the Pope for their rules and strait profession, which now is as wide as their cowls; and divided all among them, and robbed the poor once more. And out of the abbeyes took he the most part of his bishopric and cathedral churches, and most of all the lands he hath, besides that there remain yet so many mighty abbeyes, and nunneries thereto.

As soon as the monks were fallen, then sprang these begging friars out of hell, the last kind of caterpillars, in a more vile apparel, and a more straight religion; that, if aught of relief were left among the laymen for the poor people, these horse-leeches might suck that also : which drone-bees, as soon as they had learned their craft, and had built them goodly and costly nests, and their limiters had divided all countries among them to beg in, and had prepared livings of a certainty, though with begging; then they also took dispensations of the Pope, for to live as largely and as lewdly as the monks.

And yet unto the laymen, whom they have thus falsely robbed, and from which they have divided themselves, and made them a several Kingdom among themselves, they leave the paying of toll, custom, and tribute (for unto all the charges of the realms will they not pay one mite), and the finding of all the poor, the finding of scholars for the most part, the finding of these aforesaid horse-leeches and caterpillars, the begging friars, the repairing of the high-ways and bridges, the building and reparations of their abbeyes and cathedral churches, chapels, colleges; for which they send out their pardons daily by heaps, and gather a thousand pounds for every hundred that they bestow truly.

If the lay-people have war, or whatever charge it be, they will not bear a mite. If the war be theirs (as the one part almost all war is to defend them), they will with falsehood make them bear the greatest part; besides that they must leave their wives and children, and go fight for them, and lose their lives. And likewise in all their charges they have a cast to poll the lay-people. The Scots cast down a castle of the bishop of Durham's, on the Scottish bank, called Norham castle; and he gets a pardon from Rome for the building of it again : wherewith I doubt not but he gat for every penny, that he bestowed, three.

And what do they with their store, that they have in so great plenty everywhere; so that the very begging friars, in short space, to make a Cardinal or a Pope of their sect, or to do what feat it were for their profit, would not stick to bring above a King's ransom? Verily, make goodly places and parks of pleasure, and gay shrines, and painted posts, and purchase pardons, wherewith they yet still poll and pluck away that little wherewith the poor, which perish for need, and fall into great inconveniences, might be somewhat helped and relieved; and lay up in store to have alway to pay for the defending of their faith, and for to oppress the truth.

How the Pope made him a law, and why.

After that the Pope with tyranny had climbed up above his brethren, and had made all the spirituality his subjects, and had made of them and him a several Kingdom among themselves, and had separated them from the lay in all things, and had got privileges, that whatsoever they did no man should meddle with them; and after also he had received the Kingdoms of the earth of Satan, and was become his vicar to distribute them; and after that the Emperor was fallen in like manner at his feet, and had worshipped him as god, to receive his empire of him; and all Kings had done likewise to be anointed of him, and to be crowned of him; and after that the world, both great and small, had submitted themselves to receive the beast's badge; then, because that Christ's doctrine was contrary unto all such Kingdoms, and therefore had no law therein how to rule it, he went and made him a several law of his own making, which passed in cruelty and tyranny the laws of all heathen princes.

And in his law he thrust in feigned gifts of old Emperors that were out of memory, saying that the Emperor Constantinus had given up the empire of Rome unto St Sylvester which is proved a false lie, for divers causes : one, that St Sylvester, being so holy a man, as he was, would not have Kingdom, received it contrary to his Master's commandments and doctrine; another, that the Emperors reigned in Rome many years after, and all bishops sued unto the Emperor, and not to the Pope, which was but bishop of Rome only, and not called father of fathers : moreover, that no authentic story maketh mention that any Emperor gave them their patrimony, but that Pipine, which falsely and with strength invaded

the empire, gave it unto him. Then put he in the grant of Phocas; then the gift of Pipine confirmed by the great Charles; then a feigned release of the election of the Pope, given up again unto Pope Paschal by the Emperor Lewis. For they themselves had granted unto Charlemagne and his successors for ever the election or denomination of the Pope and bishops, to flatter him withal, and to make him a faithful defender, and that in a general council, which (as they say) cannot err. Nevertheless Pope Paschal, though he believed the council could not err, yet he thought them somewhat overseen to make so long a grant, and therefore he purchased a release of gentle Lewis, as they pretend. But verily it is more likely that they feigned that grant to excuse their tyranny, after they had taken the election into their hands again with violence, when the Emperors were weak, and not able to resist them; as they feigned the gift of Constantine, after they had invaded the empire with subtilty and falsehood. And, last of all, they brought in the oath of Otho, with the order that now is used to choose the Emperor.

How the Pope corrupted the scripture, and why.

Moreover, lest these his lies should be spied, and lest haply the Emperors following might say, 'Our predecessors had no power to bind us, nor to minish our might; and lest Kings following should say after the same manner, that the sword, and full power to punish evildoers indifferently, is given of God to every King for his time, and therefore that their predecessor could not bind them contrary unto the ordinance of God, but rather that it was unto their damnation to make such grants, and that they did not execute their office; therefore the foul and misshapen monster gat him to the scripture, and corrupted it with false expositions, to prove that such authority was given him of God; and challenged it by the authority of Peter, saying that Peter was the head of Christ's church, and that Christ had made him lord over the apostles, his fellows, in that he bade him feed his sheep and lambs, John the last; as who should say that Paul, which came long after, was not commanded to feed as especially as Peter, which yet would take none authority over the bodies or over the faiths of them which he fed, but was their servant for Christ's sake, Christ ever the lord and head; and as though the other apostles were not likewise as specially commanded as Peter; and as though we now, and all that hereafter shall love Christ, were not commanded to feed Christ's flock, every man in his measure, as well as Peter. Are not we commanded to love our neighbours as ourselves, as well as Peter? Why then are we not commanded to care for his flock, as well as Peter?

Moreover, if to feed Christ's sheep is to be greatest, (as no doubt to feed Christ's flock is to be great, and most to feed is to be greatest; in which office, though Peter was great, yet Paul was greater;) how cometh it that the Pope by that authority claimed to be greatest, and yet this eight hundred years feedeth not at all; but poisoned their pasture with the venomous leaven of his traditions, and with wrestling the text unto a contrary sense?

Then came he to this text, (Matthew 16), "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my congregation" or church. Lo, saith antichrist, the carnal beast, Peter is the rock whereon the church of Christ is built; and I am his successor, and therefore the head of Christ's church : when Christ meant by the rock the confession that Peter had confessed, saying, "Thou art the Christ, the son of the living God," which art come into this world. This faith is the rock whereon Christ's church is built. For who is of Christ's church, but he that believeth that Christ is God's Son, come into this world to save sinners? This faith

is it, against which hell-gates cannot prevail. This faith is it, which saveth the congregation of Christ; and not Peter.

Then he goeth forth unto that which followeth: "Unto thee I will give the keys of the Kingdom of heaven, and whatsoever thou bindest in earth, it shall be bound in heaven," &c. Lo, saith he, in that he saith, whatsoever thou bindest in earth, he excepteth nothing; therefore, I may make laws, and bind both King and Emperor: when Christ, as he had no worldly Kingdom, even so he spake of no worldly Kingdom, even so he spake of no worldly binding but of binding of binding of sinners. Christ gave his disciples the key of the knowledge of the law of God, to bind all sinners; and the key of the promises, to loose all that repent, and to let them into the mercy that is laid up for us in Christ.

Then cometh he unto another text, which Christ rehearsed, Matthew last, saying, "All power is given me in heaven and earth : go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to keep all that I commanded you : and behold, I am with you unto the world's end." Lo, saith the Pope, Christ hath all power in heaven and earth without exception, and I am Christ's vicar; wherefore all power is mine, and I am above all Kings and Emperors in temporal jurisdiction, and they but my servants, to kiss not my feet only, but my No.2 also, if I list not to have them stoop so low: when Christ, as I said, because he had no temporal Kingdom, even so he meant of no temporal power, but of power to save sinners, which the process of the text declareth, by that he saith. Go ye therefore, and teach and baptize; that is, preach this power into all nations, and wash off their sins, through faith in the promises made in my blood.

Then he cometh unto another text, (Hebrews 7) which is, "The priesthood being translated, the law must needs be translated also." Now, saith the Pope, 'The priesthood is translated unto me; wherefore it pertaineth unto me to make laws, and to bind every man.' And the epistle meaneth no such thing; but proveth evidently that the ceremonies of Moses must cease : for the priests of the old Testament must needs have been of the tribe of Levi, as Aaron was, whose duty for ever was the offering of sacrifices; wherefore, when that priesthood ceased, the sacrifices and ceremonies ceased also. Now that priesthood ceased in Christ, which was a priest of the order of Melchizedek, and not of the order of Aaron; for then he must have been of the tribe of Levi, and that he was not, but of the tribe of Judah, and of the seed of David : wherefore they that are under Christ's priesthood are under no sacrifices or ceremonies. And of this manner juggle they with all the scripture which falsehood lest the laymen should perceive with reading the process of the text, is all their fear, whatsoever they pretend.

Moreover, that thou mayest perceive the Pope's falsehood, mark, Christ said unto Peter, "I will give," and not "I give;" neither said he, 'I will give unto thee only.' Therefore, look in the twentieth chapter of John, where he gave them the John keys after his resurrection, and thou shalt see he gave them unto all indifferently, saying, "As my Father sent me, so send I you." Whither sent he them? Unto all the world, and unto all nations. What to do? To preach the law, that the people might repent; and the promises, that they might believe in Christ for the remission of sins; saying, "Receive the Holy Ghost: whosoever sins ye forgive, they shall be forgiven." By which the Holy Ghost he gave them understanding of scripture, and of all that they should preach : as thou mayest see, Luke last, where he opened their wits to understand the scripture, and said, "That repentance and forgiveness of sins must be preached in his

name to all nations," and that they were witnesses to preach it. Where by thou seest, that to bind and to loose is but to preach and tell the people their faults, and to preach mercy in Christ to all that repent.

And when he saith, "All power is given me," he saith not, Go thou, Peter, and preach : but saith unto all indifferently, Go ye and preach this power given me of my Father to save all that repent; and to damn them that repent not, but follow the lusts of their flesh, with full desire to live beastly, being enemies unto the law of God.

And (Matthew 18) Peter asked Christ, how oft he should forgive his brother, whether seven times? And Christ said, "Seventy times seven times." As who should say, As oft as he repenteth, and asketh forgiveness.

Now, though this was spoken unto Peter only, because Peter only moved the question, yet pertaineth it not unto us all as well as unto Peter? Are we not as much bound to forgive our neighbours that repent and ask forgiveness as Peter? Yes, verily. But because Peter only asked the question, therefore did Christ teach us by Peter. If another had asked, he would have taught us by that other. And in a like manner, when Christ asked, "Who say ye that I am?" if any other of the apostles which believed it as well as Peter had said as Peter did, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God, which art come into the world of sinners, to save them;" unto him would Christ have answered as he did to Peter, that upon the rock of that his confession he would have built his church; and would have promised him keys, as well as he did Peter. Yea, and in the eighteenth chapter of Matthew Christ saith to all the apostles, yea, and to all congregations where sinners be, That whatsoever they bound should be bound, and whatsoever they loosed should be loosed.

Moreover, every man and woman, that know Christ and his doctrine, have the keys, and power to bind and loose; in an order yet, and in their measure, as time, place, and occasion giveth, and privately. May not a wife, if her husband sin against God and her, and take another woman, tell him his fault between him and her secretly, and in good manner humbly, and bind his conscience with the law of God? And if he repent, may she not forgive him, and loose him, as well as the Pope? Yea, and better too, as long as the sin is secret; inasmuch as he sinneth specially against her, and not against the Pope.

And so may the son do to his father, and a servant to his master, and every man to his neighbour; as thou seest in the said eighteenth chapter of Matthew. Howbeit, to bind and loose in the conscience, by open preaching, pertaineth unto the officers that are appointed thereto. And to bind and loose open sinners, and them that will not repent, till they be complained on unto the congregation, pertaineth unto the congregation.

Finally, there were many that preached Christ at Rome, here Peter came thither, if he came ever thither; as Paul, and many others. Had they not authority to bind and loose? Or else how did they convert the people? Peter also was an apostle, and went from place to place as Paul did; and as Paul ordained bishops in every place to teach the people, so no doubt did Peter. Why then might not those bishops challenge authority by Peter, as well as they of Rome? They say also in their own legends, that Peter had his seat at Antioch first. Did he run to Rome, leaving no man behind him to teach the people at Antioch? God forbid. Why then might not that bishop challenge Peter's authority? They will haply say, sooner than prove it, that Peter died at Rome, and therefore his authority is greatest there. Then by that rule Christ's power is nowhere so full as at Jerusalem. But what hath Christ's invisible Kingdom to do with places? Where Christ's gospel is, there is his power full and all his authority, as well in one place as in another.

