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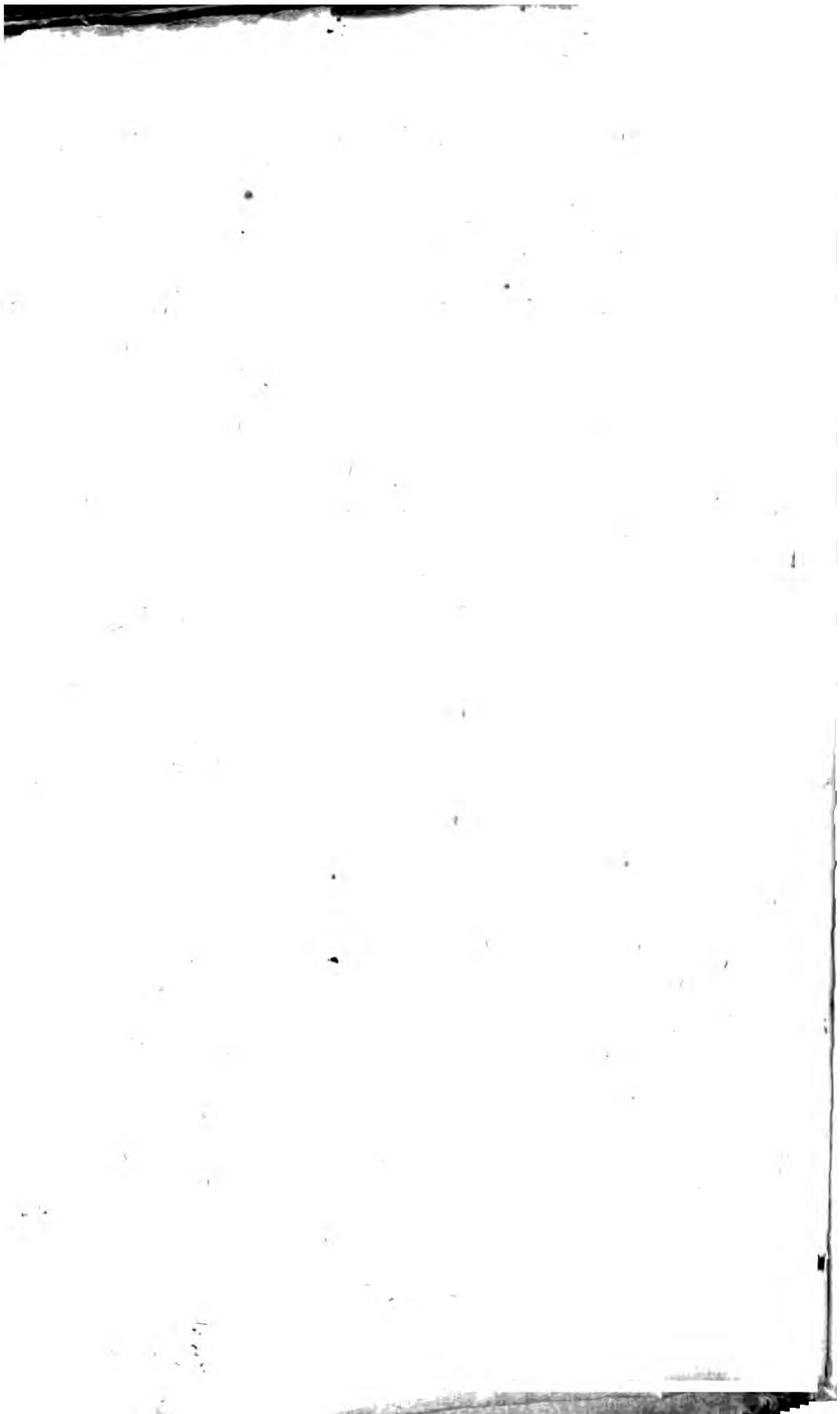
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A

LETTER
TO THE
BISHOP of *ELY*, &c.

Price Six Pence.

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A
LETTER

TO THE
BISHOP of ELY,

UPON THE

Occasion of his suppos'd Late CHARGE
(said to be Deliver'd at *Cambridge, August*
7th, 1716.) as far as Relates to what is
therein urg'd *against* Frequent COMMU-
NION; and *for* the (pretended) Episcopal
Reform'd Churches of *Transylvania, Great*
Poland, and Prussia.

By PHILALETHERS.

*A Son honoureth his Father, and a Servant his Master;
if then I be a Father, where is mine honour, and if I
be a Master, where is my fear, saith the Lord of Hosts
unto you, O Priests that despise my Name; and ye say
wherein have we despised thy Name?*

*Ye offer polluted bread upon mine Altar, and ye say
wherein have we polluted Thee; in that ye say the
Lord's Table is contemptible, Mal. i.*

L O N D O N :

Printed for *M. Smith* in *Cornhill*, and Sold by the
Bookfellers of *London*, and *Westminster*, 1717.



[1]



A

LETTER

To the Bishop of *Ely*, upon
the Occasion of his supposed
late **C H A R G E**.

