CHAP. XVIII. Of Tyranny.

Sec. 199. AS usurpation is the exercise of power, which another hath a right to; so tyranny is the exercise of power beyond right, which no body can have a right to. And this is making use of the power any one has in his hands, not for the good of those who are under it, but for his own private separate advantage. When the governor, however intitled, makes not the law, but his will, the rule; and his commands and actions are not directed to the preservation of the properties of his people, but the satisfaction of his own ambition, revenge, covetousness, or any other irregular passion.

Sec. 200. If one can doubt this to be truth, or reason, because it comes from the obscure hand of a subject, I hope the authority of a king will make it pass with him. King James the first, in his speech to the parliament, 1603, tells them thus, I will ever prefer the weal of the public, and of the whole commonwealth, in making of good laws and constitutions, to any particular and private ends of mine; thinking ever the wealth and weal of the commonwealth to be my greatest weal and worldly felicity; a point wherein a lawful king doth directly differ from a tyrant: for I do acknowledge, that the special and greatest point of difference that is between a rightful king and an usurping tyrant, is this, that whereas the proud and ambitious tyrant doth think his kingdom and people are only ordained for satisfaction of his desires and unreasonable appetites, the righteous and just king doth by the contrary acknowledge himself to be ordained for the procuring of the wealth and property of his people, And again, in his speech to the parliament, 1609, he hath these words, The king binds himself by a double oath, to the observation of the fundamental laws of his kingdom; tacitly, as by being a king, and so bound to protect as well the people, as the laws of his kingdom; and expressly, by his oath at his coronation, so as every just king, in a settled kingdom, is bound to observe that paction made to his people, by his laws, in framing his government agreeable thereunto, according to that paction which God made with Noah after the deluge. Hereafter, seed-time and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night, shall not cease while the earth remaineth. And therefore a king governing in a settled kingdom, leaves to be a king, and degenerates into a tyrant, as soon as he leaves off to rule according to his laws, And a little after, Therefore all kings that are not tyrants, or perjured, will be glad to bound themselves within the limits of their laws; and they that persuade them the contrary, are vipers, and pests both against them and the commonwealth. Thus that learned king, who well understood the notion of things, makes the difference betwixt a king and a tyrant to consist only in this, that one makes the laws the bounds of his power, and the good of the public, the end of his government; the other makes all give way to his own will and appetite.

Sec. 201. It is a mistake, to think this fault is proper only to monarchies; other forms of government are liable to it, as well as that: for wherever the power, that is put in any hands for the government of the people, and the preservation of their properties, is applied to other ends, and made use of to impoverish, harass, or subdue them to the arbitrary and irregular commands of those that have it; there it presently becomes tyranny, whether those that thus use it are one or many. Thus we read of the thirty tyrants at Athens, as well as one at Syracuse; and the intolerable
dominion of the Decemviri at Rome was nothing better.

Sec. 202. Where-ever law ends, tyranny begins, if the law be transgressed to another’s harm; and whosoever in authority exceeds the power given him by the law, and makes use of the force he has under his command, to compass that upon the subject, which the law allows not, ceases in that to be a magistrate; and, acting without authority, may be opposed, as any other man, who by force invades the right of another. This is acknowledged in subordinate magistrates. He that hath authority to seize my person in the street, may be opposed as a thief and a robber, if he endeavours to break into my house to execute a writ, notwithstanding that I know he has such a warrant, and such a legal authority, as will impower him to arrest me abroad. And why this should not hold in the highest, as well as in the most inferior magistrate, I would gladly be informed. Is it reasonable, that the eldest brother, because he has the greatest part of his father’s estate, should thereby have a right to take away any of his younger brothers portions? or that a rich man, who possessed a whole country, should from thence have a right to seize, when he pleased, the cottage and garden of his poor neighbour? The being rightfully possessed of great power and riches, exceedingly beyond the greatest part of the sons of Adam, is so far from being an excuse, much less a reason, for rapine and oppression, which the endamaging another without authority is, that it is a great aggravation of it: for the exceeding the bounds of authority is no more a right in a great, than in a petty officer; no more justifiable in a king than a constable; but is so much the worse in him, in that he has more trust put in him, has already a much greater share than the rest of his brethren, and is supposed, from the advantages of his education, employment, and counsellors, to be more knowing in the measures of right and wrong.

Sec. 203. May the commands then of a prince be opposed? may he be resisted as often as any one shall find himself aggrieved, and but imagine he has not right done him? This will unhinge and overturn all polities, and, instead of government and order, leave nothing but anarchy and confusion.

