

JOHN PONET,
*John Ponet, A Short Treatise on Political
Power (1556) - modernised spelling*

A. SHORTE TREA
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dience which subiectes owe to kynges and other
ciuile Gouvernours, with an Exhortacion
to all true naturall English
men, Compyled
by.

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*Psal. 118. It is better to trust in the Lorde,
than to trust in Princes.*

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John Ponet, *A Short Treatise on Political Power, and of the true obedience which subjects owe to kings and other civil governors, with an Exhortation to all true and natural English men.* Compiled by Dr. John Ponet, Bishop of Rochester and Worchester (1556). Modernised spelling version.

Psalm 118:9 It is better to trust in the Lord, than to trust in Princes.

Editor's Note: The spelling has been modernised by an unknown editor. Unfortunately, the original page numbers of the text were not included.

Editor's Introduction

To make this edition useful to scholars and to make it more readable, I have done the following:

1. inserted and highlighted the page numbers of the original edition
2. not split a word if it has been hyphenated across a new line or page (this will assist in making word searches)
3. added unique paragraph IDs (which are used in the "citation tool" which is part of the "enhanced HTML" version of this text)
4. retained the spaces which separate sections of the text
5. created a "blocktext" for large quotations
6. moved the Table of Contents to the beginning of the text
7. placed the footnotes at the end of the book
8. reformatted margin notes to float within the paragraph
9. inserted Greek and Hebrew words as images

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To The Gentle Reader.↩

Content yourself to read over this short treatise, where you will find neither felony, nor treason, but all that is written here in is meant for your plentiful benefit, necessary admonition, and faithful instruction. And although the Printer is not sure that the author has gone to God already (as the discourse of the matter seems to show) or yet full of this life, yet for much as the gravity of the work, the soberness of the style, and the equity of the cause joined with substantial profession, imports a mighty scale, and a fervent care of the author for his country, he is pleased to put forth the work, to the intent of the travail of the doer is not lost, neither true English be hearts frustrate of so worthy an instruction, unless they will willingly neglect their own safeguard, the state of their country, and the preservation of their posterity. God give you (good reader) a will to foresee and ears to perceive, and a judgment to discern your own state in time, and in Christ a hearty fare-thee-well.

Chapter I. From Where Political Power Grows, for what purpose it was ordained, and the right use and duties of the same: & etc.↩

As oxen, sheep, goats, and other such unreasonable creatures cannot for lack of reason rule themselves, but must be ruled by a more excellent creature, that is man: so man, although he has reason, yet because through the fall of the first man, his reason is radically corrupt, and sensuality has gotten the upper hand, he is not able by himself to rule himself, but must have a more excellent governor. Those of this world thought that this governor was their own reason. They thought that they by their own reason might do the things they lusted for, not only in private matters, but also in public. They thought reason to be the only cause that men first assembled themselves together in companies, that commonwealths were designed, that policies were well governed and long continued: but those of that mind were utterly blinded and deceived in their imaginations, their works and inventions (though they never seemed so wise) were so easily and so soon (contrary to their expectations) overthrown.



Where is the wisdom of the Greeks? Where is the fortitude of the Iberians? Where is both the wisdom and the force of the Romans gone? All have vanished away, nothing almost left to testify that they were, but that which declares well, that their reason was not able to govern them. Therefore, such were desirous to know the perfect and the only governor of all, constrained to seek further than themselves, and so at length to confess, that it was one God that ruled all. By Him we live, we move, and we have our being. He made us, and not we ourselves. We are His people, and the sheep of His pasture. He made all things for man: and man He made for Himself, to serve and Glorify Him. He has taken upon Himself the order and government of man, His chief creature, and prescribed a rule to him, how he should behave himself, what he should do, and what he may not do.

This rule is the law of nature, first planted and grafted only in the mind of man, then after that his mind was defiled by sin, filled with darkness, and encumbered with many doubts. God set this rule forth in writing in the Decalogue, or the Ten Commandments: and after that, reduced by Christ our Savior to just two commands: You will love the Lord your God above all things, and your neighbor as yourself. The latter part He also expounded on: Whatever you would want done unto yourself, do that unto others.

In this law is compiled all justice, the perfect way to serve and glorify God, and the right means to rule each and every man: and the only stay to maintain every commonwealth. This is the touchstone to try every man's works, whether he is king or beggar, whether he be good or evil. By this all men's laws will be discerned, whether they be just or unjust, godly or wicked. For example; those that have authority to make laws in a commonwealth, make this

law, that no punishment be imposed, but in their own country. This seems to be a trifling matter. Yet is by this means the people may be kept from idleness, it is a good and just law and pleases God. For idleness is a vice by which God is offended: and the way to offend Him in breach of the commandments: you shall not steal, you shall not kill, you shall not commit adultery, etc. For all these evils come from idleness. On the other side, if the people are well occupied in other things, and the people of another country live by pin making, and uttering them: if there should be a law made, that they may not sell them to their neighboring country, which is otherwise well occupied, it is a wicked and an unjust law. For taking away the means, whereby they live, a course is devised to kill them with famine, and so not only is this commandment broken, you shall not kill, but also the general law, which says: You shall love your neighbor as yourself; And, whatever you would want done unto yourself, do that unto others, for you yourselves would not be killed with hunger.

Likewise, if there is a law made, utterly prohibiting that any man can remain chaste, and cannot marry, this is an unjust, an ungodly, and a wicked law. For it is an occasion, that with marriage, he might avoid sinning: But if he does not marry, he commits fornication and adultery in act or thought contrary to God's will and commandment; You shall not commit adultery.

Again, a prince forces his subjects (under the name of request) to lend him what they have, which they do unwillingly: and yet for fear of a worse turn, they must seem to be content with the action. Afterwards, he causes a Parliament to be assembled as if he had been lent nothing at all, and they dare not displease him. To please him, they remit this general debt. This is a wicked and an unjust law. For they are not acting as they would want acted upon, but be an occasion, that a great number of people are undone, their children perish by famine for lack of sustenance, and their servants are forced to steal, and even possibly commit murder. So if men will weigh this order and law that God has proscribed to man-thou shalt love the Lord God above all things, and your neighbor as yourself. And, what ever you will have men do to you, do the same to them: they may soon learn to discern good from evil, godliness from ungodliness, right from wrong.

And it is so plain and easy to be understood, that any plea of ignorance can or will excuse him that causes offense in this manner.

Against the offenders of this law, there was no corporal punishment ordained in this world, until after the destruction of the world with the Great Flood. For although Cain and Lamech had committed horrible murders, they were not corporally punished, but had a protection of God, that none should lawfully hurt them. But after the Flood, when God saw His gentleness and patience could not work His creatures to do their duties unforced, but iniquity prevailed and mischief daily increased, and one murdered, and destroyed another; then He was constrained to change His leniency into severity, and to add corporal pains to those that would not follow, but transgressed His ordinances. And so His made this law, which He declared to Noah: He that sheds the blood of man, his blood shall also be shed by man. For man is made in the image of God.

By this ordinance and law His instituted political power and gave authority to men to make more laws. For He that gave man authority over the body and life of man, because He would have man to live quietly with man, that all might serve Him quietly in holiness and righteousness all the days of his life, it cannot be denied, but He gave him authority over goods, lands, possessions, and all such things that may breed controversy and discord, and so hinder the service and worship that He requires. This ordinance also teaches makers of laws, how they should behave themselves in making laws: that is, to set apart all affections, and to observe an equality in meting out pains, that they be not greater or less, than the fault deserves, and that they not punish the innocent or small offender for malice, and let the

mighty and great thief escape because of affections. And out of this ordinance the authority for the magistrate to execute laws grows and is grounded: for laws without execution are no more profitable than bells without clappers. But whether this authority to make laws, or the power to execute the same, shall be and remain in one person alone, or in many, it is not expressed, but left to the discretion of the people to make so many and so few, as they think necessary for the maintenance of the state. Where in some places, they have been content to obey such laws, as were made by one, as the Israelites were with those that Moses ordained: the Lacedemonians with those that Licurgus made, the Athenians with those that Solon gave them. And in some places with such as were made by certain chosen men, as in Rome by the ten men. And in some they received none, but such as all the multitude agreed unto. Like wise in some countries they were content to be governed, and the laws executed by one king or judge, in some places the many of the best sort, in some places by the people of the lowest sort, and in some places also by the king, nobility, and the people altogether.

And these diverse kinds of states or policies have distinct names, as where one ruled, a Monarchy: where many of the best, Aristocracy: where the multitude, Democracy: and where all together, that is, a king, the nobility, and commoners, a mixed state: which men by long continuance have judged to be the best sort of all. For where that mixed state was exercised, there did the commonwealth longest continue. But yet every kind of these states tended to one end, that is, to the maintenance of justice, to the wealth and benefit of the whole multitude, and not of the superior and governors alone. And when they saw that the governors abused their authority, they altered the state. This was true among the Israelites, for the iniquity of the children of Samuel their judge, from judges to kings: among the Romans, for the tyranny and oppression that Tarquinius used over the people (as the chief occasion) and afterwards for his own lewdness (as the outward occasion) from kings to consuls, and so from consuls (for their evil demeanor) to Decemviri and Triumviri, that is, to ten rulers and three rulers: and so from change to change, until it came to the Imperial state: yet always preferring and maintaining the authority, albeit they altered and changed the kind of government. For the Ethnarchs themselves being lead only by the law of nature and their own reason, saw that without political power and authority, mankind could not be preserved, nor the world continued. The rich would oppress the poor, and the poor seek the destruction of the rich, to have what the rich had: the mighty would destroy the weak, and as Theodoretus says, "the great fish eats up the small", and the weak seeks revenge on the mighty: and so one seeking the others destruction, all at length should be undone and come to destruction. And because this authority and power, both to make laws, and execute laws, proceeds from God, the Holy Ghost in Scripture calls them gods: not that they be naturally gods, or that they be transubstantiated into gods (for He says, they shall die like men, and in deed their works declare them to be none other then men) but for the authority and power which they receive of God, to be His ministers here on earth, in ruling and governing His people, and that the people should rather obey them, and have them in honor and reverence, according to His ordinances.

And the wonderful providence of God is herein to be well noted and considered, of all such as love and fear God, that in all places and counties where God's word has been received and embraced, there for the time the people followed God, no tyranny could enter, but all the members of the body sought the prosperity and wealth of one another, for God's word taught them to do this. You shall love the Lord your God (it says) above all things, and your neighbor as yourself. And, what you will have men do unto you, do you also to them. The fruits of His word is love one another, whatever state or degree in this world they be in. And the state of the policies and commonwealths have been disposed and ordained by God, that the heads could not (if they would) oppress the other members. For as among the Lacedemonians certain men called Ephori were ordained to see that kings should not oppress the people, and among the Romans, the tribunes were ordained to defend and maintain the

liberty of the people from the pride and injury of the nobles: so in all Christian realms and dominions God ordained means, that the heads, the princes and governors, should not oppress the poor people according to their lusts, and make their wills their law. As in Germany between the Emperor and the people, a council or diet exists: in France and England, parliaments, wherein there meet and assemble all sorts of people, and nothing could be done without the knowledge and consent of all. But where the people have forsaken God, and contend with His word, there has the devil by his ministers, occupied the whole country, and subverted the good orders, justice and equality, that was in the commonwealth, and planted his unreasonable lust for good laws, as every man may see by the realm of Hungary which the Turks in our time have occupied. And there the people have not utterly forsaken God and His word, but have begun to be weary of it: has not there God suffered Tyrannies by and by to rush in, and to occupy the whole, and to suppress the good orders of the commonwealth, but little by little has suffered them to creep in, first with the head, then with an arm, and so after with a leg, and at length (were not the people penitent, and in time converted to God) to bring in the whole body, and to work the feats of tyrannies, as hereafter it shall be described.

This is so manifest in most places, that it shall not need any particular example. Wherefore it shall be the part of all Christian men to take heed, that in forsaking God, they bring by injustice the devil and tyrants to reign over them. And those that be called to councils and parliaments (and so be makers of laws, whereby the people should be bound) not to neglect their duty, or to deceive the people of the trust and confidence, that was put in them. For it is no little danger that may thereby follow unto them, both in this world, and in the world to come. For that man that took upon him to do anything for another (being the thing never so little of value and there in did use himself either craftily, seeking his own gain and profit, or showed himself not to be diligent, or not passing what became of the matter committed to his trust), our elders being men of honesty, judged and condemned for a most vile harlot and dishonest person: and being a man of wisdom, made a law(which continues until this day) not only that he should make recompense for the hurt he did, but also that he should not be allowed afterwards in the company or number of honest men, no more than an open thief. And this they did not by will, but by reason, not rashly, but decidedly. Not by the irrational voices, but by the more discreet minds, because they saw that men could not always be present to do their own things, but of necessity must use the help and trust of others. And again, nature has not made ever man apt for all things, but has made one man more mete for one purpose than another: so that one having need of another, everyone should be glad to do for another, and all be tied together in an indissoluble strong band of friendship. And therefore was such false and unfriendly dealing taken to be most vile, because it did violate two of the chief virtues and most necessary things, without which mankind could not survive: faith and friendship. For no man requires another to do anything for him, whom he takes not to be his friend, nor trusts him whom he thinks not faithful. And therefore they thought him to be a very wicked and vile person, and not worthy of the name of man, that at one time and in one thing should he undo the knot of friendship, and deceive him, whom he could not have hurt, unless he had trusted him. Now, if nature, reason, honesty, and law does so grievously punish him, and cast him out of all honest men's company, that is negligent in a trifle matter, how much more ought he to be punished and cast out of all men's sight that is negligent in the greatest of matters? If he ought to be sharply used, who deceives one poor man, how much more sharply ought he to be punished, and of all men to be abhorred (yes, and even cast unto the dogs) that deceives the whole of the realm of ten or twenty hundred thousand persons? If he is thus to be punished and abhorred who is required to do another man's business, and deceives him, how much more ought they to be abhorred and hated, that takes upon them to do for others, not desired but sung for it: not called thereto, but trusting in themselves: not praying, but paying, giving many liveries, procuring and making friends to give them their voice, obtaining great men's letters, and ladies tokens, feasting freeholders,

and making great bankletting cheer: not by the consent of the party, but by force and strength, with troops of horsemen, bills, bows, pikes, guns, and such of like kind and quality.

If this opinion be held, and judgment given against a man that seeks his own gain with the loss of his friends in small things: what opinions men have, what judgment shall be given of those that, intending to make themselves noble and rich, cuts the throats of those that committed themselves, their wives, their children, their goods, yes, and even their lives upon trust in to their hands?

If this judgment is given for worldly things, what judgment shall be given to those that willfully go about to destroy men's souls, and to make them a present to the devil, so that they for a time may be his deputies here on earth? If men abhor and punish such that are unfaithful and dishonest persons, how much more will the Almighty God abhor, condemn, and exercise His severe judgment upon them that abuse the authority given to them by Him, and deceive and undo those poor sheep of His, in whom (as His ministers) they put their trust?

Listen, listen (while there is time for repentance) to the sentence of God, pronounced by the mouth of his servant Isaiah; "Wo be unto you that make unrighteous laws, and devise things which are hard to be kept, whereby the poor are oppressed on every side, and the innocent of my people are robbed of judgment, that widows may be your prey, and that you may rob the fatherless. What will you do in the time of the visitation and destruction that shall come from afar? To whom will you run to for help? Or to whom will you give your honor, that he may keep you from becoming prisoners, or lie among the dead?"

This terrible woe of everlasting damnation was spoken not only to Jerusalem, but to Germany, Italy, France, Spain, England, Scotland, and all other countries and notions, where the like vices shall be committed. For God is just, and hates sin, that he never leaves it in any place unpunished: but the more common it is, the greater plagues and force does He use to repress it: as we may learn from the examples of the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, and Jerusalem, His own city. And besides the general plague, he whips the authors of it with some special scourge, that they may be a spectacle, not only to those that are present, but also a remembrance to all that are to come.

But some, who are put in trust and authority to make the laws and statutes, will say that they would not do anything willingly against God's honor, or the wealth of our country, or deceive any that put their trust in us.

If any such thing follows, it is by reason that we were ignorant.

Tell me, I beseech you, if you had hired one to be your shepherd, and you sheep should suffer harm under his care: or if your horse-keeper, taking wages, through his negligence should suffer your horse to perish: would you not believe him to be at fault, and look for him to make amends? Should ignorance excuse him? "No", you would say, "I hired you, and you took it upon yourself." And so you would not only force him to make satisfaction, but also would think it just to have him punished to make him no more cunning than he was, not to deceive any that put their trust in him. Then they are much to blame, that being put in trust of courts and parliaments to make laws and statutes to the advancement of God's glory, and conservation of the liberties and commonwealth of their country, neglect their own office and charge, being appointed to be not only keepers of God's people, not of hogs, neither of horses and mules which have no understanding, but of that dear flock which Christ purchased with the price of His own blood: but also as physicians and surgeons, to redress, reform, and heal, if anything be amiss. And if a physician for lucre or other mean pleasure, would take upon him the healing of a sore, diseased person, would he not worthy to be taken and punished as a butcher and a murderer?

But you will say, "We gave no credit to others, and they deceived us". Do you think that this bald excuse will serve? Is it not written, that if the blind leads the blind, both shall fall into the pit? Did the plea that Eve made for offending in eating the forbidden fruit (when she said that the serpent had deceived her) excuse her? Nothing less. She was not only herself punished with pains (none greater than death could be devised) but also all her posterity.

Perhaps others of you will say that you do not dare to do otherwise. If you did, you should be taken for enemies of the governor, running into indignation, and so lose your bodies and goods, and undo your children. O you that are faint of heart, do you think that your parents would have left you as you were found, if they were so faint of heart? Or do you think that you will serve your turn? Was it enough for Adam, our first father, when he fell with his wife in eating the forbidden fruit, to say, "I dare not displease my wife." Or to say as he said, "The woman that you gave me, gave the fruit to me?" No, it did not avail, but he and all his posterity were plagued for his disobedience, as we and all that shall follow us will do, if we have any fear of God before our eyes.

When the brutish commoners of Israel were forceful with Aaron, that he for fear was made to make them the golden calf. Also when Moses sharply charged him with disobedience, he excused himself, saying that the brutish people had forced him? Surely no. If he had not repented, he would have been sure of hellfire for his labor, as they be who have set up or said the beastly, popish mass, at the furious enforcement of the brutish commoners, or in pretense of obedience to the Queens proceedings in England: unless the speedily repent, and renounce their wicked doings, as Aaron did his.

Thus you have heard not only from where political power grows, and of the true use and duty thereof, but also what will be laid to their charge, those that do not do their duty in making laws. Now see, what is said by God to the executors of the laws: "See what you do, for you execute not the judgment of man, but of God. And whatever you judge, it shall be rebounded to yourselves." Let the fear of God be before your eyes, and do all things with diligence. For with the Lord our God there is no iniquity, neither difference among persons, nor does He have pleasure in rewards or bribes.

But of the ministers of the laws and governors of realms and countries, more shall be said hereafter.

Chapter II. Whether Kings, Princes, and other Governors have absolute power and authority over their subjects.

For as much as those that be the rulers in the world, and would be taken for gods (that is, the ministers and images of God here in earth, the examples and mirrors of all godliness, justice, equity, and other virtues) claim and exercise an absolute power, which also they call a fullness of power, or prerogative to do what they lust, and none may contradict them: to dispense with the laws as it pleases them, freely and without correction or offense do contrary to the law of nature, and other god's laws, and the positive laws and customs of their countries, or break them: and use their subjects as men do their animals, and as lords do their villains and bondsmen, getting their goods from them by hook and crook, with sic volo, sic jubeo, and spending it to the destruction of their subjects: the misery of this time requires us to examine whether they do it rightfully or wrongfully, that if it be rightful, the people may the more willingly obey and receive the same: if it be wrongful, then those that use it may leave it for fear of God. For (no doubt) God will come and judge the world with equity, and revenge the cause of the oppressed. Of the popes power (who believes himself one, yes, the chief of these kind of gods, yes, above them all, and fellow to the God of God's) we mind not now to treat: no other is a requisite. For all men, yes half women and babes can well judge, that his power is worthy to be laughed at: and were it not bolstered and propped up with the

sword and faggot, it would (as it will notwithstanding) shortly lie in the mire, for it is not built on the Rock, but on sand, not planted by the Father of Heaven, but by the devil of hell, as the fruits manifestly declare. But we will speak of the power of kings and princes, and such potentates, rulers, and governors of commonwealths.

Before you have heard how for a great long time, that is until after the general flood, there was no civil or political power, and how it was then first ordained by God Himself, and for what purpose He ordained it: that is (to comprehend all briefly) to maintain justice: for everyone doing his duty to God, and one to another, is but justice. You have heard also how states, political bodies, and commonwealths have authority to make laws for the maintenance of the policy, so that they are not contrary to God's law and the laws of nature: which, if you note well the question before propounded whether kings and princes have absolute power, shall appear not doubtful, or if any world affirms it, that he shall not be able to maintain it. First with God's laws (by which name also the laws of nature are comprehended) kings and princes are not joined makers here with God, so that thereby of themselves they might claim any interest or authority to dissolve them or dispense with them, by this maxim or principal, that He that may knit together, may loose asunder: and He that may make, may marry: for before magistrates were, God's laws were. Neither can it be proved that by God's word they have any authority to dispense or break them: but that they are still commanded to do right, to minister justice, and not to swerve, neither on the right hand or on the left. Then it must follow that this absolute authority which they use, must be maintained by man's reason, or it must be an usurpation: But what can reason say? If it is not lawful, by no laws (no neither by honesty) for any man's servant to alter his masters (a mortal mans') commandment: Can reason say that it is lawful for any person to later God's commandment, or break it? That a man's servant may be wiser than his master, that he may be more just than his master, that he may see what is more profitable and necessary to be done than his master, as commonly happens: and therefor he may have some apparent cause to alter or break his masters commandment. But to say that any creature is, or that any creature would seem in word or deed, to be more wise than God, more just than God, more prudent and circumspect than God, or knows what is better for the creature than the Creator Himself (as it must be said, that He does, that takes upon himself to break or dispense with God's will and commandment) what a horrible blasphemy is it? What Luciferian presumption is it?

If we will not submit ourselves to God's judgment expressed by his word, as Christians should, let us mark the result: and thereby gather God's judgment, as Ethnars do. For when we have wrought our wits our, and devised and done what we can, we can not exclude God, but he will have a word with us.

God's word, will and commandment is, that he that willfully kills a man, shall also be killed by man: that is, the magistrate. But this law has not been observed and all ways executed, but kings and princes upon affection have dispensed and broken it, granting life and liberty to traitors, robbers, murderers, and etc.

