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A
S E R M O N

Preached before the Learned

Society of *Lincoln's-Inn*,

On JANUARY 30. 1732.

From JOB xxxiv. 30.

*That the Hypocrite reign not, lest the People
be ensnared.*

By a LAYMAN.

*Fieri potest, quod fit in multis quæstionibus, ut
res verbosior illa sit, hæc verior.*

C I C.

The FIFTH EDITION.

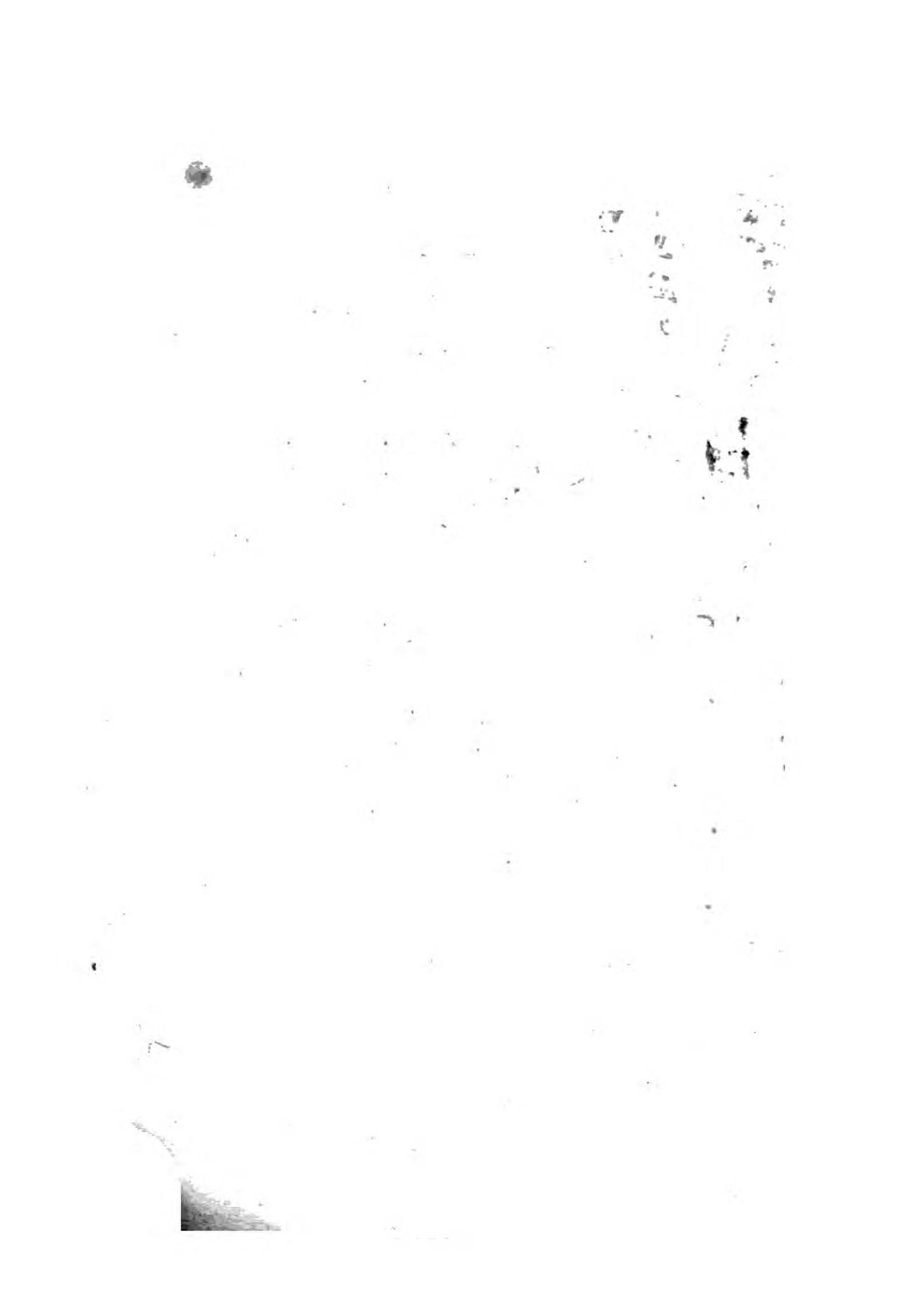
L O N D O N :

Printed for J. PEELE, at *Locke's-Head* in
Amen-Corner, near *Pater-noster-Row*.

M D C C X X X I I I .

Price One Shilling.

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S E R M O N

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IN the Thirty-fourth Chapter of the Book of *Job*, and the Thirtieth Verse, it is thus written: - - - *That the Hypocrite reign not, lest the People be ensnared:*

Friends, Brethren, and Countrymen,

I present my self before you, on this Occasion, with the greater Alacrity, and Assurance, for that I am conscious of no Engagement to any Party or Opinion repugnant to Truth, and the general Interest of my

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Country:

Country: I am under no Pay or Influence to support ancient Prejudices and false Reasonings; under no Biass to flatter particular Fraternities and Factions, nor awed by the Fear of offending them. For the Rule and Guide of my Politicks, I have the Constitution and History of *England*; and in my Religion, I am governed by the Bible and common Sense. He who walks by these Rules walks securely; and he who follows the arbitrary Notions, sophistical Distinctions, and bare Averments of Men, is sure to be deceived, at least can never know that he is not.

That the Hypocrite reign not, lest the People be ensnared.

The Task which from these Words I propose to my self, is to defend the Right of every Man to private Judgment and Opinion, to shew the Absurdity and Wickedness of setting up Authority against Conscience, and to manifest the pernicious Tendency and Effects of Power and immoderate Wealth in the Clergy. As I go along, I shall apply my Reasoning to the Purpose of the Day; and, at the Conclusion, add a word concerning the unhappy Prince, whose Blood was shed on this Day; with the proper Use to be made of it.

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Good Sense is our first and last Guide, since by that we are to judge of all other Guides; and there is more Sound than Meaning in the Objection which some make to the Guidance of Reason, when they ask, "Whether we are to judge of that by which we are to be judged," namely, the holy Scriptures, since we must recur to Reason to know whether the Scriptures be holy, and whether we are to be judged by them. 'Tis to little purpose to tell us, that "for this we must take the Word and Authority of holy Men." For, we must still consult our Reason, whether these be holy Men or no, and whether we ought to believe them or no; seeing there are many Sets of Men all pretending to be holy, all claiming this Authority to themselves only, and all denying it to every other Set.

Our Reason must therefore determine, which of all these are the most holy, and whether any of them be more so than our selves. If the Ways of Holiness and of Knowledge be as obvious to us as to them, we may have as much of either as they have; and in truth, the Sources of both are as open to us as to them. Besides, it ought to mortify their Pride, and be a Lesson of Humility to them, as it is surely one of Caution to us, to see that they never agree with one another;

another; that even those of the same Society, professing the same Faith, subscribing the same Articles, and professing to believe the same Scriptures, agree not in the Rules and Explanations which they exhibit to us. Great is their Variance, not only about Ceremonies, Circumstantials and Discipline, but even about Essentials, about Principles to be believed, about Duties to be practised, and even about the Nature, Operations and Attributes of the Deity: nay, equally great and signal is their want of mutual Charity, as is their want of mutual Concord. Are these to be our Guides, who thus pull us various and opposite ways? Can they teach mutual Love and Forbearance, who hate and revile each other? And is it not notable want of Modesty in them, who cannot agree with one another, to expect that we should agree with them all, or with any of them, when we approve not, or comprehend not what they say, or when what they say is evidently for their Interest and against ours, as all their Aims at Power and Wealth evidently are?