Sec. 204. To this I answer, that force is to be opposed to nothing, but to unjust and unlawful force; whoever makes any opposition in any other case, draws on himself a just condemnation both from God and man; and so no such danger or confusion will follow, as is often suggested: for,

Sec. 205. First, As, in some countries, the person of the prince by the law is sacred; and so, whatever he commands or does, his person is still free from all question or violence, not liable to force, or any judicial censure or condemnation. But yet opposition may be made to the illegal acts of any inferior officer, or other commissioned by him; unless he will, by actually putting himself into a state of war with his people, dissolve the government, and leave them to that defence which belongs to every one in the state of nature: for of such things who can tell what the end will be? and a neighbour kingdom has shewed the world an odd example. In all other cases the sacredness of the person exempts him from all inconveniencies, whereby he is secure, whilst the government stands, from all violence and harm whatsoever; than which there cannot be a wiser constitution: for the harm he can do in his own person not being likely to happen often, nor to extend itself far; nor being able by his single strength to subvert the laws, nor oppress the body of the people, should any prince have so much weakness, and ill nature as to be willing to do it, the inconveniency of some particular mischiefs, that may happen sometimes,
when a heady prince comes to the throne, are well recompensed by the peace of the public, and
security of the government, in the person of the chief magistrate, thus set out of the reach of
danger: it being safer for the body, that some few private men should be sometimes in danger to
suffer, than that the head of the republic should be easily, and upon slight occasions, exposed.

Sec. 206. Secondly, But this privilege, belonging only to the king’s person, hinders not, but they
may be questioned, opposed, and resisted, who use unjust force, though they pretend a
commission from him, which the law authorizes not; as is plain in the case of him that has the
king’s writ to arrest a man, which is a full commission from the king; and yet he that has it
cannot break open a man’s house to do it, nor execute this command of the king upon certain
days, nor in certain places, though this commission have no such exception in it; but they are the
limitations of the law, which if any one transgress, the king’s commission excuses him not: for
the king’s authority being given him only by the law, he cannot impower any one to act against
the law, or justify him, by his commission, in so doing; the commission, or command of any
magistrate, where he has no authority, being as void and insignificant, as that of any private man;
the difference between the one and the other, being that the magistrate has some authority so far,
and to such ends, and the private man has none at all: for it is not the commission, but the
authority, that gives the right of acting; and against the laws there can be no authority. But,
notwithstanding such resistance, the king’s person and authority are still both secured, and so no
danger to governor or government,

Sec. 207. Thirdly, Supposing a government wherein the person of the chief magistrate is not thus
sacred; yet this doctrine of the lawfulness of resisting all unlawful exercises of his power, will
not upon every slight occasion indanger him, or imbroil the government: for where the injured
party may be relieved, and his damages repaired by appeal to the law, there can be no pretence
for force, which is only to be used where a man is intercepted from appealing to the law: for
nothing is to be accounted hostile force, but where it leaves not the remedy of such an appeal;
and it is such force alone, that puts him that uses it into a state of war, and makes it lawful to
resist him. A man with a sword in his hand demands my purse in the high-way, when perhaps I
have not twelve pence in my pocket: this man I may lawfully kill. To another I deliver lool. to
hold only whilst I alight, which he refuses to restore me, when I am got up again, but draws his
sword to defend the possession of it by force, if I endeavour to retake it. The mischief this man
does me is a hundred, or possibly a thousand times more than the other perhaps intended me
(whom I killed before he really did me any); and yet I might lawfully kill the one, and cannot so
much as hurt the other lawfully. The reason whereof is plain; because the one using force, which
threatened my life, I could not have time to appeal to the law to secure it: and when it was gone,
it was too late to appeal. The law could not restore life to my dead carcass: the loss was
irreparable; which to prevent, the law of nature gave me a right to destroy him, who had put
himself into a state of war with me, and threatened my destruction. But in the other case, my life
not being in danger, I may have the benefit of appealing to the law, and have reparation for my
lool. that way.

Sec. 208. Fourthly, But if the unlawful acts done by the magistrate be maintained (by the power
he has got), and the remedy which is due by law, be by the same power obstructed; yet the right
of resisting, even in such manifest acts of tyranny, will not suddenly, or on slight occasions,
disturb the government: for if it reach no farther than some private men’s cases, though they
have a right to defend themselves, and to recover by force what by unlawful force is taken from
them; yet the right to do so will not easily engage them in a contest, wherein they are sure to
perish; it being as impossible for one, or a few oppressed men to disturb the government, where
the body of the people do not think themselves concerned in it, as for a raving mad-man, or
heady malcontent to overturn a well settled state; the people being as little apt to follow the one,
as the other.

Sec. 209. But if either these illegal acts have extended to the majority of the people; or if the
mischief and oppression has lighted only on some few, but in such cases, as the precedent, and
consequences seem to threaten all; and they are persuaded in their consciences, that their laws,
and with them their estates, liberties, and lives are in danger, and perhaps their religion too; how
they will be hindered from resisting illegal force, used against them, I cannot tell. This is an
inconvenience, I confess, that attends all governments whatsoever, when the governors have
brought it to this pass, to be generally suspected of their people; the most dangerous state which
they can possibly put themselves in, wherein they are the less to be pitied, because it is so easy to
be avoided; it being as impossible for a governor, if he really means the good of his people, and
the preservation of them, and their laws together, not to make them see and feel it, as it is for the
father of a family, not to let his children see he loves, and takes care of them.

