

wyth in their Diocesse, to bring in and deliuer vp all Antiphoners, Missales, Brailles, Processionals, Manuals, Legendes, Dies, Portuales, Iournals, and Ordinals after the vse of Sarum, Lincolne, Yorke, Bangoz, Herforde, or any other private vse, and all other bookes of seruice, the hauing wherof might be any let to seruice now set forth in English, charging also and commaunding all suche as should be found stubborne or disobedient in this behalf, to be committed vnto ward.

And because the Kinge mozeouer was aduertised that there was a slacknes and a frowardnes among the people refusing to pay towarde the finding of breade and wine for the holy Communion, by reason wherof the Communion in many places was omitted, the Bishops in like manner had geuen in charge to prouide for redresse thereof, & to punish them which should refuse so to do. wherby it may appere to vs now, that no wafer cakes but common bread, was then by the Kinges appoyntment ordinarily receiued and vsed in Churches. This was about the latter ende of December. An. 1549.

Taking downe of aultares, and setting vp of the table in steede thereof.

Furthermore, in the years nexte following. 1550. other letters likewise were sent out for the taking downe of altars in churches, and setting vp the table in steade of the same, vnto Nicholas Ridley, who being Bishop of Rochester before, was then made Bishop of London, in Bowers place, the copie and contentes of the kings letters are these, as followeth.

The kings letters to Nicholas Ridley Bishop of London. &c.

Right reuerende father in God, right trustie and well beloued, we greete you wel. And where it is come to our knowledge, that being the altars within the more part of the churches of this realme, already vpon good and godly considerations takē down, there dooth yet remaine altars standing in diuers other churches, by occasion wherof muche variance and contention ariseth amongest fundry of our subiectes, whiche if good foresight were not had, might perchance engender great hurt and inconuenience: we lette you wit, that minding to haue all occasion of contention taken away, which many times groweth by those & such like diuersities, and considering that amongste other things belonging to our roial office and cure, we do accompt the greatest to be, to maintaine the common quiet of oure Realme. we haue thought good by the aduice of our Counsaile to require you, and neuertheles especial to charge and commaund you, for the auoiding of all matters of further contention & strife about the standing or taking away of the said altares, to geue substantiall order throughout all your diocesse, that with all diligence all the altars in euery church or chappell, as well in places exempted, as not exempted within your saide diocesse be taken downe, and in the stead of them a table to be set vp in some conuenient parte of the chancel within euery suche church or chappell, to serue for the ministratioe of the blessed comunioe. And to the intēt the same may be done without the offēce of such our louing subiectes, as be not yet so wel perswaded in that behalfe as we would wish, we sende vnto you heerewith, certaine considerations gathered and collected that make for the purpose, the whiche and such others as you shall thinke meete to be set forth to perswade the weake to embrace our proceedings in this parte, we pray you cause to be declared to the people by some discrete preachers in such places as you shal thinke meete, before the taking downe of the said altars: so as both the weake consciences of other may be instructed and satisfied as muche as may be, and this our pleasure the more quietly executed. For the better doing wherof, wee require you to open the foresaid considerations in that our cathedrall church in your own person, if you conueniently may, or otherwise by your Chancelour, or some other graue preacher, both there, & in such other market townes and molte notable places of your diocesse, as you may thinke most requisite. Geuen vnder our Signet, at our Pallace of Westminster, the 24. daye of Nouember, the 4. yeare of our raigne.

- { Edward Somerser. } John Warwike. { Edward Clinton. }
- { Thomas Cranmer. } John Bedford. { H. Wentworth. }
- { William Wiltsher. } William North. { Thomas Ely. }

Reasons why the Lordes boorde shouId rather be after the forme of a table, than of an aultare.

The first reason.

First, the forme of a table shall more mone & simple from the superstitious opinions of the popish Masse, vnto

the right vse of the Lordes supper. For the vse of an altare is to make sacrifice vpon it: the vse of a table is to serue for men to eate vpon. Nowe when we come vnto the Lordes boorde, what do we come for? To sacrifice Chryste agayne, and to crucifie hym againe? or to feede vpon hym that was once onely crucified, and offered vp for vs? If we come to feede vpon hym, spiritually to eate his body, and spiritually to drinke his blood, which is the true vse of the Lordes supper, then no man can denie, but the forme of a table is moze meete for the Lordes boorde, then the forme of an aultare.

