
SUMMARY: Richard Harvey's *Lamb of God*, dedicated to Robert Devereux, 2nd Earl of Essex, was entered in the Stationers' Register on 23 October 1589. According to McKerrow, few copies of *The Lamb of God* contain the epistle printed below, and it is likely that it was added after the original publication (see McKerrow, vol. V, pp.75-6). The epistle attacks Martin Marprelate and John Lyly ('Pap-Hatchet'), and takes Nashe severely to task for his preface to Robert Greene's *Menaphon*. The epistle must thus have been added after the publication of *Pap with a Hatchet* and *Menaphon*. Nashe was convinced, on the basis of style, that Gabriel Harvey, rather than his younger brother Richard, was the real author of the epistle, and in *Have with you to Saffron Walden* he publicly accused Gabriel Harvey of having written it. The publication of the epistle also served as the basis for Nashe's attack on Richard Harvey in *Pierce Penilesse*. The modern spelling version of the epistle to *The Lamb of God* below was prepared from the 1958 edition by F.P. Wilson of Ronald B. McKerrow's original edition of 1904.

To the favourable or indifferent reader

Now so worthy a lord hath vouchsafed the honourable patronage of this treatise, I presume the rather you will vouchsafe me the favourable or indifferent reading of the same. My meaning is good, and respecteth a godly end; only my desire is, to be well understood, and well taken where I intend well. It is not my purpose to confute or control, but in declaring the infallible and invincible truth I am driven to touch some unchristian opinions, partly contrary and partly repugnant to our Christian judgment. Ours, I say, as not mine in several, but ours in common, and only mine as the dutiful subscription of one small member to the most authentical and sovereign doctrine of the whole body, even that catholic body whereof the Lamb is the head, and we the members, which should be lambs in imitation of this most innocent and most excellent lamb, not wolves, or foxes, or dogs, or any such dogged creatures, cruelly degenerating from the most gentle and most noble nature of the sweet Lamb, here in writing and over the whole world *Viua voce* and *Viua fide* to be universally preached with all entire devotion. Wherefore my intention and scope is already so evident that it needeth no farther declaration; only my earnest wish and request is, that the good mind of the reader may accompany the good meaning of the writer, and that both together, I with you, and you with me, may sincerely embrace this Lamb of God, this most precious Lamb of heaven and earth.

Alas, that this innocent and most lovely Lamb should have any enemy or adversary at all. But O, alas, and O woeful, most lamentable case, that some, in show zealous professors, should indeed prove themselves very serpents, yea, very pernicious and most poisonous serpents. It is no humanity to spare them that will not spare divinity. At this instant I shall not here greatly need to mention other in particular. I would to God the insolent and intolerable proceeding of the counterfeit Martin, now so notorious, did not more specially enforce me to touch him a little. The Lamb of God is no scoffer, nor railer; his religion is to be handled religiously. The world is full enough of vanity and folly, though the

humour be not fed with such vain and fond pamphlets, good for nothing, either in doctrine or discipline, but fostering a licentious vein, and altogether tending to the maintenance of private presumption, public disorder, and universal confusion, both in the church and in the commonwealth. God help the church when it must be reformed by such men and such means. What greater impudency than to handle reverent matters so unreverently? A notable kind of confuting, no doubt, specially in divinity, to leave sound arguments, and to affect stale jests and bald toys, unworthy any witty stage, and too piperly for Tarleton's mouth. Scurrility was odious even among the heathen Romans; civil men use a civil form of speaking and writing; scholars know and should practise the rules of decorum; grave matters would be debated gravely, and who in learning or reason can deny Martin to be a ridiculous mad fellow, that handleth so serious matters and persons so ridiculously?

Alas, that is not all. Martin cannot be content to be vain, fantastical and fond in his bald ridiculous vein, but he will needs be absurdly arrogant, notoriously seditious, and intolerably odious. I deal plainly; I had no sooner read his first pamphlet but methought, in my small learning and reason, Marprelate had already marred himself, and went about to mar all. A busy fellow, a spiteful railer, an odious jester, a factious head, a contentious wit, a seditious commotioner, a most insolent libeller, in brief, one of the most pernicious and intolerable writers that ever I had read in our language. I jest not; it becometh me not, specially in such causes. I easily yield to Martin in that vein. Lucian is his, Rabelais is his. I have seen them, and peradventure read them. Let him follow them for me; the Lamb of God needeth no such authors. Howbeit, Lucian himself, and Rabelais himself, have felt the common saying true, *Qui moccet moccabitur*, So do, so suffer, and let Martin himself assure himself he is like to taste of the same sauce, though I hold my peace, as unfit by nature, but more unmeet by profession, to deal that way. He hath a knavish and ungracious wit, I deny not; he hath some learning, I confess, but he shamefully abuseth both, and all, without any regard of himself, his country, the church or the Lamb of God, which, according to his spirit should rather be a bear, or a wolf, or a tiger, or a dragon, or any other terrible and cruel thing, than a Lamb.