But what has followed as a result of it? Have they (whose offenses have been so pardoned) afterwards shown themselves penitent to God, and thankfully profitable to the commonwealth? No, God and the commonwealth have had no greater enemies. They have added murder to murder, mischief to mischief, and of private malefactors, have become public, and of men killers, they have at length grown to be destroyers of their country, yes and many times those that have been saved from hanging and other just pains of the law. And this is no marvel: for God does not only punish the principals and authors of such mischief, but also those that are accessories and maintainers of it, and plagues iniquity with iniquity. You may likewise see what fruits have followed, were popes have dispensed, that marriages might be made contrary to God's laws. We shall not need to rehearse any? The end will declare all. But let us leave to reason that, wherein something may be said: that is, whether

kings and princes may do things contrary to the positive laws of their country. For example:

It is a positive law that a mean kind of apparel, or a mean kind of diet should be used in a commonwealth, to the intent that men leaning the excess thereof, where many occasions both to destroy nature and to offend God follow, they might convert that they spent evil, to the relief of the poverty, or defense of their country.

Answer this question, this divisions ought to be made, that there be two kinds of kings, princes, and governors.

The one, who alone may make positive laws, because the whole state and body of their country have given, and resigned to them their authority to do so: which nevertheless is rather to be thought a tyranny than a king, as Dionisius, Philippus, and Alexander were, who saved whom they would and plundered whom they desired. And the other be such, unto whom the people have not given such authority, but keep it themselves: as we have before said concerning the mixed state.

It is true that in indifferent matters, that is of themselves be neither good nor evil, hurtful, or profitable, but for a decent order: kings and princes (to whom the people have given their authority) may make such laws, and dispense with them. But in matters that are not indifferent, but godly and profitably ordained for the commonwealth, they can not (for all their authority) break them or dispense with them. For princes are ordained to do good, not to do evil: to take away evil, not to increase it: to give example of well doing, not to be the procurers of evil: to procure the wealth and benefit of their subjects, and not to work to their hurt or undoing. And in the empire where (by civil laws) the emperors claim, than the people gave them their authority to make laws, albeit they have been willing, and often attempted to execute their authority, which some Pikethankes (to please them) say they have by the laws have been forced of themselves to leave their enterprise. But such as are indifferent expounders of the laws, be of that mind that we before have declared: and therefore make this a general conclusion, and as it were a rule, that the emperor willing anything to be done, there is nor more to be done, than the laws permit to be done. For (they say) neither pope, Emperor, nor king may do anything to hurt his people without their consent. Kind Antigone's chancellor, saying unto him, that all things were honest and lawful to kings: "You speak truth (said the king) but such kings are beasts, barbarous and without humanity: but to true and good princes nothing is honest, but that which is honest in deed, and nothing is just, but that which is just indeed.

Antiochus, the third king of Asia, considering that he was above the people, so the laws were above him, wrote general letters to all the cities of his country, that if they should perceive that any letters should require anything contrary to the laws, they should think that those letters were obtained without his consent, and therefore they should not obey them.

Now where the people have given their authority to their governor to make such laws, he cannot break or dispense with the positive laws: how much less may such governors, kings, and princes to whom the people have not given their authority (but they with the people, and the people with them make the laws) break them or dispense with them? If this were tolerable, then is it in vain to make solemn assemblies of the whole state and long parliaments? Yes (I beseech you) what certainty should there be in anything, where all should depend on one's will and affection? But it will be said that although kings and princes cannot make laws, but with the consent of the people, they may dispense with any positive law, by reason that a long time ago they used to, and prescribed so to do: for long custom makes a law.

To this it may be answered that evil customs (be they never so old) are not to be suffered, but to be utterly abolished: and none may prescribe to do evil, whether king or subject. If the laws appoint you to the term of thirty or forty years to claim a sure and perfect interest in what you enjoy, yet if you know that either yourself or those by whom you claim came wrongfully by it, you are not in deed a perfect owner of it, but are bound to restore it. Although the laws of man do excuse and defend you from outward trouble and punishment, yet they do not quiet the conscience, but when your conscience remembers that you enjoy is not yours, it will convict you that you have done wrong: it will accuse you before the judgment of God, and condemn you. And if princes and governors would show themselves to be half as wise as they would have men take them to be, and by the example of others learn what mischief might happen to themselves, they would not (if they might) claim, much less execute any such absolute authority. No, neither would their counselors (if they loved them) maintain them in it: nor would the subjects suffer their prince to do what he lusted for.

For the one purchases for themselves a perpetual uncertainty of life and goods: and the other procures the hatred of all, although it be colored and dissembled for a season, yet it does not at length burst out, and works the revenge with extremity.

There is no lack of examples for this. It was driven in to the head of the Emperor Caesar Caligula that he was subject to no power, that he was above all laws, and that he might lawfully do what he lusted for. This lesson was so tempting to the flesh, that it was no sooner moved then desired, no sooner taught then learned, no sooner heard then practiced. First he desired that the empire should not go outside of his own family, he coupled with not one, but with all of his sisters, like bitch and dog. He killed his brother, Tiberius, and all his chief friends: he murdered many of the Senators of Rome. He delighted to have honest men beaten and cut on the face, and also to make him pleased he had them cast to ravenous beats to be torn and devoured in his sight, or to be sawed asunder in the middle. It was a pleasant pastime for him, to see the parents standing by, lamenting and weeping, while their children were tormented and killed. He use to complain and lament that no common miseries happened in his time. He rejoiced greatly upon hearing of the slaughter of whole armies of men, great hunger, pestilence, burning towns, and openings of the earth where many people had been swallowed up. But the day he saw any of these himself, he needed neither to eat meat nor drink because he was so merry. And being gluttoned with the pastime of every man's death by his own hand (to procure a new appetite) he devised another, if he could have brought it to pass. But when he could not have it done, the memory of it was so sweet, that he often desired: that is, that all the heads of the people of Rome stood on one man's neck, that he might with one swath of the sword cut it off. Many other terrible acts by his absolute power were wrought: and at length he commanded that his image be set up in the Temple in Jerusalem, and be worshipped: as not unlike Saint Gardiners (for he has done no small thing) shall be shortly be anticipation done in England. But what was the end of Caligula's absolute power: when he had reigned three years and ten months, his own household servants conspired against him, and the general of his own armies slew him.

Nero the Emperor was of nature very modest, gentle, and merciful, and the first five years of his reign he behaved himself with virtue. After other counselors and masters, then Seneca crept into his favor, who told him that he might do what he lusted for. He was soon persuaded of the same. And to show some proof that he had well carried away their advise, he killed his mother Agrippina. This cruel act did so move his wicked conscience, that he did not appear in the Senate, but kept himself hidden away in his private chambers. For he feared the hatred of his people, and did not know what was best for him to do. He lacked no flattering counselors. There were plenty that sought their own profit and gain, and to satisfy their own lusts, more than the honor and safety of their prince, and the commonwealth of their country, they said to him: "Sir, why should you be so amazed with the death of this woman? She was

of all people hated and abhorred: the people wonderfully rejoice at you doing, and commend you above the moon for so noble of an act. They desire that you will return into the city, that they may express how much their joy and gladness is with triumph, and how they love you for such a noble feat." These crafty knaves saw how they blinded their masters eyes, commanded in the Emperors behalf that all the people should come out of Rome to meet the Emperor. The Senate came out in their best apparel, and all other orders likewise followed after their degree, and finally man, woman, and child.

The Emperor, when he saw them, thought that it had all been done from the bottom of their hearts. The Senate showed such outward honor, the commoners great love, and everybody pretended great joy and gladness. And you think there were not those around him who said, "Does not your Majesty find all of our sayings true? May you not credit us in what we counsel and advise you." What do you think followed? The Emperor, embrewed with the blood of his mother, and his unnatural act commended by his wicked counselors, did not cease with his cruelty, but earnestly went forth and put away his wife Octavia, because she seemed to be barren, he married his harlot called Poppie. He sent his wife Octavia to an island, binding her in chains, and caused her to bleed all over her body: and fearing that this would drive the blood to her heart, causing her to live longer then him, he set her in a basin of hot water do drive the blood out quicker. But what became of his dear darling Poppie? He delayed a while with his Poppie and at length his hot love turned into displeasure, and he struck her on the belly (while being with child), and caused her death. He repented to late, but did not cease from his cruelty. He killed his master Seneca, he persecuted the Church of Christ most miserably, and so thinking that he might do what he lusted for, and that all was well done, although he was never so evil, he never left his cruelty until the people found occasion and opportunity to utter their hatred, and slew him.

But what do you think? Who was to blame for these cruel acts? The one who does them, or the others for flattering him, or the Senate and people of Rome in suffering him? surely there is none of them that can be excused, but all are to blame, and chiefly those that could have bridled him, and did not.

He is a good citizen that does not do evil (so said a noble wise man) but he is better who does not allow others to hurt or do injustice to the innocent. For the blood of the innocent shall be demanded not only from those that shed blood, but also of those that make or consent to wicked laws, to condemn the innocent, or suffer their head to kill them contrary to just laws, or to spoil then of what they justly enjoy be the order of law.

Now kings, princes, and governors of commonwealths have not, not can justly claim, and absolute authority, but the end of their authority is the maintenance of justice, to defend the innocent, and to punish evil. And that so many evil and mischiefs may follow, where such absolute and, indeed, tyrannical power is usurped: let us pray that they may know their duty, and discharge themselves to God and to the world, or else that those which have the authority to reform them, may know and do their duty, that the people finding and acknowledging the benefit of good rulers, may thank God for them, and everyone labors to do their duty: and that saying-the head is not spared, but evil sin is punished-they may be more willing to abstain from tyranny and other evil doings, and do their duties, and all glorify God.

Chapter III. Whether Kings, and other Governors are subject to God's laws, and the positive laws of their country.

One who observes the proceedings of princes and governors in these days will note how ambitious they are to usurp the dominions of others, and how negligent they are to see their own well governed, might think that wither there is no God, or that he has no care for the things of this world: or they think themselves exempt from God's laws and power. But the

wonderful overthrow of their devices (when they think themselves most sure and certain) is so manifest, that it is not possible to deny that there is a God, and that he cares for the things of this world. And His word is so plain that none can contradict that they are to be subject and obedient to God's laws and word. For the whole Decalogue and every part thereof is written as well to kings, princes, and other public persons, as it is to private persons. A king may no more commit idolatry than a private man: he may not take the name of God in vain, he may not break the Sabbath, no more than any private man. It is not lawful for him to disobey his parents, to kill any person contrary to God's laws, to be a whoremonger, to steal, to lie and bear false witness, to desire and covet any man's house, wife, servant, maid, ox, ass, or anything that belongs to another, more than any other private man. No, he is bound and charged under great pains to keep them more than any other, because he is both a private man in respect of his own person, and a public figure in respect to his office, which may appear in a great many places which I will recite. The Holy Ghost said by the mouth of a king and a prophet: "And now you kings understand, and be learned you that judge the earth. Serve the Lord in fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son (that is, receive with honor), lest the Lord become angry, and you lose the way, when His wrath shall in a moment be kindled." And in another place: "The Lord upon your right hand shall smite and break into pieces even kings in the day of His wrath." Isaiah, the prophet, also says: "The Lord shall come to judgment against the princes and elders of the people." Likewise, the Prophet Micah speaks to all princes and governors under the heads of the house of Jacob, and the leaders of the house of Israel: "Hear all you princes and governors. Should you not know what was lawful and right? But you hate the good, and love evil, you pluck off men's skin, and the flesh from their bones: you chop them into pieces, as it were in to a caldron, and as flesh in to a pot. Now the time shall come that when you call unto the Lord, He shall not hear you, but hide His face from you, because through your own imaginations you have dealt wickedly." And again he says: "O hear all you rulers and governors, you that abhor the thing that is lawful, and waste aside the thing that is straight: you that build up Zion with blood, your majesty and tyranny with wrong doing." So may Zion and Jerusalem be well expounded: "O you judges, you give sentence for gifts: O you priests, you teach for lucre: O you prophets, you prophesy for money: yet they will be taken as those that hold upon God and say, 'Is not the Lord among us? How can any misfortune happen to us?' But Zion (that is, your cities) for your sakes shall be plowed like a field: and Jerusalem (that is, your palaces) shall become a heap of stones, and the hill of the Temple (that is, your monasteries, friaries, and chantries) shall become a high forest." The Holy Ghost also speaks by the mouth of King Solomon: "Hear, O you kings, and understand. O learn you that be judges of the ends of the earth. Give ear, you that rule the multitudes, and delight in many people. For the power is given unto you is from the Lord, and the strength from the high heavens, who shall try you works, and search out your imaginations, how you being officers of His kingdom have not kept the law of righteousness, nor walked in His will. Horribly and soon He shall appear to you, for upon the highest among you, He will execute a most severe judgment. Mercy is granted unto the simple, but those that are in authority shall be punished. For God, who is Lord over all, shall not regard any man's person, neither shall He regard any man's greatness, for He cares alike for all. But the mighty shall have a sorer punishment. To you therefore (O princes) do I speak, that you may learn wisdom, and not offend.

These sayings need no particular examples to confirm them, but look on all governors and rulers named in the Holy Bible, or in any other history: and among all you shall find that none has escaped God's punishment, but always their iniquity has been plagued in themselves, or in their posterity.

The case and manner of King Saul's punishment and extinguishing of his posterity is more commonly known, than needs rehearsing. Rehoboam, because he would reign as a tyrant and not be subject to law or counsel, had ten tribes of his kingdom taken away from

him, and given to Jeroboam: who also did not content himself to be subject to God's written word and law, but fell to his own idolatrous inventions, and caused his subjects to follow his proceedings: was stripped completely from the inheritance of his crown, that his seed was utterly rooted out.

The end of Ahab and Jezebel is understood well enough. And King Joram, for his stout striving against God's laws and the order of his country was so smitten by the Lord with horrible diseases, that at length his guts flew out of his body due to extreme anguish. But bringing our particular examples of God's laws, and the laws of nature, are they not seen throughout the whole Bible, and are not the writings of profane history full of them?

Therefore, seeing no king or governor is exempted from the laws, hand, and power of God, but that he ought to fear and tremble at it, we may proceed to the other part of the question: that is, whether kings, princes, and other governors ought to be obedient to the positive laws of their country. To discuss this question, the right way and means is as in all other things, to resort to the fountains and roots, and not to depend on the rivers and branches. For if men should admit that the church of Rome were the catholic church, and the pope the head of it, and God's only vicar on earth, and not seek further how he comes by that authority: then no man could say that all his doings (were they never so wicked) should seem just: so if men should build upon the authority that kings and princes usurp over their subjects, and not seek from whence they have their authority, not whether that which they use, be just, there could be nothing produced to let their cruel tyranny. But as we see from whence all political power and authority comes, that is, from God: and why it was ordained, that is, to maintain justice: we ought (if we will judge rightly) by God's word examine and try this matter.

Saint Paul, treating the subject of who should be obedient, and to whom obedience is due, says: "Let every soul be subject to the powers that rule, for there is no power but from God." There are some who would have this word, soul, taken to be man, not as he consists of soul and body both together, but only of the flesh: and by that word, soul, should be understood only as a worldly man, that is, a lay man or temporal man (as we term it) and not a spiritual man and a minister of the church. Where upon Antichrist, the bishop of Rome, seeking for subjects to be under his kingdom, has taken the clergy to be his subjects, along with everything that belongs to them: and he has made laws that they should be his subjects, obedient to him and not to the political power and authority, where he leaves subjects only the temporal.

But in Scripture this word, soul, is taken for every kind of man, as may appear when it says that all the souls (that is, men and women) that were in the ark with Noah, there were eight. And that all the souls that were of the house of Jacob, which came into Egypt there were seventy. In which numbers it can not be denied, but that persons there were as holy and spiritual, as any are or were in the kingdom of the bishop of Rome. And Chrysostom (a priest) expounds upon this text (Let every soul be subject to the higher powers) says: "Yes, if you be an apostle, an evangelist, a prophet, or what so ever you are: for this subjection does not infringe upon religion." So that it can not be denied, but by this word, soul, is comprehended every person, none excepted. Now touching this word, power, some would have it interpreted for all those persons that execute justice, be he caesar, king, mayor, sheriff, constable, horseholder, or ever so low: and some would have it to be interpreted only of kings and chief officers. But is here to be taken for the ministry and authority, that all officers of justice do execute: and so it may appear by Christ's own words, where he says: "The kings of the nations rule over them, and those that exercise authority or power, be called gracious benefactors, or well doers." For as all men and women that seem to live together in the holy ordinance of holy matrimony, be not man and wife, for it may be that the man has another wife living or the wife another husband, or that they came not together for the love of God

only, and to avoid sin, but for sensuality, and to get riches, and so the ordinance itself is one thing, and the persons, that is, the man and woman, another: even so is the political power or authority being the ordinance and good gift of God, one thing, and the person that executes the same (be he king or caesar) another thing. The ordinance being godly, the man may be evil and not of God, nor come there by God, as the Prophet Hosea says: "They have made them a king, and not through me: a prince, and not through my counsel or will."

Neither is that power and authority which kings, princes, and other ministers of justice exercise, only called a power: but also the authority that parents have over their children, and masters over their servants, is also called a power: and neither be the parents nor the masters the power itself, but they are the ministers and executors of the power, being given unto them by God: which also Saint Paul in another place plainly shows, saying to Titus: "Warn them to be subject to the principalities and powers," which some interpret, princes and powers, to make a distinction between the minister and the ministry. And it follows: "...to obey the officers," so that always the difference may be perceived. So then if by this word, soul, is meant every spiritual and temporal person, man and woman: and by this word, power, the authority that kings and princes execute, then can not kings and princes be contained under this general word, soul, as well as others? And they being but executors of God's law, and men's just ordinances, not be exempt from them, but are bound to be subject and obedient unto them. For good and just laws of man are God's power and ordinances, and they are but ministers of the laws, and not the law itself. And if they were exempt from the laws, and so it were lawful for them to do what they lusted for, their authority being of God, it might be said that God allowed their tyranny and robbery of their subjects, killing them without law, and making God the author of evil: which is a great blasphemy. Justinian the emperor well considered, when he made this saying to be put into the body of the laws. "It is a worthy saying," he said, "for the majesty of him that in him authority to confess that the prince is subject to the laws, the authority of the prince depends so much on the authority of the laws." And certainly it is more honor than the honor of the empire, to submit the principality unto the laws. For in deed laws be made, that the willful self will of men should not rule, but that they should have a line to lead them, as they might not go out of the way of justice: and that (if any would say they did them wrong) they might allege the laws for their warrant and authority. It is also a principle of all laws grounded on the laws of nature, that every man should use himself and be obedient to that law, that he will be bound unto others. For otherwise he takes away that equality (for there is no difference between the head and the foot, concerning the use and benefit of the laws) whereby commonwealths are maintained and kept up. What equality (I beseech you) should there be, where the subject should do to his ruler all the ruler would: and the ruler to the subject, that the ruler lusted for?

The good emperor Trajanus (who for his just behavior, the Senate of Rome took to be a god) being in possession of his office, and minding to show that he was not ordained to be a tyrant, but to see the people well governed, and that, albeit he was the minister of the laws, yet he was subject to the laws, took a sword, and gave it to the captain of the horsemen, and said: "Take this sword, use it for me against my enemies in just causes: and if I myself do not justly use it, then use it against me."

Zaleuchus the ruler and maker of laws to the Locres, when he made this law, that an adulterer should be punished with the loss of both his eyes, and his son had committed this offense, although the people made great intercession, that his punishment may be pardoned, he would not consent to it, by pulling out one of his sons eyes, to fulfill and keep the law, he suffered one of his own eyes to be pulled out as well.

But you will say: What have we to do with ethnics? Why should we be ordered by ethnics doings? I answer that when Ethnics do by nature that you are bound also to do, not only by nature, but by the laws of God and man, such as Ethnics shall rise in the universal

judgment, to accuse you, and work your condemnation the bishop of Rome's laws (which he does not use against himself, yet he will have them practiced against others) says this: "It is requisite and just that a prince obey his own laws. For then he may look to see that others keep his laws, when he himself honors them. Justice wills that princes be obedient and bound to their own laws, and that they can not in the own doings condemn those laws which they prescribe to others. The authority of their saying is just and indifferent, if they suffer not to do what they prohibit unto their people." This is what the laws of the bishop of Rome says. And upon this principle the general council of Lateran, which Pope Innocent III held, it was decreed and ordained (as they say) that when kings and princes acknowledge no superior, should have a falling out amongst themselves, or should misuse their power and authority over their subjects, then the matter should be heard and corrected by the bishop of Rome.

But here it may be asked, who handed out this justice to kings and princes before that time, since it was only then committed to the bishop of Rome? We need not answer that at this time, for we do not seek presently to know who should be judge, but only to declare and prove that kings and princes ought, both by God's law, the law of nature, man's law, and good reason, to be obedient and subject to the positive laws of their country, and may not break them, and that they are not exempt from them, nor may dispense with them, unless the makers of the laws give them express authority to do so.

Who shall be the kings judge, you will hear later.

Chapter IV. In what things, and how far subjects are bound to obey their princes and governors. ↩

As the body of man is knit and kept together in due proportion by the sinews, so every commonwealth is kept and maintained in good order by obedience. But as the sinews are racked and stretched too much, or shrink together too much, it breeds great pain and deformity in a man's body: so if obedience is too much or too little in a commonwealth, it causes much evil and disorder. For too much makes the governors forget their vocation, and to usurp upon their subjects: too little breeds a licentious liberty, and makes the people to forget their duty. And so in both ways the commonwealth grows out of order, and at length comes to havoc and utter destruction.

Some will have too little obedience, as the Anabaptists. For when they heard of a Christian liberty, they would have had all political power taken away: and so in deed no obedience.

Others (as the English Papists) rack and stretch out obedience too much, and have no need of civil power obeyed in all things, and whatsoever it commands, without respect it ought and must be done. But both of them be in great error. For the Anabaptists mistake Christian liberty, thinking that men may live without sin, and forget the fall of man, whereby he was brought into such misery, that he is no more able to rule himself by himself, than one beast is able to rule another: and that therefore God ordained civil power (his minister) to rule him, and to call him back, whenever he should pass the limits of his duty, and would give an obedience back to him.

And the Papists neither consider the degrees of powers, nor over what things civil power has authority, nor how far subjects ought to obey their governors. And they do this not for a lack of knowledge, but from a spiritual malice, because it goes against their purpose, that the truth should be disclosed.

If any Christian prince should do about to redress the abuses of the Sacraments (brought in and devised by the Papists to maintain their kingdom) to correct their abominable lies, their whoredom, buggery, drunkenness, pride, and other vices: then he is another Ozias,

another Osa, a heretic, a schismatic, cursed from top to toe, with book, bell, and candle, as black as a pot side: no obedience of the subjects ought to be given unto him. But if he be content to wink at their abominations, to run with them, to dishonor God, to commit idolatry, to kill the true ministers and counselors of Christ, to destroy the poor innocents which abhor the Papist's wicked vices, and be desirous that God's kingdom not be promoted: then he is another Ezekiel, a Josiah, a catholic prince, a dear son of the church, the protector of the church, the defender of the faith, the fosterer of the church, a counselor while he lives, after his death a saint (yes, a saint devil) canonized with Ora pro nobis: when Beelzebub dances at his dirge.