The second reason.

Item, where as it is sayde, the booke of common prayer maketh mention of an aultar, wherfore it is not lawfull to abolish that which that booke alloweth: to this is thus answered: The booke of common prayer calleth the thing wherupon the Lordes supper is ministred, indifferently a Table, an Aultar, or the Lordes boord, without prescription of any forme thereof, either of a Table, or of an Aultare. So that whether the Lordes boorde haue the fourme of an Aultar, or of a table, the booke of common prayer calleth it both an Aultar and a Table. For as it calleth an Aultar wherupon the Lordes Supper is ministred, a table, and the Lordes boord, so it calleth the table where the holie Communion is distributed with handes and thankes geuing vnto the Lord, an Aultar, for that, that there is offered the same sacrifice of praise and thankes geuinge. And thus it appeareth, that here is nothing neither sayde nor meant contrary to the booke of common praier.

The third reason.

Thirdly, the popish opinion of Masse, was that it might not be celebrated but vpon an aultar, or at the least vpon a superaltare, to supply the fault of the altare, which must haue hadde hys printes and charctres, or else it was thought that the thing was not lawfully done. But thys superstitious opinion is moze holden in the mindes of the simple and ignorant by the forme of an aultar, then of a table: wherfore it is moze meete for the abolishment of thys superstitious opinion, to haue the Lordes boorde after the forme of a table, then of an altar.

The fourth reason.

Fourthly, the forme of an aultar was ordained for the Sacrifices of the Lawe, and therfore the aultar in Grecke is called *θυσιαστήριον* Quasi Sacrificij locus. But nowe bothe the lawe and the Sacrifices thereof doe cease: wherfore the fourme of the aultare vsed in the Lawe, ought to cease wythall.

The fift reason.

Fifthly, Chryste did institute the Sacrament of his body and blood at his laste Supper at a Table, and not at an Aultare, as it appeareth manifestly by the thre Evangelistes. And Saint Paul calleth the coming to the holy Communion, the coming vnto the Lordes Supper. And also it is not read, that any of the Apostles or the primitive Church did euer vse any altare in the ministratioe of the holy Communion.

Wherfore, seeing the forme of a Table is moze agreeable with Chyestes institution, and with the vse of the Apostles and of the primitive Church, then the forme of an Aultar, therfore the forme of a Table is rather to be vsed, then the forme of an Aultare in the administratioe of the holy Communion.

The sixt reason.

Finally, it is said in the preface of the booke of common prayer, that if any doubt doe arise in the vse and practising of the same booke, to appeale all suche diuersitie, the matter shall be referred vnto the Bishop of the dioces, who by his discretion shall take order for the quieting and appealinge of the same, so that the same order be not contrarye vnto any thing contained in that booke.

After these letters and reasons receyued, the forenamed Nicholas Ridley Bishop of London, consequently vpon the same did hold his visitation, wherein amongst other his Injunctions, the sayde Bishopp exhorted those Churches in his Diocesse, where the Aultares then did remaine, to conforme them selues vnto those other Churches whych had taken them downe, and had sette vp in the steade of the multitude of their Aultares, one decent Table in euery Church.

Vpon the occasion wherof there arose a greate diuersitie aboute the fourme of the Lordes boorde, some vsing it after the fourme of a Table, and some of an aultare, wherein

Considerations and reasons, why the table were more conuenient in the Church then the Altar.

The second reason.

Answer to certayne cauilers, which, take holds of the terme of Altar in the kinges booke.

The table how it may be called Altar and in what respect.

The third reason.

This reason for taking away the superstitious opinion serueth also as well for the abolishing of other thinges moebeside Altars. &c.

The fourth reason. The name of an altare how it is deriued, and what it significeth.

The fift reason. Christ vsed a table and not an Altar. The Altar neuer vsed among the Apostles.

The sixt reason.

Bookes of Latine seruice called in.

Anno 1549.

Common bread vsed in the holy Communion.

Taking down of Altars.

The kings letter to Nicholas Ridley then B. of London.

Altars taken downe and destroyed.

Considerations to perswade the people.