



**The fortresse**  
of the faythefull agaynst  
the cruell assautes of pouer  
tie and honger, newlye made  
for the comforte of poore  
nedye Chrystians, by  
*Thomas Becon.*



*Prouer. xviii.*

A myghtye stronge fortresse is the  
name of the Lorde. Unto that flyeth  
the righteous, and is in sauegard.

*Psal. xxxvii.*

I haue bene yong, and am nowe  
olde, and yet sawe I neuer the ryght-  
ous forsaken, nor hys chyldren beg-  
gyngye theyr breaude. The righteous  
is euer mercifull and lendeth, and yet  
shall hys chyldren haue Gaddes plen-  
ty and ynoughe.

ARISE FOR



IT IS DAY.

RIGHT WORSHIPFUL SIR JOHN ROBSART<sup>1</sup>, KNIGHT,

THOMAS BECON WISHETH CONTINUAL HEALTH BOTH OF  
BODY AND MIND, FROM GOD THE FATHER IN  
CHRIST JESU OUR LORD.

So oft as I behold the wretched and too much miserable face of this needy and beggarly world, yea, so oft as I consider the lamentable and pitiful state of the poor people, which are now grown unto such a number, that they be almost innumerable, and so assailed with the cruel darts of poverty and hunger, that they in a manner despair of necessary food and convenient apparel for the sustentation of their poor wretched carcasses, and by this means, for a redress of these their too manifold miseries, part of them whose brains are not perfectly settled, whose judgments are not thoroughly stayed in the way of perfect reason, not patiently bearing the cross of poverty, contrary to Christ's order and their bounden duty, attempt, unto the great dolour of all good men, ungodly and unlawful enterprises, as wicked counsels, unjust assemblies, abominable seditions, devilish insurrections, detestable commotions, unrighteous spoilings of other men's goods, uncharitable railings upon their superiors, &c., utterly defacing, so much as in them is, the face of the commonweal, not considering this plague of famine and hunger to be sent into the world for sin, according to the threatenings of God expressed in the holy scriptures—I can none otherwise than lament, and heartily wish better and more prosperous things to the needy and poor creatures of God universally.

Deut. xxviii.  
1 Kings xvii.  
Jer. xviii.  
Ezek. iv. v.  
xiv. xxix.  
xxxii. xxxiii.  
Hos. ii.

For although, according to the common proverb,

Little wot the full sow, that is in the sty,  
What the hungry sow aileth, that goeth by,

Common  
proverbs.

yet so many as are of God, and led with any natural or humane affection, they remember this old saying,

The nature  
of charity.

It is merry in hall,  
When beards wag all;

and cannot, even in the midst of their wealth, but lament the misery of the miserable, the poverty of the poor, the famine of the famished, and to the uttermost of

[<sup>1</sup> Sir John Robsart, or Robessart, was a gentleman of honourable lineage and large possessions in the county of Norfolk. An ancestor, John Robsart, distinguished himself under the seneschal of Hainault in the wars of Edward III. His son Robert, baron of Cannon in Hainault, was also a gallant soldier in the campaigns of those days, in both France and Spain. He left three sons, who were all in the English service. John, the eldest, having been knighted before the reign of Henry IV., received from that monarch a grant of £100. a year for life out of the exchequer. He was afterwards a knight of the garter, and was one of the commissioners appointed to negotiate at Troyes the treaty which was to secure Henry V.'s succession to the French throne, and his marriage with the princess Catharine, on whom he was charged to attend till Henry should arrive to celebrate the nuptials. A more mournful service was not far distant. On his royal master's decease he attended his corpse to England. His descendant, Sir Terrey Robsart, married Elizabeth, daughter and heiress of Sir Thomas Kerdeston of Sidistern, Norfolk, by whom he had a

daughter, Lucy, the wife of Edward Walpole, Esq. ancestor of the earl of Orford, and Sir John Robsart, to whom this treatise is dedicated, and of whom Becon makes such honourable mention. Sir John was the father of the unfortunate Anne or Amy Robsart, who was wedded with much pomp, June 4, 1550, (see king Edward VI.'s journal) to Sir Robert Dudley, afterwards earl of Leicester. This lady, having been sent to the solitary manor-house of Cumnor in Berkshire, belonging to Sir Richard Verney, died soon after, in consequence, it was reported, of a fall down a staircase. Her remains were hurried to the earth without an inquest; but her father, Sir John Robsart, came to the village, caused them to be disinterred, and a strict investigation to be made by the coroner. Nothing satisfactory however resulted; and her husband, on whom her singular death left a stain of suspicion, ordered her body to be re-buried with great solemnity in St Mary's Church, Oxford. As his daughter died without issue, Sir John Robsart's estates in Norfolk passed into the family of his sister above mentioned.]

their power study to relieve the distress of the needy, both with their goods and counsel. As a true christian man joyeth with them that are glad, even so sorroweth he with them that are sad.

Rom. xii. Charity seeketh not her own, but both wisheth and doeth well to all men, even to her enemies. Charity putteth on the property of Christ, which became poor to make other rich. Charity joyeth not at her own joy, if other sorrow. Charity delighteth not in her own fullness, if other want. Charity abhorreth her own rest, if other be disquieted. "I am cumbered daily," saith St Paul, "and do care for all congregations. Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is offended, and I am not grieved?" Yea, charity refuseth almost to be saved, if other enjoy not the like benefit.

1 Cor. xiii. Did not that most excellent prophet Moses desire God either to forgive the children of Israel their sins, or else to wipe him out of the book of life? Did not blessed 2 Cor. viii. Paul wish to be accursed from God, so that the Israelites, his kinsmen after the flesh, Acts vii. might be saved? Did not the glorious martyr Stephen, according to the example Luke xxiii. of Christ, pray for his enemies? So wholly doth charity give herself to serve the health and wealth of other.

And as touching the relief of the poor and needy, oppressed with the want of worldly things, what good and godly man hath not at all times, as occasion and ability hath served, sought it? Who, being godly-minded, seeing his christian brother or sister in necessity, seeketh not all means possible to help them? Can a Christian abound in worldly wealth, and suffer his neighbour to famish or to die for cold? He hath not put on the bowels and tender compassion of Christ, which is not moved with pity toward his needy neighbour.

Hospitality. O what goodly and notable examples doth the holy scripture minister unto us of succouring the succourless! What a mirror to behold is that most reverend patriarch Abraham, the father of the faithful, unto the faithful! With what alacrity and cheerfulness of mind did he receive into his house the angels of God, being in men's likeness! With what diligence prepared he all things necessary for them, as he Gen. xviii. thought, weary bodies! When Lot saw the two angels of God, whom he judged to be men, coming unto Sodom at night, how reverently did he behave himself toward them, and instantly desired them to come into his house, and there lodged that night! "I beseech you, sirs," saith he, "turn into the house of your servant, and abide there: wash your feet, and in the morning ye shall go forth on your journey." "And afterward he made them a feast," saith the scripture. These two godly ancient fathers thought it not meet to suffer strangers and way-faring men to pass foreby their houses without relief. They did according to God's holy will expressed by the prophet, saying: "Break thy bread to the hungry, and lead the needy and the way-faring into thy house. When thou seest a naked man, cover him; so shalt thou not despise thy flesh." "Forget not hospitality," saith St Paul; "for by it certain unwares Heb. xiii. have received angels into their houses."

How ready patient Job was to succour the succourless, and to relieve the needy, it is evident by these his words: "When the poor desired any thing of me, have I denied it them? Have I caused the widow to stand waiting for me in vain? Have I eaten my portion alone, that the fatherless hath had no part with me? For mercy grew up with me fro my youth, and compassion from my mother's womb. Have I seen any man perish through nakedness and want of clothing? or any poor man for lack of raiment, whose sides thanked me not because he was warmed with the wool of my sheep?" Again he saith: "I have not suffered a stranger to lie without; but I opened my doors unto him that went by the way."

As I may pass over many other examples contained in the old testament, which declare how merciful divers godly both men and women were toward strangers and poor people; how tender-hearted and full of most loving pity and unfeigned compassion did our Saviour Christ shew himself, when he fed so many people with seven loaves and a few small fishes: "I am inwardly moved with compassion toward the people," saith he, "because they have now been with me three days and have nothing to eat; and if I send them away fasting to their own houses, they shall faint by the way."

Moreover, as I may let pass divers other miracles which he did for the relief of

Mark viii.

the poor, as turning water into wine at the marriage in Cana Galilee, and feeding five thousand with five barley loaves and two fishes; did he not shew himself to take great care for the poor, when he gave the rich men this commandment? "When thou makest a dinner or supper, call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, neither thy kinsmen, nor thy rich neighbours, lest they also bid thee again, and a recompence be made thee. But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the feeble, the lame, and the blind, and thou shalt be happy; for they cannot recompense thee: but thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just men." In the description of the general judgment, which shall be at the last day, is not the reward of everlasting life set forth to the merciful, and eternal damnation to the merciless? "The judgment," saith St James, "shall be without mercy to them that hath shewed no mercy." "Blessed are the merciful; for they shall obtain mercy." "Give alms of that ye have; and behold, all things are clean unto you," saith our Saviour Christ. Was not the rich glutton damned because he was led with no pity toward the poor?

O how diligent were the apostles after Christ's ascension to appoint deacons to minister unto the poor, and to provide that they lack nothing! How earnest was blessed Paul in exhorting the Christians to make collections for the poor! Yea, how wrought he with his own hands, that he might have whereof to give unto the needy! What a friendly lesson in the poor people's behalf writeth he unto bishop Timothy, to be declared unto the rich worldlings! "Command them that are rich (saith he) in this world, that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, which giveth us abundantly all things to enjoy them; that they do good works, that they be ready to give and glad to distribute, laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may obtain eternal life."

How is Dorcas, a noble and virtuous woman, commended in the holy scriptures! "She was full of good works and alms-deeds," saith blessed Luke. Yea, she with her own hands made coats and garments for the poor. An example worthy to be followed of our gentlewomen and ladies now-a-days, which in tiring and garnishing themselves know neither measure nor end; but of preparing garments for the poor, they for the most part do not so much as once dream. Dorcas could not abide that she herself should have a rich wardrobe full of sumptuous apparel, and see her christian brethren and sistern go naked and die for cold: yea, rather than they should want, she will set her own hands to work, which thing many of our fine white-fingered gentlewomen, yea, and some inferior to them, disdain to do.

How instantly did a certain woman, named Lydia, desire St Paul and his companions to come into her house, and there to have all things necessary for them! "If ye think (saith she) that I believe on the Lord, come into my house, and abide there." Would God the like affection toward the preachers of God's word were found in our men and women at this present! then should not so many of them be oppressed with poverty, and wander abroad without livings, as they do now, unto the great slander of the gospel which they preach. Is it not a shame that they should want temporal things, which minister unto us spiritual and heavenly things? "Hath not the Lord ordained, that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel?" Are not they that rule well, and labour in word and doctrine, worthy of double honour? Is it not convenient, that the husbandman which laboureth should first take of the fruits? Are we not forbidden to muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn? Is not a reward ordained for the workman? "If we have sown among you spiritual things, is it a great matter if we reap your carnal things?" "Do ye not know that they, which minister about holy things, live of the sacrifice? they, which wait of the temple, are partakers of the temple? Even so also did the Lord ordain that they, which preach the gospel, should live of the gospel," saith St Paul.

The apostle requireth that a bishop, that is, a spiritual minister, should maintain hospitality. How unseemly then is it for them that should feed other, either miserably to live on other men's trenchers, or else, like vagabonds, to hunt about for their living! Neither our ancestors, nor we in times past, have so dealt with the sorcerer-like sacrificers, with the prattling papists, with the monstrous monks, with the chattering canons, with the flattering friars, and such other mumming mummings as, under the visor

John ii.  
John vi.

Luke xiv.

Matt. xxv

James ii.

Matt. v.  
Luke xi.  
Luke xvi.

Acts vi. xi.

Acts xxiv.  
Rom. xv.  
1 Cor. xvi.  
2 Cor. viii.ix.  
Acts xx.  
2 Thess. iii.  
1 Tim. vi.Acts ix.  
Mirrors for  
gentle-  
women.Acts xvi.  
Preachers  
unprovided.

1 Cor. ix.

1 Tim. v.

2 Tim. ii.

1 Tim. v.

Matt. x.

1 Cor. ix.

Matt. x.

1 Tim. iii.

Tit. i.

Papists here-  
tofore better  
provided for  
than preach-  
ers now.

of painted holiness, have deceived almost all the world, leading us from God's blessed word to man's trifling traditions, from the way of salvation unto the state of damnation, from heaven to hell, from God to the devil. But so hath it ever gone for the most part with the true preachers in this wicked and unthankful world. In the time of king Achab the true prophets of God were slain, and they that remained alive were secretly kept in caves, and there fed with bread and water of good Abdy, which unfeignedly feared God. If they had not been preserved by that godly man, they had either been slain, or else famished. But the priests of Baal abounded with all kind of wealth. Eight hundred and fifty, saith the scripture, "did eat of Jesabel's table."

1 Kings xviii.

Jer. xx.  
xxxviii.

Who knoweth not that the prophet Jeremy was thrown into prison, cruelly entreated, and like to die for hunger, when Phashur, the priests, and such other false prophets, even man-pleasers, lived in all wealth and abundance of worldly things? With what poverty the disciples of Christ were grieved, it may easily be known, when they for very hunger were compelled to pluck the ears of corn and to eat. And how poor Christ was, not a few places of the scripture do declare; when in the mean time Annas, Caiphas, Alexander, the scribes, the Pharisees, the lawyers, the bishops, the priests, the sacrificers, with all the rabble of hypocrites, lived in all pomp and pleasure. This ingratitude, churlishness, and illiberality<sup>1</sup> toward the ministers of God's word shall not escape unpunished. "He that despiseth you despiseth me," saith Christ, "and he that despiseth me despiseth him that sent me."

Mark ii.

Matt. viii.  
xvi.  
John xviii.  
Zech. ix.  
Matt. xxi.

But let us return unto our matter. What need I rehearse Martha, Zache, Simon the tanner, Jason, Aquila, Philip the evangelist, Publius, Philemon, Gaius, and such other, which all shewed themselves courteous, gentle, and beneficial toward all the poor, but "chiefly toward them that were of the household of faith," as St Paul warneth?

Luke x.  
Luke xix.  
Acts ix.  
Acts xvii.  
Acts xxi.  
xxviii.  
Gal. vi.

If we have recourse unto ancient histories, O how shall we learn of them the fatherly pity and godly glad affection which was in the bishops and deacons toward the poor people, when Christ's church began to flourish! Read we not that, for the comfort of the poor and oppressed Christians, the godly ancient bishops did not only sell the ornaments, treasures, and jewels of the church, but also the very boxes of gold and silver, wherein the Lord's bread, which we commonly call the sacrament of the altar, was kept? They had rather keep the sacrament of Christ's body in a basket of wickers, and to sell that they made of gold for the relief of the poor, than they should want<sup>2</sup>. O godly bishops and faithful shepherds, which so diligently watched for the preservation of their sheep, both bodily and ghostly!

Mirrors for  
our bishops.

Is it not to be thought, that the sums of money, which the beneficed men yearly pay to the archdeacon of every diocese, were first of all freely granted and given of our predecessors to be distributed among the poor people of that diocese, as necessity required, and their discretion served? But how that money is now abused, who seeth not? The office of the archdeacon is yearly to visit every parish in the diocese where he dwelleth, and diligently to see what the poor people of every parish want, and to make provision for them; and unto that use, as I said before, was that money given, which every beneficed man payeth to the archdeacon: again, to see whether the parson or vicar be resident upon his benefice, and maintain such hospitality, as the poor of the parish be the better for it. But now-a-days the archdeacon ask not for the poor, nor in what condition they stand, but whether the hosts be well kept in the pix from moulding and furring, whether corporas cloths be clean washed, whether the chrismatory be safely locked up, whether the priest useth any unhallowed garments or chalice in his sacrificing, whether the copes, vestments, and albs be sufficiently repaired, whether the church, chancel, or church-yard be in case good enough, and such other trifles. God have mercy on us, and send us once a redress of these things!

The office of  
the archdeacon.

Furthermore, with what a godly pity and charitable affection did our ancestors burn toward the poor members of Christ, which (as I may speak nothing of abbeys, colleges, chantries, free chapels, &c.) built with their great cost hospitals, and such other houses, enduing the same with yearly revenues for the relief of the poor!

Follow these  
forefathers.[<sup>1</sup> So edition of 1550; folio, *liberality*.][<sup>2</sup> See Vol. I. page 32, note 1.]

Men cry, "Fathers, fathers," but the manners of these fathers are clean forgotten. "All Phil. ii. seek their own advantage, and not those things which pertain unto Jesu Christ."

Thus see we that all good men have ever pitied the poor, and sought all means possible to do them good. But the contrary is found among us now-a-days. For men, according to St Paul's prophecy, are "the lovers of themselves," and not of the 2 Tim. iii. poor. They are covetous to themselves, and not liberal to the poor. They heap to themselves, they provide nothing for the poor. There be many signs of the last day to be at hand; but this cold affection, and more cold love, and most cold liberality toward the poor, prove evidently that it is not far off.

