

JOHN TRENCHARD AND THOMAS
GORDON,
*Cato's Letters: or, Essays on Liberty, Civil
and Religious, and Other Important
Subjects. Volume 4 (1755)*

C A T O's
L E T T E R S:

O R,

ESSAYS *on* LIBERTY,

CIVIL and RELIGIOUS,

And other important SUBJECTS.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

V O L. IV.

The SIXTH EDITION, corrected.



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- Volume 1: November 5, 1720 to June 17, 1721 - facs. PDF
- Volume 2: June 24, 1721 to March 3, 1722 - facs. PDF
- Volume 3: March 10, 1722 to December 1, 1722 - facs. PDF
- Volume 4: December 8, 1722 to December 7, 1723 - facs. PDF

The essays first appeared in the *London Journal* and the *British Journal* between 1 November, 1720 and 7 December, 1723.

Editor's note: The spelling has been modernised, page numbers have been partially added (at the beginning of each article); the rather extravagant use of capital letters and italics has been minimized; the author's name has been added to the title (in the original it was indicated by the initial "G." or "T." at the end of the essay).

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. formatted short margin notes to float right
9. inserted Greek and Hebrew words as images

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CATO'S LETTERS.

VOL. IV.

[December 8, 1722 to December 7, 1723]

No. 106. SATURDAY, December 8, 1722.

Of Plantations and Colonies. [Trenchard] ↪

[IV-3]

SIR,

I intend, in this letter, to give my opinion about plantations; a subject which seems to me to be understood but by few, and little use is made of it where it is. It is most certain, that the riches of a nation consist in the number of its inhabitants, when those inhabitants are usually employed, and no more of them live upon the industry of others (like drones in a hive) than are necessary to preserve the oeconomy of the whole: For the rest, such as gamesters, cheats, thieves, sharpers, and abbey-lubbers, with some of their betters, waste and destroy the publick wealth, without adding any thing to it. Therefore, if any nation drive either by violence, or by ill usage and distress, any of its subjects out of their country, or send any of them out in foolish wars, or useless expeditions, or for any other causes, which do not return more advantage than bring loss, they so far enervate their state, and let out part of their best heart's blood.

Now, in many instances, men add more to the publick stock by being out of their country, than in it; as ambassadors, publick ministers, and their retinues, who transact the affairs of a nation; merchants and tradesmen, who carry on its traffick; soldiers, in necessary wars; and sometimes travellers, who teach us the customs, manners and policies, of distant countries, whereby we may regulate and improve our own. All, or most of these, return to us again with advantage. But, in other instances, a man leaves his country, never, or very rarely to return again; and then the state will suffer loss, if the person so leaving it be not employed abroad in such industry, in raising such commodities, or in performing such services, as will return more benefit to his native country, than they suffer prejudice by losing an useful member.

This is often done by planting colonies, which are of two sorts: One to keep conquered countries in subjection, and to prevent the necessity of constant standing armies: a policy which the Romans practised, till their conquests grew too numerous, the conquered countries too distant, and their empire too unwieldy to be managed by their native force only; and then they became the slaves of those whom they conquered. This policy for many ages, we ourselves used in Ireland, till the fashion of our neighbours, and the wisdom of modern ages, taught us the use of armies: And I wish that those who come after us may never learn all their

uses. I must confess, that I am not wise enough to enter into all the policy made use of formerly in governing that country; and shall in proper time communicate my doubts, in hopes to receive better information. In the mean time, I cannot but persuade myself, that when our superiors are at leisure from greater affairs, it may be possible to offer them a proposition more honourable to the crown, more advantageous to each kingdom, and to the particular members of them, and vastly more conducive to the power of the whole British empire, than the doubtful state which they are now in. But as this is not the purpose of my present letter, I shall proceed to consider the nature of the other sort of colonies.

The other sort of colonies are for trade, and intended to increase the wealth and power of the native kingdom; which they will abundantly do if managed prudently, and put and kept under a proper regulation. No nation has, or ever had, all the materials of commerce within itself: No climate produces all commodities; and yet it is the interest, pleasure, or convenience, of every people, to use or trade in most or all of them; and rather to raise them themselves, than to purchase them from others, unless in some instances, when they change their own commodities for them, and employ as many or more people at home in that exchange, such as would lose their employment by purchasing them from abroad. Now, colonies planted in proper climates, and kept to their proper business, undoubtedly do this; and particularly many of our own colonies in the West Indies employ ten times their own number in Old England, by sending them from hence provisions, manufactures, utensils for themselves and their slaves, by navigation, working up the commodities that they send us, by retaining and exporting them afterwards, and in returning again to us silver and gold, and materials for new manufactures; and our northern colonies do, or may if encouraged, supply us with timber, hemp, iron, and other metals, and indeed with most or all the materials of navigation, and our neighbours too, through our hands; and by that means settle a solid naval power in Great Britain, not precarious, and subject to disappointments, and the caprices of our neighbours; which management would make us soon masters of most of the trade of the world.

I would not suggest so distant a thought, as that any of our colonies, when they grow stronger, should ever attempt to wean themselves from us; however, I think too much care cannot be taken to prevent it, and to preserve their dependences upon their mother-country. It is not to be hoped, in the corrupt state of human nature, that any nation will be subject to another any longer than it finds its own account in it, and cannot help itself. Every man's first thought will be for himself, and his own interest; and he will not be long to seek for arguments to justify his being so, when he knows how to attain what he proposes. Men will think it hard to work, toil, and run hazards, for the advantage of others, any longer than they find their own interest in it, and especially for those who use them ill: All nature points out that course. No creatures suck the teats of their dams longer than they can draw milk from thence, or can provide themselves with better food: Nor will any country continue their subjection to another only because their great-grandmothers were acquainted.

This is the course of human affairs: and all wise states will always have it before their eyes. They will well consider therefore how to preserve the advantages arising from colonies, and avoid the evils. And I conceive, that there can be but two ways in nature to hinder them from throwing off their dependence; one to keep it out of their power, and the other out of their will. The first must be by force; and the latter by using them well, and keeping them employed in such productions, and making such manufactures, as will support themselves and families comfortably, and procure them wealth too, or at least not prejudice their mother-country.

Force can never be used effectually to answer the end, without destroying the colonies themselves. Liberty and encouragement are necessary to carry people thither, and to keep them together when they are there; and violence will hinder both. Any body of troops considerable enough to awe them, and keep them in subjection, under the direction too of a needy governor, often sent thither to make his fortune, and at such a distance from any application for redress, will soon put an end to all planting, and leave the country to the soldiers alone; and if it did not, would eat up all the profit of the colony. For this reason, arbitrary countries have not been equally successful in planting colonies with free ones; and what they have done in that kind has, either been by force, at a vast expence, or by departing from the nature of their government, and giving such privileges to planters as were denied to their other subjects. And I dare say, that a few prudent laws, and a little prudent conduct, would soon give us far the greatest share of the riches of all America, perhaps drive many of other nations out of it, or into our colonies, for shelter.

If violence, or methods tending to violence, be not used to prevent it, our northern colonies must constantly increase in people, wealth, and power. Men living in healthy climates, paying easy or no taxes, not molested with wars, must vastly increase by natural generation; besides that vast numbers every day flow thither from our own dominions, and from other parts of Europe, because they have there ready employment, and lands given to them for tilling; insomuch that I am told they have doubled their inhabitants since the Revolution, and in less than a century must become powerful states; and the more powerful they grow still the more people will flock thither. And there are so many exigencies in all states, so many foreign wars, and domestick disturbances, that these colonies can never want opportunities, if they watch for them, to do what they shall find their interest to do; and therefore we ought to take all the precautions in our power, that it shall never be their interest to act against that of their native country; an evil which can no otherwise be averted than by keeping them fully employed in such trades as will increase their own, as well as our wealth; for it is much to be feared, if we do not find employment for them, they may find it for us.

No two nations, no two bodies of men, or scarce two single men, can long continue in friendship, without having some cement of their union; and where relation, acquaintance, or mutual pleasures are wanting, mutual interests alone can bind it: But when those interests separate, each side must assuredly pursue their own. The interest of colonies is often to gain independency; and is always so when they no longer want protection, and when they can employ themselves more advantageously than in supplying materials of traffick to others: And the interest of the mother-country is always to keep them dependent, and so employed; and it requires all their address to do it; and it is certainly more easily and effectually done by gentle and insensible methods than by power alone.

Men will always think that they have a right to air, earth, and water, a right to employ themselves for their own support, to live by their own labours, to apply the gifts of God to their own benefit; and, in order to it, to make the best of their soil, and to work up their own product: And when this cannot be done without detriment to their mother-country, there can be but one fair, honest, and indeed effectual way to prevent it; which is, to divert them upon other employments as advantageous to themselves, and more so to their employers; that is, in raising such growth, and making such manufactures, as will not prejudice their own, or at least in no degree equal to the advantage which they bring: And when such commodities are raised or made, they ought to be taken off their hands, and the people ought not to be forced to find out other markets by stealth, or to throw themselves upon new protectors. Whilst people have full employment, and can maintain themselves comfortably in a way which they

have been used to, they will never seek after a new one, especially when they meet encouragement in one, and are discountenanced in the other.

As without this conduct colonies must be mischievous to their mother-country, for the reasons before given, so with it the greatest part of the wealth which they acquire centers there; for all their productions are so many augmentations of our power and riches, as they are returns of the peoples's labour, the rewards of merchants, or increase of navigation; without which all who are sent abroad are a dead loss to their country, and as useless as if really dead; and worse than so, if they become enemies: for we can send no commodities to them, unless they have others to exchange for them, and such as we find our interest in taking.

As to our southern plantations, we are in this respect upon a tolerable foot already; for the productions there are of so different a nature from our own, that they can never interfere with us; and the climates are so unhealthy, that no more people will go or continue there than are necessary to raise the commodities which we want; and consequently they can never be dangerous to us: But our northern colonies are healthy climates, and can raise all or most of the commodities, which our own country produces. They constantly increase in people, and will constantly increase; and, without the former precautions, must, by the natural course of human affairs, interfere with most branches of our trade, work up our best manufactures, and at last grow too powerful and unruly to be governed for our interest only: And therefore, since the way lies open to us to prevent so much mischief, to do so much good, and add so much wealth and power to Great Britain, by making those countries the magazines of our naval stores, I hope we shall not lose all these advantages, in compliment to the interests of a few private gentlemen, or even to a few countries.

We have had a specimen of this wise conduct in prohibiting the Irish cattle, which were formerly brought to England lean, in exchange for our commodities, and fatted here; but are now killed and sent abroad directly from Ireland: And so we lose the whole carriage and merchants' advantage, and the vent of the commodities sent to purchase them. And lately we have made such another prudent law, to prevent the importing their woollen manufacture; which has put them upon wearing none of ours, making all or most of their own cloth themselves; exporting great quantities of all sorts by stealth, and the greater part of their wool to rival nations; and, by such means it is that we are beholden to the plague in France, to their Mississippi Company, and their total loss of credit, that we have not lost a great part of that manufacture. It is true, we have made some notable provision to hedge in the cuckoo, and to make all the people of that kingdom execute a law, which it is every man's interest there not to execute; and it is executed accordingly.

I shall sometime hereafter consider that kingdom in relation to the interest of Great Britain; and shall say at present only, that it is too powerful to be treated only as a colony; and that if we design to continue them friends, the best way to do it is, to imitate the example of merchants and shopkeepers; that is, when their apprentices are acquainted with their trade and their customers, and are out of their time, to take them into partnership, rather than let them set up for themselves in their neighbourhood.

T

I am, &c.

No. 107. SATURDAY, December 15, 1722.

Of publick Credit and Stocks. [Trenchard] ↩

[IV-12]

SIR,

I have in a former letter observed, that men ever have been, and I doubt ever will be, cheated by sounds, without having any just ideas annexed to them. When words have obtained anesteem, and sort of veneration, their meanings will be varied as often as those in possession of reverence and popular applause have occasion to make different uses of them. It seems to me, that no word has suffered more from this abuse than the word *credit*; nor in any instance has the publick suffered more mischief than by the abuse of it.

A merchant, or tradesman, is said to be in good credit, when his visible gains appear to be greater than his expences; when he is industrious, and takes care of his affairs; when he makes punctual payments, and the wares which he sells may be depended upon as to their goodness and value; and when those who deal with him can have a reasonable assurance that he will make a profit by his care from the commodities that they entrust him with; and, if it should happen otherwise, that he has a remaining substance sufficient at last to answer all demands. A private gentleman is said to have great credit who lives within his income, has regard to his character and his honour, is just to his word and his promises, and is known to have an unencumbered estate, or one superior to all his supposed engagements; from whence his creditors form a reasonable expectation that they shall be paid again without a law-suit, and a certainty that they can be paid with one: And therefore all these will be trusted for as much as they are worth, and sometimes more, at the lowest price for the goods which they buy, and at the lowest interest for the money which they borrow.

But if a merchant be observed to live in riot and profusion, ↩ to leave his estate to the direction of servants, who cheat him, or neglect his business; if he turn projector, do not pay his bills, and shuffle in his bargains, and sell faulty goods which are bought upon his word: Or, if a gentleman be known to spend more than his income, to mortgage his lands to take no care of his estate, or how his stewards or bailiffs manage it; if he run in debt to tradesmen and mechanicks, and be perpetually borrowing money, without any thoughts how to pay it: I say, under such management, no fair dealer will have any thing to do with them; and of course they fall into the hands of scriveners, knavish attorneys, and griping usurers; will be fed from hand to mouth, pay double and treble interest for what they receive, till their creditors watch their opportunity, and sweep all.

Credit is said to run high in a nation, when there are great numbers of wealthy subjects in the former circumstances, which will always be produced by an affluent trade; and when the commodities of a country, and the production of the people's labour, find a ready vent, and at a good price: for then they will see their account in punctuality of payment and fair dealing, and will not run the hazard of losing a regular sustenance for their families, or a constant profit arising from an open trade, for the present and occasional advantage which they may hope to receive from a knavish bargain, or a fraudulent circumvention: And those who do otherwise, are generally undone, and sell a constant and a yearly income to themselves, and possibly to their families after them, for a year or two's purchase, and often for much less.

But if any of these be above or without the reach of the laws, or by reason of their station and figure, it be difficult to get the benefit of the laws, their credit will proportionably abate, because a great part of the security which they can give fails, and they must consequently pay greater interest and procuration for the money that they borrow, and a greater price for the goods that they buy: for, those who deal with them, will always propose to be gainers by the whole, upon computing their delays and hazards.

The credit of a state, or what we call publick credit, must be preserved by the same means as private men preserve theirs; namely, by doing strict justice to particulars; by being exact in their payments, not chicaning in their bargains, nor frightening and tricking people into them, or out of them; by letting them know what they buy, and not altering the nature or property of it, to serve after-purposes, and without the free-consent of the persons interested: And they are always to take especial care to sell nothing but what is valuable; to coin silver and gold, and not put the stamp of public authority upon base and counterfeit metals.

Indeed, states are much more concerned to keep up the opinion of their integrity than private men; because those that trust them have, in effect, only their honour and their interest to depend upon for payment; and therefore will well consider whether it be their interest to maintain their honour. I doubt private men would have little credit, and upon very ill terms too, if they could not be used, or could vacate their own securities; for, when it becomes more a man's interest not to pay, than to pay, his debts, and he can choose which he pleases, no one would care to have any part of his fortune depend upon those resolutions. It is certainly the interest of all men to keep up the reputation of their honesty as long as it can be kept, in order to be trusted for the future; but when they can be trusted no longer, nor are able to pay what they are already trusted with, and can decline paying it when they see apparent ruin in being honest, it is easy to guess what course will be taken.

What nation besides our own has explained publick honour, by any other maxims than those of publick interest? Or have kept their treaties or agreements with foreign states, or one another, any longer than it was their interest upon the whole to keep them? And indeed very few have kept them so long. I am sure that no wise state will depend upon the observance of leagues and national contracts any longer. What country has not made frequent acts of resumption, when the folly and knavery of their predecessors has embezzled the publick revenues, and rendered the state unable to defend itself? Whence private men have been deprived of estates to which they had undoubted titles by the laws of their country, estates which perhaps had passed many descents and many purchases; and yet the losers sometimes have no other reason to complain, than that they want the consolation of seeing their country undone with them; which must have been the case, if they had not been undone alone. Sweden did this in the last age; Spain lately; and another country, in our time, has not only in effect cancelled all its engagements, but by various stratagems drawn the wealth of the whole into its coffers, and seized it when it was there. Which puts me in mind of a story of a butcher, who thought himself happy in the possession of a sagacious, diligent, and seemingly faithful dog, to whom, by long experience of his service, he thought he might safely trust the custody of his shambles in his absence: But Hector one day observing, against a great festival, the shop to be much fuller of meat than usual, thought it was high time to set up for himself, and so very resolutely denied his master entrance; who had then no remedy left but to shoot him.

I have above endeavoured to shew what, and what alone, ought to be called credit. But there has lately risen up, in our age, a new-fangled and fantastical credulity, which has usurped the same name, and came in with the word *Bite*, which has been made free of a neighbouring court; whereby the poor, innocent, industrious, and unwary, people, have been delivered into the ravenous and polluted jaws of vultures and tigers; and thousands, I had almost said millions, have been sacrificed, to satiate the gluttony of a few. This has inverted the oeconomy and policy of nations; made a great kingdom turn all gamesters; and men have acquired the reputation of wisdom, from their skill in picking pockets: It has entered into the cabinets of courts; has guided the counsels of senates, and employed their whole wisdom; nay, most of their time has been employed in keeping up this wild and airy traffick; as if the business of government was not to protect people in their property, but to cheat them out of it.

This is eminently true in a neighbouring country; I wish I could say, that nothing like it had ever happened amongst us. But as no men now in power are answerable for this great mischief, so I hope and believe, that we shall have their hearty assistance to extricate us out of all these evils. And as I please myself with believing, that I speak the sense of my superiors, so I shall take the liberty to say, that neither publick nor private credit can consist in selling any thing for more than it is worth, or for any thing but what it is worth. It is certainly the interest of a country, that its commodities should sell at a good price, and find a ready vent; that private men should be able safely to trust one another; that lands should find ready purchasers, good securities, money at low interest; and that mortgages should be easily transferable. And the way to bring these good purposes to pass, is to ascertain titles; to give ready remedies to the injured; to procure general plenty by prudent laws, and by giving all encouragement to industry and honesty. But it will never be effected by authorizing or countenancing frauds; by enabling artful men to circumvent the unwary; by stamping the public seal upon counterfeit wares; or by constantly coining a new sort of property, of a precarious, uncertain, and transitory, value; and, by constant juggles and combinations, conspiring to make it more so: Which conduct, whenever practiced, must soon put an end to all publick and private credit.

In what country soever these practices meet with encouragement, all fair and honest dealing will be turned into juggling. There will quickly grow a sort of cabalistical learning: And there will be a secret and vulgar knowledge; one to be trusted only to the trusty adepts and managers; and the other to be divulged to the people, who will be told nothing but what is for the interest of their betters to communicate; and pretty advantages may be made by being in the secret. As for example: Just before any publick misfortune is to make its appearance, those who know of it may sell out; and in the height of the danger buy again; and when it is over, by taking another opportunity, they may sell a second time. And when these evils are averted, they may go to market once more; and so, *toties quoties*, till the greatest part of the property of a kingdom be got into the hands of but a few persons, who will then undoubtedly govern all the rest. Nor can these mischiefs be possibly prevented, but by wholly destroying this sort of traffick, or by appointing skillful pilots to set up occasional buoys and sea-marks, according to the shifting of the winds and the tides; that is, by ascertaining and publishing the real value of all publick securities, as often as there is an alteration made in them by new provisions, or by wholly preventing the abuses occasioned by the vile trade of stock-jobbing; which I conceive is not difficult to do, when stock-jobbers have no hand in directing the remedy.

Till something of this kind be done, it is foolish to think, and worse to pretend to think, that any effectual methods can be taken to discharge and pay off the national engagements: For, in whatever country it happens, that the publick funds become the markets and standing revenues of those who can best cure the evil; where great and sudden estates may be more easily raised by knavery and juggling, than small ones by virtue and merit; where plumbs may be got at once, and vast societies may be made the accomplices of power, in order to be indulged with separate advantages; it is not to be hoped that effectual methods will be taken to dam and choke up such inexhaustible sources of wealth and dominion: On the contrary, it is to be feared, that new projects will be yearly invented, new schemes coloured with popular pretences, to toss and tumble the publick securities, and to change them into as many shapes as Proteus knew. One year shall metamorphose the schemes of another; and the next shall undo both. The leaders of one faction shall unravel the projects of their predecessors; shall charge their designs with corruption and rapine, and be more rapacious themselves; and all in their turns shall raise vast estates upon the publick ruins; and the last spirit shall be always the worst. Artful and conspiring men shall buy up desperate debts, and then use intrigues and corruption to load their country with them; and the business of nations shall stand still, or rather, it shall become their business to fish in these troubled streams, till, by long experience of the loss of their fellows, the fish will bite no longer; and then it is easy to guess what is next to be done. There is but one method which can be taken; and that will be taken.

I would gladly know what advantage ever has, or even can, accrue to the publick, by raising stocks to an imaginary value, beyond what they are really worth to an honest man, who purchases them for a regular support to himself and family, and designs not to sell them again, till he has occasion for the money that they will produce. It can most assuredly serve no honest purpose, and will promote a thousand knavish ones. Besides those before-mentioned, it turns most of the current coin of England out of the channels of trade, and the heads of all its merchants and traders off their proper business: It enriches the worst men, and ruins the innocent: It taints men's morals, and defaces all the principles of virtue and fair dealing, and introduces combination and fraud in all sorts of traffick. It has changed honest commerce into bubbling; our traders into projectors; industry into tricking; and applause is earned, when the pillory is deserved: It has created all the dissatisfaction so much complained of, and all the mischiefs attending it, which daily threaten us, and which furnish reasons for standing or occasional troops: It has caused all the confusion in our publick finances: It has set up monstrous members and societies in the body politick, which are grown, I had almost said, too big for the whole kingdom: It has multiplied offices and dependencies in the power of the court, which in time may fill the legislature, and alter the balance of government: It has overwhelmed the nation with debts and burdens, under which it is almost ready to sink; and has hindered those debts from being paid off. For if stocks fell for more, or much more upon the Exchange, than the prices at which they are redeemable; or more can be got by jobbing them than by discharging them, than all arts will be used to prevent a redemption. But as this is not at present our case, so it is every man's interest, concerned in our funds, to secure their principal, and to promote every means which will enable their country to pay them.

I doubt not but I shall incur the censure of many, by thus laying open our nakedness, and probing our wounds; and I cannot deny but I found some reluctance in doing it: But it must be done before they can be cured. The patient cannot now bear quacking; and if effectual remedies be not speedily taken, the case is desperate. The security and interest of the crown, the power and reputation of the kingdom, the credit and honour of the ministry, depend upon

doing this great work: And I really believe that the latter have inclinations and resolutions to do it. It can never be done effectually without their assistance; and if they give it, and set themselves at the head of so publick a good, they will justly obtain a reputation far beyond any who have ever appeared before them, and will enjoy unenvied all the wealth and advantages which attend greatness and power. It is folly in any one, who is the least acquainted with the affairs of nations, to pretend not to see, that if we do not soon put our publick debts in a method of being paid, they can never be paid; and all will certainly do their utmost to prevent so fatal a mischief to their country; I mean, all who do not intend it. But if there be any such, which I hope and believe there are not, they will then undoubtedly take early care to save themselves out of the general wreck; which very few will be able to do, tho' all will intend it. Those in the secret will have the advantage; for when selling becomes the word, no one can sell, unless he sells for little or nothing. All will be waiting for a rise; and if that happen, all or most will endeavour to sell, and then all selling is at an end: The managers and brokers will engross the books, as they did lately, and command the first sale; and by the time that they are got out, no one else will be able to get out.

There is nothing therefore left to be done, but for all honest men to join heads, hearts, and hands, to find all means to discharge the publick burdens, and to add no more to them; to search every measure how we can lessen the national expences; to avoid all occasions of engaging in new ones; and to do all in our power to increase trade and the publick wealth, without sacrificing it to any jobs or private views. Which conduct alone will enable us honestly to pay off what we owe, and to become once more a free, rich, happy, and flourishing people.

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I am, &c.

No. 108. SATURDAY, December 22, 1722.

Inquiry into the Source of moral Virtues. [Trenchard] ↩

[IV-24]

SIR,

Morality, or moral virtues, are certain rules of mutual convenience or indulgence, conducive or necessary to the well-being of society. Most of these are obvious; for every man knows what he desires himself; which is, to be free from oppression, and the insults of others, and to enjoy the fruits of his own acquisitions, arising from his labour or invention. And since he can have no reason to expect this indulgence to himself, unless he allow it to others, who have equal reason to expect it from him, it is the common interest of all, who unite together in the same society, to establish such rules and maxims for their mutual preservation, that no man can oppress or injure another, without suffering by it himself. As far as these rules are discoverable by the light of reason, or that portion of understanding, which most, or all men have, they are called morality: But when they are the productions of deeper thought, or the inventions only of men of greater sagacity, they are called political knowledge. But as men are often in such a situation in respect of one another, that the stronger can oppress the weaker, without any fear of having the injury returned; and most men will pursue their own personal advantage independently of all other men; therefore Almighty God, in compassion to mankind has annexed rewards and punishments to the observance or non-observance of these rules: The belief of which, and a practice pursuant to it, is called religion.

I have often read, with pleasure, pretty speculative discourses upon the intrinsick excellence of virtue, and of its having a real existence independent of human considerations, or worldly relations: But when I have been able to forget, or lay aside the dalliances and amusements of fancy, and the beautiful turns of expression, I could consider it philosophically, only as an empty sound, when detached and separated from natural, national, or religious politicks; unless in some few instances, where constitution, and innate tenderness, engage men to pity others in ease to themselves, which is called humanity.

All cardinal and private virtues are branches of these general politicks. Fortitude enables us to defend ourselves and others. Compassion is a fellow feeling of calamities which we may suffer ourselves; and it is evident that people feel them in proportion, as they are likely to suffer the same or the like calamities. Charity obliges us to give that relief to others, which we, our friends, or relations, may want for ourselves. And temperance and frugality are necessary to the preservation of our bodies and estates, and being useful members of society. I freely confess, that for my part I can find out no other motives in myself, or others, for these affections, or actions, except constitution, ostentation, or temporal or religious politicks, which are, in other words, our present or eternal interests; and I shall own myself beholden to any else who can find out any other; for there cannot be too many motives for a virtuous life.

How far the systematical gentlemen will agree with me in this speculative philosophy, I do not know, nor shall think myself much concerned to enquire; but it is certain that their practice, and many of the doctrines which they teach, confirm what I have said. I think that all mankind, except the Brahmins, and transmigrators of souls in the East, agree, that we may

destroy other animals for food and convenience, and sometimes for pleasure, or to prevent but any trifling prejudice, to ourselves; though they have the same, or very near the same, organizations as we have, equal or greater sensations of pleasure and pain, and many of them sagacity and reasoning enough to over-reach and circumvent us; nor are they guilty of any other crime, than that of acting according to their natures, and preserving their beings by such food as is necessary to their existence.

Indeed, as things stand at present, though we had not revelation for it, we may be very sure that God Almighty has given us dominion over other creatures, because he has actually given us the power, in a good measure, to destroy and preserve them, as far as they may be hurtful or useless to us; and therefore we think them not objects of moral duties, because we can hurt them and they cannot make reprisals, or equal reprisals, upon us; But if Almighty God had thought fit to have given to lions and tigers the use of speech, length of life to have gained more experience, and had formed their claws and hands to write and communicate that experience, and by such means had enabled them to have formed themselves into societies for mutual defence against mankind (whom they could quickly have destroyed, though only by confining and starving them in enclosures and fortifications) I say, in such a circumstance of affairs, will any man affirm, that it would not have been our interest and duty to have treated them with morality and social offices? I doubt, in such a case, they would have told us, and have made us feel too, that they were not made only for our use.

I will suppose, for once, a dialogue between his Holiness and a lion, since poets and some others have informed us, that beasts have spoken formerly; and I am sure that they were never more concerned to speak than upon the present occasion.

Pope. Thou art an ugly four-footed monster, and thou livest upon the destruction of thy fellow-animals.

Lion. I am as nature has made me, which has given me many faculties beyond yourself. I have more courage, more strength, more activity, and better senses of seeing, hearing, &c. than you have: Nor do I destroy the hundredth part of my fellow-animals in comparison with those that you destroy. I never destroy my own species, unless I am provoked; but you destroy yours for pride, vanity, luxury, envy, covetousness, and ambition.

Pope. But thou art a great gormandizer, and eatest up all our victuals, which was designed for the use of men only; and therefore thou oughtest to be exterminated.

Lion. Nature, which gave me life, designed me the means of living; and she has given me claws and teeth for that purpose, namely, to defend myself against some animals, and to kill and eat others for my sustenance; and, amongst the rest, your reverence, if I cannot get younger and better food. You men, indeed, may eat and live comfortably upon the fruits of trees, and the herbs and corn of the field; but we are so formed, as to receive support and nourishment only from the flesh of other animals.

Pope. Sirrah, thou hast no soul.

Lion. The greater is my misfortune. However, I have a mind and body, and have the more reason to take care of them, having nothing else to take care of; and you ought the less to deprive and rob me of the little advantages which nature has given me, you who enjoy so much greater yourself.

Pope. The earth was given to the saints; for (as St. Austin very judiciously observes) the wicked have right to nothing, and the godly to all things; and thou art certainly a very wicked animal, and no true believer.

Lion. I have heard indeed before, that such reasonings will pass amongst you men, who have faculties to reason yourselves out of reason; but we beasts know better things: For having nothing but our senses to trust to, and wanting the capacities to distinguish ourselves out of them, we cannot be persuaded to believe, that those who have no more honesty, and less understanding than their neighbours, have a right to their goods, and to starve them, by pretending to believe what the others do not understand; therefore, worthy Doctor, you shall catch no gudgeons here: You may brew as you bake amongst one another, but you will find no such bubbles amongst us.

Pope. Thou art a sniveling saucy jackanapes, and a great rogue and murderer, and I wish thou hadst a soul that I might damn it, and send thee to the Devil.

Lion. Not half so great a rogue as yourself, good Doctor, nor so great a murderer. You do more mischief in a year than all the lions in the world did since the Creation. We kill only with our teeth and claws; you use a thousand instruments of death and destruction. We kill single animals; you kill by wholesale, and destroy hecatombs at once. We kill for food and necessity; you kill for sport and pastime, out of wantonness, and to do yourselves no good. In fine, you murder or oppress all other animals, and one another too.

Pope. Rascal, thou art made for my use, and I will make thee know it, and order thee to be immediately knocked on the head for thy skin, thou varlet, and beast for Satan.

Lion. I will try that presently.

Pope, (crossing himself.) Jesu! Maria! (*Exit in haste.*)

Lion. Farewell, thou lord of the Creation, and sovereign of the universe.

I believe I may venture to say, if lions could speak, that they would talk at this rate, and his Holiness but little better. But to return to my subject.

I have said, that all, or most of mankind, act upon the former principles, and, without the motives of religion, can find out no reason to hope that they should ever act otherwise; and I am sorry to say, that religion itself has yet wanted power enough to influence them (for the most part) to contrary sentiments or actions. What nation or society does not oppress another, when they can do it with security, without fear of retaliation, or of being affected by it in their own interests, and their correspondence with other states? It is plain that all social duties are here at an end; for what is called the law of nations, are only rules of mutual intercourse with one another, without which they could have no intercourse at all, but must be in constant course of war and depredation; and therefore whenever any state is in no condition to repel injuries, nor can have protection from any other, who are concerned to preserve them, constant experience shews us, that they become the prey of a greater, who think themselves obliged to keep no measures with them, nor want pretences from religion or their own interests to oppress them. Father Austin's distinction is always at hand when they can get no better; and for the most part (if not always) they find men of reverence to thank God for their roguery.

Since therefore men ever have, and, I doubt, ever will act upon these motives, they ought not to be amused by the play of words, and the sallies of imagination, whilst designing men pick their pockets; but ought to establish their happiness, by wise precautions, and upon solid maxims, and, by prudent and fixed laws, make it all men's interest to be honest; without which, I doubt, few men will be so.

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I am, &c.

No. 109. SATURDAY, December 29, 1722.

Inquiry into the Origin of Good and Evil. [Trenchard] ↪

[IV-31]

SIR,

We have been long confounded about the origin of good and evil, or, in other words, of virtue and vice. The opinion of some is, that virtue is a sort of real being, and subsists in its own nature. Others make it to consist in rules and cautions, given us by the Supreme Being for our conduct here on earth and either implanted in our natures, or conveyed to us by revelation. A late philosopher searches it from the will and commands of the civil magistrate. But, for my own part, I must conceive it only as a compound of the two last; namely, a relation of men's actions to one another, either dictated by reason, by the precepts of heaven, or the commands of the sovereign, acting according to his duty.

It is the misfortune of those publick-spirited and acute gentlemen, who have obliged the world with systems, that they always make common sense truckle to them; and when they are bewildered, and entangled amongst briars and thorns, never go back the way that they got in, but resolve to scramble through the brake, leap over hedge and ditch, to get into their old road, and so for the most part scratch themselves from head to foot, and sometimes break their necks into the bargain. They never look back, and examine whether their system be true or false, but set themselves to work to prove it at all adventures: They are determined to solve all contradictions, and grow very angry with all who are not so clear-sighted as themselves.

This seems to me to be the case in the present question. The common light of reason has told all mankind, that there cannot be an effect without a cause; and that every cause must be an effect of some superior cause; till they come to the last of all, which can be no otherwise than self-existent, that is, must have existed from all eternity. Some sects of philosophers have thought this first cause to be only pure matter, not being able to conceive that any thing can be made out of nothing, or can be annihilated again afterwards; and they suppose that matter has been in eternal motion, and has the seeds of animals, vegetables, and of every thing else within itself, and by its constant motion and revolutions gives them life, duration, and at last death; and throws them into the womb of nature again to rise up in new shapes.

But others, by far the greatest part of mankind, are not able by this dark system to account for the exquisite contrivance and consummate wisdom shewn in the formation of animals and vegetables, in the regular and stupendous structure and circulation of the heavenly bodies, and of the earth, no more than for the operations of our own minds. They therefore most reasonably judged, that when so much contrivance is necessary to bring about our own little designs; the great machine of heaven and earth, and the infinite and admirable systems in it, could not be the spontaneous or necessary productions of blind matter. Thence they determine, that the First Being must have suitable wisdom to contrive and execute these great and amazing works.

But these latter are not so well agreed amongst themselves about the manner of acting, or the operations of this being. For some think that he must act from the necessity of his own nature: For, since his being is necessary, they think that his will and attributes (which are

parts of his being, essential to it, and inseparable from it) and consequently his actions, which are results of that will, and of those attributes, must be necessary too. They cannot conceive how a being, who has the principles and causes of all things within itself, could exist without having seen every thing intuitively from all eternity; a consideration which must exclude from his actions all choice and preference, as these imply doubt and deliberation.

They cannot apprehend how reason and wisdom can be analagous in him to what are called by the same names in men: For judgment in them, as far as it regards their own voluntary operations, is only the balance of the conveniences or inconveniences which will result from their own or other's thoughts or actions, as they have relation to beings or events out of their power, and which depend upon other causes: But if a being can have no causes without itself, but produces every thing by its own energy and power, sees all things at once, and cannot err, as men may, nor consequently deliberate and debate with itself, they think that it must act singly, and in one way only; and where there is no choice, or, which is the same thing, but one choice, they conceive that there is always necessity.

But the contrary is much the more orthodox and religious opinion, and has been held by far the greatest and best part of mankind in all ages, before and without revelation: They have thought that this last opinion bordered too much upon the material system, as being able to see but little difference in the operations of a being acting necessarily, and the productions of blind matter constantly in action, and acting mechanically; since the effect is supposed to be the same, though wisdom and contrivance, or what we are forced to call by those names for want of another, be the first spring, or chief wheel of the machine, or one link of the chain of causes: And therefore men have condemned this opinion as impious and atheistical.

Indeed the other speculations have been only the wild and babbling notions of fairy philosophers, or of enthusiastick and visionary madmen; for all prudent and modest men pretend to know no more of this being, without revelation, than that he is wise, good, and powerful, and made all things; and do not presume farther to enquire into the *modus* of his existence and operations. However, their own interest and curiosity were so much concerned to guess at his designs and motives in placing them here, that it was impossible they could be otherwise than solicitous and inquisitive about it; and finding, or fancying themselves to be the most valuable part of the whole, it was very natural for them to believe, that all was made for their sakes; and that their happiness was the only or chief view of the Supreme Being.

With these thoughts about him, every man knowing what he had a mind to have himself, and what he believed would constitute his own happiness, and not being able to attain it without making the same allowance to other people; men agreed upon equal rules of mutual convenience and protection, and finding these rules dictated to them by impartial reason, they justly believed that they were implanted within them by the deity; and as they expected themselves returns of gratitude or applause for benefits conferred by them upon others, they thought the same were due to the original being who gave them life, and every thing else which they enjoyed: and this is called natural religion.

But as the motive which men had to enter into this equal agreement, was their own pleasure and security, which most or all men prefer before the advantage of others, so they often found themselves in a condition, by superior power, will, and abilities, to circumvent those who had less than themselves, and either by artful confederacies, impostures, or by downright force, to oppress them; and in order to it, have invented systems or partial schemes of separate advantage, and have annexed suitable promises or menace to them: All which

they have pretended to receive from this divine being. They assumed to have communication with him, and to know his will, and denounced his anger against all who would not take their word, and let them do by his authority what they would never have been permitted to do by any other; and the herd not daring to oppose them, or not knowing how, have acquiesced to their tales, and come in time to believe them. From hence sprang all the follies and roguery of the heathen and Jewish priests, and all the false religions in the world; with all the persecutions, devastations, and massacres caused by them; which were all heterogeneous engraftments upon natural religion.

Almighty God thought it proper therefore at last to communicate himself again to man, and by immediate revelation to confirm what he at first implanted in all men's minds, and what was eradicated thence by delusion and imposture; but though he thought it not necessary to tell us more than we were concerned to know, namely, to do our duty to himself and to one another, yet we will still be prying into his secrets, and sifting into the causes of his original and external decrees, which are certainly just and reasonable, though we neither know his reasons, nor could judge of them, if we did.

From hence arises this dispute concerning the origin of good and evil, amongst a thousand others. For, our vanity inducing us to fancy ourselves the sole objects of his providence, and being sure that we receive our beings from him, and consequently our sensations, affections, and appetites, which are parts of them, and which evidently depend either mediately or immediately, upon causes without us, and seeing at the same time, that many things happen in the world seemingly against his revealed will, which he could prevent if he thought fit; we either recur to the intrigues of a contrary being, whose business is to thwart his designs, and disappoint his providence, or else account for it by a malignity in human nature, more prone to do evil than good, without considering from whence we had that nature; for if the malignity in it be greater than precepts, examples, or exhortations can remove, the heavier scale must weigh down.

How much more modest and reasonable would it be to argue, that moral good and evil in this world, are only relations of our actions to the Supreme Being, and to one another, and would be nothing here below, if there were no men? That no event can happen in the universe but what must have causes strong enough to produce it? That all causes must first or last center in the supreme cause; who, from the existence of his own nature, must always do what is best, and all his actions must be instantaneous emanations of himself? He sees all things at one view, and nothing can happen without his leave and permission, and without his giving power enough to have it effected: When therefore we see any thing which seems to contradict the images which we have presumed to form about his essence, or the attributes which we bestow upon him (which images and attributes are, for the most part, borrowed from what we think most valuable amongst ourselves), we ought to suspect our own ignorance, to know that we want appetites to fathom infinite wisdom, and to rest assured that all things conduce to the ends and designs of his providence, who always chooses the best means to bring them about.

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I am, &c.

No. 110. SATURDAY, January 5, 1723.

Of Liberty and Necessity. [Trenchard] ↩

SIR,

I have already said, that I could consider good and evil only as in relation to men's actions to one another, or to the Supreme Being; in which actions they can have for their end their own interest alone, in present or futurity. But when I consider these ideas in regard to God, I must consider them as objects of his will, which can alone constitute right or wrong, though they may sometimes not quadrate with the notions that we form of justice amongst one another, and which are only prudent rules for our own separate convenience, and take in no part of the creation but ourselves. We cannot enter into the rationale of God's punishing all mankind for the sin of their first parents, which they could not help; nor for his punishing all Israel with a pestilence for the private sin of David, which, without doubt, many of them condemned; nor for his bringing plagues upon the Egyptians, because he had hardened Pharaoh's heart; no more than for his destroying all mankind at the Deluge, for crimes which he could have prevented; and multitudes of the like instances in Holy Writ besides, which we cannot account for by our weak reasonings (which have for their object only our own advantage). But we are very sure that these things were done, and rightly done; and all conduced to some superior, wise, and just end. Almighty God judges of the whole of things, and we only of them as they regard ourselves: The whole system of the universe is his care; and all other inferior beings must be subordinate to the interests of this great one, must all contribute, in their several stations and actions, to bring about at last the grand purposes of his providence. Infinite millions of animals are born with the morning sun, and probably see old age, and feel the pangs of death, before noon: Great numbers of them by their death preserve life, or give convenience to others who otherwise could not live at all, or must live upon very ill terms. Vegetables rise, grow, decay, die again, and get a new resurrection in other shapes. All nature is in perpetual rotation, and working through a thousand revolutions to its last period, and the consummation of all things, when its great author will know how to make all individuals recompence for the evils which they have suffered here, and perhaps give us faculties to know, admire, and glorify his conduct, in those instances which may seem most mysterious to our narrow capacities in this frail state.

But this general and comprehensive system of the universe, this honourable conception of the deity, acquiescence in, and submission to his will, will not square with the interests of particular societies of men, who think themselves concerned to find out a system for themselves alone; and therefore, to avoid those consequences (which I can see no purposes of religion served in avoiding) they compliment away his power, prescience and general providence, to do respect to the notions which they have pleased to conceive of his justice, which they have thought fit to measure by their own interests, or what they think best for themselves. They first determine what they desire to have; then call it just, and immediately interest heaven to bring it about; and finding that it contradicts the experience of mankind, and all the notions that they can conceive of the workings of providence, and the nature of things themselves (which always operate from cause to effect) they set themselves to work to form a new scheme at the expence of denying all that they see or can know.

In order to this, they have made man the *primum mobile*, and his mind the first principle or spring of all his actions, independent of the author of his being, and of all the second causes which evidently influence and concur to determine his resolutions and his actions. They say, that Almighty God (who has infinite justice and power) having given to mankind a rule to act by, and annexed rewards or menaces to the observance or non-observance of this

rule, has given a free uncontrolled, and impartial liberty to him to determine, without being coerced or restrained by any other power to do, or not to do an action, or to choose good or evil to himself: His justice, they say, obliges him to this conduct, and his power enables him to execute and bring it to pass; and so by affecting to do right to one attribute of his, which they cannot understand, and which they may possibly mistake, by supposing it to be different from his will (which alone, as has been said, can constitute right or wrong) they take away and rob him of all or most of the rest.

His prescience or knowledge (from all eternity) of every event which does or can happen in the universe, is denied at once; for whatever is contingent in its own nature, and may or may not happen, cannot be foreseen: for when any being sees that a thing will be, it must be; for it is impossible to know that any event will come to pass, that may not come to pass; and it is equally impossible to foresee an effect, without knowing the causes which produce it. It is no irreverence to the Supreme Being, to say, that he cannot do impossibilities, and know things which cannot be known; and it is certain he must know all things that can be known, because they depend upon his will.

It reflects upon his wisdom or power: Upon the first, as supposing that he desires or intends to bring any designs or purposes to pass, and yet that he has not chosen the proper methods to attain them; or upon the latter, that he cannot attain them if he would: It entrenches upon his providence and government of the universe, by giving part of his power out of his own hands, and by leaving it to the discretion of inferior and weak beings, to contradict himself, and disappoint his intentions: And even his justice itself, to which all the rest are so freely sacrificed, is attacked upon such reasons, in charging Almighty God with severity in punishing crimes committed through weakness, want, or predominant appetites, and which he could have prevented by giving others. I do not see what has been, or can be said to these objections more, than that we are not to reason upon the proceedings of providence, which acts upon motives and maxims far above us, and which are not to be scanned by our little rules and scanty capacities; and if these gentlemen could but be persuaded to reason thus at first, they would save themselves the trouble of solving perpetual contradictions.

For what can be more evident, than that the actions of man, which seem most spontaneous and free, depend upon his will to do them; and that that will is directed by his reasoning faculties, which depend again upon the good or ill organizations of his body, upon his complexion, the nature of his education, imbibed prejudices, state of health, predominant passions, manner of life, fortuitous reasonings with others, different kinds of diet, and upon the thousands of events, seeming accidents, and the perpetual objects which encompass him, and which every day vary and offer themselves differently to him; all or most of which causes, and many more which probably determine him, must be confessed to be out of his power? Constant experience shews us, that men differently constituted, or differently educated, will reason differently, and the same men in different circumstances. A man will have different sentiments about the same things, in youth, in middle age, and in dotage, in sickness and in health, in liquor and sobriety, in wealth and in poverty, in power and out of it; and the faculties of the mind are visibly altered by physick, exercise, or diet.

The same reason which is convincing to one man, appears ridiculous to another, and to the same man at different times; and consequently, his or their actions, which are results of those reasonings, will be different: And we not only all confess this, by endeavouring to work upon one another by these mediums, but heaven thinks fit to choose the same; for what

else can be meant by offering rewards and denouncing punishments, but as causes to produce the effects designed, that is, to save those whom Almighty God in his deep wisdom has preordained to bliss, and to be influenced by those motives? We all confess, that no man can do his duty without the grace of God, and whoever has the grace of God will do his duty. It is undoubtedly to be obtained by prayer, but we must have grace to pray for it; and I am not insensible that Almighty God does any other way give his grace, but by offering to us, or by laying in our way sufficient inducements to obey his will: I am sure that I can find none else in myself, or discover them in others, whatever the enthusiastick and visionary gentlemen may do. I doubt much, that what they call grace, is what I call enthusiasm, or a strong conceit or persuasion of their own godliness and communication with the deity.

What sort of reasoning then is this, to say, that heaven gives every man sufficient power and motives to choose the best, which yet prove insufficient; that he has made every man free to act or not to act by a rule, and yet has placed him in such a situation as to find a thousand obstacles in his way to that freedom; and that he has given him a judgment capable to determine right, and opportunities rightly to exercise that judgment; yet by making use of that judgment and those opportunities, he often judges directly contrary: And all this is to make good a system, as yet owned but by a very small part of mankind, and for which I can find no foundation in reason and scripture?

I must beg leave to think it very audacious in a small number of men, to determine the workings of providence by their own narrow schemes, at the expence too of the opinions and reasonings of the greatest part of the world in all ages. All or most of the sects of philosophers in Greece and Rome, held fate or necessity, as the several sects among the Jews did, except the Essenes, a very small sect indeed, not exceeding some few thousands. The Mahometans, thro' the world, hold predestination: The Calvinists, and some other Protestant sects, hold it now; and I do not understand the articles of the Church of England, if it be not the orthodox opinion amongst us; and it certainly was held to be so, till a few doctors in King James' and Charles I's time advanced the contrary system, and who, in the addresses of Parliament, were always, in those reigns, ranked with the papists for doing so; and it is yet undoubtedly the opinion of the common people through the world. However, I do not condemn any one who may think that this is derogatory to the attributes of God, for offering in a modest manner, his reasons against any dogma ever so well established (which I think is the right of all mankind); yet I could wish that he would shew the same modesty, in giving other people their liberty of defending the contrary opinion with the same good intentions.

