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SERMONS

BY

HUGH LATIMER

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## PREACHED BEFORE THE CLERGY

*The Sermon that the Reverend Father in Christ, M. Hugh Latimer, Bishop of Worcester, made to the Convocation of the Clergy, before the Parliament began, the 9 day of June, the 28 year of the reign of our late King Henry the 8. Translated out of Latin into English, to the intent that things well said to a few may be understood of many, and do good to all them that desire to understand the truth.*

*Filii humus seculi, &c.—LUC. xvi. [1-2]*

BRETHREN, ye be come together this day, as far as I perceive, to hear of great and weighty matters. Ye be come together to entreat of things that most appertain to the commonwealth. This being thus, ye look, I am assured, to hear of me, which am commanded to make as a preface this exhortation, (albeit I am unlearned and far unworthy,) such things as shall be much meet for this your assembly. I therefore, not only very desirous to obey the commandment of our Primate, but also right greatly coveting to serve and satisfy all your expectation; lo, briefly, and as plainly as I can, will speak of matters both worthy to be heard in your congregation, and also of such as best shall become mine office in this place. That I may do this the more commodiously, I have taken that notable sentence in which our Lord was not afraid to pronounce “the children of this world to be much more prudent and politic than the children of light in their generation.” Neither will I be afraid, trusting that he will aid and guide me to use this sentence, as a good ground and foundation of all such things as hereafter I shall speak of.

Now, I suppose that you see right well, being men of such learning, for what purpose the Lord said this, and that ye have no need to be holpen with any part of my labour in this thing. But yet, if ye will pardon me, I will wade somewhat deeper in this matter, and as nigh as I can, fetch it from the first original beginning. For undoubtedly, ye may much marvel at this saying, if ye well ponder both what is said, and who saith it. Define me first these three things: what prudence is; what the world; what light: and who be the children of the world; who of the light: see what they signify in scripture. I marvel if by and by ye all agree, that the children of the world should be wiser than the children of the light. To come somewhat nigher the matter, thus the Lord beginneth:

*There was a certain rich man that had a steward, which was accused unto him that he had dissipated and wasted his goods. This rich man called his steward to him and said, What is this I hear of thee? Come, make me an account of thy stewardship; thou mayest no longer bear that office.*

BRETHREN, because these words are so spoken in a parable, and are so wrapped in wrinkles, that yet they seem to have a face and a similitude of a thing done indeed, and like an history, I think it much profitable to tarry somewhat in them. And though we may perchance find in our hearts to believe all that is there spoken to be true; yet I doubt whether we may abide it, that these words of Christ do pertain unto us, and admonish us of our duty, which do and live after such sort, as though Christ, when he spake any thing, had, as the time served him, served his turn, and not regarded the time that came after him, neither provided for us, or any matters of ours; as some of the philosophers thought, which said, that God walked up and down in heaven, and thinketh never a deal of our affairs. But, my good brethren, err not you so; stick not you to such your imaginations. For if ye inwardly behold these words, if ye diligently roll them in your minds, and after explicate and open them, ye shall see our time much touched in these mysteries. Ye shall perceive that God by this example shaketh us by the noses and pulleth us by the ears. Ye shall perceive very plain, that God setteth before our eyes in this similitude what we ought most to flee, and what we ought soonest to follow. For Luke saith, “The Lord spake these words to his disciples.” Wherefore let it be out of all doubt that he spake them to us, which even as we will be counted the successors and vicars of Christ’s disciples, so we be, if we be good dispensers and do our duty. He said these things partly to us, which spake them partly of himself. For he is that rich man, which not only had, but hath, and shall have evermore, I say not one, but many stewards, even to the end of the world.

He is man, seeing that he is God and man. He is rich, not only in mercy but in all kind of riches; for it is he that giveth to us all things abundantly. It is he of whose hand we received both our lives, and other things necessary for the conservation of the same. What man hath any thing, I pray you, but he hath received it of his plentifulness? To be short, it is he that “openeth his hand, and filleth all beasts with his blessing,” and giveth unto us in most ample wise his benediction. Neither his treasure can be spent, how much soever he lash out; how much soever we take of him, his treasure tarrieth still, ever taken, never spent.

He is also the good man of the house: the church is his household, which ought with all diligence to be fed with his word and his sacraments. These be his goods most precious, the dispensation and administration whereof he would bishops and curates should have. Which thing St Paul affirmeth, saying, “Let men esteem us as the ministers of Christ, and dispensers of God’s mysteries.” But, I pray you, what is to be looked for in a dispenser? This surely, “that he be found faithful,” and that he truly dispense, and lay out the goods of the Lord; that he give meat in time; give it, I say, and not sell it;

meat I say, and not poison. For the one doth intoxicate and slay the eater, the other feedeth and nourisheth him. Finally, let him not slack and defer the doing of his office, but let him do his duty when time is, and need requireth it. This is also to be looked for, that he be one whom God hath called and put in office, and not one that cometh uncalled, unsent for; not one that of himself presumeth to take honour upon him. And surely, if all this that I say be required in a good minister, it is much lighter to require them all in every one, than to find one any where that hath them all.

