

FOREWORD

Please accept my apologies, gentle reader, as the printer has done with admirable long-suffering, for the excessive interval -- a year and a week -- between this volume and its predecessor. St Thomas More was not indifferent to dates ; remember how he longed to go to God on 6 July : "It were a day very meet and convenient for me". You will find the statement in his last letter on the last leaf of his *English Works* (p. 1475H) ; and if you then turn to the folio's first leaf, which was penned and printed last, you will find More's nephew and quondam printer William Rastell, now serjeant-in-law, dedicating to his "most gracious sovereign", Queen Mary Tudor, "*this volume thus finished the last day of Aprill in this year of Oure Lorde GOD. 1557.*" Don't you think Thomas More is pleased to see our shorter collection of his works "thus finished" on 30 April 1971 ?

This is a kind of anthology, with some approaches toward a synthesis. Not a single section in it claims completeness. Each reader will be able to add quotes, references and footnotes to most of the pages. "Soundings" in the title of chapter 3 is probably the best definition of the volume, unless you prefer "samplings". The "explication de textes" (especially pp. 45f ; 129f) is clearly destined for the apprentice scholar, still unaccustomed to reading Early Tudor prose, still unaware of how much he is likely to miss should he venture into the classics of christendom without knowing their biblical landmarks.

St Augustine, who deserves, as much as Virgil and probably more, to be called "the father of Western culture", is for that reason given some prominence here. Erasmus, Luther and Barnes were all professed religious under St Austin's rule, but More may well have been a truer Augustinian than any of them. The way he incorporated into his *Confutation* solid pages from the greatest of church fathers provides me with a reassuring precedent for lifting large excerpts from his own works, and from those of others, in this volume, with sometimes a minimum of conjunctive tissue. The *Confessions* were composed in days when Augustine was still very much the professor of rhetoric, before he was called upon to be a daily expounder of God's word, which over the years steeped him deeper and deeper in both Testaments : his very effective and skilful weaving of Scripture into his early masterpiece is emulated in the best pages of More the Catholic layman and the Christian humanist. From generation to generation, Latin authors had looked up to Augustine as the unsurpassed model ; whatever priority they gave to information, edification or speculation, no one schooled by him could be indifferent to eloquence : beauty, they knew, made for persuasiveness, and was rightly called *splendor veri*.

My gratitude goes to more people than I can name here. The lettering of the title is the work of Sr Madeleine du Calvaire, ocd. Sr Marie-Claire Robineau, o.p. of Saint-Cloud, and Sr Marie-Thomas Josefsen, o.p. of Clairefontaine, have shared the responsibility of proof-reading with Abbé Henri Gibaud. Having no easy access to the original documents, apart from the Bible, they have essentially anticipated the reactions of all intelligent readers by putting queries opposite obscure passages or begging for a footnote. Tudor English makes difficult sense, not only More's, but even Shakespeare's, for instance *wheresome'er* of p. 131. I recall that *amonges*, *amiddes*, or *amongs*, *amids*, are the normal forms, the final -t having appeared later. The mild oath *marry* comes from Mary, while *perdy* is an attenuation of "par Dieu". I have retained the spelling *Monnicæ* (p. 49/30) after some hesitation ; the Punic double *n* may have mattered for Augustine. What else ? "a little" could mean "little" (p. 39, § 1) ; the full stop before and after the number (p. 46/1) marked the ordinal ; intensity in that oral-aural stage was often rendered by just duplication : "that that" (first line of the quote on p. 97) means : "that indeed is the great matter" ; elsewhere "that that" stands for *what* : it looks so strange that Elisabeth Bossé needed some persuading before she typed it in Meg's letter (p. 137). With *desert*, More at times uses no article, treating it as a place-name, as we still do for *heaven*, *hell* etc., while at other times he puts an article, for instance in EW 1294H. Some words encountered here have already been explained ; thus *frush* in vol. 1 under Gen 3.15 (p. 32). For the rest, pending the compilation of a full glossary of More's English, a good dictionary will have to do. His Latin spelling has been modernized in short quotes, not in long stretches lifted from critical editions, where *æ* is often reduced to *e*, and *n* preferred to *m* in words like *quicunque*. Pico's *pute* in note 1 of p. 122 need not be a misprint for *pure* : the current doublet "putus purusque" would easily lead to the adverb *pute*. *Origines* for Origen, *mo* for more, *Rhomana*, look like misprints but are not. Differences in editorial style -- page-setting, use of capitals, choice of type, italics -- are occasionally due to the typists' personal habits ; more often they reflect our immediate source : for works such as the *Supplication*, the two *Dialogues*, or Basset's *History of the Passion*, we have used the convenient transcriptions of Everyman, Campbell, Hallett, or Sr Mary-Thecla, always verifying them with the 1557 *English Works*.

My kind and perceptive proof-readers have also reacted to unexpected choice of words : where I speak of More's darling Erasmus, I should perhaps have put inverted commas, to remind the public that it was Tyndale who called Erasmus More's *darling* ; More endorsed the term, which he himself might well have refrained from, though *erasmiotate* in one of his Latin letters is hardly less tender and warm.

Sr Marie-Claire even volunteered a footnote : *pependit in ligno* (middle of p. 50), she points out, is paralleled in Terce for Eastertide : as "qui pro nobis pependit in ligno". Augustine may have influenced later formulation, unless he and the liturgy owe a common debt to older usage.

It was tempting to devote more space to Judas ; the traitor's ubiquity in Western literature is confirmed by a recent article in *Etudes Anglaises*, (n° 1 of 1971, p. 41f) : "Jesus and Judas : on Biblical Allusions in O'Neill's Plays", by Eglil Törnqvist of Upsala University. Judas is inseparable from the devil, whose place in More's works still awaits thorough investigation.

Of More's circle, his son John receives the lion's share here. Margaret had been less neglected ; her appearance – through two letters, p. 131 and 137 – is but a foretaste of a fuller treatment. A study of her work on "the seven petitions of the pater noster" might accompany a monograph on her father's biblical debt to Erasmus.

I hope my very incompleteness will provoke younger researchers : let them dig deeper from the quarries I have barely sampled. This book – the word *repertory* stands in the subtitle – mainly documents the conclusions of my *Thomas More et la Bible*. The fifth volume, please God, will come closer to being a true, though not a final synthesis.