Among many other signs and tokens which Christ declareth to go before the day of judgment, is not this one of the most evident? "Forasmuch," saith he, "as iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold." When did iniquity ever so abound? When was the love of men ever so cold toward the poor? The rich worldlings in times past could build great monasteries for the bellied hypocrites, great colleges, chantries, and free chapels for soul-carriers and purgatory-rakers; but who buildeth so much as a cottage now for to harbour a silly poor man? Men in times past disherited their lawful heirs to nourish in idleness a number of idle bellies under the pretence of prayer; but who now even of his superfluities doeth any notable thing for Christ's poor members? A number of people heretofore hath decked idols and mawmets with silk, velvet, and other precious vestures, yea, with gold, silver, pearl, and precious stones: how many now, in so great a multitude, do clothe the poor naked creatures of God with canvas and rug? They gave shoes of silver and gold set with rich stones to dumb mawmets; but who now giveth shoes of leather to the poor? O too much unmercifulness! Can these things escape unplagued? If the Lord liveth, plagues be at hand, except we amend. This our ingratitude toward God, and unmercifulness toward the poor, will surely accelerate and haste forward the vengeance of God to fall upon us. For whether we respect and behold the spirituality or temporality, their love toward the poor, compared with the love of our ancestors, is very cold, yea, it is almost nothing. But if we compare their covetousness with the desire of our elders toward the goods of the world, we shall find it so far to excel and surmount as the high heavens do the low earth.

How do many of our spiritual men, as they are called, heap promotion upon pro- Spiritual men covetous. motion, benefice upon benefice, deanery upon deanery, prebend upon prebend, and prebend for advantage! Ah, one filthy belly to devour so many wealthy livings! O abomination! And yet the careless swine are led with no pity toward the poor, whose sweat of their brows they lick up, whose labours of their hands they, cormorant-like, devour. Behold their pain in teaching, it is very small: behold their hospitality, it is nothing at all. "Wo be unto those shepherds," saith God by the Ezek. xxxiv. prophet, "that feed themselves! Should not the shepherds feed the flocks? Ye have eaten up the fat, ye have clothed you with the wool, the best fed have ye slain; but the flock have ye not nourished. The weak have ye not holden up, the sick have ye not healed, the broken have ye not bound together, the outcasts have ye not brought again, the lost have ye not sought; but churlishly and cruelly have ye ruled them."

Again, how do many of the temporal worldlings join farm to farm, office to office, Temporal men covetous. lordship to lordship, pasture to pasture, land to land, house to house, and house for advantage! that the vengeance of God threatened by the prophets may come upon them: "Wo be unto you, that join house to house, and couple land to land, so Isai. v. nigh one to another, that the poor man can get no more ground! Shall ye dwell alone upon the face of the earth? These things are come up unto my ears, saith the Lord of hosts. Shall not many great and gorgeous houses be so waste that no man shall dwell in them?" Again: "Wo be unto him that heapeth up other men's goods! Hab. ii. How long will he lade himself with the thick clay?" "Wo be unto him that covetously gathereth evil-gotten goods into his house, that he may set his nest on high, to escape from the power of misfortune! Thou hast devised the shame of thine own house." "The very stones of the wall shall cry out of it." O how doth our Saviour Christ thunder against the rich worldlings that live all in pleasure, and yet are not once

Luke vi. moved with pity and compassion toward the poor! "Wo be to you that are rich (saith he), which have your consolation! Wo be to you that are filled; for ye shall hunger! Wo be to you that laugh now; for ye shall mourn and weep!" Thus see we what unmercifulness reigneth in the world almost universally; and how all the threatenings of God's vengeance cannot quench in the wicked worldlings' hearts the insatiable thirst of gathering worldly goods, but that they go still forth to heap up thick clay against themselves, yea, and that beyond all measure, not considering how vain and deceitful the possession of temporal things is in this world. "He heapeth treasure upon treasure," saith David, "and yet knoweth he not for whom he gathereth these things together."

Luke xii. Notable is the history that our Saviour Christ telleth of a certain rich man in the gospel of St Luke. "The ground of a certain rich man," saith he, "brought forth plentiful fruits, and he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do; because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? And he said, Thus will I do: I will destroy my barns and build greater, and then will I gather all my goods that are grown unto me, and I will say to my soul, O soul, thou hast much goods laid up in store for many years: take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night will they fetch away thy soul again from thee. Then whose shall those things be which thou hast provided? So is it with him that gathereth riches to himself, and is not rich toward God."

Ecclus. xxxi. What then remaineth but that they which are godly rich remember themselves to be the stewards of God, endued with worldly substance not to spend it voluptuously, or after their own foolish fancy about trifles, but upon their necessaries, and that they may conveniently spare to distribute unto the poor, which are their brothers in Christ, of the same flesh and blood, and fellow-inheritors with them of one and of the same glory? "O blessed is the rich which is found without blemish, and hath not gone after gold, nor hoped in money and treasures! Where is there such a one? and we shall commend him, and call him blessed: for great things doeth he among his people."

Sentences for the godly rich to remember. And that the godly rich may be the more encouraged to gratify the poor, and to do good unto the needy in this wretched and beggarly time, let them ever set these and such like sentences of the holy scriptures before the eyes of their mind.

Ecclus. iv. "My son, defraud not the poor of his alms, and turn not away thine eyes from him that hath need. Despise not an hungry soul, and despise not the poor in his necessity. Grieve not the heart of him that is helpless, and withdraw not the gift from the needful. Refuse not the prayer of one that is in trouble: turn not away thy face from the needy. Cast not thine eyes aside from the poor for any evil will, that thou give him none occasion to speak evil of thee. For if he complain in the bitterness of his soul, his prayer shall be heard; even he that made him shall hear him. Be courteous unto the company of the poor, humble thy soul unto the elder, and bow down thy head to a man of worship. Let it not grieve thee to bow down thine ear unto the poor; but pay thy debt, and give him a friendly answer, and that with meekness. Deliver him that suffereth wrong from the hand of the oppressor, and be not faint-hearted when thou sittest in judgment. Be merciful unto the fatherless as a father, and be instead of an husband unto their mother; so shalt thou be as an obedient son of the Highest, and he shall love thee more than thy mother doth."

Ecclus. xxix. "Help the poor for the commandment's sake, and let him not go empty from thee because of his necessity. Lese<sup>1</sup> thy money for thy brother and neighbour's sake, and bury it not under a stone where it rusteth and corrupteth. Gather thy treasure after the commandment of the Highest; and so shall it bring thee more profit than gold. Lay up thy alms in the hand of the poor; and it shall keep thee from all evil. A man's alms is a purse with him, and shall keep a man's favour as the apple of an eye; and afterward shall it arise and pay every man his reward upon his head. It shall fight for thee against thine enemies better than the shield of a giant, or spear of the mighty." "Whoso is<sup>2</sup> merciful and giveth alms, that is the right thank-offering."

Ecclus. xxxv.

[<sup>1</sup> Lese: lose.]

[<sup>2</sup> So ed. 1550: folio, *Who is so.*]

“Look, what thine hand is able, give with a cheerful eye. For the Lord recompenseth and giveth thee seven times as much again.” “Give alms of thy goods, and turn never thy face from the poor; and so shall it come to pass that the face of the Lord shall not be turned away from thee. Be merciful after thy power. If thou have much, give plenteously: if thou have little, do thy diligence gladly to give of that little. For so gatherest thou thyself a good reward in the day of necessity. For mercy delivereth from all sin and from death, and suffereth not the soul to come in darkness. A great comfort is mercy before the high God unto all them that shew it.” “Eat thy bread with the hungry and poor, and cover the naked with thy clothes.” Teb. iv.

“He that is merciful doth himself a benefit; but whoso hurteth his neighbour is a tyrant. He that is liberal in giving shall have plenty, and he that watereth shall be watered also himself. Whoso hoardeth up his corn shall be cursed among the people; but blessing shall light upon his head that giveth food.” “Whoso despiseth his neighbour doth amiss; but blessed is he that hath pity of the poor.” “He that doth a poor man wrong blasphemeth his Maker; but whoso hath pity of the poor doeth honour unto God.” “He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the Lord; and look, what he layeth out, it shall be paid him again.” “He that is bent unto mercy shall be blessed; for he giveth of his bread unto the poor.” “He that giveth unto the poor shall not lack; but he that turneth away his eyes from such as be in necessity shall suffer great poverty himself.” “Blessed is he that considereth the poor and needy: the Lord shall deliver him in the time of trouble: the Lord shall preserve him and keep him, and make him blessed upon earth, and not deliver him into the hands of his enemies: the Lord shall comfort him when he lieth sick upon his bed, yea, and make his bed in the time of his sickness.” Prov. xi.  
Prov. xiv.  
Prov. xix.  
Prov. xxii.  
Prov. xxviii.  
Psal. xli.

“Lay not up for yourselves treasure upon earth, where the rust and moth doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal. But lay up for you treasures in heaven, where neither rust nor moth doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.” “He that hath two coats, let him part with him that hath none; and he that hath meat, let him do likewise.” “Give to every one that asketh thee.” “Be ye merciful, as your Father is merciful.” “Sell that ye have, and give alms. And prepare you bags, which wax not old, even a treasure that faileth not in heaven, where no thief cometh, neither moth corrupteth.” “Make you friends of the unrighteous mammon, that, when ye shall have need, they may receive you into everlasting habitations.” “If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell all that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven.” “He which soweth little shall reap little; and he that soweth (in giving) largely and freely shall reap plenteously. And let every man do according as he hath purposed in his heart, not grudgingly, or of necessity; for God loveth a cheerful giver.” “While we have time, let us do good unto all men, but chiefly unto them which are of the household of faith.” “To do good and to distribute forget not; for with such sacrifices God is pleased.” “He that hath the goods of this world, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? My babes, let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in work and truth.” Matt. vi.  
Luke iii.  
Luke vi.  
Luke xii.  
Luke xvi.  
Matt. xix.  
2 Cor. ix.  
Gal. vi.  
Heb. xiii.  
1 John iii.

Again, that the ungodly rich may learn somewhat to bridle their covetous affects, and by that means be the more occasioned not to be altogether unmerciful to the poor, let them grave these and such like texts of the holy scripture in their hearts, and believe them to be as true as there is a God. “Trust not unto thy riches, and say not, Tush, I have enough for my life:...for it shall not help thee in the time of vengeance and temptation.” “There is nothing worse than a covetous man. Why art thou proud, O thou earth and ashes? there is not a more wicked thing than to love money. And why? such one hath his soul to sell, yet is he but filthy dung while he liveth.” “He that loveth riches shall not be justified, and whoso followeth corruption shall have enough thereof. Many one are come in great misfortune by the reason of gold, and have found their destruction before them. It is a tree of falling unto them that offer it up; and all such as be foolish fall therein.” Sentences for  
the ungodly  
rich to  
remember.  
Eccclus. v.  
Eccclus. x.  
Eccclus. xxxi.

“He that trusteth in his riches shall have a fall; but the righteous shall flourish as Prov. xi.



Prov. xxiii. the green leaf." "Take not over-great travail and labour to be rich: beware of such a purpose. Why wilt thou set thine eyes upon the thing which suddenly vanisheth away? for riches make themselves wings, and take their flight like an eagle into the air." Prov. xxviii. "He that giveth unto the poor shall not lack; but he that turneth away his eyes from such as are in necessity shall suffer great poverty himself."

Eccles. xxxiv. "The bread of the needy is the life of the poor: he that defraudeth him of it is a man-slayer." Eccles. v. "He that loveth money will never be satisfied with money; and whoso delighteth in riches shall have no profit thereof. Where as much riches is, there are many also that spend them away. And what pleasure more hath he that possesseth them, saving that he may look upon them with his eyes? A labouring man sleepeth sweetly, whether it be little or much that he eateth; but the abundance of the rich will not suffer him to sleep."

Matt. vi. "Ye cannot serve God and mammon," that is, the worldly riches. "Verily, I say unto you, a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven: and again I say unto you, it is easier for a cable rope to go through the eye of a needle, than a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God." Matt. xix. "Wo be to you rich men, which have your consolation! Wo be to you that are filled, for ye shall hunger! Wo be to you that laugh now, for ye shall mourn and lament!"

Luke vi. "Take heed and beware of covetousness. For no man's life standeth in the abundance of the things which he possesseth."

Luke xiii. "Neither thieves, nor covetous persons, nor yet extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God."

1 Cor. vi. "Let not covetousness...be once named among you, as it becometh saints. For this ye know, that no...covetous person, which is a worshipper of idols, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God."

Eph. v. "Godliness is great riches, if a man be content with that he hath. For we brought nothing into the world, neither may we carry any thing out. But when we have food and raiment, we must therewith be content: they that will be rich fall into temptation and snares, and into many foolish and noisome lusts, which drown men into perdition and destruction; for covetousness of money is the root of all evil: which while some lusted after, they erred from the faith, and tangled themselves with many sorrows. But thou, man of God, flee such things: follow righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness."

1 Tim. vi. "Let your conversation be without covetousness, and be content with such things as ye have already. For he hath said, I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee."

Heb. xiii. "The judgment shall be without mercy to him that sheweth no mercy."

James ii. "Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl on your wretchedness that shall come upon you."

James v. "Your riches are corrupt, your garments are moth-eaten. Your gold and silver is cankered, and the rust of them shall be a witness unto you, and shall eat the flesh, as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together in your last days. Behold, the hire of labourers which have reaped down your fields, which hire is of you kept back by fraud, crieth; and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of hosts. Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth, and been wanton. Ye have nourished your hearts, as in a day of slaughter: ye have condemned and killed the just; and he hath not resisted you."

If both the godly and ungodly rich would set these sentences before the eyes of their mind continually, surely it should go much better with the poor people than it doth at this present. For then would not the rich men so greedily gripe to themselves the goods of this world, nor so niggardly keep them after they have gotten them, as they do now. Then would not many gentlemen, as they are called, so grow out of kind from their name by shewing little gentleness to the poor, neither by enhancing their farms, by taking fines, by receiving great incomes, nor yet by putting the poor out of their houses, and suffering the tenements to fall down, as they do now: then would not the rich worldlings join farm to farm, and heave other men out of their livings, as they do now. Then would not many of our spiritual ministers, like insatiable wolves, get so many ecclesiastical promotions into their hands, as they do now; but, having one living and that sufficient, be content and remain upon it, teach their flock, lead a good life, and maintain hospitality among their parishioners, that the poor of their parish in time of need may have bread, broth, beef, and beer, as they say. "Bring every tithe into my barn," saith the Lord, "that there may be meat in my house." The parsonage or the vicarage

Mal. iii. Note.

is God's house; and tithes are paid unto them, that they should have meat in their houses to nourish and comfort the poor: but while "all men," as St Paul saith, "seek Phil. ii. their own, and not Jesu Christ's," while all, as the prophet testifieth, "even from the Jer. vi. viii. least to the greatest, give their minds to covetousness," and have no regard to the poor and to their commodity; the poor live miserably, the poor mutter in corners and grudge against the rich, the poor break the bond of peace, the poor run headlong into all kind of mischief, which thing we of late have seen unto our great sorrow, trouble, and disquietness: yea, some of the poor misers, for lack of bodily sustenance, fall to picking, robbing, stealing, and murdering of other; some kill, drown, hang themselves, because they do not presently see how they may be able to feed themselves, their careful wives, their lamentable children, and their altogether wretched family; wishing rather through desperation desperately to end this their needy, careful, and weary life, than so too much wretchedly for to live.

O what good man is not moved with pity to hear<sup>1</sup>, see, and know these things? Yea, what good man thinketh not himself bound even of duty to help unto the redress of these inconveniences, yea, pestilences? They are enemies to God, to man, to the country, to the public weal, to our posterity, yea, to heaven and earth, which, wallowing in all kind of wealth like ethnish epicures, and living all in pleasure like effeminate Sardanapalus, and heaping the goods of the world together as though they should never hence depart, are nothing moved with the miseries of the poor miserable people.

Wo be to that glutton, which, enfarcing his own stinking and drafflesacked<sup>2</sup> belly with all kind of pleasant and dainty dishes, suffereth his poor needy neighbour to perish for hunger! Wo be to that covetous cankered churl, which so joineth house to house and land to land, that the poor man knoweth not where to hide his head, nor how to live! Wo be to that wicked worldling, which, decking himself gorgeously with sumptuous apparel, suffereth his poor christian brother to go naked, and to die for cold! Wo be to that rich ravening raker, which hath raked together plenty of worldly goods, and yet is unmerciful to the needy members of Christ! Wo be to that beneficed man, which, having whereof to cherish the poor of his parish, is absent from his benefice, nothing caring what becometh of them, so that he may live pleasantly and wealthily of the sweat of other men's brows! Yea, and wo be to all them, which, being able to help the need of the needy, and to relieve the misery of the miserable, refuse to do it! Great is their damnation.

