

The Candlemaker and the Inquisitor: Jacob De Roore, 1569

Background: Jacob de Roore (the Chandler/Candlemaker) was an Anabaptist leader in Flanders who was arrested in Bruges in 1569 and charged with heresy. While in prison Jacob was interrogated by the Franciscan Friar Cornelis in the presence of witnesses and stenographers. In this reading, Jacob argues in typical Anabaptist fashion that the Bible's meaning can be clear to ordinary Christians and that powerful, well-educated Christians can get it wrong. The Bible can be understood from the bottom up. Cornelis is amazed by the Anabaptists' knowledge of the Bible but is convinced that the Bible must be read top down in light of the Christian tradition. The dialogue recorded here is a small part of the entire interrogation which occupies 24 pages of the *Martyrs Mirror*. Jacob also wrote 19 (surviving) letters to his family, friends, congregations and another prisoner. St. John's Apocalypse is the Book of Revelation.

Requirements: Two persons

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Friar Cornelis: Ah bah! What do you understand about St. John's Apocalypse? At what university did you study? At the loom, I suppose; for I understand that you were nothing but a poor weaver and candlemaker before you went around preaching and rebaptizing. I have attended the university at Louvain and studied divinity a long time, and yet I do not understand anything at all about St. John's Apocalypse. This is a fact.

Jacob: Therefore Christ thanked his heavenly Father that he had revealed and made it known to babes and hid it from the wise of this world, as is written in Matthew 11:25.

Friar Cornelis: Exactly. God has revealed it to the weavers at the loom, to the cobblers on their bench, and to bellows-menders, lantern-tinkers, scissors-grinders, broom makers, thatchers, and all sorts of riff-raff, and poor, filthy and lousy beggars. And to us church leaders who have studied from our youth, night and day, he has concealed it. Just see how we are tormented.

You Anabaptists are certainly fine fellows to understand the holy Scriptures. Before you are rebaptized, you can't tell A from B, but as soon as you are baptized, you can read and write. If the devil and his mother do not have a hand in this, I do not understand anything about you people.

Source: *Martyrs' Mirror*, 775; on the same page there is a Jan Luyken engraving of this interrogation.

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