Who is a true and faithful steward? He is true, he is faithful, that coineth no new money, but taketh it ready coined of the good man of the house; and neither changeth it, nor clippeth it, after it is taken to him to spend, but spendeth even the self-same that he had of his Lord, and spendeth it as his Lord's commandment is; neither to his own vantage uttering it, nor as the lewd servant did, hiding it in the ground. Brethren, if a faithful steward ought to do as I have said, I pray you, ponder and examine this well, whether our bishops and abbots, prelates and curates, have been hitherto faithful stewards or no? Ponder, whether yet many of them be as they should be or no? Go ye to, tell me now as your conscience leadeth you, (I will let pass to speak of many other,) was there not some, that despising the money of the Lord, as copper and not current, either coined new themselves, or else uttered abroad newly coined of other; some time either adulterating the word of God, or else mingling it (as taverners do, which brew and utter the evil and good both in one pot), sometime in the stead of God's word blowing out the dreams of men? while they thus preached to the people the redemption that cometh by Christ's death to serve only them that died before his coming, that were in the time of the old testament; and that now since redemption and forgiveness of sins purchased by money, and devised by men, is of efficacy, and not redemption purchased by Christ: (they have a wonderful pretty example to persuade this thing, of a certain married woman, which, when her husband was in purgatory, in that fiery furnace that hath burned away so many of our pence, paid her husband's ransom, and so of duty claimed him to be set at liberty:) while they thus preached to the people, that dead images (which at the first, as I think, were set up, only to represent things absent) not only ought to be covered with gold, but also ought of all faithful and christian people, (yea, in this scarceness and penury of all things,) to be clad with silk garments, and those also laden with precious gems and jewels; and that beside all this, they are to be lighted with wax candles, both within the church and without the church, yea, and at noon days; as who should say, here no cost can be too great; whereas in the mean time we see Christ's faithful and lively images, bought with no less price than with his most precious blood, (alas, alas!) to be an hungred, a-thirst, a-cold, and to lie in darkness, wrapped in all wretchedness, yea, to lie there till

death take away their miseries: while they preached these will-works, that come but of our own devotion, although they be not so necessary as the works of mercy, and the precepts of God, yet they said, and in the pulpit, that will-works were more principal, more excellent, and (plainly to utter what they mean) more acceptable to God than works of mercy; as though now man's inventions and fancies could please God better than God's precepts, or strange things better than his own: while they thus preached that more fruit, more devotion cometh of the beholding of an image, though it be but a Pater-noster while, than is gotten by reading and contemplation in scripture, though ye read and contemplate therein seven years' space: finally, while they preached thus, souls tormented in purgatory to have most need of our help, and that they can have no aid, but of us in this world: of the which two, if the one be not false, yet at the least it is ambiguous, uncertain, doubtful, and therefore rashly and arrogantly with such boldness affirmed in the audience of the people; the other, by all men's opinions, is manifestly false: I let pass to speak of much other such like counterfeit doctrine, which hath been blasted and blown out by some for the space of three hours together. Be these the Christian and divine mysteries, and not rather the dreams of men? Be these the faithful dispensers of God's mysteries, and not rather false dissipators of them? whom God never put in office, but rather the devil set them over a miserable family, over an house miserably ordered and entreated. Happy were the people if such preached seldom.

And yet it is a wonder to see these, in their generation, to be much more prudent and politic than the faithful ministers are in their generation; while they go about more prudently to stablish men's dreams, than these do to hold up God's commandments.

Thus it cometh to pass that works lucrative, will-works, men's fancies reign; but christian works, necessary works, fruitful works, be trodden under the foot. Thus the evil is much better set out by evil men, than the good by good men; because the evil be more wise than be the good in their generation. These be the false stewards, whom all good and faithful men every day accuse unto the rich master of the household, not without great heaviness, that they waste his goods; whom he also one day will call to him, and say to them as he did to his steward, when he said, "What is this that I hear of thee?" Here God partly wondereth at our ingratitude and perfidy, partly chideth us for them; and being both full of wonder and ready to chide, asketh us, "What is this that I hear of you?" As though he should say unto us; "All good men in all places complain of you, accuse your avarice, your exactions, your tyranny. They have required in you a long season, and yet require, diligence and sincerity. I commanded you, that with all industry and labour ye should feed my sheep: ye earnestly feed yourselves from day to day, wallowing in delights and idleness. I commanded you to teach my

commandments, and not your fancies; and that ye should seek my glory and my vantage: you teach your own traditions, and seek your own glory and profit. You preach very seldom; and when ye do preach, do nothing but cumber them that preach truly, as much as lieth in you: that it were much better such were not to preach at all, than so perniciously to preach. Oh, what hear I of you? You, that ought to be my preachers, what other thing do you, than apply all your study hither, to bring all my preachers to envy, shame, contempt? Yea, more than this, ye pull them into perils, into prisons, and, as much as in you lieth, to cruel deaths. To be short, I would that christian people should hear my doctrine, and at their convenient leisure read it also, as many as would: your care is not that all men may hear it, but all your care is, that no lay man do read it: surely, being afraid lest they by the reading should understand it, and understanding, learn to rebuke our slothfulness. This is your generation, this is your dispensation, this is your wisdom. In this generation, in this dispensation, you be most politic, most witty. These be the things that I hear of your demeanour. I wished to hear better report of you. Have ye thus deceived me? or have ye rather deceived yourselves? Where I had but one house, that is to say, the church, and this so dearly beloved of me, that for the love of her I put myself forth to be slain, and to shed my blood; this church at my departure I committed unto your charge, to be fed, to be nourished, and to be made much of. My pleasure was ye should occupy my place; my desire was ye should have borne like love to this church, like fatherly affection, as I did: I made you my vicars, yea, in matters of most importance.