But forasmuch as every man godly affected is by the order of charity, for his power, bound to seek and further a redress in things that are amiss, I for my part, considering that nothing in this world disquieteth a man more than pensive care and careful pensiveness for a living (if not too much, yet convenient), considering also how many incommodities do chance to a man that is continually vexed with grievous thought-taking for the provision of that belly; I thought good to gather together, as time hath suffered, certain sentences and histories of the holy scripture, which declare and set forth unto us the unmeasurable bounty and exceeding large liberality of God toward all them that cast their care on him, and travail according to their vocation and calling, that, by reading or hearing of them, the weak in faith may wax strong in faith, and be fully persuaded that God, which nourished them in their mother's womb, will not leave them now succourless, when they be able through his grace to cleave unto his promises, to call upon his name, and for their power endeavour<sup>3</sup> themselves by one honest godly means or other to get their living, ever casting their care on God, and yet not being idle, but labouring in their vocation according to God's good will and pleasure.

I doubt not but, if they diligently weigh and earnestly ponder these comfortable sentences and histories of the holy scripture, they shall not only cease to attempt any unlawful means, but they also shall find great quietness, procure much rest to their minds, and, so long as they live, live with a merry conscience.

[<sup>1</sup> From edition of 1550: folio has *bear*.]

[<sup>2</sup> Drafflesacked: filled with offal or swill.]

[<sup>3</sup> From edition of 1550: folio, to *devour*.]

If I had been as able to redress the miserable state of the poor with worldly goods, as my will is to stay their consciences with the word of God, that they may not despair of a living, I would have been as ready to do the one, as I have laboured to do that other. But seeing froward fortune goeth forward to frown upon me, and daily ceaseth not to pierce me with that cruel darts of poverty, I must do that I may, when I may not that I would, laughing foolish fortune to scorn, with all her vanities and pleasures, thinking myself sufficiently rich, so long as I have such a Lord, as is "plenteously rich for so many as call on him," so long as through God's grace I am endued with this faith to believe that, while I travail in my vocation for my power, according to God's will, I shall want no good thing that is necessary for the either covering or feeding of this my mortal body. And would God all men could so quiet themselves, and with Democritus the philosopher laugh this foolish world with all the voluptuous worldlings to scorn, or, with the blessed apostle, even from the very heart say: "The world is crucified to me, and I to the world!"

This little treatise, after I had once finished it, I thought meet to dedicate unto your right worshipful mastership, partly for the godly affection and christian zeal which both you and that good virtuous lady your wife have borne toward the pure religion of God these many years, partly for the good report that both you have among all good men for your charitable liberality and plentiful alms toward the poor people, unto the notable example of all rich men, specially of such as profess the gospel; whereof many in these our days (alas for pity!) have the gospel swimming in their lips, and yet in their deeds live no part of the gospel, but abuse the name thereof to cloke their beastly living, and to shadow their carnal liberty, they themselves being the bond-slaves of Satan, further from the true faith than the very Turks and Jews, more estranged from all godly works, both<sup>1</sup> of fasting, praying, giving of alms, mortifying their carnal affects, &c., than the very papists, so covetous, proud, hateful, vain-glorious, dissembling, backbiting, lying, slandering, disdainful, uncharitable, unmerciful, wicked, and unclean in conversation, that I know not to whom I may justly compare them. "They profess that they know God," as St Paul saith, "but with their deeds they utterly deny him, being abominable, disobedient, and wholly estranged from all good works." What shall we then look for, but (except we repent and amend) even as Christ did prophesy, "The kingdom of God shall be taken from us, and given to a nation which shall bring forth the fruits thereof"? "He loved not blessing; therefore it shall be far from him," saith David. This unthankfulness toward God, this unmercifulness toward our neighbour, this dissolution of life toward ourselves, can by no means scape unpunished.

The Lord have mercy upon us, and turn our hearts, that we may "serve him in holiness and righteousness all the days of our life!" God, which hath begun a good work in you, mought continue and finish the same, unto the glory of his holy name, and the profit of his christian congregation!

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[<sup>1</sup> This correction is made from the edition of 1550: the folio has *but*.]

THE  
FORTRESS OF THE FAITHFUL.

PHILEMON, CHRISTOPHER, THEOPHILE, AND EUSEBIUS, TALK  
TOGETHER.

*Phil.* WHOSOEVER, most dear brethren, with a single eye beholdeth the corrupt manners of this most corrupt world, he shall easily perceive that Satan, our old enemy, sleepeth not, but, as St Peter saith, “walketh about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.” For if a tree may be known to be fruitful by her green leaves, flourishing blossoms, and pleasant fruit; if a workman may be proved by his labours and pains not to be idle; if the sun may be perceived to shine because of his fiery and glistening beams; surely Satan, by the works that he bringeth forth in the children of this world, may justly be judged not to be idle, not to sleep, not to slack his office, but to behave himself in all points like very Satan. 1 Pet. v.

For when at any time since the beginning of his infernal empire brought he forth so large testimonies of his devilish travails, and shewed himself so diligent and painful in procuring things meet for the enlarging of his empire, as he doth in these our days? Let our time be compared with any age that hath been from the beginning (I speak even of that age which was most ungodly, most wicked), and it shall more right well seem to be most godly, most virtuous. For although the pride, the covetousness, the whoredom, the unmercifulness, the malice, the banqueting, the building, the buying and selling, &c., exercised in the days of Noe, or at any other time, was without doubt great and abominable, and justly deserved the vengeance of God, as it came to pass; yet compared with the outrageousness of vices used in this our time, yea, and that so universally and unmeasurably, they may be judged but trifles, seeing the number of them, compared with the infinite multitude that now most wickedly live, is almost nothing. Gen. vii.  
Matt. xxiv.  
Luke xvii.

The pride of these our days is Lucifer-like, the covetousness is insatiable, the whoredom is monstrous, the unmercifulness is butcher-like, the malice is immortal, the banqueting is too much epicure-like, the building is infinite, the buying and selling is full of falsehead, craft, and dissimulation; and so forth of other vices, which are already grown unto such an exceeding height, that they can stretch out their branches no further; so that it is truly said of St John: “The world is altogether set on wickedness.” “They are corrupt, and become abominable in their doings: there is not one that doth good, no, not one,” saith David. “The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that would understand and seek after God. But they are all gone out of the way: they are altogether become abominable: there is none that doeth good, no, not one.” 1 John v.  
Psal. xiv.

And although every christian heart, beholding this most ungodly state of the world, cannot but lament and bewail the abominations used in these our days, and right heartily be sorry that the tares have so overgrown the good wheat, that vice doth so abound, that virtue can take no place, that sin hath so overflowed the whole world, that true godliness is not only neglected and contemned, but also hissed at and utterly abhorred, yet these traitorous conspiracies and hell-like commotions<sup>2</sup>, which we of late have seen, wherewith also the commonweal of England hath both been disturbed, defaced, and greatly impoverished, who, except an enemy to all good order, sorrowfully sorroweth not? Who, if not an adversary to our succession, with large tears lamenteth not? The inferior members to envy the principal parts of the body! O unnatural disposition! The servant to rule the master, the inferior to rise against his sovereign, the subject to

<sup>2</sup> The insurrections in several counties, but chiefly Devonshire and Norfolk, in the year 1549. See with respect to these, and the alleged causes of

them, the dearth, inclosures, &c., Strype, Eccles. Mem. Vol. II. Book 1. chap. xxi.]

Insurrections and commotions come of the devil.

disobey his governor! O cumbrous confusion! The brainsick, yea, rather the brainless head to attempt redress of matters in a commonweal, unsent, uncalled! O preposterous order!

*Chris.* It cannot be denied but divers of the commons have gone far beyond their limits, and taken in hand that hath not become them; forasmuch as they, contrary to their calling, have presumed to do the office of magistrates, of men lawfully called to rule in the commonweal. *Theo.* Those their rash and disobedient behaviours can by no means please God. *Phil.* Please! yea, it rather most highly displeaseth God, which is "the author of peace, and not of confusion;" which will "all things to be done seemly and in comely order;" which commandeth the subject to obey his superior in all things, "not only for fear of punishment, but also for conscience sake." How greatly God is and ever hath been offended with disobedience and rebellion, with order-breaking and disturbance of a commonweal, the holy scriptures sufficiently do shew. Was not Adam our grandfather thrown out of paradise for his disobedience toward his Lord God, that most high and most excellent Magistrate, and both he and all we his offspring damned for ever, if we had not been redeemed by the precious blood of the undefiled Lamb Jesu Christ? Thus from the beginning see we how greatly God abhorreth disobedience, though the fault in our eyes seemeth very little, and not to be passed of. *Eus.* Truly therefore is it said of Samuel: "Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice; and to hearken is better than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of whoredom; and stubbornness is as the sin of idolatry."

*Phil.* But that I may declare to you how God in commonweals hath ever punished disobedience, rebellion, conspiracies, insurrections, commotions, &c. against lawful magistrates, I pray you give ear and mark what shall be said. *Chris.* We gladly hear.

*Phil.* Ye know right well that, when God determined to deliver his people the Israelites out of Egypt, the land of bondage, he made Moses their guide and ruler under him. *Theo.* Ye say truth.

*Phil.* Here was Moses chosen and appointed of God to be the supreme magistrate and principal governor of God's people. And as he had here by God's commandment authority to rule, even so were the Israelites bound by God's word to obey; which thing so long as they did, they right well prospered, they lived quietly, God favoured them, Moses as a loving father cherished them. But when they shook off the yoke of obedience, sought carnal liberty, murmured against their magistrate, troubled the commonweal, O how did God punish and plague them! "The Lord hath heard your murmurings," saith Moses, "which ye murmur against him. For what are we (he speaketh of himself and Aaron)? your murmurings are not against us, but against the Lord." The Israelites murmuring against Moses murmured against God, whose officer Moses was. "Therefore," saith the scripture, "behold, the countenance of the Lord was moved against the people, and the Lord slew the people with an exceeding great plague:" and, as David saith, "The heavy wrath of God came upon them and slew the wealthiest of them, yea, and smote down the chosen men that were in Israel." "For there is no power," saith St Paul, "but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth power resisteth the ordinance of God. But they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation." With how grievous and horrible leprosy did God strike Miriam for murmuring against Moses! How plagued God the Israelites, for murmuring against him and Moses his servant, with fiery serpents, which stung them unto death! Corah, Dathan and Abiron, because they did not obey Moses, God's magistrate, but disdained that he should reign over them, although appointed of God, were they not swallowed up of the earth, both they, their wives, their children, and all their goods? Went not they, and all that they had, down alive unto hell, and the earth closed upon them, and they perished from among the congregation? *Chris.* A meet plague for rebellion.

*Phil.* On the morrow after, when the people of Israel murmured against Moses, saying, "Ye have killed the people of the Lord," and so unreverently railed on him, what, escaped they unpunished? The scripture saith: "There died in that plague fourteen thousand and seven hundred, besides them that died about the business of Corah." Thus see we that, in the beginning of the Israelites' public weal, God by

1 Cor. xiv.

Rom. xiii.  
1 Pet. ii.Gen. iii.  
Disobedi-  
ence.

1 Pet. i.

1 Sam. xv.

Rebellion  
plagued.

Exod. xiii.

Exod. xvi.

Num. xi.

Psal. lxxviii.

Rom. xiii.

Num. xii.

Num. xxi.

no means could abide rebels and seditious persons, but punished them with most horrible and notable plagues. *Eus.* If God so grievously plagued them which did but murmur against his magistrates, how extremely will he punish them that do not only unreverently speak of the high powers, but also gather unlawful assemblies against them, and enarm themselves on such manner, as though they should rise against a common pestilence of the public weal! Surely the end of such must needs be too much miserable. Take heed, ye rebels.

*Theo.* These things were done to shew how greatly God approveth the office and dignity of a lawful magistrate, and that he will be avenged of all such as despise his holy ordinance; again, that we by these examples may learn to fear the high powers, to honour and obey them, and by no means to resist them, except we will prove the same or worse plagues.

*Phil.* Well said: Absolon, king David's son, made an insurrection against his father, and through the counsel of wicked Ahithophel wrought most villany against his father's honour. What followed? was not Absolon miserably slain? Did not his ungodly counsellor hang himself? Were there not also twenty thousand men slain in battle, that took Absolon's part? See to what point sedition bringeth both the authors, counsellors, and maintainers thereof. 2 Sam. xv.  
xvi. xvii.  
xviii.

*Chris.* It is therefore wisdom for all men to follow this counsel of the wise man: "My son, fear thou the Lord and the king, and keep no company with seditious persons; for their destruction shall come suddenly: and who knoweth the adversity that may come of them both?" Again: "Wish the king no evil in thy thought, and speak no hurt of the rich in thy privy chamber; for a bird of the air shall betray thy voice, and with her feathers shall bewray thy words." Prov. xxiv.  
Eccles. x.

*Phil.* Who knoweth not that Seba, the son of Bichri, which conspired also against David, and dissuaded the people of Israel from obedience to their liege sovereign lord, had his head cut off? *Eus.* A meet death for a traitor. 2 Sam. xx.

*Phil.* Baasa the son of Ahia conspired against Nadab king of Israel, slew him, and reigned in his stead. But what followed? Though Baasa in the sight of the world died no shameful death, yet died he in the displeasure of God, and afterward all his succession, with all his friends and kinsfolk, were all destroyed, so that there was not one left alive. Again, Zimri conspired against Ela king of Israel, slew him, and reigned in his stead: but shortly after he was driven to such misery and strait, that he fled into the king's palace at Thirza, and setting it on a fire, brent himself, and so wretchedly ended his life. *Theo.* An end worthy of such a beginning. 1 Kings xv.  
1 Kings xvi.

*Phil.* What shall I rehearse unto you the histories of the two seditious men, Theudas and Judas of Galilee, of whom blessed Luke writeth in his book of the apostles' acts? The one boasted to do great things, and so allured much people to follow him: the other counselled the Jews by no means to pay tribute to Cæsar, but to maintain their old liberties, and by this means moved great sedition among the people. What became of them? were they not put to death, and so many as followed them either slain, or else scattered abroad, and so brought to nought? We read not in all the scriptures that any traitor or notable seditious person hath at any time escaped without notable punishment. God cannot suffer his magistrates to be disobeyed, his commonweals to be disturbed, his politic or civil laws to be condemned, his godly and honest orders to be broken, &c. Whosoever attempteth any such wickedness, God will be avenged of him; as it is evident not only in the holy scriptures, but also in the profane histories. For God, even among the heathen, cannot abide his ordinance to be despised. Acts v.

*Chris.* Would God that all they, which either were authors of sedition, or consented thereunto at any time in this our realm, had known these things! then would not they so greatly have forgotten themselves and their duty. *Eus.* If they had been as well trained up in learning such godly histories, as they were noused in hearing popish masses, and such other trifling trumpery, they had raised up no such tragedies. If there had been but the tenth part of true and learned preachers, that there were of popish priests among them, they had never fallen to such disorder. But it is truly ✠

Prov. xxix. said of the wise man: "When the preaching of God's word faileth, the people run out of order, perish, and come to nought."

Preachers. *Theo.* Yet have I heard it reported that these new preachers, as they call them, through their indiscreet sermons opened a large window unto dissolution of life, and by this means caused the common people to aspire and breach unto carnal liberty, which while they hunted, they forgot both themselves and their duty.

*Phil.* I will not excuse all preachers. For some, as I have heard, have taken upon them the office of preaching uncalled, unsent; and such disordered preachers, for the most part, bring all things to a disorder, yea, to an utter confusion, mask they with never so pleasant a visor, and babble they with never so painted eloquence in the sight and ears of the simple and ignorant people. "How shall they preach, except they be sent?" saith St Paul. "I have not sent the preachers," saith the Lord; "and yet they run: I have not spoken to them; and yet they preached." But as I may speak in the faithful and discreet preachers' behalf, which are lawfully sent of the high powers, and called thereunto by the secret motion of God's Spirit in their hearts, howsoever they be reported, certain I am, they never taught such doctrine as should minister occasion to godly people to shake off the zeal of obedience, or to break any good order or politic law.

Rom. x.  
Jer. xxiii.

*Chris.* Yet have I heard some preachers, whom I know to be both prudent and faithful, slandered that they by their preaching have caused these uproars. *Phil.* Ye said well, "slandered." Were they preachers, or rather massmongers, that caused the insurrection in Devonshire? *Chris.* Massmongers and papists, as it is reported. *Phil.* Then are the godly preachers free from giving any occasion of that sedition.

*Eus.* But what of Norfolk? *Phil.* Even in Norfolk also, or elsewhere, I am sure the very rebels themselves will confess, as I have partly heard and known, that the preachers were not the authors nor provokers of their commotion. Can the sermons of them which teach all obedience, humility, and patience, move men unto disobedience, haughtiness of mind, and desire of revenging? Can light be the occasion of darkness, or truth of falsehood? But what is so prudently, godly, and circumspectly spoken, that envy cannot wrest and corrupt? Neither is it strange for the christian preachers to be misrepresented of the voluptuous worldlings and covetous carles.

