

JETHRO'S JUSTICE OF PEACE.

A SERMON PREACHED AT A GENERAL ASSIZES, HELD AT BURY
ST EDMUND'S, FOR THE COUNTY OF SUFFOLK.

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

SIR FRANCIS BACON, KNIGHT,

LORD CHANCELLOR OF ENGLAND, ETC.

WHEN we see one go or do amiss, though his feet or hands be the next actors and instruments of his error, yet we say not, Are you lame? but, Have you no eyes? or, Can you not see? Whatever swervings or stumbings any part of the body politic makes, the blame lights not upon the gentry or commonalty, the immediate delinquents, but on the principal lights in magistracy or ministry, which, being as guardians and tutors of the rest, should either prevent or reform their aberrations. And herein miserable is the condition of these two optic pieces, that they are more subject, and that to more distempers than other inferior parts; yet herein more, that, being hurt, they are more impatient of cure, not only of searching acrimonious waters (which yet oft are needful), but shy of the most soft and lawny touches; but most of all in this, that being once extinct, they leave a void darkness to the whole body, exposing it to the pits of destruction. As exceeding great, on the other hand, is the happiness, honour, and use of them, if clear and single. For this our national body, it will little boot either to applaud the one, or to bewail the other; I rather wish and look about me for some eye-salve, which may help to descry and redress, if anything be amiss. And behold here (Right Honourable) a confection promising something thereto. It was prescribed first by Jethro, whom Moses calls the eyes of Israel, Num. x. 81; and newly compounded by an oculist, of whom as I may not, so I need not, say anything at all. Next under the sacred fountain of light (the light of our Israel), I worthily

account your Lordship most sufficient in law to accept, to make use, to judge, to patronise it. The subject of the book is the principal object of your office, to elect, direct, and correct inferior magistracy. To which purposes, nature, literature, and grace have enabled you, that if you should fail the world's expectation, they will hardly trust any other in haste. Many in rising have followed the stirrup, pampered and jetting honour not standing the ground, but once seated have done renownedly. But your Lordship had never any other graces than your birth and desert, to which hereditary dignity hath so gently tendered itself, that you have not let fall your name of religion in getting up. Therefore, now you are in the top of honour, all that know you look you will be exactly honourable. For my part, bounden to your Lordship for a favour formerly received, greater than your honour knows of, or I can express, I shall leave Jethro to be your monitor, and myself remain ever an humble suitor to God, who hath made you a judge of conscience, that he would make you continue a conscionable judge, improving your place and abilities to the best advantage belonging to it, the furtherance of your reckoning at the last day.

Your honour's daily headsman,

NATH. WARD.

JETHRO'S JUSTICE OF PEACE.

Moreover, thou shalt provide out of all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness, and place such over them, to be rulers of thousands, and rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens. And let them judge the people at all seasons: and it shall be, that every great matter they shall bring unto thee, but every small matter they shall judge: so shall it be easier for thyself, and they shall bear the burden with thee. If thou do this thing, and God command thee so, then thou shalt be able to endure, and all this people shall also go to their place in peace.—
EXODUS XVIII. 21, 22, 28

If Jethro were, as the fashion of those times and the nature of his style will bear, and (as some conceit) both prince and priest,* then was he, beyond all exception, every way qualified for skill, as a judicious divine, and for experience as an aged governor, to give direction in matters of magistracy, and to cast Moses a mould for a polity in Israel. Sure I am, a godly and religious man he was, for he begins with prayer, and ends with sacrifice. And such as himself was his advice, sage and holy. And howsoever it passed from him at the first under God's correction, yet afterward allowed by God, and practised by Moses, becomes, of good policy, sound divinity; of private counsel, a general oracle; ruling for the substance of it all ages and persons.

Venerable it is for the very antiquity of it. What price do men set upon old copies, coins, and statues? Who passeth by a crystal fountain, bearing some ancient name or date, and tastes not of it, though no thirst provoke him?† Such is this, the clear head-spring of all ensuing brooks in Scripture and other writers concerning magistracy. All those texts (which I wish were set as a frontlet between the eyes, and as a seal upon the hearts of all in authority), Jehoshaphat's charge, 2 Chron. xix. 5, Job's character, chap. xxix, David's vow, Ps. ci., the scattered parables of Solomon, and passages of the prophets, chiefly that round and smart one, Isa. xxxiii. 14, are they not all branches of this root? In which respect it must needs be of sovereign use for the discovering and reformatory of whatsoever error time hath soiled government withal. How are defaced copies and disfigured

* Cohen.

† Τους παριόντας και μη δηλωσιν ἐρίλκονται ἀρυσσάσαι του πόντου. Ignat. ad Marian. Cassub.

pictures better amended than by reducing them to their original? If the pipe fail, go we not to the head?

Here is the archetype or first draught of magistracy, worthy in this regard, chosen by judicious Bucer to press upon Edward the Sixth, for the purgation of his offices and laws from the dross and filth contracted under the Romish confusion, which considering, that worthy Josiah of ours took in such good part, and practised with such good success. Yea, Moses himself, learned in all good literature, trained up in court, the greatest law-giver that ever was, and father of all lawgivers, of the thrice great Hermes, Lycurgus, Solon, Plato, Justinian, and the rest, yea, God's familiar favourite, faithful in his house, known by name and face, honoured with miraculous power, &c., and that at the hands of one (age and fatherhood excepted) his inferior; I trust that none will dare to reject or slight it off, remembering that divinity, as the mistress, taketh upon her to direct her handmaid, and that the Scripture is the best man of counsel for the greatest statesman in the world, this little portion thereof containing in it more than all Lepsius's *Bee-hive*, or Machiavelli's *Spider-web*. All which will best appear by the opening of this rich cabinet, and viewing the several jewels in it, which are these—

1. It first gives order for the care and circumspection in the choice. 'Provide.'

2. Secondly, it directs this choice by four essential characters of magistrates:—(1.) Men of ability. (2.) Fearing God. (3.) Men of truth. (4.) Hating covetousness.

3. Thirdly, it applies these four to magistrates of all degrees, in an exact distribution of them, by way of gradation, descending step by step, from the highest to the lowest. 'And place such over them to be rulers:': (1) of thousands; (2) of hundreds; (3) of fifties; (4) of tens.

4. Fourthly, it prescribes to the magistrates, thus qualified and chosen, their offices, viz., to judge the people in the smaller causes, &c., and their assiduity and industry therein. 'And let them judge the people at all seasons, &c. And it shall be that they shall bring every great matter to thee, but every small matter they shall judge.'

5. Lastly, it propounds the blessed fruit and emolument that will necessarily ensue thereupon. *First*, to Moses himself, 'So shall it be easier for thyself, and they shall bear the burden with thee, and thou shalt be able to endure.' *Secondly*, to the people, 'And all this people shall go to their place in peace.'

THE FIRST PART.

