

keeping his own doings in secret, went the soday following to the cathedra church to the Sermon, and by chance late do'one by 2. men, which were the busiest in al the city, in seeking & searching for this heretike, and they beholding this Benet, sayd the one to the other, Surely thyss fellowe by all liklyhooe is the heretike that hath ser vp the billes, and it is good to examine him. Neuertheles when they had wel behelde him, and saw the quiet and sober behauiour of the man, his attentiuenes to the preacher, his godlinesse in the Church, being alwayes occupied in hys Booke, which was a Testament in the Latine tongue, were astonied and had no power to speake vnto him, but departed & left hym reading in his booke. As touching this poynte of Benets behauior in the Church, I finde the reportes of some other a litle to vary, and yet not much contrary one to the other. For in receiuing the letters and wyppings of a certain minister, whych at the same time was present at the doyng hereof in Exeter, thus I finde mozeouer added concernin the behauiour of this Thomas Benet in the Church.

At that time (sayth he) as I remember, doct. Moreman Crispin, Caseley wyth suche other, bare the swinge there. Beside these were there also preachers there, one Doctour Bascauid, an vnlearned doctour God knoweth, and one D. Daud, as wcl learned as he, both Bray friers, and doctour I know not wha, a Blacke frier, not much inferiour vnto them. Mozeouer there was one Bachelor of Diuinitie, a Bray frier, named Gregory Balled, in deede learned moze then they all, but as blinde and superstitious as he wyth was most. Whych Gregorie not long before, was renouced from the way of righteouines, to the way of Beliall: for in Wislowe (sayth the author) he lay in prison long, & almost famished, for hauing a booke of M. Luther, called his questions, which he a long tyme priuily had studied, & for teaching of youth a certaine Catherdriane. To be shorte, the baines of the Canons and Priests, the officers and commons of that Citie were very earnestly busied, howe or by what meanes suche an enormous heretique, whych had pricked vp thole billes, might be epyed and knowen, but it was long first. At last the Priests founde out a toye to curse him what soeuer he were, with booke, hel and candle, which case at that day seemed most fearefull and terrible. The maner of the curse was after this sort.

One of the Priests, apparelled all in white, ascended vp into the pulpit. The other rabblement, wyth certaine of the two orders of Friers, and certaine superstitious Monks of S. Nicholas house standing round about, and the Crosse (as the custome was) being holde vp, with holy candles of waix fixed to the same, he began his sermon in this Theame of Iosue: Est blasphemiam in Castris. There is blasphemie in the armie: and so made a long protestation, but not so long as tedious and superstitious, and so concluded, that that soule and abominable heretike, which had put vp such blasphemous billes, was for that his blasphemie, damnably accursed, and besought God, our Lady, S. Peter Martone of that church, with all the holy companie of martyrs, confessozs, and virgines, that it might be knowen what heretike had put vp such blasphemous billes, that Gods people might auoide the vengeance.

The maner of the cursing of the sayd Benet was maruelous to beholde, for as muche as at that tyme there was fewe or none, vntill a Sherman or two (whose houses I well remember were searched for billes at that tyme, and for bookes) that knew any thing of Gods matters, or how God doeth blesse thy curses in such cases. When sayde the Prelate, by the authoritie of God the father almighty, and of the blessed virgin Mary, of S. Peter and Paul, and of the holy Saines, we excommunicate, we vterly curse and banne, commit and deliuer to the deuill of hell, him or her, what soeuer he or she be, that hane in spite of God and of S. Peter, whose church this is, in spite of all holy saines, and in spite of our most holy father the Pope Gods vicare heere in earth, and in spite of the reuerend father in God, John our Diocelane, and the worshipfull Canons, Masters, and Priests, and Clerkes, which serue God daily in this Cathedra Church, fixed vppon with waix such cursed and hereticall Billes full of blasphemie, vppon the doores of thys and other holy Churches wythin this Citie. We communicate plainly be hee or shee plainly, or they and deliuered ouer to the deuill, as perpetuall malefactors and schismaticques. Accursed might they be, and geuen body & soule to the deuill. Cursed be they, he, or shee in Cities and townes, in fieldes, in wayes, in pathes, in houses, out of houses, and in all other places, standing, lying, or rising, walking, running, waking, sleeping, eating, drinking, and what so euer thing they doe besides. we separate them, him, or her, from the threshold, and from all the good praies of the church, from the participation of the holy masse, from all Sacraments, Chappels, and aultars, from holye

