THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER

The author sheweth that of those miracles that are told and written to be done at divers pilgrimages, and commonly believed for very true, we certainly knew some falsely feigned, yet were that no cause to mistrust the remnant.

BUT be it that among so many miracles as be daily told and written, done at divers pilgrimages, between which miracles and other, why ye put a difference, we shall, as I said before, know further your mind hereafter. And be it also that of such as long have been reputed and still taken for true, yourself undoubtedly knew some for very false, would ye therefore think that among all that remnant there were never one true? What if ye find some fair woman painted whose colour ye had went were natural, will ye never after believe that any woman in the world hath a fair colour of herself? If ye find some false flatterers that long seemed friendly, will ye take ever after all the world for such? If some prove stark hypocrites who the world would have sworn good and godly men, shall we therefore mistrust all other for their sake and ween there were none good at all?

By my truth, quod he, I rode once in good company, and to say the truth for good company, to Walsingham in pilgrimage, where a

**A MERRY TALE**

good fellow’s horse so fell in halting that he was fain to hire another, and let him go loose which was so lean and so poor and halted sore, that empty as he was he could scant keep foot with us. And when we had went we should have left him behind, suddenly he spied a mare, and forth he limped on three legs so lustily that his master’s horse with four feet could scant overtake him. But when he caught him and came again, he sware in great anger all the oaths he might swear, that he would trust halting sir Thomas the worse while he lived.

What was that halting sir Thomas, quod I?

Mary, quod he, their parish priest as he told us, as lean and as poor and as halting as his horse, and as holy too. But since he would while he lived mistrust that halting priest for his halting horse, if I find an holy horeson halt in hypocrisy, I shall not fail while I live to trust all his fellows the worse.

Well, quod I, ye speak merrily; but I wot well ye will do better what-soever ye say. Nor am I sure though ye see some white sapphire or beryl so well counterfeit, and so set in a ring, that a right good jeweller will take it for a diamond, yet will ye not doubt for all that, but that there be in many other rings, already, set right diamonds indeed. Nor will ye not mistrust saint Peter for Judas. Nor though the Jews were
A MERRY TALE
many so noughty that they put Christ to death, yet ye be wiser I wot well than the gentlewoman was, which in talking once with my father, when she heard say that our lady was a Jew, first could not believe it; but said, “What ye mock, Iwis; I pray you tell truth.” And when it was so fully affirmed that she at last believed it: “And was she a Jew,” quod she, “so help me God and halidom, I shall love her the worse while I live.” I am sure ye will not so, nor mistrust all for some, neither men nor miracles.

THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER

The author sheweth that whoso would enquire should soon find that at pilgrimages be daily many great and undoubted miracles wrought and well-known. And specially he speaketh of that great and open miracle shewed at our Lady of Ipswich of late upon the daughter of sir Roger Wentworth, knight.

AND as for the point that we spake of concerning miracles done in our days at divers images where these pilgrimages be, yet could I tell you some such done so openly, so far from all cause of suspicion, and thereto testified in such sufficient wise, that he might seem almost mad that hearing the whole matter will mistrust the miracles. Among which I durst boldly tell you for one, the wonderful work of God that was within these few years wrought in the house of a right worshipful knight sir Roger Wentworth, upon divers of his children, and specially one of his daughters, a very fair young gentlewoman of twelve years of age, in marvellous manner vexed and tormented by our ghostly enemy the devil, her mind alienated and raving with despising and blasphemy of God and hatred of all hallowed things, with knowledge and perceiving of the hallowed from the unhallowed, all were she nothing warned thereof. And after that moved in her own mind and monished by the will of God to go to our Lady of Ipswich. In the way of which pilgrimage, she prophesied and told many things done and said at the same time in other places, which were proved true, and many things said, lying in her trance of such wisdom and learning that right cunning men highly marvelled to hear of so young an unlearned maiden, when herself wist not what she said, such things uttered and spoken, as well learned men might have missed with a long study, and finally being brought and laid before the image of our Blessed Lady, was there in the sight of many worshipful people so grievously tormented, and in face, eyen, look, and countenance so griselye changed, with her mouth drawn aside, and her eyen laid out upon her cheeks, that it was a terrible sight to behold.

And after many marvellous things, at the same time shewed upon divers persons by the devil through God’s sufferance, as well all the remnant as the maiden herself in the presence of all the company restored to their good state perfectly cured and suddenly.

An in this matter no pretext of begging, no suspicion of faining, no possibility of counterfeiting, no simpleness in the seers’ her father and mother right honourable and rich, sore abashed to see such chaunces in their children, the witnesses great number and many of great worship, wisdom, and good experience, the maid herself too young to fain, and the fashion itself too strange for any
man to fain. And the end of the matter virtuous, the virgin so moved in her mind with the miracle, that she forthwith, for aught her father could do, forsook the world and professed religion in a very good and godly company at the Mynoresse where she hath lived well and graciously ever since.

THE SEVENTEENTH CHAPTER

The Messenger layeth forth objections against miracles done at pilgrimages, of which he confesseth many to be true. But he layeth causes and reasons whereby he saith that many men be moved to believe and think that those miracles that be done there be done by the devil to set our hearts upon idolatry by the worshipping of images instead of God.

BUT now albeit, as I said that I might allege you this miracle, and prove it you in such wise that I wot well ye would be as far out of all doubt thereof as ye would be deep in the marvel of the miracle. And peradventure divers other could I shew you done of late at divers pilgrimages, and prove them well too; yet would I fain first hear of you what distinction and difference is that that ye make, and wherefore ye make it, between the miracles done of old time, and these that be now-a-days done at these pilgrimages.

Sir, quod he, somewhat a little I touched it in the beginning and made in a manner a glance thereat.

But loath were I to hit it with a full shot and a sharp, as I have seen some with such reasons cleave the prick in twain that they seemed to bear over the but and all. Which reasons I would be loath in so sore manner to allege. Lest I might haply give you some occasion to think that either I set to somewhat of mine own, or else at the leastwise liked well that side and were a favourer of that faction.

Nay, quod I, fear not that hardly; for neither am I so suspicious to mistrust that one thinketh evil because he defendeth the worse part well by the way of argument and reasoning. And also I trust that all their shots shall be so far too feeble to bear over the but, that few of them shall touch the mark, many too faint to pierce the paper; and some too high, and some too shod, and some walk too wide of that but by a bow.