My Lord,



Was mov'd with a more than
ordinary Indignation, to see
an Imprudent Writer set
your Lordship's Name to an
unaccountable Paper, call'd a
C H A R G E deliver'd to your **C L E R G Y**. I
was no longer dubious in what manner I
should behave my self in an Affair in which
your Lordship's Honour was so nearly con-
cern'd,

A

cern'd, consequently I immediately applied my Labours to vindicate your Lordship from the foul Aspersions of Writing such a mean Pamphlet. I hope the Impartial part of Mankind will acquiesce in the Reasons I shall give why your Lordship could not be the Author thereof.

1st, The said Charge contains very slight Expressions of the *Holy Sacrament*, of the *Eucharist*, such as indeed made my Blood chill in my Veins. I was told therein, that the Mischief of Indevotion at that sacred Mystery; was Cur'd by another Mischief more fatal; *viz.* The Exhorting People to frequent the Communion. I could not find a Name hard enough for such a monstrous Position; surely, said I, this Man has but awkwardly imitated a Christian Bishop, in making him detract from the solemn Mysteries of the Christian Religion. Surely he was but indifferently acquainted with either the first Institution of the *Eucharist*, when our Blessed Saviour was pleas'd to call it his Body, even his Flesh and his Blood; or with the Writings of St. *Paul*. He never turn'd over 1 *Cor.* xi. 26, 27, 28, 29. *For as often as ye shall eat this Bread, and drink this Cup, ye shew the Lord's Death till he come:*
Where-

Wherefore whosoever shall eat this Bread and drink the Cup of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the Body and Blood of the Lord. Let a Man therefore examine himself, and so let him eat of this Bread, and drink of this Cup, for he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh his own Damnation, because he discerneth not the Lord's Body. Was here no Tropes, no Metaphors, no Bold Expressions, as this Mock Bishop would pretend to call 'em; were the Primitive Christians singular in their Devout Encomiums upon the *Eucharist*? the Learned, the Judicious Bishop of *Ely* could never talk at this rate.

2dly, This Writer has found out a new Race of Episcopal Beggars, which were never known in the World before, which require some severe Reflections; for 1st, 'Tis False as to Fact, that such Episcopal Churches are in the World. They set forth in their Petition Publish'd in the *Daily Courant*, of Monday *Septemb. 17. 1716.* That *Wicleff* was their Reformer. But I shall lay down before the Reader, what Notions *Wicleff* entertain'd of Episcopacy. We find in *Orthuinus Gratius fasciculus Rerum.* The Articles of *John Wicleff* oppos'd by *William*

Woodford. These Articles were never questioned by his Friends, and are look'd upon as valuable Remains, by *Regenvolscius* and others of his Followers. The Fifth Article denies That (a) *Confirmation is appropriated to Bishops.*

Art. 6. (b) In *St. Paul's* Time, two Orders in the Church were sufficient, *Sacerdos & Diaconus*; and yet in the Time of the Apostles, there was no distinction of Pope, Patriarch, Archbishop, but Priests and Deacons were sufficient to answer Christian Discipline; but the other Orders owe their origin to secular Pride.

Art. 10. (c) Amongst the 12 Pimps of Antichrist, he enumerates Bishops.

(a) *Collatio Sacramenti Confirmationis non est Episcopis Reservata. Art. 5.*

(b) *Quod tempore Pauli sufficiebant duo ordines Clericorum Sacerdos & Diaconus, nec fuit tempore Apostolorum distinctio Papa, Patriarchum, Archiepiscoporum, sed quod sufficit quod sint Presbyteri & Diaconi secundum fidem Scripturæ quia superbia Cæsarea alios gradus ad invenit. Art. 6.*

(c) *Quod isti Duodecim sint procuratores Antichristi Papa, Cardinales, Patriarchæ, Archiepiscopi, præfules, Episcopi, Arch Diaconi, Officiales & Decani, Monachi & Canonici Bifurcati, pseudo fratres introducti jam ultimo & Quæstores. Art. 10.*

In the Articles Condemned by the Council of *Constance*, we find in that which relates to the Pope, these Words. (*d*)

The Pope is the Antichrist, &c. But not only his simple Person, but all Bishops and their Accomplices, form one Monstrous Body of Antichrist. Not but that Pope *Gregory*, and others, who lived Godly Lives, and perform'd many Good Works, might in the End obtain Repentance. We see here he supposes that even the Pious Primitive Bishops, as Bishops, liv'd in a Mortal Sin.

(*e*) In the Article concerning the Power and Jurisdiction of Prelates, he mentions Excommunication as a Power invented by the Pope, for the Devil's Convenience, and that Bishops have no more Power to Excommunicate, than the Devil has to Curse a Christian People.

(*d*) Papa est ille Antichristus, &c. Non solum illa simplex Persona sed Multitudo Paparum a Tempore Dotationis Ecclesie Cardinalium, Episcoporum, & suorum Complicium, aliorum est Antichristi Persona composita Monstruosa, non tamen Repugnat. Quin. *Gregorius* & alia Papæ, qui in vita sua fecerunt multa bona de genere finaliter pœnitebant.

