

On Thursday the xi. of Aprill. 1555.

The fourth Sermon upon the first Chapter.

16 And I charged then your Judges, saying, Heare your brethren, and judge uprightly betweene a man and his brother, and betweene the straunger that is with him.

17 You shall have no respect of person in judgement, but heare the small as well as the great. Ye shall feare no mans countenance: for the judgement is the Lordes. And the case that is too harde for you, bring it before mee and I will heare it.

18 And at the same time I commanded you all the things which you ought to doe.



We have seene already what warning Moses gave for the choosing of men meete to governe the people. For (as hath bin declared) if they had taken judges at all adventure, it had bin a defiling of Gods seate. Therefore in that case, it behooved them to use good discretion. But here Moses addeth a point which wee ought to marke well. For although he had procured, that such as were chosen were men that feared God, and were indued with singular giftes: yet ceaseth he not to put them in minde of their duety, and to warne them of the thinges that they had to doe. Wherein wee see, that even the wisest have neede to be taught, and the uprightest and justest have neede to bee warned. And therefore if God have set us in the good way, and bestowed giftes of his holy spirit upon us: let us not thinke that therefore wee have no neede to bee taught. For wee must be guided even unto the ende, and wee knowe that our perfection is not in this world, nor so long as wee beare our flesh about us, and are conversant here beneath. Againe, whom soever God hath honoured by setting them in state and degree of preheminece: let

them understand that they have neede to be told of their duetie, and to bee quickened up to discharge themselves accordingly.

But let us come now to that which is conteyned here. The first charge that Moses giveth to them that are ordeyned to bee Judges and Governours, is *to heare mens causes*. Wherein he doeth us to understand, that they ought to bee attentive and diligent to understande every mans right. For if a judge vouchsafe not to heare, howe shall he execute his office? Wee knowe that although men doe the best they can to judge aright, yet their frailetie is such as they may misse: and if they be negligent too, then must all needes goe to confusion. Therefore it is not without cause, that Moses warneth the Judges to understande well mens cases. And he sayeth expressly, *betweene the Jewes and betweene the straungers*. As if he should say, every man must bee suffered to shewe his reason. Notwithstanding that the examination and sifting out of things may now and then procure favour or hatred: yet the judge that will doe his duetie well, must forget all thinges that may turne him from the right way. And forasmuch as the straunger hath no upholder nor stay to leane unto: the judge must supply his want.

And although he can looke for no reward, no nor for any great thanks at his hand to whom he may doe right: yet let him not forbear to discharge his duetie, for he doeth acceptable service to God: albeit that there come no rewarde on mens behalfe, God is able ynough to recompence him.

Nowe then, such as are Justicers have their lesson here in writing: that is to wit, that they must maintayne right and equitie towards all men that are committed to their charge. For (as hath bin declared afore) the office of justice is an honourable service. They that are set in authoritie are not advaunced to that high estate to the intent they should trample their subjectes under their feete, or make none account of them: but contrariwise they bee bounde unto them, and it is a kinde of service. For God hath not made principalities for a few mens pleasures, to the end that all mankind should be their underlings: but for the common welfare and benefit of all men. Then if governours understand not that they be bound by Gods will and by the order of nature, to them of whom they have the charge: they must be faine to yeeld an account unto God for their abusing of his gift and of the honour that he bestowed upon them. Thus much concerning the first point that we have to marke here.

And herewithall let us marke also, that if they bee so greatly bounde unto men: much more straitly are they bound unto God. If a man be grieved in a matter of five shillings or lesse, and the justice cause him not to have right: we see what is sayd here. But now, if the name of God bee blasphemed, if his honour bee defaced, if wicked and detestable thinges bee done, and they that sitte in the seate of justice and beare the sworde in their hande withstand it not, but are carelesse what injurie bee done unto God: are they to bee excused? No: for if they suffer but a poore man to bee troden done, so as he have but one penny losse: they shall bee blamed for it before God. But

yet much more precious is the Majestie of God, and the thing that concerneth his honour and service. Sith it is so, that Magistrates bee bounde to minister right to every man, in thinges that are small and in maner of no vawle: let us marke well that they ought in any wise to procure the maintenaunce of Gods honor, more carefully without al comparison, specially when the case concerneth the kingdome of our Lord Jesus Christ, whereunto all the whole world is not to bee compared, in as much as Gods glorie shineth forth there. And that is the second point which we have to marke upon this streine.