Sec. 210. But if all the world shall observe pretences of one kind, and actions of another; arts
used to elude the law, and the trust of prerogative (which is an arbitrary power in some things
left in the prince’s hand to do good, not harm to the people) employed contrary to the end for
which it was given: if the people shall find the ministers and subordinate magistrates chosen
suitable to such ends, and favoured, or laid by, proportionably as they promote or oppose them:
if they see several experiments made of arbitrary power, and that religion underhand favoured,
(tho’ publicly proclaimed against) which is readiest to introduce it; and the operators in it
supported, as much as may be; and when that cannot be done, yet approved still, and liked the
better: if a long train of actions shew the councils all tending that way; how can a man any more
hinder himself from being persuaded in his own mind, which way things are going; or from
casting about how to save himself, than he could from believing the captain of the ship he was in,
was carrying him, and the rest of the company, to Algiers, when he found him always steering
that course, though cross winds, leaks in his ship, and want of men and provisions did often force
him to turn his course another way for some time, which he steadily returned to again, as soon as
the wind, weather, and other circumstances would let him?

CHAP. XIX. Of the Dissolution of Government.

Sec. 211. HE that will with any clearness speak of the dissolution of government, ought in the
first place to distinguish between the dissolution of the society and the dissolution of the
government. That which makes the community, and brings men out of the loose state of nature,
into one politic society, is the agreement which every one has with the rest to incorporate, and
act as one body, and so be one distinct commonwealth. The usual, and almost only way whereby
this union is dissolved, is the inroad of foreign force making a conquest upon them: for in that
case, (not being able to maintain and support themselves, as one intire and independent body) the
union belonging to that body which consisted therein, must necessarily cease, and so every one
return to the state he was in before, with a liberty to shift for himself, and provide for his own safety, as he thinks fit, in some other society. Whenever the society is dissolved, it is certain the government of that society cannot remain. Thus conquerors swords often cut up governments by the roots, and mangle societies to pieces, separating the subdued or scattered multitude from the protection of, and dependence on, that society which ought to have preserved them from violence. The world is too well instructed in, and too forward to allow of, this way of dissolving of governments, to need any more to be said of it; and there wants not much argument to prove, that where the society is dissolved, the government cannot remain; that being as impossible, as for the frame of an house to subsist when the materials of it are scattered and dissipated by a whirl- wind, or jumbled into a confused heap by an earthquake.

Sec. 212. Besides this over-turning from without, governments are dissolved from within, First, When the legislative is altered. Civil society being a state of peace, amongst those who are of it, from whom the state of war is excluded by the umpirage, which they have provided in their legislative, for the ending all differences that may arise amongst any of them, it is in their legislative, that the members of a commonwealth are united, and combined together into one coherent living body. This is the soul that gives form, life, and unity, to the common-wealth: from hence the several members have their mutual influence, sympathy, and connexion: and therefore, when the legislative is broken, or dissolved, dissolution and death follows: for the essence and union of the society consisting in having one will, the legislative, when once established by the majority, has the declaring, and as it were keeping of that will. The constitution of the legislative is the first and fundamental act of society, whereby provision is made for the continuation of their union, under the direction of persons, and bonds of laws, made by persons authorized thereunto, by the consent and appointment of the people, without which no one man, or number of men, amongst them, can have authority of making laws that shall be binding to the rest. When any one, or more, shall take upon them to make laws, whom the people have not appointed so to do, they make laws without authority, which the people are not therefore bound to obey; by which means they come again to be out of subjection, and may constitute to themselves a new legislative, as they think best, being in full liberty to resist the force of those, who without authority would impose any thing upon them. Every one is at the disposal of his own will, when those who had, by the delegation of the society, the declaring of the public will, are excluded from it, and others usurp the place, who have no such authority or delegation.

Sec. 213. This being usually brought about by such in the commonwealth who misuse the power they have; it is hard to consider it aright, and know at whose door to lay it, without knowing the form of government in which it happens. Let us suppose then the legislative placed in the concurrence of three distinct persons.
1. A single hereditary person, having the constant, supreme, executive power, and with it the power of convoking and dissolving the other two within certain periods of time.
2. An assembly of hereditary nobility.
3. An assembly of representatives chosen, pro tempore, by the people. Such a form of government supposed, it is evident,

Sec. 214. First, That when such a single person, or prince, sets up his own arbitrary will in place of the laws, which are the will of the society, declared by the legislative, then the legislative is
changed: for that being in effect the legislative, whose rules and laws are put in execution, and required to be obeyed; when other laws are set up, and other rules pretended, and inforced, than what the legislative, constituted by the society, have enacted, it is plain that the legislative is changed. Whoever introduces new laws, not being thereunto authorized by the fundamental appointment of the society, or subverts the old, disowns and overthrows the power by which they were made, and so sets up a new legislative.

Sec. 215. Secondly, When the prince hinders the legislative from assembling in its due time, or from acting freely, pursuant to those ends for which it was constituted, the legislative is altered: for it is not a certain number of men, no, nor their meeting, unless they have also freedom of debating, and leisure of perfecting, what is for the good of the society, wherein the legislative consists: when these are taken away or altered, so as to deprive the society of the due exercise of their power, the legislative is truly altered; for it is not names that constitute governments, but the use and exercise of those powers that were intended to accompany them; so that he, who takes away the freedom, or hinders the acting of the legislative in its due seasons, in effect takes away the legislative, and puts an end to the government.

Sec. 216. Thirdly, When, by the arbitrary power of the prince, the electors, or ways of election, are altered, without the consent, and contrary to the common interest of the people, there also the legislative is altered: for, if others than those whom the society hath authorized thereunto, do chuse, or in another way than what the society hath prescribed, those chosen are not the legislative appointed by the people.

