

THAT WHICH EVERY CHRISTIAN MUST KNOW: JUAN DE VALDÉS AND THE
DOCTRINA CHRISTIANA

By

MATTHEW PAUL MICHEL

A THESIS PRESENTED TO THE GRADUATE SCHOOL
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF ARTS

UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA

2009

© 2009 Matthew Paul Michel

To the Reformers

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am forever indebted to Benzion Netanyahu and Henry Kamen for opening my eyes to the complexities of the Inquisition, and to J. H. Elliott and R. Trevor Davies for introducing me to the grandeur of Imperial Spain. Marcel Bataillon defined the field for all of us with his magnificent work on Spanish Erasmianism. A. Gordon Kinder paved the way for my thesis with his intricate study of the Valdés brothers. Mark Pegg made me appreciate the *courte durée* and Geoffrey Parker graciously indulged my interest in counter-factuals. Many thanks go to my friends and colleagues who have patiently listened to my frequent rhapsodies on Inquisition history for over three years. Above all, I am thankful to my parents Paul and Sally Michel whose unending support has meant everything. Yo, el escritor.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>page</u>
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.....	4
ABSTRACT.....	7
CHAPTER	
1 DOMESTIC BACKGROUND	9
Introduction: The Reformation South of the Pyrenees	9
Humanist Dissent and the “Erasmian Explosion”	10
Populist Models and Continuity	17
Illuminism and Alternative Religious Expression.....	24
2 EXPORTING DISSENT	31
Juan de Valdés: Spanish Protestant Reformer?.....	31
Inventing Heresy: Accusation and Exile	35
Diálogo de la Doctrina Christiana	38
The Creed (Símbolo de los Apóstoles)	40
Article I: Creo en Dios padre todopoderoso que crio el cielo y la tierra (<i>Credo in Deum</i>)	40
Article II: En Jesu Christo hijo de Dios, un solo señor, Dios nuestro (<i>Et in Iesum Christum filium eius</i>)	41
Article III: Jesu Christo fue concebido por obra de Spiritu Santo, y que nascio de la virgen Maria (<i>Que conceptus est</i>).....	42
Article IV: Jesu Christo señor nuestro padescio muerte e passion en tiempo de Poncio Pilato, y que fue crucificado muerto e sepultado (<i>Passus sub Pontio Pilato</i>)”	42
Article V: Descendio a los infiernos e que resuscito al tercero dia dentre los muertos (<i>Descendit ad internos</i>).....	43
Article VI: Jesu Christo subió al cielo, e que esta sentado a la diestra de Dios Padre (<i>Ascendit in celum</i>)	44
Article VII: Jesu Christo, desde allí ha de venire a juzgar los bivos e los muertos (<i>Inde venturas est indivcare vivos et mortuos</i>)	45
Article VIII: Creer en el Spiritu Santo (<i>Credo in Spiritum Sanctum</i>)	45
Article IX: Creer la santa yglesia catholica, que es ayuntamientos de santos (<i>Sanctan ecclesiam catholicam sanctorum communionem</i>).....	46
Article X: Creer la remission o perdon de los pecados (<i>Remissionem peccat</i>)	47
Article XI: Creer la resurrection de la carne (<i>Carnis resurrectionem</i>)	48
Article XII: Creer la vida eternal (<i>Et vitam eternan Amen.</i>)	49

The Ten Commandments (Los Diez Mandamientos)	49
I: Non habe bis deos alienos (<i>No ternás dioses agenos</i>)	51
II. No tomarás el nombre de tu Señor Dios en vano (<i>Non assumes nomen dni, di tui in vanum</i>)	55
III: Acuérdate de santificar las fiestas (<i>Memento ut diem sabbati sanctifices</i>).....	58
Conclusion: Juan Valdés and Practical Christianity	61
LIST OF REFERENCES	63
BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH	68

Abstract of Thesis Presented to the Graduate School
of the University of Florida in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts

THAT WHICH EVERY CHRISTIAN MUST KNOW: JUAN DE VALDÉS AND THE
DOCTRINA CHRISTIANA

By

Matthew Paul Michel

August 2009

Chair: Howard Louthan
Cochair: Nina Caputo
Major: History

One does not usually associate Protestantism with Spain, the home of the Jesuits, the site of the Inquisition, and a great staging point of the Counter Reformation. Did Spain have a Reformation, or was the vigilance of the Inquisition enough to exclude Protestant influence from the Iberian Peninsula? Contrary to expectations, it is clear that by the early 16th century Spaniards of all classes had formed “literary” groups that openly criticized and questioned not only Church practices but also fundamental doctrines. Influenced by Erasmian writing as well as Lutheran and Calvinist literature smuggled across the borders, many of these individuals called for genuine ecclesiastical reform and spiritual renewal. Although the movement was ultimately suppressed by the Inquisition, many Erasmists fled to more tolerant climes in Geneva, the Low Countries, and even Italy. There they kept alive the ideals of humanist learning and advocated a simpler, more intimate Christianity purged of excessive ceremonies and formalism. A salient example is Juan de Valdés, scion of a prominent Castilian family with close connections to both Erasmus and the imperial court. Valdés corresponded with nearly all the leading Spanish humanists of the day, published a number of critical religious and political treatises, and

eventually relocated to Naples to escape the Inquisition. His case offers a detailed, personal view of the Erasmist-Protestant phenomenon both in Spain and in the diaspora.

CHAPTER 1 DOMESTIC BACKGROUND

It is necessary that there are people separated from society, unhappy by condition, deprived of all sorts of relations, so that they will be hard, pitiless, and inexorable, in order to root out by the most cruel means the births of heresies. Such are the inquisitors.

- Montesquieu, *Study of the History and Methods of the Inquisition*

Such was the Inquisition, declared by the Spirit of God to be at once the offspring and the image of the popedom... But its nature was hostile; its fuller triumph only disclosed its fuller evil; and, to the shame of human reason, and the terror and suffering of human virtue, Rome, in the hour of its consummate grandeur, teemed with the monstrous and horrid birth of the INQUISITION!

- Foxe's *Book of Martyrs*, Chapter V

The horrid conduct of this Holy Office weakened the power and diminished the population of Spain, by arresting the progress of arts, sciences, industry, and commerce, and by compelling multitudes of families to abandon the kingdom; by instigating the expulsion of the Jews and the Moors; and by immolating on its flaming shambles more than three hundred thousand victims!

- Juan Antonio Llorente, *A Critical History of the Inquisition of Spain*

NOBODY expects the Spanish Inquisition!

- Monty Python, Series 2, 1970

Introduction: The Reformation South of the Pyrenees

One does not usually associate Protestantism with Spain, the home of the Jesuits, the site of the Inquisition, and a great staging point of the Counter Reformation. Did Spain have a Reformation, or was the vigilance of the Inquisition enough to exclude Protestant influence from the Iberian Peninsula? Contrary to expectations, it is clear that by the early 16th century Spaniards of all classes had formed "literary" groups that openly criticized and questioned not only Church practices but also fundamental doctrines. Influenced by Erasmist writing as well as Lutheran and Calvinist literature smuggled across the borders, many of these individuals called for genuine ecclesiastical reform and spiritual renewal. Although the movement was ultimately suppressed by the Inquisition, many Erasmists fled to more tolerant climes in Geneva, the Low

Countries, and even Italy.¹ There they kept alive the ideals of humanist learning and advocated a simpler, more intimate Christianity purged of excessive ceremonies and formalism. A salient example is Juan de Valdés, scion of a prominent Castilian family with close connections to both Erasmus and the imperial court. Valdés corresponded with nearly all the leading Spanish humanists of the day, published a number of critical religious and political treatises, and eventually relocated to Naples to escape the Inquisition. His case offers a detailed, personal view of the Erasmist-Protestant phenomenon both in Spain and in the diaspora.

This essay pursues a dual strategy in examining the Erasmist-Valdesian phenomenon in 16th century Spain. The first part is a historiographical survey of the field, focusing particularly on the arrival of Erasmianism in the Iberian Peninsula and its short-lived vogue in Alcalá and other centers of humanist learning. The second part observes Juan de Valdés and the exile community, using his most famous work *Diálogo de la Doctrina Christiana* as a case study in Erasmist-Valdesian thought. Valdés illustrates the degree to which Erasmist ideas were incorporated into domestic spiritual and philosophical movements, as well as how Spanish reformers went further still and approached the Lutheran ideas of *Sola Fide* and *Sola Scriptura*.

Humanist Dissent and the “Erasmian Explosion”

At the turn of the sixteenth century, Spain was a curious mixture of orthodoxy and innovation. Humanist learning was making substantial inroads at all levels of education, while Cardinal Cisneros initiated reforms intended to purge the clergy of abuses and encourage public piety. Yet Spain was also the only European nation to possess a state tribunal designed to identify and eliminate heresy: the Inquisition. Into this turbulent atmosphere was introduced

¹ I have used the term “Erasmist” rather than “Erasmian” in the context of Spanish followers of Desiderus Erasmus to reflect the Spanish term *erasmista* and to distinguish them from his other affiliates in the Low Countries, Germany, etc. The doctrines, practices, and ideology eventually attributed to the Iberian reformers by the Inquisition scarcely resemble the beliefs of their alleged founder, and so it seems somewhat inappropriate to label a movement with the name of a man who never even visited the country.

Erasmus of Rotterdam, whose call for a purified Christianity found a ready audience amid the spiritual and intellectual ferment of the era. After quickly achieving great popularity and influence throughout the peninsula, counting among its followers the inquisitor-general and the emperor himself, the Erasmist movement was condemned by the Inquisition and forcibly suppressed as heterodoxy. The meteoric rise and equally spectacular fall of Spanish Erasmianism has left numerous questions unanswered, and historians have sought to determine the reasons for the movement's rapid success and its ultimate failure. In particular, they have asked how humanist ideas were spread in the peninsula, focusing on the conflicting roles of the elite and the common people in shaping religious policy.

Since its publication in 1937, the definitive work on the sixteenth-century reform movement in Spain has been Marcel Bataillon's magnum opus *Érasme et l'Espagne*. His book was the first large-scale modern analysis of the religious history of a country generally assumed never to have deviated from orthodoxy. In contrast with customary opinions, Bataillon asserts that Spain was the site of great religious stirring in the 1500s, which saw the rise of Erasmianism and Christian Humanism.² Beginning with the Cisneran reforms of the Franciscan Order, Bataillon traces the development of multiple currents of Spanish spirituality, including Erasmianism, native mysticism (*alumbradismo*), and even Protestantism. All these found a common ground in Christian Humanism, whose advocacy of interior religion purged of needless external ceremonies served to unite the otherwise disparate movements.³ To support his thesis, Bataillon draws extensively from archival records (newly catalogued and made available by republican Spain), commentaries, and accounts by contemporary observers. Following in his

² Marcel Bataillon, *Érasme et l'Espagne: recherches sur l'histoire spirituelle du XVI^e siècle* (Paris: E. Droz, 1937), 314.

³ *Ibid*, 314.

research, generations of scholars began an exhaustive study of what became controversially known as the “Spanish Renaissance.”

Though few now dispute the ground-breaking nature of *Erasme et l’Espagne*, it is increasingly being revised by modern scholars who see its focus as too narrow and consider its conclusions to be motivated more by the author’s personal ideology than objective analysis. Such criticisms of Bataillon’s methodology have resulted in a number of conflicting models. The essential debate in modern studies of Spanish Erasmianism is over the mechanism for the movement’s diffusion. Traditional scholars starting with Bataillon have proposed a vertical model of dispersal, asserting that Erasmus first won the favor of the secular and ecclesiastical elite, after which his ideas gradually filtered down to the common masses. This “Top-Down” interpretation emphasizes the role of Charles V, Chancellor Gattinara, Inquisitor-General Manrique, Archbishop Fonseca and others in promoting humanism among their colleagues and subordinates, and for defending the Dutchman’s ideas from attack by hostile elements. Implicit in this model is the belief that without action from the elite of society, Erasmianism would not have reached such a wide audience in Spain. More recently, researchers have put forward a populist model, which attributes the movement’s success in Spain to a strong basis for support among the great majority of Spaniards. This interpretation emphasizes the continuity of humanist ideas introduced from northern Europe with pre-existing domestic conditions, especially with patterns of popular religion and internal devotion. As may be expected, these scholarly currents are not always mutually exclusive and much seems to depend on the perspective of the individual historian involved. To complicate the situation further, in recent years a revisionist school has arisen which seems ready to deny altogether the impact of Erasmus on Spanish spirituality, arguing from a variety of perspectives that the humanist’s influence was either

exaggerated or entirely fabricated. Such disputes characterize the current state of the field, and seem to have supplanted the old debates over categorization and confessional identity.

One of the most vociferous assertions of the vertical model of dispersion is provided by John M. Headley, whose book *The Emperor and His Chancellor* (1983) explores the role of Mercurio Gattinara and the secular elite in promoting Erasmist ideals in Spain and elsewhere. Significantly, Headley praises Bataillon for revealing the extent of the humanist influence at the imperial court, and adopts his essentially text-based approach. Drawing from close readings of epistolary exchanges, he describes Gattinara as an “avid correspondent and friend of Erasmus, providing crucial support within the government for the spread of Erasmist humanism in Spain.”⁴ Indeed, Headley declares that in the 1520s the Dutchman’s influence on the emperor and his chancellor became preeminent.⁵ He traces the introduction of Erasmist ideals to Alfonso de Valdés, whom he describes as “more Erasmist than Erasmus.”⁶ As the chancellery’s registrar and Latin secretary, Valdés was closest in the affections of the chancellor and served him faithfully through life. It appears that both men were active partisans of Christian Humanism, an ideology which corresponded (or so they believed) with the imperial messianism that so characterized the court of Charles V. Together they formed an influential cell that came to include courtiers, secular leaders, ecclesiastic officials, and the emperor himself. In Headley’s words, Gattinara and Valdés “shared an enthusiasm for the writings of Erasmus and for their promotion in Spain.”⁷

⁴ John M. Headley, *The Emperor and His Chancellor: A Study of the Imperial Chancellery Under Gattinara* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 2-3.

⁵ Ibid, 5

⁶ Ibid, 81.

⁷ Ibid, 92.