Such a one (they say) must be obeyed in all things, not may speak against his proceedings, for he that resists the power, resists the ordinance of God, and he that resists, purchases for himself damnation: as though to leave evil undone, and to do good, were to resist the power. And here also they wring this saying of Saint Peter (Servants obey your masters, although they be froward and churlish) to free subjects under a king: as if bondsmen and freemen were alone, and king and bondsmen had similar authority. So with violent wringing and false application of God's life giving word, Caiphas and Herod rode cheek by cheek, and arm in arm, with both the swords and Cross before them. Friend to the one, friend to both: and he that is a heretic with Caiphas must be a traitor to Herod.

Thus they go about to blind men's eyes to confirm and increase their devilish kingdom. But popish prelate's practices are no warrant to discharge a Christian man's conscience. He must seek out what God would have him do, and not what the subtlety and violence of wicked men will force him to do. He may not rob Peter to clothe Paul, not take from God his due to give it unto civil power: neither may he make confusion of the powers, but yield unto everyone that is his due, not in obeying the inferior commandment, leave the commandment of the highest undone. "Yield unto Caesar, those things that be Caesar's," says Christ, "and unto God the things that be God's." Civil power is a power and ordinance of God, appointed to certain things, but no general minister over all things. God has not given it power over the one and best part of man, that is, the soul and conscience of man, but only over the other and the worst part of man, that is, the body, and those things that belong unto the temporal life of man.

And yet over that part with the appurtenances he has not only not given man the whole power, and stripped himself of all the authority, but also he has reserved to Himself the power thereof. For we read that when civil power (his minister) has been negligent in doing his duty, or winked at the evil life of the people, God has not held his hand, but has whipped and plagued such people, as he did the Sodomites, Gomorrians, and in diverse times, the Jews.

And in our days his hand is not short, but he has, and daily does, plague blasphemers, whoremongers, drunkards, murders, thieves, traitors, tyrants, such as in man's sight no man would touch: some with incurable plagues of their body, some with loss of their children, some with the loss of their goods, and some with shameful deaths.

And to the contrary, when the worldly powers have violently, tyrannously, over sharply, and wrongfully oppressed and condemned innocents, God (to testify that He has also power of the body) has many times in all ages mightily and miraculously delivered His people from the power of tyrants: as the Israelites from Pharaoh, Mardocheus from Amon, Susanna from the lecherous judges: Shadrach, Mesach, and Abednego from the fiery furnace: Daniel from the lions den, Peter from Herod, and infinite other examples we have in Scripture and histories. And the like have occurred in our days also, if we will advisedly consider the condition and state of our time. So that we see God to be the Supreme Power of the whole man, as well to punish as to deliver at His own will.

God is the highest power, the power of powers, from Him is derived all power. All people are His servants made to serve and glorify Him. All other powers are but His ministers, set to oversee that everyone behaves himself, as he should towards God, and to do those things, that he is justly commanded to do by God.

Whatever God commands man to do, he ought not to consider the matter, but be straight to obey the commander. For we are sure, what He commands, is just and right: for from Him, that is, all together just and right, no injustice nor wrong can come.

So did Abraham, when contrary to that which seemed to be right and just (contrary to God's general commandment) he made himself ready to kill and offer in sacrifice his only promised son Isaac, according to God's special commandment. So did also the children of Israel, contrary to the general commandment (You shall not steal) robbed and spoiled the Egyptians, by God's special commandment. And so did Phineas, who was not a magistrate, yet as a result of a great zeal by the inward motion of God's Spirit thrust his sword through those two that he found committing adultery.

But contrary in man's commandments, men ought to consider the matter, and not the man. For all men, whatever ministry or vocation they exercise, are but men, and so may err. We see councils against councils, parliaments against parliaments, commandments against commandments, this day one thing, tomorrow another. It is not the man's warrant that can discharge them, but it is the thing itself that must justify thee. It is the matter that will accuse thee, and defend thee: acquit thee, and condemn thee: when you shall come before the throne of the highest and everlasting power, where no temporal power will appear for thee, to make answer or to defend thee: but you yourself must answer for yourself, and for whatever you have done. Therefore, Christian men ought well to consider and weigh men's commandments, before they be hasty to do them, to see if they are contrary or repugnant to God's commandments and justice: which if they be, they are evil and cruel, and ought not to be obeyed. We have this special commandment from God the highest power, often repeated by the Holy Ghost. Forbear to do evil, and do that which is good. Saint Paul (the true teacher of obedience) teaches that civil power and princes are not ordained to be a terror to those that do well but to those that do evil, and will not the men should do whatever the power? "Do that which is good, and you shall have praise for it: for it is the minister of God ordained for your benefit, and not to your destruction. But if you do that which is evil, then fear: for it carries not the sword in vain: for it is the minister of God, a avenger and executioner, to punish him that does evil." And therefore it is ordained that evil might be taken away. Men must be subject, not only for fear of punishment, but also for conscience sake. For not to obey the power, that defends the good and virtuous, and punishes the evil and wicked, is deadly sin. And Saint Peter teaches the same. The mark that all men ought to shoot for is to do good, and in no wise to do evil, whoever has commanded it. If the ministers of the civil power commands you to honor and glorify God, as God will be honored, to defend (with your person and goods) your country against the enemies, to do such things as be for the wealth and benefit of your country: you are burdened to do it, for it is good, and God will have you to do it. And if you do it not, you have sinned against God, and justly deserve the punishment not only of the power, but of everlasting damnation. But if the ministers of the civil power command you to dishonor God, to commit idolatry, to kill an innocent, to fight against your country, to give or lend what you have, to the mind of subversion and destruction of your country, or to maintain them in their wickedness, you ought not to do it, but to leave it undone: for it is evil, and God (the Supreme and Highest Power) will not have you do it. The apostles in time of persecution did not only give us an example of what to do when the worldly powers would have them to follow their proceedings, but also left us a lesson to do so. God must be obeyed (they say) rather than men. And this lesson even from the beginning before it was written, was by the Holy Ghost printed in man's heart. When

Pharaoh, the tyrant, commanded the midwives of the Egyptians to kill all the male children that should be born to the Israelite wives: do you think he only commanded them? No, without a doubt. You may be sure that he commanded them not only with threatened pains, but also promised them largely: and perchance as largely as those do, that being desirous of children, procure the midwives to say that they are with child, when their belly is puffed up with the dropsy or moles, and having blurred the common peoples eyes with processions, Te Deum singing, and bonfire banquets, use all ceremonies and crying out, while another bird's egg is laid in the nest. But those good midwives fearing God (the high power) who had commanded them not to kill, would not obey this tyrant Pharaoh's commandment, but left it undone.

When the jolly queen, Jezebel, commanded that the prophets of God should be destroyed, that no should be left to speak against her idols, but that all men should follow he proceedings; did Obadiah, the chief officer to the king, her husband, say, "Your grace, does very well to rid the would of them of those that worship the true living God, cannot be but traitors to my sovereign lord and master, the king your husband, and to your grace: and it is these heretics, that bewitch and conjure against you, that your grace cannot be delivered of your child, not sleep quietly in your bed: let me alone, for I will find the means to dispatch them all, only to have your grace to have a good opinion of me, and think that I am your own"? No. Obadiah (a man fearing God, and knowing this commandment to be a wicked woman's will) did clean contrary to her commandment, and hid and preserved a hundred of the prophets in caves. When the wicked king Saul commanded his own household waiters and common servants to kill the priest Abimelech and his children because of his hatred for David: did his own nearest waiting servants flatter him, and say, "Your majesty shall never be in safety and quiet so long as this traitor and his prating children (that are always in their sermons and books, meddling in the kings matters) be suffered to live? We will be your true obedient servants, we will believe as the king believes, we will do as the king bids us, according to our most bound duty of allegiance, we shall soon ease your highness of this grief: other of your graces chaplains be more suited for that room than this hypocrite traitor"? No. The used no such court cruelty, but considered God to be the Supreme Power, and seeing Abimelech (by his answers) and his household to be guiltless of such matter in form and intent as (by Doeges accusation) Saul charged him with all, they refused to kill any of them, or ones to lay violent hands on them, but plainly and utterly (being the kings true servants and subjects) denied to obey the kings unlawful commandment. And when the same hypocrite Saul commanded his servants or soldiers to kill noble Jonathan, his son, who out of necessity had taken a little honey to recover his strength contrary to the king his fathers commandment: did they say, "Let us kill him as we be willed, so shall some of us be made the king's lieutenants, we shall be an inch nearer to succession, we shall have his lands, possessions, goods, and offices parted among us: let us not stick to do it. When he is dispatched out of the world, he can make no revenge, for dead men do no harm." No, no, to the contrary. They knew that the innocent Abel's blood did cry to the Lord, "Vengeance, , vengeance." And although Cain had a mark, that no man might lawfully kill him in this life, yet hangs he now (as good writers say) in chains in hell. Therefore they would not obey the wicked and cruel tyrant's commandment, but knowing that God will not have innocent's blood shed, but innocents against tyrants defended, they took upon them the defense of the good son against the tyrannical hypocrite and unnatural father.

Julian the emperor, although he was an apostate from Christ, and a great persecutor of Christ's Church, yet had soldiers under him that professed Christ. When he commanded them to set forward to fight for the defense of the commonwealth, they obeyed him, and did it willingly: but did they seek for the Christians before they were commanded, to bring them to the twenty-one Commissioners, or to the bishop's coalhouse? Or when he willed and commanded them to destroy those that would not deny Christ, and follow his proceedings to

worship idols: did they bring them to the fire and stand about, that they should not speak? and to see that none should come near them, to comfort and strengthen them in their faith? Or when they spoke, did they cleave their heads in pieces with their halberds, or stop their mouths with bills? No, they confessed that as the Emperor of Heaven the Almighty God (and not the emperor of the earth, a wicked man, and a rebel against God) was their Emperor and captain: and they would not obey Julian, nor do what he commanded in that behalf. And this answer both Saint Ambrose and Saint Augustine, yes and even the papists (although they themselves do not do so) propound and set further for a Christian doctrine and a catholic example, how Christ and good subjects should behave themselves towards wicked princes, and their wicked commandments: that is, in no wise to obey them, but to leave them undone. And as men ought not to obey their superiors, that shall command them to do contrary to God's word, or the laws of nature: so they may not do that they shall command them contrary to civil justice, or to the hurt of the whole state. Neither will good princes attempt or do about any such thing: for it is the next way to bring them out of their seats, and to make them of kings no kings. How can that head live and continue, where the body is consumed and dissolved? And how can that body be just, where the sinews (the laws) are broken, and justice (the marrow that should nourish it) be utterly wasted and decayed?

Antiochus the third, King of Syria, wrote thus to all the cities of his dominion, that if he did command anything that should be contrary to the laws, they should not pass thereon, but that rather they should think it was stolen, or forged without his knowledge, considering that the prince or governor is nothing else but the minister of the laws. And this same saying of this most noble king seemed to be so just and reasonable, that it is taken for a common principle, how subjects should know when they should do that they be commanded, and when they ought not to.

Likewise, a bishop of Rome, called Alexander the third, wrote to an Archbishop, to do a thing which seemed to the Archbishop to be unreasonable and contrary to the laws, the pope perceiving that the Archbishop was offended with his writing, and would not do what he had required: desiring him not to be offended, but being desirous for him not to be offended, that if there were cause why he thought he should not do that which he had required, he would advertise him, and he therewith would be satisfied.

This is a popes saying: "Who is so proud as to deny that they be of less authority than a law? Yes, not a fellow, but above God's word"? Where upon this is a general rule, that the pope is not to be obeyed, but in lawful and honest things. And so be good argument from the more to the less, that princes (being but footstools and stirrup holders to popes) commanding their subjects that is not godly, not just, not lawful, or hurtful to their country, ought not to be obeyed, but withstood. For the subjects ought not (against nature) to further their own destruction, but to seek their own salvation: not to maintain evil, but to suppress evil: for not only the doers, but also the consenters to evil, shall be punished, say both God's and man's laws. And men ought to have more respect to their country, than to their prince: to the commonwealth, than to anyone person. For the country and commonwealth is a degree above the king. Next unto God, men ought to love their country, and the whole commonwealth before any member of it: as kings and princes (be they never so great) are but members: and commonwealths may withstand well enough and flourish, albeit there be no kings, but to the contrary, without a commonwealth there can be no king. Commonwealths and realms may live, when the head is cut off, and may put on a new head, that is, make them a new governor, then they see their old head seek too much his own will and not the wealth of the whole body, for which he was ordained. And by that justice and law, that lately has been executed in England (if it may be called justice and law) it should appear that the ministers of civil power do sometimes command that which the subjects ought not to do.

When the innocent Lady Jane, contrary to her will, yea by force, with tears dropping down her cheeks, suffered herself to be called Queen of England: yet you see, because she consented to that which was not by civil justice lawful, she and her husband for company suffered the pains of traitors, both headless buried in one pit.

When the blessed man of God, Thomas Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury, did what he might to resist to subscribe to King Edward's will, whereby his two sisters, the ladies May and Elizabeth should have been wrongly disinherited: yet because he afterward (to content the kings mind and commandment, yea in deed to save the innocent king from the violence of a most wicked tyrant) did subscribe to it against his will: was it not laid unto him by the wicked Judge Morgan (whom God not long after plagued with taking away his wits that was a fool before) that he ought no to do anything unlawful, by commandment of any power? And so he (an innocent) picked out among a great number of very evildoers (to satisfy the law) was condemned as a traitor before he suffered as a martyr. Were not he images and roodelofts in England destroyed by authority of civil power? And does not Boner the Archbishop of London for all that force them that obeyed the authority (because he said it was not lawful) to make them up against their own charges? But Boner, thou that allows nothing to be done (by whatsoever authority it be done) except it be lawful, nor nothing to be lawful that is not agreeing to the Canon laws: I have to say to you, stand still a while, while I rub thee. Tell me plainly, and face not our a lie, as thou are wont to do: speak not one thing, and think another, as your nature is: ones in your life tell the truth, and shame your master the devil. If thou were the son of the earth by your father's side, and of an errant whore by the mother, and so a bastard: by what authority do you say your mass, when your laws suffer no bastards to be priests without dispensation? How can you become a bishop when you by the Canons may not be a judge? All men know that your mother when you were begotten was a whore.

The common voice and fame says such, and the truth is that although one Boner (a bare whipjack) for lucre of money took upon him to be your father, and then to marry your mother, yet you were Savage's bastard: and of that race comes your cousin Winslow your archdeacon of London (a mete eye for such a gross head) and Winslow his brother, and a great many more notables. These things be so evident and plain that you can not (without blushing) deny them. For you boast and brag much, that you come from gentile blood.

But you will say that you have a bull of dispensation from the pope. I require to know what time it was granted. You say when you were at Rome. It is even that I require. You were in deed at Rome, proctor for the dowager, the Queens mother, in the cause of divorce between King Henry the eighth and her.

When you saw that no prebends, no archdiacories, no bishoprics were to be obtained by conniving on her part, you betrayed her cause, and became a Counselor to the king. O noble counselor. O severe and lawful judge.

A mete man to sit in condemnation of so many innocents: yea more mete to stand on the pillory, than in a pulpit: to be tied up in a boarfrank, then walk into a princes chamber: to wear a tiburne tippet, then a grey amiss. But what if you have no dispensation? What a murderer you are of true Englishmen? What a tormentor of the people of God? How have you deceived the Earls of Oxford and Suffex, the Lord Rich, the Mayor and Sheriffs of London, and many others among the nobility, gentlemen, and commoners, forcing them to wash their hand in innocent blood with you? What consciences may they have through you? How can you treat their wounded souls? But you will say, it makes no matter. The clergy has gotten rid of a great many enemies. A dead man can do no hurt. But be certain that you will be deceived. Whatever becomes of your body, I wish your soul to be saved. Repent therefore in time: become Paul of Saul.

When the prince of Sebech, called Adonisebech, cut off the hands and feet of seventy kings, and made them live by licking up the crumbs that fell under his table, he thought those poor, maimed men could do him no harm: but God paid him home. For he himself had his hands and feet cut off, and was forced to pick up crumbs under the table, as he had forced the other kings.

King Abimelech caused his three score and ten brethren on his father's side, to be all killed, because he might reign alone: he thought that all was fine, and so did they that helped him to execute so horrible an act. But what? Did they escape? No. God suffered the devil to make discord between the king and his dear darlings, and first they were justly destroyed by their king, and after he himself having his head broken with a piece of stone that fell out of a weak woman's hands, for shame willed his servant to kill him with a sword, that it should not be reported that a woman had killed him. King Ahab and Queen Jezebel thought none should avenge poor Naboth's death: but contrary to their expectation, by God's justice, dogs licked up the blood of them both. Queen Athalia thought herself sure when she had killed all the kings progeny, but God served her with the a similar fate: she reigned no longer, but she was killed. All the misery and mischief in the Realm of Naples came by a woman, called Queen Joan (a woman of much lust) who after she had been a while married to a noble gentleman, and waxed weary of his work, caused him to be hanged out of an open gallery in the top of the house (so that no man should see him) and not after the poor thieves manner with a halter of hemp, but with a rope of gold wrought with her own and her sisters Madame Marimalecasta fingers. She triumphed for a while, and after an unspeakable number of private marriages she made sour by day in a little space, but at length God plagued her, and she was hanged in that place where she before had hanged her husband.

When those that conspired the death of the two brethren, the Admiral and the Protector, had brought it to pass, so as they might rob the king, and spoil the realm at their pleasure: did they at length escape scot free? No. Some of them by the just judgment of God were plagued with the like punishment, with the same axe, upon the same block, and in the same place. And the rest hereafter are not unlike without repentance (which they do not show) to receive their rewards, wither in themselves or their posterity. O wonderful works, o just judgment of God, that hats those that do evil, and destroy those that work mischief: that abhors bloodthirsty people, and those that have double hearts and treble tongues.

But Boner, I may not leave you this way. Give me leave, Savage Boner, to dispute this matter of lawful and not lawful, a little more with you. If you and the rest of the traitors your companions should persuade the friendless Queen of England (whom you have enchanted) to give over the town of Calais and Berwick to a strange prince, and (contrary to her oath not to diminish any part of the rights of the Crown and liberties of the people, which kings of England at their Coronation in times past made, and which she also made to her subjects, when she was crowned before she was a perfect Queen) she followed your counsel, and some noble personages sent to deliver the keys, and the deputy and garrison did not strike of the messengers head, and set it on the gates, but obeyed it, and not resisted it: were not you and your fellow traitors for persuading her to do so? Had not she broken her oath and promise? Were not that attorney a traitor for doing what he had been commanded? Were not the deputy and garrison traitors for suffering it to be done? Answer. What cam you say for yourself and your fellows? Guilty, or not guilty? You stand mute, not a word? Are you sure, your good will, will stand you in as good stead as the deed has done. Neither do you pass, though the crowns be feed with your carrion carcasses, and the devil with your souls, so you may leave behind you a fame, that by your treachery, the laity of England was destroyed, and the spirituality restored to their pomp and lordly power.

But before the halter stop your wind, Boner, let us know what you can say for her. Do you say that princes are not bound by their oaths and promises? Enough. What for the rest? Let them remember that not long ago their neighbor Monsieur Vervin, Captain of Bologna, was punished as a traitor, for that by necessity and extremity of force he rendered up Bologna to King Henry the eighth and did not die in the defense of it: but you will say that he did it without commandment of his master: and these shall do it by commandment of their masters. But what if the commandment is not lawful? Do you not say to yourself that it is not to be obeyed? You say to others, that none may do that is not lawful for any commandment. But you will say that it is the Queen's own, and she may lawfully do with her own what she lusts for. What if it be denied to be her own? But you will say that she has the crown by inheritance, and may dispose of the realm, and every party of the realm, as pleases her. But I answer, that although she has it by inheritance, yet she had it with an oath, law and condition to keep and maintain, not to depart with it or diminish it. If she had no more right to the realm than her father had, and her father as much as every any king of England: what needed he to require the consent of the Nobility and commoners (by parliament) to give the Crown to his daughter or any other?

But you will say that it was more than needed: for without consent of the parliament, he might do without the consent of the realm and every part thereof, what it pleased him. Take heed what you say. If that be true, that King Henry might do with it without consent of the parliament: how is the Lady Mary queen? Why might not King Edward, his son (a prince born in lawful matrimony, and right heir to the Crown) bequeath the Crown where he would, and as he did? Take heed what you do. If the king and queen give you a thousand pardons, yet shall you be found a rank traitor to the realm of England. For although the king or queen of a realm have the Crown never justly, yet may they dispose of the Crown or realm, as it pleases them. They have the Crown to minister justice, but the realm being a body of free man and not of bondmen, he not she can not give or sell them as slaves and bondsmen. No, they can not give or sell away the holds and forts (as Calais or Berwick, or such like) without the consent of the Commons: for it was purchased with their blood and money. Yea and thine own pope's laws (whereby you measure all things to be lawful or not lawful) say that if a king or governor of any realm do about to diminish the regalities and rights of his crown, he ought to be deposed. Thus did Pope Honorius the third command the Archbishop of Colosse and his suffragettes to deprive the King of Hungary, which went about to waste, sell, and give away the regalities and rights of his crown, unless in time he ceased and called back that which he had done. It is so plain, you cannot deny it. But I see, Boner, I have chased you too much: your cheeks blush and swell from anger. M.D. Cheadsey, M.D. Pendleton, M. Cousins, or some of you chaplains, get my lord a cup of secke, to comfort his spirits. My lord and I agree almost like bells: we are somewhat, but not much. His lordship means that men ought to be always, but not at all times, honest. But I say, they must be honest always and at all times. His lordship would fain have a placard or proviso for him and his, that they might sometimes (that is from the beginning to the end of the week) play their parts. But I say, although his lordship have such a privilege, yet may no honest man at any time do that is not honest, just, and lawful, by kaisers, kings, queens, no, neither his commandment. For if those things which only in men's opinions seen to be unlawful may by no authority be done, and those that do them, be no less to be punished, then if they had done them without authority: how much less may such things by any commandment be committed, that are in deed lawful: but shall be punished according to the deserts, by whatever power or authority they be executed? Men Theodore ought to take heed, that by going about to come out of the smoke, they fall not in to the fire; and by pleasing of men, they run not into the displeasure of God. If men's ordinances and laws, or the governors authority and commandment were a sufficient discharge for men to do whatever were prescribed or commanded unto them, tell me (I beseech you), why did Isaiah the prophet suffer rather to be sawed in pieces, than to follow the proceedings of Manasseh? Why did Daniel not follow King Darius and his counselors

commandment, forbearing to worship the true God: but was content to be cast to the lions? Why did not the three children, Shadrach, Mesach, and Abednego obey Nebechadnezer in worshipping the golden idol, and so avoid the hot burning furnace? Why did Eleazar submit himself to death, and not dissemble? Why did he not eat his own meat, and abstain from pork, that the king commanded the Jews to eat contrary to the laws, and say that he had eaten it, as his old trusty friends of the court counselled him? Why did he not sue for a bull or pardon from Antiochus, that he might use his own religion, as our English goshelers do of the pope, counselling his authority, which is the thing that he only passes upon: and cares not how many souls be lead to the devil? Why did not the seven brothers and their mother obey the kings commandment, and save their lives and goods, as the ancient Catharites, and new Purists do, saying: all things be pure to the pure, and no idolatry nor filthiness can infect him that is pure and clean? Or why did they not say, as the Prifcianists and Papists did in time past, and as the merchants Hill and Peterson with their double tongued train and dissembling sect at the present say, that it is lawful (and no sin) to say one thing and mean another? To lie with the lips, so they have truth in their heart? To deny God in words and works, so they confess him in thought and mind? To dance with the devil all day, and lodge with Christ at night? Why did Paul suffer so many imprisonments, so many beatings, scourging, and tormenting? And why at length did not save his life, and follow Nero's commandment? Why did not the Prophets, the Apostles, and so many thousands of martyrs follow the wicked tyrant's commandments and proceedings, but resisted them, and with their blood testified, that they allowed them not? But all these holy men's doings in confessing and obeying the highest power, God, and not the inferior powers in wicked and evil things, are commended and left by the Holy Ghost to us in Holy Christ to follow and do the same. If men's laws and commandments were a sufficient warrant to men, to do whatever is commanded them: tell me (I pray you) to what purpose is suffering of persecution so often repeated, so earnestly taught, so highly commended in Scripture? Christ says: "He that does not take up his cross and follow me, is not mete for me". And again: "Blessed be those that suffer persecution for righteousness sake, for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven. Blessed are you when men shall curse you, and persecute you, and speak all evil against you, living for my sake: be glad and rejoice, for your reward is plentiful in Heaven. So did they persecute the Prophets that were before you". And the Apostle says: "All that live godly in Christ Jesus, shall suffer persecution". And so in a great number of places in Scripture.