Iwis the apostles did not proceed by such means; the primitive church did not flourish by gibing or railing. We know, or should know, the ecclesiastical histories before we undertake the reformation of ecclesiastical causes and persons. Patience, and gentleness, and fair entreaty, and good life, and godly exhortation and devout prayer were their arguments; so they moved, so they won, kings and Caesars, so they brought the world to Christendom, which began afterward to decay, those good causes decaying. If we mean to succeed as they did, we must proceed as they did. Rabelais is no good reformer of churches and states; if Saint Augustine be insufficient, Lucian is more unmeet; if it be a great and most weighty business for the very learnedest and wisest in the world, it is not for every Scogan or Martin to undertake. Every Paul is not Paul the apostle, nor every Martin a Martin Bucer, or Martin Luther, or Saint Martin in the calendar. It were hard with divines if we knew no more of the scriptures, the ecclesiastical histories, and the general councils, besides our ancient doctors, learned schoolmen, and later writers, than this pseudo-Martin doth; yet, forsooth, must we needs be schooled and reformed by his ruffianly terms. *Medice cura teipsum*; Gascoigne may see himself in his own *Steel Glass*.

Martin is no angel, no saint, no mortified man. If his justification be no surer in heaven than his sanctification is approved in earth, he need not greatly busy himself with the reformation of churchmen, or the humiliation of bishops. They, and we, have faults, but I would to God he had no more.

Ecclesiastical livings are sometimes and some ways abused, but God knoweth how temporal livings are used. I accuse neither, yet can I not excuse either. It is not my manner either to slander, or to flatter, either the worst or the best. The world is a world, and men are men; no perfection without some blemish of imperfection. God amend that is amiss, and let not us flatter ourselves without cause, and let not our accusers justify themselves without effect. Neither we nor they have so much discretion in the eye of the world, or so much devotion in the eye of God, but we may be amended, even the best, and even the purest of us, but these sinister and crooked means never work right effect; bad causes have bad success. My lord Cardinal (quoth an old gentleman) was little the better for Skelton's baldunctum rimes; this naughty fellow shall hardly make us good. Roisters are not the meetest reformers of prelates, especially when both matter and manner flow all together in that mad ruffianly vein and drunken style, unbeseeming any good Christian, or any honest man. It goeth ill with the world, but worse with the church, when all must be ruled by Lords of Misrule, and all governed by Martin's peers. I honour good lords, and reverence true nobility, but Marprelates, may they sway and swing the world at their pleasure, whatsoever they pretend now of mar-prelates, will soon become mar-lords, and mar-nobles, and mar-princes too.

They feed a brave conceit, no doubt, and nourish gallant humours of I wot not what perfection and excellency, but try them and trust them. The tree is known by the fruits; such birds, such eggs. They talk of Pauls but they prove themselves Sauls; the voice of Jacob, but the hands of Esau. None more corruptible than many of these *Johannes ad oppositum*, so impatient they are of the least corruption in other. If Martin were right Martin indeed, I should find him by his singular example of upright and entire conversation, though not discern him by his counterfeit and fantastical style. Now I must be fain to descry him otherwise, and I believe I can go as near the left-handed ape, either Senior or Junior, as anyone in England that cannot assuredly say, *This is he*. A black sheep is a perilous beast, and we little men are shrewd fellows. *Habet & musca splenem*; courage is a jolly matter, and a little pragmatical conceit is ready to mount aloft. I am a blind ass, and you are a blind ass, but who so bold as blind Bayard? I will not call him a steal-counter, or a water-drinker, but where he is best known, he was never thought but a scarecrow or bull-beggar. He calleth others fools and asses, but he proveth himself (saving the honourability of his mighty Martinship, at least above my Lord of Canterbury) a notorious fool and errant knave, a fool in proceeding and a knave in purpose, one while playing the vice, another-while the devil, upon the stage, but the more he stirreth, the more he stinketh, saving his foresaid reverence. I durst still undertake to stop his mouth with a bone, and although he be as covetous as any spiritual lord in England, yet is he as ambitious as any temporal lord in Spain, yet no such great matter either in the body or in the soul or in the fortune of the man as he pretendeth, but such is his spirit, more apt to trouble other than able to prefer himself. He hath already been sufficiently answered by my betters, but howsoever they confute him better, yet I believe

I touch him nearer, and dare in any such honest cause challenge him hand to hand, if he dare set down his own name as I do mine. The Lamb of God make him a better lamb hereafter than he hath been heretofore, and teach him now to dispute rather *ad rem*, than *ad personam*, especially till he hath reformed his own person, as corruptible, on my word and his own proof, as the person of any his marred prelates.

