

cence, & so cleane contrary to y<sup>e</sup> doctrine of al y<sup>e</sup> old holy doctours, for whom god hath & doth shew so manye myzacles in hys church, which as I sayde shall not fayle to be conserued and his right faith therein to be p<sup>r</sup>eserued, in despyte of all y<sup>e</sup> heretikes y<sup>e</sup> euer shall spring, Antechrist and all, & in sight of the deuill the great maister of the al, who Chyrist shal at the last restrayn & destroy his y<sup>e</sup>uolle Antechrist with the spirit of his holy mouth, reparyng & delating his church again, & gathering thertinto aswel the remenat of the Jewes, as all other sectes abrode about the world, shall make all folk one flocke vnder hymself the shephearde, & shal deliuer a gloriois kingdome to his father of all the saued peple fro<sup>m</sup> our for<sup>m</sup>ar father Adam, to the last dape, from

hencefurth to raygn in heauen in soye & blisse incogitable one euerlastyng dape with his father himselfe & the holy goit, which send these sedicious sectes y<sup>e</sup> grace to cease, & the fauourers of these factios to amend, & vs the grace, that stoppyng our cares from the false inchantmetes of al these heretikes, we may by the veri saythe of Chyristes satholike church, so walke with charitte in the way of good woorkes in this wretched world, that we may be partners of the heauenly blisse, whiche the blud of Goddes owne sonne hath boughte vs vnto. And thys prayer quod I seruing vs for grace, let vs now syt downe to diner, whiche we dyd. And after diner departed he home to wards you, and I to the courte.

## The supplicacion of soules

made, Anno. 1529. by I<sup>r</sup> Thomas More knight, counsailour to our  
soveraygne Lorde the Kyng, and chauncelour of hys  
duchye of Lancaster.

Agaynst the supplicacion  
of beggars.

To all good chrysten people.



**L** molte pieteous wise continuallye calleth & cryeth vpon your deuoute charitie & most tender pitie, for help, couferte, & reliefe, your late acquaintance, kinred, spouses, copanions, play felowes, & stendes, & now your humble & vnacquaynted, and half for gotten suppliantes, poore priesters, ners of god, y<sup>e</sup> sely soules in purgatory, here abiding & enduring the grieuous paynes & hote clesing fyre, that freteth & burneth oute y<sup>e</sup> rustie & filthie spottes of our sinne, til the mercy of almighty god y<sup>e</sup> rather by your good & charitable meanes, vouchsafe to deliuer vs hence. Fro whence, if ye meruayle why we moze now molesse & trouble you with our wzing then euer we were wont befoze, it may lyke you to wit and vnderstande, y<sup>e</sup> hether to, though we haue been with many folke much for gotten of negligence,

yet hath alway good folke remembred vs and we haue been recommended vnto God, and eased, holpen, and relieved, both by the priuate prayers of good bettuos people, and specially by the dayly masses, and other ghostlye suffrages of priestes, religious, and folke of holpe church. But now sith that of late there are spongen by certayne sedicious persones, which not onely trauayle and labour to destroye them by whome we be much holpen, but also to sowe and sette furth such a pestilent opiniõ agaynst our selfe, as once received and believed among the people, must nedes take from vs the reliefe and coufort y<sup>e</sup> euer should come to vs by y<sup>e</sup> charitable almes, prayer, & good woorkes of the world: ye may take it for no wonder, though we sely soules that haue long lyen and cryed so farre from you, that we seldome brake your slepe, doe nowe in thys our great feare ofoure vtter losse for euer, of your louinge remembzaunce and reliefe, not yet impozunatlye bereue you of your  
rest

Howe the  
soules in pur-  
gatorye be re-  
lieued.

The sely soules in purgatorye call vnto vs for help

The soules  
in purgatorie  
doe neuer rest

A rest w<sup>th</sup> cryinge at youre eares at vn-  
seasonable tyme when ye woulde (as wo-  
doe neuer) repose youre selfe, and take  
ease, but onelye procure to bee presented  
vnto you thys poze booke, thys humble  
supplicacyon of oures, whiche it maye  
please you parcel meale at your lasure  
to loke ouer for all sely soules sake: that  
it may be as an holesome triacle at your  
heart against the deadly popson of their  
pestilent perswasion, that would bring  
you in that errour to wene ther wer no  
purgatory. Of all which cruell persons  
so procuring not the minishment of your  
mercy toward vs, but the vtter spoyle &

robberye of our whole helpe and coun-  
sell that shoulde come from you: the very  
worst, and therby the most deadly de-  
uisour of our paynes and heauines (god  
forgeue him) is that despyteous and des-  
piteful persone, whiche of late vnder pre-  
text of pietie, made and put furth among  
you, a booke that he named, the suppli-  
cation for the beggars, a booke in dede  
nothyng lesse intending, then the pietie  
that it pretendeth: nothing minding the  
weale of any man, but as we shall here-  
after shewe you, much harme and mys-  
chiefe to all men, & among other greate  
sorrow, discourte, and heauines vnto  
vs your euen christen and nigh kynne,  
your late neighbours and pleasant com-  
panions vpon earth, and now poze prie-  
soners here.

