A Dialogue concerning heresies and matters of religion/made in the yere of our Lord, M. D. cxviii, by Sir Thomas More (than knight and one of the privy counsell of Kyng Henry the eyght & also Chauncelloure of the duchy of Lãcaster)

To which work he made this tytle hereafter following.
A DIALOGUE OF
SYR THOMAS MORE KNIGHTE:ONE OF
the counsellor of our souerayne Lorde the Kinge, and Chau
our of his Duchy of Lancaster. Wherein he treated di
vers matters, of the beneracion worship of images
and reliques, prayinge to saintes, and going on pl
grimage. With many other things touching
the pestilent state of Luther and Tyndale,
by the one bygone in Sarony, and by
the other laboured to be brought
into England.
Made in the yer of our Lord. i 5 s. 8.

The first Boke.

It is an olde said
law, that one bu
tunes before a
hungereth a
mother. Wheth
quiere as it has
pent I finde very
trewse by my selfe
which have bene
dayne by occasion, first of one buynes, a
fter to the seconde, and upon the seco
now to take the thrilde. For where
as a right worthy full frende of myne
sent ones unto me a secrete sure frende of
his, with certayne credence to be de
clarde unto me, touchynge many such
materes, as beinge in deovt very certayne
and out of doubt, be yethelesse of late by
levende people put in question, the spec
iales whereof do sertoth in the first
chapter of this boke appere, that we
shall here no paterfull thereof: I
thought it first enough to tel the me
senger my mynde by mouth, and then
that after our communicacion en
d, I sholde never neelether buynes thes
in. But after that the messenger was
departed, as I felte my tomake wel
esed, in y I resembed all my labour done,
bethinking my selfe a little whole ther
on, my buynes that I take for sappy
ed, I foude very sarte to that point
and litlle more than bygone. For wha
I considerede what the matteres were,
how many great things had ben trea
ted betweene the messenger and me, and
in what maner fashion, albe it I
mytrustede not his good will, and very wel
trusted his louer, his lernynge well I
knovnde to the perçening and reposc
ving of our, communication: yet

thyng our treatie to divers and so long,
and sometime such wise interpoxe, that
my selfe could not without labour call
it orderly to mynnde, me thought I had
not wel done, without workyng, to tryst
his onely memory, namely thos
 partes of the mater he spoke of the felle,
as rather neede to be attentelly redde
and adusted, than honesty harde and paid
our. And over this I considerede, that
though I nothing suspete the messenger,
as in good Faith I do not, so to
the trewth, am of my selfe so liertell mis
trustynge, that he were the verie plaine
ly to dely his selfe nought, what I sholde
take for saudd; yet sholde no man take
into an others brewe, as it is there
done to the beste, so were it Demed
not muche anntile in such wise to prude be,
to the woaste, as (if a man happe to be
woaste than we take him for) our good
opinion turne by to none harme. For
this cause I thought that for the mos
sure, my partes were to send our com
munication to my said frende in wryc
ynge. Wherby if it had happed that
his messenger had for any swiftler favour
borne towarde the wydf side purposely
megled the mater, his mater sholb not
only know the trewth, but also have reca
t the better to beware of his mecker,
which elles might hap to hurt while he
weren misstaken so good. Howeber
that I had upon this deliberacion, take with
my selfe, wipynge all the mater, and sent
ne to my frende, than had I not thought
done, and my mindes fulller at rest.
But that rest resteth not lenger, for one
after it was showed me, yf at all my
meckers were written diversely copies,
ones also carriyed over y se. Where whan
.
The first boke.

