

Thomas More

LIFE OF JOHN PICUS EARL OF MIRANDOLA

500th Anniversary Edition

Edited by Jeffrey S. Lehman

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NOTATIONS

- Refers to words that are glossed at the bottom.
- ‡ Refers to places where More has omitted text from Gianfresco's original Latin biography.
- Δ Indicates where More makes a significant change to the Latin original.
- ⌈⌋ Denotes additions by More to the Latin text.
- [] Bracketed numbers in the outside margin refer to the corresponding page numbers in volume 1 of *The Complete Works of Thomas More* (Yale UP, 1997).
- CW* Refers to *The Complete Works of Thomas More* (Yale UP, 1963-1997).

THE LIFE OF JOHN PICUS,

Earl of Mirandula,¹ a great lord of Italy, an excellent cunning² man in all sciences,³ † and virtuous of living; with divers^o epistles and other works of the said John Picus, full of great science, virtue, and wisdom: [48]
5 whose life and works be worthy and digne^o to be read and often to be had in memory. †

†Translated out of Latin into English by Master Thomas More. †

10 †Unto his right entirely beloved sister in Christ, Joyeuce Leigh, [51]
Thomas More greeting in our Lord. †

†It is, and of long time hath been, my well beloved sister, a custom in the beginning of the New Year, friends to send between^o
15 presents or gifts, as the witnesses of their love and friendship, and also signifying that they desire each to other that year a good continuance and prosperous end of that lucky beginning. But commonly all those presents, that are used customably all in this manner between friends to be sent,^o be such things as pertain only unto the body, either to be
20 fed or to be clad or some otherwise delighted: by which it seemeth that their friendship is but fleshly and stretcheth^o in manner to the body

The intent or meaning of New Year's gifts
Presents bodily

3 *sciences* fields of knowledge / *divers* various, several / 5 *digne* fitting / 14 *send between* exchange / 18-19 *that are used customably...to be sent* that are typically sent / 21 *stretcheth* extends

† 3 From the Latin original, More naturally omits “issued by Gianfrancesco, the son of the famous Galeotto Picus” as well as a paragraph in which Gianfrancesco defends his *Life* against those who, noting that he was the nephew and pupil of John Picus, might claim that his account is “prejudiced by favor or flattery” (unless otherwise noted, all English translations of the Latin original are those of Clarence H. Miller, see *CW* 1:295).

1. *Mirandula*: Mirandola is located in north Italy, 58 km north of Bologna, capital of the region.
2. *cunning*: Throughout his *Life of Picus*, More speaks of Picus’ “cunning,” used either adjectivally (as here) in the sense of “possessing knowledge or learning” (cf. *OED* s.v. *cunning* a. 1a) or substantivally to mean “knowledge” or “learning.” Why More emphasizes the cunning of Picus is not known.
3. *an excellent...all sciences*: The Latin text reads *viri omni disciplinarum genere consumatissimi*, “a man of

only. But forasmuch as the love and amity of Christian folk should be rather ghostly^o friendship than bodily, since that all faithful people are rather spiritual than carnal (for as the apostle saith: "We be not now in flesh, but in spirit, if Christ abide in us")¹ I therefore, mine heartily beloved sister, in good luck of this New Year have sent you such a present as may bear witness of my tender love and zeal to the happy continuance and gracious increase of virtue in your soul; and whereas the gifts of other folk declare that they wish their friends to be worldly fortunate, mine testifieth that I desire to have you godly prosperous. These works, more profitable² than large, were made in Latin by one [52] John Picus, Earl of Mirandula, a lordship in Italy, of whose cunning and virtue³ we need here nothing to speak, forasmuch as hereafter we peruse the course of his whole life, rather after our little power slenderly, than after his merits sufficiently. The works are such that truly, good sister, I suppose of the quantity^o there cometh none in your hand more profitable, neither to the achieving of temperance in prosperity, nor to the purchasing of patience in adversity, nor to the despising of worldly vanity, nor to the desiring of heavenly felicity: which works I would require you gladly to receive, ne were it^o that they be such that for the goodly matter (howsoever they be translated) may delight and please any person that hath any mean desire and love to God, and that yourself is such one as for your virtue and fervent zeal to God cannot but joyously receive anything that meanly soundeth either to the reproach of vice, commendation of virtue, or honour and laud of God, Who preserve you.⁷

THE LIFE OF JOHN PICUS,
EARL OF MIRANDULA

[The lineage of John Picus] JOHN PICUS of the father's side descended of the worthy lineage of the Emperor Constantine⁴ by a nephew of the said Emperor called

2 *ghostly* spiritual / 15 *of the quantity* as for their size / 19 *ne were it* were it not

1. From Romans 8:9–11.

2. Here and below, More insists that the works of Picus are "profitable" to the reader.

3. First paired in the opening lines, More conjoins cunning and virtue throughout his *Life of Picus*.

4. *descended of...Constantine*. As Riggs points out, "[T]he descent from the nephew of Constantine is mythical" (82, as cited in *CW* 1:209).

Picus, by whom all the ancestors of this John Picus undoubtedly bear that name. † But we shall let his ancestors pass, to whom † (though they were right excellent) † he gave again as much honour as he received, † and we shall speak of himself, rehearsing in part his learning and his
 5 virtue. For these be the things which we may account for our own, of which every man is more properly to be commended than of the nobleness of his ancestors, whose honour maketh us not honourable. For either they were themselves virtuous or not; if not, then had they none^o honour themselves, had they never so great possessions: for
 10 honour is the reward of virtue. And how may they claim the reward that properly belongeth to virtue, if they lack the virtue that the reward belongeth to? Then, if themselves had none honour, how might they leave to their heirs that thing which they had not themselves? On the other side, if they be virtuous and so, consequently, honourable,
 15 yet may they not leave their honour to us as inheritants^o no more than the virtue that themselves were honourable for. For never the more noble be we for their nobleness, if ourselves lack those things for which they were noble. But rather the more worshipful that our ancestors were, the more vile and shameful be we, if we decline from
 20 the steps of their worshipful^o living, the clear beauty of whose virtue maketh the dark spot of our vice the more evidently to appear and to be the more marked. But Picus, of whom we speak, was himself so honourable, for the great plenteous abundance of all such virtues the possession whereof very^o honour followeth (as a shadow followeth a
 25 body) that he was to all them that aspire to honour a very spectacle, in whose conditions, as in a clear polished mirror, they might behold in what points very honour standeth: whose marvellous cunning and excellent virtue though my rude learning be far unable sufficiently to express, yet forasmuch as, if no man should do it but he that might
 30 sufficiently do it, no man should do it and better it were to be insufficiently done than utterly undone--I shall therefore, as I can, briefly rehearse you his whole life: at the leastwise to give some other man hereafter (that can do it better) occasion to take it in hand when it shall

*Nobleness of
ancestors*

[53]
Honour

*Honour and virtue
come not by inheri-
tance.*

8 none no / 14 inheritants heirs / 19 worshipful worthy, virtuous / 23 very true

† 1 More omits *ab ipso tempore natiuitatis sumemus initium*, "I shall begin with the time of his own birth" (*CW* 1:294, 295). / 2 More leaves out a second reason Gianfrancesco gives for omitting an account of Picus' ancestors, namely, that he (Gianfrancesco) will restrict his *Life* to "what [he] learned with [his] own eyes and ears or what [he] heard from very reliable witnesses" (*CW* 1:295).

haply^o grieve him to see the life of such an excellent cunning man so far uncunningly written.¹

[54] ¹*Of his Parents and Time of his Birth.*² In the year of our Lord God,² 1463, Pius II³ being then the general Vicar of Christ in His Church, and Frederick, the Third of that name, ruling the⁴ Empire,⁴ this noble man was born,⁵ the last child⁶ of his mother Julia, a woman come of a noble¹ stock, his father hight^o John Francis,⁷ ¹ a lord of great honour and authority.¹

*The interpretation of
the wonder*

¹*Of the Wonder that Appeared before his Birth.*⁸ A marvellous sight was there seen before his birth. There appeared a fiery garland standing over the chamber of his mother while she travailed, and suddenly vanished away: which appearance was peradventure a token that he which should that hour in the company of mortal men be born, in the perfection of understanding should be like the perfect figure of that round circle or garland;⁹ and that his excellent name should round about the circle of this whole world be magnified, whose mind should always as the fire aspire upward to heavenly things, and whose fiery eloquence should, with an ardent heart, in time to come worship and praise almighty God¹ with all his strength: and as that flame suddenly vanished, so should this fire soon from the eyes of mortal people be hid. We have oftentimes read that such unknown and strange tokens hath gone before or followeth the nativity of excellent, wise, and virtuous men, departing^o (as it were) and by God's commandment severing the cradles of such special children from the company of other of the common sort, and showing that they be born to the achieving of some great thing. But to pass over other, the great Saint Ambrose: a swarm of bees flew about his mouth in his cradle, and some entered into his

Saint Ambrose

1 *haply* by chance, perhaps / 8 *hight* was called, named / 24 *departing* dividing

¹ More omits *Romani*: Roman. / 8 More omits her family name: Boiardo. / 8 More omits five lines of Latin text, mostly on Picus' siblings, their spouses and children. / 20 More omits *qui ignis comburens est*, "Who is a consuming fire" (*CW* 1:296, 297).

1. Stanford Lehmborg points out that this addition (5.3-6.1) is More's longest original passage (68).

2. The Latin is *Anno a partu virginis*, "In the...year after the Virgin gave birth" (*CW* 1:294, 295).

3. *Pius II*: Aeneas Sylvius Piccolomini (1405–1464), who became pope in 1458.

4. Frederick III (1415–1493) was crowned Holy Roman Emperor in 1452.

5. Picus was born 24 February 1463.

6. The youngest of six, Picus had three sisters and two brothers.

7. John Francis was count of Mirandola and Concordia.

8. Here the original Latin has the sidenote, *Prodigium*, "portent" or "wonder" (*CW* 1:211).

9. *the perfect...garland*: The original Latin is simply *orbiculari figurae*, "global form" (*CW* 1:296).

mouth, and after that issuing out again and flying up on high, hiding themselves among the clouds, escaped both the sight of his father and of all them that were present: which prognostication one Paulinus¹ making much of, expounded it to signify to us the "sweet" honeycombs of his "pleasant" writing, which should show out the celestial gifts of God and should lift up the mind of men from earth into heaven. [55]

"Of his Person." He was of feature and shape seemly and beautiful, of stature goodly and high, of flesh tender and soft, his visage lovely and fair, his colour white intermingled with comely reds, his eyes grey and quick of look, his teeth white and even, his hair yellow and not too picked.² *Virtue in a comely body is more esteemed.*

"Of his Setting Forth to School and Study in Humanity."³ Under the rule and governance⁴ of his mother he was set to masters and to learning, where with so ardent mind he laboured the studies of humanity^o that within short while he was (and not without a cause) accounted among the chief orators and poets of that time, in learning marvellous swift and of so ready a wit that the verses which he heard once read he would again both forward and backward to the great wonder of the hearers rehearse, and over that would hold it in sure remembrance; which in other folks wont commonly to happen contrary,^o for they that are swift in taking be oftentimes slow in remembering, and they that with more labour and difficulty receive it, more fast and surely hold it. *Wit receiveth; remembrance holdeth*

"Of his Study in Canon."^o In the fourteenth year of his age, by the commandment of his mother (which longed very sore to have him priest) he departed to Bononie⁵ to study in the laws of the Church, which when he had two years tasted, perceiving that the faculty leaned to nothing but only mere traditions and ordinances, his mind fell from it.⁶ Yet lost he not his time therein,⁷ for in that two years, yet being a child, he compiled a breviary or a sum upon all the decretals, in which, [56] *The faculty of Canon Law*

14 *studies of humanity* the liberal arts / 20 *wont...contrary* was not usually the case / 23 *Canon Law*

1. The source is Paulinus of Milan's *Vita sancti Ambrosii Mediolanensis episcopi*.

2. *his teeth...not too picked*: More reverses the order of the Latin (i.e., "his hair...his teeth"). More's "not too picked" translates the Latin *inaffectato*, "not done up in an affected style" (CW 1:296, 297).

3. Latin sidenote here: *Profectus in studiis humanitatis aetate tenella*, "Accomplished in the studies of humanity [liberal arts] at a tender age" (CW 1: 211).

4. *rule and governance*: Translates *imperio*, "command" (CW 1:296, 297).

5. *Bononie*: Bologna, one of the great places for the study of Canon Law throughout the Middle Ages. Picus went to Bologna in 1477.

6. *his mind...from it*: Latin *alio deflexit*, "he turned elsewhere" (CW 1:298, 299).

7. *Yet...therein*: Translates the Latin *non tamen absque bonae frugis foetura*, "not, however, without reaping a good harvest" (CW 1:298, 299).

as briefly as possible was, he comprised the effect of all that whole great volume and made a book, no slender thing to right cunning and perfect doctors.¹

“Of his Study in Philosophy and Divinity.” After this, as a desirous ensearcher^o of the secrets of nature, he left these common trodden paths and gave himself wholly to speculation^o and philosophy, as well human as divine. For the purchasing whereof (after the manner of Plato² and Apollonius³) he scrupulously sought out all the famous doctors of his time, visiting studiously all the universities and schools, not only through Italy but also through France.⁴ And so indefatigable labour gave he to those studies that, yet a child and beardless, he was both reputed, and was indeed, both a perfect philosopher and a perfect divine^o.

“Of his Mind, and Vainglorious Disputations at Rome.” Now had he been seven years conversant in these studies when, “full of pride and desirous of glory and man’s praise⁵ (for yet was he not kindled in the love of God!) he went to Rome,⁶ and there (coveting to make a show of his cunning and little considering how great envy he should raise against himself)^{Δ7} nine hundred questions⁸ he proposed of divers and sundry matters, as well in logic and philosophy as divinity,⁹ with great study picked and sought out as well of the Latin authors as the Greek, and partly fetched out of the secret mysteries of the Hebrews, Chaldees and Arabians, and many things drawn out of the old obscure philosophy of Pythagoras, Trismegistus, and Orpheus, and many other

5 *ensearcher* examiner / 6 *speculation* speculative science, as opposed to practical science / 13 *divine* theologian

‡17 More omits *ut palam fiet*, “as will become clear” (CW 1:298, 299).

1. *right cunning...doctors*: Translates *consummatis professoribus*, “seasoned professors” (CW 1:298, 299).

2. Diogenes Laertius, *Vitae philosophorum* 3.6.

3. Philostratus, *Life of Apollonius of Tyana* 1.18; 3.16-20, 34; 6.6, 19.

4. “Picus left Bologna in 1478 and visited Florence and Ferrara before studying at the University of Padua from 1480 to 1482. From 1484 to early 1485 he was in Florence. He visited Sorbonne from July 1485 to March 1486 before returning to Florence, after which he went to Rome, in November, seeking to present his nine hundred theses.... In November 1487 he returned to France, where in 1488 he was arrested at Lyons on the orders of Innocent VIII” (CW 1:212).

5. Vittorio Gabrieli comments upon the “telltale” character of this addition by More (47).

6. Picus went to Rome November 1486.

Δ7. *coveting...against himself*: Here More significantly changes the Latin original—*ostentare cupiens quanta eum a summis in posterum maneret invidia*, “in his desire to boast of how much envy he would later arouse among the grumblers” (CW 1:298, 299).

8. Picus’ *Conclusiones DCCCC publice disputandae* was published by Eucharius Silber in Rome on 7 December 1486.

9. *of diverse...divinity*: The Latin reads, *de dialecticis & mathematicis, de naturalibus divinusque rebus*, “concerning dialectics and mathematics, concerning natural phenomena and theology” (CW 1: 298, 299).

Travelling from place to place wonderfully increaseth knowledge

John Picus his disputations at Rome
[57]

things strange and to all folk (except right few special excellent men) before that day not unknown only but also unheard of.¹ All which questions in open places (that they might be to all people the better known) he fastened and set up, offering also himself to bear the costs
 5 of all such as would come thither out of far countries to dispute. But through the envy of his malicious enemies (which envy, like the fire, *Envy* ever draweth to the highest) he could never bring about to have a day to his disputations appointed. For this cause he tarried at Rome an whole year,² in all which time his enviers never durst openly with open
 10 disputations attempt^o him, but rather with craft and sleight and as it were with privy trenches^o enforced to undermine him, for none other cause but for malice and for they were (as many men thought) corrupt with a pestilent envy.

This envy, as men deemed, was specially raised against him for
 15 this cause, that where there were many which had many years, some for glory, some for covetousness, given themselves to learning, they thought that it should haply deface^o their fame and diminish the opinion of their cunning if so young a man, plenteous of substance and great doctrine¹, durst in the chief city of the world make a proof of
 20 his wit and his learning, as well in things natural^o as in divinity and in many such things as men many years never attained to. Now when they perceived that they could not against his cunning anything openly prevail, they brought forth the serpentines³ of false crime^o and cried out that there were thirteen of his nine hundred questions suspect of
 25 heresy.⁴ Then joined they to them some good simple folk that should of zeal to the Faith and pretence of religion impugn those questions as new things and with which their ears had not been in use. In which impugnation, though some of them haply lacked not good mind, yet lacked they erudition and learning—which questions notwithstanding,

10 *attempt* try, put to the test / 11 *privy trenches* hidden tunnels / 17 *deface* discredit / 20 *things natural* natural philosophy / 23 *false crime* charge, accusation

¹19 More omits *quasi fertilis ager*, “like a fertile field” (*CW* 1: 300, 301).

1. *things strange...unheard of*: With these words More replaces seven lines of Latin, wherein we are told that Picus also interlaced “many points from the Cabala...many points concerning natural magic...72 new propositions on physics and mathematics...[and] a new system of philosophizing by numerology” (*CW* 1:299).

2. That is, until November 1487.

3. *serpentes*: the Latin *tormenta calumniarum* “makes it clear that More is referring to a kind of cannon, the sixteenth century equivalent of the Roman catapult” (*CW* 1:214).

4. On 5 March 1487, seven of Picus’ theses were explicitly condemned by an examining commission; the orthodoxy of six others was deemed dubious.

before that, not a few famous doctors of divinity had approved as good and clean, and subscribed their names under them¹. But he, not bearing the loss of his fame, made a defence¹ for those thirteen questions, a work of great erudition and elegant and stuffed with the cognition of many things worthy to be learned. Which work he compiled in twenty nights; in which it evidently appeareth, not only that those conclusions were good and standing with the Faith, but also that they which had barked at them were of folly and rudeness to be reprov'd. Which defence, and all other things that he should write, he committed (like a good Christian man) to the most holy judgment of our mother, holy Church¹. Which defence received, and the thirteen questions¹ duly by deliberation examined, our Holy Father the Pope¹² approved Picus and tenderly favoured him, as by a Bull of our Holy Father, Pope Alexander VI, it plainly appeareth¹. But the book in which the whole nine hundred questions with their conclusions were contained (forasmuch as there were in them many things strange and not fully declared and were more meet for secret communication of learned men than for open hearing of common people, which for lack of cunning might take hurt thereby), Picus desired himself that it should not be read.¹ And so was the reading thereof forbidden.³ Lo, this end had Picus of his high mind and proud purpose, that where he thought to have gotten perpetual praise, there had he much work to keep himself upright, that he ran not in perpetual infamy and slander.⁷

¹ 2 Here More omits six lines of Latin in which is described Buonfrancesco, bishop of Reggio, who is praised for his "wide-ranging learning...penetrating judgement...and his solid character" (*CW* 1:301). / 11 More omits *eiusque praesidis*, here meaning "and the pope" (*CW* 1:300, 301). After this More omits a brief passage explaining Picus' reason for submitting his *Apologia* to the Church and the pope. / More omits *quae prius calumniis infestatae fuerant*, "which had formerly been slanderously attacked" (*CW* 1:300, 301). / 12 More omits "Innocent VIII." / 14 More omits a passage explaining that the text of the bull was printed together with the text of Picus' *Apologia* in *Opera omnia*. He also omits that Picus "earnestly begged friends and enemies alike, learned and unlearned, to read the [*Apologia*] but to leave unread the pamphlet containing those unqualified conclusions..." (*CW* 1:303). / 19 More paraphrases several lines of the Latin text; while conveying the general sense of the original, one conspicuous omission is the fact that Pope Innocent VIII explicitly forbade the reading of Picus' *Conclusiones*.

1. *defence*: Picus' *Apologia conclusionum suarum*, completed 31 May 1487.

2. With the omission of "Innocent VIII" More's syntax seems to imply he is speaking not of Innocent VIII but of Alexander VI, the later pope who in fact did not issue the bull for Picus' absolution until 18 June 1493.

3. Picus officially retracted his *Conclusiones* in July 1487; Pope Innocent VIII ordered their suppression.

5 ^[59] *Of the Change of his Life.* But, as himself told his nephew,¹ he judged that this came thus to pass by the especial provision and singular goodness of almighty God, that by this false crime untruly put upon him by his evil willers, he should correct his very errors, and that this should be to him (wandering in darkness) as a shining light in which he might behold and consider how far he had gone out of the way of truth. For before this he had been both desirous of glory and kindled in vain love and holden in voluptuous use of women. The comeliness of his body with the lovely favour of his visage, and therewithal his marvellous fame, his excellent learning, great riches and noble kindred, set many women afire on him, from the desire of whom he not abhorring (the way of life set aside) was somewhat fallen into wantonness. But after that he was once with this variance wakened,^o he drew back his mind,^o flowing in riot, and turned it to Christ. Women's blandishments he changed into the desire of heavenly joys, and despising the blast of vainglory which he before desired, now with all his mind he began to seek the glory and profit of Christ's Church, and so began he to order his conditions that from thenceforth he might have been approved, an though^o his enemy were his judge.

The best of us all hath had a madding time.

20 ^[60] *Of the Fame of his Virtue and the Resort unto him Therefore.* Here-upon shortly the fame of his "noble cunning and excellent virtue"² both far and nigh began gloriously to spring; for which many worthy philosophers (and that were taken in number of^o the most cunning) resorted busily unto him as to a market of good "doctrine"³ |, some for to^o move questions and dispute, some (that were of more godly mind) to hear and to take the wholesome lessons and instruction of good living: which lessons were so much the more set by^o in how much they came from a more noble man and a more wise^{Δ4} man and him also which had himself some time followed the crooked hills of

A right glorious fame

13 *after...wakened* when he was awakened by this change (of fortune) / *drew...his mind* came to his senses, regained his wits / 19 *an though* even if / 23 *that...number of* those who were regarded among / 25 *for to* in order to / 27 *set by* desired, sought

| 24 More omits *ut inquit Cicero*, "to use Cicero's phrase" (CW 1:302, 303).

1. Here and throughout the *Life*, More naturally alters the Latin first person singular of Gianfrancesco's text as necessary.

2. *fame...virtue*. More's embellishment of the original, *gloriosa...fama*. Once again, More presents "cunning" and "virtue" as a pair.

3. *good doctrine*. The original cites Cicero's use of "art" (*bonarum artium*). See Cicero's *De officiis* 3.2.6.

Δ4. *more noble...more wise*. More reverses the Latin word order and renders superlatives (*doctissimo...nobilissimo*) as comparatives.

delicious pleasure. To the fastening of good discipline in the minds of the hearers, those things seem to be of great effect which be both of their own nature good and also be spoken of such a master as is converted to the way of justice from the crooked and ragged path of voluptuous living.

5

*Detestation of vicious
life passed*

“*The Burning of Wanton Books.*” Five books that in his youth of wanton verses of love with other like fantasies he had made in his vulgar tongue altogether “(in detestation of his vice passed and lest these trifles might be some evil occasion afterwards)” he burned.

