

The ceasing of persecution in the primitive church.

The ceasing of the laste persecution of the primitive Church by the death of Licinius the last persecutour, began. An. 324. from the natiuitie of Christ, which was from the 30. yeare of hys age. 1294.

The binding vp of Sathan.

The binding vp of Sathan after peace given to the church, counting from the 30. yeares of Christ, began. 1294. And lasted a thousand yeres, that is, counting from the thirtie yeare of Christ, to the yeare. 1294.

The time of loosing of Sathan.

About which yeare Hope Boniface the 8. was hope, and made the 6. booke of the decretals: confirmed the orders of Priests, and privileged them with great freedoms, as appeareth by his constitution: Super cathedram. An. 1294.

The time of Antichrist, examined.

Unto the which count of yeares doeth not much disagree that I founde in a certaine olde Chyonicle prophesied and wyrtten in the latter ende of a booke, which booke was wyrtten as it seemeth, by a monke of Dower, & remayneth yet in the custodie of William Cary, a Citizen of London: alledging the Prophecie of one Hayncardus a gray frier, grounded vpon the authoritie of Joachim the Abbot, prophesying that Antichrist shoulde be borne the yeare from the Natiuitie of Christ. 1160. which is, counting after the Lordes passion, the very same yere and time, when the orders of Friers both Dominickes and Franciscans began first to be sette vp by Hope Bononius the 7. and by Hope Gregorius 9. which was the yere of our Lord counting after his passion. 1126.

And counting after the Natiuitie of the Lord, was the yeare. 1126. wherof these verses in the author was wyrtten.

Verfes prophesying of the coming of Antichrist.

Cum fuerint anni complet mille ducenti, Et decies seni post partum virginis almæ: Tunc Antichristus nascetur dæmone plenus.

And these verses were wyrtten, as appeareth by the sayd author. An. 1285.

These thyngs thus premised for the loosing out of Sathan, according to the prophesie of the Apocal. nowe let vs enter (Christe willing) to the declaration of these latter times, which folowed after the letting out of Sathan into the worlde: Describing the wondrous perturbations and cruell tyranny stirred vp by him against Christes Church. Also the valiant resistance of the Church of Christ against him and Antichrist, as in these our bookes here following may appeare.

The argument of which booke consisteth in 2. partes, first to censure of the raging furie of Sathan nowe loosed, and of Antichrist: Against the faintes of Christ fighting and traueiling for the maintenance of the truth, & reformation of the Church: Secondly, to declare the decay and ruine of the said Antichrist, through the power of the word of God being at length (eether in a greate parte of the worlde) ouerthrowen, or at least vniuersally in the whole world detected.

Thus then to begin wyth the yeare of our Lord. 1360. wherin I haue a litle as is aforesayd, transgressed the tyme of the first loosing out of Sathan: we are come now to the time wherin the Lord, after long darknes begunneth some reformation of hys Church, by the diligent industrie of sondry hys faithful and learned seruantes: of whome diuers already we haue foretouched in the former booke before, as namely Gulielm. de Sancto Amore, Marsilius Patavinus: Ockam: Robertus Gallus: Robertus Grosset: Petrus de Cugne-rijs: Ioannes Rupefiscanus: Conradus Hager: Ioannes de Polliaco, Celenas, wyth other moe: whych withstode the corrupt errors, and intollerable enormities of the Bishop of Rome. Beside them which about these times were put to death by the saide bishop of Rome, as Chastillon, & Franciscus de Arcatara in the booke before recorded: also the two Franciscans, Martyrs, which were burned at Quinion, mentioned, pag. 391.

Now to these (the Lord willing) we will adde such other holy Martyrs and confessors, who following after in the course of yeares with like zeale and strength of Gods

worde, and also with like daunger of their liues, gaue the like resistance against the enemie of Christes religion, and suffered at hys handes the like persecutions. First begynning wyth that godly man, whosoeuer he was the author of the Booke (hys name I haue not) intituled the prayer and complaint of the Ploughman: wyrtten as it appeareth, about thys present tyme.

