

The Land and Freedom pages

English Civil War History

England: The birthplace of Capitalism

[Land and Freedom](#)

[The Seventeenth Century Diggers and Land Rights](#)

[The Levellers](#)

[Seventeenth century democrats in the English Civil War](#)

Through my research of seventeenth century source materials - many of which are reproduced here - a picture emerges of the Western world's first Civil War from the peoples' point of view. These sources show people and popular movements in crisis as they discovered the aim of all the anti-monarchical anguish, a Commonwealth, was not going to materialize after all. The people had been duped into usurping the king only to have him replaced by a corrupt 'rump' parliament of self-seeking capitalist merchants.

This civil war put the monied classes & land privatisers in a position of power which over subsequent years they used to great effect, legally tearing people from the land, evicting, right across the country and enabling the merchant classes, the winners of the bourgoise revolution, to find willing workers for the industrial revolution and build the biggest empire the world has ever seen.

Admittedly, Oliver Cromwell saw the error of his ways before he died . Here is one of his late speeches delivered to the House of Commons - it could erasily be delivered to the cabinet system of government, 'Tony's cronies', in the early 21st century.

20 April 1653 Oliver Cromwell to the Long Parliament.

It is high time for me to put an end to your sitting in this place, which you have dishonored by your contempt of all virtue, and defiled by your practice of every vice; ye are a factious crew, and enemies to all good government; ye are a pack of mercenary wretches, and would like Esau sell your country for a mess of pottage, and like Judas betray your God for a few pieces of money.

Is there a single virtue now remaining amongst you? Is there one vice you do not possess? Ye have no more religion than my horse; gold is your God; which of you have not barter'd your conscience for bribes? Is there a man amongst you that has the least care for the good

of the Commonwealth?

Ye sordid prostitutes have you not defil'd this sacred place, and turn'd the Lord's temple into a den of thieves, by your immoral principles and wicked practices? Ye are grown intolerably odious to the whole nation; you were deputed here by the people to get grievances redress'd, are yourselves become the greatest grievance.

Your country therefore calls upon me to cleanse this Augean stable, by putting a final period to your iniquitous proceedings in this House; and which by God's help, and the strength he has given me, I am now come to do; I command ye therefore, upon the peril of your lives, to depart immediately out of this place; go, get you out!

Make haste! Ye venal slaves be gone! So! Take away that shining bauble there, and lock up the doors. In the name of God, go!

Tony Gosling - September 2000

I'm afraid these pages do have some typographical errors due to much of the material having been scanned in.

Land and Freedom

[The Diggers' Manifesto of 1649, The True Levellers' Standard Advanced](#) - introduction to The Diggers along with a complete version of Leon Rosselson's song about 'The World Turned Upside Down'

[Land tenure - How the British monarchy helped stop, and even reverse privatisation of land and evictions. Comprehensive glossary of land rights related terms which explains how land was controlled from mediaeval times up to the present day](#)

[Digger pamphlet, 1650 by Gerrard Winstanley: A New Yeers Gift to the Parliament and Armie](#), Shewing, What the Kingly Power is; And that the Cause of those They call Diggers Is the life and marrow of that Cause the Parliament hath Declared for, and the Army Fought for; The perfecting of which Work, will prove England to be the first of Nations, or the tenth part of the city Babylon, that falls off from the Beast first, and that sets the Crown upon Christs head, to govern the World in Righteousness:

[A Declaration from the poor oppressed people of England, 1649.](#) Gerrard Winstanley, The Digger, explains how the ordinary people of Britain have been enslaved ever since the Norman invasion. He explains that the basis of that enslavement is the control of land by the Lords of Manors and suggests in the most peaceful possible terms how the earth, our common Treasury, might be shared out again.



[1649, A letter to the Lord Fairfax](#), Digger pamphlet - "we shall honor our Father, the Spirit that gave us our being. And we shall honor our Mother the earth, by labouring her in righteousness, and leaving her free from oppression and bondage"

[The Law of Freedom in a Platform](#) - Winstanley's considered 1652 utopia - The Digger ideas reach their synthesis here as Winstanley spells out clearly his vision for a commonwealth with all things held in common and his own peculiar systems of justice etc.



Levellers

[A True Relation of the Proceedings in the Business of Burford](#) - republished here for the first time - so far as we know - since the Civil War, this account by Cromwell's personal emissary to the independent Leveller troops throws new light on events at Burford that fateful night in May 1649

[The Great Leveller Petition of 11th November 1648](#) - The Levellers demonstrate the extent of popular support for their constitutional reforms based around the Agreement of the People

[England's New Chains Discovered](#) 1648 - John Lilburne Ex Lt. Colonel in Cromwell's army and popular Leveller leader wrote this pamphlet as a challenge to the ruling classes

[who he saw as cynically abusing the power vacuum created by the successful campaign against Charles I. He details his criticism here and, as is almost taken for granted in civil war pamphlets, managed to get his ideas printed on a liberated back-street printing press.](#)

[The Second Part of England's New Chains Discovered](#) 1649 - A robust call for freedom of the press and a more detailed analysis of the forces that were propelling a class of, what Lilburne and his Leveller followers saw as, entirely unrepresentative and duplicitous people into power. Parliament's reaction was swift, Lilburne, Walwyn, Overton and Thomas Prince (treasurer of the Leveller Party and a wholesale Cheese merchant by profession) were rounded up by Cromwell's soldiers by order of Parliament to be tried for treason.

[The Solemn Engagement of the Army](#) from the English Civil War. Cromwell introduces temporary democracy to the parliamentary army through the election of agitators from each regiment to sit on the

[main army council](#)

[1649, England's Standard Advanced, an urgent appeal from the Leveller soldiers while they were on the run](#)

[The Levellers Vindicated](#). 1649 pamphlet with the Leveller soldiers' testimony of events up to and including the Burford murders. Cromwell's cynical attempt to crush their peaceful and righteous claim by force is a curse on the English people to this day

[The Levellers' Manifesto of 1649, The Agreement Of The People](#)

**Contact the webspave - [Tony Gosling tony@gaia.org](mailto:tony@gaia.org)
[Full contact details, fax etc. here](#)**

"The High Priests of Globalisation" [Will Hutton](#)

The transatlantic power élite's secretive Bilderberg conferences & related research - from Bristol, England

Thu22May: my browsing and email's gone down (!!) - [latest info Bilderberg 2003 latest: Trianon Hotel, Versailles, France](#)



[David Rockefeller taking a break from Bilderberg 2003](#)

Profile of [Bilderberg Secretary-General Martin Taylor](#)

My [latest email bulletin](#) and [latest Bilderberg gossip](#)

US spy agency has [new surveillance boss](#)

Bush family: [a fortune founded on Nazi collaboration](#)

Pentagon admits [Western journalists were targets in Iraq conflict](#)

Kissinger's business partner is [Iraq's new ruler](#)

'Blix: US was bent on war' [story removed from The Guardian](#)

My recommended [war news & arts links](#)

Biblical prophecy: [one apocalyptic scenario](#)

What are top freemasons up to? [1798: Proofs of a conspiracy](#)

The world's most powerful bank [in an anonymous office above a chocolate shop in Basel, Switzerland](#)

Bypass all these headlines: [see the complete index](#) to this website

The Iraq war comedy: [He's a Hitler... LET'S GO! \[Bill Hicks audio file\]](#)
[FBI's Bin Laden investigation knobbed by Bush syndicate pre-S11](#)
Who wants Hitler's dream, a fascist Europe? [Your Bilderberg dons do](#)
Bush family: [oil corruption and Nazi collaboration basics](#)

[George W. Bush and the forces of darkness](#)



[Skull and Bones at Yale, the occult 'dossier'](#)

My website could disappear anytime - [but download an offline browser & you can easily grab the lot, now ;-\)](#)
My MI5 data protection appeal evidence [to the Information Tribunal](#)
Kissinger [cop-out](#) and [Bush family and the Nazis presentation](#)
Western military lie machines [go into overdrive](#)
What does The Bible say? [When and how will the shit hit the fan?](#)
Apocalyptic kids TV series [the BBC want to bury](#)
[The Bush lies - excellent powerpoint presentation for IE only](#)
Shaylergate: [MI6 pay £100,000 to Al-Qaeda - but the UK press is gagged](#)
Leveller/Digger pamphlets - [From the English Civil War, the birth of Capitalism](#)
MI5 and the Christmas Tree files: [Secret political vetting of BBC writers in the 1980's](#) also: [New Labour hacks into BBC journalists' computers](#)

Thought for the century: *When the first 'terrorist' nuclear weapon explodes how will we, or the politicians, know whether a CIA/MI6/Mossad covert operations unit planted it.....?*

www.jewsnotzionists.org

**USA = global terrorism HQ: [Mercenaries MPRI with close connections to the U.S. administration](#) and [funding terrorism: The Carlyle Group](#)
Comedian Bill Hicks on the elite: [The Global Elite \[mp3 audio file\]](#)
Magic Mountains of the Mind - [The Economist's Elite Conference Guide](#)**



[browse our selection of obscure but good VHS videos online](#)

Channel 4 'Secret Rulers of the World' [Bilderberg Film Available](#)

The transatlantic elite misuse the terms 'democracy' and 'freedom': Is fixing the election in Florida democracy? Can the world's press be free when it has to adopt business values to survive?

Bilderberg elitists in: 1. [NATO](#) 2. [Western National Politics](#) 3. [The European Commission](#) 4. [European Parliament](#)

[What is Bilderberg?](#)

[BBC: The Day Auntie Died?](#)

[Bristol's Newspaper Monopoly](#)

[Financial Times: Bilderberg columnist sacked](#)

[Inside Bristol Freemasons Hall](#)

[Monthly email bulletins](#)

[The SS - British Military](#)

[Intelligence](#)

[Bilderberg's creator,](#)



[Bernhard, was Nazi SS officer](#)

[Fact vs. Slander - is this site's author anti-Jewish?](#)

[Yes, Jesus really was the son of God - Jewish evidence](#)

[The Project for European Unification - Mike Peters' definitive Bilderberg paper](#)

[This site campaigns for a press conference at the start of all Bilderberg meetings - and a declaration from the steering committee that any consensus reached must be in our public, not their private interest]

[www.bilderberg.org- Full Index](#)



[www.bilderberg.org - Translation](#)

[www.bilderberg.org - Introduction](#)

[www.bilderberg.org - Guestbook rant space](#)

[www.bilderberg.org - The English Civil War pages](#)

[www.bilderberg.org - Search this site using keywords](#)

[www.bilderberg.org - Examine/join Bilderberg email list](#)

[www.bilderberg.org - Threats to this site and request for help](#)

I have compiled this website because the Bilderberg organisation puts no information on the net about itself for public consumption - Believe it or not a French paper thought this was a Bilderberg run site.....actually I don't believe them but that's what they said! This site mirrored at:

<http://www.bilderberg-mirror.org.uk> [updated most regularly]

<http://www.my-brighton.co.uk/bilderberg/www.bilderberg.org/>

<http://www.mega.nu:8080/conspiracy/www.bilderberg.org/>

<http://www.unclenicks.net/bilderberg/www.bilderberg.org/>

<http://www.novomundolivres.com.br/bilderberg/>

<http://www.centrexnews.com/members/bilderberg/>

<http://www.bilderberg.amigosvirtuais.com>

<http://www.apfn.org/bilderberg.org>

http://copy_bilderberg.tripod.com

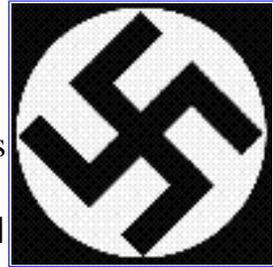
<http://bilderberg.stagyro.org>

Please help keep this information available to the public
[Here's how you can easily grab this whole site for mirroring](#)

ישוע הוא המשיח!

www.bilderberg.org - site index:

Image from a 1999 Kosovo site - NATO/NAZI connections



[Bilderberg Conferences](#) - Research on this private elite club, started by an ex-Nazi, that sets the agenda for a Corporate controlled Europe - participant lists - my email list archive - roots - common/single market

[Other Western Elites](#) - World Economic Forum - Skull and Bones - Bank for International Settlements - Transatlantic Business Dialogue - Sun Valley the media elite - Bohemian Grove - British American Project - Trilateral Commission

[The Oil Industry and Destruction of Public Transport](#) - General Motors - Beeching and the railways - the car takes over from the train - greed or coincidence?

[Culture, Communication and Control](#) - The Information War is on - UK journalist murdered - Media mind control - BBC - CIA - Censorship - Arrests of journalists - Congress for Cultural Freedom

[Fascism, State Terror and Power Abuse](#) - MI5 and MI6 - 'War on Terrorism' - Kissinger's trial - NATO as the World Army - Human Genetics - Microwaves and Non-Lethal weapons

[Quark, Strangeness and Charm](#) - Illuminati Leaks - 666 - Babylonian - Man Made Religion - Sport - Ritual Human Sacrifice - Secret Western Government Apparatus - Bohemian Grove - Freemasons Exposed

[Doubletake: Hidden History](#) - The Levellers and The Diggers - Cuban Missile Crisis - H-Bomb tests - Enclosure of Land - The Commoners King

[Personal but not private](#) - Close to Home - Outlandish Emails I get - my post being opened - legal threats

[There is another way](#) - Bible - Land - Levellers - Tolkien - Tribulation - The Changes - Inclosure of the Land

Mirrored sites within this site:

Council on Foreign Relations - [Rockefeller's business club runs U.S. foreign policy](#)

Partial mirror of disappeared website called [TheModernCrusade.org](#)

In depth analysis [of Bilderberg 2000 and related matters](#)

Definitive [Kennedy assassination analysis](#)



"...somebody has to take governments' place, and business seems to me to be a logical entity to do it." - David Rockefeller - Newsweek International, Feb 1 1999.

"...the world is governed by very different personages to what is imagined by those who are not themselves behind the scenes." - Benjamin Disraeli - British PM - 'Coningsby' pub. 1844

"The Treaty of Rome, which brought the Common Market into being, was nurtured at Bilderberg meetings." George McGhee, former US Ambassador to West Germany

"I don't think it's true to say that we want to keep it [Bilderberg] out [of the public consciousness], we never wanted to get it in. We don't encourage people to mention it in the mainstream press because we don't encourage idle speculation about what we do. We forbid individual attendees from giving press meetings at our conferences, and we do that not because we're secrecy mad, but because we want to control the politicians who come." Martin Taylor - Secretary General, Bilderberg - interviewed by Jon Ronson for the UK Channel 4 TV programme ['Secret Rulers of the World'](#) transmitted 27Jun01

"There are powers at work in this country about which we have no knowledge". H. M. Queen Elizabeth II (in conversation with royal butler Paul Burrell) [Daily Mirror](#)

Definition of a Power Elite: 'A group of men, similar in interest and outlook, shaping events from invulnerable positions behind the scenes.' C. Wright Mills ['The Power Elite'](#)

"The maintenance of secrets acts like a psychic poison, which alienates their possessor from the community" Carl Jung: 'Modern Man in Search of a Soul'

"In the councils of government, we must guard against the acquisition of unwarranted influence, whether sought or unsought, by the military-industrial complex. The potential for the disastrous rise of misplaced power exists and will persist." President Eisenhower - farewell address to the nation - Jan 16 1961

"What luck for rulers that men do not think" - Adolf Hitler

"The great masses of the people will more easily fall victims to a big lie than a small one" Adolf Hitler: 'Mein Kampf'

"Their motivation is, that the elite shall be able to act in secrecy. It is not because they are evil, but because they believe in what they are doing. International capital wants to remove all obstacles to globalisation - and all obstacles to the right of capital to act freely without constrictions such as regard for the environment, social responsibility or human rights. Demands from local democracies are such obstacles." Birger Schlaug, Swedish Green party

"Globalisation is the new Totalitarianism" - Vandana Shiva, NEF Peoples' Summit, Birmingham 1998





Bilderberg Conferences

[Prince Bernhard of The Netherlands - the 'father' of the Bilderberg - his Nazi background and activities surrounding his 1975 resignation over the Lockheed bribery scandal](#)

[To what extent are critics of Bilderberg Anti-Jewish conspiracy theorists? Is this just an excuse to divert the attention of the political 'left' away from Bilderberg?](#)

[The Bilderberg Group. Basic reference page on arguably the world's most powerful clandestine club](#)

[History and origins of Bilderberg group and a cheeky bit of work by an investigative reporter - whatever happened to Robert Eringer?](#)

[Bilderberg Conferences 2002 and beyond - after the demise of Spotlight how will we know when and where they are taking place?](#)

[Bilderberg 2001 - Gothenburg Sweden - 'Press Release' participant list and a run-down of Bilderberg related coverage in 2001](#)

[Bilderberg 2000 in Brussels, Belgium, participants and other info. on this conference](#)

[Pictures from Bilderberg 2000 Conference in Brussels](#)

[1999 Conference in Portugal - a page of information and articles specific to this conference including official press release and participant list](#)

[Leaked minutes from the 1999 conference in Sintra, Portugal](#)

[The 1998 Conference at Turnberry in Scotland, Attendees list, Email discussions etc](#)

[List of people who attended Bilderberg 1997 conference. Here's the official confession. It went out on the Reuters wire service, but with a legal warning to remind editors not to print it.](#)

[Reports and list of people who attended Bilderberg 1996 conference](#)

[Bilderberg 1994 conference in Helsinki, Finland - participant list and agenda for the meeting](#)

[Bilderberg conference 1993 down in Athens, Mr Blair's now one of the crew!](#)

[Bilderberg Meeting in 1992, scant details so far - only the agenda](#)

[1991 Bilderberg Meeting - Gordon Brown, UK chancellor's interview](#)

[Bilderberg reports and papers, background information on the Bilderberg Group](#)

[Canadian state governors jetting around the world to hob-nob with the rich and powerful types. They all find our 'right to know' an irksome annoyance](#)

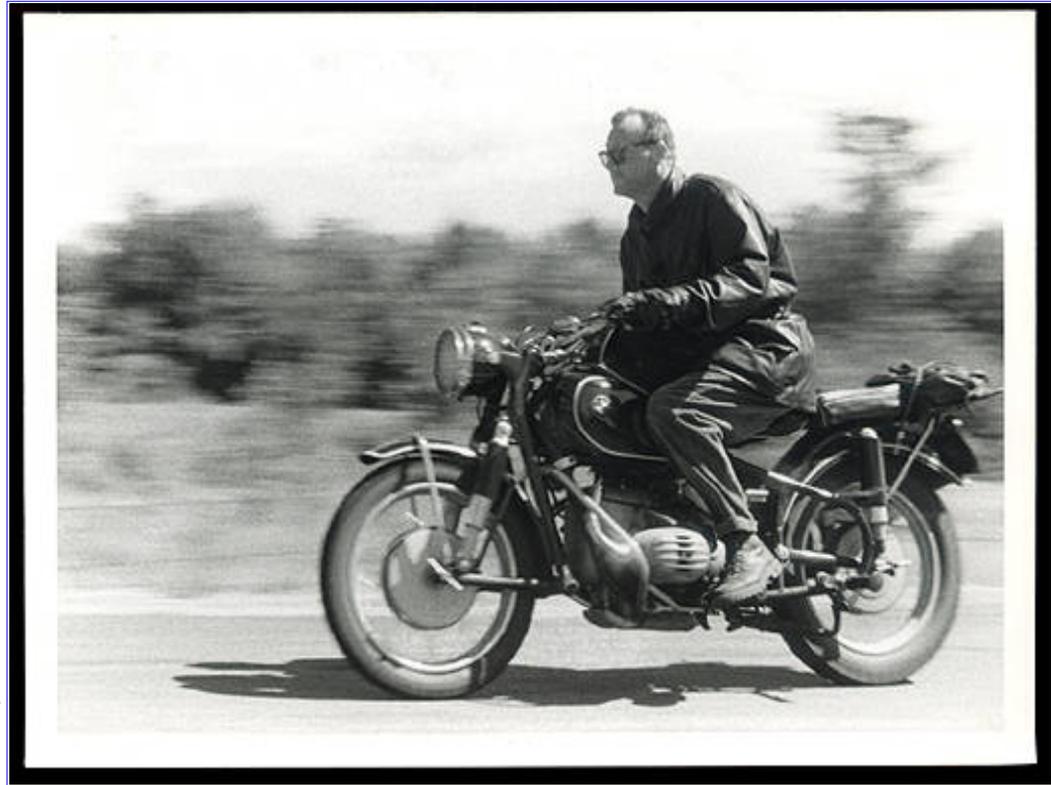
[The Power Elite Public Information Service - otherwise known as my anti-elitists email list - not to be](#)

[confused with PENIS or PEPSI - no, its PEPIS, and these are the archives](#)

Other Western Élites

[The Council on Foreign Relations - mirror of a website all about this private elite club that seems to decide on U.S. foreign policy](#)

[The Skull and Bones fraternity at Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut where the Bush family - George W. Bush, his father and his grandfather were/are all members, only trouble is it's a death cult based in a mausoleum on the university campus](#)



[The Bank for International Settlements - Set up before World War Two and described by Carrol Quigley as 'The apex of the global banking system.' - Respected economists wanted it closed down after WWII for the role it played in financing the Nazis but still it thrives](#)

[The World Economic Forum at Davos - Doesn't get a lot of media coverage but this is quite possibly the biggest meeting of Businessmen in the world with the bosses of the 1000 largest corporations in attendance](#)

[Transatlantic Business Dialogue - The Agenda Setters, material obtained by The Guardian under American freedom of information law and begrudgingly under European freedom of information law - the end of Democracy](#)

[Sun Valley, Idaho - Once a year the world's media get together for a gathering of the most powerful players and financiers of the entertainment industry. Is the media discussing how to provide what its audiences want to see - or is it cow-towing to the money masters?](#)

[The British American Project for the Successor generation - little-known elitist grouping - said to have close connections to British Intelligence agencies, the military, politics and the media](#)

[BLACK HUMOUR: Arch-mage David Rockefeller talks frankly about his sterling efforts \(along with his elite chums\) to save us from ourselves](#)

[I-MaFia... Unbelievable wedges of formerly public assets privatised by the IMF and financial institutions](#)

[DAANGEROUS LIAISONS - A report on the Global Elite cataloging many clandestine clubs and listing names of individuals involved](#)

[David Rockefeller's mission to the far east, the Trilateral Commission](#)

The Oil Industry and Destruction of Public Transport

[What's good for General Motors is, supposedly, good for America. Now is that The continent and its people or is that the growth of US GNP???](#)

[The tyranny of the car... public transport in the UK has been deliberately run off the rails. Beeching and the tearing up of the tracks](#)

[Ken Livingstone! Back in the early eighties Ken and his deputy at the GLC, Dave Wetzel attempted to rid London of the plague of the motor car, it was not to be.](#)

[Standard Oil of California made one family a heap of money, never mind that as a necessity democracy fell by the wayside, just what did Standard get up to?](#)

[Public transport in the United States subjected to the selfish arbitrary will of the super-greedy. Everybody looses out so why is it allowed to happen??](#)

[How consumption has been turned into an obsession, it's incredible what we will become used to if nobody comes along to tell us it is rubbish and that we are being used... critique of consumerism](#)

Culture, Communication and Control

[The Congress for Cultural Freedom - The CIA funded takeover of the European Art Scene](#)

[Information: Freedom of speech is under attack according to some documents published by the US military](#)

[Policing the News and the murder of Martin O'Hagan - More and more journalists in the UK are being arrested by the police, missing their deadlines, then being released without charge.](#)

[Product Placement - advertising by stealth - Misguided souls in the marketing industry, armed with endless supplies of cash, are finding great ways of getting into your head. Persuading their products into the hands of your favourite TV star without you knowing.](#)

[Drugs, police and Intelligence services. The CIA manipulation of US culture and systematic infringement of civil liberties](#)

[The BBC take people to court for not paying their TV licence fee, yet they caved in to political control years ago, public service....? Forget it! The views of an ex-BBC local radio researcher and reporter \[ie. me\]](#)

[The BBC Charter and agreement - full text in one page here - easy to download and print out - unlike on the BBC site!](#)

[Great Emperors rule today's massive media empires, D-notices gag the press in the guise of protecting national security... enter Citizen Kane's world of mind control and press power](#)

[Corporate Labour, Britain's public relations team are having trouble convincing us all that they give a damn. Maybe they'd like to?? but the mess is far too big for them to handle](#)

Fascism, State Terror and Power Abuse

*Official insignia of MI5, Britain's internal security service
'All-seeing eye' at the top [!!] helped inspire this website*

[The phoney 'war on terrorism' - an excuse to clamp down on civil liberties and ignore responsibility for acts of aggression abroad](#)

[MI5 and the Christmas Tree files - secret political vetting at the BBC](#)



[A secret state within a state: The British Secret Intelligence Services - MI5 and MI6 massive buildings full of uptight, unaccountable paranoiacs - what are they up to?](#)

[Eugenics: Genetic expertise is now being applied to humans. Human Genetics. Haven't we heard talk of a master race before - disabled people rightly taking action](#)

[NATO is the world army which must prevail - the defensive charter is forgotten about](#)

[Microwaves and other non lethal weapons are being developed in a shroud of secrecy](#)

[Echelon: Led by the American NSA intelligence agencies are invading the privacy of ordinary people here, there and everywhere without any effective scrutiny. Who are the National Security Agency in the U.S. and what on earth are they up to?](#)

[The Trial of Henry Kissinger. Who will bring this terrorist suspect to justice????](#)

[Systematic blacklisting of potential employees for their independent mindedness is still going on so long as you value profits above your staff \(and you don't hold your records on computer!\)](#)

Quark, Strangeness and Charm

[The Illuminati, fact or fiction? In 1798 professor John Robison, professor of natural philosophy and secretary to Edinburgh's Royal Society published correspondence of many of the original members including Adam Weishaupt the Illuminati's Jesuit educated founder.](#)

[The Freemasons, benevolent, sad or dangerous? What goes on inside the lodge? A selection of critical views are revealed here](#)

[The Apostasy - The gradual fusing of all world religions under a false prophet - a global man-made religion - the dilution of the Judeo/Christian message](#)

[One view of the various individual arms of a secret western government - pulling the strings behind the scenes??](#)

[What is the social function of sport? Turning us all into spectators? Training in blind obedience? Links and some analysis](#)

[Human Sacrifice was commonplace in pre-Christian times. Even here in the UK amongst the Druids](#)

[The Shengen Agreement and the number 666 on barcodes - Translation of a pamphlet from a Greek monastery](#)

[The Bohemian Grove - a private club and rollicking zone for the rich and powerful in the United States that has been going for over a hundred years](#)

["Babylon shall fall..." Whatever Babylon may be a metaphor for in the modern age ancient Babylon, in modern-day Iraq, was pretty damn sordid](#)

Doubletake: hidden history

[The Land and Freedom pages - some important lessons from the people's English Civil War struggles](#)

[King Charles I - he banned enclosure taking the side of ordinary people against the landowners - there is fascinating evidence that he was 'The Commoners' King'](#)

[The Cuban missile crisis, insane hydrogen bomb tests, some amazing facts and pics from a world on the brink](#)

Personal but not private

[Power elite watchers like me are bound to get some amazing emails! Here are some of them with names concealed where necessary](#)

[This website is under threat from several sources - this page explains what some of those threats are and how you can help make sure it stays out there](#)

[Surveillance is getting out of control what with the UK Home secretary, who signs surveillance directives being blind we should be worried and suspicious](#)



There is another way

"When Adam delved and Eve span, who was then the gentleman?"

[The book of Daniel to Revelation - Jesus stepping in at the last minute to obliterate the forces of darkness and their followers and banish sin and evil from the world](#)

[The End Times texts - Brian Redhead gives his view of the Book of Revelation - stuff about the End Times - commentaries by various people - my personal selection](#)

[The Shoplifting Vicar - one of the UK's best writers who hardly gets a hearing](#)

[Monetary Reform - How about we stop central banks from legally printing counterfeit money? Banks should not be able to monopolise money nor create it out of nowhere](#)

[The sixties and seventies UK television emporium - some pictures of my favourite programmes from the golden age of television](#)

[Life skills, or mind control? Setting our own curriculum. What education do we want for our kids? A page about Home Education.](#)

[Hippy and dippy - followers of New Age alternative remedies leave themselves open to ridicule - much to my amusement!](#)

[The Lord of the Rings, short extract, some great writing - allegory with modern Fascism and written with a knowledge of the occult and - it seems - the Biblical apocrypha](#)

[In 1975 a series swept across our TV screens here in the UK that was to leave an indelible impression upon me and many like-minded kids - The Changes](#)

[Consequences, or strange tales, an example of a game where someone writes a few lines on a piece of paper, then folds it over so there is only a line showing and the next person carries on the story.](#)

[David Rockefeller on parade - satire](#)



Intro to the site

[\(link to old site 1\)](#) [\(link to old site 2\)](#) - site 2 recently pulled by Demon Internet - [see below](#)

This site campaigns for general press access to Bilderberg venues - and a declaration from the organisers that the discussions are public, not private

This site is an outlet for my research on hidden political, cultural, economic and spiritual power and 'mind-control'. I have written the odd article here and there where the material needs some kind of interpretive 'lead-in' to be accessible.

The expression 'The Power Elite' is familiar to most sociology buffs but I have used [C Wright Mills'](#) term (he wrote a book in the fifties with that title) to go into detail on some powerful clandestine groups.

Speculation posing as fact, as well as deliberate disinformation causes confusion about the real influence of the elite - and this makes it easier for the skeptic to dismiss their influence as 'conspiracy theory'. But once one starts uncovering hard facts a consistent and more lucid picture emerges. The potential abuse of power by these groups is almost too nightmarish to contemplate, so we might be forgiven for not wishing to delve further.

It is one thing to speculate in general terms about the Bilderbergers and the Council on Foreign Relations etc. but when specific individuals, specific policies, specific dates and specific venues are laid out in black and white they become more real - and more frightening.

I am concerned about anything totalitarian, particularly when the state and the establishment attempts to control the press and turns against their own citizens. Ever since I was a teenager I found war and state terrorism difficult to explain simply in terms of 'human nature'.

I came to understand, over the years, that there is a tiny, hidden proportion of mankind for whom war, oppression and slavery are not a reluctant economic necessity but a carefully pursued benefit to their wealth and power. These individuals, that literally thrive on broken human spirits and spilt human blood, I

feel we should all work to identify. This site represents one small step towards shaming these misguided men (and women Ms. Albright) into desisting from their inhuman scheming for ever more unaccountable power.

In the hands of evil people the corporation can be a front, behind which individuals can get away with crimes they would otherwise have to take personal liability for and be fined, imprisoned and even executed. Legally a corporation or company is considered to be a person and incredibly, with limited liability, there is no financial comeback.

My calls for greater press coverage of elite forums such as Bilderberg are based on the public's right to know what is being discussed at closed meetings of the most wealthy and powerful people in the world. When the future of mankind is by no means guaranteed, knowledge of what goes on at these meetings is not a curiosity but a necessity.

I am particularly worried by the unwillingness of the power elite to deal with what everyone agrees should be their number one priority. The murderous debt crisis. Also worrying is the arrogance with which these same elitists infest democratic institutions and fill so much of our mainstream media with bland drivel. This coupled with their obscene economic power, the power to create trillions of dollars at the press of a button, quite rightly leads one to question their motives and plans.

I have been pretty scrupulous in avoiding undue speculation. I am not interested or concerned with 'conspiracy theory' just 'conspiracy fact'. It is the facts behind very real groups like the Bilderbergers, the Skull and Bones and the Council on Foreign Relations that must be known before we can best understand how to deal with them on a personal and a global level.

Bilderberg is a lobbying organisation that attempts to present plans for globalisation of world markets as a consensus and invites powerful guests along in an attempt to get them 'on board' the project. Bilderberg is not a conspiracy in itself but the attempt to keep its deliberations out of the public eye is. There is also the thorny question of the far less well known about groupings that are behind the Bilderberg meetings.

I am a Christian and a Quaker attender - with the knowledge that these groups could be tied in with the Biblical End-Time prophecies mentioned on my [Tribulation page](#).

You can hardly be blamed if you are confused by the whole thing, and the size of this site. If you want to download a document which is readable in an hour or so which gives a clear overall view of this 'alternative post war history' the following document on my Bilderberg origins section is an excellent place to start. [The Bilderberg Group and the project of European unification - From Lobster magazine No. 32](#)

It is also [downloadable as a Rich Text Document](#).

PEPIS (the Power Elite Public Information Service) is my only elite research activity now. Once every few months, when there is interesting info. to relate, I email stuff out to people who've asked to be added to [the PEPIS list](#).

I feel creating *positive alternatives* to global slavery, economic meltdown or Armageddon is a more constructive use of my time! Since the English nation has been responsible for such despicable genocide in many parts of the world, culminating in the biggest colonial empire the world has ever seen, it is an appropriate place to be looking for positive visions. I don't dislike England as a whole though, we have had some brilliant historical figures like Gerrard Winstanley (the first true anti-capitalist) and maybe even King Arthur? AND there are a lot of people in the UK with a healthy, informed mistrust of human authority and

good humour to go along with it!

This website will remain as long as possible as a free public resource for anyone who wants to know some of the hard facts on the global elite, and doesn't want to have to hear them whispered in hushed tones.

Tony Gosling, July 2001 tony@gaia.org

www.bilderberg.org Guestbook

See also: [What are Bilderberg Conferences all about?](#)

Free translation of this page

It can take a while - please be patient <http://www.freetranslation.com>

.....or you can try Babelfish at [Altavista](#)



Threats to this site:

1. [Being pulled by host after spurious 'legal threats' - this has already happened {details on separate page}](#)
2. Domain name theft by lawyers - see: <http://www.ncchelp.org> and <http://www.iftp.org>
3. [Hacking, trojans and viruses](#)
4. [Delisting or downlisting by search engines](#)
5. [Content removal by Google search engine](#)

3. Hacking, trojans and viruses

Hacking - Greenet (service provider of this site) was completely closed down for three weeks or so in 1998 by a mystery external programme/virus. The 'bug' coincidentally hit their main server when Chris Bailey's Labournet (very good) site was being used to support the Australian Maritime Union (MUA) and encouraging sympathy strikes around the world. As it turned out programmes had been planted on Greenet's server over previous months. When Greenet came back up again they received a letter the next day ordering an article on a company 'Bywater' be removed. This article linked water supply contracts Bywater had in Africa with arms deals. Apparently a co-ordinated assault on one of the UK's main alternative internet service providers.

Incidentally, news of the Liverpool Dockers' strike covered extensively on [Labournet](#) was the subject of a 'D' Notice banning discussion in the UK press (see my page on censorship).

4. Delisting or downlisting by search engines

Sometime in the second week of April 2002 [Google search engine](#) entirely 'disappeared' this Bilderberg.org website from their listings. Six weeks before the 2002 Bilderberg conference was due to start. Apparently a blatant attempt to stop journalists finding my research. After threats to expose this apparent censorship the listing was restored by 30th April 2002. [Here is my full email correspondence with David Krane, Google's Director of Corporate Communications](#) Google - who have ex-Department of Defense 'information warfare' personnel working in their premises - had previously removed my [BBC Charter page](#) from Google's index - possibly after complaints from the BBC over the [censored Greg Dyke junket article](#). One of Google's leading software engineers, Matt Cutts, has a top-secret clearance and used to work for the National Security Agency. See [my section on Google's clandestine love-affair with the U.S. Department of Defense and Google Watch](#)

Alltheweb removed my index page from its listings - this happened approx 10th October 2000. I have asked them why it disappeared but so far got no reply. By mid December 2000 it had been restored.

Ivan Frazer's 'The Truth Campaign' <http://www.vegan.swinternet.co.uk/truthcampaign.html> Ivan alleges his site has also failed to register correctly on search engines. Check his site for the latest.

In the early days of this site I had long delays getting well known search engines such as altavista to list this site equitably. Altavista still scores certain of my pages such as [The Changes](#) page very low on its index even though they have metatags etc.

It is an interesting exercise in speculative curiosity to see how Bilderberg Hotel chain (snore!) websites register above and below this site on various search engines, sometimes higher, sometimes lower on the same engine at a different time! Do [let me know](#) if you find anything weird going on.

I monitor searches on various keywords with various search engines. Watch this space for updates - please do email me at tony@gaia.org if you notice anomalies and/or feel free to add the <http://www.bilderberg.org> URL yourself to any search engine on which it fails to appear.

5. Content removal by Google search engine

Google as a weapon of War - 'Truth is the first casualty of war'

[Google](#) have begun (first time I noticed was August 2002) to remove much of my content, web published for over 5 years now, from their indexes. While content on my index page seems to be still found via Google, content elsewhere on my site has been removed from their indexes. This is a sure sign that the military personnel have begun censoring Google's index under pressure from the United States war machine. No wonder [NSA/Department of Defense & Google software engineer Matthew Cutts](#) gets paid so well. Does he enjoy working for fascists?

Examples:

all these three examples have been on the web for at least two years (test conducted 26Nov02)

1. The string "*capital may rule, without interference from either people or public scrutiny*" appears on my bilderberg conference page <http://www.bilderberg.org/2000.htm> - www.bilderberg.org NOT listed by Google
 2. The string "*During two years as an informer, Hassaine was asked to steal scores of documents from senior preachers at mosques in north London*" appears on my secret services page <http://www.bilderberg.org/sis.htm> - www.bilderberg.org NOT listed by Google
 3. The string "*positive alternatives to global slavery, economic meltdown or Armageddon*" appears on my index page <http://www.bilderberg.org/index.htm> - www.bilderberg.org listed by Google
-

What you can do:

1. [Mirror the site](#) - ie. download the entire site and put it up somewhere else
 2. [Financial support](#)
-

How to mirror this website:

My original Site was [pulled](#) for nearly six months by Demon Internet

Whether you want to copy this website so you can mirror it on your site, or whether you just want it all downloaded on to your hard drive, best way is to download one of the 'offline browsing' software packages below. All you do is type in www.bilderberg.org and the software will find and download all the pages! You can then use the software to grab any site you like in its entirety without having to save each page individually.

[Offline browser downloads - selection 1](#)

<http://download.com.com/3150-2377-0.html>

[Offline browsers downloads - selection 2](#)

http://www.sofotex.com/Download/Browsers/Offline_Browsers/

[Teleport - recommended](http://www.tenmax.com/) <http://www.tenmax.com/>

Can you help secure my research?

This website survives on a shoestring budget - and I keep it up to date in my spare time - do contact me at the above email address if you are able to contribute design help, server space or money to secure the future of this research. And/or why not contact [Greennet](#), my service provider, and give a contribution to my 'bilderberg.org' account. You can give a credit debit card donation by telephone to +44 (0) 207 713 1941. or email Liz at wwwadmin@gn.apc.org

Copyright notice

Licence is granted for non-commercial use in all media, including mirroring of the entire site - except for extracts and quotations which are not authored by me. Licence for commercial use is normally free but only with my - tony@gaia.org - permission.

Moral rights are asserted not to have my material distorted and to be identified as the author of my own articles both by name and through an appropriate hyperlink to <http://www.bilderberg.org>

The term @ntcopyright is to encourage free use of material amongst non-profit publications. It does not mean copyright is waived.



[Tony's homepage](#)

[Index](#)

['Property'](#) | [Diggers](#) | [Gift](#) | [Oppressed](#) | [Fairfax](#)

Land and Freedom



The Diggers' vision to reclaim the Land - April 1649

[An account from St .George's Hill April 1999](#)

[Quotes from Winstanley and other Diggers](#)

[Then and Now - 1649 and 1999 - little has changed!!!](#)

[Threats against the 1999 Diggers from ?? the rich and powerful ??](#)

[The True Levellers' Standard](#)

[Advanced - The Diggers' Manifesto in full](#)

[The Land Is Ours \(offsite\)](#) facilitated celebrations and events in the UK around the Diggers anniversary - 1st April 1999

[1968 - San Francisco digs Gerrard Winstanley \(offsite\)](#)

More on this page by, about and from The Diggers:

[August 1998 - Why celebrate the Diggers?](#)

[The 1990's Diggers song: 'The World Turned Upside Down'](#)

[Declaration from the Diggers of Wellingborough - from the poor inhabitants of the town](#)

[And other Digg-link](#)

A account from St. George's Hill April 1999

A commemorative account of Digger's day.. a forwarded story from Ali in Oxford.

"...making the Earth a Common Treasury for All, both Rich and Poor.

As midnight drew near on Thursday 1st April 1999, 350 years to the day Gerrard Winstanley and his followers thrust their spades into the fertile earth of St. George's Hill near Weybridge, a party of two set off from the Diggers' commemorative celebrations to retrace those first pioneering footsteps, making their way once round the public roads encircling the hill.

In 1649 when St. George's Hill remained Common Land, still unfettered by the enclosures of private dominion, Winstanley set off to cultivate this land to feed the starving landless; the dispossessed peasants of the republic. Within a year Cromwell's troops had cleared these dangerous revolutionaries off the land once more.

Today with seemingly deliberate spite, the propertied have developed a rabbit warren of private roads and exclusive mansions, guarded by gated-access and a private security force to protect its fearful inhabitants and their exclusive golf courses from the dangerous rabble beyond. St. Georges Hill is today the supreme English epitome of Private Enclosure, Wealth and Privilege so starkly challenged by those Diggers 350 years ago; as clear a statement as any from the powers-that-be against the social aspirations of the many.

Negotiating the supposedly well guarded roads the two defiantly ignored the signs of theft all around. At the highest point where once lay the ancient fort that staked the summit of the Mother's body - a site where St. George slew her Python, and acquisitioned her Oracle - there now stands a new 'castle', a monument of glass, erected as if to reinforce the Apollonian slaying of the Earth to the god of Private

Dominion, rudely stating its message that Common is enemy where Privilege and Property reign supreme.

With the light of a full moon illuminating their way in the profoundly still and unusually warm night air, the two walked around the remaining crescent of public land that skirts the ramparts of the older monument, and the second circuit was completed.

It was the first full moon after the equinox on which the Celtic 'Pelagian' Church celebrated the Resurrection of the Earth and the Spirit of the Christ. In springs where serpentine waters channel the lifeblood of the earth, on hill tops exposed to the serpentine air breathing life into the land, our forbears celebrated nature's fluids and rising solar forces as they quickened the return of life within the Mother's womb.

Where the moon shone high and silently through a clearing in the wood the two climbed the fortified embankment, passing through a portalled hedge as they made their way out onto the summit. Ahead, nearly complete, lay the forms of three imposing post-modernist buildings hewn of vast wooden beams, stainless steel joins and solid float-glass walls. So around this glass temple they walked - and thrice round the summit they made.

Where the bulldozers had skinned the earth to make way for the foundations of these Temples of Dominion a new mound of loosened earth stood waiting to be rebedded into quaint ornamental gardens. So to the summit of this was climbed and using bare hands the soil dug once again, this time for common aspiration, in spite of its present private acquisition.

Withdrawing to the gladed bank, through the portal hedge the party came upon a fallen branch formed in mimicry of an antler of the majestic red deer. So with antlered heads, as shamans of old they each turned and gave their respect to the moon. Sitting down in the glade they broke the bread of the land and drank from the waters of the earth. A small supper to focus the nights events and quietly reflect upon under the silvery moonlight.

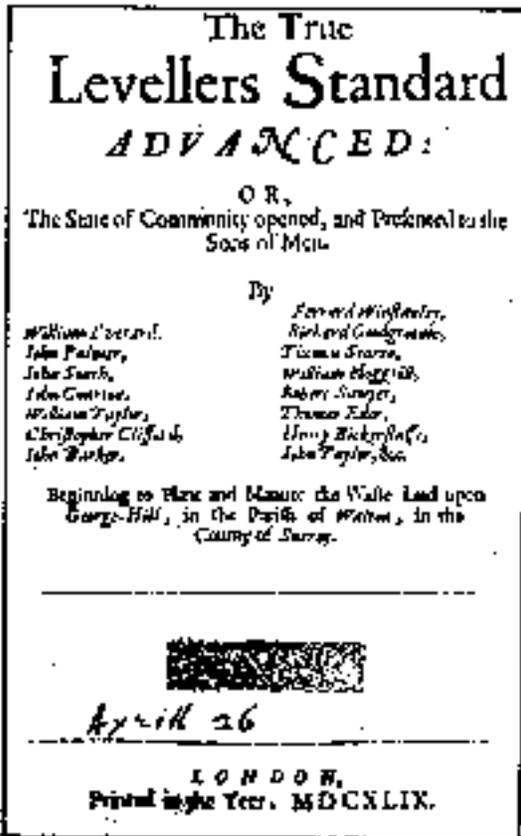
There was one final task to be settled. Three days later on the official day of Easter, a bag of Diggers' soil was scattered over a public allotment and dug-in - releasing its fertility to bring new life at the end of an old, fading millennium.

"And now I must wait to see the Spirit do his own work in the hearts of others...." - Gerrard Winstanley, 1650.

The Digging continues...

Digger Quotes

Being summe of ye most interesting and poignant quotes from Gerrard Winstanley and the seventeenth century Diggers including 'Then and Now'



"..yet my mind was not at rest, because nothing was acted, and thoughts run in me that words and writings were all nothing, and must die, for action is the life of all, and if thou dost not act, thou dost nothing,"

'All men have stood for freedom... and now the common enemy has gone you are all like men in a mist, seeking for freedom and know not where nor what it is: and those of the richer sort of you that see it are ashamed and afraid to own it, because it comes

clothed in a clownish garment.... For freedom is the man that will turn the world upside down, therefore no wonder he hath enemies'.

'if thou consent to freedom for the rich in the City and givest freedom to the freeholders in the country, and to priests and lawyers and lords of manors.... and yet allowest the poor no freedom, thou art a declared hypocrite.

Gerrard Winstanley, A Watch-Word to the City of London and the Armie, August 1649

" And thus you Powers of England, and of the whole World, we have declared our reasons why we have begun to dig upon *George* hill in Surrey. One thing I must tell you more.....

"Break in pieces quickly the Band of particular Propriety [property], disown this oppressing Murder, Opression and Thievery of Buying and Selling of Land, owning of landlords and paying of Rents and give thy Free Consent to make the Earth a Common Treasury without grumbling.....that all may enjoy the benefit of their Creation.

And hereby thou wilt *honour thy Father and thy Mother* : Thy Father, which is the spirit of community, that made all and that dwels in all. Thy Mother, which is the Earth, that brought us all forth: That as a true Mother, loves all her children. Therefore do not hinder the Mother Earth from giving all her children suck, by thy Inclosing into particular hands, and holding up that cursed Bondage of Inclosure by thy Power."

"Propriety and single interest divides the people of a land and the whole world into parties and is the cause of all wars and bloodshed and contention everywhere"

Gerrard Winstanley & 14 others *The True Levellers Standard Advanced* - April, 1649

"Was the earth made to preserve a few covetous, proud men to live at ease, and for them to bag and barn up the treasures of the Earth from others, that these may beg or starve in a fruitful land; or was it made to preserve all her children?"

Gerrard Winstanley *The New Law of Righteousness*, 1649

"True religion and undefiled is this, To make restitution of the earth which hath been taken and held from the common people by the power of Conquests formerly and so set the oppressed free."

Gerrard Winstanley *A New Yeers Gift for the Parliament and the Army*, 1650

"Money must not any longer....be the great god that hedges in some and hedges out others, for money is but part of the Earth; and after our work of the Earthly Community is advanced, we must make use of gold or silver as we do of other metals but not to buy or sell."

Gerrard Winstanley and 44 others *A Declaration from the Poor Oppressed People of England Directed to all that Call Themselves or are Called Lords of Manors*, 1649

". . . a studying imagination comes into man, which is the devil for it is the cause of all evil, and sorrows in the World; that is he who puts out the eyes of mans Knowledge and tells him he must beleeve what others have writ or spoke, and not trust his own experience."

Gerrard Winstanley [so don't believe what he wrote either if it isn't true to your own experience!] *The Law of Freedom in a Platform*. 1652

"And the Reason is this, Every single man, Male and Female, is a perfect creature unto himself.....so that the flesh of man being subject to Reason, his Maker, hath him to be his Teacher and Ruler within himself, therefore needs not run abroad after any Teacher and Ruler without him, for he needs not that any man should teach him..."

"Oh thou Powers of *England* , though thou hast promised to make this People a Free People, yet thou hast so handled the matter, through thy self-seeking humour, That thou hast warped us up more in bondage, and oppression lies heavier upon us;.....confounding all sorts of people by they Government of doing and undoing."

"We are made to hold forth this Declaration to you that are the Great Council and to you the Great Army of the Land of *England*, that you may know what we would have, and what you are bound to give us by your Covenants and Promises; and that you may jyn us in this Work, and so find Peace. Or else, if you do oppose us us, we have peace in our Work, and in declaring this Report: And you shall be left without excuse.

The Work we are going about is this, To dig up *George-Hill* and trhe waste Ground thereabouts, and to Sow Corn, and to eat our bread together by the sweat of our brows."

"Those that Buy and Sell Land, and are landlords, have got it either by Oppression, or Murther, or Theft."

"Take notice, That *England* is not a a Free People, till the Poor that have no Land, have a free allowance to dig and labour the Commons, and so live as Comfortably as the Landlords that live in their Inclosures

".....then certainly none shall say, This is my Land, work for me and I'll give you Wages. For, the Earth is the Lords, that is, Mans, who is the Lord of Creation.....

"This delares likewise to all Labourers, or such as are called Poor people, that they shall not dare to work for Hire, for any Landlord, or any that is lifted up above others; for by their labours, they have lifted up Tyrants and Tyranny; and by denying to labor for Hire, they shall pull them down again. He that works for another, either for Wages or to pay him Rent, works unrighteously, and still lifts up the Curse; but they that are resolved to work and eat together, making the Earth a Common Treasury, doth joyn hands with Christ, to lift up the Creation from Bondage, and restores all things from the Curse."

Gerrard Winstanley & 14 others *The True Levellers Standard Advanced - April, 1649*

"Therefore we are resolved to be cheated no longer, nor to be held under the slavish fear of you no longer, see the Earth was made for us, as well as for you: And if the Common Land belongs to us who are the poor oppressed, surely the woods that grow upon the Commons belong to us likewise...."

Gerrard Winstanley and 44 others *A Declaration from the Poor Oppressed People of England Directed to all that Call Themselves or are Called Lords of Manors, 1649*

"And London, nay England, look to thy freedom, I'll assure thee, thou art very neere to be cheated of it, and if thou lose it now after all thy boasting, truly thy posterity will curse thee, for thy unfaithfulness to them: everyone talks of freedome, but there are but few that act for freedome, and the actors for freedome are oppressed by the talkers and verball professors of freedome; if thou wouldst what true freedome is, read over this and my other writings [O.K., Gerrard, that's enough plugging your pamphlets] and thou shalt see it lies in the community in spirit and community in the earthly treasury...."

Gerrard Winstanley *A Watch-Word To The City of London and the Armie 1649*

"Search all your Laws, and Ile adventure my life, for I have little else to lose, That all Lords of Mannors hold Title to the Commons by no stronger hold than the Kings Will, whose Head is cut off; and the King held title as he was a Conqueror; now if you cast off the King who was Head of that power, surely the power of Lords of Mannors is the same; therefore performe your own Act of Parliament, and cast out that part of the Kinglie power likewise....."

"...the government we have gives freedome and livelihood to the Gentry, to have abundance, and to lock up Treasures of the Earth from the poor, so that rich men may have chests full of Gold and Silver, and houses full of Corn and Goods to look upon; and the poor that works to get it, can hardly live, and if they cannot work like Slaves, then they must starve.....and yet you say this is a righteous government, but surely it is no other than self-ishness, which is the great Red Dragon, the Murtherer.

"England is a Prison; the variety of subtilties in the Laws preserved by the Sword, are bolts, bars, and doors of the prison; the Lawyers are Jaylors, and poor men are the prisoners; for let a man fall into the hands of any from the Bailiffe to the Judge, and he is either undone, or wearie of his life."

"Buying and Selling is an Art, whereby people endeavour to cheat one another of the Land.....and true Religion is, To let every one enjoy it."

Gerrard Winstanley *A New-years Gift for the Parliament and Armie 1650*

"So long as the earth is intagled and appropriated into particular hands and kept there by the power of the sword.....so long the creation lies under bondage."

Gerrard Winstanley *Fire in the Bush 1650*

"And here I end, having put my arm as far as my strength will go to advance Righteousness; I have Writ, I have Acted, I have Peace: now I must wait to see the Spirit do his work in the hearts of others, and whether *England* shall be the first Land, or some others, wherein Truth shall sit down in triumph.

Anon. -but almost certainly Gerrard Winstanley *A Bill of Account of the most Remarkable Sufferings that the Diggers have met with from the great red Dragons power since April 1, 1649 / 1650?*

"The spirit Reason doth not preserve the creature and destroy another.....but it hath a regard to the whole creation; and knits every creature together into a onenesse; making every creature to be an upholder of his fellow; and so every one is an assistant to preserve the whole.

"The clouds send down raine, and there is great undeniable reason in it, for otherwise the earth could not bring forth grasse and fruit. The earth sends forth grasse, or else cattel could not be preserved. The sunne

gives his light and heate or else the Creation could not subsist. So that the mighty power Reason hath made these to give life and preservation one to another.

Gerrard Winstanley *Truth Lifting Up Its Head Above Scandals* 1649

"I am assured that if it be rightly searched into, the inward bondages of the minde, as covetousness, pride, hypocrisie, envy, sorrow, fears, desperation, and madness are all occasioned by the outward bondage that one sort of people lay upon another."

Gerrard Winstanley *The New Law of Righteousness*, 1649

THEN AND NOW

SOUNDS FAMILIAR?

LUNCH OUTS & KETTLE-WATCHERS

"Some hearing of this Common Freedom think there must be a community of all the fruits of the earth whether they work or no, therefore strive to live idle on other men's labours."

Gerrard Winstanley *The Law of Freedom in a Platform*. 1652

RIP OFFS & BLAGGERS

"And because there were some treacherous persons drew up a note and subscribed our names to it, and by that moved some friends to give mony to this work of ours, when as we know of no such note, nor subscribed our hands to any, nor ever received any money from such Collection.

Therefore to prevent such a Cheat, I have mentioned a word or two at the end of a printed book against that treachery, that neither we nor our Friends may be cheated: And I desire, if any be willing to communicate of their substance unto our worke, that they would make a Collection among themselves, and send the money to *Cobham* to the Diggers owne hands, by some trusty friend of your owne, and so neither you nor we shall be cheated."

Gerrard Winstanley and others in a "Letter Taken at Wellingborough" -1650

BULLSHITTERS, MYSTICS & GURUS

"Everyone who speaks of any Herb, Plant, Art or Nature of Mankind is required to speak nothing by imagination, but what he hath found out by his own industry and observation in tryal."

Gerrard Winstanley *The Law of Freedom in a Platform.* 1652

COPS, BAILIFFS, "SECURITY" & TRASHINGS

"The first time, divers of the Diggers were carried Prisoners into *Walton Church*, where some of them were struck in the Church by the bitter Professors....

"Some of the Diggers were beaten by the Gentlemen, the Sheriff looking on, and afterwards five of them were carried to *White Lion Prison*, and kept there about five week and then let out.....

"They Arrested some of us and some they cast into Prison; and from others they went about to take away their Goods....

"One of the Diggers had his head sore wounded, and a Boy beaten, and his cloathes taken from him....

"Divers of the Diggers were beaten upon the *Hill* by *William Star* and *John Taylor*, and by men in womens apparel [Oh, alright then, Brays private detective agency never actually thought of that one on the road protests (so far!)], and so sore wounded, that some of them were fetched home in a Cart.

"The Dragonly enemy pulled down a House which the Diggers had built upon *George Hill* and cut their Spades and Howes to pieces.

"We had another House pulled down....

"Another Cart and Wheels was cut to pieces and some of our Toolles taken by force from us which we never had again.

"...we had all our Corn spoyled....

"...two soldiers sent by Parson *Platt* pulled down another house, and turned a poor old man and his wife out of doors to lie in the field on a cold night.

Anon. -but almost certainly Gerrard Winstanley *A Bill of Account of the most Remarkable Sufferings that the Diggers have met with from the great red Dragons power since April 1, 1649 / 1650?*

Credit , respect and thanks to Jim Paton at the Advisory Service for Squatters in Islington North London for these quotations - put together in January 1999

Threatening message recieved by today's Diggers

Parson Platt and other embittered people attacked the simple honesty of the seventeenth century Diggers. Unfortunately the same mean spirit is alive and well in 1999.

This anonymous email was sent by someone calling themselves "Trustnowun" on the Diggers350 email list in April 1999. It seems to be from an American (due to the use of the very un-English 'pissed').

Our lives are described as 'worthless'. Sounds like some serious bad ideas in the author's head.

The note seems to have been inspired by one or more individuals involved in organised crime resident on St. George's Hill and be a warning to us never to return to the home of the Diggers.

Any further information on whoever might have written it - for example gleaned from the message header appreciated - please post to the Diggers350 list -

Post to the list: diggers350@egroups.com

Subscribe to the list: diggers350-subscribe@egroups.com

Diggers350 archive is at: <http://www.egroups.com/list/diggers350/>

Here is the message in full:

Received: 8 Apr 1999 08:19:15 -0000 from web806.mail.yahoo.com (128.11.23.66) by vault.egroups.com with SMTP; 8 Apr 1999 08:19:15 -0000
Message-ID: <19990408082227.10646.rocketmail@web806.mail.yahoo.com>
Received: from [194.73.231.251] by web806.mail.yahoo.com; Thu, 08 Apr 1999 01:22:27 PDT
Date: Thu, 8 Apr 1999 01:22:27 -0700 (PDT)
From: trustnowun n <trustnowun@yahoo.com>

Subject: [diggers350] St. George's Hill

For a lazy bunch of academic (well some of you at least) left-wing radicals - you are really quite stupid or naive (or maybe both). One would have thought that if you had read your

history and UNDERSTOOD it - what happened 350 years ago stands as a warning to you. Now 350 years after a mad Jew led another band of morons (and yes, William Everard was the person solely responsible for the original occupation), your leaders have decided that this would be a "good" thing to re-enact.

What they have done is to lead you into encroaching upon the enclave of a very small minority of powerful individuals (and the word "powerful" - is used in the sense that most of you are clearly incapable of even imagining). These people have only got where they have in life and society by NEVER doing anything within the law. Aren't you wondering yet about the residents who APPEAR to have NO INTEREST in you whatsoever ??? - you should be. Some of these people do things for a living (and sometimes just for the sheer hell of it) that you only see on a Hollywood movie, or occasionally read about in the newspapers.

These people are neither worried or intimidated by your kind - but they ARE pissed!

For the first time in your stupid worthless lives you may of bitten off here a little more than you can chew. They know who ALL of you are - Tony, Annie, Jon, Eric, Steve and even you Dave (who clearly ate one too many big-macs when he worked there !) - and you all should NOT be sleeping very soundly at the moment. The only hole you "diggers" are digging at the moment is the one that you are digging yourselves into.

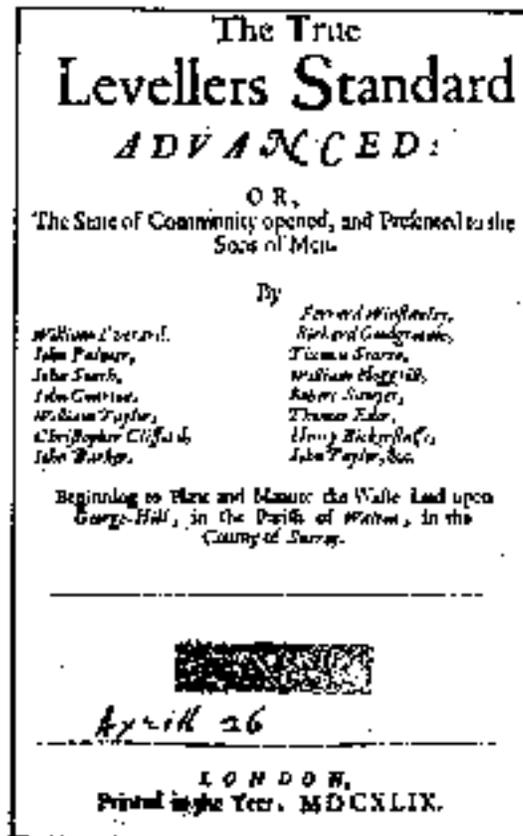
This note to you all is not a joke - you REALLY do need to be seriously concerned - especially those of you with families on site. Never mind about your "negotiations" with Mr. Newberry - once you leave here, you will NEVER be allowed to assemble en-mass on this estate again. Those of you who are "in charge" of affairs in this "camp" need to have a long hard think about your responsibility to those you have led into this act of insurgence. This is your ONLY warning.

The True Levellers' Standard Advanced

Gerrard Winstanley - the Digger - was one of the first individuals to clearly identify the extension of private property rights to land as mankind's fundamental flaw. His clear understanding of The Earth as a gift bequeathed to all mankind 'without respect of persons' is articulated in a visionary flow of spirited prose.

The Levellers and the Diggers were inextricably connected, not just in time or in their social and political vision. When they first moved on to St George's Hill in Surrey on April 1st 1649 the Diggers called themselves The True Levellers. They saw themselves as a more visionary and less compromising movement. Gerrard Winstanley and his friend's words speak for themselves.

Download/Open *The True Levellers' Standard Advanced* as a [Word Document](#) or a [Rich Text Document](#) for printing



The True
Levellers Standard
ADVANCED:

OR,

**The State of Community Opened, and Presented
to the Sons of Men.**

By

*Jerrard Winstanley, William Everard, Richard Goodgroome, John Palmer, Thomas Starre, John South,
William Hoggrill, John Courton, Robert Sawyer, William Taylor, Thomas Eder, Christopher Clifford,
Henry Bickerstaffe, John Barker. John Taylor, &c.*

**Beginning to Plant and Manure the Waste land upon
George-Hill, in the parish of *Walton*, in the
County of *Surrey*.**

L O N D O N

Printed in the Yeer, MDCXLIX.

*A Declaration to the Powers of England, and to all the Powers of the World,
shewing the Cause why the Common People of England have begun, and gives
Consent to Digge up, Manure, and Sow Corn upon George-Hill in Surrey; by
those that have Subscribed, and thousands more that gives Consent.*



In the beginning of Time, the great Creator Reason, made the Earth to be a Common Treasury, to preserve Beasts, Birds, Fishes, and Man, the lord that was to govern this Creation; for Man had Domination given to him, over the Beasts, Birds, and Fishes; but not one word was spoken in the beginning, That one branch of mankind should rule over another.

And the Reason is this, Every single man, Male and Female, is a perfect Creature of himself; and the same Spirit that made the Globe, dwells in man to govern the Globe; so that the flesh of man being subject to Reason, his Maker, hath him to be his Teacher and Ruler within himself, therefore needs not run abroad after any Teacher and Ruler without him, for he needs not that any man should teach him, for the same Anoynting that ruled in the Son of man, teacheth him all things.

But since humane flesh (that king of Beasts) began to delight himself in the objects of the Creation, more then in the Spirit Reason and Righteousness, who manifests himself to be the

indweller in the Five Sences, of Hearing, Seeing, Tasting, Smelling, Feeling; then he fell into blindness of mind and weakness of heart, and runs abroad for a Teacher and Ruler: And so selfish imaginations taking possession of the Five Sences, and ruling as King in the room of Reason therein, and working with Covetousnesse, did set up one man to teach and rule over another; and thereby the Spirit was killed, and man was brought into bondage, and became a greater Slave to such of his own kind, then the Beasts of the field were to him.

And hereupon, The Earth (which was made to be a Common Treasury of relief for all, both Beasts and Men) was hedged in to In-closures by the teachers and rulers, and the others were made Servants and Slaves: And that Earth that is within this Creation made a Common Store-house for all, is bought and sold, and kept in the hands of a few, whereby the great Creator is mightily dishonoured, as if he were a

respector of persons, delighting in the comfortable Livelihoods of some, and rejoicing in the miserable povertie and straits of others. From the beginning it was not so.

But this coming in of Bondage, is called *A-dam*, because this ruling and teaching power without, doth *dam* up the Spirit of Peace and Liberty; First within the heart, by filling it with slavish fears of others. Secondly without, by giving the bodies of one to be imprisoned, punished and oppressed by the outward power of another. And this evil was brought upon us through his own Covetousnesse, whereby he is blinded and made weak, and sees not the Law of Righteousnesse in his heart, which is the pure light of Reason, but looks abroad for it, and thereby the Creation is cast under bondage and curse, and the creator is sleighted; First by the Teachers and Rulers that sets themselves down in the Spirits room, to teach and rule, where he himself is only King. Secondly by the other, that refuses the Spirit, to be taught and governed by fellow Creatures, and this was called Israels Sin, in casting off the Lord and chusing *Saul*, one like themselves to be their King, when as they had the same Spirit of Reason and government in themselves, as he had, if they were but subject. And Israels rejecting of outward teachers and rulers to embrace the Lord, and to be all taught and ruled by that righteous King, that *Jeremiah* Prophetesied shall rule in the new Heavens and new Earth in the latter dayes, will be their Restauration from bondage, *Jer.* 23.5, 6.

But for the present state of the old World that is running up like parchment in the fire, and wearing away, we see proud Imaginary flesh, which is the wise Serpent, rises up in flesh and gets dominion in some to rule over others, and so forces one part of the Creation man, to be a slave to another; and thereby the Spirit is killed in both. The one looks upon himself as a teacher and ruler, and so is lifted up in pride over his fellow Creature: The other looks upon himself as imperfect, and so is dejected in his spirit, and looks upon his fellow Creature of his own Image, as a Lord above him.

And thus *Esau*, the man of flesh, which is Covetousness and Pride, hath killed *Jacob*, the Spirit of meeknesse, and righteous government in the light of Reason, and rules over him: And so the Earth that was made a common Treasury for all to live comfortably upon, is become through mans unrighteous actions one over another, to be a place, wherein one torments another.

Now the great Creator, who is the Spirit Reason, suffered himself thus to be rejected, and troden underfoot by the covetous proud flesh, for a certain time limited; therefore saith he, *The Seed out of whom the Creation did proceed, which is my Self, shall bruise this Serpents head, and restore my Creation again from this curse and bondage; and when I the King of Righteousnesse raigns in every man, I will be the blessing of the Earth and the joy of all Nations.*

And since the coming in of the stoppage, or the *A-dam* the Earth hath been inclosed and given to the Elder brother *Esau*, or man of flesh, and hath been bought and sold from one to another; and *Jacob*, or the younger brother, that is to succeed or come forth next, who is the universal spreading power of righteousnesse that gives liberty to the whole Creation, is made a servant.

And this Elder Son, or man of bondage, hath held the Earth in bondage to himself, not by a meek Law of Righteousnesse, But by subtle selfish Councils, and by open and violent force; for wherefore is it that there is such Wars and rumours of Wars in the Nations of the Earth? and wherefore are men so mad to destroy one another? But only to uphold Civil propriety of Honor, Dominion and Riches one over another, which is the curse the Creation groans under, waiting for deliverance.

But when once the Earth becomes a Common Treasury again, as it must, for all the Prophetesies of

Scriptures and Reason are Circled here in this Community, and mankind must have the Law of Righteousness once more writ in his heart, and all must be made of one heart, and one mind.

Then this Enmity in all Lands will cease, for none shall dare to seek a Dominion over others, neither shall any dare to kill another, nor desire more of the Earth then another; for he that will rule over, imprison, oppresse, and kill his fellow Creatures, under what pretence soever, is a destroyer of the Creation, and an actor of the Curse, and walks contrary to the rule of righteousness: (*Do, as you would have others do to you; and love your Enemies, not in words, but in actions*).

Therefore you powers of the Earth, or Lord Esau, the Elder brother, because you have appeared to rule the Creation, first take notice, That the powere that sets you to work, is selvish Covetousness, and an aspiring Pride, to live in glory and ease over *Jacob*, the meek Spirit; that is, the Seed that lies hid, in & among the poor Common People, or younger Brother, out of whom the blessing of Deliverance is to rise and spring up to all Nations.

And Reason, the living king of righteousness, doth only look on, and lets thee alone, That whereas thou counts thy self an Angel of Light, thou shalt appear in the light of the Sun, to be a Devil, *A-dam*, and the Curse that the Creation groans under; and the time is now come for thy downfal, and *Jacob* must rise, who is the universal Spirit of love and righteousness, that fills, and will fill all the Earth.

Thou teaching and ruling power of flesh, thou hast had three periods of time, to vaunt thy self over thy Brother; the first was from the time of thy coming in, called *A-dam*, or a stoppage, till *Moses* came; and there thou that wast a self-lover in *Cain*, killed thy brother *Abel*, a plain-hearted man that loved righteousness: And thou by thy wisdom and beastly government, made the whole Earth to stinck, till *Noah* came, which was a time of the world, like the coming in of the watery Seed into the womb, towards the bringing forth of the man child.

And from *Noah* till *Moses* came, thou still hast ruled in vaunting, pride, and cruel oppression; *Ishmael* against *Isaac*, *Esau* against *Jacob*; for thou hast still been the man of flesh that hath ever persecuted the man of righteousness, the Spirit Reason.

And Secondly, from *Moses* till the *Son of Man* came, which was time of the world, that the man child could not speak like a man, but lispig, making signs to shew his meaning; as we see many Creatures that cannot speak do. For *Moses* Law was a Language lapped up in Types, Sacrifices, Forms, and Customs, which was weak time. And in this time likewise, O thou teaching and ruling power, thou wast an oppressor; for look into Scriptures and see if *Aaron* and the Priests were not the first that deceived the people; and the Rulers, as Kings and Governors, were continually the Ocean-head, out of whose power, Burdens, Oppressions, and Poverty did flow out upon the Earth: and these two Powers still hath been the Curse, that hath led the Earth, mankind, into confusion and death by their imaginary and selvish teaching and ruling, and it could be no otherwise; for while man looks upon himself, as an imperfect Creation, and seeks and runs abroad for a teacher and a rule, he is all this time a stranger to the Spirit that is within himself.

But though the Earth hath been generally thus in darknesse, since the *A-dam* rise up, and hath owned a Light, and a Law without them to walk by, yet some have been found as watchmen, in this night time of the world, that have been taught by the Spirit within them, and not by any flesh without them, as *Abraham*, *Isaac*, *Jacob*, and the Prophets: And these, and such as these, have still been the Butt, at whom, the powers of the Earth in all ages of the world, by their selvish Laws, have shot their fury.

And then Thirdly, from the time of the *Son of man*, which was time that the man-child began to speak like a child growing upward to manhood, till now, that the Spirit is rising up in strength. O thou teaching and ruling power of the earthly man, thou has been an oppressor, by imprisonment, impoverishing, and martyrdom; and all thy power and wit, hath been to make Laws, and execute thm against such as stand for universal Liberty, which is the rising up of *Jacob*: as by those ancient enslaving Laws not yet blotted out, but held up as weapons against the man-child.

“England is not a free people, till the poor that have no land, have a free allowance to dig and labour the commons...”

Gerrard Winstanley, 1649



O thou Powers of *England*, though thou hast promised to make this People a Free People, yet thou hast so handled the matter, through thy self-seeking humour, That thou has wrapped us up more in bondage, and oppression lies heavier upon us; not only bringing thy fellow Creatures, the Commoners, to a morsel of Bread, but by confounding all sorts of people by thy Government, of doing and undoing.

First, Thou hast made the people to take a Covenant and Oaths to endeavour a Reformation, and to bring in Liberty every man in his place; and

yet while a man is in pursuing of that Covenant, he is imprisoned and oppressed by thy Officers, Courts, and Justices, so called.

Thou hast made Ordinances to cast down Oppressing, Popish, Episcopal, Self-willed and Prerogative Laws; yet we see, That Self-wil and Prerogative power, is the great standing Law, that rules all in action, and others in words.

Thou hast made many promises and protestations to make the Land a Free Nation: And yet at this very day, the same people, to whom thou hast made such Protestatins of Liberty, are oppressed by thy Courts, Sizes, Sessions, by thy Justices and Clarks of the Peace, so called, Bayliffs, Committees, are imprisoned, and forced to spend that bread, that should save their lives from Famine.

And all this, Because they stand to maintain an universal Liberty and Freedom, which not only is our Birthright, which our Maker gave us, but which thou hast promised to restore unto us, from under the former oppressing Powers that are gone before, and which likewise we have bought with our Money, in Taxes, Free-quarter, and Bloud-shed; all which Sums thou hast received at our hands, and yet thou hast not given us our bargain.

O thou *A-dam*, thou *Esau*, thou *Cain*, thou Hypocritical man of flesh, when wilt thou cease to kill thy younger Brother? Surely thou must not do this great work of advancing the Creation out of Bondage; for thou art lost extremely, and drowned in the Sea of Covetousnesse, Pride, and hardness of heart. *The blessing shall rise out of the dust which thou treadest under foot, Even the poor despised People, and they shall hold up Salvation to this Land, and to all Lands, and thou shalt be ashamed.*

Our bodies as yet are in thy hand, our Spirit waits in quiet and peace, upon our Father for Deliverance; and if he give our Bloud into thy hand, for thee to spill, know this, That he is our Almighty Captain: And if some of you will not dare to shed your bloud, to maintain Tyranny and Oppression upon the Creation, know this, That our Bloud and Life shall not be unwilling to be delivered up in meekness to maintain universal Liberty, that so the Curse on our part may be taken off the Creation.

And we shall not do this by force of Arms, we abhorre it, For that is the work of the *Midianites*, to kill one another; But by obeying the Lord of Hosts, who hath Revealed himself in us, and to us, by labouring the Earth in righteousness together, to eat our bread with the sweat of our brows, neither giving hire, nor taking hire, but working together, and eating together, as one man, or as one house of Israel restored from Bondage; and so by the power of Reason, the Law of righteousness in us, we endeavour to lift up the Creation from that bondage of Civil Propriety, which it groans under.

We are made to hold forth this Declaration to you that are the Great Council, and to you the Great Army of the Land of *England*, that you may know what we would have, and what you are bound to give us by your Covenants and Promises; and that you may joyn with us in this Work, and so find Peace. Or else, if you do oppose us, we have peace in our Work, and in declaring this Report: And you shall be left without excuse.

The Work we are going about is this, To dig up *Georges-Hill* and the waste Ground thereabouts, and to Sow Corn, and to eat our bread together by the sweat of our brows.

And the First Reason is this, That we may work in righteousness, and lay the Foundation of making the Earth a Common Treasury for All, both Rich and Poor, That every one that is born in the land, may be fed by the Earth his Mother that brought him forth, according to the Reason that rules in the Creation. Not Inclosing any part into any particular hand, but all as one man, working together, and feeding together as Sons of one Father, members of one Family; not one Lording over another, but all looking upon each other, as equals in the Creation; so that our Maker may be glorified in the work of his own hands, and that every one may see, he is no respecter of Persons, but equally loves his whole Creation, and hates nothing but the Serpent, which is Covetousness, branching forth into selvisch Imagination, Pride, Envie, Hypocrisie, Uncleaness; all seeking the ease and honor of flesh, and fighting against the Spirit Reason that made the Creation; for that is the Corruption, the Curse, the Devil, the Father of Lies; Death and Bondage that Serpent and Dragon that the Creation is to be delivered from.

And we have moved hereunto for that Reason, and other which hath been shewed us, both by Vision, Voyce, and Revelation.

For it is shewed us, That so long as we, That so long as we, or any other, doth own the Earth to be the peculiar Interest of Lords and Landlords, and not common to others as well as them, we own the Curse, and holds the Creation under bondage; and so long as we or any other doth own Landlords and Tennants, for one to call the Land his, or another to hire it of him, or for one to give hire, and for another to work for hire; this is to dishonour the work of Creation; as if the righteous Creator should have respect to persons, and therefore made the Earth for some, and not for all: And so long as we, or any other maintain this Civil Propriety, we consent still to hold the Creation down under that bondage it groans under, and so we should hinder the work of Restoration, and sin against Light that is given into us, and so through fear of the flesh man, lose our peace.