The most pregnant and usual objection against this doctrine is, that if men are predestinated to eternal bliss or misery, their own endeavours are useless, and they can have no motives to prefer good before evil; which I confess, will always be the reasonings of men who are predestinated to the latter (if it be possible to suppose that there can be any such); but those who are determined to the first, will always believe, that God takes proper means to attain his ends, and that he designs to save men by the medium of good works, and of obeying his will; and this conviction will be an adequate cause to produce such obedience in those who are destined to happiness. If the end be predestinated, the means must be predestinated too. If a man [is] to die in war, he must meet an enemy; if he [is] to be drowned, he must come within the reach of water; or if he [is] to be starved, he must not know how to come at any victuals, or have no mind to eat them, or stomach to digest them.

For my own part, I dare not believe, that the all-good, all-wise, and most merciful God, has determined any of his creatures to endless misery, by creating and forming them with such appetites and passions as naturally and necessarily produce it; though I think it to be fully consistent with his power, goodness, and justice, to give inclinations which may lead and entitle us to happiness. And, as I conceive that there is nothing in the holy scriptures which expressly decides this difficulty, as I may possibly shew hereafter; so I shall not presume to search too narrowly into the secret dispensations of providence, or to pronounce any thing dogmatically concerning his manner of governing the universe, more than that he cannot make his creatures miserable without just and adequate reasons. And therefore, since we find in fact, that many of them are so in this state, we must account for this, but mediums agreeable to his undisputed attributes, or own that we cannot account for it at all, though it be unquestionably just in itself. All means will probably conduce in the end to impartial and universal good; and whatever, or how many states soever of probation we may pass through, yet I hope, that the mercies of God, and the merits of Jesus Christ, will at last exceed and preponderate the frailties, mistakes, and temporary transgressions of weak and mortal men; all which I shall endeavour, in time, to shew from scripture and reason: The former of which, in my opinion, is too generally mistaken or perverted, to signify what it does not intend; by straining some passages beyond their literal and genuine signification, by explaining others too literally, and by not making due allowances to the manner of speaking used amongst the eastern nations, which was very often, if not most commonly, in hyperboles, and other figures and allegories. But more of this hereafter; when I dare promise to deserve the pardon of every candid person, whom I cannot convince.

T

I am, &c.

No. 111. SATURDAY, January 12, 1723.

The same Subject continued. [Trenchard] ↩

[IV-47]

SIR,

As all the ideas or images of the brain must be caused originally by impressions of objects without us, so we can reason upon no other. A man born blind can have no image of light or colours; nor one who has been always deaf, of sounds; whatever descriptions are given him of them. There are many creatures in the world who want some organs of sense which we have, and probably there are others in the universe which have many that we want: and such beings, if there be any such, must know many things of which we have no conception; and must judge of other things, of which we have a more partial conception, in different lights from what we are capable of judging. It is not certain that any two men see colours in the same lights; and it is most certain, that the same men at different times, according to the good or evil disposition of their organs, see them in various ones, and consequently their ratiocinations upon them will be different; which experience shews us to be true in distempered, enthusiastick, or melancholy men.

Our senses are evidently adapted to take in only finite or limited beings; nor are we capable of conceiving their existence, otherwise than by mediums of extension and solidity. The mind finds that it sees, hears, tastes, smells, and feels, which is its manner of first conceiving things, or in other words, is the modus in which objects affect it; and it can reason no farther upon them, than according to those impressions: So that it is conversant only about the film or outside of bodies, and knows nothing of their internal contexture, or how they perform their operations; and consequently can affirm or deny nothing about them; but according to the perceptions which it has. When it goes further, or attempts to go further, it rambles in the dark, wades out of its depth, and must rave about non-entities, or, which is the same thing to us, about what we do or can know nothing of, or nothing to the purpose; and yet these things, or these nothings, have employed the leisure, speculations, and pens of many very learned men, as if true wisdom consisted in knowing what we want faculties to know.

All that we can know of infinity, eternity, &c. is, that we can know little or nothing about them. We must understand what we mean by the terms, or else we could not use them, or must use them impertinently. We perfectly apprehend what we mean by duration, which is our conception of the continuance of things, and contains in it a *terminus a quo* to a *terminus ad quem*, that is, it has certain boundaries in our imaginations, and we can multiply this conception backwards and forwards, without ever being able to come to the end of it, and so may be sure that it is without end; and then the imagination is lost, and can go no further. We know that all extended bodies are divisible and can never be divided so often, but they may be divided farther; and therefore say justly, they are infinitely divisible; nor can any body be so large or long, as to come to the end of extension. And therefore we may safely affirm, that extension or space (which is our conception of the existence and immensity of bodies) is infinite. But then we know no other properties of infinity or eternity, but by the help of these conceptions, which being limited and finite, cannot measure what is infinite and eternal; that is, we cannot comprehend what is incomprehensible to any being which is not infinite and

eternal too, and whose existence is not as unmeasurable by time and place as those images are.

All the disputes, seeming contradictions, and absurdities, which offer themselves when we think or talk of infinity or eternity, arise from our applying our thoughts, which are confined to finite beings, and our words, which are coined to convey finite conceptions, to subjects which are infinite, and of which we can have no adequate ideas that can be expressed by sounds. Nothing is more true in finite beings, than that the whole must consist of all its parts; but in infinity there is no whole, nor consequently parts. Where there is no beginning, nor any end, there can be no middle; and where there is no whole, there can be no half. Time or space in theory are not divisible, because nothing but time or space can divide them, and then they are not divided; yet we know that time or space, as they have relation to finite beings, and our existence of duration, may be divided, and are so; and therefore the riddles made about them are owing to the narrowness of our capacities, and to our endeavouring to apply such conceptions as we have, to objects of which we can have no conception; which is, in effect, to attempt to hear sights, and see sounds.

It is the same thing to pretend to define eternity, or comprehend infinity; which is, to put limits and ends to what has no limits and ends, and to comprehend what is incomprehensible; which conceptions contradict one another, and cannot stand together in a proposition. It is the same to talk of infinite number, for all number must be finite.

How vain therefore is it to form any propositions or reasonings beyond our images, or to make positive deductions from premises wholly negative! From hence I conceive proceed all the fairy disputes about the modus of God's existing; what are his attributes and manner of acting; whether space is a real being, or only the order of things amongst themselves; whether it is the sensorium of God; or what is the meaning of the word *sensorium*: Which controversies have taken up great part of the time of two very learned men, that has been spent, as I think, mostly in shewing that they know nothing of the matter, or next to nothing. I am sure that I have learned nothing from their elucidations, whatever others may have done.

All that God Almighty has thought fit to tell us about the modus of his existence, is, *I am that I am*. And this we should have known, if he had not told it to us; and I believe it is all that we ever shall know, till he gives us other faculties. We are very sure that God *is*; that some being must have existed before any limitation of time, and independent of every other being; and consequently must have existed necessarily, or what we call eternally. It is exceeding probable, and, I think, certain, that there cannot be two or more such beings as are necessary and self-existing; and if but one, then that must be the cause of all the rest; or, which is the same thing, must produce all the rest; which mediately or immediately must derive their existence, faculties, sensations, capacities, powers of action, and consequently their actions themselves, from him.

But by what energy or power he effects this, we are wholly ignorant; and though the wits of learned men have been employed in solving this intricate question for many thousand years, yet the world is now just as wise as when they are first set out; and therefore I humbly think it high time to give over, and to content ourselves with knowing all that we can know, that is, that we can know nothing about it; and, consequently, ought not to form propositions about God's essence, or his attributes, concerning his eternity, his infinity, the modus or the sensorium of his existence, or concerning his ways or motives for making or governing the universe: For I conceive that in these questions we must walk wholly in the dark; like

travellers who are out of their way, the farther they go, the greater is their journey home again.

However, I think that we are left at liberty to reason about things which we do know; and therefore may with great assurance say, that God made all things, and that every thing depends immediately, or, by second causes, mediately, upon him; and that it is absolutely impossible that they can do otherwise.

I do not see how a greater absurdity can be put together in words, than that one being shall make another, create the matter of which it was made, give it all the faculties that it has, all its capacities of reasoning, powers of action, means of thinking, and present it with all its objects for thinking, yet leave it at liberty to act against them all; which I conceive is a downright impossibility. A pair of scales perfectly poised cannot ponderate on either side; and a man who has no motives to act, will not act at all. Every thing must be at rest which has no force to impel it: but as the last straw breaks the horse's back, or a single sand will turn the beam of scales which hold weights as heavy as the world; so, without doubt, as minute causes may determine the actions of men, which neither others nor they themselves are sensible of. But certainly something must determine them, or else they could not be determined; and it is nothing to the purpose to say, that their choice determines them, if something else must determine that choice: for, let it be what it will, the effect must be necessary. To say, that a man has a power to act, without any motives or impulse to act, seems to me to be a direct blunder. A man cannot have a will to act against his will; and if he has a will to do it, something must determine that will; and, whatever it is, must be his cause of action, and will produce the action; and that can only be the appearance of advantage arising from it; and those appearances must arise from the seeming relations of objects to one another, or to himself; which relations are not in his disposal, nor consequently are his actions, in the sense contended for.

If a man can do a voluntary action without a design to do it, and without any reason or motive for doing it, then matter without understanding has a self-moving power; which is atheism with a witness: though I will not, according to laudable custom, call the asserters of it atheists, because they may not see the consequence; for, take away understanding, and there can be nothing left but matter: And understanding is certainly taken away, when a being has no reason for acting; but when he has a reason, that reason is the cause, or co-cause of the action.

The question therefore is not, whether a man can do what he has a mind to do? but, whether he can do what he has no mind to do? That is, if his inclinations concur with his reasonings, his appearing interests, and his predominant passions, whether all together will not form his resolutions, and make him act pursuant to them, whilst those motives continue? One may as well say, that a man can avoid seeing, when an object strikes the eye, or hearing, when it hits the ear, as to believe that he can decline thinking, when the motion caused by the object reaches the brain, or where-ever else the seat of thinking is, unless some other more powerful object obstruct or divert it in its journey, or afterwards; and when he does think, he must think as he can, that is, according as objects from without are represented by their images to him within; or, in other words, as they act upon the animal spirits, or whatever else it is which sets the machine in motion. A man cannot avoid feeling pain or sickness, which are sensations of the mind, nor choose whether he will feel them or not; nor can he avoid desiring to get rid of them, unless some stronger motives determine him, which promise him greater advantages than he suffers inconveniences.

But here the metaphysical gentlemen distinguish between the motions of the body and those of the mind: They own that the pulse will beat, the nerves, arteries, muscles, and blood, will move, whether we will or not; and is it not as evident, that, according as they move or beat, the mind receives alteration, is enlarged or lessened, improved or impaired, and determined in many of its resolutions? A man sick, or in pain, will send for or go to a physician or surgeon, which draws after it a train of other resolutions or actions; and, according to the success which he meets with, may alter the whole scheme of his life, and of his after-thinking, and very often of his capacity of thinking. As our bodies are healthy or disordered, we are courageous, jealous, fearful, enthusiastick, or melancholy, and reason differently, and act differently: And is it not then choice philosophy, to say, that the contexture and disposition of our bodies (which were not of our own making) often direct or influence the resolutions of our mind, and yet are not the causes of those resolutions; and to go on to suppose, that our minds act independently of them, as well as of all other causes? For it is ridiculous to say, that though the mind has a principle of self-motion, yet other causes co-operate to produce the action; for if any other cause make it do what it would not otherwise do, that is the cause, or co-cause of the action produced, to all the purposes of this argument; nor can I guess at any other argument (that can be made use of to shew, that second causes can produce part of the action, or co-operate in producing it) which can prove them incapable to produce the whole. The most that can be pretended is, that there is a possibility that it may be so; but I conceive that no reason can be assigned why it may not be otherwise. But whether it be so or not, I think I have shewn, that the mind of man can be only a secondary cause, must be acted upon by other causes; that God alone is the first cause or principle of all motion; and that the actions of all other beings are necessarily dependent upon him.

A very great and justly celebrated author, who supposes that a man has a self-moving power, and, I think, only supposes it, endeavours to determine the question, by reducing his opponents to account for what no man yet has accounted for, and yet every man sees to be true: He says, [*]

If the reasons and motives upon which a man acts be the immediate and efficient cause of the action, then either abstract notions (as all reasons and motives are) are in themselves substances, or else that which has no real subsistence can put a body in motion.

Now the force of this reasoning consists in putting his adversary upon shewing how the mind acts upon the body, or the body upon the mind: and he would have done kindly to have let us into that secret himself. When he is so obliging to inform the world, how the eye sees, the ear hears, or the palate tastes, I dare undertake to solve any other difficulty which he proposes. We find, by experience, that when an object strikes the eye, it causes that sensation which we call seeing; and a man cannot then avoid seeing, no more than in other circumstances he can avoid feeling pain and sickness, which are undoubtedly actions of the mind, or, if he choose another manner of expression, we will call them passions (and indeed they are both; *viz.* the latter as they are impelled by other causes; and the former, as they produce future events: And it seems very trifling to me, in so great a man, to spend so many pages about the propriety of a word, when the meaning intended to be conveyed by it was fully understood): but certainly they are species of thinking, or, if he pleases, abstract notions, which often put a body in motion, as all thinking undoubtedly does: But how these effects are produced, we are wholly in the dark.

We see and feel, that desires and fears, that abstract notions or images of the brain, alter the disposition of the whole fabric, and often destroy the contexture of it. We see that the longings of women with child will stamp impressions upon the fetus, which longings are certainly abstract notions; and if these are not corporeal, then we must confess, that what is not so will affect what is: For as to his words *substance* and *subsistence*, I shall not pretend to understand them without a farther explanation, if he mean any thing by them besides body. Methinks this truly worthy and learned author should not call upon another to solve what no man is more capable of solving than himself. I freely own my ignorance; and, since, as I conceive, revelation is silent in the matter, am contented to continue in that ignorance.

The other argument is as follows:

If insensible matter, or any other being or substance continually acting upon a man, be the immediate and efficient cause of his actions, then the motion of that subtle matter or substance must be caused by some other substance, I would choose to call it some other being, and the motion of that by some other, till at last we arrive at a free being.

Now, if, instead of the words *free being*, he had said a self-existent being, which I call God, his conclusion had been inevitable; nor do I oppose it in the words which he uses: But as we may possibly differ, and I doubt shall do, in the meaning of the words *free being*, so I neither assent to, nor dissent from, his proposition. I mean by a *free being*, one who has nothing, without itself, to determine or control its actions; which God has not, and I think man has. His conclusion therefore from such premises are nothing to me.

T

I am &c.

No. 112. SATURDAY, January 19, 1723.

Fondness for Posterity nothing else but Self-love. Such as are Friends to publick Liberty, are the only true Lovers of Posterity. [Trenchard] ↩

[IV-58]

SIR,

Men, for the sake of their posterity, do many things, which, they tell us, they would not do for their own sakes. The wealth which they do not spend, they lay up for posterity; and their care for posterity is made a pretence, to justify all the acquisitions that they make of fortune and dominion. But this is false reasoning, though by it they often deceive themselves and others. They find that they have greater appetites to acquire wealth, than they have to enjoy it; and, not being able to deny, that wealth is only so far useful as it is enjoyed, and no farther, they cannot justify their conduct, but by furnishing themselves with a false excuse from their regard for posterity: As if the affections of men could be stronger for others, and for a future race, of whom they know nothing, or for such as perhaps may never exist, than for themselves. Doubtless, men are in no circumstances to be separated from themselves: They are ever the chief objects of their own tenderness and good wishes; and the love of posterity is only self-love continued beyond the grave. We see those who have no posterity, nor the prospect of any, engaged in the same passionate and greedy pursuits as those who have; and they often leave their estates, when they die, to those for whom, while they lived, they shewed no concern.

This ambition therefore amongst men, of leaving an illustrious posterity, is mere self-love; a passion to survive themselves, and to make a figure after they are dead. To gratify this passion, men in all stations often take wild and unaccountable courses: They employ great pains for that which they can never enjoy, and run many dangers for what they will never reap: They drudge, and laboriously contrive ways to wear themselves out, they deny themselves rest and ease, and the comforts of life, that some future men, whom they know not, may live in idleness and abundance, and perhaps despise these their careful and penurious ancestors, who painfully provided for them the means of luxury, and enabled them to be insolent, or debauched, or insignificant to society. They are indeed generally but even with one another: The descendent receives, without gratitude, an estate which his ancestor left him without affection. People would take it greatly amiss, if you supposed that they wanted honour for their ancestors, or regard to their posterity; and that they themselves were the only real objects of all this regard, and of that honour. But let them ask themselves, whether they would restore to their grandfather again the estate which he left them, were he to rise from the dead, and demand it? or, whether they are willing to part with it to their children before their own death? or, if they sometimes do, whether they have not other motives besides paternal affection? and, whether their own credit and vanity be not the strongest?

Thus men gratify their own tempers, and invent fine false reasons and specious names for what they do. A passion for posterity, is a passion for fame; and he who raises a family, considers his race as hereditary trustees for his name and grandeur, and as the proper means and channel for perpetuating himself. Nor does he carry about him an appetite more selfish and personal than this. So that all the wicked things which a man does to raise a posterity, are

but so many infamous steps to acquire personal fame, which he will never arrive at; and does therefore but labour against the very end which he labours for. If his posterity prove good, it will be remembered to their praise, and his shame, what a vile ancestor they had: If they prove bad, it will not be forgot how much they resemble him; and he will become still more odious in his odious descendents. Even the wisest men do a foolish thing, when they employ great assiduity and care to leave a great estate to a random heir, whom nature, or chance, or the law, gives them. How many immense estates, gathered in a long course of years and application, have we seen thrown away suddenly upon harlots and sharpers! The acquisitions of half a century have disappeared, as it were, in a moment; and the chief remaining monuments of the founder's name were jests made upon his memory.

But of all the foolish and wicked ways of raising families, none equals that of raising them upon the ruins of publick liberty. The general security is the only certain security of particulars; and though desperate men often find safety in publick destruction, yet they cannot ensure the same safety to their children, who must suffer with the rest in the misery of all. If great wicked men would consider this, the world would not be plagued with their ambition. Their posterity scarce ever miss to reap the bitter fruits of their actions; and the curse of their iniquities rarely fails to follow them to the third and fourth generation.

The instruments of public ruin have generally at once entailed misery upon their country and upon their own race. Those who were the instruments and ministers of Caesar and Augustus, and put the commonwealth under their feet, and them above the laws, did not consider, that they were not only forging chains for their country, but whetting swords against their own families, who were all cut off under succeeding tyrants: Nay, most of their children fell early and bloody sacrifices to the cruel and suspicious spirit of Tiberius. He began his reign with the murder of young Agrippa, whose father had, by his courage and conduct in war, established the tyranny in that house. What availed to Agrippa all his great riches, his sumptuous buildings, and even his near alliance with the prince, whose daughter he married, but to hasten and magnify the fall and destruction of his own house? There was not one Roman family wickedly enriched by their base subserviency to Augustus, but was slaughtered and confiscated under his successors, and most of them under his immediate successor: Nay, their riches and splendor were reasons for destroying them. The freed slaves of the emperors grew afterwards the first men in Rome, and had at their mercy the heads and estates of the patricians; nor could any of the great Roman lords come into any post or office in their own empire, but by the pleasure and permission of those slaves, and by servile court paid to them.

Would their illustrious ancestors, who were the friends and abettors of Caesar, have done as they did, had they foreseen this vile subserviency of their posterity to slaves and pathicks, and the daily and wanton sacrifices made of their boasted blood? And yet was not all this easily to be foreseen? While they were arming him with a power over their country, they stripped themselves of all title to their lives and estates. By laying up riches for their families, they did but lay snares for the ruin of their families. It grew a crime under these tyrants, to be conspicuous for any thing; and riches, virtue, eloquence, courage, reputation, nay, names and accidents, became crimes. Men, and even women, were put to death, for having had illustrious ancestors; and some, for bearing the fortuitous surnames of great men dead an hundred years before.

So that these men, who, from the bait of present wealth and place, helped to overthrow the constitution of that great state, were not only the parricides of their country, but the murderers of their own children and families, by putting a lawless dagger into the hands of these tyrants to execute these murders. They sold their own blood and posterity to these imperial butchers, whose chief employment it was to shed it. These mistaken men might flatter and blind themselves with a conceit, that they were laying up riches for ages, and entailing honours upon their latest race: For what is so blind as ambition and avarice? But to their unhappy descendents it proved a terrible inheritance of servitude, exile, tortures, and massacre. What they meant to perpetuate, their fortune and race, were the first things seized and extirpated. They had been real traitors to make their children great; and their children were put to death for false treason, merely for being great. So nearly are punishments allied to crimes, and so naturally do they rise from them!

Thus rash and unadvised, even as to themselves and their own families, are those wicked men, who raise up an enormous power in their country, because they were its livery, and are for some time indulged by it in their own pride and oppressions! And so ungrateful is that power when it is raised, even to the props and instruments that raised it! They themselves are often crushed to death by it, and their posterity certainly are.

This may serve among other arguments, to prove, that men ought to be virtuous, just, and good, for their own sake, and that of their families; and especially great men, whose lasting security is best found in the general security. Pericles had long and arbitrarily lavished away the publick money to buy creatures, and perpetuate his power; and, dreading to give up his accounts, which the Athenians began to call for, thought that he had no other way to avoid doing this justice to his country, but by adding another great crime to his past crimes. He would venture the ruin of the commonwealth, rather than be accountable to it: He therefore threw all things into confusion, raised armies, and entered precipitately into a war with Lacedaemon; which, after much blood, misery, and desolation, ended in the captivity of his country. During that war, he died of the plague, which the war was thought to occasion; and to his pride and guilt alone were owing the plague, war, and the taking of Athens, with the desolation of the city and territory. Before he died he felt the loss of his whole family, and of all his friends and relations; and, doubtless foresaw the downfall of his country. What huge and complicated ruin! He would see the state sink, rather than lose his authority in it: But in the destruction of his country, his own was justly and naturally involved. Where was now the great, the politick, the eloquent, Pericles? Where was the proud state which he had long and haughtily swayed? Where was his family and race? Where were all his mighty future views? Why, the sword, the pestilence, and foreign conquest, had, by his own management, put an end to them all; and his wisdom and profound foresight proved miserable and ruinous folly.

T

I am, &c.

No. 113. SATURDAY, January 26, 1723.

Letter to Cato, concerning his many Adversaries and Answerers. [Gordon] ↩

[IV-65]

HORATIUS TO CATO

SIR,

I have had a long ambition to say something about you one way or other; but I doubted whether I had best write to you, or against you. That doubt is now decided; and lo! I who might have been your adversary, am become your correspondent and advocate. I send you your apology, and shew you the good that you do.

You have, sir, opened a new source of provision for the poor, by finding employment for all the wits mendicant about town: And though they ought to reverence your name, as that of another Sutton, by whose alms they are sustained, yet they vilely fly in your face, and pollute, by their matchless ingratitude, the very bread which you generously put into their mouths; like maggots, who prey upon the flesh that they are bred in, till they turn flies, which are vermin with wings. Thus reprobates serve heaven; they affront and blaspheme it, and receive their existence from it. You scarce had appeared in the world, but you recalled superannuated authors to life again; and, toothless as they were, set them a biting, biting at the hand that brought them back from oblivion. Obsolete and despairing authors once more violently grasped their pen: The lean and ill fed candidates for weekly work from the booksellers brightened up, and began to be clothed; and puny poets, and the humble composers of ditties, left their tags and ballads, to live upon Cato; even those who had got some reputation, thought that they had now a lucky opportunity to improve it, by breaking a lance with a champion who drew all eyes upon him, and was yet invincible: And Cato became at once the butt of the envious, the mark of the ambitious, and the stay and support of the needy.

It is the lot of grandeur: A great man must have his poor and impertinent dependents, as well as his useful and agreeable: They will serve to make up his train. A troop of beggars besetting his coach, or following it in the street, do, notwithstanding their rags, and ill-favoured looks, and dismal style, but add to the lustre of his figure. Jesters and buffoons, cynicks and declaimers, are likewise of the same use, to swell his pomp, and divert him, though they be often too free with him. Your retinue, sir, of this kind is infinite: From the Cockpit to Moorfields you maintain a wag, an orator, a critick, a poet, a journalist, in every street, and whole swarms in the alleys: Nor would I desire a surer patent for fame than such a shoal of calumniators. Their scolding is compliment; and while they aim blows at you, they only cudgel themselves on your behalf: *Offendent solido*; you know the fable of the viper biting the file.

Envy always praises those whom it rails at. It is indeed the only way that foul mouths can make your panegyric, or that of any man. Were they to extol you in earnest, it would be downright scandal and railing; a foul conspiracy against your reputation; like the fawning of a whelp, who, to express his fondness, pisses upon you. If therefore they meant their scurrilities and satirical nonsense in love, you would have ground for provocation: But to mean them as they do the contrary way, is their only genuine way of thanking you for their

food. There are many sorts of folks whose calumnies I would be proud of for the same reason why I would be ashamed of their praise. A great man at Athens was followed from a publick assembly, all the way home, by a very competent reviler, with a world of panegyric ill names and acceptable abuses. That great man took all these kind volleys of defamation for so many huzzas; and calling to his servant, "Go," says he, "take a light, and conduct that worthy gentleman, who has honoured me with all those civil acclamations, home to his lodging."

Now, if this ill-tongued Athenian had not been in earnest, his courtesy would have been half lost. I hope that your numerous answerers and revilers mean what they say, else the obligation is but small; and the smaller, because these their panegyrics upon you are not at all encouraged. The town is still profoundly ignorant what a swarm of retailers, what loud and vehement flatterers, you have in it. They have filled, and do weekly fill, mighty reams of paper in extolling you, as great a secret as the world would make of it, to use the words of a witty author.

Love, they say, is blind; and perhaps from hence may be fetched a proof, that these your pretended adversaries are your real friends, since in their writings against you, that is, for you (for it is all one) they are guided by no other rule of right and wrong, than whether Cato affirms a thing, or denies it; and are always sure to take the contrary side: Nay, some of them contradict Cato, at the expence of their constant and favourite opinions. Does not this look like playing booty? By their works one would think that you had the licensing of your opponents, and, but for their hideous bulk, the overlooking of them: At least by your profound silence, and great meekness towards them, you seem well pleased with their labours. I dare say, you would not change them for any set of defamers that could be pick'd up for you.

A lady of my acquaintance is fond of dogs. She has at present two or three little curs, that are very noisy at every visitant who is taller than ordinary. The puny vermin have a spite at elevation. They once particularly, made an incessant and slanderous clamour at a noble lord, well known for his fine person, and graceful mien; nor could they be stilled. The lady was out of countenance: She told him that she would have them knocked on the head, or given away: "By no means, Madam," says his lordship, sagely enough, "I know you cannot be without dogs, and perhaps the next may bite me."

I think that I have read you impartially, and cannot say that I have found in you any knavish reasoning, any base or dishonest principles. You need not therefore be concerned who writes against you. However, as I would trust no body, in any circumstances, with any sort of absolute power, methinks I should not be displeas'd to see you checked and watch'd a little in that great authority which you have acquired over the minds of men. No body has shewn us better than yourself, that all discretionary power is liable to be abused, and ought not to be trusted, or cautiously trusted, to mortal and frail men. For this reason, though you be a monarch of the press, I would have you a limited monarch: As such it becomes you to bear with, and receive kindly, the admonitions and remonstrances of men of honour and sense, when such differ with you; and it is agreeable to your sense and character, to laugh at the profane contumelies of slaves. Your calumniators do your business. The viper carries within it a remedy for its own poison. You are secure, by the baseness of their fears, against the baseness of their malice; and their malice is harmless, by being obvious.

There is something diverting in the number and variety of your adversaries, and in their different views. Some are old stagers; and, being used to spill ink for pay in the quarrel of parties, made an offer of themselves to enter the lists again, and scold for wages at Cato. The finances were not in Cato's disposal: This was a good and conscientious reason to them for being against him. But these volunteers are not suitably encouraged. One of them has in two years writ near a dozen pamphlets against you; but with ill success every way. The town will not buy them; the other end of the town will not reward the author; nor will you take any notice of them. A melancholy case; that learned Oxonian is at present in the slough of despond.

Others, who had not been used to receive pay, and I doubt never will, thought themselves qualified to earn it: For, alas! what is so deceiving as self-love? So upon Cato they fell; and, by way of answer, cracked jests, and called him names. Fraught with this merit, away they footed sweating to the office; where, after many petitions, and much waiting, they were admitted to the audience of one of the clerks. They begged to be considered as humble auxiliaries, and to have an acknowledgment, the smallest acknowledgment. These gentlemen had better luck than the above ancient author: They were fully rewarded; that is to say, they were civilly thanked by the aforesaid clerk, and owned to be well-meaning persons. And yet they are ungrateful, and make heavy complaints, as if they had nothing. They still hope for more another time.

A bookseller of my acquaintance tells me, that he has refused within this year, five and fifty pamphlets written against you; and that the authors, one and all, offered to write for him by the year. They were all of opinion, that they could carry through a weekly paper with as much reputation and success as any yet written against you: Which he did not deny; and yet dismissed them. He told me, it was but this winter, that a man in a livery came to him, and asked him, what he would give for a sermon to be preached by his master the doctor on a publick occasion? He answered, "Nothing." "Oh, sir," says the valet, "my master's will sell like wild-fire. You cannot think, sir, how purely he claws off Cato: And you will see he'll soon be made a . . ." [*]

You may see, sir, that you are a useful man to many, and even considered as a scale to great preferment. This sermon is since out, and it has neither hurt you nor exalted the preacher, though he has there laboured the point very hard. The doctor wanted no good will, whatever else he wants. Unluckily for him, there is not an argument (I should have said assertion) used by him against writing, but what will bear fifty times as strongly against preaching. I will, however, acquit him from meaning this consequence, or any other but that which his man meant; and which seems a consequence at least extremely remote. The doctor is, indeed, admirable: While he thought himself haranging and scattering words against libelling, he was actually inveighing virulently against himself, and preaching an angry libel against preaching. May the press and liberty be ever blessed with such foes! The doctor does not want words; it is pity but he knew the use of them.

Says Mr. Bayes, in *The Rehearsal*,

I bring out my bull and my bear; and what do you think I make them do, Mr. Johnson?

Johnson. Do! why fight, I suppose.

Bayes. See how you are mistaken now! I would as soon make them dance:
No, igad, sir, I make them do no earthly thing.

There is this difference between the doctor's bull and Mr. Bayes's bull: The doctor's bull bellows; besides this he does no earthly thing neither.

Pray, sir, be not so proud and lazy; read some of your adversaries, and their bulls will divert you.

Methinks, as great a man as the world takes you to be, and as you may think yourself, you treat your intended adversaries, but real friends, too superciliously, and, I conceive, with too much contempt. I am told by some of your intimate friends, that you have never read any of their works; and yet, to my knowledge, several of them please themselves with having mortified you, and do themselves no small credit amongst their acquaintance by bragging of it. Give your poor retainers this consolation, since they are like to have no other: Consider them as brats of your own begetting; and, since you have brought them into the world, that you ought to support them. Your taking but the least notice of them, and their performances, will give them food and raiment: But I will beg leave to say, that it is very unnatural, when you have given birth to so many innocent and harmless creatures, to leave them afterwards to starve. You see that they want no industry and application; and it is not their fault if they want success. Take, generous Cato, a little notice of them; and I am sure they will gratefully acknowledge your indulgence. Read their labours, and condescend to throw away a few leisure hours in contemplating the imbecility of human nature. It becomes the greatest men to know the weak sides of it as well as the strong; at least you will learn this lesson by it, that

Man differs more from man, than man from beast.

Give me leave to conclude with a story: Once upon a time, I saw a large brave bull, of great comeliness and dignity, brought out upon a green near a country village to be baited. Among the bull-dogs fetched to bait him, were seen several dirty, deformed curs, called house dogs, that vented their choler in filthy noise. They barked aloud and bitterly, and disturbed every body but the bull, who, at all their snapping, snivelling, and snarling, never turned his head, nor moved a foot or horn. At last the squire of the place, who presided at the entertainment, shewed himself a man of taste and equity. "Take away," says he, with a voice of authority, "take away these yelping mongrels: We do not use to bait bulls with turnspits."

G

I am, SIR,

Your humble servant,

HORATIUS.

No. 114. SATURDAY, February 2, 1723.

The necessary Decay of Popish States shewn from the Nature of the Popish Religion.
[Trenchard] ↩

[IV-73]

SIR,

As I do not pretend to be inspired myself, nor have received any personal revelation concerning the Whore of Babylon, nor to have skill enough in the Apocalypse to discover the exact time of the fall of Antichrist; so I shall leave that charge to the profound persons who are learned in prophetick knowledge; but would humbly advise them to use a little of their own endeavours to demolish the harlot, and not to expect the whole from providence. And to encourage them in this undertaking, I shall attempt to shew in this paper, what is told in the *Homilies*, that she is old and withered, and would have long since fallen to pieces, if she had not been patched with searcloths, and kept alive by cordials, administered by the charity of those who were, or ought to have been, her enemies; and that as soon as they leave off their complaisance, give her no more physick, nor adopt her trumpery, her end will be certain: And this I shall attempt to prove from natural causes, leaving the supernatural ones to those who understand them better.

It has been more than once said in these letters, that population, labour, riches, and power, mutually procure one another, and always go together; that where there are but few people, and those few are not employed, there will be little wealth, and as little power; and consequently, those governments, which provide least for the increase of their people, and for the employment of those that they have, are less capable of annoying their enemies, or of preserving themselves. Now, if we try the power of Protestant and popish states by this test, it will appear absolutely impossible that the latter can long subsist, if the former do not lose their natural advantages by political blunders.

In the popish states of Europe, there are a million or more of male ecclesiasticks, and almost as many of the other sex, who by their religion are hindered from marriage, and consequently from procreation, unless by stealth, spurious births, which rarely produce living children; and all, or most of these, subsist upon the plunder of the people, without contributing any thing to the publick wealth, either by their labour, or out of their immense revenues, which are usually exempted from taxes, as are their persons from wars; on the contrary, they have no other business, but to fascinate and turn the brains of weak and enthusiastick people, to make them loiter after masses and useless harangues, and to fill their heads with senseless speculations and wild chimeras, which make them either useless or dangerous to their governors, and the ready tools and instruments of turbulent and seditious pedants; which evil is, or should be, better provided against in all Protestant states.

In popish countries, one third part of the year, or more is spent in most religiously worshipping dead men and women under the name of saints; in all which time the people dare not work to support their families, but must contribute, out of the little which remains, to pay their oppressors for preaching them out of their wits; and, by consequence, the publick loses all that the people would earn in those days; whereas, in Protestant states, all, or most of this trumpery is laid aside, and they most reasonably judge, that Almighty God is not

worshipped by his creatures starving themselves, and weakening their country.

In popish countries the power of the ecclesiasticks is so great, and their revenues so large, that the civil authority is often not able to protect its subjects. The priests, by the Inquisition and various cruelties, seize their estates, drive away their merchants and people, or starve them at home, and frighten others from coming in their room; so that their princes are forced to keep measures with them, connive at, submit to, and support their tyranny, in order to be protected in their own power; and, by so doing, their unhappy and undone subjects are reduced to the condition of their great Master, to be crucified between two thieves. On the contrary, in Protestant states the ecclesiasticks are equally subject with the rest of the people to the civil power; are not so numerous, nor have so large revenues, and those revenues are taxable; nor have they so much power and influence to mislead their hearers, and consequently cannot do so much mischief, and if kept to their proper business, may do much good by their pious examples, and by their godly precepts.

In popish countries a great part of the year is spent in keeping Lent, and in fasting-days, when the people, by their poverty, are reduced to live upon stinking or unwholesome food, whence many of them perish, and the rest are weakened and enervated, and rendered unfit either for labour or procreation; and then succeeds a riotous carnival, during which they are idle and debauched; and both these extremes, in their turns, produce diseases, poverty, and misery; whereas in Protestant countries the people live in regular plenty, according to their condition, keep themselves in constant labour and exercise, and by such means preserve their bodies in health, and their minds within their bodies, without sending them abroad a vision hunting.

In popish countries great quantities of gold, silver, and jewels, which ought to circulate, and be used in commerce, are buried as uselessly as when in the mine; are applied to adorn images and churches, or are locked up in caverns, and rendered unserviceable to mankind. This, forsooth, is called devotion, and giving to God what he before gave to men for their use; and their way of obeying him, is to make no use of it, and to lodge it only where there can be an ill use made of it. But, I thank God, this superstition is pretty well over in Protestant countries, where the people (a few old women and dotards excepted) think that their riches are better employed to maintain their families, relations, and friends, than to support idlers and cynicks.

In popish countries, their ecclesiasticks, living in idleness and riot, must be more lascivious than if otherwise employed; and by the means of confessions, and other secret communications with women, have better and frequenter opportunities to debauch them themselves, and to carry on intrigues for others, whereby they break in upon the peace of families, and interrupt the harmony which ought to accompany a married estate. To prevent in a good measure which mischiefs (since they are forbid to marry), their states are necessitated to tolerate established courtezans under a regulation; an institution which hinders many others from marrying, debauches their minds, ruins their estates, and enervates their bodies, and yet gives few children to the commonwealth: Which mischief is well provided against in Protestant countries; for there no man is obliged to trust his wife with a priest, and, for the most part, the clergy find it convenient to marry themselves; and a blessing visibly attends their endeavours, no rank of people being more observed to multiply their species.

In popish countries many foreign wars are raised and stirred up by the pride and ambition of the ecclesiasticks to increase their power; and many domestick ones fomented for the same reason, about the power of the Pope, the investiture of princes, the immunities of the clergy; and endless contentions arise with the states which they live under, about their peculiar privileges, as well as constant persecutions against all who oppose their pretences: All which wars and quarrels exhaust the people, perplex the publick affairs, and either divide them into factions, or, which is much worse, make them all of their own. But in Protestant countries these evils are less enormous: The people begin to see with their own eyes, and will not undo one another to gratify the ambition of any who would oppress them all; nor force or drive out of their country useful inhabitants, for dry chimeras and useless notions, and for the shape of their thoughts and imaginations; and many of their clergy do not desire it.

In popish countries, great numbers of idle and useless members of society are employed to support the luxury of the ecclesiasticks, or to contribute to their superstition; as organists, fiddlers, singers, scholars, as they are called, numerous officers of various kinds, and many lazy beggars, who feed upon their scraps, or are supported by their means out of the charity of others, who are persuaded that they serve God in keeping them idle and necessitous, and without labouring for a subsistence: All these are a dead weight upon society, live like drones in a hive, and eat honey without making any. This grievance is not so great in Protestant countries, the clergy amongst them not being used to throw away their money without having something for it.

In popish countries there is an asylum and sanctuary in every parish, where robbers, murderers, and all sorts of criminals, are defended against their sovereigns and their laws; by which means banditti and assassins are become a sort of establishment, and are the Swiss and guards of the papacy, depend upon the priests for protection, and are always at hand to execute their bloody designs, and to partake of the spoil, as well as to be hired by others; by which means there are numerous and nightly murders in those countries, and the people there dare not go about their necessary affairs; and therefore cannot have the same security and encouragement as in Protestant countries, where this enormous wickedness is not allowed and practised, and where the priests cannot protect assassins; and the worst that can be said of any of them is, that they will not find fault with them afterwards, but are ready to absolve them at the gallows, if they have been doing their work: And in one instance, in a certain jurisdiction [*]

where a certain high-priest, or those who act under him, compound with delinquents by the great for crimes which they have committed, or are to commit for the year ensuing; *à la mode* of his Holiness at Rome.

These, and other infinite evils, are produced by the popish religion, which depopulates nations, destroys industry, overturns law and justice, the cements of society, discourages trade, drives out merchants, enervates states, and renders the race of mankind feeble, lazy, and miserable. Nor can I see a bare possibility how these wretched people can extricate themselves out of their doleful condition, which must still go on from bad to worse, till they become so weak as to be the prey of foreign enemies, or to expire by an internal consumption; for the power of the ecclesiasticks is so great, and depends so much upon keeping the laity poor, ignorant, idle, and helpless, that they cannot have the will or power to recover themselves.

This wicked policy has turned the Campania of Rome, and all the populous and fertile provinces of Italy, into bogs, morasses, and deserts, and would have long since extinguished popery, if some of the Protestant states had not forgot the principles upon which they had reformed, and others had submitted to domestick slavery, but little worse than ecclesiastical, as both flowing from the same root, and producing the same evils, though not in the same degree; however, I think that the catastrophe of popery is but a little farther removed, for the few states amongst the Protestants, with prudent laws, and a wise conduct alone, may be in a condition, if they can keep their liberty, without striking a stroke but in their own defence, to demolish and overturn this monstrous Babel, or make or suffer it to destroy itself.

T

I am, &c.

No. 115. SATURDAY, February 9, 1723.

The encroaching Nature of Power, ever to be watched and checked. [Trenchard] ↪

[IV-81]

SIR,

Only the checks put upon magistrates make nations free; and only the want of such checks makes them slaves. They are free, where their magistrates are confined within certain bounds set them by the people, and act by rules prescribed them by the people: And they are slaves, where their magistrates choose their own rules, and follow their lust and humours; than which a more dreadful curse can befall no people; nor did ever any magistrate do what he pleased, but the people were undone by his pleasure; and therefore most nations in the world are undone, and those nations only who bridle their governors do not wear chains.

Unlimited power is so wild and monstrous a thing, that however natural it be to desire it, it is as natural to oppose it; nor ought it to be trusted with any mortal man, be his intentions ever so upright: For, besides that he will never care to part with it, he will rarely dare. In spite of himself he will make many enemies, against whom he will be protected only by his power, or at least think himself best protected by it. The frequent and unforeseen necessities of his affairs, and frequent difficulties and opposition, will force him for his own preservation, or for the preservation of his power, to try expedients, to tempt dangers, and to do things which he did not foresee, nor intend, and perhaps, in the beginning, abhorred.

We know, by infinite examples and experience, that men possessed of power, rather than part with it, will do any thing, even the worst and the blackest, to keep it; and scarce ever any man upon earth went out of it as long as he could carry every thing his own way in it; and when he could not, he resigned. I doubt that there is not one exception in the world to this rule; and that Dioclesian, Charles V, and even Sulla, laid down their power out of pique and discontent, and from opposition and disappointment. This seems certain, that the good of the world, or of their people, was not one of their motives either for continuing in power, or for quitting it.

It is the nature of power to be ever encroaching, and converting every extraordinary power, granted at particular times, and upon particular occasions, into an ordinary power, to be used at all times, and when there is no occasion; nor does it ever part willingly with any advantage. From this spirit it is, that occasional commissions have grown sometimes perpetual; that three years have been improved into seven, and one into twenty; and that when the people have done with their magistrates, their magistrates will not have done with the people.

The Romans, who knew this evil, having suffered by it, provided wise remedies against it; and when one ordinary power grew too great, checked it with another. Thus the office and power of the tribunes was set up to balance that of the consuls, and to protect the populace against the insolence, pride, and intrenchments of the nobility: And when the authority of the tribunes grew too formidable, a good expedient was found out to restrain it; for in any turbulent or factious design of the tribunes, the protest or dissent of any one of them made void the purposes and proceedings of all the rest. And both the consuls and tribunes were

chosen only for a year.

Thus the Romans preserved their liberty by limiting the time and power of their magistrates, and by making them answerable afterwards for their behaviour in it: And besides all this, there lay from the magistrates an appeal to the people; a power which, however great, they generally used with eminent modesty and mercy; and, like the people of other nations, sinned much seldomer than their governors. Indeed, in any publick disorder, or misfortune, the people are scarce ever in the fault; but far on the other side, suffer often, with a criminal patience, the sore evils brought wantonly or foolishly upon them by others, whom they pay dear to prevent them.

This sacred right of appealing to the people, was secured to them by a very good and very severe law, which is found in Livy in these words:

Aliam deinde consularem legem de provocatione, unicum praesidium libertatis, decemvirali potestate eversam, non restituit modo, sed etiam muniunt, sanciendo novam legem, ne quis ullum magistratum sine provocatione crearet: Qui creasset, eum jus fasque esset occidi: Neve caedes capitalis noxae haberetur.

The former consular law for appealing to the people (the first and only great support of liberty), having been overturned by the usurpation of the Decemviri, was now not only restored, but fortified by a new law, which forbid the creating of any magistrate without appeal, and made it lawful to kill any man that did so, without subjecting the killer to a capital penalty.

The Romans had but too good reason for these laws; for the Decemviri, from whom there was no appeal, had enslaved them.

And because the being frequently chosen into power, might have effects as bad as the long continuance in it, Cicero, in his book *De Legibus*, tells us, that there was an express law, *Eundem magistratum, ni interfuerint decem anni, ne quis capito*; "That no man should bear the same magistracy which he had borne before, but after an interval of ten years." This law was afterwards strengthened with severe penalties. Hence Rutilius Censorius blamed the people in a publick speech for creating him twice censor: And Fabius Maximus would have hindered them from choosing his son consul, though possessed of every virtue proper for one, because the chief magistracies had been too long and too often in the Fabian family. And there are many instances in the Roman history, of magistrates, chief magistrates, being degraded for their pride, avarice, and maladministration; and those who were thus degraded, were by law disabled, like our late directors, from ever enjoying again any post or power. Nor were the Romans less careful to oblige their magistrates as soon as they came out of their offices and governments, to make up their accounts, and to give a strict account of their good behaviour; and for an ill one they were often condemned, and their estates confiscated. Besides all which, to be a Senator, or a magistrate, a certain qualification in point of fortune was required; and those who had run through their fortunes were degraded from the dignity of Senators. A reasonable precaution, that they who were entrusted with the interest of their country, should have some interest of their own in it.

In this manner did the Roman people check power, and those who had it; and when any power was grown quite ungovernable, they abolished it. Thus they expelled Tarquin, and the kingly government, having first suffered much by it; and they prospered as eminently without it. That government too had been extremely limited: The first Roman kings were little more

than generals for life: They had no negative vote in the Senate, and could neither make war nor peace; and even in the execution of justice, an appeal lay from them to the people, as is manifest in the case of the surviving Horatius, who slew his sister. Servius Tullius made laws, says Tacitus, which even the kings were to obey. By confining the power of the crown within proper bounds, he gained power without bounds in the affections of the people. But the insolent Tarquin broke through all bounds, and acted so openly against law, and the people of Rome, that they had no remedy left but to expel him and his race; which they did with glorious success.

The dictatorial power was afterwards given occasionally, and found of great use; but still it was limited to so many months; and there are instances where even the dictator could not do what he pleased, but was over-ruled by the judgment of the people. Besides, when the Romans came to have great and distant territories, and great armies, they thought the dictatorial power too great and too dangerous to be trusted with any subject, and laid it quite aside; nor was it ever afterwards used, till it was violently usurped, first by Sulla, afterwards by Caesar, and then Rome lost its liberty.

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I am, &c.

No. 116. SATURDAY, February 16, 1723.