(*e*) Potestates quæ finguntur a Papa & aliis quatuor novis Sectis sunt fictæ ad Seducendos subditos, Diabolice introductæ ut Prælatorum Cæsareorum Excommunicatio, &c.

He

He afterwards proceeds to tell you, that this Power began with Consecrating the Host; and yet a simple Priest has as much or more Power than a Bishop.

But, my Lord, I have got a more weighty Article to produce against him: An Article in which your Lordship is nearly concern'd, and an Article which if it had prevail'd, would in all probability, have interpos'd between (f) *God's Providence, and the King's Favour*, and prevented your Lordship's Translation from the wholsom Air of *St. Asaph*, to the Bogs of *Ely*. My Lord, this *Wicleff* was a great Enemy to Bishop's Leases; he was for Reducing Episcopal Revenues to the Standard of the People's Pleasure. He tells you, That (g) Bishops are the People's Servants, and that their Wages may be withdrawn, if the People find them undeserving. How low, my Lord, in these Times, would the *English* Bishopricks be Reduc'd?

These were the Sentiments of *Wicleff* of Episcopacy, *Hus* and *Hierom* of *Prague*,

(f) See the Beginning of the Charge.

(g) Decimæ sunt puræ Elemosynæ & Parochiani possunt propter peccata suorum Prælatorum ad libitum suum eas auferre.

who

who Completed his Reformation, exactly follow'd his steps.

I shall next proceed to the History of the Constitution of their Church; that the Reader may have a view what manner of Episcopacy they settled therein.

About the Year 1370, *John Wicleff* being Banish'd out of *England*, fled into *Bohemia* (*b*) where he left the Dregs of his Poisonous Notions, but he settled no Church Policy, nor form'd any Regular Body of Followers; and therefore the Petition in asserting a Succession of Clergy from *Wicleff* is false.

About the Year 400, *Hus* and *Hierom* of *Prague* began their Reformation, by Preaching against the Interdiction of the Cup. *Hus's* Notion of Episcopacy may be seen in the Articles deliver'd against him to Pope *John XXIII.* in the Third Article he says, That the Church does not consist of Bishops, and Archbishops, and a Clergy subject to them; that (*i*) such a signification of the Word Church, was invented

(*b*) See *Regenvolcius*, lib. 1. c. 4.

(*i*) Non admittit quod Ecclesia significet Papam, Cardinales, Archiepiscopos, Episcopos & Clerum eis subditum & dicit illam significationem Extortam & Scholaribus & nullatenus tenendam, *vid. Art. ad init. Oper. Joh. Hus.* purely

purely to serve a Turn; he was also of the same *Sentiments* with *Wicleff*, in Relation to Bishop's Leases, and their Temporalities.

In the Fourth Article he gives (*k*) *Presbyters* the Power of Ordination. He saith, That not only the Reservation of Papal Causes (which I grant) but likewise the Ordinations of Bishops and Clergy are Humane Inventions, Calculated to support the Ambition of some Men.

But to Convince your Lordship that he was an exact *Wicleffian*, we are told in the same Indictment drawn up against *Huss*, that when the University of *Prague* Condemned the 45 Article of *Wicleff* as Scandalous, and Heretical, he was the only Man who stood up in Vindication of every one, and asserted that they were all Orthodox, and he Disputed in their Defence in the Publick University.

After he was Burnt, a most dreadful Rebellion broke out in *Bobemia*, under the

(*k*) Presbyteros Paris dicit esse potestatis & ideo Reservationes Casuum Papalium & Episcopaliū ordinationem & Clericorum Consecrationem dicit propter cupiditatem vel ambitionem superiorum adinventas, *Art. 4.*

Command of *Zisca*; and they call'd themselves *Taborites*, the Archbishop of *Prague* Renounced his Errors, and submitted all his Archiepiscopal Powers to a Presbytery at *Prague*.

At this time the *Calixtines* made a Figure, they dissented from the Church of *Rome*, only in Relation to the interdiction of the Cup.

The *Taborites* after the death of *Zisca*, were divided into two Parts. The True Genuine *Taborites*, and the *Orphana*. The first were zealous for a compleat Reformation, and the latter for a more moderate amputation of some Excrescencies.

But the Council of *Basil* accommodated the Matter with the major part of the *Taborites*, and declar'd them true Sons of the Church, in the Year, 1433.

The Minor part wou'd not come into those Measures, But they separated from the *Calixtines*, and after they had Constituted a Presbytery at *Tabor*, that Presbytery Created *Nicolaus Peldirimovius* Bishop as *Regenvolcius* is pleas'd to call him. But, my Lord, here was no Succession preserv'd from the Apostles, here was no Bishop ordain'd by another Bishop, but only a Presbyter; whereas, my Lord, no such Power is Invested in a Presbyter by any Commission from Christ. But alas, my Lord, e-

ven this Episcopacy, such as it was, was immediately extinct, and the whole Sect of *Tabo-rites* were suppress'd about the Year 1448.

