

OF THE ANTICHRIST

CCCCXXVI.

Antichrist is the pope and the Turk together; a beast full of life must have a body and soul; the spirit or soul of antichrist is the pope, his flesh or body the Turk. The latter wastes and assails and persecutes God's church corporally; the former spiritually and corporally too, with hanging, burning, murdering, etc. But, as in the apostle's time, the church had the victory over the Jews and Romans, so now will she keep the field firm and solid against the hypocrisy and idolatry of the pope, and the tyranny and devastations of the Turk and her other enemies.

CCCCXXVII.

"And the king shall do according to his will, and he shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak marvellous things against the God of gods, and shall prosper until the indignation be accomplished: for that is determined shall be done. Neither shall he regard the God of his fathers, nor the desire of women, nor regard any god, for he shall magnify himself above all."

This prophecy, as all the teachers agree, points directly at the antichrist, under the name of Antiochus; for antichrist will regard neither God nor the love of women - that is, the state of matrimony. These two, antichrist condemns on earth - God, that is religion, and mankind. He will not regard women, that is, he will condemn temporal and house government, laws, jurisdiction, emperors and kings: for through women children are born, and brought up, to the perpetuation of mankind and replenishing of the world; where women are not regarded, of necessity temporal and house government is also condemned, and laws, and ordinances, and rulers.

Daniel was an exceeding high and excellent prophet, whom Christ loved, and touching whom he said; whoso readeth, let him understand. He spoke of that antichrist persecutor as clearly as if he had been an eyewitness thereof. Read the 11th chapter throughout. It applies to the time when the emperor Caligula and other tyrants ruled; it distinctly says: "He shall plant the tabernacles of his palace between the seas, in the glorious holy mountain;" that is, at Rome, in Italy. The Turk rules also between two seas, at Constantinople, but that is not the holy mountain. He does not honour or advance the worship of *Maosim*, nor does he prohibit matrimony. Therefore Daniel points directly at the pope, who does both, with great fierceness. The prophet says further: "He shall also be forsaken of his king." It is come to that pass already, for we see kings and princes leave him. As to the forms of religion under the pope and Turk, there is no difference but in a few ceremonies; the Turk observes the Mosaical, the pope the Christian ceremonies - both sophisticate and falsify them; for as the Turk corrupts the

Mosaic bathings and washings, so the pope corrupts the sacrament of baptism and of the Lord's supper.

The kingdom of antichrist is described also in the revelation of John, where it is said: "And it was given unto him to make war with the saints and to overcome them." This might seem prophesied of the Turk, and not of the pope, but we must, on investigation, understand it of the pope's abominations and tyranny in temporal respects. It is further said in the Apocalypse: "It shall be for a time, and times, and half a time." Here is the question: what is a time? If time be understood a year, the passage signifies three years and a half, and hits Antiochus, who for such a period persecuted the people of Israel, but at length died in his own filth and corruption. In like manner will the pope also be destroyed; for he began his kingdom, not through power or the divine authority, but through superstition and a forced interpretation of some passages of Scripture. Popedom is built on a foundation which will bring about its fall. Daniel prophesies thus: "And through his policy he shall cause craft to prosper in his hand; but he shall be broken without hand." This refers specially to the pope, for all other tyrants and monarchs fall by temporal power and strength. However, it may hit both pope and Turk. Both begin to reign almost at one time, under the emperor Phocas, who murdered his own master, the emperor Maurice, with his empress and young princes, well nigh nine hundred years since. The pope began to govern the church spiritually at the same time that Mohammed founded his power; the pope's temporal kingdom stood scarce three hundred years, for he plagued and harassed kings and emperors. I cannot well define or comprehend this prophecy: "A time, times, and half a time." I do not know whether it refers to the Turk, who began to rule when Constantinople was taken, in the year 1453, eighty-five years ago. If I calculate a time to be the age of Christ (thirty years) this expression would mean one hundred and five years, and the Turk would still have twenty-five years swing to come. Well, God knows how it stands, and how he will deliver those that are his. Let us not vex ourselves with seeking over knowledge. Let us repent and pray.

Seeing the pope is antichrist,^[2] I believe him to be a devil incarnate. Like as Christ is true and natural God and man, so is antichrist a living devil. It is true, too, what they say of the pope, that he is a terrestrial god, - for he is neither a real god nor a real man, but of the two natures mingled together.

He names himself an earthly God, as though, the only true and Almighty God were not on earth! Truly, the pope's kingdom is a horrible outrage against the power of God and against mankind; an abomination of desolation, which stands in the holy place. Its a monstrous blasphemy for a human creature to presume, now Christ is come, to exalt himself in the church above God. If it had been done amongst the Gentiles, before the coming of Christ, it would not have been so great a wonder. But though Daniel, Christ himself, and his apostles, Paul and Peter, have given us warning of that poisoned beast and pestilence, yet we Christians have been, and still are, so doltish and mad, s to adore and worship all his idols, and to believe that he is lord over the universal world, as heir to St Peter; whereas, neither Christ nor St Peter left any succession upon earth.

The pope is the last blaze in the lamp, which will go out, and ere long be extinguished, the last instrument of the devil, that thunders and lightens with sword and bull, making war through the power and strength of others, as Daniel says: "He is powerful, but not by his own strength." It has been affirmed that the pope has more power in one finger, than all the princes in Germany; but the spirit of God's mouth has seized upon that shameless strumpet, and startled many hearts, so that they regard him no more; a thing no emperor, with sword and power, had been able to accomplish; the devil scorns these weapons: but when he is struck with God's Word, then the pope is turned to a poppy and a forthy flower.

CCCCXXVIII.

The word Papa, Pope, comes, as I think, of the word Abba, repeated twice, meaning father of fathers. Of old the bishops were called Papa; Jerome, writing to Augustine, who was bishop of Hippo, calls him Holy Pope; and in the legend of St Cyprian, martyr, we read that the judge asked him: Art thou the Cyprian whom the Christians call their pope? It seems to me to have been a term applied to all the bishops. Children call their fathers papa; the bishops were the spiritual papas of the people.

Who, thirty years ago, would have dared to say of the pope what we now say of him? None then ventured to express himself respecting him in other terms than those of veneration and supplication.

CCCCXXIX.

Whence comes it that the popes pretend its they who form the church, when, all the while, they are bitter enemies of the church, and have no knowledge, certainly no comprehension, of the Holy Gospel? Pope, cardinals, bishops, not a soul of them has read the Bible; its a book unknown to them. They are a pack of guzzling, stuffing wretches, rich, wallowing in wealth and laziness, resting secure in their power, and never, for a moment, thinking of accomplishing God's will. The Sadducees were infinitely more pious than the papists, from whose holiness God preserve us. May he preserve us, too, from security, which engenders ingratitude, contempt of God, blasphemy, and the persecution of divine things.