This attention to the political expediency of adopting Erasmianism is a new innovation, one which appears to be motivated by the author's desire to avoid being entangled by tiresome questions of confessional identity. Instead, his approach describes humanism as a court phenomenon tied to political history, one which naturally lends itself to the "Top-Down" model. Headley observes that criticism of clerical hypocrisy and corruption fit very neatly with the emperor's campaign to de-politicize the pope, particularly the desire to punish him for entering into and organizing the anti-Habsburg armed leagues that plagued Latin Christendom. In Charles' view, "the political pretensions of the papacy must be annihilated and the pope reduced to the properly pastoral function."⁸ One must be struck by the Erasmist tone in which the imperial argument was developed: seeking to justify his master's opposition to the pope, Gattinara declared that moral performance and internal disposition were the true measures of a Christian, and that Pope Clement was not living up to the requirements of a pastor and common father by his militant actions. Headley goes still further, arguing that Erasmus did not merely exercise a stylistic influence over the Habsburg court, but occupied a chief position in the evolving grand strategy of the emperor. He states that all of imperial policy towards Rome was "sustained by the theme of the deformed pastor and common father with its Erasmist reverberations."⁹ Within the heated political context of the 1520s, the choice to embrace Erasmianism was the conscious decision of individuals pronouncing themselves in favor of the emperor in his struggle with the papacy.

To a certain extent the debate was over a matter of appearances, for "Erasmus could never subscribe to Gattinara's imperial view of Christian polity."¹⁰ Nevertheless, events were

⁸ Ibid, 98.

⁹ Ibid, 101.

¹⁰ Ibid, 111.

moving too fast for the Dutchman to keep abreast of them. The *Lactancio* dialogue by Alfonso Valdés, a work acclaimed by Spanish Erasmists, affirmed the 1527 sack of Rome to have been an act of divine providence against the sinful papacy. Headley describes it as a “semi-official defense of the emperor’s position.”¹¹ Pro-Curia ecclesiastics denounced the book to the Inquisition as “heresy,” despite its overtly political nature and lack of notable doctrinal statements. One can see how an official condemnation against a work penned by one of Erasmus’ most prominent disciples would have been disastrous for his reputation. Once again, however, his patrons intervened: Gattinara protested the book’s orthodoxy to Charles (who required little persuasion to accept such a ringing endorsement of his policy) while Manrique prevented the book’s condemnation using his office of Inquisitor-General. Headley concludes that Christian Humanism owed its success, and indeed survival, to the support of the elite.

Probably Bataillon’s most prolific disciple is A. Gordon Kinder, whose primary attention is given to determining confessional identity. Apart from questions of categorization, he contributes substantially to the “Top-Down” model by placing the Erasmist movement among “sections of the educated classes, centered on the University of Alcalá.”¹² This close geographical concentration occurred primarily because for many years only the elite could read the languages in which his works were written. Even after Spanish versions of Erasmus’ works were made available, these were “rarely exact translations.”¹³ The ideas they expressed were frequently modified by translators to better reflect what they thought would be acceptable to the

¹¹ Ibid, 123.

¹² A. Gordon Kinder, “Spain,” in *The Early Reformation in Europe*, ed. Andrew Pettegree (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 218.

¹³ Ibid, 232.

audience and to the authorities - the Inquisition above all. As a result, the people only received very expurgated versions that were filtered through the lettered elite.

Another prominent supporter of the “Top-Down” model is Helen Rawlings, who argues that Charles V was directly responsible for the Erasmist vogue in Spain due to his decisive support for the Dutchman’s teachings at critical moments. She echoes Headley’s concern with political history: Erasmus called for peace and reconciliation between the traditionalist and reformist elements in Christian society, both to prevent further schism and to unite orthodox elements of the church against the challenge from Lutheran heresy.¹⁴ This idea agreed with the Habsburgs’ dream of a universal Catholic monarchy, prompting the emperor to encourage the movement’s diffusion in Spain. Erasmianism gained its first followers among the courtiers and leading ecclesiastics who were directly within Charles’ influence; outside the imperial court Erasmist ideas proved attractive to New Christians, *alumbrados*, and Complutensians, all of whom were seeking spiritual alternatives to the official hierarchy.¹⁵ Rawlings particularly emphasizes Erasmus’ popularity with the Alcalá humanists, whose presses published eight editions of the *Enchiridion* in four years. Significantly, Rawlings concludes that the conflict may not be between traditionalists and reformists as Bataillon had suggested. She argues that such a model is over-simplistic, as Spanish intellectuals were capable of crossing the boundary freely between scholasticism and humanism.¹⁶ This argument anticipates the next development in the field of Spanish dissent, a new interpretation that stressed the cultural and social links between imported Erasmianism and domestic spiritual and reform movements.

¹⁴ Helen Rawlings, *Church, Religion and Society in Early Modern Spain* (New York: Palgrave, 2002), 28.

¹⁵ *Ibid*, 30.

¹⁶ *Ibid*, 32.

Populist Models and Continuity

Following the wealth of information available to researchers in the post-Franco era, new interpretations of Spain's intellectual and religious history began to emerge. While previous models had argued for the primacy of the political and ecclesiastical elite in propagating the Erasmist reforms, a new approach focused instead on the role of the public, which may have possessed considerable agency in spiritual matters. Scholars of this trend emphasize Erasmus' continuity with pre-existing religious currents such as the Cisneran Reforms and *alumbradismo*, asserting that Christian Humanism received such wide acceptance in Spain because its ideas were largely in accord with the country's own long-standing spiritual tendencies.

The preceding authors demonstrate the traditional approach to Spanish Erasmianism centered on political history within the international context, a model which characterized the field for most of the twentieth century and continues to garner support. Starting in the 1970s and 80s, numerous scholars began to voice their dissatisfaction with this model. In an essay presented at a conference in 1986, Joseph Pérez criticized Bataillon's work for not taking into account the medieval roots of spiritual movements in the sixteenth century. He characterized this omission as an error of perspective - a failure not of Bataillon but rather of the generation which formed him intellectually. The object of Pérez's ire is the school which interprets the sixteenth century as the initial moment of modernity, "postulating rather than demonstrating a rupture with the preceding epoch."¹⁷ Such a narrow focus, he argues, obscures larger issues. However, modern scholarship is indebted to Bataillon for demonstrating the need to consider the "spiritual landscape" (*paisaje espiritual*) that animates and colors contemporary social and ideological movements. This led Pérez and others to consider in particular the effects of the Franciscan and Italianate schools on

¹⁷ Joseph Pérez, "El Erasmianismo y las corrientes espirituales afines," in *Erasmianismo en España*, ed. Manuel Revuelta Sañudo and Ciriaco Morón Arroyo (Santander: Sociedad Menéndez Pelayo, 1986), 324.

developments in Spain. The result is a much broader approach which takes into account both domestic religious experience and influence from abroad.

Pérez takes an ambiguous position on the question of dispersion. He notes that it is unquestionable that Erasmianism reinforced preexisting currents and gave them greater resonance, particularly with the scholarly community. Yet the movement benefited from almost official protection, based on the support it received at the highest levels of the state, without which it might never have flourished. Despite the existence of possible precursors to the movement, he concludes that Erasmianism could only interest a lettered elite, one capable of analyzing, qualifying, and understanding a purified religion.¹⁸ Franciscanism, with its emphasis on encouraging popular piety, was much more accessible and directed to a wider segment of society. Most of the faithful believed the perfection of spontaneous mental prayer was reserved for those who had taken vows of chastity, poverty, and obedience. Even mysticism was more diffuse than “elitist Erasmianism,” which remained a movement restricted to the elite intellectual sectors.¹⁹ Yet, paradoxically, this detachment resulted in the movement’s success: the universities and friars saw Erasmus as the perfect means of satisfying their deeper religious yearnings while avoiding the excesses of scholastic routine, and the plebeian *beatas* with their extravagant spectacles. In summary, Pérez breaks with populist interpretations by observing that Erasmianism never stopped being an elitist, minority sect. Also, many of those who passed for Erasmists were not unconditionally or permanently so, instead adopting only certain ideas and tenets they found convenient or interesting.²⁰ More than Erasmus, it was Franciscanism that powerfully influenced Spanish spirituality in the sixteenth century.

¹⁸ Ibid, 326.

¹⁹ Ibid, 327.

²⁰ Ibid, 338.

In making these assumptions, Pérez comments on the methodology of scholars inquiring into the Early Modern period. Critics have claimed that archival documents, particularly those of the Inquisition, are faulty and unreliable because they contain only a narrow, expurgated view of the proceedings they record. Does the Holy Office act as a “distorting filter” between objective reality and modern observers? According to Pérez, the answer is an emphatic “no.” Though perhaps containing inaccuracies and occasional misrepresentations, they are an essentially faithful echo of select threads of the *procesos*, containing invaluable information on the beliefs, rituals, prayers, phrases and concepts shared between adherents of various dissenting groups. While it is true that those tried were generally socially prominent, making it difficult for historians to approach the religion of the common masses, the records of inquisitorial trials contain full and detailed statements of the ideology of the movements’ ringleaders. Under the circumstances, it becomes possible to get a clearer picture of what the Erasmists believed at a popular level. Although Pérez broadly adheres to the traditional view, going so far as to call Bataillon the “indisputable authority in the subject,” he illustrates the shift away from the vertical model of Erasmist dispersion.²¹

Possibly the clearest statement of this doctrine is José Luis Abellán, who emphasizes the continuity of Erasmianism with the Cisneran reforms in his book *El Erasmianismo Español: Una Historia de la Otra España* (1976). In particular, he notes the focal point of both movements was the University of Alcalá, the leading peninsular humanist center whose Polyglot Bible mirrored Erasmus’ own Greek New Testament. At the same time, rather than rigid adherents to the Dutchman’s teachings, they are more accurately described as sympathizers who also

²¹ Ibid, 52.

occasionally showed affinities for mystical trends and even Lutheranism.²² Nor should Christian Humanism be considered an utterly foreign philosophy: Abellán sees in Antonio Nebrija a probable precursor to Erasmus. Primarily remembered for his treatises on grammar and linguistics, the leading humanist scholar of Alcalá also held a number of startling religious views: he denied sacramental confession as a divine institution, affirmed mortal sins were redeemed by contrition alone, and declared that it sufficed to reject “bad thoughts” (*malos pensamientos*) without confession.²³ Scholars of the revisionist trend have argued that Nebrija and his sect created an Erasmianism *avant la lettre*, popularizing the values of an internal pietist religion long before the Dutchman’s doctrines were diffused in Spain.

Nevertheless, “the importance of Erasmianism is immense, for it was a movement that penetrated all corners of the first half of the 16th century.”²⁴ While Abellán esteems the “transcendental work” of Marcel Bataillon, he suggests that it perhaps exaggerated that influence as a consequence of an inevitable unilateralism in an investigation of the proportions he achieved. Bataillon let himself be carried away by obsession with his own theme of research, and made Erasmianism the exclusive key to interpreting the spiritual history of the sixteenth century, without leaving enough room for other important movements and tendencies. According to Abellán and others, the similarities between Erasmist spiritualism and native Spanish currents were not the result of any direct influence on Spain, but from the movements having common inspiration from medieval sources. This is a bold claim, and Abellán produces little evidence to support it, other than stating baldly that greater examination must be made into Spain’s three

²² José Luis Abellán, *El Erasmianismo Espanol: Una historia de la otra España* (Madrid: S.A. Editorial Gráficas Espejo, 1976), 58.

²³ *Ibid*, 60.

²⁴ *Ibid*, 66.

spiritual lineages: the Hebrew-Rabbinic tradition, Franciscan spiritualism (as embodied by the Cisneran reforms), and the Italianate school of Savonarola. Abellán casts his net wider still, stating that in first half of century, “the territories of orthodoxy and heterodoxy were not as delimited as they would be after Trent.”²⁵ In a time of massive ideological conflict, Erasmianism, Franciscanism, and mysticism were confused more frequently than one would hope. To an extent, then, the delimitations made today by historians are more *a posteriori* impositions on reality than faithful reflections of it.²⁶ More research is needed to distinguish between these movements and to identify their mutual influence.

How then does this methodology relate with the traditional approach articulated by Marcel Bataillon? According to Abellán, the purpose of the foregoing school was to reveal the influence of Erasmus in Spain (previously ignored or under-examined) and recommend its study to a burgeoning generation of scholars. By contrast, the “modern” approach was concerned with untangling the web and returning religious life to its natural complexion. Abellán struggles to find a middle ground between the two models. He notes that “in no country did he [Erasmus] enjoy as much fame as in Spain,” because he enjoyed the favor of kings, popes, and grandees alike.²⁷ Yet Abellán also stresses that Spanish society was particularly ripe for religious reform, and this too contributed to the success of his movement. Erasmus’ attacks on scholastic philosophy, which had fallen into a real state of degradation by the sixteenth century, found ready listeners in a country yearning for a return to evangelism, interior religion, and Christian charity. Borrowing from Bataillon’s thesis, he argues the *Enchiridion* translations were not limited to an elite minority or a few intellectuals, but were enjoyed by the high and low

²⁵ Ibid, 67.

²⁶ Ibid, 68.

²⁷ Ibid, 69.

aristocracy, and found a wide popular audience as well.²⁸ Though it still retains some aspects of the “Top-Down” model, this is a fundamentally populist conception of the spread of Spanish Erasmianism.

Abellán brings up several issues that would later be used by revisionists to deny the Spanish Erasmist movement altogether. A major point of contention is that the humanist printers of Alcalá did not just translate Erasmus’ works; they adapted them for public consumption. With an eye to appeasing popular attitudes as well as the censors, they softened the most aggressive phrases and even excised passages they found too compromising from a religious perspective. For example, in the Castilian edition of the *Enchiridion*, printer Miguel Fernández toned down most of Erasmus’ commentary on the reality of the eternal flames and removed the notorious dictum “*monochatus non est pietas*.”²⁹ Despite the seemingly grave potential for mistranslation, Abellán insists that these changes do not affect essential content of book or basic message. Later scholars, however, would use the discrepancies to argue that most Spaniards never really understood the finer shades Erasmus’ ideas.

Melquíades Andrés Martín builds upon the approach explored by Abellán, articulating the latter’s incomplete approach to textual criticism and deriving from it a coherent program. Like his predecessor, he emphasizes the need to consider existing spiritual currents: “The Spain that received Erasmus was not some void of spiritualism, but one with fully developed university centers and a spirituality at the boiling point.”³⁰ Presenting his findings at a 1986 conference on new approaches to interpreting Spanish Erasmianism, he goes still further, joining a chorus of

²⁸ Ibid, 73.

²⁹ Ibid, 74. “Being a monk is not a state of holiness.”