Finally, to get authority whenever they can snatch it, they join Paul with Peter in their own laws, *Distinctio* 22 saying, "By the authority of Peter and Paul" which is clean against themselves. For they say in their own law, In the presence of the superior the power of the inferior ceaseth, and is none at all Now

if Peter be greater than Paul, then, by that rule, where Peter is present, there Paul is but a subject, and without authority. And where Christ is present bodily and preacheth himself, there the apostles give up their authority, and hold their peace, and sit down at his feet, and become scholars and hearken too. Wherefore, in that they join Paul with Peter, and challenge their superiority as well by the authority of Paul as of Peter, there they make Paul with Peter, fellow and equal with Peter. And thus it is false that Peter was greater than his fellows. But the bhnd owls care not what they howl, seeing it is night, and the day-light of God's word shut up, that no man can spy them.

Moreover, with this term, 'Peter's seat,' they juggle apace (as with infinite other), saying, 'That Peter's seat is the chief seat;' but what Peter's seat is, that they tell you not : for wist ye that, ye should soon perceive that they he. Peter's seat is no stool, or chair, (for what hath the Kingdom of Christ to do with such baggage?) but it is a spiritual thing. Christ saith in the gospel, "The scribes and Pharisees sit on Moses' seat." What was Moses's seat there, a chair, or the temple, or the churches, or synagogue of the land? Nay verily, for Moses came never there. But Moses' seat was Moses' law and doctrine. Even so Peter's seat is Peter's doctrine, the gospel of Christ, which Peter taught. And the same doctrine is Peter's keys : so that Peter's seat, Peter's keys, and Peter's doctrine is all one thing. Now is Peter's doctrine Paul's doctrine, and the doctrine of all the twelve apostles indifferently; for they taught all one thing. Wherefore it follows that Peter's keys and Peter's seat be the keys and seat of Paul also, and of all the other twelve apostles, and are nothing save the gospel of Christ. And thus, as Peter's doctrine is no better than Paul's, but one thing; even so Peter's seat is no greater, nor higher, nor hoher than the seat of the other twelve. Peter's seat now is Christ's seat, Christ's gospel, on which all the apostles sat, and on which this day sit all they only that preach Christ truly. Wherefore, as antichrist preacheth not Peter's doctrine (which is Christ's gospel), so he sitteth not on Peter's seat, but on the seat of Satan, whose vicar he is, and on the seat of his own laws and ceremonies, and false doctrine, whereunto he compelleth all men with violence of sword.

Then he climbed to purgatory with the ladder of the said text, "Whatsoever thou bindest on earth," &c. " Purgatory," saith he, "is in earth wherefore I am lord there too." Nevertheless, as he can prove no purgatory, so can he not prove that, if there were any, it should be in the earth. It might well be in the element or sphere of fire under the moon, as well as in the earth. But to bind and loose is, as I have above said, to preach, and to feed, and with Christ's doctrine to purge souls. And they that be dead be not of the flock which Christ bade Peter feed, but they that live only.

Then clamb he up, with the same ladder still, over all vows vow and professions of all religious persons, and over oaths made between man and man, to dispense with them, and over all men's testaments, to alter them. For what thou makest a hospital, that he will shortly make a college of priests, or a place of religion, or what he lusteth. Then all manner monks and friars, and like draff, took dispensations of him, for the ordinances of their old founders. And because, as they thought, they had prayed and distributed for their souls enough to bring them out of purgatory, they thrust them out of their bead-rolls, and took daily more and more.

But ever since they took dispensations of the Pope, both for their rules, and to divide among them, they received in the name, not of the poor, but of purgatory, to quench the raging fire thereof, which is as

hot as their bellies can feign it, and fools be out of their wits to believe it; promising a mass daily for forty shillings by the year, of which foundations when they have gotten twenty, they will yet, with a union purchased of the Pope, make but one chauntry. For if they should do all that they have promised, from the first founder unto this day, five hundred monks were not enough in many cloisters.

Thinkest thou that men were ever so mad to make the fashions that are now among them; to give the cellarer' such a sum, and the prior, and the sub-prior, and the other officers so much for their parts as they have yearly; and to exempt the abbot from his brethren, and to send him out of the abbey into such parks and places of pleasure, and give him a thousand, fifteen hundred, two thousand, or three thousand pounds yearly, to sport himself withal? Nay, but when through hypocrisy they had gotten land enough, then they turned unto the Pope, and took dispensations both for the Pope. their rules which were too hard for such abundance, and for the wills of their founders, and served a great sort of founders under one per Dominum [prayer], and divided among few that which was enough for a great multitude.

It was the Pope that devised all these fashions, to corrupt the prelates with abundance of worldly pleasures, of which he wist that the worst would be most greedy, and for which he wist also that he should find Judases enough, that would forsake Christ and betray the truth, and be sworn false unto him and his Godhead. He maketh of many chauntries one, of an abbey a cathedral church, and out of the abbeys plucked he the bishoprics. And as bishops pay for their bulls, even so do an infinite number of abbots in Christendom, in all lands some; which abbots be bishops within themselves, and immediately under the Pope. And other abbots and priors send after the same ensample daily unto Rome, to purchase licence to wear a mitre and a cross, and gay ornaments, to be as glorious as the best, &c. And where, before God, no man is a priest but he that is appointed to preach Christ's gospel unto the people; and the people ought not to give aught unto the spirituality, but for the maintenance of the preaching of God's word; the Pope taketh six or seven, yea, ten, twenty, and as many benefices as he listeth, and giveth them unto one that preacheth not at all; as he doth all other dignities of the spirituality. He that will purchase, and pay, and be sworn, shall have what he will.

How they prove all their general Councils.

When the bishops and abbots and other groat prelates had forsaken Christ and his living, and had fallen down before the beast, the vicar of Satan, to receive their Kingdom of him; then the Pope called together divers councils of such holy apostles, and there concluded and made of every opinion, that seemed profitable, an article of the faith. If thou ask where is the scripture to prove it? they answer, 'We be the church, and cannot err; and therefore,' say they, 'what we conclude, though there be no scripture to prove it, it is as true as the scripture, and of equal authority with the scripture, and must be believed as well as the scripture under pain of damnation.' For, say they, 'Our truth dependeth not of the truth of the scripture;' that is, we be not true in our doing, because the scripture testifies unto us that we do truly; but contrary, 'The truth of the scripture (say they) dependeth of us: ' that is, the scripture is true, because that we admit it, and tell thee that it is true. For how couldst thou know that it were the scripture except we told thee so'? And therefore we need no witness of the scripture for that we do : it is enough, that we so say of our own head; for we cannot err. Which reason is like as though young monks, newly professed, should come by the rules of their order and ordinances of their old founders, and would go about to keep them; and the old cankered monks should call them back unto the corrupt and false manner, that now is used, saying: "Ye err. Do only as we teach you, for your profession is to obey your elders." "According unto the rules of our order and ordinances of our founder," shall they say. "We can teach you no other," shall the old monks say, "nor can lie unto you; ye ought therefore to believe us, and to do as we bid you." The young monks shall answer, "'We see that ye lie, clean contrary unto all that is written in our rules and ordinances." The old monks shall say, "Ye cannot understand them except we expound them unto you, neither yet know that they be your rules, except that ye believe that we cannot lie unto you. For how can ye know that these be your rules and ordinances, but as we your elders tell you so? Now when we tell you that these be your rules and ordinances, how can ye be sure undoubtedly, that it is so, except ye believe undoubtedly that we cannot lie? Wherefore, if ye will be sure that they be your rules and ordinances, then ye must first believe that we cannot lie. Leave such imaginations and disputations therefore, and lay your rules and ordinances out of your hands, and look no more on them; for they make you err : and come and do as we tell you, and captivate your wits, and believe that we cannot lie unto you, and that ye cannot understand your rules and ordinances.' Even so, if thou say it is contrary unto the scripture; they answer, that thou understandest it not, and that thou must captive thy wit, and believe that, though it seem never so contrary, yet it is not contrary : no, if they determine that Christ is not risen again, and though the scripture testify that he is risen again, yet (say they) they be not contrary, if they be wisely understood. Thou must believe, say they, that there is some other meaning in scripture, and that no man understandeth it. But that we say, whether without scripture, or against it, that must thou believe, that it is true. And thus, because the scripture would not agree with them, they thrust it out of the way first, and shut up the Kingdom of heaven, which is Christ's gospel, with false expositions, and with such sophistry, and with false principles of natural wisdom. And the abbots took the scripture from their monks, lest some should ever bark against the abbots' living; and set up such long service and singing, to weary them withal, that they should have no leisure to read in the scripture but with their lips; and made them good cheer to fill their bellies, and to stop their mouths. And the bishops in a like manner, to occupy their priests withal, that they should not study the scripture for barKing against them, set up long service, wondrous intricate, so that in a dozen years thou couldst scarce learn to turn aright unto it : long matins, long even-songs, long masses,

long diriges, with vantage yet to mitigate the tediousness, quia levis est labor cum lucro; for 'lucre' (say they) 'maketh the labour light: ever noselling [nursed, trained] them in ceremonies, and in their own constitutions, decrees, ordinances, and laws of holy church.

And the promises and testament, which the sacrament of Christ's body and blood did preach daily unto the people, that they put out of knowledge; and say now, that it is a sacrifice for the souls of purgatory, that they might the better sell their mass. And in the universities they have ordained that no man shall look on the scripture, until he be noselled [nursed, trained] in heathen learning eight or nine years, and armed with false principles; with which he is clean shut out of the understanding of the scripture. And at his first coming unto university he is sworn that he shall not defame the university, whatsoever he seeth. And when he taketh first degree, he is sworn that he shall hold no opinion condemned by the church; but what such opinions be, that he shall not know. And then, when they be admitted to study divinity, because the scripture is locked up with such false expositions, and with false principles of natural philosophy, that they cannot enter in, they go about the outside, and dispute all their lives about words and vain opinions, pertaining as much unto the healing of a man's heel, as the health of his soul : provided yet alway, lest God give his singular grace unto any person, that none may preach except he be admitted of the bishops. Then came Thomas de Aquino, and he made the Pope a god with his sophistry; and the Pope made him a saint for his labour, and called him doctor Sanctus: for whose holiness no man may deny whatsoever he saith, save in certain places, where, among so many lies, he said now and then true.

And in like manner, whosoever defends his traditions, decrees, and privileges, him he made a saint also for his labour, were his living never so contrary unto the scripture; as Thomas of Canterbury, with many other like, whose life was like Thomas Cardinal's (Wolsey), but not Christ's; neither is Thomas Cardinal's (Wolsey) life anything, save a counterfeiting of St Thomas of Canterbury. Thomas Becket was first seen in merchandise temporal; and then, to learn spiritual merchandise, he gat him to Theobald archbishop of Canterbury; which sent him divers times to Rome about business of holy church. And when Theobald had spied his activity, he shore him deacon, lest he should go back; and made him archdeacon of Canterbury, and upon that presented him to the King. And the King made him his chancellor, in which office he passed the pomp and pride of Thomas Cardinal, as far as the one's shrine passeth the other's tomb in glory and riches. And after that he was a man of war, and captain over five or six thousand men in full harness, as bright as St George, and his spear in his hand; and encountered whosoever came against him, and overthrew the jolliest rutter (rider) that was in all the host of France. And out of the field, hot from blood-shedding, was he made bishop of Canterbury, and did put off his helmet, and put on his mitre; put off his harness, and on with his robes; and laid down his spear, and took his cross, ere his hands were cold; and so came, with a lusty courage of a man of war, to fight another while against his prince for the Pope; where his prince's causes were with the law of God, and the Pope's clean contrary. And the pomp of his consecration was after his old worldly fashion. Howbeit yet he is made a saint for his worshipping of the holy seat of St Peter; not that seat of Peter which is Christ's gospel, but another, lied to be Peter's, and is indeed cathedra pestilentem, a chair of false doctrine. And because he could no skill of our Lord's gospel, he said of matins with our lady. If any man understand the Latin, let him read his life, and compare it unto the scripture; and then he shall

see such holiness as were here too long to be rehearsed. And every abbey, and every cathedral church, did shrine them one god or other, and mingled the lives of the saints with stark lies, to move men to offer : which thing they call devotion.

And though in all their doings they oppress the temporalty and their commonwealth, and be grievous unto the rich, and painful to the poor; yet they are so many, and so exercised in wiles, and so subtle, and so knit and sworn together, that they compass the temporalty, and make them bear them, whether they will or will not (as the oak doth the ivy), partly with juggling, and beside that with worldly policy. For every abbot will make him that may do most in the shire, or with the King, the steward of his lands, and give him a fee yearly; and will lend unto some, and feast, that by such means they do what they will. And little master parson, after the same manner, if he came into a house, and the wife be snout-fair, he will root himself there by one craft or other; either by using such pastime as the good man doth, or in being beneficial by one way or another, or he will lend him, and so bring him into his danger that he cannot thrust him out when he would, but must be compelled to bear him, and let him be homely whether he will or no.

