

Saint William Tyndale's 38 page prologue to his translation of the book of Jonas, translated from the original Hebrew into English, in the year of our Lord God, 1531 A.D. (Truly and purely transcribed into (some) modern spelling English and using the Verdana 12.5 font for easy reading)

'I AM SURE / AND MY CONSCIENCE BEARETH ME RECORD THAT OF A PURE INTENT / SINGILLY AND FAITHFULLY I HAVE INTERPRETED IT AND TRANSCRIBED IT / AS FAR FORTH AS GOD GAVE ME THE GIFT OF KNOWLEDGE / AND UNDERSTANDING'

CONSIDER THAT I LABOURED NOT FOR MYSELF ONLY / BUT FOR ALL THEM THAT SEEK LEARNING. ECCLESIASTICUS Ch. 33 v. 17.

© **The prophet Jonas** / with an introduction before teaching to understand him and the right use also of all the scripture and why it was written / and what is therein to be sought / and showing wherewith the scripture is locked up that he which readeth it / cannot understand it / though he study therein never so much: again with what keys it is so opened / that the reader can be stopped out with no sotilte or false doctrine of man / from the true sense and understanding thereof.

W.T. unto the Christian reader. (Page 1) The Prologue.

AS the envious philistines stopped the wells of Abraham and filled them up with earth / to put the memorial out of mind / to the intent that they might challenge the ground: even so the fleshly minded hypocrites stop up the veins of life which are in the scripture / with the earth of their traditions / false similitudes & lying allegories: & that of like zeale / to make the scripture their own possession & merchandise: and so shut up the kingdom of heaven which is Gods word neither entering in themselves nor suffering them that would.

© The scripture hath a body with out / and within a soul / spirit & life. It hath with out a bark / a shell and as it were an hard bone for the fleshly minded to gnaw upon. And within it hath pith / cornell / mary & all

sweetness for Gods elect which he hath chosen to give them his spirit / & to write his law & the faith of his son in their hearts.

☉ The scripture containeth .iii. things in it first the law to condemn all flesh: secondarily the Gospel / that is to say / promises of mercy

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for all that repent & knowledge their sins at the preaching of the law & consent in their hearts that the law is good / & submit themselves to be scolars to learn to keep the law & to learn to believe the mercy that is promised them: & thirdly the stories & lives of those scolars / both what chances fortuneth them / & also by what means their scolmaster taught them and made them perfect / & how he tried the true from the false.

☉ When the hypocrites come to the law / they put gloses to and make no more of it then of a worldly law which is satisfied with the outward work and which a turk may also fulfill. When yet Gods law never ceaseth to condemn a man until it be written in his heart and until he keep it naturally without compulsion & all other respect save only pure love to God and his neighbor / as he naturally eateth when he is an hungred / without compulsion & all other respect / save to slake his hunger only.

☉ And when they come to the Gospel / there they mingle their leaven & say / God now receiveth us no more to mercy / but of

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mercy receiveth us to penance / that is to wit / holy deeds that make them fat bellies & us their captives / both in soul and body. And yet they fayne their idol the pope so merciful / that if thou make a little money glister in his balms in his balams eyes / there is neither penance nor purgatory nor any fasting at all but to flee to heaven as swift as a thought and at the twinckling of an eye.

☉ And the lives stories and guests of men which are contained in the bible / they read as things no more pertaining unto them / then a take of Robinhood / & as things they wott not whereto they serve / save to fayne false deceit & juggling allegories / to stablish their kingdom with all. And one the chiefest & fleshliest study they have / is to magnify the saints above measure & above the truth & with their poetry to make them greater then ever God make them. And if they find any infirmity or sin ascribed unto the saints / that they excuse with all diligence / diminishing

the glory of the mercy of God & robbing wretched sinners of all their comfort / & think thereby to flatter the saints

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and to obtain their favour & to make special advocates of them: even as a man would obtain the favour of worldly tyrants: as they also fayne the saints much more cruel then ever was any heathen man & more wreckful and vengeable then the poets fayne their gods or their furies that torment the souls in hell / if their evils be not fasted & their images visited & saluted with a Paternoster (which prayer only our lips be acquainted with our hearts understanding none at all) and worshipped with a candle & the offering of our devotion / in the place which they have chosen to hear the supplications & make petitions of their clients therein.

