

THOMAS GORDON,
The Independent Whig
Vol. 3 (2nd edition 1741)
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THE
INDEPENDENT WHIG:
OR, A
DEFENCE
OF
Primitive Christianity,
And of Our
Ecclesiastical Establishment,
A G A I N S T
The Exorbitant CLAIMS and
ENCROACHMENTS of Fana-
tical and Difaffected CLERGYMEN.

V O L. III.

The SECOND EDITION.

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Note: Vol. 3 contains articles no. 55 (no date) to no. 74 (no date) and some letters and sermons.

Editor's Introduction

To make this edition useful to scholars and to make it more readable, I have done the following:

1. inserted and highlighted the page numbers of the original edition
 2. not split a word if it has been hyphenated across a new line or page (this will assist in making word searches)
 3. added unique paragraph IDs (which are used in the "citation tool" which is part of the "enhanced HTML" version of this text)
 4. retained the spaces which separate sections of the text
 5. created a "blocktext" for large quotations
 6. moved the Table of Contents to the beginning of the text
 7. placed the footnotes at the end of the book
 8. reformatted margin notes to float within the paragraph
 9. inserted Greek and Hebrew words as images
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[III-iii]

**To the Right Honourable
The LORD PAGETT.** ↩

MY LORD,

TO the Fifth Edition of the *Independent Whig*, I added so many Pieces, some intirely new, others printed before, akin to the Subject and Design, and never collected together, that the Bookseller thought proper to publish the Whole in two Volumes. And to the Sixth Edition, I have added this third Volume, consisting of Papers, which I formerly published occasionally, after *Cato* 's *Letters* were dropped; together with some other separate Pieces, which have been well received by the Public; all asserting the Independency of human Judgment, and [III-iv] Liberty of Conscience, and exposing those monstrous Impieties and Reproaches to Christians, Persecution for religious Opinions, and Restraint upon the free Consciences of Men, accountable to none but God.

OUR blessed Saviour, and his holy Apostles after him, pretended to no Power but that of Miracles and Persuasion. Too many of their pretended Successors, destitute of the Gift of Miracles, and unsuccessful in persuading, plead for Force, not to bring Men to Christianity, (for the Separatists in many Countries are generally the best Christians) but to Ceremonies, and Postures, and Sounds, and Submission to Ecclesiastical Law, however foreign from, or unressembling the divine Law.

I AM sorry to say, that where-ever the Clergy, of any Country, had Power to persecute, they have never suffered such Power to sleep. I am sorry to see, that in this Country, where they have none, and swear that they have none, but derive their very Being, and all their Emoluments, from the Law, there [III-v] are any of them hardy enough to contend for it, and even to claim as their Right, what they have solemnly abjured.

SURELY, if we may judge by eternal Experience, by what has past for so many Ages in the World, and by what passes daily in it, the certain Consequence and Operation of *clerical Power*, is the Exalting of the Clergy, and the Depressing of Laymen and Christianity.

DOES Popery, which is the highest Pattern and Improvement of *Church Power*, at all resemble Christianity? And have the Papists any thing for the Word of God, but the Word of the Priest; who not daring to trust them with the Bible, nor with the true Sense of it, misexplains it for them, and gives them his own Whims and Falsifications for the divine Truths of the Gospel?

THIS is *Church Power* in its natural Tendency and Effects. What brought Popery itself into the World, with all its pestilent Craft and Barbarity; especially the Inquisition, more cruel than all the Cruelties ever invented by Paganism? What but *Church Power*? [III-vi] What produced the Burnings, and bloody Martyrdoms, in Queen *Mary* 's Days? What but *Church Power*, and the Impatience of the Priests to suffer another, or a better Religion? What has dragged Emperors from their Thrones, and laid them prostrate for Priests to trample upon, but *Church Power*, rampant and unblushing? What has forced brave and warlike Princes (free and sovereign as they were) to veil their Crowns to a Priest, to undergo dirty Penance, to march on Foot, bare-legged, like Criminals and Vagrants, and to humble, or rather debase, themselves before the Shrine of a Rebel and Incendiary? Was it not the *Power of Churchmen*, baffling that of Monarchs? What let loose the Fury of *Laud*, to involve these Nations in a Civil War, by oppressing and persecuting the best Men in them, and all Men who would not bend the Knee to his mad Impositions? Was it not by usurping a *Church*

Power, which had swallowed up all other *Power*? In short, let us judge of it, by what it has always and every-where done.

[III-vii]

Is the Purpose of it to restrain or punish Heresy? Then whatever Opinion displeases the Clergy, will be Heresy. Truth may be, as it often has been, declared heretical; and most Sects of Christians are Heretics to one another: So that, had they all, at least the Leaders of all, *Power* to cure Heresy, the whole World would be a *Smithfield*, a Scene of torturing, burning, and butchering.

OR, is *Church Power* of Use to prevent and punish Sin and Immorality? This too infers great Latitude, and leaves the Clergy to judge of, and define all *Sin* and *Immorality*; Words which are of vast Scope, and take in infinite Matter: And such *Power* will then extend to our whole Life and Behaviour, to our inward Thoughts, to our Eating, Drinking, and Apparel; to our Words, Studies, and Writings; and all our Opinions and Habits; and, indeed, will infer universal Dominion: As may be amply seen and felt in popish Countries, where *Church Power* does indeed make the Clergy great and uncontrollable, but the People ignorant, dastardly, [III-viii] and immoral, instead of wiser, braver, and better.

To the Laity it is eternally and everywhere productive of endless Evils and Misery, as all History shews, and all Nations have felt. We need only compare our own free and happy Condition, (happy, because free) with the wretched State of other Countries, where priestly Dominion has banished that Freedom, and consequently that Happiness. Names make no Difference; nor is Evil and Servitude a whit better for being called *Protestant*, nor worse for being called *Popish*.

Now, as Experience is the best Director, Are Popish Countries, where *Power* Ecclesiastical flourishes, more exempt from Crimes than other Countries, where the Civil *Power* only governs? Far otherwise; their Wickedness is as prevailing as their Ignorance and Misery, and they abound in Vice, and shocking Enormities. The highest Crime has its Price, and when that Price is paid, the Crime is expiated.

It was seen and observed in the Reign of King *Charles* the First, when *Church Power* was worked up to absolute Sovereignty, [III-ix] and exerted with a Fury void of Justice and Compassion, that the most fashionable Clergymen were the most licentious and immoral; and such as were persecuted for Nonconformity, were the most exemplary Livers, and most frequent Preachers. The Merit of Conformity, even to Superstition and Trifles, proved Protection and Recommendation; at a time when the strictest Piety, and most conscientious Mind, exposed Men to Ruin, to Gaols, and Excommunication, whilst they refused to encourage the Profanation of the Sabbath, and to swear wanton and contradictory Oaths, framed by an incompetent Authority; and besides other Extravagancies, injoining the *bottomless Perjury* of an &c. as it was properly called by a Member of the *House of Commons*: *An Oath* (as was said elsewhere) *of Covenant and Confederacy, for the Hierarchical Grandeur of the Clergy*. The Christian Spirit, and that of Humanity, were banished; and all Oppression, and boundless Enormities and Cruelties, were introduced, in order to establish *Church Power* and Discipline. The [III-x] clerical Madness, Excesses, and implacable Rage, at that Time, would indeed be incredible, were there not such manifold Monuments of them, authentically preserved in History.

It is the same in the *Greek* Communion, where the *Power* of the Clergy is in high Adoration, and exerted with notable Rigour, even under *Mahometan* Princes. But this boundless *Church Power* and *Discipline* hinders not the People from being scandalously debauched, faithless, and dishonest. They are only strict in their superstitious Fasts and Penance; and knowing little, or observing little, of the Laws of God, and of universal Equity,

are only obedient to those of their Priests, often as ignorant, and as vicious, as these their wretched Followers.

AGAINST this Power therefore, and the many and terrible Consequences of it, the following Papers, like those of the two former Volumes, are levelled; and like the rest, are written upon the Principles of the Gospel, and those of the Law. I hope, to candid and unprejudiced Readers, they will carry their [III-xi] own Use and Conviction along with them; and from the Passionate and Interested, I am not vain enough to expect either a favourable Reception, or Construction.

My sincere Aim in them, is to promote Truth, and common Sense, and Peace amongst Men; and to destroy that which destroys all these, Superstition, Falshood, and spiritual Tyranny. What I write, is in the Simplicity of my Heart, without any earthly View or Motive of Interest, or even any Vanity; since small is the Difficulty of shewing the Absurdity, the Malignity, and Mischief of Persecution, and of what countenances and supports Persecution, the Claim of spiritual Power over the Thoughts and Consciences of Men; a Chimera so obvious and unchristian, that he who attacks it without Success, must be a poor Proficient, either in Religion or Argument. Yet, like judicial Astrology, though it be for ever beaten and disgraced, as often as it is assaulted, it is still lifting up its Head, assuming important Airs, and asserting its Right.

[III-xii]

THIS makes it necessary, from time to time, to renew the Assault, and to keep it under; a Task which requires no more, than just to shew what it is; namely, that it is repugnant to Religion and Nature, since Conscience cannot be forced, nor the Thoughts of the Heart fixed and controuled; to human Society, since there can be no Standard for Opinions, no more than for Faces; to civil Liberty, and private Property, since these are always overthrown by it, and reckoned too mean to contend against an Authority, which is said to descend from Heaven; to all Truth and moral Honesty, since it forces Men, for their own Safety, to hide their Sentiments, to disown their real Belief, and to profess what they believe not; and frightens them, for ever, from inquiring after Truth, and receiving it, whilst in such Inquiry and Reception, they will certainly find Flames, Gaols, and Gibbets, if such Truth be not according to Mode and Prescription, and exactly subservient to Ecclesiastical Profit and Pride.

[III-xiii]

In these Speculations, I have also had a View to the Quiet and Stability of this Free State, for which I have an intire Zeal. As our Laws are Laws of Liberty, they abhor, and even abolish explicitly, by Penalties and Oaths, all the Claims of the Clergy to any Power whatsoever, and consider such Power as already banished and suppressed with Popery; and those who would revive it, as dangerous Innovators, Apostates, and even excommunicate; as is largely proved in the foregoing Papers. Nor can our Constitution consist with the Exercise of such clerical Dominion. The very Claim and Assertion of a divine Right in the Clergy, has proved baneful to Liberty; as in the Reign of *Charles* the First, when the Laws of Property, Freedom, and Right, nay, Prerogative as well as Law, were all crushed, and set at nought, in order to set up this *Phantom*. And by Men of this Spirit, that wretched Reign, full of Wilfulness, Weakness, and Oppression, so lawlessly conducted, so impotently maintained, and ending so tragically, is, to this Day, [III-xiv] fulsomely commended, in Defiance of Truth and Shame

IN Truth, many of the corrupt Clergy, upon all Occasions, whether they were countenanced by the Crown, or quarrelled with the Crown, have still maintained this strange chimerical Right to spiritual Power; sometimes by promoting universal Slavery, like *Laud* and his Adherents, and such as followed his Steps in the following Reigns; sometimes by

downright Treason and Rebellion, like the Nonjuring Clergy since the Revolution. These Men preached Kings into Divine Right, or out of all Right, just as these Kings encouraged or discouraged this their great leading Principle, of a Divine Right in themselves; and, to their everlasting Reproach, they have been always best pleased, when Tyranny and Misery prevailed, always sour and most discontented, when public Liberty and Happiness revived; witness their flattering, nay, their prostituting the Word of God, to flatter the most oppressive Reigns before the Revolution; and their fierce Hatred and Opposition to the immortal Hero, who redeemed [III-xv] and new founded our Religion and Liberties.

I WOULD humbly propose it to be considered, whether such Men (if any such remain) can ever be good Subjects, whilst they entertain Principles, and assert Claims, subversive of the Constitution; and consider themselves as oppressed, because they cannot domineer and oppress. If they fancy they have a spiritual Power, to which all Men should bend, and all Consciences submit; how can they relish and endure that Government, and those Laws, which utterly disown it, and utterly abrogate all Pretences to it? Have they not, in Fact, been ready to join with every Faction that flattered them with the Hopes of recovering it, even with every Popish and every *Jacobite* Faction? And has not Mr. *Lesley* (who was once their Champion and Darling) declared all the Laws ascertaining the Reformation, and abolishing spiritual Tyranny, to be so many Acts of Oppression, Usurpation, and Sacrilege; and treated them, and the Makers and Preservers of them, with Fierceness and Gall?

[III-xvi]

I DOUBT, mad as these Claims are, and sure nothing can be more mad, and more impious, as they are against all Religion and Reason; they will still prove Sources of Faction and Discord, unless they be more explicitly discountenanced by Clergymen of the first Rank. It would be a worthy and an useful Task in these, to calm and undeceive a Number of their misled Brethren; to shew them, that they are just like other Men, possessed of no Privilege, Faculty, Pre-eminence, or Power, but what the Laws of the Land give them; that whatever they hold, whether their Revenues or their Characters, they hold, not from the Apostles, (however vain they may be of a Descent and Inheritance, without Proof or Similitude) but from the Appointment and Gift of the State: That the Notions of a spiritual Power can only serve to fill them with Pride, and make them ill Subjects, and ill Neighbours; and hurt, if not spoil, both their Morals and their Teaching, as in all Instances might be made appear; and that, in setting up for being better than other Men, they become, by [III-xvii] such Vanity, so much worse; and lose Respect, by claiming too much.

SUCH good Counsel, and honest Reasoning, from their Superiors, would probably have great Weight with them, and cure them of that fierce Conceit and Disdain arising from their wild Notions of spiritual Dignity and Mastership: Whereas, were any of their Superiors themselves (which God forbid) bewitched with such Notions, or espoused the same for bad Ends of their own, their Authority and Example, and above all, their Testimony in Writing, (if any such Extravagancy could be supposed) would harden them in their Infatuation, beyond a Possibility of Conviction. For the Spirit of Man is easily intoxicated, especially with the Flattery and Visions of Power; such boundless Power too, as controuls Heaven and Earth, and turns Men into Deities.

METHINKS they might easily discover, by their own Hearts and Conduct, that they possess no Character of Divinity beyond other Men; else they would be every-where better than other Men; more [III-xviii] free from Pride and Fierceness, and other human and worldly Passions: A Preference which, I doubt, will not be allowed them, by such as have well attended to their Spirit and Behaviour. Why should not the Meekness of our Saviour, his Patience, Forbearance, and absolute Disinterestedness, accompany a Commission from our Saviour? Indeed, such a Temper would be the best Proof of such a Commission. Certainly, they who

come from him, must be like him; if they be not, 'tis a Proof that they do not. One who observes the Signs and Operations of the Christian Religion, will never be brought to think, that Pride, and high Conceit, and a vehement Thirst of Power, are Marks of the Christian Spirit, nor of him who sends it; or that those who have these Marks are fit to make Christians, or propagate Christianity.

MEN whose Minds are thus possessed, and their Heads thus turned, are not, in Reality, Ministers or Members of the Church of *England*; which being part of the Constitution, and incorporated with it, must have the same Policy, and stand [III-xix] upon the same Principles: And these Men, contending for another Policy, and asserting opposite Principles, belong to another Church, tho' they profess themselves of this, and subscribe all its Articles, and take its Revenues. This is not modest, nor sincere: It is still less so to arrogate to themselves only, the Name of the Church, which they thus in Fact and in Sentiment dishonour and abandon; nay, to throw the Charge of Infidelity upon such as vindicate the Church against them, and their false Representations of her. And indeed, it becomes every good Churchman to oppose all Notions of spiritual Power and Persecution, for the Honour and Security of the Church; which is ever dishonoured, and consequently weakened, by all in human Practice, and by all unhallowed Notions. Surely no persecuting Church is a Christian Church; no domineering Priest is a Gospel Minister.

I WISH all Men, especially all Clergymen, would observe the *Golden Rule*, and not seek to exercise over others a Dominion which they would not suffer others to exercise over them. They like not *Geneva*, [III-xx] they love not the *Kirk*, tho' both great Asserters of spiritual Authority, both claiming Divine Right and Descent, and differing from us in no doctrinal Point; nor, if they were there, would they comply with the Discipline and Government of either; but either go to no public Worship, or set up Conventicles, and encourage others to do so, and reckon it Persecution to be hindered or disturbed.

WHY should they not allow to others the same Latitude which they themselves take? Is their own Church more pure and apostolic than those? With all my Heart. Let them not then stain it with Actions which are impure and unapostolic, such as Restraints upon Conscience, and Severity for Difference of Opinion. Others too have the same Partiality for their particular Hierarchy. Do we of this Church allow such Partiality in them to be a Reason for punishing and harrassing *Us*? No; we do not, nor ought. Let us not therefore do *to* others what we allow not *in* others.

HAPPY were it for the World, would all Men drop their Pride, and mutual Bitterness, [III-xxi] so baneful to Christianity and Society; and learn Humility, and mutual Forbearance, so becoming reasonable Creatures and Christians. This should be the constant Wish and Endeavour of every Man, and every Christian.

MY LORD, What I have said above, though inscribed to your Lordship, is only a Preface, not a Dedication, because I meant not to interest you, as a Patron, in the Matter or Design of it. If what I there say, or what follows, cannot justify itself, it would be great Vanity and Folly to expect that your Lordship should justify it. If you approve it, you have Candour enough to own it; if you do not, I am to blame, not you, for inscribing it to you; especially as I do it without your Knowledge. I here only consider you as my Friend, one whom I greatly esteem, as a Gentleman of extensive Parts, of generous Principles, and of much Reading and Observation; as a Lover of Truth, and Liberty, and Mankind; and as an able Judge of Writing, and Reasoning, and all polite Learning.

[III-xxii]

To such a Character, it cannot be unacceptable to see the Rights of Reason and of Conscience maintained, against those who boldly claim an unnatural Power over them.

THE Subject, my Lord, is of high and universal Concernment, and interesting to every Man living, as he would not in the best Thing upon Earth find the worst, even Bondage in Christian Freedom, Darkness and Delusion instead of Light and Instruction, and Tyranny under the Name and Guise of Teaching.

It is a Dispute whether we are to take the infallible Word of our blessed Saviour, from his own Mouth, or at second hands, from such as are fallible and interested, and to believe the Words of *Men*, as *his*, though we think that it contradicts *his*; whether Almighty God, who cannot err, nor vary, has so revealed his own Will to Men, as that they can understand it, when it was revealed on Purpose to save them, and therefore to be understood by them; or has appointed certain Persons, liable to Mistakes and Passions, and to manifold Uncertainties, Doubts, and Wranglings, [III-xxiii] further to reveal his Will, already revealed by himself.

It is a Dispute, whether we are to listen only to divine Wisdom, speaking clearly, or to the Fancies of Men turning it into endless Doubts and Riddles, setting up indeed for Guides and Interpreters, yet still disputing about the Road, and the Meaning of the Directions how to find it; whether the human Soul be to be convinced by Persuasion, or by Force; and whether the meek Gospel of Peace can be advanced by Penalties, Rage, and Cruelties, or possibly approve, or even admit of them.

It is a Dispute, whether any Government can be perfect, and capable of supporting itself, where any Authority whatsoever (except what is derived from it, and absolutely depending upon it) is suffered to be claimed, or to exist; and whether the allowing of any separate and independent Rule or Power whatsoever, under any Name or Pretence whatsoever, be not naturally productive of popular Contention, Faction, and Civil Wars.

[III-xxiv]

THIS, my Lord, is the Sum of the Dispute, which, where it is referred to the Gospel, to Reason, and to History, is easily decided. How fully and explicitly these Papers have decided it, I leave to your Lordship's Judgment; as I do to your Good-nature, to pardon the Freedom of this Address, which proceeds from a very pardonable Cause, even the perfect Regard and Affection, with which I am,

MY LORD,

Your most Obedient

Humble Servant,

The INDEPENDENT WHIG.

THE INDEPENDENT WHIG.

[III-1]

NUMBER LV. *Of Blasphemy.* ↪

BLASPHEMY is like Heresy, a big Word, which they, who make the loudest Noise about it, rarely define, and indeed rarely can. From hence it comes to pass, that this Sound is greatly abused, in proportion as it is little understood: And from the Uncertainty of its Signification are derived certain Advantage to some Men, and as certain Terror to others; for all false Reverence, and false Power, and all groundless [III-2] Fears, arise from deceitful Sounds on one Side, and real Ignorance on the other Side, and from Words not defined, or ill defined. As long as the Meaning of Names is unrestrained, the Use and Abuse of Names will continue unrestrained. The Instances of this are infinite, evident, and universal; *Pope, Priest, Power, Monarch, Mystery, Zeal, Loyalty*, are but a few of these Instances.

BLASPHEMY is a Word of the same sort, a Word which passionate and crafty Men throw at one another in their religious Quarrels; and, if you will believe either Side, both Sides are Blasphemers. And thus it will ever be, as long as Anger or Interest are left to make or measure Crimes, and to explain Names by their own partial Spirit. Men, under the Biass of Passion, and known Pre-engagements, can never be calm and unbiassed Judges: And he is a mad Man who would trust his Fortune or his Soul to the Conduct of one who is manifestly biassed, and has avowed Demands of Money or Authority upon both, or upon either.

WE have a Right to expect the same Satisfaction to our Understanding from a Professor and Decider of Words, as from a Professor of the Mathematicks; that is to say, a Right to [III-3] examine their Propositions, and be convinced before we assent; and if we pay both, he who satisfies us best, ought to be best paid. Mathematicians take nothing upon Trust; and therefore amongst Mathematicians there are no Disputes, because there are no Uncertainties. If their Propositions be not made Demonstrations, they are not mathematical Propositions; and before a Theorem, which deserves Proof, be proved, he is a simple Man that believes it.

So that in mathematical Discoveries, if you will be at the Pains to inquire, your Inquiry will end in Conviction; but if you want the Capacity or Diligence to inquire, the Discovery is still an Uncertainty to you, and nobody pretends to constrain you.

A COMPULSION into Persuasion and Assent would be reckoned monstrous Madness and Contradiction in Mathematicks, or in any Science which has any Foundation in common Sense. You may still believe, if you please, that this little Earth stands still, as the important Centre of all Things; that the mighty Sun, two hundred thousand times bigger than the Earth, and all the immense Hosts of Heaven, were created, and are employed, to patrol about it, and to carry Links and Tapers [III-4] to this little dirty Speck, scarce distinguishable in the boundless and glorious Realms of Space; and that the human Pigmy is not only Lord of this little Globe, but of Millions of mighty Worlds, of no Use to him, few of them visible to him.

THIS Persuasion against Truth and Demonstration, will always make Part of the Religion of Bigots, who will always be the Bulk of Mankind; and it would be Cruelty to punish them for Folly, which affects not the Peace of Society, though it is certain, that did not the Laws with-hold them, they would punish and kill as Atheists and Blasphemers all those who bring the noblest natural Truths to Light. I have heard very lately of a *Scotch* Presbyter, who found a Multitude of Texts against the astronomical System, and told his Hearers a World of angry Things which God Almighty said against it: He asserted, that the Earth stood still, and the

Sun travelled round it, *in spite of all the mathematical Demonstrations that could come from Hell*; and, with a *Thus saith the Lord*, added terrible Threatenings against the Philosophers and Free-Thinkers of the Age, whom he christened Blasphemers, and doomed to divine Wrath, without any Hesitation. This poor mad Monk was in [III-5] earnest; his Nonsense and Fury were conscientious; and all the Hardship that should be put upon him, is to keep Vengeance out of his Hands, which, without Doubt, he would execute cruelly, and be merciless for the Glory of the God of Mercy.

WITH the Bigot, every Truth that exposes his devout Dreams is Blasphemy; which is a *Greek* Word, that signifies Detraction, or Evil-speaking in general; but, as it is used and understood amongst Christians, it means speaking Evil of the Deity; *Maledictio Supremi Numinis*. And as it is a Crime that implies Malice against God, I am not able to conceive, how any Man can commit it. A Man who knows God, cannot speak Evil of a Being, whom he knows to be blessed and beneficent, the Author and Giver of all Good, with whom no Evil can dwell: And a Man who knows him not, and reviles him, does therefore revile him, because he knows him not: He therefore puts the Name of God to his own Misapprehensions of God. This is so far from speaking Evil of the Deity, that it is not speaking of the Deity at all. It is only speaking Evil of a wild Idea, of a Creature of the Imagination, and existing nowhere but there.

If a Man say, with the Fool in the *Psalms*, that there is no God, he speaks falsely, but does [III-6] not blaspheme; for he cannot blaspheme what he thinks is not; and Ignorance is not Blasphemy. If a Man say, that God is cruel and revengeful, and subject to Passion and Change, as the heathen Deities were; this also is Ignorance, and not Blasphemy. He only abuses a false Character, to which he ignorantly applies the Name of God, and speaks maliciously of a Being which he mistakes for God, and which has no Resemblance of God, but is applicable only to *Satan*, who is an Enemy to God, or to *Jupiter* and *Saturn*, and the other like fickle and sanguinary Divinities of Paganism.

WE cannot blaspheme that which we honour: An ancient Pagan could not blaspheme *Jupiter*, while he really believed him what he called him, *Jovem optimum maximum*, All-good and Almighty: Neither could one who had contrary Sentiments concerning *Jupiter*, blaspheme the Great God in speaking contumeliously of *Jupiter*, in whom he found none of the Marks of the Great God. If the Priests and Followers of *Baal* really believed their God to be the true God, as they seem to have believed, it would have been Blasphemy in them to have spoken contumeliously of him; or rather, they could not have blasphemed him, while they retained that high and awful Opinion of him. If they conceived him cloathed with [III-7] infinite Perfections and Loveliness, they could not possibly have mocked or hated that which to them appeared perfect and lovely. But if they conceived of him in a different and a meaner Manner, their speaking of him as they conceived of him was no Blasphemy, because they only spake meanly or contemptuously of a Being, which was wholly different from the Almighty Being, who could not be abused by the ill Names bestowed upon an Idol.

It would indeed seem scarce possible in common Sense, that the bitterest Language against *Baal-Peor* could be Blasphemy, either in those who believed, or in those who believed not in him. It is manifest, that his Priests esteemed him a barbarous and bloody Spirit, by their inhuman Manner of imploring him to vindicate their Credit and his own against the God of *Israel*, in pursuance of a Challenge given them by *Elijah* the Prophet; *And they cut themselves, after their Manner, with Knives and Lancets, till the Blood gushed out upon them*, 1 Kings xviii. 28. They represented him as delighting in human Blood, and in human Tortures and Misery; and the worst they could have said of him could hardly have been Blasphemy. But as Enthusiasm is really capable of believing Contradictions, and of sanctifying the worst Nonsense and Barbarity, it is probable [III-8] enough, that these fanatick Priests did sincerely believe this abominable and wretched Idol to be the true God;

and even then the true God could not be blasphemed by Obloquies thrown upon a Being so utterly unlike him; though *Elijah* must have appeared to them a great Blasphemer, when he mocked their stupid Image, and ridiculed their God, as engaged in Discourse, or in a Journey, or perhaps taking a Nap, *Ver. 27*.

ALL this shews, that it is impossible to commit the Sin of Blasphemy, as it is commonly understood. If we know God, we must necessarily love him; if we love him, we cannot blaspheme him: And if we defame something which we take for God, but which is not God, the true God cannot be displeas'd with an Indignity offer'd to a false God. If I honour a false God, I cannot hate or calumniate, nor consequently blaspheme him; or, if I do, I do it under an Idea which appertains not to the true God; and therefore nothing that appertains to God is blasphemed, though I may ignorantly annex that Name to that Idea. Much less can another, who owns not my false God, be a Blasphemer in exposing him, though I, who have more Devotion, and less Judgment, may call him a Blasphemer: For where there is no Divinity, there can be no Blasphemy; and the [III-9] Divinity will not be blasphemed, where it is owned and adored; nor is it known, where it is not adored.

So that to be able to blaspheme God, Malice against God must be added to the Knowledge of God; which I have shewn to be impossible. Men in Despair, who no longer expect any Mercy from God, do sometimes tack terrible Imprecations to his Name, and in Words are Blasphemers; but they are so only in Words. They have no Knowledge of God; if they had, they would not despair. They therefore revile they know not what, a horrible Image created by an inflamed and distracted Brain, and more opposite to the Image of God, than a sober Man is to a mad Man.

DESPAIR is Madness; and Madness is no more a Crime than a Pleurisy, which is an Inflammation in the Side, as the other is in the Brain. Nor are the Words of a Man in Despair, the worst he can utter, criminal, no more than a Man is indictable for a Blow that he gives to his Nurse, or his Physician, in the Rage of a Fever. I have heard much Treason, and many blasphemous Words, uttered in *Bedlam*: But no Lunatick is tried from thence for a Traitor, or Blasphemer. The most unhappy Lunaticks are Men in Despair: Nor [III-10] are Men Sinners for being unhappy, nor answerable to God for the mechanical Operations of a Distemper.

THE same Defence may be made for the profane Ravings of Enthusiasm, which is only a Distemper in the Head. Those Ravings are the Operations and Overflowings of a Distemper; and it would be a barbarous Thing to turn a Misfortune into Sin, and to punish for a Disease. The Effects of Madness are neither moral nor immoral; and a mad Man can no more be guilty of Blasphemy, than an Idiot or a Parrot can. Wind cannot blow Blasphemy; and the wild Words of a Fanatick are only Wind modulated by a distempered Head. No Man knows himself to be an Enthusiast, or thinks his Enthusiasm foolish or criminal; and what is not voluntary, is no Crime. A Man cannot sin in his Sleep, nor in his sleeping or waking Dreams; and Enthusiasm is a pious Dream.

ST. *Paul*, while he was yet a Persecutor of the Christian Church, and an Enthusiast against Jesus Christ, could not blaspheme him before he knew him; and afterwards he could not, because he knew him: So that at first he only defamed him through Ignorance of him; and this was Rashness, but not Blasphemy, in any other Sense than as all Evil-speaking of any one [III-11] is Blasphemy. But I here speak of Blasphemy in the usual Sense of the Word; and, in this Sense, neither a *Turk*, nor an *Indian*, nor an *Atheist*, nor any Man, can be a Blasphemer. The *Jews* deny Jesus Christ: But this is Blindness, and not Blasphemy; and it would be a great Barbarity to kill or punish Men for their Blindness, and equally disingenuous and uncharitable to make Blasphemy of Blindness.

WHEN our Arguments for Christianity prevail not with Men, as often they do not; and when the Spirit of Christ is with-held from them, as we see it often is, we are not to grow uncharitable because they are inflexible, and to call Incredulity Blasphemy. No Means are effectual to bring Men to Christ without the Spirit of Christ, which none but he can give. Will any Man say, that all Unbelievers are Blasphemers? or that a sincere Declaration of Unbelief is Blasphemy? Did any of the Apostles tell any People or Nation, to whom they went, that they were all Blasphemers? or that as many as they could not convert, they and their Converts would treat as Blasphemers; that is, persecute, imprison and kill them? Or would such Men find Admission into any Country, who are apprised of their Spirit?

It is dissolving human Society to distress Men for involuntary Mistakes, to which all [III-12] Men in all Societies are subject: Nor do we see any sort of Men upon Earth, or that ever were upon Earth, differ more about the sublime and metaphysical Notions of God, than those Men who would reduce all Men to a perfect and impossible Unity in Notions, and boldly pretend to do that which omnipotent Wisdom, and omnipotent Power, has not thought fit to do, and which nothing but Omnipotence can do. This is a monstrous Doctrine, against Nature and Christianity; and thought it be not Blasphemy in my Sense, yet it is Blasphemy *ad hominem*; since they that hold it, bring under the Head of Blasphemy a thousand Notions and Things, that, compared with this, are innocent and wise.

So much for Blasphemy against God, which I have shewn to be impossible. I shall now say something of Blasphemy against Men; for it is indeed against them that it is generally, if not only, committed; and the holy Name of God is called down to screen and sanctify the Bigotry and Pride of Men. They sometimes annex a religious Reverence to Actions, Names, and Opinions, which have nothing to do with Religion, and perhaps are ridiculous, and then make it Blasphemy to contradict them. Hence Sounds become first sacred, and the more absurd and equivocal, the more sacred; and [III-13] then in proportion as they are easily ridiculed, Blasphemy is like to grow more frequent, and consequently more criminal and dangerous.

THUS in the Church of *Rome*, the Apostolick Succession, Infallibility, and the Power of the Keys, Purgatory, and Prayers to Saints, that is, Prayers to dead Men for living Men, or for other Men who are dead too, Transubstantiation, the indelible Character, the unbloody Sacrifice, Dominion over Consciences, the Divine Right to Tythes, the Inquisition, and no Salvation in any other Church; are all Words, and Doctrines, and Practices, utterly destitute of all common Sense, utterly opposite to the New Testament, and to all Religion and common Honesty, and big with all Mischief, and all spiritual and temporal Tyranny: But they are all most sacred in that Church, and it is the highest Blasphemy to reason against them; and Death is due to Blasphemy, nay, Damnation is due to it.

IMPOSTURE is supported by Terror; and by this means the Popish World is become the Spoils of Popish Priests. And indeed, wherever Priests make Reasoning upon or against their System, a Crime against Religion, they bring their System under the Suspicion of Craft or Weakness, and will in time make all Men, and the Property of all Men, submit to [III-14] their System, as the *Romish* Priests have done, and as all who have the same Pretensions would do. With them every Defence of Truth against Craft and Lyes, is Blasphemy; and indeed, all Men of different Religions, or of different Opinions in the same Religion, are Blasphemers to one another. They draw false and doubtful Deductions from Scripture, and call the plainest Propositions, and the most rational Objections against their Guesses, Blasphemy against Scripture; though it is impossible for any Man to blaspheme the Scripture, by denying that to be Scripture, which he is persuaded is not Scripture.

It would be profane in any Man to make a Mockery of Sounds, in which he finds any Reverence; but I believe it to be impossible upon the Principles which I have before laid down: No Man can mock and reverence the same Thing; much less can a Man be profane in ridiculing what he thinks really ridiculous: He may, indeed, be unmannerly; but ill Manners to Men are not profane in the Sight of God: The more Reverence Men place in little and ridiculous Things, the more ridiculous they become. When the Law of a Country gives a Sanction to Words and Fashions, and reckons them religious, though they be not a bit more so for the Law, yet the Law [III-15] is to be respected; and if I treat them with Contumely, I may be ill-bred, but am no Blasphemer; for they are not religious to me.

To conclude: Those who would discover Blasphemers with any Certainty, must do three Things: First, They must settle and ascertain all the Ideas of God; which none but God can do. Secondly, They must make all Men capable of judging of those Ideas with Certainty; a Task which no human Spirit can perform, and which therefore must be also the Work of God. Lastly, They must be able to see and to judge infallibly the Hearts of Men: A Province which the Almighty hath also reserved to himself; and which none but the Almighty is fit for, no, not the Angels. Till they can do all this, they had best take care, that, by their common Charge of Blasphemy, they do not mean Blasphemy against their own Pride and Mistakes.

[III-16]

NUMBER LVI. *Of mutual Charity and Forbearance.* ↩

CHARITY shall be the Subject of this Paper. By Charity, I do not mean Alms-deeds, which are only one of the good Effects of it; but by Charity, I mean that benevolent Disposition of Heart, which inclines any Man, of any Religion, to think well, and hope well, of every Man, of every Religion, from whom he receives no Injury. For no Man can think well of that Man, who does Ill to any Man, let his Motive be what it will: And it is always just to punish the Authors of Injustice. No Man has God's Authority to injure another; but all Men have his Authority to repel Injuries, and to defend themselves. If any Man's Religion teach him to do me Harm, common Sense teaches me to defend myself: But if his Religion, however absurd, frantick, and vain, be only between God and himself, and interfere not with my Security [III-17] and Property, I cannot without Violence and Injustice molest him in it. A Man may be a very silly, and yet a very pious Man: And if he seem pious, I ought to think him so; his secret Intentions can be known to God only. If indeed he claim Dominion over me and my Purse, for the Support and Reward of his Piety, I shall suspect that he has none; because I cannot conceive that Pride, Power, and Covetousness, are any Part of Piety, or any way related to it; or that a Passion for the Pomp and Pleasures of this World, is any Proof of a Zeal which breathes after the Cross of Christ, and the Kingdom of Heaven, and is entirely detached from the Mammon of Unrighteousness. Such Claims therefore, as they concern Property, and Things purely temporal, are Questions of Civil Right, and subject to the Awards and Discretion of Men, and as remote from the Considerations of Religion and Conscience, as one Thing can be from another.

BUT the Thoughts and Actions which relate only to God, are to be judged by none but him; nor, let them be ever so wild and foolish, can they be subject to any other Jurisdiction. *Humanum est errare & insanire.* There is no Pitch of Folly and Phrenzy, of which the human Soul is not capable in Matters of Devotion; [III-18] and none but he who made the human Soul, and raised it above the Soul of a Beast, can set it free from Error, and above Superstition. If a Man will approach God with a Whip and a Hair-cloth, and seek to please the Almighty by inflicting Stripes upon his own Flesh; if he chuse to mix Dancing and Bawling with his Devotion, and Aloes with his Sauce, I shall desire no Part either in his Devotion, or his Meals. But I have no more Dominion over his Imagination, than over his

Stomach. I can only tell him my own Opinion, and my own Taste, if he will hear me; and he has just the same Right over me. Every Man who is in earnest in his Religion, must chuse his own Priest, as well as his own Cook, according to his Sentiments and his Palate: And if he can find neither Priest nor Cook to his Mind, he must be content to say his own Prayers, and dress his own Victuals. The Christian Law leaves him at full Liberty to do both. Prayers are only made for those who like Made Prayers; and whoever says the contrary, is obliged to prove, that either we must pray certain Prayers whether we will or not, or not pray at all.

THE merciful God and Maker of Man can never be angry at incurable Folly and Mistakes: Where he only who can cure them, does not, and Men cannot, we may be satisfied, [III-19] that he is not offended with them. Nothing is more frequently in People's Mouths than the Reasonableness and Charity of bearing with the Infirmities of a weak Brother; but nothing is so seldom practised. If it were universally observed, it would cure all Men of Uncharitableness, since all Men have their Weaknesses, even the most Learned and most Wise. And every Man in the World differs from every Man in certain Tastes, as well as in certain Opinions, which are only internal Tastes. Every Man therefore has some Weakness in the Opinion of some other Man; for every Man judges of another's Weakness by his own Wisdom. But by this Phrase of bearing with a weak Brother, is usually meant some particular Kindness which we have for some particular Man, or Friend, or for every particular Man of the Party which we have chosen. Now, why should not every Man's Weakness be borne with, as well as the Weaknesses of our particular Friends? and the Weaknesses of all Parties, as well as the Weaknesses of our particular Party? It is a crying Scandal to human Reason, and to the Christian Religion, that we should have so much Charity for the most wicked Practices, and none for the most harmless Opinions, as all Opinions are which produce no wicked Practices. [III-20] And yet that we are thus preposterously charitable and uncharitable, is manifest from our bearing with the worst Vices of Men in our own Party, and our caressing their Persons, while we are outrageously offended with the Thoughts, Dreams, and harmless Gestures, of the best Men of a different Party. This shews that Religion is not the Quarrel, nor the Cause of Quarrel; but Pride, Interest, and Partiality; and that the holy Name of God and Religion is prostituted and abused, to gratify a base Passion.

ALL Men, even many Zealots and Enthusiasts, speak well of *Socrates*, *Plato*, and *Cicero*, though Pagans: But no Zealot will speak with Patience of the Emperor *Julian*, *Porphyry*, or *Spinosa*, though all very great Men, and, as far as we can find, all very virtuous Men; two of them, we are well informed, were so. Now, however false and absurd many of their Opinions about Religion were, they were at least as orthodox as the Opinions of *Plato* and *Socrates*, who were indeed very good Men, and subtle Disputants, but wretched Reasoners in spiritual Matters. But the Reason of this different Treatment is, that *Socrates*, *Plato*, and *Cicero*, living before Christianity, did not impugn any of its Tenets, as *Julian* and *Porphyry* afterwards did. It is therefore plain, [III-21] that this Partiality is not the Effect of Piety and Sense, but of Party-Spirit, and of personal Hatred and Anger; else *Cicero* and *Socrates* would be as much railed at, as are *Julian* and *Porphyry*, who were not worse Heathens than the former. Indeed, all Uncharitableness arises from Rage, Narrowness of Mind, Ignorance, Selfishness, and personal Quarrels; and never from Reason and Principle, which are calm Things, and have no Respect of Persons.

THE uncharitable Man thinks, that he defends himself by a pretended Zeal for the Glory of God; and pays a Compliment to his own Impiety, at the Expence of Religion and Truth. Zeal for God is inseparable from universal Charity. St. *Paul* has shewn, that all the highest Christian Graces are nothing without it; and it is my firm Opinion, that no true Christian Grace can subsist where Charity does not subsist. St. *Peter* says, *Acts* x. *Ver.* 28. That God had shewn him, that he should not call any Man common or unclean. And *Verse* 34 and 35, he saith, *Of a Truth I perceive, that God is no Respector of Persons: But in every Nation be*

that feareth him, and worketh Righteousness, is accepted with him. That is, every honest Man will be saved, let his Opinions and Mistakes be what they will; [III-22] and upon this Principle and Authority I am not ashamed to declare, that my Charity extends to all Sects and Nations. I wish that all Men were Christians; and that all Christians were true Christians: But as good Wishes are only a Part of Charity, I likewise believe, that the good and wise God, who made us, and sent us hither, and knows the Weaknesses of our Understandings, and the Strength of our Passions, will deal more kindly with all Men, than most Men are apt to allow. I have Charity even for the uncharitable Man, and would no more hurt him, than I would hurt any other Madman, whose Rage governs him, and who is out of his own Power. I would only preserve myself from the Effects of his Madness, and only bind those Hands which are lifted up to destroy me. Uncharitableness is without Doubt Madness, and is always most predominant in such as have most Heat, and least Sense. The more blind, the more fierce; as is evident from the implicit Bigotry of the *Turks*, and of the *Spanish* and *Italian Papists*: They have renounced all Humanity and Reason, to make room for distracted and implacable Zeal.

[III-23]

NUMBER LVII.

The Vanity as well as Wickedness of Persecution. ↪

IGO on with my Thoughts upon Charity, the want of which works such woeful Effects amongst Men; and makes such melancholy Additions to the Evils of human Life. As if the Heats and Contentions amongst Men were too few, or the Passions that produce them too weak, this sacred Anger and Uproar about Thoughts and Notions, is every-where brought in to swell and aggravate the ugly Reckoning.

THAT any Man's Opinion, which hurts no Man's Person, touches no Man's Property, but is only a Speculation or Belief concerning God and the World to come, should be able to provoke any Man's Passion, is so opposite to all the natural Ideas of Society, to Humanity, [III-24] and to all common Sense, that did not one see it, it would in Theory appear impossible. But common Sense is out of the Case, and has nothing to do with it, but to condemn it. It is the Ingraftment of Bigotry and Delusion upon the Folly and Weakness of Nature, and by inveterate Custom, and ungodly Arts, made a Part of Nature. It is infused into the tender Spirits of Infants, grows up with them, and haunts and infatuates them to their Graves: It begins and ends with Life, and taints every Part of it. But that it is not originally in the Soul of Man, will appear from considering what the Soul of Man is naturally prone to. Her first Care is that of Self-preservation; which includes the Means of Living, of Food, Covering, Generation, and Defence against Injuries: And as the first Thought is how to live, the next is how to live well; the Desire of Necessaries is followed by the Desire of Conveniences; and as soon as Men have arrived at a Life of Security, the next Study is a Life of Splendor: And because Splendor consists in Comparison, and one Man has more, as another has less, hence arises Emulation in Men to exceed one another; and from this Emulation proceeds a Passion for Riches, Fame, and Power, which are the [III-25] Means and the Ends of Splendor: Nor does this Passion usually stop till one Man has mastered all Men, or all that he can. And thus far Nature, which has given Men Desires without Bounds, will prompt them to go.

BUT the utmost Power that mortal Man can possess, is limited to Things visible, and must stop at the Persons, Actions and Properties of Men. It can never controul that which depends not upon the human Will, and consequently upon no human Power: Such are the Thoughts raised within us by the Motion of Objects about us. *Alexander* and *Cæsar* conquered the best Part of the World: But, mad as they were with Ambition, and one of them very superstitious, it never entered into their Hearts to set up a spiritual Monarchy over the religious Conjectures

and Rovings of the Hearts of Men: Nor has the successful and armed Phrenzy of the *Mahometans* been ever able to effect it: They have given it over as an Impossibility, and not only tolerate numerous Sects of their own, but every Sect of Christians in their Dominions. The Catholic Princes, who have attempted it, have extirpated and destroyed the best Part of their People; yet their Success, gained by so much Blood and Desolation, is never like to be complete as long as they have any People left. *France* [III-26] still abounds with concealed Heretics, *Spain* and *Portugal* with disguised *Jews* and *Moors*: So that by a Conduct more tyrannical and infamous than that of the *Pagans* and *Mahometans*, they have only established an Uniformity of barbarous Ignorance and Hypocrisy. The Attempt is waging War against Nature and the Creation. The Soul, which acts by the Organs, must act differently where the Organs differ, as the Organs of all Men do. Nor is it credible, that two Men were ever born with the same Tastes, Appetites and Discernments, or were ever equally affected by the same Objects.

THE setting up a Standard for thinking and imagining, and the hating and harassing those who cannot bring their Thoughts and Imaginations to that Standard, has an ugly Resemblance of the old Nonsense of Chivalry, where the Knight set up his Mistress for the Perfection and Queen of Beauty, and declared War against every mortal Wight who did not own it, and the same War against all who made Love to her: So whether you loved her not, or made Love to her, he stood ready mounted and armed to thrust you through with his Lance. Our visionary Champions do as mad a Thing, or rather more mad: They dress you up an imaginary *Dulcinea*, nay, often [III-27] make a fulsome deformed Piece of her, without Symmetry or Loveliness; and pronouncing her the most peerless and accomplished Lady in the Universe, pursue you with Bitterness and Cruelty, unless you embrace her as ardently as they do, and defile yourself with a Monster. The Champion in Romance is the much more reasonable Man of the two, and a Mad-man of the sounder Sense. The Difference between the *Quinote* and the *Bigot* is, that the first Mad-man forces you on Pain of Death to admire without enjoying, and the second Mad-man forces you both to admire and enjoy on Peril of double Death, temporal and eternal. With this sort of Lunatic an Impossibility is no Objection; and you must do the Thing, whether you can or no. If you do not, he does God good Service by persecuting and burning you. Without doubt there never was a Man of common Sense, or of any Sense, at any Time, who, were all his Thoughts to be known, was not liable to be burnt by the Laws and Spirit of the Inquisition, and by the Spirit of every Bigot of every Profession under the Sun.

THE Persecutor is always a Mad-man, even where the Opinions for which he persecutes are true. The most of religious Truths, especially the Truths of revealed Religion, however [III-28] evident after Examination, yet, where they are believed upon Principle, depend upon a long Train of Reasoning, a Series of Facts, and collateral and subsequent Testimonies, too intricate and sublime for the Leisure and Capacities of the Bulk of Mankind throughout the World. To settle therefore these Truths in the Hearts of Men, the Grace of God is the chief Thing required: Nor do I believe, that ever any Man became a real Christian, till Grace made him so. We see, that in the Apostles Time Grace always entered with Conviction, and brought Conviction, and nono believed but those upon whom the Spirit fell: Nor had the Apostles any other Help, after they had proposed their Doctrine, but Miracles and the Spirit. And they who have such Helps need no other; and no Helps without the Spirit will do. It is therefore the Grace of God that changes the carnal. Disposition of the Soul, and makes Men Christians; and it is most absurd and barbarous to hurt or to hate those who want that which God only can give. Where he does not give it, all the Arts and Power of Men to propagate Christianity avail nothing: Nor did it ever proceed from the Grace of God, that any Man hurt or hated another: And let him who is persecuted be as bad as he will, they that persecute him are [III-29] worse, by putting in Practice that Pravity of Spirit, of which they do but accuse him.

PERSECUTION can promote nothing but either utter Destruction, or Hypocrisy and Servitude, which are direct Contradictions to the peaceable, free, and sincere Spirit of Christianity. No Christian can bear any other Yoke in the Matter of Religion, than the Yoke of Christ, who can alone *work in him to will, and to do*, and requires no more of any of his Subjects, than Sincerity and a good Conscience. These are Graces which no human Tribunal can confer or judge, and are therefore subject to the Tribunal of Christ only. They are Things about which no Testimony can be given; they lie out of Sight, and what is invisible, is exempted from all human Cognizance. To endeavour therefore to subject the Soul to any human Judgment is a monstrous Iniquity, and must eternally have most wicked Consequences, as it tempts Men to Deceit and Insincerity, destroys natural Honesty, and lays Baits for Lying and Perjuries.

THE Terror of the Inquisition makes Multitudes of Families, who are real Jews, false and professed Christians, In being Jews, they are only mistaken; but in professing Christianity, without believing it, they are great Sinners and Hypocrites; though others, those impious [III-30] Men, those nominal Christians, or rather those Reproaches to Christianity, who frighten the Jews into this Hypocrisy, are more flagitious Sinners than they. Scandalous and execrable is that Unity which is the violent Effect of Rage and Fire on one hand, and of ungodly Dissimulation on the other. Every Man must abhor that Religion, and those Men, who hold him under Fears, Hardships and Shackles, and restrain him from a candid Profession of that Faith, which, however false or ridiculous, he thinks the best, and the most acceptable to God. It is tempting and terrifying Men into Falsehood and Impiety, and making them Knaves and Deceivers in the most tender and the most sacred Instances. No Man who tempts and frightens another Man to be a Dissembler and a Knave, can himself be an honest Man. A Man who is honest, would have all Men honest; and none but a Hypocrite in Religion can take Methods to make Men religious Hypocrites, as all Men must be, who conform and submit to any Religion, even the best and the truest, without Conviction, which is never wrought by Force, nor by Fear, but is the pure Effect of Persuasion, or the pure Gift of God. Is Bitterness and Barbarity Persuasion? And what Man's Person, Name or Property, is hurt by the Grace of God? The Ways of [III-31] Force and Fury are therefore irreconcilable Enemies to Grace, and to Sense. They are Enemies to Religion, which delights in Meekness and Sincerity, and to human Society, which subsists by Peace, mutual Forbearance, and moral Honesty.

NUMBER LVIII.

A Dialogue between Monsieur Jurieu, and a Burgomaster of Rotterdam. ↪

MONSIEUR *Jurieu*, the famous *French* Minister, after a long and intimate Friendship with the great Mr. *Bayle*, fell into as outrageous a Hatred against him. That Divine was a Man of great Vanity, and violent Passion, and could not bear the eminent and growing Reputation of Mons. *Bayle*. He therefore began to fall upon some of Mr. *Bayle*'s Principles, and, *Jure Theologorum*, attacked his Orthodoxy. Mr. *Bayle* defended himself; his Answer was strong and lively. Mr. *Jurieu* was visibly defeated, and enraged at his Defeat. He did upon this Occasion a [III-32] very scandalous and very shameful Thing, but very usual with zealous Divines, when Truth and Laymen are too hard for them, or even when they are affronted one with another. He appealed for Revenge to the Civil Power, and presented an angry and scolding Petition to the Magistrates of *Rotterdam* to silence Mr. *Bayle*. Upon this Subject I have formed the following Dialogue between Mr. *Jurieu* and a Burgomaster of that City.

JURIEU.

YOU are sensible, Sir, how Mr. *Bayle* has exposed me in his late Book. I have here drawn up a Request to the Magistracy to silence him from writing, and in the mean time I will answer him. I beg, Sir, you will countenance this my Petition.

Burgomaster. I wish, Mr. *Jurieu*, that you would command me to serve you in any reasonable Thing. Sure you will not desire me to help to tie Mr. *Bayle* 's Hands till you give him the Strapado.

Jur. Sir, his Hands ought to be tied: He is an Advocate for Atheism.

Burg. Convince me of that, and I shall think worse of him than I do at present.

Jur. Have you never read his Letters upon the Comet?

[III-33]

Burg. Yes, and value them; and have heard you an hundred times commend them.

Jur. I did not then see the Venom of them.

Burg. How could it so long escape the Penetration of Mr. *Jurieu*?

Jur. I was weak enough then to have an Esteem for the Author.

Burg. I hope you had a greater for Religion.

Jur. I believed him a religious Man.

Burg. And were angry with him before you saw any Irreligion in him.

Jur. I own that my Friendship made me partial.

Burg. And is not Anger as apt as Friendship to make Men partial? Passion is an ill Guide; and if it give new Lights, they are too generally, false Lights.

Jur. Not Passion, but God, has given me new Lights.

Burg. What! has God told you that Mr. *Bayle* is an Atheist?

Jur. No; his Book tells me so.

Burg. But you used to have very different Thoughts of that Book.

Jur. I have owned it: But God has given me Wisdom to see my Mistake.

Burg. So then you have discovered Mr. *Bayle* 's Atheism by Revelation. And to deal ingenuously with you, Mr. *Jurieu*, I shall [III-34] never make the same Discovery, till I have the same Revelation.

Jur. Sir, you make yourself merry with Revelation.

Burg. No, I don't; I only suspect, that this Thirst of Vengeance does not come from Revelation. Stick to your first Text: Say, that Mr. *Bayle* has exposed you; and therefore he is an Atheist, and all his Works are atheistical. Is there not something very criminal too and offensive in his great Fame and Reputation?

Jur. Permit me, Sir, to say, that I envy him not for his Works and his Character, by which I suffer no Eclipse. I am only sorry, upon the Score of Religion, that so ill a Man should have so many Admirers, and that yourself should be one of them.

Burg. I am one: I admire him as he is a great Genius; and I reverence him, as one of the best Men that I ever knew, and the most free from Pride and Passion.

Jur. He deceives you: He is a calm bitter Enemy to Jesus Christ.

Burg. I doubt, Sir, that your intemperate Resentment deceives you: I wish that the retained Advocates for Jesus Christ had less Bitterness, or at least would with-hold the Fierceness of their Christian Zeal from breaking out against the best Christians. What other Article [III-35] of the Christian Faith has Mr. *Bayle* violated, besides that of daring to thwart the Opinion of the Reverend Mr. *Jurieu*?

Jur. You astonish me, Sir: Has he not written an Apology for Atheism? an impious elaborate Apology?

Burg. No; I know that he has not: He has too much good Sense to be an Atheist, and too much Virtue to like Atheism. He has, if you please, proved unanswerably, that a sensible Atheist, governed by the Laws of Nature, and by the Maxims and Convenience of Ease, is a better Member of Society, than a mad and mischievous Enthusiast, who plagues, persecutes, robs, and kills his Fellow-creatures, in Obedience to the Precepts of a false Religion. A Proposition as certain and evident, as that Good is better than Evil.

Jur. This Discourse penetrates me with Grief: No Atheist can be good.