An example of practice out of our own chronicles

Take an ensample of their practice out of our own stories. King Harold exiled or banished Robert archbishop of Canterbury: for what cause, the English Polychronicon specifieth not : but if the cause were not somewhat suspect. I think they would not have passed it over with silence. This Robert gat him immediately unto King William the Conqueror, the duke of Normandy : and the Pope Alexander sent duke William a banner, to go and conquer England and clean remission unto whosoever would follow the banner, and go with King William. Here mark how straight the Pope followed Christ's steps and his apostles! They preached forgiveness of sins to all that repented, through Christ's blood shedding; the Pope preaches forgiveness of sins to all that will slay their brethren, bought with Christ's blood, to subdue them unto his tyranny. Whatsoever other cause duke William had against King Harold, thou mayest be sure that the Pope would not have meddled, if Harold had not troubled his Kingdom : neither should duke William have been able to conquer the land at that time, except the spirituality had wrought on his side. What blood did that conquest cost England, through which almost all the lords of the English blood were slain, and the Normans became rulers, and all the laws were changed into French! But what careth the holy father for shedding of laymen's blood? It were better that ten hundred thousand lay knaves lost their lives, than that holy church should lose one inch of her honour, or St Peter's seat one jot of her right.

And Anselmus, that was bishop in short time after, never left striving with that mighty prince King William the second, until he had compelled him, maugre his teeth, to deliver up the investiture or election of bishops unto St Peter's vicar, which investiture was of old time the King's duty.

And again, when the said King WiUiam would have had the tribute, that priests gave yearly unto their bishops for their whores, paid to him; did not Ralph bishop of Chichester forbid God's service (as they call it), and stop up the church doors with thorns, throughout all his diocese, until the King had yielded him up his tribute agam? For when the holy father forbade priests their wives, the bishops permitted

them whores of their own, for a yearly tribute; and do still yet in all lands save in England, where they may not have any other save men's wives only.

And again, for the election of Stephen Langton, archbishop of Canterbury, what misery and wretchedness was in the realm a long season! Then was the land interdicted many years : and when that help not, then Ireland rebelled against King John immediately; and not without the secret workings of our prelates, I dare well say. But finally, when neither the interdicting neither that secret subtilty help, and when John would by no means consent that St Peter's vicar should reign alone over the spirituality, and over all that pertain unto them, and that they should sin and do all mischief unpunished, the Pope sent remission of sins to the King of France, to go and conquer his land: whereof King John was so sore afraid, that he yielded up his crown to the Pope, and swear to hold the land of him, and that his successors should do so likewise.

And again, in King Richard the second's days, Thomas Arundel, archbishop of Canterbury and chancellor, was exiled with the earl of Derby. The outward pretence of the variance between the King and his lords was for the deliverance of the town of Brest in Britayne. But our prelates had another secret mystery a brewing. They could not at their own lust slay the poor wretches which at that time were converted unto repentance and to the true faith, to put their trust in Christ's death and blood-shedding for the remission of their sins, by the preaching of John Wicliffe. As soon as the archbishop was out of the realm, the Irishmen began to rebel against King Richard, as before against King John; but not, hardly, without the invisible inspiration of them that rule both in the court and also in the consciences of all men. They be one Kingdom, sworn together one to help another, scattered abroad in all realms.

And howbeit that they strive among themselves who shall be greatest, yet against the temporal power they be always at one; though they dissemble it and feign, as though one held against the other, to know their enemy's secrets, to betray them withal. They can inspire privily into the breasts of the people what mischief they list, and no man shall know whence it cometh. Their letters go secretly from one to another throughout all Kingdoms. Saint Peter's vicar shall have word in fifteen or sixteen days from the uttermost part of Christendom. The bishops of England at their need can write unto the bishops of Ireland, Scotland, Denmark, Dutchland, France, and Spain, promising them as good a turn another time; putting them in remembrance that they be all one holy church, and that the cause of the one is the cause of the other saying, 'If our juggling break out, yours cannot be long hidden.' And the other shall serve their turn, and bring the game into their hands; and no man shall know how it cometh about.

As soon as King Richard was gone to Ireland, to subdue these rebellions, the bishop came in again, and prevented the King, and took up his power against him, and took him prisoner, and put him down and to death most cruelly, and crowned the earl of Derby King. O merciful Christ! What blood hath that coronation cost England! But what care they? Their causes must be avenged. He is not worthy to be King, that will not avenge their quarrels. For do not the Kings receive their Kingdom of the beast, and swear to worship him, and maintain his throne? And then, when the earl of Derby, which was King Henry the fourth, was crowned, the prelates took his sword, and his son's Harry the fifth after him (as all the King's swords since), and abused them, to shed christian blood at their pleasure. And they coupled their cause unto the King's cause (as now), and made it treason to believe in Christ as the scripture teacheth, and to resist the bishops (as now), and thrust them in the King's prisons (as now), so that it is no new invention that they now do, but even an old practice; though they have done their busy care to hide their science, that their conveyance' should not be espied.

And in King Henry the sixth's days, how raged they as fierce lions against good duke Humphry of Gloucester, the King's uncle, and protector of the realm in the King's youth and childhood, because for him they might not slay whom they would, and make what mischief they lusted! Would not the bishop of Winchester have fallen upon him and oppressed him openly with might and power in the city of London, had not the citizens come to his help?

But at the last they found means to contrive a drift to bring their matters to pass, and made a parliament far from a parliament the citizens of London, where was slain the good duke, and only wealth of the realm, and the mighty shield that so long before had kept it from sorrow, which shortly after his death fell thereon by heaps. But the chronicles cannot tell wherefore he died, nor by what means. No marvel, verily : for he had need of other eyes than such as the world seeth withal, that should spy out their privy paths. Nevertheless the chronicles testify, that he was a virtuous man, a godly, and good to the commonwealth. Moreover the proctor of purgatory saith in his dialogue. Quoth I, and quoth he, and quoth your friend, how that the aforesaid duke of Gloucester was a noble man and a great clerk, and so wise that he could spy false miracles, and disclose them, and judge them from the true; which is a hateful science unto our spirituality, and more abhoped amongst them than necromancy or witchcraft; and a thing therefore a man by their law, I dare well say, is worth to die, and that secretly, if it be possible. Now to be good to the commonwealth, and to see false miracles, and thirdly to withstand that France, then brought under the foot of the Englishmen, should not be set up again, by whose power the Pope holdeth down the Emperor and reigneth in his stead, be causes why he might die, though by what means be not known. For to be good to the commonwealth is to be hurtful to the spirituality, seeing the one is the other's prey, as the lamb is the wolfs. Secondly, if a man be so cleareyed that he can spy false miracles, how can jugglers get their living, and be in price, where such a fellow is? Thirdly, to keep down the Kingdom of France is to pull St Peter's vicar out of his seat.

Now if the great bawd, the whore of Babylon, were destroyed, then would the brothel and stews of our prelates shortly perish. If Abaddon, that destroyer, King of the grasshoppers which devour all that is green, were destroyed, then were the Kingdom of our caterpillars at an end.

By what craft the Pope keepeth the Emperor clown.

Mark another practice of our most holy prelates. When the empire was translated unto the Germans, though the Emperor had fallen down, and had kissed the Pope's feet, and became his sworn servant, yet there was much strife, and open war oft-times, between the Popes and the Emperors. And the Popes have put down many good Emperors by the help of the bishops, which everywhere secretly persuaded the lords to forsake the Emperors, and to take dispensations of the Pope for their oaths.

And contrariwise, the Emperors have now and then deposed divers Popes, at the request of the Cardinals and other great prelates; by whose help only they were able to do it. For else verily, though all Kings christened had sworn to depose one Pope out of his seat, if they had not the favour of other prelates thereto, they might haply, by the secret practice of them, be put out of their own seats in the meantime.

The Pope therefore, to be sure of himself, and out of the fear and danger of the Emperor, were never so mighty, and that the Emperor should not see his daily open pastimes, made friendship and amity with the Venetians on the one side of him, and let them come into certain cities of the Emperor's in Italy and with the French King on the other side, and let him also up into certain cities and possessions of the Emperor's, and he himself in the midst and shut out the Emperor from coming to Rome, and ever sent his coronation home to him. And then he made a law that no man should rebuke the Pope for whatsoever he did saying, that the Pope was above all, and judge over all, and none over him; and therefore forbade in his law, *Distinctio*, xl. Si Papa, saying, "Though the Pope be proved negligent about himself, and also the soul-health of his brethren, and slack in his works, and speechless as concerning any good, and draw with him by his example innumerable people to hell, to be punished with him with divers torments everlastingly; yet see that no mortal man presume once to rebuke his faults here : for he shall judge all men, and no man him" O antichrist! Is he not antichrist, that will not have his life tried by God's word?

If the Venetians catch any of our holy father's towns or possessions, whether by war, or that they have bought it, or that it be laid to mortgage unto them, or that the old Pope hath given it with the marriage of some daughter unto the duke of Venice then the holy father that succeeded, when he seeth his season, sendeth for it again, saying, 'That it is not lawful for laymen to withhold St Peter's patrimony.' If they allege that they bought it, and so forth, his fatherhood answereth, "That the old Pope had none authority to make any such chevisance with St Peter's inheritance: he could have but the use of it his life long, and after it must needs return unto his successor again.' And upon that he interdicteth them, and curseth them as black as coal, down to the pit of hell.

But the Venetians, knowing more of our holy father's practice, for their nighness, then we which dwell afar off, and wiser than we of cold countries, perceiving also that their colour changeth not with his cursing, and that they sink not, and that their meat digested as well as before therefore fear not his interdiction nor excommunication.

Then our holy father raiseth up all the power that he is able to make in Italy against them, and sendeth for the Souchenars (Swiss) to come and help. If he is not yet strong enough, then he sendeth unto the bishops of France, warning them that if his seat decay, theirs cannot long prosper; and therefore that

they put their King in remembrance, how that he is called the most Christian King, and that they desire him to do somewhat for his title against this disobedient rebellion unto the most holy see of Rome, our mother, holy church. If another time the Frenchmen come to our holy father, as they be ever gaping for Italy, to bring the empire home again to France; then that most holy vicar bringeth his whole power against them, with the power of the Venetians, and with his old friends the Souchenars. If he is not yet strong enough, then he sendeth to the bishops of England to help their god, and to move their King to do somewhat for holy church, putting him in remembrance of whom he holdeth his crown, and of his oath, and how many caps of maintenance have been ever sent unto his forefathers, and what honour it was unto them, and that he may easily get as great honour as they, and haply a more excellent title, if he will take our holy father's part besides that he shall purchase remission of all his sins.

Then must the peace, and all the appointments made between us and France, be broken, and the King must take a dispensation for his oath. For the King of France will attempt nothing in Italy, until he have sent his ambassadors, and have made a perpetual peace with our King, the sacrament of the body of our Saviour broke between them to confirm the appointment. But I suppose that the breaking signified that the appointment shall not long endure : for a great deal of flour would not make so many hosts (as they call them), or singing loaves, as hath been broken in our days between Christian princes (as they will be called), to confirm the promises that have not been kept. Other use of that blessed sacrament will the princes none know: but Christ ordained it to be a perpetual memory that his body was broken for our sins upon the cross, and that all that repent should receive, as oft as they eat of it, forgiveness of their misdeeds through faith. If the Kings of the earth, when they break that sacrament between them, do say on this wise, 'The body of our Saviour (which was broken on the cross for the sin of all that repent, and have good hearts, and would fain keep his law) be broke unto my damnation, if I break this oath;' then is it a terrible oath, and they need to take heed how they make it, and, if it be lawfully made, not to break it at all. But as they care for their oath, which they make in wedlock, so they care for this.

Whatsoever need the Pope hath, he will not send to the Emperor to come and help him in Italy, for fear lest he would take to himself whatsoever he conquered of the Frenchmen, and wax too strong, and minish our holy father's power, and become our holy father's vicar, as he is St Peter's. Nevertheless, if we Englishmen will hire the Emperor to come and fight against France, for the right of the church in these quarters that be next unto us, his fatherhood is content to admit his service.

When our King hath granted to take our holy father's part, then the pretence and cloak outward must be, that the King will challenge his right in France. And, to aid the King in his right, must the commons be milked till they bleed again. Then, to do the King service, the lords sell, or lay their lands to mortgage. Then is clean remission given, to slay French dogs. He that dieth in the quarrel shall never see purgatory, but fly to heaven straight, even with a thought.

When the Pope had what he desireth in Italy, then must we make peace with the Frenchmen again immediately, that France be not altogether trodden under the foot; but that it remains always in a mean state, strong enough to match the Emperor and to keep him down, but not too mighty for oppressing the Pope. And then our prelates, to bring peace about, send immediately a friar Forest, or a vicar of Croydon, to preach before the King and his lords; which preacher roareth and crieth unto them, as though he hallooed his hounds, and maketh exclamations, saying: "Alas! what will ye do? Spare Christian blood. Will ye slay your own souls? Be not the Frenchmen as well Christians as ye? Moreover, ye slay poor innocents that never offended. Make peace for the passion of Christ. Kill not one another, as though Christ had not died for you; but fight rather against the Turks."