Againe, whereas it is sayde, that the Magistrates must accept no mans person: it betokeneth that they must not bee mooved with any mans riches, or povertie, or byrth, or friendship, or any thing else. For in the holy scripture, this worde *Person* is taken for any qualitie in man, which may purchace him grace and favour, or disgrace and disfavour. When wee speake of a person in our common speache, wee meane a man or a woman: but the Scripture meaneth a more speciall thing: namely that there should no regard be had what maner a one the man is, whether he bee our neighbour, our friend, a riche man able to doe us good, a man of credit and authoritie able to revenge himself of us, or a poore man, a man of no allyance or kinred, or I wote not what else. All these accidentes which serve but to induce us to liking or misliking of the partie, and to make us swarve from the right way, are comprehended in the Scripture under the worde *Person*: as if wee should use the word *Vizor*. And in very deede, all these accidentes which bleare our eyes and beguile us to make us start out of the right way, are but as vizors. If a man come before us without any qualitie: very well, we would heare him simply, and wee woulde not bee corrupted to judge amisse. But if there happen any stoppe, by and by wee bee

overraught, and our reason is so troubled, that wee judge not any more as wee ought to doe. That therefore is a vizor, which yeeldeth foorth such a qualitie to bee seene in the partie, as maketh us eyther to favour him too much, or else to mislike him out of measure, so as wee keepe not an upright and even hand betweene the great and the small. And truely Moses declareth the same very well in this text, in that he sayeth, *Thou shalt heare the small as well as the great:* for it serveth to expound the word *Person*, and there needeth none other glose from elsewhere. And it is a phrase of speache which wee shall see in other textes hereafter. Therefore it behoveth us to acquaint our selves with the termes and phrases of the holy Ghost, that the thinges which are contained here may not seeme straunge unto us.

Howbeit by the way, that wee may fare the better by the things that are declared here, let us marke that the chiefe reason and ground of this doctrine, is bicause there is no accepting of persons before GOD. For the same cause ought Judges to have a stay of themselves, and to keepe them cleare from all considerations that may thrust them aside, or make them to swarve one way or other¹: namely (say I) for that they represent the Majestie of God², in as much as he hath made them his officers. Now then, there is no accepting of persons before God, that is to say, when he judgeth he hath no respect to the thinges that men regarde, and wherewith they bee drawn too and fro, so as they judge not uprightly any more, bicause their excessive affections doe overmaister them. And this saying, that there is no respect of persons with GOD, extendeth very farre. For when as Saint Peter speaketh of it, first in the tenth of Actes³, and afterward in his Epistle⁴, he

sheweth that God chose whom he listed out of the whole world, in so much as he passed not whether they were Jewes or Gentiles. Whosoever doeth good (saieth he) shall have the favour of God, and as for Circumcision or uncircumcision, they shall none of them both bee made account of. True it is that God must bee faine to looke mercifully upon us, before we can do any good. For of our owne nature wee bee utterly froward, and there can nothing come from us but all maner of naughtinesse: insomuch that God should hate and abhorre the whole world, and cast us away everychone, if hee should tarie till any of us gave himselve to will doing: for our nature driveth us alwayes unto evill. But God chooseth his, without any abilitie of deserving aforehand on their behalfe: and yet notwithstanding, after he hath marked them to bee of the number of his flocke, he avoweth them and loveth them as his children and household folke, yea even without regarding of what nation or state they be, whether they be riche or poore, or in credit, or indued with any good qualitie and handsomnesse, or any other thing. God then doeth as it were shut his eyes against all the respectes which are had in so great estimation. For he hath an eye to nothing but to soundnesse of heart, he doteth not upon these vizors that are seene to the eye, according to this saying in an other place⁵, namely that the outward shewes deceive not him, but that he looketh upon that which is within. Thus much concerning the first point.

