

Thomas Cranmer

Prologue
to the
Great Bible

The prologue,

¶ A prologue or p̄face made by the
moost reuerende father in God, Thomas
Archbyshop of Canterbury
Metropolytan and P̄ymate of Englande.

For two sondye sortes of people it semeth moche necessary y^t somthyng be sayde in the entrye of thys booke, by the waye of a p̄face or prologue: wherby herafter it maye be both y^e better accepted of them which hitherto coulde not well beare it: and also the better used of them, which hertofore haue mysused it. For truly, some there are that be to slowe, & nede the spurre: some other seme to quycke, & nede more of the byddell. Some loose theyr game by shorte shotyng, some by ouer shotyng. Some walke to moche on the lefte hande, some to moche on the ryght. In the former sorte be all they that refuse to reade, or to heare redde the scripture in theyr vulgar tonges, moch worse they y^t also let, or discourage the other from the readyng or bearyng thereof. In the latter sorte be they, which by theyr inordinate readyng, vndiscrete speakyng, contentious disputyng, or otherwys, by theyr lit̄cyous luyng,

The Prologue,

¶ A prologue or preface made by the
most reverend father in God, Thomas
Archbishop of Canterbury,
Metropolitan and Primate of England

For two sundry sorts of people, it seemeth much necessary that something be said in the entry of this book by the way of a preface or prologue: whereby hereafter it may be both the better accepted of them which hitherto could not well bear it: and also the better used of them, which heretofore have misused it. For truly, some there are that be too slow and need the spur; some other seem too quick, and need more of the bridle. Some lose their game by short shooting, some by overshooting. Some walk too much on the left hand, some too much on the right. In the former sort be all they that refuse to read or to hear read the scripture in their vulgar tongues; much worse, they that also let or discourage the other from the reading or hearing thereof. In the latter sort be they which by their inordinate reading, indiscrete speaking, contentious disputing, or otherwise by their licentious living,

flander & hynder the worde of God, mooste of al
 other, wherof they wolde seme to be greatest
 furtherers. These two sortes albeit they be moost
 farre vnylike y^e one to y^e other, yet they both
 deserue in effecte lyke reproche. Neyther can I
 well tell whyther of them I may iudge y^e moze
 offender, hym y^t doth obstinately refuse so
 godlye and goodly knowledge: or hym that so
 ungodly and so ungoodly doth abuse y^e same:
 And as touchynge the former I wolde maruayle
 moche y^t any man shulde be so madd, as to refuse
 in darcknes, lyght; in hunger, foode; in colde,
 fyer; for the worde of God is lyght: **Lucerna*
pedibus meis, verbum tuum. Foode: †*Non in solo*
pane viuit homo, sed in omni verbo dei. Fyer:
 **Ignem veni mittere in terram, et quid volo, nisi vt*
ardeat? I wolde maruayle (I saye at thys) saue
 that I consyder, howe moche custome and vsage
 maye do. So that yf there were a people as some
 wyte, *de Cymeriis*, which neuer sawe y^e sunne, by
 reason that they be situated farre toward the
 north pole, and be enclosed and ouershadowed
 with hygh moutaynes: it is credyble & lyke
 ynough, that yf, by the power and wyll of God,
 the moutaynes shulde synke downe, and geue
 place, that the lyght of the sunne might haue

slander and hinder the word of God most of all other, whereof they would seem to be greatest furtherers. These two sorts, albeit they be most far unlike the one to the other, yet they both deserve in effect like reproach. Neither can I well tell whether of them I may judge the more offender, him that doth obstinately refuse so godly and goodly knowledge, or him that so ungodly and so ungodly doth abuse the same. And as touching the former, I would marvel much that any man should be so mad, as to refuse in darkness, light; in hunger, food; in cold, fire. For the word of God is light: *Lucerna pedibus meis, verbum tuum.* Food: *Non in solo pane vivit homo, sed in omni verbo dei.* Fire: *Ignem veni mittere in tertam, & quid volo nisi ut ardeat?* I would marvel (I say at this) save that I consider how much custom and usage may do. So that if there were a people as some write, *de Cymeriis*, which never saw the sun, by reason that they be situated far toward the North pole, and be enclosed and overshadowed with high mountains, it is credible and like enough, that if by the power and will of God, the mountains should sink down and give place, that the light of the sun might have

enteraunce to thē: at the fyrst, some of them wolde be offended therwith. And the olde proverbe affermeth, that after tyllage of corne was fyrst founde: many dellyted moze to feade of maste and acoznes, wherwyth they had bene accustomed, then to eate bzeed made of good corne. Soche is the nature of custome that it causeth vs to beare all thynges well and easelye, wherwyth we haue bene accustomed, and to be offended with al thynges therunto contrary. And therfoze, I can well thynke them worthy pardon, whych at the commyng abzoad of scripture doubted and drewe backe. But soch as wyll persyste styl in theyz wyllfulnes, I muste nedes iudge, not onely foolyshe, frowarde and obstinate: but also peuysshe, peruerse and indurate. And yet, yf the matter shulde be tryed by custome, we myght also allege custome for the readyng of the scrypture in the vulgare tonge, and pzescrybe the moze auncient custome. For it is not moche aboue one hundzeth yeare ago, sens scripture hath not bene accustomed to be redde in the vulgar tunge within this realme, and many hundzed yeares befoze that, it was translated and redde in the Sarones tonge, whych at that tyme was oure mothers tonge. Wherof there remayneth yet

entrance to them: at the first some of them would be offended therewith. And the old proverb affirmeth, that after tillage of corn was first found, many delighted more to feed of mast and acorns, wherewith they had been accustomed, than to eat bread made of good corn. Such is the nature of custom, that it causeth us to bear all things well and easily, wherewith we have been accustomed, and to be offended with all things thereunto contrary. And therefore, I can well think them worthy pardon, which at the coming abroad of scripture doubted and drew back. But such as will persist still in their wilfulness, I must needs judge not only foolish, froward* and obstinate, but also peevish, perverse, and indurate†. And yet, if the matter should be tried by custom, we might also allege custom for the reading of the scripture in the vulgar tongue, and prescribe the more ancient custom. For it is not much above one hundred years ago, since scripture hath not been accustomed to be read in the vulgar tongue within this realm, and many hundred years before that, it was translated and read in the Saxons' tongue, which at that time was our mother tongue. Whereof there remaineth yet

* Wilful, headstrong

† Hardened

diuers coppes foude lately in olde abbeis, of soch antique maners of wrytynge and speaking, that fewe men nowe ben able to reade and understande thê. And when this language waxed olde and out of comê vsage, because folke shulde not lacke the frute of reading, it was agayne translated in y^e newer language. Wherof yet also many copys remaine and be dayly founde. But nowe to let passe custome, and to weye as wyse men euer shulde, the thyng in hys awne nature. Let vs here discusse. What it auayleth scripture to be had and redde of the laye and vulgare people. And to this question I entêde here to saye nothyng: but that was spoken and wrytten by the noble doctoure and moost mozell diuine saynt John Chrysostome, in hys thyzde sermon *de lazaro*, albeit, I wyl be somthyng shorter, & gether the matter into feawer wordes and lesse rowme then he doth there: because I wolde not be tedious. He exorteth there hys audyence, that euery man shulde reade by him selfe at home in the mean dayes and tyme, betwene sermon and sermon: to the entent they myght both moze profoundly fyre in their myndes and memoeries that he had sayde befoze upon soch textes, wherupon he had alreadye

divers copies found lately in old abbeys, of such antique manners of writing and speaking, that few men now be able to read and understand them. And when this language waxed old and out of common usage, because folk should not lack the fruit of reading, it was again translated into the newer language. Whereof yet also many copies remain and be daily found.