And therefore I require you spare not to bring forth all that ever ye have heard, or that ye think may be said in the matter.

Sir, quod he, since ye can hear it so indifferently, I shall not spare to speak it. And surely to begin with all that I think true I will not fail to confess. For albeit that I have long sticked with you to with-stand any credence to be given to miracles done now-a-days, in which I have much the longer sticked because of some whom I have knowen or this so far from the belief of any miracles at all that, in good faith, they put me half in doubt whether they believe that there were God at all, if they durst for dread and shame have said all that they seemed to think. Yet, to say
the truth, I never heard anything said so sore therein, that ever moved me to think that any reason would bear the importune mistrust of them that, among so many an open miracle as is daily in divers places done, would ween that none at all were true. But verily as I began a little to touch in the beginning, whether these miracles be made by God and for good saints, or by the devil for our deceit and delusion—albeit I believe and ever will as the church doth—yet some men among some such things say therein that I am driven to do, as I do in other articles of the faith, lean fast unto belief for any reason that I find to make them answer with. For, first, they take for a ground that the devil may do miracles. Or if we list not to suffer them called by that name, the matter shall be thereby nothing amended; for if we will have only called by the name of miracles things by God
MIRACLES
done above nature, yet will we not deny but that God suffereth the devil to work wonders which the people cannot discern from miracles. And therefore when they see them, miracles shall they call them, and for miracles shall they take them. Now since it so is that the devil may do such things, whereby shall we be sure that God doth them, and since the devil may do them, and we be not sure that God doth them, why may not we as well believe that the devil doth them?

Mary, said I, ye told me that ye set nought by Logic, but now ye play the logician outright. Howbeit that argument men may turn on the other side and say that since God may do them much better than the devil, and we be not sure that the devil doth them, why should we not rather believe that God doth them which may do them better. And much more reason it is, where a wonderful work is wrought, there to ascribe it to God, the master of all masteries, rather than the devil that can do nothing but by sufferance, except we see some cause that cannot suffer that work to be reckoned God’s.
THE DEVIL DOTH NOTHING BUT BY SUFFERANCE
Well, quod he, then is it reason that we shew you some such case.

It is, quod he, cause enough in that we see that God hath in Scripture forbidden such imagery, and that under great malediction, as in the law which yourself spake of before, Non facies tibi sculptile and in the Psalm In exitu Israel de Egypto, where first by the mouth of that prophet he describeth the folly of such as worshippeth those images that hath ears and cannot hear, hands and cannot feel, feet and cannot go, mouth and cannot speak. All which absurdities and unreasonable follies appeareth as well in the worship of our images as in the paynims’ idols. And after he sheweth the maledictions that shall fall thereupon, seeing like mote they be to them all such as make them, and all such as putteh their trust in them. And forthwith he declareth in whom good men have their trust and the profit that proceedeth thereupon, saying, Domus Israel speravit in Domino, adjutor eorum et protector eorum est. The house of Israel hath put their trust in our Lord, the helper and defender of them is he. Now when the words of God be clear, open and plain upon this side, what reason is it to believe the comments and glosses of men such as ye brought forth right now, wherewith ye would wind out against the true texts of God? What, should we give credence to the ensample of men’s doings against the plain commandment of God’s writings? And when that only Christ is our saviour and mediator to bring our nature again to God, and our only protector and advocate afore his Father, and may help us best and will help us most, what, shall we make either our Lady or any other creature our advocate, or pray to them which of likelihood hear us not? For there can none of them be present at so many places at once, as they be called upon. And if they were, yet are they no near[er] us than God himself, nor so
fain would that we did well as he that died for us. And, therefore, when we not only do them reverence—which I were content were done them for God’s sake, as ye said before—but also pray to them, we do Christ and God great injury. For if we pray to them as mediators and advocates for us we take from Christ his office and give it them. If we ask help and health of them, then make we them plain gods and betake to them the power of the godhead. For only God is it that giveth all good, as witnesseth saint James, Every good and very perfect gift cometh from above, descending from the Father of lights. And surely, if we consider how we behave us to them, though ye say that all the honour given to saints redoundeth unto God since it is done, as ye say, not for their own sakes but for his, yet would I not ween God be well content that we should for his sake do to any creature like honour as to himself. For scripture saith that he will not give his glory from him, nor to any other creature like honour as to himself. And therefore the Schools, as I hear

DULIA, YPERDULIA, LATRIA

say, devise a treble difference in worshipping, caning the one, Dulia, the reverence or worship that man doth to man, as the bondman to the lord; the second, Yperdulia, that a man doth to a more excellent creature, as to angels or saints; the third, Latria, the veneration, honour and adoration that creatures doth only to God. In which of these parties ye put the worshipping of images, I am neither so well seen therein to tell, nor so curious greatly to care. But this I see well, if any of all these three kinds of worship be better than other, the images hath it. For they have all that ever we can do. For what do we to God when we do worship him in that fashion that they call Latria, but we do the same to saints and images both? If it stand in kneeling, we kneel to saints and their images, if in praying, we pray as bitterly to them as to God. If in sensing and setting up of candles, we sense them also and set some saint seven candles against God one. So that whatsoever fashion of worshipping of Latria be, the same is as largely done to saints and images as to God. And this not unto images only—which though they have no life have yet some shape and fashion after man—but, as men ween, unto pigs’ bones also sometime. For what reverent honour is there daily done, under the name and opinion of a saint’s relic, to some old rotten bone that was haply sometime, as Chaucer saith, a bone of some holy Jew’s sheep. See we not that some one saint’s head is shewed in three places; and some one whole saint’s body lieth in divers countries, if we believe the lies of the people. And in both the places is the one body worshipped where the one or the other is false and one body mistaken for another, an evil man haply for a good. And yet will the priests of both places take offerings and toll men thither with miracles too. In which case either must ye say that the miracles of the one place be false and famed, or else that miracles make not your matter good nor prove your pilgrimages true. And yet might all this gear be much the better borne if it were true that ye defend the things withal when ye say that in worshipping of saints and images men worship neither the one nor the other as gods, but the images for the saints, and the saints for God. But now, as it seemeth, that matter is indeed far otherwise. For the people pray to the saints for their necessities, putting thereto trust for their petitions in the saints themself, as though God gave it not but they. And in the images put the people their trust instead of the saints them-selves. For albeit that it might stand with reason, as ye have answered me, that presupposed the miracles in these pilgrimages to be done by God, the people might then with reason go seek and visit such places as God, by miracle declared that he would have himself or his holy saints sought and honoured in. Yet now this answer toucheth the point but in part and matcheth not the whole matter. For the people do not only visit these places and there do all the worship to the saints that they can possible do to God, with hope of their help from the saints’ self, which they should well wit only to be given by God,
and thus by this demeanour make the saints God’s fellows—that is to say the servants matcheth with their master and the creature mates to the maker—but also use themself in as religious a fashion and as fervent affection to the images of stone or tree, as either to saint or God. And plainly take these images for the saints’ self and for God himself. And put in these images of their pilgrimages their full hope and whole trust that they should put in God.

