

and to stand thereby after my cunning and power: I said to the Archbishop, Sir if the truth of Gods word might not be accepted as it should be, I doubt not to proue by likely evidence, that they that are famed to be out of the fayth of holy Church in Shrewsbury, & in other places also, are in the true fayth of holy Church, For as theyz wordes found, and theyz workes shew to make indgement (deadend and louing faythfully God) theyz will, their desire, their loue & theyz busines are most set to dead, to offend God, & to loue for to please him in true & faythfull keeping of his commaundements. And agayne, they that are sayd to be in the fayth of holy Church in Shrewsbury & in other places, by open evidence of their proud, enurious, malicious, courteous, lecherous, and other foule wordes & workes: neither know, nor haue wil to know, nor to occupy their wits cruelly and effectually in the right fayth of holy Church. Wherefore all theie, nor none that folow theyz maners, shall any time come verely in the fayth of holy church, except they inioice them more cruelly to come in the way which now they despise. For these men and women that are now called faythfull and holden iust, nother know, nor will exercise the selfe to know (of faythfullnes) one commaundement of God.

And thus full many men and womē now, and specialy me that are named to be principall lims of holy church, styre God to great wrath, & delecte his curse for that they call or hold them iust me, which are full vniust, as their vicious wordes, their great custonable swearing, and theyz slanderous and shameful workes shew openly and witness. And therefore, such vicious men & vniust in theyz own confusion, call them vniust men & womē, which after their power and cunning busy themselves to liue iustly after the commaundement of God. And where sir ye say, that I haue distroubled the cominalty of Shrewsbury, & many other men and women with my teaching: If it this be, it is not to be wonderd of wise men, since all the cominalty of y^e City of Jerusalem was distroubled of Christes own person, that was very God and man, and most prudent preacher that euer was or shalbe. And also all the Synagoge of Nazareth was moued agaynst Christ, & so fulfilled with ire towards him for his preaching, that the men of the Synagoge rose up and cast Christ out of theyz City, & led him by to the top of a moitayn for to cast him down there heading. Also accordingly hereto, the Lord witnesseth by Moyses, that he shall put diffention betwixt his people, and the people that contrarich and peruerseth his people, who sir is he, that shall preach the truth of Gods word to the vnfaithfull people, and shall let the sofastnes of the Gospell, and the prophesy of God almighty to be fulfilled?

And the Archbishop sayd to me. It foloweth of these thy wordes, that thou and such other thinkest: that ye do right well for to preach and teach as ye do, without authority of any Bishop. For ye presume, that the Lord hath chose you only for to preach, as faythfull disciples and special folowers of Christ.

And I sayd: By authority of Gods law and also of Sayntes and Doctors I am learned to deme, that it is euerly Priestes office and duty for to preach busily, freely & cruelly the word of God. For no doubt euerly Priest should purpose first in his soule, & couet to take the order of priesthood chiefly for to make knowne to the people the word of God, after his cunning and power: approuing his words cuey to be true by his vertuous workes, and for this intent we suppose that Bishops & other Prelates of holy church, should chiefly take and vse their prelacye, and for the same cause Bishops should geue to Priestes their orders. For Bishops should accept no man to Priesthood, except that he had good wil and ful purpose, & were wel disposed, and wel learned to preach. Wherefore sir, by y^e bidding of Christ, & by the example of his most holy liuing, & also by the witnessing of his holy Apostles and Propets, we are bounde vnder full great payn, to exercise vs after our cunning and power (as euerly Priest is likewise charged of God) to fulfill duely the office of priesthood. We presume not here of our selfes for to be esteemed (neither in our owne reputatiō nor in none other māns) faythfull disciples, & special folowers of Christ. But sir, as I sayde to you before, we deme this by authority chiefly of Gods word, that it is the chief duety of euerly Priest, to busy the faythfully to make the law of God knowne to his people, & so to communt the commaundement of God charitably, how that we may best, where, whē, and to whom that euer we may, is our very duety. And for the will & busines that we owe of due debt to do iustly our office through the byrning and special helpe (as we trust) of God, hoping stedfastly in his mercy: we desire to be y^e faythfull disciples of Christ, and we pray this gracious Lord for his holy name, that he make vs able to please him with deuout prayers, & charitably Priestly workes, that we may

obtaine of him to folow him thankefully. And the Archbishop sayd to me: I leud Iosell, whereto maketh thou such bayne reasons to me? Asketh not Saynt Paul, how should Priestes preach, except they be sent? But I sent thee neuer to preach. For thy venomous doctrine is so knowne throughout England, that no Bishop will admitte thee to preach by witnessing of theyz letters. Why the lewd Idiot, willest thou presume to preach, since thou art not sent nor licensed of thy soueraigne to preach. Sayth not S. Paul, that subiects ought to obey theyz soueraignes, and not onely good & vertuous: but also traitants that are vicious?

