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What did YOU do in the Great Plague? The Nonconformist clergy and the 1665 crisis

Anne Dunan-Page

► **To cite this version:**

Anne Dunan-Page. What did YOU do in the Great Plague? The Nonconformist clergy and the 1665 crisis. Annual Conference, Society for Reformation Studies, Society for Reformation Studies, Apr 2022, Cambridge (GB), United Kingdom. halshs-03961618

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SRS 2022. The Reformation and Dissent

Anne Dunan-Page, Aix-Marseille Université, LERMA, UR 853

What did YOU do in the Great Plague?

The Nonconformist ministers and the crisis of 1665

Introduction

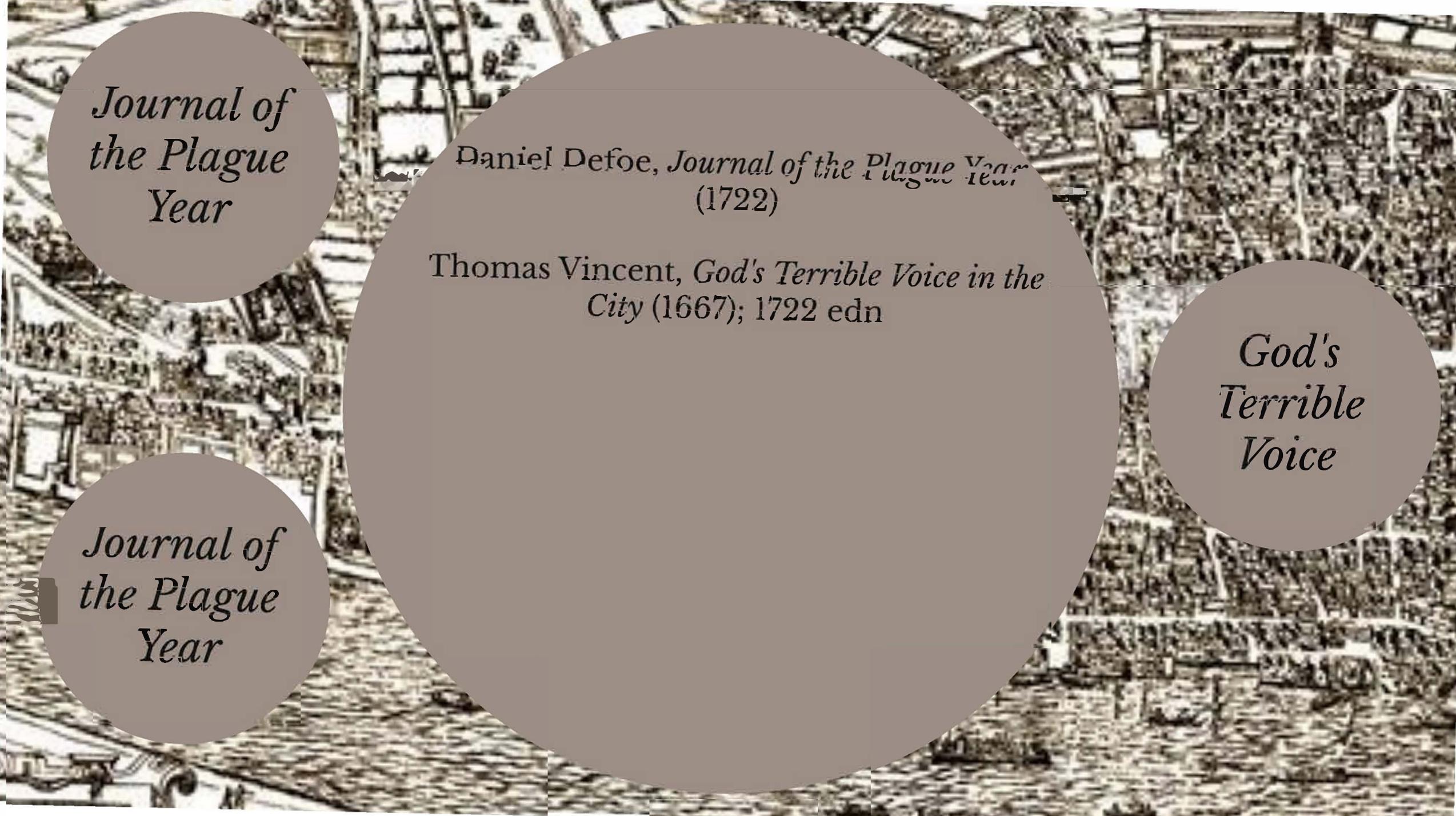
Conclusion

'Real
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Baxter
and
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Representing
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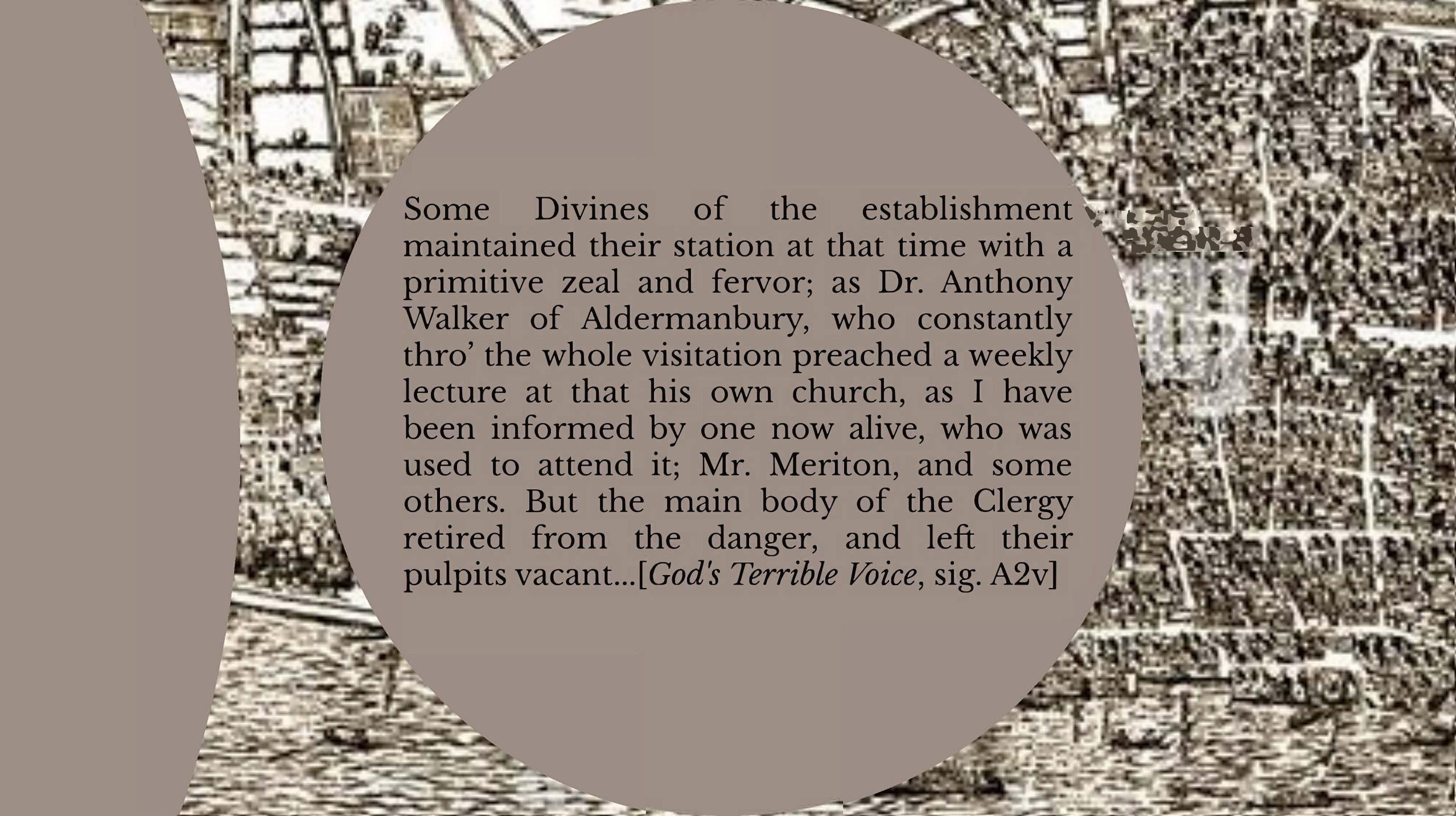
*Journal of
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Daniel Defoe, *Journal of the Plague Year*
(1722)

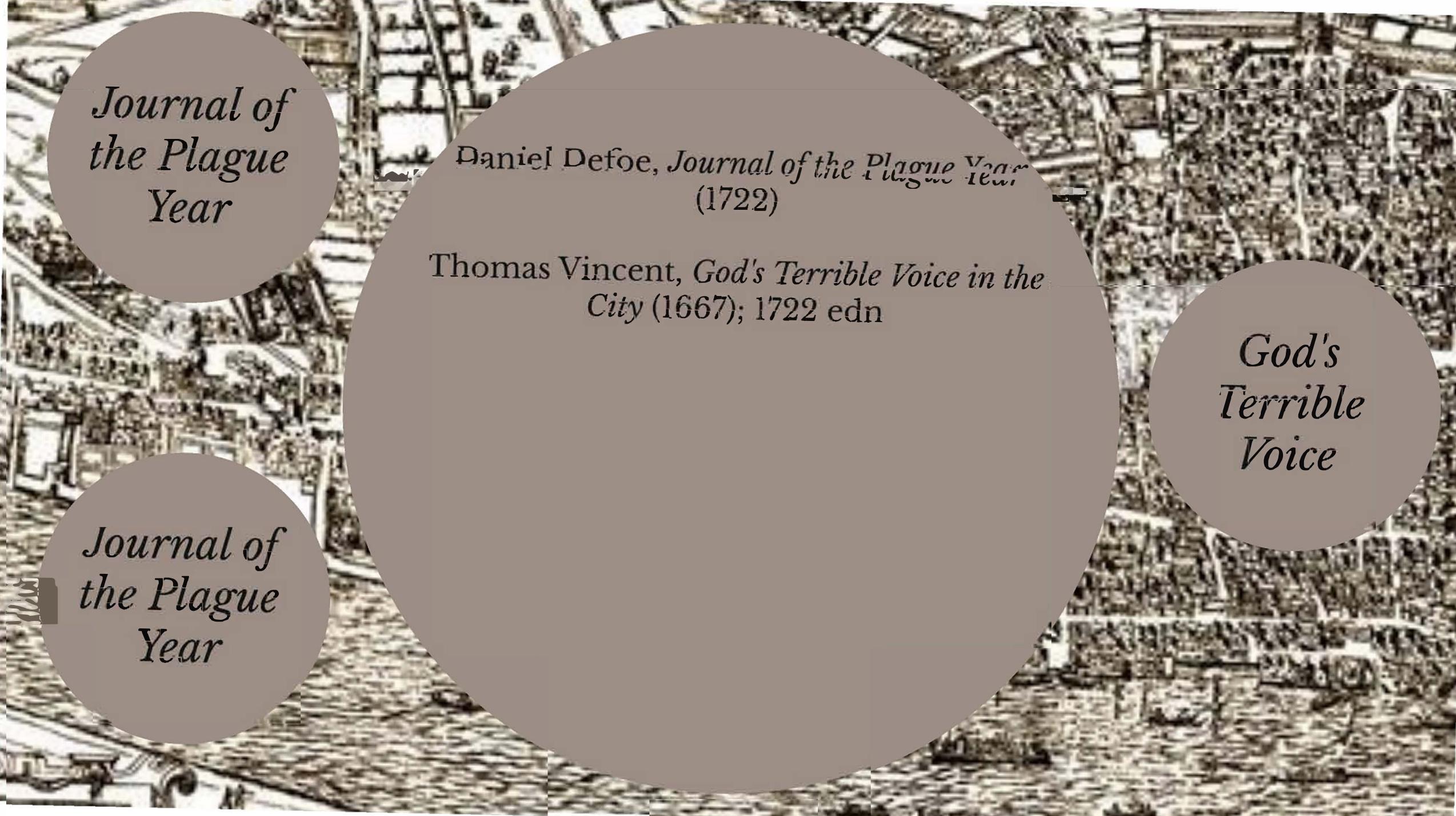
Thomas Vincent, *God's Terrible Voice in the
City* (1667); 1722 edn

*God's
Terrible
Voice*

*Journal of
the Plague
Year*



Some Divines of the establishment maintained their station at that time with a primitive zeal and fervor; as Dr. Anthony Walker of Aldermanbury, who constantly thro' the whole visitation preached a weekly lecture at that his own church, as I have been informed by one now alive, who was used to attend it; Mr. Meriton, and some others. But the main body of the Clergy retired from the danger, and left their pulpits vacant...[*God's Terrible Voice*, sig. A2v]