CCCCXXX.

Some one, speaking of the signs and marvels which are to herald the coming of antichrist, when he shall present himself previous to the last judgment, said he was to be armed with a breath of fire, which would overthrow all who might seek to oppose him. Dr. Luther observed; These are parables, but they agree in a measure with the prophecies of Daniel; for the throne of the pope is a throne of flame, and fire is his arm, as the scimeter is the Turk's. Antichrist attacks with fire, and shall be punished with fire. The villain is now full of fear, crouching behind his mountains, and submitting to things against which heretofore he would have hurled his lightning and his thunder.

CCCCXXXI.

On the 8th August, came a letter from Bucer, relating that the council of Vienna was over, that the cardinals had returned home, and that the gospel had been eagerly received at Piacenza and Bologna. The pope, enraged at this result, had sent for a German, named Corfentius, to whom he transmitted a safe conduct; but, despite this, when Corfentius reached Rome, he was seized and thrown into the Tiber. Dr. Luther observed: Such is the good faith of the Italian papists! Happy the man who puts no trust in them. If the men of God, who preach the gospel in Italy, remain firm, there will be much bloodshed. See what snares are laid for us here in Germany; there's not a single hour wherein we can regard ourselves as safe. Had not God watched over us, we must long since have succumbed.

CCCCXXXII.

Some one asked how happened it St James had been at Compostella. Dr. Martin replied: Just as it happens, that the papists reckon up sixteen apostles, while Jesus Christ had but twelve. In many places, the papists boast of having some of the milk of the Virgin Mary, and of the hay in which Christ lay in the cradle. A Franciscan boasted he had some of this hay in a wallet he carried with him. A roguish fellow took out the hay, and put some charcoal in its place. When the monk came to show the people his hay, he found only the wood. However, he was at no loss: "My brethren," said he, "I brought out the wrong wallet with me, and so cannot show you the hay; but here is some of the wood that St Lawrence was grilled upon."

CCCCXXXIII.

Kings and princes coin money only out of metals, but the pope coins money out of every thing - indulgences, ceremonies, dispensations, pardons; its all fish comes to his net. Its only baptism escapes him, for children came into the world without clothes to be stolen, or teeth to be drawn.

CCCCXXXI.

A gentleman being at the point of death, a monk from the next convent came to see what he could pick up, and said to the gentleman: Sir, will you give so and so to our monastery? The dying man, unable to speak, replied by a nod of the head, whereupon the monk, turning to the gentleman's son, said: You see, your father makes us this bequest. The son said to the father: Sir, is it your pleasure that I kick this monk down stairs? The dying man nodded as before, and the son forthwith drove the monk out of doors.

CCCCXXXVI.

A professor at Wittenberg, named Vitus Ammerbach having advanced the proposition that, some head or other being necessary for the Church, the pope might as well be that head as another, Luther said: Greece was never under the authority of the pope, nor Judea, nor Scythia, yet in all these countries were Christians of great piety. Its great presumption in Ammerbach to propound these fallacies.

CCCCXXXVII.

Some one observed: The papists flatter themselves our doctrines will not last long, but will come to nothing, like those of Arius, which, say they, endured but for forty years. Dr. Luther replied: The sect of Arius maintained itself for nearly sixty years; but s it was based on heretical principles, it ended in confusion and destruction, whereas our opponents are compelled, despite themselves, to admit that we have right on our side. Our light so shines in the eyes of all men, that none can deny it.

CCCCXXXVIII.

They once showed here, at Wittenberg, the drawers of St Joseph and the breeches of St Francis. The bishop of Mayence boasted he had a gleam of the flame of Moses bush. At Compostella they exhibit the standard of the victory that Jesus Christ gained over death and the devil. The crown of thorns is shown in several places.

CCCCXXXIX.

When Wolsey, who was the son of a butcher, was made cardinal, a merry fellow said: "Please God he come to be pope, for then we shall have meat on fast days. St Peter, because he was a fisherman, prohibited meat, in order to raise the price of fish; this butcher's son will do the same for fish."

CCCCXL.

The cuckoo takes the eggs out of the linnet's nest, and puts her own in their place. When the young cuckoos grow big, they eat the linnet. The cuckoo, too, has a great antipathy towards the nightingale. The pope is a cuckoo; he robs the church of her true eggs, and substitutes in their place his greedy cardinals, who devour the mother that has nourished them. The pope, too, cannot abide that nightingale, the preaching and singing of the true doctrine.

CCCCXLI.

They show, at Rome, the head of St John the Baptist, though its well known that the Saracens opened his tomb, and burned his remains to ashes. These impostures of the papists cannot be too seriously reprehended.

CCCCXLII.

The papists, for the most part, are mere gross blockheads. One of their priests I knew, baptized with this form of words: Ego te baptiste in nomine Christe. Another in singing, used to say, *elema*, instead of *clama*, and when corrected, only bawled all the louder, *elema*, *elema*. Another said, *elicere*, instead of *dicere*. At Bamberg, they exhibit, once a year, a book, which they say contains the history of the emperor Henry and his wife Cunegonde, who made, on their marriage-day, a vow of virginity. Birkheimer, when he passed through Bamberg, asked to see this book, and when it was brought to him, found that it was only a copy of

Cicero's *Topics*. In one convent, the brethren read *munsimus*, instead of *sumpsimus*. A young brother, just fresh from study, correcting this error, the rest said to him: "Mind thy own business; we have always read *munsimus*, and we are not going to change our reading for thee."

CCCCXLIII.

Two jesters held a disputation before the pope, who was at dinner, the one maintaining, the other denying, the immortality of the soul. The pope said, that he was advocated the immortality of the soul adduced excellent reasons, but that, for his own part, he should side with the man who denied its immortality, seeing that it was a convenient doctrine, holding out a very desirable prospect, and its to such wretches as these the government of the church is to be confided.

CCCCXLIV.

Albert, bishop of Mayence, had a physician attached to his person, who, being a protestant, did not enjoy the prelate's favour. The man seeing this, and being an avaricious, ambitious, world-seeker, denied his God, and turned back to popery, saying to his associates: I'll put Jesus Christ by for awhile, till I've made my fortune, and then bring him out again. This horrible blasphemy met with its just reward; for next day the miserable hypocrite was found dead in his bed, his tongue hanging from his mouth, his face black as a coal, and his neck twisted half round. I was myself an ocular witness of this merited chastisement of impiety.

CCCCXLV.

Philip Melancthon, on the authority of a person who had filled an important post at the court of Clement VII., mentioned that every day, after the pope had dined or supped, his cup-bearer and cooks were imprisoned for two hours, and then, if no symptoms of poison manifested themselves in their master, were released. "What a miserable life" observed Luther; it's exactly what Moses has described in Deuteronomy: "And thy life shall hang in doubt before thee, and thou shalt fear, day and night, and shall have none assurance of thy life. In the morning, thou shalt say: would God it were even! and at even thou shalt say: would God it were morning!"

