

A CONFERENCE, &c.

A CONFERENCE

BETWEEN

NICHOLAS RIDLEY,

SOMETIME BISHOP OF LONDON,

AND

SECRETARY BOURN,

WITH OTHERS,

AT THE

LIEUTENANT'S TABLE IN THE TOWER.

It was declared a little before, how Doctor Ridley was had from Fremingham to the Tower; where, being in du-rance, and invited to the Lieutenant's table, he had certain talk or conference with Secretary Bourn, Mr Fecknam, and other, concerning the controversies in religion: the sum whereof, as it was penned with his own hand, hereafter ensueth.—Fox.

Master Thomas of Bridges said at his brother Master Lieutenant's board, "I pray you, Master Doctors, for my learning, tell me what an heretic is?" Mr Secretary Bourn said, "I will tell you who is an heretic: whoso stubbornly and stiffly maintaineth an untruth, he is an heretic." "Ye mean, Sir," said I, "an untruth in matters of religion and concerning our faith." "Yea, that is true," said he: and in this we were soon agreed. Then said Master Fecknam, sitting at the upper end of the table, whom they called Mr Dean of Paul's, "I will tell you by St Augustine who is an heretic: *Qui adulandi principibus vel lucri gratia falsas opi-niones gignit vel sequitur, hæreticus est*, saith St Augustine¹." And then he Englished the same. "Sir," said I, "I ween St Augustine addeth the third member, which is *vel vanæ gloriæ causa*." "Ye say even true, Mr Doctor," said he; and thus far we did agree all three².

Sir Thomas
Abridges.

Who is an
heretic.

An heretic
defined by
Saint Au-
gustine.

Mr Fecknam began again to say, "Whoso doth not believe that the Scripture affirmeth, but will obstinately maintain

Fecknam
provoking
Master Rid-
ley.

[¹ He who for the sake of flattering princes, or of gain, invents or follows false opinions is an heretic. Ed.]

[² Or for the cause of vain glory. Vide S. Aug. de utilitate credendi, cap. 1, Op. Ed. Ben. Par. 1685, tom. viii. col. 45. The words are: Hæreticus est, ut mea fert opinio, qui alicujus temporalis commodi, et maxime gloriæ principatûsque sui gratiâ, falsas ac novas opiniones vel fingit vel sequitur. Ed.]

the contrary, he is *hæreticus*. As in the sacrament of the altar, Matthew doth affirm there to be Christ's body, Mark doth affirm it, Luke affirmeth it, Paul affirmeth it, and none denieth it: therefore to hold the contrary is heresy. It is the same body and flesh that was born of the virgin: and this is confirmed by unity, antiquity, and universality. For none before Berengarius did ever doubt of this; and he was an heretic, as Mr Doctor there knoweth full well: I do testify¹ his own conscience," said he.

Unity, antiquity, universality.

"Marry, Sir," said Master Secretary, "Master Fecknam hath spoken well. These be great matters: unity, antiquity, and universality. Do ye not think so, Master Doctor?" said he to me.

Here while I strained courtesy, and pretended as nothing to talk, said one of the commissioners: "Peradventure Master Ridley doth agree with Mr Fecknam, and then there needs not much debating of the matter."

"Sir," said I, "in some things I do and shall agree with him; and in some things which he hath spoken, to be plain, I do not agree with him at all.—Masters," said I, "ye be (as I understand) the Queen's commissioners here, and if ye have commission to examine me in these matters, I shall declare unto you plainly my faith; if ye have not, then I shall pray you either give me leave to speak my mind freely, or else to hold my peace."

"There is none here," said Mr Secretary, "that doth not favour you."—And then every man shewed what favour they bare towards me, and how glad they would be of an agreement.

But as I strained to have licence of them in plain words to speak my mind, so methought they granted me it, but *vix* or *cægrè*. Well, at the last I was contented to take it for licensed, and so began to talk.

Bishop Ridley answering to Fecknam.

Truth in Scripture goeth not by number of affirmations, where one is sufficient.

To Mr Fecknam's arguments of the manifold affirmation where no denial was, I answered, Where is a multitude of affirmations in Scripture, and where is one affirmation, all is one concerning the truth of the matter: for that any of the Evangelists spake inspired by the Holy Ghost, was as true as that which was spoken of them all. It is as true that

[¹ Testify, i. e. take to witness. Ed.]

