

February 2, 2007

It is with great pleasure that I offer the reader this book. The 1558 text by Christopher Goodman is refreshingly honest and insightful in this “politically correct” age.

I have tried to preserve the sound of the original text while updating spellings for greater readability—similar to the King James Bible. The author’s use of capitalization and punctuation has been greatly preserved. The Bible references have been placed in brackets and moved from the margins into the body, and in many cases verse numbers have been added.

The purpose of the text is to bring glory to God by promoting true righteousness in a climate of mindless obedience to irresponsible rulers. It is as relevant as ever.

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HOW
SUPERIOR
POWERS OUGHT TO
BE OBEYED OF THEIR
SUBJECTS: and Wherein they may
lawfully by God's Word be
disobeyed and resisted.

Wherein also is declared the cause
of all this present misery in
England, and the only way to
remedy the same.

BY CHRISTOPHER GOODMAN.

The Lord hath brought upon them a
nation from a far country, an
impudent nation and of a strange
language. Baruch 4. Deut. 28.

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WILLIAM WHITINGHAM

to all them that love to know the truth and
follow it: Grace and peace.

Ignorance, the mother of error and professed enemy to God's Truth, hath two daughters by whose flatteries and subtle practices she blindeth men's eyes, obscureth the Truth, and withdraweth us from the way of knowledge: Custom and Negligence. Whereof the first so bewitcheth us, that although we wallow and welter in dark blindness, yet as it were by dreaming we seem to walk in the bright sun shining: so that Custom and company may far sooner draw us to perdition, than Truth and reason bring us to the understanding of our error. The other, being a domestical servant and well acquainted with our manners, by crafty flattery doth overcome us. For the flesh is proud and swelleth against God, she glorieth in her own wisdom, she loveth her own counsel, she delighteth in her own imagination and policy: and albeit we know that slothful Negligence is an impediment and block in our nature to stop us from Truth: yet willingly we give place to her flattering persuasions, and suffer her to train us to willful destruction. So that betwixt Custom and Negligence we rather hold with damnable Ignorance, and wish to be plunged in abominable errors, than by diligent study and searching of the Truth learn to know our duty to God, and what he requireth of us to do towards our neighbor. Then if we would avoid these evils, we must love and embrace the contrary virtues: and if Custom be wicked and withhold us from God, we must speedily reject her and cleave unto God: and if Negligence have nuzzled us in the den of Ignorance, we must purchase by diligence to profit in the school of knowledge. For the achieving whereof (when Mr. Christopher Goodman, one of our ministers,

according to the course of the text, expounded both faithfully and comfortably this place of the Acts of the Apostles, Judge whether it be just before God to obey you rather than God [Acts 4:19]) certain learned and godly men most instantly, and at sundry times required him to dilate more at large that his Sermon, and to suffer it to be printed, that not only we here present, but our brethren in England and other places might be persuaded in the truth of that doctrine concerning obedience to the magistrate, and so glorify God with us. Which request he admitted not easily, till at length well weighing how many perished in their ignorance for lack of means to attain to the knowledge of the truth: and also conferring his articles and chief propositions with the best learned in these parts (who approved them) he consented to enlarge the said Sermon and so to print it, as a token of his duty and good affection toward the Church of God: and then if it were thought good to the judgment of the godly, to translate the same into other languages that the profit thereof might be more universal. There is no doubt but many overcome with old Custom, or yielding to negligent Slothfulness, will either dispraise this profitable work, or neglect it. For evil Custom delighting in Ignorance will straightway fly to her wonted argument: What is this new doctrine [Mark 1:27; Acts 17:19]? And whence is it? Negligence on the other part crieth maliciously: We have books enough: what need we yet to be set to school? Thus Satan with double subtlety deludeth the world, keeping his ever so fast tied in the bands of blind Ignorance, that they can neither stir hand nor foot: they are blind and cannot see what is good: and though it be offered, yet are they insensible and can not feel it. The truth of God's word is to them most odious: but man's dreams and devils' doctrines are in great estimation and reverence. Their false prophets and papistical priests have so charmed

them, that Ignorance is holden for knowledge, error for truth, superstition for religion, disobedience for obedience, the Mass for the Lord's Supper, Purgatory for Christ's blood, works for faith, Belial for God, and, as St. Paul saith, If they bring you into slavery, ye endure it: if they devour you, ye suffer it: if they spoil you of your goods, ye are content: if they prefer themselves and thrust you down, ye forbear it: if they smite you on the face, yet ye can sustain it [II Corinthians 11:20]. And thus the children of Satan had rather rot in their barbarous ignorance than, by submitting themselves to the mercies of God, aspire to the perfect understanding of his heavenly will revealed unto us by his word. But thou, the son of God, shew thy duty and love toward thy merciful Father, endeavor to know his will, declare thy affection towards his Scriptures, be zealous of his glory, reverence his ministers, and receive thankfully his graces given to his Church by them. Prove diligently and try by the touchstone who speak the words of God in pure simplicity as in God's presence, and who chop and change the same [II Corinthians 2:17], making merchandise thereof to traffic according to man's pleasure. Neither do we desire only that you should be persuaded in this truth because we ourselves so believe: but we exhort you, that as the Samaritans did not only believe in our Savior Christ because of the woman's report which brought the news, but forasmuch as they themselves heard him [John 4:29-30], and knew that Christ was the Savior of the world: so when you shall well examine these things by the rule of God's word, you would not so much by our report as by your own judgment and knowledge credit the truth. Remembering that the worthy people of Berea were commended by the holy Ghost, because they tried by God's word whether the minister's preaching agreed with the same or no [Acts 17:11]. Seeing then by these

examples we are bound to seek the will of God manifested unto us in his Scriptures, what excuse shall we allege for our pretended ignorance? Behold, here thou hearest the Eternal speaking by his minister, in whose mouth he hath put his word, and whose lips must keep the Law and the understanding thereof, as writeth the Prophet Malachi [Malachi 2:6-7]. Beware therefore, that thou neglect not him that bringeth the word of God, but quickly give ear and obey. For if thou desirest to know thy duty to thy Prince, and his charge likewise over thee, read this book and thou shalt well understand both: If thou wish for Christian liberty, come and see how it may easily be had: If thou wouldest love God above man, here thou shalt know how to obey God rather than man. Let the Apostles of Christ here be thy schoolmasters, and then the more thou learnest: the less occasion shalt thou have to repent. Obedience is necessary where God is glorified, but if God be dishonored, thy obedience is abominable in the sight of God, be it never so beautiful in man's eyes. God's word is our guide to lead us in our doings: when it commandeth us to obey God, we must disobey man in the contrary: for no man can serve two masters: and when our heavenly master commandeth obedience to man, it is ever to be, understand, in the Lord. So that obedience to God's Laws by disobeying man's wicked laws is much commendable, but to disobey God for any duty to man is altogether damnable: as in the discourse of this book thou shalt fully be assured, if God open thine eyes to see the truth, and move thy heart to embrace it. The Spirit of God, which is the schoolmaster to lead us into all truth, lighten your hearts, give you minds to understand, and courage to execute his holy will, to the setting forth of Christ's kingdom, the profit of his Church, and confusion of Satan's power and Antichrist's. Amen. From Geneva this first of January. 1558.

THE PREFACE

As there is nothing to be compared to true obedience, in preserving the commonwealth of towns, cities, and kingdoms: or in maintaining true religion, Christian peace, and concord (for thereby every man is instructed how to render unto God his due honor and glory: and to man that which his office requireth). Even so is there nothing more hateful to God, neither more hurtful to man, than so to be bewitched with Satan's false illusions, that they are not able to put difference betwixt obedience and disobedience: but as men without all judgment and natural sense, take the one for the other, being in themselves plain contrary, which is the only cause of all disorder and lamentable confusion, wherewith the whole world is both this day, and hath been also from the beginning, most miserably defaced and oppressed. For when vile man, replenished with pride, vain glory, and gross ignorance, will measure obedience with the crooked line of his own corrupt judgment, and not with the infallible truth of God's holy word, he must needs prefer his own decrees, fantasies, and ordinances, to the comfortable Laws and lively precepts of God his creator. Then in place of justice, he receiveth injustice; for right, wrong; for virtue, vice; for law, will; for love, hatred; for truth, falsehood; for plain dealing, dissimulation; for religion, superstition; for true worship, detestable idolatry: and to be short, for God, Satan; for Christ, Antichrist, and with him such plagues of God, and disorder among men, as are this day set before our eyes to behold in all places throughout the universal world, and have been likewise even from the beginning. When Adam was placed in paradise, being a creature most perfect, and abounding in all wisdom and heavenly knowledge, and would at the persuasion of his wife measure obedience rather by his own reason, than by

the word and sentence of God before pronounced [Genesis 3]: behold, he was not only spoiled of wisdom and knowledge, becoming a very fool, in comparison of that which he was before: but also suddenly destitute of all other singular gifts, as of innocence, and immortality, was confounded at the voice of the Lord, ashamed at his own nakedness, and felt the dreadful indignation and curse of God, which he had procured, not only to himself, but brought the same also upon all his posterity after him. When the whole world was so corrupted in their own ways in the days of faithful Noah, no regard was at all to the obedience of the living Lord, nor yet to the godly admonitions of just Noah: but every man was so drowned in his own lusts, that the space of an hundred and twenty years was not sufficient to move them to repentance [Genesis 6]. And therefore could they not escape the strange and horrible judgment of God, which immediately after followed most justly. And although in that wicked generation abounded all kind of wickedness, as well against God as man, insomuch as the earth then might be counted a very hell, yet from whence proceeded all this rebellion against God's mighty majesty, but only for that they measured all things after their own corrupt reason, and not by his holy Laws and precepts? Which they had now received of their forefathers, heard of Noah, yea, and had them engrafted naturally in their hearts. The probation whereof might easily be deduced from all ages even to our time by innumerable and evident examples, if it were needful in so plain a matter [Romans 2]. For who is so blind that may not see how man sheweth his rebellion, never so much, as when he would be most obedient in his own sight and judgment? Not measuring the same by the straight line and true touchstone, which is the Law and word of God, but suffering himself to be led by his own corrupt judgment and affections.

This turned the Wisdom of the Gentiles into mere foolishness, inventing shameful idolatry for true worship, as witnesseth the Apostle [Romans 1:20-25].

This blinded the Jews with hypocrisy and cloaked holiness, making the Law of the living Lord to give place to their invented traditions by man [Matthew 15:1-9]. Out of this stinking puddle of man's brain have issued forth so great diversity of opinions and dangerous heresies, wherewith the Church of God hath been at all times horribly tormented. Finally from hence hath Antichrist filled his pestilent cup of all sorts of deadly poison, whereof he hath made the whole earth almost, and her kings and Princes, not only to drink: but to be most vilely overcome and drunken. In whose defense they have armed themselves against the Lord and Christ, his Son [Psalm 2:1-3]: whom notwithstanding with impudent mouths they profess, whereas in very deed they persecute him most cruelly in his Saints by all means possible, fighting, as men in a rage, under the banner of that filthy beast. And yet these men in the middle of their fury, without all obedience and order, subverting the Laws of God and of nature, will be called, notwithstanding, the defenders of the faith, maintainers of true religion, authors of peace, teachers of obedience, and most discreet governors of commonwealths and policies. To the intent therefore that these disguised persons (which abuse the whole world) may appear in their own lively shape, and be known as they are in deed, I have thought it good, having occasion by this worthy answer of Peter and John, and being hereto of divers godly persons provoked, somewhat to write of true obedience: to wit, what God himself requireth of us, and what he commandeth to be given also to men. Whereby (God willing) the disguised cloaks, and crafty pretenses of obedience, used and

practiced by the ungodly worldlings, shall be discovered: who have sought always, and yet do seek under the pleasant name of obedience, only to maintain their ambition, pride, and liberty: whereby we shall learn also how in times past we have been shamefully abused in yielding to the willful will of man, in obeying his ungodly commandments, and fearing man more than God: and finally how it behooveth us to repent our former ignorance, and with diligence to redress the same, having more light and fuller knowledge.

PETER AND JOHN answered unto them, and said: Whether it be right in the sight of God to obey you rather than God, judge you. Acts 4:19

CHAP. I.

To whom this answer was given, and upon what occasion, how little the malice of the Jews prevailed against the Apostles, in seeking to stop the Gospel by their crafty fetches and chastisings.

To the end we may have more sensible feeling of all these things, let us diligently consider this answer of Saints Peter and John: as well to whom it was made, as upon what occasion. After that these two Apostles, through the malice of the Priests, the Governor of the Temple, and the Sadducees, were violently thrown into prison the night before, for preaching to the people at Jerusalem in the porch of Solomon, the resurrection from death in the Name of Jesus [Acts 4]: and the next day following were set forth, and presented to the whole Senate and Council of Jerusalem, where was assembled all the chief Rulers and Elders of the people of Israel, Annas also the high Priest, and Caiaphas, and John, and Alexander, men of great reputation, with others of the kindred of the high Bishop, to be examined of them, in whose name or power they had cured the lame cripple (who being above 40 years old, and lame from his birth, was daily brought to the porch of Solomon to beg his alms) Peter, replenished with the holy Spirit, answered with great boldness, that they wrought that miracle in the Name and power of Jesus Christ, the true Nazarite, Whom the Jews had crucified, and God had raised from the death: insomuch as the mouths of the whole Council were stopped and had nothing to say against them, but as men astonished wondered at the constant boldness of Peter and John in their answer. Then (saith St. Luke) did the whole Council, that is, all these forenamed Magistrates, by common consent straightly charge the Apostles Peter and John hereafter not so much as once to speak to any man, much

less to preach, in the Name of Jesus: thinking by this means to stop the course of the Gospel, and hinder the glory of Christ, whom they before had crucified as a malefactor and blasphemer of God's Name. And although they were destitute of all reason and Scripture to answer the Apostles, who had already confounded them: yet through authority and punishment, which they threatened, they thought craftily to put the Apostles to silence, and so at length to obtain the victory. As we see this day the Papists, their successors, express enemies of the Gospel and sworn soldiers of Antichrist, everywhere practice, who being overcome with the manifest Scriptures, and their blasphemous mouths stopped with the truth of God's word, fight notwithstanding maliciously against Christ with power, authority, threatenings, horrible punishments, and cruel murder, resembling that old serpent, whose brood they are, which was a murderer from the beginning [John 8:44].

But when the whole assembly had craftily consulted, and wrought all that they could against the faithful servants of God: they were nevertheless disappointed of their purpose. For the glory of Christ more brightly shined, and the truth of his Gospel was better known and farther published, and their falsehood and raging madness more espied and abhorred of the godly. For what extreme madness was this to set themselves against God, so to trust in their own power as though they were able to resist and overcome the power of the almighty, which is the Gospel of our Savior Jesus Christ (as witnesseth the Apostle [Romans 1:16]). To think that the threatenings of men should more prevail with the Apostles of Christ, than the threatenings of God and his horrible judgments appointed for the disobedient? Could not the Jews destroy Christ and his doctrine, whiles he was mortal and lived

amongst them in the flesh, to whom they did almost what they list, and yet would after think to bring it to pass, when he was risen again by his mighty power, and made immortal? If they could not keep him in the grave for all their diligent watch, when he was dead and buried: think they it possible to pluck him down from heaven, from the right hand of his father, where he sitteth and reigneth in everlasting glory? Oh vain and foolish men: he hath overcome already the whole world, and cast forth of it the Chief Prince and Ruler, Satan, who is no more able to prevail against his truth and servants. Are you more subtle or stronger than Satan, who is your lord and master so long as you fight against Christ, the Son of God? Could not so mighty a Prince withstand his power, and you lewd soldiers of his will think to obtain the victory? Death, which no man can escape, could not hold him, neither the power of hell prevail against him: and yet would you have him at your commandment, most maliciously and traitorously fighting against his honor, who sought by all means, and yet doth, to do you good and save you? But O miserable and vile wretches, double is your condemnation in the sight of God, which not contented to forsake Christ yourselves do so maliciously with your threatenings labor to frustrate others of his most comfortable graces. Full well doth our Savior Christ paint forth your raging envy, saying, Woe be to you, Scribes, Pharisees, and hypocrites, because you shut the kingdom of heaven before men, not entering yourselves, neither will you suffer such as come to enter [Matthew 23:13].

CHAP. II.

How the papistical Church and Councils cannot but err, and how they, being compared to the Jews, are no less deniers and blasphemers of Christ, than the Jews.

I will not here rehearse what just occasion of repentance was offered to this whole assembly of the Jews (if their hearts had not been hardened) as well by the plain and sensible doctrine taught by the Apostles, which they could not improve with all their learning: as by the mighty power of God declared in so many and wonderful miracles wrought by them in the name of Christ to confirm his Gospel and resurrection, which the Jews notwithstanding stubbornly did reject: Neither yet will I speak of the strange defection and notable falling away from God amongst them in Jerusalem, which at that time (in the judgment of man) appeared to be the only Church of God, to whom appertained the promises, who of all other nations had the Law and Prophets to instruct them [Romans 3 and 9], who only professed the true and ever-living God: and yet amongst them all that were assembled, was not so much as one man to stand upon Christ's part with the Apostles, but consented and agreed with one accord, that in the Name of Christ they should preach no more to the people. Only this I would put you in remembrance of, before we proceed any further, how vain and uncertain the doctrine of the blasphemous Papists is, which is grounded upon no other foundation, than upon the authority of their Church, their Councils, and decrees of men. And herein dare I make the papists themselves judges, whether their Church be of more authority or antiquity, than was the Church of the Jews which was the first of all, and authorized by God immediately: Or whether their Councils, at the appointment of the Roman Antichrist, were more orderly

called and assembled, than was this Council held at Jerusalem by the appointment of the Chief priest and Bishop? As for their Church, the Jews had the manifest word and promise of God: yea, there was no other Church, then visible upon the earth, besides that which the Apostles then began to build upon the true cornerstone, Jesus Christ: whereas the papists have not so much as one word or promise to prove that they are (as they impudently brag) the Church of God, but many rather most plainly proving them to be the very Synagogue of Satan, and lively members of Antichrist. If then this, which seemed the true Church of God, and authorized by him, so shamefully erred: marvel it is that the papistical Synagogue and members of Satan should be found establishers of the verity, which always, since they have been raised up from hell, have sought nothing but the utter subversion thereof? Neither can they defend themselves by any authority to assemble, or by any learning, or outward shew of holiness: seeing in none of these points they may be compared to this assembly, whereof St. Luke maketh mention. For here was the high Priest Annas, here was Caiaphas, here were the temporal Magistrates, the governors of the Temple, the Seniors of Jerusalem, the learned Scribes, and Pharisees. And what could any man wish for in the judgment of man, that there was not, to make a lawful Council? And yet thou seest the conclusion was against the Lord and his anointed Son. Wilt thou then hope for any better at the papists' assemblies and Councils, who in persecuting Christ continually, and his holy word, shew themselves open enemies to both? Dost thou here behold the Jews, which professed the true living God, without all apish maumetry and Idols, forbidden in their Law: nevertheless maliciously to consult against their true Messias: and will not yet cease to credit the papists, saying, That their

Churches and Councils cannot err, whereas they dishonor the living Lord, having their Temples replenished with all kind of idolatry: yea, when their own consciences do condemn them, that there was never the like impiety committed in all Israel, as their filthy Councils have taught and commended? But thou wilt say perchance, that there is no comparison betwixt the Jews, plainly denying Christ, and the papists which do confess him: and thereupon will conclude, that the papistical Councils may not so easily err, as those which were held of the Jews at Jerusalem, against the Apostles and their doctrine. As concerning their Councils, I may not answer now: for that were an infinite work to repeat all their absurdities. If any man would but once read them over, he should need no other persuasion to abhor them, and to confess this my saying most true in all the Councils held by the Roman Antichrist. But to compare them with the Jews in denying of Christ, thou shalt prove them more blasphemous. For the Jews after a sort did confess their Christ and Messias in waiting for him daily to deliver them, and save them from the misery wherein they were, and now are, and from all their enemies according as God promised: but when they would not acknowledge him, whom their fathers did persecute and crucify, and whom the Apostles taught to be risen and ascended, they plainly denied Christ. They believed that he should be their Captain and deliverer, but after another sort, than by his death and passion: and to another end, than to suffer in this world the shame of the Cross.

Even so do the papists confess Christ, but in effect with the Jews deny him. They confess Christ which is come in the flesh, born of the virgin Mary, crucified for the sins of the world, etc. Which all hitherunto is well, and agreeth with us. But forasmuch as they are not with him

contented, but will have another Christ besides him: they are manifest deniers of Christ. For (as writeth the Apostle [I Timothy 2:5-6]) There is but one God, one Mediator betwixt God and man, the man Jesus Christ, which gave himself to be the redemption for all. Now when the papists believe not only in this Christ and Savior, which came in the flesh, and was born of the virgin, but also in that Christ, whom they imagine to come, and to be in the world in the form of bread, and born about with the hands of man, not able to go himself: when they believe not only upon Christ crucified, and hanged upon the Cross, but in the conjured Idol, hanging by a cord over the altar: not only in Christ glorified upon the right hand of the father, who liveth and reigneth forever, but in their round cake, which (they say) is consecrated, when without sense and feeling it lieth closed in their box, subject to molding, worms, and corruption, reserved and kept to be worshipped as their God, but to their condemnation forever. Moreover when they have other advocates than Christ, other sacrifices for sin, other merits and means of salvation: it helpeth them no more to prove that they are Christians, thus impudently denying him and his office, than it helpeth the Jews, in saying they believe in the true Messias to come, which is already come, and revealed to the world. Yea so much the more is their condemnation, for that under the Name of Christ, whom they dare not deny, they work privy treason against him, to subvert the truth of his Gospel, and whole fruit of his death and passion: which is our redemption from death, and hope of everlasting life, purchased by that perfect oblation, which was offered once for all, as a sufficient sacrifice for the sins of the whole world [Hebrews 10:12-14; I John 2:1-2].

CHAP. III.

What inconvenience had come to the Church of God, if the Apostles had obeyed the commandment of the Council, and what evils have come lately upon England through the preaching of unlawful obedience and yielding to ungodly Rulers.

Let us leave the ungodly papists with their wicked decrees and Councils, as men that pass the Jews in all manner of willful stubbornness and cruel persecution of the truth, as the horrible slaughter of thousands of martyrs, which within these few years in England alone do witness: and return to the Apostles, Peter and John, to examine what answer they framed to these men of authority, and Rulers, gathered together of all sorts, as you have heard, as well of the Clergy as of the Laity, of such as then had the only government of Jerusalem under the Romans, to whom they were then tributaries, which charge and threatening of the whole Council, done with so great advisement and consultation, ought not lightly to be esteemed, especially, of the servants of God, and their subjects, as the Apostles then were. They were charged and threatened to preach no more in the Name of Christ crucified. An heavy commandment doubtless to Peter and John, especially if it might have taken place: seeing it was altogether contrary to their vocation and charge given unto them by their master Christ, to preach his Gospel throughout all the world, and to begin at Jerusalem [Luke 24:46-47; Acts 1:8], for which cause they were called and chosen from amongst all others, and had been of long time instructed of their master Christ in the knowledge of all his holy Scriptures, and replenished with wonderful gifts of the holy Ghost, to cure all diseases, to cast out devils, to drink poison, to tread upon serpents, and to distribute the holy Spirit, and all those to be as it were seals and

confirmations of their doctrine, which all had been to no purpose, if this commandment and threatening of the Magistrates should have been obeyed, and the Apostles yielded to their authority. Then the foundation of the Church should have been shaken, and the whole assembly discouraged: for the two Chief Captains giving over, who durst have presumed further?