That whatever moves and acts, does so mechanically and necessarily. [Trenchard] ↩

[IV-86]

SIR,

It is justly observed by Mr. Locke, and by Mr. Hobbes and others before him, that we have no innate ideas, nor can reflect upon them before we have them; that is, we cannot think before we have something to think upon. All objects and materials for thinking must be let in upon the mind through the organs of sense; and when they are there, we reflect or reason upon them; or, to speak philosophically, when the action of exterior bodies strikes upon us, it must cause a second action or motion, and continue it *in infinitum*, unless it meets obstruction. This first action causes sensation, and the second reflection; and the first seems to me as necessarily to produce the latter, as wind sails a ship, or the winding up of a clock sets it in motion.

Every system of matter has peculiar organizations, and can perform only peculiar functions. A cow cannot perform the offices of a horse, nor a man of a monkey; nor indeed, in many instances, can one man perform those of another. As some machines or systems of matter consist of vastly finer and more numerous parts than others, so they are capable of more operations. A watch which points to minutes or seconds, has more wheels, than one which only shews hours; and a striking or repeating watch has more than both, though all are wound up by the same key. Animals who consist of infinite tubes, veins, arteries, muscles, and juices, which also consist of infinite globular, and other figured particles of matter, must have suitable and very surprizing operations, though all their actions must be confined within the circle of their machine; but they will be multiplied in equal or greater degree than the chances upon dies. Two dies have six times as many chances as one, and three as two, and so on *in infinitum*; and therefore there seems to be no difficulty in accounting for the great variety of actions in animals, more than in inferior machines: And as mankind never have, nor, I presume, ever will discover all the powers of mechanical experiments; so with greater reason one may venture to assert, that no animal ever yet has exerted all the faculties which it was endued with: A thousand dies may turn up all sixes; but I believe this has never happened, nor I believe ever will.

Vegetables seem to me to be analogous in many respects to animals: Their generation appears to be much alike: They both rise from seeds, or eggs, and continue their kinds by the same: Their life is continued alike, and their nourishment conveyed through veins or other tubes; and when that nourishment ceases, they die; and as the action of the sun, and other bodies, set the former in motion, and causes that sort of sensation which we call vegetation, so the same power, or some other like it, seems to rouse animal life, and sets it in like motion; and all motion must be progressive in the same system till it be destroyed, or that system become another, or part of another; which shall be more fully shewn hereafter.

This action is called by different names, as it affects the different parts of the machine. When it affects the eye, it is called seeing; the ear, hearing; the palate, tasting; the nose, smelling; which indeed are but different sorts of feeling: But when the motion is continued further, and gets to the brain, or other internal parts of the system, it causes that effect which

we call thinking; which again operates within the animal, and drives it to farther action, which is always analogous to the disposition of the fabrick, and regular, or irregular, according to the present formation of the machine, and of the powers which impel it. And here we cannot enough admire the exquisite skill of the Supreme Architect, who has formed such stupendous and amazing works of his omnipotence; and in many instances, I conceive we should judge right if we only admired them, and not vainly attempted to find out what we can never know. We want faculties to search the causes of most things in nature, and know nothing of their internal contexture, and but little of the *modus* of their operations. We see only some sensible effects of the actions of bodies upon one another; but how they produce these effects, we are utterly ignorant, and I believe ever shall be whilst we are in this state: We cannot tell why the fire burns, the grass grows, the eye sees, the ear hears, or the mind thinks, only we find in fact, that they do so; and here is our *ne plus ultra*.

It is exceedingly imprudent therefore for men to pretend to determine the powers of matter and motion, when they know not what matter is, of what parts it consists, or indeed any thing about it, but by a few outward effects; nor can we form any notions of it but from those effects, which yet probably do not exhaust the millionth part of its powers: And it is still more ridiculous to use the word *spirit* (of which we have no sort of idea), to account for other things, of which we have very little or no idea neither; and in many instances, deny what we see, to pretend to believe what we do not understand. Words are only the signs of images, as figures are of numbers; and what use is there of a sound, or scrawl, which signifies nothing, or, which is the same thing, which stands for what we know nothing of?

Now if a man should ask a modern philosopher, what he meant by the word *spirit*? he possibly will answer, that it is something which wants extension and solidity. If it be asked again what conception he has of any thing which has neither extension or solidity? and he answer, that he has none at all; but that there may be beings in nature of which he neither has, nor can have any idea: If then he be asked, why he uses a word which has no conception annexed to it, to explain another thing about which he is wholly in the dark? his reply, I presume will be, that he cannot account for some operations of that being by the images which he had before conceived of it, and the definitions about it which he had been used to; and therefore he was forced to recur to negative ideas. If he be asked again, how he knows that his definitions are right, and take in all the powers of that being? he must acknowledge that he knows not the thousandth part of its powers; but yet perhaps will say, that he is very sure that it has not powers inconsistent with the nature of body. It will be asked of him, how he, who knows little or nothing of the nature of body, can know what is against the nature of body? which difficulty I shall leave to wiser men to unriddle.

Now it appears to me, that there are many mechanical operations of the minds and bodies of animals, which result only from their peculiar systems of matter; or, in other words, compounded bodies, peculiarly systematized, attain new qualities and powers which they had not before, and which influence their own actions, and the actions of other bodies, as necessarily as the loadstone draws iron, or the root and fibres of a tree or plant attract the juices of the earth, and convey them on till they are transmuted into wood, leaves, and fruit. A chick or a young pheasant, hatched in an oven, as soon as it is out of the shell, will eat bread, or emmet eggs, and soon after shew signs of love or fear, and shrink from danger (like the sensitive plant from the touch) before it has gained any experience, has any sense of injuries, or can know how it can be hurt. Birds hatched in a cage will not only generate together, but will build their nest in the same manner, and of the same materials with those of the same kind, if they can come at them, without having seen any of the same sort before.

Infant animals immediately seek after the teats of their dams, without being taught to do so; and all animals and vegetables seek or attract the peculiar nourishment that is proper to their species, without any direction but from nature; and have the same affections and passions, with but little variation: which I think plainly shews, that their particular organizations, or systems of matter, by a natural sort of gravitation or attraction direct their operations; and though every particular of the same species differ in some respects from another, and consequently their actions will vary, yet they are confined within the limits prescribed to the whole species. And this observation runs through all nature.

Now I conceive that this must be accounted for as above, or we must recur to constant miracle, or else suppose that God Almighty has given to every species of animals peculiar minds different from all other kinds, and to every particular a mind different from all the rest of the same kind; which mind guides and directs all our actions; and makes all the specifick as well as identical differences that we see: For which supposition I can find no foundation in reason, or from observation; nor can I perceive what use can be made of such a concession; for whether the actions of animals are directed by the disposition of the materials which form them, or they were originally constituted with such appetites, they must act the same way; and this farther raises our admiration of the power and providence of God, who has formed all his creatures in such a manner as to answer his intentions in creating them; and has so disposed the mechanism and juices of every living species, as well as of every individual, as will best conduce to its preservation, and to perform the function intended.

But here a notable distinction arises between the operations of the mind, and those in the body, or, in other words, between sensations and reflections, between appetites and reasonings; which I must beg leave to think in this regard, has no foundation in nature, and only exists in metaphysical brains. There can be no sensations, inclinations, or appetites, without the cooperation of that faculty, capacity, energy, or whatever else it is that we call the mind. Dead men can no more hear, see, feel, &c. than a lump of earth, because their organization is destroyed, or the animal spirits which set them in motion can no longer continue that motion, or the separate principle, called the mind, can no longer keep its habitation; but whatever it be, or by what name soever called, it is certainly the *causa sine qua non* of the actions of the animal, and is one link of the chain of causes which direct and govern his voluntary motions.

It is the mind which sees, hears, tastes, smells, feels, desires, or fears; and herein consists the difference between animals and vegetables: They have both life, and both have organizations proper to preserve and continue that life, by suitable nourishment conveyed through veins and tubes: Both have surprising operations, unsearchable by our capacities; and both must have a long train of causes from nature to enable them to produce those operations: but besides many other possible causes linked together in those chains, and many of them existing within animals themselves which we do not know, there is one which we do, namely, the will or desire to do a thing; and this certainly, in a thousand instances, depends upon causes without us, and which are undoubtedly out of our power; which causes without set the other causes within us at work, and produce the will, and consequently the action.

A chick, or a young pheasant, would no more peck, or a lamb suck, than if it was dead, if it did not intend to do it: It feels uneasiness by hunger, and strives to help itself: It certainly shews thought and choice, in preferring one sort of food before another, and in shrinking or running away from danger: And these are all actions of the mind. It is true, as it grows older, and its contexture stronger, its experience increases, and its capacity grows with it; but the

faculty is the same, and, for any thing which appears to the contrary, results from the formation of the system; nor can I conceive how all birds, beasts, and fishes of the same species should have the same, or very near the same sensations, desires, and fears, and chuse the same kinds of food and means of preservation, and always use the same, or very near the same address, cunning, or artifice, unless their contexture, the disposition of materials and juices, of which they are compounded by a natural mechanism, produced these effects, either by constituting or acting upon that energy, called their minds, and then directing and coercing those minds to exert the faculty, called the will, which produces the action, if it may be lawful to distinguish an operation of the same power from its self.

I am not aware of any other objection to this reasoning, but that we can have no conception how matter can produce an act or operation of the mind in brute animals; and therefore other systems have been invented, equally unconceivable, to avoid this, and which apparently contradict fact. It is plain, that their minds are affected, altered, and receive addition and diminution by diet, physick, and exercise, and partake, in many respects, of the fate of their material system; and their faculties are greater or less, according to the disposition of that system, as shall be more fully shewn in future papers. And since the whole must consist of the several parts, what reasons can be assigned to prove, that material causes may create or produce the parts, and not the whole, I mean of their minds; for as to the soul of man, I shall consider it separately hereafter. For my own part, I have had always so unfortunate a turn of thinking, that I could never subscribe to opinions, because others held them before me; nor will I send into the clouds for solutions, which lie under my nose, or refuse the benefit of my eyes to amuse my understanding; neither shall I regard the calumnies and uncharitable censures of those who dare not peep out of their dark dungeons, and would measure all truth by imbibed prejudices: but shall ever think, that I shall do more honour to Almighty God, in believing that he has so formed at once the whole fabrick of heaven and earth, as to produce all the events which he intended, than to suppose that he has often found cause to mend and alter his first resolutions; though I confess that it may consist with his wisdom, and conduce to the ends of his providence, to suffer matters, in some respects, and at some times, to appear to us in other lights.

He certainly is a more skilful artificer, who can make a watch which will go for a thousand years, and then break to pieces at a stated time, than another who makes one which must be wound up every day, and mended every month.

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I am, &c.

No. 117. SATURDAY, February 23, 1723.

Of the Abuse of Words, applied more particularly to the covetous Man and the Bigot.
[Gordon] ↩

[IV-96]

SIR,

I have often thought, that most of the mischiefs under which mankind suffers, and almost all their polemick disputes are owing to the abuse of words. If men would define what they mean by the sounds which they make use of to express their thoughts, and then keep to those definitions, that is, annex always the same ideas to the same sounds, most of the disputes in the world would be at an end: But this would not answer the purposes of those who derive power and wealth from imposing upon the ignorance and credulity of others. And therefore, till the world can agree to be honest, and to buy and sell by the same measure (which they do not seem in haste to do), I doubt this evil is likely to go on.

There are no words in language which seem to me to be more misapplied than the word *self-interest*, by divines, orators, philosophers, or poets: All have exerted themselves with great efforts of exhortation, reason, eloquence, and wit, against this reigning vice; but I conceive, that they have all missed the mark. Indeed, in the larger sense of the word, I think it impossible for any man to act upon any other motive than his own interest: For every pursuit that we make must have for its end the gratification of some appetite, or the avoiding of some evil which we fear; and, in truth, when we say that any man is self-interested, we mean only, that he is not enough in his own interest.

A good-humoured man, when he pities another, gratifies a natural passion, in having a fellow-feeling of the calamities of others, and a desire to see all men out of pain or trouble. A generous man pleases his vanity, ostentation, or temper, in doing good to others; or by it intends to gain friends or dependents. An indulgent parent takes pleasure to see that his children (whom he esteems parts of himself) live happy, contented, and make a figure in the world; and derives credit and reputation to himself from their doing so. A beneficent patron, or a man in love, reaps great personal satisfaction in obliging the objects of his kindness, and by making them more devoted to himself. And all these pity or contemn one who wants these agreeable appetites, and most reasonably judge, that he wants many pleasures which they themselves enjoy; as well knowing, that, next to the preservation of their beings by wholesome food, and warm raiment, and the enjoying the common necessaries and usual diversions of life, all that can be added to their happiness is, to obtain respect, love, and esteem, from others.

Even all the worst passions flow from the same source. For, what is hatred, malice, and revenge, but gratifying vicious appetites? And fear and cowardice are only struggles in nature to avoid evils to ourselves. Of all men, the covetous man is the most unhappy: For, as every pleasure is the gratification of some appetite or desire, the man who has least desires and appetites, must have the least pleasures, and he must lose many agreeable sensations which other men enjoy. I laugh at the foolish philosophy of some sects in old Greece, who placed the *summum bonum*, or chief happiness, in the absence of all passions or desires; which can be only a state of death, or perfect stupidity, whilst we are alive. Men exceed vegetables no

otherwise than as they think; and when they cease to think (if that can be) they are in a temporary state of death; and the objects of all thinking must be something which we desire to attain, or fear to lose: And as thought itself is only a motion of the mind, so one motion must produce another, as every thought must do, and be perpetually progressive, till death puts an end to all thoughts. Here covetousness therefore can only proceed from a poorness and dejection of soul, which always fears want and misery, and must ever be bereft of all lively and sparkling imaginations, be in a constant state of diffidence and despondency, and lose all the gay, cheerful and generous sensations, which flow from a free, active, happy, and beneficent mind.

I must take the liberty therefore to think, that *self-interest*, in the ill sense of the word, ought to be new-defined, and made applicable only to those who prefer a small interest to a great one, or to such who take a wrong way to attain that great one: And in this latter sense the bigot is the most self-interested person in the world: His whole thoughts are so wound up in himself, and his own personal views, that he is wholly regardless of what becomes of the rest of the world, unless he can find his own benefit in it. Indeed he will give some loose pence to beggars or vagabonds, and perhaps sums to maintain idlers and cynicks, not out of humanity and generous principles, but in order to put it out to large interest: I do not mean for five or six per cent but for more than sixty times sixty thousand; though, if a nation [is] to be saved, or a great people protected from slavery, he is wholly unconcerned about the event, as esteeming the little affairs of this world much below his notice and consideration.

He is the same in respect of the other world, as the covetous man is in respect of this; and both their good qualities proceed from the same principles and appetites in nature. He is covetous for the good things in the kingdom of heaven, as the other is for them here; and both take much the same way to get them. They both contemn wise men, because wise men contemn them; their despising the vanities of the world, saves money; their condemning the modest pleasures of life, gratifies their sour and censorious temper; their living cloistered and retired lives, feeds natural melancholy; and the former hopes to carry heaven (which the other does not trouble himself about) by singing songs upon earth, by being perfectly useless to society, and good for no one thing in the world.

This sort of creature is the tool for knaves to work with, and made use of to serve their interests, whilst he intends only to pursue his own. He is made to believe that kingdoms, infinitely preferable to those of this world, are to be gained by the manner of cutting his corns, or by forms, fashions, habits, postures, cringes and grimaces; by using a rote of words, or by useless speculations, and dancing after idle harangues, and always by being an implacable enemy and a furious adversary to all who have generous and beneficent affections towards their own species. He values opinions like rotten cheese, in proportion as they are old: and is more concerned for people's believing right, than for their doing right. He thinks that the way to shew our gratitude to God, is to refuse his gifts; and believes truth the more sacred, the less it is understood; and nothing worthy to be called faith, but what is absurd to reason, and contradicts all the principles of science. He is a fast friend to every thing that looks like a mystery; thinks common sense too common, and sublime nonsense to be always a proof of inspiration. He measures virtue and vice, right and wrong not by the interests of mankind, but by scanty and partial rules, invented by pedants and hypocrites, and calculated chiefly for their own benefit. He is a friend to no man, and all his thoughts and speculations are above humanity and social pleasures, and all the frail things of this world; and so he keeps all his money to himself, and, at last, perhaps, starves his friends and family, to leave it to such wretches as he is, not out of kindness to them, but to receive ample payment again

where he is going.

I have often wondered how this stupid animal could ever be in repute; how the most insignificant and worst being in the universe could be thought the most acceptable to the best; and how any one can be supposed to merit heaven, by being useless upon earth. Castruccio Castracani said well, that he would never believe that Friar Hieronymo had more interest above than he himself had. Surely he judged right; yet the world ever has run, and, I doubt, ever will run, madding after hermits, cynicks, dreamers of dreams, venders of prophecy, and after recluse and sequestered persons, who are supposed to know heavenly things in proportion as they know nothing here. They call their solemn folly, divine wisdom; their spleen and melancholy, godly contemplation; their envious, sullen, and morose tempers, strict and rigid virtue, and detestation of vice: Covetousness in frugality, and the contempt of things below. Whereas a truly virtuous and godly man is the most candid, amiable, and best natured creature upon earth: He spends his life in doing all the good that he can, and to all the men that he can: He takes pleasure in seeing all men happy, and will endeavour to make them all happy: He has large and comprehensive notions of the deity; and as he finds in himself kind and beneficent affections towards the whole creation, believes that the Supreme Being has the same; and, consequently, will not make our happiness or misery to depend upon what is out of our power, or upon such speculations or actions as can produce no moral good, but often destroy it, and promote evil.

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God wants nothing; and if we have any gifts to bestow, his creatures are our only proper objects: But those who crave in his name largesses and endowments, which they apply to their own use and luxury, and call their own luxury and pomp the serving of him, make the Almighty as greedy as they are, and the giver of all things to want almost every thing; and confining all their bounty and charity to their own dear persons, think that he does so too, and that they are as dear to him as they are to themselves; and so hate and despise, distress and destroy, in the name of God, all whom they hate for their own sakes: So that, excepting a very few men (the most ridiculous and the worst of the whole) all the human species are esteemed by them as outcasts, whom the wise Creator and Governor of the World has sent into it only to abhor and to damn them; and though his favours are infinite, yet they think that he bestows them all upon a little island, or a poor desert, or on a small and contemptible corner of the earth, purely because the inhabitants wear blue, or black, or broad bonnets, quaint doublets, or long petticoats; and eat, or refuse to eat fish or flesh, and other food given for the general use of all men; or make selfish and partial speeches to him, and use crazy distinctions about him, which he commands not, which wise men understand not, and which the weakest men alone are governed by.

With bigots almost every thing that is truth is blasphemy. With them a sour face, and a bitter and implacable heart, are qualifications so acceptable to the wise, merciful, and forgiving God, that he hates all who want these qualifications: So that, in great detestation of blasphemy, they blasphemously make the God and father of mercies, and of man, a party-man too; or, at best, the head of the most senseless, useless, inhuman, and mischievous party in the universe, the party of bigots; who, being blindly and obstinately addicted to their own incurable follies, are furiously bent against all the wise and sober men in the world: they improve the world by defacing it; and their way of building up, is to destroy and pull down. This they call edification.

But religion is another and a contrary thing; and whoever would entertain a just idea of the divine being, must conceive of him in direct opposition to the bigot's conceptions; namely, that the God of Truth is not the author of contradictions; that when he speaks to men, he speaks not above the capacities of men, but to their capacities, which is the end of speaking; that he who makes the hearts of men, is the best and only judge of men's hearts, who cannot see into one another's, that being the only province and privilege of omniscience; that his perfect goodness cannot punish men, whom he has created naturally subject to errors, for involuntary errors; that having not made man perfect, he cannot be offended with him for natural and inevitable imperfections.

That we cannot provoke him, when we intend to adore him; that the best way to serve him, is to be serviceable to one another; he himself, who is omnipotent, wanting none of our impotent assistance and benefits, which must come from him, but cannot go from us to him; that to hurt men, or betray them, for his sake, is to mock him, and impiously to father upon the God of Wisdom and Peace our own rage and folly; that to him neither sounds, nor gestures, nor actions, are good or bad, pleasing or displeasing, but as the intentions from whence they spring are sincere or insincere, of which he alone can be judge.

That he who made the world has not restrained his gifts, favours, and mercies, to a nook of it; nor picks out from among men, who are all his, a few particular minions and favourites, or gives these authority to domineer over the rest, and to oppress them in the name of that God who is not the god of a nation, or of a sect, but of all nations, tongues, and persuasions, and is heard of all that call upon him and fear him: That the only way to please and resemble him, is to do, as he does, good to all impartially, and to restrain men from hurting or persecuting one another: And, in fine, that anger, revenge, and ambition, are not religion; nor the author and object of it an angry, partial, whimsical, and cruel being; but that religion is as different from bigotry, and as far above it, as the wise, great, and good God is above weak, little, ill, and angry men.

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I am, &c.

No. 118. SATURDAY, March 2, 1723.

Free states vindicated from the common Imputation of Ingratitude. [Gordon] ↪

[IV-104]

SIR,

It is a common objection against free states, that they are ungrateful: But I think that I shall be able to shew the contrary, that they are much more grateful than arbitrary princes; and are rarely ungrateful but to those who use them ungratefully, and forfeit by it any obligation which they had laid upon them.

It is the chief and first ambition of free states, to preserve themselves; and such as contribute most to that end amongst them, are generally placed by them in the first stations of figure and power. But as men generally over-rate their own merit, publick rewards, however great, are rarely so great as are the expectations and pretensions of men to these rewards. So that such as are preferred for serving, or for a capacity of serving, the publick, are seldom preferred so high as they think they deserve; and, being neither pleased with the measure nor duration of their power, where it is not boundless and perpetual, are apt to be struggling to make it so, though to the ruin of those who gave it for their own preservation, and to the overthrowing of every purpose for which it was given. When this is the aim, as it too often is, the people grow presently very ungrateful, because they will not become slaves to their own servants. And here is the source of most of the contentions in the world between the governors and governed. The people provoke their rulers by a very heinous and ill-bred crime, that of distinguishing between protection and oppression: For this they are ungrateful. They are ready enough almost everywhere to give their governors too much; but that will not do. Nero, after he put off the hypocrite, never conferred any office upon any man, but he always gave him these short instructions: "You know what I have occasion for: let it be your care and mine that nobody else have any thing." Nor was Nero the last that made a power to protect property a warrant for seizing it.

Gratitude is, doubtless, due from the obliged to those who oblige them as long as they do not pretend to measure or force their own reward, nor to use the others ill, upon the pure merit of having used them well. There is such a thing as the cancelling an obligation in publick as well as in private life; as when it is turned into an injury, by being made the means of oppression, or a pretence for contempt or calumny. I would rather not be obliged, than ill used for having been obliged; and believe most men are of my mind.

A state may sometimes over-pay a benefactor; but scarce any subject can do more for the state than he owes it. We owe all things to our country, because in our country is contained every thing that is dear to us, our relations, our fortunes, and ourselves: And our labours, our studies, and our lives, are all due, upon occasion, to our country, which protects us in them all. But when we have dedicated all these to the state, it is far from being true, that the state ought to sacrifice itself, or venture any part of its security, to make us recompence. To save it from others, in order to seize it ourselves, is so far from entitling us to any reward but that of resentment and death, that, as it is adding the base crimes of treachery and ingratitude to the cruel crime of usurpation, no foreign foe can be half so wicked and detestable as such an intestine traitor, who calls himself a friend.

Spurius Melius thought himself an unquestionable benefactor to the Roman people, for having bestowed on them *gratis* a large quantity of corn in a time of dearth; by which false bounty he gained the hearts of the many, who saw not into his design of bribing and feeding them, in order to enslave them: but Servilius Ahala, who killed him, was a much greater and real benefactor; because in Melius he slew their most dangerous enemy. T. Manlius defended the Capitol bravely and generously; but when, not content with the many honours that were done him for a worthy action, he would have unworthily oppressed Rome itself for having saved part of it, he was justly thrown headlong from that very Capitol.

Caesar and Marius were the most ungrateful monsters that ever lived: They had done brave things not for the state, as the event shewed, but for themselves; and the state covered them with honours, adorned them with magistracies and triumphs, loaded them with benefits, and pursued them, even to profusion, with all publick and splendid marks of respect. But all this could not satisfy these shameless great men, unless they had a power granted them perpetual and enormous, a power destructive of all liberty, and of the state that gave it. And so they barbarously oppressed the state that exalted them.

On what side, in this instance, did the ingratitude lie? Is there a pretence for charging that generous people with this base vice, or for acquitting these parricides from the blackest? If the Prince of Orange, having at the head of the Dutch troops driven the invading French out of the Seven Provinces, had enslaved the States with their own forces, because, perhaps, they had refused to deliver up their government to his will and pleasure, and to give him a power to oppress them, as a reward for having defended them; who would have been ungrateful in this case, the prince or the States? They for refusing to be slaves, or he for making them slaves?

The people lose much more by their generosity to their benefactors, than the benefactors lose by the ingratitude or stinginess of the people, whose fault is almost always on the other side. By giving them too much, they often tempt and enable them to take all; as in the cases of Marius, Sulla, Caesar, Pisistratus, Agathocles, Oliver Cromwell, the late kings of Denmark and Sweden, and many more. But suppose it had happened sometimes (which has rarely happened) that a worthy man should not meet a proper reward from his countrymen, for publick services done them; it is still better that he has too little, or even none, than too much; and a worthy man will never seek revenge upon his country, for a mistake in his merit; a mistake which may be easily committed, and is at worst pardonable. But a man who has served his country, and then turns it upside down, because that it has not, or he thinks that it has not, given him reward enough, shews that he deserved none.

Sometimes a man's ill deeds balance his good, and then he pays himself; or overbalance them, and then he is entitled more to punishment than reward; and both rewards and punishments ought to be faithfully paid: though there is generally more crime and insecurity in not punishing well, than in not paying well; a fault too frequent in free states, who, dazzled with great benefits, are often blind to greater offences, or overlook them, and reward before they enquire.

The dearest and most valuable things are most apt to create jealousies and fears about them; and the dearest of all being liberty, as that which produces and secures all the rest, the people's zeal to preserve it has been ever called ingratitude by such as had designs against it; and others, ignorant of its value, and indifferent about it, have promoted and continued the false charge. Shakespear, in the tragedy of *Timon of Athens*, makes Alcibiades, who was

banished by the state, cry out with indignation, "Oh the ungrateful spirit of a commonwealth!" And I have seen a loud and vehement clap raised upon it by those who were angry at the word *commonwealth*, though they lived under a free government: For every free state is, in a large sense, a commonwealth; and I think our own the freest in the world. In my opinion Alcibiades, though a brave man, was justly exiled as an ambitious and dangerous man, who behaved himself turbulently in that city, was perpetually creating or inflaming factions in it, and against it; and shewed too plainly, that he aimed at overturning it for the sake of that uncontrollable power, which he could not have while its government subsisted. The citizens of Athens treated him with great distinction, and gave him great authority and eminent commands; and only banished him, out of fear of him, for which they had too much ground.

States have been often destroyed by being too generous and too grateful; and where they are really ungrateful, they are only so through error; to which, however, they are not so subject as absolute princes, who generally destroy their greatest men, and prefer the vilest, and in their courts pimps often ruin patriots. I think that those who most dislike free governments, do not pretend to shew above four or five instances of ingratitude in the Roman people, from the beginning of their commonwealth to the end of it, for several hundred years; and Coriolanus and Camillus are two of those instances.

As to Coriolanus, he was justly banished, as a declared enemy to the equality of the government, and engaged in an open design to oppress the people; which design he executed with all fierceness and contempt, and even outrage, surrounded like a monarch with guards of the young hot-headed nobility: And though the people did him no injustice, yet, to be revenged upon them, he invaded his country at the head of a foreign enemy.

Camillus was guilty of the same partiality, though not in the same degree, towards the nobles, and had broke his word with the people; for both which he was banished: But by saving his country afterwards, he gloriously cancelled all past faults, and was gratefully styled the second founder of Rome, and highly honoured, and even adored, to the end of his life, by that grateful people, in every instance where they could shew it. And indeed all the ingratitude that can be charged upon them, was, their opposing, in their own defence, the encroachments of the nobility; and the excellent laws produced by that opposition shewed its reasonableness and necessity.

Scipio Africanus is likewise mentioned as another great instance of ingratitude of the Romans. He was a great and glorious commander: He had forced Hannibal, the most dangerous foreign foe that the Romans ever had, out of Italy, which he had ravaged successfully many years; he had conquered the same Hannibal in battle, subdued Carthage and Africa, and assisted his brother Asiaticus in conquering the great King Antiochus. For which extraordinary services and merit he was the darling of the people; who were so far from being ungrateful to him, that they violated the laws of Rome, and of their own security, to do him honour;

and not only made a youth their chief magistrate, but renewed the dignity so often, that the precedent proved pernicious to them. The extraordinary steps taken by him and them, and by them for his sake, were of dangerous example and consequence; and, without his intending it, shook the foundations of Rome, and made way for the violent proceedings and usurpations of Marius, and afterwards of Caesar.

Scipio did likewise another thing, which ought by no means to have been suffered in a free state. When he was cited to answer before the people to the crimes with which he was charged, he refused to answer. "Upon this very day, my countrymen," says he, "I vanquished Hannibal"; and tearing the papers that contained the charge, walked haughtily out of the assembly. This was disowning or contemning the supreme authority of Rome; yet the people were so personally fond of the man, that they would decree nothing severe against him. He retired to his own country-house, where he lived peaceably all the rest of his honourable life.

G

I am, &c.

No. 119. SATURDAY, March 9, 1723.

The same Subject continued. [Gordon] ↵

[IV-112]

SIR,

No people upon earth were more grateful to their good citizens than the Greeks and Romans were, or encouraged virtue more, or rewarded it better: Nor did they scarce ever banish any man till he became terrible to them; and then it was time. Nor is there one great absolute monarchy in the world, or ever was from the beginning of it, but destroyed more innocent men in amonth, than the commonwealth of Rome did in a hundred years; besides, that a free state produces more great men in fifty years, than an absolute monarchy does in a thousand.

Those who had done any signal service to the state of Athens, were endowed with eminent privileges, and distinguished with all publick marks of honour: They had the first seats at publick entertainments and assemblies; they had publick statues erected to them; they had crowns conferred upon them; they were exempted from duties, taxes, and contributions, they were maintained at the publick charge, and sometimes their families after them: The publick resented the injuries done them; buried them magnificently; made publick orations in their praise; portioned out their daughters; and paid lasting honours to their name. And all this at a time when publick honours were only the rewards of merit, and parsimoniously distributed.

The Athenians had a particular law against ingratitude: And as to the ostracism, which may seem to contradict it, and by which they banished for ten years such great men as they judged formidable to their state, though they had formerly served it; it ought to be considered in its behalf, that the Athenians, like other free states, had suffered so much from their first-rate citizens, who suppressed their liberty under colour of advancing it, that they had great reason to be jealous of such. Whoever would live in a free state, must live upon a foot of equality; which great officers, accustomed to command, care not to do; and if they do not, they are justly removed. It is better that one man, however innocent, should suffer, than a whole people be ruined, or even hurt, if not by him, yet by his example: Nor ought they to shew, in one instance that cannot harm them, an indulgence, which in other and future instances may be their overthrow. Besides, the ostracism took nothing from any man, but a power of hurting every man: It affected not their goods, nor their persons, nor even their good name; and left them their full possessions, and their full liberty, every where but at Athens; whither, after ten years, they had a right to return, and were often recalled much sooner. It was likewise made use of sometimes only to pacify the fury of the envious, and to protect the innocent from it; and when base fellows came at last to be banished by it, it was laid aside.

The first purpose of the ostracism was, to keep publick benefactors from turning publick parricides, great men from being too great, subjects from growing too powerful for the state; a reasonable precaution, and practised some way or other by every state in the world: nor can any state subsist where it is not practised. Even in England, the hanging of two or three great men among the many guilty, once in a reign or two, would have prevented much evil, and

many dangers and oppressions, and saved this nation many millions.

If we now consider absolute monarchy, we shall find it grafted upon ingratitude, which is blended with the root of it. Arbitrary princes cannot, dare not, be grateful to elevated merit, which by the tenour of their power they are obliged to dread. They only consider their single selves, and their separate interest; and must cut off, for their own security, every man whose true glory may eclipse their false, and who draws away, in any degree, the thoughts and eyes of the people. If they have no magnanimity of their own, they hate or fear such as have; or if they are brave themselves, they will be jealous of those who are more so, or as much. The same may be said of every other virtue. They may heap wealth upon buffoons, and confer dignities upon parasites; but celebrated virtue, conspicuous abilities, and signal services, are their eye-sores and certain aversion. If they be hated, they will not bear that any one should be esteemed; and if they be valued themselves, they will hate rivals.

Under most of the Roman emperors, popular virtue was certain death; *ob virtutes certissimum exitium*; and those who served them most, were surest of destruction; *nec minus periculum ex magna fama quam ex mala*. Germanicus, who saved the empire of Tiberius, his uncle and father by adoption, by reconciling to him the mutinous and revolted legions, was the first great sacrifice to his jealousy, being poisoned in Asia, whither he was sent under pretence of commanding it. Thus Nero too rewarded Corbulo; and thus Domitian rewarded Agricola; both the greatest officers of their time, and the greatest benefactors to these ungrateful tyrants, who aimed at cutting up virtue by the roots: Nor did Vespasian, the first Roman emperor that changed for the better, prove much more grateful to Antonius Primus, who had signally served him, and paved his way to the imperial diadem.

It were endless to mention other absolute monarchies. They are all animated by the same ungrateful, cruel, and suspicious spirit, and make havock of every thing that is good, destroying fastest those who serve them most. If they be ever grateful, they are only so to the vilest instruments of their tyranny; but for such as serve them against their foreign foes with just and popular glory, they are generally sacrificed to their endless jealousy of every thing that is noble. Belisarius is an affecting instance of this; an illustrious general, who, in the decline of the Roman empire, did, as it were, new conquer the world for his royal master; and for a reward, was stripped of all that he had, and turned off to beg his bread with his eyes put out.

It is a fine observation of Tacitus; *Neque nobilem, neque ingenuum, neque libertinum quidem praeponere armis, regia utilitas est*;

It is the business and special interest of an arbitrary prince, that his forces be commanded neither by a nobleman, nor by a freeman, nor, indeed, by any man who is two degrees removed from a slave.

Or, if such princes be obliged by the necessity of their affairs to employ an illustrious person in an important command, they always employ him with fear; and when their turn is served, and he has made them safe, dismiss him into obscurity with contempt, if he escape so well; for all their suspicions generally end in blood. Machiavel, who knew this well, says, that a great and successful general, under an arbitrary prince, has but two ways to escape the certain ruin which his glory, services, and renown, will else bring upon him: He must either quit the army, and, retiring from all power, live like a private man; or depose his master, and set up himself: Which last is generally the safer course.

It is well known how the Ottoman monarchs reward their bravest bashaws. The successful and unfortunate have the same fate: As the latter are sacrificed to rage, the other are to jealousy; Even their own sons have been recompensed with death, for deserving esteem. Nor is that cruel ingratitude peculiar to one race or family of princes, but eternally attached to that sort of power where-ever it is found.

But far different is the spirit of the people: They are prone to gratitude, and lavish in their affections and returns for benefits received. Nothing is too much or too high for the benefactor, or for one whom they think so. They are apt to continue blind to his faults, even when he has forfeited their favour; and to remain constant in their zeal to his name and posterity, in instances where they ought to detest both. This is abundantly exemplified and confirmed by the lasting respect and reverence paid by the Romans to those plagues of Rome, and of the earth, the family of the Caesars; by the French, to the stupid and sanguinary posterity of Charlemain; by the Turks, to the bloody family of Ottoman; by the Egyptians, to their luxurious and contemptible Ptolemies; by the Jews, to the cruel race of the Asmonaeans, or Maccabees; by the Parthians, to the barbarous line of the Arsacides; and by almost every instance of every people in the world. I could mention instances here at home, but they will occur fast enough to every reader who knows any thing of our history. The people are indeed grateful and constant, even to superstition, to persons and names to which they conceive themselves once obliged: Nor do they ever act ungratefully, but where they are first deceived by those whom they trust. The people of Athens, deceived by some of their demagogues, put once to death some of their sea officers, who did not deserve it; but they soon grew apprized of their error, and were severely revenged upon the traitorous calumniators who caused it.

Several instances may, no doubt, be found of the people's ingratitude to their friends, and of the contrary quality in some absolute monarchs. But exceptions do not weaken a rule.

G

I am,&c.

No. 120. SATURDAY, March 16, 1723.

Of the proper Use of Words. [Trenchard] ↻

[IV-118]

SIR,

As I have in former papers treated of the abuse of words; so I shall, in this, discourse about the use of them. They are the signs of ideas, as figures are of numbers; and are intended to convey the conceptions of men to one another: They have no more meaning in themselves than inarticulate sounds, till men have agreed to put a meaning upon them, which meaning is wholly arbitrary; and therefore unless they mean the same things by the same words, that is annex the same conceptions to the same sounds, they cannot understand one another, or discourse together. If one man annex more or less ideas to the same words than another does whom he reasons with, it is impossible that they should agree in conclusions; when their premises are different, their reasonings will be a game at blindman's-buff: And therefore it is absolutely necessary, in all disputes, to settle the meanings of the terms made use of, before any thing can be affirmed or denied on either side.

A word not standing for any idea, is only a bare sound; and it is no more, to one who knows not what idea it stands for. The agreeing therefore in sounds, and not agreeing in the meaning of them, is no agreement at all; and though this may be a good test of orthodoxy amongst some sets of ecclesiasticks, yet I will presume to say, that it is none in common sense. It appears to me, that most of the polemick quarrels in the world have flowed from this inobservance. Men use the same sounds to express different conceptions, either in whole or in part; that is, one man comprehends more or less ideas in the terms which he makes use of than another, and then makes use of other words equally uncertain to explain that meaning; and so in a few propositions quite loses his argument, and the combatants quarrel about what they have been talking of. But though this manner of scuffling in the dark be a great obstruction, and almost an insurmountable bar to all sorts of useful knowledge, yet it highly conduces to the power and credit of those who derive riches and authority from the ignorance and credulity of others.

It gives them the reputation of learning, for talking unintelligibly: It enables them to discourse upon all subjects alike, and to fetch every thing out of every thing; for by not explaining their words, they make them signify what they please, and vary them as often as they have occasion: so that in the course of a debate they have failed in all the points of the compass. The abuse is yet more observable and mischievous in translations from one language to another; for, as few or no men understand a dead language, in many respects, in the sense which it was spoken in (and indeed few men in the same country, and the same language, speak many words in the same sense that their ancestors spoke them, the meaning of words, like all other things, being in perpetual rotation) and as few words in any language, such as comprehend complex ideas, are exactly answered by correspondent words in any other, that is, do not contain just the same number of ideas; so it is very difficult, if not impossible, in many instances, to make an exact translation; and, consequently, very easy to make a false one: And therefore it is very ridiculous (to call it by no worse a name) in controverted points, to build an hypothesis upon the signification of single words in a dead language (which, perhaps, was translated from another language) when we neither know their

manner of speaking, the philosophy and speculations which they were conversant with, nor the customs to which they alluded, and are very sure that they were different from our own, and, in many instances, had not the same common conceptions or images.

But it is not enough that we must have what are often called ideas to our words, but they must be adequate ones; for all inadequate ideas are no ideas; that is, they must be adequate as far as they are ideas: What stands for no conception, stands for nothing; and the word used can only stand for the conception, such as it is, and as far as it goes; and when the conception goes no farther, no word can stand for that which is not. It is certain, that there is no one thing in the universe of which we can have an adequate conception in the strict sense of those words; but we convey by words only such conceptions as we have, which possibly do not exhaust the millionth part of their properties; but then we are in the dark as to all the rest, and neither can affirm nor deny any thing about them: And if one man take any more or less ideas in the term he makes use of than another, he does not talk with him to the same point.

One man has no conception of gold but by the colour, and he will call prince's-metal gold; another knows it by its weight, fineness, and touch; and if a new metal should be discovered, which answers all these marks, and should yet want some medicinal qualities, or, perhaps, the same solubility which gold has, yet he will still call it gold, according to the properties which his imagination has annexed to the word *gold*; and all these three will be called by the same name, and yet different metals will be meant; and every one of these conceptions, as far as they go, are adequate, though neither of them are so to the subject, which has undoubtedly many properties which no one knows any thing of: but then we do not reason upon those properties, nor do the sounds which we use stand for them.

From what has been said appears the absurdity of being told, that we must believe things which we do not understand; or of believing things above reason, though not contrary to reason. We must have ideas, or images, of all objects of belief, or else we believe in nothing, but that we hear a sound; and it is the same thing to us whether it signify any thing or not, if we do not know what it signifies. If a man make a proposition to me in the Chinese language, and tell me that I must believe it, nothing here can be the object of my faith, but that the man does not tell me a lie, which has nothing to do with the proposition itself; and it would have been the same thing to me, if he had told me that I must believe in his thought, without telling me what that thought was; and there can be no difference, if he use words in a language which I am acquainted with, if I do not understand the meaning in which he uses those words.

From hence appears the ridicule of a late sect in Holland, and of many other visionary madmen at home, who think that the scripture is to be for the most part understood metaphorically, and find meanings in it which the words do not naturally import; which is making the Almighty speak in riddles to his creatures, and obliging them to pay largely out of their substance to those who make them yet greater riddles. What can be more absurd and wicked, than to suppose, that the great and good God should speak to mankind with a design not to be understood? should give them a rule to act by, yet express that rule in words which few can pretend to apprehend, and those few differ about? Certainly, as has been said, words are of no use but to convey ideas; and if they be not used in their common acceptance, to signify those conceptions which custom has annexed to them, or such as men shall agree to put upon them, then they must be perfectly useless, will convey no ideas at all, can give us no rule, nor can communicate any knowledge.

It is certain, as has been said, that no man's perceptions can exhaust the properties of any one thing in the world: All that we know of them is from a few obvious qualities which affect our senses; but without doubt they have thousands of others, of which we know nothing; much less can we know any thing of their *substratum*, or internal essence, or contexture: but then neither can we believe any thing of those hidden essences, or qualities, nor do we mean any thing about them when we talk of any being or substance. As in the instance before given; if a man carry to a goldsmith a solid substance, and ask him what he thinks it to be, and the goldsmith look upon the colour, touch it, weigh it, melt it, and then tell him that he believes it to be gold; it is certain that the goldsmith neither believes nor affirms any thing about it, further than of its colour, its touch, its weight, and its solubility, which are his ideas of gold: But gold has, without question, many other properties which he has never heard of; but then he does not take in those properties in this perception of gold; and he neither does nor can believe any thing about them, till he has formed some idea of those hidden qualities.

This leads me to consider what men mean, when they say that they believe in a mystery. We must understand the meaning of the words connected, and of the verb which connects them, and makes them a proposition, or else we believe in nothing; that is, we must have a perception of all those ideas which the words stand for in our imaginations; and so far it is no mystery. But then we may be told, that the beings, to which we have annexed those ideas, and by which we distinguish them from other beings, may, and undoubtedly have, many other qualities, or properties, that we know nothing of: An assertion which must be granted to be true of every thing in nature. And in this sense every thing is a mystery, and every man will readily believe such a mystery. But then if we be told, that we must believe in the properties, or qualities, of which we know nothing, or have any idea; I think that the mystery will then consist in the nonsense of the proposition; and it is the same thing to tell us, that we must believe in *fe-fa-fum*: For, a man cannot believe without believing something; and he must know what that something is, that is, he must know what he believes, or else his belief is only an abstract word, without any subject to believe in, or any thing of.

Thus when we say, that we believe there are three persons in the Trinity, and but one God, we must have distinct ideas to the words *person*, *Trinity*, and *God*. For if men have no meaning to these words, they mean nothing by the proposition; and if they annex different perceptions to them, then they have a different creed: though they fancy that they subscribe the same. No one can know whether another be orthodox in his sense, till the terms be defined, and stand for the same ideas in both their minds: To say, that they believe in three persons, without telling what they mean by the word *person*, is the same as to say, that they believe in three somethings, or in the word *three*; which indeed is a very mysterious belief, and a pretty center of unity: for no man can believe any thing else, till he has fixed a meaning to the word *person*; and if another do not agree with him in that meaning, they will differ in religion, though they agree in sounds, and perhaps in falling foul upon every one who desires them to explain themselves; which behaviour, amongst too many people, is the main test of orthodoxy.

They must agree also in what they mean by the word *God*. I do not mean, that they must define his essence, have any adequate notion of his infinity, eternity, or of the *sensorium* of his existence; for of these things we neither know, nor can know, any thing: But we must know what we mean by the sound which we make use of; that is, we must have a perception of those images annexed to the word *God* in our minds, and a perception adequate to itself, though in no-wise adequate and correspondent to the subject; which images in different men, I doubt, are very various; and when they are so, these men plainly differ in the object of their

worship, and are of a different religion, though they may think themselves to be of the same. This shall be the subject of some other paper hereafter; in which I shall shew, how absurd as well as impious it is, for men to fall together by the ears upon the account of their difference in trifles, when they scarce agree in any one thing in the world, if they explain themselves, not even in the attributes annexed to the object of all worship, though they can know nothing of him but from his attributes.

T

I am, &c.

[IV-126]

SIR,

Good breeding is the art of shewing men, by external signs, the internal regard which we have for them. It arises from good sense, improved by conversing with good company. A well-bred fool is impertinent; and an ill-bred wise man, like a good instrument out of tune, is awkward, harsh, and disagreeable. A courteous blockhead is, however, a more acceptable guest, almost every-where, than a rude sage. Men are naturally so fond of themselves, that they will rather misspend their time with a complaisant ape, than improve it with a surly and thwarting philosopher. Every bow, or good word, whencesoever it comes, is taken by us as a sign of our importance, and a confession of our merit; and the neglect of that complaisance, as a token that we are thought of none: A reproach which, however silent, few care to bear.

Good breeding is never to be learned by study; and therefore they who study it are coxcombs, and formalists and stiff pedants. The best-bred men, as they come to be so by use and observation only, practice it without affectation. You see good breeding in all that they do, without seeing the art of it. It is a habit; and, like all others, acquired by practice. A weak and ignorant man, who has lived in good company, shall enter a room with a better grace, and say common things much more agreeably, than a profound wise man, who lives by himself, or with only such as himself, and is above the forms of the world, and too important to talk of indifferent things, and to be like other people. A footman employed in *How d'ye's* shall address himself to a person of figure with more decorum, and make a speech with more ease, than a learned serjeant, who lives wholly over briefs; or the deep head of a college, occupied only in a momentous science. I have known a man, who, with the learning of a whole university, had the manners of a clown, and the surliness of a porter; not from the want of sense, though that want be very consistent with a world of learning, but from living long in a college, and dictating to boys and pupils, or with old Fellows, who had no more breeding than himself, and, like himself, were spoiled by living rarely upon the square with any other sort of people.

Good breeding therefore is never to be learned in a college, where the sphere of conversation is so narrow, where the distance between men is so great, and where the old have none to teach the young. Hence you generally see young men come from the universities with a conceited air, and a quaint manner, which often turns them into fops: They are generally either pert or prim: The tone of their voice, and the position of their muscles, shew their accomplishments, before they have spoke two words: Their step, and the manner of using their legs and arms, do the same; and every joint about them, and every action they do, declares the place and way of their education. As to the senior fellows, and heads of houses, they are such starched pedants, such solemn mamamouches, and such kingly old fops, that from their mien you may know their characters, and read their titles and preferments in their hats. They carry the college about them where-ever they go, and talk at a table as they do at a lecture; or, if sometimes they break into gaiety, it is either imperious or insipid, disrespectful or awkward, and always ungraceful: They want a good manner, less conceit, and the appearance, at least, of more humility; all which are only to be acquired by

living abroad in the world, and by conversing with all sorts of men. This accustoms one to treat all men as they expect to be treated; and such general good treatment given to all is called good breeding.