1 Kings xviii.

How earnest a setter forth of God's glory was the prophet Elias, and yet how was he reported, not only of the baser sort, but even of the king and of the queen? "Art thou he," saith king Achab, "that troubleth Israel?" As though he should say: Art thou he which through thine indiscreet and rash sermons movest the people to sedition, makest them disobedient to me their king and to all my officers, causest them unlawfully to assemble together, and to make havoc of all things? But the prophet boldly answered: "It is not I that have troubled Israel, but thou and thy father's house, in that ye have forsaken the commandments of the Lord, and followed the way of Baal." As though he should have answered: Dost thou, O king, lay to my charge, that I troubled thy realm, which teach thy subjects to obey thee in all those thy commandments that fight not with God's word? Then untruly thou accusest me. There is, I grant, in thy realm sedition and much hurly-burly: what then? Impute not the fault to me, but coy<sup>1</sup> thyself on the head, and say: I myself and my wicked progenitors, which have not tendered the glory of God, nor loved to hear his blessed word, nor to maintain the preachers thereof, but rather have slain them and followed the way of that foul idol Baal, and nourished his priests at our own table, and have not ruled the realm with such justice and equity, with such clemency and gentleness, as becometh righteous and godly rulers, but have polled and pillied our subjects, oppressed the widows and fatherless, received bribes, condemned the guiltless for gifts, and shed innocent blood like unmerciful and butcher-like tyrants; we are only the occasion of all these tumults, seditions, conspiracies, &c., wherewith this my realm at this present is so greatly disquieted.

[<sup>1</sup> Coy, or in the edition of 1550, corle: to strike or pat with the hand.]

As I may let pass the other prophets, which for their godly sermons sustained the like displeasure at the worldly tyrants' hands, how was the self Master of truth, the Wisdom of the Father, I mean Jesu Christ our Lord, "in whose mouth was found no guile," no deceit, handled for his sermons? When they brought him before Pilate, did not his adversaries and accusers lay to his charge, that he sowed sedition among the people? that he corrupted and perverted the commons with his doctrine? that he forbad men to pay tribute to Cæsar, and that he said he himself was Christ a King? How unjustly Christ was here accused, the holy scriptures abundantly testify. How could he be the author of sedition, which came into this world to make peace? How could he corrupt and pervert the people with his doctrine, when he taught nothing but that which he had heard of his Father? Can heavenly things corrupt the minds of mortal men? Forbad he to pay tribute to Cæsar, which himself paid tribute to Cæsar, and commanded other so to do? Boasted he himself a king, which fled away from the people when they would have made him their king? Said he not unto Pilate, "My kingdom is not of this world?" Was he disobedient to the temporal rulers, which disdained not to be brought before them, to be judged of them, yea, and to suffer death under them?

Matt. v.  
1 Pet. ii.  
Luke xxiii.

Eph. ii.  
Like ii.

John viii.

Matt. xvii.  
and xxii.  
John vi.

John xviii.  
Matt. xxvii.

Moreover, was not the blessed martyr, St Stephen, accused that he spake blasphemous words against Moses and against God? when of God no man ever spake more godly, nor of Moses more reverently; yet must Stephen to the pot, and be condemned for an heretic, when Stephen deserved rather praise and promotion. But Stephen had offended enough, seeing it was the chief priests' pleasure, and the other ravening rabbins', that Stephen should live no longer.

Acts vi.

Again, when St Paul and Silas came to Thessalonica, and St Paul preached in the synagogue the passion and resurrection of Christ, how did certain of the Jews complain of them unto the heads of the city, and rushed into the house of Jason, the apostle's host, and violently plucked him out, saying: "These that trouble the world are come hither also, whom Jason hath received privily. And these all do contrary to the decrees of Cæsar, affirming another king, one Jesus." Here are the apostles accused both of sedition and treason, and yet were they neither seditious persons nor traitors. They troubled not the world, except the world here be taken for the devilish people of the world, to whom it is a trouble to hear any thing of Christ, or to hear their abominable living rebuked. The good people of the world they quieted, and made them merry in their conscience; forasmuch as they persuaded by the word of God, which the apostles preached, that they had gotten free remission of all their sins through faith in Christ's blood. The apostles did not contrary to the decrees of Cæsar, if they were not against God's word, but rather taught men to obey them. Although they preached Jesus to be a king, yet did this nothing derogate Cæsar's honour; for they taught Christ not to be a temporal, but a spiritual king; not to rule with sword or pole-axe, but with his Spirit and word; not to reign in princes' palaces, but in the hearts of the faithful. Is not here great sedition, great treason?

Acts xvii.

Eph. ii.  
Col. i.

When St Paul was but seen at Hierusalem in the temple, how cried the Jews out, saying: "O ye men of Israel, help: this is the man that teacheth all men every where against the people, and the law, and this place," and violently drew<sup>2</sup> him out of the temple, smote him, and would have slain him if the high captain had not come. What had Paul offended? He spake nothing, he did nothing, but as other Jews did. It was enough to kill Paul, because he was that Paul which had preached Christ to be the Son of God. At another time, when he told the Jews that God appointed him to be a teacher of the gentiles, how lifted they up their voices, saying: "Away with such a fellow from the earth; for it is no reason that he should live!" Paul must die, because at the commandment of God he turneth the gentiles from idolatry to the true worshipping of God.

Acts xxi.

Acts xxii.

And as the wicked worldlings cruelly entreated the apostles of Christ, so did the worldly tyrants handle the good bishops and faithful ministers in the primitive church. If any mischief, plague, or evil chanced in the country where they were, it was straight-

[<sup>2</sup> This is substituted from the edition of 1550: the folio has *drive*.]



way laid to their charge. Even so likewise doth the world at this time deal with the true preachers of the Lord's word. Dearth, famine, hunger, plague, pestilence, battle, insurrections, commotions, treasons, heresies, epicurism, licentious living, &c., all is imputed to the preachers of Christ's gospel. They, they, and none but they, are the occasion of all that naught is, when no kind of people is further from doing harm to a commonweal than they; neither doth a commonweal receive more benefits of any man than of the godly preacher.

If the old world had heard and obeyed the sermons of Nohe, they had not perished with waters. If the Sodomites and Gomorrians had hearkened to the sermons of Loth, they had not been consumed with rain, fire, and brimstone from heaven. If the Israelites had given ear to the warnings of the prophets, they had not so oft be plagued and led away into captivity. If the Jews had received the doctrine of Christ and his apostles, they and their city with all their posterity had not come to such a destruction. But when the Lord raiseth up his prophets and preachers to admonish the people of their wickedness, and to exhort them to repentance, and yet they will not amend, but cruelly entreat them, slander them, persecute them, kill them, then cometh destruction. "The Lord God of their fathers," saith the scripture, "sent to them by his messengers, rising up betimes and sending; for he had compassion on his people and on his dwelling-place. But they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and misused his prophets, until the wrath of the Lord arose against his people, and till there was no remedy. And so brought he on them the king of Chaldees, which slew their young men with the sword in their holy temple, and spared neither young man, maiden, old man, nor him<sup>1</sup> that stooped for age."

*Chris.* "The scholar is not above his master, nor the servant better than his lord." "If the world hate you," saith Christ, "ye know it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love that is his: but forasmuch as ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you from the world, therefore the world hateth you."

*Eus.* Preachers are commanded of God, under pain of damnation, to tell the people their faults; and yet if they rebuke covetousness, then the covetous worldlings are mad. If they inveigh against pride, the proud are displeased. If they condemn whoredom, whores, bawds, and ruffians are wood. Look, whatsoever sin they reprove, the guilty cannot abide, but malign the preacher, and seek to do<sup>2</sup> him displeasure. The Gergesenes had rather Christ should never come among them, yea, they had rather go to the devil, than they would have their filthy swine drowned. *Theo.* "They owe him evil will," saith the prophet, "that reproveth them openly; and whoso telleth the plain truth, him they abhor."

*Phil.* Well, thus see ye it is no new thing for godly preachers to be slandered and burdened with those faults wherein they be nothing guilty.

*Chris.* I have heard it reported, that divers gentlemen have been the occasion of all these tumults and seditions, through the great oppressions and wrongs that they have done to the poor commons, as by making common pastures several to themselves, by inclosing more ground to their own use than heretofore hath been accustomed, and by this means take away the necessary food from the poor men's cattle, without the which they cannot live; again, by getting so many farms into their hands, and letting out their own lands unto the tenants and farmers for so great price, or else take such large fines and great incomes that they can never live of it. These and such like things have I heard.

*Phil.* Ye have heard my mind of preachers, which were slandered (I speak of the godly) in this behalf: I will now speak somewhat of gentlemen. As I do not allow all that be called preachers, so do I not approve the doings of all them that be called gentlemen. And as I do not condemn all preachers, so do I not dispraise all gentlemen. For as there are which are true preachers indeed, so likewise are there which are true gentlemen indeed. But some abuse the name of preachers, by teaching papistry, anabaptistry, epicurism, &c., and are no preachers indeed, but rather praters and deceivers of the people: so likewise are there many which are called gentlemen,

[<sup>1</sup> So edition of 1550: folio, *in.*]

[<sup>2</sup> *do* is inserted from edition of 1550.]

Gen. vii.  
2 Pet. ii.  
Gen. xix.

2 Chron.  
xxxvi.

Matt. x.  
John xv.

Matt. viii.

Amos v.

Of gentle-  
men.

and are no gentlemen indeed, but pollers and pillers, rakers and catchers, bribers and extortioners, yea, and very caterpillars of the commonweal. For they abuse the name of a gentleman, which is unfeignedly a name of much worship and great honour, and worthy to be had in reverence and high estimation. Without the true gentleman the commonweal can no more safely be than the body without eyes. For as the eyes are the principal comfort of an whole body, so likewise are the true gentlemen of the commonweal. And look, what the nose is without smelling, the tongue without speaking, the hands without feeling, the feet without going, the very same is a commonweal without them that are true gentlemen, as the wise man saith: "Where no good counsel is, there the people decay; but where as many are that can give good counsel, there is wealth." For such as are true gentlemen are fathers of the country, maintainers of the poor, defenders of the widows and fatherless, succourers of the needy, comforters of the comfortless, and upholders of the commonweal, in fine, gentlemen both in name and deed. These be pearls and jewels to a realm, and as necessary for the conservation of a public weal as fire, water, and heat is for the health of man's body. For their principal respect is not unto their own private lucre and singular commodity, but their whole study is how they may profit the commonweal and do good to many, as Salomon saith: "The righteous laboureth to do good; but the ungodly useth his increase unto sin." Not only their goods, but their very life also will they bestow to do good to other; so far is it off that for their own advantage they will impoverish or hinder any man.

*Eus.* Would God we had many such gentlemen!

*Phil.* We have without all doubt many, although not so many as I would wish; for of good things we can never have enough.

Then is there another sort which glory in the title of gentlemen also, and they are such as this common proverb noteth:

As riseth my good,  
So riseth my blood.

They think all nobility to consist in the abundance of worldly goods, in wearing of golden chains and costly apparel, in having fair houses and pleasant gardens. And to set forth this their gentlemanry they poll, they pill, they wake, they rake, they sweat, they fret, they gripe, they nip, they face, they brase, they semble, they dissemble; yea, they move every stone, as they say, to maintain and set forth their unnobility, not caring how they come by it, so they have it. All is fish that cometh to the net: it is good to be taking. *Bonus est odor lucri ex re qualibet*<sup>1</sup>. These study not, as the true gentlemen do, to profit many, to do good to the country, to maintain the poor, to relieve the succourless, to nourish the weak, to cherish their needy tenants; neither seek they the commodity of the commonweal, but their own private advantage. They labour to possess much, but they distribute nothing. Their hand is stretched out to receive, but shut when they should give. If they once creep into a town or village, they for the most part never cease, till they have devoured and eaten up the whole town. Whatsoever is pleasant or profitable must be theirs, by hook or by crook; it lieth handsomely for them, and so near their nose, though it be a mile off. If there be either farm or sheep-ground, upon the which some honest poor man liveth, both he and his family, out he must. Had it must be, whatsoever it cost, though the poor man and all his should go a begging, it lieth so commodiously for our new-come gentleman. If they buy any tenement, and let it out again to the poor man, O how do they rack it and stretch out the rents thereof, almost from a penny to a pound! yea, and some of them, buying house and land in a town, suffer the houses to fall down, and turn the ground unto pasture, the poor man not having where to hide his head. Who will be troubled, say they, with such a sort of shake-ragged slaves in a town, which do nothing but burn up our hedges, eat up the common, fill the town full of beggars' brawls? Who? No man, I trow, namely where such fine and long-nosed gentlemen dwell. Some, buying the lordship of a town, handle the inhabitants thereof on such sort, that they lose divers of their liberties, being in much worse case than they were afore. Thus the poor people be so

[<sup>1</sup> Juv. xiv. 204, 5.]

wrung of these ungentle gentlemen, that the silly souls are like unto dry haddocks. Some Irishman, beholding them, might well think that they came lately out of St Patrick's purgatory: they are so withered away, even to the hard bones, for cold and hunger. Against such churlish gentlemen speaketh God by the prophet, saying: "O ye heads of the house of Jacob, and ye leaders of the house of Israel...should not ye know what were lawful and right? But ye hate the good, and love the evil: ye pluck off men's skins and the flesh from their bones: ye eat the flesh of my people, and flay off their skin: ye break their bones: ye chop them in pieces as it were into a cauldron, and as flesh into a pot."

Mic. iii.

*Theo.* These greedy gripes and hungry horse-leeches, by usurping the name of gentlemen, do much obscure the renown, worship, and honour of true gentlemen, and cause the name of a gentleman to be much disdained among the common people; as we have both heard and seen now of late days. And though they challenge to themselves never so much the name of a gentleman, by their goods, by their ancestors, by antiquity, by the worthiness of their stock<sup>2</sup>, and many good morrows; yet, if they do degenerate and grow out of kind from the natural manners of a true gentleman, they are no gentlemen indeed, but carles and churls, yea, and in hurting their neighbours they are tyrants and murderers, as the holy scripture calleth them; and in polling and pilling them they are thieves, lions, and wolves, as the prophets term them. An ape shall be an ape, though she be clad in purple and gold. Esop's crow was still a crow, even when he had decked himself with the pleasant and goodly feathers of other birds.

Eclus.  
xxxiv.  
Isat. i.  
Mic. ii.  
Zeph. iii.

It is virtue, and not gross flesh and blood, which thing we all are, that maketh the true noble and gentleman. It is a mind disposed to do good, yea, and doth good in deed when occasion serveth, and not sumptuous apparel and golden chains, that setteth forth true nobility. It is justice, mercy, liberality, kindness, gentleness, hospitality for the poor, and such other godly gifts of the mind, and not the multitude of riches, that declare who is a gentleman and who a churl, who is noble, who un-noble. He that can nighest approach unto lady virtue, and most lively set forth her natural disposition in his conversation and behaviour, he is the best gentleman, be his parents never so base, and his kindred never so vile in the judgment of the world.

True nobi-  
lity.

Socrates.

*Chris.* Socrates, the philosopher, beholding a man very rich and wealthy indeed, but an ass-head in the knowledge of goodness, and notwithstanding gorgeous and gallant in apparel, said: "Behold a golden slave." Socrates, nothing esteeming the rich man for his riches and sumptuous raiment, called him a golden slave, meaning that, though he were laden with never so many golden chains, golden rings, golden apparel, yet so long as he himself is but filthy in his conversation, and hath a mind subject to carnal lusts, as covetousness, pride, ambition, &c., he is but a very slave, so far is it off that he is a gentleman. At another time that same philosopher, seeing a man both rich and gallantly apparelled, said: "Here is a horse trapped in silver." His apparel shewed him to be a gentleman; but his manners and conditions declared him to be but a horse and a beast. Diogenes, hearing a certain man bragging and boasting of his kindred, riches, beauty, costuous apparel, and such other worldly visors, knowing not one point of nobility to be in him, nor ought else worthy of praise, said: "Lo, here is a sheep with a golden fleece." Cato the elder was wont to say, that "the little thieves did wear fetters, but the great thieves went up and down gallantly apparelled with purple and gold." I pass over divers other sayings of the wise men, which, without any respect had to carnal nobility, worldly riches, gorgeous apparel, &c., called the wealthy worldlings by such names as their manners and behaviour deserved.

Diogenes.

Cato.

*Eus.* Would God all they which will be taken for gentlemen were gentlemen in deed! Then should it go much better with this realm of England.

*Chris.* This endless encroaching of worldly possessions shew evidently that they which use it are not friendly to the commonweal, seeing through it the poor com-

[<sup>1</sup> From the edition of 1550: the folio has *flock*.]

mons are brought to beggary. Salomon hath a notable saying, and would God all men would learn it! It is this: "The increase and prosperity of the commons is the king's honour; but the decay of the people is the confusion of the prince." *Theo.* Friendly to the commonweal? Marry, sir, they are not friendly to the king, by Salomon's saying, that impoverish the commons: if the commons' increase, wealth, and prosperity be the honour of the king, and if the decay and impoverishment of the commons be the confusion and destruction of the prince, then are they extreme enemies to the king, which, without any respect had to the commonweal, seek through their unsatiable covetousness to beggar the king's subjects, whereby they shall be the less able both to serve the king, and to bear for their portion the charges of the realm when time requireth.

*Phil.* Certes a king can never be poor so long as his subjects be wealthy. And better it is to have many that should help in time of need, than few; and easier is the burden and the gladlier it is borne, than many bear than few.