And albeit y<sup>e</sup> his vnhappie boke, doth  
for our owne part touche vs very nere:  
yet we be much moued to geue the  
woylde warning of his venemous wy-  
ting, for the deare loue and charitie that  
we beare to you, then for the respecte of  
our owne reliefe. For as for vs, albe-  
it that the gracypous helpe of oure pray-  
oure, almoste dede, and other good wo-  
kes for vs, maye bee the meanes of relie-  
fing & releasyng of our present paynes,

yet such is the merciful godnes of God,  
y<sup>e</sup> though y<sup>e</sup> whole wo:ld wold clene for-  
geat vs, yet would his mercy so remem-  
ber vs, that after tēporall punishment &  
purgeing here, he wil not finally for-  
get to take vs hence, & wypping at the teares  
out of our iyen, translate vs at sōdy ty-  
mes as his high wisdō seeth conuenient  
into y<sup>e</sup> eternal heauenly blisse, to whiche  
his holy blessed blood hath boughte vs.  
But surely to you wo:ldly peple liuing  
there vpon earth, not onely for thys pre-  
sent tyme, but also for as longe as thys  
wo:ld shal endure: y<sup>e</sup> wretched maker of  
y<sup>e</sup> vngracious boke (whō God geue once

the grate to repente and amend) if solke  
were so sonde to folow him, shoulde not  
sayle to wo:zke, as well muche wo:zde  
lye troible to euerye kynde of people;  
as ouer that (whiche moste losse were  
of all) to bringe manye agood symple  
soule, for lacke of beliese of purgatory,  
the verye strayght waye to hell. And  
the case so standynge, there woulde, we  
thynke no manne doubt, but though  
the man that made the boke were well  
knowen amonge you, and in hold also,  
wherby his heynous treason to god and  
the wo:zde, dysclofed and declared by  
vs, he myghte bee in perill of erquisite  
paynefull punishment: yet we bothe  
myghte and ought, rather to putte him  
in the daunger of hys owne demerour,  
then for the sparyng of hys iust correc-  
cion, to suffer him abuse the people with  
his pestilent wyting, to the inestimable  
harne of the whole wo:zde in goodes,  
bodye and soule. And sith we so myght  
of reason, & so shoulde of charitie, though  
the man were knowen and taken, howe  
much may we nowe moze frankely tell  
you all, and nothing shall nede to spare  
hym, sith his boke is nameles, & so hym-  
selfe among you vnknewen, and there-  
by out of the peril of anye punishment  
for hys vnhappy dede: But for that both  
ye & he shal wel perceiue, that we desyre  
but your weale & oures by geuing you  
warning of his malice, and nothing en-  
tend to procure his punishment, whiche  
we rather beseeche our lord of his mercy  
to remitte: ye shall vnderstand, that nei-  
ther is his name nor person vnknewen a-  
mong vs, & therfore we might wel disco-  
uer him, if we wer so minded. For there  
is not only some of his acquaintaunce &  
cōsel, whō god gaue at theyr death the  
grace to repēt, comen hether to purgato-  
ry, nothing moze now lamenting among  
vs, then theyr cruel vnkindnes toward  
vs, in geuing counsayle agaynst vs to  
the makynge of that vngracious boke,  
with infidelitte and lacke of beliese of y<sup>e</sup>  
purgeing fyre whiche they nowe finde &  
feele, but he is also named & boasted a-  
mong vs by y<sup>e</sup> euil angel of his, oure and  
your gossyp enemy the deuyll. Whiche  
as sone as he had set him a wo:zke with  
y<sup>e</sup> pernicious boke, ceased not to cōse he-  
ther & boast it amonge vs: but with hys  
enmpous & enuious laughter gnashing  
the teeth & grynnig, he told vs that his  
people had by the aduysel & cōsel of him  
and of some heretikes almost as euil as  
he, made suche a booke for beggars,  
that

The lacke of  
belief of pur-  
gatory, bring-  
geth a man to  
hell.

What the sup-  
plicacion of  
beggars pre-  
sented.

**T**hat it should make vs begge lōg ere we geat aught. **W**hereby he trusted y some of vs should not so sone creps out of our payn as we had hoped. **W**it ye wel these woꝝdes wer heauy tydings to vs. **B**ut yet because the deuill is wont to lye, we toke some comfort in that we could not belene him, speciallꝝ telling a thing so farre incredible. **F**oz who could euer haue thought y any christen man could foz very petic haue founde in his hert, to seke & study y meanes, wherby a christen man should thinke it labour lost to pray foz all christen soules. **B**ut alacke the whyle, we found sone after, that the falschēd & malice of the man, pꝛeued y deuil true. **F**oz by some that dyed sone after the booke put furth, we haue hearde & perceiued the wretched contentes thereof, well & playnly declaring, what euill spirit inspired him whyle it was in making. **F**oz albeit that it is so contriued, & the woꝝdes so couched, that by the secret inward woꝝking of the deuill that holpe to deuise it, a simple reader might by delite in the reding be deadly cozꝛupted & benemed: yet if a wise mā wel warned: aduisedly will way the sentence, he shall find the hole booke nothing els, but falschēd vnder pꝛetert of playnnesse, crueltie vnder the cloke of pterie: sedicio vnder the colour of counsayl, pꝛoude arrogancie vnder y name of supplicacion, & vnder the pꝛesence of fauour vnto poꝛe folke, a deuillish desyre of nopance both to poꝛe & riche, pꝛiest, religious, & ley mā pꝛince, lord, & people alwel quitch as ded. **H**e deuifeth a piteous bill of complaint & supplicacion, fayned to be by the poꝛe sickē, & soꝛe beggars put vp to the king, lamenting therein theyꝝ number so soꝛe increased, that good folkes almes not halfe suffisyng to find them meate, they be confreynd heauelye to dye foz hunger. **T**hen layeth he the cause of al these poꝛe beggars, both their increase in nūber, & their default in finding, al this he laith to y onely fault of the cleargie, naming thē in his bederolle, bishops, abbottes, pꝛiours, deacons, archdeacons, suffraganes, pꝛiestes, monkes, chanōs, freres, pardoners, & sōmoners. **A**ll these he calleth mighti skurvy beggers, & ydle holy theues, which he saith hath begged so importunatly, that they haue gotten into their handes y third parte of all the realme of Englād, beside tythes, pꝛiuite tithes, pꝛobates of testamentes & offringes, to make pēc & mortuaries, blessing & cursing, cyting, suspending & soyling.