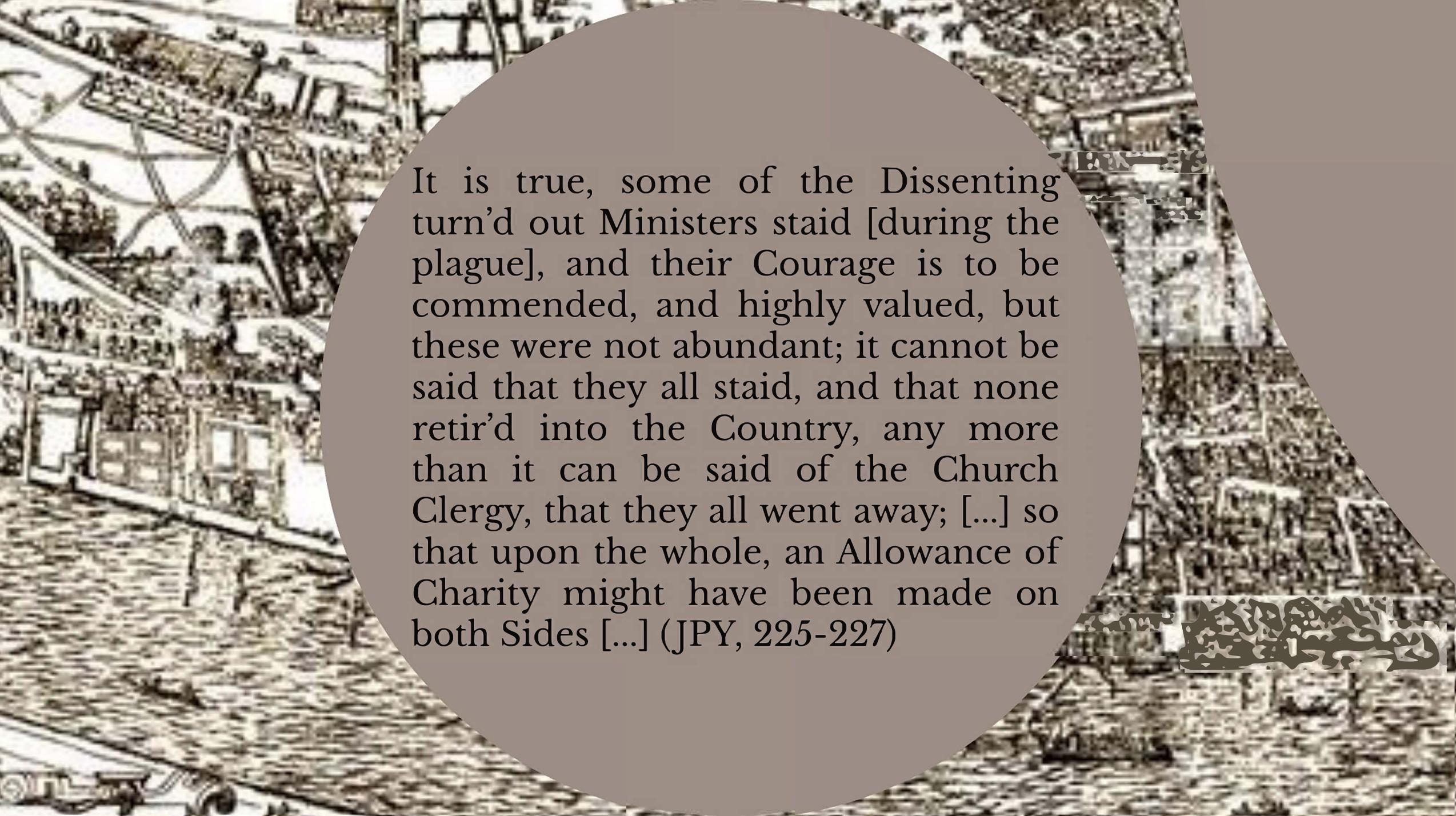
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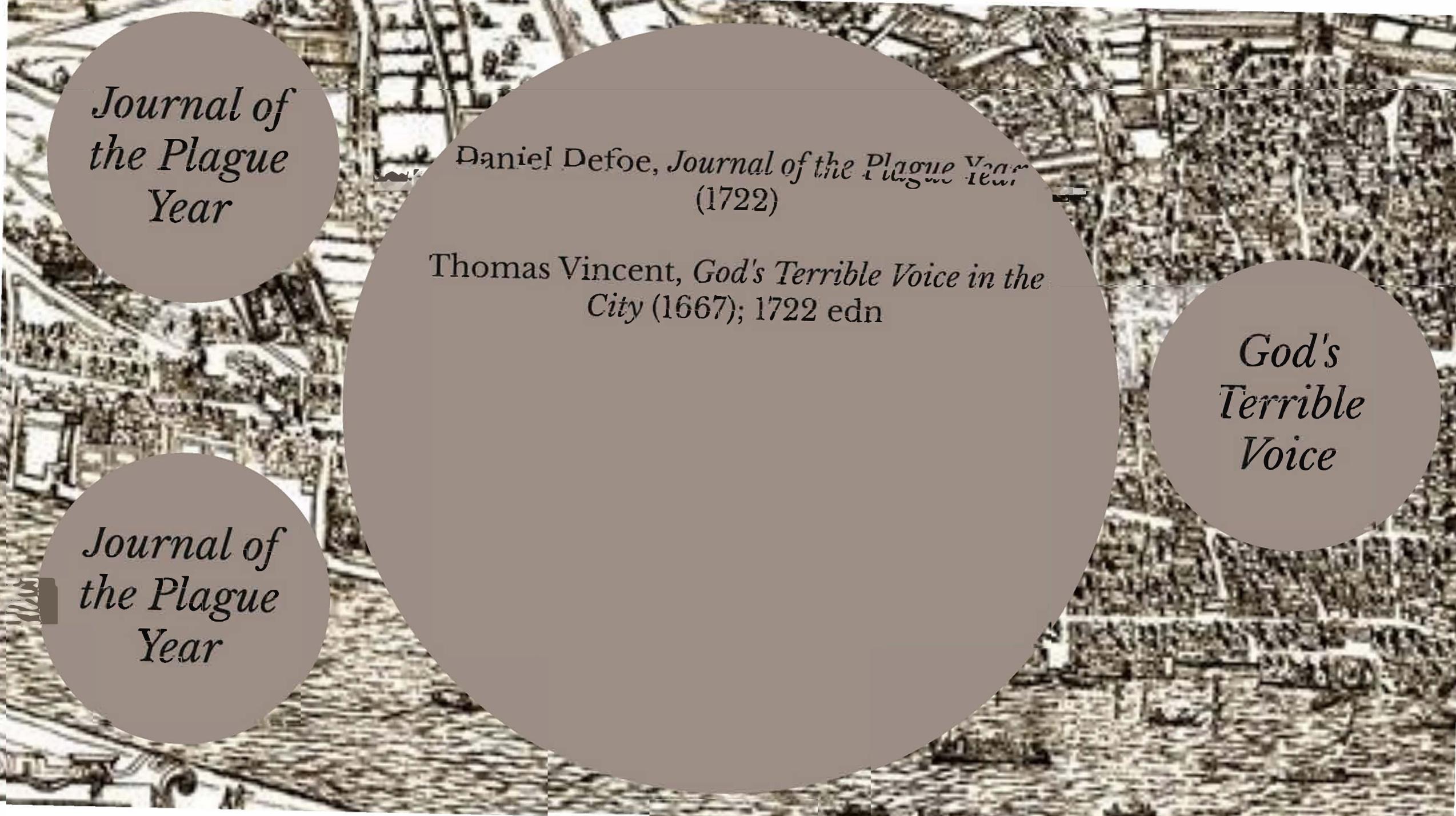
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It is true, some of the Dissenting turn'd out Ministers staid [during the plague], and their Courage is to be commended, and highly valued, but these were not abundant; it cannot be said that they all staid, and that none retir'd into the Country, any more than it can be said of the Church Clergy, that they all went away; [...] so that upon the whole, an Allowance of Charity might have been made on both Sides [...] (JPY, 225-227)



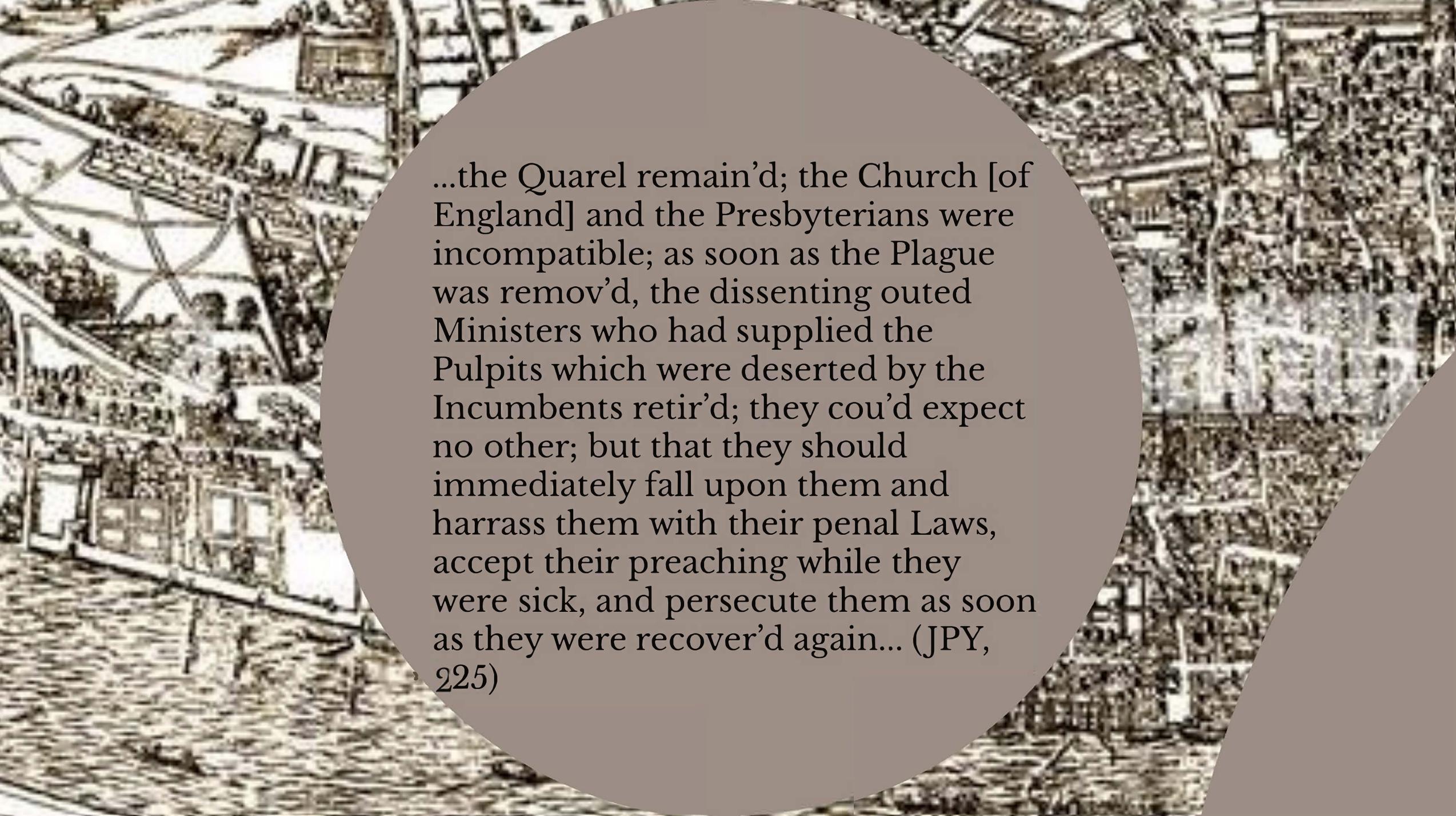
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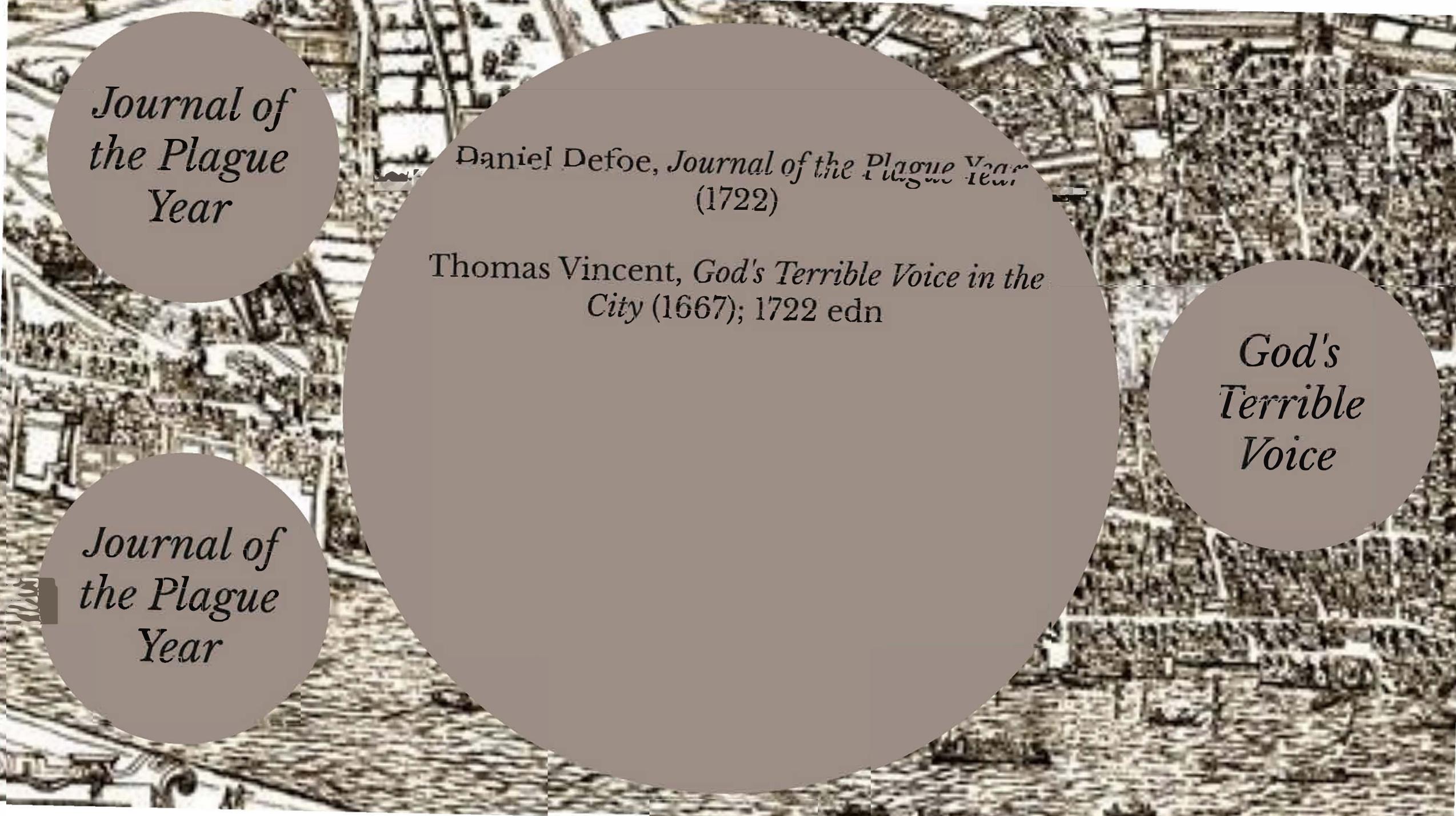
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A historical woodcut illustration of a city street during a plague. The scene is filled with people in various states of distress and death. Some are lying on the ground, while others are being carried on stretchers or litters. The architecture is dense and multi-story, typical of a medieval or early modern city. The overall tone is somber and chaotic, reflecting the impact of the plague on the community.

...the Quarel remain'd; the Church [of England] and the Presbyterians were incompatible; as soon as the Plague was remov'd, the dissenting outed Ministers who had supplied the Pulpits which were deserted by the Incumbents retir'd; they cou'd expect no other; but that they should immediately fall upon them and harrass them with their penal Laws, accept their preaching while they were sick, and persecute them as soon as they were recover'd again... (JPY, 225)