Techezeh, 'provide,' or look out. A word implying all exactness and curiosity incident to elections, as inspection, circumspection, inquisition, suspicion, information, deliberation, coming of *Chozah*, to see or contemplate, whence the prophets were called *Chosi*, seers. It is in a manner translated by a word of the like force, in a business of the like nature, Acts vi. 5, *ἐπισκοπάσθε*, 'survey' the whole body of the people, and choose the best you can cull out. It were somewhat strict and strange to say that prayer and fasting must be used. And yet this I find practised in such cases, 'Let the Lord God of the spirits of all flesh set a man over this congregation,' Acts i. and Num. xxvii. 16. Yea, Jethro himself sanctified this his advice with prayer, 'God be with thee,' ver. 19. And good reason He should be called to counsel whose the judgment is, and whose providence

is always very special in those elections, whether sought or no. If God supervise not, Samûel the seer shall take seven wrong before one right, 1 Sam. xvi. Some men's faults are palpable, and go before election; some are cunningly concealed, and break not out till after. First, therefore, look up to God, and then amongst the people. Have thine eyes in thy head, all the care that may be will be little enough. Say not there are no sufficient persons, nor yet think every one that thinks himself so, or commonly goes for such, is sufficient. Seek out such, and such may be found. Look among the olives, vines, and fig-trees. Such trees must be climbed. Brambles will lay hold on the sleeve for preferment. *Ne sit qui ambit.* Let him never speed that sues. Lay hands on none rashly. They that are fit and able must and will be sought to, yea, hauled out of their ease and privacy into the light of employment, the charge and danger whereof they weighing, as well as the credit or gain, and knowing them to be callings, will not meddle with them till they be called to them, which ambitious inconsiderates, not being able to ponder, much less to sustain, thrust their shoulders under, and either by hook or crook come in, or climb into the chair of honour, more tickle than the stool Eli brake his neck off: whither, when they have aspired with much trouble and cost, they sit as in the top of a mast, in fear and hazard, and often fall with shame and confusion, not unlike to some rash youth, that, having gotten a horse as wild as himself, with much ado backs him, sets him in a sweat, and comes down with a mischief.

For the prevention of all which evils unavoidably attending ambition, lighting partly upon the intruders themselves, partly upon the admitters, but most heavily upon the commonweal, see how needful Jethro's counsel was and ever will be. That such be provided, not as would have places, but as places should have. Which care, as Jethro commits to Moses, so both the Scripture and reason imposeth upon the superior magistrate, in whose power and place it is either to nominate or constitute inferior authorities; and whose fault chiefly it is, if they be otherwise than they ought, or the people injured in this kind. How circumspect and religious ought such to be in the performance of this greatest and weightiest duty.

Unless you will reply, as I fear many a fox doth in his bosom. Thus indeed you have heard it said of old, but those times were plain, and Jethro a simple-meaning old man. A beaten politician of our times, learned in the wisdom of newer state, and acquainted with the mysteries of the market, that knows how to improve things to the best, for his own time and turn, and to let the common body shift for itself, would have projected Moses a far more commodious plot, after this or the like manner. Now you have offices to bestow, a fair opportunity in your hand to make yourself for ever, to raise your house, to pleasure your friends; either proclaim it openly or secretly, set it abroad by some means or other, see who bids fairest, weigh the sacrifices, choose the men of the best and greatest gifts.

O gall of bitterness, O root of all evil to church and commonwealth! when authorities and offices of justice shall be bought and sold,* as with a trumpet or drum, to the candle or outrope. The particular branches whereof, when I seriously consider, I wonder not that Christ with such zealous severity brake down the banks, and whipped out the chapmen out of the temple; nor that Peter with such fiery indignation banned Simon and his money. For if such men and money perish not, kingdoms and churches must perish, and both civil and ecclesiastical courts will soon prove dens of thieves.

* Tanquam sub hasta.

Whose soul bleeds not to see men's souls bought and sold, like sheep at the market to every butcher? Of this you lawyers much complain against the clergymen, for buying of benefices, which you might do the more justly, if you yourselves were not often the sellers of them. I would the fault rested only in benefices, and reached not into offices and civil dignities. Indeed that kind of purchase we call not *simony*, it may from his other name be fittier styled *magic*; for by I know not what kind of witchcraft, men sin by leave and law in these civil purchases; the laws and statutes provided for the remedy of the evil in some cases, tolerating it in other, and the practice by means of this allowance growing intolerable. Some of them (as the world reports) offices for life, and at pleasure, amounting to the rate of lands and inheritances.

I am not ignorant of the distinction of judicature, trust and pains; but are they not all offices of justice? Do they not prepare to judicature, and lies it not in them to guide or misguide, to hasten or delay justice, &c., which how can they freely give, which buy dearly?

Doth not Bucer deal faithfully with his sovereign? Offices are not livings and salaries, but charges and duties; not preferments for favourites, but rewards of deserts, &c. Doth Julius, Justinianus, or Theodosius their laws give allowance to any? See then how providently Jethro provides against this hemlock root of justice! out of whose proviso I conclude that which Augustine saw in his time, and dear experience confirms in others; that such as provide themselves places, are not provided for them; come into them, and execute them, not with a mind of doing good, but domineering; not of providing for others' welfare, but for their own turns. Let us pray that, if it be possible, this fault may be forgiven and amended.

And not this only, but another near of kin to this, met withal in the very next clause of my text, 'Among all the people' (*Micol Hagnam*). Where Jethro restrains not Moses to his own family, to any particular tribe, or to the richer sort; but requires this freedom, as well as the former circumspection. Generality and impartiality being requisite to the good being of a choice; and limitation and restraint the very banes of election, yea, contradictions to it. As if one should say, you shall choose amongst twenty, but you shall choose this or that one; doth he not in effect say, you shall not have your choice? Will a man, when he goes to market, be confined to any shop or stall, if he mean to provide the best? How grossly is the country wronged and befooled, chiefly in the choice of such as into whose hands they put their lives and lands at parliaments, by a kind of *conge d' elire*, usually sent them by some of the gentry of the shires, persuading (if not prescribing) the very couple they must choose. Thus have we seen naturals tied to a post with a straw, which they durst not break.

This text bids you know and stand fast in your lawful liberties of election, which, that you may not abuse, I come to the second part of the text.

THE SECOND PART.

It teacheth you how to order and direct it by these four marks following, which I reckon as four supporters of the throne of justice, not altogether unlike to those four in Christ's throne, so often mentioned in the Old and New Testament, which, being properties of angels, are symbols both of magistrates and ministers.

These four, whosoever is compounded of, is a man after God's own heart,

and is a star in his right hand. He that wants any of them is but a blazing comet, how high soever he seems to soar. These will not only serve for the trial of such as are *candidati*, and not to be chosen; but also of such as are invested and already in place, to approve or reprove their condition. And for this end and purpose, let us use them this day as four weights of the sanctuary, whereunto whatsoever officer here present, from the judges to the bailiffs, shall not answer, this text (as the handwriting on the wall) shall say unto him from God, 'Thou art weighed in the balance, and found too light, and thine office (at least, ought to be) taken from thee.'

1. The first and prime mark is ability (*anishi chail*). So our new translation expresseth it well in a comprehensive word, and so I find it in Scripture, signifying and comprising all the severals that belong to faculty or ability; whereof I number, first, three complemental, for conveniency; secondly, three substantial, and of necessity.

