

How Superior Powers Ought To Be Obeyed By 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, GENEVA, 1558

THIS MODERN EDITION BY PATRICK S. POOLE FROM THE 1558 EDITION.

*'The Lord has brought upon them a nation from a far country, an
imprudent nation and of a strange language.'*

-Deuteronomy 28, Baruch 4

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DEDICATORY EPISTLE BY WILLIAM WHITTINGHAM

William Whittingham to all those that love to know the truth and follow it: Grace and Peace.

Ignorance, the mother of error and professed enemy to God's truth, has two daughters by whose flatteries and subtle practices she blinds men's eyes, obscures the truth, and withdraws us from the way of knowledge: Custom and Negligence. Whereof the first so bewitches us, that although we wallow and wade 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 brings us to the understanding of our error. The other being a domestic servant and well acquainted with our manners, by crafty flattery does overcome us. For the flesh is proud and swells against God, she glories in her own wisdom, she loves her own counsel, she delights in her own imagination and policy: and although 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 between Custom and Negligence we rather hold with damnable Ignorance, and wish to be plunged into abominable errors, than by diligence to know our duty to God, and what He requires 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 is wicked and withholds us from God, we must speedily reject her and cleave unto God: and if Negligence has nuzzled us into 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]) certainly 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, until 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 proportions with the best learned men 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 deny this profitable work, or neglect it. For evil Custom delighting in Ignorance will straight away fly to her wonted argument: What is this new doctrine? And where does it come from [Acts 17:19] ? Negligence on the other part cries maliciously: We have books enough: what we need yet to be set to school? Thus Satan with subtle subtlety deludes the world, keeping his ever so fast ties 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 invincible and cannot feel it. The truth of God's word is to them most odious: but man's dreams and devil's doctrines are in great estimation and reverence. Their false prophets and papist

priests have so charmed them, that Ignorance is held 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 said, If they bring you into slavery, you endure it [2 Corinthians 11:20] : if they devour you, you suffer it: if they spoil you of your goods, you are content: if they prefer themselves and thrust you down, you forbear it: if they smite you on the face, yet you can sustain it. And thus the children of Satan had rather rot in their barbarous ignorance, than submitting themselves to the mercies of God, aspire to the perfect understanding of His heavenly will revealed to us by His word. But you, the son of God, show your duty and love towards your heavenly Father, endeavor to know His will, declare your 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 those who speak the words of God in pure simplicity as in God's presence, and who chop and change the same, making merchandise thereof to traffic according to man's pleasure [2 Corinthians 2:17] . Neither do we desire only that you should be persuaded in the 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 [John 4:29-30] , but for as much as they themselves heard Him, and knew that Christ was the Savior of the world: so then 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 [Acts 17:10-15] were commended by the Holy Ghost, because they tried by God's word whether the minister's preaching agreed with the same or not. 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 you hear the Eternal speaking by His minister, in whose mouth He has put His word, and whose lips must keep the Law and the understanding thereof, as the Prophet Malachi writhed. [Malachi 2:7] Beware therefore, that you neglect not him that brings the word of God, but quickly give ear and obey. For if you desire to know your duty to your prince, and his charge likewise over you, read this book and you shall well understand both: If you wish for Christian liberty, come and see how it may easily be had: If you would love God above man, here you shall know how to obey God rather than men. Let the Apostles of Christ here be your school masters, and then the more you learn: the less occasion shall you have to repent. Obedience is necessary where God is glorified, but if God is dishonored, your 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 commands us to obey God, we must disobey man to the contrary: for no man can serve two masters: and when our heavenly master commands obedience to man, it is ever to be understood, in the Lord. So that obedience to God's Laws by disobeying man's wicked laws is very commendable, but to disobey God for any duty to man is all together damnable: as in the discourse of this book you shall fully be assured, if God opens your eyes to see the truth, and moves your 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 requires). Even so is there nothing more hateful to God, neither more harmful to man, than to be so bewitched with Satan's false illusions, that they are not able to put difference between obedience and disobedience: but as men without all judgment and natural sense, take the one for the other, being in themselves plainly contrary, which is the only cause of all disorder and lamentable confusion, wherewith the whole world is both this day, and has been also from the beginning, most miserably defaced and oppressed. For when vile man, replenished with pride, vainglory, 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 prefer his own decrees, fantasies, and ordinances, to the comfortable laws and lively precepts of God his Creator. Then in place of justice, he receives 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 [Genesis 3] , 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: 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 drowned in his own lusts, that the space of a hundred and twenty years was not sufficient to move them to repentance [Genesis 6 and 7] . And therefore could they not escape the strange and horrible judgment of God, which immediately followed after most justly. And although in that wicked generation abounded all kind of wickedness, as well against God as man, inasmuch as the earth then might be thought of as a very hell, yet from whence proceeds 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 from their forefathers, heard of Noah, yea, and had them engrafted naturally in their hearts. The reprobation 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 1:24-32] . For who is so blind that may so see how man shows 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 the Apostle witnesses [Romans 1:25] .

This blinded the Jews with hypocrisy and cloaked holiness, making the Law of the living Lord give place to their invented traditions by man [Matthew 15:1-20] . From out of the stinking puddle of man's brain have issued forth so great diversity of opinions and dangerous heresies, wherewith the Church of God has been at all times horribly tormented. Finally, from hence has Antichrist filled his pestilent cup of all sorts of deadly poison, whereof he has made the whole earth almost, and her kings and princes, not only to drink: but to be most vilely overcome and drunk. In whose defense they have armed themselves against the Lord and Christ [Psalm 2] , His Son: whom notwithstanding with imprudent mouths they profess, whereas indeed they persecute Him most cruelly and 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 policy. Therefore, to the intent that these distinguished persons (which abuse the whole world) may appear in their own lively shape, and are known as they are indeed, I have thought it good, having occasion by this worthy answer of Peter and John, and being hereto provoked by diverse godly persons, somewhat to write of true obedience: to wit, what God Himself requires of us, and what He commands 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 behooves 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, you judge. Acts 4:19



CHAPTER I.

TO WHOM THIS ANSWER WAS GIVEN, AND UPON WHAT OCCASION; HOW UGLY THE MALICE OF THE JEWS PREVAILED AGAINST THE APOSTLES, IN SEEKING TO STOP THE GOSPEL BY THEIR CRAFTY FETCHES AND CHASTISEMENTS.

To the end we may have more sensible feeling of all these things, let us diligently consider this answer of St. Peter and St. 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 [Acts 4:1-4] , for preaching to the people at Jerusalem in the porch of Solomon, the resurrection from death in the name of Jesus: 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, also Annas 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 by them, in whose name or power they had cured the lame cripple (who being more than 40 years old, and lame from his birth was daily brought to the porch of Solomon to beg his alms) whom 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 dead: inasmuch as the mouths of the whole Council were stopped and had nothing to say against them, but as men astonished they wondered at the constant boldness of Peter and John in their answer. St. Luke then reports that the whole Council, that is, all these forenamed magistrates by common consent straightly charged 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 maliciously against Christ with power, authority, threatening, horrible punishments, and cruel murder, resembling that old serpent, whose brood they are [John 8:15] , who was a murderer from the beginning.

But when the whole assembly had craftily consulted, and wrought all that they could against the faithful servants of God: they were never the less disappointed from their purpose. For the Glory of Christ shined more brightly, and the truth of His Gospel was better known and published farther, and their falsehood and raging madness more apparent, and abhorred by 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 the Apostle witnesses) [Romans 1:16] . To think that the threatening of men should prevail more with the Apostles of Christ, than the threatening of God and His horrible judgments appointed for the disobedient? Could not the Jews destroy Christ and His doctrine, while He was mortal and lived amongst them in the flesh, to whom they did almost what they lusted for, 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: do they think it possible to pluck Him down from heaven, from the right hand of His Father, where He sits and reigns in everlasting glory? O vain and foolish men: He has already overcome the whole world, and cast forth from 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 malicious and traitorously fighting against His honor, who sought by all means, and yet does, to do you good and save you? But O miserable and vile wretches, double is your condemnation in the sight of God, which not content to forsake Christ yourselves, do you so maliciously with your threatening labor to frustrate others of His most comfortable graces. Full well does 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] .



CHAPTER II.

