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Proclamation
by Queen Elizabeth
against certain Seditious
and Schismatical
Books and Libels, &c.

London, Christopher Barker
1588.

By the Queen.

A Proclamation against certain seditious and schismatical Books and Libels &c.

The Queens most Excellent Majestie considering howe within these few years past, and now of late, certain seditious and evil disposed persons towards her Majestie, and the Government established for causes Ecclesiastical within her Majesties Dominions, have devised, written, printed, or caused to be seditiously and secretly published and dispersed, sundry schismatical and seditious Books, diffamatory Libels, and other phantastical writings amongst her Majesties subjects containing in them Doctrine very erroneous, and other matters notoriously untrue, and dangerous to the State, and against the godly reformation of Religion and Government Ecclesiastical established by Law, and so quietly of long time continued, and also against the persons of Bishops, and others placed in authoritie Ecclesiastical under her Highness, by her authoritie, in railing forth, and beyond the bounds of all good humanity: All which Books, Libels, and Writings, tend by their scope to persuade and bring in a monstrous and apparent dangerous Innovation within her Dominions and Countries, of all manner of Ecclesiastical Government now in use, and to the abridging, or rather to the overthrow of her Highness lawful Prerogative, allowed by Gods Law, and established by the Lawes of the Realm, and consequently to reverse, dissolve, and set at Liberty the present Government of the Church, and to make a dangerous change of the form of Doctrine, and use of Divine Service of God, and the ministration of the Sacraments now also in use, with a rash and malicious purpose also to dissolve the Estate of the Bishops, being one of the three ancient Estates of this Realm under her Highness, whereof her Majesty mindeth to have such reverend regard, as to their places in the Church and Common-wealth appertaineth. All which said letted and seditious practices, do directly tend to the manifest wilful breach of great number of good Lawes and Statutes of this Realm, inconveniencies nothing regarded by such Innovations.

In consideration whereof, her Highness graciously minding to provide some good and speedy remedy to withstand such notable dangerous and ungodly attempts, and for that purpose to have such enormous malefactors discovered and condignly punished, doth signifie this her Highnesss mistaking and indignation of such dangerous and wicked enterprizes; and for that purpose doth hereby will and also straightly charge and command, that all persons whatsoever, within any her Majesties Realms and Dominions, who have or hereafter shall have any of the said seditious Books, Pamphlets, Libels or Writings, or any of like nature already published,

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or hereafter to be published, in his or their custody, containing such matters as above are mentioned, against the present Order and Government of the Church of England, or the lawful Ministers thereof, or against the Rites and Ceremonies used in the Church, and allowed by the Laws of the Realm: That they, and every of them do presently after, with convenient speed bring in, and deliver up the same unto the Ordinary of the Diocese, or of the place where they inhabit, to the intent they may be utterly defaced by the said Ordinary, or otherwise used by them. And that from henceforth no person or persons whatsoever be so hardy as to write, contrive, print, or cause to be published or distributed, or to keep any of the same, or any other Books, Libels, or Writings of like nature and quality contrary to the true meaning and intent of this her Majesties Proclamation. And likewise, that no man hereafter give any instruction, direction, labour or assistance to the contriving, writing, printing, publishing, or dispersing of the same, or such like Books, Libels, or Writings whatsoever, as they tender her Majesties good favour, will avoid her high displeasure, and as they will answer the contrary at their uttermost perils: and upon such pains and penalties, as by the Law any way may be inflicted upon the offenders, in any of these behalfs, as persons maintaining such seditious actions, to which her Majesty mindeth to have severely executed. And if any person have had knowledge of the Authors, Writers, Printers or dispersers thereof, which shall within one month after the publication hereof, discover the same to the Ordinary of the place where he had such knowledge, or to any of her Majesties Privy Council: the same person shall not for his former concealment be hereafter molested or troubled. Given at her Majesties Palace at Westminster, the xiii. of February, 1588. In the xxxi. year of her Highnesss Reign,

God Save the Queen.

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