The contentes of the booke of beggars.

The bederoll of the booke of beggars.

**T**hen cometh he perticularly to freres: **T**o whō he maketh as he thinketh a plain & open rekenyng, y they receyue by beggyng thozow the realme yerely. **rl.iii. 3. iiij. C. xxiiij. li. vi. s. viij. d. starking.** **T**he sheweth he that all thys casse together, amounteth yerely farre aboue y half fo the whole substance of the realme. **A**fter this pꝛesupposing as though he had pꝛoued it that the cleargie hath the halfe, he thē to pꝛoue the two. **C.** part of that they haue, wer moze then sufficient foz them taketh foz his grounde, that if the number of them be compared with the number of ley menne, the cleargie be not the **C.** part: & that if they be compared with the ley men, women and chyldeꝛen, the cleargie is not then the foure hūdzred pꝛcent of that number. **A**nd then intēdeth he therby to pꝛoue & conclude, that syth they haue as he sayth moze then the half of altogether, & be themself not fully the foure hūdzred part: therfoze if that better half that they haue wer deuided into ij. hūdzred partes, then wer yet one part of those. **ij.** hūdzred partes as he thinketh so much foz them, specially because they labour not. **A**fter thys he gathereth a great heape of euilles, wherewith he belieth the cleargie, to byng them in displeasure of the king, and hated of the people. **A**nd lest menne should any thing esteeme the cleargie foz y suffrages of theyꝝ prayer in relief of vs sely christen soules in purgatoꝛye, to take awaye that good mind out of good christen mens hertes, he labourerth to make the woꝛlde wene that ther wer no purgatoꝛy at al. **W**herin whan he hath done what he can, then labourerth he to the kyng foz a pꝛesence to rayle vpon the cleargie: saying that there is none other effectual remedie against them, but that it myght please the king to geue hym and suche other, free lycence and libertye, to dyffame the cleargie at theyꝝ pleasure among the people. **F**oz he sayth, that if anye of them be punished any thing by the tempoꝛal lawes thā they soꝛe trouble the labourers therof by the spiritual law, & then the heades of the cleargie doe so highly moze then recompence the losse of their felowes, that they may be holde to doe the like offence again at theyꝝ pleasure. **A**nd foz to pꝛoue that it is alway so, he layeth that it hath been so thꝛyfe: and as it shall after be shewed, he lyeth in all thꝛee. **T**he fyꝛst he layeth that the byshoppe of London was in a greate rage foz endyghtyng of certayne curates of extoꝛcyon and

incon

**I**ncontinencie the last yere in the ward-  
more queffes. And for y<sup>e</sup> second he layeth  
that doctour Alein after that he was pu-  
nished by p<sup>r</sup>emunye for hys contempte  
comitted agaynst y<sup>e</sup> kinges t<sup>e</sup>poral law,  
was therfore by y<sup>e</sup> bishops highly recom-  
pensed in benefices. And for the third he  
layeth that Richard Hunne because he  
had sued a p<sup>r</sup>emunye agaynst a p<sup>r</sup>iest  
for suing him in the spiritual court in a  
matter determinable in y<sup>e</sup> kinges court,  
was accused of heresie, & committed to  
bishops p<sup>r</sup>ieson: where he saith y<sup>e</sup> all the  
world knoweth that he was marthered  
by doctour Hoxsey with his coplices, the  
the bishops chaunceller. And that y<sup>e</sup> same  
doctour Hoxsey he saith vpon other m<sup>e</sup>s  
mouthes, payed. vi. C. li. for hym & hys  
complices: & after obteyned the kynges  
most gracious pardon. Whereupon he  
sayth, the captaynes of the spiritualtie,  
because he had foughten so manfully a-  
gainst the kinges crown & dignitie, pro-  
moted him furthwith, benefice vpon be-  
nefice, to y<sup>e</sup> value of. iij. times as much.  
And by these ensamples he concludeth  
ther wil no such punishm<sup>e</sup>t serue agaynst  
the spiritualtie: & also who that iustlye  
punithe a p<sup>r</sup>iest by the t<sup>e</sup>poral law, is  
vniustly troubled agayn in the spiritu-  
all law. Whereof he would include that  
of necessitie for a special remedy, y<sup>e</sup> king  
must nedes graut a licence to such lewd  
felowes to rable vpon the. Than cometh  
he at last vnto the deuyce of some reme-  
die for the poze beggars. Wherein he  
woulde in no wise haue none hospita-  
les made, because he saith that therein y<sup>e</sup> pro-  
fit goeth to the p<sup>r</sup>iestes. What remedye  
than for the poze beggars: He deuyseth  
noz desireth nothig to be geuen the, noz  
none other almes oz helpe requirerth for  
them, but onely that y<sup>e</sup> kinges highnes  
would first take fro the whole clergie al  
their whole liuing, & then set the abzode  
in the world to geat the wiues, & to geat  
their liuing with the labour of theyr ha-  
des and in the sweat of their faces, as he  
sayth it is y<sup>e</sup> commaundement of god in  
the first Chapter of Genesis, and final-  
ly to tye the to the cartes to be whynned  
naked about euery market to town til they  
fall to labour. And the if these petitions  
wer once grauted & perfourmed, he the-  
weth many great comodities that wold  
as he saith ensue thereupon, both to the  
king & the people, & to the poze beggars.  
Which thinges we shal ere we leaue, in  
such wise repete and ponder, that poure  
wisedomes maye consider & perceue in