*Chris.* If that same gentleness and liberality were found at this present among the rich men of this world, that hath been heretofore in men of like degree, the commons should not only at all times be quiet, but also the realm should flourish with great wealth, yea, and that universally; whereas now it resteth in few men's hands. Gentlemen to be encroachers of farms, notable sheepmongers, graziers, butchers, clothiers, weavers, brewers, &c., as I may speak nothing of their parsonages, vicarages, prebends, &c., having otherwise whereof abundantly to live! O unworthy act! O unseemly sight! O abomination! What is it to beggar the realm, to famish the king's subjects, to bring slavery into this realm, if this be not? Do they not suck the poor men's blood, that suffer them not to have whereof to live? The wise man saith: "The bread of the needy is the life of the poor: he that defraudeth him of it is a murderer."

*Phil.* Well, neighbours, although I doubt not but that the king's majesty and his most honourable council will see redress in these things when they have convenient leisure, yet, if the world should go forth and continue as it is, and the rich worldlings more miserably oppress the poor than they heretofore have done, God forbid that the common people, or any kind of people, should raise up tumults, stir up seditions, lift up their hand against the high powers! For that is a sin which by no means can escape unplagued; yea, they that so do run into the danger of eternal damnation, as ye have heard afore. *Chris.* I say, God forbid also! but ye know the common proverbs: "The belly hath no ears:" "Hunger is sharper than thorn:" "Necessity is an hard dart:" "Need maketh the old wife trot."

*Phil.* St Paul had rather never to eat flesh nor drink wine, than he should offend his weak brother. Would he then, think you, trouble an whole commonweal, make uproars, raise up commotions, come armed in the field, assemble a sort of idle brains and brainless people together, rob men's houses, spoil their goods, break up their hedges, make several pastures common to all men, hunt carnal liberty, make a communion, yea, confusion of all things, and all for the belly? Paul would rather, like unto the poor Lazar, have died for hunger, than once violently and unjustly to take away other men's goods.

*Chris.* Ye see the unmercifulness of the rich: what, would ye have the poor people starve and die for hunger? [*Phil.* Rather starve and die for hunger]<sup>2</sup>, as poor Lazar did, than to trouble a commonweal. As riches, so likewise poverty cometh from God: and both are to be taken thankfully, and not to be grudged at. If oppression be done to the poor of the rich worldlings, shall they avenge themselves? God forbid! yea, rather take that cross patiently, and think that they have deserved far worse things, which have so oft deserved hell; and pray to God to give those rich men merciful hearts, that according to their duty they may be moved with pity and compassion toward the poor. Again, if they have injuries done unto them, if they cannot otherwise be redressed, let them complain to the magistrates and officers of the commonweal, which are appointed to hear men's causes.

[<sup>2</sup> These words are supplied from the edition of 1550.]

*Chris.* If the poor oppressed complain to the justices of peace or such-like in the country where he dwelleth, that hath the injury done unto him, little redress, as I hear, can be had, one so serveth another's turn, even as the mules scratch one another's back.

*Phil.* If there be any such partial officers, which are not indifferent, but judge for favour, yet remaineth there another refuge, and that is to complain unto the king's majesty and his most honourable council, which without all doubt will both gladly hear their lamentable complaints, and redress their matters according to justice. But whoso leaveth godly means and attempteth wicked ways, both he and his enterprise must needs come to nought, as we have seen of late days. The Lord himself hath spoken it: "All they that take the sword shall perish with the sword." All they that are private men, and go about with force and violence to avenge their own cause, and to redress their own matters, shall surely come unto destruction. For they be order-breakers and despisers of God's holy ordinance, which hath appointed magistrates and head rulers justly to judge between man and man in all matters of controversy, that peace and quietness may be maintained in a commonweal.

*Theo.* If men were christian men in deed, as they profess in word, they would never for the belly's sake go about to disturb, trouble, and disquiet all the members of the body. There is a proverb no less true than common: "God never made mouth but he made meat." And truly I am thus persuaded that God, which made me a living soul, and fed me in my mother's womb, will not, after he hath brought me into this world, suffer me to perish for hunger, if I hang on his fatherly providence, cast my care on him, seek to please him, and live in my vocation according to his word.

*Phil.* I am glad, neighbour Theophile, thus to hear you speak; for I may tell you truth, the principal occasion why I so greatly desired to speak with you, and with my other neighbours here, was to comfort and strengthen you against this solicitude and thought-taking for the belly, wherewith many at this present are much vexed. For I am not ignorant what importune suitor the belly is, and how she is ever craving and casting doubts, fearing that she should never have enough, and therefore continually knocketh at the door of the mind to put him in remembrance to provide for her, saying, *Adfer, infer*: "Bring hither, bring in." For the idle belly continually consumeth, wasteth, but getteth, provideth nothing. Therefore is she full of thought and care for her living, even as a beggar is, which is so jealous over his drink, that he will not suffer the little fly to sit upon the brim of his cup, lest she should beguile him of his drink.

This belly-care causeth the lawyers to corrupt the law, the judge to give false sentence, the officers to be untrue to their lords and masters, the hypocrites to corrupt the holy scriptures, the rich men to be unliberal, unmerciful, the beneficed men to receive much and distribute little, the patrons of benefices<sup>2</sup> to sell to unlearned priests their benefices, parents to sell their children like calves and sheep for money, the papist to hate the truth of God's word, the merchant to forswear himself in selling his merchandise, the craftsman to make and utter false and sleighty wares, the temporal lord to raise his rents, or to take great fines and incomes, the inn-keepers to poll and pill his guests, the servant to rob his master, the maid her mistress, the single or married woman to play the whore, the single or married man to play the ruffian and the thief, the subject to rise against his superior, &c. Innumerable evils doth this belly-care bring unto men, against the which except they be well furnished both with strong faith in God's holy providence, and also fortified with the knowledge of holy scriptures, wherein lie buried so great consolations for the faithful, they cannot abide the importune and continual suits of the sluggish belly, but must needs despair of satisfying her requests, and by this means not only have an unquiet mind, but also throw themselves into desperation, and so too much wretchedly finish this their careful life.

*Chris.* This belly-care without doubt is a great temptation to man, and very much disquieteth him, namely when he seeth all things so dear as they be now, and despair of a redress; forasmuch as they which should amend this thing are the cause of this

Matt. xxvi.

Of how great evils<sup>1</sup> belly-care is the author.

[<sup>1</sup> This is probably the word intended: the folio has *evines*. The note is not found in the edition of 1550.] [<sup>2</sup> So the edition of 1550: the folio has *benefice*.]

dearth and famine—I speak of graziers, sheepmongers, and rich farmers. Therefore, neighbour Philemon, ye cannot entreat at this present in your communication among us of a thing more meet for this beggarly and needy wretched time, than to declare unto us by the holy scriptures, how merciful and bounteous Lord we have in heaven, which will not suffer us to perish for hunger, if we hang on his fatherly providence, and cast all our care on him.

*Phil.* This your bent good-will to hear doth not a little encourage me to speak that which I have purposed, yea, and that in few words, because I will not be tedious unto you. *Eus.* Speak, I pray you: we will give good ear.

*Phil.* That ye may be thoroughly persuaded of God's liberality toward his faithful servants, I pray you first of all consider God's order in the provision for his creatures. Before God made man, whom he was determined to make the high ruler under him over all things in this world, he made and prepared every thing necessary for him, and for the conservation of his body, that he might abundantly have whatsoever is expedient for him, and by no means perish for hunger and lack of food. First, placing him in Gen. ii. paradise, that garden of pleasure, he gave man liberty to eat of all the fruit that grew in the garden, except the tree of knowledge of good and evil. After the transgression of God's commandment, when man was justly driven out of paradise, and worthy for his disobedience not only to starve for hunger, but also to be condemned for ever, if God for his mercy's sake, promised in that blessed seed Christ Jesu, had not favoured Gen. iii. and forgiven him, God sending forth man into this vale of misery did not leave him comfortless and without provision for his bodily sustenance, neither sent he him into a barren desert, or salt ground void of all fruit, but into this world, where he found plenty and abundance of all things, and gave him liberty to eat of all fruits and seeds growing in it. "Increase," saith he, "and multiply, and replenish the earth, and Gen. i. subdue it, and have dominion of the fish of the sea, and the fowl of the air, and of every living thing that moveth upon the earth. And God said: Behold, I have given you every herb, sowing seed, which is in the upper face of all the earth, and in every tree in the which is the fruit of the tree, and that soweth seed, that they may be meat unto you." With this kind of food was Adam and his posterity content until the flood of Nohe. After the flood God, purposing, as it were, to repair mankind, and to be man's good and merciful Lord, and no less but much more bounteous to him than he was afore, said: "Bring ye forth, and multiply, and replenish the earth. The fear Gen. ix. of you, and the dread of you, shall be upon every beast of the earth, and upon every fowl of the air, and in all such as the earth bringeth forth, and in all the fishes of the sea: into your hand are they delivered. Every thing that moveth itself and that liveth shall be meat for you: even as the green herb have I given you all things." As God afore gave man liberty to eat all kind of herbs, seeds, and fruits that grow upon the earth, so likewise giveth he man authority now to eat all kind of fish or flesh as he listeth.

*Chris.* O exceeding great is the liberality of our Lord God, which dealeth so favourably with wretched man; not only to give him liberty to eat all kind of herbs, seeds, and fruits, but also all manner of flesh and fish. This is, without doubt, a singular benefit, and great token of God's inestimable goodness toward man.

*Phil.* Here, even from the beginning and repairing of man, doth the kindness of God brast out and shew forth itself toward man abundantly, so that now "all things Tit. i. are pure to them that are pure." Nothing is common or unclean, "neither is any kind 1 Tim. iv. of meat to be refused, if it be taken with thanksgiving." "For that which God hath Acts x. purified and made clean ought no man to call unpure, unclean." And all these things hath God given us to eat. Now, that ye may be thoroughly persuaded of God's truth in performing his promises, call to remembrance the histories of the holy scriptures, which do declare and evidently prove that God is faithful in all his words, and Psal. cxlv. dealeth no less favourably with his servants in deed, than he promiseth in word. God Gen. xii. commanded Abraham to get him out of his country and out of his nation, and from his father's house, unto a land that he would shew him. Abraham did as the Lord commanded him. If Abraham had not been fully persuaded of God's constancy and truth in accomplishing his promises, would he have forsaken his native country, and

gone out of his own house, where he was quietly placed and wealthily settled, and wandered abroad like a masterless hound, he cannot tell whither?

*Eus.* A carnal and worldly-wise man would have thought it great madness to leave a thing certain for that that is uncertain.

*Phil.* So judgeth "the wisdom of this world, which is foolishness afore God." Notwithstanding Abraham, nothing doubting of God's promise, forsook country, nation, and house, and obeyed the voice and commandment of God. Neither was he any thing at all thereby impoverished. The scripture saith, he was "very rich in cattle, silver, and gold." For his native country God gave him a country that flowed with milk and honey, that is, with the abundance of all things. For one house he gave him many houses. For one nation he made him a father of many nations. So recompenseth God the losses that any man sustaineth for his sake.

*Theo.* The like thing is promised of our Saviour Christ in the gospel. "There is no man," saith he, "that hath forsaken house, either father or mother, either brethren, or wife, or children, for the kingdom of God's sake, which shall not receive much more in this world, and in the world to come life everlasting."

*Phil.* Who, even by this one example, is not greatly encouraged to believe the promise of God, and to be fully persuaded, that as God dealt with Abraham, so in like manner will he deal with us, if we obey the voice of God, as Abraham did? "For there is no respect of persons with him; but in all people he that feareth him and worketh righteousness is accepted unto him." The promise of God is universal. Whosoever therefore layeth hand on it with strong faith, he shall have of God whatsoever he hath promised. "There is no difference between the Jew and the gentile; for one is Lord of all, which is rich unto all that call upon him. For whosoever calleth on the name of the Lord, he shall be safe."

*Chris.* It is not without a cause that the apostles prayed, "Lord, increase our faith." For if true and undoubted faith were in the hearts of men, they would neither distrust the promise of God, nor yet despair of a convenient living.

*Phil.* Faith is much, yea, faith is altogether. "Whatsoever ye ask when ye pray," saith Christ, "believe to have it, and ye shall have it in deed." As God shewed himself faithful in his promise to Abraham, which is the father of the faithful, so likewise did he to other, because no man should doubt of his liberality, which is common not to Abraham only, but to all the faithful in like manner: ye remember that Hagar was the handmaid of Sara, Abraham's wife; and because Sara herself was barren and childless, she gave to her husband her maid to be his wife, that she might be edified by her. *Chris.* We remember it well.

*Phil.* This Hagar brought forth a son called Ismael, by her master Abraham, which child was a mocker, insomuch that, after Sara had brought forth Isaac her son, she would not suffer neither the lad nor his mother to tarry any longer in her house, but caused Abraham to put them both out. *Eus.* Ye say truth.

*Phil.* Abraham rose up early in the morning, and took bread and a bottle of water, and gave it unto Hagar, putting it on her shoulders with the lad also, and sent her away. Now mark. Hagar is put out of her master's house with her child. She knoweth not whither to go. She hath no house wherein to hide her head, but wandereth up and down in the wilderness of Berseba. To comfort her no man is bent; for no man is present. As touching her victual, it is all spent: the bread is eaten, the water is drunk up. There remaineth now in sight no more, but utterly to despair of success, and miserably to die. Which thing Hagar considering casteth the lad Ismael under a bush, goeth her way, and sitteth on the other side a great way, as it were a bow-shot off, because she would not see the death of the child. With how great sorrows her heart was stuffed, what plenty of tears gushed out of her eyes, what careful faintness occupied her whole body, no man is able to express. A child to die for hunger, the mother knowing of it, yea, and as it were in her sight, in her bosom! O dolour unspeakable! The mother likewise to be pierced with the same dart! O incomparable pain! All things are brought here to extreme desperation. There is no way to escape this present mischief. The child crieth, the mother weepeth: both look for present death. But what? Is God untrue, unjust, false in his promise?

Stoppeth he his ears, that he may not hear the lamentable complaints of the too much wretched? Despiseth he the tears of the mother, and the crying of the child? Yea, rather, when no remedy is looked for, God is present, God comforteth, God helpeth; because he will be found a God which is "faithful in all his words," which is the self truth and "cannot lie," which leaveth no man succourless that calleth on him. He sendeth his holy angel to the miserable woman, when no mortal creature is present to help. He comforteth her, and biddeth her not fear; "for God hath heard," saith he, "the voice of the child where he lieth." He sheweth her a well of water to comfort both her and her child withal, and afterward promiseth that the lad Ismael shall be a noble man, and great multitudes of people shall rise of him. Psal. cxlv. John xiv. Tit. i. Gen. xxi.

*Theo.* O history full of most sweet consolation! This is a comfortable and pleasant mirror for all people to behold, specially for them that are married, and yet see not (such and so great is their poverty) how they may be able to nourish them. If the married folk live according to their vocation, and travail in their estate in the fear of the Lord, though they have never so many children and great family, yet shall the sea sooner be without water and fish, and the land without grass and cattle, than any of them shall perish for hunger. If God provided for Ismael and his mother in the wilderness where no sustenance was to be gotten, where no man was present, but brute beasts and fowls of the air, will he leave them succourless that put their trust in him, being in cities, towns, and villages, and conversant with men where all things do abound?

*Chris.* If the poor married men did earnestly weigh and diligently ponder this most sweet and comfortable history, they should never despair of a living, neither for themselves, nor for their children and family; neither would they seek any unlawful means, as by stirring up commotions, making insurrections, spoiling other men's goods, &c., how to avoid their misery; but rather labour to answer their vocation, and without ceasing call on the name of the Lord, which will deal no less favourably with them, than he did with Hagar and Ismael. "Put thou thy trust," saith David, "in the Lord, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the earth, and be fed with the best dainties thereof. Delight thou in the Lord; and he shall give thee thy heart's desire. Commit thy way to the Lord, and put thy trust in him; and he shall bring it to pass. He shall make thy righteousness as clear as the light, and thy just dealing as the noon-day. Hold thee still in the Lord, and abide patiently upon him," &c. Again: "Put your trust in God alway, O ye people: pour out your hearts before him; for he is our hope." [Psal. xxxvii.] Psal. lxxii.

*Phil.* In the days of Isaac, Abraham's son, there fell a great dearth in the land where he dwelt, insomuch that he removed from that place, and took his journey toward Abimelech king of the Philistines, even unto Gerer. And while he was yet in his journey, God spake unto him, and said: "Go not down into Egypt, but abide in the land which I shall shew unto thee, sojourn in this land; and I will be with thee, and will bless thee. For unto thee and to thy seed I will give all these countries." Behold God's careful providence for his servants. Isaac, wishing to escape the cruel darts of hunger, hunteth about where he and his may conveniently dwell. And rather than he would die for hunger, he, after the example of his father Abraham, determineth to go down into Egypt. God, which is able to feed and to save his people in every place ("for the earth is the Lord's, and all that is contained therein"), forbiddeth Isaac to go down into Egypt, willeth him to tarry still in the country, and promiseth to bless him, yea, to give to him and to his seed all the countries of that land. Isaac, obeying the voice of God, tarried in that country, and waxed exceeding mighty, wealthy, and rich. For God gave him great abundance of corn, of sheep, and of oxen: yea, with a mighty household did the Lord bless him, insomuch that the king himself came unto him, and desired to make a covenant of peace and amity with him; unto such and so great power was Isaac grown. He which afore knew not where commodiously to live, and in the country which he would have forsaken for penury and hunger, even he now is become so rich that the king himself is glad to come to him, and to desire his favour. Gen. xxvi. Gen. xii. Psal. xxiv.