First, *Chail* includes strength of body and manhood, such as enableth them for riding, going, sitting, watching, and industrious execution of their place; such as the Scripture commends in Caleb at fourscore and five; and stories in Vespasian, our Alfred, Hardicanutus, Ironsides, &c.

Which our strait-buttoned, carpet, and effeminate gentry, wanting, cannot endure to hold out a forenoon or afternoon sitting without a tobacco bait, or a game at bowls, or some such breathing, to refresh their bodies and minds, little acquainted with the tediousness of wise and serious business. 'Woe to the people (saith Solomon) whose princes are children, and eat in the morning; and blessed are the people whose governors eat in time and for strength,' Eccles. x.

Secondly, Neither is wealth to be excluded. That Diana of the world, which it only accounts ability, and calls it *opes et potentia*, which yet is better called *value* than *valour*, yet may it concur to make up that which our law term calls *mieux*, valiant; and though at the beam of the sanctuary money makes not the man, yet it adds some mettle to the man.

And besides, there is some use of these trappings to the common sort; *Ad populum phaleras*, which taught Agrippa to come to the judgment-seat with pomp, state, and attendance, like that of our sheriffs, not to be neglected, as that which procures some terror and awe in the people; which Alexander, well advised of, left his gigantic armour behind him among the Indians, and used more state than at Greece.

Yet remembering that these compliments, without the substance, are but empty gulls and scarebugs of majesty, the sophistry of government,* as one calls them, and as Zechariah the prophet saith, the instruments of a foolish governor. And such as Jeremiah derides in Shallum the son of Josiah, Jer. xxii. 14, 'Thinkest thou to rule because of thy large building, cedar ceiling, painted with vermillion? Did not thy father prosper when he did execute judgment and justice?' which is indeed the truth and substance, the other but the flourish.

Thirdly, I exclude not birth and blood, which many times conveys spirit and courage with it. 'Blessed is the land whose princes are the sons of nobles,' Eccles. x. 17. Eagles produce eagles, and crows cravens, yet regeneration and education often corrects this rule; and experience tells us, that cottages and ploughs have brought forth as able men for the gown and sword, as palaces and sceptres. Gideon came out of the poorest of the family of Manasseh, Judges vi. 15, and he the least in his father's house, a

* *Σοφίσματα μορμολυκία.* Cassa et hordeacea morionis sceptrum.—Chap. Zac.

poor thresher. David was taken from the sheep-fold, &c. Yet both mighty men of valour, and special saviours of their people. And the wisdom of some of our neighbour nations is much to be commended in this, that if they discern an excellent spirit and faculty in any man, they respect not his wealth, or birth, or profession, but choose him into their magistracy and weighty employments.

But these three are but of the by and well-being, the three following of the main and essential to magistracy, all comprised under the word *chaül*, as first wisdom and experience, which the preacher tells us is better than strength either of body or estate, Eccles. ix. 16. And of this ability, Moses expounds this word in his practice, Deut. i. 15, which is a good commentary upon his father's advice.

And indeed, without this, what is a magistrate, but a blind Polyphemus, or a monster without an eye? If he want either skill in the laws, or observation of his own, must he not be tutored by his clerk, as it often falls out? Or shall he not be misled by some councillor, crossed and contradicted by every stander by, that shall tell him, This you cannot do by law, or, I take it, you are besides your book?

The sound strength of mind to govern and manage passion and unruly affections, which he that wields at will is stronger than he that subdues a city and conquers a kingdom. To bear and forbear, and to order the mutinous perturbations of the mind, is that ability which the Grecians call *κράτος* and *ἐγκράτεια*.

Very requisite in a judge, who must not suffer his affection to disquiet his judgment and understanding, in rising at the first complaint, nor at any accident or present miscarriage of either party suddenly occasioned, which is collateral to the cause, and impertinent to the question; but he must be patient and meek towards their personal weakness. Likewise long-minded, to endure the rusticity and homeliness of common people in giving evidence, after their plain fashion and faculty, in time, and multitude of words, happily with some absurdities of phrase or gestures, nor impatient towards their foolish affected eloquent terms, nor anything else whereby the truth of their tale may be guessed at.

Lastly and principally, I understand with the Geneva translation, that fortitude, valour, and magnanimity, which we call courage and spirit; typified in Judah, the law-giving tribe, whose emblem or scutcheon was the lion *couchant*, that sits or lies by the prey without fear of rescue, that turns not his head at the sight of any other creature, Prov. xix., which Solomon symbolised in the steps of his throne adorned with lions; the Athenian judges by sitting in Mars Street, *ἐν Ἀρεῖᾳ πύλῳ*. Some think that from this virtue Constantine was termed, Rev. xii., the church's male or man-child; others apply it to Luther; others to Christ, the true Lion of Judah.

And though I regard not the *Salique law*, because the God of spirits hath often put great spirits into that sex, yet I mislike not Theodoret's observation upon that in Leviticus, chap. iv. 22, 27, where the ruler, for his sin, is enjoined to offer an he-goat, the private man a she-goat.† The male suits the ruler best, and the female the ruled.

This ability is so requisite, that it is often put for the only quality, as if this alone would serve, as in Moses' charge to Joshua, and David's to Solomon. And experience hath taught, that where this one hath abounded,

* Monstrum cui lumen ademptum.

† ἐπὶ σοφοῦ ἀρετὴν τῷ ἀρχόντι τὸ δὲ θῆλυ τῷ ἀρχομένῳ.

though the other hath been wanting in some magistrates, they have done more good service to their country, than many others who have had some tolerable measure of the rest, but have failed only in this.

Had not the principal posts of an house need to be of heart of oak? Are rulers and standards, that regulate other measures, to be made of soft wood, or of lead, that will bend and bow at pleasure? Do men choose a starting horse to lead the team? Had not he need be of David's valour, and Samson's courage, that must take the prey out of the lion's mouth, and rescue the oppressed from the man that is too mighty for him? Had not he need to be of some spirit and resolution, that must neglect the displeasure and frowns, reject the letters and suits, of great men and superiors?

It is incredible to those that know it not, what strength great men will put to (especially if once interested) for the upholding of a rotten ale-house, countenancing of a disordered retainer, &c. The resistance whereof, requires it not some spirit? Had not the brain need to be of a strong constitution, that must dispel and disperse the fumes ascending from a corrupt liver, stomach, or spleen? I mean the clamours, rumours, and sometimes the flatteries of the vulgar, which often intoxicate able men, and make them as weak as water; yielding and giving, as Pilate, when he heard but a buzz that he was not Cæsar's friend, and saw that, in dismissing Christ, he should displease the Jews.

What heroic spirit had he need have, that must encounter the Hydra of sin, oppose the current of the times, and the torrent of vice, that must turn the wheel over the wicked; especially such roaring monsters, and rebellious Korahs, such lawless sons of Belial, wherewith our times swarm, who stick not to oppose with crest and breast, whosoever stand in the way of their humours and lusts! Surely if Jethro called for courage in those modest primitive times, and among a people newly tamed with Egyptian yokes, what do our audacious and foreheadless swaggerers require? Our lees and dregs of time, not unlike to those wherein God was fain to raise up extraordinary judges to smite hip and thigh, &c. What Atlas shall support the state of the ruinous and tottering world, in these perilous ends of time?