☉ But thou reader think of the law of God how that it is all together spiritual / and so spiritual that it is never fulfilled with deeds or works / until they flow out of thine heart with as great love toward thine neighbor / for no deserving of his yee though he be thine enemy / as Christ loved thee and did for thee / for no deserving of thine / but even when thou wast his enemy. And in the meantime / throughout all our infancie and childhood in Christ / till

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we be grown up in to perfect men in the full knowledge of Christ & full love of Christ again & of our neighbors for his sake / after the ensample of his love to us / remember that the fulfilling of the law is / a fast faith in Christs blood coupled with our profession & submitting ourselves to learn to do better.

☉ And of the Gospel or promises which thou meetest in the scripture / believe fast that God will fulfill them unto thee / and that unto the uttermost jott / at the repentance of thine heart / when thou turnest to him & forsakest evil / even of his goodness & fatherly mercy unto thee / and not for thy flattering him with hypocrytish works of thine own fayning. So that a fast faith only with out respect of all works / is the forgiveness both of the sin which we did in time of ignorance with lust and consent to sin / & also of all the sin which we do by chance & of frailty / after that we are come to knowledge and have professed the law

out of our hearts. And all deeds serve only for to help our neighbors & to tame our flesh that we fall not to sin again / & to exercise our souls

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in virtue / & not to make satisfaction to God ward for the sin that is once past.

☉ And all other stories of the bible / with out exception / are the practicing of the law & of the Gospel / and are true and faithful ensamples & sure earneste that God will even so deal with us / as he did with them / in all infirmities / in all temptations / & in all like cases & chances. Wherein ye see on the one side / how fatherly & tenderly & with all compassion God entreateth his elect which submit themselves as scolers / to learn to walk in the ways of his laws / & to keep them of love. If they forgatt themselves at a time & went astray / he sought them out & fett them again with all mercy. If they fell & hurt themselves / he healed them again with all compassion & tenderness of heart. He hath oft brought great tribulation & adversity upon his elect: but all of fatherly love only / to teach them & to make them see their own hearts & the sin that theirs lay hid / that they might afterward feel his mercy. For his mercy waited upon them / to rid them out again / as soon as they were learned & come

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to the knowledge of their own hearts: so that he never cast man away how deep so ever he had sinned / save them only which had first cast the yoke of his laws from their necks / with utter defiance & malice of heart. Which ensamples how comfortable are they for us / when we be fallen into sin & God is come upon us with a storge / that we despair not / but repent with full hope of mercy after the ensamples of mercy that are gone before. And therefore they were written for our learning / as testifieth Paul Romans .xv. to comfort us / that we might the better put our hope & trust in God / when we see / how merciful he hath been in times past un to our weak brethren that are gone before / in all their adversities / need / temptations / yee & horrible sins in to which they now & then fell.

☉ And on the other side ye see how they that hardened their hearts & sinned of malice & refused mercy that was offered them & had no power to repent / perished at the latter end with all confusion & shame

mercilessly. Which ensamples are very good & necessary / to keep us in awe & dread in time of prosperity

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as thou mayst see by Paul .1. Corinthians .x. that we abide in the fear of God / & wax not wild and fall to vanities and so sin and provoke God and bring wrath upon us.

☉ And thirdly ye see in that practice / how as God is mercyfull & longsuffering / even so were all his true prophets & preachers / bearing the infirmities of their weak brethren & their own wrongs & injuries with all patience & long suffering / never casting any of them off their backs / until they sinned against the Holy Ghost / maliciously persecuting the open & manifest truth: contrary unto the ensamples of the pope / which in sinning against God & to quench the truth of his Holy Spirit / is ever chief captain and trompet blower / to set other awerk / and seeketh only his own freedom / liberty / privilege / wealth / prosperity / profit / pleasure / pastime / honor & glory / with the bondage / thraldome / captivitie / misery / wretchedness & vile subjection of his brethren: & in his own cause is so fervent / so stiff & cruel / that he will not suffer one word spoken against his false magestie / wily inventions and juggling

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hypocrisy to be unadvened / though all christendome should be set to gether by the cause / and should cost he cared not how many hundred thousand their lives.