³⁰ Melquíades Andrés Martín, “Corrientes culturales en tiempo de los reyes Católicos y recepción de Erasmo,” in *Erasmianismo en España*, ed. Manuel Revuelta Sañudo and Ciriaco Morón Arroyo (Santander: Sociedad Menendez Pelayo, 1986), 79.

voices hailing the Cisneran reforms in the secular and ecclesiastic spheres as the true precursors to Iberian humanism. The real question, he argues, is not how Erasmus influenced peninsular developments, but how the Erasmist methodology conformed with the Spanish experience. Purely doctrinal arguments are misleading and offer insufficient background for analysis; one must consider the social, political, and religious context to understand what is different about Spanish Erasmianism.³¹

Andrés Martín notes that the response to Erasmus was always positive or negative; very rarely was the Dutchman's philosophy greeted with indifference. In such a polarized atmosphere, it is at times difficult to determine the extent of individual reformers' affiliation with Christian Humanism. Was their adherence to full Erasmist system or did they accept only certain agreeable ideas and convenient formulations? He argues that there lacked a clear distinction of values between the Erasmists and anti-Erasmists, who clashed over such diverse issues as the role of theology, exegesis, spiritualism, and humanist methodology. It is not enough simply to view citations from authors, critics, or scholars. To determine the actual extent of Spanish Erasmianism, adherents to the continuity theory must first prove that an analogous movement existed before Erasmus arrived, and show how he impeded or propelled its development. Andrés Martín repeatedly stresses, "Spanish spirituality was highly structured at the moment of the Erasmist explosion in Spain."³² It was not the provincial backwater but the site of one of the leading humanist centers in European Christendom. Therefore, Spanish spirituality cannot be evaluated solely or even principally from an Erasmist angle. The Spaniards received his *philosophia Christi* around 1525 as merely one more "*via espiritual*," another way to the life of

³¹ Ibid, 95.

³² Ibid, 73.

the spirit. Rather than accepting his ideas wholesale, they rejected parts and modified others to better suit their interests.³³ In this vision, Andrés Martín anticipates the revisionist school, which will interpret this limited adherence to Erasmianism as an implicit rejection of its core values.

Illuminism and Alternative Religious Expression

As already discussed, Erasmianism was by no means the only-or even primary-form of dissent among Spaniards seeking a spiritual alternative to Rome. *Alumbradismo* or Illuminism was a vibrant force in 15th and 16th century Spain, a widespread mystical movement that attracted followers at all levels of society. The origins of the Illuminist or *alumbrado* movement are much debated. Despite some favorable comparisons with the Brethren of the Common Life, Flemish mystics denied any links with the *alumbrados*. Some have put forward the possibility of a Germanic influence from the likes of Eckhart, Suso, and Tauler. This possibility has largely been discounted for lack of evidence that their ideas circulated widely in Spain. As the Inquisition later noted, there were certain similarities with Lutheran doctrine, but J. E. Longhurst maintains that there was “no evidence to demonstrate the two movements were related.”³⁴ Regardless of the faction’s precise source of inspiration, Longhurst takes stock of the various views of illuminism. One extreme position is that the *alumbrado* sect “represents the reform movement in Spain, independent of the Germanic,” while an alternative interpretation describes its adherents as “poor provincial devils, without a defined creed... literary history... [or] any guide which might give body or cohesion to the movement and systematize its content preservation to the

³³ Ibid, 77.

³⁴ John Edward Longhurst, *Erasmus and the Spanish Inquisition: The Case of Juan de Valdés* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1950), 16.

world.”³⁵ Longhurst seeks to chart a middle course between the two positions by examining the legal record including abjurations, trial records, and *autos-de-fe*.

An early patron of Illuminism was Diego López Pacheco, the Marqués de Villena, who also was an outspoken supporter of Erasmus. In 1527, the Marqués told Alfonso Valdés he wished he could attend the Valladolid conference to “defend Erasmus against the calumnies of the monks.”³⁶ Evidently the Marqués shared the Dutchman’s aversion to the decadent state of monasticism, and also was “somewhat inclined, apparently, to the supernatural.”³⁷ This predilection made his estate at Escalona particularly fertile ground for Illuminism. There he entertained Juan de Olmillos and Francisco de Ocaña, wandering preachers who shared apocalyptic visions with their patrons. Another prominent mystic, Pedro Ruiz de Alcaraz, was also recruited by the Marqués with a reported salary of thirty-five thousand maravedis.³⁸

The Escalona group was not an isolated phenomenon, but merely the most recent development in an ongoing process of religious ferment. Around 1512 the first *alumbrado* cells were founded in Guadalajara by Isabel de la Cruz and in Salamanca by Francisca Hernández. These *beatas* or “holy women” served as organizers, hosts, and spiritual patrons of their meetings. They were followed in the early 1520s by María de Cazalla, who organized a sister chapter at Pastrana with the town priest Gabriel Sánchez. Other groups later appeared at Cifuentes and at the Marqués’ home at Escalona. Each cell functioned as an independent unit, and although Francisca Hernández was the unofficial head of the movement, the precise nature of the relationship between the various groups is unclear. What is certain is that they were tightly

³⁵ Ibid, 17.

³⁶ Ibid, 15.

³⁷ Ibid, 15.

³⁸ Ibid, 15.

knit communities in close communication with one another through letters and personal visits. As may be expected, members of these groups inevitably had frictions, and these internecine rivalries led to “veritable orgies of denunciation” when they fell into the hands of the Inquisition.³⁹ This phenomenon again stresses the intensely personal, individualistic nature of the *alumbrado* movement, and helps explain why its adherents were unable to produce anything resembling an official creed or uniform statement of faith.

Much of our knowledge of the Illuminist sect at Escalona comes from the time Juan Valdés was employed by the Marqués. At their private meetings, Fray Ocaña preached the need for reform in the Church from the ground up, urging parishioners to throw out clerical officials “like pigs.”⁴⁰ Rejecting the elaborate liturgy of the Church, Ocaña maintained that the passion of Christ should be the main theme of all sermons and private meditations, as everything else was trivial. He was also given to prophetic declarations: in 1524 he announced that Francis I was to be dethroned by Charles V, and that he (Ocaña) and Olmillos would then journey to Rome to reform the Church; after that, one of them would ascend to the papacy and await the Second Coming. Such episodes raised mixed opinions, and it seems that the public regarded the Escalona group either as a convocation of saints or of devils.

Word of these activities reached the Franciscan Provincial, Fray Andrés de Ecija, who went to investigate matters personally. There he witnessed Olmillos going into a trance during the mass, at which point the seer launched into convulsions and prophetic utterances. Determining that these practices were unusual, if not quite heterodox, Ecija ordered the priest to say mass only in cloister, and to preach to the Marqués privately. Undaunted, Olmillos went to

³⁹ Ibid, 15.

⁴⁰ Ibid, 17.

Madrid, where he won a large following of townspeople who thought his contortions were a sign of sainthood. Olmillos was later elected Provincial of the Franciscan Province of Castile, and died peacefully in Madrid in 1529. According to Alcaraz, Eciija and the Franciscans were unusually tolerant for fear that harsher measures against Olmillos would offend his supporters, who might stop giving money to the order.⁴¹

Virtually all we know about specific Illuminist beliefs comes from the trial records of those brought before the Inquisition. A particularly lucid example is that of Alcaraz, who gave probably the most complete statement of faith of those who were condemned. Alcaraz was born in 1480 to a family of converso roots. Though he received no formal schooling, he read extensively from St. Bernard, St. Bonaventure, and the *Imitation of Christ*. He also appears to have had great knowledge of Scripture. An accountant by trade until 1523, he experienced a religious awakening upon entering the service of the Marqués and promptly began preaching Illuminism. The group met in the home of Antonio de Baeza, the castle governor and a follower of Olmillos and Ocaña. A visitor, who later turned informant, described their meetings thus: “When they knelt they did not pray aloud or bend their heads on hearing the name of Jesus Christ.”⁴² On 26 February 1524, Alcaraz was arrested by the Inquisition. Shockingly, fellow illuminist Nicolás de Embid testified against Alcaraz, declaring that he had repeatedly preached the doctrine of *dexamiento*, according to which the “will loses all spontaneity and becomes a merely passive thing in a complete surrender of the human will to the divine.”⁴³ *Dexamiento*, often translated as “abandonment” or “emptying,” was a philosophy that relied upon individual inspiration based on the direct communication of the soul with its Creator. From this ideological

⁴¹ Ibid, 18.

⁴² Ibid, 19.

⁴³ Ibid, 19.

foundation several decidedly unorthodox tenets emerge. One is the lack of moral responsibility: a *dexado* cannot sin, because his or her actions cease to be voluntary and proceed directly from God. Associated with this idea is the belief in man's utter helplessness before the divine. All good works proceed from God, and man can do nothing for himself except surrender completely to God and realize one's own worthlessness. Confronted with his own words, which apparently denied free will, Alcaraz declared that if it existed then the best way to exercise free will was to subject oneself completely to God. He further denied the existence of hell, rejected the doctrine of the Eucharist, good works, indulgences, papal pardons, oral prayer, confession, relics, and insisted on interpreting the Bible according to his own "light."⁴⁴ Alcaraz confessed under torture to heretical depravity and was sentenced in 1529 to life imprisonment. This sentence was later commuted to ten years and a cycle of penitential prayers. The brief but powerful Illuminist vogue came to an abrupt end shortly after the sect was condemned by an edict of 23 September 1525. In fact, the *alumbrados* had no formal doctrine or creed, so the edict simply outlawed forty-eight propositions allegedly held by the Illuminists. Many of these were based on the trial and confession of Alcaraz. Such was the force of the orthodox reaction that Loyola himself was jailed in 1527 and subjected to three examinations for suspected Illuminism.⁴⁵

Joseph Pérez wrote a particularly cogent account of the 1524-1527 campaign against Illuminism. Perhaps fearing that he made too strong a case for Erasmist influence in Spain, Pérez qualifies his earlier enthusiasm by noting that "Erasmianism was but one of the aspects of that religious unease took on in Spain."⁴⁶ He places the humanists' renewed preoccupation with the inner life of the spirit within the general European religious ferment of the fifteenth century, and

⁴⁴ Ibid, 20.

⁴⁵ Ibid, 70.

⁴⁶ Joseph Pérez, *The Spanish Inquisition: A History* (London: Profile, 2004), 66.

observes the potential for friction with Catholic orthodoxy. The most notorious tradition of Iberian religious dissent was the *alumbrados*, who claimed to abandon themselves entirely to the divine inspiration and believed in free interpretation of the Gospel texts. Because they no longer had any will of their own, they could never sin and consequently had no need of priestly confessors or sacraments. Along with the authority of the Church, the *alumbrados* rejected all traditional forms of piety which they considered constraints (*ataduras*), including oral prayer, devoutness, charity, and good works.⁴⁷ The Toledo *auto-de-fe* in 1528 checked the first wave of Illuminism in Spain, albeit with no death sentences.

According to Pérez, the similarities between *alumbrados* and Erasmists are superficial at best. Both groups shared a rejection of scholasticism and forms of piety that bordered on superstition; they otherwise had nothing in common. The Erasmists were university-trained humanists with a developed critical exegesis. Their focus was above all an enlightened inner religion, one controlled by reason rather than unpredictable passions. By contrast, the *alumbrados* were “mostly simple folk with no more than an elementary education.”⁴⁸ Pérez believes that the illuminists’ total rejection of free will along with all personal responsibility alarmed the Erasmists as much as it did the Inquisition. Yet it is clear that some Erasmists maintained contact with *alumbrados* and were familiar with at least the rudiments of their beliefs, notably Vergara, Bernardino de Tovar, and the Valdés brothers. At the same time, many *alumbrados* implausibly claimed to be Erasmists when arrested by Inquisition. This, Pérez suggests, was a practical move: in the 1520s, Erasmists had strong allies in the highest levels of Church and State, while *alumbrados* were a suspect if not quite illicit sect. Juan de Valdés’

⁴⁷ Ibid, 67.

⁴⁸ Ibid, 67.

Diálogo de la Doctrina Christiana was heavily influenced by Illuminism, but Valdés publicly claimed Erasmus as his inspiration. Pérez concludes with a cynical assessment of the ploy: “By assuming the mask of Erasmianism, Valdés fooled the vigilance of the Inquisition, which did not clearly perceive his links with Illuminism or even suspect how much he owed to Luther.”⁴⁹

Pérez notes, however, that Valdés drew extensively from Luther, reprinting some passages almost verbatim. “During the first half of the sixteenth century, the Inquisition had encountered Illuminist sects, pseudo-mystics and Erasmists, but not authentic Lutherans.”⁵⁰ This changed in 1558-9 when Lutheran groups discovered in Valladolid and Seville, igniting a wave of popular hysteria throughout the peninsula. Though the Inquisition had previously dealt with heretics lightly, it now passed much harsher sentences against deviants in an attempt to root out heresy before it became full-fledged Lutheranism. Pérez appears to have no qualms about the authenticity of the victims’ heterodoxy. He refers to a “few dozen Lutherans” burned at the stake in the great Toledo *auto de fe*, and concludes: “Without a doubt, the victims of the Inquisition in 1559-1560 were Lutherans.”⁵¹ This question of categorization has dominated the field of research into Erasmist-Valdesian thought since for nearly a century. In order to appreciate the authors as they wished themselves to be understood, it is first necessary to examine their beliefs as expressed in their surviving works. No corpus is more complete than that left by Juan de Valdés, whose publication history dwarfs those of the other Erasmist authors in exile. This diaspora is a fertile ground for future inquiry, though sadly it has been largely neglected since Bataillon’s masterwork returned the history of Spanish dissent to prominence in 1937.

⁴⁹ Ibid, 68.

⁵⁰ Ibid, 69.

⁵¹ Ibid, 71.

CHAPTER 2 EXPORTING DISSENT

Juan de Valdés: Spanish Protestant Reformer?

Who was this man condemned by the Holy Office, and why was he so despised? Juan was the son of Hernando de Valdés, hereditary *regidor* of Cuenca, a man of “liberal fortune and independent circumstances,” who supported the Comuneros in their ill-fated revolt. His twin brother Alfonso was a classically-trained humanist who eventually rose to be Latin Secretary to Emperor Charles V. Like his Erasmist brother, Juan drew directly from Scripture as the ultimate source of religious authority. Neither was trained as a theologian, a fact which their allies saw as an advantage since they were unencumbered by dry, sophisticated formulas. For the Valdés brothers, religion was practical morality - “inspired doctrine, having its existence in the daily conduct of life by Faith.”¹ Juan’s religious teaching was of a private and individual character. His conversations and letters reveal an intensely personal moral influence, better disposed to intimate discussions in the home of friends rather than thundering to crowds from the pulpit. The essential question remains, what distinguished this humanist scholar from the countless others that paced the halls of Alcalá de Henares. The details of his life hardly reveal him as a man one would suspect of launching a schism or promoting a heresy within Spain, particularly in light of his family’s close connections with the Imperial court. One must look elsewhere for the causes of this persecution that was to echo across centuries.