And that this Civil Propriety is the Curse, is manifest thus, Those that Buy and Sell Land, and are landlords, have got it either by Oppression, or Murther, or Theft; and all landlords lives in the breach of the Seventh and Eighth Commandements, *Thou shalt not steal, nor kill.*

First by their Oppression. They have by their subtle imaginary and covetous wit, got the plain-hearted poor, or yonger Brethren to work for them, for small wages, and by their work have got a great increase; for the poor by their labour lifts up Tyrants to rule over them; or else by their covetous wit, they have out-reached the plain-hearted in Buying and Selling, and thereby inriched themselves, but impoverished others: or else by their subtile wit, having been a lifter up into places of Trust, have inforced people to pay Money for a Publick use, but have divided much of it into their private purses; and so have got it by Oppression.

Then Secondly for Murther; They have by subtile wit and power, pretended to preserve a people in safety by the power of the Sword; and what by large Pay, much Free-quarter, and other Booties, which they call their own, they get much Monies, and with this they buy Land, and become landlords; and if once Landlords, then they rise to be Justices, Rulers, and State Governours, as experience shewes: But all this is but a bloody and subtile Theevery, countenanced by a Law that Covetousness made; and is a breach of the Seventh Commandement, *Thou shalt not kill.*

And likewise Thirdly a breach of the Eighth Commandement, *Thou shalt not steal;* but these landlords have thus stoln the Earth from their fellow Creatures, that have an equal share with them, by the Law of Reason and Creation, as well as they.

And such as these rise up to be rich in the objects of the Earth; then by their plausible words of flattery to the plain-hearted people, whom they deceive, and that lies under confusion and blindness: They are lifted up to be Teachers, Rulers, and Law makers over them that lifted them up; as if the Earth were made peculiarly for them, and not for other weal: If you cast your eye a little backward, you shall see, That this outward Teaching and Ruling power, is the Babylonish yoke laid upon Israel of old, under *Nebuchadnezzar;* and so Successively from that time, the Conquering Enemy, have still laid these yokes upon Israel to keep *Jacob* down: And the last enslaving Conquest which the Enemy got over Israel, was the *Norman* over *England;* and from that time, Kings, Lords, Judges, Justices, Bayliffs, and the violent bitter people that are Free-holders, are and have been Successively. The *Norman* Bastard *William* himself, his Colonels, Captains, inferiour Officers, and Common souldiers, who still are from that time to this day in pursuite of that victory, Imprisoning, Robbing, and killing the poor enslaved *English* Israelites.

And this appears cleer, For when any Trustee or State Officer is to be Chosen, The Free-holders or Landlords must be the Chusers, who are the *Norman* Common Souldiers, spread abroad in the Land; And who must be Chosen: but some very rich man, who is the Successor of the *Norman* Colonels or high

Officers. And to what end have they been thus Chosen? but to Establish that *Norman* power the more forcibly over the enslaved *English*, and to beat them down again, when as they gather heart to seek for Liberty.

For what are all those Binding and Restraining Laws that have been made from one Age to another since that Conquest, and are still upheld by Furie over the People? I say, What are they? but the Cords, Bands, Manacles, and Yokes that the enslaved *English*, like *Newgate* Prisoners, wears upn their hands and legs as they walk the streets; by which those *Norman* Oppressors, and these their Successors from Age to Age have enslaved the poor People by, killed their younger Brother, and would not suffer *Jacob* to arise.

O what mighty Delusion, do you, who are the powers of *England* live in! That while you pretend to throw down that *Norman* yoke, and *Babylonish* power, and have promised to make the groaning people of *England* a Free People; yet you still lift up that *Norman* yoke, and slavish Tyranny, and holds the People as much in bondage, as the Bastard Conquerour himself, and his Council of War.



Take notice, That *England* is not a Free People, till the Poor that have no Land, have a free allowance to dig and labour the Commons, and so live as Comfortably as the Landlords that live in their Inclosures. For the People have not laid out their Monies, and shed their Bloud, that their Landlords, the *Norman* power, should still have its liberty and freedom to rule in Tyranny in his Lords, landlords, Judges, Justices, Bayliffs, and State Servants; but that the Oppressed might be set Free, Prison doors opened, and the Poor peoples hearts comforted by an universal Consent of making the Earth a Common Treasury, that they may live together as one House of Israel, united in brotherly love into one Spirit; and having a comfortable livelihood in the Community of one Earth their Mother.

If you look through the Earth, you shall see, That the landlords, Teachers and Rulers, are Oppressors, Murtherers, and Theeves in this manner; But it was not thus from the Beginning. And this is one Reason of our digging and labouring the Earth one with another; That we might work in righteousness, and lift up the Creation from bondage: For so long as we own Landlords in this Corrupt Settlement, we cannot work in righteousness; for we should still lift up the Curse, and tread down the Creation, dishonour the Spirit of universal Liberty, and hinder the work of Restauration.

Secondly, In that we begin to Digge upon *George-Hill*, to eat our Bread together by righteous labour, and sweat of our browes, It was shewed us by Vision in Dreams, and out of Dreams, That that should be the Place we should begin upon; And though that Earth in view of Flesh, be very barren, yet we should trust the Spirit for a blessing. And that not only this Common, or Heath should be taken in and Manured by the People, but all the Commons and waste Ground in *England*, and in the whole World, shall be taken in by the People in righteousness, not owning any Propriety; but taking the Earth to be a Common Treasury, as it was first made for all.

Thirdly, It is shewed us, That all the Prophecies, Visions, and Revelations of Scriptures, of Prophets, and Apostles, concerning the calling of the Jews, the Restauration of Israel; and making of that People, the

Inheritors of the whole Earth; doth all seat themselves in this Work of making the Earth a Common Treasury; as you may read, *Ezek.* 24.26, 27, &c. *Jer.* 33.7 to 12. *Esay.* 49.17, 18, &c. *Zach.* 8. from 4, to 12, *Dan.* 2.44, 45, *Dan.* 7.27. *Hos.* 14.5, 6,7. *Joel* 2.26, 27. *Amos* 9. from 8 to the end, *Obad.* 17.18.21. *Mic.* 5. from 7 to the end, *Hab.* 2.6, 7, 8, 13, 14. *Gen.* 18.18. *Rom.* 11.15. *Zeph.* 3. &c. *Zech.* 14.9.

And when the Son of man, was gone from the Apostles, his Spirit descended upon the Apostles and Brethren, as they were waiting at *Jerusalem*; and Rich men sold their Possessions, and gave part to the Poor; and no man said, That ought that he possessed was his own, for they had all things Common, *Act.* 4.32.

Now this Community was suppressed by covetous proud flesh, which was the powers that ruled the world; and the righteous Father suffered himself thus to be suppressed for a time, times and dividing of time, or for 42 months, or for three days and half, which are all but one and the same term of time: And the world is now come to the half day; and the Spirit of Christ, which is the Spirit of universal Community and Freedom is risen, and is rising, and will rise higher and higher, till those pure waters of *Shiloe*, the Well Springs of Life and Liberty to the whole Creation, do over-run *A-dam*, and drown those banks of Bondage, Curse and Slavery.

Fourthly, This work to make the Earth a Common Treasury, was shewed us by Voice in Trance, and out of Trance, which which words were these,

Work together, Eate Bread together, Declare this all abroad.

Which Voice was heard Three times: And in Obedience to the Spirit, We have Declared this by Word of mouth, as occasion was offered. Secondly, We have declared it by writing, which others may read. Thirdly, We have now begun to declare it by Action, in Digging up the Common Land, and casting in Seed that we may eat our Bread together in righteousness. And every one that comes to work, shall eat the Fruit of their own labours, one having as much Freedom in the Fruit of the Earth as another. Another Voice that was heard was this,

Israel shall neither take Hire, nor give Hire.

And if so, then certainly none shall say, This is my Land, work for me, and I'll give you Wages. For, The Earth is the Lords, that is, Mans, who is Lord of the Creation, in every branch of mankind; perfect; so every particular man is but a member or branch of mankind; and mankind living in the light and obedience to Reason, the King of righteousness, is thereby made a fit and compleat Lord of the Creation. And the whole Earth is this Lords Man, subject to the Spirit. And not the Inheritance of covetous proud Flesh, that is selvish, and enmity to the Spirit.

And if the Earth be not peculiar to any one branch, or branches of manking, but the Inheritance of all; Then is it Free and Common for all, to work together, and eate together.

And truly, you Counsellors and Powers of the Earth, know this, That wheresoever there is a People, thus united by Common Community of livelihood into Oneness, it will become the strongest Land in the World, for then they will be as one man to defend their Inheritance; and Salvation (which is Liberty and Peace) is the Walls and Bulwarks of that Land or City.

Whereas on the otherside, pleading for Propriety and single Interst, divides the People of a land, and the

whole world into Parties, and is the cause of all Wars and Bloud-shed, and Contention every where.

Another Voice that was heard in a Trance, was this,

Whosoever labours the Earth for any Person or Persons, that are lifted up to rule over others, and doth not look upon themselves, as Equal to others in the Creation: The hand of the Lord shall be upon that Laborer: I the Lord have spoke it, and I will do it.

This Declares likewise to all Laborers, or such as are called Poor people, that they shall not dare to work for Hire, for any Landlord, or for any that is lifted up above others; for by their labours, they have lifted up Tyrants and Tyranny; and by denying to labor for Hire, they shall pull them down again. He that works for another, either for Wages, or to pay him Rent, works unrighteously, and still lifts up the Curse; but they that are resolved to work and eat together, making the Earth a Common Treasury, doth joyn hands with Christ, to lift up the Creation from Bondage, and restores all things from the Curse.

Fiftly, That which does incourage us to go on in this work, is this; we find the streaming out of Love in our hearts towards all; to enemies as well as friends; we would have none live in Beggery, Poverty, or Sorrow, but that everyone might enjoy the benefit of his creation: we have peace in our hearts, and quiet rejoicing in our work, and filled with sweet content, though we have but a dish of roots and bread for our food.

And we are assured, that in the strength of this Spirit that hath manifested himself to us, we shall not be startled, neither at Prison nor Death, while we are about his work; and we have bin made to sit down and count what it may cost us in undertaking such a work, and we know the full sum, and are resolved to give all that we have to buy this Pearl which we see in the Field.

For by this work we are assured, and Reason makes it appear to others, that Bondage shall be removed, Tears wiped away, and all poor People by their righteous Labours shall be relieved, and freed from Poverty and Straits; For is this work of Restoration there will be no begger in Israel: For surely, if there was no Begger in literal Israel, there shall be no Begger in Spiritual Israel the Anti-type, much more.

Sixtly, We have another encouragement that this work shall prosper, Because we see it to be the fulness of Time: For whereas The Son of Man, the *Lamb*, came in the Fulness of Time, that is, when the Powers of the World made the Earth stink every where, by oppressing others, under pretense of worshipping the Spirit rightly, by the Types and Sacrifices of *Moses* law; the Priests were grown so abominably Covetous and Proud, that they made the People to loathe the Sacrifices and to groan under the Burden of their Oppressing Pride.

Even so now in this Age of the World, that the Spirit is upon his Resurrection, it is likewise the Fulness of Time in a higher measure. For whereas the People generally in former times did rest upon the very observation of the Sacrifices and Types, but persecuted the very name of the Spirit; Even so now, Professors do rest upn the bare observatin of Forms and Customs, and pretend to the Spirit, and yet persecutes, grudges, and hates the power of the Spirit; and as it was then, so it is now: All places stink with the abomination of Self-seeking Teachers and Rulers. For do not I see that everyone Preacheth for money, Counsels for money, and fights for money to maintain particular Interests? And none of these three, that pretend to give liberty to the Creation, do give liberty to the Creation; neither can they, for

they are enemies to universal liberty; So that the earth stinks with their Hypocrisie, Covetousness, Envie, sottish Ignorance, and Pride.

The common People are filled with good words from Pulpits and Council Tables, but no good Deeds; For they wait and wait for good, and for deliverances, but none comes; While they wait for liberty, behold greater bondage comes instead of it, and burdens, oppressions, taskmasters, from Sessions, Lawyers, Bayliffs of Hundreds, Committees, Impropiators, Clerks of Peace, and Courts of Justice, so called, does whip the People by old Popish weather-beaten Laws, that were excommunicate long age by Covenants, Oaths, and Ordinances; but as yet are not cast out, but rather taken in again, to be standing pricks in our eyes, and thorns in our side; Beside Free-quartering, Plundering by some rude Souldiers, and the abounding of Taxes; which if they were equally divided among the Souldiery, and not too much bagd up in the hands of particulars Officers and Trustees, there would be less complaining: Besides the horrible cheating that is in Buying and Selling, and the cruel Oppression of Landlords, and Lords of Mannours, and quarter Sessions; Many that have bin good Souldiers, and so to fight to uphold the Curse, or else live in great straits and beggery: O you *A-dams* of the Earth, you have right Clothing, full Bellies, have your Honors and Ease, and you puffe at this; But know thous stout-hearted *Pharoah*, that the day of Judgement is begun, and it will reach to thee ere long; *Jacob* hath bin very low, but he is rising, and will rise, do the worst thou canst; and the poor people whom thou oppresses, shall be the Saviours of the land; For the blessing is rising up in them, and thou shalt be ashamed.



And thus, you Powers of England, and of the whole World, we have declared our Reasons, why we have begun to dug upon *George* hill in Surrey. One thing I must tell you more, in the close, which I received *in voce* likewise at another time; and when I received it, my ey was set towards you. The words were these:

Let Israel go free.

Surely, as Israel lay 430. years under *Pharoahs* bondage, before *Moses* was sent to fetch them out: even so Israel (the Elect Spirit spread in Sons and Daughters) hath lain three times so long already, which is the Anti-type, under your Bondage, and cruel Taskmasters: But now the time of Deliverance is come, and thou proud Esau, and stout-hearted Covetousness, thou must come down, and be lord of the Creation no longer. For *now the King of Righteousness is rising to Rule In, and Over the Earth.*

Therefore, if thou wilt find Mercy, *Let Israel go Free*; break in pieces quickly the Band of

particular Propriety, dis-own this oppressing Murder, Oppressin and Thievery of Buying and Selling of Land, owning of landlords, and paying of Rents, and give thy Free Consent to make the Earth a Common Treasury, without grumbling; That the younger Brethren may live comfortably upon Earth, as well as the

Elder: That all may enjoy the benefit of their Creation.

And hereby thou wilt *Honour thy Father, and thy Mother*: Thy Father, which is the Spirit of Community, that made all, and that dwels in all. Thy Mother, which is the Earth, that brought us all forth: That as a true Mother, loves all her Children. Therefore do not thou hinder the Mother Earth, from giving all her Children such, by thy Inclosing it into particular hands, and holding up that cursed Bondage of Inclosure by thy Power.

And then thou wilt repent of thy *Theft*, in maintaining the breach of the eight Commandment, by *Stealing* the Land as I say from thy fellow-creatures, or younger Brothers: which thou and all thy landlords have, and do live in the breach of that Commandment.

Then thou wilt *Own no other God*, or Ruling Power, *but One*, which is the King of Righteousness, ruling and dwelling in every one, and in the whole; whereas now thou hast many gods: For Covetousness is thy God, Pride, and an Envious murdering Humor (to kill one by Prison or Gallows, that crosses thee, though their cause be pure, sound, and good reason) is thy God, Self-love, and slavish Fear (lest others serve thee as thou hast served them) is thy god, Hypocrisie, Fleshly Imagination, that keeps no Promise, Covenant, nor Protestation, is thy God: love of Money, Honor, and Ease, is thy God: And all these, and the like Ruling Powers, makes thee Blind, and hard-hearted, that thou does not, nor cannot lay to heart the affliction of others, though they dy for want of bread, in that rich City, undone under your eys.

Therefore once more, *Let Israel go Free*, that the poor may labour the Waste land, and such the Brests of their mother *Earth*, that they starve not: And in so doing, thou wilt keep the *Sabbath day*, which is a day of *Rest*; sweetly enjoying the Peace of the Spirit of Righteousness; and find Peace, by living among a people that live in peace; this will be a day of *Rest* which thou never knew yet.

But I do not entreat thee, for thous art not to be intreated, but in the *Name of the Lord*, that hath drawn me forth to speak to thee; I, yea I say, I Command thee, to *let Israel go Free*, and quietly *to gather together into the place where I shall appoint; and hold them no longer in bondage*.

And thou *A-dam* that holds the Earth in slavery under the Curse: If thou wilt not *let Israel go Free*; for thou being the Antitype, will be more stout and lusty then the *Egyptian Paroah* of old, who was thy Type; Then know, That whereas I brought *Ten* Plagues upon him, I will *Multiply* may Plagues upon thee, till *I make thee weary, and miserably ashamed: And I will bring out my People with a strong hand, and stretched out arme*.

Thus we have discharged our Souls in declaring the Cause of our Digging upon *George-Hill* in *Surrey*, that the Great Council and Army of the Land may take notice of it, That there is no intent of Tumult or Fighting, but only to get Bread to eat, with the sweat of our brows; working together in righteousness, and eating the blessings of the Earth in peace.

And if any of you that are the great Ones of the Earth, that have been bred tenderly, and cannot word, do bring in your Stock into this Commond Treasury as an Offering to the work of Righteousness; we will work for you, and you shall receive as we receive. But if you will not, but *Paroah* like cry, *Who is the Lord that we should obey him?* and endeavour to Oppose, then know, That he that delivered Israel from *Pharoah* of old, is the same Power still, in whom we trust, and whom we serve; for this Conquest over thee shall be got, *not by Sword or Weapon, but by my Spirit saith the Lord of Hosts*.

Jerrard Winstanley, William Everard, Richard Goodgroome, John Palmer, Thomas Starre, John South,

William Hoggrill, John Courton, Robert Sawyer, William Taylor, Thomas Eder, Christopher Clifford, Henry Bickerstaffe, John Barker. John Taylor, &c.

FINIS

References

Gerrard Winstanley, Selected Writings, Aporia Press, available from [The Land Is Ours](#)

Why celebrate The Diggers?

Aug98 - by Tony Gosling and Jim Paton

The English Civil War was a pivotal point in world history. Political power was seized by the burgeoning English merchant class, which went on to create the industrial Revolution and build one of the biggest exploitative empires the world has ever seen. In the late 1640s, Cromwell was constructing the police state on which his middle class revolution would be based.

The British education system leaves us with an image of Roundheads and Cavaliers, Parliament fighting the King. Parliament, teachers explain, was more representative than the King and so Cromwell's victory was a victory for the people. But history is not always as it seems, particularly when 'written by the winners'.

The parliament of the day was anything but representative. Elections had been suspended and soldiers, on several occasions, were in the Houses of Parliament, arresting MP's who would not toe the line. It was a schizophrenic war, with roundhead soldiers frequently having more to fear from their own commanders than the so called enemy. This gives ironic credence to the view that the most distinguishing difference between the warring parties was in the style of their officers' hats.

Research since the 1940s by historians Christopher Hill, H.N. Brailsford, Brian Manning and others has begun to bring recognition to long-neglected popular civil war movements and events. The Levellers were a vast popular movement which took its name from the anti-enclosure activists earlier in the century. The Levellers are only now being acknowledged as the first political faction on either side of the Atlantic to organise itself on a pattern of democratic self-government.

When Leveller pamphleteer John Lilburne was arrested and tried for treason events in the courtroom were relayed out to thousands jamming the streets around Guildhall. When he died, tens of thousands of ordinary Londoners turned out to pay their respects at what is now thought to have been the largest funeral of the century.

Most textbooks still skim over the people's war. One present-day history teacher even testifies to having been reprimanded by her headmistress for giving a lesson on the Levellers. In some schools they are still considered 'too political'.

The Leveller women, Elizabeth Lilburne and Katherine Chidley amongst others, were centuries ahead of their time. Tens of thousands of women signed their equal rights petitions but when thousands of women delivered one of them to parliament they received short shrift. They were told by Cromwell's Parliamentarians to 'go home and wash the dishes'.

The war was a time of great popular ferment. It was by no means clear what form of government would replace the monarchy and the Leveller party pulled together many visions of a better country and a better world. There was a great deal of discussion, especially within the parliamentary army, about what had been wrong with the old system and how best to replace it.

Printing had been strictly controlled by the Stationers Guild before the war. But sympathetic Leveller soldiers liberated presses and publisher Giles Calvert (the name resurrected by Calverts Press in Shoreditch today) helped ensure that Leveller ideas were available to counter Royalist and Parliamentarian propaganda. Lilburne's 'Agreement of the People' captured ordinary people's vision of a fairer more representative government of which England could be proud. A definite improvement on the monarchy. Many of the liberties enshrined in the 'Agreement' was an inspiration subsequently acknowledged by radical reformers right across the world.

So worried were the Parliamentarians by Leveller literature that they had the pamphleteers imprisoned and lying propaganda was issued to discredit them. As a final body-blow Cromwell's 'mercenary damme crew' treacherously decimated the final regiments of faithful Leveller soldiers.

The Diggers appeared in a nation wracked by the fallout of war just as this end-game was being played out. On 1st April 1649 calling themselves the 'True Levellers' they occupied a small area of common land at St. George's Hill near Weybridge in Surrey. Winstanley believed in a radical form of Christianity spelt out in confessional pamphlets like 'The Saint's paradise':

"To my beloved friends, whose souls hunger after sincere milk.

Dear friends, It hath been the universall condition of the earth (mankind) to be over-spread with a black cloud of darkness ; and the knowledge of the King of righteousness hath been manifested but in some few scattered ones... ...I spoke the name of God, and Lord, and Christ, but I knew not this Lord, God and Christ; I prayed to a God but I knew not where he was, nor what he was, and so walking by imagination, I worshipped that devill, and called him God; by reason wherof my comforts were often shaken to pieces, and at last it was shewed to me, That while I builded upon any words or writings of other men, or while I looked after a God without me, I did but build upon the sand, and as yet I knew not the rock."

To Winstanley mankind is the Lord of the Creation, but he was always careful to explain that using the term "mankind" included women as fully as men. Sovereignty is given to each soul to use for good or ill as they choose. The thought of some sovereign force outside the sphere of the individual he saw as an insult to "the great creator, Reason".

Declaring the earth a 'common treasury for all' Gerrard Winstanley went further than the Levellers had dared. With his 40 or so supporters he issued a peaceful challenge to all the nation to come and join him, to help cast off the 'Norman yoke' and liberate the land of England forever. To set an example the world could follow.

Winstanley called this practical manifesto 'The True Levellers' Standard Advanced'. He was expanding

on Leveller ideas to tackle issues even more fundamental to the plight of common people.

For all their popular support most Levellers believed it would only be necessary to revise the parliament. The Diggers went further, tackling social questions that Levellers had only touched on. Questions like whether the state has any jurisdiction over those not willingly consenting to it. In Winstanley's vision there was no place for the familiar institutions the Levellers wanted to reform.

Central in his analysis was addressing the hard fact of land poverty and dispossession, leaving those who had been masters of their own destiny in the clutches of 'Lords of Manors and Lords of the Land.' When Winstanley addressed England's landowners in 'a declaration of the poor oppressed people of England' he struck at the very root of class divisions:

"...the earth was not made purposely for you, to be Lords of it, and we to be your Slaves, Servants, and Beggars; but it was made to be a common Livelihood to all, without respect of persons: And that your buying and selling of Land, and the Fruits of it, one to another, is The Cursed thing, and was brought in by War; which hath, and still does establish murder, and theft, in the branches of some parts of Mankind over others,..."

Winstanley straightforwardly exposed what he saw as the fraud of the civil war as Lilburne had done before him. It was a popular point of view in 1649 which is only recently being acknowledged:

"O thou powers of England, though thou hast promised to make this People a Free People, yet thou hast so handled the matter, through thy self-seeking humour, That thou hast wrapped us up more in bondage, and oppression lies heavier upon us; not only bringing thy fellow creatures, the Commoners, to a morsel of Bread, but by confounding all sorts of people by thy Government..."

He was determined to strike at the root causes of social conflict. In spirited prose, he explained why the Diggers had chosen to act and spelt out his vision for an equitable future.

And the First Reason is this, That we may work in righteousness, and lay the Foundation of making the Earth a Common Treasury for All, both Rich and Poor, That every one that is born in the Land, may be fed by the Earth his Mother that brought him forth, according to the Reason that rules in the Creation. Not Inclosing any part into any particular hand, but all as one man, working together and feeding together as Sons of one Father, members of one Family; not one Lording over another, but all looking upon each other as equals in the Creation;

As the Diggers built their makeshift settlement their pamphlets and their ideas were spreading. The common at St. George's Hill was planted with parsnips, carrots and beans. Several more Digger colonies sprang up around the country, especially in Buckinghamshire and Kent, with a major settlement at Wllingborough in Northamptonshire.

The local clergyman-landowner, Parson Platt, dismissed Winstanley's Christian creed and that of his squatters. Means legal and illegal were used to confiscate livestock and destroy the encampment and crops, leaving the Digger community without food. But the Diggers didn't give up. The colony at St. George's Hill lasted only a few months, but they moved to another site near Cobham, where they were able to stay longer and raise crops. As the year wore on and winter came, however, conditions were increasingly cold and grim. Eventually they were defeated by constant attacks and oppression after a year, as malnutrition and general ill-health took their toll. Other Digger settlements lasted longer and the colony at Wellingborough gave money to support the Surrey Diggers as their venture came to an end.

Though the experiment had ended the vision refused to go away.

In the same way that Leveller ideas were taken up by.... Thomas Paine and others so the Digger philosophy has stuck. It can be traced in the Monmouth Rebellion, in the French Revolution and amongst its supporters in other countries, in the Paris Commune and in British land struggles throughout the last two centuries. In the tradition of social equity there are few that have stripped social assumptions back so far as Winstanley. His critiques transcend concepts of left or right. Winstanley's demanded no less than direct personal access to natural resources.

His convictions on common ownership reflected those of the Christian apostles:

"Now the company of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one said that any of the things which he possessed was his own, but they had everything in common." Acts 4.32

Winstanley equated the extension of private property rights with evil and the concept of participative common rights with good. He particularly highlighted land as the key resource being privatised or inclosed in his day, directly against the interests and wishes of dispossessed commoners.

By the early 1900's almost all land in Britain had been inclosed. Leaving the vast majority of the population landless, taking their livelihood through others.

The capitalist champions of private ownership have had to make new inroads, both deregulating and defiling remaining commons such as the seas and the air and bringing even the natural monopolies such as public utilities into private ownership.

Rights once thought inalienable have been recently stripped away in legislation such as the Criminal Justice Act 1995 and Police Act 1997. Meanwhile private property rights are being extended even into the building blocks of life itself.

The Landlords are being surpassed. Indian writer Vandana Shiva recently coined the expression 'Lifelords' for companies such as Monsanto new owners of copyrighted strains of living material. The extension of private property rights is now reaching unheard of proportions

What unnerving foresight Winstanley showed in his warnings and how can we not take up his challenge to those who followed him to continue his work.

"And here I end, having put my Arm as far as my strength will go to advance Righteousness: I have Writ, I have Acted, I have Peace: and now I must wait to see the Spirit do his own work in the hearts of others, and whether England shall be the first Land, or some others, wherein Truth shall sit down in triumph."

A Bill of Account of the most Remarkable Sufferings that the Diggers have met with... Gerrard Winstanley 1649/50

Tony Gosling is a researcher with The Land Is Ours www.oneworld.org/tlio/

Jim Paton works at the Advisory Service for Squatters, 2 St Paul's Road, LONDON N1

The Diggers' Song

The World Turned Upside Down

In 1649, to Saint George's Hill

A ragged band they called The Diggers came to show the people's will

They defied the landlords, they defied the law

They were the dispossessed reclaiming what was theirs

'We come in peace' they said, 'to dig and sow

We come to work the land in common and to make the waste-land grow

This earth divided, we will make whole

So it can be a common treasury for all'

'The sin of property, we do disdain

No man has any right to buy and sell the earth for private gain

By theft and murder, they took the land

Now everywhere the walls spring up at their command'

'They make the laws, to chain us well

The clergy dazzle us with heaven or they damn us into hell

We will not worship the god they serve

The god of greed who feeds the rich while poor men starve

We work, we eat together, we need no swords

We will not bow to the masters nor pay rent to the lords

We are free men, though we are poor

You diggers all stand up for glory, stand up now

From the men of property

The orders came

They sent the hired men and troopers

To wipe out the Diggers claim

Tear down their cottages

Destroy their corn

They were dispersed -

But still the vision lingers on

'You poor take courage

You rich take care

The earth was made a common treasury

For everyone to share

All things in common

All people one

We come in peace' -

The order came to cut them down

'We come in peace' -
The order came to cut them down

[The Diggers Song copyright Leon Rosselson](#)

A Declaration by the Diggers of Wellingborough - 1650

A Declaration of the Grounds and Reasons why we the

Poor Inhabitants of the Town of *Wellingborrow*, in the
County
of *Northampton*, have begun and give consent to dig up,
manure and sow Corn upon the Common, and waste
ground, called *Bareshanke* belonging to the Inhabitants of
Wellinborrow, by those that have Subscribed and hundreds
more that give Consent.



EE find in the Word of God, that God made the Earth for the use and comfort of all Mankind, and set him in to till and dresse it, and said, That in the sweat of his brows he should eat his bread; and also we find, that God never gave it to any sort of people, that they should have it all to themselves, and shut out all the rest. but he saith, The Earth hath he given to the children of men, which is every man.

2. We find, that no creature that ever God made was ever deprived of the benefit of the Earth, but Mankind; and that it is nothing but covetousnesse, pride, and hardnesse of heart, that hath caused man so far to degenerate.

3. We find in the Scriptures, that the Prophets and Apostles have left

it upon Record, That in the last days the oppressor and proud man shall cease, and God will restore the waste places of the Earth to the use and comfort of Man, and that none shall hurt nor destroy in all his holy Mountain.

4. We have great Encouragement from these two righteous Acts, which the Parliament of England have set forth, the one against Kingly Power, the other to make England a Free Common-wealth.

5. We are necessitated from our present necessity to do this, and we hope that our Actions will justifie us in the gate when all men shall know the truth of our necessity: we are in Wellinborrow in one Parish 1169 persons that receive Alms, as the Officers have made it appear at the Quarter Sessions last: we have made our Case known to the Justices, the Justices have given Order that the Town should raise a Stock to set us on work, and that the Hundred should be enjoyned to assist them; but as yet we see nothing is done, nor any man that goeth about it; we have spent all we have, our trading is decayed, our wives and children cry for bread, our lives are a burden to us, divers of us having 5.6.7.8.9. in Family, and we cannot get bread for one of them by our labor, rich mens hearts are hardened, they will not give us if we beg at their doors; if we steal, the Law will end our lives, divers of the poor are starved to death already and it were better for us that are living to dye by the Sword then by Famine. And now we consider that the Earth is our Mother, and that God hath given it to the children of men, and that the common and waste Grounds belong to the poor, and that we have a right to the common ground both from the Law of the Land, Reason and Scriptures; and therefore we have begun to bestow our righteous labor upon it, and we shall trust the Spirit for a blessing upon our labor, resolving not to dig up any mans property, until they freely give us it; and truly we find great comfort already, through the goodnesse of our God, that some of those rich men amongst us, that have had the greatest profit upon the Common, have freely given us their share in it, as one Mr John Freeman, Thomas Nottingham and John Clendon, and divers others; and the Country Farmers have proffered divers of them to give us Seed to sow it, and so we find that God is perswading Japeth to dwell in the tents of Shem: and truly those that we find most against us are such as have been constant enemies to the Parliaments Cause from first to last.

Now at last our desire is, That some that approve of this work of Righteousnesse, would but spread this our Declaration before the great Councel of the Land, that so they may be pleased to give us more encouragement to go on, that so they may be found amongst the small number of those that considers the poor and needy, that so the Lord may deliver them in the time of their troubles, and then they will not be found amongst those that Solomon speaks of, which withhold the Corn (or the Land) from the Poor, which the people shall curse, but blessing shall be upon the heads of those Rulers that sell Corn, and that will let the poor labor upon the Earth to get them Corn, and our lines shall blesse them, so shall good men stand by them, and evil men shall be afraid of them, and they shall be counted the Repairers of our Breaches, and the Restorers of our Paths to dwell in. And thus we have declared the truth of our necessity; and whosoever will come in to us to labor with us, shall have part with us, and we with them, and we shall all of us endeavor to walk righteously and peaceably in the Land of our Nativity.

Richard Smith. John Avery. Thomas Fardin. Richard Pendred. James Pitman. Roger Tuis. Joseph Hichcock. John Pye. Edward Turner.

LONDON, Printed for Giles Calvert. 1650.

Digg-linx

[An excellent film about the Diggers by Roy Hanney - The World Turned Upside Down - Order Roy's video - five pounds](http://www.users.globalnet.co.uk/~royhan/film/) <http://www.users.globalnet.co.uk/~royhan/film/>

[The Law of Freedom - Gerrard Winstanley's utopian but workable system of common ownership which he devised after the Diggers. Probably what Winstanley would have thought of as his best writings - nice one Tash!](http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/tash_lodge/winst1.htm) http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/tash_lodge/winst1.htm

[Gerrard Winstanley and the Diggers](http://www.bucknell.edu/~rennhoff/) <http://www.bucknell.edu/~rennhoff/>

[A page on The Diggers](http://www.lglobal.com/TAO/Freedom/winst.html) <http://www.lglobal.com/TAO/Freedom/winst.html>

[To The Levellers' Page](#)

[The Leveller soldiers make a stand for the People](#)

[Cornet William Thompson's message from the Leveller soldiers](#)

[To Tony's index](#)

[Index](#)

'Property' | [Diggers](#) | [Gift](#) | [Oppressed](#) | [Fairfax](#)

Land and Freedom

The Privatisation of Land in Britain

[More historical background on The Land Is Ours site](#)

[Living on the wasteland](#)

[Charles I: The Commoners' King - halting and reversing the privatisation of land just before the English Civil War](#)

[An introduction to land and power](#)

[Land and power terms index](#)

[Chronology](#)

[Land tenure/rights Links](#)

[Outline of the Irish problem](#)

Living on the wasteland

We're not talking about living on managed nature reserves - the fact is that high-impact land use (intensive housing and chemical farming)- combined with a lack of public access (scrutiny) leads to practices far more detrimental to biodiversity.

You have to be very careful using arguments about exclusivity of access to land - eg. this piece of land is for plants only. I remember seeing an Englishman in Scotland getting a cool reception in 1997 when he unveiled plans for a people-free wildlife area in the Cairngorms, "I'd say ye have nae spoken wi' many local people. Have ye never heard of the clearances," was the frosty reply.

The point we're trying to make is that responsible people manage land for the benefit of all species - not to the exclusive benefit of man. I believe Simon's criteria has a section where biodiversity is mentioned as having to form part of any management plan. That is to say "if you ain't gonna improve biodiversity you can't have your planning permission"!

I think it's really important to get away from the idea that man is incompatible with other species. It doesn't have to be like that! The problem is the current attitude to land which so many farmers have which is that they see it as their factory floor and don't look at WHY it is necessary or lucrative for them to use chemicals and force land into monoculture.

The reasons for this have a lot to do with EEC subsidies and modern distribution networks. But many farmers, and others, are guilty of this partitioned thinking where they have a 'resigned' attitude to the structure which is forcing tenant and landowning farmers to intensify their activities to destructive proportions.

The other problem comes from the private ownership of land. This means if there is any dispute about what should happen or not be allowed on the land there is no reason to talk to your neighbours. You just do what you want. It is also a very important concept that the earth is a free gift to mankind. Not to one class of mankind and not another.

Sharing land forces us to justify our plans in front of the local community and forces us into a much-needed participatory approach to land use/management.

If a modern day village was to be told the inhabitants were collectivising the land there would be nothing less than the screaming ab-dabs!!

People get very territorial especially when they have been able to wangle more than their fair share. But eventually agreement would be reached... see Ken Loach's film 'Land and Freedom' for an example of this happening in the Spanish Civil War.

But look at a pre-inclosure village. It would look something like the New Forest where the land is managed by local agreement and by local consensus. No wonder the rich and powerful sought fit to inclose it because the local wouldn't agree to their wishes to ruin it!!!

There is now only one wholly unenclosed village in the country, Laxton in Nottinghamshire.

Try visiting Laxton or the New forest and tell me if unenclosed land and wasteland is incompatible with people. You'll find in both these places the people are a positive benefit to the area.

Charles I: The Commoners' King

"From about 1607 to 1636, the Government pursued an active anti-enclosure policy" - W.E. Tate

Charles' anti-enclosure policies may have been the spark that ignited the English Civil War

From

Historians are inconclusive about the origin and cause of the war. Whatever brought the merchant classes,

or bourgeoisie, to armed conflict with the king must have had a mighty incentive. Driven by the new capitalist class the move from collective to private ownership of land was extremely lucrative. To halt it, unforgivable.

In the eyes of the merchants the king had to go!

[Extent of Charles' penalties on enclosers](#)

Extract from: 'The English Village Community and the Enclosure Movements' **W. E. Tate, Victor Gollancz, London, 1967.**

Chapter 11

Enclosure and the State in Tudor and Early Stuart times.

The Policy of the Early Stuart Governments

Probably in Stuart times baser motives weighed more heavily with the governmental authorities. The Stuart policies, especially that of Charles I, were as Tawney says, 'smeared with the trail of finance', 'Enclosure, at any rate enclosure leading to depopulation, was an offence against the common law.'* Commissions inquired into it, and in many cases the statesmen and divines who composed these were inspired by the loftiest motives. The general action of the government, however, was to use the Privy Council and the courts, especially the prerogative courts, the Court of Requests and the Star Chamber, the Councils of Wales and the North, as means of extortion. The offenders were 'compounded with', i.e. huge fines were levied so that the culprits might continue their malpractices.¹

In 1601 a proposal to repeal the depopulation acts was crushed upon the ground that the majority of the militia levies were ploughmen.² In 1603 the Council of the North were ordered to check the 'wrongful taking in of commons' and the consequent 'decay of houses of husbandry . . .'. From about 1607 to 1636, the Government pursued an active anti- enclosure policy.³ In 1607 the agrarian changes in the Midlands had produced an armed revolt of the peasantry, beginning in Northamptonshire, where there had been stirrings of unrest at any rate since 1604. The counties mainly affected were Northamptonshire, Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Huntingdonshire, Leicestershire, the three divisions of Lincolnshire, and Warwickshire.

The leader was a certain John Reynolds, nick- named Captain Pouch, 'because of a great leather pouch which he wore by his side, in which purse he affirmed to his company there was sufficient matter to defend them against all commers, but afterwards when he was apprehended, his Pouch was searched, and therein was only a peece of greene cheese'. John was soon dealt with after a skirmish at Newton, where a body of mounted gentlemen with their servants dispersed a body of a thousand rebels, killing some forty or fifty of the poorly-armed rustics. Some of his followers were hanged and quartered.

Promises of redress made by various proclamations were fulfilled only to the extent of the appointment of still another royal commission to inquire into agrarian grievances in the counties named. After it had made its return, however, it was discovered that on legal technicalities the commission was invalid, and little action seems to have been taken upon its laboriously compiled returns. The local gentry were soon busily at

work again in enclosing their own land and that of others, though in 1620 Sir Edward Coke, the greatest of English judges, who had already shown himself a keen opponent of enclosure, declared depopulation to be against the laws of the realm, asserting that the encloser who kept a shepherd and his dog in the place of a flourishing village community was hateful to God and man.

A reaction set in when in 1619 there were good harvests, and the Privy Council was concerned to relieve farmers and landlords who were suffering through the low price of corn. This is why commissions were appointed to grant pardons for breaches of the depopulation acts, and why in 1624 all save the two acts of 1597 were repealed. The county justices still, however, attempted to check the change, and in this received more or less spasmodic pressure from the Council. In the 1630's corn prices rose again, and in 1630 the justices of five Midland counties were ordered to remove all enclosures made in the last two years. In 1632, 1635, and 1636 more commissions were appointed, and the justices of assize were instructed to enforce the tillage acts. In 1633 they were cited before the Board to give an account of their proceedings. From 1635-8 enclosure compositions were levied in thirteen counties, some six hundred persons in all being fined, and the total fines levied amounting to almost £50,000. Enclosers were being prosecuted in the Star Chamber as late as 1639. However, the Star Chamber was to vanish in 1641, and the Stuart administrative policy disappeared with the engines by which it had been - somewhat ineffectively and spasmodically - put in force.

If the reign in its social and agrarian policy may be judged solely from the number of anti-enclosure commissions set up, then undoubtedly King Charles I is the one English monarch of outstanding importance as an agrarian reformer. How far his policy was due to genuine disinterested love of the poor, and how far it followed from the more sordid motive of a desire to extort fines from offenders, it is difficult to say. But even the most unsympathetic critic must allow a good deal of honest benevolence to his minister Laud, Archbishop of Canterbury, and some measure of it to his master. On the whole it is perhaps not too much to say that for a short time after the commissions issued in 1632, 1635, and 1636, Star Chamber dealt fairly effectively with offenders. The lack of ultimate success of this last governmental attempt to stem the tide of enclosure was due, no doubt, partly to the mixture of motives on the part of its proponents. Still more its failure is to be attributed to the fact that again the local administrators, upon whom the Crown depended to implement its policy, were of the very [landed] class which included the worst offenders. A (practising) poacher does not make a very good gamekeeper!

The Commonwealth

During the Commonwealth there was little legal or administrative attempt to check enclosure of open fields. It is not clear how far this was taking place, though there was great activity in the enclosure and drainage of commonable waste. Some of the Major-Generals, especially Edward Whalley, held strong views upon agrarian matters, and attempted to use their very extensive powers to carry their ideals into operation. Petitions were prepared and presented, a committee of the Council of State was appointed and numerous pamphlets were written.

In 1653 the mayor and aldermen of Leicester complained of local enclosures and sent a petition to London, very sensibly choosing their neighbour, John Moore, as its bearer. Apparently it was because of this that the same year the Committee for the Poor were ordered 'to consider of the business where Enclosures have been made'. The question arose again in 1656 when Whalley, the Major-General in charge of the Midlands, set on foot local inquiries, and took fairly drastic action in response to petitions adopted by the grand juries in his area. He hoped that as a result of his action 'God will not be provoked, the poor not wronged,

depopulation prevented, and the State not dampnified'. The same year he brought in a Bill 'touching the dividing of commons', but it failed through the opposition of William Lenthall, the Master of the Rolls, and indeed was not even given a second reading. This was the last bill to regulate enclosure. Ten years later, in 1666, another bill was read in the Lords, to confirm all enclosures made by court decree in the preceding sixty years. It also was unsuccessful, but the fact that it was introduced is indicative of a great change in the general attitude towards enclosure displayed by those in authority.

Footnotes:

* Coke (Chief justice of the King's Bench, 1613-16), was very emphatic on this, Institutes III, 1644 edn., p. 205. Ellesmere, his great rival (Lord Chancellor 1603-16), was more favourably disposed to enclosure, and himself authorised some enclosures by Chancery Decree. The point is of interest, since it may well have been Ellesmere's attitude which emboldened his kinsmen, Arthur Mainwaring, to embark on the enclosure of Welcombe, near Stratford, in 1614. In the story of this, Shakespeare plays a (very minor) part. Tothill, W., Transactions of the Court of Chancery etc., 1649, edn. 1827, P. 109, and Ingleby, G. M., Shakespeare and the Welcombe Inclosure, 1885.

¹ There is a tabular statement of the proceeds in Gonner, p. 167 [and presented below!].

² See D'Ewes, op. cit., p. 674, for Cecil's speech on this.

³ The activity was mainly 1607-18 and 1636, the first spasm being due presumably to the Midland riots, the second to a period of high corn prices.

Extent of Charles' penalties on inclosers

1) Introduction of tillage acts

2) Introduction of depopulation acts

3) A total of 600 individual fines on enclosing landowners as follows [from p. 167, Gonner, E.C.K., 'Common Land and Inclosure', 1912]:

King Charles I - fines on enclosing landowners - (££)

Year ->	1635	1636	1637	1638	Total 1635-8
Lincolnshire	3,130	8,023	4,990	2,703	18,846
Leicestershire	1,700	3,560	4,080	85	9,425
Northamptonshire	3,200	2,340	2,875	263	8,678
Huntingdonshire		680	1,837	230	2,747
Rutland		150	1,000		1,150
Nottinghamshire			2,010	78	2,088
Hertfordshire		2,000			2,000
Gloucestershire				50	50
Cambridgeshire			170	340	510

Oxfordshire	580	153	733
Bedfordshire		412	412
Buckinghamshire		71	71
Kent		100	100
Grand Total			£46,810

If anyone has the equivalent amount in today's money please Email me at tony@gaia.org and I will include it here

Understanding landrights history, some terms defined

"In the Saxon and British tongue, signified a part or portion, most commonly of a meadow, where several persons have shares"
Definition of DOLE; Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1697, Edinburgh.

Tony Gosling 23rd November 1997

As all indigenous people know everyone needs access to primary resources, land must be freely available to all, regardless of social standing. It is an essential right, not a privilege, in any society that calls itself civilised or free.

Yet this has rarely, if ever, been so. As this is the one step that can move us out of a world of constant fear, threat and intimidation what is stopping us getting there? Simply awareness and consciousness of the issue. The fact that land went into private ownership centuries ago does not mean that decision is irreversible.

Especially as our economic 'system' seems to be on its last legs; especially as the only answer the rich and powerful seem to have to poverty and dispossession is the totalitarianism of their corporations. We need land reform right now!

In order to help us understand how the land has been stolen, bit-by-bit, from ordinary people here in the U.K. here is a brief overview of historical terms related to land use and taxation, many of which have fallen out of use.

By understanding the progress of land control and theft from [Domesday](#) to the present I hope we can grasp our position more clearly, and be empowered to change it.

Index

[Bailiff](#) [Baron](#) [Ceorl](#) [Clan](#) [Copyhold](#) [Court Baron](#) [Court Leet](#) [Crofters' War](#) [Demesne](#) [Diggers](#) [Dissolution of the monasteries](#) [Distrain](#) [Distress](#) [Domesday book](#) [Duke](#) [Ealdorman](#) [Earl](#) [Enclosure](#) [Fealty](#) [Fee](#) [Feudalism](#) [Forest](#) [Franchise](#) [Frankalmoign](#) [Freehold](#) [Fyrd](#) [Gavelkind](#) [Gebur](#) [Geneat](#) [Highland Clearances](#) [Homage](#) [Irish land acts](#) [Irish Land League](#) [Kett's rebellion](#) [Knight](#) [Kotsetla](#) [Manor](#) [Manumission](#) [Man Trap](#) [Marquess](#) [Mesne tenure](#) [Norman yoke](#) [Peerage](#) [Pilgrimage of Grace](#) [Quit claim](#) [Reform acts](#) [Rights of Common](#) [Serf](#) [Scutage](#) [Sheriff](#) [Shire](#) [Socage](#) [Thegn](#) [Tithe](#) [Vassal](#) [Villein](#) [Viscount](#) [Witan](#)

Bailiff

The agent or steward of a landlord or landowner. Also a sheriff's officer who serves writs and summonses, makes arrests, and ensures that the sentences of the court are carried out.

[Back to the land terms index](#)

Baron

The fifth and lowest rank of the peerage. Until the 13th century the term was applied to all tenants-in-chief - those who held land directly from the king. A distinction came to be made between those summoned to court by personal writ (the greater barons) and those summoned by general writ (the lesser barons), which Magna Carta (1215) confirmed. A new criterion of definition was introduced in the 14th century, when baronies were created by personal summons to parliament and had no basis in land tenure. The law life peers (created since 1876) and other life peers (since 1958) are ranked as barons and baronesses.

[Back to the land terms index](#)

Ceorl

An Anglo-Saxon peasant ranking between serf and noble. He either owned his land or receive it from a lord to whom he was therefore tied by labour services. He was liable for military service (in the fyrd) and taxes. In court he was entitled to have three fellow ceorls to support his oath. By the 11th century wealthy ceorls could become thegns, but most lost their personal freedom after the Norman conquest, and 'churl' came to mean an ill-bred person.

[Back to the land terms index](#)

Clan

(Gaelic for: children or offspring) Semi-autonomous political, military and social units in the Scottish Highlands which emerged at the end of the 14th century. Clans were formed partly to counteract the growing lawlessness that resulted from the decline of the monarchy, although the clans themselves were partly to blame for this lawlessness.

In theory a clan consisted of all the descendants of a common ancestor, who was regarded as the founder of

the clan and who gave his name to it (e.g.. MacDonald, son of Donald). In practice many clansmen were tenants, dependants or followers who had no blood relationship with the chief's family.

In the west many chiefs were descendants of pre-feudal local leaders, either Celtic or Norse, who had accepted feudal tenure but now reasserted more traditional kinship claims to authority. In the east the founders of many clans were alien feudal landlords whose descendants adopted local customs, accepting the Gaelic language, culture and form of "clan chief" leadership. Thus feudalism could be at least as important as kinship in creating a clan, while naked aggression and conquest could be as important as either in extending a chief's power.

Under the clans, much of the Gaelic speaking Highlands (especially the west and the Hebrides) remained outside the effective control of central government until the 18th century.

During the 18th century the social and economic influences of Lowland Scotland combined with political and military pressure to destroy clanship, especially after the failure of the 1745 Jacobite rising.

[Back to the land terms index](#)

Copyhold

A form of land tenure, so called because the holder had a copy of the record of his holding in the manorial role. By the 15th century most villeins had become copyholders as most of the services they owed to their lord were commuted to money payments. Under the Reform Acts "£10 copyholders" - those with land worth £10 annually - were given the vote in 1832 and "£5 copyholders" in 1867.

The last copyholds were converted into freeholds by the Property Act (1922) and the last feudal obligations attached to copyhold were abolished in 1935.

[Back to the land terms index](#)

Court Baron

A court held before the freemen of a manor to deal with such services owed by tenants to the lord and personal actions by tenants for the recovery of debts or damages worth less than 40 shillings. Neither the lord nor his steward were permitted to imprison or fine. Although obsolete, courts baron have not been abolished.

[Back to the land terms index](#)

Court Leet

A court of record that the lord of a hundred or manor might be authorized by royal charter to summon annually. Its chief functions were to inspect the members of the hundred etc. and to punish misdemeanours. The steward of the leet was the judge and he might fine or imprison.

[Back to the land terms index](#)

Crofters' War

Action which culminated around an eviction at The Braes, south of Portree in Skye in 1882. Crowds, led by the womenfolk, gathered to ambush a large party of police and bailiffs sent from Glasgow to evict crofters from The Braes. The eviction party was successfully repelled and newspaper reports on 'The Battle Of The

Braes' led to Lord Napier's Royal Commission into the grievances of the Crofters. This, in turn, led to the unique Crofting Acts which do a great deal to enshrine in law what had been the customary system of land tenure before the Highland Clearances began.

Crofters War links:

[Top Scottish Site](http://www.hebrides.com/subj/crofting.htm) <http://www.hebrides.com/subj/crofting.htm>

[Crofters War discussed in the House of Commons](#)

<http://www.parliament.the-stationery-office.co.uk/pa/cm199697/cmhansrd/cm961106/debtext/61106-01.htm>

[Books available:](http://american.prices.com/books/1450/1462midi.html) <http://american.prices.com/books/1450/1462midi.html>

[Back to the land terms index](#)

Demesne

That part of a manor kept by the lord for himself as distinct from land held of him by tenants. It was exploited directly for the lord by his villeins, the amount of work owed to him varying according to region and season. Ancient demesne was the land that was recorded in Domesday as having been in the possession of the crown in 1066; it included the boroughs.

Towards the end of the 14th century the combined effects of depopulation caused by the black death, the flight of the villeins, and the low price of grain led many lords to lease the demesne.

[Back to the land terms index](#)

Diggers (1649)

A small but determined group that practised a form of agrarian communism at the end of the English Civil War. Seeing the war as a defeat for the landowning class, 20 Diggers, under the leadership of [Gerrard Winstanley](#), assembled at St. George's Hill in Surrey on 1st April 1649 to set up a colony in which land was cultivated communally. They used [liberated printing presses](#) to get pamphlets about their vision out to ordinary people and to ensure their ideas survived to inspire future generations.

Believers in passive resistance, the Diggers were harassed by legal action and mob violence and by April 1650 had been dispersed.

[Back to the land terms index](#)

Dissolution of the Monasteries

The suppression of the monastic houses of England and Wales and the transfer of their property to the crown in an effort to boost royal income. It was organised by Thomas Cromwell between 1536 and 1540. A visitation of all monastic houses conducted from 1535 to 1536 revealed the hoped for examples of misconduct that provided some moral justification for the policy. Approximately 800 institutions were affected and although their 9000 inmates received some compensation the dissolution provoked resentment that contributed to the Pilgrimage of Grace. For Henry VIII the policy meant an additional income in excess of £90,000 a year. Most of the property was sold off to the English gentry through the Court of Augmentations.

[Back to the land terms index](#)

Distraint

1. See Distress. 2. The obligation of persons owning land of a certain value (originally £20) or holding a knight's fee, to accept a knighthood. It was introduced by Henry III to increase revenues from feudal incidents. Charles I's insistence that all owners of land with an annual value of £40 assume knighthood provoked the long parliament to abolish compulsory knighthood (1641).

[Back to the land terms index](#)

Distress (or distraint)

The seizure of a wrongdoer's movable property by the person wronged. In feudal law, a lord possessed the right to seize the property, also called distress and generally comprising livestock, of a tenant who had failed to perform the services owing to him. The statute of Marlborough (1267) and subsequent legislation attempted to regulate abuses in distress.

[Back to the land terms index](#)

Domesday Book (1086)

The most comprehensive and detailed record of property compiled anywhere in Europe during the middle ages. Conceived by William the Conqueror at Christmas 1085 in Gloucester, the survey's primary purpose was to provide maximum yield from the land tax. It received its name in the 12th century to signify that, like the day of judgement, there could be no appeal from its verdict.

The survey was carried out in 1086. Each shire was visited by groups of royal commissioners, who conducted their investigations from the shire courts. Every village was expected to reply to a variable list of questions, including identity of landholders, the size and use of land, the number and status of its cultivators, and its value, "all threefold: before 1066, when king William gave it, and now". The truth of the replies was attested by juries consisting of an equal number of Englishmen and Normans. The information was then condensed and tabulated, shire by shire, on the basis of feudal ownership: the king's estates were listed followed by those belonging to the ecclesiastical and lay tenants-in-chief, women, English thegns, etc..

The survey was eventually recorded in two volumes, one dealing with the counties of Norfolk, Suffolk and Essex (Little Domesday) and the other with the remainder, which were held at the treasury in Winchester. The four northernmost counties, London, and Winchester were not included.

The survey caused considerable resentment and, in some places, riots. Domesday Book is now in the Public Record Office.

[The Village of Groby in Medieval times - domesday entry and glossary](#)

<http://www.grobynet.org.uk/gname.htm>

[Back to the land terms index](#)

Dole

In the Saxon and British tongue, signified a part or portion, most commonly of a meadow, where several persons have shares.

Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1697, Edinburgh.

Duke

The highest rank of the peerage originating in 1337 with the creation as duke of Cornwall of Edward, the Black Prince. The first nonroyal duke was Robert de Vere, 9th earl of Oxford, created duke of Ireland in 1386.

[Back to the land terms index](#)

Ealdorman

A noble of the highest social rank in Anglo-Saxon England, appointed by the king to govern a shire. Ealdormen were responsible for the shire military levy and secular law in the shire moot. From the 10th or 11th century ealdormen became powerful local magnates, with control over more than one shire, and became known as earls.

[Back to the land terms index](#)

Earl

The chief royal representative in the shires, replacing the Anglo-Saxon ealdorman in the Danish areas of England in the 10th century and throughout the country under king Cnut (reigned 1016-35). Although the office was nominally the gift of the king, the earls had such political and landed power that the tendency was towards hereditability. In the shire the earl commanded the fyrd, presided over the court, and received a third of the profits of justice. During the 11th century earls ruled over provinces, such as Wessex and Northumbria, and were replaced in shire administration by the sheriffs. In the 12th century the title of earl became one of nobility and earls formally entered the peerage.

[Back to the land terms index](#)

Enclosure

[Originally and more correctly spelt 'Inclosure' as the E spelling was thought by the powerful landowners to be less emotive.]

The conversion of the open field system of farming into that of enclosed fields, completed by the early 19th century. The enclosure by landlords of open fields, commons and waste lands occurred in the middle ages. Extensive enclosure, especially for sheep farming, took place in the 16th century, causing considerable unrest (e.g.. The Pilgrimage of Grace and Kett's Rebellion).

In spite of legislation against enclosure by 1700 about half the arable land in England and Wales was enclosed. The farming 'improvements' of the agricultural revolution were inoperable in open fields and, together with the food demands of an increasing landless population, brought about a relentless movement towards enclosure in the 18th century. Implemented mostly by enclosure acts (private acts of parliament), by 1815 almost all usable farming land was enclosed.

These enclosures, while essentially for revolutionising farming and food supply, had unfavourable social effects. Although land reallocation under an enclosure act theoretically compensated those losing their rights to common land, in practice most lacked the capital to utilise the land, and many smallholders could not live adequately from their new plots; further, landless labourers received no compensation.

[Back to the land terms index](#)

Fealty

The loyalty sworn by a vassal to his lord. It followed the act of homage. While making the oath the vassal placed his hand on the Scriptures or on a casket containing relics. The oath still survives in the coronation service.

[Back to the land terms index](#)

Fee (or fief)

Land granted to a knight by his lord in return for military service. By the 12th century such land was regarded as inheritable. Its size varied and it could be let by mesne. The word was later extended to offices of profit similarly held, and thence to the sums that those who held such offices were authorized to demand as payment for the exercise of their official functions. It was later extended to denote the remuneration due to lawyers and physicians, and in modern times to any professional person for services provided.

[Back to the land terms index](#)

Feudalism

A system of land tenure, characteristic of medæval Europe, in which land is held by a vassal (the feudal inferior) of his lord (the feudal superior) in return for a pledge of homage, military services, and certain other duties.

In England, land was granted by the king to his tenants in chief, who might pass on part of their service, in return for grants of land, to tenants, and these tenants might do likewise.

All land was held directly or indirectly (mesne tenure) of the King, who was the feudal superior of all tenants.

The question whether feudalism was introduced into England by the Normans has been much disputed. There are almost no cases of land held for specific military service in Anglo-Saxon England and the knight often regarded as an essential component of feudal society, was unknown in England before 1066. His home, the castle, was also a Norman innovation.

The feudal host provided the nucleus of the Anglo-Norman army but Kings also relied heavily upon mercenaries and specialist soldiers. Soon after the conquest money payment (scutage) was being exacted from the holders of fees (lands held in return for the service of one knight) in place of military service and the money was used to hire mercenaries. This process was hastened by increasingly sophisticated warfare and the needs of English kings in the 12th and 13th centuries for almost permanent armies to serve in France, Wales and Scotland.

The Military Justification for feudal tenure therefore declined at the same time as the development of Royal Justice contributed to the decline of the private jurisdictions of feudal Lords.

[The Feudal System](#) <http://socserv2.socsci.mcmaster.ca/~econ/ugcm/3ll3/vinogradoff/feudal>

[Back to the land terms index](#)

Forest

The right of keeping wild beasts or fowls in a specific area, not necessarily wooded, for the purpose of hunting. The royal forests were protected by forest laws, enacted mainly between 1066 and 1189. Penalties for infringement of the laws were severe and included capital punishment and mutilation, both abolished by the forest charter (1217). The repeal of the forest laws, little enforced after 1688, was completed by 1817.

[Back to the land terms index](#)

Franchise

The right to elect members of the House of Commons, known as the franchise, was until the present century only granted to landowners. The term originates in the setting free (French *franchir*, to set free) of the unfree by manumission. The franchise denoted first the body of freemen in a manor, borough, etc., and then their rights, including the right to vote. This depended largely on land ownership qualifications. Between 1430 and 1832 the English county franchise was limited to residents possessing a freehold worth 40 shillings a year. Borough members were elected on a variety of franchises. the reform act of 1832 unified the borough franchises, that of 1867 enfranchised all borough householders, and that of 1884 all county householders. In 1918 all men over 21 and women over 30 were enfranchised. Women over 21 have voted since 1928. Plural voting whereby certain electors might vote in more than one constituency, did not end until the abolition of the university seats in 1948.

[Back to the land terms index](#)

Frankalmoign

(Anglo-Norman: free alms) land held by the church fro such services as praying fro the souls of the lord and his heirs. Originating in Anglo-Saxon times, it was not abolished until 1925.

[Back to the land terms index](#)

Freehold

A form of land tenure. Under feudalism freeholders were those who held land by knight service or by socage tenure. The services attached to these tenures were at an early date commuted to money payments. These rents were fixed and thus constituted a decreasing burden. Lands held in knight service also bore the various feudal incidents, but in practice the free tenures had become hardly distinguishable from absolute possession well before they were finally abolished by the long parliament (1640-60). The unfree tenures, notably copyhold, were finally converted into freehold by the property act (1922).

[Back to the land terms index](#)

Fyrd

During the Anglo-Saxon period, a local military force in which all free men were obliged to serve. A fyrd seldom fought beyond the borders of the shires in which it was raised.

[Back to the land terms index](#)

Gavelkind

Tenure of land in return for the payment of rent (gavel) rather than the performance of services. Common in Kent, but occurring elsewhere, gavelkind land was not subject to the law of primogeniture but was inheritable by all heirs.

[Back to the land terms index](#)

Gebur

An Anglo-Saxon peasant, or ceorl. The gebur might have originated as a serf, who was given a yardland (generally about 20 acres) in return for specified and often burdensome labour services and rents. His land and tools reverted to his lord on his death.

[Back to the land terms index](#)

Geneat

A high-ranking ceorl, who paid rent for his land and performed services for his lord that were suitable to his standing, such as serving as a horseman. The word means companion, so geneatas probably originated as members of the lord's household.

[Back to the land terms index](#)

Highland Clearances

Eviction and enclosure of traditional Crofter and Cottar's settlements during the 18th century in the Scottish Highlands. The Scottish gentry's gambling debts in London pressurised them into obtaining greater revenues from their estates which they did by replacing low rent human settlement with high yeild sheep rearing. The Cheviot sheep thus replaced people in the Highlands who, because they were evicted far from the public eye, suffered brutal treatment from landlord's 'factors' such as Patrick Sellar. He ordered at least one building to be burnt down in full knowledge that a bedridden occupant was still inside.

Highland Clearances links:

[The Highland Clearances, includes links page](http://www.sirius.com/~macgowan/hc.html) <http://www.sirius.com/~macgowan/hc.html>

[U.S. Highland Clearances site:](http://www.clannada.org/docs/clrsncsa.html) <http://www.clannada.org/docs/clrsncsa.html>

Highland Clearances references:

David Craig, *On the Crofters' Trail: in Search of the Clearance Highlanders*, Pimlico, London, 1990.

[Back to the land terms index](#)

Homage

The act of submission made by a feudal tenant to his lord. Kneeling, a tenant gave his joined hands to be clasped by his lord, whom he undertook to serve. This was followed by the swearing of fealty.

[Back to the land terms index](#)

Irish Land Acts

A series of acts passed in response to agitation by Irish tenants for land rights.

1. (1870) An act that provided compensation for eviction and for improvements carried out by tenants.
2. (1881) An act guaranteeing fair rents, fixity of tenure, and freedom to sell (the three F's).
3. (1885) An act- Ashbourne's act- that advanced £5million (increased in 1888 and 1891) for the purchase of land by tenants.
4. (1903) The Wyndham Act- by which landlords were offered bonuses to sell their lands.

[Back to the land terms index](#)

Irish Land League

An organisation formed to achieve land reform in Ireland. Founded in 1879 by Michael Davitt, its most famous tactic mass organised ostracism (*boycotting*) of unpopular landlords and their agents. After Gladstone's 1881 Irish Land Act the League's immediate aims were achieved and it disbanded.

Straide, in county Mayo, is Michael Davitt's birthplace. A plaque and Musuem have been erected to his memory in the village.

Irish Land League links: [THE GREAT STARVATION AND BRITISH IMPERIALISM IN IRELAND](#) by Seamus Metress University of Toledo <http://wwwvms.utexas.edu/~jdana/iphunger.html>

[Back to the land terms index](#)

Kett's Rebellion (1549)

An insurrection in Norfolk led by Robert Kett. The rebellion was directed against the enclosure by landowners of common pasture lands to raise their own sheep. The rebels - numbering some 16,000 - proposed the abolition of private ownership of land and achieved some short-lived success before being suppressed by forces under the earl of Warwick (later duke of Northumberland). Kett was chained to the city walls of Norwich and left to die.

[Norwich drama group and a play on Ketts Rebellion](#) <http://www.paston.co.uk/users/joedye/plays.html#ketts>

[Back to the land terms index](#)

Knight

The mounted warrior of medieval Europe, it is likely he was a Norman innovation. A man became a knight, or was dubbed for knighthood, in a ceremony in which he was invested, by a noble, with a set of arms. In return for field service for a stated period, garrison duty, payment of feudal service and a general obligation to give counsel and aid his lord, a knight received land, his fee.

[Back to the land terms index](#)

Kotsetla

In the 11th century, a ceorl, or free peasant, who owed one day's labour a week to his lord and extra days at harvest time. In return he was permitted to farm a small share of the common.

[Back to the land terms index](#)

Manor

A landholding unit in Medieval England. It was normally divided into two: the demesne, land kept under the lord's direct control and cultivated for his profit, and the tenants' holdings, land granted in return for service, whether free (for money rent) or unfree (for labour provided on the lord's demesne).

The proportion of demesne and tenanted land varied; some manors had no demesne, others no land holding tenants. Nor was it always coterminous with a village: some manors comprised several villages or one village might be divided between several manors. The lord of a manor exercised jurisdiction over his tenants in the court baron and some also held courts leet.

The manor's origin is unclear but manors were certainly present in the late Anglo-Saxon period and almost all were created before 1289. They retained their integrity as territorial, legal, and administrative units until the early modern period, and vestiges of the manorial system still exist.

[Back to the land terms index](#)

Man Trap

Man Traps, Spring Guns and Dog Spears were used to frighten off poachers and trespassers of all sorts. These barbarous implements flourished during the 17th and 18th centuries and earlier years of the 19th. The Man Trap was a very large double spring gin trap. The second spring was to ensure that if a person was caught by one leg only, he/she could not release the jaws by pressing the free foot on the other spring. Spring guns were loaded shotguns attached to a trip-wire. One of the manufacturers was Higham, Warrington. A decision was given on 22nd January 1820 it was legal to set these engines if public notice was given to that effect.

The Dog Spear was planted in undergrowth with the object of maiming a running dog.

A man-trap tale from Market Bosworth, Leicestershire, England:

In 1608, an elegant manor house - Bosworth Hall - was built by Sir Beaumont Dixie and the family occupied it for generations. Situated in elegant parkland it was later a hospital but is now a luxurious hotel. An indication of the first Sir Wolstan Dixie's personality is reflected by claims that he installed a man-trap in the grounds to ensnare a young hopeful after his daughter, Anne. However, it was Anne who fell foul of the device, which severed her leg at the ankle. She died of her injuries shortly afterwards.

<http://www.hinckley-times.co.uk/bosworth.html>

The man trap was used by land owners to inhibit the starving Irish peasants from stealing from orchards and fields where food was being grown. <http://www.iol.ie/tipp/faminech.htm>

[Back to the land terms index](#)

Manumission

The granting of the status of a free man, or franchise to a villein. Freedom was usually obtained by payment (quit rent) to the lord, who gave the villein his freedom (see quit claim) in a ceremony performed before the sheriff in court.

[Back to the land terms index](#)

Marquess

A rank of the peerage, standing below a duke and above an earl. It was first conferred in 1385 on Robert de Vere, 9th earl of Oxford. The oldest surviving marquessate is Winchester, created in 1551. A woman holding the rank is called a marchioness.

[Back to the land terms index](#)

Mesne tenure

A kind of sub-letting in feudal law, where land was held from a lord by a mesne, or middle, lord, from whom an inferior tenant then held it. The arrangement was called subinfeudation.

[Back to the land terms index](#)

Norman yoke

A phrase applied to Norman rule by those who saw the Norman conquest as leading to the overthrow of representative institutions and their replacement by despotic, autocratic government. The Normans were a continental ruling dynasty, descended from the Viking Rollo, who were recognised by England in 911. The concept of the Norman yoke was a powerful political force in the English civil war, when the Anglo-Saxon witan was equated with parliament and the Norman kings with Charles I.

[Back to the land terms index](#)

Peerage

In descending order of rank, dukes, marquesses, earls, viscounts and barons. The peerage originated from the tenants in chief, those who held land direct from the Norman kings. Although of different ranks they enjoyed the same privileges, notably the right to be tried by their 'peers' (latin *pares*, equals), which was last claimed in 1936 and abolished in 1948. The peers collectively comprise the lords temporal of the House of Lords.

[Back to the land terms index](#)

Pilgrimage of Grace (1536-37)

A series of risings against Henry VIII that originated as a protest in Lincolnshire against the dissolution of the smaller monasteries. These rebellious supporters of traditional religion were joined by feudal magnates opposed to the extension of royal control over the north and by peasants worried by the enclosure of arable

lands for pasture. The unrest spread to Yorkshire, where Robert Aske led the forces opposed to the King. The rebels did not coordinate their efforts, and no pitched battle took place. Their leaders were arrested and executed, and royal authority was restored by February 1537.

[Back to the land terms index](#)

Quit claim

The release by a lord of all claims that he might have against a villein, who in compensation for lost services paid a quit rent. (See Manumission)

[Back to the land terms index](#)

Reform Acts

Three measures of electoral reform in the 19th century which went some way to granting the vote to those who do not own land:

1. (1832) An act originated by the Whig government of Lord Grey in response to widespread unrest. The first reform bill was introduced in March 1831. It was defeated by the Tories in April and the government resigned. The general election returned the Whigs, who introduced a second bill in June. In October the Lords rejected it and riots, notably in Bristol, ensued. A third bill, introduced in December again met obstruction in the Lords. Only after William IV, in response to Grey's resignation and popular agitation, threatened to create sufficient new peers to override the opposition did the bill become law. The bill disenfranchised most rotten boroughs, and the released seats were redistributed amongst the counties and previously unrepresented boroughs. The franchise was extended in the counties from the freeholders of property worth 40 shillings a year to £10 copyholders and £50 short leaseholders and tenants-at-will; in the boroughs £10 householders were granted the vote. The electorate in England and Wales was immediately increased by some 50%, but the vote had been extended only to the prosperous middle class.
2. (1867) An act sponsored by Derby's Conservative government and largely the work of Disraeli that extended the franchise to another 938,000 voters (bringing the total to some two million). It extended the vote to £5 leaseholders and £12 occupiers in the counties and to all householders and rentpayers paying £10 per annum in the boroughs. Some 45 parliamentary seats were redistributed.
3. (1884) An act introduced by Gladstone's government in response to radicals' demands, that extended the household franchise to the counties; the total electorate thus increased from about three to about five million. A separate measure (1885) redistributed seats to achieve an exact correspondence throughout the country between population and representation.

[Back to the land terms index](#)

Rights of Common

Common Land is Land subject to Rights of Common - ie rights enjoyed by one or more persons to take or use part of a piece of land or the produce of a piece of land which is 'owned' by somebody else.

Ancient rights of common were usually of five kinds, although there were others:

- **of pasture:** the right to graze livestock; the animals permitted, whether sheep, horses, cattle, etc., were specified in each case.
- **of estovers:** the right to cut and take wood (but not timber), reeds heather bracken, etc.
- **of turbary:** the right to dig turf or peat for fuel.
- **in the soil:** the right to take sand, gravel, stone, coal, minerals, etc.
- **of piscary:** the right to take fish from ponds, streams etc.

[Back to the land terms index](#)

Serf

An unfree peasant. A serf was tied to the land, which he tilled in return for paying a fee in cash or kind and providing services to his lord. He enjoyed certain rights that distinguished him from a slave. Slaves are legally owned by a master and their function is only to provide services to him.

[Back to the land terms index](#)

Scutage

A payment made by a knight to the king in commutation of services owed for his fee. The term derives from the latin *scutum*, shield, part of the knight's accoutrement.

[Back to the land terms index](#)

Sheriff

A royal official who, from the early 11th century, came to replace the earl as the king's chief agent in the shire. The Sheriff (or *shire reeve*) was responsible for financial administration, the collection and local assessment of royal taxes, and the supervision of royal estates. He also sat in the shire court- although he did not preside over it until after the Norman conquest.

Abuse of their powers by sheriffs led to an inquest (1170), following which many were dismissed. The office lost its importance by the 16th century and the sheriff's duties now comprise chiefly the supervision of parliamentary elections, executing writs, and the summoning of jurors.

[Back to the land terms index](#)

Shire

A unit of local government that originated in 8th and 9th century Wessex. The shire system, which replaced the Roman provinces, was later extended to cover the whole of England. A shire usually took its name from its principal city. The king's interest was represented by an earldorman and later by a sheriff, who presided over the shire court and was responsible for the militia. The shires were replaced after the Norman invasion by the counties.

[Back to the land terms index](#)

Socage

A form of land tenure, in which the tenant owed any of a variety of (non-military) services in return for land. The term now refers to freehold tenure.

[Back to the land terms index](#)

Thegn

(Old English, *one who serves*). A noble of Anglo-Saxon England, having a wergild six times greater than that of a ceorl. A thegn held his estates, which were hereditary, in return for service to his lord. The duty of the King's thegns included attendance at the witan, military service, and administration in both central and local government. The importance of the thegns was diminished by the time of the Norman conquest because estates of a deceased thegn were divided amongst all his sons.

[Back to the land terms index](#)

Tithe

The payment of one-tenth of the earnings or produce of an inhabitant of a parish for the upkeep of the church. Originally voluntary, tithes were first enforced in the mid 10th century, and they became an important item in the income of parish priests. The payment of tithes was widely resented and became a political issue during the Interregnum, when Barebones Parliament sought to abolish them. They were also bitterly resented by the Roman Catholic majority in Ireland and formed one of the grievances of the Whiteboys.

A series of Tithe Acts (1836-91) replaced tithes with rent charges dependent on corn prices; these charges were abolished in 1936. Similar acts were later passed for Scotland and Ireland.

[Back to the land terms index](#)

Vassal

A feudal tenant holding land from a lord in return for his sworn loyalty and service. The vassal had to do homage and swear fealty to his lord.

[Back to the land terms index](#)

Villein

A Medieval peasant. The word is derived from the Latin *villanus*, villager- the class of person most frequently mentioned in the Domesday Book. Like the Anglo-Saxon gebur or geneat the villeins cultivated land in the village fields in return for labour services on the manorial farm. By the 13th century the villeins had become unfree peasants bound to their lords by rigid legal and economic ties. Economic and social changes, especially after the black death, had greatly weakened the institution of villeinage by the 15th century.

[Back to the land terms index](#)

Viscount

A rank of the peerage, below an earl and above a baron, originally a sheriff of a county and thus a deputy of a count or earl (Latin: *vicecomes*). The title was first used of a peer in 1440.

[Back to the land terms index](#)

Witan

The council of the Anglo-Saxon kings. It developed from Germanic assemblies summoned to witness royal grants of land. By the late 9th century the witan had become a formal gathering of the principle ealdormen, thegns and bishops, summoned by the king to give him advice and to witness acts of royal administration, such as grants of charters and church benefices, new laws, and royal decisions on taxation, foreign policy and defence. The witan played a valuable role in checking royal power and preventing autocracy. It also carried on the business of government during gaps in the succession.

[Back to the land terms index](#)

A brief chronology

1066 --Norman Invasion, imposition of [Norman Yoke](#)

1086 --[Domesday Book](#)

1470-1900 --[Enclosure](#)

1536-1540 --[Dissolution of the Monasteries](#)

1549 --[Kett's Rebellion](#)

1642-1649 --English Civil War

1649 --[The Diggers](#)

1870-1903 --[Irish Land Acts](#)

1879-1881 --[Irish Land League](#)

1800-1882 --[Highland Clearances](#)

1882 --[Crofters' War](#)

1995- --[The Land Is Ours](#), a landrights movement for Britain

Links:

[Das Kapital on dispossession from the land chapter 27](#)

<http://www.marx.org/Archive/1867-C1/Part8/ch27.htm>

[Land Occupation at St George's Hill](#) http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/tash_lodge/st_georg.htm

[General Land Rights](#) http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/tash_lodge/land1.htm

A brief outline of the Irish problem:

Ulster (or Northern Ireland) was one of the four provinces of the whole island of Ireland which refused to become a republic (or free state) earlier this century.