HOW THE PAPIST 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 3:2 and Romans 9] , who only professed the true and ever living God: and yet amongst them all that were assembled, there 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 blaspheming Papists is, which is grounded upon no other foundation, than upon the authority of their church, their councils, and decrees of men. And here in dare I make the Papists themselves judges, whether their church be of more authority of 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 not another 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 imprudently brag) the Church of God, but 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 authored by Him, so shamefully erred: It is a marvel that the Papist synagogue and members of Satan should be found the establishment

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 show of holiness: seeing in none of these points they may be compared to this assembly, whereof St. Luke makes mention. For here was the High Priest, Annas, here was Caiaphas, here were the temporal magistrates, the Governor 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 you see the conclusion was against the Lord and His anointed Son. Will you then hope for any better at the hands of Papist assemblies and Councils, who in persecuting Christ continually, and His holy word, show themselves open enemies to both? Do you here behold the Jews, which professed the true living God, without all apish idolatries and idols, forbidden in their Law: nevertheless maliciously to consult against their true Messiah: 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 you will say perchance, that there is no comparison between the Jews, plainly denying Christ, and the Papists which do confess Him: and thereupon you will conclude, that the Papist councils may not so easily err, as those which were held by the Jews at Jerusalem, against the Apostles and their doctrine. As concerning their councils, I may not answer now: for that were an infinite word 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, you shall prove them more blasphemous. For the Jews after a sort did confess their Christ and Messiah in waiting for Him daily to deliver them, and save them from the misery that they were in, 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 is all is well, and agrees with us. But for as much as they are not content with Him, but will have another Christ besides Him: they are manifest deniers of Christ. For (as the Apostle writes [1 Timothy 2:5]) there is but one God, one Mediator between 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 men, 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 lives and reigns forever, but in their round cake, which (they say) is consecrated, when without sense and feeling it lies

closed in their box, subject to mold, 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 helps them no more to prove that they are Christians, thus imprudently denying Him and His office, than it helps the Jews, in saying they believe in the true Messiah to come, which is already come, and revealed to the world. You so much the more are condemned, for that under the Name of Christ, whom they dare not deny, they work privy treason against Him, to subject 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 10:10; 1 John 2:2] .



CHAPTER III.

WHAT INCONVENIENCE WOULD HAVE 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 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 them had the only government of Jerusalem under the Romans, to whom they were them 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. A 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 24:47; Acts 1:8] , for which cause they were called and chosen from amongst all others, and had been of long time instructed by 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 confirmation of their doctrine, which all have been to no purpose, if this commandment and threatening by 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 would have presumed further?

And truly, if the Apostles at that time had not been further instructed, than the most part of we are in these days, and especially have been, and yet are 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 whether it is 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, 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, did 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 did not bark against the raving 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, showing themselves plain hirelings, and no true pastors: leaving the sheep of God to be devoured, and that because they have entered into the fold before to feed the flock, to eat the flesh, and devour the people of God as bread [Psalm 14:4] , rather than to do their duty.

But all these and such like are here condemned and convicted of evil, which fearing man more than God, give ear and obedience to man, rather than to God. Whereof, besides the just shame that came upon themselves, and the displeasure of God powered generally upon all (for as much as we all were betrayers of our master, though not all alike) just occasion of offense and of like disobedience to God, were ministered to all sorts of men, of what vocation so ever they were. For when they saw the teachers and leaders of others to set up obedience to man rather than 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 of 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, not 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, does yet witness to all the shame and confusion of the Papists: wherein he goes 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 Saracenes: blasphemously terming the word of God and Gospel of salvation to be the Turkish seed. O imprudent mouth: O blasphemous beast, which says in

his heart that 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 lies 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 there at: 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 contempt the wholesome laws of the realm, to satisfy their filthy lust and vainglory, 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 reckoning 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 are 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 has been. In so much that they are made a spectacle and gazing stock to all countries and nations, amongst whom is no 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 insatiable 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 makes 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 to obey in

the fear of God only, thus cowardly to forsake their obedience to God, and utterly contempt the office wherewith He had charged them, to satisfy the unlawful commandments of their willful Governess: think it in now 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 does condemn them, and the word of God does 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] and such like: It behooves 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 resists the power, resists 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 by 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 pertains 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.



CHAPTER IV.

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. Inasmuch 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 [Psalm 104:5-9] : which with the breath of His mouth, moves the heavens, and makes the mighty mountains to shake and tremble, and drives all powers (be they never so strong) to dust and powder. We are content 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 so ever 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 has chosen us to the same end, imbued 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 uses against the Corinthians [1 Corinthians 11:1-16] : 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 makes themselves judges in the matter, saying: You judge among yourselves, whether it be comely for a woman to pray bareheaded in the congregation. Concluding, that very nature does teach the contrary. In like manner this answer is so true and sensible (that rather God is to be obeyed then man) that there can be none so

malicious or ignorant, whose very nature will not compel to confess it, if he had not 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 threatening, 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.



CHAPTER V.

TO OBEY MAN IN ANYTHING AGAINST GOD, IS UNLAWFUL AND PLAIN DISOBEDIENCE.

Now for as much 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 speaks, 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 threatening, 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 understand, 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; You judge 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 or lawful. Then if it be not lawful and just in God's sight, who judges things truly and as they be indeed, it must need 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 had 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 commands the contrary, is a rebel: and he that obeys is likewise. Neither does this appertain to the Apostles and ministers only in their office, but is a general argument for all sorts, estates, and degrees of men: for as much as God has 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 us in His presence: who commands His people generally [Deuteronomy 4] , 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 commands. And if we are 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 calls not with the voice of a true pastor [John 10: 1-30] . And as there ought to be no creature of like authority amongst us, as our sovereign Lord and God, whose creatures we are, 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 and 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 empowers 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 threatens upon all such as willfully transgress His holy precepts, and decline from His Laws [Deuteronomy 28:15-68] . Neither will He regard by what means, or by whose commandment we transgress His holy laws. For that can be no excuse for us, though he be king, queen, or emperor that commands or threatens us. For what is king, queen, or emperor compared to God [Isaiah 2:10-18] ? Is the punishment of earth, ashes, or vile man, whose breath is in his nostrils, more to be feared than the plagues of God, who has 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] ? Did man destroy Sodom and Gomorrah with fire and brimstone [Genesis 14] ? Did the plagues of Egypt, the drowning of Pharaoh, the overthrow of the Canaanites, the subversion of Jerusalem, come by the power of man [Exodus 7-11; 14: 26-31] ? If these are the works of man and not of God, fear man and not God: but if there are none of these evils which comes upon any city, or country, whereof the Lord is not the worker [Amos 3] : beware that the fear of man's punishment, cause you not to fall into the hands of this mighty revenger, which is a horrible thing, as the Apostle writes. Princes therefore [Hebrews 13:17] , and all powers upon you art, are not to be compared unto God, whose lieutenants only should they be, and are no longer then He wills, in whose hands their hearts are [Proverbs 21:1] , to move and turn at His pleasure. 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 constituted) 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 chose, as the laws by which he should rule others, and be obeyed by them. When you come (says the Lord by Moses [Deuteronomy 17:14-15]) to the land which your Lord gives you, and shall possess it, you shall without doubt, put or constitute a king to thee: but whom the Lord your God shall choose. Moreover He says, from the midst of your brethren shall you appoint a king over you. For you may not appoint a stranger, which is not your brother. Which law, as it proceeds

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, will not yet 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, then to follow the appointment of the Almighty: preferring their own wits to the wisdom of God, which never fails them that follow it. In comparison of whom all others at length, shall show 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 princes and kings, by whom realms and nations are either preserved if they are godly, or utterly destroyed, and shamefully oppressed if they are ungodly. The first point or caution that God requires of His people to observe, is, that they chose such a king as the Lord does appoint, and not as they fantasized. 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 by 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 wills 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. The Israelites had two means to know their king, whether he was of God's elect or not. 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 has 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, then if God should now speak unto us out of the heavens, as then He did to the Israelites. The word then gives us these notes to know whether he is of God or not, whom we would chose for our king. First (as was said) if he is a man that has the fear of God before his eyes, and zealous with David, and Josiah, does study to set forth the same, hating unfeignedly all papistry and idolatry. For this cause God wills that he should be chosen from amongst his brethren, and should not be a 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 is such a one: and ought not to be appointed or elected as their king and governor, what title or right so ever he seems to have thereunto, by civil policy, except he is a promoter and sets forth 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 comes 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 becomes 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 midst of your brethren shall you chose a king for yourself, and not amongst your 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 the Apostle says) who will not permit so much to the woman, as to speak in the Assembly of men [1

Corinthians 34-35; 1 Timothy 2:11-12] , much less to be ruler of a realm or nation. If women are not permitted by civil policies to rule in inferior offices, to be Counselors, Peers of a realm, Justices, Sheriffs, Bailiffs, and such like: Make yourselves judges, whether it is 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 a whole realm, which word also appoints your kings to be chosen from among their brethren, and not from their sisters: who are forbidden as persons not suited to speak in a congregation: be judges yourselves, 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 you 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 was not a 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 strong 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 preferred 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 you will say, the Crown is not entailed to the heir males only, but appertains as well to the daughters: and therefore by the laws of the Realm, you could not otherwise do. But if it is 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 has 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 the Savior not yet come: which has 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 had 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; I Kings 19.] How are you then so bold and imprudent, 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 condemn 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 are always like yourselves, stubborn, and rebellious enemies to God and condemners 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 specifies in this election is, that he is none as such that has a great number of whores: meaning, as trusts in his own power, and preparation of all things, for defense of himself, and to overcome his enemies. For under this name of whores, he comprehends all engines and furniture of war: such a one, as trust in them, and makes not God his arm and buckler, with faithful David, is not mete to be king of the Lord's people. [Psalm 52:1-7.]

For by such means should they be brought to Egypt again, to their old misery and slavery, if they delighted in their whores, from whence the Lord would have them kept, and not in any case return. As no doubt, He would have had us miserable Englishmen, wearily 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 vile than the slavery of Egypt, I mean the servitude of that Roman Antichrist.

Other observations He gives also, not to seek many wives, nor to heap up much gold: but chiefly that he had given 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, does God promise that his days, and the days of his children shall be prolonged in the middle of Israel.