This Reasoning, if it be true, as I think it is, will serve to condemn Archbishop *Laud* and his Associates, who exacted a blind Obedience to their own Tenets and Schemes, a rigid Conformity to all their Ceremonies, Inventions and Innovations, and
cruelly

cruelly persecuted all who preferred Conscience to Complaisance, and were better Christians than Churchmen and Courtiers.

Surely it ought to check and cool the Fierceness of Religionists of all Sorts towards each other about Difference in Opinion, to behold how flaming and rigorous every Man is in behalf of his own ; to behold the most ridiculous and pernicious Opinions defended with equal Obstinacy and Bitterness. *The Jew, the Papist, the Mahometan, the Banian,* have all equal Satisfaction in their own several Systems, have all equal Detestation for one another, and for every different Sect.

Is not this a pregnant Proof, that all this furious Zeal is false Zeal, that it is all miserable Bigotry and Prejudice, or constitutional Intemperance of Spirit? A zealous *Jew*, had he been bred a *Papist*, would have been equally zealous for Popery, and perhaps for burning those very *Jews* who are now his Brethren. Had the late *Dr. Sacheverel* been educated in the *Scottish Kirk*, he would doubtless have breathed as fierce Persecution against Prelacy, as he has done for it; and treated it with as foul and uncomely Names, as he treated Dissenters and false Brethren.

The same is true of Archbishop *Laud* and of other hasty and passionate Zealots; provided always, that all other Preferments in another way be taken away; else the Batteries of their Zeal are often quickly changed, and turned against the Party for whom they were first erected: Witness *Parker* Bishop of *Oxford*, and *Ward* Bishop of *Sarum*, once both holy, praying, and rigid Presbyterians, afterwards both rigid Persecutors of Presbyterians. Is it not probable that they would have died Presbyterians, had the Church Preferments been out of their reach?

This Consideration therefore, that every Man is fond of his own Opinions, and not the less fond for their being very foolish and extravagant, ought to keep Men from quarrelling about any Opinions, and to look upon those who promote such Quarrels, as Monsters and their worst Enemies. This Enmity about Notions, Chimeras, Ceremonies, and other idle Disputes; this War about Words, and Creeds, and Articles, a War and Dispute which have produced such mighty Bloodshed and Desolation in the World, has been the sole Work and Contrivance of ambitious Clergymen; who, for Ends of their own, and the Gratification of their Pride and Fury, and other evil Passions, had the Art and Cruelty to make the Laity
thus

thus to persecute and butcher one another. What infamous Inhumanity was this in Clergymen? What Frenzy and Infatuation in the Laity? But such are ever the Effects of implicit Belief, which is naturally followed by implicit Obedience, which is the certain Beginning as well as the certain Consequence of Slavery. All this Evil, Uncharitableness and Barbarity, arose from the wicked and impossible Attempt to force or suppress private Judgment and Conscience. Of such mighty Consequence it is, *that the Hypocrite reign not*; since where-ever he does, *the People will surely be ensnared.*

What added to this Evil and Insolence, this hellish Cruelty upon the score of Opinion, and made it still more provoking and intolerable, was that it was all perpetrated in the Name of Christ, of the meek Jesus, and said to be for his Church and Cause: A Declaration so impudent and incredible, that it could only be made by Men who were void of Shame, to Men who wanted Eyes. It was as false as the Gospel was true; nor could a Revelation which inspired or warranted any Degree of Bitterness or Cruelty, ever have come from God, or from any but the Antagonist of God and Enemy of Man, from Hypocrites reigning, that is, tyrannizing in the Name of the Lord.

Yet so these hardened Deluders argued, trusting to the Power of Delusion; especially when to that Power of Delusion they had added a good Share of Secular Power; And before they could make the Laity such blind Tools as to be the Tormentors and Executioners of one another, they had eradicated every Grain and Principle of Christianity out of their Hearts, yet made them believe themselves the only true Christians.

This was the Use which such Clergymen made of the Boundless Trust and Power given them by the Laity; and over the Laity they exercised it without Bounds or Mercy. Such was the Power of *Laud* and the Clergy of his Time, and such the unhallowed and inhuman Use which they made of it; yet that Use was the usual and natural Use, the Power itself being unnatural. Indeed, worldly Power and Opulence in such as preach the Gospel, are so repugnant to the Spirit and Precepts of the Gospel, that it is no wonder they cannot thrive or indeed subsist together; but the Gospel must either destroy them, or they the Gospel. It is too visible on which Side the Victory has chiefly turned. Whatever fills Men with Pride and Hatred, and prompts them to Severity and Revenge, may be Popery or Mahometanism, but is just as contrary to Christianity, as Christi-

Christianity is to all Pride and Hatred, to all Rigour and Vengeance.

From hence it is plain who they are, what Set of Men, that have hurt and abused, perverted and abolished Christianity most. I am sorry to say it, but it is too true, that in many Countries and at many Times, the Church and Religion have been very distinct and opposite things: Sure I am, that I have seen very good Churchmen who were very bad Christians, and some who were no Christians at all. I will not say that *Laud* was no Christian; but I may boldly affirm, that he resembled not the first Christians, nor possessed a Christian Temper: An extreme good Churchman I readily own him.

That it is not Religion or Christianity, but chiefly, if not only, Passion and Prejudice, which determine Men to a Fondness for their own Set of Notions and for their own Community, appears from hence, that if a vicious Man be on their Side, especially if he profess much Zeal for his Party, they cherish and extol him; whilst upon a very unblameable and pious Man, who is not of their Party, they are apt to bestow very ill Language, and often ill Usage. This is not the Spirit of true Religion, but of Passion and Partiality: Yet this Spirit too many derive from their particular Religion,

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which they think the best, but which surely is very bad; and 'twere better they had none, than one which banishes their Reason and Humanity. Now if such a Spirit should ever happen to possess those who profess to be our Guides, we may judge how wise and safe it would be to trust to their Guidance, or even to own them as Guides. Had there been no such Guides about an hundred Years ago, we should not in all likelyhood have had this Day now to solemnize. The strange Doctrines and bitter Oppressions in those Days, naturally produced such a Day as this Day.

'Tis not Religion, at least not the Christian Religion, that heats and animates such Men; 'tis only Faction, a Complication of evil and unhallowed Passions. Whoever loves or hates, blesses or curses, from Anger or Fondness, from Obligation or Resentment, belies Religion, if he pretend under its holy Name to hide base Ends and a worldly and partial Heart. 'Tis by such selfish and unworthy Ways that the Church and *Religion* have sometimes come to signify contradictory things: 'Tis thus that Men who have had no Religion or Virtue, have been extolled as excellent Churchmen: 'Tis thus that Men of the highest Religion and Virtue, have been, and often are reviled and condemned as bad Churchmen; and 'tis thus that pious
Christians

Christians have been punished, sometimes burned, by such as were special Churchmen, but not Christians. And indeed, whenever such false Zealots manifest such a Spirit of Impatience, of Rage and Reviling, they cannot give a clearer Proof that such Spirit is not of Christ, since 'tis so opposite to his Spirit. Nor can Men, who shew themselves full of Bitterness and want of Charity, be at all commissioned by him, who was all Meekness, and gave to his Disciples a new Commandment, that they should *love one another*, and even *love their Enemies*. Yet who so sudden to wax wroth as many of his pretended Successors? Who more forward and unmanly in calling unseemly Names; a Practice as common with many of them, as with the meanest Men, and even the lowest Sort of Women? *Heretick, Atheist, Infidel*, are amongst such Churchmen Words of Reproach, equivalent to the foul Language which the Vulgar throw at one another, and equally shocking to well-bred Men and true Christians.

Surely, from Men who come from God, and are Vicegerents to his Son, one would naturally expect a God-like Behaviour, with an uncommon Store of Christian Meekness and Benevolence. How does Rage, how do gross Names of Abuse, how does Uncharitableness, Revenge, Avarice, Ambition, and
the

the most savage Passions and Demeanour, suit with a Commission from Heaven, and the Gift of the Holy Ghost?

