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A
WATCHWORD
TO
The City of London,
AND THE
ARMIE:

WHEREIN

You may see that Englands freedome, which should be the result of all our Victories, is sinking deeper under the Norman power, as appears by this relation of the unrighteous proceedings of Kingstone-Court against some of the Diggers at George-hill, under colour of Law; but yet thereby the cause of the Diggers is more brightened and strengthened: so that every one singly may truly say what his freedome is, and where it lies.

Gerrard Winstanley

By Gerrard Winstanly.

*When these clay-bodies are in grave, and children stand in place,
This shewes we stood for truth and peace, and freedom in our daies;
And true born sons we shall appear of England that's our mother,
No Priests nor Lawyers wiles embrace, their slavery weel discover.*

LONDON,

Printed for Giles Calvert at the Sign of the black Spread-Eagle,
at the West end of Pauls, 1649.

May 25, 1939
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To the City of London, Freedome and Peace desired.

THou City of London, I am one of thy sons by freedome, and I do truly love thy peace; while I had an estate in thee, I was free to offer my Mite into thy publike Treasury Guild-hall, for a preservation to thee, and the whole Land; but by thy cheating sons in the theeving art of buying and selling, and by the burdens of, and for the Souldiery in the beginning of the war, I was beaten out both of estate and trade, and forced to accept of the good will of friends crediting of me, to live a Countrey-life, and there likewise by the burthen of Taxes and much Free-quarter, my weak back found the burthen heavier then I could bear; yet in all the passages of these eight yeers troubles I have been willing to lay out what my Talent was, to procure Englands peace inward and outward, and yet all along I have found such as in words have professed the same cause, to be enemies to me. Not a full yeere since, being quiet at my work, my heart was filled with sweet thoughts, and many things were revealed to me which I never read in books, nor heard from the mouth of any flesh, and when I began to speak of them, some people could not bear my words, and amongst those revelations this was one, *That the earth shall be made a common Treasury of livelihood to whole mankind, without respect of persons;* and I had a voice within me bad me declare it all abroad, which I did obey, for I declared it by word of mouth wheresoever I came, then I was made to write a little book called, *The new Law of righteousnesse,* and therein I declared it; 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. Within a little time I was made obedient to the word in that particular likewise; for I tooke my spade and went and broke the ground upon *George-hill* in Surrey, thereby declaring freedome to the Creation, and that the earth must be set free from intanglements of Lords and Landlords, and that it shall become a common Treasury to all, as it was first made and given to the sonnes of men: For which doing the Dragon presently casts a flood of water to drown the manchild, even that freedom that now is declared, for the old Norman Prerogative Lord of that Mannour *M. Drake*, caused me to be arrested for a trespass against him, in digging upon that barren Heath, and the unrighteous proceedings of Kingstone Court in this businesse I have here declared to thee, and to the whole land, that you may consider the case that England is in; all men have stood for freedome, thou hast kept fasting daies, and prayed in morning exercises for freedome; thou hast given thanks for victories, because hopes of freedome; plentie of Petitions and promises

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promises thereupon have been made for freedom, and now the common enemy is 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 owne it, because it comes clothed in a clownish garment, and open to the best language that scoffing *Ishmael* can afford, or that railing *Rabshakeh* can speak; or furious *Pharisee* can act against him; for freedom is the man that will turn the world upside downe, therefore no wonder he hath enemies.

And assure your selves, if you pitch not right now upon the right point of freedom in action, as your Covenant hath it in words, you will wrap up your children in greater slavery then ever you were in: the Word of God is Love, and when all thy actions are done in love to the whole Creation, then thou advancest freedom, and freedom is Christ in you, and Christ among you; bondage is Satan in you, and Satan among you: no true freedom can be established for Englands peace, or prove you faithfull in Covenant, but such a one as hath respect to the poor, as well as the rich; for if thou consent to freedom to the rich in the City, and givest freedom to the Freeholders in the Countrey, and to Priests and Lawyers, and Lords of Mannours, and Impropriators, and yet allowest the poor no freedom, thou art then a declared hypocrite, and all thy prayers, fasts, and thanksgivings are, and will be proved an abomination to the Lord, and freedom himselfe will be the poors portion, when thou shalt lie groining in bondage.

I have declared this truth to the Army and Parliament, and now I have declared it to thee likewise; that none of you that are the fleshly strength of this Land may be left without excuse, for now you have been all spoken to, and because I have obeyed the voice of the Lord in this thing, therefore doe the Free-holders and Lords of Mannours seek to oppresse me in the outward livelihood of the world, but I am in peace. 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 unfaithfulnesse to them: every one talks of freedom, but there are but few that act for freedom, and the actors for freedom are oppressed by the talkers and verball professors of freedom; if thou wouldst know what true freedom is, read over this and other my writings, and thou shalt see it lies in the community in spirit, and community in the earthly treasury, and this is Christ the true manchild spread abroad in the Creation, restoring all things into himselfe; and so I leave thee.

August 26. 1649.

Being a free Denizon of thee, and a true lover of thy peace,

Jerrard Winstanly.

[1]
A Watch-word to the City of London,
and the Army.

