

The masters of Oxford doubt whether to receive or reject the Popes Bull.

Bull when it came to be exhibite unto their handes, by the Popes messenger aforesayd: the proctors and maysters of the Uniuersitie toyning together in consultation, stood long in doubt deliberating with themselves, whether to receive the Popes Bull with honour, or to refuse and reject it with shame.

I cannot here but laugh in my minde to behold the authours of this story whom I follow: what exclamations, what wondrings and maruels, they make at these Oxford men, for so doubting at a matter so playne, so manifest of it selfe, (as they say) whether the popes Bull sent to them from Rome was to be receaued or contrary. Which thing to our monkish writers seemed then suche a prodigious wonder, that they with blushing cheekes are feyne to cut of the matter in the middelt with silence.

The copy of this wilde Bull, sent to them from the Pope, was this.

*Gregory the Bishop, the seruant of Gods seruants, to his welbeloued sonnes, the Chauncellour and Vniuersitie of Oxford, in the dioecesse of Lincolne greeting, and Apostolical benediction.

The Popes mad Bull sent to Oxford.

WE are compelled not onely to meruell, but also to lament, that you considering the Apostolical seate hath geuen vnto your vniuersitie of Oxford so great fauour and priueledge; and also for that you flow as in a large sea in the knowledge of the holy Scriptures, and ought to be champions and defenders of the ancient and Catholike fayth, (without the which there is no saluation) by your great negligence and slouthe, will suffer wilde cockle, not onely to grow vp among the pure wheate of the flourishing field of your Vniuersitie, but also to waxe more strong and choke the corne. Neither haue ye any care (as we are enforced) to extirpe and plucke the same vp by the rootes, to the great blemishing of your renowned name, the perill of your soules, the contempt of the Church of Rome, and to the great decay of the ancient fayth. And further (which greneeth vs) the encrease of that filthy weed was more sharply rebuked & iudged of in Rome then in England where it sprang. Wherefore let there be means sought by the help of the faithfull, to roote out the same. Greuouusly it is come to our eares, that one Iohn Wickliffe, parson of Lutterworth in Lincolne diocess, a professour of diuinitie (would god he were not rather a maister of errors) is runne into a kinde of detestable wickednes, not onely and openly publishing, but also vomiting out of the filthy dungeon of his brest, diuers professions false and erroneous conclusions, and most wicked and damnable heresies. Whereby he might defile the faythfull sorte, and bring them from the the right path headlong into the way of perdition ouerthrow the state of the Church, and vtterly subuert the secular policy. Of which his mischieuous heresies, some seem to agree (onely certayne names and termes changed) with the peruerse opinions, and vnlearned doctrine of Marcellus of Padua, & Iohn of Gandune, of vnworthy memory: whose bookes were vtterly abolished in the realme of England, by our predecesour of happy memory Iohn 22. Which kingdome doth not onely flourish in power, and abundance of faculties, but is much more glorious and shyning in purenes of fayth: Accustomed alwayes to bring forth men excellentlye learned in the true knowledge of the holy scriptures, ripe in grauitie of manners, men notable in deuotion, and defenders of the Catholike fayth. Wherefore wee will and commaunde you by our writing Apostolical, in the name of your obedience, and vpon payne of priuation of our fauour, indulgences and priueledges graunted vnto you and your vniuersitie, from the sayd see Apostolical: that hereafter ye suffer not those pestilent heresies, that those subtle and false conclusions and propositions, misconstruing the right sense of fayth and good workes (how soeuer they terme it, or what curious implication of wordes soeuer they vse) any longer to be disputed of, or brought in question: Least if it be not withstood at the first, and plucked vp by the rootes, it might perhaps be to late hereafter to prepare medicins when a greater number is infected with the contagion. And further, that ye apprehend immediately or cause to be apprehended the sayd Iohn Wickliffe, and deliuer him to be deteyned in the safe custodie of our well beloued brethren, the Archbishop of Caunterbury, and the byshop of London or eyther of them. And if you shall finde any gaynesayers, corrupted with the sayde doctrine (whiche God forbid) in your sayd vniuersitie wythin your iurisdiction, that shall obstinately stand in the sayd errors: that then in lyke manner ye apprehend them, and committe them to safe custodie; and otherwise to doe in this case as it shall appertayne vnto you: So as by your carefull proceedinges herein, your negligence past concernyng the premises, may now fully be supplied and recompensed with present diligence. Whereby you shall not onely purchase vnto you the fauour and beneuolence of the seate Apostolical, but also great re-

The Pope exclaiming of Iohn Wickliffe.

