

WHEREIN IS DESCRIBED ALL their diverse and erroneous opinions against the truth of the Gospel.

TO begin to some purpose in prose, because nothing to any purpose either in Verse, poetry, Rhyme, or reason is for their stomachs, nor are they much affected with good prose (for as the Tree is known by the fruit it bears, so they may be perceived of what spirit they are by their speech and writings, and daily libelling. And to the end that I may rather prove myself a just reprehender of their follies, then an impudent railer at their fooling and saucy ignorance, (which in plain terms is no better then malice and madness) I am induced to mix that which is material, true, and serious, with some things that may seem harsh, tart, and distasteful to the pallets of these curious furious lavish Libellers, and pestiferous platformers: Indeed they do pretend fair colours for their sole intentions, strong proofs for their weak Assertions and scandalous Aspersions, their talk being reformation, rectifying, mundifying, clarifying of the Church, and nothing is in their mouths or pens but railing and reviling against our Church of England, the Book of Common prayer, preaching, Sacraments, Ceremonies, Rites, Orders, Government and Governors; for Governors and Government was instituted by the Patriarchs before the Law, by *Moses*, the prophets and priests under the Law, by our Saviour Christ Jesus and his Apostles and successors, since the time of the Gospel, established, confirmed, and ratified by Scriptures, General Counsels, Ancient Fathers, Ecclesiastical Canons, Martyrs and Confessors, by Acts of Parliament ordained and decreed, and by all the aforesaid Authorities continually used and daily practised within the Church of Christ Catholic, Apostolic and Militant over the face of the Earth, and received into this Kingdom when *Lucius* was King here, and *Flentherius* was then Bishop of *Rome*, who was the thirteenth Bishop of that See, *Anno 179*, so that the Institution and practise of our Church and religion hath continued amongst us near 1500. years, except when It was eclipsed by popery, even from the near time of the death of some of the Apostles or their next successors: For Saint *Jerome* saith that Saint *John* the Apostle and Evangelist did live 68 years after our Saviour's passion, and that he died in the year of Christ 101, and that he out-lived Saint *Paul*, and Saint *Peter*, whom some improbable Authors say was the first Bishop or Pope of *Rome*; also that he survived *Linus*, *Amatletus*; and to the ninth year of *Clement*, the first bishop of *Rome* of that name, so that by computation of time, Saint *John* could be no less then 120 years of age when he died; so that our Church and Church-Government is no Innovation or novelty, as these late licentious Libellers have maliciously belied her.

But indeed it is no Innovation or Novelty, for the Church of God and the only Spouse of his only beloved Son *Christ Jesus* to be despised, dispersed, persecuted, hated, scorned, jeered contemned, derided, and traduced, for it hath been, is, and will be ever the marks & tokens of the true Church to be known from Heathens, Infidels, pagans, Atheists, Mahometans, Heretics, Hypocrites, Schismatics and Sectaries, with the whole rabble of the Kingdoms of Satan and Antichrist, for since the beginning the Devil hath been busy to entrap and destroy her.

By the word Church I do mean all the faithful people of God that have ever been created, or that are to be to the end of the world, of what Nation, condition, or sex whatsoever they be, if they make a conscience, to be obedient to Gods Laws, and with gladness embrace the Gospel of *Jesus Christ*, in whose faith if they live here, they are (*in Grace*) his Church militant here, and dying in God's favour they are, that are so departed, & shall be in glory his Church Triumphant hereafter eternal.

This Church hath many times been so overwhelmed with afflictions, tribulations and persecutions, that she seemed to be quite sunk, or sinking as *S. Peter* was when he walked on the Sea, *Mat. 14.31*. Then God in mercy hath still held forth his gracious hand of power, providence, protection and preservation, hath still supported, held her up, strengthened, comforted and delivered her, so that in despite of the raging of Tyrants, the rigour of torments, the storms and tempests of persecution, she hath still resplendently broken through and dispersed all the obscure clouds of the Devil's malice, so that the gates of Hell hath never prevailed against her.

This Church was, by the subtly of the Devil, assaulted in paradise in the persons of our first Parents; this Church was persecuted by *Cain* when he murdered his righteous brother *Abel*; this Church was opposed and rebelliously murmured against by *Corah*, *Da[...]han*, *Abiram*, and their accomplices; this Church that was prefigured by the Ark of *Noah* that swum and floated when all the world else was drowned, & none were saved that were not in it, which

Ark, maugre [i.e., in spite of] all storms and tempests, was preserved and rested on the mountain *Ararat*, which was a Type that the true Church doth rest upon the most High: this Church was also fore-shewed by the Bush that burned with fire, & was not consumed, which prefigured her preservation: & this Church was & is as the seamless coat of *Christ* not to be divided, this is that Church which these factious men would sink, burn, and rend in pieces, they being more merciless then the raging waters, their blind zeal more hot then the violent flaming fire, and their manners and civility far less then the barbarous soldiers.

