

OF LAWYERS

DCCLXXXV.

Two doctors in the law came to Luther at Wittenberg, whom he received and saluted in this manner: O ye canonists! I would well endure you, if ye meddled only with imperial, and not with popish laws. But ye maintain the pope and his canons. I would give one of my hands, on condition, all papists and canonists were compelled to keep the pop's laws and decrees; I would wish them no worse a devil. The bishop of Mayence cannot boast that with a good conscience he has three bishoprics; but ye maintain it to be lawful and right. Ye doctors who meddle with popish laws are nothing, for the popish laws are nothing; therefore a doctor in the popish laws is nothing; he is a chimera, a monster, a fable, nothing. A doctor in the imperial laws is half lame, he has had a stroke on the one side; the pope's laws and decrees altogether stink of ambition, of pride, of self profit, covetousness, superstition, idolatry, tyranny, and such like blasphemies.

DCCLXXXVI.

Ye that are studying under lawyers, follow not your preceptors in abuses or wrong cases, as if a man could not be a lawyer unless he practiced such evil. God has not given laws to make out of right wrong, and out of wrong right, as the unchristian acting lawyers do, who study law only for the sake of gain and profit.

DCCLXXXVII.

Every lawyer is sorely vexed at me because I preach so harshly against the craft; but I say I, as a preacher, must reprove what is wrong and evil. If I reprov'd them, as Martin Luther, they need not regard me, but forasmuch as I do it as a servant of Christ, and speak by God's command, they ought to hearken unto me; for if they repent not, they shall everlastingly be damned; but I, when I have declared their sins, shall be excused. If I were not constrained to give an account for their souls, I would leave them unreprieved.

DCCLXXXVIII.

All they that serve the pope are damned; for, next the devil, no worse creature is than the pope, with his lying human traditions, aimed directly against Christ. The greatest part of the lawyers, especially the canonists, are the pope's servants, and although they will not have the name, yet they prove it in deed. They would willingly rule the church, and trample upon her true and faithful servants; therefore are they damned.