

Ni2 These put together, thus they crye

Notes. In the only known source, this obscurely phrased poem follows a statement, in prose, detailing the prophecies of John Williams, of the Middle Temple, who was executed in 1619. Williams evidently interpreted the four Protestant English monarchs in relation to the horses of the book of Revelation, and prophesied that James would die in 1621, and that his death would be followed by confusion in the nation. The poem was presumably written by Williams; however, it may have been penned by another, as a comment on Williams's prophecies. Although the verse does not comment specifically on the Spanish Match or the renewal of confessional war on the continent, it deserves to be read alongside the other prophetic poetry triggered by the crisis.

These put together, thus they crye:

Alas, 'twas H. E. E. the fourth was J.¹

Fowre letters doe their persons show,

The place, the tyme, & tymes of wooe.

H. Which letter shewes halfe tymes defection.²

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E. Which brought the church to lay-protection

E. Which brought t' a woman lay-subjection

J. Which shewes sin's ripe and at perfection.

These 4 letters shew the fall,

Of them & of theyr Generall.³

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Source. Bodleian MS Rawl. Poet. 26, fol. 88r

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¹ *Alas...the fourth was J.:* H. is Henry VIII; E. is Edward VI; E. is Elizabeth I; and J. is James I. Presumably the poet intended this cry, "Alas, 'twas hee the fourth was jay" to have some kind of prophetic meaning, perhaps by taking "jay" in the sense of foolish, chattering person.

² *halfe tymes defection:* possibly an allusion to Henry VIII's break with Rome in the second half of his reign.

³ *fall...theyr Generall*: unclear; perhaps the intent is to predict not simply the fall of kings but the fall of all kings.