I proceed now to discourse more directly upon the undue Wealth and Power of the Clergy, and the great Evils attending the same; from whence will appear the Calamities and certain Thralldom attending *the Reign of Hypocrites.*

The Clergy, whenever they were left to take as much Power and Wealth as they pleased, rarely thought the Whole too much; nor do I remember any Instance where-eve' they owned that they had enough. Th' they have engrossed some Countries whole, of others the greatest and best Parts; and as much as they could of all. Where they have the Soil, they have the Power in course; and where they have both, (that is to say, in Popish Countries) they are the most unmerciful of all Landlords, and the most oppressive of all Magistrates. Look over the fine Continent of *Italy*, and other Climes where Priests riot and tyrannize; you will find the Laity there and every where starving, when the Clergy are the Land Owners.

Ought not the Laity in other Countries to take warning by this? And is it not monstrous and unnatural for any Number of
Laymer

Laymen to concur with the Clergy in their exorbitant Claims? Should not the Laity too learn by the Example of the Clergy, to take care of themselves? What Wealth the Clergy have, they have from the Laity: By the Power that they seek or assume, they would bind and govern the Laity. Is it natural, or just, or wise in the Laity, to impoverish themselves in order to enrich the Clergy, to forge their own Chains, to exalt their own Creatures and Pensioners into Tyrants and Taskmasters, or to suffer them so to exalt themselves? Can they forget the Insolence and Tyranny of Archbishop *Laud*, the terrible Height of Power which he had usurped, with his aspiring Views to raise the Clergy above the Laity and the Law? Can they forget his saucy Declaration, that *he hoped to see the Time when ne'er a Jack Gentleman in England should dare to be covered before the meanest Priest?* And, as an Indication how much many of the Clergy thought, and wished, and designed as he did, they of this Stamp have been ever since adoring and extolling this usurping Archpriest, this Prosecutor and Oppressor, this Instrument and Prompter of Oppression.

The Man who contends for Power and Riches to the Priests, is ever popular with the High-Priesthood, ever their Darling; nor are they always over anxious about the Soundness

Soundness of either his Faith or Morals. Is not this too a Rule and Example to the Laity? And ought not the Laity to prize and protect, and encourage any Layman who asserts the Rights and Privileges of his Brethren the Laity? Is it not equally fair, and grateful, and honourable, to cherish and esteem any Clergyman, or Number of Clergymen, who are candid enough to maintain the Interest and Independency of the Laity? Is it not foolish, ungrateful, dishonest, and even barbarous, to revile or evil-intreat such Clergymen; to abuse and weaken these our Friends, and to join with our Enemies, with such as would enthrall us, and bring us under their blind Guidance? Where the Clergy are opulent, do not the People starve? Where the Clergy have Power, are not the People Slaves? Is it not thus in *Spain*, thus in *Italy*? In these Countries, where they are Proprietors of all things, and govern all Men, can they be even said to be Teachers, or even to be Christians? No; their Teaching is deceiving, their Doctrines are Lies and Impieties, and their Lives antichristian. Christianity and Truth would undo them. They have therefore banished Christianity, and erected the Priesthood; and for Christ and Truth, they preach themselves and Fables. *Every one, from the least even unto the greatest, is given to Covetousness; from the Prophet even to the Priest, every one dealth falsely.* Jer. viii. 10. This

This is the Effect of Power and Wealth in Churchmen; two things which have proved such a certain and heavy Curse upon Religion and the World, as if the holy Author of both meant thence to convince Mankind, how pernicious, how destructive they every-where are to his Church and People, and to warn all Men and Nations against suffering or encouraging them.

Great Power and Revenues in Churchmen have not only produced and multiplied every Mischief formerly known in the World, but also produced Mischiefs so new and terrible, as the World, even the Pagan World, never knew before; such as Persecution and Butchery for Conscience and Opinion, Wars and national Massacres for Religion, with that mighty Compendium of all that is horrid, treacherous and cruel upon Earth, the execrable Tribunal of the Inquisition. What had Paganism so shocking and horrible, as to be compared to this? Not even their human Sacrifices, which were few in comparison, occasional, and stated. The Inquisition is a continual human Slaughter-house; and in it Men, Myriads of Men, have been immolated, after tedious Macerations in dark and frightful Dungeons, after unrelenting Racks and Tortures, with every Species of Treachery, Misery and
C Terror;

Terror; and all for the best thing which they could do, for their Sincerity and Piety in worshipping the Deity in the way which they were persuaded he liked best.

Now as the Inquisition is nothing but the highest Improvement of Persecution, which begins with Tests and negative Penalties, but ends in Fires and Halts; I will enumerate a few of the many Causes for which Men are committed to it; and they are such and so various, that no Man who in the least exercises his own Faculties, or practises common Charity and Mercy, or even has common Commerce with the World, can avoid it: - - - If he has heard a Heretick preach or pray; (that is, if he has thus heard the best and wisest Man upon Earth, who differs from the Extravagancies of Churchmen:) If when he is summoned, he appear not: If being excommunicate, he sue not for Absolution: If a Heretick (for Example, a Mr. *Locke*, or a Sir *Isaac Newton*) be his Friend: If he do any Act of Kindness for a Heretick; visit him, treat him, assist him, or shew him pity, or give him Counsel: If he suspect the Truth of their lying Legends and forged Miracles; if he assert the Indifference of Meats or of Days, or interpret Scripture according to his own and to common Sense: If he conceal any Heresy, his own or other People's;

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if he spare Father or Mother, Wife or Child, - - - he is for these, or any of these Causes, and for a thousand others, liable to the unparallel'd Cruelties of the Inquisition. Let me add, that by Heresy is meant every conscientious, honest, rational and benevolent Opinion differing from the senseless, narrow, barbarous Whims and Grimaces of the Priests.

As a Proof what quick Havock such a Tribunal must make in a Country, Cardinal *Turquemedas*, the first Inquisitor-General in *Spain*, even in the Infancy of the Inquisition, brought an hundred thousand Souls into it in the small Space of fourteen Years: Of these, six thousand were burnt alive. Observe too, that when such Persons are seized, all that they have is also seized, and their Families left to starve, or sent thither too, if they shew pity, or attempt Assistance.

Can the merciful and wise God, can the meek and compassionate Jesus, who laid down his Life for Men, have any thing to do with such a Church, or with such hellish Instruments and Butchers, impudently calling themselves *holy*, and their Scene of Butchery the *holy Office*? Wisely did our first Reformers disown her being a Church: *Laud* afterwards and his Followers laboured to restore her Credit, contended for her being

ing a true Church, and even derived themselves from her; nay, strove to shew themselves worthy of the Kindred and Descent, by assuming her Pride and Cruelties: Witness their numerous Imprisonments, excessive Fines, Whippings, Dismembrings, and other Barbarities; to their own Infamy, and to the Dishonour of Protestants and of our Nation.

Equal to its other Horrors is the black Treachery practised by that detestable Court, and by all who belong to, or assist it. In order to ensnare a Man into the Inquisition, they will travel Countries, and cross the Seas, to become acquainted with him; will court, caress and flatter him, treat him, make him Presents, lend him Money, administer to his Pleasures, seem to love and adopt his Opinions, rail at the Church, curse his Persecutors and the Inquisition, and swear him an eternal Friendship. - - - All with a black and murderous Purpose to seize him in a proper Place, and carry him off to the Fires and Racks of that infernal Tribunal. But where the Interest of that Church is concerned, Villany changes its Nature, and becomes meritorious; and the blackest Perfidy, and even Perjury, is esteemed and practised as good Policy. Thus the Pope's Legate, at the Head of a Crusade against the *Albigenses*, entrapped their Protector and
 General,

General, the Count de *Beziers*, solemnly swore not to hurt him, and then seized and imprisoned him.