The Protestants there were given land centuries ago as payment for putting down Irish rebellions against English rule. They form a majority in Ulster, the most developed quarter of Ireland, and want to carry on being ruled from London. The Catholics were the traditional native Celtic inhabitants of Ireland.

The protagonists line up as follows:

Extreme Protestants: *Loyalists* Political party: *Ulster Unionists* Paramilitaries: *UVF, UFF*

Moderate Protestants: *Unionists* Political party: *Democratic Unionists*

Moderate Catholics: *Nationalists* Political party: *SDLP*

Extreme Catholics: *Republicans* Political party: *Sinn Fein* Paramilitaries: *IRA, INLA*

The extremists on both sides come from the poorest sections of the communities. The protestants own almost all the land and businesses and control the police force - the Royal Ulster Constabulary. Although in some cities in Northern Ireland the communities are entirely separated, in most towns and villages there is two of everything; church, bank, school, bakers, greengrocer etc. one for the Protestants and one for the Catholics. There are a number of towns that are exclusively Protestant, but few if any that are exclusively Catholic.

The two communities are fighting for access to the national wealth and resources, most of which the Protestants own.

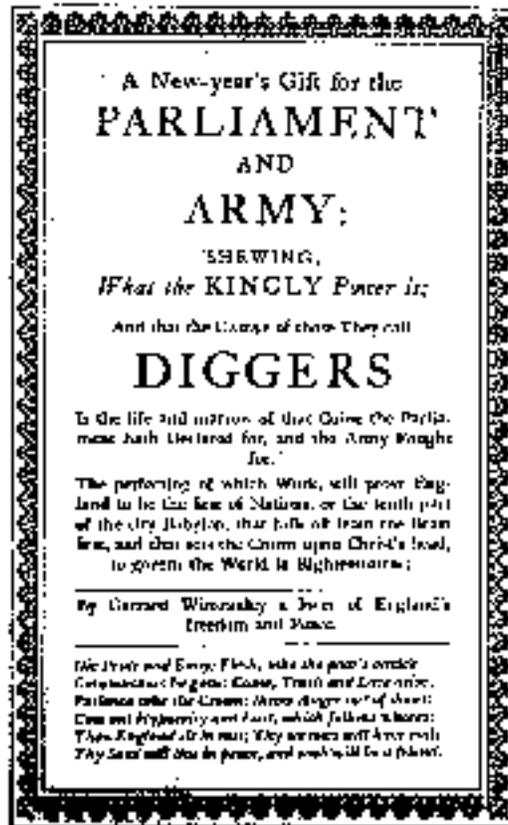
[to the index page](#)

[Index](#)

['Property'](#) | [Diggers](#) | [Gift](#) | [Oppressed](#) | [Fairfax](#)

Land and Freedom

Digger pamphlet by Gerrard Winstanley



A New-years Gift
FOR THE
PARLIAMENT
AND
ARMIE:

SHEWING,
What the KINGLY Power is;
And that the CAUSE of those
They call
DIGGERS

Is the life and marrow of that Cause the Parliament
hath Declared for, and the Army Fought for;

The perfecting of which Work, will prove *England*
to be the first of Nations, or the tenth part of the city
Babylon,

that falls off from the Beast first, and that sets the Crown
upon Christs head, to govern the World in
Righteousness:

By *Jerrard Winstanley* a lover of *Englands* freedom and
Peace.

Die Pride and Envie; Flesh, take the poor's advice.
Covetousnesse be gon: Come, Truth and Love arise.
Patience take the Crown; throw Anger out of dores:
Cast out Hypocrisie and Lust, which follows whores:
Then England sit in rest; Thy sorrows will have end;
Thy Sons will live in peace, and each will be a friend.

London, Printed for Giles Calvert, 1650.

A

New yeers Gift SENT TO THE PARLIAMENT AND ARMIE.

Gentlemen of the Parliament and Armie; you and the Common people have assisted each other, to cast out the Head of oppression which was Kingly power, seated in one mans hand, and that work is now done, and till that work was done you called upon the people to assist you to deliver this distressed bleeding dying nation out of bondage; And the people came and failed you not, counting neither purse nor blood too dear to part with to effect this work.

The Parliament after this have made an Act to cast out Kingly power, and to make *England* a free Common-wealth. These Acts the People are much rejoiced with, as being words forerunning their freedome, and they wait for their accomplishment that their joy may be full; for as words without action are a cheat, and kills the comfort of a righteous spirit, so words performed in action does comfort and nourish the life thereof.

Now Sirs, wheresoever we spie out Kingly power, no man I hope shall be troubled to declare it, nor afraid to cast it out, having both Act of Parliament, the Souldiers Oath, and the common peoples consent on his side; for Kingly power is like a great spread tree, if you lop the head or top-bow, and let the other Branches and root stand, it will grow again and recover fresher strength.

If any ask me, What Kingly power is? I Answer, there is a twofold Kingly power. The one is, the Kingly power of righteousnesse, and this is the power of Almighty God, ruling the whole creation in peace, and keeping it together. And this is the power of universal love, leading people into all truth, teaching every one to doe as he would be done unto. Now once more striving with flesh and blood, shaking down every thing that cannot stand, and bringing every one into the Unitie of himself, the one Spirit of love and righteousnesse, and so will work a through restauration. But this Kingly power is above all, and will tread-all covetousness, pride, envy, and self-love, and all other enemies whatsoever, under his feet and take the kingdom and government of the Creation out of the hand of self-seeking and self-honouring Flesh, and rule the alone King of Righteousness in the earth; and this indeed is Christ himself, who will cast out the curse; But this is not that Kingly power intended by that Act of Parliament to be cast out, but pretended to be set up, though this Kingly power be much fought against both by Parliament, Armie, Clergy, and people; but when the are made to see him, then they shall mourn, because they have persecuted him.

But the other Kingly power, is the power of unrighteousness, which indeed is the Devil; And O that there were such a heart in Parliament and Army, as to perform your own Act; then People would never complain of you for breach of Covenant, for your Covetousness, Pride, and too much Self-seeking that is in you. And you on the other-side would never have cause to complain of the Peoples murmurings against you. Truly this jarring that is between you and the People is, The Kingly power; yea that very

Kingly power which you have made an Act to cast out; therefore see it be fulfilled on your part; for the Kingly power of Righteousness expects it, or else he will cast you out for Hypocrites and unsavory Salt; for he looks upon all your Actions, and truly there is abundance of Rust about your Actings, which makes them that they do not shine bright.

This Kingly power, is covetousness in his branches, or the power of self-love, ruling in one or in many men over others, and enslaving those who in the Creation are their equals; nay, who are in the strictness of equity rather their Masters: And this Kingly power is usually set in the Chair of Government, under the name of Prerogative, when he rules in one, over other: And under the name of State Priviledge of Parliament, when he rules in many over others: and this Kingly power, is alwayes raised up, and established by the Sword, and therefore he is called the Murderer, or the great red Dragon, which fights against *Michael*, for he enslaves the weakness of the People under him, denying an equal freedom in the Earth to every one, which the Law of Righteousness gave every man in his creation. This I say is Kingly power under darkness, and as he rules in men, so he makes men jar one against another, and is the cause of all Wars and Complaining; he is known by his outward actions, and his action at this very day fills all places; for this power of darkness rules, and would rule, and is that only Enemy that fights against Creation and National Freedom: And this Kingly power is he, which you have made an Act of Parliament to cast out. And now you Rulers of *England*, play the men, and be valiant for the Truth, which is Christ: for assure your selves God will not be mocked, nor the Devil will not be mocked; for First you say and profess you own the Scriptures of Prophets and Apostles, and God looks that you should perform that Word in action: Secondly you have Declared against the Devil, and if you do not now go through with your work, but slack your hand by hypocritical self-love, and so suffer this dark Kingly power to rise higher and Rule, you shall find, he will maule both you, and yours to purpose.

The life of this dark Kingly power, which you have made an Act of Parliament and Oath to cast out, if you search it to the bottom, you shall see it lies within the iron chest of cursed Covetousness, Who gives the Earth to some part of mankind, and denies it to another part of mankind: and that part that hath the Earth, hath no right from the Law of creation to take it to himself, and shut out others; but he took it away violently by Theft and Murder in Conquest: As when our Norman *William* came into *England* and conquered, he turned the English out, and gave the Land unto his Norman Souldiers every man his parcel to inclose, and hence rose up Propriety; for this is the fruit if War from the beginning, for it removes Propriety out of a weaker into a stronger hand, but still upholds the curse of Bondage; and hereby the Kingly power which you have made an Act, and Sworn to cast out, does remove himself from one chair to another; and so long as the Sword rules over brethren, (mind what I say) so long the Kingly power of darkness Rules, and so large as yet is his Kingdom; which spreads from Sea to Sea, and fills she Earth; but Christ is rising who will take the Dominion and Kingdom out of his hand, and his power of Righteousness, shall rise and spred from East to West, from North to South, and fill the Earth with himself, and cast the other cursed power out, when Covetousness sheaths his Sword, and ceases to rage in the field; he first makes sharp Laws of Bondage, That those that are conquered, and that by him are appointed not to enjoy the Earth, but are turned out, shall be Servants, Slaves, and Vassals to the Conquerers party: so those Laws that upholds Whips, Prisons, Gallows is but the same power of the Sword that raged, and that was drunk with Blood in the field.

King *Charles*, it is true, was the Head of this Kingly power in *England*, and he Reigned as he was a Successor of the last Norman Conquerer: and whosoever you be, that hath Propriety of Land, hath your Titles and Evidences made to you in his or his Ancestors Name, and from his and their Will and Kingly Power; I am sure, he was not our Creator, and therefore parcelled out the Earth to some, and denied it to

others, therefore he must needs stand as a Conquerer, and was the Head of this Kingly power, that burden and oppresses the People, and that is the cause of all our Wars and Divisions; for if this Kingly power of Covetousness, which is the unrighteous Divider, did not yet Rule: both Parliament, Army, and rich People', would cheerfully give consent that those we call Poor should Dig and freely plant the Waste and Common Land for a livelihood, seeing there is Land enough, and more by half then is made use of, and not be suffered to perish for want. And yet O ye Rulers of *England*, you make a blazing profession, That you know, and that you own God, Christ, and the Scriptures: but did Christ ever declare such hardness of heart? did not he bid the rich man go and sell all that he hath and give to the Poor? and does not the Scripture say, If thou makest a Covenant, keep it, though it be to thy loss: But truly it will not be to your loss, to let your fellow Creatures, your equals in the Creation, nay those that have been faithful in your Cause, and so your Friends; I say it will not be to your loss to let them quietly improve the Waste and Common Land, that they may live in peace, freed from the heavie burdens of Poverty; for hereby our own Land will be increased with all sorts of Commodities, and the People will be knit together in love, to keep out a forreign Enemy that endeavours, and that will endeavour as yet, to come like an Army of cursed Ratts and Mice to destroy our inheritance; so that if this Freedom be quietly granted to us, you grant it but to your selves, to English-men, to your own flesh and blood: and you do but give us our own neither, which Covetousness, in the Kingly power hath, and yet does hold from us; for the Earth in the first Creation of it, was freely given to whole mankind, without respect of Persons; therefore you Lords of Mannors, and you Rulers of *England*, if you own God, Christ and Scripture, now make Restitution, and deliver us quiet possession of our Land, which the Kingly power as yet holds from us.

While this Kingly power rained in one man called *Charls*, all sort of people complained of oppression, both Gentry and Common people, because their lands, inclosures, and Copie-holds were intangled, and because their Trades were destroyed by Monopolizing Patentees, and your troubles were that you could not live free from oppression in the earth: Thereupon you that were the Gentry when you were assembled in Parliament, you called upon the poor Common People to come and help you, and cast out oppression and you that complained are helped and freed, and that top-bow is lopped off the tree of Tyrannie, and Kingly power in that one particular is cast out; but alas oppression is a great tree still, and keeps off the son of freedome from the poor Commons still, he hath many branches and great roots which must be grub'd up, before every one can sing Sions songs in peace.

As we spie out Kingly power we must declare it, and cast it out, or else we shall deny the Parliament of *England* and their Acts, and so prove Traitors to the Land, by denying obedience thereunto. Now there are Three Branches more of Kingly power greater then the former that oppresses this Land wonderfully; and these are the power of the Tithing Priests over the Tenths of our labours; and the power of Lords of Mannors, holding the free use of the Commons, and wast Land from the poor, and the intolerable oppression either of bad Laws, or of bad Judges corrupting good Laws; these are branches of the Norman conquest and Kingly power still, and wants a Reformation.

For as the first, *William* the Conqueror promised, That if the Clergie would preach him up, so that the people might be bewitched, so as to receive him to be Gods Anointed over them, he would give them the Tenths of the Lands increase yeerly; and they did it, and he made good his Promise; and do we not yet see, That if the Clergie can get tithes or Money, they will turn as the Ruling power turns, any way; to Popery, to Protestantisme; for a King, against a King, for Monarchy, for State-Government; they cry who bids most wages, they will be on the strongest side, for an Earthly maintenance; yea, and when they are lifted up, they woud Rule too, because they are called Spiritual men: It is true indeed, they are spiritual; but it is of the spiritual power of Covetousness and Pride; for the spiritual power of Love and

Righteousness they know not; for if they knew it, they would not persecute and raile against him as they do.

The Clergie will serve on any side, like our ancient Laws, that will serve any master: They will serve the Papists, they will serve the Protestants, they will serve the King, they will serve the States; they are one and the same Tools for Lawyers to work with under any Government. O you Parliament-men of *England*, cast those whorish Laws out of doors, that are so Common, that pretend love to every one, and is faithful to none; for truly, he that goes to Law, as the Proverb is, shall die a Beggar: so that old Whores, and old Laws, picks mens pockets, and undoes them: If the fault lie in the Laws, and much does, burn all your old Law-Books in *Cheapside*, & set up a Government upon your own Foundation: do not put new Wine into old Bottles; but as your Government must be new, so let the Laws be new, or else you will run farther into the Mud, where you stick already, as though you were fast in an *Irish Bogge*; for you are so far sunke, that he must have good eyes that can see where you are: but yet all are not blind, there are eyes that sees you: but if the fault lies in the Judges of the Law, surely such men deserve no power in a Reforming Common-wealth, that burdens all sorts of People.

And truly Ile tell you plain, your Two Acts of Parliament are excellent and Righteous: The One to cast out Kingly power; The Other to make *England* a Free Common-wealth: build upon these Two, it is a firm Foundation, and your House will be the glory of the World; and I am confident, the righteous Spirit will love you: do not stick in the Bogge of Covetousness; Let not self-love so be-muddy your brain, that you should lose your selves in the thicket of bramble bush-words, and set never a strong Oak of some stable Action for the Freedome of the poor Oppressed that helped you when you complained of Oppression. Let not Pride blind your eyes, that you should forget you are the Nations Servants, and so prove *Solomons* words good in your selves, That Servants ride on Horse-back and Coaches, when as Princes, such as Chose you, and set you there, go on foot: and many of them, through their love to the Nation, have so wasted themselves, that now they can hardly get Bread, but with great difficulty. I tell you this is a sore Evil, and this is truth; therefore think upon it, it is a poor mans Advice, and you shall finde weight in it, if you Do as well as Say.

Then Secondly for Lords of Mannors, They were *William* the Conquerors Colonels and Favourites, and he gave a large circuit of Land to every one, called A Lord-ship, that they might have a watchful eye, that if any of the conquered English should begin to Plant themselves upon any Common or waste Land, to live out of sight or out of slavery, that then some Lord of Mannour or other might see and know of it, and drive them off, as these Lords of Mannors now a dayes, endeavours to drive off the Diggers from Digging upon the Commons; but we expect the Rulers of the Land will grant unto us their Friends, the benefit of their own Acts against Kingly power, and not suffer that Norman power to crush the poor Oppressed, who helped them in their straits, nor suffer that Norman power to bud fresher out, & so in time may come to over-top our deer bought Freedom more then ever.

Search all your Laws, and Ile adventure my life, for I have little else to lose, That all Lords of Mannors hold Title to the Commons by no stronger hold then the Kings Will, whose Head is cut off; and the King held Title as he was a Conqueror; now if you cast off the King who was the Head of that power, surely the power of Lords of Mannors is the same; therefore performe your own Act of Parliament, and cast out that part of the Kinglie power likewise, that the People may see you understand what you Say and Do, and that you are faithfull.

For truly the Kinglie power reigns strongly in the Lords of Mannors over the Poor; for my own

particular, I have in other Writings as well as in this, Declared my Reasons, That the common Land is the poor Peoples Proprietie; and I have Digged upon the Commons, and I hope in time to obtain the Freedom, to get Food and Raiment therefrom by righteous labour, which is all I desire; and for so doing, the supposed Lord of that Mannor hath Arrested me twice; First, in an Action of £20. Trespass for Plowing upon the Commons, which I never did; and because they would not suffer me to Plead my own Cause, they made shift to pass a Sentence of Execution against some Cows I kept, supposing they had been mine, and took them away; but the right owner reprieved them, & fetched the Cowes back; so greedy are these Theeves and Murderers after my life for speaking the truth, and for maintaining the Life and Marrow of the Parliaments cause in my Actions.

And now they have Arrested me again in an Action of £4. trespas for digging upon the Comons, which I did, & own the work to be righteous & no trespas to any: This was the Attorney of *Kingstone's* Advice, either to get Money on both sides, for they love Mony as deerly as a poor mans dog do his breakfast in a cold morning (but regard not justice) or else, That I should not remove it to a higher Court, but that the cause might be tryed there, and then they know how to please the Lords of Mannors, that have resolved to spend hundreds of pounds but they will hinder the poor from enjoying the Commons; for they will not suffer me to plead my own Cause, but I must not Fee an enemie, or else be condemned and executed without mercy or Justice as I was before, and so to put me in Prison till I pay their unrighteous Sentence; for truly Attourneys are such neat workmen, that they can turn a Cause which way those that have the biggest purse will have them: and the Countrie knows very well, That *Kingstone* court is so full of the Kinglie power; that some will rather lose their Rights, then have their causes tryed there: one of the Officers of that court, told a friend of mine, That if the Diggers cause was good, he would pick out such a jurie as should overthrow him: And upon my former Arrest, they picked out such a jurie as Sentenced me to pay £10. damages for Plowing upon the commons, which I did not do, neither did any witness prove it before them: So that from *Kingstone* Juries, Lords of Mannors, and Kinglie power, *Good Lord deliver us.*

Do these men obey the Parliaments Acts, to throw down Kinglie power? O no: The same unrighteous doing that was complained of in King *Charls* dayes, the same doings is among them still: Monies will buy and sell Justice still: and is our 8 yeers Wars come round about to lay us down again in the kennel of injustice as much or more then before? are we no farther learned yet? O ye Rulers of *England*, when must we turn over a new leaf? Will you alwayes hold us in one Lesson? surely you will make Dunces of us; then all the Boyes in other Lands will laugh at us: come, I pray let us take forth, and go forward in our learning.

You blame us who are the Common people as though we would have no government; truly Gentlemen, We desire a righteous government with all our hearts, but the government we have gives freedom and livelihood to the Gentry, to have abundance, and to lock up Treasures of the Earth from the poor, so that rich men may have chests full of Gold and Silver, and houses full of Corn and Goods to look upon; and the poor that works to get it, can hardly live, and if they cannot work like Slaves, then they must starve. And thus the Law gives all the Land to some part of mankind whose Predecessors got it by conquest, and denies it to others, who by the righteous Law of Creation may claim an equall portion; and yet you say this is a righteous government, but surely it is no other but self-ishness, which is the great Red Dragon the Murtherer.

England is a Prison; the variety of subtilties in the Laws preserved by the Sword, are bolts, bars, and doors of the prison; the Lawyers are the Jaylors, and poor men are the prisoners; for let a man fall into the hands of any from the Bailiffe to the Judge, and he is either undone, or wearie of his life.

Surely this power the Laws, which is the great Idoll that people dote upon, is the burden of the Creation, a Nurserie of Idleness, luxurie, and cheating, the only enemie of Christ the King of righteousness; for though it pretend justice, yet the Judges and Law-Officers, buy and sell Justice for money, and wipes their mouths like *Solomons* whore, and says it is my calling, and never are troubled at it.

Two things must cast out this Idoll: First, Let not people send their children to those Nurseries of Covetousness, *The Innes of Court*. Secondly, let not people live in contention, but fulfill Christs last commandment, *Love*; and endeavour to practice that full point of the Law and the Prophets, *Doe as you would be done by*, and so cast out envie and discontent. Woe to you Lawyers, for your trade is the bane and miserie of the world; your power is the only power that hinders Christ from rising; the destruction of your power will be the life of the World; it is full of confusion, it is Babylon, and surely its fall is neer, in regard the light of truth is rising, who will continue your power, but save your persons by the words of his mouth, and brightnesse of his coming.

The Lawyers trade is one of the false Prophets, that says, Lo here is Christ, Ile save you in this Court, and lo there is Christ, Ile save you in that Court: but when we have tried all, we are lost, and not saved, for we are either utterly made Beggars by this Saviour, the Law, or else we are nursed up in hardnesse of heart and cruelty against our fellow creature whom we ought to love and preserve, and not destroy: This Saviour jeeres righteousness, and bids every man save himself, and never regard what becomes of another, and so is a plain destroyer of the Creation; Surely that Wo pronounced against Lawyers by the Man Christ must be fulfilled, delay is no payment: Therefore you Parliament and Army that have power in your hands, reform the Law; and suffer none to be called to practice Law but reformed ones; nay suffer every man to plead his own cause, and choose his own Lawyer, where he finds the most ingenuous man: Wel, every mans burthen in this Age fills their mouths with words of Lamentation against Law and Lawyers sufficiently; therefore you that have an opportunitie to ease the cry of the oppressed, shut not your eies and eares, but cast out this covetous corruption whereby corrupt Lawyers doe oppress the People; it is another Branch of the Kingly power.

You Gentlemen of *Surrey*, and Lords of Mannors, and you Mr Parson *Platt* especially, that lay almost a fortnight waiting and tempting the Lord *Fairfax* to send Souldiers to drive off the Diggers, when he granted your Desire, it was but to secure the Shereiff, for he did not give them commission to beat us, which we thank him for; and we thank the Souldiers for their moderation, that they would not strike poor wormes, *Englands* and the creations faithfull friends, though you would have moved them thereunto. My Advice to you Gentlemen is this, Hereafter to lie still and cherish the Diggers, for they love you, and would not have your finger ake if they could help it; and why should you be so bitter against them? Oh let them live by you, some of them have been Souldiers, and some countrie-men that were alwayes friends to the Parliaments cause, by whose hardship and meanes you enjoy the creatures about you in peace; and will you now destroy part of them that have preserved your lives? O do not do so; be not so besotted with the Kinglie power; hereafter let not the Attourneyes or Lawyers neatly council your Money out of your purses, and stir you up to beat and abuse the Diggers, to make all rational men laugh at your folly, and condemn you for your bitterness: If you have yet so much Money give it not away to destroy men, but give it to some poor or other to be a Stock, and bid them go and Plant the common; this will be your honour, and your comfort; assure your selves you never must have true comfort tell you be friends with the poor; therefore come, come, love the Diggers, and make restitution of their Land you from them; for what would you do if you had not such labouring men to work for you?

And you great Officers of the Army and Parliament, love your common Souldiers, (I plead for Equity

and Reason) and do not force them by long delay of Payment to sell you their deer bought Debenters for a thing of naught, and then to go and buy our common Land, and crown Land, and other Land that is the spoil one of another, therewith: Remember you are Servants to the commons of *England*, and you were Volunteers in the Wars, and the common people have paid you for your pains so largely, that some of us have not left our selves hardly bread to eat; and therefore if there be a spoil to be gathered of crown Lands, Deans, Bishops, Forrests Lands and commons, that is to come to the poor commons freely; and you ought to be content with your wages, unless you will denie Christ and the Scriptures; and you ought not to go and buy one of another that which is common to all the Nation; for you ought neither to buy nor sell other mens Proprietie by the Law of creation; for Christ gives you no such Warrant. As soon as you have freed the Earth from one intanglement of Kinglie power, will you intangle it more, and worse by another degree of Kinglie power? I pray consider what you do, and do righteously: We that are the poor commons, that paid our Money, and gave you free Quarter, have as much Right in those crown Lands and Lands of the spoil as you; therefore we give no consent That you should buy and sell our crown Lands and waste Lands, for it is our purchased inheritance from under Oppression, it is our own, even the poor common peoples of *England*: It was taken from us, and hath been held from us by former conquests, whereof the Norman conquest was the last, which is cast out by yours and our joynt Assistance; therefore you cannot in Equity take it from us, nor we cannot in Equity take it from you, for it is our joynt purchased inheritance; we paid you your wages to help us to recover it, but not to take it to your selves, and turn us out, and buy and sell it among your selves; for this is a cheat of the Kinglie swordlie power which you hold up; and we profess to all the world, in so doing you denie God, Christ, and the Scriptures whom ye professed you own: for God, Christ, and Scriptures owne no such practice: Likewise we profess to all the Creation, That in so doing you rob us of our Rights; & you kill us, by denying to give us our livelihood in our own inheritance freely, which is the crown Land and Comon Land and waste Lands, Bishops & Deans, which some of you begin to say you are not satisfied in your conscience to let us have; I, well spoke tender hearted Covetousness; if you do so you will uphold the Kinglie power, and so disobey both Acts of Parliament, and break your Oath, and you will live in the breach of those Two Commandments, *Thou shalt not kill: Thou shalt not steal*; by denying us the Earth which is our Livelyhood, and thereby killing us by a lingring death.

Well, the end of all my Speech is to point out the Kingly power, where I spie it out, and you see it remains strongly in the hands of Lords of Mannors, who have delt discourteously with some who are sincere in heart, though there have some come among the Diggers that have caused scandall, but we dis-own their wayes.

The Lords of Mannors have sent to beat us, to pull down our houses, spoil our labours; yet we are patient, and never offered any violence to them again, this 40 weeks past, but wait upon God with love till their hearts thereby be softened; and all that we desire is, but to live quietly in the land of our nativity, by our righteous labour, upon the common Land which is our own, but as yet the Lords of the Mannor so formerly called, will not suffer us, but abuse us. Is not that part of the Kingly power? In that which follows I shall cleerly prove it is, for it appears so cleer that the understanding of a child does say, It is Tyranny, it is the Kingly power of darkness, therefore we expect that you will grant us the benefit of your Act of Parliament that we may say, Truly *England* is a Common-wealth, and a free people indeed.

Sire, Though your Tithing Priests and others tell you, That we Diggers do deny God, Christ, and the Scripture, to make us odious, and themselves better thought of; yet you will see in time when the King of Righteousness whom we serve does cleer our innocencie, That our actions and conversation is the very life of the Scripture, and holds forth the true power of God and Christ. For is not the end of all preaching,

praying, and profession wrapped up in this action, (namely, *Love your enemies, and doe to all men, as you would they should do to you, (or this is the very Law and the Prophets.* This is the New Commandement that Christ left behind him. Now if any seem to say this, and does not do this, but acts contrary, for my part I owne not their wayes, they are members that uphold the curse.

Bare talking of righteousnesse, and not acting, hath ruled, and yet does rule king of darkness in the creation; and it is the cause of all this immoderate confusion and ignorance that is in men.

But the actings of righteousnesse from the inward power of love, shall rule King of righteousnesse to the creation now in these later dayes, and cast the other Serpent and fiery Scorpion out; for this is Christ the restoring power: and as he rises up, so multitude of words without action (which is hypocrisie) is to die, his judgment hastens apace.

If any sort of people hold the earth to themselves by the dark Kingly power, and shut out others from that freedom, they deny God, Christ, and Scriptures, and they overthrow all their preaching praying, and profession; for the Scriptures declare them to be Hypocrites, Scribes and Pharisees, *that say, and do not;* they have words, and no deeds: Like Parson *Platt* the Preacher at *Horsley* in *Surrey*, a Lord of Mannor (by marriage) of the place where we digg, who caused a poor old mans house that stood upon the Common, to be pulled down in the evening of a cold day, and turned the old man, and his wife, and daughter to lie in the open field, because he was a Digger: and he, and other Lords of Mannors, and Gentlemen sent their servants up and down the Town, to bid their Tenants and neighbours, neither to give the Diggers lodging nor victuals., on pain of their displeasure. Though this Parson *Platt* preach the Scriptures, yet I'll affirm, he denyes God, Christ, and Scriptures, and knowes nothing of them; for covetousness, pride, and envie hath blinded his eyes. A man knowes no more of righteousnesse than he hath power to act; and surely, this cruelty of preaching *Platt* is an unrighteous act.

If the Diggers were enemies, (oh you Lords of Mannors) as are not, you ought to love them: I am sure, they love you; a you doubt it, put them to the tryall; you shall find them more faithfull than many of those pick-thank slaves, and belly-god servants to whom your ears are open, when they bring tales full of envie to you against us.

We are told likewise, That to make us who are called Diggers odious, and to incense you against us, there came to the Generall and Councill of State, divers Justices, and others, and told you, that we Diggers were Cavaliers, and that we waited an opportunity, and gathered together to stand up for the Prince.

But all that know us can prove that to be a false report, to the dishonour of those justices; for we have been friends to the Parliaments cause, and so do continue, and will continue; for this work of digging, to make *England* a free Common-wealth, is the life and marrow of the Parliaments cause. And the two Acts of Parliament, the One, to cast out Kingly power, the Other, to make *England* a free Common-wealth, declares it: and we do obey those Acts, and will obey them, for they hold forth righteousnesse.

But for our rising in arms for the Prince, or any other, let any come and see our strength and work, and they will say, It is a meer envious slander cast upon us, to incense you against us.

Besides, You shall see by and by, That our principles are wholly against Kingly power in every one, as well as in one. Likewise we hear that they told you, that the Diggers do steal and rob from others, This likewise is a slander: we have things stollen from us; but if any can prove that any of us do steal any mans proper goods, as Sheep, Geese, Pigs, as they say, let such be made a spectacle to all the world: For my part, I own no such doing, neither do I know any such thing by any of the Diggers. Likewise they

report, that we Diggers hold women to be common, and live in that bestialnesse: For my part, I declare against it; I own this to be a truth, That the earth ought to be a common Treasury to all; but as for women, *Let every man have his own wife, and every woman her own husband*; and I know none of the Diggers that act in such an unrationall excesse of female communitie: If any should, I professe to have nothing to do with such people, but leave them to their own Master, who will pay them with torment of minde, and diseases in their bodies.

These and such-like tales, we hear, are brought to you, to incense you against us: but we desire you to mark them that bring them for we partly know who they be, and we can tell them to their faces, they were Cavaliers, and had hands in the Kentish Rising, and in stirring up that offensive *Surrey* Petition, which was the occasion of bloodshed in *Westminster*-yard, and they would rejoyce to see the Prince come in with an Armie to over-top you: for we know, they love you not but from the teeth outwards, for their own ends: And these are the proud *Hamans*, that would incense you against the *Mordecaies* of the Land, even our true-hearted friends, the Diggers. Well, in the midst of our slanders we rejoyce in the uprightness of our hearts, and we do *commit our cause to him that judgeth righteously*.

Upon these lying reports, and importunitie to the General, it seems the General granted the Lords of Mannor to have some souldiers to go along with the Sheriff, to pull down the Diggers houses; and so the souldiers did come: but they were very moderate and rationall men, and as they were sent to secure the Sheriff, so they did: but there was no cause; for, though the Gentlemen possess'd the General, that they feared opposition from the Diggers, yet the souldiers saw they lifted not up a finger in discontent, but fought against those dragons, the Lords of Manors, with the spirit of love and patience: for when the two Lords of Manor sat among the souldiers on horsback and coach, and commanded their fearfull tenants to pull down one of the Diggers houses before their faces, and rejoyced with shouting at the fall; yet some of the Diggers stood by, and were very chearfull, and preached the Gospel to those Turkish *Bashaws*, which are words of life, and in time will prove words of terrour, to torment their awakened consciences.

And the poor tenants that pulled down the house, durst do no other, becuse their Land-lords and Lords looked on, for fear they should be turned out of service, or their livings; as a poor honest man, because he looked with a cheerfull countenance upon the Diggers (though he was affraid to come neer, or affraid to speak openly, lest his Landlords setting-dogs should smell the sound of his words, and carry a pick-thank tale, which his Lords ears are much open to) a Baily was sent presently to him, to warn him out of his house.

Can the Turkish Bashaws hold their slaves in more bondage than these Gospel-professing Lords of Manors do their poor tenants? and is not this the Kingly power? O you rulers of *England*, I pay see that your acts be obeyed, and let the oppressed go free.

And when the poor enforced slaves had pulled down the house, then their Lords gave them ten shillings to drink, and there they smiled one upon another; being fearfull, like a dog that is kept in awe, when his Master gives him a bone, and stands over him with a whip; he will eat, and look up, and twinch his tail; for they durst not laugh out, lest their Lords should hear they jeer'd them openly; for in their hearts they are Diggers. Therefore, you Lords of Manors, if you have none to stand for you but whom you force by threatning, then leave off striving against the spirit, and say you are fallen, and come in and embrace righteousness, that you may finde mercy betimes.

The next day after this, there came two souldiers and three Country-men to another house which the Diggers had set up, (which the Sheriff the day before had let alone, for, as some say, he was grieved to

see what was done,) one of these souldiers was very civill, and walked lovingly with the Diggers round their corn which they had planted, and commended the work, and would do no harm (as divers others were of the same minde) and when he went his way, gave the Diggers 12 d. to drink: but the other souldier was so rude, that he forced those three Country-men to help him to pull down the house, and railed bitterly: the men were unwilling to pull it down; but for fear of their Landlords, and the threatning souldier, they did put their hands to pull it down.

And seeing Parson *Platt* (the Lord of that Manor) will not suffer the Diggers to have a house, (wherein he forgets his Master Christ, that is persecuted in naked, hungry, and houselesse members) yet the Diggers were mighty cheerfull, and their spirits resolve to wait upon God, to see what he will do, and they have built them some few little hutches like calf-cribs, and there they lie anights, and follow their work adayes still with wonderfull joy of heart, taking the spoyling of their goods cheerfully, counting it a great happinesse to be persecuted for righteousnesse sake, by the Priests and Professors, that are the successors of *Judas*, and the bitter-spirited Pharisees that put the man Christ *Jesus* to death. And they have planted divers Acres of Wheat and Rye, which is come up, and promises a very hopefull crop, committing their cause to God, and wait upon him, saying, O thou King of righteousnesse, do thine own work.

O that you would search and try our wayes narrowly, and see whether we deny God, Christ, Scriptures, as the Priests slander us we do; and you shall finde, that the Scriptures warrant our action, and God in Christ is the life of our souls, and the support of our spirits in the midst of this our sharp persecution from the hands of unreasonable men, who have not faith in Christ, but uphold the Kingly power, which you have Voted down.

Likewise, you shall see, that we live in the performance of that work which is the very life and marrow of the Parliaments Cause, whereby we honour the Parliament and their Cause: as you shall see by this following Declaration, unfolding the foundation whereupon *Englands* Laws are, or the Freedom of a Common-wealth ought to be built, which is Equity and Reason.

In the time of the Kings, who came in as Conquerors, and ruled by the power of the Sword, not only the Common land, but the Inclosures also were captivated under the will of those Kings, till now of late that our later Kings granted more freedom to the Gentry than they had presently after the conquest; yet under bondage still: for what are prisons, whips and gallows in the times of peace, but the laws and power of the sword, forcing and compelling obedience, and so enslaving, as if the sword raged in the open field?

England was in such a slavery under the Kingly power, that both Gentry and Commonaltie groaned under bondage; and to ease themselves, they endeavoured to call a Parliament, that by their counsels and decrees they might find some freedom.

But *Charles* the then King perceiving that the Freedom they strove for, would derogate from his Prerogative-tyranny, therupon he goes into the North, to raise a War against the Parliament, and took *WILLIAM the Conqueror's* Sword into his hand again, thereby to keep under the former conquered English, and to uphold his Kingly power of self-will and Prerogative, which was the power got by former Conquests; that is, to rule over the lives and estates of all men at his will, and so to make us pure slaves and vassals.

Well, This Parliament, that did consist of the chief Lords, Lord of Manors, and Gentry, and they seeing

that the King, by raising an Army, did thereby declare his intent to enslave all sorts to him by the sword; and being in distresse, and in a low ebb, they call upon the common people to bring in their Plate, Moneys, Taxes Free-quarter, Excise, and to adventure their lives with them, and they would endeavour to recover *England* from that *Norman* yoak, and make us a free people: and the common people assent hereunto, and call this the Parliaments Cause, and own it, and adventure person and purse to preserve it; and by the joynt assistance of Parliament and People, the King was beaten in the field, his head taken off, and his Kingly power voted down; and we the Commons thereby virtually have recovered our selves from the Norman Conquest, we want nothing but possession of the spoyl, which is a free use of the Land for our livelyhood.

And from hence we the common people, or younger brothers plead our propriety in the Common land, as truly our own by vertue of this victory over the King; as our elder brothers can plead proprietie in their Inclosures; and that for three reasons in *Englands* law.

First, By a lawfull purchase or contract between Parliament and us; for they were our Landlords and Lords of Mannors that held the freedom of the Commons from us, while the King was in his power; for they held title thereunto from him, he being the head, and they branches of the Kingly power, that enslaved the people by that ancient Conquerors Sword, that was the ruling power: For they said, Come and help us against the King that enslaves us, that we may be delivered from his Tyranny, and we will make you a free People.

Now they cannot make us free, unlesse they deliver us from the bondage which they themselves held us under; and that is, they held the freedom of the Earth from us: for we in part with them have delivered our selves from the King: now we claim freedom from that bondage you have, and yet do hold us under, by the bargain and contract between Parliament and us, who (I say) did consist of Lords of Manors, and Landlords, whereof Mr. *Drake*, who hath arrested me for digging upon the Common, was one at that time: Therefore by the law of Bargain and Sale, we claim of them our freedom, to live comfortably with them in this Land of our Nativity; and this we cannot do, so long as we lie under poverty, and must not be suffered to plant the commons and waste land for our livelihood: for, take away the land from any people, and those people are in a way of continuall death and misery; and better not to have had a body, than not to have food and rayment for it. But (I say) they have sold us our freedom in the common, and have been largely paid for it; for by means of our bloods and money, they sit in peace: for if the King had prevailed, they had lost all, and been in slavery to the meanest Cavalier, if the King would. Therefore we the Commons say, Give us our bargain: if you deny us our bargain, you deny God, Christ, and Scriptures; and all your profession then is and hath been hypocrisie.

Secondly, The Commons and Crown land is our propriety by equall conquest over the Kingly power: for the Parl. did never stir up the people by promises and covenant to assist them to cast out the King, and to establish them in the Kings place and prerogative power; No, but all their Declarations were for the safety and peace of the whole Nation.

Therefore the common-people being part of the Nation, and especially they that bore the greatest heat of the day in casting out the oppressor: and the Nation cannot be in peace, so long as the Poor oppressed are in wants, and the land is intangled and held from them by bondage.

But the Victory being obtained over the King, the spoyl which is properly in the Land, ought in equity to be divided now between the two Parties, that is, Parliament and Common-people. The Parliament, consisting of Lords of Manors, and Gentry, ought to have their inclosure Lands free to them without

molestation, as they are freed from the Court of Wards.

And the Common-people, consisting of Souldiers, and such as paid Taxes and Free-quarter, ought to have the freedom of all waste and common land, and Crown-land equally among them; the Souldiery ought not in equity to have all, nor the other people paid them to have all; but the spoyle ought to be divided between them that stay'd at home, and them that went to Warr; for the Victory is for the whole Nation.

And as the Parliament declared, they did all for the Nation, and not for themselves onely; so we plead with the Armie, they did not fight for themselves, but for the freedom of the Nation: and I say, we have bought our Freedom of them likewise by Taxes and Free-quarter: therefore we claim an equall Freedom with them in this Conquest over the King.

Thirdly We claim an equall portion in the Victory over the King, by vertue of the two Acts of Parliament, the One to make *England* a Free-Common-wealth; the Other to take away Kingly power. Now the Kingly power (you have heard) is a power that rules by the Sword in covetousnesse and self, giving the earth to some, and denying it to others: and this Kingly power was not in the hand of the King alone; but Lords, and Lords of Manors, and corrupt Judges, and Lawyers especially, held it up likewise; for he was the head, and they, with the Tything-priests are the branches of that Tyrannical Kingly power; and all the several limbs and members must be cast out; before Kingly power can be pulled up root and branch. Mistake me not, I do not say, Cast out the persons of men: No, I do not desire their fingers to ake: but I say, Cast out their power, whereby they hold the people in bondage, as the King held them in bondage. And I say, it is our own Freedom we claim, both by bargain, and by equality in the Conquest; as well as by the Law of righteous Creation, which gives the Earth to all equally.

And the power of Lords of Mannors lies in this: They deny the Common people the use and free benefit of the Earth, unless they give them leave, and pay them for it, either in Rent, in Fines, in Homages, or Heriots. Surely the Earth was never made by God, that the Younger brother should not live in the Earth, unless he would work for, and pay his Elder brother Rent for the Earth: No; this Slavery came in by Conquest, and it is part of the Kingly power; and *England* cannot be a Free Common-wealth, till this Bondage be taken away. You have taken away the King; you have taken away the House of Lords: Now step two steps further, and take away the power of Lords of Mannors, and of Tything Priests, and the intolerable oppressions of Judges, by whom Laws are corrupted; and your work will be honourable.

Fourthly, if this Freedom be denied the Common people, To enjoy the Common Land; then Parliament, Army and Judges will deny Equity and Reason, whereupon the Laws of a well-governed Common-wealth ought to be built: And if this Equity be denied then there can be no Law, but Club-Law, among the people: and if the Sword must raign, then every Party will be striving to bear the Sword; and then farewell Peace; nay, farewell Religion and Gospel, unless it be made use of to intrap one another, as we plainly see some Priests and others make if a Cloke for their Knavery. If I adventure my life, and fruit of my labour, equal with you, and obtain what we strive for; it is both Equity and Reason, that I should equall divide the Spoil with you, and not you to have all, and I none: And if you deny us this, you take away our Propriety from us, our Moneys and Blood, and give us nothing for it.

Therefore, I say, the Common Land is my own Land, equal with my fellow-Commoners; and our true Propriety, by the Law of Creation: it is every ones, but not one single ones: Yea, the Commons are as truely ours by the last excellent two Acts of Parliament, the Foundation of *Englands* new righteous Government aimed at, as the Elder brothers can say the Inclosures are theirs: for they adventured their

Lives, and covenanted with us to help them to preserve their Freedom: And we adventured our lives, and they covenanted with us, to purchase and to give us our Freedom, that hath been hundreds of yeers kept from us.

Daemona non Armis, sed Morte subegit Jesus.

*By patient Sufferings, not by Death,
Christ did the Devil kill;
And by the same, still to this day,
his Foes he conquers still.*

True Religion, and undefiled, is this, To make restitution of the Earth, which hath been taken and held from the Common people, by the power of Conquests formerly, and so *set the oppressed free*. Do not All strive to enjoy the Land? The Gentry strive for Land. the Clergie strive for Land, the Common people strive for Land; and Buying and Selling is an Art, whereby people endeavour to cheat one another of the Land. Now if any can prove, from the Law of Righteousness, that the Land was made peculiar to him and his successively, shutting others out, he shall enjoy it freely, for my part: But I affirm, It was made for all; and true- Religion is, To let every one enjoy it. Therefore, you Rulers of *England*, make restitution of the Lands which the Kingly power holds from us: *Set the oppressed free*; and come in, and honour Christ, who is the Restoring Power, and you shall finde rest.

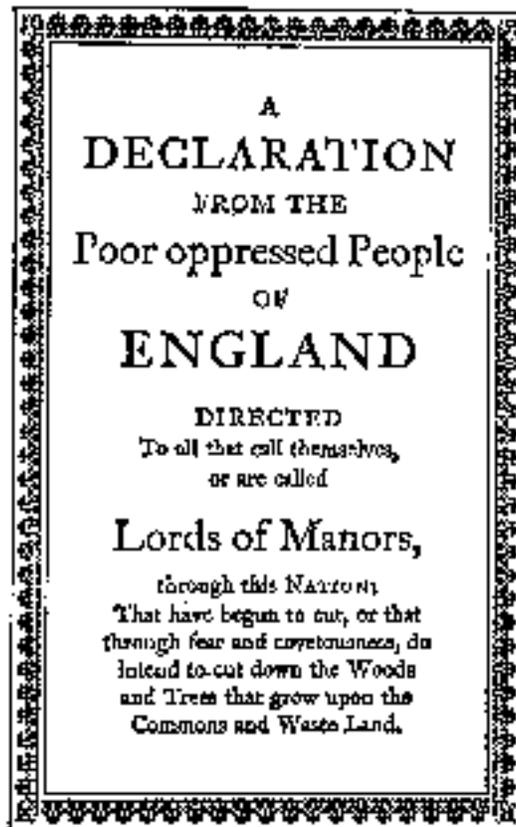
[To the site index](#)

[Index](#)

['Property'](#) | [Diggers](#) | [Gift](#) | [Oppressed](#) | [Fairfax](#)

Land and Freedom

Digger pamphlet by Gerrard Winstanley



A
DECLARATION
FROM THE
Poor oppressed People
OF

ENGLAND,
DIRECTED
To all that call themselves, or are called
Lords of Manors,
through this NATION;
That have begun to cut, or that through
fear and covetousness, do intend to cut down
the Woods and Trees that grow upon the
Commons and Waste Land.
Printed in the Yeer, 1649.

A
DECLARATION
FROM THE
Poor oppressed People of *England*.

We whose names are subscribed, do in the name of all the poor oppressed people in *England*, declare unto you, that call your selves lords of Manors, and Lords of the Land, That in regard the King of Righteousness, our Maker, hath inlightened our hearts so far, as to see, That the earth was not made purposely for you, to be Lords of it, and we to be your Slaves, Servants, and Beggars; but it was made to be a common Livelihood to all, without respect of persons: And that your buying and selling of Land, and the Fruits of it, one to another, is *The cursed thing*, and was brought in by War; which hath, and still does establish murder, and theft, In the hands of some branches of Mankind over others, which is the greatest outward burden, and unrighteous power, that the Creation groans under: For the power of inclosing Land, and owning Propriety, was brought into the Creation by your Ancestors by the Sword; which first did murther their fellow Creatures, Men, and after plunder or steal away their Land, and left this Land successively to you, their Children. And therefore, though you did not kill or theeve, yet you hold that cursed thing in your hand, by the power of the Sword; and so you justifie the wicked deeds of your Fathers; and that sin of your Fathers, shall be visited upon the Head of you, and your Children, to the third and fourth Generation, and longer too, till your bloody and theiving power be rooted out of the

Land.

And further, in regard the King of Righteousness hath made us sensible of our burthens, and the cries and groanings of our hearts are come before him: We take it as a testimony of love from him, That our hearts begin to be freed from slavish fear of men, such as you are; and that we find Resolutions in us, grounded upon the inward law of Love, one towards another, To Dig and Plough up the Commons, and waste Lands through *England*; and that our conversation shall be so unblameable, That your Laws shall not reach to oppress us any longer, unless you by your Laws will shed the innocent blood that runs in our veins.

For though you and your Ancestors got your Propriety by murder and theft, and you keep it by the same power from us, that have an equal right to the Land with you, by the righteous Law of Creation, yet we shall have no occasion of quarrelling (as you do) about that disturbing devil, called *Particular propriety*: For the Earth, with all her Fruits of Corn, Cattle, and such like, was made to be a common Store-house of Livelihood to all Mankinde, friend, and foe, without exception.

And to prevent your scrupulous Objections, know this, That we Must neither buy nor sell; Money must not any longer (after our work of the Earths community is advanced) be the great god, that hedges in some, and hedges out others; for Money is but part of the Earth: And surely, the Righteous Creator, who is King, did never ordain, That unless some of Mankinde, do bring that Mineral (Silver and Gold) in their hands, to others of their own kinde, that they should neither be fed, nor be clothed; no surely, For this was the project of Tyrant-flesh (which Land-lords are branches of) to set his Image upon Money. And they make this unrighteous Law, That none should buy or sell, eat, or be clothed, or have any comfortable Livelihood among men, unless they did bring his Image stamped upon Gold or Silver in their hands.

And whereas the Scriptures speak, That the mark of the Beast is 666, the number of a man; and that those that do not bring that mark in their hands, or in their foreheads, they should neither buy nor sell, *Revel.* 13.16. And seeing the numbering Letters round about the English money make 666, which is the number of that Kingly Power and Glory, (called a *Man*) And seeing the age of the Creation is now come to the Image of the Beast, or Half day. And seeing 666 is his mark, we expect this to be the last Tyrannical power that shall raing; and that people shall live freely in the enjoyment of the Earth, without bringing the mark of the Beast in their hands, or in their promise; and that they shall buy Wine and Milk, without Money, or without price, as *Isiah* speaks.

For after our work of the Earthly community is advanced, we must make use of Gold and Silver, as we do of other metals, but not to buy and sell withal; for buying and selling is the great cheat, that robs and steals the Earth one from another: It is that which makes some Lords, others Beggars, some Rulers, others to be ruled; and makes great Murderers and Theeves to be prisoners, and hangers of little ones, or of sincere-hearted men.

And while we are made to labor the Earth together, with one consent and willing minde; and while we are made free, that every one, friend and foe, shall enjoy the benefit of their Creation, that is, To have food and rayment from the Earth, their Mother; and every one subject to give accompt of his thoughts, words, and actions to none, but to the one onely righteous Judg, and Prince of Peace; the Spirit of Righteousness that dwells, and that is now rising up to rule in every Creature, and in the whole Globe. We say, while we are made to hinder no man of his Priviledges given him in his Creation, equal to one, as to another; what Law then can you make, to take hold upon us, but Laws of Oppression and Tyranny,

that shall enslave or spill the blood of the Innocent? And so your Selves, your Judges, Lawyers, and Justices, shall be found to be the greatest Transgressors, in, and over Mankind.

But to draw neerer to declare our meaning, what we would have, and what we shall endeavor to the uttermost to obtain, as moderate and righteous Reason directs us; seeing we are made to see our Privileges, given us in our Creation, which have hitherto been denied to us, and our Fathers, since the power of the Sword began to rule, And the secrets of the Creation have been locked up under the traditional, Parrat-like speaking, from the Universities, and Colledges for Scholars, And since the power of the murdering, and theeving Sword, formerly, as well as now of late yeers, hath set up a Govenment, and maintains that Government; for what are prisons, and putting others to death, but the power of the Sword to enforce people to that Government which was got by Conquest and Sword, and cannot stand of it self, but by the same murdering power? That Government that is got over people by the Sword and kept by the Sword, is not set up by the King of Righteousness to be his Law, but by Covetousness, the great god of the world; who hath been permitted to raign for a time, times, and dividing of time and his government draws to the period of the last term of his allotted time; and then the Nations shall see the glory of that Government that shall rule in Righteousness, without either Sword or Spear,

And seeing further, the power of Righteousness in our hearts, seeking the livelihood of others as well as our selves, hath drawn forth our bodies to begin to dig, and plough, in the Commons and waste Land, for the reasons already declared,

And seeing and finding ourselves poor, wanting Food to feed upon, while we labor the Earth to cast in seed, and to wait till the first crop comes up; and wanting Ploughs, Carts, Corn, and such materials to plant the Commons withal, we are willing to declare our condition to you, and to all, that have the Treasury of the Earth, locked up in your Bags, Chests, and Barns, and will offer up nothing to this publike Treasury; but will rather see your fellow Creatures starve for want of Bread, that have an equal right to it with your selves, by the Law of Creation: But this by the way we onely declare to you, and to all that follow the subtle art of buying and selling the Earth with her Fruits, meerly to get the Treasury thereof into their hands, to lock it up from them, to whom it belongs; that so, such covetous, proud, unrighteous, selfish flesh, may be left without excuse in the day of Judgment.

And therefore, the main thing we aym at, and for which we declare our Resolutions to go forth, and act, is this, To lay hold upon, and as we stand in need, to cut and fell, and make the best advantage we can of the Woods and Trees, that grow upon the Commons, To be a stock for our selves, and our poor Brethren, through the land of *England*, to plant the Commons withal; and to provide us bread to eat, till the Fruit of our labors in the Earth bring forth increase; and we shall meddle with none of your Proprieties (but what is called Commonage) till the Spirit in you, make you cast up your Lands and Goods, which were got, and still is kept in your hands by murder, and theft; and then we shall take it from the Spirit, that hath conquered you, and not from our Swords, which is an abominable, and unrighteous power, and a destroyer of the Creation: But the Son of man comes not to destroy, but to save.

And we are moved to send forth this Declaration abroad, to give notice to every one whom it concerns, in regard we hear and see, that some of you, that have been Lords of Manors, do cause the Trees and Woods that grow upon the Commons, which you pretend a Royalty unto, to be cut down and sold, for your own private use, Thereby the Common Land, which your own mouths doe say belongs to the poor, is impoverished, and the poor oppressed people robbed of their Rights, while you give them cheating words, by telling some of our poor oppressed Brethren, That those of us that have begun to Dig and

Plough up the Commons, will hinder the poor; and so blinde their eyes, that they see not their Priviledge, while you, and the rich Free-holders make the most profit of the Commons, by your over-stocking of them with Sheep and Cattle; and the poor that have the name to own the Commons, have the least share therein; nay, they are checked by you, if they cut Wood, Heath, Turf, or Furseys, in places about the Common, where you disallow.

Therefore we are resolved to be cheated no longer, nor be held under the slavish fear of you no longer, seing the Earth was made for us, as well as for you. And if the Common Land belongs to us who are the poor oppressed, surely the woods that grow upon the Commons belong to us likewise: therefore we are resolved to try the uttermost in the light of reason, to know whether we shall be free men, or slaves. If we lie still, and let you steale away our Birthrights, we perish; and if we Petition we perish also, though we have paid taxes, given free quarter, and ventured our lives to preserve the Nations freedom as much as you, and therefore by the law of contract with you, freedom in the land is our portion as well as yours, equal with you: And if we strive for freedom, and your murdering, governing Laws destroy us, we can but perish.

Therefore we require, and we resolve to take both Common Land, and Common woods to be a livelihood for us, and look upon you as equal with us, not above us, knowing very well, that *England* the land of our Nativity, is to be a common Treasury of livelihood to all, without respect of persons.

So then, we declare unto you, that do intend to cut our Common Woods and Trees, that you shall not do it; unlesse it be for a stock for us, as aforesaid, and we to know of it, by a publick declaration abroad, that the poor oppressed, that live thereabouts, may take it, and employ it, for their publike use, therefore take notice we have demanded it in the name of the Commons of *England*, and of all the Nations of the world, it being the righteous freedom of the Creation.

Likewise we declare to you that have begun to cut down our Common Woods and Trees, and to fell and carry away the same for your private use, that you shall forbear, and go no farther, hoping, that none that are friends to the Commonwealth of England, will endeavour to buy any of those Common Trees and Woods of any of those Lords of Mannors, so called, who have, by the murdering and cheating law of the sword, stoln the Land from younger brothers, who have by the law of Creation, a standing portion in the Land, as well, and equall with others. Therefore we hope all Wood-mongers will disown all such private merchandise, as being a robbing of the poor oppressed, and take notice, that they have been told our resolution: But if any of you that are Wood-mongers, will buy it of the poor, and for their use, to stock the Commons, from such as may be appointed by us to sell it, you shall have it quietly, without diminution; but if you will slight us in this thing, blame us not, if we make stop of the Carts you send and convert the Woods to our own use, as need requires, it being our own, equal with him that calls himself the Lord of the Mannor, and not his peculiar right, shutting us out, but he shall share with us as a fellow-creature.

For we say our purpose is, to take those Common Woods to sell them, now at first, to be a stock for our selves, and our children after us, to plant and manure the Common land withall; for we shall endeavour by our righteous acting not to leave the earth any longer intangled unto our children, by self-seeking proprietors; But to leave it a free store-house, and common treasury to all, without respect of persons; And this we count is our dutie, to endeavour to the uttermost, every man in his place (according to the nationall Covenant which the Parliament set forth) a Reformation to preserve the peoples liberties, one as well as another: As well those as have paid taxes, and given free quarter, as those that have either born

the sword, or taken our moneys to dispose of them for publike use: for if the Reformation must be according to the word of God, then every one is to have the benefit and freedom of his creation, without respect of persons; we count this our duty, we say, to endeavour to the uttermost, and so shall leave those that rise up to oppose us without excuse, in their day of Judgment; and our precious blood, we hope, shall not be dear to us, to be willingly laid down at the door of a prison, or foot of a gallows, to justifie this righteous cause; if those that have taken our money from us, and promised to give us freedom for it, should turn Tyrants against us: for we must not fight, but suffer.

And further we intend, that not one, two, or a few men of us shall sell or exchange the said woods, but it shall be known publikly in Print or writing to all, how much every such, and such parcell of wood is sold for, and how it is laid out, either in victualls, corn, ploughs, or other materials necessary.

And we hope we may not doubt (at least we expect) that they that are called the great Council and powers of *England*, who so often have declared themselves, by promises and Covenants, and confirmed them by multitude of fasting daies, and devout Protestations, to make *England* a free people, upon condition they would pay moneys, and adventure their lives against the successor of the *Norman* Conqueror; under whose oppressing power *England* was enslaved; And we look upon that freedom promised to be the inheritance of all, without respect of persons; And this cannot be, unless the Land of *England* be freely set at liberty from proprietors, and become a common Treasury to all her children, as every portion of the Land of *Canaan* was the Common livelihood of such and such a Tribe, and of every member in that Tribe, without exception, neither hedging in any, nor hedging out.

We say we hope we need not doubt of their sincerity to us herein, and that they will not gainsay our determinate course; howsoever, their actions will prove to the view of all, either their sinceritie, or hypocrisie: We know what we speak is our priviledge, and our cause is righteous, and if they doubt of it, let them but send a childe for us to come before them, and we shall make it manifest four wayes.

First, by the National Covenant, which yet stands in force to bind Parliament and people to be faithful and sincere, before the Lord God Almighty, wherein every one in his several place hath covenanted to preserve and seek the liberty each of other, without respect of persons.

Secondly, by the late Victory over King *Charls*, we do claime this our pnviledge, to be quietly given us, out of the hands of Tyrant-Government, as our bargain and contract with them; for the Parliament promised, if we would pay taxes, and give free quarter, and adventure our lives against *Charls* and his party, whom they called the Common enemy, they would make us a free people; These three being all done by us, as well as by themselves, we claim this our bargain, by the law of contract from them, to be a free people with them, and to have an equall priviledge of Common livelihood with them, they being chosen by us, but for a peculiar worke, and for an appointed time, from among us, not to be our oppressing Lords, but servants to succour us. But these two are our weakest proofs. And yet by them (in the light of reason and equity that dwells in mens hearts) we shall with ease cast down, all those former enslaving *Norman* reiterated laws, in every Kings raigne since the Conquest, which are as thornes in our eyes, and pricks in our sides, and which are called the Ancient Government of *England*.

Thirdly we shall prove that we have a free right to the land of *England*, being born therein as well as elder brothers, and that it is our equal right with them, and they with us, to have a comfortable livlihood in the earth, without owning any of our own kinde, to be either Lords, or Land-Lords over us: And this we shall prove by plain Text of Scripture, without exposition upon them, which the Scholars and great ones generally say, is their rule to walk by.

Fourthly, we shall prove it by the Righteous Law of our Creation, That mankinde in all his branches, is the Lord of the Earth and ought not to be in subjection to any of his own kinde without him, but to live in the light of the law of righteousness, and peace established in his heart.

And thus in love we have declared the purpose of our hearts plainly, without flatterie, expecting love, and the same sincerity from you, without grumbling or quarreling, being Creatures of your own Image and mould, intending no other matter herein, but to observe the Law of righteous action, endeavouring to shut out of the Creation, the cursed thing, called *Particular Propriety*, which is the cause of all wars, bloud-shed, theft, and enslaving Laws, that hold the people under miserie.

Signed for and in behalf of all the poor oppressed people of *England*, and the whole world.

Gerrard Winstanley

John Coulton

John Palmer

Thomas Star

Samuel Webb

John Hayman

Thomas Edcer

William Hogrill

Daniel Weeden

Richard Wheeler

Nathaniel Yates

William Clifford

John Harrison

Thomas Hayden

James Hall

James Manley

Thomas Barnard

John South

Robert Sayer

Christopher Clifford

John Beechee

William Coomes

Christopher Boncher

Richard Taylor

Urian Worthington

Nathaniel Holcombe

Giles Childe, senior

John Webb

Thomas Yarwel

William Bonnington

John Ash

Ralph Ayer

John Pra

John Wilkinson

Anthony Spire

Thomas East

Allen Brown

Edward Parret

Richard Gray

John Mordy

John Bachilor

William Childe

William Hatham

Edward Wicher

William Tench.

FINIS.

[To the site index](#)

[post a message to the webslave](#)

[Index](#)

['Property'](#) | [Diggers](#) | [Gift](#) | [Oppressed](#) | [Fairfax](#)

Land and Freedom

Digger pamphlet by **Gerrard Winstanley**

A
LETTER
TO
The Lord Fairfax,
AND
His Councell of War,
WITH
*Divers Questions to the Lawyers, and
Ministers:*

Proving it an undeniable Equity,
That the common People ought to dig,
plow, plant and dwell upon the Commons, with-
out hiring them, or paying Rent to any.

Delivered to the Generall and the chief Officers on Saturday June 9.

By *Jerrard Winstanly*, in the behalf of those who have begun to dig upon
George-Hill in Surrey.

*London: Printed for Giles Calvert, at the black Spread-Eagle at the West
end of P A U L S. 1 6 4 9.*

*To the Lord Fairfax, Generall of the English
Forces, and his Councell of War.*

SIR,

Our digging and ploughing upon George-hill in Surrey is not unknown to you, since you have seen some of our persons, and heard us speak in defence thereof: and we did receive mildnesse and moderation from you and your Councell of Warre, both when some of us were at White-hall before you, and when you came in person to George-hill to view our works; we indeavour to lay open the bottome and intent of our businesse, as much as can be, that none may be troubled with doubtfull imaginations about us, but may be satisfied in the sincerity and universall righteousnesse of the work.

We understand, that our digging upon that Common, is the talk of the whole Land; some approving, some disowning, some are friends, filled with love, and sees the worke intends good to the Nation, the peace whereof is that which we seeke after; others are enemies filled with fury, and falsely report of us, that we have intent to fortifie our selves, and afterwards to fight against others, and take away their goods from them, which is a thing we abhor: and many other slanders we rejoyce over, because we know ourselves cleare, our endeavour being not otherwise, but to improve the Commons, and to cast off that oppression and outward bondage which the Creation groans under, as much as in us lies, and to lift up and preserve the purity thereof.

And the truth is, experience shews us, that in this work of Community in the earth, and in the fruits of the earth, is seen plainly a pitched battaile between the Lamb and the Dragon, between the Spirit of love, humility and righteousnesse, which is the Lamb appearing in flesh; and the power of envy, pride, and unrighteousnesse, which is the Dragon appearing in flesh, the latter power striving to hold the Creation under slavery, and to lock and hide the glory thereof from man: the former power labouring to deliver the Creation from slavery, to unfold the secrets of it to the Sons of Men, and so to manifest himselfe to be the great restorer of all things.

And these two powers strive in the heart of every single man, & make single men to strive in opposition one against the other, and these strivings will be till the Dragon be cast out, and his judgement and downfall hastens apace, therefore let the righteous hearts wait with patience upon the Lord, to see what end he makes of all the confused hurley burleys of the world.

When you were at our Works upon the Hill, we told you, many of the Countrey-people that were offended at first, begin now to be moderate, and to see righteousnesse in our work, and to own it, excepting one or two covetous Free-holders, that would have all the Commons to themselves, and that would uphold the Norman Tyranny over us, which by the victorie that you have got over the Norman Successor, is plucked up by the roots, therefore ought to be cast away. And we expect, that these our angry neighbours, whom we never wronged, nor will not wrong, will in time see their furious rashnesse to be their folly, and become moderate, to speak and carry themselves like men rationafiy, and leave off pushing with their hornes like beasts: they shall have no cause to say wee wrong them, unlesse they count us wrongers of them for

seeking a livelihood out of the common Land of England by our righteous labour, which is our freedome, as we are Englishmen equall with them, and rather our freedome then theirs, because they are elder brothers and Free-holders, and call the Inclosures their own land, and we are younger brothers, and the poore oppressed, and the Common Lands are called ours, by their owne confession.

We told you (upon a question you put to us) that we were not against any that would have Magistrates and Laws to govern, as the Nations of the world are governed, but as for our parts we shall need neither the one nor the other in that nature of Government; for as our Land is common, so our Cattell is to be common, and our corn and fruits of the earth common, and are not to be bought and sold among us, but to remaine a standing portion of livelihood to us and our children, without that cheating intanglement of buying and selhng, and we shall not arrest one another.

And then, what need have we of imprisoning, whipping, or hanging Laws, to bring one another into bondage? and we know that none of those that are subject to this righteous law dares arrest or inslave his brother for, or about the objects of the earth, because the earth is made by our Creator to be a common Treasury of livelihood to one equall with another, without resect of persons.

But now if you that are elder brothers, and that call the Inclosures your own land, hedging out others, if you will have Magistrates and Laws in this outward manner of the Nations, we are not against it, but freely without disturbance shall let you alone; and if any of we Commoners, or younger Brothers, shall steal your corne, or cattell, or pull down your hedges, let your laws take hold upon any of us that so offends.

But while we keep within the bounds of our Commons, and none of us shall be found guilty of meddling with your goods, or inclosed proprieties, unlesse the Spirit in you freely give it up, your laws then shall not reach to us, unlesse you will oppresse or shed the blood of the innocent: and yet our corn and cattell shall not be locked up, as though we would be proprietors in the middle of the Nation: no, no, we freely declare, that our corn and cattell, or what we have, shall be freely laid open, for the safety and preservation of the Nation, and we as younger brothers, living in love with you our elder brothers, for we shall endeavour to do, as we would be done unto; that is, to let every one enjoy the benefit of his Creation, to have food and rayment free by the labour of his hands from the earth.

And as for spirituall teachings, we leave every man to stand and fall to his own Master: if the power of covetousnesse be his Master or King that rules in his heart, let him stand and fall to him; if the power of love and righteousnesse be his Master or King that rules in his heart, let him stand and fall to him; let the bodies of men act love, humility, and righteousnesse one towards another, and let the Spirit of righteousnesse be the Teacher, Ruler and Judge both in us and over us; and by thus doing, we shall honor our Father, the Spirit that gave us our being. And we shall honor our Mother the earth, by labouring her in righteousnesse, and leaving her free from oppression and bondage.

We shall then honour the higher powers of the left hand man, which is our hearing, seeing, tasting, smelling, feeling, and walk in the light of reason and righteousnesse, that is, the King and Judge that sits upon this five cornered Throne, and we shall be strengthened by those five well springs of life, of the right hand man, which is, understanding, will, affections, joy and peace, and so live like men, in the light and power of the Son of righteousnesse within our selves feelingly. What need then have we of any outward, selfish, confused Laws made, to uphold the power of covetousnesse, when as we have the righteous Law written in our hearts, teaching us to walk purely in the Creation.

Sir, The intent of our writing to you, is not to request your protection, though we have received an unchristian-like abuse from some of your souldiers; for truly we dare not cast off the Lord, and make

choice of a man or men to rule us. For the Creation hath smarted deeply for such a thing, since Israel chose Saul to be their King; therefore we acknowledge before you in plain English, That we have chosen the Lord God Almighty to be our King and Protector.

Yet in regard you are our brethren (as an English Tribe) and for the present are owned to be the outward Governors, Protectors and Saviours of this Land, and whose hearts we question not, but that you endeavour to advance the same King of righteousness with us, therefore we are free to write to you, and to open the sincerity of our hearts freely to you, and to all the world.

And if after this report of ours, either you, or your Forces called souldiers, or any that owns your Laws of propriety, called freeholders, do abuse or kill our persons, we declare to you that we die, doing our duty to our Creator, by endeavouring from that power he hath put into our hearts to lift up his Creation out of bondage, and you and they shall be left without excuse in the day of Judgement, because you have been spoken to sufficiently.

And therefore our reason of writing to you is this, in regard some of your foot souldiers of the Ceneralls Regiment, under Captain Stravie that were quartered in our Town, we bearing part therein as well as our neighbours, giving them sufficient quarter, so that there was no complaining, did notwithstanding, go up to George-hill, where was onely one man and one boy of our company of the diggers. And at their first coming, divers of your souldiers, before any word of provocation was spoken to them, fell upon those two, beating the boy, and took away his coat off his back, and some linnen and victualls that they had, beating and wounding the man very dangerously, and fired our house.

Which we count a strange and Heathenish practise, that the souldierie should meddle with naked men, peaceable men, Countrymen, that meddled not with the souldiers businesse, nor offered any wrong to them in word or deed, uniesse, because we improve that victory which you have gotten in the name of the Commons over King Charles, do offend the souldierie. In doing whereof, we rather expect protection from you then destruction. But for your own particular, we are assured of your moderation and friendship to us, who have ever been your friends in times of straits; and that you would not give Commission to strike us, or fire and pull down our houses, but you would prove us an enemy first.

Yet we do not write this, that you should lay any punishment upon them, for that we leave to your discretion, only we desire (in the request of brethren) that you would send forth admonition to your souldiers, not to abuse us hereafter; unlesse they have a Commission from you; and truly if our offences should prove so great, you shall not need to send souldiers for us, or to beat us, for we shall freely come to you upon a bare letter.

Therefore that the ignorant, covetous, free-holders, and such of your ignorant souldiers, that know not what freedom is, may not abuse those that are true friends to Englands freedom, and faithfull servants to the Creation, we desire, that our businesse may be taken notice of by you, and the highest Councell the Parliament, and if our work appear righteous to you, as it does to us, and wherein our souls have sweet peace, in the midst of scandalls and abuses;

Then in the request of brethren, we desire we may enjoy our freedom, according to the Law of contract between you and us, That we that are younger brothers, may live comfortably in the Land of our Nativity, with you the elder brothers, enjoying the benefit of our Creation, which is food and rayment freely by our labours; and that we may receive love, and the protection of brethren from you, seeing we have adventured estate and persons with you, to settle the Land in peace, and that we may not be abused by your Laws, nor by your souldiers, unlesse we break over into your inclosures as aforesaid, and take away your proprieties,

before you are willing to deliver it up. And if this you do, we shall live in quietnesse, and the Nation will be brought into peace, while you that are the souldierie, are a wall of fire round about the Nation to keep a forraign enemy, and are succourers of your brethren that live within the Land, who indeavour to hold forth the Sun of righteousnesse in their actions, to the glory of our Creator.

And you and the Parliament hereby, will be faithfull in your Covenants, Oaths and promises to us, as we have been faithfull to you and them, in paying taxes, giving free-quarter, and affording other assistance in the publike work, whereby we that are the Common People, are brought almost to a morsell of bread, therefore we demand our bargain, which is freedome, with you in this Land of our Nativity.

But if you do sleight us and our cause, then know we shall not strive with sword and speare, but with spade and plow and such like instruments to make the barren and common Lands fruitful, and we have, and still shall, commit our selves and our cause unto our righteous King, whom we obey, even the Prince of peace to be our Protector; and unto whom you likewise professe much love, by your preaching, praying, fastings, and in whose name you have made all your Covenants, Oaths, and promises to us: I say unto him we appeal, who is and will be our righteous Judge, who never yet failed those that waited upon him, but ever did judge the cause of the oppressed righteously.

We desire that your Lawyers may consider these questions (which we affirm to be truths) and which gives good assurance by the Law of the Land, that we that are the younger brothers or common people, have a true right to dig, plow up and dwell upon the Commons, as we have declared.

1. Whether William the Conqueror became not to be King of England by conquest, turned the English out of their birth-rights, burned divers townes, whereof thirty townes were bumed by him in Windsore Forrest; by reason whereof all sorts of people suffered, and compelled the conquered English for necessity of livelihood to be servants to him and his Norman souldiers?

2. Whether King Charles was not successor to the Crown of England from William the Conqueror, and whether all Laws that have been made in every Kings Reign, did not confirm and strengthen the power of the Norman Conquest, and so did, and does still hold the Commons of England under slavery to the Kingly power, his Gentry and Clergie?

3. Whether Lords of Mannours were not the successors of the Colonells and chief Officers of William the Conqueror, and held their Royalty to the Commons by Lease, Grant and Patentee from the King, and the power of the sword was and is the seale to their Title?

4. Whether Lords of Mannours have not lost their Royalty to the common land, since the common People of England, as well as some of the Gentry, have conquered King Charles, and recovered themselves from under the Norman Conquest?

5. Whether the Norman Conqueror took the land of England to himself, out of the hands of a few men, called a Parliament, or from the whole body of the English People? Surely he took freedom from every one, and became the disposer both of inclosures and commons; therefore every one, upon the recovery of the conquest, ought to return into freedom again without respecting persons, or els what benefit shall the common people have (that have suffered most in these wars) by the victory that is got over the King? It had been better for the common people there had been no such conquest; for they are impoverished in their estates by Free-quarter and Taxes, and made worse to live then they were before. But seeing they have paid Taxes, and given Free-quarter according to their estates, as much as the Gentry to theirs, it is both reason and equity that they should have the freedom of the land for their livelihood, which is the benefit of the

commons, as the Gentry hath the benefit of their inclosures.

6. Whether the freedom which the common people have got, by casting out the Kingly power, lie not herein principally, to have the land of their nativity for their livelihood, freed from intanglement of Lords, Lords of Mannours, and Landlords, which are our task-masters. As when the enemy conquered England, he took the land for his own, and called that his freedom; even so, seeing all sorts of people have given assistance to recover England from under the Norman yoke, surely all sorts, both Gentry in their inclosures, Commonalty in their Commons, ought to have their freedom, not compelling one to work for wages for another.

7. Whether any Lawes since the coming in of Kings, have been made in the light of the righteous law of our creation, respecting all alike, or have not been grounded upon selfish principles, in feare or flattery of their King, to uphold freedom in the Gentry and Clergie, and to hold the common people under bondage still, and so respecting persons?

8. Whether all Lawes that are not grounded upon equity and reason, not giving a universal freedom to all, but respecting persons, ought not to be cut off with the Kings head? we affirm they ought. If all lawes be grounded upon equity and reason, then the whole land of England is to be a cornmon treasury to every one that is born in the land: But if they be grounded upon selfish principles, giving freedom to some, laying burdens upon others, such lawes are to be cut off with the Kings head; or els the negiecters are Covenant, Oaths and Promise- breakers, and open hypocrites to the whole world.

9. Whether every one without exception, by the law of contract, ought not to have liberty to enjoy the earth for his livelihood, and to settle his dwelling in any part of the Commons of England, without buying or renting Land of any; seeing every one by Agreement and Covenant among themselves, have paid taxes, given free-quarter, and adventured their lives to recover England out of bondage? we affirm, they ought.

10. Whether the Laws that were made in the daies of the Kings, does give freedom to any other people, but to the gentry and Clergy, all the rest are left servants and bondmen to those task~masters; none have freedom by the Laws, but those two sorts of people, all the common people have been, and still are burdened under them.

And surely if the common people have no more freedom in England, but only to live among their elder brothers, and work for them for hire; what freedom then have they in England, more then we can have in Turkie or France? For there, if any man will work for wages, he may live among them, otherwise no: therefore consider, whether this be righteous, and for the peace of the Nation, that Laws shall be made to give freedom to impropiators and Free-holders, when as the poor that have no land, are left still in the straights of beggery, and are shut out of all livelihood, but what they shall pick out of sore bondage, by working for others, as Masters over them, and if this be not the burthen of the Norman yoke, let rationally men judge: therefore take not away men, but take away the power of tyranny and bad government, the price is in your hand, and let no part of the Nation be wronged for want of a Representative.