Perhaps suspicions were directed against Valdés because of his family’s own questionable links to heterodoxy, both religious and political. Juan’s father, Fernando, was *regidor* of the city of Cuenca, whose role in the Comuneros’ Revolt was ambiguous at best. Following Isabella's death in 1504, the powerful Marques de Villena maneuvered the Cuencan

¹ Benjamin B. Wiffen, *Alfabeto Christiano* (London: Bosworth and Harrison, 1861), xxiii.

city council into supporting Philip the Fair as regent of Castile. Fernando was crucial to this plan and personally represented Cuenca at the Cortes of Valladolid, for which service he was allowed by Philip to entail his office of *regidor* for his heirs. After lavishing favors and attention upon the Habsburg prince, Philip's sudden death was a serious blow to Cuenca's political fortunes, as was Ferdinand's accession to sole rulership of Castile and Aragon. Even more alarming was Charles of Ghent's arrival, which threatened to undermine the entire Iberian social and political order. The Habsburgs proved singularly incapable of resolving the ongoing rivalry between the towns and the great aristocrats who threatened to usurp their lands. Bereft of monarchical leadership and fearful that their cherished titles would be given to Charles' Flemish and Italian courtiers, royal officials like Fernando resolved to defend their privileged positions at any cost.²

Following Charles' departure to seek the Imperial title, many leading grandees and regional magnates attempted to wrestle authority back from the doddering regent, Adrian of Utrecht. When nearby Toledo rose in revolt, Villena lent support to the rebels without openly supporting the Comunero cause, though friction with Adrian created a rift between Cuenca and the central government.³ A careful war of words ensued, in part orchestrated by Fernando and Juan's twin brother Alfonso, with the result that Cuenca remained ostensibly neutral in the opening phase of the revolt while offering clandestine support to the anti-Habsburg, anti-foreigner movement the Comuneros represented. The situation changed dramatically once the lower classes rose against seigniorial privilege. Faced with the prospect of genuine social revolution, the terrified officials realized that their positions could only be secured by restoring

² Daniel A. Crews, "Juan de Valdés and the Comunero Revolt: An Essay on Spanish Civic Humanism," *The Sixteenth Century Journal*, 22 (1991), 236.

³ *Ibid*, 237.

royal authority in the city.⁴ When royalist forces re-entered Cuenca in 1521, the city council promptly reaffirmed its loyalty to Charles - in fact, Andrés de Valdés (Juan's older brother) insisted that the city had never actually been disloyal. Reaction would certainly have been swift and brutal but for the Emperor's need for Cuenca's tax revenues to support his imperial ambitions. Fernando was confirmed in his post as *regidor* and continued to represent Cuenca at the Cortes periodically. Although Charles eventually issued a blanket pardon for the city, the taint of disloyalty lingered over its inhabitants, and may have colored later perceptions of the Valdés family's legacy.⁵

Nor were political concerns the only source of discord. As noted, Alfonso's position as the Emperor's Latin secretary effectively secured the Valdés family from any overt accusations of disloyalty, and a succession of relatively benign Inquisitors-General ensured that their cordial relationship with Erasmus was not used to condemn them. Yet from his earliest days, Juan Valdés engaged in many activities and associations that were certainly questionable if not quite heterodox. Young Juan was taught at the Marques de Villena's court at Escalona, a noted humanist center and home to a congregation of *alumbrados*. While he studied Aristotle and the Church fathers, he was also exposed to the teachings of Pedro Ruiz de Alcaraz, an *alumbrado* preacher who called for a more personal Christianity freed from excessive ceremonies and formalism. Such was his familiarity with the mystic circle that Juan was called as a witness for Ruiz in his Inquisition trial. (That he declined to appear for the defense may suggest he held an accurate if cynical appraisal of Inquisitorial justice at the time.) Though hardly grounds for arrest and expulsion, Juan's association with this notorious cell certainly gained him unwanted scrutiny.

⁴ Ibid, 238.

⁵ Ibid, 239

The Holy Office equated *alumbradismo* and other forms of mysticism with *lèse majesté*. The mystics threatened the spiritual foundations of the state, while the Comuneros sought to overthrow its political apparatus.⁶ In the eyes of the inquisitors, Juan's presence in a hotbed of presumed heretics and potential rebels was definitely suspicious and a mark against his character.

Later events seemed to confirm this view. In 1525, Juan left Escalona and began his studies at the University of Alcalá, where he met the Vergara brothers Juan and Francisco. Fellow humanists, they inspired in Valdés a deep appreciation for the Greek and Hebrew scriptures that had been the basis for the Complutensian Polyglot. The brothers were instrumental in the completion of his magnum opus, *Diálogo de la Doctrina Christiana*, and used their influence to ensure its publication over the objections of wary censors. Given their immense impact on his life and work, the Inquisition took special interest in Juan's association with the Vergaras, though for political rather than spiritual reasons. Summoned before the Inquisition, Juan de Vergara reluctantly confessed that, as a native Toledan, he had favored the Comuneros' cause during the revolt. To underscore the point, the Toledan town council, an institution whose loyalty to the Habsburgs was perpetually in doubt, issued repeated demands to the Inquisition that Vergara be released, as he eventually was.⁷ The incident illustrates the confusing and often overlapping spheres of political and religious unorthodoxy in sixteenth century Spain, both of which were eventually tried-under various labels and pretenses-by the Inquisition. Regardless of his family's importance at court and their (occasional) loyalty to the monarchy, Juan Valdés was conspicuously linked with several real or imagined threats to

⁶ Ibid, 241.

⁷ Ibid, 243.

Peninsular unity and the Habsburg Imperial ideal. Yet while the Inquisitors might gnash their teeth at the upstart scholar, they could not yet find grounds to accuse him directly.

Inventing Heresy: Accusation and Exile

What then was this heresy, so sternly persecuted by the Holy Office and tenaciously defended by Erasmist circles? The chief difficulty in studying Spanish dissent is finding a clear statement of faith, a Protestant manifesto or Valdesian creed. The Valdesian text that most resembles Luther's 95 Theses is the *One Hundred and Ten Divine Considerations*, which was successfully repressed by the inquisitors. Barely a third of the articles survived the purge in their Italian translations—a diminished corpus that cannot fill all the gaps in Valdesian thought. A much more promising source is the *Dialogue on Christian Doctrine*, which examines in detail the doctrinal cornerstones of the Christian faith. Heavily influenced by Erasmus' *Colloquies*, the *Doctrina Christiana* emphasizes inner virtue and spiritual life over formalism and outward piety as signs of true Christianity. Unlike the Illuminists or *alumbrados*, Valdés does not altogether reject the principles of obedience to Rome, the sacraments, the Trinity doctrine, the seven deadly sins and cardinal virtues, the five commandments of the Church, or the doctrine of good works (though he emphasized the necessity of personal faith). To be sure, Valdés criticized excessive ceremony, hypocritical monks, and empty formalism; yet, “on no major point of Catholic doctrine does he appear at variance with the official Church position.”⁸ What grounds the Inquisition saw to condemn him—based solely on theology—we may only guess. J. E. Longhurst suggests that the Holy Office, perhaps too enthusiastic in its search for heresy, made a mistake. He further argues that if Valdés was a heretic, Erasmus must also have been one, and probably would have been condemned by the Inquisition if he lived in Spain.

⁸ John Edward Longhurst, *Erasmus and the Spanish Inquisition: The Case of Juan de Valdés* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1950), 80.

Not all the Protestant hysteria was a mere inquisitorial overreaction. Perhaps most disturbing to the Holy Office were Valdés' views on repentance and redemption: "God will quickly forgive you for this [sin] in which you so offend, by the humility with which you will ask his pardon, and through the faith and trust that you will maintain in Jesus Christ."⁹ Such a conception of repentance, without reference to sacramental confession or formal penance, sent a profoundly distressing signal to the Inquisition. If Valdés' seeming disregard for the sacraments of the institutional Church was disquieting, his views towards faith and justification were positively alarming: "To be a Christian person is to be justified; and no one can be justified except by faith because the just live by faith."¹⁰ Though he does not in this translation enter the fateful phrase "faith *alone*," the inclusion of this pivotal verse at such a moment in history is enormously suggestive. Valdés describes faith as the tree, and charity the fruit of the tree, declaring that faith without deeds of charity is dead. Such faith, he argues, is "acquired not by industry, nor human contrivance, but by means of the grace of God communicated with supernatural Light."¹¹ The reference to *alumbradismo* is astonishing in its boldness and doubtless would have earned Valdés an interrogation had he published his work in the Crown of Castile. Safely in the Italian villa of his patroness Giulia Gonzaga, far from the reach of the nearest inquisitorial authority, Valdés could write without fear of reprisal. Only this felicitous circumstance enabled him to reveal his doctrine.

As an exile living in Italy, Valdés depended on his protectors not only to publish his works but to prevent his arrest and imprisonment. He therefore explains his philosophy through a series of dialogues, a format that was familiar and easily accessible to his patrons. The decision

⁹ Wiffen, 68. Translated by A. Gordon Kinder.

¹⁰ Ibid, 80. Romans 1:17

¹¹ Ibid, 74.

was also an attempt to bind them closer to himself by presenting them as participants in the development of his reformist doctrines. Nowhere is this clearer than the *Alfabeto Christiano*, the so-called primer for spiritual life. In response to a question from Giulia, Valdés recognizes three ways to knowledge of God. The first is by the light of nature, as seen in the Gentile philosophers. The second is sacred scripture of the Old Testament. This source he considers an imperfect image, fettered by what he calls the spiritual blinders and limitations of the Hebrews. Finally, there is the perfect source, Christ, who reveals the “supernatural knowledge for which the special grace of God is necessary.”¹² Not only does he neglect to mention the Church in this schema, he also refers to the “light of faith inspired by the Holy Spirit.”¹³ Such language would have certainly aroused accusations of *alumbradismo* if he had been in Spain, but once again his exiled position permits Valdés a freedom of expression that his Iberian contemporaries were so conspicuously denied.

Life in exile sometimes had a starker side. Valdés was fortunate to have in the Gonzagas a literate, attentive, open-minded, and generally receptive audience. Occasionally, however, he was forced to moderate his language to suit their tastes. In response to an incredulous outburst from Giulia, Juan retreats slightly from his earlier position. He still supports confession to priest, he claims, and absolution for the remission of sins.¹⁴ Yet he urges contemplation of the Creed and prayers, “not by repeating it by rote with the lips, but by simply comprehending and considering it with the mind.”¹⁵ This statement summarizes the chief principles of Christian living: to reject and abhor worldly ways which lead not to salvation, to resolve to seek God

¹² Ibid, 103.

¹³ Ibid, 105.

¹⁴ Ibid, 114. As we will see, statements in the *Doctrina Christiana* make this assertion extremely dubious.

¹⁵ Ibid, 120. Translation by A. Gordon Kinder.

through Christ, and to confirm faith with constant study of the Scriptures.¹⁶ Only by observing this code can believers overcome the competing natures of flesh and spirit. How to obtain this degree of Christian Liberty is the question pondered in Valdés' next *magnum opus*, also written for his patrons the Gonzagas.

Diálogo de la Doctrina Christiana

The principal characters are the Archbishop, a wise and articulate scholar; Eusebio, a layman of moderate learning; and Antronio, an untutored but earnest priest. The two postulants have come to ask the Archbishop one question: What is the essence of Christian doctrine? The Archbishop replies with a synthesis of Valdesian-Erasmist thought: “[Christian behavior], after one has received the water of baptism, is founded principally in faith and charity, then in taking thought of everyone and not harming another person, and finally in living by the pure and sincere example of Jesus Christ our savior.”¹⁷ The Archbishop surprises Eusebio by saying that this behavior alone is sufficient for one to be a Christian. Eusebio objects that these are interior virtues, which cannot be seen, and notes that many of the faithless (*infidel*) and gentiles had these qualities too. The Archbishop replies that although external adherence to the ceremonies and statutes of the Church is good and proper, internal devotion is the most important requirement for a Christian. He expounds upon the matter: “That which I [already] said that a Christian should have is the principal matter, that other is accessory, in the same way that we do not call him a

¹⁶ Ibid, 126.

¹⁷ Juan de Valdés, *Obras completas*, ed. Ángel Alcalá (Madrid: Fundación José Antonio de Castro, 1997), 13. “Que el christiano, despues de haber recebido el agua del baptismo, se funda principalmente en fe y charidad, y luego en aprovechar todos y no danar a alguno, y en fin, en bivar a exemplo de Jesu Christo nuestro senor pura y sinceramente.”

Christian who does not keep the ceremonies of the Church, I would want us neither to call him a Christian who did not do the first thing I said.”¹⁸

The visit of the two younger persons in search of scriptural wisdom has delighted the Archbishop, who has apparently been approached infrequently in this way before. The Archbishop laments that lords and rich persons are more concerned about their estates than instructing their children in the faith.¹⁹ In response to the deplorable state of public morals, the Archbishop urges his listeners to remind their parishioners frequently of “*el voto que hizieron en el baptismo, y darselo muy claramente a entender.*”²⁰ Antronio is puzzled and asks which “voto” (vow) he means. The Archbishop is surprised at the priest’s ignorance and asks him if, when he baptizes an infant, the godparents do not promise in its name that it will live and die in the faith and teachings of Jesus Christ, as a sign of which they recite the Creed. When Antronio replies in the affirmative, the Archbishop explains that this affirmation is itself a vow. Antronio is amazed that despite having baptized some five hundred children, he had never thought of baptism as a vow, because he thought vows were exclusive to monks. The Archbishop explains that monastic vows only expand upon that initial vow.²¹ Repeating the vow is important because it reminds them that at baptism they renounced Satan along with all earthly desires and appetites.

¹⁸ Ibid, 13. “[L]o que yo dixe que el christano deve tener, es lo principal, estotro es accesorio, assi que de la misma manera que no temos por christiano al que no guarda las cerimonias de la yglesia, querria yo que no tuviessemos tampoco por christiano al que no hiziesse lo que primero dixe.”

¹⁹ Ibid, 15. “Parece que tienen mas cuydado en hazer de una muleta buena mula, que no de sus hijos buenos christianos.”

²⁰ Ibid, 16.

²¹ Ibid, 16. “Antes esos de los frayles son solamente para poder con mas aparejo guardar este que es el principal y sin el qual ni por pensamiento somos christianos.”