As I recollected what I had observed of some apostates assembled, parts running out of religion, and out of the right faith, I thought great parrelly might arise, if some of that company were to be confedered and conspired together, in the sowing, setting forth of Luther's pestilent heresies in this realm, and maliciously changed my words to ye worse, and to put in private my boke, framed after their fantasies, which I would afterwarde repouze and shew the difference. I might peradventure some for the colour of my cause, to have accused my name owne, by the light of theirs. For eschewing whose I am now xixen, as I say this before, by lines of publiphinge and putting my boke in printe my selfe: whiche their enterprise (if there should be such intende) shall I trust be prevented a frustrate. And this bane I have not all of mine owne head, but after the counsaille of other, more than one whose adultice and counsaille for their wilde and lemeying I asked in that behalfe, and which have at my request vouchsafed to rede over the boke xere I did put it forth, for albeit that I dare be somewhat bold to commit in familiar manner, with such as to their fantasies like to all me of such matters any question, according to the counsaille of lainct Peter, by my own selfe be ready to gene a rekeneinge, and to shewe a reasonable cause to every man of the faith to hope that we have, yet to make them put forth any boke (in which were treatted any such thinges as touch the faith) would I not presume, but if better learned than my selfe, should think of other profitable, or at the least harmless. To whose examination and judgement, I did the more studiously submit this boke, for two things in special, among others. The one for the liberal allegations of the messenger; for the young partie to live out at large, that of my selfe I wrote halfe in a doubt whether it were convenient to rede the words of any man so homely, and in manner sometime unreasonably spoke against goddes holy holies, as their reverent memoryes. The other was certain tales of mercy words which he mingled with his matter, and such on mine owne partes among, as occasione fell in communication. In which albeit I sawe no harme, yet somewhat doubted I left the would into sad men some over light & wanton, for the weight & gravitie of such an eretick matter. Therefore in these two points though I had all reby some entamples of right holy men, which in their bokes antweringe to the objections of heretics in their time, have not letted to rede & therforesome of such manner, to see a god man work not well here, have not also letted to rede a mercy word in a right eretick boke, of which two things I coulde out of godly mines books, holy saintes works gether a god beste, yet in my owne owne boke I determined that I told nothing aforesayes, that the judgement of other vertuous and constancie men woulde in any wise miscake. And therefore after that suche had red it and underset it of their advice. I founde as it often happened, that some thynge which one wise and well learned man woulde have out, swappe of like wildome and lernying specially would have in, neither the lackynge good and probable reason to their part. Whereas this I observed not come me to be judged over the judgement of them, or I take and chuse as my judgynge, beynge such of them selfs, as harde were it to any man to say, which of them before the other he coulde intuicion, withe, or prudence any thing preserue, I could no further goe, but forwarde to more parte. Which I so far have followed, that like wise as I discerse things put out of changed by their good advice and counselle so let I nothing stande in this boke, but such as shew me specially to let shewe, against any one that any doute moved me to the contrary. And thus much have I thought necessary for my declaration and excuse to advertise you all that shall happen to rede this rude simple boke, proyynge you of patience and parson, whom god of his especial grace grant as much profit in the redeemge, as my pure hart hathmente you and entided in the maskeynge.

The first Chapter.

The letter of credence sent from his friends by a trusty secret messenger.

With the letter of the author answering the same. The declaration of the credence by the mouth of the messenger whereupon the matter of all the hole worke dependeth.
The first boke.

The letter of credence.