Burg. Have I said that he is? But thus you run away with Things. I only affirm, that Worse is not so good as Better. Mr. *Bayle* has said no more; and is not therefore an Atheist.

Jur. Sir, do but comply, you and your Brethren, with my Petition for silencing him, and I undertake to prove him one.

[III-36]

Burg. This is putting the Proof upon us. You would have us treat him as an Atheist, and will perhaps fetch your first and best Argument from that Treatment, to prove him an Atheist. I know your warm Temper, and dare say, that this Argument of Mr. *Bayle* 's Atheism would soon be published all over *Europe*, and be made to justify the worst Things that your Zeal and Resentment could say of him.

Jur. Nothing too bad can be said of an Atheist, nor done to him.

Burg. I never saw an Atheist: But if we were to punish every Man whom the angry Enthusiasts call so, we must take them for our Magistrates, and become only their Inquisitors. A fine Employment for Magistrates, to exercise the Whip and the Sword for the Clergy!

Jur. Ought not the Magistrate to employ the Sword for the Defence of Religion?

Burg. Yes, when Religion is attacked by the Sword.

Jur. Is there no Remedy for speaking and writing against Religion?

Burg. Yes, that of speaking and writing; and for this Purpose are the Clergy appointed and maintained. These are the only Arms which the Gospel and common Sense give you.

[III-37]

Jur. Sir, I must beg your Pardon: Preaching and Writing have no Efficacy upon hardened and reprobate Hearts. Where Reproof is ineffectual, we must have recourse to Severity, and human Terrors.

Burg. Human Terrors may indeed bring Men under the Power of the Clergy; and that is the only Use the Clergy do or can make of them: But it is a Contradiction, to say that ever human Terrors made a Christian: The Grace of God can alone do that. Now, will you say, that Fury and Dungeons teach Men Christianity; or that the Grace of God is to be whipped or

tortured into a Man?

Jur. No; but they may be the Means of humbling audacious Sinners, and of begetting in them a Sense of Religion and *Submission*.

Burg. That Word *Submission* has a shrewd Meaning: But as to Religion, if that is to be propagated by such Means, there is little or no Use of a Clergy, but only of Prisons, Lictors, Torturers, and Executioners. And a Troop of Dragoons may do as well or better than a Troop of Ministers, when their Admonitions are ineffectual.

Jur. I mean no such Thing.

Burg. What then do you mean?

Jur. Only that you should restrain notorious Gainsayers, and punish Blasphemers.

[III-38]

Burg. That is, every Man who gainsays and blasphemes your Opinions.

Jur. True, if you mean my Orthodox Opinions.

Burg. That is the same thing. Every Man thinks his Opinions Orthodox. Now in asking for this Restraint and Punishment, do you consider the Consequences of what you ask? You really ask for an Inquisition.

Jur. You grievously mistake me, Sir: I abhor the Inquisition.

Burg. The *Popish* Inquisition you do: But do you disclaim an Inquisition of your own, or an Inquisition in Behalf of your Religion?

Jur. You may perceive, Sir, I only seek to have a Restraint laid upon Mr. *Bayle*.

Burg. Suppose that Restraint will not do: What must be done next?

Jur. Your own Polity will tell you that. You must punish him: He disobeys the Magistrate.

Burg. This is very casuistical; but let us see the End of it. Suppose that this Punishment proves still too weak, and he still goes on?

Jur. Your Government affords you a Remedy.

Burg. Yes, we can put him to Death. So that here is a Restraint, Punishment, and [III-39] Death, for Religion, or for a Question about Religion. What is an Inquisition, if this be not?

Jur. There will be no Occasion of going so far.

Burg. But you say we must go so far, if there be Occasion; and we actually see, that there is almost always Occasion: No Severity but the last Severity will do in these Cases. The very Beginning implies the Extremity; so that whoever calls for any Punishment in Matters of Religion and Speculation, calls for the highest Punishment; and Mr. *Jurieu*, a Protestant Divine, who has fled from the Persecution in *France*, where no Religion but the *Popish* is tolerated, and has taken Sanctuary in *Holland*, where all Religions are tolerated, calls upon the *Dutch* Magistrates for Persecution against a Brother Refugee, and a professed Calvinist, after having for many Years, and by many Books, reproached the *French* Government in the bitterest Terms, for persecuting the Calvinists. How will you reconcile this Contradiction in your Conduct?

Jur. Easily, by maintaining that the *Popish* Religion is a false Religion, and ours the true.

Burg. The Papists make the same Compliment to themselves, and the same Charge against you. I am a Protestant, and I protest [III-40] against Persecution, as well as against other Parts of Popery. I think that every Religion which persecutes, is a false Religion; or rather, that every Persecutor is a Papist; and that every Hardship or Restraint for religious Notions, is Persecution.

Jur. You carry this Reasoning very far. I hope you will allow the Christian Religion to take care of itself.

Burg. Yes, by all Means that are Christian: But you may as easily unite the Spirit of Christianity to the Spirit of Paganism, as preserve Christianity by the fierce and wicked Ways that were taken to preserve Paganism. Neither Christ, nor his Apostles, ever applied to the Magistrate to fall upon Unbelievers with the Civil Sword, nor even to stop their Mouths.

Jur. They needed not: They had Miracles to support them; and they would not apply to unbelieving Magistrates.

Burg. And how came you, without Miracles, to apply to us? As you shew neither Miracles nor Infallibility, we know you liable to be mistaken; as we are sure we should be, if we practise Severities for a Religion which forbids them, and became mighty without them.

[III-41]

Jur. Religion had then no Connection with the Civil Power.

Burg. Nor wanted it, nor claimed it.

Jur. The World, Sir, is much altered since.

Burg. Not for the worse, I hope, having had the Gospel so long in it, and after so great Expence to the People for preaching it. I hope you do not find the present Race of Christians more abandoned and untractable, than the first Christians found the Pagans.

Jur. Sir, I am sorry to say we have not now such extraordinary Assistances as they had then, nor such plentiful Effusion of the Divine Spirit.

Burg. Assistances of Money and Revenues you have had, I am sure, enough; but the Assistance of the Sword, and the Effusion of Blood, will make no Amends for the Want of the Assistance and Effusion of the peaceable Spirit of God.

Jur. I am far from saying that it does: But I cannot help saying, that the Power of the Magistrate has had a great Share in extending Christianity; and God has shewn, that he approved the Zeal of the first Christian Emperors, by the Success which he gave them.

[III-42]

NUMBER LIX.

Dialogue between Mr. Jurieu, and a Burgomaster, continued. ↩

Burgomaster.

THE persecuting Christian Emperors had much such Success against Paganism, as *Lewis XIV.* has had against Calvinism, and got it by the same wicked Methods. *Mahomet* had greater Success than either; and 'tis a particular Article of the *Mahometan* Religion, that God blesses every thing that succeeds.

Jurieu. No such Argument can be used in Behalf of a false Religion.

Burg. Every whit as much, as in Behalf of false and barbarous Measures, taken to propagate the true. Every Man thinks his own Religion the true Religion; and every religious successful Mischief that every Man does, has, according to your Argument, the divine Approbation. So that here, out of the Mouth of Mr. *Jurieu*, is a Defence of all the pious [III-43] Barbarities and Slaughters that ever were committed in the World.

Jur. Sir, I am against all Barbarities.

Burg. Yes; when they fall upon yourself or your Party: But when they are exercised for you against others, they are wholesome Severities. If the Duke of *Guise* hanged a Hugonot, you cry it was Persecution and Barbarity; and so say I: But if Dr. *Calvin* burned *Servetus*, it was the just Doom of a Heretic; nay, it was God's Judgment upon Heresy; and just so argued the Duke of *Guise*. Now to me both the Doctor and the Duke were Persecutors and *Barbarians* in those Instances: But thus Sects butcher and burn one another, and practise and condemn the same Thing.

Jur. Pray, Sir, consider the Consequences of this Reasoning: You put the Wolves upon the same Foot with the Lambs of Christ, as to the Defence and Security of their Flocks.

Burg. Every Persecutor is a Wolf: Did you ever see a Lamb devour a Kid? Did you ever know a Lamb armed with Fangs and Claws, and nourished with Blood?

Jur. No: But I hope you, that are Magistrates, ought to defend us against Wolves.

[III-44]

Burg. Without all Doubt: But do not you persuade us to mistake Men for Wolves, and Friends for Enemies.

Jur. No: But I maintain Mr. *Bayle* to be a Wolf.

Burg. Of all Men I should never take Mr. *Bayle*, the Philosopher, for a Beast of Prey. Has he ever torn you, Mr. *Jurieu*, or threatened to eat you up?

Jur. This is Raillery, and not Reasoning: Sure you will allow that Heretics and Sceptics are Wolves.

Burg. No, indeed won't I: I have known excellent Men of both Sorts. I will neither allow them to be Wolves, nor suffer Wolves to fall upon them.

Jur. Sir, you'll pardon me, if you argue thus, I cannot argue with you.

Burg. I believe you cannot: You thought you had nothing to do but to point out your Wolf; nor I, but to knock him on the Head.

Jur. I am sorry to see so great Lukewarmness; it forebodes no Good to the Church.

Burg. It forebodes no Victims, no spiritual Bonfires to the Ecclesiastics; whose fiery Zeal, were it suffered to blaze out, would soon make Fuel of the whole State, and reduce this opulent Commonwealth to Uniformity, and a few miserable Fisher-towns: But the Truth [III-45] is, we are not lukewarm, we act upon a Principle of Christianity, by tolerating all Religions, and by not suffering any Christian to hurt another, or any other Man, for his Religion.

Jur. Alas, Sir! without an Assistance more active, Religion will languish.

Burg. That is your Fault then: You have our active Assistance: Have you not Pulpits, and Temples, and Opportunities, by the Providence of the States, which maintains great Numbers of Ecclesiastics, at a great Expence, to teach the People what the Bible teaches them; to explain to them the plain Commandments of God; to open to them the inspired Writings of the Gospel in your own Words; and to baffle all who find any other Meaning there than what you find?

Jur. But what if they pay no Submission to our Doctrine and Discipline?

Burg. No more they ought not, if they do not like your Doctrine and Discipline, Submission is paid to external Things, and due only to the State. What Title have you to any body's Submission, any more than the Church of *France* had to yours? If every Man be not to follow his own Judgment in Religion, then is Religion Blindness.

[III-46]

Jur. But what do you say to those who have no Religion?

Burg. Say! I say, I wish that they had.

Jur. What! will you take no Method to reclaim them?

Bur. Yes, we give you Money to talk to them.

Jur. And they won't mind us.

Burg. Then you must do as I do, pray for them.

Jur. This is a faint Way of propagating the Gospel.

Burg. I beg that you would name me any other.

Jur. Sir, give me Leave to tell you, that three Fourths of *Europe* would be Pagans at this Day, had not the Emperor *Constantine*, and his Successors, employed their Authority to abolish Paganism.

Burg. If the Fact be so, I am ashamed to hear it; and think, that those Emperors were very bad Men, and great Tyrants. They made Hypocrites, and no Christians; and these were much better Men when they were professed Pagans, as well as better Subjects. All Converts made by Force, are made Impostors and Enemies. Many of those Princes were of themselves evil and bloody Men, and more so by the restless Instigations of the Clergy, who having departed from all Christian [III-47] Humility and Meekness, converted Preaching into Domineering, and Exhortation into Violence and Terrors; employed penal Laws, and the imperial Sword, to confute Antagonists, and to make Proselytes; and the Emperor and his Soldiers were the Apostles of that Time. Thus began Popery, and the strange heterogeneous Tyranny of *Rome*; and thus it continues. Better had it been for the Pagans, and better for Mankind, if there never had been such Converts.

Jur. I deny that the first Emperors were Papists.

Burg. They were directed by Priests, and founded Popery.

Jur. That was the Abuse of their Goodness.

Burg. No; it was the natural and certain Use of their Folly and Wickedness: And you cannot distinguish any Persecution, or any priestly Domination, any-where from true Popery, but in the Degrees of it; and where-ever it is not checked, it will certainly and eternally arrive, without stopping, to the highest Degree of Popery.

Jur. Sir, Can you possibly think me capable of a kind Wish for Popery?

Burg. No; but you do just as the Popish Priests do, call upon the Magistrate for Help [III-48] and civil Restraint, the first Step to Fire and Faggot.

Jur. I am grieved you should think all Sorts of Clergy alike.

Burg. I do not think they are; but I think they all would be, if the Magistrate would let them. I never knew any, but, where they were suffered, were endless Informers and Solicitors to the Magistrate against Dissenters, and Men of different Opinions; in which Conduct there is something extremely absurd and bold. If the Clergy direct the Magistrate, then are the Clergy verily and indeed the Magistrate; and if the Magistrate must deal in Religion, then is the Magistrate the Clergy.

Jur. To whom must the Clergy apply in case of obstinate Gainsayers?

Burg. To God and Reason.

Jur. Do you think, Sir, we can be satisfied with this Answer?

Burg. I do not think you can; but I am sure you ought. To deal freely with you, most Ecclesiastics are like Women and Children, and expect from all Mankind to be humoured in every thing. Like Women and Children they grow sullen, peevish, and often outrageous, when they are not humoured; and, like them, they are terrified with Dreams, Shadows, and Phantoms. I never yet knew a [III-49] Woman, or a Child, or a Clergyman, but thought they had a Right to every thing that they had a Mind to, however pernicious or unreasonable.

Jur. I am sorry, Sir, you should think what I ask of you pernicious or unreasonable.

Burg. I am sorry and ashamed you should think otherwise. You run away from Persecution in your own Country, and desire those who protect and maintain you here, to turn Persecutors, against the Genius of Christianity, and the fundamental Maxims of our State. You have Leisure, Learning, and Pay, to write and confute, and say what you please about Religion. Why should not other Men have the same Liberty? Are so many zealous and able Champions, so many learned Ecclesiastics, with so good a Cause, afraid of a few mistaken Laymen, contending weakly for Error? Did the Apostles act thus, or complain thus?

Jur. Alas, Sir! they had extraordinary Powers to combat Error withal: But the Providence of God hath now in a great measure left his Church to the Protection of the Christian Magistrate.

Burg. I thought that Truth had been always sufficient to combat Error; and I hope Providence has not left you destitute of the Assistance [III-50] of Truth. And as to the Magistrates Protection, you may enjoy it to the full here: We allow every Man to profess and defend his own Religion: and by this means Truth has a full and a fair Hearing: Nor does Truth desire more; though Craft and Falshood can never be sufficiently propped and barricaded. Thus our Protection, like our Charity, is christian and universal. As to the narrow Protection of one Tribe or Side only, it is poor, enthusiastical, and scandalous; it is depreciating Government into a Party, and confining Christianity to a Cabal.

Jur. But by this loose and unrestrained Protection, Error has equal Countenance with Truth.

Burg. How so, Mr. *Jurieu*? If I set a Giant to wrestle with a Dwarf, and encourage him to use the Dwarf as he pleases, to throw him down, and crush him to Pieces, has the Giant any Reason to complain? If, on the contrary, I bind the Dwarf Hand and Foot, and then set the Giant upon him, I am sure the poor Dwarf has Reason to complain heavily, and the Giant to

be greatly ashamed. This is plainly the State of Truth and Error: Truth will inevitably triumph, if it has fair Play. What Reason have the Clergy to be afraid? Why need Mr. *Jurieu* complain?

[III-51]

NUMBER LX.

Conclusion of the Dialogue between Mr. Jurieu and a Burgomaster.↵

Jurieu.

YOU may call Error a Dwarf; but you see how powerful it is in the World; and therefore I complain.

Burg. And plead for a Method to make it still stronger. Why is Truth impotent or unknown any-where, but that it is almost every-where brow-beaten, silenced, and shackled?

Jur. I am so far from pleading for this, that I profess nothing but Truth.

Burg. So say all Men, the mistaken and the enlightened; and as every Man makes his own Opinions, right or wrong, the Measure of Truth, all Opinions but his are to be suppressed and restrained. This keeps the whole Earth in Darkness and Misery, and supports Errors [III-52] by Establishments and Armies. Hence the *Mahometans*, hence the Herd of Catholics, are as ignorant as the Beasts of the Field, and more unsociable and fierce in Behalf of their gross Stupidity. The common *Lutherans* of *Sweden* and *Denmark* are not much better, and the *Greek Church* full as bad. If there be any Sparks of Truth in *Turkey* or *Italy*, it is hid in a few Heads, and must never, upon Pain of Death and Tortures, make any Appearance or Progress; nor can it ever appear in its full Force and Glory, but where there is an universal Toleration of all Sects and Sentiments. Where there is no Toleration, there is no Truth; where Toleration is limited, Truth is lame; and it rifes and falls with Toleration. The Learning of the *French Clergy* was owing to the *French Hugonots*; the Learning of the *English Clergy* to the Roman-catholics, and other Dissenters; and so *vice versa*. Learning in *England* makes a prodigious Progress by the means of Liberty. It as visibly decays in *France* for want of Liberty. And in *Holland*, from the same Cause, there are more learned Men, Learning and Libraries, than in all *Asia*, *Africa*, and *America*. Consider now, Mr. *Jurieu*, where, and from what Causes, Truth is to be met with.

[III-53]

Jur. Methinks you make an ill Compliment to Truth, by representing it as so much obliged, for its Strength and Inlargement, to the Toleration of Error.

Burg. The Fact is universally true; but you take but one half of my Reasoning. I contend for universal Toleration of all Opinions, true and false; and then I am sure that Truth will prevail over Falshood, nay, derive new Advantages from it; since perpetual Debate and Inquiries will as certainly promote and illustrate Truth, as weaken and expose Error.

Jur. But do you not see, Sir, how artful and designing Men dress up Falshood every Day with all the Appearances of Truth, and so deceive Mankind?

Burg. I see it plainly enough; and I see other Men every Day stripping it of its borrowed Ornaments, and restoring them to the right Owner, and exposing the Craft and Designs of those Champions of Delusions.

Jur. But still they do great Mischief; and therefore were it not much better, that Truth alone should be encouraged and established, and Error crushed and restrained?

Burg. Would we not be happy, Mr. *Jurieu*, if we were not subject to Sickness and Folly, and could establish eternal Wisdom, and eternal Health, by a Law?

[III-54]

Jur. Yes, if it were possible; but we can restrain Error.

Burg. How! Can you restrain the Thoughts?

Jur. By your Help we can restrain them from going abroad.

Burg. Then we alone do it. And thus too we can prevent Sickness, by putting Men to Death when they are well; or cure them, by killing them when they are ill. Nor can we extirpate Error from amongst Men, but by extirpating Men. Shew me the Man that is free from Error, when neither the Prophets nor Apostles were free from it; when Priests and Teachers, of all Kinds, are generally, of all Men, the most subject to it, and the greatest and warmest Promoters of it; and when so able a Divine as Mr. *Jurieu* has been so egregiously mistaken and disappointed in his Prophecies taken from the Revelations.

Jur. There are Reasons in the Councils of God why these Prophecies have not been fulfilled.

Burg. That is, however, a Confession that you were not in his Councils; and shews, that Men may be strongly persuaded, that they are in his Councils, when they are not; and is a good Reason for distrusting such as pretend to it.

[III-55]

Jur. The Wickedness of Men, as well as their Repentance, may prevent the Accomplishment of Prophecy.

Burg. That was the poor Excuse which St. *Bernard* made for himself, when by his Enthusiastic Declamations, and positive Prophecies, he had sent an Army of Christians on a Fool's Errand, to be knocked on the Head by the *Saracens*. Every Prophecy not fulfilled is false Prophecy.

Jur. I thought that I was not mistaken in what I foretold from the Revelations; and my Mistake was not voluntary, nor is it heterodox or heretical.

Burg. So will every Man say of his Opinion and Mistakes, and therefore all Men ought to be indulged in them; though, if ever any Man's Opinions and Errors deserved severe Animadversion, yours do, since those who believed your Predictions (as Enthusiasm is infinitely credulous) might have been hurried and misled by them into Insurrections, Invasions, and Civil Wars. It is well for you that your own severe Maxims were not turned upon you, and that you enjoy the Shelter and Connivance of this free State, which yet by these Maxims would utterly destroy you. You know what a just and severe Storm you have raised against you and your Party in *France*, and what Advantages [III-56] you have given the Catholics to treat you as an Impostor, and an Incendiary. I wonder that this has not humbled you, and taught you some of that Moderation towards others, which is so necessary to yourself. You have severely felt the heavy Effects of Heat, and Vehemence, and Positiveness; and yet have not learned more Mildness and Charity, nor to trust to Reason alone in disputing, though all *Europe* has seen how far you are from Infallibility.

Jur. I have not been guilty of Atheism, nor of Heresy; and I never set up for Infallibility.

Burg. I do not see but your Opinions are as chargeable with Atheism as any of Mr. *Bayle*'s; and yet you would be terribly enraged at such a Charge. Either cease to judge others, or suffer others to judge as well as you. You own you are not infallible; and yet no Pope was ever more positive and magisterial in his Decrees, then you are in your Censures. As to Heresy, it is a foolish Word, to signify any Opinion that angers hot Churchmen, who are almost universally Heretics to one another, and yet are so distracted as to set up a Model for the human Soul to think by. They may as well pretend to paint or to shave the Soul, which has certainly a different Way of acting in every mortal Man, as all Men have different [III-57] Organs and Imaginations. The persuading all Men to think alike, is as rational as to exhort them all to dream alike. What would you think, Mr. *Jurieu*, of a Mission to persuade the Negroes to change their erroneous black Complexion, and become orthodoxly white?

Jur. Do I propose any thing like that?

Burg. What then do you propose?

Jur. Only an Agreement on a System of Faith.

Burg. Who are they that thus agree in Systems of Faith; that is to say, in a certain adjusted Size of thinking?

Jur. We the *Calvinists* do.

Burg. The Papists boast as much or more of themselves; that is, every Set of Ecclesiastics agree to the Sound of certain Articles, and then fall out in explaining them.

Jur. I am sorry it should sometimes happen so.

Burg. It always happens so, where Tyranny does not efface or abolish Christianity, and set up an Inquisition, and consequently Ignorance or Hypocrisy. Besides, Mr. *Bayle* is a strict *Calvinist*.

Jur. He professes to be so; but he is not sincere.

Burg. Who made you a Judge of Hearts? You have disowned Infallibility.

[III-58]

Jur. I judge him by the Word of God, and by his own Works.

Burg. I judge the same Way; and yet can find no Fault in him. I freely own, that I am of all his religious Opinions. What now think you of me, Mr. *Jurieu*? Don't you think, that I deserve to be punished as well as he? Suppose the whole Magistracy be in the same Sentiments with me, are we not liable to great Censure, and deserving of great Punishment; What says your Principle to this?

Jur. I should be afflicted for so sorrowful a Thing: But I don't pretend to punish the Magistrate.

Burg. Why would you then punish Mr. *Bayle*?

Jur. For the Glory of God.

Burg. It is now plain how high that Principle would carry you, if the Magistrate was not higher than you. But be assured, that, for the Glory of God, we will take care both of ourselves and Mr. *Bayle*, and preserve both Magistrate and People from this strange Zeal of stigmatizing and punishing for the Glory of God.

Jur. I hope, Sir, you will make some Difference between good Men and the worst of Men.

[III-59]

Burg. Certainly. Every Man is a good Man who is an honest Man, and a quiet Subject: We will value him much more than a proud and unquiet Man, whatever fine Names he may assume.

Jur. Atheists never can be good Subjects.

Burg. Most that the Clergy call so are the best Subjects, as well as the ablest Men. No Man who owns the Being of a God, is an Atheist; and I never knew any Man that denied his Being: And till any Man does, it is false, wicked, and barbarous, to call him an Atheist. As to the Idea of God, I believe all Men differ about it, because, I am sure, no Man can ascertain it.

Jur. Is there no Preference to be given to the Christian Faith and Doctrines?

Burg. Yes, the Preference of Truth; which will defend them. Nor has the blessed and beneficent Author of them given them any other Preference, or external Advantages. And to say, that they want any other, is to call the Truth of Christianity in doubt, which made its Way without any other. It is therefore mistrusting the Power and Veracity of Christianity, to restrain, for its sake, any Set of Opinions whatsoever. Where Liberty of Conscience and of Opinion is not fully maintained, Christianity is not maintained; but only one [III-60] Faction of Christians, falsely so called, against all the rest, and against the Spirit and first Principles of Christianity. This State was once weak enough to enter into the Subtleties, Contentions, and Chimera's of Divines, and near being overturned by a ridiculous Attempt to settle Guesses and Orthodoxy. A Synod of Doctors at *Dort*, by the mere Dint of Words and Dreams, were like to have put an End to the *High and Mighty States of Holland and Friseland*. We have since learned more Wit, than to sacrifice the Peace of our Government, or any Man's Peace, to the Passion or Maggots of the Clergy. We protect them all against one another, and all Men against them. As to their own subtle Disputes and Inventions, we meddle not with them, if they meddle not with us. They have good Pay, and a clear Stage; and it is not for their Credit, if they desire more. If any Man be a bad Subject, and break our Laws, we know how to deal with him, without the Assistance of the Clergy: And if any Man be a bad Believer, it is their Business to convince him. But whoever would convince by Stripes and Terror, proclaims open War against Christianity and common Sense, against the Peace of Society, and the Happiness of Mankind. Persecution, for any Opinion whatsoever, justifies Persecution [III-61] for every Opinion in the World; and every Persecutor is liable to be persecuted, upon his own Principles, by every Man upon Earth of a different Opinion, and more Strength. What dismal Butcheries would such a cruel Spirit raise!

I HOPE you will forgive me, Mr. *Jurien*, for using you thus, with the Freedom of a Christian and a *Dutchman*. I have a great Kindness for you, but a greater for the State: We cannot violate our best Maxims, because you are angry at Mr. *Bayle*.

Jur. I shall beg leave, for all this, to present my Petition: If it has no Effect, I can only appeal to God.

Burg. With all my Heart: But do not appeal to him in Anger.

[III-62]

NUMBER LXI.

Force and Fraud, how opposite to the Spirit of Religion. The very different Effects of religious Liberty, and false Zeal.↩

TRUE Religion has every Advantage over the false, except Force and Fraud; and these are the only Advantages which a false Religion has over the true. The Holy Ghost, which always accompanies the true Religion, and every Man that has it, is not to be bought, nor bribed, nor entertained by Money; not to be propagated by Artifice, or Falshood, or human Policy, nor to be infused by Power, nor helped by the Sword. He is detached from every secular Interest, and has no Use for Rents nor Authority. He comes freely to those that ask him, and sometimes to those who do not ask; and is guided only by his Benevolence and good Pleasure. He [III-63] is Omnipotent, and can never be influenced by the Inventions of Men, nor be made obedient to Arts or Force, which can only serve to provoke and banish him, and to exalt worldly Pride in his room. The utmost Length that human Power can go in Religion, without hurting it, is to entertain some Men to persuade others to virtuous Actions, and to pray for the Spirit, and to pray with them. Beyond this, which is very commendable, human Power cannot go, and be innocent.

PEOPLE have been generally misled in their Idea of Religion, by tacking to it the Idea of a Hierarchy, which they call Church-Government, but which is in Truth only the Government of the State about Things appertaining to the Church. But the true Idea of Religion is confined to the Operations of the Spirit of God upon the Heart of Man, and to the Actions which those Operations produce. Religion therefore is the Effect of the Spirit, which can have no Alliance with Secular Interest, which too often interferes with the Spirit, and quenches it. This shews that the Ecclesiastical Cause, and the Cause of Religion, are not always identical, but ought to be distinguished. The Piety of a Bishop is not always as large as his Diocese, nor the [III-64] Good which he does equal to the Advantages which he receives: And there has been, and may be, Religion in the World, where there are no Ecclesiastical Officers. It would be impious to say the contrary.

CHARITY and Sincerity are the Characteristics of the true Religion; and it disowns Bitterness, Dissimulation, and human Arms, which are the Weapons and Defence of a false Religion, which must deceive where it cannot persuade, and force where it cannot deceive; and to use these Weapons in behalf of the true, is to renounce it, and bring it under the Suspicion of Falshood. If a Man tell me, that his Religion is the best and most merciful Religion in the World, and yet treat me with Ill-nature and Severity for not being of his Religion, I shall believe that either his Religion is false and ill-natured, or that he is a Disbeliever, or an ill Judge, of his own Religion. The Christian Religion is so absolutely divested of all Fierceness and Gall, that it commands us to love our Enemies, that is, Men of all Religions, or of none. Hence *Origen*, by a good-natured Mistake, (if it were one) believed that even the Devils and the Damned would at last be saved. This merciful Opinion, however groundless, has Piety [III-65] and Sense in it, compared to the detestable Folly and Impiety of pronouncing any Man damned, however irreligious.

MEN that have no Religion, or a false one, are intitled to our Pity and Exhortation. This is the Voice of Religion and Good-nature: For from Reason and Experience we know, that Sourness and Asperity only serve to harden and embitter them. While they are in the Wrong, they are unhappy; and it is avowed Cruelty to add, by ill Usage, one Misfortune to another, and to shew our own Want of Humanity, for their Want of Grace. It is like using a Man ill for an unfortunate Face, and hard Features. Opinions are the Features of the Soul; and let them be ever so ridiculous or deformed, all Men like their own best: And whilst they like them, they neither will nor can part with them; and when they cease to like them, they will cease to retain them.

No Man desires to be mistaken; and it is the Pride and Interest of every Man to have the best Lights, and the largest Understanding. It is a Contradiction to say, that in Point of Opinion any Man can sin against Light: His Opinion is the best Light that he has, and he will inevitably change it upon better Light. [III-66] If the Avenues to his Understanding be so

obstructed by Prejudice, Custom, and Bigotry, that no new Illumination can find Passage, a Case which is very common, this also is a Misfortune, but not a Fault: for he certainly would embrace the best, if he thought it best: There is no more Sin in this than in a diseased and depraved Appetite, which cannot relish wholesome Food.

THE Mind is more subject to be depraved than the Appetite; and there are few, if any, Minds in the World but what are more or less depraved; and but for that Depravity, we should be in a State of Perfection. But the most depraved of all, are they who quarrel with one another, because their Souls are not marked with the same Stamp and Impressions, which are as various as Men; Opinions, Imaginations, and Errors, being infinite. It depends upon no Man's Choice how he shall be first taught, nor what Ideas he shall first draw in: This depends upon Parents, Nurses, Tutors, and external Objects and Accidents. Nor is it in his Power afterwards to get rid of these first and fortuitous Impressions: Chiefly, because while they please him, he cannot desire it; and we see they generally please. Men for the most part carry the Fruits and Force [III-67] of their earliest Education along with them to their Graves. We see Men as fond of the foolishest Opinions, as of the truest. Hence *Mahometans* continue *Mahometans*, *Pagans* continue *Pagans*; and both hate our Religion, as much as we pity and condemn theirs.

INDEED Men are generally zealous for their Faith, in Proportion to its Absurdity; and the more ridiculous the Opinion, the more fierce the Zeal of its Votaries in its Defence. The *Popish* Dreams of Transubstantiation, and the Infallibility of a Man, are, I think, some of their highest and holiest Nonsense; but such as they have taken the most ardent Pains to propagate and defend, and burnt most People for denying. And as it is true, that religious Madmen are ever eager to make Proselytes to their Phrensies, it is equally true, that they are much less solicitous about the Interest of Virtue, than about the Belief and Increase of these Phrensies. We have it from our Saviour's Authority, that the Pharisees compassed Sea and Land to make one Proselyte, and by doing it, made him ten-fold more a Child of the Devil than he was before. The *Turks* have the same Zeal to bring Men from Christianity to the savage Stupidity of *Mahometism*. The *Popish* Nurseries of Drones, Enthusiasts, and Impostors, particularly the [III-68] Jesuits, the blackest Incendiaries and Immoralists of all, ramble in Clusters about all the Corners of the Earth on the same Errand, and stick at no Means nor Frauds to cheat Men out of common Sense, Charity and Humanity, to make way for Popery, which is a Complication of all the Absurdities, Rogueries, and Errors, that ever appeared amongst Men, or that the Craft, Folly, and Malice of Men are capable of.

In the most Northern Nations, Nations where Men live among Bears and Forests, their Zeal and Charity are as inhospitable as their Climate, as savage as their Way of Life. Men are every-where uncharitable in Proportion to their Ignorance, and ignorant in Proportion to their Bigotry, which lessens or ceases according to the Measure of their Understandings; but thrives by the Absence of Politeness, Civility, and Knowledge. Upon the Skirts of a Mountain, and in small Villages, you find more of it than in Towns, in Towns more than in Cities, in small Cities more than in great. A general Commerce with the World, and a thorough Acquaintance with Men, quite destroy it. Every thing that is good for Mankind, is bad for Bigotry, as Bigotry is an Enemy to every thing that promotes the Welfare of [III-69] Mankind; and it is utterly impossible for any great Nation to subsist in Greatness, where Bigotry is armed or let loose.

WE feel and behold here in *England* the glorious and diffusive Effects of a general Toleration. It has multiplied our People and Manufactures, and consequently increased prodigiously our Strength and Riches. It has invited Multitudes of Foreigners hither with all their Arts and Money. It has encouraged Industry at home, by leaving to all Men an equal Enjoyment of their Conscience and Property, without being exposed, as formerly, to the Rapine and villainous Arts of Informers, without being harassed for Opinions, and their Way

of Worship, without being insulted by foolish and zealous drunken Justices, without being summoned and terrified before merciless Courts, for a harmless pious Meeting in a Barn, and without the Danger of being driven out of their Country, or undone in it for a Conscientious Disobedience to the Inventions and Grimaces of hot-headed Monks.

HAD the Arts and Cruelties of *Laud* gone on, as they drove many of the best *English* Subjects to people the wild Woods of *America*, where they found Tygers and Rattle-snakes less destructive Enemies than his Grace; these Arts and Cruelties of his would have ended in [III-70] dispeopling *England*, or reduced this great Nation to a Number and Condition, not deserving the Name of a People, even to a Herd of Slaves, starving and trembling under the iron Rod of the new Lords of the Soil, their Levitical Landlords. *England* must have been in the same Condition, to which such Men, and such Measures, reduce every Country under the Sun where they bear Sway; a State of Lust and Insolence on one Side, and of Fear and Famine on the other. And I defy such Men, with all their Sophistry and Distinctions, to reconcile the putting any Number of People under Discouragements and Distresses for any Sort of religious Worship and Opinions, to the Peace and Happiness of Society. How would they accommodate their darling Uniformity to *London* or *Amsterdam*, without dispeopling or impoverishing those great Cities, where no Sort of Men are disturbed for their Religion? Societies must thrive apace, where they are subject to such Directors as would set up a Coat, or a Ceremony, in Balance against the Glory, Liberty, and Prosperity of Mankind!

I WISH I could help to drive this Spirit of Uncharitableness out of the World, wherein it has committed such wide and affecting Ravages; a Spirit which is against all common [III-71] Sense, and human Compassion; a Spirit which is at open War with the very Letter and Genius of the Gospel of Christ, scandalous and baneful to the whole Race of Men, and always highest amongst the worst. Good Men and wise Men are Strangers to it, and abhor it.

NUMBER LXII.

Power and Imposition, in Matters of Religion, tend rather to abolish Religion, than to improve it. The Light of Nature, and the Practice of Heathens, furnish Reproof to persecuting Christians. [↪](#)

IT is as true as it is amazing and melancholy, that the Abuse of the true Religion has done a thousand times more Mischief in the World, created more Wars, Hatred, and Havock amongst Men, shed more of their Blood, and carried human Miseries, [III-72] Ignorance, and Idolatry, higher than all the Madness and Variety of the old idolatrous Religions of the *Gentiles* ever did before it. The Reason of this sad Difference, so shameful to Christians, is the uncharitable and imposing Spirit of their ignorant or designing Leaders: A Spirit as unknown to the civilized Pagans, as it is opposite to Christianity!

THESE *Pagans* worshipped an endless Tribe of Deities: And though their principal Gods and Goddesses had great Emulation, and many Quarrels, among themselves, their Adorers agreed well enough in worshipping them all, or differed without quarrelling. The Light of Nature taught them that something was eternal, and the first Cause of themselves, and of all that they saw; and this Cause they called God. And because they thought that the conducting of Nature in its several great Divisions of Sea, Earth, and *Ether*, was too much for one, they allotted each Division to a different Deity, and made a numerous Subdivision of these Deities for smaller Purposes. Besides, finding or fansying themselves superior in Comeliness and Capacity to all other Creatures, they generally gave the Gods human Shapes and Passions. Thus, having never seen God, nor heard from him, they judged of him by Guess, and worshipped him by Humour, every [III-73] Man following his own; nor had they then any other Rule.

No Man can say, that in this Worship, and in those Conjectures, every Man did not act according to the best of his own Knowledge, or that his Intention was not upright. It was a Thing in which he himself was chiefly concerned, and it behoved him to endeavour to be in the right. This Endeavour is, without divine Help, all that any Man can do, and all that ought to be expected from any Man. The Pagans could only see God in his Works, and from thence conclude him a great and glorious Being; but where he was, or what he was, they could not know. It was a Discovery which the Light of Nature could not make: Nor has Revelation made it. Revelation only tells us what is acceptable to him: And this we can conceive; but himself we can never conceive, nor define, any more than we can his Motives and Manner of acting. It is therefore as absurd in Christians to quarrel with one another about their different weak and imperfect Notions of God, as it would have been in Pagans to have quarrelled about their different false Ideas of God.

AMONGST the Pagans there was an Infinity of religious Opinions; and yet, for the most part, perfect Peace. All the Superstitions and Nonsense of Paganism did scarce afford sufficient [III-74] Tumults and Fightings to fill one moderate Ecclesiastical History. The wise *Greeks* and *Romans*, who understood so well the Laws of Nature and Society, did not suffer the Precepts of their Religion, nor the idle Tales and Dreams of Enthusiasts, to interfere with the Laws of Reason and Humanity, much less to extinguish them. They inquired not after the Whims and Superstitions of their Countrymen, any farther than to improve their Superstition to the Good of their State. They knew, that whether their People worshipped *Jupiter*, *Bacchus*, or *Minerva*, or whatever they thought of them, they were never the better nor the worse Subjects; and they had the good Sense never to engage the State in the Affairs of Religion, any farther than Religion directly concerned the State; and never to meddle with religious Notions and Fashions, which meddled not with the Government.

THE College of Augurs at *Rome*, which consisted of their great Men and Magistrates, Men who were acquainted with human Nature, and its many Weaknesses and Superstitions, with the Innocence of unmolested Error, and with the just Extent and Use of Power, never founded Tables of Belief, nor oppressed the People with a Yoke of Imaginations, or of jarring Propositions to be believed upon Penalties, [III-75] though they could not be understood. To this humane and tolerating Temper in the *Romans* it was owing, that of all the Turns, Contentions and Revolutions which happened in that State, not one, that I remember, was occasioned by Religion, though they had Gods without Number, and almost as many Religions as Men. Nor do different Religions ever any Harm to any State, where the State does not weakly and unnaturally force all Men into one Religion. Men who are suffered to enjoy their Religion, will seek no Force to defend it: But where religious Impositions are practised, religious Wars naturally ensue; and Men will rather fight than be forced.

IN a War between two States of *Greece*, one of them robbed the Temple of *Delphos*, in the Territories of the other: Hence it was called the Sacred War. But it was, as to its Ends and Motives, a War for Power and Property, and had nothing to do with one Religion more than another, on either Side. The *Greeks* and *Romans* were so far from hurting any Man for his Religion, provided he let them alone with theirs, that their great Quarrel to the Christian Religion, at first, seems to have been, that it was destructive of theirs, and degraded all their Gods.

[III-76]

THEY had afterwards too much Ground given them for new Prejudices against it, by the abominable Spirit and Behaviour of the Christian Clergy; by their unbounded Pride, and Thirst of Riches, Power, and Revenge; by their restless Quarrels, and implacable Tyranny; by their Dissimulation and Frauds; by their wicked, absurd and selfish Doctrines; by their scandalous and tumultuous Synods, and the wicked Purposes and Results of those Synods; by

their base Flatteries to some Princes, and the vile Arts which they used to engage those Princes to shed Blood in their Behalf and Quarrel; by their Factions, Rebellions, and insulting Deportment to other Princes for their Wisdom and Humanity; in short, by a horrid and universal Depravation of Manners, and a monstrous Apostasy from the Soul and Letter of that humble, meek and charitable Religion, which, as a black Aggravation of all their Usurpations, and incredible Excesses, they still professed, and impiously urged, as their Warrant for such enormous Iniquities.

I MENTION these Things in the Bitterness of my Soul, and without any Exaggeration: They are owned and lamented by the best Christian Writers, ancient and modern; and the Ecclesiastical Histories, voluminous as they are, have little else to fill them but the Frauds [III-77] and Fury of those Men. As to those General Councils, particularly, which are revered only for want of being known, they were composed of Men so utterly void of all Sincerity, Holiness, Peace and Probity, that it will be hard to find in any Country upon Earth, any Assembly of Men met together upon any Occasion, so bent upon Mischief and Strife, or by whom so much was begun and promoted. The bold Impositions and furious Contentions begun by them are not yet ended: God knows whether they will ever end. They took upon them to coin Faith for others, and tacked dreadful Penalties and Denunciations to Injunctions of their own devising; as if the plain and easy Truths of Christianity, as delivered by such only as could deliver them, the holy disinterested Men who first heard them, and saw them, were not plain enough, or rather too plain. These Imposers, after some hundred Years, took upon them to new-fashion Christianity according to their own strange and selfish Inventions, and disguised it with such a Dress, that it was not to be known. What an inexhaustible Source this has proved of Wars and Outrage, of Domination and Servitude, and of all human Woes, Wickedness, and Sorrows, I leave the Historians of all Ages and Countries to tell. By it Millions have fallen; and by it Mahometanism [III-78] seems to have been raised, and justified by Example, in exercising the Sword over the Soul, and laying the World waste.

How innocent, I had almost said, how pious, were the ancient sober Heathens, in comparison with these false Christians, those Destroyers of Christianity, and Pests of human Society! The only Reason why the Pagan Religion, with all its Follies, Frauds, and Superstitions, did so little Harm, (how little in Comparison!) was, that it imposed nothing upon the Consciences of Men, and Opinions were not unnaturally made subject to Power. They believed naturally a supreme Power, and as naturally worshipped it; in which they all freely followed their own Fancies. The public Forms, where they were established, were established by Consent, and in Compliance with the various or unanimous Humours of the People; and every one took as much of them as he liked, and was in Practice and Opinion a *Stoic*, an *Epicurean*, a *Pyrrhonist*, just as he thought fit. His Practice was as free as his Speculations; so free, that the Gods of *Greece* were often ridiculed and severely rallied upon the *Grecian* Stage; and their Oracles were perfect Noses of Wax to every Prince or State, that had either Power to frighten the Priests, or Money to bribe them. If *Socrates* was put to Death by the *Athenians* [III-79] for nobler Notions of the Deity than the Vulgar entertained, it was done for the Honour of Persecution, as all such Things are done, by a Faction; and, for the Honour of the *Athenians*, they repented severely their rash Zeal, and practised it no more.

BUT the Christian Religion, by how much it is more excellent than all other Religions, by so much it has been more abused: It has had the ill Luck to fall, in most Places and Times, into the Hands of such Directors, as have profanely trampled upon all its gentle Precepts, and, in room of the meek Christian Spirit, have introduced a Spirit of Ferocity and Domineering; such Directors as have turned Prayer and Persuasion into Imposing and Fury; and such as, setting up for governing Conscience, which is, and can be subject to God only, have grasped temporal Dominion, and the Sword, which can have no other Power over the Soul, but to terrify and afflict it, to darken it with Ignorance, and taint it with Hypocrisy.

THIS Power they have called, by a foolish and deceitful Phrase, *Spiritual Power*; which is the most furious and fraudulent of all the Schemes and Engines of human Craft and Policy, and comprehends them all, as may be seen by the Rage, Rapine and Treachery with which it is exerted in the Territories of Popery: It is [III-80] a Power heterogeneous to Society, poisonous to the Gospel of Christ, forbid by him, and barbarous to Men. It is indeed pure secular Tyranny, heightened by ghostly Arts and Cruelty, and a further Improvement of human Malice and Misery. Dominion over Conscience is absolute Nonsense, and the Word big with Fraud: Men can only be subject to Dominion in their Bodies and Properties. That which no Power can reach, can never be the Object of Power. The Governing of Opinions is therefore impossible, and only a Pretence for the Governing of Men in their Persons and Purses. Thus far only Men can be subject to Men: Every thing beyond this is Delusion, Phrenzy and Contradiction. Thoughts and Opinions can neither be bound, whipped, nor burnt.

[III-81]

NUMBER LXIII.

The consuming Nature of Persecution. Persecutors generally religious Madmen. Their egregious Want of Shame, and utter Unfitness to make Converts. ↩

THE Practice of some of the ancient Heathens, who offered human Sacrifice, and butchered Men to please their Gods, was a dreadful Barbarity, not capable of Aggravation by Words: yet this Barbarity had Mercy and Mitigation in it, compared to the more unrestrained and merciless Genius of those Pagan Christians, who, from a Principle of Religion, or from any Principle, avow and promote the killing, punishing and distressing of Men for the free Sentiments of their [III-82] Souls, and for their Notions of God and Religion.

THE ancient human Sacrificers confined themselves to a stated Number; one or a few generally sufficed: And this brutish Devotion was either extraordinary, by the Direction of some lying Oracle, or repeated at large Intervals. But the Christian Sacrificers of Men have rarely known such Moderation, rarely set such Bounds to their devout Thirst of human Blood. All who did not say with them, and dream with them, and practise their Jargon and Postures, were proper Victims: Hence Myriads have been butchered to assuage their holy Fury; and the Blood of Nations let out, has not been enough to assuage it: Hence the *Irish* Massacre, a human Sacrifice to Popery of some hundred Thousands: Hence the like Sacrifice of thirty Thousand at *Paris*; and of three times as many all over *France* at the same time: Hence the long continued Murder of the *Waldenses* and *Albigenses*, the Destruction and Expulsion of the *Moors* in *Spain*, and of the *Hugonots* in *France*: Hence the dreadful Ravages committed by the Inquisitors, who act so much like Devils, that they can scarce be thought Men: Hence all the mad and cruel Wars for Religion; and hence the Oppressions, Imprisonments, and [III-83] Executions any-where upon any religious Account.

THE *Mahometan* Faquirs in the *Indies* are such distracted and bloody Villains for their Religion, which indeed was founded in Phrenzy and Blood, that when they return from their pious Pilgrimage to *Mecca*, drunk with Devotion, and flaming with Zeal, many of them run through the Streets, or into the first Crowd they meet withal, stabbing and killing with a poisoned Dagger, all that are not *Mahometans*, till they themselves are killed; and when they are, they are reckoned Saints and Martyrs by their Priests and the Rabble. They are solemnly buried; Tombs are built for them, and richly adorned, where Devotion is paid, and Alms are given; and a good Livelihood is got by the Dervises that look after them. This is all pure Zeal, both the Murder, and the Worship paid to the Murderer.

WHAT are all Persecutors but furious Faquirs? only most of them are not so much in Earnest, and will run no Risques to be Martyrs. Will any Man, who is not a *Mahometan*, say, that these Faquirs are not Mad-men and Villains? And yet are not all Persecutors apt to do the same thing, and to use the same Plea with the mad Faquirs? They are sure that their Worships and Opinions are true; that the [III-84] Way and Religion of those whom they hate and persecute are false; and that the punishing of Infidels and Heretics is pleasing to God. Just so reasons the Faquir, and seals his Testimony with his Blood: So that whether Men be right or wrong in their Faith and Worship, they have just the same Argument, and indeed the same Right, to plague and oppress one another; namely, a firm and selfish Persuasion on all Sides, that they are all in the right; an Argument which would keep up the Rage of Violence, and of Fire and Sword amongst Men, as long as there was any left.

THESE raging Faquirs of all Denominations have almost as much Reason to kill their own Brethren, who want Zeal to do as they do, as to kill those of a different Persuasion; and, in Fact, we have often seen those Sons of Violence shed their Bitterness and Venom upon the Children of their own Household, merely for their Candor and Forbearance. It is well known how bitterly *Tillotson* and *Hoadly*, with other the best Fathers of our Church, have been traduced and reproached by the sour Assertors of Persecution, or (which is the same thing) of Pains and Penalties, for their noblest and most christian Sentiments in favour of private Conscience, and religious Liberty. They shewed them no Mercy, for their daring to be [III-85] merciful. This is the true Nature and Extent of Persecution, to have no Bounds at all, but to persecute all who will not persecute. In this respect, as in many others, Persecutors are all alike. They are all Faquirs, whatever opposite Names and Badges they may wear; and I defy the most learned and subtle of them all, let him profess what Religion he pleases, to defend himself and his Persecution by any one Argument, by which the bloody *Mahometan* Faquir will not be equally defended. If their Religion be a good Religion, they depart from it by doing Mischief for it, and are wicked Men for a Religion that abhors Wickedness; and it is more wicked and infamous to draw a Dagger for Christianity than for Mahometanism.

BUT, say some of them, we are not for drawing Blood; we are only for smaller Penalties. Which Plea is full of Deceit and Falshood; for if those Penalties fail to subdue that Spirit which they would subdue, the Sword is the last Remedy, and Death comes to be one of their Penalties, and the only sure one. When Scarification and Lancing will not do, *Ense recidendum est*; the whole Limb must be lopped off. This most of them know, and are always ready to preach. Death or Banishment is the only effectual Cure: All [III-86] the other Process is but preparatory. If any thing less than the highest Cruelty would suffice, Popery would want no Inquisition. The Court of *Rome* are too refined. Politicians to desire the Infamy and Reproach of that horrible Tribunal, if moderate Penalties, or any Penalties on this Side Death and utter Destruction, would serve their Turn. Whoever, therefore, would send me to Gaol for my Opinion, would send me to the Gallows, though perhaps he do not at first think so. If a Gaol do not alter my Opinion, he must either condemn himself for sending me to Gaol, or condemn me to something worse. So that he who is for the smallest Penalties, if he has Sense or Thought in him, must be for the highest. What signify Penalties that have no Effect?

SUCH are the Impressions which we must naturally entertain of those cruel Men, who fly to Force in Behalf of their Faith; and with such an ill Grace do any sort of Men, who are for any sort of Severity in Cases of religious Opinions, rail at the Inquisition, which is only the highest Improvement of their own Reasoning. It is their own Scheme successfully executed. The Inquisition did not arise all at once; *Cuncta prius tentanda*. Excommunication, Cursing, and other Sorts of Church-discipline were first tried; then followed [III-87] Fines and Imprisonments, and the like Methods to secure the Papal Church against Schismatics: But as all these wholesome Severities could not persuade Men out of their Senses, the last and surest

Attack was upon their Lives. The Sword of Persecution was then openly drawn, its Fires were publicly kindled, and downright Butcheries were avowedly and piously preached. These were, and for ever must be, the natural Gradations; and such Beginnings, if they are at all pursued, must for ever have such Ends.

It is not the least provoking Part of these ungodly Barbarities, that those who practise them, or desire to see them practised, have the inimitable Impudence, all the while their Hands are thus lifted up against God and Man, to talk of Religion and Reason; to pretend Mercy and Peace in the Heat and Excesses of Bitterness and Rage; and to plead a Regard for the Souls of Men, when they are acting the blackest Hostilities against their Bodies, Fortunes, and Consciences, and sacrificing their Lives to Hate and Virulence, and to every wicked and worldly End. This is to heighten Impiety by Hypocrisy, to aggravate Cruelty by Mockery.

YOU talk of Revelation and Reason; you that are Persecutors, or Advocates for Persecution; [III-88] but how idly, how shamelessly do you talk? What has Faith to do with Violence? What has Revelation to do with the Sword? If your Religion be supported by Reason, why seek you any other Support, and such a Support as is only wanted where Reason is wanting? If your Religion be grounded upon Revelation, how can it be proved but by Revelation? And how is Revelation tried but by Reason? What Revelation tells you, or does any Revelation from God tell you, that Force teaches Faith? Or in what Instances does Reason teach, that Truth is the Offspring of Violence, or akin to it! Where does Force explain one mathematical Proposition, one Doctrine of Christianity, or any Doctrine? Christ and his Apostles are your only Guides in Christianity. Did Christ and his Apostles ever direct you to beget Faith by Violence, or to hurt any Man for his Faith? Did they themselves ever do so? And will you dare to do what they never did, but constantly forbid? From what Part of the Gospel do you bring your Axes, Ropes, and Dungeons, or even your Fines, Civil Exclusions, and negative Penalties, or even your Anger and Railing? You know that the Gospel renounces them all, and you, if you use them.

[III-89]

CONFESS the Truth; say that you employ, or would employ, those savage Engines in spite of the Gospel, for Ends purely human, and from a Spirit intirely secular. Set up avowedly Pride and Domination against the Laws of Christ and Nature, and do not increase your Guilt, by adding Deceit to Violence, by pretending to convert and reconcile Men, while you oppress, alienate, and persecute them. Do not mock God and Man, and pretend to gain Souls by Methods so monstrous and contradictory, which only shew, that you seek Empire over Men, and the Souls of Men. Is it thus that you would convert Pagans, if you made that any Part of your Business or Care? What Nation of Pagans would bear you, or forbear stoning you, if when you went about to convert them, you accosted them with your Whips, and Chains, and human Penalties, and declared your Errand in the following Style?

GENTLEMEN, “These are the Auxiliaries of our Faith: Let us persuade you to embrace it, and take us for your Guides and Governors; and if afterwards you contradict us, or vary from us in the Explication of our Doctrines and Mysteries, which cannot be explained, though we ourselves are always explaining them, and always at endless [III-90] Variance in these our Explications, these Rods and Fetters abide you; these Penalties shall chastise and coerce you. In Return for all which pastoral Care and Tenderness, we only desire you to be our Subjects blindfold, and without Reserve; to give us great Dignities, Pomp, and Revenues, and never to differ from us in any thing, however false, foolish, cruel, or wicked you may think it. At present we can only persuade you, and reason with you: But when you have established us amongst you, and set us over you, and given us a great Part of all that you have, and all that we can have, then you may hope for full Proofs of this our fatherly Correction, and for all these our temporal Terrors; and never afterwards to be suffered to have the Trouble of

using your Reason, which God has given you, against our Authority, which you will have given us, or which we shall have taken to ourselves, at first by your Connivance or Consent; but thenceforth to be exercised over you, whether you will or no: And though we must judge you, and censure you, and punish you as we think fit; and though we accept of all your Gifts and Bounties; yet you must not dare to judge nor to censure us, much less to degrade or [III-91] chastise us, let our Tyranny be ever so severe, our Lives ever so enormous; nor expect back from us any Part of the Wealth, which you will have given us, whether it was obtained by Force, or Fear, or Fraud, or by whatever other Means. Upon these Conditions, Gentlemen, out of our tender Regard for your Souls, we are willing to accept you for our Slaves.”