Now that thou mayst read Jonas fruitfully & not as a poets fable / but as an obligation between God and thy soul / as an earnest penny given thee of God / that he will help thee in time of need / if thou turn to him and as the word of God the only food and life of thy soul / this mark & note. First count Jonas the friend of God and a man chosen of God to testify his name un to the world: but yet the young scoler / weak & rude / after the fashion of the apostles / how Christ was yet with them bodily. Which though Christ taught them ever to be meek & to humble them selves / yet oft strove among them selves who should be greatest. The sons of Zebede would sit / the one on the right hand of Christ and the other on the left. They would pray / that fire might descend from heaven / and consume the Samaritans.

☉ When Christ asked who say men that I am / Peter answered / thou art the son

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of the living God / as though Peter had been as perfect as an angel. But immediately after / when Christ preached un to them of his death & passion / Peter was angry & rebuked Christ & thought earnestly that he had raved & wist not what he said: as at a nother time / when Christ was so fervently busied in healing the people / that he had no leisure to eat / they went out to hold him / supposing that he had been beside him self. And one that cast out devils in Christs name / they forbade / because he waited not on them / so glorious were they yet.

☉ And though Christ taught all way to forgive / yet peter after long going to scole / asked whether men should forgive .vii. times / thinking that .viii. times had been too much. And at the last supper Peter would have died with Christ / but yet within few hours after / he denied him / both cowardly & shamefully. And after the same manner / thou he had so long heard that noman might avenge himself / but rather turn the other cheek to / then to smite again / yet when Christ was in taking / peter asked whether

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it were lawfull to smite with the sword / and tarried none answer / but layed on rashly. So that though when we come first un to the knowledge of the truth / and the peace is made between God & us / & we love his laws & believe & trust in him / as in our father & have good hearts un to him & be born anew in the spirit: yet we are but children and young scolars weak & feeble & must have leisure to grow in the spirit / in knowledge / love & in the deeds thereof / as young children must have time to grow in their bodies.

☉ And God our father & scolemaster feedeth us & teacheth us according un to the capacity of our stomachs / & maketh us to grow & wax perfect / & fineth us & trieth us as gold / in the fire of temptations & tribulations. As Moses witnesseth Deuteronomy .viii. saying: remember all the way by which the Lord thy God carried thee this .xl. years in the wilderness / to humble thee & to tempt or prove thee / that it might be known what were in thine heart. He brought thee into adversity & made thee an

hungred / & then fed thee with manna which neither thou nor yet thy fathers ever

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knew of / to teach thee that a man liveth not by bread only / but by all that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. For the promises of God are life un to all that cleave unto them / much more then is bread and bodily sustinaunce: as the journey of the children of Israel out of egypt in to the land promised them / ministereth the notable ensamples & that abundantly / as doeth all the rest of the bible also. How be it / it is impossible for flesh to believe & to trust in the truth of Gods promises / until he have learned it in much tribulation / after that God hath delivered him out thereof again.

☉ God therefore to teach Jonas & to show him his own heart & to make him perfect & to instruct us also by his ensample / sent him out of the land of Israel where he was a prophet / to go among the heathen people & to the greatest & mightiest city of the world then / called Niniva: to preach that within .xl. days they should all perish for their sins & that the city should be overthrown. Which message the freewill of Jonas had as much power to do / as the weakest hearted woman in the world hath power / if she were commanded

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/ to leap in to a tomb of living snakes & adders: as happely if God had commanded Sarah to have sacrificed her son Isaac / as he did Abraham / she would have disputed with him yer she had done it / or though she were strong enough / yet many an holy saint could not have found in their hearts / but would have disobeyed and have run away from the presence of the commandment of God with Jonas if they had been so strongly tempted.

☉ For Jonas thought of this manner: lo / I am here a prophet unto Gods people the Israelites which though they have Gods word testified un to them daily / yet despise it & worship God under the likeness of calves & after all manner fashions save after his own word / & therefore are of all nations the worst & most worthy of punishment. And yet God for love of few that are among them & for his names sake spareth them & defendeth them. How then should God take so cruel vengeance on so great a multitude of them to whom his name was never preached to and

therefore are not the tenth part so evil as these? If I shall therefore go preach

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so shall I lie & shame myself & God thereto and make them the more to despise God and set the less by him and to be the more cruel un to his people.

