





# **SPECIAL NOTE**

**ITEM SCANNED AS SUPPLIED  
PAGINATION IS AS SEEN**

RELIGION'S PEACE;

OR,

A PLEA

FOR

LIBERTY OF CONSCIENCE.

1614.



THIS usefull Treatise (Entituled  
*Religions Peace*) long since Pre-  
sented by a Citizen of *London* to King  
*JAMES*, and the High Court of  
Parliament then sitting; I allow to be  
Reprinted.

*Aprill 1.*

*John Bachiler.*



# RELIGIONS PEACE :

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## A Plea for Liberty of Conscience.

Long since presented to King *James*, and the High  
Court of Parliament then sitting, by *Leonard*  
*Busher* Citizen of *London*, and Printed  
in the Yeare 1614.

Wherein is contained certain Reasons against Persecution  
for Religion ; Also a designe for a peaceable recon-  
ciling of those that differ in opinion.

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Rom. xiv. 5, 10. *One man esteemeth one day above another, another man esteemeth every day alike, let every man be fully persuaded in his own minde.*

*But why dost thou judge thy brother, or why dost thou despise thy brother ? for we shall all appeare before the judgement seat of Christ.*

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LONDON,

Printed for *John Sweeting* at the Angel in *Popes-head-alley*,

1646.



## INTRODUCTORY NOTICE.

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NOTHING whatever is known of the author of the ensuing treatise, beyond that which he himself has communicated in the course of his remarks. It is a mere conjecture, which has been hazarded, that he was a member of the church which, after the death of Mr. Smyth, chose Mr. Helwys to fill the pastoral office among them. He was a citizen of London, and had been an exile from his native land at some part of his life, when he probably became acquainted with the Brownists and Mr. Robinson, to whom he refers. From them he differed on several important subjects, especially on infant baptism, and liberty of conscience.

He speaks of himself as labouring for his subsistence, which with difficulty was obtained, owing to the persecutions he endured. "We that have most truth," he affectingly, and, however at the time doubted, yet, most correctly says, "are most persecuted, and therefore most poor." Still he laboured for the spiritual benefit of his fellow-countrymen. His poverty, arising from his sufferings, alone disabled him from printing two works that he had prepared. The one he calls, "A Scourge of



small cords, wherewith Antichrist and his ministers might be driven out of the temple of God." The other, "A Declaration of certain False Translations in the New Testament;" he was zealous for the purity of the church and the truthful translation of the word of God. To his difficulties are doubtless to be attributed his unpolished style and occasional obscurity.

He appears to have been acquainted with the original Greek of the New Testament, and attentive to the criticism of the sacred text. His knowledge of the Syriac version, may perhaps be referred to the translation of it into Latin by Tremellius, which at the time was frequently printed in conjunction with Beza's Latin version of the Greek.

Though not the first of the noble band who manfully claimed liberty of private judgment in divine things for himself and for all others, Busher's work remains to us as the *earliest treatise known to be extant* on this great theme.

That his address to the king and parliament was not ill-timed, (although we may not say from want of evidence that it influenced the mind of his sovereign,) appears from the very liberal sentiments which fell from the royal orator on opening the parliament of 1614. "No state," says the monarch, "can evidence that any religion or heresy was ever extirpated by the sword, or by violence, nor have I ever judged it a way of planting the truth. An example of this I take where, when many rigorous counsels were propounded, Gamaliel stood up and advised, that 'if that religion were of God, it



would prosper; if of man, it would finish of itself.' ”<sup>1</sup>  
It is to be deeply regretted that the monarch's practice did not agree with his words.

All inquiries have failed in discovering an earlier edition than that from which the present is reprinted. Mr. Hanbury has supposed,<sup>2</sup> with much probability, that Mr. Henry Burton is the author of the address prefixed, “To the Presbyterian Reader.” This courageous man and sufferer under Laud's tyranny, was among the earliest of the independents who claimed and allowed full liberty of conscience. This liberty was especially unpalatable to the presbyterians; and to them he saw fit to address his reprint. Their influence in the state was at the time predominant, and it was eagerly employed to repress all who differed from them.

Burton's edition is in 4to. His address occupies four pages, and Busher's treatise thirty-eight. No other work of our author is known to exist. An anonymous book referred to under his name in the catalogue of the Bodleian Library, is by another hand, in opposition to his views, and of much later date; though perhaps occasioned by this republication in 1646. Another copy may be found in the British Museum.

The Council is indebted to Mr. Read of Ipswich for the loan of the copy from which this edition is printed.

<sup>1</sup> Vaughan's Hist. of Eng. under the Stuarts, i. p. 89.

<sup>2</sup> Historical Memorials relating to the Independents, i. p. 224, note f.



TO THE

## PRESBYTERIAN READER.

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**T**HIS Treatise, which, as a supplication to King James and the parliament, was printed in the year 1614, is, for your good, now again reprinted. The author thereof, Leonard Busher, an honest and godly man, as I make no doubt will appear to you in the perusal of his book, intended two things therein.

First, to make it appear that the bishops were not true ministers, or successive from the apostles, but rather a scion or branch of the popish stock, descended from the Romish hierarchy, to whom they owed their instauration, ordination, and function. Had this advice been believed and embraced by the parliament then, the mischiefs they have since practised, much of the blood that hath been shed, and the miseries that by their means have been brought upon us, had in great measure been prevented; but his counsel was then slighted, though by the wisdom of this present parliament put in execution, whereby we are secured for the future from the domination, compulsion against conscience, and notorious cruelties of that sort of men.

BUSHER.]



Whence we may learn, that what to a people at one time seems strange and absurd, and in no wise to be admitted of, at another time appears an acceptable truth. The reason is, because we are not masters of our own understandings, but suffer them to be dulled and corrupted, till misery and the sting of oppression open our eyes, so that we embrace truth more out of necessity than choice.

The second thing his discourse drives at, is to make it appear by scriptures and sound arguments, that the only way to make a nation happy, and preserve the people in love, peace, and tranquillity, is to give liberty to all to serve God according as they are persuaded is most agreeable to his word; to speak, write, print, peaceably and without molestation, in behalf of their several tenets and ways of worship, wholesome and pertinent laws being made, upon penalties, to restrain all kinds of vice or violence, all kinds of reproach, slander, or injury either by word or deed.

And though this advice likewise seems not the best to some, especially to you my brethren in the Presbyterian way, yet am I well assured that this nation will never be happy; but, as hitherto it hath been, so for the future it will be, distracted with oppression and persecution, and the faces of one sort of men set against another, till liberty of conscience be allowed. Indeed a man would think we had been schooled and whipt long enough to it by our calamities, for want whereof this age, and that age, and the other age, and every age hath been miserable. For want whereof the apostles suffered martyrdom,



the saints and godly of all times have been hunted like partridges by birds of prey. And yet, good men, in the esteem of a great part of the world, especially of the rich and powerful, they have suffered as evil-doers, disturbers of the world, heretics, schismatics, seditious persons. And those that put them to death, have had the reputation of being maintainers of truth and sound doctrine. So apt in all ages have the people been to mistake good for evil, and evil for good.

The plea for liberty of conscience is no new doctrine; as old certainly as the blessed word of God itself, which gives us this immovable foundation thereof: That every man should be fully persuaded of the truth of that way, wherein he serves the Lord. And though there have been strugglings in all ages to make good this blessed birthright to all peaceful people; yet, through the potency and subtlety of popes, bishops, and ministers that preferred the advance of themselves, and their usurped and abused function, before the good and welfare of the people, we have been deprived of this blessing, next to the manifestation of God's love and goodness to us, the most excellent and desirable in this world. For want whereof, and by means of its contrary, persecution, this universe, especially the Christian part thereof, hath suffered a continual agony and earthquake.