your self, what good fruite wold folow  
the spede of his godli supplicacio, wher-  
of we haue rehearsed you y<sup>e</sup> hole sume &  
effect. Trueth it is y<sup>e</sup> many thiges wher-  
with he flazitheth hys matters to make  
the seme gay to the readers at a sodayne  
shew, we leaue out for the while, because  
we would ere we come thereto, that ye  
shold first haue y<sup>e</sup> matter self in thort set  
furth befoze your eyen. And thā shal we  
peruse his p<sup>r</sup>oues, and in such wise cōsi-  
der euery thing apart, that we nothing  
doute but whoso shal rede his worship-  
full w<sup>r</sup>iting, after shal soone perceue  
therin, flazithing without fruite, sottlet-  
tie without sub<sup>r</sup>face, rethorike without  
reason, bold babling without learning,  
& wylines without wit. And finally for  
the foundacion & groud of al his p<sup>r</sup>oues  
ye shall find in his boke not halfe so ma-  
ny leaues as lyes, but almost as manye  
lyes as lynes. And albeit we lye here in  
that case, y<sup>e</sup> about theraminacion & ann-  
swering of such a mad malicious boke,  
we haue neither lust noz leysure to be-  
strowe y<sup>e</sup> time, whereof mispet in our life  
we geue now a hard & a heuy rekening:  
yet not onely the necessitie of our cause  
d<sup>r</sup>uech vs to declare vnto you the feble-  
nes of his reasons, wherewith he would  
b<sup>r</sup>ing you in the case to care nothig for  
vs, beleuing y<sup>e</sup> ther were no purgatoz,  
but also most specialli both our charitie  
to ward you. Wirre vs to shew you y<sup>e</sup> mis-  
chief y<sup>e</sup> he myndeth to your self, alwel in  
y<sup>e</sup> poynt of infidelitie, as in all the rem-  
nant of his sedicious boke. In answer-  
ing whereof we would gladly let his foly &  
lacke of lerning passe, if it wer not more  
thā necessary, y<sup>e</sup> al folke shoud perceiue  
his litle learning & lesse wit, lest simple  
folke wening him wise & well learned,  
might vnto their harine esteeme his euil  
w<sup>r</sup>iting the better for their w<sup>r</sup>og opini-  
on of his wit & learning. As for his ma-  
licious mind and vntueth, ther can no  
man loke y<sup>e</sup> we shoud leaue vntouched,  
but he y<sup>e</sup> would rather y<sup>e</sup> man wer belie-  
ued than answered, & wold wish his bill  
sped were it neuer so malicious & falle.  
For where he so deuyseth his introduc-  
cion, as all hys purpose shoud haue a  
gret face of charitie, by that he speaketh  
all in the name of the poze beggars, this  
is nothing elles but the deuils d<sup>r</sup>ift, al-  
way couering his poise vnder some taff  
of sugar. As for vs, we trust ther wil no  
wise man doute what fauour we beare  
to beggars, as folke of their own felow-  
ship and facultie, and of al whō, there be  
na

what a pze-  
wunye is.

ff  
what thinge  
are to be found  
in the boke of  
beggars.

The deuils  
drift.

The sonnes  
in purgatorie  
praye for beg-  
gars.

