

William Dugdale *A short view of the late troubles in England; briefly setting forth, their rise, growth, and tragical conclusion. As also, some parallel thereof with the barons-wars in the time of King Henry III. But chiefly with that in France, called the Holy League, in the reign of Henry III. and Henry IV late kings of that realm. / By Sir William Dugdale Kt. Garter king of Arms; To which is added a perfect narrative of the Treaty at Uxbridge in an. 1644*

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CHAP. I.

The chief design of this ensuing discourse being to shew the mischievous fruits of Hypocrisy; which is, under the colour of Sanctity to act any sort of wickedness: And that these great pretenders to Godliness were they who have been the chief disturbers of our blessed peace; I shall observe, that upon the departure, long since, of most of the Subjects of this Realm from the Church of Rome, by reason of its apparent corruptions; there were some, who did unhappily infuse into sundry well meaning people, a bad opinion of our Reformation. These were men of proud and peevish Spirits, who had not light enough in themselves to discern the truth, because they wanted learning to search into Antiquities; nor knowledge to trace those of that Church in the paths by which they had deviated from the Doctrine of Christ and his holy Apostles; and so (by reason thereof) ran from one extremity to another. Thus sleighting the authority of the learned and pious Reformers, who shew'd the errors of the Romish Church, such a liberty to the private Spirit, was at that time by them allow'd, as at last, when the giddy multitude became in that sort deluded by those their false teachers, every brain-sick person stamp't the seal of God's Spirit upon his own false and erroneous conceits.

Which false teachers, among other their artifices to captivate the vulgar, and to beget a disaffection in them to that reverend Ecclesiastical Discipline which was then establish'd, have cunningly suggested to them, that all the Reformed Churches in forreign parts, do utterly dislike thereof, as too much favouring of the Romish polutions. And by this subtle insinuation, tho most notoriously false, * have so far prevail'd upon their proselytes, that they do not only refuse to communicate with us in our divine offices; but in that, and whatever else their own vain fancies do prompt them, are become disobedient and refractory to the superior powers which God hath ordain'd.

They who would know more of these things, may repair unto the relations of such learned men, as have written of our Reformation, and make their own observations thereon; as also upon what I shall further say in this historical work, whereunto I refer them; beginning with the Anabaptists of Germany, from an author of good credit.

They had always in their mouths (says he) those great things, charity, faith, the true fear of God, the cross, the mortification of the flesh. All their exhortations were to set light of the things in this world; to account riches and honours vanity.

They were solicitous of men of fasts, and too often meditations on heavenly things. Wherever they found men, in diet, attire, furniture of house, or any other way observers of civility and decent order; such they reported as being carnally and earthly minded.

They so much affected to cross the ordinary custom in everything, that when other men used to put on better attire, they would be sure openly to shew themselves abroad in worse. The ordinary names of the days of the week, they thought it a kind of prophaneness to use; and therefore accustomed themselves, to make no other distinction than by numbers.

From this they proceeded unto public Reformation; first Ecclesiastical, and then civil. Touching the former, they boldly vouched, that themselves only had the truth, which thing, upon peril of their lives, they would at all times defend; and that since the Apostles lived, the same was never before in all points sincerely taught. Wherefore, that things might be brought again to that integrity which Jesus Christ by his word requireth, they began to control the Ministers of the Gospel, for attributing so much force and virtue unto the Scriptures of God read; whereas the truth (said they) was, that when the word is said to engender faith in the heart, and to convert the soul of man, or to work any such spiritual divine effect, these speeches are not thereunto applicable, as it is read and preached; but as it is engrafted in us by the power of the Holy Ghost, opening the eyes of our understanding, and so revealing the mysteries of God.

No marvel was it to see them every day broach some new thing, not heard of before; for they interpreted that restless levity, to be their growing to spiritual perfection, and their proceeding from faith to faith.

But the differences amongst them, growing by this means in a manner infinite, there was scarcely found any one of them, the forge of whose Brain was not possessed with some special mystery. Whereupon, although their mutual contentions were most fiercely prosecuted amongst themselves, yet when they came to defend the Cause, common to them all, against the adversaries of their faction, they had ways to lick one another whole; the founder in his own persuasion, excusing the Dear Brethren, who were not so far enlightened.

Their own Ministers they highly magnified as men whose vocation was from God: but their manner was to term others disdainful scribes and Pharisees, to account their calling a humane creature, and to detain the people, as much as might be from hearing them.

The custom of using Godfathers and Godmothers at Christenings they scorn'd; and hated conformity to the Church, in observing those solemn festivals which others did; in as much as Antichrist (they said) was the first inventor of them.

The pretended end of their civil Reformation was, that Christ might have dominion over all; that no other might reign over Christian men but he; and for this cause, they laboured with all their might in overturning the seats of magistracy.