And here now we desire your publike Preachers, that say they preach the righteous law, to consider these questions, which confirms us in the peace of our hearts, that we that are the common people born in England, ought to improve the Commons, as we have declared, for a publike Treasury and livelihood, and that those that hinder us are rebelis to their Maker, and enemies to the Creation.

First, we demand I or No, whether the earth with her fruits, was made to be bought and sold from one to another? and whether one part of mankind was made a Lord of the land, and another part a servant, by the

law of Creation before the fall?

I affirme, (and I challenge you to disprove) that the earth was made to be a common Treasury of livelihood for all, without respect of persons, and was not made to be bought and sold: And that mankind in all his branches, is the lord over the Beasts, Birds, Fishes, and the Earth, and was not made to acknowledge any of his owne kind to be his teacher and ruler, but the spirit of righteousnesse only his Maker, and to walk in his light, and so to live in peace, and this being a truth, as it is, then none ought to be Lords or Landlords over another, but the earth is free for every son and daughter of mankind, to live free upon.

This question is not to be answered by any text of Scripture, or example since the fall, but the answer is to be given in the light of it self, which is the law of righteousnesse, or that Word of God that was in the beginning, which dwells in mans heart, and by which he was made, even the pure law of creation, unto which the creation is to be restored.

Before the fall, Adam, or the Man did dresse the garden, or the earth, in love, freedom, and righteousnesse, which was his rest and peace: But when covetousnesse began to rise up in him, to kill the power of love and freedom in him, and so made him (mankind) to set himself one man above another, as Cain lifted up himself above Abel, which was but the outward declaration of the two powers that strive in the man Adattis heart; and when he consented to that serpent covetousnesse, then he fell from righteousnesse, was cursed, and was sent into the earth to eat his bread in sorrow: And from that time began particular propriety to grow in one man over another; and the sword brought in propriety, and holds it up, which is no other but the power of angry covetousnesse: For, Cain killed Abel, because Abels principles, or religion, was contrary to his. And the power of the sword is still Cain killing Abel, lifting up one man still above another. But Abel shall not alwaies be slain, nor alwaies lie under the bondage of Cains cursed propriety, for he must rise: And that Abel of old was but a type of Christ, that is now rising up to restore all things from bondage.

2. I demand, whether all wars, blood-shed, and misery came not upon the Creation, when one man indeavoured to be a lord over another, and to claime propriety in the earth one above another? your Scripture will prove this sufficiently to be true. And whether this misery shall not remove (and not till then) when all the branches of mankind shall look upon themselves as one man, and upon the earth as a common Treasury to all, without respecting persons, every one acknowledging the law of righteousnesse in them and over them, and walking in his light purely? then cast away your buying and selling the earth, with her fruits, it is unrighteous, it lifts up one above another, it makes one man oppresse another, and is the burthen of the Creation.

3. Whether the work of restoration lies not in removing covetousnesse, casting that Serpent out of heaven, (mankind) and making man to live in the fight of righteousnesse, not in words only, as Preachers do, but in action, whereby the Creation shines in glory? I affirm it.

4. Whether is the King of righteousnesse a respecter of persons yea, or no? If you say no, then who makes this difference, that the elder brother shall be lord of the land, and the younger brother a slave and beggar? I affirm, it was and is covetousnesse, since the fall, not the King of righteousnesse before the fall, that made that difference; therefore if you will be Preachers, hold forth the law of righteousnesse purely, and not the confused law of covetousnesse, which is the murtherer: the law of righteousnesse would have every one to enjoy the benefit of his creation, that is, to have food and rayment by his labour freely in the land of his nativity, but covetousnesse will have none to live free, but he that hath the strongest arme of flesh; all others must be servants.

5. Whether a man can have true peace by walking in the Law of covetousnesse and self, as generally all do, or by walking in the Law of universall righteousnesse; doing as he would be done by? I affirm there is no true peace, till men talk lesse, and live more actually in the power of universall righteousnesse. Then you Preachers, lay aside your multitude of words, and your selfish doctrines, for you confound and delude the people.

6. Whether does the King of righteousnesse bid you love or hate your enemies, if you say love them, then I demand of you, why do some of you in your Pulpits, and elsewhere, stir up the people to beat, to imprison, put to death or banish, or not to buy and sell with those that endeavour to restore the earth to a common treasury again? surely at the worst, you can make them but your enemies; therefore love them, win them by love, do not hate them, they do not hate you.

7. Whether it be not a great breach of the Nationall Covenant, to give two sorts of people their freedom, that is, Gentry and Clergy, and deny it to the rest? I affirm it is a high breach, for mans Laws makes these two sorts of people, the Antichristian task-masters over the common people. The one forcing the people to give them rent for the earth, and to work for hire for them. The other which is the Clergy, that force a maintenance of tithes from the people; a practise which Christ, the Apostles and Prophets never walked in; therefore surely you are the false Christs, and false Prophets, that are risen up in these latter daies.

Thus I have declared to you, and to all in the whole world, what that power of life is, that is in me. And knowing that the Spirit of righteousnesse does appear in many in this Land, I desire all of you seriously in love and humility, to consider of this businesse of publike community, which I am carried forth in the power of love, and clear light of universall righteousnesse, to advance as much as I can; and I can do no other, the Law of love in my heart does so constrain me, by reason whereof I am called fool, mad man, and have many slanderous reports cast upon me, and meet with much fury from some covetous people, under all which my spirit is made patient, & is guarded with joy and peace: I hate none, I love all, I delight to see every one live comfortably. I would have none live in poverty, straits or sorrows; therefore if you find any selfishnesse in this work, or discover any thing that is destructive to the whole Creation, that you would open your hearts as freely to me in declaring my weaknesse to me, as I have been open-hearted in declaring that which I find and feel much life and strength in. But if you see righteousnesse in it, and that it holds forth the strength of universall love to all without respect to persons, so that our Creator is honored in the work of his hand, then own it, and justifie it, and let the power of love have his freedom and glory.

Jerrard Winstanly.

The Reformation that England now is to endeavour, is not to remove the Norman Yoke only, and to bring us back to be governed by those Laws that were before William the Conqueror came in, as if that were the rule or mark we aime at: No, that is not it; but the Reformation is according to the Word of God, and that is the pure Law of righteousnesse before the fall, which made all things, unto which all things are to be restored: and he that endeavours not that, is a Covenant-breaker.

This Letter with the Questions were delivered by the Authors own hand to the Generall, and the chief Officers, and they very mildly promised they would read it, and consider of it.

FINIS.

[Back to the index](#)

[post a message to the weblave](#)

[Index](#)

The Law of Freedom in a Platform Gerrard Winstanley - 1652

This pamphlet is in print and available from your bookshop ISBN 0 9528076 8

This is Winstanley's vision for a future without money or such extreme laws of private property as we have today. It hearkens back to a day when there was no need for a police force because the basic needs: water, food, shelter etc. were met in a peasant - rural based economy. Winstanley was aware that the English Civil War meant a consolidation of power for the Merchant Classes and Landowners and he - quite rightly - predicted the misery and corruption to come. He was the quintessential radical, identifying the obsession with ownership and private property as the root of social discontent, and determining to root it out absolutely. This vision is probably the most radical and best thought trough Utopian vision in the English Language.

Contrast the speech by Oliver Cromwell on the [Land and Freedom index page](#)

Index

[To His Excellency Oliver Cromwell](#)

[To the Friendly and Unbiased Reader](#)

[The Law of Freedom - Chapter 1.](#)

[Chapter 2 - What is Government in General.](#)

[Chapter 3 - Where began the first original of Government in the Earth among Mankind?](#)

[Chapter 4 - What are the Officers' Names in a free Commonwealth?](#)

[Chapter 5 - Education of mankind, in Schools and Trades.](#)

[Chapter 6 - The King's old laws cannot govern a free Commonwealth.](#)

[Footnotes](#)

To His Excellency
OLIVER CROMWELL,
General of the
Commonwealth's Army
in England, Scotland and Ireland.

Sir,

God hath honoured you with the highest honour of any man since Moses's time, to be the head of a people who have cast out an oppressing Pharaoh. For when the Norman power had conquered our forefathers, he took the free use of our English ground from them, and made them his servants. And God hath made you a successful instrument to cast out that conqueror, and to recover our land and liberties again, by your victories, out of that Norman hand.

That which is yet wanting on your part to be done is this, to see the oppressor's power to be cast out with his person; and to see that the free possession of the land and liberties be put into the hands of the oppressed commoners of England.

For the crown of honour cannot be yours, neither can those victories be called victories on your part, till the land and freedoms won be possessed by them who adventured person and purse for them.

Now you know, Sir, that the kingly conqueror was not beaten by you only as you are a single man, nor by the officers of the Army joined to you, but by the hand and assistance of the commoners, whereof some came in person and adventured their lives with you; others stayed at home and planted the earth and paid taxes and free-quarter to maintain you that went to war.

So that whatsoever is recovered from the conqueror is recovered by a joint consent of the commoners: therefore it is all equity, that all the commoners who assisted you should be set free from the conqueror's power with you: as David's law was, The spoil shall be divided between them who went to war, and them who stayed at home.

And now you have the power of the land in your hand, you must do one of these two things: first, either set the land free to the oppressed commoners who assisted you and paid the Army their wages; and then you will fulfil the Scriptures and your own engagements, and so take possession of your deserved honour:

Or secondly, you must only remove the conqueror's power out of the King's hand into other men's, maintaining the old laws still; and then your wisdom and honour is blasted for ever, and you will either lose yourself, or lay the foundation of greater slavery to posterity than you ever knew.

You know that while the King was in the height of his oppressing power, the people only whispered in private chambers against him: but afterwards it was preached upon the house-tops that he was a tyrant

and a traitor to England's peace; and he had his overturn.

The righteous power in the creation is the same still. If you and those in power with you should be found walking in the King's steps, can you secure yourselves or posterities from an overturn? Surely no.

The spirit of the whole creation (who is God) is about the reformation of the world, and he will go forward in his work. For if he would not spare kings who have sat so long at his right hand governing the world, neither will he regard you, unless your ways be found more righteous than the King's.

You have the eyes of the people all the land over, nay I think I may say all neighbouring nations over, waiting to see what you will do. And the eyes of your oppressed friends who lie yet under kingly power are waiting to have the possession given them of that freedom in the land which was promised by you, if in case you prevailed. Lose not your crown; take it up and wear it. But know that it is no crown of honour, till promises and engagements made by you be performed to your friends. He that continues to the end shall receive the crown. Now you do not see the end of your work unless the kingly law and power be removed as well as his person.

Jonah's gourd is a remembrancer to men in high places.

The worm in the earth gnawed the root and the gourd died, and Jonah was offended.

Sir, I pray bear with me; my spirit is upon such a lock that I must speak plain to you, lest it tell me another day, 'If thou hadst spoke plain, things might have been amended'.

The earth wherein your gourd grows is the commoners of England.

The gourd is that power which covers you, which will be established to you by giving the people their true freedoms, and not otherwise.

The root of your gourd is the heart of the people, groaning under kingly bondage and desiring a commonwealth's freedom in their English earth.

The worm in the earth, now gnawing at the root of your gourd, is discontented, because engagements and promises made to them by such as have power are not kept.

And this worm hath three heads. The first is a spirit waiting opportunities till a blasting wind arise to cause your gourd to wither; and yet pretends fair to you, etc.

Another spirit shelters under your gourd for a livelihood, and will say as you say in all things; and these are called honest, yet no good friends to you nor the commonwealth, but to their own bellies.

There is a third spirit, which is faithful indeed and plaindealing, and many times for speaking truth plainly he is cashiered, imprisoned and crushed: and the oppressions laid upon this spirit kindles the fire which the two former waits to warm themselves at.

Would you have your gourd stand for ever? Then cherish the root in the earth, that is the heart of your friends, the oppressed commoners of England, by killing the worm. And nothing will kill this worm but performance of professions, words and promises, that they may be made free men from tyranny.

It may be you will say to me, 'What shall I do?' I answer, 'You are in place and power to see all burdens taken off from your friends, the commoners of England.' You will say, 'What are those burdens?'

I will instance in some, both which I know in my own experience and which I hear the people daily complaining of and groaning under, looking upon you and waiting for deliverance.

Most people cry, 'We have paid taxes, given free-quarter, wasted our estates and lost our friends in the wars, and the task-masters multiply over us more than formerly.' I have asked divers this question, 'Why do you say so?'

Some have answered me that promises, oaths and engagements have been made as a motive to draw us to assist in the wars; that privileges of Parliament and liberties of subjects should be preserved, and that all popery and episcopacy and tyranny should be rooted out; and these promises are not performed. Now there is an opportunity to perform them.

For first, say they, 'The current of succeeding Parliaments is stopped, which is one of the great privileges (and people's liberties) for safety and peace; and if that continue stopped, we shall be more offended by an hereditary Parliament than we were oppressed by an hereditary king'.

And for the commoners, who were called subjects while the kingly conqueror was in power, have not as yet their liberties granted them: I will instance them in order, according as the common whisperings are among the people.

For, they say, the burdens of the clergy remains still upon us, in a threefold nature.

First, if any man declare his judgment in the things of God contrary to the clergy's report or the mind of some high officers, they are cashiered, imprisoned, crushed and undone, and made sinners for a word, as they were in the pope's and bishops' days; so that though their names be cast out, yet their High Commission Court's power remains still, persecuting men for conscience' sake when their actions are unblameable.

Secondly, in many parishes there are old formal ignorant episcopal priests established; and some ministers who are bitter enemies to commonwealth's freedom and friends to monarchy are established preachers, and are continually buzzing their subtle principles into the minds of the people, to undermine the peace of our declared commonwealth, causing a disaffection of spirit among neighbours, who otherwise would live in peace.

Thirdly, the burden of tithes remains still upon our estates, which was taken from us by the kings and given to the clergy to maintain them by our labours; so that though their preaching fill the minds of many with madness, contention and unsatisfied doubting, because their imaginary and ungrounded doctrines cannot be understood by them, yet we must pay them large tithes for so doing. This is oppression.

Fourthly, if we go to the lawyer, we find him to sit in the conqueror's chair though the kings be removed, maintaining the kings' power to the height; for in many courts and cases of law the will of a judge and lawyer rules above the letter of the law, and many cases and suits are lengthened to the great vexation of the clients and to the lodging of their estates in the purse of the unbounded lawyer. So that we see, though other men be under a sharp law, yet many of the great lawyers are not, but still do act their will as the conqueror did; as I have heard some belonging to the law say, 'What cannot we do?'

Fifthly, say they, if we look upon the customs of the law itself, it is the same it was in the kings' days, only the name is altered; as if the commoners of England had paid their taxes, free-quarter and shed their blood not to reform but to baptize the law into a new name, from kingly law to state law; by reason

whereof the spirit of discontent is strengthened, to increase more suits of law than formerly was known to be. And so, as the sword pulls down kingly power with one hand, the kings' old law builds up monarchy again with the other.

And indeed the main work of reformation lies in this, to reform the clergy, lawyers and law; for all the complaints of the land are wrapped up within them three, not in the person of a king.

Shall men of other nations say that notwithstanding all those rare wits in the Parliament and Army of England, yet they could not reform the clergy, lawyer and law, but must needs establish all as the kings left them?

Will not this blast all our honour, and make all monarchical members laugh in their sleeves, to see the government of our commonwealth to be built upon the kingly laws and principles?

I have asked divers soldiers what they fought for; they answered, they could not tell; and it is very true, they cannot tell indeed, if the monarchical law be established without reformation. But I wait to see what will be done; and I doubt not but to see our commonwealth's government to be built upon his own foundation.

Sixthly, if we look into Parishes, the burdens there are many.

First, for the power of lords of manors remains still over their brethren, requiring fines and heriots; beating them off the free use of the common land, unless their brethren will pay them rent; exacting obedience as much as they did, and more, when the King was in power.

Now saith the people, 'By what power do these maintain their title over us ! ' Formerly they held title from the King, as he was the conqueror's successor. But have not the commoners cast out the King, and broke the bond of that conquest? Therefore in equity they are free from the slavery of that lordly power.

Secondly, in parishes where commons lie, the rich Norman freeholders, or the new (more covetous) gentry, over-stock the commons with sheep and cattle; so that inferior tenants and poor labourers can hardly keep a cow, but half starve her. So that the poor are kept poor still, and the common freedom of the earth is kept from them, and the poor have no more relief than they had when the king (or conqueror) was in power.

Thirdly, in many parishes two or three of the great ones bears all the sway in making assessments, over-awing constables and other officers; and when time was to quarter soldiers, they would have a hand in that, to ease themselves and over-burden the weaker sort; and many times make large sums of money over and above the justice's warrant in assessments, and would give no account why, neither durst the inferior people demand an account, for he that spake should be sure to be crushed the next opportunity; and if any have complained to committees or justices, they have been either wearied out by delays and waiting, or else the offence hath been by them smothered up; so that we see one great man favoured another, and the poor oppressed have no relief.

Fourthly, there is another grievance which the people are much troubled at, and that is this: country people cannot sell any corn or other fruits of the earth in a market town but they must either pay toll or be turned out of town. Now say they, 'This is a most shameful thing, that we must part with our estates in taxes and free-quarter to purchase the freedom of the land and the freedom of the towns, and yet this freedom must be still given from us into the hands of a covetous Norman toll-taker, according to the

kings' old burdensome laws, and contrary to the liberty of a free commonwealth.'

'Now,' saith the whisperings of the people, 'the inferior tenants and labourers bears all the burdens, in labouring the earth, in paying taxes and free-quarter beyond their strength, and in furnishing the armies with soldiers, who bear the greatest burden of the war; and yet the gentry, who oppress them and that live idle upon their labours, carry away all the comfortable livelihood of the earth.'

For is not this a common speech among the people? 'We have parted with our estates, we have lost our friends in the wars, which we willingly gave up, because freedom was promised us; and now in the end we have new task-masters, and our old burdens increased: and though all sorts- of people have taken an Engagement to cast out kingly power, yet kingly power remains in power still in the hands of those who have no more right to the earth than ourselves.

'For,' say the people, 'if the lords of manors and our taskmasters hold title to the earth over us from the old kingly power, behold that power is beaten and cast out.

'And two acts of Parliament are made: the one to cast out kingly power, backed by the Engagement against King and House of Lords, the other to make England a free commonwealth.

'And if lords of manors lay claim to the earth over us from the Army's victories over the King, then we have as much right to the land as they, because our labours and blood and death of friends were the purchasers of the earth's freedom as well as theirs.

'And is not this a slavery,' say the people, 'that though there be land enough in England to maintain ten times as many people as are in it, yet some must beg of their brethren, or work in hard drudgery for day wages for them, or starve or steal and so be hanged out of the way, as men not fit to live in the earth, before they must be suffered to plant the waste land for their livelihood, unless they will pay rent to their brethren for it?' Well, this is a burden the creation groans under; and the subjects (so called) have not their birthright freedoms granted them from their brethren, who hold it from them by dub law, but not by righteousness.

'And who now must we be subject to, seeing the conqueror is gone?'

I answer, we must either be subject to a law, or to men's wills. If to a law, then all men in England are subjects, or ought to be, thereunto: but what law that is to which every one ought to be subject is not yet established in execution. If any say the old kings' laws are the rule, then it may be answered that those laws are so full of confusion that few knows when they obey and when not, because they were the laws of a conqueror to hold the people in subjection to the will of the conqueror; therefore that cannot be the rule for everyone. Besides, we daily see many actions done by state officers, which they have no law to justify them in but their prerogative will.

And again if we must be subject to men, then what men must we be subject to, seeing one man hath as much right to the earth as another, for no man now stands as a conqueror over his brethren by the law of righteousness?

You will say, 'We must be subject to the ruler'. It is true, but not to suffer the rulers to call the earth theirs and not ours, for by so doing they betray their trust and run into the line of tyranny; and we lose our freedom and from thence enmity and wars arise.

A ruler is worthy double honour when he rules well, that tis, when he himself is subject to the law, and

requires all others to be subject thereunto, and makes it his work to see the laws obeyed and not his own will; and such rulers are faithful, and they are to be subjected unto us therein, for all commonwealth's rulers are servants to, not lords and kings over, the people. But you will say, 'Is not the land your brother's? And you cannot take away another man's right by claiming a share therein with him.'

I answer, it is his either by creation right, or by right of conquest. If by creation right he call the earth his and not mine, then it is mine as well as his; for the spirit of the whole creation, who made us both, is no respecter of persons.

And if by conquest he call the earth his and not mine, it must be either by the conquest of the kings over the commoners, or by the conquest of the commoners over the kings.

If he claim the earth to be his from the kings' conquest, the kings are beaten and cast out, and that title is undone.

If he claim title to the earth to be his from the conquest of the commoners over the kings, then I have right to the land as well as my brother, for my brother without me, nor I without my brother, did not cast out the kings; but both together assisting with person and purse we prevailed, so that I have by this victory as equal a share in the earth which is now redeemed as my brother by the law of righteousness.

If my brother still say he will be landlord (through his covetous ambition) and I must pay him rent, or else I shall not live in the land, then does he take my right from me, which I have purchased by my money in taxes, free-quarter and blood. And O thou spirit of the whole creation, who hath this title to be called King of righteousness and Prince of Peace: judge thou between my brother and me, whether this be righteous, etc.

'And now', say the people, 'is not this a grievous thing that our brethren that will be landlords, right or wrong, will make laws and call for a law to be made to imprison, crush, nay put to death, any that denies God, Christ and Scripture; and yet they will not practise that golden rule, Do to another as thou wouldst have another do to thee, which God, Christ and Scriptures hath enacted for a law? Are not these men guilty of death by their own law, which is the words of their own mouth? Is it not a flat denial of God and Scripture?'

O the confusion and thick darkness that hath over-spread our brethren is very great. I have no power to remove it, but lament it in the secrets of my heart. When I see prayers, sermons, fasts, thanksgiving, directed to this God in words and shows, and when I come to look for actions of obedience to the righteous law, suitable to such a profession, I find them men of another nation, saying and not doing; like an old courtier saying 'Your servant', when he was an enemy. I will say no more, but groan and wait for a restoration.

Thus, Sir, I have reckoned up some of those burdens which the people groan under

And I being sensible hereof was moved in my self to present this platform of commonwealth's government unto you, wherein I have declared a full commonwealth's freedom, according to the rule of righteousness, which is God's Word. It was intended for your view above two years ago, but the disorder of the times caused me to lay it aside, with a thought never to bring it to light, etc. Likewise I hearing that Mr Peters and some others propounded this request, that the Word of God might be consulted with to find out a healing government,¹ which I liked well and waited to see such a rule come forth, for there are good rules in the Scripture if they were obeyed and practised. Thereupon

I laid aside this in silence, and said I would not make it public; but this word was like fire in my bones ever and anon, Thou shalt not bury thy talent in the earth; therefore I was stirred up to give it a resurrection, and to pick together as many of my scattered papers as I could find, and to compile them into this method, which I do here present to you, and do quiet my own spirit.

And now I have set the candle at your door, for you have power in your hand, in this other added opportunity, to act for common freedom if you will: I have no power.

It may be here are some things inserted which you may not like, yet other things you may like, therefore I pray you read it, and be as the industrious bee, suck out the honey and cast away the weeds.

Though this platform be like a piece of timber rough hewed, yet the discreet workmen may take it and frame a handsome building out of it.

It is like a poor man that comes clothed to your door in a torn country garment, who is unacquainted with the learned citizens' unsettled forms and fashions; take off the clownish language, for under that you may see beauty.

It may be you will say, 'If tithes retaken from the priests and impropiators, and copyhold services from lords of manors, how shall they be provided for again; for is it not unrighteous to take their estates from them?'

I answer, when tithes were first enacted, and lordly power drawn over the backs of the oppressed, the kings and conquerors made no scruple of conscience to take it, though the people lived in sore bondage of poverty for want of it; and can there be scruple of conscience to make restitution of this which hath been so long stolen goods? It is no scruple arising from the righteous law, but from covetousness, who goes away sorrowful to hear he must part with all to follow righteousness and peace.

But though you do take away tithes and the power of lords of manors, yet there will be no want to them, for they have the freedom of the common stock, they may send to the store-houses for what they want, and live more free than now they do; for now they are in care and vexation by servants, by casualties, by being cheated in buying and selling and many other encumbrances, but then they will be free from all, for the common store-houses is every man's riches, not any one's.

'Is it not buying and selling a righteous law?' No, it is the law of the conqueror, but not the righteous law of creation: how can that be righteous which is a cheat? For is not this a common practice, when he hath a bad horse or cow, or any bad commodity, he will send it to the market, to cheat some simple plain-hearted man or other; and when he comes home will laugh at his neighbour's hurt, and much more etc.

When mankind began to buy and sell, then did he fall from his innocence; for then they began to oppress and cozen one another of their creation birthright. As for example: if the land belong to three persons, and two of them buy and sell the earth and the third give no consent, his right is taken from him, and his posterity is engaged in a war.

When the earth was first bought and sold, many gave no consent: as when our crown lands and bishops' lands were sold, some foolish soldiers yielded, and covetous officers were active in it, to advance themselves above their brethren; but many who paid taxes and free-quarter for the purchase of it gave no consent but declared against it as an unrighteous thing, depriving posterity of their birthrights and

freedoms.

Therefore this buying and selling did bring in, and still doth bring in, discontent and wars, which have plagued mankind sufficiently for so doing. And the nations of the world will never learn to beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks, and leave off warring, until this cheating device of buying and selling be cast out among the rubbish of kingly power.

'But shall not one man be richer than another?'

There is no need of that; for riches make men vain-glorious, proud, and to oppress their brethren; and are the occasion of wars.

No man can be rich, but he must be rich either by his own labours, or by the labours of other men helping him. If a man have no help from his neighbour, he shall never gather an estate of hundreds and thousands a year. If other men help him to work, then are those riches his neighbours' as well as his; for they may be the fruit of other men's labours as well as his own.

But all rich men live at ease, feeding and clothing themselves by the labours of other men, not by their own; which is their shame, and not their nobility; for it is a more blessed thing to give than to receive. But rich men receive all they have from the labourer's hand, and what they give, they give away other men's labours, not their own. Therefore they are not righteous actors in the earth.

'But shall not one man have more titles of honour than another?'

Yes. As a man goes through offices, he rises to titles of honour till he comes to the highest nobility, to be a faithful commonwealth's man in a Parliament House. Likewise he who finds out any secret in nature shall have a title of honour given him, though he be a young man. But no man shall have any title of honour till he win it by industry, or come to it by age or office-bearing. Every man that is above Sixty years of age shall have respect as a man of honour by all others that are younger, as is shewed hereafter.

'Shall every man count his neighbour's house as his own, and live together as one family?'

No. Though the earth and storehouses be common to every family, yet every family shall live apart as they do; and every man's house, wife, children and furniture for ornament of his house, or anything which he hath fetched in from the store-houses, or provided for the necessary use of his family, is all a property to that family, for the peace thereof. And if any man offer to take away a man's wife, children or furniture of his house, without his consent, or disturb the peace of his dwelling, he shall suffer punishment as an enemy to the commonwealth's government, as is mentioned in the platform following.

'Shall we have no lawyers?'

There is no need of them, for there is to be no buying and selling; neither any need to expound laws, for the bare letter of the law shall be both judge and lawyer, trying every man's actions. And seeing we shall have successive Parliaments every year, there will be rules made for every action a man can do.

But there is to be officers chosen yearly in every parish, to see the laws executed according to the letter of the laws; so that there will be no long work in trying of offences, as it is under kingly government, to get the lawyers money and to enslave the commoners to the conqueror's prerogative law or will. The sons of contention, Simeon and Levi, must not bear rule in a free commonwealth

At the first view you may say, 'This is a strange government'. But I pray judge nothing before trial. Lay this platform of commonwealth's government in one scale, and lay monarchy or kingly government in the other scale, and see which give true weight to righteous freedom and peace. There is no middle path between these two, for a man must either be a free and true commonwealth's man, or a monarchical tyrannical royalist.

If any say, 'This will bring poverty'; surely they mistake. For there will be plenty of all earthly commodities, with less labour and trouble than now it is under monarchy. There will be no want, for every man may keep as plentiful a house as he will, and never run into debt, for common stock pays for all.

If you say, 'Some will live idle': I answer, No. It will make idle persons to become workers, as is declared in the platform: there shall be neither beggar nor idle person.

If you say, 'This will make men quarrel and fight':

I answer, No. It will turn swords into ploughshares, and settle such a peace in the earth, as nations shall learn war no more. Indeed the government of kings is a breeder of wars, because men being put into the straits of poverty are moved to fight for liberty, and to take one another's estates from them, and to obtain mastery. Look into all armies, and see what they do more, but make some poor, some rich; put some into freedom, and others into bondage. And is not this a plague among mankind?

Well, I question not but what objections can be raised against this commonwealth's government, they shall find an answer in this platform following. I have been something large, because I could not contract my self into a lesser volume, having so many things to speak of.

I do not say, nor desire, that every one shall be compelled to practise this commonwealth's government, for the spirits of some will be enemies at first, though afterwards will prove the most cordial and true friends thereunto.

Yet I desire that the commonwealth's land, which is the ancient commons and waste land, and the lands newly got in by the Army's victories out of the oppressors' hands, as parks, forests, chases and the like, may be set free to all that have lent assistance, either of person or purse, to obtain it; and to all that are willing to come in to the practice of this government and be obedient to the laws thereof. And for others who are not willing, let them stay in the way of buying and selling, which is the law of the conqueror, till they be willing.

And so I leave this in your hand, humbly prostrating my self and it before you; and remain

Novemb. 5, A true lover of commonwealth's

1651. government, peace and freedom,

Gerrard Winstanley.

To the Friendly and Unbiased READER

Reader,

It was the apostle's advice formerly, to try all things, and to hold fast that which is best. This platform of government which I offer is the original righteousness and peace in the earth, though he hath been buried under the clods of kingly covetousness, pride and oppression a long time.

Now he begins to have his resurrection, despise it not while it is small; though thou understand it not at the first sight, yet open the door and look into the house, for thou mayst see that which will satisfy thy heart in quiet rest.

To prevent thy hasty rashness, I have given thee a short compendium of the whole.

First, thou knowest that the earth in all nations is governed by buying and selling, for all the laws of kings hath relation thereunto.

Now this platform following declares to thee the government of the earth without buying and selling, and the laws are the laws of a free and peaceable commonwealth, which casts out everything that offends; for there is no pricking briar in all this holy mountain of the righteous law or peaceable ruler.

Every family shall live apart, as now they do; every man shall enjoy his own wife, and every woman her own husband, as now they do; every trade shall be improved to more excellency than now it is; s11 children shall be educated, and be trained up in subjection to parents and elder people more than now they are. The earth shall be planted, and the fruits reaped and carried into store-houses, by common assistance of every family. The riches of the store-houses shall be the common stock to every family. There shall be no idle person nor beggar in the land.

And because offences may arise from the spirit of unreasonable ignorance, therefore was the law added.

For if any man abuse his neighbour by provoking words, by striking his person, by offering offence to his neighbour's Cafe or children, or to his house or furniture therein, or to live idle upon other men's labours, here are laws to punish them sharply, and officers to see those laws executed, according to the right order of commonwealth's government, for the peace of every family in the land.

This commonwealth's government unites all people in a land into one heart and mind. And it was this government which made Moses to call Abraham's seed one house of Israel, though they were many tribes and many families. And it may be said, 'Blessed is the people whose earthly government is the law of common righteousness'.

While Israel was under this commonwealth's government, they were a terror to all oppressing kings in all nations of the world; and so wig England be, if this righteous law become our governor. But when the officers of Israel began to be covetous and proud, they made a breach or, as Isaiah said, The rulers of the people caused them to err; and then the government was altered and fell into the hand of kings like other nations, and then they fled before their enemies and were scattered.

The government of kings is the government of the scribes and Pharisees, who count it no freedom unless they be lords of the earth and of their brethren. But Commonwealth's government is the government of righteousness and peace, who is no respecter of persons.

Therefore Reader, here is a trial for thy sincerity. Thou shalt have no want of food, raiment or freedom among brethren in this way propounded. See now if thou canst be content, as the Scriptures say, having food and raiment, therewith be content, and grudge not to let thy brother have the same with thee.

Dost thou pray and fast for freedom, and give God thanks again for it? Why know that God is not partial; for if thou pray, it must be for freedom to all; and if thou give thanks, it must be because freedom covers all people, for this will prove a lasting peace.

Everyone is ready to say, they fight for their country; and what they do, they do it for the good of their country. Well, let it appear now that thou hast fought and acted for thy country's freedom. But if, when thou hast power to settle freedom in thy country, thou takest the possession of the earth into thy own Particular hands, and makest thy brother work for thee as the kings did, thou has fought and acted for thyself, not for thy country; and here thy inside hypocrisy is discovered.

But here take notice that common freedom, which is the rule I would have practised and not talked on, was thy pretence;- but particular freedom to thyself was thy intent. Amend, or else thou wilt be shamed, when knowledge doth spread to cover the earth, even as the waters cover the seas And so farewell.

G.W.

The Law of Freedom in a Platform ;

OR,

True Magistracy Restored.

CHAP. I.

The great searching of heart in these days is to find out where true freedom lies, that the commonwealth of England might be established in peace.

Some say, 'It lies in the free use of trading, and to have all patents, licences and restraints removed'. But this is a freedom under the will of a conqueror.

Others say, 'It is true freedom to have ministers to preach, and for people to hear whom they will, without being restrained or compelled from or to any form of worship'. But this is an unsettled freedom.

Others say, 'It is true freedom to have community with all women, and to have liberty to satisfy their lusts and greedy appetites'. But this is the freedom of wanton unreasonable beasts, and tends to destruction.

Others say, 'It is true freedom that the elder brother shall be landlord of the earth, and the younger brother a servant'. And this is but a half freedom, and begets murmurings, wars and quarrels.

All these and such like are freedoms: but they lead to bondage, and are not the true foundation-freedom which settles a commonwealth in peace.

True commonwealth's freedom lies in the free enjoyment of the earth.

True freedom lies where a man receives his nourishment and preservation, and that is in the use of the earth. For as man is compounded of the four materials of the creation, fire, water, earth and air; so is he preserved by the compounded bodies of these four, which are the fruits of the earth; and he cannot live without them. For take away the free use of these and the body languishes, the spirit is brought into bondage and at length departs, and ceaseth his motional action in the body.

All that a man labours for, saith Solomon, is this, That he may enjoy the free use of the earth, with the fruits thereof. Eccles. 2.24.

Do not the ministers preach for maintenance in the earth? the lawyers plead causes to get the possessions of the earth? Doth not the soldier fight for the earth? And doth not the landlord require rent, that he may live in the fulness of the earth by the labour of his tenants?

And so, from the thief upon the highway to the king who sits upon the throne, do not everyone strive, either by force of arms or secret cheats, to get the possessions of the earth one from another, because they see their freedom lies in plenty, and their bondage lies in poverty?

Surely then, oppressing lords of manors, exacting landlords and tithe-takers, may as well say their brethren shall not breathe in the air, nor enjoy warmth in their bodies, nor have the moist waters to fall upon them in showers, unless they will pay them rent for it: as to say their brethren shall not work upon earth, nor eat the fruits thereof, unless they will hire that liberty of them. For he that takes upon him to restrain his brother from the liberty of the one, may upon the same ground restrain him from the liberty of all four, viz. fire, water, earth and air,

A man had better to have had no body than to have no food for it; therefore this restraining of the earth from brethren by brethren is oppression and bondage; but the free enjoyment thereof is true freedom.

I speak now in relation between the oppressor and the oppressed; the inward bondages I meddle not with in this place, though I am assured that, if it be rightly searched into, the inward bondages of the mind, as covetousness, pride, hypocrisy, envy, sorrow, fears, desperation and madness, are all occasioned by the outward bondage that one sort of people lay upon another.

And thus far natural experience makes it good, that true freedom lies in the free enjoyment of the earth.

If we look into the old Scriptures,

We find that when Israel had conquered the nations he took possession of the enemies' land, and divided it by lot among the tribes, counting the enjoyment of the earth their perfect freedom.

In the beginning of their wars they first sent spies to view the land of Canaan (Numb. 13.23 to 33), for the enjoyment of that was the freedom they aimed at, for being so long in the barren wilderness, and children multiplying upon them, they wanted land to live upon, Deut. 1.28.

And when the spies returned and shewed them the fruits of the land, and had declared what a fruitful land it was, they were encouraged and restless till they were come thither; and when they heard bad tidings of

the land, their hearts fell and they were discouraged.

And when the spirit of wisdom, courage and providence in them had subdued those giants, and had given the house of Israel the land of Canaan, the rulers and chief officers of Israel's army did not divide the land among themselves; but, being faithful-spirited men, they forthwith divided the land by lot, to every tribe his portion without exception.

And when Israel entreated the King of Sihon to suffer him to pass through his land, he would not suffer him, but gathered all his people together and fought with Israel; and the Lord gave Sihon into Israel's hand: and he took possession of his land.

So that we see by Scripture proof likewise, the land is that which every one place their freedom in.

If we look into the practice of kings and conquerors,

Since the Scriptures of Moses were writ, we find they placed their freedom in the enjoyment of the free use of the earth.

When William Duke of Normandy had conquered England, he took possession of the earth for his freedom and disposed of our English ground to his friends as he pleased, and made the conquered English his servants, to plant the earth for him and his friends.

And all kings, from his time to King Charles, were successors of that conquest; and all laws were made to confirm that conquest.

For there are his old laws and statutes yet to be read, that do shew how he allowed the conquered English but three pence and four pence a day for their work, to buy them bread of their task-masters; but the freedom of the earth he and his friends kept in their own hands.

And as kings, so the old gentry and the new gentry likewise, walking in the same steps, are but the successors of the Norman victory.

But are not the Normans and their power conquered by the commoners of England? And why then should we not recover the freedom of our land again, from under that yoke and power?

Then further, the Norman conqueror made laws whereby this English earth should be governed, and appointed two national officers to see those laws performed.

The first officer was the lawyer; and his work is conversant about nothing but the disposing of the earth, and all courts of judicature and suits of law is about the ordering of the earth, according to his law made by him and his party.

The next officer was the national clergy; and their work was to persuade the multitude of people to let William the Conqueror alone with a quiet possession and government of the earth, and to call it his and not theirs, and so not to rebel against him.

And they were to tell the people that if they would acknowledge William Duke of Normandy and his successors to be their lord, king and ruler, and would be obedient to his government: then they should live in the haven, that is, in peace; and they should quietly enjoy their land which they rented, their houses and fruits of their labours without disturbance.

But if they would not acknowledge him to be their lord, king and ruler, nor submit to his government, then they should be cast into hell; that is, into the sorrows of prisons, poverty, whips and death: and their houses and riches should be taken from them, etc.

And this was a true prophetic and experimental doctrine. For do we not see that the laws of a king, while a king, had the power of life and death in them? And he who fell under the power of this lord 2 must pay the uttermost farthing before he was released.

And for their pains for thus preaching, the king established by his laws that they should have the tenth of the increase of all profits from the earth (I Sam. 8.15), placing their freedom where he placed his own, and that is in the use of the earth brought into their hands by the labours of the enslaved men.

But in after times, when this national ministry appeared to the people to be but hirelings, and as the people grew in knowledge, they discovered their hypocrisy more and more, as they do in these days: then this clergy (the spirit of the old Pharisees) began to divine and to deceive the people by a shew of holiness or spiritual doctrine, as they call it, difficult to be understood by any but themselves; persuading the people to believe or fancy that true freedom lay in hearing them preach, and to enjoy that heaven which, they say, every man who believes their doctrine shall enjoy after he is dead: and so tell us of a heaven and hell after death, which neither they nor we know what will be. So that the whole world is at a loss in the true knowledge thereof, as Solomon said, Who shall bring him to see what shall be after he is dead? Eccles. 3.22 and 6.11.

The former hell of prisons, whips and gallows they preached to keep the people in subjection to the king; but by this divined hell after death they preach to keep both king and people in awe to them, to uphold their trade of tithes and new-raised maintenance. And so having blinded both king and people they become the god that rules. This subtle divining spirit is the Whore that sits upon many waters; this is Nahash the Ammonite, that would not make peace with Israel, unless Israel would suffer him to put out their right eyes and to see by his, I Sam. I I.2.

For so long as the people call that a truth which they call a truth, and believe what they preach, and are willing to let the clergy be the keepers of their eyes and knowledge (that is as much as Nahash did, put out their eyes to see by theirs); then all is well, and they tell the people they shall go to heaven.

But if the eyes of the people begin to open, and they seek to find knowledge in their own hearts and to question the ministers' doctrine, and become like unto wise-hearted Thomas, to believe nothing but what they see reason for:

Then do the ministers prepare war against that man or men, and will make no covenant of peace with him till they consent to have their right eyes put out, that is, to have their reason blinded, so as to believe every doctrine they preach and never question any thing, saying, 'The doctrine of faith must not be tried by reason.' No, for if it be, their mystery of iniquity will be discovered, and they would lose their tithes.

Therefore no marvel though the national clergy of England and Scotland, who are the tithing priests and lords of blinded men's spirits, stuck so close to their master the King and to his monarchical oppressing government; for say they, 'If the people must not work for us and give us tithes, but we must work for ourselves as they do, our freedom is lost'. Aye, but this is but the cry of an Egyptian task-master, who counts other men's freedom his bondage.

Now if the earth could be enjoyed in such a manner as every one might have provision, as it may by this

platform I have offered, then will the peace of the commonwealth be preserved, and men need not act so hypocritically as the clergy do, and others likewise, to get a living. But when some shall enjoy great possessions, and others who have done as much or more for to purchase freedom shall have none at all, and be made slaves to their brethren, this begets offences.

The glory of Israel's commonwealth is this,

They had no beggar among them.

As you read, when they had conquered the Canaanites and won that land by the purchase of the blood and labour, and by a joint assistance throughout the whole tribes of Israel; the officers and leaders of the people did not sell the land again to the remainder of their enemies, nor buy and sell it among themselves, and so by cheating the people set up a new oppression upon a new account. Neither did they fall a-parting the land before the crowning victory was gotten: but they forbore the disposing of the land till the war was over, and all the tribes stuck close together till all the fighting work was done.

And when they saw the enemies' heart was broke, and that now they were the masters of the field, then they quietly took possession of the land as a free reward for all their hazards and labour.

The officers and leaders were careful to keep promise and engagements to the people, and there was no treachery found in them, as to enrich themselves with the commonwealth's land, and to deprive others of the price of their blood and free-quarter and taxes.

But they made canon 3 with all the crown lands therein, and all other forfeited lands which was gotten by a joint assistance of person and purse of all the tribes. The Scriptures say, they made this canon land a common treasury of livelihood to the whole commonwealth of Israel, and so disposed of it as they made provision for every tribe and for every family in a tribe, nay for every particular man in a family; every one had enough, no man was in want, there was no beggary among them.

They did not divide this land only to particular men who went out to war, but they who stayed at home had an equal share; they did not make one brother a lord of manor and landlord, and other brothers to be servants to them. But seeing the enemies were beaten not by the counsellors only, not by the leaders of the army only, but by the common soldiers also; and not only by them, but by the labourers who stayed at home to provide victuals and free-quarter: therefore did the counsellors and chief officers of the army agree to make provision for every one that assisted, either by person or purse; and this was pure righteousness.

And to those families in a tribe which had many persons in it, to them they allotted more land; and to those families which had less number of persons, they allotted less land. So that not only the tribes in general but every family and person in a tribe, younger brother as well as elder brother, he who wrought at home to provide food as well as he that went to war, all had sufficient, there was no want, the oppression of beggary was not known among them. All burdens were taken off, and Israel in all his tribes and families was made a free commonwealth in power, as well as in name, I Sam. 30.24, Josh. 16, 17 and 18 Chapters.

And thus the land was divided, and the whole land was the common stock, every one had a brotherly freedom therein. For the freedom of the one was the freedom of the other, there was no difference in that, they were men of true, faithful and public spirits not false-hearted.

And so likewise When Esther prevailed with Ring Ahasuerus for freedom, she did not seek her own freedom and interest, but the freedom of all her kindred and friends; for common freedom was that which men of righteous spirits always sought after.

All that I shall say is this, O that those who pretend to set up a gospel-commonwealth in England, Scotland and Ireland would not be worse than Moses, but rather exceed Moses, knowing that if this our English commonwealth's government carry perfect freedom in his hand, then shall the law go forth from England to all the nations of the world.

This foundation being laid from the example of Israel's commonwealth and testimony of God's Word, I shall proceed how the earth shall be governed for the peace of a commonwealth. But by the way, to prevent mistake, I shall insert

A short declaration to take off Prejudice.

Some, hearing of this common freedom, think there must be a community of all the fruits of the earth whether they work or no, therefore strive to live idle upon other men's labours.

Others, through the same unreasonable beastly ignorance, think there must be a community of all men and women for copulation, and so strive to live a bestial life.

Others think there will be no law, but that everything will run into confusion for want-of government; but this platform proves the contrary.

Therefore, because that transgression doth and may arise from ignorant and rude fancy in man, is the law added.

That which true righteousness in my judgment calls community is this, to have the earth set free from all kingly bondage of lords of manors and oppressing landlords, which came in by conquest as a thief takes a true man's purse upon the highway, being stronger than he.

And that neither the earth, nor any fruits thereof, should be bought or sold by the inhabitants one among another, which is slavery the kingly conquerors have brought in; therefore he set his stamp upon silver, that every one should buy and sell in his name.

And though this be, yet shall not men live idle; for the earth shall be planted and reaped, and the fruits carried into barns and store-houses by the assistance of every family, according as is shewed hereafter in order.

Every man shall be brought up in trades and labours, and all trades shall be maintained with more improvement, to the enriching of the commonwealth, more than now they be under kingly power.

Every tradesman shall fetch materials, as leather, wool, flax, corn and the like, from the public store-houses, to work upon without buying and selling; and when particular works are made, as cloth, shoes, hats and the like, the tradesmen shall bring these particular works to particular shops, as it is now in practice, without buying and selling. And every family as they want such things as they cannot make, they shall go to these shops and fetch without money, even as now they fetch with money, as hereafter is shewed how in order.

If any say, 'This will nurse idleness'; I answer, this platform proves the contrary, for idle persons and

beggars will be made to work.

If any say, 'This will make some men to take goods from others by violence and call it theirs, because the earth and fruits are a common stock'; I answer, the laws or rules following prevents that ignorance. For though the store-houses and public shops be commonly furnished by every family's assistance, and for every family's use, as is shewed hereafter how: yet every man's house is proper to himself, and all the furniture therein, and provision which he hath fetched from the store-houses is proper to himself; every man's wife and every woman's husband proper to themselves, and so are their children at their dispose till they come to age.

And if any other man endeavour to take away his house, furniture, food, wife or children, saying every thing is common, and so abusing the law of peace, such a one is a transgressor, and shall suffer punishment, as by the government and laws following is expressed.

For though the public store-houses be a common treasury, yet every man's particular dwelling is not common but by his consent, and the commonwealth's laws are to preserve a man's peace in his person and in his private dwelling, against the rudeness and ignorance that may arise in mankind.

If any man do force or abuse women in folly, pleading community, the laws following do punish such ignorant and unrational practice; for the laws of a commonwealth are laws of moderate diligence and purity of manners.

Therefore I desire a patient reading of what hereafter follows; and when you have heard the extent of commonwealth's government or freedom, then weigh it in the balance with kingly government or bondage; and see whether [i.e. which] brings most peace to the land, and establish that for government.

For you must either establish commonwealth's freedom in power, making provision for every one's peace, which is righteousness; or else you must set up monarchy again.

Monarchy is twofold; either for one king to rule, or for many to rule by kingly principles; for the king's power lies in his laws, not in the name. And if either one king rule, or many rule by king's principles, much murmuring, grudges, troubles and quarrels may and will arise among the oppressed people upon every gained opportunity.

But if common freedom be found out and ease the oppressed, it prevents murmurings and quarrels, and establishes universal peace in the earth.

Therefore seeing the power of government is in the hands of such as have professed to the world a godly righteousness, more purely than that of oppressing kings, without doubt their faithfulness and wisdom is required to be manifested in action as well as in words.

But if they who profess more righteousness and freedom in words than the kings' government was, and yet can find out no government to ease the people but must establish the kings' old laws though they give it a new name; I will leave the sentence, worthy such a profession and such a people, to be given by the heart of every rational man. And so I shall proceed how the earth should be governed for the peace of a commonwealth.

CHAP. II. - What is Government in general.

Government is a wise and free ordering of the earth and the manners of mankind by observation of particular laws or rules, so that all the inhabitants may live peaceably in plenty and freedom in the land where they are born and bred.

In the government of a land there are three parts, viz. laws, fit officers and a faithful execution of those laws.

First, there must be suitable laws for every occasion, and almost for every action that men do; for one law cannot serve in all seasons, but every season and every action have their particular laws attending thereupon for the preservation of right order. As for example,

There is a time to plough, and the laws of right understanding attends upon that work; and there is a time to reap the fruits of the earth, and the laws of right observation attending thereupon.

So that true government is a right ordering of all actions, giving to every action and thing its due weight and measure, and this prevents confusion. As Solomon speaks, There is a time for all things; a time to make promises and engagements and a time to see them performed; a right order in times of war, and a right order in times of peace; every season and time having its law or rule suitable; and this makes a healthful government, because it preserves peace in a right order.

Secondly, there must be fit officers, whose spirits are so humble, wise and free from covetousness, as they can make the established laws of the land their will; and not through pride and vain-glory make their wills to rule above the rules of freedom, pleading prerogative.

For when the right ordered laws do rule, the government is healthful; but when the will of officers rule above law, that government is diseased with a mortal disease.

Thirdly, there must be a faithful execution of those laws; and herein lies the very life of government. For a right order in government lies not in the will of officers without laws, nor in laws without officers, nor in neither of them without execution. But when these three go hand in hand the government is healthful; but if any one of these be wanting the government is diseased.

There is a twofold government, a kingly government and a commonwealth's government.

What is kingly government or monarchy?

Kingly government governs the earth by that cheating art of buying and selling, and thereby becomes a man of contention, his hand is against every man, and every man's hand against him; and take this government at the best, it is a diseased government, and the very city Babylon, full of confusion. And if it had not a club law to support it, there would be no order in it, because it is the covetous and proud will of a conqueror, enslaving a conquered people.

This kingly government is he who beats pruning hooks and ploughs into spears, guns, swords and instruments of war, that he might take his younger brother's creation birthright from him, calling the earth

his and not his brother's, unless his brother will hire the earth of him, so that he may live idle and at ease by his brother's labours.

Indeed this government may well be called the government of highwaymen, who hath stolen the earth from the younger brethren by force, and holds it from them by force. He sheds blood not to free the people from oppression, but that he may be king and ruler over an oppressed people.

The situation of this monarchical government

Lies in the will of kings, alias conquerors, setting up lords of manors, exacting landlords, tithing priests and covetous lawyers, with all those pricking briars attending thereupon, to be task-masters to oppress the people, lest they should rise up in riches and power to dethrone him, and so to share the earth with him, redeeming their own creation rights again, which this kingly government withholds from mankind in all nations. For he is the great Man of Sin who is now revealed, who sits in the temple of God, ruling above all that is called God, and both by force and cheating policy takes the people's freedoms from them, Exod. 1.8, 2 Thes. 2.8,9.

This kingly government is he that makes the elder brethren freemen in the earth, and the younger brethren slaves in the earth, before they have lost their freedom by transgression to the law.

Nay, he makes one brother a lord and another a servant while they are in their mother's womb, before they have done either good or evil. This is the mighty ruler that hath made the election and rejection of brethren from their birth to their death, or frown eternity to eternity.

He calls himself the Lord God of the whole creation, for he makes one brother to pay rent to another brother for the use of the water, earth and air, or else he will not suffer him by his laws and lawyers to live above ground, but in beggary; and yet he will be called righteous.

And whereas the Scriptures say that the creator of all things (God) is no respecter of persons, yet this kingly power doth nothing else but respect persons, preferring the rich and the proud; therefore he denies the Scriptures and the true God of righteousness, though he pray and preach of the Scriptures, and keep fasts and thanksgiving-days to God, to be a cloak to hide his oppression from the people, whereby he shews himself to be the great Antichrist and mystery of iniquity, that makes war with Christ and his saints under pretence of owning him.

The great law-giver of this kingly government

Is covetousness ruling in the heart of mankind, making one brother to covet a full possession of the earth and a lordly rule over another brother, which he will have or else he will enslave or kill his brother; for this is Cain who killed Abel: and because of this, he is called the great red dragon, the god of this world, the oppressor, under which the whole creation hath groaned a long time, waiting to be delivered from him.

The rise of kingly government is twofold.

First, by a politic wit, in drawing the people out of common freedom into a way of common bondage; for so long as the earth is a common treasury to all men, kingly covetousness can never reign as king. Therefore his first device was to put the people to buy and sell the earth and the fruits one to another; for this would beget discontents and muddy the waters.

And when this spirit of monarchy hath drawn the people into the way of buying and selling, and the people begin to vex one another, then began his opportunity to reign.

For in that man wherein this kingly spirit seats himself, he tells the people that are wronged, 'Well, I'll ease you, and I'll set things to rights'. And then he went about to establish buying and selling by law, whereby the people had some ease for a time, but the cunning Machiavellian spirit got strength thereby to settle himself king in the earth.

For after some time the people through ignorance began to multiply suits of law one against another, and to quarrel and fight. Now saith this subtle spirit, 'Come follow me' to one sort of people that are oppressed, 'and stick to me, and we will fight with those who wrong you; and if we conquer them, then we will govern the earth as we please, and they shall be our servants, and we will make them work for us'.

Thereupon one sort of people followed one head, and another sort of people followed another head, and so wars began in the earth, and mankind fell a-fighting, one part conquering and enslaving another. And now man is fallen from his innocence, and from the glory of the spirit of common freedom, love and peace, into enmity; everyone striving to be king one over another; everyone striving to be a landlord of the earth, and to make his brother his servant to work for him.

But still here is disorder, therefore this subtle spirit of darkness goes further and tells the people, 'You must make one man king over you all, and let him make laws, and let every one be obedient thereunto'. And when the people consented thereunto, they gave away their freedom, and they set up oppression over themselves.

And this was the rise of kingly power: first by policy, drawing the people from a common enjoyment of the earth to the crafty art of buying and selling; secondly, to advance himself by the power of the sword, when that art of buying and selling had made them quarrel among themselves.

So that this spirit of monarchy it is the spirit of subtlety and covetousness, filling the heart of mankind with enmity and ignorance, pride and vain-glory, because the strong destroys the weak; and so one Scripture calls this the power and government of the Beast, another Scripture calls it the god of this world or the devil. For indeed the monarchical spirit is the power of darkness, for it is the great thick cloud that hath hid the light of the sun of righteousness from shining in his full strength a long time.

And though this kingly spirit doth call buying and selling a righteous thing, thereby to put the simple younger brother upon it, yet he will destroy it as he pleaseth, by patents, licences or monopolizing.

Or else he will at his pleasure take away the riches which his younger brother hath got by trading, and so still lift up himself above his brother.

And as he rise to the throne by the crafty art of buying and selling and by the sword, so he is maintained upon the throne by the same means.

And the people now see that kingly power is the oppressor, and the maintainers thereof are called oppressors by the ancient writers of the Bible.

This kingly power is the old heaven and the old earth that must pass away, wherein unrighteousness, oppression and partiality dwells.

For indeed we never read that the people began to complain of oppression till kingly government rose up, which is the power of covetousness and pride; and which Samuel sets forth to be a plague and a curse upon the people in the first rise of it.

He will take your sons and your daughters to be his servants and to run before his chariots, to plant his ground and to reap his harvest. He will take your fields, your vineyards and oliveyards, even the best of them, and give to his servants as pleaseth him. He will take the tenth of your seed and of your vineyards and give to his officers or ministers. I Sam. 8.

And this was that god who appointed the people to pay tithes to the clergy.

And many other oppressions did the kingly government bring upon the people, as you may read at large in Samuel.

Read I Sam. 8. from Vers. 10. to 19.

The winter's past, the spring time now appears,

Begone thou kingly tyrant, with all thy Cavaliers.

Thy day is past, and sure thou dost appear

To be the bond-man's son, and not the free-born heir.

Matt. 15. 13

What is commonwealth's government?

Commonwealth's government governs the earth without buying and selling; and thereby becomes a man of peace, and the restorer of ancient peace and freedom. He makes provision for the oppressed, the weak and the simple, as well as for the rich, the wise and the strong. He beats swords and spears into pruning hooks and ploughs; he makes both elder and younger brother freemen in the earth. Micah 4.3, 4, Isai. 33.1. and 65.17 to 25.

All slaveries and oppressions which have been brought upon mankind by kings, lords of manors, lawyers and landlords and the divining clergy, are all cast out again by this government, if it be right in power as well as in name.

For this government is the true restorer of all long-lost freedoms, and so becomes the joy of all nations, and the blessing of the whole earth: for this takes off the kingly curse, and makes Jerusalem a praise in the earth. Therefore all you who profess religion and spiritual things, now look to it, and see what spirit you do profess, for your profession is brought to trial.

If once commonwealth's government be set upon the throne, then no tyranny or oppression can look him in the face and live.

For where oppression lies upon brethren by brethren, that is no commonwealth's government, but the kingly government still; and the mystery of iniquity hath taken that peace-maker's name to be a cloak to hide his subtle covetousness, pride and oppression under.

O England, England, wouldst thou have thy government sound and healthful? Then cast about and see and search diligently to find out all those burdens that came in by kings, and remove them; and then will

thy commonwealth's government arise from under the clods, under which as yet it is buried and covered with deformity.

If true commonwealth's freedom lie in the free enjoyment of the earth, as it doth, then whatsoever law or custom doth deprive brethren of their freedom in the earth, it is to be cast out as unsavory salt.

The situation of commonwealth's government

Is within the laws of common freedom, whereby there is a provision for livelihood in the earth both for elder and younger brother; and not the one enslaving the other, but both living in plenty and freedom.

The officers, laws and customs hereafter mentioned, or such like, according to such a method, may be the foundation and pillars of commonwealth's government.

This government depends not upon the will of any particular man or men; for it is seated in the spirit of mankind, and it is called the light, or son of righteousness and peace. The tyrants in all ages have made use of this man's name while he hath lain buried, to cover their cheating mystery of iniquity: for if common freedom were not pretended, the commoners of a land would never dance after the pipe of self-seeking wits.

This commonwealth's government may well be called the ancient of days; for it was before any other oppressing government crept in.

It is the moderator of all oppression; and so is like Moses and Joseph in Pharaoh's court, and in time will be the restorer of long lost freedoms to the creation, and delights to plant righteousness over the face of the whole earth.

The great lawgiver in commonwealth's government

Is the spirit of universal righteousness dwelling in mankind, now rising up to teach every one to do to another as he would have another do to him, and is no respecter of persons: and this spirit hath been killed in the Pharisical kingly spirit of self-love, and been buried in the dunghill of that enmity for many years past.

And if these be the days of his resurrection to power, as we may hope, because the name of commonwealth is risen and established in England by a law, then we or our posterity shall see comfortable effects.

In that nation where this commonwealth's government shall be first established, there shall be abundance of peace and plenty, and all nations of the earth shall come flocking thither to see his beauty, and to learn the ways thereof; and the law shall go forth from that Sion, and that Word of the Lord from that Jerusalem, which shall govern the whole earth. Micah 4.1, 2.

There shall be no tyrant kings, lords of manors, tithing priests, oppressing lawyers, exacting landlords, nor any such like pricking briar in all this holy mountain of the Lord God our righteousness and peace; for the righteous law shall be the rule for everyone, and the judge of all men's actions.

David desired rather to be a door-keeper in this house of God, or commonwealth's government, than to live in the tents of wickedness, which was the kingly oppressing courts.

If any go about to build up commonwealth's government upon kingly principles, they will both shame

and lose themselves; for there is a plain difference between the two governments.

And if you do not run in the right channel of freedom, you must, nay you will, as you do, face about and turn back again to Egyptian monarchy: and so your names in the days of posterity shall stink and be blasted with abhorred infamy for your unfaithfulness to common freedom; and the evil effects will be sharp upon the backs of posterity.

Therefore seeing England is declared to be a free commonwealth, and the name thereof established by a law; surely then the greatest work is now to be done, and that is to escape all kingly cheats in setting up a commonwealth's government, that the power and the name may agree together; so that all the inhabitants may live in peace, plenty and freedom, otherwise we shall shew our government to be gone no further but to the half day of the Beast, or to the dividing of time, of which there must be an overturn. Dan. 7.25, Rev. 12.14.

For oppression was always the occasion why the spirit of freedom in the people desired change of government.

When Samuel's sons took bribes and grew rich upon the common purse, and forgot to relieve the oppressed, that made the people forsake the government by judges, and to desire a kingly government. I Sam. 8.34.

And the oppressions of the kingly government have made this age of the world to desire a commonwealth's government and the removal of the kings; for the spirit of light in man loves freedom and hates bondage.

And because the spirit in mankind is various within itself, for some are wise, some are foolish, some idle, some laborious, some rash, some mild, some loving and free to others, some envious and covetous, some of an inclination to do as they would have others do to them, but others seek to save themselves and to live in fulness, though others perish for want:

Therefore because of this was the law added, which was to be a rule and judge for all men's actions, to preserve common peace and freedom; and Paul writ, The law was added because of transgression, one against another.

The haven gates are now set ope for English man to enter: The freedoms of the earth's his due, if he will make adventure.

CHAP. III. - Where began the first original of Government in the Earth among Mankind?

The original root of magistracy is common preservation, and it rose up first in a private family: for suppose there were but one family in the world, as is conceived, father Adam's family, wherein were many persons:

Therein Adam was the first governor or officer in the earth, because as he was the first father, so he was the most wise in contriving and the most strong for labour, and so the fittest to be the chief governor. For this is the golden rule,

Let the wise help the foolish, and let the strong help the weak. Psa. 35.10, Rom. 15. 1, 2.

But some may say here that Adam was under no law, but his will was a law to him and his household; therefore, from the root from whence magistracy first rose, it is clear-that officers are to be under no law but their own wills, and the people are to be subject thereunto.⁴ I answer:

The law of necessity, that the earth should be planted for the common preservation and peace of his household, was the righteous rule and law to Adam, and this law was so clearly written in the hearts of his people that they all consented quietly to any counsel he gave them for that end.

Therefore not Adam's will only, but the will of his people likewise, and the law of common preservation, peace and freedom, was the righteous law that governed both Adam and his household.

But yet observe, that from the father in a family was the first rise of magisterial government, because children wanting experience of their own preservation, therefore such as are experienced are to propound the law of government to them: and therefore from Adam to this day, the law of common preservation is the rule and foundation of true magistracy: and it is the work of all magistrates to help the weak and the foolish.

There are two root[s] from whence laws do spring.

The first root you see is common preservation, when there is a principle in everyone to seek the good of others as himself, without respecting persons: and this is the root of the tree magistracy, and the law of righteousness and peace: and all particular laws found out by experience, necessary to be practised for common preservation, are the boughs and branches of that tree.

And because, among the variety of mankind, ignorance may grow up; therefore this original law is written in the heart of every man, to be his guide or leader: so that if an officer be blinded by covetousness and pride, and that ignorance rule in him, yet an inferior man may tell him where he goes astray; for common preservation and peace is the foundation rule of all government. And therefore if any will preach or practise fundamental truths or doctrine, here you may see where the foundation thereof lies.

The second root is self-preservation: when particular officers seek their own preservation, ease; honour, riches and freedom in the earth, and do respect persons that are in power and riches with them and regard not the peace, freedom and preservation of the weak and foolish among brethren.

And this is the root of the tree tyranny, and the law of unrighteousness; and all particular kingly laws found out by covetous policy to enslave one brother to another, whereby bondage, tears, sorrows and poverty are brought upon many men, are all but the boughs and branches of that tree, tyranny; and such officers as these are fallen from true magistracy, and are no members thereof, but the members of tyranny, who is the devil and Satan.

And indeed this tyranny is the cause of all wars and troubles, and of the removal of the government of the earth out of one hand into another, so often as it is, in all nations.

For if magistrates had a care to cherish the peace and liberties of the common people, and see them set free from oppression, they might sit in the chair of government and never be disturbed.

But when their sitting is altogether to advance their own interest, and to forget the afflictions of Joseph or their brethren that are under bondage: this is a forerunner of their own downfall, and oftentime proves the plague to the whole land.

Therefore the work of all true magistrates is to maintain the common law, which is the root of right government and preservation and peace to everyone; and to cast out all self-ended principles and interests, which is tyranny and oppression, and which breaks common peace.

For surely the disorderly actings of officers break the peace of the commonwealth more than any men whatsoever.

All officers in a true magistracy of a commonwealth are to be chosen officers.

In the first family, which is the foundation from whence all families sprang, there was the father; he is the first link of the chain magistracy. The necessity of the children that sprang from him doth say,

'Father, do thou teach us how to plant the earth, that we may live, and we will obey'. By this choice they make him not only a father, but a master and ruler. And out of this root springs up all magistrates and officers, to see the law executed and to preserve peace in the earth, by seeing that right government is observed.

For here take notice, that though the children might not speak, yet their weakness and simplicity did speak and chose their father to be their overseer.

So that he who is a true commonwealth's officer is not to step into the place of magistracy by policy or violent force, as all kings and conquerors do; and so become oppressing tyrants, by promoting their self-ended interests or Machiavellian cheats, that they may live in plenty and rule as lords over their brethren.

But a true commonwealth's officer is to be a chosen one, by them who are in necessity and who judge him fit for that work.

And thus a father in a family is a commonwealth's officer, because the necessity of the young children chose him by a joint consent, and not otherwise.

Secondly, in a bigger family called a parish, the body of the people are confused and disordered, because some are wise, some foolish, some subtle and cunning to deceive, others plain-hearted, some strong, some weak, some rash, angry, some mild and quiet-spirited. By reason whereof offences do arise among brethren, and their common peace is broken.

Therefore as necessity hath added a law to limit men's manners, because of transgressions one against another,

So likewise doth the necessity of common peace move the whole body of the parish to choose two, three or more, within that circuit, to be their overseers, to cause the unruly ones, for whom only the law was added, to be subject to the law or rule, that so peace may be preserved among them in the planting of the earth, reaping the fruits, and quiet enjoyment.

Thirdly, in every county, shire or land, wherein the families are increased to a larger commonwealth, the necessity of the people moves them still to choose more overseers and officers to preserve common peace.

And when the people have chosen all officers, to preserve a right order in government of [the] earth among them, then doth the same necessity of common peace move the people to say to their overseers and officers:

'Do you see our laws observed for our preservation and peace, and we will assist and protect you.' And this word 'assist' and 'protect' implies:

The rising up of the people by force of arms to defend their laws and officers against any invasion, rebellion or resistance, yea to beat down the turbulence of any foolish or self-ended spirit that endeavours to break their common peace.

So that all true officers are chosen officers, and when they act to satisfy the necessity of them who chose them, then they are faithful and righteous servants to that commonwealth, and then there is a rejoicing in the city.

But when officers do take the possessions of the earth into their own hands, lifting themselves up thereby to be lords over their masters, the people who chose them, and will not suffer the people to plant the earth and reap the fruits for their livelihood, unless they will hire the land of them or work for day-wages for them, that they may live in ease and plenty and not work:

These officers are fallen from true magistracy of a commonwealth, and they do not act righteously; and because of this, sorrows and tears, poverty and bondages, are known among mankind; and now that city mourns.

And surely if it be carefully looked into, the necessity of the people never chose such officers, but they were either voluntary soldiers or officers chosen by them who ran before they were called; and so by policy and force they sat down in the chair of government, strengthening one sort of people to take the free use of the earth from another sort; and these are sons of bondage, and they act in darkness: by reason whereof the prophet Isaiah cries out, Darkness hath covered the earth, and thick darkness the people; for the leaders of the people have caused them to err: I fear so, O England, etc.

All officers in a commonwealth are to be chosen new ones every year.

When public officers remain long in place of judicature, they will degenerate from the bounds of humility, honesty and tender care of brethren, in regard the heart of man is so subject to be overspread with the clouds of covetousness, pride and vain-glory: for though at the first entrance into places of rule they be of public spirits, seeking the freedom of others as their own; yet continuing long in such a place where honours and greatness is coming in, they become selfish, seeking themselves and not common freedom; as experience proves it true in these days, according to this common proverb,

Great offices in a land and army have changed the disposition of many sweet-spirited men.

And nature tells us that if water stand long, it corrupts; whereas running water keeps sweet and is fit for common use.

Therefore as the necessity of common preservation moves the people to frame a law and to choose

officers to see the law obeyed, that they may live in peace:

So doth the same necessity bid the people, and cries aloud in the ears and eyes of England to choose new officers and to remove the old ones, and to choose state-officers every year; and that for these reasons:

First, to prevent their own evils; for when pride and fulness take hold of an officer, his eyes are so blinded therewith that he forgets he is a servant to the commonwealth, and strives to lift up himself high above his brethren, and oftentimes his fall proves very great: witness the fall of oppressing kings, bishops and other state officers.

Secondly, to prevent the creeping in of oppression into the commonwealth again: for when officers grow proud and full, they will maintain their greatness, though it be in the poverty, ruin and hardship of their brethren: witness the practice of kings and their laws, that have crushed the commoners of England a long time.

And have we not experience in these days that some officers of the commonwealth are grown so mossy for want of removing that they will hardly speak to an old acquaintance, if he be an inferior man, though they were very familiar before these wars began? Etc.

And what hath occasioned this distance among friends and brethren but long continuance in places of honour, greatness and riches?

Thirdly, let officers be chosen new every year in love to our posterity; for if burdens and oppressions should grow up in our laws and in our officers for want of removing, as moss and weeds grow in some land for want of stirring, surely it will be a foundation of misery, not easily to be removed by our posterity; and then will they curse the time that ever we their fore-fathers had opportunities to set things to rights for their ease, and would not do it.

Fourthly, to remove officers of state every year will make them truly faithful, knowing that others are coming after who will look into their ways; and if they do not do things justly, they must be ashamed when the next officers succeed. And when officers deal faithfully in the government of the commonwealth, they will not be unwilling to remove. The peace of London is much preserved by removing their officers yearly.

Fifthly, it is good to remove officers every year, that whereas many have their portions to obey, so many may have their turns to rule; and this will encourage all men to advance righteousness and good manners in hopes of honour; but when money and riches bears all the sway in the rulers' hearts, there is nothing but tyranny in such ways.

Sixthly, the commonwealth hereby will be furnished with able and experienced men, fit to govern, which will mightily advance the honour and peace of our land, occasion the more watchful care in the education of children, and in time will make our commonwealth of England the lily among the nations of the earth.

Who are fit to choose, and fit to be chosen, officers in a commonwealth?

All uncivil livers, as drunkards, quarrellers, fearful ignorant men, who dare not speak truth lest they anger other men; likewise all who are wholly given to pleasure and sports, or men who are full of talk; all these are empty of substance, and cannot be experienced men, therefore not fit to be chosen officers in a commonwealth; yet they may have a voice in the choosing.

Secondly, all those who are interested in the monarchical power and government ought - neither to choose nor be chosen officers to manage commonwealth's affairs, for these cannot be friends to common freedom. And these are of two sorts:

First, such as have either lent money to maintain the King's army, or in that army have been soldiers to fight against the recovering of common freedom; these are neither to choose nor be chosen officers in the commonwealth as yet, for they have lost their freedom; yet I do not say that they should be made servants, as the conquered usually are made servants, for they are our brethren, and what they did, no doubt, they did in a conscionable zeal, though in ignorance.

And seeing but few of the Parliament's friends understand their common freedoms, though they own the name commonwealth, therefore the Parliament's party ought to bear with the ignorance of the King's party, because they are brethren, and not make them servants, though for the present they be suffered neither to choose nor be chosen officers, lest that ignorant spirit of revenge break out in them to interrupt our common peace.

Secondly, all those who have been so hasty to buy and sell the commonwealth's land, and so to entangle it upon a new account, ought neither to choose nor be chosen officers, for hereby they declare themselves either to be for kingly interest, or else are ignorant of commonwealth's freedom, or both, therefore unfit to make laws to govern a free commonwealth, or to be overseers to see those laws executed.

What greater injury could be done to the commoners of England, than to sell away their land so hastily, before the people knew where they were, or what freedom they had got by such cost and bloodshed as they were at? And what greater ignorance could be declared by officers than to sell away the purchased land from the purchasers, or from part of them, into the hands of particular men to uphold monarchical principles?

But though this be a fault, let it be bore withal, it was ignorance of brethren; for England hath lain so long under kingly slavery that few knew what common freedom was; and let a restoration of this redeemed land be speedily made by them who have the possession of it.

For there is neither reason nor equity that a few men should go away with that land and freedom which the whole commoners have paid taxes, free-quarter and wasted their estates, healths and blood to purchase out of bondage, and many of them are in want of a comfortable livelihood.

Well, these are the men that take away other men's rights from them, and they are members of the covetous generation of self-seekers, therefore unfit to be chosen officers, or to choose.

Who then are fit to be chosen commonwealth's officers?

Why truly, choose such as have a long time given testimony by their actions to be promoters of common freedom, whether they be members in church fellowship or not in church fellowship, for all are one in Christ.

Choose such as are men of peaceable spirits, and of a peaceable conversation.

Choose such as have suffered under kingly oppression, for they will be fellow-feelers of others' bondages.

Choose such as have adventured the loss of their estates and lives to redeem the land from bondage, and

who have remained constant.

Choose such as are understanding men, and who are experienced in the laws of peaceable and right-ordered government.

Choose men of courage, who are not afraid to speak the truth; for this is the shame of many in England at this day, they are drowned in the dung-hill mud of slavish fear of men; these are covetous men, not fearing God, and their portion is to be cast without the city of peace amongst the dogs.

Choose officers out of the number of those men that are above forty years of age, for these are most likely to be experienced men; and all these are likely to be men of courage, dealing truly and hating covetousness.

And if you choose men thus principled, who are poor men, as times go (for the conqueror's power hath made many a righteous man a poor man); then allow them a yearly maintenance from the common stock, until such time as a commonwealth's freedom is established, for then there will be no need of such allowances.

What is the reason that most people are so ignorant of their freedoms, and so few fit to be chosen commonwealth's officers?

Because the old kingly clergy, that are seated in parishes for lucre of tithes, are continually distilling their blind principles into the people, and do thereby nurse up ignorance in them; for they observe the bent of the people's minds, and make sermons to please the sickly minds of ignorant people, to preserve their own riches and esteem among a charmed, befooled and besotted people.

CHAP. IV.- What are the Officers' Names in a free Commonwealth?

In a private family, a father or master is an officer.

In a town, city or parish,

a peace-maker.

a four-fold office of overseers.

a soldier.

a task-master.

an executioner.

In a county or shire, (This is called either the judge's court, or the county senate)

a judge.

the peace-makers of every town within that circuit.

the overseers and soldiers attending thereupon.

In a whole land.

a parliament.

a commonwealth's ministry.

a post-master.

an army.

All these offices are like links of a chain, they arise from one and the same root, which is necessity of common peace, and all their works tend to preserve common peace; therefore they are to assist each other, and all others are to assist them, as need requires, upon pain of punishment by the breach of the laws. And the rule of right government being thus observed may make a whole land, nay the whole fabric of the earth, to become one family of mankind, and one well-governed commonwealth: as Israel was called one house of Israel, though it consisted of many tribes, nations and families.

The Work of a father or master of a family.

A father is to cherish his children till they grow wise and strong, and then as a master he is to instruct them in reading, in learning languages, arts and sciences, or to bring them up to labour, or employ them in some trade or other, or cause them to be instructed therein, according as is shewed hereafter in the education of mankind.

A father is to have a care that as all his children do assist to plant the earth, or by other trades provide necessaries, so he shall see that everyone have a comfortable livelihood, not respecting one before another.