And truly, if the Apostles at that time had been no further instructed, than the most part of men are in these our days, and especially have been, and yet be in our miserable country of England: they would have been in great perplexity, and sore afraid to have made this, or the like answer saying: Judge you whether it be lawful before God to obey you, rather than God. For the most part of men, yea, and of those which have been both learned and godly, and have given worthy testimony of their profession to the glory of God: have thought and taught (by the permission of God for our sins) that it was not lawful in any case to resist and disobey the superior powers: but rather to lay down their heads, and submit themselves to all kinds of punishments and tyranny, thinking themselves sufficiently discharged before God of their vocation and duty, having only the commandment of the superior power to the contrary, were it never so ungodly and clean against all natural reason: whereby many having commandment to preach no more Jesus christ to the people, without any trouble of conscience have kept silence, and thought themselves sufficiently discharged: neither considering that they were made stewards of God's holy mysteries [I Corinthians 4:1-2], and that not at the appointment of man, or for themselves, but by the ordinance of our Savior Christ Jesus, and to be faithful distributors to others. Neither yet marking this present answer of Peter and John, whom they might safely

have followed with better assurance: who in such case, have left this lesson for all men, rather to obey God than man. Others, hearing the Name of God blasphemed by the false doctrine of the wicked and shaveling priests, durst not once open their mouths to speak one word in their master's behalf and his infallible truth: but stopped their mouths as dumb dogs, and durst not bark against the ravening wolf when they knew and saw him coming. Many not minding to object themselves to any danger, regarding more their own safety, than the preservation of their flock, would not abide the wild beast coming, but most shamefully fled before the danger came, shewing themselves plain hirelings, and no true pastors: leaving the selie sheep of God to be devoured, and that because they had entered into the fold before to feed of the flock, to eat the flesh, and devour the people of God as bread [Psalm 14:4], rather than to do their duties.

But all these and such like are here condemned and convicted of evil, which fearing man more than God, gave ear and obedience to man, rather than to God. Whereof, besides the just shame that came upon themselves, and the displeasure of God poured generally upon all (forasmuch as we all were betrayers of our master, though not all alike) just occasion of offence and of like disobedience to God, was ministered to all sorts of men, of what vocation soever they were. For when they saw the teachers and leaders of others to set up obedience of man rather than of God, and the same confirmed by their own example: those which knew no other, thought it their part to do the like also in their vocation and office. And such as were plain enemies to God, the wicked papists or dissolute persons, laughed in their selves: seeing both them and their wicked proceedings thereby promoted and furthered. Whereas to defend their kingdom of darkness, ambition, and idle

bellies, there is no king so godly, no country so peaceable, nor no kingdom so strong, which through their devilish enterprises and wicked persuasions, they have not studied utterly to subvert and destroy. As the example of that desperate Monk, who to poison king John, wittingly and willingly poisoned himself. O malicious devil. Likewise the oration of that most traitorous and pestilent Cardinal Pole, doth yet witness to all the papists' shame and confusion: wherein he goeth about to persuade the wicked Emperor rather to turn his power and army against King Henry the eighth and England, this dog's own country, than against the infidels, Turks, and Saracens: blasphemously terming the word of God and Gospel of salvation to be the Turkish seed. O impudent mouth: O blasphemous beast, which saith in thy heart, There is no God. And yet to all your shame and utter destruction of your country, you have received him as a God, whom before in your lawful king's days, you most justly condemned as a traitor and very son of Antichrist. The Counselors, whose office is to bridle the affections of their Princes and Governors, in giving such counsel as might promote the glory of God, and the wealth of their country by this persuasion of obedience, have hitherto sought, and yet appearing do, how to accomplish and satisfy the ungodly lusts of their ungodly and unlawful Governess, wicked Jezebel: who for our sins, contrary to nature and the manifest word of God, is suffered to reign over us in God's fury, and have thereby most wickedly betrayed Christ, their country, and themselves (so much as lieth in them) to become slaves to a strange and foreign nation, the proud Spaniards. The Nobles also, which (though unworthily will be so called) hearing no other preaching, but that they must obey their Prince, neither knowing whom, wherein, nor how far, have in like manner, as men disguised upon a stage, turned their

nobility to open shame amongst all nations, which now behold their folly, and wonder thereat: seeing they are made instruments of impiety, and destroyers of their native country, which first were ordained in Realms to stand in defense of true religion, laws, and wealth of their nation, and to be a shield (to their power) against their enemies in time of war, and a bridle at home to their Princes in time of peace: neither to suffer them in this sort to rage against God, and utterly to condemn the wholesome laws of the Realm, to satisfy their filthy lust and vain glory, nor so cruelly to murder, and against nature to devour the people of God, their subjects, whom they are charged by their office to succor and defend, and have therefore a fearful compt to make for doing the contrary.

The Justices likewise in Towns and Cities, as Mayors, Sheriffs, Bailiffs, Constables, Jailers, and all such inferior officers, following the same example of unlawful obedience, whose office and charge it is to minister justice without respect of persons, to defend the simple and innocent, and to punish all transgressors and malefactors, blasphemers of God's holy Name, violent oppressors of innocents, as be the bloodthirsty papists: are now become ministers of injustice, and tyranny, made tormentors of their own natural Countrymen, most bloody butchers of their brethren, and merciless murderers of the children of God: and that in such cruel sort, as never was heard of before since the death of Christ, where any profession of his Name hath been. Insomuch that they are made a spectacle and gazing stock to all countries and nations, amongst whom is any fear of God or civil policy, which would not have believed it to be possible, if their ears and eyes were not this day sufficient witnesses. For to understand that the papists were cruel butchers and

unsatiable bloodsuckers, had been no news at all, they have been such from the beginning. But when they both hear and see those that profess the Gospel, and would be counted Christ's sheep, turned for fear of displeasure, or losing of their office, into the nature of bloodthirsty wolves, to execute against God and their conscience, the ungodly commandments of the papists: to be at commandment, not only to their unlawful Queen, but also to every shaven Sir John, to imbrue their hands with them in innocent blood: this maketh all men to wonder and be astonished.

To conclude, the residue of the common people, seeing their superiors of all degrees and estates, by whom they should be governed with godly laws, and to whom they ought obedience in the fear of God only, thus cowardly to forsake their obedience to God, and utterly contemn the office wherewith he had charged them, to satisfy the unlawful commandments of their willful Governess: think it in no case their part to deny to her like obedience: but with bodies and goods, at home and abroad, to fulfill and maintain her will and tyranny, notwithstanding their own conscience doth condemn them, and the word of God doth plainly testify, that it is evil and ungodly which they are commanded to do. Being deceived by misunderstanding this place of Paul [Romans 13:1-2] and such like: It behooveth every soul to be subject to superior powers, because there is no power but of God. For the powers that are, be ordinances of God: and therefore he that resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God.

But how little this and other like objections make for their purpose, we shall God willing understand, after that we have better examined this present answer of Peter and John: who are not contrary to Paul, nor Paul to them,

rightly considered. For though this answer was made of Peter and John in their own cause to the Magistrates and Rulers of Jerusalem: yet is it no less general than the saying of St. Paul: and pertaineth to all conditions of men, as well Magistrates and Rulers, as inferior persons and subjects: teaching them both their office most rightly: the one, what to command, and how to rule: the other, whom to obey, and wherein to be subject, as in their places following shall evidently appear.

CHAP. III.

The truth of this answer was so sensible, that the very adversaries could not withstand it.

And first to return to the answer, we may be assured that it is certain and an undoubted truth, that in all things, and of all men, and in all places, God is to be obeyed before men. Insomuch as the Apostles were not afraid to commit the judgment thereof unto their extreme enemies: whom, they knew right well, would have given contrary sentence, if their answer had not been without all controversy. As though they would have said: After that we have been charged with this office to preach to all people and nations, and that by God himself, to whom all powers are subject, and all men are bound to obey, whose judgments none can escape, and whose wrath no flesh is able to abide: which with the breath of his mouth, moveth the heavens, and maketh the mighty mountains to shake and tremble, and driveth all powers (be they never so strong) to dust and powder [Psalm 104]. We are contented to make you judges, which charge us to the contrary: whether this dreadful God may approve our doings in obeying you, being men, and his creatures, yea earth, very dust and ashes in comparison of his Majesty? Whether man, of what authority soever he be, is able to discharge us in the presence of our God, if in holding our peace at your commandment, we transgress the express commandment of God? That is, not to preach Jesus Christ crucified: who hath chosen us to the same end, endued us with knowledge, revealed unto us his secret counsels, the mystery of our redemption, and armed us with all gifts of the holy Ghost, necessary for the accomplishment of so weighty an enterprise. We need not herein to use many words or reasons: nor to desire any arbiters to define this matter: be you yourselves judges. Which kind of

speaking, men commonly use, when the matter is evident and out of doubt, known to all men, be they of never so slender judgment, and need no further reasons, or Scriptures to prove it. The like kind of reasoning, the Apostle useth against the Corinthians [I Corinthians 11]: who permitted their women to pray bareheaded in the Congregation, which he condemned as an indecent custom, not becoming the Saints of God. For amongst other reasons, he likewise maketh themselves judges in the matter, saying: Judge ye among yourselves, whether it be comely for a woman to pray bareheaded in the Congregation. Concluding, that very nature doth teach the contrary. In like manner this answer is so true and sensible (that rather God is to be obeyed than man) that there can be none so malicious or ignorant, whom very nature will not compel to confess it, if he had no further knowledge. Neither had these men, for all their great ado, long consultation, high learning and wisdom (desirous also to take occasion against the Apostles) anything to say for the contrary. But as God's enemies are accustomed, when their mouths are stopped, either with railings, or threatenings, to express their rage: so did they with Peter and John, demitting them at the last with bitter words and menaces: and they departed notwithstanding from the Council, by the means of this answer, conquerors.

CHAP. V.

To obey man in anything against God, is Unlawful and plain disobedience.

Now forasmuch as we are assured of the truth and certainty of their answer, whereof none can justly doubt: let us somewhat further consider what things are principally herein contained. First we may hereof justly conclude, that to obey man in anything contrary to God, or his precepts, though he be in highest authority, or never so orderly called thereunto (as these men, whereof St. Luke speaketh, were) is no obedience at all, but disobedience.

Secondly, that it is not a sufficient discharge for us before God, when we deny to accomplish their unlawful demands and threatenings, except we do the contrary every man in his vocation and office, as occasion is offered, and as his power will serve. Which things plainly under-staid, as they shall give a clear light in this controversy: so do I not doubt by this present answer and fact of Peter and John, to prove most manifestly, that although we were destitute of other examples, yet this might appear sufficient. As touching the first, that there is no obedience against God which is not plain disobedience: the Apostles say; Judge you whether it be right or just in God's sight to obey you rather than God: which is as much as they would say, It is not just nor lawful. Then if it be not lawful and just in God's sight, who judgeth things truly and as they be indeed, it must needs follow that all manner of obedience against God and his word is plain disobedience, and the workers thereof likewise condemned as rebels. Why? Because it is unjust and unlawful before God: And all true obedience is lawful, which must not be measured by the will of man,

but by the just Laws and ordinances of the living Lord. So that after God hath once pronounced anything that he would have done, either in his Law or otherwise: there is no man that may or can dispense therewith, seem it of never so little importance in the judgment of men. He that commandeth the contrary is a rebel: and he that obeyeth likewise. Neither doth this appertain to the Apostles and ministers only in their office, but is a general argument for all sorts, estates, and degrees of men: forasmuch as God hath like authority of all, and all owe unto him first and principal obedience: and secondly unto men for him, and in him only: except they will be enemies to God, and deny him to be their Lord. For so much it is, in effect, when we prefer men to God; obedience to man, before the obedience to God. It is not the authority of the Prince, or the fear of his punishment, that can excuse in His presence: who commandeth his people generally, high and low, rich and poor, man and woman, to hear his voice, and to observe his statutes. Neither to decline upon the right hand, nor upon the left: neither to add anything thereto, or to take anything from it: but to do that only, which the living Lord commandeth [Deuteronomy 4:1-2]. And if we be the sheep of the Lord's fold, it is not sufficient for us to hear the voice of our pastor, and to follow him, except we also deny to hear, much more to follow any other: that is, which calleth not with the voice of the true pastor [John 10:5]. And as there ought to be no creature of like authority amongst us, as our sovereign Lord and God, whose creatures we be, and the workmanship of his own hands: even so, there is none like to him in dignity, or may be compared to him in power, none like to him in riches, or so able to reward his subjects, being Lord of heaven and earth, disposer of all things present and to come: distributor not only of all corporal and earthly blessings to those that fear and serve

him: but also poureth upon them all spiritual and heavenly graces in great abundance. Moreover, as by his authority, power, dignity, riches, and liberality, he may of right demand of us obedience; so must we persuade ourselves in not rendering the same to him willingly, that none can deliver us from his horrible punishments and destruction, which he threateneth upon all such as willfully transgress his holy precepts, and decline from his Laws [Deuteronomy 28 and 30:15-18]. Neither will he regard by what means, or by whose commandment we transgress his laws. For that can be no excuse for us, though he be King, Queen, or Emperor that commandeth or threateneth us. For what is king, Queen, or Emperor compared to God? Is the punishment of earth, ashes, of vile man, whose breath is in his nostrils [Isaiah 2:22], more to be feared than the plagues of God, who hath power both of body and soul to destroy them everlastingly? Was it any earthly power that brought the waters upon the universal world, and drowned all mankind for sin, eight persons excepted [Genesis 7:23]? Did man destroy Sodom and Gomorrah with fire and brimstone [Genesis 19]? Came the plagues of Egypt, the drowning of Pharaoh, the overthrow of the Canaanites, the subversion of Jerusalem, by the power of man? If these be the works of man and not of God, fear man and not God: but if there be none of these evils which cometh upon any City, or country, whereof the Lord is not the worker [Amos 3]: beware that the fear of man's punishment cause thee not to fall into the hands of this mighty revenger, which is an horrible thing, as the Apostle writeth [Hebrews 10:31]. Princes therefore, and all powers upon the earth, are not to be compared unto God, whose Lieutenants only should they be, and are no longer than he will, in whose hands their hearts are, to move and turn at his pleasure [Proverbs 21:1]. And for

that cause it is their duty to seek all means possible, whereby the glory of God might be advanced, by whom they are themselves so highly exalted above their brethren, and in no cause to minister occasion of rebellion against his mighty Majesty: but rather to be examples to others (over whom they are constitute) of all Godly life and lawful obedience. In consideration whereof, God himself appointing his people to have a king, which, when they should come into the land of promise (for that was the first promotion that God ordained amongst his people, which yet came not to such pride to desire an Emperor) did with great circumspection, as well appoint them what manner of man they should choose, as the laws by the which he should rule others, and be obeyed of them. When thou comest (saith the Lord by Moses [Deuteronomy 17:14-15]) to the land which thy Lord giveth thee, and shalt possess it, thou shalt without doubt, put or constitute a king to thee: but whom thy Lord thy God shall choose. Moreover he saith, from the middle of thy brethren shalt thou appoint a King over thee. For thou mayest not appoint a stranger, which is not thy brother. Which law, as it proceeded from the wisdom of God, who thought it necessary for his people: even so is our miserable ignorance and unspeakable ingratitude to be lamented, which neither do understand the goodness of God in these laws, nor yet will vouchsafe to consult with his heavenly wisdom: all men rather seeking to choose and procure themselves Princes and kings after their own fantasy, and by ungodly fetches and policies, than to follow the appointment of the Almighty: preferring their own wits to the wisdom of God, which never faileth them that follow it. In comparison of whom all others at length, shall shew themselves to be mere fools. If we will be the people of God, let us then search and diligently follow the Laws of God, especially in so weighty matters, as the

election of kings and Princes, by whom Realms and nations are either preserved if they be Godly, or utterly destroyed, and shamefully oppressed if they be ungodly. The first point or caution that God requireth of his people to observe is that they choose such a king as the Lord doth appoint, and not as they fantasy. And what one is he or how should he be known? The people of Israel (you will say) had their kings appointed them by the mouth of God and anointed of his Prophets: as David, and his son Solomon. For Saul, though he was appointed and anointed in God's fury, yet was he not of the Lord's choosing after this meaning of Moses, who willeth them to appoint a king that the Lord shall choose: to wit, of his favor and goodness, such a one as shall observe the Laws following, as we shall see hereafter. Two means had the Israelites to know their king, whether he was of God elect or no. The first, by the express commandment and promise made to some special man, whereof they needed not to doubt: as was made to David, and to Solomon his son expressly. The second is by his word, which he hath now left to all men to be the ordinary means to reveal his will and appointment. Which (if we unfeignedly follow in our doings) we need no more to doubt, than if God should now speak unto us out of the heavens, as then he did to the Israelites. The word then giveth us these notes to know whether he be of God or not, whom we would choose for our king. First (as was said) if he be a man that hath the fear of God before his eyes, and zealously with David, and Josiah, doth study to set forth the same, hating unfeignedly all papistry and idolatry. For this cause God willeth that he should be chosen from amongst his brethren, and should be no stranger: because such then had not the fear of God, but were idolaters, to whom no promise of any kingdom was made, and who also would lead the people to idolatry. Also in that his exercise is

appointed, the word, Laws, and statutes of God, it is manifest that he is not chosen of God, except he be such a one: and ought not to be appointed or elected as their king and Governor, what title or right soever he seem to have thereunto, by civil policy, except he be a promoter and setter forth of God's Laws and glory, for which cause, chiefly, this office was ordained.

The next rule to be observed is that he should be one of their brethren, meaning of the Israelites: partly to exclude the oppression and idolatry, which cometh in by strangers, as our Country now is an example: and partly, for that strangers cannot bear such a natural zeal to strange realms and peoples, as becometh brethren: but chiefly to avoid that monster in nature, and disorder amongst men, which is the Empire and government of a woman, saying expressly: From the middle of thy brethren shalt thou choose thee a king, and not amongst thy sisters. For God is not contrary to himself, which at the beginning appointed the woman to be in subjection to her husband [Genesis 3:16], and the man to be head of the woman (as saith the Apostle [I Corinthians 14:34-35; I Timothy 2:11-12]) who will not permit so much to the woman, as to speak in the Assembly of men, much less to be Ruler of a Realm or nation. If women be not permitted by Civil policies to rule in inferior offices, to be Counselors, Peers of a realm, Justices, Sheriffs, Bailiffs, and such like: I make yourselves judges, whether it be mete for them to govern whole Realms and nations?

If the word of God cannot persuade you, by which she is made subject to her husband, much more to the Counsel and authority of an whole realm, which word also appointeth your kings to be chosen from among their brethren, and not from their sisters: who are forbidden as

persons unmeet to speak in a Congregation: be you yourselves judges, and let nature teach you the absurdity thereof.

And this much have I of purpose noted in this matter, to let you see to all our shames, how far ye have been led besides your common senses and the manifest word of God, in electing, anointing, and crowning a woman to be your Queen and Governess, and she in very deed a bastard, and unlawfully begotten. But be it that she were no bastard, but the king's daughter as lawfully begotten as was her sister, that Godly Lady, and meek Lamb, void of all Spanish pride, and strange blood: yet in the sickness, and at the death of our lawful Prince of Godly memory king Edward the sixth, this should not have been your first counsel or question, who should be your Queen, what woman you should crown, if you had been preferers of God's glory, and wise counselors, or naturally affected towards your country. But first and principally, who had been most mete amongst your brethren to have had the government over you, and the whole government of the realm, to rule them carefully in the fear of God, and to preserve them against all oppression of inward tyrants and outward enemies. Whereby you might have been assured to escape all this miserable and unspeakable disorder, and shameful confusion, which now by contrary counsel is brought worthily upon us. I know ye will say, the Crown is not entailed to the heir males only, but appertaineth as well to the daughters: and therefore by the Laws of the Realm, you could not otherwise do. But if it be true, yet miserable is this answer of such as had so long time professed the Gospel, and the lively word of God. If it had been made of pagans and heathens, which knew not God by his word, it might better have been born with all. But amongst them that bear the Name of God's people, with

whom his Laws should have chief authority: this answer is not tolerable to make the constant and undoubted Law of God, which ought to be the line of all ordinances, to give place to the vain and ungodly degrees of men, as experience hath now taught you. Moreover, in anointing her as if she had been a man, was no less absurdity, using thereunto such greasings and shameless Ceremonies, and that in the face of all the people: as though Moses' law yet were in force, and Christ our Savior not come: which hath put an end to all such outward Ceremonies: whose anointings were spiritual. For as he was replenished with all graces of the holy Ghost, and that without measure, and above all his fellows, kings, Priests, and Prophets: so hath he left no other anointing to be used of his servants: but of the same sort, that is, spiritual. And if Moses with his Ceremonies were now in full authority, as he was before Christ [Hebrews 1; Psalm 45]: Yet were it not lawful by him to anoint any woman, to any manner of office or dignity, seeing that this Ceremony was never appointed to any other but only to Priests, kings, and Prophets [Leviticus 8; I Samuel 15:1; I Kings 19:15-16]. How durst you then, so bold and impudent, O Papists, (for this was your enterprise) to transgress the order of God in the Law of Moses by anointing a woman? And also to contemn the liberty of the Gospel, in reducing and bringing again the Jewish Ceremonies, from which by Christ we are delivered? But it is no marvel if you be always like yourselves, stubborn and rebellious enemies to God and contemners of Christ. And therefore leaving you to yourselves, we will return to God's appointed limits in his Law, for the lawful election of kings and Princes. You have heard the two first cautions or rules, that is, how he must be of God's appointment, and not of man's: And also from amongst your brethren and not of your sisters,

and why. The third caution that God specieth in this election is that he be none such as hath great number of horses: meaning, as trusteth in his own power, and preparation of all things, for defense of himself, and to overcome his enemies. For under this name of horses, he comprehendeth all engines and furniture of war: such a one, as trusteth in them, and maketh not God his arm and buckler, with faithful David [Psalm 52:7], is not mete to be king of the Lord's people.

For by such means should they be brought to Egypt again, to their old misery and slavery, if they delighted in their horses, from whence the Lord would have them kept, and not in any case to return. As no doubt, he would have had us miserable Englishmen, warily to have kept us in that liberty of Jesus Christ and our consciences, wherein so mercifully he had brought us: and not by placing an infidel woman over us, to return to our old vomit, much more viler than the slavery of Egypt, I mean the servitude of that Romish Antichrist.

Other observations he giveth also, not to seek many wives, nor to heap up much gold: but chiefly that he have an example of God's Laws prescribed unto him, to read in them all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the Lord and to keep his commandments, and not to lift himself up above his brethren: meaning, he should rule with all holiness and humbleness, as did Moses and David. And thereby doth God promise that his days, and the days of his children, shall be prolonged in the middle of Israel.

Of the which we may justly conclude that by the ordinance of God, no other kings or Rulers ought to be chosen to rule over us, but such as will seek his honor and

glory, and will command and do nothing contrary to his Law. Wherewith they are no less, yea, much more charged, than the common people: because their charge is double: that is, not only to fear God themselves, but to see that their people fear him also, to whom they owe in that case all humble obedience and reverence. For they be (as was said) God's subjects and Lieutenants, for whose cause they must be revered, doing their duty. But if they will abuse his power, lifting themselves above God and above their brethren, to draw them to idolatry, and to oppress them, and their country: then are they no more to be obeyed in any commandments tending to that end: but to be contemned as vile Sergeants in comparison of the high Judge and Magistrate, who ought to do nothing, but as he is commanded to do by the Judge and superior power according to the law. Otherwise, if he lift himself above the chief Judge, looking to be honored and obeyed more than he: who would not abhor such a Sergeant, and not only to withstand his commandment, but to accuse him as a rebellious traitor, and banish him from amongst them? And yet here is but rebellion against man, who is but mortal. What ought we then to do unto that king or Prince, that lifteth himself up against the Majesty of God, who is immortal, to whom belongeth all power, dominion, and honor? Is he any more in comparison of God, than the Sergeant in respect of the Judge? Shall the Sergeant be punished as a traitor, and this man honored as a king, which doeth no part of the office thereunto belonging? Or rather is not his crime and treason greater, and deserveth so much more, as God is more excellent, compared to any worldly power, than is any king or Prince compared to the most vilest Sergeant?

Moreover, whence hath he this honor? Of himself? Is any man naturally born a king, Or hath he it of God? And if of

God, whereto, but to use it with God, and not against him. Seeing then it is not just in God's sight to obey man rather than God: neither that there is any dispensation of man that can dispense with his holy commandments, neither the authority of Prince, nor fear of punishment can excuse us. Seeing also, that kings are institute to rule in God's fear and Laws, as subjects and Sergeants to God, and not against his Laws, and above him: it must needs follow (as we first said) that all obedience given to such, wicked Princes against God, is plain rebellion in his judgment. And in that case to obey God, and disobey man, is true obedience, howsoever the world judgeth. For as none will condemn Peter and John of disobedience, because they would not herein obey their ordinary Magistrates: no more will any which have right judgment, condemn the like resistance in others, which alike is lawful to all.