Which besides that I have said before appeareth well in this, that they will make comparisons between our Lady of Ipswich and our Lady of Walsingham. As weening that one image [is] more of power than the other, which they would never do but if instead of our lady they put their trust in the image self. And the people in speaking of our lady: “Of all our ladies,” saith one, “I love best our Lady of Walsingham.” “And I,” saith the other, “our lady of Ipswich.” In which words what meaneth she but her love and her affection to the stock that standeth in the chapel of Walsingham or Ipswich?

What say you when the people speak of this fashion in their pains and perils: “Help! Holy Cross of Bradman, Help our dear Lady of Walsingham.” Doth it not plainly appear that either they trust in the images in Christ’s stead and our lady’s, letting Christ and our Lady go, or take at the leastwise those images so that they ween they were verily the one Christ, the other our Lady herself? And so every way the faith and devotion withdrawn from God, that should have it, and our hearts by these images blinded and set upon the dead stocks and stones. Now see the good fruit also that followeth thereupon. I let pass over the faitry and falsehood that is therein used among, sometime by the priests, sometime by beggars in faming of false miracles. Look what devotion men come hither with. With the most come they that most abuse them-self, such I mean as most trust have and blind faith in these blind images. But the most part that cometh, cometh for no devotion at all, but only for good company, to babble thitherward and drink drunk there, and dance and reel homeward. And yet here is not all. For I tell you nothing now of many a naughty pack, many a flecke and his make, that maketh their images meetings at these wholesome hallows. And many that seem an honest housewife at home hath help of a bawd to bring her to mischief.

FRIAR DONALD

as she walketh abroad about her pilgrimages. I heard once when I was a child the good Scottish frere father Donald whom I reckon surely for a saint if there be any in heaven. I heard him preach at Poules Cross that our lady was a virgin, and yet at her pilgrimages be made many a foul meeting. And loud he cried out, “Ye men of London,

MARK THIS YE LONDONERS

Gang on your self with your wives to Willesden in the devil’s name or else keep them at home with you with sorrow.” And surely so many good men ween it were best, considering that these viages be but wander-ing about vanity or superstitious devotion, and the next door to idolatry, when men have their affections instead of [to] God bounden to blocks and stones. And now since that this gear is such, what marvel is it though, as I said before, the devil be glad to give attendance thereon, and do for his part what he may to help his own devices forward? Or what marvel is it though God in this cursed world when we fall from him to other, and from the honour of himself to his saints, when we do as the paynims did, instead of God worship mainmots, and all this by falling to follow men’s glosses before his own texts; what wonder is it though God again serve us as he served them, and suffer the devil delude us as he did them, and make us lean to false miracles as we fall wilfully to false gods? Thus say they, quod be, that
speak on that side, and yet much more than I can call to mind. But surely since ye willed me to forbear nothing, I have as I could, rather set to somewhat, not of mine own opinion, but of mine own invention, than anything left out that I could remember which I had ever heard any man lay, to prove the miracles done at pilgrimages to be uncertain by whom they be wrought, or rather to prove that they should not be God’s miracles but the devil’s wonders.

THE EIGHTEENTH CHAPTER

The author defereth the answer to the foresaid objections and first by Scripture he proveth that the church of Christ cannot err in any necessary article of Christ’s faith. And in this chapter be those words of Christ specially touched, Super cathedram Moysi sederunt etc. Qui dicunt vobis fadte, quac autem faciunt nonlire facere, « concerning the authority of the Church. 

SURELY, quod I, for my part, I can you very good thank; for ye have not faintly defended your part, as though it were a corrupted advocate that would by collusion handle his client’s matter feebly for the pleasure of his adversary; but ye have said therein, I cannot tell whether as much as any man may say, but certainly I suppose as much as ye either have heard any man say or can yourself say. And at the leastwise, much more than I have heard of any man else, or could have said of myself. And undoubted as ye spake of shooting in the beginning, this gear how near it goeth to the prick, we shall see after. But this I promise you, it would fain bear over the butt and all. For if it might hold and be bidden by, and were as well able to be proved true as I trust to prove it false, the butt we shot at were quite gone for any surety that we could reckon of our faith and christendom. But now to come to the point.

Since it is agreed already between us that at these images and pilgrimages miracles be there, either shewed by God for the comprobation of his pleasure therein, or wonders wrought by the devil for our delusion and damnation. If it may either appear to us, that they be not done by the devil, then will it well follow that they be done by God. Or if it be proved to be done by God for the good of his church, then will it be clear enough that they be no wonders wrought by the devil to the deceit of christian people. And since that either other of these parties proved implieth the reproof of our purpose, I will assay to show, and trust right well to prove you, the truth of our side by some one of these ways or peradventure by both, that is to wit as well in proving that God doth these miracles, as in reproving and confuting that they should be done by the devil. And first would I fain meet with your objections and answer them forthwith, while they be fresh, saving that me seemeth better for the while to defer them, forasmuch as some things there be whereupon it will be requisite that we first be both agreed, without which we were like to walk wide in words, and run at all riot so loose that our matter could neither have ground, order, nor end.

