

**A Dialogue concernynge
herelyes & matters of religi-
on / made in the yere of oure
Lorde, M. D. xxviii, by sir
Thomas More (than knight
and one of the priuy counsell
of kyng Henry the eyght
& also Chauncelloure of
the duchy of Lancaster)
To which work he
made this tytle
hereafter fo-
lowynge,**

A DIALOGVE OF

SYR THOMAS MORE KNYGHTE: ONE OF

the counsaill of our souerayne Lorde the Kinge, and Chauncel

lour of his Duchy of Lancaster. Wherin be treatyd Di

uers maters, as of the veneracion & woꝛship of ymages

and relyques, prayng to saintes, and goyng on pyl

grimage. With many other thinges touchyng

the pestilent secte of Luther and Tyndale,

by the tone bygone in Saxony, and by
the tother labored to be brought
into England.

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Made in the yere of our lord. 1 5 2 8.

The fyrst Boke.

One busynes
begetteth a
nother.



It is an olde said
saw, that one bus
synes begetteth &
bynggeth forth a
nother. Whiche
puerbe as it hap
peth I finde very
trewe by my self,
which haue bene

sayne by occasion, first of one busynes,
after to take the secod, and bypon the se
cod, now to take the thirde. For where
as a right woꝛshipfull frende of myne
sent onto me a secrete sure frende
of his, with certayne credence to be de
clared onto me, touchyng many such
maters, as beinge in dede very certaine
and out of doute, be nethelisse of late by
letode people put in question, the speci
altees wherof do so serforth in the first
chapter of this boke appere, that we
shall here nede no reherfall therof: I
thought it first ynough to tell the mes
senger my mynde by mouth, accoptyng
that after our communicacion ended, I
sholde neuer nede serther busynes ther
in. But after that the messenger was
departed, & I felte my stomake wel ea
sed, in þ I rekened all my labour done,
bythynkinge my selfe a litle whyle ther
on, my busynes that I toke for simpl
shed, I soude very farre fro that point,
and litell more than bygonne. For whā
I considered what the maters were, &
how many great thinges had ben trea
ted betwene the messenger and me, and
in what maner fassion, albe it I myl
trusted not his good will, and very wel
trusted his wyfte, his lernyng well ser
uyng him to the perceuyng and repoꝛ
tyng of our communicacion: yet sin

dyng our treatie so diuerse and so long,
and somtime such wise intrycate, that
my selfe coulde not without labour call
it orderly to mynd, me thought I had
not wel done, without wyptyng, to trust
his onely memoꝛy, namely sith some
partes of the mater be suche of the selfe,
as rather nede to be attentely redde and
adulsd, than houerly harde and passid
ouer. And ouer this I considered, that
thoughe I nothing suspecte the messen
ger, as in good faith I do nor, & to saie
the treuth, am of my selfe so lyttell mis
trustyng, that he were like very plainly
to shew him selfe nought, whā I sholde
take for bad: yet sith no man can loke
into an others bꝛeste, as it is therfoze
well done to deme the beste, so were it
not muche amisse in such wise to putte
for the woꝛke, as (if a man happe to be
woꝛse than we take him for) our good
opinion turne vs to none harme. For
this cause me thought that for the moꝛe
suerty, my parte were to send our com
municacion to my said frende in wyꝛ
tyng. Wherby if it had happed that his
messenger had for any synyster fauour
borne towarde the woꝛd side purposely
magled the mater, his master shold not
only know þ treuth, but also haue occa
sion the better to beware of his messen
ger, which elles might hap to hurte while he
were mystaken for good. Howe whā
I had bypon this deliberacion, takē with
my self, wyꝛpen all the matter, and sent
it to my frende, than had I me thought
all done, and my mynde full set at rest.
But that rest rested not longe, For sone
after it was shewed me, þ of al my wyꝛ
tynges were wyꝛtten diuerse copies, &
one also caried ouer þ see. Wherē whā
þ. i. I re

¶

Deme the
best.