Then come in the ambassadors of France, and money, a few prelates, and certain other the King's play-fellows, that be sworn with them to betray both the King and the realm too; and then is peace concluded. But outwardly there is nothing save a truce taken for half a year, till our soldiers be at home again, for fear lest they would not be content. Then cometh the whole host home beggared, both great and small; and the poor, that cannot suddenly get work, fall to stealing, and be hanged at home. This

could More tell in his Utopia, before he was the Cardinal's sworn secretary, and fallen at his feet to betray the truth to get promotion.

Take an example : the bishops sent King Henry the fifth out to conquer France. The cause was, saith the chronicles, that the King went about to take their temporalities from them; and therefore, to bring the King into another imagination, they monied him, and sent him into France.

When they had sent out the King, he conquered more than was their will, and more than they supposed possible for him in such a short space, and brought France clean under the foot; so that our prelates had much secret business to set it up again. But what is impossible unto so great gods?

In King Henry's the sixth days, our holy father of Rome made the bishop of Winchester a Cardinal; which went shortly after into France, to treat of a truce between England and France. And him met a legate of Rome, and Cardinal also : after which meeting Englishmen had ever the worse in France, and their chiefest friend, the duke of Burgaine, forsook them. For when Cardinals and bishops meet together, they have their secret council by themselves, wherein they conclude neither what is good for England, nor yet for France, but what is best for our holy father's profit, to keep him in his state.

When King Henry was of age, there was a marriage between him and the earl of Armainacke's daughter, in Gyan; with the which should have been given many castles and towns in Gyan, and a great sum of money thereto. But that marriage was broken, not without the secret working of our prelates, and dispensation of our holy father, thou mayest be sure; and a marriage was made between him and the King's daughter of Sicily, for which England gave up the whole dukedom of Gyan and earldom of Maine : whereby we lost all Normandy, whereof they were the key; and besides that, the commons gave a fifteen (tax) and a half, to fetch her in with pomp. And then was the good duke of Gloucester traitorously murdered; partly because he could judge false miracles, and partly because of the deliverance of these two countries : for, he being alive, they durst not do it.

And when King Edward had put down King Harry, a marriage was made and concluded between him and the King of Spain, this Queen's mother that now is. But there the ambassadors were come home, our prelates had bewitched King Edward by their apostle, Friar Bungay, and married him unto a widow that was a knight's wife; lest, if Spain and England had been joined together, King Edward should have recovered France again. But what followed after the breaking off the marriage between King Edward and the earl of Warwick? And what came of his children? Yea, and what came on King Henry of Windsor's children also? But what care our prelates, what vengeance or mischief fall on princes, or on their realms, so their Kingdom prosper?

In King Henry the seventh's days the Cardinal Morton and bishop Fox of Winchester delivered unto the King's grace the confessions of as many lords as his grace lusted. Whosoever was mistrusted, if he shrove himself at the Charter-houses, Sion, Greenwich, at St John's, or wheresoever it was, the confessor was commanded by the authority of the Pope to deliver his confession written, and sworn that it was all. And Cardinal Morton had a licence of the Pope for fourteen to study necromancy, of which he himself was one; and other I have heard named, which at this time I pass over in silence. And how the holy friars observants carried feigned letters, to try who was true, I pass over in silence. However, such

temptations and feigned offers were enough to move them that never would have thought amiss : yea, and in confession men will shrive themselves of thoughts, which they never went about in the outward deed.

When any great man is put to death, how his confessor entreated him, and what penance is enjoined him, concerning what he will say when he cometh unto the place of execution, I could guess at a practice that might make men's ears glow.

And did not the subtle counsel of the said two prelates feign the siege of Boulogne, to make a pretence to gather in a fifteen (tax), when there was no more war between the King of France and of England than is between a man's head, that hath lust to sleep, and his pillow? Which siege yet cost many men their lives, yea, and some great men thereto, which knew not of that feigning. The King's grace went over with a ten thousand men to conquer all France, and spent haply a hundred thousand pound, of which he saved the fourth part in the dandiprats (small coins), and gathered at home five or six hundred, or more. And two other such feigned voyages could I haply rehearse, which I pass over for divers causes, where many an Englishman lost his life. But what care they for men's lives?

And did not our Cardinal with like policy, think ye, (to gather that which he thought would not be paid, except the commons saw some cause,) bring a great multitude of Scots unto the English pale, either by some bishops of Scotland, or by some great man whom he corrupted with some yearly pension? against which the poor northern men must go on their own cost, to keep them out. And general procession was commanded at London thrice in the week, and throughout all the land, while the King's receivers gathered the tax of the common people. Which plague, and the such like, after the threatening of God, Lev. xxvi. and Deut. xxviii. and xxix. I am sure will fall on all Christendom without cease, until they either defy the name of Christ with the Turks; or, if they will be called Christians, they turn and look on his doctrine.

Yea, and what feigned the Cardinal at that great loan, to beguile his own priests, to make them swear what they were worth, and the better willing to pay! For the common priests be not so obedient unto their ordinaries that they will pay money, except they know why. Now it is not expedient that every rascal should know the secrets of the very true cause, for many considerations; and therefore another pretence must be made, and another cause alleged : and therefore the priests were charged by their ordinaries to appear before the gentlemen of the country, and temporal officers, and swear what every man was worth. Now the priests had lever be slain, and die martyrs, after the ensample of St Thomas of Canterbury, than to swear before a lay judge; for they think it greater sin than to slay their own fathers, and that then the liberties of the church were clean lost, and they no better than the vile lay people. And when they were in that perplexity, that they must either swear, or run into the King's danger, and lose their gods (I would say their goods); then my lord Cardinal sent down his gracious power, that they should swear unto their ordinary people only. And then the priest, for joy that they were rid of the layman's hands, were so glad and joyous, that they wist not what thanks to give my lord Cardinal, and so were obedient to swear, and to lend; or else for all the curses that my lord Cardinal hath, and the Pope too, they would neither have sworn, or paid a penny.

The practice of our time

When the King's grace came first to the right of the crown, and unto the governance of the realm, young and unexpert, Thomas Wolsey, a man of lust and courage and bodily strength, to do and to suffer great things, and to endure in all manner of voluptuousness; expert and exercised in the course of the world, as he which had heard, read, and seen much policy, and had done many things himself, and had been of the secret counsel of weighty matters, as subtle as Sinon that betrayed Troy; utterly appointed to semble and dissemble, to have one thing in the heart and another in the mouth, being thereto as eloquent as subtle, and able to persuade what he lusted to them that were unexpert; so desirous and greedy of honour, that he cared not but for the next and most compendious way thereto, whether godly or ungodly; this wily wolf, I say, and raging sea and shipwreck of all England, though he shewed himself pleasant and calm at the first (as whores do unto their lovers), came unto the King's grace, and waited upon him, and was no man so obsequious and serviceable, and in all games and sports the first and next at hand; and as a captain to courage other, and a gay finder out of new pastimes, to obtain favour withal. And thereto, as the secret communication went, which by many tokens thou mayest well conjecture and gather to be true, he called the King's nativity and birth, (which is a common practice among prelates in all lands;) whereby he saw whereunto the King's grace should be inclined all his life, and what should be like to chance him at all times.

And, as I heard it spoken of divers, he made by craft of necromancy graven imagery to bear upon him; wherewith he bewitched the King's mind, and made the King to dote upon him more than ever he did on any lady or gentlewoman; so that now the King's grace followed him, as he before followed the King. And then, what he said, that was wisdom; what he praised, that was honourable only. Moreover, in the meantime he spied out the natures and dispositions of the King's play-fellows, and of all that were great; and whom he spied meet for his purpose, him he flattered, and him he made faithful with great promises, and to him he swore, and of him he took the oath again, that the one should help the other : for without a secret oath he admitted no man unto any part of his privities.

And ever as he grew in promotions and dignity, so gathered he unto him of the most subtle-witted, and of them that were drunk in the desire of honour, most like unto himself : and after they were sworn, he promoted them, and with great promises made them in falsehood faithful, and of them ever presented unto the King's grace, and put them into his service, saying, 'This is a man meet for your grace.' And by these spies, if aught were done or spoken in the court against the Cardinal, of that he had word within an hour or two; and then came the Cardinal to court with all his magic, to persuade the contrary. If any in the court had spoken against the Cardinal, and the same not great in the King's favour, the Cardinal bade him walk a villain' (begone imposter), and thrust him out of the court headlong. If he wore in conceit with the King's grace, then he flattered, and persuaded, and corrupted some with gifts, and sent some ambassadors, and some he made captains at Calais, Hames, Guines, Jersey, Guernsey, or sent them to Ireland, and into the north; and so occupied them, till the King had forgotten them, and others were in their rooms, or till he had sped what he intended.

And in like manner played he with the ladies and gentlewoman. Whosoever of them was great, with her he was familiar, and to her gave he gifts : yea, and where St Thomas of Canterbury was wont to come after, Thomas Cardinal (Wolsey) went oft before, preventing his prince, and perverted the order of that holy man. If any were subtle-witted, and meet for his purpose, her made he sworn to betray the

Queen likewise, and tell him what she said or did. I know one that departed the court for no other cause than that she would no longer betray her mistress.

And, after the same example, he furnished the court with chaplains of his own sworn disciples, and children of his own bringing up, to be always present, and to dispute of vanities, and to water whatsoever the Cardinal had planted. If among those cormorants any yet begun to be too much in favour with the King, and to be somewhat busy in the court, and to draw any other way than as my lord Cardinal had appointed that the plough should go, anon he was sent to Italy or Spain; or some quarrel was picked against him, and so was thrust out of the court, as Stokesly (Bishop John Stokesly) was.

He promoted the bishop of Lincoln that now is his most faithful friend and old companion, and made him confessor to whom of whatsoever the King's grace shrove himself, think ye not that he spake so loud that the Cardinal heard it? And not unright for as God's creatures ought to obey God and serve his honour, so ought the Pope's creatures to obey the Pope and serve his majesty.

Cardinal Finally, Thomas Wolsey became what he would, even porter of heaven, so that no man could enter into promotion but through him.

The cause of all that we have suffered these twenty years

About the beginning of the King's grace that now is, France was mighty, so I suppose that it was not mightier this five hundred years. King Louis (XII) of France had won Naples, and had taken Bononia from St Peter's see. Wherefore Pope Julius (II) was wroth, and cast how to bring the Frenchmen down, yet soberly, lest, while he brought him lower, he should give an occasion to lift up the Emperor higher. Our first voyage into Spain was to bring the Frenchmen lower: for our many were set in the fore-front and borders of Spain, toward Gascoyne, partly to keep those parties, and partly to fear the Gascoynes and to keep them at home, while in the meantime the Spaniards won Navarre. When Navarre was won, our men came to house, as many as died not there; and brought all their money home again, save that they spent there. Howbeit, for all the loss of Navarre, the Frenchmen were yet able enough to match Spain, the Venetians, and the Pope, and all the Souchenars (Swiss) that he could make so that there was yet no remedy but we must set on the Frenchmen also, if they should be brought out of Italy.

Then Pope Julius wrote unto his dear son Thomas Wolsey, that he would be as good, as loving, and as helping to holy church as any Thomas ever was, seeing he was as able. Then the new Thomas, as glorious as the old, took the matter in hand and persuaded the King's grace. And then the King's grace took a dispensation for his oath, made upon the appointment of peace between him and the French King, and promised to help the holy seat, wherein Pope Peter never sat. But the Emperor Maximilian might in no wise stand still, lest the Frenchmen should money him, and get aid of him, since the Almaines refuse not money whencesoever it be proffered : then quoth Thomas Wolsey, "Oh, and like your grace, what an honour should it be unto your grace if the Emperor were your soldier! So great an honour never chanced upon any King christened; it should be spoken of while the world stood; the glory and honour shall hide and darken the cost, that it shall never be seen, though it shall cost half your realm!" Dixit et factum est (He spoke and it was done). It was even so. And then a parliament, and then pay : and then upon the French dogs, with clean remission of all his sins that slew one of them; or if he be slain, (for

the pardons have no strength to save in this life, but in the life to come,) then to heaven straight without feeling the pains of purgatory.

Then came our King with all his might, by sea and by land, and the Emperor with a strong army, and the Spaniards, and the Pope, and the Venetians, all at once against King Louis of France. As soon as the Pope had that he desired in Italy, then peace immediately and Frenchmen were christian men; and pity, yea, and great sin also, were it to shed their blood; and the French King was 'The most christian King' again. And thus was peace concluded, and our Englishmen, or rather sheep, came home against winter, and left their fleeces behind them. Wherefore no small number of them, while they sought them better raiment at home, were hanged for their labour.

Why the King's sister was turned unto France

When this peace was made, our holy Cardinals and bishops (as their old guise is to calk and cast forty, fifty, yea, a hundred years before, what is like to chance unto their Kingdom) considered how the Emperor that was most likely to be chosen Emperor after his grandfather Maximilian; for Maximilian had already obtained of divers of the electors that it should so be.