CCCCXLVI.

Mary, the humble virgin of Nazareth, strikes these potentates and popes fiercely, when she sings: "I will put down the mighty from their seats." Doubtless she had a sweet and sounding voice.

The pope and his crew are mere worshippers of idols, and servants of the devil, with all their doings and living; for he regards not at all God's Word, nay, condemns and persecutes it, and directs all his juggling to the drawing us away from the true faith in Christ. He pretends great holiness, under color of the outward service of God, for he has instituted orders with hoods,

with shavings, fasting, eating of fish, saying mass, and such like: but in the groundwork, its altogether the doctrine of the devil; and the cause why the pope so stiffly holds such devilish doctrine is, that which the Gospel relates, Matt. iv. The devil has shown him the kingdoms of the world, and made promise to him as he did to Christ. This makes him condemn and scorn our sermons and God's service, by which we are beggars, and endure much, while for his doctrine he gets money and wealth, honour and power, and is so great a monarch, that he can bring emperors under his girdle.

CCCCXLVII.

I cannot imagine how there should be peace between us and the papists, for neither will yield to the other; its an everlasting war, like that between the woman's seed and the old serpent. When temporal kings are weary of warring, they make a truce, more or less enduring, but in our case, there can be no such cessations; for we cannot depart from the Gospel, nor will they desist from their idolatry and blaspheming; the devil will not suffer his feet to be chopped off, nor will Christ have the preaching of his Word hindered; therefore I cannot see how any peace or truce may be between Christ and Belial.

CCCCXLVIII.

After the persecution of the church ceased, the popes aimed at the government, out of covetousness and ambition. The first was Hildebrand, or rather Hellbrand; they affrighted the people with their excommunication, which was so fearful a thing, that it descended upon the children, nay, fell upon servants. On the other hand, the pope seeking the goodwill of the people, granted and sold the remission of sins, were they never so heavy. Had one ravished the Virgin Mary, or crucified Christ anew, the pope would, for money, have pardoned him. This power and domination of the pope's, God has brought to confusion and destruction by my pen; for God, out of nothing, can make all things, and of the least means produce the greatest results.

CCCCXLIX.

Popedom must needs be brought to the stake, and pay for all. The pope shall be devoured by the friars, his creatures. The great and innumerable multitude of monks and friars, said Cardinal Campeggio, produces great evil; for they shake that fair monarchy of popedom, so carefully erected; and he said right; the Rat King is being paid home by his rats. By divinity he cannot be defended, for `tis no argument of his anonists and shaven crew, that his rule has long been a custom. How should the pope be able to judge, who has no skill or experience in matters of temporal government. How foolishly decides he touching matrimonial causes. He has forbidden his greased retinue to enter into the state of matrimony, though he commands it to be held and observed as a sacrament. If matrimony be a sacrament, it cannot be for the heathen; for the unbelieving Gentiles have nothing to do with them.

CCCCL.

Its a mere fable to say that Constantine the Emperor gave to the pope so much property and people as he boasts of. This I read, that Constantine gave much alms to the poor, commanding the bishops to distribute them, by which means they grew to be great lords. But he gave them neither countries nor cities; wherefore the world wonders whence the popes derived such dominions. In former times the popes were not lords over emperors and kings, but were instituted or ordained by the emperors.

CCCCLI.

The world remains the world it was thousands of years ago; that is, the spouse of the devil. The world says now, as the Pharisees said to their servants, whom they had sent to take Christ prisoner: "Are ye also deceived? Have any of the rulers or Pharisees believed in him? This people that knoweth not the law are accursed." Even so says the world now: Do the great ones and bishops believe in the Lutheran doctrine

CCCCLII.

The pope denies not the sacrament, but he has stolen from the laity the one part or kind thereof; neither does he teach the true use of it. The pope rejects not the bible, but he persecutes and kills upright, good, and godly teachers, as the Jews persecuted and slew the prophets that truly expounded and taught the Scriptures. The pope will permit the substance and essence of the sacrament and Bible to remain; but he will compel and force us to use them according to his will and pleasure, and will constrain us to believe the fictitious transubstantiation, and the real presence, *corporaliter*. The pope does nothing else than pervert and abuse all that God has ordained and commanded.

CCCCLIII.

The chief cause that I fell out with the pope was this: the pope boasted that he was the head of the church, and condemned all that would not be under his power and authority; for he said, although Christ be the Head of the church, yet, notwithstanding, there must be a corporal head of the church upon earth. With this I could have been content, had he but taught the Gospel pure and clear, and not introduced human inventions and lies in its stead. Further, he took upon him power, rule, and authority over the Christian church, and over the Holy Scriptures, the Word of God; no man must presume to expound the Scriptures, but only he, and according to his ridiculous conceits; so that he made himself lord over the church, proclaiming her at the same time a powerful mother, and empress over the Scriptures, to which we must yield and be obedient; this was not to be endured. They who, against God's Word, boast of the church's authority, are mere idiots. The pope attributes more power to the church, which is begotten and born, than to the Word, which has begotten, conceived, and borne the church.

We, through God's grace, are not heretics, but schismatics, causing, indeed, separation and division, wherein we are not to blame, but our adversaries, who gave occasion thereto, because they remain not by God's Word alone, which we have, hear, and follow.

CCCCLIV.

When our Lord God intends to plague and punish one, he leaves him in blindness, so that he regards not God's Word, but condemns the same, as the papists now do. They know that our doctrine is God's Word, but they will not allow of this syllogism and conclusion: When God speaks, we must hear him; now God speaks through the doctrine of the Gospel; therefore we must hear him. But the papists, against their own consciences, say, No; we must hear the church.

It is very strange: they admit both propositions, but will not allow the consequences, or permit the conclusions to be right. They urge some decree or other of the Council of Constance, and say, though Christ speak, who is the truth itself, yet an ancient custom must be preferred, and observed for law. Thus do they answer, when they seek to wrest and pervert the truth.

If this sin of antichrist be not a sin against the Holy Ghost, then I do not know how to define and distinguish sins. They sin herein wilfully against the revealed truth of God's Word, in a most stubborn and stiff-necked manner. I pray, who would not, in this case, resist these devillish and shameless lying lips? I marvel not John Huss died so joyfully, seeing he heard of such abominable impieties and wickedness of the papists. I pray, how holds the pope concerning the church? He preserves her, but only in an external lustre, pomp, and succession. But we judge her according to her essence, as she is in herself, in her own substance, that is, according to God's Word and sacraments. The pope is reserved for God's judgment, therefore only by God's judgment he shall be destroyed. Henry VIII, king of England, is now also an enemy to the pope's person, but not to his essence and substance; he would only kill the body of the pope, but suffer his soul, that is, his false doctrine to live; the pope can well endure such an enemy; he hopes within the space of twenty years to recover his rule and government again. But I fall upon the pope's soul, his doctrine, with God's Word, not regarding his body, that is, his wicked person and life. I not only pluck out his feathers, as the king of England and prince George of Saxony do, but I set the knife to his throat; and cut his windpipe asunder. We put the goose on the spit; did we but pluck her, the feathers would soon grow again. Therefore is Satan so bitter an enemy unto us, because we cut the pope's throat, as does also the king of Denmark, who aims at the essences of popery.