☉ And upon that imagination he fled from the face or presence of God: that is / out of the country where God was worshipped in & from prosecuting of Gods commandment / and thought / I will get me a nother way among the heathen people & be no more a prophet / but live at rest & out of all cumbrance. Never the less the God of all mercy which careth for his elect children & turneth all un to good to them & smiteth them to heal them again & kisseth them to make them alive again / & playeth with them (as a father doth sometime with his young ignorant children) & tempteth them & proveth them to make them see their own hearts / provided for Jonas / how all thing should be.

☉ When Jonas was entered in to the ship / he layed him down to sleep and to take his rest: that is / his conscience was tossed between the commandment of God which sent him to Nineva / & his fleshly wisdom that

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dissuaded & counseled him the contrary & at the last prevailed against the commandment & carried him a nother way / as a sheep caught between .ii. streams / & as poets fayne the mother of Mesiagner to be between diverse affections / while to avenge her brothers death / she sought to slay her own son. Where upon for very pain & tediousness / he layed down to sleep / for to put the commandment which gnew & freat his conscience / out of mind / as the nature of all wicked is / when they have sinned a good / to seek all means with riot / revel & pastime / to drive the remembrance of sin out of their thoughts or as Adam did / to cover their nakedness with aprons of pope holy works. But God awoke him out of his dream / and set his sins before his face.

☉ For when the Lot had caught Jonas / then be sure that his sins came to remembrance again & that his conscience raged no less then the waves of the sea. And then he thought that he only was a sinner & the heathen

that were in the ship none in respect of him / and thought also / as verily as he was fled from

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God / that as verily God had cast him away: for the sight of the rod maketh the natural child not only to see & to knowledge his fault / but also to forget all his fathers old mercy & kindness. And then he confessed his sin openly & had yet lever perish alone then that the other should have perished with him for his sake: and so of very desperation to have lived any longer / bade cast him in to the sea betimes / except they would be lost also.

☉ To speak of lotts / how farforth they are lawfull / is a light question. First to use them for the breaking of strife / as when partenars / their goods as equally divided as they can / take every man his part by lott / to avoid all suspicion of deceitfulness: & as the apostles in the first of the Acts / when they sought a nother to succeed Judas the traitor / & .ii. persons were presents / then to break strife & to satisfy all parties / did cast lotts / whether should be admitted / desiring God to temper them & to take whom he knew most mete / seeing they wist not whether to pretend / or haply could not all agree on either / is lawful and in all like cases. But to

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abuse them un to the tempting of God & to compel him therewith to utter things whereof we stand in doubt / when we have no commandment of him so to do / as these heathen here did / though God turned it un to his glory / can not be but evil.

☉ The heathen seemeth asstonied at the sight of the miracle / feared God / prayed to him / offered sacrifice & vowed vows. And I doubt not / but that some of them or haply all came thereby un to the true knowledge & true worshipping of God & were won to God in their souls. And that God which is infinite mercyfull in all his ways / wrought their souls health out of the infirmitie of Jonas / even of his good will & purpose & love wherewith he loved them before the world was made / & not of chance / as it appeareth un to the eyes of the ignorant.

☉ And that Jonas was .iii. days & .iii. nights in the belly of his fish: we can not thereby prove unto the Jews & infidels or un to any man / that Christ

must therefore die and be buried & rise again. But we use the ensamples and likeness to strength the faith of the

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weak. For he that believeth the one can not doubt in the other: in as much as the hand of God was no less mighty in preserving Jonas alive against all natural possibilities & in delivering him safe out of his fish / then in rising up Christ again out of his sepulchre. And we may describe the power & virtue of the resurrection thereby / as Christ himself borroweth the similitude thereto Matthew .xii. saying unto the Jews that came about him & desired a sign or a wonder from heaven to certify them that he was Christ: this evil & wedlock breaking nation (which break the wedlock of faith wherewith they be married un to God / and believe in their false works) seek a sign / but there shall no sign be given them save the sign of the Prophet Jonas. For as Jonas was .iii. days and .iii. nights in the belly of the whale / even so shall the son of man be .iii. days & .iii. nights in the heart of the earth. Which was a watch word / as we say / & a sharp threatening un to the Jews & as much to say as thus / ye hard hearted Jews seek a sign: lo / this shall be your sign / as Jonas

