Over the last few years, while I was investigating the Loseley Collection of papers in the Folger Shakespeare Library, my attention was called more than once to a four-page, single-sheet, sixteenth-century manuscript which purported to be a portion of a play. The manuscript (shelf mark L.B.554) contains 118 lines of bad verse dealing prosaically with a theological disagreement in an unclear, clumsy language, but it has a contemporary note in the hand of Sir Thomas Cawarden, Master of the Revels to the Tudors, calling it 'Parte of a play'. This report will describe the manuscript, provide a transcription of the accompanying photographs with the permission of the Library, and discuss the dramatic significance of the text.

The handwriting of the heading 'Parte of a play' is identified by Laetitia Yeandle, Curator of Manuscripts at the Folger, in the Catalogue of Manuscripts to the Folger Shakespeare Library (II, 686), as that of Sir Thomas Cawarden, Master of the Revels under Henry VIII, Mary, Edward, and Elizabeth. This attribution is quite possible. The verses themselves are written in a different but not entirely dissimilar hand using ordinary secretary forms, for the most part in a rapid, even elliptical style that sometimes runs letters together, fails to distinguish forms, and omits strokes; the appearance of the stanza and the page of stanzas is pleasant, as if the scribe still felt faintly that writing was a matter of page design as well as of communication. He is copying a version (see Textual Notes lines 65, 118). Mrs Yeandle dates the document as c 1550, which is round enough; she probably dated it years ago while she was calendaring and cataloguing the fairly homogeneous collection to which the leaves belong, so that both her attribution of the heading and her approximate dating are as near as we can now affix to the fragment.

Cawarden was Master of the Revels and Masks from 16 March 1544 (retroactive to 11 March 1544) until the day of his death, 29 August 1559. E.K. Chambers gives most of the available details on the life of Sir Thomas Cawarden in his Notes on the History of the Revels Office under the Tudors (1906), 1 and 9-18, supplemented in The Elizabethan Stage (1923) II, 477, 480-93, out of previous authors; what emerges is the portrait of the usual grasping courtier with a mod coloration of arrogance, but one with a talent for 'devices' and pageantry. His labelling of the lines as theatrical would carry some weight.

The manuscript is a single, small folio sheet (16½ inches: 42 cm by 12 inches: 30 cm) folded to make four large quarto size pages. The opening page bears mid-leaf the watermark of an inverted, cuffed, open, right hand with a cinquefoil flower balanced on the index finger; the dimensions of the figure are 8½ inches by 4. Thick lines (7/8 inches: 20-3 cm) run up and down and the thin lines (10 or 11
to the cm) run across. The edges of the sheet have been cut a bit crudely from the original sheet, perhaps with a knife. In the fold of the sheet are some very small holes, which could be from age, but may be stab holes from sewing. There is an older foliation on the first page — 39 — in a different ink which blends through into the verso. What appear to be two wormholes pass ever so slightly out of register through the two leaves (in the right margin of line 4 on the first page and of line 68 on page 3, and on line 21 of page 1 and of line 84 on page 3).

Apparently, the sheet was detached from a bound book, sometime before 1559 when Cawarden died. The text may antedate that separation by some years, if we are to imagine the original book in a state of dilapidation from wear. If the sheets of this volume were gathered in fours, this was a centre sheet since the text is continuous. If so, this sheet would be part of the twentieth gathering, so that this supposed book would have had at least eighty pages, a few of them at the beginning being unfoliated blanks and perhaps a title page. This is of a size sufficient for a play, even if f 39 occupied a place near the end. When Cawarden came to put his annotation, the sheet was already separated from the original binding: if the volume was still present, he would have re-inserted the loose sheet in its place. His identification of the sheet as 'Parte of a play' is an admission that he did not have a playbook to put it in, and that he did not know the name of the play that he supposed it to come from. Indeed, he may have come across this sheet and mistakenly supposed it to be dramatic. There are no speech prefixes or any other sign of a dramatic voice, unless it be one in the delivery of an extended address.