WHereas we *Henry Bickerstaffe*, *Thomas Star*, and *Jerrard Winstanly*, were arrested into Kingstone Court, by *Thomas Venman*, *Ralph Verny*, and *Richard Vinwood*, for a trespasse in digging upon *George-hill* in *Surrey*, being the rights of *Mr. Drake* the Lord of that Mannour, as they say, we all three did appear the first Court day of our arrest, and demanded of the Court, what was laid to our Charge, and to give answer thereunto our selves: But the answer of your Court was this, that you would not tell us what the Trespasse was, unlesse we would see an Attorney to speak for us; we told them we were to plead our own cause, for we knew no Lawyer that we could trust with this businesse: we desired a copie of the Declaration, and profered to pay for it; and still you denied us, unlesse we would see an Attorney. But in conclusion, the Recorder of your Court told us, the cause was not entred; we appeared two Court daies after this, and desired to see the Declaration, and still you denied us, unlesse we will see an Attorney; so greedy are these Attorneys after money, more then to justifie a righteous cause: we told them we could not see any, unlesse we would willfully break our Nationall Covenant, which both Parliament and people have taken joyntly together to endeavour a Reformation. And unlesse we would be professed Traytors to this Nation and Common-wealth of England, by upholding the old Norman tyrannicall and destructive Lawes, when they are to be cast out of equity, and reason be the Moderator.

Then seeing you would not suffer us to speak, one of us brought this following writing into your Court, that you might read our answer; because we would acknowledge all righteous proceedings in Law, though some slander us, and say we deny all Law, because we deny the corruption in Law, and endeavour a Reformation in our place and calling, according to that Nationall Covenant: and we know if your Lawes be built upon equity and reason, you ought both to have heard us speak, and read our answer; for that is no righteous Law, whereby to keep a Common-wealth in peace, when one sort shall be suffered to speak, and not another, as you deal with us; to passe sentence and execution upon us, before both sides be heard to speak.

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This principle in the forehead of your Laws, foretells destruction to this Common-wealth: for it declares that the Laws that follow such refusal, are selfish and thievish, and full of murder, protecting all that get money by their Laws, and crushing all others.

The writer hereof does require Mr. Drake, as he is a Parliament man; therefore a man counted able to speak rationally, to plead this cause of digging with me, and if he shew a just and rationally title, that Lords of Mannours have to the Commons, and that they have a just power from God, to call it their right, shutting out others; then I will write as much against it, as ever I writ for this cause. But if I shew by the Law of Righteousness, that the poorest man hath as true a title and just right to the Land, as the richest man, and that undeniably the earth ought to be a common treasury of livelihood for all, without respecting persons: Then I shall require no more of Mr. Drake, but that the Commons ought to be free to all sorts, and that it is a great trespass before the Lord God Almighty, for one to hinder another of his liberty to dig the earth, that he might feed and cloath himself with the fruits of his labor therefrom freely, without owning any Landlord, or paying any rent to any person of his own kind.

I sent this following answer to the Arrest, in writing into Kingstone Court: In foure passages, your Court hath gone contrary to the righteousness of your own Statute Laws: for first it is mentioned in 36. Ed. 3. 15. that no Proccesse, Warrant, or Arrest should be served, till after the cause was recorded and entred; but your Bailiffe either could not, or would not tell us the cause when he arrested us, and Mr. Rogers your Recorder told us the first Court day we appeared, that our cause was not entred.

Secondly, we appeared two other Court daies, and desired a copy of the Declaration, and profered to pay for it, and you denied us. This is contrary to equity and reason, which is the foundation your Lawes are, or should be built upon, if you would have England to be a Common-wealth, and stand in peace.

Thirdly, we desired to plead our own cause, and you denied us, but told us we must see an Attorney to speak for us, or els you would mark us for default in not appearance. This is contrary to your own Laws likewise, for in 28. Ed. 1. 11. chap. there is freedom given to a man to speak for himself, or els he may choose his father, friend or neighbor to plead for him, without the help of any other Lawyer.

Fourthly,

Fourthly, you have granted a judgement against us, and are proceeding to an execution, and this is contrary likewise to your own Laws, which say, that no plaint ought to be received, or judgement passed, till the cause be heard, and witnesses present, to testifie the plaint to be true, as Sir Edward Cook 2. part of Institutes upon the 29. chap. of Magna Charta, fol. 51. 52. 53. The Mirror of Justice.

But that all men may see, we are neither ashamed nor afraid, to justify that cause we are arrested for, neither to refuse to answer to it in a righteous way, therefore we have here delivered this up in writing, and we leave it in your hands, disavowing the proceedings of your Court, because you uphold Prerogative oppression, though the Kingly office be taken away, and the Parliament hath declared England a Common-Wealth; so that Prerogative Laws cannot be in force, unless you be besotted by your covetousness and envy.

We deny that we have trespassed against those three men, or Mr. Drake either, or that we should trespass against any, if we should dig up, or plow for a livelihood, upon any the vast Land in England, for thereby we break no particular Law made by any Act of Parliament, but only an ancient custome, bred in the strength of Kingly Prerogative, which is that old Law or custome, by which Lords of Mannours lay claime to the Commons, which is of no force now to bind the people of England, since the Kingly power and office was cast out: and the common people, who have cast out the oppressor, by their purse and person, have not authorized any as yet, to give away from them their purchased freedom; and if any assume a power to give away, or withhold this purchased freedom, they are Traytors to this Common-Wealth of England: and if they imprison, oppress, or put to death any for standing to maintaine the purchased freedom, they are murderers and thieves, and no just rulers.