But wee must apply this texte to the same use that Moses putteth it: which is, that after the example of God, wee must have this unpartialitie in us, so as wee will not bee drawn one way nor other by the thinges that appear in men. And this is a very profitable or rather needefull doctrine. True it is that this is spoken expressly to

¹ Romans 13:1

² Deuteronomy 10:17

³ Acts 10:34

⁴ I Peter 1:17

⁵ I Sam 16:7

Judges and governours, in as much as God hath taken them neere to himselfe by setting them in his owne seate, and by willing them to execute his office in this worlde: and therefore ought they also to have the greater care to followe uprightnesse, that they suffer not themselves to bee perverted by the thinges that are to be seene in men. But yet for all that, every man for his owne part ought to take warning to follow Gods example, and to frame himself thereafter, according also as Saint Paul sendeth us thither⁶, when he speaketh of bondmen and of men of bace degree that are easie to bee oppressed, bicause men take leave to doe evill when they see that a sillie soule cannot revenge himselfe, and that if he have any wrong done unto him he must bee faine to put it up patiently: by reason wherof they presume the more boldly to say, O, as for him, when I have done the worst to him that I can, he hath no meanes to hurt mee. Thus are wee the bolder when we see that men are bace and have no maintenance. But in this case Saint Paul saieth that wee must lifte up our eyes to heaven, and that forasmuch as there is no respect of persons before God, wee must not thinke wee shall escape unpunished when we abuse the priviledge and authoritie that he giveth us. He then that despiseth his neighbour ought to thinke thus: yet notwithstanding, we have a common judge in heaven, and although I be now rich and honorable to the worldward, although I be in authoritie and estimation, yet when I come thither, all this geare must cease: and although my counterpartie be now despised, and have no man to stand by him, yet hath he a defender in heaven. Lo here (say I) what ought to beate downe all pride in us, to the end that none of us advance himselfe, nor take more upon him than is lawfull, ne thinke he hath leave to doe evill, under colour that our

counterparties are of no credite and authoritie. Let us not tarie till ordinarie Justice doe redresse our extorsions, or till those whom God hath set in his place to judge without respect of persons, doe punish us for committing of some outrage: but let every of us remember this lesson here, namely that inasmuch as God regardeth not any outward shewes at al, it behoveth every of us also to frame himselfe to the like uprightnesse and indifferencie.

And forasmuch as men do always put us in feare, so as there spring from thence the sorest and worst temptations that can be to hinder the perfourmance of our duetie: Moses warneth Judges expresly, not to be afrayde of men. Why? *For the judgement is Gods*, sayeth he. Loe here a text well worthy to bee marked. I have tolde you alreadie, that which experience sheweth too much: that is to wit, that they which otherwise are of good nature, doe neverthesse overshoot themselves through fearefulnesse. Ye shall see a man in the place of Justice, who being not evill of himselfe, would that all should goe well, it grieveth him when he seeth any fault, and he could finde in his heart that every man should brydle himselfe, or else that there should be some good correction when any men have done amisse: but in the meane whyle, forasmuch as he seeth that there will be some grudging and misliking of the matter, [he thinketh thus with himselfe:] What? Shall I provoke every man to anger against mee? That man hath kinsfolke and friends, and such a one is able to be even with me if I trouble him. Againe forasmuch as naughtinesse regneth everywhere, and wicked folke have their full scope, and are most in number: I shall bring all the world in my top, and if I minde to discharge my duetie, I must not set my selfe against two or three onely, but I see that all are corrupt, and there is no man but he resisteth weldoing. They therefore which otherwise feare God and woulde minister right and