Or else should the Israelites be excused, because they obeyed their wicked king Jeroboam in worshipping his calves in Dan and Bethel [I Kings 12].

Then should that cruel butcher Doeg, in killing Ahimelech with eighty-five Priests or Levites, and the whole town of Nob, at the commandment of ungodly king Saul, have been preferred to the rest of all his servants and soldiers [I Samuel 22:17-19]. And the soldiers also of cruel Herod should be blameless in murdering and shedding the blood of so many infants in Bethlehem at Herod's commandment [Matthew 2:16]. Then should the wicked Jews be guiltless of Christ's death and his Prophet's, whom they consented to murder by the persuasion of their Rulers [Matthew 27]. And the counterfeit Christians this day, which everywhere (but especially in our miserable country) imprison, famish,

murder, hang, and burn their own countrymen, and dear children of God, at the commandment of furious Jezebel, and her false Priests and Prophets, the bloody Bishops and shavelings, should be guiltless in all their doings. But all these doth God (who is a Jealous and righteous God, and cannot abide his honor to be given to any other [Exodus 20:5], nor suffer the blood of the innocent long to cry unto him for vengeance [Psalm 9; Genesis 4:10]) condemn as blasphemers, idolaters, and cruel murderers: which saith: Thou shalt have no other Gods but me. Thou shalt not kill. And if God doth make this disobedience (as thou mayest plainly see) what commandment of man can alter his sentence, before whom there is no obedience in evil things? Yea, if the whole multitude, from the highest to the lowest, would agree and consent to do evil, yet must not thou follow them, saith the Lord [Exodus 23:2]. For if thou do (notwithstanding the commandment of thy Prince, or example of all others) thou art with them a rebel, and a rebel against thy Lord and God: from whose wrath and heavy indignation, no man can defend thee in the dreadful day of his visitation, which is at hand.

CHAP. VI.

How it is not enough to deny wicked commandments of all kind of Rulers, except we withstand them also, every man according to his vocation, in doing the contrary.

As by this answer afore mentioned, we have been taught not to give place to the unlawful commandments of Magistrates, in what authority soever they be, because it is nothing but rebellion in the judgment of God: even so may we learn by the same answer and example of the Apostles, how God requireth more at our hands, that is, to withstand their precepts, in doing the contrary: every man according to his office and estate wherein God hath placed him. For as man thinketh himself not fully obeyed, when we abstain from those things which he forbiddeth, except moreover we do the contrary, which he commandeth: even so may we much more think, that God is not fully obeyed, when we will not do the ungodly commandments of men, except also we apply ourselves with all diligence to do the contrary. So did Peter and John make answer, denying to do as they were commanded by the Magistrates. And as they denied in words, so did they, and the rest of the Apostles in effect, as the course of the history doth witness. Who went all together to the Temple after they were dismissed, and preached openly in the face of all the people Jesus Christ crucified, notwithstanding all the afore named threatenings and menacings, yea afterward, when they had been imprisoned and then by the Angel of God delivered, and whipped most vilely, as if they had been slaves [Acts 5]: yet were they nothing thereby discouraged, but continued in one mind and answer, saying as they did before with one voice and consent: God must be obeyed before man, and boldly preached their master Christ, contemning all displeasures which they for

his Name's sake sustained, remembering well his sure and comfortable promises who said: Blessed are you when men revile you and slander you, and speak all evil against you, lying, for my sake: be glad and rejoice, for great is your reward in the kingdom of heaven. For so did they persecute the prophets before you [Matthew 5:11-12].

Thus see we then how the truth of this doctrine is not proved only by the first examination of Peter and John: but also confirmed the second time by the rest of all the Apostles agreeing therein, and suffering vile scourging for the same: not only boldly affirming it in the presence of all the Magistrates at Jerusalem, but as constantly approving it in their doings: when contrary to their commandments, they ceased not more diligently to publish the doctrine of salvation: rejoicing and praising God, who had made them worthy to suffer for his Son's sake, their Lord and master. O worthy and manful soldiers, O most trusty and painful servants: neither fearing the proud looks and malicious threatenings of the whole Senate and power of Jerusalem: nor shrinking in their office, for all their cruel punishments. But the more they were forbidden, and the oftener they were punished: the stouter, stronger, and mightier were they to fight against their enemies with the spiritual sword, wherewith they were charged in their master's quarrel: being assured always of this, that he who gave them authority to preach, would give them strength also for the performance thereof, as he had promised, saying: I will be with you to the end of the world [Matthew 28:20]. And he being with them, (as the Apostle saith [Romans 8:31]) what should they care who were against them? A worthy example and mirror for all such to behold as are called of God to be his messengers and disposers of his holy mysteries, how

faithful they ought to be in the distribution of the same [I Corinthians 4:1-2], omitting no manner of occasions, obeying no contrary commandments, nor fearing the cruel threatenings of men.

God hath given them the charge of most precious jewels, and inestimable riches [Ephesians 3:8]: not to be hid in a corner, or retained with themselves: but rather (as the Apostle exhorteth [I Timothy 4:13-15]) to stir up the gift of God, which is in them, and not to neglect it, to preach the word of God, and to be instant in season and out of season, to convince, reprove, and exhort with all softness and learning [II Timothy 4:2]. For this is that sharp and two-edged sword wherewith God hath not only armed them against their enemies [Ephesians 6:17; Hebrews 4:12]: but to fight also manfully for others against powers worldly and spiritual, with this mighty and spiritual sword, the word of God.

For otherwise, if Christ himself had ceased to preach his Father's will, for which cause partly he was sent into the world, for fear of threatenings, conspiracies, commandments, and punishments of men: where had been this comfortable doctrine of salvation? When should he have suffered death, for our redemption and deliverance?

How should the Apostles and all other faithful martyrs, which by their deaths in all ages, have given glory to Christ, have left behind them so worthy monuments, and comfortable writings, besides the notable examples of constancy in sealing up their doctrine with the shedding of their blood, if they had yielded or shrunk in executing their office for fear of any power. And in our miserable Country, where Antichrist this day is again for our sins

exalted, if commandments of tyrants should have taken place in all men, as it did with many hireling preachers, some most shamefully denying their Master Christ, taking upon them the mark of the beast, ministering poison for food to their flock, some in making a spoil and prey of their flock, and as cowards taking them to their feet, leaving the poor lambs of God without all comfort, to be devoured of the wild, ravenous beasts. Some also, in playing on both parts with the halting Israelites, think to serve God and Baal [I Kings 18; II Corinthians 6:14-18]: if in all others (I say) as in these, the ungodly decrees of men should have taken place: how could we have had these worthy examples of so many hundred martyrs, who have glorified Christ most constantly, in offering up their lives as a most sweet savor to the Lord? And that of all sorts of men and women, young and old, rich and poor, learned and unlearned, all being herein persuaded (not able perchance to do any more for the comfort of others, in so general a defection from God) have chosen rather with the loss of this corporal life, to obey God, than otherwise to live in wealth and obey man. For the which, the Name of God be praised forever, who stir up our hearts by their examples, and prepare us with the grace of his holy Spirit to the like constancy and obedience.

Besides this we learn by the commandments of God, that so oft as he forbiddeth anything which he would not to be done, in the selfsame, he commandeth us the contrary, as for example: Thou shalt not murder, Steal, Commit adultery, or Bear false witness. It is not enough to abstain from these things, neither is God therein fully obeyed, except we do the contrary, so oft as occasion is ministered, that is, to save, preserve, and defend, as well the goods as the persons of our brethren and neighbors. And this is a certain and general rule, not only in these

examples here named: but in all other precepts whether they be of the Ten commandments, or any other besides contained in the Scriptures: that whatsoever God forbiddeth any man, in the same he is charged to do the contrary according to his power, though all the world would stand against him. In confirmation whereof, let us only consider the notable example of the Godly Prophet Daniel [Daniel 6], who when he was commanded in the name of king Darius (by whom he had been promoted to great honor, and of all other was in best favor, and highest reputation with him) to ask nothing of his God, or any other for the space of thirty days, but only of Darius his king, according to the decree made at the request of his ungodly counsel, purposely against Daniel, would not obey the commandment, being not ignorant that it was a public decree, which all (he only except) obeyed. And also how death (and that most terrible, to be cast among the hungry lions) was appointed for a punishment to the transgressors. But Daniel, not contented to do as he was commanded, did as he was accustomed, the contrary: not once, but thrice every day, transgressing the king's commandment, praying to the living Lord his God. And to the intent it might be known abroad to all men, that he contemned this ungodly commandment, he set open his windows more than custom, to the intent that all which would, might behold his doing: so glad was he to be known to serve the true and mighty God. Here would our worldly wise men, no doubt, condemn Daniel of rashness and folly in doing more than was expedient. What needed he thus to provoke the indignation of a Prince, who had power with a word of his mouth to destroy him? If he would not ask anything in the Name of Darius as others did, yet might he have abstained from praying to God for that space. Was thirty days so great a matter, that he might not abstain from praying to God, to gratify thereby

his Prince to whom he was so much bound? And if he would needs pray to God, could he not have done it privily and secretly? What need he to set open his window in the sight of all men? This was an open contempt of the king's Majesty: this was a greater offence, than the fact itself. Thus would the politicians and worldlings reason, as our carnal Gospellers do daily, to maintain their shameless halting upon both parts, to cloak their own impiety, and to entice others to do the like. But faithful Daniel had learned another lesson, and of a more faithful schoolmaster: even the very same that instructed here the Apostles, the Spirit of God, the author of wisdom and truth [John 16:13]: that he ought not only to condemn the king's unlawful commandment, but to do the plain contrary. Neither thought he it sufficient to do this secretly, except openly he shewed to all the world whose servant he was, and what God he honored. Otherwise, how could he have declared to the people that he loved his God with all his heart, soul, and power, as was commanded?

CHAP. VII.

All men are bound to follow the like example, as well as the Apostles and Daniel, of what estate and condition soever they be.

Here are all excuses taken away from all men, that will be true Christians, and have the Apostles and Daniel for their instructors and teachers: whether they are Counselors, Nobles, Peers, or inferior and civil officers. But they will peradventure excuse themselves, as though God had nothing to do with them, because they are not Apostles, nor Prophets. Nevertheless they may be assured, they shall be as they ever have been, subject to his plagues and punishments: and so will he have ado with them, though they would have naught to do with him. If the temporal sword had been committed to the Apostles, as well as was the spiritual: if they had been Peers of a realm, and known so well their duty toward God and their country, as they did to Christ and his Church, being Apostles, would they have lifted up their sword against God's glory, to the subversion of the truth and their nation, at the commandment of their Prince and king? Or would they not rather have answered: we are appointed of God to set forth his glory, and to defend his people, and cannot therefore obey you? If that would not serve, must they then have ceased at their threatenings with death and displeasure? Is that sufficient to discharge them, if in not using their power to suppress tyranny and idolatry, they suffer the people of God to be devoured? Judge you yourselves that bear this Name, whether God could approve their doings.

Mattathias, that worthy Captain of the Jews, as it is written in the first book of the Maccabees [I Maccabees 2], could not so lightly excuse himself when he was

commanded by the cruel officers of wicked Antiochus (which had spoiled their Temple, razed their walls, murdered their brethren, and set up idolatry, insomuch as all, for the most part, applied themselves to their wicked persuasions) that he, with the residue should forsake the Laws and sacrifices of their God, to worship strange Gods: he made answer, to the officer of Antiochus the king (which would to God our Noblemen had presently learned): That though all Nations appertaining to king Antiochus should obey him, so that every man would decline from the Laws of his country: yet I, (saith he) my children, and brethren, will stand in the covenant of our fathers, etc. Which thing he performed indeed to the glory of God, to his own salvation, and comfort of his brethren and country forever.

And even at the selfsame time he slew, not only a Jew, one of his own brethren, which came to sacrifice in his presence at the altar Modin, according to the prescript of Antiochus: but killed also the king's officer, that compelled him thereto, and afterward destroyed the altar, and followed the Law of God with a zeal, as did Phinees. Mattathias had then a little power amongst his brethren, but nothing to defend himself against the king, and also being charged with children and kinsfolk (which seemed to be all his power) would neither pollute himself, nor suffer them to be polluted with wicked idolatry, nor causeless to be oppressed with tyranny. And yet we read of no authority or office he had to excuse him by: but only this one thing, which was common to all other of his nation, the Laws of their country, and covenant of their fathers. Which cause he thought sufficient to discharge his conscience before God, and to approve his doings. Forasmuch as God had commanded him not only to deny to do the commandment of the cruel tyrant Antiochus

(under whom all Jerusalem then was by conquest) but manfully to profess him and his as open adversaries to his Laws and to resist idolatry by force, in killing the idolater and the king's servant (by whom he was compelled) and in subverting the altar, whereupon the idolatrous sacrifice should have been done. Which was, as you see, manifest resisting of the superior power, being but man, to the intent he might shew true obedience to his Lord and God, in defending and maintaining his Laws (which he calleth the covenant of their fathers) yea and with the temporal sword to the uttermost of his power. Then if Mattathias herein did discharge his conscience before God and man, in resisting by temporal power the king, his commandments and officers: it is not only the office of Apostles and preachers to resist, but the duty likewise of all others according to their estate and vocation. But you will say perchance that this book of the Maccabees is not of sufficient authority to persuade your consciences in the like case, because it is not reputed to be amongst those books which are authentic, and named Canonical. Truth it is, but that thou (which art in like and better estate, because of thy power and authority, wherewith thou art as well charged before God as king or Emperor) mayest and shouldest with a safe conscience, follow this worthy example, it is most true and certain. For the fact of Mattathias dependeth not upon the authority of the book wherein it is contained: but upon the word of God, whereupon it was grounded. For hath he done any otherwise in his vocation, than the Apostles did in theirs? Did they not say, that God is to be obeyed rather than man? And so said Mattathias, and much more plainer: that though all nations would obey Antiochus: yet he, and so many as he could procure, should obey the true God and his Laws. And like as the Apostles, according to their answer, openly and plainly in sight of the people did use

the spiritual sword, manfully fighting against all rebellion of man in God's cause: so did Mattathias use the temporal sword according to his power, moved by the same reason against idolatry and oppression which is manifest rebellion against God. Yea and if there were neither example nor Scripture to prove his fact: yet would very natural reason compel every man to allow the same, as most Godly. And that therein he did nothing but his duty, which thing was approved in the judgment of that age, and as a lawful fact and monument write and left to be read and practiced by all posterity, the Law of nature so directing their judgments.

But to put you out of all doubt, we will confirm it with another testimony most surely authorized, and the very same in effect, of that renowned and worthy Captain Joshua, the son of Nun, whom God himself had chosen to succeed Moses in the government, and leading of the people of Israel [Joshua 24]: who after he had declared the benefits of God done unto them, from the time that he had chose them to be his people, (namely to Abraham whom he called from idolatry, to Isaac and Jacob, and to the rest of the people, their posterity, in delivering them out of Egypt, preserving them in the wilderness, and giving to them his Laws) spake these words to the Elders and all the multitude, saying: Now therefore fear ye the Lord, serve him unfeignedly and faithfully, take away the Gods which your fathers worshipped, beyond the River, and in Egypt, and serve the Lord. But if you will not serve the Lord, choose unto you this day whom you will serve: whether ye will serve the Gods beyond the River, or the Gods of the Amorites in whose land ye dwell. As for me and my family, we will serve the Lord: answering as did Mattathias. And this spake he in his later days, to admonish them aforehand not to incline to idolatry and to

neglect the Laws of God, which is the cause of all evil, and gap to all mischief. Which saying of Joshua, the true servant of God, seemed so Godly in the sight of all the people, that all were compelled with a vehemency of spirit to say: God forbid, that we should forsake the Lord, to serve strange Gods. For the Lord our God himself brought us out of Egypt and from the house of bondage.

What wilt thou more to prove this fact of Mattathias, and thereby thy duty also, whether thou be of the Seniors of the people, or of the multitude? Here is thy confession, if thou be of God. If all men would serve strange Gods, yet will I and my family serve the living Lord. And again, God forbid that we should leave the obedience of our God, by whom we are created, redeemed, and saved, to serve strange Gods. And how canst thou say that thou servest God thy Lord, except thou use all such means as he hath given to thee in defense of his glory, be it counsel, learning, authority, power in body or in soul? All must serve the Lord, when he demandeth it. And when demandeth God these things of us, if not then chiefly, when Satan beginneth to rage, the word of God despised, his Name blasphemed, his Church scattered, his children miserably oppressed, imprisoned, famished, and murdered? Either now must the counsel of the Counselor, the learning of the learned, the authority of the honorable, the power of the Nobles, the bodies of the subjects serve the Lord, or never. For now will the Lord try who are his people in separating the chaff from the corn [Luke 3:17], those that love the Lord unfeignedly, and will serve him indeed from the halting dissemblers and hypocrites, who thinking thereby to escape present dangers, run headlong to their own destruction, thinking thereby to escape the fearful voice of the Lord, fall into the pit. And if they came forth of the pit, they are taken in the net, and cannot

escape, saith the Lord [Isaiah 24:17-18; Jeremiah 48:43-44].

There is no way but one, to turn again unto the Lord, who hath wounded us, and he will heal us: he hath stricken us for our sins, and he will bind us up again, and within two days will he restore us to life, and the third day raise us up, and we shall come before his face, saith the Prophet [Hosea 6:1-2]. And by what other means can we turn unto the Lord to be healed of our wounds, to be restored to life again, to be lifted up and brought before his presence: but by unfeigned repentance, every man of what estate or condition soever he be? Considering with tears how shamefully he hath fallen from God, and by what means, and to call for grace and strength to turn back by the selfsame means and ways, to obey God in walking the contrary. And to follow the counsel of the Apostle, that as before we have given our members to serve uncleanness and iniquity: so now (after true repentance) make them to serve righteousness and holiness [Romans 6]. Where before we served men and not God, now to serve God and not man, but in God: Whereas we abused all the gifts of God to maintain idolatry and tyranny, now to use the same to the restoring of God's glory, and preservation of his humble and afflicted children: whereas before we have through contempt of his graces, especially the word and Gospel of our Savior Jesus Christ, brought upon us shame and confusion, now by reverent receiving of them again, and framing our lives thereunto, we may remove these plagues, and find favor and grace in the sight of our God, who for this cause hath stricken us, and by all manner of means calleth us back from our wickedness, readier to receive us, than we to desire him.

CHAP. VIII.

The conclusion of these two parts with a farther declaration of the same, that it is both Lawful and necessary some times to disobey and also to resist Ungodly magistrates and wherein.

Wherefore (dear brethren in the Lord) to return to our purpose, you may well understand of these things which have been hitherto mentioned, not only the cause of all our misery in England this day, to have been for that we neither taught, knew, nor used true obedience: but also what obedience God requireth of all men, and what he condemneth for disobedience. Obedience is to hear God rather than man, and to resist man rather than God, as by the answer and doings of the Apostles, and examples of others you have been instructed. Wherein you may see how little the commandments, threatenings, power, authority, or punishments of any king, Prince or Emperor, ought to prevail with us against the commandment of God, wherewith we are charged.

Can we then pretend ignorance any more? Behold, very nature doth teach all men, which be not destitute of their common sense and reason, that God ought rather to be obeyed than man: insomuch as the Apostles therein feared not the judgment of their enemies.

Shall authority of man, or power of Princes blear our eyes any longer: seeing there is none so ignorant whose conscience doth not bear him witness, that God is most worthy of all honor, and only to be feared for his power: who made the heavens and the earth, and man ruler thereof, by whose power and wisdom, as all things were created, so by his wonderful providence are all things preserved and governed?

Shall the threatenings of man or punishment of Princes move us to leave undone that which he commandeth, and our vocation requireth? Should we honor them for their offices and great titles, because they are called kings, Princes, or Emperors? This must we do so long as they will be subjects to God, and promoters of his glory, of whom they have their authority, as the examples of the Godly Patriarchs, and Prophets, of Christ himself, and his Apostles, and of all martyrs in all ages until this day do witness. Which with their blood have sealed up this doctrine for an undoubted verity: that there is no obedience against God, which in his judgment is not manifest rebellion.

Dost thou then unfeignedly believe in God, and have given thyself to serve him, and after art commanded of thy Prince or Ruler, what name soever he bear, to commit idolatry in worshipping a piece of bread for thy Savior (as do the Papists) which is open blasphemy against the Son of God?

Art thou willed to be present at the idol service, which the Apostle St. Paul forbiddeth [I Corinthians 10:14-21]: or else to make or erect images in Churches or temples, to hear Masses, to trot on pilgrimage, to purchase pardons, to confess the Pope's authority, to esteem God's word for heresy?

Art thou charged to be a tormentor of the Saints of God, to lay hold upon them as did the Scribes and Pharisees, the chief Bishop and Priests with their officers upon Christ and his Apostles: to bring them before the Council, to cast them in prison, to flatter them, to revile them openly, to famish them secretly, and hang them in their jails, to rack them, to bring them to the gallows, to the

stake, and consuming fire: to see execution done upon them, as upon thieves, murderers, villains, whoremongers, adulterers, traitors, idolaters, and blasphemers: when inwardly thy conscience crieth unto thee, Take heed and beware what thou doest to these men, for they are the very servants of God, as Pilate was admonished by his wife [Matthew 27:19]? Art thou (I say) commanded to do any of these things, and fearest God? Behold, here art thou taught what answer it behooveth thee to make, and that by the Apostles of Christ: which is, Judge you whether it be lawful in God's sight to obey you rather than God. And again, God must be obeyed before man.

If thou wilt allege the danger of losing thy living and office, whereby thou and thy family are found: consider it is a greater matter to lose thy soul, and to bring the curse of God upon thy whole household, to whom it were far better to beg in the fear of God, than to be guilty of innocent blood, which the Lord must needs revenge according to his promise [Psalm 9]. If thy innocent brother, which is brought to thee, because he is the servant of God, be ready for Christ's sake to offer up his life in sacrifice: what great thing is it for thee to offer up thy vile living for the same cause of righteousness? For as he in losing his life hath assurance to find it everlastingly [Matthew 16:25]: even so mayest thou be assured in forgoing thy office, because thou wilt be no tormentor of God's children, against thy duty and conscience, to have the reward of righteousness at the hands of God, who esteemeth all things done to any of these little ones, as done to himself [Matthew 10:42; 18:5]: and forbiddeth thee to touch them, saying, Touch not mine anointed ones [Psalm 105:14-15].

Therefore, as there is no power or punishment that should cause thee to do evil: so is there no office or promotion, which thou shouldest not willingly forgo, rather than in retaining it to be an instrument of injurious oppression, having this rule of our Savior Christ always before thine eyes: Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, that do you to them also [Matthew 7:12].

Neither is this enough, rather to suffer injury and loss, than that thou wouldest be a worker of injury to others by any means: but moreover it is thy part to be a withstander of evil, and a supporter of the Godly to the uttermost of thy power, as thou hast partly heard already, and partly shalt hear now following. For as God hath not created us for ourselves [Genesis 2], but to seek his honor and glory, and the profit of our neighbor, especially of such as be of the household of faith [I Corinthians 10:31-33; Galatians 6:10]: even so are we indebted to God, to bestow all those gifts, be they spiritual or corporal, wherewith God hath blessed us to the selfsame end, striving against all impediments, helping, defending, comforting, and delivering to the uttermost of our power all such as we are assured do fear God, and stand in need of our aid and support. Otherwise we shew ourselves to have more compassion upon brute beasts, as our neighbor's ox, ass, or sheep, which God's Law doth charge us to help, save, or draw forth of the ditch, although it were the beast of our enemy [Exodus 23:4-5].

