

Application of the Masse idolatrous.

But here come in blinde gloses (albeit to no purpose) to excuse this application. For vniuersally amongst all the people, who is he that thinketh otherwise, but that thys worke is auaylable for the whole Church? Yea the Canon of the Masse it selfe declarerth no lesse. And why then doe some of these craftie sophisthers dally out the matter wpyth their glosing wordes, demeng that they make any application of their Masse, when they know full well that the error of the people is confirmed by this their doing: although they themselves do thinke otherwise? Albeit how few be there in very deepe which do otherwise thinke?

The olde institution of Christ is not to be altered by new inuencions.

We ought not to dissemble in Gods matters. Let vs vse them as the holy Scripture teacheth, and as the auncient custome of the primitive Church doth leade vs. why should any man be so presumptuous to swerue from auncient custome? why now do they defend the errors of o-ther which haue peruerterd the institution of Christ?

Now, although some perhaps wil pretend and say, that he maketh no application of his Masse, yet notwithstanding he so dealeth in handling the ceremony priuately by himselfe, that he thinketh this his oblation to be high seruice done to God, and suche as God requirerth: which is also erroneous and to be reprobued. For why, no seruice nor worship pertaining to God ought to bee let vp by mans deuise, without the commaundement of God.

wherefore I beseeche you for the glory of Christ, that you will not defend the article of this Acte concerning these priuate Masse, but that you will suffer the matter to bee well examined by veruous and learned men. All things that we here with vs do, we do them by euident & substantiall testimonie of the primitive Church, which testimonie I dare bee bolde to set against the iudgements of all that haue since followed, such as haue corrupted the aunciente doctrine and old rites with manifold errors.

Against vowes of Priestes single life. The commo error concerning vowes.

As touching the other articles, they haue no neede of any long disputation. Those that be wicked, sayned, and impossible, are not to be kept. There is no doubt, but thys is the common persuasion of all men touching vowes, that all these wilworkes deuised by man, are the true seruice and worship of God: and so thinke they also whyche speake most indifferently of them. Other adde there vnto more grosse errors, saying, that these workes bring wpyth them perfection, and merite euercasting life. Now all these opinions the Scripture in manye places doth reproboue. Christ saith: They worship me in vayne wpyth the preceptes of men. And Daule sayth, that these obseruations be the doctrine of deuilis: for they ascrib to the power and strength of man, false honour, because they are taken for the seruice of God: they obscure faith and the true worshipping of God. Item, the sayd Daule to the Coloss. sayth: Let no man deceyue you by sayned humilitie, &c. Why make you Decrees? &c. wherefore these corrupt tradicions of men are in deepe a wicked and detestable seruice of God.

Marke. 7. 1. Tim. 4.

Coloss.

Vnto these also are annexed many other corrupt & wicked abuses. The whole order of Monckery, what superstition doth it contene: what prophanations of Masse, inuocation of Saints, colours & fashions of apparell, choise of meates, superstitious prayers without all measure: of which causes euery one were sufficient, why these vowes ought to be broken. Besides this, a greate part of men are drawne to this kinde of life chiefly for the bellies sake, and then afterward they pretend the holines of their bowe and profession.

Causes why vowes ought to be broken.

Math. 19.

Furthermoze, this bowe of single life is not to all men possible to be kept, as Christ himselfe saith: All men do not receiue this. Such vowes therefore which without sinne can not be performed are to be vndone, but these things I haue discussed sufficiently in ocher of my workes.

The 6. articles make the uowe of Priestes as streight as the uowe of Monkes, which is contrary to their owne lawe.

But this cauleth me muche to maruell, that this bowe of Priestes in your English Decree, is more strait and hard, then is the bowe of Monkes, whereas the Canons themselves doe bind a Priest no farther to single life: but onely for the time that he remainerth in the ministry. And certeynely it made my hart to tremble when I reade thys Article which fo forbidderth matrimony, and dissoluerth the same being contracted, and appointerth mozeouer the punishment of death for the same. Although there haue bene diuers godly Priestes which in certeyn places haue bene put to death for their marriage, yet hath neuer man better to hene so hold to stablish any such lawe. For euery man in a manner, wel perceiued that all well disposed and reasonable persons would abhorre that cruelty: and also they feared least the posteritie woude thinke euill thereof. who would euer thinke, that in the Church of Christ, wherein all lenitie toward the godly ought most principally to be shewed, such cruelties and tyrannie could take place, to see forth bloody lawes to be executed vpon the godly for lawfull matrimony?