**N**o where in the world, neither so nedy,  
nor so soze & so sick, nor so impotent, & so  
soze in paynes as we. And that so farre  
furth, that if ye might see them all on the  
sone side, & but one of vs on y<sup>e</sup> tother side,  
we be very sure y<sup>e</sup> the world would pitie  
one of vs, moze thā thē al. But although  
we be moze beggars than your beggars be,  
as folke daily begging our almes of  
you & thē both: yet enue we not them as  
one of thē doth another, but we praye, &  
require you to geue them for our sakes,  
wherby your gift greatly couforyteth vs  
both. And they be also our proctoures &  
begge in our name, and in our name re-  
ceiue your money, whereof we receiue  
both your deuocion & their prayers. So  
y<sup>e</sup> ye may be wel assured, there coulde be  
put no bill nor supplicacō furth for their  
aduantage, which we wold in any wise  
hinder, but very gladly further in all y<sup>e</sup>  
euer we might. But in godd faith, as our  
poze bryeth y<sup>e</sup> beggars, be for many cau-  
les gretly to be pietied, for their diseale  
& sickenes, sozow, payn, & pouertie: so do  
we muche in this case sozowe their mis-  
hap, y<sup>e</sup> they haue not had at the least wise  
so much forytune, as to fall vpon a wiser  
scruiener to make their supplicacion:  
but vpon suche a one as vnder his great  
wilines sheweth so litle wit, that begin-  
ning with a cloke of charitie, doeth by &  
by no lesse disclose his hatred & malice,  
than if he nothing els had intended, but  
to cast of y<sup>e</sup> cloke & set out his malice na-  
ked to the shew: wherin like a beggars  
proctour he goeth furtō so nakedly, that  
no beggar is ther so bare of cloth or mo-  
ney, as he sheweth himself bare of faith,  
learning, trueth, wit, or charitie: which  
thing as it already well appereth to wise  
mē, so wil we make it euident to al mē,  
taking our beginning at y<sup>e</sup> declaracion  
of his vntueth: whiche one thyng well  
perceiued, wil be sufficient to aunswer &  
ouerturne al his hole enterpryse. How-  
beit we nether shal nede, nor do purpose  
to cūber you with rehearsal & repose of  
all his lies, for that wer to long a worke  
wherof we feare ye should be wery to as-  
bide y<sup>e</sup> hearing. But of so many we shall  
pray you take patience while we shewe  
you some, & such as for the matter be re-  
quisite to be knowen, for as much as all  
his proues be specially grounded vpon  
thē. And first to begin where he begyn-  
neth, whē he saith that the nūber of such  
beggars as he pretendeth to speake for,  
y<sup>e</sup> is as himselfe calleth thē the wretched  
hydnous mōstres, on whō he saith scar-

cely any eye dare loke, y<sup>e</sup> soule vnhappy  
for of lepers & other soze people, nedy,  
impotēt, blind, lame & sick, liuing only  
of almes: haue their nūber now so soze  
increased, y<sup>e</sup> al y<sup>e</sup> almes of al the wel dis-  
posed people of the realme, is not half y<sup>e</sup>  
nough to sustaine thē, but y<sup>e</sup> for very con-  
strainte, they dye for honger. Unto all  
those wordes of his, wer it not y<sup>e</sup> though  
we well wist our self he said vntreue: yet  
would we be loth so to lay as a lie to his  
charge any thing, wherof the vntreue  
wer not so playnly perceiued, but that he  
might find some fauouers which might  
say he said true, els would we peradue-  
ture not let to tel him, y<sup>e</sup> for a beginning  
in these few wordes he had writē. ii. lies  
at once. If we should tell you what nū-  
ber ther was of poze sick folke in dayes  
passed lōg befoze your time: ye wer at li-  
bertie not to belue vs. Howbeit he can  
not yet on y<sup>e</sup> other side for his parte nei-  
ther, bryng you furth a bederoll of their  
names: wherfoze we must for both our  
partes be faine to remit you to your own  
time, & yet not frō your childhod (wherof  
many thinges mē for get whā they come  
to farre greater age) but vnto the dayes  
of youre good remembraunce. And so  
dooyng we suppose if the soze syghtes  
that menne haue seene, had left as great  
impressiōn still remaynyng in theyr  
heartes, as the sight maketh of the pre-  
sent sozowe that they see, menne should  
thinke & say y<sup>e</sup> they haue in dayes passed  
seen as many sicke beggars as they see  
now. For as for other sicknes, they rain  
not God be thanked, but after such rate  
as they haue done in times passed. And  
then of the french pockes, xxx. yere agoe  
went there aboute sycke, syue agaynst  
one that beggeth with them now. wher-  
of who so list to say that he seeth it other-  
wise, we will holde no great dispicions  
with him therupon, because we lack the  
names of both the sydes to make the tri-  
all with. But surely who so shall say the  
contrary: shall as we suppose, either say  
so for hys pleasure, or elles shall it fare  
by his syght as folkes fare with theyr  
seling, whiche what they feele they whine  
at, but what they haue felte, they haue  
moze than halfe for gotten, though they  
felt it right late. Whiche maketh one y<sup>e</sup>  
hath but a poze boyle vpon hys finger,  
thynke the grieue moze great than was  
the payne of a greate botche, that grie-  
ued hys whole hande lyttle moze than  
a doneth a soze. So that in thys  
poynt of the nūber of sicke beggars,  
so soze