War and its miseries have overspread all lands. States have been shaken and subverted. Love, meekness, gentleness, mercy, the truest badges of Christianity, have been damned and banished; and, in their room, cruelty, hard-heartedness, respect of persons, prisons, tortures, &c.,



things that our blessed Lord and Master, and his apostles never proved, unless upon their own afflicted bodies, have had great sway for these many hundred years. Hence is it, that instead of peace, we have frequently had the sword; instead of sweet tranquillity, love, and affection, hatred, contention, disaffection, and the bitter fruits thereof, have reigned amongst us; and, in all probability, will reign, till God shall put it into the heart of the parliament to make trial for the prevention thereof, of this God-like way, which, in the ensuing treatise, is held forth.

I hope, upon perusal thereof, you that are my brethren of the Presbyterian way, will abate much of your misguided eagerness in prosecuting your conscientious brethren. Consider, I beseech you, St. Paul before his conversion. He was as zealous, I make no question, as any of you, when he persecuted the saints, and made havoc of the church, that is, of God's people congregated together, to worship and serve God; when he entered into every house, and drew out both men and women to put them to prison; when he breathed out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord; when he procured letters of the high priest to go to Damascus, where, if he found any of that way, then the heretical way in his account, he might bring them down to Jerusalem; when he consented to Stephen's death.

Acts viii. 3.  
Verse 3.  
Acts ix. 1.  
Verse 2.  
Acts viii. 1.

In all these violent motions he was zealous and hearty, and thought he did God good service in the suppression of a rising sect, that was against the high priests, learned rabbis, and doctors of the law, ceremonies, strict injunctions and observations of the judaical and



priestly law. You see how far mistaken zeal can go. Consider this, I beseech you. I know you are, especially you that are laymen, zealous as you think for God and his truth, as Paul was; but I hope there will a time come, and I wish it were now present, when in the midst of your heat and fervency, the glorious and shining brightness of love will appear in your hearts, like the light surrounding Paul going to Damascus; and the scales of ignorance and mistake will fall from your eyes. And then you will lament all the evil, which, through weakness, you have brought upon your brethren. You will then blame your own zeal and importunity, and apply yourselves more cordially and constantly to observe our Saviour's rule of equity, to do unto others what you would have others do unto you.

Peruse this treatise, I beseech you, with a single heart, and unprejudiced mind, and let it sway you: as the arguments thereof are efficacious, and the scriptures therein urged are pertinent and convincing.

So wisheth yours, and all other good

Men's true Friend,

H. B.



## RELIGION'S PEACE,

ETC. ETC.

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*To the High and Mighty King JAMES, by the grace of God King of Great Britain, France, and Ireland, and to the Princely and Right Honourable Parliament, LEONARD BUSHIER wisheth the wisdom of Solomon, the zeal of Josias, and the mercy of Christ, with the salvation of your spirits <sup>1 Cor. v. 5.</sup> in the day of the Lord Jesus.*

**F**ORASMUCH as your majesty and parliament do stand for the maintenance of the religion wherein you are born, and for the same do most zealously persecute with fire and sword; I have thought it good, and also my duty, most royal sovereign, to inform your majesty and parliament thereof. In all humility, therefore, I give you to understand, that no prince or people can possibly attain that one true religion of the gospel, which is acceptable to God by Jesus Christ, merely by birth.

For Christ saith, *Except a man be born again, he cannot* <sup>John iii. 3.</sup> *see the kingdom of God.* Also, the apostle James saith, *Of his own will he begat us by the word of truth.* And the <sup>Jam. i. 18.</sup> apostle Peter saith, *Being born anew, not of mortal seed, but* <sup>1 Pet. i. 23.</sup> *of immortal, by the word of God who liveth and endureth for ever.* Therefore Christ commanded this word to be <sup>Matt. xxviii</sup> preached to all nations, that thereby they may attain the <sup>[19, 20];</sup> new birth. By which your majesty and parliament may <sup>Mark xvi. [15.]</sup>



perceive, that the one true religion of the gospel is not attained by natural birth ; for then all princes and peoples, in all nations, should have that one true religion of the gospel, the which you see and grant they all have not. Yet many of them, also, will defend their religion wherein they are born, by fire and sword, as if it were their natural and earthly inheritances, or had with fire and sword been gotten, and therefore will with fire and sword maintain and defend it.

But your majesty and parliament may please to understand, that the scriptures do teach, that the one true religion is gotten by a new birth, even by the word and Spirit of God, and therewith also it is only maintained and defended.

Heb. iv. 12 ;  
2 Cor. x. 4 ;  
Eph. vi. 17.

*For the word of God is lively, and mighty in operation, and sharper than any two-edged sword, and entereth through, even unto the dividing asunder of the soul and the spirit, and of the joints and of the marrow ; and is a discerner of the thoughts and the intents of the heart.* Seeing, then, the one true religion of the gospel is thus gotten, and thus defended and maintained—namely, by the word preached only ; let it please your majesty and parliament to be intreated to revoke and repeal those antichristian, Romish, and cruel laws, that force all in our land, both prince and people, to receive that religion wherein the king or queen were born, or that which is established by the law of man. And instead thereof, enact and publish that apostolic, Christian, gentle, and merciful law of Christ—viz. *Go, teach all nations, preach the gospel to every creature.* That is, Christ

Matt. xxviii.  
19 ; Mark  
xvi. 16.

Acts ii. 41,  
viii. 12, 37 ;  
Luke xxiv.  
47.

will have his ministers to preach and teach the people of all nations, the things that concern the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Messiah, repentance and remission of sins, and to baptize in his name such as do believe.

And forasmuch, also, that the false and antichristian religion did come by the spirit of error and doctrine of



devils, and not by fire and sword, therefore by the Spirit of Christ and doctrine of the word of God, must it be driven out of the hearts and consciences, both of prince and people; and not by fire and sword, as the false bishops and ministers have and do still persuade.

Therefore may it please your majesty and parliament to understand that, by fire and sword, to constrain princes and peoples to receive that one true religion of the gospel, is wholly against the mind and merciful law of Christ, dangerous both to king and state, a means to decrease the kingdom of Christ, and a means to increase the kingdom of antichrist; as these reasons following do manifest. The which, I humbly beseech your majesty and parliament carefully to consider, and that according to the word of God, which shall *judge every man according to his deeds*. And persecution is a work well pleasing to all false prophets and bishops, but it is contrary to the mind of Christ, *who came not to judge and destroy men's lives, but to save them*. And though some men and women believe not at the first hour, yet may they at the eleventh hour, if they be not persecuted to death before.

And no king nor bishop can, or is able to command faith; *That is the gift of God, who worketh in us both the will and the deed of his own good pleasure*. Set him not a day, therefore, in which, if his creature hear not and believe not, you will imprison and burn him. Paul was a blasphemer and also a persecutor, and could not be converted by the apostles and ministers of Christ; yet at last was received to mercy, and converted extraordinarily by Christ himself, *who is very pitiful and merciful, and would have no man to perish, but would that all men come to repentance*. But not by persecution, but by the word of reconciliation which he hath committed to his ministers. And as kings and bishops cannot command the wind, so they cannot command faith;

1 Tim. iv. 1;  
Rev. xvi. 14.

Mark ix. 38,  
39.

Matt. xvi.  
27.

Rev. xvi. 14.

Luke ix. 55,  
56; John  
xii. 47.

Matt. xx. 6,  
7.