Therefore in the light of reason and equity, and in the light of the Nationall Covenant, which Parliament and people have taken, with joynt consent: all such Prerogative customs, which by experience we have found to burden the Nation, ought to be cast out, with the Kingly office, and the Land of England now ought to be a free Land, and a common treasury to all her children, otherwise it cannot properly be called a Common-Wealth.

Therefore we justify our act of digging upon that hill, to make the earth a common treasury. First, because the earth was made by Almighty God, to be a common treasury of livelihood for whole mankind in all his branches, without respect of persons; and that not any one according

according to the Word of God (which is love) the pure Law of righteousness, ought to be Lord or landlord over another, but whole mankind was made equal, and knit into one body by one spirit of love, which is Christ in you the hope of glory, even all the members of mans body, called the little world, are united into equality of love, to preserve the whole body.

But since the fall of man there from, which came in by the rising up of covetousness in the heart of mankind (to which Serpent the man consented) and from thence mankind was called *Adam*: for this covetousness makes mankind to be a stoppage of freedom in the creation, and by this covetous power, one branch of mankind began to lift up himself above another, as *Cain* lifted up himself, and killed his brother *Abel*: and so one branch did kill and steal away the comfortable use of the earth from another, as it is now: the elder brother lives in a continuall thevery, stealing the Land from the younger brother. And the plain truth is, thieves and murderers upheld by preaching witches and deceivers, rule the Nations: and for the present, the Laws and Government of the world, are Laws of darkness, and the devils Kingdom, for covetousness rules all. And the power of the sword over brethren in Armies, in Arrests, in Prisons, in gallows, and in other inferiour torments, inflicted by some upon others, as the oppression of Lords of Mannours, hindring the poore from the use of the common Land, is *Adam* fallen, or *Cain* killing *Abel* to this very day.

And these Prerogative oppressors, are the Adamites & Cainites that walk contrary to the Word of God (which is love) by upholding murder and theft, by Laws which their Fathers made, and which they now justify; for in the conquests that Kings got, their Ancestors did murder and kill, and steal away the earth, and removed the Land mark from the conquered, and made Lawvs to imprison, torment, or put to death, all that would adventure to take the Land from them againe, and left both that stoin Land, and murdering Lawvs to their children, the Lords of Mannours, and Freeholders, vvhich now vwith violence, do justify their Fathers vickedness, by holding fast, that vvhich was left them by succession.

For vvhich are all the Lawvs of the Nations, in this corrupt covetous Government, lifting up one branch of *Adam* mankind above another, the Conqueror, above the conquered, or those that have power above them that are vweak, I say vvhich are they, but Lawvs of murder and theft, yea enmity it self, against the Lawv of righteousness, vvhich is love, vvhich makes people do, as they would be done unto?

And

And so all Kingly power, (in one or many mens hands) reigning by the sword, giving the use of the earth to some of mankind (called by him his Gentry) and denying the free use of the Earth to others, called the younger brothers, or common people, is no other but *Cain* lifted up above *Abel*; the Prerogative Lawes is *Belzebub*, for they are the strength of covetousness and bondage in the creation, lifting up one, and casting down another: the Attorneys, and Priests, and Lawyers, and Bayliffs are servants to *Belzebub*, and are Devils; their Prisons, Whips, and Gallows are the torments of this Hell, or government of darkness; for mind it all along, and you shall see, that covetousness and bitter envie gets freedom by these Lawes; But the sincere and meek in spirit, is trod under foot.

And this is that power, that hath made such havock in the Creation, it is that murderer and Devill that is to be cast out: this power of covetousness, is he that does countenance murder and theft in them that maintaines his Kingdom by the sword of Iron, and punishes it in others: and so that which is called a sin in the Common people, if they act such things, is counted no sin in the action of Kings, because the have they power of the sword in their hands, the fear whereof makes people to feare them.

But since this Kingly Office by the Parliament, is cast out of *England*, and *England* by them is declared to be a free State or Common-wealth, we are in the first place thereby set free from those bonds and ties that the Kings laid upon us: Therefore this Tyranny of one over another, as of Lords of Mannours over the Common people, and for people to be forced to hire Lawyers to plead their causes for them, when they are able to plead themselves, ought to be taken away with the Kingly Office, because they are the strength of the Antient Prerogative custom.

Secondly, we justify our digging upon *George's* hill to make the Earth a common Treasury, because all sorts of people have lent assistance of purse and person to cast out the Kingly Office, as being a burden *England* groaned under; therefore those from whom money and blood was received, ought to obtain freedom in the Land to themselves and Posterity, by the Law of contract between Parliament and People.

But all sorts, poor as well as rich, Tenant as well as Landlord, have paid Taxes, Free-quarter, Excise, or adventured their lives, to cast out that Kingly Office.

Therefore, all sorts of people ought to have freedom in the Land of this their nativity, without respecting persons, now the Kingly Office is cast out, by their joynt assistance. And those that doe imprison, oppresse and take away the livelihood of those that rise up to take Possession of this purchased freedom, are Traitors to this Nation, and Enemies to righteousness:

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oufesse: And of this number are those men that have arrested, or that may arrest the Diggers, that endeavour to advance freedom; therefore I say all sorts ought to have their freedom.