*Eus.* O wonderful works of God! *Chris.* Here find we that true which is spoken



*Eccius. xi.* by the wise man : “ Put thy trust in God, and abide in thine estate ; for it is an easy thing in the sight of God to make a poor man rich, yea, and that suddenly. The blessing of God hasteth to the reward of the righteous, and maketh his fruits soon to flourish and prosper.” *Theo.* This in deed was proved true in Isaac.

*Phil.* Not in Isaac only, but in so many as ever obeyed the voice of God, and lived<sup>1</sup> according to their vocation. God is the same God to us all that he was to Abraham and Isaac, if we by strong faith hang on him and on his fatherly providence, as they did, if the same integrity of manners and innocency of life appeareth in us that shined in them.

*Eus.* This beneficence and liberality of God toward Isaac ought to encourage all men to tarry at home in their own countries and houses, to be content with their estate and calling, and not to stray abroad for livings, as many idle brains do now-a-days, leaving their wives and their children in great care and misery, and many of them never returning unto them. Neither ought men to doubt but that God, which is almighty, and able to do whatsoever his good pleasure is, will as well provide for them at home in their poor cottages, as in the halls of princes. “ The blessing of the Lord maketh men rich ; as for careful travail, it doth nothing thereto.”

*Prov. x.*

*Phil.* When Isaac sent his son Jacob to Mesopotamia, that he might take to wife one of the daughters of Laban, Jacob, as he passed forth on his journey, “ made a vow, and said, If God will be with me, and will keep me in this journey which I go, and will give me bread to eat and clothes to put on, so that I come again unto my father’s house in safety, then shall the Lord be my God, and this stone which I have set up an end shall be God’s house, and of all that thou shalt give me will I give the tenth unto thee.” Here Jacob desireth God’s assistance in his journey, that he may go and come safe. And as touching worldly goods, he desireth no more but food and raiment. And so, nothing doubting of God’s help, he goeth forward on his journey, according to the commandment of his father. Now behold the loving-kindness of God toward Jacob. God, which never leaveth them succourless that call on his holy name, appeareth unto Jacob in his sleep, and promiseth that he will give him and his seed the land that he sleepeth upon, and that his posterity shall be great and many, that they shall be as the dust of the earth, and shall spread abroad to the west, to the east, to the north, and to the south ; yea, and that in his seed all kindreds of the earth shall be blessed.

*Gen. xxviii.*

*Chris.* Here are more benefits promised to Jacob than he asked. *Phil.* Yea, more than he durst have required of God. *Eus.* But what of the requests concerning his journey ?


*Phil.* Ye shall hear. Whereas Jacob desired God to be with him, and to keep him in his journey, God said unto him on this manner : “ Behold, I am with thee, and will be thy keeper in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land, neither will I leave thee until I have made good all that I have promised thee.” According to God’s promise Jacob had a prosperous journey, travelling into Mesopotamia : of whose coming when Laban heard, unto whom he was sent of his father, Laban for very joy “ came to meet him, embraced him, and kissed him, and brought him to his house.”

*Gen. xxix.*

*Theo.* This was good luck. *Chris.* Good luck indeed. *Phil.* So worketh God for his servants, which hath all men’s hearts in his hand. *Theo.* But what entertainment had Jacob afterward ?

*Phil.* Jacob tarried with Laban twenty years, in the which time God did not only send him bread and clothes according to his request, but also such wives as his heart desired, with many goodly children. Yea, God so blessed Jacob, that he was exceeding rich in gold and silver, in maid-servants, and men-servants, in sheep, camels, asses, goats, kine, &c. And afterward God brought him home again into his country both safely and wealthily. Who will now distrust the promise of such a Lord, so liberal, so bounteous, so beneficial ?

*Gen. xxxi.*

 *Eus.* This history is greatly comfortable for all godly travellers by countries : hereof

[<sup>1</sup> The edition of 1550 is here followed : the folio reads *liveth*.]

may they learn that God will not forsake them nor leave them succourless, but send them all things necessary in their journey, defend them from their enemies, and safely bring them home again, if they call on his holy name, and cast their care on him. *Chris.* So saith the psalmograph: "He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. They shall bear thee in their hands, that thou hurt not thy foot against a stone." God "shall defend thee under his wing; and thou shalt be safe under his feathers. His faithfulness and truth shall be thy shield and buckler. Thou shalt not be afraid for any terror by night, nor for the arrow that flieth by the day." Again: "My help cometh even from the Lord, which hath made heaven and earth. He will not suffer thy foot to be moved, and he that keepeth thee will not sleep. Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep. The Lord himself is thy keeper: the Lord is thy defence upon thy right hand; so that the sun shall not burn thee by day, neither the moon by night. The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil: yea, it is even he that shall keep thy soul. The Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in, from this time forth for evermore."

*Theo.* These be sweet and comfortable scriptures. *Phil.* I grant, to the faithful, which depend altogether on God, and on his fatherly providence. But the unfaithful, which trust on themselves, on their own wisdom and policy, feel no savour nor sweetness in them, as St Paul saith: "A natural man perceiveth not the things that belong to the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him."

But let us behold more histories, which shall declare and set forth God's high providence and singular liberality toward his servants, that we may learn perfectly to hang on the Lord our God. Ye read in the first book of Moses, that in the time of Jacob, whom we spake of a little afore, there was a great dearth in all countries; insomuch that in the land of Canaan there was no victual to be gotten for money. Now behold the providence of God. God, aforeseeing this plague of famine, to the intent that his servants should not perish in time of hunger for lack of food, wonderfully sent Joseph afore into Egypt. And although his brothers sold him into a strange land, by this means seeking his destruction, yet God turned this his servitude unto his honour, and the evil that they did to their brother unto their profit, wealth, and commodity. For God exalted Joseph, and set up his honour above all the lords and princes of Egypt: even next unto the king was he in dignity, insomuch that he had the rule of all the king's dominions, and did what seemed him good in his own eyes; such favour found he in the sight of the king through God's working.

Now, when this dearth was also felt in the land of Canaan, and Jacob with his family in great danger thereof, Jacob, hearing that corn was to be sold in Egypt (for through Joseph's wisdom was there corn enough laid up in the store-houses of every city in Egypt), sent his sons thither to buy corn for their money, that they might live, and not die. To be short, seeing the history is known, when the sons of Jacob came thither for victual, there was Joseph their brother in high authority, whom they judged either to be dead, or else to live like a bond-slave and drudge, not able either to do himself good or any other. In fine, they had victuals home with them and their money also, with many precious gifts, and at the last a commandment given them that they should bring their father and his household with all that he had, and provision should be made for them even in the best parts of the land of Egypt. Yea, the king himself sent chariots out of Egypt to fetch Jacob and all his family, and bade them not regard their stuff; "for the good of all the land of Egypt is yours," saith he. Jacob and all his were honourably brought thither, liberally and gently entertained of the king, quietly and wealthily placed in the land of Egypt.

And all this came to pass by the providence of God, which, aforeseeing things to come, worketh wonderfully for the safeguard and health of his servants. For the cause that Jacob and his children found such favour in the sight of king Pharaoh was not fortune, nor chance, but God's providence: again, that Joseph was exalted unto such dignity, the cause thereof was not Joseph's fair face, nor yet his goodly personage, but God's good-will, which gave him such wisdom as none had the like in all Egypt, neither

was there any in all the dominions of king Pharaoh found like unto Joseph, whom the king might make governor over his realm.

Gen. xlv.

And all these things wrought God for the preservation of his servants, as Joseph himself said to his brethren: "I am Joseph your brother, whom you sold into Egypt. Now therefore be not grieved therewith, neither let it seem a cruel thing in your eyes that ye sold me hither. For God did send me before you into Egypt for your wealth, and to save your lives. For this is the second year of dearth in the land; and five more are behind, in which there shall be neither earing nor harvest. Wherefore God sent me before you to make provision, that ye might continue in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance. So now it was not you that sent me hither, but God, which hath made me a father unto Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and ruler throughout all the land of Egypt." God himself also spake unto Jacob in a vision by night, saying: "I am God, the God of thy father: fear not to go down into Egypt; for I will there make of thee a great people. I will go down with thee into Egypt, and I will also bring thee again."

Deut. iv.

*Chris.* O the unspeakable good-will of God toward all them that trust in him! "What other nation," saith Moses, "is so great that gods come so nigh unto, as the Lord our God is nigh unto us in all things, so oft as we call unto him?" "The Lord our God is a merciful God: he will not forsake us, neither destroy us, nor forget the appointment of our fathers, which he sware unto them." The Lord our God cherisheth us, even as a father doth his son. "Will a mother forget the child of her womb," saith God, "and not pity the son whom she bare? And though she doth forget, yet will not I forget thee. Behold, I have written thee up upon my hands," &c.

Isai. xlix.



*Theo.* The last history which you rehearsed, neighbour Philemon, is very comfortable, and teacheth us, that although the plague of famine be cast upon any realm, and the wicked thereof perish for hunger, yet will God so provide for them that fear him, and call on his holy name, that they shall want no good thing. *Phil.* Well noted, neighbour Theophile. So would I have you both hear and read the histories of the holy scriptures, that ye should persuade yourself that whatsoever comfortable history ye find in the sacred bible, is there written for your comfort. And to prove your saying true, hear what God saith by the prophet: "Behold, my servants shall eat; but ye shall hunger. Behold, my servants shall drink; but ye shall suffer thirst. Behold, my servants shall be merry; but ye shall be confounded. Behold, my servants shall rejoice for a very quietness of heart; but ye shall cry for sorrow of heart, and complain for vexation of mind."

How the histories of the holy scriptures are to be read and considered. Isai. lxv.

Psal. xxxiii.

*Eus.* The saying of king David doth not much differ from this: "Behold, the eyes of the Lord are upon them that fear him, and upon them that trust in his mercy; that he may deliver their lives from death, and nourish them in time of hunger." Salomon also saith: "The Lord will not let the life of the righteous suffer hunger."

Prov. x.

Exod. xvi.

*Phil.* After God had delivered the Israelites out of Egypt with an out-stretched arm, and brought them into the wilderness of Sin, where they saw neither meat nor drink (for God was determined to prove them whether they were faithful or not), they grudged against Moses and Aaron, saying: "Would to God we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the flesh-pots, and when we did eat bread our bellies full! For ye have brought us out into this wilderness to kill the whole multitude with hunger." Ye see the unthankfulness of this people, for whom God had wrought so many wonders, and to whom God had shewed so great tokens of loving-kindness, even as a father doth to his child. Ye have heard how they murmured against Moses and Aaron, God's lawful ministers, which is nothing else than to murmur against God himself. Ye see their unfaithfulness, and how they are altogether swerved from God and from his holy providence; so that they are worthy no benefit at the hand of God: but what then? is God false of his promise? yea, rather, even for his promise sake (whereunto God hath ever chief respect), which he made to their fathers Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, he wonderfully sent them down meat from heaven, even manna, and so fed them, as the wise man saith: "Thou hast fed thine own people with angels' food, and sent them bread ready from heaven without their labour, being very pleasant and

God doth good for his promise sake even to the unworthy.

Wisd. xvi.

good of taste. And to shew thy riches and sweetness unto thy children, thou gavest every one their desire; so that every man might take what liked him best."

*Theo.* If God for his promises' sake feedeth the unfaithful and no less unthankful Israelites from heaven, we, that believe his promises, and hang only on him and on his fatherly providence, may be sure not to want, but abundantly to have whatsoever is necessary for us, as the psalmograph saith: "The eyes of all things look and wait upon thee, O Lord; and thou givest them meat in due time. Thou openest thy hand, and replenishest all things living with thy blessing." Again: "They that fear the Lord shall have no scarceness." "They which seek the Lord shall want no good thing."

*Chris.* God shall sooner cease to be God, than such as unfeignedly trust in him shall perish for hunger.

*Phil.* As the Israelites murmured for meat, so likewise did they for water. They came to Moses and chid with him; yea, they were almost ready to stone him, and said: "Give us water to drink." "Wherefore hast thou brought us out of Egypt to kill us and our children and cattle with thirst?" The Lord God, still considering his promises, and not weighing their infidelity nor unthankfulness, wonderfully, and against all natural and human expectation, gave them plenty of sweet waters out of the hard stony rock. *Eus.* O the marvellous works of God! He is not called Almighty without a cause; for he doth whatsoever his good pleasure is. It is truly said of David: "Great is our Lord, and great is his power: yea, his wisdom is infinity." Who will now doubt of necessary food, seeing God so marvellously feedeth the unfaithful, unthankful, and disobedient people?

*Phil.* At another time the rascal people that was among them, being weary of the meat sent down from heaven, fell a lusting, and turned themselves and wept (even as did also the children of Israel), and said: "Who shall give us flesh to eat? We remember the fish which we did eat in Egypt for nought, and the cucumbers, and melons, leeks, onions, and garlick. But now our soul is dried away; for we can see nothing else save manna: and our soul loatheth this light bread." Ye see that these people are still like themselves, that is, unfaithful, unthankful, disobedient. "O froward and crooked generation!" saith Moses; "do ye so reward the Lord, O ye foolish people and unwise?" *Chris.* It is not without a cause that St Stephen called that nation "stiff-necked, uncircumcised in hearts and ears, and such as always resist the Holy Ghost."

*Phil.* Well, yet note: notwithstanding their infidelity, unthankfulness, and disobedience, God continued still just in his promises, faithful in his words, and true in his dealings; for, according to their desire, for his promise' sake he would not suffer them to want, but gave them whatsoever they lusted for. "There went forth a wind from the Lord," saith the scripture, "and brought quails from the sea, and let them fall about the host, even a day's journey round about on every side of the host; and they did fly in the air as it were two cubits high over the earth. And the people stood up; and all that day, and all that night, and on the morrow, they gathered quails. And he that gathered a little gathered ten homers full. And they spread them abroad round about the host." Thus see ye how God for his promise' sake cherished the Israelites, although unfaithful, unthankful, and disobedient, even as the nurse doth her sucking babe; and fed them by the space of forty years in the wilderness, without their pain, care, travail, or labour.

*Theo.* If God shewed such gentleness to the unfaithful and disobedient for his promise' sake, how much more will he shew himself a gentle and loving Father to them that fear him, believe in him, love him, and for their powers labour to walk in his holy pathways!

*Phil.* Such shall never want. Now mark what followeth. As God provided meat for the Israelites, so in like manner suffered he them not to go naked, nor to perish for cold; but all that time of forty years, when they were in the wilderness, he so preserved their clothes that they waxed not old, and so saved their shoes that they were not worn, but both garments and shoes so whole at the forty years' end, as they were at their first coming into wilderness: "I have led you forty years in the wilderness," saith God; "and your clothes are not waxed old upon you, neither are the shoes of your feet worn. Ye have eaten no bread, nor drunk wine, or strong drink, that ye

Deut. viii. might know that I am the Lord your God." Moses also saith: "God humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which neither thou nor thy fathers knew of, to make thee to know that man doth not live by bread only; but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord, doth a man live. Thy raiment waxed not old upon thee, neither did thy foot swell those forty years." Hereof may ye perceive how bountiful God is in giving food and apparel, to them specially that fear him, and keep his holy commandments. Who will now be careful either for the belly, or for the back, as they say? God made them both, God will nourish them both.

*Eus.* These histories do so set forth the kindness of God toward man, that none except very infidels have just occasion to despair of God's liberality, if they call on his name, and travail according to their vocation.

*Phil.* There is nothing more certain. But lest any man should think that this kindness of God ceased in them of whom I have hitherto spoken, I will rehearse one or two histories more out of the old testament, and then allege certain out of the new, whereof ye may learn that other proved the like kindness at the hand of God, even as well in the new testament as in the old; that by this means ye may be perfectly persuaded God to be the Lord of the same liberality now that he was afore, and alike kind to his servants in all ages. Who knoweth not that Elias was an excellent prophet of God, fervent in spirit, vehement in word, and jealous for the glory of God?

Eccelus.xlviii. *Chris.* The scriptures testify no less of him. *Theo.* "Elias stood up as fire," saith the wise man; "and his word brent like a cresset<sup>1</sup>." While he lived, he was afraid of no prince; and no man might overcome him. Of his praise writeth Jesus, the son of Sirach.

*Phil.* This man of God lived in the time of Achab, king of Israel, in whose days God sent a great dearth into the world; for it rained not upon the earth by the space of three years and six months. In this plague of famine, whereof innumerable without doubt died, see how God provided for his servant Elias. First, when the waters  
1 Kings xvii. began to be dried up, God sent him to the brook Cherith, where he promised to give him drink, which thing he unfeignedly performed; so that, when other perished for lack of drink, he had God's plenty and enough, as they use to say. Now, as touching his meat, behold the wonderful power of God, which commanded the ravens to feed him, and to bring him meat. "The ravens," saith the scripture, "brought him bread and flesh in the morning, and likewise bread and flesh in the evening; and he drunk of the brook." Behold, and mark well, how God provideth for his servant. He maketh the fowls of the air to be Elias' cooks, and to bring him meat; and God himself is butler, and giveth him drink at the brook Cherith. O what a God have the faithful! how tender and gentle, how loving and kind is he to all them that put their trust in him! Rather than his servant should die for meat, he maketh the fowls of the air to bring him things necessary for the sustenance of his body. O behold and diligently mark the fatherly care which the Lord God hath for his servants!  
Psal. ciii. "Even as a father pitieth his own children, even so is the Lord merciful to them that  
Psal. cxlv. fear him." It is truly said of the psalmograph: "The Lord is at hand to all them that call on him; yea, to all them that call on him in truth."