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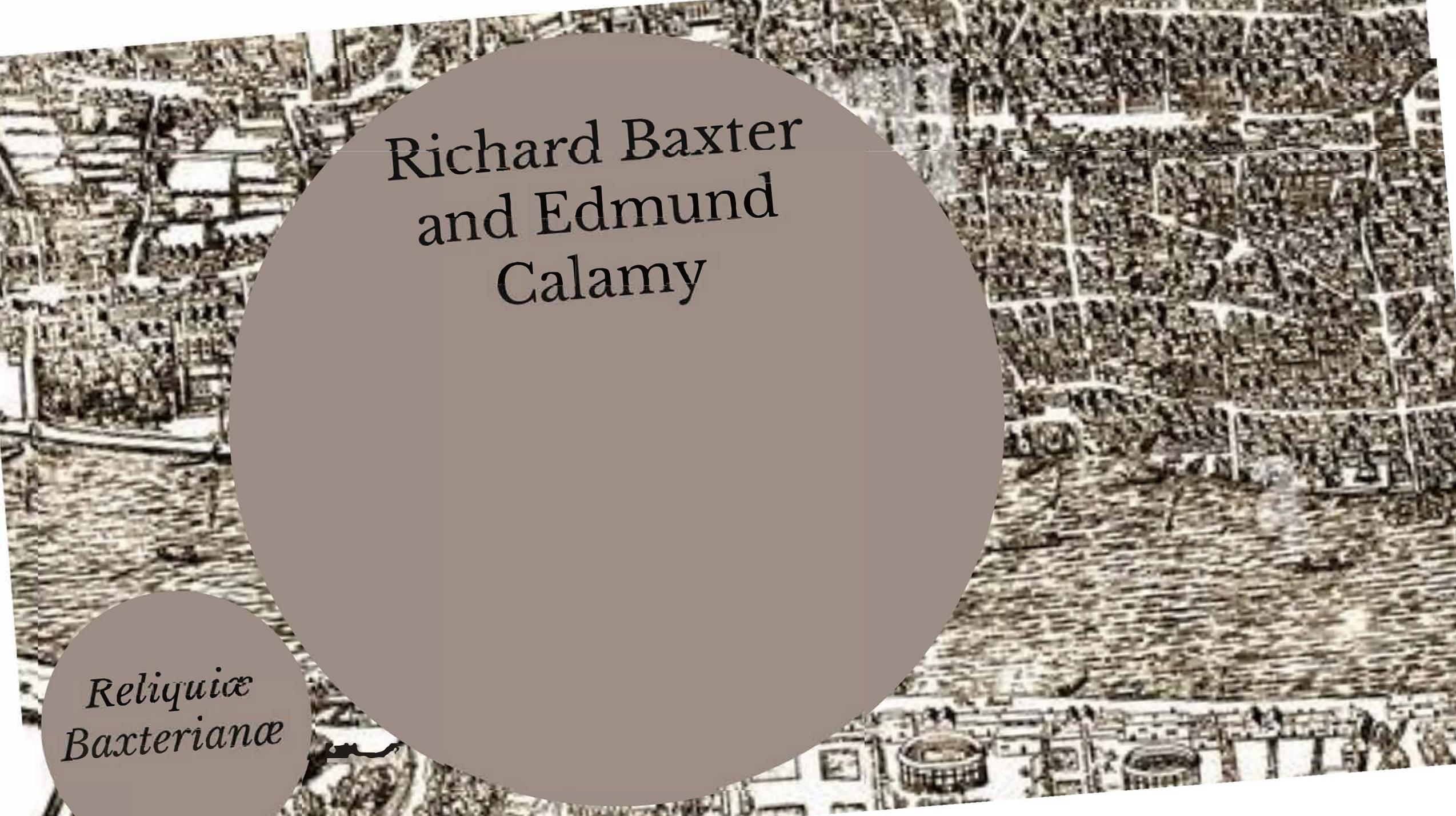
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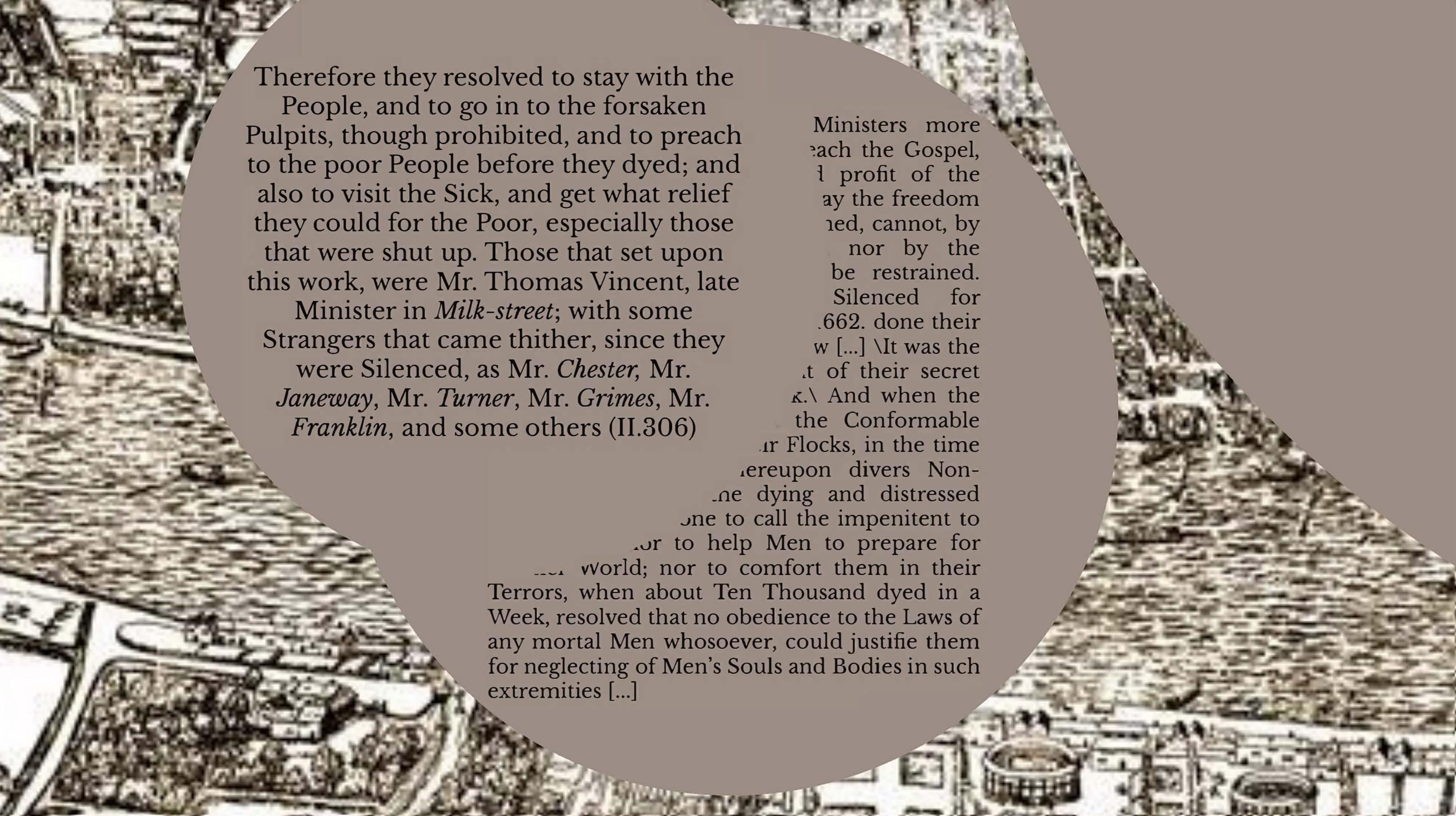
An aerial, black and white photograph of a city grid, likely New York City, showing a dense pattern of streets and buildings. A large, semi-transparent grey circle is centered over the image, containing the main title. A smaller, similar grey circle is located in the bottom-left corner, containing a subtitle.

Richard Baxter
and Edmund
Calamy

*Reliquiæ
Baxterianæ*



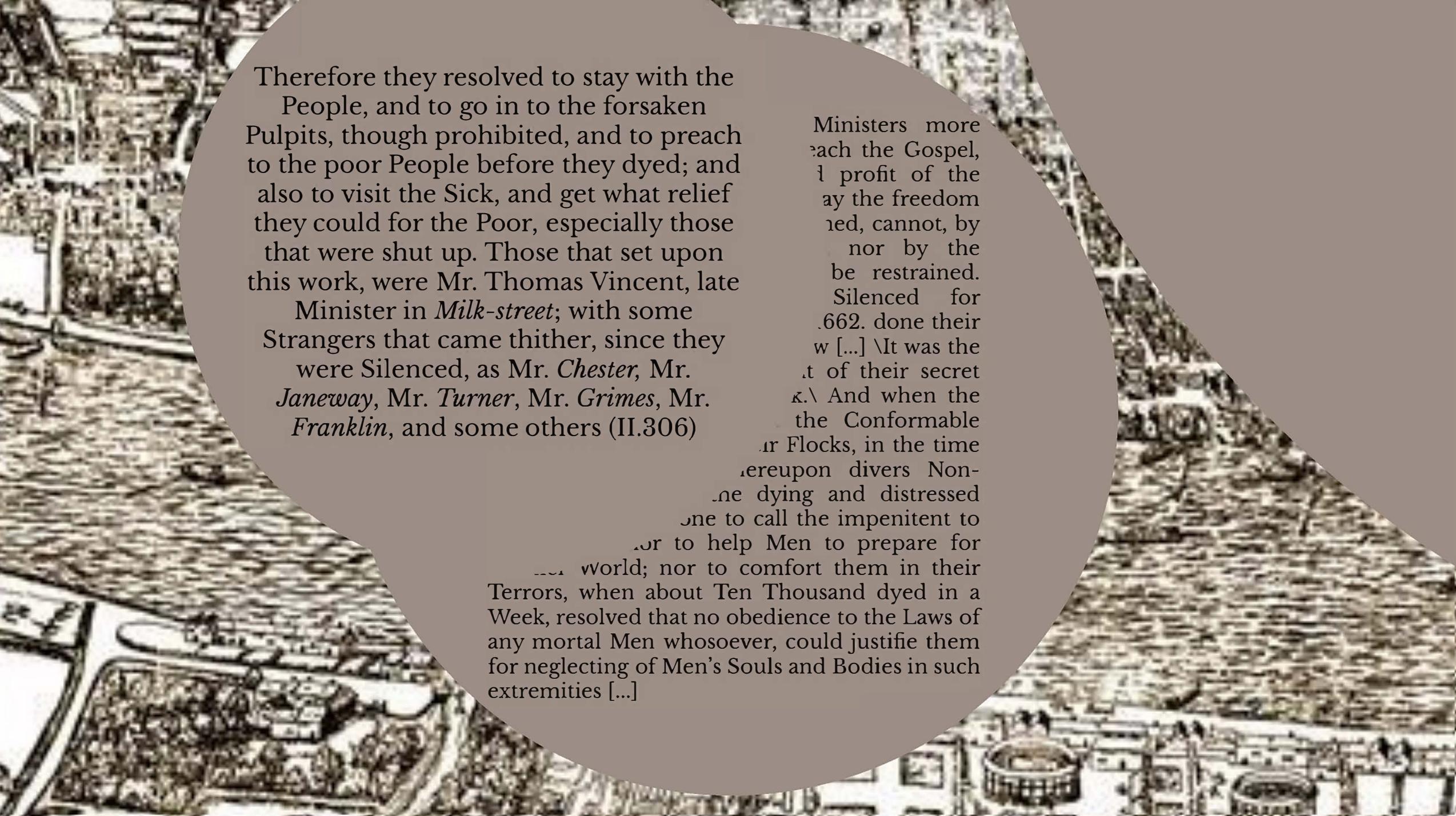
...it occasioned the Silenc'd Ministers more openly and labouriously to Preach the Gospel, to the exceeding comfort and profit of the People; insomuch, that to this Day the freedom of Preaching, which this occasioned, cannot, by the daily Guards of Soldiers, nor by the Imprisonments of Multitudes, be restrained. The Ministers that were Silenced for Nonconformity, had ever since 1662. done their Work very privately, and to a few [...] \It was the Plague that brought them out of their secret narrow Meetings into publick.\ And when the Plague grew hot, most of the Conformable Ministers fled, and left their Flocks, in the time of their Extremity: whereupon divers Non-conformists pitying the dying and distressed People, that had none to call the impenitent to Repentance, nor to help Men to prepare for another World; nor to comfort them in their Terrors, when about Ten Thousand dyed in a Week, resolved that no obedience to the Laws of any mortal Men whosoever, could justify them for neglecting of Men's Souls and Bodies in such extremities [...]



Therefore they resolved to stay with the People, and to go in to the forsaken Pulpits, though prohibited, and to preach to the poor People before they dyed; and also to visit the Sick, and get what relief they could for the Poor, especially those that were shut up. Those that set upon this work, were Mr. Thomas Vincent, late Minister in *Milk-street*; with some Strangers that came thither, since they were Silenced, as Mr. *Chester*, Mr. *Janeway*, Mr. *Turner*, Mr. *Grimes*, Mr. *Franklin*, and some others (II.306)