And that in regard they have not only joynd persons and purses together, but in regard likewise, they took the Nationall Covenant, with joynt consent together, which the Parliament did make, of whom Mr *Drake* that caused us to be arrested was one; which Covenant likewise, the Ministers in their Sermons, most vehemently prest upon the people to take; the intent whereof was this, That every one in his severall place and calling, should endeavor the peace, safety and freedom of *England*, and that the Parliament should assist the people, and the people the Parliament, and every one that had taken it, should assist those that had taken it, while they were in pursuit hereof, as in the sixth Article of the Nationall Covenant.

But now Mr *Drake* that was one that made this Covenant, and the *Surrey* Ministers that took it with great zeal at *Kingstons*, which I was eye witness to, and shall be of their hypocrisie therein, have set up a Lecturer at *Cobham* one purpose to drive off the Diggers to forsake the pursuit of their Covenant, are the most vehement to break Covenant, and to hinder them that would keep it, neither entering into peace themselves, nor suffering them that are entering in to enter.

But in regard some of us did dig upon *George's Hill*, thereby to take Possession of that freedom we have recovered out of the hands of the Kingly Office, and thereby endeavour a Reformation in our place and calling according to the Word of God (which is Love:) And while we are in pursuit of this our Covenant, we expect both Parliament that made the Covenant, and the Officers of this Court, and Parish Ministers, and Lords of Mannors themselves, and especially Mr *Drake*, to assist us herein, against all that shall oppose us in this righteous work of making the Earth a common Treasury; and not to beat us, imprison us, or take away our estates or lives, unless they will wilfully break Covenant with God and man, to please their own covetous froward heart, and thereby declare themselves to be the worst of Devils.

Therefore, in that we doe dig upon that Hill, we do not thereby take away other mens rights, neither do we demand of this Court, or from the Parliament, what is theirs and not ours: But we demand our own to be set free to us and them out of the Tyrannicall oppression of ancient custome of Kingly Prerogative; and let us have no more gods to rule over us, but the King of righteousness only.

Therefore as the Free-holders claime a quietnesse and freedom in their inclosures, as it is fit they should have; so we that are younger brothers, or the

the poore oppressed, we claime our freedom in the Commons, that so elder and younger brother may live quietly and in peace, together freed from the straits of poverty and oppression, in this Land of our nativitie.

Thus we have in writing declared in effect, what we should say, if we had liberty to speak before you, declaring withall, that your Court cannot end this Controversie in that equity and reason of it, which wee stand to maintaine: Therefore we have appealed to the Parliament, who have received our Appeal and promised an Answer, and we wait for it; And we leave this wish you, and let Reason and righteousness be our Iudge; therefore we hope you will do nothing rashly, but seriously consider of this cause before you proceed to execution upon us.

You say God will blast our work, and you say, you are in the right, and we are in the wrong: Now if you be Christians, as you say you are; Then doe you act love to us, as we doe to you; and let both sides waite with patience on the Lord, to see who he blesses; but if you oppose by violence, arrest us, judge, condemn and execute us, and yet will not suffer us to speak for our selves, but you will force us to give money to our Enemies to speak for us, surely you cannot say your cause is right; but hereby you justify our cause to be right, because you are the Persecutors of a loving meek spirited people, and so declare that the God you say that will blast us, is covetousnesse, whom you serve by your persecuting power.

*Covetous might may overcome rationall right for a time,
But rationall right must conquer covetous might, and that's the life of mine.*

*The Law is righteous, just and good, when Reason is the rule,
But who so rules by the fleshly will, declares himself a foole.*

Well, this same writing was delivered into their Court, but they cast it away and would not read it, and all was because I would not see an Attourney; and then the next Court day following, before there was any tryall of our cause, for there was none suffered to speak but the Plaintiffe, they passed a Judgement, and after that an Execution.

Now their Jury was made of rich Free-holders, and such as stand strongly for the Norman power: And though our digging upon that barren Common, hath done the Common good, yet this Jury brings in damages of ten pounds a man, and the charges of the Plaintiffe in their Court, twenty nine shillings and a peny; and this was their sentence and the passing of the Execution upon us.

And 2 dayes after (for in this case they can end a cause speedily in their Court; but when the Attorney and Lawyers get money they keep a cause depending seven yeares, to the utter undoing of the parties, so unrighteous is the Law, and Lawyers) I say, two dayes after they sent to execute the execution, and they put *Henry Beckarstaffe* in prison, but after three dayes, Mr *Drake* released him again, *Beckarstaffe* not knowing of it till the release came; They seek after *Thomas Star* to imprison his body, who is a poore man not worth ten pounds.