He is to command them their work and see they do it, and not suffer them to live idle; he is either to reprove by words or whip those who offend, for the rod is prepared to bring the unreasonable ones to experience and moderation:

That so children may not quarrel like beasts, but live in peace like rational men, experienced in yielding obedience to the laws and officers of the commonwealth, everyone doing to another as he would have another do to him.

The work of a peace-maker.

In a parish or town may be chosen three, four or six peacemakers, or more, according to the bigness of the place; and their work is twofold.

First, in general to sit in council to order the affairs of the parish, to prevent troubles and to preserve common peace, and here they may be called councillors.

Secondly, if there arise any matters of offence between man and man, by reason of any quarrels, disturbance or foolish actings, the offending parties shall be brought by the soldiers before any one or more of these peace-makers, who shall hear the matter and shall endeavour to reconcile the parties and make peace, and so put a stop to the rigour of the law, and go no further.

But if the peace-maker cannot persuade or reconcile the parties, then he shall command them to appear at the judge's court at the time appointed to receive the judgment of the law.

If any matters of public concernment fall out wherein the peace of the city, town or country in one county is concerned, then the peace-makers in every town thereabouts shall meet and consult about it; and from them, or from any six of them if need require, shall issue forth any order to inferior officers.

But if the matters concern only the limits of a town or city, then the peace-makers of that town shall from their court send forth orders to inferior officers for the performing of any public service within their limits.

Thirdly, if any proof be given that any officer neglects his duty, a peace-maker is to tell that officer between them two of his neglect; and if the officer continue negligent after this reproof, the peace-maker shall acquaint either the county senate or the national Parliament therewith, that from them the offender may receive condign punishment.

And it is all to this end, that the laws be obeyed; for a careful execution of laws is the life of government.

And while a peace-maker is careful to oversee the officers, all officers and others shall assist him, upon pain of forfeiture of freedom or other punishment, according to the rules following.

One thing remember, that when any offender is brought before any of these chief peace-makers, then this is to be noted, that the offender hath rejected mercy once before by refusing to yield obedience to the overseers, as is explained further hereafter.

The work of an overseer.

In a parish or town there is to be a fourfold degree of overseers, which are to be chosen yearly.

The first is an overseer to preserve peace, in case of any quarrels that may fall out between man and man; for though the earth with her fruits be a common treasury, and is to be planted and reaped by common assistance of every family, yet every house and all the furniture for ornament therein is a property to the indwellers; and when any family hath fetched in from the store-houses or shops either clothes, food or any ornament necessary for their use, it is all a property to that family.

And if any other family or man come to disturb them, and endeavour to take away furniture, which is the ornament of his neighbour's house, or to burn, break or spoil wilfully any part of his neighbours' houses, or endeavour to take away either the food or clothing which his neighbour hath provided for his use, by reason whereof quarrels and provoking words may arise:

This office of overseers is to prevent disturbance, and is an assistance to the peace-maker; and at the hearing of any such offence, this overseer shall go and hear the matter, and endeavour to persuade the offender, and to keep peace; and if friendship be made, and subjection be yielded to the laws for the peace of the commonwealth, the offender is only to be reprov'd for his rashness by his overseer; and there is an end.

But if the offender be so violent that he will not refrain his offence to his neighbour at this overseer's persuasion, but remain stiff and stubborn, this overseer shall then give out an order to the soldier to carry the body of the offender before the council of the peace-makers, or before any one or more of them.

And if the offender will not yield obedience to the laws of peace by the persuasion of the chief peace-makers neither, then this is to be noted to be the second time that this offender hath refused mercy.

Then shall the peace-maker appoint him a day, and command him to appear before the judge's court, either in the city or country where the offence is given, and there he shall receive sentence according to the rigour of the law.

And if an overseer should make peace, and do not send the offender to the peace-maker's court, yet this shall be noted the first time of such a one's disobedience to the laws.

And all this is to prevent quarrels and offences; and the chief peace-makers or councillors may not always be at hand at the beginning of such disturbance, therefore this overseer is an assistance thereunto, and is a member of that court.

One man shall not take away that commodity which another man hath first laid hands on, for any-commodity for use belongs to him that first laid hands on it for his use; and if another come and say, 'I will have it', and so offences do arise, this overseer shall go to them, or give order to the soldier to bring the offender to him, and shall endeavour to make peace, either by giving the commodity to him who first laid hands on it, or else by taking the commodity from both, and bid them go to the store-houses and fetch more, seeing the store-houses are full and afford plenty of the same commodities, giving the offender a sharp reproof for offering to break the peace, noting this to be the first time that such a one offered violence to break the laws of peace.

And all persons whatsoever shall assist the overseers herein; and if any person strike or affront by words this overseer, he shall give order to the soldier to carry him before the peace-makers, and from them the offender shall receive a command to appear before the judge's court, where he shall receive the sentence of the law without mitigation.

For when a peace-maker or councillor doth appoint an offender to appear before the judge's court, such an offender hath refused mercy twice.

All this is to be done in case of small offences; but if any offence be offered by any which comes within compass of death, there shall be no peace-maker to be a mediator aforehand, but the offender shall be tried by the law.

The second office of overseership is for trades.

And this overseer is to see that young people be put to masters, to be instructed in some labour, trade, science, or to be waiters in store-houses, that none shall be idly brought up in any family within his circuit.

Likewise this overseer is to assist any master of a family by his advice and counsel in the secrets of his trades, that by the experience of the elders the young people may learn the inward knowledge of the things which are, and find out the secrets of nature.

And seeing there are variety of trades, there are to be chosen overseers for every trade, so many overseers as the largeness of the town and city requires; and the employment of this overseer is not to work (unless he will himself) but to go from house to house to view the works of the people of every house belonging to his trade and circuit, and to give directions as he sees cause, and see that no youth be trained up in idleness, as is said.

And if this overseer find any youth more capable and fit for another trade than his own, he shall speak to some overseers of another trade, who shall provide him a master, with the consent of his father, and appoint him what family to live in.

And if the father of a family be weak, sick or naturally foolish, wanting the power of wisdom and government, or should be dead before his children should be instructed; then the overseers of this trade

wherein the father was brought up are to put those children into such families where they may be instructed according to the law of the commonwealth.

One man may be an overseer for twenty or thirty families of shoemakers; another for smiths, another for weavers of cloth, another for the keepers of store-houses or shops; for every trade is to have an overseer for that particular trade.

And truly the government of the halls and companies in London is a very rational and well-ordered government; and the overseers of trades may very well be called masters, wardens, and assistants of such and such a company, for such and such a particular trade. Only two things are to be practised to preserve peace:

The first is, that all these overseers shall be chosen new ones every year. And secondly, the old overseers shall not choose the new ones, to prevent the creeping in of lordly oppression; but all the masters of families and freemen of that trade shall be the choosers, and the old overseers shall give but their single voice among them.

And as there are to be overseers for trades in towns and cities:

So there are to be chosen overseers in the country parishes, to see the earth planted; and in every parish in the country may be chosen four or six overseers of husbandry, to see the ground planted within their circuits, and to see that the work of husbandry be done orderly and according to reason and skill.

Some overseers to look after the shepherds, and appoint out such men as are skilled in that work. Some overseers to look after the herdsmen. Some overseers of them who look to horses, and some for the dairies. And the work of these overseers is to see that every family send in their assistance to work, both in ploughing and dressing the earth in that season of the year, in seed time; and in reaping the fruits of the earth, and housing them in store-houses in time of harvest.

Likewise they are to see that all barns belonging to any family, or more public store-houses belonging to a parish, be kept in sufficient repair. Likewise they are to see that every family do keep sufficient working tools for common use, as ploughs, carts and furniture, according as every family is furnished with men to work therewith: likewise pickaxes, spades, pruning-hooks, and any such like necessary instrument.

Likewise it is the work of this overseership to see that schoolmasters, postmasters and ministers do their several offices according to the laws.

Likewise this overseership for trades shall see that no man shall be a house-keeper, and have servants under him, till he hath served under a master seven years and hath learned his trade; and the reason is that every family may be governed by staid and experienced masters, and not by wanton youth.

And this office of overseership keeps all people within a peaceable harmony of trades, sciences or works, that there be neither beggar nor idle person in the commonwealth.

The third office of overseership is to see particular tradesmen bring in their works to store-houses and shops, and to see the waiters in store-houses do their duty.

As there are particular trades requiring strength, and some men are strong to perform such works; so there are some weak in body, whose employment shall be to be keepers of store-houses and shops, both

to receive in commodities, and deliver out again, as any particular family or man wants and comes for them.

As for example:

When leather is tanned, it shall be brought into the storehouses for leather; and from thence shoemakers and harnessmakers and such like may fetch it as they need.

So for linen and woollen cloth, it is to be brought by the' weavers into the store-houses or shops, from whence particular families of other trades may fetch as they need: and so for any commodity, as in the law for store-houses is declared.

Now the work of this overseership is of the same nature with the other trades; only this is to be employed only about the oversight of store-houses and shops.

And they are to see that particular tradesmen, as weavers of linen and woollen cloth, spinners, smiths, hatters, glovers and such like, do bring in their works into the shops appointed; and they are to see that the shops and storehouses within their several circuits be kept still furnished:

That when families of other trades want such commodities as they cannot make, they may go to the shops and storehouses where such commodities are, and receive them for their use without buying or selling.

And as this officer sees the particular tradesmen to furnish the shops and store-houses, so they shall see that the keepers of the shops and store-houses be diligent to wait, both to receive in and deliver out again, according to the law, any commodity under their charge.

And if-any keeper of a shop and store-house neglect his duty of his place, through idleness or vain conversation or pride, whereby just offence is given, the overseers shall admonish him and reprove him. If he amend, all is well; if he doth not, he shall give order to the soldiers to carry him before the peace-makers' court; and if he reform upon the reproof of that court, all is well: but if he doth not reform, he shall be sent unto by the officers to appear before the judge's court, and the judge shall pass sentence, that he shall be put out of that house and employment, and sent among the husbandmen to work in the earth; and some other shall have his place and house till he be reformed.

Likewise this overseer shall see to it that the keepers of shops and store-houses do keep their houses in sufficient repair; and when any house wants repair, the keepers thereof shall speak to any of the overseers for trades, and they shall appoint either brick-layers, masons, smiths or carpenters forthwith to take the work in hand and finish it.

Fourthly, all ancient men, above sixty years of age, are general overseers

And wheresoever they go and see things amiss in any officer or tradesman, they shall call any officer or others to account for their neglect of duty to the commonwealth's peace: and these are called elders.

And everyone shall give humble respect to these as to fathers, and as to men of the highest experience in the laws for the keeping of peace in the commonwealth.

And if these see things amiss and do speak, all officers and others shall assist and protect them, to see the laws carefully executed; and everyone that affronts or abuses these in words or deeds shall suffer

punishment according to the sentence of the judge.

And all these shall be general assistances and encouragers of all officers in the doing the work of their places.

And the reason of all is this that many eyes being watchful the laws may be obeyed, for to preserve peace.

But if any of these elders should vent their passion, or express envy against anyone and set up his own will above the law, and do things contrary to law, upon complaint the senators at the judge's court shall examine the matter. If he be faulty the judge shall reprove him the first time, but the second time he does so the judge shall pronounce that he shall lose his authority and never bear office nor general oversight more while he lives, only he shall have respect as a man of age.

What is the office of a soldier?

A soldier is a magistrate as well as any other officer, and indeed all state officers are soldiers, for they represent power; and if there were not power in the hand of officers, the spirit of rudeness would not be obedient to any law or government but their own wills.

Therefore every year shall be chosen a soldier, like unto a marshal of a city, and being the chief he shall have divers soldiers under him at his command, to assist in case of need.

The work of a soldier in times of peace is to fetch in offenders, and to bring them before either officer or courts, and to be a protection to the officers against all disturbances.

The soldier is not to do anything without order from the officers; but when he hath an order, then he is to act accordingly; and he is to receive orders from the judge's court or from the peace-makers' court or from overseers, as need shall require.

If a soldier hath brought an offender before a peacemaker, and if the offender will not be subject to the law by his persuasion, and the peace-maker send him to the judge's court, if the offence be under matters of death, the offender shall not be imprisoned in the mean time: but the peacemaker shall command him to appear before the judge's court at the time appointed, and the offender shall promise to obey; and this shall be for two reasons:

First, to prevent cruelty of prisons. Secondly, in the time of his binding over he may remember himself and amend his ways, and by testimony of his own actions and neighbours' reports, his sentence may be mitigated by the judge; for it is amendment not destruction that commonwealth's law requires.

And if this offender run away from that country to another, and so both disobey the peace-makers' command and break his own promise of appearance: then shall the soldiers be sent forth into all places to search for him, and if they catch him, they should bring him before the judge, who shall pronounce sentence of death upon him without mercy.

And if any protect him or shelter him, after hue and cry is made after him, all such protectors shall suffer the loss of freedom for twelve months' time, as is shewed hereafter what that is.

But if the offence should be matter of death, then the peace-maker shall take no promise from him for his appearance, but let the soldier carry him to prison till the next judge's court sits where he shall have his

trial.

The work of a task-master.

The work or office of a task-master is to take those into his over-sight as are sentenced by the judge to lose their freedom, and to appoint them their work and to see they do it.

If they do their tasks, he is to allow them sufficient victuals and clothing to preserve the health of their bodies.

But if they prove desperate, wanton or idle, and will not quietly submit to the law, the task-master is to feed them with short diet, and to whip them, for a rod is prepared for the fool's back, till such time as their proud hearts do bend to the law.

And when he finds them subject, he shall then carry a favourable hand towards them, as to offending brethren, and allow them sufficient diet and clothes in hopes of their amendment, but withal see they do their work till by the sentence of the law he be set free again.

The task-master shall appoint them any kind of work or labour as he pleases that is to be done by man.

And if any of these offenders run away, there shall be hue and cry sent after him, and he shall die by the sentence of the judge when taken again.

The work of an executioner.

If any have so highly broke the laws as they come within the compass of whipping, imprisoning and death, the executioner shall cut off the head, hang or shoot to death, or whip the offender according to the sentence of law. Thus you may see what the work of every officer in a town or city is.

What is the work of a judge?

The law itself is the judge of all men's actions, yet he who is chosen to pronounce the law is called judge, because he is the mouth of the law: for no single man ought to judge or interpret the law:

Because the law itself, as it is left us in the letter, is the mind and determination of the Parliament and of the people of the land, to be their rule to walk by and to be the touchstone of all actions.

And that man who takes upon him to interpret the law doth either darken the sense of the law, and so makes it confused and hard to be understood, or else puts another meaning upon it, and so lifts up himself above the Parliament, above the law, and above all people in the land.

Therefore the work of that man who is called judge is to hear any matter that is brought before him; and in all cases of difference between man and man, he shall see the parties on both sides before him, and shall hear each man speak for himself without a fee'd lawyer; likewise he is to examine any witness who is to prove a matter in trial before him.

And then he is to pronounce the bare letter of the law concerning such a thing, for he hath his name 'judge' not because his will and mind is to judge the actions of offenders before him, but because he is the mouth to pronounce the law, who indeed is the true judge. Therefore to this law and to this testimony let everyone have a regard who intends to live in peace in the commonwealth.

But from hence hath arose much misery in the nations under kingly government, in that the man called

the judge hath been suffered to interpret the law; and when the mind of the law, the judgment of the Parliament and the government of the land, is resolved into the breast of the judges this hath occasioned much complaining of injustice in judges, in courts of justice, in lawyers, and in the course of the law itself, as if it were an evil rule.

Because the law, which was a certain rule, was varied according to the will of a covetous, envious or proud judge, therefore no marvel though the kingly laws be so intricate, and though few know which way the course of the law goes, because the sentence lies many times in the breast of a judge, and not in the letter of the law.

And so the good laws made by an industrious Parliament are like good eggs laid by a silly gooses and as soon as she hath laid them, she goes her way and lets others take them, and never looks after them more, so that if you lay a stone in her nest, she will sit upon it as if it were an egg.

And so though the laws be good, yet if they be left to the will of a judge to interpret, the execution hath many times proved bad.

And truly as the laws and people of nations have been abused by suffering men (judges) to alter the sense by their interpretation:

So likewise hath the Scriptures of Moses, the prophets, Christ and his apostles been darkened and confounded by suffering ministers to put their inferences and interpretations upon them.

And surely both the judges for the law and the ministers for God's Word have been both unfaithful servants to man and to God, by taking upon them to expound and interpret that rule which they are bound to yield obedience to, without adding to or diminishing from.

What is the judge's court?

In a county or shire there is to be chosen

a judge,
the peace-makers of every town within that circuit,
the overseers, and
a band of soldiers attending thereupon.

And this is called the judge's court or the county senate. This court shall sit four times in the year (or oftener if need be) in the country, and four times in the year in great cities. In the first quarter of the year they shall sit in the east part of the county, and the second quarter of the year in the west, in the third in the south and in the fourth in the north.

And this court is to oversee and examine any officer within their county or limits; for their work is to see that everyone be faithful in his place; and if any officer hath done wrong to any, this court is to pass sentence of punishment upon the offender, according to his offence against the law.

If any grievance lie upon any man, wherein inferior officers cannot ease him, this court shall quietly hear his complaint, and ease him; for where a law is wanting, they may prepare a way of ease for the offender till the Parliament sit, who may either establish that conclusion for a law, if they approve of it, or frame another law to that effect; for it is possible that many things may fall out hereafter which the law-makers for the present may not foresee.

If any disorder break in among the people, this court shall set things to rights. If any be bound over to appear at this court, the judge shall hear the matter and pronounce the letter of the law, according to the nature of the offence.

So that the alone work of the judge is-to pronounce the sentence and mind of the law; and all this is but to see the laws executed, that the peace of the commonwealth may be preserved.

What is the work of a commonwealth's Parliament in general?

A Parliament is the highest court of equity in a land, and it is to be chosen every year; and out of every city, town and certain limits of a country 6 through the land, two, three or more men are to be chosen to make up this court.

This court is to oversee all other courts, officers, persons and actions, and to have a full power, being the representative of the whole land, to remove all grievances and to ease the people that are oppressed.

A Parliament hath his rise from the lowest office in a commonwealth, viz. from the father in a family. For as a father's tender care is to remove all grievances from the oppressed children, not respecting one before another; so a Parliament are to remove all burdens from the people of the land, and are not to respect persons who are great before them who are weak; but their eye and care must be principally to relieve the oppressed ones, who groan under the tyrants' laws and power. The strong, or such as have the tyrant power to uphold them, need no help.

But though a Parliament be the father of a land, yet by the covetousness and cheats of kingly government the heart of this father hath been alienated from the children of the Land, or else so over-awed by the frowns of a kingly tyrant :hat they could not or durst not act for the weakest children's ease.

For hath not Parliaments sat and rose again and made Laws to strengthen the tyrant in his throne, and to strengthen the rich and the strong by those laws, and left Oppression upon the backs of the oppressed still?

But I'll not reap 7 up former weaknesses, but rather rejoice in hope of amendment, seeing our present Parliament hath declared England to be a free commonwealth, and to cast out kingly power; and upon this ground I rejoice in hope that succeeding Parliaments will be tender-hearted fathers to the oppressed children of the land;

And not only dandle us upon the knee with good words and promises till particular men's turns be served, but will Fill our bellies and clothe our backs with good actions of Freedom, and give to the oppressed children's children their birthright portion, which is freedom in the commonwealth's land, which the kingly law and power, our cruel step-fathers and step-mothers, have kept from us and our fathers for many years past.

The particular work of a Parliament is fourfold.

First, as a tender father, a Parliament is to empower officers and give out orders for the free planting and reaping of the commonwealth's land, that all who have been oppressed and kept from the free use thereof by conquerors, kings and their tyrant laws may now be set at liberty to plant in freedom for food and raiment; and are to be a protection to them who labour the earth, and a punisher of them who are idle. But some may say, 'What is that I call commonwealth's land?'

I answer, all that land which hath been withheld from the inhabitants by the conqueror or tyrant kings, and is now recovered out of the hands of that oppression by the joint assistance of the persons and purses of the commoners of the land; for this land is the price of their blood. It is their birthright to them and their posterity, and ought not to be converted into particular hands again by the laws of a free commonwealth.

And in particular, this land is all abbey lands, formerly recovered out of the hands of the pope's power by the blood of the commoners of England, though the kings withheld their rights herein from them.

So likewise all crown lands, bishops' lands, with all parks, forests, chases, now of late recovered out of the hands of the kingly tyrants, who have set lords of manors and taskmasters over the commoners to withhold the free use of the land from them.

So likewise all the commons and waste lands, which are called commons because the poor was to have part therein; but this is withheld from the commoners, either by lords of manors requiring quit rents and overseeing the poor so narrowly that none dares build him a house upon this common land, or plant thereupon without his leave, but must pay him rent, fines and heriots and homage, as unto a conqueror; or else the benefit of this common land is taken away from the younger brethren by rich landlords and freeholders, who overstock the commons with sheep and cattle, so that the poor in many places are not able to keep a cow unless they steal grass for her.

And this is the bondage the poor complain of, that they are kept poor by their brethren in a land where there is so much plenty for every one, if covetousness and pride did not rule as king in one brother over another, and kingly government occasions all this.

Now it is the work of a Parliament to break the tyrants' bonds, to abolish all their oppressing laws, and to give orders, encouragements and directions unto the poor oppressed people of the land, that they forthwith plant and manure this their own land for the free and comfortable livelihood of themselves and posterities;

And to declare to them, it is their own creation rights, faithfully and courageously recovered by their diligence, purses and blood from under the kingly tyrants' and oppressors' power.

The work of a Parliament, secondly,

Is to abolish all old laws and customs which have been the strength of the oppressor, and to prepare and then to enact new laws for the ease and freedom of the people, but yet not without the people's knowledge.

For the work of a Parliament herein is threefold.

first, when old laws and customs of the kings do burden the people, and the people desire the remove of them and the establishment of more easy laws:

It is now the work of a Parliament to search into reason and equity, how relief may be found out for the people in such a case, and to preserve a common peace; and when they have found out a way by debate of counsel among themselves, whereby the people may be relieved, they are not presently to establish their conclusions for a law.

But in the next place, they are to make a public declaration thereof to the people of the land who choose

them, for their approbation; and if no objection come in from the people within one month, they may then take the people's silence as a consent thereto.

And then in the third place they are to enact it for a law, to be a binding rule to the whole land. For as the remove of the old laws and customs are by the people's consent, which is proved by their frequent petitioning and requests of such a thing: so the enacting of new laws must be by the people's consent and knowledge likewise.

And here they are to require the consent, not of men interested in the old oppressing laws and customs, as kings used to do, but of them who have been oppressed. And the reason is this:

Because the people must be all subject to the law, under pain of punishment; therefore it is all reason they should know it before it be enacted, that if there be any thing of the counsel of oppression in it, it may be discovered and amended.

But you will say, 'If it must be so, then will men so differ in their judgments, that we shall never agree'. I answer:

There is but bondage and freedom, particular interest or common interest; and he who pleads to bring in particular interest into a free commonwealth will presently be seen and cast out, as one bringing in kingly slavery again.

And men in place and office, where greatness and honour is coming in, may sooner be corrupted to bring in particular interest than a whole land can be, who must either suffer sorrow under a burdensome law, or rejoice under a law of freedom.

And surely those men who are not willing to enslave the people will not be unwilling to consent hereunto.

The work of a Parliament, thirdly,

Is to see all those burdens removed actually, which have hindered or do hinder the oppressed people from the enjoyment of their birthrights.

If their common lands be under the oppression of lords of manors, they are to see the land freed from that slavery.

If the commonwealth's land be sold by the hasty counsel of subtle, covetous and ignorant officers, who act for their own particular interest, and so hath entangled the commoners' land again under colour of being bought and sold:

A Parliament is to examine what authority any had to sell or buy the commonwealth land without a general consent of the people; for it is not any one's but everyone's birthright. And if some through covetousness and self-interest gave consent privately, yet a Parliament, who is the father of a land, ought not to give consent to buy and sell that land which is all the children's birthright and the price of their labours, monies and blood.

They are to declare likewise that the bargain is unrighteous, and that the buyers and sellers are enemies to the peace and freedom of the commonwealth. For indeed the necessity of the people chose a Parliament to help them in their weakness; and where they see a danger like to impoverish or enslave one part of the

people to another, they are to give warning and so prevent that danger; for they are the eyes of the land. And surely those are blind eyes that lead the people into bogs, to be entangled in mud again after they are once pulled out.

And when the land is once freed from the oppressors' power and laws, a Parliament is to keep it so, and not suffer it by their consent to have it bought or sold, and so entangled in bondage upon a new account.

And for their faithfulness herein to the people, the people are engaged by love and faithfulness to cleave close to them, in defence and protection. But when a Parliament have no care herein, the hearts of the people run away from them like sheep who have no shepherd.

All grievances are occasioned either by the covetous wills of state-officers, who neglect their obedience to the good laws, and then prefer their own ease, honour and riches before the ease and freedom of the oppressed people. And here a Parliament is to cashier and punish those officers, and place others who are men of public spirits in their rooms:

Or else the people's grievances arise from the practice and power that the kings' laws have given to lords of manors, covetous landlords, tithe-takers or unbounded lawyers, being all strengthened in their oppressions over the people by that kingly law. And when the people are burdened herewith and groan, waiting for deliverance, as the oppressed people of England do at this day; it is then the work of a Parliament to see the people delivered, and that they enjoy their creation freedoms in the earth. They are not to dally with them, but as a father is ready to help his children out of misery, when they either see them in misery or when the children cry for help; so should they do for the oppressed people.

And surely for this end, and no other, is a Parliament chosen, as is cleared before: for the necessity of common preservation and peace is the fundamental law both to officers and people.

The work of a Parliament, fourthly, is this:

If there be an occasion to raise an army to wage war, either against an invasion of a foreign enemy or against an insurrection at home, it is the work of a Parliament to manage that business for to preserve common peace. And here their work is threefold:

First, to acquaint the people plainly with the cause of the war, and to shew them the danger of such an invasion or insurrection; and so from that cause require their assistance in person for the preservation of the laws, liberties and peace of the commonwealth, according to their engagement when they were chosen, which was this: do you maintain our laws and liberties, and we will protect and assist you.

Secondly, a Parliament is to make choice of understanding, able and public-spirited men to be leaders of an army in this case, and to give them commissions and power in the name of the commonwealth to manage the work of an army.

Thirdly, a Parliament's work in this case is either to send ambassadors to another nation which hath invaded our land, or that intends to invade, to agree upon terms of peace, or to proclaim war; or else to receive and hear ambassadors from other lands for the same business, or about any other business concerning the peace and honour of the land.

For a Parliament is the head of a commonwealth's power, or (as it may be said) it is the great council of an army, from whom originally all orders do issue forth to any officer or soldier.

For if so be a Parliament had not an army to protect them, the rudeness of the people would not obey their proceedings: and if a Parliament were not the representative of the people, who indeed is the body of ail power, the army would not obey their orders.

So then, a Parliament is the head of power in a commonwealth, and it is their work to manage public affairs, in times of war and in times of peace; not to promote the interest of particular men, but for the peace and freedom of the whole body of the land, viz. of every particular man, that none be deprived of his creation rights unless he hath lost his freedom by transgression, as by the laws is expressed.

The work of a commonwealth's ministry, and why one day in seven may be a day of rest from labour.

If there were good laws, and the people be ignorant of them, it would be as bad for the commonwealth as if there were no laws at all.

Therefore according to one of the laws of Israel's commonwealth made by Moses, who was the ruler of the people at that time:

It is very rational and good that one day in seven be still set apart, for three reasons:

First, that the people in such a parish may generally meet together to see one another's faces, and beget or preserve fellowship in friendly love;

Secondly, to be a day of rest or cessation from labour, so that they have some bodily rest for themselves and cattle;

Thirdly, that he who is chosen minister (for that year) in that parish may read to the people three things:

First the affairs of the whole land, as it is brought in by the postmaster (as it is related in his office, hereafter following).

Secondly, to read the law of the commonwealth: not only to strengthen the memory of the ancients, but that the young people also, who are not grown up to ripeness of experience, may be instructed to know when they do well and when they do ill; for the laws of a land hath the power of freedom and bondage, life and death, in its hand, therefore the necessary knowledge to be known, and he is the best prophet that acquaints men therewith: that as men grow up in years, they may be able to defend the laws and government of the land. But these laws shall not be expounded by the reader, for to expound a plain law, as if a man would put a better meaning than the letter itself, produces two evils:

First the pure law and the minds of people will be thereby confounded, for multitude of words darken knowledge;

Secondly the reader will be puffed up in pride, to contemn the lawmakers, and in time that will prove the father and nurse of tyranny, as at this day is manifested by our ministry;

And thirdly because the minds of people generally love discourses, therefore that the wits of men both young and old may be exercised, there may be speeches made in a threefold nature.

First to declare the acts and passages of former ages and governments, setting forth the benefit of freedom by well-ordered governments, as in Israel's commonwealth, and the troubles and bondage which hath always attended oppression and oppressors; as the state of Pharaoh and other tyrant kings, who said the earth and people were theirs and only at their dispose.

Secondly speeches may be made of all arts and sciences, some one day, some another: as in physic, chirurgery,⁸ astrology, astronomy, navigation, husbandry and such like. And in these speeches may be unfolded the nature of all herbs and plants from the hyssop to the cedar, as Solomon writ of.

Likewise men may come to see into the nature of the fixed and wandering stars, those great powers of God in the heavens above; and hereby men will come to know the secrets of nature and creation, within which all true knowledge is wrapped up, and the light in man must arise to search it out.

Thirdly speeches may be made sometimes of the nature of mankind, of his darkness and of his light, of his weakness and of his strength, of his love and of his envy, of his sorrow and of his joy, of his inward and outward bondages, and of his inward and outward freedoms, etc. And this is that which the ministry of churches generally aim [at], but, only that they confound their knowledge by imaginary study, when anyone takes upon him to speak without experience.

Now this is the way

To attain to the true knowledge of God (who is the spirit of the whole creation) as he hath spread himself forth in every form, and more eminently in man; as Paul writ, The creation in all the several bodies and forms are but the mansions or fulness of him who hath filled all things with himself.

And if the earth were set free from kingly bondage, so that everyone were sure to have a free livelihood, and if this liberty were granted, then many secrets of God, and his works in nature, would be made public, which men nowadays keep secret to get a living by: so that this kingly bondage is the cause of the spreading of ignorance in the earth. But when commonwealth's freedom is established, and Pharisaical or kingly slavery cast out, then will knowledge cover the earth, as the waters cover the seas; and not till then.

He who is the chosen minister for that year to read shall not be the only man to make sermons or speeches; but everyone who hath any experience, and is able to speak of any art or language or of the nature of the heavens above or of the earth below, shall have free liberty to speak when they offer themselves, and in a civil manner desire an audience, and appoint his day. yet he who is the reader may have his liberty to speak too, but not to assume all the power to himself, as the proud and ignorant clergy have done, who have bewitched all the world by their subtle covetousness and pride.

And everyone who speaks of any herb, plant, art or nature of mankind, is required to speak nothing by imagination, but what he hath found out by his own industry and observation in trial.

And because other nations are of several languages, therefore these speeches may be made sometimes in other languages, and sometimes in our mother tongue, that so the men of our English commonwealth may attain to all knowledges, arts and languages, and that everyone may be encouraged in his industry, and purchase the countenance and love of their neighbourhood for their wisdom and experimental knowledge in the things which are.

And thus to speak, or thus to read the law of nature (or God) as he hath written his name in every body, is to speak a pure language, and this is to speak the truth as Jesus Christ spake it, giving to everything its own weight and measure.

By this means in time men shall attain to the practical knowledge of God truly, that they may serve him in spirit and truth; and this knowledge will not deceive a man.

'Aye but,' saith the zealous but ignorant professor,

'This is a low and carnal ministry indeed, this leads men to know nothing but the knowledge of the earth and the secrets of nature, but we are to look after spiritual and heavenly things.' I answer:

To know the secrets of nature is to know the works of God; and to know the works of God within the creation is to know God himself, for God dwells in every visible work or body.

And indeed if you would know spiritual things, it is to know how the spirit or power of wisdom and life, causing motion or growth, dwells within and governs both the several bodies of the stars and planets in the heavens above, and the several bodies of the earth below, as grass, plants, fishes, beasts, birds and mankind; for to reach God beyond the creation, or to know what he will be to a man after the man is dead, if any otherwise than to scatter him into his essences of fire, water, earth and air of which he is compounded, is a knowledge beyond the line or capacity of man to attain to while he lives in his compounded body.

And if a man should go to imagine what God is beyond the creation, or what he will be in a spiritual demonstration after a man is dead, he doth (as the proverb saith) build castles in the air, or tells us of a world beyond the moon and beyond the sun, merely to blind the reason of man.

I'll appeal to your self in this question, what other knowledge have you of God but what you have within the circle of the creation?

For if the creation in all its dimensions be the fulness of him that fills all with himself, and if you yourself be part of this creation, where can you find God but in that line or station wherein you stand?

God manifests himself in actual knowledge, not in imagination; he is still in motion, either in bodies upon earth, or in the bodies in the heavens, or in both; in the night and in the day, in winter, in summer, in cold, in heat, in growth or not in growth.

But when a studying imagination comes into man, which is the devil, for it is the cause of all evil and sorrows in the world: that is he who puts out the eyes of man's knowledge, and tells him he must believe what others have writ or spoke, and must not trust to his own experience. And when this bewitching fancy sits in the chair of government, there is nothing but saying and unsaying, frowardness, covetousness, fears, confused thoughts and unsatisfied doubtings, all the days of that man's reign in the heart.

Or secondly, examine yourself, and look likewise into the ways of all professors, and you shall find that the enjoyment of the earth below, which you call a low and a carnal knowledge, is that which you and all professors (as well as the men of the world, as you call them) strive and seek after.

Wherefore are you so covetous after the world, in buying and selling? counting yourself a happy man if you be rich, and a miserable man if you be poor. And though you say, heaven after death is a place of glory, where you shall enjoy God face to face, yet you are loath to leave the earth to go thither.

Do not your ministers preach for to enjoy the earth? Do not professing lawyers, as well as others, buy and sell the conqueror's justice, that they may enjoy the earth? Do not professing soldiers fight for the earth, and seat themselves in that land which is the birthright of others as well as theirs, shutting others out? Do not all professors strive to get earth, that they may live in plenty by other men's labours?

Do you not make the earth your very rest? Doth not the enjoying of the earth please the spirit in you? And then you say, God is pleased with your ways and blesseth you. If you want earth and become poor, do you not say, God is angry with you and crosseth you?

Why do you heap up riches? Why do you eat and drink and wear clothes? Why do you take a woman and lie with her to beget children? Are not all these carnal and low things of the earth? And do you not live in them, and covet them as much as any? nay more than many which you call men of the world?

And it being thus with you, what other spiritual or heavenly things do you seek after more than others? And what is in you more than in others? If you say, 'There is'; then surely you ought to let these earthly things alone to the men of the world, as you call them, whose portions these are; and keep you within the compass of your own sphere, that others seeing you live a life above the world in peace and freedom, neither working yourself nor deceiving, nor compelling others to work for you, they may be drawn to embrace the same spiritual life by your single-hearted conversation. Well, I have done here.

Let us now examine your divinity,

Which you call heavenly and spiritual things, for herein speeches are made not to advance knowledge, but to destroy the true knowledge of God. For divinity does not speak the truth as it is hid in every body, but it leaves the motional knowledge of a thing as it is and imagines, studies or thinks what may be, and so runs the hazard, true or false. And this divinity is always speaking words to deceive the simple, that he may make them work for him and maintain him, but he never comes to action himself to do as he would be done by; for he is a monster who is all tongue and no hand.

This divining doctrine, which you call spiritual and heavenly things, is the thief and the robber. He comes to spoil the vineyard of a man's peace, and does not enter in at the door but he climbs up another way. And this doctrine is twofold.

First he takes upon him to tell you the meaning of other men's words and writing by his studying or imagining what another man's knowledge might be, and by thus doing darkens knowledge and wrongs the spirit of the authors who did write and speak those things which he takes upon him to interpret.

Secondly he takes upon him to foretell what shall befall a man after he is dead, and what that world is beyond the sun and beyond the moon, etc. And if any man tell him there is no reason for what you say, he answers, 'You must not judge of heavenly and spiritual things by reason, but you must believe what is told you, whether it be reason or no'. There is a threefold discovery of falsehood in this doctrine.

For first it is a doctrine of a sickly and weak spirit, who hath lost his understanding in the knowledge of the creation and of the temper of his own heart and nature, and so runs into fancies, either of joy or sorrow.

And if the passion of joy predominate, then he fancies to himself a personal God, personal angels and a local place of glory which, he saith, he and all who believes what he saith shall go to after they are dead.

And if sorrow predominate, then he fancies to himself a personal devil and a local place of torment, that he shall go to after he is dead, and this he speaks with great confidence.

Or secondly, this is the doctrine of a subtle running spirit, to make an ungrounded wise man mad: that he might be called the more excellent man in knowledge. For many times when a wise understanding heart is assaulted with this doctrine of a God, a devil, a heaven and a hell, salvation and damnation after a man

is dead, his spirit being not strongly grounded in the knowledge of the creation, nor in the temper of his own heart, he strives and stretches his brains to find out the depth of that doctrine and cannot attain to it: for indeed it is not knowledge but imagination; and so, by poring and puzzling himself in it, loses that wisdom he had, and becomes distracted and mad. And if the passion of joy predominate, then he is merry and sings and laughs, and is ripe in the expressions of his words and will speak strange things: but all by imagination. But if the passion of sorrow predominate, then he is heavy and sad, crying out, He is damned, God hath forsaken him and he must go to hell when he dies, he cannot make his calling and election sure. And in that distemper many times a man doth hang, kill or drown himself; so that this divining doctrine, which you call 'spiritual and heavenly things' torments people always when they are weak, sickly and under any distemper; therefore it cannot be the doctrine of Christ the saviour.

For my own part, my spirit hath waded deep to find the bottom of this divining spiritual doctrine: and the more I searched, the more I was at a loss; and I never came to quiet rest, and to know God in my spirit, till I came to the knowledge of the things in this book. And let me tell you, they who preach this divining doctrine are the murderers of many a poor heart who is bashful and simple, and that cannot speak for himself but that keeps his thoughts to himself.

Or thirdly, this doctrine is made a cloak of policy by the subtle elder brother, to cheat his simple younger brother of the freedoms of the earth. For, saith the elder brother, 'The earth is mine and not yours, brother; and you must not work upon it unless you will hire it of me; and you must not take the fruits of it unless you will buy them of me, by that which I pay you for your labour. For if you should do otherwise, God will not love you, and you shall not go to heaven when you die, but the devil will have you and you must be damned in hell.'

If the younger reply and say, 'The earth is my birthright as well as yours, and God who made us both is no respecter of persons: therefore there is no reason but I should enjoy the freedoms of the earth for my comfortable livelihood as well as you; brother.'

'Aye but', saith the elder brother, 'you must not trust to your own reason and understanding, but you must believe what is written and what is told you; and if you will not believe, your damnation will be the greater.'

'I cannot believe', saith the younger brother, 'that our righteous creator should be so partial in his dispensations of the earth, seeing our bodies cannot live upon earth without the use of the earth.'

The elder brother replies, 'What, will you be an atheist and a factious man? Will you not believe God?'

'Yes,' saith the younger brother, 'if I knew God said so I should believe, for I desire to serve him.'

'Why,' saith the elder brother, 'this is his Word, and if you will not believe it, you must be damned; but if you will believe it, you must go to heaven.'

Well, the younger brother, being weak in spirit and having not a grounded knowledge of the creation nor of himself, is terrified and lets go his hold in the earth, and submits himself to be a slave to his brother for fear of damnation in hell after death, and in hopes to get heaven thereby after he is dead; and so his eyes are put out, and his reason is blinded.

So that this divining spiritual doctrine is a cheat; for while men are gazing up to heaven, imagining after a happiness or fearing a hell after they are dead, their eyes are put out? that they see not what is their

birthrights, and what is to be done by them here on earth while they are living. This is the filthy dreamer, and the cloud without rain.

And indeed the subtle clergy do know that if they can but charm the people, by this their divining doctrine, to look after riches, heaven and glory when they are dead, that then they shall easily be the inheritors of the earth, and have the deceived people to be their servants.

This divining doctrine, which you call spiritual and heavenly, was not the doctrine of Christ; for his words were pure knowledge, they were words of life. For he said, He spoke what he had seen with his Father; for he had the knowledge of the creation, and spake as everything was.

And this divinity came in after Christ to darken his knowledge; and it is the language of the mystery of iniquity and Antichrist, whereby the covetous, ambitious and serpentine spirit cozens the plain-hearted of his portions in the earth.

And divinity cozens a plain heart two ways. First, if a man have an estate, according to the kings' laws, he is made by this charm to give it or baze 9 it away to the priests or to religious uses, in hopes to get heaven when he is dead.

Or secondly, a man by running to hear divinity sermons, and dancing after his charming pipe, neglects his labour and so runs into debt, and then his fellow professors will cast him into prison and starve him there, and their divinity will call him a hypocrite and wicked man, and become a devil to torment him in that hell.

But surely light is so broke out that it will cover the earth, so that the divinity charmers shall say, The people will not hear the voice of our charming, charm we never so wisely. And all the priests and clergy and preachers of these spiritual and heavenly things, as they call them, shall take up the lamentation, which is their portion, Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city divinity, which hath filled the whole earth with her sorcery and deceived all people, so that the whole world wondered after this Beast; how is it fallen, and how is her judgment come upon her in one hour? And further, as you may read, Rev. 18.10.

The officer of the postmaster.

In every parish throughout the commonwealth shall be chosen two men (at the time when other officers are chosen), and these shall be called postmasters. And whereas there are four parts of the land, east, west, north, south, there shall be chosen in the chief city two men to receive in what the postmaster of the east country brings in, and two men to receive in what the postmaster of the west brings in, and two for the north, and so two for the south.

Now the work of the country postmaster shall be this: they shall every month bring up or send by tidings from their respective parishes to the chief city, of what accidents or passages fall out which is either to the honour or dishonour, hurt or profit, of the commonwealth; and if nothing have fallen out in that month worth observation, then they shall write down peace or good order in such a parish.

And when these respective postmasters have brought up their bills or certificates from all parts of the land, the receivers of those bills shall write down everything in order from parish to parish in the nature of a weekly bill of observation.

And those eight receivers shall cause the affairs of the four quarters of the land to be printed in one book

with what speed may be, and deliver to every postmaster a book, that as they bring up the affairs of one parish in writing, they may carry down in print the affairs of the whole land.

The benefit lies here, that if any part of the land be visited with plague, famine, invasion or insurrection, or any casualties, the other parts of the land may have speedy knowledge, and send relief.

And if any accident fall out through unreasonable action or careless neglect, other parts of the land may thereby be made watchful to prevent like danger.

Or if any through industry or ripeness of understanding have found out any secret in nature, or new invention in any art or trade or in the tillage of the earth, or such like, whereby the commonwealth may more flourish in peace and plenty, for which virtues those persons received honour in the places where they dwelt:

When other parts of the land hear of it, many thereby will be encouraged to employ their reason and industry to do the like, that so in time there will not be any secret in nature which now lies hid (by reason of the iron age of kingly oppressing government) but by some or other will be brought to light, to the beauty of our commonwealth.

The rise of a commonwealth's army.

After that the necessity of the people in a parish, in a county and in a land, hath moved the people to choose officers to preserve common peace, the same necessity causeth the people to say to their officers,

'Do you see our laws observed for our common preservation, and we will assist and protect you.'

This word 'assist' and 'protect' implies the rising of the people by force of arms to defend their laws and officers, who rule well, against any invasion, insurrection or rebellion of selfish officers or rude people; yea to beat down the turbulency of any foolish spirit that shall arise to break our common peace.

So that the same law of necessity of common peace, which moved the people to choose officers and to compose a law for to be a rule of government, the same law of necessity of protection doth raise an army; so that an army, as well as other officers in a commonwealth, spring from one and the same root, viz. from the necessity of common preservation.

An army is twofold, viz. a ruling army or a fighting army.

A ruling army is called magistracy in times of peace, keeping that land and government in peace by execution of the laws, which the fighting army did purchase in the field by their blood out of the hands of oppression.

And here all officers, from the father in a family to the parliament in a land, are but the heads and leaders of an army; and all people arising to protect and assist their officers, in defence of a right-ordered government, are but the body of an army.

And this magistracy is called the rejoicing of all nations, when the foundation thereof are laws of common equity, whereby every single man may enjoy the fruit of his labour in the free use of the earth, without being restrained or oppressed by the hands of others.

Secondly, a fighting army, called soldiers in the field, when the necessity of preservation, by reason of a foreign invasion or inbred oppression, do move the people to arise in an army to cut and tear to pieces

either degenerated officers, or rude people who seek their own interest and not common freedom, and through treachery do endeavour to destroy the laws of common freedom, and to enslave both the land and people of the commonwealth to their particular wills and lusts.

And this war is called a plague, because that cursed enmity of covetousness, pride and vain-glory and envy in the heart of mankind did occasion the rise of it, because he will not be under the moderate observation of any free and right order unless he himself be king and lord over other persons and their labours.

For now the people do arise to defend their faithful officers against such officers as are unfaithful, and to defend their laws and common peace.

The use or work of a fighting army in a commonwealth

Is to beat down all that arise to endeavour to destroy the liberties of the commonwealth. For as, in the days of monarchy, an army was used to subdue all who rebelled against kingly property, so in the days of a free commonwealth an army is to be made use of to resist and destroy all who endeavour to keep up or bring in kingly bondage again.

The work of this fighting army is twofold.

The first is to withstand the invasion or coming in of a foreign enemy, whose invasion is for no other end but to take away our land and earth from us, to deny us the free use thereof, to become kings and landlords over us and to make us their slaves.

As William the Conqueror when he had conquered England, he gave not only the land in parcels to his soldiers, but he gave all men, their wives and children within such a lordship to his lords of manors, to do with them as they pleased. And for this cause now doth an army arise to keep out an invasion of a foreigner, that by the defence of our army, who is part of ourselves, the rest of our brethren in the commonwealth may plough, sow and reap, and enjoy the fruits of their labours, and so live in peace in their own land.

Or secondly, if a land be conquered and so enslaved as England was under the kings and conquering laws, then an army is to be raised with as much secrecy as may be, to restore the land again and set it free, that the earth may become a common treasury to all her children, without respecting persons, as it was before kingly bondage came in, as you may read, I Sam. 8.

This latter is called civil wars, and this is the wars of the commoners of England against King Charles now cast out, for he and his laws were the successive power of that Norman conquest over England.

And now the commoners of England in this age of the world are rise up in an army, and have cast out that invasion of the Duke of Normandy and have won their land and liberties again by the sword, if they do not suffer their counsels to befool them into slavery again upon a new account.

Therefore you army of England's commonwealth, look to it ! The enemy could not beat you in the field, but they may be too hard for you by policy in counsel, if you do not stick close to see common freedom established.

For if so be that kingly authority be set up in your laws again, King Charles hath conquered you and your posterity by policy and won the field of you, though you seemingly have cut off his head.

For the strength of a king lies not in the visible appearance of his body, but in his will, laws and authority, which is called monarchical government.

But if you remove kingly government and set up true and free commonwealth's government, then you gain your crown, and keep it, and leave peace to your posterity, otherwise not.

And thus doing makes a war either lawful or unlawful.

An army may be murderers and unlawful.

If an army be raised to cast out kingly oppression, and if the heads of that army promise a commonwealth's freedom to the oppressed people if in case they will assist with person and purse, and if the people do assist, and prevail over the tyrant, those officers are bound by the law of justice (who is God) to make good their engagements. And if they do not set the land free from the branches of the kingly oppression, but reserve some part of the kingly power to advance their own particular interest, whereby some of their friends are left under as great slavery to them as they were under the kings, those officers are not faithful commonwealth's soldiers, they are worse thieves and tyrants than the kings they cast out; and that honour they seemed to get by their victories over the commonwealth's oppressor they lose again by breaking promise and engagement to their oppressed friends who did assist them.

For what difference is there between a professed tyrant, that declares himself a tyrant in words, laws and deeds, as all conquerors do, and him who promises to free me from the power of the tyrant if I'll assist him; and when I have spent my estate and blood and the health of my body, and expect my bargain by his engagements to me, he sits himself down in the tyrant's chair and takes the possession of the land to himself, and calls it his and none of mine, and tells me he cannot in conscience let me enjoy the freedom of the earth with him, because it is another man's right?

And now my health and estate is decayed, and I grow in age, I must either beg or work for day wages, which I was never brought up to, for another; whenas the earth is as freely my inheritance and birthright as his whom I must work for; and if I cannot live by my weak labours but take where I need, as Christ sent and took the ass's colt in his need, there is no dispute but by the kings and 10 laws he will hang me for a thief.

But hear, O thou righteous spirit of the whole creation, and judge who is the thief: him who takes away the freedom of the common earth from me, which is my creation rights and which I have helped to purchase out of the hands of the kingly oppressor by my purse and person, and which he hath taken for wages of me;

Or I, who takes the common earth to plant upon for my free livelihood, endeavouring to live as a free commoner in a free commonwealth, in righteousness and peace.

Such a soldier as this engagement-breaker is neither a friend to the creation nor to a particular commonwealth, but a self-lover and a hypocrite, for he did not fight to set the earth free from the bondage of the oppressor as he pretended by his engagements: but to remove that power out of the other's hand into his own. And this is just like the beasts who fight for mastery and keeps it, not relieving but still lording and kinging over the weak. These are monarchical soldiers not commonwealth's soldiers; and such a soldier is a murderer and his warfare is unlawful.

But soldiers of true noble spirits will help the weak and set the oppressed free, and delight to see the

commonwealth flourish in freedom, as well as their own gardens. There is none of this true nobility in the monarchical army, for they are all self-lovers; the best is as a briar, and the most upright amongst them is as a thorn held. Speak you prophets of old if this be not true.

A monarchical army lifts up mountains and makes valleys, viz. advances tyrants and treads the oppressed in the barren lanes of poverty.

But a commonwealth's army is like John Baptist, who levels the mountains to the valleys, pulls down the tyrant and lifts up the oppressed: and so makes way for the spirit of peace and freedom to come in to rule and inherit the earth.

And by this which hath been spoken, an army may see wherein they may do well, and wherein they may do hurt.

CHAP. V. - Education of mankind, in Schools and Trades.

Mankind in the days of his youth is like a young colt, wanton and foolish, till he be broke by education and correction; and the neglect of this care, or the want of wisdom in the performance of it, hath been and is the cause of much division and trouble in the world.

Therefore the law of a commonwealth does require that not only a father but that all overseers and officers should make it their work to educate children in good manners, and to see them brought up in some trade or other, and to suffer no children in any parish to live in idleness and youthful pleasure all their days, as many have been, but that they be brought up like men and not like beasts: that so the commonwealth may be planted with laborious and wise experienced men, and not with idle fools.

Mankind may be considered in a fourfold degree, his childhood, youth, manhood and old age. His childhood and his youth may be considered from his birth till forty years of age; and within this compass of time, after he is weaned from his mother, who shall be the nurse herself if there be no defect in nature, his parents shall teach him a civil and humble behaviour toward all men. Then send him to school, to learn to read the laws of the commonwealth, to ripen his wits from his childhood, and so to proceed in his learning till he be acquainted with all arts and languages. And the reason is threefold:

First, by being acquainted with the knowledge of the affairs of the world, by this traditional knowledge they may be the better able to govern themselves like rational men;

Secondly, they may become thereby good commonwealth's men, in supporting the government thereof, by being acquainted with the nature of government;

Thirdly, if England have occasion to send ambassadors to any other land, we may have such as are acquainted with their language; or if any ambassador come from other lands, we may have such as can understand their speech.

But one sort of children shall not be trained up only to book learning and no other employment, called scholars, as they are in the government of monarchy; for then through idleness and exercised wit therein they spend their time to find out policies to advance themselves to be lords and masters above their

labouring brethren, as Simeon and Levi do, which occasions all the trouble in the world.

Therefore, to prevent the dangerous events of idleness in scholars, it is reason, and safe for common peace, that after children have been brought up at schools to ripen their wits, they shall then be set to such trades, arts and sciences as their bodies and wits are capable of; and therein continue till they come to forty years of age.

For all the work of the earth, or in trades, is to be managed by youth, and by such as have lost their freedoms.

Then from forty years of age till fourscore, if he live so long, which is the degree of manhood and old age, they shall be freed from all labour and work, unless they will themselves.

And from among this degree of mankind shall be chosen all officers and overseers, to see the laws of the commonwealth observed.

For as all men shall be workers or waiters in store-houses till they be forty years of age, so none shall be chosen a public officer till he be full forty years of age: for by this time man hath learned experience to govern himself and others: for when young wits are set to govern, they wax wanton, etc.

What trades should mankind be brought up in?

In every trade, art and science, whereby they may find out the secrets of the creation, and that they may know how to govern the earth in right order.

There are five fountains from whence all arts and sciences have their influences: he that is an actor in any or in all the five parts is a profitable son of mankind; he that only contemplates and talks of what he reads and hears, and doth not employ his talent in some bodily action for the increase of fruitfulness, freedom and peace in the earth, is an unprofitable son.

The first fountain is the right planting of the earth to make it fruitful, and this is called husbandry. And there are two branches of it:

As first, planting, digging, dunging, liming, burning, grubbing and right ordering of land, to make it fit to receive seed, that it may bring forth a plentiful crop. And under this head all millers, maltsters, bakers, harness-makers for ploughs and carts, rope-makers, spinners and weavers of linen and such like, are all but good husbandry.

The second branch of husbandry is gardening, how to plant, graft and set all sort of fruit trees, and how to order the ground for flowers, herbs and roots for pleasure, food or medicinal. And here all physicians, chirurgeons,¹¹ distillers of all sorts of waters, gatherers of drugs, makers of wines and oil, and preservers of fruits and such like, may learn by observation what is good for all bodies, both man and beasts.

The second fountain is mineral employment, and that is to search into the earth to find out mines of gold and silver, brass, iron, tin, lead, cannel¹² coal and stone of all sorts, saltpetre, salt and alum-springs and such like. And here all chemists, gunpowder-makers, masons, smiths and such like, as would find out the strength and power of the earth, may learn how to order these for the use and profit of mankind.

The third fountain is the right ordering of cattle, whether by shepherds or herdsmen; and such may learn here how to breed and train up cows for the dairies, bulls and horses for the saddle or yoke. And here all

tanners, hatters, shoemakers, glovers, spinners of wool, clothiers, tailors, dyers and such like, may learn how to order and look to these.

The fourth fountain is the right ordering of woods and timber trees, for planting, dressing, felling, framing of timber for all uses, for building houses or ships. And here all carpenters, joiners, throsters,¹³ plough-makers, instrument-makers for music, and all who work in wood and timber, may find out the secret[s] of nature, to make trees more Plentiful and thriving in their growth and profitable for use.

The fifth fountain, from whence reason is exercised to find out the secrets of nature, is [to] observe the rising and setting of the sun, moon and the powers of the heavens above; and the motion of the tides and seas, and their several effects, powers and operations upon the bodies of man and beast. And here may be learned astrology, astronomy and navigation, and the motions of the winds and the causes of several appearances of the face of heaven, either in storms or in fairness.

And in all these five fountains here is knowledge in the practice, and it is good.

But there is traditional knowledge, which is attained by reading or by the instruction of others, and not practical but leads to an idle life; and this is not good.

The first is a laborious knowledge, and a preserver of common peace, which we find God himself acting; for he put forth his own wisdom in practice when he set his strength to work to make the creation: for God is an active power, not an imaginary fancy.

The latter is an idle, lazy contemplation the scholars would call knowledge; but it is no knowledge but a show of knowledge, like a parrot who speaks words but he knows not what he saith. This same show of knowledge rests in reading or contemplating or hearing others speak, and speaks so too, but will not set his hand to work. And from this traditional knowledge and learning rise up both clergy and lawyer, who by their cunning insinuations live merely upon the labour of other men, and teach laws which they themselves will not do, and lays burdens upon others which they themselves will not touch with the least of their fingers. And from hence arises all oppressions, wars and troubles in the world; the one is the son of contention, the other the son of darkness, but both the supporters of bondage, which the creation groans under.

Therefore to prevent idleness and the danger of Machiavellian cheats, it is profitable for the commonwealth that children be trained lip in trades and some bodily employment,-as well as in learning languages or the histories of former ages.

And as boys are trained up in learning and in trades, so all maids shall be trained up in reading, sewing, knitting, spinning of linen and woollen, music, and all other easy neat works, either far to furnish store-houses with linen and woollen cloth, or for the ornament of particular houses with needle-work.

And if this course were taken, there would be no idle person nor beggars in the land, and much work would be done by that now lazy generation for the enlarging of the common treasuries.

And in the managing of any trade, let no young wit be crushed in his invention; for if any man desire to make a new trial of his skill in any trade or science, the overseers shall not hinder him, but encourage him therein: that so the spirit of knowledge may have his full growth in man, to find out the secret in every art.

And let everyone who finds out a new invention have a deserved honour given him; and certainly, when

men are sure of food and raiment, their reason will be ripe and ready to dive into the secrets of the creation, that they may learn to see and know God (the spirit of the whole creation) in all his works; for fear of want, and care to pay rent to taskmasters, hath hindered many rare inventions.

So that kingly power hath crushed the spirit of knowledge, and would not suffer it to rise up in its beauty and fulness, but by his club law hath preferred the spirit of imagination, which is a deceiver, before it.

There shall be no buying and selling of the earth, nor of the fruits thereof .

For by the government under kings, the cheaters hereby have cozened the plain-hearted of their creation birthrights, and have possessed themselves in the earth and calls it theirs and not the others' and so have brought in that poverty and misery which lies upon many men.

And whereas the wise should help the foolish, and the strong help the weak, the wise and the strong destroys the weak and the simple.

And are not all children generally simple and weak, and know not the things that belong to their peace till they come to ripe age? But before they come to that understanding, the cunning ones who have more strength and policy have by this hypocritical, lying, unrighteous and cheating art of buying and selling wrung the freedoms of the earth out of their hands, and cozened them of their birthrights.

So that when they come to understanding, they see themselves beggars in the midst of a fruitful land, and so the proverb is true, 'Plain dealing is a jewel, but he who uses it shall die a beggar'. And why?

Because this buying and selling is the nursery of cheaters, it is the law of the conqueror and the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, which both killed Christ and hindered his resurrection, as much as darkness can to put out light.

And these cunning cheaters commonly become the rulers of the earth, and then the city mankind mourns, for not the wise poor man, but the cunning rich man, was always made an officer and ruler, such a one as by his stolen interest in the earth would be sure to hold others in bondage of poverty and servitude to him and his party.

And hence arise oppression and tyranny in the earth upon the backs of the weak younger brethren, who are made younger brothers indeed, as the proverb is, by their cunning elder brother; and as Daniel said, The basest of men under kingly government were set to rule, who can command but not obey, who can take other men's labours to live at ease, but not work themselves.

Therefore there shall be no buying and selling in a free commonwealth, neither shall any one hire his brother to work for him.

If the commonwealth might be governed without buying and selling, here is a platform of government for it, which is the ancientest law of righteousness to mankind in the use of the earth, and which is the very height of earthly freedoms. But if the minds of the people, through covetousness and proud ignorance, will have the earth governed by buying and selling still, this same platform, with a few things subtracted, declares an easy way of government of the earth for the quiet of people's minds and preserving of peace in the land.

For as, like a tradesman, I ask the highest price:

Yet I may fall (if you will rise) upon a good advice.

How must the earth be planted?

The earth is to be planted, and the fruits reaped and carried into barns and store-houses, by the assistance of every family. And if any man or family want corn or other provision they may go to the store-houses and fetch without money. If they want a horse to ride, go into the fields in summer, or to the common stables in winter, and receive one from the keepers; and when your journey is performed, bring him where you had him, without money. If any want food or victuals, they may either go to the butchers' shops, and receive what they want without money; or else go to the flocks of sheep or herds of cattle, and take and kill what meat is needful for their families, without buying and selling. And the reason why all the riches of the earth are a common stock is this, because the earth, and the labours thereupon, are managed by common assistance of every family, without buying and selling; as is shewn how more largely in the office of overseers for trades and the law for store-houses.

The laws for the right ordering thereof, and the officers to see the laws executed to preserve the peace of every family and the peace of every man, and to improve and promote every trade, is shewed in the work of officers and by the laws following.

None will be an enemy to this freedom, which indeed is to do to another as a man would have another do to him, but covetousness and pride, the spirit of the old grudging snapping Pharisees, who gives God abundance of good words in their sermons, in their prayers, in their fasts and in their thanksgivings, as though none should be more faithful servants to him than they: nay, they will shun the company, imprison and kill everyone that will not worship Go(l, they are so zealous.

Well now, God and Christ hath enacted an everlasting law, which is love; not only one another of your own mind, but love your enemies too, such as are not of your mind: and, having food and raiment, therewith be content.

Now here is a trial for you, whether you will be faithful to God and Christ in obeying his laws; or whether you will destroy the man-child of true freedom, righteousness and peace in his resurrection.

And now thou wilt give us either the tricks of a soldier, face about and return to Egypt, and so declare thyself to be part of the serpent's seed, that must bruise the heel of Christ; or else to be one of the plain-hearted sons of promise, or members of Christ, who shall help to bruise the serpent's head, which is kingly oppression; and so bring in everlasting righteousness and peace into the earth Well, the eye is now open.

Store-houses shall be built and appointed in all places, and be the common stock.

There shall be store-houses in all places, both in the country and in cities, to which all the fruits of the earth, and other works made by tradesmen, shall be brought, and from thence delivered out again to particular families, and to everyone as they want for their use; or else to be transported by ship to other lands, to exchange for those things which our land will not or does not afford.

For all the labours of husbandmen and tradesmen within the land, or by navigation to or from other lands, shall be all upon the common stock.

And as every one works to advance the common stock, so every one shall have a free use of any commodity in the store-house, for his pleasure and comfortable livelihood without buying and selling or

restraint from any.

And having food and raiment, lodging and the comfortable societies of his own kind, what can a man desire more in these days of his travel? 14

Indeed, covetous, proud and beastly-minded men desire more, either to lie by them to look upon, or else to waste and spoil it upon their lusts; while other brethren live in straits for want of the use thereof.

But the laws and faithful officers of a free commonwealth do regulate the unrational practice of such men.

There are two sorts of store-houses general and particular.

The general store-houses are such houses as receive in all commodities in the gross, as all barns and places to lay corn and the fruits of the earth at the first reaping: and these may be called store-houses for corn, flax, wool; for leather, for iron, for linen and woollen cloth or for any commodity that comes into our hand 15 by shipping; from whence [a] particular family or shop-keepers may fetch as they need, to furnish their lesser shops.

So likewise herds of cattle in the field, flocks of sheep and horses, are all common store-houses- so that from the herds and flocks every family may fetch what they want for food or pleasure, without buying and selling.

So likewise all public dairies are store-houses for butter and cheese: yet every family may have cows for their own use, about their own house.

And these general store-houses shall be filled and preserved by the common labour and assistance of every family, as is mentioned in the office of overseer for trades.

And from these public houses, which are the general stock of the land, all particular tradesmen may fetch materials for their particular work as they need, or to furnish their particular dwellings with any commodities.

Secondly, there are particular store-houses or shops,

To which the tradesmen shall bring their particular works: as all instruments of iron to the iron-shops, hats to shops appointed for them; gloves, shoes, linen and woollen cloth in smaller parcels, to shops appointed for every one of them; and the like.

Even as now we have particular trade[rs?] in cities and towns, called shopkeepers, which shall remain still as they be, only altered in their receiving in and delivering out. For whereas by the law of kings or conquerors they do receive in and deliver out by buying and selling, and exchanging the conqueror's picture or stamp upon a piece of gold or silver for the fruits of the earth; now they shall (by the laws of the commonwealth) receive into their shops, and deliver out again freely, without buying and selling.

They shall receive in, as into a store-house, and deliver out again freely, as out of a common store-house, when particular persons or families come for anything they need, as now they do by buying and selling under kingly government.

For as particular families and tradesmen do make several works more than they can make use of: as hats, shoes, gloves, stockings, linen and woollen cloth and the like, and do carry their particular work to

store-houses:

So it is all reason and equity that they should go to other store-houses, and fetch any other commodity which they want and cannot make; for as other men partakes of their labours, it is reason they should partake of other men's.

And all these store-houses and shops shall be orderly kept by such as shall be brought up to be waiters therein, as is mentioned in the office of overseers for trades.

For as there are some men more ingenious to work, so other men are more ingenious in keeping of store-houses and shops, to receive in and deliver out commodities. And all this easy work may be called waiting at such and such a store-house: as some may wait at corn houses, some at linen and woollen houses, some at leather, some at iron shops; and every general and particular commodity shall be known where they are by their houses and shops, as it is at this day. So that towns and cities, and every family almost, are but store-houses of one commodity or other, for the uses of the commonwealth or to transport to other lands.

Now this same free practice will kill covetousness, pride and oppression: for when men have a law to buy and sell, then, as I have said before, the cunning cheaters get great estates by other men's labours; and being rich thereby, become oppressing lords over their brethren; which occasions all our troubles and wars in all nations.

Come hither now, all you who challenge your brethren to deny Christ, as though you were the only men that love Christ and would be true to him.

Here is a trial of your love: can you be as ready to obey the law of-liberty, which is the command of Christ, as you would have others to obey your kingly laws of bondage? It may be you will either storm, or go away sorrowful; does not Christ tell you, that if you have food and raiment, you should therewith be content? And in this common freedom, here will be food and raiment, ease and pleasure plentiful, both for you and your brethren; so that none shall beg or starve, or live in the straits of poverty- and this fulfils that righteous law of Christ, Do as you would be done by: for that law of Christ can never be performed till you establish commonwealth's freedom.

Therefore now let it appear, seeing the child is come to the birth, whether you will receive Christ who is the spreading spirit of freedom, righteousness and peace; or whether you will return to monarchy, to embrace that Egyptian bondage still. Well, here is life and death set before you, take whether you will; but know that unless your righteousness exceed the righteousness of the kingly and lordly scribes and Pharisees, you shall never enjoy true peace in your spirit.

CHAP. VI. - The Kings' old laws cannot govern a free Commonwealth.

They cannot govern in times of bondage and in times of freedom too: they have indeed served many masters, popish and protestant. They are like old soldiers, that will but change their name, and turn about, and as they were; and the reason is, because they are the prerogative will of those, under any religion, that count it no freedom to them unless they be lords over the minds, persons and labours of their

brethren.

They are called the kings' laws because they are made by the kings. If any say they were made by the commoners, it is answered, They were not made by the commoners as the commoners of a free commonwealth are to make laws.

For in the days of the kings, none were to choose nor be chosen Parliament-men, or law-makers, but lords of manors and freeholders, such as held title to their enclosures of land or charters for their liberties in trades under the king, who called the land his as he was the conqueror, or his successor.

All inferior people were neither to choose, nor to be chosen; and the reason was because all freeholders of land, and such as held their liberties by charter, were all of the kings' interest; and the inferior people were successively of the rank of the conquered ones, and servants and slaves from the time of the conquest.

And further, when a Parliament was chosen in that manner, yet if any Parliament-man in the uprightness of his heart did endeavour to promote any freedom, contrary to the king's will or former customs Tom the conquest, he was either committed to prison by the king or by his House of Lords, who were his ancient Norman successive council of war; or else the Parliament was dissolved and broke up by the king.

So that the old laws were made in times under kingly slavery, not under the liberty of commonwealth's freedom, because Parliament-men must have regard to the king's prerogative interest, to hold his conquest, or else endanger themselves.

As sometimes it is in these days: some officers dare not speak against the minds of those men who are the chief in power, nor a private soldier against the mind of his officer, lest they be cashiered their places and livelihood.

And so long as the promoting of the kings' will and prerogative was to be in the eye of the law-makers, the oppressed commoners could never enjoy commonwealth's freedom thereby.

Yet by the wisdom, courage, faithfulness and industry of some Parliament-men, the commoners have received here a line and there a line of freedom inserted into their laws; as those good lines of freedom in Magna Charta were obtained by much hardship and industry.

Secondly, they were the kings' laws, because the kings' own creatures made the laws; or lords of manors, freeholders, etc., were successors of the Norman soldiers from the conquest, therefore they could do no other but maintain their own and their kings' interest.

And do we not see that all laws were made in the days of the kings to ease the rich landlord? But the poor labourers were left under bondage still; they were to have no freedom in the earth by those Pharisaical laws. For when laws were made and Parliaments broke up, the poor oppressed commoners had no relief; but the power of lords of manors, withholding the free use of the common land from them, remained still: for none durst make use of any common land but at the lord's leave according to the will and law of-the conqueror; therefore the old laws were called the kings' laws.

And these old laws cannot govern a free commonwealth, because the land now is to be set free from the slavery of the Norman conquest; and the power of lords of manors and Norman freeholders is to be taken away, or else the commoners are but where they were, if not fallen lower into straits than they were: and the old laws cannot look with any other face than they did. Though they be washed with commonwealth's

water, their countenance is still withered. Therefore it was not for nothing that the kings would have all their laws written in French and Latin and not in English, partly in honour to the Norman race, and partly to keep the common people ignorant of their creation-freedoms, lest they should rise to redeem themselves: and if those laws should be writ in English, yet if the same kingly principles remain in them, the English language would not advantage us anything, but rather increase our sorrow by our knowledge of our bondage.

What is law in general?

Law is a rule whereby man and other creatures are governed in their actions, for the preservation of the common peace. And this law is twofold:

First, it is the power of life (called the law of nature within the creatures) which does move both man and beast in their actions; or that causes grass, trees, corn and all plants to grow in their several seasons; and whatsoever any body does, he does it as he is moved by this inward law. And this law of nature moves twofold, viz. unrationally or rationally. 0

A man by this inward law is guided to actions of generation and present content, rashly, through a greedy self-love, without any consideration, like foolish children, or like the brute beasts; by reason whereof much hurt many times follows the body. And this is called the law in the members warring against the law of the mind.

Or when there is an inward watchful oversight of all motions to action, considering the end and effects of those actions, that there be no excess in diet, in speech or in action break forth to the prejudice of a man's self or others. And this is called the light in man, the reasonable power, or the v law of the mind.

And this rises up in the heart, by an experimental observation of that peace and trouble which such and such words, thoughts and actions bring the man into. And this is called the record on high; for it is a record in a man's heart above the former unreasonable power. And it is called the witness or testimony of a man's own conscience.

And it is said, to the law and to the testimony etc., for this moderate watchfulness is still the law of nature in a higher resurrection than the former: it hath many terms which for brevity sake I let pass.

And this twofold work of the law within man strives to bring forth themselves in writing to beget numbers of bodies on their sides. And that power that begets the biggest number always rules as king and lord in the creature and in the creation, till the other part overtop him, even as light and darkness strive in day and night to succeed each other; or as it is said, the strong man armed keeps the heart of man, till a stronger than he come, and cast him out.

And this written law, proceeding either from reason or unreasonableness, is called the letter; whereby the creation of mankind, beasts and earth is governed according to the will of that power which rules. And it is called by his opposite, the letter that kills, and by those of the same nature with it, it is called the word of life.

As for example, if the experienced, wise and strong man bears rule, then he writes down his mind to curb the unreasonable law of covetousness and pride in unexperienced men, to preserve peace in the commonwealth. And this is called the historical or traditional law, because it is conveyed from one generation to another by writing; as the laws of Israel's commonwealth were writ in a book by Moses,

and so conveyed to posterity.

And this outward law is a bridle to unreasonableness, or as Solomon writ, it is a whip for the fool's back, for whom only it was added.

Secondly, since Moses's time, the power of unreasonable covetousness and pride hath sometimes rise up and corrupted that traditional law.

For since the power of the sword rise up in nations to conquer, the written law hath not been to advance common freedom and to beat down the unreasonable self-will in mankind, but it hath been framed to uphold that self-will of the conqueror, right or wrong; not respecting the freedom of the commonwealth, but the freedom of the conqueror and his friends only. By reason whereof much slavery hath been laid upon the backs of the plain-dealing man; and men of public spirits, as Moses was, have been crushed, and their spirits damped thereby; which hath bred, first discontents, and then more wars in the nations.

And those who have been favourites about the conqueror, have by hypocrisy and flattery pleased their king, that they might get what they can of the earth into their possession; and thereby have increased the bondage of the painful labourer, if they could but catch him to act contrary to the conqueror's will, called law. And now the city mourns: and do we not see that the laws of kings have been always made against such actions as the common people were most inclinable to, on purpose to ensnare them into their sessions and courts, that the lawyers and clergy, who were the kings' supporters, might get money thereby, and live in fulness by other men's labours?

But hereby the true nature of a well-governed commonwealth hath been ruined, and the will of kings set up for a law, and the law of righteousness, law of liberty, trod under foot and killed.

This traditional law of kings is that letter at this day which kills true freedom, and it is the fomentor of wars and persecution.

This is the soldier who cut Christ's garment into pieces, which was to have remained uncut and without seam; this law moves the people to fight one against another for those pieces, viz. for the several enclosures of the earth, who shall possess the earth, and who shall be ruler over others.

But the true ancient law of God is a covenant of peace to whole mankind; this sets the earth free to all; this unites both Jew and Gentile into one brotherhood, and rejects none: this makes Christ's garment whole again, and makes the kingdoms of the world to become commonwealths again. It is the inward power of right understanding, which is the true law that teaches people, in action as well as in words, to do as they would be done unto.

But thus much in general, what law is: hereafter follows what those particular laws may be, whereby a commonwealth may be governed in peace and all burdens removed; which is a breaking forth of that law of liberty which will be the joy of all nations when he arises up and is established in his brightness.

Short and pithy laws are best to govern a commonwealth.

The laws of Israel's commonwealth were few, short and pithy; and the government thereof was established in peace, so long as officers and people were obedient thereunto.

But those many laws in the days of the kings of England, which were made, some in times of popery, and some in times of protestantism, and the proceedings of the law being in French and Latin, hath produced

two great evils in England.

First, it hath occasioned much ignorance among the people, and much contention; and the people have mightily erred through want of knowledge, and thereby they have run into great expense of money by suits of law, or else many have been imprisoned, whipped, banished, lost their estates and lives by that law which they were ignorant of, till the scourge thereof was upon their backs. This is a sore evil among the people.

Secondly, the people's ignorance of the laws hath bred many sons of contention: for when any difference falls out between man and man, they neither of them know which offends the other; therefore both of them thinking their cause is good, they delight to make use of the law; and then they go and give a lawyer money to tell them which of them was the offender. The lawyer, being glad to maintain their own trade, sets them together by the ears, till all their monies be near spent; and then bids them refer the business to their neighbours, to make them friends; which might have been done at the first.

So that the course of the law and lawyers hath been a mere snare to entrap the people, and to pull their estates from them by craft; for the lawyers do uphold the conqueror's interest and the people's slavery: so that the king, seeing that, did put all the affairs of judicature into their hands. And all this must be called justice, but it is a sore evil.

But now if the laws were few and short, and often read, it would prevent those evils; and everyone, knowing when they did well and when ill, would be very cautious of their words and actions; and this would escape the lawyers' craft.

As Moses's laws in Israel's commonwealth: The people did talk of them when they lay down and when they rose up, and as they walked by the way; and bound them as bracelets upon their hands: so that they were an understanding people in the laws wherein their peace did depend.

But it is a sign that England is a blinded and a snared generation; their leaders through pride and covetousness have caused them to err, yea and perish too, for want of the knowledge of the laws, which hath the power of life and death, freedom and bondage, in its hand. But I hope better things hereafter.

What may be those particular laws, or such a method of laws, whereby a commonwealth may be governed.

1. The bare letter of the law established by act of Parliament shall be the rule for officer and people, and the chief judge of all actions.
2. He or they who add or diminish from the law, excepting in the court of Parliament, shall be cashiered his office, and never bear office more.
3. No man shall administer the law for money or reward; he that doth shall die as a traitor to the commonwealth: for when money must buy and sell justice and bear all the sway, there is nothing but oppression to be expected.
4. The laws shall be read by the minister to the people four times in the year, viz. every quarter, that everyone may know whereunto they are to yield obedience; then none may die for want of knowledge.
5. No accusation shall be taken against any man, unless it be proved by two or three witnesses or his own confession.