By that we 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, you 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 are (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 condemned 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 lifts himself above the chief judge, looking to be honored and obeyed by more than he: who would not abhor such a sergeant, and not only 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

lifts himself up against the majesty of God, who is immortal, to whom belongs all power, dominion, and honor? Is he any more in comparison to God, then the sergeant to be punished as a traitor, and this man honored as a king, which does no part of the office thereunto belonging? Or rather is not his crime and treason greater, and deserves so much more, as God is more excellent, compared to any worldly power, then is any king or prince compared to the most vile sergeant?

Moreover, whence had he this honor? Of himself? Is any man naturally born a king, or has 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 instituted to rule in God's fear and Laws, as subjects and sergeants to God, and not against His Laws, and above Him: it must follow (as we first said) that all obedience given to such, wicked princes against God, and disobey man, is true obedience, how so ever the world judges. 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 the Israelites should be excused, because they obeyed their wicked king Jeroboam in worshipping his calves in Dan and Bethel. [1 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. [1 Samuel 22.] 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 2:16-18.] Then should the wicked Jews be guiltless of Christ's death and His Prophets, whom they consented to murder by the persuasion of their rulers. [Matthew 27:20-25.] And the counterfeit Christians this day, which everywhere (but especially in our miserable country) imprison, famine, 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 does God (who is a jealous and righteous God, and cannot abide His honor to be given to any other, [Exodus 20:3.] 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 say: You shall have no other gods before Me. You shall not kill. And if God does make this disobedience (as you may 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 you follow them, says the Lord. [Exodus 23:2.] For if you do (notwithstanding the commandment of your prince, or example of all others) you are with them a rebel, and a rebel against your Lord and God: from whose wrath and heavy indignation, no man can defend you in the dreadful day of His visitation, which is at hand.



CHAPTER VI.

HOW IT IS NOT ENOUGH TO DENY WICKED COMMANDMENTS OF ALL KINDS OF RULERS,
EXCEPT WE WITHSTAND THEM ALSO, EVERY MAN ACCORDING TO HIS VOCATION, IN
DOING THE CONTRARY.

As by this answer fore mentioned, we have been taught not to give place to the unlawful commandments of magistrates, in what authority so ever 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 requires more at our hands, that is, to withstand their precepts, in doing the contrary: every man according to his office and state wherein God has placed him. For as man thinks himself not fully obeyed, when we abstain from those things which he forbids, except moreover we do the contrary, which he commands: 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 does witness. Who went all together to the Temple after they were dismissed, [Acts 5:41-42.] and preached openly in the face of all the people Jesus Christ crucified, notwithstanding all the fore named threatening and menacing, yea afterward, when they had been imprisoned and then by the Angel of God delivered, and whipped most vilely, [Acts 5:40.] as if they had been slaves: 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, [Acts 5:29.] and boldly preached their master Christ, condemning all displeasure which they for His Name 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 we see 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 threatening of the whole Senate and power of Jerusalem: nor thinking in their office, for all their cruel punishments. But the more they were forbidden, and often 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 the 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 says [Romans 8:9-11.]) 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 4:2.] omitting no manner of occasions, obeying no contrary commandments, nor fearing the cruel threatening of men.

God had given them the charge of most precious jewels, and inestimable riches: not to be hid in a corner, or retained with themselves [Ephesians 3:9-10.] : but rather (as the Apostle exhorts) to stir up the gift of God, which is in them, and not to neglect it, [I Timothy 4:14.] to preach the word of God, and to be ready 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 has not only armed them against their enemies [Ephesians 6:17; Hebrews 4:12-13.] : 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 threats, conspiracies, commandments, and punishments of men: where has this comfortable doctrine of salvation been? When should He had 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 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 by the wild, ravenous beasts. Some also in playing on both parts with the halting Israelites, which to serve God and Baal [I Kings 18:20-40; 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 hundreds of 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, stirs 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 often as He forbids anything which He would will not to be done, in the same, He commands us the contrary, for example: You shall 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 often 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 are of the Ten Commandments, or any other besides contained in Scriptures: that what so ever God forbids 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: 4-28.] who when he was commanded in the name of King Darius (by whom he had been promoted to great honor, and of all 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 excepted) 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 was not content to do as he was commanded, did as he was accustomed, the contrary: not once, but three times a day, transgressing the king's commandment, praying to the living Lord and his God. And to the intent it might be known abroad to all men, that he condemned this ungodly commandment, he set open his windows more than usual, 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 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 need to pray to God, could he not have done it privately and secretly? What did he need 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 offense, than the fact itself. Thus would the political and worldly 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 6:13.] : that he

ought not only to condemn the king's unlawful commandments, but to do the plain contrary. Neither thought he it sufficient to do this secretly, except openly he showed to all the world whose servant he was, and what God he honored. [Daniel 6:10.] Otherwise, how could he have declared to the people, that he loved his God with all of his heart, soul, and power, as was commanded?



CHAPTER VII.

ALL MEN ARE BOUND TO FOLLOW THE LIKE EXAMPLE, AS WELL AS THE APOSTLES AND DANIEL, OF WHATSOEVER ESTATE AND CONDITION 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 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 a work 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 the Realm, and known so well their duty towards 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 threatening 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? You judge you yourselves that hear 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, could not so lightly excuse himself when he was commanded by the cruel officers of wicked Antiochus (which had spoiled their Temple, raised their walls, murdered their brethren, and set up idolatry, inasmuch 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 and 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 the every man would decline from the Laws of his country: yet I, (he said) my children, and brethren, will stand in the covenant of our fathers, and 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 same time he slew, not only a Jew, but one of his own brethren, which came to sacrifice in his presence at the altar in 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 Phineas. Mattathias had then a little power amongst his brethren, but nothing to defend himself against the king, and also being charged with children and kinfolk (which seemed to be all his power) would neither pollute himself, nor suffer them to be polluted with wicked idolatry, not causeless, to be oppressed with tyranny. And yet we read of no authority or office he had to excuse him: but only this one thing which was common to all other among his nation, the Laws of their country, and the covenant of their fathers. Which cause he thought sufficient to discharge his conscience before God, and to approve his doings. For as much as God had commanded him not only to deny to do the commandment of the cruel tyrant Antiochus (under whom all Jerusalem then was under 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, where upon the idolatrous sacrifice should have been done. Which was, as you see, manifest resistance of the superior power, being but man, to the intent he might show true obedience to his Lord and God, in defending and maintaining His Laws (which he called the covenant of their fathers) yea and with the temporal sword to the utmost by 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, by the duty likewise of all others according to their estate and vocation. But you will say that this Book of 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. That is true, but that you (which are in like and better estate, wherewith you are as well charged before God as king or Emperor) may and should with a safe conscience, follow this worthy example, it is most true and certain. For the fact of Mattathias depends not upon the authority of the book, wherein it is contained: but upon the word of God, whereupon it was grounded. For has he done any otherwise in his vocation, then the Apostles did in theirs? Did they not say, that God is to be obeyed rather than man? And so Mattathias said, and much more plainly: 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 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 their were neither example nor Scripture to prove his fact: yet would 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 direction 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: 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) spoke these words to the Elders and all the multitude, saying: Now therefore fear 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, chose unto you this day whom you will serve: whether you will serve the gods beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you dwell. As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord: answering as did Mattathias. And he spoke this in his latter days, to admonish them beforehand not to incline to idolatry and to neglect the Laws of God, which is the cause of all evil, and gate to all mischief. Which saying of Joshua, the true servant of God, send so godly in the sight of all the people, that all were compelled with a vehemence 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 will you more prove to this fact of Mattathias, and thereby you duty also, whether you are of the Elders of your people, or of the multitude? Here is your confession, if you be of God. If all men would serve strange gods, yet will I and my house 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 can you say that you serve God the Lord, except you use all such means as He has given to you in defense of His glory, be it counsel, learning, authority, power in body or in soul? All must serve the Lord, when He demands it. And when God demands these things of us, if not then chiefly, when Satan begins to rage, 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, 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 from the pit, they are taken in the net, and cannot escape says the Lord.

There is no way but one, to turn again unto the Lord, who has wounded us, and He will heal us: He has stricken us, for our sins, and He will bind us up again, and within two days will restore us to life, and the third day raise us up, and we shall come before His face, says the Prophet. 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 has fallen from God, and by what means, and to call for grace and strength to turn back by the same 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. 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 contempt 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 thereto, we may remove these plagues, and find favor and grace in the sight of God, who for this cause has stricken us, and by all manner of means called us back from our wickedness, ready to receive us, then we to desire Him.



CHAPTER VIII.

THE CONCLUSION OF THESE TWO PARTS WITH A FURTHER DECLARATION OF THE SAME,
THAT IT IS BOTH LAWFUL AND NECESSARY SOMETIMES 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 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 requires of all men, and what He condemns 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, threatening, power, authority, or punishments of any king, prince or emperor, ought to prevail with us against the commandment of God, where with we are charged.

Can we then pretend ignorance any more? Behold, very nature does teach all men, which is 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 blare our eyes any longer: seeing there is none so ignorant whose conscience does 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 threatening of man or punishment of princes move us to leave undone that which he commands, and our vocation requires? 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 of God, and promoters of His glory, of whom they have their authority, as examples of the godly Patriarchs, and Prophets, of Christ Himself, and His Apostles, and of all martyrs in all

ages until this day. 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.