For all these fore-named purposes, how unapt is a man of a soft, timorous, and flexible nature! for whom it is as possible to steer a right course, without swerving to the left hand or right, for fear or favour, as it is for a cock-boat to keep head against wind and tide, without help of oars or sails: experience ever making this good, that cowards are slaves to their superiors, fellow-fools to their equals, tyrants to their inferiors, and wind-mills to popular breath, not being able to any of these to say so much as No!

Wherefore this text proclaims and speaks, as Gideon, in the ears of all the faint-hearted, 'Whosoever is fearful and timorous, let him depart' from Mount Gilead, Judges vii. 8, and there departed twenty thousand; and yet God the second time, out of the remnant, viz., ten thousand, defaults all the lazy persons, and reduced that huge army to three hundred able persons.

It were excellent for the commonwealth, if such a subtraction might be made, and the weak-hearted would resign their rooms to able men. For what have servile cowards to do with the sword of the Lord and Gideon, with God and the king's offices?

On the contrary, it saith to all men of ability, as the angel to Gideon,

'The Lord is with thee, thou mighty man of valour; go on in this thy might, to save Israel,' &c. What is our office, that are ministers, but as God's trumpeters and drummers to encourage, hearken, and put life in those that fight his battles, and do his work? By the virtue, then, of this my text, I say to every good-hearted magistrate, Proceed, and go on from strength to strength.

And if any ask me, Who, then, is sufficient for these things? Or where shall we get this strength, that are but flesh and blood, and men as others? I answer, with Job, 'Silver hath his vein, and gold his mine where it is found; iron is taken out of the earth, and brass molten out of the stone,' Job xxviii.; but the place of this ability is not to be found in the land of the living. Nature saith it is not to be found in me; wealth and honour says not in me. It is falsely said of Cato and Fabricius, that the sun might sooner be stayed or altered in his race, than they in the course of justice. The stoutest and the richest will yield. But David tells his son Solomon, on his deathbed, where he shall find it, 1 Chron. xxix. 11, 12: 'Thine, O Lord, is greatness and power; thou art the head of all riches; honour and strength are in thy hands; it is in thee to make great,' &c. This God hath taught David to break a bow of steel with his hands. It is he that looseth the collar of princes, girdeth their loins, and ungirdeth them again, befools the counsellor, the judge, and the spokesman. He it was that made the shoes of Joseph as strong as brass, Jeremiah as a wall of brass, Caleb as strong at fourscore and five as at forty. If Samson's hair be off, and God departed from him, he is as other men, and he can strengthen him again without his locks at his pleasure.

If any man want wisdom or strength, let him pray, and he can make him wiser than the children of the east, and stronger than the Anakims. Wherefore be strong in the Lord, faint not; be not weary of well-doing, for fear of opposition and crossing. Though in rowing this ship the winds blow, and the seas rage, Christ can straight send an halcyon, and set it on shore.

It is the fault of many Christian magistrates, ever to be complaining and groaning under the burthen, as if ease and delicacy were to be sought for in government. What if there be a lion in the way? The righteous is bolder than the lion. What if thou be weak? Is not God strength? and doth he not perfect his strength in our weakness? What if there be many opposites in the way? True courage is strong as death, Cant. viii., and will trample all under feet without resistance.

Yea, but what if an host come against thee, and as bees encompass thee? True faith sees more on God's side than against them, even guards of angels, as plainly as men do the sheriff's halberts, and doubts not, but in the name of the Lord, to vanquish them all.

One concluding place for all, out of a preacher's mouth, Eccles. vii. 15, that knew what he said: 'Wisdom strengthens one man more than twenty mighty potentates that are in a city,' he that feareth God shall come forth of all dangers. Whence, by way of passage, note that the next point of the fear of God, is that which giveth life to the foregoing, and to the two following also: and is placed in the text, as the heart in the body, for conveying life to all the parts; or, as a dram of musk, perfuming the whole box of ointment.

2. *Fearing God.* Jethro must be understood, not of the poor, bastardly, slavish fear, which depraved nature hath left in all; nor of any sudden flash of fear wrought by word or works, such as Felix, Belshazzar, and Caligula,

were not void of, and yet never the better magistrates; but such a filial fear as faith and the assurance of God's love and salvation breeds, such as awed Joseph, Cornelius, David, &c. This is the fear required by Jethro, *ισοψαφια, quæ parit ιυλαβειαν*, godliness which breedeth an heedfulness in all our ways and actions.

Without this fear of God, what is ability but the devil's anvil, whereon he forgeth and hammereth mischief? What is wisdom but subtilty? What is courage unsanctified but injustice? Wherein is such skill in the laws commonly employed, but in colouring and covering bad causes and persons, and in making the laws a nose of wax to private ends? Other men have other bits and restraints; but men in authority, if they fear not God, have nothing else to fear. Wherefore Christ joins them well in the unrighteous judge, that he feared neither God nor man. If he be a simple coward, he fears all men; if a man of ability, he fears none at all.

What are the nerves and sinews of all government, the bonds and commands of obedience, but an oath? And what are oaths to profane men, but as Samson's cords, which he snapt asunder, as fast as they were offered him. The common sort of our people count the oaths that men take when they take offices, no other than formal; so they distinguish them (a strange distinction) from other oaths of contract, and dally with them accordingly.

They discern God no more in oaths than Christ in the sacraments, and therefore take them, and break them, rashly and regardlessly; which, when they have done, the devil enters into them, as into Judas, and runs them headlong into all perjured courses, which makes the land to mourn for the contempt of oaths and neglect of duties. What is the ground of all fidelity to king and country but religion? Well fare Constantius's maxim: 'He cannot be faithful to me that is unfaithful to God.' Why, then, what are oaths for atheists and papists, other than collars for monkies' necks, which slip them at their pleasure? * Such neither are, nor can be, good subjects, much less good magistrates. Papists will keep no faith with protestants, let protestants give no trust to papists, though they swear upon all the books in the world.†

Finally, what is the principal scope of magistracy in God's intention, whose creature and ordinance it is; but, to promote his glory, countenancing the gospel and the professors of it, safeguard of the church and commonwealth, the first and second table, and principally the former. Now, for all these, chiefly for the chiefest, what cares a Cato or a Gallio, who bears the sword in vain for God and his ends; who never minds anything but his own cabinet, or the ship of the commonwealth, at the best? For the other, sink they, swim they, all is one to him, he took no charge, nor will he take notice of them.

Wherefore I conclude, that the fear of God is the principal part, as of my text, so of a good magistrate, whom Christ calls a ruler in Israel, John iii.; Paul, God's minister and sword-bearer, Rom. xiii.; yea, the very form and soul of such an one; yea, it troubles me to make it, but a part which Solomon calls the whole of a man, Eccles. xi. 18, especially such a man who is sent of God, for the praise of the godly, and the punishment of evil-doers, 1 Pet. ii. In which respect, being the main of my text, give me leave to give you a short character of such a magistrate, as this quality will make him, wherever it is found in any good latitude.

* *ὅς ἐστι βῆμιος ἐν ὄρεος.*

† Nulla fides habenda papistis, etiamsi per omnes deos juraverint.

