

and with good hope craue mercy at God & remission of his finnes: what is he that can let God to absolue that sinner from his sinne? And as God absolue a sinner from his sinne, so hath Christ absolued many, although they confessed not theyr finnes vnto the priests, and although they receiued not due penance for their finnes. And if Christ could after y^e manner once absolue sinners: how is he become now not able to absolue? Except some man wil say, that he is a boue Christ, and that his power is diminished by y^e ordinaunces of his own lawes? How were sinners absolued of God in th^e time of the Apostles, and alwayes heretofore, vnto y^e time that these Canons were made? I speake not these things as though confession to priests were wicked, but that it is not of necessity requisite vnto saluation. I beleue verily that the confession of finnes vnto godd priests, and likewise to other faythful Christians, is god, as witnesseth S. James the Apostle: Confesse ye your selues one to another, & pray ye one for another, that ye may be saued: for the continuall prayer of the iust auayleth much. Helias was a man that suffered many things like vnto you, and he praied that it should not rayne vpon the earth, & it rayned not in 3. yeares & 6. monethes. And agayne he prayed, and it rayned from heauen, and the earth yel'ded forth her fruit. This kinde of confession is good, profitable and expedient: for if God peradventure heareth not a mans own prayer, he is helped with the intercession of others: Yet neuertheless y^e prayers of the priests seemeth to much to be extolled in the decrees, where it treateth of penitēce, and that saying is ascribed vnto Pope Leo. Cap. multiplex misericordia Dei. &c. And it followeth: So is it ordeyned by the prouidence of Gods diuine wil, that y^e mercy of God cannot be obtained but by the praier of y^e priests, &c. The praier of a good priest doth much auayle a sinner confessing his fautes vnto him. The counsell of a discret priest is very profitable for a sinner, to geue the sinner counsell to beware heratter to sinne, and to instruct him how he shal punish his body by fasting by watching, and such like actes of repentance, that herafter he may be better preferred from sinne.

After this manner I esteeme confessioⁿ to priests very expedient and profitable to a sinner. But to confesse finnes vnto the priest as vnto a iudge, & to receive of him corporall penance for a satisfaction vnto God for his finnes committed, I see not how this can be founded vpon the truth of the scripture. For before the coming of Christ, no man was sufficient or able to make satisfactioⁿ vnto God for his sins, although he suffered neuer so much penance for his finnes. And therefore it was needefull, that he that was without sinne should be punished for finnes, as witnesseth I sayas chap. 53. where he sayth: he took our griefes vpon him, and our sorowes he bare. And againe: He was wounded for our iniquities, and vexed for our wickednes. And agayne: The Lord put vpon him our iniquity. And agayne: for the wickednes of my people haue I strike him. If therfore, Christ through his passion hath made satisfaction for our finnes, whereas we our selues were unable to do it, then through him haue we grace & remission of finnes. How can we say now, that we are sufficient to make satisfaction vnto God by any penance enioyned vnto vs by mans authority? seeing that our finnes are more greuous after Baptisme: the they were before the coming of Christ. Therefore, as in Baptisme the payne of Christ in his passion was a full satisfaction for our finnes: euen so after Baptisme if we confesse that we haue offended, & be hary fory for our finnes, and munde not to sinne agayne afterwarde.

Herupon John writeth in his first epistle. ca. 1. If we say we haue no sinne, we deceiue our selues, & the truth is not in vs. If we confesse our finnes, God is faythfull and iust, he will remit them, and cleanse vs from all our iniquities. If we say we haue not sinned, we make him a lyar, and his word is not vs. My welbeloued children, this I write vnto you that ye sinne not: but if any man sinne, we haue an aduocate with the father Iesus Christ the righteous, and he is the propitiation for our finnes, and not for our finnes onely, but for y^e finnes of y^e whole world. Therefore, we ought to confesse our selues chiefly vnto God euen fro^m the hart, for that he chiefly doth remit finnes, without whose absolution litle auaileth the absolutioⁿ of man. This kinde of confession is profitable and good. The authors of the Canons say, that although auricular confession made vnto the Priest, be not expressly taught by Christ, yet, say they, it is taught in that saying, which Christ said vnto them diseased of the leprosy, whom he commaunded: Go your wayes, & shewe your selues vnto the Priestes, because as they say, the law of cleansing lepers, which was geuen by Moyses, signified the confession of finnes vnto the Priest. And whereas Christ commaunded the lepers to shew themselves vnto the Priestes, they say that Christ ment, that

those y^e were vncleane with the leper of sinne, should shew theyr finnes vnto the Priestes by auricular confession. I maruell much at the authors of the Canons, for euen from the beginning of their decrees vnto the end, they grounde theyr sayings vpon the old law, which was the law of sinne and death, and not (as witnesseth Saule) vpon the words of Christ, which are spirite & life. Christ sayth, the wordes which I speake vnto you, are y^e spirite and life. They grounde theyr sayings in the shadow of the law, and not in the light of Christ. For euer euill doer hateth the light, & commeth not into it, that his deeds be not reprov'd: but he that doth the truth, commeth into the light, that his woorkes may be openly sene, because they are done in God. Job. 3.