Eph. ii. 8.

1 Tim. i. 13;  
Acts xxvi.  
11.

Jam. v. 11;  
2 Pet. iii. 9.

2 Cor. v. 19



John iii. [8.] *and as the wind bloweth where it listeth, so is every man that is born of the Spirit.* You may force men to church against their consciences,<sup>1</sup> but they will believe as they did afore, when they come there; for God giveth a blessing only to his own ordinance, and abhorreth antichrist's.

1 Sam. xv. 15, 24.

And kings are to think that they are men as well as kings, and that Christ hath ordained the same means of faith for kings, which he hath for subjects; and that subjects are Christ's freemen, as well as kings' subjects; and kings that believe are Christ's servants, even as subjects are kings' servants, and both are bought with a price. Therefore both ought not to be the servants of men in matters of faith and religion. But kings shall give a greater account at the day of judgment than their subjects. And to judge men now for religion, is to judge afore the time, and also to sit in the judgment-seat of Christ, to whom only it belongeth, yet not before the day appointed. How much less to kings and bishops?

Rom. ii. 16;  
Acts x. 42.

I read that Constantine the emperor, called the great, wrote to the bishop of Rome, that he would not force and constrain any man to the faith, but only admonish, and commit the judgment to God.<sup>2</sup> Christ's kingdom is not of this world, therefore may it not be purchased nor defended

John xviii.  
36, 10, 11.

[<sup>1</sup> By the act of uniformity, 1 Eliz. c. 2, a fine of 12*d.* was commanded to be levied on every absentee from the parish church, for each offence, and the offender to be corrected and punished by ecclesiastical censures. By the 23 Eliz. c. 1, every such offender being above sixteen years of age, was to forfeit 20*l.* for every month he should forbear frequenting the church; and threats of further penalties were added if he still continued obstinate. — Statutes at Large, vol. vi. pp. 123, 334.]

<sup>2</sup> [<sup>4</sup> "And those that are led away with error, let them desire to live in peace and tranquillity with the faithful. For friendly human society, and commerce with them, will be very much available to bring them to the right way. Let no man molest another, but let every one follow the persuasion of their own conscience. — Let no man, in that which he is persuaded is right and good, give any offence to another; but rather he that hath knowledge and understanding, let him endeavour to instruct and con-



with the weapons of this world, but by his word and Spirit. <sup>Eph. vi. 10, 17.</sup> No other weapons hath he given to his church, which is his spiritual kingdom. Therefore Christ saith, *He that will* <sup>Matt. xviii. 17.</sup> *not hear the church, let him be to thee as a heathen and a publican.* He saith not, burn, banish, or imprison him; that is antichrist's ordinance. And though a man be an heretic, yet ought he not to be burnt, but to be rejected, *after once* <sup>Tit. iii. 10.</sup> *or twice admonition*—that is, cast out of the church.

But as in the church of Rome, people of all sorts are by persecution forced thereinto by the bishops and ministers thereof; so it is in the church of England also. Which showeth that the bishops and ministers of Rome and England are of one spirit, in gathering people to their faith and church, which is the spirit of Satan, who knoweth well that his kingdom, the false church, would greatly decay, if persecution were laid down. Seeing himself cannot stand before the word and Spirit of God, much less his bishops and ministers; therefore he will have them for a name and show, to use the word of God. But, indeed, if the false interpretation and alleging of the scriptures will not help, then, saith he, constrain them with fire and sword; or else (if people have liberty of conscience) they will try the <sup>1 John iv. 1.</sup> spirits, which of them is of God, as the apostle John teacheth: and then, saith he, the prince as well as people will *try all things, and keep that which is good; and will also* <sup>[1 Thess. v. 21.]</sup>

vert his neighbour: but if he cannot, let him give over. For it is one thing to embrace religion willingly, and another to be compelled through fear of punishment." — Eusebius in Vit. Constantin. l. ii. c. 55, 59, p. 32; Saltonstall's Translation, 1659.—The above extracts are from an edict of Constantine. The only letter extant from him to a bishop of Rome, does not

contain any sentiments similar to those referred to in the text. See Du Pin, Eccles. Hist. Cent. iv. p. 15, ed. 1697; and Eusebius, Hist. Eccles. l. x. c. 5. Constantine did not always act on the tolerant principles here avowed.—Eusebius in Vit. Constantin. l. ii. c. 63; Gibbon, Decline and Fall, c. 21, p. 331, 8vo edit. London: 1830.]



<sup>2</sup> Cor. xiii. 5. *prove themselves*, as the apostle Paul teacheth, *whether they are in the apostolic faith* or not.

And as the church of Rome provoketh the magistrates to persecute to death such as are excommunicated out of her, so doth the church of England provoke the magistrates to persecute to death such as she excommunicates.<sup>3</sup> And as the bishops and ministers of Rome will persuade the prince and people to hear and read none but themselves, so do the bishops and ministers of England also.

But the bishops and ministers of the apostolic church do persuade all men, to prove and *try the spirits whether they are of God*; which they cannot do, except they hear and read other men's doctrines as well as the bishops' and their ministers'. Neither can they if they would, so long as the bishops have power from the king and state to silence and imprison, &c., all preachers, and to burn all books which teach not their doctrines.<sup>4</sup>

Your majesty and parliament shall understand, that all <sup>1</sup> John iv. 2. those *that confess*, freely, without compulsion, *that Jesus is the Messiah*, the Lord, *and that he came in flesh*, are to be esteemed the children of God and true Christians, seeing

<sup>3</sup> ["Preachers may reprove and threaten, princes may seize the goods and chastise the bodies of such as offend: preachers may shut the gates of heaven against non-repentants, princes may root them from the face of the earth, and let them feel the just vengeance of their sins in this world. This is the power of princes which we say must be directed by bishops, but is not subjected to their wills or tribunals."—The True Difference between Christian Subjection and Unchristian Rebellion, by Thos. Bilson, Warden of Winchester, pp. 361, 362; edit. Oxford, 1585.]

<sup>4</sup> [In 1562, we find the archbishops and bishops in convocation assembled, presenting the following bill for adoption, to the sovereign and parliament:—"Forasmuch as in these our days divers subjects of this realm, and others the queen's majesty's dominions, are grown into such license and contempt of the laws ecclesiastical and censures of the church, that unless it were for fear of the temporal sword and power, they would altogether despise and neglect the same: which temporal sword and power being oftentimes slowly and negligently executed, that the execution of justice thereby



such are *born of God*; and no man can say that *Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost*, therefore not to be persecuted. And as Abel killed not Cain, but was killed himself; and as Isaac and Jacob did not persecute Ishmael and Esau, but were persecuted of Ishmael and Esau—who, and Cain, were figures of all persecutors—so the believing do not persecute the unbelieving, nor the true church the false; but the believing and true church are, as they have been, most often persecuted themselves. Of whom Abel, Isaac, and Jacob, were figures, whose children are all believers and freemen, that *stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made them free, and will not be tangled with the yoke of bondage*. No, not with circumcision, much less with the discipline and doctrine of the church of Rome, whose bishops are able ministers of the fire and sword, both to prince and people, as many histories do lamentably witness, to their utter infamy and overthrow.