CCCCLV.

Its wonderful how, in this our time, the majesty of the pope is fallen. Heretofore, all monarchs, emperors, kings, and princes feared the pope's power, who held them all at his nod; none durst so much as mutter a word against him. This great god is now fallen; his own creatures, the friars and monks, are his enemies, who, if they still continue with him, do so for the sake of gain; otherwise they would oppose him more fiercely than we do.

CCCCLVI.

The pope's crown is named *gegnum mundi*, the kingdom of the world. I have heard it credibly reported at Rome, that this crown is worth more than all the principdoms of Germany. God placed popedom in Italy not without cause, for the Italians can make out many things to be real and true, which in truth are not so: they have crafty and subtle brains.

CCCCLVII.

If the pope were the head of the Christian church, then the church were a monster with two heads, seeing that St Paul says that Christ is her head. The pope may well be, and is, the head of the false church.

CCCCLVIII.

Where the linnet is, there is also the cuckoo, for he thinks his song a thousand times better than the linnet's. Even thus, the pope places himself in the church, and so that his song may be heard, overcrowds the church. The cuckoo is good for something, in that its appearance gives tidings that summer is at hand; so the pope serves to show us that the last day of judgment approaches.

CCCCLIX.

There are many that think I am too fierce against popedom; on the contrary, I complain that I am, alas! too mild; I wish I could breath out lightning against pope and popedom, and that every word were a thunderbolt.

CCCCLX.

Its an idle dream the papists entertain of antichrist; they suppose he should be a single person, that should govern, scatter money amongst them, do miracles, carry a fiery oven about him, and kill the saints.

CCCCLXI.

In popedom they make priests, not to preach and teach God's Word, but only to celebrate mass, and to gad about with the sacrament. For, when a bishop ordains a man, he says: Take unto thee power to celebrate mass, and to offer for the living and the dead. But we ordain priests according to the command of Christ and St Paul, namely to preach the pure gospel and God's Word. The papists in their ordinations make no mention of preaching and teaching God's Word, therefore their consecrating and ordaining is false and unright, for all worshipping which is not ordained of God, or erected by God's Word and command, is nothing worth, yea, mere idolatry.

CCCCLXII.

Next unto my just cause the small repute and mean aspect of my person gave the blow to the pope. For when I began to preach and write, the pope scorned and condemned me; he thought: Its but one poor friar; what can he do against me? I have maintained and defended this doctrine in popedom, against many emperors, kings, and princes, what then shall this one man do? If he had condescended to regard me, he might easily have suppressed me in the beginning.

CCCCLXIII.

A German, making his confession to a priest at Rome, promised, an oath, to keep secret whatsoever the priest should impart unto him, until he reached home; whereupon the priest gave him a leg of the ass on which Christ rode into Jerusalem, very neatly bound up in silk, and said: This is the holy relic on which the Lord Christ corporally did sit, with his sacred legs touching this ass's leg. Then was the German wondrous glad, and carried the said holy relic with him into Germany. When he got to the borders, he bragged of his holy relic in the presence of four others, his comrades, when, lo! it turned out that each of them had likewise received from the same priest a leg, after promising the same secrecy. Thereupon all exclaimed, with great wonder: Lord! had that ass five legs?

CCCCLXIV.

A picture being brought to Luther, in which the pope, with Judas the traitor, were represented hanging on the purse and keys, he said: `Twill vex the pope horribly, that he, whom emperors and kings have worshipped should now be figured hanging on his false pick-locks. It will also grieve the papists, for their consciences will be touched. The purse accords well with the cardinal's hats and their incomes, for the pope's covetousness has been so gross, that in all kingdoms he has not only raked to himself Annates, Palliummoney, etc., but has also sold for money the holy sacraments, indulgences, fraternities, Christ's blood, matrimony, etc. Therefore his purse is filled with robberies, upon which justly ought to be exclaimed, as in the Revelations; "Recompense them as they have done to you, and make it double unto them, according to their works." Therefore, seeing the pope has damned me and given me over to the devil, so will I, in requital, hang him on his own keys.

CCCCLXV.

It is abominable, that in so many of the pope's decrees, there is not one single sentence of the Holy Scripture, or one article of the Catechism mentioned. The pope intending to conduct the government of his church in an external way, his teachings were blasphemous; such as that a stinking friar's hood, put upon a dead body, procured remission of sins, and was of equal value with the merits of our blessed Saviour Christ Jesus.

CCCCLXVI.

It is no marvel that the papists hate me so vehemently, for I have well deserved it at their hands. Christ more mildly reprov'd the Jews than I the papists, yet they killed him. These,

therefore, think they justly persecute me, but, according to God's laws and will, they shall find their mistake. In the day of the last judgment I will denounce the pope and his tyrants, who scorn and assail the Word of God, and his sacraments. The pope destroys poor married priests, whereas by all their laws they are only to be displaced from their office. So Prince George has banished and driven away from Oschitz ten citizens and householders, with twenty-seven children, martyrs to the Word. Their sighs will rise up to heaven against him.

CCCCLXVII.

The pope and his crew can in nowise endure the idea of reformation; the mere word creates more alarm at Rome, than thunderbolts from heaven, or the day of judgment. A cardinal said, the other day: Let them eat, and drink, and do what they will; but as to reforming us, we think that is a vain idea; we will not endure it. Neither will we protestants be satisfied, though they administer the sacrament in both kinds, and permit priests to marry; we will also have the doctrine of the faith pure and unfalsified, and the righteousness that justifies and saves before God, and which expels and drives away all idolatry and false worshipping; these done and banished, the foundation on which pope-dome is built falls also.

CCCCLXVIII.

We will have the holy sacrament administered in both kinds, that it shall be free for priests to marry, or to forbear, and we will in no way suffer ourselves to be bereaved of the article of justification: "That by faith only in Jesus Christ we are justified and saved before God; without any works, merits, and deserts, merely by grace and mercy." This we must keep and preserve, pure and unfalsified, if we intend to be saved. As to private mass, we cannot hinder it, but must leave it to God, to be acted by those over whom we have neither power nor command; yet, nevertheless, we will openly teach and preach against it, and show that it is abominable blasphemy and idolatry. Either we must go together by the ears, or else they, in our countries, must yield unto us in this particular; if it come to pass that herein they yield unto us, then must we be contented; for, like as the Christians dealt with the Arians, and as St Paul was constrained to carry himself towards the Jews, even so must we also leave the papists to their own consciences, and seeing they will not follow us, so we neither can nor will force them, but must let them go and commit it to God's judgment; and truly, sincerely, and diligently hold unto and maintain our doctrine, let the same vex, anger, and displease whom it will.