After chaunceler as hartise as I possibly can, I recommende to you, for about a thousand thanks for our god company, what we were last together. In which ie, as muchie as it liked you to spend some of your time with me in familiar communication, whereof some part I trust to remember as my selfe shall be better, and some other never in the risks which shall haue cause and have all ready to gueu you great thank therefore, I am bold at this time to send you my special secret: send this bearer, to beke with you somewhat further, partly of the same matters participe of some other, suche as are hapned there, whereof great speche and rumour runneth here whereby we shall have occasion more at length (if your lef for will serue) to touch certaine dores moved hence of matters treated betweene us before. Wherin were it not for your other busines I would be bold on your goodnes, to despe you to take good time with him. And yet netherlye do require you harsely, as your labour wil for me, to satisfie him at the full. For we shall haue longe to ever betray therefore, that attendaunce unto you, words and hours, as ye may spare you time, which can not in these things be but well bestowed, considering that the matters bee suche, and to touching to god, as they were well worthy to sett worthily businesse aside, specially in such need. For I assure you, some folke here talke very strangely of the things that be there nowe. Not onely suche as they tell, that from thence, but also most specially through the occasion of some letters lewdeley written by ther out of my land by a person of two, whom thet take here for honest. But what so ever any me tell to write I shal for the confidence and trust that I haue in you, santly take and tell faste to the very truth, what so ever ye shall say me unto my friend, whom I sende unto you, not too much, because I may not come my self holde therefore to as for bycause I love to haue him talke with you. To shaw whatsoever ye se, when it saide to my selfe. Not onely for his trouth and serentie, but also for his credit.
Our frinde first after your letter crede, whom I demand, and assured him, and crede, helved me that ye had set him to me, not for any doute, ye your self had in many of these things that he should move unto me, but for the doubt that ye perceived in many other, and in some false plain persuation to the contrary, whom ye would be glad to assure with the truth, albeit some things he spake were also there so talked, ye will not well your self which parte semight believe. For it was there not only spoken, but also tyder wrote by divers honest preysters out of London, that the man ye wrote of, was of many things bose, where in hande, therin so lose hallowed that he was forced to assure and assure some heryes, openly put to penance thence, where he never held any luche. And all this done for malice and envy, pil of the sters, against whose abusions he spake partly for that he spake boldly against, and spake boldly and other inordinate thing (that no men speake of the preche of died in the clarge. And they take for a great toke that he should not meane uppl, the pulse and experience which men have had of hym, he lived well, and was a good, honest, vertuous man, farre from ambitio and desire of wo: deeply worship, hate, humble, and charitable, free and liberall in almosd deed, and a very goodly prechour, in whose devout sermons the people were greatly edified. And therefore the people say that all this was done but neither to stoppe mennes mouths, and to put every man to silence that would any things speake of the fautes of the clarge. And they think that for no cause was also burned at Poules Crosse the newe testament late translated in engilche by master William Yuchin, otherwise called master Tindall, who was (as men say) well knowen; he went over the sea, for a man of right good living, studious and well learned in scripture, and in divers places in England was very wel liked and did great good with preaching. And men murther amonge them selfe, that boke was not onely faultes, but also veru well translated, was duelled to be burned, because men could not be able to prove that suche fautes (as were at Poules crosse declared to have been nit) were never foute there in decde, but untruly furred.
The first boke

A furnisht. And yet suche as they were, some men saye were no fautes at all, if they had beene to translate in deede, but blamelisend faulte found with things nothinge faunte worthye, as to desire that holy word, to the ende, that they might tyme to have some just cause to burne it. And that for no other reason but to keipe out of the peoples hides all knowledges of Christys gospel, and of goddes law, except to much truly as the clarege them false left now and than to tell us. And that yeell as it is a foolish shewed, yet, as it is feared not just and truly tolde, but watered with false glories, and altered from the truth of the very wordes and sentence of scripture only for the maintenance of their authors.

And the see left this thinge should be evidently appeare to the people, if they were suffered to rede the scripture them selfe in theys owne tongue, as it is thought, the very cause not onely for which the newe testament translated by Lyndale was burned, but also that the clarege of this ronall thinge before this time by a conspiration provincial provoked any boke of scripture to be translated into the englishe tongue, fearing men with fear as heretiques who should presume to kepe it as though it were herefes for a christens mane to rede christes gospel.

And surely by goodsome some feele that thinke this dealing of the clerege to be thus and good men to be mislanded by declaring the truth, and the scripture left to be pulled out of the peoples hands, lest they should perceyve the truth be led in theys mindez, to devote whether Luther himselfe (of whose opinions) at the left of whole worshippe all theys bullenisse bygone hauze in deede to supplie he is borne in hande. And many men there be that thinke he never meant such thinges. But that because he wrote against the abusions of pardons and plaide some what liberallly at the court of Rome, a generally against the execes of the clerge, therefore he was brought in hatred, and first eyed to Rome. And what that for fear of bodely harme with wronge, whereof it would haue bene to late to take for remedy after, if he had ones bee burned up before he durst not cnyther than was he accused. His booke damped, Luther great pains to burned to be rede. And that thing done by cause it, haue not ha knowen what wronge he had, that he not merely meaneth no falsie such odious and abominable heretiques, as the people be borne in hande to endure the to haurret of him, as it were peradventure to appeare his booke was suffered to be burned. And they saye they it were no matter to make it some that a mane should be an heretique, if he be borne in hande he saith the thing, which he never saith, peradventure one line take out amouge many, such as it were, not suffering the remanent to be sense, whereby it might more clesely appeare what he meant.

