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LEVIATHAN

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*To my most honour'd friend
Mr Francis Godolphin of Godolphin*

Honoured Sir,

Your most worthy brother, Mr Sidney Godolphin, when he lived, was pleased to think my studies something, and otherwise to oblige me, as you know, with real testimonies of his good opinion, great in themselves, and the greater for the worthiness of his person. For there is not any virtue that disposeth a man either to the service of God, or to the service of his country, to civil society or private friendship, that did not manifestly appear in his conversation, not as acquired by necessity, or affected upon occasion, but inherent, and shining in a generous constitution of his nature. Therefore in honour and gratitude to him, and with devotion to yourself, I humbly dedicate unto you this my discourse of Commonwealth. I know not how the world will receive it, nor how it may reflect on those that shall seem to favour it. For in a way beset with those that contend, on one side for too great liberty, and on the other side for too much authority, it is hard to pass between the points of both unwounded. But yet, methinks, the endeavour to advance the civil power, should not be by the civil power condemned; nor private men, by reprehending it, declare they think that power too great. Besides, I speak not of the men but, in the abstract, of the seat of power (like to those simple and unpartial creatures in the Roman Capitol, that with their noise defended those within it, not because they were they, but there), offending none, I think, but those without, or such within (if there be any such) as favour them. That which perhaps may most offend, are certain texts of holy Scripture, alleged by me to other purpose than ordinarily they use to be by others. But I have done it with due submission, and also, in order to my subject, necessarily; for they are the outworks of the enemy, from whence they impugn the civil power. If notwithstanding

THE INTRODUCTION

Nature, the art whereby God hath made and governs the world, is by the art of man, as in many other things, so in this also imitated, that it can make an artificial animal. For seeing life is but a motion of limbs, the beginning whereof is in some principal part within; why may we not say that all automata (engines that move themselves by springs and wheels as doth a watch) have an artificial life? For what is the heart, but a spring; and the nerves, but so many strings; and the joints, but so many wheels, giving motion to the whole body, such as was intended by the artificer? Art goes yet further, imitating that rational and most excellent work of nature, man. For by art is created that great *Leviathan* called a *Commonwealth*, or *State* (in Latin *Civitas*), which is but an artificial man; though of greater stature and strength than the natural, for whose protection and defence it was intended; and in which, the sovereignty is an artificial soul, as giving life and motion to the whole body: the magistrates, and other officers of judicature and execution, artificial joints; reward and punishment, by which fastened to the seat of the sovereignty, every joint and member is moved to perform his duty, are the nerves, that do the same in the body natural; the wealth and riches of all the particular members, are the strength; *salus populi* (the people's safety) its business; counsellors, by whom all things needful for it to know, are suggested unto it, are the memory; equity and laws, an artificial reason and will; concord, health; sedition, sickness; and civil war, death. Lastly, the pacts and covenants by which the parts of this body politic were at first made, set together, and united, resemble that *fiat*, or the Let us make man, pronounced by God in the creation.

- To describe the nature of this artificial man, I will consider
- First, the matter thereof, and the artificer; both which is man.

Secondly, how and by what covenants it is made; what are the rights and just power or authority of a sovereign; and what it is that preserveth and dissolveth it.

Thirdly, what is a Christian commonwealth.

Lastly, what is the kingdom of darkness.

Concerning the first, there is a saying much usurped of late, that wisdom is acquired, not by reading of books, but of men. Consequently whereunto, those persons that for the most part can give no other proof of being wise, take great delight to show what they think they have read in men, by uncharitable censures of one another behind their backs. But there is another saying not of late understood, by which they might learn truly to read one another, if they would take the pains; and that is, *nosce teipsum*, read thyself: which was not meant, as it is now used, to countenance either the barbarous state of men in power towards their inferiors; or to encourage men of low degree, to a saucy behaviour towards their betters; but to teach us, that for the similitude of the thoughts and passions of one man, to the thoughts and passions of another, whosoever looketh into himself, and considereth what he doth when he does think, opine, reason, hope, fear, &c, and upon what grounds; he shall thereby read and know what are the thoughts and passions of all other men, upon the like occasions. I say the similitude of passions, which are the same in all men, desire, fear, hope, &c; not the similitude of the objects of the passions, which are the things desired, feared, hoped, &c: for these the constitution individual, and particular education, do so vary, and they are so easy to be kept from our knowledge, that the characters of man's heart, blotted and confounded as they are with dissembling, lying, counterfeiting, and erroneous doctrines, are legible only to him that searcheth hearts. And though by men's actions we do discover their design sometimes, yet to do it without comparing them with our own, and distinguishing all circumstances by which the case may come to be altered, is to decipher without a key, and be for the most part deceived by too much trust or by too much diffidence; as he that reads, is himself a good or evil man.

But let one man read another by his actions never so perfectly, it serves him only with his acquaintance, which are but few. He that

is to govern a whole nation must read in himself, not this or that particular man, but mankind: which though it be hard to do, harder than to learn any language or science; yet, when I shall have set down my own reading orderly and perspicuously, the pains left another will be only to consider, if he also find not the same in himself. For this kind of doctrine admitteth no other demonstration.