Do you then unfeignedly believe in God, and have given yourself to serve him, and after art commanded of you prince and ruler, what name soever he bear, to commit idolatry in worshipping a piece of bread for your Savior (as do the Papists) which is open blasphemy against the Son of God?

Are you willed to be present at the idol service, which the Apostle St. Paul forbids: or else to make, or erect images in churches or temples, to hear Mass, to trot on pilgrimage, to purchase pardon, to confess the Pope's authority, to esteem God's word for heresy?

Are you 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 your conscience cries unto thee: Take heed and beware what you do to these men, for they are the very servants of God, as Pilate was admonished by his wife? Are you (I say) commanded to do any of these things, and fear God? Behold, here are you taught what answer it behooves you to make, and that by the Apostles of Christ: which is, You judge whether it is lawful in God's sight to obey you rather than God. And again, God must be obeyed before man.

If you will allege the danger of losing your living and office, whereby you and your family are found: consider it is a greater matter to lose your soul, and to bring the curse of God upon your whole household, to whom it were far better to beg in the fear of God, then to be guilty of innocent blood, which the Lord must revenge according to His promise. If your innocent brother, which is brought to you, because he is the servant of God, by ready for Christ's sake to offer up His life in sacrifice: what great thing is it for you to offer up your vile living for the same cause of righteousness? For as he in losing his life has assurance to find it everlasting: even so may you be assured in forgoing your office, because you will be no tormentor of God's children, against your duty and conscience, to have the reward of righteousness at the hands of God, who esteems all things done to any of these little ones, as done to Himself: and forbids you to touch them, saying, Touch not my anointed ones.

Therefore, as there is no power or punishment that should cause you to do evil: so is there no office or promotion, which you should not willingly forgo, rather than in retaining it to be an instrument of injurious oppression, having this rule of our Savior Christ always before your eyes: What so ever you would that men should do to you, do that to them also.

Neither is this enough, rather to suffer injury and loss, then that you would be a worker of injury to others by any means: but moreover it is your part to be a withstander of evil, and a supporter

of the godly to the uttermost of your power, as you have partly heard already, and partly shall hear now following. For as God has not created us for ourselves, but to seek His honor and glory, and the profit of our neighbor, especially of such as be of the household of faith: even so are we indebted to God, to bestow all those gifts, be they spiritual or corporal, wherewith God has blessed us to the same 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 show ourselves to have more comparison upon brute beasts, as our neighbor's ox, ass, or sheep, which God's Law does charge us to help, save, or draw forth from the ditch, although it were the beast of our enemy. [Exodus 23:4-5]

Are we then bound to do this to unreasonable 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 by 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 our hands and power to deliver them?

The very Gentiles without God were taught so much by nature, that to do wrong to another is not only injury, by also they condemn him as an injurious person, which can, and will not withstand wrong done to another. Wo be to you then (O miserable England) among other nations and peoples, which have a long time delighted in injustice and cruel oppression. Wo be unto you most ungodly and careless counselors. Wo be to you rulers and magistrates, from the highest to the lowest: for that by your ruling without the sword 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 insatiable 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 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 necessities of their dispersed servants, besides the shameful betraying and subversion of the whole realm daily approaching, can once move you 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. Can you escape the condemnation of the Law, which prefers 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, then you yours? 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 has threatened that it shall be easier for Tyre and Sidon in the last day, them for it. The Gentiles He

commanded to be destroyed as his extreme enemies. 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 fore prophesied, and as their miserable state and dispersion this day does 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 lies?

Repent, repent, you miserable men: for your sins are 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 sent upon you. 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 nobility 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, fair, 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, then His honor and glory.

And therefore behold, O proud man, I am coming to thee (says the Lord of Hosts) because your day is come, and the time when I will visit you. 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, and etc.

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 does it then come to pass, that you 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, has (you say) so commanded you. O vain and miserable men. To what vileness are you brought, and yet as blind men, you see not? Because you would not have God to reign over you, and His word to be a light unto your footsteps, behold, He has not given a hypocrite only to reign over you (as He promised) but an idolatress as well: not a man according to His appointment, but a woman, which His Law

forbids, and nature abhors: 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 Israel.

This you do not see, blinded with ignorance: yea, which is more shame, whereas the word of God frees you from the obedience of any prince, be he never so mighty, wise, or political, commanding anything which God forbids, and herein gives 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 the 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 has destroyed the wall and distance between the Jews and Gentiles, and has no more respect to any tribe (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, Greek nor Barbarian, bond nor free, and etc. And therefore how it must follow that King Henry the Eighth, in marrying with his brother's wife, did utterly contempt 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, does give witness upon my part. And moreover, that such as are bastards should be deprived of all honor: inasmuch as by the Law of Moses they were prohibited to have entrance into the Congregation or Assembly of the Lord to the tenth generation. Consider your ungodly proceeding 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: for as much 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 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 traitress to her own native country.

For God's word she abhors, Antichrist's has she restored, her father's laws condemned, her promise broken, and her brother, godly King Edward, as a heretic condemned. Thinking it not enough to express her tyranny upon them that live, except she showed cruelty, or rather a raging madness, on the bodies of God's servants long before buried, drawing them forth from their graves to burn them as heretics. And in utterly abhorring the English nation, she has joined

herself to adulterous Philip, the Spanish king: to whom she has, and does continually labor to betray the whole kingdom. And yet you cannot, or will not, see it, neither yet for all this is 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? They come to make a spoil of the whole realm, and leave you and yours untouched? What has your great wisdom become? Your subtle counsels and policies, whereof you brag so much, to whom these things be hid, that every child espouses?

If Isaiah the Prophet had not fore spoken these secret judgments of God, in blinding the eyes of the proud condemners, I could not cease to wonder at your gross ignorance, as now I consider with a grieving heart, the misery which is like shortly to come upon you in full measure, for this calamity, already powered upon others, through your procurements and studies. Which fearful judgment of God look never to escape, except suddenly you repent and change your ungodly purpose. If you are 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: 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 to the Pope, your flattering of the Queen, and shaven prophets of Baal, that can defend you in that day: yet neither your licenses which some of you purchase from an infidel to give you depart from 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, then of Christ our Savior. Thinking by such unlawful means to work miracles: but their games at length will be confusion, as now their fruit which they have brought thence to 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 you have time, and I will show it unto you.

You have sinned most grievously against the Lord: know your transgressions, and with tears counsel them, every man unfeignedly unto the Lord, who is ready to forgive and slow to anger. 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 has thus plagued us with a tyrant). Seek after the word again and receive it with all reverence. By giving authority to an idolatrous woman you 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, you have disobeyed God. Then in disobeying her, you shall please God. Because you have given place to her and her counselors, you all have become idolatrous hypocrites, and also traitors to your own country: then by resisting herself damnation from their transgressions 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 are no more, as it were, brute beasts without sense or judgment: but that they know wherein, and how far they are obedient, and would no more be led by their devilish and ungodly lusts, as they have been and still 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. 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 mightily people upon the earth, as God promised to Israel, so long as they should live.



CHAPTER IX.

ANSWERS TO THE CONTRARY OBJECTIONS OF SUCH AS TEACH ALL MANNER OF OBEDIENCE TO MAGISTRATES TO BE LAWFUL, TAKEN FROM THE NEW TESTAMENT.

But for as much 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 it expedient before I proceed any further, for the better establishment 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 spy 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 (he says) 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 resists power, resists the ordinance of God: and they that resist, shall receive unto themselves damnation. Here (they say) 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 means by every soul) must be subject to the Magistrates and rulers, of what condition soever he be, but proves 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 content with one reason, he confirms the same with another depending of God's punishments, which He has 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 makes 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 seems 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 there at take an occasion by preaching of the Gospel to pay no more tribute to their superiors. Such were many of the Jews, who counted it as bondage. And that kind of sect was raised up even in Christ's days, as appeared 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. And in Acts, Gamaliel makes mention of one Judas Galilaeus, which was the author of that sect, and moved much trouble amongst the people, saying: It was not lawful to pay tribute. By these and such like opinions, and 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 has appointed rulers over them).

Then as the Apostle writes, we confess, and so much as he speaks we grant, that is, that all men are bound to obey such Magistrates, whom God has ordained over us lawfully according to His word, which rule in His fear according to their office, as God has appointed. For though the Apostle says: There is no power but of God: yet does he here mean any other powers, but such as are orderly and lawfully instituted by God. Either else should He approve all tyranny and oppression, which comes 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 permits. But St. James gives us contrary commandment, saying: Resist the Devil and he will flee away from you.

And that the Apostle Paul does so restrain his words to all lawful powers, we need not to seek far off. For in the same chapter after he expounds his mind: that is, what powers and Magistrates he means: Such (he says) as if you do well, you need not to fear, but only if you do evil. And again will you be out of the fear of power? Do well then: and so shall you be praised by the same. For he is the minister of God for your benefit. But if you do evil, fear: for he bears 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 says, there is no power but of God: yet

he means such power as is his ordinance and lawful: whose office stands in these two points, to defend the good, and to punish the evil: not to be feared for doing good, 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 threatens, is damnation. And this makes nothing against our former sentence, but rather confirms the same: approving no obedience but that which is lawful, that is to say, according to God's appointment and ordinance, as does more evidently appear in His words following: partly in that he demands 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 contempt the Magistrates, ordained of God to punish vice and maintain virtue, that he needs no other to reprove him of evil in so doing, then 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 wills for us to pay their tribute, not to every man that will demand of us (for unlawful demands may be lawfully denied) but to whom tribute belongs, custom to whom custom, fear to whom fear, and honor to whom honor is due.