By which manner of being a mane they saye might take heretique to saint Poul, and find a faute in saint Johns gospel. And yet they saye, the worst of all is this that the clarege caute not hereby, nor haue the false contente with the coinvent of Luther, for supposing of his bokes, but further abuse the hatred of his name against every man that is in preaching of the wordes of god any thing such as should be, that is to witte, plain and bold without gross or flattering, whereby if they find a man fault, let them lay his faute to his charge, what needeth to call him a Lutheran. Though Luther be a deuill, peradventure a man perceive saith as he saith in some thinge, and saye true enought. For never was ther heretique, that sayd all false. For the deuill him selfe leied not, when he called christ godes sone. And therefore me thinke that this name of Lutheran厮eth the clarege for a common clerc of a false crime, whereby they lacke special matter to charge one with by ingemus, they labour to bringe him first in infancy of his name, that consisteth (as they make it seame) a confusde heape of hereticies, no man can tell what.

And yet in such dealing the bounds their own matter another way. For while they be came Lutherans, men that be of known vertue and conning, what do they thereby, but one of the two, either cause the people (that have for good prouinge their name, these men in great reputation to thinke that the clarge for malce is now made. But truly came them, so that Luthers doctrine is good, while so cunninge and abominable hande to destroye, to say secrete by faire wayes indued to s
to believe upon his faith, no wonder that he should fight for his: nor that his adversaries should fight for his matters. In so strictness that he would not suffer Saint Peter to fight for his own selfe, but expose him for striking Alch16.

The word doth not defend him selfe, but dealing the care againe of Alchus his persecutor, which Peter had suffered and gotten all his holy bodies to the patient sufferance of all the painsfull tourniotes, that his cruel enemies would put to it, their works as well by his effectual enample of his death, as by his godly counsel in his life, and after that confirmed by the constant Passion of his holy Martyrs, and most worthy is that we should not much as defend our selfe against heretiques and impious, were they paganes, turrers, or sarasmys. And made less than should too fight against the and kill them, but that we should peruse in setting forth his faith against his miserable and impious, by such worth as him selfe began it, keep it, and encrease it, as it was gotte. And that was by patience and sufferance, by which the faith was dylygent and spread, and for the most part the worldes in lytle while.

And by patience the faith was dylygent.

When your crede had thus declared his crede, he deised me both on your behalfe, on his owne, in suche things as were peresse not well said, to take them as they were in dece, the minde of other, whom ye would sayne antwore, and fastely with reall, which ye trued to be the better able to do, by mine antwore, and neither the minde of opposition of you no hym, which did a good in all thing made and abide, by the faith and beleue of Christ's catholike church. But as fo longe partes of this mater as concerned not any parte of our beleue, but the dealing of this world, as the justice of unjustice of some spiritual persons, in the pursing of and contemnmg men for heretiques, or them tooke for heretiques, he thought the law (as of hym selfe) that men might without any parrell of heresy, for they owne parte, not brythstandinge any mans judgement gven, yet well and reasonably doubt therein, so though he thought it here, to think the opposition of any man to be good and catholique, which beart heresy in dece, yet might a man be thought without any parrell of heresy, double.
The first boke

A doubt whether he were an hereteike of no, that were by mannes judgmen condene for one, it might well happen that he never heide those opinions that were put upon him, but that he was either by saide deposici of wrogo full witness, or by the error of malice of unutuf judges condene. And that sometimes perceas, the ignorance of some judges, woulde condene for hereteic such articles, as water better learned woulde in pointe of judgment nowe for god and catholique, and of the other judgmen deserne and judge the contrary.

Butte he, he said that ye bad in me and my lemyyne, as speciall trust and confidence, in any of all these thinges, what ever ye had heard, or should by ye els where, ye were fully determinet to use full credence to, a take by the truth such any where, as he should shewe you from me, with all as he had by me, to take some course, to shew in these matters, by his mouth knowe my minde at large.