Thus ended the Church of *Bohemia* (a) till ~~about the~~ Year 1450, at which time a New Reformation commenc'd; of which I shall give your Lordship as brief an Account as I can.

Upon a Decree of the Council of *Florence*, that the *Bohemians* were Hereticks, a Scheme was laid to Reconcile them to the *Greek Church*, (b) one *Rokitsanus* was the Chief Promoter of this Design, in a Synod of Priests held at *Prague*, and the Matter was carried so far, that an Appeal was drawn up to the *Greek Church*, and Legates were sent to *Constantinople*. The *Greeks* receiv'd the Appeal with Joy, and return'd an Answer in a very obliging Letter, in which they commended their Thirst after Reformation, and promis'd to Ordain Ministers for their Churches. You see, my Lord, the *Greek Church* at that time imagin'd a De-

(a) *Regenvoclius*, c. 8.

(b) Καὶ μετὰ ταῦτα σὺν ἐπιμελείᾳ μεγίστῃ καὶ ἀγάπῃ προνοήσομεν περὶ πνευματικῶν ποιμένων ἢ ἐπισκόπων τῶν ὑμετέρων ψυχῶν ποιμαίνοντων ὑμᾶς τῷ λόγῳ τῆς ἀληθείας καὶ τῷ παραδείγματι τῆς ζωῆς ἑθλιβόντων.

fect in the Commissions of the *Bohemian* Reformer.

Rokitsanus could not have Patience (c) to see an Affair of that Nature carried on so gradually, he mov'd for a separation from the *Calixtina*, which was agreed to unanimously; and withal, that he should be the Head thereof, At first they were contented with a private Place for the Worship of God. But about the Year 1457, they set up for themselves, and propagated with all their Power.

Regenvolcius tells us, they adhear'd strictly to *John Hufs*, from whence I conclude that their Church was of the same nature, and inur'd to the same hatred to Episcopacy as his formerly was.

Their Clergy he tells us consisted of *Calixtine* Priests, who came over to their Party. The Chief of whom was one *Michael*, Pastor of the Church of *Samburg*; so that, my Lord, here was no appearance of one Bishop amongst them.

(c) Posthac maxime Desiderio, & charitate providebimus pro Spiritualibus Pastoribus & Episcopis; pascentibus vos verbo veritatis, & vitæ exemplo haud affligentibus, *Epist. Græcor. ad Bohemos, apud Col. Treheri Script. Bohem. p. 235. Edit. Hanoviae. 1602.*

About the Year 1467, they began to form their Church into something like Order, and to settle a Ministry therein.

It happened that some *Waldenses* who fled from the Persecution in *France*, settled in the Neighbourhood of *Austria*, with one or two of such whom *Regenvolcius* calls Bishops.

These *Waldenses* were the Original Reformers, who diffus'd their Poison into *Wicleff*, and *John Hufs*; for it has been prov'd that *Hufs* follow'd *Wicleff*; and *Aeneas Sylvius* in his History of *Bohemia*, says, that the *Hussites* kept close to the Discipline and Profession of the *Waldensians*; one of whose Errors were, *That there is no difference between a Bishop and a Priest*, see C. 35. There is also in *Treheir's* Collection a small Treatise wrought by an Anonymous Author, suppos'd to be *Rainerius*, concerning the *Valdenses*, in which he recites their Opinions. The which is, (d) *That all Bishops are Murtherers*. The 11th, *That (e) a Prelate can lay no Claim to Obedience*. The 12th, (f) *That there ought to be no inequality in the Church*.

(d) *Omnes Episcopi sunt Homicidæ, Pt. I. p. 223.*

(e) *Quod non sit obediendum Prelatis sed tantum Deo.* (f) *Quod nemo altero sit Major in Ecclesia.*

This was the first standing Opinion of the *Albigenses*. But *Regenvolcius* tells us, they were under a Superintendent, *Bartholomew* by Name, in *Germany*, who Created Bishops, and Constituted Churches. This was 62 Years after *Valdus* began his Reformation.

This, *Matthew Paris* tells us, was done with a design to intice the Popish Bishops over to their Party. No Man can have the least shadow of Reason to imagine that they so much as pretended to have Bishops before. For *Matthew Paris* (g) recites a Letter from a Popish Bishop of the Presumption of *Bartholomew*, as an unheard of Enormity. But what was this *Bartholomew*, upon whom as far as I can find is founded the Succession of all those pretended Episcopal Churches? But in all probability a meer *Layman*; and if not a *Layman*, he could be no more than a Priest; and by what Commission he could make a Bishop, I cannot tell; I must leave it to your Lordship's Sagacity to find out.

For ought that we know to the contrary, their Bishops as *Regenvolcius* calls them,

(g) *Matth. Paris Hen. 3d*, p. 317. in *An. 1222*.
Ipse etiam inter alias enormitales Creat. Episcopos
& Ecclesias perfide ordinare contendit, *ib. p. 318*.

were

were the Successors of this *Bartholomew*, I am very confident 'tis as much as they can do to claim such an Ancient Succession; altho' for ought we know, they might have a much later Original.