CCCCLXIX.

The papists see they have an ill cause, and, therefore, labour to maintain it with very poor arguments, that cannot endure the proof, and may be easily confuted.

They say: "The praising of anything is an invocation; the saints are to be praised, therefore they are to be invoked." I answer: No, in nowise; for every praising is not invoking; married people are to be praised, but not to be invoked; for invocation belongs only to God, and not to any creature, either in heaven or on earth; no, not to any angel. They say:

"The doctrine of the remission of sins is necessary; indulgences, pardons, and graces are remissions of sins; therefore they are necessary." No: the pope's pardons are not remissions of sins, but satisfactions for remitting the punishments; mere fables and fictions.

CCCCLXX.

When I was in Rome a disputation was openly held, at which were present thirty learned doctors besides myself, against the pope's power; he boasting that with his right hand he commands the angels in heaven, and with his left draws souls out of purgatory, and that his person is mingled with the godhead. Calixtus disputed against these assertions, and showed that it was only on earth that power was given to the pope to bind and to loose. The other doctors hereupon assailed him with exceeding vehemence, and Calixtus discontinued his arguments, saying, he had only spoken by way of disputation, and that his real opinions were far otherwise.

CCCCLXXI.

For the space of many hundred years there has not been a single bishop that has shown any zeal on the subject of schools, baptism, and preaching; it would have been too great trouble for them, such enemies were they to God. I have heard divers worthy doctors affirm, that the church for a long time stood in need of reformation; but no man was so bold as to assail popedom; for the pope had on his banner, *Noli me tangere*; therefore every man was silent. Dr. Staupitz said once to me: "If you meddle with popedom you will have the whole world against you;" and he added: - "yet the church is built on blood, and with blood must be sprinkled."

CCCCLXXII.

I would have all those who intend to preach the Gospel, diligently read the popish abominations, their decrees and books; and, above all things, thoroughly consider the horrors of the mass - on account of which idol, God might justly have drowned and destroyed the whole world - to the end their consciences may be armed and confirmed against their adversaries.

CCCCLXXIII.

That Italian monk's book, the *Conformities*, wherein a comparison is drawn between Christ and St Francis, is a tissue of such horrible lies, that he who wrote it must have been possessed of a devil, not only spiritually but corporally. Christ, he says, is a figure or emblem of St Francis; and he affirms that Christ gave to St Francis the power of saving or condemning whom he pleased.

CCCCLXXIV.

In a monastery at Luneburg, there stands to this day a great altar, whereon are represented the life and miracles of Christ; his birth, his entry into Jerusalem, his passion, death, descent into

hell, resurrection, and ascension. Just by is set forth, in like manner, the birth of St Francis, his miracles, sufferings, death, and ascent into heaven, so that they esteemed the works of St Francis of equal value with those of our blessed Saviour Christ Jesus; a great and abominable blasphemy.

CCCCLXXV.

The pope's decretals s are naught; he that drew them up was an ass. They are a book put together like a beggar's coat, patched up with all sorts of rags. There is nothing in them about the church; they all aim at temporal matters. Yet the pope says, these decretals are to have equal authority with the Gospel and the writings of the apostles.

CCCCLXXVI.

In the pope's decretals are many horrible and diabolical canons; they are a great plague and evil for the church. The shameless pope presumes to say: "Whoso believes and observes not my decrees, it were in vain for him to believe in Christ, or give credit to the four Evangelists." Is not this the language of the very devil, infusing deadly poison into the Church? Again, he says in one of his decretals: That though he led people into hell, they ought to follow him; whereas, on the contrary, the office of a true bishop is to comfort the broken and sorrowful in heart, and to lead them to Christ. For upon this reprobate villain! must he teach consciences to despair in this sort? Whoever reads the decretals, will often find fair sentences of Scripture monstrously lugged in as confirmation; and, in other cases, when the Scripture is dead against them, that it is roundly said: the Romish Church has otherwise decided. Thus, like an infernal dog, the pope dares to subject God's Word to human creatures. Its just the same with Thomas Aquinas, who, in his books, argues, *pro et contra*, when he cites a passage in Scripture, he goes on: Aristotle maintains the contrary; so that the Holy Scripture must give place to Aristotle, a heathen. The world heeds not this abominable darkness, but condemns the truth, and falls into horrible errors. Therefore, let us make good use of our time, for things will not always remain as now.

CCCCLXXVII.

In the decretals, the pope domineers and triumphs like a victor; there he is on his dunghill, in possession, thundering and lightning with these words: "We have cognizance and authority, and by divine command we judge; all others ought to be obedient unto us." No human creature may criticize the pope; he only and alone has power to judge and criticize the whole universal world. I am persuaded, that in the pope's spiritual laws it is written above one thousand times, that the pope's actions may not be criticised by any man whatsoever.

CCCCLXXVIII.

The spiritual law of the pope is a filthy book, stinking of money. Take out of it covetousness and ambition, there remains nothing of its own proper substance, yet is has a great lustre, for all unhappiness must begin *in nomine Domini*. Like as all righteousness and saving health is

only "in the name of the Lord, so, under the color and cover of God's name, all idolatry and superstition come. Therefore the commandment fitly says: "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain."

CCCCLXXIX.

Gratian, the lawyer, who collected the decretals together, endeavoured with diligence to arrange them congruously, and to separate the good from the evil. The good man meant well, but the result was naught; for he proceeded thus; he rejected that which was good, to justify that which was evil, and thus undertaking the impossible, became amazed and affrighted.

CCCCLXXX.

The fasting of the friars is more easy to them than our eating to us. For one day of fasting there are three of feasting. Every friar for his supper has two quarts of beer, a quart of wine, and spice-cakes, or bread prepared with spice and salt, the better to relish their drink. Thus go on these poor fasting brethren; getting so pale and wan, they are like the fiery angels.

CCCCLXXXI.

If the emperor would merit immortal praise, he would utterly root out the order of the Capuchins, and, for an everlasting remembrance of their abominations, cause their books to remain in safe custody. 'Tis the worst and most poisonous sect. The Augustine and Bernardine friars are no way comparable with these confounded lice.

CCCCLXXXII.

Francis was an Italian, born in the city of Assisi, doubtless an honest and just man. He little thought that such superstition and unbelief would proceed out of his life. There have been so many of those grey friars, that they offered to send forty thousand of their number against the Turks, and yet leave their monasteries sufficiently provided for.