I appeal to all Men, and to the Experience of all Men, whether, when any Man who is for Penalties and Persecution, goes about to convert a Nation of Pagans, or any Nation, these are not, upon his Principles, the comfortable Terms and Fruits of their Conversion. Let him consider what People upon Earth would not dread and reject him, if he escaped so well: But if he apply to them with Persuasion and Gentleness at first, and basely conceal from them these his severe and proud Purposes, then he is a Deceiver, and justly deserves all the ill Usage which he unjustly intends for others.

BUT quite different and contrary must be the Speech and Behaviour of a Man who would only propagate Christianity without low or high Regards to himself, or without mixing his own selfish Passion with his Zeal. Such [III-92] a Man would tell them honestly and openly:

GENTLEMEN, “You are in a very wrong Way: Your Religion is ill-grounded, and only serves to deceive you, and to frighten you: If you will hear me, I will teach you a better, and the only one that is good: If you like it, I have my End; if you do not like it, the worst will be yours, and I have done you no Harm. Over those who embrace it, I claim no Power: You are to continue Christians by the same Means that made you Christians; that is, by Meekness, Arguments, and the Grace of God. I will not be such a Deceiver as to turn the Persuasions which I now use with you into Violence and Power afterwards. If any of you or yours desert my Religion, after having tried it, or exercise it in a manner different from mine, I will pray for you, and persuade you: But Force and Bitterness I abominate. They are against the Genius of the Religion which I bring you; as impotent and improper to bring back into it those who are lapsed from it, as to drive them into it at first. If any of you believe not my Religion, he is an Hypocrite if he assent to it; and if I tempted him to do so by Gain, or frightened him by worldly [III-93] Pains and Threats, I should share in his Hypocrisy: But if he believe it, he will want no Terror or Temptation to profess it. For myself, Gentlemen, you will judge when you have heard me, whether it is worth your while to support me amongst you. Other Provision than this, the disinterested Religion which I teach makes none for me.”

I leave it with my Readers to consider which of these two Speeches would be the most christian, and which would be likely to be best heard, and to make most Proselytes in a Country of Unbelievers.

[III-94]

NUMBER LXIV.

Mutual Bitterness and Persecution amongst Christians, how repugnant to the Gospel, and how shocking to a rational Pagan. ↩

REASON is not the only Thing in which Men exceed Brutes: Their Passions, as well as their Reasons, are stronger than those of the dumb Creation, and prompt them to commit more abominable things. To qualify and restrain those Passions is the Business of Religion; and where it has contrary Effects, it is either a bad Religion, or they are very bad Men who profess it. By this Rule, all Men may know what sort of Christians they are: *Except ye love*

one another, says our blessed Saviour, *you cannot be my Disciples*. How different from the Style of many who call themselves his Successors! “Unless you hate, kill, and destroy one another, you cannot be our Followers.”

[III-95]

THE only End of Christianity, as to this Life, was to teach Men Peace, Charity, mutual Forbearance, and the Forgiveness of Injuries. This was the *New Commandment*, which Jesus Christ gave to his Apostles, and to all Christians. How ill it has been observed, or rather, how impiously it has been violated, let those whose Duty it more especially was to see it obeyed, consider; whether they have not inflamed, instead of calming, the natural Heat and foolish Passions of Men? and, far from instructing them to forgive Injuries, have not taught them never to forgive Things which were no Injuries, namely, the Faith and Opinions of one another; and to commit real Injuries to revenge nominal Injuries?

If a Man halt in his Understanding, how is any one injured by his intellectual Lameness, more than by the Lameness of his Limbs? If his Opinions are crooked and wild, what Offence is that to another, more than if he squinted, or had a wild Look? Error is an Infirmary of the Mind, as Pain, Halting, and Crookedness are of the Body; why should his internal, any more than his external Defects, provoke any rational Man? Would not he who went about to persecute, or invent Penalties for Crookedness, be looked upon as a Monster equally cruel with those Savages, who [III-96] drown all their innocent new-born Babes, whose Make does not please their Eye? And is not hating, hurting, or killing, for the natural or habitual Weaknesses of the Soul, equally monstrous and savage? What is it to any Man what I think of Colours; and whether I like or dislike White or Black? or what Sentiments, which are the Colours of the Mind, fit mine best? or with what Words I cloathe these Colours? or what Actions or Gestures they produce in me, provided my Actions and Gestures hurt not him? Does he, by hating or distressing me, fulfil our Saviour’s Commandment of loving one another? Are his own Notions right? Let him enjoy them: He is happy. Are my Notions wrong? I am unhappy. Why does he persecute me? Perhaps Fortune has been kinder to him than to me, and he is richer and handsomer: Why does he not chastise me for this Fault too, because I cannot force Fortune any more than Nature? But the Truth is, none persecute but the worst, the most ignorant, or the most barbarous Men. By this Mark we know a *Nero* from an *Antoninus*, and a fatherly Pastor from a bloody Inquisitor.

THE perverting of no one Thing upon Earth is so bad, and so sinful, as the perverting of Christianity; because Christianity is the best [III-97] Thing upon Earth. He therefore who makes use of Christianity to raise Heats, Feuds, and Hatred amongst Men, is a much worse Man than he, who, having no Christianity, can make no ill Use of that which he does not use at all. It is like turning the best Medicine into Poison; and a Physician who does so, is worse than a Peasant who knows no Physic. It is a strange and astonishing Sight to see a Man in a Rage, with the New Testament open before him, justifying his Rage out of the Testament, and raising from thence in his Hearers a cruel and angry Spirit like his own; and yet such Sightings are far from being rare. I have frequently seen a Text from the pious and peaceable Gospel, quoted and explained to rouze all the most barbarous and unsocial Passions, to authorize all the worst and most inhuman Effects of those Passions: And this has been confidently called *Preaching the Gospel*, and this Herald of Wrath a *Preacher of the Gospel*, and his raging Hearers a *religious Assembly*.

I HAVE sometimes fancied to myself what a sensible *Chinese* would think of the Gospel upon reading it; in what Manner he would conceive it must be preached, and what Consequences he would expect from that Preaching.

“Here, he would say, is the most meek and benevolent System that ever appeared in the [III-98] World: A System, contrived to root out the Roughness, Malignity, and Selfishness of human Nature, to extinguish or restrain all its sour Passions; to destroy for ever all the Seeds of Strife, Anger, and War; and to make all Men Friends. Happy are they who receive this System! more happy they amongst whom it is continually preached and inculcated! Here is no Pretence for Divisions, at least for quarrelling about them. Here all the Pomp and Tyranny, affected by Men over Men, are expressly forbid, and Love, even to our Enemies, is strictly enjoined. This is admirable! Without Doubt, it is from God. The Divine Being, in Pity to the ill-natured, jarring and tempestuous World, has here offered them a divine Calm, and restored them to a State of Perfection and Innocence, by giving them these celestial Rules for bearing and forbearing all manner of Evils. Would I could be a Witness of the happy State of Christendom!”

I HAVE fancied this same *Chinese* in Christendom; and first in *Rome*, the Centre of Christendom, the Residence of his Holiness, and the Seat of all Abominations, Poisonings, Assassinations, unnatural Lust, Pride, Ambition, Divisions, Tyranny, Luxury, Poverty, and Oppression. There he sees an old Frier, who [III-99] calls himself the Vicar of the meek Jesus, covered with all the Ensigns of savage Tyranny, supporting his monstrous and motly Domination, with dark Intrigues, and every pious and worldly Fraud; holding his own Subjects under severe Fetters and Famine, scattering every-where Firebrands, and the Spirit of Slaughter and War amongst Christians; animating Sovereigns against their People, the People against their Sovereigns; and giving his Apostolic Benediction to human Rage and Malice.

THE *Chinese* asks if his Holiness be a Christian according to the Gospel? Yes, he is answered, he is what he is from the Gospel, and all that he does is for it. The *Chinese* blesses himself, and the more christian Spirit of good old *Confucius*. He is just ready to return to *China* again, to a happier People, and more virtuous Paganism; but meets with a Protestant, who tells him, That all the Wickedness which he finds at *Rome*, is the Abuse of Religion, and the natural Effects of the Pope’s lying Pretensions and Usurpations; and begs him to visit Protestant Countries, which abhor the Pope, and all his Doings.

THE *Chinese*, ravished to hear that the Gospel does not fare every-where alike, and in Hopes of beholding Societies of Men, who are Christians according to the Gospel, travels [III-100] through Part of the Empire, where he finds *Lutherans* and *Calvinists*, headed by their Guides, at mortal Enmity. They both believe the Gospel; but rail at one another out of it; hate one another for it; and are only restrained by their Princes from contending even to Blood about Words which are not in it. In *Denmark* and *Sweden* he finds the *Lutherans* still fiercer, and suffering no Sort nor Name of Christianity among them, but their own, and treating all others with the highest Pitch of Fury and Ignorance.

THE *Chinese*, who thinks the *Lutheran* Popes as little justifiable as the *Popish* Pope, since they alike set up for spiritual Dominion, which the Gospel gives to no Man upon Earth, does once more praise old *Confucius*; and, resolved to find, if he can, the Spirit of Christianity in some christian Country, fails away for *Great Britain*, and lands in *Scotland*. There he beholds a rigid Gravity in the Countenance of the Kirk; she affects great Sanctity, has an eminent Conceit of her own Righteousness; but finds Righteousness no-where else: She has a very strong Stomach for Dominion; but sweetens it with a soft Name, and calls it Discipline; which she exercises with little Tenderness upon such as offend her, or gainsay her; and towards all other Churches and Opinions, her Looks are [III-101] sour and unforgiving: She talks much of the Lord, and contends, that nothing is to be done by any Man without God’s Grace moving in him, and assisting him; which is in no Man’s Power: But, for all that, if you want that Grace, of which she is Judge, or if you do not learn it from her, and submit implicitly to her, though she be not the Giver of Grace, you will find, that she asserts a Claim, as well as his Holiness, to chastise wrong Faith and Obstinacy; for though the Pope, being the

Man of Sin, has no such Right, yet she, who is the Daughter of *Zion*, is intitled to it.

THE *Chinese* cries, That here is much loud and warm Zeal, very long Prayers, a World of Bitterness, but no Charity. In *England*, says he, there is more Knowledge and Freedom: I will try *England*. In it he finds great and free Liberty of Conscience, and rejoices in it; but sees those who should be most for it, most implacable against it: He sees Churchmen nobly provided for; but many of them not satisfied; on the contrary, claiming ten times more, and wildly supporting those Claims by the Gospel, and by the Example of cheating and usurping Popish Monks; sees them railing at private Conscience, damning all that have it, and calling for the temporal Sword to destroy them: He sees great Part of the Dissenters, who, after [III-102] much Suffering, enjoy this precious Liberty, not contented with it, nor mended by their Sufferings, but setting up for this same antichristian spiritual Domination, and taking, as far as they can, the Blessing and Protection of the merciful Law from one another. The *Chinese* applauds the Wisdom, Gentleness, and christian Spirit of the Legislature, and finds the chief human Security for the Gospel in an Act of Parliament, by which every Man has the natural and christian Privilege to read, understand, and apply it his own Way.

“This (says he) is Christianity according to the Gospel, which, by Observation, I find, can only subsist where all Sorts of Consciences, the Wise and the Weak, are intirely unmolested; where no Sort of Power is exercised over the Soul, and where every Man understands and interprets with Security the Words of *Christ*, and of *Paul*, as he judges *Christ* and *Paul* meant them. No two Things, not Heaven and Hell, not Good and Evil, are more opposite than Force and Faith. The one is only from the good God, the other only from the worst Passions of the worst Men.”

[III-103]

NUMBER LXV.

Of the strange Force of Education, especially in Matters of Religion. ↩

HOW far the Force of Example influences Nature, and enlarges or restrains the human Passions and Appetites, is evident to all who compare different Nations, and the several Ranks of Men in the same Nation. Custom, which is a continued Succession of Examples, warps the Understanding, and, as it is observed or neglected, becomes the Standard of Wisdom or Folly. Men cannot bear to see what they themselves reverence, ridiculed by others; nor what they ridicule, revered by others. It is a common Thing to breed up Men in a Veneration for one Sort of Folly, and in a Contempt for another, not worse, nor so bad; in a high Esteem for one Kind of Science, and in Aversion to another, full as good; to love some Men merely because they have good Names, and to hate [III-104] others for their best Qualities; to adore some Objects for a bad Reason, to detest others against all Reason.

In *Turkey* they have as good natural Understanding as other People; and yet by their Education are taught to believe, that there is a Sort of Divinity in the utter Absence of all Understanding: They esteem Idiots and Lunatics as Prophets: They think their Raving to be celestial, because it is Nonsense; and their Stupidity instructive, because unintelligible. If, upon the Article of Religion, you offer or expect common Sense, they revile you, and knock you on the Head; but, if you be a natural Fool, your Words are Oracles, and Phrenzy is Saintship.

A PAPIST laughs and shakes his Head at this religious Sottishness and Fury of the *Turks*; but burns you if you laugh at him for doing the same Things. There never were greater Sots and Mad-men than many of the *Roman* Saints; nor are they the less worshipped for that, but the more. As they were Enthusiasts in Proportion to their Lunacy, they are adored in Proportion to their Folly. St. *Francis*, for Instance, was an errant Changeling; St. *Antony* was

distracted: Yet who is of more Consequence in the *Roman Breviaries*, than those two Saints? They are daily invoked by many devout [III-105] Catholics, who never prayed to God in their Lives.

THAT all this wild and astonishing Bigotry is the pure Effect of Example, or of Education, which is the same thing, (being only some Men setting Examples to other Men) may be learnt from hence, that no Man bred without Superstition, or in any particular Way of it, can be brought into the Vanities of any strange Devotion at once, and rarely ever. People must be seasoned in it by Time, by Steps, and Reiterations; after certain Periods in Life, Examples come too late, or with small Force. A grown *Spaniard* can hardly ever be a *Frenchman*; nor a *Frenchman* be a *Spaniard*. We see Men will fight and die for certain Practices and Opinions, and even for Follies and Fopperies, which, had they been bred to others, they would have despised, and perhaps have died for such as they now despise.

It is plain from the Accounts, even the partial and disguised Accounts, given by the Missionaries, of the Progress which they make in converting the Natives of the *East* and *West Indies*, that their Proselytes are very few, and those few fickle, not half made, and lukewarm; still fond of their old Superstitions, and, upon every Terror or Temptation, ready [III-106] to revolt to Paganism, which they had scarce forsaken. I believe this is almost universally true of the elder Sort: I doubt they are almost all like Father *Hennepin*'s old Woman, who, when all other Arguments were unconvincing, yielded to be baptized for a Pipe of Tobacco; and having smoaked it, offered to be baptized again for another. It is certain, that the *Chineses* have converted the Jesuits, who have at least civilly met these obstinate Heathens half-way, and gone roundly into Paganism, to make the Pagans good Catholics: An Union not unnatural; only I am sorry that the peaceable Heathenism of *Confucius* should be debauched by the barbarous Spirit of Popery, which has not only from the Beginning adopted the antient Gentile Idolatry, but disgraced it by Cruelty.

I AM satisfied, that the famous Doctor in *Holbourn* [*] 295. is a very sincere keen Churchman; but I am equally satisfied, that had he been educated in the Mosaic Way, he would have been as fierce a Jew; or bred at *Athens*, in the Days of *Socrates*, as clamorous as the rest of the Rabble against that wise and moderate Man, who was doubtless a Heretic as to the Doctrine and Discipline of the *Athenian* Priests. If in this Conjecture I have offended the Doctor, [III-107] who, they say, is a Man of warm Spirit, I will give him competent Revenge, by declaring my equal Belief, that many a stern Calvinist, zealous in his Way, would with different Breeding have been as zealous in a different Way. I could wish, that from this Consideration both Sorts would learn to bear with one another, and with all Men; that at least they would be as angry at *Mahomet*, as at Dr. *Clarke*, and learn not to attack Heresy through the Sides of Charity. But in this very thing the Force of Example, of which I am talking, is against me.

BY this Force Men may be brought to renounce every Glimmering of common Sense, every Impulse of Pity, and be transported with every Degree of Madness and Inhumanity. In many Countries the Death of a Snake will cost you your Life; and those People who would murder a Man, and eat him, would tremble at the Thought of hurting a Serpent, for which pernicious Reptile they have a religious Regard. The unnatural Mercy which Superstition teaches them, is the only Mercy that they have, and exercised upon a Creature that is a known Enemy to human Life.

THE *Iroquois*, not satisfied with putting their Enemies to Death in cold Blood, burn them alive after other Tortures, cut off [III-108] Pieces of their raw Flesh, and eat them, and give the Children the Blood to drink, to season their young Minds with the like sanguinary Spirit. Thus the Cruelty is continued by Example from Father to Son, and grows natural by Habit. Their Enemies serve them the same way; but this Consideration reclaims neither. It is

Heroism to be barbarous, and the fiercest Cannibal is the bravest Warrior. Yet these Savages are, in their own Clans, merciful and good-natured to one another, and live together in remarkable Innocence, Simplicity, and Union.

As these *American Nations*, who thus destroy one another, are very thin, there is more than Territory enough for them all; nor is Husbandry any of their Arts; and there are Woods large enough for many more to hunt in, and Rivers to fish in: And all living from Hand to Mouth, they do not much mind Property. But inveterate Quarrels, handed down from Generation to Generation, and daily inflamed, perpetuate their mutual Ferocity and Rage. They often watch many Days in Hunger and Cold, to circumvent their Enemy, though nothing is to be expected at last, but Blood, lost or got: But Blood, on whatever Side shed, is Glory.

[III-109]

In some Parts of *Peru*, this Savageness is still improved. Their chief Ambition in War is to make Women Captives. These they make their Slaves in a strange Way: They breed out of them, and eat the Children so bred at the Age of ten or twelve, having first well fattened them; and the Women, when they can breed no longer, are eaten last. Amongst these People, the Sense of Shame seems intirely extinguished, or rather never known. Their Prostitutions, natural and unnatural, are as public as their Eating and Drinking. Some of them account Virginity a great Blemish, and the young Women must be beholden to their Friends and Relations to get rid of it, before they can get Husbands. Their Women ran openly after the *Spaniards*, in all the Transports of Female Rage, begging the Gratifications of Gallantry. But, what is still most monstrous and incredible, there are of those People, who have public Temples for the Practice of Sodomy, as an Act of Religion: For, with all these Abominations, they have a Religion, which is Part of them; and we see in them into what Excesses Mistakes in Religion can run. They believe the Immortality of the Soul; they have Offices for the Dead; they worship the Sun; they believe a Creator of all Things; they offer Sacrifices to their [III-110] Idols, and sometimes human Sacrifices. Will any of our Casuists say, that it were not better they had no Religion, than one that teaches them such hideous Crimes and Barbarities? I wish that these brutal Heathens were the only Instances where Reason and Humanity are made Victims to Religion. But Customs of Religion and Honour, right or wrong, (as both are commonly vilely mistaken and abused) are apt to take an inveterate Hold of the human Soul, and to master every natural Faculty.

It would be a hard, if not an impossible Thing to convert these *Peruvian Savages*. There is no weaning them from their horrible and delicious Banquets of human Flesh, alive or dead: And while they themselves have such a Relish of Man's Blood, they will always think it acceptable to the Gods. For Men everywhere imagine, that the Deity loves and hates just as they do; and their common Way of going to God, is to bring God to them.

It is as easy to bring an *Englishman* into the Way and Life of a *Hottentot* or *Greenlander*, as to bring them into his. Both are impossible; the *Hottentot* is nasty and naked, and lives or starves upon Filth; the *Greenlander* lives in piercing and unhospitable Regions of Snow, in a Country made desolate by Nature, where no comfortable Thing appears, [III-111] but all covered with Darkness, or the Rage of the Elements. Yet both these miserable Barbarians, miserable in our Eyes, are inveterately fond of their own Caves and Miseries; nor could all the Delicacies and Allurements of *Europe* ever reclaim one of them. Their Captivity, in the midst of Plenty, Conveniences, and kind Usage, either broke their Hearts, or attached them more violently to their own more amiable Barbarity, Indigence, and Garbage, when they returned.

WHAT shall we say to all these strange Fondnesses, strange, but natural? They are Effects of Habit and Prepossession, from which no Man is wholly free; by which almost all Men are wholly governed; and from all this a good Lesson is to be learned, how Men ought to use one another.

[III-112]

NUMBER LXVI.

The extravagant Notions and Practice of Penance, how generally prevailing as a necessary Part of Religion, even amongst such as know not, or neglect, all the other and real Penalties. ↩

MY last was concerning the Power of Example and Education. I shall in this pursue the same Subject, as far as it relates to Penance, or the undergoing voluntary Miseries for God's sake. At what time it came into the World, I do not know; but the universal Esteem and Influence which it has gained in it amongst the Gentiles, Christians, and Mahometans, is surprizing to consider. It is probable, that it was begun by melancholy Enthusiasts, who, supposing the Deity to be like themselves, a gloomy and sorrowful Being, [III-113] believed that he delighted, as they did, in splenetic and mortifying Actions; and having no Revelation but what they took for such, their own Dreams and Vapours, thought that their religious Worship ought to be as wild and horrid as their Imaginations were. Thus it is likely, that Men first cheated themselves, and were afterwards the more easily cheated by others, and Fraud improved what Phrenzy began.

BUT, whatever was the Original of Penance, its Progress has been prodigious, and it has gained strange and invincible Strength. It has run out into such numerous Branches, and into such extravagant Excesses, that there is no Room left for any new Device for Improvement. To it have been sacrificed Ease, Health, and Convenience; the necessary Appetites of Nature; the Faculties of the Soul; Self-pity and Tenderness; all the Pleasures of Life, and Life itself. People have been brought to vie with one another in Famine, Thirst, and Torture, and to engage with Zeal in a Combat for Misery.

As great a Mummery as Penance is made in the *Roman Church*, and as easily as it is dispensed with, there are still many amongst them who afflict themselves with great Cruelty, and even kill themselves by it. It is for the [III-114] Glory of the Church, that Numbers should shew themselves in earnest in this savage Devotion; and therefore, on their penitential Days, so many are seen vehemently bruising and scarifying their own Flesh, and covering themselves, and the Ground which they go on, with their own Blood. Some actually die under this inhuman Discipline; some soon after. One would think, that these Self-murderers considered themselves as Martyrs.

THE Men of Gallantry amongst these devout Catholics, especially in *Spain* and *Portugal*, are acted by a carnal, as well as spiritual Devotion on these Occasions; and make Love to God and their Mistresses by one and the same religious Feat of Barbarity. It is plain from hence, that they believe the merciful God to have the cruel Heart of a Coquette; and that both His and hers are to be won by pitiless Stripes, and the Loss of Blood. I wonder that they have not, for this double End, made a holy Exercise of their Bull-feasts, in which so many Lovers do such desperate things, and expose their Lives. For their Mistresses are in no other Danger than that of losing their Lovers. Their Acts of Faith are more barbarous than their Bull-feasts.

BUT at the same time that the more fierce Devotees of that Church are furnished with [III-115] Acts of Penance, as rigid as their Spirit, others, not so fond of Pain, are more gently accommodated. The holding in the Breath for a Second or two, once or twice in a Day, or a Week; or saying a few *Ave-Maria's* extraordinary, or repeating the Words *Jesu amabilis* half a dozen times, or carrying half a Pound of Lead or Iron in the Sinner's Pocket, are all good and

valid Penances upon such as can bear no harder.

DELICATE Ladies, who cannot endure such robust Atonements for Sin, are complimented with a Discipline still softer, and as tender, if possible, as their Sex and Iniquity. However, their Penance is very mortifying; for they are sometimes commanded not to wear Gloves for at least half a Night together, and sometimes no Lace for a whole Day. If their Crimes be very flagitious, they are without any Mercy obliged, by the severe Confessor, to go in Stuff, instead of Silk, for two Days, without any Abatement; and sometimes, which is more cruel, ordered to quit the Company of their Spark a full Minute sooner than they would, at least for once or twice: Nay, I have heard of some, who, as an adequate Mortification for the Sin of Pride, were forbid looking in the Glass for a Night and a Day. Who would sin under such heavy [III-116] Penalties? If they do, it is a Sign that Sin must be very sweet.

BUT even these soft Votaries, the gentle Fair, are sometimes as merciless to their tender Tabernacles as the most boisterous Male Penitents. The famous Monsieur *Huet*, a most learned Man, but a miserable Bigot, in an *Eloge* of his upon one of his Sisters, gives us an affecting Instance of the Power of religious Folly under the Name of Penance: He says, that, bent upon a religious Life, she was put into a Nunnery, where she found none of their Mortifications severe enough for her; nor could she find in any Books any Rules and Lessons of Penance so rigid as her own Zeal. She therefore racked her Invention for new and uncommon Ways of afflicting herself. Such was her devout Passion to suffer for God; *Souffrir pour Dieu*, as he calls it. She heard that great Thirst was an exquisite Torment, and believed so from the Pleasure of quenching it; she therefore resolved never to drink more. In this cruel Course she persevered, without being perceived; for she spilt her Drink in the Refectory. Nor did the Disorders that came fast upon her, dispose her in the least to any Mercy upon herself. Her Illnesses were incurable before the Secret that caused them came out. She discovered it by [III-117] the Authority of her Confessor, too late: Remedies signified nothing, and she could take nothing; her Stomach was gone; the Functions of Nature ceased; her whole Body was scorched up; and her Skin parched like a Scroll. She confessed, that, in the Course of her unnatural Abstinence, such was the Extremity of her Thirst and Heat, that she beheld the Swine with Envy for the filthy Puddle that they enjoyed, and would have given any thing but Heaven for a Refreshment of the Mire in which they wallowed.

If one was not taught by Experience, that Enthusiasm is capable of reconciling the wildest Contradictions, it would appear impossible, that God Almighty should be beloved by those who think him delighted with Cruelty; or feared by those who believed him appeased by Trifles. But I am satisfied, from Observation and Charity, that both Sorts are in earnest; and that, if we allowed none to be sincerely religious, but such whose Religion is warranted by Principles of Reason, we should find but very few religious Men upon Earth. Even they, or most of those, who are of the only true Religion, blend it with so many Chimeras and Absurdities, and put their own vain Superstructures upon so equal a Foot with the Foundation, that were you to leave [III-118] them no more than enough, they would think you left them nothing, and call you a Persecutor, though you forced really nothing from them but their Follies.

IN an Insurrection of the Priests and Populace of *Sweden*, upon the Loss of their Bells, and other Ecclesiastical Furniture, at the Beginning of the Reformation there, when both Sides were differently inflamed upon the same Cause, the Court sent to that zealous Rabble to know their Demands. In Answer, they insisted upon these two principal Articles, among others; "That all the Heretics, that is, all the Protestants, must be burnt; and they must have their Bells again." Bells and Burning were really Parts of their Religion, as every Man's Religion is what he thinks so; and Penance is another Part, a Part essential to Popery, and to the Domination of the Clergy. Upon their Authority the Necessity of Penance is established,

and by their Appointment it is inflicted. It is so important a Pillar of their Trade, that they have made it a Sacrament; and from it derive no small Power and Gain. Upon the People it is, in every View and Degree, a monstrous Cheat and Abuse. Where it is slight, it is Mockery; where it is severe, it is Barbarity; in either Case it is Servitude. It is a Complication of [III-119] Imposture and Tyranny over the Understandings, Persons and Properties of Men. But such is the Witchcraft of Superstition, that Men are Slaves by their own Consent. They would venture their Lives to defend their Misery, and the Authors of it; and murder the Man who would release them from Chains. Thus they are educated, in Fear and Abhorrence of common Sense; and where Enthusiasm has taken Possession, there is no Re-entrance for Reason; which is indeed marked out as an Enemy, and constant War maintained against it.

It is not only possible, but easy, to bring up a Child to worship a Pair of Tongs, or a Monkey's Tooth; and in those Matters the Child generally forms the Man, who often adores Rust and Rottenness when he is old, because he did it when he was young; nay, Time and Experience, which sometimes cure other Follies, add to this. Religious Folly is a Mistress, which her Votaries scarce ever enjoy to Satiety; but, unlike other Mistresses, the more she is enjoyed, the more she is idolized; and the uglier, the more engaging. If we can but bear her at first, we will soon come to like her: Liking will improve into Love, and Love into Dotage. The highest Transports of this fairy Passion are found under [III-120] grey Hairs, and in frozen Veins. The older, the more amorous: So that in this Instance, if we do not learn Wisdom when we are young, we shall be Children when we are old.

NUMBER LXVII.

The Principle and Practice of Penance; its Extravagance and ill Tendency further considered. ↩

I INTEND in this Paper to say something further of Penance, which always keeps pace with Ignorance and Error: It is lost where Knowledge abounds, and triumphs in Darkness; but more or less, according to the Heat or Temperance of the Climate, and of the Constitutions of Men. In *Spain* and *Italy*, where the Power of the Sun, and of Priests, and Ignorance, prevails so abundantly, godly Savageness of all Kinds prevails in proportion: In other Countries, where the Air and People's [III-121] Tempers are cooler, Zeal is cooler; and where there is a Toleration of common Sense, very cool. Eastward, in proportion to the Increase of Heat and Ignorance, holy Austerities increase; and Turks, Christians, and Pagans, are Rivals in the Rigours of Penance.

SMITH, in his Account of the *Greek Church*, talking of *their strict Observation both of the Annual and Weekly Fasts*, says,

“They retain them most religiously, and think it a grievous Sin herein to transgress the Laws of the Church, in the least; partly, out of a Principle of Conscience, and partly, through long Custom and Practice, which make the greatest Hardships and Severities of Life tolerable and easy. They have gained a perfect Mastery over their Appetites; and are so far from complaining of the Tediousness and Rigour of their Fasts, that they will not hear of any Abatement and Relaxation; but would be rather apt to retain strong Jealousies and Apprehensions, that their whole Religion would be in Danger, if there were the least Indulgence permitted in so necessary a Part of it. ----- Some are so strangely devout, or rather superstitious, that they will not touch any thing that is forbidden; so that if by chance a Drop of Wine or Oil should [III-122] fall upon their Bread, or any of their lawful Food, they think them polluted and profaned, and accordingly throw them away; and had rather (out of Obstinacy and Desperateness) perish either through Hunger or Sickness, than be guilty of so grievous a Sin, as they esteem it. ---- The Women submit very readily to these Rigours; and Boys of six or seven Years of Age endure as much as they are able.”

THE Christians of *Armenia* are at least as rigid. Monsieur *Tavernier* says,

“Their Austerities are such, that many of their Bishops never eat Flesh or Fish above four times a Year; and when they come to be Archbishops, they only live upon Pulse. Six Months and three Days in a Year they keep *Lent*, or particular Fasts; and during that Time, both Ecclesiastics and Laics live only upon Bread, and some few Herbs which grow in their Gardens. The Superstition of one *Zulpha*, an *Armenian*, was so great, that he made his Horse fast with him, allowing him little Provender or Drink for a whole Week together. The poor labouring People feed only upon Pulse boiled with Salt. During their *Lent* they are not permitted, any more than others, to cat Butter or Oil; nay, tho’ [III-123] they lay dying, it is not lawful for them to eat Flesh upon Fast-days.”

WITH all these religious Sufferings, the *Greeks* and *Armenians* have very little Religion amongst them, but devout Fooleries, Superstition, and pious Forgeries in abundance. They are a debauched, base, and licentious People, without Purity and Virtue; as excessive in their Depravities and Intemperance, as in their Penance, which only annoys Nature, without mending the Heart. On the contrary, it is an Incitement to Sin, as it is a Composition for sinning, an Equivalent to Almighty God for breaking his Laws. A Balsam for Iniquity, is only a Motive to commit it; and that Balsam is Penance.

THE *Turks* are not less barbarous to their own Bodies in their religious Severities, than are the *Greeks* and *Armenians*. Many of them would suffer Swooning and Death, rather than break their appointed Fasts. But the *Indian* Pagans far exceed them all in this Sort of Merit. The Life of many of the Bramins is a perpetual Life of Misery by Choice, of various and exquisite Misery. To go stark naked under a scorching Sun, stung and devoured by Vermin, which Religion forbids them to destroy; to live in constant Abstinence from all Pleasures, and from Refreshments above [III-124] once in some Days, and sometimes many Days; to sit in the same painful Posture upon their folded Legs for Years together, or to stand upon one Leg, or to lean upon the Trunk of a Tree, with their Arms exalted unnaturally over their Heads, never to be let down; and to continue in these tormenting Situations as long as they live: To mortify every Appetite; to maintain an eternal Fight against Nature and Sensation; to court Distress; to invite Pain; to study Torture; to hang by the Hair upon a Tree, or tied by a sharp Rope about the Middle; to renounce all Speech and Cleanliness for ever; to ward off Sleep by Cruelty and a Rack, and never to shut their Eyes till they are shut eternally: These are some of the voluntary Penances which many of the Oriental Pagan Doctors inflict upon themselves. They are almost as barbarous to their Penitents, whom they torture and starve by way of religious Discipline: Some they hang by the Flesh upon iron Hooks, till the Weight of their Bodies, and the Sharpness of the Iron, tear the Hold, and the miserable Penitents tumble down.

AND all this not as an Atonement for Sin, but to acquire a Stock of Merit, and to humour the Deity. They are thus religious and distracted, through Ambition to be as great [III-125] hereafter, as they are wretched and ridiculous here; and (agreeably to their Notions of Transmigration) to return into the World again *Rajahs* and *Omrahs*, that is, great Lords and Princes. It is all Selfishness, but Selfishness turned by Superstition against Nature. Hence we see a Reason for the Haughtiness of mortified Men, and why Enthusiasts and Bigots are the proudest of all Men: They have more Conceit of their Merit, and more aspiring Views. What is so sublime as to be the special Favourites of Heaven? and who can equal them?

BAUMGARTEN, the Traveller, tells us of a *Saracen* Saint, who arrived at the Glory of Saintship, not only by living austerely in the Desart, and refusing the Use of Women, but by lying carnally with Mules and Asses, instead of Women. This Bestiality was imputed to him for Religion and Righteousness, and procured him Canonization. Indeed, many in the *Roman* Calendar deserve it less. He only defiled himself and some Brutes of the Wilderness: But the

Catholic Saints have polluted and poisoned Mankind with their Superstitions, and merited their Title by more extensive Mischiefs, by endless Frauds and Massacres.

[III-126]

Now what is the Use of all these, or any of these Severities called Penances? By what Precept of God, or of Nature, are they commanded? That they disorder and afflict the Body and Spirit, is most certain: That they can do Good to either, has not the Face of Probability. To say, that they please God, is to say, that God takes Pleasure in human Miseries and Pain. To say, that they dispose the Soul to serve him, is as absurd: They fill the Mind with Gloominess and Chimera's; and it is a shocking Character of the Almighty, to suppose him served by Infatuation and Madness.

WE are indeed told in Scripture, of *Fasting*, of *Sackcloth*, and *Ashes*: But if by these Words any thing more is meant, (as I believe there is not) than a Departure from Intemperance and Riot, than Shame and Concern for Vice; I do not conceive their Signification. Without Rest, Food, and other Conveniencies, Man cannot subsist; his Nature requires perpetual Recruits; and as long as we must live, where can be the Crime of living easily?

It is Heathenism and Superstition to believe, that Crimes can be expiated by Starving, Stripes, and the Absence of Rest. To such as think the Deity a barbarous Being, such Expedients to please him may seem necessary: They therefore who worshipped *Demons*, cut [III-127] themselves with Knives, made their Children pass through Fire, and offered human Sacrifices, as devout Barbarities agreeable to the Genius of their Gods. When a great Idol in the *East-Indies* (I think 'tis in *Bengal*) is carried forth in Procession, on a solemn Festival, in a Chariot, some of the *Indians* are mad enough to throw themselves under the Wheels which support that ponderous Idol, and are instantly crushed to Death, in pursuit of the Glory of Martyrdom, and as an acceptable Sacrifice to that inanimate Deity.

WHERE-EVER the Devil is adored, as he is in many Places, Penance is a great and indispensable Part of the Adoration paid him; and 'tis natural to imagine a raging, cruel, and avaricious Being delighted with Cruelty and Gifts; as it is impious and unnatural to think, that the God of Wisdom and Mercy is to be bribed with Money or Blood, and rendered propitious by merciless and foolish Actions. He is always propitious; he has no Fury to be appeased, no Caprice to be humoured, no Avarice to be satiated: He who endowed us with Reason and Humanity, cannot require of us a Behaviour that is frantic and inhuman: He who gave us all things, wants nothing; no Gifts for Gifts, no Share in his own Bounty. [III-128] A rich Man who bestows Alms, claims none of his own Alms again; and it would be an Affront to offer it: Neither do our Friends and Patrons desire to see us beat, famish, and impoverish our selves, in Honour and Gratitude to them. If we were thus mad, without Doubt they would restrain us, probably send us to *Bedlam*. And can we believe, that the Omnipotent God is to be charmed with Follies, that are below the Reason and Dignity of Men? That infinite Wisdom approves Things which are ridiculous and offensive to common Sense? That the merciful God, the Maker and Preserver of Men, takes Pleasure in the Pains and Sorrows of Men, in their Stupidity and Extravagance, and in Feats of Rigour and Anguish, such as shock Good-nature?

I AM the larger and warmer upon this Subject, because the *Nonjuring* Clergy, and those who agree with them in every thing but in not taking the Oaths, have shewn so much Zeal, and preached and written so much for the Restoration of Penance, among the other *Chimera's* and Barbarities of Popery. It is a Doctrine admirably contrived for intoxicating and enslaving the Spirits and Persons of Men, and for opening their Purses; and no Wonder that the Advocates for Levitical Empire are [III-129] so fierce for it. But, as it can never be

introduced, without the total Extirpation of all Civil and Religious Liberty, it becomes all sober Christians, and rational Men, to be as zealous against it.

NUMBER LXVIII.

The Teachers of all Sects (who lay Claim to Power and Submission) how apt to reproach, yet how much resembling each other.↩

ALL Sects reproach one another; but though all their Reproaches be generally too well grounded, they should in good Policy spare them, and be equally silent, since most can equally recriminate. By the contrary Conduct they do but furnish one another with reciprocal Weapons, invite an Assault by giving it, and arm Men of free and unlisted Minds against them all.

“Why do you keep the Bible from the Laity?” says a Protestant Minister to a *Popish* Priest: “Why do you [III-130] not give it them in their own Tongue?” The Priest answers, “Why do you not give it them in their own Sense?” So we do, “says the Minister, when their Sense of it is orthodox. That is, when they submit to your Sense, says the Priest. Just so do we, but with more Sincerity: We tell them they cannot, they shall not understand it for themselves. And while both you and we keep the Spirit and Explication of it to ourselves, what avails the dead Letter? What signifies poring over Leaves and Print with another Man’s Eyes? If they must not understand it as they please, where is the Pleasure of Reading? Would it not be downright Mockery in me, to say to you, Sir, some Men are so barbarous to let their necessitous Friends go naked: There’s Lord *Peter* does so, an inhuman Wretch, though he pretends to be the most fatherly and most christian Creature alive: But my Name is *John*, or *Martin*; I hate Lord *Peter*, and abominate his Example so much, that I neither eat nor drink with him. I will, therefore, in Charity to your poor Carcase, give you freely a Suit of Cloaths; they shall be made solely for your Use, and be intirely yours: But because, tho’ you want them sadly, you are not qualified to wear them [III-131] yourself, I will wear them for you: But you may declare to all the World, as I will, that they are your Cloaths, and that you have the free Use of them; though, for good Reasons, you are not permitted to make use of that Use; and you and I will rail plentifully all the while at Lord *Peter*, who keeps all the Wool to himself, and will not allow his Creatures and Followers a Rag of Cloaths, like a Miser as he is! a Wolf! a Tyrant!”

I KNOW not what the Protestant could answer to this Raillery of the Catholic. To say, that the Pope is Antichrist, and an Usurper, would be no Answer, or a foolish one: For I take upon me to maintain, that Antichrist has as valid a Right to be an Usurper, and to do ill and inconsistent Things, as any good Christian whatsoever. I do further aver on the other Side, that the Bible is of no Use but to be understood; that another Man’s Understanding is not my Understanding; that Heretics and Schismatics have as much need to read the Scripture, as any the most orthodox and conforming Man; that the Laity have Souls to be saved as well as the Clergy; that the Word of God is of sovereign Use thereunto; and that no Man can be pious or knowing by Proxy.

[III-132]

WE ought at least to be free from the Faults with which we upbraid others. The *Popish* Travellers relate with Abhorrence the superstitious Phrenzies, and religious Barbarities, of the modern *Pagans*, which, compared with those of their own Church, are few and tolerable. Their Church has refined the godly Madness of Heathenism, enlarged it beyond Bounds, and carried pious Wickedness as far as human Craft and Selfishness can carry it.

THE *Lama* or Arch-priest of *Great-Tartary* is a considerable Monster, and described as a hideous one by Catholic Writers, who adore the Pope, a Monster more complicated and terrible. Dr. *Gemelli*, a Romish Traveller, tells us,

“That impious and ridiculous Adoration is paid by the *Tartars* to a living Man, whom they call *Lama*, that is, Great Priest, or Priest of Priests; because from him, as the Source, they receive all the Grounds of their Religion or Idolatry; and therefore they give him the Name of *Eternal Father*. This Man is adored as a Deity, not only by the Inhabitants of the Place, but by all the Kings of *Tartary*, who own a Subjection to him in Matters of Religion: And therefore not only these Kings, but their People, go in Pilgrimage, with considerable Gifts, to adore him as a true [III-133] and living God. He, as a great Favour, shews himself in a dark Place of his Palace, adorned with Gold and Silver, and lighted by several hanging Lamps, sitting upon a Cushion of Cloth of Gold, on a Place raised from the Ground, and covered with fine Carpets. Then they all prostrate themselves flat on the Ground, and humbly kiss his Foot. Hence he is called Father of Fathers, High-priest, Priest of Priests, and Eternal Father. For the Priests, who are the only Persons who attend and wait on him upon all Occasions, make the simple Strangers believe Wonders of his Sanctity: And, that he may be thought immortal, when he dies, they seek out, through all the Kingdom, for one very like him; and having found one, place him upon the Throne, and make all the Kingdom hold it as an Article of Faith, (they being all ignorant of the Imposture) that the Eternal Father rose again out of Hell, after seven hundred Years, and has lived ever since, and will live to Eternity: Which is so deeply imprinted on the Minds of those barbarous People, that no Man amongst them makes the least Doubt of it. They adore him so blindly, that he thinks himself completely happy, who has the Fortune to get the least Bit of his [III-134] Excrement, which is bought at a great Rate. They believe that by wearing it about their Necks in a gold Box, as the great Lords use to do, it is a sure Defence against all Evils, and an Antidote against all Diseases; and there are those, who out of Devotion put some of it into their Meat. This living Deity is of such great Authority throughout all *Tartary*, that no King is crowned, till he has sent Ambassadors with rich Presents to obtain the great *Lama* ’s Blessing, for a happy and prosperous Reign. His Residence is in the Kingdom of *Barautola*, or *Lossa*, where he assumes the Regal Dignity, though he takes nothing upon him of the Government, contenting himself with the Honour, living quietly and peaceably, and leaving the Care of the Kingdom to another, whom they call *Deva*, or *Dena*: Which is the Reason why they say there are two Kings in *Barautola*.” *Churchill’s Collections*, Vol. IV. p. 325.

THIS is the Character of the *Lama*, who does pretty well for a Pope of rude and savage *Tartars*; but is, in reality, an innocent and limited Cheat, compared to the *Lama* of *Rome*; who, like the other, is often styled *Our Lord God the Pope*, and like him receives Adorations: But in Pretensions to Power and [III-135] Mischief, the other is a Babe to him. Here an old crazy Frier, avowedly subject to Follies, Diseases, and Death, affects a Power over Heaven, Earth, and Hell; and, though he cannot restore a lost Finger, pretends to save or damn the Souls of all Mankind; and to open and shut, at his Pleasure, the Gates of the upper and infernal Worlds, though not a Door in his own Palace will lock or unlock at his Command. He is so far from living peaceably, and not meddling with Government, that he has made and murdered Kings, claims a Sovereignty over Sovereigns, and has butchered, or caused to be butchered, a great Part of the World, for the Ambition of governing the rest. In the midst of his Hypocrisy, Impurities, and Tyranny, he sets up for such infinite Sanctity, that he has engrossed the Word, is styled *Sanctity* itself, and conveys (generally sells) Saintship to all that have it. Hitherto he has not thought fit to canonize his own personal Excrements: But the Excrements of the Dead, their rotten Bones, dried Flesh, their Hair and Nails, serve the same Purpose, are as highly revered, and travel over the Globe at a high Price: And the putrid, perishing Remains of the Dead, who could not defend themselves from Casualties, Executions, and the common Lot of Nature, [III-136] are esteemed the Guards and Security of the Living. For the rest, the *Lama* ’s Foot is as good as the Pope’s Toe; and in Grimace, Pomp, the Awe of Sounds and Appearances, his Holiness still exceeds: Nor do we find, that the *Lama* ever set his sanctified Foot upon the Necks of Princes.

By this Idea of these two Monsters, it will appear which is the more frightful.

THE Fathers Missionaries were greatly astonished, and pierced at the Heart, with the wild and nasty Superstitions of the *East-India* Pagans; who, in some Places, whenever a Cow urines, run to that Fountain to drink and wash, as an Act of Religion. Now, I would be glad to know of the reverend Fathers, wherein the Cow's holy Water and theirs differ in Cleanliness and Efficacy? Is theirs a stronger or a sweeter Lee for the Soul; or does it more potently purify from Sin?

[III-137]

NUMBER LXIX.

The Hierarchy of Rome, how like that of Japan. The obvious Danger to a State from Popish Missionaries. ↩

I Have, in my last, shewn the Resemblance between the Pope of *Rome*, and him of *Tartary*. I shall not now inquire, whether the Domination of Priests does not naturally end in a Papacy, in exalting one with blasphemous Titles and Pretensions over all the rest, and over all Men; or whether the Popedom of *Rome* is not an improved Copy of the Popedom of barbarous Pagans: But shall here draw from the History of *Japan*, some Passages and Observations concerning its Pagan Hierarchy, to which the Popish Hierarchy bears so intimate a Likeness.

THE general Name for the *Japonese* Priests, is *Bonzes*. These profess to live in Celibacy, [III-138] and have Laws forbidding them the Use of Women, as a Thing filthy and detestable; but they are allowed the Use of Boys as a Practice holy and virtuous. They have a priestly Sovereign, with uncontrollable Authority over them all: He is an infallible Judge in Matters of Religion, and makes unerring Decisions about public and private Worship, and about Points necessary to be believed concerning the Deity; without believing which, I presume, he tells them they cannot be saved. This Pontiff chuses and consecrates the *Paudes*, a sort of Ecclesiastics of Quality, lower than himself, but higher than the *Bonzes*, who resemble Monks, as those do Bishops.

THEY abstain from Fish and Flesh; they shave their Heads and Beards, and under the Appearance of an austere Life, conceal their Debaucheries. A considerable Branch of their Revenue arises from Burials; and a very great one from the Refreshments which they undertake, for large Offerings, to procure to the Souls of the Dead, I suppose, by Masses, Penance, and Conjurament. It is plain from hence, that they have a Purgatory; and the poor People, who have great Faith in their Power there, spare nothing to bribe the *Bonzes*, to release their Friends out of it. These holy Men have yet another high pious Fetch to cheat their simple [III-139] Flocks, and enrich themselves; they borrow Money to be paid with great Interest in the other World, and tell the Lenders what a rare Bargain they have.

THERE is, however, one good Thing to be said of the Monks of *Japan*; and in it they differ as much from the *Romish* Monks, as they agree with them in Impurities, and devout Knavery. They are of twelve different Sects, or Religions, and each has full Liberty to follow their own. They say, that the Bodies of Men may be a-kin, but their Understandings know no Kindred. This is to assert the natural Independency of Conscience, and even Christian Charity; to the Infamy of such Christians, who will allow no Man to have a Conscience, unless he has their Conscience; which, by the Character that in this they give of themselves, no honest Man would chuse to have.

THE *Bonzes*, and their Superiors, have amongst their Deities, dead Men canonized: To these they pray, and make Offerings, (at the People's Expence) as the *Popish Bonzes* do to their Saints. These their artificial Deities are so complaisant, that for the pronouncing of one Word, they will save you. It is a Principle amongst the Divines of *Japan*, that by the single Invocation of *Namuamidabut*, or by [III-140] barely crying *Forenguelio*, you expiate all

sorts of Sin, and without Repentance are in a State of Salvation: An expeditious Cut to Heaven!

It puts me in mind of Father *Barry* the Jesuit's Book of easy Devotions, quoted by Mr. *Paschal* in his Provincial Letters, and intitled, *Paradise opened to the Lovers of Holiness, by an hundred Devotions to the Mother of God, easy to be practised*. The following are some of the Father's easy Devotions:

“To salute the blessed Virgin whenever you see her Image: To say over ten *Ave-Maries* for the Pleasures of the Virgin: To give Commission to the Angels to do her Reverence as from us: To wish one's self able to build her more Churches than all Kings and Princes put together have built: To bid her Good-morrow every Morning, and every Evening Good-night: To say every Day an *Ave-Maria* in Honour of the Heart of *Mary*.” He affirms this last to be so effectual, that the Practiser of it may assure himself of the Virgin's Heart. “Heart for Heart, says he, were indeed but what ought to be; but yours is haply too much taken up with the World, and is ever filled with the Creature; for which Reason I dare not invite you to offer up immediately that little Slave that you call your Heart.”

Nay [III-141] he offers Devotion easier still, and as certain: Such as “carrying about one a Pair of Beads, or a Rosary, or some Picture of the Virgin.” These, or any of these, the Father says, will certainly do the Business, and he will be responsible for *Mary*. Do the *Japone*se Doctors go beyond him?

THE chief Opposition made to the Missionaries in planting their Religion in *Japan*, came from the *Bonzes*, not by Reasoning or Disputes, says Mr. *Bayle*, but by Ways common with Ecclesiastics. Here they forgot, or renounced, their tolerating Principle. They had recourse to the secular Arm; they animated the Kings and People to maintain the old Religion, to persecute the Followers of the new; and though they could not hinder the Christian Religion from making a great Progress in a little Time, yet at last they worked up the Emperor to Violences, which drove it totally out of *Japan*, and well swelled the Martyrology.

THE Abbot who wrote the History of the Church of *Japan*, admires the Depths of the Judgments of God, and wonders that he suffered the Blood of so many Martyrs to be shed, without making it serve, as in the first Ages of the Church, for Seed rising up fruitfully into new Christians. Mr. *Bayle*'s Reflection [III-142] upon these Words of the Abbot is just: I shall give it at Length.

WITHOUT taking Liberty, says he, to search after the Reasons which the Wisdom of God may have to permit at one Time what it permits not at another, one may say, that the Christianity of the sixteenth Century had no Right to hope for the same Favour and Protection from God, as the Christianity of the three first Ages. This last was a benevolent Religion, gentle, patient; a Religion which recommended to Subjects Submission to their Sovereigns, and aspired not to an Elevation over Thrones by the means of Rebellion. But the Christianity preached to the Infidels of the sixteenth Century was no longer such: It was a bloody, a murdering Religion; for five or six hundred Years accustomed to Carnage, she had contracted an inveterate Habit of maintaining and aggrandizing herself, by putting whatever opposed her to the Point of the Sword. Burning, Butchering, the horrible Tribunal of the Inquisition, Croisades, Bulls exciting Subjects to rebel, seditious Preachers, Conspiracies, Assassinations of Princes, were the ordinary Means which she employed against those who submitted not to her Injunctions. Ought this Religion to promise herself the Blessing vouchsafed [III-143] to the Primitive Church, to the Gospel of Peace, of Patience, and Love? Conversion to the true God was the best Choice that the *Japone*se could make; but wanting sufficient Light to renounce their false Religion, they had no other but that of practising Persecution, or suffering it. They could neither preserve their antient Government nor

Religion, but by destroying the Christians, who sooner or later would have destroyed both. Whenever they had been able to make War, they would have armed all their Proselytes, introduced foreign Succours, and the cruel Maxims of the *Spaniards*; and by the Dint of killing and hanging, as in *America*, brought under their Yoke all *Japan*. So that considering Things in Policy only, we must agree, that the Persecution suffered by the Christians there, was, in the Course of Measures, dictated by Prudence, for preventing the Overthrow of the Monarchy, and the Ravage of a whole State. The Ingenuity of a certain *Spaniard* justifies the Precautions of those Infidels, and furnished the *Bonzes* with a specious Pretence for discharging their Hatred, and soliciting the Extirpation of Christians: When asked by the King of *Possa*, how the King of *Spain* was become Master of such a mighty Extent of Dominions in each Hemisphere, he answered [III-144] with too much Simplicity,

“That he sent Missionaries to preach the Gospel to strange Nations; and after having converted a good Number of Pagans, he sent his Troops, who joining the new Christians, subdued the Country.”

This Indiscretion cost the Christians dear.

NUMBER LXX.

Dialogue between a Country Clergyman and a Quaker. ↩

Clergyman.

I AM glad of this Opportunity of talking with you. It was what I wanted.

Quaker. And why didst thee not take it before? I never shunned thee.

Cler. I am your Minister: It became you to come to me.

Qua. I promise thee, thou art none of my Minister; I'll have none but of my own chusing. Besides, if thou mindest thy Pride more [III-145] than my Salvation, and art too great to come to thy Parishioners, small is my Encouragement to come to thee: The Apostles stood not thus upon their Dignity.

Cler. The Apostles went to those who could not come to them.

Qua. And to those that would not.

Cler. A modest Man would have doubted, and heard what I had to say.

Qua. Friend, hast thou thyself no Doubts about the Straitness of the Way that thou art in?

Cler. Certainly, no.

Qua. Then am I more modest than thou art. I often doubt, and go to God with my Doubts.

Cler. But you should go to him in a proper Way.

Qua. I seek him by Prayer, and endeavour to understand his Will from the Scriptures of Truth. Knowest thou a more proper Way?

Cler. Do you understand the holy Scriptures?

Qua. It is thy Fault, and the Fault of thy Brethren, if I do not. The Clergy have translated them.

Cler. But there are still many difficult Places in them, which the Clergy understand best.

Qua. If the Clergy understand them, then are they not difficult to Laymen who know [III-146] Languages: And why do not the Clergy explain them?

Cler. That is their Business.

Qua. Then they ill understand their Business, since they vary and quarrel so much about it.

Cler. They only differ in controverted Points.

Qua. No more don't thee and I.

Cler. But I mean Points controverted amongst us.

Qua. That is to say, all Points. Even where you say you believe alike, you explain differently; which sheweth a manifest Difference also in believing. And art not thou unreasonable to expect, nay, to demand Union amongst the People, when the Clergy themselves are the Authors of Disunion?

Cler. Therefore we renounce such Clergymen.

Qua. And they renounce thee. And do not the Quakers act wisely to renounce you all, as you all do one another?