*No divine either old
or new to J. Picus
unknown*

[61]

“*Of his Study and Diligence in Holy Scripture.*” From thenceforth he gave himself day and night most fervently to the studies of Scripture,¹ “in which he wrote many noble books which well testify both his angelic wit, his ardent labour, and his profound erudition, of which books some we have and some (as an inestimable treasure) we have lost. Great libraries—it is incredible to consider with how marvellous celerity he read them over and wrote out what him^o liked. Of the old Fathers of the Church so great knowledge he had, as it were hard for him to have that hath lived long and all his life hath done nothing else but read them. Of these newer divines so good judgment he had, it might appear there were nothing in any of them that were unknown to him, but all things as ripe as though he had all their works ever before his eyes. But of all these new doctors he specially commendeth Saint Thomas,¹ as him that enforceth himself in a sure pillar of truth.” He was very quick, wise, and subtle in disputations and had great felicity therein, while he had that high stomach.² But now a great while he had bid such conflicts farewell and every day more and more hated them and so greatly abhorred them that, when Hercules Estensis,³ Duke of Ferrara, first by messengers and after by himself, desired him to dispute at Ferrara, because the General Chapter of Friars Preachers^o

10

15

20

25

J. Picus loth to dispute

16 *him* he / 29 *Friars Preachers* Dominicans

‡ 11 *Scripture* At this point More omits several pages of the Latin original, amounting to nearly a third of the entire work (summarized by More in the following lines, 12.10-21). The omitted passage deals mainly with Picus’ philosophical and theological writings. For an extended treatment of the omission, see Lehberg 71-72. / 25 More omits a Latin passage in which Picus’ intellectual powers are compared with those of renowned scholastic figures, such as Albertus Magnus, Thomas Aquinas, and Duns Scotus.

1. Picus’ library contained nearly thirty works or editions of St. Thomas Aquinas (see Kibre 70).

2. *He...stomach*: More thus translates an isolated sentence in the Latin: *Disceptandi porro peritissimus fuit frequentemque & impensissimam operam litterariis agonibus, dum ferveret animus, impendit.* “Then, too, he was very skilled in disputation, and while his temperament was still fiery he expended an enormous amount of effort in scholarly contests” (CW 1:316, 317).

3. *Hercules Estensis*: Ercole d’Este (1431?–1505), who became duke of Ferrara in 1471.

was held there, long it was ere he could be brought thereto; but at the instant request of the Duke, which very singularly loved him, he came thither,¹ where he so behaved himself that was wonder to behold how all the audience rejoiced to hear him, for it were not possible for a man to utter neither more cunning nor more cunningly.^{Δ1} But it was a common saying with him that such altercations were for a logician² and not meetly for a philosopher. He said also that such disputations greatly profited as were exercised with a peaceable mind to the ensearching of the truth in secret company without great audience. But he said that those disputations did great hurt that were held openly to the ostentation of learning and to win the favour of the common people and the commendation of fools. He thought that utterly it could unneth^o be but that with the desire of worship^o (which these gazing disputers gape after) there is with an inseparable bond annexed the appetite of his confusion and rebuke whom they argue with: which appetite is a deadly wound to the soul and a mortal poison to charity. There was nothing passed him^o of those captious subtleties³ and cavillations of sophistry,¹ nor again there was nothing that he more hated and abhorred, considering¹ that they served of naught but to the shaming of such other folk as were in very science much better learned and in those trifles ignorant,¹ and that unto the ensearching of the truth (to which he gave continual labour) they profited little or naught.

“Of his Learning Universally.” But because we will hold the reader no longer in hand, we will speak of his learning but a word or twain generally. Some man hath shone in eloquence, but ignorance of natural things^o hath dishonested^o him; some man hath flowered in the knowledge of divers strange languages, but he hath wanted^o all the

Disputations profitable

Disputations hurtful

To covet the rebuke of other standeth not with charity.

[62]

Sophistical cavillations to what purpose they serve

12 *unneth* hardly, with difficulty / 13 *worship* favor, acclaim / 17 *nothing passed him* nothing which escaped him / 26 *natural things* natural philosophy / *dishonested* disgraced / 27 *wanted* lacked

¹ 3 More omits two lines of Latin here, describing Picus’ countenance during debate: “When he disputed, his countenance revealed such a cheerful mind that he seemed to be debating about some friendly and peaceful matter, not a somewhat rancorous and difficult point” (CW 1:319). / 18 More omits several lines of Gianfrancesco’s Latin, in which he attacks such sophistry and contrasts the extent of Picus’ reading and learning. / 19 More omits *meo iudicio*, “in my judgment” (CW 1:318, 319). / 21 More omits *labefactandamque in replicando memoriam*, “and to wear down the memory by responses” (CW 1:318, 319).

Δ1. *where...cunningly*: More significantly alters the Latin here, once again recasting the original in terms of Picus’ “cunning” Miller renders the Latin as follows: “On that occasion one could wonder whether he showed more quickness or eloquence, more learning or kindness” (CW 1: 317, 319).

2. *logician*: Latin *dialectici*, “dialectician” (CW 1:318, 319).

3. *subtleties*: More’s use in the sense of “niceties of thought, speculation, or argument” antedates the earliest recorded reference in *OED* (s.v. *subtlety* sb. 7).

cognition of philosophy; some man hath read the inventions of the old philosophers, but he hath not been exercised in^o the new schools¹; some man hath sought cunning, as well philosophy as divinity, for praise and vainglory and not for any profit or increase of Christ's Church^{Δ2}. But Picus all these things with equal study hath so received that they might seem by heaps as a plenteous stream to have flowed into him. For he was not of the condition of some folk (which to be excellent in one thing set all other aside)^{Δ3} but he in all sciences profited so excellently that which of them soever ye had considered in him, ye would have thought that he had taken that one for his only study. And all these things were in him so much the more marvelous in that he came thereto by himself with the strength of his own wit, "for the love of God and profit of His Church,"⁴ without masters; so that we may say of him that Epicurus the philosopher said of himself, that he was his own master.⁵

All cunning and knowledge in learning abounded in J. Picus.

J. Picus his own master

[63] "Five Causes that in so Short Time brought him to so Marvellous Cunning." To the bringing forth of so wonderful effects in so small time, I consider five causes to have come together: first, an incredible wit; secondly, a marvellous fast^o memory; thirdly, great substance, by the which, to the buying of his books as well Latin as Greek and other tongues,[‡] he was especially helped. Seven thousand ducats he had laid out in the gathering together of volumes of all manner of worldly literature. The fourth cause was his busy and indefatigable study. The fifth was the contempt or despising⁶ of all earthly things. †

Wit, memory, substance, study, worldly contempt

2 exercised in acquainted with / 19 fast gripping, tenacious

‡ 21 More naturally omits Gianfrancesco's *rettulisse mihi memoria repeto...usque ad diem illam*, "for I remember he once told me that up to that day..." (CW 1:320, 321). / 24 More omits two lines of Latin: *Hunc igitur si prisca illa aetas Laconum tempore protulisset, si Aristoteli credimus, divinum illum virum appellavisset*, "If such a man as this had lived in the time of the ancient Spartans, they would have called him, if we may believe Aristotle, a god-man" (CW 1:320, 321). / 25 More omits *ut arbitror*, "I think" (CW 1:320, 321).

1. *new schools*: Latin *nova dogmata*, "modern doctrines" (CW 1:318, 319).

Δ2. *some man hath sought cunning...Christ's Church*: More significantly alters the Latin original—*Scientiae ab altero hominum tantum & humanae gloriae causa, non christianae rei publicae emolumento, & divinae & humanae, quaesitae sunt*, "Another has pursued learning, both human and divine, merely to gain the favor of men and for the sake of human glory, not in order to benefit the Christian community" (CW 1:318, 319).

Δ3. *which...aside*: More alters the Latin—*qui non aliquo uno excellentes omnium participes sunt*, "who excel in no one branch of learning but know something of all of them" (CW 1:318, 319).

4. *for the love...His Church*: More substitutes this addition for the Latin *& veritatis amore*, "and the love of truth" (CW 1:320–21).

5. As Rigg points out (83), Diogenes Laertius attributes this claim to Epicurus (341–270 BC) in his *Vitae philosophorum* (10.13).

6. Both the 1510 and 1525 editions have "contempt dispising"; 1557 reads "contempt or dispising." For possible reasons for the difference, see CW 1:218 (s.v. 63/10 *dispising*).

“Of his Conditions and his Virtue.” But now let us pass over¹ those powers of his soul which appertain to understanding and knowledge, and let us speak of them that belong to the achieving of noble acts; let us as we can declare his excellent conditions, that his mind inflamed
 5 to Godward may appear and his riches given out to poor folk may be understood, to the intent that they “which shall hear his virtue”^{Δ1} may have occasion thereby to give especial laud and thanks² therefor to almighty God, of Whose infinite goodness all grace and virtue cometh.

God is the giver of all goodness.

“Of the Sale of his Lordships and Alms.” Three years before his death
 10 (to the end that, all the charge and business of rule or lordship set aside, he might lead his life in rest and peace,³ well considering to what end this earthly honour and worldly dignity cometh) all his patrimony and dominions, that is to say, the third part of the earldom of Mirandula and of Concordia, unto John Francis, his nephew,⁴ he sold, and that so
 15 good chepe^o that it seemed rather a gift than a sale. † And all that ever he received of this bargain, partly he gave out to poor folk, partly he bestowed in the buying of a little land to the finding^o of him and his household. † And over that, much silver vessel and plate with other precious and costly utensils of household he divided among poor people.
 20 He was content with mean fare at his table, howbeit somewhat yet retaining of the old plenty in dainty viands^o and silver vessels. Every day at certain hours he gave himself to prayer. To poor men always, if any came, he “plenteously” gave out his money, and, not content only to give that he had himself ready, he wrote over to one Jerome
 25 Benivenius,⁵ a Florentine, a well lettered man (whom for his great love towards him and the integrity⁶ of his conditions he singularly favoured) that he should with his own money ever help poor folk and give maidens money to their marriage, and always send him word what he had laid out that he might pay it him again. This office he committed to him

Quietness of life to the godly is a most pleasant possession.
 [64]

Alms

Prayer

O wonderful zeal to the relieving of the poor

15 *so good chepe* at such a bargain / 17 *finding* supporting / 21 *viands* foods

† 15 More omits a passage here in praise of the emperor Maximilian, who confirmed the sale.
 / 18 More omits Gianfrancesco’s reference to Picus’ paying “many thousands of gold coins” for Corbola, a municipality in the vicinity of Ferrara (CW 1:321).

Δ1. *which...virtue*: More’s substitution for the Latin *qui tandem divinae legi sunt addicti*, “who are devoted to the law of God” (CW 1:320, 321).

2. *laud and thanks*: The Latin is simply *gratias*, “thanks” (CW 1:320, 321).

3. *rest and peace*: The Latin has *in alta pace*, “in full peace” (CW 1:320, 321).

4. *unto John Francis, his nephew*: More’s necessary alteration of the Latin *mibi*, “to me” (CW 1: 320, 321).

5. *Jerome Benivenius*: Girolamo Beniveni (1453–1498).

6. *integrity*: More’s use here to signify moral integrity or “freedom from sin” (CW 1:219) antedates the first recorded instance in *OED* (s.v. *integrity* 3a).

that he might the more easily by him as by a faithful messenger relieve the necessity and misery of poor needy people such as himself haply could not come by the knowledge of.

“*Of the Voluntary Affliction and Paining of his own Body.*” Over all this, many times (which is not to be kept secret) he gave alms of his own body. We know many men which (as Saint Jerome saith)¹ put forth their hand to poor folk, but with the pleasure of the flesh they be overcome; but he many days (and namely those days which represent unto us the passion and death that Christ suffered for our sake) beat and scourged his own flesh in the remembrance of that great benefit and for cleansing of his old offences. †

*The flesh voluntarily
afflicted for God's sake
[65]*

“*Of his Placability or Benign Nature.*” He was of cheer always merry and of so benign nature that he was never troubled with anger, † and he said once to his nephew² that whatsoever should happen (fell there never so great misadventure) he could never, as him thought, be moved to wrath, but if³ his chests perished in which his books lay that he had with great travail and watch compiled. But forasmuch as he considered that he laboured only for the love of God and profit of His Church, and that he had dedicated unto Him all his works, his studies and his doings, and since he saw that, “since God is almighty,” they could not miscarry but if it were either by His commandment or by His sufferance, he verily trusted, “since God is all good,” that He would not suffer him to have that occasion of heaviness.³ O “very” happy mind, which none adversity might oppress, which no prosperity might enhance †; not the cunning of all philosophy was able to make him proud, not the knowledge of the Hebrew, Chaldee⁴ and Arabic language, besides Greek and Latin, could make him vainglorious; not his great substance, not his noble blood could blow up his heart, not the beauty of his body, not the great occasion⁴ of sin, were able to pull him

*Anger or wrath can
have no place in a
godly mind.*

*No misadventure
could happen to J.
Picus so grievous as
the loss of his books.*

16 *but if* unless / 23 *beaviness* sorrow / 26 *Chaldee* Aramaic, not Chaldean (see *CW* 1:219)

† 11 More omits Gianfrancesco's brief first person testimony regarding Picus' voluntary afflictions: “and with my own eyes—may all redound to the glory of God!—I have often seen the whip” (*CW* 1:323). / 13 More omits *multis etiam audientibus testatus sit*, “that he testified, in the hearing of many persons” (*CW* 1:322, 323). / 25 More omits *ut palam fiet*, “as will become clear” (*CW* 1:322, 323).

1. Rigg cites Saint Jerome's *Epistola ad Eustochium Virginem* (84, n. 13) as the source.

2. *he said once to his nephew*. More alters Gianfrancesco's first person account—*Recolo mihi inter loquendum dixisse* (*CW* 1:322).

3. *He...beaviness*: A noteworthy departure from the Latin—*confidebat se non contristatum iri*, “he [Picus] trusted he would not be saddened by it” (*CW* 1:322, 323).

4. *occasion*: Latin *licentia* (*CW* 1:322).

back into the voluptuous broad way¹ that leadeth to hell. What thing was there of so marvellous strength that might overturn the mind of him, which now (as Seneca saith)² was got above fortune?—as he which as well her favour as her malice hath set at naught,³ that he⁴ might be
 5 coupled with a spiritual knot unto Christ and His heavenly citizens. |

[66]

How he eschewed Dignities. When he saw many men with great labour and money desire and busily purchase the offices and dignities of the Church (which are nowadays, alas the while, commonly bought and sold) himself refused to receive them | when two kings⁵ offered
 10 them. When another man⁶ offered him great worldly promotion if he would go to the King's Court, | he gave him such an answer that he should well know that he neither desired worship nor worldly riches, but rather set them at naught that he might the more quietly give himself to study and the service of God. | This ways^o he [was] persuaded that
 15 to a philosopher and him that seeketh for wisdom it was no praise to gather riches | but to refuse them.⁷

Ambition subdued

Of the despising of Worldly Glory. All praise of people and all earthly glory he reputed utterly for nothing. But in the renaying^o of this shadow
 of glory he laboured for very glory, which evermore followeth virtue as
 20 an inseparable servant. He said that fame oftentimes did hurt^{Δ8} to men

Shadow of glory

Fame

14 This ways Thus / 18 renaying denying

| 2 More omits *inquam*, “I say” (CW 1:322, 323). / 5 More here omits a transitional clause: *Quod vel hoc argumento liquido percipitur: quod*, “That this was so can be clearly seen from the following evidence...” (CW 1:322, 323). / 9 More omits *per internuntios oblatas (testes adsunt gravissimi, testis ego) se sacris initiari nolle respondens*, “through their intermediaries, replying that he did not wish to enter into holy orders (to this there are very reliable witnesses, and I myself witnessed it also)” (CW 1:322, 323). / 11 More omits *conspicatus angulum non relinqui in quem se conderet ademptaque esse cuncta suffugia*, “since Picus saw that there would be no nook or cranny left for him to hide in and that all means of escape would be taken from him” (CW 1:324, 325). / 14 Here More omits half a page of the Latin original, in which Gianfrancesco relates how Picus, following the example of many holy men who were reluctant to accept appointment to church offices, declined the office of cardinal. / 16 More omits *non quaesisse honores*, “or to seek honors” (CW 1:324, 325).

1. *voluptuous broad way*: Translates the Latin *in mollem illam & spatiosam multorum viam*, “to that broad highway of self-indulgence trodden by the many” (CW 1:322, 323).

2. Seneca, *De brevitate vitae* 5.3.

3. *which...naught*: More condenses the Latin—*cum illam, sive secundis flatibus tumidam sive adversis reflatibus humilem, aliquando contempserit*, “since he scorned her in any case, whether her sail was swollen with favorable winds or drooping in the counterblasts of adversity” (CW 1:322, 323).

4. *he*: For the Latin *eius mens*, “his mind” (CW 1:322, 323).

5. *two kings*: The identity of these kings is unknown.

6. *another man*: This figure has not been identified.

7. *to refuse them*: Here More moves a brief passage that follows in the Latin original (*et umbratilem... comitatur*) to just after the following sentence (beginning *Humanam gloriam* in the Latin; see CW 1:324, 325).

Δ8. More significantly alters the Latin, which says not that fame “oftentimes did hurt” but that it “is of some use to the living” (*famam vivis nonnihil*; CW 1:325, 324 respectively).

*How much learning
ought to be esteemed*

*The good man
travaileth for the
profit of others and
not of himself or the
advancement of his
own name.*

[67]

Devotion

To love God

while they live, and never good when they be dead. So much only ¹ set he by his learning, in how much he knew that it was profitable to the Church and to the extermination¹ of errors. And over that, ¹ he was come to that prick^o of perfect humility that he little forced^o whether his works went out under his own name or not, so that they might as much profit as if they were given out under his name. And now set he little by any other books save only the Bible,² in the only study of which he had appointed himself to spend the residue of his life, saving that the common profit pricked him when he considered so many and so great works as he had conceived and long travailed upon, how they were of every man by and by^{oΔ3} desired and looked after. ¹

⌈*How much he set more by Devotion than Cunning.*⌋ The little affection of an old man or an old woman to Godward (were it never so small) he set more by than by all his own knowledge as well of natural things as godly. And oftentimes in communication he would admonish his familiar friends how greatly these mortal things bow and draw to an end; how slipper^o and how falling⁴ it is that we live in now; how firm, how stable it shall be that we shall hereafter live in, whether we be thrown down into hell or lifted up into heaven. Wherefore he exhorted them to turn up their minds to love God, which was a thing far excelling all the cunning⁵ that is possible for us in this life to obtain. The same thing also in his book which he entitled *De Ente et Uno*⁶ lightsomely he treateth, where he interrupteth the course of his disputation and turning his words to Angelus Politianus⁷ (to whom he dedicateth that book) he writeth in this wise: “But now behold, O my well-beloved Angel, what madness holdeth us. Love God (while we be in this body) we rather may, than either know Him or by speech utter Him. In loving Him also we more profit ourselves, we labour less and serve Him more;

4 *prick* acme, height / *forced* cared / 11 *by and by* immediately / 17 *slipper* unstable, insecure

¹ 1 More omits *agnovimus*, “we recognized that” (*CW* 1:324, 325). / ³ More omits *percepimus*, “we perceived that” (*CW* 1:324, 325). / 11 More omits *sed & immature exigi*, “but were also sought for even before they were ripe” (*CW* 1:324, 325).

1. *extermination*: More condenses the Latin—*eliminandis explodendisque*, “banishment and confutation” (*CW* 1:324, 325).

2. *Bible*: The Latin reads *veteri novoque testamento*, “the Old and New Testaments” (*CW* 1:324, 325).

Δ3. *by and by*: More’s substitution of the Latin *passim*, “everywhere” (*CW* 1:324, 325).

4. *falling*: More’s translation of the Latin *fluxum*, “fleeting” (*CW* 1:326, 327).

5. *cunning*: More’s translation of *cognitioni*, “knowledge” (*CW* 1:326, 327).

6. A treatise on questions of being and unity whose full title is *De Ente et Uno ad Angelum Politianum*, the work was written by Picus in 1491 but only published posthumously.

7. A poet and fellow humanist, Angelo Poliziano (1454–1494) was among Picus’ close friends.

and yet had we leuer^o always by knowledge never find that thing that we seek, than by love to possess that thing which also, without love, were in vain found.”¹ |

5 ¹Of his Liberality and Contempt of Riches.² Liberality only in him passed measure: for so far was he from the giving of any diligence to earthly things that he seemed somewhat besprent^o with the freckle^o of [68] ¹negligence.² His friends oftentimes admonished him that he should not all utterly despise riches, showing him that it was his dishonesty and rebuke when it was reported (were it true or false) ¹that his negligence and setting naught by money³ ¹gave his servants occasion of deceit and robbery. Nevertheless, that mind of his (which evermore on high cleaved first in contemplation and in the ensearching of nature’s counsel) could never let down itself to the consideration and overseeing of these base, abject, and vile earthly trifles. | His high steward came on a 10 time to him and desired him to receive his account of such money as he had in many years received of his:³ | and brought forth his books of reckoning. | Picus answered him in this wise, “My friend (saith he), I know well ye might have oftentimes and yet may deceive me and ye list;^o wherefore the examination of these expenses shall not need. 20 ¹There is no more to do: ¹if I be aught in your debt I shall pay you by and by; if ye be in mine pay me, either now if ye have it, or hereafter if ye be now not able.”

A sbort audit and a godly

25 ¹Of his Loving Mind and Virtuouse Behaviour to his Friends.² His ¹lovers and ¹friends with great benignity ¹and courtesy³ he entreated, whom he used in all secret communing virtuously to exhort to Godward,⁴ whose godly words ¹so effectually wrought in the hearers³ ¹that where

Friends

1 *leuer* rather / 6 *besprent* covered, besprinkled / *freckle* rash / 19 *list* desire, wish

| 3 Here More omits a sentence telling of how Picus often repeated a saying of St. Francis—*Tantum scit homo quantum operator*, “A man knows only as much as he puts into practice” (*CW* 1:326, 327). / 14 More omits a passage in which Gianfrancesco recalls an occasion when he observed Picus attending to an account sheet presented to him by his butler. When questioned by Gianfrancesco, Picus replied that he did so only to humor those close to him who had not only begged but even demanded that he fulfill his duty (see *CW* 1:327). / 16 More omits *quo securius menti suae consuleret*, “so that he could have some peace of mind about it” (*CW* 1:326, 327). / 17 More omits *percepimus* and alters what remains accordingly (*CW* 1: 326).