The passage deals obscurely with matters of theological controversy. Does charity act with faith in justification? Justification is an event which occurs only if God sends grace and is not earned, nor, in this sense, merited by the soul. Is charity dormant until acted on by grace, or is it the source and co-worker in justification? How does mercy enter into this central psychic occurrence? And what is the relation of the divine promises to these important transactions? The speaker feels that some of those who hold views different from his own are not merely mistaken, but are inspired by Satan. The argument and the diction do not readily suggest a dramatic document. If it is theatrical, it is in tone and matter suitable only to a propagandist piece. The argument is too short and confused to reveal its sect distinctly, but it is written from what may be a somewhat Calvinist position against a more Lutheran one — Roman Catholic or indeed Anglican Catholic views being assumed to be out of the question. The positions of the various schools of religious thought at mid-century in England were not altogether clear.

One hesitates to doubt the contemporary authority of Sir Thomas's ascription, even though there is little support for its being a play fragment from its contents or its format, except that the sheet came from a book of sufficient size to contain a play. There is no reason why something as bad as this, dramatically speaking, might not have been written by a polemicist for the stage or, rather, for the edification of a suitable but narrow audience. One can even conjecture that it is an attempt by some supporter of these doctrines to copy in fair a sample speech for a play on a sheet that he had removed from his own commonplace book. The initial
letter of the opening word of the first page is made oversize, a practice not sus-
tained at the other three opportunities to initialize a page (unless one accepts the O
of page 3 as oversize); if this is an incipit, the rhyme word stole should probably be
taken as soule (a dubious reading), which would have the fragment begin with the
only couplet in the passage, a couplet which can be understood as an introductory
summation. Also, the sense and the argument of the whole passage can be taken
as complete at the end of page 4, so that nothing need follow.

What kind of a play would ask for such a trial passage? When one skips the first
two lines and comes to the first three complete stanzas, a difference can be noted.
So relatively benign are the first three stanzas (lines 3-14) that one can hear in them
an earlier, even pre-Reformation serenity. They could be a speech by the Doctor
introducing a play, or even lines appropriate to the opening speech of God as in
many a medieval English play. The fourth stanza (lines 15-19) announces a further
change from a broadly acceptable description of man's relation to God into the
turbulent pugnacity of an academic clerical dispute, which continues through to
the end. Also, the relative metrical regularity of lines 3-14 soon disappears in some
lines that are unscannable as four-stress. To turn from the grand figure opening a
play with this familiar invocation, 'Off god etemall that ys but one,' to the fervid
gesticulations of such gownish, graceless lines as 'But where charite and faithe be
sett at contencion,' or

whether god that worketh mannes lustificacon
as he geueth the man faithe geueth the charite working
Or charite idle withowte Operacion

— this is a considerable artistic and psychic move. The leisurely use of fixed ex-
pressions familiar in medieval plays (with prayse and worbipe, render ... thankes,
with bart & thought, of vertewe [or other substantive] is the spring), the comfor-
table doublets (as above), the repetitions (God in the second full stanza, good in the
third), the unashamedly obvious rhyme fillers (ytt ys sayd true, with bart &
thought) are all marks of much medieval playwriting. These stylistic devices all
disappear abruptly. Metaphors disappear, to be replaced by allusions to nature in
a reductio ad absurdum. Direct exhortations appear. Parenthetical syntax, rhetori-
cal questions, thorny technical diction, subtle distinctions, a derisive tone un-
balance the ease of the opening, and spring the verse into the contortions of an
unresilient man made mad with ideas. One can frolic in conjecture that we have
here a trial at reforming an older play, a document which came in due course into
the royal office delegated to survey such matters, and that when the Masters of the
Revels wrote his annotation, he was merely identifying a still-born scrap. But this
is perhaps to make much out of little.

Whatever the origins of the lines and of the sheet, it had been folded in the
binding and in the writing. Later, the four pages were then twice folded over
unevenly, the crease marks being still evident. This later folding was done only
after a time, time enough for pages 1 and 4 to become noticeably dirtier than the
inner pages 2 and 3. It is also possible that the dirtying occurred in a period after
the unfolding of the uneven double-fold.