Now if I were in this matter to dispute with a Paynim that would make the question between their miracles and ours, albeit I should have a clear matter in the end, yet must it needs be a long matter and much entriek « or it should come at the end. And whole books would it hold, both the confuting of theirs, and unto them the assertion of our own, specially for that they receive not
our scripture, and between them and us nothing common to ground upon but reason. And if we should dispute with a Jew, less labour should we have, since that we should have with him—though he deny the new testament—yet reason and the old testament agreed upon, wherein we should not vary for the text, but for the sentence and understanding. For therein we should have him stiffly withstand us. But now since we shall in our matter dispute and reason with those that agree themselves for christian men, our dispicions is so much the shorter in that we must needs agree together in most things. For we must agree in reason where faith refuseth it not. And over that we shall agree upon the whole corpus of scripture, as well the new testament as the old. But in the interpretation we may peradventure stick. Is it not so?

Yes, quod he.

Well, quod I, is there any other thing wherein ye think that we shall vary, but the interpretation of the scripture?

Not that I remember, quod he, except the conclusion itself, where-upon we talk, as of the worshipping of images, or praying to saints, in which methink there can be no great question, if the scripture be well interpreted. 

**THAT THAT WAS SAID TO THE APOSTLES WAS SAID TO THEIR SUCCESSORS**

Ye do, quod I, agree that such things as are mentioned in the gospel spoken by Christ unto saint Peter and other apostles and disciples, were not only said to themself, nor only for themself, but to them for their successors in Christ’s flock, and by them to us all, that is, to wit, every man as shall appertain to his part.

Whereby mean you that? quod he.

I mean, quod I, as for ensample when he said: *Nisi abundaverit justitia vestra plusquam scribarum et pharisiorum, non intrabitis in regnum coelorum.* “Except your justice abound and exceed the justice of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall never come in heaven. And where he saith, If ye will enter into the kingdom of heaven, keep the commandments; “ did he not say such things to them for all Christian men that shall come after?

I think yes, quod he, for the second word concerning the commandments. But as for the first, that their justice should be better than the justice of the Scribes and Pharisees, peradventure he spake specially to his apostles themself, that they should not be like the scribes and Pharisees, which commanded other many things, and did nothing themself.

That is in my mind, quod I, well taken, and so doth holy saint Austyn expound it. But since ye think he said that word to his apostles specially, rather than to his whole flock, whither think you that he said it only to them, or else to all other also that should after come in their places and succeed them in office?

Nay fore God, quod he, to all that [be] bishops, he said it, and prelates and spiritual rulers of his church, that ever shall be in the church, forbidding them to bind and lay upon other poor men’s backs importunabe burdens, to the bearing whereof themself will not once put forth a finger.
Very well said, quod I, what think you then of that he said, Do ye such things they bid you do, but not as ye see them do? 

In that would our Lord, quod he, that all the people should do all that the prelates should command, as far as was commanded in the law by God; but he meant no further. And therefore he said that they sat upon the chair of Moses, and he willed that they should for that cause be obeyed. And therein he meant in such things only as they should command, that were by God commanded the people in the law given to Moses. And that Christian men in likewise obey the bishops and prelates, commanding only such things as himself hath commanded his people in his gospel and his own law.

And in nothing else, quod I? What meaneth it then that our Lord in the parable of the Samaritan, bearing the wounded man into the Inn of his Church, and delivering him to the host after that himself had dressed his wounds with wine and oil, and left with the host the two groats of the two testaments, and promised the host beside, that what-soever the host would bestow upon him more, he would when he came again recompense him therefore. 

And also in the place that we spake of, our Saviour said that the Scribes and Pharisees, beside the law of Moses on whose seat they sat, did lay great fardels and fast bound them on men’s backs, to the bearing whereof they would not move a finger themself. 

And yet for all that he bade the people do what their prelates would bid them, though their burden were heavy. And let not to do it though they should see the bidders do clean contrary. For which he added, but as they do, do not you.

By our Lady, quod he, I like not this gloss. For it maketh all for the bonds by which the laws of the church bind us to more ado than the Jews were almost with Moses’ law. And I wot well Christ said come to me, ye that be overcharged, and I shall refresh you. 

And his apostles said that the bare law of Moses, beside the ceremonies that were set too by the Scribes and the Pharisees, were more than ever they were able to bear and fulfil. 

And therefore Christ came to call us into a law of liberty. And that was in taking away the band of those very ceremonial laws. And therefore, saith our Saviour, of that law that he calleth us unto, My yoke, saith he, is fit and easy, and my burden but light. Whereby it appeareth that he meant to take away the strait yoke and put on a more easy; and to take off the heavy burden and lay on a lighter. Which he had not done if he would lade us with a fardel full of men’s laws more than a cart can carry away.

The laws of Christ, quod I, be made by himself and his Holy Spirit for the governance of his people, and be not in hardness and difficulty of keeping anything like to the laws of Moses. And thereof durst I for need make yourself judge. For if ye bethink you well, I ween if it were at this age now to choose, you would rather be bounden to many of the laws of Christ’s church than to the circumcision alone. Nor to as much ease as we ween that Christ called us, yet be not the laws that have

THE LAWS MADE BY THE CHURCH ARE OF LESS DIFFICULTY THAN THE LAWS MADE BY CHRIST

been made by his church of half the pain nor half the difficulty that his own be, which himself putteth in the gospel, though we set aside the counsels. It is, I trow, more hard not to swear at all than to forswear, to forbear each angry word than not to kill, continual watch and prayer than a few days appointed. Then what an anxiety and soliciute is there in the forbearing of every idle word? What an hard threat after the worldly count for a small matter. Never was there almost so
sore a word said unto the Jews by Moses, as is to us by Christ in that word alone where he saith that we shall of every idle word give account at the day of judgment. What say ye then by divorces restrained, and liberty of divers wives withdrawn, where they had liberty to wed for their pleasure if they cast a fantasy to any that they took in the war.

One of that ware is enough, quod he, to make any one man warre.

Now that is merrily said, quod I, but though one eye were enough for a fletcher, yet is he for store content to keep twain, and would, though they were sometime sore both and should put him to some pain.

What ease also call you this, that we be bound to abide all sorrow and shameful death and all martyrdom upon pain of perpetual damnation for the profession of our faith. Trow ye that these easy words of his easy yoke and light burden were not as well spoken to his apostles as to you, and yet what ease called he them to. Called he not them to watching, fasting, praying, preaching, walking, hunger, thirst, cold and heat, beating, scourging, prisonment, painful and shameful death. The ease of his yoke standeth not in bodily ease, nor the lightness of his burden standeth not in the slackness of any bodily pain—except we be so wanton, that where himself had not heaven without pain, we look to come thither with play—but it standeth in the sweetness of hope, whereby we feel in, our pain a pleasant taste of heaven.