Sec. 217. Fourthly, The delivery also of the people into the subjection of a foreign power, either by the prince, or by the legislative, is certainly a change of the legislative, and so a dissolution of the government: for the end why people entered into society being to be preserved one intire, free, independent society, to be governed by its own laws; this is lost, whenever they are given up into the power of another.

Sec. 218. Why, in such a constitution as this, the dissolution of the government in these cases is to be imputed to the prince, is evident; because he, having the force, treasure and offices of the state to employ, and often persuading himself, or being flattered by others, that as supreme magistrate he is incapable of control; he alone is in a condition to make great advances toward such changes, under pretence of lawful authority, and has it in his hands to terrify or suppress opposers, as factious, seditious, and enemies to the government: whereas no other part of the legislative, or people, is capable by themselves to attempt any alteration of the legislative, without open and visible rebellion, apt enough to be taken notice of, which, when it prevails, produces effects very little different from foreign conquest. Besides, the prince in such a form of government, having the power of dissolving the other parts of the legislative, and thereby rendering them private persons, they can never in opposition to him, or without his concurrence, alter the legislative by a law, his conse power, neglects and abandons that charge, so that the laws already made can no longer be put in execution. This is demonstratively to reduce all to anarchy, and so effectually to dissolve the government: for laws not being made for themselves, but to be, by their execution, the bonds of the society, to keep every part of the body politic in its due place and function; when that totally ceases, the government visibly ceases, and the people become a confused multitude, without order or connexion. Where there is no longer the
administration of justice, for the securing of men’s rights, nor any remaining power within the
community to direct the force, or provide for the necessities of the public, there certainly is no
government left. Where the laws cannot be executed, it is all one as if there were no laws; and a
government without laws is, I suppose, a mystery in politics, unconceivable to human capacity,
and inconsistent with human society.

Sec. 220. In these and the like cases, when the government is dissolved, the people are at liberty
to provide for themselves, by erecting a new legislative, differing from the other, by the change
of persons, or form, or both, as they shall find it most for their safety and good: for the society
can never, by the fault of another, lose the native and original right it has to preserve itself, which
can only be done by a settled legislative, and a fair and impartial execution of the laws made by
it. But the state of mankind is not so miserable that they are not capable of using this remedy, till
it be too late to look for any. To tell people they may provide for themselves, by erecting a new
legislative, when by oppression, artifice, or being delivered over to a foreign power, their old one
is gone, is only to tell them, they may expect relief when it is too late, and the evil is past cure.
This is in effect no more than to bid them first be slaves, and then to take care of their liberty;
and when their chains are on, tell them, they may act like freemen. This, if barely so, is rather
mockery than relief; and men can never be secure from tyranny, if there be no means to escape it
till they are perfectly under it: and therefore it is, that they have not only a right to get out of it,
but to prevent it.

Sec. 221. There is therefore, secondly, another way whereby governments are dissolved, and that
is, when the legislative, or the prince, either of them, act contrary to their trust. First, The
legislative acts against the trust reposed in them, when they endeavour to invade the property of
the subject, and to make themselves, or any part of the community, masters, or arbitrary
disposers of the lives, liberties, or fortunes of the people.

Sec. 222. The reason why men enter into society, is the preservation of their property; and the
end why they chuse and authorize a legislative, is, that there may be laws made, and rules set, as
guards and fences to the properties of all the members of the society, to limit the power, and
moderate the dominion, of every part and member of the society: for since it can never be
supposed to be the will of the society, that the legislative should have a power to destroy that
which every one designs to secure, by entering into society, and for which the people submitted
themselves to legislators of their own making; whenever the legislators endeavour to take away,
and destroy the property of the people, or to reduce them to slavery under arbitrary power, they
put themselves into a state of war with the people, who are thereupon absolved from any farther
obedience, and are left to the common refuge, which God hath provided for all men, against
force and violence. Whenceover therefore the legislative shall transgress this fundamental rule of
society; and either by ambition, fear, folly or corruption, endeavour to grasp themselves, or put
into the hands of any other, an absolute power over the lives, liberties, and estates of the people;
by this breach of trust they forfeit the power the people had put into their hands for quite contrary
ends, and it devolves to the people, who, have a right to resume their original liberty, and, by the
establishment of a new legislative, (such as they shall think fit) provide for their own safety and
security, which is the end for which they are in society. What I have said here, concerning the
legislative in general, holds true also concerning the supreme executor, who having a double
trust put in him, both to have a part in the legislative, and the supreme execution of the law, acts
against both, when he goes about to set up his own arbitrary will as the law of the society. He acts also contrary to his trust, when he either employs the force, treasure, and offices of the society, to corrupt the representatives, and gain them to his purposes; or openly pre-engages the electors, and prescribes to their choice, such, whom he has, by solicitations, threats, promises, or otherwise, won to his designs; and employs them to bring in such, who have promised beforehand what to vote, and what to enact. Thus to regulate candidates and electors, and new-model the ways of election, what is it but to cut up the government by the roots, and poison the very fountain of public security? for the people having reserved to themselves the choice of their representatives, as the fence to their properties, could do it for no other end, but that they might always be freely chosen, and so chosen, freely act, and advise, as the necessity of the commonwealth, and the public good should, upon examination, and mature debate, be judged to require. This, those who give their votes before they hear the debate, and have weighed the reasons on all sides, are not capable of doing. To prepare such an assembly as this, and endeavour to set up the declared abettors of his own will, for the true representatives of the people, and the law-makers of the society, is certainly as great a breach of trust, and as perfect a declaration of a design to subvert the government, as is possible to be met with. To which, if one shall add rewards and punishments visibly employed to the same end, and all the arts of perverted law made use of, to take off and destroy all that stand in the way of such a design, and will not comply and consent to betray the liberties of their country, it will be past doubt what is doing. What power they ought to have in the society, who thus employ it contrary to the trust went along with it in its first institution, is easy to determine; and one cannot but see, that he, who has once attempted any such thing as this, cannot any longer be trusted.

