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John Stubbs's *Gaping Gulf*  
WITH  
Letters and Other Relevant  
Documents

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this English paradise. Who because she is also our Adam and sovereign lord or lordly lady of this land, it is so much the more dangerous, and therefore he so much the more busily bestirs him.

Now although the truth be that upon further ripping-up of this serpentine attempt we shall find the Church notably undermined by the Pope; the very foundations of our commonweal dangerously digged at by the French; and our dear Queen Elizabeth (I shake to speak) led blindfold as a poor lamb to the slaughter; yet should not my fear be so great, knowing Her Majesty's wisdom sufficient to teach her, in such a matter as this, neither to trow<sup>1</sup> a Frenchman nor once hear speak a daily hearer of Mass (for she may know him by his hissing and lipping), but that some English mouths professing Christ are also persuaders of the same. And though this ship fraught with England's bane were already under crossed sail with the freshest gale of wind in her stern that can blow in the sky for our best port, yet had we counterpuffs and counterbuffs enough to keep him aloof and to send him back again into the deeps, if he had none but only French mariners and only French tackle. But, alas, this ship of unhappy load hath among us and of ourselves (I would, not in prince's court) those who with all their might and main help to hale it in, and, as though the blustering winds of our enemy's malice and the broad sails of our sins were not sufficient to give it a speedy passage hither, our own men walk on this shore and lay to their shoulders with fastened lines and cables to draw it in. This is our mischief, this is the swallowing gulf of our bottomless destruction; else might we think ourselves impregnable. It is not the feeble assault of this carpet squire that would make us come to the walls or once shut the gates against him.

Therefore, albeit I wot well you understand already in general what is that great calamity thus imminent over our heads whereof I speak, and albeit the bare consideration of some few apparent circumstances of this strange sought marriage by France with England

<sup>1</sup> Trust.

do sufficiently move and affect every Christian heart, in respect of the hurt to the Church of Christ, every English heart, in respect of the detriment to England, and every honest affectionate heart of any Her Majesty's loving true servant, in regard of the great danger thereby coming to her royal person, yet to the end our minds may be the more earnestly stirred up by more particularly weighing the evils of this matter, we will enter into the parts of this practice and gauge the very belly of this great horse of hidden mischiefs and falsehood meant to us. And according as those not half-taught Christians and halfhearted Englishmen which persuade and solicit this French marriage have in their mouths nothing but the church and commonweal, pretending hereby, either against their own conscience or of some other humor that blindeth them, to bring great advancement to religion and advantage to the state, with many smooth words of I wot what assurance to Her Majesty's person, I will likewise draw all my reasons to those chief heads of religion and the policy, showing and proving, I hope, that this is a counsel against the Church of Christ, an endeavor of no well-advised Englishman, as well in regard of the common state, as of Her Majesty's good estate, to every of which it is pernicious and capital. In the end I will answer such of their adverse or perverse reasons as shall be left undisproved in this my proof.

And, first, if a man would here bring in the Church to speak for herself, standing upon the doctrine of her Prophets and Christ the Lord, leaning upon the pillar of truth, whose crown and garland is to suffer rather than to use any vain help of man against God's law, mild though she be, without all gall in her heart and have no words in her honey-sweet mouth but of a most loving mother, yet would she with sharp reproof take up these goodly procurers of her wealth as very practicers of her woe; she would call them to account why they take her holy name in their mouths, and she would scarce repute them for her children who will needs forsooth be her fathers, for (to reason with these politics in their own profession) can they think any counsel wholesome to the state or becoming good counse-

lors which cannot be once deliberated of, much less put in execution, without both despising of the prince and contemptuous breach of the country laws? They must needs say no, if they have any sincerity or plain dealing left; at least they will say nay for fear. And think they that any their vainglorious device can prove to the life or health of the Church, which is offered her with shameful dishonor to her spouse, with the separating her from her Lord God, and with the treading under foot of that precious law which is her holy rule for order and sovereign preservative against all headlong confusion? If they say yea, we say nay, and prove it nay. Namely, that this procuration of marriage is a breach of God's law, and not only for the sin thereof is against the Church because it hasteneth vengeance, but we show by demonstrative reasons that it goeth to the very gorge of the Church.