bread, and holy water, from all y merites of Gods priests, and religious men, and from all their Cloisters, from all their pardones, priuileges, grauntes, and immunities, whych all the holy fathers Popes of Rome haue graunted to them: and we geue them ouer vterly to the powce of the seend, and let vs quench their soules, if they be dead, thys night in the paines of hell fire, as this candle is now quenched, and put out (and wyth that he put out one of the candles) and lette vs praye to God, (if they be aliue) that their eyes may be put out, as this candle light so he put out the other candle) and lette vs praye to God and to oure Lady, and to S. Peter and Paul, and all holye Saines, that all the senses of their bodies maye faile them, and that they may haue no feeling, as now the light of this candle is gone (and so he putte out the thirde candle) except they, hee, or shee, come openly to we and confesse their blasphemie, and by repentance (as muche as in them shall be) make satisfaction to God, our Ladye, S. Peter, & the worshipfull companie of thys Cathedra Church, and as thys holy Crosse staffe nowe falleth downe, so myght they, except they repent and shewe them selues: and one firste taking away the Crosse, the staffe fell downe. But Loyde what a shoute and noyse was there, what terrible feare, what holding vp of handes to heauen, that curse was so terrible.

Now thys fond foolish phantasie and mockerie beyng done and played, which was to a Christian heart a thyng ridiculous, Benet could no longer forbear, but fel to great laughter, but within him selfe, and for a great space coude not cease: by the which thyng the poore manne was epyed. For thole that were next to him, wondryng at that greate curie, and beleeuing that it coude not but light on one or other, asked good Benet for what cause he should so laugh. My frendes (sayd he) who can forbear, seeing suche merie conceites and entrecludes plaide of the priests? Straitway a noyse was made, Heere is the heretike, heere is the heretike, holde him fast, holde him fast. With that there was a greate confusion of voyces, and much clapping of handes, and yet they were vncertain whether he were the heretike or no. Some say, that vppon the same he was taken and apprehended. Other report, that his enemies being vncertaine of him, departed, and so he wet home to his house, where hee being not able to digest the lies there preached, renewed his former billes, and caused his boy early in the morning following, to set the sayd billes vpon the gates of the Churchyarde. As the boy was setting one of the sayde billes vpon a gate called the little stile, it chanced that one W. S. going to the Cathedra church to heare a Masse called Bartons Masse, whych was then daily sayd about 5. of the clocke in the morning, founde the boye at the gate, and asking him whose boy he was, did charge him to be the heretike, which had ser vp the billes vpon the gates, wherefore pulling downe the bill, he broughte the same together with the boy before the Maior of the citie, and there vppon Benet being knowen and taken, was violently committed to ward.

On the morow began both the Canons and heades of the citie ioynd to them, to sal to examination, with whom for y day he had not much communication, but confessed & said to them, it was euen I that put vp thole billes, and if it were to doe, I would yet doe it againe, for in them haue I wrytten nothing but that is very truth. Couldst thou (said they) as well haue declared thy mind by mouth, as by putting vp billes of blasphemie? So (sayd he) I put vp the billes that many should read and heare what abominable blasphemers ye are, and that they might the better knowe your Antichrist the Pope to be the Boze out of the woode, which destroyeth & throweth downe the hedges of Gods church, for if I had ben heard to speake but one woorde, I should haue bene clapped fast in prison, and the matter of God hidden. But now I trust moze of your blasphemous doings will thereby be opened and come to light, for God will so haue it, and no longer will suffer you.

The next day after he was sent vnto the bish: who first committed him vnto prison called the bishops prison, where he was kept in stocks & strong yron, with as much fauour as a dog shuld find. Then the B. associating vnto him one D. Brewer his chancelor, & other of his leude cleargy and friers, began to examine him & burden him, that contrary to the catholike faith, he denied praying to the saines, and also denied y supremacie of the Pope, whereunto he answered in such sober maner, & so learnedly proued & defended hys assertions, that he did not only confound and put to silence his aduersaries, but also broughte the in great admiratio of him, the most part hauing pitie & compassion on him. The friers tooke great paines with him, to perwade hym from his cronious opiniōs, to recant & acknowledge his fault touching the billes, but they did but dig after day, for God had

Marke the apithe praesentes of these Popes Kinges.

The Benet laugheth at their cursing.

The Benet setteth vp newe billes.

The Benet taken by means of his boy setting vp his Billes.

The Benet willingly confesseth.

The cause why Benet set vp his billes.

The Benet, sent to the Bishops prison.

Articles layd against Benet.

Benet almost taking the church.

The storyes a litle vary touching the taking of Benet.

Doctors & friers in Exeter.

Gregory Balled Fryor of Exeter.

The priests curse they cannot tell whosa.

The maner of the popes blacke art, with booke, bell, and candle.

Here I would shew you.

Wills and curse not, faith the Loyde, Curse, & blesse not, faith the Pope.