Hence the breeding of courts is always the easiest and most refined. Courtiers have the constant advantage of living daily with the best-bred men: Besides, having occasion for all sorts of people, they accustom themselves to use all sorts of people civilly. By conversing with all sorts, they can fall readily into all sorts of styles, and please every body by talking to him in his own way. They find too, by daily experience, and promiscuous conversation, that the difference between men and men is not so great, as an unacquaintedness with men would generally make it: They are therefore under no awe, nor shyness, in speaking to the greatest; nor have any general contempt for the meanest: a contempt which too often rises from a wrong judgment, grounded upon pride, and continued by inexperience. They consider, that as the greatest can do them good, so the meanest can hurt them: They are therefore respectful without awe to those above them, and complaisant without disdain to those below them. Courts therefore are the best schools for good breeding; and to be well-bred we must live not only with the best sorts of men, but must be acquainted with all sorts.

The want of this general conversation may be one reason why the country clergy are so often accused of want of breeding. They come from the university full of an opinion, that all that is to be learned is to be learned there; and believing themselves to have already every accomplishment, often remain without any. In their parishes they can learn nothing but an additional pride, from seeing or fancying themselves the biggest men there. If there be a squire in the place, he rarely mends them. If he have a delicate taste, he will not converse with them: But it frequently happens, that his taste is as crude as theirs, and consists in eating much, and drinking more, and talking loud. From this conceited education, and narrow conversation, arises their impatience of contradiction, and their readiness to contradict. I own that I am always cautious of reasoning with the vicar: His first argument is generally an assertion; and his next, an affront.

An engaging manner and a genteel address may be out of their power; but it is in their power to be condescending and affable. When people are obliging, they are said to be well-bred. The heart and intention are chiefly considered: When these are found friendly and sincere, the manner of shewing it, however awkward, will be kindly overlooked. Good breeding is artificial good nature; and complaisance is understood to be a copy of the invisible heart. When people are satisfied of one another's good-will and sincerity, the forms they shew them are generally laid aside. Between intimate friends there is little ceremony, and less between man and wife. Some, however, is still necessary, because by signs and actions the affections are shewn. But a courteous behavior, which is known to mean nothing, goes for nothing, and is not necessary when the meaning is known to be good. Expressions of kindness, when they are not thought the marks and effects of kindness, are empty sounds: And yet these unmeaning expressions are necessary in life. We are not to declare to every man whom we dislike, how much we dislike him, nor to shew it by dumb signs. When a man says, that he is my humble servant, he obliges me; not by the words, which in common speech signify scarce any thing, but because by these words he shews that he thinks me worth notice. Good breeding therefore is then just, when the actions which it produces are thought sincere: This is its end and success: It must seem produced by kindness for the person for whom it is shewn.

Good breeding is of so great importance in the world, that an accomplishment this way goes often further than much greater accomplishments without it can do. I have known gentlemen, who with moderate parts and much good breeding have been thought great men; and have actually come to be so. Great abilities alone make no man's person amiable; some have been unpopular with the greatest, and some even ridiculous. But the gay, the easy, the complaisant man, whose chief abilities are in his behaviour, pleases and obliges all, and is amiable to as many as he obliges. To learn this behaviour, people must begin early. One who sets out into the world at twenty, shall make twice as much progress in life, as one who with twice his sense sets out at forty; because he is then less susceptible of the arts of life. Habits are not to be got in a day; and after a certain age, never. Forced complaisance is foppery; and affected easiness is a monster. I have seen a world of tradesmen, and almost as many gentlemen, take such pains to be well-bred, that I have been in pain for them: Native plainness is a thousand times better.

Complaisance is ingenious flattery: It makes those to whom it is paid flatter themselves, while they take every act of complaisance in others as the declaration of merit in themselves: And beyond a certain degree it is not innocent. Courtiers know its efficacy so well, that to it alone no small part of their power is owing. Hence so many people have always been deceived by civil words and kind looks. To know speculatively the delusions of this art, is not sufficient to put you upon your guard against it. A fair and plausible behaviour, with a ready rote of kind expressions, and all the appearances of sincerity, will be apt to mislead you in spite of your foreknowledge. They will catch your senses, and beat you off your theory in politicks. You must find their insincerity some time before you will come to distrust it. Their art and your own self-love will conspire against you, drive away your incredulity, and beget faith, as it is often begot, against evidence and reason. You will still flatter yourself, that you are an exception to the rule, though there were never another exception. The credulity of some is perfectly incurable; many have continued steady believers, in spite of daily proofs and fatal experience for twenty years together. They were always persuaded, that every promise was at least intended to be kept, and always forgave the breaking of it. The great man smiled graciously, bowed courteously, excused himself earnestly; and vowed to God, that you should have the next thing. You miscarried; and then, with a concerned face, he vowed to God, that he could not help it, promised again with the same solemn vow, was again believed and always believed. This wretched credulity is the fruit of self-love, of an opinion that we are as considerable in the eyes of others as we are in our own. Mankind are governed by their weaknesses; and all that statesmen have to do to keep expecting crowds about them, and attached to them, is to promise violently, to seem violently in earnest, and never be so: That is, they must be extremely well-bred.

Good breeding is indeed an amiable and persuasive thing: It beautifies the actions, and even the looks of men. But equally odious is the grimace of good breeding. In comparison with this, bluntness is an accomplishment. The ape of a well-bred man is just as offensive as the well-bred man is agreeable: He is a nuisance to his acquaintance. I am frighted at the affected smile, and the apish shrug. When these foul copies of courtiers throw their civil grin in one's face, it is as much as one can do to avoid spitting in theirs. A starched rogue forcing smiles, is a more hideous sight than a mummy. He is a fugitive from nature; and it is notable impudence in such a creature to pretend to be courteous.

As to ill-breeding, or rudeness, there is something still worse in it than its deformity. It is immoral; it is using others as you would not be used.

No. 122. SATURDAY, March 30, 1723.

Inquiry concerning the Operations of the Mind of Man, and those of other Animals.
[Trenchard] ↩

[IV-133]

SIR,

The world has always run riot after one whimsey or another. Astrology was the madness of the last age: Pretended prophets, fortune-tellers, conjurers, witches, apparitions, and such-like superstitious fooleries, have been in request in all ages. Dreamers of dreams led, misled, and governed mankind, for more than two thousand years together; and they are far from being out of fashion yet: And it is no small comfort, that this sort of divination, and instruction is left to us: for I do not find, that any society of men pretend to any jurisdiction over sleeping dreams, or to have the sole conduct, regulation, or interpretations of them; but every man, when he is asleep, is left at liberty to dream as he can, and to interpret his dreams as he thinks fit; which indulgence is not allowed to our waking dreams. I shall therefore take the advantage of this present toleration of dreaming, to dream too; and though I will not vouch or be answerable for the truth of my dreams, yet I dare compare them with those of the ancient and some modern philosophers.

I conceive, that the divines of all religions have ever agreed, that the soul of man is a being separate from the body, and in its own nature capable of subsisting independent of it. I also conceive, that all Christian divines hold, or ought to hold, that it is a distinct being from what we call the mind, and superadded to it by the divine goodness, to distinguish mankind from the brute creation, to continue his being after the dissolution of the body, and to make him an object of future rewards and punishments. For it is certain, that other animals have minds too; that they reason and resolve, though in an inferior degree to ourselves; and I think also, that it is almost universally agreed, that those minds take the fate of their bodies, and die with them.

The philosophers of all ages have set themselves to work, and employed their wits, to trace the minds of brutes to their first sources or principles, and so to account for their operations; but have differed as widely as they do in other matters about which they know nothing. Some have supposed them to be modifications of matter and motion, and operations resulting from the organization and mechanism of the body, like the striking of a clock, or watch, or musick made by blowing into or striking upon an instrument; for as the percussion of one body against another makes sound, so the instruments or vehicles upon which or through which it hits or passes, modify and determine the species of it.

These endeavour to illustrate the power of voluntary motion (namely, how a sudden impulse of the will can set a great machine in action) by what they think is analogous to it in mechanical observations: As for instance, a little agitation of the air will turn a windmill, or sail a great ship; and it is demonstrable in mechanicks, that a hair of a man's head, or a puff of his breath, by the help of proper springs, wheels, and pulleys, may have force enough to move a body as big and heavy as the world. Then they reason, that if the little contrivance and trifling experiments which we can make of the powers of matter and motion can convince us of its capacity to produce such surprizing effects and operations, a machine

organized by the excellent skill and most wise contrivance of the Supreme Architect, consisting too of such subtle animal spirits, and of such infinite springs, wheels, and tubes, must have suitable operations, some of them such as are not perceivable by our senses, or penetrable by our capacities. They conceive, that there is something in vegetation analogous to animal life; and that the difference of the appearing sensations between the highest vegetable and the lowest animal (as for example, between the sensitive plant and worm or snail) is so very little, that they can account for them both by the same system of reasoning; or rather, they are both equally unaccountable by our reason: And therefore, since the former is undoubtedly only a modus or operation of matter and motion they think that we cannot know but the other may be so too.

Many pretenders to philosophy have thought the mind of a brute animal to be part of the body, originally formed with it, and differing only from the other parts, as it has a finer contexture, and consists of more subtle and volatile particles of matter, that cannot keep together without their case or shell, and consequently cannot exist together in a separate state from the body; but when the organization and mechanism of its inclosure is dissolved or broken to pieces, it must dissipate into the mass of matter again.

But the greater number have thought, that there is an *anima mundi*, or universal spirit, that permeates and actuates all matter, and is the source of vegetable and animal life; which spirit receiving its modification from, and assimilating itself to, the nature and structure of the body through which it passes, or in which it acts, constitutes all the specific effects and operations which we daily see, feel, and admire; as in the instances before given, the same wind, blown into different instruments, makes different kinds of musick.

Many of this latter sort have fancied, that all nature is full of organized bodies, with each a particular and sufficient portion of this universal and vital spirit annexed to or inherent in them; which bodies being in constant motion, fall gradually into peculiar matrixes or wombs, which are necessary to bring them to perfection. They think that the first seeds of all vegetables and animals (which are indeed the vegetables and animals themselves) must have been formed at the creation of the world; that the seeds of the former must make their progression through the veins and tubes of the vegetables of the same kind, to prepare them to become fruit, and to produce that grosser sort of seed which more easily, and by another motion, grows into the same kind of plant or tree again; and that those of the latter must pass through the body of the male to awaken the first life of those who are sent to be nursed in the eggs of the female for increase and expansion; and they conceive, that experience confirms this opinion; for that an egg will not produce an animal, till the male has thrown one into it; but afterwards, by the assistance of that vital warmth which it receives from a living body (or that heat which is equivalent to it, and is necessary to preserve the tender fibres and juices of infant animals) it continues life, nourishes and increases it, till it swell and break out of its first inclosure, and be strong enough to receive grosser nourishment.

It seems to me, that the generation or production of vegetables is analogous to, if not the same with, that of animals, and that they both receive their first nourishment and increase in eggs; and what are vulgarly called the seeds of the former, are eggs, that inclose the minute specks of entity, which are its original seeds or principles, or rather the whole plants or trees in miniature, nourish them for some time, and defend them against the injuries of exterior bodies, when they first expand themselves, and swell out of their native beds, and their tender parts become susceptible of outward violence. It is evident, that if we break up new or maiden ground, many sorts of vegetables will spontaneously arise, which have undoubtedly

their proper seeds in the earth, and as undoubtedly none of those gross seeds which produce the same plant again; and it is plain, that the latter are subject to be destroyed by exterior accidents, and to decay and die; which the others are not, but very probably have had an unmolested existence from the beginning of time, and would have continued in their first state, if they had not received a fermentation, and found a proper matrix, by the opening the fibres and bowels of the earth; which matrix must be different from what multiplies the same species afterwards.

There have been other sects of philosophers (if folly may be called by that name) who have distinguished themselves by supposing the mind and soul to be the same being, and consequently enjoyed in common by other animals, as well as men; and they have supposed this being not only to be different too from the body, and capable in its own nature, not only of subsisting independent of it, but believed that it received prejudice, and was restrained from the free use of many of its faculties, by its imprisonment and union with the body; and yet, when it was discharged from its gaol, was at liberty, capable or obliged to enter into some other organized body, to animate it, and to perform the functions of it. This was the opinion of the transmigrators of souls formerly, but is justly rejected by very many Christians; is contrary to revelation, and would put brute animals upon a level with mankind: for it cannot be denied that other living creatures have minds, and as certainly no souls; nor are they capable of just or unjust actions, or of receiving future rewards and punishments due to those actions.

It is certain that they have minds, and consequently thought; reflection upon past actions, or memory; sensations of pleasure and pain; and in many instances they judge well of their own interests, and choose proper means to attain them: And mankind have not only the above qualities in common with them, but possess them in a greater degree; and over and above enjoy, by the bounty of heaven, immortal souls, capable of continuing their duration to all eternity; of which some traces are discoverable in our nature, and the rest are ascertained to us by revelation, which man alone is capable of receiving: But how this superadded being operates upon and controls the actions of the mind and body, we seem to be wholly in the dark; but it is certain that in some respects they are all blended together, co-operate, and act as one being; and therefore are answerable for their joint actions, and are to take the same fate at last, when they come to be united again. However, in this discourse it may be proper to consider them separately, and not to impute the mechanical operations of matter and motion immediately to our immortal part; especially in such instances as are the same, or analogous to the actions of brutes, who are wholly mortal.

Therefore, if we consider this energy, or principle, called *mind*, as separate from an human soul, we shall find, that it mingles with, animates, and informs the bodies of men, and of all animals; and whether it be only a modification of matter and motion, whether subtle, volatile, and elastick particles of matter, called animal spirits; whether it be elementary fire, or what the ancients called *anima mundi*, or *divinae particula aerae*, that is, a particle of the soul of the universe, or a spark or impulse of the divinity; or whatever else it be unknown to us; it is most certain, that its power and action over some sorts of organized bodies is very surprizing, and not to be accounted for by any other system of matter and motion which falls within our comprehensions; nor can I conceive it possible that it ever should be: For how should any being trace its own principles, and the causes which gave it being, know what it was before it was, or be able to think how it came to think, unless by resolving all thinking into the power of its creator? To know the modus of creation is the next step to creation, and to a creature's creating itself, or another being like itself, and rendering the *opus operatum*, or

the work performed, equally or near as valuable as the artificer.

The powers of this principle are very stupendous. We seem to owe to this most, if not all our sensations, appetites, affections, and passions, which obviously receive constant alteration by the addition of new and adventitious particles of matter, which must more or less be penetrated and inspired with this spirit, which unites to what is called the mind, as the grosser parts do to the body; for neither can grow but by addition, or be lessened but by subtraction, though their actions may be, and are often clogged by internal and external impediments. Our desires and fears, which appear to direct, and indeed comprehend, all the actions of the mind, are only passions, or perturbations of it, made by the impressions of external and internal causes; and what we call judgment seems to me to be no more than a struggle of those passions, or, in other words, the balance of the conveniences or inconveniences which will result from what we desire or fear, and the heavier scale must weigh down.

When a proper proportion of this active force is duly diffused through the whole machine, it will equally receive or resist the impressions of objects; the passions will be alike balanced, and consequently our thoughts and actions will be regular, and what we call prudent: But if there be too little to animate the mass, or if it meet such obstructions as hinder its energy, it becomes stupidity or folly; but if it abound, and overinform its tenement, or if it be unequally dispersed, or put or kept out of its proper place by natural or accidental obstructions, it causes indiscretion, extravagance, and, in a greater degree, madness. Of which several manners of thinking there are as many kinds and degrees as there are irregularities in man's conduct; and I doubt there are few men so equally tempered, but they have, at different times, more or less of all these qualities by the unequal supplies of this vital spirit, or by the occasional obstructions which it meets with. When we denominate a man mad, or a fool, we mean only that he is more so than most others of his species; for all men at times have a mixture of both, and no men's actions will always bear the test of just reasonings, and if we could enter and look into their private thoughts, I doubt they would much less do so. All sudden passion is temporary madness, as continued passion is continued madness; and all want of apprehension is folly.

Madness too is undoubtedly to be learned and acquired by habit and exercise, as well as covetousness, pride, ambition, love, desire of revenge, and other qualities: All which, carried beyond a certain degree, become madness; as every thing else is, when men's desires or fears, or the means chosen to attain the one, or avoid the other, are extravagant, and above human power or prudence. Nor does madness (as has been said) depend only upon wrong organizations at first, or upon the original ill temperament of the juices, by an undue mixture or superabundance of this active spirit; but often upon the fortuitous alterations which both receive afterwards by diet, physick, action, or accidents: for when those volatile particles have been long diverted, and used to run in wrong and indirect channels, the proper ones will be closed up, and they will have no others but the wrong ones to go in; which unequal distribution must overload some, and starve the rest, and make their operations as heterogeneous and irregular as their causes are; and daily experience shews, that men who have been long used to think or act only in one way, are very difficultly, if ever, put into another.

But of all the several species or kinds of madness in the world, none is so flagrant, catching, and mischievous, as the madness of enthusiasm; which is still the worse, as it adopts and puts on the mask and appearance of zeal, and often passes for sobriety and

inspiration; and consequently is incapable of a cure, because it will not seek or accept a remedy. This shall be the subject of my next two papers; and then my dream will be out.

T

I am, &c.

No. 123. SATURDAY, April 6, 1723.

Inquiry concerning Madness, especially religious Madness, called Enthusiasm.
[Gordon] ↩

[IV-144]

SIR,

I have supposed, in my last, that our desires and fears are passions or impressions made upon us by the actions of other beings; and that a due balance of those passions, or equal impressions made upon the several parts of the machine, duly impregnated with vital spirit, makes it act regularly, and constitutes what we call prudence: but when it is over-informed, or irregularly informed, or when those impressions are too strong for the machine to grapple with, it becomes madness and distraction; for the truth of which we need only appeal to experience. Men of warm constitutions are easily animated into madness by fiery liquors and high food, or by occasional strokes of good or bad fortune; whereas those who have not a sufficient share of vital spirit, are only elevated and raised to a proper pitch by high living, or wholly depressed by afflictions, as wanting vigour to resist their power, whilst nature, in the former, by an unequal struggle and contention with it, over-exerts itself, and disorders and shakes the whole machine.

This hypothesis receives further confirmation from the methods usually taken to cure madness; namely by fasting, bleeding, or purging; which methods can operate only by removing, carrying off, or suffering to exhale or perspire, the superabundant particles of spirituous matter, which overcharge and disorder the fabrick, till it receive a fresh fermentation from the addition of new ones, when the distemper again returns. Since therefore it is evident, that some of our thinking faculties receive addition and diminution from the action of other bodies, and from many internal and external causes, it must be equally evident, that they must be mortal, or perishable in their own nature; for what is mortality but a being changing its form, shape, or state? And what is immortality, but its continuing always the same? And every alteration makes it a different being in some respects from what it was before.

It seems therefore to me, that all the operations of our minds do not flow from our immortal souls; but that many of them have much lower sources: For what can be more absurd, than to suppose that what is immortal, and consequently not perishable, can be bled, purged, or starved away, in whole or in part? or that a being independent of matter, that pervades and permeates all matter, and yet (as it is said) has no extension, nor takes up or fills any place, can be acted upon by matter, which we cannot conceive to act otherwise than by contact or impulse, and consequently cannot affect what it cannot touch mediately or immediately; that is to say, either by instant action upon an adjoining body, or by striking or gravitating upon distant ones, by the communication of most or of all which are intermediate. I do not pretend to describe the *modus* of gravitation, or to explain how material substances attract one another, whether by Lucretius's system of hooked atoms, or by an elastick principle that God has given every particle of matter, which keeps it in constant motion, and by impelling all contiguous parts; which motion must force the more dense bodies together, the more subtle and thin ones not being able to resist their power, and interrupt their union.

It is highly probable, if not certain, that every part of matter is affected more or less by all parts of matter; and therefore the greater the quantity is that is united together, the more it must impel some bodies, and resist others; and when any part of matter is kept from having its full influence and operation upon a dense and aggregate substance by the interposition of another, acted upon by the motion of bodies encompassing it, then it seems evident that those two substances must meet together, unless some other power hinders their junction; for all circumambient bodies having their full force upon them, except in those parts which look towards one another, and they still preserving their own force and intrinsic motion, must necessarily gravitate, and more where they meet with the least opposition. But whether this be the true cause of gravitation, or whether we shall ever know the cause of it whilst we are in these frail bodies still I conceive that we are under no necessity to recur immediately to the first cause, when we cannot dive into his manner of governing the universe; nor, since we want faculties to conceive how he has united the soul to the body, are we to determine it to be done in a manner which apparently contradicts the nature of both; but we ought to leave and submit those searches to the secret decrees of providence, and to the time of the last resurrection, when our minds and bodies will be as immortal as our souls, and when possibly all these matters may be revealed to us.

I think therefore it is pretty evident, by what I have said in this paper and the last, as well as from constant observation, that madness is a super-abundance of vital spirits; which must burst their vessel, if they do not overflow, or be let out by tapping; but which way soever they find their evacuation, they generally ferment first, and make a terrible combustion within. This is the devil which haunts us, and often carries away part of an empty house, or blows it up. If he ascend to our garrets, or upper regions, he disorders the brain, and shews visions, airy and romantick images and appearances, carries the hero out of himself, and then sends him armed *cap-a-pee* in wild expeditions, to encounter windmills, and giants of his own making; till at last he return home (if ever he return home) transported with his victory, and in his own opinion a most consummate knight-errant.

Whenever the mind cannot be confined within its inclosure, but flies like Phaeton into the great abyss, and gives the full reins to imagination, it will quickly be carried out of its knowledge, and ramble about wherever fancy, desire, or vision, leads it. It will quickly rise above humanity, become proper conversation for the celestial beings; and, when once it can persuade itself into such angelical company, will certainly despise all other; and the man who is animated by it will think that he has a right to govern all. If the excess of any passion be madness, the excess of them altogether is exorbitant and outrageous madness; and whoever can get it into his head, that he has secret communications with the deity, must have all his passions at work together. The awe of a divine presence must strike him strongly with fear and reverence: The fancied indulgence and condescension shewn him, must raise the highest love, adoration, and transports of joy: So visible a partiality of the deity to him beyond other men, must create pride, and contempt towards others: Such a support and assistance must inspire the highest courage and resolution to overcome all opposition: Hatred, and revenge, to all who do not believe him, will bring up the rear. At last the jumble of all these passions, with many more, will make an accomplished reformer of mankind.

Religious enthusiasm, therefore, is a flaming conceit that we have great personal interest with the deity, and that the deity is eminently employed about us, or in us; that he warms and solaces our hearts, guides our understandings and our steps, determines our will, and sets us far above those who have less pride and more sense than our selves. The enthusiast heats his own head by extravagant imaginations, then makes the all-wise spirit of God to be the author

of his hot head; and having worked up his brains into the clouds, despises and hates all that are below, and if he can, kills them, unless they submit to be as mad as himself; for, because he takes his own frenzy for inspiration, you must be guided by his frenzy; and if you are not, you are a rebel to God, and 'tis ten to one but he has a call to put you to death.

I have but a bad opinion of that devotion which is raised by a crazed head, and can be improved by a dram, and a hot sun, or the assistance of wine, or can be lessened by cold weather, or by letting of blood. It is great madness, mixed with presumption, to pretend to have the spirit of God, unless we can shew it by doing works which only God's spirit can do; that spirit which can do all things, but foolish things. Enthusiasm is doubtless a fever in the head, and, like other fevers, is spreading and infectious; and all the zeal of the enthusiast is only an ambition to propagate his fever.

You never knew a madman of any sort, who was not wiser than all mankind, and did not despise his whole race, who were not blessed with the same obliquity of head. Those in Bedlam think, that they are all mad who are out of it; and the madmen out of Bedlam, pity the madmen in it. The virtuoso, or dealer in butterflies, who lays himself out in the science of blue and brown beetles, thinks all science but his own to be useless or trifling. The collectors of old books are of opinion, that learning, which is intended to improve and enlighten the understanding, is inseparable from dust, and dirt, and obscurity, or contemptible without them. The pedant loads his heavy head with old words, and scorns all those who are not accomplished with the same lumber.

Now all these madmen, and many more who might be added, are harmless enthusiasts; and their pride being part of their madness, is only a jest. But your holy enthusiast is often a mischievous madman, who out of pure zeal for God, destroys his creatures, and plagues, and harasses, and kills them for their good. The Saracens, a barbarous, poor, and desert nation, half-naked, without arts, unskilled in war, and but half-armed, animated by a mad prophet, and a new religion, which made them all mad; overrun and conquered almost all Asia, most part of Africa, and a part of Europe. Such courage, fierceness, and mischief, did their enthusiasm inspire. It is amazing how much they suffered, and what great things they did, without any capacity of doing them, but a religion which was strong in proportion as it wanted charity, probability, and common sense.

They saw rapturous visions in the air, of beautiful damsels richly attired, holding forth their arms, and calling to them for their embraces; and being animated by such powerful deities, no enterprize was too hard for them. They scarce ever departed from any siege, however inferior to it in military arts or numbers. Their constant rule was to fight till they had subdued their enemies, either to their religion, or to pay tribute. They had God and his great apostle on their side, and were obstinately determined to die, or to conquer; and therefore they always did conquer. And their success confirmed their delusion; for finding that they performed greater actions than any other race of mankind ever did, or could do, they believed themselves assisted by heaven; and so esteemed their madness to be inspiration. And then it was very natural to believe, that they were the sole favourites of the Almighty, who interposed thus miraculously in their behalf; that they were employed to do his work; that all the good things of this world were but just rewards of their obedience; and consequently that it was their duty to plunder, distress, kill, and destroy all who resisted the will of God, and denied to give to them their undoubted right.

Now what was able to withstand these inspired savages; who if they lived and conquered, had this world, or, which was better, if they were killed, had the next? They were sure either of empire or paradise; a paradise too, which gratified their carnal appetites. There is no dealing with an armed enthusiast: If you oppose real reason to his wild revelations, you are cursed; if you resist him, you are killed. It signifies nothing to tell him, that you cannot submit to the impulses of a spirit which you have not, and do not believe; and that when you have the same spirit, you will be of the same mind: No, perhaps, that very spirit has told him, that he must kill you for not having it, though you could no more have it, than you could be what you were not.

Don Quixote was a more reasonable madman: He never beat, nor famished, nor tortured the unbelieving Sancho, for having a cooler head than his own, and for not seeing the extraordinary miracles and visions which he himself saw. If a man see battles in the air, or armies rising out of the sea, am I to be persecuted or ill used because I cannot see them too, when they are not to be seen! Or ought not rather their distracted seer to be shut up in a dark room, where no doubt he will have the same sights, and be equally happy in his own imaginations? As there is no reasoning with an enthusiast, there is no way to be secure against him, but by keeping him from all power, with which he will be sure to play the Devil in God's name. I would not hurt him for his ravings; but I would keep him from hurting me for not raving too.

All men who can get it into their own heads, that they are to subdue others to their opinions, reasonings and speculations, are enthusiasts or impostors, madmen or knaves. Almighty God has given no other light to men to distinguish truth from falsehood, or imposture from revelation, but their reason; and in all the addresses which he himself makes to them, appeals to that reason. He has formed us in such a manner, as to be capable of no other kind of conviction; and consequently can expect no other from us: It must therefore be the last degree of impudence, folly, and madness, in impotent, fallible and faithless men, to assume greater power over one another, than the Almighty exercises over us all.

The appointing judges in controversy, is like setting people at law about what they are both in possession of. A man can have no more than all that he is contending for; and therefore I can compare the quarrelling of two men about their religion, to nothing else in nature, but to the battle between Prince Volscius and Prince Prettyman in *The Rehearsal*, because they were not both in love with the same mistress.

G

I am,&c.

No. 124. SATURDAY, April 13, 1723.

Further Reasonings upon Enthusiasm. [Trenchard] ↪

[IV-152]

SIR,

Besides the flaming enthusiasm mentioned in our last, which is there supposed to be inspired by a super-abundance of spirits, labouring for evacuation; and shaking, disordering, and sometimes bursting its tenement to get ready vent (like gun-powder in a granado or mine, or subterraneous fire enclosed in the bowels of the earth); there seems to me to be another sort of religious enthusiasm, not at all mischievous, but rather beneficial to the world; and this has shewn itself in several ages, and under several denominations. There is much to be read of it in the mystick writers in all times. Hermits seem to be inspired with it, and several sects have built their innocent superstitions upon it; as the Alumbrati in Spain, the Quietists in Italy, the French Prophets lately amongst us; and I doubt, a very great part in Europe, called Quakers, owe their rise and increase to it. Having mentioned this last sect, I think myself obliged to declare that I esteem them to be a great, industrious, modest, intelligent, and virtuous people; and to be animated with the most beneficent principles of any sect which ever yet appeared in the world. They have a comprehensive charity to the whole race of mankind, and deny the mercies of God to none. They publickly own, that an universal liberty is due to all; are against impositions of every kind, yet patiently submit to many themselves, and perhaps are the only party amongst men, whose practices, as a body, correspond with their principles.

I am not ashamed to own, that I have with great pleasure read over Mr. Barclay's *Apology for Quakerism*; and do really think it to be the most masterly, charitable, and reasonable system that I have ever seen. It solves the numerous difficulties raised by other sects, and by turns thrown at one another, shews all parts of scripture to be uniform and consistent; and as Sir Isaac Newton, by allowing him gravitation, has accounted for all the phenomena of nature, so if we allow Mr. Barclay those operations of the spirit, which the Quakers pretend to feel, and which he says every man in the world has and may feel, if he watch its motions, and do not suppress them; I think that all the jangling vain questions, numerous superstitions, and various oppressions, which have plagued the world from the beginning, would cease and be at an end.

But this postulatam will not be granted, and I fear will never be proved; though such a discovery be much to be wished, and the opinion of it alone must render those very happy, who can persuade themselves that they have attained to it. Mr. Asgil wrote and published a book, to prove that all true believers (that is all who had attained a spirit like this) shall be translated without passing through death; and, as I doubt not but he believed his own dream himself, so if he had published it before any man had actually died, I cannot see how it could have been answered, or how it can be answered now, but by opposing fact to it, and by making the words *eternal death* signify eternal life in torments, which liberty no language will bear in other disputes; and yet his doctrine cannot be assented to, without supposing that no man ever had faith but Elias and Enoch; which is a very wild supposition.

For the same reason, I cannot concur with Mr. Barclay, in believing that all men who cannot find this spirit in themselves, do or have suppressed it; for I believe that there are many thousands in all respects equally virtuous with himself, who have actually tried all experiments of watching, internal prayer, outward and inward resignation, separation from worldly thoughts and actions, acquiescence of mind, and submission to the operations of the deity, yet have found themselves, after all, just where they set out; nor could recollect any thing that happened to them in those intervals, but absence of thought; and therefore, till I can feel something in my self, or discover some traces in others, which I cannot account for from lower motives, I shall take the liberty to call the pretenders to it, enthusiasts: though I must confess that all or most religious parties have laid claim to this spirit upon certain occasions, and have bestowed it upon their founders, or particular men amongst them; and the Quakers only say, that all men have it, and may exert it, or rather permit it to exert itself if they please.

It is supposed that the power so claimed is Jesus Christ operating within us; and as it is allowed by all that the least drop of his natural blood was enough to atone for the sins of the whole world; so one might imagine that the least portion of his godhead, working within us, might be too hard for and overcome the depravity transmitted to us by our first parents, or at least be able to engage our attention or acquiescence, which is all that is supposed requisite to the farther progress and effusion of his deity. It is very hard to conceive, that we can serve God by sequestering for a time all the faculties which he has given us; by sending our wits out of doors, to make room for grace, and by believing that the spirit of God will never exert it self but in an empty head; and therefore I shall presume to believe, till I am better informed, that as the Almighty shews and exhibits to us the visible world by the medium of the outward senses, which he had before given us, so he dispenses all that we do know or can know of the invisible one, through the vehicles of our reasoning faculties.

We have not yet been able thoroughly to discover any vacuum in nature, but as soon as any body gets out of a place, another leaps in; if therefore a man can once drive his wits out of house and home, some other being of a different kind will certainly get into their room, and wind is always at hand crowding for preferment; which, in various shapes, has a great share in human transactions, and always has contributed much to the great revolutions in empire and superstition, such as have often overturned the world. But to return to my dream.

A clock, or other machine, made by a skilful artist, will have certain and regular motions, whilst it continues in that state; but if it gather filth, meet with obstructions, or its springs and wheels decay and wear out by time, or be hurt by accidents, it moves irregularly, or not at all. Experience proves the same in the mechanism of animals, who have infinitely finer contextures, as consisting of thousands of tubes, veins, arteries, nerves, and muscles, every one of which, in a certain degree, contributes to the operations of the living engine; and as all these are more tender and delicate, and consequently more susceptible of injuries, than the parts which constitute and give motion to other organized bodies, so they are much more easily put out of order: and we find in fact, that a cold which stops perspiration, and hinders the evacuation of the super-abundant particles of matter, disorders the whole fabrick, clogs and interrupts its action; and that those effluvia which cannot find their proper vent through the pores, over-shadow and oppress the brain, and render the mind unactive, and incapable to perform its functions, till they are let out by larger passages, as by bleeding, or vomiting, or forced out by sweating, or other violent action, or by fasting, and taking in no new supplies, there is time given to them leisurely to expire; but if they require quicker vent than these conduits can give, then fevers, or other violent distempers ensue, when the brains of men are so oppressed, that they see visions, appearances of angels, demons, and dead men,

talk incoherently, and sometimes surprisingly, and have obviously different sensations, affections, and reasonings, from what they have at other times.

The same is true of madmen, who through wrong organizations at first, or through the indisposition of the organs afterwards, persuade themselves that they are princes, prophets, or messengers from heaven; and certainly often utter flights, and sallies of imagination, which are amazing, and that never fall from them in their lucid intervals, and which are often passed upon the whole world for inspiration; insomuch, that in several ages, and in several countries in our age, they have been and are thought to be divinely inspired. Now madness shews itself in a thousand shapes; and as has been said in my former paper, there is scarce a man living but at times has more or less of it, though we denominate it from a train of irregular actions; and many kinds of it certainly do not fall within common observation, or scarce within any observation.

When we see men in the main of their conduct seemingly act with prudence in such things as we understand, we are apt to take their words in such things as we do not understand; especially if we see them do such actions, shew such emotions of spirit, and utter such discourses as we cannot otherwise account for, though we perceive the same done by men in known distempers, and in sleep, and often feel it in our selves: For it is incredible to those who have not seen or observed it, what energy and strength men shew in convulsive distempers, when too they often vent surprising discourses, without knowing what they say; and there are few men, who do not sometimes strike out sudden and extemporary thoughts and expressions, without being able to observe by what traces they came into their minds; and fanciful and conceited men easily persuade themselves, or are persuaded by others, to believe that at those times they are inspired from above.

But if we compare things which we do not know, with those which we do, I think we may account for them both by the same principles in nature. Men, as has been said, in sleep see visions, hold discourses, and sometimes very good ones, with phantoms of their own imaginations, and can walk about, climb over houses and precipices, which no man who is awake durst venture to do. Men in distempers see spirits, talk and reason with them, and often fancy themselves to be what they are not. Melancholy men have believed that they were glass bottles, pitchers, bundles of hay, prophets, and sometimes that they are dead; and yet, in all other actions of life, have behaved themselves with discretion; and as these things happened often, few or none are surprised at them, and therefore treat them only as subjects of jest or merriment; but if they had happened but once, or seldom, we should either have not believed them, or have recurred to miracle and witchcraft for the solution. No man wonders at the sun's rising every day, and yet all are amazed and frightened by seeing a blazing star once in their life-time, though that is certainly the less wonder of the two.

Now what stretch will it be upon our imagination, to believe that once in an age, or more, a catching distemper of the mind should actuate a man or two, and communicate itself afterwards to others of the same complexion, of the same temperament of juices, and consequently of the same dispositions of mind; all which certainly are as infectious as those of the body, though not so observable? We assimilate to the passions, habits, and opinions of those whom we converse with; and their tempers are catching. This indeed is not true in all instances; neither does a plague infect every body, but only those who have proper juices, and suitable dispositions of body to receive it. We see often, that the yawning of one man, will make a whole company yawn; and that the sight of men in convulsive distempers will throw others into the same; as many people were agitated with the same motions and spirit of

prating with the French Prophets, though they went to see the Prophets fall into their trances, with a design only to divert themselves; which trances undoubtedly were an unusual kind of epileptick fits, which often actuate the organs of speech without the patient's knowing it, and have often been mistaken for divine trances, and his incoherent rhapsodies been esteemed revelations.

If we may believe Mr. Barclay, and Mr. George Keith, in his *Magick of Quakerism* (who was once of that sect, and afterwards took orders in the Church of England), the same thing has happened to many others who went to insult the Quakers and were caught by their shakings, groanings, and the solemnity of their silent meetings, and became afterwards steady converts. I think it is Thucydides, who tells us, that at Abdera, a city in Greece, upon a hot day, all the spectators who were present in the theatre to see *Andromache* acted, were suddenly seized with a madness, which made them pronounce iambicks; and the whole town was infected with the distemper, which lasted as long as that weather continued. And he tells us too of another sort of madness, which seized the young women of Athens, many of whom killed themselves; and the magistrates could not stop the contagion, till they made a decree, that those who did so should be exposed, and hung up naked. There seems to be no difficulty, in conceiving that the effluvioms, which steam from the body of an enthusiast, should infect others suitably qualified, with the same distemper; as experience shews us, that the minute particles, which are conveyed by the bite of a mad dog, cause madness, and will make the person infected bark like the dog who bit him. And such particles in other instances may be conveyed through the pores, and in a common instance undoubtedly are so; for many people will swoon if a cat be in the room, though they do not see her. And all infectious distempers must be communicated by those passages.

Some distempers or dispositions of body, make men rave; others make them melancholy: Some give them courage, impetuosity, prodigious energy of mind, and rapturous thoughts and expressions; others sink and depress their spirits, give them panick fears, dismal apprehensions, melancholy images, and secret frights; and they will all account for such sensations from their former imbibed prejudices by early education, and by long use become familiar to them. One of these distempers will make a flaming false prophet, and the other a despairing penitent, in spite of the mercies of God; and afterwards physick or abstinence shall cure the first, and a bottle of wine, now and then moderately and cheerfully taken, in agreeable company, shall make the other a man of this world again.

Opium in different constitutions will work both these extremes, and other drugs will give temporary madness. The oracular priests of old well understood this secret of nature. The high priestess of Delphos sucked inspiration from the fumes of an intoxicating well, which disordered her brain, made her rave and utter incoherent speeches, out of which something was found out to answer the devout querist, and tell the meaning of the god: And in the temple, as I remember, of Amphiaraus, where oracles were conveyed in dreams, the humble and submissive votary was let down into a deep hole, that had several fantastical apartments, where he saw sights and apparitions, which his mind was prepared to receive before by physick, suitable diet, and sometimes by fasting; and then he was wrapped up in the skins of victims, rubbed and impregnated with intoxicating drugs, which made him dream most reverently; and when he related his visions, it was very hard luck if the priests could find nothing in them for their purpose: but if that happened to be the case, the same operation was tried over again; and if they had no better fortune then, the god was angry with the impious seeker for his sins, and so was become sullen, and the poor miscreant was sent away as an excommunicate person (if he had the good luck to escape so), and perhaps hanged himself in

his way home.

We see and feel, by constant experience, that our thoughts in dreams are lascivious, frightful or pleasing, according to the temperament of our bodies, the food which we eat, or as our spirits are oppressed or cherished by it. We see too that drunken or distempered men are overcome by liquor or diseases, and made to talk, reason, and act differently from what they do in sobriety and in health; and we all confess such discourses and actions to be the indispositions of their organs, and the operations of external or internal material causes, and will yet not account for other sensations equally extravagant from like mediums, though we cannot shew any difference between them: However, as it is not to be denied but Almighty God has sometimes communicated himself to particular persons by secret impressions upon their senses and understandings, so I dare not affirm, that he may not, and does not do so still; nor will I dogmatically assert, that any one who pretends to feel his divine spirit is a liar or enthusiast; but I think I may safely affirm, that no one is concerned in his visions or revelations but himself, unless the other feels them too, or he can prove the truth of them by miracles.

Almighty God, as has been said, has given us reason to distinguish truth from falsehood, imposture from revelation, delusion from inspiration; and when we quit that light we must wander through endless mazes and dark labyrinths, and ramble where-ever fancy, imagination, or fraud leads us. If Mr. Barclay had meant only, by the testimony of the spirit, that natural faculty, or principle which the deity has inspired into all men to regulate their actions, and to acknowledge his divine bounty (which principle I call reason), and could have reconciled the workings of his light to the only one which I can find in myself, I could readily have subscribed to a very great part of his system; for I must confess that it is most beneficent to the world, in my opinion, most agreeable to the scriptures, and makes them, or rather shews them, to be most consistent with themselves, and comprehends every thing which has been since said by the best of writers for liberty of conscience, and against all sorts of religious impositions. And this he has done with as much wit, happy turn, and mastery of expression, as is consistent with the plainness and simplicity affected by those of his sect, and for the most part used in the holy writings.

T

I am, &c.

No. 125. SATURDAY, April 20, 1723.

The Spirit of the Conspirators, Accomplices with Dr. Atterbury, in 1723, considered and exposed. [Gordon] [↪](#)

[IV-163]

SIR,

I intend to consider in this paper, the behaviour and spirit of the conspirators; and to shew what enemies they are, even to such as are favourable to them. But, before I proceed to enquire into the avowed causes of all this outrageous disaffection, I will freely own, that many things have been done which cannot be justified; some, perhaps ignorantly, many ambitiously, and others, it is to be feared, traitorously, to help the conspirators, by provoking the people, and by rendering the administration odious. Sure I am, that there are many pregnant appearances that look sadly this way; and can be construed no other way; and that these measures gave much sorrow and indignation to the best friends of the government, as I doubt not but they did pleasure and hopes to the disaffected, who saw how fast, by such steps, their views were advanced. Treason is most successfully carried on by unsuspected traitors, as friends are easiest betrayed and undone by friends. The cry therefore of the conspirators against unpopular proceedings, was all hypocrisy, and false fire: They saw their mischievous influence, and rejoiced in it: They thought that they were saved the danger and trouble of plotting; and that all that they had to do was to hold the match ready, while other people were laying the train; and to put their sickle into a harvest not of their own sowing. How near they were to reaping this harvest, is now apparent.

Every good man will condemn unjust measures, let them come from what quarter they will: But the conspirators could not with a good grace condemn the worst, even supposing the resentment sincere. The wildest and wickedest things done by their own party, have been constantly and zealously defended and promoted by them: And they have steadily acted for or against a party, from passion or faction: Nor has the love of their country, and the good of the whole, separated from party, ever swayed them in one publick action, that I remember. Neither is it any defence of them, that others, who professed larger, and more humane and publick principles, have fallen too often into the same partiality and been too often governed by the same narrow, selfish, and passionate spirit. Who have ever sworn more blindly to a steady faith in their demagogues, than the conspirators? Who have ever more notoriously shewn, that they knew no other measures of right and wrong, of religion and impiety, than the measures espoused or opposed by their own leaders! What job has been so vile, that they have not blindly approved? Or what scheme so just, that they have not fiercely condemned? Just as this scheme, or that job has taken its rise from this or that quarter.

Nor was the spirit of faction ever more manifest than in the present conspiracy: What did the conspirators want, but plunder and places? But what advantages was their country to reap from the violent change, which they were bringing upon it? Before they could have accomplished it, the nation and every thing in it must have been thrown into convulsions, and a chaos. What order could they bring out of this confusion? What amends could they make for unsettled or plundered property, a trade stagnated or lost, harvests destroyed, contending armies, bloodshed, slaughter and battles, general desolation, universal terror, every man's sword against his neighbour, the foreign sword against all, and dyed with the blood of

Britons, his Majesty deposed, and perhaps butchered? For it could not be possible, even for them to suppose, that his Majesty and his family, possessed of so much power in his native dominions, supported by such numbers, such wealth and dependences in Great Britain, and by so many powerful allies abroad, could be effectually expelled by their bigotted idol, and his champions, but after a long and fatal civil war, fought within our bowels: A war in which most of the contending powers of Europe would have been parties, and which must have ended in the utter loss of our liberties, which ever side had prevailed.

In answer to this black catalogue of woes will they urge, that England and English liberty, and the Protestant religion, would have been indeed destroyed; but that they, the conspirators, would have had places? And yet what else can they urge? For this is the sum of their reasoning, whatever disguises they would put upon it. Such was their spirit; and I wish it were as new as it is shocking and horrible. But alas! it is as old as men: and every country upon earth, that has been undone, has been undone to satiate the ambition of one, or a few, who aimed at seizing or extending power.

The complaints of miscarriages, of wrong steps, and abuse of power, came awkwardly and absurdly from their mouths, whatever grounds there may have been for such complaints. What security could the conspirators give us, that, contrary to the nature of man, and of power, and to their own nature and conduct, they themselves would be humble in grandeur, and modest in exaltation, and occupy power with moderation, self-denial, and clean hands? They who would overturn the constitution, and the foundations of the earth, and fill the land with violence, war and blood, to come at that power! Can we conceive it impossible that any regard to the publick good, and to publick property, would have the least influence over those men, who would sacrifice the publick, and annihilate all property, for the gratification of personal ambition and rage? Or how should the love of liberty and peace bind these men, whom neither the laws of humanity, and of their country, nor the religion of an oath, nor the awful gospel of Jesus Christ, can in the least bind?

They exclaim against armies and taxes, and are the cause of both, and rail at grievances of their own creating. Who make armies necessary, but they, who would invade, and enslave, or destroy us by armies, foreign popish armies? Who make taxes necessary, but they, who by daily conspiring against our peace and our property, and against that establishment which secures both, force us to give part to save all? And who, but they, can give a handle and pretence to such as delight in taxes and armies, and prosper by them, to continue and increase them? They are not only the authors of those great grievances, but of all the evils and subsequent grievances which proceed from them. Had the conspirators succeeded, can we think, or will they have the face to say, that they would have ruled without armies? The yoke of usurpation and servitude is never to be kept on without the sword. They who make armies necessary now, would have found them necessary then: Nor would they have ridiculously and madly trusted to their merit and popular conduct, when in this very instance they shew that no means were too black, no pitch of iniquity and cruelty too horrid, for the accomplishment of their treason; and general plunder and devastation, conflagrations and murder, were the concerted specimens of their spirit, and to be the hopeful beginnings of their reign. Did King James, whose misfortunes they caused and lament, did he, or could he, pretend to support his religion, and his arbitrary administration, without the violence of the sword, without a great and popish army? Is the Pretender of a different religion, or more moderate in the same religion? Or does he disavow his father's government, and propose a better and milder of his own? Does he pretend to come or to stay here without armies? And are not governments continued, and must be, by the same means by which they were

founded? A government begun by armies, and the violation of property, must be continued by armies, oppression and violence.

What is here said of taxes and armies, may be said of the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act. They complain of suspension as a heavy evil; and by their incessant plots and rebellions, make long and frequent suspensions inevitable. By their eternal designs and attacks upon us, they force us upon the next means of self-preservation; and then complain of oppression, because we will not suffer them to oppress and destroy us. It is therefore owing to them, that the subject is taken from under the protection of the common law, and left to the discretion of the court. Who says that this is desirable? But who makes it necessary, or gives a pretence for it?