Let me just add upon this Head, That Blasphemy, or any outrageous Words and Defiance offered to Almighty God, is not punishable, nor cognisable in the Inquisition. The great Crime and Pursuit there, is Heresy; that is to say, Blasphemy against the Trade and Opinion of Priests. So that any profane Wretch may blaspheme God without fear of the Inquisitors, provided he blaspheme like a good Churchman, and say nothing against the Priests or their Gear: But if Heresy be mixed with his Blasphemy, he cannot hope to escape. Most remarkable too and shocking is the Impudence and Hypocrisy of these Inquisitors, when after having long starved in their horrid Dungeons the wretched Offender; after having long terrified, misused and tortured him, they at last deliver him over to the secular Arm: They have then the solemn Assurance, *to beseech the Civil Magistrate, in the Bowels of Jesus Christ, not to hurt his Life or Limb;* yet would excommunicate the Civil Magistrate, if he did not burn him alive.----Such is the terrible Power and Falshood of *Hypocrites reigning.*

I am

I am far from thinking that what I have said about the Inquisition is a Digression. That terrible Part of Popery, or indeed any other Part of Popery, which is all terrible, is too little known in *England*. For some time after the Reformation, a due Horror was kept up amongst the People by our Preachers against the Church of *Rome*: And it was done like Protestants, and is their Duty at all times; and they who omit it are unworthy of the Name, and I doubt have dark and unprotestant Designs. But when our Clergy began to contend for equal Dominion and Wealth, they found that they could not consistently rail at the Church of *Rome*, and yet follow her Example. And so far altered was their Stile at last, that instead of painting and reviling her, as *an old withered Harlot, the Mother of Abominations and Whoredoms, and drunk with the Blood of the Saints*, it became fashionable to defend her, nay, to praise her, and even to punish such as exposed her: Such uncommon Friends she found in *Laud* and his Adherents. It is true, he and some others of that Cast wrote Books against some Parts of Popery. But what signified writing against Papists, when he was introducing and practising Popery at home? For, all Cruelty, or even Severity for Opinion, and all Authority assumed over Conscience and the Soul, is
 Popery,

Popery, by whatever Name it be called. Besides, it was natural for *Laud*, who was acting as Pope himself, to deny the Power of the other Pope, at least here; and for the bare Notions, the Ceremonies, the Grimaces and Mummery of Popery, they are of little Consequence, any farther than as they tend to introduce and preserve its Power, by creating or continuing Delusion in the People.

Laud and his Adherents were notorious Persecutors; and all Persecution is Popery; and every Degree of it, even the smallest Degree is an Advance towards the Inquisition. As negative Penalties are the first Degree, so Death and Burning is the last and highest; all the other Steps are but natural Gradations following the first Degree, and introducing the last. For the smallest implies the Necessity of a greater, where the former fails; and consequently of the greatest of all, which is the Inquisition.

Was it now at all wonderful, that *Laud* and his Associates were charged with being Papists, when they were openly introducing and exerting all the terrible Parts of Popery, Church Power and Persecution, and thus establishing Church Tyranny and an Inquisition? For, it was thus that that bloody Court was established; and the like
Claims

Claims and Practices will always introduce and establish it. Madam de *Motteville*, in the Memoirs of *Anne of Austria*, says expressly, upon the Authority and Information of King *Charles the First's* Queen, that *Laud* was a good Catholick in his Heart. It is certain that he brought in what was most terrible in Popery, its Power and Cruelty, with not a few of its Fooleries and Superstitions. Whoever is a Tyrant and Persecutor is a Papist, in the only Sense of the Word that Protestants and Freemen are concerned about.

Let such as claim Power to controul Conscience and Opinion consider this, if they have not considered it already. Let those too over whom such Power is claimed consider it, and look upon the Men who claim it, as Enemies and Deceivers, that would seduce them in order to enslave them. How would any Man, any Protestant, (who dares own his Opinion) like the Inquisition? Without doubt he would abhor it: Let him likewise abhor the Ways and Practices that lead to it; for it is supported entirely by the Power of the Clergy, which never has, never can produce any Good. As Dominion over Thoughts and Notions is in itself a Monster, the greatest of all Monsters, it must be supported by monstrous Means, even by Priests wielding or directing the civil Sword; the pretend-

pretended Followers of the Humble Jesus, treading upon the Necks of Nations, engrossing their Wealth, and spilling their Blood.

Is any Man fond of his Liberty, as all Men naturally are, and of his own Opinions, (for this too is natural) and of examining all Opinions; which every Man has a Right to do? Would he worship God after his own Way, be subject to no Man's insolent Rebukes and Controul, be exempt from vexatious Suits and Prosecutions, from clerical Curses followed with civil Punishments, with Dungeons, and (as they say) with Damnation? Would he preserve his Conscience, his Person, his Time and his Property, and all that is dear to him, safe and entire? He is in consequence of all this obliged for ever to oppose all Power in the Clergy, as it has been ever found utterly repugnant to whatever is dear to Men and Societies. I know not that ever they possessed Power without using it perniciously; I know not that ever they could persecute, and did not persecute: Such of them as had most argued and inveighed against Persecution when they were under it, exercised it afterwards without Shame or Remorse, whenever they got the Rod into their own Hands. Thus the Catholics acted against the *Arians*; thus the latter acted against the former; both complain-

plaining heavily of Persecution, both heavy Persecutors.

St. *Athanasius* could at one time argue, “ that the Devil does therefore use Violence, “ because he has a bad Cause, and the Truth “ is not on his Side. Jesus Christ, on the “ contrary, uses only Exhortations, because “ his Cause is good: *If any Man will be my “ Disciple, let him follow me.* He forces no “ Man to follow him; nor enters by Force “ where he is shut out.” Whence that Fa- ther observes, “ that this persecuting Sect “ could not be of God.” So argued all the Orthodox upon that Occasion, and I think very truly. St. *Hilary* urges the same Argu- ment to an *Arian* Emperor and Persecutor, and denies the *Arians* to be the true Church, for this very Reason. But the Orthodox, when they were uppermost, changed their Tone; and never were there more merciless Persecutors, Oppressors, and Butchers than they. Hence their own Reasoning has been frequently turned upon them; and the He- reticks have charged them in their turn, as being none of Christ’s Flock, because they had renounced his Spirit, and exercised Force and Cruelty. The *Donatists* particularly in- sulted them upon this unchristian Incon- sistency.

But so it hath eternally happened, that no Reasoning, not even their own Reasoning, could

could ever restrain Churchmen, orthodox or heterodox, when they were invested with Power, or with the Direction of Power, from using it violently. The *Presbyterians* justly exclaimed against the Violence and Tyranny of Archbishop *Laud* and his Brethren, for harassing, imprisoning, fining, and persecuting them, and even driving them from their native Homes, to seek Peace, and Shelter, and the quiet Worship of God in the Woods of *America*. He had converted the High Commission Court into an Inquisition: Nay, every Bishop's Court was become an Inquisition; and many of the best Churchmen were silenced, fined, and even deprived, for adhering honestly to the Doctrines of the Reformation, to primitive Strictness of Manners, and for observing the Sabbath.