6. No man shall suffer any punishment but for matter of fact, or reviling words: but no man shall be troubled for his judgment or practice in the things of his God, so he live quiet in the land.

7. The accuser and accused shall always appear face to face before any officer, that both sides may be heard, and no wrong to either party.

8. If any judge or officer execute his own will contrary to the law, or which there is no law to warrant him in, he shall be cashiered, and never bear office more.

9. He who raises an accusation against any man, and cannot prove it, shall suffer the same punishment the other should, if proved. An accusation is when one man complains of another to an officer, all other accusations the law takes no notice of.

10. He who strikes his neighbour shall be struck himself by the executioner, blow for blow, and shall lose eye for eye, tooth for tooth, limb for limb, life for life; and the reason is that men may be tender of one another's bodies, doing as they would be done by.

11. If any man strike an officer, he shall be made a servant under the task-master for a whole year.

12. He who endeavours to stir up contention among neighbours, by tale-bearing or false reports, shall the first time be reprov'd openly by the overseers among all the people; the second time shall be whipped; the third time shall be a servant under the task-master for three months; and if he continues, he shall be a servant for ever, and lose his freedom in the commonwealth.

13. If any give reviling and provoking words whereby his neighbour's spirit is burdened, if complaint be made to the overseers, they shall admonish the offender privately to forbear; if he continues to offend his neighbour, the next time he shall be openly reprov'd and admonished before the congregation, when met together; if he continue, the third time he shall be whipped; the fourth time, if proof be made by witnesses, he shall be a servant under the task-master for twelve months.

14. He who will rule as a lord over his brother, unless he be an officer commanding obedience to the law, he shall be admonished as aforesaid, and receive like punishment if he continue.

Laws for the planting of the earth, etc.

15. Every household shall keep all instruments and tools fit for the tillage of the earth, either for planting, reaping or threshing. Some households, which have many men in them, shall keep ploughs, carts, harrows and such like: other households shall keep spades, pick-axes, axes, pruning hooks and such like, according as every family is furnished with men to work therewith.

And if any master or father of a family be negligent herein, the overseer for that circuit shall admonish him between them two; if he continue negligent, the overseers shall reprove him before all the people: and if he utterly refuse, then the ordering of that family shall be given to another, and he shall be a servant under the task-master till he conform.

16. Every family shall come into the field, with sufficient assistance, at seed-time to plough, dig and plant, and at harvest-time to reap the fruits of the earth and carry them into the store-houses, as the overseers order the work and the number of workmen. And if any refuse to assist in this work, the overseers shall ask the reason; and if it be sickness or any distemper that hinders them they are freed from such service; if mere idleness keep them back, they are to suffer punishment according to the laws

against idleness.

Laws against idleness.

17. If any refuse to learn a trade, or refuse to work in seedtime or harvest, or refuse to be a waiter in store-houses, and yet will feed and clothe himself with other men's labours: the overseers shall first admonish him privately; if he continue idle, he shall be reprov'd openly before all the people by the overseers; and shall be forbore with a month after this reproof. If he still continues idle, he shall then be whipped, and be let go at liberty for a month longer; if still he continue idle, he shall be delivered into the task-master's hand, who shall set him to work for twelve months, or till he submit to right order. And the reason why every young man shall be trained up in some work or other is to prevent pride and contention, it is for the health of their bodies, it is a pleasure to the mind to be free in labours one with another; and it provides plenty of food and all necessaries for the commonwealth.

Laws for store-houses.

18. In every town and city shall be appointed store-houses for flax, wool, leather, cloth and for all such commodities as come from beyond seas, and these shall be called general store-houses; from whence every particular family may fetch such commodities as they want, either for their use in their house, or for to work in their trades; or to carry into the country store-houses.

19. Every particular house and shop in a town or city shall be a particular store-house or shop, as now they be; and these shops shall either be furnished by the particular labour of that family according to the trade that family is of, or by the labour of other lesser families of the same trade, as all shops in every town are now furnished.

20. The waiters in store-houses shall deliver the goods under their charge, without receiving any money, as they shall receive in their goods without paying any money.

21. If any waiter in a store-house neglect his office, upon a just complaint the overseers shall acquaint the judge's court therewith, and from thence he shall receive his sentence to be discharged that house and office; and to be appointed some other labouring work under the task-master; and another shall have his place. For he who may live in freedom, and will not, is to taste of servitude.

Laws for overseers.

22. The only work of every overseer is to see the laws executed; for the law is the true magistracy of the land.

23. If any overseer favour any in their idleness, and neglect the execution of the laws, he shall be reprov'd the first time by the judge's court; the second time cashier'd his office, and shall never bear office more, but fall back into the rank of young people and servants to be a worker.

24. New overseers shall at their first entrance into their office look back upon the actions of the old overseers of the last year, to see if they have been faithful in their places, and consented to no breach of law, whereby kingly bondage should any ways be brought in.

25. The overseers for trades shall see every family to-lend assistance to plant and reap the fruits of the earth, to work in their trades and to furnish the store-houses; and to see that the waiters in store-houses be diligent to receive in and deliver out any goods, without buying and selling, to any man whatsoever.

26. While any overseer is in the performance of his place, everyone shall assist him, upon pain of open reproof (or cashiered if he be another officer) or forfeiture of freedom, according to the nature of the business in hand in which he refused his assistance.

Laws against buying and selling.

27. If any man entice another to buy and sell, and he who is enticed doth not yield but makes it known to the overseer, the enticer shall lose his freedom for twelve months and the overseer shall give words [in] commendation of him that refused the enticement, before all the congregation, for his faithfulness to the commonwealth's peace.

28. If any do buy and sell the earth or quits thereof, unless it be to or with strangers of another nation, according to the law of navigation, they shall be both put to death as traitors to the peace of the commonwealth, because it brings in kingly bondage again and is the occasion of all quarrels and oppressions.

29. He or she who calls the earth his and not his brother's shall be set upon a stool, with those words written in his forehead, before all the congregation; and afterwards be made a servant for twelve months under the task-master. If he quarrel, or seek by secret persuasion, or open rising in arms, to set up such a kingly property, he shall be put to death.

30. The store-houses shall be every man's substance, and not any one's.

31. No man shall either give hire or take hire for his work; for this brings in kingly bondage. If any freemen want help, there are young people, or such as are common servants, to do it, by the overseer's appointment. He that gives and he that takes hire for work, shall both lose their freedom, and become servants for twelve months under the taskmaster.

Laws for navigation.

32. Because other nations as yet own monarchy, and will buy and sell, therefore it is convenient, for the peace of our commonwealth, that our ships do transport our English goods and exchange for theirs, and conform to the customs of other nations in buying and selling: always provided that what goods our ships carry out, they shall be the commonwealth's goods; and all their trading with other nations shall be upon the common stock, to enrich the store-houses.

Laws for silver and gold.

33. As silver and gold is either found out in mines in our own land, or brought by shipping from beyond sea, it shall not be coined with a conqueror's stamp upon it, to set up buying and selling under his name or by his leave; for there shall be no other use of it in the commonwealth than to make dishes and other necessaries for the ornament of houses, as now there is use made of brass, pewter and iron, or any other metal in their use.

But if in case other nations, whose commodities we want, will not exchange with us unless we give them money, then pieces of silver and gold may-be stamped with the commonwealth's arms upon it, for the same use, and no otherwise.

For where money bears all the sway, there is no regard of that golden rule, Do as you would be done by. Justice is bought and sold: nay, injustice is sometimes bought and sold for money: and it is the cause of

all wars and oppressions. And certainly the righteous spirit of the whole creation did never enact such a law, that unless his weak and simple men did go from England to the East Indies, and fetch silver and gold to bring in their hands to their brethren, and give it them for their good-will to let them plant the earth, and live and enjoy their livelihood therein. 16

Laws to choose officers..

34. All overseers and state officers shall be chosen new every year, to prevent the rise of ambition and covetousness; for the nations have smarted sufficiently by suffering officers to continue long in an office, or to remain in an office by hereditary succession.

35. A man that is of a turbulent spirit, given to quarrelling and provoking words to his neighbour, shall not be chosen any officer while he so continues.

36. All men from twenty years of age upwards shall have freedom of voice to choose officers, unless they be such as lie under the sentence of the law.

37. Such shall be chosen officers as are rational men of moderate conversation, and who have experience in the laws of the commonwealth.

38. All men from forty years of age upwards shall be capable to be chosen state officers, and none younger, unless anyone by his industry and moderate conversation doth move the people to choose him.

39. If any man make suit to move the people to choose him an officer, that man shall not be chose[n] at all that time. If another man persuade the people to choose him who makes suit for himself, they shall both lose their freedom at that time, viz. they shall neither have a voice to choose another, nor be chosen themselves.

Laws against treachery.

40. He who professes the service of a righteous God by preaching and prayer, and makes a trade to get the possessions of the earth, shall be put to death for a witch and a cheater.

41. He who pretends one thing in words, and his actions declare his intent was another thing, shall never bear office in the commonwealth

What is freedom?

Every freeman shall have a freedom in the earth, to plant or build, to fetch from the store-houses anything he wants, and shall enjoy the fruits of his labours without restraint from any; he shall not pay rent to any landlord, and he shall be capable to be chosen any officer, so he be above forty years of age, and he shall have a voice to choose officers though he be under forty years of age. If he want any young men to be assistance to him in his trade or household employment, the overseers shall appoint him young men or maids to be his servants in his family.

Laws for such as have lost their freedom.

42. All those who have lost their freedom shall be clothed in white woollen cloth, that they may be distinguished from others.

43. They shall be under the government of a task-master, who shall appoint them to be porters or

labourers, to do any work that any freeman wants to be done.

44. They shall do all kind of labour without exception, but their constant work shall be [that of] carriers or carters, to carry corn or other provision from store-house to storehouse, from country to cities, and from thence to countries, etc.

45. If any of these refuse to do such work, the task-master shall see them whipped, and shall feed them with coarse diet. And what hardship is this? For freemen work the easiest work, and these shall work the hardest work. And to what end is this, but to kill their pride and unreasonableness, that they may become useful men in the commonwealth?

46. The wife or children of such as have lost their freedom shall not be as slaves till they have lost their freedom, as their parents and husbands have done.

47. He who breaks any laws shall be the first time reprov'd in words in private or in public, as is shew'd before; the next time whipped, the third time lose his freedom, either for a time or for ever, and not to be any officer.

48. He who hath lost his freedom shall be a common servant to any freeman who comes to the task-masters and requires one to do any work for him; always provided, that after one freeman hath by the consent of the task-master appointed him his work, another freeman shall not call him thence till that work be done.

49. If any of these offenders revile the laws by words, they shall be soundly whipped, and fed with coarse diet; if they raise weapons against the laws, they shall die as traitors.

Laws to restore slaves to freedom.

50. When any slaves give open testimony of their humility and diligence, and their care to observe the laws of the commonwealth, they are then capable to be restored to their freedom, when the time of servitude is expired according to the judge's sentence; but if they remain opposite to the laws, they shall continue slaves still another term of time.

51. None shall be restored to freedom till they have been a twelve month labouring servants to the commonwealth, for they shall winter and summer in that condition.

52. When any is restored to freedom, the judge at the senators' court shall pronounce his freedom, and give liberty to him to be clothed in what other coloured cloth he will.

53. If any persons be sick or wounded, the chirurgeons, who are trained up in the knowledge of herbs and minerals and know how to apply plasters or physic, shall go when they are sent for to any who need their help, but require no reward, because the common stock is the public pay for every man's labour.

54. When a dead person is to be buried, the officers of the parish and neighbours shall go along with the corpse to the grave, and see it laid therein, in a civil manner; but the public minister nor any other shall have any hand in reading or exhortation.

55. When a man hath learned his trade, and the time of his seven years' apprenticeship is expired, he shall have his freedom to become master of a family, and the overseers shall appoint him such young people to be his servants as they think fit, whether he marry or live a single life.

Laws for marriage.

56. Every man and woman shall have the free liberty to marry whom they love, if they can obtain the love and liking of that party whom they would marry; and neither birth nor portion shall hinder the match, for we are all of one blood, mankind; and for portion, the common store-houses are every man[']s and maid's portion, as free to one as to another.

57. If any man lie with a maid and beget a child, he shall marry her.

58. If a man lie with a woman forcibly, and she cry out and give no consent; if this be proved by two witnesses, or the man's confession, he shall be put to death, and the woman let go free; it is robbery of a woman[']s bodily freedom.

59. If any man by violence endeavour to take away another man's wife, the first time of such violent offer he shall be reprov'd before the congregation by the peace-maker; the second time he shall be made a servant under the task-master for twelve months; and if he forcibly lie with another man's wife, and she cry out, as in the case when a maid is forced, the man shall be put to death.

60. When any man or woman are consented to live together in marriage, they shall acquaint all the overseers in their circuit therewith, and some other neighbours- and being all met together, the man shall declare by his own mouth before them all that he takes that woman to be his wife, and the woman shall say the same, and desire the overseers to be witnesses.

61. No master of a family shall suffer more meat to be dressed at a dinner or supper than what will be spent and eaten by his household or company present, or within such a time after, before it be spoiled. If there be any spoil constantly made in a family of the food of man, the overseer shall reprove the master for it privately; if that abuse be continued in his family, through his neglect of family government, he shall be openly reprov'd by the peace-maker before all the people, and ashamed for his folly; the third time he shall be made a servant for twelve months under the task-master, that he may know what it is to get food, and another shall have the oversight of his house for the time.

62. No man shall be suffered to keep house, and have servants under him, till he hath served seven years under command to a master himself; the reason is, that a man may be of age and of rational carriage before he be a governor of a family, that the peace of the commonwealth may be preserved.

*Here is the righteous law; man wilt thou it maintain?
It may be, is, as hath still, in the world been slain.
Truth appears in light, falsehood rules in power;
To see these things to be is cause of grief each hour.
Knowledge, why didst thou comes to wound and not to cure?
I sent not for thee, thou didst me inlure.
Where knowledge does increase, there sorrows multiply,
To see the great deceit which in the world doth lie:
Man saying one thing now, unsaying it anon,
Breaking all's engagements, when deeds for him are done.
O power where art thou, that must mend things amiss?
Come change the heart of man, and make him truth to kiss.
O death where art thou? Wilt thou not tidings send?
I fear thee not, thou art my loving friend.*

Come take this body, and scatter it in the four, 17
That I may dwell in one, and rest in peace once more. 18

Footnotes

1. This probably refers to Hugh Peter's Good Work for a Good Magistrate, Published 7 June 1651. In January 1652 Peter was put on a Parliamentary committee for the reform of the law.
2. Law?
3. 'Canon' might be a misprint for 'common'. But it is a legal term meaning 'quit rent'. 'Canon land' here probably means land subject to some form of customary rent.
4. This theory had been put forward by Sir Robert Filmer in The Anarchy of a Limited or Mixed Monarchy (1648).
5. County.
6. County.
7. Rip.
8. Surgery.
9. Waste or squander. This spelling of the word 'bezzle' is not in the Oxford English Dictionary.
10. Old?
11. Surgeons.
12. 'Cannel' is a bituminous coal.
13. Turners (probably).
14. Travail.
15. Land?
16. This sentence is incomplete.
17. The four elements
18. The Table of Contents is omitted.

[To the Land and Freedom index](#)

[post a message to the webslave](#)

The Levellers

Short Forward to Francis White's *A True Relation*

This pamphlet deserves to be far better known than it is. It was written in 1649 shortly after the climax of the English Revolution. The Parliamentary armies in the Civil War had militarily defeated the Royalist 'old regime'. King Charles 1 was executed in January and the country declared a republic or *Commonwealth*. As the reader of this pamphlet will quickly realise, the New Model Army that had made the Parliament victorious was no mere body of soldiers like any other. Here we see an Army prepared to impose its will and turn out Parliament rather than accept a Parliamentary compromise with monarchy; an Army wherein elected representatives of the rank and file parleyed with their Generals about pay and politics. The rich were seriously unsettled. The world had been 'turned upside down'.

The Commonwealth, true to the historical limitations of a *bourgeois* revolution, had to fight not only the restorationist forces of Charles II but, from 'below', the democratic, plebeian, *Leveller* aspirations stirred by the Civil War -- a political force in the New Model itself which the Generals now determined to reckon with. The Army (and with it the hopes of the Leveller party) was to be sent abroad for the brutal re-conquest and subjugation of Ireland. Leveller leaders were arrested and imprisoned. In May, at a rendezvous at Burford in Oxfordshire, some twelve troops of the New Model, maybe a thousand strong, who had 'dismissed their Officers' and were in dispute over arrears of pay and the proposed service in Ireland, were surprised by a strong force under Fairfax and Cromwell which had ridden through the night. Three troopers bravely faced their execution -- shot to death in the Churchyard -- for mutiny. When they heard the news in Parliament, a national holiday of thanksgiving was voted. After the execution of the King, this was a decisive moment: the defeat of the Leveller party. Cromwell was both the Robespierre and the Bonaparte. By cutting down the 'left' wing of the revolution, he prepared the way for the Restored form of monarchy. The Civil War was the heroic period of modern English history: other revolutions, yet more potent, followed in the world: Leveller and Digger would rise again.

The pamphlet which follows was written by Major Francis White who served as an emissary from Fairfax and Cromwell to the Burford mutineers with a letter and instructions to effect an 'understanding' between them and the Generals. White published partly to answer accusations that he had betrayed the soldiers at Burford with whom he shared every sympathy; but, more than that, White's pamphlet, for all its deeply religious fervour, is a political vindication of the parliamentary Army and the greater *Cause* it served. Professional historians who dispute the English Revolution ever happened like to deny the very existence of the 'old *Cause*'. Here the last word goes to Francis White.

[Rob Styles <Robert.R.Styles@si.shell.com>](mailto:Robert.R.Styles@si.shell.com)

London

18Feb01

A TRUE
RELATION
OF THE
PROCEEDINGS
IN THE
Business of Burford
With other
Discourse of public Concernment.

By *Francis White*, Major to the Lord
General's Regiment of Foot.

LONDON,

Printed by *Robert Austin*, on *Adlin-hill*.

1 6 4 9 .

A true Relation of the proceedings in the

business of B U R F O R D .

Having upon former occasions appeared in print, once to seek the preservation of my life, and another time to keep the peace of my mind, by bearing my public testimony, I thought I had sufficiently discovered my weakness to the world, that I should have kept silence for a time, at least from public view: But I am put upon it a third time, for the defence of my integrity, and reputation among good men, and the vindicating my innocency towards God and the world.

I being in *May* last commanded by my Lord General, with some others, to go to the revolted Horse of Commissary General *Ireton's* and Colonel *Scroop's* Regiment, for whom I received a Letter, and Instructions from my Lord, that I should communicate that Letter, and use what means I thought expedient, according to my judgement and conscience, to produce a right understanding, and procure a union, to which Lieutenant-General *Cromwell* added, that I should let them know, that although they sent Messengers to them, they would not follow with force at the heels; which words my Lord-General confirmed, and I accordingly went to them with the rest, and communicated my Papers and Instructions with as little prejudice to either, as I bear to my self; but did pass through the prosecution of that trust with faithfulness to my Lord, and honest plain-dealing towards the party: yet since their dissolution it hath been often charged upon me, that I betrayed them; in answer to all private reports, I thought my private information sufficient, but since there have been some things appeared in print, which do reflect upon myself, (and were I not in public employment I could freely submit in silence; but to defend innocency, and to satisfy friends, which have pressed it upon me as my duty,) I have here published the truth of proceedings, without fear or flattery on the one hand, or prejudice on the other.

For the ground and rise of that revolt, it is as well known to others as my self; I shall therefore speak to that which no others can so well relate: After I went from my Lord General with Captain *Scoten*, Captain *Peverell*, and Captain *Baylee*, we rid in the night from Andover to Marlborough, & finding the Regiment gone from thence, we rid after them to Wantage, May 13. where they quartered, and getting those Officers they had, and Trustees whom they had chosen together, I related my Instructions, and let them know the Letter sent from my Lord General, was directed to the Officers and Soldiers, and therefore I desired it might be communicated to them together at a Rendezvous; they then told me, their Rendezvous was appointed the next day, at ten of the clock at Stanford-plain near Farrendon: they then demanded, whether I would give them assurance, that my Lord-General should not fall upon them in their Quarters? to which I answered them, that they were ignorant men, if they would take any such assurance from me, for they knew it was not in my power to give: what I had spoken of the Generals not following with force at our heels, was by direction, and not from my self; upon which they consulted and agreed to move their Quarters that night, and did so accordingly: the next day we went all to a Rendezvous near Abingdon, but by the way I met with Colonel *Scroop*, who was sent to them with a Letter from my Lord General in answer to a Letter they sent him from Marlborough; the copies of both Letters are as followeth:

Gentlemen,

I received a Letter from you of the 12. of this instant, amongst other false suggestions, whereby I believed you have been abused, it is a mistaken and untrue surmise which you mention of an intendment to disband some of the Soldiery of the Army without competent pay in hand of their Arrears, it being never so thought, but otherwise taken care for, and put into as hopeful and settled a way as could be desired; I had rather pretermit then strictly take notice of your grounding this unusual course you have taken upon the marching of Forces towards you, to subdue you, when as some, if not all of you by your disorderly

precipitance into such an irregularity, was the first and sole occasion of marching with forces: however since you now desire to be heard, and taken under my protection, I have given way to Col. Scroop to receive you under protection, and am ready to hear you in any thing you have to say concerning the engagement by you mentioned; I rest,

May 13.1649.

Your assured Friend,

FAIRFAX.

The copy of a Letter presented to his Excellency from Colonel *Ireton's* and Colonel *Scroop's* Regiments.

May it please your Excellency,

A Proposition was made unto us for the service of Ireland, with a Declaration of your Excellency's pleasure, that it was lawful for us to consent or deny, for no man was to be forced: although many of us were very willing to put our lives in our hands for that service, yet were we constrained to answer in the negative, in regard we did conceive it a breach of former engagements, to suffer many of our fellow Soldiers, who could not go, to be disbanded without a competent pay in hand of their Arrears to carry them home, and enable them to follow their occupations: We perceive such a representation of the business hath been laid before your Excellency, rendering us so vile in your eyes, that the next news we heard was of Forces marching towards us which hath put us upon an unusual, yet a necessary way for our own preservation lest we shall be destroyed before we could be heard to speak, to relinquish our Officers and fly for our present safety. And now we do earnestly beseech your Excellency patiently to hear us, and to take us under your protection; all that we require is the performance of our engagement at Triploe Heath, and we shall promise never to depart from your Excellency's command, in any thing which shall not be contrary to the said engagement, professing ourselves very sorry, that we should have no better esteem in your Excellency's judgement.

May 13. 1649.

vera copia.

Subscribed by the Agents of Commissary-
General *Ireton's*, and Colonel *Scroop's*
Regiments.

They then refused Colonel *Scroop*, and marched towards Colonel *Harrison's* Regiment's Quarters, which was prepared for a conjunction: but we coming to a Rendezvous, where I had liberty to speak to them, and to read my Lord-General's Letter, and being very sensible what evils that division might produce, I did endeavour to procure a right understanding, and invite them to a submission to my Lord-General, and presented to their consideration the strength of the enemy in Ireland, and the enmity of foreign Councils and Powers against this Nation, and the discontented temper of Scotland, which would take the advantage of our divisions to invade us: I likewise offered to their view the discontented and divided condition of this Nation, and how that it had no other visible security under God, but this Army, the Government being lately altered and nothing settled, by reason of divisions, and the multitude of contracted grievances by the late wars, so that if this power break, all things would be in a immediate confusion, propriety would be confounded, and the whole Nation would be in flames and blood, and that we should become the scorn of Nations, and a by-word and hissing to our enemies, who would cry this to be our just doom: And for us that have been together so many years engaged in one body, now to sheath our swords in one another's bowels, it would be the lamentation and destruction of all our Christian

friends, and of all honest men of our party. I likewise pitied their condition, to hear the relation of so many provocations, to put them in distemper, and disobedience, and did heartily desire they might have satisfaction concerning their engagement at New-market-Heath. I likewise informed them of my Lord-General's affection towards them, and that there was the discovery of an humble mind in him, and of loving desires to reclaim them, and entreated them that they would not heighten their spirits against the General; but that they would meet him with such affections and humility, as might prevent the shedding of blood: to this they answered, that it was their sorrow there should be these differences, and that they desired nothing more to be avoided, then actions of hostility, and referred me to an answer, to what I had spoken, and to my Lord-General's Letter, from their Trustees whom they had chosen; the copy of the letter sent from my Lord-General was read to them, which is as followeth.

For the Officers and Soldiers of Commissary-General Ireton's and Colonel Scroop's Regiment: These,

Gentlemen,

I Hear much of your late disorderly carriage, which doth not a little trouble me, that you who have so much opposed the common enemy, should now condemn the Lawful Authority set over you, give the Malignants new hopes, it may be new footing, to occasion another war, and deprive your selves of all your honour, and one another of your Arrears, and present provision of pay, putting the Country upon Free-quarter, which the Parliament had provided against, hinder the Parliament from settling the Kingdom upon those just foundations of Liberty you have so long and often desired, and what other mischiefs may follow is very hard to determine; if there were nothing else but dividing the Army, and engaging one part of it against another, this were to be lamented with tears of blood. I have thought fit to send these persons to you, to let you know, that if you shall return to your obedience, these mischiefs are not yet gone so far, but that they may be healed by your submission and acknowledgement: if you pretend to have done this unlawful act for just ends, when did I ever refuse you, in referring any just desire of the Armies to the Parliament? if you refuse this tender to you, I must and I shall through God's assistance, endeavour to reduce you by force to a just obedience, and when you have tried to gather up all discontented spirits to you, you will find you had better have followed this counsel of mine, then your own, whereby you hazard all that is dear to you, for that which you might obtain without any hazard or trouble at all. These Gentlemen will acquaint you more fully with what may be for your good; I rest,

May 12. 1649.

Your assured Friend,
FAIRFAX.

Then came Captain *Modee* and Lieutenant *Prichard*, with a Declaration from my Lord General, directed to me to communicate to them; but the Regiment being marched to join with some troops of Colonel *Harrison's*, it could not at present be communicated to the whole, but I read it to their Trustees and Officers, and delivered it to them to communicate; at which time they offered to dismiss us, unless we would grant, that persons should go from them to my Lord General's forces with him, and that they might have liberty to speak to, and publish Papers among them: this motion was like the former, of desiring assurance my Lord should not fall upon them; things without our power, and exalting their party to stand in competition with my Lord; this much incensed Captain *Scoten*, and made him impatient to be gone, which I must needs say, I was unwilling so to do, before I had gotten the bottom of their desires and intentions, but Captain *Scoten* going away, I desired him to present things to my Lord General, with an impartial account, and how I had behaved my self among them, and to let my Lord General know, I should prove my self as faithful to him in that business, as any Officer in the Army, and that at what time he should send for me, I would come to him, and however I would stay but a very little time with them,

but did entreat him to beseech my Lord General, to call me away before any hostility was exercised. After these passages, some of the party came to me, and desired me to be faithful to them in my proceedings, and told me, no man could deceive them but my self, for I was a person whom they did put confidence and trust in, and they entreated me to draw up a Paper that might speak their sense, and take in their interest, and produce a union with my Lord General: To this I answered, it would not be fit for me to act their business as themselves, but they pressing it upon me, I considered my Liberty by instructions; and my disengagement in the differences, as well in judgement as condition, being very sensible of failings on both parts, but I undertook what they desired, and betook my self to a little privacy, and drew up this Paper, which begins thus:

May it please your Excellency,

We your Excellency's soldiers, who have engaged our lives under your Excellency's Conduct, etc. See the rest of it at large, pag.5, 6, of the printed book entitled, *The Levellers (falsely so called) vindicated, etc.*

No sooner had I dispatched this in Characters, and overtaken them upon their March towards New-Bridge, but reports came that the Bridge was made good against them by Colonel *Reynolds*, with 200.Horse, and a party of Dragoons, and that my Lord General was coming to fall upon them in the Rear: this news was strange to me, and begat some heats among them, and put some upon resolution to force the Bridge, and they tied up their cloaks and rode a Career with resolutions to charge them, as far as I could perceive by their words and practice. I then made what haste I could to get before them, and to interpose between them to prevent hostility; but by the way I met with Major *Abbot* who asked my opinion, whether it were best for them to keep the Bridge, or let them pass? I asked him whether he had command from my Lord so to do, he answered he had; then I said, you are bound so to do, or else you may be hanged if you do not: then coming to Colonel *Reynolds* at the Bridge foot, I there read the Paper which I had written, the which I thought so reasonable, as by that means to put a stop to any furious resolutions, the parties were persuaded to decline force, and marched a mile up the river, and forded over, at which place I read the Paper again in the head of them, which was generally approved of, they desired me to transcribe it, that their Trustees might consider of it, and mend what they thought fit, I immediately did so, and marched with them, and desired that they would not neglect the use of their intended means of safety for my being with them, and did likewise express a great deal of confidence, that my Lord General would not fall upon them, and not without ground for it, but we marched to *Burford*, where we came to Quarters about nine of the clock: then this Paper which I drew, was ordered to be drawn up, with answers to my Lord's Letters jointly, and we with some messengers of their own, to have carried it to my Lord General in the morning, but about midnight, when the Papers were a drawing up by Cornet *Den* at my Quarters news came in, that my Lord General and the Lieutenant General were at the Town's end with 2000 horse and dragoons, I then presently went forth in my slippers, and made what haste I could towards my Lord, to beg of his Excellency to prevent bloodshed, but hearing the pistols firing very thick, I ran as fast as I could till I was stayed by a troop of horse, who threatened to pistol me, but after information I passed them, and went forward, till I met with a single Trooper of the Northamptonshire horse, which would be satisfied with no account, but vowed if I stirred further he would pistol me: I was forced to return back, and persuaded him to go with me to his Lieutenant, to be dismissed from being his prisoner, and then betook my self to my Quarters till the fury was over; after which I went to my Lord General, to give him account of my proceedings, I likewise delivered him the Papers which were a writing by Cornet *Den*: his Lordship asked me how their affections were towards him, & what they said of him, & whether I thought the business might have been composed? to which I

answered, that they generally spoke well of his Excellency, & that I thought the business might have been taken up without that breach; to these expressions the Lieutenant General discovered much dissatisfaction, and wondered I was not ashamed to inform my Lord things so ridiculous, as to talk of a composure: I told him I would not spare to speak my judgement and conscience; in the presence of any man alive, after which I was silent.

The next proceeding was the bringing Cornet *Den* and others to a Council of War, wherein I heard from the prisoners such Christian expressions, such humility and submission, and begging for mercy, that with the remembrance of our Saviour's words, *Mat. 10.1.* where he saith, *The brother shall deliver up the brother to death*, my heart was overwhelmed with sorrow and ready to break, that Scripture being so fulfilled among us before my eyes: after which I departed to my charge before the execution. Thus have I given a true and perfect relation of my demeanour; let all impartial men judge, and I believe they will conclude, another might have erred in such a business as much as my self, but that any should so ignorantly affirm that I betrayed them, I suppose they have little ground to think I should expose my self to the practicing of such deceit. I desire no longer to live, then whilst I keep faithfulness, without shame to look any man alive in the face. I must needs say, the party had a very good opinion of me, and I did bear as much affection to them, and did own those just things which they desired, and do still own that righteousness which they pretended to, but I shall only endeavour to procure them by lawful means, and avoid irregularity, unless the weight of our cause, and being of our party come in competition: yet I do not think myself engaged to own every furious party that pretend to Justice and honesty upon their weak and improbable Foundations.

But seeing our divisions are still fomented in our own bowels, which may probably prove more destructive and dangerous to the whole, then anything the enemy can do from abroad; Therefore that our own party (who make professions of honesty and Religion) may be taken into union, I shall a little discourse our differences, and offer my judgement to public view, and hope that it may not prove fruitless.

It is not out of memory what oppression, injustice and persecution was exercised upon this Nation, and the godly people among us under the government of the late King; and when he could no longer hold the government in peace, he called a Parliament, who were chosen by the people, and had of right the greatest share in the Law-giving power; the King after giving them an Act of continuance during pleasure, did absolutely divest himself of Sovereignty, and all the Laws and former Government were cast under their feet; they then having a sense of what power was in their hands, and what advantage to free this Nation from bondage: they then began to exercise the Sovereignty, and did by their Authority settle the command of the *Militia*, without the King's consent, the Nation willingly yielding obedience thereunto; this was an Act of the highest Sovereignty that could pass from them: For where the Lawful command of the power of a Nation is, there it will necessarily follow that inferior things are subordinate: The King seeing the power and command of his Kingdom thus departed from him, and himself subjugated to his people, his spirit riseth with a King-like resolution, to make use of his interest to recover his Dominion by force of Arms, and appeals to God and the people to judge of his cause, putting the issue thereof upon the success of the sword: God having given testimony of the Parliament's cause as far forth as the sword can determine, it now remaineth, that men may receive satisfaction for the conviction of their judgements, and in this point it is not to be expected, that profane people that are swayed by interest, and make little conscience of their undertakings, should receive conviction: but for such as profess Religion, and have formerly preached the doctrine of prayers, and tears, let them look back to their former principles, which teach subjection to the highest power, which is the command of

the most highest visible force, and although that power be unlawful, yet in all lawful things they are to yield obedience, and where the commands are unlawful, then rather obey God then men, and submit to suffering, until God raise up a more righteous power for their deliverance; and if it be asked why we did not so, I answer we did, and suffered much under the unlawful exercise of power by the King, until God in a way of order, raised up a higher visible and more lawful power, the Parliament. And whether it were so or no was the question, and hath been sufficiently disputed and determined, and whether our cause was right, I leave it further to be judged, by God, the success, and men's consciences.

But to this it may be objected, that if the Parliament were the most lawful visible power, why did not the Army yield obedience and disband at their command, and give way to them to exercise their authority agreeable to their own judgement.

I must confess that this is a strong objection, which if it be well answered, will much justify the Army, and be a great means to unite the former parties that have joined in our common cause, and do not now willingly submit to the ruling power.

Now to this it must be observed, that in the first place we do determine the Parliament to be the most lawful visible power, when we took up Arms to be directed by their commands, and the Army to take a lawful rise to power, as they could give, to act with them for the vindicating of the people's Sovereignty, which they were invested with. The Parliament declaring by their Votes before the war begun, that the King seduced by evil counsel, did intend to make war upon the Parliament, that it was a Breach of his oath, and the trust reposed in him, and tended to the dissolution of the government of Church and State, and that whosoever should assist him in the war, were Rebels and Traitors: we go on by their direction and fight the King's Army, till a total dissolution of all force he could procure, in the meantime the King corrupteth a party in the Parliament by flattery, & courteth them by his own creatures into a secret compliance to his designs, they then declare for the continuance of the Government, by King, Lords and Commons, which speaks contradiction to their former Votes, nay they first speak right of the *Militia* in themselves, and put it in practice, and upon that account we yielded obedience to them, then after the conquest, they propose to the King to give them the exercise of the same for twenty years, which was a clear denial of their former principles and cause, for if the right were in the King to give, then was in no ways lawful for them to use it but by his consent: upon this point lay the weight of our whole proceeding, for once determine where the lawful right of the command of force is, and all other things of common concernment will be subordinate; but in order to the carrying on his designs in our counsels, as was evident in the confederacy of *Hollis* and *Stapleton* with him, who swayed the House, they Vote the disbanding of the Army, and endeavour to make a corrupt composure, which would have subjected us to the mercy of his will, and insensibly have destroyed us by policy, we of the Army being sensible of this Apostasy. From the first declared principles so evident, we do contract our force, and capitulate with the Parliament, which thing I must confess to be somewhat irregular, and nothing can answer but necessity, of which God will judge: the power of the Army being now revolted from the Parliament, the Dominion was taken into the Martial Jurisdiction of the sword, the people Petition us to stand for their Liberties, having most confidence of our faithfulness, the Army solemnly engage to live and die together, rather then disband before their own satisfaction and security, and the people freed from their former oppressions: in the height of the proceedings, difficulties surround us on every side, and before any way of settlement can be brought in practice, we are encountered with another war by many potent enemies, but yet still there remaineth a seed among us which own the righteous cause, to whom God giveth a wonderful success, not withstanding our many enemies in our own Counsels, which carried on designs to make us more war, or to destroy us. Now the sword having made it self the highest visible judge, &

wrested it self from subjection to the Parliament, save in things only agreeable to its judgement and reason, the secluding of the disaffected Members who carried on the King's designs in Counsel, was no more but a fruit or exercise of that power, which the sword long before had taken, to make way for the restoring of our primitive principles, upon which the Quarrel was at first grounded: and since so many of our honest Parliament Patrons stand fast to the introducing our public Liberty, the sword doth willingly desire to become subject, and promiseth submission to future changeable Representatives, which this Parliament hath declared the Nation shall be governed by: and seeing what is passed cannot be recalled, it will be most for safety, to act moderately for the highest visible good before us.

But it is strongly suggested, that this ruling power are not faithful to the primitive principles of freedom, upon which this engagement began, and that they do not intend what they pretend, but only give good promises to keep the people quiet, and rather endeavour to fasten and perpetuate their own power, then to seek the public peace and tranquillity of the Nation.

I would to God there were not too much of this spirit among some of our chief Rulers, but yet we have some ground to believe this is not intended by the ruling power, for they having declared the people the original fountain of all just power under God, it will necessarily follow, that the appointment of the people may put a period to their power, and to bring them to account, and to be subject as well as rule, that the Chief Officers and Magistrates may be taken an account of, if they walk contrary to the Laws and Rules given them to effect this. For continuance there is no way visible among men, but by a changeable Law-giving Representative: now it were good if this were procured by an *Agreement of the People*, if it could be so procured; but for a few men to hold forth things for Agreement, which the Nation doth not receive nor accept, this cannot be called an *Agreement of the People*, therefore there is a necessity of ruling by power, till the people can agree of foundations for future Government, or this present ruling power distribute Elections equal for a future Representative by equal choice, which cannot probably be expected before their wars be at a period, and they possessed of some grounds for their future security, before they put the power into the hands of new Governors. And if men seriously consider how great a work they have gone through, and how many enemies at home and abroad, the Government lately altered the Nation in heats and distempers, it cannot with prudence be expected they should give up their power before the peace of the Nation be settled, and the laws and people's interest a little secure: but if any furious spirits shall stir up the people to insurrections to break this power into confusion, which is the thing sought after by the common enemy, let it be at their perils if they perish, let their blood be upon their own heads, and if another sword should conquer this, that must needs uphold it self for some time arbitrary, till it can fasten it self by Laws and Government, and what benefit or ease the people will find, they will have little cause to glory of; but I am very jealous, and not without ground, that many of our forward pretenders to Justice and Righteousness have more zeal than knowledge, and others more policy then honesty, and that the chief thing aimed at, is the thrusting those persons out of power that are in, that new ones may get into the saddle, that thereby they may have some profit and honour: but I shall desire all those that own Justice and righteousness unfainedly, and have a conscientious respect to the Nation's happiness, peace, and freedom, to consider that their safety and being is made up in the preservation of the present power, and for their liberties and freedom, it will be impossible for them to keep it from the Nation, for having in terms laid the power upon a new Foundation, there can be no lasting safety to themselves, but by giving the power into the hands of a future Representative: for they declaring the people under God the Fountain of all just power, it will necessarily follow, that no Law can be justly given, but by the people's consent, and there can be no consent of the people concluded, but by a general subscription, or by the voice of the persons whom the people choose, which will in time put them upon

the choice of a new Parliament.

But here some may say, if the present powers do not justly give Law according to their own principles, why do you support them to give Laws illegally?

To this I answer, that the people are never without a means of safety, and necessity is the highest Law, and the power which is uppermost, will be judge of that necessity, and upon the alteration of the Dominion Law must be given by strength and force, till a legal just prudential Law-giving Authority may be soberly established.

But now the great burden of the people is taxes, and it were good they could be eased, but it is an easier matter to desire good than to procure, and I wish they may not by passionate violence, seeking ease, find more woe and sorrow.

Another great ground of contention among the soldiers, is our solemn engagement of Newmarket, upon their heads let it rest that are the violators thereof, but being done by force, the Authors of the force must give an account to God and their consciences, but so that we may have peace and righteousness, which were the ends intended, I wish the engagement and Scots Covenant may sleep together.

As for the great complaint of the exercise of Martial Law, it is over none but the Members of the Army, and for those they are not forced to continue under it, and whats done by consent is no wrong, therefore let that cry cease.

But it may be said, the patrons and promoters of public Liberty, are imprisoned and suffer much: I would to God some were not more forward than they need to be in the procuring their suffering, by their busy acting and passionate proceedings, where they have no warrantable call: there are many other grievances to be complained of, as the disposal of public treasure to private persons, where little deserved, and giving great revenues to them which have enough already, and in the meantime the poor starve. I pray God forgive and amend this evil, but let wise men consider, whether these and all other our many grievances are grounds to intrude another war, or whether they may not be remedied more easy, and avoid the bloodshed and misery which no eye of man can discern. This I have written to do my duty towards the keeping of peace, but if God for our many sins, and the pride and hardness of our hearts shall again scourge this Nation, with the judgement of war, which is much to be feared, yet I shall rejoice in my inward peace, and freely engage my life to defend our friends, in our original righteous cause, against the common enemy, and all other licentious, passionate, furious men that assist them, till I die or am in bonds.

But having argued according to my weak judgement and natural reason, which all men of natural principles are capable of, judging of the equity or reason here offered, I shall likewise make bold to offer my judgement of religious and divine things, and of the proceeding of God in the world, of which things Christian people are the best Judges. Now first this must be acknowledged, that the most high invisible God, the Creator and Maker of heaven and earth and all things therein, he is that most glorious power that rules the whole world, he is that living Spirit which is the wheel in the wheel, which moves the living creatures, and hath the ordering of all principalities and powers; he buildeth and planteth, plucketh up, or pulleth down, and giveth power and dominion to whomsoever he will, and did before the beginning of things fore-know and determine what things should be in time.

Now that God which is thus shaking the heavens and the earth which he hath made, and throwing down the Thrones and Dominions of the wicked powers of the world, to make way for the Kingdom and

Dominion which shall have no end; for now are those last and great commotions begun which our Saviour Christ fore-told, wherein should be wars and rumours of wars before the time of his coming to reign as King upon his holy hill of Zion, but here is the comfort of Christian people, that when these things begin to come to pass, their redemption draweth nigh, which redemption there spoken of is the deliverance of Zion, of the holy people, from the bondage of persecuting powers of the world, to make Jerusalem the praise of the whole earth, that the Lamb may lie down with the Lion, and no beast of prey in the holy mountain of the Lord; in the accomplishing this work the Lord will bring down the pride of all flesh, and all humane glory, that himself alone may be exalted, so that no man will have any thing left to glory of, but he that will glory let him glory in the Lord, glory in humility, in love patience and meekness, peace with God and conscience, for outward peace will not yet be certain to any place of the earth, for God is now a turning the powers of the world, and removing the old earth, to make way for the foundations of the new heaven and new earth, wherein shall dwell righteousness.

And in the progress of this work it must be expected, that the mighty men will be raised from their seats, and that there will be a gathering together of the Nations to prepare for war, that the seat and throne of the Beast may be removed, and Mistress Babylon the great, the mother of fornications, and the abominations of the earth, may come down and sit in the dust, that the daughter of Zion may be exalted, that she that led into captivity, may be led into captivity, and she that killed with the sword, may be killed by the sword.

But although God do throw down the wicked powers by the sword, which were set up by the sword, and dasheth them to pieces one against another, and turns out the strong man armed by a stronger, yet the fabrics that he will raise, shall not be established by might, or by power, but by his Spirit, the man whose name is called the branch shall build him an house, it will appear that fury is not in God, but he will come in the still soft voice, the use of humane force is only ordained of God to be a terror to the evil, violent spirits of wicked men; for when the power and divine presence of God appears in his holy people, the face of wicked men will be against them, and when Christ hath taken the power, and rules, the Nations will be angry, and the Heathen will rage and imagine vain things, but he that sitteth in the heavens, will laugh them to scorn, and go forward in the exercise of his righteous judgements upon the earth, so that it is clear the work of God is unquestionable, and the power of men and devils shall not make it void, it remains only that we as his people be found doing his work, for the life of all Religion is practical obedience: The matter doth not consist so much in this or that form of Worship or Discipline, so that the aim and intent be to exalt God and Christ, pure holiness and righteousness, and to fight against the wicked principalities and powers of darkness, and evil works, to the increase of love, meekness, patience, and all other graces of the Spirit; and in order to the accomplishment of this, a form is necessary both in divine and civil things; for God is the God of order, and rules the world by order, for if every man's spirit should be his rule, few would be ruled: These things I have thought fit to publish in discharge of duty, as well as to effect good, I desire my weakness and boldness to be excused by those that are friends to truth and peace, in which I am a servant to all.

September 17. 1649.

Francis White.

Published by Authority. R.H.Sec.

A True Relation is transcribed above with the original wording and punctuation retained while spelling has been modernised, to combine authenticity with greater accessibility. However, I have introduced the apostrophe in the possessive case so as to avoid confusion with the plural. – RS.

[Land and freedom index](#)

The Levellers

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE THE COMMONS OF ENGLAND

in Parliament assembled.

**The humble Petition of Thousands wel-affected
persons inhabiting the City of London,
Westminster, the Borough of Southwark Hamblets,
and places adjacent.**

Sheweth,

That although we are as earnestly desirous of a safe and well-grounded Peace, and that a final end were put to all the troubles and miseries of the Common-wealth, as any sort of men whatsoever : Yet considering upon what grounds we engaged on your Part in the late and present Wars, and how far (by our so doing) we apprehend our selves concerned, Give us leave (before you conclude as by the Treaty in hand) to acquaint you first with the ground and reason which induced us to aid you against the King and his Adherents. Secondly, What our Apprehensions are of this Treaty. Thirdly, What we expected from you, and do still most earnestly desire.

Be pleased therefore to understand, that we had not engaged on your part, but that we judged this honourable House to be the supreme Authority of England, as chosen by, and representing the People; and entrusted with absolute power for redress of Grievances, and provision of Safety: and that the King was but at the most the chief publike Officer of this Kingdom, and accomptable to this House (the Representative of the People, from whom all just Authority is, or ought to be derived) for discharge of his Office: And if we had not bin confident hereof, we had bin desperately mad to have taken up Armes or to have bin aiding and assisting in maintaining a War against Him ; The Laws of the Land making it expresly a crime no less than Treason for any to raise War against the King.

But when we considered the manifold oppressions brought upon the Nation, by the King, His Lords, and Bishops; and that this Honourable House declared their deep sense thereof; and that (for continuance of that power which had so opprest us) it was evident the King intended to raise Forces, and to make War; and that if he did set up His Standard, it tended to the dissolution of the Government: upon this, knowing the safety of the People to be above Law, and that to judge thereof appertained to the Supreme Authority,

and not to the supreme Magistrate, and being satisfied in our Consciences, that the publike safety and freedom was in imminent danger, we concluded we had not only a just cause to maintain; but the Supreme Authority of the Nation, to justifie, defend, and indemnifie us in time to come, in what we should perform by direction thereof; though against the known Law of the Land. or any inferiour Authority, though the highest.

And at this our understanding was begotten in us by principles of right reason, so were we confirmed therein by your own proceedings, as by your condemning those Judges who in the case of Ship-money had declared the King to be Judge of Safety; and by your denying Him to have a Negative voice in the making of Laws; where you wholly exclude the King from having any share in the Supreme Authority: Then by your casting the Bishops out of the House of Lords, who by tradition also, had bin accounted an essential part of the Supreme Authority; And by your declaring to the Lords, That if they would not joyn with You in settling the Militia, (which they long refused) you would settle it without them, which you could not justly have done, had they had any real share in the supreme Authority.

These things we took for real Demonstrations, that you undoubtedly knew yourselves to be the supreme Authority; ever weighing down in us all other your indulgent Expressions concerning the King or Lords. It being indeed impossible for us to believe that it can consist either with the safety or freedom of the Nation, to be governed either by three or two Supremes, especially where experience hath proved them so apt to differ in their Judgements concerning Freedom or safety, that the one hath bin known to punish what the other hath judged worthy of reward; when not onely the freedom of the people is directly opposite to the Prerogatives of the King and Lords, but the open enemies of the one, have bin declared friends by the other, as the Scots were by the House of Lords.

And when as most of the oppressions of the Common-wealth have in all times bin brought upon the people by the King and Lords, who nevertheless would be so equal in the supreme Authority, as that there should be no redress of Grievances, no provision for safety, but at their pleasure. For our parts, we profess our selves so far from judging this to be consistent with Freedom or Safety, that we know no greater cause. Wherefore we assisted you in the late Wars, but in hope to be delivered by you from so intolerable, so destructive a bondage, so soon as you should (through Gods blessing upon the Armies raised by you) be enabled.

But to our exceeding grief, we have observed that no sooner God vouchsafeth you victory, and blesseth you with success, and thereby enableth you to put us and the whole Nation into an absolute condition of Freedom and Safety; but according as ye have bin accustomed, passing by the ruine of the Nation, and all the bloud that hath bin spilt by the King and his Party, ye betake your selves to a Treaty with him, thereby puting him that is but one single person, and a publike Officer of the Common-wealth, in competition with the whole Body of the People, whom ye represent; not considering that it is impossible for you to erect any Authority equall to your selves, and declared to all the world that you will not alter the Ancient Government, from that of the King, Lords, and Commons: not once mentioning (in case of difference) which of them is supreme, but leaving that point (which was the chiefest cause of all our publike differences, disturbances, wars, and miseries,) as uncertain as ever.

In so much as we who upon these grounds have laid out our selves every way to the uttermost of our abilities: and all others throughout the land, Souldiers and others who have done the like in defence of your supreme Authoritie, and in opposition to the King, cannot but deem our selves in the most dangerous condition of all others, left without all plea of indemnitie for what we have done; as already

many have found by losse of their lives and liberties, either for things done or said against the King, the law of the land frequently taking place, and precedencie against and before your Authoritie, which we esteemed supreme, and against which no law ought to be pleaded. Nor can we possibly conceive how any that have any waies assisted you can be exempt from the guilt of murderers and robbers, by the present laws in force, if you persist to disclaim the supreme authoritie, though their own consciences do acquit them, as having opposed none but manifest Tyrants, Oppressors and their adherents.

And whereas a Personal Treaty, or any Treaty with the King, hath been long time held forth as the only means of a safe and wel-grounded Peace; it is well known to have been cryed up principally by such as have been alwaies dis-affected unto you; and though you have not contradicted it: yet it is beleaved that you much fear the issue thereof; as you have cause sufficient, except you see greater alteration in the King and his party than is generally observed, there having never yet been any Treaty with him, but was accompanied with some underhand-dealing; and whilst the present force upon him (though seeming liberty) will in time to come be certainly pleaded against all that shall or can be agreed upon: Nay, what can you confide in if you consider how he hath been provoked; and what former Kings upon lesse provocations have done, after Oaths, Laws, Charters, Bonds, Excommunications, and all tyes of Reconciliations to the destruction of all those that had provoked and opposed them: yea, when your selves so soon as he had signed those bills, in the beginning of this Parliament, saw cause to tell him, That even in or about the time of passing those bills, some designe or other was on foot, which if it had taken effect would not only have rendred those bills fruitlesse, but have reduced you to a worse condition of confusion than that wherein the Parliament found you. And if you consider what new wars, Risings, Revolting invasions, and Plottings have been since this last Cry for a Personall Treaty, you will not blame us if we wonder at your hasty proceedings thereunto: especially considering the wonderfull Victories which God hath blessed the Army withall.

We professe we cannot chuse but stand amazed to consider the inevitable danger we shall be in, though all things in the Propositions were agreed unto; the resolutions of the King and his party have been so perpetually violently and implacably prosecuted and manifested against us; and that with such scorn and indignation, that it must be more than such ordinary bonds that must hold them. And it is no lesse a wonder to us that you can place your own security therein, or that you can ever imagin to see a free Parliament any more in England.

The truth is (and we see we must either now speak it, or for ever be silent,) We have long expected things of an other nature from you, and such as we are confident would have given satisfaction to all serious people of all Parties.

As,

1. That you would have made good the supreme authoritie of the people, in this Honourable House, from all pretences of Negative Voices, either in King or Lords.
2. That you would have made laws for election of representatives yearly and of course without writ or summons.
3. That you would have set expresse times for their meeting Continuance and Dissolution: as not to exceed 40 or 50 daies at the most, and to have fixed an expresse time for the ending of this present Parliament.
4. That you would have exempted matters of Religion and Gods worship, from the compulsive or

restrictive power of any Authoritie upon earth, and reserved to the supreme authouritie an un-compulsive power only of appointing a way for the publick, whereby abundance of misery, persecution, and heart-burning would for ever be avoyded.

5. That you would have disclaimed in your selves and all future Representatives, a power of Pressing and forcing any sort of men to serve in warrs, there being nothing more opposite to freedom, nor more unreasonable in an authoritie impowered for raising monies in all occasions, for which, and a just cause, assistants need not be doubted; the other way serving rather to maintain injustice and corrupt parties.

6. That you would have made both Kings, Queens, Princes, Dukes, Earls, Lords, and all Persons, alike liable to every Law of the Land, made or to be made; that so all persons even the Highest might fear and stand in aw, and neither violate the publick peace, nor private right of person or estate, (as hath been frequent) without being lyable to accompt as other men.

7. That you would have freed all Commoners from the jurisdiction of the Lords in all cases: and to have taken care that all tryalls should be only by twelve sworn men, and no conviction but upon two or more sufficient grown witnesses.

8. That you would have freed all men from being examined against themselves, and from being questioned or punished for doing of that against which no Law hath bin provided.

9. That you would have abbreviated the proceedings in Law, mitigated and made certain the charge thereof in all particulars.

10. That you would have freed all Trade and Marchandising from all Monopolizing and Engrossing, by Companies or otherwise.

11. That you would have abolished Excise, and all kinds of taxes, except subsidies, the old and onely just way of England.

12. That you would have laid open all late Inclosures of Fens, and other Commons, or have enclosed them onely or chiefly to the benefit of the poor.

13. That you would have considered the many thousands that are ruined by perpetual imprisonment for debt, and provide for their enlargement.

14. That you would have ordered some effectual course to keep people from begging and beggery, in so fruitful a Nation as through Gods blessing this is.

15. That you would have proportioned Punishments more equal to offences; that so mens Lives and Estates might not be forfeited upon trivial and slight occasions.

16. That you would have removed the tedious burthen of Tythes, satisfying all Impropiators, and providing more equal way of maintenance for the publike Ministers.

17. That you would have raised a stock of Money out of those many confiscated Estates you have had, for payment of those who contributed voluntarily above their abilities, before you had provided for those that disturbed but of their superfluities.

18. That you would have bound your selves and all future Parliaments from abolishing propriety, levelling mens estates, or making all things common.

19. That you would have declared what the duty or business of the Kingly office is, and what not, and ascertained the revenue, past increase or diminution, that so there might never be quarrels about the same.
20. That you would have rectified the election of publike Officers for the Citie of London, and of every particular Company therein, restoring the Comunalty thereof to their just Rights, most unjustly withheld from them, to the producing and maintaining of corrupt interest, opposite to common Freedom, and exceedingly prejudicial to the Trade and Manufactures of this Nation.
21. That you would have made full and ample reparations to all persons that had bin oppressed by sentences in High Commission, Star-Chamber, and Counsel Board, or by any kind of Monopolizers or Projectors; and that out of the Estates of those that were Authors, Actors, or Promoters of so intollerable mischiefs: and that without much attendance or seeking.
22. That you would have abolished all Committees, and have convayed all businesses into the true method of the usual Tryals of the Common-wealth.
23. That you would not have followed the example of former tyrannous and superstitious Parliaments, in making Orders, Ordinances, or Laws, or in appointing punishments concerning opinions or things super-natural, stiling some blasphemies, other heresies; when as you know your selves easily mistaken, and that divine Truths need no humane helps to support them: such proceedings having bin generally invented to divide the people amongst themselves, and to affright men from that liberty of discourse by which Corruption and tyranny would soon be discovered.
24. That you would have declared what the business of the Lords is, and ascertain their condition, not derogating from the Liberties of other men, that so there might be an end of striving about the same.
25. That you would have done Justice upon the Capital Authors and Promoters of the former or late wars, many of them being under your power: Considering that mercy to the wicked, is cruelty to the innocent: all your lenity doth but make them the more insolent and presumptuous.
26. That you would have provided constant pay for the Army, now under the command of the Lord General Fairfax, and given rules to all Judges, and all other publike Officers throughout the Land for their indempnity and for the saving harmless all that have any waies assisted you, or that have said or done any thing against the King, Queen, or any of his party since the beginning of this Parliament without which any of his party are in a better condition then those who have served you; nothing being more frequent with them, then their reviling of you and your friends.

The things and worthy Acts which have bin done and atchieved by this Army and their Adherents (how ever ingratfully suffered to be scandalized as Sectaries and men of Corrupt Judgements) in defence of the just authority of this honourable House, and of the common liberties of the Nation, and in opposition to all kind of Tyranny and oppression, being so far from meriting an odious Act of Oblivion, that they rather deserve a most honourable Act of perpetual remembrance, to be as a patern of publik vertue, fidelity, & resolution to all posterity.

27. That you would have laid to heart all the abundance of innocent blood that hath bin spilt, and the infinite spoil and havock that hath bin made of peaceable harmless people, by express commissions from the King: and seriously to have considered whether the justice of God be likely to be satisfied, or his yet

continuing wrath appeased, by an Act of Oblivion.

These and the like we have long time hoped you would have minded, and have made such an establishment for the General peace and contentful satisfaction of all sorts of people, as should have bin to the happines of all future generations, and which we most earnestly desire you would set your selves speedily to effect; whereby the almost dying honour of this most honourable House, would be again revived, and the hearts of your Petitioners and all other well affected people, be a fresh renewed unto you, the Freedom of the Nation (now in perpetual hazard) would be firmly established, for which you would once more be so strengthened with the love of the people, that you should not need to cast your eies any other waies (under God) for your security: but if all this availeth nothing, God be our Guide; for men sheweth us not a way for our preservation.

This Leveller petition was presented to Parliament on 11 September 1648. Signatories included about 1/3 of all Londoners.

[post a message to the webslave](#)

[Land and Freedom Index](#) | [Main Site Index](#)

[Levellers](#) | [Triploe](#) | [England's](#) | [Burford](#) | [White](#) | [New Chains](#) | [New Chains 2](#) | [Petition](#)

The Levellers

Just check out John Lilburne's life story and you'll see the man faced death time after time to defend our freedoms and to expose the corruption in the capitalist class that keeps the world in chains to this day.

What a pity that Lilburne is hardly known by the people he has helped the most... the poor and the needy. Respect now fully due to the man!! And let's make a film of his incredible life story.

This pamphlet is in print and available from your bookshop ISBN 0 9528074 1



**ENGLANDS
NEW CHAINS
DISCOVERED**

Or

The serious apprehensions of a part of the People, in behalf of the Commonwealth; (being Presenters, Promoters, and Approvers of the Large Petition of September 11. 1648.)

Presented to the Supreme Authority of England, the Representatives of the people in Parliament assembled.

By Lieut. Col. John Lilburn, and divers other citizens of London, and Borough of Southwark; February 26. 1648.

whereunto his speech delivered at the Bar is annexed.

Since you have done the Nation so much right, and your selves so much honour as to declare that the People (under God) are the original of all just Powers; and given us thereby fair grounds to hope, that you really intend their freedom and prosperity; yet the way thereunto being frequently mistaken, and through hast or error of judgement, those who mean the best, are many time mis-led so far to the prejudice of those that trust them, as to leave them in a condition neerest to bondage, when they have thought they had brought them into a way of Freedom. And since woful experience hath manifested this to be a Truth, there seemeth no small reason that you should seriously lay to heart what at present we have to offer, for discovery and prevention of so great a danger.

And because we have bin the first movers in and concerning an Agreement of the People, as the most proper and just means for the setling the long and tedious distractions of this Nation, occasioned by nothing more, than the uncertainty of our government; and since there hath been an Agreement prepared and presented by some officers of the army to this honourable House, as what they thought requisite to be agreed unto by the People (you approving thereof) we shall in the first place deliver our apprehensions thereupon.

That an Agreement between those that trust, and those who are trusted, hath appeared a thing acceptable to this honourable House, his Excellency, and the Officers of the army, is as much to our rejoycing, as we conceive it just in it self, and profitable for the Common-wealth, and cannot doubt but that you will protect those of the people, who have no waies forfeited their Birth-right, in their proper liberty of taking this, or any other, as God and their own Considerations shall direct them.

Which we the rather mention, for that many particulars in the Agreement before you, are upon serious examination thereof, dis-satisfactory to most of those who are very earnestly desirous of an Agreement, and many very material things seem to be wanting therein, which may be supplied in another: As

1. They are now much troubled there should be any Intervalls between the ending of this representative, and the begining of the next; as being desirous that this present Parliament that hath lately done so great things in so short a time, tending to their Liberties, should sit; until with certainty and safety they can see them delivered into the hands of another Representative, rather than to leave them (though never so small a time) under the dominion of a Council of State; a Constitution of a new and unexperienced Nature, and

which they fear, as the case now stands, may design to perpetuate their power, and to keep off Parliaments for ever.

2. They now conceive no less danger, in that it is provided that Parliaments for the future are to continue but 6 moneths, and a Council of State 18. In which time, if they should prove corrupt, having command of all Forces by Sea and Land, they will have great opportunities to make themselves absolute and unaccountable: And because this is a danger, than which there cannot well be a greater; they generally incline to Annual Parliaments, bounded and limited as reason shall devise, not dissolvable, but to be continued or adjourned as shall seem good in their discretion, during that yeer, but not longer; and then to dissolve of course, and give way to those who shall be chosen immediately to succeed them, an in the Intervals of their adjournments, to entrust an ordinary Committee of their own members, as in other cases limited and bounded with express instructions, and accountable to the next Session, which will avoid all those dangers feared from a Council of State, as at present this is constituted.

3. They are not satisfied with the clause, whereas it is said, that the power of the Representative shall extend to the erecting and abolishing of Courts of Justice; since the alteration of the usual way of Tryals by twelve sworn men of the Neighborhood, may be included therein: a constitution so equal and just in it self, as that they conclude it ought to remain unalterable. Neither is it cleer what is meant by these words, (viz.) That the Representatives have the highest final judgement. They conceiving that their Authority in these cases, is onely to make Laws, Rules, and Directions for other Courts and Persons assigned by Law for the execution thereof; unto which every member of the Common-wealth, as well those of the Representative, as others, should be alike subject; it being likewise unreasonable in it self, and an occasion of much partiality, injustice, and vexation to the people, that the Law-makers, should be Law-executors.

4. Although it doth provide that in the Laws hereafter to be made, no person by virtue of any Tenure, Grant, Charter, Patent, Degree, or Birth, shall be priviledged from subjection thereunto, or from being bound thereby, as well as other; Yet doth it not null and make void those present Protections by Law, or otherwise; nor leave all persons, as well Lords as others, alike liable in person and estate, as in reason and conscience they ought to be.

5. They are very much unsatisfied with what is exprest as a reserve from the Representative, in matters of Religion, as being very obscure, and full of perplexity, that ought to be most plain and clear; there having occurred no greater trouble to the Nation about anything than by the intermedling of Parliaments in matters of Religion.

6. They seem to conceive it absolutely necessary, that there be in their Agreement, a reserve from ever having any Kingly Government, and a bar against restoring the House of Lords, both which are wanting in the Agreement which is before you.

7. They seem to be resolved to take away all known and burdensome grievances, as Tythes, that great oppression of the Countries industry and hindrance of Tillage: Excise and Customs, Those secret thieves, and Robbers, Drainers of the poor and middle sort of People, and the greatest Obstructors of Trade, surmounting all the prejudices of Ship-mony, Pattents and Projects before this Parliament: also to take away all Monopolizing Companies of Marchants, the hinderers and decayers of Clothing and Cloth-working, Dying, and the like useful professions; by which thousands of poor people might be set at work, that are now ready to starve, where Marchandising restored to its due and proper freedom: they conceive likewise that the three grievances before mentioned, (viz.) Monopolising Companies, Excise

and Customes, do exceedingly prejudice Shipping and Navigation and Consequently discourage Sea-men, and Marriners, and which have had no small influence upon the late unhappy revolts which have so much endangered the Nation, and so much advantaged our enemies. They also incline to direct a more equal and lesse burdensome way for levying monies for the future, those other fore-mentioned being so chargable in the receipt, as that the very stipends and allowance to the Officers attending thereupon would defray a very great part of the charge of the army; whereas now they engender and support a corrupt interest. They also have in mind to take away all imprisonment of disabled men, for debt; and to provide some effectual course to enforce all that are able to a speedy payment, and not suffer them to be sheltered in Prisons, where they live in plenty, whilst their Creditors are undone. They have also in mind to provide work and comfortable maintainance for all sorts of poor, aged, and impotent people, and to establish some more speedy, lesse troublesome and chargeable way for deciding of Controversies in Law, whole families having been ruined by seeking right in the wayes yet in being: All which though of greatest and almost immediate concernment to the People, are yet omitted in their Agreement before you.

These and the like are their intentions in what they purpose for an Agreement of the People, as being resolved (so far as they are able) to lay an impossibility upon all whom they shall hereafter trust, of ever wronging the Commonwealth in any considerable measure, without certainty of ruining themselves, and as conceiving it to be an improper tedious, and unprofitable thing for the People, to be ever running after their Representatives with Petitions for redresse of such Grievances as may at once be removed by themselves, or to depend for these things so essential to their happiness and freedom, upon the uncertain judgements of several Representatives, the one being apt to renew what the other hath taken away.

And as to the use of their Rights and Liberties herein as becometh, and is due to the people, from whom all just powers are derived; they hope for and expect what protection is in you and the Army to afford; and we likewise in their and our own behalves do earnestly desire, that you will publicly declare your resolution to protect those who have not forfeited their liberties in the use thereof, lest they should conceive that the Agreement before you being published abroad, and the Commissioners therein nominated being at work in persuance thereof, is intended to be imposed upon them, which as it is absolutely contrary to the nature of a free Agreement, so we are perswaded it cannot enter into your thoughts to use any impulsion therein.

But although we have presented our apprehensions and desires concerning this great work of a Agreement, and are apt to perswade our selves that nothing shall be able to frustrate our hopes which we have built thereupon; yet have we seen and heard many things of late, which occasions not only apprehensions of other matters intended to be brought upon us of danger to such an Agreement, but of bondage and ruine to all such as shall pursue it.

Insomuch that we are even agast and astonished to see that notwithstanding the productions of the highest notions of freedom that ever this Nation, or any people in the world, have brought to light, notwithstanding the vast expence of blood and treasure that hath been made to purchase those freedoms, notwithstanding the many eminent and even miraculous Victories God hath been pleased to honour our just Cause withall, notwithstanding the extraordinary gripes and pangs, this House hath suffered more than once at the hands of your own servants, and that at least seemingly for the obtaining these our Native Liberties.

When we consider what rackings and tortures the People in general have suffered through decay of Trade, and dearness of food, and very many families in particular, through Free-quarter, Violence, and

other miseries, incident to Warre, having nothing to support them therein, but hopes of Freedom, and a well-settles Common-wealth in the end.

That yet after all these things have bin done and suffered, and whilst the way of an Agreement of the People is owned, and approved, even by your selves, and that all men are in expectation of being put into possession of so deer a purchase; Behold! in the close of all, we hear and see what gives us fresh and pregnant cause to believe that the contrary is really intended, and that all those specious pretenses, and high Notions of Liberty, with those extraordinary courses that have of late bin taken (as if of necessity for greatest punishments, unless they end in just liberty, and an equal Government) appear to us to have bin done and directed by some secret powerful influences, the more securely and unsuspectedly to attain to an absolute domination over the Common-wealth; It being impossible for them, but by assuming our generally approved Principles, and hiding under the fair shew thereof their other designs, to have drawn in so many good and godly men (really aiming at what the other had but in shew and pretense) and making them unwittingly instrumental to their own and their Countries Bondage.

For where is that good, or where is that liberty so much pretended, so deerly purchased? If we look upon what this House hath done since it hath voted it self the Supreme Authority, and disburthened themselves of the power of the Lord. First, we find a high Court of Justice erected, for Tryal of Criminal causes; whereby that great and strong hold of our preservation, the way of tryal by 12. sworn men of the Neighborhood is infringed, all liberty of exception against the tryers, is over-ruled by a Court consisting of persons pickt and chosen in an un-usual way; the practise whereof we cannot allow of, though against open and notorious enemies; as well because we know it to be an usual policy to introduce by such means all usurpations, first against Adversaries, in hope of easier admission; as also, for that the same being so admitted, may at pleasure be exercised against any person or persons whatsoever. This is the fist part of our new liberty. The next is the censuring of a Member of this House, for declaring his judgement in a point of Religion, which is directly opposite to the Reserve in the Agreement concerning Religion. Besides the Act for pressing of Sea-men, directly contrary to the agreement of the officers. Then the stoping of our mouths from Printing, is carefully provided for, and the most severe and unreasonable Ordinances of Parliament that were made in the time of Hollis and Stapletons reign, to gag us from speaking truth, and discovering the tyrannies of bad men, are refered to the care of the General, and by him to his Marshal, to be put in execution; in searching, fining, imprisoning, and other waies corporally punishing all that any waies by guilty of unlicensed Printing; They dealing with us as the Bishops of old did with the honest Puritan, who were exact in geting Laws made against the Papist, but really intended them against the Puritan, and made them feel the smart of them: Which also hath bin, and is dayly exercised most violently, whereby our Liberties have bin more deeply wounded, than since the begining of this Parliament; and that to the dislike of the souldiery, as by their late Petition in that behalf plainly appeareth. Then whereas it was expected that the Chancery, and Courts of Justice in Westminster, and the Judges of Officers thereof should have bin surveyed, and for the present regulated, till a better and more equal way of deciding controversies could have bin constituted, that the trouble and charge of the people in their suits should have bin abated: Instead hereof, the old and advanced fees are continued, and new thousand pounds Annual stipends allotted; when in the corruptest times the ordinary fees were thought a great and a foreburden; in the mean time, and in lieu thereof, there is not one perplexity or absurdity in proceedings taken away. Those Petitioners that have move in behalf of the people, how have they bin entertained? Sometimes with the complement of empty thanks, their desires in the mean time not at all considered; at other times meeting with Reproches and Threats for their constancy and publike affections, and with violent motions, that their Petitions be burnt by the common Hangman, whilst other

are not taken in at all; to so small an account are the people brought, even while they are flattered with notions of being the Original of all just power. And lastly, for compleating this new kind of liberty, a Council of State is hastily erected for Guardians thereof, who to that end are possessed with power to order and dispose all the forces appertaining to England by Sea or Land, to dispose of the publike Treasure, to command any person whatsoever before them, to give oath for the discovering of Truth, to imprison any that shall dis-obey their commands, and such as they shall judge contumacious. What now is become of that liberty that no mans person shall be attached or imprisoned, or otherwise dis-eased of his Free-hold, or free Customs, but by lawful judgement of his equals? We entreat you give us leave to lay these thing open to your view, and judge impartiall of our present condition, and of your own also, that by strong and powerfull influences of some persons, are put upon these and the like proceedings, which both you and we ere long (if we look not to it) shall be inforced to subject our selves unto; then we have further cause to complain, when we consider the persons: as first, the chief of the Army directly contrary to what themselves thought meet in their Agreement for the People. 2. Judges of the Law, and Treasurers for monies. Then 5. that were Members of the Lords House, and most of them such as have refused to approve of your Votes and proceedings, concerning the King and Lords. 2. of them Judges in the Star-chamber, and approvers of the bloody and tyrannical sentences issuing from thence.

Some of your own House, forward men in the Treaty, and decliners of your last proceedings; all which do cleerly manifest to our understandings that the secret contrivers of those things doe think themselves now so surely guarded by the strength of an Army, by their dayly Acts and Stratagems, to their ends inclined, and the captivation of this House, that they may now take off the Vail and Cloak of their designs as dreadlesse of what ever can be done against them. By this Council of State, all power is go into their hand, a project which hath been long and industriously laboured for; and which being once firmly and to their liking established their next motions may be upon pretense of ease to the People, for the dissolution of this Parliament, half of whose time is already swallowed up by the said Council: now because no obstacle lies in their way, to the full establishment of these their ends; but the uncorrupted part of the Souldiery, that have their eyes fixed upon their ingagements and promises of good to the People, and resolve by no threats or allurements to decline the same; together with that part of the people in Citie and Countries, that remain constant in their motions for Common good, and still persists to run their utmost hazards for procurement of the same, by whom all evil mens designs both have, and are still likely to find a check and discovery. Hereupon the grand contrivers fore-mentioned, whom we can particular by name, do begin to raise their spleen, and manifest a more violent enmitie against Souldiers and People, disposed as afore-said, than ever heretofore, as appeareth by what lately past, at a meeting of Officers, on Feb. 22. last, at White-Hall, where after expressions of much bitterness against the most Consciencious part of the Souldiery, and others, it was insisted upon, (as we are from very credible hands certainly informed) that a motion should be made to this House for the procurement of a Law enabling them to put to death all such as they should judge by Petitions or otherwise to disturbe the present proceedings; and upon urging that the Civil Magistrate should do it, It was answered, that they could hang twenty ere the Magistrate one. It was likewise urged that Orders might be given to seize upon the Petitioners, Souldiers, or others, at their meetings, with much exclamation against some of greatest integrities to your just Authority, whereof they have given continual and undenyable assurances. A Proclamation was likewise appointed, forbidding the Souldiers to Petition you, or any but their Officers, prohibiting their correspondencies: And private Orders to be given out for seizing upon Citizens and Souldiers at their meetings. And thus after these fair blossoms of hopefull liberty, breaks forth this bitter fruit, of the vilest and basest bondage that ever English men groan'd under: whereby this notwithstanding is gained (viz.) an evident and (we hope) a timely discovery of the instruments, from whence all the

evils, contrivances, and designes (which for above these eighteen moneths have been strongly suspected) took their rise and original, even ever since the first breach of their Promises an engagements made at New Market, Triploe Heath, with the Agitators and People. It being for these ends that they have so violently opposed all such as manifested any zeal for Common Right, or any regard to the Faith of the Army, sentencing some to death, others to reproachfull punishments, placing and displacing Officers according as they shewed themselves serviceable or opposite to their designes, lifting as many as they thought good, even of such as have served in Arms against your thought good, even of such as have served in Arms against you: And then again upon pretence of easing the charge of the People, disbanding Supernumeraries, by advantage thereof picking out, such as were most cordial and active for Common good; thereby moulding the Army (as far as they could) to their own bent and ends premised; exercising Martial Law with much cruelty, thereby to debase their spirits, and make them subservient to their wils and pleasures; extending likewise their power (in many cases) over persons not Members of the Army.

And when in case of opposition and difficult services, they have by their creatures desired a Reconciliation with such as at other times they reproached, vilified, and otherwise abased; and through fair promises of good, and dissembled repentance gained their association and assistance, to the great advantage of their proceedings: yet their necessities being over, and the Common enemy subdued, they have freighted their former promises, and renewed them with such appellations as they knew did most distaste the People, such as Levellers, Jesuites, Anarchist, Royalists names, relation to the man so reputed; meerly relying for beleefe thereof upon the easinesse and credulity of the People.

And though the better to insinuate themselves, and get repute with the People, as also to conquer their necessities, they have bin fane to make use of those very principles and productions, the men they have so much traduced, have brought to light: yet the producers themselves they have and doe still more eagerly maligne than ever, as such whom they know to bee acquainted to their deceipts, and deviations and best able to discover the same.