A I remembred what a shrewde sorte of our apostatas are assembled, parte runne out of religio, & al rúne out of the right faith, me thought grete parell myght arise, if some of that company (whiche are confedered & conspired together, in the sowynge & setting forth of Luthers pestilent heresies in this realme) sholde maliciously chaunge my wordes to the worse, and so put in prynte my boke, framed after their fantasies, whiche whan I wolde afterwarde reprove and shewe the difference, I might peradventure seme for the colour of my cause, to have amended myne owne, by the sight of theirs. For eschewing wherof I am now diven, as I say to this thirde busynesse of publishynge and puttyng my boke in prynte my selfe: wherby their enterpryse (if thei shoulde any such intende) shall (I trust) be prevented & frustrated. And this have I done not all of mine owne heed, but after the counsaile of other, mo than one: whose advise and counsaile for their wisdom & lernyng I asked in that behalfe, and which have at my request vouchsafed to rede over the boke ere I did put it forth. For albeit that I dare be somewhat bolde to commen in famliar maner, with such as for their fantasies like to aske me of such matters any question, accorbyng to the counsaile of saint Peter, byddyng vs be redy to geue a rekenyng, and to shewe a reasonable cause to every man of the faith & hope that we haue, yet to make & put forth any boke (wherin were treated any such thinges as touche our faith) wolde I not presume, but if better lerned than my selfe, shoulde thinke it eyther profitable, or at the lest wise harmlesse. To whose examinacon and iudgement, I did the more studiously submit this woꝝke, for two thinges in speciall, among diuers other. The one for the liberall allegacions of the messenger for the wzonge parte so laide out at large, that of my selfe I wode halfe in a doubt whether it were conuenient to reherse the wordes of any mā so homly, & in maner sometime vnrreverently spokē against goddes holy halowes, & their reuerēt memoꝝies. The other was certayne tales & mery wordes which he mingled with his matter, and some such on mine owne parte amōg, as occasiō fell in comunicacion. In which albeit I sawe no harme, yet somewhat doubted I lest thei shoulde vnto sad men seme over light & wanton for the weight & grauite

of such an earnest matter. Wherfore in these two pointes though I had all redy lene some ensamples of right holy men, which in their bookes answeringe to the objections of heretiques in their tyme, haue not letted to reherse þ very formal wordes of them, whose wꝝitings thei made answer to, beinge somtyme of such maner & sorte as a god man wolde not well bere, & haue not also letted to wꝝite a mery woꝝde in a right earnest woꝝke, of which two thinges I coulde out of godly mēnes bookes & holy saintes woꝝkes gether a god sorte, yet in myne owne woꝝke I determined that I wold nothinge allowe nor defende, that the iudgement of other vertuous and conynge men woulde in any wise mislike. And therfore after that suche had red it and severally said their aduice. I founde as it often happeth, that som thinge which one wise and well lerned man woulde haue out, twayne of like wisdom and lernyng specially woulde haue in, neither side lackynge good and probable reasons for their parte. Wherfore sith it became not me to be iudge ouer the iudgement of them, whom I wode and chose for my iudges, beyngē such of them selfe, as harde were it for any man to say, which of them before the other he coulde in erudicion, wittē, or prudence any thing preferre, I coulde no further go, but lene to þ more parte. Which I so serforth haue folowēd, that like wile as I diuerse thinges put out or chaunged by their good aduice and counsell so let I nothing stande in this boke, but such as twain aduised me specially to let stāde, against any one that any doute moued me to the contrary. And thus much haue I thought necessary for my declaracion and excuse to aduertise you all that shall happen to rede this rude simple woꝝke, prayeng you of pacience and pardon, whom god of his especiall grace graunt as much profite in the redinge, as my pore hart harshmente you and entēded in the maner.

¶ The first Chapter.

The letter of credece sent from his frende by a trusty secret messēger. With the letter of the author answeryng the same. The declaracion of the credece by the mouth of the messenger whereuppon the matter of all the hole woꝝke dependeth.

L. Pet. 3.

Lene to the more parte.

A

The letter of credence.



