

An. no 1555. February. B. Boner seketh the blood of M. Saunders.

because it had so many ceremonies, partly blasphemous, partly vnlawfull and vnprofitable. After much talke had concerning this matter, the Bpshop willed him to write what he belieued of transubstantiation. Laurence Saunders did so, saying: My Lorde, ye do seeke my blood, and ye shall haue it: I pray God that ye may be so baptised in it, that ye may thereafter loath bloud-sucking, and become a better man. This writing the Bpshop kept for his purpose, euen to cut the writers throte, as shall appere hereafter. The Bpshop when he had his will, sent Laurence Saunders to the Lord Chancellour, as Annas sent Christ to Cayphas: and like fauour found Saunders as Christ his Gaspiter did before him. But the Chancellour being not at home, Saunders was constrained to tary for him by the space of foure houres, in the vtter chamber, where he found a Chaplein of the Bishops very merrily disposed with certeine Gentlemen playing at the Tables, with diuers other of the same family or house, occupied there in the same exercise.

All this time Saunders stood very modestly and soberly at the scene of Cupbord, bareheaded, Syr John Woydant his guide or leader walking vp and downe by him: who (as I sayd before) was then one of the Counsell. At the last, the Bpshop returned from the Court, whome, as some as he was entered, a great many luters met and receiued: so that, before he could get out of one house into another, halfe an hour was passed. At the last, he came into the chamber where Saunders was, and went through into another chamber: where in the meane way Saunders leader gaue him a writing containing the cause, or rather the accusation of the sayd Saunders, which when he had perused, where is the man, sayd the Bpshop: When Saunders being brought forth to the place of examination, first, most lowly and meekely kneeled downe, and made curtesie before the table where the Bpshop did sit: Unto whom the Bpshop spake on this wise.

How hapnieth it (sayd he) that notwithstanding the Queenes Proclamation to the contrary, you haue entered into preaching?

Saunders denyed that he dyd preache: Saying, that for so much as he saw the perillous tymes now at hande, he did but (according as he was admonished, and warned by Ezechiel the Propheet,) exhort his flocke and Parishioners to perseuer and stand steadfastly, in the doctrine which they had learned, saying also, that he was moued and prickted forward thereunto by that place of the Apostle where in he was commaunded rather to obey God than man: and mozeouer, that nothing moze moued or stirred hym thereunto, than his owne conscience.

A goodly conscience surely sayd the Bpshop. This your conscience could make our Queene a Bastard or misbegotten: wouldest thou not I pray you?

When sayd Saunders, we (sayd he) do not declare or say that the Queene is base or misbegotten, neither go aboute any such matter. But for that let them care whose writings are yet in the hands of men, witnessing the same, not without the great reproch and shame of the Authour: princely taunting the Bpshop hymselfe, which had before (to get the fauour of Henry 8.) written and set forth in print a booke of true obedience, wherein he had openly declared Queene Mary to be a Bastard. Now M. Saunders going forward in his purpose, sayd: we do only profite and teach the sinceritie and puritie of the word, the which albeit it be now forbidden vs to preache with our mouthes, yet notwithstanding I do not doubt, but that our blood hereafter shall manifest the same. The Bpshop being in this sort prettily nipped and touched, said: Carry away this freneticke foole to prison. Unto whome M. Saunders answered, that he did geue God thanks which had geuen hym at the last, a place of rest and quietnesse, where as he might pray for the Bpshops conuersion.

Furthermoze, he that did lye with him afterwarde in prison in the same bed, reported that he heard him say that euen in the time of his examination, he was wonderfully comforted; in so much as not only in spirite, but also in body, he receaued a certayne taste of that holy communion of Sauntes, whilst a most pleasant refreshing did issue from euery part and member of the body vnto the seat & place of the hart, and from thence did ebbe and flow to and fro, vnto all the partes againe.

This Saunders continued in prison a whole yeare and 3. moneths. In all which space he sent diuers letters to diuers men: as one to Cramer, Ardeley, and Latimer: and other to his wife and also to others, certifying them both of the publike calamitie of the time, and also of his priuate afflictions, and of sondy his conflicts with his aduersaries: As in writing to his friend, he speaketh of woxton conferring with him in prison, whercof you shall heare a-

none (by the leaue of the Lorde) as followeth in the story. In the meane time the Chancellour, after this little talke with M. Saunders (as is aforesaid) sent him to the prison of the Marshalsey, &c. For the Cayphas (winchester I meane) did nothing but bayte him with some of his currish eloquence, and so committed him to the prison of the Marshalsey, where he was kept prisoner one whole yeare and a quarter. But of his cause and estate, thou shalt now see, what Laurence Saunders hymselfe did write.