Are we then bound to do this to unreasonable and brute beasts, yea then anything belonging to our neighbor, and shall we be afraid to do the like to himself, what time he is in necessity? If his sheep or other of his cattle were ready to be devoured in our presence of wolves, or such wild beasts: are we not bound, as well in conscience as by

the Law of God, to drive the wild beast away and save his cattle, who can deny this to be our duty? Can we be excused then in suffering the souls and bodies of the children of God, our brethren, to be most pitifully destroyed by God's enemies, by false doctrine and cruel murdering, and put not to our hands and power to deliver them?

The very Gentiles without God were taught so much of nature, that to do wrong to another is not only injury, but also they condemn him as an injurious person, which can and will not withstand wrong done to another. Woe be to thee then (O miserable England) among other nations and peoples, which hast a long time delighted in injustice and cruel oppression. Woe be unto you most ungodly and careless counselors. Woe be to you Rulers and Magistrates, from the highest to the lowest: for that you ruling without the fear of God, see your own flesh and blood, the very lambs of God daily to fall by flocks, not into the ditch or pit, but into the unsatiable mouths of the wolfish papists: not only to be hurt and injured, but cruelly to be devoured both body and goods, and their poor wives, children, and families destroyed, and go a begging. And yet neither the sorrowful sobs, and continual tears of the lamentable mothers, nor the pitiful cry of the spoiled infants, nor the extreme necessity of their dispersed servants, besides the shameful betraying and subversion of the whole Realm daily approaching, can once move your hard and stony hearts with pity to defend their cause, and deliver them from tyranny: being promoted to your honors and offices to that end [Isaiah 1:23]. Can you escape the condemnation of the Law, which prefer the preservation of your beasts and cattle to the precious lives of your own brethren, the Image of the living Lord, whom you are bound to love as yourselves?

Shall not the Gentiles, which live besides the Law, stand in judgment against you which profess the Law, when they are more pressed to defend their people from injuries, than you yours [Romans 2:14]? Your own offices, authority, and power shall in that day put you to silence and confound you.

Was there ever the like contempt of God's word in Capernaum? The like idolatry among the heathen? Or like tyranny and cruel murdering at Jerusalem? And yet to Capernaum Christ hath threatened that it shall be easier for Tyre and Sidon in the last day, than for it [Luke 10:13-15]. The Gentiles he commanded to be destroyed as his extreme enemies [Numbers 33:51-53; Exodus 23:20-23; 34:11]. And as for Jerusalem, that worthy City of the Lord escaped not his severe judgment: not leaving one stone upon another, as our Savior himself afore prophesied [Matthew 24:2], and as their miserable state and dispersion this day doth testify. Will God then spare England alone, and punish all other nations for less impiety?

Can he of his justice spare you counselors, you Nobles and inferior officers: Which spare not to spoil, oppress, accuse, condemn, and murder the people of God, to deface his glory, and to destroy the whole English Nation from the earth, so much as in you lieth?

Repent, repent, you miserable men: for your sins be at the highest, your cup of iniquity is full, and the hour of your heavy visitation is come: when it will be too late for you to flee from the great wrath of God's indignation, which shortly is like to be poured upon you [Isaiah 29]. Then shall you well perceive that there is no salvation but under God's protection, no comfort without Christ, no

obedience against God, no power that can dispense with the charge of the Almighty and his commandments: especially when all your counsels against him and his poor servants shall fall upon your own heads: your wisdom turned to folly, your nobleness to vileness, your rule and dominion taken from you, and you made slaves to others: your fair houses and gorgeous buildings destroyed, your great possessions given to your enemies, your wives to be ravished, your maids deflowered, and children murdered without mercy, your pride and high looks abated, your wealth turned to misery, your delicate fare and costly apparel to extreme hunger and beggary, your joy and patience to weeping and continual sorrow, and in the end shameful death as you have deserved. And why? Because you have chosen to obey man rather than God, and sought rather to maintain your own pride and dignity, than his honor and glory.

And therefore behold, O proud man, I am coming to thee (saith the Lord of hosts) because thy day is come, and the time when I will visit thee. For the proud shall fall and be destroyed, and there shall be no man to lift him up. I will kindle a fire in his Cities that shall consume all things about them, etc. [Jeremiah 50:31-32].

And justly may the Lord do all this to you, saying he gave you not this dignity, making you Counselors, Noblemen, Rulers, Justices, Mayors, Sheriffs, Bailiffs, Constables, or Jailers to exalt yourselves against his Majesty, and to fight against Christ and his members: but to humble yourselves in his presence, to promote his glory, and to defend all those whom he committed to your charge. How cometh it then to pass, that ye have thus betrayed him and his people, in banishing his truth to receive falsehood, and have changed Religion into superstition, true honoring of

God into blasphemous idolatry, and now (to finish your proceedings) are ready to sell your subjects for slaves to the proud Spaniards, a people without God.

That wicked woman, whom you untruly make your Queen, hath (say ye) so commanded. O vain and miserable men. To what vileness are you brought, and yet as men blind, see not? Because you would not have God to reign over you, and his word to be a light unto your footsteps, behold, he hath not given an hypocrite only to reign over you (as he promised [Job 34:16-30]) but an Idolatress also: not a man according to his appointment, but a woman, which his Law forbiddeth, and nature abhorreth: whose reign was never counted lawful by the word of God, but an express sign of God's wrath, and notable plague for the sins of the people. As was the reign of cruel Jezebel, and ungodly Athalia, special instruments of Satan, and whips to his people of Israel.

This you see not, blinded with ignorance: yea, which is more shame, whereas the word of God freeth you from the obedience of any Prince, be he never so mighty, wise, or politic, commanding anything which God forbiddeth, and herein giveth you authority to withstand the same, as you have heard: Yet are you willingly become, as it were, bondsmen to the lusts of a most impotent and unbridled woman: a woman begotten in adultery, a bastard by birth, contrary to the word of God and your own laws. And therefore condemned as a bastard by the judgment of all Universities in England, France, and Italy: as well of the Civilians, as Divines. For now are we freed from that Jewish yoke to raise up seed to our brethren departing without issue, by the coming of our Savior Jesus Christ, who hath destroyed the wall and distance betwixt the Jews and Gentiles [Leviticus 10:10; Ephesians 2], and

hath no more respect to any Tribes (for conservation whereof this was permitted) but all are made one in him without distinction, which acknowledge him unfeignedly to be the Son of God and Savior of the world. For in Christ Jesus there is neither Jew nor Gentile, Grecian or Barbarous, bond nor free, etc. [Galatians 3:28]. And therefore how it must needs follow that king Henry the eighth, in marrying with his brother's wife, did utterly contemn the free grace of our Savior Jesus Christ, which long before had delivered us from the servitude of that law: and also committed adulterous incest contrary to the word of God, when he begat this ungodly serpent Mary, the chief instrument of all this present misery in England.

And if any would say, it was of a zeal to fulfill the law which then was abrogated, he must confess also that the king did not marry of carnal lust, but to raise up seed to his brother: when the contrary is well known to all men. Let no man therefore be offended, that I call her by her proper name, a bastard, and unlawfully begotten: seeing the word of God, which cannot lie, doth give witness upon my part. And moreover, that such as are bastards should be deprived of all honor: insomuch as by the Law of Moses they were prohibited to have entrance into the Congregation or assembly of the Lord to the tenth generation [Deuteronomy 23:2]. Consider then your ungodly proceedings in defrauding your country of a lawful king: and preferring a bastard to the lawful begotten daughter, and exalting her which is, and will be, a common plague and aversion of altogether: forasmuch as she is a traitor to God, and promise breaker to her dearest friends, who helping her to their power to her unlawful reign, were promised to enjoy that religion which was preached under king Edward: which notwithstanding in a short space after, she most falsely

overthrew and abolished. So that now both by God's Laws and man's, she ought to be punished with death, as an open idolatress in the sight of God, and a cruel murderer of his Saints before men, and merciless traitoress to her own native country.

For God's word she abhorreth, Antichrist's hath she restored, her father's Laws contemned, her promise broken, and her brother, Godly king Edward, as an heretic condemned. Not thinking it enough to express her tyranny upon them that lived, except she shewed cruelty, or rather a raging madness, on the bodies of God's servants long before buried, drawing them forth of their graves to burn them as heretics. And in fine, utterly abhorring the English nation, hath joined herself to adulterous Philip, the Spanish king: to whom she hath, and doth continually labor to, betray the whole kingdom. And yet ye cannot, or will not, see it, neither yet for all this be stirred up to bridle her affections, and withstand her ungodly doings, to promote the glory of God, and to preserve your brethren, and yourselves: but thinking to retain your promotions by flattery, do hastily draw God's vengeance upon yourselves and others.

For do you think that Philip will be crowned king of England, and retain in honor English counselors? Will he credit them with the government of his estate, who have betrayed their own? Shall his nobility be Spaniards, without your lands and possessions? And shall they possess your promotions and livings, and your heads upon your shoulders? Come they to make a spoil of the whole Realm, and leave you and yours untouched? Where is your great wisdom become? Your subtle counsels and policies, whereof you brag so much, to whom these things be hid, that every child espieth?

If Isaiah the Prophet had not fore-spoken these secret judgments of God [Isaiah 3; 4; 29], in blinding the eyes of the proud contemners, I could not cease to wonder at your gross ignorance, as now I consider with grief of heart, the misery which is like shortly to come upon you in full measure, for this calamity, already poured upon others, through your procurements and studies. Which fearful judgment of God look never to escape, except suddenly ye repent and change your ungodly purpose. If you be at a covenant with death (as you think) you shall not avoid it, if you think to escape the common destruction, making dissimulation and lies your refuge, yet shall you be revealed [Isaiah 28:15-22]: for the Lord himself will destroy all your counsels, because they are not of him.

It is not your going to the Mass, your praying of the Pope, your flattering of your Queen, and shaven Priests of Baal, that can defend you in that day: neither yet your licenses which some of you purchase of an infidel to depart out of your country, some lying in idolatrous places, differing nothing from them in their dissolute living, some passing into Italy to please their Queen, and to get an opinion of men that they approve her proceedings, rather coveting to have the name of a blasphemous papist, than of Christ our Savior. Thinking by such unlawful means to work miracles: but their gains at length will be confusion, as now their fruit which they have brought thence do witness: that is the want of God's fear and open dissimulation.

This is not the way (O vain men) to win God's favor, and to escape his fearful judgments: but to increase his wrath and hasten his vengeance, who will not be mocked, neither suffer his holy Name long to be blasphemed. Consider within yourselves, and return to the right way,

and walk in it while ye have time, and I will shew it unto you.

You have sinned most grievously against the Lord: know your transgressions, and with tears confess them, every man unfeignedly unto the Lord, who is ready to mercy and slow to anger [Psalm 103:8]. You have despised and abused the word of his dearly beloved Son Jesus Christ, the Author of salvation, in the days of our Godly king Edward (which is the cause why God hath thus plagued us with a tyrant) seek after the word again and receive it with all reverence. By giving authority to an idolatrous woman ye have banished Christ and his Gospel, and in his place restored Antichrist with all his infections, wherein your own consciences condemn you of evil. Then in taking again the same authority from her, you shall restore Christ and his word and do well. In obeying her, ye have disobeyed God. Then in disobeying her, you shall please God. Because you have given place to her and her counsels, you are all become idolatrous hypocrites, and also traitors to your own Country: then by resisting her and her wicked decrees, you must be made true worshipers of God, and faithful English men.

Other means there are not, but to turn to God by repentance, to banish falsehood by receiving the truth, to overthrow Antichrist, and all kind of idolatry by honoring Christ and his Gospel: to suppress tyranny by justice: to withstand oppression and murder by defending the just and innocent, and punishing the workers of iniquity, of what estate or condition soever they be, as after (God willing) shall be proved at large. For as by this means only God's honor must be restored, and you escape his vengeance, to obey them that obey God, and resist them that resist his Majesty, rendering unto all according to his

Laws: even so, when they should understand that their subjects be no more, as it were, brute beasts without sense or judgment: but that they know wherein, and how far they owe obedience, and would no more be led by their devilish and ungodly lusts, as they have been and yet are presently.

Then would their Princes and Rulers also give themselves with all diligence, to study and apply the same Law of God: then would they do nothing themselves, nor command others, wherein they were not assured to please him [Deuteronomy 17:14-20]. Then would they learn to obey God, which now rebel against him: and to follow the examples of the Godly kings and Rulers, having the book of the Lord ever with them, never suffering it to depart from them. But as worthy Joshua, Josiah, and Jehoshaphat, to read and study in it day and night. Not to decline from it themselves, nor yet to suffer their subjects therein to be ignorant, which is the only wisdom of God and comfort of all men's consciences. Then should the Rulers love and preserve their subjects. And the subjects likewise reverently obey their superiors. To conclude, then should all be blessed of God, feared of their enemies, sure from all dangers, void of all idolatry and false religion, and esteemed of all nations the wisest and mightiest people upon the earth, as God promised to Israel, so long as they should live [Deuteronomy 4:1-40].

CHAP. IX.

Answers to the contrary objections of such as teach all manner of obedience to Magistrates to be lawful, taken forth of the New Testament.

But forasmuch as there is nothing so manifest and true, which is not either obscured utterly by contrary reasons of man's brain, or else discredited by other places of Scripture wrongfully understood and applied by many: I have here thought expedient before I proceed any further, for the better establishing of the truth, to answer and satisfy, so far as shall please God to give unto me, all such reasons, authorities, and Scriptures, as are alleged to the contrary: to the intent that we may not only see the truth, and so be stirred to embrace it, but also may espy the falsehood, and learn to avoid it.

And because amongst all other authorities and reasons, there is none of greater force than that which is written in the Epistle of St. Paul to the Romans: we will first of all others begin with it. Let every soul (saith he) submit himself to the authority of the higher powers: for there is no power but of God, and the powers that be, are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist, shall receive unto themselves damnation [Romans 13:1-2]. Here (say they) is a general doctrine affirmed by the Apostle, that every man (none excepted) must be subject to superior powers: and if every man must be subject, none ought to disobey.

Besides this, behold the Apostle does not barely affirm this proposition, saying: Every person (for that he meaneth by every soul) must be subject to the Magistrates and Rulers, of what condition soever he be, but proveth the same with a most sure argument gathered of the

ordinance of God: because there is no power but of God. And therefore to resist powers, is to resist God himself, whose ordinance it is. And not contented with one reason, he confirmeth the same with another depending of God's punishments, which he hath appointed for all them that resist, which is, to receive to themselves damnation for their transgression: so that they conclude, that it is not only Paul's authority that maketh all men subject to their superiors (which notwithstanding were sufficient, being the Apostle of Christ) but also the same is by good and strong reasons confirmed.

In answering to this objection, I will not long hold you in rendering the cause, which as we may probably gather moved the Apostle to write this to the Romans concerning obedience to their superiors: but in few words touch so much as seemeth necessary. It may appear very credible (which some Godly and learned do write) that amongst the Romans, after they had received the Gospel, there were many under that name, which would be delivered from all subjection: thinking the office of Magistrates no more necessary to them that professed Christ: as do this day the Anabaptists and Libertines. Others, who had been once freed from tribute and custom paying, to strange Magistrates, would thereat take an occasion by preaching of the Gospel to pay no more tribute to their superiors. Such were divers of the Jews, who counted it for bondage. And that kind of sect was raised up even in Christ's days, as appeareth when the Pharisees sent their disciples with Herod's servants to know his judgment, whether it was lawful for them to pay tribute to Caesar or no [Matthew 22:15-22]. And in the Acts, Gamaliel maketh mention of one Judas Galilaeus, which was author of that sect, and moved much trouble amongst the people, saying: It was not lawful to pay tribute [Acts 5:37]. By these and such

like opinions, the Apostle (perceiving the office of Magistrates to come into contempt, and men to esteem it not lawful, which God himself ordained in defense of his religion and Civil policy) was moved to write as is before mentioned: exhorting all men to esteem the office of Magistrates as God's ordinance, and to obey them whom God had appointed Rulers over them.

Then as the Apostle writeth we confess, and so much as he speaketh we grant, that is, that all men are bound to obey such Magistrates, whom God hath ordained over us lawfully according to his word, which rule in his fear according to their office, as God hath appointed. For though the Apostle saith: There is no power but of God: yet doth he not here mean any other powers, but such as are orderly and lawfully institute of God. Either else should he approve all tyranny and oppression, which cometh to any commonwealth by means of wicked and ungodly Rulers, which are to be called rightly disorders, and subversions in commonwealths, and not God's ordinance. For he never ordained any laws to approve, but to reprove and punish tyrants, idolaters, papists, and oppressors. Then when they are such, they are not God's ordinance. And in disobeying and resisting such, we do not resist God's ordinance, but Satan's, and our sin, which is the cause of such. Or else, if we shall so conclude with the words of the Apostle, that all powers whatsoever they be must be obeyed and not resisted, then must we confess also, that Satan and all his infernal powers are to be obeyed. Why? Because they are powers, and have their powers also of God, which cannot touch man any farther than God permitteth [Job 12]. But St. James giveth us contrary commandment, saying: Resist the devil and he will flee away from you [James 4:7].

And that the Apostle Paul doth so restrain his words to all lawful powers, we need not to seek far of. For in the selfsame Chapter after he doth expound his mind: that is, what powers and Magistrates he meaneth: Such (saith he) as if thou doest well, thou needest not to fear, but if thou doest evil. And again wilt thou be out of fear of the power? Do well then: and so shalt thou be praised by the same. For he is the minister of God for thy wealth. But if thou doest evil, fear: for he beareth not the sword for naught: for he is the minister of God, to take vengeance on them that do evil, etc. Whereby we may plainly understand, that although, he saith, There is no power but of God: yet he meaneth such power as is his ordinance and lawful: whose office standeth in these two points, to defend the good, and to punish the evil: not to be feared for well doing, but for evil, to whom the sword is given for that purpose. And to such, with the Apostle we grant also, that every person must be subject and obedient: for they are God's ordinance. And to disobey or resist such, is to disobey and resist God himself. And therefore do deserve justly to receive God's punishment, which, as the Apostle threateneth, is damnation. And this maketh nothing against our former sentence, but rather confirmeth the same: approving no obedience but that which is lawful, that is to say, according to God's appointment and ordinance, as doth more evidently appear in his words following: partly in that he demandeth obedience to such for conscience sake, and not for fear of vengeance only. As though he would say: so far is it from reason and God's word that any man should disobey or contemn the Magistrates, ordained by God to punish vice and maintain virtue, that he needeth no other to reprove him of evil in so doing, than his own proper conscience, which will (justly examined) teach him how God's ordinance ought to be revered, especially serving to the preservation of

the people, in suppressing wickedness, and promoting Godliness.

For that cause he willeth after to pay their tribute, not to every man that will demand (for unlawful demands may be lawfully denied) but to whom tribute belongeth, custom to whom custom, fear to whom fear, and honor to whom honor is due.

Obedience then he requireth of all men, tribute also, custom, fear, and honor: but under this condition of justice and equity, to render these duties to them that have just title thereunto. And who are they, but (as I said before) such as God hath appointed to rule over us in his fear, for our profit, and preservation of the commonwealth?

To this also doth the saying of St. Peter well agree, though it be brought in of the other party to prove the contrary: Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it is to king as to the chief, or unto Rulers as unto them that are sent of him, for the punishment of evil doers, and the praise of them that do well [I Peter 2:13-14]. Behold how Peter here neither differeth from himself in his answer before to the Council, nor here disagreeeth from Paul, willing obedience to kings and inferior Rulers: not to all, but to such as are appointed to punish evil doers, and praise the contrary: and to disobey such, must needs be condemned for wicked and ungodly rebellion. For such there were as may plainly appear by St. Peter's words following, which under the pretense of liberty would cover and cloak their malice. And this the Apostle forbiddeth in all manner of subjects, and justly.

But you will say, the words of Peter following concerning obedience of servants to Masters, doth charge us farther than with godly Rulers, and such as rule according to their office. For to servants he writeth on this wise. Servants obey your Masters with all fear, not only if they be good and courteous, but also though they be froward: for so the Greek word doth signify, a conbrous, froward, or a person hard to please and self-willful. Whereof they will conclude, that Peter commandeth obedience to all kind of persons, good and bad: whatsoever they command must be done, and why? Because he so chargeth servants to obey their masters.

Nevertheless this is to be observed in reading the words of Peter (as also in all the holy Scriptures) that we must so take them as they agree with himself, and not against him. For the Spirit of God changeth not his meaning: but what he saith once, he saith forever. Saint Peter here seemeth to prevent the objection which servants (desirous of liberty) might have objected, being willed to obey their Masters: as though he would say: I am not ignorant that there are many Masters troublesome, froward, and importune over you: which are not so gentle and courteous towards you as becometh them: well: that is their fault and infirmity, which you must for Christ's sake, whom you profess, patiently sustain and bear. For though your Masters are rough or froward (he saith not wicked and ungodly) that is no cause why ye should not faithfully serve them for the time of your servitude, so long as they will nothing of you, but that which is good and godly.

Then the mind of St. Peter is that the shrewdness or frowardness of Masters is no lawful or just occasion why the servants should be disobedient. And as this is the very meaning of the Apostle in that place: so is it not like that

he would write contrary to himself, when he said: God ought rather to be obeyed than man [Acts 4:19; 5:29]. Neither can he be judged contrary to the Apostle Paul, who bindeth up all lawful obedience with this knot, In the Lord: speaking unto children, and exhorting them to obey their fathers and mothers [Ephesians 6:1]. But how? In the Lord, saith he. And why? For that is just. Then if Paul charge not children with further obedience to their parents, than in the Lord, to whom principally they are by God's commandment and nature bound, will Peter bind servants to their Masters any further than in the Lord? And if it be just obedience only which is in the Lord: can there be any lawful obedience against him, either of children towards their parents, servants towards their Masters, or subjects towards their Rulers or Magistrates? No, God is the first and principal Father, Master, and Lord, to whom first obedience must be given as he doth demand: and to others in him, and for him only, as we were taught at the beginning.

And that St. Peter had only respect to the rough conditions of Masters, and not to their unlawful commandment against God and their conscience (which they are bound to do for no man's pleasure) the words do plainly witness. For this is thanks worthy (saith he) if a man for conscience towards God endure grief, suffering wrongfully. For what praise is it, if when ye are buffeted for your faults, ye take it patiently, etc.? Then ye see the meaning of St. Peter is not to make us subject to any evil or ungodly commandments, but to persuade all servants not to cast off their duty during the time of their servitude, notwithstanding they be roughly dealt with all of their Masters, which thing is not spoken here of St. Peter to encourage or maintain froward Masters in their frowardness, nor yet to forbid the servants which fear God

to seek after lawful remedy at the hands of superior powers, who for that cause are ordained to see justice administered to all sorts of men, as well to servants as others: but that they should not think the sharpness of their Masters to be a cause sufficient to free them from doing their duty upon the other part.

In like case may we conclude of Princes and Magistrates, though they be rough and froward: yea, though before God they are wicked, ungodly, and reprobate persons (as was Saul) yet so long as their wickedness brasteth not out manifestly against God, and his Laws, but outwardly will see them observed and kept of others, punishing the transgressors, and defending the innocent: so long are we bound to render unto such, obedience, as to evil and rough Masters: because we may not take God's office in hand to judge of the heart any farther than their outward deeds do give manifest testimony. Otherwise, if without fear they transgress God's Laws themselves and command others to do the like, then have they lost that honor and obedience which otherwise their subjects did owe unto them: and ought no more to be taken for Magistrates: but punished as private transgressors, as after I have promised to prove.

Hereunto they add the saying of our Savior Jesus Christ to Peter, which bade him to put up his sword, after he had stricken the servant of the high Priest, and cut off his ear: not minding by the sword to make resistance [Matthew 26:51-52; John 18:10-11]. Whereupon they gather that although it be lawful in doctrine and preaching for the servants of God to withstand and reprove the enemies, as Christ himself and his Apostles did: yet it is not permitted to do the same by any outward or bodily force. For then

as Christ answered, he might have obtained of his Father twelve Legions of Angels for his defense.