The Franciscan and grey friars came up under the Emperor Frederick II., at the time St Elizabeth was canonized, in the year 1207. Francis worked his game eighteen years; two years under the emperor Philip, four years under the emperor Otho, and twelve years under the emperor Frederick II. They feign, that after his death he appeared to the pope in a dream, held a cup in his hand, and filled the same with blood that ran out of his side. Is not this, think ye, a fine and proper piece of government, that began with dreams and with lies? The pope is not God's image, but his ape. He will be both God and emperor; as pope Innocent III., said: I will either take the crown from the Emperor Philip, or he shall take mine from me. Oh, such histories ought diligently to be written, to the end posterity may know upon what grounds popedom was erected and founded; namely, upon mere lies and fables. If I were younger, I would write a chronicle of the popes.

CCCCLXXXIII.

If the pope should seek to suppress the mendicant friars, he would find fine sport; he has made them fat, and cherished them in his bosom, and assigned them the greatest and most powerful princes for protectors. If he should attempt to abolish them, they would all combine and instigate the princes against him, for many kings and princes, and the emperor himself, have friars for confessors. The friars were the pope's columns, they carried him as the rats carry their king; I was our Lord God's quicksilver, which he threw into the fishpond; that is, which he cast among the friars.

A friar is evil every way, whether in the monastery or out of it. For as Aristotle gives an example touching fire, that burns whether it be in Ethiopia or in Germany, even so is it likewise with the friars. Nature is not changed by any circumstances of time or place.

CCCCLXXXIV.

In Italy was a particular order of friars, called *Fratres Inorantiae*, that is, Brethren of Ignorance, who took a solemn oath, that they would neither know, learn, nor understand anything at all, but answer all questions with *Nescio*. Truly, all friars are well worthy of this title, for they only read and babble out the words, but regard not their meaning. The pope and cardinals think: should these brethren study and be learned, they would master us. Therefore, *saccum per neccum*, that is, hang a bag about their necks, and send them a-begging through cities, towns, and countries.

CCCCLXXXV.

An honest matron here in Wittenberg, widow of the consul Horndorff, complained of the covetousness of the Capuchins, one of whom pressed her father, upon his death bed to bequeath something to their monastery, and got from him four hundred florins, for the use of the monastery, the friar constraining herself to make a vow, that she would mention the matter to no person. The man kept the money, which course he usually took, to the great hurt of all the children and orphans in that city. At last, by command of the magistrate, she told how the friar had acted. Many such examples have been, yet no creature dared complain. There was no end of the robbing, filching, and stealing of those insatiable, money-diseased wretches.

CCCCLXXXVI.

When I was in the monastery at Erfurt, a preaching friar and a bare-foot friar wandered together into the country to beg for the brethren and to gather alms. These two played upon each other in their sermons. The bare-foot friar, preaching first, said: "Loving country people, and good friends! take heed of that bird the swallow, for it is white within, but upon the back it is black; it is an evil bird, always chirping, but profitable for nothing; and when angered, is altogether mad," hereby describing the preaching friars, who wear on the outside black coats, and inside white linen. Now, in the afternoon, the preaching friar came into the pulpit, and played upon the bare-foot friar: "Indeed, loving friends, I neither may nor can well defend the swallow; but the grey sparrow is far a worse and more hurtful bird than the swallow; for it bites the kine, and when it fouls into people's eyes, makes them blind, as ye may see in the

book of Tobit. He robs, steals, and devours all he can get, as oats, barley, wheat, rye, apples, pears, peas, cherries, etc. Moreover, he is a lascivious bird: his greatest art is to cry: "Scrip, scrip," etc. The bare-foot friar might in better colors have painted the preaching friars, for they are proud buzzards, and right epicureans; while the bare-foot friars, under color of sanctity and humility, are more proud and haughty than kings or princes, and, most of all, have imagined and devised monstrous lies.

CCCCLXXXVII.

St Bernard was the best monk that ever was, whom I love beyond all the rest put together; yet he dared to say, it were a sign of damnation if a man quitted his monastery. He had under him three thousand monks, not one of whom was damned, if his opinions be true, *sed vix credo*. St Bernard lived in dangerous times, under the emperors Henry IV, and V., Conrad, and Lothaire. He was a learned and able monk, but he gave evil example. The friars, especially the Minorites and Franciscans, had easy days by their hypocrisy; they touched no money, yet they were vastly rich, and lived in luxury. The evil friars life began betimes, when people, under color of piety, abandoned temporal matters. The vocation and condition of a true Christian, such as God ordained and founded it, consists in three hierarchies - domestic, temporal, and church government.

CCCCLXXXVIII.

The state of celibacy is great hypocrisy and wickedness. Augustine, though he lived in a good and acceptable time, was deceived through the exaltation of nuns. And although he gave them leave to marry, yet he said they did wrong to marry, and sinned against God. Afterwards, when the time of wrath and blindness came, and the truth was hunted away, and lying got the upper hand, the generation of poor women was condemned, under the color of great holiness, but which, in truth, was mere hypocrisy. Christ with one sentence confutes all their arguments: God created them male and female.

CCCCLXXXIX.

The covetousness of the pope has exceeded all others, for the devil made choice of Rome as his peculiar habitation. The ancients said: Rome is a den of covetousness, a root of all wickedness. I have also read in a very old book, this verse following: -

"Versus Amor, mundi caput est, et bestia terrae."

That is, when the word Amor is turned and read backward, *Roma*, Rome, the head of the world, a beast that devours all lands. At Rome all is raked to their hands without preaching or church service, by superstition, idolatry, and selling their good works to the poor ignorant laity for money. St Peter describes such covetousness with express and clear words, when he says: "They have a heart exercised with covetous practices." I am persuaded a man cannot know the disease of covetousness, unless he know Rome; for the deceits and juggling in other parts are nothing in comparison with those at Rome.

CCCCXC.

The proverb says: Priests livings are catching livings; priests goods never prosper; and this we know to be true by experience, for such as have taken spiritual livings unto them are grown poor thereby and become beggars.

CCCCXCI.

Saint Augustine and others distinguish thus between heretics, schismatics, and bad Christians; A schismatic is one that raises divisions and dissensions, professing the true faith of the Christian church, but not at union with her as to certain ceremonies and customs; an evil Christian is he that agrees with the church both in doctrine of faith and ceremonies, but therewithal leads an evil life, and is of wicked conversation. But an heretic is one that introduces false opinions and doctrines against the articles of the Christian faith, contrary to the true meaning of Holy Scripture, and stubbornly maintains and defends them. The papists do not call me a heretic, but a schismatic; one that prepares discords and strives. But I say, the pope is an arch heretic, for he is an adversary to my blessed Saviour Christ; and so am I to the pope, because he makes new laws and ordinances according to his own will and pleasure, and so directly denies the everlasting priesthood of Christ.