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was raised out of the sepulchre of his fish & then sent un to the Ninevites to preach that they should perish / even so shall I rise again out of my sepulchre & come & preach repentance un to you. See therefore when ye see that sign that ye repent or else ye shall surely perish & not escape. For though the infirmities which ye now see in my flesh be a let un to your faiths / ye shall yet then be with out excuse / when ye see so great a miracle & so great power of God shed out upon you. And so Christ came again after the resurrection / in his spirit & preached repentance unto them / by the mouth of his apostles & disciples / & with miracles of the Holy Ghost. And all that repented not perished shortly after and were for the most part slain with sword and the rest carried away captive in to all quarters of the world for an ensample / as ye see un to this day.

☉ And in like manner since the world began / where soever repentance was offered and not received / there God took cruel vengeance immediately: as ye see in the flood of Noah / in the overthrowing of Sodom

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& Gomor & all the country about: & as ye see of Egypt / of the Amorites / Cananites & afterward of the very Israelites / & then at the last of the Jews too / and of the Assyrians and Babylonians and so throughout all the empires of the world.

☉ Gyldas preached repentance un to the old Britains that inhabited england: they repented not / & therefore God sent in their enemies upon them on every side & destroyed them up & gave the land un to other nations. And great vengeance hath been taken in that land for sin since that time.

☉ Wycliffe preached repentance un to our fathers not long since: they repented not for their hearts were indurate & their eyes blinded with their own Pope holy righteousness wherewith they had made their souls gay against the receiving again of the wicked spirit that bringeth .vii. worse then him self with him & maketh the latter end worse then the beginning: for in open sins there is hope of repentance / but in holy hypocrisy none at all. But what followed? They slew their true & right king and

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set up .iii. wrong kings arow / under which all the noble blood was slain up and half the countries thereto / what in france & what with their own sword / in fighting among them selves for the crown / & the cities and towns decayed and the land brought half in to a wilderness in respect of that it was before.

☉ And now Christ to preach repentance / is risen yet once again out of his sepulchre in which the pope had buried him and kept him down with his pilars and polaxes and all disguisings of hypocrisy / with guile / wiles and falsehood / and with the sword of all princes which he had blinded with his false merchandise. And as I doubt not of the ensamples that are past / so am I sure that great wrath will follow / except repentance turn it back again and cease it.

☉ When Jonas had been in the fishes belly a space & the rage of his conscience was somewhat quieted and swaged and he come to him self again and had received a little hope / the qualms & pangs of desperation which went over his heart / half over come

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/ he prayed / as he maketh mention in the text saying: Jonas prayed un to the Lord his God out of the belly of the fish. But the words of that prayer are not here set. The prayer that here standeth in the text / is the prayer of praise & thanksgiving which he prayed and wrote when he was escaped and past all jeopardie.

☉ In the end of which prayer he saith / I will sacrifice with the voice of thanksgiving and pay that I have vowed / that saving commeth of the Lord. For verily to confess out of the heart / that all benefits come of God / even out of the goodness of his mercy and not deserving of our deeds / is the only sacrifice that pleaseth God. And to believe that God only is the saver / is the thing that all the Jews vowed in their circumcision / as we in our baptism. Which vow Jonas now taught with experience / promiseth to pay. For those outward sacrifices of beasts / un to which Jonas had haply ascribed to much before / were but feeble & childish things & not ordained / that the works of them selves should be a service

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un to God / but un to the people / to put them in remembrance of this inward sacrifice of thanks & of faith to trust and believe in God the only saver. Which signification when was away / they were abominable and devilish idolatry and image service: as our ceremonies and sacraments are become now to all that trust & believe in the work of them and are not taught the significations / to edify their souls with knowledge and the doctrine of God.

☉ When Jonas was cast upon land again / then his will was free and had power to go whother God sent him & to do what God bade / his own imaginations layed a part. For he had been at a new scole / yee and in a furnace where he was purged of much refuse & droshe of fleshly wisdom / which resisted the wisdom of God & led Jonases will contrary un to the will of God. For as far as we be blind in Adam / we can not but seek & will our own profit / pleasure & glory. And as far as we be taught in the spirit / we can not but seek & will the pleasure and glory of God only.