“For thus I taught openly: ‘He that should hear you, should hear me; he that should despise you, should despise me.’ I gave you also keys, not earthly keys, but heavenly. I left my goods that I have evermore most highly esteemed, that is, my word and sacraments, to be dispensed of you. These benefits I gave you, and do you give me these thanks? Can you find in your hearts thus to abuse my goodness, my benignity, my gentleness? Have you thus deceived me? No, no, ye have not deceived me, but yourselves. My gifts and benefits toward you shall be to your greater damnation. Because you have contemned the lenity and clemency of the master of the house, ye have right well deserved to abide the rigour and severity of the judge. Come forth then, let us see an account of your stewardship. An horrible and fearful sentence: Ye may have no longer my goods in your hands. A voice to weep at, and to make men tremble!”

You see, brethren, you see, what evil the evil stewards must come to. Your labour is paid for, if ye can so take heed, that no such sentence be spoken to you; nay, we must all take heed lest these threatenings one day take place in us. But lest the length of my sermon offend you too sore, I will leave the rest of the parable and take me to the handling of the end of it; that

is, I will declare unto you how the children of this world be more witty, crafty, and subtle, than are the children of the light in their generation. Which sentence would God it lay in my poor tongue to explicate with such light of words, that I might seem rather to have painted it before your eyes, than to have spoken it; and that you might rather seem to see the thing, than to hear it! But I confess plainly this thing to be far above my power. Therefore this being only left to me, I wish for that I have not, and am sorry that that is not in me which I would so gladly have, that is, power so to handle the thing that I have in hand, that all that I say may turn to the glory of God, your souls' health, and the edifying of Christ's body. Wherefore I pray you all to pray with me unto God, and that in your petition you desire, that these two things he vouchsafe to grant us, first, a mouth for me to speak rightly; next, ears for you, that in hearing me ye may take profit at my hand: and that this may come to effect, you shall desire him, unto whom our master Christ bad[e] we should pray, saying even the same prayer that he himself did institute. Wherein ye shall pray for our most gracious sovereign lord the king, chief and supreme head of the church of England under Christ, and for the most excellent, gracious, and virtuous lady queen Jane<sup>1</sup>, his most lawful wife, and for all his, whether they be of the clergy or laity, whether they be of the nobility, or else other his grace's subjects, not forgetting those that being departed out of this transitory life, and now sleep in the sleep of peace, and rest from their labours in quietness and in peaceable sleep, faithfully, lovingly, and patiently looking for that that they clearly shall see when God shall be so pleased. For all these, and for grace necessary, ye shall say unto God God's prayer, *Pater-noster*.

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<sup>1</sup> Jane Seymour, the third wife of Henry VIII.

## THE SECOND SERMON, IN THE AFTERNOON.

*Filli hujus seculi, &c.*—LUC. xvi. [8].

CHRIST in this saying touched the sloth and sluggishness of his, and did not allow the fraud and subtlety of others; neither was glad that it was indeed as he had said, but complained rather that it should be so: as many men speak many things, not that they ought to be so, but that they are wont to be so. Nay, this grieved Christ, that the children of this world should be of more policy than the children of light; which thing was true in Christ's time, and now in our time is most true. Who is so blind but he seeth this clearly; except perchance there be any that cannot discern the children of the world from the children of light? The children of the world conceive and bring forth more prudently; and things conceived and brought forth they nourish and conserve with much more policy than do the children of light. Which thing is as sorrowful to be said, as it seemeth absurd to be heard. When ye hear the children of the world, you understand the world as a father. For the world is father of many children, not by the first creation and work, but by imitation of love. He is not only a father, but also the son of another father. If ye know once his father, by and by ye shall know his children. For he that hath the devil to his father, must needs have devilish children. The devil is not only taken for father, but also for prince of the world, that is, of worldly folk. It is either all one thing, or else not much different, to say, children of the world, and children of the devil; according to that that Christ said to the Jews, "Ye are of your father the devil:" whereas undoubtedly he spake to children of this world. Now seeing the devil is both author and ruler of the darkness, in the which the children of this world walk, or, to say better, wander; they mortally hate both the light, and also the children of light. And hereof it cometh, that the children of light never, or very seldom, lack persecution in this world, unto which the children of the world, that is, of the devil, bringeth them. And there is no man but he seeth, that these use much more policy in procuring the hurt and damage of the good, than those in defending themselves. Therefore, brethren, gather you the disposition and study of the children by the disposition and study of the fathers. Ye know this is a proverb much used: "An evil crow, an evil egg." Then the children of this world that are known to have so evil a father, the world, so evil a grandfather, the devil, cannot choose but be evil. Surely the first head of their ancestry was the deceitful serpent the devil, a monster monstrous above all monsters. I cannot wholly express him, I wot not what to call him, but a certain thing altogether made of the hatred of God, of mistrust in God, of lyings, deceits, perjuries, discords, manslaughters; and, to say at one word, a thing concrete, heaped up and made of all kind of mischief. But what the devil mean I to go about to de-

scribe particularly the devil's nature, when no reason, no power of man's mind can comprehend it? This alone I can say grossly, and as in a sum, of the which all we (our hurt is the more) have experience, the devil to be a stinking sentine<sup>2</sup> of all vices; a foul filthy channel of all mischiefs; and that this world, his son, even a child meet to have such a parent, is not much unlike his father.