Let us but mark the two points in his decrees, where, with exceeding pompous majesty, he exalts himself above the Holy Scriptures. He is content to leave the expounding thereof to the Fathers, but the decision of their truth he reserves for the chair of Rome. Therefore he discharges against me his lightnings and thunderings, yea, also against his own decrees; for the pope himself says: Justice must give place and yield to the truth. For that purpose he produces the example of king Hezekiah, who brake in pieces the brazen serpent, which God had commanded to be erected. But the pope deals quite contrary to his own laws and decrees; for now he will have that truth must and shall give place to his innumerable and apparent errors. And indeed it is a grievous case, that youth have not seen such errors, or comprehended them; they thing that the gospel has always been the same as now it is. If we had held God's Word in due honour and reverence, then such abominable errors and idolatries would never have risen or crept in among us.

CCCCXCII.

Through concord small things and wealth increase, as the heathen said; but dissension is dangerous and hurtful, especially in schools, professions, high arts, and their professors, wherein the one ought to reach the hand to the other, kissing and embracing. But when we bite one another, then let us take heed lest we be swallowed up together. Therefore let us pray and strive; for the word of faith, and the prayers of the just, are the most powerful weapons; moreover, God himself sends his holy angels around them that fear him. We ought valiantly to fight, for we are under a Lord of hosts, and a prince of war; therefore with one hand we must build, and in the other hand take the sword - that is, we must both teach and resist.

It is now time to watch, for we are the mark they shoot at; our adversaries intend to make a confederacy with the Turk; they aim at us, but we must venture it, for antichrist will war and get the victory against the saints of God. We stand outwardly in the greatest danger, by reason of treachery and treason; the papists endeavour with money to corrupt our captains and officers. An ass laden with money may do anything, as Tacitus writes of us Germans; they have been taught to take money; there is neither fidelity nor truth on earth.

CCCCXCIII.

The papists have a fair and glittering external worship; they boast much of God's Word, of faith, of Christ, of the sacraments, of love, of hope, etc., but they utterly deny the power and virtue of all these; nay, teach that which is quite contrary thereunto. Therefore St Paul very well says: "They deny the power of godliness." He does not say they deny godliness, but they deny the power, strength, and virtue thereof, by false and superstitious doctrine.

CCCCXCIV.

Luther, coming from Rome, showed the prince elector of Saxony a picture he had brought with him, whereon was painted how the pope had foiled the whole world with his superstitions and idolatries. There was the little ship of the church, as they term it, almost filled with friars, monks, and priests, casting lines out of the ship to those that were in the sea; the pope, with the cardinals and bishops, sat behind, in the end of the ship, overshadowed and covered by the Holy Ghost, who was looking up towards heaven, and through whom those swimming in the sea, in great danger of their lives, were hoisted up into the ship and saved.

These and like fooleries we then believed as articles of faith. The papists - blind people - by pretending that they go through much tribulation in this world; whereas they wallow in all the glory, pleasures, and delights of the earth. But let them be assured, that ere many years the power of their abominable blasphemies, idolatries, and damnable religion, will be broken, if not destroyed.

And on the contrary, we, who for the sake of confessing God's holy Word in truth, are terrified, banished, imprisoned, and slain here on earth by that man of sin, and God's enemy, the antichrist-pope of Rome, at the last day, with unspeakable comfort, shall take possession of the fruits of our assured hopes - namely, everlasting consolation, joy, and salvation.

CCCCXCV.

The pope places his cardinals in all kingdoms - peevish milk-sops, effeminate and unlearned blockheads, who lie lolling in king's courts, among the ladies and women. The pope has invaded all countries with these and his bishops. German is taken captive by popish bishops, for I can count above forty bishopries, besides abbeys and cathedrals, which are richer than the bishopries. Now, there are in Germany but eight and twenty principalities, so that the popish bishops are far more rich and powerful than the princes of the empire.

CCCCXXVI.

The devil begat darkness; darkness begat ignorance; ignorance begat error and his brethren; error begat free-will and presumption; free-will begat merit; merit begat forgetfulness of God; forgetfulness begat transgression; transgression begat superstition; superstition begat satisfaction; satisfaction begat the mass-offering; the mass-offering begat the priest; the priest begat unbelief; unbelief begat king hypocrisy; hypocrisy begat traffic in offerings for gain; traffic in offerings for gain begat purgatory; purgatory begat the annual solemn vigils; the annual vigils begat church-livings, church-livings begat avarice; avarice begat swelling superfluity; swelling superfluity begat fullness; fullness begat rage; rage begat license; license begat empire and domination; domination begat pomp; pomp begat ambition; ambition begat simony; simony begat the pope and his brethren, about the time of the Babylonish captivity.

After the Babylonish captivity, the pope begat the mystery of iniquity; the mystery of iniquity bagat sophisticated theology; sophisticated theology begat rejecting of the Holy Scripture; rejecting of the Holy Scripture begat tyranny; tyranny begat slaughtering of the saints; slaughtering of the saints begat condemning of God; condemning of God begat dispensation; dispensation begat wilful sin; wilful sin begat abomination; abomination begat desolation; desolation begat doubt; doubt begat searching out the grounds of truth, and out of this, the desolator, pope, or antichrist, is revealed.

St Paul complained and said: "The time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine;" and elsewhere: "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come: for men shall be lovers of themselves," etc.

When first I read these sentences, I did not look towards Rome, but thought they had been spoken of the Jews and Turks.

CCCCXCVII.

In the Old Testament, the year Jubilee was observed every fiftieth year; the pope imitated this with the golden gate; which brought gain and money to the popes; so they afterwards changed the fiftieth year into the five and twentieth, then to the fifteenth, and then to the seventh year, so they might frequently get money.

CCCCXCVIII.

If I had not been a doctor, Satan had made me work enough to do. It was no slight and easy matter for one to alter the whole religion of popedom, so deeply rooted. But I promised and swore in baptism, that I would hold by Christ, and his Word, that I would steadfastly believe in him, and utterly renounce the devil and all his lies. And, indeed, the oath I took in baptism is renewed in all my tribulations; without this I could not have subsisted or resisted my troubles, but they had overwhelmed and made an end of me. I would willingly have shown obedience to the pope and bishops in any reasonable particular; but they would have, short and round, that I should deny Christ, and make God a liar, and say: the Gospel is heresy.

CCCCXCVIII.

In the New Testament, and in the Christian church, God's worship consists in the plain simple truth; no superstitions or worshipping of idols are there to be found; hence St John, in his Epistle, writes: There are three that bear witness in earth: 1. The spirit; that is, the function of preaching. 2. Water; that is, baptism. 3. Blood; that is, the supper of the Lord. But the pope and his seducing spirits condemn these witnesses, and have invented innumerable worshippings, ceremonies, and offerings; and instituted them of their own election without God's Words, so that through errors the church is excluded from her bridegroom's ordinances.

D.