1. “*But now . . . found*”: A citation from the fifth chapter of Picus’ *De Ente et Uno ad Angelum Politianum*.
2. *besprent with the freckle of negligence*. More’s translation of the Latin *incuriositatis naevo macularetur*, “flecked with the mole of carelessness” (*CW* 1:326, 327).
3. *his*: While all the early editions read “his,” Edwards argues that both the original Latin and the syntax of More’s English reveal this to be a misprint for “him” (*CW* 1:222).
4. *whom . . . to Godward*: More alters the Latin *quibuscumq[ue] hortatoriis ad benevivendum locutionibus uti solebat*, “commonly addressing them with exhortations to lead good lives” (*CW* 1:328, 329).

a "cunning" man (but not so good as cunning) came to him on a day for the great fame of his learning to commune with him, as they fell in talking of virtue he was with two words of Picus so thoroughly pierced that forthwith he forsook his accustomed vice and reformed his conditions. The words that he said unto him were these: "If we had evermore before our eyes the "painful" death of Christ which He suffered for the love of us, and then if we would again think upon our death, we should well beware of sin." Marvellous benignity and courtesy he showed unto them, not whom strength of body or goods of fortune magnified, but to them whom learning and condition bound him to favour. For similitude of manners is a cause of love and friendship: | a likeness of conditions | is (as Appollonius¹ saith |) an affinity. |

"*What he Hated and what he Loved.*" There was nothing more odious nor more intolerable to him than (as Horace² saith) the proud palaces of stately lords. Wedding and worldly business he fled almost alike. Notwithstanding, when he was asked once in sport whether of those two burdens seemed lighter and which he would choose if he should of necessity be driven to that one, and at his election; which he sticked thereat³ a while, but at the last he shook his head and a little smiling he answered that he had leuer take him to marriage, as that thing in which was less servitude and not so much jeopardy. Liberty above all things he loved, to which both his own natural affection and the study of philosophy inclined him |; and for that he was always wandering and flitting and would never take himself to any certain dwelling. |

"*Of his Feruent Love to God.*" Of outward observances he gave no very great force: we speak not of those observances which the Church commandeth to be observed, for in those he was diligent: | but we speak

[69]
Talk proceeding of an
earnest zeal worketh
effectually.

Similitude of manners
causeth love

Proud palaces

Liberty

[70]
Observances

| 12 More omits a sentence telling of Picus' love of those "who had some scholarly proficiency... or whom he saw to be at least suited and apt for the pursuit of true learning" (CW 1:329). / More omits *erga sapientem virum*, "and we feel [a certain affinity] for a wise man" (CW 1:328, 329). / More omits *teste Philostrato*, "according to Philostratus" (CW 1:328, 329). / More omits the following sentence: *Scientiam quoque perficere hominem qua homo est, perfectum vero bonitatem consequi, super aliosque probos esse diligendos non ambigitur*, "Also there is no doubt that knowledge perfects man as man, that a perfect man achieves goodness, and that the upright, above all others, are worthy of love" (CW 1:328, 329). / 23 More omits Gianfrancesco's *autumo*, "I say that" (CW 1:328, 329). / 24 At this point More omits a lengthy passage from the Latin original, "which describes the attraction of Ferrara and Florence to Picus: the former because of its proximity to Mirandola and its associations with his youth; the latter because of his friendship with Angelo Poliziano and Ficino and the presence of the Platonic Academy" (CW 1:223). / 27 More omits Gianfrancesco's *prae oculis eum vidimus*, "as I saw with my own eyes" (CW 1:330, 331).

1. On which, see Philostratus' *Life of Appollonius* 6.40 (CW 1:222–223).

2. *Epodes* 2.7–8. Compare with the use of Horace at 36.5.

3. *he sticked thereat*: More's translation of the Latin *haesitabundus*, "he hesitated" (CW 1:328, 329).

of those ceremonies which folk bring up, setting the very service of God aside, Which is ¹ (as Christ saith) ² to be worshipped in spirit and in truth. But in the inward affections of the mind he cleaved to God with very fervent love ³ and devotion ⁴. Sometimes that marvellous
 5 alacrity languished and almost fell, and after again with great strength rose up into God. In the love of Whom he so fervently burned that on a time ⁵ as he walked with John Francis, his nephew, in an orchard at Ferrara, in the talking of the love of Christ, he broke out into these words, “Nephew,” said he, “this will I show thee, I warn thee keep it
 10 secret; the substance that I have left, after certain books of mine finished, I intend to give out to poor folk, and fencing^o myself with the crucifix, barefoot walking about the world in every town and castle I purpose to preach of Christ.” Afterwards, I understand, ⁶ by the especial commandment of God, ⁷ he changed that purpose and appointed^o
 15 to profess himself in the order of Friars Preachers.² ⁸

Exercising ardent love to Godward

John Picus inclined to religion

⁹ *Of his death.* ¹⁰ In the year of our Redemption, 1494, when he had fulfilled the thirty-second year of his age and abode at Florence, he was suddenly taken with a fervent access^o which so far forth crept into the interior parts³ of his body, that it despised all medicines and
 20 overcame all remedy, and compelled him within three⁴ days to satisfy nature ¹¹ and repay her the life which he received of her ¹². ¹³

[71]

¹⁴ *Of his Behaviour in the Extremes of his Life.* ¹⁵ After that he had received the holy Body of our Saviour, when they offered unto him the crucifix (that in the image of Christ’s ineffable passion suffered for
 25 our sake, he might ere he gave up the ghost receive his full draught of love and compassion in the beholding of that pitiful figure as a strong defence against all adversity and a sure portcullis^o against wicked spirits) the priest demanded him whether he firmly believed that crucifix to be the ¹⁶ image of Him that was very God and very man: which in His

11 *fencing* protecting / 14 *appointed* resolved / 18 *fervent access* burning attack of fever / 27 *portcullis* protective gate, as in a castle

¹ More omits *memini*, “I remember,” as well as other instances of Gianfrancesco’s first person account in this passage (CW 1:330, 331). / ¹⁵ More here omits the following: *Interim eorum quae conceperat operum quaeque inchoaverat maturabat editionem*, “In the meantime he was bringing to fruition and publishing the works that he had conceived and begun” (CW 1:330, 331). / ²¹ More omits Gianfrancesco’s insistence that he has received the account of Picus’ death from most reliable witnesses (CW 1:331). / ²⁹ More omits the Latin *veram*, “true” (or “very” as with the following “very God” and “very man”).

1. Here is one of the few places in the entire *Life of Picus* where More retains Gianfrancesco’s first person in his translation.
2. *order of Friars Preachers*: That is, the Dominican order.
3. *interior parts*: Translates in *humores & viscera*, “bodily fluids and inner organs” (CW 1:330, 331).
4. *three*: The Latin text reads *tertium decimum*, “thirteen” (CW 1:330, 331).

Godhead was before all time begotten of His Father, to Whom He is also equal in all things, and Which of the Holy Ghost, God also, of Him and of the Father coeternally¹ going forth (which three Persons be one God) was in the chaste womb of our Lady, a perpetual virgin, conceived in time; Which suffered hunger, thirst, heat, cold, labour, travail, and watch;² and Which at the last for washing of our spotty sin contracted and drawn unto us in the sin of Adam,³ for the sovereign love that He had to mankind, in the altar of the cross willingly and gladly shed out His most precious blood:—when the priest inquired of him these things and such other as they be wont to inquire of folk in such case, Picus answered him that he not only believed it but also certainly knew it. When that one Albertus, his sister's son,⁴ a young man both of wit, cunning, and conditions excellent, began to comfort him against death and by natural reason to show him why it was not to be feared but strongly to be taken as that only thing which maketh an end of all the labour, pain, trouble, and sorrow of this short, miserable, deadly life, he answered that this was not the chief thing that should make him content to die, because the death determineth the manifold incommodities and painful wretchedness of this life; but rather this cause should make him not content only but also glad to die, for that death maketh an end of sin, inasmuch as he trusted the shortness of his life should leave him no space to sin and offend. He asked also all his servants' forgiveness if he had ever before that day offended any of them;—for whom he had provided by his testament eight years⁵ before: for some of them meat and drink, for some money, each of them after their deserving.⁵ He showed also to the above-named Albertus

A constant faith

[72]
*What cause should
make us willing and
glad to die*

1 More omits *proque reseranda ianua coeli*, “and to open the gates of heaven” (CW 1:330, 331). / 12 More omits *Et item illud*, “And likewise the following” (CW 1:332, 333). / More omits *quem nominavimus inter huius vitae initia*, “whom we mentioned at the beginning of this Life” (CW 1:332, 333). / 14 More omits Gianfrancesco's claim that Alberto employs the same argument here as that set forth by Alexander of Aphrodisias and Themistius as well as Averroes; he also omits Gianfrancesco's *inquam*, “I say” (CW 1:332, 333). / 25 More omits *et tegumentum*, “and clothing” (CW 1:332, 333). / 26 More omits *Et illud praeterea*, “And moreover the following incident” (CW 1:332, 333).

1. *coeternally*: This usage in the sense of “with equal eternity” antedates the earliest recorded in OED (s.v. *coeternally* adv.).

2. *hunger...watch*: More changes the Latin word order and translates *labores* twice (CW 1:225).

3. *his sister's son*: Alberto was the son of Caterina, Picus' eldest sister.

4. *eight years*: “A mistranslation of the Latin ‘ante acto anno’..., presumably either because More misread ‘acto’ as ‘octo’ or because there was such an error in More's Latin text. Picus' will was actually dated September 1, 1493” (CW 1:225).

5. *He asked...their deserving*: This passage does not come until later in the Latin original (in the same paragraph, following “...the heavens open”). In this passage, More omits *certiores facti sumus*, “we were truly informed that” (CW 1:332, 333).

and many other credible persons¹ that the Queen of heaven came to him that night with a marvelous fragrant odour, refreshing all his members that were bruised and frused^o with that fever, and promised him that he should not utterly die. He lay always with a pleasant and a merry countenance, and in the very twitches and pangs of death he spake as though he beheld the heavens open.² And all that came to him and saluted him, offering their service, with very loving words he received, thanked, and kissed^l. The executor of his moveable goods he made one Antony, his brother. The heir of his lands he made the poor people of the hospital of Florence.³ ⁵ ¹⁰ ¹⁵ ²⁰ ²⁵ ³⁰ ³⁵ ⁴⁰ ⁴⁵ ⁵⁰ ⁵⁵ ⁶⁰ ⁶⁵ ⁷⁰ ⁷⁵ ⁸⁰ ⁸⁵ ⁹⁰ ⁹⁵ ¹⁰⁰ ¹⁰⁵ ¹¹⁰ ¹¹⁵ ¹²⁰ ¹²⁵ ¹³⁰ ¹³⁵ ¹⁴⁰ ¹⁴⁵ ¹⁵⁰ ¹⁵⁵ ¹⁶⁰ ¹⁶⁵ ¹⁷⁰ ¹⁷⁵ ¹⁸⁰ ¹⁸⁵ ¹⁹⁰ ¹⁹⁵ ²⁰⁰ ²⁰⁵ ²¹⁰ ²¹⁵ ²²⁰ ²²⁵ ²³⁰ ²³⁵ ²⁴⁰ ²⁴⁵ ²⁵⁰ ²⁵⁵ ²⁶⁰ ²⁶⁵ ²⁷⁰ ²⁷⁵ ²⁸⁰ ²⁸⁵ ²⁹⁰ ²⁹⁵ ³⁰⁰ ³⁰⁵ ³¹⁰ ³¹⁵ ³²⁰ ³²⁵ ³³⁰ ³³⁵ ³⁴⁰ ³⁴⁵ ³⁵⁰ ³⁵⁵ ³⁶⁰ ³⁶⁵ ³⁷⁰ ³⁷⁵ ³⁸⁰ ³⁸⁵ ³⁹⁰ ³⁹⁵ ⁴⁰⁰ ⁴⁰⁵ ⁴¹⁰ ⁴¹⁵ ⁴²⁰ ⁴²⁵ ⁴³⁰ ⁴³⁵ ⁴⁴⁰ ⁴⁴⁵ ⁴⁵⁰ ⁴⁵⁵ ⁴⁶⁰ ⁴⁶⁵ ⁴⁷⁰ ⁴⁷⁵ ⁴⁸⁰ ⁴⁸⁵ ⁴⁹⁰ ⁴⁹⁵ ⁵⁰⁰ ⁵⁰⁵ ⁵¹⁰ ⁵¹⁵ ⁵²⁰ ⁵²⁵ ⁵³⁰ ⁵³⁵ ⁵⁴⁰ ⁵⁴⁵ ⁵⁵⁰ ⁵⁵⁵ ⁵⁶⁰ ⁵⁶⁵ ⁵⁷⁰ ⁵⁷⁵ ⁵⁸⁰ ⁵⁸⁵ ⁵⁹⁰ ⁵⁹⁵ ⁶⁰⁰ ⁶⁰⁵ ⁶¹⁰ ⁶¹⁵ ⁶²⁰ ⁶²⁵ ⁶³⁰ ⁶³⁵ ⁶⁴⁰ ⁶⁴⁵ ⁶⁵⁰ ⁶⁵⁵ ⁶⁶⁰ ⁶⁶⁵ ⁶⁷⁰ ⁶⁷⁵ ⁶⁸⁰ ⁶⁸⁵ ⁶⁹⁰ ⁶⁹⁵ ⁷⁰⁰ ⁷⁰⁵ ⁷¹⁰ ⁷¹⁵ ⁷²⁰ ⁷²⁵ ⁷³⁰ ⁷³⁵ ⁷⁴⁰ ⁷⁴⁵ ⁷⁵⁰ ⁷⁵⁵ ⁷⁶⁰ ⁷⁶⁵ ⁷⁷⁰ ⁷⁷⁵ ⁷⁸⁰ ⁷⁸⁵ ⁷⁹⁰ ⁷⁹⁵ ⁸⁰⁰ ⁸⁰⁵ ⁸¹⁰ ⁸¹⁵ ⁸²⁰ ⁸²⁵ ⁸³⁰ ⁸³⁵ ⁸⁴⁰ ⁸⁴⁵ ⁸⁵⁰ ⁸⁵⁵ ⁸⁶⁰ ⁸⁶⁵ ⁸⁷⁰ ⁸⁷⁵ ⁸⁸⁰ ⁸⁸⁵ ⁸⁹⁰ ⁸⁹⁵ ⁹⁰⁰ ⁹⁰⁵ ⁹¹⁰ ⁹¹⁵ ⁹²⁰ ⁹²⁵ ⁹³⁰ ⁹³⁵ ⁹⁴⁰ ⁹⁴⁵ ⁹⁵⁰ ⁹⁵⁵ ⁹⁶⁰ ⁹⁶⁵ ⁹⁷⁰ ⁹⁷⁵ ⁹⁸⁰ ⁹⁸⁵ ⁹⁹⁰ ⁹⁹⁵ ¹⁰⁰⁰ ¹⁰⁰⁵ ¹⁰¹⁰ ¹⁰¹⁵ ¹⁰²⁰ ¹⁰²⁵ ¹⁰³⁰ ¹⁰³⁵ ¹⁰⁴⁰ ¹⁰⁴⁵ ¹⁰⁵⁰ ¹⁰⁵⁵ ¹⁰⁶⁰ ¹⁰⁶⁵ ¹⁰⁷⁰ ¹⁰⁷⁵ ¹⁰⁸⁰ ¹⁰⁸⁵ ¹⁰⁹⁰ ¹⁰⁹⁵ ¹¹⁰⁰ ¹¹⁰⁵ ¹¹¹⁰ ¹¹¹⁵ ¹¹²⁰ ¹¹²⁵ ¹¹³⁰ ¹¹³⁵ ¹¹⁴⁰ 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"Of the State of his Soul." "After his death (and not long after)"
 Jeronimus,¹ a Friar Preacher of Ferrara, a man as well in cunning as
 holiness of living most famous, in a sermon which he rehearsed in
 the chief church² of all Florence, said unto the people in this wise | :
 "O thou city of Florence, I have a secret thing to show thee which is 5
 as true as the gospel of Saint John | . I would have kept it secret but I
 am compelled to show it, for he that hath authority to command me
 hath bid me publish it. I suppose verily that there be none of you
 but ye knew John Picus, Earl of Mirandula, a man in whom God had
 heaped many great gifts and singular graces | : the Church had of him 10
 an inestimable loss, for I suppose if he might have had the space of
 his life prolonged he should have excelled (by such works as he should
 have left behind him) all them that died this eight hundred years before
 him. He was wont to be conversant with me and to break to me the
 secrets of his heart: in which I perceived that he was by privy inspiration 15
 called of God unto religion. Wherefore he purposed oftentimes to
 obey this inspiration and follow his calling. Howbeit, not being kind^o
 enough for so great benefices of God, or called back by the tender-
 [74] ness of his flesh (as he was a man of delicate complexion) he shrank
 from the labour, or thinking haply that the religion had no need of 20
 him,³ deferred it for a time; howbeit this I speak only by conjecture.
 But for this delay I threatened him two years together that he would
 be punished if he forslothed^o that purpose which our Lord had put
 in his mind. And certainly I prayed to God myself (I will not lie there-
 for) that he might be somewhat beaten to compel him to take that 25
 way which God had from above showed him. But I desired not this

*Punishment desired for
 a godly intent*

17 *kind* grateful / 23 *forslothed* neglected

| 4 At this point More omits several lines of the Latin in which Gianfrancesco warns against
 the "crude ears and obstinate hearts" of those who may consider incredible what he is about
 to relate (*CW* 1:335). / 6 More omits *proverbium illud apud te frequens*, rendered by Miller as "so
 frequently on your lips" (*CW* 1:334, 335). / 10 More omits *multifariaque predictis disciplina fuerat*.
Nulli forte mortalium tam celebre obtigit ingenium, "and he was furnished with learning of many kinds.
 Perhaps no mortal has ever had such an illustrious intellect" (*CW* 1:334, 335).

1. *Jeronimus*: Girolamo Savonarola (1452–1498).

2. *in the chief church*: That is, the Duomo. The Latin reads *in aede sacra quae Sanctae Reparatae dicitur*, "in the church called Santa Reparata" (*CW* 1:334, 335).

3. *thinking...him*: According to Edwards, "More mistranslated 'arbitratus eius opera religionem indigeret'... ('thinking that the religious life needed his [literary] endeavors') by inserting a negative ('had no need of him'). Gianfrancesco presumably implied by this phrasing that entry into the religious life would interrupt or preclude Picus' scholarly endeavor ('opera')" (*CW* 1:227).

scourge upon him that he was beaten with. I looked not for that. But our Lord had so decreed that he should forsake this present life and leave a part of that noble crown that he should have had in heaven¹. Notwithstanding, the most benign Judge hath dealt mercifully with him: and for his plenteous alms given out with a free and liberal hand unto poor people; and for the devout prayers which he most instantly offered unto God,¹ this favour he hath: though his soul be not yet in the bosom of our Lord² in the heavenly joy, yet is it not on that other side deputed unto perpetual pain; but he is adjudged for a while to the fire of purgatory, there to suffer pain for a season, which I am the gladder to show you in this behalf, to the intent that they which knew him, and such in especially as for his manifold benefices are singularly beholden unto him, should now with their prayers, alms, and other suffrages,³ help him.” These things⁴ this holy man Jerome, this servant of God, openly affirmed, and also said that he⁴ knew well if he lied in that place⁵ he were worthy eternal damnation. And over that he said that he had known all those things within a certain time, but the words which Picus had said in his sickness⁵ of the appearing of our Lady caused him to doubt and to fear lest Picus had been deceived by some illusion of the devil, inasmuch as the promise of our Lady seemed to have been frustrated by his death. But afterwards, he understood that Picus was deceived in the equivocation of the word⁶, while she spake of the second death and everlasting, and he undertook⁷ her of the first death and temporal.⁸ And after this the same Jerome showed to his acquaintance that Picus had after his death appeared unto him

Purgatory

Prayer and Alms
available for the dead

[75]

16 *that place* the pulpit / 23 *undertook* understood

¹ 3 More omits *famaque & nominis celebritatem, quae ad summum cummulum si vixisset fuerat habiturus, as plenum non assequeretur*, “and that he should not fully achieve the reputation and celebrity that he would have possessed in superabundance if he had lived” (CW 1:334–337). / 14 More omits *& plura alia*, “and more” (CW 1:336, 337). / 22 More omits *mortis*, “death” (CW 1:336, 337). / 24 More omits several lines of the Latin original, in which Gianfrancesco defends not only the trustworthiness of such visions in general but also the credibility of Savonarola in particular (CW 1:337).

1. *devout prayers...unto God*: Edwards argues, “The Latin (*orationes quae ad deum instantissime effusae sunt*...) is ambiguous: it might refer to Picus’ prayers, as More takes it, or to the prayers of others for him” (CW 1:227).

2. *our Lord*: The Latin here is *patris*, “the Father” (CW 1:336).

3. *alms, and suffrages*: More expands the Latin *suffragiis*, “good deeds” (CW 1:336, 337).

4. *he*: “More, in this clause, changes plural to singular and the original plural subject, ‘*verbi dei precones*’..., to the third person singular pronoun” (CW 1:228).

5. *Picus...in his sickness*: The Latin has simply *aegrotus*, “the sick man” (CW 1:336, 337).

all compassed in fire, and showed unto him that he was such wise in purgatory punished for "his negligence" and his unkindness.^{o1}

Now since it is so that he is adjudged to that fire from which he shall undoubtedly depart unto glory, and no man is sure how long it shall be first, and maybe the shorter time for our intercessions, let every Christian body show their charity upon him to help to speed him thither where, after the long habitation with the inhabitants of this dark world (to whom his goodly conversation gave great light) and after the dark fire of purgatory "(in which venial sins be cleansed)" he may shortly (if he be not already) enter the inaccessible and infinite light of heaven, where he may in the presence of the sovereign Godhead so pray for us that we may the rather by his intercession be partners of that unspeakable joy which we have prayed to bring him speedily to. Amen.^{Δ2}

"Here endeth the life of John Picus, Earl of Mirandula."

[76] "HERE FOLLOWETH THREE EPISTLES³ OF THE SAID PICUS; OF WHICH THREE, TWO BE WRITTEN UNTO JOHN FRANCIS, HIS NEPHEW, THE THIRD UNTO ONE ANDREW CORNEUS, A NOBLEMAN OF ITALY"

"*The Argument and Matter of the First Epistle of Picus unto his Nephew John Francis.* It appeareth by this epistle that John Francis, the nephew of Picus, had broken his mind unto Picus and had made him of counsel in some secret godly purpose which he intended to take upon him; but what this purpose should be, upon this letter can we not fully perceive. Now after that he thus intended, there fell unto him many impediments and divers occasions which withstood his intent, and in manner letted^o him and pulled him back, wherefore Picus comforteth

2 *unkindness* ingratitude / 30 *letted* prevented

1. *And after...unkindness*: Edwards argues, "The Latin...here is ambiguous: either a man who had been present at the sermon approached Savonarola and told him of the vision (the more likely meaning), or Savonarola told the man of his own vision (as More takes it)... After this point until the conclusion of the Latin Life...More largely replaces the Latin with his own summary" (CW 1:228).

Δ2. *Now since...Amen*: Lehmborg observes that this summary paragraph by More substitutes for two and a half pages of lavish praise and exhortation to emulate Picus' life (69).

3. *THREE EPISTLES*: "Gianfrancesco included forty-seven of Picus' letters in the *Opera omnia*. More translated three of them, two...to Gianfrancesco himself...and the third to Andrea Corneo" (CW 1:229).

him in this epistle and exhorteth him to perseverance, by such means as are in the epistle evident and plain enough. Notwithstanding, in the beginning of this letter, where he saith that the flesh shall (but if we take good heed) make us drunk in the cups of Circe and misshape us
 5 into the likeness and figure of brute beasts:¹ those words, if ye perceive them not, be in this wise understood.