Cler. You speak harshly, and untruly: There are Numbers of us who adhere together in our Sentiments.

Qua. And there are Numbers who adhere together against you, and yet call themselves of the same Church with you.

[III-147]

Cler. I am sorry for it.

Qua. So oughtest thou to be for charging me with speaking untruly, when thou thyself bearest Testimony to the Truth which I speak.

Cler. But you go too far.

Qua. I do not, nay, I will go farther, and maintain, that the Numbers thou boastest of in Union with thee, were every Man to explain his Belief his own Way, would all vary from thee, and from one another.

Cler. I do not think so: However, their varying in Belief is no Reason for believing.

Qua. But it is a good Reason why every Man should have his own Belief.

Cler. Then there will be no End of Confusions.

Qua. No more there is not in Opinions and Doctrines.

Cler. And is not that a deplorable Case?

Qua. So is the Fall of *Adam*: Canst thou cure it?

Cler. They are not parallel Cases.

Qua. Depend upon it, thou may'st as easily bring back *Adam* into a State of Innocence, as all his Posterity into one Mind.

Cler. What, can't I reason a Man into my Opinion?

[III-148]

Qua. Yes, if he like thy Opinion, and thy Reasoning: Perhaps he will think them both stark naught.

Cler. That may be his Fault.

Qua. And it may be thine. How are thy Opinions better than mine? I think them worse.

Cler. They are warranted by the holy Scriptures.

Qua. I think mine are: I'll promise thee, I'll try them by the Scriptures, which I think I can interpret as well as thou canst. I'll tell thee further, that I am satisfied the God of Mercy never damned any Man for mistaking it; for I take it, that in revealing his Word he mocketh not Men, by giving them a Riddle instead of a Revelation.

Cler. You know little of Scripture, if you do not know, that there are in it Places which you cannot understand.

Qua. Nor canst thou. As to those Places, though they may be his Will, yet I am sure they are not his revealed Will, because he hath not revealed it; and if I take thy Interpretation and Conjectures for his Word, then do I believe in thy Word, and not in his. Now, where hath he commanded me to believe in thee?

[III-149]

Cler. He has commanded you to believe me, when I speak in his Name.

Qua. And so art thou to believe me, when I speak in his Name.

Cler. But I am his Ambassador.

Qua. There I do not believe thee, because thou speakest in thy own Name.

Cler. Why, does not St. *Paul* say, *We are Ambassadors in his Stead?*

Qua. Yes: Art thou *Paul*?

Cler. No, I am only his Successor; he himself is dead.

Qua. So are his Gifts and Miracles: Canst thou work Miracles? If not, how dost thou succeed him?

Cler. I preach the Gospel which he preached.

Qua. So do I, and bear my own Charges, as he did his; and why should I pay thee for doing what I can do as well myself? I do not find, that *Paul* has left thee any Wages, and I am sure he has left thee nothing else; his Epistles are left to every Man.

Cler. Yes, he has left Ministers to wait upon God's Ordinances in the House of God. I am one of those Ministers.

Qua. Friend, as thou art a Christian, thou must needs know, that every House is alike to Almighty God, who filleth Heaven and Earth, and dwelleth not in Houses made with Hands: [III-150] And as to what you call Ordinances, thou knowest that the Apostles administered none. Every Man did it for himself, and it was done from House to House. There were no bloody Sacrifices in the Religion of Jesus, and consequently no Priests, their only Office

being to slay Beasts.

Cler. Dare you say that God has appointed nobody in his Church to preach and explain his Word?

Qua. No; I neither do nor dare say it; and thou may'st spare thy big Words. He hath left every Man to preach it to another; nor doth it appear that thou hast any more Call from him than every one of thy Parish hath. If thou wouldest resemble the Apostles, go and preach to the Unconverted without Money, and without Price. Thy whole Parish believe in Christ already, as much as thou doest, and did before they knew thee. They have the Bible themselves; and if thou bringest them any Tidings that are not in it, and that they themselves see not in it, they ought not to believe thee.

Cler. You argue very insincerely with me. Just now you contended that I had none of St. *Paul*'s Gifts; and now you would have me go without those Gifts, and do what he did with them; namely, travel over the World, and convert the Unconverted.

[III-151]

Qua. No, I only would shew thee, that as thou dost not resemble him, thou art vain in pretending to succeed him; and so far I reason consistently, as thou dost weakly, if thou claimest all his Reverence without any of his Merit.

Cler. I do not set up for the Abilities of St. *Paul*; but still have Qualifications superior to Laymen.

Qua. What are those Qualifications?

Cler. I know Languages; I have had an University-Education; and - - -

Qua. All these are civil Qualifications, common to all Men, who would be at the Pains and Charge. Laymen understand *Latin* and *Greek* as well as thou dost. The Gospel wanteth no Embellishment from those whom thou callest: *Virgil* and *Horace*; and Christ crucified is not sought nor found in Universities, nor indeed the Flesh crucified. If I am not misinformed, they abound with young Men who are too often Sinners, and with old Men, who are no Saints. They are Schools of Words; but the Gospel hath nothing to do with thy Logic and vain Philosophy.

Cler. I was going to tell you too, that I had studied Divinity.

Qua. Knowest thou any Divinity but what is in the Bible? and have not I the Bible? I [III-152] think, and am sure, that it is a plain and intelligible Book, at least as much of it as is meet for a Christian; and to turn it into Doubtfulness, and Disputation, and Science, and Gain, savoureth not of Christianity.

Cler. This is insolently said: Who turns it into Gain?

Qua. He who maketh a Gain of it; which is worse than Insolence, whereof thou dost groundlessly accuse me.

Cler. What, do you not declare against Preachers?

Qua. I have already told thee, I do not: I would have all Men Preachers.

Cler. Ay, Tinkers, and Taylors, and Coblers.

Qua. Friend, beware of thy Words: What were the Apostles? They were no University Gentry.

Cler. But you say, that we want the Apostles Gifts.

Qua. I wish thou couldst confute me. However, we have all of us the Apostles Books; and canst thou mend them?

Cler. No: But I can enforce them; and the Labourer is worthy of his Hire, if you will believe *St. Paul*.

Qua. But if he laboureth for himself, why should I pay him? I profit not by thy Labour; [III-153] why shouldst thou profit by my Substance? I believe *Paul*; but *Paul* hath given thee no Property in my Pigs and Barley.

Cler. But the Law has.

Qua. The Law is not *Paul*. But I perceive, whoever is the Giver, thou wilt be the Taker.

Cler. Sir, you are rude.

Qua. How? Because I do thee Justice.

Cler. Let me tell you, Sir, there is Reason in it, as well as Law.

Qua. Thy Interest may be Reason to thee. But thou wilt be put to it, to give me a Reason for giving thee something for nothing.

Cler. Don't you know, that under the Law, the Priests had their Lot in the Land?

Qua. Yes: But they were *Jewish* Priests, or Sacrificers. Art thou a *Jew*? And dost thou kill Cattle as they did? And wouldst thou reconcile Judaism to Christianity?

Cler. No; I would only shew, that it is reasonable that Priests should have a proper Appointment.

Qua. I have already shewn thee the Unreasonableness of having any Priests in Christianity.

Cler. In this you saucily differ from all the Societies of Christians in the World.

[III-154]

Qua. I do not differ from Christianity; nor am I saucy in differing from those that do. The blessed Jesus hath left thee no Legacy, that I know of, nor so much as named thee in his Will.

Cler. The Man grows profane.

Qua. Thou meanest unanswerable. Is it any Article of thy Creed, that Truth is profane?

Cler. Your having no established Ministers amongst you, is enough to render your Sect odious to all sorts of Christians.

Qua. We have Religion established amongst us. Is Religion odious in the Eyes, where there is not a Livelihood to be got out of it? We establish no Clergy, lest they should disestablish the Peace and Purity of the Gospel; and whilst our Preachers are under the Influence of the Holy Spirit, we reckon they will seek no Money. We therefore do not keep in Pay Men who sell Speech.

Cler. The Truth is, the Speeches uttered amongst you are not worth buying.

Qua. Friend, no Speeches in the House of God ought to be bought, nor the Tabernacle be turned into a Shop. Why sellest thou thine, which, as Report saith, are not alluring? *Freely you have received, freely give.* Friend, what did the Gospel cost thee? Or why [III-155] should we purchase it at thy dear Price, when we have it in our Houses in more Purity and Plainness than thou can'st give it?

Cler. Yes, and you understand it by the Spirit.

Qua. Thou sayest it. We trust to the Spirit to direct us, who is promised to all that ask him. Thou trustest to *Henry Hammond* and *Daniel Whitby* for Direction. Whether art thou or we best directed?

Cler. I shall not believe that the Spirit is the Author of the Enthusiasm and Dreams that are found amongst you.

Qua. *The carnal Man discerneth not the Things of God.* Paul was called a Babler by the Athenians, whose Priests, who were many, had no Illumination; but being Men of dark and voluptuous Minds, and feeding upon Sacrifices and Offerings, preferred *Bacchus* and his Grapes to the Spirit of Christ.

Cler. The Comparison you would insinuate is impudent and profane.

Qua. Friend, Meekness becometh a Preacher. Thou hast the Passion of a Priest, but not the Meekness of a Minister of the Gospel. Why dost thou fall upon me with bitter Words, for telling thee a Fact which, in Answer to thee, it was necessary to tell? Is it profane to say, that the heathen Clergy took [III-156] Offerings? Nay, since thou dost urge me, dost not thou take Offerings? and did the Apostles take any? I have put thee between these Priests and the Apostles, that by comparing thyself with both, thou mayst see whom thou resemblest most.

Cler. If this be not Profaneness, I know not what is.

Qua. The Profaneness is not on my Side.

Cler. Let me inform you, Sir, that for this Language, in some Countries, you would have your Tongue cut out of your Head.

Qua. I know it; and praise God that I am not in those Countries, and that thou canst not bring those Countries hither. It is plain, that thou approvest their Barbarity; else why dost thou think it due to me? I beg thou wouldst not be provoked, if I mention to thee once more the Example of the Apostles: Where did they justify Savageness and Severity to any Man for any Opinion, or any Words? Where did they ever talk to Pagans as thou dost to me, who am a Christian, and endeavour to possess the Temper of the Gospel?

Cler. Yes, you have a Form of Godliness: But - - -

Qua. Friend, in the first Place, *judge not*; and secondly, beware what thou sayest against Forms, for thy own sake.

[III-157]

Cler. I say, if your Preachers had Power, they would quickly find Texts for Persecution.

Qua. I guess thou judgest by thyself; and thou judgest well. We know it; and therefore give them no Power, nor the Sinews of Power. Pride and Impatience are inseparable from it: It destroyeth all Humility, and maketh Men imperious, and Persecutors. Why are the Popish Priests more cruel and mischievous than Protestant Priests, but because they have more Power? And why is the Pope the most mischievous of all Priests, but because he hath most

Power?

Cler. You carry every thing too far. Preachers of the Gospel ought to be kept above Contempt.

Qua. Friend, they who are rich in spiritual Things, want no other Riches to save them from Contempt; and they who are rich without these, ought to be contemned. Riches may render them formidable; but Piety only, and a holy Conversation, can make them revered. Revenues do not place them above Contempt, but only encourage them to despise the People. The Poverty of the Apostles was great Part of their Glory.

[III-158]

NUMBER LXXI.

Dialogue between a Country Clergyman and a Quaker continued. ↩

Clergyman.

OF all People, I think the Quakers have the least Pretence to glory in their Poverty.

Quaker. Thou seemest in this to aim at being severe, but I feel it not. Our moderate Wealth is the Effect of our honest Industry, and we are not ashamed of it.

Cler. As well you might, if you got it by your Preaching.

Qua. I do not find that thou art ashamed, and yet thy Income is great this Way.

Cler. Then you make Comparisons?

Qua. Assuredly, no; thy Motives and ours are not akin.

Cler. I warrant you preach by the Spirit.

Qua. How preachest thou? by the Sheet?

[III-159]

Cler. I read my Sermons, to avoid Incoherences.

Qua. Thou needest not, hadst thou the Spirit; it would help thy Infirmities.

Cler. Does the Spirit help you to your low Language, and your silly Repetitions?

Qua. If Repetitions are silly, why shuttest not thou thy Common-Prayer Book, which aboundeth therein? And as to your Language, if the Spirit were a Dealer in Style, why doth *Paul* write such bad *Greek*, as the Learned say? But I can tell thee, we have many Men amongst us, who preach in as decent Language, and as free from Tautologies, as any that thou canst read out of thy Note-book. I could mention the different Efficacy too, and the manifest Disinterestedness of our Preachers; but I spare thee.

Cler. Spare me! I fear you not.

Qua. Why, truly, nor I thee, since thou defiest me. I have found thee no terrible Adversary, which may not be the Fault of the Man. Thy Bishop would not do better, tho' his Pay is greater.

Cler. It is too true, he could not: Reason is thrown away upon you, and such as you.

Qua. To deal freely with thee, as I am not the richer, so neither art thou the poorer, for any Reason thou hast thrown away upon me.

[III-160]

Cler. Where Men pretend to the Spirit, it is vain to argue with them.

Qua. Then why dost thou? But especially why floutest thou the Spirit?

Cler. I hope there is a wide Difference between the Spirit of God and the Spirit of Enthusiasm.

Qua. Doubtless there is; but I would be glad to hear thee explain the Difference.

Cler. The same Difference as between a good Understanding, and a wild hot Imagination.

Qua. Thy Words sound well, but thy Reasoning is naught. Is not the Gospel above the best Understanding? and was it not to the *Greek* Philosophers Foolishness? They had as much Sense as thou or thy Bishop, and knew their own Language better; but could not comprehend the Incarnation and Crucifixion of Christ the Lord, nor original Sin, and the Resurrection. The Light of the Spirit hath therefore no Analogy with the natural Understanding; as you yourselves contend, when you would confute or punish People for following their Reason, and departing from your Systems. I must tell thee too, that the Spirit warmeth both the Heart and the Imagination; for which Cause *Festus* reckoned *Paul* mad, [III-161] and the first Christians sought Martyrdom. And if— — —

Cler. Be shorter; we see you can preach.

Qua. If I do, 'tis Truth without Tythes, and can but half offend thee.

Cler. Mighty witty! I just mentioned Preaching, and presently Tythes must be brought in for Company.

Qua. Why, dost thou like them asunder?

Cler. Fiddle-faddle! what has all this to do with Enthusiasm.

Qua. Nothing; and wherefore didst thou begin it? I have shewn thee thy weak Reasoning about Enthusiasm: What sayest thou in Answer?

Cler. That the Quakers are Enthusiasts.

Qua. And givest no Reason. Is it thus thou convincest Gainsayers, and edifiest thy Flock?

Cler. My Flock won't come to you for Edification.

Qua. It is well for thee that they do not. But to keep thee to the Point, if I can: I tell thee, that we are no Enthusiasts, and I will give thee a Reason: We pretend to no more of the Spirit than influences our Actions, and our Actions are sober and rational. Hast thou found in me the Speech and wild Behaviour of an Enthusiast?

[III-162]

Cler. You have no ill Knack at Prating.

Qua. Friend, my Prating costeth no Man any thing.

Cler. Though 'tis enriched with the Spirit.

Qua. I thank thee; thou givest a Reason why it should cost nothing. The Spirit is not bought nor sold, nor are the Works of the Spirit: Wherefore he neither receives Fees, nor claimeth Dues. *Simon Magus*, who traded in Conjuratation and Spells, was profanely for

making a Commodity of the Holy Ghost, and offered Money from him, doubtless with a Design to make more. Thou knowest his Doom; and yet, Friend, there are many *Simon Magus's* in the World; yea, worse than *Simon Magus*. There be many who raise great Revenues out of the Spirit; yea, and have him not.

Cler. Who goes from the Point now?

Qua. I do not. I feared thou would'st think me too much in the Point. We were speaking of the Spirit.

Cler. Which you think you have. How do you know it?

Qua. There is but one Way. I feel him.

Cler. But how shall I be satisfied of that?

Qua. The same Way; thou must first feel him too.

Cler. So say all the Enthusiasts in the World.

[III-163]

Qua. Friend, are all who have the Spirit Enthusiasts?

Cler. No.

Qua. How dost thee distinguish?

Cler. By their Works.

Qua. Thou sayest well. Now by what Work of ours do we appear to be Enthusiasts? We are sober in Society, sober in our Families: We fear God, and have an awful Reverence for his Name and Power, and for this we continually read the Scriptures which testify of him; insomuch that, for this our Low to the Bible, some of thy Brethren laugh us to Scorn, and scoffingly say, that we are *Bible-mad*. We fast and we play in private, and preach and pray in our religious Assemblies, and we have universal Charity. We open our Purses chearfully for the Support of the Public; we are dutiful Subjects, and meddle not in Factions; we maintain all our own Poor, and contribute not the less to thine; and even the Clergy have Part of our Substance. Seest thou in this true Character the Marks of Enthusiasm?

Cler. You indeed maintain a fair Outside.

Qua. Canst thou see farther?

Cler. I can see your ghostly *Hummings* and *Hawings*.

[III-164]

Qua. Is it not as easy for thee to call them *Sighs and Groans, which cannot be uttered*; whereof thou must have read, but seemest not to understand?

Cler. Why, who can understand the Use of your Silent Meetings?

Qua. We do, and thou mayest. Friend, our Devotion and holy Exercises are not taken out of a Book, but begin first at the Heart; and when the Heart dictateth not, we speak not. Our Godliness is not performed like a Play, by Rehearsal.

Cler. This is a villainous Reflection upon the Common-Prayer.

Qua. Thou makest it then. I am only defending the Religious Worship of the People called *Quakers*; and I have defended it. I do not revile thy Church-exercise: Why revilest thou me?

Cler. Who are they that perform their Devotion by Rehearsal, like a Play?

Qua. We do not: And is it not lawful to say, We do not? Knowest thou any that do?

Cler. We have a Form of Prayers, the best that ever was composed, and find great Devotion in it.

Qua. I rejoice in it; I like all Devotion that is paid to God, and warranted by the Scriptures. [III-165] I find no Fault with thine; only it is not meet for me, who find more Fervency in my own, and more Edification. And what is the End of Devotion but Edification?

Cler. Yes, the Glory of God.

Qua. God is not glorified, where Men are not edified. Hence every Man must glorify God his own Way.

Cler. What, in an erroneous Way?

Qua. Those are Words. No Man errs who pleases God; who is, doubtless, pleased with our best Endeavours to please him: Knowest thou any better Rule?

Cler. Yes, the Rule of Certainty.

Qua. This is Certainty. Other Certainty than this is not found amongst Men, who must all answer for themselves; and therefore must all worship God, as each thinks best.

Cler. Which would introduce a thorough Anarchy in Worship.

Qua. So there is in Faces, and what Harm ensueth? God made Faces different; canst thou make them uniform?

Cler. No; but Minds are different from Faces. The Mind may be altered by Reasoning.

Qua. Sometimes for the worse, as well as the better; and so may Faces be altered by [III-166] good or bad Keeping. But thou mayest depend upon it, Minds will always vary as infinitely as Faces; and for ought I know, more, as their Substance is more delicate and quick, and knoweth no particular Figure and Dimensions.

Cler. There is, however, no Harm in reasoning with them.

Qua. I concur with thee, if that Reasoning be free from Deceit, the next worst Thing to Violence, which ought never to be employed about the Mind, which it can never change.

Cler. But in case of Obstinacy and Disobedience, what Remedy is there?

Qua. None. God only can judge the Heart; which he only can see. Thou mayest think me obstinate: But I declare sincerely, I am not; and thou in Charity oughtest to believe me. If thou dost not, thou art not a good Christian; and if thou would'st punish me, thou art no Christian. I do not think that thou art obstinate, and adherest to Opinions which thou dislikest; and I would not hurt a Hair of thy Head, no, not though I thought thee obstinate.

Cler. This is plausibly said: But God keep me out of thy Power!

[III-167]

Qua. I desire not to have thee in my Power: I know the Frailty of human Nature, and the Deceitfulness of Power, which perhaps I might abuse. Wherefore I would neither have thee in mine, nor be myself subject unto thine.

Cler. Ay, but you are only a private Man.

Qua. Friend, all Christians, as Christians, are private Men. There is neither High nor Low in Christianity, but in the Degrees of Christian Perfections; and to found Dominion in Grace, is indeed Fanaticism, as the Clergy, in their Disputes with the Presbyterians, have justly called it.

Cler. Ay, but they meant Civil Power.

Qua. Knowest thou any Power in Society but Civil Power?

Cler. Yes, certainly, Power Ecclesiastical.

Qua. What to do?

Cler. To coerce and punish Offenders against the Laws of the Church.

Qua. What, in their Bodies and Property?

Cler. Without Doubt.

Qua. And is not this manifest Civil Power?

Cler. Yes, in its Effect.

Qua. Then it is in Effect, and in Truth, and intirely, Civil Power, which Christianity is a Stranger unto; and which is an Enemy to Christianity, when it meddleth therewith.

[III-168]

Cler. How! are we not all subject to the Laws of the Church?

Qua. To the Laws of Christ, if thou pleasest; my Conscience knoweth no other Master: Doth thine?

Cler. No: But my Conscience tells me, that there ought to be spiritual Governors in the Church.

Qua. Governors are Masters; and the Conscience cannot be mastered.

Cler. What, not directed?

Qua. If by Direction thou meanest Instruction, this hath no Relation to Government. And all Men that can instruct, ought to instruct.

Cler. What, without a Call?

Qua. To be able, is a sufficient Call; and no Call sufficient without Ability.

Cler. But who shall judge of that Call?

Qua. He who hath it, and they to whom he ministreth.

Cler. The common People are rare Judges!

Qua. The commonest Man is a good Judge, whether he be edified by his Preacher, or not.

Cler. Perhaps they are both Enthusiasts.

Qua. They may be pious Christians for all that: If their Affections be good toward God, they will certainly be saved.

[III-169]

Cler. Nay, I don't wonder at your Charity for Enthusiasts: It is but natural.

Qua. I have Charity for all Men, as every true Christian hath, even for thee. Art thou an Enthusiast?

Cler. No: I am a Member of the Church of Christ.

Qua. Shew it by thy Charity. Thou hast neither Charity nor Understanding, if thou wouldest exclude all Enthusiasts from Christ's Church.

Cler. They exclude themselves.

Qua. Thy Censure is passionate and cruel. No Man chooseth to be an Enthusiast, nor knows that he is. Wouldest thou damn him for invincible Weakness?

Cler. What shall I do with him, if he will not be reclaimed?

Qua. That is Part of his Weakness, and thou hast nothing to do with him. What wouldest thou have to do, where thou canst do nothing? Those who have Conscience, know that it is not to be commanded nor plied.

Cler. A Whipping-post has sometimes worked great Cures that way.

Qua. Upon Hypocrites. Dost thou reckon Conscience an Evil? and would a Whippingpost cure thee of thine?

[III-170]

Cler. You are an unmannerly Fellow.

Qua. Would that were the worst I could say of thee!

Cler. Sir, what can you say of me?

Qua. What I will not say. I do not like thy Example so well as to follow it; nor will I fulfil the Character that thou givest of me. I will only assure thee, that thou art not qualified to rebuke unmannerly Language; and that for myself, I would rather want Breeding than Charity.

Cler. I perceive my Censure of your Brethren, the Enthusiasts, touches you.

Qua. With Compassion for thee, who art the greatest Enthusiast that I ever met with.

Cler. Hey day! Mr. *Pert*; what, is your Head turned?

Qua. I am going to shew thee that thine is: For Reasoning hath no Manner of Effect upon thee; and thou reckonest every Man who is out of thy Favour, to be moreover out of the Favour of God. All which is manifest Enthusiasm, and the worst Part of Enthusiasm, the Enthusiasm of Monks and Dervises, of Bigots and Persecutors of all Sides and Sorts.

Cler. Thou art a very merry Fellow.

[III-171]

Qua. I am not merry: Thou makest me melancholy to see such an Antichristian Spirit in thee.

Cler. Are you really in earnest, when you charge me with Enthusiasm?

Qua. Thou chargest thyself, by declaring for Persecution; a Crime against the very Essence of Christianity. If thou art not an Enthusiast, thou art worse.

Cler. Why, I tell you, I am an Enemy to Enthusiasts.

Qua. In that very Thing thou art one. Thou art an Enthusiast against Enthusiasm. If Enthusiasts hurt not thee, why shouldest thou be their Enemy?

Cler. I am sure you talk like a wild Enthusiast.

Qua. So thou sayest, but thou provest nothing. I talk against Persecution.

Cler. To punish Disobedience to our Spiritual Governors, is, forsooth, Persecution!

Qua. I thought I had already shewn thee the Vanity of thy Language about Spiritual Governors, which Words contradict each other. None but God can govern the Spirit of Man. All Government amongst Men is human Government, which meddleth only with the Peace and Property of Society: When it would controul [III-172] the Consciences of Men, it invadeth the Jurisdiction, and usurps the Prerogative of the Almighty, and is guilty of Persecution.

Cler. But don't you disturb the Peace of the Church, which is Part of the Government?

Qua. We ourselves are Part of the Church of Christ, and give no Disturbance to the rest; and if thy Pride be disturbed at our Christian Liberty, the Scripture condemneth thee. We cannot, as we are Christians, sacrifice our Conscience to any Man's Ambition. Can a peaceable Compliance with private Conscience disturb any Man, who hath the Spirit of Christ? The Business of Religion is to find a Way to Heaven: Art thou disturbed, because I choose that which appears the shortest, and which to me is the only comfortable Way?

Cler. But if you be in a wrong Way, and I would compel you into the right Way; I do you no Injury, but real Service.

Qua. Friend, hast thou ever been there? And have not I the same written Directions from the inspired Men of God as thou hast, about the Length and Difficulty of the Road? If thou wouldest take my divine Rules for Travelling out of my Hand, or force thyself upon me for a Guide, and drive me into a Road [III-173] which I do not find in my Book, and make me pay for all this; I shall suspect thee for mine Enemy, and for a Freebooter, who wouldest carry me out of the Way into a Wilderness, to rob me. Let me ask thee a Question: Wouldest thou be compelled to accompany me in my Journey Heavenward?

Cler. No, faith, for two unanswerable Reasons: First, you are not going thither.

Qua. I dare neither think nor say the like of thee: Only thy Road is not my Road.

Cler. Secondly, you have no Warrant to compel me.

Qua. Thou speakest Truth: No Man hath a Warrant to force Faith, or to carry another Man's Conscience.

[III-174]

Clergyman.

BUT you allow me a Right to direct Conscience.

Quaker. Yes, if it liketh thy Direction. I have the same Right.

Cler. You have Self-conceit in abundance.

Qua. When thou art free from it, thy Rebuke may be seasonable. I think I have Impartiality too. My Religion bringeth me no Rents; I only seek Salvation from it.

Cler. Smart again!

Qua. Dost thou feel it?

Cler. If I do, I ought to bear it, you know, from a Teacher.

Qua. I wish thou wert one. I am sure thou hast hitherto taught me nothing. I have [III-175] fully confuted all thy Propositions, and thou hast not answered mine.

Cler. You are too wise a Man to be confuted or convinced.

Qua. By thy Arguments undoubtedly.

Cler. By any Arguments.

Qua. That are insufficient.

Cler. In short, you are the most incorrigible Sect living.

Qua. And art not thou vain to endeavour to correct what thou sayest cannot be corrected?

Cler. I would, at least, do my Duty, and save your Soul, if I could.

Qua. My Soul is safe in the Blood of Christ. Knowest thou any other Safety?

Cler. Your Safety will fail you, if you do not worship him in a proper Manner.

Qua. I believe in him, I pray to him, and to God through him; I pray for his Spirit, I seek his Will in his Word, and beg for Light to understand it, and praise him for it; and I live soberly. Is not this the Whole of Religion, and of religious Worship? Canst thou teach me any better?

Cler. If you were to be taught, I could teach you to worship him decently.

Qua. Thou meanest, I suppose, to bow at Sounds, to make Legs to a Table, and to say [III-176] after thee. This is not religious Worship, but a Task which any Infidel can perform; nay, we have Creatures amongst us that are not rational, and yet can perform it.

Cler. Was there ever such profane Buffoonery?

Qua. Why truly I think not.

Cler. None but a Pagan could jest thus with sacred Things.

Qua. Thou art mistaken, Friend; Pagans reckon them sacred, and solemnized in their Temples a Number of merry Motions, which were a sest to the primitive Christians.

Cler. Good Things are not the worse for being abused by the Heathens.

Qua. True, nor foolish Things the wiser for being used by Christians.

Cler. What, do you call the Ceremonies of our holy Church foolish?

Qua. No, but to me they are not edifying.

Cler. To me they are; but your Heart is hardened.

Qua. Do not Things that are edifying soften the Heart? else what are they good for?

Cler. Grace must go along with them.

Qua. Friend, won't Grace do without Ceremonies? Whoever hath Grace, is already [III-177] edified: And cannot I pray for Grace without Ceremonies?

Cler. Our Church has established them as necessary to Decency and Edification. Has the Authority of the Church no Weight with you?

Qua. Yes, great Weight, where she erreth not.

Cler. Of which you pretend to judge.

Qua. Dost thou follow any Church without knowing why? or should any Man?

Cler. No.

Qua. Then every Man ought to judge of every Church, as thou dost, by separating from every Church but thy own; doubtless, because thou art most edified by her: And when she edifieth me also, I will also join with her.

Cler. You ought to join with her: She is the Established Church.

Qua. If ours were established, wouldest thou join with us?

Cler. How! I join with Fanatics!

Qua. It becometh not me to return ill Language; but it is plain, that thou valuest not Establishments; and why wouldest thou expect it from others, and set up Duty against Conscience?

Cler. Conscience! Cant!

[III-178]

Qua. By our Conscience we must please God; but if it offendeth thee, I will call it by another Name; I will call it Opinion. Now, suppose I differ in Opinion with thee and thy Church, wouldest thou have me be an insincere Man, a Hypocrite, and a Lyar, by declaring myself of thy Opinion, when I am not?

Cler. No, but---

Qua. Have Patience: I have another Question to put to thee. Wouldest thou have me change my Mind, when I cannot change it?

Cler. No Man shall tell me that it is impossible for him to be of the true Religion.

Qua. I am of the true Religion, and so thinks every Man; it being every Man's nearest Interest to be of the best.

Cler. A Medley of Religions is pernicious to Society.

Qua. Pernicious (if thou pleasest) to the Pride of Men, who would ride upon Society over the Belly of Conscience. But what hath human Society to do with what is in the Heart of Man concerning a future State, wherewith there can be no human Commerce? Human Society indeed should beware of those Men who, under Colour of conducting them to the other World, would engross this; of Men [III-179] who would make the whole Body Politic their Slaves and Tenants; and would take so much Care of Postures and Opinions, as to leave them nothing but Postures and Opinions to take Care of.

Cler. A fine Harangue, truly! Who are the terrible Fellows that do or would do all this?

Qua. All who would bear no Religion in the World but their own. The Popish Clergy have done it; and all other Clergy, who make the same Demands upon Society that they do, would do it. Do not all thy High Brethren make the same Demands, and contend for all the Tyranny, and Wealth, and Pomp of Popery?

Cler. I am not for Popery: But I am for the Church's having all her own Power and Lands.

Qua. That is, thou art for the worst Parts of Popery, but not for Popery. Friend, Religion claimeth neither Power nor Lands: Our Saviour had none, the Apostles had none, and we claim none; and we cannot interfere with Society, as they do who demand every thing that is great and good in Society.

Cler. A pretty Fellow to regulate Society!

Qua. I meddle not with Society: I only desire its Protection.

[III-180]

Cler. What have you to do then with Church-Lands?

Qua. Nothing. What hast thou? They were robbed from the Laity by the Popish Monks. --- Art thou one? At the Reformation the Laity resumed them again: And doth the Church of Christ condemn the Reformation? Or, what hath she to do with the Cheats and Robberies of Monks, but to condemn them?

Cler. I hope you will allow us to keep what the Law gives us.

Qua. But why claimest thou more? And hath not the Law that gave, a Power to take away?

Cler. I dare say, you don't mean your own Estate.

Qua. Yes surely, if I robbed the Public to get it, or turned the Bounty of the Public to the public Detriment.

Cler. Have you the Impudence to say, that the Clergy do so?

Qua. Friend, there are Clergy who do so; who for their own Pride and Debaucheries starve the Laity, that feed their Luxury; who receive all their Power and Revenues from the Laity, and leave the Laity none. And there are others who have great Benefices for the Exercise of religious Functions, and never [III-181] exercise any; but convert them into *Sinecures*, or leave them to a Hireling. This, Friend, is worse than Impudence, whereof I am not guilty. Does the Spirit call them to this? For, if I am not deceived, you all declare yourselves called by the Spirit.

Cler. I know you are nibbling at our keeping Curates, and yet you keep a Bailiff upon your Estate.

Qua. Yes; and I will turn him out, if he neglect my Affairs, or trust them to a Carter. How dost thou like the Example? It is of thy own choosing. And thou puttest the Cure of precious Souls, for which Christ died, upon the same Foot with the Care of Corn and Cattle, which Men eat; and upon a worse Foot, if thou wilt not suffer us to choose our spiritual Bailiffs.

Cler. And so you would have the same Authority over Clergymen, as over your Ploughmen. Mighty civil!

Qua. We maintain both, but at very unequal Wages. Where would be the Incivility or Injustice of laying out our own Money for our own Use?

Cler. Then the Church might starve for you?

Qua. Friend, thou mayest be learned, but thou art very ignorant. The Church of Christ [III-182] cannot starve, because it liveth not upon Meats, and Drink, and Money.

Cler. Nor consists of solemn Faces, prim Cravats, plain Coats, and broad Hats.

Qua. Thou speakest Truth, notwithstanding thy Intention.

Cler. Then why are you singular in your Habits?

Qua. Why art thou?

Cler. I am a Minister of the Gospel.

Qua. Which never gave thee that Tippet, nor that long and unhandy Coat with many Plaits.

Cler. But it is decent.

Qua. My Coat is more decent, and would become thee better. It is plain and warm, and hath no long Train, nor vain Superfluities.

Cler. That solemn Gate and Mein too is very becoming.

Qua. Wouldst thou have me cut Capers, and practise Smiles?

Cler. And be sure never alter the Figure of that broad Hat.

Qua. It is not broader than thine.

Cler. I tell you I am a Minister.

Qua. Thy Hat is none, and I make no ministerial Use of mine. I do not go to my Neighbour, and say, *Neighbour, I demand the [III-183] Tenth of thy Substance, by virtue of this broad Hat.*

Cler. Sir, who does?

Qua. Friend, thou art very passionate. I am only defending my Hat, whereof I make no other Use but to keep my Head warm.

Cler. Why don't you pull it off upon Occasion?

Qua. I do upon proper Occasion, that is, when I seek God.

Cler. But never to Man.

Qua. Therefore I do not, because I do it only to God. I think that the Acts of Worship, which we pay unto God, ought not to be confounded with Ceremonies of Civility paid unto Men. Thou bowest at the Name of Jesus; dost thou how also at the Name of the King?

Cler. But you are inconsistent with yourselves. Your Style to God and Man is the same, and you *thee* and *thou* them both alike.

Qua. We speak properly, to one God as one God, to one Man as one Man. Thou art more inconsistent with thyself. Thou reckonest *thee* and *thou* disrespectful to Man: Why usest thou the same Language to God?

Cler. It is the Scripture Style.

Qua. To Man as well as to God. Besides, Friend, let me tell thee, that the using the [III-184] plural Number to single Persons, was begun in Flattery to Princes and great Men; as was also the Ceremony of the Hat and the Knee, and came to be practised as Marks of Adoration paid to Men, who were thereby set up in God's stead; and where they cannot go that Length, yet they feed natural Pride, and make Differences amongst Men, where Nature hath made none.

Cler. We do not use them as Marks of Adoration.

Qua. I believe thee; but still they are Marks of Insincerity, and of a Submission which is not due from Man to Man. Friend, these civil Ceremonies are of evil Efficacy, and apt to deceive the Mind into a slavish and superstitious Veneration for Persons. They make unnatural Distances in Society, and set Men too far above and below one another. By such Steps Kings came to be worshipped as Gods; as several of the *Roman* Emperors formerly, and lately thy Friend *Louis* was deified by many of thy *French* Brethren.

[III-185]

NUMBER LXXIII.

Dialogue between a Country Clergyman and a Quaker, continued. ↩

Clergyman.

DOES the Light within teach you all this?

Quaker. My natural Light, which thou callest Reason, sufficeth to confute thee. The other Light seemeth to be with-held from thee, and therefore thou mockest it; it better becomes a Christian to pray for it.

Cler. You are an impudent Man. Is it from your inward Light that you reproach me, as if I were not a Christian?

Qua. Thou art very tender. I do not reproach thee with any such Thing; but I am sure, that Christianity teacheth no Man to deny the inward Light, and to wax angry and revile.

[III-186]

Cler. I do not deny that there is such a thing as the Light of the Spirit, but I deny that you have it.

Qua. Thy Censure is rash. How knowest thou what is within me?

Cler. By what comes out of you.

Qua. I judge not of thee by the same Rule; I hope thou hast Charity, though I see it not. But I will abide by thy Rule in relation to myself. What hast thou heard me utter but the Words of Truth and Soberness?

Cler. Not a Word of the Spirit, I am sure.

Qua. Knowest thou him? If thou dost, thou must know that he is the Author of Truth.

Cler. But not of Sauciness and Schism.

Qua. True, Doctor; and therefore the Quakers do not faucily insult, nor uncharitably damn, all those, or any of those, who differ from them. That is the only Antichristian Schism, which dammeth all Men as Schismatics, except its own cruel Club.

Cler. A smart Casuist, I'll assure you, to vindicate the Quakers from Schism!

Qua. I wish thou couldst vindicate thyself as well, upon the same pious and benevolent Principle.

Cler. What, do you charge the established Church with Schism?

[III-187]

Qua. God forbid! I only wish thee, and such as are like thee, a more peaceable and more merciful Spirit. Thou art not the established Church.

Cler. And dare you say that the Quakers are not Schismatics?

Qua. Yes, certainly; I think that all good Men, of all Professions, will be saved. This is Charity; I separate from no Church out of Pride or Interest, and am therefore no Schismatic.

Cler. And herein, I suppose, the Spirit is your Voucher.

Qua. I desire no other, and can have no other for the Thoughts of my Heart.

Cler. For which we are to take your Word; for I think you never take Oaths.

Qua. The Scripture forbiddeth us to swear at all.

Cler. It forbids profane Cursing and Swearing.

Qua. Doctor, it forbids all Swearing.

Cler. But the Solemnity of an Oath in the Presence of God is an Act of Religion.

Qua. All Speaking is in the Presence of God, and speaking the Truth is an Act of Religion. When we are called upon to give our Testimony to the Truth, we never refuse it.

[III-188]

Cler. I should be sorry to have my Property depend upon your Affirmation.

Qua. If I am a good Man, thou needest not distrust me; if I am a bad Man, my Oath will not secure thee.

Cler. I believe, indeed, the Affirmation and Oath of a Quaker are much alike.

Qua. They ought to be alike amongst all Christians, and all moral Men; and therefore let thy Meaning be ever so bitter, thou givest an honourable Testimony to Friends. I hope thou findest the same Faithfulness and Sincerity amongst thine. Is not the Word of a Churchman as

good as his Oath?

Cler. I hope better than a Quaker's, at least.

Qua. Not if a Quaker speaketh the Truth.

Cler. That *If* was well put in.

Qua. Be it so; though thou mightest have spared thy Reproach, by which thou wo't gain nothing. None of us have been accused of false Evidence, and doubtless thou hast heard of many Churchmen punished with public Infamy for Perjury.

Cler. I suppose you do the Thing more filly.

Qua. I thank thee for allowing us to have more Discretion than thy Disciples: If they have, at least, as few Restraints, and more [III-189] Folly, than we have, how are they bettered by thy Teaching? and how is their Oath better than our Affirmation?

Cler. I cannot answer for Profligates.

Qua. Nor oughtest thou to suspect us for Profligates without Cause.

Cler. I must beg Leave not to value a Quaker's Affirmation so much as a Churchman's Oath.

Qua. I will value it as much without Leave. Friend, are thy Brethren more loyal by taking Oaths, than Men of our Persuasion are without taking any?

Cler. I'll take my Oath, that thou art a saucy Fellow.

Qua. I am not so the more for that.—But is that thy best Answer? I could easily have given thee the same, had it been suitable to good Manners.

Cler. Manners! O my Sides! Why, you are the most unmannerly of all Sects: So unmannerly, that there is no living with you; and all that do, despise you.

Qua. Friend, I in particular have given thee no Cause for thy Accusation, nor for thy Contempt; and what thou sayest of us in general, thou sayest passionately; and it comes from Prejudice, or ill Information. In *Pensylvania*, where we have the Power, we do not molest nor revile any Man of any Religion; and thou [III-190] thyself, for all thy intemperate Spirit, mightest live there with full Freedom.

Cler. I live amongst you! I live amongst Fanatics!

Qua. I do not invite thee. There are no Tythes there to allure, but there are *Indians* to convert. How likest thou the Employment, and the Terms thereof?

Cler. Sir, I have no Call there; I have Employment in my own Parish.

Qua. I hope thou hadst a Call thither.

Cler. Yes, Mr. *Pert*, to preserve Peace and religious Order; though you are an Enemy to all Order.

Qua. Thou hast not a more orderly Man in thy Parish: And many of thy Flock are very disorderly, especially upon Holidays, which, I think, are part of your Order, and celebrated with Drunkenness, and with breaking my Windows.

Cler. Did I exhort them to it?

Qua. No; thou didst only paint out Quakers to them, as a People not fit to live amongst Christians.

Cler. I preached what I thought it my Duty to preach.

Qua. And they practised what they thought thou hadst taught them to practise.

[III-191]

Cler. If you would wisely remove to *Pensilvania*, you might live there with Freedom, you know.

Qua. So I would, if my Affairs would let me; as I might here, under the Protection of the Law, if thou wouldst let me. Let me tell thee, Friend, for the Credit of the Quakers Government in *Pensilvania*, there is not a more thriving Colony in *America*. They encourage and protect all Men, and persecute none: They are friendly to the savage *Indians*, who come freely into their Houses by Day, and by Night; and any Man in a Quaker's Habit may travel safely and singly through all the Nations of *North America*, who will be ready to receive and assist him.

Cler. The Quakers are obliged to live peaceably with their Neighbours: You know they must not fight.

Qua. Knowest thou any better way to avoid fighting, than a peaceable Spirit? And ought not all Men to avoid fighting? The Quakers, since their first Establishment there, have had no Wars: It is not so in *New-England*, where Men, like thee, are for spiritual Dominion, and trust to the Sword. There they use the poor Natives ill, who therefore make frequent Incursions upon them. Men who will take away by Violence the Lands and Goods of [III-192] others, and domineer over them, must fight to defend what they do. The Quakers have hurt no Man, and no Man offers to hurt them.

Cler. Commend me to their human Prudence! The Quakers will make no Man their Enemy, by their Zeal for Christianity.

Qua. Friend, thy Abuse ends in Praise. The Quakers use no Man as an Enemy for his Religion; and they who do, have not Zeal, but Fury and Fanaticism. Our Saviour and his Apostles had no such Zeal. Ill Usage, Fierceness, and Barbarity, convince no Man; nor is any Man made a Christian by Rage and Power.

Cler. It would be great Pity, that such as you should make any. A Pagan converted into a Quaker, makes but a sorry Exchange.

Qua. Those Words would fit the Mouth of a Pagan better than thine; and a Quaker is better qualified to reason with a Pagan, than thou art. We have nothing to desire of him but to be a Christian, and we gain neither Money nor Authority by his Conversion. But with what Face can such as thou art tell a Nation of Heathens?

“Gentlemen, be of my Religion, and in Requital I will be your Lord and Master, and take the Tenth of all you have, and all else that I can get: None of which can ever return to you again, let me use it, or abuse you, how I will.”

And [III-193] yet can Men of thy Spirit and Pretensions reason in Sincerity at any other Rate with any Set of Men in the World?

Cler. The Man raves.---Can People pay too much for their Souls?

Qua. They ought to pay nothing: The Blood of Christ is already paid. Is not that sufficient? And dost thou really confess, that thou wouldst not save Souls without Payment?

Cler. I will bear no more.---This is audacious beyond human Patience.

Qua. Doctor, Nothing is beyond christian Patience.

Cler. Too much Liberty makes you insolent.---We shall find some other Way of confuting you.

Qua. Thou meanest Force, which is the Champion of bad Reasoning, and a bad Cause.

Cler. Hold your Tongue, Prater.

Qua. I have Liberty of Speech from Christ and the Law.---Wouldst thou restrain it by thy Breath?

Cler. It is pity thy Breath were not restrained.

Qua. Friend, may God of his great Mercy forgive thee! Farewel.

[III-194]

NUMBER LXXIV.

Of the Character and Capacity of the Fathers of the Church. ↩

THE Reading of the Fathers, and an Acquaintance with the Fathers, has made a great Noise in the World, as a momentous Study, intitling the Proficients in it to a high Character, and the Reputation of Learning. Few People had Leisure to read them, and fewer would take the Pains; and now I think most Men agree, that the Pains are not worth taking; and he who employs his Time that Way, whatever Industry he may have, is neither envied for his Taste, nor admired for his Acquirements, unless by those whose Applause Men of Genius are not fond of. There is not much Glory to be got in an Employment, where, to excel in it, nothing is required but great Drudgery, eminent Patience, and no Taste, or a wrong one. A Clown may exult and swagger, because he is an accomplished [III-195] Ploughman; but I would rather he should have the Renown than I; though a good Ploughman is a good Character in a Country; and, in some Instances, a drudging Pedant, who is the Ploughman in the Learned World, is likewise an useful Character. It might be, however, wished, that they would preserve the Distance and Humility of Ploughmen, and not value themselves so much upon mere Sweat and Digging.

As to the Fathers, there is so little to be learned from them, that they who know much of them, are only esteemed by such as know little of any thing. Nor was there ever any thing more insolent and dishonest, than to refer us, for the Knowledge of the Scriptures, to the Fathers, who were so very ignorant of them, that they almost constantly understood them in every Sense but the true Sense. They have such an Appetite for Vision, Mystery, and Obscurity, that in the plainest Texts they find Difficulty, Darkness, Allusion, and Enigma's; and explain obvious Passages, just as they do doubtful ones, by far-fetched and mysterious Guesses and Meanings, which contradict common Sense, and which none that had it would have thought of. A plain and natural Meaning, which every body could see, would not serve their Turn; but they must extort a [III-196] Meaning, and so have the Glory of the Discovery; and their Thoughts, like their Language, were forced and Bombast. And to these Men, who made the Word of God of none Effect, by darkening his plainest Precepts with false Glosses and Figures, we are sent for Instruction in that Word.

WHOEVER has seen *Solomon's Temple Allegorized* by John Bunyan, may find there a Specimen of the Sagacity and Abilities of the Fathers in explaining of Scripture. According to *John*, there was not a Nail in that Temple but had its typical Purpose; and every Bason and Pair of Tongs prefigured some great Mystery to come; and, in short, every Stone and every Tool in the Temple prophesied. And in all this the poor pious Tinker did but tread in the Steps of the Fathers, without knowing it. As he had much more Honesty, and a more quiet and beneficent Spirit, than any of them; so he had as much Invention, and was full as equal to the Business of Allegory, as the best of them, and his Fancy was not more heated than theirs; and whoever reads his *Pilgrim's Progress*, need only suppose himself reading one of the brightest Fathers in *English*; and he will make them no ill Compliment; for his Imagination, which was a very good one, was really more regular and correct than theirs. [III-197] I have often thought the *Rosicrucians* a Sort of modern Fathers; only they are more sublime in their Reveries: They deal alike in the same Puffry, false Rhetoric, and their Imaginations are alike inflamed and extravagant.

It is irrational and impious to suppose, that Almighty God, the good, the merciful God, would give to his Creatures Instructions, Commands, and Advices, which were puzzling, obscure, or uncertain, when their eternal Salvation was depending upon their conceiving and applying them aright. And yet these Fathers suppose all this, in fetching from his Word Inferences and Meanings, which, upon reading it, seem as different from it as any one Language is from another. It is but Justice to the Omnipotent Being, to believe that he speaks candidly and intelligibly to his Creatures, and to all his Creatures, whenever he speaks to them at all: But this Justice the Fathers deny him, when they make him thus say one thing, and mean another.

AND no more is it to be supposed, that the Father of Mercies would cruelly impose upon us an impossible Thing for a Duty; I mean that of agreeing with the Fathers, who never agreed with one another, nor indeed with themselves. No People upon the Earth ever differed more (no, not their Successors); nor [III-198] proceeded to greater Fury and Bitterness in their Differences. They were constantly quarrelling about the smallest, as well as the greatest Points; and for the smallest, as well as for the greatest, they damned one another. It is to be hoped, that we are not to learn our Religion from those who wanted Charity; nor our Charity and Meekness from Men that were perpetually quarrelling, and cursing each other.

THEY indeed contradicted the first Principles of the Gospel, by turning Meekness, Humility, and Self-denial, into Pride, Riches, and Domination; and claimed all things, by virtue of a Gospel that gave them nothing. Are these Patterns for such as would *renounce the World, the Flesh, and the Devil; and live sober, righteous, and godly in the World?* Does their sainting of Villains and Assassins, as sometimes they did, intitle them to the Character and Reverence of Saints? Does their eternal Contention and Contradiction qualify them for the Centre of Unity? Is their turbulent Spirit, and their wild Want of common Sense, their ravenous Avarice, and flaming Ambition, their Fury and Fighting, their frequent Change of Opinion, their Apostasy and Murders; I say, are all these, or any of them, proper Marks of the Guides of God's People? And that these Marks belong to many of the Fathers, and all of them [III-199] to some, is too manifest: Indeed, their own Writings, and all Ecclesiastical History, do little else but prove it.

WE have often heard the Dissenters charged with Fanaticism, and their best Writers have been called Fanatics by Men who revered much greater Fanatics, whilst they revered the Fathers, who far out-went in Fanaticism even the wildest Sectaries, that appeared in *England* during the late long Civil War; nor were the *Ranters, Sweet-Singers, Muggletonians, Fifth-monarchy-men*, or any of them all, more stark mad with Enthusiasm than the Fathers were; who, besides the Turbulency of their Behaviour, by which they brought many and heavy Evils and Persecutions upon the Primitive Christians, asserted Principles utterly

irreconcilable to human Society, as well as to Religion and Reason. *Jacob Behmen* was not a greater Visionary, nor vended more devout Dreams.

I THANK God, we can understand the Scriptures without the voluminous and contradictory Ravings and Declamations of the Fathers, who have equally perverted the Religion of *Jesus*, and the Religion of Nature; both which are clear enough to those that will see them, and do mutually confirm each other. There is as much Difference, and indeed Opposition, between the New Testament and the [III-200] Writings of the Fathers, as there is betwixt the *Pentateuch* and the *Talmud*; which, by its Fables, Forgeries, and wild Inventions, has mangled, darkened, and perverted the short and plain History of *Moses*; nor are the Dreams, Fables, and Absurdities of the Fathers more sacred, or less glaring and extravagant, than those of the *Rabbies*. Never were such ridiculous Commentators upon Texts; and where a Child, that could but read, would not have missed their Meaning, the Fathers have missed it. They were so far from understanding, applying, explaining, or improving the amiable and evident Moral of the Gospel, that whoever would look for it in a Place where he is sure not to find it, need only read the Fathers; and I should think very meanly of our Country Curates, if most of them could not compose Systems of Divinity, more rational and scriptural than any of the Fathers ever composed.

THUS much I thought proper to say here concerning the Fathers. Whoever would see more elsewhere, may read the learned Dr. *Whitby* 's late *Latin* Treatise, intituled, *Disquisitiones modestæ*, and Mr. *Marvel* 's short History of *Councils*, and *Dailé* of the Use of the Fathers.

[III-201]

A Letter to the Lord Archbishop of CANTERBURY; proving, That his Grace cannot be the Author of the Letter to an eminent Presbyterian Clergyman in Switzerland; in which Letter the present State of Religion in England is blackened and exposed. ↩

Non potuit celare *pia* Ludibria *Fraudis*.

Buchan.

Written in 1719.

My LORD,

THERE is lately printed in *Switzerland* a Book intituled, *Oratio historica de Beneficiis in Ecclesiam Tigurinam collatis*: “An Historical Oration concerning the Mercies bestowed upon the Church of *Zurich*. ” In [III-202] the 14th Page of which Oration the Author gives an Account of the present State of the *English* Church, as the same was transmitted from hence, in an Epistle to a principal Person (or Ruler) there, from one of the *like*, or *greater Character* here.

As this Epistle gives a frightful Representation of the State of Religion amongst us, in general; and, more particularly, of the Distresses and Dangers, which accrue to the *Church of England*, from Schism, Heresy, and the *Ministry*; I herewith send it to your Grace. I have translated it for the Benefit of my *less learned* Readers, and added some Observations of my own, to expose a *lurking Author*, who deceives and prejudices the World abroad with a base Image of our *Church Affairs under your Grace’s Administration*. And I do it the rather, because, my Lord, some People are so very ignorant and malicious, as to surmise, that your Grace was the Author of that Letter, so inconsistent with your former Life and Character.

[III-203]

ORATIO Historica de Beneficiis in Ecclesiam Tigurinam collatis, p. 14.

“ECCLESIA Anglicana divisionibus perrupta est, & Schismatibus divisa; tot ac tam variis hominum ab ipsis sacris sese segregantium generibus confusa, ut nullis propriis nominibus vel ipsi se distinguere valeant, vel aliis describere. Atque utinam etiam hoc ultimum nobis querelæ argumentum esset! Sed impleri oportet quæcumque Spiritus Dei olim futura prædixit; adeo ut inter nos ipsos exsurrexerint viri loquentes perversa. Et quid dico, viri? Immò Pastores, Episcopi ipsi manibus Ecclesiam diruunt, in quâ ministrant; ad cujus doctrinam pluries subscripsere: Quibus defensio Ecclesiæ commissa, quorum munus est invigilare contra hostes ejus, eosque pro meritis redarguere, compescere, punire. Etiam hi illius Ecclesiæ auctoritatem labefactare nituntur, pro quâ non tantum certare, verùm, si res ita postularet, etiam mori debuerint. Quæ sint horum novatorum placita, ex duobus nuperis scriptis Gallico sermone libellis aliquatenus discernere valeatis. Uno hîc verbo dixisse [III-204] sufficiat, his hominibus omnes Fidei confessiones, omnes Articulorum subscriptiones, animitus displicere. Velle eos libertatem, seu verius licentiam omnibus concedi, quæcumque libuerit non tantum credendi, sed dicendi, scribendi, prædicandi; etiam si Gratia Spiritus Sancti, Christi Divinitas, & alia omnia Religionis nostræ principia maximè fundamentalia, exinde forent evertenda. Quis hæc Christianus, de hominibus nomine saltem Christianis, dici non obstupescat! Quis non doleat hujusmodi λύχ[Editor: illegible character]ς βαρῆς non tantum non ab Ovili longè arceri, verùm etiam intra ipsa Ecclesiæ pomœria recipi? Ad honores, ad officia, ad gubernacula ejus admitti? At vero ita se res habet. Dum ad ca, quæ

sunt hujus seculi, unicè respicimus, prorsùm obliviscimur eorum quæ ad alterum spectant. Et quia horum hominum tolerantia & promotione quidam se populi savorem conciliaturos sperant, quibus id unicè cordi, ut in suis sese dignitatibus & potentia tueantur, parùm curant quid de Ecclesiâ, de Fide, de Religione, de ipso denique Jesu Christo, ejusque veritate eveniat. Ignoscas, vir spectatissime, si, dum justo animi dolori indulgeam, indignationem meam contra hosce Religionis nostræ inimicos paulò asperius, quàm pro more meo, [III-205] expresserim. Reum me putarem proditæ Fidei, si non his Hæreticis, quâvis occasione oblatâ, Anathema dixerim, &c.