*Theo.* Elias might right well say, as David writeth of himself: "The Lord guideth me; therefore can I lack nothing. He shall feed me in a green pasture, and lead me forth beside the waters of comfort." *Eus.* As God dealt with Elias and David, so will he deal with us, if we labour to please him as they did. *Chris.* So I trust; "for there is no respect of persons with God." And "whatsoever is written is written for our learning, that through patience and comfort of the scriptures we may have hope."

*Phil.* Ye say truth. Neither did the care of God cease for his servant Elias with that benefit, whereof ye have hitherto heard. For God is no changeling: whom he  
1 Kings xvii. loveth he loveth to the end. Therefore, when the brook was dried up because there fell no rain upon the earth, God, which never leaveth his servants succourless, said to Elias: "Up, and get thee to Sarepta, which is in Sidon, and dwell there: behold,

[<sup>1</sup> Cresset: a watch-fire, or beacon.]

I have commanded a widow there to sustain thee. So he arose, and went to Sarepta. And when he came to the gate of the city, the widow was there gathering sticks. And he called to her and said, Fet me, I pray thee, a little water in a vessel, that I may drink. And as she was going to fet it, he cried after her, and said, Bring me, I pray thee, a morsel of bread also in thine hand. She said, As truly as the Lord thy God liveth, I have no bread ready, but even an handful of meal in a barrel, and a little oil in a cruse. And, behold, I am gathering two sticks for to go in and dress it for me and my son, that we may eat and die. And Elias said unto her, Fear not, come and do as thou hast said; but make me thereof a little cake first of all, and bring it unto me, and afterward make for thee and thy son. For thus saith the Lord God of Israel, The meal in the barrel shall not be wasted, neither shall the oil in the cruse be diminished, until the Lord have sent rain upon the earth. And she did as Elias said. And she and her house did eat a good space; and the meal wasted not out of the barrel, neither was the oil spent out of the cruse, according to the word of the Lord, which he spake by the hand of Elias." Here again ye see what provision God made for Elias, and how beneficial he also was to Elias' hostess and to her household, because she entertained him so gently, and did whatsoever he commanded.

*Theo.* These be comfortable histories. *Eus.* And written for our comfort.

*Phil.* At another time, when he fled from wicked Jesabel, king Achab's wife, which 1 Kings xix. sware that she would surely slay him, because he had killed all Baal's priests, whom she full daintily nourished at her own table, how did God, even when he was asleep, send his angel unto him with a loaf of broiled bread, and a vessel of water, and bade him eat! "For thou hast yet," saith he, "a great journey to go." "And in the strength of that meat," saith the scripture, "walked he forty days and forty nights, even unto Horeb, the mount of God." Here see ye that, when we sleep, God watcheth and careth for us, even as he cared for Peter, and sent his angel to deliver him out Acts xii. of prison, when Peter was in a sound sleep, and thought nothing at all of the matter. "Behold," saith the psalmograph, "he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor Psal. cxxi. sleep." Note again, that with one meal's meat God is able to preserve us forty days and forty nights, as he did the prophet Elias; yea, all our life-time, if it be his pleasure; so that it is truly said: "Man shall not live with bread alone, but with every word Deut. viii. that cometh out of the mouth of God." And as God made provision for Elias, even so stirred he up Abdia, governor of wicked king Achab's house, to pity his prophets, 1 Kings xviii. and to provide for them; which, when devilish queen Jesabel destroyed the prophets of God, took an hundred of them, and hid them, fifty in one cave, and fifty in another, and provided bread and water for them; such and so great is the care which the Lord taketh for his servants universally.

*Chris.* It is therefore truly said of the prince-like prophet: "They that seek the Lord shall want no good thing." Again: "I have been young and am waxen old, and Psal. xxxiv. I have not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his children begging their bread on the Psal. xxxvii. earth."

*Theo.* These be comfortable histories for christian and godly preachers, whom for Preachers. the most part the wicked and unthankful world neglecteth, despiseth, and set nought by, yea, and maketh less provision for them than for their malt-horses<sup>2</sup> and ban-dogs. Here may the true preachers see that, although the world regardeth them nothing at all, and suffereth them, so much as in them is, not only miserably to live, but also to perish for hunger, yet God, whose ministers they are, whose word they preach, will not suffer them extremely to want, but will either wonderfully feed them himself, as he did Elias, or else stir up some good Abdy to make provision for them, as this Abdy did for the prophets of the Lord, when he hid them in the caves from the tyranny of queen Jesabel, and provided things necessary for their living.

*Phil.* We read also, that a certain woman of the wives of the prophets came unto 2 Kings iv. Heliseus the prophet, declaring unto him that her husband was dead, and that, for debt which she ought, and was not able to pay, the creditor was come to fet her two sons to be his bondmen. This woman was a prophet's wife. Her husband is dead, which

[<sup>2</sup> Malt-horses: slow dull drudges of horses.]

left her both poor and in debt. Comfort hath she none, but only the company of her two sons, which also the creditor would take away and make his bondmen, because she is not able to discharge the debt. O in what misery is this careful woman! She hath nothing at all in her house but a pitcher of oil: but what is that to the dispatch of the debt? And if that be gone, there remaineth nothing whereof she and her sons may live. What is then to be done? Debt must be paid. Her substance will not reach so far. To make her children bond-slaves should be to her present death. This therefore remaineth. The sorrowful widow lamenteth, first of all, her cause secretly in her heart unto God, which is the helper and patron of all true widows and fatherless children, and afterward uttereth the same to Elizeus, the prophet of God, which, through God's blessing, of one pitcher of oil filleth so many empty vessels full of oil, that she, selling part of the same, was not only able to pay her debts at the uttermost, but also had enough of the rest to find her and her children.

Tob. iv.

*Eus.* O notable miracle! Here find we true that holy Thoby said to his son: "My son, be not afraid. Truth it is we lead here a poor life; but great good shall we have if we fear God, and depart from all sin, and do well." *Chris.* This woman's husband was a prophet, and feared the Lord; therefore could not she and her children remain long comfortless. For God hath promised to be a husband to such widows, and a father to such godly men's children. "I have not seen the righteous forsaken, nor their children begging their bread on the earth," saith the psalmograph. Again: "Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord: he hath great delight in his commandments. His seed shall be mighty upon earth: the generation of the faithful shall be blessed. Riches and plenteousness shall be in his house; and his righteousness endureth for ever."

Psal. xxxvii.

Psal. cxii.

Preachers' wives.

*Theo.* This is a comfortable history for such godly women as are christian preachers' wives. Hereof may they learn that, though their husbands be never so poor when they depart out of this world, yet, if they remain faithful and in the fear of God, and diligently call on his blessed name in their adversity, he will neither suffer them nor their children to lack necessaries for their living, but by one means or other send them all good things; so that they shall not want. "I will not fail thee, nor yet forsake thee," saith God. "The Lord giveth meat to the hungry." "Behold, the eyes of the Lord are upon them that fear him, and upon them that trust in his mercy, that he may deliver their lives from death, and nourish them in the time of hunger." "God despiseth not the desire of the fatherless, nor the widow," saith the wise man, "when she poureth out her prayer before him. Doth not God see the tears that run down the cheeks of the widow? or heareth he not the complaint over such as make her to weep? For from her cheeks do the tears go up unto heaven; and the Lord which heareth them doth accept them."

Josh. i.

Psal. cxlvi.

Psal. xxxiii.

Eccles. xxxv.

2 Kings iv.

*Phil.* At another time also we read, that the aforesaid prophet in the time of dearth fed the prophets' children, and with a few loaves nourished a great number of men; insomuch that they did not only eat enough, but also left much of the bread; so greatly was it multiplied through the blessing of God, which is able of a little to make much, seeing of nothing he made all. "Give unto the people, that they may eat," saith the prophet. "The minister answered, What, should I set this before an hundred men? Set it before the people, saith he, and let them eat. For thus saith the Lord, They shall eat and leave. And he did set it before them; and they did eat and leave, according to the word of the Lord." See ye not here what the blessing of the Lord is, and how all things increase and abound when the Lord "openeth his hand?" If we depend on God's goodness, he will surely increase our victual in our store-houses, upon our table, yea, in our mouths and bellies. The prophet's servant thought it not possible that so great a number of men could be sustained with so few loaves. "But that which is impossible with men is possible with God." Who therefore will doubt any more of God's liberality, have he much or have he little? It is all one before God to feed with much or to feed with little. If God bless us, we cannot want; but if God's blessing be taken from us, we must needs perish.

Psal. cxlv.

Matt. xix.

Mark x.

Luke xviii.

Psal. civ.

*Eus.* So saith the psalmograph: "All creatures depend upon thee, O Lord, that thou shouldest give them their meat in due time. For, thou giving it them, they take it; and, thou opening thy hand, they are well satisfied. But, thou hiding thy face, they are

sorrowful: thou taking away their breath, they are but dead, and turned into the earth that they came of."

*Phil.* How wonderfully did God feed Daniel the prophet, when he was cast into the lions' den of the high rulers, because he said that the great dragon, whom they of Babylon worshipped as God, was not God! Did not the angel of the Lord take the prophet Abacuck by the top, when he was going into the field to bear meat to the mowers, and carried him by the hair of the head, and through a mighty wind set him in Babylon, upon the den where Daniel was? "Go, carry thy meat," saith the angel, "that thou hast, into Babylon, unto Daniel, which is in the lions' den." And when Abacuck cried and said, "O Daniel, thou servant of God, have, take thy breakfast that God hath sent thee;" Daniel answered: "O God, hast thou thought upon me? well: thou never failest them that love thee." What a lively example is this of God's singular providence and fatherly care which he hath for his servants! Notable and worthy to be written in letters of gold is this saying of Daniel: "THOU NEVER FAILEST THEM THAT LOVE THEE."

*Chris.* This history is very comfortable for all them that suffer imprisonment for the glory of God, and the confession of his truth. Hereof may they learn, that God will not leave them succourless nor destitute of help, as David saith: "The Lord is my light and my health: whom then shall I fear? The Lord is the defender of my life: of whom then shall I be afraid? When mine enemies came upon me to eat up my flesh, they stumbled and fell. Therefore, though an host of men were laid against me, yet shall not my heart be afraid; yea, and though there rose up war against me, yet will I put my trust in him." Psal. xxvii.

*Phil.* As I may leave off the histories of the old testament, and rehearse certain out of the new, that we may learn God's liberality toward his servants to be one and the same at all times and in all ages, let us call to remembrance the wonderful miracles that Christ wrought for the sustenance of his people. Read we not that our Saviour Christ at a certain time fed almost five thousand men, beside women and children, with five loaves and two fishes? And yet, when they all had eaten enough, they gathered up so much of the fragments that he left as filled twelve baskets full. At another time, when the people had been with Christ three days, and were ready to depart, having nothing to eat, and some of them had far to go, so that, if they had gone away without meat, they should have fainted by the way, what a friendly care had Christ for them! "I have compassion on the people," saith he, "because they have continued with me three days and have nothing to eat. And I will not let them depart fasting, lest they perish by the way." And when his disciples said, "Whence should we get so much bread in the wilderness, as should suffice so great a multitude?" and told him that they had but seven loaves and a few little fishes, "he commanded the people to sit down on the ground, and took the seven loaves and the fishes, and giving thanks, brake them, and delivered them to his disciples, and the disciples to the people; and they all did eat and were filled. And they took up of the broken meat that was left seven baskets full. And yet they that did eat were four thousand men, besides women and children." Here see ye that the loaves and fishes were multiplied in the hands of the disciples, and in the mouths and bellies of them that did eat, through Christ's blessing; so mighty is he to preserve the lives of his servants in the time of need. Matt. xiv. Mark vi. Luke ix. John vi. Matt. xv. Mark viii.

*Theo.* This is a comfortable history for all them that love to hear the word of God, and to frame their life according to the same. Such may be sure not to want the liberality of God in their necessity, which, as St Paul saith, "giveth us all things abundantly to enjoy them." *Chris.* This affirmeth that prince-like prophet, saying: "The rich shall want and suffer hunger; but they which seek the Lord shall want no good thing." 1 Tim. vi. Psal. xxxiv.

*Phil.* When Christ and his mother with his disciples were at the marriage in Cana, a city of Galilee, ye know that the guests wanted wine. What, spared he his liberality from them? Yea, rather did he not command the servitors to fill the water-pots with water? And when they had filled even unto the brim six water-pots of stone, containing two or three firkins a-piece, did not he turn all that water into John ii.



sweet wine? Certes they can want nothing, which have Christ present with them. Let us provide that we have Christ among us, and we may be sure to have abundance of all good things.

*Eus.* This history is very comfortable for all married persons, which marry in the Lord. All such that so marry, and continue in the fear of God, may be sure, that the water in their wells shall sooner be turned into wine, and the stones of their walls into bread, and the clay of their floors into meat, and the thatch of their houses into cloth, than they shall extremely want necessary things, either for themselves or for their family. *Chris.* Would God all men believed this! Then should they have merry and quiet minds, where now through infidelity they be miserably disquieted with the care of worldly things. *Theo.* "Lay thy care on the Lord," saith David; "and he shall nourish thee." Also St Peter: "Cast all your care on God; for he careth for you."

*Phil.* Again, how did our Saviour Christ provide for his disciples, when he sent them forth to preach, without money or meat! as he himself saith in the gospel of Luke: "When I sent you without wallet, and scrip, and shoes, lacked ye any thing? And they said, No." The disciples, according to their vocation, went forth and preached the gospel, nothing doubting but he that sent them would provide for them. For what master can find in his heart to see his servants lack?

*Chris.* This is very comfortable for the true preachers of God's word. Hereof may they well be ascertained that, if they do their Master's message faithfully, they shall not want, though the wicked world be never so unthankful and niggardly unto them.

*Phil.* O how comfortable are these words of our Saviour Christ to a faithful christian man! "I say unto you, be not careful for the life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more worth than meat, and the body more of value than raiment? Behold the fowls of the air; for they sow not, neither reap, nor yet carry into the barns; and yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? Which of you, though he took thought therefore, could put one cubit unto his stature? And why care ye then for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow. They labour not, neither spin. And yet for all that, I say unto you, that even Salomon in all his royalty was not arrayed like unto one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass, which is to-day in the field, and to-morrow shall be cast into the furnace, shall he not much more do the same unto you, O ye of little faith? Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewith shall we be clothed? After all these things seek the gentiles. For your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But rather seek ye first the kingdom of God, and the righteousness thereof; and all these things shall be cast unto you."

Behold what goodly and natural examples our Saviour Christ bringeth forth here, that he may allure us to trust only on God's providence, and not to be careful for the necessaries of this life, which are not gotten by painful travail, but received of God's mere liberality. And because we should not be careful for meat, he first setteth before our eyes the fowls of the air for an example, whom seeing God the Father feedeth so plenteously that they want nothing, when they neither sow, nor reap, nor carry into the barns, much more will he feed us, and send us whatsoever is necessary for the preservation of this our natural life, if we call on his holy name, and live according to our vocation. If he feedeth the birds because they be his creatures, which notwithstanding so once die that they never live after, much more will he provide for us, which are not only his creatures, but also created after his own image, endued with an immortal soul, and made unto the end that we should set forth his glory, praise his blessed name, and after the general resurrection, our bodies and souls being knit together, live with him in glory, worlds without end, as his lawful heirs, through Jesus Christ our Lord. And as touching our apparel, to dissuade us from thought-taking for that, he biddeth us consider and diligently mark the lilies and flowers of the field; which, although they neither labour nor spin, are so clothed with

Married persons.

Psal. lv.

1 Pet. v.

Matt. x.

Luke xxii.

Matt. vi.

fine and pleasant colours, that not king Salomon in all his royalty and glory was apparelled like unto one of them. If God so decketh the transitory flower, which this day is in the field pleasantly growing, and to-morrow shall be cut down and cast into the furnace, how much more will he send us convenient apparel for our bodies, which though they once die, yet shall they rise again, and for ever live with God in eternal glory! Christ therefore concludeth, that all these things shall be cast unto us, if we seek the kingdom of God and the righteousness thereof. Let us seek heavenly things; and things worldly shall abound unto us. Let us labour to garnish our minds with virtues; and God will not suffer our bodies to perish for lack of transitory things. For God is the Lord which "giveth meat to all flesh." "He giveth," as the psalmograph saith, "food to the cattle, and feedeth the young ravens that call upon him." He feedeth the Turk, the Saracen, the Jew, and all the rabble of infidels for their creation sake, and for his mercies' sake. He therefore will not leave them that be his faithful people unprovided, succourless, and destitute of help. He giveth the vile worms of the earth not only their being, but also whereof to live: he therefore will not see the faithful man lack, which is made like unto his own similitude and image. Let us therefore never despair either of food or of apparel. God gave us the life, God will preserve the life. God gave us the body, God will clothe the body. Away therefore with careful pensiveness and pensive care! Let us cast our eyes on God's most holy and infallible providence, which is certain and never faileth. "Take heed and beware of covetousness," saith our Saviour Christ; "for no man's life standeth in the abundance of the things which he possesseth."