But such persecution cannot be meant the injuries that private man does to private man: for God has ordained a means, that is, the magistrate to redress them. But by persecution is meant the injuries and tyranny that the magistrates and governors exercise over God's people. For they, not content to let a Christian man have justice in civil things against a papist, not an honest man against such a one as favors their proceedings, do themselves spoil the Christians and honesty of their goods: and not only spoil them, but by all manner of force, violence, and snares seek their life and blood, not only in their own country, but where then have no authority, because they will not obey their commandments, and follow their wicked proceedings.

God will have His tried by persecution, that the world may see, who love the chief power, more than the inferior powers: His commandments, more than man's fond proceedings: the soul, more than the flesh: the sure and everlasting inheritance of Heaven, more than the uncertain and temporal possessions of this world. Yea he has no other way to let the differences appear to men's eyes between His servants and parasite princes, than only by persecution. Papists, Turks, Jews, Gentiles can dissemble, they can seem to fast, to pray, to give alms, to build monasteries, and chantrys, and not do works pleasing to the eye, because they would be thought holy men, but to refuse to do that is evil for justice seek, to be slandered, spoken evil of, whipped, scourged, spoiled of their goods, killed by the worldly princes and tyrants, rather than they would disobey God, and forsake Christ: this can neither,

Papists not Turks, Jews not Gentiles, not none other do, but only the Elect of God. And yet God does not so severely require of his people, that they should offer themselves to the princes slaughterhouse, their necks to the halter, their heads to the block, their blood to make prince's pudding, their entrails to make tripes, their quarters to be boiled or roasted: but he has left them a special rule and commandment, whereby to guide themselves, that is, in all things to seek first the Kingdom of God. If he that is persecuted, feels in his conscience, that he may do God greater service and glorify by suffering than by fleeing, he ought rather to suffer a thousand deaths, than to flee one foot. But if his conscience witnesses with him that he may do God greater glory by fleeing than by tarrying, but is bound by the commandment to depart. "If they persecute you in one city", says Christ, "flee to another". And he did not only teach it, but did it himself, forsaking Jewry, and going into Galilee, when he heard John the Baptist was laid by the heels, because the time was not yet come, wherein he was appointed to glorify God. And because God would have a refuge place, and sanctuary for his, when such tyranny and persecution should be exercised, he would never suffer the power and ambitious tyrannies, to make one perfect monarchy of all, but when they had done their best to bring all together, and the string had been almost in the nick of the bow (as the proverb says) it had suddenly slipped, and not only destroyed the doer, but it has fallen into a great many shivers then it ever was before. Thus God dallies and plays with His puppets the prince of this world.

Since we be God's people and servants, and He our Lord and the highest power: and the princes of the world be but his ministers and inferior powers, ordained to do good and not evil: we ought to seek chiefly to do God's commandments before all men, to please God rather than men. For the princes (do they the worst they can) can but take from men their goods and lives: but God can take from us both goods and body, and cast both body and soul into hell. And yet should not they be able to work their will in this world, not execute their malice, if men would behave themselves toward their Lord and Master, God, as they ought. For as he can, so would he soon dispatch the world of tyrants. But because many be open enemies of God, and many dissemblers of God, God sends and suffers evil governors (and will send worse) to plague the people for their iniquity, and to try the faith of his Elect, from whom not one hair of the head can be taken without God's will. And seeking always to do that which is good, they should always eschew to do that is evil, and commit the end to God.

But admit there be a great number that have drunk of the Whore of Babylon's cup, and think that there is neither Heaven nor Hell, and that God's word is but friars matters: and that (like Sardanapalus) they should seek to eat and drink, and serve their lusts, and nothing else, were there no sure way for them to do what they would, if they should obey their princes in whatever they commanded.

The nature of wicked princes is much like to the warthogs, which if they be suffered to have their snouts in the ground, and be not forthwith let, will suddenly have in all the body: So they if they be obeyed in any evil thing (be it never so little) will be obeyed in all at length. What lets but that they may not only send for men's goods, but for their heads also, as the Turk does to his best Baffa, and all his subjects when it pleased him? Why may not they send for their subject's children, cause them to be killed, baked, and given to their parents instead of other meat: and for a second course bring in to them, the heads, feet, and hands, as King Astiages did to Harpagus? All the paper in England would not serve to record the mischief that might follow, then princes evil commandments should be obeyed and fulfilled. But men that are wise, may by a little, consider the whole.

Seeing that God wills princes commandments should not be obeyed in all things, but will have His rather suffer a thousand deaths, than do anything that is evil: and since also many evils and mischiefs may follow in this life, where wicked princes will may stand for laws, men ought, both for God's sake and commandment, abstain to obey such commandments,

and cleave unto this maxim: We must obey God rather than man, for whose sake if we lose both goods and life, we ought to rejoice, that we be called to serve him, and not doubt, but as He is able to recompense it, so will He (according to His promise) reward it. And besides also they ought to consider, that princes be ordained for the wealth and benefit of the people, and not to their destruction: to maintain commonwealths, and not to subvert them: which rather than any man should consent unto, he ought (being a faithful man to his country) to abide all losses, both of body and goods. For next after God, men be born to love, honor, and maintain their country.

Chapter V. Whether All The Subject's Goods Be The Kaisers and Kings Own, And That They May Lawfully Take Them As Their Own.

The Anabaptists wresting Scripture to serve their madness, among other foul errors, have this: that all things ought to be common, they imagine man to be of that purity that he was before the Fall, that is, clean without sin, or that (if he will) he may so be: and that as when there was no sin, all things were common, so they ought to be now.

But this mingling of the state of man before the Fall, and of him after the Fall deceives them much. For by the Fall, and ever after the Fall, this corruptible flesh of man is clogged with sin, and shall never be rid of sin, as long as it is in this corrupt world, but shall be always disposed and prone to do that which is evil. Therefore, as one means to be uncombered of the heap of sin, God ordained that man should get his living by the sweat of the brow: and that he should be the more forced to labor, the distinction of things and property (mine, and yours) was (contrary to Plato's opinion) ordained, being apparent by these two laws: Thou shall not steal: Thou shall not covet your neighbors wife, nor his servant, nor his maid, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is his. Afterward, in deed, Scripture speaks of communion of things, not that they ought so to be (for so Scripture should be directly against Scripture) but that there was such charity among people, that of their own free will, they gave and sold all they had, to relieve the misery of their poor brethren: who for impotency, or for multitude of children, were not with their labor able to get sufficient to relieve their necessity. Nor of this so given might every man take as much as lusted for, but to everyone (according to his necessity) sufficient was distributed. So that it stood in the liberality of the giver, and not in the liberty of the taker.

But there are some in these days, not of the meanest or poorest sort, but of the chief and rich: that is, many wicked governors and rulers, who in this error excel the common Anabaptists. For the common Anabaptists do not only take other men's goods as common, but are content to let their own also be common, which smacks of some charity: for they themselves do not to others, but as they themselves are content to suffer.

But the evil governors and rulers will have all that their subjects have, common to themselves, but they themselves will depart with nothing, but where they ought not: no, not so much as pay for those things, that in words they pretend to buy of their subjects, not pay those poor men their wages, whom they force to labor and toil in their works. But the manner of coming thereby is so divers, that it makes the justness of their doings much suspect. For some do it under pretense to do the people good: some by crafty and subtle means, color their doings: and some of right (but without right) claim them for their own.

Of the first sort are those, that put great taxes and impositions on drink, for as much as the people with overmuch drinking become drunkards (and so sin against God) they would seem by making them pay as much or more to them as the drink is worth, they should force them the rather to abstain from too much drinking, and so from sin. But in this it may appear they seek not abstinence from sin, and the wealth of the people, but their own private profit. For if they had their eye to God's glory and the benefit of the people, and the vice to be taken

clean away: they would not crop of the branches of the tree, and let the root grow, but they would root up the root that it should no more grow. And some of this sort do it to this end, to make things better cheap. For (they think) if there were but little money, then must things be sold better cheap. As though it lay in them to make plenty and scarcity, and as though the one were no the bounteous benefit of God sent to them that fear and love Him: and the other his plague justly powered on them that hate Him.

This kind of practice was, if not first sound, used by Emperor Julian the Apostate, a tyrant and persecutor of the Christians (as before you have heard) who being a subtle man, and not having his Counselors, should yours and subjects (at his devotion) ready to kill whom he would of the Christians (whom he knew for no private cause would rebel) meant by policy to murder them, spoiling them of that they had, and so not leaving them wherewith to buy to relieve their necessity. The enemy of God says this: "I will use you after your Christ's Gospel. For it says: 'Blessed be you poor, for yours is the Kingdom of God'. And therefor I take from you all that you have presently, that you may the sooner come by that is promised you." Doubtless, if this way were as good and beneficial for the agents and doers of it, as it may be profitable for the subjects and suffers: no doubt it were to be desired that it were done out of hand, rather than one minute of an hour differed to be done. For the people from the least to the greatest, from bottom to top, all be given to covetousness, scraping, snatching, and catching.

And from Pope to the hedge massmonging priest, all be given to subtlety, craftiness, lying, traitory, and false dealing. Their heart is so on their halfpenny, that neither they consider their duty to God (no, they know him not) nor remember how much they are bound to their country: but upon a vain hope to save their own, are content either themselves to betray their country, or to suffer it to be betrayed of others, and one of them devours and eats another, that for a little while he may the more live after his own lusts: where contrary, poverty makes men to remember, seek, and call on God, to love and defend their country, one to love another like brethren, and finally devises and works what so ever good is. But none may pill or poll, rob or spoil, or do any mischief (says the Apostle) that good may follow: and especially kings and governors of people, who because they be ordained to do good, and should no nothing but good, Christ call benefactors and not malefactors. If they do it, while they pretend (but mean it not) to bring others to Heaven, they may be sure to bring themselves to Hell.

The second sort be those that rob the people indeed, yet would not have their doings known. They walk in nets, and think no man sees them. And of this kind be those, that contrary to all laws (both of God and man) and contrary to their other, changing the coin that is ordained to run between man to man, turning the substance from gold to copper, from silver to worse than pewter, and advancing and diminishing the price at their pleasure. For in coins all laws command and equity will, that these four things be observed and straightly kept. First, the pureness of the matter, that it be not corrupted or changed. Second, that it has just weight. thirdly, that it be not clipped. The last, that it be not at the princes will sometime priced at a more value, and sometime at a less: for if a prince might do herein even what he lusted: how might he not lightly spoil his subjects of all that they have, or could come by. Which thing the great devil and cutthroat of England (the papist's god) in his sermon that he made at Paul's cross, upon this theme (now is the time to wake from sleep, by brethren, for now is our joy and pomp more nye, than when we before dissembled to believe in Christ. Be of good cheer, my disciples, our trouble is past, our joy is at hand) let not to be blurted out. In this sermon to bring the dead innocent and blessed King Edward (whom for his virtue he hated) in hatred of the people: for he imputed to him (a child and a ward) the lewd and wicked behavior of his cruel Counselors, and said, he marveled that the people could suffer so great injury, to be robbed of their prince, by altering the coin from gold to copper, and

silver to lead, and to pull it from twelve pence to six pence, and not rise against the king to redress their injury. He saw that this and such like injuries were not tolerable in a prince, and would have had the people do that against him (whom for his virtue hated) which neither for this nor any vice he would have done, where as he seemed to favor. For at the beginning to maintain Bolonga's wars. which he had devised to pull King Henry's mind from matters of religion, or (as afterward good likelihood appeared) to have him taken in the wars, and carried to the bishop of Rome: the same devil Gardener was then the Chief Counselor to have the money abused, to maintain the same. And now lately (when he has broken his chain) devised Rosemary pence, worse than ever any coin was before, as the experience shows, they being at length cried to be nothing.

The third sort of these evil princes are those that claim all their subjects goods for their own, who allege for them this common saying: All things are the Kaisers, all things be the kings, all things be the princes. And as the devil brought forth Scripture to serve his purpose against Christ, so they abhorring all other parts of Scripture, that teach them their office or Christian duty, pike out only a piece that may maintain their tyranny. It is thus written, say they in the First Book of Kings, "This shall be the right or law of the king that shall rule over you: he will take your sons, and put them to his chariots, and make his horsemen of them, and they must run before his chariot, and will make captains over them, over thousands, and over fifties, and will set them to air his ground, and gather in his harvest, and to make instruments of war and carts. And of your daughters he will make him ointment makers, his cooks, and bakers. And he will take the best of your fields and of your olive trees, and give them to his servants. And he will take the tenth of your seeds and of your vines, and give it to his lords and to his servants. And he will take the best of your male servants, and female servants, and young men, and of your asses, and do his work with them. And he will take the tenth of your sheep, and your shall be his servants. But when you shall cry out at that time upon your king, which you shall have chose, the Lord will not hear you on that day."

This piece of Scripture is their cloak: but it serves no more a kings wicked doings than that of wicked sons of Eli, and the sacrificers (whom men call priests) to take our of men's pots, what piece they lusted for, or to take their portion raw, contrary to God's ordinances. For as in your place it is called the right or law of the king: so is it in the other place called the right or law of the priests. But in no other of these places is it called the law or right that God appointed to kings or priests, which he set out in other places, but such as they would usurp over the people. No other will this maintain the purpose, that here he speaks of a king and not of a tyrant, for at the first a kings name was as odious, and as much abhorred, as a tyrants. But this was spoken of the prophet Samuel to scare the people, that they should not go about to alter the order and policy that God had ordained: which if they did, they should feel what a plague it were to have a king given in God's fury. And if they had only sought to be ruled by one (as partly in this, that one alone rules, a king does differ from other governors) they would have been content with Samuel alone, who as he was appointed by God to rule alone over the Israelites, so did he exercise and use his office most uprightly: but they would have need of a gallant and pompous king, one that should ride out with his trumpets before him, a great troop of horsemen before and behind him, his guard all together in silk with their halberds about him, and everyone to fall flat to the ground that should meet him, as the Gentiles had, who were indeed tyrants, as appears by the first, called Nimrod, who for his rebellion against God, and devouring of God's people, was call the stout before or against God. And in the same kingdom of the Israelites God showed by an evident terror to all governors, that he did no allow such right, as the prophet said, the king would overuse his subjects. For when King Ahab would have bought from his subject, Naboth, his vineyard (which he needed not to have done, if the subjects goods be the kings) and he refused to sell it, as he might do, for by God's law he had a property therein, from which without his will and consent, he could not be forced to depart, the king fretted so much because he could not

have his will, that he fell sick in his bed, and would not eat. His wife, Jezebel, a woman full of malice and mischief (as that king is very apt and prone to those virtues, and within a short space do excel, as few men can in long time match them) took the matter into his own hands. What (she said) be you a small man to be a king over Israel, that will suffer such dishonor at your slaves hands, one that by your ancient prerogative which has continued these hundred and three score years, yea from the first kings of Israel) you may use in body and gods, as pleases you? Pull your courage to you, arise, eat your meat, be merry, I warrant you the vineyard. Out goes a commission in the king's name, to certain commissioners where Naboth lived, such as the queen's grace was sure, favored her proceedings. Those she required to cause Naboth to be indicted and condemned for a heretic and a traitor: and so to cause him to be stoned to death. Her will is further satisfied, matter enough against Naboth, prisoner at the bar, because she would so have it: no man might be admitted nor speak the truth in the prisoner's cause, lest they also had been clapped fast and trussed up also for speaking against the king and queen: no quest quieted him: no laws, no equity, no justice might defend the poor innocent. So the vineyard is the kings by the order of law. This news was carried by post to Jezebel, she showed it to her husband, upon which (as soon as he heard it) recovered, and took possession of the vineyard. But what followed this cruelty and tyranny? Are not both the kings majesty and the queens highness within a while killed, and their blood licked up by dogs, according to the declaration which the prophet declared to him in the vineyard, when he took possession of it? And all of his house was destroyed, that there was not left not so much as a dog to piss against the wall? Thus you may see the end of lusty lords and ladies that will have their lusts a law, and their will to be followed and obeyed of their subjects as a right indeed. The true right and prerogative of a king was written in a particular book by the Prophet Samuel, and laid up by the Ark, which book (among many others) was lost, yet who so lusted to know it, may see it set out by God in the book of Deuteronomy. After that, God had prescribed who should be their kings, that is, no alien or stranger, but one of their own brethren: for naturally strangers do not favor strangers. And a strange prince seeks by all means to destroy the natural inborn, that he may with quietness and surety enjoy and use that by evil he comes by, and so leave it to his succession: than is set further the right and prerogative of a king thus. When your king is made, he shall not keep many horses, nor putting his trust in his horsemen, he shall not bring the people again into Egypt. He shall not have many wives, lest they alter his mind from God: none other but silver and gold. But when he is set in his throne, he shall cause a copy of these laws and statutes to be written out of the original remaining with the Levites, and the same he shall have with him all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the Lord his God, and to keep (not to break) all the words and ceremonies that be commanded in the law, and also to fulfill them in his doings: and he shall not be proud and haughty over his brethren, neither shall he swerve from the law towards the right hand or left hand, that he and his children may long reign over Israel. But besides this law appointed for all kings, he that will be accounted as a Christian king or governor, must remember, that he is a Christian man, and that by being made a king, he is not exempt from the laws and duty of a Christian man, which everyone professes in Baptism: but as he is called and exalted above the rest of his brethren, so should be an example to them of good living and virtue, in observing the law, which says as well as kings as to beggars: Thou shall not steal, thou shall not covet anything that is your neighbors: and so it stabilizes and confirms, that everyone may justly keep that is his own, and none may take it from him by any means against his will, be he king or kaiser.

And by the doings of Samuel, who albeit he were not a king in name, yet he had (being the lieutenant and viceroy to God the chief king) as great authority as any king in the earth: it may appear that all things of the subjects be not the kings own property. For if they had been his own, what did Samuel need (at the surrender of his office) to offer to make a reckoning? And to whom, I pray you? To any bribing auditor? No, he offered to make it to God, and to the king that succeeded him. "Behold," he says, "I have done all that you desired of me. I

have made a king to rule over you. My children shall yet be with you. But I am old, and declining: that is, I cannot long continue. I have been among you from a child to this day. Lo, I am ready to make my reckoning before God and your king, for all things that can be laid to me by any of you, whose bull have I taken? Whose ass have I had? To whom have I done any violence or wrong? Whom have I oppressed? Of whom have I taken any bribes, to maintain him in wickedness, to wink at his faults, or to stop justice? Let him come forth, and I will make satisfaction." And none could speak against him.

Samuel continued, "No, I take God and your king to witness against you: I am withering, so that you shall not find one joint in my fingers, but I am able to lay enough against you wicked people, & etc."

O Samuel, Samuel, what king or prince can say as you did to the Israelites? They look to not make a reckoning: no, they have counsel of crafty Alcibiades, how they can avoid making amends.

But they cannot escape it, they shall meet with another manner of auditor, than any of Monsieur Cinquebonets apprentices: they shall reckon before him, that has all their doings truly written and fairly engrossed all ready before hand, and where he shall in the day of his general audit, say to Samuel and all true governors that rule according to God's rules: "You fared well, you good and faithful servants; Come, enter into your Master's joy": He shall to the contrary commit these oppressors and tyrants not to the lieutenant of the Tower, or to the warden of the Elite, but unto the jailer of Gehenna (to be chained in the ward of eternal pain) and say: "Away with these deceivers of my people to the dogs of Hell, you were masters, and not ministers. You were bare baiters, and not bailiffs, you were destroyers, and not stewards".

But let us imagine an untruth, that all the subjects goods were the princes, and that he might take them at his pleasure. Let us imagine, that the subjects were only carnal men without knowledge and fear of God. Yes, and let it be granted also, that they were spoiled of all their armor, and great garrisons set in every place to keep them in office, so that they had not wherewith to address their injuries, as nature would counsel them: were this a way to make the people labor, when others should take the bread out of their mouths? Would they desire to increase the world with children, when they knew that they should be left in the worst estate, than unreasonable beasts? No surely, and that you may see by the work of nature in the people of the West Indies, now called New Spain: who knew of Christ nothing at all, and of God no more that nature taught them. The people of that country when the Catholic Spaniards came to them, were simple and plain men, and lived without great labor, the land was naturally so plentiful of all things, and continually the trees had ripe fruit on them. When the Spaniards had by flattery put in their foot, and little by little made themselves strong, building forts in various places, they to get the fold that was there, forced the people (that were no used to labor) to stand all the day in the hot sun gathering gold in the sand of the rivers. By this means a great number of them (not used to such pains) died, and a great number of them (seeing themselves brought from so quiet a life to such misery and slavery) of depression killed themselves. And many would not marry, because they would not have their children slaves to the Spaniards. The women when they felt themselves with child, would eat a certain herb to destroy the child in the womb. So that where at the coming of the Spaniards, there were believed to be in that country nine hundred thousand persons, there were in short time by this means so few left, as Peter Martyr (who was one of the Emperor Charles the fifth's counsel there, and wrote this history to the Emperor) says, it was a shame for him to name.