John saith of Christ, *Ego sum ostium ovium*, I am the door of the sheep, as if all had said it. For it is not in Scripture as in witness of men, where the number is credited more than one, because it is uncertain of whose spirit he doth speak. And where Mr Fecknam spake of so many, affirming without any negation, &c., "Sir," said I, "all they do affirm the thing which they meant. Now, if ye take their words, and leave their meaning, then do they affirm what ye take, but not what they meant. Sir," said I, "if in talk with you I should so utter my mind in words, that ye by the same do and may plainly perceive my meaning, and could, if ye would be captious, cavil at my words, and writhe them to another sense, I would think ye were no gentle companion to talk with; except ye would take my words as ye did perceive that I did mean."

Words in Scripture must be taken with their meaning.

"Marry," quoth Mr Secretary, "we should else do you plain injury and wrong."

Mr Fecknam perceiving whereunto my talk went, "Why," quoth he, "what circumstances can ye shew me that should move you to think of any other sense, than as the words plainly say, *Hoc est corpus meum, quod pro vobis tradetur?* This is my body which shall be betrayed for you."

Luke xxii. *Hoc est corpus meum* expounded.

"Sir," said I, "even the next sentence that followeth; *Hoc facite in meam commemorationem*, Do this in my remembrance. And also by what reason ye say the bread is turned into Christ's carnal body; by the same I may say, that it is turned into his mystical body. For as that saith of it, *Hoc est corpus meum quod pro vobis tradetur*; so Paul which spake by Christ's spirit saith, *Unus panis et unum corpus multi sumus omnes, qui de uno pane participamus*. We being many are all but one bread, and one body, in as much as we are partakers of one bread."

Reasons why these words ought to be taken not literally.

1 Cor. x.

"Here he calleth one bread, one loaf," said Mr Secretary.

"Yea," said I, "one loaf, one bread, all is one with me."

"But what say ye," quoth Master Secretary, "of the universality, antiquity, and unity, that Master Fecknam did speak of?"

"I ensure you," said I, "I think them matters weighty, and to be considered well. As for unity, the truth is, before

Unity with verity to be allowed.

Eph. iv.
Antiquity.

God, I do believe it and embrace it, so it be with verity, and joined to our head Christ, and such one as Paul speaketh of, saying, *Una fides, unus Deus, unum baptisma*, One faith, one God, one baptism. And for antiquity, I am also persuaded to be true that Irenæus saith, *Quod primum verum*¹, That is first is true. In our religion Christ's faith was first truly taught by Christ himself, by his Apostles, and by many good men that from the beginning did succeed next unto them: and for this controversy of the sacrament, I am persuaded that those old writers, which wrote before the controversy and the usurping of the see of Rome, do all agree, if they be well understood, in this truth."

"I am glad to hear," said Master Secretary, "that ye do so well esteem the doctors of the church."

Universality
hath a
double un-
derstand-
ing.

"Now as for universality, it may have two meanings: one, to understand that to be universal which from the beginning in all ages hath been allowed; another, to understand universality for the multitude of our age, or of any other singular age."

"No, no," saith Master Secretary, "these three do always agree; and where there is one, there is all the rest." And here he and I changed many words. And finally, to be short, in this matter we did not agree.

"There was none," quoth Master Fecknam, "before Berengarius, Wickliffe, and Hus, and now in our days Carolostadius and Æcolampadius. And Carolostadius saith, Christ pointeth to his own body, and not to the sacrament, and said, *Hoc est corpus meum*. And Melanethon writeth to one Miconius, (Miconius, said I,) these are like words: *Nullam satis gravem rationem invenire possum, propter quam à fide majorum in hac materia dissentiam*². I can find no grounded reason to cause me to dissent from the belief of our fore-elders."

Melanethon
ad Mico-
nium.

The doctrine
of the Sacra-
ment not
new.

Thus when he had spoken at length with many other words more, "Sir," said I, "it is certain that other before these have written of this matter; not by the way only, and

[¹ See notes to the Conferences with Latimer. The words referred to are those of Tertullian, not of Irenæus. Ed.]

[² Mel. Ep. ad Mycon. apud Æcolampadium, de Euchar. Ed. 1530, p. 58. Ed.]

obiter, as do for the most of all the old writers, but even *ex professo*, and their whole books entreat of it alone, as Bertram."

"Bertram," said the Secretary, "what man was he? and who was he³, and how do ye know?" &c. with many questions.

"Sir," quoth I, "I have read his book. He propoundeth the same which is now in controversy, and answereth so directly that no man may doubt but that he affirmeth, that the substance of bread remaineth still in the sacrament; and he wrote unto Carolus Magnus."