**A** so soze increased so late, albeit we will  
foz beare so to save to hym as we myght  
well say: yet will we be so bolde to denie  
it him, till he bring in some better thing  
than his bare woꝝd foꝝ the pꝛofe. And in  
good fapth, if he be put to the pꝛofe of the  
rother point also, y is to wit, that foꝝ be-  
ry constraint those pꝛoze sicke folke dye  
foꝝ hunger: we verelye trust & thinke he  
shal sicke farre and fynd verys selue, if he  
fynd any at al. Foꝝ albeit y pꝛoze house-  
holders, haue theie deare veres made  
right harde thist foꝝ coꝝne: yet our loꝝde  
be thanked, men haue not been so farre  
from all pietie, as to suffer pꝛoze impo-  
tent persones dye at their doꝝes foꝝ hun-  
ger. Now wheras he saith that y almes  
of all well disposed peple of this realme  
**I**s not half ynough to sustein them, & the  
weldisposed peple he calleth in this ma-  
ter al thē that geneth thē almes, & he spe-  
aketh not of one vere noꝝ twayn, but of  
these many veres now passed, foꝝ nether  
be the nūber of the clergie, noꝝ their pos-  
sessions, noꝝ the freres almes, in which  
things he layeth the cause why y almes  
of good peple, is not halfe sufficient to  
kepe & sustein the pꝛoze & sick beggers fro  
famishing, ani great thing increased in  
these. x. oꝝ. xiii. oꝝ. xx. veres last passed, &  
therfoꝝe if that he said wer true: then by  
al these. x. veres at the leass, the almes of  
good people hath not been halfe habile to  
susteyn the pꝛoze & sick beggers fro fami-  
shing. And surely if that were so that in  
iiii. oꝝ. v. veres in which was plentie of  
coꝝne, y pꝛoze & sicke beggars foꝝ lacke of  
mennes almes dyed so fast foꝝ hunger:  
though many should fall sicke neuer so  
fast agayn, yet had they in the last two  
deare veres dyed by of likelthod almost  
enerichone. And whether this be true oꝝ  
not, we purpote not to dispute: but to re-  
ferre & repoꝝt our selve to every mannes  
even and eares, whether any man heare  
of so many dead, oꝝ see so mani y fewer.

**W**han he hath layd these sure stonnes to  
begin the grounde & foundation of hys  
bylding with, that soze and sicke beg-  
gars be so soze encreased, that the almes  
of al y good people of this realme, is not  
halfe ynough to sustein thē, & y therfoꝝe  
by very constraint they daily die foꝝ hu-  
ger: vpon thē he layeth another ston, y  
the cause of al this euil is the great pos-  
sessions of y spiritualtie, & the greate al-  
mes geuen to the freres. But herin first  
he layeth y besides tythes & al such other  
pꝛofites as ryse vnto the church by rea-  
son of the spirituall lawe, oꝝ of mennes

deuocidn, y they haue y thirde part of all  
the tempozall lādes of y realme. Which  
whoso can tell as much of the reuerues  
of y realme, as he can tell lile y made y  
boke, doth well knowe that though they  
haue much: yet is y thirde part of al farre  
another thing, & y he saith in this poynt  
vntue. Than goeth he to y pꝛoze freres.  
And there as we tolde you, he sheweth y  
y almes geuen thē, of certētie amounteth  
verely vnto. ciiii. ℥. CCC. xxxiii. li. xxi.  
s. viii. d. starling, peraduenture mē wold  
wene the mā wēre some apostata, & that  
he neuer couid be so pꝛiue to the freres  
rekening, but if he had been long they  
limitour, and seen some generall viewe  
of al their whole accountes. But surely  
sith the man is bad ynough besyde, we  
wold be loth folk shold reken him foꝝ  
apostata, foꝝ surely he was neuer frere  
foꝝ aught y we know, foꝝ we neuer wiff  
that ever in his life he was halfe so well  
disposed. And also whē ye heare y groud  
of his rekening: ye wil your self thinke  
y he nether knoweth much of their ma-  
ters, & of all the realme besyde, make as  
though he knew mani thinges foꝝ true,  
which mani mē know foꝝ false. Foꝝ first  
he putteth foꝝ y groud of his rekening y  
there are in y realme: lii. thousand parish  
churches, which is one playne lye to be-  
ginne with. Then he putteth that every  
parish one with another, hath. x. house-  
holdes in it: meaning beside suche pꝛoze  
houses as rather aske almes than geue,  
foꝝ of suche ye wote well the freres geat  
no quarterage, and that point albeit the  
groud be not sure, yet because it may to  
many men seme likely, therfoꝝe we let it  
passe. But then he sheweth ferther foꝝ a  
sure trowth, a thyng that al men knowe  
surely foꝝ a great lye, that is to say, that  
of every household in every parish, every  
of y. v. oꝝders of freres hath eury quar-  
ter a peny: foꝝ we know fall wel, & so do  
many of you to, fyꝛst y the comon peple  
speake but of. iiii. oꝝders, the whyte, the  
blacke, the austayne, and the grey, and  
whiche is the fyfth in manye partes of  
the realme fewe folke can tell you. Foꝝ  
if the question were asked aboute, there  
wold be peraduenture founden many  
moꝝ, y moꝝe pietie it is, that could name  
you the grene freres, thē the crowched.  
We know right well also that in many a  
parish in england, of. xl. householders ye  
shal not find sowoꝝe pay, neither. v. pēce  
a quarter, noꝝ. iiii. neither. and many a  
parish neuer a peny. And as foꝝ the. v. d.  
quarterlye, we dare boldelye saye that  
ye shall

Four oꝝders  
of freres.