This is the fruit, where princes take all their subjects things as their own. And where at length will it come, but that either they must be no kings, or else kings without people, which is all one. But you will say: where comes this common saying: all things be the kaisers, all

things be the kings? It cannot come from nothing. But with that already said, you see that every man may keep his own, and none may take it from him, so that it cannot be interpreted, that all things be the kaisers or kings, as his own property, or that they may take them from their subjects at their pleasure, but thus it is to be expounded, that they ought to defend what every man has, that he may quietly enjoy his own, and to see that they be not robbed or spoiled thereof. For as in a great man's house, all things are said to be the stewards, because it is committed to his charge, to see that every man in the house behave himself honestly, and do his duty, to see that all things are well kept and preserved and may take nothing away from any man, not misspent or wasted, and of his doings he must render account to his lord for all: so in a realm or other dominion, the realm and country are God's, he is the lord, the people are his servants, and the king or governor is but God's minister or steward, ordained not to misuse the servants, that is, the people, neither to spoil them of what they have, but to see the people do their duty to their Lord God, that the goods of this world be not abused but spent to God's glory, to the maintenance and defense of the commonwealth, and not to the destruction of it. The princes watch ought to defend the poor man's house, his labor the subject's ease, his diligence the subject's pleasure, his trouble the subject's quietness. And as the sun never stood still but continually goes about the world, doing his office: with his heat refreshing and comforting all natural things in the world: so ought a good prince to be continually occupied in his ministry, not seeking his own profit, but the wealth of those that are committed to his charge. And therefor Seleucus, king of Syria used to say: "If men knew how much business and how little quietness it was to do the things of a king, none would take upon him that office, if he might have the crown for taking it up out of the mire." And Antiochus, also the great king of Syria, when he was driven out of his country by Scipio, the Captain of the Romans, and had lost all of Asia, and the countries about: he thanked the Romans, that by their means he was delivered of so great a part of his cares. He saw it was so impossible for one man (were he never so diligent and watching) to execute well so great a charge.

If these two great kings (who knew not God, but thought themselves God: that hoped not on everlasting life, but thought there was none other but this life: those that thought they could not be forced to make account of their doings to any person) thought it so great a charge to have a rule over countries: how much more should such princes, as pretend to be Christians, that know themselves mortal men, not gods: servants, not masters: and who must (because God has said it shall be so) make an account for all their doings, for all souls, men, women, and children; think their office and ministry a heavy burden, and so give over seeking and hunting after their own glory, their pomp, their pride: and seek the glory of God and the wealth (and not the destruction) of those that be committed to their charge, and tremble at this saying of Chrysostom: "I marvel that any governor can be saved", which is not spoken in vain.

Chapter VI. Whether It Be Lawful To Depose An Evil Governor, And Kill A Tyrant.

As there is no better nor happier commonwealth nor no greater blessing of God, than where one rules, if he is a good, just, and godly man: so there is no worse nor none more miserable, nor greater plague of God, than where one rules, that is evil, unjust and ungodly. A good man knowing that he or those by whom he claims was to such office called for his virtue, to see the whole state well governed, and the people defended from injuries: neglecting utterly his own pleasure and profit, and bestows all his study and labor to see his office well discharged. And as a good physician earnestly seeks the health of his patient and a shipmaster the wealth and safeguard of those he has in his ship, so does a good governor seek the wealth of those he rules. And therefore the people feeling the benefit coming by good governors, used in times past to call such good governors, fathers: and gave them no less

honor than children owe to their parents. And evil person coming to the government of any state, either by usurpation, or by election or by succession, utterly neglecting the cause why kings, princes, and other governors in commonwealths be made (that is, the wealth of the people) seeks only or chiefly his own profit and pleasure. And as a sow coming into a fair garden, roots up all the fair and sweet flowers and wholesome simples, leaving nothing behind, but her own filthy dirt: so does an evil governor subvert the laws and orders, or makes them to be wrenched or racked to serve his affections, that they can no longer do their office. He spoils the people of their goods, either by open violence, making his ministers to take it from them without payment therefore, or promising and never paying: or craftily under the mane of loans, benevolences, contributions, and such gay painted words, or forbear he gets out of their possession that they have, and never restores it. And when he has it, consumes it, not to the benefit and profit of the commonwealth, but on whores, whoremongers, dice games, cards, bankletting, unjust wars, and such evils and mischiefs, wherein he delights. He spoils and takes away from them their armor and harness, that they shall not be able to use any force to defend their right. And not content to have brought them in to such misery (to be sure of his state) seeks and takes all occasions to dispatch them of their lives. If a man keeps his house, and nothing in metal, than shall it be said that he frets at the state. If he comes abroad and speaks to any other, further with it is taken for a just conspiracy. If he says nothing, and shows a merry countenance, it is a token, that he despises the government. If he look sorrowful, than he laments the state of his country, how many so ever be for any cause committed to prison, are not only asked, but are racked also to show whether he is privy of their doings. If he departs, because he would live quietly, then he is proclaimed an open enemy. to be short, there in no doing, no gesture, no behavior, no place can preserve or defend innocence against such a governor's cruelty: but as a hunter makes wild beasts his pray, and uses toils, nets, snares, traps, dogs, ferrets, mining and digging the ground, guns, bows, spears, and all other instruments, engines, subtle devises and means, whereby he may come by his prey: so does a wicked governor make the people his game and prey, and uses all kinds of subtleties, deceits, crafts, policies, force, violence, cruelty, and such devilish ways, to spoil and destroy the people, that be committed to his charge. And when he is not able without most manifest cruelty to do by himself that which he desires, then fain unjust causes to cast them into prison, where like as the bearwards muzzle the bears, and tie them to the stakes, while they are baited and killed by mastiffs and curies, so he keeps them in chains, while the bishops and his other tormentors and heretical inquisitors do tear and devour them. Finally, he says and denies, he promises and breaks promises, he swears and forswears, and no other passes on God nor the devil (as the common saying is) so he may bring to pass that which he desires. Such an evil governor men properly call a tyrant.

Now for as much as there is no express positive law for punishment of a tyrant among Christian men, the question is, whether it is lawful to kill such a monster and cruel beast covered with the shape of a man.

And first for the better and more plain prose of this matter, the manifold and continual examples that have been from time to time of the deposing of kings, and killing of tyrants, do most certainly confirm it to be most true, just and constant to God's judgment. The history of kings in the Old Testament is full of it. And as Cardinal Pole truly cites, England lacks not the practice and experience of the same. For they deprived King Edward the Second, because without law he killed his subjects, spoiled them of their goods, and wasted the treasure of the realm. And upon what just causes Richard the Second was thrust out, and Henry the Fourth put in his place, I refer it to their own judgment. Denmark also now in our days did nobly act the same, when they deprived Christierne the tyrant, and committed him to perpetual prison.

Zacharias the pope that invented first the lamps in the church, deposed Chilperichus, king of France, because he was said to be a lecherous person, and an unprofitable governor of the realm: and forced him to be a monk, and made Pippin (father of Charles) king of France.

Pope Honorius (as you heard before) commanded that the king of Hungary should be deprived, because he diminished the rights of the crown: unless he repented, and undid all that he had done.

A certain king of Portugal was very negligent in his office: he consumed and wasted away the treasure of his realm, he oppressed his subjects, and misused them. Wherefore Pope Innocent the Fourth made the king's brother the Earl of Bologna, co-auditor to the king, and gave him the whole charge of the realm, discharged the people of their oath to the king, and commanded them to be obedient to the king's brother in all things, as king. But the Pope's learned counsel said that he ought to have been utterly deposed of the crown. These doings of popes I rehearse not, as though their usurped authority were to be allowed, but for that you may see that it is no new thing to depose evil kings and governors: and that those that have the just authority, may and ought for the like causes, do as they did. For although the authority of the pope is not lawful, yet is the reason that moved them so to do, honest and just, and meet to be received and execute among reasonable creatures. And this law of nature to depose and punish wicked governors, has not been only received and exercised in political matters, but also in the church. For the canonists (the pope's own champions) grounding themselves upon this law of nature, say that popes who may be in deed (by their saying) the lieutenants of the devil, although they call themselves the vicars of God, may be derived by the body of the church. And so at one clap, in the council held in Constance in Germany, in the year of our Lord 1415, were three popes popped out of their places, Gregory, John, and Benet, and the fourth (called Martin the fifth) chosen. Afterward in the Council of Basel was Pope Eugenius served with that sauce. For the unluckiness of the country the rest of popes have since refused that any general council should be kept in Germany, fearing least they all having deserved as much as the other four deposed, should have the like punishment. And thus they confirm their doings. If (they say) the pope has no superior, he might bring suffering from his evil, bring the church to destruction. And therefore if he cannot otherwise be brought to amend himself, it is lawful to use the law of nature, that is, to remove him from his office: for he is no bishop or pope, that abuses his Popedom and bishopric. An evil prelate and unreformable seems not to be ordained by the will of God, say the Canonists, alleging the words of St. Jerome, upon the saying of the prophet Hosea, that a prince or judge is not always ordained by God. And he brings forth the example of King Saul, against whom God said: "Seeing the people have made themselves a king, and not a ruler by Me, and not by My counsel": and yet because he was not chosen according to the will of God, but according to the mind and deserts of the sinful people, God denied him to be ordained by his will or counsel. The Canonists also say that although the Popedom be by the law of God (as it is not in deed, the truth says) yet that this man or that, Paul or Julius is pope, it comes by the act of man. For the Cardinals representing the universal Church, chose him. And therefore if he be not according to the will of God, and for the wealth of the universal Church, that is: if he be not one that seeks God's glory, and the wealth of Christ's Church, he may be justly deprived, because they erred in choosing him. And God seems not to be against the putting out of such an evil person, but to favor and further it. For he said: "If the salt be unsavory, it is good for no one's use, but to be cast out, and trodden under foot of all men". And again: "If your right eye be a let unto you, pull it out, and cast it from you. For it is better that one member perish, than that the whole body should be cast into hell". And again say the Canonists (the pope's lawyers) in rehearsing Christ's words: "If our eye, foot, or hand offends us, let it be taken from the rest of the body: for it is better to lack members in this world, than that they should carry the rest of the body into hell". By salt, eye, foot, and hand, is understood the heads and rulers, and not the other members and subjects. And not only the heads and rulers in the

Church, but also in all policies and commonwealths.

Now if it is lawful for the body of the Church to depose and punish a pope, being the chief priest, anointed not on the arm or shoulder, as kings are, but on the head and hands, to declare a higher authority than kings have: nor crowned with a simple crown, as emperors or kings are, but with a triple crown, to show his regality and power above all others: how much more by the like arguments, reasons and authority, may emperors, kings, princes and other governors abusing their office, be deposed and removed out of their places and offices, by the body or state of the realm or commonwealth?

By this law and arguments of the Canonists and example of deprivation of a pope, are all cloaks (wherewith popes, bishops, priests, kaisers, and kings use to defend iniquity) utterly taken away. They say: "We are anointed, you may not touch us: We are only subject to God, and every man to us, God will have us (O most wicked popes, bishops, priests, cruel and evil princes) reign to plague you people, for your iniquity".

But here you see the body of every state may (if it will) yea and ought to redress and correct the vices and heads of their governors. And for as much as you have already seen, whereof political power and government grows, and the end where unto it was ordained: and seeing it is before manifestly and sufficiently proved, that kings and princes have not an absolute power over their subjects: that they are and ought to be subject to the law of God, and the wholesome positive laws of their country: and that they may not lawfully take or use their subjects goods at their pleasure: the reasons, arguments, and law that serve for the deposing and displacing of an evil governor, will do as much for the proof, that it is lawful to kill a tyrant, if they may be indifferently heard. As God has ordained magistrates to hear and determine private men's matters, and to punish their vices: so also will he, that the magistrates doings be called into account and reckoning, and their vices corrected and punished by the body of the whole congregation or commonwealth.

As it is manifest by the memories of the ancient office of the High Constable of England, unto whose authority it pertained, not only to summon the king personally before the parliament or other courts of judgment (to answer and receive according to justice) but also upon just occasion to commit him unto ward.

Kings, princes, and governors have their authority of the people, as all laws, usages and policies do declare and testify.

For in some places and countries they have more and greater authority, in some places less. And in some the people have not given this authority to any other, but retain and exercise it themselves. And is any man so unreasonable to deny, that the whole may do as much as they have permitted one member to do? Or those that have appointed an office upon trust, have not authority upon just occasion (as the abuse of it) to take away that they gave? All laws do agree, that men may revoke their proxies and letters of Attorney, when it pleased them: much more when they see their proctors and attorneys abuse it.

But now to prove the later part of this question affirmatively, that it is lawful to kill a tyrant: there is no man that can deny, but that the ethnics (although they had not the right and perfect knowledge of God) were endued with the knowledge of the law of nature.

For it is no private law to a few or certain people, but common to all: not written in books, but grafted in the hearts of men: not made by man, but ordained of God: which we have not learned, received or read, but have taken, sucked, and drawn it out of nature: where unto we are not taught, but made: not instructed, but seasoned: and (as St. Paul says) man's conscience bearing witness of it.

This law testifies to every man's conscience, that it is natural to cut away an incurable member, which (being suffered) would destroy the whole body.

Kings, princes, and other governors, although they are the heads of a political body, yet they are not the whole body. And though they be the chief members, yet they are but members: no other are the people ordained for them, but they are ordained for the people.

Upon this law of nature, and to conserve the whole body the ethnics not knowing that the soul is immortal, not that there shall be a Resurrection of the body and soul to judgment, but thought the soul perished with the body, and that there was no difference between a brute beast and man's life: thought it reasonable, and made it lawful (by their positive law) for every man to kill a tyrant. And to encourage men to enterprise to kill a tyrant, they esteemed the deed to be worthy so great reward, that they thought him worthy of pardon that kills a tyrant, though he had killed his natural father before. And besides this, when they saw that tyrants used to have their bodies defended with garrisons and guards of foreign people, or kept themselves in strongholds and secret chambers, so as none without great hazards and peril might come near them: the propounded great rewards to him that should destroy a tyrant. No other thought the rewards or gifts to be a sufficient recompense for so virtuous an act, but they used also to make the image of him that killed a tyrant, in brass: and to set it up in the most solemn place of the city, for a perpetual memory of the act, the commendation of the doer, and the encouragement of other to do the like. They dedicated to his praise and honor songs and verses, and would have them taken of men as gods worthy of immortality.

Whereof came the name of nobility, or how were those that are called heroic or noble personages divided from others, and had in such honor and reverence, seeing all men came of one man and one woman? Was it for their lusty hawking and hunting? For their nimble dicing and cunning carding? For their fine singing and dancing: for their open bragging and swearing? For their false fleering and flattering? For their subtle piking and stealing? For their cruel polling and piling? For their merciless man murdering? For their unnatural destroying of their natural countrymen, and traitorous betraying of their country? No, no, there was no such thing. The respect only of their virtue and love to their country brought them thereto. Because they revenged and delivered the oppressed people out of the hands of their governors, who abused their authority, and wickedly, cruelly and tyrannously ruled over them: the people of a grateful and thankful mind, gave them that estimation and honor. Of this kind of nobility was Hercules, Theseus, and suck like.

Good kings, governors, and states in time past took it to be the greatest honor that could be, not to take cities and realms to their own use (when they were called to aid and relieve the oppressed) as princes do now a days: but to rescue and deliver the people and countries from the tyranny of the governors, and to restore them to their liberties. So did the Romans, the Lacedemonians out of the tyranny of Onabis, and all Greece from the bondage that Philip (Demetrius' son) king of Macedonia had them in. So did the noble men of the people of God also come to their high estimation and honor, as Gideon, Baruch, Jephtha, and Samson, who for the delivery of his country from the power of the idolatrous cruel Philistines, pulled upon himself present death. So that this principle that evil and evil doers ought to be punished, and rotten members to be cut away, was no peculiar law of the ethnics, but it proceeds of nature, and therefore common to all men, as it is plain by the Chronicles and experience of all ages, and purposely exemplifies for our sure stay and learning as well as the Book of Judges, as in many other histories of Holy Scriptures, according to the express word and commandment (applied to this sense and meaning) which says: "Let evil be taken out of the midst of the congregation; that the rest which hear of it, may be afraid., and not enterprise to do the like". And Christ pronounces that every tree which brings not forth good fruit, shall be cut down, and case into the fire: much more the evil tree, that brings forth evil fruit. And although some do hold that the manner and means to punish evil and evildoers, is not all one among

Christians (which be in deed that they profess in word) and ethnics, which think it lawful for every private man (without respect of order and time) to punish evil: yet the laws of many Christian regions do permit, that private men may kill malefactors, yea though they were magistrates, in some cases: as when a governor shall solidly with his sword reign upon the innocent, or go about to shoot him through with a gun, or if he should be found in bed with a man's wife, or go about to deflower and ravish a man's daughter: much more if he goes about to betray and make away his country to foreigners, & etc. Nevertheless, for as much as all things in every Christian commonwealth ought to be done decently and according to order and charity: I think it cannot be maintained by God's word, that any private man may kill, except (where execution of just punishment upon tyrants, idolaters, and traitorous governors is either by the whole state utterly neglected, or the prince with the nobility and counsel conspire the subversion or alteration of their country and people) any private man have some special inward commandment or surely proved motion of God: as Moses had to kill the Egyptian, Phineas the Lecherous, and Ahud King Eglon, with such life: or be otherwise commanded or permitted by common authority upon just occasion and common necessity to kill.

But now perchance you will demand, why Christian men never made express positive law of the kind of punishment of tyrants. Might it not be answered, as Solon did (excusing that he had not made a law for such as killed their parents) that no man would suspect, that so unnatural a fact should be thought, much less committed? Or that those that should be the ministers, yea the images of God here in earth, charged both by God and man, to see the people defended from injuries, should so much abuse their office and authority, as to convert the sword to the destruction of them, whose champions and defenders they ought to be? Yea rather of all to say (which is most certain) the simple people deceived by great oaths, and beguiled with fair promises, suffered their governors to usurp such authority and power over them, and so long winked and bore with their iniquity, that they were not able to take it from them.

But I beseech you, what needs to make one general law to punish by one name a great many offenses, when the law is all ready made for the punishment of everyone of them particularly. If a prince robs and spoils his subjects, it is theft, and as a thief ought to be punished. If he kills and murders them contrary or without the laws of his country, it is murder, and a murderer he ought to be punished. If he commits adultery, he is an adulterer and ought to be punished with the same pains that others be. If he violently ravish men's wives, daughters, or maidens, the laws that are made against ravishers, ought to be executed on him. If he goes about to betray his country, and to bring the people under a foreign power: he is a traitor, and as a traitor he ought to suffer. And those that be judges in commonwealths, ought (upon complaint) to summon and cite them to answer to their crimes, and so to proceed, as they do with others. For the prophet speaking unto those that have the rule in commonwealths, and that be judges and other ministers of justice, he says: "Minister justice to the poor and orphaned, pronounce the miserable and poor to be innocent, if he be innocent: take the poor, and deliver the needy out of the hands of the wicked". When you sit to judge, you shall not have respect of persons, whether they be rich or poor, great or small: fear no man, for you execute the judgment of God, says the Holy Ghost by the mouth of Moses. Judge not after the outward appearance of man, but judge rightly, says Christ.

God Himself gave the example of punishment of evil governors. For when the children of Israel had committed idolatry, he commanded Moses to take the princes of the people, and to hang them up against the sun, that his wrath and fury might be turned from Israel.

When that doughty dame, Queen Athalia, the woman tyrant (seeing after her son Ahaziah was dead, that she was childless, and past hope to have any children) had killed all the king's progeny (saving Joas, whom Jehosaba, Joram's daughter hid and get with his nurse

out of the way) purposing to reign thereby in security, and to transpose the right of the crown to strangers or some other favorer of her cruel proceeding at her pleasure by the help and subtlety of her traitorous counselors, and so went on in all abomination and cruelty without comptrolling a great space: did her subjects suffer her in her wickedness still unpunished though she was the undoubted queen and chief governor of the land? No, no. But as soon as Joas was a little nursed up, and crept somewhat out of the shell being a child of seven years old: the nobility and commoners feeling by experience what misery it was to live under the government of a mischievous woman, not only guarded Joas with men and all decent regal ceremonies unto the house of God (by the advise and appointment of Jeoiada the High Priest) and there crowned him solemnly: but also when Athalia the Queen came in, marveling what ado that was, and perceiving the matter, rent her clothes howling and crying, as the manner of mad women is, specially in the hot seasons of the year: they laid hands on her (for all her crying, "treason, treason") and when they had carried her out of the house of God, they slew her. And so was the realm rid of a tyrant, the right inheritor possessed in his regal estate, the people made a new covenant with God to serve him sincerely according to His word, and banished all idolatry and false religion (which the Queen had set up and used) and the commonwealth flourished afresh in her former peace and liberty.

The Prophet Elias being no civil magistrate, caused the king and queens highness chaplains Baal priests to be killed before Achabs face, because they were idolaters, and taught and maintained false religion, though scarce so false and idolatrous, as the pope's mass and religion is. And when the queens majesty dame Jezebel (that she-devil) saw Jehu come to her palace, cried and reviled him as a traitor. Jehu not passing upon her words (though she was his sovereign lady and masters) cried aloud: who is on my side, who? As though he had said, if there be any among you, that sets more by God's true religion and their natural country than by that idolatrous witch the queen: cast her out at the window. And so two or three of her privy chamber threw her out to him, bursting her neck and bones against the walls. And as soon as Jehu had trod her under his feet, dogs (as you heard before) eat up her flesh, and slosed up her blood.

Joram was known the king and right inheritor of the crown of Israel. And yet when he saw Jehu and his company come toward him, he asked him whether he came in peace. Jehu said: "What peace should there be, as long as the whoredoms of your mother Jezebel and her witchcrafts be so great"? And so for his idolatrous tyranny and evil government Jehu slew him. And many more such examples in Scripture we have, which (as the rest of the Bible is) be left for the instruction of all Christian commonwealths in like case, as we want not also the like experience and examples even in these out days. Because the remembrance of the horrible destruction of the evil governors, and alteration of the commonwealth in Switzerland and certain other places in high Alamagne, now in our time is not very pleasant, I will purposely pass it over, although the matter is so fresh and green yet still in all men's sights, that it is spoken of universally throughout the world. And was not Petrus Aloysius (Pope Paul the Third's son, and duke of Placenza) justly slain now lately of his own people, because of the evil government and tyranny he used among them?

And where this justice is not executed, but the prince and the people play together, and one winks and bears with the others faults, there cannot be, but a most corrupt, ungodly, and vicious state, which although it prosper for a season, yet no doubt at length they may be sure, that unto them shall come that came to Sodom, Gomorrah, Jerusalem, and such other, that were utterly destroyed.