Having established the liturgical basis for starting on the Christian walk of life, the Archbishop details how one should progress further. Following the rite of baptism, newcomers to the faith should be taught in order:

1. The Creed, the articles of faith which a Christian is obligated to believe.
2. The Ten Commandments, which teach Christians how to please and obey God.
3. The Gospel of St. Matthew, the Beatitudes, which are the summary of Christian Doctrine.²²
4. The Seven Deadly Sins, which Christians should be taught from childhood to abhor.
5. The Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit, or godly virtues.
6. The *Pater Noster*, which priests must explain so their parishioners will not do as the ignorant and pray without knowing what they mean.²³

Antronio asks if they should then be taught some formulaic prayers (“*algunas oraciones devotas*”). The Archbishop replies that the priest may do as he likes in that matter, but here they will only discuss “that which every Christians must know.”²⁴

The Creed (Símbolo de los Apóstoles)

Article I: Creo en Dios padre todopoderoso que crio el cielo y la tierra (*Credo in Deum*)

Eusebio asks, when we say God, what should we be understood to mean? The Archbishop replies that God is an eternal being without beginning or end, whom nothing can equal in greatness or wisdom. He made all visible and invisible things, governing them with his wisdom and generosity, and also restored humanity from the misery into which it fell for the sin of the first man. The three qualities of God that the Archbishop discusses are “Poderoso, Sabio, y Bueno.” The first term, *Poderoso*, refers to God’s omnipotence, and Christians must recognize that all the greatness of humans and angels is nothing before His majesty. Using this term confirms that we believe in the Scripture and know He will do what He promised. The second

²² Ibid, 17. “Porque allí está la suma y cumplimiento de la doctrina Christiana.”

²³ Ibid, 18. “Para que la tengan en lo que es razon, e no hagan como el vulgo de los ygnorantes que rezan e no saben que es lo que dizen.”

²⁴ Ibid, 18. “[L]o que es necessario que todo Christiano sepa.”

quality, *Sabio*, means that everything He does is right and just. The third quality, *Bueno*, signifies the generosity of God. Christians would do well to remember we owe everything to his liberality (*liberalidad*) and there is no sin so great He cannot forgive for true contrition and repentance.²⁵

The Archbishop goes further still, asserting that there is nothing in the world He will not give his servants if they ask with full confidence.²⁶ Eusebio asks if simply believing in God as the Archbishop has said is enough. The Archbishop replies that mere belief is not enough; one must put in Him all our love, hope and confidence, and to abhor and reject Satan along with all idolatry and magic.²⁷ Eusebio then asks if we should honor, fear, or love anything apart from God. The Archbishop responds that we should attribute all to God's glory, always giving thanks for everything that happens to us, whether sad or joyful.²⁸

Article II: En Jesu Christo hijo de Dios, un solo señor, Dios nuestro (*Et in Iesum Christum filium eius*)

Eusebio asks how could Jesus be immortal God and mortal man at once? The Archbishop replies that this was simple for Him who can do all that he wants, and that for this reason Jesus shares the same divine nature as the Father, and everything of greatness, wisdom, and generosity that we attribute to the Father we must attribute also to the Son. The rest of the discussion addresses foundational questions that the priest should have been taught in catechism. Why is Jesus called the unique Son? To distinguish Christ the natural Son of God from the adopted children who are united to Him through a union of love. Why did God want his divine Son to

²⁵ Ibid, 19. "[Y] pensamos tambien que no ay pecado por grave que sea que El no huelgue de perdonar al que muy de versa se buelve e convierte a El."

²⁶ Ibid, 20. "[Y] de mas desto que ninguna cosa ay en el mundo qu'El no huelgue de dar al que con entra confianza se la pide."

²⁷ Ibid, 20. "Toda la esperanca en Dios, no es suficiente solamente creer en Dios, sino poner en El todo nuestro amor, esperanca e confianca."

²⁸ Ibid, 20. "Haziendole siempre gracias por todas las cosas que nos succedieren, agora sean tristes, agora sean alegres."

become man? Because as a man Christ reconciled all men to God. So far all is doctrinally sound, avoiding the dualist language that earned inquisitorial condemnation for the Cathars or Albigensians of the 13th century. It seems absurd that Antronio should be so grossly ignorant of key theological issues, but therein lies the Erasmist-Valdesian critique of the Church: the clergy cannot read Latin or Greek and do not understand the articles of the faith they must transmit.

Article III: Jesu Christo fue concebido por obra de Spiritu Santo, y que nascio de la virgen Maria (*Que conceptus est*)

To cleanse us from the impurities (“*inmundicias e suziedades*”) of our birth, God’s Son was born a man so that humanity could be born again through spiritual birth as children of God.²⁹ When asked whether we should believe if Christ really conversed in the world and performed those miracles recorded in the gospels, the Archbishop replies, “*Mucho mejor que creer que yo soy hombre.*”³⁰ He also confirms that Christ was the promised Messiah, prefigured in the Mosaic Law (“*Ley Vieja*”). This article serves to underline the postulants’ ignorance of the faith, and the clergy’s failure in providing this level of basic instruction - even to Antronio, a priest who by his own admission baptized over 500 infants! One wonders what sort of instruction he in turn could provide?

Article IV: Jesu Christo señor nuestro padescio muerte e passion en tiempo de Poncio Pilato, y que fue crucificado muerto e sepultado (*Passus sub Pontio Pilato*)”

The Archbishop adds that it is important to know that he suffered these things willingly and readily, without any fault of his own, to win our salvation, by his own desire and by order of His eternal Father.³¹ Why did the Father want His believed Son to suffer such horrible things?

²⁹ Ibid, 21. “[Q]uiso Dios nacer hijo humano para que nosotros nasciendo otra vez en virtud suya por Nuevo nascimiento spiritual, nasciessemos hijos de Dios.”

³⁰ Ibid, 22.

³¹ Ibid, 22. “Padescio todas estas cosas my de Buena gana, sin culpa suya, e como aquel que para nuestra salvacion mucho las desseava padescer, e tambien que fue todo por ordenacion de su eterno padre.”

“Because through this surpassingly great sacrifice we were reconciled to Him. Therefore we have in His name the confidence and hope of our *justification* [emphasis added].”³² Was there no other way to achieve this reconciliation? The Archbishop answers not from human reason but from faith that by no other way could it have been done better for to our benefit (*utilidad*).³³ Why did Jesus choose to die in that way over any other death? Because so it was prophesied and the world saw this manner of death as the most dishonored of all because of its cruel torments. Why was he buried so curiously, with guards, a tomb of stone, and sealed by a great rock?³⁴ Because being buried so prominently made it clearer and more noticeable that he really had risen, because if his death were doubtful then so too would be his resurrection, which he wanted to be certain.³⁵

Article V: Descendio a los infiernos e que resuscito al tercero dia dentre los muertos
(Descendit ad internos)

The first question is provocative. “*Padescio allí algún detrimento? / No, en ninguna manera.*” What does this cryptic exchange mean? Does the Archbishop deny Christ suffered any physical or spiritual torment in Hell, or does he rather emphasize that Christ should not have been there and suffered unjustly? Perhaps the response is intended to emphasize Christ’s redemptive work and selfless purpose in descending to Hell, an interpretation supported by the postulants’ subsequent question: Why did He descend? The Archbishop replies, to take the souls of the “santos padres” (i.e. The Patriarchs, and other ancient worthies) that had long waited for

³² Ibid, 22. “Porque mediante este altissimo sacrificio fuessemos reconciliados con El. Quando pusieremos en su nombre toda la confianza y esperanza de nuestra justificacion.”

³³ Ibid, 23.

³⁴ Ibid, 23. “Por que quiso ser sepultado con tanta curiosidad, embuelto con enguentos, encerrado en Nuevo monumento cavado en piedra biva, e sellada la puerta e puestas guarddas publicas?”

³⁵ Ibid, 23. “Porque si la muerte fuera dubdosa, fueralo tambien la resurrection, la qual quiso El que fuese certissima.”

Him, and to overthrow the kingdom of the devil so that from there we could too could fight against the devil. So far then, the Archbishop is on solid ground doctrinally. He approaches heterodoxy, however, as he explores the theme of resurrection. When asked why did Christ rise again, the Archbishop again offers three reasons. The first is to give us certain hope of our own resurrection. The second is so that we would know that He is immortal and thereby confide more fully in Him or our health and well-being. The third is so that we might die to sins through penitence, be buried with Christ through baptism, and rise again with his grace to live a new way of life.³⁶ Though scarcely revolutionary, the Archbishop's response glosses over the institutional church entirely. Indeed, Valdés has little use for the church as a conduit of grace and seems to offer independent, individual contact with God. His advice to Giulia Gonzaga synthesizes his moral philosophy: "Turn within yourself, open the ears of your soul, so that you may hear the voice of God."³⁷ Such a schema leaves alarmingly little role for the clergy.

Article VI: Jesu Christo subió al cielo, e que esta sentado a la diestra de Dios Padre
(Ascendit in celum)

Why did Christ want to leave the world? So we would love him spiritually as our Savior and guide, so we may lift our souls to heaven in hopeful expectation of his return, so that no nation could boast (*vanagloriar*) for having Christ in their land, and so that no one would be dependent on his corporeal presence (as some loved the Apostles at one time). One may read in this response a muted criticism of the medieval preoccupation with relics, which the Archbishop says have no intrinsic value for believers. He continues by saying that it pleases God for all Christians not to become entangled in these material and external things, but rather to place all

³⁶ Ibid, 24. "... porque muertos nosotros (mediante la penitencia) a los pecados, y sepultados juntamente con Jesu Christo mediante el bautismo, favorecidos con su gracia, resucitasemos para bivar nueva manera de vida." I believe the use of *penitencia* here refers to contrition and repentance, rather than the Catholic sacrament.

³⁷ Wiffen, 23.

our faith in spiritual and interior matters. Such behavior is true service to God, independent of dry formalism.³⁸

Article VII: Jesu Christo, desde allí ha de venire a juzgar los bivos e los muertos (*Inde venturas est indivcare vivos et mortuos*)

The First Coming was according to the prophecies, in which Christ came humbly to instruct our lives. He showed us how to live if we want to participate in his glory. In the Second Coming he will arrive in great majesty, and all that died from the beginning of the world to that day will be reborn to face the eternal judge.³⁹ The angels will appear before him as faithful servants. The demons of hell will appear before him for judgment. Christ will pronounce sentence on everyone: those who had followed the devil's banner will be sent into the eternal torments, while the good saints He will take with Him into his Heavenly kingdom. The Archbishop notes that Christ did not want to tell us the day of this Second Coming, which we believe as Christians and also instruct others (*"lo qual todo conviene que creamos assi los christianos, y que lo enseñemos assimismo a los que instruimos"*). Antronio again demonstrates his ignorance of Scripture when remarks that he knew nothing of these matters.⁴⁰

Article VIII: Creer en el Spiritu Santo (*Credo in Spiritum Sanctum*)

The Archbishop says that this confession means that the Holy Spirit is God, together with the Father and Son, three persons of one essence and one being.⁴¹ Such an overtly doctrinal

³⁸ Valdés, 25. "Y pluviessse a Dios que aprendiessemos todos los que nos llamamos christianos, a no hazer tanto hincapie en estas cosas corporals y exteriors, e a poner todo el fundamento de nuestra christiandad en las espirituales e interiors. Esto hara Dios quando fuere servido."

³⁹ Ibid, 25. "...porque todos los que desde el principio del mundo, hasta aquel dia fueren muertos en un instante resucitaran, e cada uno vestido con su mesmo cuerpo, vera el eterno juez."

⁴⁰ Ibid, 26. "Quanto que a mi pareceme cosa de entre sueños oyr lo que oygo, porque de todo ello no sabia mas que una tabla."

⁴¹ Ibid, 26. "Espiritu Santo es verdadero Dios, juntamente con el Padre e con el Hijo, e que de tal manera son tres personas, que es una mesma essencia, quiero dezir un mesmo ser."

statement seems to contradict claims that Valdés was antitrinitarian. The Archbishop observes that human reason cannot suffice to understand and explain this persuasively, so human reason must subject itself to faith.⁴² The Holy Spirit also inspired all who wrote the books of the Old and New Testament, and without His favor and grace none achieve eternal life and salvation. Eusebio asks if it is permitted to speak of the Father as spirit, for fear of confusing the Persons. The Archbishop replies that the Father is spirit because he is incorporeal, as are all the Three Persons according to their divine nature. The third person is called the Holy Spirit because He invisibly inspires our souls, just as the wind invisibly passes over and through the land or the water.⁴³

Article IX: Creer la santa yglesia catholica, que es ayuntamientos de santos (*Sanctan ecclesiam catholicam sanctorum communionem*)

Why not say *in* the holy church?⁴⁴ Saint Ciprian says we are only obligated to believe in God, and for this reason the apostles did not put the preposition. Antronio does not understand, so the Archbishop explains: Cipian says that our hope and faith must be in God, not any creature, and because the church is made of men, which are creatures, it is unlawful to put our faith and confidence in either. Antronio then suggests that he say “creo santa yglesia.” The Archbishop replies that *yglesia* is a Greek word which means “congregación o ayuntamiento.” There is a Church in the world, which is an *ayuntamiento* of the faithful, who believe in God the Father and put their trust in his Son and are governed by the Holy Spirit. He distinguishes the Church itself from the communion of saints, which is the participation and communication between the

⁴² Ibid, 26. “Y porque no ay rezones humanas que sean bastantes para persuader e para entender esto, es menester que el entendimiento humano se sojuzgue e someta a la obediencia de la fe.”

⁴³ Ibid, 26. “... inspira e invisiblemente traspasa por nuestros animos, assi como los ayres traspasan por la tierra, o por el agua.”

⁴⁴ Ibid, 27. “... por que no decimos *en* la santa yglesia?”

faithful since the beginning of the world, and all their good works. However, he adds that their good works do not achieve eternal life for anyone if they are not reconciled and united with the holy congregation.⁴⁵ This distinction is important in assessing Valdés' impact on his literate audience, already familiar with Erasmist and even Lutheran strains.