After chaunceller
as hartelye as I
possible ca, I reco-
mende me to you.
Not wout a thou-
sande thanks for
your good compa-
ny, whā we were
last together. In

whiche for as muche as it liked you to
spend some of your tyme with me in fa-
milyer communicacion, wherof some
parte I truste so to remeber as my selfe
shal be the better, and some other neuer
the worse, whiche shall haue cause and
haue all ready to gyue you great thank
therfoze, I am bold at this time to send
you my special secreet friend this bearer,
to breake with you somewhat ferther,
partely of the same matters partely of
some other, suche as are happed there
sence, wherof great speche and rumour
runneth here whereby ye shall haue oc-
casyon more at length (yf your leysour
wyl serue) to touch certain doutes mo-
ued sence of h maters treated betwene
vs befoze. Wherin were it not for your
other busines I would be bold on your
goodnes, to desyre you to take good time
with him. And yet neuerthelesse do re-
quire you hartely, as your leasour wil
serue you, to satisfye him at the full.

For he shall (howe longe so ener he tary
therfoze, gyue attendaunce vnto you,
dayes and houres, as ye may spare him
tyme, which can not in these thinges be
dur well bestowed, cōsidering that the
matters bee suche, and so touchinge to
god, as they were well woorthye to sett
wozidely businesse aside, specpallye in
such nede. For I assure you, some folke
here talke very straungely of the thin-
ges that he shall moue you. Not onely
for such wordes as they tell, that from
thence, but also most spectallye thughe
the occasion of some letters lewdelye
writen hyther out of London by a priest
or two, whom they take here for honest.
But what so ever any mā tell or write
I shal for the confidence and trust that
I haue in you, surely take and tell forth
for the very truth, what so ever ye shall
assyme vnto my frende, whom I sende
vnto you, not so much, bycause I may
not come my selfe (howbeit therfoze to)
as for bycause, I lōge to haue him talke
with you. To whō whatsoeuer ye saye,
reken it said to my selfe, Not onely for
hys trouthe & secretnesse, but also for his

In matters
concerning
god, seruo: dly
businesse
afide.

D

memozy with whōe to cōmune, I trust
shall not mislike you. For eyther myne
affection blindeth me, or ye shall fynde
hym wyle, and as other say, that canne
better iudge it then I, more then mean-
lye lerne, with one thing added where
w ye be wont well to be content, a very
mery wit. He is of nature nothing toge-
tayed. And I haue in these matters bid-
de him be bolde, without any straying
of curtesie, wherof the serimonyes in
disputacio marreth much of the matter
while one studpeth more howe he maye
behaue him, than what he shall saye. I
haue I say therfoze bode him more to
mynde his matter, then bys curtesye, &
frelly to lai forth, not only what he thin-
keth, but also what hym list, gypng no
fote in disputing vnto your authory,
but yf he bee bozne backe with reason.
Thus maye ye see I am boude on your
goodnes, to put you to labour & bulines
and sende one to face you in your owne
house. But so much am I holder, for y
in such chalenges I know you for a re-
dye & sure defender. And of such labour
your wisdom well seeth, y god is the re-
warder, who lōg pserue you & al yours.

The letter of the author sent
with the boke.



Right woorthipfull syz, after
most hartelye recommendacio,
albeit y of late I sent you my
poze minde by the mouthe of
your trusty frende, to whom
ye desyred me by your letter to giue no
lesse credence, than to your selfe, cōcer-
ning all suche thinges as he brake of, &
communed with me in your behalfe (&
that for the confidence that ye haue in
him, the wit and lerning that I founde
in hym, and honestly that I so much the
more thinke him to be of, in that I per-
ceiue you being of such wisdom & ver-
tue to haue hym in so speciall trust) I
neither do nor can beleue the cōtrarye
but that he hath of all our communica-
cyō made you saythfully, plain and ful
repozte, yet sith I suppose in my selfe,
that if wee had mought convenient eōe
together, ye woulde rather haue chosin
to haue harde my mynde of mine owne
mouthe than by the meane of another,
I haue sence in these fewe dayes (in
which I haue ben at home) put the mat-
ter in writing, to the ende, ye may not
only hyze it by the mouth of your frēde,
but also (whiche better is then sodenlye
ones to hyze it of myne owne mouthe)