Sec. 223. To this perhaps it will be said, that the people being ignorant, and always discontented, to lay the foundation of government in the unsteady opinion and uncertain humour of the people, is to expose it to certain ruin; and no government will be able long to subsist, if the people may set up a new legislative, whenever they take offence at the old one. To this I answer, Quite the contrary. People are not so easily got out of their old forms, as some are apt to suggest. They are hardly to be prevailed with to amend the acknowledged faults in the frame they have been accustomed to. And if there be any original defects, or adventitious ones introduced by time, or corruption; it is not an easy thing to get them changed, even when all the world sees there is an opportunity for it. This slowness and aversion in the people to quit their old constitutions, has, in the many revolutions which have been seen in this kingdom, in this and former ages, still kept us to, or, after some interval of fruitless attempts, still brought us back again to our old legislative of king, lords and commons: and whatever provocations have made the crown be taken from some of our princes heads, they never carried the people so far as to place it in another line.

Sec. 224. But it will be said, this hypothesis lays a ferment for frequent rebellion. To which I answer,
First, No more than any other hypothesis: for when the people are made miserable, and find themselves exposed to the ill usage of arbitrary power, cry up their governors, as much as you will, for sons of Jupiter; let them be sacred and divine, descended, or authorized from heaven; give them out for whom or what you please, the same will happen. The people generally ill treated, and contrary to right, will be ready upon any occasion to ease themselves of a burden that sits heavy upon them. They will wish, and seek for the opportunity, which in the change, weakness and accidents of human affairs, seldom delays long to offer itself. He must have lived
but a little while in the world, who has not seen examples of this in his time; and he must have
read very little, who cannot produce examples of it in all sorts of governments in the world.

Sec. 225. Secondly, I answer, such revolutions happen not upon every little mismanagement in
public affairs. Great mistakes in the ruling part, many wrong and inconvenient laws, and all the
slips of human frailty, will be born by the people without mutiny or murmur. But if a long train
of abuses, prevarications and artifices, all tending the same way, make the design visible to the
people, and they cannot but feel what they lie under, and see whether they are going; it is not to
be wondered, that they should then rouse themselves, and endeavour to put the rule into such
hands which may secure to them the ends for which government was at first erected; and without
which, ancient names, and specious forms, are so far from being better, that they are much
worse, than the state of nature, or pure anarchy; the inconveniencies being all as great and as
near, but the remedy farther off and more difficult.

Sec. 226. Thirdly, I answer, that this doctrine of a power in the people of providing for their
safety anew, by a new legislative, when their legislators have acted contrary to their trust, by
invading their property, is the best fence against rebellion, and the most likely means to hinder it:
for rebellion being an opposition, not to persons, but authority, which is founded only in the
constitutions and laws of the government; those, whoever they be, who by force break through,
and by force justify their violation of them, are truly and properly rebels: for when men, by
entering into society and civil-government, have excluded force, and introduced laws for the
preservation of property, peace, and unity amongst themselves, those who set up force again in
opposition to the laws, do rebelle, that is, bring back again the state of war, and are properly
rebels: which they who are in power, (by the pretence they have to authority, the temptation of
force they have in their hands, and the flattery of those about them) being likeliest to do; the
properest way to prevent the evil is to shew them the danger and injustice of it, who are under
the greatest temptation to run into it.