There was sometime in [Aeaea]² a woman called Circe which by enchantment (as Virgil maketh mention) used with a drink to turn
 10 as many men as received it into divers likeness and figures of sundry beasts, some into lions, some into bears, some into swine, some into wolves, which afterwards walked ever tame about her house and waited upon her in such use or service as she list to put unto them.³ In like-
 15 wise, the flesh if it make us drunk in the wine of voluptuous pleasure or make the soul leave the noble use of his reason and incline unto sensuality and affections of the body^o: then the flesh changeth us from the figure of reasonable men into the likeness of unreasonable beasts, and that diversely, after the convenience and similitude between our sensual affections and the brutish properties of sundry beasts—as the proud-hearted man into a lion, the irous^o into a bear, the lecherous into
 20 a goat, the drunken glutton into a swine, the ravenous extortioner into a wolf, the false deceiver into a fox, the mocking jester into an ape. From which beastly shape may we never be restored to our own likeness again unto the time we have cast up again the drink of the bodily affections by which we were into these figures enchanted. When there cometh,
 25 sometimes, a monstrous beast to the town, we run and are glad to pay some money to have a sight thereof; but I fear if men would look upon themselves advisedly they should see a more monstrous beast nearer home; for they should perceive themselves by the wretched
 30 inclination to divers beastly passions changed in their soul not into the shape of one but of many beasts, that is to say, of all them whose brutish appetites they follow. Let us then beware, as Picus counselleth us, that we be not drunken in the cups of Circe, that is to say, in the sensual affections of the flesh, lest we deform the image of God in

*Circe**How reasonable men be changed into unreasonable beasts*

[77]

Wittily said

15 *affections of the body* passions, appetites (OED s.v. *affection* sb. 3) / 19 *irous* angry, wrathful

1. The reference is to 28.14-17.

2. [Aeaea]: The 1510 edition has a blank space here, either because the compositor could not read his copy (perhaps written in Greek characters—the reference is to Homer's *Odyssey* 10.135) or because More left it blank and failed to return to fill it in (CW 1:229).

3. Cf. *Aeneid* 7.15–20, but note the additions More makes.

our souls, after Whose image we be made,¹ and make ourselves worse than idolaters. For if he be odious to God which turneth the image of a beast into God, how much is he more odious which turneth the image of God into a beast?²⁷

5

John Picus, Earl of Mirandula, to John Francis his Nephew by his Brother, Health in him that is very Health. That thou hast had many evil occasions

after thy departing which trouble thee and stand against the virtuous purpose that thou hast taken, there is no cause, my son, why thou

10

shouldst either marvel thereof, be sorry therefor, or dread it. But rather how great a wonder were this, if only to thee among mortal men the

[78]

way lay open to heaven without sweat, as though that now at erst^o the deceitful world and the cursed devil failed, and as though thou were not

yet in the flesh, which coveteth against the spirit³; and which false flesh (but if we watch and look well to ourselves⁴) shall make us drunk in

15

the cups of Circe and so | deform us into monstrous shapes of brutish and unreasonable beasts. Remember also that of these evil occasions

the holy apostle Saint James saith thou hast cause to be glad, writing in this wise: *Gaudete, fratres, quando in tentationes varies incideritis*—“Be glad,”

saith he, “my brethren, when ye fall in divers temptations”⁵—and not causeless. For what hope is there of glory if there be none hope of

20

victory; or what place is there for victory where there is no battle? He is called to the crown and triumph which is provoked to the conflict,

and namely to that conflict in which no man may be overcome against his will, and in which we need none other strength to vanquish but

25

that we list ourselves to vanquish. Very happy is a Christian man, since that the victory is both put in his own free will and the reward of the

victory shall be far greater than we can either hope or wish. Tell me, I pray thee, my most dear son, if there be aught in this life of all those

things the delight whereof so vexeth and tosseth these earthly minds. Is there, I say, any of those trifles in the getting of which a man must

30

not suffer many labours, many displeasures, and many miseries ere he get it? The merchant thinketh himself well served if after ten years

12 *erst* first

| 16 More omits *illicebrosa*, “alluringly” (*CW* 1:340, 341).

1. *after...made*: Genesis 1:26–27.

2. *idolaters...beast*: Edwards sees here a possible allusion to Romans 1:23.

3. *flesh...spirit*: Galatians 5:17.

4. *to ourselves*: The Latin has *saluti nostrae*, “our salvation” (*CW* 1:340, 341).

5. *Gaudete...temptations*: James 1:2.

In the conflict against temptation no man is overcome against his will.

No pleasure in this life is gotten without pain.

failing, after a thousand incommodities, after a thousand jeopardies of his life, he may at last have a little the more gathered together. Of the court and service of this world¹ there is nothing that I need to write unto thee, the wretchedness whereof the experience itself hath
 5 taught thee and daily teacheth. In obtaining the favour of the princes, in purchasing the friendship of the company, in ambitious labour for offices and honours, what an heap of heaviness there is! How great anguish, how much business and trouble, I may rather learn of thee than teach thee, which holding myself content with my books and rest,
 10 of a child have learned to live within my degree, and as much as I may dwelling with myself nothing out of myself labour for or long for.

*The wretchedness of
the court
[79]*

Now then, these earthly things slipper,^o uncertain, vile, and common also to us and brute beasts, sweating and panting we shall unneeth^o obtain; and look we then to heavenly things and godly (which neither
 15 eye hath seen nor ear hath heard nor heart hath thought)² to be drawn slumbering and sleeping maugre our teeth,^{o3} | as though neither God might reign nor those heavenly citizens live without us? Certainly if this worldly felicity were got to us with idleness and ease, then might some man that shrinketh from labour rather choose to serve the world
 20 than God. But now if we be forlaboured in the way of sin as much as in the way of God, and much more (whereof the damned wretches cry out, *Lassati sumus in via iniquitatis*—“We be wearied in the way of wickedness”)⁴ then must it needs be a point of extreme madness if we had not leuer labour there where we go from labour to reward,
 25 than where we go from labour to pain. I pass over how great peace and felicity it is to the mind when a man hath nothing that grudgeth his conscience nor is not appalled with the secret touch of any privy crime.⁵ This pleasure undoubtedly far excelleth all the pleasures that in this life may be obtained or desired.

*Pain ought to be taken
rather for heavenly
than earthly things*

*The way of sin more
painful than the way
of virtue*

Spiritual pleasure

30 What thing is there to be desired among the delights of this world, which in the seeking weary us, in the having blindeth us, in the losing

[80]

12 *slipper* unstable / 13 *unneeth* scarcely, with difficulty / 16 *maugre our teeth* in spite of all we could do

‡ 16 More omits *a diis*, “by the gods” (CW 1:342, 343).

1. *Of the court and service of this world*: More’s rendering of *militia saeculi*, “worldly offices” (CW 1:342, 343).

2. *which neither...thought*: 1 Corinthians 2:9.

3. *maugre our teeth*: More’s translation of *propemodum inuiti*, “almost reluctance” (CW 1:342, 343). As Edwards points out, “More uses the same phrase in Pageant Verses [CW 1:5.78]. It is proverbial” (CW 1:230).

4. *Lassati...wickedness*: Wisdom 5:7.

5. *secret...crime*: More’s expansion of the Latin *culpa*, “guilt” (CW 1:342, 343).

*The mind of the
wicked is never in
quiet*

paineth us? Doubtest thou, my son, whether the minds of wicked men be vexed or not with continual thought and torment?— it is the word of God, Which¹ neither may deceive nor be deceived:² *Cor impii quasi mare fervens quod quiescere non potest*,—“The wicked man’s heart is like a stormy sea, that may not rest.”³ There is to him nothing sure, nothing peaceable, but all things fearful, all things sorrowful, all things deadly. Shall we then envy these men? Shall we follow them! and forgetting our own country, heaven, and our heavenly Father, where we were free born, shall we wilfully make ourselves their bondmen, and with them wretchedly living more wretchedly die, and at the last most wretchedly in everlasting fire be punished? Oh the dark minds of men! Oh the blind hearts! Who seeth not more clear than light that all these things be (as they say) truer than truth itself?⁴ And yet do we not that that we know is to be done. In vain we would pluck our foot out of the clay, but we stick still. There shall come to thee, my son, doubt it not (in these places namely where thou art conversant)⁵ innumerable impediments every hour which might fear thee from the purpose of good and virtuous living and (but if thou beware) shall throw thee down headlong. But among all things the very deadly pestilence is this: to be conversant day and night among them whose life is not only on every side an allective^o to sin, but over that all set in the expugnation^o of virtue, under their captain the devil, under the banner of death, under the stipend of hell, fighting against heaven, against our Lord God and against His Christ. But cry thou therefore with the prophet: *Dirumpamus vincula eorum et projiciamus a nobis jugum ipsorum*—“Let us break the bands of them and let us cast off the yoke of them.”⁶ These be they whom (as the glorious apostle Saint Paul saith) our Lord hath delivered into the passions of rebuke and to a reprobable sense, to do those things that are not convenient, full of all iniquity, full of envy, manslaughter, contention, guile, and malice, backbiters, odious to God, contumeli-

Evil company

[81]

21 *allective* enticement / *expugnation* conquest

‡ 7 More omits *obliti propriae dignitatis*, “shall we forget our own dignity” (*CW* 1:344, 345).

1. *Which*: As Edwards notes, the Latin makes it clear that the antecedent is “God,” not “word” (*CW* 1:230).

2. *neither...deceived*: Edwards claims that the Latin phrase from the original (*qui nec falli potest nec fallere*) derives ultimately from St. Augustine’s *Enarrationes in Psalmos* 88.2.6.45 (*CW* 1:230).

3. *Cor...rest*: Isaiah 57:20.

4. *truer than truth itself*: More’s rendering of the Latin proverb, *ipsa veritate veriora*, found in Gianfrancesco’s original text (*CW* 1:230).

5. *in...conversant*: More’s translation of *in quibus habitas*, “in the places where you dwell” (*CW* 1:344, 345).

6. *Dirumpamus...them*: Psalm 2:3.

ous, proud, stately, finders of evil things, foolish, dissolute, without affection, without covenant, without mercy; which when they daily see the justice of God, yet understand they not that such as these things commit are worthy death¹—not only they that do such things but also
 5 they which consent to the doing. Wherefore, my child, go thou never about to please them whom virtue displeaseth, but evermore let these words of the apostle be before thine eyes: *Oportet magis Deo placere quam hominibus*—“We must rather please God than men.”² And “remember” these “words of Saint Paul also:” *Si hominibus placerem, servus Christi non essem*—“If I should please men I were not Christ’s servant.”³ Let enter
 10 into thine heart an holy pride and have disdain to take them for masters of thy living which have more need to take thee for a master of theirs. It were far more seeming that they should with thee by good living begin to be men than thou shouldst with them, by the leaving of
 15 thy good purpose, shamefully begin to be a beast. There holdeth me sometimes, by almighty God, as it were even a swoon and an insensibility⁴ for wonder: when I begin in myself, I wot^o never whether I shall say, to remember or to sorrow, to marvel or to bewail the appetites of men, or, if I shall more plainly speak, the very madness. For it is verily a great madness not to believe the Gospel, whose truth the blood
 20 of martyrs crieth, the voice of apostles soundeth, miracles proveth, reason confirmeth, the world testifieth, the elements speaketh, devils confesseth. But a far greater madness is it, if thou doubt not but that the Gospel is true, to live then as though thou doubt not but that it
 25 were false. For if these words of the Gospel be true, that it is very hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven,⁵ why do we daily then gape after^o the heaping up of riches? And if this be true, that we should seek for the glory and praise, not that cometh of men, but that cometh of God,⁶ why do we then ever hang upon the judgment
 30 and opinion of men, and no man recketh^o whether God like him or not? And if we surely believe that once the time shall come in which

*A holy pride**The truth of the gospel*

[82]

An extreme madness

17 *wot* know / 27 *gape after* “to be eager to obtain, to have a longing for” (OED s.v. *gape* v. 4) / 30 *recketh* considers

1. *our Lord...death*: Cf. Romans 1:26, 28–32.

2. *Oportet...men*: Acts 5:29.

3. *Si...servant*: Galatians 1:10.

4. *insensibility*: OED cites this instance as the earliest usage of the word to mean “unconsciousness” (s.v. *insensibility* 2).

5. *it is...heaven*: Matthew 19:23; Mark 10:23–24.

6. *we should...God*: Cf. John 12:43.

our Lord shall say: "Go ye cursed people into everlasting fire"¹—and again: "Come ye my blessed children, possess ye the kingdom that hath been prepared for you from the forming of the world"²—why is there nothing then that we less fear than hell, or that we less hope for than the kingdom of God? What shall we say else, but that there be many
 5 Christian men in name but few³ in deed. But thou, my son, enforce thyself to enter by the strait gate⁴ that leadeth to heaven⁴ and take no heed what thing many men do, but what thing the very law of nature, what thing very reason, what thing our Lord⁵ Himself showeth thee to be done. For neither thy glory shall be less if thou be happy with
 10 few, nor thy pain more easy if thou be wretched with many. Thou shalt have two specially effectual remedies against the world and the devil, with which two, as with two wings, thou shalt out of this vale of misery⁶ be lifted up into heaven; that is to say, almsdeeds and prayer. What may we do without the help of God, or how shall He help us if
 15 He be not called upon?

*Many Christian men
in name and few in
deed*

*Alms and prayer—two
special remedies
against the world and
the devil*

[83]

But over that, certainly He shall not hear thee when thou callest on Him, if thou hear not first the poor man when he calleth upon thee. And verily it is according that God should despise thee, being a man, when thou, being a man, despisest a man. For it is written: "In what measure that ye mete, it shall be meted you again."⁷ And in another place of the Gospel it is said: "Blessed be merciful men, for they shall get mercy."⁸ When I stir thee to prayer, I stir thee not to the prayer that standeth in many words, but to that prayer which in the secret chamber
 20 of the mind, in the privy closet of the soul, with very affection speaketh to God, and in the most lightsome darkness of contemplation not only presenteth the mind to the Father but also uniteth it with Him by unspeakable ways which only they know that have essayed.⁹ Nor care I not how long⁷ or how short⁷ thy prayer be, but how effectual, how ardent, and rather interrupted and broken between with sighs than
 25 30

Prayer

28 *essayed* tried, attempted

1. *Go...fire*: Matthew 25:41.

2. *Come...world*: Matthew 25:34.

3. *few*: The Latin has *paucissimos*, "very few" (*CW* 1:346, 347).

4. *enter...heaven*: Cf. Matthew 7:13.

5. *our Lord*: The original Latin is *deus*, "God" (*CW* 1:346, 347).

6. *vale of misery*: "The expression," notes Edwards, "found in the *Salve Regina*, comes from Ps. 83:7. More used it in 1534 in the Tower (as reported by Margaret Roper...)" (*CW* 1:232).

7. *In what...again*: Matthew 7:2.

8. *Blessed...mercy*: Matthew 5:7.

drawn on length with a continual row and number of words. If thou love thine health, if thou desire to be sure from the grins¹ of the devil, from the storms of this world, from the await^o of thine enemies; if thou long to be acceptable to God, if thou covet to be happy at the

5 last—let no day pass thee but thou once at the leastwise present thyself to God by prayer, and falling down before Him flat to the ground with an humble affection of devout mind, not from the extremity of thy lips² but out of the inwardness of thine heart cry these words of the prophet: *Delicta juventutis meae et ignorantias meas ne memineris, sed secundum*

10 *misericordiam tuam memento mei propter bonitatem tuam Domine*—“The offences of my youth and mine ignorances remember not, good Lord; but after Thy mercy, Lord, for Thy goodness remember me.”³ What thou shalt in thy prayer ask of God, both the Holy Spirit which prayeth for us, and eke^o thine own necessity, shall every hour put in thy mind;

15 and also what thou shalt pray for, thou shalt find matter enough in the reading of holy Scripture, which that thou wouldst now (setting poets, fables and trifles aside) take ever in thine hand, I heartily pray thee. Thou mayest do nothing more pleasant to God, nothing more profitable to thyself, than if thy hand cease not day nor night to turn

20 and read⁴ the volumes of holy Scripture. There lieth privily in them a certain heavenly strength, quick and effectual, which with a marvellous power transformeth and changeth the reader's mind into the love of God, if they be clean and lowly entreated. But I have passed now the bounds of a letter, the matter drawing me forth and the great love that

25 I have had to thee, both ever before and specially since that hour in which I have had first knowledge of thy most holy purpose.

No day without prayer

[84]

Reading of holy Scripture

Now to make an end with this one thing, I warn thee (of which when we were last together I often talked with thee) that thou never forget these two things: that both the Son of God died for thee, and that thou shalt also thyself die shortly, live thou never so long. With these twain, as with two spurs, that one of fear, that other of love, spur forth thine horse through the short way of this momentary life,

3 *await* ambush / 14 *eke* also

1. *grins*: Latin *laqueis*, “snares” (*CW* 1:346, 347).

2. *extremity of thy lips*: More's rendering of *summ̄is labris* (*CW* 1:346). Edwards argues, somewhat subtly, that “‘extremite’ in opposition to ‘inwardness’ means ‘outer point’—not from the outer point (‘extremite’) of your lips, but out of the inner part (‘inwardness’) of your heart” (*CW* 1:232).

3. *Delicta...me*: Psalm 24:7.

4. *turn and read*: The Latin has *versare...versare*, “to turn” (*CW* 1:348).

to the reward of eternal felicity, since we neither ought nor may prefix ourselves any other end than the endless fruition of the infinite goodness, both to soul and body, in everlasting peace.

Farewell, and fear God. † [Dated from Ferrara, May 15, 1492.]

5

† *The Matter or Argument of the Epistle of Picus to Andrew Corneus.*

This Andrew, a worshipful man and an especial friend of Picus, had by his letters given him counsel to leave the study of philosophy, as a thing in which he thought Picus to have spent time enough and which, but if it were applied to the use of some actual business, he judged a

10

[85]

of study and put himself with some of the great princes of Italy, with whom (as this Andrew said) he should be much more fruitfully occupied than always in the study and learning of philosophy. To whom Picus answered, as in this present epistle appeareth; where he saith these words: by this it should follow that it were either servile or at

15

Philosophy

the leastwise not princely to make the study of philosophy other than mercenary,¹—thus he meaneth: mercenary, we call all those things which we do for hire or reward. Then he maketh philosophy mercenary and useth it not as cunning but as merchandise which^o studieth it not for pleasure of itself, or for the instruction of his mind in moral virtue,² but to apply it to such things where he may get some lucre or worldly advantage.⁷

20

Mercenary

John Picus Earl of Mirandola to Andrew Corneus, Greeting. † Ye exhort

25

me by your letters to the civil^o and active life, saying that in vain, and in manner to my rebuke and shame, have I so long studied in philosophy, but if I would at the last exercise that learning in the entreating^o of some profitable acts and outward^o business.³ Certainly, my well beloved Andrew, I had cast away both cost and labour of my study if I were so

30

20 *which* who / 26 *civil* political, public / 28 *entreating* undertaking (cf. *OED* s.v. *entreating* vbl. sb. 1b) / 29 *outward* external, outside the mind (cf. *OED* s.v. *outward* a. 5)

† 4 More omits the date and place of writing. / 25 More omits the first paragraph, in which Picus explains his delay in responding (a previous letter written by Comeo never arrived) and reassures Corneo of his enduring friendship (*CW* 1:348).

1. *by this...mercenary*: A nearly verbatim citation of Picus' letter (p. 35, ll. 28-30).

2. *or for...moral virtue*: This reason is not given in the letter that follows. Considering the substantial changes More makes in it, Edwards concludes that More "is concerned to emphasize the necessity of the active life rather than the reclusive life of the solitary scholar/divine" (*CW* 1:xlviij). Baker-Smith concurs, seeing a parallel between Picus' stance and "Raphael's rejection of the *vita activa*" in *Utopia* (137).

3. *exercise...business*: The Latin has *in agendarum tractandarumque rerum palaestra desudem*, "work up a sweat on the wrestling mat where practical affairs are handled and conducted" (*CW* 1:348, 349).

minded that I could find in my heart in this matter to assent unto you
 and follow your counsel. This is a very deadly and monstrous persua-
 sion^o which hath entered the minds of men, believing that the studies of
 philosophy are of estates^o and princes either utterly not to be touched,
 5 or at leastwise with extreme lips^o to be sipped, and rather to the pomp
 and ostentation of their wit than to the culture^o ^{and profit} of their
 minds to be little and easily tasted. The words of Neoptolemus¹ they
 hold utterly for a sure decree, that philosophy is to be studied either
 never or not long; but the sayings of wise men they repute for japes^o
 10 and very fables, that sure and steadfast felicity standeth only in the
 goodness of the mind and that these outward things of the body or
 of fortune little or naught pertain unto us. But here ye will say to me
 thus: “I am content ye study, but I would have you outwardly occu-
 pied also.” And I desire you not so to embrace Martha that ye should
 15 utterly forsake Mary.² “Love them and use them both, as well study as
 worldly occupation.” “Truly, my well beloved friend,” in this point I
 gainsay^o you not; they that so do I find no fault in nor I blame them
 not, but certainly it is not all one to say we do well if we do so, and
 to say we do evil but if we do so. This is far out of the way, to think
 20 that from contemplation to the active³ living— that is to say, from the
 better to the worse⁴—is none error to decline, and to think that it were
 shame to abide still in the better and not decline. Shall a man then be
 rebuked because that^o he desireth and ensueth^o virtue only for itself,
 because he studieth the mysteries of God, because he ensearcheth the
 25 counsel of nature, because he useth continually this pleasant ease and
 rest, seeking none outward thing, despising | all other thing, since those
 things are able sufficiently to satisfy the desire of their followers? By this
 reckoning it is a thing either servile, or at the leastwise not princely, to
 make the study of wisdom other than mercenary. Who may well hear
 30 this, who may suffer it? Certainly he never studied for wisdom which
 so studied therefor that in time to come either he might not⁴ or would

*A monstrous
persuasion touching the
philosophy*

[86]

Felicity

Contemplation

*The study of wisdom
never to be omitted*

3 *persuasion* belief / 4 *estates* lords / 5 *extreme lips* in small doses, a little at a time / 6 *culture* development (OED cites this as the first usage in the sense of “cultivation or development [of the mind...]” [s.v. *culture* sb. 4]) / 10 *japes* jokes / 17 *gainsay* contradict, deny / 23 *because* that if / *ensueth* follows

| 26 More omits *& negligens*, “and neglecting” (CW 1:350, 351).

1. The story of this character of Ennius is quoted in Cicero’s *Tusculanae Disputationes* 2.1, *De Oratore* 2.156, and *De Re Publica* 1.30.

2. *Martha...Mary*: An allusion to Luke 10:38–42.

3. *active*: The Latin has *civilem*, “political, public” (CW 1:350).

4. *he might not*: As Edwards points out, “The Latin has merely ‘*possit*’ ..., without ‘*non*,’ but the sense seems to require ‘*non*’ here, and More may simply have supplied it. On the other hand, ‘*possit*’ alone might mean ‘merely be able to philosophize—without actually doing it’” (CW 1:234).

not study therefor. This man rather exercised the study of merchandise
 [87] than of wisdom. Ye write unto me that it is time for me now to put
 myself "in household with" some of the great princes of Italy, but I
Philosophers see well that as yet ye have not known the opinion that philosophers
 have of themselves, which (as Horace saith¹) repute themselves kings 5
 of kings; "they love liberty;" they cannot bear the proud manners of
 estates; they cannot serve.² They dwell with^o themselves and be^o con-
 tent with the tranquillity of their own mind; they suffice themselves
 and more; they seek nothing out^o of themselves; the things that are
 had in honour among the common people, among them be^o not held 10
 honourable. All that ever the voluptuous desire of men thirsteth for,
 or ambition seeketh for, they set at naught and despise. Which while
 it belongeth to all men, yet undoubtedly it pertaineth most properly to
 them whom fortune hath so liberally favoured that they may live not
 only well and plenteously but also nobly. These great fortunes lift up a 15
High estate man high and set him out to the show,^o but oftentimes as a fierce and
 a skittish horse they cast off their master. Certainly always they grieve
Mean estate and vex him and rather tear him than bear him. The golden mediocrity,³
 "the mean estate," is to be desired, which shall bear us as it were in
 hands⁴ more easily, which shall obey us and not master us. I therefore, 20
 abiding firmly in this opinion, set more by my little house, my study,
 the pleasure of my books, "the rest and" peace of my mind, than by
 all your kings' palaces, all your common business,⁵ "all your glory," all
 the advantage that ye hawk after,⁶ and all the favour of the court. Nor
 I look not for this fruit of my study, that I may thereby hereafter be 25
The right fruit of study tossed in the flood and rumbling of your worldly business,⁷ but that

7 *with* within / *be* are / 9 *out* outside / 10 *be* are / 16 *set* . . . *out to the show* display ostentatiously, "exhibit . . . on the stage" (*OED* s.v. *set* 149i)

1. *Epistles* 1.1.106–107. Horace humorously concludes this verse epistle: "To sum up: The wise man [*sapiens*] is less than Jove alone. He is rich, free [*liber*], honored, beautiful, nay a king of kings; above all, sound—save when troubled by the 'flu!'" (H. Rushton Fairclough trans., Loeb ed., 1961).