Did the *Presbyterians* afterwards, these very *Presbyterians*, who had thus groaned and smarted under Persecution, and complained of its Injustice and Fury, exercise Charity and Forbearance towards others who dissented from them, when they were become Masters of ecclesiastical Rule? No: Never was a more bitter, intolerating Race, or more rigorous Exactors of Conformity. Every Man who differed from them was an Enemy to the State, an Innovator, forsooth, whom it behoved the State to suppress. They had forgot that *Laud* had brought the

same Charge against them but a little before, and how unmercifully they had been then used as publick Incendiaries, Enemies, and Innovators. Nor do any Set of Priests fail to draw down, if they can, the Anger of the Crown upon any Man who has merited theirs. Thus the Monks of St. *Denis* in *France*, in the twelfth Century, accused the famous *Abelard*, then amongst them, with being an Enemy to the Glory and Crown of *France*, only for denying that their Founder was *Dionysius* the *Areopagite* mentioned in the New Testament. It is indeed a Charge which all domineering Priests in the World have ever brought, will ever bring against all who offend them, against all who withdraw from their Power, and disown their Systems. The *Presbyterians*, when undermost, felt this to be true, both before and afterwards; and always when they felt it, exclaimed against it; but took it up themselves without blushing, as soon as ever they tasted of Dominion.

The Churchmen too, they who had persecuted the *Presbyterians* without all Mercy, the Moment they found themselves persecuted by *Presbyterians*, made heavy Outcries against Persecution, and preached and wrote for Toleration. It was then that Dr. *Taylor* published his Book entituled, *The Liberty of prophesying*: An excellent Book it is, and
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was then extremely applauded by his Brethren of the Episcopal Profession. But did these Churchmen, did even Dr. *Taylor*, after the Restoration, observe their own Reasoning and Writings for Indulgence to Dissenters? No, it was the great Business of the Churchmen, when they had resumed their old Seats and Revenues, to preach, to write, to solicit severe Laws, and then the Execution of these Laws, against their Protestant Brethren, during all that long Reign.

Was not all this strangely inconsistent, as well as strangely unchristian, on both Sides? And was it not strange Madness, as well as Wickedness, in the Civil Power, to gratify the sower and aspiring Spirit of the Ecclesiasticks, by plaguing and punishing the People about Religion? There is no End of their Demands, nor of the Unreasonableness of such Demands. In *Spain*, where they profess to burn Hereticks, that is to say, Protestants, they complain of it at the same time, as Persecution in a Protestant Country, to imprison a *Romish* Priest, however factious and busy he be in perverting of Protestants. The High Clergy in *England*, though avowed Enemies to a Toleration here, would think it terrible Persecution to deny it to themselves, or their Brethren in *Scotland*. Ay, but we of the Church of *England* are the true Church of Christ, says
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the *English* Episcopalian: And so says *Rome* of herself, so says *Scotland*, so says *Geneva* and *Greece*, and so say all Churches in the World; and each of them would persecute and abolish all the rest as false or defective.

This is not the Spirit of Religion, nor of its Author, but an open Departure from that Spirit. It is the Spirit of Faction and Fury, which utterly blinds Men, and extinguishes that of Peace and Charity, without which Men cannot be Followers of Christ. Did we not daily see it, it would be incredible, to what Extravagancies religious Disputes will carry Men. *Daniel Tilenus*, a learned Man, and publick Professor (I think, of Divinity) became so heated in favour of *Arminianism*, in opposition to *Calvinism* and Predestination, that he declared, were he obliged to change his Religion, he would turn *Turk* sooner than *Calvinist*; for he denied that the *Calvinists* believed in God, and owned that the *Turks* did. *Grotius*, when Ambassador for *Sweden* in *France*, had two Chaplains, a *Calvinist* and a *Lutheran*, who preached by turns. What they principally laboured was to revile one another, and their Sermons were only Invectives. The Ambassador, tired and ashamed of the Extravagancies of these Reverend Madmen, begged them to explain the Gospel without wounding Christian Charity

riety. This good Advice neither of them relished. His *Lutheran* Chaplain particularly replied, that *he must preach what God inspired*; and went on in the old Strain. For, all the Ravings of hot-headed Divines are fathered upon God. *Grotius* at last ordered him either to forbear railing or preaching. The meek Preacher turned away in great Wrath, expressing his Amazement, that *a Christian Ambassador should shut the Mouth of the Holy Ghost*. This he thought terrible Usage, and Persecution, and published his Complaints every where, that *Grotius had shut the Mouth of the Holy Ghost*; that is, his Chaplain's Mouth.

I return to consider the Consequences of Power and great Wealth in the Clergy. These Acquirements of Opulence and Dominion were so foreign to the first preaching of the Gospel, so little known to its Author and his Disciples, that 'tis no wonder they assorted so ill with it, and at last so strangely transformed it, and even banished all but the Name. What can be seen of Christ and his Humility, of the Apostles and their Poverty, in the Pomp and Pride, in the Fierceness and Domination of Priests? Is ought of the Plainness and Simplicity of the Gospel to be found in the Intricacies of School Divinity, in the endless Wranglings and wonderful Distinctions of Ecclesiasticks?

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Does the Pope, or such as resemble or would resemble the Pope, bear any Likeness of Christ, or of St. *Peter*? Did the Ambition of the Bishops and Clergy, their Avidity for Power and rich Churches, for which they contended with Blows, and Bloodshed and Slaughter, come from Christ, or from the Genius of his Religion? Were the Seditions, Tumults and Wars which ensued such ambitious Pursuits, the Effects of a Christian, or of a Clerical Spirit? Yet were not such Evils and terrible Calamities immediately derived from the Thirst of the Clergy after Grandeur and Authority?

At first they had no Revenue but Alms, and of these Alms they had only a Share; but to that Share they at last added (I had almost said feloniously) the Whole, cheating the Donors, and robbing the Poor. They afterwards greatly enlarged these Revenues (which were at first chiefly usurped) by Arts and Contrivances sufficiently wicked and vile, even by deceiving silly Women and Bigots, and selling them Salvation for present Money and Rents; by terrifying the Weak and Dying, and forcing them to compound for Heaven, by parting with all that they possessed on Earth. Father *Paul*, that rational and honest Clergyman, says, that the Church is beholden for her greatest Legacies and Donations, to the Bounty of infamous
Women

Women, Strumpets and Prostitutes; or to that of peevish People, who thus gratified their Spite towards their own Blood and Relations. And as the Church had no Riches but what were freely given her, or taken and gotten unjustly by her; so she had no Power but what was either begged or usurped. What Use they have made of both, we have already seen. It is most natural, that what is ill gotten, should be ill used.

It would make a curious History, to discover and explain minutely, from what particular Men, and by what particular Arts and Application, every Farm, every Estate and Donation now possessed by Churchmen, was at first acquired. I question whether any Revenues in the World were ever so wickedly procured; since to enrich the Church, all Means, even Wickedness, Murder and Impiety, were deemed lawful. Thus Assassins and Blasphemers merited Protection and Absolution; Tyranny and Oppression were warranted and sanctified; holy Snares were laid, false Terrors spread, Miracles forged, God's Name belied, and Jesus and his blessed Mother profanely personated by Priests, to delude Enthusiasts; as if these heavenly Beings had thus honoured them with a Visit in Person.

It were endless to enumerate all the Arts and Impieties, Impostures and Lies, by which Churchmen formerly filled their Coffers, at the Expence and through the Stupidity of Laymen. And though no Possessions were ever so impiously obtained, I never heard any Instance of their parting with them from Remorse or Shame, even whilst the right Heirs, by being thus deprived of their Estates, were starving, and the Possessors (or rather Usurpers) gorged with more Wealth than they could use even in their Luxury and Debauches. Whatever was once annexed to the Church, in these Days of Usurpation and Darkness, (however knavishly or violently obtained) was forthwith sacred and unalienable: nay, it became no less than Sacrilege, to divest her of what she had gained by Robbery and Fraud. For, whatever was once hers, even her Frauds and Crimes, were holy; and it was profane to censure them, or indeed to see them; and he was profane, nay atheistical, who did it. Whoever found fault with the Church, was an Enemy to the Church; and he who was an Enemy to the Church, was an Atheist. Hence the frequent and ridiculous Application of Atheism and Blasphemy, till these two Words, of themselves very awful, grew contemptible. As to the Quantity of the Church's Wealth, she never

ver knew any Stint or Bounds; but whilst the Laity had to give, she took, till in some Countries she had all, and they Rags and no Bread.