"Marry," quoth he, "mark, for there is a matter. He wrote," quoth he, "*ad Henricum*⁴, and not *ad Carolum*, for no author maketh any such mention of Bertramus."

"Yes," quoth I, "*Trithemius in catalogo illustrium Scriptorum* speaketh of him. Trithemius was but of late time: but he speaketh," quoth I, "of them that were of antiquity." Here after much talk of Bertram; "What authors have ye," quoth Mr Secretary, "to make of the Sacrament a figure?"

[³ "Who was he?" etc. The celebrated work of Bertramus, or Ratramnus, *de Corpore et Sanguine Domini*, is here alluded to. An English translation by William Hugh had shortly before this time, viz. in 1548, been printed, under the title of "A book of Bertram the Priest." It is supposed that Ridley met with it in the year 1545 or 1546. Dr Gloucester Ridley says: "Few books have drawn after them such salutary consequences as this has done. This first opened Ridley's eyes, and determined him more accurately to search the Scriptures in this article, and the doctrine of the primitive fathers, who lived before the time of this controversy betwixt Bertram and Paschasius." Ed.]

[⁴ "*Ad Henricum*." "That is," says Dr Wordsworth, "to Henry the Eighth: meaning to insinuate that this book of Bertram's, which bore too strongly against the Romish corruptions in the doctrine of the Eucharist, to admit easily of any fair and direct answer, was a modern forgery of the Protestants of late time." The work of John of Trithemius was finished A.D. 1494, and first published at Basil. Ridley was under a mistake as to the precise date of the work in question; it was addressed not to Charlemagne, but to Charles the Bald: it was besides not the "*Catalogus illustrium virorum*," but the "*Catalogus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum*," to which he refers; that work states of Bertram, "*ad Carolum regem, fratrem Lotharii imperatoris, scripsit commendabile opus*." Ed.]

Doctors that
make the
Sacrament
but a figure.
Tertullianus,
Gelasius,
Origen.

“Sir,” quoth I, “ye know (I think) that Tertullian in plain words speaketh thus: *Hoc est corpus meum, id est, figura corporis mei*; This is my body, that is to say, a figure of my body. And Gelasius saith plainly, that *substantia panis manet*; the substance of bread remaineth. And Origen saith likewise; *Quod sanctificatur secundum materiam, ingreditur stomachum et vadit in secessem*; That which is sanctified, as touching the matter or substance, passeth away in the draught¹.” This when I had Englished, Mr Secretary said to me, “You know very well as any man,” &c.; and here, if I would, I might have been set in a foolish Paradise of his commendation of my learning, and *quod essem vir multæ lectionis*, a man of much reading. But this I would not take at his hand. He set me not up so high, but I brought myself as low again: and here was much ado.

“As for Melancthon,” quoth I, “whom Mr Fecknam spake of, I marvel that ye will allege him; for we are more nigh an agreement here in England, than the opinion of Melancthon to you: for in this point we all agree here, that there is in the sacrament but one material substance; and Melancthon, as I ween, saith there are two.”

“Ye say truth,” quoth Mr Secretary: “Melancthon’s opinion is so. But I pray you, ye have read that the sacrament was in old time so revered, that many were then forbidden to be present at the ministration thereof, *catechumeni*,” quoth he, “and many more.”

“Truth, Sir,” quoth I, “there were some called *audientes*, some *pœnitentes*, some *catechumeni*, and some *energumeni*, which were commanded to depart.”

“Now,” quoth he, “and how can ye then make but a figure or a sign of the sacrament, as that book which is set forth in my Lord of Canterbury’s name²? I wis, ye can tell

[¹ Tertul. cont. Marcion. lib. iv. cap. 40. Gelasius de duab. nat. in Christo. Bibl. Pat. Paris, 1575, vol. v. p. 475. Orig. in Matth. Op. Ed. Par. 1745, Hom. xi. vol. iii. p. 499. For these references to the Fathers see The Brief Declaration. Ed.]

[² “Lord of Canterbury’s name.” Fox, in the margin, calls this ‘the book of Catechism,’ by which he probably meant either the Catechism commonly called the Catechism of King Edward, or the “Short Instruction unto Christian Religion:” or possibly that of Justus Jonas, translated under Cranmer’s authority, and often referred to as his.

who made it: did not ye make it?” And here was much murmuring of the rest, as though they would have given me the glory of the writing of that book; which yet was said of some there, to contain most heinous heresy that ever was.