Psal. cxxxvi.

Psal. cxlvii.



Luke xii.

*Eus.* I beseech God give us all grace so to do. *Theo.* Amen, good Lord, I most heartily beseech thee.

*Phil.* Furthermore, that we should be certain of corporal necessities, Christ our Saviour hath commanded us, in that prayer which we commonly call the *Pater noster*, and so likewise taught us, that we should ask our bodily sustenance of our heavenly Father. This would he not have done, without doubt, if he had not been certain, that according to our requests our heavenly Father will deal with us, and give us our desires.

Matt. vi.

*Chris.* Of whom should the child crave, but of his father?

*Phil.* Again, to make us thoroughly assured of this thing, what comfortable promises have we in the holy scriptures! "Ask, and it shall be given you: seek, and ye shall find: knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For whosoever asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. Is there any man among you, which, if his son asked him bread, would offer him a stone? or if he asked fish, would he proffer him a serpent? If ye then, which are evil, can give to your children good gifts, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him!" "Whatsoever ye desire when ye pray, believe that ye shall have it; and it shall be done unto you." "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you. Ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full." "The Lord is at hand," saith St Paul: "be not careful, but in all things shew your petition unto God in prayer and supplication, with giving of thanks." Many other most sweet and comfortable promises have we in the holy scriptures, whereby we be assured to obtain of God whatsoever we ask of him, being agreeable to his most holy will.

Matt. vii.

Mark xi.

John xvi.

Phil. iv.

*Eus.* To ask necessities for our living is according to God's will. *Phil.* Truth, For God hath commanded us so to do, and promised that he will hear us. Jacob and Salomon, as the scripture witnesseth, asked of God necessities for their living, and were heard.

1 John v.

Gen. xxviii.

Prov. xxx.

*Chris.* Although we ought to depend on God's providence, and by strong faith and fervent prayer look for all good things at his hand, yet may not we be idle, and lie wide open, gaping when God will put meat into our mouths, like careless swine.

*Phil.* God forbid. For, as the holy man Job saith: "A man is born to labour, even as the bird is to fly." From the beginning God appointed man to labour, saying: "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat thy bread until thou return unto the earth,"

All men ought to labour in their vocation. Job v. Gen. iii.

whence thou wast taken. For earth thou art, and unto earth shalt thou return."

Psal. exxviii. David also saith: "Thou shalt eat the labours of thine own hands." The holy apostle  
 2 Thess. iii. St Paul giveth a commandment, that "if any man will not labour, the same should  
 not eat," and giveth a charge that all men "work with quietness, and eat their own  
 1 Thess. iv. bread." "We beseech you, brethren," saith he, "that ye study to be quiet, and to  
 meddle with your business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded  
 Eph. iv. you." Again: "Let him that stole steal no more; but let him rather labour with  
 his hands some good thing, that ye may have to give unto him that needeth." St  
 ☞ Paul calleth it theft for any man to live of the labour of other men's hands idly and  
 without any certain vocation, and commandeth that all such should labour and get  
 them some honest occupation, whereby they may be the more able both to find them-  
 selves, and also to distribute unto other that have need.

Examples of  
 labour.  
 Gen. iii.  
 Gen. iv.  
 Amos i.  
 Gen. ix.  
 Gen. xiii.  
 xxv. xxix.  
 xli.  
 Exod. iii.  
 Exod. i.  
 1 Sam. xvi.  
 Exod. xxviii.  
 Luke i.  
 Mal. i.  
 B. & Dr.  
 Mark vi.  
 Matt. iv.  
 Acts xx.  
 Col. iv.  
 Acts xviii.  
 Acts x.  
 Acts ix.

Our first father Adam toiled in the earth, according to God's commandment, and so gat his living. Cain was a ploughman. Abel was a shepherd. Jubal exercised music. Tubalcain was a smith, and a graver in metal. Noe was a planter of vineyards. Abraham, Lot, Isaac, and Jacob were ploughmen and shepherds. Joseph was a magistrate, and a public minister in the commonweal of Egypt, under king Pharaoh. Moses was a shepherd, and kept the sheep of Jethro his father-in-law, priest of Madian. The children of Israel got their living with hard and painful labour in Egypt, under king Pharaoh. David, before he was anointed king of Israel, was a shepherd. All the priests and Levites of the old law, every man according to his vocation, laboured by giving attendance in the temple, by killing of beasts, and offering sacrifices, by studying the scriptures of God, and teaching the same unto the people, &c. Amos the prophet was one of the shepherds at Therna. Abacuck the prophet travailed in husbandry. Christ himself was a carpenter. The apostles of Christ were fishers. Paul laboured with his own hands, and gat both his own living, and others' that were with him. St Luke was a physician, and (as some writeth) a painter also. Aquila was a maker of tents, of the which occupation St Paul was. Simon, St Peter's host, was a tanner. Dorcas, that virtuous woman, made garments with her own hands, and gave them to the poor. There was no good and godly man even from the beginning of the world, which hath not practised somewhat to get his living, and lived in some certain honest and godly vocation, wherein he might with a good conscience eat his bread.

Magistrate. The magistrate is called of God to rule with the temporal sword, to be governor of the people, to promote God's word, to nourish the preachers of the same, to exercise justice, to defend the widow and fatherless, to conserve the commonweal, to banish all false religion out of his realm, and to seek the quietness and commodity of his subjects, even as a father seeketh the health and profit of his natural son.

Minister. The spiritual minister is appointed of God to rule with "the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God," to rebuke sinners with the law, yea, and to excommunicate them, if they be obstinate and will not repent, to comfort and cherish the weak with the sweet promises of the holy scripture, to encourage the strong, and to exhort them to go forward until they wax ancient, and be perfect in Christ's religion, to minister the sacraments, to make collections for the poor, to maintain hospitality for the relief of the needy.

Subject. The subject is called of God to obey, and to be in subjection unto his superiors, and every one of them is bound by the commandment of God to live in their vocation. The lawyer in pleading and defending poor men's causes; the shoemaker in making shoes; the tailor in making garments; the merchant in occupying merchandise faithfully and truly; the school-master in bringing up his scholars godly and virtuously; the father of the household to provide for his family; the mother of the household to look upon things pertaining to the house, and to see her family well governed; and so forth in all other persons, in whatsoever state God hath called them. Every man in his vocation ought to labour, and by no means to be idle. And who so doth, God will bless his labours, and send him wherewith abundantly to live.

Prov. xx. *Theo.* The wise man saith: "The sluggard plougheth not for cold; wherefore he

beggeth in harvest, and getteth nothing." "He that gathereth in harvest is a wise son; but he that is idle in summer is the son of confusion." Again: "He that tilleth his field shall be satisfied; but he that is idle shall suffer hunger." Prov. xxviii.

*Phil.* God indeed hath promised to feed us, but yet so that we ourselves labour for our living. God hath promised us salvation in Christ Jesus, yet so that we believe his promise, and labour to the uttermost of our power to frame our lives according to his blessed will. David saith not only, *Spera in Domino*, "Trust in the Lord;" but he addeth unto it, *et fac bonitatem*, "and do good." All our affiance and trust must be reposed in God, and all good things must be looked for at his hand; yet must we do that lieth in our power concerning all those things that we desire to obtain of God. Therefore Christ saith: "Take no thought." He saith not, Labour not. The pensive care and thought-taking for our living, wherewith the heathen be so greatly disquieted, we must cast away from us, and lay it upon God, which careth for us; but as for labour, which is laid upon us of God as a cross for our sin and disobedience in Adam, we may not refuse, every man in his vocation, but joyfully take it upon us, and give God thanks that by such means, without our care and thought-taking, he will feed us according to his word. For what are all our pains, labours, and travails, if God bless them not? as the psalmograph saith: "Except the Lord build the house, their labour is but lost that build it. Except the Lord keep the city, he watcheth but in vain that keepeth it." Psal. xxxvii.

*Chris.* Methink the occasion of this dearth<sup>1</sup>, wherewith we are now oppressed, is not so greatly to be ascribed unto the covetousness of certain greedy gripes, as unto our own selves, unto our own ungodliness and dissolution of life, which so live as though there were no God at all, so behave ourselves as though there were neither heaven nor hell. They which have the gospel swimming in their lips, so live clean contrary to the doctrine of the gospel, as though there were no gospel at all. In ambition, in pride, in covetousness, in envy, in malice, in wantonness of life, &c., they give place to none. Another sort are so drowned in papistry, in superstition, in hypocrisy, &c., and burn with such an immortal hatred against God's word, that they can neither abide that (otherwise than it shall serve their fancy), nor the preachers of it, nor yet such as avance it. Can God do any otherwise than send his plagues where such impiety and ungodliness reign? It cometh from God's great mercies that we be not consumed, and handled as Sodom and Gomorre. But our own damnation sleepeth not, if we do not both shortly and earnestly repent and amend. Matt. vi. Careful pensive-ness, and not labour, is forbidden of Christ.

*Phil.* Truth it is indeed, that God many times sendeth the plague of famine into the world for sin, as it came to pass in the time of that most wicked and idolatrous king Achab, and at divers other times. And Moses, that most excellent prophet of God, saith: "If thou wilt hearken diligently unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe and do all his commandments, which I command thee this day, the Lord will set thee up on high above all nations of the earth. And all these blessings shall come on thee, and overtake thee, if thou wilt hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God. Blessed shalt thou be in the town, and blessed in the fields. Blessed shall be the fruit of thy body, the fruit of thy ground, and the fruit of thy cattle, the fruit of thy oxen, and thy flocks of sheep. Blessed shall thy almary be, and thy store. Blessed shalt thou be both when thou goest out, and blessed when thou comest in, &c. The Lord shall command the blessing to be with thee in thy store-houses, and in all that thou settest thine hand to, &c. The Lord shall make thee plenteous in goods, in the fruit of thy body, in the fruit of thy cattle, and in the fruit of thy ground, &c. The Lord shall open unto thee his good treasure, even the heaven, to give rain unto thy land in due season, and to bless all thy labours of thine hand, &c. But and if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to keep and to do all his commandments and ordinances, which I command thee this day, then all these curses shall come upon thee, and overtake thee. Cursed shalt thou be in the town, and cursed in the field. Cursed shall thine almary be, and thy store. Cursed shall the fruit of thy body and the fruit of thy land be, and the fruit of thy oxen, and the Gross gossellers. Papists. Deut. xxviii. Blessings. Cursings.

[<sup>1</sup> So edition of 1550; folio, *death*.]

[<sup>2</sup> The edition of 1550 reads *the*.]

flocks of thy sheep. And cursed shalt thou be when thou goest in, and when thou goest out. And the Lord shall send upon thee famine, hunger, and going to nought in all things that thou settest thine hand to, until thou be destroyed and brought to nought quickly, because of the wickedness of thine inventions, in that thou hast forsaken the Lord." "And the heaven that is over thy head shall be brass, and the earth that is under thee iron. And the Lord shall turn the rain of thy land unto powder and dust: even from heaven shall they come down upon thee, until thou be brought to nought, &c. Thou shalt carry much seed out into the field, and shalt gather but little in; for the vermin shall destroy it." The prophet Esay also saith: "If ye be loving and obedient, ye shall eat the good things of the earth. But if ye be obstinate and rebellious, ye shall be devoured with the sword. For thus the Lord hath promised with his own mouth."

Isai. i.

These sentences, with many other in the holy scripture, do evidently shew that the plague of famine and hunger is sent unto us of God for our sins.

*Eus.* It is convenient therefore that we all hearken to the admonition of God, given by the psalmograph, which is, that there "be no strange god" among us, nor that we "worship any other god" but him alone, which only is the Lord our God that delivered us out of the spiritual Egypt, that is, from the servitude and tyranny of Satan. If we so do, God promiseth that he will give us whatsoever we ask of him. He will feed us with the finest wheat-flour, yea, and satisfy us with honey out of the stony rock. But to obtain of God this abundance and wealth, we may worship and have no strange gods.

Psal. lxxxii.

What is meant by strange gods.

These strange and new-found gods are not<sup>1</sup> only idols and mawmets made of wood or stone, which in times past the simple and foolish ignorant people worshipped as gods, but the abominable vices which reign so commonly now among us; I mean covetousness, pride, ambition, gluttony, lechery, malice, &c. These are strange gods. These must we put out of our breasts, if we will have God merciful and liberal unto us. For is this reasonable for us to serve strange gods, and to give over ourselves as bond-slaves to them, and yet to require our wages and reward of the true and only living God? "What fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? What company hath<sup>2</sup> light with darkness? What concord hath Christ with Belial? Either what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? How agreeth the temple of God with idols?" "Know ye not," saith St Paul, "how that, to whomsoever ye commit yourselves as servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey, whether it be of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?" "Every one that doth sin is the servant of sin," saith Christ. We must first of all be God's servants, before we flatter ourselves with the obtaining of the good things promised by God; or else we deceive ourselves. If we be once the servants of God, and faithfully continue in his service, then may we be bold to ask of him our wages, and to persuade ourselves that all the comfortable histories and sentences which we read in the holy scriptures pertain unto us; otherwise we have no more to do with them than the Turk or the Jew. And if we receive any good thing at the hand of God, being not his servants, we reserve<sup>3</sup> it, as all other infidels do, unto our damnation.

2 Cor. vi.

Rom. vi.

John viii.

*Phil.* I confess, neighbour Eusebius, all this to be true which you have now spoken. Neither meant I, by talking so much of God's gentleness and liberality, and by alleging all these comfortable histories and sentences, to stablish the idolaters in their idolatry, the wicked in their wickedness, the covetous worldlings in their covetousness, the proud in their pride, the lecherous in their lechery, the idle bellies in their idleness, &c.; and yet notwithstanding to look for all those good things at the hand of God which belong unto his servants, as he witnesseth by the prophet; but to declare for your comfort and mine, that so many as give themselves over to God, believe in him, fear him, serve him, and live according to their vocation, shall never perish for hunger, but at all times have whatsoever is necessary for them. And if any should chance to famish (which seldom or never happeneth), God suffereth them so to do, partly that

Isai. lxxv.  
The merciful promises of God be made to the godly, and not to the ungodly.

[<sup>1</sup> Not is supplied from the edition of 1550.]

[<sup>2</sup> So edition of 1550. Folio, *have.*]

[<sup>3</sup> This word, though not clearly printed in the edition of 1550, seems there to be *receive.*]

he may the sooner call them unto his glory, partly that their death may turn unto the greater damnation of such unmerciful monsters as suffered the servants of God to perish for hunger.

*Theo.* We know your godly intent, brother Philemon, neither doth our neighbour Eusebius otherwise take the matter. And I for my part thank you right heartily for your godly admonitions, freely confessing that I am much edified by your talk, and strongly enarmed against the darts of poverty and hunger, whensoever they shall go about to oppress me.

*Chris.* We all confess no less.

*Eus.* I spake that I spake to this end, that men should not flatter themselves with the sweet and comfortable promises of God, when they live in all wickedness and abomination; which promises pertain not unto them, but unto the faithful servants of God, which shall enjoy no less at the hand of God than he hath promised. If they will enjoy the like commodity, they must do the like service. They must away with their strange and new-found gods, I mean pride, covetousness, gluttony, whoredom, malice, &c., and serve the only true and living God.

*Phil.* Well, neighbours, to knit up your talk with few words, ye have heard how beneficial God is to them that put their trust in him, and live according to their vocation; so that those that be faithful need not to despair of comfort, seem the scarceness of things so great that it bringeth present death almost with it. For in that dearth and penury the faithful man that casteth his care on God, and hangeth wholly on his fatherly providence, may well say with the psalmograph: "If I walk in the midst of the shadow of death, I will not be afraid of any evil, for thou art with me." Psal. xxiii.  
Psal. xxi. God is ever present with his people in all their tribulation, and he will undoubtedly deliver them, and save them harmless. This now remaineth, that when ye come among the poor needy Christians, ye comfort them with these sweet scriptures that ye have heard, which without all doubt shall greatly quiet their minds, and refrain them from attempting any unlawful redress of things after this. Again, according to your ability relieve their poverty with your riches. Exhort your rich neighbours likewise to be beneficial to the poor, as the faithful stewards of God, remembering that unto that end God hath endued them with their possessions. Pray unto God that he may give unto the covetous worldlings a merciful and liberal heart, that after this they may no less willingly seek the profit of their neighbours, than hitherto they have sought their own private lucre and singular commodity. To conclude, pray unto God that every one of us may so live and so frame our life according to his will, that he may vouchsafe to bless us, and send us necessaries for our living, that we may the more freely, and with the more quiet minds, "serve him in holiness and right- Luke i. eousness all the days of our life."

Well, neighbours, I pray you take the pains to come into the parlour with me. Ye shall take your part of such homely fare as I have. And I pray you, be no strangers: the offer ye come, the more welcome shall you be.

*Eus.* We thank you, most gentle neighbour Philemon; and praised be the Lord for your godly and comfortable exhortations.

*Chris.* Amen.

*Give the glory to God alone.*