But now to let pass custom, and to weigh as wise men ever should the thing in his own nature. Let us here discuss, What it availeth scripture to be had and read of the lay and vulgar people. And to this question I intend here to say nothing: but that was spoken and written by the noble doctor and most moral divine, saint John Chrysostom in his third sermon *de Lazaro*; albeit, I will be something shorter, and gather the matter into fewer words and less room than he doth there, because I would not be tedious. He exhorteth there his audience, that every man should read by himself at home in the mean days and time, between sermon and sermon: to the intent they might both more profoundly fix in their minds and memories that he had said before upon such texts, whereupon he had already

preached: and also that they myght haue theyr myndes the moze ready and better prepared to receaue and perceaue that whyche he shulde sey frome thenforth in hys sermones, upō soche textes, as he had not yet declared and preached upon: therfoze sayth he there: My comen vsage is to geue you warnynge befoze, what matter I intende after to entreate vpon, y^t you youre selues in the meane dayes maye take the boke in hande, reade, wepe, and perceyue the summe and effect of the mattier: and marke what hath bene declared, & what remayneth yet to be declared: so y^t therby youre mynde maye be the moze furnyshed, to heare the reste, that shal be sayd. And that I exhorte you (sayth he) & euer haue & wyll exhorte you, y^t ye (not only here in the churche) geue eare to that, that is sayde by the preacher: but that also, when ye be at home in youre houses, ye applye youre selues from tyme to tyme to the readyng of the holy scriptures: which thynge also I neuer lynne to beate into the eares of them that bene my famylers, and with whom I haue pryuate aquayntaunce and couersacyon. Let no man make excuse and saye: (sayeth he) I am busyed aboute mattiers of the comon welth, I beare this office or y^t, I am a

preached: and also that they might have their minds the more ready and better prepared to receive and perceive that which he should say from thenceforth in his sermons, upon such texts, as he had not yet declared and preached upon: therefore saith he there, My common usage is to give you warning before, what matter I intend after to entreat upon, that you yourselves in the mean days may take the book in hand, read, weigh, and perceive the sum and effect of the matter; and mark what hath been declared and what remaineth yet to be declared; so that thereby your mind may be the more furnished to hear the rest that shall be said. And that I exhort you (saith he) and ever have and will exhort you, that ye (not only here in the church) give ear to that, that is said by the preacher; but that also when ye be at home in your houses, ye apply yourselves from time to time to the reading of the holy scriptures, which thing also I never lin* to beat into the ears of them that be my familiars, and with whom I have private acquaintance and conversation. Let no man make excuse and say (saith he): I am busied about matters of the commonwealth; I bear this office, or that; I am a

* Stop, cease.

craftes man, I must applye myne occupacyon, I haue a wyfe, my chyldzen must be fedde, my householde must I prouyde for. Briefly I am a man of y^e world, it is not for me to reade the scriptures, y^e belongeth to them y^e hath bydden y^e world faze well, which lyue in solitarennes and contēplacyon, that hath bene brought up, and contynually nosylled in learnynge and religyon. To thys answering: what sayest thou man (sayeth he) is it not for the to studye and to reade the scripture, because thou art encombred and distracte with cures and busynes? So moche the more it is behouefull for the to haue defence of scriptures, howe moche y^u art the more distressed in worldly daungers. They that bene free and farre from trouble and entremedlyng of worldly thynges, lyueth in sauegarde and tranquilyte, and in the calme oz within a sure haven. Thou art in the myddest of the see of worldly wyckednesse, and therfore thou nedest the more of ghostlye succoure & comfort: they sytte farre from the strokes of battayll, and farre out of gonneshote, and therfore they be but seldome wounded: thou that standest in the forefront of the hoost, & nyest to thyne enemyes, muste nedes take nowe and then many strokes, and be

craftsman, I must apply my occupation. I have a wife, my children must be fed, my household must I provide for. Briefly I am a man of the world, it is not for me to read the scriptures, that belongeth to them that have bidden the world farewell, which live in solitariness and contemplation, and have been brought up and continually nosylled* in learning and religion. To this answering: What sayest thou man? (saith he) Is it not for thee to study and to read the scripture, because thou art encumbered and distracted with cares and business? So much the more it is behoveful for thee to have defense of scriptures, how much thou art the more distressed in worldly dangers. They that be free and far from trouble and intermeddling of worldly things liveth in safeguard and tranquility, and in the calm or within a sure haven. Thou art in the midst of the sea of worldly wickedness, and therefore thou needest the more of ghostly succor and comfort! They sit far from the strokes of battle, and far out of gunshot, and therefore they be but seldom wounded: thou that standest in the forefront of the host, and nighest to thine enemies, must needs take now and then many strokes, and be

* Nursed; nuzzled, nurtured

greuouſly wounded. And therfore y^u haſt more
 nede to haue thy remedies and medecynes at
 hande. Thy wyfe prouoketh y^e to anger, thy
 chyldre gyueth y^e occaſion to take ſorowe and
 penſyuenes, thyne enemyes lyeth in wayte for
 y^e, thy frende (as y^u takeſt him) ſomtyme
 enuieth y^e, thy neyghboure myſteporteth the, or
 pycketh quarels agaynſt y^e, thy mate or
 partynner vndermyneth y^e, thy lord e iudge, or
 iuſtice threteneth the, pouertye is payneful to y^e,
 the loſſe of thy deare & welbeloued cauſeth y^e to
 mozne. Proſperite exalteth y^e, aduerſite byngeth
 y^e lowe. Bezelye, ſo diuerſe and ſo manyfolde
 occaſyōs of cares, tribulacyōs and tēptacyōs
 beſetteth y^e & beſegeth the roude aboute. Where
 canſt y^u haue armour or forterreſſe agaynſt
 thyne aſſautes? Where canſt thou haue ſalue for
 thy ſores, but of holy ſcripture? Thy fleſhe muſt
 nedes be prone and ſubiect to fleſhly luſtes, which
 dayly walkeſt & art cōuerſaunte amongeſt
 women, ſeyſt theyr bewtyes, ſet forth to y^e eye,
 heareſt theyr nyſe & wāton wordes, ſmelleft their
 balme, cyuet & muſke, w^t many other lyke
 prouocatiōs and ſteryngeſ, except y^u haſt in a
 redynes wherwith to ſuppreſſe and auoyde them,
 which cannot elles where be had, but onely out of