Then, this devil being such one as can never be unlike himself; lo, of Envy, his well beloved Leman<sup>3</sup>, he begat the World, and after left it with Discord at nurse; which World, after that it came to man's state, had of many concubines many sons. He was so fecund a father, and had gotten so many children of Lady Pride, Dame Gluttony, Mistress Avarice, Lady Lechery, and of Dame Subtlety, that now hard and scant ye may find any corner, any kind of life, where many of his children be not. In court, in cowls, in cloisters, in rochets, be they never so white; yea, where shall ye not find them? Howbeit, they that be secular and laymen, are not by and by children of the world; nor they children of light, that are called spiritual, and of the clergy. No, no; as ye may find among the laity many children of light, so among the clergy, (how much soever we arrogate these holy titles unto us, and think them only attributed to us, *Vos estis lux mundi, peculium Christi, &c.* "Ye are the light of the world, the chosen people of Christ, a kingly priesthood, an holy nation, and such other,") ye shall find many children of the world; because in all places the world getteth many children. Among the lay people the world ceaseth not to bring to pass, that as they be called worldly, so they are worldly indeed; driven headlong by worldly desires: insomuch that they may right well seem to have taken as well the manners as the name of their father. In the clergy, the world also hath learned a way to make of men spiritual, worldlings; yea, and there also to form worldly children, where with great pretence of holiness, and crafty colour of religion, they utterly desire to hide and cloak the name of the world, as though they were ashamed of their father; which do execrate and detest the world (being nevertheless their father) in words and outward signs, but in heart and work they coll<sup>4</sup> and kiss him, and in all their lives declare themselves to be his babes; insomuch that in all worldly points they far pass and surmount those that they call seculars, laymen, men of the world. The child so diligently followeth the steps of his father, is never destitute of the aid of his grandfather. These be our holy holy men, that say they are dead to the world, when no men be more lively in worldly things than some of them be. But let them be in profession and name most farthest from the world,

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<sup>2</sup> Sentine, *sentina*, kennel of collected filth.

<sup>3</sup> Leman, properly, a sweetheart of either sex, but the word was commonly used in a bad sense.

<sup>4</sup> French *accoler*, to hang round the neck.

most alienate from it; yea so far, that they may seem to have no occupying, no kindred, no affinity, nothing to do with it: yet in their life and deeds they shew themselves no bastards, but right begotten children of the world; as that which the world long sithens [since?] had by his dear wife Dame Hypocrisy, and since hath brought them up and multiplied to more than a good many; increased them too much, albeit they swear by all he-saints and she-saints too, that they know not their father, nor mother, neither the world, nor hypocrisy; as indeed they can seemle and dissemble all things; which thing they might learn wonderful well of their parents. I speak not of all religious men, but of those that the world hath fast knit at his girdle, even in the midst of their religion, that is, of many and more than many. For I fear, lest in all orders of men the better, I must say the greater part of them be out of order, and children of the world. Many of these might seem ingrate and unkind children, that will no better acknowledge and recognise their parents in words and outward pretence, but abrenounce and cast them off, as though they hated them as dogs and serpents. Howbeit they, in this wise, are most grateful to their parents, because they be most like them, so lively representing them in countenance and conditions, that their parents seem in them to be young again, forasmuch as they ever say one thing and think another. They shew themselves to be as sober, as temperate, as Curius the Roman was, and live every day as though all their life were a shroving [confession] time. They be like their parents, I say, inasmuch as they, in following them, seem and make men believe they hate them. Thus grandfather Devil, father World, and mother Hypocrisy, have brought them up. Thus good obedient sons have borne away their parents' commandments; neither these be solitary, how religious, how mocking, how monking, I would say, soever they be.

O ye will lay this to my charge, that *monachus* and *solitarius* signifieth all one. I grant this to be so, yet these be so solitary that they be not alone, but accompanied with great flocks of fraternities. And I marvel if there be not a great sort of bishops and prelates, that are brethren german unto these; and as a great sort, so even as right born, and world's children by as good title as they. But because I cannot speak of all, when I say prelates, I understand bishops, abbots, priors, archdeacons, deans, and other of such sort, that are now called to this convocation, as I see, to entreat here of nothing but of such matters as both appertain to the glory of Christ, and to the wealth of the people of England. Which thing I pray God they do as earnestly as they ought to do. But it is to be feared lest, as light hath many her children here, so the world hath sent some of his whelps hither: amongst the which I know there can be no concord nor unity, albeit they be in one place, in one congregation. I know there can be no agreement between these two, as long as they have minds so unlike, and so contrary affections, judgments

so utterly diverse in all points. But if the children of this world be either more in number, or more prudent than the children of light, what then avail-eth us to have this convocation? Had it not been better we had not been called together at all? For as the children of this world be evil, so they breed and bring forth things evil; and yet there be more of them in all places, or at the least they be more politic than the children of light in their generation. And here I speak of the generation whereby they do engender, and not of that whereby they are engendered, because it should be too long to entreat how the children of light are engendered, and how they come in at the door; and how the children of the world be engendered, and come in another way. Howbeit, I think all you that be here were not engendered after one generation, neither that ye all came by your promotions after one manner: God grant that ye, engendered worldly, do not engender worldly: and as now I much pass not how ye were engendered, or by what means ye were promoted to those dignities that ye now occupy, so it be honest, good and profitable, that ye in this your consultation shall do and engender.