In English thus.

“THE Church of *England* is broken by Parties, and rent by Schisms; in short, distracted with such a Number and Variety of Separatists, that they want apt Names to distinguish themselves from one another, and to describe themselves to the rest of the World.

“ AND I wish even this were our highest Ground of Complaint! But it must be fulfilled, what the *Holy Spirit* foretold in Times past; so that among ourselves, Men have arisen, speaking *perverse Things*. But why do I say Men? When even Pastors, nay, *Bishops* themselves, pull down with their own Hands the *Church* in which they minister, and to whose Doctrine they have over and over subscribed, even *they* to whom the Preservation of the Church is committed, and whose Business and Duty it is to watch against her Enemies, and to oppose, and restrain, and punish them. Yes, *they* strive to undermine and over-turn the Authority of that Church, for which they [III-206] ought not only to contend, but, if Occasion were, to lay down their Lives.

“ WHAT the Pleas and Pretensions of these *Innovators* are, you may in some measure learn, from a couple of *French Pamphlets* lately published. Let it here suffice to say, in one Word, that these Men are angry at all *Confessions of Faith*, and all Subscriptions of Articles, and are for granting a general *Liberty*, or rather a general *Licence*, to all Men, not only to believe, but to speak, and write, and preach whatever they please, tho’ at the Expence and Ruin of the *Grace of the Holy Spirit, the Divinity of our Blessed Saviour*, and all the other *Fundamental Principles* of our Religion.

“ WHO, that is a Christian, can without Astonishment hear these Things, of Men that call themselves Christians? And who can avoid lamenting, that these *ravening Wolves* (λύχ[Editor: illegible character] βαρῆς) are not only not driven far away from the *Sheepfold*, but even received within the very Inclosures of the Church, and admitted to her Honours, her Offices, and her Government? And yet so it unfortunately is.

“ BUT while we only strive for the Things of this Life, we wofully neglect those which belong to another. And because *some* hope [III-207] by the Toleration and Advancement of *such Men*, to acquire the Favour of the People, and, by that Means, maintain themselves in *that* which they have *only* at Heart, *their Power and Places*, they care not what becomes of *the Church*, or of *the Faith*, or of *Religion*, or indeed of *Jesus Christ* himself, and *his Cause*.

“ You will pardon me, Sir, that to gratify a *just Sorrow*, I thus express my Indignation, with more than *usual Bitterness*, against *these Enemies* of our Religion. I should accuse myself of betraying *the Faith*, did I not, on every Occasion, denounce *Damnation* against *these Heretics*, &c.”

THUS far the *Letter*, as it is quoted in the *Oration* above-mentioned. Your Grace will perceive in it a Spirit, which shews what blind Zeal, and Uncharitableness, go to the Composition of a *High Churchman*, who must see double, and represent at Random; else it would be impossible for him, either to discover the Danger of the Church himself, or to shew the same to others: A Character by no means *becoming* your Grace.

A HIGH Churchman may be denominated from divers Marks and *Exclamations*. He [III-208] must be devout in damning of Dissenters; he must roar furiously for the Church, and its great *modern Apostle*, the late *Duke of Ormond*, with some other pious and forsworn Gentlemen, who are well affected to the *Pretender* and the *Convocation*; he must *rebel* for *Passive Obedience*; he must uphold *Divine Right* by diabolical Means; and he must be loud and zealous for *Hereditary*, *Indefeasible*, and the like *Orthodox Nonsense*. But there is one Sign more of a *true Churchman*, which is more lasting and universal than all the rest, and that is a firm and senseless Persuasion, that the *Church is in Danger*. If a Man believe this, it is enough; his Reputation is raised; and, tho' his Life shew more of the Dæmon than the Christian, he shall be deem'd an *excellent Churchman*. This is so true, that, if an honest, atheistical Churchman, will but curse and roar against a *Toleration of Dissenters*, he shall be sure to find a *Toleration* himself for the blackest Iniquities, be rewarded with *Reputation*, and, if possible, with *Power*.

THERE was a Fellow in *Oxfordshire*, one *Jack Brunt*, who had made himself famous for *Zeal* and *Roguary*. His whole Life was religiously wasted in getting drunk for the Church, and robbing of Hen-roosts and Gardens. In short, he was the *best Churchman*, [III-209] and the *greatest Thief*, in all the Neighbourhood, and in high Esteem with every one that honoured the Cause of *Drunkenness* and *Orthodoxy*. But for all this Merit, as *Jack* was carrying off half a dozen Cabbages from *Farmer Shepherd*'s Garden, he was unluckily apprehended, and carry'd before *Justice Plowden*. However, as *Jack* was upon his Examination, and nigh his Commitment, the *Parson of the Parish*, hearing of his Tribulation, came to intercede for so worthy a *Fellow-labourer* in the Cause of *Tippling* and *Conformity*. The first thing the *Doctor* said was, that tho' *Jack* was *addicted to Roguary*, yet he was *honest*. *How, Sir! an honest Thief!* replied the 'Squire, spitting and staring. *I mean he is for the Church*, answer'd the Parson. *The Church, Man!* says his Worship— — — *I hope the Common-Prayer Book does not feed on Cabbages. But consider, Sir*, said the Doctor again, *the Prosecutor is a notorious Dissenter. And what if he be*, quoth the Justice? *Have not Presbyterians a Toleration to eat their own Cabbages? Away, away, Mr. What d'ye call; I love the Church very well, and yet I'll have this Fellow gaoled and whipped.* *Jack* was accordingly committed; and all the while he peep'd through the Grate, he modestly acquainted every one who came to see him, *that his Sufferings were* [III-210] *all for the Church*. And in this the Parson joined with him, and collected Money all round the Country for *Jack*, by the Name of an *honest Churchman*, who was *persecuted* by a *Fanatic*. He particularly told a zealous Gentlewoman, the better to dispose her to be liberal, that *Jack* had cursed *King George*, at a public Alehouse in *Ab— — —n*.

My Lord, I have repeated this Story, to shew you what you no doubt know and lament; namely, that this mad Fondness for the Name and Power of the Church, has dissolved the Bonds of Justice and Charity, and confounded Merit and Villainy, and fancified the vilest Immoralities.

YOUR Grace does, without Question, behold, with Grief and Shame, that those who are employed, and even *greatly rewarded*, to keep up the Land-marks between Virtue and Vice, do, notwithstanding, often trample upon Peace and Truth, and animate the mad Multitude to seek their Salvation in the Paths of Wickedness and Destruction.

HAD your Grace been the Author of *the Letter*, instead of bewailing *Notions* and *Opinions*, which nobody can help, and which hurt nobody, you would have lamented and rebuked what is truly lamentable, that shameless Corruption of Manners, and that horrid Prostitution [III-211] of Conscience and Oaths, which are countenanced and practised by *many* who are fond of the *Word, Church*, but are at great Enmity with Religion and Liberty.

I GRANT that *such Persons* are Orthodox Conformists to all the *Ceremonies* and *Bowings* enjoined by *Authority*, and *true Believers* of all the *Mysteries* which the *Church* has *thought fit* to maintain in *Opposition* to *carnal Reason*, that being *no Guide* in *spiritual Matters*, which being *inconceivable*, ought *therefore* to be believed. But as a good Life, and righteous Behaviour, are of some Use and Importance to human Society, your Grace to be sure wishes, that all your Clergy were of my Mind, and would not only believe well, but, *if it may be*, live well also.

I AM, perhaps, proposing a Task to them, for which *some* of them will not thank me. But as the Advantages which arise from Virtue, and good Conscience, are many and obvious *to me*; and as the dreadful Practice of Perjury is not only *very common*, but even impiously justified in *some* of our Pulpits, by those whose Duty it is to shew its Horror, and press its Punishment, *were Religion any Part of their Aim*; and as all Sorts of Lewdness and Vice accompany this infamous Departure from common Honesty, this *truly damnable Schism* from [III-212] the *Spirit of Christianity*; I cannot love Religion and my Country so little, as to be altogether silent on these important Heads.

WITH what Face and Conscience can that Man, or *Minister*, who breaks avowedly the *third Command*, persuade the keeping of the other Nine? And are there not *Clergymen* who pray for his Majesty in the Desk, and damn both him and his Title in the Pulpit? Who swear to him, and betray him? Who pledge their Souls for their Allegiance to him, and yet think him an Usurper; and do their hellish Endeavours to dethrone him? And are not such *Atheists* zealous for the Church, and loud in the Cry of her Danger?

ARE not such Men manifest Foes to Christianity, and all social Virtues, who, by their blasphemous Practices, and their unhappy Power over the stupid Vulgar, do what in them lies to break the Bonds of *human Faith* and *Society*, and to banish Truth, Good-nature, and Morality, from the Face of the Earth?

Is not this, my Lord, a *shocking Scene*? And are not these *diabolical Teachers*? And yet they are all *Orthodox* to a Degree, and far from *pulling down the Church with their own Hands*, tho' they are Enemies to God and Man.

[III-213]

It is plain that these are not the Men meant by the *Complainer*, who only laments the Diversity of Opinions amongst us; as if our Belief and Sentiments, which are perhaps the Effects of Education or Complexion, were such terrible Things, tho' all their Guilt consists in provoking the Pride of the *worst Sort of Priests*, who, by their Lives, seem to know no Religion but *Superstition* and *Cruelty*.

THESE *Jacobite Parsons*, who take the Oaths to a Prince whom they abhor, and are perpetually betraying, shew, that their Consciences are either seared beyond feeling, or that they have *none* at all. Can such Monsters, who are the Pests and Shame of their own Species, tell us that they are Christians? (for as to their being true Churchmen, we make no doubt of it) and yet go on, as they do, to make void the eternal Laws of God and Nature, by swearing falsely, and using the great and solemn Name of God purely to deceive? How little do they seem to believe of *that Divine Vengeance* and *Damnation*, which they so liberally denounce against others?

THEIR other Morals are of a Piece with their dreadful and repeated Perjuries. To come *drunk* to the *Sacrament*; to *debauch* and play at Cards *on Sunday*; to be perpetually *wrangling* [III-214] with their Neighbours; to be ever sowing *Sedition* and *Falshood*, and *fomenting Strife*; to be perpetually flinging *Hell-Fire* at all who will not be *Forsworn like themselves*; to be *Idle, Riotous, Drunken, Forsworn*, are all so many current Symptoms of a

Conscience prostituted, or dead. *Quis hæc Christianus, de hominibus nomine saltem Christianis, dici non obstupescat! &c.*

OF all these crying Enormities, tho' manifest and *far spread*, this *Mourner*, this Mouth and *Representative* of the Church, takes not the least Notice. It is *Orthodoxy*, it is *Jurisdiction*, which he contends for; Things, which however void of true Piety, or inconsistent with it, yet are the *Limbs* and *Citadels* of a *corrupt Priesthood*.

To put this Business of Orthodoxy and Impiety still in a stronger Light, I will beg Leave to suppose, that there are, or may be, such Characters as the following; and by them it will appear how a very ill Man, when he is for the Church, becomes a very good Man; and, on the contrary, how a very good Man, when the Church is against him, is made a very ill Man. For Instance:

One Parson is drunken and quarrelsome: But then he *bows* to the *Altar*, and thinks *King William* is damned.

[III-215]

Another cheats every body, and pays nobody. It is true, but he drinks to the *Royal Orphan*, and cannot abide *King George*.

A *Third* neither preaches nor prays, but he does a more meritorious Thing— — he fervently curses the *Germans*, and the *Presbyterians*.

A *Fourth* has hot Blood, and loves unnatural Pleasures; but he has *chaste* Principles, and swears that Bishops are by *Divine Right*.

A *Fifth* lets his Father starve in a Gaol; and the old miserable Man, who had impaired his Substance, to breed his Son a Parson, writes a Petition to this hopeful Child, *to send him Bread, or a Coffin*; and can procure neither, but perishes. But for all that, this *unnatural*, pious Priest, roars for the Danger of the Church, and is a dutiful Son of it.

A *Sixth* is an Evidence upon a Trial, and forswears himself; but the Cause was for Tythes, and he did it out of Love for the Church.

A *Seventh* is a Scoffer, who laughs at Religion: But he hates the *Whigs*, and gets often drunk for the Prosperity of the Church.

Now for the Low-church Clergy.

One is a pious Man, and lives in the Fear of God; will *that* do? *No, he thinks Dissenters may be saved.*

[III-216]

Another has great Learning and Industry, and employs them both honestly and usefully. *That's nothing— — he came over with King William, and opposed King James and Popery.*

A *Third* is a great Master of Reasoning, his Life unblameable, and his Sincerity and Integrity are unquestionable. *What then? He is not a good Churchman— — He says, Presbyterians should not be hanged for following their Conscience, and keeping the Sabbath.*

A *Fourth* is a pious Person, a constant Attendant upon the Service of the Church, and charitable beyond Belief. *What then? That Bishop is a Presbyterian— — He said, the Duke of Ormond was a Traitor.*

A *Fifth* is strictly devout and religious, an unmoveable Adherent to Truth, and one who sacrificed *his All*, even his daily Bread, to his Conscience, which is neither *fashionable*, nor *conforming*; therefore he should be burnt, because he would not forswear himself, and say that he believed in St. Athanasius.

A *Sixth* is a great Champion for Natural and Revealed Religion, the *Truth* of which he has demonstrated, and his Piety and Parts are admirable; a Man who has missed the *Mitre* by deserving it! Why, he ought to be burnt too, because he is for founding Faith upon Scripture ONLY.

[III-217]

A *Seventh* is an aged Person, venerable for Learning and Piety, who has done Service to Religion and Mankind, by his *infinite Labours* in *History Sacred and Profane*. But notwithstanding all this, he is no Churchman; he is tainted with Moderation.

THE last I shall mention is one, who gives up his Life to good Works, and his Income to Charity. But this excellent Christian is a bad Churchman; for he was heard to say, once upon a Time, that King Charles the First, and Archbishop Laud, were but MEN.

THIS, my Lord, is the *State of the Case* between *High Church* and *Low Church*; and let common Sense determine, which is the more material to Religion, the *Belief of a Point of Speculation*, perhaps false, perhaps insignificant, perhaps blasphemous; for 'tis unproved, and may be any thing; or, the utmost Sincerity and Goodness in Life and Opinion.

HAVING thus taken a general View of our *Mourner's Declamation*, I shall now consider it more particularly, Piece by Piece; and in doing this, I shall be greatly helped by your Lordship's Judgment and Authority, since out of your Writings alone, I shall be able to shew sufficiently the Deceit and groundless Clamours of this lurking Author.

[III-218]

First, He says, That the Church of England is broken by Parties, and rent by Schisms; in short, distracted with such a Number and Variety of Separatists, &c.

AND here I think it is plain, that the Author does not by the Church mean Religion; for as Religion does not only permit, but even command, Men to act from Conviction, there will ever be different Opinions about Spirituals, so long as there are different Complexions, and different Understandings, amongst Mankind. All Religion infers Conscience, and voluntary Choice; and he, who has not these for his Motives to Devotion, but stupidly follows the uncertain Authority of Names and Persons, may indeed be a very good Conformist, and pay great Reverence to the Clergy; but will never bring along with him an acceptable Worship to God, or Benefit to his own Soul; which, I think, with humble Submission to the Author, are two Things worth minding, tho' Obedience to Church Authority seems with him to be of much greater Moment.

IF I think I am certainly, or most probably, in the Right, and yet act contrary to what I think so, I am then as certainly in the wrong.

I WISH this Author (whoever he be) had consulted your Grace's Judicious and Christian Defence of the Exposition of the Doctrine of the [III-219] Church of England, in the several Articles expounded by Monsieur De Meaux, as well as your admirable Sermon, intituled, False Prophets, &c. before he had thus treacherously betrayed his native Country, basely misrepresented the Church of England to a Presbyterian Clergy Abroad; and factiously vilified and traduced the best Law which was ever enacted for the Honour and Defence of the Protestant Religion, and of those Principles which have deservedly advanced your Grace to

the most eminent Station in the Church and Kingdom.

In the first of these Books[*] 828.your Grace excellently observes, that

“In Matters of *Faith*, a Man is to *judge for himself*, and the Scriptures are a *clear and sufficient Rule* for him to judge by; and therefore if a Man be evidently *convinced* upon the best Inquiry he can make, that *his particular Belief* is founded upon the *Word of God*, and that of the *Church* is *not*, he is *obliged to support and adhere to his own Belief*, in *Opposition to that of the Church*.” And (as your Grace proceeds in the same Strain of good Sense and Charity) “the Reason of this must be very *evident to all* those who own, *not the Church*, but the *Scriptures*, to be the *ultimate [III-220] Rule, and Guide of their Faith*. For, if this be so, then *individual Persons*, as well as *Churches*, *must judge of their Faith* according to what *they find in Scripture* ---- and, if *they are convinced* that there is a *Disagreement in any Point of Faith*, between the Voice of the *Church* and *that of Scripture*, *they must stick to the latter* rather than the *former*; *they must follow the superior, not inferior Guide* ---- This Method is *most just and reasonable*, and most *agreeable to the Constitution of the Church of England*, which does not *take upon her to be absolute Mistress* of her Members; but allows a higher Place and *Authority to the Guidance of the Holy Scriptures*, than to that of her *own Decisions*.”

Quorsum mihi mea Conscientia, si mihi secundum alienam Conscientiam vivendum est, & moriendum? said *John Gerson*, Chancellor of *Paris*.

“To what purpose have I a *Conscience of my own*, if the *Conscience of another Person* must be *my own Rule of Living and Dying*?

YOUR Grace, in your Sermon, preached at *St. James's, Westminster*, on the Fifth of *November, 1699*. and intituled, *False Prophets tried by their Fruits*; I say, your Grace, ever zealous for *Truth and Liberty*, does there assert, in *Opposition to the Pretensions of designing [III-221] Men, who call themselves the Church*, and have usurped *Authority over the Consciences of Men*; [*]

“That the *Right of examining* what is *proposed to us in Matters of Religion*, is *not any special Privilege of the Pastors, or Governors of the Church*, but is the *common Right and Duty of all Christians whatsoever*.”

AND if, in *Consequence of this Examination*, a Man be *convinced*, “that *his particular Belief is founded upon the Word of God*, and that of the *Church* is *not*,” your Grace has told us, in your *Defence of the Exposition* above cited, “That such a Man is *obliged to support and adhere to his own Belief, in Opposition to that of the Church*.”

HERE we have your Grace's *public Opinion*, that we are *obliged to follow a private nonconforming Conscience to a Conventicle*, whenever we think the *established Church* is in *the wrong*. For, as your Grace further observes, [‡]

“ *Every particular Person is to answer to God for his own Soul, and must examine*, as far as he is able, both *what he believes*, and *how he practises*, and *upon what Grounds* he does both; and not follow *any Assembly*, tho' of never so much *seeming Authority*.”

[‡] 838.“ AND yet (continues your Grace) how confidently do *some Men* tell us, that [III-222] we must believe *them* before *our own Reason* ---- that it is *Schism and Heresy*, and I know not what besides, to *doubt of, or differ with them* in any thing that *they require us to believe*; and that much better were it to *shut our Eyes* altogether, and go on *blindfold* under *their Conduct*, than to follow the *clearest Light* that *Scripture, or Reason, or even Sense* itself, can give us.

[*] 840.“ BUT let *them* (says your Grace) *assume* what *Authority* they please to *themselves*, and raise what *Clamour* they can against us; when all is done, this Conclusion will remain *firm as Heaven*, and clear as any first Principle of *Science*, that, if the Scriptures be, as we all agree that they are, *the Word of God*, and were written for *our Instruction*; then we must follow the Conduct of *them*, and hold fast to the *Truth* which *they* deliver, tho’ not only a *Company of assuming Men*, calling *themselves the Church*, but the *whole World*, should conspire against us.”

In this unanswerable manner has your Grace, long before you came to be at the *Head of the Church*, shewn the *Reasonableness*, and even the *Necessity*, of *Separation*; and *ridiculed* the *stale* and *deceitful* Cry of *Heresy* and *Schism*, which [III-223] being nothing else but a Departure from the Way of thinking *established by Law*, and an Adherence to Truth as it *appears*, and not as it is *represented by human Authority*, are not only the most *harmless*, but the most *commendable* Things in the World. Taking them in *this View*, they are not only true Friends to *Christian* and *Civil Liberty*, but even the *necessary Effects* of it; and nothing but the *fiercest Tyranny* can try to oppress them. I am almost of Opinion, that if it had not been for the *Puritans*, we should have been long since, not only without the *Protestant Religion*, but without *any Religion* at all. It is certain, these old Fellows, as *queer* and fanatical as they were, always opposed the Growth of *Ceremonies*, and *Arbitrary Power*; and, if your *Grace’s Predecessor, Archbishop Laud*, when *many peaceable and industrious Protestant Dissenters* fled from *his Fury* to the *Wild-beasts* and *Rattle-snakes* of *America*, could have sent *all the rest* after them, he might have successfully *Popified* us into *that abject Slavery* and *Uniformity*, which *his good Catholic Christianity* had projected for us.

AND therefore, without *disguising the Matter*, or falling into the senseless *Ditty* of lamenting our Divisions in *Opinion*, I heartily thank God, that we have Dissenters; and I hope [III-224] we shall never be without them. They are *Centries* and *Watchmen* against the *sly Intrigues* and *Conspiracies* of designing *Churchmen*, who, could they but *wheelde*, or *drive all Men* into *one Belief*, would soon grow as *independent* and *uncontrollable* as the *Pope* or the *Czar*. *Bigotry*, *Chains*, and *Cruelty*, are *always*, and in *all Places*, the *certain Issue* of *Uniformity*; which is itself of an *infamous Race*, being begot by the *Craft* of the *Priests* upon the *Ignorance* of the *Laity*. I think that it puts *Uniformity*, and what is generally called *Schism*, in a true Light; that *Tyranny* can never subsist without the *first*, nor *Liberty* without the *latter*.

FOR my Part, I do not know one Dissenter in *England*, but who sincerely believes the Scriptures, and faithfully adheres to *King George*, and *his Government*; and, in Consequence of both, prays to God heartily, and pays his Taxes *cheerfully*. Let the *Church* boast as much of her *conforming Sons*, if she can.

OH ! but *Schism* and *Dissenters* break the *Peace* of the *Church!* --- I never much liked this same Phrase, *the Peace of the Church*, because there is always something very bad tacked to it. For, in short, those who have the Impudence to appropriate that Name (the Church) to themselves, *will never be at Peace* till they have got the *Possession of our Estates*, and the [III-225] *keeping of our Senses*; so that *Religion*, and *Property*, and *Reason*, and *Conscience*, must all go to Ruin, to give *such a Church Peace*. Nothing else will do. *At this present Time*, the *Church*, besides the great *Increase* of her *Revenues*, enjoys all the Advantages which she ever had *since the Reformation*, except that of *worrying Schismatics*; and yet by *daily Experience* we see, and by *this very Letter* we see, that the *High-church Parsons* will not be *at Peace*.

I have thus far spoken my Mind frankly upon the Topic of Schism, emboldened so to do by your *Grace’s great Name and Example*, who have, in many Places and Discourses, taught Mankind not to be alarmed with *Words* and *Bugbears*. Your Grace [*]

“accounts it a *Meanness of Spirit*, to desert the *Truth*, or be afraid to own it, tho’ never so much *clamour’d* against by *ignorant* or *designing Men*;

of which Truth, you say, *every Man must judge for himself*; as I have quoted it already.

THE next Complaint in the *Letter* is, *Of Men who speak perverse Things, and of Pastors, nay Bishops, who pull down the Church, and undermine its Authority, tho’ they have subscrib’d [III-226] to its Doctrine, and therefore ought to contend for it, and even die for it.*

HERE is the most rank, tho’ impotent Malice shewn against the *best Bishop, best Protestant, and best Man*, who ever adorned the *Mitre*; and for the *best Actions* which he was capable of, viz. for his *comprehensive Love* to *Mankind*, and for strenuously supporting *those Principles*, upon which alone the *Protestant Religion*, his *Majesty’s Title*, and the *Liberties of the World*, can be defended; all which intitles *him* in a particular manner to your Grace’s Protection, who have always maintained the same, and *now* worthily enjoy the *Rewards* of your *Virtue*.

BUT it is no wonder, that my[*] *Lord Bishop of Bangor* should suffer under the Rage of a wicked and despairing *Faction*, when even your Grace’s great Post and Character do not protect your *Innocence* from *their* feeble Assaults; otherwise they could never have surmised your Grace to be the Author of so *senseless a Declaration* against one of *your own Order*, and in Contradiction to the whole Tenour of your Life, the Expectations of your Friends, I will not say Engagements to those who had the Honour to prefer you.

[III-227]

YOUR Grace has always, in your excellent Writings, asserted the contrary Principles; and therefore this *foolish Paper* must have come from some foul-mouthed *High-church-man*, and one of that new sort of *Disciplinarians*, who, your Grace, in your Appeal, assures us, are risen up from amongst ourselves; who seem to comply with the Government of the Church, much upon the same account as others do with that of the State, not out of Conscience to their Duty, or any Love they have for it; but because it is the *Established Church*, and they cannot keep their *Preferments* without it. They hate our Constitution, and revile all that stand up in good Earnest for it; but for all that, they resolve to hold fast to it, and so go on to subscribe and rail.

THESE are the *Church-monsters*, or many headed Hydra’s, heroically vanquished by your Grace, and the *Bishop of Banger*, who have ever maintained the *King’s Supremacy*, and the total Dependence of the *Clergy upon the Laity*; and have manfully opposed *Civil* and *Ecclesiastical* Tyranny, in all their Shapes; for which you have been falsely represented as *Judas’s*, *Church Empsons*, and *Church Dudleys*, and what not? And now, my Lord, you having disarmed them of all fair Weapons, they have recourse to the blackest Calumny, and the fiercest Railing.

[III-228]

THE *Letter-writer* comes next to shew *What are the Pleas and Pretensions of these Innovators*, as he calls them; and these, he says, may be learned from a Couple of French Pamphlets lately published, the Authors of which, and their Confederates, whom he has before described, are angry at all Confessions of Faith, and all Subscription of Articles, and are for a general Toleration, which he invidiously calls a general Licence; and he might, with the same Candour, have christened it a general Libertinism.

ONE of the Treatises here referr’d to, is written by Mr. *Durette*, and, I suppose, the other by Mr. *De la Pillioniere*, and both intended to expose the Absurdity, and shew the Ridicule, of broad-brimm’d Hats, and grave Faces, meeting in Synods to reveal the revealed Will of God;

and to make Creeds and Confessions of Faith, and carry them by a Majority of Voices (often of Proxies); which Creeds the Laity are to believe at present, and in all Generations to come.

I VERY much suspect, the virulent Libeller, under the Shelter of opposing these poor *French Refugees*, intends to level his bold Invective against your Grace's Person and Writings, in which you have so openly and significantly declared your Opinion of what is to be expected [III-229] from such Assemblies of Clergymen, who have no other Business there, but to spread Uncharitableness and Dissention amongst the People; and to usurp Wealth, Dominion, and Power, to themselves.

In your Authority of Christian Princes, you excellently well observe, That[*] *nothing more exposed our Christian Profession heretofore, or may more deserve our serious Consideration at this Day, than the Violence, the Passion, the Malice, the Falseness, the Oppression, which reigned in most of the Synods held by Constantine, and after him by the following Emperors, upon occasion of the Arian Controversy. Bitter are the Complaints which we are told that great Emperor made of them: The Barbarians, says he, in a Letter to one of them, for fear of us, worship God; but we mind only what tends to Hatred, to Dissention, and in one Word, to the Destruction of Mankind.*

YOU further observe of Synods in general[†] 858.; *What Good can be expected from the Meeting of Men, when their Passions are let loose, and their Minds disorder'd; when their Interest and Designs, their Friends and Parties, nay, their very Judgments and Principles, lead them different Ways; and they agree in nothing so much, as [III-230] their being very peevish; when their very Reason is deprav'd, and they judge not according to Truth and Evidence, but with respect to Persons, and every one opposes what another of a different Persuasion moves or approves of?*

I HEARTILY concur with your Grace in your Opinion of such Assemblies; and, indeed, I cannot see what Good they can do, were it possible that they were inclined to do it: The common Pretence is, to make Faith to explain Religion, and to teach the Holy Ghost to talk intelligibly. Vain and weak Men! as if the Almighty was not capable of making himself understood without their Help, when he intends to be understood; or, as if a few fallible Mortals, neither *more wise*, or *more honest*, than other Men, were capable of discovering what the Almighty has a mind to conceal; or as if the Divine Goodness would cruelly hide from us what is necessary for us to know.

If the Scriptures are so abstruse, and want so much Explanation, how are they so plain, that he who runs may read? And how can God Almighty (whose Laws they are) be said to will that all Men should come to the Knowledge of the Truth? And how are the great Things of Religion revealed to Babes and Sucklings, and hid from the Learned and Wise?

[III-231]

THE *Romish Clergy* act consistently with themselves, when they pretend to believe, that the Holy Ghost presides in their General Councils, and consequently may be allowed to explain his own Meaning. But it is incorrigible Impudence in Protestant Priests, to assume to talk or write better than the Holy Spirit himself, when they pretend not to his Assistance, nor will accept of any other, if they can help it.

AND therefore I shall conclude this Head, and stop this *Reviler*'s Mouth, by telling him, in your Grace's Words:[*]

“That nothing at this Day preserves us from Ruin and Desolation, but that we (the Clergy) have not Power of ourselves to do *the Church* a Mischief; and *the Prince*, who *sees* too much of *our Temper*, is too gracious to us, and has too great a Concern for the Church's Good, to suffer us to do it.”

THE Letter goes on, and the next Passage is pregnant with *Anger* and *Scurrility*.

“Who (says the Author) that is a *Christian*, can avoid lamenting, that these *ravening Wolves* (I wish he does not mean such Men as *your Grace*, and the *Bishop of Bangor, &c.*) “are not only not driven far away from the Sheepfold, but even received within the Inclosures of the Church, and admitted to her Honours, [III-232] her Offices, and her Government? But so it unfortunately is, while we only strive for the Things of this Life, we wofully neglect those which belong to another. And because *some* hope, by the *Toleration*, and *Advancement* of *such Men*, to acquire the Favour of the People, and thereby maintain themselves in that which they have *only* at Heart, *their Power and Places*; they care not what becomes of the *Church*, or of the *Faith*, or of *Religion*, or indeed of *Jesus Christ* himself, and *his Cause*.”

HERE is a Volley of Rage, and ugly Names, enough to distance *Billingsgate*, and to put all *reasonable* and *moderate Railing* out of Countenance for ever. *How!* thought I, when I read it first, *have we got [*] 867. Bungey here? It savours filthily of the Sermon at St. Paul’ s, and breathes the very same Truth, and good Sense. Pray God the poor Orthodox Lunatic may come off no worse than he did last Time!—I know a galled Back will not agree with his choleric Soul; and I see no Hopes of escaping. Blessed Memory is no more; and within these five Years we have had one rebelling Priest hanged, and another seditious Priest set in the Pillory— —Once more, Heaven preserve poor Bungey!* But while I was in the midst of my Soliloquy, I [III-233] happily remember’d, that the *Letter* was written in *Latin*; and so I cleared myself of my Fears, and the *Doctor* of the *learned Scandal*.

FROM the *Falshood* of the *Assertions*, and the *Bitterness* of the *Style*, I should have suspected *Frier [_(a)] Francis* for the Author; but as it bears no Tincture of his *Spirit* and *Parts*, I am sure none of this dull Dirt is of his flinging.

UPON the Whole, my Lord, I am come to a Persuasion, that this *wretched Author* is some wooden Implement of the *late Reign*; some *Northern Genius*, some *holy Bigot*, and [_(b)] *Bungler of Peace*, made use of by *his Masters*, as a *foul Hand* to *sign away* the *Protestant Religion*, and the *Liberties* of *Europe*.

SUPPOSING this Author to be a Papist, (which is most likely) this *doleful Ditty* of his will run *most naturally*, in the following *Style*, into which I have paraphrased it.

“ WHO, that is a *good Catholic*, can avoid *crossing himself*, and saying his *Pater Noster*, when he sees, that, tho’ the *titular Bishop of Bangor*’s Heterodox Principles are the Barrier of the *great Schism*, call’d the *Reformation*, and are the *Gulph* over which no *rational Englishman* can pass into the *Bosom* of [III-234] *Mother Church*; yet that *Arch-heretic* is not only not *burnt*, but even *sacrilegiously* exercising the Office of a *pretended Bishop*, and *poisoning the People* with the *damnable Doctrines* of *private Judgment*, and *Liberty of Conscience*; and *falsly* asserting, that the *Priests* cannot *forgive Sin*, and *command Heaven*. But so it unfortunately happens, that while we only strive for *Religion* and *Liberty*, we wofully forget those Things which belong to the *Church*; and because *some* hope, by their favouring and protecting of *Protestants*, to gain the good Will of *Protestants*, and thereby gratify their *Schismatical Ambition* of being at the *Head of the Protestant Interest*, they care not what becomes of his *Holiness the Pope*, nor of *Tradition*, the *Real Presence*, nor indeed of *Transubstantiation* itself.”

YOUR Grace, my Lord, will perceive how naturally this silly *Declamation*, full of Froth, and empty of Reasoning, runs into Ridicule. And, in short, there is no other way of answering it, but by giving it a Turn of this Sort; for it is all Noise and Scolding, it fixes upon no certain Point, nor does it state or confute any particular Error.

OUR Author's concluding Words are remarkable ones. Says he,

“You will pardon [III-235] me, Sir, that, to gratify a just Sorrow, I thus express my Indignation, with more *Bitterness* than usual, against *these Enemies* of our Religion. I should accuse myself of betraying the Faith, did I not on every Occasion *denounce Damnation* against *these Heretics*.”

HERE is a true Image of a *priestly Spirit*, destitute of all *Humanity*, and the *Fear of God*, and fraught with *Fire and Brimstone*, which he scatters so freely among the Sons of Men. 'Tis (I had almost said) well, that the *more merciful Devils* have the Custody of these flaming Materials. Dreadful! that honest Men, and sincere Christians, should be wantonly consigned over to *Eternal Flames*, for adhering to the *Truth*, or what appears to them to be so, which is all that is required of them! This, in short, is the Case — — — They *please God*, and make the Parsons *mad*.

YOUR Grace perceives, and, no doubt, with Horror, the *execrable Genius* and *Malice* of this Author, who, by the assuming Style of his *Cursing of Christians*, seems willing to be thought a *Firebrand of Authority*, and an *Atheist of Power*. What a Blessing it is to this Church and Nation, that such a *ravening Wolf* does not fill your *Lordship's Chair*!

Gratulor huic Terræ — — —

[III-236]

I WISH that this *Curser* would be instructed by your Lordship's excellent Words, particularly where you so warmly, so christianly, recommended a *mutual Charity*, which alone; you say, *can secure us amidst all our Errors*; and which, with an Agreement in what is most necessary, will, to the *Honest and Sincere*, be sufficient for our *eternal Security*. This, your Grace adds, *should make us more sparing in our Anathema's*, and more *zealous in our Prayers for one another*. With much more excellent Advice to the same Purpose, your Grace also, in your excellent Sermon printed in 89, has this Remarkable and Christian Passage:

“Who am I, that should dare to pronounce a Sentence of Reprobation against any one, in whom there will appear all the other Characters of an humble, upright, sincere Christian, only because he is not so wise, and it may be, wiser than I am, and sees further than I do, and therefore is not exactly of my Opinion in every thing?”

To give a Man to the *Devil*, is an odd way of keeping him from the *Devil*; which I ignorantly imagined was the Profession and Duty of every Clergyman.

I HAVE thus, my Lord, taken to Pieces this venomous Author, and shewn his Spirit. He has reviled, *beyond Sea*, one whom he [III-237] dares not attack, at home: And he *sculks* and *scolds* in *Switzerland*, because his *base Spirit* must breathe *somewhere*.

BUT, praised be Almighty God! however he may gratify himself by reviling *other Bishops*, the Nation is blessed in your *Grace* with a *Metropolitan* of such *Uniformity in Life and Principles*, as must ever baffle *Calumny*, and confound the *Malice* of *his* and the *Church's Enemies*; and who will never give Occasion to such a Story as is told of a *Western Bishop* at the *Revolution*, who fled from the *Protestant Religion*, and the *Prince of Orange* at *Exeter*, to *King James* and *Father Peters* at *London*, and was made an *Archbishop* for his *Loyalty* and *Passive Obedience*. But, as he was going Northward to take Possession of his new Dignity, he bethought himself, that the Bible was *better*, and *like to get the better* of his *Holiness* and *Popery*; and so he declared for the *Prince*, and a *Free Parliament*, upon the Road.

I HAVE the Honour to be, with profound Veneration,

My Lord,

Your Grace's most dutiful Son,

And most obedient, humble Servant.

*An Examination of the Facts and Reasonings in the Lord Bishop of
CHICHESTER 's Sermon, preached before the House of Lords, on the 30 th of
Jan. 1731. Humbly addressed to His Lordship.* ↵

My LORD,

I HAVE read some very extraordinary Sermons on this same Occasion, and heard of many more such; but considering the Place, and the Preacher, I believe there have been found few more notable, than that preached lately by your Lordship.

In your Sermon upon *Church Authority*, you drew so much Trouble upon yourself, by your unwearied Positions, nowise favoured by [III-239] Scripture, and successfully exposed by a Brother Prelate, (famous for his Love and Defence of Truth, however unfashionable and disgusting) that I hoped you would have proved more circumspect in any Labours of yours, that were to be afterwards presented to the World. I am therefore sorry, that you should again lay yourself open; and whilst you are scattering your public Rebukes, should deserve one yourself.

I SHOULD indeed have still thought you too wise and moderate, to be capable of reviving old Heats and Partialities, had you not in Fact done it: Nor else could I have imagined, that you would again venture into the World another Performance so very loose and exceptionable, that even your Friends condemn it, and think it ill-judged, and unfair.

I KNOW nothing more repugnant to the Spirit of the Gospel, than for one professing to preach it, to inlist himself a Champion of a Party, indeed almost of any Party; since most Parties are too visibly heated and influenced by Motives altogether worldly, passionate, and human; nor so much concerned what serves the Interest of Truth, as what serves the Interest of Faction; and are generally Foes to Truth, where Truth interferes with them. Surely 'tis unworthy of a Preacher of the Gospel, [III-240] to fence with or against Sounds, to equivocate, and lay false Colours, to discover Faults on one Side only, to invent Merit on the other, and to darken, or disguise, or suppress Facts; instead of informing, to mislead; and to heighten popular Animosities, instead of calming them. All this is the Work, not of a Preacher, whose Province is Truth and Peace; but of an Apologist, who hides or adulterates the Truth; of an Inflamer, who would create Rage and Strife.

WHETHER such wicked Use hath not been made of this same Anniversary, Experience too sadly tells; and whether your Lordship hath made a right Use of it; whether you have been utterly unmoved by the Spirit of Party, and of your Order, and have censured without Prejudice or Partiality, I leave to your own Conscience, and the Consideration of our Readers.

YOUR Lordship begins with the Use which is to be made of History, and particularly of the impious Fact then to be commemorated. But I doubt, in making use of that Fact, you are too narrow, and have omitted one of the principal Uses (whether in Tenderness to the Memory of that Prince, or in mistaken Court to other Princes); namely, what bitter Effects he felt from his Thirst of unbounded Power; [III-241] that in violating his Duty, he brought Misery upon himself; that if he had observed the Laws, and protected the Rights of his People, his People, and the Laws, would have protected him: But that by following evil Counsels, and his own arbitrary Will, whilst he was misguided by flattering and ambitious Bishops, and oppressed his Lay Subjects, he lost the Hearts and Confidence of his People; and by pursuing lawless Measures, taught his Enemies to destroy him against Law.

ANOTHER obvious Use to be made of this Fact, omitted likewise by your Lordship, is, thence to warn Princes against being seduced by pious Flattery, or any Flattery; nor to suffer Sycophants, especially religious Sycophants, the most dangerous of all others, to inspire them with evil Passions, or to sooth such Passions as they already have. King *Charles* the First had raised the Power of the Church, even beyond his own; and the Churchmen openly asserted their Power to be independent and unaccountable; independent even of the Crown, though they had sworn the contrary; and in Return for his suffering them to usurp upon him, they encouraged and prompted him to usurp upon the Kingdom. Thus the two lawless Powers were to support and recompense each other. It was indeed a [III-242] plain, a wicked Bargain struck between the Crown and the Mitre; both bent to enslave these Nations, and to divide Shares in the common Oppression. For the Clergy are not wont to serve either God, or the King, for Nought; and though they be spiritual Men, whose only Business is to guide us to the other World, they are seldom satisfied with a small Part of this, which they are always teaching others to renounce. It was well said by a Reverend Doctor, to an Assembly of Doctors: "If you would teach the Laity to condemn the World, shew them the Way, by condemning it first yourselves."

Is not this a true Account? Had not the King and the Clergy, by breaking all Bounds, and by invading the Privileges and Properties of all Men, drawn down a general Odium upon both Crown and Mitre? And has your Lordship fully, or at all, opened and owned this Matter? Have you warned Princes and Churchmen against aspiring to more Power or Wealth, than the Constitution has given them; against the Iniquity and Infamy of violating their Trust, a Trust so important and sacred? Have you warned them against the Consequence, and the Curse, of Ambition and Violence?

YOUR Lordship repeats the Words of your Text, to *fear the Lord and the King, and not* [III-243] *to meddle with them that are given to Change*; and you add, that "had our Forefathers followed this Advice, the horrid Fact we this Day lament, had not been committed." My Lord, I say, if that Prince, and the Churchmen then had followed this Advice, that horrid Fact never had been committed. Who were addicted to Change? Was it the King and Churchmen? Or was it the People? Not the People surely, who seem to have been intirely contented with the Form of Government, and not to have had a Thought of another, till they were daily more and more incensed by the merciless Oppressions of the Court and the Bishops. My Lord *Clarendon* owns the good Temper and Inclinations of the People, which were so remarkably peaceable, that thence, he says, many wondered the more at the prodigious Change which afterwards happened; and seems to lay the Blame of all upon Archbishop *Laud*.

THE Question therefore is, Who were the Aggressors? Who began Enormities? Who defied and overturned the Law? Was it the People? No. It was the Court and the Clergy, and both rioted in lawless Rule for a long Course of Years. After this Change, this alarming Change, where all Law and Security were swallowed up, it was natural for other [III-244] Changes to follow; and when once a general War was begun, no Change, nor any Excess, was to be wondered at. Had not the King disregarded, and even overthrown Law, he needed not have been a Martyr to public Resentment, nor even to a particular Faction. Neither can I comprehend what you mean, when towards the End of your Sermon you say, "That the Crown is now limited by Law:" as if it had not been so then.

I AGREE with your Lordship, that "the like can never happen again, if Posterity will have the Wisdom to take Warning from this Example." But to condemn indiscriminately all that was done, especially at first, against the King, and indiscriminately to extol his Character and Reign, is the ready Way to encourage the like to happen over and over. It is plain that his Son was thus encouraged, and thus came to suffer as well as his Father; nor can I say, that the Fate of the Son was less miserable than that of the Father, but rather to any Man of Spirit

more miserable. I am moreover very inclinable to fear, that were Times to change once more, we should hear higher Encomiums upon the Martyrdom of *Eighty-eight*, than upon that of *Forty-eight*, (if that be possible) and from the same Men too. We should then be told what Concessions the [III-245] Martyr King *James* made, and how sincere he was in them; be told how criminal they were who would not accept them; though 'tis manifest he made none with any the least Intention to keep them. Nay, 'tis probable we should be told too, That he had a divine Right to do what he pleased, and none had a Right to controul him, or to expect any Concessions at all from him; and that all which has been done since, has been only successful Rebellion. For what has been too wicked, or too mad, to be said upon both these Occasions already, and upon both these Kings?

THAT his Father was very sincere, your Lordship takes upon you to determine roundly: Though the Violation, the repeated and continual Violation, of his Coronation Oath; his passing the Bill of Rights, and owning all these Rights to be legal and just, and thence confessing, that he had broken them all; nay, his violating that very Bill in all its Parts, almost as soon as he had passed it, were but ill Marks of a Heart very upright and sincere. Of all these Excesses he was guilty, at a Time when his Parliament were well disposed for the honourable Support of his Government, and free from any Design to distress it, much less to alter it; nay, were ready to grant him very noble Supplies, if he would but have suffered [III-246] Justice to be done upon public Traytors, the infamous Instruments of illegal Power, and of mutual Distrust between him and his People.

WHILST I am upon this Head, I would take Notice, that he actually committed, or attempted to commit, all the Enormities, all the Acts of Usurpation, committed by the late King *James*; levied Money against Law, levied Forces, and obliged his Subjects to maintain them, against Law; raised a Body of Foreign Soldiers to destroy the Law, and enslave his People at once; dispensed with all the Laws; filled the Prisons with illustrious Patriots, who defended the Law, and themselves by the Law; encouraged and rewarded Hireling Doctors to maintain, that his Will was above Law, nay itself the highest Law, and binding upon the Consciences of his Subjects, on Pain of eternal Damnation; and that such as resisted his lawless Will, resisted God, and were guilty of Impiety and Rebellion. He robbed Cities of their Charters, the Public of its Money and Liberty, and treated his Free-born Subjects as Slaves born only to obey him.

It is said, that he was not a *Papist*: Perhaps he was not, that is, not a Subject to the Pope of *Rome*; but he was bent upon setting up a Hierarchy in *England*, resembling that of *Rome* in all its Power and Terrors. Nor does it [III-247] avail, if Men are to be persecuted and oppressed for their Conscience, whether they suffer from the Tyranny of a *Hildebrand*, a *Luther*, or a *Laud*. All persecuting Religions are alike terrible to those who alike hate or dread all persecuting Religions. It is certain, that of all the Diffenters, none but the *Papists* had any Mercy shewn them, and these were in high Favour.

It is also certain, that for all these Exorbitances he underwent much Affliction, and a severe Lot afterwards, from Men too, who had no Sort of Right to inflict it. But they did by Power, as he once had done, used it wantonly, and without Mercy or Law. This I candidly own: But your Lordship, who strongly represent his Fate, says nothing of his Crimes; and surely Oppression and Usurpation are great ones, and big with all Crimes: Crimes of which that unhappy Prince seems not to have had a true Sense, if any; nor is his Repentance apparent, though God knows he had abundant Cause for it. Here therefore is a powerful Objection against his Sincerity; since it does not appear, that he was struck with any Sense of his Guilt. Can a Man be said to own his Fault, who justifies himself, and seems conscious of his Innocence?

[III-248]

It would have been but fair in your Lordship, to have shewn his Errors and evil Doings, as well as his Sufferings. The former you scarcely touch, and therefore are an Advocate, not an Instructor.

In your second Paragraph there is a doctrinal Passage, which seems to deserve some Attention: You tell us, *to fear the Lord*, means, to us Christians, “To believe and practise the Doctrines and Duties taught by Christ in the Scriptures, or by his Ministers, agreeably thereto”. I thought it had been enough to believe and practise them as taught by him; that all farther Authority was needless; and that submitting to the Deductions of the Clergy from thence, or to their Paraphrases upon these, was no Part of our Duty. If such Deductions or Explanations appear to us true and rational, we must believe them, though they came from a Layman; if we think them false or partial, will your Lordship say, that we are to believe them, because they come from the Clergy?

I BEG your Pardon, my Lord, if I mistake your Meaning. But in your Words there seems to lurk a sort of latent Claim of Right in the Clergy to interpret the Scriptures authoritatively. If you mean so, nothing is more dangerous, or untrue: If you mean no such thing, [III-249] why do you add, *or by his Ministers, agreeably thereto*? Who are to judge of this Agreeableness? If their Hearers, if the Laity, be the Judges, then such Words were needlessly added, and stand for nothing; and there is an End of all Church Authority, and of any Pretence to it. But if the Clergy be both to interpret, and to judge for others, then there is an End of all Liberty, of all Judgment and Conscience amongst Men, and the Clergy are all so many Popes, infallible and irresistible; which I presume your Lordship will not say; and shall be glad to hear you talk clearly upon this Subject, of itself clear enough, but often darkened and wrested by Design.

YOUR Lordship tells us, (p. 6.) That

“ *to fear the King*, is to obey him— — —that is, in a limited and legal Government, to observe the Laws— —and that this is the certain Rule of Obedience, which leaves all Men without Excuse, who pretend Ignorance.”

This is true. But did not this very Rule leave King *Charles* I. also without Excuse? For, if he were to be exempted from the Rule, your just Distinction of *a limited and legal Government* had been absurd. He therefore, having the Laws for his Guides, finned against Knowledge: Nor, had he been ignorant, would it have excused him; since it [III-250] was his Duty to inform himself. Nor is my Lord *Clarendon* ’s Plea of his Ignorance, a good Plea. Besides, I think the King declared at his Trial, that he understood Law as well as most private Gentlemen in *England*.

YOUR Lordship, repeating again the Words of your Text, tells us, that

“we are advised by it not to mix, or familiarly converse, with such *as are given to Change*, lest we be seduced by them to Idolatry,”

&c. An Advice intirely applicable to that King, though your Lordship makes no such Application. It was from him, and his evil Counsellors, the Change began. Why did he converse with such? Why did he nourish and employ them? Why was he governed by them? Why did he listen to them more than to the Voice of his Duty, and of the Laws? Had not his *Popish* Queen, weak and bigotted as she was, prodigious Influence over him? Had he not *Popish* Ministers of State, *Popish* Counsellors? And had he not about him hot-headed and arbitrary Bishops, continually instigating him to Innovations? So that, had he observed this, or any sober Advice, he must have banished all the Papists from his Court, and all other Parasites, Ecclesiastical and Civil.

YOUR Lordship well observes, That one of the best Preservatives against Vices of all [III-251] kinds, is to avoid bad Company; for that there is a strange Contagion in ill Example. But you have not told us how much King *Charles* I. was corrupted and misled by bad Company, by arbitrary Ministers, and flattering Prelates. Very true likewise is what you say, that “there is a specious Outside in every Vice, which flatters our Senses, and is but too agreeable to one or other of our Passions.” But the Application of this Truth to that Prince is again forgot. Were not the Principles of lawless Rule dressed up to him in very alluring Colours, and was he not intirely misled by them?

EVERY Vice, you say, has its Party, who dress it up in the most attracting Colours, and represent its opposite Virtue to the greatest Disadvantage: You add, that Vice, in their Account of it, is *sociable and good-natured; ’tis Manliness, Good-breeding, Pleasure, and Liberty*. Now, my Lord, (after I have assured your Lordship, that I never heard any of my Acquaintance make any such Encomiums upon Vice) give me Leave to ask, what is a more horrid, a more complicated Vice, than lawless Power; than abrogating the Laws, and robbing Nations of their Liberty and Rights? Did not King *Charles* do this? Was not violent Power his Darling? Was he not [III-252] bewitched with the wicked Doctrines that support it? Were not these Doctrines recommended in the most pleasing Lights, and even in the Name of the Lord? Was it not become the common Theme of the Pulpit, especially in the King’s Pulpit, to represent Servitude as Duty, and Tyranny as the Ordinance of God?

THESE Observations, my Lord, fell naturally in your Way: and why you made them not, you can best tell. But, to apply to the King what your Lordship applies to Vice: He found in the End, that all such Representations in favour of unlawful Power, were mere Delusion; that the Pleasures he was flattered with, were false Pleasures; sweet indeed in the Mouth, but all Bitterness within; that no two Things are at a wider Distance, than lawful Power, and Power usurped; that Submission to the Laws is the most perfect Freedom; and that those Flatterers and Preachers, who seduced him from his Oath and his Duty, whilst they promised him Monarchy without Controul, were themselves aiming at uncontrouled Power over the Monarch.

THUS they dazzled him with the Lustre of Power, and he blindly pursued it; till, by grasping at too much, he risqued, and at last lost, the Whole.

[III-253]

WHAT you say further of Men given to Change, *page 7*. is too general, and may serve for any Party, and any Time; but may be very justly applied to that King, and his Counsellors; as,

“That they acted from Motives of Avarice or Ambition, from Disappointment or Revenge, or to mend a bad Fortune — —from Vanity and Self-conceit, from a Levity and Fickleness of Temper, from a scheming Head, and a Love of innovating in Religion and Government for innovating-sake, &c.”

WHAT follows is true in some measure, but very loose and declamatory.

“If, for Example, some Men are against whatever is uppermost, and seem to dislike what is established, merely because it is so;”

are there not others, who know no other Reason for liking what is established, but purely because it is established? Are there not some who have particular and large Interest and Advantages in being for the Establishment; and must seem either to like the Thing, or lose the Pay? And will they not always have something very plausible to urge in Favour and Defence of their Gain?

“What Religion, you ask, what Establishment of Religion, what Church in any Country, is so perfect, as not to leave room [III-254] for finding Fault?”

Give me leave to say, my Lord, that the less room there is, the better it is; and that if there be any Faults, they ought rather to be mended than defended. This, I presume, your Lordship will allow; and I should likewise be obliged, if you would please to inform me, whether the Clergy have ever been remarkable for mending their own Faults, or for thanking others for mending them, or even suffering them to do it. I doubt it will be found, that where-ever Religion has been defaced or debauched, it was the Clergy who did it; that where-ever Religion has been reformed, it was the Laity that reformed it.

“In the Opinion of religious Men, (says Sir *Francis Bacon*) the Church never wants reforming: As if Castles and Houses might want repair, but Chapels and Churches never do.”

The Use I would make of this is, that we cannot always well depend upon the Word of the Clergy, whether the established Church, anywhere, be perfect or defective, or how far she is so.

YOUR Lordship goes on to ask, What Forms of

“Words so complete and unexceptionable; what Discipline so well framed, or so well executed; what System of Faith and Doctrine so wisely drawn up; where a [III-255] national Clergy so well qualified for Virtue and Learning, so pious, so prudent in the Discharge of their Offices, as to leave no Place for Exceptions, for Objections, for Scruples, for Censure, for Reproach?”