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☉ And as for the .iii. days journey of Niniva / whether it were in length or to go round about it or through all the streets / I commit un to the

discretion of other men. But I think that it was then the greatest city of the world.

☉ And that Jonas went a days journey in the city / I suppose he did it not in one day: but went fair & easily preaching here a sermon & there another & rebuked the sin of the people for which they must perish.

☉ And when thou art come un to the repentance of the Ninevites / there hast thou sure earnest / that how soever angry God be / yet he remembereth mercy un to all that truly repent and believe in mercy. Which ensample our saviour Christ also casteth in the teeth of the indurate Jews saying: the Ninevites shall rise in judgment with this nation and condemn them / for they repented at the preaching of Jonas / and behold a greater than Jonas here / meaning of him self. At whose preaching yet / though it were never so mighty to pierce the heart / & for all his miracles thereto / the hard hearted

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Jews could not repent: when the heathen Ninevites repented at the bare preaching of Jonas rebuking their sins without any miracle at all.

☉ Why? For the Jews had leavened the spiritual law of God and with their gloses had made it all to gether earthy and fleshly / and so had set a vail or covering on Moses face / to shadow and darken the glorious brightness of his countenance. It was sin to steal: but to rob widows houses under a color of long praying / & to polle in the name of offerings / and to snare the people with intolerable constitutions against all love / to catch their money out of their purses / was no sin at all.

☉ To smite father and mother was sin: But to withdraw help from them at their need / for blind zeale of offering / un to the profit of the holy pharisees / was then as meritorious as it is now to let all thy kynne chose whether they will sink or swim / while thou buildest and makest goodly foundations for holy people which thou hast chosen to be thy Christ / for to sowple thy soul

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with the oil of their sweet blessings / & to be thy Jesus for to save thy soul from the purgatory of the blood that only purgeth sin / with their watching / fasting / wolward going & rising at midnight etc. where with

yet they purged not them selves from their covetousness / pride / lechery or any vice that thou seyst among the lay people.

☉ It was great sin for Christ to heal the people on the sabbath day un to the glory of God his father / but none at all for them to help their cattle unto their own profit.

☉ It was sin to eat with unwashen hands or on an unwashen table / or out of an unwashen dish: but to eat out of that purified dish that which came of bribery / theft & extortion / was no sin at all.

☉ It was exceeding meritorious to make many disciples: but to teach them to fear God and his ordinances / had they no care at all.

☉ The high prelates so defended the right of holy church and so feared the people with

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the curse of God & terrible pains of hell / that no man durst leave the vilest herke in his garden untithed. And the offering and things dedicate un to God for the profit of his holy vicars where in such estimation and reverence / that it was much greater sin to swear truly by them / then to forswear thyself by God: what vengeance then of God / and how terrible and cruel damnation think ye preached they to fall on them that had stollen such holy things? And yet saith Christ / that righteousness and faith in keeping promise / mercy and indifferent judgement were utterly trodden under foot and clean despised of those blessed fathers / which so mightily maintained Aarons patrimony and had made it so prosperous and envired it and walled it about on every side with the fear of God / that no man durst twech it.

☉ It was great holyness to garnish the sepulchres of the prophets & to condemn their own fathers for slaying of them: and yet were they them selves for blind zeale of their own constitutions / as ready as their fathers

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to slay whosoever testified un to them / the same truth which the prophets testified un to their fathers. So that Christ compareth all the righteousness of those holy patriarchs un to the outward beauty of a painted sepulchre full of stench and all un cleanness within.

☉ And finally to begyld a mans neighbor in sottle bargaining and to wrap and compass him in with cauteses of the law / was then as it is now in the kingdom of the pope. By the reason where of they excluded the law of love out of their hearts / and consequently all true repentance: for how could they repent of that they could not see to be sin?