Also, if the believing should persecute the unbelieving to death, who should remain alive? Then none but the believing should live in the world, and the unbelieving should die in their unbelief, and so perish for ever. The Lord will not that the believing should live to the destruction of the unbelieving, but unto their conversion, edification, and salvation. And by persecuting of prince and people to death, because they will not hear and believe, is no gaining of souls unto God, but unto the devil. And

is letted or delayed, and the party excommunicated thereby encouraged to continue and persist in wilful and obstinate contumacy and disobedience: May it therefore please your majesty, that it be enacted, to attack and apprehend the body of the person or persons excommunicated, and to carry and convey the same unto the next prison and gaol.”—*Strype’s Annals* I.

i. 460; Grindal, p. 431, 8vo edit.—It was accordingly passed. The crimes which exposed an individual to the merciless severity of these ecclesiastics, were, “matters of heresy, or refusing to have a child baptized, or to receive the holy communion, or to come to divine service, or error in matter of religion or doctrine now received in this church.”—p. 467.]

<sup>1</sup> John v. 1;  
<sup>1</sup> Cor. xii. 3.

Gal. iv. 29.

Gal. v. i.



Luke xviii.  
20.

whereas ignorant and wicked bishops may think to win souls, by killing prince and people for religion, they are deceived greatly; for thereby they lose many souls—viz., their own and the unbelieving. Their own they lose, because they wilfully break the Lord's commandment, that saith, *Thou shalt not kill*; meaning such as are not corporal malefactors. And the others which die in their unbelief, they themselves confess, are eternally lost; except they, as some of their ministers, hold a redemption after this life.

And the bishops should know, that error and heresy cannot be killed by the fire and sword, but by the word and Spirit of God. These are the only weapons of Christ's bishops and ministers; and such only Christ's ministers do use. Whose lives and conversations are so harmless, holy, and gentle, that thereby, and by their deaths and sufferings, they win many souls unto God. Whereby they are known from all false bishops and ministers, who, like wolves and bears, not like sheep and lambs, make prey, and devour both prince and people, that are not of their kind, if they be able to master them.

Besides, may it please your majesty and parliament to understand, that the believing man that hath an unbelieving wife, and the believing woman that hath an unbelieving husband, cannot live together as the scripture teaches, for the salvation of the unbelieving, if they be persecuted to death. Indeed, some thereby are forced to confess with the mouth, that which they believe not in heart, and so are made true dissemblers, instead of true Christians. Whereby many men and women are deceived with dissembling husbands and wives, as well as the king and state are deceived with dissembling servants and subjects. But the word of God, if permission of conscience might be granted, would procure upright, pure, and unfeigned husbands and wives, servants and subjects, so that thereby neither prince nor



people should be deceived. For all good shepherds will divide and separate, and not force, slay, and persecute. For if men and women be found heretics, they shall be separated from the church; but if they be unbelievers, they shall not be joined unto it, until they be converted by the word of God, much less forced. Which conversion, for ought we know, may be at their death, if not afore, seeing the Lord calleth some at the eleventh hour, as well as at the first, and not at the king's and bishops' pleasures. Matt. xx. 6, 7.

Kings and magistrates are to rule temporal affairs by the swords of their temporal kingdoms, and bishops and ministers are to rule spiritual affairs by the word and Spirit of God, the sword of Christ's spiritual kingdom, and not to intermeddle one with another's authority, office, and function. And it is a great shame for the bishops and ministers not to be able to rule in their church, without the assistance of the king and magistrate; yea, it is a great sign they are none of Christ's bishops and ministers. If they were, they would not be afraid nor ashamed of their faith; nor yet would they persuade princes and people to persecute, and force one another to believe them; but would use only the assistance of God's word and Spirit, and therewith suffer their faith and doctrine to be examined, proved, and disputed, both by word and writing.

And he is a true bishop who is unreprouable, and that is able to stop the mouths of his adversaries by God's word and Spirit only, and whose faith and discipline agree with the prophets, Christ, and his apostles, and maketh no contradiction. But all those bishops that force princes and peoples to receive their faith and discipline by persecution, do, with Judas, go against Christ, in his members, with swords, staves, and halberds; who, seeing God's word will not help them, betake themselves, with all haste and hazard, unto the authority of the king and magistrate. Tit. i. 7, 9, 11.



I read that a bishop of Rome would have constrained a Turkish emperor to the Christian faith, unto whom the emperor answered, "I believe that Christ was an excellent prophet, but he did never, so far as I understand, command that men should, with the power of weapons, be constrained to believe his law; and verily I also do force no man to believe Mahomet's law." Also I read that Jews, Christians, and Turks, are tolerated<sup>5</sup> in Constantinople, and yet are peaceable, though so contrary the one to the other.

If this be so, how much more ought Christians not to force one another to religion? AND HOW MUCH MORE OUGHT CHRISTIANS TO TOLERATE CHRISTIANS, WHEN AS THE TURKS DO TOLERATE THEM? SHALL WE BE LESS MERCIFUL THAN THE TURKS? OR SHALL WE LEARN THE TURKS TO PERSECUTE CHRISTIANS? IT IS NOT ONLY UNMERCIFUL, BUT UNNATURAL AND ABOMINABLE; YEA, MONSTROUS FOR ONE CHRISTIAN TO VEX AND DESTROY ANOTHER FOR DIFFERENCE AND QUESTIONS OF RELIGION. And though tares have overgrown the wheat, yet Christ will have them let alone till harvest, *lest while you go about to pluck up the tares, you pluck up also the wheat with them*; as your predecessors have done, who thought they had gathered up the tares and burned them, but you see now that they have burned the wheat instead of tares. Wherefore in all humility and Christian modesty, I do affirm, that through the unlawful weed-hook of persecution, which your predecessors have used, and by your majesty and parliament is still continued, there is such a quantity of wheat plucked up, and such a multitude of tares

Matt. xiii.  
29, 30, 38.

<sup>5</sup> ["The disciples of Abraham, of Moses, and of Jesus, were solemnly invited to accept the more perfect revelation of Mahomet; but if they preferred the payment of a moderate tri-

bute, they were entitled to the freedom of conscience and religious worship."—Gibbon's *Decline and Fall*, &c., c. 51, p. 968, edit. 1830.]



left behind, that the wheat which remains cannot yet appear in any right visible congregation.

And now, beloved sovereign and parliament, I know that through ignorance you do persecute, as did also your predecessors. *Amend your lives, therefore, and turn, that your sins may be put away, when the time of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; who before hath showed by the mouth of his holy servant John, that the woman—meaning the church—should fly into the wilderness for a time, times, and half a time, from the presence and persecution of the serpent.* And that the winepress should be trodden without the city, until blood come out of the winepress unto the horse-bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs. And thus he hath fulfilled it. Acts iii. 17, 18, 19.  
Rev. xii. 14.  
Rev. xiv. 20.

Now, therefore, I humbly beseech you, suffer not your bishops and ministers any longer to persuade [you] to force your subjects, or any others, to their faith and church by persecution; neither suffer them therewith to defend their faith and church against their adversaries. If they have not any thing from God's word against us, let them yield and submit themselves. If they think they have any thing against us, let them betake themselves only to God's word, both in word and writing. *For the whole scripture is given by inspiration of God to that purpose, and is profitable to teach, to reprove, to correct, and to instruct in righteousness; that the man of God may be absolute,<sup>6</sup> being made perfect unto all good works.* With which scripture, and not with fire and sword, your majesty's bishops and ministers ought to be armed and weaponed. And whosoever shall not hear the words of such bishops and ministers, then such bishops 2 Tim. iii. 16, [17.]