Obedience then He requires 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 thereto. And who are they, but (as I said before) such as God has appointed to rule over us in His fear, for our profit, and preservation of the commonwealth?

To this also does the saying of St. Peter well agree, though it is weighed by 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 by Him, for the punishment of evildoers, and the praise of them that do well. Behold, how Peter here neither differs from himself in his answer before the Council, nor here disagree with Paul, willing obedience to kings and inferior rulers: not to all, but to such as are appointed to punish evildoers, and praise to the contrary: and to disobey such, must and needs to be condemned for 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 forbids in all manner of subjects, and justly.

But you will say the words of Peter following concerning obedience of servants to masters, does charge us further then with godly rulers, and such as rule according to their office. For to servants he writes on this matter. Servants, obey your masters with all fear, not only if they are good and courteous, but also though they are forward: for so the Greek word does signify, a conbrous, forward, or a person hard to please. Whereof they will conclude, that Peter commands obedience to all kind of persons, good and bad: what so ever they command must be done, and why? Because he so charges 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 changes not His meaning: but what He says once, He says forever. Saint Peter here seems to prevent the objection which servants (desiring liberty) might have objected, being willed to obey their masters: as though he would say: I am not ignorant that there are many troublesome masters, forward, and importune over you: which are not so gentle and courteous towards you as becomes 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 forward (he says not wicked and ungodly) that is no cause why you 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 forwardness of the master is not lawful or a 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. Neither can he be judged contrary to the Apostle Paul, who binds up all lawful obedience with this knot, in the Lord: speaking to children, and exhorting them to obey their fathers and mothers. But how? In the Lord, he says. And why? For that is just. Then if Paul charges not children with further obedience to their parents, then in the Lord, to whom principality 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 is 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 does 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 (he says) if a man for conscience towards God endures grief, suffering wrongfully. For what praise is it, if when you are buffeted for your faults, you take it patiently & etc.? Then you 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 if they are roughly dealt with by their masters. This thing is not spoken here of St. Peter to encourage or maintain forward masters in their forwardness, 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 party.

In like case may we conclude of princes and magistrates, though they are rough and forward: yea, though before God they are wicked, ungodly, and reprobate persons (as was Saul) yet so

long as their wickedness does not extend against God, and His laws, but outwardly will see them observed and kept by 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 same, 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.

Here unto 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. Where upon they gather that although it is 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 by His Father twelve legions of angels for His defense.

To this we shall soon answer, if we consider who spoke 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 affirms not to be of this world, as His Priesthood and Prophecy: even so for His own part, could He use no temporal force or power for the accomplishment of the same, because He denies 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 between them, saying: Man, who made me a judge or divider over you? 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 your way, and sin no more.

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 takes 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 knows not that the Apostles were witnesses of Jesus Christ chosen forth of the world (as St. John says) not to defend their master by the temporal sword (for that would have usurped 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. For as the Apostle says: 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 strongholds: 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. 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 requires of Peter and all the rest, the faithful use of the spiritual sword, where with they were charged, or else they should be subject to malediction and judgment: For woe be to me (says Paul) if I preach not: 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, where with 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 drank 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.

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 into execution.



CHAPTER 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 from 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. 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 whereunto God had brought them, and to pray to God for it. For (he said) with the peace of that city, shall you 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. Wherein (they say) two things are to be noted against our opinion. The first, that he forbids them to rebel, and exhorts 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 them 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 spoke 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 no longer continue in Babylon, when as the Lord had otherwise appointed. Whereof when God assured them by His Prophet, it must be counted as extreme madness and rebellion against God, if they should have done the contrary. As we read of wicked Ahaz, who crediting the flattering counsel of the false prophets, disobeyed God in holding in contempt the truth told him by Micah: but to his own destruction.

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 until he calls 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 has commanded us: but whether we ought to do evil at the commandment of prince or power, where so ever we are, 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 Jewish captives in Babylon and written in the prophecy of Baruch, does abundantly witness. 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.

Also in that they are willed to pray for the good estate of the city wherein they dwelt, 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 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 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 seeks but to consume the English nation, and in the end to cut your throats that now are in authority, whom she uses 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 them which you have had all peace and quietness. And in condemning these, you see into what case you are brought, and into what misery, ready to fall. You may yet with God's help, and your endeavor promote His glory, undergird 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 so bewail.

If you Jezebel, though she is 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 what so ever people or nation spoke evil of the God of Israel should be rent in pieces, and his house counted detestable. For he says that there is no other true God that so could deliver His servants, as He did Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.

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 Messiah, and repented of 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) then were there also some probabilities in the reasons of the adversaries of this doctrine. Otherwise, as you now see, it makes nothing at all for their purpose.

Another argument is gathered of the words written by the same Prophet Jeremiah: 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 (says the Lord) and the beasts upon the earth in my strength and out-stretched hand, and it do I give to him that pleases 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 does come, that it, 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 you the King of Babel and live. Behold, they say, (who think it in no case lawful to withstand ungodly rulers) this wicked king is constituted by God, and made His servant. And moreover, those that should

withstand him, are cursed and threatened with sword, famine, and pestilence. And therefore to disobey such, must be unlawful.

Nebuchadnezzar as it is written in Jeremiah, is called the maul of the Lord, and His instrument of war, by which he was determined to beat down all nations and kingdoms, punishing them for their sins and idolatry. And therefore the Lord called 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 do we gather, 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 you are too weak to fight against the Lord whose work this is. When you were lords within yourselves, and had full liberty to honor your Lord God, according to the Laws which He gave unto you, and whereby you 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 until 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: then 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 often 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 you would depart with nothing to serve our Master and Savior Christ, do you think 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 is an ungodly idolatress? Jeremiah speaks 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. This thing was for their punishment. And therefore of duty they must patiently bear them.

Then in few words I answer, that although it is 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 bound 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 loses his life for His sake, shall find it: and he that loses father or mother, friends or goods in His cause, shall be rewarded a hundredfold in this world, and in the world to come with life everlasting.

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 while He menaces 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 so ever they bear. For this answer of the Apostles must ever more 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 David murdered, saying: God forbid that I should touch the anointed of the Lord: and why? Because he is the anointed of the Lord. If it is 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 does confess in the same chapter, saying: I know of a surety that you shall reign, and that the kingdom shall be established in your hand. Swear to me therefore by the Lord, that you will not cut off my seed after me, nor destroy my name from my father's house. This being then David's own private cause, it was not lawful for him in that case to seek his own revenge: 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 many times. Neither that

he was an open oppressor and condemner 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 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: whom as He does appoint such magistrates over His people by His Law, so does he condemn as well them as the people transgressing against the Law. For with God there is no respect of persons, as hereafter follows 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: so that not to withstand such rages of princes in time according as the Law requires (which commands that the evil be taken forth from amongst you) 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 nation and people that bear the Name of Christ.

These are the objections for the most part, or at the least the chief, 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 show 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 you 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.



CHAPTER XI.

IT APPERTAINS NOT ONLY TO THE MAGISTRATES AND ALL OTHER INFERIOR OFFICERS TO SEE THAT THEIR PRINCES ARE 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 is their duty or not: and to what sort of men it does belong, as though any were exempted out of that number which do profess the Name of God. If the superior power is an idolater or a cruel tyrant suppressing true religion and murdering the saints of God (as Jezebel of England does with all her rabble of papist bishops, and shavelings) who are 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 where unto he is born, because he is not able to use them a right: 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 does by the rage and folly of ungodly rulers, maintainers of idolatry and tyranny. For folly has commonly joined with it simplicity, void of malice and easy to be ordered: but idolatry and tyranny rebels more the nature of wild beasts, cruel bears, and raging lions, then the condition of man. For simplicity, they are replenished with craftiness: for love, they show 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 teaches all men to be most true, that it is better to have any fool, then 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 requires 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 thinks it lawful: 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 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, Achitophels deserve Achitophels' reward, for their devilish counsel without mercy. And as it is with them, so is it with the rest of all estates, as before has been touched. Nevertheless, the matter is so evident upon their parts, that all will confess that it chiefly belongs 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 is 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, no meet to lead others. And because their doings are counted tumults and rebellion (except they are 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 (they say) 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 are 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 goes forward, gives the bridle wholly to their rulers till destruction remedies 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 has been proved almost in all places and countries) to suffer themselves like brute beasts rather than reasonable creatures, to be led and drawn where so ever their princes 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 forbids 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 commandment of king of 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 nor more so blinded, nor run headlong (as they do) to their own destruction: I have thought good moreover and besides that which hitherto has been

spoken in general (whereof notwithstanding they might also gather what belongs to them in their condition and estate) to show 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 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 follow 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 appertains 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 between bondservants, 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 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 appertains to them, which becomes members of one body and brethren, because the Lord God Himself (from whom kings have their authority and power) called 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: even so, the people, if they suffer this right to be taken from them, which God of his singular favor has 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, inasmuch 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 did not reject Samuel, but God Himself in whose fear he ruled. This (says 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 anointment, 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 a tithe, 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 tithe, 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, then of the Lord's.