And on the other side, where the nobility and people look diligently and earnest ly upon their authorities, and do see the same executed on their heads and governors, making them to yield account of their doings: than without fail will the princes and governors be as diligent to see the people do their duty. And so shall the commonwealth be godly, and prosper, and

God shall be glorified in all. But you will say, that if the nobility, and those that be called to common Councils, and should be the defenders of the people, will not or dare not execute their authority: what is then to be done? The people be not so destitute of remedy, but God has provided another means, that is, to complain to some minister of the word of God, to whom the keys be given to excommunicate not only common people for all notorious and open evils: but also kaisers, kings, princes, and all other governors, when the spoil, rob, undo and kill their subjects without justice and good laws. And what so ever such minister of God's word binds upon those occasions here in earth, it is fast bound in heaven before the face of God. And no means to undo it, by any good word (much less by popes pardon or friars prayers) without repentance of the party offending, and satisfaction made to the party offended for the injustice and injuries committed: and the mercy of God through the only merits of our Saviour Jesus Christ. For example we have of St. Ambrose, who being no pope, nor popes commissary, but Bishop of Milan excommunicated the Emperor Theodosius. Whose doings, because you may the better know, I will in few words express the effect of the history. this Theodosius, although he was an Emperor, and a Christian man, yet was he of nature choleric, and much disposed to be angry: and as it seemed, without consideration. It chanced that in a sedition at Thessalonica, some of his officers were stoned to death, and some very evilly treated. He in a rage sent a number of merciless men of war, who made no difference between the authors of the sedition and the innocent people, make a horrible slaughter of the poor people, man, woman, and child. Afterwards, the Emperor after his accustomed manner, came toward the church, and St. Ambrose meet him at the church door, and would not suffer him to enter: but not only told him, it was no place for murderers, but also did excommunicate him out of all Christian company, until he repented and made satisfaction for the horrible murder committed by his soldiers. The Emperor being brought up and instructed in the word of God (as I would to God all Christian princes were at this present time) and knowing the office both of the minister of God's word, and of an Emperor, obeyed: and returned weeping and crying to his palace. Eight months after, came the feast of the Nativity of Christ: and Ruffinus, lord, great master, or steward of his house came to the Emperor, who he found very heavy, weeping, and sobbing. He being familiar with him, desired to know the cause of his sorrow. The Emperor said, "Ah Ruffinus, you are merry, for you feel not my pains. I lament and mourn for my calamity. It is free for slaves and beggars to go to the church, and there to pray to God, by I may not come there: no, Heavens gates be shut to me. Christ's words go not out of my heart: what so ever you bind on earth is bound in Heaven". At length, being encouraged by Ruffinus, that he might not be absolved by St. Ambrose, he sent him before, to be a means for him, and he himself followed. But Ruffinus could not entreat the Bishop. After the Emperor came, but did not dare enter into the church, but outside the doors fell upon his knees to St. Ambrose, and desired absolution. St. Ambrose said he was not mete to be absolved, for his coming was more like a tyrant, one that would by force be absolved, than a Christian man that showed himself penitent and sorry. No (said the Emperor) I will not presume against the order of the church to enter in by force, but I humbly beseech you to loose me out of these bonds of excommunication, and that you will remember the mercy that God uses: and that you will not shut against me the gate that God opened to all that be penitent. The Bishop asked him what worthy penance he had showed since the time he had committed that wicked act, or with what medicine he had healed those most grievous wounds. It is you part (said the Emperor) to prepare the medicine, and mine to receive and use it. At length, St. Ambrose required there might be a law ordained, that the execution of revenge should not be done suddenly but delayed, so as it should not proceed from anger, and the Emperor made that law. Afterwards he was released of the excommunication: and coming into the church he made his prayers, not standing nor kneeling, but lying flat on the ground, pulling his hair, beating his brow, weeping, lamenting, and crying with David: My soul cleaves to the pavement, quicken me, O Lord, according to your word: and asked mercy and forgiveness. Thus you see, what any minister of the church

may do upon the greatest prince, if he well execute his office and the power that Christ gave him. But you will say, what if the minister pass not on his duty, but be content to wink at all the vices of the governors, be they never so wicked, so he may have a bishopric, a deanery, a prebend, or a good fat benefice, and live unpunished in all abomination? Yea, and what if there be such special grudges between the nobility and the commoners, that the one sort neither trusts nor loves the other, so as the one dare not open the necessity and means of such correction and redress of the evil governors vices, for fear least if the purpose come to light beforehand, the matter be dashed, and the monsignor leap headless for his labor, as it is in these days so often seen: what shift then? Indeed there be certain examples and patterns in the Holy Bible, which I will not stick to rehearse, though not expound, but wholly refer them to the further debating and judgment of thine own conscience, through the Holy Ghost, by whose providence they are enrolled for our learning.

We read that after the Lord God had sundry times delivered his people of Israel from wicked tyrants, with whom he had plagued them for their wickedness and idolatry: at length when through abundance of wealth and quietness they fell to a certain careless security of life, not only forgetting God and His holy, sincere word, but also seeking everyone his own singular self gain with the hurt and contempt of his neighbor. God took from them their natural liege lord, the good judge Othoniel, and placed, yes (says the Scripture) he strengthened a strange prince among them, an idolatrous person and a wicked, called Eglon. This Eglon used the matter so with bribing those Israelites, that for preference would be traitors to their natural country, and specially in bringing in a great power of Ammonites and Amalekites (two kinds of people in beggarly pride and filthiness of life much like to the common nature of Italians and Spaniards) as well to guard his person, as to fortify the strongholds and munitions: that by and by seeing himself strong enough with his strangers and inborn traitors, he brought the country and people under his subjection by fine force, so that he continued their ordinary prince and chief ruler xviii years long. What oppressing of the poor, what robbing of the rich, what taking up of corn and vital for the king and his strangers, and no money paid for it, what taxes and payments the people were yoked with all, what ravishing of men's wives, daughters, and servants, what heading and hanging of the natural Israelites to make the strangers lords and gentlemen, what common miseries and continual calamities there were during that space, no doubt it is unspeakable.

But what remedy? No man would make moan to his neighbor for fear of retribution, none would whisper against the king, they must bend or break, no remedy, patience perforce, all were fain to serve and please King Eglon. But at length they sent (as their yearly accustomed manner was) a present to the king by a witty messenger, called Ahud: who having access to the king, said he had to say unto his majesty secretly from God. And when the king had commanded all his servants away, so that Ahud and the king were alone in his summer parlor, Ahud thrust his dagger so hard into the king's fat paunch, that there lay King Eglon dead, and Ahud fled away.

Now, was this well done or evil? For the deed is so commended in Scripture, that the Holy Ghost reports Ahud to be a savior of Israel.

But note by the way, the text does not say that Ahud was sent of the people to kill the king, not that he told them what he intended: for by that means, one Judas or other would have betrayed him, and so should he have been drawn, hanged, and quartered for his enterprise, and all his conspirators have lost both life, lands, and goods for their conspiracy.

Only the Scripture says that Ahud (being a private person) was steered up only by the Spirit of God.

Likewise, when Sisera, lieutenant general of King Jobin's wars, fleeing from Barak sought protection to hide his head, having long annoyed and hurt Israel with oppression and wars, a woman named Jael called him into her house, and hid him under a covering. He thought himself sure, and for weariness, dropped hard into a sleep.

Jael took a great, long spiking nail, and drove it with a hammer so hard into his brains, that Sisera troubled Israel no more, not never told who hurt him.

Mattathias being by the king's commissioners required and commanded to conform himself to the king's proceedings (which was to commit idolatry) as all his countrymen the Jews had done (and as the like case stands now in England) not only refused to obey King Antiochus commandment, or to follow his proceedings in that behalf, but also when he saw a Jew commit idolatry before his face, he ran upon the Jew in a great zeal and slew him, and fell also upon the ordinary commissioners sent from Antiochus the ordinary king of the realm, and slew them by his own hand. These examples need no further exposition, the Scripture is plain enough. But if neither the whole state nor the minister of God's word would do their common duty, not any other lawful shift before mentioned can be had, nor dare be attempted: yet are not the poor people destitute all together of remedy: but God has left unto them two weapons, able to conquer and destroy the greatest tyrant that ever was: that is, Penance and Prayer. Penance for their own sins, which provokes the anger and displeasure of God, and makes him to suffer tyrants, wars, famine, pestilence, and all plagues to reign among the people. And prayer, that he will withdraw His wrath, and show His merciful countenance.

Hereof we have not only commandments, but also manifest examples in the Scriptures. For when the Ark of God was taken away from the people of Israel by the Philistines in battle, and the glory of Israel brought under foot (the people being miserable for their sins pressed and plagued by the Philistines twenty years long) so that the people despairing of their honor and liberty, and seeing no martial weapon, nor help of man able to redress their state, cried and continued in lamenting their grievous condition: at length by the advise and commandment of the good Prophet Samuel, the people fell to these two means: Penance, and Prayer, with fasting: and the Lord God not only delivered them out of the oppression of the Philistines unto their former liberty, but also gave them such victories, that the Philistines many years after, did not once move war against them.

Thus was also the cruel tyrant Herod vanquished. The Apostles and people in the primitive church lamenting their sins, and calling to God for mercy, the Angel of God stuck Herod sitting in his throne, in his princely apparel, making an oration to the people, and the commending it to the voice of God, and not of man, and so he was eaten up by lice and worms. Likewise, when Julian the Emperor and Apostate had long persecuted the Church, at length when the people fell to repentance and common prayer, he going into Persia, was slain, and none of the family of Constantine (whereof he came) after that was Emperor. And in like manner not long since when that tyrant Duke George of Saxony persecuted all such as professed the word of God, revived and pulled out of purgatory, by the worthy instrument of God Dr. Luther: and at length threatened, that he would burn and destroy the University of Wittenberg, which when Luther heard, he went into the pulpit, and exhorted every man to put on his armor: that is, Penance and Prayer. And soon after, God rid the world of that tyrant, and so not only delivered his Church, but also augmented it with another University, called Lipsia, and all the whole country of this cruel duke was converted to Christ's gospel.

These be the wonderful works of Almighty God, whose power is as great and as ready at a pinch as ever it was, and his mercy as willing to be shown, if his poor, afflicted people would do put on their weapon: that is, be sorry for their sins, and desire Him to withdraw His scourges, and to hold His merciful hand over them.

Chapter VII. What Confidence Is To Be Given To Princes And Potentates.↩

When the king of Macedonia, Alexander the Great, heard the philosopher Anaxagoras say there were many worlds, the worm of ambition so tickled and troubled his heart, that the water gushed out of his eyes. And when he was asked what made him to weep: "Have I not just occasion to weep", he said, "that hearing of so many worlds, I am not yet lord of on?" This worm without fail was the devil, who not content that kings (the ministers of God) should serve God in their vocation (to have them the sooner fall from God, and serve him) puts them in hope they shall be lords of all the world, if they will take him for their chief lord and sovereign. But because he sees the inconstancy of kings, that they no longer abide by their oaths and promises than they may thereby have profit, gain, and their desire, he does not forthwith put them in possession, but to try their fidelity, he shows them by what means they shall come to it, putting to their good will, help, and industry. He doubts not, but if he may bring them once in to the puddle over the shoen, they will through thick and thin whatsoever comes of it, to come to that they looked for. These ways of the devil, from out of his school of practice and they be in a generality, two: that is, open force and secret subtlety: the one whereof, that is, force and manhood, having often tried and most times it has not succeeded after their mind, they have no so much put in use, but have rather trusted on the other, that is, subtlety and craft whereby they work a great deal more mischief than by open force and strength of men, and with less peril of themselves. For when they go about it by force, the devil their master is not able to warrant them the success. For all victory and good success comes from God, who when He sees the people (against whom the devil and his kings work) fall to repentance for their sins, He overthrows His and their enemies with a flip, as He did proud Olofernes and Senacherib: the one being slain by the good and faithful woman to God and her country, Judith: all his power being a hundred and twenty thousand footman, and twelve thousand archers on horseback destroyed by a few. And the other's army being a hundred four score and five thousand persons was destroyed by the angel of God without the word of man, and he forced to flee: and at his return home he was killed by two of his sons.

But the other means, that is, subtlety and craft (which the world calls policy) they more practice: and therein daily do so proceed, that within short time many of them have been doctors. And they have a principle of this art, which is, that to come by a kingdom, to come by that they desire, they may break all men's laws, all oaths, all promises, yea the laws, of God and honesty. This art of subtlety of princes (otherwise called policy) confines chiefly in this, for a man to appear outwardly that he is not inwardly: to say one thing with the mouth, and think another in the heart: to smile upon him, whose throat he would gladly see cut: and so pretends to the eye all amity, benevolence, and love, where they bear greatest hatred, envy, and malice, till convenient time may be had with least danger, to execute their conceived mischief. And because they be not able alone to do their feats, look where they can understand of any of their nature, them they retain, to them give they great chains of gold, feed them with great pensions and fees promised. And yet them be not ignorant, that such vile men (as will for money betray their own country, and serve their wicked purposes) are like unto common soldiers and lance knights, who serves him that gives a penny more: and will, when they may have greater bribes of another, soon but and sell their present master. For how is it possible for any man to think, that he whom he has corrupted with rewards to serve his purpose, will or can be faithful to him that is a stranger, that so well knows what they be, and finds them false to their native country: in the defense whereof all honest men be bound, and be content to bestow their life, their blood, their goods, and what so ever the have? Do not princes use traitors, as men use Coloquits, Turbith, Eleborum, and such like poisons? That is, to serve their purpose, when they have need of them, and after cannot abide their fight, no, not their savior, but cast them out on the dung hill?

Yes, doubtless it is most certain. When one had betrayed in to Caesar's hands certain towns: what said Caesar? "I love treason", he said, "but traitors I do abhor". So said also King Antigonus, "I love traitors while they betray, but when they have betrayed, and served my purpose, I utterly hate and abhor them".

Aurelius the Emperor having long besieged the city of Tiana in Asia, and being without hope to get it by force, practiced with one Heracleo (a great rich man and citizen of the city, then being in the city) to betray the city to him.

This Heracleo fearing least if the city should be won by force, he should also lose his riches, and hoping of great gain by this bargain, consented to the Emperor, and did what he required. The Emperor as soon as he came into the city, caused this traitor Heracleo to be killed (although he had done alone that for the Emperor, that all the Emperor's power was not able to obtain for the Emperor) because he could no abide his sight, that had betrayed his country, the deed was so horrible and against nature. Yet because he would not seem to have done it for desire of his riches, he gave them to his children, whom he preserved. And writing to his friend the matter as it was done, showed that he could no love nor abide traitors, not that he could keep promise with such as should not be faithful and loving to their country.

It is written of one called Cakanus, king in Baierland in Germany, that he invaded a country sometimes called Carnia, now called Frioly in Italy, and other places belonging to the Venetians with a great power: and at the first meeting of him and the enemies, he overcame and killed one Gisulfus, a Lombard, Duke of that country. After that he besieged a city, wherein Romilda the Duke's wife was.

She desiring to see this king what manner man he was, needed not to have his image portrayed unto her, but looked over the walls advisedly upon him. When she saw he was a goodly and fair person, she was by and by in love with him. She wished that she might have him enter into her own hold. Meat nor drink could do her good, she could not sleep, she sobbed, she howled, she sounded, she tore her hair, and is more than half mad, for lack of her lust.

To be short, contrary to all honesty and womanly shamefastness, she wooed him to be her husband: and having no regard of the love that every honest creature ought to bear to his country, she promised to give him city, country, jewels, goods, and what so ever she could pull out of her subjects, and make for him, so that he would marry her. The king lacking no wit (or at least wanting no witty counsel) and knowing what peril might chance unto him, if he should seek to win it by force, took the offer.

And according to his promise he married her, and one night took pains to shake up her lecherous rotten ribs. In the next morning he left his chamber, and her gates open free to everyman: and (as some, God give them grace to repent in time, did to the wicked woman of Feversham in Kent, that not long since killed her husband) he gave everyman liberty that would, to offer his devotion into her corporese. So at length, when he thought her tired, and her insatiable lust somewhat stanchd (for by like it would never have been fully glutted) he caused her to be thrust on a stake naked, that all men might see those ugly parts, which to satisfy she was content to betray her natural country: and that it should be an example to all others, to take heed to do the like, he caused the whole city to be clean overthrown.

This may you see, that kings spare neither male nor female, great nor small, that for any respect betray their own natural country: because they know, those can never be faithful to strangers that be false to their parent, their country. And would to God they were as earnestly set to abstain from doing evil, as in these examples they to have been ready to do justice.

But what shall we need to bring further examples of practicers, of strange and fair countries, when everyman may find plenty in his own? To what purpose shall it be, to allege those of a great many years past and stale, when there be plenty everyday fresh to be found? Only to let men see by comparison of the old with the new, and the new with the old, the present with the past, and the past with the present, that the devil has always been, is and shall be the devil: and such fetches as he has used, such he does and will use. And that his disciples of their science, so have they at length their masters reward, worthy their desserts.

When Wriothesley, Arundell, and Southwell conspired with the ambitious and subtle Alcibiades of England, the Earl of Warwick (afterward Duke of Northumberland) to pull the good Duke of Somerset, King Edward's uncle and Protector, out of his authority, and by forging a great many false letters and lies to make the Protector hated, brought to pass Warwick's purpose: who then for a while, but those three? Wriothesley that before was banished the Court, is lodged with his wife and son next to the King.

Everyman repaired to Wriothesley, honors Wriothesley, sued unto Wriothesley (as the Assyrians did to Ammon) and all things be done by his advise: and who but Wriothesley? Arundell, his next promised to be king, groom of his stole, or Comptroller of his house at the least. Southwell (for his whisking and double diligence) must be a great counsellor in any wise. But what was the end? The Earl as crafty as the best (seeing that his desire should not take place, if these men might have that they hoped for) so handled the matter, that Wriothesley is fain in the night to get him out of the court to his own house: where upon narrow examination, fearing lest he should come to some open shameful end, he either poisoned himself, or pined away for thought.

Southwell is committed to the Fleet, where being examined, he counseled enough to be hanged for, and had gone very near it, had not his examiners upon hope of his amendment breaking out of his eye, but not out of his heart, obtained the Earl's favor.

And at the Earl's suit Arundell had his head with the axe divided from the shoulders.

And how at length was P. the master of practices handled, that will have one part in every pageant, if he may be praying or paying put in his foot? But before I proceed to speak of this master of practices it shall not be amiss, that I tell you somewhat of his master the doctor of practices. For although this doctor be now (but to late) thoroughly known, yet it shall be requisite, that our posterity know what he was, and by his description see, how nature had shaped the outward parts, to declare what was within. This doctor had a swart color, and hanging look, frowning brows, eyes and inch within the head, a nose hooked like a buzzard, wide nose trills like a horse, ever snuffing into the wind, a sparrow mouth, great paws like the devil, talons on his feet like a grip, two inches longer than the natural toes, and so tied to with sinews, that he could not abide to be touched, nor scarce suffer them to touch the stones.

And nature having thus shaped the form of an outward monster, it gave him a vengeful wit, which at Cambridge by labor and diligence he had made a great deal worse, and brought up many in that faculty: Wriothesley, Germaine Gardiner (whom he caused speedily to be hanged, lest he should have to much disclosed his master art) and among many other, this master or proctor of practices, whom we are now entered to speak of.

This doctor to give some signification of his nature and cunning to come aloft, that he might do the more mischief, betrayed his M. Cardinal Wolsey: and more than any other labored the divorce between King Henry and the dowager. And by and by he earnestly sought to have ridden in the kings boots: worse could not content him. But when he saw that would not be, and considered it better to have store than one only pair (for so perchance he might have found them sometimes not all clean when he would have used them, and also it should be a let to bring to pass that he purposed) he changed his purpose: and because none should

remember his practices before, nor suspect the rest to come, he shaved his crown as broad as a saucer, and decked himself with a white smock like a porter of the Stiliard. But what needs such circumlocution, when everybody knows this doctor of practices was called D. Stephen Gardiner? After this, his luck was to be committed to the Tower, when Tyburne had been a place more worthy his desserts. His scholar the master or proctor of practices, remembering how much he had proposed by the means of the doctor, and bending his disposition to make thankful requital of part of his received benefits, puts the doctor in memory of an old lesson he had taught him: that is, to give back two foot with the ram, that he might win the third. But whether this D. Gardiner was offended with his scholar the proctor, for his overrank practicing, or how it happened, I cannot tell, I am sure that in this one, he answered honestly: let my scholar go on as he had begone (he said) for Gardiner cannot play the knave so. Words of Gardiner: but he was not unskilled (I say) in the art of practices. No indeed, he was excellent in that feat, as it well appeared. For when he had wrought and made sure the great marriage to avoid the hatred of the people, he made his scholar to father it, and to have the outward thanks. And no marvel of his cunning. For he was his master, and had studied longer the art, than the proctor, and had a better wit, and spent yearly the half of his bishopric in bribing, or else he had lose his head before long: for his treasons were not altogether unknown, although they were covered and hidden.

But what does this master or proctor of practices? Does he not dissemble with the Earl of Warwick, serves his turn in all that his wits would serve?

But what at length becomes of our practicing P.? He is committed to ward, his garter with shame pulled from his leg, his robe from his back, his coat of armor pulled down, spurned out of Windsor Church, trodden underfoot, and he himself at length with great favor obtained, that he might redeem the rest of his corporal pains with open confession at the bar in the Star Chamber on his knees of his bribery, extortion, dissimulation, ambition, robbing of the king, and such like virtues, whereby he became noble.

If we minded in this place to display the packing and practicing of the Nobility and Counsel of England in the sickness and at the death of King Edward the VI for the pretense of placing of the Lady Jane in the regal seat, and their sudden slipping the color, and deceiving of one another: it were matter enough to teach men, how little confidence and trust ought to be given either to the smooth countenances, fair words, confident promises, bloody oaths, or swearing upon the Holy Evangelists, either yet to the letters and handwritings of the princes and potentates of the world. They that were sworn chief of Counsel with the Lady Jane, and caused the Queen to be proclaimed a bastard throughout all England and Ireland: and they that were the sorest forcers of men (yea under the threatened pains of treason) to swear and subscribe unto their doings, bewrayed the matter themselves underhand by their wives and other secret shifts, and afterwards became counselors (I will not say, procurers) of the innocent Lady Jane's death: and at this present are in the highest authority in the Queen's House, and the chief officers and doers in the commonwealth.

And some of them that wrote most earnestly to a certain ancient lord of the realm (among many other, in the favor of the Lady Jane, bebastardly and railing upon the Queen, were not ashamed within few days [when the same lord was locked up in the Tower, for his constant although constrained obedience to the common order of the Council]) to be his most strange and rough examiners on the contrary part, as though they themselves had never halted in the matter.

But I know these practicer's answer: that if they had not used that practice, they should not only have stood in hazard themselves, but also failed of their privy purpose well. In the meantime it is enough to know, that a man may not trust nor believe them, either by their words, oaths, or handwritings further than he sees and hears them, and scarcely so far.

And I pray you, have not the realm good cause to thank and trust the potentates, prelates, and Parliament men for banishing the sacred Testament and Gospel of God with the sincere administration of his Holy Sacraments, and for bringing the devilish power of the Roman Antichrist into England again with his miserable Mass and all popish slavery? By the which they have not only broken their oath and loyalty to God, and to the imperial Crown of England, pulling eternal condemnation upon themselves, and provoking the heavy hand of God's wrath and plague upon their seed, and upon the whole realm, im compelling the people to sin by falling from the true service of the living God into most wicked superstition and idolatry (alas therefore) but also have been and are guilty of the innocent blood of sundry excellent and nose godly learned men, and of many other true Christian natural Englishmen and women.

These practices need no painter, the memory and sight thereof is not only evident in men's eyes (to their hearts sorrow) but also raw in their stomachs, and not easy to be digested. God be merciful unto miserable England.