W. A. rede

A rede it (if ye list) moze often at your best
 leisure aouiledly from mine owne pen.
 Which thing I verely thought my self
 so much the moze bounde to do, for that
 it lyked you of your special fauour, and
 affection towarde me, so greatly to re-
 garde and esteeme my mynde & answere
 in those matters, that no rumour there
 running, or tales in your coutrie told,
 or letters thither writte, nor reasons or
 argumentes there made to the contrary
 shoulde let or withstande, but that ye
 woulde (as ye wrote) take that thing for
 vndoubted trowth that I should (by your
 frende) assertaine you. And surely sir
 in this point, ye maye make your selfe
 sure, & I shall neuer willingly deceyue
 your trust. And lest I might hap to do it
 of ouer sight vnbware, albeit I nothing
 sayd vnto your frēd by mouth, but that
 I was right wel enformed of the trowth
 yet for as muche as I perceiued by hym
 & some folk doubted, lest many thinges
 were layed to the charge, not onely of
 that man ye wrote of, but also of Lu-
 ther him selfe, otherwise than coulde be
 proued, I did so much therein that I was
 suffred to se and shewe hym as well the
 booke of the tone, as the very actes of
 the court concerning the other, that we
 might both (by so much) the moze surely
 warrant you the trowth. Wherin yf ye
 fynde any man that yet do woteh, whe-
 ther he tolde you, and I wypte you the
 trowth or not, I shall if he vnderstande
 the latine tonge find the meane at your
 pleasure, that he shall so se & bokes him
 selfe, that were he neuer so full of mis-
 trustyng, he shall not fayle to bee fully
 content and satisfiye. And this warā-
 tisse will I make you as far forth as cō-
 cerneth any acte done here. But as for
 things reasoned and disputed bytwene
 vs, the conclusions selfe be so sure tru-
 thes, that they be not disputable. But
 whyther the reasons by me made in the
 ben effectuall or insufficient (albe it
 your frende, either for that of trowth he
 thought so, or for that of curtesy he said
 so, accepted them for good) yet without
 prejudice of the principall matters ye
 may your selfe iuge. And thus I pray
 you take in god worth the littel labour
 and great good will of him, whome in
 any thing that may do you pleasure, ye
 may to the vttermost of his littel power
 well and boldely cōmaunde. And thus
 our lord sende you with my good lady
 your bedselowe and all yours, as hat-
 tely wel to fare as you would al wishe.



Our frende first after your
 letter redde (whan I deman-
 ded hym his credēce) shewed
 me that ye had set him to me,
 not for any doutis & your self
 had in many of thole thinges that he
 shoulde moue vnto me, but for the doubt
 that ye perceiued in many other, and in
 some folke plaine persuation to the cō-
 trary, whome ye woulde be glad to an-
 swere with the trowth, albeit some thi-
 ges he sayd were also there so talked, &
 ye wist not well ysur selfe which parte
 ye might helcne. For it was there not
 only spoken, but also chyder writte by
 diuers honest preelkes out of London,
 that the man ye wrote of, was of many
 thinges bozne wōge in hande, & therein
 so soze handeled that he was forced to
 for swere and abiure certaine here-
 syes, & openly put to penance therfore,
 where he neuer held any such. And all
 this done for malice & enuy, vly of soe
 freres (against whose abusions he pre-
 ched) partly for that he preched boldly
 against & pompe & pride & other inordi-
 nate liuing (that mo men speake of thā
 preche of) used in the clargye. And they
 take for a great tokē that he shoulde not
 meane euyl, the pzofo and experyence
 which men haue had of hym, & he lyued
 well, and was a good, honest, vertuons
 man, farre from ambicio and desire of
 woꝝidely woꝝhip, chasty, humble, and
 charitable, free and liberall in almous
 dede, and a very goodly prechoure, in
 whose deuout sermons the people were
 greatly edified. And therfore the people
 say that all this gere is done but onely
 to stoppe mennes mouthes, and to put
 euery man to silence that woulde anye
 thinge speake of the fautes of the clar-
 gye. And they thinke that for none o-
 ther cause was also burned at Poules
 Crosse the newe testamēt late transla-
 ted in englyshe by maister William
 Duchin, otherwise called maister Tin-
 dall, who was (as men saye) well kno-
 wen or he went ouer the sea, for a man
 of right good lyaing, studious and wel
 lerned in scripture, and in diuers pla-
 ces in Englad was very wel liked and
 did great good with preching. And men
 mutter amonge them selfe, that & boke
 was not only faultles, but also very wel
 translated, & was deuyled to be burned,
 because men shoulde not be able to proue
 that suche fautes (as were at Poules
 cross declared to haue be found in it) wer
 neuer founde there in dede, but vntuly
 surmi