A parcell of a Letter of Laurence Saunders sent to the Bpshop of Winchester, as an answer to certayne thyngs wherewith he had before charged hym.

Touching the cause of my imprisonment, I doubt whether I haue broken any law or proclamation. In my doctrine I did not, forasmuch as at that time it was permitted by the proclamation to vse according to our consciences, such seruike as was then established. My doctrine was then agreeable vnto my conscience and the seruike then vsed. The Act which I did (he meaneth publike teaching of Gods word in his owne parish, called Alhallowes in Breadstreete in the Citie of London) was such, as being indifferently weyed, founded to no breaking of the proclamation, or at the least no wilfull breaking of it; forasmuch as I caused no bell to be roong, neyther occupied I any place in the Pulpit, after the order of Sermons or Lectures. But be it that I did breake the Proclamation; this long time of continuance in prison may be thought to be more than a sufficient punishment for such a fault.

Touching the charging of me with my Religion, I say wyth S. Paule: This I confesse, that after the way which they call heresie, so worship I the God of my forefathers, beleueing all thyngs which are written in the lawe and the Prophets, and haue hope towards God, &c. And herein study I to haue alway a cleare conscience towards God, and towards men: so that God I call to witnesse, I haue a conscience. And this my conscience is not grounded vpon vayne fantasie, but vpon the infallible veritie of Gods word, with the witnessing of his chosen Church agreeable vnto the same.

It is an easie thing for them, which take Christ for theyr true Pastor, and be the very sheepe of his pasture, to discern the voice of their true shepheard, from the voyce of wolues, hyrelings, and straungers, for as much as Christ sayeth: My sheepe heare my voice, yea and thereby they shall haue the gift to know the right voyce of the true shepheard, and so to follow him, and to auoyde the contrary, as he also sayeth: The sheepe follow the shepheard; for they knowe his voyce: A straunger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they knowe not the voice of a stranger. Such inward inspiration doth the holy Ghost put into the children of God, being in deede taught of God, but otherwise vnable to vnderstand the true way of their saluation. And albeit that the Wolfe (as Christ saith) commeth in sheepes clothing, yet he sayth: by their fruites yee shall knowe them. For there be certayne fruites whereby the Wolfe is bewrayed, notwithstanding that otherwise in sondry sortes of deuoute holines in outward shew, he seemeth neuer so simple a sheepe. That the Romish religion is rauening & woluishe, it is apparant in 3. principall points. First, it robbeth God of his due and only honour.

Secondly, it taketh away the true comfort of conscience, in obscuring, or rather burying of Christ, and his office of saluation.

Thirdly, it spoyleth God of his true worship and seruike in spirit and truth, appointed in his prescript commaundementes, and driueth men vnto that inconuenience, against the which Christ with the Prophet Esay doth speake sharply: This people honoureth me with their lips, but their hart is far from me. They worship me in vaine, teaching the doctrine and precepts of men. And in another place: ye cast aside the commaundemente of God to mayntayne your owne traditions.

Wherefore I in conscience weying the Romish Religion, and by indifferent discussing thereof, finding the foundation vnstedfast, and the building thereupon but vayne: and on the other side hauing my conscience framed after a right and vncorrupt religion, ratified and fully established by the word of God, and the consent of his true Church. I neyther may, nor do intend by Gods gracious assistance, to be pulled one iot from the same, no though an Angell out of heauen should preach another Gospell than that which I haue receyued of the Lord.

And although that for lacke either of such deepe knowledge and profound iudgement, or of so expedite vterring of that I do know and iudge, as is required in an excellent clarke, I shall not be able sufficiently to answer, for the conuincing of the gaine-sayer: yet neuertheless, this my protestation shall be of me presumed, that for the respect of the grounds and causes before considered, albeit I cannot * explicita side as they call it, conceiue all that is to be conceiued, neither can discusse all that is to be discussed, nor can effectually expresse all that is to be expressed in the discourse of the doctrine of this most true religion, whereunto

M. Saunders feare not Annas was to Cayphas.

Winchesters talk with M. Saunders.

M. Saunders answer to M. Winchester.

Winchester.

M. Saunders.

A priuy nippe to Winchester.

Winchesters booke de vera obedientia.

Note how Winchester confuteth M. Saunders.

A notable example of the Lord comforting his seruantes in their troubles.

M. Saunders in prison a yeare and 3. moneths.

A fragment of M. Saunders letter.

He meaneth the proclamation of which mention is made before. Satis peccauit qui resistere non potuit.

Act. 24.

A good testimony of a good conscience.

John. 10.

Math. 7.

How the Wolfe is knowne fro the true shepheard.

The inconuenience of the Romish religion, in 3. poyntes.

Esay. 26. Math. 23.

*Explicita Fides, is wher a man hath to answer to euery poynt of his faith by sufficient ground and learning.