☉ And on the other side they had set up a righteousness of holy works / to cleanse their souls with all: as the Pope sanctifieth us with holy oil / holy bread / holy salt / holy candles / holy dome seremonies and holy dome blessings / and with whatsoever holyness thou wilt save with the holynes of Gods word which only speaketh un to the heart and showeth the soul her filthiness and uncleanness of sin / and leadeth

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her by the way of repentance un to the fountain of Christs blood to wash it away through faith. By the reason of which false righteousness they were disobedient un to the righteousness of God / which is the forgiveness of sin in Christes blood and could not believe it. And so through fleshly interpreting the law and false imagined righteousness / their hearts were hardened and made as stony as clay in a hot furnace of fire / that they could receive neither repentance nor faith or any moyster of grace at all.

☉ But the heathen Ninevites / though they were blinded with their lusts a good / yet were in those .ii. points uncorrupt and unhardened / & therefore with the only preaching of Jonas came un to the knowledge of their sins and confessed them & repented truly & turned every man from his evil deeds & declared their sorrow of heart & true repentance / with their deeds which they did out of faith & hope of forgiveness / chastising their bodies with prayer & fasting & with taking all pleasures from the flesh:

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trusting / as God was angry for their wickedness / even so should he forgive them of his mercy / if they repented & forsook their miss living.

☉ And in the last end of all / thou hast yet a goodly ensample of learning / to see how earthy Jonas is still for all his trying in the whales belly. He was so sore displeased because the Ninevites perished not / that he was weary of his life and wished after the death for very sorrow & pain / that he had lost the glory of his prophesying / in that his prophesy come not

to pass. But God rebuked him with likeness saying: it grieveth thine heart for the loss of a vile shrobb or spray / whereon thou bestowdest no labour or cost / neither was it thine handwork. How much more then should grieve mine heart / the loss of so great a multitude of innocents as are in Nineveh / which are all mine hands work. Nay Jonas / I am God over all / and father as well un to the heathen as un to the Jews and mercyfull to all and warn yer I smite: neither threat I so cruelly by any prophet / but that I will

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forgive if they repent and ask mercy: neither on the other side / what soever I promise / will I fulfill it / save for their sakes only which trust in me and submit them selves to keep my laws of very love / as natural children.

ON this manner to read the scripture is the right use thereof & why the Holy Ghost caused it to be written. That is that thou first seek out the law / what God will have thee to do / interpreting it spiritually without glose or covering the brightness of Moses face / so that thou feel in thine heart / how that it is damnable sin before God / not to love thy neighbor that is thine enemy / as purely as Christ loved thee / and that not to love thy neighbor in thine heart / is to have committed already all sin against him. And therefore un till that love become / thou must knowledge unfaynedly that there is sin in the best deed thou doest. And it must earnestly grieve thine heart and thou must wash all thy good deeds in Christs blood / yer they can be pure and acceptable sacrifice un to God / and must

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desire God the father for his sake / to take thy deeds aworth & to pardon the imperfectness of them / & to give thee power to do them better and with more fervent love.

☉ And on the other side thou must search diligently for promises of mercy which God hath promised thee again. Which .ii. points / that is to wit / the law spiritually interpreted / how that all is damnable sin that is not unfayned love out of the ground and bottom of the heart after the ensample of Christs love to us / because we be all equally created and formed of one God our father / and indifferently bought & redeemed with one blood of our savior Jesus Christ: and that the promises be given un

to a repenting soul that thursteth and longeth after them / of the pure and fatherly mercy of God through our faith only with out all deserving of our deeds or merits of our works / but for Christs sake alone and for the merits and deservings of his works / death and passions that he suffered all to gether for us & not for himself: which .ii. points I say / if they be

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written in thine heart / are the keys which so open all the scripture un to thee / that no creature can lock thee out / and with which thou shalt go in and out / and find pasture and food every where. And if these lessons be not written in thine heart / then is all the scripture shut up / as a cornell in the shell / so that thou mayst read it and comen of it and rehearse all the stories of it and dispute sotilly and be a profound sophister / and yet understand not one Jot thereof.

☉ And thirdly that thou take the stories & lives which are contained in the bible / for sure and undoubted ensamples / that God so will deal with us un to the worlds end.

☉ Here with Reader farewell and be commended un to God / and un to the grace of his spirit. And first see that thou stop not thine ears un to the calling of God / and that thou harden not thine heart begyled with fleshly interpreting of the law & false imagined and hypocritish righteousness / and so the Ninevites rise with thee at the day of judgement & condemn thee.