A furnished. And yet suche as they were, some men saye) were no fautes at all, if they hadde be so traslated in deede, but blame laied and faute found with thinges nothinge faute woꝛthy e, onely to deface that holy woꝛke, to the ende, that they might seme to haue some iust cause to burne it. ¶ And that foꝛ none other entent, but foꝛ to kepe out of the peoples hādes all knowledges of Christys gospel, and of goddys law, except so much onely as the clargye them selfe list now and than to tell vs. And that ytell as it is & seldom thewed, yet, as it is feared not wel and truely tolde, but watered with false gloses, and altered from the trouth of the very woꝛdes and sentence of scripture only foꝛ the maintenaunce of theyꝛ authozite.

B ¶ And the fere lest this thinge shoulde evidently appere to the people, if they were suffered to rede the scripture them selfe in theyꝛ own tonge, was (as it is thought, the verye cause not onely foꝛ whiche the newe testament translated by Tyndale was burned, but also that the clargye of this realme hath befoꝛe this tyme by a constytucion pꝛouincial pꝛohybited any boke of scripture to be translated into the englyshe tonge, fearing men with fier as heretiques who so shoulde pꝛesume to kepe the as though it were heresie foꝛ a christen mā to rede christes gospel.

C ¶ And surely byꝛ quod he some folk that thinke this dealinge of the clergye to be thus) and good men to be mishandelyd foꝛ declaring the trouth, and the scripture selfe to be pulled out of the peoples handes, lest they shoulde perceyue the trouth (be led in theyꝛ mindes, to dowte whither Luther himselte (of whose opinions oꝛ at the lest of whose woꝛkes all these businesse bygan) wꝛote in dede so supll as he is boꝛne in hande. And many men there be that thinke he neuer ment such thinges. But that bicause he wꝛote against the abusions of pardons and spake some what liberally agaynst the court of Rome, & generally agaynst the vices of the clargye, therfoꝛe he was brought in hatred, and first cyted to Rome. And whā that foꝛ fere of bodely harme with wꝛonge, wherof it woulde haue bene to late to loke foꝛ remedye after, if he had ones bee burned by befoꝛe (he durst not come thither, than was he accursed, & his bokes dampned, & vnder great paines foꝛboden to be redde. And that thing done bycause it shoulde not be

known what wꝛonge he had, & that he neither meaneth noꝛ saith such odious & abhominable heresies, as the people be boꝛne in hande to enduce the to hatred of him, as it wold peradventure appere if hys bokes wer suffered to be red.

¶ And they saye that it were no mastery to make it seme that a man shoulde be an heritique, if he may be boꝛne in hande y he saith the thing, which he neuer sayd, oꝛ peradventure one line take out amonge many, & misconstrued, not suffering y remenant to be sene, wherby it might moꝛe clerely appere what he meaneth. By which maner of deling a man they saye might laye heresie to saint Poule, and find a faute in saint Johns gospel.

¶ And yet they saye, the woꝛst of all is this that the clargye cease not hereby, noꝛ haide the selfe content with the cōdēpning of Luther, & foꝛbydding of his boxes, but further abuse the hated of his name agaynst euery man that is (in pꝛeching of the woꝛde of god) any thing such as shoulde be, that is to witte, plain & hold without glose oꝛ flatering, where if they find a mā faulty, let them lay his faute to his charge, what nedeth to call him a Lutherane? Though Luther wer a deuill, yet might a man percase say as he sayth in some thinge, and saye trewe ynough. Foꝛ neuer was ther heretique, that sayd all false. Foꝛ the deuill hym self lied not, when he called christ gods sonne. And therfoꝛe mē think that this name of a Lutherane serueth the clargye foꝛ a common clocke of a false crime, y where they lacke special matter to charge one with by iugemēt, they labour to bringe him first in y infamy of y name, that compriseth (as they make it seme) a confused heape of heresies, no man can tell what.