He is one that came into his place by God's door, and not by the devil's window; when he is in, he eyes him that is invisible, even God in the assembly of gods; and therefore sits on the judgment-seat in as great, though not in so slavish, a fear of offending, as Olanes upon the flayed skin of his father Sylannes, nailed by Cambyzes on the tribunal; or as a Russian judge that fears the boiling cauldron or open-battocking;* or the Turkish senate, when they think the great Turk to stand behind the arras, at the dangerous door.

Who hath always (as God enjoineth, Deut. xvii. 18) a copy of the law of his God before him, and reads it all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the Lord his God, and to keep the commandments, without turning aside either to the right hand or left.

If at all he be glad of his place, it is not as a chair of honour, or farm of commodity, nor sword of revenge; but only as a mean of furthering his reckoning and pleasuring his country. For his oath he remembers it, and trembles lest, if carelessly he transgress it, the winged flying book overtake him before he get home; if he cut but the skirt or lap of justice, his heart smites him with a privy pinch, till he sets all right again with God and man. He dares not so much as by countenance offend any of God's little ones, nor afford a good look to a varlet, nor yet to respect their persons as to wrong their cause, for he knows all these to be abomination to his Lord, into whose hands he dreads to fall, as knowing him a consuming fire, and one that hath provided Tophet for princes. When an unlawful suit is commenced† by power or by friendship, his heart answers (if not his tongue) with Job: 'How shall I do this, and answer God when he comes to judgment?'

As for bribes he dares not look on them, lest they blind his eyes before he be aware; such pitch he dares not touch, nor receive into his bosom, lest it defile him in the open sun; if tendered in closet or chamber, he fears the timber and stones in the wall would be witnesses against him.

When he comes in court, he fixeth his eye, neither before him on that person, nor about him on the beholders, nor behind him for bribes, but upward on God;‡ generally considering that Christ is Lord-paramount of all courts of justice, and that now his Father hath resigned all judgment into his hands. He stewards all to his content, promotes his profits without wrong to the tenant. Looks so to the church, that the commonweal receive no detriment; and so to the commonwealth as the church shall surely flourish; so countenancing the servants of God that he wrong not the worst worldling; maintains piety and neglects not equity; keeps his house well, but his church better; in frequenting whereof, he, with his family, are precedents to all the hundreds where he dwells; and, in a word, doth as much good by his example as by his authority.

This is the godly man, whom the Lord chooseth and guideth, whose praise and reward is of God, which David, having found true in this life, a little before his death recordeth to all ages. 'The Spirit of the Lord spake by me, and his word was in my tongue. The God of Israel spake to me, the strength of Israel said, Thou shalt bear rule over men, being just, and ruling in the fear of God. Even as the morning light when the sun riseth, the morning, I say, without clouds, so shall mine house be, and not as the grass of the earth is by the bright rain. For God hath

* That is, the bastinado—Ed.

† Qu. 'Commended?'—Ed.

‡ Summa boni iudicis est neque respicere neque despiciere, neque circumspicere, sed respicere.—Ferus in John v. 30.

made with me an everlasting covenant, perfect in all points, and sure,' 2 Sam. xxiii. 2-4.

Let the devil and the world storm and burst with envy. One of these is worth a thousand of the common sort, though men will see no difference, but say, Are not all honest and sufficient men? Let men talk of their quiet and peaceable neighbours, and good housekeepers, good common-wealth men; though these be good things, yet if religion come not in, as a number to make them of some value, they are all but as cyphers in God's account.

Now, if God think so meanly of these, who are either mere civil and politic men, or idle, pleasurable gentlemen, what reckoning do we think he makes of such profane, uncircumcised vice-gods (as I may, in the worst sense, best term them) that sell themselves to work wickedness, that give themselves to all good fellowship (as they call it), and to all excess of riot (as the apostle calls it), and that hate to be reformed,—such, I mean, as hold religion a disparagement to gentry, and fear nothing more than to have a name that they fear God, who think when they have gotten an office they may swear by authority, oppress by licence, drink and swill without control.

What shall I say of such? Are these gods and children of the Most High, or the characters of his most holy image? Devils are they rather than deputies for him, imps of his kingdom, far better becoming an ale-bench than a shire-bench, and the bar than a judgment-seat.

But what shall I say to such mock-god-like Esaus? Shall I take up the words of Moses, 'If thou wilt not fear this glorious name, The Lord thy God, I will make thy plagues wonderful, and of great continuance?' or those of David, which perhaps will fit them better, and these times of imminent changes, 'They know not, and understand nothing; they walk in darkness, albeit the foundations of the earth be moved. I have said, Ye are gods; but ye shall die like men, and fall like others.' Or will they suffer the prophet's exhortation, Isa. lii. 8, 12, 18. 'Who art thou that darest a mortal man, whose breath is in his nostrils, whom the moth shall eat like a garment, and the worm like wool, and forgettest thy maker, that hath spread the heavens, laid the foundations of the earth, that giveth the first and latter rain, that hath set the bounds to the sea,' &c., Jer. v. 23, 24. Or will they hear Solomon's end of all, 'Fear God, that will bring every secret to judgment'? or a greater yet than Solomon, 'Fear him that is able, when he hath killed the body, to destroy the soul also in hell fire for evermore'?

Well, the Lord cause them to hear, that hath planted the ear, and plant his fear in their hearts where it is not, increase it where it is, that there may be more holy magistrates, and that the holy may yet be more holy. And then we hope the other two properties following will more abound, and we shall spend the less time and labour about them; for men fearing God truly will be also

3. 'Men of truth,' without which show of religion is but lying vanity,—a glorious profession, but plain hypocrisy; and courage, if it be not for the truth, and in the truth, is but either thrasonical audacity or wicked impudency. And therefore this character, added to the former, joins those which are in the form of jurats, and ought to be in all officers, 'good men and true.'

This style, 'men of truth,' admits two interpretations, both compatible with the text and theme. A man of truth is either a true Israelite, a true Nathanael, void of guile, as truth is opposed to hypocrisy, *οἷον ἀνὴρ ἰσθῆς*; or

else a lover of the truth, as truth is opposed unto falsehood ; one that, in particular cases, suits, and controversies between man and man, counts it his honour to sift out the truth, maintain the truth, stick to it, not suffering himself to be misinformed by tale-bearers, promoters, and sycophants, nor misled and perverted by the false pleading and colouring of conscienceless counsellors, but brings judgment to the balance and rule of righteousness, and delights (as the hound doth naturally in scenting out the hare) to search and trace out the truth out of all the thickets and dens of juggling and conveyance, labouring as much to bolt it out by examination in *hypotheses* as the philosophers by disputations in *thesi* ; being of his temper that worthily said, Plato is my friend, Socrates my friend, but the truth is my dearest friend ; or like Job, chap. xxix. 16, who covered himself with justice, and to whom judgment was as a robe and a crown, who, when he knew not the cause, sought it out diligently.