And I sayd to the Archbishop: Sir, as touching your letter of licence or other Bishops, which ye say we should haue to witness that we were able to be sent for to preach: We know wel that neither you sir, nor any other bishop of this land, wil graunt to vs any such letters of licence, but if we should oblige vs to you, and to other bishops by vnlawfull othes, for to passe not the bondes and termes which ye sir, or other bishops will limit to vs. And since in this matter your termes be some to large, & some to strait: we dare not oblige vs thus to be bounden to you for to keepe the termes, which you will limit to vs, as you do to Priests, & such other Preachers. And therefore, though we haue not your letter sir, nor letters of any other bishops wyrite with take vpon parchment: we dare not therefore leaue y^e office of preaching (to which preaching, all Priestes after their cunning and power are bound: by diuers testimonies of Gods law, and great Doctors) without any mention making of Bishops letters. For as mikle as we haue taken vpon vs the office of Priesthood (though we are vnworthy thereto) we come and purpose to fulfill it with the helpe of God, by authority of his own law, and by witness of great doctors and Sayntes, accordingly hereto trusting stedfastly in the mercy of God. For that he commaundeth vs to do the office of Priesthood, he will be our sufficient letters and witness, if we by example of his holy liuing and teaching, specialy occupy vs faythfully to do our office iustly: yea y^e people to whom we preach (be they faythfull or vnfaythfull) shall be our letters, that is our witness beaers: for y^e truth where it is sowne, may not be vnwitnessed, For all y^e are conuerted & saued by learning of Gods word, & by working there after: are witness beaers: that the truth and sofastnesse which they heard and did after, is cause of theyz saluation. And agayne, all vnfaythfull men and women which heard the truth told out to them, and would not do the after: also all they that might haue heard the truth, & would not hear it, because that they would not do the after.

All these shall beare witness agaynst themselves, & the truth which they would not hear, or els heard it & despised to do the after, though they vnfaythfullnes, is & shalbe cause of theyz damnation. Therefore sir, since this afore sayd witnessing of God, and of diuers Sayntes and Doctors, & of al the people good & euill, sufficeth to al true preachers: we thinke that we doe not the office of Priesthood, if that we leaue our preaching, because that we haue not, or may not haue duely Bishops letters, to witness that we are sent of them to preach. This sentence approueth Saint Paul, where he speaketh of himselfe, & of faythfull Apostles and disciples saying thus. We need no letters of commendatiō as some preachers do, which preach for couetousnesse of temporal goods, and for mens paying. And where ye say Sir, that Paul biddeth subiectes obey theyz soueraignes, that is soth, and may not be denied. But there is two manner of soueraignes, vertuous soueraignes and vicious trauntes. Therefore, to these last soueraignes, neiher me nor womē that be subiect, owe to obey in two maners. To vertuous soueraignes & charitable, subiectes owe to obey willfully and gladly, in hearing of their good counsell, in consenting to their charitable biddinges, and in working after their fruitfull workes.

This sentence Paul approueth wher he sayth to subiectes. Be ye mindfull of your soueraignes, that speake to you the word of God, & follow you the fayth of the, whose conuersion you know to be vertuous. For as Paul sayth, after these soueraignes, to whom subiectes owe to obey in following of the maners: worke besely in holy studying, how they may withstand and destroy vices, first in themselves, and after in all their subiectes, and how they may best plāt in them vertues. Also these soueraignes, make deuout and seruet prayers for to purchase grace of God, that they and their subiectes may ouer all thing, dread to offend hym, and to loue for to please him. Also these soueraignes to whō Paul biddeth vs obey, as it is laid before, liue so vertuously: that all they that will liue well, may take of them good example, to know & to keep the commaundements of God. But in this foresayd wise, subiectes ought not to obey nor

If the touchstone might truly truth should be knowne. The description of the right Christians in Shreusbury. The Catholikes of Shreusbury. Shreusbury, except thou turne fro thy wicked wayes, thou canst not receiue the truth.

Jerusalem troubled by the preaching of Christ.

The worde of God ought truly to be preached.

If this lesson had bene well folowed, the world had not bene brought to such darknes by blind & dumme Priestes.

An effectuous prayer, God graunte in all maneres.

Why hee preached without the byshops licence.

He answered to the question concerning the letter of licence.

The inconveniences of seeking of the bishops letter or licence.

The witness of the preachers, is the good life of the folowers.

Two manner of soueraignes.

He meaneth prelates that be vnvertuous.