⁶ Colossians 4:1

justice when they sit in judgement, are letted through fearefulness. If they stand in awe of men, they shall surely bee shaken downe. And why? Bicause they bee not grounded upon the foundation that Moses layeth here, namely *that the judgement is Gods*. They knowe not (say I) that they offer great dishonour and reproche unto God, when they preferre men before him. For he that swarveth from his duetie for feare, esteemeth men more than God. Why so? A Judge ought to consider, that God hath set him in the place where he is, with another maner of countenance than other simple creatures. For he that sitteth in the seate of Justice, sitteth in the roome of God, and is as his Lieuetenant. A Judge therefore ought to consider that: and if he doe not, he forgetteth God, whom he was bound to serve. It is all one as if a man being feeed by his maister to doe him service, knoweth not whether there bee a maister in the house or no, but falles to singing and playing, and eateth and drinketh at his houres, and sleepeth when he listeth, without having any care or regarde of his maister. Doeth not the servaunt that forgetteth his maister after that fashion, deserve to have men to spitte in his face? Nowe then, if Judges consider not of whome they holde their estate and dignitie: their unthankfulness or rather blockishnesse is too too shamefull and beastly. Againe, if Judges knowing themselves to bee set up of God, doe neverthesse shrinke from their duetie for feare of men, and bee stopped and helde backe from doing the things which they knowe they ought to do bicause men are against them: what yeelde they unto God? what estimation have they of his power? And yet for al that, God hath taught them their lesson, and promised them to stande by them, and to bee their defence. Seeing it is so, ought they not to make a bucklar of his invincible power, and to fight lustily though al the world should step up against them? Is not God nightie ynough to ayde

them and succour them, if they trusted thereunto, so as the woulde rest upon it, and plucke up a lively courage and constancie too goe on in the right way? Yes: but else, if they bee moved by such temptations to swarve from their duetie: let them assure themselves that God wil leave them destitute of his power. Thus then wee see, that this streine (as I saide afore) importeth a very profitable doctrine.

But yet wee must note also, that this perteyneth not only to them that are in authoritie: but also to all men in generall. For there is as it were a comparison made betweene God and mortall men. And why? For nothing beguileth us more, than that wee make too great reckening of men, and in so doing eyther dimminishe God, or abolish his highnesse. As oft as men come in our minds, God is no body in comparison: insomuch as if wee put him in ballaunce, hee seeneth lighter than a feather: whereas men doe alwayes keepe their full weight with us. Surely if wee were about to compare other men with our selves, wee coulde set them light ynough: for every of us woulde make much of himselfe. Or if wee were to consider one man with another: looke whom wee lyked off, he should give greatest glosse to disgrace the thinges that were to bee mislyked in the contrarie partie: insomuch that wee say, tushe what is he? he is no body. For why? Wee woulde make farre greater estimation of the other. Thus ye see howe wee could skill to disgrace men. But come we once to GOD, he must bee as good a cast downe, and men must bee set up in his place. Lo howe spytefull and frowarde wee bee. So much the more therefore doeth it stande us on hand to mark this saying, where it is declared that if God come in place, it is not for us to make any reckening of men. For it is a great trayterousnesse that men or creatures shoulde bee in such estimation, that Gods right should bee defaced, or any thing bee plucked from him.