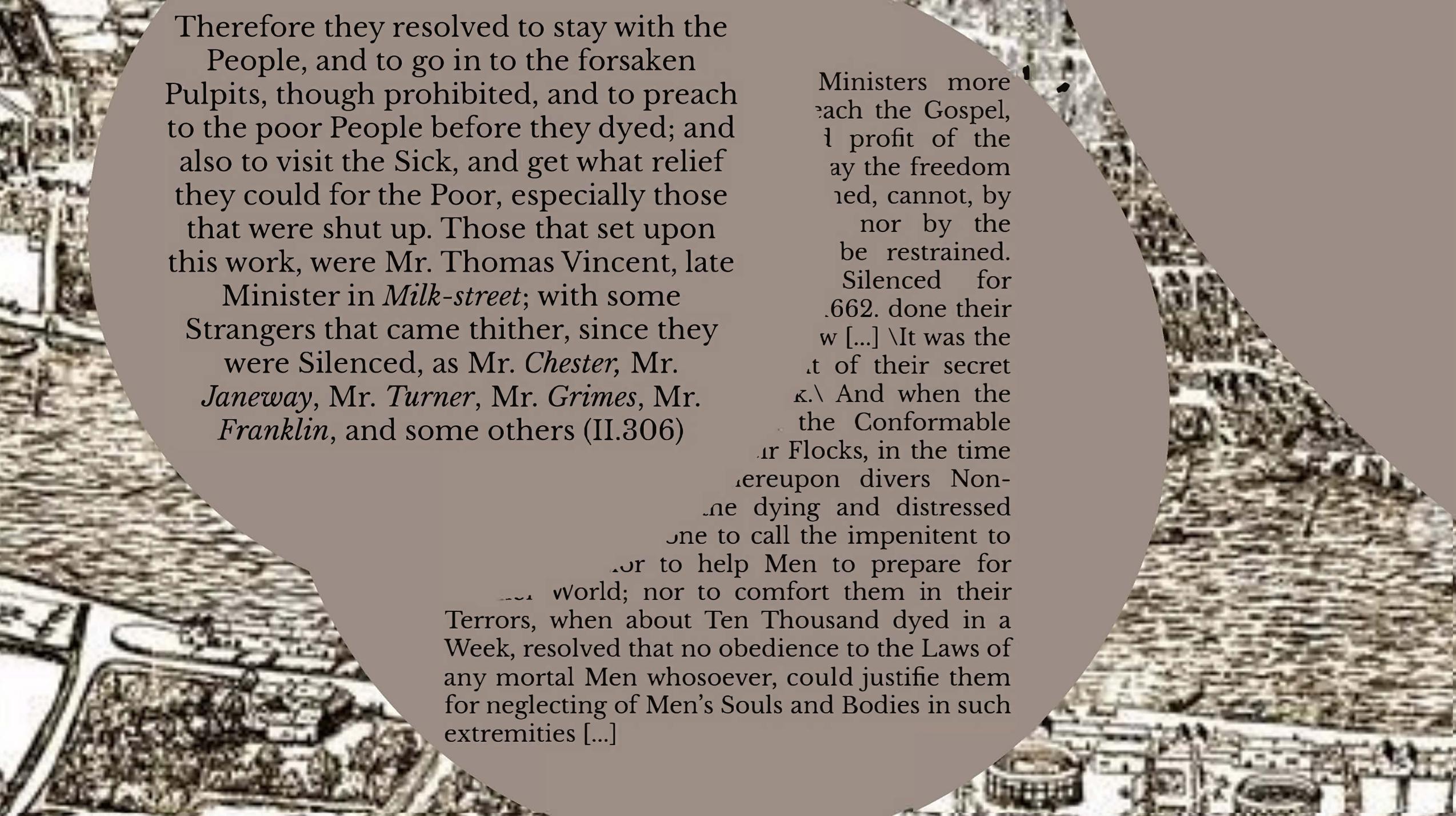
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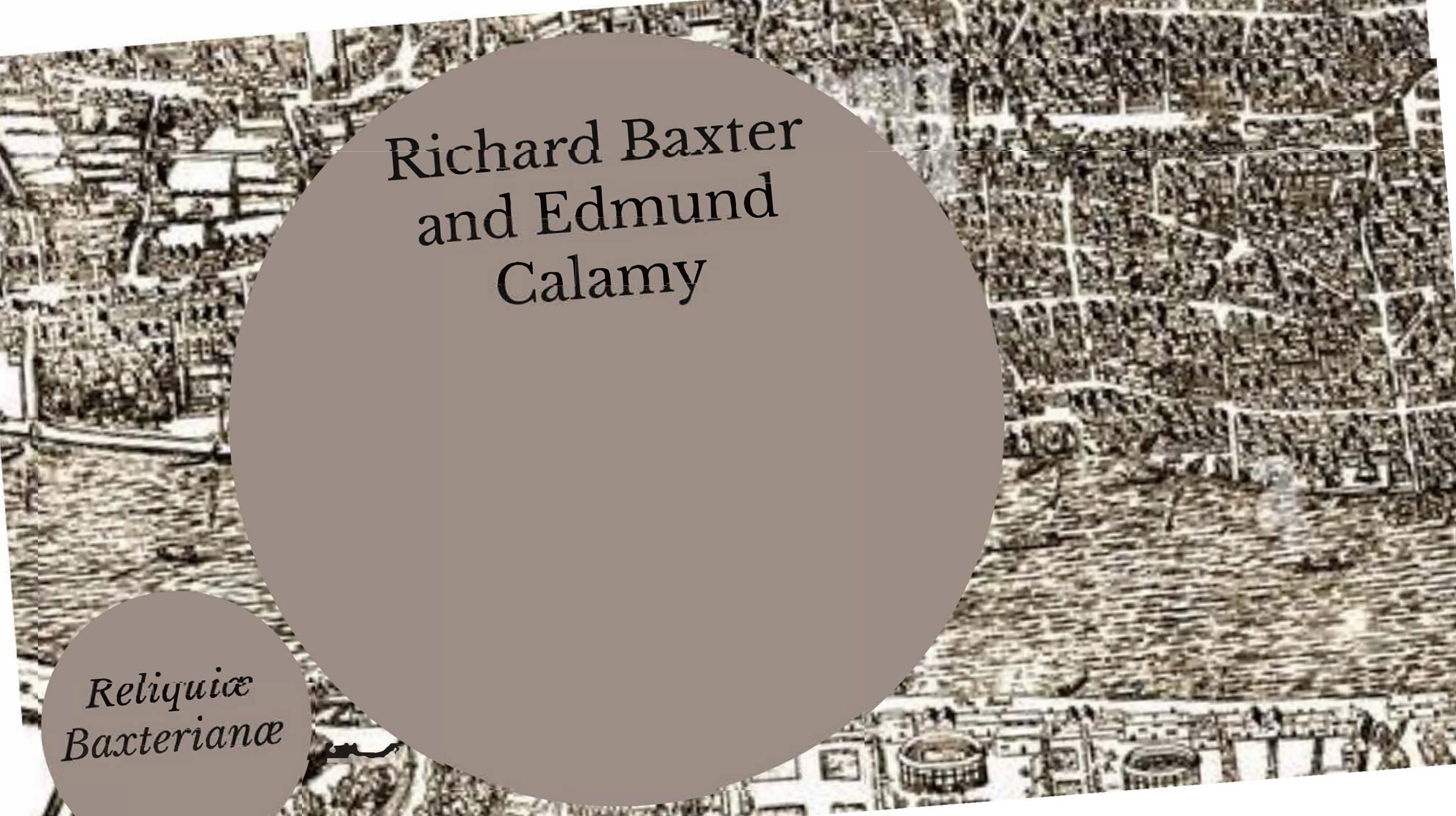
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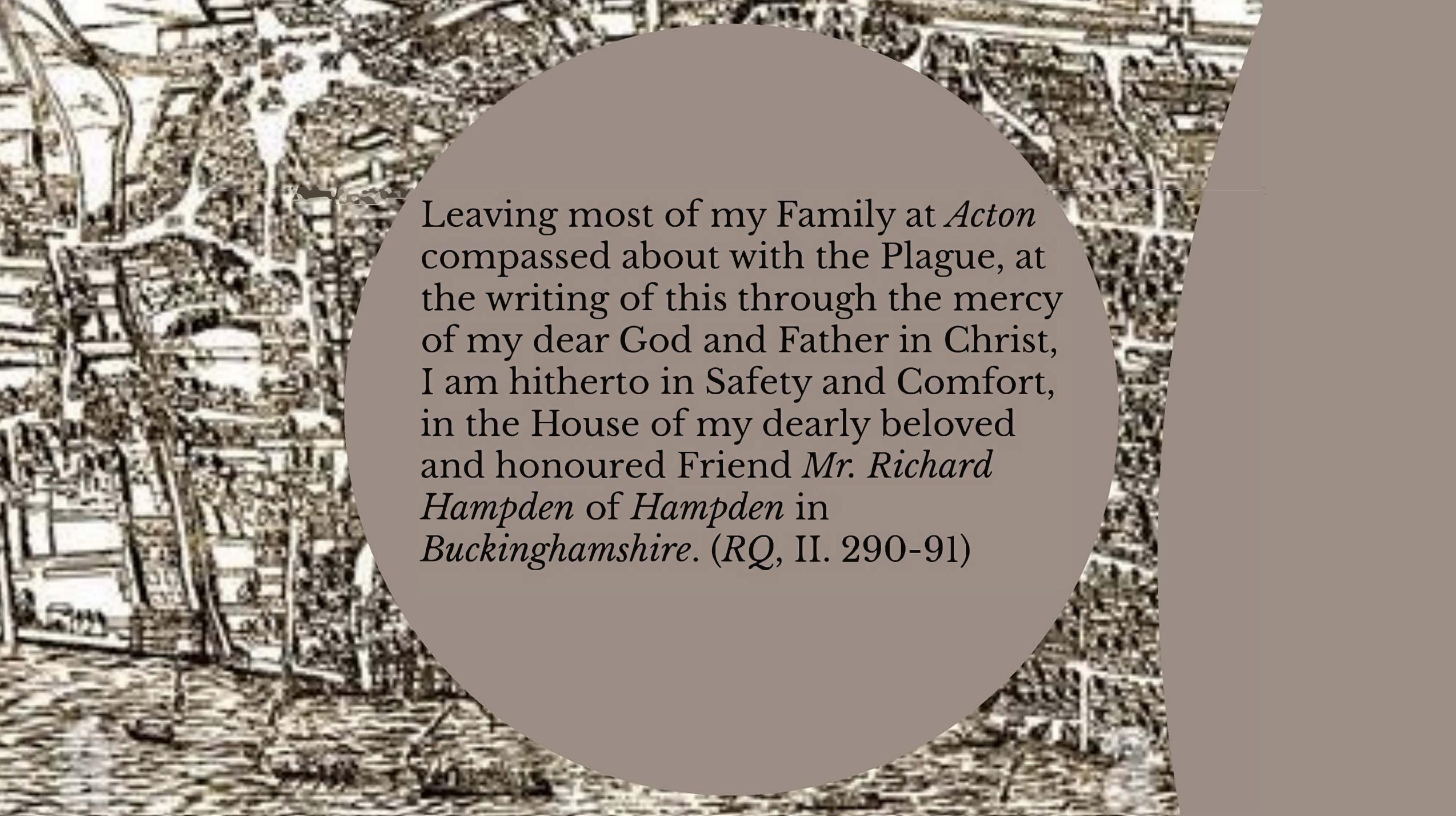
The
works

...and how
to use
them

Slater,
*The
Plague
Checkt*

Doolittle,
*A
Spiritual
Antidote*

Meade,
*Solomon's
Prescription*



Leaving most of my Family at *Acton* compassed about with the Plague, at the writing of this through the mercy of my dear God and Father in Christ, I am hitherto in Safety and Comfort, in the House of my dearly beloved and honoured Friend *Mr. Richard Hampden* of *Hampden* in *Buckinghamshire*. (RQ, II. 290-91)

The Call

Shaw, *The Voice...in the Wilderness*

...and how to use them

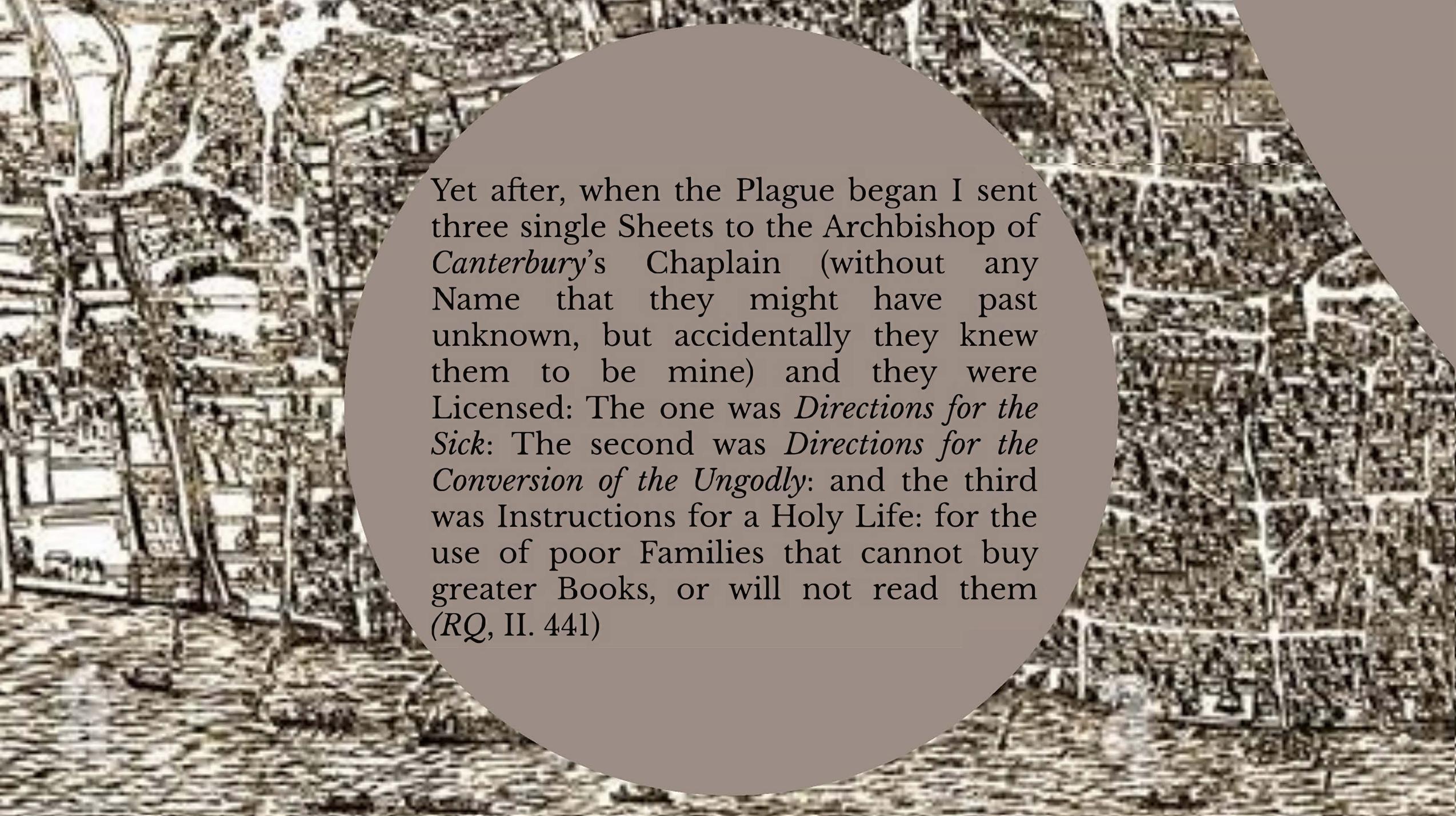
Slater, *The Plague Checkt*

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Meade, *Solomon's Prescription*

A black and white illustration of a medieval town square. In the foreground, there is a market stall with a wooden frame and a canopy. In the background, there is a church with a tall spire and a large crowd of people. The scene is set in a town with stone buildings and a cobblestone street.

Yet after, when the Plague began I sent three single Sheets to the Archbishop of *Canterbury's* Chaplain (without any Name that they might have past unknown, but accidentally they knew them to be mine) and they were Licensed: The one was *Directions for the Sick*: The second was *Directions for the Conversion of the Ungodly*: and the third was Instructions for a Holy Life: for the use of poor Families that cannot buy greater Books, or will not read them (*RQ*, II. 441)

The Call

Shaw, *The
Voice...in
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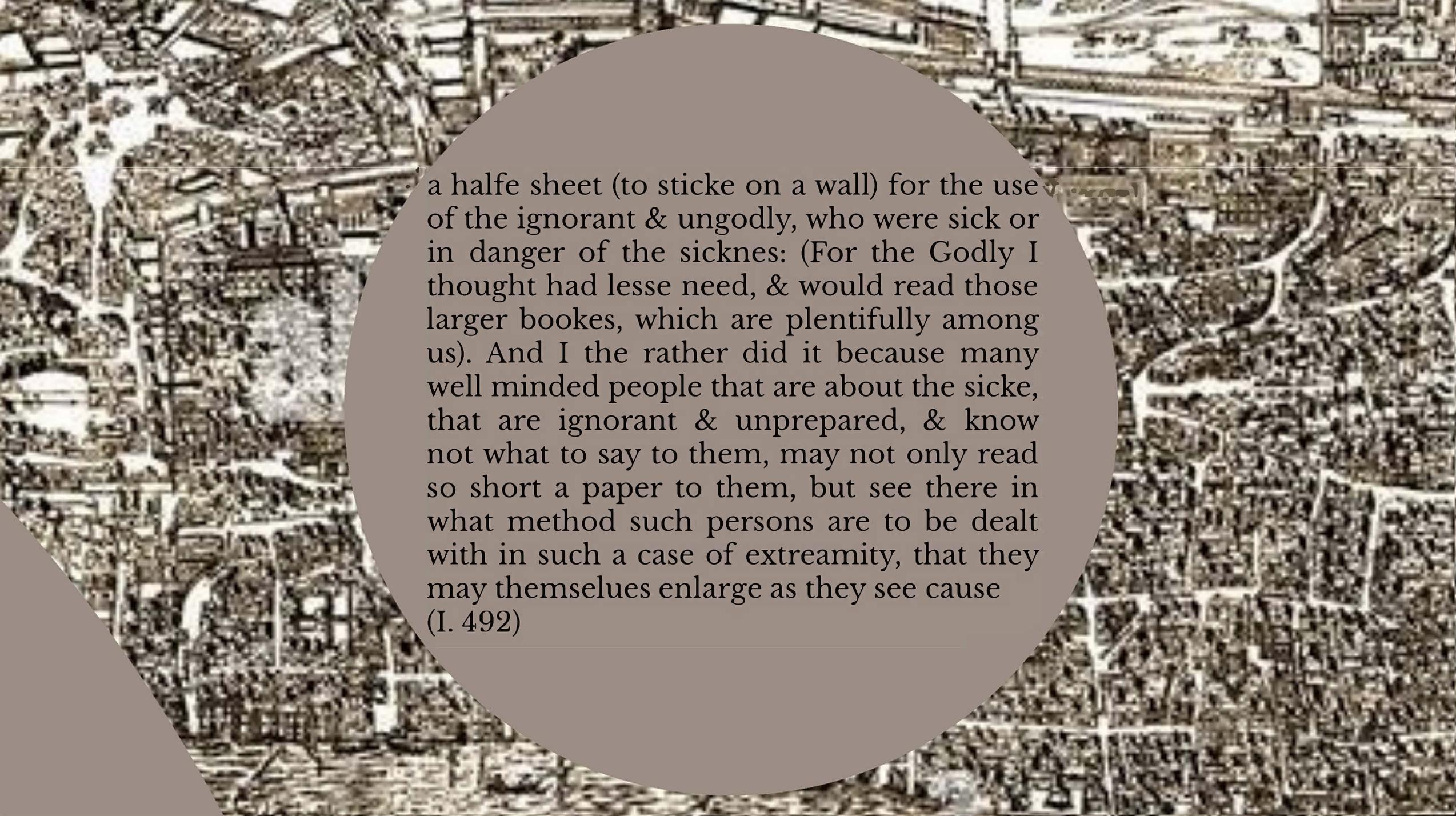
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An aerial photograph of a city in ruins, showing a dense grid of streets and the remains of buildings. A large, semi-transparent grey circle is overlaid on the center of the image, containing text. The text is in a black, serif font and is centered within the circle. The background image is in black and white, showing the extent of the destruction.