I doubt, no-where: And if Churchmen and Churches be thus imperfect, thus fallible and frail, every Man must be left at perfect Liberty to leave them wholly, or to join with them in part, as to himself seems most rational and fitting: Every Man ought to be free to discourse or write concerning these Churches and Churchmen, whatever he judges fit; to urge his Objections, to defend his own different Opinions, if he has any; and to propose Amendments where he thinks he sees Faults. To deprive him of this Liberty, would be unjust and unchristian; since his conforming against Inclination is Hypocrisy; and surely the Clergy would not commit such a heinous Sin, as to make or encourage Hypocrites: And if he conform by Choice, he wants no other Motive.

WHAT therefore can be said for Archbishop *Laud*, and the Clergy of that Time, who plagued and persecuted all Men (but the Papists) for not submitting blindly to their arbitrary and selfish Injunctions, as to so many Institutions? Were not they the Men given [III-256] to Change, to a Change fatal to Conscience, and civil Liberty? And is not this the natural Result of blending Power unnaturally with Religion, which resides wholly in the Soul, is the Effect only of Conviction, and can never be subject to Force? Nor was it the only Time when Religion was banished, to make room for the Hierarchy.

It is very true what your Lordship says, that no Forms of Words, no Systems, can please all Men. This you ascribe to the Love of Change. My Lord, I will give you a Reason worth a Thousand of yours. In Matters of Religion, all Men have a Right to judge for themselves; and as the Variation and Difference, in the Opinion of Men, is endless and infinite, the Sentiments of some Men can never be the Sentiments of all Men; and 'tis notable Folly to aim at fixing a general Standard of Thinking, and notable Wickedness and Tyranny to force Men to submit to it. Do they who compose such Systems and Forms, maintain that they are all derived from the Word of God, and virtually contained in it? Then he who believes the Word of God, believes these; and this would be sufficient, if the Composers meant no more. The Truth is, (and your Lordship knows it well) that their Meaning has too often been to subject [III-257]

Men not to Christ's Authority, but to their own.

CAN no Systems, no Forms, please all Men? What then is to be done? Even to leave all Men at full Liberty to take them, or to reject them. Knows your Lordship a better, or indeed any other Christian Rule? We all know, that Christian Rules, and Ecclesiastical Rules, have often been very different, in Truth, very opposite things. Neither is your Reasoning just, when you arraign the People, especially the Bulk of the People, with being addicted to Change in matters of Religion. I believe the Truth is on the other Side; and that they are rather apt to be persevering and obstinate, as in all their Habits, so particularly in their religious Habits, be the same right or wrong; as the Clergy themselves, when such Habits do not please them, are apt to contend. They therefore who would force or persuade the People into new Forms, or out of their old Forms, are the Men given to Change. Pray, who are they that have every-where, or any-where, introduced Changes and Adulterations in Religion? Who are they, who in too many Countries have converted Religion into a Monster? Not the People, 'tis well known; your Lordship knows it well. At one Time, and indeed for several Ages, [III-258] Christianity was almost lost in the World; lost in the gross Forgeries and Impostures of the Priests: Or if it was found any-where, it was chiefly found amongst the *Albigenses* and *Waldenses*, who had no Priests at all, at least none pampered with Wealth, and intoxicated with Power. Let others declare, whether, if our Clergy do less Harm, than in Popish Countries the Clergy do, and observe some Circumspection, such their Behaviour and Forbearance be owing to our Constitution, to the Spirit of the Legislature, or to their own Spirit. What Changes, what dangerous and ridiculous Changes, were made, or attempted, by *Laud* and his Brethren, I shall take notice by-and-by.

As to Forms and Ceremonies, 'tis certain, that if they are about Things indifferent, 'tis a Shame to argue in their Defence with such Men as think them sinful, and consequently not indifferent. 'Tis as certain, that whatever is not really a Part of Religion, ought to be kept out of the Church; not only for fear of Offence, though even this be a good Reason; but for fear of creating Superstition in the common People, who will for ever take whatever is joined to Religion, to be Part of Religion, though declared over and over again, to be matter of Indifference. To multiply [III-259] therefore such Causes of Superstition, is sinful and scandalous, where-ever 'tis done; and *Laud* and his Adherents were continually doing it, to the seducing of many, and to the disgusting of more. Are there no Forms of Words, no Systems, that can please all Men? Surely there are not: And this, perhaps, is an unanswerable Reason against imposing such Forms and Systems upon Men. To impose them upon such as dislike them, is notorious Tyranny, and altogether antichristian.

WERE I to pursue this Subject, it would lead me into many Reflections. Give me just leave to say, that where there is the least Grimace, and Pomp, and human Contrivances, in Religion, especially in a Country of much Light and Liberty, like ours, there the fewest Handles are given for upbraiding or ridiculing the Clergy, who can expect no other whilst such Handles subsist. I might add, that the surest way to preserve and perpetuate the Power of Religion, is to restore Religion to its original Simplicity. But even to gain this great and valuable End, I am for no Violence, no sudden Changes, no altering Foundations, or shaking the Constitution, or for changing the Frame of the Church, or for withdrawing her Revenue. Nor do I know any such terrible Men as your Lordship suggests to be [III-260] bent upon any such Change. And considering that I think the Pretender's Game to be altogether desperate, I cannot foresee any Change so fatal as that which the vast Increase of the Clergy's Property, must one Day, if it go on, certainly make. This I think demonstrable from Figures. I am not sure, that this is a Change which troubles or alarms your Lordship.—You will not surely reply, that there are many Clergymen, and their Livings very poor. My Lord, there are also many excessively rich. Why does not the wealthy Brother support the poor? The Truth is, they must be all excessively rich, and the Laity excessively poor, if the Scheme goes on

for a Course of Years. Will not this be a Change, a terrible Change, in the Constitution? And who are the Men given to such a Change?

In *page 8.* you tell us of the Force of Enthusiasm, how easily Enthusiasts are seduced, how apt to think their Cause

“the Cause of God, which allows no Delays, admits of no Restraints. Times and Places, and Persons and Things, must give way to what the Enthusiast calls the Work of God, &c.”

All this is very true; and what then? Were there no Enthusiasts at that Time, or since, but the Sectaries? Your Lordship must know better; and it had been but fair to have owned [III-261] it. Have not many Churchmen been notable Enthusiasts, possessed with very foolish, and very false Notions, which they themselves took to be so many divine Truths? Indeed, every hot-headed Man, who takes the Heat in his Head to be Religion, is an Enthusiast: Nor did I ever know any Party in Religion, established, or not established, but what had Enthusiasts among them; and I have known as vehement Enthusiasts in our own Church, as in any. Whoever places Sanctity in Names and Trifles, is an Enthusiast: Whoever reverences Sounds, or Postures, or Colours, is one: Whoever thinks that worldly Power is necessary to Religion, is one: Whoever would hurt another for any religious Opinion, is one, let him call that Opinion by as odious Names as he pleases, even *Heresy* or *Schism*, or even *Deism*: Whoever applies the Judgments of God to others, that is, calls their Misfortunes by the Name of divine Judgments, is an arrant Enthusiast, if he be in earnest; and worse, if he be not. In short, whoever builds upon Religion any Superstructure of his own, and then contends for it as a real Part of Religion, is an Enthusiast; as is he who sees Holiness in Things inanimate and irrational, or thinks that Holiness can be conveyed into such, whether the same be Earth, or Walls, or Garments, or Appellations.

[III-262]

BUT I hope I need not to prove to your Lordship, that there have been Madmen, that is, Enthusiasts, of the Church, and for the Church, in all Times. No Man knows it better than you. Pray what was Archbishop *Laud*, Bishop *Cosins*, and the other Innovators and Persecutors of this very Time, about which you now preach? If they were not Enthusiasts, fierce and raving Enthusiasts, they were much worse; and the best Apology that can be made for them is, that they were stark-mad. Did they not contend, that all their Forms, and religious Curiosities, with all their various Ecclesiastical Heraldry, were of divine Right, even their Deans and Chapters, even their Chancellors, Archdeacons, and even their miserable Bishops-Courts? And did not they make Men swear to this? Did they not frame Oaths with an *& cætera*, that no Man might have a Possibility of not being perjured? Did they not make a Canon, obliging all the Clergy of *Scotland* to swear to a Liturgy which was not then made, nor till a Year afterwards?

THESE are Changes, which, in your Harangue against Men given to Change, you take no notice of; though to me they seem terrible and impious Changes. These are Enthusiasts, whom you have not mentioned, nor seem to have meant. These were Enthusiasts [III-263] with Power, formidable Enthusiasts. “To serve God, they trampled upon all the Laws of God and Man;” to use your Lordship’s Words: And I agree with your Lordship, That it is very afflicting (I cannot say with you, that ’tis very surprising; for ’tis too common)

“to see what a Frenzy of Enthusiasm poor ignorant Men have been worked up to, by specious Pretences to a purer Religion, or a more exalted Devotion, through a blind Zeal to advance what they call the Kingdom of Christ.”

It is indeed afflicting, to see Men such ready Dupes to Delusion and Deluders. Just such Enthusiasm have we all seen, just such Frenzy raised, by a blind Zeal for the *Church*; and 'tis this very Zeal, blind indeed, which has more than once filled above half the Nation with religious Fury. The very Day, my Lord, which you celebrate by this Sermon, has been abused to raise that Fury, abused to revive and perpetuate religious Rage and Strife. I wish that the Abuse were at an End. I must again use your Lordship's Words, to say, That

“what makes this the more afflicting is, that they are worked up to this Madness by Men who do not believe themselves a Word of what they say, by Men who are themselves the vilest Hypocrites, void of all true Virtue and Religion.”

[III-264]

YOUR Lordship proceeds, and says, That

“when such Men cannot ruin the established Religion this way, then they set up for zealous Assertors of the Rights of Subjects in religious Matters.”

The asserting the Right of the Subject in religious Matters, is, I hope, no Mark of Enthusiasm, nor infers that he who does so, aims at misleading Enthusiasts. This I know well, that when *Laud*, and his Followers then and since, drove at aggrandizing themselves, at settling strict and universal Uniformity, that is to say, Church Tyranny, they set up for zealous Assertors of the Rights of the Crown, and gave it such Rights as it never had, at the Expence of the Law, and even of the Word of God, upon which they always fathered all their most impious Inventions. Their Flattery to the Crown was monstrously insidious and impudent: For, whilst they freely complimented it with the Liberty and Property of the Laity, they were themselves daily undermining it, and robbing it of its most valuable Prerogatives and Strength.

THIS Observation has likewise escaped your Lordship, though it was so very obvious. If Fault was then found with the Teachers of Religion, it was not because they taught, but for what they taught, which God knows was faulty [III-265] and wicked enough. What you say about crying up the Law of Nature, (which, by the way, our Saviour never cried down) and about Infidelity, is not applicable to those Times, which claim a very different Character; and I fancy your Lordship means the Times present; how justly, I shall consider by-and-by, as also how Men contract a Dislike to the Church and Churchmen. Let me here just humbly represent, that throwing at Random the Charge of Infidelity, has ever been a Practice too common with those of your Cloth; and such of them as have been the loudest in that Charge, were generally the warmest Advocates for Priestcraft. For, that there has been and is Priestcraft in the World, your Lordship, I presume, will not deny.

THERE is another Proposition of yours quite too general, and, I doubt, not true;

“That Men who are of a restless, turbulent, factious Temper, with respect to Government, are always ready to join in their Complaints against the Religion established, and in their Endeavours to seduce Men from it.”

Your Lordship, more zealous than cautious in asserting just what serves your present Purpose, forgets that for these forty Years, ever since the *Revolution*, most of those who were the most restless, the most turbulent, the [III-266] most factious against the Government, have been noted for rigid Churchmanship, distinguished by their Attempts to advance the Power and Interest of the Church. Such were King *William*'s greatest Enemies, such the late King's, and such the present King's. Were not the Members of the famous *French* League all Zealots to Popery? So far were they from seducing Men from it, that they destroyed all who

were not for it. Yet that League was a terrible Faction combined against that Government, all strictly of the established Church, yet bent against the established Government; and they pursued their wicked Ends, not by endeavouring to ruin, but to advance and aggrandize, the established Church.

WHETHER “the greatest Strength of the Government ever did, and ever will, lie in the Fidelity and Affection of the Members of the established Church,” as your Lordship roundly affirms, I shall now a little consider: And first allow me to say, that this is oddly affirmed. It is no more than affirming, that as most of the Nation are Members of the established Church, they will be the strongest Support of the Government, as long as they are faithful and affectionate to the Government. My Lord, have they always been [III-267] so? Did the late King find them so? And did he not find, does not his present Majesty find, that the Dissenters have been universally so? My Lord, pardon me for saying, that it is a wild Assertion, that Monarchy cannot stand without the Church. What Proof is there of this, but that they once fell together? and it was the Church that in Effect pulled down the Monarchy. This surely is a bad Argument, that the Monarchy is altogether supported by the Church. Does not our Monarchy subsist in *North-Britain*, where Presbytery is established? And do not the Presbyterians there, as they and other Dissenters do here, heartily adhere to our civil Government; when almost all the Churchmen there, and too many of them here, have been zealous to destroy it?

If Presbyterians formerly, and other Dissenters, opposed the Crown, it was evidently because the Crown, miscounselled by the Bishops, oppressed them, cruelly oppressed them; and Oppression will make a wise Man mad. When they were not oppressed, they never resisted; and have ever been steady to every Administration that protected them. Can your Lordship say the same of Churchmen? Have not Churchmen rebelled, without Provocation, or Oppression, or any ill Usage, merely [III-268] from an intemperate Spirit of Pride and Power? The endless Enterprizes of Prelates against the Crown make a great Part of our History: And even long since the *Reformation*, the wise, candid, and famous Father *Paul* expresses great Fear for the Crown of *England* from the Power and Claims of the Bishops: He says, “He sees the Horse bridled and saddled, and just ready to be mounted by his old Rider.” Even in the pious Reign, about which you preach, the Supremacy of the Crown was boldly denied by the Clergy; and Archbishop *Laud* had intimidated the Judges from granting Prohibitions, though the Judges could not, without Perjury, refuse such Prohibitions. What Regard, thinks your Lordship, had this great Prelate to Conscience, and consequently to the Salvation of Souls, or even to the Monarchy? What Regard had the Judges, even in this Instance, to their Oath and Duty? those very Judges, of whom you speak so well, nay so kindly?

How is it, my Lord, that the Church only can support the Government? Is it by her Doctrines of Obedience? All our Dissenters profess the same Doctrines to Princes that protect them; and have never yet falsified their Professions. Can Churchmen boast as much? These have indeed infatuated some of [III-269] our Princes with extravagant Notions of Power and Obedience. But did they ever stand the Trial themselves? No; none ever resisted more fiercely; sometimes without one Blow, or any just Offence given them. These mad Doctrines are therefore not to be relied on: If they had, King *James II.* who weakly trusted to them, might have died in his Throne: And in paying a just and legal Obedience, all Sects amongst us concur. Nor will any Prince, who is not as weak as King *James*, and, like him, deluded by Priests, trust to any other Obedience. Were the Dissenters once against the King? I have given the Reason. Nor does it from thence follow, that they are not hearty Friends to the Government. The Churchmen were once against Parliaments; is therefore the Church to be charged with being against the Government?

I USE the Word *Church* in the Sense which you and all the Clergy use it; a Sense which has prevailed through Custom, but is indeed impertinent and unjust. For your Lordship knows, that the Word *Church* is never used, either in the Old or New Testament, to mean the Bishops or Priests alone; but generally intends the whole Assembly of the Faithful, and often means the People alone without the Priest or Minister. But the Clergy have everywhere [III-270] usurped it to themselves, against all Truth, and served their own Ends notably by it.

YOUR Lordship's Reasoning about Government, *page 9.* is mostly true; but the Application is again either quite dropped, or very defective and partial. You say it is a very complicated Question, What Species of Government is best for the People? &c. Without entering into this Inquiry, I am convinced, that our own is the best for us; namely, a King and Parliament, the People represented, the Laws inviolable, and the only Standard of Power and Liberty. Now who departed first from this excellent Frame? Was it not the King, and the Clergy who governed the King? Your Lordship would not surely have found it a very complicated Question, Whether Governors keep or break known Laws? That King *Charles* did so, is Fact, and a Fact that it would have become your Lordship to have owned. You own that Men given to Change may urge plausible things in their own Behalf, though such a Change is sure to throw things into Confusion: I ask again, Who began the Change? And whether, since a Violation of the Laws naturally ends in Confusion, and indeed brings it, Opposition to such Violence may not produce Order, and has not sometimes [III-271] done it, though not always? That King had plausible things said for him, and for his arbitrary Government: His Necessities were urged; Laws were pretended to justify his Breach of Law, and he was said to be the Vicegerent of God, whilst he was acting like a very bad Man. But about these Things your Lordship is intirely silent.

WHAT follows is chiefly haranguing, and may be turned any way, but chiefly against that King; though I intirely acquit your Lordship from intending it. What you say about Seducers and Inflamers, is also too confined. It becomes a Spirit of Truth and Peace to expose all Seducers, and all Incendiaries, at all Times: Was King *Charles*'s Reign and Court free from them? Was the Church free from them? Whilst we remember the Enthusiasm and Violence that followed, let us not forget the Domination, the Superstition, and High-church Fanaticism, that went before, and seem to have begot and introduced the other. I think it manifest, that till the Church and the Crown had begun a Change, no other Change was thought of: And whoever begins any Mischief, is, in a great measure, answerable for the whole.

[III-272]

WHILST your Lordship was inveighing, with becoming Warmth, against Inflamers, Innovators, and the like *Pests* of Government, it would have been no Digression to have observed, how much the Martyr's Court was infested with such; that more especially Parasites (and the worst of all, spiritual Parasites) were the Bane of his Reign, and even of our Constitution; that perhaps one of the greatest Defects in our Government, has been its Tameness, in suffering the Clergy to preach the People out of their Liberties; as was their Practice during the Reigns of all the STUARTS.

PERHAPS it were too much to wish that, you had likewise warned us, to be upon our Guard against a Body of Men continually pursuing selfish and separate Advantages: Men who have often with deceitful Words seduced Princes from their Duty, engaged them in Acts of Violence, and consecrated even their Iniquities; Men who have sometimes pursued their Point even to Extremity, and to the Subversion of public Liberty, in order to share with the deluded Prince in his Violence; yet cloaked all their unhallowed Doings under the Name of the Lord. Who have so often as they (to use your Lordship's Words)

“been watching for a Change, and lain in wait to [III-273] deceive, and to seduce the People from the Obedience which both Reason and Religion taught them to be due to the higher Powers? ---- Since there is no knowing where to stop, or what Extravagance they may be gradually worked to in following the Seduction of such Guides.”

--- I add, Guides, such as *Laud* and his Brethren, who were never quiet till they had “carried Things to Extremity, and subverted the Constitution.” They too, my Lord, had their specious Pretences in the midst of their evil Pursuits, and talked of God’s true Religion, of asserting the Rights of the Church and Monarchy, of suppressing Schism; “and that they intended nothing, if you would believe them, but the true Service of God and the King.” So that the Sectaries afterwards wanted not a Pretence for their pious Cant, and violent Measures.

THERE is the more Reason for reviving these Truths, (for Truths they are, as certain as any in History) for that most of the Sermons on this Occasion have been nothing else but confident Apologies for all the notorious Usurpations of the Court and the Clergy; and the Preachers generally either boldly defend them, or deny them, or are silent about them. I could wish your Lordship had been [III-274] more candid and explicit upon the same Subject. You dwell upon the Consequences of the War, and the Change, the violent Change, which it produced; and labour to raise the Passions of your Hearers and Readers against one Side only. The Excesses, the Provocations, the continued Enormities of the other Side, which occasioned the rest, you hardly touch; and when you do, ’tis with a gentle and palliative Hand.

My Lord, I, who have no Reserves, and love a fair Representation of things, can see and confess wicked Counsels, Hypocrisy, execrable Measures, and flagrant Breach of Trust, on both Sides: I own that the King and the Clergy had hard and cruel Usage; that he was destroyed by a Faction; that the Laws were abolished, and a Tyranny set up: But still, from whence are we to trace the first Cause? And did it not begin from the Court and the Clergy? Hence proceeded the first Distrust, and Breach of Union and Confidence between the King and his People: Hence arose the first Aversion to the Churchmen: And, as it was the Monarch who created a Disgust to Monarchy, it was the insolent Spirit of Churchmen that made the Church odious.

YOUR Lordship justly detests the Murder of the King: So do I. But I likewise detest [III-275] the Murder of the Constitution, which he and his Counsellors had for many Years trampled upon, and endeavoured to overturn for ever. One of the Uses therefore to be made of the Day, is, to expose lawless Rule, flattering Counsels, an aspiring and corrupt Priesthood, with the Danger and Sin of violating public Trust, and abusing Power.

YOUR Lordship “will not say, That there had been no Occasion given by the Court for Jealousies and Fears.” How tenderly spoken! when the Law was actually preached down, when the King’s Will was preached up as the only Law; when no Man obnoxious to the Court had the Benefit of Law; when the Liberties and Properties of all Men were subjected to the Caprice and Passion of one. My Lord, he had been guilty of as many public Violences, as his Son King *James* was afterwards, and continued them much longer.

YOUR Lordship will not say, That “there was not sufficient Reason for Opposition in a Parliamentary Way.” Had he not laid aside Parliaments? laid them aside for twelve Years together? Had he not made it penal even to talk of Parliaments? Nor does it at all appear, that he ever intended to call another, till the Distresses brought upon him by [III-276] his wanton Conduct, and by the wise Advice of the Bishops, (who involved him in a War with his own People for Words and Forms, and the violent Establishment of Prelacy in *Scotland*) forced him to it. Nay, I think it apparent, that he very early meditated to rule like his Brother of

France; at least, that this bad Spirit was infused into him by his traitorous Counsellors, and particularly animated by the Bishops and Clergy. But I avoid, as your Lordship does, to enter minutely into the History of those unhappy Times, though perhaps not for the same Reason. I only ask your Lordship, Suppose he had never called a Parliament, what would have been the adviseable Remedy, what the Method of Opposition then?

You say, "That whatever wrong Measures had been taken, which might endanger the Liberties of the Subject," (my Lord, this very soft Language no-wise represents the Excesses of that Reign) "what was most offensive of that Kind," (still very tender) "was by the Advice of his Council, &c." So were the worst of King *James*'s Measures; so are the Measures of the *Great Turk*, and of every Tyrant and Usurper in the World. It is too true, that the worst Kings, the greatest Oppressors, will ever find complaisant and officious [III-277] Counsellors, and the most wicked Measures find Parricides to defend them. Had not *Nero*, had not *Caligula*, Ministers and Instruments, as barbarous as themselves, to justify all their Barbarities, and even to advise and inspire them? Have not all the most bloody Tyrants that ever plagued and afflicted Men, found such impious Counsellors and Defenders? Indeed, had there never been any such wicked Advisers and Instruments, there never could have been such mischievous and pernicious Princes.

You add (very surprizingly) "with the Concurrence of his Judges, Judges in general of good Character, and well esteemed in their Profession." I cannot help thinking that this Account is extremely amazing from your Lordship. My Lord, they were public Traitors, Enemies to their Country, the Hirelings of Power, Wretches who fancified by the Name of Law, as many of the Clergy did by the Name of Christ, the most complicated Wickedness under the Sun, that of overturning all Laws human and divine, and of enslaving a whole People. It avails not what Sufficiency they had in the Knowledge of the Law, farther than to condemn them; nor does it avail what has been said to their Advantage, nor what your Lordship says, [III-278] since Facts, the most notorious, contradict it. Will your Lordship say thus much of King *James*'s Judges? And did King *James*'s Judges go greater Lengths to legitimate lawless Power and Oppression? Amongst them too there were able Men; they were therefore the more inexcusable. The Truth is, both these Princes seem to have considered their Judges as the Machines and Champions of Usurpation, as the abandoned Instruments of cancelling Law by Chicanery.

WHAT your Lordship labours next is, to vindicate the Sincerity of the King's Intentions in his Declarations and Concessions, "to govern for the Future by the known Laws of the Land, and to maintain the just Rights and Privileges of Parliaments." I have already taken some Notice how sincere he was, and how much his Actions contradicted his Declarations. He had already contradicted, over and over, all his Professions to former Parliaments; he had manifested such an Affection for lawless Power, and such a settled Intention to introduce it, such a Fondness for the Promoters of it, and such Dislike of all other Men and Measures; that it was no wonder his last Parliament was loth to trust him, and for guarding themselves with all possible Securities against a Relapse into their former [III-279] Bondage: And I doubt, his Readiness in his Concessions, was no Proof of a Purpose to observe them. They still remembered how wantonly he had broken his Coronation Oath, the Bill of Rights, and all the Ties of Law, seized their Properties, and imprisoned their Persons. And all his Compliance seemed only the Effect of Distress, all his other Resources having failed him; nor had he recourse to Parliament, till Violence, and Power, and Stratagems, and every Scheme of Support, from any other Quarter, had miscarried; and he conformed to old ways, when new would no longer do.

THIS seemed to be the Opinion of the Parliament, and this the Ground of their Distrust. They remembered his Professions to former Parliaments, and how little his Actions had corresponded with these his Professions; how he had insulted Parliaments, when he thought

he could subsist, however lawlessly, without them; how wantonly he had dissolved them, how barbarously he had used their Persons after such Dissolution, a Dissolution called by my Lord *Clarendon*, *unreasonable, unskillful, and precipitate*. These Jealousies, my Lord, possessed the whole Parliament, at least a great Majority; and some concurring Accidents terribly heightened them, [III-280] particularly his supposed tampering with the Army in the *North*, and the *Irish* Massacre. Yet amongst all these Alarms, which your Lordship must allow to have had great Weight, there seems not the least View, (I think 'tis plain there was not) in that Assembly, to abolish the Monarchy, or to introduce a new Government. It was composed of many great and able Men, who all concurred in putting Restraints upon the King, such as he might not be able to break through. What Events followed, no Man then foresaw, or could foresee. A War ensued, and on both Sides there appeared considerable Men.

YET the Great Men who adhered to the King, though they thought the Parliament too violent, seem to have had no Confidence in him, that he meant well to the Constitution: And it was probably owing to such their Distrust of his Humour and Designs, that after the Battle of *Edge-hill*, where he had the Advantage on his Side, they did not proceed to *London*, where he might have had a Chance for being Master. They who gave him good Counsel at *Oxford*, found but cold Countenance there, and some of them were disgraced. Nor could he ever prevail upon the Members, whom he had drawn thither, and called his Parliament, to declare the Parliament at *Westminster* [III-281] Rebels, though this was a Point which he had much at Heart, and laboured hard, and complained heavily of his Disappointment; nay, reviled them by the Name of his *Mungrel Parliament*. The Fate of the excellent Lord *Falkland*, his principal Secretary of State, deserves Notice, and seems to have proceeded from his utter Despair of seeing a good Issue from either Side. And, if I remember right, it appears, even from my Lord *Clarendon*, that the Concessions which the King made, proceeded from no Purpose to observe them.

WHAT your Lordship says of the King's Adherents, is not conclusive. If they were of the Nobility and Gentry, and Men of Fortune; so were those of the other Side, especially till the Army desperately and wickedly assumed the Government to themselves. What followed, was indeed infamous and horrible! the Murder of the King, and a military Government. *Cromwell* was a notorious Hypocrite and Usurper, and richly deserved the Fate which he made the King suffer.

YOUR Lordship seems likewise to fail in the last Proof which you offer of the King's Sincerity, and good Intentions, namely, his christian Fortitude at his Death.

MY Lord, this Reasoning will justify those who doomed him to die. Did not the *Regicides* [III-282] meet Death with great Intrepidity, some of them with Raptures? Do not almost all Enthusiasts die so, even the most criminal and bloody, even Traitors and Assassins? I think the Goodness of his Intentions had been more clear, had he fairly owned the many grievous Iniquities of his Reign, his Oppressions, and arbitrary Rule. But we see in this, as in other Instances, the great Partiality of Men to themselves, and their own Actions, and how little their Opinion ought to weigh, in such Cases. Cardinal *Richelieu*, who had done a thousand Acts of Violence and Injustice, saw, at his Death, no Guilt in any Part of his Life, especially as a Minister. Did not the Earl of *Strafford*, who had been a great Oppressor of public Liberty, and of his Country; did not Archbishop *Laud*, a hot-headed Monk, who had caused so much Violence and Confusion, both die with clear Consciences? Nay, did not *Gortz*, Baron *Gortz*, the most barbarous Villain that ever counselled or served a Prince, he who had served his Master, the late King of *Sweden*, in the most merciless Measures, and indeed advised them, go to his Execution, not only without any Reproach from his own Heart, but even praising himself? These wicked Men valued themselves upon their Loyalty to their Prince. But [III-283] execrable, and infamous, and inconsistent, is that Loyalty which

misleads Princes, and ruins their People.

In your Vindication of the King's Adherents, your Lordship is again too loose, and you say many things at random.

To what you say against *Cromwell*, and against the Violence and Hypocrisy of his Agents, I have no Objection; only that the Style seems not to resemble that of a Sermon. I should, however, have thought you impartial, had you shewn the like Warmth against the first Authors of our Confusions. Some of your Language is applicable enough to the latter:

“There was so much Injustice, Violence, and Oppression; so much Arbitrariness and Cruelty in their Proceedings, accompanied with the vilest Hypocrisy and Falshood:”

— — —For Law, and Religion, my Lord, were still pretended by *Laud*, and his Faction, even whilst they were oppressing Justice and Conscience.

You just confess, That

“the indiscreet Zeal of the Friends of the Church, and the Severity with which they pressed a Compliance in Things indifferent, or of small Consequence, upon Persons of different Persuasions, whose Aversion to a Compliance increased in proportion to the Zeal [III-284] with which it was pressed, prepared Fuel for that unhappy Fire.”

This is mentioned in a very temperate Style, though as proper a Topic as any in your Sermon, to have been opened and explained with Warmth and Indignation. My Lord, do these few cold Words make a proper Picture of that violent and arbitrary Time? What your Lordship thinks, I know not; nor do you, perhaps, care what I think about it. Let us leave it to our impartial Readers.

I HAVE before answered what you repeat and dwell upon; namely, that the King could not have fallen, had the Church stood.

YOU say, that they who ruined the Church, had for their Pretence, pure Religion, and a further Reformation. Had there no Ground been furnished for such a Pretence? Was there no need of some Reformation, when the Clergy were (very many of them) going back every Day to Popery, and ruining all their Brethren, who would not go back with them? Were they not daily introducing Popery, the most dreadful Part of Popery, its terrible Power, its vindictive and intolerating Spirit? Perhaps they meant not to restore the Pope: But the Superstition of Popery was increasing every Day, as also the Pomp of Popery, with Persecution, the most dreadful Engine of Popery. [III-285] Archbishop *Laud* was already affecting the Title of *Holiness*, and *most holy Father*. The Books of Papists were licensed by his Chaplains, or approved by himself: New Books against Popery were by him forbid to be printed; some such already printed were called in: Passages against Popery were struck out in others. The best Protestant Books of long standing, and formerly published by Authority, were not suffered to be reprinted, not even *Fox*'s famous Acts and Monuments, a Common-place Book to Protestants of their Sufferings and Burnings under Queen *Mary*, and of the Popish Cruelties then and before. The very *Practice of Piety*, a Protestant Book, which had gone through six and thirty Editions, was not permitted to be reprinted. Bishop *Wren* put this extraordinary Article amongst those of his Visitation,

“That the Church-wardens in every Parish of his Diocese, should inquire whether any Persons presumed to talk of Religion at their Tables, or in their Families.”

It was made one of the Articles against Bishop *Williams*, that he had said, “He did not allow the Priests to jeer, nor to make Invectives against the People.” It was another Article against him, “That he had wickedly jested on St. *Martin*’s Hood:” And it was another Article against [III-286] him, that he had said, “That the People are God’s and the King’s, and not the Priest’s People;” though for this he quoted a national Council. Poor *Gillebrand*, an Almanack-maker, was prosecuted by the Archbishop in the *High Commission Court*, for leaving the Names of the old Popish Saints out of his Calendar, and inserting, in their Room, the Names of the Protestant Martyrs. Bishop *Cosins* of *Durham* caused three hundred Wax-candles to be lighted up in the Church on *Candlemas-day*, in Honour of our Lady: He forbad any Psalms to be sung before or after Sermon; but instead of Psalms, an Anthem in Praise of the three Kings of *Colen*. He declared in the Pulpit, that when our Reformers abolished the Mass, they took away all good Order. He said, that the King had no more Power over the Church, than the Boy that rubbed his Horse’s Heels. For the Clergy had then assumed to themselves the Regal Supremacy; and as the Crown had taken it from the Pope, who had usurped it, they had usurped it now from the Crown, to the Disgrace of the King, the Subversion of the Constitution, and to their own Shame, and even Perjury.

To all this, which your Lordship’s Silence has given me Occasion to say on this Head, [III-287] give me Leave to add the unquestionable Testimony of the judicious and excellent Lord *Falkland*, in his Speech concerning the Bishops and their Adherents.

“It seemed, says he, their Work to try how much of a Papist might be brought in without Popery, and to destroy as much as they could of the Gospel, without bringing themselves into Danger of being destroyed by the Law. — — — Some of them have so industriously laboured to deduce themselves from *Rome*, that they have given great Suspicion, that in Gratitude they desire to return thither, or at least to meet it half-way. Some have evidently laboured to bring in an *English*, though not a *Roman* Popery: I mean not only the Outside and Dress of it, but, equally absolute, a blind Dependence of the People upon the Clergy, and of the Clergy upon themselves; and have opposed the Papacy beyond the Sea, that they might settle one beyond the Water (namely, at *Lambeth*). Nay, common Fame is more than ordinarily false, if none of them have found a way to reconcile the Opinions of *Rome* to the Preferments of *England*; and be so absolutely, directly, and cordially Papists, that it is all that Fifteen hundred Pounds a Year can do to keep them from confessing [III-288] it.” — — — He had said just before, “That they had first depressed preaching to their Power; and next laboured to make it such, as the Harm had not been much, if it had been depressed: The most frequent Subjects, even in the most sacred Auditories, being the *divine Right of Bishops and Tythes, the Sacredness of the Clergy, the Sacrilege of Impropriations, the demolishing of Puritanism and Property, the building the Prerogative at St. Paul’s*; the Introduction of such Doctrines, as admitting them true, the Truth would not recompense the Scandal; or of such that were so false, that, as Sir *Thomas More* said of the Casuists, they served but to inform them *how near they might approach to Sin, without sinning.*”

WHAT thinks your Lordship of this Picture of those Clergy? Is it not such as seemed to call for a real Reformation? And was not the Pretence of such as did so, well warranted?

YOUR Lordship takes Notice of the Confusions which followed the King’s Death, as the just Judgment of God for it. My Lord, this, of God’s Judgments, is a Subject infinitely nice and tender, and ought to be warily touched: Nor can I help thinking, that you Clergymen generally do it too boldly, and even very partially. Judgments are very [III-289] apt to pursue and overtake your Enemies; but you are not so ready to see any befalling yourselves. The Evils that fall to your Lot, have generally another Name, and are only Misfortunes; but if they happen to those that you dislike, they are Judgments. Pray, my Lord, what Rule have you in this Case to distinguish by? I know none; unless he who only sends Judgments, and only can tell what are Judgments, would inform you. Where he does not inform you, it is at

least great Rashness, and I think very wicked, to call any Calamity befalling others, however terrible it be, by the awful Name of a Judgment. It is representing them as Enemies to God, and therefore exposing them to the Abhorrence of Men.

DIVINE Judgments have always been the Cry and Common-place of pious Impostors, who part not readily with any Topic of Delusion; and therefore I am surprised to see your Lordship fall into the same Strain.

WAS the unsettled State of the Nation a Judgment upon it for the Murder of the King? And were his Misfortunes and Fate no Judgment upon him, for having abused his Trust, and oppressed the Nation? But why should the Nation suffer for a Fact, which almost the whole Nation abhorred? And why did not [III-290] this Judgment reach those who committed it, and who remained the only Men of Power and Prosperity after it? Why, particularly, should the Church continue cast down, forlorn, and distressed, for an Iniquity abhorred by her, and perpetrated by her Enemies? Or had the Church never, by any Acts of Wantonness and Injustice formerly, merited such a Visitation as might be deemed a Judgment? But why should I, if I sin not with another, but avoid and detest Sinning, suffer for what he does? And why should he, who is guilty, not suffer, or suffer less than I? Surely this Reasoning cannot be sound Divinity, since 'tis thus against all Logic and Sense.

YOUR Lordship must needs know, that it is the way of Parties, to throw Judgments at one another, with equal Bitterness, and equal Folly. Whatever happens well to one Side, is a Blessing; whatever happens ill to the other, is a Curse. To us Evil is a Chastisement, to others 'tis a Judgment; and just so say others of us, and of themselves. Is there any Misfortune or Mischief incident to ill Men, from which the Good are exempt? Are there any worldly Felicities attending the Righteous, in which the Wicked have no Share, or not an equal Share? If it be said, that their being wicked, is Judgment enough; this Argument, [III-291] besides that it seems to make God the Author of their Wickedness, is a Confession that what they suffer in common with others, cannot be called a Judgment.

THERE is no end of exposing this pious Absurdity, though it be easily done; nor yet in reviving it upon every Occasion. The best that can be said for it, is bad enough; namely, that like other Falshoods, it serves the Turn of angry and interested Men; it startles and convinces Bigots; it teaches Men Ignorance, and to hate one another; and it contributes to perpetuate Party for ever: — — — A Turn becoming an Incendiary and Deceiver, but not a Messenger of Truth and Peace. It is therefore very unworthy of your Lordship: And, I dare say, upon Reflection, you will condemn it.

YOUR Assertion, "That the Judgments of God for great Sins may hang over a Nation for many Generations," is a very bold one, and admits of the same Confutation. How hang over a Nation? What! over the Earth, and Stones, and Buildings? This your Lordship surely will not say, though things equally absurd are often said by some of your Order; and Dr. *Trebeck* asserts in Print, that in Places consecrated there is an inherent Holiness. Such Judgments therefore must hang [III-292] over the People only. — — But suppose another People may have taken Possession of the Land: Must that new People, who came from another Climate, be also visited? If so, they might as well have suffered in their former Habitations, as in their new Settlement: and then all the Nations in the Universe may suffer for what is done wickedly by, or even in, any one of them. But if new Comers are not to suffer for the Iniquities of the former People, why must this Generation, nay, every succeeding Generation, be chastised for the Sins of the Dead, for whom they are no more answerable, than the wild *Indians* are for the Oppressions of the *Turks*; no more than the Pope of *Rome* is answerable for the Sins of *Romulus*? As for sinning *ex post facto*, it is a Distinction which would involve every Man in the Errors of every Man throughout the World. May not a Man, without sinning, approve what really was a Sin in him that committed it? He may approve it through

Misinformation about particular Circumstances, or from want of right Discernment; neither of which is a Sin.

IN Consequence of your way of Reasoning, you must make all the modern and late Clergy, who approve *Laud* 's violent Doings, guilty of *Laud* 's Transgressions.— — — Nay, all the future [III-293] Clergy of this Spirit, must be thus wicked and guilty. As a farther Consequence of this Sort of Doctrine, I should not wonder to hear your Lordship congratulating all good Churchmen, and Lovers of King *Charles* I. and his Cause, upon the Blessing derived to them from the Merits of his Life and Sufferings. According to the Rule of just Distribution, if some are still cursed for him, why not others blessed for him?

THE next Topic of your Eloquence is, the Dread still remaining from the old Republican Spirit, which brought that King to the Block. Upon this you raise Terrors, and assert with your usual Strength of Style;

“All Places, *you say*, are filled with loose Books, which tend to nothing but to destroy all Principles, and set Men free from all Government— — — Republican Principles are as industriously propagated now, as they were then, and to the same Ends; to introduce a Change of Government; and in order to that, to weaken it, by weakening first the Influences of Religion, and introducing Infidelity: Which Attempts come chiefly from the Republican Quarter now, as they did then.”

And you quote Dr. *Burnet*, who says, *Many of the Republicans began to profess Deism, and almost all of them were [III-294] for destroying all Clergymen, pulling down Churches, discharging Tithes, and for leaving Religion without either Encouragement or Restraint.*

My Lord, a profligate Clergy has often tempted Men to disbelieve Religion, whilst they notoriously contradicted it in Actions, though they loudly professed it with their Lips.— — — I know not but that very Time might have unsettled the Belief of some, and disposed them to Deism. They had seen a domineering Episcopal Church demolished; a Presbyterian Church, equally domineering, raised in its room: Both professing great Holiness, even to be the Oracles of God; both rapacious and insatiable; merciless to all that differed from them, Tyrants to all who submitted to them; hypocritically disclaiming the World, and confidently grasping after all the Power and Grandeur in it; deriving all their Wealth and Power from the simple Gospel of Christ, who disclaimed all Power and Wealth for himself, and bequeathed them none, but left his Example and Precepts to all Men indifferently, as well as to them. They had seen Preachers of the Gospel, who never preached it, but rioted by the Name and Pretence of it; or, if they preached at all, preached up themselves: They had seen Explainers of the [III-295] Scripture, who never could agree in explaining it, yet obtruding their contradictory Explanations upon all others: They had seen Ministers, who had been persecuted, as soon as they had Power, persecuting others; seen others, who had been Persecutors, complain of Persecution; and both Sorts ever accommodating their Doctrines to their own Views and Passions, and to the Views and Passions of such as they were disposed to flatter; both Sorts indifferent, or rather Enemies to public and equal Liberty; ever indeed contending for it to themselves, when others oppressed them; ever denying it to such as they had a mind to oppress; fathering all their Doctrines, and all their Whims, however selfish, wicked, or foolish, upon the Father of Wisdom, of Mercy, and of Truth; pretending to have the Call, and peaceful Guidance, of the Holy Ghost, yet swayed by the worst and most hostile Passions; talking of Christian Meekness, and the Forgiveness of Enemies; indulging Fury and Vengeance upon every Offence, or Contradiction; calling themselves Ambassadors of Peace, nay, Successors to the Apostles; but sowing Strife, and doing nothing like the Apostles, nay, every thing unlike the Apostles; still boasting that God was with them, and that the Gates of Hell could not [III-296] prevail against them, yet frightened at every Breath of Opposition.

I SAY, some Men, seeing all these monstrous Inconsistencies, and how small Reliance there was upon the Veracity, or Reasoning of any Set of Churchmen, might be tempted to think, that there was nothing in Religion; because they perceived, that the several Bands of Ecclesiastics had turned Religion into a Farce and a Market, and professed what they seemed not to believe. Others too might be good Christians, yet join with no Society of Christians, like *Grotius* and some others.

OR perhaps, after all, there were then no Deists, or Signs of Deism; but that this Charge was invented by Priests and Bigots, who are always notoriously addicted to forge Falshoods and Calumny against those who differ from them in their Dreams and Forms. Nor indeed does Infidelity appear to have been the Turn of those Times, but rather a Humour quite opposite, that of Enthusiasm, and of false and austere Holiness. I know but of one Writer then, who was generally suspected of Infidelity, and that was Mr. *Hobbes*; no Republican, your Lordship well knows, but an Advocate for Monarchy without Bounds. Atheism came not in, at least with any Countenance or Force, till the *Restoration*. Then [III-297] it prevailed, and grew fashionable; and whatever, or whoever had the Look of Seriousness and Sobriety, grew an Object of Reproach and Ridicule: All kinds of Debauchery grew common; Lewdness and Riot overspread the whole Land. So little was Vice suppressed, or Virtue promoted, by the Re-establishment of the Church! Nay, many of the Clergy behaved themselves scandalously; and according to the same Dr. *Burnet*, *Sheldon* the Archbishop (though a zealous Champion for the Rights and Powers of the Church)

“seemed not to have had a deep Sense of Religion, if any at all; and spoke of it most commonly, as of an Engine of Government, and as Matter of Policy.”

Even before the *Restoration*, impious Opinions, and Sallies of Blasphemy, were grown common amongst the Cavaliers, who were wont, especially in their Cups, to revile Almighty God for his Partiality to the Sectaries, and for deserting the King and the Church. The Account which the Bishop gives of the Vileness, the Bitterness, the Barbarity, the Debauchery of the Clergy after the *Restoration*, is astonishing, and would be incredible, if the Facts were not known to be true.

My Lord, you will not surely say, that such an open Dissolution of Manners, and such Latitudinarian [III-298] Principles were promoted in that Reign, in order to raise a Republican Spirit. Far different was the Design, even to introduce Popery and Slavery, when both the King and the High-Churchmen were aiming too openly at Power without Controul; and nothing could possibly have kept alive a Republican Spirit, (a Spirit which had grown odious to the whole Nation, by the late Tyranny exercised under the Name of the *Commonwealth*; I say, nothing could possibly keep alive such a Spirit) but the apparent ill Designs, and violent Measures, of the Court and the Clergy. Men who are oppressed, or who foresee inevitable Oppression, will be naturally thinking of the Means of Security and Escape. But when they are well and equally protected, when the Laws are inviolable, and Property secure, no general or violent Change is to be apprehended, especially where the Title to the Crown is uncontested. Nor do I remember, that a Commonwealth was ever thought of in *England*, or any Dislike conceived against the Government, or any Subversion of the Church intended, till some of our Monarchs had rendered Monarchy distasteful; and the Church, like the Monarchy, when through the Pride and Fury of the Bishops it was become terrible, became likewise odious.

[III-299]

It was this which first occasioned the Notion and Proposal of introducing a Commonwealth, which yet never was settled, nor ever can be settled in *England*. Even the Tyranny of King *James* the Second, (to say nothing farther of his Brother's wild and

unhallowed Reign) as provoking and recent as it was, did not produce any Effort for a Commonwealth, I do not remember that the Word was once mentioned in either House, upon their Convention; and if it was mentioned at all elsewhere, it was only in Whispers, by two or three Visionaries, who were not regarded, and had no Party.

A COMMONWEALTH in *England* will never be other than a Dream, existing only in crazy Heads. All Men of common Sense know, that we enjoy more Liberty, more equal Protection, under our own legal Monarchy, as 'tis administred by His Majesty, than we could in any Commonwealth existing, or that ever did exist. Neither did I ever find, that there was, nor do I believe, that there is, one reasonable Man in His Dominions, that thinks such a Change either eligible or possible. This I speak in the Sincerity, and from the Conviction, of my Heart.

It is therefore highly blameable in any one, much more so in one of your Lordship's great [III-300] Station and Credit, to raise public Alarms, and to endeavour to infuse Fears into His Majesty's Breast, of Principles that no-where appear, and of a Party that, from my Soul I think, do not exist. This is as unjust, as it would be to raise in his People a Dread of His Majesty; nor can there be a greater Crime, than publishing Terrors and Tales, tending to break the Confidence between King and People. Just such Tendency had the old Cry, about *the Danger of the Church*; a popular Alarm then calculated only to frighten Prince and People, and big with Mischief and Falshood. This false Terror, and Party Word, your Lordship has finely exposed, in a Sermon of yours, when you were Dean of *Worcester*. I am sorry to find your Courage smaller now, when your Church Emoluments are much larger.

YOUR Lordship knows, that that Cry of the *Church's Danger*, was accompanied with another, equally bold and absurd, *the Danger of a Commonwealth*. My Lord, you likewise know, who they were who raised and promoted those wild Alarms, what violent Effects they had, and what farther Effects they were like to have had. Nor will you, I presume, say, that what evidently endangered the State [III-301] and the Protestant Succession then, will serve either now.

My Lord, where are these Republicans? For myself, I know none; I protest solemnly to your Lordship, I know none; none who are for a Commonwealth, or any other Change of Government, except the *Jacobites*. Where too are *those loose Books, which tend to destroy all Principles, and set Men free from all Governments*? Loose Books are certainly punishable, and have been punished. For lewd and obscene Books, Men have been imprisoned and pilloried. For Books which have treated Religion with Indecency, Men have been imprisoned and fined; though some of the Authors seemed crazy, and fitter for *Bedlam*, than a Gaol.

WHAT other Books your Lordship means, I cannot be sure. I can by no means suppose, that you would thus revile Books which you cannot answer; Books which profess to combat Falshood, Imposture, and false Reasoning; Books which assert the natural and legal Rights of Men, against such as would allow Liberty to none but themselves, and claim as their Right, what neither God, nor Nature, nor Law, ever gave them. Loose Books, methinks, should be easily answered and refuted; and so many thousand Clergymen, with their [III-302] superior Piety and Learning, be an Over-match for all the loose Writers in the World.

LOOSE Books, I doubt, there ever will be in the World; especially in free Countries, where there is no way of preventing them, but by the utter Extinction of Liberty: Nor will ever this prevent them, though it be a Price too dear for silencing foolish and profane Writers. In *Italy* and *Spain*, where none write but the Clergy, or by their Permission, there are many loose and profane Books. Nor can there be looser, or more pernicious, not to say blasphemous, Books upon the Earth, than such as compliment the Clergy with Powers equal to those of the Deity;

make them Gods upon Earth, and assert their Authority even to damn and to save; to dispose of the other World, and consequently of this. I know not whether open Systems of Atheism were not less hurtful; since it is less Indignity to the Deity, to suppose him not to exist, than to suppose him the Author of such Fooleries and Barbarities, as the Clergy there impiously father upon him. Your Lordship knows what *Plutarch* says upon this Subject; it has been always applauded, never confuted.

My Lord, it cannot surprise your Lordship to be told, that the Clergy, almost in all Countries, have written more loose Books than any [III-303] other Set of Men upon Earth; that even in *England* they have done so. Let me quote you the Authority of a Reverend Doctor for what I say (nay, from a Speech of his to his Brethren the Clergy in Convocation, even when they were censuring loose Books).

“With what Face, Mr. *Prolocutor*, says he, or with what Conscience, can we offer to complain of the Licentiousness taken by Lay-writers, and yet connive at the like Offences given by the Ministers of our Church? I doubt, greater Offences: For, if all the ill Books against Religion, Scriptures, Laws of this Land, and Constitution of this Church, were here packed up together, I would undertake to pick out the worst of them, by pointing at those written by Clergymen, even of the most profane Drollery, as well as most serious Heresy.”

YOUR Lordship cannot but know, how many loose and profane Sermons have been preached and published upon this very Solemnity, every Year since it was instituted; how many (too, too many!) of the Preachers have made it a Day of Strife and Animosity: What Falshoods they have uttered; what wicked Principles they have advanced; what impious Comparisons they have made; yet at the same time, with strange Boldness, and indeed Blindness, [III-304] complained of loose and republican Doctrines prevailing, to the great Peril of Church and State; nay, still denounced Judgments, and still railed at the Freedom and Licentiousness of the Age.

YOUR Lordship is justly angry at Libels: Can there be greater or more poisonous Libels, than such Sermons as these, or worse Libels against Religion or Government? For they were generally levelled against the Constitution, Toleration, Peace, and Charity. Surely, your Lordship, in calling for a Remedy against the Licentiousness of the Age, could not fail to have principally in your Eye the Licentiousness of the Pulpit, the most scandalous Licentiousness of all, and to wish for a Restraint upon Preaching. Without such a Restraint as this, you cannot consistently, nor with any Degree of Candor, call for one upon the Press. Of all Demagogues, preaching Demagogues, spiritual Demagogues, have been the most implacable and mischievous, as well as the most busy and barbarous, of all Incendiaries: What Class of Men has ever sounded the Trumpet to Sedition and Blood, with such Frequency and Success, as they?

My Lord, I shall say but little here upon the Liberty of the Press. The same ingenious and sensible Hand, who has answered you already [III-305] upon that Head, is able to support his own Reasoning. If it be a Liberty, that is sometimes troublesome to the Clergy, it brings a Remedy along with it; and none use it more freely than they; and they of all Men complain of it with the worst Grace; they who are so nobly encouraged, so amply endowed with Learning, and Revenue, and Leisure, to defend Truth, and assault Error. Where they have Reason, and the Gospel, on their Side, with so many subordinate Advantages, What can stand before them? What Falshood? What Error? And where Truth and Reason are against them, and they against these, Why should the same be left undefended? When these are on their Side, they will defend themselves. What would they have more?

WHERE-EVER Liberty is unequal, or restrained, so far Truth will for ever be found impaired; and with the suppressing of free Inquiry and Argument, Truth will be suppressed. Hence 'tis quite lost, or at best disowned, in *Italy* and *Spain*, where the Press is thoroughly restrained; and according to the Degrees of such Restraint, will be the Degrees of Truth and Error, of Knowledge and Ignorance, every-where.

[III-306]

THE Clergy surely will not say, that they distrust their Cause. What then do they distrust? What indeed can resist a good Cause supported by good Reasons? Whoever attacks it, has but one bad Weapon against two excellent ones; namely, cavilling against Right, and against Argument defending Right. God's Cause therefore is hard to be opposed, and easily defended. Nor can it be at all opposed, where human Follies, and the Interests of Men, come not to be by them blended with divine Truths, and both called by the same good Names, declared to be inseparable, and contended for without Distinction. Here indeed there will be abundant room for an Attack, and even for a Victory.

BUT simple and sincere Truth can surely never be vanquished, where her Champions are not disarmed, as they are in *Popish* and *Mahometan* Countries: And therefore such who are conscious of being the Champions of Truth, must heartily despise the Champions of Error; and none but the Champions of Error can justly fear the Champions of Truth. I therefore wonder at your Lordship's Fears. You have been engaged in Controversy, and from that Trial must have found the Advantage of the Liberty of the Press, with the Truth of what I say, how superior an Advocate for [III-307] honest and open Truth must be to one who quibbles, equivocates and frets, in Support of By-ends, Pride, and Hypocrisy. Probably too Scoffers may say, that Losers must have Leave to complain; and that you are an Enemy to the Liberty of the Press, because the Liberty of the Press proved no Friend to you.

BESIDES, methinks it suits not well with a Successor of the Apostles, to be calling for Helps which the Apostles never sought. They had the Tongues and Pens of all Men against them, and never desired the Privilege of being alone heard, whilst others were obliged to be silent. Your Lordship is better situated than they: You live in a Christian Country, and have a great Revenue from your Country, to preach and write for Religion; nay, have it, though you be altogether idle. Are there loose Books abroad? are there evil Opinions stirring? Confute them, my Lord: Such Books, and Opinions, can never resist the Word of God, and of Reason. Your Lordship will not say, that the World, the Christian World, is worse than it was in a State of Paganism. This would be to make an ill Compliment to Christian Teachers, maintained at so great an Expence for so many hundred Years.