And yet for all that, we see it is too common a thing, and it hindereth us that we cannot serve GOD as we ought to doe. True it is that every an is turned away by his owne lustes, insomuch that although wee have none other to withstande us, yet have wee inwarde incumberances of our owne, and our nature is so sinfull, as wee cannot in any wise applie our selves to doe good. But yet is there this inconvenience more in it, that assoone as another man comes in place, by and by wee bee at our wittes ende. I would faine doe my duetie (say we), but what? Then must I purchase me such a mans displeasure. Wee see nowe adayes that a man cannot pleasure men, except hee doe as the worlde doeth, and followe the byasse of other men. And againe, beholde heere my neighbour, hee will alwayes bee at deadly foode with mee, if I fashion not my selfe to his manner of dealing: beholde, such a man is my friende, I must needes beare him out. Hence come all privie packings and other lewde trickes, namely that every man despiseth God, to please his neighbor or his friend. For when vices reigne, as whoredome, drunkennesse, and other disorders, so as every man is infected by the example of his neighbor, and one catcheth diseases of another: what is the cause of al this? It is for that we advance men too much, and consider not that it were meete for us to abase both great and small, and to frame our selves earnestly to the will of God.

Now therefore let us bethinke us so much the better of this doctrine that is set down here, not only for Judges but also for all men in common: [That is to witte,] that forasmuch as the judgement is Gods, we must not in any wise be shaken any more by men, but give God his preheminance, and thrust downe all consideration of men, so as if men vex us wee set our selves against them, and be not so lewd as to rob God of that which belongeth unto him, to furnish

creatures therewithal. Thus yee see what we have to remember heere.

Moreover also, whereas it is saide that the *Judgement is Gods*: that speech importeth another good lesson. True it is that Moses speaketh heere of the roome that Judges and Magistrates holde: as if hee shoulde say, they have it not in feesimple or as a Lordship of inheritance, but as an office: and God in setting them in that degree of honour, resigned not his owne majestie to say, Sirs, you shall reigne with absolute power and I will henceforth bee no bodie. God therefore, when hee did thus set men in office, did not for all that diminish his owne estate. For hee holdeth still the soveraine dominion over all men, and they ought to bee but as instruments of his power, and consequently to serve him, and to referre all thinges unto him. If this doctrine were well knowen, Kinges and Princes woulde not lorde it so lycentionsly nowadayes as they doe, and men shoulde have seene another manner of modestie in them at all times than is now seene. For they that are advaunced unto honour, doe beare themselves on hande that the worlde was made for them, and for their faire eyes (as they say): and there upon they reject all informations, lawes and statutes, and shake off the yoke from their necks, as though they helde all things at their own swindge, and God is no body at al with them. But yet in this text Moses telleth them, that be they never so great kings and princes, their superioritie ought not to diminish the authoritie of God, that his glory should not continue alwayes unappaired. Why so? For what else are the princes of the world than Gods officers, to the end that by their meanes he might be obeyed, and al men do him homage, so as the highest should begin and give example to the lowest? Seeing then that the judgement is Gods they that pervert the order of government when they be called to do their duetie, shalbe double blamed. And therefore shal Kinges and

Princes and al such as are in roome of Justice, have a verie harde account to make. For if they do amisse, they be not bound alonely unto men, neither have they offended creatures onely: but they have violated the majestie of God, and defiled his feare. Why so? Because judgement belongeth unto him, and he reserveth it to himselfe.

But like as it is said of the execution of Justice: so let us note that it belongeth also to the spiritual government which god hath ordeined in his Chutch: yea and this doctrine ought to bee kept more straitly in that respect, than in the earthly government. Why? When God ordeineth kings, Princes and Magistrates: there withall he giveth them authoritie to make Lawes. True it is, that they ought to learne them in his schoole, according as it is said that lawes and ordinances which are made in comman weales, do take their force of Gods wisdom⁷. But yet for al that, civil or politike lawes are made by men. Yet notwithstanding God hath not resigned any thing, that he should not hold stil the souveraine dominion over men, I meane even in respect of outward policy. And as touching the spiritual government of the Church, we know that God wilbe heard and that he wil have his word obeyed above all things, so as men may not take upon them to make laws and statutes, but must hold themselves contented with that which he commandeth them. For the rule that is contained in his word is the very perfection it self. Therefore when we go up into the pulpit, it is not to utter our owne dreames and dotages. why so? For God reserveth the mastership and chiefe superioritie still to himselfe, so as he will have men to receive his word, to rest wholly therupon without any swarving at all from it: Seeing that God hath once set it downe so: it behoveth us to rest upon it. Had this bin well observed in