I trust I shall not need to prove to these men's consciences this major proposition or maxim, that is to say, sin provoketh the wrath of God, and that great sins call down great plagues, and mighty sinners are mightily punished. This argument—the world sinneth, such a city sinneth, such a land sinneth, such a tribe, such a kindred, such a family, such a soul sinneth; ergo, the world, such a city, land, tribe, kindred, family, soul shall feel the vengeance of that high lawgiver against whom they sin—is a most necessary consequence.

This next, though it be but the minor in order and will not perhaps without farther proof be yielded unto by this kind of Protestants, yet is it as true as the former, that is, that it is a sin, a great and a mighty sin, for England to give one of Israel's daughters to any of Hamor's sons,<sup>2</sup> to match a daughter of God with one of the sons of men, to couple a Christian lady, a member of Christ, to a prince and good son of Rome, that anti-Christian mother city. For the invincible manifestation therefore of this truth, let us first consider England as a region purged from idolatry, a kingdom of light, confessing Christ and serving the living God. Contrariwise, France

<sup>2</sup> Gen. 34:1-29.

a den of idolatry, a kingdom of darkness, confessing Belial and serving Baal. Then let us remember what was the first institution of marriage which is set before us as a directory rule for us in our marriages forever, and whereunto Christ teacheth us plainly in all cases and other incidents of marriage to look back, when, upon a case put of marriage, he answers "In the beginning it was not so."<sup>3</sup> The first marriages were between pairs in religion, and in the fear of God. And the first written commandments that are given by Moses touching marriage have their regard to that first institution, as it were to the oldest law. The which Moses, rightly understanding and according to the interpretation of all laws when they bid or forbid anything, do therewith forbid or bid the contrary. He also in Deuteronomy forbade those matches wherein the sons of God were given to the daughters of men, adding this reason, for, saith he, such marriages will make thy children to fall from me.<sup>4</sup> And this place at once may expound those other many places where it is said, lest they make thy children to commit idolatry, to be added as a certain punishment by the judgment of God, and not for a doubtful reason, as some would fain have it that seek to draw the laws of God to their lusts, who should rather rule their lusts by the laws. Which pure institution of marriage St. Paul also continues; when enlarging the holy use thereof to all sorts of men, he yet hath this restraint, that it be in the Lord, that is to say, in his fear, as it was from the beginning, and according to his former commandments in his Word.<sup>5</sup>

~~It is more than enough to break the holy ordinance instituted of God, which ought to govern us without further inquiry of reason or commodity. But as the holiness of his laws is wholesome to us even in this life by obedience, so doth their transgression breed us infinite incommodities. For the end of this holy kind of marriage is our mutual help and upholding one another in the fear of God, which appeareth by the reason of forbidding those unholy marriages,~~

<sup>3</sup> Matt. 19:3-8.

<sup>4</sup> Deut. 7:3-4.

<sup>5</sup> I Corinthians 7.

and us thankful for it), upon communication of this marriage to indent<sup>33</sup> with man, how far God should be honored, what is this but to sin more than the supposed sin of the Reubenites and to exceed the transgressions of Solomon or Jehoram? Even to erect an idolatrous altar, not in a corner of the realm but on the highest hill of the land, in London, which is our Jerusalem, and to make an open fault, not of infirmity, but by advised composition against the Lord and his truth, not in two shires and a half, but in the greatest part of the realm and head of the land, our prince, insomuch as it should be safer to set up a thousand hill altars for hedgecreeping priests elsewhere rather than this high altar so near the Court.

The sin of Achan, though not in this kind, proves that the sin of one man, and him private, done in secret and buried close under the ground, gave forth such a stench in the Lord's nostrils as was contagious to the whole host, and his garment brought the plague among them.<sup>34</sup> Much more shall the high sin of a highest magistrate, done and avowed in open sun, kindle the wrath of God and set fire on church and commonweal.

And this fire, if it fasten on our Church, it is like wildfire or fire from heaven that all the seas cannot stop nor quench, but the flakes thereof will fly over sea and keep havoc in the churches both on this side and beyond seas. Our neighbor well-built Church of Scotland must needs think herself to have somewhat in hand when our wall is a-burning. The infant churches in the Low Countries shall lose a nurse of us; the elder churches in Germany, a sister of strength.