These Men were call'd in to assist the new Leagers in their Scheme. *Regenvolcius* tells us, that tho' some were fond of deriving their Ordination from the Church of *Rome*, their Necessities requir'd them to seek for their Sacerdotal Orders amongst themselves.

Their manner of Ordination was thus; all Ranks and Degrees of Men met together at a Village call'd *Lhota*, in Number about 70, after Prayer, Fasting, and Preaching, the Directors who for that time were chosen to preside over the Synod, pitch'd upon Three Persons, *viz. Rokitsjanus, Procopius,* and *Clenovius*, who pack'd 20 Men for the Purpose; Nine of whom were to be Candidates, who were to draw Lots, there being Six Blanks, and Three Prizes. The Lot stood good and firm, but *Regenvolcius* gives us to understand, that tho' their Church was bound to no Rules, and that tho' there was no distinction between Bishops and Presbyters in the first Ages of the Church, nevertheless to stop the Mouths of their Adversaries,

ries, they would not immediately Ordain these Three Persons. But the *Valdensian* Bishops chose Three, who had before been rightly Ordain'd Priests, Bishops; and gave them a Power of Ordaining the Persons before Chosen, Ministers. The Bishops were *Michael* of *Samburg*, a Priest of the *Romish* Unction, an old *Albigensian* Priest, who went over to the Brotherhood, and another Priest Ordain'd by the Church of *Rome*, to whom they afterwards added a Boy of 25 Years of Age.

This is all the Episcopacy they could pretend to, which puts me in mind of *Tertulian's* Notion, That the Devil takes delight in mocking the Mysteries of Christianity.

But however these strict Admirers of the Episcopal Form took care even to abolish the very Name of Bishops, and to introduce in its room the word *Seniores*. This is the Succession, my Lord, of Christian Bishops uninterrupted from the Apostles, and with this Lye in their Mouth, have they the Impudence to beg in our Kingdom, under the Notion of *Daughter Churches* to *England*; Impudence not to be parallel'd.

2dly, My Lord, *Valdus*, *Wicleff*, and *Hufs* were Notorious Hereticks.

Wicleff asserted (*b*) That all Matrimonial Contracts were void, which at any time were entred into upon the consideration of Comfort, mutual Assistance, or Convenience of Life, by Persons who had no hopes of Children.

2. (*i*) That Divorce by Reason of Consanguinity, was an Human Ordinance.

3. (*k*) There cannot be a more flagrant sign of Heresy and Antichristianism, than to assert that the Clergy can be capable of Inheriting a Temporal Estate.

4. (*l*) He founds all Spiritual Government upon Grace alone, without any Commission

(*b*) Quod Antiqui qui ex Cupiditate rerum temporalium, ex spe mutuorum iuvaminum, aut ex causa excusandæ libidinis, licet de prole desperent, copulantur invicem non vere Matrimonialiter Copulantur. *Art. a Woodford impug. 7.*

(*i*) Quod Causæ Divortii, ratione consanguinitatis vel affinitatis sunt infundabiliter humanibus ordinatæ. *Art. 8.*

(*k*) Quod non est major Hæreticus vel Antichristus quam ille clericus qui Docet quod licitum est, Sacerdotibus & Levitis legis gratiam dotari cum possessionibus temporalibus *Art. 12.*

(*l*) Quicumque est humilior serviviliior in amore Christi, quoad suam Ecclesiam amabiliior ille tam in Ecclesia major & proximus est Christi Vicarius, *Art. 15.*

which

which may Authorise a Person to Govern the Church; his Words are; *Whoever is Meek and Humble, he is the greatest in the Church, and the Vicar of Christ.*

We see here, he opens a way for any bold Pretenders to Sanctity, to invade the Ministerial Offices.

5. (*m*) All Things that happen come to pass by unavoidable Necessity.

6. (*n*) For Temporal Dominion the Justice of the Person who Governs, is so requisite, that no Person who is guilty of a Mortal Sin, can claim any Property in the goods of Life.

The Council of *Constance* Condemn'd him for these following Positions.

7. (*o*) A Bishop in a Mortal Sin cannot Ordain, or Consecrate, or Baptize.

(*p*) The Holy Scriptures forbid that Ecclesiastical Persons should enjoy Temporal Possessions.

(*m*) Quod omnia quæ eventient absolute Necessario evenient, *Art. 17.*

(*n*) Quod ad verum Dominium seculare requiritur justitia Dominantis sic quod nullus in peccato mortali est Dominus alicujus Rei, *Art. 16.*

(*o*) Episcopus vel Sacerdos in peccato Mortali, non Ordinatur, non Consecratur, non Consecrat, non Baptizat, *Art. 4.*

(*p*) Contra Scripturam Sacram est quod Viri Ecclesiastici, habeant Possessiones, *Art. 10.*

A (q) Prelate who Excommunicates a Person appealing to the Prince, or to the Council of the Kingdom, is a Traytor.

They (r) who desist from Hearing or Preaching the Word of God, by reason of any Excommunication below, are Excommunicated for that Neglect, and shall in the Day of Judgment be adjudged Traytors for the same.