The Arians, Anabaptists, Brownists, Donatists, Erticheans, Familists, Marcianists, Montanists, Nicholaitans, Pelagians, Papists, Puritans, Nonatians, and all other sorts of Heresies and Sects do stiffly hold and maintain to their uttermost power that every one (in his own opinion) in each of their Sects are the true Church, and under the colours of a feigned piety they are all in violent opposition against each other, in a disunion and diversity among themselves, and all in a general malignant inveterate hatred against the Government, the Governors, and of the true Church indeed.

God hath ordained certain Orders, Degrees or Functions of men in this Kingdom for the defence, guard, guide, preservation and salvation of mankind; the first is Kings, Princes, Potentates and Peers (or Nobility) whose wisdom and power may and have made Laws and Statutes agreeable to God's Word, the spring and Fountain of which Laws are derived from the Law of God; secondly, (under Kings and Rulers) there are the most right Reverend Fathers the Clergy for the Church's Government, and for the directing and guiding of the wandering and straying Flock of Christ, whose Learning, wisdom, gravity, painful life and example may draw souls unto God. And whose Office and Authority which they have from and under the King (as from God's Lieutenant) is such that they by imposition of hands always have done and do (as occasion requires) ordain Ministers for the Church, for the preaching of the Word to the people, for prayer for them, and for the true and due administration of the Sacraments to them; and also by their power to maintain Order and Decency in the Congregation, and in their Jurisdictions and charge to admonish, reprehend, and excommunicate all obstinate and erroneous offenders, and (in fine) advance the Word of God, and make it propagate, and to trample on, tread down, and suppress all Heresies, sects, schisms, and needless and impertinent innovations, that might any way disturb the peace of the Church.

Thirdly, the Physician is to be honoured, because he is God's Instrument for the health and preservation of the body, but as much as the soul (which is immortal) is in value above the body, which is frail, transitory, and mortal, so far is the holy Function of a sincere and painful Divine, (who is a physician for the soul) to be preferred before any Physician for the Body.

And fourthly, the Lawyer is to be revered and esteemed for he is (or should be) the rule, square, guide, and rectifier of all our temporal Actions, a righter of wrong, a true and impartial Decider and Judger of all matters of debate and controversies amongst men, concerning our houses, lands, debts, touching estate or loss of limb or life, and all these are comprised under the title of the goods of Fortune; in which, were not the Lawyer expert, the Law itself is but a dead letter, and of no Force or Virtue: Now, as much as goods and all outward means, which are called the goods of *Fortune*, because they are uncertain, here today and gone tomorrow, are short of the estimation of bodily life and health, so much is the Lawyer below the Physician in use or estimation.

But men being constant in nothing but in wavering inconstancy, do in a perverse and preposterous manner begin at the wrong end, and as they do make more account of body, goods and Fame, than they do either of their souls or everlasting happiness, so much they esteem the Physician and the Lawyer above the Divine; I confess them all to be as worthy of Honour as they are endued with Honesty, and each of them to be held in as much regard and Reverence as their pains and studies shall merit for their true service to God and man; yet, with *Mary*, I humbly desire to make *choice of the better part which shall not be taken from me*, Luk. 10. and 41.42.

In the mean space, (amongst mutable and contentious spirits) Religion is made a Hotch potch, and as it were tossed in a Blanquet, and too many places of *England* too much *Amsterdammified* by several opinions; Religion is now become the common discourse and Table-talk in every Tavern and Ale-house, where a man shall hardly find five

together in one mind, and yet every one presumes he is in the right. The Book of Common prayer which was established by Act of Parliament by that good and godly King *Edward* the sixth, and after re-established by another Parliament, by that unparalleled and peerless princess Queen *Elizabeth*, and continued since in the happy Reigns of two gracious Kings in the Church of *England* for the service of God these ninety years; yet one would have it to be cast out now, holding it a false worship; another is angry at the vestments and habits of the Ministry; one will not kneel, another will not stand, one will sit down, one will not bow, another will not be uncovered, one holds all good manners to be popery, another that all decency is superstitious, another that rails are Romish (which is false, for the papists have no rails in their Churches, nor any thing so convenient). One foolishly assumes and presumes to save himself, and some of his Neighbours too, by his good works; another will be saved by a bare and lazy Faith that will do no work at all, and thus religion is puffed and blown to and fro with every wind of doctrine, and as it were tossed in a Blanquet; but of this more largely hereafter in another part which will suddenly be printed, till when and ever it shall be my hearty prayers, that as there is but one Shepherd, that God in his gracious goodness and mercy would make us all one sheepfold.

FINIS.