a halfe sheet (to sticke on a wall) for the use
of the ignorant & ungodly, who were sick or
in danger of the sicknes: (For the Godly I
thought had lesse need, & would read those
larger bookes, which are plentifully among
us). And I the rather did it because many
well minded people that are about the sicke,
that are ignorant & unprepared, & know
not what to say to them, may not only read
so short a paper to them, but see there in
what method such persons are to be dealt
with in such a case of extreimity, that they
may themselues enlarge as they see cause
(I. 492)

The Call

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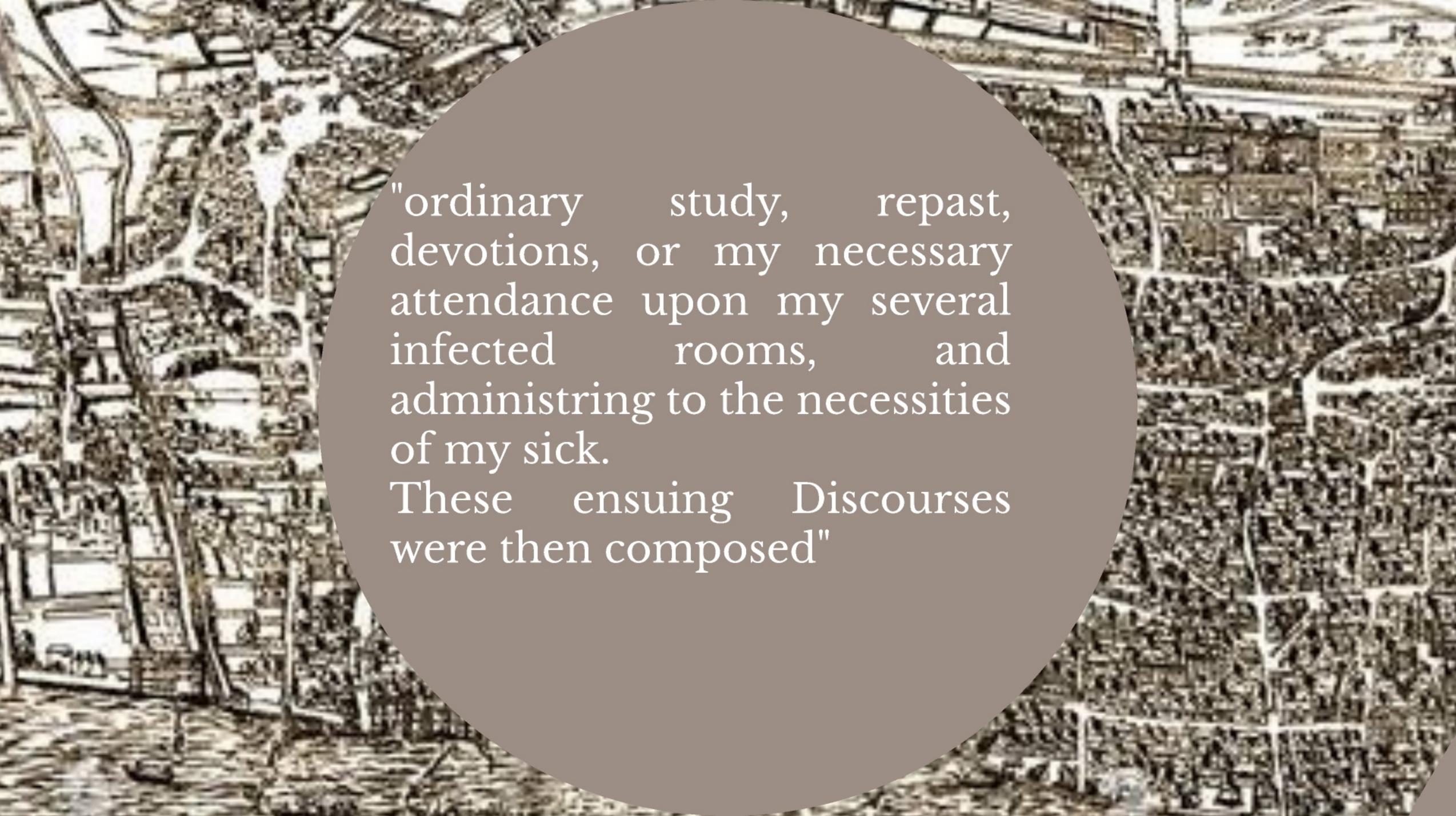
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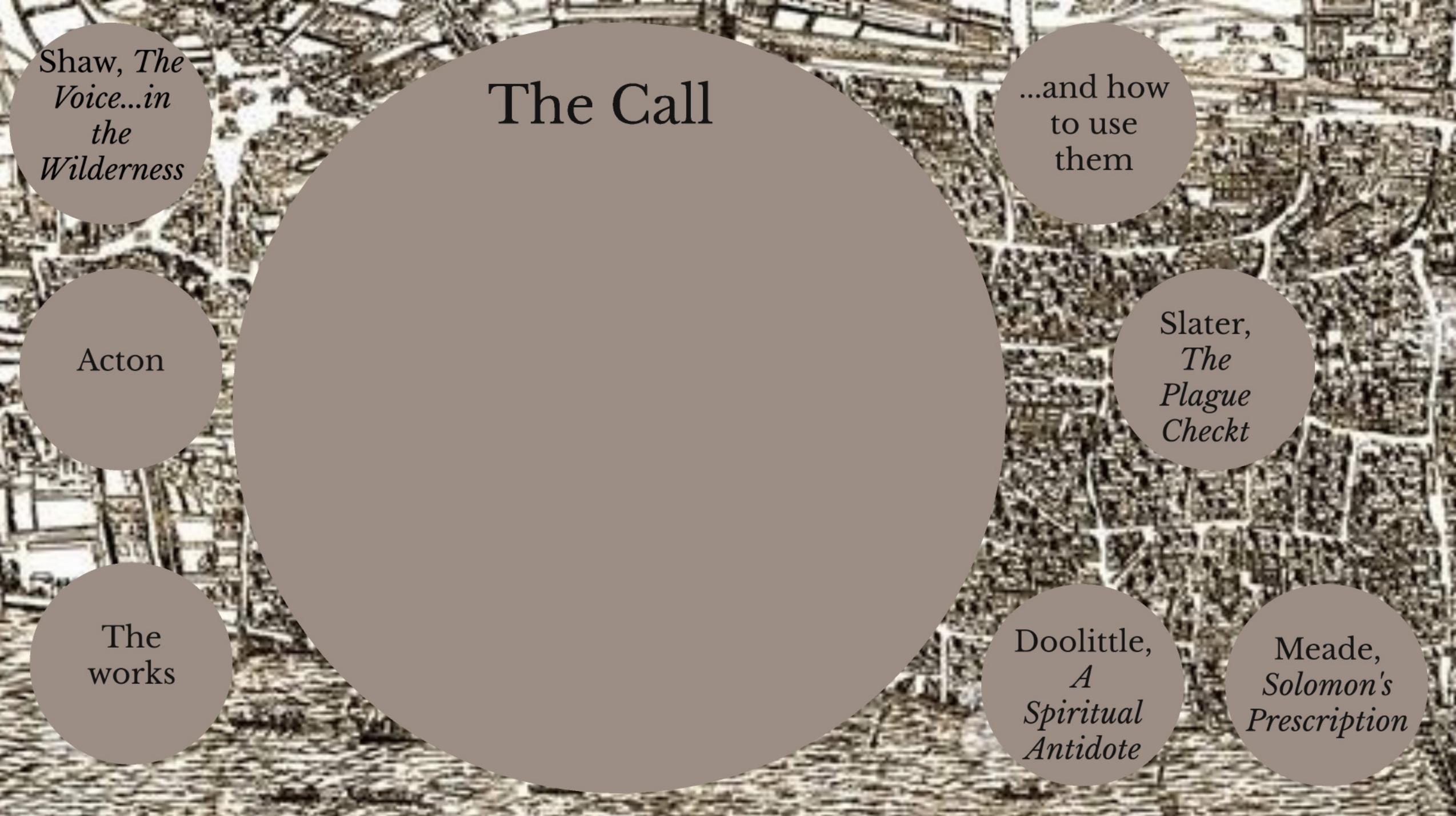
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"ordinary study, repast,
devotions, or my necessary
attendance upon my several
infected rooms, and
administring to the necessities
of my sick.

These ensuing Discourses
were then composed"



The Call

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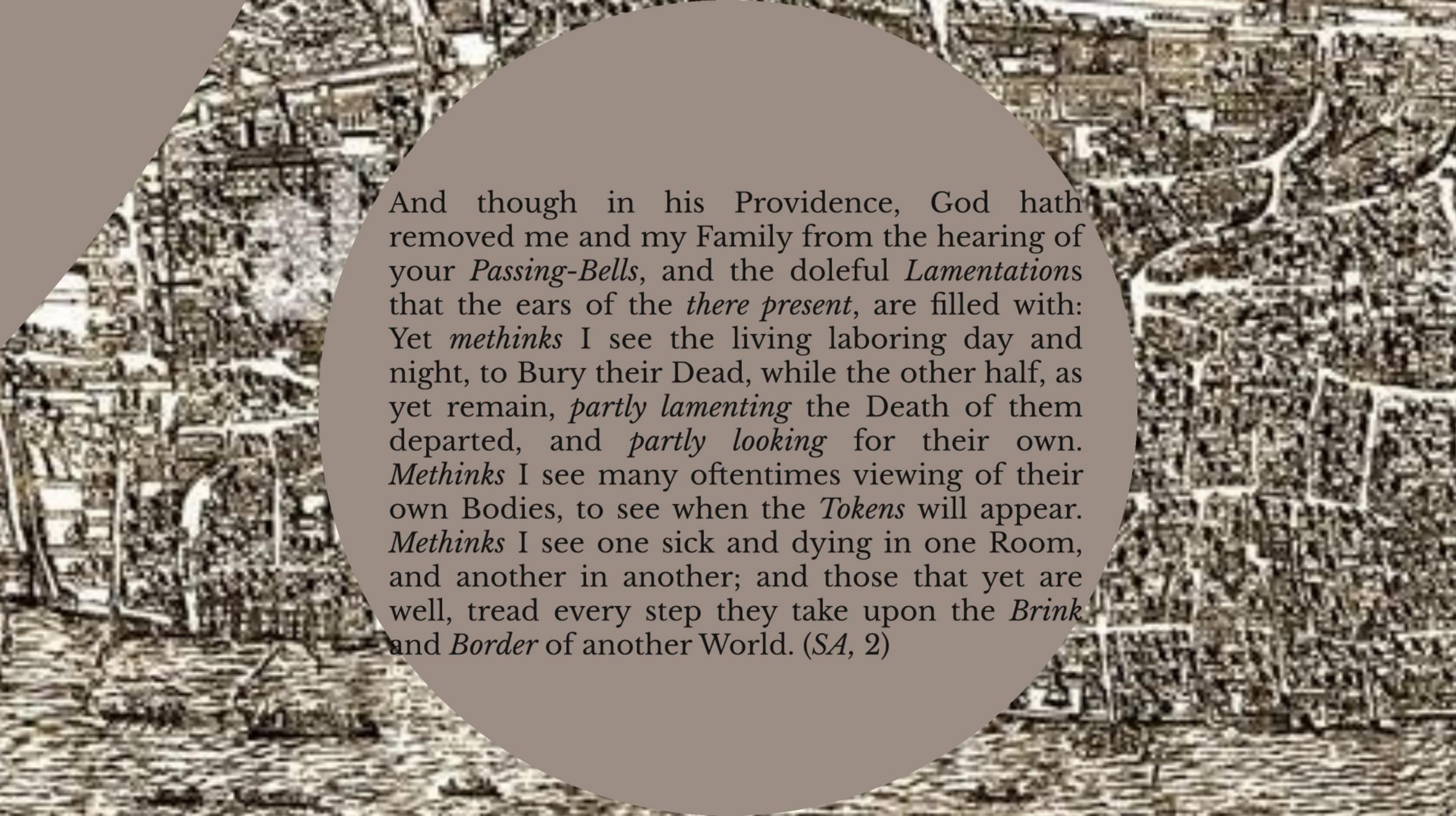
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And though in his Providence, God hath removed me and my Family from the hearing of your *Passing-Bells*, and the doleful *Lamentations* that the ears of the *there present*, are filled with: Yet *methinks* I see the living laboring day and night, to Bury their Dead, while the other half, as yet remain, *partly lamenting* the Death of them departed, and *partly looking* for their own. *Methinks* I see many oftentimes viewing of their own Bodies, to see when the *Tokens* will appear. *Methinks* I see one sick and dying in one Room, and another in another; and those that yet are well, tread every step they take upon the *Brink* and *Border* of another World. (SA, 2)