The end of your convocation shall shew what ye have done; the fruit that shall come of your consultation shall shew what generation ye be of. For what have ye done hitherto, I pray you, these seven years and more? What have ye engendered? What have ye brought forth? What fruit is come of your long and great assembly? What one thing that the people of England hath been the better of a hair; or you yourselves, either more accepted before God, or better discharged toward the people committed unto your cure? For that the people is better learned and taught now, than they were in time past, to whether of these ought we to attribute it, to your industry, or to the providence of God, and the foreseeing of the king's grace? Ought we to thank you, or the king's highness? Whether stirred other first, you the king, that he might preach, or he you by his letters, that ye should preach oftener? Is it unknown, think you, how both ye and your curates were, in [a] manner, by violence enforced to let books to be made, not by you, but by profane and lay persons; to let them, I say, be sold abroad, and read for the instruction of the people? I am bold with you, but I speak Latin and not English, to the clergy, not to the laity; I speak to you being present, and not behind your backs. God is my witness, I speak whatsoever is spoken of the good-will that I bear you; God is my witness, which knoweth my heart, and compelleth me to say that I say.

Now, I pray you in God's name, what did you, so great fathers, so many, so long a season, so oft assembled together? What went you about? What would ye have brought to pass? Two things taken away—the one, that ye (which I heard) burned a dead man<sup>5</sup>; the other, that ye (which I felt) went

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<sup>5</sup> The body of William Tracy, in the year 1532.

about to burn one being alive: him, because he did, I cannot tell how, in his testament withstand your profit; in other points, as I have heard, a very good man; reported to be of an honest life while he lived, full of good works, good both to the clergy, and also to the laity: this other,<sup>6</sup> which truly never hurt any of you, ye would have raked in the coals, because he would not subscribe to certain articles that took away the supremacy of the king:—take away these two noble acts, and there is nothing else left that ye went about, that I know, saving that I now remember, that somewhat ye attempted against Erasmus,<sup>7</sup> albeit as yet nothing is come to light. Ye have oft sat in consultation, but what have ye done? Ye have had many things in deliberation, but what one is put forth, whereby either Christ is more glorified, or else Christ's people made more holy? I appeal to your own conscience. How chanced this? How came it thus? Because there were no children of light, no children of God amongst you, which, setting the world at nought, would study to illustrate the glory of God, and thereby shew themselves children of light? I think not so, certainly I think not so. God forbid, that all you, which were gathered together under the pretence of light, should be children of the world! Then why happened this? Why, I pray you? Perchance, either because the children of the world were more in number in this your congregation, as it oft happeneth, or at the least of more policy than the children of light in their generation: whereby it might very soon be brought to pass, that these were much more stronger in generating the evil, than these in producing the good. The children of light have policy, but it is like the policy of the serpent, and is joined with doveish simplicity. They engender nothing but simply, faithfully, and plainly, even so doing all that they do. And therefore they may with more facility be cumbered in their engendering, and be the more ready to take injuries. But the children of this world have worldly policy, foxly craft, lion-like cruelty, power to do hurt, more than either *aspis* or *basilucus*, engendering and doing all things fraudulently, deceitfully, guilefully: which as Nimrods and such sturdy and stout hunters, being full of simulation and dissimulation before the Lord, deceive the children of light, and cumber them easily. Hunters go not forth in every man's sight, but do their affairs closely, and with use of guile and deceit wax every day more craftier than other.

The children of this world be like crafty hunters; they be misnamed children of light, forasmuch as they so hate light, and so study to do the works of darkness. If they were the children of light, they would not love darkness. It is no marvel that they go about to keep other in darkness, seeing they be in darkness, from top to toe overwhelmed with darkness, darker

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<sup>6</sup> Latimer himself.

<sup>7</sup> An allusion to the attempt of Dr. Standish (1520) to fasten the charge of heresy on Erasmus.

than is the darkness of hell. Wherefore it is well done in all orders of men, but especial in the order of prelates, to put a difference between children of light and children of the world, because great deceit ariseth in taking the one for the other. Great imposture cometh, when they that the common people take for the light, go about to take the sun and the light out of the world. But these be easily known, both by the diversity of minds, and also their armours. For whereas the children of light are thus minded, that they seek their adversaries' health, wealth, and profit, with loss of their own commodities, and oftentimes with jeopardy of their life; the children of the world, contrariwise, have such stomachs, that they will sooner see them dead that doth them good, than sustain any loss of temporal things. The armour of the children of light are, first, the word of God, which they ever set forth, and with all diligence put it abroad, that, as much as in them lieth, it may bring forth fruit: after this, patience and prayer, with the which in all adversities the Lord comforteth them. Other things they commit to God, unto whom they leave all revenge. The armour of the children of the world are, sometime frauds and deceits, sometime lies and money: by the first they make their dreams, their traditions; by the second they stablish and confirm their dreams, be they never so absurd, never so against scripture, honesty, or reason. And if any man resist them, even with these weapons they procure to slay him. Thus they bought Christ's death, the very light itself, and obscured him after his death: thus they buy every day the children of light, and obscure them, and shall so do, until the world be at an end. So that it may be ever true, that Christ said: "The children of the world be wiser, etc."

These worldlings pull down the lively faith, and full confidence that men have in Christ, and set up another faith, another confidence, of their own making: the children of light contrary. These worldlings set little by such works as God hath prepared for our salvation, but they extol traditions and works of their own invention: the children of light contrary. The worldlings, if they spy profit, gains, or lucre in any thing, be it never such a trifle, be it never so pernicious, they preach it to the people, (if they preach at any time,) and these things they defend with tooth and nail. They can scarce disallow the abuses of these, albeit they be intolerable, lest in disallowing the abuse they lose part of their profit. The children of the light contrary, put all things in their degree, best highest, next next, the worst lowest. They extol things necessary, christian, and commanded of God. They pull down willworks feigned by men, and put them in their place. The abuses of all things they earnestly rebuke. But yet these things be so done on both parties, and so they both do gender, that the children of the world chew themselves wiser than the children of light, and that frauds and deceits, lies and money, seem evermore to have the upper hand. I hold my peace; I will not say how

fat feasts, and jolly banquets, be jolly instruments to set forth worldly matters withal. Neither the children of the world be only wiser than the children of light, but are also some of them among themselves much wiser than the other in their generation. For albeit, as touching the end, the generation of them all is one; yet in this same generation some of them have more craftily engendered than the other of their fellows.