LOOK NOT TO COME TO HEAVEN WITH PLAY
This is the thing, as holy saint Gregory Nazienzen declareth, that refresheth men that are laden and maketh our yoke easy and our burden light, not any delivering from the laws of the church, or from any good temporal laws either, into a lewd liberty of slothful rest. For that were not an easy yoke, but a pulling of the head out of the yoke. Nor it were not a light burden, but all the burden, discharged contrary to the words of saint Poule and saint Peter both, which as well understood the words of their master as these men do, and as a thing consonant and well agreeable therewith do command us obedience to our superiors and rulers, one and other, in things by God not forboden, although they be hard and sore. But see for God’s sake how we be run a great way further than I thought to go when I began and have left that we should go forth withal.

It is no loss, quod he, for there is a good thing well touched by the way.

Well, quod I, let us go back again where we left, since ye agree that Christ spake his words not to his apostles only for their own time, but such things as he said to them he meant to all that should follow them. And therefore somewhat he spake to them for the priests and bishops only: As when he said, *Vos estis sal terrae,* Ye be the salt of the earth; and somewhat to the whole flock, as when he said: *Mandatum novum do vobis ut diligam invicem sicut ego dilexi vos,* I give you a new commandment that you love together as I have loved you. Tell me then, I require you, when Christ said to saint Peter, “Sathanas hath desired to sift thee as men sift corn; but I have prayed for thee that thy faith shall not fail,” said he this to him as a promise of the faith to be by THE WHOLE CHURCH
God’s help perpetually kept and preserved in saint Peter only, or else in the whole church, that is to wit the whole congregation of Christian people professing his name and his faith, and abiding in the body of the same, not being precided and cut off, meaning that his faith should never so
utterly fail in his church but that it should whole and entire abide and remain therein.

Mary, quod he, this is good to be advised of. For though Christ for the more part such things as he spake to one, spake to all, according to his own words, *Quod uni dico, omni bus dico*, That I say to one, I say to all. "Yet some things he said and meant particularly as he spake it. As when he bade saint Peter come upon the water to him, "he bade not the remnant come so. And so may it peradventure be that this word was spoken and meant toward Peter alone. That will be, quod I, very hard to hold. For his faith after failed. But since that upon his first confession of the right faith that Christ

**PETER HEAD OF THE CHURCH**

was God’s son, our Lord made him his vicar and under him head of his church; and that for his successor he should be the first upon whom and whose firm confessed faith he would build his church and of any that was only man make him the first and chief head and ruler thereof, therefore he showed him that his faith, that is to wit the faith by him confessed, should never fail in his church, nor never did it, notwithstanding his denying. For yet stood still the light of faith in our Lady, of whom we read in the gospel continual assistance to her sweetest son without fleeing or flitting. And in all other we find either fleeing from him, one time or other, or else doubt of his resurrection after his death—his dear mother only except—for the signification and remembrance

**OUR LADY’S CANDLE**

whereof the church yearly in the Tenebrae lessons "leaveth her candle burning still when all the remnant, that signifieth his apostles and disciples, be one by one put out. And since his faith in effect failed, and yet the faith that he professed abode still in our Lady, the promise that God made

was (as it seemeth) meant to him but as head of the Church. And therefore our Lord added thereto: “And thou being one of these days converted, confirm and strengthen thy brethren.” "In which by these words our Saviour meant and promised that the faith should stand for ever. So that the gates of hell should not prevail thereagainst. Or else might ye say, that these words spoken to St. Peter, “Feed my sheep,” "was meant but for himself, and no commandment to any successor of his or any bishop or prelate. And by that mean might ye say also that these words of Christ’s promise made unto his disciples, that the Holy Ghost should instruct them of all things, "were only meant for themself in their own persons, and not that ever he should instruct his church after their days. And when he said “Where-soever be two or three gathered together in my name, there am I myself among them;” "we shall say by this means, that he meant but of his own disciples in his own time while he was here with them, and not that he would be likewise present with such other congregations in his church after.

And finally, then were these words frustrate where he said: “Lo, I am with you all the days to the world’s end” ? "If he should mean it but with them that heard him speak it. then should it appear that he had intended a church only of them, and for their time; and then from their death hither all were done.

Verily, Sir, quod he, I can well agree that all such things was spoken by Christ to make them sure that the faith should never fail in his church. Howbeit, if I durst doubt in that point, one thing is there that somewhat sticketh in my mind.
Doubt on, quod I, between us twain and spare not, nor let not to tell me what moveth you.

Sir, quod he, I think that God setteth no more by faith than he doth by charity. But as for charity and good works with virtuous living shall cool and decay in the church as our Saviour saith in the twenty-fourth chapter of Matthew. Because iniquity shall abound, the charity of many men shall cool. And surely methinketh it is well near all gone already.

God forbid, quod I, for albeit that it greatly day by day decayeth, and much people nought, yet be there many good men about, and shall be alway, though they be few in comparison of the multitude. And yet is not all one of other virtues and of faith, that is to wit of knowledge and belief of the articles of our faith. I mean of such articles as we be of necessity bound to believe. For albeit that the flock of Christ shall never lack good and devout virtuous people, yet shall both the best be sinners, and also much more the multitude shall ever have the faith that I speak of, than shall have the goodness of living.

Why for, quod he?

For two causes, quod I. One, the malice of the people whereby they will not be so ready to live well as to believe well. For the people themself will better keep the faith [than] the other virtues, since it is

**IT IS LESS LABOUR TO BELIEVE THAN TO WORK WELL**

a thing of less labour to know what they should believe, and to believe it also when they know it, than it is to work well. For though the knowledge and belief bring many men to the labour of good works, yet the world commonly and the frailty of our flesh, with the enticement of our ghostly enemies, make us, willingly and wittingly well knowing and believing the good, yet to walk in the worse, as doth sometime the sick man, that believing his physician, and having had also right often good proof by his own experience to his pain before, that some certain meat or drink shall do him harm, doth yet of an importune appetite fall for his little pleasure to his great pain and hurt.