Which booke as it was faithfully set forth by William Findall, so I haue as truly distributed the same abroade to the Readers handes: neyther chaunging any thyng of the matter, neyther altering many wordes of the phrase thercof. Although the oldnesse and age of hys speache and termes be almost growne nowe out of vse: yet thought I it so best, both for the vtilitie of the booke to rescue it from obliuion, as also in his owne language to let it go abroad, for the more credite and testimonie of the true antiquity of the same. Adding withal in the margent for the better vnderstanding of the reader, some interpretation of certaine difficult termes and speches, as otherwise might perhaps hinder or stay the reader. The matter of this complaining prayer of the ploughman, thus proceedeth.

An olde auuncient wryting, intituled, The prayer and complaint of the Ploughman.

IESU CHRIST that was ybore of the maid Marie, haue on thy poore seruauntes mercie and pitie, and helpe them in their great nede to fight against sinne, and against the deuill that is author of sinne, and more nede nes there neuer to cry to Christ for helpe, then it is ryght nowe. For it is fulfilled that God sayde by Isay the Prophet: ye riseth vp erlich to follow drunkennesse, and to drinke till it be euen, the harpe and other minstrelles beeth in your feastes and wine. But the woorkes of God ye ne beholdeth not, ne taketh no kepe to the woorkes of his handes: And therefore my people is take prisoner, for they ne had no cunning. And the noble men of my people deyeden for hunger, and the multitude of my people wren dry for thirst, and therefore hel hath drawn abroad theyr soule, and hath yopened hys mouth wythout any ende. And estfoones sayeth Isay the Prophet: The worde is flossen away, and the highnesse of the people is ymade sicke, and the earth is infecte of his wonnyers, for they haue broken my lawes, and ychaunged my right, and han destroyed mine euerlastyng bonde and * forward betwene them & me. And therefore cursing shal deuour the earth, and they that wonneth on the erthly shullen done sinne. And therefore the earth tilyars shullen waxe woode, and fewe men shullen cen yleft vpon the earth. And yet sayth Isay the Prophet, this sayeth God, for as much as this people nigheth me with their mouth, & glorifieth me with their lippes, and thei hart is farre from me. And they han ydrad more mens commandement, then mine, and more draw to their doctrines, then mine. Therefore will I make a great wondring vnto this people, wisdom shall perish away from wise men, and vnderstanding of fready men shall be yhid. And so it seemeth that an other saying of Isay is fulfilled, there as God bad hym goe teach the people, and sayd go forth and say to this people: eares haue ye, and vnderstād ye not, and eyes ye haue and sight ne know ye not. Make blinde the hart of this people, & make their eares heauy, and close their eyen, least he see with his eyen, and yheare with his eares, and vnderstand with his hart, and ych heale him of his sicknes. And Isay sayd to God: how long Lord shall this be? And God sayd: For to that the cities ben deuolate withouten a wonnier, and an house withouten a man.

Here is mychel nede for to make sorow, & to cry to our Lord Iesu Christ hertlich for helpe and for succour, that hee wole forgeue vs our sinnes, and geue vs grace and coning to seruen him better here after. And God of his endles mercy geue vs grace and coning trulich to tellen which is Christes law in helping of mens soules, for we beth lewde men, and sinfull men, and vnconning, and if he wolle be our helpe and our succour, we shullen wel perfourme our purpose. And blessed be our Lorde God that hideth his wisdom from wise men, and fro ready men, and teacheth it to small children, as Christ teacheth in the Gospell.

Christen men haue a law to keepe, the which lawe hath tve parties. Beleue in Christ that is God, & is the foundmet of their law, and vpon this foundement, as he sayde to Peter, and the gospel beareth witnes, he wolle byelden his Church, and thys is the first party of Christes law. The secod party of this law beth Christes commaundements that beth wrytten in the gospel, and more verilich in Christen mens hartes.

And as touching the beleue, we beleuen that Christ is God, and that there ne is no God but he. We beleuen neuertheless that in the Godhead there bene three persons, the Father, the Sonne, and the holy Ghost, and all these three persons ben one God, and not many Gods, and all they beth ylich mighty, ylich good, and ylich wise, and euer haue bene, and euer shullen ben. We beleuen this God made the worlde of nought, and man he made after hys owne likenesse: in Paradise that was a land of blisse, and gaue him that

The author of the ploughmans prayer not knowne.

An olde booke intituled, the ploughmans prayer, wrytten as seemeth about Wickliffes tyme. The complainnt of Esai applied to these times. * Forward, that is, couenant.

The law of Christ standeth on tve partes.

Anno. 1360.

A brief rehearfall of faythfull learned men, which withstood the proceedings of the Pope.