There can be no Secular Lord (s) no Prelate, or Bishop, while they continue in a Mortal Sin.

(t) People may at their Pleasure Punish their Offending Governors.

(u) Tythes are meer Charity, and the People may Substract them from their offending Prelates at their Pleasure.

(q) Prelatus Excommunicans Clericum qui appellavit ad Regem vel ad Concilium Regni eo ipso Traditor est Regis & Regni, *Art. 12.*

(r) Illi qui dimittunt prædicare, sive audire verbum Dei propter excommunicationem Hominum sunt excommunicati & in Dei Judicii Traditores Christi habebuntur, *Art. 13. 2^o*

(s) Nullus est Dominus Civilis, nullus est Prelatus, nullus Episcopus, dum est in peccato mortali, *Art. 15.*

(t) Populares possunt ad suum Arbitrium Dominos Delinquentes corrigere, *Art. 17.*

(u) Decimæ sunt puræ eleemosynæ & Parochiani possunt eas propter peccata Prelatorum suorum ad libitum suum auferre eas, *Art. 18.*

(x) Uni-

(x) Universities, Colleges, &c. are Heathenish, and do as much Hurt to the Church as the Devil.

(y) To make the Clergy Rich, is against the Rules of Christ.

These, my Lord, were the Opinions for which not only *Valdus*, and *Wicleff*, but *John Hufs* and *Hierom* of *Prague* were Persecuted under the Name of Protestants. I shall only crave Leave of your Lordship, to insist upon the above-mentioned Topicks to Convince the World of what Dangerous and Pernicious Consequence they are; and whether the Church of *England* can be proud of Boasting of such Daughters.

1st, My Lord, here is a positive Declaration of his own, without any express Warrant of Scripture, to void Matrimonial Contracts; and the same Reason holds why a Man may put away his Wife, after he Despairs of Children from her, as to void the

(x) Universitates, Studia, Collegia graduationes & Magisteria in eisdem, sunt vana Gentilitate introducta & Tantum profunt Ecclesiæ sicut Diabolus, *Art. 29.*

(y) Ditare Clericum est contra Regulam Christi, *Art. 32. Vid. Concil. Constantiense, apud Binium, Sefs. 8.*

Contract upon the impossibility of having any.

2dly, He has broke in upon the Divine Law, and positive Institution of God against impure Marriages, and Incest.

3dly, He declares That, to be an Heresy, which is really none, viz. That the Clergy may Inherit, which was never forbid by the Laws of God, or Man.

4thly, The Founding all Spiritual Authority in the peculiar Sanctity of the Person who pretends to be a Spiritual Governour, effectually Confounds all Notion of a succession of such Governours, it takes away all the Certainty of the validity of any Religious Act, and Erects a Court of Judicature in every private Breast, to pass Sentence upon, and to deprive their Priests. Nay it opens a way for all manner of Diabolical Confusion, the Wicked has all fear taken from him of Spiritual Censures, and has nothing more to do than to proclaim himself a Saint, and back those Pretensions by Power. He may build a New Church, temper the Mortar thereof with Blood, and bring down upon the World all those Miseries that attend prosperous Enthusiasm.

But

But will your Lordship adhere still so strictly to *Wicleff*: My Conclusion is, that your Lordship must un-Bishop your self, and all your Brethren, you must un-Priest all the Chapter that Elected you upon your *Congè de Live*, because I am afraid a Mortal Sin may be charg'd upon the greatest part of them. My Lord, there never was any Schism in the Church, but it was founded upon the pretence of extraordinary Purity. The *Novatians* and the *Donatists* in the Heat of Religious Zeal, wou'd Damn a poor offending Criminal, without Remission, to the Pit of Hell. But they could dispence at the same time with Schism, Murder, and Ufurpation. The *Presbyterian* in these Days is a zealous Man for Gospel Ordinances, but he can Rebel against the Ordinance of *Christ* and of his Apostles. We have many in these Days who are very true Friends to a Religion they can't define: They will fight under its Banner with Ardour and Alacrity, but with such little Indiscretion, that sometimes the Enemy will put out false Colours, and carry 'em over to *Arianism*, *Socinianism*, *Presbytery*, and sometimes very near to the Borders of *Atheism* it self.

But,

But, my Lord, if Piety and Morals alone Commission any Person to Preach the Gospel, or perform any Religious Offices, and no Person without those Qualifications, is, or can be Commission'd in the Church Militant, it becomes a Person to inspect into your Lordship's Morals, before he asks your Blessing; and after all the Pomp of an Episcopal Title, you may be only Mr. *Eleetwood*, Your Ordinations may have been Null, and the Clergy you deliver'd the CHARGE to, none of your own. I do not speak this as any particular Reflection on your Lordship, but as a meer possibility; and that possibility is enough to puzzle a Man who cannot see the Heart, and has only Circumstantials to Judge by.

I hope by this time the Bishop of *ELY* can be no Friend to *Wicleff*, whatever this Writer was, who Forges his Name to such a weak CHARGE.