Sec. 227. In both the fore-mentioned cases, when either the legislative is changed, or the
legislators act contrary to the end for which they were constituted; those who are guilty are guilty
of rebellion: for if any one by force takes away the established legislative of any society, and the
laws by them made, pursuant to their trust, he thereby takes away the umpirage, which every one
had consented to, for a peaceable decision of all their controversies, and a bar to the state of war
amongst them. They, who remove, or change the legislative, take away this decisive power,
which no body can have, but by the appointment and consent of the people; and so destroying the
authority which the people did, and no body else can set up, and introducing a power which the
people hath not authorized, they actually introduce a state of war, which is that of force without
authority: and thus, by removing the legislative established by the society, (in whose decisions
the people acquiesced and united, as to that of their own will) they untie the knot, and expose the
people anew to the state of war, And if those, who by force take away the legislative, are rebels,
the legislators themselves, as has been shewn, can be no less esteemed so; when they, who were
set up for the protection, and preservation of the people, their liberties and properties, shall by
force invade and endeavour to take them away; and so they putting themselves into a state of war
with those who made them the protectors and guardians of their peace, are properly, and with the
greatest aggravation, rebellantes, rebels.
Sec. 228. But if they, who say it lays a foundation for rebellion, mean that it may occasion civil wars, or intestine broils, to tell the people they are absolved from obedience when illegal attempts are made upon their liberties or properties, and may oppose the unlawful violence of those who were their magistrates, when they invade their properties contrary to the trust put in them; and that therefore this doctrine is not to be allowed, being so destructive to the peace of the world: they may as well say, upon the same ground, that honest men may not oppose robbers or pirates, because this may occasion disorder or bloodshed. If any mischief come in such cases, it is not to be charged upon him who defends his own right, but on him that invades his neighbours. If the innocent honest man must quietly quit all he has, for peace sake, to him who will lay violent hands upon it, I desire it may be considered, what a kind of peace there will be in the world, which consists only in violence and rapine; and which is to be maintained only for the benefit of robbers and oppressors. VVho would not think it an admirable peace betwixt the mighty and the mean, when the lamb, without resistance, yielded his throat to be torn by the imperious wolf? Polyphemus’s den gives us a perfect pattern of such a peace, and such a government, wherein Ulysses and his companions had nothing to do, but quietly to suffer themselves to be devoured. And no doubt Ulysses, who was a prudent man, preached up passive obedience, and exhorted them to a quiet submission, by representing to them of what concernment peace was to mankind; and by shewing the inconveniences might happen, if they should offer to resist Polyphemus, who had now the power over them.

Sec. 229. The end of government is the good of mankind; and which is best for mankind, that the people should be always exposed to the boundless will of tyranny, or that the rulers should be sometimes liable to be opposed, when they grow exorbitant in the use of their power, and employ it for the destruction, and not the preservation of the properties of their people?

Sec. 230. Nor let any one say, that mischief can arise from hence, as often as it shall please a busy head, or turbulent spirit, to desire the alteration of the government. It is true, such men may stir, whenever they please; but it will be only to their own just ruin and perdition: for till the mischief be grown general, and the ill designs of the rulers become visible, or their attempts sensible to the greater part, the people, who are more disposed to suffer than right themselves by resistance, are not apt to stir. The examples of particular injustice, or oppression of here and there an unfortunate man, moves them not. But if they universally have a persuasion, grounded upon manifest evidence, that designs are carrying on against their liberties, and the general course and tendency of things cannot but give them strong suspicions of the evil intention of their governors, who is to be blamed for it? Who can help it, if they, who might avoid it, bring themselves into this suspicion? Are the people to be blamed, if they have the sense of rational creatures, and can think of things no otherwise than as they find and feel them? And is it not rather their fault, who put things into such a posture, that they would not have them thought to be as they are? I grant, that the pride, ambition, and turbulency of private men have sometimes caused great disorders in commonwealths, and factions have been fatal to states and kingdoms. But whether the mischief hath oftener begun in the peoples wantonness, and a desire to cast off the lawful authority of their rulers, or in the rulers insolence, and endeavour to get and exercise an arbitrary power over their people; whether oppression, or disobedience, gave the first rise to the disorder, I leave it to impartial history to determine. This I am sure, whoever, either ruler or subject, by force goes about to invade the rights of either prince or people, and lays the foundation for overthrowing the constitution and frame of any just government, is highly guilty of
the greatest crime, I think, a man is capable of, being to answer for all those mischiefs of blood, rapine, and desolation, which the breaking to pieces of governments bring on a country. And he who does it, is justly to be esteemed the common enemy and pest of mankind, and is to be treated accordingly.

Sec. 231. That subjects or foreigners, attempting by force on the properties of any people, may be resisted with force, is agreed on all hands. But that magistrates, doing the same thing, may be resisted, hath of late been denied: as if those who had the greatest privileges and advantages by the law, had thereby a power to break those laws, by which alone they were set in a better place than their brethren: whereas their offence is thereby the greater, both as being ungrateful for the greater share they have by the law, and breaking also that trust, which is put into their hands by their brethren.

Sec. 232. Whosoever uses force without right, as every one does in society, who does it without law, puts himself into a state of war with those against whom he so uses it; and in that state all former ties are cancelled, all other rights cease, and every one has a right to defend himself, and to resist the aggressor. This is so evident, that Barclay himself, that great assertor of the power and sacredness of kings, is forced to confess, That it is lawful for the people, in some cases, to resist their king; and that too in a chapter, wherein he pretends to shew, that the divine law shuts up the people from all manner of rebellion. Whereby it is evident, even by his own doctrine, that, since they may in some cases resist, all resisting of princes is not rebellion. His words are these.