But lo, while I am thus occupied: a new policy, a new, a new, a new. Wote you what? Paget and Mason although they have not one father and mother yet be they sworn brethren: and although they be of sundry universities, yet be they both of one study. What so ever Mason works, Paget utters: that one invents, the other practices. By Mason's working, and Paget's devising, Sir Peter Carowe went into Flangers, Mason pledging for his safeguards King Philip's fidelity, and his own honesty. Afterward he and Sir John Cheke being enticed both to come to Brussels to see the Queen's Ambassadors, and having brought Paget on his way toward England, be in their return taken by the Provost Marshall, spoiled of their horses, and clapped into a cart, their legs, arms, and bodies tied with halters to the body of the cart, and so carried to the seaside, and from there into the Tower of London. And before Paget came to Calais, Sir Peter's man coming out of England met him and asked for his master. Paget smiled and said nothing, but his master was in health.

But how came this to pass? Mark well. The Queen thought Paget a mete man for her in all things, saving that without cause she suspected his religion: and at his coming over, she (like a woman) uttered to him what she thought of him, and promised, if she may perceive his heart and mouth to agree together, she would set his aloft. He assured her, that what so ever she should will him, should be done, yea he would do more than she should require him.

Coming over he bruited, that he liked not the state in England: for he is one of them, that hangs now on prophesies (but on a wrong thing) and therefor would be out of the way in the heat of the mad month of May, and pretended to come to the banes to Acon. But indeed his intent was to see, if he could practice with some of the Duke of Cleves' men, to betray the poor Duchess of Suffolk, and some of the English congregation at Wesil, that he (to perform his promise) might present them to the Queen. But when he saw his purpose had failed (God having better provided for his Duchess, to keep her from traitors hands) he came not to the banes, he needed them no at that time. But then he caused Carowe and Cheke (whom Mason had prepared ready to serve his turn) to be taken and carried away, as before you have heard. And at his return, had great thanks, and the Queen's favor increased toward him. But his just reward yet is not come, let him not look to spend any better than Heracleo, if he continue Judas still. I would wish, he would in time become a Peter, I trust he is not so far past, but he may be prayed for. He is my good lord, and Mason once my great friend, and near neighbor. I wish them both well. Thus you see the final success and reward of traitors. Wherefore it is to be wondered, that such practicers which work so much mischief for others, can not take heed of the evil that is towards themselves. But God's word must be verified of the wicked. "Behold, the wicked travails with mischief", (says the worthy Prophet and King David, a man of great experience). "He has conceived unhappiness, and brought forth a lie. He has graven and dug up a pit, but he shall fall himself into the pit that he has made. For the

mischief that he minds for others, shall come on his own head, and his wickedness shall fall on his own pate."

But for as much as all these fetches and practices are only made and laid to deceive those that be honest, faithful, and true, and natural to their country: it is requisite to treat how they may be avoided. Deceit would not be knocked out with deceit, if it might so be, but honest men should always and at all times deal plainly and honestly. And therefor the most honest means before things be done, is to be wise and circumspect: and to foresee the end, what mischief may follow, before they suddenly, rashly, and unadvisedly consent to anything. To use such honest wisdom and foresight, is permitted both by God's word and nature. Yea God's word and nature command honest men to use it. For those things that can but once be done, and whereon so great weigh the angels, ought to be well done. Therefor men ought not to give credit to fair words, large promises, and great oaths (for these are the instruments to deceive the honest and well meaning) but the fairer the oaths, the more to suspect. For godly and honest things may be well enough done without painted and smooth words, fair promises, and oaths. There ought to be such equality in doing of things, that such deceits need not. Only subtlety and craft devised long writings, great promises, and many solemn ceremonies. When the great marriage was treated in the Privy Council and so great promises made, the old Duke of Norfolk said that they were golden words, but how shall they be performed, he asked? Afterward when it was propounded to the lords in Parliament to be ratified, the Lord Windsor in like manner asked who should be surety for the performance thereof, and who should sue the forfeit? No other of them lacked wisdom and foresight, to see that under painted paper, much mischief was hidden. Long experience had taught it to the Duke, being long trained in prince's practices: and nature suffered not the other lard to be utterly void of it. But both of them lacked that courage, magnanimity, and fortitude, that ought to be in noble men. But it might be, that they had it, but did not utter it, partly for that the one was in hope to recover that he had a time lacked, and the other for fear to lose that he had: but chiefly (as it may be gathered) because they saw their peers mouths stopped. But let them be sure, all will not serve, if practicers parts may take place. For such things would be all together overthrown, or not meddled with: for at length the least let will be called to memory, they may be sure. And because public matters of a realm, that concern all and every man's life, wife, children, lands, goods, and what so ever can not be trod upon by all men, but all must put their trust in a few: men ought to be wise and circumspect whom they trust. For there be to many that pass not what become of their neighbors, so they may proper themselves: what became of the whole of the realm, so their own families may stand still. He that makes suit to be a deputy for a multitude, seems to sue for his own vainglory or profit. Those that send letters not to choose this man, but to choose such a man: have in their heads more than the universal wealth of all. He that brings letters to be preferred, means not the benefit of them that he would serve. He that gives money, and makes great feasts, thinks some other fetch, than the service of his neighbors. He that refuses or releases his ordinary wages, looks for some greater extraordinary reward. He that is always or often at prince's platters, or in practicer's palaces, an not long continue the peoples true proctor. And therefor in Venice (as they write) none of the Senate and officers upon pain of his head, are talks privily with another, not takes rewards or fees of any foreign prince. For they are so jealous of the whole state, because they have been so often deceived by practicers in their own companies. Which lesson all wise men and honest men should learn, and by all means suspect prince's promises and withstand practicer's doings, and not believe one word that they say, be it never so gentle: nor yet their deeds, what so ever shine or pretense of love they declare. Such a realm as England is, is well gotten, how so ever it is gotten. But you that are a true Englishman, seeing the fetches and falsehoods of these named and such other as they be, look in time to yourself and to the state of you natural country, and trust not unto them, though they use never so much flattery, though they swear never so fast, though they speak never so fair, and though they give you their handwriting. Be Prometheus and not

Epimetheus. Remember that our countryman Adam Afterwitte had a great while been the Lord Forrewitte's fool. Be taught therefor in time, before you be taken. Say not too late: If only I had. You have sufficient warning, God give you grace to consider it and use it.

An Exhortation, Or Rather, A Warning, To The Lords And Commoners Of England.[↩](#)

I heartily wish (natural Englishmen and good countrymen) that it had pleased God, to have given some cause, whereby you with me, and I with you might have rejoiced, and not to have lamented one of us to another of our misery. For sorrowful things are neither grate to the hearer, nor pleasant to the teller. But as if one should come to his dear friend or good neighbor, finding him very sorely wounded, and did but lament with him, and not went about to help him to cure his wounds, he should rather augment his pains and increase his sorrow: so if in this miserable misery, wherein we and our poor country of England stand, and yet is not come to the full and ripeness, I should but lament and wail with you, which I can not but do, unless I should show myself totally unnatural and unkind, I should but increase (I think) your sorrows and pains: but most certainly I am sure mine own. But as it is a most sure token of death, when the sick man feels not his disease, nor can tell where his grief is, being asked in what place his pain lies: so in all realms and congregations of people, when they do not feel the common calamities and miseries that are among them, it is a most certain and infallible sign that the destruction and the end of it is at hand. And therefore give me leave (I beseech you) to open your wounds, and to search the cause of your calamities, and then to minister and power into them some wholesome balm, and cover them with some comfortable plaster.

And although I do it not so finely as some others can, but boisterously after my rude manner, yet I doubt not, but by God's grace you shall find comfort, or at least perceive, that I have an earnest desire to see you helped. For I mean your wealth and health, as one brother ought of another, that is born of the same, father and mother.

There was never great misery, destruction, plague, or visitation of God, that came on any nation, city, or country, which as they be indeed, so may they justly be called wounds, but be sent of God for sin, and be not suddenly laid on the people, but are before prophesied and declared by the prophets and ministers of God's word, or by some revelations, wonders, monsters in the earth, or tokens and signs in the elements.

For God as He is most just, and will not fail to punish sin, so is He most merciful, and wills not the death of sinners, but rather that they should turn to him and live.

And therefore beforehand gives them warning what shall follow, it in time they repent not, as by the histories of all ages it does appear. And none of these admonitions have you lacked, countrymen.

For the preachers and ministers of God's word, in the time of the godly Josiah, King Edward the Sixth preached and prophesied unto you, what miseries and plagues should certainly come to you: the food of God's word to be clean taken away from you, famine of the body, pestilence, wars, the loss of your goods, the deflowering and ravishing of your wives and daughters before your eyes, the captivity of your bodies, wives, and children: the subversion of the policy and state of the realm: that a strange king and strange people (not only in country, but also in conditions and manners in respect of your own) should reign and rule by force over you, if you in time repented you not of your wickedness, amended your lives, and called to God for mercy.

But then you passed nothing on it, but as the Jews being downed in sin, mocked, scorned, and murdered the prophets of God which long before prophesied unto them their captivities and utter destruction: so you laughed and jested at your preachers words, nothing regarding the threats of God, but containing them, yes increasing in your wickedness, and now at length murdering most cruelly the minister of God.

And seeing words of warning took no place with you, God for His loving mercy has warned you also by monstrous marvels on the earth, and horrible wonders in the elements, to put you beside all manner of excuses. What wonderful monsters have there now lately been born in England? What celestial signs most horrible? A child born besides Oxford in the year 1552 with two heads and two parts of two evil shaped bodies joined in one. A child born at Coventry in the year 1555 without arms or legs. A child born at Fulham by London ever now this year, with a great head, evil shaped, the arms with bags hanging out at the elbows and heels, and feet lame. A child newborn at London speaking as a prophet and messenger of God. A horrible comet this year, besides diverse eclipses, which follow. But what were these? Only bare signs? No certainly, they do and must signify the great wrath and indignation of God.

Not long after the passion of our Savior, Christ, when the Britains, our countrymen, went about to recover their liberty, and to be dispatched of the most cruel servitude and misery which the Romans kept them in, wherein no Britain was certain of wife, children goods, no, not of their lives, all things were so in bondage of the cruel Roman pleasure: there were of our countrymen slain at one time threescore and ten thousand men, and at another time thirty thousand. Before which slaughters there were many wonders seen in England. The image of the idol which the Romans had in their temple called Victory was turned back, as though she gave place to the enemies. The sea was like blood, images of men's bodies found on the seaside. And women were out of their wits, and cried: "Destruction at hand, destruction at hand": so that the Britains were in great hope, and the Romans in great fear. Before Britain (now called England) came into the full power of the Danes, King Edmund the son of Ethelbert being slain, there were diverse strange things, whereby all men guessed, that an alteration of the realm was toward: but chiefly they guessed the great calamity by the sudden swelling of the sea without any evidence cause, which so break into the land, that it destroyed many towns and people. Before that great slaughter of Englishmen and Normans which was by reason of the wars that were in Normandy, between King Henry the First, King of England, and Robert, Duke of Normandy his brother (at which time Normandy was joined to England) the river of Trent did not run one whole day together, but was so empty, that men passed over on foot: and at that time a sow brought forth a monster with the face of a man, and a hen, a four footed monster. So that by that it is past, you may boldly divine that which is to come.

The child by Oxford, what did it signify, but that our one sweet head, King Edward should be taken away (as he was indeed) and that there should be in his place two heads, diverse governors, and a division of the people, but not all together: which so manifestly followed, that no man can deny it: or two people should be knitted together, but not in good proportion nor agreement. The child of Coventry without the principal members to help and defend the body, must need signify, that the natural body, that is, the people of England shall be helpless, ready to be trod under the foot of every creature, and none to relieve or succor it.

The child of Fulham, what can it signify, but that the natural body of England shall be weak, the chief members (the arms and legs) which is the nobility, so clogged with chains of gold, and bags of money, that the hand shall not be able to draw out the sword, nor the heels to spur the horse to help and defend the body, that is, the commoners. And as the head of it is the greatest part, and greater than it ought to be, with too much superfluity of that it should not have, wherefore it must pull from the other members to comfort it, and lack of that good

proportion it ought to have: so shall the governors and heads of England suck out the wealth and substance of the people (the political body) and keep it bare, so that it shall not be able to help itself, yet shall the head never come to what nature requires. What is to be gathered of the young child, I do not say it is true, because the father was forced (unless he would have lost his life) to recant it: but might it not be true? Is there not as much to be said for it, as for the popes transubstantiation? Does not Eusebius Pamphili (a man of as good credit, as Thomas Aquinas, Scotus, Gratianus, and such other the inventors and maintainers of transubstantiation) write, that a lamb contrary to nature and possibility, did in plain words before declare the nature and disposition of Bochorus, King of Egypt? They that wrote the chronicles of the Romans say that a dog, a serpent, and oxen did speak. But Scripture plainly says that Balaam's ass (an unreasonable creature, without possibility to speak) did say to his master: why do you beat me? And John the Baptist contrary to the common course of nature, leapt and rejoiced in his mother's womb, when Christ's mother being with child came to see Elizabeth his mother.

If men that believed not the miracles, which the goggle-eyed Rhode of Boxley, the idol of Walsingham, the bawd of wisdom, which ever fool might see to be deceits and open illusions, were condemned and burned for heretics: how should they be taken, that do not believe the manifest works of God?

The horrible comet and blazing star that was seen this year greater in England than elsewhere, what else does it signify, but the great displeasure of God? And therefore famine, pestilence, wars, sedition, death of princes, invasion of foreign nations, destruction of some or many cities and countries, and the alteration and changing of the state and government? For if it be lawful for man to diving of God's wonderful works, and by the like things past, conjecture those that be to come: why should we not affirm, that these plagues will follow? Before the great wars made by Xerxes against the Greeks, and the overthrowing of the whole sate of Greece, there was a blazing star seen of the shape of a horn, and an eclipse of the sun.

Before the last and utter destruction of the city of Jerusalem, there was seen hanging in the elements over the Temple a burning sword almost the space of a whole year. In the time of cruel Nero, there was a comet that continued for six months.

After that followed great sedition and alteration in the Empire: and the Kingdom of the Jews (mark well) was utterly destroyed. Before the death of our countryman Constantine the Great, who was the first professor of the Gospel of Christ among all the emperors: and no doubt a special favorer and promoter of it. For he did not prohibit laymen to read God's word, as some princes do at this time, but he caused examples of the Bible to be written at his own charges, and sent into all countries: there was a great comet, and afterwards followed a wonderful and cruel war, which who so delighted in histories, may perceive.

Before the dissension and deadly wars that was between the brethren of Lotarius the Emperor, son of Lodovicus Pius, for the division of the inheritance (whereby such slaughter grew in France, that the Frenchmen were never after able to recover completely their force) there were many comets seen.

About the year of Christ 1001, there was a horrible comet seen, and then followed wonderful famines and pestilence?

In the year 1061, before the invasion of William the Conqueror into England, and the conquest of the same, and in which Harold, King of England with twenty thousand true Englishmen in the defense of their country against a tyrant were slain: there was seen a wonderful comet, which everyman thought (as indeed it followed) to be much mischief and the alteration of the state, as hereafter you shall hear. A little before the great wars in Normandy (whereof you have heard before) there was seen in Normandy a great comet, and

two full moons at one time shining, the one in the East, the other in the West. In the year 1221 while the wars in Asia between the Christian men and the pagans, where unto King Henry the Third sent a power of Englishmen under the Earl of Chester (for the maintenance whereof the nobility granted the king the wardship of their children, as Polidore writes) before the Christian men lost the city of Damatia, and a great overthrow of them was in Egypt, many wonders were seen in diverse places, and also in England a very great comet, a wonderful great earthquake, all the horrible winter thunders, which in England seldom in summer are heard: such great rains, and tempests of winds, that it overthrew many houses: and the sea drowned many places, which every man said, signifying the hurt that followed on Christian men. In the year 1241, a little before Wales was brought to the subjection of the King of England, there appeared in England a terrible comet, by the space of thirty days.

In the year 1531 there was a horrible comet. And what followed it? the Turk occupied a great part of Hungary: the King of Denmark, Christierne invading his country with a great army, and so minding to recover his kingdom, was taken and his son. And why should not you of England think, that these signs be only (or at the least chiefly) for you. Compare yourselves, and your lives and doings with the Jews, or the worst nation, if any can be worse: and see whether you are not able to match them, yea to overmatch them, and to drop vie, three for one? In what nation under the scope of Heaven, has God showed greater tokens of his Savior, and it so little set by, as in England? What contempt of Him, His word and ministers has there been? What dissimulation with God? What hypocrisy? What swearing and foreswearing? What treason to their country? What disobedience to the governors in good, godly, and necessary things? What ready obedience to their rulers in wicked and evil things? What unnatural relations used between the father and daughter, brother and sister? What abominable whoredom suffered unpunished? Yea in many and the chiefest places the greatest whoremongers, the most imprudent ribalds, the worst bribers, and the lewdest persons made Justices of the Peace, and correctors of vice? What railing and reviling of the worthy pure preachers of God's Gospel for only rebuking of vice? What horrible murders secret and open, not only of private persons, but also of the most honorable peers and reverend ministers of God? What butchering and burning of true English Christians, young and old, whole and lame, seeing and blind, man , woman, and child, without respect of age, sex or estate? What pillaging and pulling, taking and snatching, stealing and robbing, not only among the mean sort, but among the greatest? Where is so great hatred and malice, so little love and charity, as in England? I should never make an end, if I should tell but that I have myself seen and known, much less if I should declare all that other credible persons of their own knowledge report to be most certain and true.

But to return to the matter. Look well England, look well, whether the comet past, and eclipses to come, touch them? Ate you not all ready plagued with famine? Yes, and with such a famine, as you never before heard of. It is true, you had dearths in the time of Kings Henry and Edward, but those were dearths without need: only they were occasioned by the greediness and malice of naughty men without scarcity or lack of things: and for lack of diligent overseeing and good government, and not by the direct plague of God. But these two years since King Edward's death, from the restitution of your cursed popish Mass, you have had scarcity by the direct plague of God. The earth not brought forth such plainly as it customarily did before. Where before time the country fed London, London to the contrary was and is forced of her former provision to feed the country, where Dantiske and other the northeast parts were the barns and garners of corn: for they had the provision of corn for many years before hand, and nourished all the low parts of Germany, Denmark, Friseland, Holland, Zealand, Brabaunt, Flanders, Hispania, and many others: now by reason of their bringing so much to relieve England, unless a stay is made in time, they themselves will perish from famine. When were ever things so dear in England, as in this time of the popish Mass and other idolatries restored? Who ever heard or read before, that a pound of beef was

at four pounds. A sheep twenty shillings. A pound of candles at four pounds. A pound of butter at four shillings. A pound of cheese at four pounds, two eggs a penny, a quart of wheat, sixty-three shillings. A quart of malt as fifty shillings, or above: the people driven of hunger to grind acorns for bread meal, and to drink water instead of ale? And what? Shall this famine away, before his walking mate and fellow (pestilence) come? No surely, without your earnest speedy repentance, and God's exceeding miraculous mercy, it is not possible: for hitherto the one went never before, but the other come either arm in arm, or else quickly after.

But it shall almost come to late for common people, for they are so hanged up by twenty and forty in a plump (and a great number of them, because they confessed and professed, that they should be saved by the only merits of Christ's passion) that the pestilence shall have little matter among the mean sort to be occupied on: but therefor must be the more occupied with the great.

And have you (England) had no sedition and inward grudge? Yes, so much that the heads and governors does not peep out of their privy chambers: not one neighbor seen to talk with another, for fear to be noted and accused of conspiracy. Yea and that (that is worst of all, and to be lamented of all Englishmen) there is inward grudge, and secret malice between the members, that is, the nobility and commoners.

The one hates and condemns the other, which is the work of the devil, and his ministers the popish prelates and priests. They cast water into the coals, to make the fire greater: for they know, unless such division and dissension be fostered and nourished, their kingdom would soon lie in the dirt. This is the practice of such as mind the conquest or utter destruction of any people, to maintain and prick forward dissension, division, and discord among the people. For Christ's words are true, who says that every kingdom divided against itself shall be desolate, and every city or house divided against itself, shall not continue. The prophet prophesying of the destruction of the Kingdom of the Jews, said before, that there should be civil and inward sedition, as there was indeed in Jerusalem, between three pestilent factions and parts, whereof Simon, Joannes, and Eleazarus were the authors and heads. This was Xerxes practice to set the Greeks by the ears, to maintain civil wars and dissension among them, that so when one had destroyed another, he might easily enjoy all. This policy have all together ambitious monarchs hitherto in all places practiced. And a Gardiner when he should die, did not lament his sins, but sent for the Queen, and wept to her, that he could no longer live to serve her grace, that is, to undo the nobility and commons of the realm: but he desired her to proceed as he counseled her by his word and writing: so Granville when he should also die, sent word to the Emperor Charles, and required him, not to forget his counsel, but still use it, that is, to nourish and maintain dissension among the states of Germany, and so he should at length easily come by the whole. In like manner if the traitorous bishops and priests can once set the commoners against the nobility and gentlemen, they will soon (the nobility being once suppressed) sent the commoners to climb a doves nest, and use them at their pleasure. But wise men and such as loved their country in times past, for was this mischief that came by inward grudge and civil discord: and ever (as much as in them lay) went about to let it. They thought it was most necessary to provide for the safeguard of the whole by all means, and not for any particular part: which may well appear by the wisdom of Thrasibulus, who being driven out of Athens (his country) by the thirty tyrants, because he would not consent to their tyranny, and to see his country destroyed: at length gathered together all those that were banished with him, and by the help of the Thebans their neighbors, took a castle beside Athens, and afterward in battle he overcame the tyrants, and restored all those that were banished, to their country, and their old laws that were taken way by the tyrants. And seeing what mischief might follow, if he did not take away the inward grudge that was among the people, and made a unity between them,

although the poor banished men were spoiled of all that they had, and their goods in those hands, that had not right thereto, yet he made them all promise, that none should claim anything of another, but that all should be forgiven and forgotten. And the same wisdom did the Romans many times use, to make quietness among the people, and to preserve the whole commonwealth. Yea the noble men of Rome, although they were as ambitious as others, and one envied anothers glory, yet when the commonwealth was in hazard, and that their service must be used for the defense of their country, they did clan forgive and forget all private injuries and inward grudges: yea it was the chief means to reconcile enemies. And no marvel among wise men, for they saw, if the whole body of their country should perish, they could not prosper. There can be no arm, where there is no body: and it is a feeble body that lacks the arms and legs. Yea it is a most miserable body where the arms and legs beat the body, and the body goes about to shake of the arms and legs. And although there ar no people that have been more plagued by inward sedition and civil discord, that Englishmen: yet is there none that less considers it. I can not tell, whereof it comes, but commonly they neither remember what is past, nor foresee what is to come, but only (as unreasonable creatures) look upon those things that are present. The dissension and discord that was in Britain our country (which now is called England) and between our own countrymen, brought first the Romans to England: who after they entered, soon took all to themselves: the murdered a great number of British, of some they took their children as pledges, and sent them to Rome: and to rid the realm of strong and lusty persons, that there might be none to withstand them, they sent armies and garrisons out of the realm, to serve in foreign countries. Those that were left at home, the spoiled of their goods with great taxes and impositions: and a great number made slaves and bondsmen, and glad he was, that could find favor to enjoy any little part of his own as long as he lived. By this means was the realm almost made desolate, and then the Picts (a barbarous and cruel nation) invaded Britain, and destroyed man, woman, and child, that came into their hands; and so greater misery followed, the people forced to fly into the mountains, woods, and caves for their safety, and by those means the ground was not tilled, great famine fell on them, and then wonderful pestilence, as the one goes not without the other. thus our countrymen the Britains being oppressed by the Picts, sought aide of the Saxons (men of great force, but of little truth) who when they came into the realm, and saw the fertility of it, subtly devised to marry Ronix, daughter to their captain Hengistus, to the King of Britain, called Vortiger. She being instructed what she should do, found the means, that her own countrymen should be placed next to the king, and have the highest offices. Thus were our countrymen, the Britains, removed from their king, strangers place in all offices and holds, and at length the land was overrun, and possessed by strangers. And the main of Britain put away, and the realm called England.