**A** ye shal find it paid in very few parishes thozow the realme, if ye find it payde in anye. And yet thys thinge beyng suche a sharke lye as many men already knoweth, & euery man shortly may fynde it, he putteth as a playne well knowen trowth for a speciall post to beare vpon his rekening. For vpon these groudes now maketh he a clere rekening in thys maner ensuing, whiche is good also to bee knowne for folke that will learn to cast account. Ther be .liiij. parishes, and in eche of them .x. householdes. So haue ye the wholc summe of y<sup>e</sup> householdes .v. hundred thousand & .xx. thousand. **E**uē iust. So now to y<sup>e</sup> money thē. Euery order of y<sup>e</sup> .v. orders of freres, hath of euery of these householdes a peny a quarter. Summa for euery house among all the .v. orders euery quarter .v. s. & herby maye ye learne that .v. tymes one maketh .v. Now thys is he sheweth you among the .v. orders of euery house for y<sup>e</sup> whole yer .xx. d. & so learne ye there, that .liiij. times .v. maketh .xx. Summa sayth he .v. hundred thousand & .xx. thousand quarters of angelles. Here we would not y<sup>e</sup> because the realme hath no coyne called the quarter angell: ye shouid therfoze so farre misse take the man, as to wene that he meynt so many quarter sakes ful of angelles.

**C** For in dede (as we take hym) by the naming & coumpting of so many quarters of angelles, he meaneeth nothyng elles, but to teache you a poynt of rekening, & to make you perceue & know, that .xx. d. is the fourth part of .vi. s. viii. d. For after that rate it semeth that he valuethe y<sup>e</sup> angell noble. Then goeth he furth with his rekenig & sheweth you y<sup>e</sup> .v. C. thousand and .xx. thousand quarters of angelles, maketh two hundred three scoze thousand halfe angelles. And by thys lo ye may perceiue clearely, that he meynt not quarter sakes of angelles, for than they woulde haue holden ye wote well, many moe peces of fourtye pence, then fourtye times thys whole summe cummeth to. Then he sheweth you farther y<sup>e</sup> .C. l. thousand half angels, amounte iust vnto .C. xxx. thousand angels. where in euery man may learne that the halfe of .l. is .xxx. and that the halfe of twayn is one. Finally then he casteth it altogether and bringeth it into poudes. Summa totalis .xlviij. thousand .li. iii. hundred & .xxiiij. li. vi. s. viii. d. But here to contente the playnnesse of his rekening, he forgoth to tell you that .liiij. nobles make .xx. s. & that .xx. s. make a pounde. But

who can now dout of this rekening whā it cometh so round, y<sup>e</sup> of so great a summe, he leaueth not oute the odde noble. But now sith al this rekening is grouded vpon two false groundes, one vpon .liiij. thousand parishes churches, the other y<sup>e</sup> euery of the .v. orders hath euery quarter of euery household a peny: this rekening of .xlviij. thousand .C. xxx. li. vi. s. viii. d. semeth to come much like to passe, as if he woulde make a rekening w<sup>o</sup> you y<sup>e</sup> euery asse hath .viii. eares. And for to proue it w<sup>o</sup>, beare you first in hand that euery asse hath .liiij. heades, & then make summa .liiij. heades. Then might he boldly tell you farther, that euery asse head hath .ii. eares, for y<sup>e</sup> is commonlye trewe, except any be cutte of. Summa thā .liiij. eares, & so summa totalis .viii. eares. At this account of cyght eares of one asse, ye make a lippe, & thinke it so mad, that no mā woulde make no such. Surely it wer a mad counnit in dede, & yet as mad as it wer, it wer not so mad by half as is hys sad & earnest coumpte that he maketh you now so solenely of y<sup>e</sup> freres quarterage. For this shoulde he ground but vpon one lye, where he groundeth the tother vpon twayne as open lyes as thys and as great. Now might we (and we would) say that al his rekening wer naught, because he rekeneth .xx. d. for y<sup>e</sup> quarter of the angell, and all the remenant of his rekenyng foloweth furth vpon y<sup>e</sup> same rate. But we woulde be loth to putte him in the fault that he deserue not. For surely it might be that he was not ware of the newe valuacion: for he ranne awaye before the valuacion charged. But now vpon this great summe of .xlviij. thousand .C. xxx. li. vi. s. viii. d. vpon these good groudes heaped vpon together, he bringeth in hys ragimannes colle of hys rude rethorike agaynst the pore freres, beginning with such a gret exclamacion, that we heard him better, & sodaynly wer al afrayd when we herd him erie out so loude. Oh grieuous and paynful exaccions: thus verely to be payed, fro the which the peple of your noble progenitours aunciente Britons euer stood free. And so goeth he for: the agaynst the pore freres with Danes, and Sarones, and noble kyng Arthur, & Lucius the emperour, the Romaines, the Grekes, and the great Turke, shewing that all these hadde been utterly marred and neuer hadde been hable to doe nothyng in the warre, if they peple had geuen theyr almyse to freres.