Another cause is, quod I, the goodness of God, which how far so ever his people fall from the use of virtue, shall not yet as himself hath promised suffer them to fall from the knowledge of virtue, not only for the manifestation of his justice, that their own conscience may condemn them in doing the things that themself know to be nought; but also to the intent they may still have among them a perpetual occasion of amendment. For if the faith were once gone, and the church of Christ fallen in that error that they believed vice to be virtue, and idolatry to be the right way of God’s worship, then had they no rule to give them to better. And therefore while we be not in error of understanding and faith, how so ever we fall, or how often so ever we sin, we see the way to turn again by grace to God’s mercy. But if faith were gone, all were gone, and then had God here no church at all.

**THE NINETEENTH CHAPTER**

*The author proveth that if the worship of images were idolatry then the church believing it to be*
lawful and pleasant to God were in a misbelief and in a deadly error. And then were the faith failed in the church whereof Christ hath promised the contrary as is proved in the chapter before.

SURELY, Sir, quod he, that God made not his church for a while, but to endure till the world’s end, that is there no Christian man but he will well agree. And since his church cannot stand without faith, which is the entry into Christendom—for as saint Poule saith,

**FAITH SHALL BE ALWAY IN THE CHURCH**

\[\text{Accedentem ad deum oportet credere.} \quad \text{“Whoso will come to God must needs believe.} \]

No man will deny but that faith is and alway shall be in his church—and that his church not in faith only and the knowledge of the truths necessary to be known for our soul’s health, but also to the doing of good works and avoiding of evils, is, hath been, and ever shall be specially guided and governed by God and by the secret inspiration of his holy spirit.

Well, quod I, then, if the church have faith, it erreth not in belief.

That is truth, quod he.

It should err, quod I, if it believed not all the truths that we be bound to believe.

What else, quod he?

What and we believed, quod I, all that is true, and over that some other thing not only false, but also displeasant to God, did we not then err in our necessary belief?

Whereby mean you that, quod he?

As thus, quod I, if that one believed in all the three persons of the Trinity, the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, and therewith were persuaded that there were a fourth person beside, equal, and one God with them.

He must, quod he, needs err in his necessary belief, by which he is bounden to believe in the Trinity. And that fellow believeth in a quarternity.

That is, quod I, the whole Trinity and one more.

But we be not only not bounden, quod he, to believe in any more, but also bounden not to believe in any more.

Very well, quod I, then erreth he as much and as far lacketh his right belief that believeth too much, as he that believeth too little; and he that believeth something that he should not as he that believeth not something that he should.

What else, quod he, and what then?
Mary, this, quod I, if we believe that it were lawful and well done to pray to saints, and to do reverence [to] their images, and do honour to their relics, and visit pilgrimages. And then where we do these things they were indeed not well done, but were displeasant to God, and by him reputed as a minishment and a withdrawing of the honour due to himself, and therefore afore his majesty reproved and odious and taken as idolatry, were not this opinion a deadly pestilent error in us, and a plain lack of right faith?

Yes, fore God, quod he.

But ye grant, quod I, that the church cannot err in the right faith necessary to be believed, which is given and alway kept in the Church by God.

Truth, quod he.

Then followeth it, quod I, that the church in that it believeth saints to be prayed unto, relics and images to be worshipped, and pilgrimages to be visited and sought, is not deceived nor doth not err, but that the belief of the church is true therein. And thereupon also followeth that the wonderful works done above nature at such images and pilgrimages, at holy relics by prayers made unto saints, be not done by the devil to delude the church of Christ therewith, since the thing that the church doth is well done and not idolatry. But by the great honour done unto saints, God himself [is] the more highly honoured, in that his servants have so much honour for his sake. And thereof followeth it that himself maketh the miracles in comprobation thereof.

Also, if it be true that ye have granted that God keepeth and ever shall keep in his church the right faith and right belief by the help of his own hand that planted it, then can it not be that he shall suffer the devil to work wonders like unto his own miracles to bring his whole church into a wrong faith. And then if those things be not done by the devil, I trow ye will not then deny but they be done by God. And so is yet again our purpose double proved. First, in that ye grant that God will not suffer his church to err in his right faith; secondly, which pursueth thereupon, by that he hath by many a visible miracle declared that this faith and manner of observance is very pleasant and acceptable unto him, which miracles, since they be proved to be done upon good ground and cause, appear well to be done by God and not by our ghostly enemy.

THE TWENTIETH CHAPTER

The Messenger allegeth that the perpetual being and assistance of Christ with his church to keep is out of all damnable errors is nothing else but his being with his church in holy scripture; whereof the author declareth the contrary.

HOW think you, quod I, is there anything in this matter amiss? I cannot well tell you, quod he, what I might answer thereto. But yet methink that I come to this point by some oversight in granting.
Well, quod I, men say sometimes when they would say or do a thing and cannot well come thereon but miss and oversee themself in the assaye: “It maketh no matter,” they say, “ye may begin again and mend it, for it is neither mass nor mattyns.” And albeit in this matter, ye have nothing granted but that is in my mind as true as the mattyns or the mass either, yet if ye reckon yourself over swift in granting, I give you leave to go back and call again what ye will.

In good faith, quod he, full hard were it in my own mind, otherwise to think, but that God shall alway keep the right belief in his church. But yet since we come to this conclusion by the granting therof, let us look once again thereupon. And what if men would say, as I heard once say myself, that God doth peradventure not keep alway faith in his church, to give them warning with, when they do well and when the contrary. But since he hath given them and left with them the scripture, in which they may sufficiently see both what they should believe, and what they should do, he letteth them alone therewith, without any other special cure of his, upon their faith and belief. For therein they may see all that them needeth if they will look and labour therein. And if they will not, the fault is their own sloth and folly. And whoso be willing to mend and be better, may always have light to see how by recourse to the reading of holy scripture, which shall stand him in like stead, as ye said before, that God kept the faith for, by his special means in his church.

If this, quod I, were thus, wherof should Christ’s promise serve, *Ego vobiscum sum omnibus usque ad finem saeculi*, I am with you all the days to the end of the world? Wherefore should he be here with his church if his being here should not keep his right faith and belief in his Church?