grievously wounded. And therefore thou hast most need to have thy remedies and medicines at hand. Thy wife provoketh thee to anger, thy child giveth thee occasion to take sorrow and pensiveness, thine enemies lie in wait for thee, thy friend (as thou takest him) sometime envieth thee, thy neighbor misreporteth thee, or picketh quarrels against thee, thy mate or partner undermineth thee, thy lord judge, or justice, threateneth thee, poverty is painful to thee, the loss of thy dear and well-beloved causeth thee to mourn. Prosperity exalteth thee, adversity bringeth thee low. Briefly, so divers and so manifold occasions of cares, tribulations and temptations beset thee and besiege thee round about. Where canst thou have armour or fortress against thine assaults? Where canst thou have salves for thy sores but of holy scripture? Thy flesh must needs be prone and subject to fleshly lusts, which daily walkest and art conversant among women, seest their beauties set forth to the eye, hearest their nice and wanton words, smellest their balm, civet and musk, with many other like provocations and stirrings, except thou hast in a readiness wherewith to suppress and avoid them, which cannot elsewhere be had, but only out of

the holy scriptures. Let vs reade & seke all the remedies y^t we can, & all shal be lytell ynough. Howe shall we then do, yf we suffer and take dayly woūdēs, & whan we haue done, wyll sytte still & serche for no medecynes? Doest thou not marke & consider, howe y^e smyth, mason, oz carpenter, oz any other hād̄y craftesman, what neade soeuer he be in, what other shyfte soeuer he make, he wyll not sell oz laye to pledge y^e toles of his occupacyon, for then howe shulde he worke his feate oz get his lyuyngē therby? Of lyke mynde and affeccyon ought we to be towarde holpe scripture, for as mallettes, hāmars, sawes, chespylles, axes, and hatchettes, be y^e tooles of their occupacyon. So bene the bokes of the prophetes, and apostelles, and all holpe wyte inspired by the holy ghoſt, the instrumētes of oure saluacyon. Wherfore, let us not stycke to bye and prouyde vs the Byble, that is to saye, the bookes of holy scripture. And let us thynke y^t to be a better Juell in our house then eyther golde or syluer. For lyke as theues bene lothe to assaute an house, where they knowe to be good armour & artillary, so wheresoeuer these holy and ghostly bookes bene occupied, there nether the deuēl, nor none of his angelles dare come neare.

the holy scriptures. Let us read and seek all remedies that we can, and all shall be little enough. How shall we then do, if we suffer and take daily wounds, and when we have done, will sit still and search for no medicines? Dost thou not mark and consider how the smith, mason, or carpenter, or any other handy craftsman, what need soever he be in, what other shift soever he make, he will not sell nor lay to pledge the tools of his occupation, for then how should he work his feat or get his living thereby? Of like mind and affection ought we to be towards holy scripture, for as mallets, hammers, saws, chisels, axes, and hatchets be the tools of their occupation. So be the books of the prophets, and apostles, and all holy writ inspired by the holy ghost, the instruments of our salvation. Wherefore let us not stick to buy and provide us the Bible, that is to say, the books of holy scripture. And let us think that to be a better jewel in our house than either gold or silver. For like as thieves be loath to assault an house where they know to be good armour and artillery, so wheresoever these holy and ghostly books be occupied, there neither the devil nor none of his angels dare come near.

And they that occupye them bene in moche sauegarde, and hauen greate consolacyon, & bene the readyer vnto all goodnes, the slower to all euyl, and yf they haue done any thing amysse, anone euen by the syght of y^e bookes they^r consciences bene admonished, and they waren so^ry & ashamed of the facte. Paraduecture, they wyll saye vnto me: howe & yf we vnderstande not that we reade, that is cōteyned in the bokes. What then? Suppose, thou vnderstande not the depe and profoude misteryes of scriptures, yet can it not be, but that moche frute & holynes must come and growe vnto the by the readyng: for it cannot be that thou shuldest be ignoraunte in all thynges alyke. For the holye ghost hath so ordered and attēpered the scriptures, that in them aswell publicanes, fysshers, and shepherders may fynde they^r edifycacion, as greate doctoures they^r erudicion: for those bookes were not made to bayne glozie, lyke as were the wyttinges of the gentyle philosophers and rethoricyans, to the entent y^e makers shulde be had in admiracion for they^r hye styles and obscure maner of wytyng, wherof nothyng can be vnderstande without a master or an expositoure. But y^e apostelles and prophetes wrote they^r bokes so, that they^r speciall

And they that occupy them be in much safeguard, and have a great consolation, and be the readier unto all goodness, the slower to all evil, and if they have done anything amiss, anon even by the sight of the books their consciences be admonished, and they wax sorry and ashamed of the fact. Peradventure, they will say unto me: how and if we understand not that we read, that is contained in the books. What then? Suppose thou understand not the deep and profound mysteries of scriptures, yet can it not be, but that much fruit and holiness must come and grow unto thee by the reading: for it cannot be that thou shouldest be ignorant in all things alike. For the holy ghost hath so ordered and attempered the scriptures, that in them as well publicans, fishers, and shepherds may find their edification, as great doctors their erudition: for those books were not made to vain glory, like as were the writings of the gentile philosophers and rhetoricians, to the intent the makers should be had in admiration for their high styles and obscure manner of writing, whereof nothing can be understood without a master or an expositor. But the apostles and prophets wrote their books so, that their special

entēt and purpose might be vnderstanded and perceaued of euery reader, which was nothyng but the edificacyon and amendemēte of the lyfe of them that readeth or heareth it. Who is it, that readyng or hearyng reade in the gospell, Blessed are they that bene meke. Blessed are they y^t bene mercyfull. Blessed are they y^t bene of cleane herte: & soch other lyke places, can perceyue nothyng excepte he haue a master to teache hym what it meaneth? Likewyse, the signes & myzacles with all other hystories of y^e doynges of Christ or hys apostelles, who is ther, of so simple witte ad capacitye, but he maye be able to perceauē & vnderstande them? These be but excuses and clokēs for the rayne, and keuerynges of theyz awne ydell slouthfulness, I cannot vnderstāde it. What maruaylle? Howe shuldest y^u vnderstande, yf thou wylt not reade, nor loke vpon it? Take the bookes into thyne hādes, reade the hole stozye, and that y^u vnderstandest kepe it well in memozye: that thou vnderstādest not, reade it agayne, & agayne: yf thou can nether so come by it, couंसaylle with some other that is better learned. Go to thy curate and preacher, shewe thy selfe to be desirous to knowe and learne. And I doubtē not,