They also considered how mighty he should be : first King of Spain, with all that pertaineth thereto, which was wont to be five, six, or seven Kingdoms; the duke of Burgaine, earl of Flanders, of Holland, Zealand, and Brabande, with all that pertain thereto; then Emperor; and his brother duke of Austria; and his sister Queen of Hungary. Wherefore, thought our prelates, if we take not heed betimes, our Kingdom is like to be troubled, and we to be brought under the feet. For this man shall be so mighty, that he shall with power take out of the French King's hands, out of the hands of the Venetians, and from the Pope also, whatsoever pertaineth unto the empire, and whatsoever belongeth unto his other Kingdoms and dominions thereto; and then will he come to Rome and be crowned there; and so shall he overlook our holy father and see what he doth : and then shall the old heretics rise up again, and say that the Pope is antichrist, and stir up again, and bring to light, that we have hid and brought asleep with much cost, pain, and blood-shedding, more than this hundred years long. [They] considered also that his aunt is Queen of England, and his wife the King of England's sister considered the old amity between the house of Burgaine and the old Kings of England, so that they could never do aught in France without their help; and last of all considered the course of merchandise that England hath in those parts, and also the natural hate that Englishmen bear to Frenchmen. Wherefore, if we shall use our old practice, and set the French King against him, then he shall lightly obtain the favour of the King of England, by the means of his aunt and his wife, and aid with men and money : wherefore we must take heed betimes, and break this amity; which thing we may by this our old craft easily bring to pass. Let us take a dispensation, and break this marriage, and turn the King's sister unto the French King : if the French King get a male of her, then we shall lightly make our King protector of France, and so shall England and France be coupled together; and as for the Queen of England, we shall trim her well enough, and occupy the King with strange love, and keep her that she shall bear no rule. And as the gods had spoken, so it came to pass. Our fair young daughter was sent to the old pocky King of France, the year before our mortal enemy, and a miscreant worse than a Turk, and disobedient unto our holy father, and no more obedient than he was compelled to be against his will.

The cause of the journey to Calais

In short space thereafter Thomas Wolsey, now Cardinal, and legate a latere (papal legate), and greatly desirous to be Pope also, thought it exceeding expedient, for his many secret purposes, to bring our King and the King of France that now is together, both to make a perpetual peace and amity between them, and that, while the two Kings and their lords dallied together, the great Cardinals and bishops of both parties might betray them both, and the Emperor and all christian Kings thereto.

Then he made a journey of gentlemen, arrayed altogether in silk, so much as their very shoes and lining of their boots, more like their mothers than men of war; yea, I am sure that many of their mothers would have been ashamed of so nice and wanton array. Howbeit they went not to make war, but peace, for ever and a day longer. But to speak of the pompous apparel of my lord himself, and of his chaplains, it passeth the twelve apostles. I dare swear that if Peter and Paul had seen them suddenly, and at a blush, they would have been harder of belief that they or any such should be their successors, than Thomas Didymus was to believe that Christ was risen again from death.

When all was concluded between the King of France and ours, that Thomas Wolsey had devised, and when the prelates of both parties had cast their penny-worths against all chances, and devised remedies for all mischiefs; then the right reverend father in God, Thomas, Cardinal and legate, would go see the young Emperor newly chosen to the room, and have a certain secret communication with some of his prelates also; and got him to Bruges, in Flanders, where he was received with great solemnity, as belongeth unto so mighty a pillar of Christ's church, and was saluted at the entering into the town of a merry fellow, which said, 'Salve rex regis tui atque regni sui': "Hail, both King of thy King, and also of his realm." And though there were never so great strife between the Emperor and the French King, yet my lord Cardinal juggled him favour of them both; and finally brought the Emperor to Calais to the King's grace, where was great triumph, and great love and amity shewed on both parties; insomuch that a certain man marvelling at it asked the old bishop of Durham, how it might be that we were so great with the Emperor, so shortly upon so strong and everlasting a peace made between us and the Frenchmen, the Emperor and the King of France being so mortal enemies? My lord answered, 'That it might be well enough, if he wist all : but there was a certain secret (said he) whereof all men knew not.' Yea, verily, 'they have had secrets this eight hundred years; which though all the laymen have felt them, yet few have spied them, save a few Judases, which for lucre have been confederate with them, to betray their own Kings and all other.

Then we were indifferent and stood still; and the Emperor and the French King wrestled together; and Ferdinandus, the Emperor's brother, won Milan of the Frenchmen, and the Emperor Tournay, our great conquest; which yet, after so great cost in building a castle, we delivered up again to the Frenchmen, in earnest and hope of a marriage between the Dolphine and our princess.

How the Emperor came through England.

After that the Emperor would into Spain, and came through The Emperor England; where he was received in great honour, and with all that pertaineth to love and amity. The King's grace lent him money, and promised him more; and the Emperor should tarry a certain years, and marry our princess : not that the Cardinal intended that, thou mayest be sure; for it was not profitable for their Kingdom; but his mind was to dally with the Emperor, and to keep him without a wife, that (insomuch as he was young and lusty) he might have been noselled and entangled with whores (which is their nurturing of Kings), and made so effeminate and beastly, that he should never have been able to lift up his heart to any goodness or virtue; that Cardinals and bishops might have administered his dominions in the meantime, unto our holy father's profit.

The King of France, hearing the favour that was shewed unto the Emperor, sent immediately a defiance unto our King', not without our Cardinals and bishops counsel, thou mayest well wit : for Frenchmen are not so foolish to have done it so unadvisedly and so rashly, seeing they had too many in their tops already. Then our King spake many great words, that he would drive the French King out of his realm, or else the French King should drive him out of his. But had he added, as the legate Pandulph taught King John, 'with the Pope's licence,' his words had sounded much better : for there can no vow stand in effect, except the holy father confirmed it.

We sent out our soldiers two summers against the Frenchmen, unto whose chief captains the Cardinal had appointed how far they should go, and what they should do; and therefore the French King was nothing afraid, but brought all his power against the Emperor in other places : and so was the Emperor ever betrayed. And thus the Cardinal was the Emperor's friend openly, and the French King's secretly. For at the meeting with the French King beside Calais, he utterly betrayed the Emperor, yet for no love that he had to France, but to help the Pope; yea, and to have been Pope happily, and to save their Kingdom : which treason though all the world smelled it, yet it brake not out openly to the eye till the siege of Paris. And the Cardinal lent the Emperor much money 'openly; and gave the French King more secretly'. He played with both hands to serve their secret that all men know not, as the bishop of Durham said. But whatsoever the Frenchmen did, they had ever worse, notwithstanding the secret working of our holy prelates on their side.

Finally, unto the siege of Paris came the French King personally with sixty thousand men of war, of which twelve thousand were horsemen, and with enough money. And the Emperor's host was under twenty thousand, of which were but three thousand horsemen, with no money at all : for he trusted unto the Pope for aid of men, and unto our Cardinal for money. But the Pope kept back his men, till that the Frenchmen had given them a field; and our Cardinal kept back his money for the same purpose. And thus was the silly Emperor betrayed, as all his predecessors have been this eight hundred years. Howbeit there be that say that the Emperor's soldiers so threatened Pace, the King's grace's ambassador, that he was fain to make a pact with merchants for money, in the King's name, to pay the soldiers withal. "Wherefore the Cardinal took from him all his promotions, and played tormentors with him, when he came home; because he presumed to do one jot more than was in his commission".

But, howsoever it was, the Emperor's men, in tarrying for Bourbon. help, had spent out all their victuals. Whereupon Bourbon, the chief captain of the Emperor, said unto his under captains : 'Ye see help cometh not, and that our victuals are spent; wherefore there is no remedy but to fight, though we be unequally matched. If we win, we shall find meat enough; if we lose, we shall lose no more than we must lose with hunger, though we fight not.' And so they concluded to set upon the Frenchmen by night. The King of France and his lords, supposing that the moon would sooner have fallen out of the sky than that the Emperor's host would have fought with them, were somewhat negligent, and went the same night a mumming that Bourbon set upon them. The Emperor's host therefore with their sudden coming upon them amazed the Frenchmen, and drove them upon heaps together one on another, so that they never could come in array again; and took the King, and divers of his lords, and slew many and won the field. And there came out all the Cardinals privy treason : for in the French King's tent (say men)

were letters found; and beside that in the French King's treasure, and in all the host, among the soldiers were English ships found innumerable, which had come sailing a thousand miles by land.

But what wonder? Ships be made to sail over the sea, and wings to fly into far countries, and to mount to the top of high hills.

When the French King was taken, we sang Te Deum. But for all that singing we made peace with Frenchmen and the Pope, the Venetians, France, and England, were knit together; lest the Emperor's army should do any hurt in France. Whereby ye may conjecture of what mind the Pope and the Cardinal were toward the Emperor, and with what heart our spirituality, with their invisible secrets, sang Te Deum. And from that time hitherto the Emperor and our Cardinal have been twain. After that, when the King of France was delivered home again, and his sons left in pledge, many ways were sought to bring home the sons also : but in vain, except the French King would make good that which he had promised the Emperor. For the bringing home of those children no man more busied his wits than the Cardinal. He would in any wise the Emperor should have sent them home; and it had been but for our King's pleasure, for the great kindness that he shewed him in times past. He would have married the King's daughter, our princess, unto the Dolphine again, or, as the voice went among many, unto the second brother; and he should have been prince in England, and King in time to come. So he sought all ways to pluck us from the Emperor, and to join us unto France; to make France strong enough to match the Emperor, and to keep him down; that the Pope might reign god alone, and do what pleaseth' him, without controlling from any overseer. And for the same purpose he left nothing unprovided to bring the mart from Antwerp to Calais.

Why the Queen must be divorced

If the Cardinal could by such means have made us French, the Queen had been Queen yet; yea, though she had not been his wife. Neither would he have been more about to separate her, than he hath been to separate other that indeed were not his wives, but hath been rather diligent to couple them to him, to pluck him from his right wife; lost, if she had been (as right is) in his favour, she should have given his grace better counsel for the realm than he hath followed; and lest also the prince's grace should have been moved through her more to have favoured the Emperor.

But when there was found no other way, he inspired the King that the Queen was not his wife, by the bishop of Lincoln his confessor, as the saying was; by whom he hath breathed many things into his grace, and by whom he hath heard his confession, and by whom, and like hypocrites, he hath long betrayed him to have married him unto the King's sister of France, as the fame went, by that means at the last to make us French. And then the Cardinal's doctors laid their heads together to seek subtle arguments and riddles to prove his divorcement. But all the chancellors of England (say men) which be all lawyers, and other doctors, mumpsimus of divinity, were called up suddenly to dispute the matter (under a colour to condemn Bilney and Arthur, heard I say), which is their old cast and subtilty, to pretend a contrary thing, and to cast a mist before the eyes of the people, to hide their juggling; that no man should once surmise where they went. And the Cardinal's secretaries ministered reasons unto them. And so the matter was discussed with a plain conclusion that he must be divorced. When the

Queen was warned, she desired learned counsel to defend her quarrel, that she should have no wrong; and it was granted her : and she chose. But, alas! what choice is there among the fox's whelps? All that be shaven be sworn together; and all that be promoted by them must play the Judases with them. They may, to blind the world withal, dispute one against another; but the conclusion shall be the Pope's profit, prelates' pleasure, and the lusts of princes, which are their defenders. Finally it is concluded that the Queen is not his wife; and the reason why they are not divorced, is peradventure that our prelates are afraid. If they could have brought any marriage about, to join us unto France, it had been done long since; but because they cannot (for the French King's sister knew too much of Christ to consent unto such wickedness), haply they would it were undone I doubt not but they bear the King's grace in hand that the Pope dare not confirm it for fear of the Emperor; but I doubt not, if they feared not the Emperor and the lords and commons, it had been done already.

After that my lord Cardinal with More, his sworn secretary, and the bishop of London, that still Saturn, the imaginer of all mischief, went to France to juggle secretly, and carried with him more than he brought home again. This is of a truth, that he carried great treasure with him. The French galleys lay long in Thames' mouth, and not for nought. The fame went plain, yea, and I know also one that saw in my lord Cardinal's court letters sealed with the King's great seal, wherein was contained that the French King should have of us money sufficient for to find twenty thousand men against the Emperor in Italy, from the second day of July, in the year of our Lord fifteen hundred twenty-seven, forward.

But among all other, as soon as the Pope was taken the Cardinal wrote unto the Emperor that he should make him Pope. And when he had got an answer that pleased him not, but according unto his deservings toward the Emperor, then he waxed furious mad, and sought all means to displease the Emperor and imagined this divorcement between the King and the Queen, and wrote sharply unto the Emperor with menacing letters, that if he would not make him Pope, he would make such ruffling between christian princes as was not this hundred year, to make the Emperor repent : yea, though it should cost the whole realm of England. The Lord Jesus be our shield! What a fierce wrath of God is upon us, that a misshapen monster should spring out of a dunghill into such a height that, the dread of God and man laid apart, he should be so malapert, not only to defy utterly the majesty of so mighty an Emperor, whose authority both Christ and all his apostles obeyed, and taught The pride all other to obey, threatening damnation to all them that would not, but should also set so little by the whole realm of England, which hath bestowed so great cost and shed so much blood to exalt and maintain such proud, churlish, and unthankful hypocrites, that he should not care to destroy it utterly for the satisfying of his villainous lusts.