Marcellus Patavinus, Iohn de Gandano, noted.

Here the wilde Bull striketh.

ward and merite of almightie God.

Yeu en at Rome at S. Maries the greater. xi. kalend. of Iune, and in the teuenth yeare of our consecration.

Beside this Bull sent to the Uniuersitie of Oxford, the sayd Pope Gregory directed moreover his letters the same tyme to the Archbyshoppe of Caunterbury Symon Sudbury: to the Byshoppe of London named William Courtenay, with the conclusions of Iohn Wickliffe therein inclosed, commaunding them, by vertue of thole his letters Apostolical, and straitly enioyning them to caule the sayd Iohn Wickliffe to be apprehended, and call in prison: And that the king and the nobles of England should be admonished by them, not to geue any credit to the sayde Iohn Wickliffe, or to his doctrine in any wise. &c.

Simon Sudburie Archb. of Cant. W. Courtenay Bishop of London.

Beside this Bill or Bull of the Pope, sent vnto the Archbyshop of Caunterbury and to the Byshop of London, bearyng the date. 11. kalend. Iuni. and the 7. yeare of the raigne of the Pope: I finde moreover in the sayd story, two other letters of the Pope concernyng the same matter, but differing in tyme, sent vnto the same Byshops, and all bearyng the same date both of the day, yeare, and moneth of the raigne of the sayd Pope Gregory. Whereby it is be supposed, that the Pope either was very exquisite and solicitous about the matter, to haue Wickliffe to be apprehended which wrote thre diuers letters to one person, and all in one day, about one businesse: or els that he did suspect the bearrers thereof, the scruple wherof I leaue to the iudgement of the Reader.

Three sundry letters of the pope to one person, about one matter.

Furthermore beside these letters writte to the Uniuersitie, and to the Byshops, he directed also an other Epistle bearyng the same date vnto kyng Edward (as one of my honies sayth) but as an other Epistle, to the kyng Richard, whiche soundeth more neare to the truth, inasmuch as in the 7. yeare of Pope Gregory the xi. which was the yeare of our Lord. 1378. kyng Edward was not aliue. The copy of his letters to the kyng here followeth.

*The copy of the Epistle sent by the Byshop of Rome to Richard kyng of England, to perforce Iohn Wickliffe.

Vnto his welbeloued sonne in Christ, Richard the most noble kyng of England health. &c.

The kyngdome of England which the most highest hath put vnder your power and gouernaunce, beyng so famous and renowned in valiancy and strength, so aboundaunt and flowyng in all kynde of wealth and riches: but much more glorious resplendent and shynyng through the brightnesse and clearenesse of all godlynesse and fayth: hath accustomed alwayes to bring forth men endued with the true knowledge and vnderstandyng of the holy Scriptures, graue in yeares, seruent in deuotion, and defenders of the Catholike fayth: The which haue onely directed and instructed their own people through their holisome doctrine and preceptes into the true path of Gods commaundementes, but also as we haue heard by the report and information of many credible persons (to our great grief & hart sorow) that Iohn Wickliffe Parson of Lutterworth, in the Dioeces of Lincolne, professor of diuinitie (I would to God he were no author of heresie) to be fallen into such a detestable and abhominable madnes: that he hath propounded and fet forth diuers and sundry conclusions full of errors and coteinyng most manifest heresie, the which do tende vtterly to subuert and ouerthrow the state of the whole Church. Of the whiche, some of them (albeit vnder coloured phrase and speache) seeme to smell and fauour of peruerse opinions, and the foolishe doctrine of condemned memory of Marillius of Padua, and Iohn of Gandano, whose bookes were by Pope Iohn the 22. our predecesour, a man of most happy memorye reprobued and condemned. &c.

The Popes letter to King Richard agaynst I. Wickliffe.

Whereto gentle reader, thou hast heard how Wickliffe was accused by the Byshop. Now you shall also heare the Popes mighty reasons and arguementes, by the which he hid consute him to the kyng. It followeth.

Therefore, for so much as our Reuerend brethren the Archbishop of Caunterbury, and the Byshop of London haue received a speciall commaundement from vs by our autoritie, to apprehend and committe the forenamed Iohn Wickliffe vnto prison, and to transporte his confession vnto vs: If they shall seeme in the prosecution of this their businesse to lacke your fauour or helpe, we require and most earnestly desire your maiestic euen as your most noble predecessors haue alwayes bene most earnest louers of the Catholicke fayth (whose case or quarell in this matter, is chiefly hand.

Here is printed what was not changed.