intent and purpose might be understood and perceived of every reader, which was nothing but the edification and amendment of the life of them that readeth or heareth it. Who is it, that reading or hearing read in the gospel, Blessed are they that be meek. Blessed are they that be merciful. Blessed are they that be of clean heart. and such other like places, can perceive nothing except he have a master to teach him what it meaneth? Likewise, the signs and miracles with all other histories of the doings of Christ or his apostles, who is there, of so simple wit and capacity, but he may be able to perceive and understand them? These be but excuses and cloaks for the rain, and coverings of their own idle slothfulness. I cannot understand it. What marvel? How shouldest thou understand, if thou wilt not read, nor look upon it? Take the books into thine hands, read the whole story, and that thou understandest, keep it well in memory; that thou understandest not, read it again, and again. If thou can neither so come by it, counsel with some other that is better learned. Go to thy curate and preacher; show thyself to be desirous to know and learn. And I doubt not,

but God seinge thy diligence & redynesse (yf no man elles teache y^e) wyll hym selfe vouchsafte with hys holy spzete to illuminate the, and to open vnto the that which was locked from the.

Remēber the Eunnuchus of Candace quene of Ethiope, which albeit he was a man of a wyld and barbarous countrey, and one occupped with worldly cures and busynesses, yet rydyng in his charet, he was readyng the scripture. Now cōsider, yf thys man passyng in hys iorney, was so diligent as to reade y^e scripture, what thynkest thou of lyke was he wonte to do sittynge at home? Agayne, he that lettēd not to reade, albeit he dyd not vnderstande, What dyd he then, trowest thou, after that when he had learned and had gotten vnderstandyng? For that y^u mayest well knowe that he vnderstode not what he reade: herken what Philippe there sayth vnto him. Vnderstandest thou what thou readeest? And he nothyng ashamed to confesse his ignozaunce, answereth: Howe shulde I vnderstade hauyng nobody to shewe me the wey? Lo when he lacked one to shewe hym the weye and to expounde to hym the scriptures, yet dyd he reade: and therfoze God the rather prouyded for hym a gyde of the wey, that taught hym to vnderstande it. God perceyued his wyllynge and

but God seeing thy diligence and readiness (if no man else teach thee) will himself vouchsafe with his holy spirit to illuminate thee, and to open unto thee that which was locked from thee.

Remember the Eunuch of Candace, queen of Ethiopia, which albeit he was a man of a wild and barbarous country, and one occupied with worldly cares and businesses, yet riding in his chariot, he was reading the scripture. Now consider, if this man passing in his journey, was so diligent as to read the scripture, what thinkest thou of like was he wont to do sitting at home? Again, he that letted* not to read, albeit he did not understand, What did he then, trowest† thou, after that when he had learned and gotten understanding? For that thou mayest well know that he understood not what he read: hearken what Philip there saith unto him. Understandest thou what thou readest? And he nothing ashamed to confess his ignorance, answered, How should I understand, having nobody to show me the way? Lo when he lacked one to show him the way, and to expound to him the scriptures, yet did he read; and therefore God the rather provided for him a guide of the way that taught him to understand it. God perceived his willing and

* Hinder, obstruct, prevent

† Think, suppose

towarde mynde: and therfore he sent him a teacher by and by. Therfore, let no man be negligēt about his owne health and saluacyon: though thou haue not Philippe alwayes when thou woldest, the holy ghost, which then moued & stered by Philippe, wyl be ready and not fayle the yf thou do thy diligence accordingly. All these thynges bene wrytten for vs to oure edifycacyon and amendement, which be borne towarde the latter ende of the worlde. The reacyng of scriptures is a greate and strong bulwarke or fosteresse agaynst synne, y^e ignorance of the same is the greater ruyne and destruccyon of them that wyl not knowe it. That is y^e thyng that byngeth in heresie, that is it, that causeth all corrupte & peruerse luyng, y^e is it, that byngeth all thynges out of good order. Hetherto, all that I haue sayde, I haue taken and gathered out of the forsayde sermon of this holy doctour saynt Iohn Chrysostome. Howe yf I shulde in lyke maner byng forth, what the selve same doctour speaketh in other places, and what other doctoures & wrytters saye, cōcerning y^e same purpose, I myght seme to you to wryte another Byble, rather then to make a pzeface to the Byble. Therfore in few wordes to cōprehende the largenes & vtilytie of the scripture, howe it cōteyneth frutefull instruccyon and

toward mind: and therefore he sent him a teacher by and by. Therefore let no man be negligent about his own health and salvation: though thou have not Philip always when thou wouldest, the holy ghost, which then moved and stirred up Philip, will be ready and not fail thee if thou do thy diligence accordingly. All these things be written for us to our edification and amendment, which be born towards the latter end of the world. The reading of the scriptures is a great and strong bulwark or fortress against sin, the ignorance of the same is a greater ruin and destruction of them that will not know it. That is the thing that bringeth in heresy, that is it, that causeth all corrupt and perverse living, that is it that bringeth all things out of good order. Hitherto all that I have said, I have taken and gathered out of the foresaid sermon of this holy doctor, saint John Chrysostom. Now if I should in like manner bring forth, what the selfsame doctor speaketh in other places, and what other doctors and writers say, concerning the same purpose, I might seem to you to write another Bible, rather than to make a preface to the Bible. Wherefore in few words to comprehend the largeness and utility of the scripture, how it containeth fruitful instruction and

erudicyon for euery man, yf any thyng be
necessarpe to be learned: of y^e holpe scripture we
maye learne it. If falshed shall be reprovued, therof
we maye gather wherwith all. If any thyng be
to be corrected & amended, yf there nede any ex=
hortacyon or cōsolacyon, of the scripture we maye
well learne. In the scriptures be y^e fatte pastures
of the soule, therin is no venymouse meate, no
unholosome thyng, they be y^e very dayntie & pure
fedyng. He that is ignoraunte, shall fynde there
what he sholde learne. He that is a peruerse
synner, shall there fynde his damnacyon to make
hym to tremble for feare. He that labourerth to
serue God shall fynde ther his glozpe, and the
promissions of eternall lyfe, exhortyng him more
diligently to labour. Herin maye princes learne
howe to gouerne their subiectes: Subiectes obediēce,
loue & dreade to their princes. Husbandes, howe
they shulde behaue them vnto their wyfes: howe to
educate their chyldzen and seruaūtes. And cōtrary
the wyfes, chyldzen, and seruaūtes maye know
theyr dutye to their husbandes, parentes, and
masters. Here maye all maner of persons, men,
wemen, yonge, olde, learned, vnlearned, ryche,
poore, prestes, layemen, Lordes, Ladyes, officers,
tenaūtes, & meane men, virgyns, wyfes, wedowes,