We were all justly filled with the apprehension of losing Gibraltar, and thought that no doom was too bad for the traitor that had agreed to give it up (if there ever were such a traitor in his Majesty's service); and the conspirators exclaimed as loudly as any. But behold their baseness and insincerity in this, as in other complaints, and their extensive enmity to their country in every instance! By the conspiracy it appears, that they laboured with foreign powers to have Gibraltar taken from Great Britain, on purpose to engage the nation to part with their government and their religion, in resentment for the loss of that single though important fortress.

The late management of the South-Sea was another topick of resentment and complaint, and a just one, whatever unjust uses the conspirators made of it. It is reasonable to believe that in their hearts they rejoiced in it, since from the universal displeasure, confusion, and losses, occasioned by it, and from the bitterness caused by those losses, they drew hopes and a good omen to their conspiracy, which else must have been impotent and languishing. The tender and slow prosecution of the execrable managers, the gentle punishment inflicted upon them, and the obvious difficulties thrown in the way of any punishment at all, were fresh provocations to a plundered and abused nation, and fresh stimulations to the conspirators. They saw, that great numbers, who had always hated them and their Pretender, were now, under heavy misfortunes, and in the present agonies of their soul, brought to think not unkindly of him and his cause, or to be entirely indifferent about it. They said they were undone, and could not be worse undone; and that nothing in human shape, or in any shape, could use them so ill as the directors had; the execrable, rich, and unchanged directors!

But of all men it least concerns the conspirators to be noisy about the hellish management of the South-Sea scheme; since one of the first and most certain consequences of the conspiracy would have been the utter ruin of the whole South-Sea stock, and of all the many thousands who have their property in it. The Bank, and all other publick funds, would have had the same fate; nay, one of the first steps would have been the plundering of the Bank, and the seizure of all the books of the great companies.

This was so much the design of the conspirators, that one reason given by themselves for delaying the execution of the plot, was, that a principal conspirator, who had a great deal of stock, might have time to sell out. So that they who did so virtuously and disinterestedly exclaim against the abuse of publick credit, would have sunk and destroyed for ever not only the publick funds, but the foundation of all publick credit and publick happiness, publick and private property.

The conspirators likewise profess a loud zeal and concern for the Church; and papists, nonjurors and perjured traitors, were to deliver a Protestant church from a Protestant government, which protected her, to be better protected by a popish bigot, and his popish monks, who all think her damned. A zeal therefore for the Church was to justify the most hideous impieties, a general perjury, foreign invasions, and the final overthrow of all liberty, virtue, and religion: The reformed Church of England was, for a protecting father, to be surrendered to a nursling of the Pope's, who by his religion is, and must be, a determined enemy to the whole Reformation in general, and to the Church of England in particular; and is under the menaces and horrors of damnation, if he do not exert his whole policy and power to extirpate the Protestant name, and introduce a religion which is worse than none; as it professedly tolerates no other, and persecutes conscience, which is the source and seat of religion, the only source that any religion can have. While there are men, and societies of men, there will be religion; and where dread and tyranny are taken away, different religions: And yet no religion is preferable to a cruel religion; a religion that curses and oppresses toleration, which is a principle inseparable from Christianity; a religion which buries the Bible, or burns it, and all that read it, and damns all meekness and mercy; a religion that defaces the Creation, cheats, impoverishes, oppresses, and exhausts the human race, and arms its apostles with jails, tortures, gibbets, impostures, and a bloody knife.

Every other complaint of the conspirators might with the same facility and truth be turned upon them. But this paper is already too long. I will therefore conclude with observing, that the conspirators have, by the assistance of malicious calumnies, blind prejudices, gross ignorance, and constant misrepresentations, misled and abused their party, and governed them by abusing them: That they have wickedly taught them to hate a government, which, with all the faults, true or false, that their worst malice can charge it with, does just as far excel that which they would introduce, as the blessings and beauties of liberty transcend the horrid deformities of slavery, and the implacable and destroying spirit of popish tyranny: That they have wickedly taught them to be weary of their present free condition; which, with all its disadvantages, debts, and taxes, is easy and happy, greatly and conspicuously happy, in comparison of any condition of any people under any popish prince now upon earth: That they have, by perpetual delusion and lies, worked them to a readiness, nay, a passion, to venture and sacrifice their whole property, rather than pay a part to secure the whole; and to wish for a revolution, a popish revolution, which will neither leave them their property, their conscience, nor their Bible!

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I am, &c.

No. 126. SATURDAY, April 27, 1723.

Address to those of the Clergy who are fond of the Pretender and his Cause. [Gordon] ↩

[IV-173]

SIR,

I have in my last, considered the spirit of the conspirators in general; I will in this address myself to those of the clergy, who have joined with them, or are well affected to them. That there are some such, no body doubts; and our enemies boast, I hope, unjustly, of a great majority: But let them be many or few, none can be affected by what is hereafter said, but those to whom it is applicable.

I shall not here urge the sacred ties which you are under; ties, sufficient to bind any conscience, which is not past all tenderness and sense of feeling; ties, awful and solemn enough to restrain minds that any religion can restrain; and ties, from which no lawless breach of the Coronation Oath, nor any act of tyranny, has disengaged you; though, according to your own doctrines, your peculiar and favourite doctrine, so often thundered in the ears of Englishmen, *No act nor acts of tyranny can dissolve the bonds of allegiance*. But I would reason with you upon the point of more weight and moment with you, your secular state and interest.

Pray what violence has been offered to your dignities and immunities? What breach made upon your livings, and revenues? What good has been done to religion at your expence? What arbitrary indulgences have been granted to dissenters, or legal ones, besides that of worshipping God? Is it a sin against you, to suffer them to exercise religion in a way different from you; when every man who worships God, must worship him his own way, in the way which he thinks God will accept, else he cannot worship him at all? What other worship will God accept, but that which conscience dictates? Every other worship is hypocrisy; which is worse than a false religion proceeding from a good conscience. He who complies with a religion which he condemns or despises, worships not God, but the pride of priests; and is therefore their friend and favourite: while the upright man, who adores his God in spite of them, and will not dissemble in so nice and sacred a point, is reckoned a capital foe. The religion of one's country, to any man who dislikes it, is cant, and no more than the religion of Lapland. Besides, would your own pride suffer any of you to comply with the religion of Scotland, or Geneva, if you were there? On the contrary, do you not constantly encourage there, what you constantly exclaim against as schism here, a separation from the established communion?

The state which makes you what you are, and gives you what you have, may by the same right and power confer what favours, privileges, and bounties it pleases, upon any other different bodies of men; nor could you in modesty, or common sense, complain, that a legislature disposed of its gifts and graces according to its own wisdom and discretion; and yet you have not even had this nonprovocation. What dissenter, what Presbyterian, has been preferred to the preferments of the Church, or any other, unless all who are faithful to the government and to their oaths, be dissenters? And will you pay dissenters this compliment? None but churchmen are preferred in the Church, or in the state. No preferments are continued vacant; the church revenues are not lessened, nor impaired, but every day

increased. All the usual and legal advantages of the Church are secured to churchmen, and none but churchmen possess them. All their honours, all their emoluments, are in their hands, and they are protected in them; nor are any hardships done them, or suffered to be done them, but that of restraining them from putting hardships, distresses and shackles upon others; and that of confining a bishop, and some of his lower brethren, for treason against their God and their oaths, their religion and their King. And the outrageous and brutal resentments which they have shewn for this necessary, this legal proceeding, shew what friends you are to that establishment, which maintains and supports you in such ease, honours, and plenty; and which he, and such as he, would have destroyed: You indeed make it more and more manifest, that your greatest quarrel to the government is, that it will not put swords into your hands to destroy it. Will you after this complain, that the government will not particularly distinguish you, you only, and your deluded party with honour, trust, and esteem, for this your declared infidelity and enmity to the government?

But the Convocation, you cry, does not sit. This you think a crying evil: But before we agree with you in this thought, you ought to shew us what good their present sitting would do. And if you would shew too what good their sittings ever did, or ever can do, you would inform many who are in utter ignorance as to this great affair. Do convocations always, or at any time promote peace and indulgence, and the tender charity of Christianity? Have their furious contentions for ecclesiastical union ever increased Christian union? Has their fierceness for garments and sounds, and the religion of the body and the breath, had any good effect upon humanity, sincerity, conscience, and the religion of the soul! Have not some of them, and some not very late ones, gone to open war with moderation and common sense; and with such as only offended by reconciling religion with moderation and common sense, and by proving that our Saviour lied not when he declared that his kingdom is not of this world? How did the late Convocation particularly, and their champions, agree with their Head and Saviour, the great Bishop of souls, upon this article? Will such as you say, that for the interest of this government the convocation ought to sit? And ought it to sit for any other interest? Be so good to lay before us the services done, and the instances of zeal shewn by the late Convocations, to this Protestant establishment.

Another of your common-place cries is, that the clergy are contemned. What clergy, gentlemen? Are any contemned but the profane, the forsworn, the rebellious, the lewd, the turbulent, the insatiable, the proud, and the persecuting; such as will be unavoidably contemned, and ought to be contemned, by all who have conscience, virtue, loyalty, and common honesty? And will you say that the clergy, or the body of the clergy feel, or ought to feel, this contempt? Why should the just doom of the traitors to their order affect the credit of the clergy, or fill with apprehensions such as are not traitors? If they have their crimes, what credit or respect is due to the criminal? And if any of them respect the crime, what respect is due to them from those who abhor traitors and treason, which all good men abhor?

Your little regard to conscience, and your wanton contempt of oaths, are sad proofs how small power the Christian religion, or any religion, has over you. What can bind the man whom oaths cannot bind? Can society have any stronger hold of him? And are not they enemies to society, and to mankind; they who violate all the bonds by which societies subsist, and by which mankind are distinguished from wild beasts? You boast of your succession from the apostles: Do you do as the apostles did? Or would they have deserved that venerable name, or found credit amongst men, or made one convert from heathenism, if they had been the ambitious disturbers of government; and, by profanely trampling upon oaths, had published to the world by their practice, an atheistical contempt of all conscience and

religious restraints? The apostles, rather than disown their faith and opinion, and dissemble a lying regard for the Gentile deities, for a moment, were miserable in their lives, and martyrs in their death; nor could racks, wheels, fire, and all the engines of torture and cruelty, extort from them one hypocritical declaration, one profession that their souls contradicted. Neither they, nor their pious followers, needed to have been martyrs, had they been guided by a spirit that taught religion and conscience to stoop to worldly interest and luxury.

You say, I have heard some of you say, that you are forced to swear. How were you forced? Can conscience be forced? You may as well say, that men may be forced to like a religion which they hate. Can any excuse be an excuse for perjury? Were Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego forced to worship Nebuchadnezzar's golden image? Were the first reformers forced to adore a wafer for a god? Was St. Paul to be forced to offer incense, and worship idols? Or, if he had, would his preaching have been of any effect, or ought to have been? Either the gospel condemns the prostitution of conscience and religion to ease and interest; or such prostitution, if the gospel allowed it, would condemn the gospel. You must therefore either renounce the gospel, which in practice you do; or condemn yourselves, which I do not hear you do: And in honour to the Christian religion, the peaceable, the sincere, the conscientious and disinterested Christian religion, all men who are sincere Christians, or only honest moralists, must condemn you, and abhor your practices.

But how were you forced? Either you must swear fidelity to a government which protects you, and takes nothing from you; or you must quit the advantages, and not eat the bread of the government (for, that the government gives you all that you have, I am ready to prove whenever you please). Now if you have really tender consciences, you would not swear: But if your tithes and rents be dearer to you than your consciences, then it is plain that your consciences are not tender. It is a very hardened conscience that is not dearer to a man than his belly. Your perjury therefore is pure wantonness, and an utter absence of all honesty, conscience, and shame. Are these qualifications proper to direct the lives and consciences of others; and to promote in the minds and practices of others, the scrupulous and upright religion of our blessed Saviour?

Cease, for God's sake, to use that holy name, or use it better. Can you bring people to him, by shewing yourselves daily apostates from him? Cease mentioning the holy martyrs, you who are a disgrace to martyrdom, and act directly contrary to the spirit of the martyrs; nay, would make a martyr of that religion for which they died. For shame rail not at atheism, speak not of atheists, you who give essential proofs of the blackest atheism. What is atheism but an utter disbelief, or, which is really worse, an utter contempt of the deity? And what is a stronger demonstration of that contempt, than a daring, a practical contempt of conscience, his deputy within us, and a wanton and solemn invocation of his awful name to hypocrisy, deceit, and determined falsehood? This is making the godhead a party to infidelity, and to treason against himself: It is mocking God, and abusing men, and making religion the means of damnation. What can equal this horrible crime, the root and womb of all crimes? Or what words can describe it? This, gentlemen, is your advantage: No language suffices to paint out your wickedness: You are secure that your picture can never be fully drawn, or the world see it in half its blackness and deformity.

Will you after this scold at the morals and impiety of the age? You, who lay the broadest foundation for all immorality and wickedness, by letting loose the minds of men from all the strongest bonds of virtue and of human society, the inviolable engagements of conscience, and the awe of the Supreme Being! After you have thus proclaimed, in the most effectual

manner, that you have no religion, or that religion has no power over you, will you continue to fill the world and weak heads with canting conjectures and barren speculations, as if religion consisted in whims, dreams, and non-entities? And when you have, as far as your authority and example go, deprived Almighty God of the essential worship arising from social virtue, peace, charity, and good conscience towards God and man, will you be still adding further indignities to the deity, be representing him chiefly pleased with unmanly grimaces, words without meaning, the nonsense of metaphysics, the jargon of logick, and the cant of mystery?

But this subject is too long for one paper: I shall therefore continue it in my next. In some following letters I shall shew my poor deluded countrymen, by what wretched guides in church and state they are conducted, and whose jobs they are doing, to their own undoing.

G

I am, &c.

No. 127. SATURDAY, May 4, 1723.

The same Address continued. [Gordon] ↪

[IV-181]

SIR,

I proceed in my address to the disaffected part of the clergy.

Are not you the men who professed such blind, such unconditional submission to princes, the most oppressive and tyrannical princes; and damned all who would not go your mad, your impious, and your impracticable lengths? And are not you the first to bring home your own damnation to your own doors, by shewing that no obligation, human or divine, can withhold you from rebelling against the most legal government, and mildest prince? To assert that the government is not a lawful government, is to assert your own perjury; and by disowning the government, you disown all honesty and conscience. The government is founded upon reason, upon laws, and consent, the only foundation of any government; and it is administered with equity, and without the blemish of violence, or of dispensing arbitrarily with laws: And yet this government is to be resisted, betrayed, and overturned; while a government founded upon the chance of blood, upon the hereditary sufficiency of men, and successive chastity of women, and which acts by discretion, cruelty, or folly, is of divine appointment, and irresistible. What can be more monstrous! And what capricious and hard-hearted folly would you fix upon the good and all-wise God! By which you only shew, that your hallowed nonsense, if you be in earnest, is as signal as your wickedness.

As to the Pretender's right, I know not what it is; unless it be, that because his supposed father violated his Coronation Oath and the laws, usurped a tyrannical power, and oppressed and enslaved these nations five and thirty years ago, therefore his supposed son has a lawful right to enslave them now. And I defy you, with all your distinctions, and men of distinctions, to produce a better argument upon this head of right. Besides, how can the Pretender think that you have any the least regard to his right, when you have so often and so solemnly sworn that he had none? Dispossess yourselves, if you can, of the spirit of faction, and of groundless displeasure and revenge; and then try if you can find any divine, any unalterable right in the Pretender. He has in truth no right, but what your own unruly and restless passions give him. We all know what would cure you of your opinion of his title, of your fondness for his person. The constitution will not stoop to you; the government will not be governed by you; you have not the power; you have not the revenues of the ancient ecclesiastics before Henry VIII's days; nor would you, if the Pretender were here: And if you had not, in three months you would be fierce for sending him abroad again, as you did his supposed father; or using him worse. Of this I am certain, that if he ruled as his present Majesty does, you would treat him, and obey him, and honour him, just as you do his present Majesty. Plead no longer your consciences, which you have so long, and so often, and so vilely prostituted, and still prostitute! No body will receive the plea.

Before you can pretend to make your notions and authority pass with others, you must shew that you yourselves are guided by any notions of right or wrong. If you would clear yourselves from the guilt, the horrid guilt of constant and repeated perjury; shew how faithfully, how religiously you have kept your oaths. If you would not be thought disaffected,

shew by some particular instances your faith and attachment to the government, from the Revolution to this day. What have you done to prevent or repress plots, assassinations, and rebellions; to render them odious in the hearts of your people, or to satisfy the world that they were odious in your own? And is not this the duty of Christians and preachers, and your sworn duty? In a stupid dispute about grimace and forms, or about paltry distinctions and empty words, you are all in flame and uproar, and fill your pulpits, and your people, and the nation, with your important nonsense, and the danger of sense: But when church and state were just going to be swallowed up by popery and tyranny, what alarms have you rung? What resentment, what attachment to the establishment and your oaths, have you shewn? What honest testimony have you borne?

And what have you done, Gentlemen, since the discovery of this horrid conspiracy? You that from your lofty rostrums have scattered poison and epidemical distempers over the land, as if out of Pandora's box; what antidotes have you applied to the venom which you have dispersed? What satisfaction have you made for all the mischiefs which you have done, and which stare you in the face? What sermons have you preached? What discourses have you printed? What detestation have you shewn against this monstrous design; levelled at the life of the prince who protects you; against the religion which you ought to support, and which supports you; and against the liberties and estates of your countrymen, from whose mistaken confidence you derive all your power and wealth?

What has been done by the governors of the universities to promote loyalty either in tutors or pupils, and to support the principles upon which the Revolution stands? What charges have been given by archdeacons (to say nothing of their betters), to enforce obedience to this government upon the foot of liberty? How many seditious priests have met with punishment or discountenance from their superiors? though we all know what resentment they would have found, if any one had dared to have opened his mouth against the power and pride of his order?

What care has been taken in the licensing or approving of school-masters, who are almost all Jacobites! What a bitter and disaffected spirit is there in the charity-schools, and all schools! Is there a contest any where between two candidates, but the most disaffected has the vote and interest of the country clergy? And is not the same partiality practised in most of the colleges of the universities?

Reconcile, if you can, your wild conduct to any semblance of religion, or of common sense and common honesty. If a Protestant dissenter [is] to be let into a place by the good pleasure and indulgence of the law; what books, scolding, and fury! But when the Pretender and popery are to be let into England, to the utter subversion of religion and property, and against law and oaths; what resignation! what silence! Though you are sworn to oppose them, strongly and solemnly sworn, and have no provocation not to oppose them, but that the happiness and estates of the laity, and the tenderness shewn to dissenters (by which our people and our riches are increased, and our Christian spirit is shewn) disturb the pride of the narrow persecuting ecclesiasticks, always insatiable and discontented, always plotting and railing while the wealth and dominion of mankind are not entirely theirs.

It would be endless to enter into all the late and publick instances of your perjury, your disaffection, and furious spirit. I shall mention but one, but one that is a disgrace to our nation; an instance of a mean priest, destitute of name and parts tried and condemned for sedition, yet almost deified for his insolence and crimes. Ignorant of the laws, and despising

his own oaths, he publicly attacked the constitution, and libelled it. He asserted the irresistibility of all governments good or bad, though our own was founded upon resistance. For this daring offence he was impeached and tried; tried by one part of the legislature before the other, and condemned by all three: So that the business of the nation, and of Europe, stood still for many weeks, till this groveling offender had a hearing, and his sentence; a sentence, which would have come more properly for him from the chairman of a petty-sessions, than from the mouth of a Lord High Chancellor of England!

What reverence might not have been expected to such a trial as this, what acquiescence in the issue of it, especially from those who contended, daily and vehemently contended, from the pulpit and the press, for submission, unlimited submission, to governors, though tyrants and oppressors! But instead of this, as if they intended to publish to the world, that the meanest of the order, how vile and insolent soever, is not to be touched for the most enormous crimes, even in the most legal, open, and honourable manner, even by the whole legislature, the most solemn and august judicature upon earth; there was such a hideous stir made; such a horrible outcry and spirit were raised; such insolences, tumults and insurrections ensued; such contempt was shewn of power and magistracy; such lies and libels published against those who possessed them; such lying encomiums were bestowed upon the sentenced criminal; such profane compliments were made him; such profound and insolent respect was paid him; as if there had been neither religion nor order in the land, but both had been banished out of it by many of the avowed and hired advocates for religion and order; who, all the while they were thus reviling and resisting authority, had still the front to press and preach absolute non-resistance to authority, and to reward what they themselves were doing with damnation: unless it were safe and laudable to resist the most lawful power, but sinful and damnable to resist that which is lawless. For, after so many oaths to the government, and so many abjurations of the Pretender, they durst not say that the government was unlawful. But the rage and uproar which they were in, even before the sentence, were as great as if the priesthood it self, nay, all nature was to have been overturned by the apprehended whipping of a profligate priest.

A sufficient lesson is this to all governments, how this sort of men are to be trusted with power, who dare thus act in spite of all power! and a strong proof to all men how little regard is due to the opinions and doctrines of these men, who do not regard their own doctrines! who teach what no man ought to practise, and themselves will not! who are perpetually contradicting themselves, and one another, and yet are never in the wrong! and who would not suffer the meanest, or worst of their order, to be subject to the united and original power of one of the greatest states in the world!

Sure this cannot be forgot whilst there is a king, or liberty, in Israel!

G

I am, &c.

No. 128. SATURDAY, May 11, 1723.

Address to such of the Laity as are Followers of the disaffected Clergy, and of their Accomplices. [Trenchard] [↪](#)

[IV-188]

SIR,

I have already addressed two of these letters to the disaffected clergy; and will in this apply myself to the disaffected laity, their followers.

I cannot help saying, Gentlemen, that it argues your great lowness of sense, and depravity of manners, to be thus blindly inflamed by such forsworn apostates, such lying and disaffected monks, men of such vile morals: You see their unruly spirit, their unhallowed conduct, their daring and impious perjuries; and yet will you be led by them into wickedness as great, if possible, as their own; the wickedness of unprovoked rebellion; of overthrowing a government, which, in spite of their malice and lies, does really protect you in your religion and property; and of sacrificing a Protestant Church, that you think yourselves fond of, to a popish Pretender, who is bound by his religion to destroy it?

And what is all this noise about? For whose sakes, think you, Gentlemen, that all this combustion is made? Do you believe that they are serving your interests, or their own? Have they in any instance, or any age, shewn any regard, any concern for your persons, your religion, or your interests? If they pretend to have done so, they speak as falsely as they swear. Remember all the reigns since Queen Elizabeth's time to the Revolution; those reigns that oppressed you, and that Revolution that saved you. Did they not make it the whole business of their zeal, of their addresses and their preachments, to give up your persons, your consciences, and your fortunes, to the pleasure and lust of the prince; and damned you if you defended either? Did they not impiously make our Saviour the author of their inhuman nonsense, and Christianity a warrant of indemnity for oppressing, robbing, chaining, and killing you? And did they not fill the kingdom with atheistical volumes of sermons, books, and addresses, full of profane compliments and curses upon this vile head? And have they ever since publickly and expressly renounced these destroying principles? When their own interest is concerned, no principles can bind them, as we all see and know; but as to the power of princes over laymen, over you, Gentlemen, have they not always asserted it to be boundless and discretionary, and always left you at the mere mercy of royal lust and madness? It is true, they will not now suffer you to bear a prince whom laws can bind; nor would they formerly suffer you to preserve yourselves from tyrants, which neither God, nor man, nor the good of mankind, could bind.

As soon as the great Queen Elizabeth was dead, who was resolved to be truly what she was called, Head of the Church; and in order to be so, kept her priests in a just and becoming subordination, and would not suffer them to meddle with or prate about her government (for which to this day you have never heard them spare to her memory one good word); and when a weak prince succeeded her, many of the leading clergy advanced all the vilest tenets of popery: They declared, that the Church of Rome, contrary to the express words of the *Homilies*, was a true church (which they might as justly have said of the Church of Hell) at the same time that they denounced damnation against all foreign and domestick Protestants

for being no churches at all. So much did they prefer their own notional power of ordination before the precepts of our Saviour, and the essentials of religion! They persuaded the King to appoint three bishops to re-ordain the Scotch presbyters; which imposition put that kingdom in a flame, as being in effect told, that they were in a state of damnation before, and that their ministers had no lawful call to serve God without episcopal dubbing. And thus he had like to have lost one of his kingdoms, to gratify the pride of a few crack-brained ecclesiasticks.

Then it was that professed papists and popish principles grew in request: Liberty of conscience was once given to them by proclamation, and always connived at and indulged; whilst Protestant dissenters, and the best churchmen too, under the odious name of Puritans, were every where reviled and persecuted. Then it was that your parents first heard, in this Protestant church, of the power of the keys, the indelible character, the uninterrupted succession, the real presence, the giving the Holy Ghost, the divine right of kings and bishops; all tending to aggrandize the clergy, and to enslave the laity. Then was invented that nonsensical apothegm, *no bishop, no king*; which his Majesty echoing several times upon oath at the conference at Hampton-Court, the Archbishop declared, that doubtless his Majesty was inspired, and spoke by the special assistance of God's spirit. Then the bishops thought it was their time, with the Archbishop at their head, to present a memorial to the King, demanding an exemption of their courts from the civil jurisdiction; and the ecclesiastical power was every day swelling, nay carried to such a pitch in the High-Commission Court, as to draw the Parliament upon them. And to induce his Majesty to support them in their nonsense and roguery, they made him a present of all your persons, lands, and liberties. It became the current doctrine amongst the prerogative clergy, and books were published by some of them, approved and applauded by all, to maintain, that the King was exempt from the restraint of laws; that he need not call Parliaments, but might make laws without them; and, that it was a favour to admit the consent of his people in giving subsidies.

This weak prince left one as weak behind him; one who having, as is said, been once destined to the priesthood, and being a bigot by nature as well as education, the ecclesiasticks found in his reign a proper season and a proper soil to sow their tares in, with a fair prospect of a plentiful harvest. Popery came into the kingdom like a torrent; arbitrary power appeared undisguised, and in the most glaring colours. The King, by positive order to the chancellor, forbade the laws against papists to be put in execution; and, notwithstanding the constant protestations of Parliaments, protected Romish priests against legal prosecutions. Popish books were licensed by Laud; and Protestant ones, which defended the Articles and the opinions of the Established Church, were forbidden, suppressed, and published in the Star Chamber. Montague, who was impeached by Parliament, for his attempts to introduce popery, was not only protected, but made Bishop of Chichester. Laud issued injunctions, by his own authority, for reforming the Church, and bringing it nearer to popery: He had the sauciness to declare publicly, that he hoped to see the time when no jack gentleman should dare to keep on his hat before the meanest curate. The bishops disclaimed all jurisdiction from the crown in Bastwick's trial; and the independence of the Church upon the state was openly asserted. Then came in the altar, and the unbloody sacrifice upon it, with the antick and foppish consecration of churches and church-yards, and many other monkish fooleries, to draw us to a nearer conformity with Rome.

And as priestcraft and tyranny are ever inseparable, and go hand-in-hand, infinite other oppressions were brought upon the poor people, and proved by the priests to be *jure divino*; as, unlawful imprisonments, various monopolies, extorted loans, numerous taxes; all levied

without authority of Parliament. Sibthorp and Manwaring, two of Laud's creatures, were set on to preach, that the King was not bound by the laws of the land; that the King's royal will, in imposing loans and taxes, did oblige the subject's conscience, on pain of damnation. His Majesty sent a special mandate to Archbishop Abbot, to license those sermons; and his Grace was suspended for not doing it. It seems that it was lawful then to suspend the greatest clergyman, and first subject of England, for doing his duty, and preserving the laws: And now it is a sacrilegious usurpation of the divine rights of the clergy, to deprive a bishop for the most traitorous conspiracy against his king, his country, and the religion which he himself professes. To make good all these invasions upon publick liberty, a German army was contracted for; and some time after an Irish and popish one was actually raised by Strafford in Ireland.

During these reigns, all the high clergy were the professed trumpets, the setting dogs and spiritual janizaries, of a government which used you like cattle, and starved you, or slew you for profit and sport. They made you conspire against yourselves, by alarming your consciences, and filling them with blind and unnatural resignation to all the excesses of cruelty, plunder, oppression, killing, servitude, and every species of human barbarity: But now that you are protected and secure in standing laws, which the administration has never pretended to dispense with; when you have the full enjoyment of your consciences, which the government in no instance restrains; when you are secure in your estates and property, which the government does not touch, nor pretends any right to touch; when you have as much liberty as mankind can under any government possess, a liberty which goes to the very borders of licentiousness: I say, under all these blessings, blessings unknown almost to all men, but Englishmen; will these implacable and steady impostors let you alone? Are not their spiritual goads continually in your sides, stimulating you to renounce your understanding, your freedom, your safety, your religion, your honesty, your conscience; and to destroy the source of all your own happiness and enjoyments, religious and secular; to exchange a free government, and every thing that is valuable upon earth, for the cruelty, madness, chains, misery, and deformity of popery and of popish tyranny?

Look back, Gentlemen, once more, to later reigns: What testimony did they bear against the barefaced encouragement of popery, and the persecution of Protestants, in Charles II's reign; against his fatal treaties and leagues with France, his unjust wars with the United Provinces, and his treacherous seizure of their Smyrna fleet, to destroy the only state in the world that could be then called the bulwark of liberty and the Protestant religion? What did they say against the terrible excesses, the arbitrary imprisonments, the legal murders, and violation of property, during his reign? Did they not encourage and sanctify all the invasions and encroachments of the court, and cursed all who opposed them, or complained of them? Can they have the forehead to complain of armies, of taxes, or any sort of oppression (however just such complaint may be in others), they who have never shewn themselves for any government, but what subsisted by armies and oppression? They have been always mortal foes to popular liberty, which thwarts and frustrates all their aspiring and insatiable views; and in every favourite reign preached it as impiously down, as they preached up every growing and heavy oppression.

Nor did they ever quarrel with King James, but consecrated all his usurpations, his armies, and dispensing power, till he gave liberty of conscience to dissenters, and till some of their own ill-contrived oppressions were brought home to their own doors. They then cursed their king, and helped to send him a begging. They resisted him, and upon their principles were rebels to him, and animated others to be so; yet have been damning you and the nation

for that resistance ever since: Which is a full confession, that when a popish tyrant plunders and oppresses you, you neither can nor ought to have any remedy; but if he touch but a tithe-pig or surplice of theirs, their heel is ready to be lifted up against him, and their hands to throw the crown from his head, and to put it upon another, with fresh oaths of allegiance and obedience; and to pull it off again in spite of those oaths, or without any forfeiture, or any just provocation. Is not this infamous conduct of theirs manifest to sight? Does it not stare you and every Briton in the face? And yet will you be implicitly led by such traitors to God, to truth, and to you?

How did they behave towards King William, whom they themselves invited over? As soon as he gave liberty of conscience to Protestant dissenters; let them see that he would not be a blind tool to a priestly faction, but would equally protect all his subjects who were faithful to him; had set himself at the head of the Protestant interest, and every year hazarded his person in dangerous battles and sieges for the liberty of England and of Europe, against the most dreadful scourge and oppressor of mankind that ever plagued the earth; they were perpetually preaching and haranguing seditiously, always calumniating him, reviling him, distressing him, and plotting against him; always endeavouring to render his measures, all his generous attempts for their own security, abortive and ineffectual. Nor did they use the late Queen, their own favourite Queen, or even those of their own party who served her faithfully, one jot better, till she fell into the hands of a few desperate traitors to herself and them; who gave away all the advantage of a long, expensive, and successful war; put France into a condition again to enslave Europe, and to place a popish traitor, an attainted fugitive, upon the throne of these kingdoms(which he had undoubtedly done, if unforeseen accidents had not prevented it): And then what encomiums, what panegyrics, what fulsome and blasphemous flattery, did they bestow upon her person and actions, and have bestowed ever since?

Is not this, Gentlemen, using you like slaves, and worse than spaniels; making you the tame vassals of tyrants, and restless rebels to lawful governors? Is not this using you like insensible instruments, void of reason and of conscience, of prudence, and of property? Is this teaching! this the price of their revenues and ease! this the function of ministers! Or can human invention, animated and aided by human malice, draw the character of more unlimited, merciless, and outrageous enemies?

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I am, &c.

No. 129. SATURDAY, May 18, 1723.

The same Address continued. [Gordon] ↪

[IV-197]

GENTLEMEN,

You are abused: You are blindly governed by certain chiefs, who can have no view but to dispose of you; to make sale of you for their own proper advantage. By prating pedants, and disaffected monks, and by party cries, and party revelling, and hogsheads of October, you are brought to adore this duke, that lord, and the other knight or squire; and to think the publick undone, unless it be under the sole management of these your idols, who would effectually undo it. They once had places: Had you then more money, more trade, more land and liberty, by any wise or virtuous conduct of theirs, than you have now? And did they not take that opportunity of your generous confidence in them, to betray you basely to France and the Pretender? And have they not ever since been labouring, by plots and rebellion, to accomplish that which, from the shortness of their reign, and the sudden change, they could not then accomplish by power?

Power and places are still their only aim: And to come at them, you see, they would make war upon heaven and earth, and involve you in blood and popery. But you cannot all have places, Gentlemen: Your only ambition ought to be the security of your property, and to live like freemen. And are you not free? Is not your property secure? or can these men accomplish their designs and conspiracies, but at the expence of your estates and your freedom? They seek their own grandeur, and all their advantages, from your ruin and servitude. You must pay the whole and long reckoning at last. You must fill the empty coffers of new shoals of *banditti* who must be rewarded out of your pockets for their villainous merit and pretended sufferings. You will have a whole and black flight of harpies to glut, who with ravenous and unhallowed claws will devour your substance, and your children's bread. All foreign debts, all the demands of Spain and Rome, will be brought upon you for payment; and all that you have will be too little to satiate needy traitors, whom you madly want to save your all; which is not touched, nor can be hurt, but by them, and is but too little to defend you from them.

Think you to be then without armies? No: Instead of occasional troops, which their wicked plots and devices, and your own disaffection, have brought upon you, you will see your country and your houses filled with popish armies, perhaps foreign popish armies. You will be told, that Protestant and English ones, which already betrayed the father, will betray the son, and cannot be trusted: That your frequent rebellions render you unfit to be relied on; and that if you turned out a Protestant prince, whom you yourselves called in, you will be apt, upon the least disgust or caprice, to turn out your hereditary King, as you did his father.

Think you that your present debts will be cancelled, and your taxes made easy? No; your taxes and your funds will be continued: But, instead of being applied, as they are, to pay off lawful debts contracted for your security, they will be seized by this new government, and called lawful prize. It will be said, That they were given to keep out your lawful king, and ought to be made use of to keep him in: That if you were so prodigal of your wealth for the support of rebellion and faction, can you refuse these revenues, which are now no longer

your own, but in possession of the enemies of the establishment, who chiefly gained them at first by stock-jobbing and extortion, and now keep them as the prizes of disloyalty and treason; can you refuse these revenues (so ill got, and as ill applied) to secure your lineal government, founded upon a long succession of your natural princes? These revenues therefore, which are now your property, and the property of your neighbours and relations, will then be united to the crown, fix an absolute power there, and entail lasting and irretrievable slavery upon yourselves and your posterity, and destroy at one blow the whole property and trade of three great kingdoms. At present, if prudent methods be taken (which surely necessity must at last make us take) these great debts may be paid honestly off, and we again see ourselves a happy and disengaged people. But upon such a dreadful turn as the conspirators intended, they will be thrown into a free gift, and your taxes will be made perpetual, to perpetuate your slavery.

Do you expect any redress of any kind from such a Parliament as can then be chosen, if any be chosen? No; hope it not. All that would serve you faithfully in it, will be called enemies and traitors to the new, and friends to the late rebellious establishment. Such therefore will not dare to offer themselves to your choice; and, if they did, would be mobbed, or imprisoned. You must choose only such as are recommended to you, the ragged and famished tribe that are brought over; men of desperate fortunes, the beggarly plotters against your present happiness, fiery and implacable bigots, half papists, engaged malcontents, or rapacious vultures; all gaping for prey, all determined to every measure of oppression, and to sacrifice you and your country to their ambition and want. You will then find time for repentance, when it is too late, when all the grievances which you now so wantonly complain of will fall upon you in earnest, and an hundred fold, without hope of remedy or end.

Nor can this blessed condition be brought upon you, but after the horrid prelude of a long and cruel civil war. You will first see your country in blood, your cities burnt, your houses plundered, your cattle taken from you, your stocks consumed by dragoons, and your sons, your neighbours, and relations, murdered before your faces. Flatter not yourselves, that his Majesty will easily quit the many thousands of his subjects, who will certainly and resolutely stand by him; or that he will want the assistance of all the foreign powers who are interested in his establishment, or even in making this great kingdom wretched, impotent, and poor. No, Gentlemen, you will have armies of Germans and of Dutch poured in upon you on one side, Spaniards and Russians on the other, and perhaps French on both sides. Irish papists will come over in shoals; Hosts of Highlanders will fall like snow from the north; and all the necessitous, the debauched, the ambitious, the rapacious, the extravagant, and the revengeful, amongst yourselves, will think these your calamities their harvest: They will banquet in your plunder; and for a share of you, will greedily join to devour you. Is this a condition like that which you now enjoy?

How would you like to see your churches dressed up like toyshops; to see vermin of various fashions, shapes, and colours, crawling about in them, antickly dressed up in an hundred fantastical garments; to see the same vermin, at other times, filling and polluting your streets, haunting your houses, debauching and corrupting your wives, perverting your children, devouring your substance, and lording it over you? You will hardly know, thus transmogrified, the old faces which you have been used to, the faces of those impious wretches, who would bring all these frightful mischiefs upon you. That they are ready and prepared for this ungodly change, is evident from their maintaining and asserting all the vilest and most formidable tenets of popery; and by their uniting in all the traitorous intrigues, in all the basest and bloodiest councils of papists. But that the papists would protect

or prefer them afterwards, is more than doubtful: It is not likely, that they will trust those whom by experience they know no trust can bind. They know that those who have betrayed you, and a King who has protected and preferred them, will betray also even papists. They know, that neither religion, nor conscience, not honesty, nor hardship, has any share in their present disaffection, which has its whole root in pride and avarice, and the lust of rapine and power; and that they will in a moment turn upon them as soon as the first preferments go by them, or they cannot all catch the preferments and wealth which they so immoderately thirst after.

Your present deceivers, therefore, will not then be trusted. All ecclesiastical prizes will be the prizes of foreign ecclesiasticks, or of those who have been ever staunch Catholics at home. The others will be left to certain contempt, beggary, and if possible to shame. It will not be forgot what servile adoration they paid, what hollow compliments they made, to the late King James; adoration that bordered upon blasphemy! Compliments that interfered with the incommunicable attributes of God! And how faithlessly, how readily, afterwards they betrayed him, when all his favours did not fall in their lap, and as soon as they found that for them alone his tyranny was not exerted. It will be remembered how cheerfully, or rather how revengefully, they ran into the Revolution; and when they could not engross the whole advantages of it, and could not make King William their instrument and bully, how they were continually libelling King William and the Revolution, continually prating, preaching, and plotting against both, notwithstanding their constant oaths, their constant abjurations and imprecations.

For God's sake, Gentlemen, think what you are doing: Your lives, your estates, your religion, your conscience, your trade, your country, your honour, are all at stake, and you are wantonly throwing them all away; you are pursuing a false and miserable shadow; and it would be happy for you, were it only a shadow: In reality, you are going to catch in your embraces, superstition, beggary, and servitude. I approve your love and pursuit of liberty, which ever was, and ever will be, a grateful and charming sound in my ears; and I will be always ready to lead you, or to follow you, in that virtuous and noble pursuit. This is wisdom! This is honour! But honour is to be acquired by honourable means, and not by rapine, perjury, and murder.

I thank God, we have yet the means left within our constitution to save ourselves. We have, in spite of malice and contumelies, an excellent, meek, and benevolent prince, who has in no one instance of his reign attempted to strain his prerogative above the laws; which we defy his bitterest enemies to say of the best of their favourite kings, his predecessors. He has every disposition to make a people great and happy, and will be always ready to gratify them in every thing that they can reasonably ask for their security. But if we would make ourselves secure, we must make him secure. It cannot be denied, but there have been some excesses of power, and that we have suffered under many publick calamities: None of them are, however, imputable to him; but to the corruption and intrigues of those who betrayed him and us, and to the constant conspiracies of traitors, which deterred honest men from a severe animadversion upon their crimes, when they saw them pursued by those who rejoiced in those crimes, with no design to rectify abuses, but to inflame discontents.

To whom, Gentlemen, do we owe all our present debts and misfortunes? Even to those who opposed all the measures for raising effectual supplies in the first war, and ended the second by a scandalous peace, which left us in insecurity and danger, and made more taxes and more debts necessary to our security. To whom, as I have observed in a former paper, do

we owe standing armies, such frequent suspensions of the *habeas corpus* bill, and so many consuming pensions? Even to those, who, by their constant plots, conspiracies, and rebellions, have given occasions, or pretences, for these great evils and excesses. And now that they have brought all these mischiefs, and many more, upon us, and forced the government upon measures which perhaps would not have been thought of, certainly would not have been complied with, they would impudently throw upon his Majesty the burdens and imputations, which they alone ought to bear, and impiously dethrone him, and undo their country, for their own crimes.

You are born, Gentlemen, to liberty; and from it you derive all the blessings which you possess. Pray, what affection have these your leaders ever shewn to the cause of liberty? It is plain that they have never taken the sacred sound into their mouths, but to profane it; nor pretended to cherish it, but in order to destroy it, and make it an unnatural ladder to tyranny. As often as dominion has been in their own hands, liberty became a crime, and a sign of sedition; and as often as they wanted to destroy power, that is, as often as they were out of it, they prostituted the spirit of liberty to the service of treason. Hence their late cries for liberty, to animate you against a government that protected it; and under the pretence of affecting liberty, to introduce a tyranny that would destroy the soul, body and property. They could, however, have made no dangerous progress in this mischief and hypocrisy, if those who have always professed, and whose interest it would have been always to have supported and practised, free and beneficent principles, had not deserted those principles, and armed by that desertion the enemies to all that is good and virtuous, with an opportunity of turning liberty upon herself. Let the real friends to the government support the maxims upon which it stands, and upon which only it can stand, and they have nothing to fear from the well or ill-grounded popularity of its enemies.

Such, Gentlemen, are your leaders, and such are the grievances which they cause, and complain of: To cure them, they would introduce the compleatest and most comprehensive of all, a total overthrow of church and state. They have reduced us to unhappy circumstances; but let us not make them infinitely worse, and destroy ourselves for relief; let us not, like silly and peevish children, throw away what we are in possession of, to attain what is out of our power, and which attained would undo us: Let us put on resolutions suitable to our present condition. Let all honest men join with the greatest unanimity in all measures to preserve his Majesty and our establishment; and then we may rest assured, that his Majesty will do every thing to preserve us. We may then ask with confidence, and he will give with pleasure. When the kingdom is in this desirable calm and security, we shall not need so many troops, nor will his Majesty desire them. We may lessen the publick expences, pay off gradually the publick debts, increase the trade, wealth, and power of the nation, and be again a rich, easy, and flourishing people.

I cannot help persuading myself, that the gentlemen at present in the administration, who have observed and condemned so justly the fatal and unsuccessful measures taken by some of their predecessors, the terrible consequences that have flowed from them, and the dreadful advantages that they gave to the common enemies of his Majesty, of themselves, and of us all, are already convinced, that there is no possibility of preserving our happy establishment long, but by gaining and caressing the people, by making them easy and happy, by letting them find their account in his Majesty's reign; and by giving no handles for just reproach, or pretences for contumely, to those who would make no other use of them but to destroy us all.

G



No. 130. SATURDAY, May 25, 1723.

The same Address continued. [Trenchard] ↩

[IV-207]

SIR,

I have in my last and former papers given you some faint images of hypocrisy, pride, tyranny, perjury, atheism, and restless ambition, of the Jacobite and disaffected clergy, who constantly mislead you, and constantly abuse you. I shall in this inform you what are their views, what the butt and mark to which they direct all their actions; what the idols to which they sacrifice their honour, their conscience, their religion, and their God. It is even to their ambition and pride. It is to get you into their power; to have the disposal of your persons, your opinions, and your estates; to make you ignorant, poor, miserable, and slavish, whilst they riot upon your fortunes, prey upon your industry. They look abroad with envious, with wishing eyes, at the revenues, grandeur, and power of the Romish clergy; they remember with regret, how they lost all those fine things at the Reformation, and have never lost sight of them since; but been constantly involving you in factions, in misery, often in blood, to recover them again.

Popery is the most dreadful machine, the utmost stretch of human politicks, that ever was invented amongst men, to aggrandize and enrich the clergy, to oppress and enslave the laity. All its doctrines, all its views, all its artifices, are calculated for the sole advantage of the priests, and the destruction of the people, at the expence of virtue, good government, common sense, and the gospel. It is an open conspiracy of the ecclesiasticks against all the rest of mankind, to rob them of their estates, of their consciences, and their senses; and to make them the dupes and tame vassals of saucy and ambitious pedants. Look into their doctrines and their practices, and see whether you can find the least appearance of honour, morality, common honesty, or religion, in them; or any thing but pride, hypocrisy, fraud, tyranny, and domination. What do they mean by the power of the keys, binding and loosing, of excommunication, of their being mediators and intercessors between God and you; what do they mean by their pardoning sins, and having the sole power of giving the sacraments, which they tell you are necessary to salvation; what, by their doctrines about purgatory; but to persuade you, if you are foolish enough to believe them, that your future happiness and misery depend upon them? and then they well know that you will give the most that you have in this world, to be secure in the next.

What do they intend by telling you that bishops are of divine institution; by the power of ordination; and that they can alone make one another? What, by the indelible character; by uninterrupted succession from the apostles; by their being able to give the Holy Ghost, and having it themselves; but to create reverence to their persons, submission to their authority, and to render themselves independent of the civil government? And then they know that the civil government will be dependent on them. What purpose does it serve, to make you believe that tithes (which they hold by laws of your making) are of divine institution; that it is sacrilege to resume lands or donations, once given to the clergy, and that they can never afterwards be alienated; but constantly to increase their riches, and consequently their power and dependence, till by the natural course of things they come to be possessed of all? What do they mean by their holy water, their extreme unction, their exorcisms, their consecration

of churches and church-yards, and their absurd notion of transubstantiation, but to gain adoration to the priestly character, as if he was able by a few canting words to change the nature of things, bless dead earth and walls, and make a god out of a meal? Why so many monasteries and nunneries, so many religious orders of men and women, so many fraternities, colleges, and societies of different kinds, but to engage great numbers of young people and potent families in their interest? Why so many antick garbs, so many rich vestments, so many gaudy shrines, so many decked images, used in their worship, and so much pompous devotion? Why organs and so much musick, so many singing-men, and singing-boys, but to attract the eyes and ears, and to amuse the understandings of the gaping herd, to make them forget their senses, and the plain natural religion of the gospel, and to engage men and ladies of pleasure in the interests of so agreeable a devotion.