Even in this Protestant Nation it is computed, that they have a fifth Part of our Wealth; yes, that fifteen or twenty thousand Priests are endowed with the fifth Part of the Property of eight Millions of People. Are they satisfied with this? And do they never aim at more, or complain of this as too little? If they do, 'tis not for the Reputation of their Modesty: I am sorry to add, that they are in a Way of draining and monopolizing all the Wealth of *England*. It is thought, that the Revenue of the Churchmen is at present as large as in the Times of Popery, notwithstanding the Demolition of so many Monasteries, and the Seizure of their Revenues; considering that the Clergy then maintained the Poor, who are now supported chiefly by the Laity, at an immense Charge, no less than two Millions a Year. There are indeed some Individuals who have very small Salaries: But whose Fault is that? Are there not others, who wallow in Thousands, yet do less Duty than such as are in constant Service with Appointments of ten or twenty Pounds a year? Why should not the Wealth of the Church be more equally and charitably divided. But so it often is,

that the more Churchmen have, the more they seek, yet the less they do. To all this I wish it were not in my Power to add, but it is true, and I must add it, that whatever Corruptions have crept into the Church, did so by the Contrivance, at least by the Connivance of Churchmen, and were never afterwards removed by their Consent.

They are always forward to complain of Innovations, and of disturbing Things that are settled. But who have made more Innovations than Churchmen? Who have more disturbed and changed Religion and States, by their Ambition, by their Disputes, by their turbulent Behaviour and exorbitant Claims? And who are so much given to Change? What Changes, what violent and lawless Changes, were there not wrought by *Laud* and his Brethren in his Time, and always attempted by those of his Spirit ever since? The Laity have been only on the defensive, warding off the Attempts and monstrous Demands of such of the Clergy, and answering their wild Writings. What is a great Part of Ecclesiastical History, but a continual Detail and Repetition of the Efforts of the Clergy to govern Mankind, and to master the World? Was not this an Innovation with a witness, a Propensity to Change, an actual and alarming Change? Were they not continually attempting to be what they were

were not, to have what they had not, still to be richer, still to be greater? Could there be a greater Change than from the Almsmen of the People to become Lords and Princes; from Poverty and Humility, to rise to Mitres and Diadems, and Dominion? And could such a Change, a Change so mighty and unnatural, be accomplished without turning the World upside down?

This is something more than *quieta movere*, something more than disturbing Things that were quiet. Did not *Laud* actually master and abolish the Laws of his Country, assert the Independency of the Clergy upon the civil Power, and terrify the Judges from issuing Prohibitions, as they were actually sworn to do? And did the Spirit of *Laud*, and this Passion in the Clergy of his stamp, for Dominion, Independency, and princely Revenues, die with *Laud*? No: They have even improved upon his Scheme, and added, if possible, to his wild and enslaving Pretensions; and, as a Proof that they were the Pretensions of the Body, at least of the Majority, the Convocation could never be persuaded to censure them.

In short, whoever doubts whether they (I mean all along, such of the Clergy as ambitiously pursued Power) have not been the Authors of Changes in the World, of
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great and calamitous Changes; whether they have not themselves changed and degenerated from their Patterns and Original, need only read History, and compare them with Christ and his Apostles, compare their Pretensions, Pomp, Luxury, and Possessions, with the Simplicity, Humility, Labour, and Disinterestedness of the primitive Christians.

The truth, I doubt, is, when they make this Complaint, which is very usual with them, that *it is not safe to disturb Things which are established*, they only mean to discourage People from disturbing them in their favourite Pursuit after Power and Riches. Whatever is established by the New Testament and the Law, no Man that I know is for disturbing. But if they have Aims and Demands which are neither warranted by Christ nor the Constitution, it is right, and christian, and legal, to disturb, and even to defeat them.

Such high Claimers therefore of princely Rule and Opulence, (if there be any such) are the Men given to change; and it is always just to oppose Usurpation, to redress Grievances, remove Nuisances, and to attack Fraud, Avarice, and Nonsense.

It would be endless to deduce Particulars. But suppose any assuming Clergyman
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were so extravagant, and daring, and had so little Regard to Conscience and publick Tranquility, as to attempt to establish an ecclesiastical Tribunal in our Colonies abroad, to the Terror and Affliction of our Brethren there, who were many of them first driven thither by the Oppression and Barbarity of such Courts here, especially in Archbishop *Laud's* Reign; would not such an Attempt tend to a bold Innovation, and discover a busy, an arrogant and dangerous Spirit in such a Clergyman; and would he not be a good Subject and an honest Man, who set himself against such a lewd Attempt, and exposed its wicked Tendency?

Suppose any other Clergyman, such an Enemy to the civil Constitution, and to the Church of *England*, or such a Defserter from it, as to contend for the Independency of the Clergy, for their Exemption from the civil Laws, nay for trying a Clergyman when he is to be tried, by a Jury of Clergymen; would not such a Man deserve severe Animadversion and Punishment; and would it not be honest and meritorious, to defend the Laws, and repulse this their Enemy, this Innovator, this Papist?

Suppose any other designing Priest, fond of promoting Superstition for the Ends of Authority and Gain, should abuse the Credulity of the People, by pretending to convey

vey Holiness into Ground and Stone Walls; as if Earth or Stone, or any thing inanimate, were susceptible of Sanctity, or their Quality to be altered by solemn Words; and all this without any Colour of Warrant from Law or Gospel, but in Opposition to the Spirit of both; would not such a crafty Priest be a false Guide, an Innovator, who relinquished Truth and the Protestant Religion, to promote Error, and to introduce Popery and Delusion? And would not he who resisted and confuted him, be a Friend to Society, a Defender of Truth, and a Foe to Fraud?

Suppose any Clergyman so bent upon exalting Churchmen and *their Revenue*, (*for*, the sure way of raising them is to raise That) that he encouraged Designs and Schemes for transferring the whole Wealth of a Nation, by no slow Degrees, into the Coffers of the Clergy; would not such a Man be a Promoter of Change, of a universal and melancholy Change, and a declared Enemy to the Laity? And would it not be becoming Laymen, nay, incumbent on them, to be upon their Guard, to secure their Estates, and to preserve themselves and Posterity from Poverty and Vassalage?

Suppose (once more) that any other Clergyman should have the Boldness to declare
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publickly, that a Brother Clergyman (a Bishop, for Example) still continued a true Bishop of the Church of Christ, even though he stood convicted of, and deprived for the highest and blackest Crimes, namely, Perjury, Disloyalty, Conspiracy, Treason and Rebellion; would not such a Declaration be highly insolent, scandalous, and punishable? To tell those who make Priests, that they cannot unmake them, nor one of them, would be to tell them, that Priests are above the Law and the Laity; that the Clergy have a Power and Designation which Laymen cannot take away, though the Laity and the Law actually create them, and confer upon them the only Designation that they can have, nay, confer their whole Office; nor does our Constitution particularly own, or know any Character in any Subject whatsoever, but what the Law alone bestows; and all the Clergy renounce upon Oath all Power whatsoever but what they derive from hence. An Act of Parliament would to-morrow effectually degrade all the Clergy in *Great Britain*; that is, reduce them all to Laymen, and create so many Priests immediately out of the Laity, without a Jot more Apparatus or Ceremony. Whoever is declared to be a Priest by any Society, is a Priest to them, and ceases to be one the moment they declare him none. The strange Notion of an indelible Character

is arrant Nonsense and true Priestcraft, nay, the Ground-work of all Priestcraft. Would it therefore be borne by an Assembly of Law-makers, so tender of their Liberties and of Protestantism as ours, to have this same indelible Character, this Root of Popery, maintained to their Faces? And would it not draw down their Indignation and Censures upon the bold Offender, I had almost said, Deceiver? Surely it would; and therefore

I mention these Instances as bare Possibilities, which can never be suffered in this free Protestant Country, but are common in Popish Countries, nay, are some of the reigning Tenets and Practices which support Popery. How zealous *Laud* was in such Popish Practices and Tenets, I have not now time to explain. Read his Life and Trial.