And, for this purpose, a man of truth keeps men of truth about him, and, with David, abandons all liars out of his household, Ps. ci. 7 ; whereas of a prince that hearkeneth to lies, all his servants are liars. And of such justice which is in truth and for truth, I say (as of old it was said) neither the evening nor morning star equals it in brightness.*

But withal I must complain, as of old, that truth is fallen in the streets, and utterly perished from among men, Isa. v. 44. Judgment fails, and stands afar off. Equity enters not, the common trade of the times being to weave lies in all cases, especially against the true servants of God, and the common weakness of the times to receive the slanders which are broached and bruited by tongues set on fire from hell, so that he that refrains from cunning makes himself a prey, the Latin whereof was all that Louis the Eleventh would have his son to learn,† and is all the policy that most study and practise ; insomuch that the common bywords are, that when men swear by faith and truth, they swear by idols that are not. Names they are, and notions ; things they are not, nor substances. Jewels they are, but such as use them die beggars ; honourable ladies and mistresses they are, but such as follow them close at the heels may have their teeth dashed out of their heads.

Well, let deceivers thus deceive themselves ; let cunning heads and glozing tongues make as much as they will of Tiberius's art, or the devil's rather, the father of the art of dissimulation. In the end, they shall prove it to be most pernicious to the students and masters of it. Let the children of truth justify their mother, which hath the reward of honour in her right hand, and of wealth in the left. And if it should be attended with hatred and crosses for a time, yet he that is *Amen*, the true witness, yea, truth itself, will reward them in the end ; when he shall shut out with the dogs all such as love and make lies ; with whose exhortation I close up this link, and knit with the following, 'Buy the truth, and sell it not ;' which he that means to do must be,

4. A true 'hater of covetousness,' else will Solomon's several proverbs meet in him. 'The wicked gives heed to the false lip, and the liar to a naughty tongue,' Pro. xvii. 4. He taketh the gift out of the bosom to wrest judgment. Acceptation of gifts prove commonly prevarication to the truth. It is impossible to be a champion to truth and a slave to Mammon ; but he must love the one and hate the other. It is best, therefore, to hate the worst, yea, the worst of all vices incident to magistracy, the root of all evil, which, if it be not rooted out of the magistrate's heart, it alone will poison

* Nec Hesperus nec vespas formosior. † Qui nescit dissimulare nescit vivere.

† Acceptatio muneris est prevaricatio veritatis.

all the three former qualities required in him. Neither strength, nor religion, nor love of the truth, shall be able to preserve him from enchantments of covetousness.

Which being an inordinate love of money, an evil concupiscence of having more than God hath allotted, or a lawful course affordeth, is such a kind of idolatry as transformeth the worshippers of this golden calf into idols themselves, making them to have eyes that see not, ears that hear not, only leaving them hands to handle that which perverteth the eyes of the wise, Deut. xvi. 19. It bores out their eyes, and maketh them as blind as ever was Samson and Zedekiah.

Eyes, you know, are tender things, and small motes annoy them; even handfuls of barley and morsels of bread make such men to transgress, Ezek. xiii. 8; and a dram's weight injected inclines the golden scales of justice to which side they please.

There is such a strange, bewitching power in Balaam's deceitful wages, that he that will admit them for justice shall soon take them for injustice.* If the right hand be full of bribes, the left hand must be full of mischief. The devil as well as the briber layeth his hooks in this shrap, whereof he that is greedy and will needs be rich falleth into his snare, and many other noisome lusts, which sink men into perdition, 1 Tim. vi., pierce their souls with sorrow, their names with reproach, cause them to swerve from the truth, and make shipwreck of a good conscience. Even the most precious things are vile and cheap in his eyes to whom money is dear. He will not stick, with Ahab, to sell even himself to work wickedness for the compassing of that his soul loveth and longeth after.

But thou, O man of God, flee these things, and hate covetousness with a perfect hatred. Hate it as Amnon did Tamar. First thrust it out of thy heart, and shut and lock the door after it. Secondly, let thy behaviour and conversation be averse and strange from the love of money.† Let all sordid and filthy lucre be abominable, all ill-gotten goods execrable. Let them stink in thy nostrils as ill as Vespasian's tribute of urine.

Shake thy lap of bribes with Nehemiah. Consider, as Bernard counsels Eugenius, how the people may grow rich under thee, and not thou by them.‡ Remember the end of Balaam's wages, and of Judas's bag. And wish with Damianus rather to have Gehazi's leprosy than his curse entailed to thee and thy posterity and inheritance after thee, fretting thine estate as a canker and moth, consuming your flesh as fire, and crying in the ears of the Lord of hosts for vengeance.

But what do I making myself ridiculous to this old, doting, covetous age of the world? This theme only made the pharisees laugh at Christ's woes, because they were covetous. And so do they serve all our caveats against covetousness, applauding themselves, and laughing in their sleeves when they behold their bags in the chest, and their lands from off their turrets, saying to themselves, What is a man but his wealth? What is an office but the fees.

There is a text in Isaiah, chap. xxxiii 14, that, if Paul had the preaching of it, he would make every gropping and gripping Felix to tremble. I mean such as the Scripture termeth roaring lions, ranging bears, horse-leeches, wolves, devouring all in the evening, and leaving none till the morning, as well judges that judge for reward, and say with shame, 'Bring you,'

* A venditione justı judicii venitır ad venditionem nequissimı.

† Heb. xiii. 5, ἀφιλάργυρος ὁ ἄγιος.

‡ Præes ut de subditis crescas? nequaquam, sed ut ipsi de te.

such as the country calls capon-justices; as also such mercenary lawyers as sell both their tongues and their silence, their clients' causes, and their own consciences, who only keep life in the law so long as there is money in the purse, and when this golden stream ceaseth the mill stands still, and the case is altered; such extorting officers of justice as invent pulleys and winches for extraordinary fees, to the miserable undoing of poor suitors; such false perjured sheriffs, stewards of liberties, and their deputies, as for money falsify their charges; such corrupted jurates and witnesses of the post, which are as hammers and swords and sharp arrows in their brethren's hearts; such cheese-bailiffs and lamb-bailiffs as vex the poor countrymen with unjust summonses to the assizes and sessions, with the rest of that rabble.

These muck-worms of the world, which, like the gentles, breed of putrefaction, and beetles fed in the dung, relishing nothing else but earthly things, think there is no other godliness but gain, no happiness but to scrape and gather, to have and to hold. Let such consult shame to their houses. Let such make their offices as casting-nets for all fish that come, till they get the devil and all. Let them heap up treasures of wickedness and treasures of wrath withal.

But where there is any fear of God and love of the truth, let John's counsel prevail with them, to 'be content with their due wages.' Let Paul persuade them that godliness is gain with contentation; Solomon, that God's blessing maketh rich, and adds no sorrow therewith. So shall they follow Jethro's advice the better, and prove complete magistrates and officers, 'men of courage, men of religion, men of truth, hating covetousness.'

These are the four cardinal virtues of magistrates, of which, if all were compounded, and were as eminent for them as for their place, and did (as the great dictator of reason speaks in his politics) as far exceed the vulgar sort in those heroic virtues as the statues of the gods the statues of men, then would people become voluntary subjects, put the sceptres into their hands, and the law of commanding and obeying become easy, things thought irreparable would easily be reformed.

THE THIRD PART.