FOR the Government, my Zeal is as great as your Lordship's can be, indeed too great to [III-308] wish it the Odium of restraining the Press; an Attempt very unpopular and unjust. The Press was always most abused when shut up; neither has it ever been, nor can it ever be, so abused when open, though the Abuse from thence too, has been and is very great. But no Good which Man enjoys, is exempt from Abuse, not even Religion, nor Government, nor Health, nor Power, nor Liberty, nor Property.

My Lord, I cannot desire to see a Privilege in the Hands of this Government, which every Government has abused as often as they had it. For, in short, there never was any such Restraint, but upon one Side, who first thus disarmed the other, and then cudgelled them without Mercy. We know when it was, that Liberty, and the Protestant Religion, were written and preached away, and by whom, with Impunity, nay with Applause and Rewards; and when it was, and by whom, that every Answer, every Defence, was made Penal, if not Capital.

YOUR Lordship has another Source of Terrors, from the supposed Growth of Deism. Were there real Ground for this, I do not think it politic in a Bishop to own it, for fear of invidious Questions. I have already [III-309] said something of this matter; I shall here add something more.

I KNOW not how it happens, but the Clergy have almost always something to fear; Deism, or Heresy, or Schism, or Dissenters, or false Brethren. This has sometimes served their Purposes, whenever they wanted new Powers, or Penalties, or Acts of Vengeance, and when People were ignorant enough to grant them whatever they wanted; nor would they have had a Pretence for desiring such Powers, had they not pleaded terrible Fears and Alarms. But the old Cry and Artifice will not now do; for Men are not so easily frightened or misled, nor so ready to adopt the selfish Interests and Passions of the Clergy.

DOES Deism indeed increase? Why does not your Lordship, why do not the Clergy, confute it? What else have you been attending to, for so many Ages? The Cause of Truth must for ever prevail, if its Champions do not desert it, and pursue other Designs. Your Lordship would not suggest, that Truth wants another Set of Champions, less lazy and interested, more able and exemplary. To say the Truth, some of our present Champions hardly deserve the Name; yet still confidently assume, and retain it. And 'tis really odd enough, to see an idle Creature rolling [III-310] in Wealth, Luxury, and Ease, living voluptuously every Day, preaching, perhaps, once a Year, (even then probably) not the Gospel, but some favourite Point of Power, or Revenue; daily accumulating Riches; changing almost yearly from Diocese to Diocese; still aiming at a better, and the highest of all; hardly visiting any, or staying long enough with any one Flock to know them, scarce seeing them, much less feeding them, yet still calling them by that tender Name, without blushing; to see him multiplying Benefices and *Commendams*; holding several great Cures, without attending upon one, yet declaiming, after, and in the midst of all this, against the Prevalence of Deism, and loose Principles; and shamefully calling for worldly Restraints against Reasoning, for Violence against Opinions. Is it not exceeding natural, my Lord, for all Men of Discernment, nay, for all Men who have Eyes, to stand amazed at such wild Inconsistency of his Complaints, and his Conduct?

I DOUBT it will be found hard to answer what Mr. *Whiston* has said in his *Memoirs of Dr. Clarke*.

“It is clearly my Opinion, says he, that till our Defenders of Christianity do more than they have most of them hitherto done, as to affording the World [III-311] this Conviction, that they are really *in Earnest* themselves; particularly till our Bishops leave off procuring *Commendams*, and heaping up Riches and Preferments on themselves, their Relations, and Favourites: Nay, till they correct their *Non-residence*, till they leave the Court, the Parliament, and their Politics, and go down to their several Dioceses, and there *labour in the Vineyard of Christ*, instead of *standing the most part of the Day idle* at the Metropolis: They may write what learned *Vindications*, and *Pastoral Letters*, they please; the observing Unbelievers will not be satisfied they are *in Earnest*, and, by Consequence, will be little moved by all their Arguments and Exhortations.”

To this Quotation I will add, that Residence formerly was reckoned of indispensable, indeed of divine, Obligation, in the Opinion of many able Casuists. Cardinal *Cajetan* particularly thought it so, till great Preserments and Dignity gave him new Lights.

RESTRAINTS upon Opinion and Conscience have an evident Tendency to increase Hypocrisy and Infidelity, instead of curing or preventing them; as is notorious in Countries where the Inquisition is established, that is to say, the highest of all Restraints, Imprisonment, Confiscation, Tortures, and burning [III-312] alive. Even there, and in spite of all these ugly and inhuman Horrors, Deists, nay Atheists, are more numerous than any-where. And the

Reason is strong and obvious: For, (besides that the Clergy there, and indeed in many other Places beyond Sea, are extremely profligate and scandalous, and utterly despised by all Men, who are not quite bewitched with Grimace and Priestcraft) as People there dare not reason, or shew or propose any of their Doubts, they acquire evil Notions, and still retain the same, since it would be capital to own or explain them. Moreover, though the Clergy are bad and licentious enough, even in some Places where there is no Inquisition, they are most scandalously so where they have one; and 'tis most true, that the ill Lives of the Clergy, every-where, their Pride and Hypocrisy, their Rage and Avarice, contribute too evidently to discredit Religion, which they thus disgrace, and seem not to believe. Hence all their Reasonings for Religion, especially where with such Reasonings they mix selfish Tenets of their own, are despised; and some People may, perhaps, come to doubt the Being of a God, because they who call themselves his Ministers, live and act as if there were none; nor can they think, that Men that are covetous or cruel, whatever sacred Name, [III-313] they bear, are at all related to the God of Mercy; or that any good Being could employ bad ones in his Service, and in so holy a Cause.

THE pious and learned Dr. *Henry More*, in his *Mystery of Godliness*, has a Section to shew, that the Hypocrisy of Professors fills the World with Atheists.

“Men, says he, are exceedingly tempted to think the whole Business of Religion is at best but a Plot to enrich the Priests, and keep the People in Awe, from their observing, that they who make the greatest Noise about Religion, and are the most zealous therein, do neglect the Laws of Honesty, and common Humanity: That they can easily invade other Mens Right; that they can juggle, dissemble, and lye for Advantage: That they are proud, conceited, love the Applause of the People; are envious, fierce, and implacable, unclean and sensual, merciless and cruel; care not to have Kingdoms flow in Blood for maintaining their Tyranny over the Consciences of poor deluded Souls.”

KNOWS your Lordship any thing more whimsical, any thing more unmodest, than that, when the public Teachers are so singularly provided for, and possessed of all Advantages, to defend a good Cause; yet these Men, [III-314] called to this holy Vocation, instead of making Converts by Pains, by Persuasion, and by pious Lives, should be continually calling upon the civil Power to do by Terror and Force, what they ought to do by godly Exhortations, and a heavenly Example; to do what can never be done by any other Means, much less by opposite Means? My Lord, intemperate Ways are not the Ways of Christ, nor intemperate Words his Words; at least he never encouraged them in others.

BUT still I believe, that this Cry of *Deism* is but an idle and ill-grounded Cry; and hope that our Teachers have been, and still are, too diligent and successful Labourers in their Master's Vineyard, to suffer such a Weed to grow up, at least to spread. My Lord, Where are these Deists? What Company does your Lordship keep, what Books do you read? I have hardly ever seen any Book against Christianity; and in Books that attack Priestcraft, Christianity is no ways concerned; and to attack Authors who profess to be Christians, and only write against Priestcraft, as what has corrupted Christianity, is itself downright Priestcraft. 'Tis become a stale Art, to call such Writers Atheists or Deists.

MY Lord, I wish that all Men were Christians; but am not for cutting off Deists, who, [III-315] like others that differ from us, are only to be dealt with by Reason and Persuasion. Nor can Deism be ever terrible to the Public, since Deists are never likely to overspread and possess a Nation: The Bulk of Mankind will always be rather over-credulous, than incredulous; and Men of any Sense will never be the worse Neighbours or Subjects for their Speculations, though they pay no Regard to the Systems of Churchmen. And if a Man act agreeably to good Sense, and the Impulses of Humanity, he is a good Member of Society; nor need his Fellow Members look further, much less trouble or hurt him for differing from them,

which is no more than what they do by him. But a Bigot is ever a ready Instrument of Mischief, a ready Tool for the Ambition or Cruelty of his Leaders, and apt to call Good Evil, and Evil Good.

“Hot Zealots, (says Father *Paul*) believing every thing to be justifiable which is done with a View to Religion, come thence to act against Religion; nay, even against common Humanity; and thus have set the World in a dreadful Combustion.”

In *China*, all Men of Consideration, all of any Eminence for Learning or Dignity, are Deists. I wish that in *Spain* and *Italy*, and in many other Countries called Christian, as much civil Felicity, and as many Marks of Prosperity, [III-316] were found, as in *China*: It were indeed better for Mankind, that all fiery Catholics and Bigots, every-where, were converted into rational and sober *Chineses*. To be Followers of Christ is the best Choice, and the sure Road to Happiness: But to follow Priests and Bigots in most Countries, and in most of their Ways, is not to follow Christ, or Happiness, or common Sense.

My Lord, it is a great Presumption, 'tis very uncandid, to charge Men with Opinions which they do not own; it is worse to charge them with Opinions which they utterly disown. It is unjust to charge them with one obnoxious Opinion in consequence of another, nay, to take both for granted; to suppose a Man is a Deist, and therefore a Republican; or a Republican, and therefore a Deist. Does it become a good Christian, or a fair Reasoner, or a well-bred Man, to assert or insinuate such Things? Is it not a wicked thing, to prejudice his Majesty against any Part of his good Subjects? to bring a false, at best precarious Accusation against them? to represent them to him as Republicans, and to Bigots as Infidels? Why Republicans, when they have as much Liberty and Protection as ever any Government could bestow, as much as any Subject could desire or enjoy? Do they confess any [III-317] such Principles or Spirit? Why Deists? Do they own themselves so? Or why should Deism spread? Nobody is paid to maintain Deism; nor does any Interest attend it, but Obloquy and Unpopularity. Sure, they must be miserably weak, for whom Deism is too strong.

'Tis an old Artifice, one much beneath your Lordship, or any Man of Probity and Honour, an Artifice only worthy of miserable Bigots, and little sour Priests, thus to represent Men as Enemies to God and the King, because they presume to differ in Opinion with some of the Clergy.

THUS almost all the learned Men at the *Reformation* were reckoned Heretics, if not Atheists, because they were no great Admirers of the Monks, or perhaps for reforming the Clergy: Thus the first Christians were by the *Pagan* Priests and Persecutors traduced, as Enemies to the Gods, and to *Cæsar*; and thus all the Dissenters in this Nation were continually branded by the Parsons, as certain-Enemies to Monarchy, and therefore unworthy of Toleration, or even of Protection; and that Imputation continued confidently, till it was no longer believed; and long Experience has quite confuted the Parsons. We are again alarmed with the old Cry, or a new one just like the old, and from the same [III-318] Quarter, and for the same Ends. There are Hosts of Republicans and Deists, God knows where, like the Army which lay *Incognito* at *Knightsbridge*.

It is an easy Matter to raise Phantoms, and to frighten the Croud, generally infatuated with Superstition and false Zeal; nay, a good Degree of Considence, and strong Assertion, will often mislead Men of Sense; the most groundless Invention often finds many Vouchers, and sometimes gains such Credit and Belief, that it is unsafe to deny it, much more to expose it: Instances of this are endless.

YOUR Lordship cannot forget what an Uproar was raised some Years ago about a *Hell-fire Club*, said to be subsisting in *London*; how much it alarmed the Clergy, how much the Clergy alarmed others, and how zealously they called (as usual) for the Aid of the secular Arm; what a solemn Proclamation ensued, full of pathetic Strains, and of all due Horror against such an impious Society; how the Lord Chancellor was directed by the King, the Justices of Peace by the Lord Chancellor, to find out these dark Assemblies, and bring them to Punishment; how generally this terrible Story was believed, how much it filled Conversation, and employed the Pulpit and the Press; how Gentlemen of Name and Fortune, [III-319] nay, Ladies of eminent Quality, were confidently charged with being Members of this horrible Club. Never was a finer Topic for haranguing, for spreading Hatred and Terror, Abuse and Calumny. It was become fashionable, nay, orthodox, to believe it; 'twas Infidelity to doubt it, and they were Atheists who denied it. Now where did all this mighty Tumult, these panic Terrors, and this solemn Inquiry end? Even in the Discovery, that there was no such Discovery to be made. Yet I never heard, that the vile Broachers of such a wicked Alarm, that the wicked Authors or Promoters of so much Calumny, ever took Shame to themselves. No: Some sort of Men never own themselves in the Wrong, even when they are convicted of having done it. It would be a Digression to mention here, what a knavish Purpose this pious and popular Cry was intended to answer.

As of all Truths, the Truths of Religion are the most valuable; so of all Falshoods, religious Falshoods are the most mischievous: Because with the misled Vulgar they are made to pass for religious Truths. What destructive Effects they have had, what Seditions they have produced, what Wars, what Persecutions and Massacres, would require a Volume to specify and explain.

[III-320]

My Lord, I beg pardon for detaining you so long. I hope it will not offend your Lordship, that I have spoken my Mind thus freely concerning your late Performance, which is itself a very free one. I hope I have treated you with Civility; without Passion or Anger, or any personal Prejudice, I am sure I have. I honour your Abilities, and your high Station in the Church; and I am,

With great Respect,

My Lord, &c.

A SERMON preached before the Learned Society of Lincoln's-Inn, on Jan. 30. 1732. from Job xxxiv. 30. That the Hypocrite reign not, lest the People be ensnared. ↩

By a LAYMAN.

Fieri potest, quod fit in multis questionibus, ut res verbosior illa sit, hæc verior.

CIC.

IN the Thirty-fourth Chapter of the Book of *Job*, and the Thirtieth Verse, it is thus written: — — — *That the Hypocrite reign not, lest the People be ensnared.*

Friends, Brethren, and Countrymen,

I PRESENT myself before you, on this Occasion, with the greater Alacrity and Assurance, for that I am conscious of no Engagement [III-322] to any Party or Opinion repugnant to Truth, and the general Interest of my Country: I am under no Pay or Influence to support ancient Prejudices, and false Reasonings; under no Biass to flatter particular Fraternities and Factions, nor awed by the Fear of offending them. For the Rule and Guide of my Politics, I have the Constitution and History of *England*; and in my Religion, I am governed by the Bible and common Sense. He who walks by these Rules, walks securely; and he who follows the arbitrary Notions, sophistical Distinctions, and bare Averments of Men, is sure to be deceived, at least can never know that he is not.

That the Hypocrite reign not, lest the People be ensnared.

THE Task which from these Words I propose to myself, is to defend the Right of every Man to private Judgment and Opinion, to shew the Absurdity and Wickedness of setting up Authority against Conscience, and to manifest the pernicious Tendency and Effects of Power, and immoderate Wealth, in the Clergy. As I go along, I shall apply my Reasoning to the Purpose of the Day; and, at the Conclusion, add a Word concerning the [III-323] unhappy Prince, whose Blood was shed on this Day; with the proper Use to be made of it.

GOOD Sense is our first and last Guide, since by that we are to judge of all other Guides; and there is more Sound than Meaning in the Objection which some make to the Guidance of Reason, when they ask, “Whether we are to judge of that by which we are to be judged,” namely, the holy Scriptures; since we must recur to Reason to know whether the Scriptures be holy, and whether we are to be judged by them. ’Tis to little Purpose to tell us, that “for this we must take the Word and Authority of holy Men.” For we must still consult our Reason, whether these be holy Men or no, and whether we ought to believe them or no; seeing there are many Sets of Men all pretending to be holy, all claiming this Authority to themselves only, and all denying it to every other Set.

OUR Reason must therefore determine, which of all these are the most holy, and whether any of them be more so than ourselves. If the Ways of Holiness, and of Knowledge, be as obvious to us as to them, we may have as much of either as they have; and in Truth, the Sources of both are as open to us as to them. Besides, it ought to mortify their Pride, and be a Lesson of Humility to them, as it is [III-324] surely one of Caution to us, to see that they never agree with one another; that even those of the same Society, professing the same Faith, subscribing the same Articles, and professing to believe the same Scriptures, agree not in the Rules and Explanations which they exhibit to us. Great is their Variance, not only about

Ceremonies, Circumstantials and Discipline, but even about Essentials, about Principles to be believed, about Duties to be practised, and even about the Nature, Operations and Attributes of the Deity: nay, equally great and signal, is their want of mutual Charity, as is their want of mutual Concord. Are these to be our Guides, who thus pull us various and opposite Ways? Can they teach mutual Love and Forbearance, who hate and revile each other? And is it not notable want of Modesty in them, who cannot agree with one another, to expect that we should agree with them all, or with any of them, when we approve not, or comprehend not, what they say; or when what they say, is evidently for their Interest, and against ours, as all their Aims at Power and Wealth evidently are?

THIS Reasoning, if it be true, as I think it is, will serve to condemn Archbishop *Laud*, and his Associates, who exacted a blind Obedience to their own Tenets and Schemes, a [III-325] rigid Conformity to all their Ceremonies, Inventions, and Innovations, and cruelly persecuted all who preferred Conscience to Complaisance, and were better Christians than Churchmen and Courtiers

SURELY it ought to check and cool the Fierceness of Religionists, of all Sorts, towards each other, about Difference in Opinion, to behold how flaming and rigorous every Man is in Behalf of his own; to behold the most ridiculous and pernicious Opinions defended with equal Obstinacy and Bitterness. The *Jew*, the *Papist*, the *Mahometan*, the *Banian*, have all equal Satisfaction in their own several Systems, have all equal Detestation for one another, and for every different Sect.

Is not this a pregnant Proof, that all this furious Zeal is false Zeal; that it is all miserable Bigotry and Prejudice, or constitutional Intemperance of Spirit? A zealous *Jew*, had he been bred a *Papist*, would have been equally zealous for Popery, and perhaps for burning those very *Jews* who are now his Brethren. Had the late Dr. *Sacheverel* been educated in the *Scottish* Kirk, he would, doubtless, have breathed as fierce Persecution against Prelacy, as he has done for it; and treated it with as foul and uncomely Names, as he treated Dissenters, and false Brethren.

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THE same is true of Archbishop *Laud*, and of other hasty and passionate Zealots; provided always, that all other Preferments in another way, be taken away; else the Batteries of their Zeal are often quickly changed, and turned against the Party for whom they were first erected: Witness *Parker* Bishop of *Oxford*, and *Ward* Bishop of *Sarum*, once both holy, praying, and rigid Presbyterians; afterwards both rigid Persecutors of Presbyterians. Is it not probable, that they would have died Presbyterians, had the Church Preferments been out of their Reach?

THIS Consideration therefore, that every Man is fond of his own Opinions, and not the less fond for their being very foolish and extravagant, ought to keep Men from quarrelling about any Opinions; and to look upon those who promote such Quarrels, as Monsters, and their worst Enemies. This Enmity about Notions, Chimera's, Ceremonies, and other idle Disputes; this War about Words, and Creeds, and Articles, a War and Dispute which have produced such mighty Bloodshed and Desolation in the World, has been the sole Work and Contrivance of ambitious Clergymen; who, for Ends of their own, and the Gratification of their Pride and Fury, and other evil Passions, had the Art and Cruelty to make the [III-327] Laity thus to persecute and butcher one another. What infamous Inhumanity was this in Clergymen? What Frenzy and Infatuation in the Laity? But such are ever the Effects of implicit Belief, which is naturally followed by implicit Obedience, which is the certain Beginning, as well as the certain Consequence, of Slavery. All this Evil, Uncharitableness, and Barbarity, arose from the wicked and impossible Attempt to force or suppress private

Judgment and Conscience. Of such mighty Consequence it is, *that the Hypocrite reign not; since where-ever he does, the People will surely be ensnared.*

WHAT added to this Evil and Insolence, this hellish Cruelty, upon the score of Opinion, and made it still more provoking and intolerable, was, that it was all perpetrated in the Name of Christ, of the meek Jesus, and said to be for his Church and Cause: A Declaration so impudent and incredible, that it could only be made by Men who were void of Shame, to Men who wanted Eyes. It was as false as the Gospel was true; nor could a Revelation which inspired or warranted any Degree of Bitterness or Cruelty, ever have come from God, or from any but the Antagonist of God, and Enemy of Man, from Hypocrites reigning, that is, tyrannizing in the Name of the Lord.

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YET so these hardened Deluders argued, trusting to the Power of Delusion; especially when to that Power of Delusion they had added a good Share of Secular Power: And before they could make the Laity such blind Tools, as to be the Tormentors and Executioners of one another, they had eradicated every Grain and Principle of Christianity out of their Hearts, yet made them believe themselves the only true Christians.

THIS was the Use which such Clergymen made of the boundless Trust and Power given them by the Laity; and over the Laity they exercised it without Bounds or Mercy. Such was the Power of *Laud*, and the Clergy of his Time, and such the unhallowed and inhuman Use which they made of it; yet that Use was the common and natural Use, the Power itself being unnatural. Indeed, worldly Power and Opulence, in such as preach the Gospel, are so repugnant to the Spirit and Precepts of the Gospel, that it is no Wonder they cannot thrive, or indeed subsist together; but the Gospel must either destroy them, or they the Gospel. It is too visible on which Side the Victory has chiefly turned. Whatever fills Men with Pride and Hatred, and prompts them to Severity and Revenge, may be Popery or Mahometanism; but is just as contrary to [III-329] Christianity, as Christianity is to all Pride and Hatred, to all Rigour and Vengeance.

FROM hence it is plain who they are, what Set of Men, that have hurt and abused, perverted and abolished, Christianity most. I am sorry to say it, but it is too true, that in many Countries, and at many Times, the Church and Religion have been very distinct and opposite Things: Sure I am, that I have seen very good Churchmen, who were very bad Christians; and some, who were no Christians at all. I will not say, that *Laud* was no Christian; but I may boldly affirm, that he resembled not the first Christians, nor possessed a Christian Temper: An extreme good Churchman, I readily own him.

THAT it is not Religion or Christianity, but chiefly, if not only, Passion and Prejudice, which determine Men to a Fondness for their own Set of Notions, and for their own Community, appears from hence: That if a vicious Man be on their Side, especially if he profess much Zeal for his Party, they cherish and extol him; whilst upon a very unblameable and pious Man, who is not of their Party, they are apt to bestow very ill Language, and often ill Usage. This is not the Spirit of true Religion, but of Passion and Partiality: Yet this Spirit too many derive from their particular [III-330] Religion, which they think the best, but which surely is very bad; and 'twere better they had none, than one which banishes their Reason and Humanity. Now if such a Spirit should ever happen to possess those who profess to be our Guides, we may judge how wise and safe it would be to trust to their Guidance, or even to own them as Guides. Had there been no such Guides about an hundred Years ago, we should not, in all Likelihood, have had this Day now to solemnize. The strange Doctrines, and bitter Oppressions, in those Days, naturally produced such a Day as this Day.

'Tis not Religion, at least not the Christian Religion, that heats and animates such Men; 'tis only Faction, a Complication of evil and unhallowed Passions. Whoever loves or hates, blesses or curses, from Anger or Fondness, from Obligation or Resentment, belies Religion, if he pretend, under its holy Name, to hide base Ends, and a worldly and partial Heart. 'Tis by such selfish and unworthy Ways, that the Church and *Religion* have sometimes come to signify contradictory Things: 'Tis thus that Men, who have had no Religion or Virtue, have been extolled as excellent Churchmen: 'Tis thus that Men of the highest Religion and Virtue, have been, and often are, reviled and [III-331] condemned as bad Churchmen; and 'tis thus that pious Christians have been punished, sometimes burned, by such as were special Churchmen, but not Christians. And, indeed, whenever such false Zealots manifest such a Spirit of Impatience, of Rage and Reviling, they cannot give a clearer Proof that such Spirit is not of Christ, since 'tis so opposite to his Spirit. Nor can Men, who shew themselves full of Bitterness, and want Charity, be at all commissioned by him, who was all Meekness, and gave to his Disciples a new Commandment, that they should *love one another*, and even *love their Enemies*. Yet who so sudden to wax wroth as many of his pretended Successors? Who more forward and unmanly in calling unseemly Names; a Practice as common with many of them, as with the meanest Men, and even the lowest Sort of Women? *Heretic, Atheist, Infidel*, are amongst such Churchmen Words of Reproach, equivalent to the foul Language which the Vulgar throw at one another, and equally shocking to well-bred Men, and true Christians.

SURELY, from Men who come from God, and are Vicegerents to his Son, one would naturally expect a God-like Behaviour, with an uncommon Store of Christian Meekness and Benevolence. How does Rage, how do [III-332] gross Names of Abuse, how do Uncharitableness, Revenge, Avarice, Ambition, and the most savage Passions and Demeanour, suit with a Commission from Heaven, and the Gift of the Holy Ghost?

I PROCEED now to discourse more directly upon the undue Wealth and Power of the Clergy, and the great Evils attending the same; from whence will appear the Calamities and certain Thralldom, attending *the Reign of Hypocrites*.

THE Clergy, whenever they were left to take as much Power and Wealth as they pleased, rarely thought the Whole too much; nor do I remember any Instance, where ever they owned that they had enough. Thus they have ingrossed some Countries whole; of others, the greatest and best Parts; and as much as they could of all. Where they have the Soil, they have the Power in course; and where they have both, (that is to say, in Popish Countries) they are the most unmerciful of all Landlords, and the most oppressive of all Magistrates. Look over the fine Continent of *Italy*, and other Climes where Priests riot and tyrannize, you will find the Laity there, and every-where, starving, when the Clergy are the Land-owners.

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OUGHT not the Laity in other Countries to take warning by this? And is it not monstrous and unnatural for any Number of Laymen to concur with the Clergy in their exorbitant Claims? Should not the Laity too learn by the Example of the Clergy, to take care of themselves? What Wealth the Clergy have, they have from the Laity: By the Power that they seek or assume, they would bind and govern the Laity. Is it natural, or just, or wise, in the Laity, to impoverish themselves, in order to enrich the Clergy? to forge their own Chains, to exalt their own Creatures and Pensioners into Tyrants and Taskmasters, or to suffer them so to exalt themselves? Can they forget the Insolence and Tyranny of Archbishop *Laud*, the terrible Height of Power which he had usurped, with his aspiring Views, to raise the Clergy above the Laity, and the Law? Can they forget his saucy Declaration, that *he hoped to see the Time when ne'er a Jack Gentleman in England should dare to be covered before the meanest Priest?* And, as an Indication, how much many of the Clergy thought, and wished, and designed, as he did; they of this Stamp have been ever since adoring and extolling this

usurping Arch-priest, this Prosecutor and Oppressor, this Instrument and Prompter of Oppression.

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THE Man who contends for Power and Riches to the Priests, is ever popular with the High Priesthood, ever their Darling; nor are they always over-anxious about the Soundness of either his Faith or Morals. Is not this too a Rule and Example to the Laity? And ought not the Laity to prize, and protect, and encourage any Layman, who asserts the Rights and Privileges of his Brethren the Laity? Is it not equally fair, and grateful, and honourable, to cherish and esteem any Clergyman, or Number of Clergymen, who are candid enough to maintain the Interest and Independency of the Laity? Is it not foolish, ungrateful, dishonest, and even barbarous, to revile, or evil-intreat, such Clergymen; to abuse and weaken these our Friends, and to join with our Enemies, with such as would intral us, and bring us under their blind Guidance? Where the Clergy are opulent, do not the People starve? Where the Clergy have Power, are not the People Slaves? Is it not thus in *Spain*, thus in *Italy*? In these Countries, where they are Proprietors of all things, and govern all Men, can they be even said to be Teachers, or even to be Christians? No; their Teaching is deceiving, their Doctrines are Lyes and Impieties, and their Lives antichristian. Christianity and Truth would undo them. They have [III-335] therefore banished Christianity, and erected the Priesthood; and for Christ and Truth, they preach themselves and Fables. *Every one, from the least even unto the greatest, is given to Covetousness; from the Prophet even to the Priest, every one dealeth falsly.* Jer. viii. 10.

THIS is the Effect of Power and Wealth in Churchmen; two things which have proved such a certain and heavy Curse upon Religion and the World, as if the holy Author of both meant thence to convince Mankind, how pernicious, how destructive, they everywhere are to his Church and People, and to warn all Men and Nations against suffering or encouraging them.

GREAT Power and Revenues in Churchmen have not only produced and multiplied every Mischief formerly known in the World, but also produced Mischiefs so new and terrible, as the World, even the Pagan World, never knew before; such as Persecution and Butchery for Conscience and Opinion, Wars and national Massacres for Religion, with that mighty Compendium of all that is horrid, treacherous, and cruel, upon Earth, the execrable Tribunal of the Inquisition. What had Paganism so shocking and horrible, as to be compared to this? Not even their human Sacrifices, which were few in Comparison, [III-336] occasional, and stated. The Inquisition is a continual human Slaughter-house; and in it Men, Myriads of Men, have been immolated after tedious Macerations in dark and frightful Dungeons, after unrelenting Racks and Tortures, with every Species of Treachery, Misery, and Terror; and all for the best thing which they could do, for their Sincerity and Piety, in worshipping the Deity in the way which they were persuaded he liked best.

Now as the Inquisition is nothing but the highest Improvement of Persecution, which begins with Tests and negative Penalties, but ends in Fires and Halts; I will enumerate a few of the many Causes for which Men are committed to it; and they are such, and so various, that no Man, who in the least exercises his own Faculties, or practises common Charity and Mercy, or even has common Commerce with the World, can avoid it.— If he has heard a Heretic preach or pray (that is, if he has thus heard the best and wisest Man upon Earth, who differs from the Extravagancies of Churchmen); if, when he is summoned, he appear not; if, being excommunicated, he sue not for Absolution; if a Heretic (for Example, a Mr. *Locke*, or a Sir *Isaac Newton*) be his Friend; if he do any Act of Kindness for a Heretic; visit him, [III-337] treat him, assist him, or shew him Pity, or give him Counsel: If he suspect the Truth of their lying. Legends, and forged Miracles; if he assert the Indifference of Meats,

or of Days; or interpret Scripture according to his own, and to common Sense: If he conceal any Heresy, his own or other People's; if he spare Father or Mother, Wife or Child;— — — he is for these, or any of these Causes, and for a thousand others, liable to the unparalleled'd Cruelties of the Inquisition. Let me add, that by Heresy is meant every conscientious, honest, rational, and benevolent Opinion, differing from the senseless, narrow, barbarous Whims and Grimaces of the Priests.

As a Proof, what quick Havock such a Tribunal must make in a Country, Cardinal *Turquemedas*, the first Inquisitor General in *Spain*, even in the Infancy of the Inquisition, brought an hundred thousand Souls into it in the small Space of fourteen Years: Of these, six thousand were burnt alive. Observe too, that when such Persons are seized, all that they have is also seized, and their Families left to starve, or sent thither too, if they shew Pity, or attempt Assistance.

CAN the merciful and wise God, can the meek and compassionate Jesus, who laid down his Life for Men, have any thing to do with [III-338] such a Church, or with such hellish Instruments and Butchers, impudently calling themselves *holy*, and their Scene of Butchery the *holy Office*? Wisely did our first Reformers disown her being a Church: *Laud* afterwards, and his Followers, laboured to restore her Credit, contended for her being a true Church, and even derived themselves from her; nay, strove to shew themselves worthy of the Kindred and Descent, by assuming her Pride and Cruelties: Witness their numerous Imprisonments, excessive Fines, Whippings, Dismembrings, and other Barbarities; to their own Infamy, and to the Dishonour of Protestants, and of our Nation.

EQUAL to its other Horrors, is the black Treachery practised by that detestable Court, and by all who belong to, or assist it. In order to ensnare a Man into the Inquisition, they will travel Countries, and cross the Seas, to become acquainted with him; will court, caress, and flatter him, treat him, make him Presents, lend him Money, administer to his Pleasures, seem to love and adopt his Opinions, rail at the Church, curse his Persecutors, and the Inquisition, and swear him an eternal Friendship.— — — All with a black and murderous Purpose to seize him in a proper Place, and carry him off to the Fires and Racks of that [III-339] infernal Tribunal. But where the Interest of that Church is concerned, Villainy changes its Nature, and becomes meritorious; and the blackest Perfidy, and even Perjury, is esteemed and practised as good Policy. Thus the Pope's Legate, at the Head of a Crusade against the *Albigenses*, entrapped their Protector and General, the Count *de Beziers*, solemnly swore not to hurt him, and then seized and imprisoned him.

LET me just add upon this Head, That Blasphemy, or any outrageous Words and Defiance offered to Almighty God, is not punishable nor cognisable in the Inquisition. The great Crime and Pursuit there, is Heresy; that is to say, Blasphemy against the Trade and Opinion of Priests. So that any profane Wretch may blaspheme God without Fear of the Inquisitors, provided he blaspheme like a good Churchman, and say nothing against the Priests, or their Gear: But if Heresy be mixed with his Blasphemy, he cannot hope to escape. Most remarkable too and shocking is the Impudence and Hypocrisy of these Inquisitors, when after having long starved in their horrid Dungeons the wretched Offender after having long terrified, misused and tortured him, they at last deliver him over to the secular Arm: They have then the solemn Assurance, [III-340] *to beseech the Civil Magistrate, in the Bowels of Jesus Christ, not to hurt his Life or Limb*; yet would excommunicate the Civil Magistrate, if he did not burn him alive.— — — Such is the terrible Power and Falshood of *Hypocrites reigning*.

I AM far from thinking, that what I have said about the Inquisition is a Digression. That terrible Part of Popery, or indeed any other Part of Popery, which is all terrible, is too little known in *England*. For some time after the Reformation, a due Horror was kept up amongst

the People by our Preachers against the Church of *Rome*: And it was done like Protestants, and is their Duty at all times; and they who omit it, are unworthy of the Name, and I doubt have dark and unprotestant Designs. But when our Clergy began to contend for equal Dominion and Wealth, they found that they could not consistently rail at the Church of *Rome*, and yet follow her Example. And so far altered was their Style at last, that instead of painting and reviling her, as *an old withered Harlot, the Mother of Abominations and Whoredoms, and drunk with the Blood of the Saints*, it became fashionable to defend her, nay, to praise her, and even to punish such as exposed her: Such uncommon Friends she found in *Laud*, and his Adherents. It is [III-341] true, he and some others of that Cast wrote Books against some Parts of Popery. But what signified writing against Papists, when he was introducing and practising Popery at home? For all Cruelty, or even Severity for Opinion, and all Authority assumed over Conscience and the Soul, is Popery, by whatever Name it be called. Besides, it was natural for *Laud*, who was acting as Pope himself, to deny the Power of the other Pope, at least here; and for the bare Notions, the Ceremonies, the Grimaces, and Mummery of Popery, they are of little Consequence, any farther than as they tend to introduce and preserve its Power, by creating or continuing Delusion in the People.

LAUD and his Adherents were notorious Persecutors; and all Persecution is Popery; and every Degree of it, even the smallest Degree, is an Advance towards the Inquisition. As negative Penalties are the first Degree, so Death and Burning is the last and highest; all the other Steps are but natural Gradations following the first Degree, and introducing the last. For the smallest implies the Necessity of a greater, where the former fails; and consequently of the greatest of all, which is the Inquisition.

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WAS it now at all wonderful, that *Laud* and his Associates were charged with being Papists, when they were openly introducing and exerting all the terrible Parts of Popery, Church Power and Persecution, and thus establishing Church Tyranny, and an Inquisition? For it was thus that that bloody Court was established; and the like Claims and Practices will always introduce and establish it. *Madam de Motteville*, in the Memoirs of *Anne of Austria*, says expressly, upon the Authority and Information of King *Charles the First's* Queen, that *Laud was a good Catholic in his Heart*. It is certain, that he brought in what was most terrible in Popery, its Power and Cruelty, with not a few of its Fooleries and Superstitions. Whoever is a Tyrant and Persecutor, is a Papist, in the only Sense of the Word that Protestants and Freemen are concerned about.

LET such as claim Power to controul Conscience and Opinion, consider this, if they have not considered it already. Let those too, over whom such Power is claimed, consider it; and look upon the Men who claim it, as Enemies and Deceivers, that would seduce them in order to enslave them. How would any Man, any Protestant, (who dares own his Opinion) like the Inquisition? Without doubt he would [III-343] abhor it: Let him likewise abhor the Ways and Practices that lead to it; for it is supported intirely by the Power of the Clergy, which never has, never can produce any Good. As Dominion over Thoughts and Notions is in itself a Monster, the greatest of all Monsters; it must be supported by monstrous Means, even by Priests wielding or directing the civil Sword; the pretended Followers of the humble Jesus, treading upon the Necks of Nations, engrossing their Wealth, and spilling their Blood.

Is any Man fond of his Liberty, as all Men naturally are, and of his own Opinions, (for this too is natural) and of examining all Opinions, which every Man has a Right to do? Would he worship God after his own Way, be subject to no Man's insolent Rebukes and Controul, be exempt from vexatious Suits and Prosecutions, from clerical Curses followed with civil Punishments, with Dungeons, and (as they say) with Damnation? Would he preserve his Conscience, his Person, his Time, and his Property, and all that is dear to him,

safe and intire? He is, in consequence of all this, obliged for ever to oppose all Power in the Clergy, as it has been ever found utterly repugnant to whatever is dear to Men and Societies. I know not, that ever they [III-344] possessed Power without using it perniciously; I know not, that ever they could persecute, and did not persecute: Such of them as had most argued and inveighed against Persecution, when they were under it, exercised it afterwards without Shame or Remorse, whenever they got the Rod into their own Hands. Thus the Catholics acted against the *Arians*; thus the latter acted against the former; both complaining heavily of Persecution, both heavy Persecutors.

St. *Athanasius* could at one time argue,

That the Devil does therefore use Violence, because he has a bad Cause, and the Truth is not on his Side. Jesus Christ, on the contrary, uses only Exhortations, because his Cause is good: *If any Man will be my Disciple, let him follow me.* He forces no Man to follow him; nor enters by Force where he is shut out."

Whence that Father observes, "That this persecuting Sect could not be of God." So argued all the Orthodox upon that Occasion, and I think very truly. St. *Hilary* urges the same Argument to an *Arian* Emperor and Persecutor, and denies the *Arians* to be the true Church, for this very Reason. But the Orthodox, when they were uppermost, changed their Tone; and never were there more merciless Persecutors, Oppressors, and Butchers, than they. [III-345] Hence their own Reasoning has been frequently turned upon them; and the Heretics have charged them in their turn, as being none of Christ's Flock, because they had renounced his Spirit, and exercised Force and Cruelty. The *Donatists* particularly insulted them upon this unchristian Inconsistency.

BUT so it hath eternally happened, that no Reasoning, not even their own Reasoning, could ever restrain Churchmen, orthodox or heterodox, when they were invested with Power, or with the Direction of Power, from using it violently. The *Presbyterians* justly exclaimed against the Violence and Tyranny of Archbishop *Laud* and his Brethren, for harassing, imprisoning, fining, and persecuting them, and even driving them from their native Homes, to seek Peace, and Shelter, and the quiet Worship of God, in the Woods of *America*. He had converted the High Commission Court into an Inquisition: Nay, every Bishop's Court was become an Inquisition; and many of the best Churchmen were silenced, fined, and even deprived, for adhering honestly to the Doctrines of the Reformation, to primitive Strictness of Manners, and for observing the Sabbath.

DID the *Presbyterians* afterwards, these very *Presbyterians*, who had thus groaned and smarted [III-346] under Persecution, and complained of its Injustice and Fury, exercise Charity and Forbearance towards others, who dissented from them, when they were become Masters of Ecclesiastical Rule? No: Never was a more bitter, intolerating Race, or more rigorous Exactors of Conformity. Every Man who differed from them, was an Enemy to the State, an Innovator, forsooth, whom it behoved the State to suppress. They had forgot, that *Laud* had brought the same Charge against them but a little before, and how unmercifully they had been then used as public Incendiaries, Enemies, and Innovators. Nor do any Set of Priests fail to draw down, if they can, the Anger of the Crown upon any Man who has merited theirs. Thus the Monks of *St. Denys* in *France*, in the twelfth Century, accused the famous *Abelard*, then amongst them, with being an Enemy to the Glory and Crown of *France*, only for denying, that their Founder was *Dionysius* the *Areopagite* mentioned in the New Testament. It is indeed a Charge which all domineering Priests in the World have ever brought, will ever bring, against all who offend them, against all who withdraw from their Power, and disown their Systems. The *Presbyterians*, when undermost, felt this to be true, both before and afterwards; and [III-347] always, when they felt it, exclaimed against it; but took it up themselves without blushing, as soon as ever they tasted of Dominion.

THE Churchmen too, they who had persecuted the *Presbyterians* without all Mercy, the Moment they found themselves persecuted by *Parliaments*, made heavy Outcries against Persecution, and preached and wrote for Toleration. It was then that Dr. *Taylor* published his Book in titled, *The Liberty of Prophesying*: An excellent Book it is, and was then extremely applauded by his Brethren of the Episcopal Profession. But did these Churchmen, did even Dr. *Taylor*, after the Restoration, observe their own Reasoning and Writings for Indulgence to Dissenters? No, it was the great Business of the Churchmen, when they had resumed their old Seats and Revenues, to preach, to write, to solicit severe Laws, and then the Execution of these Laws, against their Protestant Brethren, during all that long Reign.

WAS not all this strangely inconsistent, as well as strangely unchristian, on both Sides? And was it not strange Madness, as well as Wickedness, in the Civil Power, to gratify the sour and aspiring Spirit of the Ecclesiastics, by plaguing and punishing the People about Religion? There is no End of their Demands, [III-348] nor of the Unreasonableness of such Demands. In *Spain*, where they profess to burn Heretics, that is to say, Protestants, they complain of it at the same time, as Persecution in a Protestant Country, to imprison a *Romish* Priest, however factious and busy he be in perverting of Protestants. The High Clergy in *England*, tho' avowed Enemies to a Toleration here, would think it terrible Persecution to deny it to themselves, or their Brethren in *Scotland*. Ay, but we of the Church of *England* are the true Church of Christ, says the *English* Episcopalian: And so says *Rome* of herself, so says *Scotland*, so says *Geneva* and *Greece*, and so say all the Churches in the World; and each of them would persecute and abolish all the rest as false or defective.

THIS is not the Spirit of Religion, nor of its Author, but an open Departure from that Spirit. It is the Spirit of Faction and Fury, which utterly blinds Men, and extinguishes that of Peace and Charity, without which Men cannot be Followers of Christ. Did we not daily see it, it would be incredible, to what Extravagancies religious Disputes will carry Men. *Daniel Tilenus*, a learned Man, and public Professor, (I think, of Divinity) became so heated in favour of *Arminianism*, in Opposition to *Calvinism* and Predestination, [III-349] that he declared, were he obliged to change his Religion, he would turn *Turk* sooner than *Calvinist*; for he denied that the *Calvinists* believed in God, and owned that the *Turks* did. *Grotius*, when Ambassador for *Sweden* in *France*, had two Chaplains, a *Calvinist*, and a *Lutheran*, who preached by turns. What they principally laboured was, to revile one another, and their Sermons were only Invectives. The Ambassador, tired and ashamed of the Extravagancies of these reverend Madmen, begged them to explain the Gospel, without wounding Christian Charity. This good Advice neither of them relished. His *Lutheran* Chaplain particularly replied, that *he must preach what God inspired*; and went on in the old Strain. For all the Ravings of hot-headed Divines are fathered upon God. *Grotius*, at last, ordered him either to forbear railing, or preaching. The meek Preacher turned away in great Wrath, expressing his Amazement, that *a Christian Ambassador should shut the Mouth of the Holy Ghost*. This he thought terrible Usage, and Persecution; and published his Complaints every where, that *Grotius had shut the Mouth of the Holy Ghost*; that is, his Chaplain's Mouth.

I RETURN to consider the Consequences of Power, and great Wealth, in the Clergy. These Acquirements of Opulence and Dominion [III-350] were so foreign to the first preaching of the Gospel, so little known to its Author and Disciples, that 'tis no wonder they assorted so ill with it, and at last so strangely transformed it, and even banished all but the Name. What can be seen of Christ and his Humility, of the Apostles and their Poverty, in the Pomp and Pride, in the Fierceness and Domination, of Priests? Is aught of the Plainness and Simplicity of the Gospel to be found in the Intricacies of School Divinity? in the endless Wranglings, and wonderful Distinctions, of Ecclesiastics? Does the Pope, or such as resemble, or would resemble, the Pope, bear any Likeness of Christ, or of St. *Peter*? Did the Ambition of the Bishops and Clergy, their Avidity for Power and rich Churches, for which they contended

with Blows, and Bloodshed, and Slaughter, come from Christ, or from the Genius of his Religion? Were the Seditions, Tumults, and Wars, which ensued such ambitious Pursuits, the Effects of a Christian, or of a clerical Spirit? Yet were not such Evils and terrible Calamities immediately derived from the Thirst of the Clergy after Grandeur and Authority?

AT first they had no Revenue but Alms, and of these Alms they had only a Share; but to that Share they at last added (I had almost [III-351] said, feloniously) the Whole, cheating the Donors, and robbing the Poor. They afterwards greatly enlarged these Revenues, (which were at first chiefly usurped) by Arts and Contrivances sufficiently wicked and vile, even by deceiving silly Women and Bigots, and selling them Salvation for present Money and Rents; by terrifying the weak and dying, and forcing them to compound for Heaven, by parting with all that they possessed on Earth. Father *Paul*, that rational and honest Clergyman, says, that the Church is beholden, for her greatest Legacies and Donations, to the Bounty of infamous Women, Strumpets, and Prostitutes; or to that of peevish People, who thus gratified their Spite towards their own Blood and Relations. And as the Church had no Riches, but what were freely given her, or taken and gotten unjustly by her; so she had no Power, but what was either begged or usurped. What Use they have made of both, we have already seen. It is most natural, that what is ill gotten, should be ill used.

It would make a curious History, to discover and explain minutely, from what particular Men, and by what particular Arts and Application, every Farm, every Estate and Donation, now possessed by Churchmen, was at first acquired. I question whether any Revenues [III-352] in the World were ever so wickedly procured; since, to enrich the Church, all Means, even Wickedness, Murder, and Impiety, were deemed lawful. Thus Assassins and Blasphemers merited Protection and Absolution; Tyranny and Oppression were warranted and sanctified; holy Snares were laid, false Terrors spread, Miracles forged, God's Name belyed, and Jesus, and his blessed Mother, profanely personated by Priests, to delude Enthusiasts; as if these heavenly Beings had thus honoured them with a Visit in Person.

It were endless to enumerate all the Arts and Impieties, Impostures and Lyes, by which Churchmen formerly filled their Coffers, at the Expence, and through the Stupidity, of Laymen. And though no Possessions were ever so impiously obtained, I never heard any Instance of their parting with them from Remorse or Shame, even whilst the right Heirs, thus deprived of their Estates, were starving, and the Possessors (or rather Usurpers) gorged with more Wealth than they could use, even in their Luxury and Debauches. Whatever was once annexed to the Church, in these Days of Usurpation and Darkness, (however knavishly or violently obtained) was forthwith sacred and unalienable: Nay, it became no less than Sacrilege, to divest her of what she had [III-353] gained by Robbery and Fraud. For, whatever was once hers, even her Frauds and Crimes, were holy; and it was profane to censure them, or indeed to see them; and he was profane, nay atheistical, who did it. Whoever found fault with the Church, was an Enemy to the Church; and he who was an Enemy to the Church, was an Atheist. Hence the frequent and ridiculous Application of Atheism and Blasphemy, till these two Words, of themselves very awful, grew contemptible. As to the Quantity of the Church's Wealth, she never knew any Stint or Bounds; but whilst the Laity had to give, she took, till in some Countries she had all, and they Rags, and no Bread.

EVEN in this Protestant Nation it is computed, that they have a fifth Part of our Wealth; yes, that fifteen or twenty thousand Priests are endowed with the fifth Part of the Property of eight Millions of People. Are they satisfied with this? And do they never aim at more, or complain of this as too little? If they do, 'tis not for the Reputation of their Modesty: I am sorry to add, that they are in a way of draining and monopolizing all the Wealth of *England*. It is thought, that the Revenue of the Churchmen is at present as large as in the Times of Popery, notwithstanding the Demolition of so many Monasteries, and the [III-354] Seizure of

their Revenues; considering that the Clergy then maintained the Poor, who are now supported chiefly by the Laity, at an immense Charge, no less than two Millions a Year. There are indeed some Individuals, who have very small Salaries: But whose Fault is that? Are there not others, who wallow in Thousands, yet do less Duty than such as are in constant Service with Appointments of ten or twenty Pounds a Year? Why should not the Wealth of the Church be more equally and charitably divided? But so it often is, that the more Churchmen have, the more they seek, yet the less they do. To all this I wish it were not in my Power to add (but it is true, and I must add it) that whatever Corruptions have crept into the Church, did so by the Contrivance, at least by the Connivance, of Churchmen, and were never afterwards removed by their Consent.

THEY are always forward to complain of Innovations, and of disturbing Things that are settled. But who have made more Innovations than Churchmen? Who have more disturbed and changed Religion and States, by their Ambition, by their Disputes, by their turbulent Behaviour, and exorbitant Claims? And who are so much given to Change? What Changes, what violent and lawless Changes, [III-355] were there not wrought by *Laud*, and his Brethren, in his Time, and always attempted by those of his Spirit ever since? The Laity have been only on the Defensive, warding off the Attempts, and monstrous Demands, of such of the Clergy, and answering their wild Writings. What is a great Part of Ecclesiastical History, but a continual Detail and Repetition of the Efforts of the Clergy to govern Mankind, and to master the World? Was not this an Innovation with a Witness, a Propensity to Change, an actual and alarming Change? Were they not continually attempting to be what they were not, to have what they had not, still to be richer, still to be greater? Could there be a greater Change than from the Almsmen of the People to become Lords and Princes; from Poverty and Humility, to rise to Mitres and Diadems, and Dominion? And could such a Change, a Change so mighty and unnatural, be accomplished without turning the World upside down?

THIS is something more than *quieta movere*, something more than disturbing Things that were settled. Did not *Laud* actually master and abolish the Laws of his Country, assert the Independency of the Clergy upon the civil Power, and terrify the Judges from issuing Prohibitions, as they were actually sworn [III-356] to do? And did the Spirit of *Laud*, and this Passion in the Clergy of his Stamp, for Dominion, Independency, and princely Revenues, die with *Laud*? No: They have even improved upon his Scheme, and added, if possible, to his wild and enslaving Pretensions; and, as a Proof that they were the Pretensions of the Body, at least of the Majority, the Convocation could never be persuaded to censure them.

IN short, whoever doubts whether they (I mean all along, such of the Clergy as ambitiously pursued Power) have not been the Authors of Changes in the World, of great and calamitous Changes; whether they have not themselves changed and degenerated from their Patterns and Originals; need only read History, and compare them with Christ, and his Apostles; compare their Pretensions, Pomp, Luxury, and Possessions, with the Simplicity, Humility, Labour, and Disinterestedness of the primitive Christians.

THE Truth, I doubt, is, when they make this Complaint, which is very usual with them, that *it is not safe to disturb Things which are established*, they only mean to discourage People from disturbing them in their favourite Pursuit after Power and Riches. Whatever is established by the New Testament, and the [III-357] Law, no Man, that I know, is for disturbing. But if they have Aims and Demands which are neither warranted by Christ nor the Constitution, it is right, and Christian, and legal, to disturb, and even to defeat them.

SUCH high Claimers therefore of princely Rule and Opulence, (if there be any such) are the Men given to Change; and it is always just to oppose Usurpation, to redress Grievances, remove Nuisances, and to attack Fraud, Avarice, and Nonsense.

It would be endless to deduce Particulars. But suppose any assuming Clergyman were so extravagant and daring, and had so little Regard to Conscience, and public Tranquillity, as to attempt to establish an Ecclesiastical Tribunal in our Colonies abroad, to the Terror and Affliction of our Brethren there, who were many of them first driven thither by the Oppression and Barbarity of such Courts here, especially in Archbishop *Laud* 's Reign; would not such an Attempt tend to a bold Innovation, and discover a busy, an arrogant, and dangerous Spirit in such a Clergyman; and would he not be a good Subject, and an honest Man, who set himself against such a lewd Attempt, and exposed its wicked Tendency?

SUPPOSE any other Clergyman, such an Enemy to the Civil Constitution, and to the [III-358] Church of *England*, or such a Deserter from it, as to contend for the Independency of the Clergy, for their Exemption from the Civil Laws, nay for trying a Clergyman, when he is to be tried, by a Jury of Clergymen; would not such a Man deserve severe Animadversion and Punishment; and would it not be honest and meritorious, to defend the Laws, and repulse this their Enemy, this Innovator, this Papist?

SUPPOSE any other designing Priest, fond of promoting Superstition for the Ends of Authority and Gain, should abuse the Credulity of the People, by pretending to convey Holiness into Ground and Stone Walls; as if Earth, or Stone, or any thing inanimate, were susceptible of Sanctity, or their Quality to be altered by solemn Words; and all this without any Colour of Warrant from Law or Gospel, but in Opposition to the Spirit of both; would not such a crafty Priest be a false Guide, an Innovator, who relinquished Truth, and the Protestant Religion, to promote Error, and to introduce Popery and Delusion? And would not he who resisted and confuted him, be a Friend to Society, a Defender of Truth, and a Foe to Fraud?

SUPPOSE any Clergyman so bent upon exalting Churchmen, and their Revenue, (for [III-359] the sure way of raising them, is to raise that) that he encouraged Designs and Schemes for transferring the whole Wealth of a Nation, by no slow Degrees, into the Coffers of the Clergy; would not such a Man be a Promoter of Change, of an universal and melancholy Change, and a declared Enemy to the Laity? And would it not be becoming Laymen, nay, incumbent on them, to be upon their Guard, to secure their Estates, and to preserve themselves and Posterity from Poverty and Vassalage?

SUPPOSE (once more) that any other Clergyman should have the Boldness to declare publicly, that a Brother Clergyman (a Bishop, for Example) still continued a true Bishop of the Church of Christ, even though he stood convicted of, and deprived for, the highest and blackest Crimes, namely, Perjury, Disloyalty, Conspiracy, Treason, and Rebellion; would not such a Declaration be highly insolent, scandalous, and punishable? To tell those who make Priests, that they cannot unmake them, nor one of them, would be to tell them, that Priests are above the Law and the Laity; that the Clergy have a Power and Designation, which Laymen cannot take away, though the Laity and the Law actually create them, and confer upon them the only Designation that [III-360] they can have, nay, confer their whole Office: Nor does our Constitution particularly own, or know any Character in any Subject whatsoever, but what the Law alone bestows; and all the Clergy renounce upon Oath all Power whatsoever, but what they derive from hence. An Act of Parliament would To-morrow effectually degrade all the Clergy in *Great Britain*; that is, reduce them all to Laymen, and create so many Priests immediately out of the Laity, without a Jot more Apparatus or Ceremony. Whoever is declared to be a Priest by any Society, is a Priest to them, and ceases to be one the Moment they declare him none. The strange Notion of an indelible Character is arrant Nonsense, and true Priestcraft, nay, the Ground-work of all Priestcraft. Would it therefore be borne by an Assembly of Lawmakers, so tender of their Liberties and of Protestantism as ours, to have this same indelible Character, this Root of Popery, maintained to their Faces? And would it not draw down their Indignation and Censures upon the bold Offender, I had

almost said, Deceiver? Surely it would; and therefore,

I MENTION these Instances as bare Possibilities, which can never be suffered in this free Protestant Country, but are common in Popish Countries, nay, are some of the reigning [III-361] Tenets and Practices which support Popery. How zealous *Laud* was in such Popish Practices and Tenets, I have not now Time to explain. Read his Life and Trial.

