

A Dialogue betweene Fryer John Brusferd, and Mayster Thomas Bilney, in Ipswich, concerning worshipping of Images.

Brusferd.

A Dialogue betweene Bilney and Fryer Brusferd.

Although you haue blaſphemed moſt pernitiouſly the immaculate ſtocke of Chriſt, with certayne blaſphemies of yours: yet being moued partly with your gentle peticions, partly pitying your caſe & towardly diſpoſitiō, I am come hither to talke with you ſecretly, before the rumor be diſcloſed, vpon the conſideration of the threeſolde errors which I ſee in you.

Fiſt for that, when you began to ſhoot the dart of your peſiferous error more vehemently then you ought, agaynſt the breaſt of the ignorant multitude, you ſeeme to poure vpon the ground, the precious blood of Chriſt, as with a certein vehement violence out of the miſerable beſſel of your hart. whereas you ſayd, that none of the ſayntes do make interceſſion for vs, nor obtaine for vs any thing, you haue peſiferouſly blaſphemed the efficacy of the whole church, collected with the precious blood of Chriſt, which thing you are not able to deny, eſpecially ſeing y ſame ſo inceſſantly doth knocke at the gates of heaue, through the continuall interceſſion of the ſayntes, according as in the ſeuenteſolde Letary manifeſtly appeareth to be ſcene.

Bilney. I maruell at you, and doubtles cannot marnell enough, but that the ſtrong & bayn cuſtome of ſuperſtitious men, thinking themſelues not to be heard but in much babling, doth put an end of my admiration. For our heavenly father knoweth what we haue need of before we aſke. Alſo it is writtē: There is one mediator of God and men, the man Chriſt Ieſus. If then there be but one mediator of God and men, the man Chriſt Ieſus, where is our bleſſed Ladye? where is then S. Peter and other ſaintes?

Brusferd. I ſuppoſe that no man is ignorant, but that the diuines of y primitive church haue all affirmed to be one mediator betweene God and man. Neither could any at that time praye or pray to the ſayntes, where as yet they liuing in the calamities of this body, and waſtling with the contrary windes of this world, were not yet come to the port of reſt wherunto they were traueiling. Paul (I graunt) did rightly affirme to be but one mediator of God & men, what time as yet there was no ſaint canonized or put into y kalender. But now ſeing the church doth knowe, & doth certeinly beleue, through y vndoubted reuelations of God, that y bleſſed virgin & other ſaintes are placed in the boſome of Abraham, ſhe therfore like a good mother hath taught, and that moſt diligently, vs her childzen, to praye the omnipotent Ieſus in his ſayntes: & alſo to offer vp by the ſame ſayntes, our petitioes vnto God. Whereof it is that the ſhal. ſayth: Prayſe ye the Lord in his ſayntes. Rightly alſo do we ſay and affirme, that ſayntes may pray for vs. One man may pray for another. Ergo, much more may ſayntes that do enioy the fruit of his high maiesty. For ſo it is writtē: God is my wiues whome I ſerue in my ſpirit, in the Goſpell of his ſonne, that without ceaſing I remember you in my praier alwaies for you. &c. Bilney. I maruell doubtleſſe, that you a man learned are not yet deliuered out of the conſule dungeon of hereſie, through the helpe of the holy Goſpell: eſpecially ſeing y in the ſame Goſpell it is writtē: Verely, verely, I ſay vnto you, what ſo euer you aſke the father in my name, he will geue it vnto you. He ſayth not, whatſoener ye aſke the Father in the name of S. Peter, S. Paul, or other ſayntes, but in my name. Let vs, aſke therfore helpe in the name of him, which is able to obtaine for vs of his father, whatſoener we aſke, leaſt peraduenture hereafter in the end of the world, at the ſtrayt iudgement we ſhall heare: Hitherto in my name ye haue aſked nothing.

Brusferd. Where ye maruell (with what minde, I can not tel) that I being a learned man (as you ſay) am not deliuered yet fro the conſule dungeon of hereſie, through the helpe of the goſpell: much more do you that are far better learned then I, cauſe me to maruel at your ſo liſh admiratiō. Neither can I chule but laugh at you, as one being rayt to the third heauen of ſuch high miſteries, and yet ſee not thoſe things which be done here in the lower partes of terrene philoſophy, for what a ridiculous thing is it, for a man to looke ſo long vpon the Sunne, that he can ſee nothing els but the Sunne, nor canne not tell whyther to turne him? Moreover, what ſtudent is there in all Lambrydge, he neuer ſo young, that knoweth not, that the argument of authority brought out nagatiuely, hath no force?

Bilney. So as the ſharifis toke Chriſt, you take my wordes much otherwiſe then I meant.

Brusferd. Your words which wander farre from the ſcope of Scripture, I doe not like. What is in your meaning, and lyceth inwardly in your minde, I can not tell.

Bilney. Such as inuocate the helpe either of Chriſt, or of any other ſaynt, for any copozal infirmitie, to be deliuered fro the ſame, may be well reſcribed to delicate paciēts, who being vnder the hand of phyſitiōs, & hauing medicines miniſtered agaynſt theſe diſeaſes: not abiding the pain thereof, rap all a ſuder: wherefore I ſay, no man ought to implore y helpe of God or of any ſaynt, for copozal infirmitie.