To this we shall soon answer, if we consider who spake this, to whom, and for what cause it was spoken. Which circumstances well weighed, give a great light to all like facts and sayings. First we must diligently consider the office of our Savior Jesus Christ, which as it was in all points spiritual, as well concerning his kingdom which he himself affirmeth not to be of this world, as his Priesthood and Prophecy [John 18:36]: even so for his own part, could he use no temporal force or power for the accomplishment of the same, because he denieth that he either came to reign in this world, or else to be a judge therein: as he answered the man, which would have had him to command his brother to divide the lands betwixt them, saying: Man, who made me a judge or divider over you [Luke 12:13-14]? And being demanded to give judgment against the woman taken in adultery, he would not take that office upon him, but said unto the woman, when her accusers were gone: Neither do I condemn thee: go thy way, and sin no more [John 8:1-11].

Thus as concerning Christ's own person, who had all things and powers both in heaven and in earth at his commandment, it is evident that he would use no temporal power against his enemies: for that he was not therewith charged. Which example taketh not away the office or duty of such as are charged with the temporal sword, to use it in defense chiefly of God's glory, and the preservation of those that are under them.

Secondly, why he forbade Peter also, and in him all the rest of the Apostles, we cannot be ignorant. For who knoweth not that the Apostles were witnesses of Jesus

Christ [Acts 1:8] chosen forth of the world (as St. John saith [John 17:6]) not to defend their Master by the temporal sword (for that were to usurp upon another man's office, not appertaining to them) to whom only the spiritual sword was committed, to fight manfully with it against the world, Satan, and all spiritual powers [Ephesians 6:10-20; Hebrews 4:12]. For as the Apostle saith: Though we walk compassed with the flesh, yet do we not war fleshly. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal things, but strong by the power of God to cast down holds: wherewith we overthrow imaginations of every high thing that is exalted against the knowledge of God, and bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ [II Corinthians 10:3-5]. Wherefore, seeing the office of the Apostles also is spiritual, as their Master was: and had only spiritual weapons to use in the defense of the Gospel, whereof they were ministers: it is not good reason to conclude their purpose, that Magistrates and other inferior officers, ought not to use the temporal sword in defense of religion: because Christ would not suffer Peter to fight with the temporal sword. But rather as Christ requireth of Peter and of all the rest, the faithful use of the spiritual sword, wherewith they were charged, or else they should be subject to malediction and judgment: For woe be to me (saith Paul) if I preach not [I Corinthians 9:16]: even so may not they escape judgment and the curse of God, which use not the temporal sword committed unto them with all endeavor in the defense of God's glory and his Church, wherewith every man is charged, according to his vocation and power, none excepted.

To be short, if our Savior Christ should, as he might by his power, have withstood the Jews that came to apprehend him and put him to death, how should he have

drunk of that cup which his Father had given him? That is, how should he by his death and passion have redeemed us, for which cause he came into the world: not to have his life taken from him against his will, but willingly to lay it down for all [Romans 5; John 10:11-18].

Then we see that there is nothing in this saying of Christ to Peter, which can condemn lawful resisting of ungodly Rulers in their ungodly commandments. For though it was profitable to all men that Christ without any resistance should be crucified, being the sacrifice appointed of God the Father to salvation: yet is it not therefore lawful for the inferior officers, or permitted to the subjects, to suffer the blasphemy and oppression of their superiors to overflow their whole country and nation, when both power and means is given unto them lawfully to withstand it, and they by their profession and office are no less bound to put it in execution.

CHAP. X.

Objections out of the old Testament, and Answers to the same.

This much being spoken to satisfy such objections as are commonly alleged forth of the New Testament: let us see also what may be said against us in the old, and after what sort they may be truly answered. Jeremiah they allege in his letter sent from Jerusalem to the captains in Babylon, to the Priests and Prophets, and to all the people of Israel that then were in Babylon, counseling them how to behave themselves, and to escape danger [Jeremiah 29]. The effect whereof was this: not to rebel, that they might escape, but to remain still and abide the appointed time of the Lord: yea, to seek the peace of the City whereinto God had brought them, and to pray to God for it. For (saith he) with the peace of that City, shall your peace be also.

And the like is written in Baruch the Prophet tending to the same end, that they should pray for the long life of Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar his son, that under their shadow (that is protection) they might live and serve them a long time [Baruch 1]. Wherein (say they) two things are to be noted against our opinion. The first, that he forbiddeth them to rebel, and exhorteth them patiently to abide the time appointed of their deliverance. The second, that they are bound to pray for their enemies, and wealth of their Cities, and therein also are bound to obey them.

This Epistle or letter of Jeremiah sent to the Jews at Babylon then captives, we may not deny to be his: though of the Prophecies of Baruch some do doubt, and esteem it not as Canonical. Nevertheless because they tend both to one effect in this matter, we will admit both. First, granting that their counsel to quietness and to abstain

from rebellion was good and necessary: because it proceeded from the Spirit of God and of knowledge, which spake or wrote nothing that God had not revealed unto them: and whereof they also should not admonish others, to the intent they might give no credit to false Prophets, which would stir them up to sedition, persuading them that they should not long continue in Babylon, whenas the Lord had otherwise appointed. Whereof when God assured them by his Prophet, it must needs be counted extreme madness and rebellion against God, if they should have done the contrary. As we read of wicked Ahab, who crediting the flattering counsel of the false Prophets, disobeyed God in contemning the truth told him by Micaiah: but to his own destruction [I Kings 22].

Therefore this matter is soon answered, where we have the secret counsel of God revealed unto us, admonishing us to abide in any place, and not to depart till he call us: we are more than rebels to do the contrary, and must sustain the danger worthily. But this is not our question, whether we ought to remain in any place so long as God hath commanded us: but whether we ought to do evil at the commandment of Prince or power, wheresoever we be, or in what estate, be it never so miserable. For though Jeremiah counseled them with patience to remain in Babylon, yet neither he, nor Baruch would permit them to follow the example of the Gentiles there, in idolatry or evil doing: as the Epistle of Jeremiah sent also to the Jews, captives in Babylon, and written in the prophecy of Baruch, doth abundantly witness [Baruch 6]. And as the examples of Daniel also, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego do teach us: which notwithstanding their Captivity, would not obey the king's commandment to do evil [Daniel 3].

Also in that they are willed to pray for the good estate of the City wherein they dwelled, that is Babylon, and for the long life of Nebuchadnezzar and his son, the cause is also alleged, to the intent that the peace of that City should also be their peace: and for that Nebuchadnezzar and his son should be their shadow and protection, God so moving their hearts. Which causes are sufficient why the people of God should be thankful, that is, to wish well to the places and persons where, and of whom, they receive any benefit, especially peace and protection, as was promised to the Jews in Babylon.

But what is this to the purpose? The Jews were commanded by God by the Prophets especially to tarry in Babylon, where then for their sins they were captives, because their own City Jerusalem, and all their country was destroyed and subject to Nebuchadnezzar and there remained no other place where they might have peace, but in Babylon and under his jurisdiction. Is this then a sufficient excuse for you that enjoy your country and are charged with the defense thereof, to suffer yourselves willingly to be spoiled of God's glory, and peace of your consciences, that is, true religion: and you for the same cause to be oppressed, removed, and murdered, to give place not only to them that hate you, but to the greatest enemies of Christ, the papists, and idolatrous Spaniards?

The Jews were willed to be quiet in Babylon, because that they and their brethren also dispersed should thereby find more favor and comfort: shall you therefore forsake God and betray your country to bring the vengeance of God and his horrible plagues upon yourselves and your brethren, whereof you have already felt some portion? The Jews were willed to pray for Nebuchadnezzar and his son, for that by them they should pass over a great part of

their captivity with peace, and be also by them defended from other enemies. Are you therefore excused, that permit yourselves to be made a prey to Satan, Antichrist, and to all sorts of God's enemies, at the commandment of an ungodly woman? Who seeketh but to consume the English nation, and in the end to cut your throats that now are in authority, whom she useth as instruments, to bring her wicked purposes to pass.

Is your condition now all one with the Jews? Indeed brethren it is like to be much worse, and that shortly without God's unspeakable mercy: but as yet there is some difference: They were captives and prisoners under their enemies, in a strange country, but you are yet in your own country and houses (though most unnaturally you have driven out many by tyranny). You have yet your own laws amongst you, that is, the Law of God and of your Realm, if you would use them: by the which you have had all peace and quietness. And in condemning these, you see into what case ye are brought, and into what misery, ready to fall. You may yet with God's help, and your endeavor, promote his glory, underprop that Realm and commonwealth, which by your falsehood is falling into utter ruin. The fall whereof, you, and yours chiefly, which have greatest charge, shall have greatest cause to bewail.

If your Jezebel, though she be an unlawful Governess, and ought not by God's word and your own laws to rule, would seek your peace and protection as did Nebuchadnezzar to his captives the Jews: then might you have some pretense to follow Jeremiah's counsel: that is, to be quiet, and pray for her life, if she would confess the only God of the Christians, and not compel you to idolatry no more than did Nebuchadnezzar: who

acknowledged the God of the Jews to be the true and everlasting God, and gave the same commandment throughout all his dominions, That whatsoever people or nation spake evil of the God of Israel should be rent in pieces, and his house counted detestable. For (saith he) There is no other true God that so could deliver his servants, as he did Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego [Daniel 3].

But because her doings tend all to the contrary, that is to blaspheme God, and also compel all others to do the like, what cloak have you here to permit this wickedness?

To be short, if she at the burning of three hundred Martyrs at the least, could have been satisfied and unfeignedly moved to confess the true Christ and Messias, and repented her former rebellion in giving contrary commandment to all her dominions, charging them to receive again the true religion and to expel all blasphemous idolatry of the pestilent papists: and that none should speak any evil against Christ and his Religion (as did Nebuchadnezzar by the example of three persons only, whom the fire by the power of God could not touch) then were she more to be born with, and revered as a Ruler (if it were lawful for a woman to rule at all) than were there also some probability in the reasons of the adversaries of this doctrine. Otherwise, as you now see, it maketh nothing at all for their purpose.

Another Argument is gathered of the words written in the same Prophet Jeremiah [Jeremiah 27]: speaking of the dominion which God was purposed to give unto Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon on this wise: I have made the earth and men (saith the Lord) and the beasts upon the earth in my strength and stretched out hand, and

it do I give to him that pleaseth me. And therefore have I given all this land into the hands of Nebuchadnezzar my servant. And all nations and mighty kings shall serve him, and till the time of his land do come, that is, till I visit him, and his country also. And it shall come to pass, that I will visit the nation or kingdom which will not serve the king of Babel with sword, famine, and pestilence. Wherefore serve ye the king of Babel and live. Behold, say they (who think it in no case lawful to withstand ungodly Rulers), This wicked king is constitute of God, and made his servant [Jeremiah 5]. And moreover those that should withstand him are cursed and threatened with sword, famine, and pestilence. And therefore to disobey such, must needs be unlawful.

Nebuchadnezzar, as it is written in Jeremiah, is called the maul of the Lord, and his instrument of war, by the which he was determined to beat down all Nations and kingdoms, punishing them for their sins and idolatry. And therefore the Lord calleth him his servant, for that he had chosen him to that office. Neither ought we to marvel that God will use the labors of ungodly persons, seeing all being his creatures are at his commandment, as is Satan with all his infernal spirits. Then God, having appointed Nebuchadnezzar to this office to be his tormentor, as well in scourging and correcting his own people, as in destroying his open enemies: it was requisite that God should minister unto him sufficient power, for the accomplishment of his determinate counsel, which the Lord did in such abundance, as no Nation was able to resist him, that should not perish either with the sword of Nebuchadnezzar, or famine, either else in that the Lord himself would from heaven fight on his part with the plague of pestilence.

And of this what thing else gather we, but first the purpose of Jeremiah: that was to draw the Jews from their folly, which after they had once forsaken the Lord by rebellion, did think also by their policy to escape God's appointed punishment. No, no, would Jeremiah say: it is too late, and ye are too weak to fight against the Lord whose work this is. When ye were Lords within yourselves, and had full liberty to honor your Lord God, according to the Laws which he gave unto you, and whereby ye were assured to live without fear of all nations, you would not. And therefore shall you serve a strange king, strange laws, and a strange nation till you be well corrected and humbled: till you have felt by experience what an inestimable comfort it is to have the living Lord to be your king and governor. And therefore would Jeremiah say, Serve Nebuchadnezzar.

Seeing then this is the appointed plague of God for disobeying him and his Laws, to serve strange kings, and to be captives: you are hereby warned and taught, rather to turn with all speed to the living Lord, and to set up his true religion again, that he may defend you: than in proceeding in your blasphemy for the commandment and fear of any creature, to hasten God's wrath and Judgments. The Israelites, because they would not receive the oft admonitions of God's Prophets to fear the Lord, could not afterward escape his plagues, nor the fear of men: no more shall you (O inhabitants of England) without speedy repentance escape the Spanish plague of adulterous Philip whom the Lord will make his sword and maul to beat down your towns and Cities, and to devour the people thereof. For seeing you have with the Israelites forsaken the sweet and pleasant yoke of God and Christ his Son: you shall endure the importable yoke of this cruel and beastly nation.

But what, shall we obey then say you? Yes, verily: but against your wills in captivity and thralldom, as did the Israelites in Egypt and Babylon, to serve them with your bodies and goods. Seeing ye would depart with nothing to serve our Master and Savior Christ, think you to escape this by obeying your wicked Rulers? By what other means have you fallen into the hands of your enemies, but by this king of obedience only? Which as you have heard sufficiently proved, is in God's sight plain disobedience and rebellion. But you will say: Jeremiah willed the Jews to serve Nebuchadnezzar which was a wicked Prince, and then without the fear of God, and therefore are we bound to serve our Queen, though she be an ungodly idolatress? Jeremiah speaketh but of bodily service, and such as subjects owe to their superiors in Civil ordinances, and outward doings, and not to defile their consciences in committing evil. For in such things, both God and his Prophets, and the examples of all the godly do forbid all obedience. They were made subjects to the king of Babylon to serve him with their bodies and goods, as were his own people: and also to pay tribute to him as did strangers, which he had likewise subdued. The which thing was for their punishment. And therefore of duty they must patiently bear them.

Then in few words I answer, that although it be most lawful with patience to bear the punishment of the Lord for our sin, and not to repine or rebel against it: yet is it our part nevertheless, and bounden duty, to defend and maintain the cause of God with all our might: and to withstand all manner of adversaries, even to the loss of our goods and lives: being ever assured of this promise of our Savior and Master, That he that loseth his life for his sake, shall find it: and he that loseth father or mother, friends or goods in his cause, shall be rewarded an

hundred fold in this world, and in the world to come with life everlasting [Matthew 19:29].

It is not then wisdom to repine at the rod when it is laid upon us to beat us, but to return back to our merciful Father with unfeigned repentance, calling for mercy beforehand whiles he doth but menace us. And therefore the threatening or counsel of Jeremiah, is but an admonition for us to obey God in true religion when we have time: that thereby we may escape the like plagues: and no defense at all for our ungodly behavior in yielding to the devilish decrees of any ungodly Magistrates, what names or titles soever they bear. For this answer of the Apostles must evermore prevail: God must be obeyed rather than man. And there is no obedience in evil that can please the almighty.

Last of all we have to consider the saying and doing of the worthy servant of God the king and Prophet David, who would not lift up his hand against king Saul, notwithstanding he sought to have murdered David, saying: God forbid that I should touch the anointed of the Lord: and why? Because he is the anointed of the Lord [I Samuel 24:6]. If it be not lawful then to touch the king because he is the Lord's anointed: it is likewise unlawful to disobey or resist, for that he is the Lord's anointed.

To which I answer, that to consider the bare words, it would seem true as they say: but weighing the cause, the matter is easy to answer. The occasion wherefore Saul hated David, was for that he knew he should succeed him in his kingdom. As Saul himself doth confess in the same Chapter, saying: I know of a surety that thou shalt reign, and that the kingdom of Israel shall be established in thy hand. Swear to me therefore by the Lord, that thou wilt

not cut off my seed after me, nor destroy my name from my father's house [I Samuel 24:20-21]. This being then David's own private cause, it was not lawful for him in that case to seek his own revengement: especially in murdering violently his anointed king, and the anointed of the Lord. For it is not written of Saul, that he was an idolater or constrained his people to worship strange Gods, nor yet was about to sell them to the enemies of God, the Philistines, against whom he fought manfully and many times. Neither that he was an open oppressor and contemnor of the Laws of God, as are this day all the rulers in miserable England. And therefore David being but a private man, could have done no violence to his king without God's special inspiration, except in revenging his private cause he had usurped God's office and sought to have established himself in his kingdom, not tarrying the Lord's appointment.

But whereas the kings or Rulers are become altogether blasphemers of God, and oppressors and murderers of their subjects, then ought they to be accounted no more for kings or lawful Magistrates, but as private men: and to be examined, accused, condemned, and punished by the Law of God, whereunto they are and ought to be subject, and being convicted and punished by that Law, it is not man's, but God's doing: who as he doth appoint such Magistrates over his people by his Law, so doth he condemn as well them as the people transgressing against the Law. For with God there is no respect of persons, as hereafter followeth more largely.

Thus we see that although David thought it not lawful in his private cause to touch God's anointed, yet are no people or nation thereby constrained either to obey their anointed in unlawful demands, or else forbidden to

withstand the open transgression of God's Laws and man's. For in that case Saul's servants would not obey him, commanding them to murder Ahimelech and the rest of the Levites and Priests [I Samuel 22:16-17]: so that not to withstand such rages of Princes in time according as the Law requireth (which commandeth that the evil be taken forth from amongst you [Deuteronomy 17]) is to give them the bridle to all kind of mischief, to subvert all Laws of God and man, to let will rule for reason, and thereby to inflame God's wrath against you, wholly, as yourselves in England are this day an example to all nations and people that bear the Name of Christ.

These are the objections for the most part, or at the least the chiefest, which are commonly alleged against this verity most plain and evident: that is that there is no obedience to be allowed against God, which is not in his sight disobedience. Also that it is lawful for all men according to their vocation to resist to the uttermost of their power all such as are open enemies of God, and labor to make them slaves to Satan. These objections, as you plainly see, make nothing to the contrary: but if they shall be deeply considered, do rather strongly confirm the same. Therefore dear brethren, let no man fear to shew himself God's servant openly, and to forsake in time the shameful bondage of Satan, to call back the truth of God's word again, whereby ye were once in freedom both of conscience and body: and utterly to abolish all vile papistry the doctrine of devils, and only cause of all your calamity, both of body and soul.

CHAP. XI.

It appertaineth not only to the Magistrates and all other inferior officers to see that their Princes be subject to God's Laws, but to the common people also: whereby the tyranny of the Princes and rebellion of the subjects may be avoided.

To resist evil and to maintain goodness, to honor God truly and to expel idolatry, every man will confess to be a good and godly act, and cannot but highly commend the workers thereof, as men acceptable to God, and worthy members of a commonwealth: but when men consider the dangers and displeasure, which commonly happen to such, then is there great courtesy made who first shall take the enterprise in hand: and long disputations made whether it be their duty or no: and to what sorts of men it doth belong, as though any were exempted out of that number which do profess the Name of God. If the superior power be an idolater or a cruel tyrant suppressing true religion and murdering the Saints of God (as Jezebel of England doth with all her rabble of papistical Bishops, and shavelings) who is so ignorant of God, or destitute of all humanity or natural judgment, that will not acknowledge such a one to be unworthy the society of the godly and honest: much less to have the authority and rule over great nations and whole kingdoms?

And not without cause. For by the Civil Laws, a fool or idiot born, and so proved, shall lose his lands and inheritance whereunto he is born, because he is not able to use them aright: but especially ought in no case to be suffered to have the regiment of a whole nation or kingdom. And it is most certain that there is no such evil can come to any commonwealth by fools and idiots, as doth by the rage and fury of ungodly Rulers, maintainers

of idolatry and tyranny. For folly hath commonly joined with it simplicity, void of malice and easy to be ordered: but idolatry and tyranny resembleth more the nature of wild beasts, cruel bears, and raging lions, than the condition of man. For simplicity, they are replenished with craftiness: for love, they shew malice: and for patience, furious rage and madness and being born as it were a common plague to all men, cannot once study for the preservation of a few.

This besides reason, experience teacheth all men to be most true, that it were better to have any fool, than such an untamed beast to be over them. And that such being altogether without God, ought to have no authority over the people of God, who by his word requireth the contrary as is most manifest. And yet to punish, and depose such a one according to the commandment of God, there is none that thinketh it Lawful [Deuteronomy 17]: or at the least will confess it to appertain unto them, either to do it themselves, or to see it done by others. As for the wicked counselors, they are plain Gnatos and flatterers, thinking their office to be applied unto their king's and Queen's will, as though they had no charge of the whole Realm. And therefore will labor to compass nothing but that which their Princes lust after, or may at the least please them, not passing if the whole Realm do perish, so they may obtain their favors. Such Ahithophels deserve to have Ahithophel's reward, for their devilish counsel without mercy. And as it is with them, so is it with the rest of all estates, as before hath been touched. Nevertheless, the matter is so evident upon their parts, that all will confess that it chiefly belongeth to inferior Magistrates to see a redress in such disorders: and they themselves cannot well deny it.

But as touching the common and simple people, they think themselves utterly discharged, whether their Prince be godly or ungodly, wise or foolish, a preserver of the commonwealth or else a destroyer, all is one to them, they must be obedient, because they are ignorant, and must be led themselves, not mete to lead others. And because their doings are counted tumults and rebellion (except they be agreeable to the commandments, decrees, and proceedings of their superior powers and Magistrates, and shall in doing the contrary be as rebels punished) therefore of all others (say they) we have least to do, yea nothing at all with the doings of our Rulers. If they rule well, we shall fare the better: if they be ungodly they have the more to answer for their ungodliness. What have we to do with their matters? Thus do all sorts of men from the highest to the lowest slip their heads out of the collar: and as careless persons not passing which end goeth forward, giveth the bridle wholly to their Rulers till destruction remediless overflow all.

To the intent therefore that this simplicity, ignorance, and subjection of the inferior people, do not altogether blind them, and cause them (as hitherto it hath been proved almost in all places and countries) to suffer themselves like brute beasts rather than reasonable creatures, to be led and drawn wheresoever their Prince's commandments have called: either to arm themselves against Christ their Savior in overthrowing the truth of his Gospel to bring in Antichrist and papistry: or else to fight against their own brethren the servants of God, to rob them, expel them out of their own houses, possessions, and country, to torment them and cruelly put them to death: as though the commandment of the Prince could make that lawful, which God forbiddeth as detestable: as though they being made instruments to their Princes in executing ungodly

tyranny, should not be partakers likewise with them of God's vengeance in the day of his dreadful visitation, when neither their ignorance can excuse them, neither commandment of king or Prince defend them, but they working wickedness with their Rulers shall drink of the same cup with them also.

To the intent (I say) that they should be no more so blinded, nor run headlong (as they do) to their own destruction: I have thought good moreover and besides that which hitherto hath been spoken in general (whereof notwithstanding they might also gather what belongeth to them in their condition and estate) to shew unto them more especially what may be demanded of common people by God's word, and what the people also may lawfully deny to do by the same word of God. Which as it ought to be permitted and preached to all men in general: so should it be the common and only rule whereby to frame and order all men's lives and doings.

And to avoid all incommodities that are accustomed to happen in all commonwealths, as well upon the Magistrates' part as of the people, there are two extremities: whereof both must be warned. The first is, that the Magistrates permit not to their subjects overmuch liberty, lest thereby they fall into contempt and subjection of their people: whereof followeth for the most part, all kind of dissoluteness, and carnal liberty, subversion of all good Laws and orders, alteration of commonwealths and policies, contempt of God and man: and to be short, all things turned to disorder and confusion. The second appertaineth on the other part, to the people, which ought not to suffer all power and liberty to be taken from them, and thereby to become brute beasts, without judgment and reason, thinking all things lawful, which their Rulers do,

without exception, command them, be they never so far from reason or godliness: as though they were not reasonable creatures, but brute beasts: as though there were no difference betwixt bond slaves, and free subjects: and as though they had no portion or right at all in the country where they inhabit: but as they were altogether created of God to serve their kings and governors like slaves, and not their kings and governors appointed of God to preserve his people, whereof they are but a portion and members, albeit they occupy the chief room and office, not to bring the rest of the members in contempt and bondage, but to comfort them, defend them, and nourish them as members of the same body.