Article X: Creer la remission o perdon de los pecados (*Remissionem peccat*)

The earlier provocative statements are followed by a more seemingly orthodox assertion, though this too is carefully worded. The Archbishop declares that not one person outside the Church he has mentioned is forgiven his or her sins, even though they afflict and torment themselves with penance (*penitencias*) and charitable works (*obras de misericordia*). Rather, the true forgiveness of sins comes through baptism, true penitence, and the keys that Christ gave the church. He qualifies this statement further by proclaiming this law applies only to the Holy Church, not that of the heretics.⁴⁶ The use of *santa yglesia* to refer to the True Church is suggestive, as is the absence of more familiar terms like “Catholic” or “Roman.” The Archbishop denounces as fools those who say there are no saints in the world today, and who do not see that they negate (*niegan*) what they confess in the Creed with their idle speech and gossip (*platicas*). This confusion arises from their not understanding what they confess to believe, and because the priests have failed to instruct them in the basic elements of the faith.⁴⁷ Antronio confesses to falling into this fault without realizing it, but promises to be wiser in the future.

⁴⁵ Ibid, 28. “Pero fuera desta congregacion que digo, aun sus propias buenas obras no aprovechan a ninguno para la vida eternal, si no se reconcilia e torna a juntar a la santa congregacion.”

⁴⁶ Ibid, 28. “Fuera de la yglesia que digo a ninguno se perdonan los peccados, puesto caso que se aflija mucho e atormente con penitencias o exercite todas las obras de misericordia, y mirad que digo que en la yglesia no de los ereges sino santa... Ay remission de pecados, mediante el baptismo, e despues mediante la penitencia e las llaves que Jesu Chrsto dio a la yglesia.”

⁴⁷ Ibid, 28. “Esto les viene de no saber lo que confiessan que creen, e por ventura no lo saben, porque no han tenido quien se lo declarar.”

Elsewhere Valdés speaks much more openly on the topic of justification. In the *Alfabeto Christiano*, he presents the Golden Rule as the single rule for Christian living: “He is a just man because he goes by the way of justification, which is that which Christ taught us.”⁴⁸ Regarding works, he quotes St. Augustine as saying that “good works follow them who are already *justified*, and do not go before in him who has to be *justified* [emphasis added].” He expounds on this point: “Works are good when done by a person already *justified*, and none can be *justified* unless he stand in love and charity with God and his neighbor [emphasis added].” And again, “As God is love, so no work is grateful to him that is not done by love.”⁴⁹ In short, faith and private morality far outweigh blind adherence to ecclesiastical ritual. That he moderates his language for this dialogue indicates that he wished the *Doctrina Christiana* to be acceptable to a wider audience, one not necessarily as favorably disposed to his reformist ideas as the Gonzagas.

Article XI: Creer la resurrection de la carne (*Carnis resurrectionem*)

Will each soul return to the same body it left? Yes, nor should it seem strange that God can reunite them.⁵⁰ But it is better to rely on faith than human reason; Christians must believe that God has promised these things, that He cannot lie, and that He is powerful enough to do whatever He wants. Why do we need bodies at all? So that all of man, body and soul, enjoy the glory of Jesus Christ. With great honor will we say that we suffered in body and soul for Christ on Earth. Well might Juan have drawn comfort from this premise as he spent his waning years in comfortable exile!

⁴⁸ Wiffen, 68.

⁴⁹ Ibid, 53.

⁵⁰ Valdés, 29. “Mirad, hermano, al que pudo criar todo quanto quiso de nonada, creedme que no le sera dificultoso tornar en su primera figura lo disfigurado.”

Article XII: Creer la vida eternal (*Et vitam eternam Amen.*)

For the final article, the Archbishop explains that there are two manners of death: one of the body that is common to good and bad men alike, and one of the spirit that is reserved for the unrepentant. After the universal resurrection, the good will have eternal life of the body as well as the soul. This new body will be free from all earthly fatigue and will be governed by the spirit and soul.⁵¹ The bad will have eternal death of both body and soul, because they have immortal bodies, which will eternally be tormented, and their souls without hope of clemency (*miser cordia*) will be afflicted “*con stimulus de pecados.*”⁵² Such a strong statements seems intended to demonstrate Valdés’ orthodoxy and to refute his critics who accused him of denying the existence of Hell.

The Ten Commandments (Los Diez Mandamientos)

Following his exegesis on the Creed, Valdés (through the voice of the unnamed Archbishop) expounds upon the Ten Commandments as the foundation for a moral lifestyle. Although ostensibly a harmless discussion of Church history and ethical behavior, the discussion touches on several issues that were alarming to the Inquisition, particularly questions about faith, works, and justification. I present a translation of this pivotal section of the *Dialogue* together with a discussion of the key points. As will be seen, the first section of the work was intended partially to impress the readers with the author’s rhetorical skill and knowledge of ecclesiastical tradition. By turning to Scripture itself in this section Valdés asserts his right to interpret the Bible directly without aid of a priest - a radical idea which he tones down slightly by presenting these revelations through the voice of a pseudo-cleric. This brief discourse on the Ten

⁵¹ Ibid, 29. “Y el cuerpo sera ya libre de toda fatiga, e hcho spiritual sera regido por el spiritu y el anima siendo libre de toda tentacion gozara sin fin del sumo bien, que es Dios.”

⁵² Ibid, 30.

Commandments thereby assumes a place of great importance both for the listeners within the *Dialogue* and for the adherents to the larger body of Valdesian thought. The first three articles are most relevant to our purpose as they concern man's relationship to God and the role of the individual believer in attaining salvation. The remaining articles primarily deal with personal morality and largely reiterate the ethical questions considered in the foregoing discussion of the Creed. To avoid covering the same ground again we will focus on the first three Commandments and their implications for a believer newly introduced to the Erasmist-Valdesian philosophy.

Eusebius begins by asking why the Archbishop recommends that the first thing that a Christian child should be taught after the Creed is the Ten Commandments. The Archbishop replies that first man must know who he must believe in and then what he must believe; then it is necessary to know the will of Him whom he already knows and believes. God declared His will in the time of the children of Israel by giving them the Ten Commandments, and we are also obligated to keep and proclaim them (Exodus XX, Dn.V).⁵³ Eusebius compliments his instructor's rhetorical skill, then asks why God says in almost all the Commandments what He wants us *not* to do, rather than what He wants us to do. For example, the Scriptures could easily say "You will worship only one God," rather than "You will not worship foreign gods."⁵⁴ The Archbishop replies that only God knows the answer to this question with certainty, but he is willing to repeat what he told someone else who asked the same, "and if either of you knows something better say so." Apparently satisfied with this disclaimer, he begins to declaim.

For Valdés, proper interpretation of the Ten Commandments requires acknowledgement of a basic contrast between human and divine law. The laws of men are only made so we do not

⁵³ Ibid 32, "[M]ás Jesu Christo Nuestro Señor estando y conversando acá en el mundo." All translations are my own unless otherwise indicated.

⁵⁴ Ibid 32, "Quiero dezir, por que no dize *Adorarás a un solo Dios*, sino *no adorarás dioses ajenos*, e semejantemente en los más de los otros."

continually do what they prohibit us (*nos viedan*). The Law of God is very different, meant not just to advise us of what we should and should not do, but as St. Paul says because in the Law we came into knowledge of our sins against God. The Law, as expressed in the Ten Commandments, thereby shows us how we are sinners.⁵⁵ This knowledge, he declares, is the beginning of true justification.⁵⁶ The Archbishop concludes this preface with a flourish. To his awestruck listeners he exclaims that the First Commandment declares: “O miserable man! Behold herein your wickedness. You should be such that neither had foreign gods, nor took your God’s name in vain, and that neither killed nor fornicated, yet here you are foreign to this love and perverse.”⁵⁷ Here Valdés draws upon Spain’s long history of domestic reform movements. Such emphasis on private morality and personal accountability recalls the Cisneran reforms or even the exigencies of the Jesuits.

I: Non habe bis deos alienos (*No ternás dioses agenos*)

The First Commandment warns against the sin of idolatry (*pecado de la ydolotría*), in both its interior and exterior forms. The external or superficial sign is easily observed: when men worship a piece of wood, a stone, an animal or some such thing, as seen in the Old Testament. The Archbishop opines that people did this many times in history for fear of penalty or for their own selfish interest. The internal form is much more dangerous and difficult to detect. It occurs when men really put their love and confidence in their earthly idols: honors, riches, or other creatures. We need not really bend our knees before them, the Archbishop declares, but offer

⁵⁵ Ibid 32, “[P]or ella venimos en conocimiento de los malos pecados que avemos hecho contra Dios, e assí muéstranos como somos pecadores.”

⁵⁶ Ibid 33, “El qual conocimiento es principio de verdadera justificación.”

⁵⁷ Ibid 33, “Devias ser tal que ni tuviesses dioses agenos, ni tomasses el nombre de tu Dios en vano, e que ni matasses, ni fornicasses, y veste aqui muy ageno desta bondad e perverso.”

them our hearts, the most noble part of man. Men thereby worship God externally with their bodies, and adore internally the idol with their spirit. He quotes Mat. XV, Den. VI.⁵⁸

All of this should not come as a surprise, the Archbishop tells his listeners, as they should already be familiar with these ideas. God says to each of us that neither through our strength nor efforts can we ever arrive at such a level of perfection that we will not worship foreign gods, for even if we do not externally worship statues, in our hearts we love earthly things more than Him. Therefore we will only worship God when we hear Him and believe His words, truly confiding them. Only this confidence will rescue us from covetousness and dependence on exterior things, and bring us finally to our Creator. Antronio declares that the Archbishop has said a great thing and asks very humbly how it can be done. The teacher replies at length:

You must know that the faith and confidence we put in Jesus Christ goes far beyond all confidence in our own wisdom, justice and virtue, because if Jesus Christ had not died for us, neither we nor any other creature could experience real happiness. This knowledge makes us disdain (*menospreciar*) exterior things. When a Christian hears that Jesus suffered for him and he believes it, in him is born a new confidence, a sure love, a joyful wonder (*maravilla sabrosa*), and consequently all desire for external things perishes and is replaced by the knowledge that only Jesus satisfies and from Him we can expect all things.

Anticipating his pupils' next question, the Archbishop hastens to explain how the faithful can expect to meet this impressively high standard:

It is only possible to comply with this first Commandment if one has whole faith, firm hope, and perfect love for Jesus Christ our God and Redeemer, completely unaffected by external things for which the special grace of God is doubtless necessary.⁵⁹

Antronio, predictably, demonstrates his ignorance by declaring, "When you ask me if I have a foreign god, I tell you no, absolutely not." The Archbishop says he has expected this response from the priest. Therein lies all the trouble, he laments, that since we do not know our own illness, we cannot procure the remedy for it, and so we are stuck (*reposito*) in it. He asks his

⁵⁸ Ibid 34. "Israel, si me oyes, no ternás dios nuevo, ni adorarás dios ageno."

⁵⁹ Ibid 35: "... dessasidos totalmente de todo affecto de cosas exteriores para lo qual es sin dubda menester especial gracia de Dios."

protégés whether they are so dead to all material things, and so sure in Jesus Christ, that neither riches nor poverty, honors nor affronts, life nor death can hold any appeal or terror for them? In other words, are they so detached from the material world that nothing can excite their acquisitiveness? For assuredly, however things fall, for better or worse, only by placing your hope and trust in Christ can anyone hope to achieve this level of assuredness and peace. The pupils are, understandably, dumbfounded by this impressive declaration.

Surprisingly, it is the priest who recovers first. Antronio stammers that all this seems good to him, but asks whether all that the Archbishop is saying is really for him or only for the perfects? The aged cleric answers that these things are certainly for the perfects but are expedient for all Christians. Antronio is taken aback. Surely the Archbishop differentiates between the states of the Church militant? Or does he place on equal footing the plebeian and the bishop?⁶⁰ His teacher responds with a synthesis of Valdesian thought: “I am speaking only of Christian perfection, which perfects him who reaches for it.” Here is succinctly stated the main premise of Erasmist-Valdesian thought: that practical Christianity consists of moral living that is available to anyone, regardless of status. Sadly, Antronio seems to have missed the subtlety of the point. He demands whether all who do not have this perfection go to Hell? The Archbishop distances himself from this extreme statement:

I don’t say that, but this is the point or terminus which we must reach towards, and for those who don’t achieve it, only those are pardoned who with pained spirits know and confess that they are not as they should be, and say of the Pater Noster, *Dimitte nobis debita nostra sicut et no dimittimus debitoribus nostris* (Math. VII), and David, *Cor mundum crea in me Deus, et spiritum rectum innova in visceribus meis* (Psalm 1).”⁶¹

⁶⁰ Ibid 35: “... vos no hazeys diferencia en los estados de la yglesia militante, pues ygualeys en perficion al plebeyo con el obispo?”

⁶¹ Ibid 36.

Again, the old man's seemingly encyclopedic knowledge of Scripture sharply distinguishes him from the untutored priest. However, those that do not follow this path but sleep soundly (*a pierna tendida*) truly do not keep this Commandment. The Archbishop angrily declares, "I promise you that they will not be excused by saying that it is only for the perfects as you said, for this was not given for the stones but for men."⁶² Antronio is terrified by the seeming rebuke: "My flesh trembles in hearing you, and I don't know what to respond." He further fears what his congregation will do when he has to repeat this message to them. ("que hará pues a los muchachos si yo les tengo de dezir esso.") The Archbishop declares that this attitude is a great cowardice (*pusilanimdiad*) and ill-befitting a priest. One must not tremble in fear, but consider that however difficult (*rezio*) this Commandment is, God's grace is greater still, so much so that "you will easily be able to comply, so ask God humbly for his grace and help and I promise you that he will not deny you." Thereby Antronio will see how light and joyful is that which now seems heavy and burdensome.⁶³

The Archbishop concludes by reinforcing his earlier statement that Christian living is for all believers, not restricted to an elite band of perfects. He admonishes his listeners to tell this counsel to all the Christians, small and great. (Math. XIX, VI, XI.) Apparently heartened by this change in tone, Antronio eagerly declares that he will do what his teacher says, but begs the Archbishop to tell him specifically who are those that sin against this Commandment. Unwilling to further belabor the point, the Archbishop refers his pupils to the "thousand commentaries" on the subject, particularly that of Cyruel.⁶⁴ Antronio says that he has seen it but wants to hear it from Archbishop. Apparently somewhat flattered, the Archbishop offers a concise summary: all

⁶² Ibid 36, "[P]ues esta claro que no se dio para las piedras sino para los hombres."

⁶³ Ibid 36, "[Q]uan liviano y sobroso es lo que agora os paresce pesado y aspero."

⁶⁴ Ibid 37, "[P]ues topareys por ay mil confessoraris que os lo digan, especialmente uno de un maestro Cyruel."

break the Commandment who do not live in the simplicity and purity that he has said “que le quebrantan todos aquellos que no biven con la simplicidad e puridad que avemos dicho.”