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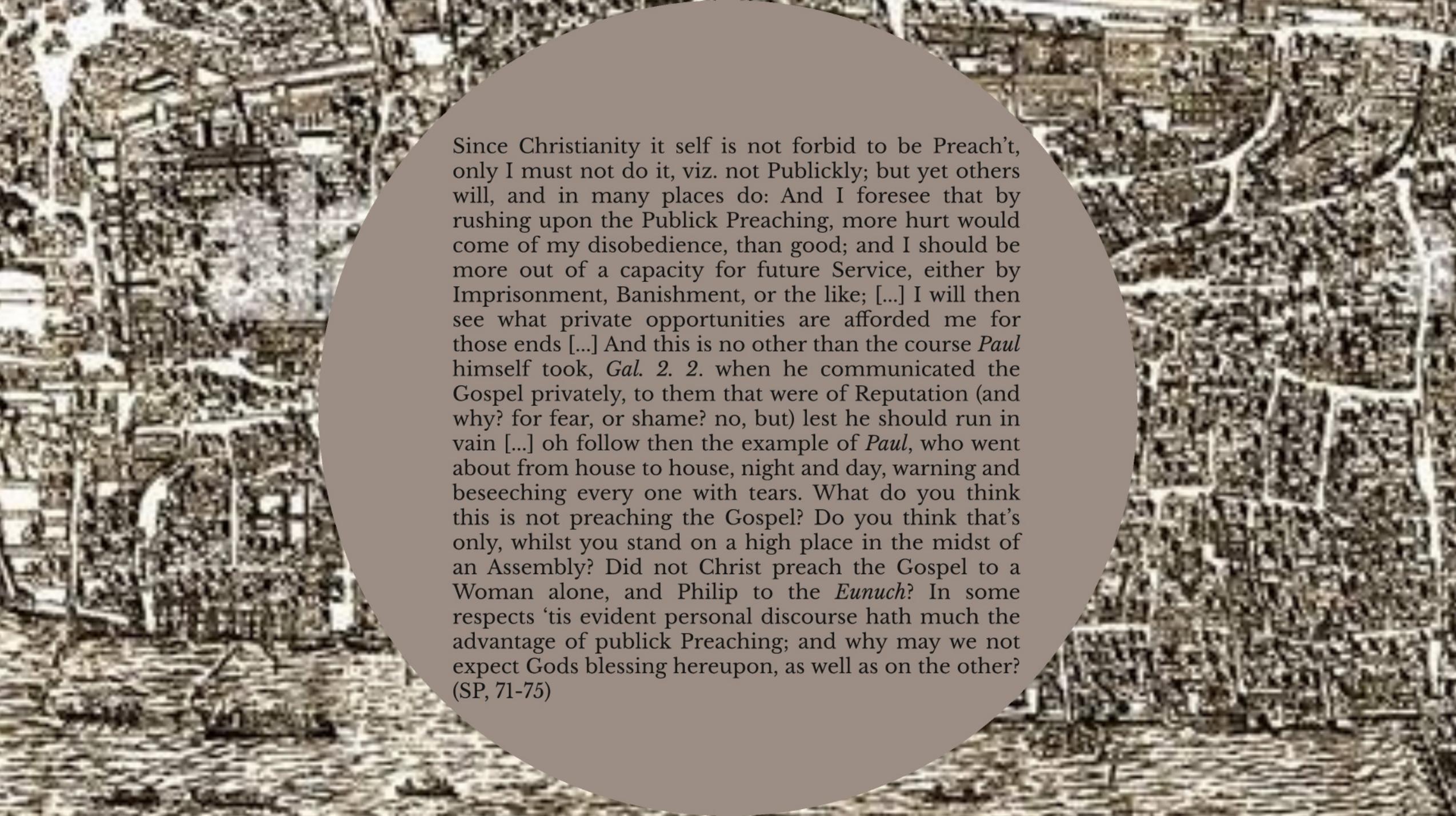
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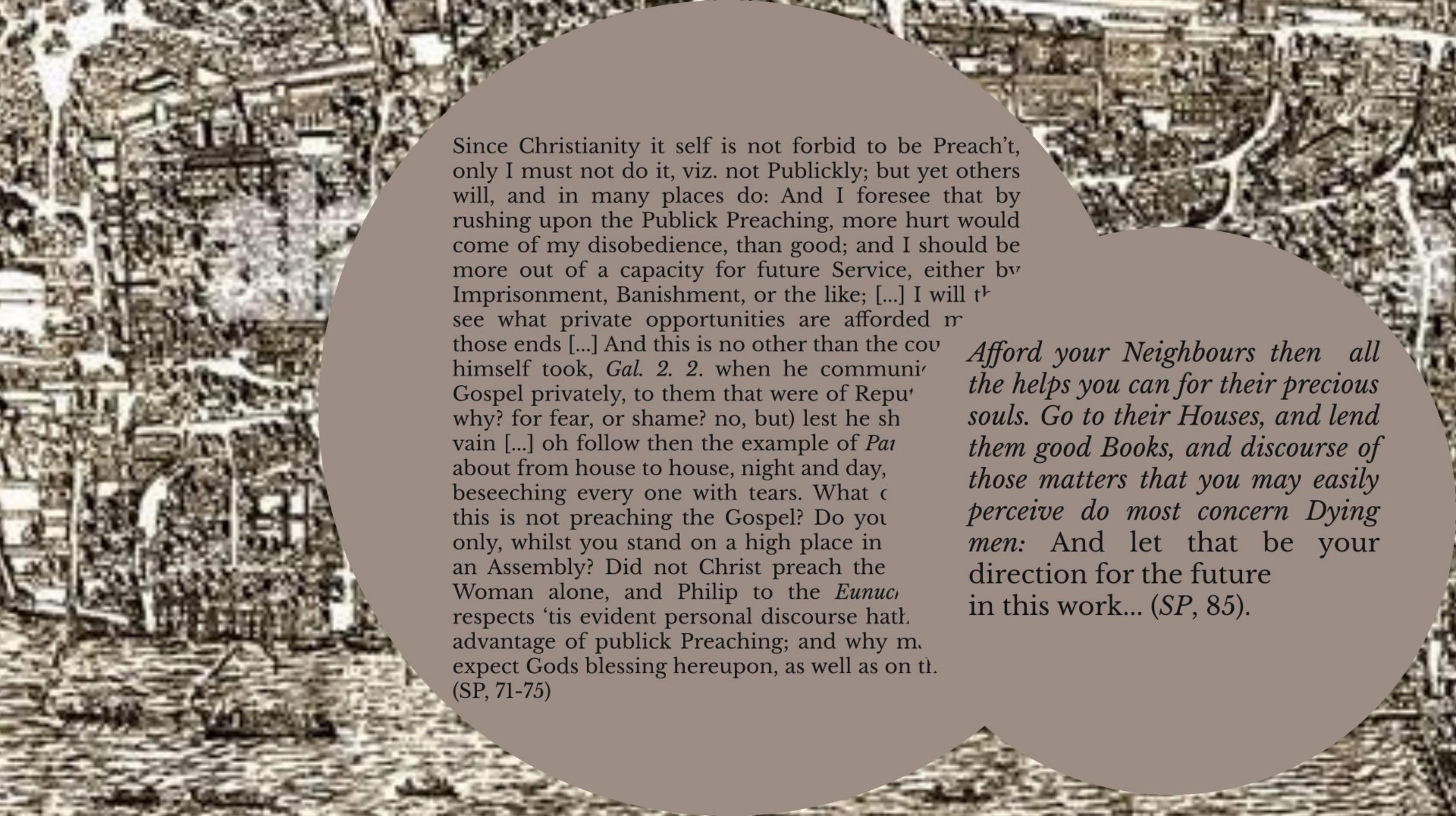


Since Christianity it self is not forbid to be Preach't, only I must not do it, viz. not Publickly; but yet others will, and in many places do: And I foresee that by rushing upon the Publick Preaching, more hurt would come of my disobedience, than good; and I should be more out of a capacity for future Service, either by Imprisonment, Banishment, or the like; [...] I will then see what private opportunities are afforded me for those ends [...] And this is no other than the course *Paul* himself took, *Gal. 2. 2.* when he communicated the Gospel privately, to them that were of Reputation (and why? for fear, or shame? no, but) lest he should run in vain [...] oh follow then the example of *Paul*, who went about from house to house, night and day, warning and beseeching every one with tears. What do you think this is not preaching the Gospel? Do you think that's only, whilst you stand on a high place in the midst of an Assembly? Did not Christ preach the Gospel to a Woman alone, and Philip to the *Eunuch*? In some respects 'tis evident personal discourse hath much the advantage of publick Preaching; and why may we not expect Gods blessing hereupon, as well as on the other? (SP, 71-75)

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Afford your Neighbours then all the helps you can for their precious souls. Go to their Houses, and lend them good Books, and discourse of those matters that you may easily perceive do most concern Dying men: And let that be your direction for the future in this work... (SP, 85).





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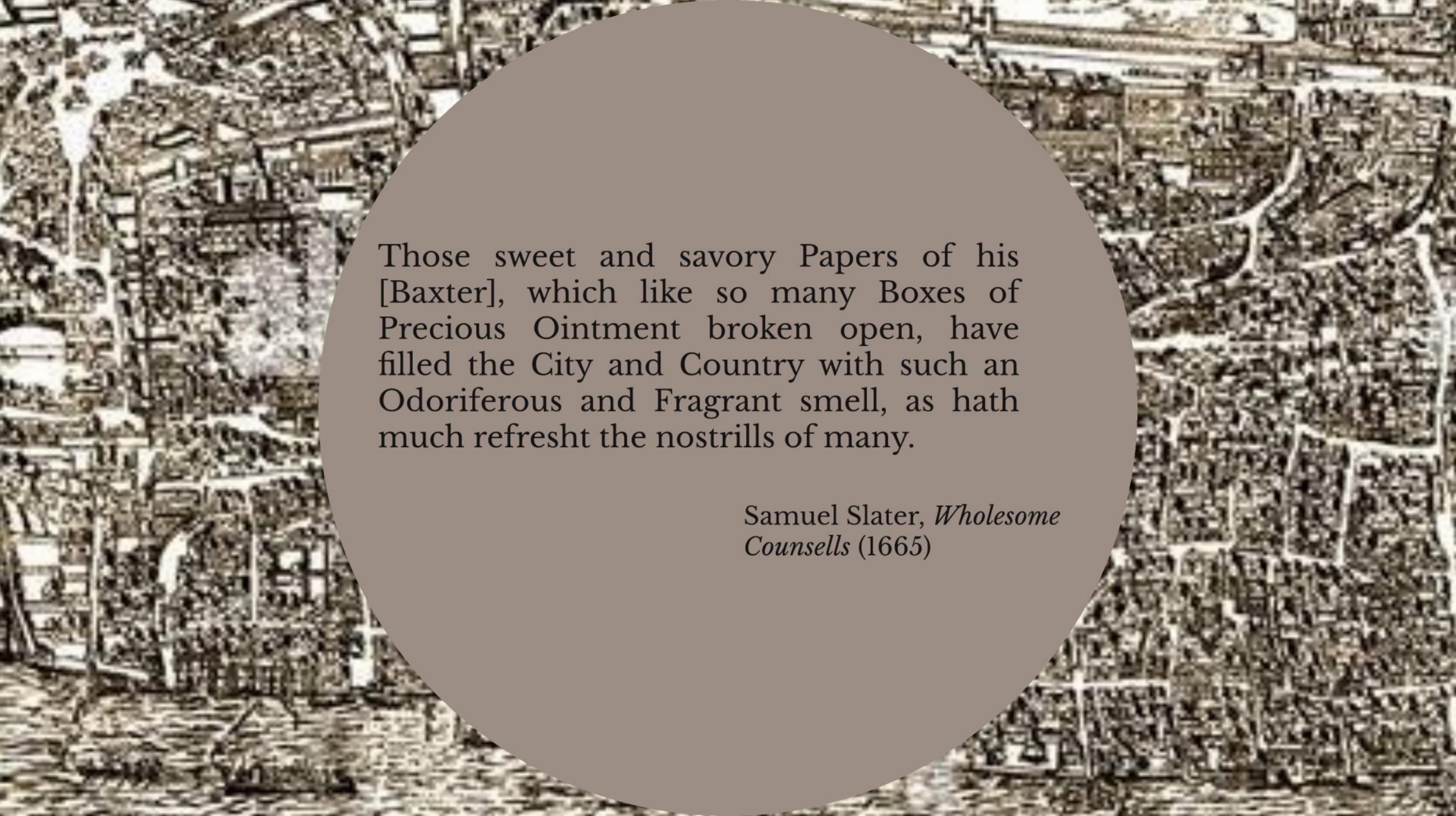
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Those sweet and savory Papers of his [Baxter], which like so many Boxes of Precious Ointment broken open, have filled the City and Country with such an Odoriferous and Fragrant smell, as hath much refresht the nostrills of many.

Samuel Slater, *Wholesome Counsells* (1665)