“Master Secretary,” quoth I, “that book was made of a great learned man, and him which is able to do the like again: as for me, I ensure you (be not deceived in me) I was never able to do or write any such like thing. He passeth me no less, than the learned master his young scholar.”

Now, here every man would have his saying, which I pass over as not much material for to tell. “But, Sir,” quoth I, “methinks it is not charitably done, to bear the people in hand that any man doth so lightly esteem the sacrament, as to make of it but a figure. For that maketh it (but) a bare figure without any more profit; which that book doth often deny, as appeareth to the reader most plainly.”

“Yes,” quoth he, “that they do.”

“Sir, no,” quoth I, “of a truth: and as for me, I ensure you I make no less of the sacrament than thus: I say, whosoever receiveth the sacrament, he receiveth therewith life or death.”

“No,” quoth Mr Secretary, “Scripture saith not so.”

“Sir,” quoth I, “although not in the same sound of words, yet it doth in the same sense; and St Augustine saith in the sound of words also: for Paul saith, The bread which we break, is it not the partaking or fellowship of the body of Christ? and St Augustine, *Manduca vitam, bibe vitam, Eat life, drink life*³.”

Then said Master Pope, “What can ye make of it when ye say, there is not the real body of Christ? which I do believe, and I pray God I may never believe other. How

¹ Cor. x. 16.

The Sacrament may bring life without transubstantiation.

It is known by the title “Catechism of 1543.” But it is more likely that Ridley referred to the Book on the Sacrament, which Cranmer afterwards defended against Gardiner, and that Fox was wrong in mentioning a catechism at all. Ed.]

[³ S. Aug. Sermo cxxxii. de verb. Evan. Joh. vi. Op. Ed. Ben. Par. 1685, tom. v. col. 641. Ed.]

can it bring (as ye say) either life or death, when Christ's body is not there?"

"Sir," quoth I, "when you hear God's word truly preached, if ye do believe it and abide in it, ye shall and do receive life withal: and if ye do not believe it, it doth bring unto you death: and yet Christ's body is still in heaven, and not carnal in every preacher's mouth."

"I pray you tell me," quoth he, "how can you answer to this, *Quod pro vobis tradetur*, Which shall be given for you? Was the figure of Christ's body given for us?"

"No, Sir," quoth I, "but the very body itself, whereof the sacrament is a sacramental figure."

"How say ye then," quoth he, "to *quod pro vobis tradetur*, Which shall be given for you?"

Tertullianus.

"Forsooth," quoth I, "Tertullian's exposition maketh it plain, for he saith, *Corpus est figura corporis*, The body is a figure of the body. Now put to *quod pro vobis tradetur*, Which shall be given for you; and it agreeth exceedingly well."

"In faith," quoth he, "I would give forty pounds that ye were of a good opinion. For I ensure you, I have heard you, and had an affection to you."

"I thank you, Master Pope, for your heart and mind: and ye know," quoth I, "I were a very fool if I would in this matter dissent from you, if that in my conscience the truth did not enforce me so to do. For I wis (as ye do perceive, I trow) it is somewhat out of my way, if I would esteem worldly gain."

Cyprian.

"What say ye," quoth he, "to Cyprian? Doth he not say plainly, *Panis quem dedit Dominus, non effigie, sed natura mutatus, omnipotentia verbi factus est caro*¹: The bread which the Lord did deliver, being changed not according to the form, but according to the nature thereof, by the omnipotent word is made flesh."

Dr Ridley falsely reported of, for a sermon of his at Paul's.

"True, Sir, so he doth say, and I answer even the same which once by chance I preached at Paul's Cross in a sermon, for the which I have been as unjustly and as untruly reported,

[¹ Cyp. de Cœna Domini. Op. Ed. Ben. Par. 1726, col. 111. This treatise is placed by the Benedictine Editor at the end of the volume among those falsely attributed to Cyprian. Ed.]

as any poor man hath been. For there I, speaking of the sacrament, and inveighing against them that esteemed it no better than a piece of bread, told even the same thing of *pœnitentes, audientes, catechumeni, energumeni*, that I spake of before; and I bade them depart as unworthy to hear the mystery; and then I said to those that be *sancti*, Cyprian the Martyr shall tell you how it is that Christ calleth it, saying, *Panis est corpus, cibus, potus, caro*², &c., Bread is the body, meat, drink, flesh, because that unto this material substance is given the property of the thing whereof it beareth the name: and this place then took I to utter as the time would then suffer, that the material substance of bread doth remain." Mr Fecknam (which, as is reported to me, did belie me openly in the same matter at Paul's Cross,) heard all this my talk, as red as scarlet in his face, and herein answered me never one word.