For what a thing was that, that once every hundred year was brought forth in Rome of the children of this world, and with how much policy it was made, ye heard at Paul's Cross in the beginning of the last parliament: how some brought forth canonizations, some expectations,<sup>8</sup> some pluralities and unions, some tot-quot and dispensations, some pardons, and these of wonderful variety, some stationaries,<sup>9</sup> some jubilaries,<sup>10</sup> some pocularies<sup>11</sup> for drinkers, some manuaries<sup>12</sup> for handlers of relicks, some pedaries<sup>13</sup> for pilgrims, some oscularies<sup>14</sup> for kissers; some of them engendered one, some other such fetures,<sup>15</sup> and every one in that he was delivered of, was excellent politic, wise; yea, so wise, that with their wisdom they had almost made all the world fools.

But yet they that begot and brought forth that our old ancient purgatory pick-purse; that that was swaged and cooled with a Franciscan's cowl, put upon a dead man's back, to the fourth part of his sins; that that was utterly to be spoiled, and of none other but of our most prudent lord Pope, and of him as oft as him listed; that satisfactory, that missal, that scalary: they, I

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<sup>8</sup> *Gratiæ expectivæ*, or certain papal instruments by which benefices, not yet vacant, were prospectively made over to purchasers. Many laws were enacted in England against this intolerable abuse.

<sup>9</sup> During a time of pestilence, Gregory I. appointed certain litanies and masses to be sung in the principal churches in Rome on certain fixed days, for the remission of sins. These solemnities were continued ever afterwards on stated occasions, and denominated *Stations*, *quasi stasas*, i.e. *certis anni diebus ac statutis celebres*. Pol. Vergil, De rerum Inventoribus, Lib. VIII. c. I.

<sup>10</sup> Pope Boniface VIII. instituted the first *jubilee* at Rome in the year 1300, promising plenary remission of sins to all who should visit Rome at that festival. These jubilees were at first ordered to be celebrated once in 100 years; but Clement VI. shortened that period to 50 years; Paul II. (who was followed herein by Sextus IV.) reduced the interval to 25 years; whilst Alexander VI., to increase his revenue, assigned jubilees to be held in provinces and countries at a distance from Rome, as well as in Rome itself.

<sup>11</sup> Consecrated drinking-vessels.

<sup>12</sup> Consecrated gloves and sandals.

<sup>13</sup> Consecrated tablets on which were representations of Christ, of the Virgin Mary, or of some saint. Virtues, pardons, merits, &c. of various kinds were supposed to be derived from the purchase and use of these several consecrated articles, e.g. the *pardon-bowl* mentioned by Latimer in his sermon "Of the Plough," p. 68

<sup>14</sup> Fetures: births or productions.

<sup>15</sup> Masses-satisfactory,—soul-masses,—masses of *scala cæli*.

say, that were the wise fathers and genitors of this purgatory, were in my mind the wisest of all their generation, and so far pass the children of light, and also the rest of their company, that they both are but fools, if ye compare them with these. It was a pleasant fiction, and from the beginning so profitable to the feigners of it, that almost, I dare boldly say, there hath been no emperor that hath gotten more by taxes and tallager of them that were alive, than these, the very and right-begotten sons of the world, got by dead men's tributes and gifts. If there be some in England, that would this sweeting of the world to be with no less policy kept still than it was born and brought forth in Rome, who then can accuse Christ of lying? No, no; as it hath been ever true, so it shall be, that the children of the world be much wiser, not only in making their things, but also in conserving them. I wot not what it is, but somewhat it is I wot, that some men be so loth to see the abuse of this monster, purgatory, which abuse is more than abominable: as who should say, there is none abuse in it, or else as though there can be none in it. They may seem heartily to love the old thing, that thus earnestly endeavour them to restore him his old name. They would not set an hair by the name, but for the thing. They be not so ignorant, (no, they be crafty,) but that they know if the name come again, the thing will come after. Thereby it ariseth, that some men make their cracks, that they, maugre all men's heads, have found purgatory. I cannot tell what is found. This, to pray for dead folks, this is not found, for it was never lost. How can that be found that was not lost? O subtle finders, that can find things, if God will, ere they be lost! For that cowlish deliverance, their scalary loosings, their papal spoliations, and other such their figments, they cannot find. No, these be so lost, as they themselves grant, that though they seek them never so diligently, yet they shall not find them, except perchance they hope to see them come in again with their names; and that then money-gathering may return again, and deceit walk about the country, and so stablish their kingdom in all kingdoms. But to what end this chiding between the children of the world and the children of light will come, only he knoweth that once shall judge them both.

Now, to make haste and to come somewhat nigher the end. Go ye to, good brethren and fathers, for the love of God, go ye to; and seeing we are here assembled, let us do something whereby we may be known to be the children of light. Let us do somewhat, lest we, which hitherto have been judged children of the world, seem even still to be so. All men call us prelates: then, seeing we be in council, let us so order ourselves, that we be prelates in honour and dignity; so we may be prelates in holiness, benevolence, diligence, and sincerity. All men know that we be here gathered, and

with most fervent desire they anheale<sup>16</sup>, breathe, and gape for the fruit of our convocation: as our acts shall be, so they shall name us: so that now it lieth in us, whether we will be called children of the world, or children of light.