Then they came privately by day to *Gerrard Winstanleys* house, and drove away foure Cowes; I not knowing of it and some of the Lords Tenants rode to the next Town shouting the diggers were conquered, the diggers were conquered. Truly it is an easie thing to beat a man, and cry conquest over him after his hands are tied, as they tyed ours. But if their cause be so good, why will they not suffer us to speak, and let reason and equity, the foundation of righteous Lawes, judge them and us. But strangers made rescue of those Cowes, and drove them astray out of the Bailiffes hands, so that the Bailiffes lost them; but before the Bailiffes had lost the Cowes, I hearing of it went to them and said here is my body, take me that I may come to speak to those *Normians* that have stolne our land from us; and let the Cowes go, for they are none of mine; and after some time, they telling me that they had nothing against my body, it was my goods they were to have; then said I take my goods, for the Cowes are not mine; and so I went away and left them, being quiet in my heart, and filled with comfort within my self, that the King of righteousness would cause this to work for the advancing of his own Cause, which I prefer above estate or livelyhood,

Saying within my heart as I went along, that if I could not get meat to eat, I would feed upon bread, milk and cheese; and if they take the Cowes, that I cannot feed on this, or hereby make a breach between me and him that owns the Cowes, then Ile feed upon bread and beere, till the King of righteousness clear up my innocency, and the justice of his own cause; and if this be taken from me for maintaining his Cause, Ile stand still and see what he will doe with me, for as yet I know nor.

Saying likewise within my heart as I was walking along, O thou King of righteousness shew thy power, and do thy work thy self, and free thy people now from under this heavy bondage of miserie, *Pharaoh* the covetous power. And the answer in my heart was satisfactory, and full of sweet joy and peace: and so I said, Father, do what thou wilt, this cause is thine, and thou knowest that the love to righteousness makes me do what I do.

I was made to appeal to the Father of life in the speakings of my heart likewise

likewise thus: Father thou knowest that what I have writ or spoken, concerning this light, that the earth should be restored and become a common Treasure for all mankind, without respect of persons, was thy free revelation to me, I never read it in any book, I heard it from no mouth of flesh till I understood it from thy teaching first within me. I did not study nor imagine the conceit of it; self-love to my own particular body does not carry me along in the manning of this businesse; but the power of love flowing forth to the liberty and peace of thy whole Creation, to enemies as well as friends: nay towards those that oppresse me, endeavouring to make me a beggar to them. And since I did obey thy voice, to speak and act this truth, I am hated, reproached, and oppressed on every side. Such as make profession of thee, yet revile me. And though they see I cannot fight with fleshly weapons, yet they will strive with me by that power. And so I see Father, that *England* yet does choose rather to fight with the Sword of Iron, and covetousnesse, then by the Sword of the Spirit which is love: and what thy purpose is with this land, or with my body, I know not; but establish thy power in me, and then do what pleases thee.

These and such like sweet thoughts dwelt upon my heart as I went along, and I feel my self now like a man in a storm, standing under shelter upon a hill in peace, waiting till the storm be over to see the end of it, and of many other things that my eye is fixed upon: But I will let this passe,

And return again to the Dragons Den, or Hornets nest, the selfish murdering fleshly Lawes of this Nation, which hangs some for stealing, and protects others in stealing; Lords of Mannours stole the land from their fellow creatures formerly in the conquests of Kings, and now they have made Lawes to imprison and hang all those that seek to recover the land again out of their thieving murdering hands.

They took away the Cowes which were my livelyhood, and beat them with their clubs, that the Cowes heads and sides did swell, which grieved tender hearts to see: and yet these Cowes never were upon *George Hill*, nor never digged upon that ground, and yet the poore beatts must suffer because they gave milk to feed me, but they were driven away out of those Devils hands the Bailiffes, and were delivered out of hell at that time.

And thus Lords of Mannours, their Bailiffes the true upholders of the *Norman* power, and some Freeholders that doe oppose this publick work, are such as the country knowes have beene no friends to that Cause the Parliament declared for, but to the Kingly power; and now if they get the foot fast in the stirrup, they will lift themselves again into the *Norman* saddle; and they do it secretly; for they keep up the *Norman* Lawes, and thereby Traytours to freedome, get into places of Law and power, and by

that will enslave *England* more then it was under the Kingly power.

Therefore *England* beware; thou art in danger of being brought under the *Norman* power more then ever. The King *Charles* that was successour to *William* the Conquerour thou hast cast out: and though thy Parliament have declared against the Kingly office, and cast it out, and proclaimed *England* a Common wealth, that is to be a free land for the liberty and livelyhood of all her children;

Yet *William* the Conquerours Army begins to gather into head againe, and the old *Norman* Prerogative Law (is the place of their rendezvous: for though their chief Captain *Charles* be gone, yet his Colonells, which are Lords of Mannours, his Councillours and Divines, which are our Lawyers and Priests, his inferiour officers and Souldiers, which are the Freeholders, and Land-lords, all which did steal away our Land from us when they killed and murdered our Fathers in that *Norman* conquest: And the Bailiffes that are slaves to their covetous lusts and all the ignorant bawling women, against our digging for freedome, are the snaplack boyes and the ammunition fluts that follow the *Norman* Camp.

These are all striving to get into a body againe, that they may set up a new *Norman* slavery over us; and the place of their rendezvous, Prerogative power is fenced already about, with a Line of Communication. An act made by a piece of the Parliament to maintain the old Lawes; which if once this Camp be fortified in his full strength, it will cost many a fighting heart, and burdened spirit before it be taken.

And this *Norman* Camp are got into so numerous a body already, that they have appointed their Suters to drive away the Cows which we rely livelyhood, and some of them they would sell to make money of to pay the Attorney, *Gilder*, and Lawyers their fees, for denying the diggers our priviledge to plead our own cause; for as it is clearly seen that if we be suffered to speak we shall batter to pieces all the old Lawes, and prove the maintainers of them hypocrites and Traitours to this Common wealth of *England*, and then the Attorneys and Lawyers Trade goes down, and Lords of Mannours must be reckoned equall to other men. And this covetous flesh and blood cannot endure.