The Danes after understanding how fertile and plentiful England was, sought means little by little to place themselves in England, and after a king of Denmark in his own person invaded England in the North, and made wonderful cruel wars, they spared none, they burned and wasted Yorkshire, Northumberland, and all places, so that the inhabitants were forced to sue for peace at the Danes' hands. Then they built the town of Dancaster (that is, the Castle of the Danes) and while they had peace, sent for more Danes: and when they thought their force and power big enough, they passed not upon promises and leagues that they had made, but renewed the wars, killed, burned, and spoiled in every pace, until they came to Exeter: the people and realm was miserably tormented, and made tribute to them. Diverse of the nobility of England upon light yea no occasions, but only because they were though not to favor the Danes, were taken, their nose trills most villainously slighted, their hands cut off. Ah good God, who can remember these things without weeping? Who that fears your wrath, O Lord, will not amend his life, and call to you for mercy? What naughty nobility were that, that would oppress the commoners, and afterward be used and oppressed themselves, by strangers, as their predecessors have been before time? What devilish commoners might that be called that would repine or rebel against the nobility and gentlemen, and then to be

overrun themselves: with priests and foreigners, and to be pined with such misery, as you hear that our ancestors were: and all because the gentlemen and commoners agreed not among themselves? Who is a natural Englishman, that will not in time foresee and consider the misery toward his country and himself, and by all means seek to let it? Who is it, that can hope for quietness, peace, health, plenty, and such like gifts of God, without God's favor and mercy. And how is it possible that God should use mercy with them, that bears inward hatred and grudge one to another, and will use no mercy with others? If you forgive other men their offenses that they commit against you (says Christ(you Heavenly Father will forgive the offenses that you have committed against him. But if you do not forgive other men their faults, neither will your Father forgive you your faults. No while you say the Lord's Prayer, and be full of rancor, malice, hatred, and envy toward you neighbor, you condemn yourselves, and desire God's plagues and vengeance to fall on yourselves: for you mean vengeance to your neighbors, and wish all evil to fall on them. And so it does fall on you: as you see by experience of the plays and miseries that are and shall come upon you. But from inward sedition and civil discord, that breeds so much mischief, let us come to outward wars and invasions made by strangers. But you will say, you have no wars with any foreign prince. It is true: but shall you have none? Yes, yes: the time is not yet come, all is not hatched that is under the hen. Your wings must be dubbed, your feathers must be pulled, you combs must be cut, you must be cleanly picked, your substance shall be gotten little by little out of your hands, by taxes and subsidies, by benevolence and loans, and so from a little more, and from more to more: and at length all the merchants goods to be confiscated in Flanders by and inquisition, and others in England by an open excommunication. And when you are once cleanly stripped of your store, and thus weakened out of courage, and your heart in your hose, as the say: then shall your king return to his well-beloved England, with great pomp and power, and shall compel you (despite your hearts) to render and deliver her wholly into his hands. then shall the Easterlings (upon hop to recover their old and greater privileges) aide him with men, money and ships: already they have offered and promised, as diverse credible letters have declared. Then shall they invade England, and shall by shiploads (if no worse happen to you) carried into new Spain, and there not live at liberty, but because you ar a stubborn and unfaithful generation, you shall be tied in chains, forced to row in the galley, to dig in the mines and to pick up the gold in the hot sand. And so with sorrow to you sops, your three men's song shall be, alas, and weal away. Then shall you know the pride and lordliness of the Spaniards, though for a while until they may get the overhand, they creep and crouch, feed men with sweet wines, pleasant perfumes, gay apparel, and such like vain toys: but then they are once aloft, there is no nation under the scope of Christ, like them in pride, cruelty, mercilessness, not so far from all humanity as the Spaniards be: which them the realm of Naples, the Dukedom of Milan, the City of Sienna, many parts of Deutchland, and the land of Julike Cleveland, and Gelderland can to their cost right well testify.

And may it not be thought that the French king (when he sees opportunity) will set in a foot, making claim to England, in the right of the Queen of Scots, as heir to King Henry the Eighth by his eldest sister? And may it not be suspected, that the pope (to do the French king a pleasure) shall say the divorce between king Henry and the dowager was by the canon laws lawful: and shall excommunicate the realm, unless they revoke the act of Parliament, whereby the divorce of late was judged unlawful?

Remember, remember (good countrymen, and true English hearts) the misery that followed in our poor country upon the conquest made by the ambitious William, Duke of Normandy: upon how small a title he entered, and how tyrannously he used himself. His only color was a bequest or promise made to him by King Edward, brother to Cauntas and Harold, kings of England, when he was a banished man in Normandy, if he should die without issue, as he did. At his first entry, he had a great battle with the new chosen king of England, and slew him and twenty thousand of our countrymen, which put such a fear in all men, the

nobility, the clergy, the Londoners, and the commoners, that it made them sue for peace, and to give pledges for their fidelity, whom he sent into Normandy. At the first he made them many fair promises of peace, quietness and justice. They thought they had God by the tail, but they had the wolf (yea the devil) by the ears. He first fortified the holds and ports by the seaside, and in his absence (as many times he was forced upon rebellions in Normandy, to return) he made a Council of his own countrymen, and made the bishop of Bayone, his brother, his lieutenant in England. But when he was once sailed, and thought himself strong enough to keep the Englishmen under: then farewell all fair promises, he begins to play Rex, yea the devil indeed.

He spoiled the nobility of their goods and possessions, made them slaves, and his own slaves lords: and upon the commoners he put immense taxes and impositions. He took from the people their weapons and harness, and made a law that no man should come out of his house after the belle rogue, which was at eight of the cloak, but to cover the fire and to bed. Wherefore until this day the bell that then rings is called Coverfew. And then he built at Nottingham, Lincoln, York, and Hastings, and set in them garrisons of Normandy. And not contented herewith, he executed many wonderful cruel things, and specially on the nobility, and such as he saw to be stout men: some he caused to be murdered, some their nostrils to be slit, and their hands cut off. Happy was he that could fly out of the realm: he so spoiled Yorkshire, and Durham, and all the north parts, that ten years together it lay waste and uninhabited. He could in no wise abide the English nobility, but utterly destroyed them. And all this he did by the law of the devil, which they call the law of arms. The good laws and customs of England he clean took away, and made his own lusts his laws, and put them in his own Norman tongue, that his friends might always have the interpretation of them, and that he might catch the poor Englishmen, when it pleased him: and would have the laws to be pleaded and all things to be done in French. And he was not taken to be the Norman's friend, not no gentleman, that could not speak french. And thereof comes the old proverb : Jack would be a gentleman, but he cannot French. He removed the English bishops, and placed Normans by the aide of the bishop of Rome. He pulled down town, villages, and houses, and put out the poor people to make him sporting places, pricey pleasures, forts, pikes, and chases. O miserable England, that once thus was by a tyrant and outward enemies plagued. but how much more miserable shall you be by the wars that are most certain to come shortly to be. God be merciful unto thee. But I think I hear your papists, bishops, priests, friars, and such like antichristian monsters say, that these plagues which have fallen and shall come to England (for they know they cannot be avoided, no they are occasioned and helped forward by them) have grown for things done in King Henry and King Edward's time, for that their abomination was disclosed, their burrows and dens dug up, their monasteries thrown down, and the lands divided and sold to the laity. Ah hypocrites, ah subtle wolves, ah viperous generation. When the fox preaches, beware you geese. Where in Scripture do they find, that any such belly gods as they are, should be maintained? No, Scripture would have such merchants whipped out of the church, such burrows and cellars of men's souls. Wo be unto you hypocrites (says Christ) for you swallow up the houses of the poor and miserable, that is, that which should be converted to the relief of the poor and needy: and that under pretense of long prayers. Wo be unto you (you masking hounds) which go from place to place, by sea and by land, to make a novice of your own order, and when you have him, you make him the child of hellfire twofold more than yourselves. I know you not (says Christ) away from me, you workers of iniquity. It is only their god, the belly, that they seek to serve, they pass on the God in Heaven, nor the devil in hell, so they may have wherewith to maintain themselves on earth, in their whoredom, buggery, pride, and all abomination. And this I say, is not fained or imagined, but evident in all men's eyes that will not be willfully blind.

Those that be desirous to be rulers in monasteries, abbots and priors before they come to it, they pine themselves away with fasting, and use the rest of the instruments of hypocrisy for a while: but when they have once caught the fish they cast for, they show what they be plainly. Who are so great belly gods? Who are so great whoremongers? Where is such knavery used? I am ashamed to tell it. In like manner play these chaplains of honor, that seek for bishoprics: all saving one M. Doctor Weston (the common bull of dissembled virginity, and the boar of old rusted widowhead) who before hand shows what he will be. But as the world goes, his plain dealing has no nor will put him to any afterdeal. Where is such a whoremonger (yea worse than a whoremonger) as this old hypocrite Paul the Fourth, now Bishop of Rome? Who is so great a glutton? Who is so proud and ambitious? Who is so great a tyrant and tormentor? Who is so great a warrior? And yet before he came to that high feast of Antichrist, he would seem a saint, no religion nor order o hypocrites was straight enough for him. he was a friar, a monk, a Capuchin, and anchorite, yea what was he not? But you see the mark these hypocrites show. And I can tell you somewhat of mine own knowledge, which may not be denied: for the author is a man of good credence both abroad and at home with the greatest and the meanest. After the beginning of the Queen's reign, and the sudden alteration of all things (contrary to oath and promise) there came one of my order unto me, as I walked in a garden, and went about to persuade me to incline to the Queen's proceedings: play the wise man (he said) and do as I and other men do: I have known you for a long time, to be a good fellow. I warrant you, you shall recover your loss and live in honor, if you will be ruled by reason. And with that he leapt up to clap me on the shoulder, for unless he strode on tiptoe, he could not reach it. Tush, he said, you are a fool: If the Turk ruled in England, I would frame myself to live accordingly. I may not nor will tell you his name, because I hope he will once remember himself, and call to God for grace. But to put you somewhat from musing, I will tell you somewhat. In the King Henry's time, when Gardiner was called the bear, he was called the ape. What said drunken Doctor Weston in the midst of his cups (for wine will disclose secrets, if it be as well plied, as his mastership does) by the Mass, he says, that Boucher, Bishop of London will cut all the gentlemen's throats in England, if he could. Thus you may see the mark, whereat these hypocrites the papists shoot. They make religion and God's word nothing else than a color to cover their wickedness, and to maintain their lewdness. And therefore they wrest and writhe Scripture to serve their purpose, and so they have need to do: for there is not one word in all the Scripture for them, but ever word against them. And because you are returned to their devotions, have forsaken God and his word, and cleave to the pope and his traditions, and maintain such a sort of hypocrites, dissemblers, and open enemies of God and the realm of England: therefore have all these plagues lighted on you, and the rest will shortly follow without fail. Look upon the twenty-eighth chapter of Deuteronomy, where it is written thus. If you will not harken to the voice of the Lord your God, to keep and to do all his commandments and his ordinances, which I command you this day, all these curses shall come upon you and overtake you. Cursed shall you be in the town, and cursed in the field, cursed shall your basket be and your store. cursed shall be the fruit of your oxen, and the flocks of your sheep. The Lord shall send upon you cursing, destruction, and rebuke, to all that you set your hand to, and that you do, until he destroy you, and bring you to naught quickly, because of the wickedness of your inventions, and because you have forsaken me. The Lord shall smite you with madness, blindness, and dazing heart. You shall be oppressed with wrong, and be pulled evermore, and no man shall succor you. You shall be betrothed to a wife, and another man shall lie with her. You shall build a house, and not dwell therein. Your oxen shall be killed before your eyes, and you shall not eat thereof. Your ass shall be violently taken form you, and shall not be restored to you again. Your sheep shall be given to your enemies, and no man shall rescue you. The fruit of your land and all your labors shall a nation which you know not, eat: and you shall continually suffer violence, and be oppressed always, so that you shall be clean beside yourself, for the sight that thine eyes shall see. You shall carry much seed out into the field, and shall gather but a little in, for the

grasshoppers shall destroy it. All your trees and fruit of your land shall be marred with blasting. The stranger that is among you, shall climb above you on high, and you shall come down beneath allow. Moreover all these curses shall come upon you, and shall follow you and overtake you, until you be destroyed: because you harkened not to the voice of the Lord your God, to keep his commandments and ordinances, which he commanded you, and they shall be upon you as miracles, and upon your seed forever, because you serve not the Lord your God with joyfulness and with a good heart, when you had abundance of all things: therefore you shall serve your enemies, which the Lord shall send upon you, in hunger and thirst, in nakedness and in need of all things: and he shall put a yoke of iron upon your neck, until he has brought you to naught. And the Lord shall bring a nation upon you, a nation whose tongue you shall not understand: a hard favored nation, which shall not regard the person of the old, not have compassion on the young. the same shall eat the fruit of your cattle, and the fruit of your land, until he has destroyed you: and shall leave you neither corn, wine, nor oil, neither the increase of your oxen, nor the flocks of your sheep, until he had brought you to naught. And the Lord shall send upon you and your seed great plagues and of long continuance, evil sickness and of long endurance. And it shall come to pass, that as the Lord rejoiced over you to do you good, and to multiply you: ever so He will rejoice over you, to destroy you, and to bring you to naught. And among these nations you shall find no ease, neither shall the sole of your foot have rest. But the Lord shall give you an unquiet heart, and dazing eyes, and sorrow of mind, & etc. And in the end of the twenty-ninth chapter of the same it follows. Then shall all nations say, wherefore has the Lord done on this fashion unto this land? And men shall say: because you left the Testament of their fathers, which He made with them, when He brought them out of the land of Egypt. For they went and served strange gods, and worshipped them. Gods which they know not, and which had given them to naught. And the wrath of the Lord waxed hot against this land, to bring upon it all the curses that are written in this book, & etc. By this Scripture you are plainly told the undeniable cause and matter, wherefore the Lord God threatens and sends plagues. Read all the histories of the Bible, and the prophecies of the prophets, and you shall evidently see, how people and nations have been destroyed for maintaining of such idolatrous and wicked lives, as the papists are, and where such wickedness has been use (as is among you) and not corrected, as I have before declared. But you will say: what shall we do to avoid the calamity and misery that is both present and toward? Would to God you did ask it from the bottom of your heart. But I fear you do dissemble and speak it with your lips only, as you were wont. When the great sweat was in England in the time of King Edward, a little signification of a greater scourge following: and many that were merry at dinner, were buried in the evening: some that went at night to sleep lusty, were found in bed dead in the morning: some that went not far from their own house, never to return. Then as long as the feverency of the Plague lasted, there was crying: I have sinned, I have sinned, I have sinned, mercy good Lord, mercy, mercy, mercy. The ministers of God's word were sought for in every corner, they could not rest, they might not sleep: you must come to my lord, you must come to my lady, by master prays you to come straight unto him, my master must need speak with you. Come, if you love God: and if you lover their salvation, tarry not. For God's sake, M. Minister (say the sick folks) tell us what we shall do to avoid God's wrath. Take these bags, pay so much to such a man, for I deceived him: give him so much, for I got it from him by usury: I made a crafty bargain with such a one, restore him so much, and desire him to forgive me. I have taken bribes of such a one, I pray you give him so much more again. I have spoken evil of such a man, God forgive me, I have been a whoremonger, a bawd, God pardon me. Divide this bag among the poor, carry this to the hospital, pray for me for God's sake. Good Lord forgive me, I have dissembled with you: I pretended to love you word with my lips, but I thought it not with my heart: but now I see you know the deepest of secrets, and will not leave evil unpunished. Have mercy on me, and forgive me good Lord, I beseech you from the bottom of my heart. This was the dissimulation of the people for three or four days wile the execution

was: but after then the rage was somewhat waged, then return they to their vomit, worse than ever they were. Then that which they have caused to be restored and given in alms, they seek to recover by more evil favored means. But God is not blind, nor is His hand shortened: He has begun to meet with you, and will pay you what you owe to the utmost. But whether you require me unfeignedly, to know how to avoid the plague to come, or does dissemble with me, I had rather you should be found in fault, than I not to do that I before promised you. God's word requires and commands every man to help his neighbor in word and deed, as much as in him lies. I will therefore tell you my best advise, and heartily pray God you may earnestly follow it. All these plagues that before you have heard rehearsed, famine, pestilence, sedition, wars, destruction of countries, captivity of people, and alterations of states, are the instruments of God sent and powered on the people for their sins, that they should be sorry and repent them of their former wicked life, call to God for mercy, and lead a new life in holiness and righteousness all the days of their life: which if you will earnestly do, no doubt but as God is merciful, so will He use mercy towards you. For God that never deceived any, but abhors all practices, all deceit, and all practicers (the workers of deceit) promised it by the mouth of His prophet Ezekiel. If (he says) the ungodly will turn away from all his sins that he has done, and will keep all my commandments, and of the thing that is just and right, doubtless he shall live and not die. For all the sins that he did before, shall not be thought upon anymore: but in his righteousness that he has done, he shall live. For I have no pleasure in the death of a sinner (says God) but that he should repent him of his wicked life and live &etc. It follows in the prophet thus: wherefore repent and return from your wickedness, and your wickedness shall not be your destruction. Cast from you all your ungodliness, make you a new heart and a new spirit: wherefore will you die, o you house of Israel (that is, all such as trust to be saved by Christ) seeing I have no pleasure in the death of him that dies, say the Lord God. Turn therefore, and you shall live.

This is not holy water of the court, bare words of course, as the princes of the world use, while they go about to deceive the poor people with their practices, but he says no less, that he will do: he promises no more, than he will justly and fully perform. Scripture is full of examples to prove it. After the death of Gideon, the children of Israel fell from the worshipping of the true God, became idolaters, and worshipped Baal and Ashteroth, and other gods as the ethnics did, wherefore God plagued them wonderfully with invasions and overrunning of the Philistines by the space of twenty-eight years: they seemed in words to do penance, but God saw they did not dissemble with Him, and therefore He would not hear them. But after they had done penance indeed, that is, destroyed the idols, and cast them out of their country, than God sent them the noble captain Jephtha, who defended them, and revenged the malice of the Philistines. Likewise where the children of Israel had in the time of Eli the priest received by the Philistines many slaughters of the people, and had lost many cities and towns for the idolatry they had committed, yet when by the admonition of Samuel they repented (as you heard before) and turned to God, God turned to them, and was merciful. And when the Philistines had prepared a wonderful great force against the children of Israel, God sent suddenly such a terrible thunder and lightening, that they were dispersed and ran away. The children of Israel persecuted them and slew them, and recovered their cities, and all that they had lost. When the Moabites, Ammonites, and Idumites thought to have overrun Judah in the time of King Jehosaphat, yet when the king and his people lamented to God and called for mercy, God turned away his wrath, and poured it on their enemies, and made them to fall out among themselves, and so to kill one another. When Benadab the King of Syria besieged Samaria, there was so great a famine in the city, that women ate their own children: but when King Joram and the people fell to repentance, and called to God for mercy, they had in one day plenty of all things. For God sent such a terror among the Syrians with the noise of armor, that they fled, and left all their vital bags and baggage behind them for those of Samaria. You have heard before also, how Olofernes and Senacherib that invaded Israel, were with their whole armies destroyed of God, after the

people repented of their sins, and called for mercy. And so you have innumerable examples of the great mercy of God toward all that repented truly, and called for mercy. As of the city of Nineveh, whom although God had threatened utterly to destroy them, yet when God saw they were penitent for their former wicked life, and called unto him for mercy, He withdrew his plague, and held out His merciful hand over them: even so you (good countrymen and true English hearts) if you will in time earnestly repent you of your sins, leave your idolatry, and honor and worship God truly, as you were taught in blessed King Edward's time, abhor the fantasies and foolish traditions of men, and cleave to the sincere word of God, and be desirous for the knowledge of it: leave your blasphemy and vain swearing and horrible forswearing and perjury, no longer hate your country, but be true and faithful to it, and by all godly means seek the wealth and safety of it: if you will obey God's commandments before your governors, and your governors in that is godly, honest, and just, and nothing else: If you will leave your bawdry, whoredom, and improper relations, and drive out of all places whores, whoremongers, and whorehouses, and all such as favor and maintain them: If you will abstain from cruel murdering of the saints of God and innocents, and rather yourselves to be content to suffer all martyrdom, then you will embrew your fingers in their blood, or consent to it: If you will leave oppressing of your neighbors, you subtlety, craft, and deceit, and yourselves leave to love greediness, and inordinate desire of the trash of this world: If you leave your inward hat reed, grudge and malice one to another, if the nobility will love and cherish the commonality, and the commoners honor and love the nobility: If one will show himself a brother and neighbor indeed to another: than no doubt if you do these things from the bottom of your heart, that the mouth and heart agree together, your sayings and doings be all one: than shall you perceive, that God will be easily entreated to turn. Then may you boldly ask of God in Christ's name, and your desires shall be heard and granted. But you may in no wise dissemble with Him, as the Israelites did, when they said they would commit no more idolatry, and yet kept their idols, as you pulled down you images, but yet kept them secretly in your chambers: not yet as Judas Iscariot did, who lamented his sins and repented, but returned not to God: nor yet as yourselves did dissemble in the last sweat, while God's whip was in your necks, but you must cleanly do away the old man and put on the new: you must refuse and cast away all evils, and do that which is good, and ever study to do that shall pleases God, and in no wise look (as Lot's wife did) backward: but still go forward. And then if you call to God for mercy, putting your full and only trust in Him, He will hear you, and take from you those plagues that lie on you, and the other which most certainly (if you repent not, hang over you, and will come upon you). Then will He send you His benediction for malediction, plenty for famine, health for pestilence, peace for war, quietness for trouble, for cruel tyranny, a godly and just government: for sedition, such force and power, that you being a few, shall be able to withstand all the tyrannies of the world, and enemies of God and our country, and utterly confound them and destroy them. You shall avoid the eternal pains of hell prepared for sinners: and at length you shall be sue also to make a change from your earthly country to the Heavenly Paradise: from variable England, to the constant Jerusalem: from the company of men, to the fellowship of angels: from mutable and frowning countenances of worldly powers, to the unchangeable and most comfortable sight of the King of all Kings, our most merciful Eternal Heavenly Father. To whom with the Son and the Holy Ghost, be all honor, praise, and glory, now and forever. Amen.