The place of St Cyprian expounded.

"You do know well," quoth Mr Secretary, "that Origen and Tertullian were not catholic, but erred."

"Sir," quoth I, "there is none of all the doctors that are holden in all points, but are thought to have erred in some things. But yet I never heard that it was either laid to Origen's charge, or to Tertullian, that ever they were thought to have erred in this matter of the sacrament."

None of all the doctors holden in all points.

"What," quoth Mr Chomley, late chief justice, "doth not Christ say plainly, that it is his very flesh and his very blood, and we must needs eat him, or we can have no life?"

St Augustine taketh the words of the sacrament figuratively by Bourn's own confession.

"Sir," quoth I, "if you will hear how St Augustine expoundeth that place, you shall perceive that you are in a wrong box." And when I began to tell St Augustine's mind in his book *De Doctrina Christiana*³, "Yea, yea," quoth Mr Secretary, "that is true. St Augustine doth take it figuratively in deed."

"Forty years ago," quoth Mr Fecknam, "all were of one opinion in this matter."

"Forty years ago," quoth I, "all held that the Bishop of Rome was supreme head of the universal church."

[² Cyp. Ib. The words are, *Ipse enim et panis, et caro, et sanguis; idem cibus et substantia et vita factus est Ecclesie suæ, quam corpus suum appellat, dans ei participationem spiritus. Ed.*]

[³ Lib. III. Sect. 24. Op. Ed. Ben. Par. 1685, tom. iii. col. 52. See notes to The Brief Declaration. Ed.]

“What then?” was Master Fecknam beginning to say, &c. but Mr Secretary took the tale, and said, that was but a positive law.

Dist. 21.
Quamvis.

“A positive law?” quoth I, “no, Sir, he would not have it so: for it is in his decrees, that he challenged it by Christ’s own word. For his decree saith: *Nullis Synodicis constitutis, neque conciliis, sed vivâ voce Domini prælata est Ecclesia Romana omnibus ecclesiis in toto mundo: dicente Domino Petro, Tu es Petrus*¹, &c. The church of Rome was advanced above all other churches in the world, not by any synodical constitutions, nor yet any councils, but by the lively voice of the Lord, according as the Lord said to Peter, Thou art Peter, &c. And in another place he entreateth, *Tu es Cephas, id est caput*, Thou art Cephas, that is to say the head.”

Matt. xvi.
John i.

“Tush, it was not counted an article,” quoth Mr Secretary, “of our faith.”

“Yes,” said I, “if ye call that an article of our faith, which is to be believed under pain of damnation. For he saith: *Omnino definimus, declaramus, pronunciamus, omnem humanam creaturam subesse Romano pontifici de necessitate salutis*²: We do absolutely determine, declare, and pronounce, that every creature is subject to the obedience of the Bishop of Rome upon necessity of salvation.”

And here when we spake of laws and decrees, Mr Roger Chomley thought himself much wronged, that he could not be suffered to speak, the rest were so ready to interrupt him: and then he up and told a long tale what laws were of Kings of England made against the Bishop of Rome, and was vehement to tell how they alway of the clergy did fly to him. And here, because he seemed to speak of many

[¹ The words of the decree are “*Sancta tamen Romana Catholica et Apostolica Ecclesia nullis Synodicis constitutis cæteris ecclesiis prælata est, sed evangelica voce Domini et Salvatoris nostri primatum obtinuit, ‘Tu es Petrus’ inquit, &c.*” Dist. 21. cap. 3. *Decreta Gratiani*, Paris, 1585, cols. 115, 116. Ed.]

[² Extravag. Comm. lib. 1. tit. de majoritate et obedientiâ—the words are, “*Porro subesse Romano pontifici omnem humanam creaturam declaramus, dicimus, definimus, et pronunciamus, omnino esse de necessitate salutis.*” Ed. Lugd. 1509, fol. 8. See also the conclusion of the Bull of Boniface VIII. “*Unam Sanctam.*” Ed.]

things beside our purpose, whereof we spake before, he was answered of his own fellows, and I let them talk.

Finally, we departed in peace, and Master Secretary promised in the end, that of their talk there should come to me no harm. And after I had made my moan for lack of my books, he said they were all once given him: but sith I know (said he) who hath them now, write me the names of such as ye would have, and I will speak for you the best I can.

Dr Ridley’s
books given
away.