2. *they cannot . . . serve*. More expands the original Latin, *mores pati & servire nesciunt*, "they do not know how to patiently obey and serve" (*CW* 1:350, 351).

3. *golden mediocrity*: More's rendering of the Latin *aurea . . . mediocritas* (*CW* 1:350). This is sited in the *OED* as the earliest usage in the sense of "golden mean" (s.v. *mediocrity* 1b). Cf. Horace, *Odes* 2.10.5.

4. *in hands*: Presumably, More's Latin read (or he misread) *manus* instead of the correct *mannus* (*CW* 1:235).

5. *common*: The Latin has *publicis*, "public" (*CW* 1:350).

6. *the advantage . . . after*: More's rendering of the Latin *vestris aucupii*, "that bird-catching of yours" (*CW* 1:350, 351).

7. *of . . . business*: The Latin has *rerum publicarum*, "public affairs" (*CW* 1:350, 351).

I may once bring forth the children that I travail on; that I may give out some books¹ of mine own to the common "profit" which may somewhat savour if not of cunning yet at the leastwise of wit and diligence. And because ye shall not think that my travail and diligence
 5 in study is anything remitted or slackened, I give you knowledge that after great fervent labour with much watch and indefatigable travail I have learned both the Hebrew language and the Chaldee, and now have I set hand to overcome the great difficulty of the Arabic tongue. These, my dear friend, be things which do appertain to a noble prince,
 10 I have ever thought and yet think. "Fare ye well." | Written at Paris² the xv. day of October, the year of grace 1492.³

The Argument of the Epistle following. After that John Francis, the nephew of Picus, had (as it appeareth in the first epistle of Picus to
 15 him) begun a change in his living, it seemeth by this letter that the company of the Court where he was conversant, diversely (as it is their unmannerly manner) descanted^o thereof to his rebuke, as them thought, but, as truth was, unto their own. Some of them judged it folly, some called it hypocrisy, some scorned him, some slandered him; all of which
 20 demeanour (as we may of this epistle conjecture) he wrote unto this Earl Picus, his uncle, which in this letter comforteth and encourageth him, as it is in the course thereof evident. |

¹⁷ *descanted* made comment on (*OED* cites this as the first usage in the sense of "to make remarks, comments, or observations; to comment (on, upon...)" [s.v. *descant* v. 2])

| ¹⁰ More omits the remainder of the letter, amounting to nearly two pages in translation (*CW* 1:353, 355). In these pages, "Picus discusses his plans to visit Rome, Corneo's marital affairs, Picus' Italian verses, a wayward servant of Picus, and mitigates the amorous escapades of an unnamed lover, evidently Picus himself, who had abducted Margherita, the wife of Giuliano Mariotto dei Medici, on May 10, 1486. She was pursued by her husband, restored to him, and Picus was wounded and imprisoned. For an account of this episode see Eugenio Garin, *Giovanni Picus della Mirandola: Vita e dottrina*, Pubblicazioni della Università degli Studi di Firenze, Facoltà di Lettere e Filosofia, 3 serie, 5 (Florence, 1937), p. 25. More could have learned of this abduction from Colet or Linacre, both of whom were in Italy not long after this well-known scandal" (*CW* 1:236).

1. *children...books*: Gianfrancesco's Latin uses *liberos* once (*CW* 1:352), a word that means both "children" and "books." More draws attention to the pun by his translation, "books of mine own."

2. *Paris*: A mistranslation of *Perusia*, "Perugia" (*CW* 1:354).

3. The date is incorrect. This letter was written in 1486, the year before Picus' conversion. Edwards lists two reasons given by scholars as to why More may have intentionally altered the date, which was present on the Latin text: 1) "to make Picus into a more appropriate spiritual hero by passing over the time [of]...his confrontation with papal authority"; and 2) a concern "to disassociate Picus from the other controversial event of 1486, his kidnapping of Margherita dei Medici" (*CW* 1:236).

John Picus Earl of Mirandula to † Francis his Nephew Greeting "in the Lord." Happy art thou, my son, when that our Lord not only giveth thee grace well to live, but also that while thou livest well He giveth thee grace to bear evil words "of evil people" for thy living well. Certainly, as great a praise as it is to be commended of them that are commendable, as great a commendation it is to be reprov'd of them that are reprov'able. Notwithstanding, "my son," I call thee not therefore happy because this false reproof is worshipful and glorious unto thee, but for because that our Lord Jesus Christ (Which is not only true but also truth itself¹) affirmeth that our reward shall be plenteous in heaven when men speak evil to us and speak all evil against us lying for his name.² This is an apostle's dignity †: to be reputed *digne*^o "afore God," to be defamed of^o wicked folk for His name. For we read in the gospel of Luke³ that the apostles went joyful and glad from the council house of the Jews because God had accepted them as worthy to suffer wrong and reproof for His sake. Let us therefore joy and be glad if we be worthy so great worship^o before God that His worship be showed in our rebuke. And if we suffer of the world anything that is grievous or bitter, let this sweet voice^o of our Lord be our consolation: *Si mundus vos odio habet, scitote quia priorem me vobis odio habuit*—"If the world," saith our Lord, "hate you, know ye that it hated Me before you."⁴ If the world, then, hated Him by Whom the world was made, we most vile and simple men, and worthy (if we consider our wretched living well)^o all shame and reproof, if folk backbite us and say evil of us, shall we so grievously take it that lest they should say evil we should begin to do evil? Let us rather gladly receive these evil words, and if we be not so happy to^o suffer for virtue and truth as the old saints⁵ suffered beatings, binding, prison, swords, "and death," let us think at the leastwise we be well served if we have the grace to suffer chiding, detraction, and hatred of wicked men, lest that if all occasion of deserving be taken away, there be left us none hope of reward. If men for thy good liv-

[89]
It is a commendation
to be reprov'd of by
the reprov'able.

An apostle's dignity

12 *digne* worthy / 13 *of by* / 17 *worship* honor / 19 *voice* saying / 23 *consider...well* consider well our wretched living / 27 *to* as to

† 1 More omits *Ioanni*. / 12 More omits *si nescis*, "in case you do not know it" (*CW* 1:356, 357).

1. Cf. John 14:6.

2. Cf. Matthew 5:11–12.

3. *gospel of Luke*: Actually, the reference is not to the gospel of Luke, but to Acts 5:27–42, also written by St. Luke.

4. *Si...you*: John 15:18.

5. *old saints*: The Latin has *heroes nostri*, "our heroes" (*CW* 1:356, 357).

ing praise thee, thy virtue certainly, in that it is virtue, maketh thee like unto Christ; but in that it is praised it maketh thee unlike Him, Which for the reward of His virtue received the "opprobrious" death of the cross; for which, as the apostle saith,¹ God hath exalted Him and given
 5 Him a name that is above all names. More desireful is it, then, to be condemned of the world and exalted of God, than to be exalted of the world and condemned of God. The world condemneth² to life, God exalteth to glory: the world exalteth to a fall, God condemneth to the fire of hell.³ Finally, if the world fawn upon thee, unneeth it may be
 10 but that thy virtue (which all lifted upward⁴ should have God alone to please) shall somewhat unto the blandishing of the world and favour of the people incline. And so, though it lose nothing of the integrity "of our perfection", yet it loseth of the reward; which reward while it beginneth to be paid in the world where all thing is little, it shall be
 15 less in heaven, where all thing is great. O happy rebukes, which make us sure that neither the flower of our virtue⁵ shall wither with the pestilence blast of vainglory, nor our eternal reward be diminished for the vain promotion of a little popular⁶ fame! Let us, my son, love these rebukes, and only of the ignominy and reproof of our Lord's cross let us like faithful servants with an holy ambition be proud. "We," saith Saint Paul,⁷ "preach Christ crucified, which is unto the Jews despite, unto the Gentiles folly, unto us the virtue^o and wisdom of God." The wisdom of this world is foolishness afore God,⁸ and the folly of Christ is that by which He hath overcome⁹ the wisdom of the world, by which
 20 it hath pleased God to make His believing people safe.

If that you doubt not but that they be mad which backbite thy virtue, which the Christian living, that is very wisdom, reputeth^o for madness, consider then how much were thy madness if thou shouldst for the judgment of mad men swerve from the good institution of thy life, [91]

22 *virtue power* / 27 *which...reputeth* who consider

1. *as the apostle saith*: Cf. Philippians 2:9.

2. *condemneht*: The Latin is *crucifigit*, "crucifies" (*CW* 1:356, 357).

3. *the fire of hell*: Latin *Gebennam* (*CW* 1:356).

4. *all lifted upward*: The Latin has *tota sursum erecta*, "totally directed on high" (*CW* 1:238).

5. *flower of our virtue*: More's rendering of *iustitiae flos*, "flower of righteousness" (*CW* 1:358, 359).

6. *popular*: More's usage, apparently to denote what is "vulgar" or "common," antedates the earliest found in *OED* (s.v. *popular* a. 2c).

7. *saith Saint Paul*: 1 Corinthians 1:23–24.

8. *wisdom...God*: Cf. 1 Corinthians 3:19.

9. *hath overcome*: The Latin is *vincit*, "overcomes" (*CW* 1:358).

namely since all error is with amendment to be taken away and not with imitation and following to be increased. Let them therefore neigh, let them bawl, let them bark, go thou boldly forth^o thy journey as thou hast begun, and of their wickedness and misery consider how much thyself art beholden to God, Which hath illumined thee sitting in the shadow of death, and translating thee out of the company of them which like drunken men without a guide wander hither and thither, in obscure darkness, hath associated thee to the children of light. Let that same sweet voice of our Lord always sound in thine ears: *Sine mortuos sepelire mortuos suos, tu me sequere*,—"Let dead men alone with dead men, follow thou me."¹ Dead be they that live not to God and in the space of this temporal death laboriously purchase themselves eternal death. Of whom if thou ask whereto they draw, whereto they refer their studies, their works, and their business, and finally what end they have appointed themselves in the adoption^o whereof they should be happy, either they shall have utterly nothing to answer or they shall bring forth words repugnant in themselves and contrary each to other, like the raving of Bedlam people.² Nor they wot never themselves what they do, but like them that swim in swift floods, they be borne forth with the violence of evil custom as it were with the boisterous course of the stream. And their wickedness blinding them on this side, and the devil pricking them forward on that side, they run forth headlong into all mischief, as blind guides of blind men,³ till that death set on them unawares, and till that it be said unto them "that Christ saith in the Gospel: "My friend, this night "the devils" shall take thy soul from thee. These goods then that thou hast gathered, whose shall they be?"⁴ Then shall they envy them whom they despised, then shall they commend them that they mocked, then shall they covet to ensue them in living when they may not, whom when they might have ensued they pursued. Stop therefore thine ears, | my most dear son, and whatsoever men say of thee, whatsoever men think on thee, account it for noth-

*Dead be they that live
not to God.*

Evil Custom

[92]

³ *forth* forth on / ¹⁵ *adoption* Apparently in the sense of "taking up and treating as one's own"; if so, More's usage antedates the first recorded in *OED* (s.v. *adoption* 2a)

|³⁰ More omits *cerus*, "with wax" (*CW* 1:360, 361).

1. *Sine...me*: Matthew 8:22.

2. *like the raving of Bedlam people*: More's translation of the Latin, *verba velut fanaticorum deliramenta*, "like the babblings of madmen" (*CW* 1:358). The "Bedlam people" are those of the Bethlehem Hospital for the insane. *OED* cites this instance as the earliest usage of "Bedlam" in the attributive sense meaning "mad" (s.v. *Bedlam* 6).

3. *blind guides...men*: An allusion to Matthew 15:14.

4. *this night...they be*: Cf. Luke 12:20.

ing, but regard only the judgment of God,—Which^o shall yield every man after his own works when He shall show Himself from heaven with the angels of His virtue, in flame of fire, doing vengeance upon them that have not known God nor obeyed His Gospel, which (as the apostle saith¹) shall suffer in death eternal pain, from the face of our Lord and from the glory of His virtue, when He shall come to be glorified of His saints and to be made marvellous in all them that have believed. It is written: *Nolite timere qui corpus possunt occidere, sed qui animam potest mittere in gehennam.*—“Fear not them,” saith our Lord, “that may slay the body: but fear Him that may cast the soul into hell.”² How much less, then, be they to be feared that may neither hurt soul nor body? Which^o if they now backbite thee living virtuously,³ they shall do the same nevertheless if (virtue forsaken) thou were overwhelmed with vice,—nor for that vice displeaseth them but for that the vice of backbiting always pleaseth them. Flee if thou love thine health, flee as far as thou mayest their company and, returning to thyself, oftentimes secretly pray unto the most benign Father [of heaven], crying with the prophet: *Ad te Domine levavi animam meam : Deus meus in te confido, non erubescam, etiam si irrideant me inimici mei. Etenim universi qui sperant in te non confundentur. Confundantur iniqua agentes supervacue. Vias tuas Domine demonstra mihi, et semitas tuas edoce me. Dirige me in veritate tua, et doce me: quia tu es Deus Salvator meus, et in te sperabo tota die,*—that is to say, “To Thee, Lord, I lift up my soul: | in Thee I trust, I shall not be ashamed, an though mine enemies mock me. Certainly all they that trust in Thee shall not be ashamed. Let them be ashamed that work wickedness in vain. Thy ways, good Lord, show me, and Thy paths teach me. Direct me in Thy truth, and teach me: for Thou art God, my Saviour; in Thee shall I trust all the day.”⁴ Remember also, my son, that the death lieth at hand. Remember that all the time of our life is but a moment and yet less than a moment. Remember how cursed our old enemy is, which offereth us the kingdoms of this world that he might bereave us the kingdom of heaven; how false the fleshly pleasures which therefore embrace us that they might strangle us; how deceitful these [worldly]

[93]

Our life is less than a moment.

The devil, the world, the flesh

1 *Which* who / 12 *Which* who

|23 More omits *deus meus*, “my God” (CW 1:360, 361).

1. *as the apostle saith*: 2 Thessalonians 1:7–10.

2. *Nolite...bell*: Matthew 10:28; Luke 12:4.

3. *virtuously*: More's translation of the Latin, *ex ratione*, “according to reason” (CW 1:360).

4. *Ad te...the day*: Psalm 24:1–5.

Honour
Riches

honours which therefore lift us up that they might throw us down; how deadly these riches which the more they feed us the more they poison us; how short, how uncertain, how shadow-like, false, imaginary it is that all these things together may bring us, an though they flow to us as we would wish them. Remember again how great things be promised and prepared for them which, despising these present things, desire and long for that country whose king is the Godhead, whose law is charity, whose measure is eternity. Occupy thy mind with these meditations and such other that may waken thee when thou sleepest, kindle thee when thou waxest cold, confirm thee when thou waverest, and exhibit the wings of the love of God while thou labourest to heavenward, that when thou comest home to us (which with great desire we look for) we may see not only him that we covet but also such a manner one¹ as we covet. Farewell, and love God, Whom of old thou hast begun to fear. † At Ferrara, the second day of July, † the year of our Redemption, † 1492.

[94] † *The Interpretation of John Picus upon this Psalm, "Conserua Me Domine."*—
Conserua me Domine quoniam speravi in te. Dixi Domino: Deus meus es Tu, quoniam bonorum meorum non eges. Sanctis qui sunt in terra ejus mirificavit voluntates suas. Multiplicatae sunt infirmitates eorum postea acceleraverunt. Non congregabo conventicula eorum de sanguinibus: nec memor ero nominum eorum per labia mea. Dominus pars hereditatis meae et calicis mei: tu es qui restitues hereditatem meam mihi. Funes ceciderunt mihi in praeclaris: etenim hereditas mea praeclara est mihi. Benedicam Dominum qui tribuit mihi intellectum: insuper et usque ad noctem increpauerunt me renes mei. Providebam Dominum in conspectu meo semper, quoniam a dextris est mihi ne commovear. Propter hoc laetatum est cor meum et exultavit lingua mea, insuper et caro mea requiescet in spe. Quoniam non derelinques animam meam in inferno: nec dabis sanctum tuum videre corruptionem. Notas mihi fecisti vias vitae: adimplebis me laetitia cum vultu tuo. Delectationes in dextera tua usque in finem.⁻²

†15 More omits *Bigus te salutet*, "Bigo sends you greetings" (CW 1:362, 363).

1. *bim...one*: In these two cases where More has the third person, the Latin original has the second (CW 1:362).

2. "This commentary on Psalm 15 (as it is in the Vulgate) is the only part of Picus' commentary on the Psalms to be printed in his *Opera omnia*.... More's translation is also the first printing in English of a psalm commentary. Indeed, such commentaries in Middle English are relatively rare..." (CW 1:239).

Conserva me Domine—“Keep me, good Lord.” If any perfect man look upon his own estate there is one peril therein, that is to wit, lest he wax proud of his virtue, and therefore David, speaking in the person
 5 of a righteous man of his estate, beginneth with these words, *Conserva me* [“*Domine*”], that is to say, “Keep me, good Lord”; which word ‘Keep me,’ if it be well considered, taketh away all occasion of pride. For he that is able of himself anything to get is able of himself that same thing to keep. He that asketh then of God, to be kept in the state of
 10 virtue signifieth in that asking that from the beginning he got not that virtue by himself. He, then, which remembereth that he attained his
 [95] virtue not by his own power but by the power of God may not be proud thereof but rather humbled before God, after those words of the apostle: *Quid habes quod non accepisti?*—“What hast thou that thou
 15 hast not received?”¹ And if thou hast received it, why art thou proud thereof, as though thou hadst not received it? Two words, then, be there which we should ever have in our mouth: that one, *Miserere mei Deus*—“Have mercy on me, Lord,”² when we remember our vice; that other, *Conserva me Deus*—“Keep me, good Lord,” when we remember
 20 our virtue.

Quoniam speravi in te—“For I have trusted in Thee.” This one thing is it that maketh us obtain of God our petition, that is to wit, when we have a full hope and trust that we shall speed.^o And if we observe these two things [“in our requests”], that is to wit, that we require | nothing but that which is good for us, and that we require it ardently with
 25 a sure hope that God shall hear us, our prayers shall never be void. Wherefore, when we miss the effect of our petition, either it is for that we ask such thing as is noyous^o unto us, for (as Christ saith)³ we wot never what we ask. And Jesus said: “Whatsoever ye shall ask in
 30 My name, it shall be given you.”⁴ This name Jesus signifieth a saviour, and therefore there is nothing asked in the name of Jesus but [“that is wholesome and helping”] to the salvation of the asker, or else God heareth not our prayer because that though the thing that we require be

Two things to be observed in prayer

23 speed succeed /28 noyous harmful

| 24 More omits *a deo*, “God” (CW 1:362, 363).

1. *Quid...received*: 1 Corinthians 4:7.

2. *Miserere...Lord*: Psalm 50:1.

3. *as Christ saith*: Matthew 20:22.

4. *Whatsoever...you*: John 14:12.

good yet we ask it not well, for we ask it with little hope. And he that asketh doubtingly, asketh coldly. And therefore Saint James biddeth us ask in faith, nothing doubting.¹

Dixi Domino: Deus meus es tu—"I have said to our Lord: my God art Thou." After that he hath warded and fenced himself against pride, he

[96]

describeth in these words his estate. All the estate of a righteous man standeth in these words, *Dixi Domino, Deus meus es tu*—"I have said to our

Lord, my God art Thou." Which words though they seem common to all folk,² yet are there "very" few that may say them truly. That thing a

God

man taketh for his god that he taketh for his chief good; and that thing taketh he for his chief good, which only had, though all other things

lack, he thinketh himself happy, and which only lacking, though he have all other things, he thinketh himself unhappy.³ The niggard, then,

The niggard's god is money.

saith to his money, *Deus meus es tu*—"My god art Thou." For though honour fail, and health and strength and friends, so he have money

he thinketh himself well. And if he have all those things that we have spoken of, if money fail, he thinketh himself unhappy. The glutton

The glutton's god is fleshy lust.

saith unto his fleshly lust,⁴ the ambitious man saith to his "vainglory:

The ambitious man's god is vainglory.

"My God art Thou." See then how few may truly say these words, "I have said to our Lord, my God art Thou." For only he may truly say it

which is content with God alone; so that if there were offered him all the kingdoms of the world and all the good that is in earth and all the

good that is in heaven⁵, he would not once offend God to have them all. In these words, then, "I have said to our Lord, my God art Thou,"

standeth all the state of a righteous man.

Quoniam bonorum meorum non eges—"For Thou hast no need of my goods." In these words he showeth the cause why he saith only to our

Lord, *Deus meus es tu*—"My God art Thou." The cause is for that only our Lord hath no need of our goods. There is no creature but that it

needeth other creatures, an though^o they be of less perfection than itself, as philosophers and divines prove: for if these "more imperfect

30 *an though* even if

†18 More omits *imperio sive*, "power or" (*CW* 1:364, 365).

1. *ask...doubting*: Cf. James 1:6.

2. *all folk*: The Latin has *feres omnibus*, "almost everyone" (*CW* 1:364, 365).

3. *That...unhappy*: In this sentence More changes Picus' first person plural to third person singular forms (*CW* 1:240).

4. *The glutton...lust*: More condenses and alters the original Latin *Gulosis item crapulae, et incontinenis libidini*, "Likewise the glutton says to his drunkenness and the incontinent to his lust" (*CW* 1:364, 365).

5. *earth...heaven*: More reverses the order of the Latin (*CW* 1:364).

creatures¹ were not, the other² that are more perfect³ could not be. [97]
 For if any part of the whole universe¹ of creatures were destroyed and
 fallen to naught, all the whole were subverted. For certainly³ one part
 of³ that universe perishing, all parties perish, and all creatures be parts
 5 of that universe; of which universe God is no part, but He is the begin-
 ning, nothing thereupon depending. For nothing truly won He by the
 creation of this world, nor nothing should He lose if the world were
 annihilated² and turned to naught again. Then only God is He which
 hath no need of our good. Well ought we certainly to be ashamed to
 10 take such thing for God as hath need of us—and such is every creature.
 Moreover, we should not accept for God, that is to say, for the chief
 goodness, but only that thing which is the most sovereign goodness of
 all things—and that is not the goodness of any creature. Only therefore
 to our Lord ought we to say, “My God art Thou.”

