

after that the clergy is divided into sundry degrees, as appeareth in the decretals.

This distinction of the clergy from the laitye, with the toulure of clerkes, began in the time of Anacletus, as it doth appeare in the Cronicles. The degrees of the clergy were afterward inuened & distinguished by their offices, and there was no ascent to the degree of the priesthood, but by inferior orders and degrees. But in the primitive church it was not so: for immediately after the conuersion of some of the to the fayth & baptisme received: they were priests & bishops made, as appeareth by Ananias, whom Marcus made of a taylor or shomaker, to be a bilhop. And of many others it was in like case done, according to the traditions of the church of Rome. Priests are ordeined to offer sacrifices, to make supplication and prayers, and to blesse & sanctify. The oblation of the priesthood, onely to Priests (as they say) is congruent: whose duties are, vpon the altair to offer to: the sinnes of the people the Lords body, which is consecrated of bread. Of which saying I haue great maruell, considering S. Paule his wordes to the Hebrewes before recited. If Christ offering for our sinnes one oblation for euermore, sitteth on the right hand of God, and woth that one oblation hath consumed for euermore, those that are sanctified: If Christ euermore sitteth on the right hand of God, to make intercession for vs, what neede he to leaue here any sacrifice for our sinnes, of the Priests to be daily offered? I do not finde in the scriptures of God nor of his Apostles, that the body of Christ ought to be made a sacrifice for sinne: but onely as a Sacrament and commemoration of the sacrifice passed, which Christ offered vpon the altair of the crosse for our sinnes. For it is an absurditie to say, that Christ is now euery day really offered as a sacrifice vpon the altair by the Priests: for then the Priests should really crucify him vpon the altair, which is a thing of no Christian to be beleued. But euen as in his supper, his body & his blood be deliuered to his Disciples, in memorial of his body that should be crucified on the mozroto for our sinnes: So after his ascension, did his Apostles vse the same (when they brake bread in euery house) for a Sacrament, and not for a sacrifice, of the body and blood of our Lord Iesus Christ. And by this meanes were they put in remembrance of the great loue of Christ, who so entirelye loued vs, that willinglye he suffered the death for vs, & for the remission of our sinnes. And thus did they offer themselves to God by loue, being ready to suffer death for the confession of his name, and for the sauing health of theyr brethren fulfilling the new commandement of Christ, which sayd vnto them: A new commandement do I geue vnto you that you loue one another, as I haue loued you. But wher loue began to wane cold or rather to be frozen for cold, thow to the anguish & anxiety of persecution for the name of Christ: then Priests did vse the flesh and blood of Christ, in stead of a sacrifice. And because many of them feared death, some of them fled into solitary places, not daring to geue themselves a sacrifice by death vnto God through the confession of his name, & sauing health of theyr brethren: Some other worshipped Idols fearing death, as did also y<sup>e</sup> chiefe Bilhop of Rome, and many other mo in diuers places of the world. And thus it came to passe, as that which was ordeined and instituted for a memoriaill of the one & onely sacrifice, was altered (for want of loue) into the realitie of the sacrifice it selfe.

After these things thus discussed, he inferreth consequently vpon the same, another briefe tractation of women and laye men, whether in defect of the other, they may exercise the action of praier, and administration of Sacraments belonging to Priests: wherein he declareth the vse received in the Popes Church, for women to Baptise, which, sayth he, cannot be without remission of sinnes, wherefore seeing that women haue power by the Pope to remit sinne, and to baptise, why may they not aswell be admitted to minister the Lordes Supper, in like case of necessity? Wherin also he maketh relation of Pope Iohn. 8. a woman Pope, mouing certayne Questions of her. All whiche for breuitie I pretermitt, proceeding to the ministracion of prayer, and blessing or sanctification, appropriate to the office of Priests as followeth.

Furthermore, as touching the function & office of praying and blessing, wherunto Priests seme to be ordeined (to omitte here the question whether women may pray in Churches, in lacke of other meete persons) it remaineth now also to prosecute. Christ being desired of his Disciples to teach them to pray, gaue them the common prayer both to men and women, to the which prayer in my estimation, no other is to be compared. For in that first, the whole honor due vnto the deity is comprehended. Secondly, what-