the world, there should not be so great troubles and variances at this day as there are. Whence come the variances that are betwixt us and the papists, but of that men have not reserved unto God the thing that belongeth unto him, but have framed articles of faith, lawes, and ordinances at their owne pleasure, and in the ende are come to this horrible confusion of mingling the inventions of mens braines with the purenes of the holy scripture, so as thy have marred all things? And whereof else commeth it, that even at this day, the papistes fight still for the maintenance of that tyrannie, that a man might not knowe God from his Apostles as they themselves say, by which common proverbe of theirs they condemne themselves and cut their owne throtes? Wherefore let us marke well this lesson wherein it is saide *that the judgement is Gods*, that is to say, that the superioritie which men have, in what degree so ever it bee, is not to diminish Gods preheminance, but rather to maintaine it. What then are the states of honour and all the dignities of the worlde? They are all meanes to bring to passe that God may reigne over us, and to make all men to stoope to him, and to knowe him and obey him in all cases. So then, what ought kings, Emperours, and Magistrates to doe? They ought to see that God be exalted and magnified as he is worthie, and that all their sujetes doe him homage, and they themselves must shewe them the way. Againe, what ought schoolemasters and fathers to doe, and all such as have anie householde [or servauntes]? Everie of them ought to consider on his owne behalfe howe greatly God hath inhonored him? He that hath children ought to consider, thou holdest Gods place in this roome of a father, but yet hath not GOD stripped himselfe to clothe thee with his honour. What then? He is the father still, both of mee and of my children, therefore must I indever that he may be obeyed. The master must thinke

⁷ Proverbs 8:15

thus: Is the mastershippe mine? No: but it is Gods, who hath graunted mee that prerogative undeserved on my parte. It hath pleased him to put this householde under my government, but yet for all that, it is he that must rule me, yea both me and all that are under my subjection. After this manner ought wee to put this doctrine in ure.

And when wee have passed through all the states of the worlde, wee must also come to the spirituall government of the Church. Therefore let such as are ordeined to preach Gods worde, understande that God hath not appointed them to set foorth their owne dotages, and to speake what they list: but to thinke uppon Gods superiorite, specially seeing that our Lord Jesus Christ is nowe declared to bee the heade of his Church⁸, accourding to the everlasting mastership which God gave him over us, in saying, Heare ye him⁹. Seeing it is so, let such as have the charge of teaching in the Church and are shepherdes and ministers, understande that they must not seeke to advance themselves, nor to be heard, nor to bring the people in a mase with their own inventions: but [they must indever] that God may alwayes have the overhand, and be obeyed, and his worde bee received purely and sinplie without any mingling or adding to it.

And like as they that are in that vocation and office, ought to have mildnesse, and lowlinesse, that they usurpe not the authoritie which God hath reserved to himselfe, yea and given to his onely sonne: so all Christians ought to thinke thus with themselves. Wherefore come wee to Sermons? Wherefore is there order in the Church? It is to the ende that GOD shoulde governe us, and that wee should have our Lorde Jesus Christ to bee as our souveraine teacher, and that wee shoulde be his flocke to bee led by him. Nowe this cannot bee

done, unlesse we hearken to his voyce, and discern it from the voyces of straungers, so as wee be not caried too and fro like wavering Reedes with every winde, but stande fast settled uppon the purenesse of the holy Scripture, and that our faith be so grounded thereuppon, as the divell may never shake it downe. Loe (say I) howe we ought to applie this doctrine to our use, namely that the judgement and authoritie is Gods. For if wee doe so, wee may well see many contrarieties in this world, men may assaile us with many troubles, they may well set themselves against us, and they may well speake against us: but yet shal we stil keepe on our pace. And why? for GOD is not variable. Although the divell keepe never so great a stirre here beneath, yet is Gods purpose alwayes unchaungeable. And so is ment by this that is saide of the truth¹⁰, that it dureth for ever. It is not such a trueth as is hidden or shutte up in heaven: but it is saide expresly that it is the same truth which God uttereth to us by his worde, as he witnesseth dayly. Sith it is so, let us looke up to GOD, and yelde him the government that is due unto him, that hee may reigne over us: and then shal our faith bee unvariable, though the divell trouble and turmoyle all thinges upsidedowne, and stirre up never so much strife and contention. Thus you see howe we must put the doctrine in ure that is contained heere.