So that now at length, guessing all to be sure, and their own (the King being removed, the House of Lords nulled, their long plotted Council of State erected, and this House awed to their ends,) the edge of their mallice is turning against such as have yet so much courage left them as to appear for the well establishment of England's Liberties: and because God hath preserved a great part of the Army untainted with the guilt of the designes aforementioned, who cannot without much danger to the designers themselves by suppressed, they have resolved to put this House upon raising more new forces, (notwithstanding the present necessities of the People, in maintaining those that are already) in doing whereof (though the pretence be danger, and opposition, yet the concealed end is like to be the over ballancing those in the Army, who are resolved to stand for true Freedome, as the end of all their labours, the which (if they should be permitted to do) they would then doubt of making themselves absolute seizures, Lords and Masters, both of Parliament and People; which when they have done wee expect the utmost of misery, nor shall it grieve us to expire with the liberties of our native Country: for what good man can with any comfort to himself survive then? But God hath hitherto preserved us, and the Justice of our desires, as integrity of our intentions are dayly more and more manifest to the impartial and unprejudiced part of men; insomuch that it is no smal comfort to us, that notwithstanding we are upon all these disadvantages that may be, having neither power nor preeminence, the Common Idols of the world; our Cause and principles, do through their own natural truth and lustre get ground in mens understandings, so that where there was one, twelve moneths since, that owned our principles, we beleeve there are now hundreds, so that though we fail, our Truths prosper.

And prosperity we doubt not shall reap the benefit of our endeavours, what ever shall become of us. However though we have neither strength nor safety before us, we have discharged our Consciences, and emptied our breasts unto you, knowing well that if you will make use of your power, and take unto you that courage which becomes men of your Trust and condition, you may yet through the goodnesse of God prevent the danger and mischief intended, and be instrumental in restoring this long enthralled and betrayed Nation into a good and happy condition.

For which end we most earnestly desire and propose, as the main prop and support of the work, that you will not dissolve this House, nor suffer your selves to be dissolved, until as aforesaid, you see a new Representative the next day ready to take your room; which you may confidently and safely insist upon, there being no considerable number in the Army or else-where, that will be so unworthy as to dare to disturb you therein.

2. That you will put in practise the self-denying Ordinance, the most just and useful that ever was made, and continually cryed out for by the people; whereby a great infamy that lies upon your cause will be removed, and men of powerful influences, and dangerous designes, deprived of those means and opportunities which now they have to prejudice the publike.

3. That you will consider how dangerous it is for one and the same persons to be continued long in the highest commands of a Military power, especially acting so long distinct, and of them selves, as those now in being have don, and in such extraordinary waies whereunto they have accustomed themselves, which was the original of most Regalities and Tyrannies in the world.

4 That you appoint a Committee of such of our own members, as have bin longest establish't upon those rules of Freedom upon which you now proceed; to hear, examine, and conclude all controversies between Officers and Officers, and between Officers and Souldiers; to consider and mitigate the Law-Martial; and to provide that it be not exercised at all upon persons not of the Army: Also to release and repair such as have thereby unduly suffered, as they shall see cause: To consider the condition of the private Souldiers, both Hose and Foot in these deer times, and to allow them such increase of pay, as wherewithal they may live comfortably, and honestly discharge their Quarters: That all disbanding be refered to the said Committee, and that such of the Army as have served the King, may be first disbanded.

5. That you will open the Press, whereby all trecherous and tyranical designes may be the easier discovered, and so prevented, which is a liberty of greatest concernment to the Commonwealth, and which such only as intend a tyrannie are engaged to prohibit: The mouths of Adversaries being best stopped, by the sensible good which the people receive from the actions of such as are in Authority.

6. That you wil (whilst you have opportunity) abate the charge of the Law, and reduce the stipends of Judges, and all other Magistrates and Officers in the Common-wealth, to a less, but competent allowance, converting the over-plus to the publike Treasury, whereby the taxes of the people may be much eased.

7. But above all, that you will dissolve this present Council of State, which upon the grounds fore-mentioned so much threatneth Tyrannie; and mannage your affairs by Committees of short continuance, and such as may be frequently and exactly accountable for the discharge of their Trusts.

8. That you will publish a strict prohibition, and severe penalty against all such, whether Committees, Magistrates, or Officers of what kind soever, as shall exceed the limits of their Commission, Rules, or

Directions, and encourage all men in their informations and complaints against them.

9. That you will speedily satisfie the expectations of the Souldiers in point of Arrears, and of the people in point of Accounts, in such a manner, as that it may not as formerly, prove a snare to such as have bin most faithful, and a protection to the most corrupt, in the discharge of their trust and duties.

10. That the so many times complained of Ordinance for Tyths upon treble cottages, may be forthwith taken away; all which, together with due regard shewed to Petitioners, without respect to their number and strength, would so fasten you in the affections of the people, and of the honest Officers and Souldiers, as that you should not need to fear any opposite power whatsoever: and for the time to come, of yourselves enjoy the exercise of you Supreme Authority, whereof you have yet but the name onely; and be inabled to vindicate your just undertaking; wherein we should not onely rejoyce to have occasion to manifest how ready we should be to hazard our lives in your behalf, but should also bend all our studies and endeavours to render you Honorable to all future generations.

February. 26.

Febr. 26 1648. Being ushered in by the Sergeant at Arms, and called to the Bar, with all due respects given unto the House, Lieutenant Colonel John Lilburn, with divers others, coming to the Bar next the Mace, with the Addres in his hand, spake these words or to this effect, as followeth.

M. Speaker,

I am very glad that without any inconvenience unto my self, and those that are with me, I may freely and cheerfully address my self to this honorable House, as the Supreme Authority of England (time was when I could not) and it much refresheth my spirit, to live to see this day, that you have made such a step to the Peoples Liberties, as to own and declare your selves to be (as indeed you are) the Supreme Authority of this Nation.

M. Speaker, I am desired by a company of honest men, living in and about London, who in truth do rightly appropriate to themselves, the title of the Contrivers, Promoters, Presenters, and Approvers of the late Large London Petition of the 11. of Sept. last, (which was the first Petition I know of in England, that was presented to this honorable House against the late destructive Personal Treaty with the late King) to present you with their serious apprehensions; And give me leave (I beseech you) for my self and them, to say thus much; That for the most part of us, we are those that in the worst of times durst own our Liberties and Freedoms, in the face of the greatest of our adversaries; and from the begining of these Wars, never shrunk from the owning of our Freedoms, in the most tempestuous times, nor changed our Principles: Nay Sir, let me with truth tell you, that to the most of us, our Wives, our Children, our Estates, our Relations, nay our Lives, and all that upon earth we can call Ours, have not bin so highly valued by us, as our Liberties and Freedoms; which our constant Actions (to the apparent hazard of our Bloud and Lives) have bin a cleer and full demonstration of, for these many yeers together.

And M. Speaker, give me leave to tell you, that I am confident our Liberties and Freedoms (the true and just end of all the late Wars) are so deer and precious to us, that we had rather our Lives should breath out with them, than to live one moment after the expiration of them.

M. Speaker, I must confess I am to present you with a paper, something of a new kind, for we have had no longer time to consider of it, than from Thursday last, and Warrants (as we are informed) issuing against us to take us, from those that have no power over us; we durst not well go our ordinary way to work, to get Subscriptions to it, lest we should be surprised before we could present it to this honorable House, and to be frustrated in that benefit or relief that we justly expect from you; and to present it with a few hands, we judged inconsiderable in your estimation, and therefore chuse in the third place (being in so much hast as we were to prevent our eminent and too apparent ruine) in person to bring it to your Bar, and avowedly to present it here: And therefore without any further question, give me leave to tell you, I own it, and I know so doth all the rest of my Friends present; and if any hazard should ensue thereby, Give me leave resolvedly to tell you, I am sorry I have but one life to lose, in maintaining the Truth, Justice, and Righteousness, of so gallant a piece.

M. Speaker, We own this honorable House (as of right) the true Guardian of our Liberties and Freedoms; and we wish and most heartily desire, you would rouse up your spirits (like men of gallantry) and now at last take unto your selves a magnanimous resolution, to acquit your selves (without fear or dread) like the chosen and betruisted Trustees of the People, from whom (as your selves acknowledge and declare) all just power is derived, to free us from all bondage and slavery, and really and truly invest us into the price of all our bloud, hazards, and toyls; Our Liberties and Freedoms, the true difference and distinction of men from beasts.

M. Speaker, Though my spirit is full in the sad apprehension of the dying condition of our Liberties and Freedoms: Yet at present I shall say no more, but in the behalf of my self and my friends, I shall earnestly entreat you to read these our serious Apprehensions seriously, and debate them deliberately.

Friends,

This we have adventured to publish for the timely information and benefit of all that adhere unto the common interest of the people, hoping that with such upon due consideration, it will find as large an acceptance, as our late Petition of Sept. 11.1648. And we thought good (in regard we were not called in to receive an answer to the same) to acquaint you, that we intend to second it with a Petition sufficiently subscribed, we doubt not with many thousands, earnestly to solicit for an effectual Answer.

FINIS

[index page](#)

[Land and Freedom Index](#) | [Main Site Index](#)

[Levellers](#) | [Triploe](#) | [England's](#) | [Burford](#) | [White](#) | [New Chains](#) | [New Chains 2](#) | [Petition](#)

The Levellers

The Second Part of England's New Chains Discovered 1649

This pamphlet is in print and available from your bookshop
ISBN 0 9528075 X

A robust call for freedom of the press and a more detailed analysis of the forces that were propelling a class of, what Lilburne and his Leveller followers saw as, entirely unrepresentative and duplicitous people into power.

Parliament's reaction was swift, Lilburne, Walwyn, Overton and Thomas Prince (treasurer of the Leveller Party and a wholesale Cheese merchant by profession) were rounded up by Cromwell's soldiers by order of Parliament to be tried for treason.

Followed by: [an overheard discussion amongst the Council of State after the arrests](#)



The Second Part OF ENGLANDS

N e w - C h a i n e s

DISCOVERED:

Or a sad Representation of the uncertain and dangerous condition of the

COMMON-WEALTH:

DIRECTED

**To the Supreme Authority of England, the Representors of the People
in Parliament assembled.**

**By severall wel affected persons inhabiting the City of London,
Westminster, the borough of Southwark, Hamlets, and places adjacent,
presenters and approvers of the late large Petition of the Eleventh of
September. 1648.**

**All persons who are assenting to this Representation, are desired to subscribe it, and bring
in their Subscriptions to the Presenters and Approvers of the foresaid Petition of the 11 of
Sept.**

**London, Printed in the Year, 1649. To the Supreme Authority of
ENGLAND, the Representors of the People, in Parliament Assembled.**

THE

Sad Representation

**of the uncertain and dangerous Condition of the Common-wealth : By
the Presenters and Approvers of the Large Petition of the 11. of
September, 1648.**

If our hearts were not over-charged with the sense of the present miseries and approaching dangers of the Nation, your smal regard to our late serious Apprehensions, would have kept us silent; but the misery, danger, and bondage threatned is so great, imminent, and apparent, that whilst we have breath, and are not violently restrained, we cannot but speak, and even cry aloud, until you hear us, or God be pleased otherwaies to relieve us.

Nor should you in reason be with-held from considering what we present you withal, through any strangeness

that appeareth therein; For what was more incredible, than that a Parliament trusted by the people to deliver them from all kinds of oppression, and who made so liberal effusion of their blood, and waste of their estates (upon pretense of doing thereof) should yet so soon as they were in power, oppress with the same kind of oppressions, which yet was true in the times of Hollis and Stapletons faction, and who, (as the King and Bishops had done before) laboured for an Army to back and perpetuate them therein.

Nor were our Petitions then presented (wherein we justly complained of those oppressions, and fore-warned them of the danger ensuing) the less considerable for their burning them by the hand of the common hangman; Nor the Petitioners the more blame-worthy for being reproched with the names of Atheists, Hereticks, and seditious Sectaries (as now with Jesuite, and Leveller) Aspersion being the known marks of corrupt States-men, and usually working no other effect, but the discredit of the Aspersers. Yet were there then many who believed their reports of us, and they were as impatient with us, for our taxing them with their wicked and pernicious designs, as others are now for our presuming to detect them, who are so high in present power and reputation: But it is now evident, that it is possible for our Physicians to bring us into a more dangerous condition than they found us.

And though experience hath made us wofully sensible, that nothing is more dangerous to any people than their bearing with unjust, covetous, or ambitious practises in those they trust; Yet did we forbear to interpose our judgements, or to oppose those mens designs, until they had made a large progress toward our bondage, and endeavoured to grasp the power of the army into their hands, thereby to enforce their Tyrannie upon us; insomuch that it was almost too late to give check to their wicked intentions: so unwilling were we to believe it possible for men who all along pretended liberty and redress of grievances, to degenerate so soon into the grossest Principles and practises of long settled Tyrannies.

And much more do our Consciences bear us witness of our backwardness to believe any evil intentions in those who not only were most vigorous and successful against the common enemy but seemed so sensible of the injustice and trechery of that prevalent faction in Parliament, as to engage with the utmost of their might, as if they had really intended to deliver the Nation from that dangerous thralldom, so that we both durst, and did many of us, venture our lives upon their fidelity; Yea so powerful, perswasive, and contentful were their first Engagement, Papers, and Remonstrances, so fraught with self-denying Doctrines, tender regard to the peace of the Nation, and satisfaction to all interests: as even lulled all peaceable People into a sound sleep of security, casting all their care upon the General Council of the Army, as upon a People they thought could never have the face to decline either those principles, or to neglect the performance of so many engagements, promises, and protestations, made as in the presence of the all-seeing God, frequently calling upon him, the searcher of all hearts, to bear witness to their integrity and sincerity therein: Insomuch that we (who alwaies with some warinesse observed them) many times denied our own understanding rather than we would draw hasty conclusions from evident testimonies of their defection.

But when after they had once sleighted the Agitators. and discountenanced those Officers and Souldiers, who first engaged against the destructive Votes of Parliament; such as stood firm to their engagements at New-market, and Triploe Heath: when we saw they not only neglected them, but adhered to persons sent from Parliament and City, in those corrupted times, and fell immediately to plead for Negative Voyces in the King, and Lord; checking and controuling those that opposed: When we understood their General Councils (which according to their engagements ought to have consisted only of two select Commission Officers, and two private Souldiers, chosen by every Regiment, with such General Officers as assented to the Engagement, and no other) were neverthesse overgrown with Collonels, Lieut. Collonels, Majors, and others, not chosen; and many of them dissenters from the said Engagement; and that some few eminent persons presum'd above measure therein, and in effect overawed and controuled those Councils: and that the contrivance of a Counsel of State, was the great engine which those Councils laboured to bring about: when we found them not only to

Court the King, by kissing his hand, and the like, and that a correspondency was held between him and the General Officers, and Agents sent to and fro continually, whereby they came to so neer a close, as that their Proposals were not only received, but corrected and amended by the King, before they were sent to the House, till they became very consistent with his ends and Prerogative: and those Officers so engaged thereby as to be moved to impatience towards any that spake a sillable against this their trafique and intercourse with him: upon which likewise, they concluded an agreement with the opposing Citizens of London, without so much a calling the Agitators to advize thereupon. Seeing, Hearing, and Understanding these things, no marvel if we were staggered in our Beleefe of their integrity.

But that a person so deeply charged as the Earl of Manchester, and other grand self-seekers of this House should be entertained with so great respect, and guarded to their places in Parliament, and that notwithstanding the prevailing power of the Army, those who had usurped the Authority of the House, and Voted a new warre, were nevertheless permitted to sit and Vote there, and that contrary to the importunate desires of the Agitators, and the Remonstrance of the Army: and then one of the first fruits of this their conjunction was the passing of an Ordinance of Tythes, upon trebble dammages, which the corrupt Clergy had presented (in the absence of the Speaker) to Pelhams Parliament; and the burning of Mr Biddles Book, by the Common Hangman; and imprisoning his person: and that notwithstanding their glorious March through London, the prerogative Prisoners in the Tower, New-gate, and else where, were utterly neglected, and the Council of those friends sleighted, who had been instrumental, even to the losse of some, and the hazard of all their lives, to make an easie and unbloody passage for the Army into Southwark and the City. Upon observation of these and abundant more particulars, which we could enumerate, we concluded, that the Councils of the Army were not steered as at their first engagement, by the select persons chosen thereunto, not for the ends in that engagement expressed; but by some other powerfull and ever-ruling influences, that intended other matters then were pretended, and that laboured by all possible means to convert the honest endeavours of good men in the Army, and else-where, and the happy success God had blessed them withall, to the advantage of their Lusts, Pride, and Domination: And as time came on, it more and more appeared, that they intended meerly the establishment of themselves in power and greatnesse, without any regard at all to the performance of their promises and engagements, or any respect to the faith and credit of the Army, or to the peace and prosperity of the Common wealth, and that they walked by no rules or principles either of honesty or conscience; but (as meer pollititians, were governed altogether by occasion, and as they saw a possibility of making progress to their designs, which course of theirs they ever termed a waiting upon providence, that with colour of Religion they might deceive the more securely.

Now that this may appear no slander, we entreat that without partiality, their after proceedings may be throughly scan'd: as first, at Kingston it was proposed by the Agitators, friends of London, Southwark, and the places adjacent, that the Tower, City, and Borough, might be secured by the well-affected Inhabitants, and not by Souldiers, that so trade and traffique might be preserved, which otherwise would be driven away (as it soon after proved) And that it was hoped they intended not to secure any place by Souldiers, when the wel-affected Inhabitants were able to secure it. Which advise proceed as well from our respects to the City and neighbour places, as upon fears of what we know to be the practise of other Tyrants (and therefore doubted would be exercised by those) namely, the garisoning great Town, thereby to keep the people, as wel in poverty, as in continual aw and subjection.

Which advise, though assented unto by the Agitators, was yet rejected by the grand Officers, and a new Regiment raised, to the futher charge of the Common-wealth; the Proposers themselves being dismissed with reproches, and the Agitators thrust out, and not permitted to observe how they were dealt withal.

At which time also its very remarkable with how much height of State they observed the King at Hampton Court, visiting him themselves, and permitting thousands of people dayly to visit him, to kiss his hand, and to

be healed by him, whereby his party in the City, and every where, were exceedingly animated, his Agents being as familiar at the head-quarters, as at the Court. Then on a sudden, when the House complied not with their purposes, in all hast it was to be purged, and thereupon they publish a large Remonstrance, Aug. 18. stuffed with publicke reasons, to shew the justness and necessity thereof: but the House again complying, through the sight of their Remonstrance, though no whit changed in respect of its corruption; & they finding, if it were purged, it would not be for their design; they make nothing of their former resolution, but continue it in its corrupt condition, and sit with them themselves.

Then they fall to work again about the King, and send the propositions of New-castle to him, which they knew, and were agreed he should not sign; in the meantime, the so wrought the King by deep promises, and hopes of restauration, as that he inclined much to countenance the Army, gave out words in their favour, and in his answer to the House, prefer'd their Proposals, before the Parliaments Propositions; in lieu thereof, the great ones of the Army themselves, endeavoured the revival of a Treaty, and some of them in the House, were very violent against motions of no more Address, and expressed it was the sense of the Army that further Address should be made, and that except they would make Addresses of another nature to the King, they could not promise them the assistance of the Army; and accordingly they take pains to work every man at the head-quarters; upon which, petitions were attempted in the Army, in favour of a Treaty, and some conscientious, but weak people, were drawn to second their design, with a Petition for a Personal Treaty, which they had ready at the House dore.

These strange and mysterious proceedings, occasion'd a new face of things in the Army, many of the Officers being much distasted thereat, & whole Regiments chusing new Agents to look after the publike, as fearing things were runing head-long into a most dangerous condition: The far greater number of the Officers, would not by any means indure to hear of the Armies compliance with the King, and the Agents finding all former engagements, promises, and declarations broken, and utterly neglected, and the Common wealth in danger of utter dissolution, produce an Agreement of the People, upon grounds of Common right, for uniting of all unprejudiced people therein; the great Officers very much oppose it a while, as having set up another Interest: but seing the same take with the Army, profess though at present their judgements could not so far close with it as to act for it, yet they would never oppose it. Hereupon the whole frame of the design alters, and the matters in projection with them, were how to dis-engage themselves, and be rid of the King, and how likewise to discountenance and keep under the discerning party in the Army. In order to the first, they cast about how to get the King into the Isle of Wight, where they might both easier keep others from him, and the more entirely possess him themselves; and that he might with willingness be hurried thither, they work upon his fear; suggesting to him, that there was an intention in some violent persons to murder him, and perswade him to leave that in a letter, as the cause of his remove. To make which the more credible, they wrought L.Col. Hen. Lilburn to asperse his brother John (who then stood in the way of the great men of the Army) with a base & abhorrid resolution of being one that intended to murder the King; to the proof whereof they would never suffer the Asperser to be brought (though solicited thereunto by a Petition from divers well-affected persons but instead thereof, for that perfidious service, they advanced him to the government of Tinmouth Castle, above his brother Robert, where retaining the leven of his Apostacy, which the Gen. Officers had laid in him, he sufferd the deserved reward of a perfidious traytor.

And though the General Officers enclined him to this revolt themselves, as well by their example, as by coutenancing him in the beginning thereof; and though for the same he incurred the extreme displeasure of his Father, and Kindred, yet are both his Father and kindred by the Officers themselves and their Associates aspersed with the fact, as if tainted with guilt and contammination thereof.

Thus did they kill two birds with one stone, framing a Name for them which of all others is most distasteful to the People, and was therefore most likely to beget a beleef of the pretended assassination.

Where (by the way) we desire it may be observed, that notwithstanding the word Leveller was framed and cast upon all those in the Army (or elsewhere) who are against any kind of Tyranny, whether in King, Parliament, Army, Council of State, &c. And though it was not so much as beleev'd to concern those upon whom they cast it, the inventer having often professed as much, yet have they both themselves and by their Instruments industriously propagated the same, and insinuated both this and other slanders of us into the hearts of all the easy and credulous people they could meet withall.

But to returne, The King thus removed, they judge themselves at good leisure to deal with the Agreers for the People, and so suddainly violent they became in that work, that at the first Randezvous neer Ware, they shot a Souldier to death, for pursuing the Agreement for the People: unworthily abused Major Skott, a Member of this House, sent him up a prisoner, and accused him and Col. Rainsborough for appearing in behalf of the Agreement, and therewithall sent Col. Ayres, Major Cobbet, Capt. Bray, and many others after them prisoners to Windsor, where, as Parties, Judges, and Juries, the Officers did what they would against them, sentencing some to death, others to disgracefull punishments, restraining and releasing at pleasure, and with as much Arbitrarinesse as ever was in the world, and could not be deswaded though Mr Saltmarsh and others bore full testimony against the cruelty and injustice thereof. Hereupon at the House they procured at once the imprisonment of five cordial Citizens, for justifying the Agreement of the People, and requiring Justice for the bloud of the Souldier that was shot at Ware, disfranchised them, and under the notion of London Agents forbad their meetings. And when now they thought they had moulded and qualified the Army to their own bent, and had gratified their complying Officers, with the cruelty upon the Levellers, (for so they have stiled all who have manifested any sence of Common Right) and had found that they could be nothing so great, rich, and potent, upon a close with the King, and that it would be impossible for them to hold either Officer or Souldier firm to them, in case of such composure, Hereupon uterly to frustrate his hopes that way, they prevail with the House to Vote no more Addresses; and so vanisht away all their glorious flattery of the King and his Party, and their notorious disimulation appeared, abusing thereby the Fifth of the Army, and making it cleer to all discerning men, that such as could so break with one sort of men, will make no Conscience of keeping faith with any.

Their next work was to mew-mould the City, and make it theirs, for which purpose they brought some Regiments of Horse and Foot, to White Hall and the Muse, to the extreme discontent of the City, and provoke them further by keeping their Lord Mayor, and some of their Aldermen in the Tower, without admitting them to a Legal Tryal, though upon Petitions and earnest Desires: at last they were referred to be tryed by the Lords, contrary to the known Law of the Land; but their jurisdiction being disclaimed, after a while they were released without any Tryal at all, their end being accomplit, which was the terror of the City, and changing the Magistrates thereof, so as should best serve their designes.

About this time also they began to exercise their Marshal power over persons not of the army, and did sentence Mr William Thomson to death at White Hall. And then also they began to new moddel the Army, and for that end, (though the new raised Regiment for the Tower was thought no burthen, yet upon pretence of easing the charge of the Common wealth, the Life-Guard must be disbanded, because consisting of discerning men, faithfull to their Country and former promises, and many others of like principles were pickt out of every Regiment; the designe being by weeding the choisest and best resolved men, to make the Army wholly mercenary, slavish, and the Executioners of a few mens lusts and lawlesse Pleasures.

All which those good men perceiving and resolving thereupon not to be disbanded according to the Agreement at New-market, till the ends therein expressed were fully gained, they were enforced thereunto by Tyrannicall Sentences of Imprisonment and Death (though the Officers themselves had formerly refused to disband upon command of Parliament upon the same grounds and strength of the same engagement:) By all which 'tis evident, that according to the maxime of Polititians, they judge themselves loose, where other men are bound;

and that all obligation are to them Transitory and Ceremoniall, and that indeed every thing is good and just only, as it is conducing to their corrupt and ambitious interests.

And thus the most hopefull opportunity that ever England had for recovery of our Freedome, was spent and consumed, in such their uncertain, staggering motions, and arbitrary, irrational Proceedings, whereby all partyes became extreamly exasperated, as People that had been meerly mock'd and cheated by faire promises, and under the most religious Pretences, &c. Hereby the Army, that had but few monethes before been the joy and hope of all sorts of Rationall people, was made a by-word, a hissing, and Reproach to the whole Nation: insomuch that those (in hope of their large good Promises, and protests in their Declarations) who thought nothing too precious for them, now grudged them bread, & were ready to stone them in all places where they came; Trade fled, Poverty increased, and discontents abounded, till at length broke out such a flame, as no time had ever seen before; and no doubt was the proper issue of such horrid delusion, ministring such matter for a generall Rising and Revolt, as all former policies could never attain to, and more threatning the ruine of the Nation, then all the former forces and stratagems of the enemies: and which is rightly to be imputed to the unjust partiall and perfidious dealings of these men.

But when they saw what a strange predicament they had brought themselves into, and which they would never beleeve, till it was come upon them no more than now they will) they had befor manifested a greater obstinacy, then now they did a serious Repentance (which yet as the sequell proves, was but counterfeit) though (as God knoweth) we were overjoyed to beleeve it reall: Acknowledging, with the greatest expressions of sorrow, that they had walked by corrupt Pollitick Principle; That they had been to blame in Actings against honest men; That the name of Leveller, Jesuite or the like reproaches, should never be more heard amongst them, that if ever the Nation be happy, it must be by a conjunction in the Levellers Principles, calling upon all, to lay by all Discontents, to forget and forgive, and to unite all against the Common enemy and promising with greatest asseverations, That if God, upon our joynt endeavors, should be pleased to deliver us out of this Sea of danger, that they would never divide from just Principles, nor in the least discountenance honest men as they have done, nor endeavor to set up a party, but cast themselves upon an agreement of the People for the future settlement of the Peace of the Nation: but how and what performance they have made, that we shall intreat may be impartially observed in the ensuing story; And for a full and timely proofe of their Relapse, & Discovery of their dissituation; No sooner had they (through Gods blessing and the assistance of their reconciled friends) finished their worke at Colchester, but presently they call to question certaine Persons, that had appeared at St. Albanes in behalf of Captaine Reynalds, chusing rather to forsake the Service, then to be commanded by Captaines that had been violent against them that had drunke the Kings health upon their knees, and profest they could rather fight against the Levellers then Cavaliers, and these (according to their old wont) they sentenc'd to Death, and soon after releast them, as finding or supposing this kinde of Discipline most essentiall, to the breaking and debasing the spirits of the English.

And because Col. Rainsborough had ever opposed their unjust Proceedings, they withdaw him from the Army by a plausible but onely a Tittular command at Sea, whereby the the straitness of his Commission, he not having thereby the command of the Shippes or Officers, he could neighter restrain their Revolt , nor preserve himself from being expulsed at the Seamans pleasure out of that employment.

Then upon his return, the ruling Officers finding him as inflexible to their ends as formerly they put him upon that dangerous and unhappy Service before Pomfret (notwithstanding a commander had been appointed thereunto by the Committee of Yorke) whether he went with much Reluctancy and discontent, as wondering at the Cause of his being design'd thither, and expressing as much to his Friend, his sad soul presaging the misfortune, which after befell him, But that which gives greatest cause of grief and suspect to his friends is, that his Brother receives no furtherance, but rather, all discouragement that may be in searching after, and prosecuting the causers of that so bloody and inhuman a Butchery.

In the North, though during the Service and Necessaries of the Army, the Levellers, (as they are call'd) were countenanc'd, and taken into the Boosme, who thereupon (forgetting all former affronts and disrespects) did liberally hazzard their lives, without suspition of fraud and delusion; Yet the Necessities being over, and the enemies subdued, they renew fresh disgraces, and fall into a greater Odium, and contempt then ever.

First, divers Souldiers for Petitioning in the behalfe of Major Reinolds, that he might serve in the room of Major Huntington, were therefore rated and threatned to have their skulles broake, and some of them struck for so Petitioning; Major John Cobit, who with the extreamest hazard of his life, had regain'd Tinmouth Castle, where his Superiour Commander had through the dangers and Difficulties, by storme regained, and a Member of Parliament taken from his duty there & contrary to the self denying Ordinance, made Governor thereof. Major White, who in all the desperate services in the North, had performed the duty of Lieutenant Colonel and Major both in the Generall Regiment, yet because a constant man to his Promises and Principles, was refused the Lieftenant Colonelship and a man of a more complying Spirit fetch'd from another Regiment to officiate therein.

And this was the usage not onely to those Gentlemen, but to all others whether Officers, or souldiers in North or South (for their Counsells were one in both) that did retaine a sense and Resolution to prosecute those good things intimated in their former Ingagements.

And as before, upon their first great Successe against the City, when now again it justly was expected they should have made use of so notable and unexpected Blessings to the benefit & advantage of the Common-wealth, (as their late repentances, promises and Pretences gave men cause to hope) the event proved they intended another use thereof, for (having now subdued all their enemies), they proceed with greater confidence to their former purposes, of making themselves absolute masters over the Common-wealth, wherein there yet appears one main obstacle, and that was an unanimous and universal Resolution in all Well-minded People (especially in that numerous P E O P L E that concurred in the P E T I T I O N of the Eleventh of September to center in an Agreement of the People, which if not evaded, it would be impossible for them) to goe through with their Worke: hereupon againe they cry out for Union, and imploy their Agents to get meetings, and Treaties with those that were most forward for an agreement & contract with them to center in an Agreement, and that the Matter of the Petition of the Eleventh of September (as was desired) should be the substance of that Agreement: There being no other way then by the yeelding in shew: to amaze this busie watchfull party and to keep them quiet, whilst they went on with other pieces of their worke.

For what else, hath all the time spent thereabouts produc'd, but a meer amusing blinding and deluding all that cordially desired the same, it being (before they left it) so obscur'd and perplex't in the sence thereof, so short of what was in ended, and so corrupted in the mean time, whilst they had fixt good mens eyes and thought upon that Worke, they secretly and swiftly prosecute their other Designes as principal in their purposes, where in questionless they had not had the assistance of good men, but that it was verily beleev'd in shew of driving on their owne Designe, they wer really and cordially producing a perfect and complete Agreement of the People, as large both in grounds of Freedome, and redresse of grievances, as the Petition of the Eleventh of September, in the uttermost extent thereof did import.

Many of which Petitioners were not satisfyed but that such an Agreement of the People might then have been obtained without any of those extraordinary sudden and violent Courses lately taken, neither in bringing the Army to the City breaking the House in pieces, or removing the King by such and extra-judiciall Proceedings and Court of Justice, as had no place in the English Government, and did really foresee, there would be nothing but abuse in their pretence of an Agreement of the People: and that their own domination, in and by a counsell of State, was the maine thing aimed at, and intended.

The Removing the King, the taking away the House of Lords, the overawing the House, and reducing it to that

passee, that it is become but the Channell, through which is conveyed all the Decrees and Determinations of a private Counsell of some few Officers, Peers, the erecting of their Court of Justice and their Counsell of State, The Voting of the People the Supream Power, and this House the Supream Authority: all these Particulars, (though many of them in order to good ends, have been desired by Wel affected People) are yet become, (as they have managed them) of sole conducement to their ends, and Intents, either by removing such as stood in the way between them and the Power, wealth, or command of the Common-Wealth; or by actually possessing and investing them in the same.

And though all this was foreseen by us, yet so perswasive were their insinuations in the ears of many good & well disposed People, both Souldiers and others, that they have been really carried away with beliefe of them, and reliance upon them, and have thought they could not better imploy their time and abilities then in affording them all furtherance, and assistance that might be.

So that their only Feares remaine upon our Discoveries, to prevent which they use meanes, that either we might not have opportunity to lay open their Treacheries, and Hypocrisies, or not be beleev'd if we did it.

In order to the first, They strictly stop the Presse; In order to the second; They blast us with all the Scandalls and false Reports their Witt or Malice could invent against us; and so monstrously wicked have they been in this particular, that they have pry'd into all our Actions, made use of all our acquaintances, and friendly intimacies, and in conclusion, have onely produced such scandalls, as have been customarily used by former Statesmen, and such when scan'd and examined, containe both contrariety in themselves, and have not the least ground of Truth, as concerning us.

By these Arts are they now fastened in their Power, till either by opposition from the enemy which they may well expect God will raise against them as the deserved Recompence of their vile Apostacy; or by the weight and Violence of their many Injustices (which in the wicked course they are in) must every day be multiplied, till they be throwne downe from their usurped greatnesse.

They have already lost the Affections of all People, and are only supported by their present strength; but when once those good men that hold them up, shal perceive how instrumentall they are made, contrary to their intention, in advancing a few lofty and imperious mens designes; and how easy it is for them to convert their abilities & power to better and more common ends exprest in their former engagements, and with the complaints of the agrieved people, and their owne understandings can furnish them withall, they will then lament that they have so long been out of the way, and set themselves with the utmost courage & resolution to free their distressed country from the fears and captivity it now groans under. They may talk of freedom, but what freedom indeed is there, so long as they stop the Presse, which is indeed, and hath been so accounted in all free Nations, the most essentiall part thereof, imploying an Apostata Judas for executioner therein who had been twice burnt in the hand, a wretched fellow, that even the Bishops and Star-chamber would have sham'd to own. What freedom is there left, when honest & worthy Souldiers are sentenc'd and enforc'd to ride the horse with their faces reverst, and their swords broken over their heads for but Petitioning and presenting a Letter in justification of their liberty therein: it this be not a new say of breaking the spirits of the English, which Strafford and Canterbury never dreamt of ; we know no difference of thing. A taste also of Liberty of Conscience they have given us in the Case of a worthy Member of your House; so as we may well judge what is like to follow, if their Reigne continue. And as for Peace; whilst the Supreme Officers of the Army are Supream in your House, in the Council of State, and all in all in the generall Counsell of the Army when the martiall power is indeed supream to the Civill Authority, what Peace can be expected; we professe we see no counsels tending to it, but hereof mighty and vast sums of money to be taxed upon the People per mensem, as if warre were become the only trade or as if the people were bound to maintain Armyes whether they have trade or no; yea whether they have bread or no.

And as for the prosperity of the Nation; what one thing hath been done that tendeth to it? Nay, hath any thing been done since they were in power, but what increaseth the rancor, hatred, and malice, which our late unhappy differences have begotten amongst us, as if they had placed their happiness and security in the total division of the people nothing being offered by them, that hath any face of reconcilment in it, nothing of cheerfulness or generall satisfaction, the mother of trade & plenty, that might take away the private remembrances and distinctions of partyes nothing indeed, but what tendeth to implacable bitterness of spirit, the mother of confusion penry, and beggery.

Nay what sence of the heavy burdens of the people have they manifested of late, hath it not been by their procurement that the Judges their creatures have a thousand a yeer allow'd to every one of them above the ordinary fees? which were ever esteemed a heavy oppression in themselves: is there any abridgement of the charge, or oppression in themselves: is there any abridgement of the charge, or length of time in triall of causes? are they touch'd with the generall burthen of Tithes, that canker of industry and tillage? or with that of Exize, which out of the bowells of labourers and poor people enriches the Usurers, and other Catterpillars of the Common wealth: or what have they done to free Trade from the intolerable burden of Customs? except the setting fresh hungry flyes, upon the old sores of the People? What one matterial thing did they offer unto you in their late Petition, which you gave them so many thanks for? terming their desires modest and descreet; when it's evident by the contents, they did it only to stop the mouths of their Souldiers & to amuze them into a pleasing dream, whilst they go on with their designe of absolute domination & which should you in the least oppose, you would finde their modesty no more towards you, then towards you excluded members: In the mean time, where is their Charge against those Members? or why finde they not who amongst them have conferred offices upon each other, and upon their Creatures and relations? or who they were that gave so large Donations of thousands and hundred per annum whilst the Publick Faith is broaken, and Families are ready to starve for emptying themselves to serve the publick necessities; or why discountenance not they all those who have betrayed the trust of Feofees for Bishops, and Delinquents lands? and are become purchasers themselves of great Estates, for very few yeers purchases the due value rightly considered: or why they not blame the Lord chief Justice and Lord chief Barron for keeping their places which were conferred on them? (and the like on others) by this House, when those Members sate there, they have excluded? or why finde they not out those perfidious persons that have made no conscience of breaking the self-denying Ordinance, and persist therein? or is the reason visible why they have nothing to say against those sorts of men, manely, because these are their own and their Creatures cases? Oh wretched England, that seeth, and yet suffereth such intollerable masters; What can be exacted from such Officers, who frequently manifest a thirst after the blood of such People, and souldiers, as are most active for the common Freedom peace & prosperity of the Common-wealth, and against whom they have nothing else to object: or what can be expected from such a Counsel in the Army, as shal agree that the supreame authority should be moved to make a law, That the Counsel of Officers may have Power to have and put to death all such persons, though not of the Army, as they should judge, were disturbers of the Army.

Certainly these things cannot but manifest unto you their very hearts, their inward purposes and Intentions, representing visibly before you and all the World, the most dangerous condition that ever yet this Nation hath been in: And there be any conscience towards God or man to be found amongst you the whole sinews and progresse of this our sad Representation is so fully knowne, and fresh in memory, that it is impossible, but it must worke upon all amongst you that are not Co-partners with them in their Designe, or are not engaged (as the Lawyers are) in some corrupt Interest.

But though this long betrayed and miserable Nation should prove so unhappy, as that there should not be one found amongst you, to owne these known Trueths, which yet ring in every mans eares, throughout the Land; but through feare, or other vile respects, should shut your eyes against the light: it shall be so farre from inducing us, to repent of what we have herein (or in our late Apprehensions) expressed, and set before you,

that we shall rejoyce above measure, that we have witnessed to the Trueth ; and against all those Delusions and perfidious Stratagems, lay'd by those men to betray and enslave the Common-wealth, to their own Pride, Ambition, Lusts, Covetousnesse, and Domination, if not Dukeship, or Kingship; their Creatures discoursing of late, That the Power must be reduced to one: what their meaning is, time (if they be not hindred) will manifest: but the Premises duly weighed, doth evidence, what ere it be, it will be as bad, as bad possibly can be.

And as we shall not altogether doubt of the appearance of some, in this Honorable House, that will conscionable perfore that Supream Trust which is really and essentially resident in your integrity; what ever may be suggested to the contrary: (it being not others treachery, nor anyes violence, that can divest you of that Authority:) but if you all should fayl therein, as God forbid, yet we shall not doubt, but that what we have here presented, and published, will open the eyes, and raise the hearts of so conscionable a number of the Souldiery and People in all places, and make them so sensible of the bondage and danger threatned, as that these men, this Faction of Officers, shall never be able to goe through with their wicked intentions.

It being an infinite shame that they should be suffered to proceed so farre therein, as they have done, there having beene no party hitherto so inexcusable for it is possible, if not probable that the King and his party might at first be induced to offend through error of breeding, long custome, and sway of times, (although that excuse neither him nor them) That Hollis, and that party, might at first be drawne into their violence, against people faithfull to the Common wealth through an erronious Zeale against supposed Secteries, and for uniformity in Presbytery (though that also but little extenuates their offence) but neither the one nor the other can be imagined to have transgressed against so evident light. nor against so many and great obligations of love, and great respects from the people as this party hath done; So that the intentions, and endeavours of these men, to enslave the Common-wealth, or their continuing of burthen, without any remorse at the dearnesse of food, and utter losse of trade, exceeds in the nature and measure of it, all the wickednesse of both the other parties put together.

And therefore upon due consideration of the premises and in utter detestation of their most perfidious and treacherous dealing with the Army, Parliament and Common-wealth; we do in behalf of our selves and all wel-minded people, here before this Honourable House, as in the presence of Almighty God, protest against their breaking the faith of the Army with all parties, their dissolving the Council of the Agitators, and usurping a power of giving forth the fence of the Army to the Parliament and people, also against the shooting of the Souldiers to death at Ware, and their cruelties exercised on other persons, to the debasing of their spirits, and thereby new moulding of the Army to their owne designes, then playing fast and loose with the King and his party, till they brought a new and dangerous Warre upon the Nation.

We also protest against their dissembled repentances, as in no measure satisfactory for so abominable offences: we also protest against all their late extraordinary Proceedings, in bringing the Army upon the City, (to the ruine of trade) there breaking the House in pieces without charging the Members particularly: And then judging and taking away of mens lives in an extraordinary way, as done for no other end, but to make way for their owne absolute domination: we also protest against the Election and Establishment of those High-Courts of Justice, as unjust in themselves, and of dangerous Presidence in time to come: as likewise against the Councill of State, and putting some of themselves therein contrary to their owne Agreement: we also protest against all other the like meetings of those officers, that on Thursday the 2. of February last, voted for so bloody a Law, as to hang whom they should judge, disturbed the Army, (us having no power either by such Councils, either to give the sence of the Army, or to do any thing in reference to the Common-wealth, more then what any, so many fifty Souldiers or persons not of the Army have power and may lawfully do: though all the Generall officers were continually present.) these we protest against, as things unjust abominable and dangerous and declare that our present not seeking for Justice or reliefe therein, shall be no bar against us for the future, when we shall see cause to seek for Justice and reliefe therein.

And for the truth of our Judgements herein: we should with gladnesse submit unto the determinations of this Honourable House, were not their High hand as yet held over you. And therefore we are enforced to appeale to a new Representative equally chosen in such like manner, as is exprest in our serious apprehensions lately presented unto you, and do likewise desire taht you would encourage the Army in chusing a Representative, consisting of select Persons, chosen by every Regiment of the Army, as at the first at New-market: and shall humbly pray that you will not any more receive the result of a few officers, as the sence of the Army the officers of an Army having no more power to make Laws for an Armie then the officers of the Common wealth to make Laws for the People; both of them being constituted only for the Discipline, and Government thereof. We hope you will proceed t further an Agreement of the People; according to our late desires in our serious Apprehensions, and also speedily take in hand and effect those other things therein desired, tending very much to the abrogation of the bondage intended.

Thus have we once more unburdened our hearts before you, and faithfully discharged our duties to our Country, giving timely warning of the most dangerous thraldom and misery that ever threatned this much wasted Nation, and much we doubt not, wil, by wisdom mixt with som honest resolutions, be timely prevented: which we shall exceedingly rejoyce to see, that so after so many yeers of sorrow, the people may at length be comforted, and the Land enjoy her rest; and that all the world may be enforced to confess That There is a reward for the righteous, and that there is a God that judgeth the earth..

FINIS.

An overheard discussion amongst the Council of State after the arrests

The Leveller party spokespeople: Lilburne, Walwyn, Overton and Thomas Prince, were arrested in the early hours of Wednesday 28 March 1649. The prisoners had been called in one-by-one a second time by the Council of State, self-appointed junta of the roundheads. The Copuncil werew having second thoughts about these arrests. Walwyn and Prince were not controversial political figures like the other two. The Council feared that their arrests particularly might lose them support in the City of London.

Each of them refused on principle to incriminate himself or his comrades. As the 4 who carried the hopes of the Leveller cause sat in an Ante-room the Council debated their case. Lilburne laid his ear to the door and heard:

Lt. General Cromwell (I am sure of it) very loud, thumping his fist upon the Council table, til it rang again, and heard him speak in these very words or to this effect; I tell you, Sir, you have no other way to deal with these men, but to break them in pieces; and thumping upon the Council table again, he said, Sir, let me tell you that which is true, if you do not break them, they will break you; yea and bring all the guilt of the blood and treasure

shed and spent in this kingdom upon your head and shoulders; and frustrate and make void all that work, that with so many years' industry, toil and pains you have done, and so render you to all rational men in the world as the most contemptiblest generation of silly, low-spirited men in the earth, to be broken and routed by such a despicable, contemptible generation of men as they are; and therefore, Sir, I tell you again, you are necessitated to break them.

Quoted in undoubtedly the best book on the period:

Brailsford, H.N., The Levellers and the English Revolution, Spokesman, Nottingham, 1976 and still available. ISBN 0 85124 154 9.

[index](#)

[post a message to the weblave](#)

The Levellers

1647: A pact between Cromwell and The Levellers

This pamphlet is in print and available from your bookshop ISBN 0 9528073 3

This 'Engagement' came about after a disagreement between Parliament and Cromwell's army during the English Civil War. It had fallen into utter obscurity and its historical importance has not, to my knowledge, been recognised.

What it represents is an ultimatum to parliament to stop negotiations with the king. The threat was that if the negotiations did not stop immediately the army would progress day by day towards the House of Commons until negotiations ceased. The ultimate sanction was a military attack on the Commons itself which the army grandees would, for reasons of political credibility, have wanted to avoid at all costs. This was an audacious thing for the unelected army to do and could be taken as military dictatorship by Cromwell's faction. Because of this worry the ultimatum (couched in the most polite language possible) was justified by the assertion that the army had made its decision based not on the arbitrary will of a few, but at an army council meeting where two elected soldiers, or agitators, from each regiment, were able to vote.

Two years later the officers' promise, contained in this document, to allow two agitators from each regiment at army council meetings, had been discarded by Cromwell.

But not by The Levellers, who held the grandees' to their pledge not to disband nor divide the army unless it was agreed to by the agitators.

Their [mutiny in Salisbury](#) ended in tragedy but this was the document that they used to justify their refusal to make the choice of either disbanding without pay or going to fight in Ireland. It was read aloud to Parliamentary troops, many of whom then joined the ill-fated mutiny.

A SOLEMNE ENGAGEMENT

of the Army under the Command
of his Excellency Sir THOMAS FAIRFAX;
with a Declaration of their Resolutions,
as to disbanding; and a briefe Vindication
of their principles and intentions in relation
*to divers scandalous things suggested
against them.*

Together with the representations of the
dis-satis-
factions of the Army, in relation to the late
Resoluti-
ons for so sodain disbanding: shewing the
particu-
lars of their former grievances; wherein they did remaine
unsatisfied: and the reasons thereof, unanimously
agreed upon, and subscribed by the Officers and
Souldiers of the severall Regiments, at
*the Randezvous neare New-Market on
fryday and saturday June 4. and 5.*

Presented to the Generall, and by him to be humbly
presented to the P A R L I A M E N T.

With his Excellencies Letter to the Speaker
June the 8. sent with the same.

*London ; Printed for George Whittington, at the Blew
Anchor in Cornhill neare the Royall Exchange.
1 6 4 7 .*

Mr. SPEAKER:

In my Last I promised to send you by the next an Account of the Proceedings and Resolutions of the Army at the late Rendezvous: I have sent you the same in two Papers unanimously agreed upon there, by both Officers and Souldiers: I finde in one of them divers things which your later proceedings since the Resolution of disbanding may have given satisfaction unto: But the Army having then no knowledge thereof, it was thus passed and delivered to mee, and I cannot but send it to them: you may see what they then did remaine unsatisfied in.

Understanding, that his Majesty and your Commissioners were much straitened and disaccommodated in the House at Childerley, I went thither yesterday to advise with your Commissioners about the disposal of his Majesty, for more conveniency to himselfe and them, then that place did afford: The Commissioners were pleased wholly to refuse giving of any advice or opinion at all in the businesse, and therefore the King declaring his Resolution not to goe back to Holdenby, unlesse he were forced, yet complaining much of the inconveniency he suffered where he was, and pressing for a remove to New-Market, and your Commissioners not judging it inconvenient for him to be there: I ordered Col. Whalley this day to attend his Majesty, and the Commissioners thither, with a trusty and sufficient Guard of two Regiments of Horse, which accordingly was this day done, and his Majesty, with the Commissioners, gone to New-Market, but not through Cambridge. This businesse taking up the sole time yesterday, and it being necessary his Majesty should be disposed of: Before the place of Rendezvous could well be resolved on, this morning at a Councill of Warre, it was judged inconvenient, and scarce possible to draw to a Rendezvous to morrow early enough to dispatch anything; Therefore it is appointed on Thirsday morning at nine of the Clock: and in regard of his Majesties going to New-Market, it was thought fit by the Councill of Warre, that the place of Rendezvous might be altered from New-Market-Heath to Triploe- Heath, five miles from this Towne: I shall take care that your Commissioners if they come to New--Market, may have notice of this alteration from the former appointment.

I remaine

Your most humble servant,

Cambridge June 8.

1647.

T. F A I R F A X.

For the Honorable *William Lenthall*,
Esquire, Speaker of the Honourable
House of *Commons*.

A SOLEMNE
ENGAGEMENT
OF THE
ARMY,

UNDER

The Command of his Excellency
Sr. THOMAS FAIRFAX,

Read, assented unto, and subscribed by all
Officers, and Souldiers of the several Regi-
ments, at the generall Rendezvous, neare
Newmarket, on the fift of June,
1647.

Whereas upon the Petition intended and agreed upon in the Army, in March last, to have been presented to the Generall, for the obtaining of our due and necessary concernments as Souldiers; the Honourable House of Commons being unseasonably prepossessed with a Copie thereof, and (as by the sequell we suppose) with some strange misrepresentations of the carriage and intentions of the same, was induced to send down an Order for suppressing the Petition, and Within two or three dayes after, upon further misinformation, and scandalous suggestions, of the like or worse nature, and by the indirect practice of some malitious and mischievous persons (as we suppose) surprizing or otherwise abusing the Parliament. A Declaration was published in the name of both Houses, highly censuring the said petition, and declaring the Petitioners, if they should proceed thereupon, no lesse then enemies to the State, and disturbers of the publick peace. And whereas at the same time and since, divers eminent Officers of the

Army have been brought into question and trouble about the said Petition, whereby both they and the rest of the Officers were disabled, or discouraged for the time, from further acting or appearing therein on the souldiers behalfe; And whereas by the aforesaid proceedings and the effects thereof, the souldiers of this Army (finding themselves so stop't in their due, and regular way of making knowne their just grievances, and desires to, and by their Officers) were enforced to an unusuall (but in that case necessary) way of correspondence and agreement amongst themselves, to chose out of the severall Troops and Companies severall men, and those out of their whole number, to chose two or more for each Regiment, to act in the name and behalfe of the whole souldiery of the respective Regiments, Troops and Companies, in the prosecution of their rights and desires in the said Petition, as also of their just vindication and writing in reference to the aforesaid proceedings upon and against the same, who have accordingly acted and done many things to those ends, all which the souldiers did then approve as their owne Acts. And whereas afterwards, upon the sending downe of Field-Marshal Skippon, and those other Officers of the Army that were Members of the House of Commons, to quiet distempers in the Army, fresh hopes being conceived of having our desires againe admitted to be made knowne, and considered in a regular way, and without such misrepresentations as formerly, the Officers and souldiers of the Army (except some few dissenting Officers) did againe joyne in a representation of their common grievances, and the Officers (except as before) did agree upon a Narrative accompt of the grounds, rise, and growth of the discontents in the Army, and their proceedings in relation thereunto, with an overture of the best expedients, to remove or satisfie the same, both which were presented to the same Members of the House, and by them reported to the House, and whereas the Parliament having thereupon voted, and ordered some particulars, onely toward satisfaction of our grievances, hath since proceeded to certaine resolutions of sodaine, disbanding the Army by peeces, which resolutions being taken, and to be executed before full or equall satisfaction given to the whole Army, in any of the grievances, before effectuall performance of that satisfaction in part, which the preceeding Votes seem'd to promise, as to some of the grievances, and before any consideration at all of some others most materiall, (as by the result of a generall Councell of Warre on Saterdag, May 29.) was in generall declared, and is now more fully demonstrated, in particular by a representation there upon, agreed unto by us: we all cannot but looke upon the same resolutions of disbanding us in such manner, as proceeding from the same malicious, and mischievous Principles and intentions, and from the like indirect practices of the same persons abusing the Parliament, and is as the former proceedings against us before mentioned did, and not without carnall and bloudie purposes (for some of them have not stuck to declare or intimate) after the body of the Army should bee disbanded, or the souldiers divided from their Officers: then to question proceed against, and execute their malicious intentions upon all such particular Officers, and souldiers in the Army, as had appeared to act in the Premisses in the behalfe of the Army; and whereas upon a late Petition to the Generall from the Agitants, in behalfe of the souldiers (grounded upon the preceeding considerations) relating to the same resolutions of disbanding the same generall Councell of Warre to prevent the danger, and inconveniences of those disturbings, or tumultuous actings, or confluences which the dissatisfaction and Jealousie thereupon also grounded, were like sodainely to have produced in the Army to advise the Generall, first to contract the Quarters of the Army, and then to draw the same to an orderly Rendezvous for satisfaction of all, and that his Excellencie would immediately send up to move and desire the Parliament to suspend any present proceeding upon the said Resolution of disbanding, to resume the Consideration of the grievances, and desires sent up from the Army, and not to disband it in pieeces before just and equall satisfaction given to the whole; And where as some of the Regiments appointed for disbanding, upon notice thereof withdrawing themselves from the Quarters adjacent to the appointed Rendezvous, & drawing towards the Head Quarters; and the contracting the Quarters according to the said advice of the Councell of Warre.

Wee the Officers and Souldiers of severall Regiments hereafter named, are now met at a generall Randezvous, and the Regiments appointed us aforesaid to be disbanded, have not appeared, nor can appeare; but are resolved not to appeare at the severall and respective Randezvous, appointed as aforesaid for their disbanding; and divers other thing have bin done by severall other partyes, or Members of the Army, necessarily relating to the good & concernment of the whole in these affaires: Now for as much as wee know not how far the malice, Injustice, and Tiranicall Principells of our enemies, that have already prevailed so far to abuse the Parliament and the Army (as is afore mentioned) in the past proceedings against the Army may further prevaile to the danger and prejudice of our selves, or any officers, or Souldiers of the Army, or other persons that have appeared to act anything in behalfe of the Army, or how far the same may further prevaile to the danger or prejudice of the Kingdome in raising a new warre, or otherwise: Therefore for the better prevention of all such dangers, prejudices, or other inconveniences that may ensue; and withall for better satisfaction to the Parliament and Kingdome, concerning our desires of conferring to the authority of the one, and providing the good and quiet of the other, in the present affaires of disbanding, and for a more assured way whereby, that affaires may come to a certaine issue, (to which purpose we herein humbly implore the present and continued assistance of God, the Righteous Judge of all) wee the Officers and Souldiers of the Army subscribing here unto; doe hereby declare, agree, and promise, to and with each other, and to, and with the Parliament and Kingdome as followeth.

1. That wee shall chearfully and readily disband when thereunto required by the Parliament or else shall many of us be willing (if desired) to ingage in further Services either in England or Ireland, having first such satisfaction to the Army in relation to our Grievances and desires heretofore presented, and such security; That we of our selves (when disbanded, and in the condition of private men) or other the free-borne people of England (to whom the consequence of our Case doth equally extend) shall not remaine subject to the like oppression, injury or abuse, as in the premisses hath been attempted and put upon us while an Army by the same men's continuance, in the same credit and power (especially if as our Judges) who have in these past proceedings against the Army so farre prevailed to abuse the Parliament and us, and to endanger the Kingdome; and also such security that we our selves, or any member of this Army or others, who have appeared to act any thing in behalfe of the Army in relation to the premisses before recited, shall not after disbanding be any way questioned, prosecuted, troubled, or prejudiced for any thing so acted, or for the entring into, or necessary prosecution of this necessary agreement: (we say) having first such satisfaction and security in these things as shall be agreed unto by a Councill to consist of those generall Officers of the Army (who have concurred with the Army in the premisses) with two Commission Officers, and two Souldiers to be chosen for each Regiment, who have concurred, and shall concur with us in the premisses and in this agreement. And by the major part of such of them who shall meet in Councill for that purpose when they shall be thereunto called by the Generall.

2. That without such satisfaction and security, as aforesaid, we shall not willingly disband, nor divide, nor suffer our selves to be disbanded or divided.

And whereas we finde many strange things suggested or suspected to our great prejudice concerning dangerous principles, interests and designes in this Army (as to the overthrow of Magistracy, the suppression or hindering of Presbytery, the establishment of Independent government, or upholding of a generall licentiousnesse in Religion under pretence of Liberty of Conscience, and many such things) we shall very shortly tender to the Parliament a Vindication of the Army from all such scandals to cleare our Principles in relation thereunto, and in the meane time we doe disavow and disclaime all purposes or designes in our late or present proceedings to advance or insist upon any such interest, neither would we

(if we might and could) advance or set up any other particular party or interest in the Kingdome (tho imagined never so much our own) but shall much rather (as far as may be within our spheare or power) study to promote such an establishment of common and equall right and freedome to the whole, as all might equally partake of but those that doe by denying the same to others, or otherwise render themselves incapable thereof.

ISBN 0 9528070 3 3

From an original pamphlet in the Bodleian Library, Oxford.

This pamphlet available in paperback:

Publisher: Tony Gosling, c/o 10 Highwood Close, ORPINGTON, Kent. BR6 8HT.

[Main index](#)

[The Agreement of the People](#)

[The Burford Levellers Vindicated](#)

[Cornet Thompson's pamphlet](#)

[The Diggers](#)

[post a message to the webslave](#)

[Land and Freedom Index](#) | [Main Site Index](#)

[Levellers](#) | [Triploe](#) | [England's](#) | [Burford](#) | [White](#) | [New Chains](#) | [New Chains 2](#) | [Petition](#)

The Levellers

1649: A Leveller message 'to the whole world'

Cornet William Thompson's Leveller pamphlet, 6 May 1649

This pamphlet was written and published as hundreds of Leveller soldiers marched through the countryside of Wiltshire, Berkshire and Oxfordshire in southern England. They had sacked their officers in Salisbury and elected new ones, then setting off seeking other soldiers to join them in upholding the Agreement of the People. They were persued by Oliver Cromwell to Burford in Oxfordshire where they were tricked and imprisoned.

Robert.R.Styles@si.shell.com says:

The document was signed by a never-commissioned Leveller 'Captain', William Thompson, not his younger brother, Cornet James Thompson executed in the Burford Churchyard, May 1649. William broke out of Burford, rode to Northampton and died a hero's death, fighting till the end against all odds.

FOR
A New Parliament
BY THE
A G R E E M E N T
OF THE

PEOPLE

ENGLAND'S STANDARD

Advanced

A Declaration from M. Will. Thompson and the oppressed People of this nation, now under his conduct in Oxfordshire, Dated at their Rendezvouz, May 6. 1649.

Whereas it is notorious to the whole world, that neither the Faith of the Parliament, nor yet the Faith of the Army (formerly made to the People of this nation, in behalf of their Common Right, Freedom and safety) hath bin all observed, or made good, but both absolutely declined and broken, and the People only served with bare words and faire promising Papers, and left utterly destitute of all help or delivery : And that this hath principally bin by the prevalency and treachery of some prominent persons (now domineering over the People) is most evident. The Solemn Engagement of the Army at New-Market and Triploe Heaths by them destroyed, the Council of Agitators dissolved, the blood of War shed in time of Peace, Petitioners for Common Freedom suppressed by force of armes, and Petitioners abused and terrified, the lawful Tryal by twelve sworn men of the Neighbour-hood subverted and denyed, bloody and tyrannical Courts (called an high Court of justice, and the Council of State) erected, the power of the sword advanced and set in the Seat of the Magistrates, the Civil Lawes stopt and subverted, and the Military introduced, even to the hostile seizure, imprisonment, tryal, sentence and execution of death, upon divers of the Free People of this Nation, leaving no visible Authority devolving all into a factious Juncto and Council of State, usurping and assuming the name, stampe and Authority of Parliament, to oppresse, torment and vex the People, whereby all the lives, liberties, and estates, are all subdued to the Wills of those men, no Law, no justice, no right or Freedom, no ease of grievances, no removal of unjust barbarous taxes. no regard to the cryes and groanes of the poore to be had while utter beggary and famin (like a mighty torrent) hath broke in upon us, and already seized upon several parts of the Nation.

Wherefore through an inavoydable necessity, no other means left under heaven, we are inforced to betake our selves to the Law of nature, to defend and preserve our selves and Native Rights, and therefore are resolved as one man (even to the hazard and expence of our lives and fortunes) to to endeavour the redemption of the Magistracy of England, from under the force of the Sword, to vindicate the Petition of Right, to set the unjustly imprisoned free, to relieve the poore, and settle this Common-wealth upon the grounds of Common Right, Freedom, and Safety.

Be it therefore known to all the free People of England, and to the whole world, that, (chusing rather to die for Freedom than to live as slaves) we are gathered and associated together upon the bare account of Englishmen, with our Swords in our hands, to redeem our selve and the Land of our Nativity, from slavery and oppression, to avenge the blood of War shed in the time of Peace, to have justice for the blood of M. *Arnold* shot to death at *Ware*, and for the blood of M. *Robert Lockyer*, and divers other who of late martial Law were murdered at London.

And upon this our Engagement in behalf of the Commonwealth, we do solemnly agree and protest, that we will faithfully (laying all self respects aside) endeavor the actual relief and settlement of this distressed Nation.

And that all the world may know particularly what we intend, and wherein we will particularly center and acquiesce for ever, not to recede or exceed the least punctillio, we declare from the integrity of our hearts that by the help and might of God we will endeavor the absolute settlement of this distracted Nation, upon that forme and Method by way of an Agreement of the People, tendered as a Peace-offering by Leiut. Col. *John Lilburn*, M. *Will. Walwyn*, M. *Thomas Prince*, and M. *Richard Overton*, bearing date May 1. 1649. the which we have annexed to this our Declaration as the Standard of our Engagement, thereby owning every part and particular of the Premisses of the said Agreement, Promising and Resolving, to the utmost hazard of our Lives and Abilities, to persue the speedy and full Accomplishment thereof, and to our power, to protect and defend all such as shall Assent or Adhere thereunto : And particularly, for the Preservation and Deliverance of Lieutenant Colonel *John Lilburn*, M. *William Walwyn*, M. *Thomas Prince*, M. *Richard Overton*, Captain *Bray*, and M. *William Sawyer*, from their barbarous and illegal Imprisonments : And we Declare, That if a hair of their heads perish in the hands of those Tyrants who restrain them, That if God shall enable us, we will avenge it seventy times seven fold upon the heads of the Tyrants themselves and their Creatures.

And that till such time as by Gods Assistance we have procured to this Nation the Declared purpose of this our Engagement, we will not Divide nor Disband, nor suffer our selves to be Divided nor Disbanded, resolving with soberness and civility to behave our selves to the Country, to wrong nor abuse any man, to protect all to our power from violence and oppression in all places where we come; resolving to stop the Paiment of all Taxes or Sesments whatsoever, as of Excise, Tythes, and the Tax of ninety thousand pounds per Mensem. &c.

And having once obtained a New Representative, according to the said Agreement, upon such Terms and Limitations therein expressed; We shall then freely lay down our Arms, and return to our several Habitations and Callings.

And concerning the Equity, Necessity and Justice of our undertaking, We appeal to the judgement of the oppressed, betwixt their Destroyers and Us; Whether by the Law of God, of Nature, and Nations, it be not equally justifiable in us to Engage for the Safety and Deliverance of this Nation, as it was with the Netherlanders, and other People for theirs, and that upon the same Principles that the Army engaged at New-Market and Triploe Heaths ; Both Parliament and Army declaring, That it is no resistance of Magistracy, to side with just Principles, and Law of Nature and Nations : And that the Souldiery may lawfully hold the hands of that General, who will turn his Cannon against his Army, on purpose to destroy them : The Sea-men the hands of that Pilot, who wilfully runs his Ship upon a Rock. And therefore (the condition of the Common-wealth considered) we cannot see how it can be otherwise esteemed in us. And upon that account we declare, that we do own, and are resolved to Own all such Persons, either of the Army or Countries, that have already, or shall hereafter, rise up and stand for the Liberties of England, according to the said Agreement of the People : And in particular; We do own and avow the late proceedings in Colonel *Scroops*, Colonel *Harrisons*, and Major General *Skippons* Regiments, declared in their Resolutions published in print; as one man. Resolving to live and dy with them, in their and our just and mutual defence.

And we do implore and invite all such as have any sense of the Bonds and Miseries upon the people; any

Bowels of Compassion in them, any Piety, Justice, Honour, or Courage in their Brests, any Affections to the Freedoms of England, any love to his Neighbor or Native Country, to rise up, and come in to help a Distressed Miserable Nation, To break the Bands of Cruelty, Tyrannie, and Oppression, and set the People Free.

In which service, Trusting to the undoubted goodness of a just and righteous Cause, We shall faithfully discharge the utmost of our Endeavors ; Not sparing the venture of all hardships and hazards whatsoever, and leave the Successe to God.

*Signed by me William Thompson, at our Randez-
vouz in Oxfordshire, neer Banbury, in behalf of
my Self, and the Rest Engaged with me,
May 6. 1649.*

For a New Parliament, By the Agreement of the People.

Definitive reference

Brailsford, H. N., The Levellers and the English Revolution, Spokesman, Nottingham, ISBN 0 85124 154 9.

[The Diggers' Page](#)

[The Leveller soldiers' testimony from Burford](#)

[The Solemn Engagement made two years before](#)

[The Agreement of the People](#)

[Back to the index](#)

[post a message to the webslave](#)

The Levellers

1649: The testimony of the Burford Levellers

This pamphlet is in print and available from your bookshop ISBN 0 9528070 9

A pivotal point in the English Civil War. The king was dead, and the future....???????

Were the soldiers who'd given up livelihood and home, lost friends and loved ones in the 7 year war going to let the gentry grab England for themselves? These champions of democracy sprang up with a positive vision for life after the civil war, they were The Levellers

Hidden English History: It was May 1649, the end of the English Civil War. A mass of troops were being disbanded in Salisbury without pay and with little prospect of getting what they had been fighting for. Eight hundred troops sacked their officers, elected new ones and marched north, over several days, to Burford, with Cromwell on their heels. Despite his promise of peaceful negotiations the following day, Cromwell charged into the town at midnight with 2,000 horsemen.

340 of the Levellers were rounded up and imprisoned in Burford church, where carvings from the incarcerated soldiers can still be seen to this day.

Next morning three of the leading Leveller soldiers were summarily executed against the church wall, where you can still see the bullet holes.

The following night Cromwell was treated to a slap-up banquet and awarded an honorary degree at Magdalen [scumbag] College Oxford. The last thing Cromwell wanted was democracy.

If the Levellers had held Cromwell to the pledge of a democratic army which he gave in the Solemn Engagement of New Market and Triplo Heath in 1647.... a very different world would have been inherited by the present generation.

T H E
L E V E L L E R S
(Falsly so called)
V I N D I C A T E D,
O R T H E
C A S E

Of the twelve Troops (which by Treachery in a Treaty) was lately surprised, and defeated at *Burford*, truly stated, and offered to the Judgement of all unbyassed, and wel-minded People, especially of the Army, their fellow Souldiers, under the Conduct of the Lord *Fairfax*.

By a faithful remnant, late of Col. *Scroops*,
Com-
missary General *Iretons*, and Col. *Harrisons*
Regiments,
that hath not yet bowed their knee unto *Baal*,
whose names
(in the behalf of themselves, and by the
appointment of the
rest of their friends) are hereunto subscribed.

Printed in the yeer 1649

The Case &c.

It is wel known, and yet fresh in the publike memory; with what monstrous and hateful defamations, as Anti-Scripturists, Libertines, Atheists, Mutiniers, Levellers, &c. we have most falsly and maliciously been deciphered out to the people and Army, on purpose to bury us under the rage and odium of our fellow-souldiers; and utterly to blast, and prejudice the common acceptance, against our late lawful, and concientious Undertaking: And seeing the equity of all transactions most commonly measured by the event, and success that befalls them; few considering how God many times suffereth unjust men to prosper, and spread themselves in the world, like the Green Bay Tree; and the just (for their correction and proof) to be subdued and trod underfoot in a season. We are thereby at so great a seeming disadvantage amongst men, That in every thing we are fore spoken, our truths (how palpable and evident forever) are rendered as incredible, and regardless, strength and power being on their side to countenance their actions, our enemies over awing all judgements, and forcing by the might of their lawless Sword, a credit or subjection to their own most perfidious and deceitful ways; so that, as for the fruit or success that we expect, we could still have sat in patience, and not have uttered a word, but the dishonest and treacherous dealings recieved, with the woful ruin of the Nation, therewith sustained in ours (evidently appearing) do so boyl our hearts, and so prevalently press upon our consciences, that we are not able longer to rest in silence; but let the hazard to us be what it will, we shall so far presume upon the publike view, as faithfully and impartially, to set down the true state and maner of our whole proceedings in that our late undertaking, hitherto most falsly and deceitfully represented by the ruling Faction of the Army, and so leave the same to the judgement and timely consideration of all honest and concientious people, especially of the Army, our fellow soldiers, under the conduct of the Lord Fairfax, and amongst them in a

special maner, all those that really in judgement and concience took up Arms for the Rights and liberties of their Native Country, as the whole Army in their Declaration of the 14 of June, 1647 declare they all did. Thus then understanding, that we the soldiers of Col. Scroops Regiment, and others, were allotted for the service of Ireland, without our consent, or of any of our fellow soldiers in Counsel for us, we fell into serious debate (as in reason and honesty we could do no less, considering likewise our late [solemn Engagement](#)) whether we could lawfully, In safety of our selves, and our own Native Rights in England submit unto that foreign service or no? And finding by that our old [Solemn Engagement](#) at New Market and Triplo Heaths, June 5, 1647. with the manifold Declarations, Promises, and Protestations of the Army, in persuance thereof, were all utterly declined, and most perfidiously broken, and the whole fabrick of the Common-wealth fallen into the grossest and vilest Tyranny that ever English men groaned under; all their Laws, Rights, Lives, Liberties, and Properties, wholly subdued (under the vizard and form of that Engagement) to the Boundless wills of some decietful persons, having developed the whole Magistracy of England into their Martial Domination, ruling the people with a Rod of Iron, as most mens woeful experience can clearly witness; which, with the consideration of the particular, most insufferable abuses and dis-satisfactions put upon us, moved us to an unanimous refusal to go, till our Conciencie were discharged in the faithful fulfillment of our said [Solemn Engagement](#) to our Native Countrey; in which Engagement, we were expresly and particularly obliged against the Service of Ireland, till full satisfaction and security were given to us as Soldiers and Commoners, by a Counsel of our own free Election, according to the rule and tenor of that Engagement, Recorded in the Armies Book of Declarations pag 23, 24, 25, 26, 27. Whereupon we drew up a Paper of some Reasons, by way of Declaration, concerning our said refusal, to deliver to our Colonel; unto which, we all chearfully subscribed, with many of our Officers (especially Cornet Den who then seemingly was extream forward in assisting us to effect our desires) which being delivered a day or two after, immediately our Officers caused a Rendezvous near unto Salisbury, where they declared, That the General intended not to force us, but that we might either go or stay; and so testifying our intents to stay, we were all drawn into the town again, and the Colonel, with the rest of the Officers, full of discontent, threatened us the soldiers; and because we were all, or most of one minde, he termed our Unity a Combination, or Mutiny; yet himself upon our request to know, told us, That he could not assure us, that he would go. Which forementioned Paper, with a Letter, we sent to Commissary General Iretons Regiment, who took it so well, That they were immediately upon their march towards our quarters, to joyn with us, for the making good of their and our Engagement, which we, they, and the rest of the Army had engaged at New-Market and Triplo Heaths.

After all this, all politike means that could be thought upon, were put in practice to work us off from our resolutions, as severing the Troops, and dealing with them apart, not suffering the Soldiers of one Troop to come to any of the other, employing Agents and Preaching Officers from Troop to Troop, to work us to that Service; and craftily, and lyingly, telling each Troop, That the other Troops were listed for the Irish Service, surrepticiously to over-reach, and gain us by that deceit. A crime they most maliciously fix upon others, whom they would make the world believe drew us to that undertaking, as in their Declaration of their proceedings against us, published last May 22. is to be seen, where page 6. speaking scandalously of some persons, naming none, yet strongly implying our four worthy Friends in the Tower [John Lilburne, Richard Overton, William Walwyn and Thomas Prince], they say of them, "That they sent their Emissaries and Agents into all parts, pretending from one Regiment to another; that each Regiment had declared, That so by that Artifice, they might draw each to declare. To the Forces in Wales, and the West, they gave assurances, that the forces about London would revolt; to those about

London, that those in Wales, and the West, would do the same." Thus to shroud their own vildness, and to effect their own evil ends, they are not sparing to blast innocent persons with their own wicked devices themselves are so apparently and foully guilty of; and yet wipe their mouths, as if no speck or stain were upon them, and raise the report upon others.

All those devices working nothing upon us (there being no satisfaction given to our just exceptions) our Colonel fell to violent threats, and commanded us to put our Horses in a Field two miles from our Quarters; which though at first we did, yet finding the bitterness of his spirit to increase, and that upon his information, That the General, and Lieutenant General [Fairfax and Cromwell] were preparing a force against us: what could we do less, than to put ourselves into the best posture we could to preserve ourselves, which we immediately did (and in this no man was more forward, and violently earnest, than that perfidious Apostate, Cornet Den.) And for our justification therein, we need go no further than their own words, in the Armies Declaration of the 14 of June, 1647. where to justifie their own opposition and rebellion to the Orders of a full, free, unforced, unravished, and untwice purged Parliament, they tell us, That the Parliament hath declared it no resisting of Magistracy, to side with the just principles, and Law of Nature and Nations, being that Law upon which the Army Assisted; and that the Souldiers may lawfully hold the hands of the General that will turn his Cannon against his Army, on purpose to destroy them.

This being done, we had further Intelligence of the greatness and speediness of the Generals preparations against us and that, Though what we had done, did not amount to so much, as the Army had formerly done at Saffron Walden, upon the Parliaments commanding them for Ireland, yet were we strangely represented to our fellow Souldiers, by the Lieutenant General [Cromwell] in Hide Park, under the notion of Mutiniers, Levellers, and denyers of the Scriptures, of purpose to make them engage against us*; so that now we saw, there was no way of safety left us, but by standing upon our Guard, and capitulating with our Swords in our hands, being encouraged thereto, as well by our own innocency, and the equity of those things, upon which we had grounded our Resolutions: As also for that we could not think our fellow Souldiers of the Army, who with us engaged at New-Market Heath, would fight against us, for upholding the said [Solemn Engagement](#), wherein they were equally concerned and obliged with us, both as Souldiers and Commoners to each other, to us, and the whole Nation, with whom it was made. But indeed, this Treacherous Tragedy was principally managed and acted by (that Turn Coat) Reynolds, and his Regiment; who for most of them were strangers to that Engagement. A company of Blood-thirsty Rogues, Murderers, Thieves, High-way-men, and some that were taken in Colchester, and such as were cashiered out of other Regiments for high misdemeanors, being entertained therein. And these were the men principally designed, and to be trusted against us, as most fittest to fight for the truth of the Scriptures, and such Saints as the Lieutenant General(*)

*Though none act more directly against the tenor thereof than themselves, as is too manifest by their frequent breaking of all Faith and Promises, making nothing of Treachery, dissembling, yea, and lying too (which is not once to be mentioned amongst Saints, as they would have men think of them.) O abominable Hypocrites! Know ye not, that dissembling Piety is double iniquity; but we fear, while ye pretend to Scripture, ye believe neither it, nor the Resurrection: For if ye did, ye would not condemn the Innocent; against Knowledg and Conscience, of those things your selves are Guilty. Repent betimes, or else your portion will be with Hypocrites.