5thly, *Wicleff* was a Strenuous Asserter of *Predestination* and *Fate*, to which he even made God himself subject, which deserves no better Name than Blasphemy; because it sets up a Power Independent of, and Superior to God, a Power that controuls his Actions; which Power is such, that it
would

would require that Adoration and Worship we pay to the Supreme God.

6thly, That Secular Dominion is founded in Grace, is a Notion that can never be sufficiently Exploded.

I shall Consider this Position in a two-fold Sense: (1st,) As a Grand Heresy; (2dly,) The Consequences that flow therefrom.

First, Heresy is advancing any Notion as an Article of Faith, which is contrary to Divine Revelation. *Tertullian* derives the Word from *αἰρεσις* *Eligo*, Because a Heretick opposes a Religion of his own Choice, and work'd up by his own Fancy to that Faith which was convey'd down by Christ and his Apostles.

But, my Lord, 'tis sufficient to Convict a Man of Heresy, if he Contradicts but the most indifferent and minute part of the Scripture. For Instance my Lord; if I should deny that *Rehoboam* succeeded *Solomon* in his Kingdom, when I have found it expressly asserted in Scripture, I should be an Heretick; because if I can disbelieve any part of Divine Revelation, when I am satisfied that it is such, I must give the Lye to the Sacred Spirit of God, and obstinately oppose my self to its Sacred Dictates. I must assert that in
some

some part of the Holy Scripture. the Holy Ghost spake Truth, and in others not. If this is not an Heresy, my Lord, I have no more to say to the Christian Religion.

Likewise if I oppose any Moral Precept deliver'd down to me in Scripture, I am an Heretick. For Example, if I should maintain, in opposition to the 5th Commandment, *That my Father or my Mother may and ought to be dishonour'd*, * I should commence from that time a Monstrous Heretick. But an actual Disobedience to them, does not make me such, till I advance such an immoral Practice into a Notion, and maintain that Notion is True.

Likewise if I should oppose any Article of Faith in Scripture, I should be an Heretick. For Instance, if I should deny the *Resurrection*, as the Ancient *Gnosticks* have done before, I could deserve no better Denomination, because I not only give the Spirit of God the Lye, but I set up a New Religion, in opposition to the Catholick Church, *which has one Faith, one Lord, and one Baptism.*

But, my Lord, the Precepts of *St. Paul*, and *St. Peter*, in relation to Obedience to

* Vid. *Charge*, p. 2. Line, 24.

the *Higher Powers*, are Articles of the Christian Faith, consequently *Wicleff* was a most Compleat Heretick; in Maintaining, *That Princes in any Mortal Sin might be Punished by the People.*

I distinguish between a Moral Precept and an Article of Faith, thus: A Moral Precept regards my Practice; but an Article of Faith is somewhat I am requir'd to believe; abstracted from Practice.

But the Precept of *St. Paul* in the 13th of the *Romans*, in relation to Obedience to the *Higher Powers*, is both a Moral Precept, and an Article of Faith. 'Tis a Moral Precept, because it regards our Practice; and it is an Article of Faith, because it requires somewhat to be Believed, *viz. That all Power is the Ordinance of God, and that the Supream Power in Society, is the Minister of God.*

Thus, my Lord, *Wicleff* is an Heretick in a two-fold Sense, and he was a Traitor in two Senses more; 1st, He is a Traitor to his more large and extensive Country, the World, of which he was a Subject, by violating the Universal Law of Society; a Law as essential thereto, and as necessary to the preservation thereof, as Attraction

and Gravitation are to the Material World, without which all Things would fall into their Primitive *Chaos*. 2dly, he was a Traitor to his Native Country, in stirring up his own Party to Rebel against their Prince.

I must tell your Lordship, that I think I have prov'd *Wicleff* an Arch-Heretick; with what Face then could this Writer pretend to *Advise the CLERGY to Contribute to the Relief of Hereticks, under the Notion of Episcopal Reform'd Churches*. My Lord, such Reformati^ons have been very Detrimental to Religion.

When I Consider That *Passive Obedience* has carried an uninterrupted Tradition with it from the Beginning of the World, till a very small time past; and when I Consider that the Primitive Christians adher'd so Unanimously thereto, as to give up their Lives (even when they wanted no Strength to defend themselves) to the *Roman Emperors*, I must Conclude, that either a wrong Interpretation was deliver'd down to them, or they Suffer'd Gloriously, as Men who knew and believ'd the Truth to some Purpose.

For my part, I must look upon that Church to be Heretical, which is founded
upon

upon Rebellion first, and takes no Care to Purge her self in her Articles or Confessions, from that Imputation.

I do not say that the immoral Practices of the greatest Number in a Church, involve that Church in Heresy. But if all the CLERGY Transfer their Allegiance to an Usurper, who comes in by no other Claim but the Tumultuary Choice of the People; if they afterwards Swear to, and Subscribe to such a Title, and own its Validity in full Terms; if they Pray to God to Support it, and Prosper it. I say this is flat Heresy.