<sup>6</sup> [Complete. "Because the things that proceed from him are perfect without any manner of defect or maim; it cannot be, but that the

words of his mouth are *absolute*, and lack nothing which they should have for performance of that thing whereunto they tend."—Hooker.]



and ministers are commanded by Christ, not to imprison,  
 Matt. x. 14, burn, banish, and hang them; but *to shake the dust of their*  
 15. *feet against them, for a witness, when they depart from them:*  
 Mark vi. 11. *affirming, that at the day of judgment, it shall be easier for*  
*Sodom and Gomorrah,* than for such persons. And this  
 commandment of Christ did his bishops and ministers obey,  
 Acts xlii. 51. as you may read. By which, and by that which follows,  
 your gracious majesty and princely and honourable parlia-  
 ment, may perceive the will and mind of our Lord and  
 Saviour Christ: unto whose mercy I commend you, and to  
 the word and wisdom of his grace, which is able to build  
 further, and to give you an inheritance among all them  
 which are sanctified. Amen.

Your faithful and loving subject,

LEONARD BUSER.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Not Furbusher. There is one Furbusher, a preacher, in this land.



## CERTAIN

### REASONS AGAINST PERSECUTION.

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**F**IRST—Because Christ hath not commanded any king, bishop, or minister to persecute the people for difference of judgment in matters of religion.

Secondly—Because Christ hath commanded his bishops and ministers to persuade prince and people to hear and believe the gospel, by his word and Spirit, and, as ambassadors for him, to beseech both prince and people to be reconciled unto God; and not, as tyrants, to force and constrain them by persecution. <sup>2 Cor. v. 20.</sup>

Thirdly—Because through persecution it will come to pass, that the ambassadors of the only spiritual Lord and King, Jesus, may be persecuted and imprisoned, burned, hanged, or banished, for delivering the message of their gracious Lord, sincerely and often, both to prince and people. Which to do, is a more heinous fact, than to persecute the ambassadors of the greatest king and prince in the world. For instead of heretics, they shall, as they have already,<sup>1</sup> burn, banish, and hang the ambassadors of the Lord Jesus Christ, who doth choose out whom he pleaseth, to bear his name before kings and rulers, for a testimonial <sup>Mark xiii. 9.</sup> to them.

<sup>1</sup> Many thousand ambassadors and martyrs of Christ have bishops caused to be slain since Christ ascended.



Persecution  
destroys  
Christians,  
but not er-  
rors.

Fourthly—Because then we cannot say we have the liberty of the gospel in our land; seeing where that is, there is no persecution for any difference in religion, nor [any] forcing of the conscience to believe the gospel, except by the word and Spirit of God only, the which do wound and kill the errors of men, and not their persons.

2 Cor. x. 4.

1 Tim i. 13,  
15.

Fifthly—Because *Christ came into the world to save sinners*, and not to destroy them, though they be blasphemers; seeing the Lord may convert them as he did Saul, after called Paul. And though they have difference in religion, or will not hear nor believe in Christ that they may be converted, yet ought you not to persecute them, seeing Christ rebuketh such; and his Father *sent him not into the world to condemn the world, but to save it*. Be ye, therefore, followers of Christ, and not of antichrist, in gathering people to the faith.

Persecutors  
rebuked of  
Christ.

Luke ix. 53,  
55.

[John iii. 17]

Col. iv. 5.

Sixthly—Because then you shall not *walk wisely towards them that are without*, as the scripture teacheth; but shall offend also the Jews, and all other strangers, who account it tyranny to have their consciences forced to religion by persecution.

1 Cor. x. 32.

Seventhly—Because if persecution be not laid down, and liberty of conscience set up, then cannot the Jews, nor any strangers, nor others contrary-minded, be ever converted in our land. For so long as they know aforehand, that they shall be forced to believe against their consciences, they will never seek to inhabit there. By which means you keep them from the apostolic faith, if the apostolic faith be only taught where persecution is.

Persecution  
does make  
many stran-  
gers.

Eighthly—Because if freedom of conscience be not set up, and persecution laid down, then all the king's subjects, and all strangers inhabiting the land, that shall believe the apostolic faith, must depart the land to some free country; or else abide the danger of burning, banishing, hanging, and



imprisoning. The first will be a great impoverishing and weakening of our land, besides a loss of the faithfulest subjects and friends. The second will provoke the Lord to wrath, by spilling the blood of his faithful servants, ambassadors, and witnesses; and also open the mouths of all strangers, to speak yet more lamentably of the cruel and bloody persecution of our land.

Ninthly—Because if persecution continue, then the king and state shall have, against their will, many dissemblers in authority and office, both in court, city, and country. Yea, no man of any degree shall know, whether they are all faithful and true Christians that are about him, and with whom he hath to do: seeing most men will conform themselves for fear of persecution, although in their hearts they hate and detest the religion whereto they are forced by law.<sup>2</sup> The which is very dangerous and hurtful, both to

<sup>2</sup> ["A preacher, Mr. Smith, one of us, being called, and, upon their speeches and demands, answering that he marvelled, who being above eleven months prisoner, they should deal with men by imprisonment and other rigorous means, in matters of religion and conscience, rather than by more Christian and fit proceedings; protesting unto them, that he should but dissemble with them, and play the hypocrite, if he should, to please them, or to avoid trouble, submit to go to church, and to join with the public ministry of those assemblies, as it now standeth; he being persuaded in conscience that it was utterly unlawful. The aforesaid commissioner said to him again, Come to the church, and obey the queen's laws, and be a dissembler, be a hypocrite, or a devil, if thou wilt."—Francis Johnson's Letter to the Lord Treasurer, Jan. 18th,

1593. Strype, Annals, iv. 187.—  
"All know well enough, it is no matter how open and professed they be, so as they will be conformable to come to church once a month, and hear your divine service book. Did Mr. W. Smith, your great acquaintance, never tell you how Mr. Wroth, one of the commissioners themselves, when he was called before them, said unto him, *Come to church, and be a devil if thou wilt?*"—F. Johnson's Answer to Maister H. Jacob, p. 200, printed in 1600. From this it appears that Mr. Brook is mistaken in presenting this scene as occurring in the life of Mr. John Smyth, who afterwards became a baptist. It must refer to a Mr. Wm. Smith, at that time in prison, and who frequently appeared before the commissioners.—Lives of the Puritans, ii. 194, 44.]



king and state, in time of temptation from beyond the seas, and in rebellion at home. For they that are not faithful to God in their religion, will never be faithful to the king and state in their allegiance; especially being tried by a great reward, or by a mighty rebel: but will, to increase their honours and revenues, conform themselves; and some to save their honours, lands, goods, and lives, will yield and submit, though against their will, even as they have done in case of religion. For through forcing men to church by persecution, the true-hearted subjects are forced out of the land, and out of the world. Some [are] banished, others burned, hanged, and imprisoned to death.

Persecution  
causes many  
religions in  
the church.

Tenthly—Because if there be many religions in the land, as it is well known there are, then it will come to pass, through the continuance of persecution, that many religions will be continued in the church; seeing all are forced to church, who bring their religions with them as well as their bodies.<sup>3</sup> Whereby all their devotion is against their consciences, and all the church is a confused Babel, *full of every unclean and hateful bird*, even a *hold of foul spirits*, as the scripture speaketh; out of which the people of God are commanded to flee, lest, as of their sins, they be also partakers of their plague. And the bishops, the authors of persecution, are very ignorant to think that when they have gotten people to their church by persecution, that then they have gotten them to their faith and religion; the which is not so, for most people, though contrary-minded, to save life and goods will dissemble their religion. As, for example, the Jews in Spain and Portugal;<sup>4</sup> and the papists,

Rev. xviii.  
2, 4

<sup>3</sup> Better were it to have many religions in the land, than in the church.