The sheet passed with other of Cawarden’s papers into the hands of Sir William
More of Loseley near Guildford (1520-1600), his executor, and into the sizable
number of papers of the More family, to which documents continued to be added
into the late seventeenth century. The collection at Loseley was examined by
A.J. Kempe in 1835, by J.C. Jeaffreson in 1879, and in the early part of this century
by Albert Feuillerat and C.W. Wallace. In 1923 it was still there, to Sir Edmund
Chambers’ knowledge. Most of the papers were purchased by William H. Robinson,
Ltd, and offered for sale by Lionel K. and Philip R. Robinson, from whom, appar-
ently, Henry Folger or the Folger Library purchased them.

The scribe does not conveniently distinguish forms: for example, c can degenerate
into a resemblance of o or e; a descending backstroke on terminal n can be
confused with y (man, may, even mercy when the r is a stroke above the line);
initial f and s are the same; st, tt, lt, ft can fall together; medial e looks like medial
a or o (detbe, dotbe), a difficulty that can cause of to look like as. He uses various
forms of given letters, of course, but takes some exceptional liberties, for example,
three per signs, one form of which is not far from the letter p; both an open and
a closed o (one = are = ane); a form of d that has an oval and one that does not (so
that it look like l); c has peculiar variances (com can be read arn). He is not always
exact in the number of minims in a string such as min, and he does not dot his i.
He occasionally runs words together, or breaks one word in two. An idiosyncrasy
is a habit of beginning the first letter of a word with a right to left stroking, so that,
for instance, initial co may appear as va, or terminal t may begin mid-line with a
cusp formed right to left followed by a descent to the line and then a looping back
for the cross right to left with a surprising finish by an almost full reversal from left
to right with a flat line. It is a difficult charactery. Dr Bella Schauman has rendered
important aid in suggesting readings in several places, and has saved me from error
often. The final responsibility for the text presented is, however, mine.

The ambiguities promoted by the handwriting are exceeded by the ambiguities
left by the crabbed expression of an involved and originally delicate argument.
Though the readings of the hand given here are usually fairly certain, the argument
does not readily make sense. Therefore, I must apologize for some full comments
which are needed to explain the sense so as to defend the readings.

[Ed note: Mr Cummings’ paper was ready for printing when Reed learned of the
forthcoming transcription of the same document by Richard Proudfoot in the
Malone Society's Collections Volume IX. Because the present paper treats the
manuscript and its significance more fully (Mr Proudfoot is appropriately con-
cerned with providing texts only of several disparate fragments), because the
readings are not identical in every instance, and because facsimiles are included
here, we have gone ahead with it. Mr Cummings wishes to call attention to two of
Mr Proudfoot’s readings that he prefers to his own: line 1 scale for stole/stele/soule,
which solves the problem alluded to in the introduction; line 54 ioyned for wyued.]
And that my love was in your name, and in your heart.

When we first met, you were so kind and gentle.

Your love was like a river, flowing deep and true.

I saw your heart, and knew its love was true.

And yet, I was afraid, for love can be so cruel.

But you were patient, and your love was strong.

And so, I mounted my horse, to go to my father.

But you were kind, and gave me comfort and peace.

And so, I left you, for I knew I had to go.

And as I rode away, I knew I loved you more than words can say.

And when I returned, you were still there, waiting for me.

And so, I know now, that love is a gift from God.

And that, my love, is why I love you.
Alone and only in a wrong stole
have brought to error many A ffole

Off god eternall that ys but one
In persons thre / ytt ys sayd trewly
to hym is honor dewe Alone
with prayse and worship to hym only.