¶ And yet in such dealing thei wounde their owne matter another way. Foꝛ while they defame foꝛ Lutheranes, men that be of knowen vertue and conning, what do they thereby, but one of the twaine, either cause the people (that haue foꝛ good lꝛuinge & lerninge, those men in great reputation) to thinke that the clargie foꝛ malice & enuy dothe vntruly defame them, oꝛ els that Luthers doctrine is good, while so conning mē & god mē lene therto. ¶ And therfoꝛe it were wisdō, not to call the Lutherans, but rather when they teche & holde any such opinions, as the people know foꝛ Luthers, let it epyther be disquimuled, oꝛ thei secretly by faire waies educed to y

A contrarpe, if the pointes that they teche of his be nought. Lest by calling good and conning mē Lutheranes, they may peradventure bzing them self in suspition of malyce and enuye. And Luther amonge the people into good oppinion. Thinkinge as they begin to do al redy, that eyther Luther saied not so euyll as is surmised vpon him, or els that those thinges that he sayth, as odious as they seme, bee good ynough in dede.

W He said also that it semed vnto many men a soze thing, and ser vntreasonable, that poze, simple, and vnlearned men (all though they fell into errours, and were led out of the right way, by that they leened to the aucthorite of such mē, as they beleued to bee vertuous and conning, should in freede of teching, bee beaten cruelly with abiuracions & open shame, to perell of burning also, if a few false witnesse shall after such abiuracion depose ȳ thei haue hard him fal in relapse.

C Finally he said that many god & well lerned mē thought plainly that the clergy semeth farre out of all good order of charite, and that they do contrary to the mildnesse and mercifull minde of the olde holy fathers, in that they cause for any errour or wzong oppinio in ȳ faith, any man one or other to be put to death.

F For they say that the old holy fathers bled onely to dispute with heretiques, techinge them and conuicting them by scripture, and not by sagottes. And that by that way, ȳ faith went well toward, and one heretique so tourned did turne many other, where as now we mē abhozre this crueltie in the chyche. And they that seme tourned, thynke stil the thinges ȳ they dare not say. And of ȳ athes of one heritique springeth by manye.

Of the athes of one heritique springeth by manye.

A And ȳ now we make the fallio of cristēdom, to seme al turned quite byfodown. For where as Christ made infidels the persecutozs, and his chzissen people the sufferers, we make the chzissen men the persecutozs, and the infidels the sufferers, wherby men thinke, that secretly Chzisses order yet standeth stil, though it bee not so taken and so percepued.

For the people take it, that styl those that persecute be the miscreauntes, and those poze people that suffer it, be (vnder the falle name of heretykes) the trewe beleuinge men, and very chzissen martyzs.

C Christ also they say wold neuer haue any man compelled by force & violence

to beleue vpon his faith, nor woulde that mē should fight for him or his matters. In so ferforth that he wouide not suffre saint Peter to fight for his owne selfe, but reyzoned him for striking Malch^o.

Math. 26

For woulde not defende him selfe, but healing the eare againe of Malchus his persecutour, whiche Peter had smitten of: and gyuing all his holy bodye to the pacient sufferance of al the painfull tourmētes, that his cruell enemies woulde put to it, shewed vs, as wel by his effectuall ensample of his death, as by his godly counsaill in his life, and after that confirmed by the cōtinuall passion and martyrdoms of his holy martyze, ȳ his will and pleasure is, that we should not so much as defende our self against heretiques and infydels, were they paganes, turkes, or saralyns. And muche lesse than should we fyght against the and kill them, but that we should perseuer in setting forth his faith agaynst miscreates and infydels, by such waies as hym selfe began it, kepe it, and encrease it, as it was gottē. And that was by pacpence and sufferance, by which the faith was dyuulgate and spzed almost thorothe the world in litel while. For by warre & fightinge, which waye hath (as they saie) well nere all redy lost all, that the other waye wanne.

By pacpence & sufferance the faith was dyuulgate.

When your frede had thus declared his credēce, he desyzed me both on your behalfe, & on his owne, in suche thinges as were percase not well saied, to take them as they were in dede, the minde of other, whome ye would sayne answer, and satisfy with reaso, which ye trusted to be the better able to doo, by mine answer, and neyther the minde nor oppinion of you nor him, which did & would in all thing stāde and abide, by the faith and beleue of Chzisses catholike chirch.

