

Anno 1558. Noucm. Her departing from her husband & returning agayne.

can not passe ouer a certaine poore woman, and a sely creature, burned vnder the sayd queenes reigne, in the City of Exeter (whose name I haue not yet learned:) who dwelling sometime about Cornewall, hauing a husbände and childre there, much addicted to the superstitious sect of popery: was many times rebuked of the, & dūme to go to the church, to their Idols and ceremonies, to hymn, to follow the Crosse in procession, to geue thanks to God for restoring Antichrist agayne into this Realme. &c. which when her spirit could not abide to do, she made her prayer vnto God, calling for helpe and mercy, and so at length lying in her bed, about midnight, she thought there came to her a certaine motion and feeling of singular comfort, wherupon in short space, she beganne to grow in contempt of her husband and children, and so taking nothing from them, but euen as she went, departed from them, seeking her lyving by labor & spinning as well as she could, here & there for a time. In which time notwithstanding she neuer ceased to vtter her minde, as well as she durst: howbeit she at that time was brought home to her husband agayne. wher at last she was accused by her neighbours, and so brought vp to Exeter, to be presented to the Bishop and his Clergy. The name of the Bishop which had her in examination, was Doctour Troubleuile. His Chauncellour (as I gather) was Blackstone. The chiefest matter wherupon she was charged and condemned, was for the Sacrament (which they call of the Altar) and for speaking against Idols, as by the declaration of those which were present. I vnderstand, which report the talk betwene her and the bishop on this wise.

The poore woman sent vp to Excestor. D. Troubleuile B. of Excestor, Blackstone persecutors.

Talke betwene the woman & the Bishop.

Bishop. Thou foolish woman (quoth the Bishop) I heare say that thou hast spoken certayne words of the most blessed Sacrament of the Altar, the body of Christ. Fye for shame. Thou art an vnlearned person and a woman: wilt thou meddle with such highe matters, whiche all the Doctours of the world can not define? wilt thou talke of so high misteryes? Keepe thy worke, & medle with that thou hast to do. It is no womans matters, at cardes and towe to be spoken of. And if it be as I am informed, thou art worthy to be burned.

Woman. My Lord (sayde she) I trust your Lordship will heare me speake.  
Bish. Yea mary (quoth he) therefore I send for thee.  
Woman. I am a poore woman & do lue by my hands, getting a penny truly & of that I get I geue part to the poore.  
Bish. That is well done. Art thou not a mans wife?

And here the Bishop entred into talke of her husband. To whom she answered againe, declaring that she had a husband and children: and had them not. So long as she was at liberty, she refused not, neyther husband, nor children. But now standing here as I doe (sayd she) in y<sup>e</sup> cause of Christ & his truetly, where I must either forsake Christ, or my husband, I am contented to sicke onely to Christ my heauenly spouse, and renounce the other.

The wyfe renouncing her husband for Christes sake.

And here she making mention of the words of Christ: He that leaueth not father or mother, sister or brother, husband. &c. the Bishop inferred that Christ spake that of the holy martyrs, which dyed because they would not doe sacrifice to the false Gods.

Woman. Sincerely say, and I will rather dye then I will do any worship to that foule Idoll, whiche with your Masse you make a God.  
Bish. Yea, you callet, will you say that the sacrament of the altar is a foule Idoll?

The Sacrament of the Altar made an Idoll.

Wom. Yea truly, quoth she: there was neuer such an Idoll as your sacrament is, made of your priestes, & comāded to be worshipped of al mē, with many idd phantasies, where Christ did commaund it to be eaten & drunken in remembrance of his most belied passion our redemption.

Bish. See this prating woman. Dost thou not heare, that Christ did say ouer the bread: This is my body, & ouer the cup: This is my blood.

Wom. Yes forsooth, he sayd so, but he meant that it is hys body and blood not carnally, but sacramentally.

Bish. Doe, she hath heard prating among these new preachers, or heard some pecuilly book. Alas poore woman, thou art deceived.

Reasons shewing why the Sacrament of the Lordes body is not to be worshipped.

W. m. No, my Lorde, that I haue learned, was of Godly preachers, & of godly books which I haue heard read. And if you will geue me leaue, I will declare a reason why I will not worship the sacrament.

Bish. Mary say on, I am sure it will be goodly geare.  
Woman. Truly such geare as I will looe this poore life of mine for.