But an Usurper may come in, and the CLERGY may submit to him, and be consequently guilty of a grievous Sin, without involving the CHURCH in Heresy. In several Cases, if they go upon his suppos'd *Hereditary* Title, as in the Case of HENRY 4th, who really had no such; in that Case, as they did not acknowledge the Deposing Principle, they were involv'd in the *Immorality*, but not in the *Heresy*; and 'tis the same likewise in a Mistake where the *Supream Power* may be lodg'd; as for instance, in *Poland*; if one Party should pretend that the *Supream Power* is
 D 2 lodg'd

lodg'd in the KING, and the other in the *Dyet*, and should accordingly oppose each other in a Warlike manner; one Party must be necessarily guilty of *Rebellion*, tho' not of the *Heresy*; because by their pretending they obey the *Supream Power*, they disown the Universal Popular Deposing Doctrine. But if an Usurper, comes in upon no Pretence of Right, but the above-mentio'nd irregular Election, and the Clergy universally own that Title to be good, I say that they break in upon an Article of Faith, *viz. That all Power is from God*; they place it in the *People*, which is a most flagrant Heresy; because they Rob God of his Power, and in effect Depose him.

I leave to your Lordship's Consideration how far not only these pretended Episcopal Churches, but all the *Calvinistical Churches* are involv'd in *Heresy* likewise.

Valdus, Wicleff, and Huss, a Concatenation of Reformers, brought that Doctrine into their Confessions of Faith, nor was ever this Article expung'd out of those Confessions, or disown'd by any Publick Act or Declaration to this Day.

That

That Pestiferous Book, call'd *Vindicia contra Tyrannos*, was suppos'd to be wrote by *Beza*, the Father of the *French Hugonots*, and that Doctrine has been Practis'd in that Kingdom, and urg'd to its full Rigour, as the miserable Land to this Day can Testifie. In short, the whole Current of Reformers ran that way. *Calvin, Zuinglius, Knox, Buchanan, Goodman, Pareus, Gracerus, Aretius, &c.* the Foreign Reformers, have upon all Occasions Practis'd it. Nor have by any Publick Act or Testimony declar'd their Abhorrence thereof.

Nay, my Lord, *Wicleff's* Followers put those Rebellious Notions into Practice in *England*, under the Conduct of Sir *John Oldcastle*, and Sir *Robert Ascham*. The *Hussites* under *Zisca*, involv'd the Kingdom of *Bohemia* in Blood, under Pretence of subduing the Wicked.

Thus, my Lord, has this unaccountable Writer taken an Heretical Society into his Patronage, and would obtrude them upon the Church of *England*, as her Issue; to such a pass is the Age arriv'd. But, my Lord, I Repeat it, *That whoever maintains such Rebellious Tenets, can be no Son of that pure and undefil'd CHURCH.*

I shall

I shall Conclude this Head with (*) *Tertullian*. ' Hereticks have no Share or Part
 ' with our Discipline, who are judg'd Fo-
 ' reigners by their deserting our Communion,
 ' therefore I cannot acknowledge that I have
 ' any part with them; because they have a
 ' different *God*, another *Christ*, distinct from
 ' *Ours*, and consequently a different *Baptism*;
 ' for if they have no Right Baptism, they
 ' have none in Respect to us; for as that
 ' cannot be number'd which has no Exist-
 ' ence, so neither can they be said to Receive
 ' that which they have not.

I shall crave your Lordship's Patience to
 here the Conclusion, and then I may give
 you an *Eternal Farewell*.

If those CHURCHES mention'd in the
 CHARGE with so much Honour, are really
Episcopal, I flatter'd my self that I have
 prov'd them nevertheless *Heretical*.

(*) Hæretici autem nullum habent Consortium,
 Nostræ Disciplinæ, quos extraneos ubique testatur ipsa
 ademptio. Communicationis, non Debeo in illis re-
 cognoscere quod mihi est preceptum, quia non idem
 Deus est nobis & illis, nec unus Christus, id est
 idem, ideo nec Baptismus unus quia non idem, qui
 cum rite non habeant sine Dubio non habent,
 nec capit numerari quod non habetur, ita nec possint
 accipere quia non habent, *Tert. de Baptismo*.

But

But if they are *Episcopal*, the Consequence is, that a *Priest* may Ordain a *Bishop*, a *Deacon* may Ordain a *Priest*, and a *Layman* may Ordain them *all*.

It Remains likewise that the *Presbyterian Church of Scotland*, and all the Reform'd Churches Abroad are *Episcopal*; for if a *Presbyter* has all the *Sacerdotal Powers* invested in him, he must be a *Bishop*.

I am very sorry that your Lordship's Name should be made use of upon such an Occasion, as giving up the *Divine Right of Bishops*, and Reducing us to the Plan that prevail'd in *Oliver's Days*, at one stroke. My Lord, if that stroke be yours, all that we have been Contending for is given up, and your Lordship has no more of a *Bishop* left than the *Inferior Clergy*, but the REVENUES. They are Bishops alike, as to their *Intrinfick Powers*, and may call your Lordship to an Account.

Consider, my Lord, if whether such bold Strokes do any kindness to *Religion*, or to that *Cause* your Lordship pretends to Defend.

F I N I S.