After this, I made an answer to his words, I requested him what maner acquantaine was betweene him and me. And thereto peremptoring him to have yours sories at caste, enquyning further of him, to what faculte he had most gene his study. I understande he to have gene diligence to the latine tongue. As for other facultie he taught not at he told me merily. But Logique he redd but babblinge. Whiche to serve for singers. Arithmetiche more for merchants. Geometrie for masons. Astronomy good for no man. And as for philosophy, the most vniite of all. And if Logique had lost all good divinitie, as the subtilties of their questiones, babblinge of their disputations, babblinge all upo reason, which rather geneth blindnesse than any light. For he said, that no light, but of holy scripture. And therfore I said, that he shewed the latin tongue, he had done (which I much remembre) into holy scripture, when he was (he said) learningbounche for a christen man, with which the apostles helde the selfe certene. And therin he said he laboured not one, to can many textes thereof by heart, but also to enterke the sentence and understanding thereon, as seere as he might perceve by his selfe. For as for interpreters, he tolde me that neither his time woulde well serve him to rede, and also he was to great winices in the texte selfe, that he could not finde in his harte, to seke any time in any glosses. And as touching any difficulties, he said that he founde by experience that the bee and suret interpretation was to saye con-

The soule to serve one tere with another, which he interpreted of fable not amongst them well and suret scripture, suficiently to declare them selfe. And this way (he saide) that he beld, which he founde insufficient and suret. For to shoulde it most suftely rapt, whate it were founde out, and leard by a mannes owne labor. And that he beld every man was able enough to do with helpe of God, which never failleth them that faithfully truule in his promise. And he hath promised, that if we seek we shall finde, and if we knocke we shall have it opened to us. And what that be opened, but that boke which is so faith in the Apocalypse is so lyt with Cupp by, clapes, that it can not be opened, but by the lambe, that whan he hyseth then can no man open it, and whan he opens it, than can no man lyst it.

Upon these wordes other lyke, what I considered that your frende was lubious of scripture, all though I now have a very good opinion of him, no at that time had not all the contrary, yet to be plaine with you and him both, by reason that he see the matter is well and doth for wordes, he put me forth that in double whether he were as young faders be sompyne prone to newe fantasies fallen in to libertys secte. And that peereaduret is what feignyng the same, did of god minde the rather sende him to me, with such a message, for that he trusted he should be somewhat answered and satisfie by me. I therefore thought it not mel in to many matters weighte to make him an unbrained anwser, but with god wordes welcomying him for the time, pretending lacke of lesire for other present busines, required him to returne on the moydayn against which time I woulde to order mine affairs, that we woulde have esperence together, of all his stande at length. And he in his wifes being departed, I began to gather in minde, the holeeffecte as my remembrance woulde serve me of all that he had purposed. And because I woulde have it the more zedy at mine eye, so I might the more fully and effectively anwser it, leynge no parte unthushed, in such oder, as he had purposed it, that is to witten, after the maner that I have above rebered. I bethel committed it to wryynge.

psig. The
The first boke.

The second chapter.

Here sommeryly is declared what
The Adownd intende to treate
Of the matters purposed unto the,
Whereof because the first was an op-
nion conteined in some mens habiti
des, that a certain person late abused of
herself for preaching against pilgrimes,
and pictures, yeaters made to iantines,
was therin greatly wedged, the auctor
briefly declared his minde, considering
the contradiction of those perplused and
pernicious opinions.

Of the morow when he was
come again somwhat before
bus, of the clocke (for so I ap-
pointed him) taking him
with me into my study, & my ser-
vantes warned, that if any other holde
happen to desire to speake with me(cer-
tain except of who I gave them know-
ledge) they should deliberate them till
another leasure, I let him down with me,
at a little table. And then I heeded on
unto him, that where he had purposed on
your behalfe his words, many false
bynges, whereby the restfull were take
of time, to him that so well knew them
all red, I wolde (all superfluous rec-
spition and fear) as brefly as I con-
veniently could, the we him my minde
in them all. And first began, where he
began at the abication of the man be
spake of. Secondly, wolde I touche the
codification and buorning of the new
testament, translated by Lydalle. Thir-
ly, somwhat wolde I speke of Luther, &
his sect ingenerall. Fourthly, & finally,
the thing that he touched last, that is
to wit, the warre and fighting against
indefile, with the contemnation of
heretikes unto death, which two points,
him selfe had combined and knotted to-
gether.

And first as touching the matter of
the mannes abication, where it is re-
ported, that the spiritualle did hym
wronge, and soe to make that some ip-
hely, there is laced in them displeasure,
malice and envy toward him, for pre-
ching (as ye saye quod) against their
devous lyning; in him is on the other
side alleged much congryng, heres, &
gownes. I will neither enter into the paue
of them, nor into the dispas of him,
wherein handeth nothing the effect of
this matter, for if there did, I wolde not
passt our fourm parte therof so shortly.