

SARAH CARPENTER

*Spir:* Friend, quhair find ye that we suld prechours be?

*GC:* Luik quhat Sanct Paul wryts unto Timothie.  
Tak thair the Buik; let se gif ye can spell!

*Spir:* I never red that; thairfoir reid it your sell!

*Gude Counsell sall read thir wordis on ane buik:*

*Fidelis sermo, si quis Episcopatum desiderat, bonum opus desiderat. Oportet [ergo], eum irreprehensibilem esse, unius uxoris virum, sobrium, prudentem, ornatum, pudicum, hospitem, doctorem non vinolentum, non percussorem sed modestum.*

That is: 'This is a true saying, If any man desire the office of a Bishop, he desireth a worthie worke: A Bishop therefore must be unprovable, the husband of one wife, etc. (2912–24)

Unlike Verity's 'dulce and redolent' emblem of Christ's Law, this is primarily a material text, appealed to as literal proof of an ecclesiastical duty. Gude Counsell is citing the words of St Paul in the first Epistle to Timothy. But theatrically, there are some interesting questions about exactly what it is he appears to read, questions which themselves raise further queries about the nature and status of Charteris' 1602 printed text of the play in which this scene is recorded.<sup>24</sup> First, it appears that Gude Counsell reads not from an English Bible, but from a Latin text which he then translates into English. The scene is not, then, building directly on Verity's English New Testament with its reformist implications; the question raised at this point seems to be about clerical reading and understanding of the Vulgate, not about the broader access of lay people to the Bible in English. This suggests that the play is interested not only in the politicised issue of access to the vernacular scriptures, but in dramatising a range of different issues concerning the role of biblical text and how it may be understood.

According to the printed text of the play, Gude Counsell initially reads in Latin, but then appears to translate the words into English. Scholars have pointed out that the English translation of the passage (like others in the play) does not follow any of the editions available to Lyndsay.<sup>25</sup> They have therefore tended to suggest that he made his own translation (even though Gude Counsell's words are noticeably more English than Scots). This might perhaps reinforce a sense that what mattered to Lyndsay was not any specifically textual authority as contained in the words themselves, but simply the importance of making meaning broadly accessible. His discussion of the role of translation into the vernacular in a work almost