And other of the Cows were to be killed to victual the Camp, that is, to feed those *Normans* *Wil Star & Ned Sutton*, both Freeholders & others the snaplack boyes, and ammunition drabs that helped to drive away the Cows that they might be encouraged by a belly full of stoin goods to stick the closer to the businesse another time. Or else the price of these Cows were to pay for the sack and Tobacco which the *Norman* officers of Knights, Gentlemen, and rich Freeholders did spend at the *White Lion at Cobham*,
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when they met the 24. of *August* 1649, to advise together what course they should take to subdue the diggers; for say they, if the cause of the diggers stand, we shall lose all our honour and titles, and we that have had the glory of the earth shall be of no more account then those slaves our servants and yonger brothers that have been footstools to us and our Father ever since the *Norman William* our beloved Generall took this land (not by love) but by a sharp sword, the power by which we stand: and though we own Christ by name, yet we will not do as he did to save enemies, but by our sword we will destroy our enemies, and do we not deserve the price of some of the diggers Cows to pay us for this our good service? And doe not our reverend Ministers tell us that *William* the Conquerour, and the succeeding Kings were Gods annointed? And do not they say that our inclosures which were got by that murdering sword, and given by *William* the Conquerour to our Fathers, and so successivly from them, the land is our inheritance, and that God gave it us, and shall these broken-fellows, and beggarly rogues take our rights from us, and have the use of the land equall with us? Thus do these *Norman* Gentlemen comfort their hearts, and support themselves with broken reeds, when they meet together in their Counsels.

But say you *Norman* Gentlemen, let me put in a word amongst you, doth the murderers sword make any man to be Gods annointed? Surely, *Iesus Christ* was called Gods annointed not because he conquered with a Sword of iron, but because he conquered by love, and the spirit of patience: therefore your Generall was not Gods annointed, as *Christ* was.

And then the Earth was not made to be the successive Inheritance of children of murderers, that had the strongest arm of flesh, and the best sword, that can tread others under foot with a bold brazen forehead under colour of the Law of justice as the *Norman* power does; But it was made for all by the Law of righteousness, and he gives the whole Earth to be the inheritance of every single branch of mankind without respect of persons, and he that is filled with the love of this righteous King, doing a. he would be done by is a true annointed one.

Therefore, that god whom you serve, and which did intitle you Lords, Knights, Gentlemen, and Landlords, is covetousnesse, the god of this world, which alwayes was a murderer, a devil and father of lies, under whose dark governing power, both you and all the nations of the world for the present are under. But the King of righteousness or God of love whom I serve, did not call the earth your inheritance, shutting out others, but gave the earth to be a common treasure to whole mankind (who is the Lord of it) without respect of person.

This power of love, is the King of righteousness, the Lord God Almighty that rules the whole Creation in peace, that is the Seed that breaks covetousness the Serpents head; he is the restoring power, that is now rising up to change all things into his own nature, he will be your Judge, for vengeance is his; and for any wrong you have done me, as I can tell you of many, yet I have given all matters of judgment and vengeance into his hand, and I am sure he will do right, and discover him that is the true Trespasser, that takes away my rights from me.

And take notice of this, you Lords of Mannors, and Norman Gentry, though you should kill my body or starve me in prison, yet know, that the more you strive, the more troubles your hearts shall be filled with; and doe the worst you can to hinder publick freedom, you shall come off losers in the later end, I meane you shall lose your Kingdom of darknesse, though I lose my livelihood, he poor Cowes that is my living, and should be imprisoned; you have been told this 12 Months agoe, that you should lose ground by striving, and will you not take warning, will you needs shame your selves, to let the poore Diggers take away your Kingdome from you? surely, the power that is in them, will take the rule and government from you, and give it a people that will make better use of it.

Alas! you poor blind earth moults, you strive to take away my livelihood, and the liberty of this poor weak frame my body of flesh, which is my house I dwell in for a time; but I strive to cast down your kingdom of darknesse, and to open Hell gates, and to break the Devils bands asunder, wherewith you are tied, that you may Enemies may live in peace, and that is all the harm I would have you to have.

Therefore you Lords of Mannors, you Free-holders, you Norman-Clergy, oppressing Tith-mungers, and you of the Parliament men, that have plaid fast and loose with this poor Nation, for what is past let it goe; hereafter advance freedom and liberty, and pluck up bondage; and sinne no more by Lording it over your Lords and Masters, that set you upon those Parliament Seats, lest worse things befall you then yet hath.