After

**A** After hys rayling rethorike ended a-  
gaynst h̄ freres, then this some of .xliij.  
thousand. CCC. rrriii. li. vi. s. viii. d. he  
addeth vnto al h̄ tother ȳ he said befoze,  
that all the clergie hath beside which he  
sumeth not but layth ȳ this & that toge-  
ther amount vnto moze betwene them,  
thē half of the old substance of h̄ realme.  
And thys he affyrmeth as boldelye, as  
though he could rekē the hole reuenues  
& substance of al england, as readely as  
make h̄ rekenyng of this beggars purse.

Then sheweth he that this better halfe  
of the hole substance is shyfted among  
fewer then the fouze hūdzred part of the  
peple: which he p̄oueth by that he saith,  
that all the cleargie compared vnto the  
remenant of the menne onely, be not the

**B** hundzeth persone. And if they be compa-  
red vnto the remenant of men, women,  
& chyldzen, so are they not be sayeth the  
fouze hundzeth person. But now some  
folke that haue not very long ago vpon  
greate occasions taken the rekenyng of  
p̄iestes & religius places in euery dio-  
ces, & on the other side the rekenyng and  
ȳ number of the temporal men in euery  
countie: know well ȳ this mans mad re-  
kenyng goeth very farre wyde, & semeth  
that he hath hard these wise rekenynges  
at some congregacion of beggars. And  
yet as though because he hath sayd it, he

**C** had therfoze p̄oued it, he runneth furth  
in his rayling rethorike agaynst h̄ hole  
clergie, & that in such a sort & fashon, ȳ  
very hard it wer to discerne whether it  
be moze false and moze foolish. For first  
all the faultes that anye lewde p̄iest or  
frere doeth, all that layeth he to the hole  
clergie, as wel & as wisely as though he  
would lay the faultes of some lewde ley  
people to h̄ default & blame of al h̄ whole  
tempozaktie. But this waye liketh hym

**D** so well, that thus layyng to h̄ hole cler-  
gie h̄ faultes of such as be synple & fault-  
tie therin, & yet not onely layyng to their  
charge the bzeche of chāsttie & abuse in  
fleshy luyng of suche as be nought: but  
also madly like a fōd selowe layyng much  
moze to their charge, & much moze ear-  
nestly repprouyng h̄ good & honest luyng of  
those that be good, whō he rebuketh & ab-  
horreth because they kepe their vōlves, &  
perseuer in chāsttie: for he layeth ȳ they  
be h̄ marrars & distroyers of the realme,  
h̄yngyng the lande into wildernes for  
lack of generacion by their abstaynyng  
from wedding: thē agreueth he hys gret  
crimes with hānous woordes, gay repe-  
titions, & greuous exclamaciōs, calling

them blud suppers, & druncken in h̄ blud  
of holy martirs & sayntes, which he me-  
neth for the condemning of holy hereti-  
kes. Credie golophers he calleth them &  
infaciāble whyzlepoles, because the tē-  
poraltie hath geuen them possessions, &  
geue to ȳ freres their almes. And al ver-  
teuous good p̄iestes & religious folke he  
calleth ydle holye thenes, because they  
spend their tyme in p̄eachyng & p̄ayer.  
And than saith he, these bce they ȳ make  
so manye sicke & sore beggars. These be  
they that make these hozes and baudes:  
These be they that make these thenes:

These be they ȳ make so many ydle per-  
sons. These be they ȳ corrupt the gene-  
rations. And these be they ȳ with the ab-  
staynyng frō wedding, hinder so the ge-  
neracion of the peple, ȳ the realme shall  
at length fall in wildernesse, but if they  
wedde the sooner. And nowe vpon these  
heynous crymes laid vnto the hole cler-  
gie, & laid as euery wise man seeth some  
very falsely, & some very foolishly, after  
his goodly repetitions, he fallth to hys  
gret & greuous exclamaciōs, cryyng  
out vpon the great brode botomies occer-  
an sea of euilles, and vpon the grieuous  
shypwreck of the cōmon welch, ȳ trans-  
lating of the kynges kingdome, and the

ruine of the kynges crown. And therew-  
rolling in hys rethorike frō figure to fi-  
gure, he fallth to a behement inuocaci-  
ō of the king, & geueth hym warning of  
his greates losse, asking hym seruently:  
where is your sward, power, crowne, &  
dignitie become: as though the kynges  
grace had cleane lost hys realme, speci-  
ally for lacke of peopls to raygne vpon,  
because ȳ p̄iestes haue no wyues. And  
surely the man cannot sayle of such elo-  
quēce: for he hath gathered these goodly  
wozd for wozd without any moze laboz

**E** but onely the translating oute of the la-  
tine into the englische tonge. But to en-  
flame the kynges hyghnesse against the  
church, he saith that the cleargie labou-  
reth nothing els, but to make the kyng-  
es subiectes fall into dysobedience and  
rebellion agaynst his grace. This tale  
is a very likely thyng, as though the  
cleargye knewe not, that there is no  
thyng earthlye, that so muche kepeth  
themselve in ayete, resse, and suretie,  
as dooeth the due obedyence of the peopls  
to the vertuous mynde of the p̄yn-  
ce. Whose hyghe goodnesse must nedes  
haue much moze dyfficultie to defende  
the cleargye, and keepe the church  
in peace

The boke of  
beggars rebu-  
keth men for  
heryng theyr  
dores and  
chāsttie.