The Emperor ' sent forth a little book in print, both in the Spanish and also in Dutch, in which he answereth unto the Cardinal's menacing, and unto many articles that the Cardinal layeth against him, and among all other repeated this threatening of the Cardinal, 'Ye will (saith the Emperor) to do me displeasure, if I will not make you Pope, set such a ruffling among christian princes as was not this hundred year, though it should cost you the whole realm of England.' Whereunto the Emperor answereth, saying, ' Ye go about to give your King another wife, which if you do, it may be the next way to cost you the realm of England.' And I believe verily, that the prophecy of this caitiff Caiaphas, the Cardinal, through the mischief that he hath wrought for the divorcement of the marriage, shall be fulfilled, and that it will cost the whole realm of England, if it be not seen too early. By what means, I will shew you after that I have spoken a word or two of this divorcement.

Of the divorcement

If the King's most noble grace will need to have another wife, then let him search tho laws of God, whether it be lawful or not; forasmuch as he himself is baptized to keep the laws of God, and hath proposed them and hath sworn them. If the law of God suffer it, then let his grace put forth a little treatise in print, and even in the English tongue, that all men may see it, for his excuse and the defence of his deed, and say, 'Lo, by the authority of God's word do I this.' And then let not his grace be afraid either of the Emperor, or of his lords, or of his commons and subjects: for God hath promised to keep them that keep his laws. If we care to keep his laws, he will care for the keeping of us, for the truth

of his promises. If it be found unlawful, then let his grace fear God, and cease to shame himself and his blood, his lords, his subjects, and his realm, and specially the blessed name of our Saviour Jesus Christ, and his holy doctrine, and the profession of our faith : for whosoever professeth the faith of Christ, and haveth contrary unto his doctrine, shameth the name of our Saviour Jesus Christ. Moreover whatsoever God coupled, man may not loose, no, though he name himself Pope. Wherefore, if this marriage be of God, the Pope cannot dispense with it: for God hath given no power against himself; but to preach his ordinances' only hath he given power. Therefore if we will see what is right and what is wrong, let us bring it unto the light of God's law, and let us submit our causes unto the judgment thereof, and be content to have our appetites slain thereby, that we lust no farther than God's ordinance giveth us liberty. For verily to desire more than God permitteth, is to tempt God, and to provoke wrath and indignation upon us, unto our destruction, as the children of Israel did under Moses, and perished: whose disobedient deeds are warning for us (says Paul, 1 Cor. 10.) that we, feared with the terrible ensample of their fall, should abstain from like wickednesses.

The controversy and strife of the matter, and all the doubt and difficulty, standeth in this, that Moses in the 18th of Leviticus saith, "Thou shalt not uncover the secrets of thy brother's wife, for they are thy brother's secrets." Which is as much to say as, thou shalt not take thy brother's wife. And in the 25th of Deuteronomy he saith, "That if a man die with-out issue, his brother must marry his wife." Which two texts seem contrary, the one forbidding, the other commanding, a man to take his brother's wife. Wherefore, that we may come unto the true sense and clear meaning of these two texts, and that we may perceive also the ground of the reason that may be made by both parties by the occasion of these texts, and see which reasons do conclude, ye shall understand that the law of Moses is divided into three parts. Part of his laws are ceremonies, that is to say, signs that put men in remembrance either of the benefits of God done already, as the Easter lamb; either signs of the promise and appointment made between God and man, as circumcision; or signs that testify unto the people that the wrath of God is peaced, and their sins forgiven, as all manner of sacrifices : which all ceased as soon as Christ had offered up the sacrifice of his body and blood for us; and instead of them come the open preaching of Christ, and our signs which we call sacraments.

Another sort are laws of penalty or punishment to avenge sin, if it breaks out and hurt a man's neighbour, as tooth for tooth, eye for eye, and that the blood-shedder must have his blood shed again, and the breaker of wedlock must be stoned : which laws were given unto the Jews only, and we heathen or Gentiles are not bound unto them, that we should punish every sin after the same manner; but it is enough that every land punish their trespassers as it seemeth best for the common-wealth there, some of one manner and some of another.

Another part pertain unto faith and love; and that a man believe how that there is but one God, and that he is true, good and merciful in all things; and therefore ought to be believed, trusted and loved with all a man's heart, soul, mind and strength; and that if a man love his neighbour as himself, for God's sake, which hath created him and made him. And this is the law of nature, and pertaineth unto all nations in-differently, with all that dependeth or followeth thereof. This law was also before Moses; insomuch that though Moses had never written it, yet had the Jews been no less bound thereto by nature and by natural right and equity. For whosoever is of God, the same consented unto this law, and unto all that

followeth thereof naturally, when he heareth it preached; as he consented that the fire is hot, when he putteth his finger in it.

Moreover, whosoever hath this law graven in his heart, this same keepeth all laws; and whosoever hath it not written SI2!wt1' in his heart, the same keepeth no law. For whosoever believeth that there is one God, and loveth him with all his heart, with all his soul, mind and strength, (which is the first of the ten commandments pertaining unto the person of God,) the same will worship nothing of his own imagination without God's word; and then he can make none image to worship it : which is the second commandment pertaining unto the person of God. He cannot also, for love's sake, take the name of God in vain and swear by it irreverently : and so thou hast the third commandment pertaining unto the person of God. Further-more, he that believeth God and hath his trust in him, and loveth him as I said, cannot but keep his holy day, not after Moses's fashion, but spiritually: that is, he cannot but observe a time to wait on God's word, to hear it, and learn it, and to knowledge his sins to God, and to desire him of mercy, according to his promises and testament which he hath made with us : and so thou hast the fourth commandment pertaining unto the person of God. Last of all, he that loveth God cannot disobey father and mother, in which two names are contained all high powers; as grandfather, grandmother, aunt, uncle, King, lord, master, husband, and so forth, people here in God's stead, by which he made us, and by which he feedeth us, clotheth us, governeth us, teacheth and ruleth us. And thus thou hast the five commandments, which all pertain unto the person of God : for the obedience of father and mother, and of all high powers which rule the world in God's stead, pertaineth unto the person of God, and must be done with love as unto God's self.

Furthermore, he that loveth God hath this commandment also, that he loves his brother or neighbour, in the fourth chapter of the first epistle of John. For how can a man love i John i. the father, and hate the son, whom the Father loveth? Even so, how canst thou love God the Creator, and hate that creature whom he hath created and made after his own likeness; and so loveth him, that he hath made him lord over all other creatures, and thereto hath given his own Son unto the death for his sake, to shew him kindness, that he might see love, and to love again? How can I love our Saviour Jesus Christ, and hate him whom he hath bought with his blood? Though the son be never so evil, yet if I love his father heartily, I cannot help but be sorry that the son is evil, and wish him good in mine heart, and help to the uttermost of my power to make him better, even for his father's sake : until I see him run so far that he go about to slay his father; which thing if he does, then I resist him unto the uttermost of my power. Even so, though my neighbour be never so evil, yet as long as I love God, and Christ our Saviour, with all mine heart, I cannot but love him, and help to better him with all my power; until he run so far, that he beginneth to fight against God, and to destroy the law of God, and the testament that God hath made unto man : then I resist him with all my power, as God hath taught me to resist. Now if I love my neighbour in God faithfully and unfeignedly, then I cannot find in my heart to slay him : neither to defile his wife : neither to steal his goods : nor to bear false witness against him : neither can mine heart covet his house, wife, man-servant or maid from him, either ox, ass, or what-soever is his. And thus hast thou other five of the ten commandments, pertaining all unto the person of thy neighbour. This is the law of nature, whose servants Moses and the prophets were, to teach it the Jews; and whose servant Christ our Saviour was, for our sakes, with his apostles, to teach it us. And it is an everlasting

law, and pertaineth indifferently to all nations, with all that hangeth thereof; insomuch that though a man be never taught it, yet if it be not found written in his heart, he is the heir of damnation.

Now they that study to make this divorcement between the King's grace and the Queen, will happily say that the first text is a law depending on the natural law, (for, undoubted, it is no ceremony, nor yet law of penalty,) and therefore pertaineth unto all men indifferently, and ought to be kept of all nations; and that the second is a ceremony, and therefore ceaseth at the coming of Christ. I answer : If it be a ceremony, then it is a sign and must have a signification. It must signify some benefit of God done already, or some vengeance taken for sin, or some promise, or something that I must do or leave undone at the commandment of God. Now the significance of it they will shew me, when our lady hath a new son.

Moreover, there is no ceremony of Moses, but that I may keep it this day as an indifferent thing; howbeit, not as a thing so necessary unto my soul's health, that I should think that I sinned if I did not. But I may eat the Easter lamb of passover every year, when the time cometh, if I will. And I may circumcise myself for my pleasure, as well as pare my nails, if I list. And I may burn the blood and fat of oxen and calves unto this day without sin, as an indifferent thing; and give this signification thereto, that as the fat is consumed in the fire, even so doth the sin of all men that repent consume in the hot fire of the love of God to us-ward in Christ Jesus the Lord; and so forth. If it be a ceremony, then, how happeneth it that this one ceremony is unlawful among all other?

Thereto, inasmuch as Moses in all his laws sought the glory of God and the pureness of his people, as he boasteth of himself, (Deut 4), saying, " What nation hath ordinances and laws so righteous as all this law, which I set before you?" how cometh it that Moses was driven into so great a strait, that he would find nought to make a ceremony of, but that which of his own nature is damnable sin, and filthy among the heathen; which heathen made as just laws, out of the law natural graven in their hearts, as Moses did? Might not the heathen of good right say, " See what a filthy nation it is, they marry every one his brother's wife, as hounds?" And so the law shamed the name of God, and honoured it not. If Moses gave his people two contrary commandments, then he was an indiscreet lawgiver, yea, and devilish thereto; for then I cannot but be damned whatsoever I do. If a man says that the first pertaineth unto us heathen, and the last unto the people of Israel, that soundeth not; for when all the other laws contained in the same chapter, and in all his books, pertained unto the same people, how should he, among so many belonging unto them, mingle one for us hear then only, to whom he was no lawgiver; and namely when he wist that one as wise as he should come and teach us, which is our Saviour Jesus Christ?

If a man will say, the first is a law, and the second a permission, as the permission of divorcements, when a man did hate his wife : nay, verily, it is not a permission, but a flat commandment, and that under pain of great shame and rebuke unto the man, if he did it not, and under the loss of all her husband's possession unto the woman, if she offered not herself. Of which law, also, because thou needest not to dream of a ceremony, a man may shew a good natural reason, profitable unto the commonwealth. For a woman, when she is married, she forsaketh her father's kin, and bringeth her dowry with her, and taketh her name among her husband's kin. Now if her husband die childless, it is not reason that she should be cast out of the kin empty, neither is it right that she should carry her husband's possessions out of his kin away with her, and that a stranger should get a child of her, to possess them. Thou wilt say, that the lands might return unto the next of his kin, and the wife have a portion her life long only. Then should great possessions come into the hands of one man, and so should there many tyrants rise among the

people : which to avoid, God ordained that the lands should be scattered ever among as many as might be of the same kin; and for the same cause would suffer no man to buy any lands for ever. For God thinketh it better for his commonwealth, that twenty should spend twenty or forty shillings apiece, than that one should spend twenty or forty pounds, and nineteen never a whit : for then must many poor hang on one rich; which rich for the most part be of corrupt minds, and so sensual that they will look on no man to do him good, except it will be on such as will follow their lusts. And so should the people follow the will of man, and not of God; and be compelled to live wickedly, and to murder, steal, and oppress their brethren, to fill their bellies withal.

Moreover, it was a law in the time of the law natural, four hundred years before Moses, that a man should marry his brother's wife, as thou seest Genesis 38. Also, Moses forbids not a man, when his wife is dead, to marry her sister. If one man may marry two sisters, why may not one woman marry two brethren? Are not two sisters as nigh of kin as two brethren?

Wherefore I see no remedy, but that a man must understand the text thus : That Moses forbids a man to take his brother's wife as long as his brother liveth; as in the text following, when he forbiddeth a man to take his neighbour's wife, he meaneth while his neighbour liveth; for after his death it is lawful. And therefore John rebuked Herod for taking his brother's wife from him, his brother being yet alive. Or at the uttermost, if they will strive and shew no cause why, it can extend no further than that a man may not take his brother's wife, if he has issue by her; which I suppose an indifferent thing to have her or not, as they can agree; but if his brother died childless, then he ought to have her, and that she is bound to offer herself to the other brother, by the law of Moses; and that it is lawful now, though no commandment.