Sec. 233. But if any one should ask, Must the people then always lay themselves open to the cruelty and rage of tyranny? Must they see their cities pillaged, and laid in ashes, their wives and children exposed to the tyrant’s lust and fury, and themselves and families reduced by their king to ruin, and all the miseries of want and oppression, and yet sit still? Must men alone be debarred the common privilege of opposing force with force, which nature allows so freely to all other creatures for their preservation from injury? I answer: Self-defence is a part of the law of nature; nor can it be denied the community, even against the king himself: but to revenge themselves upon him, must by no means be allowed them; it being not agreeable to that law. Wherefore if the king shall shew an hatred, not only to some particular persons, but sets himself against the body of the common wealth, whereof he is the head, and shall, with intolerable ill usage, cruelly tyrannize over the whole, or a considerable part of the people, in this case the people have a right to resist and defend themselves from injury: but it must be with this caution, that they only defend themselves, but do not attack their prince: they may repair the damages received, but must not for any provocation exceed the bounds of due reverence and respect. They may repulse the present attempt, but must not revenge past violences: for it is natural for us to defend life and limb, but that an inferior should punish a superior, is against nature. The mischief which is designed them, the people may prevent before it be done; but when it is done, they must not revenge it on the king, though author of the villany. This therefore is the privilege of the people in general, above what any private person hath; that particular men are allowed by our adversaries themselves (Buchanan only excepted) to have no other remedy but patience; but the body of the people may with respect resist intolerable tyranny; for when it is but moderate, they ought to endure it.
Sec. 234. Thus far that great advocate of monarchical power allows of resistance.

Sec. 235. It is true, he has annexed two limitations to it, to no purpose:
First, He says, it must be with reverence.
Secondly, It must be without retribution, or punishment; and the reason he gives is, because an inferior cannot punish a superior.
First, How to resist force without striking again, or how to strike with reverence, will need some skill to make intelligible. He that shall oppose an assault only with a shield to receive the blows, or in any more respectful posture, without a sword in his hand, to abate the confidence and force of the assailant, will quickly be at an end of his resistance, and will find such a defence serve only to draw on himself the worse usage. This is as ridiculous a way of resisting, as juvenal thought it of fighting; ubi tu pulsas, ego vapulo tantum. And the success of the combat will be unavoidably the same he there describes it:
— Libertas pauperis haec est: Pulsatus rogat, & pugnis concisus, adorat, Ut liceat paucis cum dentibus inde reverteri.
This will always be the event of such an imaginary resistance, where men may not strike again. He therefore who may resist, must be allowed to strike. And then let our author, or any body else, join a knock on the head, or a cut on the face, with as much reverence and respect as he thinks fit. He that can reconcile blows and reverence, may, for aught I know, desire for his pains, a civil, respectful cudgeling where-ever he can meet with it.
Secondly, As to his second, An inferior cannot punish a superior; that is true, generally speaking, whilst he is his superior. But to resist force with force, being the state of war that levels the parties, cancels all former relation of reverence, respect, and superiority: and then the odds that remains, is, that he, who opposes the unjust agressor, has this superiority over him, that he has a right, when he prevails, to punish the offender, both for the breach of the peace, and all the evils that followed upon it. Barclay therefore, in another place, more coherently to himself, denies it to be lawful to resist a king in any case. But he there assigns two cases, whereby a king may un-king himself. His words are,

Sec. 237. What then, can there no case happen wherein the people may of right, and by their own authority, help themselves, take arms, and set upon their king, imperiously domineering over them? None at all, whilst he remains a king. Honour the king, and he that resists the power, resists the ordinance of God; are divine oracles that will never permit it. The people therefore can never come by a power over him, unless he does something that makes him cease to be a king: for then he divests himself of his crown and dignity, and returns to the state of a private man, and the people become free and superior, the power which they had in the interregnum, before they crowned him king, devolving to them again. But there are but few miscarriages which bring the matter to this state. After considering it well on all sides, I can find but two. Two cases there are, I say, whereby a king, ipso facto, becomes no king, and loses all power and regal authority over his people; which are also taken notice of by Winzerus.
The first is, If he endeavour to overturn the government, that is, if he have a purpose and design to ruin the kingdom and commonwealth, as it is recorded of Nero, that he resolved to cut off the senate and people of Rome, lay the city waste with fire and sword, and then remove to some other place. And of Caligula, that he openly declared, that he would be no longer a head to the people or senate, and that he had it in his thoughts to cut off the worthiest men of both ranks, and then retire to Alexandria: and he wisht that the people had but one neck, that he might dispatch
them all at a blow. Such designs as these, when any king harbours in his thoughts, and seriously
promotes, he immediately gives up all care and thought of the common-wealth; and consequently
forfeits the power of governing his subjects, as a master does the dominion over his slaves whom
he hath abandoned.

Sec. 238. The other case is, When a king makes himself the dependent of another, and subjects
his kingdom which his ancestors left him, and the people put free into his hands, to the dominion
of another: for however perhaps it may not be his intention to prejudice the people; yet because
he has hereby lost the principal part of regal dignity, viz. to be next and immediately under God,
supreme in his kingdom; and also because he betrayed or forced his people, whose liberty he
ought to have carefully preserved, into the power and dominion of a foreign nation. By this, as. it
were, alienation of his kingdom, he himself loses the power he had in it before, without
transferring any the least right to those on whom he would have bestowed it; and so by this act
sets the people free, and leaves them at their own disposal. One example of this is to be found in
the Scotch Annals.