God Alone hathe created man
and only god, Ayen man bought
So man to god onely, must nedes than
render dewe thankes, with hart & thought

ffrom god all goodnes dothe procede
God only of vertewe ys the Snyng
his only grace, dothe good men lede
and is ther strenght in eche good thyng

Hitherto ther can no error make
alone est only without thow wylte
Godes ordre & wille, frowardly take
to thy confusion and dreadfull gilte

As thus I meane where god declareth
by whom for hym selfe he wyll honor receyve
beware of only, for her yt snarethe
and by mystakyng, will the deceyve

ffor he that dothe suche ordre obbey
and honor as he ys tought by trewe direccon
dothe honor god only, and yet dothe paye
the same to dyuere in dewe proporcion

And eke when god / dothe geue by other,
his giftes of grace, as he thynketh the best
and so vse man, to helpe his Brother
Alone and only, the trewthe may wrest
null
We may not our selves deceive by nombre
and so call towe, that god make the one
for god and his myster, be never Asonder
in ordre, vnyte and operacion

Man vnder god, and yett god Alone
Workethe godes pleasure, as god wille is
So only or alone, can make no reson
Why man as mynister may not do that or this

Only and Alone, haue so been abused
to deceyver faithe and charite asonder
as charite in Justification clerely refused
hath made religion talke and worldly wonder

Yett some saye only & not alone
mannes faith dothe worke his Justification
with charite promist and moche they mone
men cannot concyeve, ther fonde conclusion

To maytayne ther speche they haue no wrytte
but concyeve yt in fansie, for an evell intent
The sentence hath no lemyng ne wytte
as they do vtre yt, and by them is ment

But where faithe is grownd in significacon
conteynethe the hole Moyses lawe excluded
Good men declaryng mannes Justification
haue wyued only to faythe and trewly concluded
But where charite and faithe be sett at contencion
and faithe Alone chalengethe to be worker only
ytts ysvndoubtedly of Satan and his Inuencion
To deuide godes giftes and graces fon{:1}dlly

In effecte, the bate is in this only thyng
whether god that worketh mannes Justification
as he geueth man faithe geueth charite working
Or charite idle without Operacion
Ae et amo mea domu se
et volo faciam se eam.
Nec ipsa facit eam in
in partes, sed facit in
in partes et non
non facit eam in
in partes.

Neque ipse facit eam
in partes, sed facit in
in partes et non
non facit eam in
in partes.
Off charite idle no man dothe rede
and yett they graunte ther charites presens
Werby faite workethe [mannes lustificacon] 'and so
confessethe in dede' 65
workyng and not workyng in the self same sentence

ffor this is Amere & Avayne cavillacon
by cause faite by charite, workethe and is lively
to say that faite hath all the operacion
and charite to be but An Instruiment only 70

In Alyke speche / the wood by fyre burnethe
and candell eke, by fyre geueth light
shall we here gather that wood & candell workethe
and fyre dothe nothyng / no worker can be hight 75

And if we so say we must also gather this
that heate and fire be not / in fire conceyved
but only in wood wyche by fyre burne is
wherein hetherto / all men haue been deceyved

And further where wemen by men ingender
we must say nowe that men ther haue no Action
but wemen only and the reson rendre
lyke as faite by charite hath operacion 80

In workes of nature, where god workethe euer
we are not affrayde with god to yoyne company
not idle but workyng and so put to gether
causes inferior, and to one Acte meny 85

In the Acte of grace, when god dothe man renewe
with the light of faitehe and of charite the lyfe
God only is Author that is full trewe
and only the meane causes / a fonde folyshe stryve 90
God to hele man, do thus the medicyne make
geyng faihte and charite all in one potion
but the right wrong lygement detho thus yer matter take
that only faihte ther workth the worke of lustificacion

And if thowe wilt presse and aske them why
thus they Answere and the matter comprehende
faith, they say in Office is fit and can only
godes . mercy wyche only lustifiethe, Apprehende.