But to return again to Mr Gilders advice, the Attorney of Kingstons Court, and the proceeding of that Court with the Cowes; you heare how they did judge, condemn and execute me, not suffering me to speak; and though those four Cowes were rescued out of their hands by strangers, not by me; and so by their own Law, they should have looked after the Rescuers, yet contrary to their own Law, they came againe to *Winstanleys* dwelling a fortnight after, and drove away seven Cowes and a Bull in the night time, some of the Cowes being Neighbour's that had hired pasture; and yet the damage which their Norman Jury, and their covetous be-

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fotted ignorant Attorney Mr Gilder, had judged me to pay for a Trespasser in digging upon that barren *George's Hill*, was but eleven pound nine Shillings and a penny charges & all, which they are like never to have of me, for an empty carrier will dance and sing before these Norman thieves and pick-purses: And thus you see they judged and passed sentence upon me but once at their prerogative pleasure, which they call *Englands Law*; but they executed me twice, that they might be sure to kill me. But yet these Cowes likewise are brought home againe, and the heart of my Enemies is put into the pound of vexation because the Cowes are set free: Surely, these Lords of Mannors and the Attorney Mr Gilder, that gave advice to Arrest us for digging, have burned their Bibles long agoe, because they have so quite and clean forgotten that Petition in the Lords prayer, *forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them*; for they make this a trespasser against them, for digging upon the wast land of our mother the Land of *England* for a livelihood, when as their Law it self saith, *That the Commons and wasts belong to the poore.*

So that you see the Norman Camp is grown very numerous and big, that they want much beeffe to vituall them and they are such hungry ones, that they will eat poor lean Cowes, that are little better then skin & bone; and poor Cowes if I keep them in the winter, they are like to be poorer for want of Hay; for before the report of our digging was much known, I bought three Acres of ground of a Lord of a Mannor, whom I will not here name, because I know the council of others made him prove false to me; for when the time came to Mow, I brought mony to pay him before hand; but he answered me, I should not have it, but sold it to another before my face; this was because his Parish Priest, and the *Surrey* Ministers, and sorry ones too they are that have set up a Lecture at *Cobham* for a little time, to preach down the Diggers, have bid the people neither to buy nor sell with us, but to beat us, imprison us, or banish us; and thereby they prove themselves to be members of the Beast that had two horns, like a Lamb, and yet speak like a Dragon, & so they fulfill that Scripture in *Rev. 13.16.* *that no man might buy and sell, save he that had the mark of the Beast.* Or else surely, they do it on purpose to quicken us to our work, and to drive us to Plant the Commons with all speed as may be.

But though the Cowes were poor, yet they care not, so the skins will but pay the Lawyers and Attorneys *Gilder* his Fees, and the flesh to feed the snaphack boyes, either to eat and make merry with, or else to sell to make money of, to pay those that drive away the Cowes for their paines or charges they have been at, in this 18 weeks striving to beat the Diggers off their work: But the bones will serve the Bailiffs to pick, because their action will be both proved thievery in stealing another mans cattell, and their

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trespasse very great against the same man, in opening all the Gates round about the ground, where *Winstanley* dwells, and let Hogs and common Cattel, into the standing barley and other corn, which the right owner will seek satisfaction for.

So that the fury of this Norman Camp against the Diggers is so great, that they would not only drive away all the Cowes upon the ground, but spoyl the corn too, and when they had done this mischief, the Bayliff, & the other Norman snap-sack boyes went hollowing and shooting, as if they were dancing at a Whitsun Ale; so glad they are to do mischief to the Diggers, that they might hinder the work of freedom.

And why are they so furious against us? but because we endeavour to dig up their Tythes, their Lawyers Fees, their Prisons, and all that Art and Trade of darknesse, whereby they get money under colour of Law; and to plant the pleasant fruit trees of freedom, in the room of that cursed thorn-bush, the power of the murdering sword; for they say, they doe all they do by the Law of the Land which the Parliament hath confirmed to them by an Act: And if so, Then Souldiers where is the price of your blood? and Countrey-men, and Citizens, Where is the price of your Taxes and Free-quarter? If this be the freedom, you are like to have, to be beaten and not be suffered to say why doe you so, and shall have no remedy, unlessse you will Fee a Lawyer (an Enemy) to plead for you, when you are able to plead your own cause better your self, and save that charge, and have your cause ended sooner and with more peace and quietnesse.

And you zealous Preachers, and professors of the City of *London*, and you great Officers and Souldiery of the Army, Where are all your Victories over the Cavaliers, that you made such a blaze in the Land, in giving God thanks for, and which you begged in your Fasting dayes, and morning Exercises? Are they all sunck into the Norman power again, and must the old Prerogative Laws stand? what freedom then did you give thanks for? Surely, that you had killed him that rid upon you, that you may get up into his saddle to ride upon others; O thou City, thou Hypocriticall City! thou blindfold drow sic *England*, that sleepest and snorst in the bed of covetousnesse, awake, awake, the Enemies is upon thy back, he is ready to scale the walls and enter Possession, and wilt thou not look out?

Does not the streames of bondage run in the same river that it did, and with a bigger stream of Norman power; so that if you awaken not betimes, the flood of the Norman Prerogative power, will drown you all? here's more rivers comes into the maine stream, since the storm fell, and the waters of fury rises very high, banked in by Laws; and while you are talking and disputing about words, the Norman Souldiers are secretly working among you to advance their power again; and so will take away the

the benefit of all your victories by a subtle act of intricate Lawes, which the sword in the field could not do against you: and when you have lost that freedom, which you boasted of that you will leave to your posterity, then who must give thank? you that vapoured in words, or they that lay close in action, waiting to trip up your hees by pollicy, when the sword could not do it.

tell thee thou *England*, thy battells now are all spirituall. Dragon against the Lamb, and the power of love against the power of covetousnesse; therefore all that will be Souldiers for Christ, the Law of righteousnesse, joyn to the Lamb. He that takes the iron sword now shall perish with it, and would you be a strong Land and flourish in beauty, then fight the Lambs battells, and his strength shall be thy walls and bulwarks.