II. No tomarás el nombre de tu Señor Dios en vano (*Non assumes nomen dni, di tui in vanum*)

The Archbishop declares that this Commandment, like all the others, depends on the First, because he who observes the first observes all the rest. Ever quick to spot a logical fallacy, Eusebio asks why declare them separately (*por qué los ponen distintos*)? The Archbishop replies that this serial listing serves better to help our spiritual blindness and slowness, for we neither know what we should do externally nor internally.⁶⁵ Here again is the Erasmist-Valdesian preoccupation with the interiority of religion, shunning false works in favor of private devotion. This idea is maintained throughout the section. While the First Commandment instructs the heart, the Second concerns the mouth. We sin against God in three ways: in our heart, through our mouth, and through our works. Accordingly, each form of sin has its own commandment, so that he who sins with the heart does not also sin by speech or works. The Archbishop concludes on a somber note: “He who sins with the heart, neither by words (*la boca*) nor by works (*la obra*) can he be justified.”⁶⁶ This type of Erasmist thought, subtly introduced and quickly passed over, is highly characteristic of Valdés’ writing. Indeed, all of Valdés’ works are punctuated with similar barbs, enough to arouse the reader’s interest in Erasmist/Illuminist models but never overt enough to risk inquisitorial condemnation.

Perhaps aware that he is on dangerous ground, the Archbishop quickly shifts focus to a more orthodox material. Having dismissed irreverent uses of the name of God, he signals a more

⁶⁵ Ibid 37: “Por socorrer a nuestra ceguedad y torpeza, que ni sabemos qu é es lo que avemos de hazer exteriormente ni aun interior.”

⁶⁶ Ibid 37: “[P]ecamos contra Dios en tres maneras, con el corac ón, y con la boca, y con la obra, assí para cada una ay su mandamiento, de manera que assí como el que pecca con el coracón no pecca tampoco con la boca ni con la obra, assí el que pecca con el coracón, ni por la boca ni por la obra puede ser justificado.”

favorable aspect of the Second Commandment. By forbidding us to use God's name in vain, this commandment also gives us license to call upon, worship, and confess God's name.⁶⁷ To further support his views, he quotes St. Paul: "Whoever calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."⁶⁸ While this reference to Romans X is clearly an attempt to demonstrate the Archbishop's (and Valdés') orthodoxy and knowledge of scripture, the universalist sentiment is uncomfortably similar to Erasmist and *alumbrado* arguments condemned by the Inquisition. Partially to distance himself from the latter group of mystics, Valdés has the aged cleric outline the proper attitude of devotion towards God. In summary, the only lawful use of the divine name is to glorify God and for the health of our soul.⁶⁹ The Archbishop categorically forbids its use by sorcerers and the superstitious ("ensalmadores," or folk healers, often translated as quacks in contemporary speech).

This apparently innocuous statement provokes a disbelieving reaction from his listeners. Eusebius demands whether good intentions matter in such cases? When the Archbishop imperturbably responds that they do not, Antronio declares that he has always heard that works are judged by the intentions of the individual.⁷⁰ The elderly cleric responds forcefully that his guests are deceived (not mistaken, but deliberately misled or taken in) and that St. Paul would never have agreed with their interpretation.⁷¹ Eusebius incredulously asks why not. (It is worth

⁶⁷ Ibid, 37: "Pues viniendo a nuestro mandamiento av éys de entender que en mandarnos que no tomemos el nombre de Dios en vano se nos da licencia que lo tomemos para llamarle, alabarle y confesarle"

⁶⁸ Ibid, 38: "Qualquiera que llamare el nombre del Señor será salvo."

⁶⁹ Ibid, 38: "La causa para que es lícito tomarlo es para gloria de Dios y para salud de nuestras ánimas."

⁷⁰ Ibid 38: "Porque dizen que tal es la obra qual es la intención. Pues si la intención destes es buena, ¿por qué será mala la obra?"

⁷¹ Ibid 38: "Engañado estáys, que esse dicho no lo terná sant Pablo en todo por verdadero."

noting that in this matter the clever layman and the untutored priest are in rare agreement). The Archbishop calmly quotes Romans IX, arguing that if the good intentions promoting an action are foolish (*nescias*) then the results are necessarily bad.⁷² Eusebius succinctly restates this premise, asking whether sometimes the intention is good and the work bad. The Archbishop replies, apparently with some impatience, “Yes, and if St. Paul’s authority is not good enough for you, I will give you another proof from Jesus Christ our Lord, who said to his Disciples that there would come a time when those who killed them thought themselves doing a service for God.”⁷³ Joan XVI. Since the act of killing Apostles was clearly bad, the good (though mistaken) intentions of the murderers counted for nothing. Similarly, Saul’s intention in his sacrifice appeared good, but he gained only misfortune. David’s choice of the census and St. Peter’s decision to offer to die in defense of Jesus both might seem positive at first, but because in their good intentions they did not have discretion, they were visibly punished.⁷⁴

One might imagine a suitable pause after this somber pronouncement. At length Eusebius replies, with a weak attempt at humor, “You have convinced me I have been a poor defender of the *ensalmadores*.” Here the Archbishop’s face seems to cloud over, and he declares that he will soon track down and punish all the *ensalmadores* in his archbishopric, “but this is beside the point.” It has been said not to lie or bear false witness, but the Archbishop says we must not swear at all. This idea, he insists, is in accord with the true spirit of what Christ said to the Jews, for although oaths were permitted in the past, if anyone willingly and needlessly says more than a simple “yes” or “no,” he goes against the doctrine of Jesus Christ. Though inoffensive if

⁷² Ibid 38: “Porque dize, el que da testimonio de los judíos, que su intención para con Dios era buena, pero que la obra de estar siempre en su pertinacia era mala, y la causa por que era mala es porque era nescia la buena intención.”

⁷³ Ibid 39: “Porque dize, el que da testimonio de los judíos, que su intención para con Dios era buena, pero que la obra de estar siempre en su pertinacia era mala, y la causa por que era mala es porque era nescia la buena intención.”

⁷⁴ Ibid 39: “[D]e manera que para que la obra sea buena es menester que la intención sea buena e discreta.”

confined to its context as presented, this critique of empty formalism and insincere devotion again echoes Erasmist ideas that had been outlawed in Spain. Ever the judicious author, Valdés seems unwilling to make this potentially controversial connection outright, relying instead upon the readers to deduce it for themselves. With a definite sense of anticlimax, the Archbishop abruptly declares that they have effectively exhausted the discussion of the Second Commandment.

III: Acuérdate de santificar las fiestas (*Memento ut diem sabbati sanctifices*)

The Archbishop warns against the danger of offending God not only through sins but through reliance on servile works.⁷⁵ Continuing with the themes of externality and internality explored earlier in the *Doctrina Christiana*, he repeats that man can sin in three ways: through the heart, through the mouth, and through deeds or works. These behaviors correspond respectively with the external or sensual self, the internal or rational self, and the intermediary or spiritual self. Predictably, Antronio wails that he cannot understand the erudite distinctions made by his mentor.⁷⁶ The Archbishop quickly explains that the confusion arises from a long-standing misinterpretation of the original Commandment. When God told the ancient Hebrews to honor the Sabbath, they understood the command literally and felt that in not working on that day they complied with the divine will. Yet these were merely exterior works in service of an external obligation. Unless the will and emotions were involved in this task, the observance of the Sabbath and thereby compliance with the Commandment would never reach into the inner man of the spirit. In order for modern Christians to fulfill God's law, they must live in such a way as

⁷⁵ "Así no ofendamos a Dios en obras serviles y de pecados."

⁷⁶ Por vuestra vida, señor, que no me metáis en esas sutilezas que yo no entiendo.

to observe the Sabbath every day of their lives. This ideal is so far removed from the reality of human behavior that the Archbishop gives rare vent to his emotions:

I do not know what to tell you, except that I see that the customs of Christians have already come to such a state of misery, and are fallen into such blindness, that in doing what we think is observing the feast days we break them, and on the same days that God commands us to purify and give ourselves wholly to Him, in those very moments we condemn ourselves and give ourselves wholly to Satan.⁷⁷

After silently receiving this fiery tirade, the pupils are understandably shocked. Eusebio recovers first and quickly asks the logical question: if the situation is so poor, why has the Archbishop, as a powerful prelate, not sought to remedy it?⁷⁸ The cleric responds that what is needed is not stentorian efforts but a *remedio general* or renewal on a wide scale, adding that if it were up to him the matter would be quickly corrected. He next calls on his listeners to witness that already in his diocese he has begun to do so. The last comment is suggestive: the Archbishop declares that if he lives long enough he will extend his reforms further still (*y si vivo, yo haré de manera que las cosas anden de otro norte que andan.*) This cryptic phrase literally means to march further north than they are marching. The direction here is striking: Valdés has clearly established the scene of the dialogue as a Neapolitan court. Does the seemingly doctrinal and dogmatic cleric make a veiled reference to Rome and the Papal Marches?

Continuing with the theme of Erasmist perfection, the Archbishop expands the Commandment from guidelines for select feast days to a general admonition for moral living. He declares that a good Christian must consider all days are feast days and follow the precept of sanctification, that is improving one's manner and way of living in order to achieve whole

⁷⁷ “No sé qué os diga, sino que veo que son ya venidas las costumbres de los cristianos a tanta miseria, y son caídas en tanta ceguedad, que con lo que pensamos guardar las fiestas las quebrantamos, y en los mismos días que nos manda Dios que nos hagamos santos y nos demos todos y del todo a El, en aquellos mismos nos hacemos infernales y nos damos todos y del todo a Satanás.”

⁷⁸ “Pues que tan mal os parece eso, ¿por qué, pues, sois prelado, no lo remediáis?”

perfection.⁷⁹ He follows this principle with an even more daunting challenge: “But you must know that all the Commandments, so that by keeping them one can achieve eternal life, require that whoever keeps them must be outside of mortal sin and have compassion (*caridad*), which is the perfect love of God; because where this compassion is not, although one externally obeys the Commandments, they do not observe the intentions with which they were instituted, and in order to have this compassion we must ask it of God.” As if unsatisfied by this criticism of a works-based doctrine of salvation, the Archbishop proceeds to summarize the entire work in a single sentence: “And this is my theme, that he that would keep the Commandments need not take any means other than prayer, which will do more than any other way.”⁸⁰ As if suddenly struck by the import of his words, the Archbishop hastily adds that here it would be in order to talk more about the proper spiritual exercises a Christian ought to observe, particularly how to hear mass and sermons.⁸¹ Yet even as he commends the importance of these measures, he undermines their seriousness by calling them *cositas* - little things, matters of small importance.

The discussion quickly returns to the Third Commandment, particularly the vulgar misinterpretation of its observance. Eusebio notes that many people think they are being holy by refraining from all labor, even apparently inconsequential tasks like sewing, although they do nothing of value but play games and dwell on even worse things.⁸² Antronio recounts the story of a peasant laborer who worked on the Sabbath and consequently was fined and publicly reprimanded by the town *cofradía*. The Archbishop is irate; why should the poor be punished for

⁷⁹ “El buen cristiano ha de pensar que todos los días son fiestas, y que en todos ha de cumplir este precepto y se ha de santificar; quiero decir, mejorar en su manera y arte de vivir hasta que alcance entera perfección.”

⁸⁰ “Y así es mi tema: que el que quisiere guardar los Mandamientos como debe, no ha de tomar otro medio más principal que la oración, y hará más que por otra vía ninguna.”

⁸¹ “Aquí fuera razón que dijéramos de los ejercicios en que el cristiano debe gastar estos tales días, y de cómo ha de oír su misa y su sermón, y así otras cositas; pero se quedarán para otro día.”

⁸² “[A]unque en todo el día no haga sino jugar y entender en otras cosas tales y aún peores.”

doing constructive work when his fellows spend the day in idleness, gambling, “lying, murmuring, busying and doing other similar things.”⁸³ He is particularly incensed that the *cofradía* should sanction this hypocritical behavior: “Oh blessed be God who so patiently overlooks so many wrongs and such blindness!”⁸⁴ Belatedly, almost as a disclaimer, he states that he does not deny that the worker did wrong, but mourns the little respect that the public has for the Commandments of God, and complains of the deceitful, false manner in which we judge these things.⁸⁵

Conclusion: Juan Valdés and Practical Christianity

After concluding his exegesis, the Archbishop encourages his listeners not to think this task is impossible. If what he has said seems good to them, they should ask for God’s help to live this way and they will experience the fruit of such a lifestyle. Nor should they be cold or lukewarm in their faith, but present their petitions with great fervor and in the firm knowledge of their need. He finishes on a provocative note, saying that God answers prayer based on the fervor of the supplicant rather than based on any degree of personal merit.⁸⁶ Eusebio says that of all the explanations of the Creed he has heard, this is the most satisfying, and he asks if the Archbishop has learnt it in a book. The Archbishop asks if he has heard of Erasmus.⁸⁷ Eusebio replies that he

⁸³ “[V]eis ahí, habría en la ciudad muchos que gastarían aquel día en jugar a naipes y a dados y en andar con mujeres, y mintiendo, murmurando, trafagando y haciendo otras cosas semejantes.”

⁸⁴ “¡Oh, bendito sea Dios que tanta paciencia tiene para consentir tantos males y tanta ceguedad!”

⁸⁵ “No digo yo que no hizo mal el labrador; pero quéjome del poco respeto que se tiene a los Mandamientos de Dios, y quéjome del falso juicio y engañoso con que juzgamos estas cosas.”

⁸⁶ Ibid, 30. “Si lo que he hecho os parece bien e desseays el fruto dello, deveis pedirlo a Dios, e pedirlo no tibia ni friamente, sino con mucho fervor conociendo vuestra necesidad, porque quiero que sepays que tanto fervor tenemos en la oracion, quanta es la necesidad que en nosotros conocemos.”

⁸⁷ “Bien aveys oydo nombrar un excelente doctor verddaderamente theologo que agora bive, el qual se llama Erasmo Roterodamo.”

has heard the name, but that others had advised him not to read his works.⁸⁸ The Archbishop says to dismiss Erasmus' detractors as fools and to read and study his works. He recommends the *Colloquies* as a primer for Christian children, which includes a description of the Creed much like the Archbishop's, who has studied the text diligently.⁸⁹

Before departing, Antronio says that he too had friends advise him against Erasmus, but that he will now read him, though he will need a translation because he does not understand Latin-another scathing critique of the clergy. The Archbishop agrees, but says it is more important to have these things imprinted on the soul than written in books. This last comment concisely states the cornerstone of Valdesian-Erasmist thought: that Christianity is something interior, intensely personal, and therefore invisible to the external observer. For all their reasoned arguments, powerful patrons, and impressive credentials, Erasmus and Valdés gained such a wide following simply because their message of a more intimate religion resonated strongly with a generation in the throes of spiritual ferment. The Inquisition's condemnation of the *Doctrina Christiana*, as with the *Enchiridion* and *Colloquies* before it, was less an attack on heresy than a defense of ecclesiastical privilege and entitlement. Already battered by councils, reformers, schisms, and mystics, the Church could not accept another attack on the *status quo*, however subtle or scholarly. Yet the *Doctrina Christiana* survived, along with a reduced corpus of Valdés' other works, and offers a tantalizing glimpse of a world long ignored or thought destroyed: the brief but intense Erasmist experience in Spain and its exile community.