Brusferd. Moſte peccious & perilous hereby of all that euer I heard. Thus you fleeing the ſmoke, ſal into the fire, & auoiding the danger of Scylla, you run vpon Caribdis. What of man wrapped in palpable darcknes, I wiſh S. Bilney, that you would but once ſearch & ſet out the myſte origine of theſe rogariōs dayes: For ſo we read in y church ſtozy, that they were firſt ordeyned by pope Gregory, with faſting, prayers, & holy proceſſions agaynſt the peſtilence, by the infection of the ayre theſe raigning among the people. At what time y people the going in y proceſſion, a certein ymage like to our bleſſed Lady, painted in the handes of S. Luke y Euangeliſt, did go before the, about y which image, in y honor of the virgin, angels did ſing this Antheme: Regina cœli letare. &c. O Queene of heaue be glad. To the which Antheme the pope alſo adioyned this: Ora pro nobis domini. &c. Pray to the Lord for vs. wherefore ſeing the angels did worſhip the image of the glorious virgin Mary, in the honor of her: & ſeing moreover y holy father pope Gregory, with al y clergy, did pray for copozal infirmitie, it appeareth manifeſtly that we ought to worſhip y ſaintes, & alſo to geue honor in a maner to theſe ymages: further alſo to pray to almighty God & al ſaintes, for copozal infirmitie, that we may be deliuered from the ſame, ſo that they may ſay the like for vs, which is ſaid in the Goſpell: Sende them away, becauſe they cry after vs. And although there be infinite places inſuperable to be alleaged out of the holy ſcripture, wherewith we might eaſily reſiſt this your error: yet ſtanding herewith content, as ſufficient at this preſent, we will procede now to your ſecond peſiferous error, wher in you, like an ingrate, chide go about to teare out y bowels of your mother. For in y you ſay & affirme blaſphemouſly the biſh, of Rome to be the very Antichriſt, & that his pyndiges haue no force againſt the gates of he: in ſo ſaying, what do you but like a moſt unkinde and unnatural child, ſpoile your louing mother of all her treaſures, & would her being ſpoiled, & being wounded, plucke out her bowels moſt miſerably vpon y earth. But ſo long as there is nothing ſo abſurd or ſo heretical but ſhalbe receiued of ſome itching eares: I would therfore now hear you declare, how he ſiteth in the ſeple of god, as god, being exalted & worſhipped aboute all y is named god, or how that he ſheweth himſelfe as Lord in power and ſignes, and wonders deceitfull.

Bilney. Although incredulitye doth not ſuffer you, notwithstanding your learning, to vnderſtand theſe things, yet I will goe about ſomething to helpe your incredulitye herein, through the helpe of the Lozde, beſeeching you, y ſetting all ſuperſtition aparte, you will vnderſtande thoſe things that are about. Do ye know the table of the tenne Commandementes?

Brusferd. According as the Catholique Doctours do expound them, I know them meanly. But how you do expound them, I cannot tell.

Bilney. And doe you knowe alſo the conſtitutions of men, which are deniſed ouly by the dreames of men, wherunto men are ſo ſtraightly bound, that vnder paine of death they are compelled to obſerue them?

Brusferd. I knowe certein ſanctions of the holy fathers, but ſuch as you ſpeake of to be deniſed by mens dreames, I knowe none.

Bilney. Now then let vs ſet and compare theſe two together, & ſo ſhall you eaſily vnderſtand the Biſhop of Rome whom they call the Pope, to ſitte in the temple of God, as God, and to be extolled aboute all that is named God. It is writtē. The temple of the Lorde is holy, which is you. Wherefore the conſcience of man is the temple of the holy Hoſt: in which temple I will vpon the Pope to ſit as God, and to be exalted aboute all that is called God. For who ſo contemneſh the decalogue or the table of the commandementes of God, there is but a ſmall punyſhment for him, neither is that punyſhment to death: but contrarywiſe he that ſhall contemne or violate the conſtitutions which you call the ſanctions of men, is couſed by all mens iudgement gilty of death. What is this, but y high biſhop of Rome to ſit & to raigne in the temple of God, that is, in mans conſcience, as God?

Brusferd. Although this expoſition ſeemeth unworthy for chriſtē eares, yet I would heare you further how he ſheweth himſelfe in ſignes and wonders deceitfull.

Bilney. Theſe wonders (whiche they call miracles) be wrought daily in the Church, not by the power of God, as many

Praying for taking away temporal infirmities.

* He meaneth abſolutely, with out condition. Scylla and Charibdis, be two dangerous rocks in the ſea. By this church ſtorie, he meaneth by like, Legenda aurea, other wiſe called the legende of Ihes. The Popes Letanic at Rome.

Scripture well applyed.

Whether the Pope be Antichriſt.

A great blaſphemy among the Fryers to ſet vp Chriſt onely to be our mediator.

One mediator, and no moe.

The Popes Calender maketh moe Mediators now, then were in the Primitive Church.

Note this argument, we muſt prayſe God in his ſaintes, Er- go, we muſt pray to ſaintes. Rom. 1.

John 16.

In nomine meo.

Argumentum ad autoritate deſtructive.

2. Theſſal. 2.

1. Cor. 3.

The place of S. Paule expounded concerning Antichriſt, ſitting in the temple of God, &c.

Signes and myrales wrought t illusion.