You Knights, Gentlemen, and Freeholders, that sat in councill at the white Lion in *Chham* to find out who are our backers, and who stirs us up to dig the Commons, I tel you plainly who it is, it is love, the King of righteousnes ruling in our hearts, that makes us thus to act that the creation may be set at liberty, and now I have answered your inquirie, do what you can to him and us his servants: And we require you in his name, to let our cause have a publick triall, and do not work any longer in darknesse, let not your Bailiffes and slaves to come by night to steal away the Cowes of poore men under colour of justice, when as the cause was never yet heard in open Court.

He that backs you, and that sets you to work, to deny to us our younger brother the use of the common land, is covetousnesse, which is heelzebub the greatest devil so that there is the 2 generalls known, which you & we fight under, the 2 great Princes of light and darknes, bondage and freedom, that does Act all flesh in the great controversies of the world. These are the 2 men that stir in this busines, that is, the wicked man that counsels, & backs you to be so envious and furious against us, and the righteous man Christ, that backs and counsells us to love you our enemies. And do we not see that *Gabal*, *Ammon* and *Amaleck*, and all the rabble of the nations Lords, Knights, Gentlemen, Lawyers, Bailiffes, Priests, and all the *Norman* snap-sack boyes, and ammunition women to the old *Norman* Camp do all combine together in the art of unrighteous fury, to drive the poore diggers off from their work, that the name of community and freedom which is Christ, may not be known in earth. Thus I have dealt plainly with you all, and I have not flattered Parliament, Army, City, nor Countrey, but have declared in this, and other writings the whole light of that truth revealed to me by the word of the Lord: and I shall now wait to see his hand to do his own work in what time, and by what instruments be pleased. And I see the poore must first be picked out, and honoured in this work, for they begin to receive the word of righteousnesse, but the rich generally are enemies to true freedom.

*The work of digging still goes on, and stops not for a rest.
The Cowes were gone, but are return'd, and we are all at rest.*

No money's paid, nor never shall, to Lawyer or his man
To plead our cause, for therein we'll do the best we can.

In Cobham on the little Heath our digging there goes on!
And all our friends they live in love, as if they were but one.

Thus you Gentlemen, that will have no Law to rule over you, but your Prerogative will must be above Law, and above us that are the younger brothes in the Land; but if you say, no, your will shall be subject to Law: then I demand of you *Mr. Drake*, *Mr. Gilder*, and other the Bailiffes and Officers of *Kingsston* Court, why will you arrest us, and tronble us, and say we trespasse against you, and though we came to answer to your arrest, and to plead our own cause, yet contrary to the equity, nay contrary to the bare letter that the Law, as I shewed you before, you denyed me the priviledge, but went on and did condemne and execute a forceable power upon body and goods, is not your will here, above Law? do you not hereby uphold the *Norman* conquest?

Mr. Drake, you are a Parliament man, and was not the beginning of the quarrell between King *Charles* and your House? This the King pleaded to uphold Prerogative, and you were against it, and yet must a Parliament man be the first man to uphold Prerogative, who are but servants to the Nation for the peace and liberty of every one, not conquering Kings to make their will a Law? did you not promise liberty to the whole Nation, in case the Cavalier party were cast out? and why now wil you seek liberty to your self and Gentry, with the deniall of just liberty and freedom to the common people, that have born the greatest burden?

You have arrested us for digging upon the common Land, you have executed your unrighteous power, in distraining cattel, imprisoning our bodies, and yet our cause was never publickly heard, neither can it be proved that we have broke any Law, that is built upon equity and reason; therefore we wonder where you had your power to rule over us by will, more then we to rule over you by our will. We request you before you go too far, not to let covetousnesse be your Master, trample not others under your feet, under colour of Law, as if none knew equity of Law but you; for we and our estates shall be horns in your eyes, and pricks in your sides, and you may curse that Councell bid you beg our estates, or in prison our persons. But this we request that you would let us have a fair open trial, and do not carry on the course of Law in secret, like *Nicodemus* that is afraid to have his businesse come to light; therefore I challenge you once more, seeing you professe your selves Christians, to let us be brought to a trial of our cause; let your ministers plead with us in the scriptures, & let your Lawyers plead with us in the equity & reason of your own Law; and if you prove us transgressours, then we shall lay down our work and acknowledge we have trespassed against you in digging upon the Commons, & then punish us. But if we prove by Scripture & reason that undeniably the land belongs to one as well as another, then you shall own our work, justify our cause, & declare that you have done wrong to Christ, who you say is your Lord and master, in abusing us his servants, & your fellow creatures, while we are doing his work. Therefore I knowing you to be men of moderation in outward shew, I desire that your actions towards your fellow creatures may not be like one beast to another, but carry your selves, like man to man; for your proceeding in your pretence of law hitherto against us, is both unrighteous, beastly & divelish, and nothing of the spirit of man seen in it. You Attornies and Lawyers, you say you are ministers of justice, & we know that equity and reason is, or ought to be the foundation of Law; if so, then plead not for mony altogether but stand for univerrall justice & equity; then you will have peace; otherwise both you with the corrupt Clergy will be cast out as unfavoury & it.

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