erudition for every man, if anything be necessary to be learned, of the holy scripture we may learn it. If falsehood shall be reproved, thereof we may gather wherewithal. If anything be to be corrected and amended, if there need any exhortation or consolation, of the scripture we may well learn. In the scriptures be the fat pastures of the soul, therein is no venomous meat, no unwholesome thing; they be the very dainty and pure feeding. He that is ignorant, shall find there what he should learn. He that is a perverse sinner, shall there find his damnation to make him to tremble for fear. He that laboureth to serve God, shall find there his glory, and the promises of eternal life, exhorting him more diligently to labour. Herein may princes learn how to govern their subjects; subjects obedience, love, and dread to their princes; husbands how they should behave them unto their wives, how to educate their children and servants. And contrary the wives, children, and servants may know their duty to their husbands, parents, and masters. Here may all manner of persons, men, women, young, old, learned, unlearned, rich, poor, priests, laymen, Lords, Ladies, officers, tenants, and mean men, virgins, wives, widows,

lawers, marchauntes, artifycers, husbande men,
and almaner of persons of what estate oz condicyon
soeuer they be, mape in thys booke learne all
thynges what they ought to beleue, what they
ought to do, & what they shulde not do, aswell
concernyng almyghtye God as also cōcernynge
them selues & all other. Briefle to y^e readyng of the
scripture none can be enemye, but that eyther be so
sycke, that they loue not to heare of any medecyne:
oz els that be so ignoraunte, that they know not
scripture to be y^e most helthfull medecyne.
Therefore as touchynge this former parte. I wyll
here conclude & take it as a conclusion suffycientlye
determined and approued, that it is cōuenient and
good, the scripture to be red of all sortes & kyndes of
people, and in the vulgare tonge without farther
allegatiōs oz probaciōs for the same, which shall not
nede, syns that this one place of John Chrysostome
is ynough & suffyciēte to perswade all them y^e be
not frowardly and peruerslye set in their alone
willful opinion, specially nowe that y^e kynges
hyghnes beyng supzeme heade nerte vnder Christ
of this churche of Englande hath approued with his
royal assente y^e settynng furth herof, which onely to
all true and obediēt subiectes ought to be a suffyciēte
reason, for the alowāce of the same, without

lawyers, merchants, artificers, husbandmen, and all manner of persons of what estate or condition soever they be, may in this book learn all things what they ought to believe, what they ought to do, and what they should not do, as well concerning almighty God, as also concerning themselves and all other. Briefly to the reading of the scripture none can be enemy, but that either be so sick, that they love not to hear of any medicine; or else that be so ignorant, that they know not scripture to be the most healthful medicine. Therefore, as touching this former part. I will here conclude and take it as a conclusion sufficiently determined and approved, that it is convenient and good, the scriptures to be read of all sorts and kinds of people, and in the vulgar tongue without farther allegations or probations for the same, which shall not need, since that this one place of John Chrysostom is enough and sufficient to persuade all them that be not frowardly and perversely set in their own wilful opinion, specially now that the king's highness being supreme head next under Christ of this church of England hath approved with his royal assent the setting furth hereof, which only to all true and obedient subjects ought to be a sufficient reason, for the allowance of the same, without

farther delaye, reclamacyon, or resyſtaunce
although there were no pꝛeface noꝝ other reason
here in expꝛeſſed. Therfoꝛe nowe to come to y^e
ſecode & latter parte of my purpoſe: there is
nothyng ſo good i this worlde but it maye be abuſed,
& turned from frutefull & hoſſome, to hurtfull and
noyſome. What is there aboue, better then the
ſunne, the moone, the ſtarres? Yet was ther that
toke occaſion by y^e great bewtye & vertue of them
to dyſhonoure God, & to defyle them ſelues with
ydolatrie, geuyng the honour of y^e lyuyng God &
creatour of all thynges, to ſuche thynges as he had
created.

What is there here beneth, better then ſyer,
water, meates, drynckes, metalles of golde, ſyluer,
yꝛon & ſtele? Yet, we ſe daylie great harme & moch
miſcheſe, done by euery one of theſe, as well foꝛ
lacke of wiſdome & pꝛouydence of them that ſuffer
euyl, as by the malice of them that woꝛketh y^e
euyl. Thus to them that be euyl of them ſelues,
euery thyng ſetteth foꝛwarde & encreaſeth theyꝝ
euyl, be it of his awne nature a thyng neuer ſo
good, lyke as cōtrarelye, to them that ſtudyeth and
endeuozeth them ſelues to goodnes, euery thyng
pꝛeuayleth them, and pꝛofyteth vnto good: be it of
hys awne nature a thig neuer ſo badde. As ſaynct

farther delay, reclamation, or resistance, although there were no preface nor other reason herein expressed.

Therefore now to come to the second and latter part of my purpose: there is nothing so good in this world, but it may be abused, and turned from fruitful and wholesome, to hurtful and noisome. What is there above better than the sun, the moon, the stars? Yet was there that took occasion by the great beauty and virtue of them to dishonour God, and to defile themselves with idolatry, giving the honour of the living God and creator of all things, to such things as he had created.

What is there here beneath, better than fire, water, meats, drinks, metals of gold, silver, iron, and steel? Yet, we see daily great harm and much mischief, done by every one of these, as well for lack of wisdom and providence of them that suffer evil, as by the malice of them that worketh the evil. Thus to them that be evil of themselves, everything setteth forward and increaseth their evil, be it of his own nature a thing never so good, like as contrarily, to them that studyeth and endeavoureth themselves to goodness, everything prevaileth them, and profiteth unto good, be it of his own nature a thing never so bad. As
Saint

Paul sayde, *hiis qui diligunt deum, omnia cooperantur in bonum*, euen as out of moost venomouse woꝝmes is made triacle, the moost soueraygne medecyne for the preseruacyon of mans helth in tyme of daunger. Wherfoze I wolde aduise you all, that cometh to the readyng or hearyng of this boke, which is the woꝝde of God, the mooste precious Iuell, and mooste holy relyque, that remaineth vpon earth, that ye byng with you the feare of God, & that ye do it with all due reuerence, & vse youre knowledg therof, not to vayne gloꝝpe & friuolouse disputacyon: but to the honour of God, encrease of vertu, & edifycacyon both of your selues and other. And to the entet that my woꝝdes maye be the moze regarded, I wyll vse in this parte the auctozite of saynct Gregoꝝpe Nazianzene, lyke as in the other I dyd of S. John Chrysostome. It appereth y^e in hys tyme there were some (as I feare me, there bene also nowe at these dayes a great number) which were ydell bablers, and talkers of y^e scripture out of ceason, and all good order, & without any encrease of vertu, oz example of good lyuyng, to the he wytteth all his fyrst boke, *de theologia*. Wherof I shall bryefly gather the hole effecte, & recyte it here vnto you. There ben some (sayeth he) whose not onely eares and tonges,