Nowe furthermore Moses saith expreslie, *that if there were any harde case it should be brought unto him*. And afterwarde hee addeth for a conclusion, *that hee had commanded them all the things which they ought to doe*. As touching the harde cases, Moseses reserving of them to himselfe, was neither for desire of praise nor for pride, but because they belonged to his vocation: hee knewe that God had ordeined him to the same purpose. And therefore let us not bee afraide to keepe still

⁸ Ephesians 1:22

⁹ Mark 17:5 and Luke 9:15

¹⁰ Psalm 117:2

that which God hath given us, if wee execute the charge that hee hath committed unto us. For why? like as a man must not esteeme of himselfe, so must hee not surmise, oh, this is hatefull, it may be ill taken, it is subject to slaunder: but wee must followe that which God commaundeth us. And therefore let us not take any thing uppon us of our owne head, that is to say, let us not bee rashe to say, this belongeth to mee, for ambition tickleth us continually, and everie of us would have I wote not what a priviledge: wherefore let us beware of such folly. Yet notwithstanding like as there shoulde no such boldnesse reigne in us, as to usurpe or take any thing uppon us: so on the contrarie part, when GOD will have any office or charge laide uppon us, it becommeth us to take it. True it is that men may chauce to speake evill of us for it, but wee must overpasse that, and keepe on our pace still. That is the thing which Moses hath shewed us heere by his owne example.

And in his owne person, hee hath set us as it were a looking glasse before our eyes, to shewe us that we must followe the order that God hath set, and not swarve from it at all. If wee doe not so, it is an intolerable unthankfulnessse. We knowe what infirmitie is in our selves: not onely in some one point but in all things are wee so fraile as is pitie to see. But our Lorde hath well provided for all our needes, and given us remedies for them. As for example, hee hath given us meate and drinke to maintaine this transitorie life of ours, hee hath ordeined Magistracie to governe us, hee hath ordeyned the ministerie of his worde to rule our soules, and hee hath given singular giftes of grace to severall persons, so as they bee able to give us counsell, and to comfort and incourage their neighbours, and to helpe them at their neede. What is to be done then? Whensoever wee bee cumbered or in any perplexitie, let us looke that wee use the meanes of remedie that GOD giveth us, yea and to use them alwayes in his feare.

For wee may bee abused, as wee have seene. What is to bee done then? We must not turne aside nor stoppe for such as have heither right nor reason in them, but everie of us must further himselfe by such meanes as God giveth him, even as though hee were going to God himselfe. And that will make us to use the order of Lawe lawefully, which thing men doe not nowe. And it is a point well worthie to bee marked, to wit, howe men may repulse injuries, and howe they ought to behave themnselves, when any of us findeth himselfe intangled or in perplexitie, let us pray to God to direct us. If wee did so, surely wee would not goe to lawe but with trembling, and wee woulde say in our selves, I goe now to present my self as it were before my God. But howe goe men to it noweadayes? Rather to seeke a cloke for all naughtinesse: so as there is neither craft, nor spite, nor any other wickednesse which is not to bee founde there. And why? For without having any regarde of God, there is nothing thought uppon but howe to beguile men, or howe to winde them in by some wicked practise. So much the more neede therefore have wee to marke well what is saide here, that is to wit, that according as God hath ordeined states and degrees among men: so must men dispose things and direct them by the order that God hath set and established.