And as the people may be assured by God's word that this liberty appertaineth to them, which becometh members of one body and brethren, because the Lord God himself (from whom kings have their authority and power) calleth their subjects and people their brethren, charging them in no case to lift themselves above them, but as brethren to rule in all humbleness and love over them [Deuteronomy 17]: even so, the people, if they suffer this right to be taken from them, which God of his singular favor hath granted: then are they an occasion that their kings and Rulers are turned to tyrants, and cruel oppressors, according as Samuel promised the people of Israel should come upon them, insomuch as they had refused his government, who ruled over them, in all justice, and humbleness, and in such sort as no man could charge him with any crime. And therefore the Scriptures pronounce that they rejected not Samuel, but God himself in whose fear he ruled [I Samuel 8]. This (saith Samuel) shall be the Law of the king, which shall rule over you. Your children shall he take to serve in his chariot, and to be his horsemen, and they shall run before his chariot, and he

shall constitute also Captains of a thousand, and of five hundred, and others to till his ground, and to gather his harvest, to make weapons for war, and harness for his chariots. Moreover, he shall take your daughters to make his anointments, to serve his kitchen, and to be his clothiers: besides this he shall take your fields and your vineyards, your best orchards of olives and give to his servants, and of your corn and vines shall he take the tenths, and give them to his Eunuchs, and servants: your servants also and maids and the chief of your youth and your asses, shall he take to do his work. And of your cattle shall he take the tenth, and you shall become his servants: and you shall cry out that day in the sight of your king whom you have chosen, and the Lord God will not hear you that day: and why? Because they had rather have a king and Ruler of their own appointment, than of the Lord's.

Wherefore to avoid the dangers upon both parts, it is more than necessary that both be subject to that Rule, and with all diligent care, labor to retain it, whereby both may learn their duty, and be constrained justly to execute the same. For when the common people and subjects have so large liberty by the negligence of their Rulers, that customs and unlawful usages shall be preferred to God's Laws, and statutes, and that to maintain the same customs, they care nothing if all other good Laws, either of God or man, do perish: how is it possible without dangerous tumults, and rebellion, to bring them to any good order and reformation, except there be some common, and approved Law, which very nature, and the fear of God, will teach them to reverence, and obey? As for example: amongst other customs which maintain idleness, and serve the greedy appetite of the belly (which all men are loath to forgo) how hard a thing was it to bring them from their

Saints' days? The abolishment whereof, godly king Edward in his time could not bring to pass. So great was the number of Papists in the Parliament house, which maintained those superstitious days, some bearing the name of men, and some of women, ascribing that to the creatures of God, which appertaineth to him alone, forasmuch as every day is the Lord's work, and ought to serve to his honor only. They have now in time of papistry, days of Peter and Paul, Mary, and John, with the rest of the Apostles: they have George's day, and Katherine's, Dunstan's day the conjurer, and Loye the smith, with innumerable others, which maintain the idleness of them and of their servants contrary to the ordinance of God, appointing six days for their travail, and the seventh day only to rest, and that to the honoring of our Lord God.

Also by what means may the people be drawn from the days of riot and banqueting, which they term friendly feasting and good fellowship: as from Whitsuntide's drunkenness and surfeit, Midsummer's shews and vanities, Christmas' riot and bawdry, Shrove Tuesday's gluttony, and Lent's superstitious observations, except by some Law of greater importance, the rude people be otherwise persuaded? And what other Laws are there able to bring this to pass besides the Laws of God? Wherein if they be not instructed, it is impossible for any authority or power to withhold them, without great danger and tumults from such kind of disorders and unlawful customs.

Therefore if thou be a Ruler and covet to have the people obedient to thee in God's fear, this must be thy first and principal study, to procure that they may truly know God by the plain and diligent preaching of his word, wherein if they be well instructed, there is no custom so long

continued, no idleness so long used, no superstition so deeply rooted, which they will not gladly and peaceably forgo at thy commandment: yea, there is no thing which is evil, that they can for shame stand in: nor any good and lawful demand, that they will deny thee. By these means only shalt thou obtain honor, maintain thy right, win the hearts of thy people, and have them all obedient.

And as the Magistrates, by this means, are sure to find obedience, and escape all rebellion, tumults, and disorders amongst their subjects: even so is there no other rule for the subjects to escape the idolatry, tyranny, and oppression of their superiors, than in retaining (as their chief possession) the selfsame Law and word of God. Permitting rather all things worldly to be taken from them, as lands, goods, house, country, father, mother, wife, children, yea, life itself, than to be deprived by any means of that heavenly treasure and precious pearl, for which they must sell all things [Matthew 13:44-46]. Whereof to be fully persuaded, it is necessary to understand what manner of people you are.

If you be the people of God, and unfeigned Christians, then must ye also know that the Law of God, and Christ your Savior, doth appertain unto you: wherein, as without shame and condemnation ye may not be ignorant: even so no power, commandment, or threatenings, should cause you to depart from it, wherein only standeth that comfort and salvation, which no creature can restore again unto you.

The heathen which knew not God aright, but were idolaters, yet made their religion to have the highest place in their commonwealths: as Aristotle writeth in his Politics. In the name whereof they might demand

anything of their kings and Rulers, and they durst not deny them: and might also without offence deny all things which their Rulers demanded contrary to their religion. Insomuch as this proverb was common amongst all, *Usque ad Aras*: meaning that against their religion (as they were persuaded) they were bound to no person: father, mother, friend, or governor: their love and obedience towards them could stretch no further than to the Altars, that is, so far as with observing their religion, they might lawfully perform.

If the Gentiles then had their religion in such honor and reverence that against it (though indeed it was mere superstition and idolatry) they would acknowledge no obedience: in what estimation should God's word and the religion of our Savior Jesus Christ be amongst us that profess his Name, and are assured of his doctrine to be the undoubted truth and power of God to salvation of all believers? If the heathen kings and Magistrates could compel their subjects no farther than the Altars: shall any authority or power compel us farther than God, and his anointed, our chief king, Lord and Master? Let it be counted shame to us, that the ignorant Gentiles should be found more careful and zealous in defending their superstition and manifest idolatry, than we are in maintaining the true worship of God and his heavenly wisdom.

If we were Turks, Saracens, Jews, or papists, which either knew not God aright, or else denied his Son Jesus: it were no great marvel if we were led after the lusts of our ungodly Princes. For as our Master teacheth, When the blind leadeth the blind, both fall into the ditch [Matthew 15:14]. But if we will be taken for the people of God and his Son's by adoption in Christ Jesus, then it behooveth us

likewise to give obedience, principally to our Lord and Master, to our mighty God and most loving Father, as Malachi the Prophet exhorteth. The son reverenceth the father, and the servant the master: if I be your Father (saith the Lord) where is the honor that you give me? If I be your Lord and Master where is my fear [Malachi 1:6]? Noting unto us how it is in vain to call him Father or Lord, so long as we give him not that honor and reverence which he demandeth.

Also, if we will not be taken for blind and ignorant persons, then must we shew forth this light by walking as becometh the children of light [John 12:36], as the Apostle requireth indifferently of all God's children without exception, or excuse, either of guide or Ruler [Ephesians 5]. For the blindness of our guide, whether he be of the Clergy or Laity may be no excuse to us, if in following him we fall and perish: it is our own fault, and we must bear our own judgment. For Christ hereof admonisheth us: Let them alone (saith he) for they are blind guides, and leaders of the blind [Matthew 15:14]. And again, according to their works, see ye do not [Matthew 23:3].

If thou having sight, had appointed to thee a blind guide, wouldest thou follow him into a dangerous pit or deep water, wherein both might perish because he was thy guide? Then truly mightest thou be judged of all men worse than either ox or ass, or any other unreasonable beast, which will not be driven into such places, as to their outward senses appear dangerous.

Nature only teacheth all creatures this, to fly from those dangers that should hurt them: and to desire all things that do them good. And when God hath made this common to

all beasts, and inferior creatures, painfully to seek their preservation: hath he denied the same to man, whom above all others he will have preserved? For whose preservation chiefly he hath not only created all things and prescribed his Laws and commandments to prohibit murder, and every other thing tending to his destruction: but also to shew the abundance of his mercies, spared not his dearly beloved Son, but gave him to the cruel death of the Cross, that man might have full salvation, not only here in this world, but everlastingly in the world to come.

Wherefore, if he tender us so much, as to seek by all means possible our life and preservation, then must it likewise follow, that he hath constitute no laws, or ordinances to our destruction, so long as we shall be found obedient unto them. Then is there no power that ruleth according to these laws, which either can or will command us anything, tending to our destruction. But if any do so by God's permission because of our sins, and rebellion towards him [Isaiah 3] (for which cause only he suffereth wicked Princes to be our Governors) it is (dear brethren) to draw us to repentance, and knowledge of our sins, and not that we should forsake the Laws of our God, and to continue in our wonted rebellion, by yielding to the ungodly commandments of wicked men.

CHAP. XII.

How much the common people owe to God for his benefits received, what obedience he requireth, how far they are charged, what things they have promised, and how ignorance may not excuse them.

All these things being well considered, it is an easy matter for all manner of subjects to know what liberty belongeth unto them, by the word of God, which they may lawfully claim as their own possession, and are likewise bound at all times to practice: wherein also appeareth what things are prohibited unto them, which they may in no case exercise. If you therefore be God's subjects and people, and he your Lord God and loving Father, who is above all powers and Princes, and hath made no Laws, but such as are for your preservation, and singular comfort: then without all controversy there may be nothing lawful for you by any commandment of man, which your Lord God in any case forbiddeth: and nothing unlawful or forbidden to you which he commandeth, whether it appertain to the first Table or the Second. Which rule if ye observe, you may be assured to please God: likewise by doing the contrary, ye shall purchase his heavy wrath and indignation. For no man can serve two Masters at once: but he shall hate the one, and love the other [Matthew 6:24]. And in hating your first and chief Lord to obey and please man, behold your impiety is intolerable, preferring vile man his creature, to the Almighty God and creator of all.

How much we are bound to his Majesty, our own conscience doth bear us witness: which cannot deny but that we have received of him alone our life, moving, and being, our wisdom, strength, beauty, riches, children, and all things that are good and profitable, in whose power we

may do all things, and without him all flesh is turned to dust and powder [Psalm 1; 7; 17].

Remember the example of the worthy Captain and Prince Moses, whom God chose to deliver his people from Egypt, who would not charge them with any thing at any time which the Lord his God had not commanded, evermore speaking on this wise, These are the statutes and precepts of the Lord: Thus saith the Lord: and, Hear O Israel the voice of the Lord, etc. [Exodus 19; Deuteronomy 4; 20]. Insomuch as he had this for his only shield against the murmuring of people: It is not against Aaron and me that ye murmur, but against the Lord: which being chosen and appointed of the Lord, did only execute his will and commandments. Yea, as for themselves they confessed that they were nothing. As for us (said Moses) what are we? meaning but earth and ashes, the creatures of God, nothing differing from others, saving for that authority, whereunto they were called, and the obedience which they shewed in executing not their own wills, but the will and pleasure of God. And why? but because they knew they were the people of God with whom they were charged, and being his people, how it behooveth them to be ruled by no other Laws and ordinances, than by such as God had given them [Deuteronomy 10:12-22].

Wherefore if Moses and Aaron, God's elect and chosen servants, had no more power over the people than his express commandment permit, and that the people so far and no farther were bound to obey them [Exodus 19]: how can we assure ourselves that we offend not God's Majesty, whose people we would be called, when without his word, yea contrary to his express commandment we satisfy the requests and statutes of ungodly rulers?

For as Moses could command nothing but from the mouth of the Lord: so could the people obey nothing but that which proceeded from his mouth also: as well because they were his people, as for that they had so promised with one voice and consent before God and Moses, when the Lord commanded him to say on this wise to the people, You have seen what I have done to the Egyptians, and how I have carried you upon the wings of Eagles, and led you forth to me. If therefore ye will diligently hear my voice, and observe my commandment, you shall be my proper people before all nations: For mine is the earth. And you shall be unto me a kingly Priesthood, and an holy people. Which words when Moses had pronounced before the whole people, they all together, with one accord, answered: Whatsoever the Lord shall speak, that will we do. And Moses praised them (or God rather by Moses) saying, They did well in so answering. And therefore promised to raise them up a Prophet like to him, etc. [Deuteronomy 18:13-22]. And this was the covenant only that God made with them before he gave them the Law in writing, and the promise that they made to observe the same Law, that they might thereby be his dear and chosen people.

This example ought never to depart from the eyes of all such as are, or would be, God's people. Wherein as in a most clear glass it doth appear how they are bound to God, what God requireth of them, and what they have promised to him. For as the Lord God required nothing of the Israelites, but that which was their duty to do, and he by his exceeding benefits in delivering them from their enemies had well deserved: even so he bindeth them to nothing, but to obey him. Neither did they promise any farther, saying: We will do all things (not what Moses or Aaron or any other after them shall of themselves

command) but whatsoever our Lord God shall speak, that will we do. More than this God required not, neither were they bound any farther but to the Laws of God only, which they promised for them and their posterity to observe. And God for that cause blessed them above all nations, with his unspeakable benefits.

So are we no less bound to obey the selfsame God of Israel, whom we also profess in Christ Jesus, our Moses and Captain, by whom we are not only delivered from bodily servitude, but from the most vile and dangerous bondage of Satan through sin, our spiritual enemy. To this worthiest deliverer also have we in Baptism promised no less, yea, much more obedience: because of the more abundance of graces, which by him we have received. And besides this are most straightly charged so to do. Not by the voice of any earthly creature, but by the mouth of God the Father speaking from the heavens: This is my dearly beloved Son, in whom I am delighted, hear him [Matthew 3:17; 17:5]: whose fidelity also no less passed the faithfulness of Moses, than did his honor and dignity: being the Son of God, and promised Savior, doing nothing at all, nor teaching anything which his heavenly Father had not appointed him to do and to teach.

Wherefore, as the Jews had the Law of God and his commandments for a sufficient discharge against all contrary commandments, or what authority soever they were, being no farther bound to any creature than the selfsame Laws of God approved: even so, all such as bear the Name of Christ and would be taken for the people of God, though they be of the basest and lowest state of subjects, are no farther bound to any Prince or superior power, nor to their commandments, than the commandment of the chief king and Lord doth approve

and permit, nor than their promise again to him doth require.

Neither may it be a sufficient discharge for thee to allege ignorance, because thou art a subject, and therefore hast nothing to do, to inquire of the doings or to examine the commandments of thy superiors or Rulers, but wilt say with the multitude, If they command well thou art obedient, if otherwise thou art excused in doing as thou art commanded, and they only have to answer to God by whom thou art thus charged. Deceive not thyself (dear brother) For as well art thou charged by God's word to know what they command thee, and not to do it except it be lawful, as they are charged by their office to will nothing of thee, which God's word approveth not. For as they in commanding and doing evil, shall not escape God's heavy wrath and judgments: no more shalt thou, being made an instrument of their impiety and ungodliness. Therefore to be ignorant in these things, although thou be a subject, is to contemn the commandment of God, and to neglect thine own salvation: forasmuch as God hath charged thee being one of his people, with the same Laws (the Ceremonies except) wherewith he charged his people Israel before, and willeth you no less to know his precepts, and to obey them, than he willed the Israelites. Of them he required to have his Laws written upon their doors and posts, to instruct their children in the same, to talk of them sitting at home, and when they walked in the way, when they went to bed, and when they should rise [Deuteronomy 6:6-9; 11:18-20]. But to thee besides all this, God hath sent a more shining light, our Savior Jesus Christ: which every man may clearly behold, except he is willfully blinded with the stubborn Jews. He is the light that shineth in darkness, and lighteneth every man that cometh

into this world [John 1:5, 9]. He hath taken away the shadows and Ceremonies of the Law, that thou mayest clearly behold the will of his Father. He hath uncovered Moses' face, to the intent thou mayest fully consider the secrets of God [Exodus 34:29-35; II Corinthians 3]. For these are the days whereof the Prophet Joel spake, when all should be Prophets, and see visions. And it shall come to pass in the latter days (saith God) that I will pour forth my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and daughters shall prophesy, your young men shall see visions, and your ancients shall dream dreams [Joel 2:28; Isaiah 44]. And moreover upon my servants and handmaids in those days, will I pour my Spirit, and they shall prophesy. Which prophecy St. Peter affirmeth to be fulfilled in the kingdom of Christ [Acts 2], where all things are as plain and evident to all sorts of men and women, which profess Christ unfeignedly, as before his time they were to the Prophets themselves, or to such as God appeared unto in dreams and visions.

And therefore, if ignorance of God's Laws could not excuse the Jews before Christ's coming, which were continually subject to the punishment of God for their transgressions (though many things were obscure as in shadows and figures) how much less can it excuse any man now in so great light of the Gospel? Seeing then thou knowest thyself bound to obey thy Lord God above all others, because of the inestimable benefits thou hast received of him in Christ Jesus, and because he requireth the same of thee, and thou hast also promised no less to him in thy baptism and profession: and last of all in that thou canst not pretend ignorance in such knowledge and shining brightness, nor yet escape God's vengeance, which he without respect of persons will pour indifferently upon all transgressors, be they superior

powers, or inferior subjects. It is thy part then, being a subject, to learn this lesson of the Apostles (whensoever thou shouldest be constrained, by commandment or force of tyrants to do evil) That God must be obeyed before man. Which unto thee will be as sufficient a defense and buckler in all assaults and dangers, as it is to all other sorts of men in authority and office: as was before declared.

Art thou then, being a subject commanded to worship stocks and stones which this day to our shame are erected again in England? Behold thou hast God's commandment for thy defense: Thou shalt commit no idolatry, nor make to thyself any graven image, etc. [Exodus 20:4; Deuteronomy 5:8]. Art thou charged to be at the idolatrous Mass, wherein Christ thy Lord is blasphemed? Behold, he hath given thee another charge: that is, to celebrate his Supper, according as he left in example, saying: Do you this, that is, which ye see me do, and not which the powers of the world, or the pestilent papists, command. Also do it (saith Christ) in remembrance of me [Matthew 26:26-29; I Corinthians 11:20-34], and not of your friends alive or departed, as teach the Papists. For none of them died for you. Moreover do it to shew forth the death of Christ, till his coming, as witnesseth the Apostle: and not to make a new sacrifice for sin, as the Papists blasphemously both teach and preach. Art thou commanded by men to dishonor the Sabbath day in worshipping of Saints and abstaining upon their days and evens from thy lawful business? Behold, God thy Lord chargeth thee no further than only with his day of rest, saying: See thou keep holy the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: and not of Peter, Paul, Mary, James, or John. Art thou commanded to swear in the name of Mary and all the Saints in heaven (which is the papistical oath)? Behold,

the Lord saith, Thou shalt only swear in the Name of thy Lord and God [Deuteronomy 6:13; 10:20; Joshua 23; Isaiah 45]. Art thou commanded not only to take the Name of the Lord in vain, but also to forswear thyself most shamefully against God's glorious Majesty, and the honor of our Savior Christ (as all they have done which lately have sworn to acknowledge Antichrist, the bloody butcher of Rome to be their head and governor)? Behold, The Lord will not suffer his house unpunished that taketh his Name in vain: much less such perjured and forsworn wretches. Art thou commanded to persecute thy parents and friends, charged not to succor them in their necessity, because they profess the doctrine of salvation? Art thou forbidden lawful marriage, because thou art a minister of God's word, and permitted to live in all kind of filthy uncleanness, as do the Sodomitical Priests, Monks, Friars, Nuns, Cardinals, Deans, Archdeacons, and all other orders of Satan: behold, such doth the Lord God, as most abominable of all other, command to be put to death [Leviticus 20:13].

To be short, when they contrary to their oath and profession, command thee to receive Antichrist, the beastly Bishop of Rome, with all his filthy dregs of damnation: to burn the word of God and the faithful interpreters and professors of the same: to forgo the comfortable preaching of the Gospel, and reading of the Scriptures: to persecute Christ in his members: to aid the enemies with thy goods and body against the dear children of God: to fight in other countries without any just cause or occasion, and to suffer thy wife, children, kinsfolks, and countrymen to be most cruelly spoiled, oppressed, and murdered for want of thy defense at home (as they most shamefully have done of late) which at the commandment of that cruel tyrant, prepared themselves to

fight against the French king, and their own brethren, the Scots, whiles the Spaniards put themselves in a readiness to enter the Realm and make a general spoil and prey of all.

These things and many such like are plainly forbidden you by the manifest word of God: and therefore to do them for fear or pleasure of any Prince or power, is plain disobedience and rebellion against the Almighty. And contrariwise, to answer in this case, and to do as the Apostles have taught, that is, to obey God rather than man, is the only way to discharge your consciences, to do your duties, and to please God: no more to be made by ignorance the instruments of his sworn enemies (what title soever they bear) to subvert God's glory, oppress your brethren, and destroy your country: but repenting your former ignorance and impiety, to be made instruments of the contrary to the uttermost of your power, lest you be taken in your sin, and prevented with the bitter cup of God's indignation, already prepared for the workers of iniquity, and all such, as are aiders and partakers with them, when neither power can defend the superiors, nor their commandments excuse the subjects.

CHAP. XIII.

The readiness of the people to defend idolatry, superstition, and earthly commodities: and their slothfulness in maintaining the contrary. How they are charged to see the Laws of God kept, and the transgression of the same punished, if their rulers do neglect them. And that they may lawfully punish their Magistrates as private persons transgressing the Lord's precepts.

But what remedy? (say you) we being but subjects without power, and wisdom cannot help it. The more pity, dear Countrymen, that you have so stoutly, or rather, stubbornly shewed your wiles and power in the days of Godly king Edward the Sixth, your late Prince and governor, and the zealous servant of God: who sought to rule you in God's fear, and under whom you had the comfortable word of God, and were delivered from the Romish Antichrist, and from all superstition, for the most part, having your Realm free from strangers, and quiet from all enemies, enjoying your goods and friends in peace without all force (imprisoning, reveling, banishing, or murdering). It is to be lamented (I say) that then receiving all these blessings of God, by the means of so worthy a Prince, ye were able to conspire, rise, and rebel, with the danger of bodies, goods, and souls, against your godly and lawful king: and that chiefly to defend the devilish Mass, and all the puddles of popery with the Caterpillars and rabble of all unclean spirits [Revelation 16:13-14], as Cardinals, Bishops, Priests, Monks, Friars, Nuns, etc. And now in these matters wherein consisteth the glory of God, the preservation of your own lives, and defense of your country, you are without all will, power, and help.

To restore Antichrist again, whom once God had banished to all your comforts, you were not ashamed to term it obedience, and to count yourselves therein no rebels, but lawful resisters: but to defend Christ and his comfortable Gospel (which then you had in possession) that are you persuaded to be open rebellion. To arm yourselves against your superiors, to defend your commons and earthly commodities withholden from you, by the greedy desire of new upstart gentlemen, how willing and ready have you shewed yourselves? But to hold and retain your spiritual possession not promised only, but given into your hands, you are most slow without all hope and courage. Shall not this be to your just condemnation? When God calleth you to a reckoning, what can you have to answer? Are ye any better than the Gergesenes, which desired Christ to depart from them because they lost their hogs and swine [Matthew 8:28-34]? yea, ye are worse than they were by much, because ye have professed Christ and received him and his doctrine, and with him unspeakable benefits and treasures. And yet notwithstanding have not only desired him to depart from amongst you as they did: but laid violent hands upon him, persecuting him with sword, banishment, fire, and cruel death, as though he had been your mortal enemy. O ingratitude intolerable! Christ your merciful Lord (who destroyed nothing of yours, but preserved and increased, even your swine and hogs, and all other beasts and cattle in great abundance) you have despised and utterly denied, to have Antichrist to be your Lord and governor, and with him all filthy swine, wild bears, wolves, boars, tigers, and lions to devour, destroy, and overthrow all things: not your fields and pastures only: but villages, Towns, Cities, and Castles, yea your selves, your wives, and children, and whatsoever you count most precious.