(*)These are of the men that usually asperce the Peoples best Friends with such Language, as Atheists,

Levellers, Anti-Scripturists, and who lives more like such than they? for it is they who ruine all, and destroy Propriety, by their Arbitrary and Lawless Power; and who more like Jesuites than themselves for crafty Policy, Lying, and Treachery? and certainly these be the effects, or fruits of Atheism: For by their works you shall know them.

But to return. Hereupon our Officers leaving us, we choose new ones, and disposed of our Colours, and immediately drew up a Declaration, wherein we signified the Resolutions of the General (upon our refusal to go to Ireland) in a slight and unworthy manner to disband us, after our so many years hard and faithful Services; which we then knew to have been practised upon many of our fellow souldiers in Colonel Huesons and Cooks Regiments; and thereupon, we resolved to stand to our former Engagements made at New-Market; which the proceedings of the General and our Officers, did expressly contradict and make voyd. This Declaration was publikely read at our Rendezvous in old Sarum [Iron-Age Hill-Fort NE of Salisbury], where four Troops of Commissarie General Iretons met us, and unanimously assented to by both Regiments; whereupon our conjunction we advanced to Marlborough, and so to Wantage, where Commissioners from the General met us, to wit Major White, Captain Scotten, Captain Pevreral, and Captain Lieutenant Batley, with whom that day we did nothing, but agreed to meet at Stamford Green, the next morning by eight of the Clock, where we were all according to appointment, but the Commissioners not coming, we marched out of the field, on our way towards Abbington; and as we were upon our march the Commissioners came posting after us, and we presently made a halt; then they overtaking us, and told us, They had Order from the General, and Lieutenant General, to hear our Desires, and endeavor the Composure of our Differences; then they read a Letter unto us from the General, which took but little effect upon our Spirits; and so marching a little further, two of Colonel Harrisons Troops, to wit, Captain Pecks and Captain Winthrops were marching to their Quarters, where Cornet Den and divers others met them, And read a Declaration to them, and used many glorious invitations of them to desire them to come and joyn with us, making appeare the lawfulness of our cause, telling them that we were resolved to stand to our first principles, and that if there were but ten men would stand for those just things, he would make the eleventh, with divers such like expressions, the two Troops being very willing to be satisfied in the lawfulness of the engagement, telling us they were marching to Thame, and the next morning we should know their resolutions; But as we were marching back againe, before we were half out of the field, we spied a partie of horse, which it seemed was the Apostate Reynolds with his mercenary damme crew (such as in our hearing most desperately swore, That if the Devil would come from hell and give them a groat a day more than the state, they would fight for him against the Levellers or any others) well, upon this we drew out a Folorne hope, and thereupon two Troops of Colonel Harrisons marched with us towards them; they retreated towards New-bridge and kept it by force against us, but we unwilling to shed blood, or to be the original occasion of a new war (though they have often branded us with it as if we wholly sought it) but our actions did then clearly manifest the contrary; for we seeing Souldiers, coming in a Hostile manner against us as aforesaid, did meet them, having forty or fifty of them at our mercy, and could have destroyed them, for we had them two miles from the foresaid bridge, but we did not then in the least offer them any violence or diminish a hair of their heads, but let them go to their body againe, and withall marched to a Ford, because we would not in the least be an occasion of any blood-shed; And having marched through the Ford into the Marsh on the other side, we called our Councel together, who referred the appointment of our quarters to Lieutenant Ray and Cornet Den, who designed us for Burford, where being in the Treatie with the Commissioners, and having intelligence, that the General and Lieutenant Generall were upon their march towards us, many of us severall times, urged to Major White, and prest upon him, that he came to betray us, to which

he replied, That the Generall and Lieutenant Generall had engaged their Honours not to engage against us in any Hostile manner till they had received our Answer, no not so much as to follow their Messengers and Commissioners with force, and being too credulous to the Generals words, knowing that he never broak engagement with the Cavaleers in that kinde; We gave the more credit to the Major, who seemed extream forward and hastie to make the Composure, pretending so far to approve of our standing for the things contained in our engagement at Triplo-Heath, that himself with our consents drew up a Paper in Answer to the Generall for us, so fully according to our desires as that it gave us satisfaction, so that the Agreement betwixt the Generals Commissioners and us, seemed to be even concluded and at an end; And for full satisfaction take a Copie of the said Letter which is as followeth:

May it please your Excellency.

Wee are your Excellencies Souldiers, who have engaged our lives under your Excellencies conduct, through all difficulties and hazards in order to the procurement of Freedom, Safety and Peace to this Nation, and our selves as Members thereof, and being lately designed by lot to be divided, and sent over into Ireland for the prosecution of that service, in order to the Peace and safety of this Common-wealth, which we think necessary to be performed, but looking back to take a view of our former proceeding, we finde that we cannot in concience to our selves, in duty to God, this Nation, and the rest of our fellow souldiers undertake that service, but by such a decision as is Agreeable to our [solemn Engagement](#) made at New-Market Heath, the 5 of June 1647. where we did in the presence of God, with one consent solemnly engage one to another, not to disband nor divide, nor suffer our selves to be disbanded nor divided, Untill satisfaction and security was received by the judgement of a councill consisting of two Officers and two Souldiers together with the Generall Officers that did concur, such satisfaction and security as that engagement refers unto; And being now departed from our obedience to you because you keep not Covenant with us: yet we shal not in the least harbour any evil thought or prejudice against you, nor use any act of hostility, unlesse necessitated thereunto in our own defence, which we desire God to prevent; All that we desire (and we speak in the presence of God, who knows our hearts) is, that your Excellency will call a Generall Councill according to the [solemn Engagement](#). In the Judgment whereof we will acquiesce, and refer ourselves to them to take an account of our late actions. This being assured we will every man with cheerfulness returne to our obedience, and submit to your Excellency and the Judgement of that Councill in all matters that concern us as Souldiers, or Members of this Common-wealth; this we beg of your Excellency to grant, out of the respect of your duty to God, this Nation, and the Army, that we may thereby retain our peace with him and procure the happinesse of this Nation under him, which is the desire of our soules: If you shall deny us this, we must lay at your door all the Misery, Bloodshed and Ruine that will fall upon Nation and Army; for we are resolved as one man by Gods assistance to stand in this Just desire, and although our bodies perish, yet we shall keep our consciences cleer, and we are confident our soules will be at peace; Now till we have a full determination herein, we desire your Excellency will forbear all manner of hostility, or marching towards us for avoyding any inconveniencies that may come to our selves or the Country; these desires with affection being granted we hope the falling out of friends will be the renewing of love, And we shall subscribe and manifest our selves your Excellencies faithfull Souldiers, and servants to this Common-wealth.

But to returne, during the time of treaty, while the Commissioners thus assured us all security, one of them, to wit, Captain Scotten privately slipt from us, and to others, to wit, Captain Bayley and Peverill left notes at every Town of our strength and condition, whilst Major White held us in hand, and told us, that if they fell upon us, he would stand between the bullets and us: So that when notice had been

sufficiently given, and we with all the meanes that could be used, wrought into a secure condition at Burford, & after the setting of our Guard, which was commanded by Quarter-Master More who was thereupon appointed, by his brother Traytor, Cornet Den (who himself) since his coming to London hath avowedly declared to Ma. W. W. [William Walwyn] to this effect, that his beginning and continuing with the Burford Troops was out of premeditated and complotted designe, that so at last he might the easier bring on their destruction, holding all the time he was with them, correspondency with the Generalls creatures, which said Quarter-Master More after he had set the guard in this slight manner, and possest us with as much security as he could, and under the pretence of going to refresh himself and horse, did most villanously and treacherously leave the guard without any Orders, and himself in person posted away to the Generalls forces and brought them in upon us, marching in the head of them with his sword drawn against us; And Quarter-master More being afterward called Traitor by some of the Souldiers, Captain Gotherd of Scroops Regiment made answer, he was none, for that he did nothing but what he was sent to do; so that most Treacherously, that same night the Generalls forces came pouring on both sides of the Towne of Burford, where we had not been above three houres, swearing, Damme them and sink them, and violently fell upon us, and so by a fraudulent and Treacherous surprize defeated us, not expecting it during the Treatie, especially from them with whom we had joyned these seven years for the defence of Englands Liberties and Freedoms, and though divers of us had fair quarter promised us by Colonel Okey, Major Barton and the rest of the Officers then with them, as that not a hair of our heads should perish, yet did they suffer their souldiers to plunder us, strip us, and barbarously to use us, worse than Cavaliers, yea Cromwell stood by to see Cornet Thomson, Master Church and Master Perkins murdered, and we were all condemned to death, although Colonel Okey, Major Barton and others of the Grandees had ingaged that not a hair of our heads should perish, when they surrendred themselves unto them, Thompson being then at the head of a party of two Troops of horse, and the other with their fellow Souldiers made good their Quarters while they had the conditions promised them, and then Cromwel, after this horrid murder was committed upon the three forementioned, contrary to Okeys, Bartons and others of their promises at their taking them, came to us in the Church, and making his old manner of dissembling speaches, told us it was not they that had saved our lives, but providence had so ordered it and told us that he could not deny but that many of the things that we desired were good, and they intended to have many of them done, but we went in a mutinous way, and disobeyed the Generalls Orders; but withall he told us that we should not be put off with dishonourable terms because we should not become a reproach to the common Enemie: but we desire all unbyassed men to judge, whether ten shillings a man and a peece of paper for seven yeers Service, be honourable terms: the paper being good for nothing but to sell to Parliament mens Agents who have set them a work to buy them for three shillings, or four shillings in a pound at most; and we are forced to sell them to supply our wants, to keep us from starving, or forcing us to go to the highway, by reason they will not pay us one penny of our Arrears any other way but by papers, that so they may rob us and the rest of the Souldiers of the Armie of their seven yeers Service, to make themselves and their adherence the soul possessors of the late Kings Lands for little or nothing; and for ought we know, the moneys they buy our Debenters withall, is the money the Nation cannot have any account of. But this their dealing is not onely so to us, whom they pretend disobeyed their commands; but they dealt so basely by other Souldiers who never resisted their unjust Commands, as we beleeve no age can parallel; For in the first place they turned them off with two months pay. Secondly they have taken away three parts of their Arrears for Free-quarter, though the Country (whose victuals, grasse and corn they eat) be never the better; and do also force them to sell their papers at the rate aforesaid. And deer fellow-Souldiers think not, because you are in Arms a little longer than we, that you shall speed better than we, which thay have disbanded before you; but be assured, that when they have their own ends served on you, as they have already on us, you shall have as bad conditions of them, and may be,

worse, if it be possible, then we have had before you; and may also reward you for your good services, by raising a company of mercenary Rogues, to cut your throats, as they did trayterously to cut ours at Burford.

But to return, from this sad and long digression: by this their serpentine craft, and our own over credulous innocency, we were overthrown, and our hopefull beginnings for the rescue and deliverie of our selves and the Nation from the thraldome, in us all Assertors of the Freedoms of England, and to put an utter inconfidence and jealousie for ever amongst such upon all future engagements, they made that wretched Judas Den, to that end their pandor and slave: they pretendedly spare his life after his condemnation to death, although now upon good grounds and intelligence, (yea partly from his own confessions as is noted before) we do beleieve that from the beginnings of our proceedings, he was their appointed Emissary (as well as the forementioned Quartermaster) to be most zealous and forward of any man for us, the better to compasse our ruine and lead us like poor sheep to the slaughter; they enjoyne Den, to preach Apostacy to us in the Pulpit of Burford Church, to assert and plead the unlawfulness of our engagements, as much as before the lawfulness to vindicate, and justifie all those wicked and abominable proceedings of the Generall, Lievetenant Generall and their officers against us, howling and weeping like a Crocodile, and to make him a perfect Rogue and villain upon everlasting Record, to which like the most abhorred of mankind to bring about their pernicious ends upon the people, he willingly submitted, and in that paper at the advantage of this wicked and treacherous overthrow of ours endeavoured to bury our [solemn Engagement](#) at New market heath in our ruines, as if long since cancell'd and of no longer force or obligation, pretending that by petition we had call'd home our councill of Agitators and so dissolv'd our engagement at New-market heath, And so the Army absolved from all further observation thereof.

Now to this, is to be considered, that the said engagement was radicall upon the grounds of common freedom, safetie and securitie to the Nation, and upon that account and to that end onely undertaken and solemnly made, and all righteous othes, vows, and covenants are indissolveble and of force till their full and perfect accomplishment; the Apostacy and defection of no man, though of him or those that vowes, or makes such oaths or engagements can absolve or untie them; and this no man that hath any spark or Conscience or Christianitie in him can deny. Therefore it was most deceitfully and corruptly urged, that the fame power that gave it a being dissolved it; for till the vowes of that engagement be paid unto the people, it standeth firm and obligatorie, till then the gates of hell are not able to prevail against the being and obliging powers thereof; and we are sure none can say, the genuine ends and intents of that engagement are yet obtained, but a thousand times further off, then at the making of that vow: besides, as that engagement enjoynes, what securitie or satisfaction then their private or publick rights, both as Souldiers and commoners, have we of the rest of our fellow souldiers yet recieved from a councill consisting of two Souldiers chosen out of every Regiment, two commission officers with such Generall officers onely as assented to that undertaking when or where was it? Indeed had such a Councill so concluded, and we the souldiers by our unanimous testimony and subscription (as we did to our engagement) testifie our satisfaction, there might have been some plausible pretence for its dissolution; but to this day it is evident to the whole world that no such thing hath been, and this was the expresse letter and intent of that New-market engagement; and to urge a petition for recalling the Agitators is a blinde excuse; for put the case there had been such an one, and that of Generall, Officers and Souldiers, yet the foundation of that Vow standeth sure to us all, it is immovable till its own proper end, viz. the accomplishment of the righteous end therein contained, affix its period: which we earnestly desire, may be conscienciously and seriously laid to heart by all our fellow-souldiers in solemn covenant with us; for

there is a God that over-seeth, and one day (when there will be no Articles of War to prevent) will call us to a strict reckoning for the breach of our faith and vows one to another, and the Nation and account with us for all the blood, ruine, misery and oppression that thereby hath ensued, and still dependeth upon that most monstrous Apostacie. That pretended petition at that day will be found to be but a broken reed to lean upon, it will nothing abate of the guilt: and how-ever it is now highly urged to wipe off all worldly dishonour from the iron Rulers of our age, we are not such strangers to the Army, if any such Army Petition were, as not to know it: Sure wee are, no such Petition can be produced from any single Troop, Company, or Regiment, much lesse from the Armie. And though some such endeavours were for the promotion of so wicked and vile an enterprise, and now as evilly made use of; yet it never fell under the cognizance of the Army, neither yet of any single entire Regiment, Troop or Company; and the Engagement by the Army was made as an Army, by unanimous consent, and therefore no otherwise dissolvable, but unanimously as an Army and that neither otherwise than righteously, after the tenour and true intent of that Engagement, as we have clearly evinced, and therein discharged our Consciences: See further upon this Subject a late Book of Aug. 1649. Lieut. Col. John Lilburns, Intituled, An Impeachment of High Treason against Oliver Cromwell, and Henry Ireton Esquires page 4,5. See also the 40, 41, 42, 43, 81, pages of the second edition of his Book of the eight of June 1646. Intituled, The Legall Fundamentall Liberties of the People of England, asserted, revived, and vindicated.

Thus we have truly stated the case of our late proceedings and differences betwixt our Officers and us, and hope sufficiently to beget a right understanding and approvement, especially with all honest and conscientious people, of the equity of our late undertakings: however to those that are and shall come after, we have published and left upon record a perfect view and Prospect of our condition, that if the present Perusers shall not, yet happily that those that are to come may be thereby provoked to consideration thereof, and equall resentment with us of the righteous ends of that now betrayed, deferred, Engagement of the Army, which we chiefly desire and expect at the hands of our Fellow Souldiers, that they may not longer like their Leaders be numbred amongst such as will not be limited or circumscribed within any Bounds, Engagements, Oaths, Promises, or Protestations, but levell, break, frustrate and throw off all, (as if no tyes betwixt man and man were to be on mankind) to bring about the corrupt ends of their ambition and avarice, as not only in this case of ours, but in all others of their publike undertakings since the beginning of the Armies Engagement is clearly manifest, and yet all their successes, and advancements over the People, gaine by their perjury, fraud, equivocations, treacheries and deceits they ascribe to the immediate approving hand of God, and seal over their delusions with the glorious exercise of Religious formalities to the eye of the People, by which a thick mist, as thick as the Egyptian darkness is lately come over the eyes of the greatest pretenders to true puritie and Religion, and many conscientious people therewith bewitched into the favour and approvement of their alone Jesuitical, wicked, desperate and bloody wayes, even to the opposition and persecution of the most faithfull and constant promoters of, and sufferers for, the just freedoms of the Nation.

But in case our fellow Souldiers will not remember their vows, but still slight & desert the same, their sin be upon their own heads, we have discharged our selves: yet considering they may again possibly incline to their countries redemption (as labouring more under ignorance than willfulnes) we shall offer them and all others that bear good will to the Nation, what in reason and Equity is most conducing to a safe and well grounded peace amongst us, and which by its greatest Adversaries cannot be denied but to be righteous and just, though contradictory to the lawless Lordship and ambitions of their Officers.

And first, We desire it may be considered, that our Hostile engagements against the late King, was not against his Oppressions and Tyranny on the People, and for their removall, but the use and advantage on

all the successes God hath been pleased to give us is perverted to that personall end, that by his removall the Ruling sword-men might intrude into his Throne, set up a Martiall Monarchie more cruell, Arbitrarie and Tyrannicall then England ever yet tasted of, and that under the Notion of a Free State, when as the People had no share at all in the constitution thereof, but by the perjurie and falseness of the Lieutenant Generall and his Son in Law Ireton with their Faction was enforced and obruded by meer conquest upon the People, a Title which Mr John Cook in his Book Intituled, King Charles his Case, &c. there confesseth to be more fit for Wolves and Bears then amongst men, and that such Tyrants that doe so govern with a rod of Iron, doe not govern by Gods permissive hand of approbation, and in such Cases its lawfull for a People to rise up and force their deliverance, See page 8, 10.

Now, rather then thus to be vassallaged, and thus trampled and trod under foot by such that over our backs, and by the many lives, and losse of our blood from us and our fellow-souldiers, have thus stept into the chair of this hatefull Kingship and presumption over us, in despight and defiance of the consent, choice, and allowance of the free-people of this Land (the true fountain and original of all just power, (as their own Votes against Kingly Government confesse) we will chuse subjection to the Prince [Charles I 's son, Charles II to be], chusing rather ten thousand times to be his slaves then theirs, yet hating slavery under both: and to that end, to avoid it in both, we desire it may be timely and seriously weighed,

That whereas a most judicious and faithfull Expedient to this purpose, hath as a peace-offering been tendered to the acceptance of the free people of England, intituled, An Agreement of the People, dated May 1 1649, from our four faithfull Friends, now close prisoners in the Tower of London, we cannot but judge, that that way of Settlement, to wit, by an Agreement of the People, is the onely and alone way of attonement, reconciliation, peace, freedom, and security (under God) to the Nation; it being impossible by way of Conquest to allay the feud, divisions, parties and Quarrels amongst us, which if not stopt, will certainly devour us up in Civil and domestick Broils, though we should have none from abroad; for the Sword convinceth not, it doth but enforce; it begetteth no love, but fomenteth and engendereth hatred and revenge; for bloud thirsteth after bloud, and vengeance rageth for vengeance, and this devoureth and destroyeth all where it cometh. And though our present Rulers have settled themselves and their conquest-Government over us; yet are we farther from peace and reconciliation then ever: the discontents and dissatisfactions amongst the people in the Kings time, (which at length burst into desperate Warr) was not the hundreth part so great as the discontents that are now; and if so much did follow the lesser, can better be expected from the greater? never were there such repinings, heart-burnings, grudgings, envyings and cursings in England as now, against the present Governours and Government; never such fraction and division into parties, banding, biting, countermining and plotting one against another for prehemincy and majority then now; and of all this nothing is the cause, but this way of force and martiall obrusion: And can it be imagined such counterplottings, repinings and divisions can be with safety and peace ? it is impossible : Insurrections, tumults, revoltings, war and commotions are the proper issues of the wayes of such violence, and no better is to be expected : none but intruders, usurpers and tyrants can be for the way of force ; such as would be but servants to the people, and not make the people their servants, cannot but abhor it, and lay down their glory at the feet of the people : these (that now ramp and rage over us) were they other than Tyrants, could do no lesse : they draw near it indeed in words, but are as far as hell from it in actions ; they vote and declare the People the supreme Power, and the originall of all just Authority; pretend the promotion of an Agreement of the people, stile this the First yeer of Englands Freedom, intitle their Government a Free State, and yet none more violent, bloody and perverse enemies thereto; for not under pains of death, and confiscation of lands and goods, may any man challenge and promote those rights of the nation, so lately pretended to by themselves : if we ask

them a Fish, they give us a Scorpion, if bread, they give us a stone. Nothing but their boundlesse, lawlesse wils, their naked swords, Armies, arms and ammunition is now law in England; never were a people so cheated, so abused and trod under foot ; enough to inrage them (as once the children of Israel against Adoram) to stone them to death as they passe the streets ; which some could not certainly escape, were it not for the fiery sword, vengeance that surrounds them, which at the best is but the arm of flesh, for their shelter and protection, and may fail ere they are aware : all sorts of people watch but for their opportunity, and if it once come like a raging sea on Pharaoh and his host they will swallow and devour them up alive : and sure, this kind of constitution of Government thus by force in despite of the people obruded and settled, thus grutched, cursed and hated, will never bring any peace, quiet or rest unto this Nation, it will be but as a continuall fire in their bones: therefore this conquest Constitution is not the way of Englands peace : There is but two wayes, by Conquest, or Agreement ; by fire and sword, or by compact and love; and both these are contrary to each other as light is to darkness, and take their title from contrary ends ; and the way of love must needs be of God, for God is love, and all his ways are love ; therefore we are bold of all other ways and Expedients whatsoever, to commend only this way of love, of popular Agreement to the publick consideration for a well founded and safe settled peace : and upon this account, and no other, can any security or enjoyment be expected to any publick transactors in this English Theatre, whether Prince or others. We beleeve, he that now judgeth otherwise, will at the length, it may be, when it is too late, finde himself as much deceived, as he that lost his head against his own Palace gate.

Therefore considering there can be no sure building without a firm foundation, and for prevention of further homebred divisions and backslidings into blood, we desire our fellow Souldiers for their severall Regiments of Horse and Foot to chuse their respective Agents to consider this way of Peace, that yet at length they may be instrumentall in saving (as now they are in destroying) this Nation ; but considering what unsettledness, and wavering from their principles, hath appeared among them, and how slender grounds we have of their return from Apostacy, we heartily desire that all serious and well-affected people, that have any bowels of compassion in them to an afflicted, distressed nation, any sence of piety, justice, mercy or goodness in them, any hatred to oppression or remorse of spirit, at the afflicted, or desire of deliverance, or freedome from their worse then Egyptian bondage, that they would lay the miserable condition of the Nation to heart and unite themselves in their endeavours for a new, equall, and speedy Representative ; and we humbly offer this motion as a just expedient to that end that they would chuse two or three or more faithfull persons from their severall and respective Counties of the Land to come up to London to demand the freedom and release of the Owners and Publishers of the foresaid Agreement unjustly detained in Prison by Wil and Force, to debate and consult with them &c. of some way if possible to accomplish the said Agreement, before a deluge of Intestine insurrections and Forraign Invasions from Ireland, Scotland, Swethland, Denmarke, France, and Spain, sweep us away from the Land of our Nativity ; and for our parts we doe declare, that though we have been thus abused and defeated, we have still the hearts of Englishmen in us, and shall freely (if there be occasion) spend the Remainder of our strength and blood, for the redemption and purchase of an Agreement of the People, upon the foresaid principles, the which for the satisfaction of such as have not seen it, We have hereunto annexed the forementioned draught of the said Agreement of our 4. imprisoned Friends in the Tower of London, as containing those things our souls like and approve of as the most exactest that our eyes have seen, and commend the effectual promoting of it to the serious consideration of all the true hearted friends of this miserable and distressed Nation, and rest

The Nations true Friends and hearty Wel-wishers while

we have a drop of blood running in our Veines.

Signed at London this 20 of August 1649, by us

John Wood, Robert Everard, Hugh Hurst,

Humphry Marston, William Hutchinson, James Carpen,

in the behalf of our selves, and by the appointment of the rest of our fore-mentioned Friends of the three forementioned Regiments.

FINIS .

ISBN 0 9528070 0 9

From an original pamphlet in the Bodleian Library, Oxford.

Publisher: Tony Gosling, 10 Highwood Close ORPINGTON, Kent BR6 8HT.

Definitive reference

Brailsford, H. N., The Levellers and the English Revolution, Spokesman, Nottingham, ISBN 0 85124 154 9.

[More information on The Leveller mutiny at http://www.britannia.com/tours/craig/2stage2.html](http://www.britannia.com/tours/craig/2stage2.html)

[To The Diggers' Page](#)

[The Agreement Of The People, The Levellers' Manifesto](#)

[Cornet William Thompson's message from the Leveller soldiers](#)

[The Solemn Engagement made two years before](#)

[Back to the index](#)

Session day by day without intermission for four monthes at the least ; and after that shall be at Liberty to adjuorn from two monthes to two months, as they shall see cause untill their yeer be expired, but shall sit no longer than a yeer upon pain of treason to every member that shall exceed that time : and in times of adjurnment shall not erect a Council of State, but refer the managing of affairs in the intervals to a Committee of their own members giving such instructions, and publish them, as in no measure shall contradict this agreement.

IX. --- And that none henceforth may be ignorant or doubtful concerning the power of the Supreme authority, and of the affairs, about which the same is to be conversant and exercised : we agree and declare, that the power of Representatives shall extend without the consent or concurrence of any other person or persons,

1 --- To the conservation of Peace and commerce with forrain Nations.

2 --- To the preservation of those safe guards, and securities of our lives, limbes, liberties, properties, and estates, contained in the Petition of Right, made and enacted in the third year of the late King.

3 --- To the raising of moneys, and generally to all things as shall be evidently conducing to those ends, or to the enlargement of our freedom, redress of grievances, and prosperity of the Common-wealth.

For security whereof, having by wofull experience found the prevalence of corrupt interests powerfully inclining most men once entrusted with authority, to pervert the same to their own domination, and to the prejudice of our Peace and Liberties, we therefore further agree and declare.

X. --- That we do not inpower or entrust our said representatives to continue in force, or to make any Lawes, Oaths, or Covenants, whereby to compell by penalties or otherwise any person to any thing in or about matters of faith, Religion or Gods worship or to restrain any person from the profession of his faith, or to exercise of Religion according to his Conscience, nothing having caused more distractions, and heart burnings in all ages, then persecution and molestation for matters of Conscience in and about Religion :

XI. --- We doe not impower them to impresse or constraint any person to serve in war by Sea or Land every mans Conscience being to be satisfied in the justness of that cause wherein he hazards his own life, or may destroy an others.

And for the quieting of all differences, and abolishing of all enmity and rancour; as much as is now possible for us to effect.

XII. --- We agree, That after the end of this present Parliament, no person shall be questioned for anything said or done in reference to the late Warres, or publique differences; otherwise then in persuance of the determinations of the present Parliament, against such as have adhered to the King against the Liberties of the people : And saving that Accomptants for publick moneys received, shall remain accomptable for the same.

XIII. --- That all priviledges or exemptions of any persons from the Lawes, or from the ordinary course of Legall proceedings, by vertue of any Tenure, Grant, Charter, Patent, Degree, or Birth, or of any place of residence, or refuge, or priviledge of Parliament, shall be henceforth void and null; and the like not to be made nor revived again.

XIII. --- We doe not impower them to give judgment upon any ones person or estate, where no Law hath been before provided, nor to give power to any other Court or Jurisdiction so to do, Because where there is no Law, there is no transgression, for men or Magistrates to take Cognisance of; neither doe we impower them to intermeddle with the execution of any Law whatsoever.

XV. --- And that we may remove all long settled Grievances, and thereby as farre as we are able, take away all cause of complaints, and no longer depend upon the uncertain inclination of Parliaments to remove them, nor trouble our selves or them with Petitions after Petitions, as hath been accustomed, without fruit or benefit; and knowing no cause why any should repine at our removall of them, except such as make advantage by their continuance, or are related to some corrupt Interests, which we are not to regard.

We agree and Declare,

XVI. --- That it shall not be in the power of any Representative, to punish, or cause to be punished, any person or persons for refusing to answer questions against themselves in Criminall cases.

XVII.--- That it shall not be in their power, after the end of the next Representative, to continue or constitute any proceedings in Law that shall be longer then Six months in the final determination of any cause past all Appeal, nor to continue the Laws or proceedings therein in any other Language then English, nor to hinder any person or persons from pleading their own Causes, or of making use of whom they please to plead for them.

The reducing of these and other the like provisions of this nature on this Agreement provided, and which could not now in all particulars be perfected by us, is intended by us to be the proper works of faithful Representatives.

XVIII. --- That it shall not be in their power to continue to make any Laws to abridge or hinder any person or persons, from trading or merchandising into any place beyond the Seas, where any of this Nation are free to trade.

XIX. --- That it shall not be in their power to excise Customes upon any sort of Food, or any other Goods, Wares or Commodities, longer than four months after the beginning of the next Representative, being both of them extreme burthensome and oppressive to Trade, and so expensive in the Receipt, as the moneys expended therein (if collected as Subsidies have been) would extend very far towards defraying the publick Charges; and forasmuch as all Moneys to be raised are drawn from the People ; such burthensome and chargeable wayes, shall never more be revived, nor shall they raise Moneys by any other ways (after the aforesaid time) but only by an equal rate in the pound upon every reall and personall estate in the Nation.

XX. --- That it shall not be in their power to make or continue any Law, whereby mens reall or personall estates, or any part thereof, shall be exempted from payment of their debts ; or to imprison any person for debt of any nature, it being both unchristian in itself, and no advantage to the Creditors, and both a reproach and prejudice to the Common-wealth.

XXI. --- That it shall not be in their power to continue any Law, for taking away any mans life except for murther, or other the like hainous offences destructive to humane Society, or for endeavouring by force to destroy this our Agreement, but shall use their uttermost endeavour to appoint punishments equall to offences: that so mens Lives, Limbs, Liberties, and estates, may not be liable to be taken away upon trivial or slight occasions as they have been; and shall have speciall care to preserve, al sorts of people from wickedness misery and beggery: nor shall the estate of any capitall offender be confiscate but in cases of treason only; and in all other capitall offences recompense shall be made to the parties damnified, as well out of the estate of the Malifactor, as by

loss of life, according to the conscience of his jury.

XXII. --- That it shall not be in their power to continue or make any Law, to deprive any person, in case of Tryals for Life, Limb, Liberty, or Estate, from the benefit of witnesses, on his, or their behalf; nor deprive any person of those priviledges, and liberties, contained in the Petition of Right, made in the third yeer of the late King Charls.

XXIII. --- That it shall not be in their power to continue the Grievance of Tithes, longer then to the end of the next Representative ; in which time, they shall provide to give reasonable satisfaction to all Impropriators ; neither shall they force by penalties or otherwise, any person to pay towards the maintenance of the Ministers, who out of conscience cannot submit thereunto.

XXIV. --- That it shall not be in their power to impose Ministers upon any respective Parishes, but shall give free liberty to the parishioners of every particular parish, to chuse such as themselves shall approve ; and upon such terms, and such reward, as themselves shall be willing to contribute, or shall contract for. Provided, none be chusers but such as are capable of electing Representatives.

XXV. --- That it shal not be in their power, to continue or make a law, for any other way of Judgments, or Conviction of life, limb, liberty, or estate, but onely by twelve sworn men of the Neighbor-hood ; to be chosen in some free way by the people; to be directed before the end of next Representative, and not picked and imposed, as hitherto in many places they have been.

XXVI. --- They shall not disable any person from bearing any office in the Commonwealth, for any opinion or practice in Religion excepting such as maintain the Popes (or other forraign) Supremacy.

XXVII. --- That it shall not be in their power to impose any publike officer upon any Counties, Hundreds, Cities, Towns, or Borroughs ; but the people capable by this Agreement to chuse Representatives, shall chuse all their publike Officers that are in any kinde to administer the Law for their respective places, for one whole yeer, and no longer, and so from yeer to yeer : and this as an especial means to avoyd Factions, and Parties.

And that no person may have just cause to complain, by reason of taking away the Excise and Customs, we agree,

XXVIII. --- That the next, and all future Representatives shall exactly keep the publike Faith, and give ful satisfaction, for all securitie, debts, arrears or damages, (justly chargeable) out of the publike Treasury ; and shall confirm and make good all just publike Purchases and Contracts that have been, or shall be made ; save that the next Representative may confirm or make null in part or in whole, all gifts of Lands, Moneys, Offices, or otherwise made by the present Parliament, to any Member of the House of Commons, or to any of the Lords, or to any of the attendants of either of them.

And for as much as nothing threateneth greater danger to the Commonwealth, then that the Military power should by any means come to be superior to the Civil Authority,

XXIX. --- We declare and agree, That no Forces shal be raised, but by the Representatives, for the time being ; and in raising thereof, that they exactly observe the Rules, namely, That they allot to each particular County, City, Town, and Borrough, the raising, furnishing, agreeing and paying of a due proportion, according to the whole number to be levyed ; and shall to the Electors of Representatives in each respective place, give Free liberty, to nominate and appoint all Officers appertaining to Regiments, Troops, and Companies, and to remove them as they shall see cause, Reserving to the Representative, the nominating, and appointing onely of the General, and all General Officers ; and the ordering, regulating and commanding of them all, upon what service shall seem to them necessary for the Safety, Peace, and Freedom of the Commonwealth.

And in as much as we have found by sad experience, That generally men make little or nothing, to innovate in Government to exceed their time and power in places of trust, to introduce an Arbitrary, and Tyrannical power, and to overturn all things into Anarchy and Confusion, where there are no penalties imposed for such destructive crimes and offences.

XXX. --- We therefore agree and declare, That it shall not be in the power of any Representative, in any wise, to render up, or give, or take away any part of this Agreement, nor level mens Estates, destroy Propriety, or make all things Common : And if any Representative shall endeavor, as a Representative, to destroy this Agreement, every Member present in the House, not entering or immediately publishing his dissent, shall incur the pain due to High Treason, and proceeded against accordingly ; and if any person or persons, shall by force endeavor to contrive, the destruction thereof, each person so doing, shall likewise be dealt withal as in case of Treason.

And if any person shal by force of Arms disturb Elections of Representatives, he shall incur the penalty of a Riot ; and if any person not capable of being an Elector, or Elected, shal intrude themselves amongst those that are, or any persons shall behave themselves rudely and disorderly, such persons shall be liable to a presentment by a grand Inquest and to an indictment upon misdemeanor ; and be fined and otherwise punish' d according to the discretion and verdict of a Jury. And all Laws made, or that shall be made contrary to any part of this Agreement, are hereby made null and void.

Thus, as becometh a free People, thankfull unto God for this blessed opportunity, and desirous to make use thereof to his glory, in taking of every yoak, and removing every burthen, in delivering the captive, and setting the oppressed free ; we have in all the particular Heads forementioned, done as we would be done unto, and as we trust in God will abolish all occasion of offence and discord, and produce the lasting Peace and Prosperity of this Common wealth: and accordingly do in the sincerity of our hearts and consciences, as in the presence of Almighty God, give cleer testimony of our absolute agreement to all and every part hereof by subscribing our hands thereunto. Dated the first day of May, in the Yeer of our Lord 1 6 4 9 .

John Lilburn.

William Walwyn.

Thomas Prince.

April 30. 1649.

Imprimatur. Gilbert Mabbot.

FINIS.

***London, Printed for Gyles Calvert at the black
spread-Eagle at the VWest end
of PAULS.***

ISBN 0 9528070 2 5

Definitive reference:

Brailsford, H. N., The Levellers and the English Revolution, Spokesman, Nottingham, ISBN 0 85124 154 9.

Link:

[THE LEVELLERS: LIBERTARIAN RADICALISM AND THE ENGLISH CIVIL WAR By David Hoile](http://www.libertarian.org/LA/leveller.html) <http://www.libertarian.org/LA/leveller.html>

[To Tony's Index Page](#)

[To The Diggers Page](#)

[The Leveller Soldiers rally to the Agreement](#)

[The Solemn Engagement made two years before](#)

[Cornet William Thompson's message from the Leveller soldiers](#)

[Index](#) | [Homepage](#) | [Good Links](#) | [Bad Links](#) | [Search](#) | [Guestbook](#)

Hi, I'm Tony Gosling, this website's editor, [my contact details](#) are near the bottom of this page. If you have a minute though, do check out why I believe *The Bible* is still the clearest guide to understanding the mess this world is in - by having a look in between.....



Contents of my homepage:

[What's going on in this crazed world?](#)

[Who does Gosling think he is?](#)

[Favourite Bible Quotes](#)

[Bill Hicks - a brilliant comedian - now sadly passed on](#)

[Out-cry of the poor oppressed people of Britain](#)

[Some of my favourite poetry](#)

[My contact details](#)

[Privacy rights links to PGP](#)

[Anti-Fascist poetry](#)

Are we winning?

Wouldn't it be satisfying if the energy being put in to help sort out our misdirected world could turn things around? It would be comforting to think so but realistically the banks, corporate media and other transnational corporations, the merger maniacal 'dark side', are extending their monopolistic control. The modern transnational corporation is an immortal, soulless collusion of greed that reduces everything it touches to a dollar value. In law a corporation is a person, able to own property and resources just as a person can only, it seems, not responsible for the deaths it causes.

Lies are becoming more common - liars are rewarded in the scrabble of the marketplace - but this serves to remind some of us of how important the truth is. However unpalatable.

**'When a man lies, he murders some part of the world'
Merlin, in the John Boorman film - *Excalibur***

[Is God's intolerance of all this destructive madness called 'business', going to eventually bring this world to an end? This page shows you where to look in The Bible.](#)

Land, money and media are means of control.... Deprive people of their land and you can control them with money seems to be the long and short of it... and most of us have been got by the short and curlies.

God's Law or Man's law?

The Law has been appropriated, twisted by the establishmet elite and used as a tool against ordinary people. God's law is simple:

Old Testament: The Ten Commandments:

Thou shalt have no other gods before Yahweh (The LORD God)

Thou shalt not make nor worship idols

Thou shalt not take Yahweh's name in vain

Remember the Sabbath day (Saturday) and keep it holy (rest)

Honour thy father and mother

Thou shall not kill

Thou shall not commit adultery (sex outside marriage)

Thou shalt not steal

Thou shalt not lie

Thou shalt not desire thy neighbours property [Exodus 20]

New Testament: Jesus's Two Commandments

Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul and with all thy mind.

Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself [Matthew 22:36-38]

The Bible encourages us to put faith into action every day. Jesus' (His actual name was *Yeshua*. *Jesus* is a Greek translation) Jesus' direct action in the temple - overturning the tables of the moneychangers and the traders who were selling overpriced goods for sacrifice - condemning them all as a 'den of thieves' is one of the most inspiring moments in the New Testament. Though the fact that it was the only occasion that Jesus used force in his ministry tells us not to see civil disobedience as the solution in what is essentially a spiritual battle, or a battle for the truth over the lies of the adversary.

Banking is legal counterfeiting Money is a fraud - War is Murder for Profit

The Money Masters video www.TheMoneyMasters.com is Bill Still's unique insight into how banks lend money to both sides in wars and how the victor honours the debts of the vanquished. How money is created out of nothing then lent out at interest by privately owned 'central bank' monopolies.

Available in PAL [Europe+] and NTSC [N. America+]

Bankers are the world's most dangerous con-men:

<http://www.wizardsofmoney.org/>

[Foulds2000 - The Economists \(humour\)](#)

Money fraud education site <http://www.fame.org>

"The issue which has swept down the centuries and which will have to be resolved sooner or later is *The People v. The Banks.*" Lord Acton: Lord Chief Justice of England, 1875

"For the love of money is the root of all evil" 1 Timothy 6:10

I have looked at many spiritual beliefs but nothing has touched me like Jesus' teachings and actions. The sermon on the mount (Matthew 5-7) shows that no-one has understood the importance of love, nor exactly what it means, more than Yeshua (Jesus) the Messiah. I challenge anyone reading this to find any text in history to compare with it. Tell me at tony@gaia.org if you can.

I'm not into the establishment church and 'middle men' like vicars & professional priests or pastors. The Old Testament prophecies that told of the coming of a Messiah, coupled with Jesus's attitude to the ecclesiastical and legal hierarchies of his day, have led me to examine the Bible more closely and find, life changing prophecies of the 'End Times', particularly relating to the re-establishment of His people, Isreal.

At least 52 different aspects of Christ's coming were prophesied in the Old Testament ([see pp. xxvi-xxix, Jewish New Testament ISBN 965 359 006 5, Jewish New Testament Pubs. Inc. Maryland N.J. U.S.A.](#)).

Yet still He was not recognised as 'God's anointed one' or Messiah by many Jews. With a bit of Bible study we can be sure not to be deceived as the prophecies of the End Times unfold and Christ returns ultimately in glory for all the world to see.

Hey Tony, did the Tribulation begin on September 11th 2001? Will it begin tomorrow or in two thousand years time.....?

World Government is moving closer all the time - and what's the chance that it will serve the people? Zero! And nobody tells the public or dares to talk about how fascistic the European Union is. We could be in for some serious skullduggery in coming years/months. A political/financial crisis, combined with spiritual disinformation could push us into a Fourth Reich, New World Order, with an official world religion that claims to represent ALL religions. Powerful people will certainly be preparing their version of a spiritual 'panacea' to fill the spiritual gap THEY have created.

**'Education is a system of imposed ignorance'
- Noam Chomsky - Manufacturing Consent
(THE Chomsky film, available from British Film Institute)**

Whilst political action against the greedy and for positive solutions gives us hope, it doesn't necessarily add up to much against the combined power of the capitalists, the armed forces and many of the media bosses! So the solution, it seems, will be spiritual and not political. We are in the middle of an undeclared spiritual war and here The Bible is a peaceful but potent weapon - here are some passages which have meant a lot to me and form a basis for a different 'church' to the one most of us know. Many of the Pentecostal churches concentrate on this side of Christianity but, so far as I know, still use a single paid (and unbiblical) pastor.

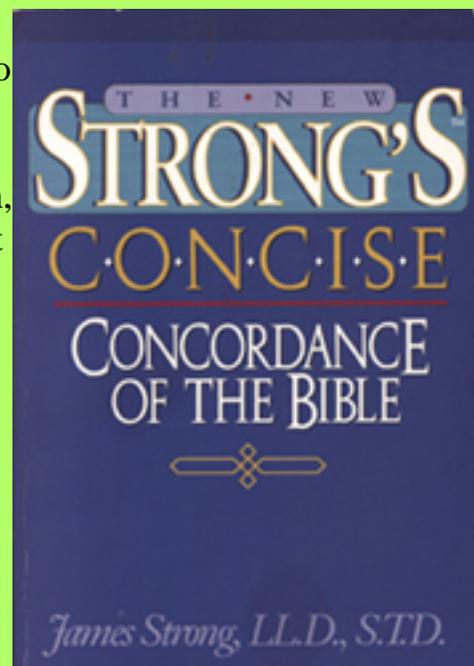
I found myself drawn to Quakerism because we emphasise individual faith and testimony: The Society of Friends was founded in England in the seventeenth century at the same time as the birth of state capitalism. The merchant classes in England conducted a comprehensive takeover from the aristocracy.

For more on The Quakers see the Journal of George Fox, itinerant man of God and the society's founder. Fox emphasised a direct personal relationship with God, through the Holy Spirit, and the need to repent in ones heart of previous sins, to be reconciled to God and forgiven.

Who does that Tony Gosling think he is?

A brief biog.

I was born in 1962 and brought up in Bromley, South London. I ended my formal education at Ilkley College in West Yorkshire with a Humanities degree, specialising in English Literature, from Bradford University. After working for a few



years in the family aviation parts business I decided to have a go at radio journalism. Volunteering at the GLC funded [Radio Thamesmead](#) (RTM) in South East London I eventually became their full-time, unpaid, editor of community programmes. RTM applied for, and got, an FM licence from the Radio Authority but as part of the financial deal manager Bob Smith took many of the best presenters off the air. I therefore left in 1991 for a researchers job at [Greater London Radio](#), the BBC's station for London. In 1992 I moved to [BBC Radio Solent](#) as a reporter and then on to [BBC Wiltshire Sound](#), where I worked as Salisbury reporter, relief presenter and documentary maker. When the BBC decided they no longer required my services I got involved with environmental campaigning, volunteering at [The Land Is Ours](#) in Oxford helping to organise land occupations in the mid to late 1990's. After moving to Bristol I have helped establish [i-Contact video network](#) and [Ecovillage network UK](#) and am now secretary of the Bristol branch of the [National Union of Journalists](#). You can contact me [here](#).

Tony's favourite Bible quotes

The comforter, which is the Holy Spirit, whom the father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you. John 14:26

Don't owe anyone anything - except to love one another; for whoever loves his fellow human being has fulfilled the Torah [Old Testament Law]. Romans 13:8

Now the company of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one said that any of the things which he possessed was his own, but they had everything in common. Acts 4:32

"Come to me all of you who are struggling and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, because I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light." Matthew 11:28-30

Put on the whole armour of God so you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the dark powers of this world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Ephesians 6:11-12

"Fear not therefore: for there is nothing covered that shall not be revealed; and nothing hid that shall not be made known. What I tell you in darkness, that speak ye in the light and what ye hear in the ear, that preach ye upon the housetops." Matthew 10:26-27

Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them. Ephesians 5:11

There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear; 1 John 4:18

the whole world lies in the power of the Evil One. 1 John 5:19

God resists the proud but gives grace unto the humble. Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. James 4:6-7

"who hath ears to hear, let him hear", Matthew 13:43

And Yahweh answered me, and said, "Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it." Habakkuk 2:2

"Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God, trust also in me. In my father's house are many rooms. If it were not so I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. I will come back and take you to be with me so that you also may be where I am. You know the way to the place where I am going." John 14:1-4

In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes" Luke 10:21

"This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that he lay down his life for his friends." John 15:12,13

"If any man thirst, come to me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." John 7:37-38

"when you pray, go into your room, close the door, and pray to your Father in secret. Your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. And when you pray, don't babble on and on like the pagans, who think God will hear them better if they talk a lot. Don't be like them, because your Father knows what you need before you ask him." Matthew 6:6-8

"...when the Son of Man cometh, shall he find faith upon the earth?" Luke 18:8

When people are saying: "Peace and Safety" then a sudden destruction cometh upon them as upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. 1 Thessalonians 5:3

Now listen, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to such-and-such a city, stay there a year trading and make a profit"! You don't even know if you will be alive tomorrow! For all you are is a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes. James 4:13-14

"Ye have heard that it was said in the Old Testament: Thou shalt not commit adultery; But I say unto you that whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart. And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and throw it away; For it is better one part of thee should perish than thy whole body be cast into hell. And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and throw it away; for it is better one of thy limbs should perish than thy whole body be cast into hell." Matthew 5:27-30

"All men cannot receive this saying, save they to whom it is given. For there are some eunuchs, which were so born from their mother's womb: and there are some eunuchs, which were made eunuchs of men: and there be eunuchs, which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He that is able to receive it, let him receive it. "Matthew 19:11-12

"Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves; so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves." Matthew 10:16

The spirit of man is the candle of Yahweh. Proverbs 20:27

Behold, I will make those of the synagogue of Satan who say that they are Jews and are not, but lie---behold, I will make them come and bow down before your feet, and learn that I have loved you. Revelation 3:9

No-one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Mammon [money, riches]. Matthew 6:24

You have heard that our fathers were told 'Do not break your oath,' and 'Fulfill what you have sworn to God.' And I tell you not to swear at all... Simply let your 'Yes' be 'Yes' and your 'No' be 'No'; anything else comes from the devil. Matthew 5:33&37

Woe to those who join house to house and field to field, until there is no more room, and you are made to dwell alone in the midst of the land. Yahweh of heaven's armies has sworn in my hearing: "Surely many houses shall be desolate, large and beautiful houses, without inhabitant." Isaiah 5:8-9

'The land shall not be sold for ever, for the land is mine and you are but my tenants'. God speaks to Moses, Leviticus 25:23

The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. Isiah 11:6

"If he comes suddenly, do not let him find you sleeping. What I say to you I say to everyone: 'Watch!'" Mark 13:36-37

[My page \[with links\] on the end times](#) and [on 666 the mark of the beast](#)

The sermon on the mount: Matthew 5-7

God's comfort in adversity: Psalm 23

Equality in marriage: 1 Corinthians 7:4

Guidance for the rich: 1 Timothy 6:17-19

Dinosaurs: Behemoth & Leviathan Job 40:15, 41:1

Jesus describes the End of this World: Matthew 24

True Christian worship described: 1 Corinthians 14:26

Jesus' fiery condemnation of lawyers and priests: Matthew 23

Acknowledge Yeshua in your heart and God will acknowledge you: Luke 12:8

Judas entrusted with the disciples' moneybag: John 12:4-6

Holy Spirit inspired the gospel writers: John 14:25-26

Celebrate diversity: Romans 14:13

Spot-on, up-to-date Bible resources:

Jewish New Testament, trans. David H Stern, pub. Jewish New Testament Publications, ISBN 965 359 006 5

Jewish New Testament Commentary, David H Stern, pub. Jewish New Testament Publications, ISBN 965 359 008 1

Complete Jewish Bible, trans. David H Stern, pub. Jewish New Testament Publications Inc., ISBN 965 359 015 4

Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the King James Bible, James Strong, pub Nelson, ISBN 0 7852 1195 0

Do-It-Yourself Culture!

Action, not words is what changes things. Non-Violent Direct Action is, in most cases, doing the will of the people when the state refuses. When you see something that needs doing or stopping act to change it. Don't rely on the or 'jobsworth' authorities.

Like the days of Noah society is going way off course, the family and marriage is becoming uncool in modern junk culture shaped by monied power. Cultural gatekeepers in the BBC keep crucial issues like landlessness and monetary reform off the agenda. If they do appear its always in a diluted form.

"Landlessness is slavery"

To casual Christians, the logical 'progress' of humanity should mean that things would be getting better and better with people living in a happier and increasingly loving world. To them, present world events are puzzling. However this is a comfortable view which ignores Holy Scripture and its Biblical prophecies, many of which may have been fulfilled already.

The final overthrow of evil is predicted in the Bible but the established churches seem to ignore the most relevant bits. If a vicar speaks out against the Church establishment he risks getting kicked out of a job and a (probably beautiful) home like any other employee.

With a few exceptions:
"Capitalism is institutionalised bribery"



Over to Bill Hicks...

Here's a bit of space devoted to quite possibly the best comedian ever?? Certainly the most un-Politically Correct and cutting comedy I've ever seen...

Was Bill a Christian? - Well you might be amazed to hear I am convinced he was. In his unique cheeky style he said some things just before he died that convince me he had kind of been hiding his open-mindedness to Jesus' message. If you don't believe me do please check out his final televised interviews on the net - via a multimedia search engine such as singingfish.com

Including: ["shut up, go back to bed America"](#)

Have a listen to him: [What if Bill Hicks was your optician? Scary thought. {MP3 Audio file}](#) Also [Bill Hicks describes the Elite {MP3 Audio file}](#)

The Eyes of Fear and the Eyes of Love:

"The world is like a ride at an amusement park and when you choose to go on it you think its real because that's how powerful our minds are. And the ride goes up and down and round and round, it has thrills and chills and it's very brightly coloured and its very loud and its fun, for a while.

Some people have been on the ride for a long time and they begin to question: is this real or is this just a ride?

And other people have remembered, and they come back to us and they say: hey, don't worry, don't be afraid, ever, because: this is just a ride. And we.....

kill those people.

"Shut him up. We have a lot invested in this ride. Shut him up! Look at my furrows of worry. Look at my big bank account, and my family... This has to be real."

It's just a ride, and we can change it any time we want. It's only a choice, no effort, no work, no job, no savings of money, a choice right now between fear and love.

The eyes of fear want you to put bigger locks on your door, buy guns, close yourself off, the eyes of love instead see all of us as one.

Here's what we can do to change the world, right now, to a better ride: take all that money we spend on weapons and defence each year and instead spend it feeding clothing and educating the poor of the world, which it would many times over, not one human being excluded, and we can explore space together, both inner and outer,

forever, in peace."

Comedian Bill Hicks - died (or murdered?) in 1994 of pancreatic cancer - aged 32 - just after he had been awarded his own network TV show.

Another Hicks newscast:

"Today a young man on acid realized that all matter is merely energy condensed to a slow vibration, that we are all one consciousness experiencing itself subjectively..... There's no such thing as death, life is only a dream and we're the imagination of ourselves....."

Here's Tom with the weather."

"Shut up, go back to bed America"

"Television works to control the society, to keep the culture credulous, to keep it from thinking, to enchant it literally, to spellbind it." An explanation of the end of Bill Hicks' career and his untimely death, from *Totally*, one of the Bill Hicks videos.

[Robert Morton - Producer, The David Letterman Show]:

We always pushed the envelope, by seeing OK, just how much of a fuck-you attitude can you have, without going over the line on network television. And that was always the thrill of presenting it.

ON OCTOBER 1st 1993 BILL HICKS' TWELFTH AND FINAL APPEARANCE ON THE DAVID LETTERMAN SHOW WAS CUT FROM THE TRANSMITTED PROGRAMME

[Richard Belzer]:

I can't quote you club owners or television executives by name, but I know that the nature of what Bill did was not universally applauded and accepted because it did challenge the status quo and it might upset certain political sensibilities in the audience and in the corporate structure.

[John Lahr - Critic, The New Yorker]:

When his stuff was taken off the air or whatever, he wrote me a 32-page letter, hand-written, a sort of a creed, he couldn't understand the situation, just because, he was a free spirit, it was a joke, these jokes had import. But it was the prescribing of his freedom which so offended him.

[David Letterman]:

Well, our relationship with Bill Hicks came to kind of a peculiar ending, made all the more peculiar by the man's death. And I have personal regrets about how our

relationship developed prior to his death. So it makes me doubly sad that he is now not around so that we can I think, correct mistakes that were made on his behalf. So I feel a personal sense of regret regarding that.

[John Lahr - Critic, The New Yorker]:

And what it did also do was give him more material for his belief, correct in my view, that television worked to control the society, to keep the culture credulous, to keep it from thinking, to enchant it literally, to spellbind it. And his job, as he saw it, was to break the spell.

[Bill Hicks]:

Go back to bed, America, your government has figured out how it all transpired, go back to bed America, your government is in control again. Here, here's American Gladiators, watch this, shut up, go back to bed America, here is American Gladiators, here is 56 channels of it, watch these pituitary retards bang their fucking skulls together and congratulate yourselves you're living in the land of freedom. Here you go America - you are free to do as well tell you! You are free to do as we tell you!

Transcribed from Bill Hicks: *Totally* - available on VHS video

Videos, cassettes and CD's distributed by www.rykodisc.com and www.laughingstock.co.uk amongst others - and see dmproductions.freeyellow.com - 'Automatic Living' is inspired by Hicks.

An out-cry of the poor oppressed people of Britain and the world

The desire of traders to acquire wealth down the years has turned into greed of horrific proportions. Bankers, bosses of Transnational Corporations and media tycoons at the 'top' wash their hands of responsibility for the deaths of millions of innocent people across the world. "You want to change things...", they say, "get the politicians to do it!" But they pay and arm the politicians to do the opposite, to rob the needy and concentrate even more wealth in the hands of the rich. Its obscene. The politicians may be ours one day every five years, but they're under the influence of the super-rich for the other 1,824! That gives ordinary people hardly any say at all.

"And because wickedness is multiplied, most men's love will grow cold." Matthew 24.12

Live free or die!

**From New Hampshire car licence plates.
quotation from General John Stark written July 31, 1809**

In the forties and fifties they invented a weapon that could wipe out mankind, if not life on earth. The thermonuclear [H-bomb](#) meant that if wealth was to be acquired it would have to be done stealthily and without upsetting governments. For this and other reasons big business around the world came together to formalize networks of influence with virtually limitless resources that transcended national boundaries and they began the final moves towards privatising the Earth. They knew the main difficulty would be the nation state so they plotted its downfall. [Read more about this](#)

The Earth is, as Gerrard Winstanley and the [Diggers](#) knew: '*...a common treasury for all...*' but its been gradually acquired as the 'private property' of the super-rich land-lords. No doubt, this is not how God intended it to work!

YHWH - the Tetragrammaton - God's name - usually written Yahweh

One correspondent told me this means simply - "I AM DOING WHAT I AM DOING"

Another correspondent added: The Sacred Name of GOD is: "YHVH"- Pronounced: Yeh-Ha-Veh, which is the Etymology of "EHYEH-ASHER-EHYEH" translated "I Am that I Am". Moses asked what is your name, and GOD answered, "I Am that I Am", tell them I AM (EHYEH) has sent you.

Names of GOD are:

Elowahh - which means "Deity".

Elohiym - plural of Elowahh.

EI - which means "The Almighty".

Yehovah - which means "Eternal or Self Existent".

Yehovih - same as "Yehovah" but used to prevent repetition

Yahh - the short form of "Yehovah" .

Kill your television (but keep your video)

The mainstream media has become lifeless with many of the most sensitive and clued up contributors sacked and edited out. Ideas for programmes are stolen as a matter of course now and those ideas twisted to the corporate - money is god - agenda. The arts have been taken over by advertisers and miserable rich patrons who want to simply use them to make money or express misery through conceptual or post-modern art.

We all want rewarding work because our time is all we have in this life and that precious time they want us to waste doing the donkey-work of the rich. Those that work for money rather than love are often spending their God give creative energy bringing the empty dreams of money lovers to fruition. No wonder we feel sick working for them.

The 'joys' of prostituting ourselves to the global, corporate top-down business structures are crumbling around us. Low wages, short term (if any) contracts, doubts about social security/welfare and pensions,

casual labour, union bashing, all of these trends make working for hire incrementally less attractive. It's nearly impossible to get out of the system since our fundamental rights and needs (see *Mazlow's hierarchy of needs*), especially for land, have been stripped away. The government even extorts income tax from employees so that just about everything you do is, at least in part, working for the corporate state. They love it when we're feeding the whims of the rich.

Why? There is [a deliberate attempt to destroy all out political and spiritual aspirations.](#)

The 'democratic' governments of the world have become little more than a perverted mishmash of public relations and protection racket.

Anyway... back to what we can do about it.

First we can refuse to compromise, that means refusing to swallow lies. **I feel better already!** We can all acknowledge the sad and sorry tale of the corrupt system.

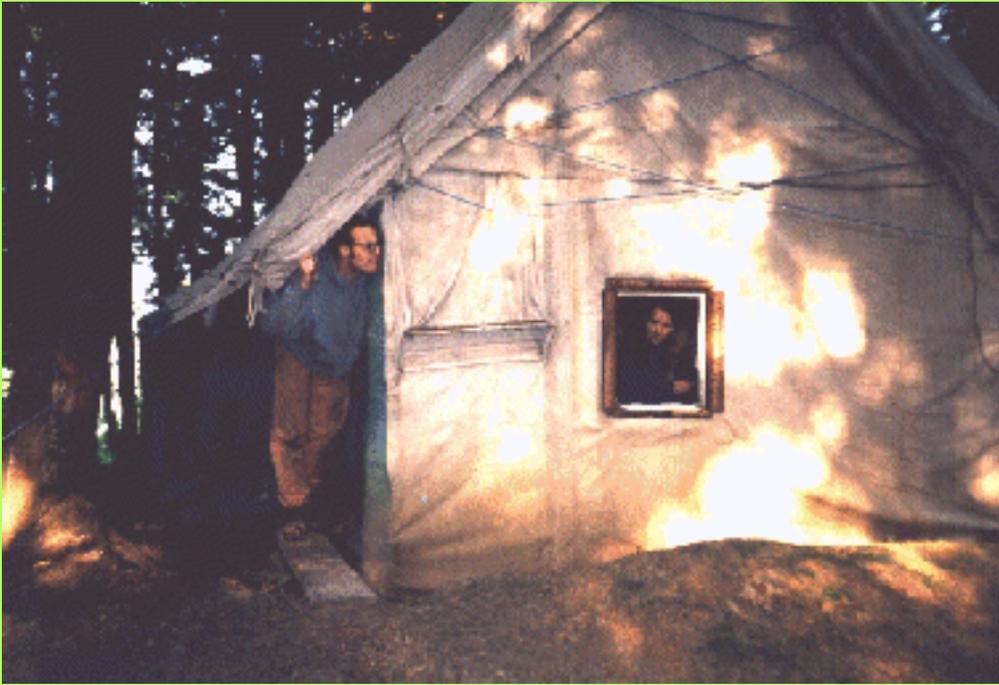
So - we can *all* shine the spotlight into murky corners where the elites would rather we didn't. Let the world see what they are up to and see how they are taking us all for a ride, living off the land and the labour of others. Secondly we can turn our backs on their rotten hierarchical system of haves and have nots. "Oh poverty has always been there and it is a natural part of life that there will be winners and losers", they say... but its getting worse for those at the bottom at one hell of a rate and that's paganism, the law of the jungle. We want to live in a caring society where we can reject man's 'laws' of competition and selfishness in favour of agreements of co-operation, collectivism and return to God's law. The Ten Commandments and love thy neighbour as thyself.

As [Gerrard Winstanley the Digger](#) said back in 1648:

"Dear friends, It hath been the universall condition of the earth (mankind) to be over-spread with a black cloud of darkness; and the knowledge of the King of righteousness hath been manifested but in some few scattered ones... ...I spoke the name of God, and Lord, and Christ, but I knew not this Lord, God and Christ; I prayed to a God but I knew not where he was, nor what he was, and so walking by imagination, I worshipped that devill, and called him God; by reason wherof my comforts were often shaken to pieces, and at last it was shewed to me, That while I builded upon any words or writings of other men, or while I looked after a God without me, I did but build upon the sand, and as yet I knew not the rock."

From 'The Saints Paradice' 1648

Create our own communities



Anyway, the second thing is to turn away from the dying system and to start making our own spaces, like this one, part of a low impact settlement.

In places like this we can work not for hire but voluntarily for what we want. We can agree our own rules and continue the process of coming together, organising in new ways of living. Treading lightly on the earth, not seeing it simply as a resource to plunder.

We can get ourselves organised by meeting up with people of a similar mind and take pride in being

regarded as 'serious criminals' according to one of the UK's latest bits of fascist legislation, the Police Act 1997, because we dare participate in '...conduct by a number of persons in pursuit of a common purpose...'

By doing so we risk our homes and solicitors offices being bugged and camera'd up by the police and MI5, and our houses being secretly searched, without a warrant. Under the act, intelligence information on us can now be sold or 'exchanged for gifts of property' with any business the police think could make good use of it. Legalised bribery, just as the money system is legalised counterfeiting.

The Criminal Justice Act 1995 is a criminal Act of Parliament which, like the Public Order Act, gives the police power without responsibility. It makes innocent lifestyles: travellers, ravers etc. virtually illegal and was part of the militarisation of the police.

For me Britain had crossed the Rubicon on the journey to a police state. It was illegal to be outside the government approved system, to be different. It's what made me decide it wasn't enough to sit by and watch it happen.

nuff said

Tony's favourite poetry....

"Sutta a chi tucca,"

"It's up to you to get up there: to make for the hills and do your bit."

THE MORES

John Clare

Far spread the moorey ground a level scene
Bespread with rush and one eternal green
That never felt the rage of blundering plough
Though centurys wreathed spring's blossoms on its brow

Still meeting plains that stretched them far away
In uncheckt shadows of green brown, and grey

Unbounded freedom ruled the wandering scene
Nor fence of ownership crept in between
To hide the prospect of the following eye
Its only bondage was the circling sky

One mighty flat undwarfed by bush and tree
Spread its faint shadow of immensity
And lost itself, which seemed to eke its bounds
In the blue mist the horizon's edge surrounds

Now this sweet vision of my boyish hours
Free as spring clouds and wild as summer flowers
Is faded all - a hope that blossomed free,
And hath been once, no more shall ever be

Inclosure came and trampled on the grave
Of labour's rights and left the poor a slave
And memory's pride ere want to wealth did bow
Is both the shadow and the substance now

The sheep and cows were free to range as then
Where change might prompt nor felt the bonds of men
Cows went and came, with evening morn and night,
To the wild pasture as their common right

And sheep, unfolded with the rising sun
Heard the swains shout and felt their freedom won
Tracked the red fallow field and heath and plain
Then met the brook and drank and roamed again

The brook that dribbled on as clear as glass
Beneath the roots they hid among the grass
While the glad shepherd traced their tracks along
Free as the lark and happy as her song

But now all's fled and flats of many a dye
That seemed to lengthen with the following eye

Moors, loosing from the sight, far, smooth, and blea
Where swopt the plover in its pleasure free
Are vanished now with commons wild and gay
As poet's visions of life's early day

Mulberry-bushes where the boy would run
To fill his hands with fruit are grubbed and done
And hedgrow-briars - flower-lovers overjoyed
Came and got flower-pots - these are all destroyed

And sky-bound mores in mangled garbs are left
Like mighty giants of their limbs bereft

Fence now meets fence in owners' little bounds
Of field and meadow large as garden grounds
In little parcels little minds to please
With men and flocks imprisoned, ill at ease

Each little path that led its pleasant way
As sweet as morning leading night astray
Where little flowers bloomed round a varied host
That travel felt delighted to be lost

Nor grudged the steps that he had ta-en as vain
When right roads traced his journeys and again -
Nay, on a broken tree he'd sit awhile
To see the mores and fields and meadows smile

Sometimes with cowslaps smothered - then all white
With daisies - then the summer's splendid sight
Of cornfields crimson o'er the headache bloomd
Like splendid armys for the battle plumed

He gazed upon them with wild fancy's eye
As fallen landscapes from an evening sky

These paths are stopt - the rude philistine's thrall
Is laid upon them and destroyed them all

Each little tyrant with his little sign
Shows where man claims earth glows no more divine

But paths to freedom and to childhood dear
A board sticks up to notice 'no road here'

And on the tree with ivy overhung
The hated sign by vulgar taste is hung
As tho' the very birds should learn to know
When they go there they must no further go

Thus, with the poor, scared freedom bade goodbye
And much they feel it in the smothered sigh
And birds and trees and flowers without a name
All sighed when lawless law's enclosure came

And dreams of plunder in such rebel schemes
Have found too truly that they were but dreams.

John Clare 1793-1864

Postscript to [The Law of Freedom](#)

Here is the righteous law; man wilt thou it maintain?
It may be, is, as hath still, in the world been slain.
Truth appears in light, falsehood rules in power;
To see these things to be is cause of grief each hour.

Knowledge, why didst thou comes to wound and not to cure?
I sent not for thee, thou didst me inlure.
Where knowledge does increase, there sorrows multiply,
To see the great deceit which in the world doth lie:

Man saying one thing now, unsaying it anon,
Breaking all's engagements, when deeds for him are done.
O power where art thou, that must mend things amiss?
Come change the heart of man, and make him truth to kiss.

O death where art thou? Wilt thou not tidings send?
I fear thee not, thou art my loving friend.
Come take this body, and scatter it in the four,
That I may dwell in one, and rest in peace once more.

Gerrard Winstanley (The Digger), The Law Of Freedom, 1652 [published here](#)

John Papworth (of Maida Vale)'s Millennium Prayer

Lord make me an instrument of the war against evil,
Where there is vandalism against Thy creation
Let me campaign to stop it,
Where there is sabotage of Thy genetic ordainings,
Let me fight like hell to prevent it.

Where there is conspiracy to dominate Thy world with boardroom greed,
Let me join with others to wage an unremitting struggle to oppose it.
Where giant political forces combine with money makers and pocket liners
to assume control of community concerns such as education, health,
commerce, banks, law and order and work,

Let me be quick to affirm the overriding need for such matters to be restored to local community life so that Thy moral laws may prevail.

Where there is passivity, deference and conformism to the powers of darkness which are degrading society and its individual members, let me be a powerful witness to oppose them.

Divine master, grant that I may not so much seek to live a quiet life as to be in the vanguard of those who would enhance life, not so much to grab as to give, not to evade my social obligations as to shoulder them, not to be afraid of power as to be imbued with courage with others to control it for worthy ends.

For it is in striving to act with love that we affirm love, and in devoting ourselves to noble causes we are redeemed, and in giving ourselves utterly to the service of truth, love and beauty in shared, fully democratic communities we rise to the life immortal.

John Papworth

Fourth World Review no.97 - 1999 - john.papworth@btinternet.com

Jelly Mountain

By Ivor Cutler (for school kids group to sing) 1975

I spied a jelly mountain,
and chased it to the sea,
I found a squashed banana skin,
and had it for my tea,
I climbed the cliffs of Dover,
and swam across to France,
I said my ten times table,
and french for gloves is gants.

Oh Jelly, I love you truly dear,
Oh Jelly, I love you truly dear,
Oh Jelly, I love you truly dear,
Oh Jelly, I love you cheap as well, d'accord!

THE TROUBLES

Ireland na hEirann!
The sadness in your heart
Seeps through your eyes
As tears of memories
Riven by visions of subjugation
Famine and disease
That even bombs of frustration

Cannot ease

Alf Mendes

OLD ENGLAND

**by G.A. Studdert Kennedy - otherwise known a "Woodbine Willie"
from his collection 'The Unutterable Beauty', First World War poems**

Yes, I'm fightin' for old England
And for eighteenpence a day,

And I'm fightin' like an 'ero,
So the daily papers say.

Well, I ain't no downy chicken,
I'm a bloke past forty-three,

And I'm goin' to tell ye honest
What old England means to me.

When I joined the British Army
I'd bin workin' thirty years,

But I left my bloomin' rent-book
Showin' three months in arrears.

No, I weren't no chronic boozer,
Nor I weren't a lad to bet;

I worked 'ard when I could get it,
And I weren't afeared to sweat.

But I weren't a tradesman proper,
And the work were oft to seek,

So the most I could addle
Were abaht a quid a week.

And when me and Jane got married,
And we 'ad our oldest kid,

We soon learned 'ow many shillings
Go to make a golden quid.

For we 'ad to keep our clubs up,
And there's three and six for rent,

And with food and boots and clothing
It no sooner came than went.

Then when kiddies kep' on comin'-
We reared four and buried three;

My ole woman couldn't do it,
So we got in debt - ye see.

And we 'ad a 'eap o' sickness
And we got struck off the club,

With our little lot o' troubles
We just couldn't pay the sub.

No, I won't tell you no false'oods;
There were times I felt that queer,

That I went and did the dirty,
And 'ad a drop o' beer.

Then the wife and me 'ud quarrel,
And our 'ome were little 'ell,

Wiv the 'ungry kiddies cryin',
Till I eased up for a spell.

There were times when it were better,
There were times when it were worse,

But to make it altogether,
My old England were a curse.

It were sleepin', sweatin', starvin',
Wearing boot soles for a job,

It were sucking up to foremen
What 'ud sell ye for a bob.

It were cringin', crawlin', whinin',
For the right to earn your bread,

It were schemin', pinchin', plannin',
It were wishin' ye was dead.

I'm not fightin' for old England,
Not for this child - am I? 'Ell!

For the sake o' that old England
I'd not face a single shell,

Not a single bloomin' whizzbang.
Never mind this blarsted show,

With your comrades fallin' round ye,

Lyin' bleedin' in a row.

This ain't war, it's ruddy murder,
It's a stinkin' slaughter 'ouse.

'Ark to that one, if 'e got ye
'E'd just squash ye like this louse.

Would I do this for old England,
Would I? 'Ell, I says, not me!

What I says is, sink old England,
To the bottom of the sea!

It's new England as I fights for,
It's an England swep' aht clean,

It's an England where we'll get at
Things our eyes 'ave never seen;

Decent wages, justice, mercy,
And a chance for ev'ry man

For to make 'is 'ome an 'eaven
If 'e does the best 'e can.

It's that better, cleaner England,
Made 'o better, cleaner men,

It's that England as I fights for,
And I'm game to fight again.

It's the better land o' Blighty
That still shines afore our eyes,

That's the land a soldier fights for,
And for that a soldier dies.

Customise your computer:

Download my wallpaper for your desktop if you like: [Exodus flag](#),
[Blakes' Seven](#), [Tarot](#) or [stars](#)

Finally, if you have windows 95, replace [this .sys file](#) in your windows directory - and get an interesting effect every time you switch off your computer!

Snailmail Interception Warning: Illegal surveillance and/or disruption of lines of communication will be challenged by me using all legal means. I respectfully ask all correspondants to keep evidence such as details of how packages are sealed that may lead to prosecution of those responsible.

My contact details:

Postal address:

Tony Gosling
10-12 Picton Street
Montpelier
Bristol, BS6 5QA
England

Telephone:

+44 (0)117 944 6219 [with answerphone]

Fax:

+44 (0)117 942 0164

E-mail:

tony@gaia.org

If you put 'confirm' as the subject of the email I will reply as soon as I see the message (that might be up to 2 weeks on occasions). See also my monthlyish email list: [The Power Elite Public Information Service](#)

You can encrypt email messages to me

[Import my PGP Public Key here](#) - once you've downloaded PGP - again, put 'confirm' in the subject if you want to be sure I got it - and telephone me if you don't get a reply. See below on how to install PGP on your machine.

Privacy rights links - go get PGP:

"Sending email without PGP is like sending a letter without an envelope" EU privacy report

- [International PGP Homepage](http://www.pgpi.com/) <http://www.pgpi.com/>
- [General PGP information page](http://rschp2.anu.edu.au:8080/crypt.html) <http://rschp2.anu.edu.au:8080/crypt.html>
- [Another International PGP Homepage](http://www.no.pgpi.com/) <http://www.no.pgpi.com/>
- [Shells to wrap round PGP for Windows 3.1 users etc.](http://www.aegisrc.com/Products/Shell/index.htm)
<http://www.aegisrc.com/Products/Shell/index.htm>

Postal Intercept

In what appears to be a crude attempt at intimidation my post has been selectively intercepted/delayed/opened (at least up to September 2001) and may even be stolen in transit. Contact me, if you wish, after a reasonable period of time to confirm delivery of specific items. If anything disappears I can then pursue the matter with the appropriate UK authorities but I need to know when and where post has been sent from as well as details of contents. Please obtain a free 'proof of posting' slip from your local post office if you send me anything of value that you think might go astray. [When I initially got FED UP with postal interception last year I started a page to record incidents - with photos](#)

Niemoeller's anti-Fascist poem

First they came...

First they came for the communists
and I did not speak out -
because I was not a communist

Then they came for the trade unionists
and I did not speak out -
because I was not a trade unionist

Next they came for the Catholics
and I did not speak out -
because I was not a Catholic

Then they came for me
and there was no one left
to speak out for me.

Pastor Niemoeller, protestant minister and victim of the Nazis

Notes:

1. Some versions of this poem read: ...communists; ...socialists; ...trade unionists; ...me; in that order - but Hitler's party was the National Socialists which makes the Socialists 'motif' unlikely, also persecution of the Catholics took place before the protestants, for any true man of God certainly worthy of inclusion in the poem.
2. It is quite worrying and depressing to see corruptions of the poem, purporting to be Niemoeller's original, beginning 'First they came for the Jews...' the rounding up of Jews happened towards the end of World War II and was, of course, Hitler's 'Final Solution' not 'First' at all.
3. What that famous and moving quotation does not mention is that before they came for the Communists, they came for the homeless, the mentally disabled, the unemployed, and all those categorized as "asocial." (from McSpotlight site: http://194.109.5.47/media/press/bioticbb_24feb99.html)
4. Once upon a time in Germany the Nazis rounded up citizens and murdered them. Other German citizens were so frightened by the Nazis they pretended not to see what was happening to their neighbors. Is the press in your country so frightened by the Elite your journalists and photo-journalists have become a group of "Not-Sees."? Or, are your journalists and photo-journalists "Not-Sees" because they can make more money being dishonest then they can from being honest? see 2 Peter 2:1 roundtable@geocities.com

[To Tony's total index zone containing lists of every page](#)