It is now high time to draw towards a Conclusion, by considering briefly what produced the Tragedy of this Day; a Consideration which will lead us to see how such Tragedies are to be prevented. The immediate Instruments of the King's Murder were violent Men, supported by a powerful Army, gained and commanded by a Usurper. This Power in the Army, and his Power over it, were the Effects of the Civil War,

War, which was itself caused by the Misunderstanding and Struggle between the King and Parliament. What originally produced this Misunderstanding, which produced all the rest, is what we are principally to attend to. It is of much less moment to know by what Hands the King fell, than to know how such Hands, or any Hands, came to be lifted up against him.

Now if we enquire into the first Cause, from which all the rest naturally followed, we shall find that the Violence of his Reign caused his violent End. It is not to be denied nor disguised, that from the very Beginning the Court aimed at arbitrary Power, openly pursued it, and for fifteen Years together practised it, raising Money without Law, and against Law; which was Robbery in those who enforced the Collection of it: Imprisoning Men, the best and greatest Men, without Law and against Law; which was lawless Cruelty: Seizing the Lands and Estates of others, without Right and against Right; which was flagrant Oppression and Violence: Assuming and exercising a Power to dispense with Laws, that is, a Power to make and annul Laws; which was manifest Usurpation: And, in short, establishing an arbitrary and *Turkish* Authority over the Persons, and Rights and Fortunes of the

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People; which was apparent and undeniable Tyranny.

Between Law and Violence, between Right and Tyranny, there is no Medium, no more than between Justice and Oppression. If King *Charles* had no Right to act thus, then his acting thus was Tyranny. If he had a Right, of what Force are Laws and Oaths, and where is our Constitution, the boasted Birthrights of *Englishmen*, and our ancient *Magna Charta*? Why was his Son King *James* turned out; why declared to have forfeited? And I would ask the Admirers and Defenders of King *Charles I.* how they would have liked, how borne such Violences, such lawless Doings and Misrule in King *William*; how in the late Reign; how in this? How would they have relished the Imprisonment of their Persons, Taxes laid on and exacted without Consent of Parliament, arbitrary and excessive Fines, their Estates seized, their Families impoverished or famishing? Doubtless, no Men would have been louder in the Cry of Tyranny; and very just and natural would have been such a Cry. No Sort of Men talk more warmly and frequently now in favour of Liberty and Law. How do they reconcile such Zeal and Professions with an Approbation of the Reign of King *Charles I.* which was one continued Series of Oppressions,

fions, had abolished Liberty and Law, and established universal Slavery? How would they have borne such terrible and tyrannical Usage? Very impatiently, I dare say. If they say otherwise, no reasonable Man will believe them, nor have they, upon Trial, ever shew'd much Passiveness of Spirit. Besides, if they justify the enslaving Measures then; they are not in earnest, or utterly inconsistent with themselves now, when they extol publick Liberty, and are for restraining Kings and their Ministers to Reason and Law.

What we have therefore to do on this Day, is not only to abhor the bloody Death of the King, and wicked Instruments of it, but to abhor also his evil and wicked Government for fifteen Years together; abhor the impious Principles which were then countenanced and prevailed, with the traitorous and ungodly Broachers and Promoters of such; and all the evil and arbitrary Counsellors then and since. And as we lament his latter End, let us detest the Beginning and Course of his Reign, which was as enormous and guilty, as his Catastrophe was mournful and barbarous. Was it crying Guilt thus to cut him off, as surely it was? Was it not also crying Guilt in the Crown, to abandon its Duty, to violate the Coronation Oath, to tread upon Law and Justice,
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to persecute Conscience, to rob and oppress the People, and from limited and lawful, to become lawless and arbitrary? And is it not equally reasonable, equally becoming us as *Englishmen* and Freemen, to commemorate and detest an Administration so pernicious and devouring, Measures so black and lawless? Is it not our Duty to take warning by them, and whenever we are threatned with them, to guard against them, to watch every Principle of Slavery, and suppress it betimes; to rejoice that we live in happier Times, live in a free Government, and under the free Course of the Laws; to pray for the Continuance of such an unvaluable Blessing, and be dutiful and assisting to that Good and Great Prince, who secures it to us, and claims nothing to himself, but what our Parliaments and the known Laws give him?

Let us also learn a Lesson from the Behaviour of the Clergy at that Time; and as they were then become wanton with extravagant Power, and used it very cruelly, in persecuting and oppressing their Fellow-Subjects; let us take Care for the future, that they who are set apart for the Purposes of Holiness, be not spoiled by the unnatural Possession and Exercise of worldly Business and Authority. Methinks it is profaning holy Men as they are, to embark them in
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secular Affairs, in the Commerce and Occupations of Laymen and Worldlings. As they miserably misled that unhappy Prince, King *Charles I.* it may serve as a Warning to other Princes from being led by them; And as they promoted and justified all unlawful and merciless Impositions upon the Laity; as they contended that we were obliged to undergo all Servitude, to be tame Slaves to the meer Will of the Prince, and to obey it as our only Law; we may from hence infer, that whenever they leave preaching the Gospel, and turn Courtiers and Politicians, they are out of their Element, and thence grow more wild and extravagant, as well as more wicked, and shameless and false, than other Men are.

It would never have entered into the Heart of a Layman, that the merciful God authorized Iniquity, Perjury, Perfidiousness and Tyranny; and that any miserable Wretch, who had all these crying Sins to answer for, was still Sacred, and the Vicegerent of God; or that God, who hates Wickedness, had forbid to resist, that is, to remedy the highest and most complicated Wickedness, nay damned all who had Sense and Virtue enough to do so.

These Positions were Monsters, formed by Clergymen out of their Sphere, and in high Fashion with *Laud* and his Associates.

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Was it very natural for the Laity to love and reverence such Clergymen, or these monstrous Positions? *The Lord said unto me, The prophets prophesy lies in my name; I sent them not, neither have I commanded them, neither spake unto them: They prophesy unto you a false vision and divination, and a thing of nought and the deceit of their hearts.* Jer. xiv.

14. Would it not therefore be prudent to keep all Clergymen from thus exposing themselves to Hate and Ridicule, and from promoting Mischief and Misery amongst the Laity? And is not this their Guilt infinitely more heinous and aggravated than that of the greatest private Sinner can be, as it affects and involves whole Nations, and is impiously covered with the Veil of Religion?

According to this Rule, and I think it a true Rule, the blackest Felon that ever suffered, was an Innocent in comparison of *Laud* and those of his Leaven; and had *Laud* consumed his Time in Debauchery, he could have done but small Hurt, compared to what he did as a Troubler and Seducer of the World. His Morals, as a private Man, did but heighten his Credit to do Mischief. With what an ill Grace must such Men rebuke private Vice and the Detail of Sins, they who vend and commit Sins by the Gross? This is indeed to swallow Camels, and strain at Gnats. Crimes are to
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be measured by their Consequences; and he who persecutes Men, he who misleads them and enslaves them, is the most guilty, the most monstrous and gigantick of all Criminals. Had *Laud* been a Parish Priest, and confined himself to the Duties of one; or being a Bishop, had he done so; he, who was a Man of Learning and Morals, might have been an innocent, nay, a useful Man. But as he and his Brethren would needs sway the Court and the Nation, they overturned both by the wickedest of all Means, even by an Excess of Tyranny and Oppression. It was they who raised, or at least increased the Storm, which at last ruined the Publick, and overwhelmed them in the publick Ruins.