Certain it is that these men at first, were only pityed in their error; he great humility, zeal, and devotion which appeared to be in them, being in all men's opinion, a pledge of their harmless meaning. Whereupon Luther made request unto Frederick Duke of Saxony; that within

his dominion they might be favourably dealt with and spared; for that (their error excepted) they seemed otherwise right good men. By means of which toleration, they gathered strength, much more than was safe for the state of the commonwealth, wherein they lived. For they had their secret meetings in corners, and assemblies in the night, the people flocking unto them by thousands.

Nor were the means whereby they both allured and retained so great multitudes ineffectual; viz. First, a wonderful shew of zeal towards God. Secondly, an hatred of sin, and a singular love of Integrity. Lastly, a cunning sleight which they had to stroke and smooth up the minds of their followers; as well by appropriating unto them all the favourable titles, the good words, and the gracious promises in Scripture; as by casting the contrary always on the heads of such as were severed from that retinue.

And in all these things, being fully persuaded, that what they did, it was in obedience to the will of God, and that all men should do the like; there remain'd after speculation, practise, whereby the whole frame there unto (if it were possible) might be squared.

But seeing that this could not be done without mighty opposition and resistance against it: therefore to strengthen themselves, they secretly entred into a league of association; concluding, that as Israel was deliver'd out of the Egypt of the worlds servile thralldome, to sin and superstition. As Israel was to root out the idolatrous nations, and to plant instead of them, a people which feared God, so the same Lord's good will and pleasure was now, that these new Israelites, should under the conduct of other Ioshuas, Sampsons and Gedeons, perform a work no less miraculous, in casting out violently the wicked from the Earth, and establishing the kingdom of Christ with perfect liberty.

But these men in whose mouthes at the first sounded nothing but mortification of the flesh, were come at the length, to think they might lawfully have their six or seven wives apiece. They who at the first, thought judgment and justice it self to be merciless cruelty; accounted at the length, their own hands sanctified with being imbrued in Christian blood. They who at first were wont to beat down all dominion, and to urge against poor constables, kings of nations; had at the length, both consuls and kings of their own erection amongst themselves. Finally, they who could not brook at first, that any man should seek, no not by law the recovery of his goods injuriously taken, or withheld from him; were grown at the last to think they could not offer unto God more acceptable sacrifice, then by turning their adversaries clean out of house and home; and by enriching themselves with all kind of spoil and pillage.

For a further Character of them, Sleidan tells us; that Muncer, by his new doctrine, touching goods to be in common, incited the Boores of Franconia and Turingen, to undertake the Holy war (as he call'd it) against their princes; telling them, that he was commanded of God to destroy all wicked Princes, and substitute new ones in their places; and that they were call'd indeed princes, but were tyrants. Moreover, that they would not restore unto the people their liberty; nor permit them to have the true religion and service of God: exhorting them rather to dye then to allow their wickedness, and suffer the doctrine of the Gospel to be taken from them; and therefore to play the men, and gratify God, in destroying such unprofitable people.

Likewise, that this their great zeal towards God, and outward humility, got them in the beginning many followers; for their demands were, first, that they might choose them such Ministers, as should preach Gods word sincerely, without any mixture of men's traditions. Secondly, that thenceforth they would pay no tithes, but of corn only; and the same to be distributed by the discretion of good men; partly to the Ministers of the Church; partly upon the poor; and partly upon common affairs. Thirdly, that they had till that time, been unworthily kept in Bonds, considering how they were all made free in the bloud of Christ. Fourthly, that they refused not to have a Magistrate, knowing that he is ordain'd of God, and would obey him in all honest things; but could not abide to be any longer bound, unless it were shewed reasonable by the testimony of Scripture. Fifthly, that in all their letters, which they wrote to provoke and allure others to their fellowship; they made their boast that they took up arms by God's Commandment; and for a certain love and zeal to the Commonwealth, to the intent the doctrine of the Gospel might be set forth, augmented, and maintained. And sixthly, that truth, equity, and honest living might reign and flourish: as also, that they might so provide for them and theirs, that henceforth they should not be oppressed with any violence.

And that when they had thus, at few words, declared the cause of their enterprise, they would then command their Neighbours to arm, and come unto them immediately, and help them: If not, then would they threaten to come upon them, with all their force. But, having gotten the power and Arms into their hands, they committed divers horrid outrages; insomuch as Luther exhorted all men, that they would come to destroy them as wicked thieves and parricides, in like case as they would come to quench a common fire; having most shamefully broken their faith to their Princes; taken other men's goods by force, and cloak all this abomination and wickedness, with the cover of Christianity: which (saith he) is the vilest and unworthiest thing that can be imagined.