No lawe of death euer established for Priestes marriage, before the 6. Articles

But they bryake their vowes, will the Bishops say. For (as I sayd) that vow ought not to stand being it is turned to a false worship of God, & is impossible to be kept. Agayne, although it stand in force, yet it should not extend to the which forsake the ministry. Finally, if the Bishops here would haue a care and regarde to mens consciences, they should then ordaine Priestes without any such profession or vow making, as appearerth by the old Canons, how that many were admitted to the ministry without professing of any vow, and the same afterward, when they had married their wives, to haue remainyd in the ministry, as is testified Cap. Diaconi. Distinct. 28.

Why Priestes vowes ought not to stand.

Certainely what here I may complayne, I can not tell. First, in this Article I can not impute it to ignorance that they do, for no man is ignorant of the commaundment of God, which sayth: Let euery man haue his wife for auoyding of fornication. Agayne, who is so bynd but he seeth what a life these unmarried Priestes do liue? The complayntes of godd me are wel knownen. The filthyynes of y wicked is to manifest. But peraduenture your Bishops holding to the sect of Epicures, doe thinke that God is not offended with filthy lustes, which if they so thinke, then doe we sitte in douberlesse a hard cause where such must be iudges.

Dist. 28. cap. Diaconi.

Bishops restrain Priestes marriage agaynst all reason and excuse.

I am not ignorant that this single life is very fitte to set out the glory and haucry of Bishops and Colledges of Priestes, & to mainteine their wealth and portly state, and this I suppose to be the cause why some do abhorre so much that Priestes should be married. But O lamentable state of the Church, if lawes should be so forced to serue, not the veritie and the will of God, but the priuate gayne and commoditie of men. They erre which thinke it lawfull for them to make lawes repugnant to the commaundement of God & to the lawe of nature, so that they be profitable to attaine wealth and riches. And of trowth fro my very hart I do mourne & lament, right noble Prince, both for your sake & also for the cause of Christes Church. You pretend to impugne and gainelead the tyranny of the Romish Bishop, and truly do call him Antichrist, as in deepe he is: & in the meane tyme you defend and maintaine those lawes of that Romish Antichrist, which be the strength & sinowes of all his power, as priuate Masse, single life of Priestes, & other superstitious. You threaten horrible punishments to godd men and to the members of Christ, you violently oppresse and beare down the veritie of the Gospel begynnynge to shyne in your Churches. This is not to abolish Antichrist, but to establish him.

Complaint of vniust lawes seruing to the lucre of me agaynst the glory of God.

I beseech you therefore for our Lord Iesus Christ, that you sile not your conscience in defending those Articles which your Bishops haue deuised and set forth touching priuate Masse, Auricular confession, vowes, single life of Priestes, & prohibition of the one halfe of the Sacrament. It is no light offence to establish Idolatry, erroneous, cruelitie the filthy lustes of Antichrist, If the Romane Bishop should now call a Councell, what other Articles chiefly would he deuise and publish vnto the world, but the very same which your Bishops haue here enacted.

Understand and consider I pray you, the subtile traynes and deceites of the deuill, whiche is wont first to let vpon and assaile the chief gouernours. And as he is the enemy of Christ from the begynnynge of the world, so his chief purpose is by all craftie and subtile means, to worke contumely agaynst Christ in sparsing abroad wicked opinions and setting vp Idolatry: and also in polluting mankind with bloody murders and selyly lustes: in the working whereof he abuseth the policies and wittes of hypocrites: also the power and strength of mighty Princes: as stories of all tymes beare witnes what great kyngdomes & Empires haue set themselves wpyth all might & maine, agaynst the poore Church of Christ.

The subtiltye of Sathan in abusing the power of Princes to maintaine his kyngdome.

And yet notwithstanding God hath reserved some good Princes at all tymes, out of the great multitude of such giuants, and hath brought them to his Church, to embrace true doctrine, and to defend his true worshyp: as Abrahā taught Abimelech, Joseph the Egyptian kynges: and after them came Dauid, Josaphat, Ezechias, Josias excellyn in true godlynesse. Daniell conuerted to the knowledge of God the kynges of Chaldea & Babilonia. Also Britany brought forth vnto the world the godly Prince Constantine. In this number I wishe you rather to be, then amongst the enemyes of Christ, defiled with Idolatry & spotted with the blood of the godly: of whom God will take punishment, as he doth many tymes forewarne, and many examples do teach.

Example of good Princes.

Yet agayne therefore I pray and beseeche you for our Lord Iesus Christ, that you wil correct and mitigate this Decree of y Bishops: In which doing you shall aduance the glory of Christ, and prouide as well for the wealth of your owne soule, as the saue garde of your Churches.