

RECORDS OF EARLY ENGLISH DRAMA

Pre-publication Collections

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REDBOURN, Hertfordshire

1589

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1589

Articles against William Dyke, preacher British Library: Lansdowne Ms. 61, #24
f. 72 (23 Sept 1589)

...

4 ffurthermore: whereas the Inhabitantes of the parishe of Redbourne had at the feast of whitsontyde a neighborly metinge or feast in the Churche howse of the said parishe, wheare they haue made merry together, to the mayntenaunce and increase of love and charitie among them, and at the same tyme haue contributed liberally theire money towardes the reparacion of the Churche and buyinge of necessaryes for the Chruche and suche like vses, (as of auncyent tyme the like hath byn vsed in that place, and infynite other places of this Realme to the vses and intentes above mentioned (The said Dike havinge a great dislike of the said feaste or metinge, hath in his sermons inveighed against that kynde of feastinge, callinge it prophane riotous, dronken and disorderly yea the way vnto perdition and hell, or the like vncharitable and slanderous vehement speaches, by all which he did strive and bende hym self to discredit vs and our charitable metinge at Redbourne/ But his speches being malicious to vs and in that respect loathsone vnto many christian eares i cannot choose but terme them a kynde of filthie speakinge/ And therefore also the man may be called in some sort a filtie preacher./

...

Notes: The Letter of John, Bishop of London, to Lord Treasurer Burghley, asks that William "Dicke" may be stayed from preaching at St. Albans because he is only a deacon, and has continued so for many years, refusing to take full orders. John argues that the people may be sufficiently instructed by a Mr. Williams, who is "better learned" than Dyke, without the latter's "newe fangled innouacions." Dyke has also been charged with incontinency, disorder and "withstandinge" of orders of the Privy Council. John also argues that: "The multitude of the supplicants for

him are of the meanest & basest sort, dubbed with the titles of yeomandy" (Lansdowne Ms. 61, no. 4, f. 7; dated 9 November 1589).

Lansdowne Ms. 61, no. 23 (ff. 70v-71; dated 7 November 1589) is a petition of some 35 parishioners of St. Michael's, St. Albans. They state that the people of the parish were long in sin from ignorance, until some four or five years past, when Lady Bacon at her own charge employed Dyke to preach to them. Since Dyke's suspension by the bishop of London, they fear they will fall into the ignorance of their fathers. They aver that the charges against Dyke are malicious slander, spread by those who want to continue in their evil (i.e., papist) ways, and ask Burghley to reinstate Dike.

#24 comprises the articles against Dyke, probably by the bishop of London, though in a different, more formal hand than his letter to Burghley. Article one says Dyke preached that unmarried clergy "wolde occupie other mens wifes"; article two that he compared women who church after childbirth veiled to Tamar; article three that he called those who played football on Sunday during his sermon the "dunge of the earth"; article five that he attacked the vicar, mr. Wetherhead, in his sermons, etc. All these articles are explanations of the author's words that Dyke "is a filthie Preacher." A further set of articles explains the statement that "If Dike and his likes be suffered they will pull the Quene out of her seate." Essentially, he means by this that Dyke and company will have the sovereign yield all ecclesiastical authority to the presbyteries. The articles detail Dyke's preaching against bishops and how people of many parishes near St. Albans refuse to attend services in their own parishes and come to hear him, taking up many of his reforms.

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Dyke's answers to the articles

British Library: Lansdowne Ms. 61, #25, f. 74

...

- 4 To the fourth I answer that theire Whyttson Ales in theire originall beinge badd, and by the marvelous and shamefull abuses in them made farre worse, drawing the people of other parishes vnto them from the exercises of gods word which they might haue had at home, and havinge in them pypinge dauncinge, and Maid Marion comyng into the Churche in the time of prayer and preachinge to move laughter with kissinge in the churche besides sondrie other abues they iustly deserve to be called prophane riotous and disorderly meetinges.

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DOCUMENT DESCRIPTIONS

Articles against William Dyke

Lansdowne 61, the Burghley Papers volume for 1589 also includes a letter (#4) from Bishop Aylmer (of London) to Burghley, explaining why Aylmer suspended Dyke from preaching, and a petition (#23) from the parishioners of St Michael's requesting that Burghley reinstate Dike.

London, British Library, Lansdowne 61, #24; 23 September 1589; English; paper; two sheets, bound as ff. 72-73v; 332mm x 230mm (314 x 165mm); endorsed: '23 Sept. 1589. Articles against Mr Dike Preacher at St Michaels in St Albons./.'

Dyke's Response to Articles

London, British Library, Lansdowne 61, #25; 17 October 1589; English; paper; 332mm x 230mm; two sheets, bound in as ff. 74-75v; endorsed: '17 Octob .1589. Mr Dikes awnswers to the Articles prefered against him by mr Reade.'