And when I remember the poor orphan churches in France, I must needs give the prize of godless impudency to those which will needs forsooth maintain this marriage as a mean to assure religion in France and to preserve the professors there from more massacres. These men have, like unkind mothers, put (as it were) their own child, the Church of England, to be nursed of a French enemy and

<sup>33</sup> Covenant.

<sup>34</sup> Josh. 7:19-26; 22:20.

friend to Rome, and now very kindly they take in both arms the Church of France and give it a privy, deadly nip under color of offering it their teats, wherein is nought but wind, if not poison. As, therefore, the enemies to God's truth seek those churches' ruin through hatred to religion, so should we, who are members of one body with them, have a care of them as of ourselves. The enemies think their kingdom of Antichrist cannot stand unless Christ be put out of these churches: let us know, as those reformed churches next under God and their own forces have stood by good neighborhood, even so that their standing is our necessary strength.

Certainly the Pope seeth well that one great stay why neither the French king in France nor the Spanish king in the Low Countries can destroy religion is the help and awe of other princes confessing the gospel, among which our queen is in regard with the chief. Again he seeth as well that, next under God, one great cause why his interdictions against us take no place in England nor Ireland, and that those kings to whom he hath given our land, as it were to whomsoever *occupanti*, cannot come to take possession of us, is because that they of the reformed religion in both those countries are as a brazen door and an iron wall against our Popish enemies, and, therefore, by this match he seeks to sunder them from us and us from them, and so by unbarring our brazen door and treading down our wall to lay open his passage to us. I will not therefore vouchsafe this strange supposition of these persuaders the place of an objection to be answered in the end, but will use it for another main reason of proof in this part that this marriage is against the Church because it is against the churches of France, the which it must needs kill in the place, as they say, and withal give our Church a death's wound.

Here is, therefore, an imp<sup>35</sup> of the crown of France to marry with the crowned nymph of England. It is proved already that his coming shakes the Church in England, and how shall he establish the religion in France? What is France to the Church of God and to

<sup>35</sup> Offspring.

England for religion's sake? France is a house of cruelty, especially against Christians a principal prop of the tottering house of Antichrist, and without which our western Antichrist had been ere this sent to his brother Mahomet into Greece, whither he long since sent his masters, the Emperors of Rome.<sup>36</sup> The long and cruel persecutions in France, the exquisite torments, and infinite numbers there put to death do witness how worthy that throne is to be reckoned for one horn of that persecuting beast, the primitive Empire.<sup>37</sup>

This man is a son of Henry the Second, whose family, ever since he married with Catherine of Italy, is fatal, as it were, to resist the gospel, and have been ever, one after other, as a Domitian after Nero, as a Trajan after Domitian, and as Julianus after Trajan, whose manifest cruelties and detected treacheries against God's church have been severally sealed with his visible marks of vengeance, written, not upon the wall, but successively on their carcasses with a heavenly finger, not by torchlight but at noonday in the eyes and ears of the world, insomuch as Belshazzar, the father, had his *Mene* graven in the apple of his eye, and that in the eyesight of Anne du Bourg, whose death for professing Christ he had vowed to see.<sup>38</sup> His first son had his *Tekel* told in his ear, which rotted him

<sup>36</sup> Stubbs on several occasions hearkens back to this "unholy alliance" between France and the Turks. Francis I, in the years following his defeat and capture at the Battle of Pavia (1525), had striven to bring about a sustained Ottoman assault against Austria, hoping thus to relieve the Hapsburg pressure on his own realm. The two agreed upon war on the Spanish and the states of Venice and Genoa instead (1532-1535). In 1536 Suleiman bestowed on France commercial privileges similar to those which Venice had long held.

<sup>37</sup> The allegorical interpretation of Dan. 8:9-12, 23-25 is sometimes associated with Nero.