Wherefore lift up your heads, brethren, and look about with your eyes, spy what things are to be reformed in the church of England. Is it so hard, is it so great a matter for you to see many abuses in the clergy, many in the laity? What is done in the Arches<sup>17</sup>? Nothing to be amended? What do they there? Do they evermore rid the people's business and matters, or cumber and ruffle them? Do they evermore correct vice, or else defend it, sometime being well corrected in other places? How many sentences be given there in time, as they ought to be? If men say truth, how many without bribes? Or if all things be well done there, what do men in bishops' Consistories<sup>18</sup>? Shall you often see the punishments assigned by the laws executed, or else money-redemptions used in their stead? How think you by the ceremonies that are in England, oft-times, with no little offence of weak consciences, contemned; more oftener with superstition so defiled, and so depraved, that you may doubt whether it were better some of them to tarry still, or utterly to take them away? Have not our forefathers complained of the ceremonies, of the superstition, and estimation of them?

Do ye see nothing in our holidays? of the which very few were made at the first, and they to set forth goodness, virtue, and honesty: but sithens, in some places, there is neither mean nor measure in making new holidays, as who should say, this one thing is serving of God, to make this law, that no man may work. But what doth the people on these holidays? Do they give themselves to godliness, or else ungodliness? See ye nothing, brethren? If you see not, yet God seeth. God seeth all the whole holidays to be spent miserably in drunkenness, in glossing, in strife, in envy, in dancing, dicing, idleness, and gluttony. He seeth all this, and threateneth punishment for it. He seeth it, which neither is deceived in seeing, nor deceiveth when he threateneth.

Thus men serve the devil; for God is not thus served, albeit ye say ye serve God. No, the devil hath more service done unto him on one holiday, than on many working days. Let all these abuses be counted as nothing, who is he that is not sorry, to see in so many holidays rich and wealthy persons to flow in delicates, and men that live by their travail, poor men, to lack necessary meat and drink for their wives and their children, and that they cannot labour upon the holidays, except they will be cited, and brought

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<sup>16</sup> Are breathlessly anxious. (*anhelare*).

<sup>17</sup> The chief and most ancient Consistory court belonging to the archbishop of Canterbury.

<sup>18</sup> All bishops have a *Consistory* court for the trial of ecclesiastical causes arising within their respective dioceses.

before our Officials? Were it not the office of good prelates to consult upon these matters, and to seek some remedy for them? Ye shall see, my brethren, ye shall see once, what will come of this our winking.

What think ye of these images that are had more than their fellows in reputation; that are gone unto with such labour and weariness of the body, frequented with such our cost, sought out and visited with such confidence? What say ye by these images, that are so famous, so noble, so noted, being of them so many and so divers in England? Do you think that this preferring of picture to picture, image to image, is the right use, and not rather the abuse, of images? But you will say to me, Why make ye all these interrogations? and why, in these your demands, do you let and withdraw the good devotion of the people? Be not all things well done, that are done with good intent, when they be profitable to us? So, surely, covetousness both thinketh and speaketh. Were it not better for us, more for estimation, more meeter for men in our places, to cut away a piece of this our profit, if we will not cut away all, than to wink at such ungodliness, and so long to wink for a little lucre; specially if it be ungodliness, and also seem unto you ungodliness? These be two things, so oft to seek mere images, and sometime to visit the relicks of saints. And yet, as in those there may be much ungodliness committed, so there may here some superstition be hid, if that sometime we chance to visit pigs' bones instead of saints' relicks, as in time past it hath chanced, I had almost said, in England. Then this is too great a blindness, a darkness too sensible, that these should be so commended in sermons of some men, and preached to be done after such manner, as though they could not be evil done; which, notwithstanding, are such, that neither God nor man commandeth them to be done. No, rather, men commanded them either not to be done at all, or else more slowlier and seldomer to be done, forasmuch as our ancestors made this constitution: "We command the priests, that they oft admonish the people, and in especial women, that they make no vows but after long deliberation, consent of their husbands, and counsel of the priest." The church of England in time past made this constitution. What saw they that made this decree? They saw the intolerable abuses of images. They saw the perils that might ensue of going on pilgrimage. They saw the superstitious difference that men made between image and image. Surely, somewhat they saw. The constitution is so made, that in manner it taketh away all such pilgrimages. For it so plucketh away the abuse of them, that it leaveth either none, or else seldom use of them. For they that restrain making vows for going of pilgrimage, restrain also pilgrimage; seeing that for the most part it is seen that few go on pilgrimage but vow-makers, and such as by promise bind themselves to go. And when, I pray you, should a man's wife go on pilgrimage, if she went not before she had well debated the matter with herself, and obtained the

consent of her husband, being a wise man, and were also counselled by a learned priest so to do? When should she go far off to these famous images? For this the common people of England think to be going on pilgrimage; to go to some dead and notable image out of town, that is to say, far from their house. Now if your forefathers made this constitution, and yet thereby did nothing, the abuses every day more and more increased, what is left for you to do? Brethren and fathers, if ye purpose to do any thing, what should ye sooner do, than to take utterly away these deceitful and juggling images; or else, if ye know any other mean to put away abuses, to shew it, if ye intend to remove abuses? Methink it should be grateful and pleasant to you to mark the earnest mind of your forefathers, and to look upon their desire where they say in their constitution, “We *command* you,” and not, “We *counsel* you.” How have we been so long a-cold, so long slack in setting forth so wholesome a precept of the church of England, where we be so hot in all things that have any gains in them, albeit they be neither commanded us, nor yet given us by counsel; as though we had lever the abuse of things should tarry still than, it taken away, lose our profit? To let pass the solemn and nocturnal bacchanals, the prescript miracles, that are done upon certain days in the west part of England, who hath not heard? I think ye have heard of St Blesis’s<sup>19</sup> heart which is at Malverne, and of St Algar’s<sup>20</sup> bones, how long they deluded the people: I am afraid, to the loss of many souls. Whereby men may well conjecture, that all about in this realm there is plenty of such juggling deceits. And yet hitherto ye have sought no remedy. But even still the miserable people are suffered to take the false miracles for the true, and to lie still asleep in all kind of superstition. God have mercy upon us!