Paul said, *hiis qui diligunt deum, omnia cooperantur in bonum*, even as out of most venomous worms is made treacle, the most sovereign medicine for the preservation of man's health in time of danger. Wherefore I would advise you all, that come to the reading or hearing of this book, which is the word of God, the most precious jewel, and most holy relic, that remaineth upon earth, that ye bring with you the fear of God, and that ye do it with all due reverence, and use your knowledge thereof, not to vain glory and frivolous disputation, but to the honour of God, increase of virtue, and edification both of yourselves and other. And to the intent that my words may be the more regarded, I will use in this part the authority of saint Gregory Nazianzen, like as in the other I did of St John Chrysostom. It appeareth that in his time there were some (as I fear me, there be also now at these days a great number) which were idle babblers, and talkers of the scripture out of season and all good order, and without any increase of virtue, or example of good living, to them he writeth all his first book, *de theologia*. Whereof I shall briefly gather the whole effect, and recite it here unto you. There be some (saith he) whose not only ears and tongues,

but also their fystes bene whetted and ready bent
all to contencion and vnprofitable disputacon,
whom I wolde wysse as they bene vehemete and
ernest to reason y^e matter with tonge: so they were
also ready & practiue to do good dedes. But soz
asmoche as they, subuertynge the order of all
godlynes, haue respecte onely to thys thynge.
Howe they maye bynde and loose subtile questions,
so that nowe euery marketplace, euery alehouse &
tauerne, euery feasthouse: bze fly euery company
of men, euery assemblie of women is fylled with
such talke. Sens the matter is so (sayth he) and
that our fayth & holy religyon of Chryst begynneth
to ware nothyng els: but as it were a sophystrye oz
a talkyng crafte, I can no lesse do but saye
somthing therunto. It is not fitte (sayth he) for
euery man to dispute the hygh questios of diuinite,
nether is it to be done at all tymes: nether in euery
audiēce must we discusse euery doubtte: but we must
knowe whan, to whom, & how farre we ought to
enter into soch matters. Fyzt it is not for euery
man: but it is for suche as be of exacte and exquisite
iudgemetes, and suche as haue spente theyz tyme
befoze in studye and contemplacon: and suche as
befoze haue clensted them selues aswell in soule, as
bodaye: oz at the least, endeuored themseules to be

but also their fists be whetted and ready bent all to contention and unprofitable disputation, whom I would wish as they be vehement and earnest to reason the matter with tongue; so they were all ready and practive* to do good deeds. But forasmuch as they, subverting the order of all godliness, have respect only to this thing. How they may bind and loose subtle questions, so that now every marketplace, every alehouse and tavern, every feast house: briefly every company of men, every assembly of women is filled with such talk. Since the matter is so (saith he) and that our faith and holy religion of Christ beginneth to wax nothing else; but as it were a sophistry or a talking craft, I can no less do but say something thereunto. It is not fit (saith he) for every man to dispute the high questions of divinity, neither is it to be done at all times: neither in every audience must we discuss every doubt. But we must know when, to whom, and how far we ought to enter into such matters. First it is not for every man; but it is for such as be of exact and exquisite judgments, and such as have spent their time before in study and contemplation; and such as before have cleansed themselves as well in soul as body; or at the least endeavoured themselves to be

* Active

made cleane. For it is daungerous (sayth he) for the vncleane to touch that thynge, that is mooste cleane: lyke as y^e soze eye taketh harme by lokynge upō the sunne. Secundarelye, not at all tymes but when we be reposed: and at reste frome all outwarde dregges and trouble, and when that oure headdes be not encombrd with other worldelye and wanderynge ymaginacyons: as yf a man shulde myngle balme and dyzte together. For he that shall iudge and determyne suche matteres and doubttes of scriptures, muste take his tyme, when he maye applye his wittes therunto, that he maye thereby the better se, and discerne what is trueth.

Thyzdelye where, and in what audience. There and among those that bene studious to learne, and not amonge suche as haue pleasure to tryfle with suche matters as wyth other thynge of pastyme, whych repute for theyr chyeefe delicates the disputacion of hygh questions, to shewe theyr wittes, learnynge and eloquence in reasonynge of hygh matters. Fourthlye, it is to be consydered howe farre to wade in suche matters of diffycultye. No further (sayeth he) but as euery mannes owne capacitye wyll serue him, and agayne no further thē the weaknes or intelligence of the other audiēce maye beare. For lyke as to

made clean. For it is dangerous (saith he) for the unclean to touch that thing that is most clean; like as the sore eye taketh harm by looking upon the sun. Secondly, not at all times, but when we be reposed, and at rest from all outward dregs and trouble, and when that our heads be not encumbered with other worldly and wandering imaginations: as if a man should mingle balm and dirt together. For he that shall judge and determine such matters and doubts of scriptures, must take his time when he may apply his wits thereunto, that he may thereby the better see, and discern what is truth.

Thirdly, where, and in what audience. There and among those that be studious to learn, and not among such as have pleasure to trifle with such matters, as with other things of pastime, which repute for their chief delicacies the disputation of high questions, to show their wits, learning and eloquence in reasoning of high matters. Fourthly, it is to be considered how far to wade in such matters of difficulty. No further (saith he) but as every man's own capacity will serve him, and again no further than the weakness or intelligence of the other audience may bear. For like as to

gret noyse hurteth the eare, to moch meat hurteth the mannes bodye, to heuye burdens hurteth the bearers of them, to moche rayne doeth moze hurte then good to the grounde, briezlye in all thynge to moch is noyouse, euē so weke wittes & weke consciēces maye sone be oppressed with ouer harde questions, I saye not thys to dysuade men from the knowledge of God, and readyng or studyng of the scriptrue. For I saye, that it is as necessarye for the lyfe of mannes soule, as for the bodye to breathe. And yf it were possyble so to lyue, I wolde thynke it good for a man to spende all hys lyfe in that, and to do no other thynge, I commende the lawe whyche byddeth to meditate and studie the scriptrue alwayes both nyght ad daye, and Sermons and preachinges to be made both moznyng, noone, ad euentyde. And God to be lauded and blessed in all tymes, to bedwarde, from bedde, in oure iozneyes, and all oure other woꝝkes, I forbydde not to reade, but I forbydde to reason. Nether forbydde I to reason so farre as is good and godlye. But I alowe not that is done oute of season, and out of measure and good order. A man maye eate to moche of honey be it neuer so swete, and ther is tyme for euery thynge, and that thynge that is good is not good, yf it be ungodly done.