<sup>38</sup> Anne du Bourg, a leader of the Protestants, spoke boldly against the worldliness of the Catholic prelates and pleaded for toleration of Protestants in Parliament before the King on June 10, 1559. Henry was enraged and swore he would see him burned with his own eyes. Du Bourg was burned on December 23, 1559, but Henry did not have the satisfaction of witnessing his martyrdom, as he had preceded him into Eternity by more than five months. Henry II's death was caused by an accidental wound in a tournament, when a splinter from a lance struck his eye.

while he was yet alive.<sup>39</sup> And his next son had his *Peres* marked in every vent of his body, that as he had shed Christian blood with Julianus,<sup>40</sup> so he might take of his own blood in his hand and say with Julianus, *Vicisti, Galilaeae*.<sup>41</sup> Who would not tremble to come near this kindred so wrathfully marked of God? Who would become one with this generation so hateful to men? Let us boast in this Galilean and defy Julian; let us with confidence glory in the cross of Christ and not vouchsafe to join with these apostate princes. This present king, besides the sins of his ancestors, have given the Lord cause enough of personal actions by his own excesses.<sup>42</sup> Which though the Lord do not yet bring in upon him through his long suffering, yet assuredly there is a measure of his wickedness measured out, and a time for his judgments whensoever the saints of God have filled his bottle with tears. The plague common to the house he hath. That is, he wants one of his loins to sit upon his seat. So that we see by proof in three brothers that the Lord will not leave one of Ahab's house.<sup>43</sup> An ill-disposed body he hath, a suspicious and fearful mind even of his friends.

Touching this prince now offered to this Church in marriage, if he be behind in mischiefs, remember he is younger in years and never came to that ability by might of a kingdom to perform his inborn malice to the Church, and the discredit of his brethren have notably hindered him that way. Nevertheless, so far as his place would suffer, he hath been used to do that service to Rome and damage to the Church that he was fit for. At the massacring

<sup>39</sup> Francis II (1544-1560) married Mary Stuart, Queen of Scots, in 1558 and became King in 1559. Francis was a frail, sickly person, but I can find no evidence that his ear rotted away.

<sup>40</sup> Charles IX (1550-1574) married Isabella of Austria in 1570 and became King in 1560. He was responsible for the Massacre of St. Bartholomew.

<sup>41</sup> Emperor Julian's dying words: "Thou hast conquered, O Galilean."

<sup>42</sup> Henry III (1551-1589) married Louise de Lorraine in 1575. He became King of Poland in 1573 and King of France in 1574.

<sup>43</sup> II Kings 10:1-11. Jehu slew Ahab's seventy sons.

ence and go the way of our Parisian brethren. Yea, though this marriage being made should not have towards us that malicious bloody effect which is meant, and that it should but weaken us, as that of Spain did, alas, nevertheless, for the poor Protestants in France their ruin were present, for we saw when, before the great murder, there was a new colored friendship made with our Queen such as with other princes (in respect whereof both she and they were notably abused and wronged by the massacre following), that friendship served first to bear the eyes of the French Protestants, and after to put them quite out, which single friendship with the Queen, if it made the French king the bolder to enterprise the murder, how far will he presume, having a brother in the heart of our Court to refresh the remembrance of his alliance and to stay any contrary aids from hence, while he seize upon his Protestants and worry them like sheep?

And if Monsieur had any sincere meaning to relieve the Protestants, he would employ all that credit and familiarity which he now hath, while he is present with the King, to the Protestants' good, even now whenas they seem to have some need of him. He means nothing less,<sup>50</sup> and that he means the contrary may easily be gathered by the many blasphemous speeches and cruel threatenings against reformed religion proceeding from such as been in the train of his present legate a-later in England; his ill will also to help the Protestants may appear, that whereas there have been since the last peace many violences, murders, and outrages, and justice for those facts denied, and establishment of churches withstood, all against the edict, yet Monsieur showed never to have any common compassion such as some man would have upon beasts when he saw them overburdened. In France he haunts the Mass and is haunted only of Papists. In Flanders he joined himself only with the Papists and strengthened that tumultuous part of the Walloons from whence all the present disorder there comes and the advantage to the Spaniard

<sup>50</sup> Nothing of the sort.

by mutual dissension; his messenger here, though he be in continual conversation with the King's ambassador and at one table, yet cannot one Mass serve them but they must have three or four priests that do nothing but go from the tavern to Mass and from Mass to the tavern, a miserable hope, therefore, of the master's change to good.