soeuer is necessary for vs, both for the time present, or past, or for time to come, is there desired & paid for. He informeth vs besides to pray secretly, and also briefly: secretly to enter into our close chamber, and there in secrecy he willetch vs to pray vnto his father. And sayth mozeouer, when ye pray, vie not much babbling, or many words as doth y<sup>e</sup> heathen. For they thinke in their long and prolix praying to be heard. Wherefore be you not like to the. By the which doctrine he calleth vs away fro the errors of the heathen Gentils: fro whom proceed these superstitious manner of artes (or rather of ignorances) as Necromancy, the art of diuination, & other spiles of conuersion, not vnknewen to them, that be learned: for these Necromancers beleue, one place to be of greater vertue then another, there to be heard soeuer, then in another. Like as Balaam being hyzed to curse y<sup>e</sup> people of God, by his arte of southsaying, or cherming, wher he could not accomplish his purpose in one place, he removed to another, but he in y<sup>e</sup> end, was deuided of hys desire. For he intending first to curse them, was not able to accurse the whom the Lord blessed, so that his curse coude not hurt any of all y<sup>e</sup> people. After like sort the Necromancers turne theyr face to the East, as to a place more apt for theyr prayers. Also y<sup>e</sup> Necromancers beleue, that the vertue of y<sup>e</sup> words of the prayer, & the curiosity thereof, causeth the to bring to y<sup>e</sup> effect, which they seek after, which is also another poynnt of infidelity, vfed much of Charmers, Sorcerers, Inchanters, Southsayers & such like. Out of y<sup>e</sup> same arte (I feare) proceedeth the practise of exorcising, wherby devils & spirits be conuired to do that, wherunto they are enforced by the Exorcist. Also wherby other creatures likewise are exorcised or conuired, so that by the vertue of their exorcisme, they may haue theyr power and strength exceeding all naturall operation.

In the Church of Rome, many such exorcismes & conuitions be practised, & are called of them benedictions, or halowings. But here I aske of these Exorcisers, whether they beleue the things and creatures so exorcised and halowed, haue that operation and efficacy gene them, which they pretend: If they do beleue, euery child may see that they are farre beguiled. For holy water being of them exorcised or conuired: hath no such power in it, neither can haue which they in theyr exorcisme do commaund. For there they inuoynt and commaund, that wher soeuer that water is sprinkled, all veratid or inuestatid of the vniclean spirit, should auoid, and that no pestifer spirit there should abide, &c. But most playn it is, that no water, be it neuer so holy, can haue any such power so to do, as it is commaunded, to wit, to be an vniuersall remedy to expell all diseases.

This I woulde aske of these Exorcistes: whether in theyr commaunding, they do conuere or adiure the things conuired, to be of an higher vertue and operation, the their own nature doth geue: Or els whether they in their prayers desire of God, that he wil infuse into them that vertue, which they require? If they in theyr commaunding doe so beleue, the do they beleue that they haue that power in the to the which the inferior power of the thing exorcised must obey, in receiuing that which is commaunded. And so doing, are much more deceived, forasmuch as they see themselves, that they which are so authorized to the office of exorcising, say to the deuill being conuired: So, & he goeth not: And to another come, and he cometh not, & many things els they commaund the inferior spirit their subiect, to do, & he doth not. So in like case, when they pray to God to make the water to be of such vertue, that it may be to them health of mind and body, and that it may be able to expulise euery vniclean spirit, & to chase away all manner of distemperature and pestilence of the ayre (being an vreaconable petition asked, & sore displeasing to God) it is to be feared least theyr benediction, their halowing & blessing is chaunged into cursing, according to that saying that followeth. And now O you priests, I haue a message to say vnto you: If you will not heare and beare well away in your mindes, to geue the glory vnto my name sayth the Lord God of hostes, I will send scarcety amongst you, and I will curse your blessings. What things and how many are blessed, or halowed in the Church, that in halowing thereof displeaseth God, and are accursed: And the more according to the saying of S. James, they aske & are not heard, because the aske not as they should, that they in theyr owne desires may perish, Let a man be hoide the blessing or halowing of their fire, water, incense, waie, bread, wine, the church, the altair, the Churchyard, ashes, bellies, copes, palmes, oile, candles, salt, the halloving of the ring, the bed, the staffe, & of many such like things: & I beleue that a man shall find out many errors of the heathen Magicians, witches, southsayers and charmers. And notwithstanding the ancient and old Magicians in their bookes, commaund those that

The office of priests after the popes order.

The body of Christ not left to be a sacrifice for sinne, but onely for a sacrament.

How the memoriaill of the sacrament came to the realtie of the sacrifice it selfe.

The order and office of prayer. The Lordes prayer.

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The artes of Necromancye, Southsaying & withcraftes, how & fro wher they came.

Against exorcising of Priests.

Conuiring or halowing in the popish church.

Holy water conuired.

Exorcise.

The absurditie & ab hominibus in the popish exorcismes detected.

Where was the popes holy water then in the great pestilence in the tyme of K. Edward. 3.

James. 4.

Romish conuitions.