It is now high time to draw towards a Conclusion, by considering briefly what produced the Tragedy of this Day; a Consideration which will lead us to see how such Tragedies are to be prevented. The immediate Instruments of the King's Murder were violent Men, supported by a powerful Army, gained and commanded by an Usurper. This Power in the Army, and his Power over it, were the Effects of the Civil War, which was itself caused by the Misunderstanding and Struggle between the King and Parliament. What originally produced this Misunderstanding, which produced all the rest, is what we are principally to attend to. It is of much less Moment to know by what Hands the King fell, than to know how such Hands, or any Hands, came to be lifted up against him.

Now, if we inquire into the first Cause, from which all the rest naturally followed, we shall find that the Violence of his Reign caused his violent End. It is not to be denied nor disguised, that from the very Beginning the Court aimed at arbitrary Power, openly pursued it, and for fifteen Years together practised [III-362] it, raising Money without Law, and against Law; which was Robbery in those who enforced the Collection of it: Imprisoning Men, the best and greatest Men, without Law, and against Law; which was lawless Cruelty: Seizing the Lands and Estates of others, without Right, and against Right; which was flagrant Oppression and Violence: Assuming and exercising a Power to dispense with Laws, that is, a Power to make and annul Laws; which was manifest Usurpation: And, in short, establishing an arbitrary and *Turkish* Authority over the Persons, and Rights, and Fortunes of the People; which was apparent and undeniable Tyranny.

BETWEEN Law and Violence, between Right and Tyranny, there is no Medium, no more than between Justice and Oppression. If King *Charles* had no Right to act thus, then his acting thus was Tyranny. If he had a Right, of what Force are Laws and Oaths; and where is our Constitution, the boasted Birthrights of *Englishmen*, and our ancient *Magna Charta*? Why was his Son King *James* turned out; why declared to have forfeited? And I would ask the Admirers and Defenders of King *Charles* I. how they would have liked, how borne such Violences, such lawless Doings and Misrule in King *William*; how in [III-363] the late Reign; how in this? How would they have relished the Imprisonment of their Persons, Taxes laid on, and exacted without Consent of Parliament, arbitrary and excessive Fines, their Estates seized, their Families impoverished or famishing? Doubtless, no Men would have been louder in the Cry of Tyranny; and very just and natural would have been such a Cry. No Sort of Men talk more warmly and frequently now in favour of Liberty and Law. How do they reconcile such Zeal and Professions with an Approbation of the Reign of King *Charles* I. which was one continued Series of Oppressions, had abolished Liberty and Law, and established universal Slavery? How would they have borne such terrible and tyrannical Usage? Very impatiently, I dare say. If they say otherwise, no reasonable Man will believe them, nor have they, upon Trial, ever shewed much Passiveness of Spirit. Besides, if they justify the enslaving Measures then, they are not in earnest, or utterly inconsistent with themselves now, when they extol public Liberty, and are for restraining Kings and their Ministers to Reason and Law.

WHAT we have therefore to do on this Day, is not only to abhor the bloody Death of the King, and wicked Instruments of it, [III-364] but to abhor also his evil and wicked Government for fifteen Years together; abhor the impious Principles which were then countenanced and prevailed, with the traiterous and ungodly Broachers and Promoters of

such; and all the evil and arbitrary Counsellors then and since. And as we lament his latter End, let us detest the Beginning and Course of his Reign, which was as enormous and guilty, as his Catastrophe was mournful and barbarous. Was it crying Guilt thus to cut him off, as surely it was? Was it not also crying Guilt in the Crown, to abandon its Duty, to violate the Coronation Oath, to tread upon Law and Justice, to persecute Conscience, to rob and oppress the People, and from limited and lawful, to become lawless and arbitrary? And is it not equally reasonable, equally becoming us as *Englishmen* and Freemen, to commemorate and detest an Administration so pernicious and devouring, Measures so black and lawless? Is it not our Duty to take Warning by them, and whenever we are threatned with them, to guard against them; to watch every Principle of Slavery, and suppress it betimes; to rejoice that we live in happier Times, live in a free Government, and under the free Course of the Laws; to pray for the Continuance of such an unvaluable Blessing, and be dutiful and [III-365] assisting to that Good and Great Prince, who secures it to us, and claims nothing to himself, but what our Parliaments and the known Laws give him?

LET us also learn a Lesson from the Behaviour of the Clergy at that Time; and as they were then become wanton with extravagant Power, and used it very cruelly, in persecuting and oppressing their Fellow-Subjects; let us take Care for the future, that they who are set apart for the Purposes of Holiness, be not spoiled by the unnatural Possession and Exercise of worldly Business and Authority. Methinks it is profaning holy Men as they are, to embark them in secular Affairs, in the Commerce and Occupations of Laymen and Worldlings. As they miserably misled that unhappy Prince, King *Charles* I. it may serve as a Warning to other Princes from being led by them: And as they promoted and justified all unlawful and merciless Impositions upon the Laity; as they contended that we were obliged to undergo all Servitude, to be tame Slaves to the mere Will of the Prince, and to obey it as our only Law; we may from hence infer, that whenever they leave preaching the Gospel, and turn Courtiers and Politicians, they are out of their Element, and thence grow more wild and extravagant, as well as [III-366] more wicked, and shameless, and false, than other Men are.

It would never have entered into the Heart of a Layman, that the merciful God authorized Iniquity, Perjury, Perfidiousness, and Tyranny; and that any miserable Wretch, who had all these crying Sins to answer for, was still Sacred, and the Vicegerent of God; or that God, who hates Wickedness, had forbid to resist, that is, to remedy the highest and most complicated Wickedness, nay, damned all who had Sense and Virtue enough to do so.

THESE Positions were Monsters, formed by Clergymen out of their Sphere, and in high Fashion with *Laud* and his Associates. Was it very natural for the Laity to love and reverence such Clergymen, or these monstrous Positions? *The Lord said unto me, The Prapbets prophesy Lyes in my Name; I sent them not, neither have I commanded them, neither spake unto them: They prophesy unto you a false Vision and Divination, and a Thing of Nought, and the Deceit of their Hearts,* Jer. xiv. 14. Would it not therefore be prudent to keep all Clergymen from thus exposing themselves to Hate and Ridicule, and from promoting Mischief and Misery amongst the Laity? And is not this their Guilt infinitely more heinous and aggravated, than that of [III-367] the greatest private Sinner can be, as it affects and involves whole Nations, and is impiously covered with the Veil of Religion?

ACCORDING to this Rule, and I think it a true Rule, the blackest Felon that ever suffered, was an Innocent in comparison of *Laud*, and those of his Leaven; and had *Laud* consumed his Time in Debauchery, he could have done but small Hurt, compared to what he did as a Troubler and Seducer of the World. His Morals, as a private Man, did but heighten his Credit to do Mischief. With what an ill Grace must such Men rebuke private Vice, and the Detail of Sins, they who vend and commit Sins by the Gross? This is indeed to swallow Camels, and strain at Gnats. Crimes are to be measured by their Consequences; and he who persecutes Men, he who misleads them and enslaves them, is the most guilty, the most monstrous and

gigantic of all Criminals. Had *Laud* been a Parish Priest, and confined himself to the Duties of one; or, being a Bishop, had he done so; he, who was a Man of Learning and Morals, might have been an innocent, nay, a useful Man. But as he and his Brethren would needs sway the Court and the Nation, they overturned both by the wickedest of all Means, even by an Excess of Tyranny and Oppression. It was they who raised, or at least [III-368] increased the Storm, which at last ruined the Public, and overwhelmed them in the public Ruins.

THESE therefore are the Things and Persons now proper to be commemorated. From these we are to take our Marks and Warnings, against a Relapse into the like evil Days and Calamities: And if there be any Curse still subsisting, derived from the King's Blood, it must justly lie upon them who approve the Men and Measures that first rendered him arbitrary and oppressive, and thence unpopular and distrusted. Here the Evil began, and from hence it was propagated like a Train. Had he always ruled as he afterwards too late proposed to rule, when Men were irritated and engaged, and full of Distrust, there had been no Civil War, nor a conquering Army, nor an *Oliver*, nor consequently Royal Blood spilt. His Design and Promises to govern better afterwards (when he found that the Laws and Constitution would prevail) have been often urged and repeated, and are a Confession that he had governed ill before. Perhaps he meant to perform them. It is certain his Misrule had been sadly felt; nor is there any Proof but his Word, that he intended to change: That Word had been often and egregiously broken, especially in the Bill of Rights, which he solemnly [III-369] promised to observe; yet he afterwards openly violated that just Bill.

How this Prince comes to be still so extremely popular amongst many of the Clergy, and consequently amongst many of the Laity, influenced by them, is obvious enough. He was a very great Bigot to the Church, to Ceremonies, and Shew in Religion, and to the Power and Pomp of Churchmen. These he cherished, and exalted, and obeyed; invested them with his own Power, and surrendered to them almost the whole Supremacy; and not only suffered them to enjoy the Use of it as a Present from him, but suffered them to seize it for themselves, and even to deny his Title to it. For such Court and Favour to them, for humouring them in their Persecution of the *Puritans*, for his glutting them with Power, and becoming their Creature rather than Sovereign and Head of the Church, they promoted and consecrated all the Excesses, Oppressions, and lawless Measures of his Reign, because all these Violences were exercised over the Laity; and the Churchmen were so far from feeling them, that they shared in his Domination, and acted the King too in their Place and Turn. This is the true Source of so much Merit and Praise; for this he is adored and sainted; for this he has been often [III-370] compared to Jesus Christ in his Sufferings; and for this the Guilt of murdering him has been represented as greater, than that of crucifying our blessed Saviour.

THESE their Panegyrics are, in Truth, partial and shameful in all respects, as well as impious and profane; since thence they who utter them make it evident, that they care not how a Prince abuses his Trust, and oppresses his Lay Subjects, if he will but humour and aggrandize the Clergy; else why so much Incense and Applause bestowed upon a Prince who actually did so? This is partial and dishonourable: nor can there be a greater Insult upon the Laity, than to desire, or even hope, that they should join in such Praises and Applause. They who feel Oppression, cannot extol him who commits it, nor reckon him a good King, who uses them like Slaves.

No Sort of Men are more tender than the Clergy, when their Property, or Persons, or Privileges are touched, or more severe and resenting, or even more unforgiving, towards such as meddle with either. I fear much, that had the Clergy been then used as the Laity were, treated like mean Slaves, worried with arbitrary Power and Impositions, and imprisoned upon mere Will and Command; [III-371] this Day would not have been commemorated at all, or perhaps commemorated in a very different manner. Why should not the Laity too have felt and resented Indignities done, and Violences committed, against the Laity? Was it natural or

possible to praise and honour the Author of such Violence and Indignities? When the Clergy were pleased and gratified, they might rejoice, though it be not generous to triumph, when others suffer, nay, for such Sufferings. But the Laity could not express Joy, when they had just Cause to sorrow and mourn; or was it possible they should?

Such is the Difference between the Laity and the High Clergy, with regard to King *Charles* the First, and Archbishop *Laud*. They adore the Archbishop, because he raised their Power beyond all Reason and Law, and was furious in the Exercise of such usurped Power: They adore the King for suffering such Encroachment, for being subservient to the Pride and Pursuits of Churchmen, and for dividing the Sovereignty with them. But as both the King and the Archbishop abused their Power, oppressed and persecuted the Laity, the Laity can commend neither; and have good Reason to pray, that they may never see such a King, nor such an Archbishop, any more for ever; [III-372] and bless God for their present happy and different Situation. This is indeed just and copious Cause for Joy and Thanksgiving. King *GEORGE* reigns, the Laws prevail, Dissenters and private Conscience are protected, the Clergy have their Dues, and to all Men their Property is religiously secured. This is Protection, this is Liberty, this is Renown, and we are happy, and ought to be dutiful and content.

As to such Churchmen who will be contending, that the Clergy are a distinct Body from the Laity, with separate Interests and Views; they cannot be surprised to see, that the Laity improve the Hint and Example, and take care of themselves. It is very natural for the Laity to remember, that they alone give and continue to the Clergy what they have, and make them what they are. It is natural for them to be alarmed, when they hear the lawless Rule of King *Charles* the First applauded, his lawless and oppressive Measures justified or excused, and himself sainted and adored. This is a bold and awakening Insult, and a full Declaration, that if High Churchmen can but flourish and domineer as they did then, they care not how much the Laity droop and decay; nay, approve and encourage the Bonds and Distresses of the [III-373] Laity: And as a Proof how violently in earnest such High-churchmen are in their Panegyrics upon that King, and his Reign, they treat as Monsters, and false Brethren, all impartial Clergymen, that refuse to falsify and daub as they do; insomuch that such reasonable and moderate Clergymen as confess the Truth, and love the Law and the Laity, and are willing to do Justice to both, are scorned, and derided, and reviled, as bad Churchmen, that is, as Friends to the Constitution, to Liberty, and Laymen, and such only as the Laity ought to esteem. Surely the Laity cannot but consider, as open Foes, such Men as vindicate the Oppression and Bondage of the Laity: And that the Laity were thus used by that King, is Fact; and 'tis Fact also, that in using the Laity thus, he was abetted and prompted by all High-churchmen then, and justified by all such ever since. Is it not full time for us Laymen to see these things, to resent such Insults, and to mark such Insulters? Is it not fair in us, is it not natural for us, to distinguish with all Countenance and Favour, those Clergymen alone, who contend for the Liberty and Rights of the Laity, and condemn all the mad and extravagant Claims, and all the selfish and violent Tenets of High-Churchmen?

[III-374]

As to the black Fact committed on this Day, all Men agree to condemn and abhor it, as utterly unlawful, violent, and full of Guilt. But this is not enough for High-churchmen, unless all the Oppressions and Excesses, all the wicked Counsellors and Instruments, of that Reign, be likewise excused, if not extolled. This is what they themselves have over confidently undertaken to do, in the Face of the most glaring Truth and Facts. How we Laymen ought to consider this Day, and these Men, I have already said. In Truth, had there not been such Men then, there had not been such a Day now. By them the unhappy King, of himself very vain of unbounded Power, and fond of setting Royalty above Right, was abetted and encouraged to pursue such Measures as ended in much Misery to him, as well as to his People: By such Men his Son was tempted to try the same dangerous and guilty Experiment; and by trusting

to such Men, to their unnatural Whims, and deadly Flattery, he lost his Crown and his Honour, lived an Exile, and died a Beggar.

FROM hence, and from all that has been said, let us learn a Lesson proper for this Day, and for every Day; that is, let us take great Care, according to the Words and Warning [III-375] of my Text, *that the Hypocrite reign not, lest the People be ensnared.*

P. S. THE Author of this Sermon, finding his Matter increase, and his Sermon already too long, reserves what he has further to say, to a Supplement, addressed to a very important and most solemn Churchman.

***A Supplement to the SERMON preached at Lincoln's-Inn, on Jan. 30, 1732.
By a LAYMAN. Addressed to a very important and most solemn CHURCHMAN,
Solicitor-General for Causes Ecclesiastical.*** ↩

HOLY FATHER,

I APPLY to you without Form or Compliment, about certain Doubts and Difficulties, which, I am told, no Man is so fit as you to answer and resolve. Your great Abilities (I do not say in Divinity; for that is a very different thing, but) in Canons, Distinctions, Discipline, and all Parts of Church Attorneyship, are allowed by all Men. Even such as dispute his Majesty's Title to the Crown, allow you that of an *excellent Churchman*. As I aim at no Preferment, and therefore bring no Incense, I was willing to shew you, that it [III-377] was possible to dedicate to you without Worship, or Dawbing. Besides, I take this my Address to you to be exceeding suitable; since you, who have made Church Power, and Church Revenues, so much your Care and Pursuit, are a proper Judge, whether what I have said of the evil Influence of Church-Power, and Revenue, over Religion, and human Society, be true.

YOU, who must have traced Ecclesiastical Grandeur up to its first Sources, and marked its Progress, Improvements, and Variations, can readily explain how it arose, how it was used, whether righteously acquired, whether honestly employed, how it affected the Laity, how the Clergy; what Tendency it had to advance Religion and civil Happiness, what Success in mending the Morals, and increaseing the Humility and pious Labours of Churchmen.

YOU, who are known to contend for Ecclesiastical Authority, can demonstrate what that Authority is, whence derived, by whom, and over whom to be exercised, how to be reconciled to Conscience, Christianity, and common Sense; whether it can produce or preserve Conviction, and make Men Christians, or continue them so; and whether such Authority be consistent with Reason and Grace, [III-378] or whether Reason and Grace do not exclude and destroy such Authority; as also how such Authority consists with the Oaths of the Clergy, who swear to renounce all Claim to any Power of any kind or sort whatsoever, but what they derive from the Crown.

PRAY tell us, what any Clergyman can do, which any Layman, who can read and write, cannot do, and may not do, if the Law appoint him? Is it not the Law alone, which has the Power to qualify, and can alone disqualify? Whoever maintains the contrary, incurs a *Præmunire*. Have the Clergy any Revelation but the Bible? And is not such Revelation made to the Laity, and indeed, without Restriction, to all Men? And are not the necessary and practical Parts of the Bible very plain, and intelligible to Laymen? And have Clergymen ever agreed about explaining the dark Parts? I wish none had ever endeavoured to darken the clearest Parts of it, or to hide and suppress the Whole. If the Assertion of any Powers invisible in Men, that is, Powers which have no visible Effect, be other than a Dream and Forgery, you will do well to shew what they are, whence they are, and how they effect their strange and invisible Feats. To read Prayers, and Scriptures, and Sermons; to give Bread and Wine, and say Words over [III-379] them; to sprinkle Water upon Babes; to declare what offends God and his Law; and to wear Gowns, and Bands, and broad Hats, are Exploits which may be performed by very mean Men amongst the Laity: And to judge and declare who are qualified to perform them, is a Task as easy as the rest. Will you say, that such Functions are less effectual in a Layman, or more so in a Clergyman? Who told you so? It may be so said in the old Popish Canons, or Schoolmen, and in the extravagant Writings of some Ecclesiastics; but no where in the New Testament.

WILL you say, that God blesses any pious Office done by a Layman, less than when done by a Clergyman? And what Idea would this give us of God? Will you say, that a little Infant, free from Offence, and incapable of offending, is therefore debarred from Heaven, or any Part of Bliss, because he dies unbaptized, or was baptized by a Layman? And what Idea does such a Tenet exhibit of the divine Being? Or, if a Layman can do this sacred Office effectually, why not more Offices, and all?

YOU know what impious Notions many Clergymen have broached, and held about Baptism, as if no Salvation could be had without it, and no Baptism without them. [III-380] This is one of the monstrous, I had almost said, blasphemous Whims, resulting from the other monstrous Whim, that of an indelible Character; which is a Whim so very strange and inconceivable, that where 'tis once believed and established, 'tis no Wonder to see the wildest Extravagancies, and even Impossibilities and Contradictions maintained and believed in Consequence of it: Since from any senseless Position whatsoever, endless Deductions of Nonsense can be drawn, and may seem naturally to follow; and one Contradiction shall produce, and illustrate, and prove an hundred Contradictions. Thus, if either the indelible Character, or apostolic Succession, or Infallibility, or Power of binding and loosing be but allowed; from these, or any of these, all the most fraudulent, fanatical, and ingrossing Claims of the Pope, and Popish Clergy, may be deduced and established.

MAY not a Layman perform all spiritual Offices, where there are no Clergymen? Is a Chapter of the Bible less edifying when read by a Layman, than when read by a Clergyman? I ask this the rather, because I knew a Tradesman, who read Prayers and the Scripture on *Sundays* at a foreign Fishery, where there were no Clergy, and he was therefore thought proper to be put into Deacon's Orders, [III-381] as if he had been thence the better qualified for reading Prayers, and the Bible. Was this Employment in him either more sacred, or more effectual, afterwards than before? If it was, What an Idea does this too give us of the Great God? Or, have the Clergy succeeded better than Laymen, in appointing one another? Father *Paul* says, and History says, the contrary. That excellent Writer lays it down as Fact, That the best Bishops were made by Princes; and that, whenever the Clergy had the conducting of their own Elections, infinite Disorders ensued. So little, or so ill Effect had their indelible Character in making and appointing one another. Was not this Pretence to an indelible Character, one great Source of Popery, and the Inquisition, and of all the Terrors, Frauds, and Deformities of Priestcraft? And was it not natural for *Indelibility* to produce *Infallibility*; and is there more to be said for the former, than for the latter?

I SHOULD also be glad to hear you discourse rationally about Pluralities and Commendams, and shew their Consistency with the Duty and Call of such Churchmen as possess them. As they who do not reside, do not labour; should such as do no Work, receive Pay? *Beneficium propter Officium*, was the Style [III-382] of old; and Benefices were given for spiritual Purposes. Indeed, the temporal Part was only considered in a second and circumstantial Sense. "Afterwards, says Father *Paul*, the spiritual Part was forgot, and nothing but the Profits regarded." This was lamentable Corruption; yet such as dealt in it, and, in Truth, in little else, called themselves holy Men; that is, the most sordid, the most corrupt, and covetous, such as made Traffic of Churches and Souls, assumed to be holy, and claimed an indelible Character.

IN the primitive Times, it was scandalous and forbidden, that any Clerk should quit his Cure, though ever so poor, for another, though richer. It was alledged and ordained, That if any Bishop despised his Bishoprick for being small, and sought after a greater Diocese, and larger Rents, he should not only never obtain the greater Bishopric, which through Avarice he desired, but even lose that which he already possessed, and through Pride despised. What can be a more sacred Trust, than a Trust of Souls; what so important? Does it not require all the Time and Attention that mortal Men can bestow? And how is such Duty to be reconciled to

Pluralities and Commendams, how to Non-residence? The holding of more Churches than one, was adjudged by some [III-383] principal Fathers of the primitive Church, to be spiritual Polygamy: And I question whether a Plurality of Wives, though Felony by our Law, be so sinful, or can have such bad Consequences, when we consider, that some Pastors, who are greatly endowed, hardly ever see the Faces of their Flocks: Some have several Flocks, and feed none of them; but take vast Pay for nothing, and employ Underlings for poor Wages. If these Underlings, and these poor Wages, are sufficient, as by their Practice these great Clergymen shew that they think, Is it not natural for the Laity to desire to make as good Bargains as the Clergy? Is it not natural to conclude, that since the highest and most solemn Offices may be performed at a small Expence, as is manifest from the hiring of Curates, it would be but Prudence to save such high Revenues given to such as do nothing but hire others?

How a spiritual Trust once conferred, could be afterwards delegated to another, the Trust itself transferred, and the Advantages reserved, I could never yet account either from the Gospel of Christ, or from the natural Ideas of Morality. Yet are not great Revenues daily desired upon the Erection of any new Church, though he who is to enjoy them, often does no Duty at all, but leaves it to a [III-384] cheap Hireling? And is not that Service, for which the Parish is to pay many Hundreds a Year, often performed for thirty or forty Pounds a Year? Some Civil Trusts may be thus executed by Deputies; but is this a way to deal (I had almost said to traffic) with Souls, and to be answerable for them? Is this spiritual Fatherhood? Is this Apostolic; or are those who do so, still Successors to the Apostles? I should be glad to hear you explain this, and shew whether any Man who professed to turn Religion into a Trade, could act in a different, or more lucrative Manner.

I HAVE likewise some Doubts to propose to you about Excommunication, which, I fear, is little understood, and greatly abused. If it were originally no more than turning a Man out of a Society, with the Laws of which he would not comply, as was really the Case, and as is daily done in common Clubs, and in Juntoes of Traders; is it not notorious Abuse, as well as extremely daring and wicked, to construe it into the dismal Delivery of a Soul to the Devil and Damnation? Will you say, dare you venture to say, that a Person excommunicated is in the Power of Satan, and that such a Sentence sends him thither? If it do, they who pronounce it, must be the most wicked and impious of all Men; nor can any [III-385] earthly Consideration excuse them. Is it for Tythe? Then is their Tythe dearer to them than an immortal Soul. Is it not for Tythe, but for Contumacy, in not appearing and owning their Jurisdiction? Then is their Pride and Jurisdiction of more Weight with them, than the Salvation of Men. But if Excommunication have no such Effect, why is not the Bugbear removed, by explaining it into a reasonable and a christian Meaning? Or rather, why is a Practice, which cannot be of God, suffered to continue, why impiously continued in his Name? And can any Man who defends Excommunication, argue against Purgatory? The temporal Effects of it are sufficiently heavy and hard; so hard, that nothing under the highest Consideration can justify the Man who brings them down upon another. Its spiritual Operation, were it true, would indeed be shocking and frightful. But who would affront the Divine Being, by believing that he, the Author of Mercy and Wisdom, could contradict his own Nature, to gratify the Peevishness and Cruelty of weak and revengeful Men?

THEY who are apt to bring the Charge of Blasphemy against others, often upon very small, sometimes upon very ludicrous Occasions, would do well to consider, Whether [III-386] there can be higher Blasphemy, than to assert a Power in Man of directing or obliging the Almighty; a Privilege to apply the Might and Terrors of Omnipotence, to the Perdition of Men? I presume you will not say of Excommunication, what I am told the Reverend Dr. *Fiddes* says of Popish Indulgences, in his History of *Henry VIII. That they were a Treasure which the Church had been long in Possession of.*

I LEAVE it therefore to your Judgment, whether this spiritual Engine be for the Service of Christ's Church, or for the Credit of such as call themselves his Ministers; and whether what is shocking to Sense and Humanity, can ever be true in Religion, or a Part of Religion, I mean of the Christian Religion.

I WOULD also humbly propose it to your serious Thoughts, whether amongst your public Admonitions and Reproofs to the Laity, you might not think it advisable, and find Cause, to let your Brethren the Clergy have their Share. Are there no prevailing Mistakes or Disorders amongst them? No strange and unreasonable Claims maintained by them who are called Orthodox, no extravagant Writings published, no wild and passionate Sermons preached? Is Orthodoxy alone never preferred by you to eminent Piety and Sufficiency, under [III-387] Suspicion of Heterodoxy? Is the Man who asserts *Christ's Kingdom not to be of this World*, as dear to you as they who would found worldly Power upon the Gospel of Christ, and erect a Priesthood with Power, in virtue of being Successors to him, who had no Power, and disclaimed all Power? Are you equally tender to the Failings of Laymen, as to those of Clergymen? Or is it your Opinion and Policy, that the same should be concealed and dissembled, at least not exposed to the profane Laity?

I REMEMBER an Instance, where I thought the Partiality of a more than Reverend Clergyman too apparent: For whilst *He* manifested much just Zeal for capitally punishing certain beastly Offenders against the Law, and Purity, and Design of Nature; I mean *Lay-Offenders*; all *his* Zeal cooled, at least produced small Effect, in the Case of a *Brother Doctor* found to have been flagrantly guilty of that Abomination for many Years, and often in a very sacred Place: Yet this Doctor escaped with an Admonition, and a small Fine, in a Court too where that more than Reverend Clergyman was thought to have no small Influence. And I suppose, that that unnatural Sinner was still esteemed to be *a true Minister of the Church*, since he is still left to act as such, and to receive [III-388] the Stipend of such, doubtless to the great Edification of Souls, and Credit of Orthodoxy and of Episcopal Courts. So far was that more than Reverend Clergyman from applying, on this Occasion, to the secular Arm, though *He* had just before praised it for finding out, and pouring down its deadly Terrors upon such bestial Criminals.

A LITTLE of your public and private Advice to your Brethren, recommending to them more Meekness and Moderation, with a Behaviour more complaisant, and less litigious towards their People, would be of Use. I hear that you give them very different Advice, even to be as troublesome and vexatious to their People as they can, by departing from settled Customs, and starting new Demands. Such Advice is by no means proper for them, nor do they want it. It is certain, they would do well not to render themselves daily more unpopular and obnoxious by Haughtiness, Greediness, and Law-Suits. My Lord *Clarendon* owns, that the Clergy of that Time, supported and animated by Archbishop *Laud*, grew assuming, and lived not well with their Neighbours in the Country. This bred ill Blood towards them; and when they were pulled down, it was remembered how insolently they had behaved when they were uppermost: Hence the [III-389] easier way was made for the sour and gloomy Sett who succeeded them.

THE present daily Increase of their Property, their Monopoly of Advowsons, their breaking all the Modus's, their frequent Success in troublesome Suits, and their apparent Fondness of such, help to sooth and exalt them: But as all this is seen, and felt, and regretted by the whole Body of the Laity, it may bring a Storm strong enough to overthrow all these Advantages. Perhaps too Abuses, not now thought of, will be then sought, and found, and severely redressed.

THIS Thought is really painful to me; in the Sincerity of my Heart I speak it: For I dread all great Changes, and all Approaches towards such. I would therefore have the Clergy provoke none. They must not, in an enlightened Age, and an Age of Liberty, think themselves a Match for the Laity, were the Laity once tempted to exert themselves. Perhaps they were never less a Match for the Laity than now. Times and Countries have been, when the People were so blind, or so awed, that though Religion was turned publicly into Power and Gain, they could not perceive it, or durst not censure it. Such Times are no longer, nor is *England* that Country now.

[III-390]

MODESTY and Meekness, in the Language and Writings of the Clergy, is likewise always commendable, and no more than good Policy. The fierce and provoking Style is not the Christian, nor the gaining Style; and Pride and Passion are ill Proofs of Religion. But most unpardonable is the Practice of such, who, when a Man differs from them in any ecclesiastical Point, though utterly foreign from Religion, yet charge him confidently with Infidelity, let his Style be ever so Christian, and his Professions for Christianity ever so strong. This Practice, follow it who will, is unchristian and malicious, but shamefully common. I therefore like Dr. *Conybeare*'s late Book, for its Temper and Civility; nor, as far as I have looked into it, could I find any Strokes of Pertness or Anger; two Ingredients very common in the Works of Ecclesiastics. Another Doctor, of some Name in Controversy, and an Advocate and an Answerer on the same Side, hath shewn such wild Transports, such Virulence and Scurrility, that it is not to be determined, whether the Madman, the Scold, or the Executioner, predominate most in his Composition.

I HAVE heard, that even you, holy Father, with all your Affectation of Smoothness and Temper, have treated Gentlemen with very coarse Names, for no other Reason, than that [III-391] they differed from you about Matters of Power and Speculation. This was not wise (that it was ill-bred, I do not wonder); and it might tempt, and perhaps warrant Gentlemen so used, to treat you very roughly. A *Monster* is by no means a proper Name for Gentlemen, some of them as well esteemed, and as generally beloved, as you are. I could paint such Usage in Colours which you would not like. I could likewise draw such a Character of some who are dead (for upon the Dead and Living, *Monster* and *Infidel* are Names, which, it seems, you freely throw); I say, I could represent some of them in such Lights, such true Lights, as would equal, and, I doubt, much foil, the best that you can be shewn in. I could represent their amiable and benevolent Minds, their great Knowledge, their elevated Capacity, their universal Integrity, and Love of Mankind, their Scorn of Hypocrisy and little Party-views, of narrow Spirits, and of every mean and selfish Artifice.

BUT I want Room and Time to enter fully into the pleasing and mournful Theme. Neither do I think myself qualified to make equal Returns to coarse Usage. Let me just say, that *Infidel* and *Infidelity*, as they are grown Terms of Anger and Reproach, can seldom become the Mouth or Pen of a candid or well-bred [III-392] Man. Pardon me, when I assert, that every Man living has as good a Right to differ in Opinion from you, as you have to differ from him: If you think or maintain the contrary, you have a *monstrous* Share of Pride or Folly; nor do I know a greater *Monster* amongst Men, than the solemn Hypocrite, who pretends to derive Pomp, and Power, and worldly Wealth out of the New Testament; who would confine the uncontrollable Freedom of the Soul by human Articles and Restrictions, and treats such as follow Reason, and not him, with Spite and saucy Language.— — —But I check myself; nor will I finish my Picture of this sort of *Monster*, lest the Likeness might be too glaring. I therefore return to advise you; and here let me assure you, that it is repugnant to all Candor, and unworthy your Character, to descend to mean Solicitations, and to teize for Prosecutions against such Writings and Authors as thwart you. In Matters of Religion, no Book which can be answered, ought to be prosecuted; nor can you find any Honour in such

Prosecution, no more than you can shew Charity in procuring it. A Minister of Truth begging the Aid of worldly Penalties in a Dispute about Spirituals, makes a poor, a strange, and a scandalous Figure. Such Conduct seems only to suit with worldly Designs, and to bewray, [III-393] if not the Weakness of his Cause, at least his Insufficiency to defend it.

To oppose Force to just Reasoning, is unjust; to answer false Reasoning by Force, is foolish and needless. A bad Cause is quickly refuted, a good Cause easily defended; and Christianity, though it can bear much Severity and Violence, can never exercise nor warrant any: Nor was the Christian Name ever more abused, than when prostituted to justify Rigour and Violence: And Punishment for Opinion might indeed be of *Ecclesiastical*, but could never be of *Christian* Pedigree.

YOU have, holy Father, the Reputation of a strong Churchman; and Charity obliges me to believe you a Christian (for the Christian Spirit is not suspicious, no more than revengeful). Be the Churchman still; but let the Christian predominate, and then I dare say you will never solicit another Prosecution. The Clergy, to a Man, believe your Heart bent upon Church Power, and upon all the Means that lead to it. You have also thoroughly convinced the Laity in this Point, though 'tis said that you had rather they were not so convinced; and are wont to speak to them in a Style not at all savouring of a Passion for sacerdotal Rule: Which Behaviour in you is only artful, and must not be called *false* or *insincere*, since [III-394] Insincerity is not a christian Virtue. But such Art, when found out, loses its Use: You would therefore do well to drop such of your grand Views as bode not well towards the Laity; for they are upon their Guard, and I would not have you put them upon trying their Strength and Mettle.

RATHER take a contrary and securer Method; surrender your weak Passes, give up indefensible Points, claim nothing but what the Constitution gives you, affect not to be more than what the Law makes you; separate not yourself and Brethren too much from the Laity; for woe be to you, if ever they should separate themselves from you! If upon Examination you find any Milstones about the Neck of your Cause, any excessive Absurdities, any contradictory Tenets, any terrible Claims, any hurtful or oppressive Practices, any unpopular Principles or Rules, such as square not with the general Interests and Sentiments of the Laity; begin, O holy Father, to throw off such Milstones into the Sea, lest they pull you thither after them. 'Tis better to quit, with a good Grace, even the most favourite Point or Mistake, than be forced to quit it with Shame, and the Imputation of Obstinacy.

[III-395]

WHAT those Milstones, those indefensible Points, are, I pretend not farther to explain to one of your Sagacity. Some of them I have named. In your Researches for others, perhaps it may merit some Inquiry, or perhaps very little, whether Ecclesiastical Courts be any considerable Support or Credit to the Cause of the Church (for I think Religion has little to do with them). I will venture to say, that Excommunication is a Matter of very serious, of very melancholy Attention, to every Man who believes in God, and has a Regard for the Bodies or Souls of Men. Are there not moreover some Things in the Oath given to Churchwardens, hard, if not impossible, to be kept; either obliging them to be perjured themselves, or uneasy, and even intolerable, to their Neighbours? And are there not certain odd and contradictory Oaths in the Universities, which are a Scandal to Religion, and a Contradiction to Learning, and even to Morality? And does it not become the Zeal of any Christian Pastor, to remove all such Scandals? And would they not be removed, if Religion were as much considered, as Ecclesiastical Policy and Power?

I WOULD likewise humbly propose, whether a true, a good, or even a christian Use has been generally made of the 30th of *January*? [III-396] Whether those of your Order have generally acted upon it like Ambassadors of *Truth* and *Peace*? And whether either the Civil Government of King *Charles* I. or the Ecclesiastical Government of Archbishop *Laud*, be proper Patterns to be followed in a free and a christian Country? I think that, in my Sermon, I have amply shewn that they are not. Let me add here one remarkable Passage out of *Rushworth*.

“About this Time (in the Year 1636.) the new Statutes for the University of *Oxford* were finished and published in Convocation. The Preface disparaged King *Edward* the VIth’s Times and Government, declaring the Discipline of the University was discomposed by that King’s Injunctions, and that it did revive and flourish again in Queen *Mary*’s Days under Cardinal *Pool*; when by the much to be desired Felicity of those Times, an inbred Candor supplied the Defect of Statutes.”

WAS there ever in any Declaration, even from the *Vatican*, more of the Popish Style and Spirit? The Times and Government of that excellent Prince, that pious Protestant and Reformer, *Edward* the VIth, are traduced by an *English* Convocation, for his having unsettled the old Popish Discipline, and reduced it nearer to the Genius of the Reformation. [III-397] The Days of that Popish Bigot, Queen *Mary*, are wished for; that is, the Days when Popery, with all its Power and Fury, was restored, the Protestant Religion abolished, and Protestants openly and mercilessly burned; a *Romish* Cardinal is mentioned and extolled for his Church Government, and Popish Superstition; and Bigotry, and blind Obedience, are represented as *inbred Candor*.

SAY, holy Father, were the Members of this Convocation Protestants, or was *Laud*, who governed them, a Protestant? And was it any Hardship or Wonder, that he and they were represented as Papists? And what was that King who submitted to, and assisted them in, all their violent and popish Pursuits? Nay, was their Advocate against himself; when instead of asserting his Prerogative and Supremacy, and supporting the University of *Cambridge*, who opposed *Laud*’s Visitation of them, as what he could not undertake without the King’s Commission; he, even the King in Person, argued for this Usurpation, for this Invasion of his Royalty, for this Seizure and Impropriation of his Power and Dignity.

STRANGE Condescension and Folly in him, as well as Inconsistency of Character! fond of exalting the Prerogative over the Belly [III-398] of Law and Justice where the Laity were concerned, yet poorly laying it under the Feet of the Clergy, where the Protection of his People, and his own Duty and Honour, called upon him to preserve and exert it. I shall here add a further Catalogue of his Oppressions, as the same are summed up in a lively manner by the late excellent Mr. *Trenchard*, in his *short History of Standing Armies in England*.

—“This King’s whole Reign was one continued Act against the Laws: He dissolved his first Parliament for presuming to inquire into his Father’s Death, though he lost a great Sum of Money by it, which they had voted him: He entered at the same time into a War with *France* and *Spain*, upon the private Piques of *Buckingham*, who managed them to the eternal Dishonour and Reproach of the *English* Nation; witness the ridiculous Enterprizes upon *Cadiz*, and the Isle of *Rhee*. He delivered *Pennington*’s Fleet into *French* Hands, betrayed the poor *Rochellers*, and suffered the Protestant Interest in *France* to be quite extirpated: He raised Loans, Excises, Coat and Conduct-money, Tunnage, and Poundage, Knighthood, and Ship-money, without Authority of Parliament; imposed new Oaths on the Subjects, to discover the Value of their Estates; imprisoned [III-399] great Numbers of the most considerable Gentry and Merchants, for not paying his arbitrary Taxes; some he sent beyond Sea; and the poorer Sort he pressed for Soldiers: He kept Soldiers on free Quarter, and executed martial Law upon them: He granted Monopolies without Number, and

broke the Bounds of the Forests: He erected arbitrary Courts, and enlarged others; as the High Commission Court, Star Chamber, Court of Honour, Court of Requests, &c. and unspeakable Oppressions were committed in them, even to Men of the first Quality. He commanded the Earl of *Bristol*, and Bishop of *Lincoln*, not to come to Parliament; committed and prosecuted a great many of the most eminent Members of the *House of Commons* for what they did there, some for no Cause at all; and would not let them have the Benefit of *Habeas Corpus*: Suspended and confined Archbishop *Abbot*, because he would not license a Sermon that asserted despotic Power, whatever other Cause was pretended: He suspended the Bishop of *Gloucester*, for refusing to swear never to consent to alter the Government of the Church: Supported all his arbitrary Ministers against the Parliament, telling them, he *wondered at the foolish Impudence of any one to think [III-400] he would part with the meanest of his Servants upon their account*. And, indeed, in his Speeches, or rather Menaces, he treated them like his Footmen, calling them *undutiful, seditious, and Vipers*: He brought unheard-of Innovations into the Church, preferred Men of arbitrary Principles, and inclinable to Popery, especially those Firebrands *Laud, Montague, and Manwaring*; one of whom had been complained of in Parliament, another impeached for advanceing Popery, and the third condemned in the *House of Lords*: He dispensed with the Laws against Papists, and both encouraged and preferred them: He called no Parliament for twelve Years together; and in that Time governed as arbitrarily as the *Grand Seignior*: He abetted the *Irish Massacre*, as appears by their producing a Commission under the Great Seal of *Scotland*; by the Letter of *Charles* the Second, in favour of the Marquis of *Antrim*; by his stopping the Succours that the Parliament sent to reduce *Ireland*, six Months under the Walls of *Chester*; by his entering into a Treaty with the Rebels, after he had engaged his Faith to the Parliament to the contrary; and bringing over many Thousands of them to fight against his People.

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[III-401]

“ UPON Pretence of the *Spanish* and *French* War, he raised many thousand Men, who lived upon free Quarter, and robbed and destroyed where-ever they came: But being unsuccessful in his Wars abroad, and pressed by the Clamours of the People at home, he was forced to disband them. In 1627. he sent over 30000 *l.* to *Holland*, to raise 3000 *German* Horse to force his arbitrary Taxes; but this Matter taking Wind, and being examined by the Parliament, Orders were sent to countermand them. In the 15th Year of his Reign, he gave a Commission to *Strafford*, to raise 8000 *Irish* to be brought into *England*: But before they could get hither, the *Scots* were in Arms for the like Oppressions, and marched into *Northumberland*; which forcing him to call a Parliament, prevented that Design, and so that Army was disbanded. Soon after he raised an Army in *England*, to oppose the *Scots*, and tampered with them to march to *London*, and dissolve the Parliament: But this Army being composed, for the most part, of the Militia, and the Matter being communicated to the House, who immediately fell on the Officers that were Members, as *Ashburnham, Wilmot, Pollard, &c.* the Design came to nothing.”

[III-402]

I COULD quote much more from the same Pamphlet; but, to use the Words of the Author, *it is endless to enumerate all the Oppressions of his Reign*. What think you, holy Father, of the Panegyrics made upon such a Prince, for almost a Century past, by the Clergy, or of the Clergy who made and make those Panegyrics either upon him or *Laud*?

I THINK nothing is more manifest, than that in those Days there was a settled Purpose, both in the Court, and in the Churchmen, to overturn the Reformation, and the Constitution; nay, each of these Designs was well-nigh accomplished; and it was already the Fashion, not only to treat such who adhered to the Law, against the Violence and mad Maxims which then prevailed, as Traitors; but the Name of *Traitors* and *Rebels* were, by *Laud*’s Followers and

Creatures, bestowed upon our first pious Reformers; and with the Reformation itself great Faults were found, especially with those Parts of it which retrenched the Wealth and Power of the Clergy: Popish Ceremonies were daily restored, with the Bowings, Grimaces, Pictures, and Forms, usually seen at Popish Chapels, and Masses; and all Men were persecuted, many ruined, who opposed such scandalous Innovations, [III-403] tending only to advance Superstition and Priestcraft.

WHY many of these Innovations, and such Defection from the Reformation, still continue, I leave you, holy Father, to consider and explain; I desire this of you, the rather, for that I am told, that you often hold up your Hands, and wonder how Clergymen can, by their Writings, contradict what they have once subscribed!

THAT you should wonder at this, is indeed matter of Wonder. Is there one of you that conforms to the genuine Sense, or even to the Words, of the Articles? Are not these Articles *Calvinistical*? Were they not composed by *Calvinists*? And are you not now, and have been long, all *Arminians*? And do you not preach and write against the Presbyterians, who defend *Predestination*, which is one of your own *Articles*?

WILL you say that Articles, will you say that Oaths, are to be taken in a Sense different from the Words, different from the Meaning, of those who compose them? If you do, then you maintain that *Papists*, nay, that *Mahometans*, may subscribe our Protestant Articles, and be still *Mahometans* and *Papists*; and that *Jacobites* may take the State Oaths, and be still *Jacobites*.

[III-404]

WHAT Subscriptions, or Declarations, or indeed what other Ties can bind Men, who, after they have solemnly testified, that they are called by the *Holy Ghost*, yet subscribe the direct contrary to what they believe, subscribe the Doctrines of *Calvin*, yet remain Antagonists to *Calvin*? Is this Practice, this solemn Assertion of a Falshood, for the Honour of Religion, or of Churchmen? Or, is it not the direct Method to harden Men against Truth and Conscience, and to turn holy Things into Contempt? Yet you still go on to subscribe those Articles, still to disbelieve and contradict them, yet never attempt to alter or abolish them. Do such contradictory Doings shew any Regard for Religion, or for Truth or Decency?

AFTER such Departure from the doctrinal Articles, you cannot with any Decency blame such who differ from your Notions about Church Power and Discipline. The Church and Constitution of *England*, neither owns nor knows any Clergymen but such who derive all their Power from the Law: All others are Pretenders, or rather Deserters, and would be Usurpers, if the Laity, and the Law, would let them. Such Clergymen therefore as disclaim all Power, and Pomp, and Revenue, whatsoever, but what the Law and Laymen [III-405] give them, are the only Clergy that Laymen ought to reverence, or indeed acknowledge: All the rest, who assert a prior Right, and have superior Demands, should be considered as lurking Enemies, or bold Invaders, and carefully watched and resisted. Nor is it small want of Modesty in you, and such as are like you, to censure such Clergymen as adhere to the Law and Constitution, whilst you assume to yourselves a Latitude to dissent from your very Articles, with spiritual Characters and Powers, superior to the Law, and independent upon it.

CAN any Layman, who has common Sense, or common Notions of Truth and Liberty, bear with Patience, a Spirit so arrogant, with such a saucy and inconsistent Behaviour? Far different, and indeed quite opposite, was the Spirit of the Reformation. Nor is Reverence due to any Clergyman in whom this last Spirit is not found. Neither are they at all Clergymen of the Church of *England*, in whom the contrary Spirit is found. Can any Layman be at a Moment's Loss to know, what sort of Clergymen are most useful and amiable to him; they who set up to command him, and consequently to put Chains upon him; or they who claim

only the Liberty to instruct and advise [III-406] him, and therefore leave him still as free as he was before?

BE pleased also, holy Father, to instruct me in the Nature and Efficacy of *Absolution*. Is it authoritative, and proceeding from the Power of the Priest only? or is it conditional, and only a Declaration, that God will accept, or hath accepted, sincere Repentance? If God pardons upon Repentance, what Force is in *Absolution*, or what Use, further than to ease poor Sinners, by assuring them, that if they have repented, God has forgiven them? If this be all, any Man, even the Sinner himself, may pronounce such a Declaration upon himself. Or does God stay to forgive, even after Repentance, till the Priest pronounces *Absolution*? If so, has not the Priest a greater Share than God, in saving Men; nay, a superior Power, if his Part comes first, and his *Absolution* takes place of, and introduces, God's Pardon? If Repentance suffices without a Priest, or *Absolution*, then what signifies either upon such Occasion, further than for a Declaration of Comfort? And without Repentance, what avails *Absolution*? Will you say, that it avails? Or has our blessed Saviour ever said so? You must needs know what extravagant Positions, and what impious Claims of Power, have been confidently derived from this Privilege of [III-407] Priests to pronounce *Absolution*, as if it inferred a Power to damn and save; though it be really no more than what any Man may pronounce to another, or to himself, or to many, if they desire it, or will hear it. Has not this therefore, as well as many other pious Practices, been horribly abused and perverted by the ungodly Craft of selfish Priests?

WHILST I am giving you all this Trouble, and tiring you with so many Questions, permit me, holy Father, to mix a little Comfort with so much Freedom and Importunity. I am told, that your Ease and Rest are greatly interrupted and broken, by the Increase and Prevalence of *Free-thinking*. Be not too much frightened; the Mob, and the Many, will always be orthodox, always true to the Church, to Holy-days, and pious Rioting, for Reasons too apparent to need mention. The Number of *Free-thinkers*, that is, of Men who bring all things to the Bar and Trial of right Reason, can never be so very great as justly to alarm the Clergy, can never greatly diminish the Majority of a Country, who will always be of the Church in vogue, always have Religion, if not that of Reason and Nature, yet surely that of Authority, and of the Priesthood, who are themselves always conformable to Establishments and Tythes, and the prevailing Faith.

[III-408]

I DOUBT it will not be equally pleasing to you, to be told, at least to have the Public told, that it is by no means *Free-thinking* which fills the Gaols, or loads the Gallows, or even peoples *Exchange-Alley*, or increases public or private Knavery, or contributes at all towards it. Was the *South-Sea* Scheme the Effect of *Free-thinking*? Sir *John Blunt* was a great Saint, and Frequenter of the Ordinances; nor were any of his Confederates suspected of Deism. Was it *Free-thinking* that contrived or promoted national Massacres, that of *Ireland*, or of *Paris*? Has it produced or assisted the Inquisition or Persecution? Was the Monk St. *Dominic* a *Free-thinker*, or was Bishop *Laud* one? Has *Free-thinking* encouraged, or have *Free-thinkers* perpetrated, particular Murders or Assassinations? Was *Ravilliac* a *Free-thinker*, or was he who murdered the *Prince of Orange*? Or was he one who offered to murder the late King? Are the *Banditti*, and Assassins in *Italy*, *Free-thinkers*? Are not these Villains good Catholics, and Frequenters of Churches? Do any of our own Thieves die *Free-thinkers*? Do they not generally die good Churchmen, Catholic or Protestant, and always of some Religion? Was the famous Murderess, *Sarah Malcolm*, a *Free-thinker*? Did she die one, or declare that she had lived one?

[III-409]

No; holy Father! *Free-thinking* has no Proselytes in *Newgate* or *Exchange-Alley*. I doubt it will be found, that it is not *Free-thinking* that steals in Shops, or cheats behind Counters, or robs Houses, or cuts Throats. Nor is it *Free-thinking* that *absolves* Criminals of any sort, much less *Traitors* and *Assassins*; nor consequently encourages such Crimes. I could, had I time, enlarge with Success on this Subject, and convince all Men, that *Free-thinking* disclaims all Alliance with Vice, and Mobs, and dissolute Men; and leaves all Knaves, Profligates and Hypocrites, to *Conformity*, and *Creeds*, and the numerous Train of *Orthodoxy*.

It seems you have likewise found great Evils occasioned by People's not coming to Church. My own Opinion is, that when People find themselves edified by going, they will go; when they are not edified, their going avails not. If the People had the Choice of their own Ministers, as in the primitive Times they had, 'tis more than probable they would go oftener. But when they neither like the Man nor the Matter, 'tis not likely that they will hear either. I was therefore surprised to hear, that some of your *Scouts*, and humble Agents, (employed, I suppose, to try the Pulse of the Public) have mentioned *compulsory Laws*, still in Force, to oblige People to go to Church. Pray, can you reconcile [III-410] such a Law, if there be one, to the Principles and Laws of Toleration? Could any such Law be at first procured but by the Solicitations of the persecuting Clergy? Or could any but Persecutors solicit such a Law? Is it just or christian, to force any Man to hear what or whom he likes not? Would a High-Churchman care to be forced to hear a Presbyterian Preacher, suppose in a Country where there were no other, as in *Geneva*? And should he not do as he would be done by? No penal Laws whatsoever were, or ever could be, prompted by a Christian Spirit. And besides this Consideration, I wonder how any Man can contend for the Continuance of Tests and Penalties here in *England*, as you do, and yet be against the Exercise of such in *Scotland*. Is this equal Justice, or equal Charity?

I SHOULD be quite too tedious to my Readers and myself, (to you, holy Father, I fear I have been so already) should I but touch every Topic that deserves your Animadversion, and that of the Public. I cannot forbear mentioning one Practice, very common amongst you *Churchmen*, though it be destitute of all Candor, of all Truth and Charity. Whenever any clerical Folly, or Artifice, or Usurpation, or false Position, is attacked, he who does so, scarce ever fails of being accused, of having attacked [III-411] whatever is *serious* and *sacred*; and he is confidently charged with Irreligion, though he has evidently espoused and defended Religion against such as had profaned it, and blended it with Superstition and Power.

THIS Method of yours may have some Effect upon the Vulgar; but with Men of Sense, it hurts you, by discovering what you mean by *Things serious and sacred*. If by these Words you understood only the *Gospel*, and *Conscience*, and the *Duties* enjoined by either, you could have taken no Offence at any Writings which commend and vindicate Christianity, and only expose what weakens and defaces it, even the Pride and Violence of domineering and superstitious Priests. That there are such Priests, I presume, you will not deny; nor that such Priests act not in all Things, or indeed hardly in any, upon the Foot and Motives of the Gospel.

THAT my late Sermon is intirely upon the Christian Scheme, and in the Christian Style, I ever, and every Man may perceive; and therefore no Man, who regards Christianity and civil Liberty, can possibly dislike it. What it attacks, is clerical Wantonness, clerical Superstition and Fury, Tyranny and Usurpation, both in the State and in the Church. If therefore that Sermon provoke you, it is manifest what pleases you, what you approve, and what [III-412] you pursue. For myself, I can say truly, and therefore boldly, that my Writings are intirely conformable to the Religion and Laws of my Country: Nor can any impartial Judge affirm of that Sermon, or of any Performance of mine, what I have often heard the ablest Lawyers in this Nation affirm of a bulky Performance of yours, That *it is a Libel upon the Laws and Constitution of England, and ought to be burned by the Hand of the common Hangman*.

HERE I humbly bend my Knee, holy Father; and kissing your Vestment, subscribe myself,
with profound Adoration,

Your Great Admirer,

And Dutiful Son,

Lincoln's-Inn,
March 8. 1732-3.

A LAYMAN.

Endnotes

- [*] Dr. *Sacheverel*, Minister of *St. Andrew's Holbourn*, when these Papers were written.
- [*] Defence of the Exposition, &c. pag. 81.
- [*] Pag. 12.
- [†] Serm. p. 13.
- [‡] Pag. 15.
- [*] Pag. 15.
- [*] State of the Church, &c. p. 3.
- [*] Dr. BENJAMIN HOADLEY, now Lord Bishop of *Winchester*.
- [*] Pag. 307.
- [†] Pag. *ibid*.
- [*] Dedication to the Appeal, &c.
- [*] A Name given to Dr. *Sacheverel*.
- [(a)] Dr. *Francis Atterbury*.
- [(b)] Some have applied this (I suppose maliciously) to Dr. *Robinson*, late Bishop of *London*.