And, to conclude this part, unless he had some extraordinary purpose and some Italian quintessence of mischief meant to be compassed against the Church of Christ, in which service the Pope will employ his Catholic and his Christian son and all his sons and they like obedient fools do his will, it could not be possible that he would speak of coming hither with any meaning. For Pope, mother, and brother, and all Papists would resist it, and he himself for his own part would cast with himself, that, being next King of France, if he should be here at the death of his brother, he might be holden for a noble hostage till they had restored us our manifold wrongs, and again, on the other side, it might put him in danger of his French kingdom, being there but slenderly beloved for his family and for his person, and where other great houses for valure<sup>51</sup> in their persons, and perhaps title of their ancestors, would be judged by the wise and by the multitude more worthy to reign over them, and so perhaps we might keep a gauge that they would not care to redeem. The hazards to himself and his state must needs tell us that it is a commodity by our extreme incommodity which he seeks, especially to God's Church against which all the kind of them have sworn enmity.

For the Lord's namesake, therefore, O Christian Queen Elizabeth, take heed to yourself and to the Church of Jesus Christ for which he shed his blood, and which he hath shielded under your royal defense; show yourself a zealous prince for God's gospel to the end; foresee, in a tender love to this people committed to your government, the continuance of the truth among them and their posterity.

<sup>51</sup> Merit.

And forsomuch as in any great plague that can come to this Church your Majesty must have your part, being a chief member therein, as by being in the bosom thereof you receive of the graces bestowed among us, have a care even of yourself and for yourself also, we instantly beseech you, to keep this sin far from you by admitting no counsel that may bring it near you, and in that common confession of sins with the shaking of this rod drives us all to deny some of your delights also, and enter with the whole Church into judgment of ourselves that we be not judged of the Lord. And sith the Lord hath used you as a mean to spread and enlarge Christ's kingdom in other churches, and to harbor the persecuted Christians in your own kingdom, stop your Majesty's ears against these sorcerers and their enchanting counsels, which seek to stay this happy course of yours and to provoke God's anger against you, pray against these dangerous tempters and temptations, and know assuredly, to your comfort, that all the faithful of God pray for you, and when you are in your secret, most separate closet of prayer they join with you in spirit.

The Lord endue you with wisdom according to that you have need of at this special time, and considering the state of princes is in this one point more unhappy than the poor man's degree, that they have none enemies that dare tell truth, and commonly such as been their chief favorites, yea, too many churchmen, which have particular privileges to speak truth (a cruel and impious betraying of a sacred prince), study rather for smooth, delicate words than for plain, rough truth, so much the more I beseech the Lord of his mercy to supply their want of duty with such extraordinary store of counsel in your own breast, and grant you such a principal spirit to discern spirits and to sift counsels that you may smell a flatterer from a loyal counselor, prove all and approve the best. And seeing the very place of a prince doth bring him some disadvantage through our old Adam, who when he is lift up will hardly yield to the good poor advice of them that speak truth in a bare simplicity, the same Lord fill your royal heart with such a tractable and easy sweetness of a yielding nature that you readily and humbly may hearken

to all good counsels sent you from God and such as fear God and love your Majesty. Yea, that you may know that it makes most for your safety to encourage and make much of plain, honest speakers and to put out of heart all flatterers. For true, plain men are the best spies of a prince; they watch when you sleep and will ring a timely alarum in your ear before the danger approach; flatterers never watch but when you wake and that they may be seen; they will lull you in security till the sin and punishment thereof be heard at the doors. The Lord deliver you from them even as from ravens and dogs. And whosoever doth most hotly follow this suit of French marriage with your Majesty, seek to satisfy yourself, most gracious Queen, with what faith and love he can do it; let this be one fire to try him in, that whereas marriage is the most important matter even to the privatest person that he can do all his life long, as that which makes most to an happy or unhappy life here, and therefore even the meanest body will not enter this weighty consultation of marriage without special prayers to God for his direction, if these men, while they deal in this high marriage so nearly concerning your own person and so much importing the whole Church in these parts of the world and the state of England, have persuaded not only your private prayers, but, according to your public place, have also proclaimed or wished to be proclaimed public solemn prayer to God through the land that he might send the best issue to this counsel, then have they not neglected a great help in this thing and have considered of this matter as the consequence thereof requires. Again, let this be a second trial (for it were well done to try them seven times), if heretofore throughout all your younger years they have continually been thus earnest and taken every good occasion to persuade you to marriage, hanging upon your skirts (as it were) and lying at your feet for to win you to marriage, alleging reasons for church and commonweal as they now pretend, then may you think they now have also a good meaning at least, and are but deceived; but if heretofore they have been either dumb or slow speakers in this cause, when all good men wished it, and whose