Wherefore to avoid the dangers upon both parts, it is more then necessary that both are 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 usage 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 with 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 revere, and obey? As for example: among 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 Saint's 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 these superstitious days, some bearing the name of men, and some of women, ascribing that to the creatures of God, which appertains to Him alone, for as much as every day is the Lord's day, 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 Loy 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 travel, and the seventh day only to rest, and that to the honoring of the 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 Whitsontide's drunkenness and surfeit, Midsummer's shows and vanities, Christmas' riot and bawdry, Shroftetweday's gluttony, and Lent's superstitious observations, except by some law of greater importance, the rude people are otherwise persuaded? And what other laws are there able to bring this to pass besides the Laws of God? Wherein if they are 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 you are a ruler and covet to have the people obedient to you in God's fear, this must be your first and principal study to, procure that they may truly know God by the plain and diligent preaching of His word, wherein if they are 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 your 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 you. By these means only shall you obtain honor, maintain your right, win the hearts of your people, and have them all obedient.

And as magistrates by this means, are sure to find obedience, and escape all rebellion, tumults and disorders among their subjects: even so is there no other rule for the subjects to escape the idolatry, tyranny, and oppression of their superiors, then in retaining (as their chief possession) the self same 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, then to be deprived by any means of that heavenly treasure and precious pearl, for which they must sell all things. Whereof to be fully persuaded, it is necessary to understand what manner of people you are.

If you are the people of God, and unfeigned Christians, then must you also know that the Law of God, and Christ your Savior, does appertain unto you: wherein, as without shame and condemnation you may not be ignorant: even so no power, commandment, or threatening, should cause you to depart from it, wherein only stands that comfort and salvation, which O 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 writes in his Politics. In the name whereof they might demand anything of their kings and rulers, and they do not deny them and might also without offense deny all things which their rulers demanded contrary to their religion. Inasmuch 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 are 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, His 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, then we are in maintaining the true worship of God and His heavenly wisdom.

If we were Turks, Saracens, Jews, or papists, which neither knew not God correctly, or else denied His Son Jesus: it was no great marvel if we were led after the lusts of our ungodly princes. For as our Master teaches, when the blind lead the blind, both fall into the ditch. But if we will be taken for the people of God and His Son's by adoption in Christ Jesus, then it behooves us likewise to give obedience, principally to our Lord and Master, to our mighty God and most loving Father, and Malachi the Prophet exhorts. The son reveres the father, and the servant his master: if I am your Father (says the Lord) where is the honor that you give me? If I am your Lord and Master where is my fear? Nothing 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 demands.

Also, if we will not be taken for blind and ignorant persons, then must we show forth this light by walking as becomes the children of light, as the Apostle requires indifferently of all God's children without exception, or excuse either of guide or ruler. For the blindness of our guide, whether he is 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 admonishes us: Let them alone (He says) for they are blind guides, and leaders of the blind. And again, according to their works, see that you do not.

If you having sight, had appointed to you a blind guide, would you follow him into a dangerous pit or deep water, wherein both might perish because he was your guide? Then truly might you 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 teaches all creatures this, to fly from those dangers that should hurt them: and to desire all things that do them good. And then God has made this common to all beasts, and inferior creature, painfully to seek their preservation: has He denied the same to man, whom above all others He will have preserved? For whose preservation chiefly He has 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 show the abundance of His mercies, spare 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 tenders us so much, as to seek by all means possible our life and preservation, then must it likewise follow, that He has constituted no laws, or ordinances to our destruction, so long as we shall be found obedient unto them. Then is there no power that rules 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 (for which cause only He suffers 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.



CHAPTER XII.

HOW MUCH THE COMMON PEOPLE OWE TO GOD FOR HIS BENEFITS RECEIVED, WHAT OBEDIENCE HE REQUIRES, 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 belongs to 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 appears what things are prohibited unto them, which they may in no case exercise. If you therefore are God's subjects and people, and He your Lord God and loving Father, who is above all powers and princes, and has made no laws, but such as are for you 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 forbids: and nothing unlawful or forbidden to you which He commands, whether it appertains to the first table or the second. Which rule if you observe, you may be assured to please God: likewise by doing the contrary, you 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. And in hating your first and chief Lord to over 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 does bear us witness: which cannot deny but that we have received of Him alone our life, movement and being, our wisdom strength, beauty, riches, children, and all things that are good and profitable, in whole power we may do all things, and without His all flesh is turned to dust and powder.

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 anything 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 says the Lord: and, Hear O Israel the voice of the Lord, & etc. Inasmuch, as he had this for his only shield against the murmuring of people: It is not against Aaron and me that you murmur, but against the Lord: which being chosen and appointed by 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, where unto they were called, and the obedience which they show 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 behooves them to be ruler by no other Laws and ordinances, then by such as God had given them.

Wherefore if Moses and Aaron, God's elect and chosen servants had no more power over the people then His express commandment permits, and that the people so far and no farther were bound to obey them: 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 has so promised with on 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 you 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 a holy people. Which words when Moses had pronounced before the whole people, they all together with one accord, answered: What so ever the Lord shall speak, that will we do. And Moses praised them (or God rather by Moses) saying, They did well in answering so. And therefore promised to raise them up a prophet like unto him, & etc. 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 clear glass it does appear how they are bound of God, what God requires 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 binds 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 what so ever 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 same 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 worthy 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: whose fidelity also no less passed the faithfulness of Moses, then 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 so ever they were, being no further bound to any creature then the same 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 are of the base and lowest state of subjects, are no farther bound to any prince or superior power, not to their commandments, then the commandment of the Chief King and Lord does approve and permit, nor then their promise again to Him does require.

Neither may it be a sufficient discharge for you to allege ignorance, because you are a subject, and therefore have nothing to do, to inquire of the doings or to examine the commandments of your superiors or rulers, but will say with the multitude, if they command well you are obedient, if otherwise you are excused in doing as you are commanded, and they only have to answer to God by whom you are thus charged. Have you not deceived yourself, dear brother, for as well are you charged by God's word to know what they command you, and not to do it except it be lawful, as they are charged by their office to will nothing of you, which God's word approved not. For as they in commanding and doing evil, shall not escape God's heavy wrath and judgments: no more shall you, being made an instrument of their impiety and ungodliness. Therefore to be ignorant in these things, although you are a subject, is to condemn the commandment of God, and to neglect your own salvation: for as much as God has charged you being one of His people, with the same Laws (the ceremonies except) wherewith He charged His people Israel before, and wills you no less to know His precepts, and to obey them, then 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. But besides all this, God has sent to you 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 shines in the darkness, and lights every man that comes into this world. He has taken away the shadows and ceremonies of the Law, that you may clearly behold the will of His Father. He has uncovered Moses' face, to the intent you may fully consider the secrets of God. For these are the days whereof the Prophet Joel spoke, when all should be prophets, and see visions. And it shall come to pass in the latter days (says God) that I will send forth my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and daughters shall prophesy, your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams. And moreover upon my servants and handmaids in those days, will I send my Spirit, and they shall prophesy. Which prophesy St. Peter affirms to be fulfilled in the kingdom of Christ, where all things are 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 you know yourself bound to obey your Lord God above all others, because of the inestimable benefits you have received by Him in Christ Jesus, and because He requires the same of you, and you have also promised no less to Him in your baptism and profession: and last of all in that you cannot pretend ignorance in such knowledge and shining brightness, nor yet escape God's vengeance, which He without respect of persons will power indifferently upon all transgressors, be they superior powers, or inferior subjects. It is you part then, being a subject, to learn this lesson of the Apostles (when so ever you should be constrained, by commandment or face of tyrants to do evil) that God must be obeyed before man. Which unto you 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.

Are you then, being a subject commanded to worship sticks and stones which this day to our shame are erected again in England? Behold you have God's commandment for you defense: Thou shalt not commit idolatry, nor make for yourself any graven image, & etc. Are you charged to be at the idolatrous Mass, wherein Christ your Lord is blasphemed? Behold, He has given you another charge: that is, to celebrate His Supper, according as He left in example, saying: Do this, that is, which you see me do, and not which the powers of the world, or the pestilent papists command. Also do it (says Christ) in remembrance of me, and not of your friends alive or dead, as the papists teach. For none of them died for you. Moreover, do it to show forth the death of Christ, until His coming, as witnesses the Apostle: and not to make a new sacrifice for sin, as the papists blasphemously both teach and preach. Are you commanded by men to dishonor the Sabbath day in worshipping of saints and abstaining upon their days and even from lawful business? Behold, God your Lord charges you no further then only with His day of rest, saying: See you keep holy the Sabbath of the Lord your God: and not of Peter, Paul, Mary, James or John. Are you commanded to swear in the name of Mary and all the saints in heaven (which is the papist oath)? Behold, the Lord says: You shall only swear in the Name of your Lord and God. Are you commanded not only to take the Name of the Lord in vain, but also to forswear yourself 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 to go unpunished, who takes His Name in vain: much less such perjured and forsworn wretches. Are you commanded to persecute your parents and friends, charged not to help them in their necessity, because they profess the doctrine of salvation? Are you forbidden lawful marriage, because you are a minister of God's word, and permitted to live in all kind of filthy uncleanness, as do the Sodomite priests, monks, friars, nuns, cardinals, deans, archdeacons, and all other orders of Satan: behold, such does the Lord God command to put to death, as most abominable above all others.