<sup>4</sup> [In the beginning of the seventh century, ninety thousand Jews were compelled to receive the sacrament of baptism, and the property of

the obstinate confiscated. So rigorous were the proceedings of the Spanish sovereign, that the clergy sought to moderate his zeal. They "solemnly pronounced an inconsistent sentence—that the sacraments should not be



reformists, and others in England.<sup>5</sup> But when they come hither, or to some other free city or country, where (praised be God) is liberty of the gospel, then they show that before they dissembled, to avoid the cruel persecution of their land.

Moreover, the bishops bewray great ignorance, when they persuade the king and parliament to force prince and people to church by persecution. For if that be the means to come to the church of Christ, then Christ hath taught us to flee the means of salvation, seeing he hath taught us to flee persecution; the which the bishops and their ministers persuade to be a great means to bring men to the church. Indeed, I confess it is the only means to bring prince and people to the false church; and therefore Christ teacheth us to flee that means, lest through persecution, which is a great temptation, we be constrained to go the broad way, which is the false church, *that leadeth to destruction, and many go in thereat.* And no marvel, for there men may be any

Matt. x. 23.

Christ teacheth to flee persecution; ergo, it cannot possibly be good.

Matt. vii. 13.

forcibly imposed, but that the Jews who had been baptized should be constrained, for the honour of the church, to persevere in the external practice of a religion which they disbelieved and detested." Their frequent relapses led to the banishment of the entire nation, at an after period.—Gibbon, Decline, &c. c. 37, p. 617.—Their expulsion was ordered by an edict of Ferdinand and Isabella, in the year 1492, when it is computed that one hundred and seventy thousand families emigrated, comprising eight hundred thousand souls. "Persecution and intolerance compelled many of them to change their religion; and from these incidents, both Spain and Portugal became spread with secret Jews, in the guise of Christians, whose

hypocrisy, or the suspicion of it, chiefly upheld the inquisition."—Sharon Turner, Hist. of Edw. VI. vol. iii. p. 19.—The inquisition affected to have no jurisdiction over Jews until by baptism they had professed their adherence to the church. Any relapse, or suspicion of it, immediately exposed them to the fangs of this dreaded tribunal.—Limborch, Hist. Inquisitionis, pp. 238, 242; Amstel, 1692.]

[<sup>5</sup> Great numbers of papists and puritans conformed to the services of the church, to avoid the pecuniary mulcts and imprisonments to which absence from church exposed them.—Neal, Hist. of the Puritans, i. 244, edit. 1837; Collier, Eccles. Hist. vi. 264, 8vo edit. 1840.]



Note.

thing, except good Christians. For besides Demas the worldling, and Hymeneus the blasphemer, and many other sorts of indifferent Christians, excommunicants, covetous, and profane persons, there are notable rebels and traitors; yea, most cruel and desperate traitors and rebels, as Digby, Catesby, Percy, &c., whose unread and unheard-of treachery will never be forgotten. Which persons, if they had not been forced to church against their consciences, had never enterprised such horrible and hateful treason.<sup>6</sup>

See 2 Tim.  
iii. 3, 4.

Rom. x. 17.

And the bishops should understand, that it is preaching, and not persecuting, that getteth people to the church of Christ. For the scripture saith, *Faith is by hearing, and hearing by the word of God*; and not by the sword of princes and magistrates, as they persuade and practise. And therefore the bishops of our land are truly called antichrists; for by their beastly and bloody persecution, as well as by their blasphemous titles, erroneous doctrines, and popish government, may they justly be termed antichrists.

Matt. xxiv.  
[24.]2 Thess. ii.  
[3]; 1 Tim.  
iv. [1-3].

Eleventhly—Because Christ foretold, that *many false Christs and false prophets should arise, and deceive many; yea, if it were possible, the very elect*. And the apostle Paul did prophesy a departure from the faith. And Peter said,

<sup>6</sup> ["The Roman catholics now utterly despairing, either by flattery to woo, or force to wrest, any free and public exercise of their religion, some of them entered into a damnable and devilish conspiracy, to blow up the parliament-house with gunpowder." Robert Catesby was the author of the plot, Thomas Percy, Sir Everard Digby, and ten others, with some Jesuits, uniting in it. "All of resolute spirits, most of ancient families, some of plentiful fortunes."—Fuller, Ch. Hist. bk. x. sect. ii. 24.—Their expectations of some relaxation

of the penal laws were destroyed. Fines, confiscations even to two-thirds of their property, imprisonments, and death, fell upon them with increased rigour. The king, the parliament, and the bishops, united in enforcing attendance at church and conformity to ecclesiastical laws, repugnant alike to liberty and religion, with the severest penalties. Can we wonder that they should resent the intolerable oppression they suffered?—See Dodd's Ch. Hist. vol. iv. p. 41, Tierney's edition, for a statement of these enactments.]



*there should be false teachers now among the people.* And <sup>2 Peter ii. 1.</sup> John said, *the kings should give their power and authority unto the beast, until the words of God be fulfilled.* Therefore if persecution be not laid down and liberty of the gospel set up, you may persecute the true Christians instead of the false, as your predecessors have done. For they are now, like as they were then, the smallest number; and the false Christians are now, like as they were then, the greatest number. And persecution is a notable mark of the false church and her bishops and ministers, and therefore Christ <sup>Rev. xvii. 13, 17.</sup> would have us flee from it; who overcame the devil and his ministers by the word of God, and by a good, meek, and gentle life; whose steps his bishops and ministers ought to follow.

Twelfthly—Because persecution of such as do preach and teach Christ, is a great hindrance to the liberty of the gospel. FOR THEREBY ARE THE JEWS, TURKS, AND PAGANS OCCASIONED AND ENCOURAGED TO PERSECUTE LIKEWISE ALL SUCH AS PREACH AND TEACH CHRIST IN THEIR DOMINIONS. For if Christian kings and magistrates will not suffer Christians to preach, and preach the gospel of Christ freely and peaceably, in their dominions: how should you expect it of the infidels, unto whom bishops and Christian kings and magistrates ought to give a good example, and not an evil [one], as to burn, banish, hang, and imprison, peaceable and godly Christians, that are no traitors, nor thieves, nor fighters, nor man-slayers, nor yet swearers, nor drunkards, nor whoremasters, nor such like.

And the king and parliament may please to permit all sorts of Christians; yea, Jews, Turks, and pagans, so long as they are peaceable, and no malefactors, as is above mentioned; which, if they be found to be, under two or three witnesses, let them be punished according to God's word. Also, if any be found to be willing liars, false accusers, false

Note.  
False bishops teach  
Turks and  
pagans to  
persecute  
Christians.

Gal. ii. 3, 4.  
v. 11, vi. 12.



allegers and quoters of the scriptures, or other men's writings—as some men willingly do—let them be punished according to right and justice; it is due desert, and no persecution. But let God's word have its full and free passage among them all, even to the end of their lives, in all bountifulness, long-sufferance, and patience; knowing that it is ordained of God's rich mercy, to lead the infidels and such as err unto repentance and amendment, out of the snare of the devil, of whom they are taken and deceived.

Rom. ii. 4;  
2 Tim. ii. 25.

Thirteenthly—Because persecution for religion is to force the conscience; and to force and constrain men and women's consciences to a religion against their wills, is to tyrannize over the soul, as well as over the body. And herein the bishops commit a greater sin, than if they force the bodies of women and maids against their wills. Yea, herein they are more cruel and greater tyrants than the Turks, who, though they force the bodies of strangers to slavery and bondage, yet they let the consciences go free, yea, to Christians that are so contrary to them in religion.<sup>7</sup>

2 Cor. xi. 2.

False bi-  
shops worse  
than Turks  
and pagans.