Last of all, how think you of matrimony? Is all well here? What of baptism? Shall we evermore in ministering of it speak Latin, and not in English rather, that the people may know what is said and done?

What think ye of these mass-priests, and of the masses themselves? What say ye? Be all things here so without abuses, that nothing ought to be amended? Your forefathers saw somewhat, which made this constitution against the venality and sale of masses, that, under pain of suspending, no priest should sell his saying of tricennals<sup>21</sup> or annals.<sup>22</sup> What saw they, that

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<sup>19</sup> Probably St Blaise.

<sup>20</sup> Probably Algar the father of Fremond, the latter being a Mercian saint in great odour.

<sup>21</sup> Tricennals or *Trentals*—“trentall of masses:…What masses should they be? Thre Masses of the nativity of our Lord: Thre Masses of the Epiphanie of our Lord: Thre of the purification of our Lady: Thre of the annunciation of our Lady: Thre of the resurrection of our Lord: Thre of the ascension of our Lord: Thre of Penthecost: Thre of the Trinitie: Thre of the assumption of our Lady; And of her nativitie; so that these masses be celebrated within the *octaves* of the said feasts.” Becon, Works, III. fol. 366.

<sup>22</sup> “*Annals* or *Annuals* was a yearly mass said for a certain dead person, upon the anniversary day of his death.” Johnson, Collection of all the Ecclesiastical Laws, &c. Vol. II. anno

made this constitution? What priests saw they? What manner of masses saw they, trow ye? But at the last, what became of so good a constitution? God have mercy upon us! If there be nothing to be amended abroad, concerning the whole, let every one of us make one better; if there be neither abroad nor at home any thing to be amended and redressed, my lords, be ye of good cheer, be merry; and at the least, because we have nothing else to do, let us reason the matter how we may be richer. Let us fall to some pleasant communication; after let us go home, even as good as we came hither, that is, right-begotten children of the world, and utterly worldlings. And while we live here, let us all make bone cheer. For after this life there is small pleasure, little mirth for us to hope for; if now there be nothing to be changed in our fashions. Let us say, not as St Peter did, "Our end approacheth nigh," this is an heavy hearing; but let us say as the evil servant said, "It will be long ere my master come." This is pleasant. Let us beat our fellows: let us eat and drink with drunkards. Surely, as oft as we do not take away the abuse of things, so oft we beat our fellows. As oft as we give not the people their true food, so oft we beat our fellows. As oft as we let them die in superstition, so oft we heat them. To be short, as oft as we blind lead them blind, so oft we beat, and grievously beat our fellows. When we welter in pleasures and idleness, then we eat and drink with drunkards. But God will come, God will come, he will not tarry long away. He will come upon such a day as we nothing look for him, and at such hour as we know not. He will come and cut us in pieces. He will reward us as he doth the hypocrites. He will set us where wailing shall be, my brethren; where gnashing of teeth shall be, my brethren. And let here be the end of our tragedy, if ye will. These be the delicate dishes prepared for the world's well-beloved children. These be the wafers and junkets provided for worldly prelates,—wailing and gnashing of teeth. Can there be any mirth, where these two courses last all the feast? Here we laugh, there we shall weep. Our teeth make merry here, ever dashing in delicates; there we shall be torn with teeth, and do nothing but gnash and grind our own. To what end have we now excelled other in policy? What have we brought forth at the last? Ye see, brethren, what sorrow, what punishment is provided for you, if ye be worldlings. If ye will not thus be vexed, be ye not the children of the world. If ye will not be the children of the world, be not stricken with the love of worldly things; lean not upon them. If ye will not die eternally, live not worldly. Come, go to; leave the love of your profit; study for the glory and profit of Christ; seek in your consultations such things as pertain to Christ, and bring forth at the last somewhat that may please Christ. Feed ye tenderly, with all diligence, the flock of Christ.

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1236, n. 8. A mass said for the soul of a deceased person every day for a whole year, was also called an Annal.

Preach truly the word of God. Love the light, walk in the light, and so be ye the children of light while ye are in this world, that ye may shine in the world that is to come bright as the sun, with the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; to whom be all honour, praise, and glory. Amen.

[The picture of superstitions, of clerical misdoings, and papal abuses, which this Sermon presents, will not appear too highly coloured to any who are at all acquainted with the then existing state of things. Dean Colet had, twenty-five years earlier, preached a sermon before the convocation, in which he dwelt on the need of a Reformation, in language quite as strong as that employed by bishop Latimer. See Knight's *Life of Colet*, pp. 289-308. It is scarcely necessary to remind the learned reader of the enumeration of abuses contained in the Appendix to Wicelius' *Via Regia*, nor of those recited in the memorial presented to pope Paul III. by the Cardinals Contarini, Sadolet, Pole, and other eminent Romanists.]