I was loath to enter this discourse, but upon request where I might be commanded; I provoke not any but Martin, who provoketh all men. I was desired to give like judgment of certain other, but it becometh me not to play that part in divinity that one Thomas Nashe hath lately done in humanity, who taketh upon him in civil learning as Martin doth in religion, peremptorily censuring his betters at pleasure, poets, orators, polyhistor, lawyers, and whom not, and making as much and as little of every man as himself listeth. Many a man talketh of Robin Hood that never shot in his bow, and that is the rash presumption of this age, that every man of whatsoever quality and perfection is with every man of whatsoever mediocrity but as every man pleaseth in the abundance of his own swelling sense. I wis this Thomas Nashe, one whom I never heard of before (for I cannot imagine him to be Thomas Nashe, our butler of Pembroke Hall, albeit peradventure not much better learned) showeth himself none of the meetest men to censure Sir Thomas More, Sir John Cheke, Doctor Watson, Doctor Haddon, Master Ascham, Doctor Carr, my brother Doctor Harvey, and suchlike, yet the jolly man will needs be playing the doughty Martin in his kind, and limit every man's commendation according to his fancy, profound no doubt, and exceeding learned, as the world now goeth in such worthy works.

Good my masters, either study more, or presume less. Excellent learning and perfect judgment is not so easily gotten, either in divinity or in humanity; you may soon be of resolute opinion in both, but resolute judgment either in the one or in the other is not every man's gift. I speak not without consideration; howbeit, if I err more or less either in this or any other point, as I and my betters are subject to error, I am ready to submit my opinion to every sounder reason, and will never stand in contention with any better judgment. Yet let not Martin, or Nashe, or any such famous obscure man, or any other piperly make-play or makebate, presume overmuch of my patience as of simplicity, but of choice. As I am easily ruled by reason, so no fierce or proud passion can overrule me; no carping censor, or vain Pap-Hatchet, or madbrain Scogan, or gay companion, anything move me; no man readier to yield to a good argument even against myself, but light words and toys I can as lightly contemn.

To conclude, as for Martin, when he submitteth himself unto his betters, I will submit myself unto him (especially Martin Senior); in the meantime, he must pardon me, though I be as stout in a good cause as he is proud in a bad. I mean not mine own cause, or the cause of any prelate, but the present cause of the Lamb here preached, and so consequently of such (howsoever termed or entitled) as most nearly apply and conform themselves to this most worthy and only blessed Lamb, unto whose gracious favour I earnestly recommend the zealous devotion of every good reader, and well-affected Christian.

Your unfeigned well-willer in the said devotion, R.H.

The conclusion to the foresaid favourable or indifferent reader

Now, good reader, and every good Christian friend, let atheism, barbarism, Martinism, and, briefly, all heresy, schism & enormity go even to the Devil whence they came. Let us embrace the true, Christian and excellent virtues of the Lamb, innocency, modesty, sobriety, humility, patience, temperance, concord, love, charity, and, in a word, all divine and humane justice, the very foundation of all ecclesiastical and civil order, I may say further, the only direct line of true reformation. Do God, your prince and your neighbour right, and all will soon be right, otherways you are out of the way. Libels and indirect courses do but more and more harm; good effects cannot proceed of bad causes, unchristian means cannot avail toward a Christian end. The world, the church and every state have been overmuch accumbered with profane opinions, lewd actions, private quarrels, public discord, proud insolency, disobedience, contempt of authority, depraving of government, contumacy, sedition, ataxy, and, in a manner, with all manner of disorder and abuses, which either must be removed (O, the Lamb of God redress them speedily), or what finally can we look for, either in church or commonwealth, but utter confusion and anarchy, the very bane and rot of all churches and commonwealths.

In the meantime, it particularly behooveth every good preacher, yea, it specially concerneth every good Christian, to do his best endeavour, in private and public, to prevent so grievous and heinous a mischief, and to set up the Lamb of God in spite of the devil. This is my duty, this is your part, this is the office of every divine, of every godly man, of every true Christian; otherwise, what availeth it to talk of religion without godliness, and to have the heavenly Lamb in our mouths, and to nourish the hellish wolf in our lives or hearts? Saint Paul as well preacheth sanctification as justification, and it is an infallible doctrine. They that despise or neglect godliness, contemn God. The Holy Ghost make us more and more holy, who is sanctification unto them that sanctify him, light unto them that follow him, joy unto them that delight in him, felicity unto them that possess him, mercy unto them that fear him, judgment unto them that fear him not. O, let us fear him reverently, embrace him lovingly, and continually dwell in his grace, that his grace may continually dwell in us. No grace without the Holy Ghost, nor any Holy Ghost without the Lamb.