How comes it to be a part of religion, not to confess our sins to God, but to the priest? It lets him into all the secrets of families, the power of imposing what severe penances he pleases upon superstitious penitents, and of commuting for those penances; acquaints him with all designs to the disadvantages of his order; gives him opportunities of debauching women himself, and procuring them for others; and holds them devoted to his will by the knowledge of their most important concerns. And lastly, what do they mean by the terrible engine of the Inquisition, and by their hellish doctrine of persecution for opinions; but to keep all men in awe of them, and to terrify those whom they cannot deceive? These are the favourite doctrines of popery! These the doctrines which they are concerned for! If you be rich or powerful, you may be as wicked as you please, and no body shall molest you; nay, the priests shall be ready to assist you, to pimp for you, and to pardon you. The same is true of the speculative opinions held by that church, that do not affect their power and pride: They suffer their several orders to differ about them, and do not trouble themselves what the people believe concerning them; nor are any of the people at all concerned in them. The absurd notions and ridiculous worship of the papists are only foolish things; but the power of popery is a terrible thing. If a man adore rotten bones, and use antick gestures towards them, he makes a fool of himself, but hurts not me; but if he would rob me, torture me, or burn me, for not playing the fool too, it is time to keep him at a distance, or to hold his hand. It is the power of popery, the cruel, the insatiable, the killing spirit of popery, that is to be dreaded. This, Gentlemen, is the power, this the terrible condition, that many of your Protestant instructors would bring you under, and which you are to guard against.

These wicked doctrines, these absurd opinions, were all abolished, all renounced, by the first reformers, but kept alive by the corrupt part of the clergy, and have been growing upon you ever since: They have been connived at by some, openly asserted by others, and I wish I could say, as openly discountenanced by the rest. It would fill a volume, instead of a paper, to enumerate all the clergymen, in the highest repute amongst their own order, who have abetted most, if not all of these monstrous opinions; and I have heard as yet of none of them who have been censured by any publick act of their body. I confess, that many of the corrupt amongst them have renounced the Pope's authority, as believing that they might find fairer quarter from a King whom they educated and hoped to govern, than from a foreign prelate, and his needy priests, who would plunder them, oppress them, and give away their revenues to his creatures, and to lazy monks and friars. They hoped too, that some favourable opportunities might happen to get away the regale from the crown; and we never had a prince whom they could entirely govern, or who would not be governed at all by them, but they have laid claim to it, and attempted it. But what stood always in their way, and made all their designs impracticable, was the power of Parliament, and the liberties of the people, who

preserved the prerogative of the crown to preserve themselves: They therefore levelled all their batteries against publick liberty, and laboured to make the prince absolute; as finding it much easier to flatter, mislead, or bargain with one man (and often a weak one) than to deceive a whole people, and make them conspire against themselves: and if persuasion, bigotry, and fear, would not make him practicable to their designs, they knew that poison and the dagger were at hand.

But now two hundred years' experience has convinced them, that the people will not suffer the crown to part with the regale, nor would they themselves part with their liberty; and till they do so, there is no possibility of settling a pompous hierarchy, and gaining the domination which they aspire to: They therefore are reduced to accept barefaced popery, and throw themselves under the protection of the Holy Father: And that is the game which they are now playing. What else can they propose by a popish revolution, but to share in the power and tyranny that attend it? They have not sufficient stipends for the daily mischiefs which they do: They want greater revenues, and an ecclesiastical inquisition. Now, at whose expence, think you, must this accumulation of wealth which they thirst for be acquired? How must this Babel of authority which they pant after be raised? Not at the expence of the Pretender, by whose assistance they must gain them: No, Gentlemen; from your coffers these riches must be drained: Over you this tyranny must be exercised: The utter extinction of our liberties must constitute their grandeur: The single seizure of your lands and properties must support their domination: You must be the poor harassed slaves of a monstrous two-headed tyranny: be constantly and inhumanly crushed between the upper and the nether millstone of the regale and pontificate; and, in any dispute betwixt them, be given to Satan on one side, and to the executioner on both.

Many of you are in possession of impropriations and of abbey-lands, and are protected by the constitution in those possessions, which these reverend cheats would rob you of; and only want an arbitrary and a popish government to enable them to commit that robbery, to strip you to the skin, and to reduce the English laity to be once more humble cottagers and vassals to the monks, friars, and other ecclesiastical gluttons, to whom the whole riches of a great nation will be no more than sufficient wages for cheating and oppressing it. I bring you, Gentlemen, no false charge against the Jacobite clergy: Do they not claim your estates publickly from the press and the pulpit; and from the pulpit and the press charge you with sacrilege, and damn you for keeping them? Yes, Gentlemen, these reverend and self-denying teachers damn you for keeping your own legal possessions, and for eating your own bread. Now I would leave you to reason upon this conduct of theirs, to consider how nearly it affects you, whither it tends, and what sort of Protestants these doctors are. If the publick take nothing from them which they occupied since the Reformation, why should they destroy the government, but in hopes of destroying the Reformation, to get possession of popish lands, and popish power; which, while the Reformation and the government subsist, they can never possess?

That this, Gentlemen, is what they aim at, it is impossible to doubt. Lesley, long their favourite and director, who knew their inclinations, knew their views, and the best way to apply them and to gain them, in his *Letter to the Clergy* (as I think it was) which was to usher in the rebellion at the beginning of his Majesty's reign, promises them an independence upon the crown, and that they should choose their own bishops. It is dominion, it is power, which they court; it is themselves whom they adore: When have they ever considered you or your interests, when they thought they could make a bargain for themselves? When King James applied to the bishops, upon his fear of an invasion from your great deliverer, and desired

them to propose the nation's grievances, what grievances did they represent but their own trifling complaints? They said nothing of standing armies, how much soever they complain of them now. Who are their favourites? Even papists and nonjurors, known rebels, or men of rebellious principles, the most ambitious and wicked amongst the clergy, the most debauched and stupid among the laity. What sermons have they preached, what books have they wrote, against popery, though their flocks be every day decreasing? What exhortations against popish principles, which are constantly growing upon us? Whom do they treat as their avowed enemies, but friends to the Revolution, the most steady friends to the Establishment which they have sworn to, the Protestant dissenters, and such of their own body as regard their oaths, and the principles of the Reformation? What have you gained by all the favours lately shewn to them? Which of them have been obliged by these concessions? You have given them the first-fruits: You have in effect repealed the statute of mortmain; You have given them a shorter method to recover their tithes: You have increased their number and riches by building more churches: You have sat still, whilst they have been destroying the moduses through England, buying up your advowsons, extorting upon their tenants, and making those estates more precarious, which were always before esteemed as certain interests as any in Great-Britain: Has all this obliged them? Has it taught them moderation? On the contrary, it increases their demands upon you. Be assured, that they will never be satisfied, never think that they have enough, whilst you have a penny left; and when they have got all your lands, they must ride and enslave your persons.

Will you bear, Gentlemen, such constant and impudent insults? Will you still be governed by such abandoned deceivers? Are you men, free-men, rational men; and will you beat this wild and priestly war against human nature, against freedom, and against reason? Will you indeed believe them, when they pretend any regard to you and your interest? And is it upon your score that they practise perjury and rebellion themselves, and promote it in others?

T

I am, &c.

No. 131. SATURDAY, June 1, 1723.

Of Reverence true and false. [Gordon] ↩

[IV-216]

SIR,

The word *reverence* has had the fate of many, indeed of almost all, good words, and done much mischief: It signifies a solemn regard paid the persons of men of gravity, of religion, and of authority. By these qualifications men are entitled to it. But when the pride and craft of men who have no real gravity, no real religion, or a foolish one, and only a pretended or an absurd authority, would annex reverence only to grave or grotesque names, it becomes as ridiculous to men of good sense, as it seems awful to such as have none. Reverence belongs only to reverend qualities and reverend actions. As to names and habits, the more grave they are, the more ludicrous they become, when worn by persons who live loosely, and act ludicrously.

Garments signify nothing themselves. They grow first solemn, by being worn by men of character and solemnity: But the most solemn garment becomes contemptible and diverting upon the back of a droll, a buffoon, or upon a cheat or mountebank of any kind. The gravest man alive drest up in the cap and coat of a harlequin, would look like a harlequin; and the gravest speech that he could make, would be laughed at: Yet a coat of many colours was a coat of value in the East, in Jacob's time, and his favourite son Joseph wore one. Nor do our own ladies lose any respect by wearing all the colours of the peacock and the rainbow. On the other side, the gravest clothes put upon burlesque animals, will look burlesque. A monkey in a deep coat, and a broad beaver, would be still more a monkey, and his grimace would be still more diverting grimace; and a hog in a pair of jack-boots, and a coat of mail, would make no formidable figure, notwithstanding his warlike equipment.

These two last instances of the monkey and the hog may be farther improved, to shew the spirit of false reverence. A monkey in a red coat, and a hog in armour, would give no offence to a soldier, because his character consists in actions which these creatures cannot perform nor mimic; and consequently these animals, though accoutered like a soldier, cannot ridicule a soldier. But if you put a popish mitre, and the rest of that sort of gear, upon a hog, the useless and stupid solemnity of the animal gives you instantly the idea of a popish bishop, and if you are not a papist, will divert you: Or, if you dress up a baboon in the fantastical habit of a Romish priest, that animal which can chatter much and unintelligibly, and can really do most of the tricks which the priest himself can do, does genuinely represent the original; and therefore creates true mirth, and fully shews, that there cannot be much reverence in that which a baboon can perform as well, for aught I know better, as he is naturally a creature of grimace and humour. And the said bishop and priest could not with any temper bear the sight, their rage and impatience would be still farther proofs, that the monkey did them justice, that the trial was successful, and the mirth occasioned by it just. Such sport would indeed be tragical in popish countries; which is but another confirmation that false reverence cannot bear ridicule, and that the true is not affected by it.

Many of the ancient Greek philosophers took great pride, and found mighty reverence, in the length and gravity of their beards. Now an old goat, who had as much gravity and beard as any of them, had he been placed in any of their chairs, would, doubtless, have provoked the philosopher, and diverted the assembly. Pomp and beard were therefore ridiculous, since they could be ridiculed: But nothing that constitutes a philosopher, neither genius, nor virtue, nor useful learning, nor any thing that is good for something, can be ridiculed, at least justly ridiculed. The odd dance of judges and bishops in *The Rehearsal*, does neither ridicule bishops nor judges, because they never practice such odd dances: But if these grave men met and gambolled together as they do there, the ridicule would be strong upon them.

It is a jest to expect from all men great reverence to that which every man may do, whether it consist in reading, or repeating, or wearing, or acting. Where is the difficulty or merit of saying certain words, or of making bows, or of spreading the arms, or crossing them, or of wearing a long coat, or a short cravat? It is impudence and imposture to demand singular and vast respect to small and common things. Superior virtue and capacity, publick actions and services done to mankind; a generous and benevolent heart, and greatness of mind, are the true objects and sources of reverence. But to claim reverence to prating, to cuts, and colours, and postures, is stupid, ridiculous and saucy. The *a-b-c* of a tinker is as good as a Pope's *a-b-c*; and it is open cheating and conjuring to pretend, that the same words have not the same force out of the mouth of a cobbler as out of a cardinal's mouth. When any one of these mighty claimers (I had almost said clamourers) of reverence from their visionary empire of words and tricks, can by the magick of their art remove a mountain or a mole-hill, or raise a house, or a dead insect, or kill a heretick, or a grasshopper by a charm, I am ready to bow down before them: But while I see any of them living like other men, or worse, and doing nothing but what so many chimney-sweepers (who can read) may do as well; I can consider such who do so only as solemn liars, and seducers; and as much worse than fortune-tellers, as they cheat people out of much more money, and fill their minds with worse terrors.

The Roman augurs made no such base use of their power, and of their ghostly trade, which was instituted, at least practised, for the ends of good policy; and, as far as I can find, they had no revenues: I would therefore have respected them, as they were great officers of the Roman state. But had an augur, as an augur, demanded reverence of me for his long staff, his tricks, and divinations, I should have done what Cato the elder wondered they themselves did not do as often as they met, laughed in his face, as I would in the face of any man who pretended to be my superior and director, because his coat was longer than mine, or of a different colour; or because he uttered words which I could utter as well, or played pranks which a posture-master could play better.

I will reverence a man for the good which he does, or is inclined to do; and for no other reason ought I. But if under the pretence of doing me good, which I neither see nor feel, he pick my pocket, and do me sensible harm, or would do it; how can I help hating and despising him? If he turn religion into selfishness, and a plain trade, or by it destroy morality; if he set himself up in God's stead, and by pretending boldly to his power, abuse his holy name, and oppress his creatures; if he exclaim against covetousness, and be governed by it; and practice every vice which he condemns; if he preach against the world, and yet have never enough of it; and against the flesh, and yet be visibly governed by all its worst passions and appetites; if he take immense wages for promoting the welfare of society, and yet disturb, impoverish, and enslave it; how can I reverence him, if I would? And is he not lost to all modesty if he desire it?

If men would preserve themselves from superstition, and servitude, and folly, they must beware of reverencing names and accidents. A wise man does not reverence rulers for their insignia and great titles: As there is no use of rulers, but to do service to mankind, he reverences them for that service done: If they do none, he despises them: If they do mischief, he hates them. What are men reverenced for, but for the good talents which they possess, or for the useful offices which they bear. Now if a man have never a good quality, or having such, abuse them; or if he do no good with the office which he bears, but harm (which he must do, if he do no good), every omission by which many are hurt, being a crime against many; how am I to reverence him, for taking away by his conduct the only cause of reverence? If he give me cause to hate him, am I for all that to love him? Either there is no such passion as hatred, which none but a madman will say, or it must be raised by the causes, that raise it; and what are those causes, but mischief done, when good is due, and expected; or the disappointment of a great good; which is a great mischief.

But when people are taught to reverence butchers, robbers, and tyrants, under the reverend name of rulers, to adore the names and persons of men, though their actions be the actions of devils: Then here is a confirmed and accomplished servitude, the servitude of the body, secured by the servitude of the mind, oppression fortified by delusion. This is the height of human slavery. By this, the Turk and the Pope reign. They hold their horrid and sanguinary authority by false reverence, as much as by the sword. The Sultan is of the family of Ottoman, and the Pope St. Peter's successor; they are therefore reverenced, while they destroy human race. The Christians hate the Turk, and call him a tyrant: Protestants dread the Pope, and call him an impostor. Yet I could name Christians who have tyrants of their own, as bad as the Sultan; I could name Protestants who have had impostors of their own as cruel as the Pope, had their power been as great, and their hands as loose. Men see the follies and slavery of others; but their own nonsense is all sacred, their own popes and sultans are all of heavenly descent, and their authority just and inviolable. But truth and falsehood, wisdom and folly, do not vary with the conceptions and prepossessions of men. Affliction and misery, oppression and imposture, are as bad in Christendom as in Turkey, in Holland as in Rome. Protestant rulers have no more right than the Sultan to oppress Protestants; and the Pope has as good a title as a Protestant parson to deceive Protestants. God forbid that all religions should be alike; but all who make the same ill use of every religion, are certainly alike; as are all governors, Turkish, popish, or Protestant, who make the same ill use of power.

If therefore all governors whatsoever, of what conduct soever, [are] to be reverenced, why not the Turk and old Muly of Morocco, who are both great governors, and have as much a divine authority to be tyrants as any governor of any name or religion ever had? And if all clergy whatsoever [are] to be reverenced, why not the Druids, and the priests of Baal, and the priests of Mecca and of Rome? But if only the good of both sorts [are] to be reverenced, why have we been told so much of the mighty respect due in the lump to priests and rulers? Is there any other way in common sense to gain respect, but to deserve it? Could the Romans reverence their governor Nero for robbing them of their lives and estates, for burning the city, and for wantonly making himself sport with human miseries: could the first Christians reverence him for dressing them up in the skins of wild beasts, and setting on other wild beasts to devour them: or for larding them all over with pitch and tallow, and lighting them up like lamps to illuminate the city?

If we reverence men for their power alone, why do we not reverence the Devil, who has so much more power than men? But if reverence be due only to virtuous qualities and useful actions, it is as ridiculous and superstitious to adore great mischievous men, or unholy men

with holy names, as it is to worship a false god, or Satan in the stead of God. Are we to be told, that though we [are] to worship no god but the good and true God, yet we are to pay reverence, which is human worship, to wicked men, provided they be great men, and to honour the false servants of the true God, whom they dishonour? Or, that any sort of men can be his servants or deputies in any sense, but a good and sanctified sense? And if they be not, are we for the sake of God, to reverence those who belie him, and are our enemies? Or, am I to reverence the men, though I detest their actions and qualities which constitute the characters of men? Can I love or hate men, but for what they are, and for what they do? We ought to reverence that which is good, and the men that are good: Are we therefore to reverence wickedness and folly, and those who commit them? Or, because they have good names and offices, which are to be honoured, are they to be honoured for abusing those good things, and for turning good into evil?

We must deserve reverence before we claim it. If a man occupy an honourable office, civil or sacred, and act ridiculously or knavishly in it, do I dishonour that office by contemning or exposing the man who dishonours it? Or ought I not to scorn him, as much as I reverence his office, which he does all he can to bring into scorn? I have all possible esteem for quality; but if a man of quality act like an ape, or a clown, or a pick-pocket, or a profligate, I shall heartily hate or despise his lordship, notwithstanding my great reverence for lords. I honour episcopacy; but if a bishop be an hypocrite, a time-server, a traitor, a stock-jobber, or an hunter after power, I shall take leave to scorn the prelate, for all my regard for prelacy.

It is not a name, however awful, nor an office, however important, that ought to bring, or can bring, reverence to the man who possesses them, if he act below them, or unworthily of them. Folly and villainy ought to have no asylum; nor can titles sanctify crimes, however they may sometimes protect criminals. A right honourable or a right reverend rogue, is the most dangerous rogue, and consequently the most detestable.

*Omne animi vitium tanto conspectius in se
Crimen habet, quanto major qui peccat habetur.*

Juvenal

G

I am, &c.

Inquiry into the Doctrine of Hereditary Right. [Trenchard] ↪

[IV-225]

SIR,

We have had a world of talk both in our pulpits and our addresses, about hereditary right, and I think that no one has yet fully explained what it means; I will therefore try whether I can unfold or cut asunder the Gordian knot. It is a divine, unalterable, indefeasible right to sovereignty, dictated or modified by the positive laws, and human constitutions or national governments. In France, Turkey, and the large eastern monarchies, it descends wholly upon the males. In the kingdom, or rather queendom of Achem, it falls only upon females. In Russia formerly it descended upon all the males jointly, and it would not operate upon the females at all. In Poland the nobility have an human right to confer part of this divine right, but not all of it, upon whom they please; and in old Rome the soldiery often made bold to confer it: But in England and other countries, all of it falls upon the male who chances to be born first; and so on to the next, according to priority of birth; and for want of males to the eldest female, contrary to other inheritances, which descend upon females equally. However, though this same right be absolute and unalterable, yet it is often limited and circumscribed by human laws, which ought not to be transgressed, yet may be transgressed with impunity, unless it interfere with another divine right, which is the divine right of the high clergy. In all other cases, it is boundless and unconditioned, though given and accepted upon conditions.

There is one circumstance particularly remarkable in the exercise of this divine right; namely, that it may make as bold as it thinks fit with other divine right (except as before excepted), of which we have a late and very pregnant instance, approved by very good churchmen, and all our able divines, who thanked God, publicly for thus exercising it; that is, when the Queen made that honourable peace which executed itself. Then the unalterable divine right of the dauphin to the kingdom of Spain was given to his younger son, and the indefeasible divine right of the present King of Spain, to the monarchy of France, was assigned over to a younger branch of the house of Bourbon; and sometime before, the divine right of the last Emperor to the Spanish dominions, was given to the present Emperor. Nay, it seems that this alienable, unalienable, indivisible right, is divisible too. The divine right to Sardinia, is given to the Duke of Savoy; that of Naples, Sicily, and Flanders, to the Emperor; and that of Gibraltar and Port Mahon to us, as long as we can keep it; which I hope we are now in a fair way to do. All the rest of this divine right, besides what is thus disposed of, remains where it was before, and where it should be.

But there are certain human ingredients, experiments, and operations, which are necessary to attain to this divine right. In most countries, and particularly in our own, the priests must have a finger in modelling the same; nor will it come down from above, and settle here below upon any prince whatsoever, unless they say certain words over the married couple, which they alone have the right to say: But in Turkey, India; and other Mahometan and pagan countries (*heu Pudor!*), this same divine right is to be got without the benefit of their clergy, and will make its conveyance through the channel of a strumpet; yet in most nations all is not well, unless the clergy say grace over it; but then it is of no consequence who it is that gets the divine babe, so he be but born in wedlock; and in a late instance it

appeared no ways necessary whether he were born in wedlock or not, or of whom he was born, so he were but born at all. Now, sir, you must know, that this is a mystery, and like some other mysteries, wholly inexplicable, yet may be explained by the Jacobite clergy; but then you are not to understand the explication, but are to take their words for it; and we all know that they are men of probity, and will not deceive you. From this divine right all other rights are derived, except their own, which comes down from above too; and if the possessors of these two divine rights can agree together, all is as it should be; otherwise, you are to take notice, that God is to be obeyed before man, and the regale is to bow down, like the sheaves in Joseph's dream, before the pontificate.

But this is not all: There are some circumstances very particular and whimsical in this divine right. Though, as has been said, it may be conveyed away, yet nothing passes by the conveyance in many cases: Part of it may be granted and conceded to its subjects, and yet they have no right to keep what is so given, always excepting the high clergy, who may take it without being given. I had almost forgot another conveyance of this right, which is conquest, or, in other words, the divine right of plunder, rapine, massacre: But the right is never the worse for the wickedness of men; for howsoever they get possession of sovereign power, the right is that moment annexed to the possession, unless in special cases, still preserving a right to the Jacobite clergy, to give a right to whomsoever they else please. This same right is of so odd and bizarre a nature, that it receives no addition or diminution from the consent of men, or the want of that consent. It is lawful to swear to it, when there is an interest in doing so; yet it is no ways necessary to believe what you swear, or to keep your oath. It is not to be resisted; yet in particular cases it may be opposed. It is limited, and yet unlimitable. You may make laws to bind it, yet it is treason and damnation to defend those laws, unless you have the *verbum sacerdotis* on your side.

What contradictions, absurdities, and wickedness, are men capable of! We have a set of abandoned wretches amongst ourselves, who seem to have a design to destroy [the] human race, as they would human reason! Every doctrine, every opinion, which they advance, is levelled against the happiness of all mankind. Nothing conduces to virtue, to true religion, to the present or future interests of men, but is represented as destructive to piety. We are to be the vassals of tyrants, the dupes of impostors, the zanies of mountebanks, or else are in a state of damnation. Men, for whose sakes government was instituted, have no right to be protected by government. Religion which was given by Almighty God to make men virtuous here, and happy hereafter; has been made use of to destroy their happiness both here, and hereafter. Scarce any thing is discovered to be true in nature and philosophy, but is proved to be false in orthodoxy: What is found to be beneficial to mankind in their present state is represented hurtful to their future; nay, some are risen up amongst us, who are such implacable enemies to their species, that they make it sin to take proper precautions against the danger of the small-pox, even when they are advised by the most able physicians, and when these physicians are most disinterested.

What can be more cruel, wicked and detrimental to human society, or greater blasphemy against the good God; than to make government, which was designed by him to render men numerous, industrious, and useful to one another, designed to improve arts, sciences, learning, virtue, magnanimity and true religion, an unnatural engine to destroy the greatest part of the world? to make the rest poor, ignorant, superstitious and wicked; to subject them like cattle, to be the property of their oppressors; to be the tame slaves of haughty and domineering masters, and the low homagers of gloomy pedants; to work for, to fight for, and to adore those who are neither better nor wiser than themselves; and to be wretched by

millions, to make one or a few proud and insolent? And yet we are told, that this is the condition which God has placed us in, and that it is damnation to strive to make it better.

All these mischiefs, and many more, are the inseparable consequences of an indefeasible hereditary right in any man, or family whatsoever; if it can never be alienated or forfeited: For if this be true, then the property of all mankind may be taken away, their religion overturned, and their persons butchered by thousands, and no remedy attempted: They must not mutter and complain; for complaints are sedition, and tend to rebellion: They must not stand upon their defence, for that is resisting the Lord's anointed: They must not revile the ministers and instruments of his power; for woe be to the man who speaketh ill of him whom the king honoureth. And all this has been told us by those who have never shewn any regard to authority, either human or divine, when it interfered with their own interests. What shall I say; what words use to express this monstrous wickedness, this utter absence of all virtue, religion, or tenderness to the human species: What colours can paint it, what pen can describe it!

Certainly, if government was designed by God for the good, happiness, and protection of men, men have a right to be protected by government; and every man must have a right to defend what no man has a right to take away. There is not now a government subsisting in the world, but took its rise from the institution of men; and we know from history when, and how it was instituted: It was either owing to the express or tacit consent of the people, or of the soldiers, who first erected it; it could have no more power than what they gave it; and what persons soever were invested with that power, must have accepted it upon the conditions upon which it was given; and when they renounced those conditions, they renounced their government. In some countries it was hereditary; in others elective; in some discretionary; in others limited: But in all, the government must have derived their authority from the consent of men, and could exercise it no farther than that consent gave them leave. Where positive conditions were annexed to their power, they were certainly bound by those conditions; and one condition must be annexed to all governments, even the most absolute, that they act for the good of the people; for whose sake alone there is any government in the world. In this regard there can be no difference between hereditary and elective monarchies; for the heir cannot inherit more than his ancestor enjoyed, or had a right to enjoy, any more than a successor can succeed to it.

Then the wise question will arise, what if any man, who has no natural right, nor any right over his fellow creatures, accept great powers, immense honours and revenues, and other personal advantages to himself and his posterity, upon conditions either express, as in all limited constitutions, or implied, as in all constitutions whatsoever; and yet either by deliberate declarations, or deliberate actions, publicly proclaim, that he will no longer be bound by these conditions, that he will no longer abide by his legal title, but will assume another that was never given him, and to which he can have no right at all; that he will govern his people by despotick authority; that instead of protecting them, he will destroy them; and he will overturn their religion to introduce one of his own; and instead of being a terror to evil works, will be a terror to good: I ask, in such a case, whether his subjects will be bound by the conditions, which he has renounced? Do the obligations subsist on their part, when he has destroyed them on his? And are they not at liberty to save themselves, and to look out for protection elsewhere, when it is denied where they have a right to expect and demand it, and to get it as they can, though at the expence of him and his family, when no other method or recourse is left?

And now, O ye gloomy impostors! O ye merciless advocates for superstition and tyranny! Produce all your texts, all your knotty distinctions! Here exert all your quaint eloquence, your quiddities, your *aliquo modo sit, aliquo modo non*; appear in solemn dump, with your reverential robes, and your horizontal hats, with whole legions of phantoms and chimeras, and cart-loads of theology, broken oaths, and seditious harangues, and try whether you can maintain the battle, and defend the field against one single adversary, who undertakes to put all your numerous and fairy battalions to flight.

Let us hear what you can say for your abdicated idol. Distinguish, if you can, his case from that which I have represented: Shew that Almighty God gave him a divine right to play the Devil; or, if he had no such right, that his subjects had none to hinder him: Prove that kings are not instituted for the good of the people, but for their own and the clergy's pride and luxury: But if they be instituted for the good of the people, then shew that they are left at liberty to act for their destruction, and that their subjects must submit to inevitable ruin, yet kiss the iron rod whenever his Majesty pleases: Shew that it was possible for the kingdom to trust themselves again to the faith and oaths of a popish prince, who, during his whole reign, did nothing else but break his faith and his oaths, and whose religion obliged him to do so; or that it was possible for them to place his son upon the throne which he had abdicated (if they had believed him to be his son), when he was in possession of the most implacable enemy of their country, or of Europe, or of the Protestant religion; and that it would not have been direct madness to have sent for him afterwards from France or Rome, enraged by his expulsion, educated, animated, and armed with French and popish principles; and shew too, that the poor oppressed people had any recourse, but to throw themselves under the protection of their great deliverer, who was next heir to their crown.

If you cannot do this, there is nothing left for you to do, but to shew, that the late King James did not violate and break the fundamental laws and statutes of this realm, which were the original contract between him and his people; and that he did not make their allegiance to him incompatible with their own safety, for the preservation of which he was entitled to their allegiance: Shew that he did not claim and exercise a power to dispense with their laws; that he did not levy the customs without the authority of Parliament; or that he called Parliaments according to the constitution which he had sworn to; and that when he intended to call one, he did not resolve to pack it, and closeted many of the gentlemen of England, and with promises and menaces endeavoured to make them practicable to his designs: Shew that he did not disarm Protestants, and arm papists; set up exorbitant and unlawful courts; cause excessive bail to be required, excessive fines to be imposed, and excessive punishments to be inflicted; that he did not prosecute members in the King's-Bench for what they did in Parliament; and discharge others committed by Parliament; that he did not grant fines and forfeitures of persons to be tried, before their conviction; that he did not erect an ecclesiastical commission directly against an act of Parliament, and suspended, by virtue of it, clergymen, for not reading in their churches a proclamation, which he issued by his own authority, to give liberty of conscience to papists and Protestant dissenters: Shew that he did not imprison and try seven bishops for their humble petition against it, which petition they were empowered by law to make; that he did not combine with France and Rome to overthrow the Established Church, which he was bound to defend, and to introduce another in the room of it, which was worse than none; that, in order to it, he brought not professed papists into offices, both civil and military; sent not, nor received ambassadors to and from Rome, who were guilty of high treason by the laws of the land, and brought not from thence swarms of locusts, to devour and pollute every thing that it produced; turned not out the

masters and fellows of Magdalen-College against law, for not doing what they were sworn not to do, nor substituted in their room, those who were not qualified by law to be there: And to make good all these breaches upon our liberties, that he did not raise a popish army in Ireland, and another in England, which had many papists in it, without authority of Parliament.

Shew, if you can, that he ever discovered the least inclination to reform these abuses; but on the contrary, when he could continue them no longer, that he did not desert his people: That he dared to trust himself to a free Parliament, after he had called it, and dissolved it not again, and did not foolishly throw his great seal into the Thames, that no other might be called; and when he resolved to leave his people, that he would suffer his pretended son to remain amongst us. Shew that you yourselves did not help to expel him; that you have not taken oaths, repeated oaths to this government, and abjurations of every other; and that you have adhered to either one or the other. When you have done this, I will allow you to be honest men, good Englishmen, and true Protestants.

T

I am, &c.

No. 133. SATURDAY, June 15, 1723.

Of Charity, and Charity-Schools. [Trenchard] ↩

[IV-236]

SIR,

I know well, that any one must run a great deal of hazard, who shall advance any opinions against what is vulgarly called charity, though it be ever so much mistaken or miscalled, as for the most part it is, and ever has been. The giving loose money in the streets to canting and lazy beggars, has obtained the name of charity, though it is generally a mischievous liberality to encourage present idleness, or to reward past extravagancy, and is forbid by severe laws. The founding of monasteries, nunneries, and other miscalled religious houses, has passed too upon the world in late ages for charity, though they have ever proved seminaries of superstition and of papal tyranny, discouragements of matrimony, the sources of depopulation, and have made multitudes of people useless to the world and themselves. The giving lands and revenues to saucy, aspiring, and lazy ecclesiasticks, has been reputed a meritorious action; yet such actions have ever destroyed religion, increased the pride and dominion of the clergy, and depressed, impoverished, and enslaved the laity, for whose sakes alone there ought to be any ecclesiasticks at all. The founding and endowing of universities, colleges, and free-schools, carries an appearance of promoting sciences, learning, and true religion; yet they have been made use of to promote the kingdom of Antichrist, to debauch the principles of the nobility and gentry; to deprave their understandings; advance learned ignorance; load their heads with airy chimeras and fairy distinctions; fill states with desperate beggars and divines of fortune, who must force trade for a subsistence, and become the cudgels and tools of power or factions. A learned author justly compares these establishments to the Trojan horse, which carried hosts of armed men within its bowels, to send them out afterwards to destroy kingdoms.

But there is another new-fangled charity risen up amongst us, called *charity-schools*, which, I think, threatens the publick more than all which I have mentioned. I would not be understood to condemn every thing of that nature; for, under a proper regulation, something like it may be commendable: But, as they are now employed and managed, I see no good that can accrue to the publick from them, but apprehend a great deal of mischief. These establishments were first begun and encouraged by pious men, many of them dissenters; and then our high clergy every where exclaimed against them as dangerous innovations, and attempts to subvert the Church, and the national religion. But now they have got them under their own management, and they really prove what they foretold they would prove, they continually make harangues and panegyrical elogiums upon them, and upon the persons who promote them. It is become part of their duty (and much better executed than all the rest), to prate people out of their money; to decoy superstitious and factious men out of their shops and their business, and old doting women out of their infirmaries, to hear too often seditious harangues upon the power of the clergy, and of the reverence due to them, and upon the merit of nursing up beggars to be the blind tools of ambitious pedants; and lectures and instructions are there given them, inconsistent with our present establishment of church and state; and we have scarce a news-paper but gives notice of sermons to be preached upon this occasion.

It is certain that there was almost every where a general detestation of popery, and popish principles, and a noble spirit for liberty, at or just before the Revolution; and the clergy seemed then as zealous as the foremost. But when the corrupt part of them found themselves freed from the dangers which they complained of, and could not find their separate and sole advantage in the Revolution, they have been continually attacking and undermining it; and since they saw that it was impossible to persuade those who were witnesses and sufferers under the oppressions of the former governments, wantonly, and with their eyes open, to throw away their deliverance, they went a surer and more artful way to work, though more tedious and dilatory; and therefore have, by insensible degrees, corrupted all the youth whose education has been trusted to them, and who could be corrupted; so that at the end of near forty years, the Revolution is worse established than when it began. New generations are risen up, which knew nothing of the sufferings of their fathers, and are taught to believe there were never any such. The dread of popery is almost lost amongst us; the vilest tenets of it are openly asserted and maintained; men are taught to play with oaths; and it is become fashionable to revile authority more for its commendable actions, than for its excesses. The principles of our nobility and gentry are debauched in our universities, and those of our common people in our charity-schools, who are taught, as soon as they can speak, to blabber out *High Church* and *Ormond*; and so are bred up to be traitors, before they know what treason signifies.

This has been long seen, and as long complained of; yet no remedy has been applied, though often promised. Those whose duty and business it ought to have been, have had their time and thoughts so wholly engaged in modelling factions, and enriching themselves, that this great evil has been suffered to go on, and still goes on; it has been continually increasing, and yet increases; but I hope, at last, that those in authority will take the alarm, will think their own safety, and the safety of his Majesty and his people, are highly concerned to remove a mischief which is levelled at all their and our happiness; and that they will not, like their predecessors, disoblige all their friends to gratify their enemies, whom yet they cannot gratify. If this be not done, any one, without much skill in politicks, may safely affirm, that our present establishment cannot long subsist. A free government must subsist upon the affections of the people; and if those affections be perpetually debauched; if the education of youth be altogether inconsistent with the nature of it; and if it must depend only upon converts, pensions, or armies, its duration cannot be long, without a constant succession of miracles: Armies will soon find their own strength, and will play their own game: Foreign armies will neither be thought on nor borne; and it is to be feared, that our domestick ones, upon every disgust, or prospect of advantage, may fall into the intrigues and resentments of their countrymen, when they grow to be general, and consequently will be of least use, when most wanted. We cannot sure, so soon forget what the Parliament army did formerly, and King James's lately, and what was expected from our own in the late conspiracy; and without such expectations, it had been direct madness to have formed or engaged in such an attempt, and the criminals had been more properly sent to Bedlam than to Tyburn, though they deserved both.

But to apply myself more directly to the charity-schools, I shall endeavour to show, that under the false pretence and affectation of charity, they destroy real charity, take away the usual support and provision from the children of lesser tradesmen, and often from those of decayed and unfortunate merchants and gentlemen, and pervert the benevolence, which would be otherwise bestowed upon helpless widows, and poor housekeepers, who cannot by reason of their poverty, maintain their families.

Every country can maintain but a certain number of shop-keepers, or retailers of commodities, which are raised or manufactured by others; and the fewer they are, the better; because they add nothing to the publick wealth; but only disperse and accommodate it to the convenience of artificers, manufacturers and husbandmen, or such who live upon their estates and professions; and serve the publick only by directing and governing the rest; but as there must be many retailers of other men's industry, and the greatest part of them will be but just able to support themselves, and with great pains, frugality, and difficulty, breed up their families, and be able to spare small sums out of their little substance to teach their children to write and cast account, and to put them out apprentices to those of their own degree; so those employments ought to fall to the share of such only; but now are mostly anticipated, and engrossed by the managers of the charity-schools; who, out of other people's pockets, give greater sums than the other can afford, only to take the lowest dregs of the people from the plough and labour, to make them tradesmen, and by consequence drive the children of tradesmen to the plough to beg, to rob, or to starve.

The same may be said of servants, who are generally the children of the lesser shop-keepers, though sometimes of decayed merchants and gentlemen, who have given them an education above the lower rank of people, which has qualified them to earn a comfortable subsistence this way, without much labour, to which they have never been used. Now, I have often heard, that one advantage proposed by these charity-schools, is to breed up children to reading and writing, and a sober behaviour; that they may be qualified to be servants: A sort of idle and rioting vermin, by which the kingdom is already almost devoured, who are become every where a publick nuisance, and multitudes of them daily, for want of employment, betake themselves to the highway and house-breaking, others to robbing and sharpening, or to the stews; and must do so, if we study new methods to increase their numbers.

I have mentioned another mischief which has flowed from this pretended charity; for it has, in effect, destroyed all other charities, which were before given to the aged, sick and impotent. I am told that there is more collected at the church-doors in a day, to make these poor boys and girls appear in caps and livery-coats, than for all other poor in a year; and there is reason to presume, that less still is given to private charities, where the givers are almost the only witnesses of their own actions: So that this benevolence is a commutation or composition for what was formerly given to widows, orphans, and to broken and unfortunate house-keepers. And how should it be otherwise, when the clergymen in highest repute, stroll about from church to church, nay print publick advertisements of charity sermons to be preached, recommending the merit of this sort of liberality, the service which it does to God and the Church; and but faintly, or perhaps not at all, exhorting to any other: insomuch, that the collections made every winter, by virtue of the King's Letter, for the many miserable in this great town, visibly decrease, though these collections be made from house to house, though the names of the givers, and sums given, be entered down, and though all ministers be directed by his Majesty and the Bishop of London, in their sermons, to press this charity upon their congregations; which is notwithstanding seldom done, unless in a faint manner, perhaps at the end of a sermon; whereas, on the other occasion, the ears of the auditors are deafened with the cry of the preacher, and their passions are all inflamed to a profuse liberality; and those who do not give, and give largely too, must incur reproach and contumely.

Oh! but say some pious, and many more impious and hypocritical people, what would you hinder poor boys and girls from being well clothed, from serving God, and being bred scholars? I answer, that there are few instances in which the publick has suffered more, than

in breeding up beggars to be what are called scholars, from the grave pedant and the solemn doctor, down to the humble writer and caster of accounts; to attain which characters, does not require the pains and acuteness that are necessary to make a good cobbler: yet they immediately fancy themselves to be another rank of mankind, think that they are to be maintained in idleness, and out of the substance of others, for their fancied accomplishments; are above day-labour, and by an idle education, require a listlessness to it; and when they cannot find the sort of subsistence which they aspire to, are always perplexing the world, and disturbing other people. So that no education ought to be more discountenanced by a state, than putting chimeras and airy notions into the heads of those who ought to have pickaxes in their hands; than teaching people to read, write, and cast account, who, if they were employed as they ought to be, can have no occasion to make use of these acquirements, unless it be now and then to read the Bible, which they seldom or never do: Besides, they are told by their spiritual guides, that they must not understand it.

What benefit can accrue to the publick by taking the dregs of the people out of the kennels, and throwing their betters into them? By lessening the numbers of day-labourers, by whose industry alone, nations are supported, and the publick wealth increased? By multiplying the number of such who add nothing to it, but must live out of the property of the rest? By taking boys and girls from the low and necessary employments of life, making them impatient of the condition which they were born to, and in which they would have thought themselves happy, to be seamstresses, footmen, and servant maids, and to teach them to read ballads? How much more useful a charity would it be, to give the same sums to their parents to help them to raise their families, and breed up their children to spinning or hard-labour; to help them to maintain themselves, and to depend for the future upon their own hands for subsistence? Whereas, this sort of charity is of no use, benefit, or ease to their parents, who must find them meat, drink, washing, and some clothes, during the whole time which they spend at school, and lose, at the same time, the little that they can otherwise earn, or what they would earn themselves, whilst they employed their children in going on errands, and doing little offices, which they can do as well: And all this for the pleasure of seeing them a little better clothed, hearing them sing psalms, and repeating by rote a catechism made for that purpose.

The pretence that this sort of education will render them more useful members of society, and will make them more virtuous and religious, is a mere chimera. How many are hanged at Tyburn that can write and read; or rather how few that cannot? And generally they all die for high church, and for the right line! Who are greater rogues than scholars, as they are called; And what set of people have supplied the town with more whores than our spiritual fathers, who all have the practice of piety by them? Nothing keeps the herd of mankind so honest, as breeding them up to industry, and keeping them always employed in hard-labour, and letting them have no time or inducements from necessity to rob or cheat, or superfluities to debauch with. Who are the persons who have the conduct, and are at the head of these charity-schools? Are they men of the most exemplary piety and morals? No, I am told quite the contrary: They are, for the most part, staunch Jacobites, or, in other words, furious high-church-men; often men of debauched lives and principles; and the masters of these schools are generally enemies to the establishment. And what use do they make of their power? Why! they supply the children with what they want out of their own shops; get credit and interest amongst their neighbours, for their charitable disposition; make use of that credit to promote disaffection to the government; engage the parents and friends of the children in the interest of a popish Pretender, and breed up the children themselves to fight his battles in due time.

I have been very much diverted to see, now and then, one of these poor creatures skip over a kennel as nimble as a greyhound, to get to the other side of the way, that it might be ready to make a low bow to a parson as he passed by; which order of men they are taught almost to adore; and I have been often told (though I do not affirm, and can scarce believe it to be true), that their duty to the clergy is inserted in a catechism that is or has been taught them; but whether such a catechism be committed to print or writing, or not, it is certain that their duty to God is not half so much, I will not say, inculcated into them, but observed by them, as the reverence and respect which they are made to believe is due to these holy men. And what use will be made of this blind adoration to such persons and their power, we may easily judge by what use ever has been made of it; which I think is well worth the time and thoughts of publick authority, as of all men who wish well to their King, their country, and themselves, seriously to reflect upon, and to provide against, before it be too late, and the mischief be accomplished.

T

I am, &c.

No. 134. SATURDAY, June 29, 1723.

What small and foolish Causes often misguide and animate the Multitude. [Gordon] ↪

[IV-247]

SIR,

It is surprizing what minute and contemptible causes create discontents, disorders, violence, and revolutions amongst men; what a small spring can actuate a mighty and many-headed multitude; and what mighty numbers one man is capable of drawing into his disgusts and designs. It is the weakness of the many; when they have taken a fancy to a man, or to the name of a man, they take a fancy even to his failings, adopt his interest right or wrong, and resent every mark of disfavour shewn him, however just and necessary it be. Nor are the resentments and fondness the less violent for being ill-grounded. If a man make them drunk once or twice a year, this injury is a kindness which they never forget; and he is sure of their hearts and their hands for having so generously robbed them of their time, their innocence, and their senses. They are grateful for the mischief done them; and in return, are ready to do any for him. He who restrains them from drunkenness, or even punishes them for it, is a greater and a real benefactor; but such a benefactor as they will never forgive, and he is sure to lose their good will, probably to purchase their hatred.

This shews how much their senses are stronger, than their understandings. They are governed not by judgment, but by sensations; and, one guinea in drink obliges them more than two in clothes; or in any other dry way. Liquor warms their hearts, and fills them with the man who is the author of so much joy. So that to instruct them, feed them, and employ them, are not such sure ways to win them, as to mislead and inflame them, and to waste their time. For this reason, the sober and the sensible clergyman is never so popular, as the loud, the factious, and the hot-headed. Rational and sober instruction is a cold thing, and goes no farther than the understanding: But noise and raving awaken and intoxicate the animal spirits, and set the blood on fire, and have all the effects of wine.

So that in raising parties and factions, inflaming goes a thousand times farther than reasoning and teaching. A foolish speech, supported with vehemence and brandy, will conquer the best sense, and the best cause in the world, without anger or liquor. Sobriety and capacity are not talents that recommend to the crowd, who are always taken with shallow pomp and sound, and with men of little restraints. The debauched and the superstitious have great hold of them: Men who will sin with them, or men who can give them amulets against the vengeance due to sinning. But men who will neither corrupt them, nor deceive them, are to them distasteful Stoicks, or frightful infidels, and sometimes used as such. One may at any time gain an interest in a mob with a barrel of beer, or without it, by means of a few odd sounds, that mean nothing, or something very wild or wicked. Let any superstition, though ever so wild or foolish, be advanced by one who has credit enough to deceive them; let any favourite party watch-word be invented, and pronounced in such a tone and such a posture, it soon becomes sacred, and in the highest esteem; and woe be to him that speaks against a mystery: Every argument shall be an affront and a sign of unbelief; which is a crime always highest, and most hated, when it is best grounded. The managers of the charm, on the contrary, are men of vast reverence, moment, and popularity: and a zeal for the charm, creates guards and revenues to the charmers. If you go about to expose the imposture, and

unfold the cheat, you are a foe to all religion, and will believe nothing without evidence. The superstition grows in established repute, and 'tis dangerous to oppose it, till some other, often more absurd, and consequently more prevailing, undermines and exterminates it: For there is that propensity in most men to delusion and grimace, that they seldom recur to the plain and amiable precepts taught in the scripture, and to a religion without shew, pageantry, and ceremonies; but superstition almost always subsists in some shape or other, and grows strong and revered in proportion to its weakness, nonsense, and absurdity: As it is admired in proportion as it is foolish or wonderful, it is believed in proportion as it is incredible. So that the credulity of the people for the most part follows the wise improvement of nonsense:

Cupidine ingenii humani libentius obscura credi. Tacit.

Considering the weakness of man's nature, prone to imaginary fears, to lean upon imaginary props, and to seek imaginary cures, limited deluders are often to be borne; but the worst is, that they will not be limited, but extend their guile to instances where it is not wanted; and from managing his whims, assume a right to direct his property, his eating and drinking, and every part of his behaviour; and turn canting and telling dreams, into authority and ruling.

The Egyptians have been always a most superstitious nation, always under the dominion of their priests, and consequently prone to tumults and insurrections. Their priests were at one time arrived to that monstrous pitch of power and tyranny, that they used to dispatch their kings by a message. If they did but signify their pious pleasure, that his Majesty was to cut his throat he durst not refuse, but must humbly take the knife, and be his own executioner. But the power of the priests was weakened, and the danger of frequent rebellions prevented, by the following stratagem of one of the princes. He considered the madness of the multitude after their gods, and their priests; and that their unity in religious frenzy and nonsense, disposed them to unanimity in their civil rage. He therefore divided Egypt into several districts, and endowed every district with its peculiar and separate deities. He knew, that if they differed about their gods, or divine cattle, and vegetables of worship, and about the rites paid them, they would agree about nothing else, and consequently never to conspire against him. One division had for its deity a monkey, another had a cat, another a crocodile, another a kite; and some adored leeks and garlick, savoury gods of their own planting.