15 *Sanctis qui sunt in terra ejus mirificavit voluntates suas*—“To his saints that
 are in the land of Him, He hath made marvellous His wills.” After God
 should we specially love them which are nearest joined unto God, as be
 the holy angels and blessed saints that are in their country of heaven.
 Therefore, after that he had said to our Lord, “My God art Thou,” he
 20 addeth thereunto that our Lord³ hath made marvellous His wills, that
 is to say, He hath made marvellous His loves and His desires towards
 His saints that are in the land of Him, that is to wit, in the country of
 heaven, which is called the land of God and the land of living people. *Heaven*
 And verily if we inwardly consider how great is the felicity of that
 25 country and how much is the misery of this world, how great is the
 goodness and charity of those³ “blessed” citizens, we shall continually
 desire to be hence, that we were there. These things and such other
 when we remember, we should³ “evermore” take heed that our medita-
 tions be not unfruitful, but that of every meditation we should always
 30 purchase one virtue or other; as, for example, by this meditation of
 the goodness of that heavenly country we should win this virtue, that
 we should not only strongly suffer death and patiently, when our time
 cometh, or if it were put unto us for the faith of Christ, but also we
 should willingly and gladly long therefor, desiring to be departed out of

[98]

*Of every meditation to
purchase a virtue*

1. *university*: Here and in the lines that follow, More's “university” has been changed to “universe.”

2. *annihilated*: More's usage, which is in the sense of “reduce to nonexistence,” antedates the earliest found in OED (s.v. *annihilate* v. 1a).

3. *our Lord*: The Latin has *dei*, “God” (CW 1:364, 365).

this vale of wretchedness, that we may reign in that heavenly country with God and His holy saints. †

Multiplicatae sunt infirmitates eorum, postea acceleraverunt—“Their infirmities be multiplied, and after they hasted.” These words the prophet speaketh of wicked men. By infirmities he understandeth idols, and so it is in the Hebrew text. For as good folk have but one God whom they worship, so evil folk have many gods and idols, for they have many voluptuous pleasures, many vain desires, many divers passions, which they serve. And wherefore seek they many sundry pleasures? Certainly for because they can find none that can set their heart at rest, and for that “(as the prophet saith)¹” wicked men walk about in a circuit “or compass whereof there is none end”. Now after these words, “Their idols be multiplied,” it followeth, “After they hasted,” that is to say, “after their idols:” after their “passions and beastly desires” they run forth headlong unadvisedly, without any consideration.² And in this be we taught that we should as speedily run to virtue as they run to vice, and that we should with no less diligence serve our Lord God than they serve their lord the devil. The just man considering the estate of evil folk determineth firmly with himself (as we should also) that utterly he will in no wise follow them; and therefore he saith: *Non congregabo conventicula eorum de sanguinibus: nec memor ero nominum eorum*—“I shall not gather the congregation of them from the blood, nor I shall not remember their names.” He saith ‘from the blood’ both because idolaters were wont to gather the blood of their sacrifice together and thereabout to do their ceremonies; and also for that all the life of evil men forsake reason, “which standeth all in the soul,” and follow sensuality, that standeth all in the blood. “The prophet saith not only that he will not gather their congregation together from the blood, that is to say, that he would do no sacrifice to those idols, but also that he would not remember their names, that is to say, that he would not talk nor speak of the voluptuous delights which are evil peoples’ gods,” which

*Wicked people worship
many gods.*

Blood
[99]

† 2 More omits *Cum ergo iustus descripsit statum suum, qui totus est in affectu erga deum & divina, despicitque ex alto...*, “Thus, when the righteous man describes his state, which consists totally in a desire for God and the things of God, he both looks down from on high at the...” (*CW* 1:366, 367). The remainder of the sentence, *statum hominum malorum & dicit*, More modifies and inserts as a separate sentence two lines below: “These words the prophet speaketh of wicked men” (ll. 4-5).

1. *as...saith*: Cf. Psalm 11:9.

2. *unadvisedly...consideration*: More’s expansion of *inconsiderate*, “thoughtlessly” (*CW* 1:366, 367).

we might yet lawfully do: showing us by that that a perfect man should abstain, not only from unlawful pleasures, but also from lawful, to the end that he may altogether wholly have his mind into heavenward and the more purely intend unto the contemplation of heavenly things.

A perfect man should abstain, not only from unlawful pleasures, but also from lawful.

5 And forasmuch as some man would peradventure think that it were folly for a man utterly to deprive himself from all pleasures, therefore the prophet addeth, *Dominus pars hereditatis meae*—“Our Lord is the part of mine inheritance,” as though he would say: ‘Marvel not though I forsake all thing to the intent that I may have the possession of God, in Whom¹ all other things also be possessed.’ This should be the voice of every good Christian man: *Dominus pars hereditatis meae*—“God is the part of mine inheritance.” For “certainly” we Christian people, to whom God is promised for an inheritance, ought to be ashamed to desire anything besides Him. But for that some man might haply
15 repute it for a great presumption that a man should promise himself God for his inheritance, therefore the prophet putteth thereto, *Tu es qui restitues hereditatem meam mihi*—“Thou, good Lord, art He that shall restore mine inheritance unto me,” as though he would say, ‘O good Lord, my God, I know well that I am nothing in respect of Thee, I wot well I am unable to ascend by mine own strength so high to have Thee in possession, but Thou art He that shalt draw me to Thee by Thy grace, Thou art He that shalt give Thyself in possession unto me.’ Let a righteous man then consider how great a felicity it is to have God fall unto him as his inheritance.

[100]

25 It followeth “in the psalm”: *Funes ceciderunt mihi in praeclaris*—“The cords have fallen to me nobly.”¹ The parts and lots “of inheritances” were of old time meted out and divided by cords “or ropes”. “These words, then, ‘the ropes or cords have fallen to me nobly,’ be as much to say, as the part or lot of mine inheritance is noble.” But forasmuch
30 as there be many men which though they be called to this great felicity (as indeed all Christian people are) yet they set little thereby and oftentimes change it for a small simple delight, therefore the prophet saith seemingly, *Hereditas mea praeclara est mihi*—“Mine inheritance is noble to me, as though he would say, that as it is noble in itself so it is
35 noble to me, “that is to say, I repute it noble,” and all other things in

Cords or ropes

¹10 More omits *denique*, “finally” (CW 1:368, 369).

1. *nobly*: More’s translation of *in praeclaris*, “in pleasant places” (CW 1:242).

respect of it I repute (as Saint Paul saith¹) for dung. But forasmuch as to have this light of understanding whereby a man may know this gift that is given him of God to be the gift of God, therefor [the prophet suingly^o] saith, *Benedicam Dominum qui tribuit mihi intellectum*—that is to say, “I shall bless our Lord, Which hath given me understanding.” But insomuch as a man oftentimes intendeth after reason to serve God, and, that notwithstanding, yet sensuality and the flesh repugneth,^o then is a man perfect when that not his soul only but also his flesh draw forth to Godward, after those words [of the prophet in another psalm]: *Cor meum et caro mea exultaverunt in Deum vivum*—that is to say, “My mind and my flesh both have joyed in the living God.”² And for this the prophet saith here suingly, *Et usque ad noctem increpauerunt me renes mei*—“My reins [or kidneys] hath chidden me unto the night,” that is to say, my reins, in which is wont to be the greatest inclination to concupiscence, not only now inclineth me not to sin but also chideth me, that is to say, withdraw me from sin unto the night, that is to say, they so far forth withdraw me from sin that willingly they afflict and pain my body. Affliction is [in Scripture] oftentimes signified by the night, [because it is the most discomfortable season]. Then [suingly the prophet] showeth what is the root of this privation [or taking away of fleshly concupiscence in man,] saying, *Providebam Deum semper in conspectu meo*—“I provided^o God always before my sight.” For if a man had God always before his eyes as a ruler of all his works, and in all his works should neither seek his own lucre,³ his glory, nor his own pleasure, but only the pleasure of God, he should shortly be perfect. And forasmuch as he that so doth prospereth in all things, therefore it followeth, *Ipse a dextris est mihi ne commovear*—“He is on my right hand that I be not moved or troubled.” Then the prophet declareth how great is the felicity of a just man, which shall be everlastingly blessed both in body and in soul; and therefore he saith, *Laetatum est cor meum*—“My soul is glad,” knowing that after death heaven is made ready for him. *Et caro mea requiescet in spe*—“And my flesh shall rest in hope,” that is to say, that though it joy not by and by, as in receiving his [glorious] estate immediately after the death, yet it resteth in the sepulchre with this

[101]

Reins

Night

The mean how a man
may soonest come to
perfection

[102]

The flesh to rest in
hope what it is.

4 *suingly* next / 7 *repugneth* resist / 22 *provided* placed, kept

1. *as ... saith*: Cf. Philippians 3:8.

2. *Cor...God*: Psalm 83:2.

3. *lucre*: The Latin has *utilitatem*, “advantage” (*CW* 1:370, 371).

hope, that it shall arise in the Day of Judgment immortal and shining with his soul. And also the prophet more expressly declareth | in the verse following, for where he said thus, "My soul is glad," he addeth the cause, saying, *Quoniam*¹ *non derelinques animam meam in inferno*—"For
 5 Thou shalt not leave my soul in hell." Also where the prophet said that his flesh should rest in hope, he showeth the cause, saying, *Nec dabis sanctum tuum videre corruptionem*—"Nor Thou shalt not suffer Thy Saint to see corruption," | that is to say, "Thou shalt not suffer the flesh of a good man to be corrupted."⁷ For that that was corruptible shall arise
 10 incorruptible. And forasmuch as Christ was the first which entered paradise and opened the life unto us, and was the first that rose again and the cause of our resurrection, therefore these words that we have spoken of the resurrection be principally understood of Christ, as Saint Peter, the apostle, hath declared;² and secondarily,³ they may be
 15 understood of us, in that we be the members of Christ, Which only never saw corruption, for His |holy| body was in His sepulchre nothing putrefied. Forasmuch, then, as the way of good living bringeth us to perpetual life of soul and body, therefore the prophet saith, *Notas mihi fecisti vias vitae*—"Thou hast made the ways of life known unto me." And
 20 because that all the felicity of that | standeth in the clear beholding and fruition of God, therefore it followeth, *Adimplebis me laetitia cum vultu tuo*—"Thou shalt fill me full of gladness with Thy cheer." And for that our felicity shall be everlasting, therefore he with, *Delectationes in dextera tua usque in finem*—"Delectation and joy shall be on Thy right hand for
 25 ever";—he saith 'on Thy right hand' because that our felicity is fulfilled in the vision and fruition of the humanity of Christ, Which sitteth in heaven on the right hand of |His Father's| majesty, after the words of Saint John, *Haec est tota merces, ut videamus Deum, et quem misisti Jesum Christum*—"This is all our reward, that we may behold God, and Jesus
 30 Christ Whom Thou hast sent"⁴: | to which reward He bring^o us That sitteth there and prayeth for us. Amen.⁷

30 *He bring* may He bring

| 2 More omits *hoc totum*, "all this" (CW 1:370, 371). / 20 More omits *vitae*, "life" (CW 1:370).

1. *Quoniam*: The Latin has *quia* (CW 1:370).

2. *as...declared*: Acts 2:26–31.

3. *secondarily*: Employed here in the sense of "secondly," More's usage antedates the earliest found in the OED (s.v. *secondarily* adv. 2).

4. *Haec...sent*: John 17:3.

TWELVE RULES¹ OF JOHN PICUS EARL OF MIRANDULA,
PARTLY EXCITING, PARTLY DIRECTING A MAN IN
SPIRITUAL BATTLE

5

*If We refuse the Way of Virtue for that^o it is Painful, for the Like Cause
ought We to refuse the Way of Sin.²*

Whoso^o to virtue esteemeth hard the way³ 10
Because we must have war continual
Against the world, the flesh, the devil, [^]that aye^o
Enforce^o themself to make us bond and thrall,^{o^}
Let him remember that choose what may he shall
Even after the world,⁴ yet must he need sustain^o 15
Sorrow, adversity, labour, grief, and pain.

The Second Rule.

Think⁵ in this wretched worldès busy woe⁶ 20
The battle more sharp and longer is I wis^o
[104] With more labour and less fruit also
In which the end of labour labour is:
[^]And when the world hath left us after this
Void of all virtue: the reward when we die 25
Is nought but fire[^] and pain perpetually.⁷

7 for that because / 10 Whoso Whoever / 12 aye ever, always / 13 Enforce exert / thrall slave / 15 sustain endure, suffer / 21 wis know

1. *TWELVE RULES*: Originally written in prose, Picus' "Rules" are transformed by More into poetry.

2. *If We . . . Way of Sin*: This sentence was originally a sidenote in the 1557 edition, published after More's death in 1535. Thus, it is an insertion by a later editor.

3. *Whoso . . . the way*: That is, "Whoever considers the way of virtue difficult. . ." The original reads: *si homini videtur dura via virtutis*, "if the way of virtue seems hard to someone" (CW 1:372, 373).

4. *choose . . . the world*: In other words, "whatever life one chooses, even the pursuit of worldly pleasures. . ." Such also is the sense of the Latin original: *quancunque elegerit vitam etiam secundum mundum* (CW 1:372).

5. *Think*: More's rendering of the Latin *recordetur*, "let him remember" (CW 1:372, 373). Throughout the "Rules" More translates *recordetur* variously—as "think" as well as "let him remember" (e.g., earlier in 50.14) and "consider" (as found below in 50.30). The recurrence of *recordetur* and variations thereof underscores the meditative character of the "Rules."

6. *wretched . . . woe*: More's expansion of *rebus mundi*, "affairs of the world" (CW 1:372, 373).

7. *And . . . perpetually*: These three lines are More's expansion of the Latin *& tandem paena eterna*, "and, finally, eternal punishment" (CW 1:372, 373).

The Third Rule.

Consider "well" that folly it is "and vain"
 5 To look for heaven "with pleasure and delight"^{Δ1}
 Since Christ our "Lord and sovereign" captain²
 Ascended never but by manly^o fight
 And bitter passion; then were it no right^o
 That any servant, "ye will yourself record,"^{o7}
 10 Should stand in better condition than his lord.³

The Fourth Rule.

Think how that we not only should not grudge
 15 But eke be "glad and joyful" of this fight,^{Δ4}
 And long therefor although we could not judge
 How that thereby redound^o unto us might
 Any "profit"^{Δ5}, but only "for delight"
 To be conformed "and like in some behaviour"
 20 To Jesu Christ our blessed Lord and Saviour.⁶

As often as thou dost war and strive,
 By the resistance of any sinful motion,^{o7}
 Against any of thy sensual wittès five,^o
 25 Cast in thy mind⁸ as oft "with good devotion"
 How thou resemblest Christ: as with sour potion

7 *manly* courageous / 8 *were it no right* it is not fitting / 9 *record* remember / 17 *redound* result / 23 *sinful motion* temptation / 24 *sensual wittès five* five senses

Δ1. *To look . . . delight*: Here More significantly alters the Latin original, which reads *credere ad caelum posse perveniri nisi per buismodi pugnam*, "to think one can reach heaven except by such a battle as this" (CW 1:372, 373).

2. *our . . . captain*: For the Latin *caput nostrum*, "our head" (CW 1:372, 373).

3. *then were . . . his lord*: An allusion to Matthew 10:24.

Δ4. *Think . . . this fight*: More alters the original Latin *recordetur non solum non esse aegre ferendam banc pugnam sed optandam*, "let him remember that he should not only not endure this battle unwillingly but should choose to bear it" (CW 1:372, 373).

Δ5. *And . . . profit*: More expands and alters the Latin *etiam si nullum inde nobis praemium perveniret . . .*, "even if we got no reward from it . . ." (CW 1:372, 373).

6. *To Jesu . . . Saviour*: The Latin reads *Christo deo & domino nostro*, "to Christ, our God and our lord" (CW 1:372, 373).

7. *As often . . . motion*: More's expansion of the Latin *& quotiens resistendo alicui tentationi*, "and whenever in resisting any temptation" (CW 1:372, 373).

8. *Cast in thy mind*: While the Latin has *cogita* and not *recordetur* (CW 1:372), the sense here is much the same, namely, "remember"—even "meditate upon"—the truth in question.

If thou pain thy taste †: remember therewithal
How Christ for thee tasted eysell^o and gall.¹

- [105] If thou withdraw thine handè and forbear
The ravin^o of anything: remember then 5
How His †innocent‡ handè nailèd were †.
If thou be tempt with^o pride: think how that when
He was in form of God, yet of a bondman
He took the shape and humbled Himself for thee
To the †most odious and vile‡ death of a tree.^{o2} 10
- Consider when thou art movèd to be wroth^o
He Who that was God, and of all men the best,³
Seeing Himself scornèd and scourgèd both, 15
And as a thief between two thievès threst^o
With all rebuke and shame:⁴ yet from his breast
Came never sign of wrath or of disdain,⁵
But patiently endurèd all the pain †.
- Thus every snare and engine^o of the devil 20
If thou this wise^o peruse them⁶ by and by:
There can be none so cursèd or so evil
But †to some virtue thou mayst it apply.
For oft thou shalt, resisting valiantly
The fiendès might and subtle fiery dart, † 25

2 *eysell* vinegar / 5 *ravin* theft, robbery / 7 *tempt with* tempted by / 10 *of a tree* on a cross / 12 *wroth* angry / 15 *threst* placed, [perhaps] thrust / 20 *engine* plot, wile / 21 *this wise* in this manner

†1 More omits *gulae resistens*, “to resist gluttony” (*CW* 1:372, 373). / 6 More omits *pro te ligno crucis*, “to the wood of the cross for your sake” (*CW* 1:372, 373). / 18 More omits *omnibus mansuetissime respondebat*, “and he answered everyone with the greatest mildness” (*CW* 1:372, 373).

1. *How Christ . . . gall*: More’s translation of *illum felle potatum & aceto*, “they gave him gall and vinegar to drink” (*CW* 1:372, 373). Cf. Matthew 27:34; Mark 15:36; John 19:29.

2. *He was . . . of a tree*: An allusion to Philippians 2:6–8.

3. *best*: The Latin has *iustissimus*, “most righteous” (*CW* 1:372, 373).

4. *Seeing Himself . . . and shame*: The Latin is *cum se tamen videret quasi latronem & illudi & conspui & flagellari & obprobriis omnibus affici & cum latronibus deputari*, “when he saw himself treated like a thief, mocked and spat upon, and scourged and subjected to all manner of insults and classed among thieves” (*CW* 1: 372, 373). Cf. Mark 15:27; Luke 23:33; John 19:18.

5. *Came . . . disdain*: Cf. John 19:1–11.

6. *peruse*: “Seemingly used in the sense ‘recount in order’; if so, it antedates the earliest usage in this sense, which *OED* gives as More’s *Dialogue of Comfort* (*CW* 12, 40/22)” (*CW* 1:244).

Our Saviour Christ resemble in some part. ^{Δ1}

The Fifth Rule.

5 Remember well that we in no wise must
 Neither in the foresaid espiritual armour,²
 Nor any other †remedy put our trust,
 But only in the virtue of our Saviour:³
 For He it is by Whose mighty power
 10 The world was vanquished and his^o prince cast out
 Which reigned before in all the earth about.⁴

In Him let us trust to overcome all evil,
 In Him let us put our hope and confidence
 15 To subdue the flesh⁵ and master the devil,
 To Him be all honour and lowly reverence;
 Oft should we require^o with all our diligence
 With prayer, †with tears, and lamentable plaints^{o†}
 The aid of His grace⁶ and His holy saints.⁷

[106]

20 The Sixth Rule.

†One sin⁸ vanquished, †look thou not tarry, †
 But lie in await for another very hour,⁹
 25 For as a wood^o lion, the fiend, our adversary,

10 *his* its / 17 *require* request, ask for / 18 *plaints* expressions of grief or sorrow / 25 *wood* raging

† 7 More omits *humano*, “human” (CW 1:244). / 23 More omits *recordare*, “remember that” (CW 1:374, 375).

Δ1. *Thus every . . . part*: More’s significant alteration and expansion of the Latin *et sic discurrendo per singula invenias nullam esse passionem quae te Christo aliqua ex parte conformem non efficiat*, “and thus, running over the details one by one, you can discover that there is no suffering which may not render you conformed to Christ in some way” (CW 1:372, 373).

2. *in the foresaid espiritual armour*: More’s rendering of the Latin *in illis duodecim armis*, “in those twelve weapons” (CW 1:372, 373); likely, the “Twelve Weapons of Spiritual Battle” that follow Picus’ “Rules.”

3. *our Saviour*: The Latin is *Iesu Christi* (CW 1:372).

4. *For He . . . earth about*: In these three lines, More paraphrases and expands the allusions to Revelation 12:9 and John 12:31 found in the Latin original (CW 1:372).

5. *the flesh*: In place of the Latin *mundum*, “the world” (CW 1: 372, 373).

6. *The aid of . . . grace*: The Latin is simply *auxilium*, “help” (CW 1:372, 373).

7. *In Him . . . saints*: These seven lines of verse are More’s expansion of less than three lines of Latin prose (CW 1:372).

8. *sin*: The Latin is *tentationem*, “temptation” (CW 1:374, 375).

9. *But lie . . . hour*: In other words, “But be on your guard, always expecting another temptation.”

Runneth about seeking whom he may devour;¹
 Wherefore continually upon thy tower,
 Lest he thee unpurveyed^o and unready catch,²
 Thou must with the prophet stand and keep watch.³

5

The Seventh Rule.

Enforce thyself not only for to stand
 Unvanquishèd against the devil's might,[†]
 But over that take valiantly on hand
 To vanquish him and put him unto flight:
 And that is when of the same deed, thought or sight⁴
 By which he would have thee with sin contract,⁵
 Thou takest occasion of some good [virtuous] act.⁶

10

15

Sometime he secretly casteth in thy mind⁷
 Some laudable deed to stir thee to pride,
 As vainglory maketh many a man blind.
 But let humility be thy sure guide,
 Thy good work to God let it be applied,
 Think it not thine but a gift of His
 Of Whose grace undoubtedly all goodness is.

20

3 unpurveyed unprepared

† 9 More omits *quam te tentat*, "when he tempts you" (*CW* 1:374, 375).

1. *For as . . . devour*: More's expansion of the Latin *quia Diabolus semper circuit quem devoret*, "since the devil always prowls after someone to devour" (*CW* 1:374, 375). The allusion is to 1 Peter 5:8.

2. *upon thy tower . . . catch*: In place of the Latin *servire in timore* ☞, "serve with fear and" (*CW* 1:374, 375).

3. *with the prophet . . . watch*: More alters the Latin, *dicere cum propheta* "*Super custodiam meam stabo*", "say with the prophet, 'I will stand on my guard'" (*CW* 1:374, 375). Cf. Habakkuk 2:1.

4. *deed, thought or sight*: More's clarification of *ex ea re*, "from the point on which" the devil has tempted you (*CW* 1:374, 375).

5. *with sin contract*: More uses "contract" in the sense of "become infected with something noxious, as disease [or] blame"; this usage antedates the earliest found in *OED* (s.v. *contract* v. 5).

6. *some good virtuous act*: More's rendering of *alicuius boni*, "something good" (*CW* 1:374, 375).

7. *he secretly casteth in thy mind*: The Latin is simply *tibi offert*, "he presents to you" (*CW* 1:374, 375). As Edwards notes, "More's use of ['cast'] in a transitive sense antedates the earliest recorded in *OED* (s.v. *cast* v. 42b)" (*CW* 1:245).

The Eighth Rule.