If it be understood of a man's brother's wife, he being alive, then haply ye will say that it is superfluously added of Moses; for it is included in that which follows immediately, that a man shall not take his neighbour's wife. Nay, verily : for it is another sin, and a greater sin for a man to take his brother's wife than his neighbour's wife, that is no kin to him; because that my neighbour's shame is not my shame. For let my neighbour be hanged, and no man casteth that in my teeth. But my brother's shame is ray shame, and the shame of my father and mother, and of all my kin. For let whatsoever rebuke bechance my brother, and it is cast in my teeth, and in the teeth of my father and mother, and of all my kin immediately. Wherefore, to be so forgetful of natural honesty, that I should defile my brother's wife unto mine own shame and all my kin, is more grievous and heinous (as they say), and springeth of greater lewdness or malice, than to take my neighbour's wife which is not of my kin. And this doth the xxth chapter of the said Leviticus prove, where Moses saith. If a man lie with his brother's wife, they shall die immediately, and not tarry the birth : as Judah would have burnt Tamar, his daughter-in-law, being yet great with child.

They will happily say also, that if it be to be understood of a man's brother's wife, while his brother liveth, then they will understand of the father's and uncle's wives also, while the father and uncle live. Nay, verily, it is far unlike. For my father's wife and mine uncle's wife are my superiors, and persons unto whom I owe obedience by means of my father and uncle. Now if I should marry them, then I should make them my servants, (for the wife must obey her husband) and so pervert I the law of nature

and natural equity and honesty. Ye will say that when my father and uncle be dead, the obedience is loosed. Verily, it might well stand with the Pope's doctrine; for he thrust Kings and Emperors down thereto, and exalteth their sworn subjects into their rooms : he rakes one out of the dunghill on one day, and out of the most low and vile kind of subjection, and maketh him on the morrow superior unto his own prince, and to all the lords of his realm, in worldly pomp and dignity. But God teacheth his children to humble themselves; and Christ teaches his disciples to come lower and lower. I suppose, therefore, that a man ought much more to do them service, and obey them, and to give them honour and reverence now after the deaths of their husbands, than before. Moreover, ye see that a man may not marry his daughter-in-law after his son's death, by the story of Judah. And again, ye see that David, after the death of his son Absalom, would not meddle with his own wives, which his son Absalom had before corrupt, but shut them up in perpetual widowhood. Now if the father, after the death of his son, abstain from her that was one flesh with his son, for natural reverence; how much more ought the son, after the death of his father, to abstain from her that was one flesh with his father, to whom also, by reason of his father, he oweth obedience thereto! Moreover, if a woman should find a man-child on the streets, and bring him in, and find him up of nought; I would not by my will that she should after marrying him, for perverting of due obedience, which she should be happily as unnaturally, even so shrewdly, give unto him again. If she obeyed not, with what face should he correct her? If he corrected her, what would she cast in his teeth, and what wondering would neighbours make ? What reverence and service then suppose ye would nature (if we were not so corrupt-minded) teach us to give unto the father's and uncle's wife?

And to go through all the degrees that are forbidden : the mother, grandmother, aunts, father's wife and uncle's wife, are persons to be obeyed as God, with all reverence and service. The daughter and the daughter's daughter, and son's daughter, are a man's wife's flesh. The wife's mother and grandmother are persons to be obeyed, besides that the wife is your flesh. Now between a man and his wife's sister, when she is dead, and his brother's wife, when his brother is dead, is there no such cause as between these persons.

And concerning the maid-children, though they be under the obedience of their uncles; yet because, if any be married unto her uncle, she bideth in obedience still, therefore it is not utterly forbidden. And ensamples there be, that maidens have married unto their uncles : which thing yet I could not have drawn into a common use without necessity, or for a commonwealth.

And concerning the sister; she is of equal birth to her brother. It is to be feared, therefore, lest her obedience would be less to her brother than to a stranger. Then note the grief of father and mother, if they agreed not. Moreover, if he were an unkind husband, then had she double sorrow; first, because he is unkind, and also because she hath lost the comfort of a brother. Then the familiar bringing up together. And beside all those and such Uke, there is yet another, (which I think the chiefest of all,) that the sending out of daughters into another kin, and receiving again out of another kin, is the greatest cause of peace and unity that is in the world. And therefore the heathen people forbade that degree in the laws.

Nevertheless, the marriage of the brother with the sister is not so grievous against the law of nature (thinketh me) as the degrees above rehearsed. And therefore it seemeth me, that it might be dispensed with in certain cases, and for divers considerations. It would be hard to prove that Sarah was not Abraham's sister, whom I think he married because there was none other faithful woman that believed in God. Moreover, the greatest cause to send the daughter out is unity and peace between divers kindreds.

Wherefore, if greater peace and unity might be made with keeping her at home, I durst dispense with it : as, if the King of England had a son by one wife, heir to England, and a daughter by another, heir to Wales; then, because of the great war that was ever want to be between those two countries, I would not fear to marry them together, for the maKing of a perpetual unity, and to make both countries one, for to avoid so great effusion of blood. For which cause, I would God that our princess had been married unto the King of Scots, And I doubt not but that had been concluded long ago, if it had been as greatly unto the profit of the Pope and his pilpates, (I would say prelates,) as it were to the honour of God. But it is not profitable for them that any Kingdom should be strong and mighty, lest, if God should open the eyes of the King, the Pope should have too much ado to resist him, and to send in other Kings upon him, to conquer his realm.

I did my diligence a long season, to know what reasons our holy prelates should make for their divorce-ment; but I could not come by them. I searched for what might be said for their part, but I could find no lawful cause of myself, by any scripture that I ever read: I communed with divers learned men of the matter, which also could tell me no other way than I have shewed. Then I considered the falsehood of our spirituality, how that it is but their old practice, and a common custom; yea, and a sport to separate matrimony, for to make division where such marriage made unity and peace. Wherefore I could not but declare my mind, to discharge my conscience withal; which thing I had done long since, if I could have brought it to pass. Howbeit, I had lever now do it at the last, than that any man should cast me in the teeth in time to come, when this old marriage were broken, and a new made, why I had not spoken rather? Neither can the King's grace, or any other christian man, of right be discontent with me. For it is not possible that any person baptized in the heart with repentance of evil, and with faith of forgiveness in the blood of Christ, and stedfast purpose and profession of heart to walk henceforth after the steps of Christ, in the law of God, should once desire or will to do aught openly, with long deliberation, that he would not have compared with the law of God, to see whether it were right or not. Some men might haply say, that though a great man would be content to have his deeds compared unto the laws of God, he would disdain yet to have so vile a wretch as I am to dispute them.

I answer, that it is not my fault, but God's, which for the most part even chooseth of the vilest to confound the glorious; which not only clothed his Son with our vile nature, but made him also of the very lowest sort of man, even five hundred steps beneath the degree of a Cardinal, and sent him to rebuke the scribes and the Pharisees which sat on Moses' seat, for their evil doing and false doctrine, beside the law of Moses. And the glorious scribes and the Pharisees, for all their holiness, rebuked not Herod; nor Caiphas and Annas, for all their high-ness; but vile John the Baptist. By what authority? Verily, by the authority of God's word; which only, whatsoever garment she wears, ought to have all authority among them that have professed it. That word is the chiefest of the apos-tles, and Pope, and Christ's vicar, and head of the church, and the head of the general council. And unto the authority of that ought the children of God to hearken without respect of person; for they that are of God, hear God's word. (John 6) And Christ's sheep hear Christ's voice (John 10), yea, though ' he speak by a calf.

Ye will happily say, my reasons are not good. They may be the sooner solved, and shall thereto make the contrary part better, and set it out, and make it appear to all men's sight, and establish it; and so they shall do good every way.

By what means the divorcement should cost the realm

Now to that I promised, how I would shew you by what means this marriage might cost the realm of England, according to Caiphaz the Cardinal's blind prophecy. This is first as sure as the winter followeth the summer, that our prelates have utterly determined that this marriage that is between the King and the Queen must be broken; and so is the princess disinherited, and the King of Scots next to the crown. And we may fortune to find one at home, which, because he is near hand, would look to step in before him; and it may chance thereto that another yet will look to come in, as soon as any of both; peradventure, the third born at home may make friends likewise; yea, and so forth. And then, while ye shed each other's blood, our prelates will sit and laugh, and look upon you out of sanctuary; and when every man hath done his best, they will think to make them a defender, wheresoever shall please them best.

The King's grace, will ye say, shall have another wife, and she shall bear him a prince, and he shall break strife. Who hath promised him a prince? Moreover, if his new marriage be not well proved, and go forth with good authority, so shall we yet follow the princess still; or, if she be sent another way, some other, whom we shall suppose more right-eous inheritor : and so the new prince is like to go after King Henry of Windsor's prince, and King Edward's children. And I will tell you yet another sport. As soon as the Cardinal had sent the Emperor a defiance, and upon that defiance had arrested the Emperor's ships in England, and our ships and men were arrested also in all regions of the Emperor; then went the common fame throughout all Dutchland, that the Emperor's council, Holland, Brabant, and Zealand, had determined, if the war had proceeded, to have set up the King of Denmark that was, to have challenged his right in England. For the Danes challenge England, as we challenge France; and the King of Denmark writeth himself King of England, as our King writeth himself King of England and France. And this is once : the old King of Denmark, with his son, a goodly prince if he had lands, shall never come in Denmark again, of any likelihood\ Wherefore, if ye fall together by the ears, may he not by some chance, if God be angry with you, make an appointment with the King of Scots to come in upon you on the one side, and make for his part what friends he can in Dutchland, and send unto the new King of Denmark, and give up his title for ever to get rid of him, so to come in on the other side, and conquer you? And twenty other ways are ye like to come in danger; which I commit unto your own consideration.

The putting down of the Cardinal

And finally, concerning the Cardinal's putting down, I consider many things : first, that I never heard or read that any man, being so great a traitor, was so easily put to death : then the natural disposition and inclination of the man, how that his chief study, yea, and all his felicity and inward joy, hath ever been to exercise that 'angel's wit of his' (as my lord of Lincoln was wont to praise him) in driving of such drifts to beguile all men, and to bind the whole world withal. Wherefore I can none otherwise judge by a hundred tokens, evident unto whomsoever hath a natural wit, but that this is also nothing

save a cast of his old practice; so that when God had wrapped him in his own wiles, that he wist not which way out, (for the Emperor prevailed for all the Cardinal's treason, and the French children might not come home,) and he had learned also of his necromancy, this would be a jeo-pardous year for him, what for the treason that he had wrought against the Emperor, and what for the money which he had borrowed of the commons, lest any rising should be against him, then he thought to undo his destiny with his policies, and cudiorai went and put down himself under a colour (which the process of the tragedy well declareth), and set up in his room, to minister forth, and to fight against God as he had begun, the chiefest of all his secretaries, one nothing inferior unto his master in lying, feigning, and bearing two faces in one hood; a whelp that goeth not out of kind from his sire; the chiefest tassel wherewith the Cardinal caught the King's grace, whom he called unto the confirmation of all that he intended to persuade, saying, 'If it like your grace. More is a learned man, and knoweth it, and is also a layman, wherefore he will not say otherwise than it is, for any partiality to usward : ' which secretary yet must first deserve it with writing against Martin (Luther), and against 'The Obedience,' and 'Mammon,' and become the proctor of purgatory, to write against 'The supplication of beggars'. And then, to blind the world withal, many quarrels were picked : the Cardinal might not speak with the King's grace; the broad seal was fetched away; high treason was laid to his charge : first, that he had breathed (heard I say) in the King's face, when he had the French pox: (O hypocrite!) but the very treason that he had wrought was not spoken of at all, nor ought worthy of a traitor done to him at all'.

Then they called a parliament (as though the golden world should come again), wherein the hypocrites, to blear men's eyes withal, made a reformation of mortuaries, and probates of testaments; the root yet left behind, whence all that they have for a time weeded out will spring again little by little as before, if they, as their hope is, may stop this light of God's word that is now abroad. They made also a reformation of pluralities of benefices, ordaining that henceforth no man may come by plurality of benefices with and cunning, but with serving for them in the court. What other thing is it save blatant simony? blind buzzards and shameless hypocrites! what care they to do, whether against God or their own laws, to flatter great men withal and to bind them! But hark here : the tithes were ordained, at the beginning, to find the preachers and the poor people, which now go a begging; so that the church-wardens ought to take the benefices into their hands in the name of the parishes, and to deliver the preachers of God's word their dwelling and present a sufficient living, and divide the rest among the poor people. And the King is bound to 'maintain that order, and not to resist them, except he will be an open tyrant. Now I appeal to the consciences of the King's grace and of his lords. What answer will they give, when they come before Christ in the last judgment, for their robbing of so many souls in so many parishes of God's word, with holding every man so many chaplains in their houses with pluralities of benefices, and for the robbing of so many poor and needy of their due and daily food; whose need, for lack of succour, crieth to God continually for vengeance against them, which we see daily, by a thousand misfortunes, fall on them and on their wives and children? Let them read Exodus and Deuteronomy, and see what they find there. Yea, and what shall so many chaplains do? First slay their souls, and then defile their wives, their daughters, and their maidens, and last of all betray them. When this reformation, the colour and cloak of their hypocrisy, was made, then the spirituality came ducKing before the King's grace, and forgave him the money which they had lent their Pope to bring in the temporalty; and to make them after their example to do likewise, as loving subjects, and no less kind unto their prince than the spirituality. Whereupon the temporalty forgave their part also, in the hope of that they obtained not : for as soon as the loan was forgiven, the parliament broke up; because our prelates, and their confederate friends, had found that they sought, and caught the fish for which they laid the bait of all those faces of reformations; and for which the Cardinal, to bring the world into a fool's paradise, was compelled even with his own good will to resign his chancellorship, and that to whom he listed himself. And as for the bishopric of Durham, to say the very truth, he could not of good congruity but reward his old chaplain, and one of the chief of all his secretaries withal, still Saturn, that so seldom speaketh, but walketh up and down all day musing and imagining mischief, a ducKing hypocrite, made to dissemble: which, for what service done in Christ's gospel came he to the bishoprick of London; or what such service did he therein? He burnt the New Testament, calling it *Doctrinam peregrinam*, 'strange learning.' Yea, verily, look how strange his living, in whose blood that testament was made, was from the living of the Pope; even so strange is that doctrine from the Pope's law, in which only, and in the practice thereof, is Tunstal learned. Which also, for what cause left he the bishoprick of London? Even for the same cause he took it, after that he had long served for it, covetousness and ambition. Neither is it possible naturally, that there should be any good bishop, so long as the bishopricks be nothing save worldly pomp and honour, superfluous abundance of all manner riches, and liberty to do what a man listeth unpunished; things which only the evil desire, and all good men abhor.