O sanctas gentes, quibus haec nascuntur in hortis Numia

This dividend of deities had the desired effect. The several districts abhorred all the neighbouring celestial gentry as intensely and madly as they doted on their own; and were ready to spill their blood, either offensively, or defensively, for the honour and interest of these their different divinities. Hence the religious and bloody war between two neighbouring towns, finely described by Juvenal with his usual force and indignation. *Inter finitimos vetus atque antiqua simulas,*

*Immortale odium & nunquam sanabile vulnus
Ardet adhuc, Ombas & Tentyra. Summus utrinque
Inde furor vulgo, quod numina vicinorum
Odit uterque locus; cum solos credit habendos
Esse deos quos ipse colit.*

Juv. Sat. 15

When people are once divided in their affections, every thing, however innocent and indifferent, if it be peculiar to the one, becomes a mark of iniquity, and an object of hatred to the other. A different hat or coat becomes the source of resentment, when perhaps a cloak or a ruff creates friendship and esteem. A judgment is made of the hearts of men by their habit, and particular good or bad qualities are annexed to cloth and colours. There are instances of monarchs deposed and murdered by their people for wearing a foreign dress, or for speaking a foreign language: And there are instances of nations persecuted, wasted, and laid in blood by their princes, for using, or not using, particular gestures and sounds, which their Highnesses had taken a liking to; and of princes used the same way by their people for the same reason.

If they take an affection to the word *abracadabra*, though they join to it no certain idea, they think themselves justified in oppressing, and sometimes in butchering, all who do not profess the same vehement affection to the same senseless sound. But the man who is loud and mutinous for *abracadabra* is their darling: They grow fond of him for being fond of their word: His fondness is a compliment to them; and they will venture life and limb for a cheat, or a blockhead, who opens his mouth just as they do theirs. Their zeal is the fiercer, because it is blind. If they fall religiously in love with an ape, or an ox, or with those that tend him, as the Egyptians did, he is presently a blasphemer, who does not debase his understanding or forfeit his sincerity, by sacrificing shamefully and devoutly to these brute creatures, and by reverencing and pampering the solemn Merry Andrews that look after them.

The great island of Madagascar is divided into two great parts and parties, who are at fierce strife and everlasting war about a sanctified elephant's tooth, which both own to have come down from heaven, and both pretend to have it; and I am not sure whether it has not worked miracles on both sides: but as neither side will allow the other to have it, they hate one another as much as they love and hate the said tooth. *Great is the elephant of Madagascar, and the tusk which fell down from Jupiter!*

The Turks and the Persians are equally the devout, the blind, and bigotted followers of Mahomet, and differ in no point of doctrine. This doctrinal unanimity, one would think, must be a powerful bond of union, at least of religious union between the two empires. But no such matter. They treat one another as execrable hereticks and infidels, and do not hate the Christians more, though their only or principal difference in opinion is, that the Turks hold Omar for the true successor of Mahomet, and the Persians maintain that Ali was. They tie their religion, at least the efficacy of it, to the succession; and deny that there can be any salvation in any church where the uninterrupted succession is not kept up: So that each side is damned in the opinion of each. This hatred and division is increased by another momentous difference, the difference of the colours and caps which they wear. The Turks wear white turbans, and the Persians wear red bonnets. These are such abominable marks of heresy and schism, as deserve to be expiated with blood: And therefore that heresy has always been assigned as a principal cause of their many mutual invasions, merciless wars, and devastations.

I wish I could not say, that the wise and grave English nation have had also their holy and outrageous quarrels about words and motions, crape and cloth, bonnets and colours, and about the eastern and western situation of joint-stools. Thank God it is not quite so bad at present, no thanks to our education.

I would, for a conclusion to this letter, only desire it to be considered, what infamy and contempt it reflects upon the human understanding, and indeed upon the human species, to be thus apt to run into discord and animosities upon such wretched and unmannerly motives; and what monsters and impostors they must be, who begin, or manage, or heighten these absurd and impious contentions amongst any part of the race of men, already too unhappy by the lot of nature.

G

I am, &c.

Inquiry into the indelible Character claimed by some of the Clergy. [Gordon] ↪

[IV-254]

SIR,

I have lately given you the genuine meaning of two very nonsensical words, as they are vulgarly understood, those of *hereditary right*. In this I shall a little animadvert upon two other words in as much use, even the *indelible character*. This I choose to do, because no small number of ecclesiasticks, and some, as I have heard, of the highest character, dare to assert, that though the late Bishop of Rochester be deprived of his bishoprick, and expelled the kingdom, yet *He remains a bishop of the Universal Church*, which are some more nonsensical words. Indeed, there is scarce a theological system in the world (legal establishments excepted), but contains almost as many falsehoods as words, and as much nonsense as matter. Give the corrupt priests but some odd, unintelligible, and ill-favoured words, suppose *hic haec hoc, trim tram, bow wow, fee fa fum*, or any other sound that is utterly void of any rational meanings, they shall instantly find profound mystery in it, and fetch substantial advantages out of it: Nay, when they are got in full possession of the said word, you are damned if you deny it to be sense, and damned if you endeavour to make sense of it.

The *indelible character*, is one of their beloved phrases, from which they derive great importance and authority; yet it is a palpable contradiction to all common sense. By it they mean a certain invisible faculty, which is peculiar to themselves, of doing certain duties, which they could have done as well before they had it. It is a divine commission, or power, to do that every where, which human powers can hinder them from doing any where. It neither conveys virtue, holiness, nor understanding, and has no visible operation; but authorizes those who are possessed of it to use certain words, and perform certain actions and ceremonies, and act certain motions, all which most other men could pronounce, perform, and act as well as they can, but, they tell us, not with equal effect: But then this effect is no ways visible, nor comprehensible, but through faith, and is far above all human conception.

How then, and by what marks, shall we know that any one has attained to this indelible character? Not from scripture, which is wholly silent about the matter. Not by succession from the apostles, who claimed no such power; as is unanswerably proved in the *Independent Whig*, nos. 6 and 7. Not from reason, the impossibility of it being there fully shewn in nos. 15. And the wickedness of pretending to it being as fully shewn in nos. 47 and 48. Not from the laws of England, which oblige all clergymen to own, that they receive all jurisdiction and authority whatsoever from the crown, as is demonstratively proved in nos. 13 and 14 and in nos. 49 and 50. It is as undeniably proved there by numerous texts, as well as by the whole bent of scripture, that no one Christian has more power than another, to perform all the offices of Christianity; that the Holy Ghost fell upon all believers alike, and that they had all the power of doing miracles, after they had received it: And I think it is as evident, that none of them have now the power of doing miracles, as this would be with a witness, if a few words pronounced, and few motions performed, should give to any one new qualities and faculties which he had not before. I am sure, if this be a miracle, it is an invisible one, much like that of the popish transubstantiation, where, though we are told, that the bread and wine

are changed into flesh and blood, yet to human eyes they appear to be bread and wine still. We are so far from being told in holy writ, that elders, pastors, and teachers (for all priesthood is plainly abolished by our Saviour in any other sense than as all Christians are priests), are always to choose one another; that even an apostle in the first of the *Acts* is chosen by the congregation, and by the casting of lots.

But these gentlemen are sometimes so modest, as to confess, that holy orders do really convey neither piety, morals, learning, nor increase the natural faculties in any respect: I desire therefore to know of them, what they are good for, unless to declare, that such a man has undertaken to execute an office, and that he has natural or acquired qualifications sufficient to perform it? And this trust is for the most part committed to clergymen, who are presumed best to understand their own trade; and the ceremony which they use to signify that declaration, is laying on of hands, and a form of words prescribed by act of Parliament; which ceremony has obtained the name of consecration and ordination. Now suppose that the law had appointed another form to be executed only by laymen, as by flourishing a sword over his head, and by putting a cap and long gown upon him; would not the same man with the same qualifications, be just as good a pastor? Or suppose that the bishop, who ordained him, through some mistake, had not himself gone through all the operation, would the person ordained have been ever the worse? There is no appearance that our modern operators have any discernment of spirits; if they had, I presume that we should not have had so many Jacobites in holy orders; and 'tis evident in fact, that whenever the parishes choose their own parsons, they prove at least as good ones as those who are recommended to us by our spiritual fathers. 'Tis certain that our laws know nothing of this gibberish, but declare laymen capable of all sorts of ecclesiastical jurisdiction; and when the bishops consecrate one another, or ordain priests, they do it ministerially from the crown, and formerly took out a commission from the crown to ordain presbyters. Nay, the King now constitutes bishops in Ireland by commission; and they will be valid bishops, and able to perform all episcopal offices, though they were never consecrated. In Scotland, before the Revolution, they were created by patent, and held their sees only during the good pleasure of the crown.

Now let us consider what is the meaning of the word *bishop*, and wherein his office consists. It is a power or jurisdiction given to do certain actions within a certain district, which district is limited by human laws; and he must not execute his power in any other bishop's district, under the penalty of schism, and human punishment. Now what is this jurisdiction? It is a power to name a lay-chancellor if he pleases, who is to enquire after and punish certain carnal crimes, without consulting or taking any notice of the bishop himself, who constituted him; and excommunication is the legal process which he is to use, and the punishment which he is to inflict. The bishop has, moreover, a power to examine into the qualifications of those who desire to be admitted into orders, and to admit them, or reject them, as he finds them capable, or incapable; and after they are admitted, to inspect into their behaviour, in some respects, and to punish them according to stated laws. Now what is this priestly office? It is to read prayers, appointed by act of Parliament, publicly to the congregation; to read aloud certain chapters out of the Bible, appointed by publick authority to be read on particular days; to pick out a text or two every Sunday, and harangue upon it to the people; to administer the sacraments by a form of words prescribed by law, to visit the sick, exhort and rebuke, and to take the tithes. The bishop besides is to be a lord of Parliament, to have one or more thousands *per annum*, and to bless people when they are upon their knees.

Now what part of all this may not be as well executed, by what ceremony soever the person officiating be appointed, or if he be appointed without any ceremony at all? May not a bishop constitute a lay-chancellor to hear smutty causes, and to excommunicate the guilty, till they buy themselves out of purgatory again for a sum of money? Cannot this layman equally enquire into the capacities of those who were candidates for the priesthood, as they call it, and deprive or otherwise punish them as the law directs? Might not he equally sit in the House of Lords, and vote for the just prerogatives of the crown, and the good of the Church; make the most of his revenues (only for the sake of his successor), and say "God bless you" to any one who will ask it upon his knees? Might not a private man, though a bishop's hand had never touched his periwig, read aloud the publick prayers and the chapters for the day, when he can read at all, without any new inspiration; talk half an hour or more about the meaning of a plain text; exhort his parishioners to be good churchmen; rail at and revile dissenters; read the legal form of baptism, and sprinkle an infant; carry about the bread and wine to the communicants; repeat the words appointed in the Common Prayer Book to be said on that occasion; gather in tithes very carefully, and put any one into the spiritual court that does not pay them?

Now, what is deprivation, but by publick authority to hinder them from doing these things; that is to take away the power that it has given them? I think it is agreed by them all, that some of these powers might be taken away, namely, that of the bishops being members of the upper house, with their baronies and revenues, their lordships, their dignities, their spiritual courts, their legal jurisdiction within their former districts; but still, it seems they remain good bishops of the Universal Church; which character is indelible, and can never be taken away. But what they mean by the Universal Church, I cannot guess, unless they mean all Christian countries, or all countries where there are Christians: And then it seems that bishops may ordain presbyters, and bishops and presbyters both may preach and pray, give the sacraments, and excommunicate, wherever there are any Christians; and if the words *Universal Church* will extend to those who are no Christians, then they may do these things through the whole world. But how will this agree with another orthodox opinion, holden I think by them all, that no bishop can execute his office in another's diocese, and no priest in another's parish, against consent, without being guilty of schism? And here almost all Christendom is cut off from their ecclesiastical jurisdiction at once, and a good part of Turkey too, the Christians there having all bishops (such as they are): So that they are reduced to execute this universal power only *in partibus infidelium*; and methinks, since sovereign authority is every where the same, Mahometan or pagan princes should have as much power to hinder any one from conferring offices in his dominions, as Christian princes have to confine him to a small limit, and to hinder him every where else; for no more power is necessary to one than to the other.

But to shew that I am in charity with these gentlemen, and willing to agree with them as far as I can admit, that no government, either Christian, Mahometan, or pagan, has any authority to hinder a good man from doing his duty to God; from saying his prayers, and reading the scriptures publickly; from exhorting his brethren, from giving or receiving the sacraments, or from avoiding ill company; which last is all that is meant in scripture, by what we call excommunication: All which offices, or rather duties, every Christian is empowered by the gospel to execute. And as the clergy have been called upon oftener than once already to shew from scripture, or reason, that these duties, or any of them, are appointed by God, to be performed by any set or order of men whatsoever, independent of other Christians; so I call upon them again to shew it, and I expect that they will introduce plain and direct texts,

or, at least, as much evidence as they would pay five shillings upon any other occasion. And if they cannot do this, as I shall presume they cannot, till the contrary appears; then all this artificial cant must pass for juggling, hypocrisy, and priestcraft.

If we will take some of their words for it, there are many things very strange and extraordinary in this divine trust. It may be given here below, but cannot be taken away again; for then it would not be indelible. It is a power to execute ecclesiastical jurisdiction or duty through the whole earth, yet may be confined to dioceses, or parishes. No human authority can hinder those who are possessed of it from executing it; yet their persons may be imprisoned, or put to death, and so be wholly disabled from executing it. They may be rendered incapable of performing it by diseases, by drunkenness, gluttony, and laziness; but not by murder, robbery, treason, blasphemy, or atheism. Non-execution, or wrong execution, is no forfeiture. It is the most tender and important of all trusts; yet no crimes, how heinous or black soever, will disqualify a man from holding and executing it. Whoever has once got it, can never part with it, but carries it with him to the block and the gallows; but whether it there leaves him, authors are silent, or uncertain.

It can be given by one of them to another only by the motion of the hand, but not by act of Parliament, and the consent of the States of a great kingdom, though the head of the church be one of them; yet it must be given according to the command of that one, and by a form of words enacted by all three. Whoever has it, must have a call from the Holy Ghost, yet must be examined whether he have common natural qualifications. When he has heard this call, and his qualifications are found sufficient, he need not execute what he is called to, but may hire another to do it for him; which other must not execute it neither, unless he has an human diocese, or an human parish, or is employed by those who have.

Is not this pretty jargon, worthy to be made an article of faith? Though it has had the ill luck not to get in amongst the rest; and, what is worse, some of the rest directly contradict it.

The same invisible faculty makes him, who is possessed of it, neither wiser nor better; yet he is to be much more respected, and his authority to be much more regarded, provided he be zealous for the notions which are orthodox for the time being; otherwise you may abuse him as much as you please, whether he be Most Reverend, Right Reverend, or only plain Reverend; and you need not then have any reverence at all for him, though the indelible character stick just where it did before. You must know that this indelible character came down by an uninterrupted succession from the apostles; but then it being wholly invisible, and making no alteration in the outward or inward man, there is some difficulty, and we are often at a loss to know who has it. The most common, outward and visible signs are a broad-brimmed hat, a long black gown, and a band; though others hold a cloak, with a cape to it, to be a better criterion. But what will become of us, if some heretick should have formerly usurped these holy garments, without having passed through all the precedent ceremony and operation? What if he should have happened to have consecrated and ordained a great many others, such as have continued the succession? Then, alas! the whole chain of succession may have been broken, never to be pieced again by human skill; and we can never know who amongst us are regular Christians, or in a regular way of salvation. Some are so wicked as to say, that this was the case of many of our Protestant bishops at the Reformation. Which God forbid!

Nay, what is worse, the orthodox differ amongst themselves about what requisites are necessary to continue this line of succession. Many have affirmed, that the Holy Ghost would not inhabit a heretick, a schismatick, a simoniack, or an atheist: And some have went so far, as to assert, that a Christian bishop ought to be a Christian. Now it is certain, that there have been many bishops and popes too, who did not believe one word about Jesus Christ; and if this be a disqualification, then the Lord have mercy upon those who have pretended to receive orders from them, or under them, and upon those who received the sacraments only by succession from such.

Others have ventured to affirm, that no greater power was necessary to take away orders than to give them. If so, the Pope and Church of Rome have taken away all our orders from us, and excommunicated us all to a man. Then too a question will arise, whether any one, who is wholly turned out of the Church, can be a bishop of the Church! If not, all our bench of bishops are gone at once: for we all know that the Church of Rome is a true church; and if the clergy have any authority from scripture, all the ecclesiastical authority in the world was against the first reformers, and they were all excommunicated together. They had certainly no power to separate themselves from the Church of Rome, but what every man in the world ever had, has now, and ever will have, to separate from any church which he thinks to be erroneous, and to disown all ecclesiastical authority, which does not take its force from the laws of the country which he lives under; and then it is only civil authority. I desire of the gentlemen, who have always shewn themselves very happy at distinctions, to clear up those matters to us, that we may know whether we be Christians or not, and in the ordinary way of salvation.

G

I am, &c.

The Popish Hierarchy deduced in a great Measure from that of the Pagans. [Trenchard] ↗

[IV-265]

SIR,

In my last I endeavoured to give you a true anatomy of the *indelible character*, and of the *uninterrupted succession*, from whence are derived most of the absurdities of the Romish Church, with all the spiritual equipages of their popes, patriarchs, archbishops, bishops, parish-priests, &c. as well as all the powers claimed by them in the Church. In this I shall give you their genealogy; as also the genealogy of their cathedrals, their altars, their lighted candles upon them at noonday, their worshipping God towards the east; and a great deal more of their religious trumpery. I cannot, after the most diligent enquiry, find out the least countenance for most, if any, of these fine things, in the Christian religion, and the Jewish is long since abolished. Our Saviour plainly intended to reduce men to natural religion, which was corrupted and defaced by the numerous superstitions of the Jews, and by the absurd idolatries of the Gentiles. The doctrine which he taught, consisted only in worshipping one god, and in doing good to men; and therefore he instituted a religion without priests, sacrifices, and ceremonies; a religion which was to reside in the heart, to consist in spirit, and in truth; and to shew itself outwardly in virtuous actions: But such a religion would not gratify the ambition and pride of those who desired to domineer over their brethren, and to acquire from their ignorance and fears, riches and authority.

As therefore the Jewish priests had, by their traditions, and their fabulous legends, corrupted the law of Moses; so the Christian clergy did by degrees blend the gospel, and the plain and easy precepts of Christianity, with the most absurd parts of the Jewish traditions, and with the ridiculous foppery of the religion of the Gentiles; insomuch, that at the Reformation there was not left in the world any thing that looked like Christianity. The Pope and his priests had picked out from all other superstitions their most absurd, cruel, and wicked parts and principles; and having incorporated the same with peculiar absurdities of their own, made out of all such a wild jumble of nonsense and impieties, as has driven virtue, good government, and humanity, almost out of the world; given rise to Mahometanism; and both together have almost extinguished the human race; since there is not in those countries, where these religions entirely prevail, the tenth part of the people that they could boast in the times of the old Romans, nor in proportion to the numbers which China and Holland can now boast; where the priests have no power, and but little influence.

It would be endless to trace all the numerous absurdities of the Romish Church, and to search the sources from whence they are all taken and stolen. I shall content myself here, to shew that their whole machinery is copied from the religion of Zoroaster and the Persian Magi; and shall quote no other authority than the excellent and learned Dr. Prideaux, but give an account of that impostor and his Magi, altogether in the doctor's own words.

He tells us, that Zoroaster flourished in the reign of Darius Hystaspes (though others say, very long before, as he says, the Magi did, who, without doubt, held many of the same opinions, he having only revived their sect with some alterations), and he taught, that there was one Supreme Being, independent and self-existent from all eternity: That under him

there were two angels; one the Angel of Light, and the author and director of all good; the other the Angel of Darkness, the author and director of all evil; that this struggle shall continue to the end of the world, and then there should be a general resurrection, and a Day of Judgment, wherein just retribution should be rendered to all, according to their works; and the Angel of Darkness and his disciples should go into a world of their own, where they should suffer in everlasting darkness the punishment of their ill deeds; and the Angel of Light and his disciples should go into a world of their own, and receive in everlasting light, the rewards due to their good deeds.

This impostor pretended to have been taken up to heaven, and there to have heard God speak to him out of the midst of the fire; and therefore he ordered fire-temples to be built, and erected altars in them, upon which sacred fires were kept and preserved, without being suffered to go out; and all the parts of their publick worship were performed before these publick sacred fires, as all their private devotions were before private fires in their own houses: Not that they worshipped the fire, but God in the fire; for God having spoken out of the fire, he said, that it was the surest *Shechinah* of the Divine Presence; that the sun being the perfectest fire that God had made, there was the throne of his glory, and the evidence of his Divine Presence, in a more especial manner than any where else; for which reason he ordered them to direct all their worship towards the sun, and next towards their sacred fires; and therefore, they always approached them from the west-side; that having their faces towards them, and also towards the rising sun at the same time, they might direct their worship towards both; for the *kebla* of the Magians being the rising sun, they always worshipped with their faces towards the east.

To gain the greater reputation to his pretensions, he retired to a cave, and there lived a recluse, pretending to be abstracted from all worldly considerations, and to be wholly given up to prayer and divine meditations. Whilst he was in his retirement, he composed the book wherein his pretended revelations are contained; which consisted of twelve volumes. The first contains the liturgy of the Magi, and the rest treat of the other parts of their religion. In this book he commands the same observances about beasts; clean and unclean, which Moses commands; gives the same law of paying tithes to the sacerdotal order; enjoins the same care of avoiding all external and internal pollutions; the same way of cleansing and purifying themselves by frequent washings; the same keeping the priesthood always within one tribe; and several other institutions are also therein contained, of the same Jewish extraction. The rest of its contents are an historical account of the life, actions, and prophecies of its author; the several branches and particulars of his new-reformed superstition; and rules and exhortations to holy living; in which he is very pressing, and sufficiently exact, saving only in one particular, which is about incest, which (the Doctor supposes) is allowed by him out of flattery to the Persian kings, who were exceedingly given to incestuous marriages. This book he pretends to have received from heaven; and according as the actions of his sect agree or disagree with it, they are esteemed either good or evil.

His priests, as is said, are to be all of one tribe, and none but the son of a priest was capable of being a priest; and his priesthood he divided into three tribes. The lowest were the inferior clergy, who served in all the common offices of their divine worship. Next above these were the superintendents, who in their several districts governed the inferior clergy, as the bishops do amongst us; and above all was the Archimagus, or arch-priest, who was the same as the high-priest amongst the Jews, or the Pope now amongst the Romanists, and is the head of the whole religion: And, according to the number of their orders, the temples and churches in which they officiated, were of three sorts. The lowest sort, were their parochial

churches, or oratories, which were served by their inferior clergy, as the parochial churches are now with us; and the duties which they there performed, were to read the daily offices out of their liturgy, and at stated and solemn times to read some part of their sacred writings to the people. In these churches there were no fire-altars; but the sacred fire before which they worshipped, was maintained only with a lamp. Next above these were the fire-temples, in which fire was continually kept burning on a sacred altar; and these were in the same manner as cathedrals with us, the churches or temples, where the superintendent resided. In every one of these were also several of the inferior clergy entertained, who, in the same manner as the choral vicars with us, performed all the divine offices under the superintendent, and also took care of the sacred fire, &c.

The highest church above all, was the fire-temple where the Archimagus resided, which was had in the same veneration with them, as the temple of Mecca among the Mahometans, to which every one of that sect thought themselves obliged to make a pilgrimage once in their lives. Zoroaster settled at Balch, and he and the Archimagus his successors had their residence there; but afterwards it was removed to Herman. This temple of the Archimagus, as also their other fire-temples, were endowed with large revenues in lands; but the parochial clergy depended only upon the tithes and offerings of the people. The Doctor observes afterwards, that this impostor having wonderful success in causing this imposture to be received by the King, the great men, and the generality of the whole kingdom, he returned to Balch; where, according to his institution, he was obliged to have his residence, as Archimagus, or head of the sect; and there he reigned with the same authority in spirituals over the whole empire, as the King did in temporals.

The Doctor observes, and perhaps with truth, that Zoroaster borrowed a great part of his new religion from the Jews, especially if he lived so late as he supposes him to have done, with some appearance of reason. But if the impostor took his doctrine of the immortality of the soul, and of rewards and punishments from them too (which he also supposes), it must have been from the Essenes, a sect among the Jews, not exceeding four thousand: For I cannot find any mention made of that doctrine in the books of Moses, which contain their laws, and promise only temporal blessings and punishments: And the Doctor himself, in another place, tells us, that the Sadducees, who were the gentlemen, and men of learning amongst them, did wholly disbelieve the resurrection, future rewards and punishments, angels and spirits, and rejected all the scriptures but the law; and that the Pharisees, though they believed the resurrection, yet only thought it a Pythagorean resurrection, or transmigration of the same soul into another body: And I think it is plain from the New Testament, that the full revealing of this truth was reserved to our blessed Saviour, who brought life and immortality to light: Though it is undoubtedly true, that some of the Jews held it as a philosophical opinion, probably taken from the nations whom they conversed with: But it does not appear to me, that Moses established it as a sanction to the religion which he revealed, or that it was any part of the Jewish religion to believe it.

But admitting that Zoroaster took the best parts of his religion from the Jews, I think it is much plainer that the Romanists have taken the worst parts of theirs from him; or else they have very luckily or unluckily jumped in the same thoughts. Their Archimagus, high-priest or pope, they can have no where else, unless they borrowed him from the Jews, which would be extremely impudent, since the Christian religion is built upon the ruins of theirs. Their superintendents, whom they call archbishops and bishops, and their parochial priests, whom they do not borrow from the Jews, and who, they say, are not derived from human institution, cannot be derived, in my opinion, from any other source than that of Zoroaster. Where else

do they find the division of their priests into several orders, which exactly resemble his, namely, the lower order in parochial temples, to read offices out of their liturgies, or mass-books, and portions of their sacred writings at appointed times? for the Jews had not that oeconomy, nor indeed any synagogue-worship, till long after Zoroaster's time. Where else do they find cathedrals with altars in them, and lighted candles upon these altars, in imitation of the sacred fire of the Magi; and these altars standing to the east, and the worship in them performed with the face towards it? Where else the many inferior priests officiating in such temples, subordinate to the superintendent, and in ease to him? And where else the endowing these temples with lands, and revenues?

Where do they find their *uninterrupted succession* &c. and in consequence their *indelible character*, but in the succession of Zoroaster's priests in one tribe only, who without doubt were all holy, had all a divine right, were particularly favourites of the Divine Being, and clothed with peculiar powers and dispensations? Where had they the absurd and blasphemous opinion of God's being more immediately at the altar, or in the east, than in any other place; unless from the notion and dreams of the Magi, that the Divine Presence was in an especial manner in the sun, or in the fire? Where do they find that the deity is pleased with men's retiring into caves, corners, and monasteries; with their neglecting the affairs of the world, and of their families; with their being useless to society; and with their indulging meditation and the spleen; but in the example and authority of Zoroaster? Where do they find any command for wild jaunts in pilgrimage to the Holy Land, and for idle and enthusiastick devotions to shrines, altars, and chappels, unless in the injunctions of this impostor to all his votaries to visit the temple of Balch? And where else did they adopt the absurd, monstrous, and wicked hypothesis, of the Church's having a different head from the state, and of the independence of the priests upon the civil power?

Most of these opinions and practices are parts of the religion of the ancient Magi; and from thence it is reasonable to presume that the Romish priests have copied them, unless they can shew where else they had them. They cannot, with the appearance of common sense, be deduced from the New Testament; and the Jewish religion has been long since abolished. They have therefore the honour of having restored the old superstition of the Magi, with this material difference, that the latter had more learning, and much more integrity; that they did not do, by the hundredth part, so much mischief; and treated with more humanity those who differed from them.

T

I am, &c.

Of the different and absurd Notions which Men entertain of God. [Trenchard] ↩

[IV-274]

SIR,

In my paper, which treats about the use of words, I have promised to shew how absurd and impious it is for men to fall together by the ears, on account of their difference in trifles, when they scarce agree in any one thing in the world, not even in the attributes annexed to the object of all worship, though they know nothing of him but from his attributes. I will now perform that promise.

There is no proposition about which mankind have agreed and disagreed so much, as about the meaning of the word *god*. I think, very few instances excepted, they have all agreed that there is such a being; and yet I apprehend, that no two nations, two sects, or scarce two men of the same sect, have essentially agreed in all the ideas which they have annexed to the sound. All have asserted, that he has existed from all eternity, and must for ever exist; and that he has made or produced every thing else: And thus far heathens and Jews, Mahometans and Christians, Protestants and papists, deists and free-thinkers, materialists and immaterialists, Stoicks, peripateticks and Epicureans, are all orthodox; for the last could not have doubted but some being must have existed before the fortuitous concourse of atoms; and in this sense there are very few, if there be one atheist, in the world. But when they go farther, and explain what they mean by the sound, I doubt most, or many of them, are atheists to one another, as not believing in the being which the one and the other call God.

All the differences amongst mankind, as to their belief of the deity, are owing to their different conceptions of him; as they disagree in his attributes, in the modes of his operations, and worship him under various images and representations. As to his substance, essence, the manner or *sensorium* of his existence, we neither know nor can know any thing, nor can have any conception about it, and consequently can believe nothing concerning it; and therefore all that we can believe (besides what I above said every man agrees in) is concerning his attributes, and the *modus* wherein he has communicated or represented himself to us: That is, we can only believe in the ideas which we have annexed in our minds to the word *god*; and if we annex different images to the word, we are of a different religion, or rather are atheists to one another, though we call the object of all our worship by the same name. For since, as I have said, we can only worship our own conceptions or images of the deity, or (by new placing the words) the deity under our conceptions and images, if those images be false, we worship only an idol of our own imaginations, and pay divine homage to nothing. For, what is the difference to us in saying, that another man believes in nothing, or believes in what we know to be nothing, which equally is atheism. From hence I think it appears, that no man has a right to call another atheist, in any other sense, than as I shall make appear, that most men have a right to call those who differ from themselves, in their conception of the deity, atheists.

Now, to begin with the heathens, who worshipped Jupiter, Mars, Venus, Mercury, &c. which were only bare sounds and non-entities: Their paying divine honours to nothing, was worshipping nothing: and believing in nothing, is the same thing in substance as having no

belief. And therefore they were certainly atheists, though they did not know themselves to be so. For what is atheism, but not believing in a god? And can any man be said to believe in a god, whose whole belief is in an imaginary being that is not God; though I confess such a fancied belief may influence his actions, and answer many of the purposes of society? It was the same thing when they believed in real beings, as images, stocks, stones, monkeys, garlick, &c. For they worshipped them for powers which they supposed were in them, but which were not in them; and so worshipped those supposed powers, and consequently worshipped nothing, and believed in nothing which was God; and consequently were atheists in fact, though devout religionists in shew, and in their own opinion too.

But without annihilating the heathen deities, the Stoicks and Epicureans (who differed much in the same manner as some of the deists and orthodox do amongst us), were atheists to one another, as not believing in the attributes that each annexed to their different divinities. The Stoicks annexed the attributes of wisdom, mercy, and justice, to the being of the deity; who was supposed by them to dispense those attributes occasionally to the actions and necessities of men. The Epicureans thought the deity to be sufficient in his own felicity; and that he did not concern himself with our affairs here below; but that all things depended upon fate, and an eternal cause, which controlled and was superior to even Jupiter himself; which fate must have been their eternal god, which produced all things at first.

They had no notion of what was meant by *wise*, *merciful*, and *just*, when applied to the deity; and thought that these could not be analogous to what was meant by the same qualities in men: For they said, that wisdom in men, was only balancing the motives of doing or not doing an action, and choosing which was best; which wisdom was a knowledge acquired by habit and experience, and by observing the relations of things to one another, and conveyed to them through the organs of sense: But they said, that the deity had no organs, but saw all things intuitively from all eternity, and could not err. So they said, that mercy in men was a passion caused by the feeling or apprehension of the sufferings of others: But they believed that the divinity could have no passions, because no agent could operate upon him, he himself being eternal, and before all things, and producing all things; nor could suffer temporary anguish and uneasiness, always produced by compassion. In like manner, they said, that justice was an adherence to certain rules, dictated by superior powers, or agreed upon by men for their mutual convenience; but no rules could be set to the divinity, who the Stoicks confessed had made every thing, and had a right to do what he pleased with his own creatures. He that made the relation of all things, might alter that relation, and dispense with his own laws, when and how he thought fit.

They therefore said, that when those attributes were applied to the deity, nothing could be meant by them, but to express our reverence for him, our admiration of his power, and to sacrifice to him our best conceptions; not that we pretend to define his essence, nor the *modus* of his actions, which are wholly incomprehensible to us. They concluded that he that had done all things could do all things; but did not pretend to know how he did them; but thought themselves very sure that he did not do them as we do, by weighing the difficulties on each side the question, because nothing could be difficult to him; nor could he deliberate, because deliberation would imply doubt; and the deity could not doubt, being necessitated by the excellency of his nature always to do the best.

They thought, that a being that could never have any cause before it, nor without it, or after it, but what it produced, nor any objects to work upon it, must have been always uniform and entire; that is, its attributes, its will, and its actions must have been one with its

essence. It must have been constantly moving, or acting or, as late divines very elegantly express themselves, eternally proceeding. For there could be no beginning of action, without being at rest before; and then they said that it must have been from all eternity at rest, as finding it difficult to conceive, that a being that had self-motion should never have exerted that principle till a particular period of time, and in a particular portion of space, when eternity and infinity (its inseparable attributes) can have no periods and limits; nor can any intervals of time and space measure such a being.

Hence philosophers have called eternity a *nunc sans*, or an instant, or punctum, which cannot be divided even in imagination; and though they could not convey any distinct images by that way of speaking, yet they found themselves reduced to it, from the difficulties which would arise in dividing the operations of a being in all respects indivisible. Now, can any one say that these sects believe in God? Certainly the object of the belief of one of them was not God, but only an idol of their own brains, and consequently that sect believed in nothing, and were atheists.

The same observations run through the different sects of religionists in the world, and great numbers of particular men in every sect of religion. Some represent the deity as a capricious, angry, revengeful being, fond of commendation and flattery, prescribing and dictating partial rules to his creatures, laying useless burdens upon them, and making their future happiness to depend upon the actions of others, and upon such performances, or believing such speculations, as are out of their power. Others think that the deity has satiety of happiness within itself, and must be incapable of any passions to interrupt that happiness; and therefore, as we cannot do good or harm to him, the only way to recommend ourselves to him, is to do good to one another. These cannot apprehend, that any man's future felicity lies in another's power; or, that useless speculations or actions, as bows, cringes, forms, grimaces, rotes of words, or any thing but a good conscience, and a virtuous life, can make us acceptable to the deity. Now 'tis certain that there are great numbers of men in the world of both these opinions, and they undoubtedly do not believe in the same being; but some of them believe in a non-entity, and consequently are atheists.

If this argument were to be traced through all its subdivisions, it would fill a volume instead of a single paper; and therefore I shall tire you no farther upon the subject; my design in entering upon it being to warn my countrymen how cautious they ought to be in calling odious names, which may with equal justice be retorted upon themselves. Let us therefore leave such appellations to those who scold for hire; and rest fully assured, that as most certainly there is a God, so he is the best being in the universe, that he expects no more from us than he has given us means to perform; that when we have done all in our power to please him, we shall please him, however, or how much soever, we mistake his being or attributes; and then it will be of very little consequence whom else we displease.

T

I am, &c.

[IV-281]

SIR,

As I have with a success which no man has yet met with (if I regard the number of my readers, and the sale of these papers) carried on a weekly performance, under this and another title, [*]

for near four years; in doing which, it was impossible that I could have any other view but the good of my country and of mankind; by shewing them the advantage and the beauty of civil and ecclesiastical liberty, and the odious deformity of priestcraft and tyranny: As I have vindicated Almighty God, and the religion which he has taught us, from the superstition, follies, and wickedness of men, who would prostitute it to ambition and avarice, and build a visionary empire upon the plain and simple precepts of Christianity; and have endeavoured to remove all the rubbish, grimace, and pageantry, with which it has been long stifled and oppressed, by shewing to the world, and I think proving, that true piety consists only in honouring the deity, and in doing good to men, and not in postures, cringes, and canting terms, and in barren and useless speculations: As I think I have unanswerably shewn that civil governments were instituted by men, and for the sake of men, and not for the pride and lust of governors; and consequently that men have a right to expect from them protection and liberty, and to oppose rapine and tyranny wherever they are exercised; and have thereby vindicated our present establishment, which can pretend to no other title.

As I have done all this openly, and in the face of the world, and have defied and called upon all the merciless and detestable advocates for superstition and slavery, to shew that I have transgressed the rules of morality or religion, or the peace and happiness of society in any respect; and no one has yet dared to enter the lists against me; from whence I may reasonably hope that I have removed many of the prejudices imbibed by education and custom, and set many of my countrymen free from the wild, wicked, and servile notions, strongly infused and planted in their minds by craft and delusion: I shall now with cheerfulness lay down this paper, which I am well informed will be continued by an able hand, under another name, and upon various subjects; and it is probable that I may so far join in the undertaking, as to give my assistance now and then, when proper occasions require it; at least, I am not determined not to do so.

There are some papers, especially those signed Diogenes, which have given an undesigned offence to some, whose persons I honour, and whose opinions I reverence. For I have no regard to the persons, and narrow notions of bigots, who will renounce any opinion as soon as it appears to be rational, and would rather make nonsense of it, than not make it a mystery. It is a principle become constitutional to me, that God gave us our understandings to use them, and that we cannot offend him in carrying them as far as they will carry us. However, as the principal question handled in those papers is a matter of mere speculation, understood but by few, and to be understood but by few, the belief or disbelief of it can no way affect human society; and whether it be true or not, the actions of men will be the same, and men will be alike actuated by the motives that operate upon them, and equally pursue

what they take to be their advantage upon the whole, at the time, and in the circumstances which they are then in, whether they be obliged to do so, or choose to do so without being necessitated to that choice.

What led me into this thought, is the observation which runs almost through the world, that the bulk of mankind in all ages, and in all countries, are violently attached to the opinions, customs, and even habits, which they have been used to; that sounds, shews, prejudices, vain and idle terrors, phantoms, delusions, and sometimes diet and physick, are more prevalent with them, and operate more upon them than true and strong reasons; and that all animals of the same species act in the same manner, and have the same passions, sensations and affections, with very little alterations: All which I could not account for, but by supposing those operations to be mechanical, and the results of their several constitutions, as they were altered and modified by habit, and by different occasions or motives of making use of them, such as acted upon them.

For the rest, I saw, with a sensible concern, the many mischiefs, which the leaders and deceivers of parties and factions in religion did to the world, by throwing God's judgments at one another, and impiously confining his providence and mercies to themselves; and by applying the common phenomena and events of nature to their own advantage, and interpreting the same as denunciations of his wrath against their enemies; by which unhallowed presumption they have raised up and inflamed implacable hatred, animosities and uncharitableness amongst men of the same nation, who are all brethren. I have therefore shewn, that the Almighty dispenses his favours to all his creatures; that his sun shines upon the just and the unjust; and that it is the highest and most daring boldness in any sort of men to search into, and to pretend to unriddle the secret dispensations of his providence; to know his mind before he unfolds it; to throw about such balls of contention and wrath; and to make the condition of men, already too miserable by the lot of nature, still more miserable.

I saw the many evils and barbarous consequences arising from the idle and foolish stories of witches, spirits, and apparitions, first infused into our tender minds by nurses, chambermaids, and old women, and afterwards continued and improved by tutors and priests; which impressions and stories the wisest and bravest men often carry about them to their graves, and which make them always uneasy till they go thither; insomuch, that numbers of people dare not be alone, nor go about their necessary affairs, in the night-time; but are kept in constant dread of phantoms and non-entities; and multitudes of innocents have been murdered under the appearance of justice upon Satan's confederates. I have therefore shewn, that there is no foundation in nature, in reason or in religion, for these fairy tales; that they are inconsistent with the mercies, and even with the being, of the great and good God; and that the telling or believing these tales, is endeavouring to give an empire to the Devil at the expence of the Almighty.

It is certain, that the capacities of men would carry them much farther than they are suffered to go, if they were not cramped by custom and narrow education, and by narrow principles taken from those who design and derive advantages from this their ignorance. I have therefore lamented to see men of large and extensive genius, such as seemed designed by nature to carry human knowledge many degrees further than it has yet gone, seemed designed to manumit their country and mankind from the servile and wicked notions infused into them by prating pedants, and babbling impostors; I say, I have lamented to see such extensive capacities employed and conversant only about whims, idle speculations, empty notions, fairy-dreams, and party-distinctions, all tending to contract and imbitter the mind, to

stifle and oppress the faculties, and to render men dupes and machines to the ambition, pride, and avarice of selfish and haughty ecclesiasticks, or of corrupt statesmen. Nor can I see how this great evil can ever be cured, till we change the education of our youth; and let gentlemen be bred by gentlemen, and not by monks and pedants; whom yet I would suffer to dream on with their bellies full of college-ale, and their heads full of college-distinctions; but think that they ought not to be trusted with the education of our nobility and gentry, till they have some themselves.

And now I beg leave again to repeat, that it was impossible I could engage in this undertaking so troublesome to myself, and I hope of some benefit to my countrymen, with any view to my own personal advantage. I hope that no one will think so meanly of my understanding, to believe that I intended to make my court to any of the powers of this world, by attacking vice, corruption and folly wheresoever and in whomsoever they were found. I knew that I was to walk over burning plough-shares; that I must provoke numerous and powerful societies and parties; that I must disturb nests of hornets, and sometimes venture too near the lion's den, and perhaps within the reach of Jove's thunder; that men in possession of reverence would not bear being told, that they did not deserve it; that those who rioted in power, and upon the publick misfortune, would very unwillingly hear that they were trusted with that power for the publick advantage, and not for their own; that they were obliged by all the motives of honour, virtue, and religion, to serve and protect the people out of whose industry and wealth they were so highly rewarded; and that they deserved the severest punishment if they did otherwise. I had all this before my eyes: But armed with innocence, and animated by love to God and mankind, I resolved to brave the danger, in defiance of the worst that could happen to myself, in the service of my country; and I have braved it. I have now the pleasure to see great numbers of my fellow-subjects approve my endeavours, and embrace my opinions. I therefore here lay down this paper, and with it the most virtuous and noble subject that can employ the human soul; the subject of religion and government.

I am, &c.

T and G

CATO

ADVERTISEMENT TO THE READER ↩

After Mr. Trenchard and I had agreed to conclude Cato's Letters, we likewise agreed to publish occasional papers upon such subjects of moment as occurred to us. But as he was not long after seized with the distemper that soon bereft the publick of his valuable life, the pursuit of that design was left altogether to me; and I continued to publish from time to time several papers upon religious subjects, and a few upon political subjects. The latter, six in number, are therefore subjoined to this edition of Cato's Letters, as naturally belonging to that collection. The former, which are a much greater number, upon the subject of religion and controversy, I intend to throw together as a third volume of The Independ Whig, since they treat of the like matters.

T. Gordon

AN APPENDIX Containing additional letters by Cato [↗](#)

No. 1. SATURDAY, August 24, 1723.

That ambitious Princes rule and conquer only for their own Sakes; illustrated in a Dialogue between Alexander the Great and a Persian. [Gordon] ↪

[IV-291]

SIR,

Man is more selfish than all other creatures; as habit, or imagination, has made more things necessary to his pleasure and convenience, than other animals want for theirs. Lust and hunger are their only appetites; further than these prompt them, they commit no ravages, and they have the plea of necessity for the evils which they do. None of them invade countries for the vanity of a title; nor enslave, plunder, and burn, out of pride. They have no avarice; they do not starve millions to surfeit one, or a few. They have no ambition; they do not destroy for glory. To the disgrace of humanity, and the misfortune of the world, all these mischiefs and abominations come from the impulse of human passions, from a ravenousness and ferocity, worthy only of wild beasts, but practised by men with much more extensive and successful cruelty. The false refinements of reason have taught them to make the earth a wilderness, or a shambles; and to commit oppressions and butcheries, which true reason abhors.

Men are so conceited, that they think they deserve every thing they want, and may do every thing to procure it; and nothing but fear restrains man from dealing with man as nations deal with nations, that is, from devouring one another. There is not a city or country in the world, but, were it let alone, would swallow up all the rest; and cities and countries are compounded of men, and governed by them. And, as every nation is in its own conceit better than another, almost every man in every nation is in his own opinion better than all the rest. Some may ask, whether a poor labourer in a ditch fancies himself as good a man as the lord of the soil? I answer, try him: Offer him the manor, and then see whether, from a mean opinion of his merit, he rejects the offer. Who is it that refuses or resigns greatness, from the inaptness of his talents to sustain it? Titles and honours are only due to merit; but who denies them from a sense of the want of it? On the contrary, are not the weakest and most worthless men the easiest puffed up with the vanity of a gay name; which is so far from giving them any intrinsic advantages, that it really exposes their defects? And do they not make one acquisition, which they merited not, a ground and reason for expecting and demanding, perhaps for extorting, others, which they merit as little? Great men are sometimes supplanted and undone by their creatures; and princes have had the crown taken from their head, and with it their life, by such as they had raised from the dust.

Leave men to take the full reward of their fancied merit, and the world will be thought too little for almost every individual, as Alexander thought it for him. He had the fortune to ravage the world, and from thence believed he had a right to it. *Omnia vult, qui omnia potest.* Men thus let loose, do no more mischief than they can, nor less. The world is therefore a foot-ball; a great scene of contention, revolutions, and misery: It is full of Alexanders.

For the better illustration of this subject, I will here subjoin a dialogue between Alexander the Great and a Persian.

Alex. I find you a man of understanding; and you shall say with security what you please: But sure you must acknowledge that I have acquired everlasting glory in conquering this great empire.

Pers. You have done many horrible things for this glory; made havock of mankind, all Asia a scene of blood, and the world a theatre of sorrow and violence, to gain it.

Alex. Is not glory thus gained?

Pers. More is the shame and the pity, that so wicked a thing should have so fine a name. If you had saved us from all the evil, that you have done us, I should have called it glory.

Alex. Great actions are glorious, let the consequences be good or bad.

Pers. Then I perceive there is no difference between good and bad actions; at least great mischief is as good and as glorious for your purpose as great good.

Alex. For the mischiefs that you have suffered, your king must answer: He drew the war upon you.

Pers. How so?

Alex. Xerxes, one of his predecessors, invaded Greece.

Pers. If he did it wantonly, he did wrong, and sacrificed many lives to his pride: But I thought all this had been glory, because you seek glory the same way.

Alex. No, I revenge Greece upon Persia.

Pers. So he did Persia upon Greece, though with less advantage to him, and less detriment to the Grecians. Besides, he is dead, and it is unjust to punish those who hurt you not, for those who hurt your ancestors a great while ago.

Alex. Greece and Persia still subsist.

Pers. They are still called Persia and Greece; but the men of whom you complain no longer subsist.

Alex. Darius, your present Emperor, whom I have so often beaten, still lives, and he oppressed the Greek cities in Asia.

Pers. So he did the Persian cities, and his whole empire; or his governors did it for him. Now if you had come and relieved us, and gone back again, I should not differ with you about the notions of glory: But to invade us, and make us the plunder of armies for another man's crimes, which we condemn, and could not help, is no glory to us.

Alex. I meant his subjects no harm.

Pers. But you have done it as effectually as if you had.

Alex. I could not come at him, without killing his soldiers, and subduing his people.

Pers. Then you should have let him alone, at least till he had molested you.

Alex. He did; he enthralled my brethren the Asiatick Greeks; which I could not brook.

Pers. Give me leave to say, you have enthralled Greece itself, and Asia, and the world. How comes thralldom from Alexander to be better than thralldom from Darius? or why should it be better brooked?