In time of battle so put thyself in preace^o
 As though thou shouldest after that victory
 5 Enjoy for ever a perpetual peace:
 For God of His goodness and liberal mercy¹
 May grant the gift, and eke thy proud enemy,
 Confounded and 「rebukèd」 by thy battle,
 Shall thee no more haply for very shame assail.²

[107]

10 But when thou mayest once the triumph obtain
 Prepare thyself and trim thee^o in thy gear³
 As thou shouldest incontinent^o fight again,
 「For if thou be ready the devil will thee fear:」
 15 Wherefore in any wise so even thou thee bear
 That thou remember and have ever in memory
 In victory battle, in battle victory.

The Ninth Rule.

20 If thou think thyself well fenced^o and sure
 「Against every subtle suggestiòn of vice,
 Consider frail glass may no distress endure,
 And great adventurers oft curse the dice:
 25 Jeopard^o not too far therefore an^o ye be wise,」
 But evermore eschew the occasiòns of sin,
 For † he that loveth peril shall perish therein.⁴

3 *in preace* “into the thick of the fight” (OED s.v. *press* sb. I.1c *in press*) / 12 *trim thee* dress yourself / 13 *incontinent* immediately, at once / 21 *fenced* armed, protected / 25 *Jeopard* Wager (OED s.v. *jeopard* v. 2) / *an* if

† 27 More omits *ut dicit sapiens*, “as the wise man says” (CW 1:374, 375).

1. *of His goodness and liberal mercy*: More’s expansion of the Latin *ex gratia sua*, “by his grace” (CW 1:374, 375).

2. *Shall thee . . . assail*: More’s rendering of *amplius non redibit*, “will not come back any more” (CW 1:374, 375).

3. *trim thee in thy gear*: As Edwards points out, “OED does not record a reflexive sense of the verb, and More’s usage in the sense of ‘dress’ antedates the earliest recorded there (s.v. *trim* v. 7)” (CW 1:245).

4. *he that . . . therein*: Ecclesiasticus 3:26b. According to Edwards, “the saying had become proverbial in Middle English” (CW 1:245).

The Tenth Rule.

In all temptation withstand the beginning: 5
 The cursèd infants of wretched Babylon
 ¶To suffer them wax^o is a jeopardous^o thing: ¶
 Beat out their brains therefore at the stone¹:|
 ¶Perilous is the canker^o that catcheth^o the bone: ¶
 Too late cometh the medicine if thou let the sore 10
 By long continuance increase more and more.²

[108] The Eleventh Rule.

!Though in the time of the battle and war 15
 The conflict seem bitter, sharp and sour,³
 Yet consider it is more pleasure⁴ far
 Over the devil⁵ to be a conqueror
 Than is in the use of thy beastly pleasure:⁶
 ¶Of virtue more joy the conscience hath within 20
 Than outward the body of all his filthy sin.⁷

In this point many men err for ¶negligence⁷⁷
 For they compare not the joy of the victory
 To the sensual pleasure of their concupiscence,⁸ 25
 But like rude beasts unadvisedly

7 *suffer them wax* allow them to grow / *jeopardous* hazardous / 9 *canker* disease, corruption / *catcheth* infects, attacks

!8 More omits *petra autem est Christus*, “and the rock is Christ” (CW 1:374, 375). / 15 More omits *recordare quod*, “remember that” (CW 1:374, 375).

1. *The cursèd . . . stone*: An allusion to Psalm 136:9.

2. *Too late . . . more*: More expands the Latin *quia sero medicina paratur*, “because it is too late to apply the medicine” (CW 1:374, 375), thereby filling out a quotation from Ovid’s *Remedia amoris* 91–92 (CW 1:246).

3. *Though in . . . sour*: More expands and alters the Latin *licet in ipso conflictu tentationis amara videatur pagna*, “although in the conflict with temptation the battle seems bitter” (CW 1:374, 375).

4. *more pleasure*: Instead of the Latin *dulcius*, “sweeter” (CW 1:374, 375).

5. *devil*: In place of the Latin *tentionem*, “sin” (CW 1:374, 375).

6. *Than is . . . pleasure*: The Latin is *quam ire ad peccatum ad quod te inclinat*, “than to commit the sin to which it inclines you” (CW 1:374, 375).

7. *err for negligence*: Instead of the Latin *decipiuntur*, “are deceived” (CW 1:374, 375).

8. *For they . . . concupiscence*: More expands and alters the Latin *quia non comparant dulcedinem victoriae dulcedini peccati*, “because they do not compare the sweetness of victory with the sweetness of sin” (CW 1:374, 375).

Lacking discretion they compare and apply^o
 Of their foul sin the voluptuous delight
 To the labourous travail of the conflict and fight.^{Δ1}

5 And yet alas he that oft hath known
 What grief it is by long experience
 Of his cruel enemy to be overthrown,
 Should once at the leastwise do his diligence
 To prove and essay^o with manly defence
 10 What pleasure there is, what honour, peace and rest
 In glorious victory, triumph and conquest.^{Δ2}

The Twelfth Rule.

15 Though thou be tempted, despair thee nothing:³
 Remember [the glorious apostle Saint] Paul
 When he had seen God in His perfect being,
 Lest such revelation should his heart extol,
 His flesh was suffered rebel against his soul:
 20 This did almighty God of His goodness provide
 To preserve His servant from the danger of pride.⁴

And here take heed that he whom God did love,^{Δ5}
 And for His most especial^{Δ6} vessel chose,
 25 Ravished into the third heaven above,

[109]

1 *apply* compare, weigh against / 9 *essay* assay, put to the test

Δ1. *But like . . . fight*: In these four lines, More significantly expands and alters the Latin *Sed comparant pugnam voluptati*, “Rather they compare the battle with the pleasure” (CW 1:374, 375).

Δ2. *And yet . . . conquest*: In these seven lines, More significantly expands and alters the Latin *& tamen homo qui miles expertus est quid sit cedere tentationi deberet semel saltem experiri quid sit vincere tentationem*, “and yet a person who has experienced a thousand times what it is like to yield to temptation should experience at least once what it is like to conquer temptation” (CW 1:374, 375).

3. *Though thou . . . nothing*: Here More condenses the Latin *propterea quod tentaris ne credas te a deo derelictum aut deo parum gratum esse aut parum iustum & perfectum*, “just because you are tempted, do not think that God has abandoned you or that you are less pleasing to God or less righteous and perfect” (CW 1:374, 375).

4. *Paul . . . of pride*: Here and in the following lines (57.23–58.1), the allusion is to 2 Corinthians 12:1–10, wherein Saint Paul says he received “a thorn . . . in the flesh, a messenger of Satan, to harass [him], to keep [him] from being too elated” (RSV).

Δ5. *he whom God did love*: The Latin is *Paulus* (CW 1:374).

Δ6. *most especial*: The Latin is *electionis*, “chosen” (CW 1:374, 375).

Yet stood in peril lest pride might him depose¹ †;
 Well ought we then our heartès fence² and close
 Against vainglory, † the mother of reproof,³
 The † very crop and † root of all mischief.³

5

Against this † pomp and wretched worldès gloss⁴
 † Consider how Christ⁴ † the Lord, sovereign power, †
 Humbled Himself for us unto the cross:
 And † peradventure † death † within one hour † †
 † Shall us bereave⁵ wealth, riches and honour: †
 And bring us down full low⁵ † both small and great †
 To † vile carrion and wretched † wormès meat.⁶

10

THE TWELVE WEAPONS OF SPIRITUAL BATTLE, WHICH
 EVERYMAN SHOULD HAVE AT HAND WHEN THE PLEA-
 SURE OF A SINFUL TEMPTATION COMETH TO MIND⁷

15

The pleasure little and short.⁸

The followers grief and heaviness.^{Δ9}

20

The loss of a better thing.

† This † life a dream and a shadow.

3 *reproof* reproof / 6 *gloss* “superficial luster” (*OED* s.v. *gloss* sb.2 1a) / 10 *us bereave* deprive us of

†1 More omits *sicut ipse dicit de se* “*Ne magnitudo revelationum extolleret me, datus est mihi stimulus carnis meae qui me collaphizet*”, “as he himself said about himself, ‘Lest the greatness of the revelations should lift me up, I have been given a goad in the flesh to buffet me’ [a partial paraphrase of 2 Corinthians 12:7] (*CW* 1:374, 375). / 7 More omits *unicum remedium est*, “the only remedy is” (*CW* 1:376, 377). / 9 More omits *imitos*, “unwillingly” (*CW* 1:376, 377).

1. *Yet stood . . . depose*: The Latin is *tamen erat in periculo ne de suis virtutibus superbiret*, “was nevertheless in danger of taking pride in his virtues” (*CW* 1:374, 375).

2. *fence*: Used here in the sense of “screen, shield, or protect,” this instance antedates the earliest recorded in *OED* (s.v. *fence* v. 2).

3. *mischief*: The Latin is *malorum*, “evil” (*CW* 1:376, 377).

4. *Christ*: The Latin is *deus*, “God” (*CW* 1:376, 377).

5. *bring us down full low*: More’s rendering of the Latin *nos humiliabit*, “will humiliate us” (*CW* 1:376, 377).

6. *wormès meat*: According to Edwards, this is a “stock locution of proverbial force in Middle English” (*CW* 1:247).

7. *TWELVE WEAPONS*: More translates the title as well as the list of twelve weapons from the Latin; but the meditations in verse upon each weapon are More’s invention.

8. *little and short*: More reverses the order of the Latin *brevis* & *exigua* (*CW* 1:376).

Δ9. *The followers grief and heaviness*: More alters the Latin, which reads *Comites fastidium* & *anxietas*, “Its companions are disgust and anxiety” (*CW* 1:376, 377).

The death at our hand^o and unaware.

The fear of impenitent departing.¹

Eternal joy,² eternal pain.

The nature and dignity³ of man.

5 The peace of a good mind.

The "great" benefits of God.

The "painful" cross of Christ.

The witness of martyrs and example of saints.

10 "The Twelve Weapons have we more⁴ at length Declared as Followeth.

The Pleasure Little and Short.

Consider well the pleasure that thou hast,

15 Stand it in touching or in wanton sight,

In vain smell or in thy licorous^o taste,

Or finally, in whatsoever delight

Occupied is thy wretched appetite:

Thou shalt it find, when thou hast all cast^o,

20 Little, simple, short and suddenly past.

[110]

The Followers Grief and Heaviness.

Any good work if thou with labour do,

25 The labour goeth, the goodness doth remain:

If thou do evil with pleasure joined thereto,

The pleasure which thine evil work doth contain

Glideth⁵ his way, thou must him not restrain:

The evil then in thy breast cleaveth behind

30 With grudge of heart and heaviness of mind.

1 *at our hand* imminent, looming / 16 *licorous* greedy, lecherous / 19 *cast* considered, reckoned

1. *The fear* . . . *departing*: The Latin is *Suspicio impaenitentiae*, "The suspicion that you will not repent" (CW 1:376, 377).

2. *joy*: The Latin is *praemium*, "reward" (CW 1:376, 377).

3. *nature and dignity*: More reverses the order of the Latin *dignitas* & *natura* (CW 1:376).

4. *we more*: Campbell and Reed point out a possible play on words—"We More" (EW 386).

5. *Glideth*: The OED lists this as the earliest recorded usage in the sense of "slip away" or "elude one's grasp" (s.v. *glide* v. 5b).

The Loss of a Better Thing.

When thou labourest thy pleasure for to buy
 Upon the price look thou well thee advise,
 Thou sellest thy soul therefor even by and by
 To thy most utter despiteous^o enemies:
 O mad merchant, O foolish merchandise,
 To buy a trifle, O childish reckoning,
 And pay therefore so dear a precious thing!

5

10

⁂This⁂ Life a Dream and a Shadow.

This wretched life, the trust and confidence
 Of whose continuance maketh us bold to sin,
 Thou perceivest well by experience,
 Since that hour in which it did begin,
 It holdeth on the course and will not lin,^o
 But fast it runneth on and passen shall
 As doth a dream or shadow on the wall.¹

15

20

[111]

Death at our Hand and Unaware.

Consider well that ever night and day,
 While that we busily provide and care
 For our disport,^o revel, mirth and play,
 For pleasant melody and dainty fare,
 Death stealeth on full slyly and unaware:
 He lieth at hand and shall us enterprise^o
 We wot^o not how soon nor in what manner wise.

25

30

Fear of Impenitent Departing.

If thou shouldst God offend, think how therefor
 Thou were forthwith^o in very jeopardous case:

6 *despiteous* pitiless, cruel / 17 *lin* cease / 25 *disport* entertainment / 28 *enterprise* attack, overcome / 29 *wot* know / 34 *forthwith* immediately

1. *shadow on the wall*: As Edward points out, "The phrase is biblical in origin (cf. Ps. 143:4; Eccles. 7:1, 8:13, 9:8; Wis. 2:5) and had become proverbial in Middle English" (*CW* 1:247). Given Picus' Neoplatonic tendencies, it may also be an allusion to the shadows cast on the wall in Plato's image of the cave (*Republic* VII).

For haply^o thou shouldst not live an hour more
 Thy sin to cleanse, and though thou haddest space,
 Yet peradventure shouldst thou lack the grace:
 Well ought we then be feared to do offence
 5 Impenitent lest we departen hence.

Eternal Reward, Eternal Pain.

Thou seest this world is but a thoroughfare,¹
 10 See thou behave thee wisely with thine host;
 Hence must thou needs depart naked and bare,
 And after thy desert look to what cost^o
 Thou art conveyed at such time as thy ghost^o
 From this wretched carcass shall dissever:²
 15 Be it joy or pain, endure it shall for ever.

The Nature and Dignity of Man.

Remember how God hath made thee reasonable
 20 Like unto His image and figure,
 And for thee suffered pains intolerable
 That He for angel never would endure.³
 Regard, O man, thine excellent nature;
 Thou that with angel art made to be equal,
 25 For very shame be not the devil's thrall.

[112]

The Peace of a Good Mind.

Why lovest thou so this brittle^o world's joy?
 30 Take all the mirth, take all the fantasies,
 Take every game, take every wanton⁴ toy,

1 *haply* perhaps / 12 *cost* coast, region (OED s.v. *cost* obs.) / 13 *ghost* soul, spirit / 29 *brittle* fleeting, transient

1. *this world . . . thoroughfare*: Edwards compares this with a line from Chaucer: *This world nys but a thoroughfare ful of wo* ["The Knight's Tale," 1.2847] (CW 1:247).

2. *at such time . . . dissever*: In other words, "when your soul is separated from your body [at death]."

3. *for thee . . . endure*: That is, Christ endured intolerable suffering for the sake of men, not angels.

4. *wanton*: Used in the sense of "unrestrained" or "impelled by caprice or fancy;" this instance antedates the earliest recorded in OED (s.v. *wanton*, a. 3c).

Take every sport that men can thee devise:
 And among them all on warrantise^o
 Thou shalt no pleasure comparable find
 To th' inward gladness of a virtuous mind.

5

The "Great" Benefits of God.

Beside that God thee bought and formèd both
 Many a benefit hast thou received of His:
 Though thou have moved Him often to be wroth
 Yet He thee kept hath and brought thee up to this,
 And daily calleth upon thee to His bliss:
 How mayst thou then to Him unloving be
 That ever hath been so loving unto thee?

10

15

The "Painful" Cross of Christ.

When thou in flame of the temptation friest
 Think on the very lamentable pain,
 Think on the piteous cross of woeful Christ,
 Think on His blood beat out at every vein,
 Think on His precious heart carvèd in twain,
 Think how for thy redemption all was wrought:
 Let Him not lose thee that He so dear hath bought.

[113]

25

The Witness of Martyrs and Example of Saints.

Sin to withstand say not thou lackest might:
 Such allegations^o folly it is to use;
 The witness of saints, and martyrs' constant sight¹
 Shall thee of slothful cowardice accuse:

30

2 *on warrantise* "it can be guaranteed that" (OED s.v. *warrantise* v. obs. 2) / 29 *allegations* excuses

1. *sight*: Given that one edition has "fight" (1525) and others have "sight" (1510, 1557) here, there is some discussion regarding which reading is correct. Edwards argues, "In this context 'fight' makes better sense than 'sight,' since 'constant fight' seems to stand in opposition to 'slothful cowardice'" (CW 1:248). On the other hand, these lines are most likely an allusion to the account of saints and martyrs found in Hebrews, chapters 11, following which the recipients of the epistle are exhorted to persevere, being "surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses" (12:1a). In Hebrews, at least, it appears that the author has the sight of the saints and martyrs in mind.

God will thee help if thou do not refuse:
 If other have stand or this thou mayst eftsoon:^{o1}
 Nothing impossible is that hath been done.⁷

5 THE TWELVE PROPERTIES² "OR CONDITIONS" OF A
 LOVER

- To love one alone and contemn^o all other for that one.
 To think him unhappy that is not with his love.³
 10 To adorn himself for the pleasure of his love.
 To suffer all thing, though it were death, to be with his love.⁴
 To desire also to suffer harm for his love, and to think that hurt
 sweet.⁵
 To be with his love ever as he may, if not in deed, yet in thought.
 15 To love all thing that pertaineth unto his love.¹
 To covet the praise of his love, and not to suffer any dispraise.^o
 To believe of his love all things excellent, and to desire that all
 folk should think the same.
 To weep often with his love: in presence for joy, in absence for
 20 sorrow.⁶
 To languish ever, and ever to burn in the desire of his love.
 To serve his love, nothing thinking of any reward or profit.

2 *eftsoon* soon afterwards / 8 *contemn* despise / 16 *dispraise* reproach

†15 More omits *amicos omnes, domus, uestes, imagines*, "all his friends, houses, clothes, pictures" (CW 1:376, 377).

1. *If other . . . eftsoon*: That is, if others (i.e., the saints and martyrs) have stood against temptation, then you are able to do so as well.

2. *TWELVE PROPERTIES*: After translating the title and list of properties from the Latin original, More inserts his meditations on the twelve properties in verse (64.1–70.17). At the end (following the asterisks in this edition), More renders in verse the lines of prose found immediately after the twelfth property in Picus' Latin (70.21–71.6).

3. *his love*: As Edwards points out, "The pronouns in Picus' Latin show that the beloved is a man. By translating 'his love' More makes the object of the love ambiguous; the reader of the English would assume 'his love' is a woman" (CW 1:248).

4. *To adorn . . . his love*: More reverses the order of Picus' Latin, placing the fourth property before the third.

5. *To desire . . . sweet*: This property comes ninth in the Latin (CW 1:376, 377).

6. *in presence . . . sorrow*: More reverses the order of the Latin—*vel si absens ex dolore, vel si praesens ex laetitia*, "either from sorrow when he is away or from joy when he is present" (CW 1:376, 377).

[114] *The Twelve Properties we have at length more openly
Expressed in Balade^o as it Followeth.*

The first point is to love but one alone,
And for that one all other to forsake: 5
For whoso loveth many loveth none:
The flood that is in many channels take
In each of them shall feeble stream^s make:
The love that is divided among many
Unneth sufficeth that any part have any. 10

So thou that hast thy love set unto God
In thy remembrance this imprint and grave^o:
As He in sovereign dignity is odd^o,
So will He in love no parting^o fellows have: 15
Love Him therefore with all that He thee gave:
For body, soul, wit, cunning, mind and thought,
Part will He none, but either all or naught.

The Second Property. 20

Of his love, lo, the sight and company
To the lover so glad and pleasant is,
That whoso hath the grace to come thereby
He judgeth him in perfect joy and bliss: 25
And whoso of that company doth miss,
Live he in never so prosperous estate,^o
He thinketh him wretched and infortunate.

So should the lover of God esteem that he 30
Which all the pleasure hath, mirth and disport,
That in this world is possible to be,
Yet till the time that he may once resort
[115] Unto that blessed, joyful, heavenly port
Where he of God may have the glorious sight, 35

Is void of perfect joy and sure delight.

The Third Property.

5 The third point of a perfect lover is
 To make him fresh to see that all thing been^o
 Appointed well and nothing set amiss
 But all well fashioned, proper, goodly, clean:
 That in his person, there be nothing seen
 10 In speech, apparel, gesture, look or pace
 That may offend or minish any grace.

So thou that wilt with God get into favour
 Garnish¹ thyself up in as goodly wise
 15 As comely be^o, as honest in behaviour,
 As it is possible for thee to devise:
 I mean not hereby that thou shouldest arise
 And in the glass upon thy body prowl,²
 But with fair virtue to adorn thy soul.

20

The Fourth Property.

If love be strong, hot, mighty and fervent,
 There may no trouble, grief, or sorrow fall,
 25 But that the lover would be well content
 All to endure and think it eke too small,
 Though it were death, so he might therewithal
 The joyful presence of that person get
 On whom he hath his heart and love yset.^o

30

Thus should of God the lover be content
 Any distress or sorrow to endure,
 Rather than to be from God absent,

6 *all thing been* all things are / 15 *as comely be* as is proper, seemly / 29 *yset* set

1. *Garnish*: Used here in the sense of “dress or clothe, especially in an elegant fashion,” this instance antedates the earliest recorded in *OED* (s.v. *garnish* v. 3), which is from More’s *Dialogue of Comfort against Tribulation* III: *It maketh vs gooe much more gay and glorious in sight, garnysbed in sylke*.
 2. *prowl*: “Although prowl can mean ‘to search, seek for something (without moving about)’... More seems to use the word in the strained sense ‘gaze,’ perhaps for the sake of rhyme” (*CW* 1:248–249).

[116]

And glad to die, so that he may be sure
 By his departing hence for to procure,
 After this valley dark, the heavenly light,
 And of his love the glorious blessed sight.

5

The Fifth Property.

Not only a lover content is in his heart
 But coveteth eke and longeth to sustain
 Some labour, incommodity,^o or smart,^o
 Loss, adversity, trouble, grief, or pain:
 And of his sorrow joyful is and fain,^o
 And happy thinketh himself that he may take
 Some misadventure for his lover's sake.

10

15

Thus shouldest thou, that lovest God also,
 In thine heart wish, covet and be glad
 For Him to suffer trouble, pain and woe:
 For Whom if thou be never so woe bestead,^o
 Yet thou ne shalt^o sustain (be not adread)^o
 Half the dolour,^o grief and adversity
 That He already suffered hath for thee.

20

The Sixth Property.

25

The perfect lover longeth for to be
 In presence of his love both night and day,
 And if it haply so befall that he
 May not as he would, he will yet as he may
 Ever be with his love, that is to say,
 Where his heavy body nil^o be brought
 He will be conversant^o in mind and thought.

30

Lo in like manner the lover of God should,
 At the least in such wise as he may,

35

10 *incommodity* disadvantage, inconvenience / *smart* pain (typically physical) / 12 *fain* glad
 / 19 *woe bestead* surrounded or beset by sorrow (OED s.v. *bested, bestead* pa. pple. 4) / 20 *thou
 ne shalt* you will not / *adread* frightened / 21 *dolour* physical suffering / 31 *nil* will not /
 32 *conversant* present

If he may not in such wise as he would,
 Be present with God and conversant alway;
 For certes,^o whoso list,^o he may purvey,^o
 Though all the world would him therefrom bereaven¹
 5 To bear his body in earth, his mind in heaven.

[117]

The Seventh Property.

There is no page or servant, most or least,
 10 That doth upon his love attend and wait,
 There is no little worm, no simple beast,
 Ne none so small a trifle or conceit,
 Lace, girdle, point,² or proper glove strait,^o
 But that if to his love it have been near,
 15 The lover hath^o it precious, lief^o and dear.