Is not this elere matter playnner and evident
to shyfte from one only to another
ffor by only faihte they say ys only ment
onely mercy, by correlacion of promes faithes Brother

Nowe if thowe cast no Skylle of correlacion
he knowest [what] not what Apprehend dothe clerely significie
thowe cast not lerne ther lustifiacon
ne perceyve what is ment by ther faihte only

Thus as they can they lynke the matter together
Mercy they saye is the promise, and promise only can
by faihte be acchevid, and so what skyllethe it whether
faihte only or onely mercy be thy speche then

In godes promise is mercy none wyll gayne saye
nc this, that promise by faihte is apprehended
but yett if thowe (....), ther is yea and naye
in ther speche (as they handle it) falsly apprehended

ffor mercy is the hele that god hathe promised
to forgueue and renewe / man fallen by synne
wyche men receyve, when they be lustified
bothe the promise and mercy [theryn] conteyned theryn
COMMENTARY

56) a twentieth-century pencil annotation.

1) The words `Alone and only' are used here and throughout the fragment as simplified labels for the concepts of singularity, of uniqueness, sometimes of absoluteness, of exclusiveness.

1 stole] The first six lines are transcribed in the entry in the Manuscript Catalogue, but this was the cursory work of a calendarist, and there are a few errors. This word is read there as 'soule', which is not the MS but makes sense of the passage. The first vowel is ambiguous in this hand. Read `stele' (?), that is, 'style', that is, 'linguistic usage, semantic application', which suits the whole argument.

15 can no error make] ‘can [one] no error make’.

16 est] The forms, which are indeterminate to several readings, might also be read 'et'. The reading preferred may be seen in Cappelli (Dizionario, 5th edition, p 114, col 2, 2nd and 3rd specimens); here the scribe turns to a more careful characterly to signify a shift in language. This is a crux in the meaning of the text: ‘The exclusive and absolute power of God to act is unique and unassisted.’ Dr Schauman suggests er or or, but the first does not make sense, and the second seems not warranted in the MS. It does look like er, or e plus the Latin abbreviation.

16 withowt] ‘unless’.

21 beware of only] ‘beware of the concept of only, or singleness, in the operation of God’s redemptive plan.’

23 suche ordre] refers to the avoidance of attributing single, simple operation in God’s agents.

26] a flourish over the -con, a syllable often so augmented.

30 may] The scribe writes terminal n with a descender which drifts to the left as if underscoring the word; hence 'may' and 'man' are almost indistinguishable, and the form 'Mcy' in the closing stanzas can also be taken as one of these two. Here, however, the very thin descender makes a turn to the right. Another crux. The preferred reading gives this rendition: Just as man should honour God in paying appropriate homage to whatever displays His workings (previous stanza), so God sends grace to man through other ministers including men, but here the concept of only and alone preserves man from error.

36 god] Read 'God's'.

37-8] We cannot understand the action of God’s imperious will when it acts through His agents, and the concept of only and alone cannot help us here.

40 to deceyver] ‘as to desever’.

41] because the refusal to see Charity present in Justification.

45 promist] Uncertain. The sense would be that they are wrong who maintain that Faith only acts in Justification, with Charity instrumental through the promises of God (see lines 69-70, 101-10).

52 excluded] exclusively, exclusive of the New Law, that is to say, where Faith is based meaningfully, that Faith acting alone without Charity in Justification exists in the Old Law, and not in the New Dispensation.
Records of drama and minstrelsy in Nottinghamshire to 1642

Among the shires whose dramatic records are not at present being edited is Nottinghamshire. The early Gough map shows half a dozen places in it, including the Benedictine monastery of Blyth in the north (a site for 12th- and 13th-century tournaments), Southwell Cathedral in the centre, the borough of Newark-on-Trent on the long eastern border with Lincolnshire, and of course Nottingham in the south. One other important borough, East Retford, lay north of Newark, and the old Archdeaconry of Nottinghamshire (part of the diocese of York) had many religious houses, such as those for Augustinian canons at Thurgarton, Newstead and Worksop, for Cluniac monks at Lenton Abbey, for Carthusian monks at Beauvale, and for Cistercian monks at Rufford. Since at least the 12th century the mother church for the whole Archdeaconry was at Southwell, not at York, and until the Reformation each borough and parish had to send representatives in procession to Southwell with offerings each Whitsun tide. The county was thus to some extent isolated from the rest of the diocese, particularly from York and Beverley, its eastern cathedral cities. This circumstance and the fact that Southwell was not a