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☉ And secondarily if thou find ought amiss / when thou seyst thy self in the glass of Gods word / think it compendious wisdom / to amend the same betimes / monished & warned by the ensample of other men / rather then to tarry until thou be beaten also.

☉ And thirdly if it shall so chance / that the wild lusts of thy flesh shall blind thee and carry thee clean away with them for a time: yet at the latter end / when the God of all mercy shall have compassed thee in on every side with temptations / tribulations / adversities & cumbrance / to bring thee home again un to thine own heart / & to set thy sins which thou wouldest so fayne cover & put out of mind with delectation of voluptuous pastimes / before the eyes of thy conscience: then call the faithfull ensample of Jonas & all like stories un to thy remembrance / and with Jonas turn un to thy father that smote thee: not to cast thee away /

but to lay a corosie and a freating plaister un to the pocket that lay hid & fret inward / to draw the disease out & to make it appear / that thou mightest feel thy sickness & the danger thereof & come &

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receive the healing playster of mercy.

☉ And forget not that what soever ensample(s) of mercy God hath showed since the beginning of the world / the same is promised thee / if thou wilt in like manner turn again and receive it as they did. And with Jonas be aknowen of thy sin & confess it & knowledge it un to thy father.

☉ And as the law which freteth thy conscience / is in thine heart & is none outward thing / even so seek within in thine heart / the playster of mercy / the promises of forgiveness in our saviour Jesus Christ / according un to all the ensamples of mercy that are gone before.

☉ And with Jonas let them that wait on vanities & seek God here & there & in every temple save in their hearts go / & seek thou the testament of God in thine heart. For in thine heart is the word of the law / & in thine heart is the word of faith in the promises of mercy in Jesus Christ. So that if thou confess with a repenting heart & knowledge and surely believe that Jesus is Lord over all sin / thou art safe.

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☉ And finally when the rage of thy conscience is ceased and quieted with fast faith in the promises of mercy / then offer with Jonas the offering of praise and thanksgiving / & pay the vow of thy baptism / that God only saveth / of his only mercy & goodness: that is / believe stedfastly & preach constantly that it is God only that smiteth / and God only that healeth: ascribing the cause of thy tribulation un to thine own sin / and the cause of thy deliverance un to the mercy of God.

☉ And be ware of the leaven that saith we have power in our free will before the preaching of the Gospel / to deserve grace / to keep the law / of congruity / or God to be unrighteous. And say with John in the first / that as the law was given by Moses / even so grace to fulfill it / is given by Christ. And when they say our deeds with grace deserve heaven / say thou with Paul Romans .vi. that everlasting life is the gift of God through Jesus Christ our Lord / & that we be made sons by faith John .i. &

therefore heirs of God with Christ Romans .viii. and say that we receive all of God through faith

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that followeth repentance / & that we do not our works un to God / but either un to our selves / to slay the sin that remaineth in the flesh & to wax perfect / either un to our neighbors which we do as much for us again in some other things. And when a man exceedeth in gifts of grace / let him understand that they be given him / as well for his weak brethren / as for him self: as though all the bread be committed un to the panter / yet for his fellows with him / which give the thanks un to their Lord / and recompence the panter again with other kind service in their offices. And when they say that Christ hath made no satisfaction for the sin we do after our baptism: say thou with the doctrine of Paul / that in our baptism we receive the merits of Christs death through repentance and faith of which two / baptism is the sign.

And though when we sin of frailtie after our baptism we receive the sign no more / yet we be renewed again through repentance and faith in Christs blood / which twain / the sign of baptism ever

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continued among us in baptizing our young children doeth ever keep in mind and call us back again un to our profession if we be gone astray / & promiseth us forgiveness. Neither can actual sin be washed away with our works / but with Christs blood: neither can there be any other sacrifice or satisfaction to God ward for them / save Christs blood. For as much as we can do no works unto God / but receive only of his mercy with our repenting faith / through Jesus Christ our Lord and only saver: un to whom & un to God our father through him / and un to his Holy Spirit / that only purgeth / sanctifieth & washeth us in the innocent blood of our redemption / be praise for ever AMEN.