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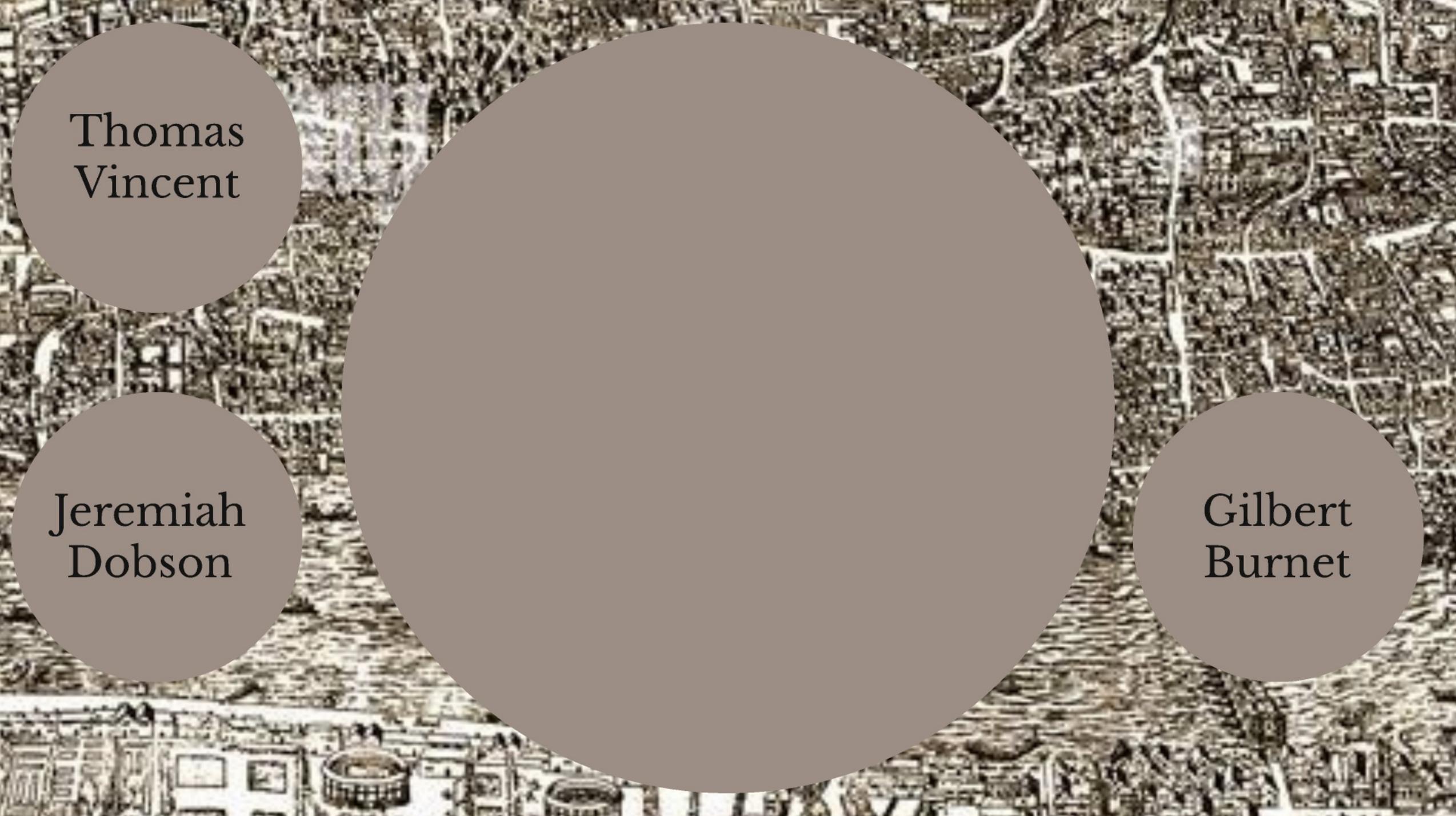
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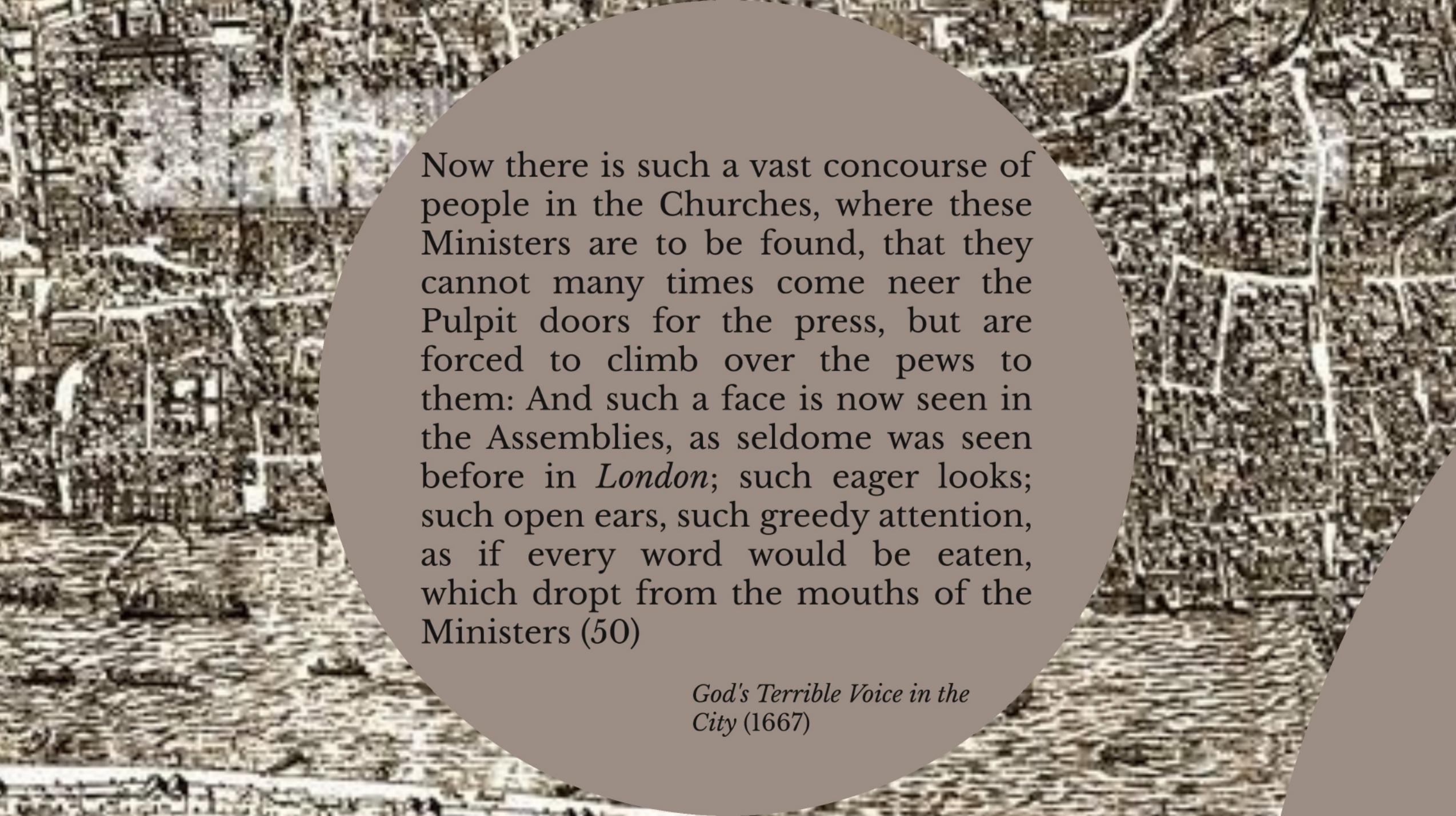
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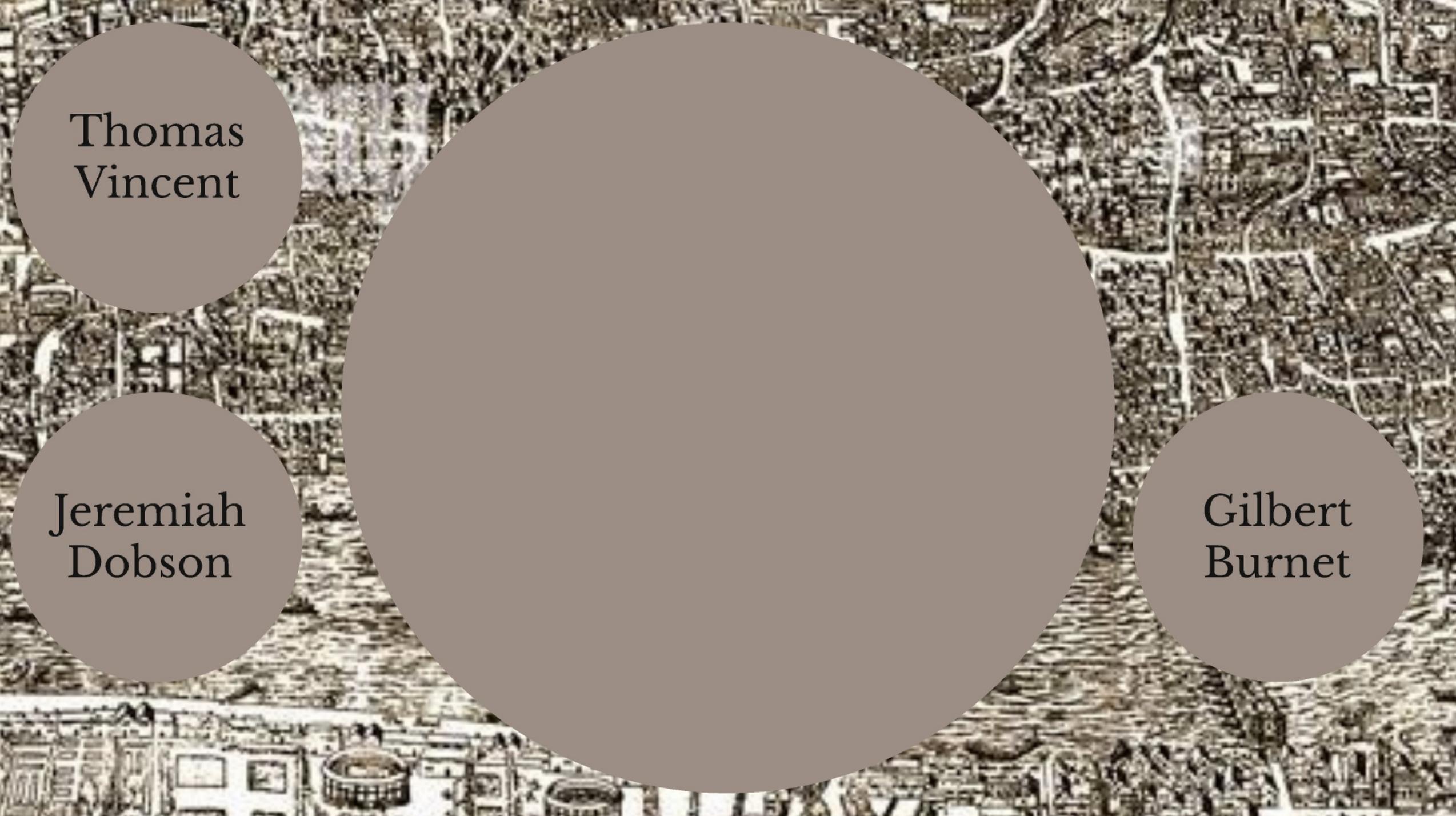
Jeremiah
Dobson

Gilbert
Burnet



Now there is such a vast concourse of people in the Churches, where these Ministers are to be found, that they cannot many times come near the Pulpit doors for the press, but are forced to climb over the pews to them: And such a face is now seen in the Assemblies, as seldome was seen before in *London*; such eager looks; such open ears, such greedy attention, as if every word would be eaten, which dropt from the mouths of the Ministers (50)

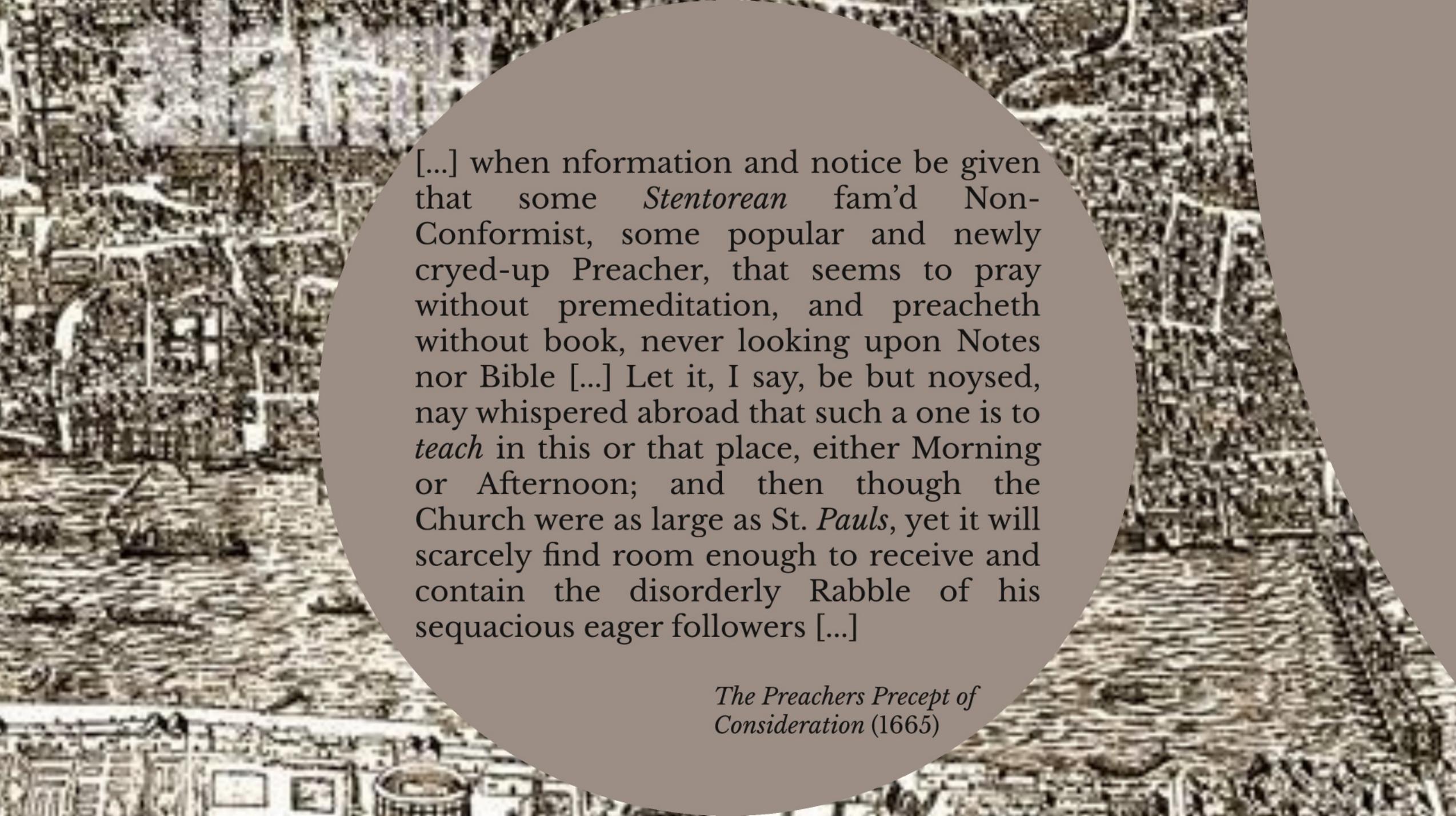
God's Terrible Voice in the City (1667)



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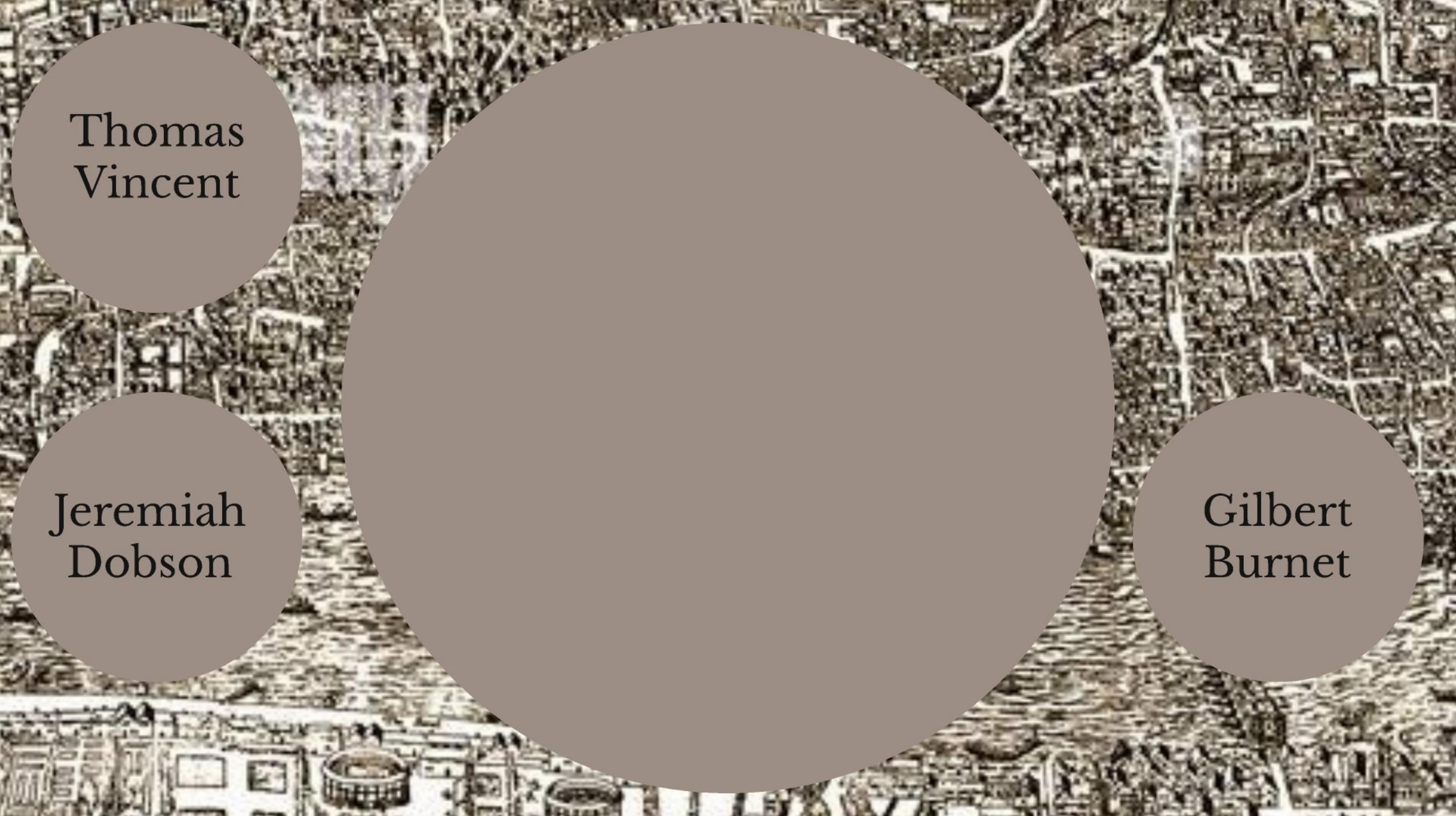
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Burnet



[...] when information and notice be given that some *Stentorean* fam'd Non-Conformist, some popular and newly cryed-up Preacher, that seems to pray without premeditation, and preacheth without book, never looking upon Notes nor Bible [...] Let it, I say, be but noysed, nay whispered abroad that such a one is to *teach* in this or that place, either Morning or Afternoon; and then though the Church were as large as *St. Pauls*, yet it will scarcely find room enough to receive and contain the disorderly Rabble of his sequacious eager followers [...]