And for a conclusion let us also wey well this which Moses addeth in the ende: namely, *that hee had taught the Jewes all thinges which they had to doe*. When hee saith so, it is all one as if hee shoulde protest, that they coulde not but know, that they sinned not through ignorance, neither coulde say, I tooke it to have beene otherwise, I knewe not what was to bee done. You knowe (saieth Moses) there is no let but in your selves, for I for my parte have beene faithfull to Godwarde: since the time that hee did put mee in trust to instruct you, I have taught you as hee commaunded mee: nowe therefore you cannot have any excuse

to hide you withall. And if Moses had such a care to teach the people in respecte of the earthly government: no doubt but hee was yet more diligent in teaching them the doctrine of salvation. That is the first poynt whiche wee have to note. Doth Moses tell us, that hee did not conceale nor hyde any thing from the Jewes, in the thinges that concerned their worldlie dueties, for the mainteyning of some order and humaine honestie among them? Then is it much more likely that hee first preached to them the grace of God, and afterwarde shewed them the rule of good counversation and there withall tolde them of the covenant of salvation, which GOD had made with his people. It is certaine that nothing was concealed in that behalfe, but that he used an exquisite diligence, so as hee left not the Jewes in doubt without due warrant how to behave themselves to Godward.

Nowe then, if Moses dischargd his duetie after that sort, wee must conclude that the Lawe was a sufficient doctrine to instructe the people, and that hee used not anie shiftes to carie them heere and there. Afterwarde came the Prophetes, which added yet a greater lighte. Last of all, the Gospell was preached through the whole worlde. Nowe then, can we say that our Lorde hath not taught us sufficiently, and that all the Prophetes, and the Apostles, yea and Jesus Christ himselfe have given us but halfe an instruction? Can we say so? No: that were too vilanous a blasphemie. Nowe therefore, let us have our eares open to hearken to our GOD, and he will be a good schoolemaster to us, and let us bee contented with the dictrine that is conteyned in the holy Scripture. For there wee have so perfect wisdom, as no fault can bee found with it. Consider well therefore what we have to marke upon this streine, to the ende that everie of us may indever to profite dayly more and more. And if there bee any ignorance in us, let us assure our selves it is through our owne

fault, in that we bee as blinde wretches, untill God have inlightened us through his grace. Therefore it behoveth us to pray him to open our eyes by his holy spirite. And on the other side, let us not stop our eares against the thinges that God speaketh, nor pretende ignorance to excuse our naughtinesse. But seeing that God telleth us, that he hath shewed us all things by his worde which wee ought to doe: let us holde us to it without coveting any novelties, and without fond curiositie, for wee shall never scape from him; and therefore let us not be gadding to receive everie newe toy that is offered unto us. And so let us ponder well the thinges that wee have to marke upon this text, to the ende that for asmuch as GOD hath nowe given us a confirmation of his Lawe and of his Propheisies, and directed us to the right marke: wee may take the Gospell [alwayes] for our guide, in wayting till he have gathered us together into his kingdome.

Nowe let us kneele downe in the presence of our good God with acknowledgement of our faults, praying him to make us feele them better, to the ende we may returne to him with true repentance, and being ashamed of our selves flee for refuge to his mercy: and that forasmuch as we knowe hee hath set it forth most largely and abundantly in our Lord Jesus Christ, wee may resort to him the more boldly, seeking continually for the great treasures which he hath prepared for us in his kingdome. And [beseeching him] to guide us so hencefoorth with his holie spirite, as we may live in his feare, framin our selves unto his righteousnesse, and serving him according to his holie will, so that although wee might be hindered by the stumblingblockes and cumbrances which wee see in the worlde, yet wee may not cease to followe our good GOD, whither soever hee calleth us, notwithstanding that the worlde bee blinded with never so outrageous confusion and disorder. That it

may please him to graunt this grace, not
onely to us, etc.