Ceremonies are only middle things, instituted for the end of policy; namely to observe rules, and that everything in the church may proceed decently and in order, as the law of nature also teaches, and as we behold in the creating of all creatures.

DI.

It is of the devil himself that the papists hold the final cause of instituting human traditions to be, that thereby God is truly worshipped and served, and that, therefore, they are necessary to salvation. Its most monstrous; for though such human traditions were the best and most esteemed works of Christianity, which they are not, yet to say they are necessary to salvation, or give God satisfaction for our sins, and so purchase grace, spoils all, and makes the best of works to be utterly rejected of God.

The like superstition and abomination lay in those works which they call *opera supererogationis*, that is, works which they had in overplus, and more then they, the friars, priests, and nuns themselves had need of, so sold them to the laity.

DII.

If we could but preserve the catechism, and set up schools for posterity, we had lived well; as for ceremonies, they might go whither they would, for they are the touch-powder, giving occasion to superstition; people thinking they are necessary to salvation and that their being omitted is sin.

DIII.

The popish fasting is right murder, whereby many people have been destroyed, observing the fasts strictly, and, chiefly, by eating one sort of food, so that nature's strength thereby is wholly weakened.

For this cause Gerson was constrained at Paris to write a book of "Comfort for troubled and perplexed Consciences," to the end they might neither be discouraged nor despair. For those that fast, spoil themselves and weaken their strength. Such darkness has been in popedom,

where they neither taught, nor intended to teach, the Ten Commandments, the creed, and the Lord's Prayer.

DIV.

There are two sorts of holiness, substantial and accidental; St Francis was once substantially holy by his faith in Jesus Christ, but afterwards he became infatuated with the accidental holiness of the hood, an accessory wholly foreign to holiness. Ah, God! `tis not the putting on this or that article of dress, that will give us a pass to heaven.

DV.

Luther received tidings from Denmark, that the king and the duke of Holstein had ordered a fast, to be observed three days, - as an admonition to the people to prayer and peace; whereupon he said: it is a very upright and good course; I wish all other kings and princes did the like; its the most external humiliation, and when we add thereunto the inward humility of the heart, its exceeding good.

DVI.

Popedom stands upon the mass two manner of ways; first, spiritually, holding that the mass is a worshipping of God; secondly, corporally, being maintained and preserved, not by divine power, but by human and temporal princes.

The mass is the papist's rock, both spiritually and carnally; and now it is fallen in the spirit, and in due time God will also destroy it in the flesh.

DVII.

The private mass, since the time of Gregory, now above eight hundred years, has deceived many saints. John Huss was taken captive by that deceitful painted stuff. I much wonder how God drew me out of this idolatry. Three years since there was here a man who certified me that in Asia no private mass was celebrated. I am assured that in Armenia, Ethiopia, India, and in the countries towards the east, there are many Christians to this day, who never heard mass.

The mass in France was not so highly esteemed as it has been in Germany; for when in the morning one had heard mass, he cared for no more, how many-soever were held, but passed by them without showing any particular regard. When the French king heard mass, he always gave a French crown to the priest, which he laid upon a book that was brought and held before him.

DVIII.

The canon of the mass is pieced and patched up out of many lies. The Greeks have it not. When I was in Italy, I saw that they at Milan had no such canon, and when I offered to celebrate mass there, they said to me: *Nos sumus Ambrosiani*. They told me that in former

times they had been at debate among themselves, whether they should receive into their church the book of Ambrose, or that of Gregory, and to that end prayed God by some miracle to decide for them. At night they laid both the books in the church; in the morning found the book of Ambrose, altogether whole and unmoved, upon the high altar, but the book of Gregory was torn all in pieces, scattered up and down the church. The same they construed thus: Ambrose should remain at Milan upon the altar, Gregory be scattered through the whole world.

DIX.

The ornaments and gay apparel used in popedom, in celebrating mass, and other ceremonies, were partly taken out from Moses, and partly from the heathen. For as the priests saw that the public shows and plays, held in the market places, drew away the people, who took delight therein, they were moved to institute shows and plays in the churches, so as to draw children and unlearned people to church. Such are the toys they exhibit on Easter-eve, very pleasing and acceptable, not for devotion's sake, but to delight the foolish fancy.

DX.

When I was a young friar at Erfurt, and had to go out into the villages for pudding and cheeses, I once came to a little town where I held mass. Now, when I had put on my vestments and trimmings, and approached the altar, the clerk or sexton of the church began merrily to strike upon the lute the *Kirieleison*, whereat I, who scarcely could forbear laughing, was constrained to direct and tune my *Gloria in excelsis* according to his *Kirieleison*.

DXI.

The Jews held their offerings *es opere operata*; when a work was accomplished only externally, they thought that thereby sins were reconciled and satisfied, whereas all their offerings and sacrifices ought to have been signs of thanksgiving.

Even so it is likewise with the papists error of the mass, whereby the mass-priest, an unlearned ass, affects to give full satisfaction for sins.

DXII.

The mass ought to be abolished, chiefly for two reasons: First, because natural understanding judges that it is a dishonest kind of trading and gain to celebrate mass for two-pence, or to sell it for three-half-pence. Secondly, because, according to the spirit, it is judged to be an abominable idolatry, making Christ to have died in vain, seeing they pretend thereby to make full satisfaction for sins with mere work. These two abuses are altogether inexcusable, yet all universities have conspired and vowed to maintain the mass. We can never agree with the papists as to this point. For if they should suffer the mass to be abolished, they must make full restitution of that which, with their lies and deceit, they have got and stolen from emperors, kings, princes, nobility, and other people.

DXIII.

Many Italians are well inclined to the Protestant religion, and would have been well satisfied therewith had I not touched the mass, to reject which they held to be an abominable heresy. They depend thereon so surely, that they think he who has heard mass is free from all danger, and cannot sin, whatsoever he take in hand, and that no evil can befall him; hence it comes to pass, that after hearing mass, many sins and murders are committed. When I was at Rome, there was one who had sought his enemy two whole years, to be revenged upon him, but had not been able to find him out; at last, he spied him in the church where he himself had heard mass, having just risen from before the altar; he forthwith stepped to him, stabbed him to death, and fled. My book on the abolition of the mass is written with much vehemence against the blasphemers, but it is not for those who are not entering upon the true path, who have just become born to the new life; nor should these be offended thereat; if, twenty years ago, any one had presumed to take from me the mass, he must have tugged hard, before he got it from me; for my heart hung thereon, and I adored it; now, God be praised, I am of another mind, and am fully assured, that the foundation and ground of the mass, and of popedom, is nothing but imposture, extortion, and idolatry.

DXIV.

Missa, the mass, comes of the Hebrew word *Maosim*, that is, a collecting of alms, a stipend, or a tax for the sake of priests, or other people. The mass has devoured infinite sums of money.

[HOME](#)

[TABLE TALK INDEX](#)