But these idol-bishops will force the consciences of Christians, their own natural countrymen, even unto spiritual bondage and slavery. And herein they commit fornication both with prince and people, and *have made all, both small and great, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads, so that no man may buy or sell, save he that will go to church, and submit to the bishop's ordinances, and name and mark of their beastly and bloody persecution; through which, as God, they sit in and reign over the con-*

Note.  
False bi-  
shops spiri-  
tual fornicators.

[Rev. xviii.  
9, xiii. 16,  
17.]

<sup>7</sup> ["Indeed, the Turk within his dominions compelleth no man to alter his religion; by reason whereof he is the more able peaceably to enjoy so large an empire. But if he thought he might bring all men to Mahomet's law, as he seeth the

contrary, he would use that rigour in religion that he doth in other things."—A third political discourse made by Wm. Thomas, Esq., for the king's study. Strype's Memorials, II. ii. p. 381, 8vo edit.]



sciences, both of prince and people, which are the spiritual seat and temple of God, bought at a dear price, even with the precious blood of their only spiritual Lord, Jesus Messiah, the true shepherd and bishop of their souls.

2 Thess. ii.  
4; 1 Cor. vi.  
19, 20; 2  
Cor. vi. 16,  
17, with  
Rev. xviii.  
4; 2 Peter  
ii. 1; 1 Peter  
i. 19.

And the bishops in forcing men and women's consciences do therein play the antichrist, as well as the popes. And, indeed, there is never a bishop in the land but is a pope; for pope in Latin is *papa*, and *papa* signifies father in English. All the bishops in our land are called reverend fathers, therefore all the bishops in our land are called reverend popes. So many lord bishops, so many reverend fathers, so many reverend popes. And these are all so many antichrists, so many idols, and so many false gods of England. How many are thy gods, whom thou dost serve! For whose spiritual adoration, the knee of every man and woman must bow,<sup>8</sup> or else they shall be persecuted.<sup>9</sup> Unto whom the king ought not any longer to give his authority and power, lest he fulfil the scripture, which saith, that kings should *give their power and authority unto the beast*.

Rev. xvii.  
13.

Fourteenthly—Because the burning, banishing, hanging, and imprisoning of men and women by protestants, for difference of religion, do justify the burning, banishing, and imprisoning of men and women, by the papists, for difference of religion; even as the papists do justify the Turks

<sup>8</sup> If idolaters ought to be slain, then ought all those that submit and yield spiritual obedience and reverence unto these bishops to be slain. Who then should remain in [the] land alive?

<sup>9</sup> [In the "Reformatio Legum," compiled chiefly by Archbishop Cranmer, edited and published by John Fox, the martyrologist, under the direction of Archbishop Parker, and which body of ecclesiastical law, to the great regret of the hierarchy, but

happily for the puritans, never received the approbation of parliament, it is provided, that so long as an excommunicated person "continued unrelenting, nobody was to pray, to eat, or drink with him, to salute him, or invite him to their houses."—Collier, Eccles. Hist. v. p. 494, 8vo edit. 1840; Fox's Acts and Mon., Preb. Townsend's Preliminary Dissertation, vol. i. p. 179, 8vo edit. 1841.]



and pagans in such like cruelty and tyranny. Wherein now are the protestants more merciful than the papists, or the papists than the Turks? Therefore as the papists, when they complain of the Turks and pagans, for their bloody persecution, do therein condemn themselves; because they are found to do the same, yea, worse—for it is greater tyranny for one Christian to force and kill another, than for Turks and pagans to kill a Christian. For that is no such great wonder, seeing it is a paganish part, who have no better knowledge. But Christians should have better knowledge and more mercy, than to play the pagans against Christians. So also the protestants, when they complain of the papists for their bloody and beastly persecution, do therein condemn themselves, seeing they do the same for which they blame others; and so are rebuked of the scripture, which saith, *Therefore thou art inexcusable, O thou man, whosoever thou art, that blamest another: for in that thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things. And thinkest thou this, O thou man, that judgest them that do such things, and thou doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God?*

Note.

Rom. ii. 1, 3.

Fifteenthly—Because his majesty and parliament would not willingly themselves be forced against their consciences, by the persecution of the bishop of Rome and his princes. So, I beseech them, according to the law Christ hath enjoined Christians, not by persecution to force other men's consciences against their wills, by the irritation<sup>1</sup> of the bishops of our land.

Luke vi. 31.

Sixteenthly—Because persecutions do cause men and women to make shipwreck of faith and good consciences, by forcing a religion upon them even against their minds and consciences: and also do send them quick to the devil in

<sup>1</sup> Or provocation.



their errors, if that be heresy for which they are hanged and burned. Which to do, is a most unchristian, unnatural, cruel, and tyrannous deed; and I am sure you would not be content to be so dealt withal yourselves.

But, indeed, the popish and idol-bishops are the authors hereof against the people, as well as of other persecutions against the princes. For antichristian bishops do draw kings and princes hereto against their minds, as may appear by Edward the Sixth, that godly king of famous memory, who being urged by his bloody bishops to subscribe to the burning of a woman called Joan Boucher, he answered, Rev. xvi. 14. "Will you have me to send her quick to the devil in her error?" But when his blood-thirsty bishops would have no nay, he said again to Archbishop Cranmer, "I lay all the charge thereof on you before God." And Cranmer said, "He had never so much to do in all his life" as to procure it.<sup>2</sup> The Christian answer of King Edward.

Whereby I do perceive that godly kings are drawn to battle against the saints, by antichristian bishops and false prophets, who otherwise would rule and reign more agreeable to the mind of Christ. Also, hereby may all men perceive, that the council and bishops could not satisfy the king's conscience by their persuasion. If they could have showed him the word of God for burning that Christian, it would have prevailed with that godly king, and he might then of faith have consented. But his answer sheweth that he was not of their mind, for all that they had said. And therefore now, if it please you to require of your bishops,

<sup>2</sup> King Edward was an enemy to persecution.—Acts and Mon. p. 1179, [edit. 1610. "He always spared and favoured the life of men; as in a certain dissertation of his once appeared, had with Master Cheke in favouring the life of heretics: inso-

much that when Joan Boucher should be burned, all the council could not move him to put to his hand, but were fain to get Doctor Cranmer to persuade with him, and yet neither could he, with much labour, induce the king so to do, saying," &c.]



warrant from the word of God for the persecuting of Christians, or for forcing prince and people to church, you shall find not one bishop, yea, not all of them together, though assisted with their ministers, will be able to show warrant from God's word, whereby to persuade your consciences thereunto. And *whatsoever is not of faith is sin*, and whatsoever is not from God's word cannot be of faith.

Rom. xiv. 23.

Seventeenthly—Because persecutions of Christians by Christians, do not only justify papists, and teach the Jews and pagans to persecute Christians; but also do teach the papists and others, that know not the mind of Christ and once get the upperhand, to persecute those that persecuted them. Yea, it is a means, as we have had lamentable experience,<sup>3</sup> to set such as are forced to church against their consciences, at deadly hatred against the king and state; and urgeth all them to treason and rebellion, that have not truly learned Christ, who himself was persecuted to death; whose harmless cross all true Christians must take up, and whose gentle and humble steps they must follow and walk in, or else they cannot be his disciples, nor sheep of his pasture.

Matt. xi. 29;  
Luke xiv.  
27.

And neither can the papists be persuaded that persecution is a sin, so long as they, and other Christians also, are persecuted by the protestants; seeing the papists do build their persecution on the same ground with the protestants. But both sorts of bishops do err grossly, as shall be showed, God willing, when they make their defence: except, herewith, their consciences be convinced to yield, as I wish they may, for the salvation of their own souls, the peace both of prince and people, and the safety of the king and state.