But as for such partes of this mater as concerned not any parte of our beleue, but the dealing of this world, as the iustice or vniustice of some spirituall persons, in the pursuing, and cōdemping men for heretiques, or theyz woꝝkes for heresy, he thought he sayd (as of hym selfe) that men might without any partell of heresy, for theyz owne parte, not wythstandinge any mans iudgement gyuen, yet well and reasonably doubt therein, for though he thought he hereyfe, to thinke the oppinions of any man to bee good and catholyque, which been hereyfes in dede, yet mighte a man he thought wythout any partell of heresy,

doubte

A doubt whether he were an heretike or no, that were by mannes iudgemēt condēned for one, lity it might well happen that he neuer helde those oppiniōs that were put vpon him, but that he was either by faise depositiōs of wrongefull witness, or by the errour or malice of vniust iudges condēned. And that sometime percaie, the ignoraūce of some iudges, woulde cōcēne for heresie such articles, as wyler & better lerned woulde in pointe of iudgement allowe for god and catholique, and of the other iudgement deserue and iudge the contrary.

¶ Howe be it, he said that ye had in me and my lernynge, so speciall trust & confidence, that in any of all these thinges, what so euer ye had herde, or shoulde here els where, ye were fully determined to geue full credēce to me, & take for the trowth such answer, as he shoulde bringe you from me, wherin ye right hartely desired me, to take some payne, that ye might in these matters, by his mouth knowe my minde at large.

After this, ere I made any answere to his wordes, I demaūded him what manner acquayntaūce was betwene him & you. And there vpon perceyving him to haue your sonnes at scolē, enquyring further of him, to what faculte he hau most geue his study, I vnderstode hi to haue geue diligence to the latin tōge, As for other faculties he rougth not of. For he told me meryly, y Logicke he rekeened but bablinge. Musike to serue for singers, Arithmetricke meete for marchantes, Geometry for masons, Astronomy for no man, And as for Philosophy, the most vantage of all, And y it & Logicke had lost all good diuinite, wth subtilties of their questions, & babyllynge of their dispicions, buyldinge all vpon reason, which rather geueth blindness thā any light. For mā (he said) hath no light, but of holy scripture. And therfore I said y beside the latin tōge, he had ben (which I much cōmende) studious in holy scripture, which was (he said) lerning ynoughe for a christie mā, with which the apostles helde thē selfe cōtente. And therein he said he laboured not onely to can many textes thereof by harte, but also to enterche the sentence and vnderstāding therof, as ferre as he might perceiue by him selfe. For as for interpretours, he tolde me that neyther his tyme woulde well serue him to rede, and also he fōude so great witness in the texte self, that he coulde not finde in his

harte, to lese any tyme in y gloses. And as touchyng any difficultie, he said that he fōunde by experiece that the best and surest interpretacion was to lay & conferre one texte with another, which wayle not amonge them well and sufficiently to declare them selfe. And this way (he saide) that he used: which he fōunde sufficient and surest. For so shoulde it most surely tary, whā it were fōunde out, and lerned by a mannes owne laboure. And that he saide every mā was able ynoughe to do with helpe of God, which neuer faileth them that faithfully trust in his promise. And he hath promised, that if we seke we shall finde, and if we knoeke we shall haue it opened to vs. And what shal be opened: but that booke which as saīct Johan saith in the Apocalyps is so thyt with by. clapses, that it can not be opened, but by the lambe, that whan he thyttereth then can no man open it, and whan he openeth it, than can no man thyt it.

¶ Upon these wordes & other like, whā I considered that your frende was studious of scripture, & all thoughe I now haue a very good opinion of him, noz at that tyme had not all the cōtrary, yet to be playne with you and him bothe, by reason that he set the matter so well and lustly forward, he put me somewhat in doubt whether he were (as yonge scolers be somtyme prone to newe fantasies) fallen in to Luthers secte. And that ye peradventure somewhat serpyng the same, did of god minde the rather sende him to me, with such a message, for that ye trusted he shoulde be somewhat answered and satisfied by me. I therfore thought it not metely in so many matters & weightie to make him an braduisse answer, but with god wordes welcomyng him for the tyme, pretending lacke of leasure for other present busynes, required him to retourne on the morowe: Against which time I woulde so order mine affaires, that we woulde haue cōferēce together, of all his errānde at length. And he in this wise beyng departed, I began to gather in minde, the hole effecte as my remēbraunce woulde serue me of all that he had purposed. And because I woulde haue it the more redy at mine eye, so y I might the more fully & effectually answer it, leuyng no parte vntouchēd, in such ordre as he had purposed it, that is to witte, after the maner that I haue aboue reherced, I hertely committed it to wyrtynge.