How let vs passe to the words that Christ spake to the leper. Lord if thou wilt, thou canst make me cleane. And Iesus stretching forth his hand, touch'd him, saying: I will, be thou cleane: and straight wayes he was cleane of his leper. And Iesus sayd vnto him: See thou tell no man, but go and shew thy selfe to the Priest, and offer the gyft that Moyses commaunded for a witness of these things. This Gospell witnesseth playnly that y^e diseased of lepers were cleansed onely by Christ, and not by the Priestes, neither did Christ commaund the leper to shew himselfe vnto the Priestes, for any helpe of cleansing that he should receive of the Priestes: but to fulfill the law of Moyses, in offering a sacrifice for his cleansing, & for a testimony vnto the Priestes, who alwayes of enny accused Christ as a transgressour of the law. For if Christ after he had cleansed the leper, had licensed him to communicate with others that were cleane, before he had shewed himselfe cleansed vnto the Priestes, the might the Priestes haue accused Christ, as a transgressour of the law: Because it was a precept of the law, that the leper after he was cleansed, should shewe himselfe vnto the Priestes. And they had signes in the booke of law, whereby they might iudge whether he were truly cleas'd or no. And if he were cleas'd, then would the Priestes offer a gyft for his cleansing. And if he were not cleas'd, then would they segegate him, fro^m the company of others that were cleane. Seeing euerie figure, ought to be affirmed vnto the thing that is figured: I pray you then, what agreement is there betwene the cleansing of lepers by the law, & the confession of finnes? By that law the Priest knew better whether he were leprouse then he himselfe that had the leper. In confession the priest knew not the finnes of him that was confessed, but by his owne confession. In that law the Priest did not cōfesse the leprouse. How now therfore ought the priests to cleanse sinners from their sinne, & that without the they cannot be cleans'd? In this law y^e Priest had certain signes, by the which he could certainly know, whether a mā were cleansed fro^m his leper or not. In confession, the Priest is not certaine of the cleansing of finnes, because he is ignorant of his contrition: He knoweth not also whether he will not sinne any moze, without the which contrition and graunting to sinne no moze, God hath not absolued any sinner. And if God hath not absolued a man, without doubt then is he not made cleane. And how then is confession figured vnder that law? Doubtlesse so it seemeth to me (vnder the correction of them that can iudge better in the matter) that this law beareth rather a figure of excommunication, & reconciliation of him, that hath bene obstinate in his sinne, & is reconciled agayne. For so it appeareth by the proccesse of the Gospell, that when as the sinner doth not amend for the priuate correction of his brother, nor for the correction of two or three, neither yet for the publick correction of the whole Church: When is he to be counted as an Ethnik, & a Publicane & as a certayn Leper to be ayoyed out of the company of all men, which sinner notwithstanding, if hee shall yet repent, is then to be reconciled, because he is then cleansed from his obstinacy.

But he which pretendeth himselfe to be the chiefe vicar of Christ, and the high Priest, sayth: that he hath power to absolue a poena & culpa: which I doe not finde how it is founded in the scripture, but that of his owne authority, he enioyneth to sinners, penance for their finnes. And graunt y^e fro^m their finnes he may well absolue them, yet fro^m the payn (which they call a poena) he doth not simply absolue, as in his indulgences he promisseth. But if he were in charity, and had such power, as he pretendeth, he would suffer none to lie in purgatory for sinne, for so much as that payn doth farre exceede all other payne which here we suffer. What mā is there being in charity, but if he see his brother to be tormented in this world, if he may, he will helpe him, and deliuer him? Much moze ought the Pope the, to deliuer out of paynes of purgatorye, indifferently as well rich as poore. And if he sel to the rich his indulgences, double wise, yea triple wise he seduceth them, first in promising to deliuer the out of the payne from where he doth not, neither is able to

The authors of the Canon law reprov'd.

John 3.

Luke 5.

The story of the lepers expounded to make nothing for auricular confessions

The cleansing of the lepers, & the cleansing of the priest in auricular confession agree not.

The popes power in absolving from finnes not founded in scripture.

The pope can absolue none from punishment.

James 5.

De penit. dist. 1. cap. Multiplex misericordia dei.

Esay 53.

1. John 1.

Confession vnto God.

Auricular confession not truly grounded vpon the Scripture. Luke 17.