Alex. I see you are no politician: You do not consider, that when I was about to invade Asia, it would have been madness to have left Greece unsubdued behind me.

Pers. The great Mithra shining yonder over our heads, and witnessing our actions, preserve all sober men from madness; and, for the peace of mankind, restore all madmen to their senses! And so, to revenge Greece upon Asia, which a hundred years before would have subdued Greece, you subdued Greece yourself, in order to subdue us harmless Asiaticks, who never saw any of your faces, till you came sword in hand to kill and oppress us for glory. You have arrived at that glory: And now I hope you will leave us, and return home.

Alex. No: Your King Darius still lives.

Pers. What! would you kill him?

Alex. No.

Pers. Then why do you pursue him?

Alex. To have him in my power.

Pers. And make him a captive and a slave; which is worse than killing him. But when you have him in your power, do you propose to set him up again, or in his room another royal Persian, who has not offended you?

Alex. No: Whom can I set up so worthy as Alexander, over the conquests of Alexander?

Pers. Doubtless none so brave to maintain them. But what right do you claim to the crown of Persia?

Alex. My sword; that sword which has conquered it.

Pers. While that right is in such hands, few will care to dispute it. But were I, who am no conqueror, to drive away my neighbour's flocks and herds, and make them my own, I doubt you would call it robbery, and impale me alive.

Alex. Doubtless: I conquered the Persian empire; but I will protect the Persians in their lives and property: It is suitable to my generosity and justice.

Pers. In conquering us you have destroyed many lives, and much property, against all justice; and reserve the rest for your own use, whenever and as often as you think fit to take them.

Alex. It is the right of war.

Pers. War is then an unrighteous and inhuman thing, and entitles the next invader (if his sword be longer than yours, and his fortune superior) to drive you out, as you have done Darius.

Alex. Who shall dare to brave Alexander? Who contend with the son of a god?

Pers. Methinks you come not very honourably by that divine pedigree, and carnal divinity; which reflects some disgrace too upon your mother, and her husband Philip, and is not much to the reputation of this god of the desert. But who told you that he was your father?

Alex. His priests.

Pers. They would have told me as much, had I been there at the head of an army in quest of a celestial descent. It is no great credit to be akin to the figure of a ram: It is at least as much honour to be akin to the next palm-tree, or to the next marble-quarry, the elements of such inanimate deities.

Alex. Blaspheme not the gods, if thou wouldest avoid their vengeance: They will punish thee, though I forbear.

Pers. If the son forgive me, I will venture the displeasure of the father. I honour that only god, whose bright image I behold in the skies; nor fear the indignation of a piece of a trunk, or of a rock, however fashioned; unworthy kindred of the great Alexander, the most exalted of men, but subject to pain, misfortunes, and grief, and all the symptoms of mortality: The conqueror of Asia, the avenger of Greece, must die. But first, how is Greece avenged?

Alex. By conquering Persia.

Pers. You have ruined both: But of the two you have rather revenged Persia upon Greece. The lesser follows the greater. You are already monarch of Asia; and Greece, which you have enslaved, will be but a province of Persia: You do the very thing which you were so incensed against our former princes for intending. If your sovereignty continue, Persians will in time be sent governors of Greece; nay, you yourself, who are a Greek, wear already a Persian habit.

Alex. I have made the world my own, and will do with it as I list.

Pers. You do so; but it is more than you would suffer others to do, who thought they had a better right. If you be innocent, how were the Persian monarchs faulty?

Alex. I am Alexander, the son of Jupiter, and conqueror of the world.

Pers. Nay, they had sublime titles too, and heavenly alliances. They were lords of the world, and brothers of the sun; a more illustrious and visible deity than Jupiter the ram.

Alex. Their gods could not protect them; and mine have given me their empire. Once more, I am Alexander; the world is mine, and I will keep it.

Pers. Now this is open and fair dealing, worthy the great spirit of Alexander. You had a mind to the world, and you took it; nor think it enough for you. If you had made this frank declaration at first, I should not have troubled you with so much contradiction. If the great and bold mind of Alexander can stoop to dissemble, we are never to expect that men will own the true motives of their conduct. Their reason is just what their passion pleases. All their plausible and framed pretences are resolvable into some selfish appetite, which, like their conceit, is generally unmeasurable.

G



No. 2. SATURDAY, September 14, 1723.

Considerations upon the Condition of an absolute Prince. [Gordon] ↩

[IV-299]

SIR,

There is no human condition but what carries uneasinesses with it; and I believe it will be difficult to know what condition makes men most happy, or happy at all. There is no judging of it by outward appearances. We often envy others for what they find misfortunes; and pity them for things, which are blessings, and either make them happy, or hinder them from being miserable. Nothing can be happiness in this world but gratifying our desires and inclinations; and yet we can seldom gratify them to any degree, but by turning them into misfortunes; yet we must gratify them in some degree, or else we can have no happiness at all.

To have no desires (if that be possible) is a perfect state of stupidity; and our desires must be always to attain what we do not then enjoy, and often what we cannot compass. This produces uneasiness, or in other words, renders us unhappy in some degree. The man therefore who has fewest desires, or desires the least difficult to be accomplished, has the least unhappiness; but wants many agreeable sensations, which men of more lively and active spirits enjoy. So that, upon the whole, if we balance the account, men have little reason to envy or pity one another: But if there be any difference between them, the condition of absolute princes and great men is by far the most miserable. They have little relish of the enjoyments, which they possess; they are always pursuing things difficult to be obtained, and are in as constant fear and danger of losing what they have, as of gaining what they have not; and if they do gain it they are seldom the better, but often plunged into new difficulties by their success.

Great fortune comes attended with great cares, and much greatness has many incumbrances. This is the condition of a despotick prince, who, having much more business than himself can do, be his diligence ever so great, must share the great weight and multiplicity of his affairs amongst many; who will be but too apt, in the administration of their several parts, to attend more to their own greatness and advantages, than to their master's reputation and security, to justify their ill actions by his authority, and to acquire grandeur and riches to themselves, while they heap obloquy upon him.

This is often the true reason why a good prince is not always popular. People will judge of him by what is done, and not by what he causes to be done; and therefore the publick dislike rarely stops at his servants, who perhaps alone deserve it; but have often the art of involving him in the ill consequences of their own conduct, and of making their crimes complete, by engaging him to support them in their crimes, by persuading him that all their views and actions were for his service, and by frightening him with this false and mischievous maxim, That *a prince must never give up his servants*: A maxim fatal to many princes, and big with nonsense and with ruin to the people, as it makes all ministers, even the weakest and the worst, perfectly unaccountable!

This is an unnatural maxim: Nor have the most absolute monarchs, though their power be erected upon the violent abasement of human nature, and upon the ruins of all goodness, happiness, and virtue, been ever able to practise it, however they may want it, and in speculation pretend to it. The Great Turk is often forced to give up his servants, who must die for his crimes, as well as for their own; so far is he from sacrificing himself for theirs, as this maxim would direct. Nor is there an arbitrary prince in the world but must give up the best minister that he has, if his army demand it; and where the people have any share of power, no well-advised prince will employ a servant whom they justly hate and suspect.

Princes are set in a high place; which, though the most coveted of all, has the least happiness of any other. Those, who have no equals, can hardly have any friends; and a particular friendship and confidence between an arbitrary prince and any of his own subjects, is seldom sincere on either side, especially on theirs; and often fatal to him, sometimes to them. Such princes are most successfully betrayed by their greatest favourites, who are likewise frequently undone for being favourites. Nor can princes, with all their power, raise to the highest place those who are highest in their favour. Interest, or ambition, and sometimes fear, determines their choice; and their first minister is often the man whom they hate most, or dread most, which is the beginning of hatred. Nero hated Seneca and Burrhus; and Lewis XIII hated Cardinal Richelieu; as did King James I towards his latter end, the Duke of Buckingham. Even the crafty, implacable, and diffident Tiberius was forced to continue the traitor Sejanus in his power, places and trust, a good while after he had full proof that he sought his life and empire.

The greatest princes therefore are generally destitute of friends. To purchase friends, they must give them power; and power cancels all friendships. It is the most selfish thing in the world. Those who have it are too frequently faithless to the giver; and when it is taken away, always ungrateful. And this is the reason why they may dislike their ministers, and yet be loth to change them: They know, that to dismiss their servants, is to multiply their enemies. So they are forced to accept faint or false services, to prevent open opposition; which they who have been in their service, and know their affairs and designs, are the best qualified to make.

The opening of one's heart to a friend, is one of the greatest pleasures and reliefs arising from friendship; and private men can practise it, because where the reputation of keeping a secret is greater than the temptation to reveal it, it will be kept: But to whom can a prince lay open his heart in any great and tender point, when by doing it he puts his safety and reputation in the power of another, who must be paid dear for being faithful; and perhaps at last is not so, because he never thinks himself sufficiently paid!

Hence princes and great men are naturally close and reserved, and keep themselves as far as possible within their own power: They know that the fidelity of men is then only greater than their treachery, when the price is greater. Secrecy is indeed so absolutely necessary in great affairs, that he who wants it is utterly unfit for them; and I have known very little men, who, with this qualification alone, have been thought great men. Sometimes men are dark and cautious from the littleness of their talents; and employments and trust generally make men so.

As to the publick friendships of princes, that is, of princes with princes, it is generally grimace; and there can scarce be any such thing. They are all rivals for power and credit; and all envy, or are envied by, one another. Nor do treaties and alliances allay their jealousies and

heart-burnings, but often increase them: They are generally made out of fear, and always imply distrust. Men of power, at least men of equal power, princes or subjects, never agree but from the necessity of their affairs; and they too often seem to be friends, on purpose to execute their malice with the greater certainty. Every particular wants to be master, and to give laws to all the rest; and they often push their mutual diffidence even to ridicule, and fall into violence and quarrels about the ceremonial; which, like some other ceremonies, signifies not a straw to the rest of the world, and yet must be owned to be of considerable consequence to those that deal in it.

Nor are princes more happy in their families. They are unhappy if they have no children, because by it conspiracies are encouraged, as one life is easier destroyed than several. Julius Caesar had no child; and the tyrannicides hoped in him to have destroyed his family. The same consideration was doubtless one motive to the many plots against Queen Elizabeth and King William: If they have children, they are often as unhappy; and there is seldom a good understanding between the incumbent and the next heir; who sometimes takes the throne before it is vacant, and sometimes makes a vacancy: *Imperium habere quam expectare mallet*. And sometimes the father destroys the son, for fear of being destroyed by him; as did Constantine, the first Christian emperor, and Philip II of Spain. And thus the excellent Germanicus owed his murder to the cruel politicks of Tiberius, his uncle, and his father by adoption. Nor do the children of princes hate one another less, than the eldest or the most ambitious generally does his father. The Great Mogul almost always sees his sons, and his daughters with them, engaged in wars and blood for their father's empire; and he is their prisoner by turns, as their several parties prevail, and perhaps ends his life in a dungeon. One of David's sons lay with his sister, and was killed by another son, who defiled his father's bed, and endeavoured to dethrone him; and Solomon, as soon as his father was dead, put his eldest brother to death.

Princes are likewise subject to higher dangers, and have more and greater enemies, than other men; and their lives and reputations are more exposed. They have no small enemies, but either neighbouring princes and states as powerful or politick as themselves; or great domestick conspirators, often more terrible; or little assassins, the most formidable enemies of all, as they are the most sure and sudden. Besides, the dangers they are sometimes in are not seen or credited till they are past remedy. Domitian therefore said well, *Conditionem principum miserrimam, quibus de conjuratione comperta non crederetur, nisi occisis*: "It is a miserable lot that of princes, never to be believed as to any conspiracy formed against them till it has had its effect, and they are fallen by it." Sueton. in *Domitian*. C. 21.

I shall refer to another paper my further considerations upon the condition of a prince.

G

I am,&c.

No. 3. SATURDAY, November 2, 1723.

The same Subject continued. [Gordon] ↩

[IV-305]

SIR,

I have already sent you a letter about the condition of an arbitrary prince: I here send you another; and what is said in both does in some respects concern all princes, especially all princes who do not make the fixed and standing laws of their country the rules of their government. For though I do not think it possible for any prince, the wisest and most vigilant, and virtuous to avoid all the inconveniences which I have observed usually to attend a crown; yet it is my opinion, that a prince of a legal and limited state, who defends the laws and rights of his people to his people's advantage, will be defended by his people and the laws; that a righteous administration will be too powerful for unrighteous factions, and make him safe in the love of his subjects, against the leaders and deceivers of parties, and against the intrigues of his own servants, who will be obliged to serve him faithfully in their own defence, and cannot distress him where his people love him. But as this has been the condition of few, very few princes, they have generally reduced themselves to the evils and hardships which I have already mentioned in part, and shall now further set forth.

Such princes are generally poor, notwithstanding their great revenues. Their income is scarce ever well husbanded. The great number of officers necessary to gather it in, must all be paid suitable to the grandeur and bounty of a prince; and it is well if they do not finger more of it, much more than their pay; so that it comes into his coffers with large abatements; and the bulk of his rents is far short of the name, yet by that name his wealth is computed; and hence expectations from him are higher than his ability to answer them.

If his money be wasted in his receipts, it is still more so in his issues. His revenues are distributed, as well as collected, by a great number of officers, with great salaries, who, in the payment of his bills, frequently value their own gain more than their master's credit, and keep in their hands for their own use the money which they should pay away for his. For this reason he buys almost every thing extremely dear, sometimes at double, nay, treble its value; because they who will sell have large interest for slow and uncertain payment: Neither is it uncommon, that those who buy for him, combine with those who sell to him, and divide the profits of an extravagant bill: Even officers who do not conspire against his purse out of sordidness, frequently do it to oblige their friends; so that he is at least cheated on one side. I have known a piece of ground sold to a king at fifty times its value, and an old house for not much less; and the like enormous prices received for a piece of painting, for a horse, and for a paltry rarity, which, for the benefit of a friend, they who had his ear persuaded him to purchase.

But besides all this, let his revenues be as great as they will, the demands upon them are commonly greater. Every service done him costs him dear; and it is well if he pays not equally dear for disservice and treachery; a price which yet he is obliged sometimes knowingly to pay, to deceive and flatter an enemy, or a false friend, whom he dares not crush. The pretensions too of those who never served him, but fancy that they did, or that they can, are infinite; and they will be too apt to distress him without provocation, if he do not reward

them without cause, or beyond their merit. Whatever they do for him, or think they can do, claims a high price, not according to its worth, but according to their own conceit, and to his grandeur; and all his gratuities are expected to be great, how small soever they and their pretensions are who expect them: Others, who think they can hurt him, will make a virtue of not being mischievous; but not a virtue which is to be its own reward, but such a virtue as will seek revenge where it is not rewarded; so that he must pay as well for false services, and for no services, as for real services; his foes for sparing him, and his friends for defending him, and both rather according to the measure of their own selfish value and importance, than suitably to reason, or even to his ability.

And as such princes are, I think without exception, oppressors of their people, they must fear those whom they oppress, and depend for their security either upon a nobility or an army, or upon an army only; two sorts of men equally ambitious and insatiable, who will expect to riot upon the spoils of the prince, as he does upon the spoils of the people, and will turn upon him if he disappoint their avarice and pride, nor spare him if he spare his subjects.

The Roman emperors were no longer safe than they were feeding the soldiery with largesses, and sometimes all that they had to bestow was not a sufficient bribe to save their lives. The immense revenue of the whole Roman world was too little for the soldiery alone, though the provinces were ransacked, tortured, and exhausted, to increase it. The emperor was but a name: The soldiers were the state, the governors of the state, and the gentle landlords of Europe, Asia, and Africa; as the Great Turk is at this day but the creature and property of the janizaries, who are the real disposers of the Turkish diadem, and the real governors, or rather emperors, of Turkey. He who has the name, is but the gatherer of their rents; and they hold him in such alarms, that he is scarce secure of his life for a day, and in such necessities, that to satiate them, he is forced to be daily killing and plundering his bashaws, glutted with the plunder of the provinces; which to supply this constant and progressive plunder, are reduced to regions of gloomy solitude and desolation: And all this wealth of so great and so fine a portion of the earth does but end in a fee to a tribe of rogues, renegades, and vagabonds, to save their master's life.

No prince's coffers are full enough to answer all demands; and as to the places and bounties which he has to bestow, he may engage by them a number of people in his interest; but he makes a greater number of enemies, because to every such favour there are many pretenders, and all are disgusted but he who gains it; and the boundary between disgust and enmity is so very small in such cases, that it is scarce to be measured, or indeed discerned. Where twenty people aim at the same thing, he can make a friend of but one.

Hence such a prince must be subject to perpetual and painful hypocrisy, by being obliged to soften disappointments with good words, which, perhaps he does not mean; and with fair promises, which he cannot keep. It behoves him to please all that he can please, and to provoke none wilfully; for, in spite of his greatest complaisance, many will be provoked by disappointments which he cannot prevent.

No sort of men are under such great restraints as to liberty of speech princes as are; nor can the greatest power give them this freedom with any safety. For, besides that a loose in mirth and jests affects their dignity, and weakens its awe, their words are all thought to have design in them, and are readily caught up and misapplied, especially where they seem any way to relate to their own power, or to the persons of men. Caesar did at least hasten the conspiracy against him by a miserable pun of his: He said, that Sulla, who had resigned the

dictatorship, was a novice in letters; he could not dictate.

From these words of his, perhaps spoken in pure jest, the measure of his ambition was taken, though I think there were much better proofs against him. Galba was murdered by his guards, for an honest unwary speech of his: He declared, he would choose soldiers, and not purchase them: And Cassius Chaerea, captain of the guards to Caligula, put that prince to death, for railing him upon his effeminacy.

All satirical railleries are the more felt, and the least forgiven, the higher they come. A sarcasm from a superior is an insult, because it cannot be returned. No man cares to bear a severe jest, which only serves to shew him how much lower he is than the person who makes it; and therefore no wise or good-natured man will make such jests. Greatness is so naturally apt to be proud, that we generally expect no better from it, and are ready to see pride in great men where they really have none, or shew none; and because we hate pride, we are apt to hate greatness, which we consider as the cause of pride: an imputation which all great men can never be too careful to avoid; and let them be ever so careful and complaisant, they will never wholly avoid it: And therefore stateliness of behaviour, and imperious airs, are signs of great want of sense, and the certain causes of hate.

Great men can never be too well-bred. We are naturally quick-sighted enough to see the difference between us and them, and can only be reconciled to it by their treating us as if there was none; but supercilious pains taken on their side, will surely create distaste and enmity on ours. We think that they owe us a sort of amends for being greater than we; and if they can pay us with affability and condescension, they pay easily, and have no occasion to complain.

Caesar was never forgiven for receiving the Roman magistracy sitting: And some passionate expressions of King Charles I against the Parliament, did him more mischief than all his former encroachments upon the constitution; as these expressions created personal enemies, and a fear and distrust of his spirit and sincerity. His father, still less capable of supporting the dignity of a crown, and of preserving the affections of his people, had such a wild mixture of timidity and pride, and familiarity, that many of them hated him, more despised him, and yet none feared him. He would sacrifice his reputation with his people to the titillation of a poor pun, and manifest his passion for absolute power, rather than smother a wretched witticism, or a quaint conceit, hardly worthy of a country school-master. When a fit of bouncing was upon him, then he was the oldest king in Europe, and, he trowed, the wisest, and would be master of the purses of his subjects; but when the Parliament had put him into a fright, then they had an humble sermon from him, larded with scraps of Latin, upon the duty and restraints of a sovereign; and logick was chopped, and distinctions were made, upon that head.

His private conversation was low and cheap; and when the crown was off, the King was never seen; his tongue never lay still, and his usual themes were far unworthy of royalty: He delighted in sifting metaphysical questions, and in discussing dark points in divinity, and in smutty and familiar jokes; and it was usual with him to fall upon men with rude language and ill breeding: His condescension to others was as full of meannesses, and the obscenities and fulsome style of his letters are below the lowest mechanick. It was impossible to know him and reverence him. Those who were raised by him, and most obliged to him, treated him with contempt, and hectored him when they could not wheedle him: And it was usual with him to give and take such language, as no gentleman would give or take. He was particularly free of

his oaths and his kisses, practices beneath a great or a grave man. He was so ignorant of his character, and so fond of logick, that from a great king he descended to be a disputant on one side in a squabble of divines. His reputation abroad was as low as at home. He talked much of king- craft; but his maxims, which he was always uttering, were poor ones, and foreign princes derided him. In their treaties with one another, they either took no notice of this keeper of the balance of Europe, or always outwitted him. In his own negotiations with them, they over-reached and baffled him, even to wantonness; and treated his long letters and his learned labours with small regard: His premonition to princes, and his books of divinity, had no influence on the powers of Christendom.

King Charles II had more sense, and more accomplishments: He had the parts and address of a gentleman; but he was too ludicrous for a King. He had many pleasant stories, and told them well: He made very good jests, and diverted his friends over a bottle. But the monarch suffered in the merry companion, and his good-nature was the occasion of many ill-natured railleries. His great familiarities with his subjects made them very familiar with the dignity of the diadem; and he never made so many jests as were made upon him. The freedoms which his own dear friends the wits used with their sovereign, and their sarcasms upon so great a prince, are astonishing.

Scarce any of the words of a prince fall to the ground; they therefore ought to be cautious what words they utter. Whatever he says, and his manner of saying it, will be apt to make impressions either to his advantage or disadvantage. His sayings quickly fly abroad, and are at the mercy of every interpreter; and when once his words are publick, it depends no longer upon himself what meaning his words shall bear. The publick rarely distinguish the man from the King; but with them in every thing he acts and speaks as a King, and consequently by all his words and actions that come abroad, his royal dignity is affected, though they regard neither.

My next letter shall be upon the same subject.

G

I am, &c.

No. 4. SATURDAY, November 9, 1723.

The same Subject continued. [Trenchard] ↩

[IV-314]

SIR,

The actions of a prince are more liable to censure than his words. His words, which can be heard but by a few, may be misrepresented; and this his friends may plead in his defence: But his actions publish themselves; and all men will pretend to judge what all men see, and what concerns all men. Nor must he expect to be judged by the motives, and intention of his conduct, but by the effects. Those motives, however just and necessary, are not always such as he can avow; and if he mean one thing, and pretend another, he cannot with a good grace take it ill that his sincerity is suspected.

Henry III of France dispatched Monsieur Bellievre away to England as his ambassador extraordinary, to interpose his royal credit with Queen Elizabeth, for the life of Mary, Queen of Scots; and great consequences were expected from so much zeal and ostentation. Nor was ever any thing more strong, laboured, and pathetick, than Monsieur Bellievre's speech upon that occasion. In it all the topicks of mercy, of consanguinity, of charity and forgiveness, of good policy, of the sacredness of the blood of princes, and the ill example of shedding it, were urged and exhausted with great earnestness and art. The French King's pious concern for his sister-in-law was dressed up in moving colours, and warm arguments were fetched from the safety and reputation of Queen Elizabeth herself. Never was such a dolorous farce! The ambassador had private orders to solicit in his Majesty's name the execution of Queen Mary, and alleged the same arguments for that execution.

Now the whole of this conduct, so full of contradiction and insincerity, was necessary to his condition. It concerned that prince's reputation with his people, and with all the Catholicks in Europe, to interest himself in the life of a Catholick queen, his brother's wife: If he had not, he had furnished the Guises and the League, already too popular and powerful, with a new advantage against him. They had already charged him with heresy, though he had murdered a world of hereticks to demonstrate his Catholick zeal. But it concerned him full as nearly, that that Queen should neither be restored to Scotland, nor succeed Queen Elizabeth in England, and thereby strengthen the hands of the League, and her uncles, the Guises, against him.

Queen Elizabeth, who was a wise princess, acted the same double part in the same affair. The security of her life and her crown was precarious while the Queen of Scots lived; and yet the life of her royal cousin and sister was so dear to her, that the importunity and repeated addresses and petitions of Parliament, with all the doughty casuistry and logick of her spiritual counsellors, the bishops, could hardly prevail upon her tender conscience to rid herself and her realm of so dangerous an enemy; and after she had submitted her many scruples to the love and fears of the people, and to the holy reasonings of the bishops, she was forced to be surprised into the signing of the death warrant; which, after all, she never meant to have executed, but only kept over the sentenced queen *in terrorem*. But this her merciful purpose was frustrated by the officious zeal of Secretary Davison; for which the poor man was disgraced.

This was all illusion. No person upon earth wished more passionately for the death of Mary, Queen of Scots; but she did wisely to save appearances. She had good reasons for what she had done; and reasons equally good for not bearing her testimony to the rightfulness of putting a queen to death.

Queen Elizabeth escaped the bloody hand of her sister Mary, by the policy of King Philip her husband, which got the better of his bigotry and natural cruelty. His wife had no children, and the crown must descend either to her sister Elizabeth, who was a Protestant, or to the Queen of Scots, who was a papist, and also Queen of France. He hated Protestants, but loved his interest better; and saved the princess, to prevent so much power from falling into the French scale. This was just policy; but he durst not own it: It would have made him odious to the court of Rome, and to the popish world.

Thus princes themselves become subjects; subjects to the censure of their people: And to please them, or to avoid their displeasure, are often obliged to disguise their actions, often to disown the motives of their best actions, and sometimes the actions themselves. This acting in masquerade is a restraint which most princes, the most haughty and unlimited, must undergo. Not Louis le Grand, nor the Great Turk, durst declare to his people, that he oppressed them to satiate his pride or avarice; that he went to war through ambition, and spilled their blood for fame.

Caesar, the mighty and successful Caesar, had no other deity but false glory! But, with all his power and fortune, he was not powerful enough to declare, that he shed human blood, and enslaved the world, only to make more noise than any man in it; for this great glory of his was no more but noise and mischief. His purpose of war with the Parthians was only to gratify his restless spirit, and to employ the spirits of the Romans, which, by enslaving them, he had incensed; and he was no longer easy and safe, than he was fighting and killing. But this was a secret not fit to be told, and the honour and benefit of the Romans were boldly pretended; that is, the Romans were to have certain losses, and no purchase, for the honour and benefit of the Romans: For, if he had conquered all Parthia, which was no ways probable, Rome would have been never the better, but, on the contrary, must have sacrificed many Romans to the pride and pleasure of Caesar.

Oliver Cromwell sought the Lord upon all occasions, and all that he did was the Lord's doings; and because many of the saints preached it, numbers believed it. Now, though this was downright impudence, which, to a wise man, is worse than silence, yet it passed with a party. Parties generally act implicitly: Watchword and cant pass with them for reason, and they find great conviction in a few solemn unmeaning sounds. The partisans of Caesar vindicated their purpose of making him a king, by a foolish old prophecy never heard of before, that none but a king could conquer the Parthians. They could not have devised a better argument; it convinced the whole party, and filled their mouths with an answer to the stiff-necked republicans. Had Cromwell been declared King, I doubt not but his preachers would have found a revelation for it, and probably the coronation sermon would have abounded with texts that gave him the diadem. It would not have been the first nor the last time that the Bible has been made a great courtier, and heaven the voucher of wickedness and falsehood. The last argument of the Spanish clergy for the expulsion of the Moors, was a bell in the church of Vililah, which rung of its own accord; and though it uttered nothing but sound, yet expressly commanded that expulsion, and fully satisfied King Philip's conscience. It was a miracle; and what should miracles be worked for, but for the confusion of infidels and hereticks? And who should see the design of miracles executed, but those who interpret

miracles?

Princes must say something for their best and worst actions; which is a confession, that they are not so unaccountable as some would make them. Their reputation is at the mercy of their people; and when their reputation is lost or lessened, they cannot possess their crowns in much peace, nor indeed in much safety. Hence nothing is so tender as the reputation of a prince, and nothing ought to exercise his thoughts and fears more. He must not measure his publick fame by the fine tales told him by those who are well paid for the tales, and dare not always tell him truth, for fear of losing that pay. It would be more to his advantage to hear the worst things that are said of him; for while he is falsely told that all things go well, he will never think of altering his conduct, how wrong soever he is; and going on in an error for want of honest information, has been the ruin of many princes. They cannot go abroad for truth, and rarely hear it at home; and the evil day has come upon them when they thought themselves most secure; or if they have heard part of the truth, it has come disguised to their ears; and the complaints of the people, forced from them by oppression, have been represented as the clamours of malcontents, and as the voice of faction. And it is very true, that faction often rails without ground; but it is as true, that faction often derives its chief power from complaints that are wellgrounded. Nor is it at all good reasoning to justify every thing which faction condemns.

—Fas est & ab hoste doceri.

Some men, especially great men, would never hear of their faults, were it not for their foes; and princes might often have learned better lessons of government from the satires made upon them, than from their many panegyrics. Their panegyrics consecrate their worst actions, and never find any thing to be mended; but in satire there is always some truth, and often a great deal; and where there is no truth, there is no satire.

It is the interest of a prince, to know what his subjects think of him and his government: It is a duty which he owes to himself as well as to them; and though he may hear of many evils and grievances which are fathered upon him, and yet not owing to him, he will probably at the same time hear of many that he has power to remove, or to mitigate. Let him do his best, he will have many enemies; but this is no reason why he should not lessen their number, by lessening the cause all he can.

It is a hard matter for a prince to learn his true character at second-hand: His surest way is to learn it from himself, from the measures which he pursues, and from the effects which they ought to have upon the minds and fortunes of men. His friends will sanctify or palliate his greatest faults; and his foes will make crimes of his greatest virtues. If he be a bigot to a reigning superstition, wise men will despise him; and if he despise superstition, the bigots, who are always the majority, will curse him. Nor will the most able and upright administration be of any merit with them, if he do not season his administration with the blood of infidels and hereticks, and exclude the best and soberest part of his subjects, from any share in his protection and paternal mercy; and if he fall in with this religious fury, he destroys or provokes his soberest and best subjects. So that to be a saint one way, he must be a devil on the other; a character very common in the world: And if he do not exercise his rage for enthusiasts, he must expect to feel theirs, and to have his humanity and wisdom exposed and treated as atheism. To butcher, or be butchered, is the lot of a prince who rules over bigots; a sort of madmen, who would father their own frenzy upon the deity, and make him thirst after the coolest human blood to assuage it. The Spanish Inquisition is a priestly

slaughter-house, a dreadful tribunal erected against the lives, consciences, and faculties of men; and yet no King of Spain could attempt to suppress it, without expecting to lose his life in the attempt. Nor is it in the power of the Pope to suppress popery. And the Great Turk, absolute and irresistible as he is, were he to turn Christian, could not live half an hour.

Princes are under the same difficulty, when they would cure another mighty evil in their government. Standing armies are standing curses in every country under the sun, where they are more powerful than the people; and yet it is hardly possible for a prince that rules by an army, to part with his army, or to set up any new authority over them. He will find them armed against himself, as well as against his people or his neighbours; and he cannot relieve his subjects, if he would. The Asiatick governments, and all that are like them, are modelled for the destruction of [the] human race; and yet the best and wisest man that ever lived, were he at the head of one of those governments, must act according to its bloody maxims, or quickly perish. Brutus, in the place of the Great Turk, must have been a Great Turk, and observed all the essential principles of that savage monarchy. Human wisdom cannot give freedom to Turkey; and if the laws of liberty, practised amongst us, were to be followed there, especially in cases of treason, there would be an end of the empire in a month, and every bashaw would be an independent king. Great empires cannot subsist without great armies, and liberty cannot subsist with them. As armies long kept up, and grown part of the government, will soon engross the whole government, and can never be disbanded; so liberty long lost, can never be recovered. Is not this an awful lesson to free states, to be vigilant against a dreadful condition, which has no remedy.

This therefore is the situation of the best arbitrary prince, as to his conduct and popularity. The good that he would do, he cannot do; and the good that he does, he sometimes dares not own. He is often hated for his best deeds, and slandered for his noblest qualities: If he rule by soldiers, he must oppress his people; and if he favour his people, he is in danger from his soldiers. Where there are factions, he is sure of one of them for his foes; and is exposed to the cruelty of the bigots for his mercy to all men. As to limited princes, who have the laws for the rules of their actions, and rule their actions by those laws, and study in all things the happiness of their people, they may be secure from the convulsions which are scarce separable from absolute monarchies; nor are they necessitated to exercise the violence and fraud by which the others subsist, unless they have the misfortune to govern a people mad with enthusiasm and bigotry: And there is no remedy but to overcome the enthusiasm, or to be carried away with it; to comply in some instances with reigning and popular prejudices; to elude their force by seeming to yield to them; and in time, by patience and prudent management, wholly to destroy them.

T

I am, &c.

No. 5. SATURDAY, November 30, 1723.

Considerations upon the Condition of Prime Ministers of State. [Gordon] ↪

[IV-322]

SIR,

I have considered, in three former letters, some of the many evils that encompass royalty: I shall here consider the condition of great ministers; who are far from being so happy as they appear. Those who view them at a distance, are apt to measure their happiness by their greatness; and, as they do in other things, to take appearances for proofs. They see the elevation of great men, the shew that they make, the numbers that follow them, and the obedience and adoration which are paid them; and from all this infer a suitable degree of felicity. This is wrong reasoning. The world affords not more unhappy men, than those who seem to abound in happiness, by abounding in certain things, which others, who have them not, consider as the means of happiness. The increase of fortune is followed by an increase of cares; and riches and power, so much the aim of all men, as the chief causes of worldly happiness, are no more capable of giving it, than of giving health, strength, or beauty; but often become real misfortunes, and the bitter sources of misery in various shapes. All which will be more manifest from an enquiry into the condition of a great man.

In his pursuit of greatness he will meet with many rough rebukes, and many shocking disappointments. Things, upon which he had set his heart, will often fail him; and the next hopes of his ambition be often frustrated. Little men and small accidents will frequently do him great and essential harm; and the chance of a day destroy the schemes of years. Those who are his equals, will not care to see over their heads one who they think ought to be at their elbow; and when he offers to break out of his rank, will be apt to give him an invidious pull backwards. They will not care to see their companion become their master; and such as are yet greater than he, will not love one who would be as great as they, and when he is as great, would be greater; one, who, having been accustomed to mount above his equals, aims visibly at equalling his superiors or at having none.

Here are the beginnings of numerous conspiracies against him and his ambition; conspiracies that will watch his steps, retard his advancement, blast his views, and perhaps his reputation; and, when he has gained ground, be ready to set him back again: They will often reduce him to difficulties, often to despair, or to painful patience, and make his ascent tedious and tiresome: They will be heavy weights upon him while he rises, and thorns in his side when he is risen; and possibly push him over a precipice at last.

In his state of exaltation he will find new difficulties to encounter, besides most of the old ones increased; and the grandeur which he had so long and so painfully pursued, he will now find to be chiefly pomp and name, the reputation of happiness without happiness: He will meet with a thousand mortifications which a private character is a stranger to, and which but for his elevation he would have never known. He will never be able to oblige all who are able to hurt him, if they be not obliged; nor to terrify all who can distress him, if they be not terrified. By this power he will think himself entitled to honour and submission; and where he misses the same, as certainly he often will, his vexation will be as great as are the notions which he entertains of his worth and power; and those notions being generally sufficiently

selfish, that is, extreme, that vexation must likewise be extreme.

Hence a disappointment in small things often gives men great disturbance; not from the value of the thing, but from the value which they put upon themselves; and great men are not apt to value themselves less than other men are, but much more, and, at least, in proportion to their greatness. A private man's vineyard could not be of much importance to a king; but a king thought it of great importance to be refused, when he had set his heart upon having it. Ahab could not brook this refusal of Naboth; and therefore "Ahab came into his house heavy and displeased; and he laid him down upon his bed, and turned away his face, and would eat no bread." 1 Kings xxi. 4. Archbishop Laud was equally discontented, and more enraged, by a jest of Archy, the King's fool, upon the mad and unsuccessful pranks which his Grace was playing with religion in Scotland; so enraged, that though Archy was a professed and allowed buffoon, and had made many jests equally severe upon the King himself without offence, yet of so fierce and unforgiving a temper was the Archbishop, and so much a greater man than his Majesty, that poor Archy was by a solemn act of council banished the court, for offending his meek Grace of Canterbury.

Such instances shew, that trifles are capable of mortifying the most exalted men, because the most exalted men think that they ought to be balked and ruffled in nothing, and expect to be protected by their exaltation from all contradiction and opposition: Whereas greatness, which must be supported by much action, and by the co-operation of many persons, does, by increasing their necessities and views, increase also their anxieties and disappointments. They will need many helps, and be obliged to embark in many designs; and both the helps and the designs that they relied on will often fail them. And as they will find the cause of that failure in the shortness of their power, it will be natural for them to be trying expedients to enlarge their power: If those expedients miscarry, as they frequently will, their uneasinesses are multiplied by an attempt to cure them: If they succeed, the success will only imbitter their enemies, and probably help to strengthen them, by furnishing them with a popular handle for reproach, and for alarming the publick. And as to their friends, who are only to be made so by giving each his lot in the power which they assist to raise, it is not to be expected that they will raise it so high, as no longer to want their assistance, unless in cases perfectly desperate, when in the last struggle of parties one or other must inevitably swallow all; and then the respect of persons must carry it.

But I speak here of the usual contention for the usual advantages of power, which is not to be acquired without difficulty and struggles, unless where by the maggot of a prince a favourite is raised in a day; as King James I from a stripling, without name or experience, or any fitness for business, made young Villiers his first minister for his handsome face. But, however it may be thus hastily got, or rather given, that minister found that it was not easily kept: for, though he was possessed of his master's whole authority, and invested, in effect, with royalty; and though that weak timorous king did not at first, and afterwards durst not, refuse him any thing, how absurd, extravagant, and arbitrary soever; and though the civil and military lists were filled with his creatures and family; yet he was not too big to be shaken: His foundation, as strong and broad as it was, felt many terrible convulsions; and if King Charles I who had likewise taken him for his minister, or rather for his master, had not loved him better than he loved the constitution, and parted with the Parliament rather than part with Buckingham, his fall must have been as swift as his rise, as it was afterwards sudden by the hand of an assassin.

Cardinal Richelieu, infinitely more able, and far more powerful, as that monarchy, which he governed with a high hand, was more absolute than ours, was never free from difficulties, dangers, and embarrassments: And though by his great talents and good fortune he overcame them almost as fast as they arose; yet still they arose as fast as he overcame them. The intrigues of the cabinet against him were so many, so powerful, and so constant, that, though he had almost all Europe to contend with, he declared, that one chamber (meaning the cabinet) embarrassed him more than all Europe. The plots against his power were perpetual, and there were frequent plots against his life: Cardinal de Retz (then the Abbot de Retz) owns himself to have been engaged in one, and Monsieur Cinqmars died for another. Cinqmars was the King's favourite, and the King knew his design, though it does not appear that he approved it; but it is certain that he hated the Cardinal, as did all France.

As his power grew, his crosses and danger grew; so much are they mistaken, who from the growth of power expect equal ease and security. Cardinal Richelieu had the entire power of France in his hands, her armies, her garrisons, and her finances: The King was no more than his pupil; and every thing that obeyed the monarchy, obeyed him. Mazarin, who had the same authority, but seems to me to have been rather a little tricking Italian than a great politician, underwent so many insults, disgraces, dangers, and disappointments, that none but a man mad with ambition and avarice would have held his place upon such miserable terms.

G

I am,&c.

No. 6. SATURDAY, December 7, 1723.

The same Subject continued. [Gordon] ↩

[IV-329]

SIR,

It is true, that the ministers whom I mentioned in my last were arbitrary ministers, and committed acts of power, which made them justly terrible; but it is equally true of Cardinal Richelieu, that his justest and his wisest actions created him the most powerful enemies, and the greatest danger: And it is true of every minister, that the good which he does is as odious to faction as his errors are, often more; and that his services to the publick are, in some instances, through misrepresentations, from envy, made distasteful to the people, who must feel those services before their distaste be removed. And if he has made, or they believe that he has made, any ill steps (a case by no means rare), they will be apt to believe that all his steps are ill, to confound the good and the bad, and to hope no good from him. Nor has he any ready way of removing those ill impressions, but by some such sudden and signal act of praise and popularity as perhaps he has no opportunity to perform; and to remove them by degrees, and by a continued series of worthy actions, perhaps the term of his life, or of his power, is not sufficient. And as sometimes the most glorious actions are done with ill views, he who does them will not be more adored by some, than he will be dreaded and reproached by others. And hence the beginning or increase of factions, which almost always extol or condemn implicitly, and by no other rule but that of blind affection and blind antipathy.

And as faction, on one side, will be watching, thwarting, and exposing all that he does; his own party, on the other, will be making advantages of his distresses, and consequently be distressing him more; and he will find it harder to defend himself from his friends, and to preserve their dependence, than to disappoint his foes: Every party hangs together by interest, and every particular means his own. It is impossible to gratify all; and all that are not gratified are disoblige: Whoever therefore is at the head of a party, has but an uneasy station. Whatever blaze he may make, and however absolute he may seem, his disappointments often equal his triumphs; and when we say that he carries all before him, it is because we see his successes, but not his difficulties.

Besides, he has equal trouble and solicitude from small as from great matters. For every little favour which he has to bestow, he has numerous little suitors, as well as several great ones, who become suitors for the small, and think their reputation concerned not to be denied. So that perhaps there are a dozen considerable men soliciting earnestly for one inconsiderable place, and each ready to resent a refusal, and to disappoint him in something of greater moment, if he disappoint them in that, as he must do most of them. Sometimes he has twenty embarrassments of the like nature upon his hand, besides many greater; as particularly, when several considerable men are all candidates for some considerable thing, which can only be given to one; and all the rest are made enemies, or cool friends.

And as there is no greatness without emulation, his attacks from rivals must be incessant, and frequently powerful and dangerous. They who follow power, will themselves never want followers; and such as aim at his place, will never want creatures, nor consequently strength. It sometimes happens that one of his own creatures, whom he trusts (as he must trust

somebody), shall make use of that trust to supplant him; a method which, I think, is as frequent as any other; and hence he is sometimes persuaded by his false friends into measures which they intend shall destroy him. Sometimes schemes are offered him, which they know he will reject; and then his non-compliance, however honest, is made a crime, and the cause of his disgrace; and he often bears the reproach of the evil counsels which he opposed. Sometimes a step taken to subdue his rivals, shall end in exalting them; and sometimes an advance made to win his enemies, throws him into their power. Add to all this the difficulty of managing the humours of a prince, and of pleasing the people at the same time. A hard task! Princes are afraid of a minister who has too much credit; and he cannot serve them, if he has none. Neither is the favour of the most powerful prince able always to preserve a minister. The demands of the people, or of a great party, often make his dismissal unavoidable; of which there are endless instances. Cardinal Richelieu, indeed, found a way to govern the French king and the French nation, in spite of themselves; but I have already shewn what uneasinesses he underwent. No prince will love a minister whom he dares not part with; and no minister will care to be of so little importance as to be parted with at pleasure.

It is another plague of greatness, that he who has it has scarce any leisure, any agreeable moments to throw away upon amusements and indolence; even when he is doing no business, the cares of business follow him, with a concern for preserving and enlarging his power, always attacked from one quarter or another, and always liable to be attacked in some weak place or other. The necessity of receiving and of making many applications, of raising some creatures, and gaining others; of disappointing the machinations and assaults of enemies; of making many dispatches, or directing them to be made; of giving access and part of his time to such as have or claim a right to see him, who will always be many, and always resent it if they cannot see him; and of concerting and pursuing favourite projects: I say, all this must either engage him entirely, or he cannot expect to stand. Perpetual industry and anxiety are generally the terms upon which he stands; and if he be idle or recluse, his affairs will be in confusion, and he himself pursued with clamour, as neglectful of the publick, and unequal to his trust. Nor will the partiality and authority of the prince be able to protect him long, at least without exposing his own reputation for the idleness of his minister.

When therefore a minister is strongly addicted to his pleasures, it is a great misfortune to a prince, to the people, and himself. A man whose head is often warm with wine, or perpetually possessed with women or gaming, must often neglect business, or do it hastily. This is not only postponing, but sacrificing the publick to pleasure. Thus the Duke of Buckingham involved us in two wars at once, with France and Spain for disappointed lust; and thus the invasion of Italy by Francis I, the unfortunate Battle of Pavia, the loss of a noble army, the long captivity and imprisonment of that great king, were the effects of the passion of one of his ministers for an Italian beauty, whom he was resolved to enjoy once more, at the peril of his master and of his dominions.

It is true that the pleasures of a minister, which do not affect the publick, ought not to offend it; but it is as true, that however private and personal they are, they will give publick offence; and it is his misfortune that they can scarce ever be hid. His haunts and diversions will soon be observed and known. Several people must be trusted, some of them will certainly whisper; and private whispers about publick men will grow to be publick rumours; and amongst the rigid and precise, or those who pretend to be so, the man of pleasure always passes for a debauched man.

A minister is liable to the same or greater censure of misrepresentation in the making or enlarging his fortune. Men may, by accidents, by conspicuous parts, by the caprice of a prince, or by the partiality and weight of a party, arrive at greatness without the assistance of wealth: But wealth is, doubtless, a great help to a man who would rise; and he who is careless of acquiring it, judges ill. It is one of his greatest stays, and sometimes his only one. Now, however fairly he comes by it, it is odds but part of it, if not the whole, will be ascribed to corruption. Ill-natured comparisons will be made between what he had, which will be generally lessened; and what he has, which will be more generally aggravated; and the fruits of private management and industry will be called publick plunder. So that as the neglect of riches is imprudent, the accumulation of riches is unpopular. I have known great ministers go poor out of employment, when it was thought that their estates were immense; and what others had got was sometimes reckoned ten times greater than it proved.

The last thing which I mention upon this subject is, that men who have once tasted of greatness, can scarce ever after relish a private life. The toils, tumult, and anxieties, inseparable from power, make them often sick of it, but never willing to leave it. Self-love tells them, that as nothing is too much for them, so they are constantly worthy to keep what they have; and as the displacing them is a contradiction to this opinion, and the putting others in their room a declaration that others are more worthy, their pride is and continues inflamed, and they are never to be cured of hatred or emulation towards their successors. So that, besides the loss of power, and consequently of homage, pomp, and submission (a tribute always dear to all mankind), they live ever after angry and affronted; and if they have any pleasure, it is when things go wrong under their successors. Nor can old age and infirmities, unless they be such as render them utterly unfit for business, cure them of this uneasiness and painful ambition. England affords instances of men who have lived forty years after their dismissal from power, in a constant struggle to regain it: At fourscore they were in the midst of intrigues: When they had lost all other appetites, their lust of power was in its vigour; upon the brink of the grave, their eyes were unnaturally turned backwards to secular grandeur, and their souls bent upon dominion.

This is one of the greatest curses which attend power, that they who have enjoyed it, can rarely ever after enjoy retirement; which yet they are always extolling, and seeming to long for, while it is out of their reach. In the hurry and solicitude of employment, beset with cares, fears, and enemies, they see the security, ease, and calm of recess; but are never to be reconciled to the terms upon which it is to be had. What! Descend from on high, and from giving laws to a nation, be lost in the multitude, and upon a level with those who adored them, and see others adored in their room; others, whom probably they hated, probably despised! This is a sorrowful and a dreadful thought to ambition; and they consider their discharge as a sentence of ignominy and exile.

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I am,&c.

FINIS

Endnotes to Volume 4

- [*] Dr. Clarke's remarks upon a philosophical enquiry concerning human liberty. Page 43.
- [*] Here he mentioned one of the highest dignities in the church.
- [*] Westminster, in the time of Dr. Atterbury, whose protection, or that of his high bailiff, some bawdy-houses claimed against the authority of the justices of peace.
- [*] The Independent Whig.