In Suevia and Franconia about forty thousand pesants took arms; rob'd a great part of the nobility, plunder'd many towns and castles, Muncer being their chief captain, so that the princes of the empire, Albert Count of Mansfeild, Iohn Duke of Saxony, and his Cousen George, Philip the Lantgrave of Hesse, and Henry Duke of Brunswick, were necessitated to raise what power they could; and having offered them pardon upon submission, and delivering up their principal Leaders, which was refused; marcht against them. But Muncer preparing for battle, encouraged his followers; crying out to them to take their weapons, and fight stoutly against their Enemies, singing a Song, whereby they call'd for help of the Holy Ghost. The success of which Battel was, that the Rebels at the first onset, were soon put in disorder, and above five thousand slain on the place: and that Muncer fled and hid himself: but being found and brought to the Princes, was (with his fellow Phifer) beheaded at Mulhuse.

And about the year 1535, Iohn of Leyden (a taylor by trade, and of this tribe) preaching the doctrine of rebaptization, so much infected the inferior sort of people, by the means of private conventicles, that his followers grew numerous, and exercised violence against those that were not of their Sect. At last robbing their adversaries, and gathering together in great troops, they possest themselves of the strongest part of the City of Munster; declaring, that all such as were not rebaptized, ought to be accounted pagans and infidels, and to be killed. His companions

were Rosman and Cnipperdoling, who gathered together to that city great numbers of the base sort of people: and seeing their strength, chose new senators of their own Sect, making Cnipperdoling the chief; who taught that the people might put down their magistrate. And albeit that the Apostles had no commandment to usurp any jurisdiction: yet such as were their Ministers of the Church, ought to take upon them the right of the sword, and by force to establish a new Commonwealth. Hereupon they spoil'd the suburbs, and burnt the Churches; so that the Bishop of Munster (who was lord of the city, and forced out) beseiged them; the neighbour Princes giving assistance: which seige continuing long, the famine grew to be such, as that the beseiged miserably perished in great numbers: and at length the beseigers forcing their entrance by assault, slew many, took the ring-leaders; and having put them to death, hang'd their bodies in several Cages of Iron on the highest towers of that city. Thus far Sleidan.

It is not unworthy observation that divers of these German Phanatiques, to the end they might at that time be the better known to those of their own sect, did cut their hair round, as Petrus Crinitus (an author of good credit) in his book *De Bello Rusticano* Tom. 3. pag. 209. averreth. From which example, there is no doubt but that these of ours took their pattern, whence they were generally called Roundheads.

Concerning these men, the testimony likewise of Mr. Iohn Calvin, may (I presume) be here not unfitly produced; as well for other respects, as for that he lived in that time.

Olim Fanatici homines (saith he) ut sibi applauderent in sua inscitia, jactabant, Davidis exemplo, sperandas esse omnes literas, sicut hodie Anabaptistae; non alio praetextu se pro spiritualibus venditant, nisi quod omnis scientiae sint expertes. Brainsick men, in times past, would take example from David, to despise all learning, as now our Anabaptists; who only hold themselves inspired with gifts because they are ignorant of all literature. And he addeth, *Cum sub specie studii perfectionis, imperfectionem nullam tolerare possumus, aut in corpore, aut in membris Ecclesiae, tunc Diabolum nos tumescere superbia & hypocrist seducere moneamur.* Whereas under the colour of a desire of perfection, we can tolerate no imperfection, either in the body or the members of the Church; then may we be admonished, that it is the Devil which pusseth us up with pride, and seduceth us with hypocrisy. And in another place he further saith, *Quia nulla specie illustriori seduci possunt miseri Christiani &c.* Because silly Christians, who with a zeal to follow God, cannot by any more notable shew be seduced, then when the word of God is pretended; the Anabaptists (against whom we write) have that evermore in their mouths, and always talk of it.

There is an undoubted tradition that upon the suppressing of this pernicious sect in Germany, many of them fled into the Netherlands; and that thence two Ships laden with some, got into Scotland, where they first propagated their mischievous principles. Which within a short time spreading hither, have not a little endangered the utter ruine of Church and State. For that they soon after arrived here to a considerable increase, it may very well be concluded, from what the same person hath expressed, in an epistle of his, written to Edward Duke of Somerset, then Protector to King Edward the sixth, in these words: *Amplissime domine, Audio esse duo seditiosorum genera, &c.* Sir, I hear there are two sorts of seditious men among you, who lift up the head against the king, and state of the Kingdom; the one are a sort of giddy-headed men, who

promote their sedition under the name of the Gospel. The other are so hardned in the superstitions of Antichrist, that they cannot endure a revulsion of them; and both these must be restrained by the revenging sword, which the Lord hath put into your hand; since they rise up not only against the king, but against God himself, who hath placed the king in his royal throne, and made you protector of his person, and his Royal Majesty.

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