A The second chapter.

Here summarly is declared what the Audoz intended to treate of the matters purposed vnto him. Whereof because the first was an opinion conceyued in som mennes heddes, that a certain person late abiured of heresy for preaching against pilgrimages, and ymages, & prayers made to iaintes, was therein greatly wroged, the auctoz byrtefly declareth his minde, cōcernyng the confutacion of those perplouse and pernicious opinions.

In the moztow whan he was come again somwhat before vij. of the clocke (for so I appointed him) taking him with me into my study, & my seruantes warned, that if any other shoulde happen to desire to speake with me (certaine except of who I gaue them knowledge) thei shoulde differre them till another lealour, I set him down with me, at a litell table. And then I shewed vnto him, that where he had purposed on your behalse i thort woordes, many lōge thinges, wherof the reherfall were loue of tīare, to him that so well knewe them all redy, I wolde (all superfluous recapitulacion set apart) as byrtefly as I conveniently coulde, shewe him my mynde in them all. And first begyn where he began at the abiuracion of the man he spake of. Secondly, wolde I touch the cōdemnacion and burnyng of the new testamēt, translated by Tyndale. Thirdly, somwhat wold I speke of Luther, & his secte ingenerall. Fourthly & finally, the thing that he touched last, that is to wit, the warre and fightyng against infideles, with the contemnacōn of heretikes vnto death, which two pointes, him selfe had combyned and knitte together.

And first as touching the matter of the mannes abiuracion, where it is reported, that the spiritualtie did hym wroge, and for to make that seme lykely, there is layed in them displeasure, malice and enuy towarde him, for preaching (as ye say quod I) against their blyng luyng: & in him is on the other side alleged much cōnyng, vertu, & godnes. I will neither enter into the praise of them, nor into the dispraise of him, wherin standeth nothing the effecte of this mater. For if there did, I wold not passe ouer som parte therof so thortly.

But now for this matter, although the whole spiritualtie (wherin no man doubteth to be many a right, vertuous, and godly man) were in their luyng farre worse than deuilles, yet if thei did that man no wroge, there hath for this matter no man against them any cause to complayne. And ouer this, if that mā were in all his other luyng as innocēt as a saint, yet if he were infected & faultie in these heresies, he had than in this matter no wroge. And yet beside all this, if he not only were in all other thinges very vertuous, but also were in all these heretics (wherof he was detected) vtterly clene & faultles, yet if it were by sufficient witness (were thei neuer to falle in dede, semyng honest & likely to say trewe) preued in open court that he was faultie therin, albeit in suche case his witnesses had wroged him, yet had his iudges done him but right. And therfore lettynge passe as I say, & praise or dispraise of either his iudges or him, as thinges impertinent to the point, I will shewe you that thei not onely did him no wroge, but also shewe him in my minde the grettest fauour, and vled towarde him the most charitable mercy that euer I wold vled to any mā in such case. And first as for any wroge that his iudges did him, I meruell me much, wherin thei that report it could assigne it. For if any were done him, it must nedes haue ben in one of the two thinges, either in that he was vntuly iudged to haue preached suche articles as he was detected of, where he preached none such in dede: or elles in that some such articles as he preached, were iudged & condēned for heresies, where thei were none in dede. Excepte y any man wolde say that though he were preued & cōuicted of heresie, yet he shoulde haue bene put to no penaunce at all, or elles to no such as he was. And of that point if any man so thinke, I shall speake in the fourth parte, where we shall touche ingenerall the order, that the churche taketh in the cōdenacion of heretiques. But as for the other poites, first if any prieste wrote out of London into your countrey, that any suche article of his preaching, was by his iudges declared for heresie, as were in dede good & not against the faith of Christles church, let him name what article. And either ye shall finde that he shall name you such as the man was not charged withall, or elles shall ye finde that such as he shall name