To be short, when they contrary to their oath and profession, command you 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 perceive Christ in His members: to aid the enemies with your goods and bodies against the dear children of God: to fight in other countries without any just cause or occasion, and to suffer you wife, children, kinfolk, and countrymen to be most cruelly spoiled, oppressed and murdered for want of your 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, while the Spaniards put themselves in a readiness to enter the realm and make a general spoil and prey of all.

These things and many of the like are plainly forbidden to 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 to the contrary, 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 of your former ignorance and impiety, to be made instruments of the contrary within 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 aides and partakers with them, when neither power can defend the superiors, nor their commandments, excuse the subjects.



CHAPTER 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 exists (you will say)? We being but subjects without power, and wisdom cannot help it. The more pity dear countrymen, that you have so stoutly, or rather, stubbornly showed 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 Roman 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, imprisonment, revelries, banishment, or murders. It is to be lamented (I say) that then receiving all these blessings of God, by the means of so worthy a prince, you were able to conspire, rise and rebel, with the dangers 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, as cardinals, bishops, priests, monks, friars, nuns, & etc. And now in these matters wherein consists 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 not 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 withheld from you, by the greedy desire of new upstart gentlemen, how willing and ready have you showed 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 calls you to a reckoning, what can you have to answer? Are you any better then the Gergesenes, which desired Christ to depart from them because they lost their hogs and swine? Yea, you are worse than they were by much, because you 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 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 yourselves, 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 adversary: a cruel people, a proud nation: a people of afar and of a strange language, whose tongue you shall not understand, an imprudent nation, and hardhearted people, without all pity and mercy, which neither will be moved with the lamentable voice of the mothers, nor show compassion for the pitiful cry of their suckling babes and infants. And why? Because you have chosen to obey vile man, yea a raging and mad woman, rather than the Almighty and Merciful God. Repent, repent, O you 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 outstretched arm, that you may find mercy, and that the bottom of your cup will not be turned upward.

Alas for you, what is this we hear? Are not the people, of themselves sheep without a pastor? If the magistrates and other officers condemn their duty in defending God's glory and the Laws committed to their charge, does it not lie 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 discouragement 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, have become instruments to enforce them to wicked impiety. Nevertheless, all this can be no excuse for you, seeing, that evil doings of other, whether they are 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 Himself to be your captain who wills 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. 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 of your heart and with all your soul, for this has God required of you, and this have you promised unto Him no under condition (if the rulers will) but without all exception to do what so ever your Lord and God shall command you.

As touching idolatry, it is worthy to be considered what Moses writes, or rather the Spirit of God by him, how the Lord in that place charged 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 spoke beforehand, if that thereby he sought to persuade them or draw them to idolatry. 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 charge 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 appertains 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, who wills His people to be like Him in their judgments. In judgment (says the Lord) commit no unrighteousness, neither respect the face of the poor, neither be afraid at the countenance of the mighty, but judge uprightly your neighbor.

Moreover that every person both high and low is charged by God with this Law, and none freed from the punishment, it is evident in the same chapter following: Where God does not permit so much as private whispering in your ear, tending to idolatry, unpunished, no not by your dearest friend or kinsman, saying: If your own natural brother, son, daughter, or the wife of your own bosom, or your neighbor whom you love as much as your own life, secretly provokes you to idolatry, to serve strange gods, either far or near, give no place to him, neither hear him, neither let your eye have pity on him, neither shall you pardon him, or hide him, but shall utterly slay him: your hand shall be first upon such a one to kill him, and then the hands of all the people & etc.

The same commandment is also given in the 17th and 18th chapter 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 where with they are so straightly charged, that then the people are not discharged, except they put it into execution to take the evil from amongst them, to whom it also belongs. next, that no person is exempted by any Law of God from this punishment,

whether king, queen, or emperor, that is, either openly or privately known to be an idolater be he never so near or dear unto us, he must die the death. For God has not placed them above others to transgress His Laws as they like, but to be subject unto them as well as others, over whom they govern. And if they are subject unto His Laws, they must be subject to the punishment also, when they are found disobedient transgressors: yea, so much the more as their example is more dangerous. For look what wickedness reigns in the magistrates, the subjects commonly take encouragement thereby to imitate the same, as we see in the examples of Jeroboam, Achan and wicked Manasseh, 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 all the captains and heads of the people, for that by their example they made the people idolaters also. He had no respect for their authority, because they were rulers, but so much would He rather 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 such rulers as should draw them from Him.

And though it appeared at 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 gives the sword into the hands of the people, and He Himself has immediately become their head (if they will seek the accomplishment of His Laws) and has promised to defend them and bless them.

And although the rebellion of the people, their ingratitude and contempt of God's Laws has been such at all times, that it is a rare thing to show their duty in this behalf, by any example: yet is there on fact of the Israelites worthy of memory, and appertaining to this purpose, which is written in the Book of Judges, 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 house or tent, before the were revenged of their own brethren the Benjaminites, to flee from those detestable persons, which had so shamefully abused the Levite's wife, although she was a 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 show justice, because they wanted a lawful magistrate to govern them, not though themselves discharged for that they were as sheep without a pastor: except they did thus arm themselves against the sons of Belial the ungodly Benjaminites to see the judgments of God executed according to His Law (and as they said themselves) to cut off the evil from among them, 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, then to have a tyrant and murderer. For then are they no more public persons, condemning their public authority in using it against the Laws, but are to be taken by all men, as private persons, and so examined and punished. Nevertheless, to the intent you 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, who when they but heard that the sons of Reuben, the sons of Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh, had erected 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 the 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 reprov'd them: yea, happy might Joshua think himself, that had his people so ready to maintain by 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 Laws of God, then 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 magistrates, as upon other among 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 so ever they be. If death is deserved, death: if other punishments, to see they are executed to all.

For this cause have you promised obedience to your superiors, that they might herein help you: 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 them all humble obedience: If not, you are discharged, and no obedience belongs to them, because they are not obedient to God, nor are His ministers to punish the evil, and to defend the good. And therefore you 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 hand of the Almighty God, and to be subject to His fearful plagues and punishments.



CHAPTER XIV.

THIS IS NO DOCTRINE OF REBELLION, BUT THE ONLY DOCTRINE OF PEACE AND MEANS TO ENJOY QUIETLY THE BLESSINGS OF GOD, WHICH OUGHT NOT TO BE WISHED FOR ONLY BY THE PEOPLE, BUT CAREFULLY SOUGHT FOR ALSO.

And although this seems a strange doctrine, perilous, and to move sedition amongst the people, and to take from the lawful rulers all due obedience: yet who so will consider the matter a right, 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 are there any laws more perfect than are the Laws of God? Or did any man better know the nature of man, then he which created man? Or any more desirous to keep them in His fear, and true obedience, then God Himself, who chose them for His people? Then who is so mad and imprudent, 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 Law of God? That man which is not able to rule himself, can better govern his subjects and defend them, then God nay His people? That the people shall rather enjoy all blessings of God, in yielding to the wickedness of the ungodly rulers, then 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 showed 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. And why? Because (says Moses) He is the God of Gods, the Lord of Lords, the great, mighty and dreadful God, which has no respect of persons, nor takes any rewards. And this fruit shall be yours if you are sure in keeping His Laws. He will be your praise, and your God: that is (as in another place the same Moses writes) He will make you a wise people, a mighty nation, which shall say, This is only a wise people, and a people of understanding and mighty. For what people is so great, which has their God so friendly and familiar with them, as the Lord our God is in all things that we call to Him for? For while 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 powered upon us: that is to be blessed at home and abroad, in the fruit of our womb,

and our land, of our beasts and cattle. 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 does it minister occasion of rebellion, without which there can be no godly peace or quietness, as your experience in England has already (as I suppose) sufficiently taught you: who have felt rather hell like torments, and shameful confusion, since you permitted the wild boars to cast down the hedge of the Lord's vineyard, that is, His Laws and precepts, then any manner of godly peace, either in conscience or body: 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 you have suffered this unpunished? Or if you had punished it as you were then charged by God's Laws and man's, would 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 revere them as God's ministers so ruling you, otherwise, not to acknowledge them but as His enemies, and so to take them: has either that Jezebel so raging 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? Does she without all shame so openly and unfaithfully broken a promise to them (which to their own sorrow, and all others this day) were her chief promoters? Assure yourself 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 appertains, had denied, you would have seen it performed at all times, and in all places) then should you have showed that zeal of God, which was commended in Phinehas, destroying the adulterers: and in the Israelites against the Benjaminites, as before is noted. You 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 God 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 no either your private gain or promotion, as did all the carnal preachers, 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, and hates iniquity, and therefore will be no cloak to cover their falsehood and covetousness.

Also you must beware that private displeasure, and worldly injuries move you not more to seek revenge of your adversaries, then 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 takes His office out of your hand, to whom you ought to commit all your private displeasure and injuries: then can you 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. 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.