These therefore are the Things and Persons now proper to be commemorated. From these we are to take our Marks and Warnings against a Relapse into the like evil Days and Calamities: And if there be any Curse still subsisting, derived from the King's Blood, it must justly lie upon them who approve the Men and Measures that first rendered him arbitrary and oppressive, and thence unpopular and distrusted. Here the Evil began, and from hence it was propagated like a Train. Had he always ruled as he afterwards too late proposed to rule, when Men were irritated and engaged, and

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full of Distrust, there had been no civil War, nor a conquering Army, nor an *Oliver*, nor consequently royal Blood spilt. His Design and Promises to govern better afterwards (when he found that the Laws and Constitution would prevail) have been often urged and repeated, and are a Confession that he had governed ill before. Perhaps he meant to perform them. It is certain his Misrule had been sadly felt; nor is there any Proof but his Word, that he intended to change: That Word had been often and egregiously broken, especially in the Bill of Rights, which he solemnly promised to observe; yet he afterwards openly violated that just Bill.

How this Prince comes to be still so extremely popular amongst many of the Clergy, and consequently amongst many of the Laity influenced by them, is obvious enough. He was a very great Bigot to the Church, to Ceremonies and Shew in Religion, and to the Power and Pomp of Churchmen. These he cherished, and exalted, and obeyed; invested them with his own Power, and surrendered to them almost the whole Supremacy; and not only suffered them to enjoy the Use of it as a Present from him, but suffered them to seize it for themselves, and even to deny his Title to it. For such Court and Favour to them, for humouring them
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in their Persecution of the *Puritans*, for his glutting them with Power, and becoming their Creature rather than Sovereign and Head of the Church, they promoted and consecrated all the Excesses, Oppressions, and lawless Measures of his Reign, because all these Violences were exercised over the Laity; and the Churchmen were so far from feeling them, that they shared in his Domination, and acted the King too in their Place and Turn. This is the true Source of so much Merit and Praise; for this he is adored and sainted; for this he has been often compared to Jesus Christ in his Sufferings; and for this the Guilt of murdering him has been represented as greater than that of crucifying our Blessed Saviour.

These their Panegyrics are, in truth, partial and shameful in all respects, as well as impious and profane; since thence they who utter them make it evident, that they care not how a Prince abuses his Trust, and oppresses his Lay Subjects, if he will but humour and aggrandize the Clergy; else why so much Incense and Applause bestowed upon a Prince who actually did so? This is partial and dishonourable: nor can there be a greater Insult upon the Laity, than to desire, or even hope, that they should join in such Praises and Applause. They who feel Oppression, cannot extol him who com-

mits it, nor reckon him a good King, who uses them like Slaves.

No Sort of Men are more tender than the Clergy, when their Property, or Persons, or Privileges are touched, or more severe and resenting, or even more unforgiving towards such as meddle with either. I fear much, that had the Clergy been then used as the Laity were, treated like mean Slaves, worried with arbitrary Power and Impositions, and imprisoned upon mere Will and Command; this Day would not have been commemorated at all, or perhaps commemorated in a very different manner. Why should not the Laity too have felt and resented Indignities done, and Violences committed against the Laity? Was it natural or possible to praise and honour the Author of such Violence and Indignities? When the Clergy were pleased and gratified, they might rejoice, though it be not generous to triumph when others suffer, nay, by their Sufferings. But the Laity could not express Joy, when they had just Cause to sorrow and mourn; or was it possible they should?

Such is the Difference between the Laity and the High Clergy, with regard to King *Charles* the 1st and Archbishop *Laud*. They adore the Archbishop, because he raised their Power beyond all Reason and Law, and was
 furious

furious in the Exercise of such usurped Power: They adore the King for suffering such Encroachment, for being subservient to the Pride and Pursuits of Churchmen, and for dividing the Sovereignty with them. But as both the King and the Archbishop abused their Power, oppressed and persecuted the Laity, the Laity can commend neither; and have good Reason to pray, that they may never see such a King, nor such an Archbishop, any more for ever, and bless God for their present happy and different Situation. This is indeed just and copious Cause for Joy and Thanksgiving. King GEORGE reigns, the Laws prevail, Dissenters and private Conscience are protected, the Clergy have their Dues, and to all Men their Property is religiously secured. This is Protection, this is Liberty, this is Renown, and we are happy, and ought to be dutiful and content.

As to such Churchmen who will be contending, that the Clergy are a distinct Body from the Laity, with separate Interests and Views; they cannot be surprized to see, that the Laity improve the Hint and Example, and take care of themselves. It is very natural for the Laity to remember, that they alone give and continue to the Clergy what they have, and make them what they are. It is natural for them to be alarmed, when they

they hear the lawless Rule of King *Charles* the First applauded, his lawless and oppressive Measures justified or excused, and himself fainted and adored. This is a bold and awakening Insult, and a full Declaration, that if High-Churchmen can but flourish and domineer as they did then, they care not how much the Laity droop and decay; nay, approve and encourage the Bonds and Distresses of the Laity: And as a Proof how violently in earnest such High-Churchmen are in their Panegyricks upon that King and his Reign, they treat as Monsters and false Brethren, all impartial Clergymen, that refuse to falsify and daub as they do; inso-much that such reasonable and moderate Clergymen as confess the Truth and love the Law and the Laity, and are willing to do Justice to both, are scorned, and derided, and reviled as bad Churchmen, that is, as Friends to the Constitution, to Liberty, and Laymen, and such only as the Laity ought to Esteem. Surely the Laity cannot but consider as open Foes, such Men as vindicate the Oppression and Bondage of the Laity: And that the Laity were thus used by that King, is Fact, and 'tis Fact also, that in using the Laity thus, he was abetted and prompted by all High-Churchmen then, and justified by all such ever since. Is it not full time for us Laymen to see these things, to resent such Insults, and to mark such Insulters?

sulters? Is it not fair in us, is it not natural for us, to distinguish with all Countenance and Favour, those Clergymen alone, who contend for the Liberty and Rights of the Laity, and condemn all the mad and extravagant Claims, and all the selfish and violent Tenets of High-Churchmen?

As to the black Fact committed on this Day, all Men agree to condemn and abhor it, as utterly unlawful, violent, and full of Guilt. But this is not enough for High-Churchmen, unless all the Oppressions and Excesses, all the wicked Counsellors and Instruments of that Reign be likewise excused, if not extolled. This is what they themselves have ever confidently undertaken to do, in the Face of the most glaring Truth and Facts. How we Laymen ought to consider this Day and these Men, I have already said. In truth, had there not been such Men then, there had not been such a Day now. By them the unhappy King, of himself very vain of unbounded Power, and fond of setting Royalty above Right, was abetted and encouraged to pursue such Measures as ended in much Misery to him, as well as to his People: By such Men his Son was tempted to try the same dangerous and guilty Experiment; and by trusting to such Men, to their unnatural Whims and deadly Flattery,

Flattery, he lost his Crown and his Honour,
lived an Exile, and died a Beggar.

From hence, and from all that has been
said, let us learn a Lesson proper for this
Day, and for every Day; that is, let us take
great care, according to the Words and
Warning of my Text, *that the Hypocrite
reign not, lest the People be ensnared.*

P. S. The Author of this Sermon find-
ing his Matter increase, and his Sermon al-
ready too long, reserves what he has further
to say, to a Supplement, which he will soon
publish, addressed to a very important and
most solemn Churchman.

F I N I S.