Mary, quod he, these words well agree withal. For God is and shall be to the world’s end with his church in his holy scripture. As Abraham answered the rich man in hell saying, “They have Moses and the pro-phants,” not meaning that they had them all at the time present with them, but only that they had their books. And so Christ forasmuch as the scripture hath his faith comprehended therein according to his own words, *Scrutamini scripturas, quia scripturae sunt quae testimonium persibent de me.* Search you the scriptures for they bear witness of me. Therefore he said, “*Ego vobiscum sum usque ad finem saeculi.*” I am with you to the end of the world, because his holy scripture shall never fail as long as the world endureth. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away. And therefore in his holy writing is he with us still, and therein he keepest and teacheth us his right faith if we list to look for it, and else as I said, our own fault and folly it is.

If God, quod I, be none otherwise with us but in holy scripture, then be those words of Christ, I am with you to the world’s end, some-what strangely spoken, and unlike the words of Abraham whereunto ye resemble them. For Christ never left a book behind him of his own making, as Moses did and the prophets. And in their books he was spoken of, as he was in the gospel. Wherefore if he had spoken and meant of scripture he would have said that they should have with them still his evangelists and writers of his gospels as Abraham said they have Moses and the prophets, which were the writers of the books that the Jews had. Christ also said, I am with you till the end of the world, not I shall *I AM* be, but I am, which is the word I AM appropriated to his godhead. And therefore the word “am”
is the name by which our Lord would, as he told Moses, be named unto Pharaoh, as a name which from all creatures, since they be all subject to time, clearly discerneth his Godhead, which is ever being and present without difference of time past or to come. In which wise he was not in his holy scripture, for that had [a] beginning. And, at [the time when] those words [were] spoken, was not yet all written. For of the chief part, which is the new testament, there was yet at that time never one word written. And also we be not sure by any promise made that the scripture shall endure to the world’s end, albeit I think verily the substance shall. But yet, as I say, promise have we none thereof. For where our Lord saith that his words shall not pass away, nor one jot thereof be lost, he spake of his promises made in dede, as his faith and doctrine taught by mouth and inspiration. He meant not that of his holy scripture in writing there should never a jot be lost, of which some parts be already lost, more peradventure than we can tell of. And of that we have the books in some part corrupted with miswriting. And yet the substance of those words that he meant be knowen, where some part of the writing be unknowen. He saith also that his Father and he should send the Holy Ghost, and also that he would come himself, whereto all this, if he meant no more but to leave

**CHRIST IS BODILY PRESENT IN THE SACRAMENT**

the books behind them, and « go their way? Christ is also present among us bodily in the holy sacrament. And is he there present with us for nothing? The Holy Ghost taught many things, I think unwritten, and whereof some part was never comprised in the scripture yet unto this day, as the article, which no good Christian man will doubt of, that our blessed Lady was a perpetual virgin as well after the birth of Christ as afore.

Our Saviour also said unto his apostles that when they should be accused and brought in judgement, they should not need to care for answer, it should even then be put in their minds. And that he meant not only the remembrance of holy scripture which before the Paynim judges were but a cold and bare alleging, but such new words given them by God, inspired in their hearts so effectual, and confirmed with miracles, that their adversaries though they were angry thereat, yet should not be able to resist it. And thus with secret help and inspiration is Christ with his church, and will be to the world’s end present and assistant—not only spoken of in writing.

**THE TWENTY-FIRST CHAPTER**

*The author sheweth that if it so were indeed as the Messenger said, that is to wit, that Christ continued with his church none otherwise but only by the leaving of his holy scripture to them, and that all the faith also were only therein; then should it yet follow that, as far as the necessity of our salvation requireth, God giveth the Church the right understanding thereof. And thereupon followeth farther that the Church cannot err in the right faith. Whereupon is inferred eftsoon all that the messenger would have fled from by force. And thereon also specially followeth that all the texts of holy scripture which heretics allege against images, or any point of that common belief of Christ’s catholic church, can nothing serve their purpose.*

BUT now would I wit, since ye reckon him none otherwise present than in holy scripture, whether then doth he give his church the right understanding of holy scripture or not?
What if he do not, quod he?

Mary, quod I, then yourself seeth well that they were as well without. And so should the scripture stand them in as good stead as a pair of spectacles should stand a blind frier.

That is very truth, quod he. But therefore hath his wisdom and goodness provided it so to be written, that it may be well understanden by the collation and consideration of one text with another.

May it not also be, quod I, that some of them which do read it dili-gently, and diligently compare and consider every text how it may stand with other, may yet for all that mistake and misunderstand it?

Yes, quod he, it may be so. For else had there not been so many heretics as there hath been.

Very truth, quod I. But now if all the faith be in holy scripture, and no part thereof anywhere else, but that it must be therein altogether learned, were it then sufficient to understand some part aright, and some other part wrong, in the necessary points of our faith, or must we as far forth as concerneth the necessity thereof misunderstand no part?

We must, quod he, mistake no part, as far as necessarily concerneth our faith. But we must have so the right understanding of all together, that we conceive no damnable error.

Well said, quod I, then, if we must, we may. For if we may not we must not. For our Lord bindeth no man to an impossibility.

We may, quod he.

If we may, quod I, then may we either by good hap fall into the right understanding, or else by natural reason come to it, or else by supernatural grace be led into it.

That is truth, quod he, needs must it be one of these ways.

Well, quod I, we will not ensearch which. But I would first wit whether Christ have a church in the world continually and so shall have to the world’s end, or else have one sometime, and sometime none at all? As we might think, that he had one while he was here himself, and peradventure a while after, and haply none at all never since, nor shall not again we wot not nere when.

Nay, quod he, that can not be in no wise but that he must needs have his church continue still somewhere; for else how could he be with them continually to the world’s end, in scripture or otherwise, if they, with whom he promised to be and continue to the world’s end, should not continually so long endure?

Or how could those words of Christ be true, “Lo I am with you all the days to the world’s end,” -
if before the world’s end he were away some days, as he were indeed from the church some
days, if in some days he had no church.

Well, quod I, yet would I wit one thing more. Can he have a church without faith?

Nay, quod he, that were impossible.

THE CHURCH, FAITH AND REASON
Forsooth, quod I, so were it. For his church is a congregation of people gathered into his faith.
And faith is the first substantial difference discerning Christian men from heathen, as reason is
the difference dividing man from all kinds of brute beasts.