In the meanwhile it is to be observed, that those bishops and ministers which persuade the king and parliament to burn, banish, hang, and imprison, for difference of religion,

<sup>3</sup> By Digby, Catesby, &c.



are bloodsuckers and manslayers. And such, it cannot be denied, caused kings and magistrates to be their executioners and tormentors, in burning the martyrs in former times, even in the days of king Henry the Eighth and queen Mary, as the books of Acts and Monuments will witness, if they be not burned. And I ask the bishops and their ministers, if the martyrs should have obeyed the king and queen, rather than have suffered death? Acts iv. 19.

And now I must humbly, and, with all reverence, do beseech his majesty and parliament advisedly to consider among themselves, whether the prince or princess, differing with the church now in matter of conscience and religion, established by law in our land, as the right noble princess Elizabeth did in queen Mary's days, do not incur the danger and cruelty of the law now, as that worthy princess did then? <sup>4</sup> Seeing that popish and cruel law standeth still in force in most points of religion; and who dare trust the bishops and their adherents in such a case, the matter lying in their hands? <sup>5</sup> Note well.

Let it be supposed that the prince's heart should be moved by the Lord to embrace the apostolic faith and discipline; shall he be forced to believe as the bishops do, against his conscience? Shall he be constrained to submit

<sup>4</sup> ["Elizabeth, like Mary, preferred the religion of her mother; and she had the same claims to urge which Mary had so justly made, to be allowed to worship her Creator as she had been educated to do. But what had been permitted to the queen by her brother Edward she now refused to her only sister."—Sharon Turner, *Hist. of Edw. VI.* iii. 416. Elizabeth was shortly after committed to the Tower, and great efforts were made to connect her treasonably with the rebellion of Wyatt. The Bishop of

Winchester appears to have been her chief enemy. "For this is credible to be supposed, that the said wicked Gardiner of Winchester had long laboured his wits, and to this only most principal mark bent all his devices to bring this our happy and dear sovereign out of the way, as by his words and doings may sufficiently appear."—Fox, *Acts and Mon.* iii. 1900, ed. 1610.]

<sup>5</sup> The bishops, as the high priests, force men to obey man rather than God.



to their government and discipline, against his conscience? Shall he live in vexation and persecution, and in danger of his life, by the bishops and law established, as the princess Elizabeth did? Yea, it must be thus with our right noble prince,<sup>6</sup> except there be partiality. Yea, it will be thus with his princely person, except those popish and cruel laws be repealed and extinguished.

Better to-day, than tarry till to-morrow.

Wherefore I meekly entreat, seeing death is most certain, though most uncertain when, that those antichristian and popish laws may be disannulled and made void in time, lest we all lament and bewail it, when it will be too late. And I pray your majesty and honours to consider, that *kings'*

[Prov. xxi. 1.]

*and princes' hearts are in the hands of the Lord, as the rivers of waters; to turn as he will.* And the scripture saith,

Rev. xvii. 16.

*the ten horns, by which I understand ten kings, shall hate the whore, and make her desolate and naked.* Likewise the scripture saith to Abraham, the father of believing princes

Gen. xvii. 6; Rom. iv. 17.

*as well as believing people, Also I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and will make nations of thee; yea, kings shall proceed of thee.*

Which scripture doth also overthrow the judgment of those men, that hold a Christian may not be a king nor magistrate. Let such consider, that the Lord here speaketh of Abraham's spiritual seed, and not of his natural seed. Because if it be understood of his natural seed, then cannot Abraham be the father of many nations, seeing all Abraham's natural seed are called Jews, and are but one nation of the Jews.<sup>7</sup> So that the covenant of God could not be performed, that said, *I will make nations of thee; yea, kings shall proceed of thee.* Therefore it must be understood of his spiritual seed, of which may be kings and princes that are not naturally descended of him, as well as people that

<sup>6</sup> [Prince Charles, afterwards king.]

Gen. xvii. 8, with xv. 13, 18, and

<sup>7</sup> Ishmael and Edom excepted,

xvi. 10, xvii. 18, 20, xxvi. 3, xxi. 13.



are naturally descended of him. Therefore believing kings may safely walk in the steps of their father Abraham, and with their swords defend their subjects against their adversaries, and redeem their brethren out of the jaws of all devouring beasts and bloody persecutors, for they bear not the sword for nought. Gen. xiv. 14. Rom. xiii. 4.

And now, also, I desire those subjects, of what degree soever, that would destroy their kings and governors for difference in religion, to consider, that therein they justify their kings and governors, which destroy their subjects for difference of religion. For as it is sin for kings and governors to destroy their subjects for difference of religion, at the persuasion of their bishops: so is it sin, but in a higher degree, for subjects to destroy their kings and governors for difference of religion, at the persuasion of their bishops and ministers.

Therefore persecution for difference in religion is a monstrous and cruel beast, that destroyeth both prince and people, hindereth the gospel of Christ, and scattereth his disciples that witness and profess his name. But permission of conscience in difference of religion, saveth both prince and people; for it is a meek and gentle lamb, which not only furthereth and advanceth the gospel, but also fostereth and cherisheth those that profess it: as may be seen by the permission of the Princess Elizabeth,<sup>7</sup> and others that were permitted and fostered in Dutchland at that time.<sup>8</sup>

Permission of conscience a furtherance to the gospel, and a safety both to prince and people.

<sup>7</sup> ["After the death of this Gardiner, followed the death also and dropping away of other her enemies, whereby by little and little her jeopardy decreased, fear diminished, hope of comfort began to appear as out of a dark cloud." Philip of Spain, the husband of Queen Mary, interfered on behalf of the princess,

and she shortly obtained her release, although for a time she partially conformed to some of the external observances of the papal church.—Fox, Acts and Mon. iii. 1900; Rapin, ii. 40, fol. 1733.]

<sup>8</sup> [By the influence of William, Prince of Orange, their liberator, various edicts were issued by the



Also permission of conscience is a great and sure band and benefit to the king and state, as may likewise be seen in the same Princess Elizabeth; who, if she had not been permitted, but had suffered death, as the bloody bishops earnestly desired, then had not the kingdom been so surely, nor yet so purely, kept and preserved for his majesty and his royal issue, as now it is. The Lord be praised therefore.

Rev. xii. 6,  
14, xiii. 1, 7;  
2 Cor. xi. 13.

Further, I beseech his right excellent majesty and parliament to observe, that persecution was the occasion that the apostolic church was at first scattered and driven into the wilderness, that is, desert places of the world; whither she fled to save herself from the rage and tyranny of antichrist, and his apostles and ministers, the first authors of persecution under the gospel. Therefore his majesty and parliament may please to consider, that so long as persecution continue, so long will the apostolic church continue scattered and persecuted into the secret places of this world. And no marvel, for her faith and discipline is as offensive, as odious, and as unwelcome unto antichrist and his bishops and ministers now, as it was then; as their burning, banishing, hanging, and imprisoning do witness even unto this day.

And it is to be noted, that as the apostolic faith and discipline—in the apostles' days, when through them true signs and wonders were wrought by the extraordinary gift and power of the Holy Ghost—did let and hinder the mystery of iniquity, wrought by antichrist, his apostles and

States of Holland, granting liberty of conscience to all in their dominions. Such an edict was published in Antwerp in 1579, after a noble declaration from him, that "nothing could, in his opinion, be more unreasonable

than to force conscience, and to refuse that liberty to others which even we ourselves desire to enjoy."—Brandt's Hist. of Reformation in the Low Countries, i. 359. Lond. edit. 1720.]