Well, the day of the Lord will come, when you shall feel what it is to fight for your Mass, and to betray the Gospel, to rise and rebel against your lawful Prince, and to obey and defend a bastard, and open enemy to God, an utter destruction of the whole realm: to murder and banish your natural countrymen and loving brethren, to honor and receive strangers, God's express adversaries: a cruel people, a proud nation: a people of afar and of a strange language, whose tongue ye shall not understand, an impudent nation, and hardhearted people, without all pity and mercy, which neither will be moved with the lamentable voice of the mothers, nor shew any compassion for the pitiful cry of their sucklings and infants [Baruch 4; Jeremiah 5; Deuteronomy 28]. And why? because ye have chosen to obey vile man, yea a raging and mad woman, rather than the almighty and merciful God. Repent, repent, O ye people of England, for your destruction is at hand. Forsake with speed the unlawful obedience of flesh and blood, and learn to give honor in time to the living Lord, that he may stay his hand, and draw to him again his stretched out arm, that you may find mercy, and that the bottom of your cup be not turned upward.

Alas say you, what is this we hear? Be not the people, of themselves, as sheep without a pastor? If the Magistrates and other officers contemn their duty in defending God's glory and the Laws committed to their charge, lieth it in our power to remedy it? Shall we that are subjects take the sword in our hands? It is indeed as you say, a great discouraging to the people when they are not stirred up to godliness by the good example of all sorts of Superiors, Magistrates, and officers in the faithful executing of their office: and so much more when they are not defended by them in their right and title, as well concerning religion,

as the freedom of their natural country: but most of all when they, which should be their guides and Captains, are become instruments to enforce them to wicked impiety. Nevertheless, all this can be no excuse for you, seeing that evil doings of others, whether they be Lords, Dukes, Barons, knights, or any inferior officers, may not excuse you in evil. And though you had no man of power upon your part: yet, it is a sufficient assurance for you, to have the warrant of God's word upon your side, and God himself to be your Captain who willeth not only the Magistrates and officers to root out evil from amongst them, be it idolatry, blasphemy, or open injury, but the whole multitude are therewith charged also, to whom a portion of the sword of justice is committed, to execute the judgments which the Magistrates lawfully command [Deuteronomy 4, 5, 6; I Chronicles 29]. And therefore if the Magistrates would wholly despise and betray the justice and Laws of God, you which are subjects with them shall be condemned except you maintain and defend the same Laws against them, and all others to the uttermost of your powers, that is, with all your strength, with all your heart and with all your soul, for this hath God required of you, and this have you promised unto him not under condition (if the Rulers will) but without all exceptions to do whatsoever your Lord and God shall command you.

As touching idolatry, it is worthy to be considered what Moses writeth, or rather the Spirit of God by him, how the Lord in that place chargeth the whole people to stone to death without mercy the false Prophet or dreamer, when any should rise up amongst them, yea though the things came to pass which he before spake, if that thereby he sought to persuade them or draw them to idolatry [Deuteronomy 13]. And also how he suffered such

amongst his people to try and prove them, whether they would love him with all their heart and with all their soul, meaning (as every man may well perceive) that if they should yield for all their signs and wonders to idolatry, and not punish such false Prophets and dreamers as God had raised up: that then they loved him not, yea that they had plainly forsaken and denied him, for that he commanded expressly that every such Prophet should be put to death, and therefore chargeth to take the evil from amongst them. Which commandment as it is not given only to the Rulers and Governors (though I confess it chiefly appertaineth to their office to see it executed, for which cause they are made Rulers) but also is common to all the people, who are likewise bound to the observation of the same: even so is the punishment appointed of God, belonging to all manner of persons without exception, being found transgressors. For the Lord is a just punisher, with whom there is no respect of persons [Deuteronomy 10:17], who willeth his people to be like him in their judgments. In judgment (saith the Lord) commit no unrighteousness, neither respect the face of the poor, neither be you afraid at the countenance of the mighty, but judge uprightly to your neighbor [Leviticus 19:15].

Moreover that every person both high and low is charged of God with this Law, and none freed from the punishment, it is evident in the same Chapter following [Deuteronomy 13]: Where God doth not permit so much as privy whispering in thy ear, tending to idolatry, unpunished, no not of thy dearest friend or kinsman, saying: If thine own natural brother, son, daughter, or the wife of thine own bosom, or thy neighbor whom thou lovest as thine own life, secretly provoke thee to idolatry, to serve strange Gods, either far or near, give not place to him, neither hear him, neither let thine eye have pity upon

him, neither shalt thou pardon him, or hide him, but shalt utterly slay him: thy hand shall first be upon such a one to kill him, and then the hands of all the people, etc.

The like commandment is also given in the 17 and 18 Chapters of the same book, charging all the people of God in general, to see idolatry punished without mercy, and that in all persons. Wherefore we may most certainly conclude, that if the Rulers and Magistrates in this case, would not execute the Laws of God wherewith they are so straightly charged, that then the people are not discharged, except they put it in execution to take the evil from amongst them, to whom it also belongeth. Next, that no person is exempted by any Law of God from this punishment, be he king, Queen, or Emperour, that is, either openly or privily known to be an idolater be he never so near or dear unto us, he must die the death. For God hath not placed them above others to transgress his Laws as they list, but to be subject unto them as well as others, over whom they govern. And if they be subject unto his Laws, they must be subject to the punishment also, when they be found disobedient transgressors: yea, so much the more as their example is more dangerous. For look, what wickedness reigneth in the Magistrates, the subjects commonly take encouragement thereby to imitate the same, as we see in the examples of Jeroboam, Ahab, and wicked Manasseh [I Kings 14; 21], who being suffered in the beginning to commit idolatry, and to erect idols, made the same likewise lawful to all their subjects. For the same cause God commanded Moses to hang up all the captains and heads of the people, for that by their example they made the people idolaters also [Numbers 25:4]: he had no respect for their authority, because they were Rulers, but so much the rather would he have them so sharply punished, that is, hanged against the sun without

mercy: which judgment, though it was done at God's commandment first, and after at Moses', yet were the people executors of the same, and all did understand that it was just: and not for that time only, but to be a perpetual example forever, and a sure admonition of their duty in the like defection from God, to hang up such Rulers as should draw them from him.

And though it appear at the first sight a great disorder, that the people should take unto them the punishment of transgression, yet, when the Magistrates and other officers cease to do their duty, they are as it were, without officers, yea, worse than if they had none at all, and then God giveth the sword into the people's hand, and he himself is become immediately their head (If they will seek the accomplishment of his Laws) and hath promised to defend them and bless them [Leviticus 26; Deuteronomy 27; 30].

And although the rebellion of the people, their ingratitude and contempt of God's Laws hath been such at all times, that it is a rare thing to shew their duty in this behalf, by any example: yet is there one fact of the Israelites worthy memory, and appertaining to this purpose, which is written in the book of the Judges [Judges 19; 20], at what time they had no lawful Magistrate in all Israel. Who notwithstanding rose up wholly together against the Tribe of Benjamin in Gibeah (because of that shameful villainy, which the sons of Belial had done to the Levite's wife) and said or agreed amongst themselves, that none should depart to their houses or tents, before they were revenged of their own brethren the Benjamites, to flee those detestable persons, which had so shamefully abused the Levite's wife, albeit she was an harlot, and they without a guide or Captain: not knowing when they came to the

field who should be their governor to lead them and give the onset, before they had consulted with God, who appointed unto them Judah. Here do we see the eleven Tribes, to whom the Levite made his complaint, in sending to every Tribe a portion of his wife, did not excuse themselves to shew justice, because they wanted a lawful Magistrate to govern them, nor thought themselves discharged for that they were as sheep without a pastor: except they did thus arm themselves against the sons of Belial, the ungodly Benjamites, to see the Judgments of God executed according to his Law (and as they said themselves) to cut off the evil from amongst, then demanding in the end the wicked men that had committed that villainy.

But you will say: It is another matter for the people to enterprise such an act being without a Ruler, and when they have a Ruler appointed unto them, without whom they may do nothing. To this I answered before, that it is all one to be without a Ruler, and to have such as will not rule in God's fear. Yea, it is much better to be destitute altogether, than to have a tyrant and murderer. For then are they no more public persons, contemning their public authority in using it against the Laws, but are to be taken of all men, as private persons, and so examined and punished. Nevertheless, to the intent ye may understand, that the governor ought not to take away all right from the people, neither discharge them utterly, from the execution of justice: let us consider a like example of the people's zeal under the worthy Captain Joshua [Joshua 22], who when they but heard that the Sons of Reuben, the Sons of Gad, and the half Tribe of Manasseh, had erected up an Altar in their portion, which God had given them beyond the Jordan, thinking that they had so done, to have sacrificed thereon, and so to have fallen from God:

assembled themselves together wholly, against the Reubenites, Gadites, and half Tribe of Manasseh to revenge that defection from God (as they took it) though afterward they proved it to be nothing so. Which fact, as it declared an earnest true zeal in the people for the defense of God's glory, and his religion: so Joshua their Captain, neither did nor ought to have reproved them: yea, happy might Joshua think himself, that had his people so ready to maintain of their own accord the Laws of God, which before in the days of Moses were so stubborn and rebellious. And if this readiness was commendable, having a worthy Magistrate and godly Captain: how necessary is it to be used amongst the people when they have ungodly and wicked Princes, who seek by all means to draw them rather from the Law of God, than to encourage them to maintain the same? Wherefore this zeal to defend God's Laws and precepts, wherewith all sorts of men are charged, it is not only praiseworthy in all, but required of all, not only in abstaining from the transgression of the said Laws, but to see the judgments thereof executed upon all manner of persons without exception. And that if it is not done by the consent and aid of the Superiors, it is lawful for the people, yea, it is their duty to do it themselves, as well upon their own rulers and Magistrate, as upon other of their brethren, having the word of God for their warrant, to which all are subject, and by the same charged to cast forth all evil from them, and to cut off every rotten member, for fear of infecting the whole body, how dear or precious soever it be. If death be deserved, death: if other punishments, to see they be executed in all.

For this cause have you promised obedience to your Superiors, that they might herein help you [Romans 13:1-5]: and for the same intent have they taken it upon them.

If they will do so, and keep promise with you according to their office, then you do owe unto them all humble obedience: If not, you are discharged, and no obedience belongeth to them: because they are not obedient to God, nor be his ministers to punish the evil, and to defend the good. And therefore your study in this case, ought to be, to seek how you may dispose and punish according to the Laws, such rebels against God, and oppressors of yourself and your country: and not how to please them, obey them, and flatter them as you do in their impiety. Which is not the way to obtain peace, and quietness, but to fall into the hands of the almighty God, and to be subject to his fearful plagues and punishments.

CHAP. XIII.

This is no doctrine of Rebellion, but the only doctrine of peace and means to enjoy quietly the comfortable blessings of God, which ought not to be wished for only of the people, but carefully sought for also.

And although this seem a strange doctrine, perilous, and to move sedition amongst the people, and to take from the lawful Rulers all due obedience: yet whoso will consider the matter aright, shall find it sound and true doctrine, and the only doctrine of godly peace and quietness, and means to avoid all strife and rebellion, by which only Superiors shall rule in the fear of God, and subjects reverently obey them without grudging or murmuring. For is there any laws more perfect than are the Laws of God? Or did any man better know the nature of man, than he which created man? Or any more desirous to keep them in his fear, and true obedience, than God himself, who chose them for his people? Then who is so mad and impudent, to think that peace and quietness can be amongst any people or nation, by observing the Laws of wicked men, rather than in retaining the wholesome Laws of God? That man which is not able to rule himself, can better govern his subjects and defend them, than God may his people? That the people shall rather enjoy all blessings of God, in yielding to the wickedness of the ungodly Rulers, than to see them straightly punished for transgressions of the comfortable Laws of the almighty? For after that God had once given his Laws to his people, he shewed them plainly by Moses that he required nothing else of them, but to fear him and to walk in his ways, to love him, and serve him with all their heart, and to keep his precepts and statutes, which he commanded them that day [Deuteronomy 10:12-13]. And why? because (saith Moses) he is the God of Gods, the Lord of Lords, the great, mighty, and dreadful God, which

hath no respect of persons, nor taketh any rewards. And this fruit shall you be sure of in keeping his Laws. He will be your praise, and your God: that is (as in another place the same Moses writeth) He will make you a wise people, a mighty Nation, praised and commended of all Nations, which shall say, This is only a wise people, and a people of understanding and mighty. For what people is so great, which hath their God so friendly and familiar with them, as the Lord our God is in all things that we call to him for [Deuteronomy 4:6-7]? For whiles we obey his Laws, and suffer them in no case, and in no person, to be transgressed and left unpunished (to the uttermost of our power) we are assured that the blessings, which God after promised, shall be poured upon us: that is to be blessed at home and abroad, in the fruit of our womb, of our land, of our beasts and cattle [Deuteronomy 28]. And the Lord will make our enemies which rise against us to fall before us, to enter in one way against us, and to flee by seven ways before us. And all the people of the earth shall see that the Name of the Lord is called upon amongst us, and shall be afraid of us.

It is then no new doctrine which God so long ago taught to the Israelites, nor no rash or perilous doctrine whereby they are only made wise, and most strongly defended. Neither yet doth it minister occasion of rebellion, without which there can be no godly peace or quietness, as your experience in England hath already (as I suppose) sufficiently taught you: who have felt rather hell-like torments, and shameful confusion, since ye permitted the wild boars to cast down the hedge of the Lord's vineyard, that is, his Laws and precepts, than any manner of godly peace, either in conscience or bodies: which misery shall have no end before you reclaim with a vehement zeal and

love, your right title and possession of God's Laws, which you have most unthankfully given over and neglected.

If the true zeal of God's people had been in you when popery began to be preached in the place of the Gospel, when the Mass was reduced in place of the Lord's Supper, and that by the ignorant Papists and malicious shavelings, when Antichrist was restored to displace Christ: could ye have suffered this unpunished? Or if you had punished it as you were then charged by God's Laws and man's, durst they have proceeded to such impiety? If you had required the Magistrates to rule you in God's fear and not in tyranny, and that you would reverence them as God's ministers so ruling you, otherwise, not to acknowledge them but as his enemies, and so to take them: durst either that Jezebel so ragingly have trodden God's word the Gospel of Christ our Savior, as a polluted sow, under her feet, either else so rashly destroyed her father's and brother's Laws before her? Durst she without all shame so openly and unfaithfully have broken promise to them (which to their own sorrow, and all others this day) were her chief promoters? Assure yourselves no. If you had required all Massmongers and false Preachers to have been punished with death (as is appointed by God's word for such blasphemers and idolaters, and if they to whom it appertained, had denied, yourselves would have seen it performed at all times, and in all places) them should you have shewed that zeal of God, which was commended in Phinehas, destroying the adulterers [Numbers 25]: and in the Israelites against the Benjamites, as before is noted. Yea, then had not the Priests of Baal so swarmed abroad, nor the servants of God have been in such abundance murdered. But great was our sins before, that this deserved: and cold was our

zeal to Godwards after, that this shame have suffered:
and gross is our blind dullness, which will not yet see nor
seek to remedy it.

Nevertheless in all these enterprises you must be certain
and sure of this one thing, that under the name of Religion
and pretense to promote God's glory, you seek not either
your private gains or promotion, as did all the carnal
Gospellers, and such as would be counted the chief pillars
and maintainers of the same in times past amongst you.
And therefore under the cloak of Christ, seeking the
world, when Christ seemed to have the upper hand: are
now returned to their old master Antichrist, to be his hired
soldiers, and to fight under his banner against Christ and
his servants, by whom they were first promoted. Which
treason God is prepared already to revenge, to pluck from
them his feathers, and to set forth to the whole world their
shame and nakedness. For he is a just God [Psalm 5], and
hateth iniquity, and therefore will be no cloak to cover
their falsehood and covetousness.

Also ye must beware that private displeasure and worldly
injuries move you not more to seek revengement of your
adversaries, than the true zeal and thirst for God's word,
the lively food of your souls. For then do you seek
yourselves, and not God: then take you his office out of
his hand, to whom ye ought to commit all your private
displeasures and injuries: then can ye not look to have
God's right hand upon your part, but rather may be
assured to find him your enemy, and strongly armed
against you [Deuteronomy 32; Ezekiel 9; Romans 12]. To
resist evil therefore is your part, and to maintain
Godliness, but simply and unfeignedly, for the love of
virtue, and hatred of vice, if you will be sure to prosper,
and avoid God's heavy displeasure, who is the searcher of

your hearts and secrets, and will in time disclose them and make them known to all men [Psalm 7; Jeremiah 17].

But you perchance would grant me all this, that it is both lawful and godly, if the people wholly together would follow the example of zealous Phinehas and the Israelites, as before was mentioned, and take punishment themselves upon all blasphemers of God, manifest betrayers of their country, and cruel murderers of their brethren: seeing the Laws of God and public peace can be by no other means restored. But when the people themselves agree not, when they are divided amongst themselves, and the greatest part of them perchance papists, and will be maintainers of such ungodly proceedings as are now brought into England, how is it possible that by the weaker part, God's glory should be restored?

To this I answer, that as I know the restoring of God's word, and comfortable doctrine of our Savior Christ to be the only work of God, and of no man (though he forsake not man as a mean external) and also am not ignorant that he regardeth not the multitude and strength of man to accomplish his purpose, who hath been accustomed to give the victory to a few in number, and weak in strength, that the glory might be his [Numbers 13; I Samuel 14; Judges 6]: so will I not counsel you rashly to cast yourselves into danger, but patiently and earnestly to call to the living Lord for mercy, and acknowledging your sins (for which this plague is poured upon you) to desire him to shew some sign of comfort: who hath promised to hear your groanings, and to behold your affliction, as he did the groanings and oppression of his people in Egypt, when they were brought to full repentance and feeling of their sins [Exodus 2; 3]: so that he came down from

heaven, and appeared to Moses, and sent him to be their Captain, whom they once had forsaken: as you have done Christ.

And as he also sent Othniel to deliver his people, when they cried unto him in that captivity that they were in under the idolatrous king of Mesopotamia for the space of eight years [Judges 3:9-11].

Neither is this enough to call upon God for help, except ye utterly forsake the wicked doctrine and doings of the papists, and seek also (to the uttermost of your power) for remedy in following the example of the people of God, as it is written: which did not only serve God and call to him for help, at what time they were destitute of their worthy Captain Judas Maccabees [I Maccabees 6]: but also sought it, and demanded it where it was like to be found. And assembling themselves together, came to Jonathan his brother, desiring him to be their guide and Captain, to help them in their misery, and to defend them against the enemies of God, their whole nation being then most cruelly oppressed on every side, and the most part of them in vile slavery, serving the strange Gods of the heathen. Then Jonathan, pitying their estate and his own, did not deny their request, but willingly took in hand that dangerous enterprise, being assured that the cause was lawful, to maintain to his power God's glory and to succor his afflicted nation, as his brother Judas had done before him. And doing the same with a simple eye, according as he was bound, God prospered his doing, and he had good success.

Therefore if they did well in demanding succor, and he discharged his conscience in granting their request, why is it not also lawful for you to seek help of them that be able

and willing: and for them likewise to grant help, to whom God hath lent it for that use especially?

But I know your answer: experience (say you) hath taught us the contrary. For if God had been pleased herein with Sir Thomas Wyat that valiant Captain taking in hand the like enterprise: it should undoubtedly have had better success. But he being a man, and of God, of great estimation amongst all goodmen, was notwithstanding apprehended, condemned, and at last (although he was promised his pardon) as a traitor beheaded. And besides him, Sir Henry Isley, knight, with many godly men, for the same fact, hanged and murdered. The like also ye will affirm of that Noble man Henry Lord Grey, Marquis Dorset, and Duke of Suffolk: who only for the zeal that he had to promote God's glory, and the liberty of his country, prepared himself with that power he could make to the aid of the said Wyat, according to his promise. But being deceived, or rather betrayed by such as he trusted unto, was in the end also apprehended, and with his brother, the Lord Thomas Gray (a Gentleman of great courage and towardness) likewise beheaded.

Although I mind not to stand long in the praise of these worthy men's facts, who most cowardly were of many betrayed, which since perchance have felt some part of worse misery: yet so much must I needs confess in their behalf, that none but papists, or traitors can justly accuse them of treason or disobedience. Of whom to be misdained or slandered, is in the eyes of the godly, no small commendation, and praise. For to pass over with silence the duke of Suffolk (whose noble parentage and earnest love that he bare to the promoting of Christ's Gospel, and the wealth of his country, is to all Englishmen sufficiently known) what, I beseech you,

moved Wyat that worthy knight to rise? Was it his poverty? Behold, he was a famous Gentleman of great lands and possessions, stout and liberal in the service of his Prince, faithful to his country, and merciful to the poor. Sought he ambitiously honor? Which of his enemies could herewith justly charge him? Did he this because he was of a troublesome and busy nature, which could not be under lawful government? His great wisdom, modesty, and gentle behavior at all times, and to all persons, did well declare the contrary: ever more being found a faithful Captain to his Prince in the field, and an obedient subject at home. What then moved him to this dangerous enterprise? Verily, the zeal of God's truth and the pity that he had to his Country, for the miseries he saw to approach by the usurped power of ungodly Jezebel, and her merciless papists, the soldiers of Antichrist. If it be treason to defend the Gospel and his Country from cruel strangers and enemies, then was Wyat a traitor and rebel. But if this was his duty, and all others that professed Christ amongst you, then are all such traitors, as did deceive him: and such as took not his part also, when time and occasion by him was justly offered.

And though his enterprise had not such success, as we would have wished: yet was it no worse than our cowardliness and unworthiness deserved. Which neither ought of any therefore to be condemned, neither should be any discouragement to others in the like. For sometimes we see the very servants of God to have evil success in their doings, according to man's judgment: and yet God is well pleased therewith. As the example of the Israelites, whereof we made mention before, doth most manifestly approve: at what time they armed themselves against the Benjamites, and that at the commandment of God, and yet were twice discomfited, losing the first time 22 thousand

men: and the next day following 18 thousand: both times consulting with the Lord, and following his commandment [Judges 20].

If thou wilt here pronounce according to the effect, behold, thou shalt prefer the vile and adulterous Benjamites to the servants of God: those which most abominably abused the Levite's wife, to them that with the zeal of God sought to have the transgression punished. Even so, I say of worthy Wyat: If you judge his fact according to the success in man's reason: then shall you prefer to him all the false and flattering Counselors, all wicked and bloody Bishops, and all others that would be counted Nobles, which in very deed be traitors to God and his people. But Wyat, I doubt not, departed with praise the servant of God, where all these are left to perpetual shame and destruction without speedy repentance. O noble Wyat, thou art now with God, and those worthy men that died for that enterprise! Happy art thou, and they which are placed in your everlasting inheritance, and freed from the misery of such as were your enemies, in so just and lawful a cause: who live as yet patrons of idolaters, of thieves and murderers, against whom thou and thine shall stand one day as judges to their condemnation.

For what can you Nobles or Counselors say for yourselves at that day, when God shall call you to account (ye know not how soon) which have permitted Wyat, and with him the whole Church and commonwealth of England, to fall into the hands of God's enemies, and would not rescue him, some of you having then in your hands sufficient power not only to have supported him and others which fear God according to duty and promise: but to have tamed the ramping lions, raging bears, and

ravening wolves? Have ye not herein justly condemned yourselves as faint-hearted cowards and manifest traitors, not only to Wyat, but to God himself, to his poor, oppressed servants, and to your own native and ruinous country? But your ungodly fetches and wicked doings (whereof I am not altogether ignorant) with your names, I do now purposely omit: perchance God in the mean season will change your minds, soften your hard hearts, and call you to repentance. Otherwise doubt ye nothing, but God will minister either to me, or some other (or it belong) the like occasion to set forth your shame and nakedness to all posterity, as you most worthily have deserved: who hitherunto have shewed yourselves (in contemning so many and notable occasions offered by God's providence, as well since as in the days of Wyat) to be men in whom is neither zeal to religion, nor love to your country. And therefore I, leaving you to God's mercies, or fearful judgments, will speak a word or two by the way to them which will be called Gospelers, and yet have armed themselves against the Gospel drawing forth with them out of their country to maintain Philip's wars, and to please Jezebel (who seeketh by that means, to cut their throats craftily) their poor and ignorant tenants and other soldiers without knowledge, while their brethren be burned at home and their country like to be wasted, spoiled, oppressed, possessed, and replenished with ungodly Spaniards. Is this the love that ye bear to the word of God? (O ye Gospelers) have ye been so taught in the Gospel to be willful murderers of yourselves, and others abroad, rather than lawful defenders of God's people, and your country at home? Is God's cause become unjust and not mete to be defended: and the cruel murder and shameful slaughter of Princes approved? This hath not the Gospel taught you, but chiefly in all your doings to seek the kingdom of God, next to love your neighbor as

yourselves: and in no case to be murderers (as all you are) that either for pleasure of Princes, or hope of promotion, or gain of wages have become Captains, or soldiers in unlawful wars, especially in this case and dangerous time.