Now, then, if his church be, and ever shall be continual, without any times between in which
there shall be none, and without faith it may never be, and no part of the faith is, as ye say
elsewhere, had but in holy scripture, and all it must be had; « and also, as we were agreed a little
while afore, there must be none error adjoined thereto, and therefore as far as toucheth the
necessity of faith, no part of scripture may be mistaken, but all must be understanden right, and
may be right under-standen by hap, reason or help of grace it necessarily followeth that by one or
other of these ways the Church of Christ hath alway, and never faileth, the right understanding of
scripture, as far as longeth for our necessity.

That followeth indeed, quod he.

Well, quod I, let pass for the while what followeth further. And since the Church so hath, let us
first agree by which of these three ways the church hath it, whether by hap, reason or grace.

By hap, quod he, were a poor having. For so might it hap to have and hap to fail.

Then, quod I, since it hath it ever, it cannot be by hap. What think you then of reason?

As little, quod he, as any man thinketh. For I take reason for playne enemy to faith.

Ye take, peradventure, wrong, quod I. But now since ye so think, ye leave but the third way,
which is the help of grace.

No, surely, quod he.

Verily, quod I, where reason may between divers texts stand in
THE SPIRIT OF GOD LEADETH THE CHURCH INTO ALL TRUTH
great doubt which way to lean, I think that God with his Holy Spirit leadeth his church into the
consent of his truth. As himself said that the Holy Ghost, whom he would send, should lead them
into all truth. « He said not the Holy Ghost should at his coming write them all truth, nor tell
them all the whole truth by mouth, but that he should by secret inspiration lead them into all
truth. And therefore, surely, for a true conclusion in such means by God himself, by the help of
his grace, as yourself granteth, the right understanding of scripture is ever preserved in his
church for (from) all such mistaking, whereof might follow any damnable error concerning the
faith. And thereof doth there first follow, that beside the scripture self, there is another present
assistance, and special cure of God, perpetual with his church, to keep it in the right faith, that it err not by misunderstanding of holy scripture, contrary to the opinion that ye purposed, when ye said that Christ’s being with his church was only the leaving of his holy scripture to us.

And over this, if God were no otherwise present than ye speak of, yet since it is proved that his church, for all that, ever hath the right understanding of scripture, we be commen “to the same point again, that ye would so fain flit from. For if the scripture, and nothing but the scripture, doth contain all thing that we be bounden to believe, and to do, and to forbear, and that God also therefore provideth for his church the right understanding thereof concerning everything necessary for us that is contained in scripture, then must there needs follow thereupon the thing that ye feared lest ye had wrong and unadvisedly granted, that is, to wit, that God alway keepeth the right faith in his church.

And thereupon followeth further the remnant of all that is question between us, that the faith of the church in the worship that it believeth to be well given unto saints, relics and images, is not erroneous, but right.

And thereupon followeth also that the miracles done at such places be none illusions of damned spirits but the mighty hand of God, to show his pleasure in the corroboration thereof, and in the excitation of our devotion thereto.

Indeed, quod he, we be come back here with going forward as men walk in a maze.

Ye have not yet, quod I, lost all that labour. For though ye have half a check in this point, yet have ye, if ye perceive it, mated me in another point by one thing that is agreed between us now.

What is that? quod he.

This, quod I, that I have agreed as well as you that God hath given his church the right understanding of scripture in as far forth as longeth to the necessity of salvation.

In what point, quod he, hath that mated you?

Why, quod I, see you not that? Nay then will I not tell you but if ye hear me, or if I tell you, yet shall ye not win the game thereby. For since ye see it not yourself it is but a blind matter.

Let me know it yet, quod he, and I am agreed to take none advantage thereof.

On that bargain be it, quod I. Ye wot well, quod I, that against the worshipping of images, and praying to saints, ye said certain texts of scripture to prove it forbidden and reputed of God for idolatry. For answer whereof, when I said that men must lean to the sentence that the church and holy doctors of the church give to those texts, ye said they were but men’s false glosses against God’s true texts. And now

**THE CHURCH CANNOT MISUNDERSTAND THE SCRIPTURES**

since ye grant, and I also, that the church cannot misunderstand the scripture to the hindrance of the right faith in things of necessity [to salvation], and that ye also acknowledge this matter to be
such, that it must either be the right belief and acceptable service to God or else a wrong and erroneous opinion and plain idolatry, it followeth of necessity that the church doth not misunderstand those texts that ye or any other can allege and bring forth for that purpose. But that all these texts be so to be taken and understood as they nothing make against the church, but all against your own opinion in this matter. And this have ye suddenly answered your self, to all those texts out of hand, with a gloss of your own, as true as any text in the bible, and which all the world will never avoid, except they would make the scripture serve the church of nought, or rather to their hindrance than furtherance in the faith. For so were it if it might be that God giveth them not the good understanding thereof but suffereth them to be deceived and deluded in errors by the mistaking of the letter.

Mary, quod he, this is a blind mate indeed.

Surely, quod I, these two things seem to me two as true points, and as plain to a Christian man, as any peticon of Euclid’s geometry is to a reasonable man. For as true as it is that every whole thing is more than his own half, as true is it indeed and to every Christian man faith

TWO THINGS MOST PERFECT AND TRUE
maketh it as certain—First, that Christ’s church cannot err in any such article as God upon pain of loss of heaven will that we believe. And thereupon necessarily followeth that there is no text of scripture well understanden, by which Christian people are commanded to do the thing which the church believeth that they may lawfully leave undone, nor any text whereby we be forbidden any thing which the church believeth that they may lawfully do.

1 Onlookers.
2 Target practice: prick, the point of the target: but=butt=target.
3 Ex. 20. 4.
4 Ps. 113. 4-8.
5 Ps. 113. 9.
6 James I. 17.
7 Incensing.
8 Deception.
9 Worthless fellow and his mate.
11 Entangled.
12 Disputations.
13 Matt. 5. 20.
14 Matt. 19. 17.
15 Matt. 23. 2, 3.
17 Burdens.
18 Matt. 23. 4.
19 Matt. II. 28
20 Acts. 15. 10.
21 19. 9.
22 Matt. 5. 13.
The Divine Office of the Church sung on the Wednesday, Thursday and Friday of Holy Week, now as then, throughout the world.

- John 13. 34.
- Mark 13. 37.
- Heb. II. 6
- Attempt.
- Matt. 28. 20.
- John 5. 39
- Matt. 24. 35.
- He and His Father and the Holy Ghost.
- Matt. 28. 20
- and the whole faith must be found in scripture.
- Come.