So every relic, image or picture
 That doth pertain to God's magnificence,
 The lover of God should with all busy cure^o
 20 Have it in love, honour and reverence³
 And specially give them pre-eminence
 Which daily done His blessed body wirche,^{o4}
 The quick^o relics, the ministers of His Church.⁵

25 The Eighth Property.

A very lover above all earthly thing
 Coveteth and longeth evermore to hear

3 *certes* certainly / *whoso list* whoever [He] wishes / *purvey* contrive, make arrangements / 13 *strait* tight-fitting / 15 *hath* deems / *lief* beloved (OED s.v. *lief* a. A.1) / 19 *busy cure* anxious concern (CW 1:249) / 22 *wirche* make / 23 *quick* living

1. *Though all . . . bereaven*: In other words, "even if the entire world wanted to deprive him [of heaven]."

2. *point*: "A tagged lace or cord, of twisted yarn, silk, or leather, for attaching the hose to the doublet, lacing a bodice, and fastening various parts where buttons are now used; often used as a type of something of small value" (OED s.v. *point* sb.¹ II.5).

3. *So every . . . reverence*: For a similar defense of images found elsewhere in More's writings, Edwards suggests CW 6:47.19–31 (CW 1:249).

4. *Which daily . . . wirche*: In other words, "Those who daily cause his body to be made²—that is, consecrate the host" (CW 1:249).

5. *The quick . . . Church*: "Priests are left behind by Christ, but unlike the ordinary relics they are alive" (CW 1:249).

The honour, laud, commendation and praising,
 And everything that may the fame clear^o
 Of his love: he may in no manner
 Endure to hear that therefrom mighten vary
 Or anything sound into^o the contrary.

5

The lover of God should covet in like wise
 To hear His honour, worship, laud and praise,
 Whose sovereign goodness none heart may comprise,^o
 Whom hell, earth, and all the heaven obeys,
 Whose perfect lover ought by no manner ways
 To suffer the cursed words of blasphemy,
 Or anything spoken of God unreverently.

10

[118]

The Ninth Property.

15

A very lover believeth in his mind
 On whomsoever he hath his heart ybent,^o
 That in that person men may nothing find
 But honourable, worthy and excellent,
 And eke surmounting far in his entent^o
 All other that he hath known by sight or name:
 And would that every man should think the same.

20

Of God likewise so wonderful and high
 All thing esteem and judge his lover ought,
 So reverence, worship, honour and magnify,^o
 That all the creatures in this world ywrought^o
 In comparison should he set at nought,
 And glad be if he might the mean^o devise
 That all the world would think in like wise.

25

30

The Tenth Property.

The lover is of colour dead and pale;
 There will no sleep into his eyes stalk;

35

He favourèth neither meat, wine, nor ale;
 He mindeth not what men about him talk;
 But eat he, drink he, sit, lie down or walk,¹
 He burneth ever as it were with a fire
 5 In the fervent heat of his desire.

Here should the lover of God ensample take
 To have Him continually in remembrance,
 With him in prayer and meditation wake,
 10 While other^o play, revel, sing, and dance:
 None earthly joy, disport, or vain plesance^o
 Should him delight, or anything remove
 His ardent mind from God, his heavenly love.

15 The Eleventh Property.

Diversely passioned² is the lover's heart:
 Now pleasant hope, now dread and grievous fear,
 Now perfect bliss, now bitter sorrow smart;
 20 And whether his love be with him, or elsewhere,
 Oft from his eyes there falleth many a tear,—
 For very joy, when they together be;
 When they be sundered, for adversity.

[119]

25 Like affections feeleth eke the breast
 Of God's lover³ in prayer and meditation:
 When that his love liketh in him rest
 With inward^o gladness of pleasant contemplation,
 Out break the tears for joy and delectation;^o
 30 And when his love list eft to part him fro,⁴
 Out break the tears again for pain and woe.

10 *other* others / 11 *plesance* pleasure, delight / 28 *inward* inner / 29 *delectation* delight

1. *But eat . . . walk*: In other words, "Whether he eats, drinks, . . ."

2. *passioned*: Used in the sense of "affected with or possessed by passion," this instance antedates the earliest recorded in *OED* (s.v. *passioned* ppl. a. 1).

3. *Like affections . . . lover*: That is, "The one who loves God feels similar affections . . ."

4. *And when . . . fro*: In other words, "And afterward when his love desires to depart from him..."

The Twelfth Property.

A very lover will his love obey:
 His joy it is and all his appetite
 To pain himself in all that ever he may,
 That person in whom he set hath his delight
 Diligently to serve both day and night
 For very love, without any regard
 To any profit, guerdon^o or reward.

5

10

So thou likewise that hast thine heart yset
 Upward to God, so well thyself endeavour,
 So studiously that nothing may thee let
 Not for His service any wise dissever:¹
 Freely look eke thou serve that thereto never
 Trust of reward or profit do thee bind,
 But only faithful heart and loving mind.

15

* * *

20

Wageless² to serve, three things may us move:³
 First, if the service self^o be desirable:
 [120] Second, if they whom that we serve and love
 Be very good and very amiable: †
 Thirdly, †of reason be we serviceable⁴
 Without the gaping after any more †
 To such as have done much for us before.

25

Serve God for love, then, not for hope of meed:^o

9 *guerdon* requital, reward / 22 *self* in itself / 29 *meed* reward, wages

† 24 More omits *sicut solemus dicere* “*Servimus illi propter suas virtutes*”, “as we ordinarily say, ‘We serve him because of his virtues’” (*CW* 1:378, 379).

1. *Not for*. Edwards argues, “All early editions read ‘Not for,’ which does not make sense here; the error *for* for *pro* is commonplace. Possibly ‘Not’ is an error for ‘Nor,’ which would make the syntax clearer” (*CW* 1:249). Following Edwards’ suggestion, then, the line might mean: “nor separate [you] from His service in any way.”

2. *Wageless*: Used here in the sense of “not earning or receiving wages,” this instance antedates the earliest recorded in *OED* (s.v. *wageless* a. 2).

3. *Wageless to serve . . . move*: That is, “Apart from the incentive of wages, three things may lead us to serve.” As Edwards points out, this and the following stanza are based upon Picus’ Latin; but “the parallels are selective and not very close”—especially in the latter stanza (*CW* 1:249).

4. *of reason . . . serviceable*: In other words, “we reasonably serve. . .”

What service may so desirable be
 As where all turneth to thine own speed?²
 Who is so good, so lovely eke as He
 Who hath already done so much for thee,
 5 As He that first thee made, and on the rood³
 Eft thee redeemed with His precious blood?⁴

A PRAYER² OF |PICUS MIRANDULA UNTO GOD

10 O holy God of dreadful⁵ majesty,
 Verily one in three and three in one,
 Whom | angels serve, Whose | work all creatures be,
 Which heaven and earth directest all alone |:
 We Thee beseech, good Lord, with woeful moan,
 15 Spare us wretches and wash away our guilt
 That we be not by Thy just anger spilt.

In strait⁶ balance of rigorous judgment
 If Thou shouldst our sin ponder and weigh,
 20 Who able were to bear Thy punishment?³
 The whole engine of all this world,⁴ †I say,⁷

2 *speed* success / 5 *rood* cross / 10 *dreadful* inspiring reverence or awe (OED s.v. *dreadful* a. 2a) / 18 *strait* exact, strict

†8 More omits *Ioannis*, “Giovanni” (CW 1:378, 379). / 12 More omits *super excelsi flammantia moenia mundi . . . turba beata chori*, “beyond the lofty, flaming walls of the world [by] the blessed multitude of the [angelic] choir” (CW 1:378, 379). / More omits *immensum hoc oculis spectabile nostris omnipotens quondam dextra*, “[who] long ago [created] with your omnipotent right hand [this] immense [work] which is visible to our eyes” (CW 1:378, 379). / 13 More omits *nutu . . . cuius ab imperio fulmina missa cadunt*, “with your nod, by whose command the thunderbolts are thrown down” (CW 1:379, 380).

Δ1. *Serve God . . . blood?*: This stanza is a complete reworking of Picus' text, bearing very little resemblance to the Latin original (see CW 1:378.6–14).

2. *A PRAYER*: The only portion of More's translations of Picus to survive in manuscript form, this prayer was originally composed by Picus in verse. Its Latin title is *Deprecatoria ad Deum*, “A prayer to God for mercy” (CW 1:378, 379).

3. *Who able . . . punishment?*: More condenses Picus' Latin, which reads *quis queat horrendum viventis ferre flagellum vindicis & plagas sustinuisse graves?*, “who could bear the horrible scourge of the living avenger and endure his heavy strokes?” (CW 1:378, 379). The allusion in this and the previous two lines is to Psalm 129:3 (cf. also Psalm 142:2; Romans 3:20; and Galatians 2:16).

4. *The whole . . . world*: More's expansion of the Latin *machina* (CW 1:378, 379). In context the “whole engine of all this world” means something like “universal frame,” perhaps after Lucretius' *machina mundi* (OED s.v. *engine* sb. 6a *engine of the world*). More also employs the phrase in his *Dialogue concerning Heresies* I: “there was a god, eyther maker or gouernour or bothe, of all this hole engine of the worlde” (CW 6:73.4-5).

The engine that endure shall for aye,¹
 "With such examination" might not stand
 "Space of a moment in" Thine angry hand.²

[121]

Who is not born in sin original?³ 5
 Who doth not actual sin in sundry wise?⁴
 But thou, good Lord, art He that sparest all,
 With piteous mercy tempering justice;
 For as Thou dost rewardè us devise^o
 Above our merit, so dost Thou dispense 10
 Thy punishment far under our offence.

More is Thy mercy far than all our sin:
 To give them also that unworthy be
 More godly is, "and more mercy therein." 15
 Howbeit,^o worthy enough are they, pardee,^o
 Be they never so unworthy, whom that He
 List^o to accept: which^o wheresoever He taketh
 Whom He unworthy findeth worthy maketh.⁵ 20

Wherefore, "good Lord, that aye merciful art,
 Unto Thy grace and sovereign dignity
 We silly^o wretches cry with humble heart:
 Our sins forget and our malignity:"
 With piteous eyes of Thy benignity 25
 Friendly look on us once, Thine own, we be,
 Servants or sinners⁶ whether it liketh Thee.

1 *aye* always / 9 *devise* give / 16 *Howbeit* Nevertheless / *pardee* indeed / 18 *List* Pleases / *which* who [i.e., God] / 23 *silly* pitiful, miserable

1. *The engine . . . aye*: The Latin reads *Machina supremo non peritura die*, "that structure which is not to perish utterly on the last day" (*CW* 1:378, 379).

2. *band*: The Latin is *dextrae*, "right hand" (*CW* 1:378, 379).

3. *Who . . . sin original?*: Picus' Latin is *Quae mens non primae damnata ab origine culpae?*, "What mind is not condemned from the beginning by original sin?" (*CW* 1:378, 379). *Original sin* is a theological term denoting the loss of sanctifying grace that all men inherit from Adam; according to St. Paul, "sin entered the world through one man [Adam], and through sin death" (Romans 5:12).

4. *Who . . . in sundry wise?*: In other words, "Who does not commit actual sin in various ways?" *Actual sin* is a theological term referring to sin(s) committed as opposed to *original sin* inherited from Adam (see note 4).

5. *which . . . worthy maketh*: That is, however unworthy they may be when He finds them, He takes them and makes them worthy.

6. *sinner*s: The Latin here and below is *crimina*, "criminals" (*CW* 1:380, 381).

Sinners, if Thou our crime behold, certain,
 Our crime the work of our uncourteous^o mind,
 But if Thy gifts Thou behold again,
 Thy gifts noble, wonderful and kind,
 5 Thou shalt us then the same persons find
 Which are to Thee, and have be long space^o
 Servants by nature, children by Thy grace.

[122]

But this Thy goodness, wringeth^o us, alas,
 10 For we whom grace had made Thy children dear,
 Are made Thy guilty folk by our trespass;
 Sin hath us guilty made this many a year.
 But let Thy grace, Thy grace that hath no peer,
 Of our offence surmounten^o all the preace,^o
 15 That in our sin Thine honour may increase.

For though Thy wisdom, though Thy sovereign power,
 May otherwise appear sufficiently
 As thingès which Thy creatures every hour
 20 All with one voice declare and testify,
 Thy goodness yet, Thy singular mercy,
 Thy piteous heart, Thy gracious indulgence
 Nothing so clearly sheweth^o as our offence.

25 What but our sin hath showed that mighty love
 Which able was Thy dreadful majesty¹
 To draw down into earth from heaven above
 And crucify God, that we, poor wretches we,
 Should from our filthy sin¹ ycleansèd^o be
 30 With blood and water of Thine own side,²
 That streamed from Thy blessed woundès wide?

2 *uncourteous* unruly, discourteous / 6 *have be long space* have been for a long time / 9 *wringeth* presses upon / 14 *surmounten* surpass, overcome / *preace* pressure / 23 *sheweth* shows / 29 *ycleansed* cleansed

‡29 More omits *contractus patrio de semine*, “contracted from the seed of our father” (CW1:380, 381).

1. *Thy dreadful majesty*: More repeats this phrase from the opening line of Picus' prayer (66.12). The Latin is simply *dominum*, “the Lord” (CW 1:380, 381).

2. *With blood . . . side*: Cf. John 19:34.

Thy love and pity, thus, O heavenly King,
 Our evil maketh matter of Thy goodness,
 O love, O pity, our wealth aye providing,
 O goodness serving Thy servants "in distress,"
 O love, O pity, well nigh now thankless, 5
 O goodness, "mighty, gracious and wise,"
 And yet almost vanquished with our vice.

Grant, I Thee pray, such heat into mine heart²
 That to this love of Thine may be equal; 10
 [123] Grant me from Satan's service to astart,^o
 With whom me rueth^o so longe to have be thrall †;
 Grant me †, "good Lord and Creator of all,"
 The flame to quench of all sinful desire³
 And in Thy love set all mine heart afire; 15

That when the journey of this deadly life
 My silly ghost hath finishèd, and thence
 Departen must "without his fleshly wife,"⁴
 Alone into his Lordés "high" presence, † 20
 He may Thee find, "O well of indulgence,"
 "In Thy lordship" not as a lord, but rather
 As "a very tender loving" father. "Amen." †

11 *astart* escape / 12 *me rueth* I regret

†12 More omits *excusso deposuisse iugo*, "and let us cast off his yoke" (*CW* 1:380, 381). /
 13 More omits *precor*, "I beg you" (*CW* 1:380, 381). / 20 More omits *Promissi regni felici sorte potitus*, "coming to possess the happy lot of the promised kingdom" (*CW* 1:380, 381). /
 23 More omits *FINIS*, "THE END" (*CW* 1:380, 381).

2. *mine heart*: The Latin is *nostris cordibus*, "our hearts" (*CW* 1:380, 381). In these last two stanzas, More changes several first person plural to first person singular forms.

3. *The flame . . . desire*: The Latin is *extingui vesanae incendia mentis*, "that the flames of our mad minds may be quenched" (*CW* 1:380, 381).

4. *fleshly wife*: A metaphor for the body.

GLOSSARY

This Glossary only includes terms and expressions that depart from modern English usage. These same terms and expressions may also appear in ways familiar to a modern speaker of English. Each entry therefore indicates the location of an example or examples of the archaic usage according to page and line number. Whenever the part of speech is unclear, it has been indicated. For highly context-sensitive glossed phrases, please consult the specific gloss on the page in question.

- access, fervent* burning attack of fever: 21.18
- adoption* “taking up and treating as one’s own” (OED s.v. *adoption* 2a): 40.15
- adread* frightened: 66.20
- affections of the body* passions, appetites (OED s.v. *affection* sb. 3): 27.15
- allective* enticement: 30.21
- allegation* excuse: 62.29
- an* if: 55.25
- an though* even if: 11.19, 44.30
- apply* compare, weigh against: 57.1
- appoint* resolve: 21.14
- astart* escape: 74.11
- attempt* try, put to the test: 9.10
- await* ambush: 33.3
- aye* ever, always: 50.12, 72.1
- balade* ballad: 64.2
- bereave* deprive of: 58.10
- besprent* covered, besprinkled: 19.6
- brittle* fleeting, transient: 61.29
- busy cure* anxious concern (CW 1:249): 67.19
- but if* unless: 16.21
- cast* consider, reckon: 59.19
- catch* infect, attack: 56.9
- canker* disease. corruption: 56.9
- Canon* Canon Law: 7.23
- Chaldee* Aramaic, not Chaldean (CW 1:219): 16.26
- certes* certainly: 67.3
- chepe* bargain: 15.15
- civil* political, public: 34.26
- clear* make clear, known: 67.31, 68.2
- comely* proper, seemly: 65.15
- comprise* take in, conceive: 68.9

- contemn* despise: 63.8
conversant present: 66.32
cost coast, region (*OED* s.v. *cost* obs.): 61.12
crime, false charge, accusation: 9.23
culture development (*OED* s.v. *culture* sb. 4): 35.6
cure, busy anxious concern (*CW* 1:249): 67.19
customably typically: 3.15

deface discredit: 9.17
delectation delight: 69.29
depart divide: 6.24
descant make comment on (*OED* s.v. *descant* v. 2): 37.17
despiteous pitiless, cruel: 60.6
devise give: 72.9
digne fitting: 3.2; worthy: 38.12
dishonest (v) disgrace: 13.26
disport entertainment: 60.25
dispraise reproach: 63.16
divers various, several: 3.2
divine theologian: 8.13
dolour physical suffering: 66.21
dreadful inspiring reverence or awe (*OED* s.v. *dreadful* a. 2a): 71.10
drew back regained: 11.13

eftsoon soon afterwards: 63.2
eke also: 33.14
enforce exert: 50.13
engine plot, wile: 52.20
ensearcher examiner: 8.5, cf. 35.24
ensue follow: 35.23
entent intent: 68.21
enterprise attack, overcome: 60.28
entreat undertake (cf. *OED* s.v. *entreating* vbl. sb. 1b): 34.28
erst first: 28.12
essay try, attempt: 32.28; assay, put to the test: 57.9
estate lord: 35.4; condition: 64.27
exercise in acquaint with: 14.2
expugnation conquest: 30.21
extreme lips in small doses, a little at a time: 35.5
eysell vinegar: 52.2

fain glad: 66.12
false crime charge, accusation: 9.23
fast gripping, tenacious: 14.19
fence protect: 21.11, cf. 55.21
fervent access burning attack of fever: 21.18
find support: 15.17
freckle rash: 19.6
frush crush: 23.3
for that because: 22.20, 50.7
for to in order to: 11.25
force care: 18.4
forsloth neglect: 24.23
forthwith immediately: 60.34
Friar Preacher Dominican: 12.29

gainsay contradict, deny: 35.17
gape after “to be eager to obtain, to have a longing for” (*OED* s.v. *gape* v. 4): 31.27
ghost soul, spirit: 61.13
ghostly spiritual: 4.2
gloss “superficial luster” (*OED* s.v. *gloss* sb.² 1a): 58.6
grave engrave: 64.13
guerdon requital, reward: 70.9

- baply* by chance, perhaps: 6.1, 61.1
have (3rd pers. sing. *bath*) deem: 67.15
heaviness sorrow: 16.23
hight was called, named: 6.8
howbeit nevertheless: 72.16
humanity, studies of the liberal arts: 7.14
incommodity disadvantage, inconvenience: 66.10
incontinent immediately, at once: 55.13
inheritant heir: 5.14
irous angry: 27.19
- jape* joke: 35.10
jeopard (v) wager (OED s.v. *jeopard* v. 2): 55.25
jeopardous hazardous: 56.7
- kind* grateful: 24.17
- let* prevent: 26.30
leuer rather: 19.1
licorous greedy, lecherous: 59.16
lief beloved (OED s.v. *lief* a. A.1): 67.15
lin cease: 60.17
lips, extreme in small doses, a little at a time: 35.5
list desire, wish: 19.19; please: 72.18
- magnify* glorify: 68.27
manly courageous: 51.7
maugre our teeth in spite of all we could do: 29.16
- mean* means: 68.30
meed reward, wages: 70.29
mind senses, wit: 11.13
motion, sinful temptation: 51.23
- natural things* natural philosophy: 13.26
ne not: 4.19
nil will not: 66.31
noyous harmful: 43.28
- odd* unique, single: 64.14
of a tree on a cross: 52.10
outward external, outside the mind (cf. OED s.v. *outward* a. 5): 34.29
- pardee* indeed: 72.16
parting divided, inconstant: 64.15
pass (v) escape: 13.17
persuasion belief: 35.3
plaint expression of grief or sorrow: 53.18
plesance pleasure, delight
portcullis protective gate, as in a castle: 21.27
preace “the thick of the fight” (OED s.v. *press* sb. I.1c *in press*): 55.3; pressure: 73.14
prick acme, height: 18.4
privy trench hidden tunnel: 9.11
provide place, keep: 48.22
purvey contrive, make arrangements: 67.3
- quantity* size: 4.15
quicke living: 67.24
ravin theft, robbery: 52.5

- reck* consider: 31.30
record remember: 51.9
redound 51.17
renay deny: 17.18
reproof reproof: 58.3
repugn resist: 48.7
repute consider: 39.27
require request, ask for: 53.17
rood cross: 71.5
rue regret: 74.12

science field of knowledge: 3.2,
 14.8
send between exchange: 3.11
sensual wittès senses: 51.24
set by desired, sought: 11.27
shew show: 73.23
silly pitiful, miserable: 72.23
sinful motion temptation: 51.23
slipper unstable, insecure: 18.17,
 29.12
smart pain (typically physical):
 66.10
speculation speculative science, as
 opposed to practical science:
 8.6
speed succeed: 43.23
strait tight-fitting: 67.13; exact,
 strict: 71.18
stretch extend: 3.18
studies of humanity the liberal arts:
 7.14
suffer them wax allow them to
 grow: 56.7
suingly next: 48.4
surmounten surpass, overcome:
 73.14
sustain endure, suffer: 50.15

things natural natural philosophy:
 9.20
this ways thus: 17.14
thrall slave: 50.13
threst placed, [perhaps] thrust:
 52.15
tree, of a on a cross: 52.10
trench, privy hidden tunnel: 9.11
trim (v) dress: 55.12

uncourteous unruly, discourteous:
 73.2
undertake understand: 25.23
unkindness ingratitude: 26.2
unneth hardly, with difficulty:
 13.12, 29.13
unpurveyed (adj) unprepared: 54.3

variance change (of fortune):
 11.13
very true: 5.23
viand food: 15.21
virtue power: 39.22
voice saying: 38.19

want lack: 13.27
warrantise "it can be guaranteed
 that" (OED s.v. *warrantise* v.
 obs. 2): 62.2
wax, suffer them allow them to
 grow: 56.7
whoso whoever: 50.10
wis know: 50.21
wise manner: 52.21
wittès, sensual senses: 51.24
woe bestead surrounded or beset by
 sorrow (OED s.v. *bested, bestead*

pa. pple. 4): 66.19

wod (adj) raging: 53.25

worship (n) favor, acclaim: 13.13;
honor: 38.17

worshipful worthy, virtuous: 5.19

wot know: 31.17, 60.29

wring press upon: 73.9

wroth angry: 52.12

wurche make: 67.19

ybent bent: 68.18

ycleanse cleanse: 73.29

yset set: 65.29

ywrought made: 68.28

Thomas More

The life of John Picus,

Earl of Mirandula, a great Lord
of Italy, an excellent cunning man
in all sciences, 「and virtuous of living;
with divers epistles and other works
of the said John Picus, full of great
science, virtue, and wisdom: whose
life and works be worthy and
digne to be read and often
to be had in memory.」

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