great noise hurteth the ear, too much meat hurteth the man's body, too heavy burdens hurt the bearers of them, too much rain doth more hurt than good to the ground, briefly in all things, too much is noyous*; even so, weak wits and weak consciences may soon be oppressed with over hard questions, I say not this to dissuade men from the knowledge of God, and reading or studying of the scripture. For I say, that it is as necessary for the life of man's soul, as for the body to breathe. And if it were possible so to live, I would think it good for a man to spend all his life in that, and to do none other thing, I commend the law which biddeth to meditate and study the scriptures always both night and day, and Sermons and preachings to be made both morning, noon, and eventide. And God to be lauded and blessed in all times, to bedward, from bed, in our journeys, and all our other works, I forbid not to read, but I forbid to reason. Neither forbid I to reason so far as is good and godly. But I allow not that is done out of season, and out of measure and good order. A man may eat too much of honey, be it never so sweet, and there is time for everything, and that thing that is good is not good if it be ungodly done.

* Annoying, noisome, noxious.

Euen as a flower in wynter is out of season, and as womans apparel becometh not a man, nether contrarily, the mannes, the woman: nether is wepyng couenient at a bydeale, nether laughynge at a beryall. For we yf we can obserue and kepe that is comely and tyme in all other thynges, shall not we then the rather do the same in the holpe scriptures? Let vs not runne furth as it were wyld horses y^t can suffre nether byddell in they^r mouthes, nor sytter on they^r backes. Let us kepe us in our boundes, and nether let us go to farre on thone syde, lest we retozne into Egypt, nether to farre ouer y^e other, lest we be carped awaye to Babylon. Let vs not synge the songe of oure Lorde in a straunge lande, that is to saye, let vs not dispute the worde of God at all auentures, aswell where it is not to be reasoned, as where it is, and aswell in the eares of them y^t be not fytt therfore, as of thê that be. If we cã in no wyse forbear, but y^t we must nedes dispute, let us forbear thus moche at the leaste, to do it oute of tyme, and place conuenient. And let us entreate of those thynges which be Holpe, Holylic, and vpon those thynges y^t bene mysticall, mysticall, and not to vtter the dyuine misteryes in the eares vnworthy to heare thê, but let vs knowe what is comely aswell in

Even as a flower in winter is out of season, and as woman's apparel becometh not a man, neither contrarily, the man's the woman; neither is weeping convenient at a bridal, neither laughing at a burial. Now if we can observe and keep that is comely and timely in all other things, shall not we then the rather do the same in the holy scriptures? Let us not run furth as it were wild horses, that can suffer neither bridle in their mouths, nor sitter on their backs. Let us keep us in our bounds, and neither let us go too far on the one side, lest we return into Egypt, neither too far over the other, lest we be carried away to Babylon. Let us not sing the song of our Lord in a strange land, that is to say, let us not dispute the word of God at all adventures, as well where it is not to be reasoned, as where it is, and as well in the ears of them that be not fit therefore, as of them that be. If we can in no wise forbear but that we must needs dispute, let us forbear thus much at the least, to do it out of time, and place convenient. And let us entreat of those things which be Holy, Holily, and upon those things that be mystical, mystically, and not to utter the divine mysteries in the ears unworthy to hear them, but let us know what is comely, as well in

oure sylvence: and talkyng, as in oure garmentes
 werynge, in oure fedynge, in oure gesture, in oure
 goynges, and all oure other behauynge. Thys
 contention and debate aboute scriptrue, and
 doubttes therof (specyally whan suche as pretende
 to be the sauerers ad studentes therof cannot agre
 wythin the selves) doth mooste hurte to our selues,
 and to the furtherynge of the cause and quarels y^t
 we wolde haue forthered aboute all other thynges.
 And we in this (sayeth he) be not unlyke to them
 that beyng madde, set theyz abone houses on fyre,
 and that sle there abone chyldren, or beate theyz
 abone parentes. I maruayle moch (sayeth he) to
 recounte wherof cometh all this desyre of vayne
 glozpe, wherof cometh all this tounge itche, y^t we
 haue so moch delight to talke ad clatter. And
 wherin is our comunicacion? Not in the
 comendations of vertuous and good dedes of
 hospitalytie, of loue betwene christian brother and
 brother, of loue between man & wife, of virginitie
 and chastitie, and of almose towardes the poore.
 Not in Psalmes and godly songes, not in
 lamentynge, for oure synnes, not in repressyng the
 affections of the body, not in prayers to God. We
 talke of scripture, but in y^e meane tyme we subdue
 not our fleshe, by fastynge, wakynge, and wepyng,

our silence, and talking, as in our garments wearing, in our feeding, in our gesture, in our goings, in all our other behaving. This contention and debates about scriptures, and doubts thereof (specially when such as do pretend to be the favourers and students thereof cannot agree within themselves) doth most hurt to ourselves, and to the furthering of the cause and quarrels that we would have furthered above all other things. And we in this (saith he) be not unlike to them that, being mad, set their own houses on fire, and that slay their own children, or beat their own parents. I marvel much (saith he) to recount whereof cometh all this desire of vain glory, whereof cometh all this tongue itch, that we have so much delight to talk and datter. And wherein is our communication? Not in the commendations of virtuous and good deeds of hospitality, of love between Christian brother and brother, of love between man and wife, of virginity and chastity, and of alms toward the poor. Not in Psalms and godly songs, not in lamenting, for our sins, not in repressing the affections of the body, not in prayers to God. We talk of scripture, but in the meantime we subdue not our flesh, by fasting, watching, and weeping,

We make not this lyfe a meditation of death, we do not stryue to be Lordes of oure appetites and affections. We go not aboute to pull downe our proude & hygh myndes, to abate our fumpsh ad rancozouse stomackes, to restrayne our lustes and bodely delectations, oure vndyscrete sorowes, oure lasciuious myrthe, our inordinate lokynge, oure vsfaciable hearyng of vanities, oure speakynge wythout measure, our inconuenient thoughtes, and briezly, to refozme our lyfe and maners: but all our holynes consysteth in talkynge. And we pardon eche other from all good lyuyng, so that we may styck faste together in argumentacion, as though there were no mo wayes to heauen, but thys alone, the waye of speculatio and knowledge (as they take it) but in very dede, it is rather the waye of superfluous contention and sophistication. Hytherto haue I recyted the mynde of Gregorpe Nazianzene in that booke whych I spake of before. The same authour sayeth also in another place that the learnynge of a Christen man ought to begynne of the feare of God, to ende in matters of hygh speculatio, ad not contrarily to begynne with speculation and to ende in feare. For speculation (saieth he) other hye connyng and knowledge, yf it be not stayed with byddell of feare to offende God