⁸⁸ Ibid, 30. "No, porque algunos me han aconsejado que me guarde de leerlas."

⁸⁹ Ibid, 31. "Pues tomad vos mi consejo e dexad a essos para necios, e vos leed y estudiad en las obras de Erasmo e vereys quan gran fructo sacais, e dexado aparte esto, aveis de saber que entre las obras deste Erasmo hay un librito de *Colloquios familiars* el qual dize el que hizo para que los ninos juntamente aprendiessen latinidad e christiandad, porque en el trata muchas coasas christianas. Entre estos pues ay uno donde se declara el Credo casi de la manera que yo aqui os lo he declarado, e no os maravilleys quelo tenga assi en la cabeza que lo he leydo muchas vezes, e con mucha atencion."

LIST OF REFERENCES

- Abellán, José Luis. *El Erasmianismo Español: Una Historia de la Otra España*. Madrid: S.A. Editorial Graficas Espejo, 1976.
- Andrés Martín, Melquíades. "Alumbrados, Erasmists, Lutherans, and Mystics: The Risk of a More Intimate Spirituality." In *The Spanish Inquisition and the Inquisitorial Mind*, edited by Angel Alcalá, 457–494. New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1987.
- Andrés Martín, Melquíades. "Corrientes Culturales en Tiempo de los Reyes Católicos y Recepción de Erasmo." In *Erasmianismo en España*, edited by Manuel Revuelta Sañudo and Ciriaco Morón Arroyo, 73–96. Santander: Sociedad Menéndez Pelayo, 1986.
- Andrés Martín, Melquiades. *La Teología Española en el Siglo XVI*. 2 vols. Madrid: Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, 1976–1977.
- Andrés Martín, Melquiades. *Los Recogidos: Nueva Visión de la Mística Española de la Edad de Oro*. Madrid: Fundación Universitaria Española, 1975.
- Ansa, María Paz Aspe. *Constantino Ponce de la Fuente: el Hombre y Su Lenguaje*. Madrid: FUE Universidad Pontificia de Salamanca, 1975.
- Bataillon, Marcel. *Erasmus y España: Estudios Sobre la Historia Espiritual del Siglo XVI*. Translated by Antonio Alatorre. Mexico: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1966.
- Baudier, Michel. *The History of the Administration of Cardinal Ximenes, Great Minister of State in Spain*. London: J. Wilkins, 1671.
- Benito, Nicolás Castrill. *El 'Reginaldo Montano': Primer Libro Polémico Contra la Inquisición Española*. Madrid: CSIC, 1991.
- Bergua, J. "De Nuevo Sobre Francisco de Enzinas y Juan de Jarava." *Bibliothèque D'Humanisme et Renaissance* 66 (2004): 387–401.
- Bethencourt, Francisco. *La Inquisición en la Época Moderna: España, Portugal e Italia, Siglos XV–XIX*. Translated by Federico Palomo. Madrid: Akal, 1997.
- Boehmer, Edward. *Bibliotheca Wiffeniania: Spanish Reformers of Two Centuries from 1520, Their Lives and Writings*. London: Truebner, 1874–83.
- Brink, J.N. Bakhuizen van den. *Juan de Valdés, Réformateur en Espagne et en Italie*. Geneva: Droz, 1969.
- Burgos, Jesús Alonso. *El Luteranismo en Castilla Durante el S. XVI. Autos de Fe de Valladolid de 21 de Mayo y de 8 de Octubre de 1559*. San Lorenzo del Escorial: Swan, & Fundación Avantos & Hakeldama, 1983.

- Burman, Edward. *The Inquisition: Hammer of Heresy*. Gloucestershire, UK: Sutton Publishers, 2004.
- Castelnau, Charlotte. "Les Étrangers Protestants dans l'Espagne Moderne, 16e–17e Siècles." In *Recherche Sur l'Histoire de l'État dans le Monde Ibérique, 15e–20e Siècle*, edited by Jean Frédéric Schaub, 143–162. Paris: Presses de l'Ecole Normale Supérieure, 1993.
- Cedillo, Jerónimo López de Ayala, conde de. *El Cardenal Cisneros, Gobernador del Reino*. Madrid: Real Academia de la Historia, 1921.
- Coleman, David. "Spain." In *The Reformation World*, edited by Andrew Pettegree, 296–305. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1992.
- Contreras, Jaime. "The Impact of Protestantism in Spain 1520–1600." In *Inquisition and Society in Early Modern Europe*, edited by Stephen Haliczer, 47–63. Totowa, NJ: Barnes & Noble, 1987.
- Crews, Daniel A. "Juan de Valdés and the Comunero Revolt: An Essay on Spanish Civic Humanism." *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 22 (1991): 233–252.
- Cruz, Anne J. and Mary Elizabeth Perry. *Culture and Control in Counter-Reformation Spain*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1992.
- Domínguez Berrueta, Juan. *Cisneros*. Madrid: Editora Nacional, 1945.
- Elliott, J. H. *Imperial Spain, 1469–1716*. New York, NY: Penguin Books, 1990.
- García, Agustín Bustamante. "El Santo Oficio de Valladolid y los Artistas." *Boletín del Seminario de Estudios de Arte y Arqueología* 61 (1995): 455–466.
- García Oro, José. *Cisneros, Cardenal de España*. Alcalá de Henares: Instituto de Estudios Complutenses, 1998.
- García Oro, José. *Cisneros y la Reforma del Clero Español en Tiempo de los Reyes Católicos*. Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1971.
- Hamilton, Alastair. *Heresy and Mysticism in Sixteenth-Century Spain*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992.
- Headley, John M. *The Emperor and His Chancellor: A Study of the Imperial Chancellery under Gattinara*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1983.
- Heredia, Beltrán V. *Historia de la Reforma de la Provincia de España (1450–1550)*. Rome: Sabinae, 1939.

- Homza, Lu Ann, "Erasmus as Hero, or Heretic? Spanish Humanism and the Valladolid Assembly of 1527." *Renaissance Quarterly* 50 (1997): 78–118
- Homza, Lu Ann. *Religious Authority in the Spanish Renaissance*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000.
- Huerga, Alvaro. *Historia de los Alumbrados: (1570–1630)*. Madrid: Fundación Universitaria Española, Seminario Cisneros.
- Kamen, Henry. *Crisis and Change in Early Modern Spain*. Brookfield, VT: Variorum, 1993.
- Kamen, Henry. *Spain, 1469–1714: A Society of Conflict*. New York, NY: Pearson/Longman, 2005.
- Kamen, Henry. *The Spanish Inquisition: A Historical Revision*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1998.
- Kinder, A. Gordon. "Protestantism in Sixteenth-Century Spain: Doctrines and Practices As Confessed to Inquisitors." *Mediterranean Studies* 4 (1994): 77
- Kinder, A. Gordon. "Spain." In *The Early Reformation in Europe*, edited by Andrew Pettegree, 215–237. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1992.
- Lea, Henry Charles. *A History of the Inquisition of Spain*. New York, NY: The Macmillan Company, 1922.
- Lea, Henry Charles. *Chapters from the Religious History of Spain Connected with the Inquisition*. New York, NY: Burt Franklin, 1967.
- Llorente, Juan Antonio. *A Critical History of the Inquisition of Spain, from the Period of Its Establishment by Ferdinand V to the Reign of Ferdinand VII*. Williamstown, MA: J. Lilburne Co., 1967.
- Longhurst, John Edward. *Erasmus and the Spanish Inquisition: The Case of Juan de Valdés*. Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press, 1950.
- Mansilla, Demetrio. "La Reorganización Eclesiástica Española del Siglo XVI." *Anthologica Annua* 4 (1967): 97–238; 5 (1968): 91–216.
- Márquez, Antonio. *Los Alumbrados: Orígenes y Filosofía*. Madrid: Taurus, 1972.
- M'Crie, Thomas. *History of the Progress and Suppression of the Reformation in Spain in the Sixteenth Century*. New York, NY: AMS Press, 1971.
- Menéndez y Pelayo, Marcelino. *Historia de los Heterodoxos Españoles*. Buenos Aires: Espasa-Calpe, 1951.

- Nieto, José C. *El Renacimiento y la Otra España: Visión Cultural Socioespiritual*. Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1997.
- Nieto, José C. *Juan de Valdés*. Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1970
- O'Malley, John (ed.) *Catholicism in Early Modern History*. St. Louis, MO: Center for Reformation Research, 1988.
- O'Reilly, Terence. "Erasmus, Ignatius Loyola, and Orthodoxy." *Journal of Theological Studies* 30 (1979): 115–127.
- Pastore, Stefania. *Un'Eresia Spagnola. Spiritualità Conversa, Alumbadismo e Inquisizione (1449–1559)*. Florence: Olschki, 2006.
- Pérez, Joseph. "El Erasmianismo y las Corrientes Espirituales Afines." In *Erasmianismo en España*, edited by Manuel Revuelta Sañudo and Ciriaco Morón Arroyo, 323–338. Santander: Sociedad Menéndez Pelayo, 1986.
- Pérez, Joseph. *The Spanish Inquisition: A History*. London: Profile, 2004.
- Peters, Edward. *Inquisition*. New York, NY: The Free Press, 1988.
- Porreño, Baltasar. *Dos Tratados Históricos Tocantes al Cardenal Ximénez de Cisneros*. Madrid: Sociedad de Bibliófilos Españoles, 1918.
- Rawlings, Helen. *Church, Religion, and Society in Early Modern Spain*. New York, NY: Palgrave, 2002.
- Rawlings, Helen. *The Spanish Inquisition*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub., 2006.
- Reina, Casiodoro de. *Confesión de Fe Christiana: The Spanish Protestant Confession of Faith*. London, 1560/61. Edited by A. Gordon Kinder from the sole surviving copy of the bilingual edition. Exeter: University of Exeter, 1988.
- Rummel, Erika. *Jiménez de Cisneros: On the Threshold of Spain's Golden Age*. Tempe, AZ: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 1999.
- Sañudo, Manuel Revuelta and Ciriaco Morón Arroyo (eds.) *Erasmianismo en España*. Santander: Sociedad Menéndez Pelayo, 1986
- Spach, Robert, "Juan Gil and Sixteenth-Century Spanish Protestantism", *Sixteenth Century Journal* 26 (1995): 857–879.
- Starkie, Walter. *La España de Cisneros*. Barcelona: Editorial Juventud, 1943.

- Vázquez Santiago, David. *Propedeutica de los Autos de Fe de Valladolid de 1559: Espiritualidad y Poder en Castilla*. Madrid: Universidad Complutense de Madrid, Memoria de Licenciatura, 2000.
- Vermaseren, B.A. "Who was Reginaldus Gonsalvius Montanus?" *Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance* 47 (1985): 47–77.
- Villalón, Cristóbal. *El Crotalón*. Edited by Asunción Rallo. Madrid: Cátedra, 1990.
- Villanueva, Joaquín Pérez (ed.) *La Inquisición Española: Nueva Visión, Nuevos Horizontes*. Madrid: Siglo XXI, 1980.
- Villanueva, Joaquín Pérez and Bartolomé Escandell Bonet (eds.) *Historia de la Inquisición en España y América*. Madrid: Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos Centro de Estudios Inquisitoriales, 2000.
- Wagner, Klaus. *El Dr. Constantino Ponce de la Fuente: El Hombre y su Biblioteca*. Seville: Diputación, 1979.
- Wagner, Klaus. "Gaspar Batista Vilar, 'Hereje Luterano', amigo de Constantino y de Egidio." *Archivo Hispalense* 187 (1982): 107–118.
- Wagner, Klaus. "La Biblioteca del Dr. Francisco de Vargas, Compañero de Egidio y Constantino." *Bulletin Hispanique* 78 (1976): 314–323.
- Wagner, Klaus. "La Reforma Protestante en los Fondos Bibliográficos de la Biblioteca Colombina." *Revista Española de Teología* 41 (1981): 393–463.
- Wagner, Klaus. "Los Maestros Gil de Fuentes y Alonso de Escobar y el Círculo de 'Luteranos' de Sevilla." *Hispania Sacra* 28 (1975): 240–242.
- Wanger, Christine. "Los Luteranos ante la Inquisición de Toledo en el Siglo XVI." *Hispania Sacra* 46 (1994): 473–507.
- Wolfgang, Otto. *Juan de Valdés and the Reformation in Spain*. Jahrhundert, Frankfurt an Main: Peter Lang, 1989.
- Valdés, Juan de. *Alfabeto Christiano*. Translated by Benjamin B. Wiffen. London: Bosworth and Harrison, 1861.
- Valdés, Juan de. *Obras completas*. Edited and with a prologue by Ángel Alcalá. Madrid: Fundación José Antonio de Castro, 1997.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

As an undergraduate, Matthew Michel was primarily interested in the history of Spain and the Spanish Empire. He was particularly fascinated by the brief flourishing of the Erasmian-Valdesian movement in 16th century Iberia and its swift suppression by the Inquisition. In the summer of 2006, he participated in the University Scholars Program and traveled to Madrid, where he examined primary sources in the Cervantes Room of the *Biblioteca Nacional de España*. These included the seminal Valdesian texts *Diálogo de la Doctrina Christiana*, *Alfabeto Christiano*, and *Diálogo de Mercurio y Carón*. His graduate studies focused on the history of persecution, particularly in the Western Mediterranean, and broadened to include the Cathars or “Manichean” heretics of medieval France. The parallels between the Albigensian Crusade and the brutal suppression of *erasmistas* by the Inquisition are startling and deserve further inquiry.

In addition to a Master of Arts in history, Matthew Michel holds a Master of Arts in international business from the Warrington College of Business Administration. He entered the Frederic G. Levin College of Law in 2009. After his studies are complete, he intends to work in the U.S. Department of State as a Foreign Service Officer specializing in Latin American political affairs. The Spanish language, history and culture have been his life-long passion, and he hopes to continue his studies while traveling abroad.