Then which of you all now for shame can accuse that zealous and godly man Wyat, whether ye be of the Nobles, Counselors, Lords, knights, or of the common soldiers? I will make your own consciences judges in this matter, whether worthy Wyat or you should be taken for traitors? He, who in the fear of God and love towards his country sought to defend all, and to destroy none: or you, who, seeking the defense of none, labor to destroy all? He, who endeavored himself to withstand wicked Jezebel, and the only traitors of God's truth, and their country, as Priests, Bishops, and papists: or you that have been their maintainers, with shields and bucklers. He, who according to the word of God, sought with the danger of all his goods, lands, and life, to keep out strangers, which were coming to rule over you, and to devour you: or you, which have been means with your lives, lands, and goods to bring them in, and to defend them? He, who would be openly known in his doings as he was in heart, their enemy: or you which hate them inwardly, and yet do what you may to shew yourselves friends outwardly? But tell me your gains in the end. To conclude, he who did his endeavor among his countrymen at home to defend them, or you which helping your enemies abroad, labor to destroy your friends and country at home?

Also you subjects and soldiers, which are gone with them to butcher yourselves and others without cause or conscience, contrary to the word of God, be you assured that before him you shall be condemned as rebels and

disobedient persons, whereas your godly brethren which in a just and lawful cause died with faithful Wyat, are allowed before God, and of all goodmen commended [Genesis 9; Deuteronomy 5; Leviticus 24].

O London, London, thou that boasted thyself to be the Jerusalem of all England, wherein Christ chiefly was preached, and the truth of his Gospel best known, remember how thou forsookest that godly Captain, and what promise thou madest him. Thou (I say) which mightest have been an example and comfort to all the Cities, and Towns in England, and to have made the papists to tremble and quake for fear. God grant that for thy faint heart in that behalf, and shameful falling from God in murdering then and since so many of his servants and Prophets, thou be not left likewise destitute and desolate, not one stone left upon another, as happened to Jerusalem [Matthew 24:2]. Thou canst not herein defend thyself, which since hast been ready, and yet art to maintain wicked Jezebel in her tyranny at home, and in her ungodly and needless wars abroad with thy goods and body at her commandment, being thereby made an aider, helper, and furtherer of all her ungodly oppression and tyranny. And therefore must needs be partaker with her of the dreadful plagues and punishments, which God hath appointed for such impiety.

Wherefore to conclude this matter, if Wyat's cause was just and lawful, as thou must needs confess: for if he were faulty in any point, it was chiefly in this, that he pretended rather the cause of his country, than of God's Religion, which always ought to be preferred, and without which no Realm or nation may long continue in quietness: for then God keepeth not watch over them. If also he was betrayed by others, and sought not to betray any: if he purposed

God's glory, and the defense of his country: If the justness of the cause ought to try his doings, and not the effect that followed, or the preventing of time, whereunto he after a sort was enforced: then ought no person, whether he be a Ruler, or subject, Counselor, Noble, public, or private to be discouraged, but rather encouraged by Wyat's example. The people to seek and demand help of them that are able, and they to grant them succor willingly: seeing by all means possible to restore Christ again, and his kingdom, with whom you have lost all godly liberty and quietness: and to expel Antichrist and all his adherents, by whom you are brought in this miserable slavery and bondage, both of bodies and souls.

And though it succeed not the first or second time, no more than did the enterprise of Wyat, or of the Israelites: yet when God shall see your zeal and diligence, to be applied only in seeking to maintain his kingdom, and the glory thereof: he will help no doubt at length to confound all his enemies, as he did the third time comfort the Israelites to the utter destruction of the adulterous Benjamites. We must now look for no revelations from the heavens to teach us our duty, it being so plainly set before our eyes in his word. And if in this case considerably be gone in the fear of God, it should happen any of you to perish, consider you perish but in the flesh to live with God: leaving in the meantime an example behind you, that you lived in his fear and sought his glory according to your duty.

CHAP. XV.

What remedy or counsel is left, to the poor and afflicted servants of God, at what time they are destitute of all outward means and support of men.

To the people of Israel, whom God from among all nations chose to be his peculiar people, he did not only give his Laws, ordinances, and statutes: but also instituted all kind of officers to see the same Laws put in execution. And besides this, appointed such as might be leaders and defenders of them in time of war against their enemies, and such as should maintain their right at home in time of peace: as were their judges and princes appointed over every Tribe, besides their king and chief governor, to whom it was lawful for the people and for every Tribe to resort in time of danger, to ask counsel and desire help, who were likewise bound to hear their cause, and support them, whether it were by counsel or bodily travail.

In like manner God hath no less mercifully dealt with you in England, not only giving unto you his Laws and holy word, with far greater light and plainer declaration of his will and pleasure than ever was published to the Israelites: but also hath furnished you with all sorts of Magistrates, officers, and governors necessary for the accomplishment, or rather execution of the same. To whom it ought to be no less lawful for you to resort for comfort in your necessity, than it was to the Israelites, and they as much bound to hear you. For this cause have you Mayors, Sheriffs, and Aldermen in Cities, Constables and Bailiffs in Towns, knights and Justices, in Shires and countries. To these ought the people to have concourse in necessity, who should be their refuge and aid in all trouble and adversity.

But if all these are so shamefully corrupted, and so mindless of their charge and office, that neither the Citizens can be comforted, nor succored by their Mayors, Sheriffs, and Aldermen: neither the poor Townsmen and Tenants by their Justices and Landlords, but all given over as it were to Satan, and to serve the lusts of their chief Rulers, care not whether the poor people sink or swim, so it be well with them (though it be a thing impossible that the people can be destroyed and they escape danger, or that their neighbor's house can be consumed with fire, and theirs remain untouched). If all I say, in whom the people should look for comfort, were altogether declined from God (as indeed they appear to be at this present time in England, without all fear of his Majesty or pity upon their brethren) and also, if the least and weakest part of the people in all places feared God, and all outward means of help utterly taken from them, neither being able to find remedy amongst themselves, neither can see how to be supported of others: then assure yourselves (dear brethren and servants of God) there can be no better counsel, nor more comfortable or present remedy (which you shall prove true, if God grant you his Spirit and grace to follow it) than in continual and daily invocation of his Name, to rest wholly and only upon him, make him your shield, buckler, and refuge, who hath so promised to be to all them that are oppressed and depend upon him: to do nothing commanded against God and your conscience, preferring at all times (as you have learned before) the will of God, to the will, punishments, and tyranny of Princes: saying, and answering to all manner of persons: This hath God commanded, this must we do. That hath God forbidden, that will we not do. If you will rob us and spoil us for doing the Lord's will, to the Lord must you make answer, and not to us: for his goods they are, and not ours. If ye will imprison us, behold, ye are oppressors.

If ye will hang us or burn us, behold, ye are murderers of them which fear the Lord, and are created to the Image of God: for whose contempt ye shall be straightly punished. And for our part, if you take from us this vile and corruptible life, we are assured the Lord will give it us again with joy, and immortality both of body and soul.

If God give you grace to make this or the like answer, and strength to contemn their tyranny, you may be certain and sure to find unspeakable comfort and quietness of conscience, in the middle of your danger and greatest rage of Satan. And thus boldly confessing Christ your Savior before men (as by the example of thousands of your brethren before your faces God doth mercifully encourage you) you may with all hope and patience wait for the joyful confession of Christ again before his Father and Angels in heaven, that you are his obedient and dearly beloved servants, being also assured of this, that if it be the will of God to have you any longer to remain in this miserable world, that then his providence is so careful over you, and present with you, that no man or power can take your life from you, neither touch your body any further than your Lord and God will permit them [Matthew 10:28-31]. Which neither shall be augmented for your plain confession, nor yet diminished for keeping of silence. For nothing cometh to the servants of God by hap or chance, whose hairs of their heads are numbered. Whereof if you be so assured as you ought to be, there can be nothing that should make you to shrink from the Lord. If they do cast you in prison with Joseph, the Lord will deliver you: if they cast you to wild beasts and lions, as they did Daniel, you shall be preserved: if into the sea with Jonah, ye shall not be drowned: or into the dirty dungeon with Jeremiah, you shall be delivered: either into

the fiery furnace with Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, yet shall you not be consumed. Contrariwise, if it be his good pleasure that you shall glorify his holy Name in your death, what great thing have you lost? Changing death for life, misery for felicity, continual vexation and trouble, for perpetual rest and quietness: choosing rather to die with shame of the world being the servants of God, than to live amongst men in honor being the servants of Satan, and condemned of God. Otherwise, if you give place to the wickedness of men to escape their malice and bodily dangers, you shew yourselves therein to fear man more than the mighty and dreadful God: him that hath but power of your body, and that at God's appointment, than God himself, who hath power, after he hath destroyed the body, to cast both bodies and souls into hellfire, there to remain everlastingly in torments unspeakable.

And moreover, that which you look to obtain by these shameful shifts, you shall be sure to lose with grief and trouble of Conscience. For this saying of our Master being true and certain, That they which seek to save their life (meaning by any worldly reason or policy) shall lose it [Matthew 16:25]: what shall be their gains at length, when by dissimulation and yielding to popish blasphemy, they dishonor the Majesty of God to enjoy this short, miserable, and mortal life: to be cast from the favor of God, and company of his heavenly Angels, to enjoy for a short time their goods and possessions among their fleshly and carnal friends: when as their conscience within shall be deeply wounded with hell-like torments? when God's curse and indignation hangeth continually over the heads of such, ready to be poured down upon them? when they shall find no comfort, but utter despair with Judas, which for this worldly riches (as he did) have sold their Master:

seeking either to hang themselves with Judas, to murder themselves with Frances Spera, to drown themselves with Justice Hales, either else to fall into a raging madness with Justice Morgen? What comfort had Judas then by his money received for betraying his Master? Was he not shortly after compelled to cast it from him with this pitiful voice: I have sinned in betraying innocent blood [Matthew 27:4]? Could any of these forenamed persons, after they had committed the like treason to our Savior Jesus Christ, find any more comfort in their friends, from whom they were so loath to depart? Or any more pleasure in their possessions, or assurance in their treasures? Behold, they had all most miserable lives for the time, and shameful ends.

Then dear brethren in Christ, what other reward can any of you look for, committing the like offences? Have you any more assurance of God's mercies than they had? Would not Christ spare his own Apostle Judas, and yet will pardon you? Did not judge Hales appearingly profess the Gospel a long space, and was greatly commended for a godly man amongst the Godly? And yet after by the importunate persuasions of the pestilent papists denying his Master, sustained this horrible judgment, that he and such like might be a perpetual example for you and all men to fear the like or worse punishment.

You see therefore how there is no trust but in God, no comfort but in Christ, no assurance but in his promise, by whose obedience only you shall avoid all danger [Matthew 10]. And whatsoever you lose in this world and suffer for his Name, it shall be here recompensed with double according to his promise, and in the world to come with life everlasting: which is to find your life, when ye are willing to lay it down at his commandment.

I am not ignorant how unnatural a thing it is, and contrary to the flesh, willingly to sustain such cruel death, as the adversaries have appointed to all the children of God, minding constantly to stand by their profession: which to the spirit notwithstanding is easy and joyful. For though the flesh be frail, the spirit is prompt and ready. Whereof (praised be the name of God) you have had notable experience in many of your brethren very martyrs of Christ, who with joy patiently and triumphantly, have suffered and drunk with thirst of that bitter cup which nature so much abhorreth: wonderfully strengthened no doubt by the secret inspiration of God's holy Spirit. So that there ought to be none amongst you so feeble, weak, or timorous, whom the wonderful examples of God's present power and singular favor in those persons, should not encourage, embolden, and fortify, to shew the like constancy in the same cause and profession.

Nevertheless, great cause we have thankfully to consider the unspeakable mercy of God in Christ, which hath farther respect to our infirmity, that when we have not that boldness of spirit to stand to the death, as we see others, yet giving so much to our weakness, he hath provided a present remedy, that being persecuted in one place, we have liberty to flee into another: where we cannot be in our own country with a safe conscience (except we would make open profession of our religion, which is every man's duty, and to be brought to offer up our lives in sacrifice to God in testimony that we are his [Matthew 10]) he hath mollified and prepared the hearts of strangers to receive us with all pity and gladness, where you may be also not only delivered from the fear of death and the papistical tyranny practiced without all measure in that country: but with great freedom of conscience hear the word of God continually preached,

and the Sacraments of our Savior Christ purely and duly ministered, without all dregs of popery, or superstition of man's invention: to the intent you being with others refreshed for a space, and more strongly fortified, may be also with others more willing and ready to lay down your lives at God's appointment. For that is the chiefest grace of God, and greatest perfection, to fight even to the blood under Christ's banner, and with him to give our lives.

But if you will thus flee (well beloved of the Lord) you must not choose unto yourselves places according as you fantasy, as many of us which have left our country have done: some dwelling in papistical places amongst the enemies of God in the middle of impiety: in France, as in Paris, Orleans, and Rhone: and some in Italy, as in Rome, Venice, and Padua. Which persons in fleeing from their Queen, run to the Pope: fearing the danger of their bodies, seek where they may poison their souls: thinking by this means to be less suspected by Jezebel, shew themselves afraid and ashamed of the Gospel, which in times past they have stoutly professed. And lest they should be thought favorers of Christ, have purposely ridden by the Churches, and Congregations of his servants their brethren, neither minded to comfort others there, nor to be comforted themselves. Wherein they have shewed the coldness of their zeal toward religion, and given no small occasion of slander to the word of God, which they seemed to profess. For being returned again into their Country, they either become Idolaters with the papists to please the Queen, and keep their possessions, or else dissemblers with the rest of counterfeit Christians: but to their own condemnation at length, except the Lord grant unto them speedy repentance. For whoso are ashamed of Christ, and his Gospel, thus denying him before men:

them hath he promised to deny, and be ashamed of before his Father, and Angels, in heaven [Matthew 10:32-33]. This manner of fleeing then is ungodly, and (as you hear) dangerous: and therefore not lawful for you therein to follow their example.

Neither is it enough to keep you out of the dominions of Antichrist, and to place yourselves in corners where you may be quiet, and at ease, and not burdened with the charges of the poor, thinking it sufficient if you have a little exercise in your houses in reading a chapter or two of the Scriptures, and then will be counted zealous persons and great gospellers. No, brethren and sisters, this is not the way to shew yourselves manful soldiers of Christ, except you resort where his banner is displayed, and his standard set up: where the assembly of your brethren is, and his word openly preached, and Sacraments faithfully ministered. For otherwise, what may a man judge, but that such either disdain the company of their poor brethren, whom they ought by all means to help and comfort, according to that power that God hath given them for that end only, and not for their own ease: or else that they have not that zeal to the house of God, the assembly of his servants, and to the spiritual gifts and graces (which God hath promised to pour upon the diligent hearers of his word) as was in David: which desired being a king, rather to be a doorkeeper in the house of God, than to dwell in the tents of the ungodly [Psalm 84:10]: lamenting nothing so much the injuries done unto him by his son Absalom (which were not small) as that he was deprived from the comfortable exercises in the Tabernacle of the Lord, which then was in Zion. Neither doth there appear in such persons that greedy desire (whereof Isaiah maketh mention [Isaiah 2]) which ought to be in the professors of the Gospel, who

never would cease or rest, till they should climb up to the Lord's Hill: meaning the Church of Christ, saying one to another: Let us ascend up to the Hill of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob, and he will teach us his ways, and we shall walk in his footsteps. For the Law shall come forth of Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. Which zeal the Prophet doth not mention in vain, but to shew what a thirst and earnest desire should be in the true Christians, and how the same appeareth in seeking and resorting to those places, where it is set forth in greatest abundance and perfection, as was after Christ's ascension in Jerusalem. And as that zeal shewed them to be of Christ, by the like must we be judged Christians also, that if we flee for Christ, the places whereunto we flee may bear witness for what cause we are fled.

Neither is it a sufficient excuse which many allege, that they believe to be saved by Christ, that they have sufficient knowledge of their duty, and the rest, they can supply by their own diligence. Whose faith is not so much (I dare say) but they have need to desire with the Apostles, Lord increase our faith. And if they will so confess, why do they forsake the chiefest means that God hath ordained, which is the open Congregations of his people, where his word, the fountain of faith, is most purely preached, and where the Godly examples of others may be a sharper spur to prick them forward. And as for the knowledge and diligence of such, may be no buckler to defend their doings. For if they have those gifts whereof they boast, where may they bestow them better than in the Church of God? Except they will say, they are born to themselves, and have the gifts of God which he would have common to others, applied to their own private fantasy, which is to lap them up in a clout, and not to put them forth to the vantage of the owner, as did the

unprofitable servant: and as all they do, to whom God hath given either learning, counsel, or worldly substance, which either for the strength of Cities, pleasantness of air, traffic, or merchandise, or for any other worldly respect or polity, do absent themselves from the Congregation and company of their poor brethren, where Christ hath advanced his standard, and blown his trumpet, as is afore said.

If God then give you not strength-at the first to stand in his profession to the death, nor that you cannot be quiet in conscience, abiding in your country: you see how his mercy hath given you liberty to flee, and what places he hath appointed for you to flee unto, that is, where ye may do good to yourselves and others, where ye may be free from superstition and idolatry, where your faith may be increased rather than diminished, and yourselves strengthened, confirmed, and more strongly armed.

But if you in tarrying will neither stand manfully to Christ your Master, but betray him with the Papists in doing as they do, nor yet with thanks use this remedy that God hath granted to our infirmity, to resort to his Churches godly instituted: what answer shall you be able to make to his Majesty when he shall call for account of your doings? How shall you avoid his wrathful indignation, now ready to be poured upon his enemies? Assure yourself, they shall be taken in their sin: and you also as God doth find you. If in the tents of his enemies, doing as they do under their standard, to be stricken with them, and also to perish. For in taking part with their impiety, you must be partakers of their cup likewise.

Neither is this any new or hard doctrine that may exceed your capacity, but may rather be termed your a.b.c. and

first principles, wherein none ought to be ignorant.

That is if we will be Christ's scholars, we must learn to bear his cross, and to follow him: not to cast it off our shoulders with the enemies, and run from him. It is the same lesson which of children we learned in the Lord's prayer, that the Name of God the Father may be sanctified: His kingdom come: His will be done. Mark it brethren, that your daily prayer turn not to your everlasting confusion. For if you daily pray, that by you his Name you may be sanctified, that is, that he may be worthily honored for his majesty and wonderful power, revered for his mercy and infinite wisdom, feared for his justice and just judgments: and yet for fear of the ungodly, do blaspheme his Name by dissimulation and outward idolatry, are ye not herein judges of your own condemnation? Praying that his Name may be honored with your lips, and blaspheme him in your deeds? When you pray that his kingdom may come, and yet you yourselves do build and establish the kingdom of Satan? When you desire that his will may be done, and contrary thereunto, study to maintain and accomplish the will of Satan and his members?

Wherefore be no more deceived in so plain a matter. If the Lord be God, follow him: if Baal be God, go after him [I Kings 18:21]. Play no more the hypocrite, pray not with your lips only, but express the same in your works. Subject yourselves wholly to God: for he hath redeemed you. Honor him alone: for you are his people. Let not the example of any lead you into error: for men are but mortal. Trust in the Lord: for he is a sure rock. Beware of his judgments: for they are terrible. Trust not to your own shifts: for they will deceive you. Mark the end of others, and in time be warned. These lessons are hard to the flesh, but easy to the spirit. The way of the Lord is a strait path,

but most faithful, sure, and comfortable. In this way have you also promised to walk with Christ: and for the same cause do you bear his Name, that you should forsake the world and the flesh, to yield unto him all honor and obedience, before the face of men in earth, that he may bestow upon you the glory of his Father which is in heaven. To whom with the Son, and holy Ghost be everlasting praise, honor, and glory forevermore. Amen. From Geneva, this first of January, M.D.LVIII.

FINIS.

WILLIAM KETHE to the Reader.

The vain heart of man, full frail is, and blind,
 Uncertainly settled, and rest can none find:
 Whose hap is in wandering, to wade the wrong way,
 As one apt by kind to run still astray.

For, what thing so good by truth hath been wrought,
 Or what so well-framed hath nature forth brought,
 Which man is not prone by craft to accuse,
 And nature's good gifts doth not sore abuse?

Thus see how man, contemning God's grace,
 Is wholly inclined, that ill should take place:
 Whose will (truth rejecting) delighteth that to have,
 Which nature corrupted would seem still to crave.

Since man then in judging, so thwart'ly is bent.
 To satisfy fancy, and not true intent:
 How hardly in this case, can such judge upright,
 When truth doth but peep out, as seem'th to our sight.

Full needful then were it, we had this respect,
 Before we receive aught, or aught do reject:
 The thing to decide so with Judgment and skill,
 That truth may be stickler, and not our own will.

Behold here a truth drawn forth of her grave,
 By power fore oppressed, and made a bond slave:
 Whose chains, though this Author could not rent or tear,
 Yet hath he forth brought here, into most clear air.

With whom now to reason, whoso will assay,
 Shall learn how ill Rulers we ought to obey.
 Which kill, how, they care not, in their cruel rage.
 Respecting their will more, than law, oath, or charge.

Whose fury long fostered by sufferance and awe,
 Have right rule subverted, and made will their law:
 Whose pride, how to temper, this truth will thee tell,
 So as thou resist mayest, and yet not rebel.

Rebellion is ill, to resist is not so,
 When right through resisting, is done to that foe,
 Who seeketh, but by ruin, against right to reign,
 Not passing what perish, so she spoil the gain.

A public weal wretched, and too far disgraced,
 Where the right head is off cut, and a wrong in stead placed,
 A brute beast untamed, a misbegot then,
 More mete to be ruled, than reign over men.

A marvelous madness, if we well behold,
 When sighs shall assault men, to see themselves sold:
 And yet when from slavery, their friends would them free,
 To stick to their foes so, still slaves to be.

For France spiteth Spain, which England doth threat,
 And England proud Spaniards, with salt would fain eat:
 Yet England proud Spain aideth with men, ships, and boats.
 That Spain (France subdued once) may cut all their throats.

A people preferred, replete with disdain,
 Though flattery fain hide would their hate, and vile train.
 Whose rage, and hot lust, deceit, craft, and pride,
 Poor Naples their bondslave, with great grief hath tried.

Lo, these be the birds which England must feed,
 By planting of whom, to root out their feed
 Their own lands and lives, by them first devoured,
 Their maids then and wives, most vilely deflowered.

Is this not strong treason, ye ignoble bloods?
 To aid such destroyers, both with lands and goods?
 But when they thus pinch you, and ye put to flight,
 To what fort then flee you? or where will you light?

For England thus sold, for Spaniards to dwell,
Ye may not by right, possess that ye sell.
They seeing your treason, against your own state,
Will not with theirs trust you, which they know ye hate.

To Scotland or France, if ye then should cry,
Your vile deeds now present, they may well reply,
And Dutchland abhorreth you: this then doth remain,
When Spaniards are placed, ye must to new Spain.

But, oh dreadful plague, and sign of God's wrath,
On such noble Gnatos, strong foes to God's oath.
Whom fond fear hath framed, to prop such a stay,
As country and people, so seeketh to betray.

Which thing herein proved, to be without doubt,
All such full well find shall, as read it throughout.
If then their hearts fail them the right to defend,
Confusion remaineth for such a mete end.

Give not thy glory to another: neither that which is profitable for thee, to a strange nation. Baruch 4.

The way to life is strait and few find it. Mat. 7.

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