But before I come to make use of what hath been said, let me, as the third part of my text and the distribution of magistracy requires, tell you to whom all this hath been spoken. Not to judges and justices of peace only, as I fear most have imagined in hearing it, but to all, from the highest and greatest to the lowest and least instrument of justice, from the governor of the thousand to the centurion, from him to the tithing man or deciner. To the which ancient division of the Jewish commonwealth our platform agrees in substance. Their *Sanhedrim* or senate of seventy, to our parliament, council table, star chamber, exchequer chamber, &c. Our justices of assizes, in their circuit, and justices of peace, in their general commission or dominion, and high sheriffs in their shires, answering to the rulers of thousands.

Our justices in their several divisions, judges of hundred courts and turns, to their rulers of hundreds, to whom I may add high constables in their places; our court leets, and court barons, to their rulers of fifties; to whom I add ordinary constables in their offices; our chief pledges, tithing-men, or deciners, to their rulers of tens. Now all these Jethro means, and speaks of every one of them in their station and degree, con-

ceiving the commonwealth as an instrument not well in tune, if but the least of these strings be false or naught.

Contrary to the common and dangerous opinion of the vulgar, who to their own injury think and say, that it matters not for petty officers, constables, and bailiffs, &c., though they be of the lees and dregs of men; nay, they hold that for some offices, it is pity any honest men should come into them. Alas! alas! the more subject to tentation and vice it is, the more needful it is that none other should have them.

O but (say they) a good judge or justice may help all. They err and are deceived; it is no one beam, though never so bright, that enlightens all; it is not the light and influence of the fixed stars, though the greatest and highest, but of the sun and moon, and the lowest and nearest orbs, that govern the world. It is the ground wind, not the rack wind, that drives mills and ships. It is in the civil, as in the ecclesiastical body; if bishops be never so learned, and the parishional ministers negligent, worldly, proud, or blind Sir Johns, 'the people perish for want of vision.'

What can the superior do, if the inferior inform not? What can the eye do, if the hand and foot be crooked and unserviceable? Yea, not only if such as be organs of justice, such as have places of judicature; but if the media and spectacles of the sense will yield a false report, how shall the common sense make a right judgment? If pleaders and attorneys will colour and gloze, if the clerks and penmen make false records, may not any of these disturb or pervert justice? If the least finger or toe of this body be distorted, I mean jailor or sergeant, or any other that should execute justice, be remiss and slack, then must the Dutchman's proverb be verified, Look what the bell is without the clapper, such are good laws and judgments without due execution.*

Thus we see in this curious clock-work of justice, the least pin or wheel amiss may distemper and disorder all; but if care were had to frame all these parts of the building according to the platform of this skilful architect, what an absolute harmony of the parts, what an exact perfection of the whole; yea, what golden times should we live to see!

Hearken, O ye mountains and little hills, you rulers of thousands, you rulers of tens, you reverend sages of the laws, you worshipful knights and gentlemen of the country; yea, listen to this charge of Jethro, ye of the meanest places of the commonwealth, weigh not things nor persons at the common beam of custom and opinion, but at the golden standard of God's sanctuary, with these goldsmiths' weights of my text, which if I shall persuade you to do, I fear that we must say with the Psalmist, that sons of men *Beni-Adam*, yea, the chiefest men, *Beni-ish*, to be laid upon the balance, will be found lies, and lighter than vanity, Ps. lxi. 9; here money will not make the man, nor craft carry it away. Every Nabal of Mount Carmel, nor every Ahithophel may be admitted.

The text saith to every timorous, profane, false-hearted, covetous person, as Samuel to Saul, 'God hath rent thine office from thee, and bestowed it on thy better;' or as the Scripture of Judas, 'Let another more worthy take his place;' if this order and rule of trial might take place, how many would be turned out of commission? how many would be *officii perda*? how would benches and shire-houses be thinned?

As for this present, to the which God hath called me to speak (for if I had called myself, I could not nor durst not speak), give me leave without offence to speak that plainly and openly, which I conceive inwardly. When

* Quod campana sine pistillo, &c. Apud Bucolæum.

I have come into the shire-house sometimes to observe the state of it, it hath presented itself to my view, not unlike to that image in Daniel, or picture in Horace, or table of the popes of Rome, which for memory's sake I reduce to these two distichs :

Ex auro caput est, argentea brachia, venter
Æneus, admisto ferrea crura luto
Divino capiti, ceruix humana, ferinus
Assuitur truncus, Dæmonique pedes.

The head of gold. And with such honourable judges God hath usually, and for a long time, blessed this circuit. If I had ever heard other of these present, I durst not give titles, lest my Maker should condemn me ; yet being unknown to me but by fame, which hath spoken all good, I desire you to prove and weigh yourselves by Jethro's weights, and accordingly to have peace and approof in your own consciences before the Judge of all judges.

The shoulders of silver. A worthy bench, yet mingled with some dross, and not so refined as I have known and seen it, like the sky in a clear evening bespangled with bright stars. Many such there be at this present. God be praised, religious and able justices, and so many, as I believe few other benches are furnished withal ; yet in this silver I fear some dross, some whose skill and ability the country doubts of, being conceived to be either so simple or so timorous, that they dare meddle with none that dare meddle with them ; or else so popular they will displease none. The devil himself, they say, may keep an ale-house under their nose. Others whose religion they call into question, at least for the truth, and for the power of it ; unless religion may stand with common swearing, with drinking, with familiarity with papists and recusants, with ungoverned and ungodly families, void of all exercises of religion, fraught with spirits of the buttery, ruffians, ale-house hunters, and such as are the sin-tutors and sin-leaders to all the country about them. I hope there be few such, I could wish there were none at all.

The breast and belly of brass, the strength of the country, in which rank I account the great inquest, jurymen, and constables, of which number how few make a conscience to present disorders according to oath, or that know and regard the bond of an oath !

The legs and feet of iron and clay, or mire. Indeed the very mire and dirt of the country, the bailiffs, stewards of small liberties, bum-bailiffs, jailors, &c. If Beelzebub wanted officers, he needed no worse than some of these ; what mysteries have they to vex the poor countrymen with false arrests ? and by virtue of that statute tying every freeholder of forty shillings *per annum* to attend the assizes ; but I list not to stir this sediment of the country, too unsavory to be raked up in a sermon.

O that some Jehoshaphat would visit and reform, or that you judges in these your days of visitations would redress some part of these grievances, and reduce all to this idea of Jethro's, which indeed would make a heaven upon earth amongst us. An Utopia, I fear some will say, too good to be true, objecting to me as to Cato, that, he not discerning the times he lived in, looked for Plato's commonwealth in the drags of Romulus. And so that these magistrates, thus limned out, might be found in Moses' golden age of the world, but not in these lees of time.

To which I answer : that if Jethro were now to give advice, he would double the force of it. If David's reason be true, it is now high time for God to work, for men have destroyed his law. Was there ever more need

of courage than now, when sin is so audacious? of truth, when Esauism? of religion, when hypocrisy and iniquity? of contentation, when the love of the world so abounds? The only way to repair these ruins of the dying world, is to renew government to the primitive beauty of it: the face whereof I have now shewed in this excellent mirror or looking-glass; so you go not away, and forget both the comeliness and spots it hath shewed you, but wash and be clean, and such as it would have you to be.