Let the world preach the fox; we must preach the Lamb, that is our text, that is our everlasting scripture, that is our great sermon, *De Christo crucifixo*, the endless sermon of the faithful. Neither the politics of the world present, nor the histories of any age past, must any way prevail with us against that endless sermon. Emperors have been crucifiers, princes persecutors, lawyers tormentors, and worldly-wise men contemners of the Lamb. The worse for them that so horribly transgressed, the better for us if we take good heed by their bad example. All other wisdom is folly, all other learning ignorance, all other zeal madness, either without this, or in comparison of this. I hope I shall not need, at least I wish I may not need, any farther persuasion. I beseech the Lamb himself to hasten his own kingdom, and the Holy Ghost himself be his mighty orator to persuade as much as is possible, even with the most obdurate and iron hearts in the world. I detest all

impiety; I defy all enemies of the Lamb; I abhor all antichristianity, either Jewish, Greekish, Latinish, Turkish, or other, but here more specially and precisely I would advise every Christian reader to take wary heed of certain unchristian censors of Christian religion, over-ready in private conferences, and public discourses, to revive the dangerous and pernicious doctrine of Josephus and Arius, of the Jews and the Turks, touching the deity or divinity of Christ, and in sort making no other reckoning of the Lamb of God, yea, the Lamb of God, than Severus the Emperor did, who, mixing holy and profane things together, esteemed of Abraham and Christ as he did of Hercules and Orpheus, which four he proposed unto himself as four singular patterns of most worthy and heroical virtue in their several kinds of mighty doings and sayings. A sensible and reasonable conceit, according to the sense and reason of man unsanctified, but a heathen and damnable judgment to every man of God, or regenerate person in the divine eye of Heaven; God keep all godly mouths from such speeches, and Christ defend all Christian hearts from such thoughts. The Lamb of God is the Lamb of God; the Son of God is God, very God, true God, personally one of three, essentially one of one, and to maintain his humanity without divinity, or his divinity without humanity, is as contrary to all good divinity in him, as it may feed the humour of some bad humanity in man.

I will not now either repeat premises, or prosecute other arguments of persuasion; I presume in reason, I hope in zeal, I trust in God this may be sufficient to resolve every religious mind not heathenly or barbarously, or desperately or impiously bent, as I unfeignedly & right heartily pray God it may be sufficient. In the meantime, I also most earnestly beseech God that as well the learned as the unlearned may use their talent as it becometh them, according to the measure of their several graces and blessings, and that neither we abuse them in spiritual matters, nor they misuse us in temporal matters, but that both may carefully follow our vocations, and faithfully discharge our duty. He is my witness, it is not any part of my meaning to flatter either bishops or any other, but let bishops and all other learned men have their due and right in their calling as well as any other men in their vocation; otherwise, instead of doing better, we are like to fare worse, and for one abuse and default now, we mayhap feel ten, should Martin prove *Domine factotum*, and such good-fellows dispose of other men's lordships and livings at their inordinate pleasure. Flesh and blood cannot be excused, and all the churchmen in Christendom have their particular faults more or less, but a certain religious Italian not many years ago, noting the twelve great abuses of the world, in his opinion cleareth England most of any one kingdom or nation in the world, and among the rest, even namely for our bishops by him much commended. Which I repeat here, not to please bishops, or to displease Martin, but to show indifferently that other have esteemed them worthy of honourable commendation, whom he so dishonourably defameth, and so shamefully revileth; for mine own part, I wish it better and better, whatsoever is most commendable in them, and whatsoever is amiss, or may seem offensive, either more or less, God amend it, and them, and their accusers, and us all. The Lamb make us all lambs, friends to him, friends amongst ourselves, and friends to our foes, not any longer the sons of wrath, or rage, or faction, or contention, or any such unchristian passion, but the children of all Christian virtues, and, namely, faith, hope and charity, that for doctrine, truth may correct falsehood, and for discipline, order may reform disorder; honesty, dishonesty; godliness, ungodliness; virtue, vice; and that the Lamb of Heaven may utterly confound

the wolf of hell. In effect I can say no more, but commend the universal reformation of all unto that Lamb which only cannot err, either in doctrine or discipline.

R.H.