Sec. 239. In these cases Barclay, the great champion of absolute monarchy, is forced to allow,
that a king may be resisted, and ceases to be a king. That is, in short, not to multiply cases, in
whatsoever he has no authority, there he is no king, and may be resisted: for wheresoever the
authority ceases, the king ceases too, and becomes like other men who have no authority. And
these two cases he instances in, differ little from those above mentioned, to be destructive to
governments, only that he has omitted the principle from which his doctrine flows: and that is,
the breach of trust, in not preserving the form of government agreed on, and in not intending the
end of government itself, which is the public good and preservation of property. When a king has
dethroned himself, and put himself in a state of war with his people, what shall hinder them from
prosecuting him who is no king, as they would any other man, who has put himself into a state of
war with them, Barclay, and those of his opinion, would do well to tell us. This farther I desire
may be taken notice of out of Barclay, that he says, The mischief that is designed them, the
people may prevent before it be clone: whereby he allows resistance when tyranny is but in
design. Such designs as these (says he) when any king harbours in his thoughts and seriously
promotes, he immediately gives up all care and thought of the common-wealth; so that,
according to him, the neglect of the public good is to be taken as an evidence of such design, or
at least for a sufficient cause of resistance. And the reason of all, he gives in these words,
Because he betrayed or forced his people, whose liberty he ought carefully to have preserved.
What he adds, into the power and dominion of a foreign nation, signifies nothing, the fault and
forfeiture lying in the loss of their liberty, which he ought to have preserved, and not in any
distinction of the persons to whose dominion they were subjected. The peoples right is equally
invaded, and their liberty lost, whether they are made slaves to any of their own, or a foreign
nation; and in this lies the injury, and against this only have they the right of defence. And there
are instances to be found in all countries, which shew, that it is not the change of nations in the
persons of their governors, but the change of government, that gives the offence. Bilson, a bishop
of our church, and a great stickler for the power and prerogative of princes, does, if I mistake not,
in his treatise of Christian subjection, acknowledge, that princes may forfeit their power, and
their title to the obedience of their subjects; and if there needed authority in a case where reason
is so plain, I could send my reader to Bracton, Fortescue, and the author of the Mirrour, and
others, writers that cannot be suspected to be ignorant of our government, or enemies to it. But I
thought Hooker alone might be enough to satisfy those men, who relying on him for their ecclesiastical polity, are by a strange fate carried to deny those principles upon which he builds it. Whether they are herein made the tools of cunninger workmen, to pull down their own fabric, they were best look. This I am sure, their civil policy is so new, so dangerous, and so destructive to both rulers and people, that as former ages never could bear the broaching of it; so it may be hoped, those to come, redeemed from the impositions of these Egyptian under-task-masters, will abhor the memory of such servile flatterers, who, whilst it seemed to serve their turn, resolved all government into absolute tyranny, and would have all men born to, what their mean souls fitted them for, slavery.

Sec. 240. Here, it is like, the common question will be made, Who shall be judge, whether the prince or legislative act contrary to their trust? This, perhaps, ill-affected and factious men may spread amongst the people, when the prince only makes use of his due prerogative. To this I reply, The people shall be judge; for who shall be judge whether his trustee or deputy acts well, and according to the trust reposed in him, but he who deputes him, and must, by having deputed him, have still a power to discard him, when he fails in his trust? If this be reasonable in particular cases of private men, why should it be otherwise in that of the greatest moment, where the welfare of millions is concerned, and also where the evil, if not prevented, is greater, and the redress very difficult, dear, and dangerous?

Sec. 241. But farther, this question, (Who shall be judge?) cannot mean, that there is no judge at all: for where there is no judicature on earth, to decide controversies amongst men, God in heaven is judge. He alone, it is true, is judge of the right. But every man is judge for himself, as in all other cases, so in this, whether another hath put himself into a state of war with him, and whether he should appeal to the Supreme Judge, as leptha did.

Sec. 242. If a controversy arise betwixt a prince and some of the people, in a matter where the law is silent, or doubtful, and the thing be of great consequence, I should think the proper umpire, in such a case, should be the body of the people: for in cases where the prince hath a trust reposed in him, and is dispensed from the common ordinary rules of the law; there, if any men find themselves aggrieved, and think the prince acts contrary to, or beyond that trust, who so proper to judge as the body of the people, (who, at first, lodged that trust in him) how far they meant it should extend? But if the prince, or whoever they be in the administration, decline that way of determination, the appeal then lies no where but to heaven; force between either persons, who have no known superior on earth, or which permits no appeal to a judge on earth, being properly a state of war, wherein the appeal lies only to heaven; and in that state the injured party must judge for himself, when he will think fit to make use of that appeal, and put himself upon it.

Sec. 243. To conclude, The power that every individual gave the society, when he entered into it, can never revert to the individuals again, as long as the society lasts, but will always remain in the community; because without this there can be no community, no common-wealth, which is contrary to the original agreement: so also when the society hath placed the legislative in any assembly of men, to continue in them and their successors, with direction and authority for providing such successors, the legislative can never revert to the people whilst that government lasts; because having provided a legislative with power to continue for ever, they have given up their political power to the legislative, and cannot resume it. But if they have set limits to the
duration of their legislative, and made this supreme power in any person, or assembly, only temporary; or else, when by the miscarriages of those in authority, it is forfeited; upon the forfeiture, or at the determination of the time set, it reverts to the society, and the people have a right to act as supreme, and continue the legislative in themselves; or erect a new form, or under the old form place it in new hands, as they think good.