THE FOURTH PART.

There being nothing else remaining to your perfection, and the peace of the commonwealth, but this one item following in my text, requiring assiduity and diligence: 'Let them judge the people at all times,' &c.

A most needful caveat in times that love ease and private employments, with neglect of public. Sitting in the gate is perpetually needful. Diligence in hearing and ending causes, would prevent that grievance of delays which occasioned Jethro his discourse: how do you think it would have affected him to have seen six or seven, I have heard sixteen, sums set upon one suit? These our English delays being (as Marnixius complained) worse than Spanish strappadoes.

And it is fit, though public and general courts have their terms, yet that particular audience of petty grievance should have no vacation.

Many are the suits and controversies, many are the criminal offences, that need continual inspection. Let him therefore that hath an office, attend to his office with cheerfulness; he that hath no leisure to hear his neighbour's causes, let him (as the woman said to Philip) have no leisure to bear office. Cursed is he that doeth the work of the Lord negligently, and withholdeth his hands therefrom.

You gentlemen complain often of idle shepherds, dumb dogs, &c., in the ministry. But how many such in the magistracy! Some in commission, that never sit on the bench but for fashion; constables that are but cyphers in their place. Forsooth they will be no pragmatistical fellows, no busybodies to trouble the country. Is there no mean between busybodies and tell-clocks, between factotums and faineants?

From this neglect comes that wrong and injury to the assizes, that such petty causes, trifling actions and complaints, trouble these grave and reverend personages, which a mean yeoman were judge fit enough to end in a chair at home: when the whole shire must be troubled to hear and judge of a curtesy* made out of the path, or a blow given upon the shoulder, upon occasion of a wager, or such like bauble-trespases which I shame to mention. And to punish every petty larcenary, every small riot or disorder, which lighter controversies and faults, if particular officers would compromise and redress in their spheres, these greater orbs should not be troubled with them.

THE FIFTH PART.

Then indeed would that follow, which Jethro assures Moses of in the last part of my text, ver 23: 'If thou do this thing (God so commanding thee), then shalt thou and thy people endure, and all this people shall go quietly to their place.'

That is, 'a short-cut.'—ED.

An admirable emolument of magistracy, and sufficient reward of all the pains of it ; that they and the people may go home in peace, sit under their vines and fig-trees, follow their callings, and, that which is the chief jewel of all, may lead their lives in all godliness and honesty. That the gold, blue, and purple silk might shine and glitter within the tabernacle, the outside was covered with red skins and goats' hair ; such a shelter is magistracy to God's church and religion. Nebuchadnezzar was a great tree, and every particular magistrate a little one, under whose boughs people build and sing, and bring up their young ones in religious nurture, even foster-fathers as Joseph in Egypt. Such were the rich and religious times under David and Solomon, and under such as are described, Isa. xxxii., which whole chapter is worth the reading, as a just commentary upon this point ; setting forth the felicity, quietness, plenty, virtue and piety of just governors, as are hiding-places from the wind, and refuges from the tempest, rivers of waters to dry places, and as the rain to the new mown grass, &c.

Such also were the times enjoyed by the church under Constantine, deciphered, as I take it, Rev. viii., when there was silence in the heaven about half an hour, the golden vials filled with sweet odours, the prayers of the saints ascending as a pillar of smoke up to heaven.

Of these times see panegyric sermons, and encomiastical discourses storied of old, and one of them at large recorded by Eusebius,* which whole book is nothing but an eulogium of those peaceable days, wherein the church was edified and multiplied. The commonwealth being to the church, as the elm is to the vine, or as the garden to the bees ; the flourishing of the one, the thriving of the other ; and the disturbance of the one, the disquiet of the other.

How can men either attend God's service or their own work, when they are molested at home with drunkards, barretors, quarrellous persons ? when hurried up to London with suits ? As I have known a constable molested with five or six actions, for an act of justice in punishing vice according to his office. With what bitterness of spirit do men groan under delayed and perverted justice, when it is turned into hemlock, and turns them out of their wits, some of them swooning at the sight of their orders, as I have heard from credible eye-witnesses, others ready to destroy themselves, their adversaries, yea, and sometimes their judges !

Oh, the benefit of good magistrates. It is an unknown good, as the countryman in an ancient poet, when he had met withal, feelingly cries out, that he had found that *summum bonum*, which the philosophers so much sought after, he now enjoying more sweetness of little than of great revenues in troublous times. Surely, we Christians ought to prize it as the mean of our greatest good, of our peaceable frequenting of our churches, and our serving of God. Merchants make a higher use, and are more glad of a calm than common passengers ; so should we Christians than heathens, by how much we may and ought to improve it for richer ends of God's glory, and the salvation of our souls.

Lord, what manner of persons ought we to be in all godliness and honesty, which enjoy such length and latitude of halcyon days, as we do ; the tithe whereof, not only former days, but our neighbour nations, would now be glad of.

God give us the use and fruit of them, continue and increase them, which will then be when this text shall be most studied and practised. Then (as Amos speaks) shall judgment flow as waters, and righteousness run down

* Euseb. lib. 10.

as a mighty torrent ; or as David : ' Then shall the earth increase, all people shall praise God, and God even our God shall bless us, and all the ends of the earth shall fear him.' And so I make Jethro's preface my conclusion. ' I have given you counsel this day ; hearken to my voice, and the Lord God be with you all.' Amen.

TO MY LOVING BROTHER

MR SAMUEL WARD

BROTHER—If you meet with your Jethro's counsel, returned from beyond the seas, and as much beyond your expectation preserved alive as his son-in-law was against Pharaoh's injunction, marvel as much as you will, but be no more offended than you have cause. Joab sinned wider on the other hand in destroying David's Absalom, contrary to his serious charge, yet Joab was pardoned, and yet no brother. I have noted you hitherto inexorable for your own publishing of anything of your own ; whether out of judgment, modesty, curiosity, or melancholy, I judge not ; but when others have adventured them with fruit and acceptance into the light, I have seen you rest content with the public good. The like leave I have taken, expecting the like success ; assuring you and myself of the general welcome and usefulness hereof to all whom it concerns, which are the greatest number of the land, even so many as have any reference to sessions and assizes, if not all sorts of Christians. Only I fear that the corruption of our times is grown so gross and Eglon-like, that it doth not Ehud-like enough sharpen the points, and send them home to the hilt, that they may reach to the quick. I had myself added thereto a project and persuasion for the redress of many abuses crept into offices and officers, having spent so much time in the study of the law, and execution of some offices, as made me weary of the errors I saw, and heartily wish the reformation of them ; but fearing I have learned too much bluntness and plumpness of speech among the Lutherans, which is here as prime a quality as smoothness with you, as also loath to meddle out of mine orb, in my second thoughts I suppressed it. And so wishing unto this many diligent, conscionable, and ingenuous readers and appliers, and to them God's blessing and the fruit intended, I take my leave. From Elbing in Prussia.

Your Brother in the flesh, in the Lord, and in the work of the ministry,

NATH. WARD.