Bish. Then you will be a marty: good wife.  
Woman. In deed if the deuyng to worshipping: that bready God be my martyrdome, I will suffer it with all my hart.

Bish. Say thy minde,

Wom. You must beare with me a poore woman, quoth she. Bish. So I will, quoth he.

Woman. I will demaunde of you, whether you can denye your creed, which doth say, that Christ perpetually doth sit at the right hand of his father both body & soule, vntill he come agayne, or whether he be there in heaue our aduocate & do make prayer for vs vnto God his father. If it be so, he is not here in the earth in a peece of bread. If he be not here, & if he do not dwell in temples made with hands, but in heauen, what shall we seeke him here: if he did offer his body once for all, why make you a new offering: if he once offering he made al perfect, why do you with a false offering make al vnperfect: if he be to be worshipped in spirit and truth, why doe you worship a peece of bread: if he be eaten & drunk in faith & truth, if his flesh be not profitable to be among vs, why do you say, you make his body and fleshe, and say it is profitable for body & soule? Alas, I am a poore woman: but rather then I would do as you doe, I would lue no longer. I haue sayd s<sup>r</sup>.

Bish. I promise you, you are a tolly protestant, I pray you in what schooles haue you bene brought vp?

Wom. I haue vpon the sondays visited the sermons, and there haue I learned suche thynges, as are so fixed in my brest that death shall not separate them.

Bish. O foolish woman, who wilt wast his breath v<sup>o</sup> thee or such as thou art? But how chaunceth it that thou werest away from thy husbände? if thou were an honest woman, thou wouldest not haue left thyne husband and children, and runne about the country like a fugitiue.

Wom. S<sup>r</sup>, I laboured for my liuing: And as my mayster Christ counselleth me, when I was persecuted in one city, I fled vnto another.

Bish. who persecuted thee?

Wom. My husband and my children. For when I woulde haue him to leaue Idollary, and to worship God in heauen, he would not heare me, but he with his children rebuked me, and troubled me. I fled not for whoredom, nor for theft, but because I would be no partaker with him & his, of that foule Idoll the Masse. And wher soeuer I was, as oft as I could vpon sondays and holy dayes I made excuses not to go to the popish church.

The wyfe persecuted by husband and children.

Bish. Belike the you are a good housewife, to flee from your husband, and also from the church.

Wom. My housewifery is but small but God geue me grace to go to the true church.

Bish. The true church: what doest thou meane?

Woman. Not your popish church, full of Idolles and abominations, but where thre or foure are gathered together in the name of God, to that church wil I go as long as I lue.

Bish. Belike then you haue a church of your owne. Well, let this mad woman be put down to prison, vntill we send for her husband.

Wom. No, I haue but one husband, which is here already in this city and in prison with me, from whom I will neuer depart: and so they communication for that day brake of. Blackstone and others perswaded the Bishop that she was a mazed creature, and not in her perfect wit (which is no new thing, for the wisdom of God to apper foolishnes to carnall men of this world) & therefore they consulted together, that she should haue liberty and go at large. So the keeper of the bishops prison had her home to his house, where she fell to spinning and carding, and did all other worke as a seruant in the said keepers house & went about the city, when and whither she would, and diuers had delight to talke with her. And euer she continued talking of the sacrament of the altar, which, of all thing they coule least abide. Then was her husband sent for, but she refused to go home with him, with the blemish of the cause and religion, in defence wherof she there stood before the Bishop and the priestes.

Then diuers of the Priestes had her in handing, perswading her to leaue her wicked opinion about the sacrament of the altar, the naturall body and blood of our Saviour Christ. But she made them aunswere, that it was nothing but very bread and wine, and that they might be ashamed to say, that a peece of bread should be turned by a man into the naturall body of Christ, which bread both vnto now, and thice oftentimes do eate it, and it doth moue & is burned: And (saye she) Gods owne body wyll not be so handled, nor kept in prison, or boxes, or ambitics. Let it be sold: God: it shall not be mine: for my shame suffereth on the right hand of God, & doth pray for me. And to make that sacrament a significantie bread instituted for a remembrance, the very body of Christ, and to worship it, it is very foolishnes and deuillish deceit.

Now truly (sayd they) the deuill hath deceived thee.  
No (sayd she) I trust the lining God hath opened mine eyes,

Talke betweene The woman and the Priestes about the Sacrament.