we make not this life a meditation of death, we do not strive to be Lords of our appetites and affections. We go not about to pull down our proud and high minds, to abate our fumish and rancourous stomachs, to restrain our lusts and bodily delectations, our indiscreet sorrows, our lascivious mirth, our inordinate looking, our insatiable hearing of vanities, our speaking without measure, our inconvenient thoughts, and briefly, to reform our life and manners: but all our holiness consisteth in talking. And we pardon each other from all good living, so that we may stick fast together in argumentation, as though there were no more ways to heaven but this alone, the way of speculation and knowledge (as they take it) but in very deed it is rather the way of superfluous contention and sophistication. Hitherto have I recited the mind of Gregory Nazianzen in that book which I spake of before. The same author saith also in another place that the learning of a Christian man ought to begin of the fear of God, to end in matters of high speculation; and not contrarily to begin with speculation and to end in fear. For speculation (saith he), other high cunning or knowledge, if it be not stayed with the bridle of fear to offend God

is dangerous, and ynough to tumble a man heedlynge downe the hyll. Therfore, sayeth he, the feare of God must be the fyrst begynnynge and as it were an A. B. C. or an introduction to all them that shall enter to the very trew and most frutesfull knowledge of holy scriptures. Where as is the feare of God, there is, sayeth he, the keping of the commaundementes, and where as is the kepyng of the commaundementes, there is the clensynge of the flesshe, which flesshe is a cloude befoze the soules eye, and suffereth it not puerlye to se the beame of the heauenly lyght. Where as is the clensynge of the flesshe, there is the illumination of y^e holy ghost, thende of all oure desyres, and the very lyght wherby the verytie of scriptures is sene and perceyued. This is the mynde & almost the wordes of Gregorie Nazianzene doctoure of the Greke churche of whom saynt Jerome sayth, that unto hys tyme, the Laten churche had no wyter able to be compared, and to make an euen matche wyth him. Therfore to conclude thys latter parte, every man that commeth to the readynge of this holpe booke ought to bynge with him fyrst and formoste thys feare of almyghtye God, and then nexte a fyrme and stable purpose to refozme hys awne selfe accoꝝdnyng ther vnto, and so to contynue, procede,

is dangerous, and enough to tumble a man headlong down the hill. Therefore, saith he, the fear of God must be the first beginning, and as it were an A.B.C. or an introduction to all them that shall enter into the very true and most fruitful knowledge of holy scriptures. Where as is the fear of God, there is (saith he) the keeping of the commandments, and where as is the keeping of the commandments, there is the cleansing of the flesh, which flesh is a cloud before the soul's eye, and suffereth it not purely to see the beam of the heavenly light. Where as is the cleansing of the flesh, there is the illumination of the holy ghost, the end of all our desires, and the very light whereby the verity of scriptures is seen and perceived. This is the mind and almost the words of Gregory Nazianzen doctor of the Greek Church of whom saint Jerome saith, that unto his time, the Latin Church had no writer able to be compared, and to make an even match with him. Therefore to conclude this latter part, every man that cometh to the reading of this holy book ought to bring with him first and foremost this fear of almighty God, and then next a firm and stable purpose to reform his own self according thereunto, and so to continue, proceed,

and prospere fro tyme to tyme, shewynge hym selfe to be a sober and frutefull hearer and learner, whych yf he do, he shall proue at the length well able to teache, though not with hys mouth, yet with his lyuyng and good example, which is suer the most lyuely, and effecteous forme and maner of teachyng. He that otherwylse intermedeleth wyth this booke let hym be assured, that ones he shall make accompte therfore, when he shall haue sayde to hym as it is wrytten in the Prophete Dauid, *Peccatori dicit Deus &c.* Unto the ungodly sayde God, why doest thou preache my lawes, and takest my testament in thy mouth? Where as thou hatest to be reformed, and hast caste my wordes behynde the. When thou sawest a thefe, thou consentyddest vnto hym, and hast bene partetaker with aduouterers. Thou hast let thy mouth speake wyckednes, and wyth thy tonge thou hast set forth discepte. Thou satest and spakest agaynst thy brother and hast sklaundered thyne awne mothers sonne. These thinges hast thou done, and I helde my tonge and thou thoughtest (wyckedly) that I am euen soche a one as thy selfe. But I wyl reprove the, and set before the, the thynges that thou hast done. O consyder this ye that forget God lest I plucke you awaye, and ther be none to delyuere

and prosper from time to time, showing himself to be a sober and fruitful hearer and learner; which, if he do, he shall prove at the length well able to teach, though not with his mouth, yet with his living and good example, which is sure the most lively and effectuous form and manner of teaching. He that otherwise intermeddleth with this book let him be assured that once he shall make account therefore, when he shall have said to him as it is written in the Prophet David, *Peccatori dicit deus. &c.* Unto the ungodly said God, why dost thou preach my laws, and takest my testament in thy mouth? Whereas thou hatest to be reformed, and hast cast my words behind thee. When thou sawest a thief, thou consentedest unto him, and hast been partaker with advouterers*. Thou hast let thy mouth speak wickedness, and with thy tongue thou hast set forth deceit. Thou sattest and spakest against thy brother, and hast slandered thine own mother's son. These things hast thou done, and I held my tongue and thou thoughtest (wickedly) that I am even such a one as thyself: But I will reprove thee, and set before thee the things that thou hast done. O consider this ye that forget God lest I pluck you away, and there be none to deliver

you. Whoso offereth me thankes and prayse, he honoureth me, and to hym that ordereth hys conuersation ryght: wyl I shewe the saluation of God.

God saue the kynge.

you. Whoso offereth me thanks and praise, he honoureth me, and to him that ordereth his conversation right, will I show the salvation of God.

God save the King.

I prepared this version of
Thomas Cranmer's prologue to the Great Bible
using Jeff Lee's typefaces JSL Blackletter and JSL
Ancient <<http://shipbrook.com/jeff/typograf.html>>,
transcribing and comparing several editions. In this state
it does not reproduce any one of them, since I
abbreviated some words and expanded some
abbreviations (consistently with the typographic rules
that the prologue itself displays). For those unfamiliar
with blackletter typography, the ʒ ("ragged r") is a lower-
case "r", used when it occurs after a rounded letter; the ſ
("long s") is ordinarily used, save when the "s" is the last
letter of a word; the letters "n" and "m" are frequently
abbreviated by putting a tilde over the vowel that
precedes them (since the typeface does not support tildes,
I used a circumflex); "&" and "and" appear
interchangeably; and "that", "the", and "thou" are
frequently abbreviated by placing the final letter of the
word over the letter "y" (since this was not possible, I
used superscripts to approximate this effect).
The result is very imperfect, but may serve the purpose of
displaying something *like* what the typeset prologue will
have looked like.