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 no, 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 forsakes not man as an external means) and also am not ignorant that He regards not the multitude and strength of man to accomplish His purpose, who has been accustomed to give the victory to a few in number, and weak in strength, that the glory might be His: so will I not counsel you rashly to cast yourselves into danger, but patiently and earnestly to call the living Lord for mercy, and acknowledge your sins (for which this plague is sent upon you) to desire Him to show some sign of comfort: who has promised to hear your groaning, and to behold your affliction, as He did the groaning and oppression of His people in Egypt, when they were brought to full repentance and feeling for their sins: 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.

Neither is this enough to call upon God for help, except you 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: 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 doings, 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 are able and willing: and for them likewise to grant help, to whom God had lent it for that use especially?

But I know your answer: experience (you say) has taught us the contrary. For if God had been pleased herein with Sir Thomas Wyatt 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 good men, 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 act, hanged and murdered. The like also you 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 Wyatt, 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 Grey (a gentleman of great courage and like mindedness), was also beheaded.

Although I mind not to stand long in the praise of these worthy men's acts, who most cowardly were by many betrayed, which since perchance have felt some part of worse misery: yet so much must I need to confess in their behalf, that none but papists, or traitors can justly accuse them of treason or disobedience. Of whom to be maligned and slandered, is in the eyes of the godly, no small condemnation, and praise. For to pass over with silence the Duke of Suffolk (whose noble parentage and earnest love that he bore to the promoting of Christ's Gospel, and the wealth of his country, is to all Englishmen sufficiently known) what I beseech you moved Wyatt 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. Did he seek honor ambitiously? Which of his enemies could herewith justly charge him? Did he do 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 is treason to defend the Gospel and his country from cruel

strangers and enemies, then was Wyatt 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 some times 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 does most manifestly approve: at what time they armed themselves against the Benjaminites, and that at the commandment of God, and yet were twice disconnected, losing the first time 22 thousand men: and the next day following 18 thousand: both times consulting with the Lord, and following His commandment.

If you will here pronounce according to the effect, behold, you shall prefer the vile and adulterous Benjaminites 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 Wyatt: If you judge his act 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 are traitors to God and His people. But Wyatt, 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 Wyatt, you are now with God, and those worthy men that died for that enterprise! Happy are you, 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 you and yours shall stand one day as judges to their condemnation. For what can you nobles or counselors say for yourselves at that day, whom God shall call you to account (you know not how soon) which have permitted Wyatt, 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 ravenous wolves, raging lions and beasts? Have you not herein justly condemned yourselves as faint hearted cowards and manifest traitors, not only to Wyatt, 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 nothing, but God will minister either to me, or some other the like occasion to set forth your shame and nakedness to all posterity, as you most worthily have deserved: who hitherto have showed yourselves (in condemning so many and notable occasions offered by God's providence, as well since as in the days of Wyatt) to be men in whom is neither zeal to religion, nor love to your country. And therefore I am leaving you to God's mercies, or fearful judgments, will speak a word or two by the way to them which will be called gospellers, 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 seeks by that means, to cut their throats craftily) their poor and ignorant tenants and other soldiers without knowledge, while their brethren are burned at home and their country like to be wasted, spoiled, oppressed, possessed, and replenished with ungodly Spaniards. Is this the love that you bear to the word of God? O you Gospelers, have you 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 no need to be defended: and the cruel murder and shameful slaughter of princes approved? This has 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 Wyatt, whether you are of the nobles, counselors, lords, knights, or of the common soldiers? I will make your own consciences judges in this matter, whether worthy Wyatt 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 endured 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 show 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, are 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 Wyatt, are allowed before God, and of all good men commended.

O London, London, you that boasted yourself to be the Jerusalem of all England, wherein Christ chiefly was preached, and the truth of His Gospel best known, remember how you forsook that godly captain, and what promise you made him. You (I say) which might have been an example and comfort to all the cities, towns in England, and to have made the papists to tremble and quake for fear. God grant that for your faint heart in that behalf, and shameful falling from God in murdering then and since so many of His servants and prophets, you are not left likewise destitute and desolate, not one stone left upon another, as happened to Jerusalem. You cannot herein defend yourself, which since has been ready, and yet are to maintain wicked Jezebel in

her tyranny at home, and in her ungodly and needless wars abroad with your goods and body at her commandment, being thereby made an aide, helper, and furtherer of all her ungodly oppression and tyranny. And therefore must need be partakers with her of the dreadful plagues and punishments, which God has appointed for such impiety.

Wherefore to conclude this matter, if Wyatt's cause was just and lawful, as you must confess: for if he were at fault at any point, it was chiefly in this, that he pretended rather the cause of his country, then 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 keeps 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, where unto he after a sort was enforced: then ought no person, whether he is a ruler, or subject, counselor, noble, public or private to be discouraged, but rather encouraged by Wyatt'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 body and soul.

And though it succeed not the first or second time, no more than did the enterprize of Wyatt, 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 Benjamins. 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.



CHAPTER 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 kinds of officers to see the same Laws put into 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 has no less mercifully dealt with you in England, not only giving unto you His Laws and holy word, with far greater light and plain declaration of His will and pleasure than ever was published to the Israelites: but also has 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 you have 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 citizen 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 is well with them (though it is 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 all together 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 send remedy amongst themselves, neither can see how to be supported by 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 grants you His Spirit and grace to follow it) then in continual and daily invocation of His Name, to rest wholly and only upon Him, make Him your shield, buckler and refuge, who has 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: God has commanded this, this must we do. That which God has 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 an answer, and not to us: for they are His goods, and not ours. If you will imprison us, behold, you are oppressors. If you will hang us or burn us, behold, you are murderers of them which fear the Lord, and are created to the Image of God: for whose contempt you 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 to us again with joy, and immortality, both of body and soul.

If God gives you grace to make this or the like answer, and strength to condemn 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 does 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 then your Lord and God will permit them. Which neither shall be augmented for your plain confession, nor yet diminished for keeping of silence. For nothing comes to the servants of God by hap or chance, whose hairs of their heads are numbered. Whereof if you are 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 into 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, you 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. To the contrary, if it is 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 among 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 show yourselves therein to fear man more than the mighty and dreadful God: him that has but power over your body, and that at God's appointment, then God Himself, who has

power, after He has destroyed the body, to cast both body and soul into hell fire, 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: 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 hangs continually over the heads of such, ready to be sent down upon them? When they shall find no comfort, but utter despair with Judas, which for these worldly riches (as he did) they have sold their Master seeking either to hang themselves with Judas, to murder themselves with France's Spera, to drown themselves with Justice Hales, either else to fall into a raging madness with Justice Morgan? 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? 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 offenses? Have you any more assurance of God's mercies then 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 time, and was greatly commended for a godly man among 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. And what so ever 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 you are willingly to lay it down at His commandment.

I am not ignorant how unnatural a thing it is, and contrary to the flesh, willing to sustain such a 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 is 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 abhors: 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 timid, whom the wonderful examples of God's present power and singular favor in those persons, should not encourage, embolden, and fortify, to show 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 has 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 had 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) He had 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 papist 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 time, 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 chief 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 fantasize, as many of us which have left our country have done: some dwelling in papist places among 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, show 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 showed 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 whosoever is ashamed of Christ, and His Gospel, thus denying Him before men: them has He promised to deny, and be ashamed of before His Father, and angels, in heaven. 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 gospels. No, brethren and

sisters, this is not the way to show 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 has 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 has promised to send 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: 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 does there appear in such persons that greedy desire (whereof Isaiah makes mention) which ought to be in the professors of the Gospel, who never would cease or rest, will 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 God of Jacob, and He will teach us His ways, and we shall walk in His footsteps. For the Law shall come forth from Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. Which zeal the Prophet does not mention in vain, but to show what a thirst and earnest desire should be in the true Christians, and how the same appears 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 that zeal showed them to be of Christ, by the like must we be judged Christians also, that if we flee for Christ, the places where unto we flee may bear witness for what cause we have 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 chief means that God has 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 has 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 has advanced His standard, and blown His trumpet, as is fore said.

If God then gives you not strength-at the first to stand in His profession to the death, nor that you cannot be quiet in conscience, abiding in you country: you see how His mercy has given you liberty to flee, and what places He has appointed for you to flee unto, that is, where you

may do good to yourselves and others, where you 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 has 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 sent upon His enemies? Assure yourself, they shall be taken in their sin: and you also as God does 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 you abc's and first principles, wherein none ought to be ignorant. That is if we will be Christ's students, 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 children learn 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 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 you 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 is God, follow Him: if Baal be god, go after him. 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 has redeemed you. Honor Him alone: for you are His people. Let not the example of any lead you into error: for men are but mortals. 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 stray 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 are everlasting praise, honor and glory forevermore. Amen. From Geneva, this First of January, M.D.LVIII.

Finis.



To learn more about righteous resistance to unjust laws and rulers, obtain the book [The Doctrine of the Lesser Magistrates: A Proper Response to Tyranny and A Repudiation of Unlimited Obedience to Civil Government](#). The book is available through [Amazon.com](#) or at [LesserMagistrate.com](#). The doctrine - which is found in Scripture and history - has been employed by men for thousands of years and has proven successful at reining in tyranny.