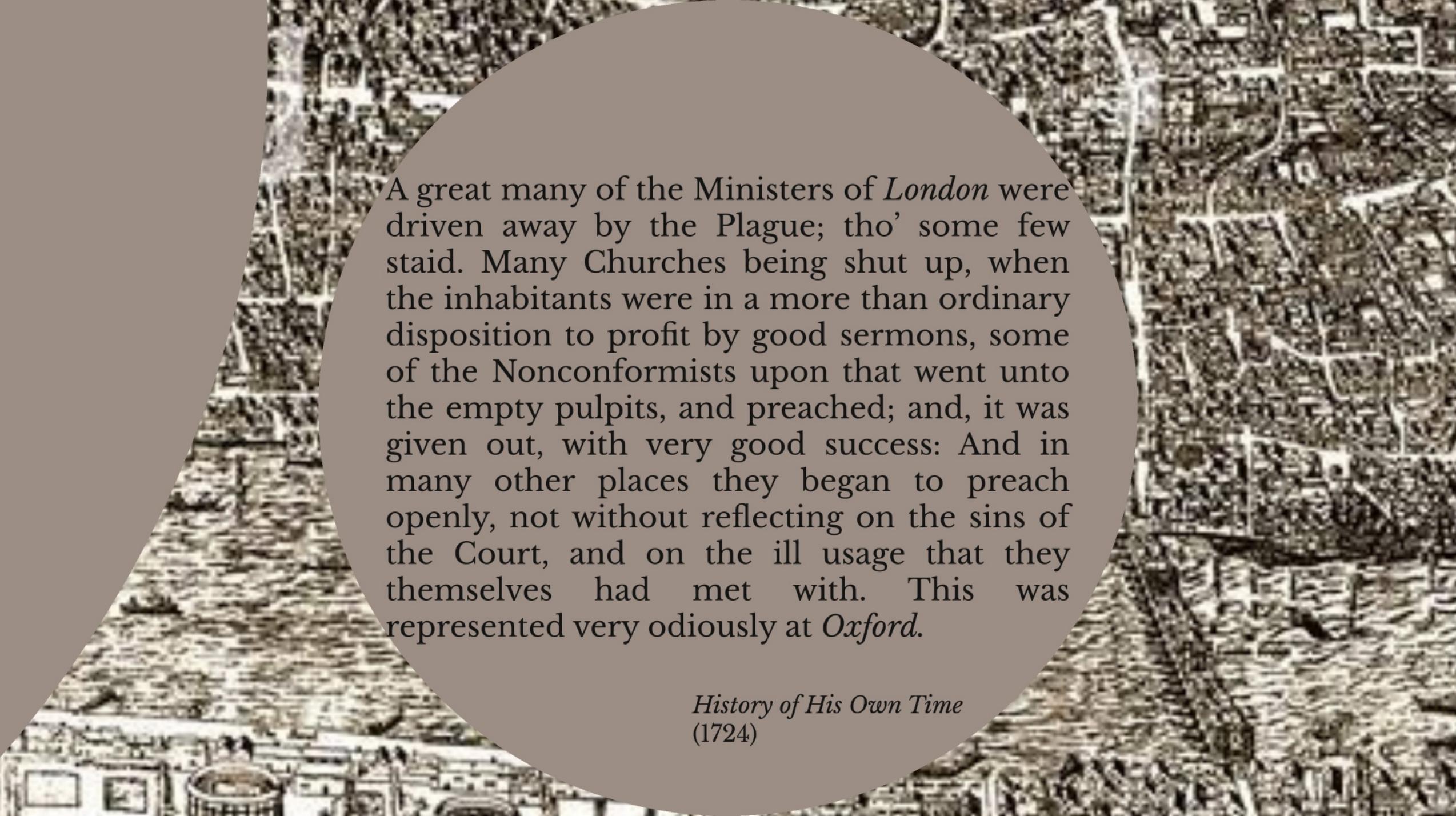
*The Preachers Precept of
Consideration (1665)*



Thomas
Vincent

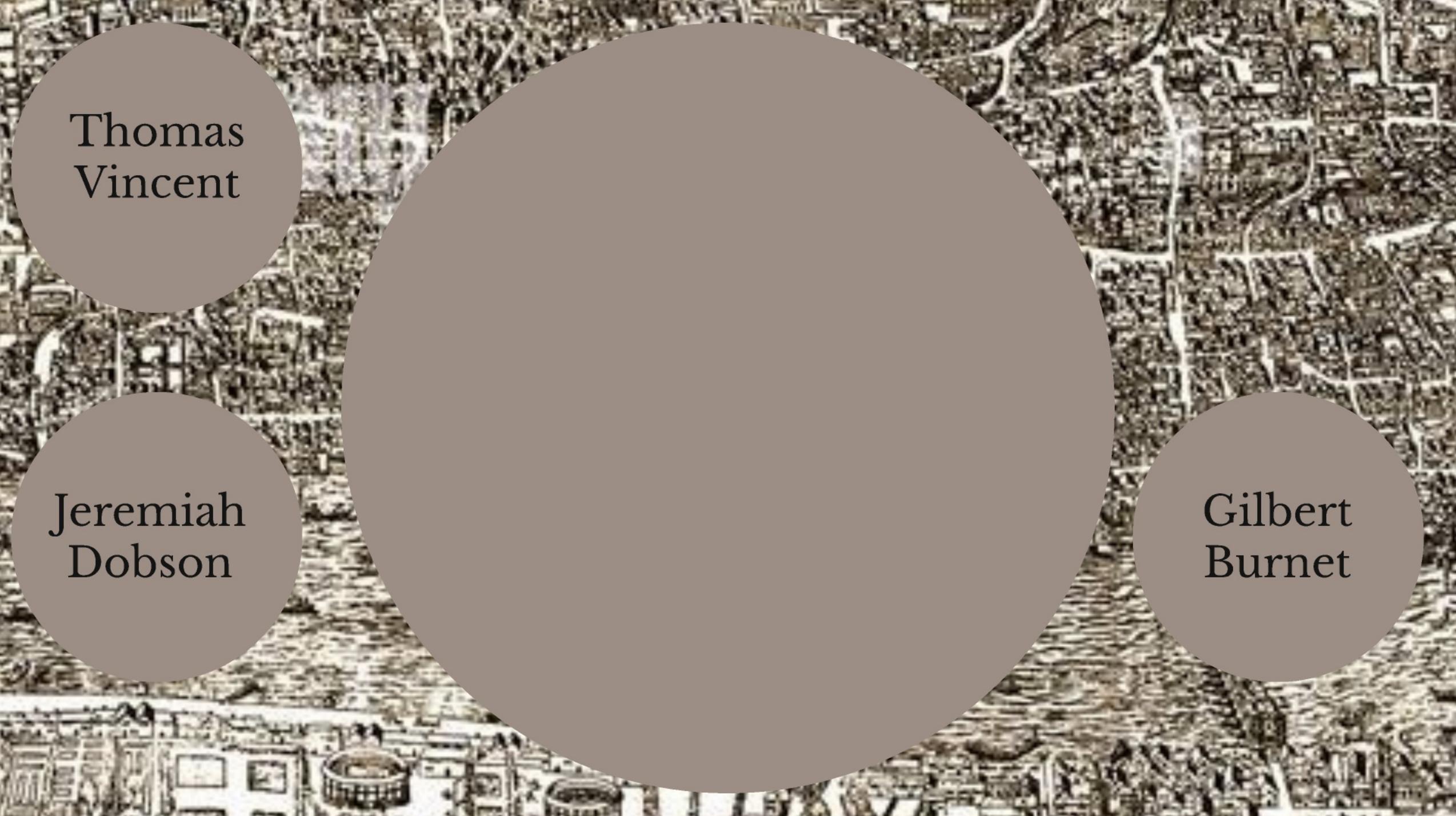
Jeremiah
Dobson

Gilbert
Burnet



A great many of the Ministers of *London* were driven away by the Plague; tho' some few staid. Many Churches being shut up, when the inhabitants were in a more than ordinary disposition to profit by good sermons, some of the Nonconformists upon that went unto the empty pulpits, and preached; and, it was given out, with very good success: And in many other places they began to preach openly, not without reflecting on the sins of the Court, and on the ill usage that they themselves had met with. This was represented very odiously at *Oxford*.

History of His Own Time
(1724)

An aerial photograph of a city with a grid street pattern and numerous buildings. A large, semi-transparent grey circle is centered in the image. Three smaller, semi-transparent grey circles are positioned around the large circle: one in the top-left, one in the bottom-left, and one in the bottom-right. Each of these smaller circles contains the name of a person in a black serif font.

Thomas
Vincent

Jeremiah
Dobson

Gilbert
Burnet

SRS 2022. The Reformation and Dissent

What did YOU do in the Great Plague?

The Nonconformist ministers and the crisis of 1665

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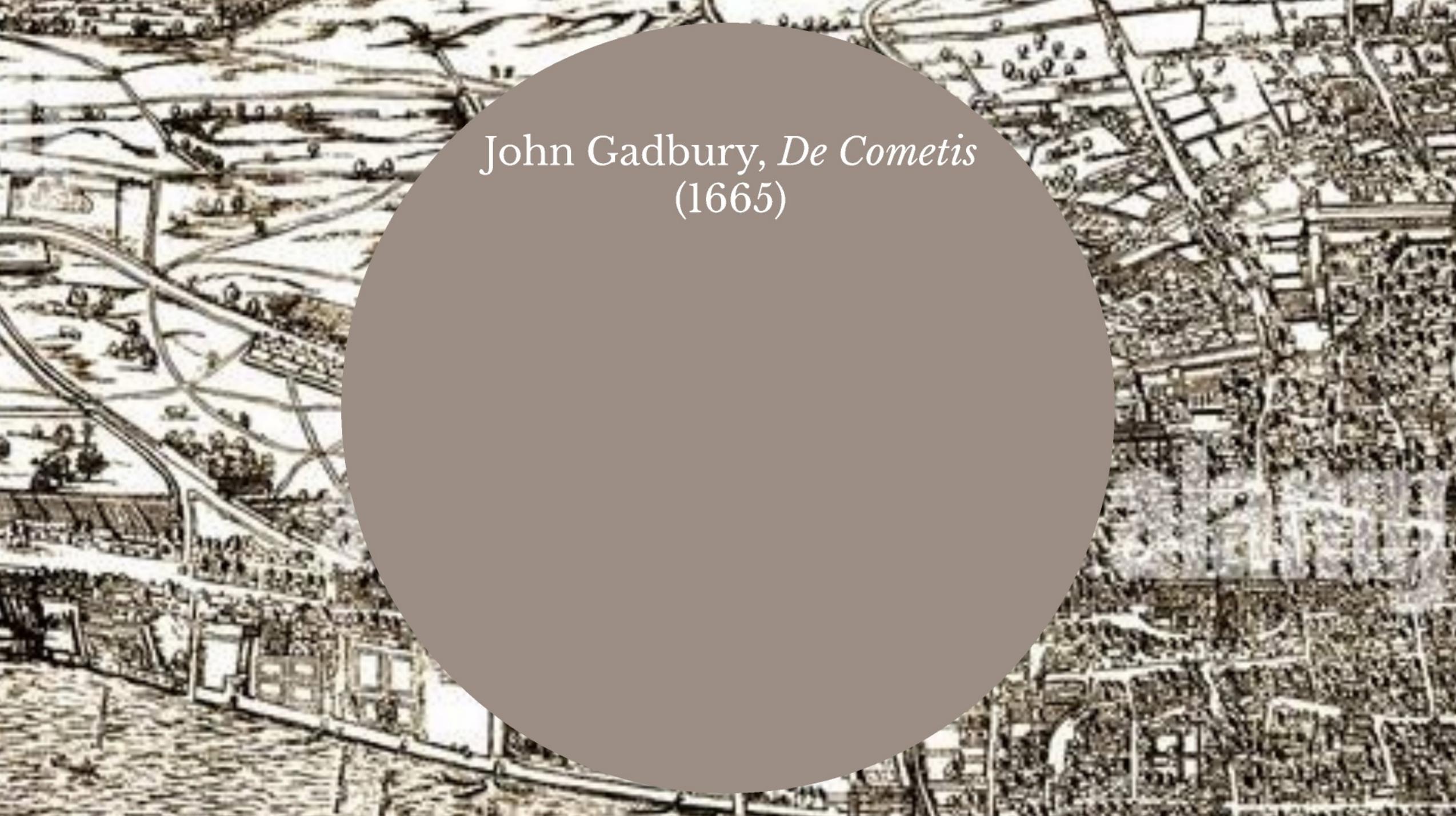
Conclusion

'Real
heroes'

The call

Baxter
and
Calamy

Representing
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John Gadbury, *De Cometis*
(1665)

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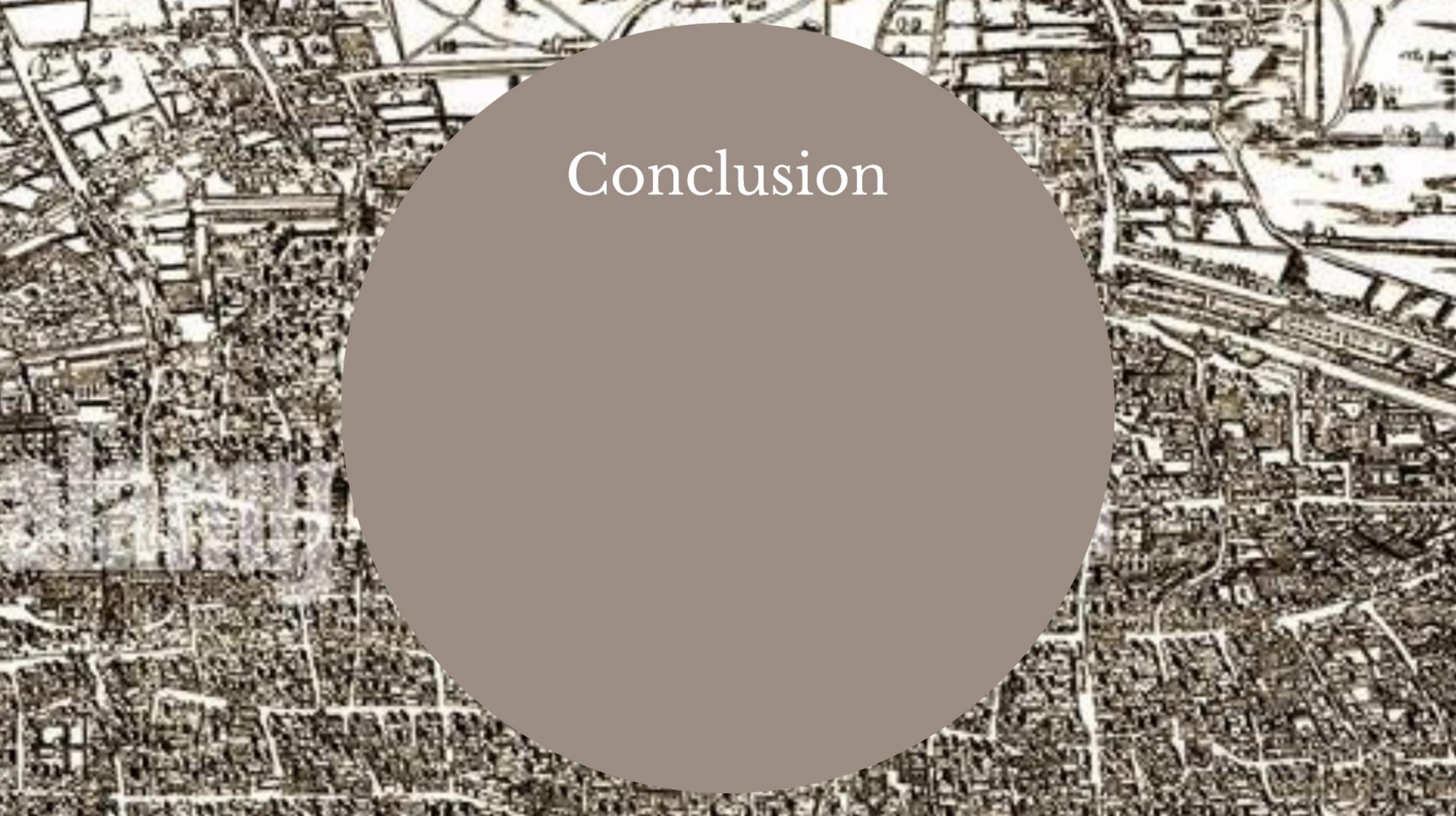
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An aerial photograph of a city grid, showing a dense network of streets and buildings. A large, semi-transparent grey circle is overlaid in the center of the image, containing the word "Conclusion" in white serif font.

Conclusion

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