And as soon as the parliament was ended, the Cardinal had his charter, and gat him home; and all bishops get them every fox to his hole; leaving yet their attorneys behind them, to come again themselves as soon as the constellation is somewhat overrun, whereof they be afraid.

What the cause of all this mischief is

Whence cometh all this mischief? Verily it is the hand of God to avenge the wantonness of great men, which will walk without the fear of God, following the steps of the high prelates, contrary unto their profession; and to avenge the wrongs, the blasphemies, and subtle persecuting of his word.

For when Martin Luther had uttered the abominations of the Pope and his clergy with God's word, and divers books were come into England, our Cardinal thought to find a remedy against that well enough, and sent to Rome for this vain title, ' Defender of the faith; ' which the vicar of Croydon preached that the King's grace would not lose for all London, and twenty miles round about it. Neither is it marvel : for it had cost more than London and forty miles about it is able to make (I think) at this hour; beside the effusion of innocent blood that was offered unto the idol, and daily is offered thereto. When this glorious name was come from our holy father, the Cardinal brought it unto the King's grace at Green-wich. And though the King had it already, and had read it, yet against the morning were all the lords and gentlemen that could in such a short space be gathered together, sent for, to come and receive it in with honour. And in the morning after the Cardinal gat him, through the back side, into the friars Observants. And part of the gentles went round about, and welcomed him from Rome, as representing the Pope's person; part met him halfway, part at the court gate, and last of all the King's grace himself met him in the hall, and brought him up into a great chamber, where was a seat prepared on high for the King's grace and the Cardinal, while the bull was read; insomuch that not the wise only, but men of mean understanding, laughed the vwn pomp to scorn, not far unlike to the receiving of the Cardinal's hat: which when a ruffian had brought unto him to Westminster under his cloak, he clothed the messenger in rich array, and sent him back to Dover again; and appointed the bishop of Canterbury to meet him, and then another company of lords and gentles, I wot not how oft, ere it came to Westminster; where it was set on a cupboard, and tapers about, so that the greatest duke in the land must make courtesy thereto, yea, and to his empty seat, he being away.

And shortly, for lack of authority of God's word, Martin must be condemned by the authority of the King. And the King's grace, to claw the Pope again, must make a book; in which, to prove all that they would have established, for lack of scripture, yea, and contrary to the open scripture, is made this mighty reason : Such prelates are the church; and the church cannot err; and therefore, all that they do is right; and we ought to believe them without any scripture yea, and though the scripture be contrary. "Wherefore God (offended by such blasphemy, to make his enemies feel that they would not see in the open scripture, nor in the practice of their livings and doings, clean contrary unto the scripture and unto the living of Christ and his apostles, this eight hundred years,) hath poured this wrath upon us, and hath snared the wise of the world with the subtilty of their own wits. For either the Pope and Cardinals, with other prelates, that made this first marriage, or they that would break it, err; to speak no more grievously.

Moreover, when Martin Luther had submitted himself in an epistle, let his grace consider what answer he gave again. Where is the glory of that great praise become, that his grace gave the Cardinal for his good acts and benefits, which all the commonwealth of the whole realm should feel? And let his grace remember how he inveighed against Martin's wedlock, and fear lest God, to avenge wilful blindness, tangle his grace with matrimony (beside the destruction of the realm that is like to follow) much more dishonourable than his grace thinketh Martin shameful. His grace promised to keep his wedlock, as well as Martin did his chastity : and his grace's vow hath authority of God, and Martin's not, but is damned by the word of God as he did vow, and as the hypocrites do yet teach to vow.

And More, among his other blasphemies in his dialogue, saith, that none of us dare abide by our faith unto death. But shortly thereafter God, to prove More that he hath ever been a false liar, gave strength unto his servant. Sir Thomas Hitton, to confess, and that unto the death, the faith of his holy Son Jesus; which Thomas the bishops of Canterbury and Rochester, after they had dieted and tormented him secretly, murdered at Maidstone most cruelly.

I beseech the King's most noble grace, therefore, to consider all the ways by which the Cardinal and our holy bishops have led him, since he was the first King; and to see whereunto all the pride, pomp, and vain boast of the Cardinal is come, and how God hath resisted him and our prelates in all their wiles. We, having nothing to do at all, have meddled in all matters, and have spent for our prelates' causes more than all Christendom, even unto the utter beggaring of ourselves, and have gotten nothing but rebuke and shame and hate among all nations, and mock, and a scorn thereto, of them whom we have most helped. For the Frenchmen (as the saying is) of late days made a play, or disguising, at Paris, in which the Emperor danced with the Pope and the French King, and wearied them; the King of England sitting on a high bench, and looking on. And when it was asked why he danced not, it was answered, that he sat there but to pay the minstrels their wages only. As who should say, we paid for all men's dancing. We monied the Emperor openly, and gave the Frenchmen double and treble secretly, and the Pope also. Yea, and though Ferdinandus had money sent him openly, to blind the world withal, yet the saying is throughout all Dutchland, that we sent money to the King of Pole, and to the Turk also; and that by the help of our money Ferdinandus was driven out of Hungary. Which thing, though it were not true, yet it will breed us a scab at the last, and get us, with our meddling, more hate than we shall be able to bear, if a chance come, unless that we wax wiser betime.

And I beseech his grace also to have mercy on his own soul, and not to suffer Christ and his holy testament to be persecuted under his name any longer; that the sword of the wrath of God may be put up again, which for that cause, no doubt, is most chiefly drawn.

And I beseech his grace to have compassion on his poor subjects, which have ever been unto his grace both obedient, loving, and kind; that the realm utterly perish not, with the wicked counsel of our pestilent prelates. For if his grace, which is but a man, should die, the lords and commons not knowing who hath most right to enjoy the crown, the realm could not help but stand in great danger. And I exhort the lords temporal of the realm, that they come and fall before the King's grace, and humbly desire his majesty to suffer it to be tried, who of right ought to succeed and if he or she fails, who next, yea, and who third. And it be proclaimed openly : and let all the lords temporal be sworn thereto, and all

the knights, and squires, and gentle-men, and the commons, above eighteen years old, that there be no strife for the succession. For if they try it by the sword, I promise them, I see none other likelihood but that, as the Cardinal hath prophesied, it will cost the realm of England.

And all that be sworn unto the Cardinal, I warn them yet once again to break their oaths, as I did in 'The Obedience.' And all my lord Cardinal's secretaries and spies, by whom he worketh, yet I warn them to beware betime. My lord Cardinal, though he has the name of all, yet he wrought not all of his own brain : but of all wily and exercised in mischief he called unto him the most expert, and of their council and practice gathered that most seemed to serve his wicked purpose. Let them remember Emson and Dudley, and such like in all chronicles.

And all that be confederate with the Cardinal and the bishops upon any secret appointment, be they never so great, I advise them to break their bonds, and to follow right by the plain and open way, and to be content, and not too ambitious : for it is now evil climbing; the boughs be brittle. And let them look well on the practice of bishops, how they have served all other men in times past, and into what troubles they have brought them that were quiet. Many a man, both great and small, have they brought to death in England, even in my days, (beside in times past,) whose blood God will seek buKopsmake oco. Let them learn at last, that it is but the cast of the bishops to receive the sacrament with one man secretly upon one purpose, and with another man as secretly upon the contrary, to deceive all parties. For of perjury they make as much conscience as a dog of a bone; for they have power to dispense with all things, think they. At the beginning of the war between the French King and the Emperor the prognostication said, year by year, that there should be great labour for peace : but it shall not come to pass ; for there is Bicorporeum, or Corpus neutrum, that cometh between and letteth it; that is to say, a body that is neither-nother, or holdeth on neither part : and that body is the spirituality, which hold but of themselves only. For when then shall any ambassadors go between, to entreat of peace, the bishops are ever the chief; which, though they make a goodly oration for the peace openly, to deceive the layman, yet secretly, by the bishops of the same country, they cast a bone in the way : and there can be' no peace, until the peace be for their profit, let it cost in the mean season what blood it will.

And as for them which for lucre, as Judas, betray the truth, and write against their consciences; and which for honour, as Balaam, enforce to curse the people of God; I would fain (if their hearts were not too hard) that they did repent. And as fain I would, that our prelates did repent, if it were possible for them to prefer God's honour before their own. And let them remember what wrong they have done to the Queen, and what fruit they have lost her, that never could come unto the right birth, for sorrow which she suffered through their false means; than which what greater treason could they work unto the realm of England? And unto all subjects I say, that they repent. For the cause of evil rulers is the sin of the subjects, testifieth the scripture. And the cause of false preachers is, that the people have no love unto the truth, saith Paul in the second chapter of the second epistle to the Thessalonians. We are all sinners, a hundred times greater than all that we suffer. Let us therefore each forgive other, remembering, the greater sinners the more welcome, if we repent; according to the similitude of the riotous son (Luke 15) For Christ died for sinners, and is their Saviour, and his blood their treasure, to pay for their sins. He is that fatted calf which is slain to make them good cheer withal, if they will repent, and come to their father again; and his merits is that goodly raiment, to cover the naked deformities of our sins.

These be sufficient at this time, although I could say more, and though other have deserved that I more said : yea, and I could more deeply have entered into the practice of our Cardinal, but I spare for divers considerations; and namely for his sake, which never spared me, nor any faithful friend of his own, nor

any that told him truth; nor spareth to persecute the blood of Christ, in as clear light as ever was, and under as subtle colour of hypocrisy as ever was any persecution since the creation of the world. Neither have I said for hate h tyn-of any person or persons, (God I take to record,) but of their wickedness only, and to call them to repentance, acknowledging that I am a sinner also, and that a grievous one. Howbeit, it is ' a devilish thing, and a merciless, to defend wickedness against the open truth, and not to have power to repent. And therefore, I doubt not, if men will not be warned hereby, but that God will utter more practice by whom he will, and not cease until he have broken the bond of wily hypocrites which persecute so subtilly.

And finally, if the persecution of the King's grace, and of other temporal persons conspiring with the spiritually, be of ignorance, I doubt not but that their eyes shall be opened shortly, and they shall see and repent, and God shall shew them mercy. But if it be of a set malice against the truth, and of a grounded hate against the law of God by reason of a full consent they have to sin, and to walk in their old ways of ignorance, whereunto (being now past all repentance) they have utterly yielded themselves, to follow with full lust, without bridle or snaffle, which is the sin against the Holy Ghost; then ye shall see, even shortly, that God shall turn the point of the sword, wherewith they now shed Christ's blood, homeward to shed their own again, after all the examples of the bible.

And let them remember that I, well toward three years are gone, to prevent all occasions and all carnal beasts that seek fleshly liberty, sent forth ' The true Obedience of a Christian Man,' which yet they condemned, but after they had condemned the New Testament, as right was, whence 'The Obedience' had his authority. Now then, if when the light is come abroad, in which their wickedness cannot be hid, they find no such obedience in the people unto their old tyranny, whose fault is it? This is a sure conclusion : none obedience, that is not of love, can long endure; and in your deeds can no man see any cause of love : and the knowledge of Christ, for whose sake only a man would love you, though ye were never so evil, ye persecute. Now then, if any disobedience rise, are ye not the cause of it yourselves? Say not but that ye be warned!

Source: William Tyndale, The Practice of Prelates. From Doctrinal Treatises and Introductions to Different Portions of the Holy Scriptures, ed. Henry Walter, Parker Society (Cambridge University Press, 1848).

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Translation: Original English composition (author died 1536; no translation involved). Archaic spelling and OCR-scan artifacts throughout (e.g. 'looKing', 'maKing') are consistent with a genuine period-register 19th-century Parker Society scan rather than a modern paraphrase. <https://www.thestromata.com/texts/practice-of-prelates-tyndale>