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MEMORIAL

TO THE

C L E R G Y

OF THE

Church of *ENGLAND*,

Relating to
Their CONDUCT since the
REVOLUTION.

TOGETHER

With some Advice to them upon the pre-
sent State of AFFAIRS.

By a CLERGYMAN.

I Cor. xiv. 20.

*Brethren, be not Children in Understanding: Howbeit
in Malice be ye Children, but in Understanding be
Men.*

L O N D O N :

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1810

TO THE

CLERGY

Church of England

That God be praised

in all things



in all things

in all things

in all things

in all things

in all things

in all things



*A MEMORIAL to the
CLERGY of the Church
of England.*

Reverend and Dear Brethren,



I CAN no longer refrain from pouring out before you the Sentiments of a Heart big with Grief and Shame on your account, and on the account of the Religion you profess and teach. I am pierc'd with Sorrow when I hear the severe Treatment you meet with from too many, some of whom I fear are stirr'd up against you more from their Aversion to Religion and Vertue, than from that Love to their Country which they generally pretend. But I am at the same time cover'd with Confusion, when I find I cannot with sincerity say in your justification, that you have given no sort of occasion or colour for such Usage. All I can offer in your Defence, is, That you have been misled by those who have had the Art to insinuate themselves (for no good Design, as it now appears) into your closest Friendship and Confidence,

dence ; who have impos'd upon your Easiness, partly with downright Falshoods that they have industriously spread among you, and partly with Misrepresentations and unfair Aggravations of what has perhaps had some Foundation in Truth. And I have ventur'd to say it in your behalf, (and I ventur'd to say it, because I verily believed it true of by far the greatest part of you,) That you would have abhorr'd the very Thoughts of such Crimes as, it seems, have been committing under the Veneration that is deservedly paid to your Sacred Characters. It behoved them to cover the Flagitiousness of their Designs, with something that had Power and Authority enough with Mankind to make Darkness pass upon them for Light. And where could they have found any Support that could be of equal value or use to them, as in seeming to have on their side the Opinions and Inclinations of those, whom Learning, whom Gravity, whom Eloquence, whom Probity and Disinterestedness had rendred the Darlings of the People ? But, I hope, now, that you see whither they have been driving you, to what Precipice they had almost brought you, you will be the most forward to show, and not only to express in Words, the Detestation I dare say you feel rising in your own Breasts at the Discovery of so much Iniquity. And, when you have done this on your part, I hope those Gentlemen, whose worthy Zeal for the Liberty and Happiness, and perhaps Religion of their Country, (I am willing to believe it so,) has led them to pass too unmerciful and too general Censures on our Body, because of the infamous Behaviour of those who are the Reproach of their Order ; I say, I hope those Gentlemen will let us hear no more of that cruel and unfair Method of

condemning All for the Crimes of a Few. And I hope the only Revenge we shall take of those who shall for the future revile us unjustly (the only Revenge indeed that may be taken by a Christian) shall be, To convince them by our Behaviour, that if we do meet with unbecoming Treatment it will be undeservedly.

I had this Design of speaking my Thoughts freely to you, when I first heard of the unravelling of this unnatural Conspiracy. But I thought I should address myself with greater advantage to yourselves, and meet with a more patient and favourable Reception from you, if I staid till the whole Scene was laid open before your eyes, and till you had had time to recover your own natural and honest Way of Thinking: which I am sure must be now full of Horror at such Actions; to You especially, who have been bred up in the Schools of Vertue, and in the sacred Institutions of Religion; and of Indignation, to find that any educated in the same Places, and presuming to take upon them the same pure and undefiled Character with yourselves, should be so abandon'd as it appears they are.

But I will not aggravate the Guilt of those who are going to suffer the just Punishment of their Crimes in this Life; and, I would hope, may be awaken'd thereby to such a Sense of their Vileness, as may save them from that which otherwise abides them in the *next*: Tho' who can aggravate what really surpasses all Words and Thoughts; and, if it had not been prov'd beyond Doubt, would have gone without Belief?

No one, I believe, could have had the Cruelty to have suspected any Man of such a Complication of Profligateness, as, it appears now most evidently, these Men have been guilty of.

But

But my Business is not so much to look after their Condemnation, as to consult your Safety: To whom I am tied by the Tenderness of Fraternal Affection, being one of yourselves; by the Concern I feel for your Honour, and much more for Religion, which is in danger of being wounded thro' your Sides; and for the uninstructed People, who will probably be corrupted with ill Principles, if you do not stop the Progress of the Infection, that seems to be going on but too quick among them, unless the revealing of this foul Conspiracy has in some measure retarded its Course.

But the purging away thoroughly the virulent Poison that has been infus'd into the People, and making them learn again the Laws of the Gospel, the Laws of Truth and Righteousness, which these pretended Friends seem to have prevail'd with them to lay aside; those eternal Laws that condemn, and assign to everlasting Burnings, Perjury and Faithlessness, Murder and Rapine, Cruelty and Violence, Treachery and Ingratitude: This, I say, my Reverend Brethren, must be accomplish'd by you. And, if you have unwarily and ignorantly been drawn in to favour and promote Designs your Hearts would have detested had they been reveal'd to you, let the doing this great and beneficial Work, that so well becomes your Office and Dignity, be the Amends you make the World for That, which I am perswaded was at most but your Error, and not your Crime.

But that I may explain my Sentiments more fully to you, I shall cast what I have to say into some Order; (a Method often used by you with Success, when you are laying out to your People the amiable Principles and Rules of Religion and Virtue :) And therefore,

Ist, I shall lay before you the present State of this Church and Nation, that you may have a just View of the Danger we have now escaped, where our true Interest lies, and what must be our Ruin if it should ever come to pass.

IIdly, I shall observe to you the wicked Conduct of those who have pretended to be your Friends, and have been all this while secretly betraying you ; and the weak Conduct of others, who I verily believe have been sincere in their Will to serve you, but have been very unhappy in the way they have chosen to do it in, and by their Credulity have expos'd you to the Vileness and Treachery of the former : On the other hand, I shall remind you of the prudenter Conduct of those who have been always your truest Friends, but who have for that very Reason often fallen under your severest Displeasure thro' the Slander and Malice of those your pretended Friends, but real Enemies.

IIIIdly, I shall let you know the Charge that is laid against us : And,

IVthly, I shall presume to offer such Advice, as not only my own Thoughts furnish me with, but such as I know the wisest and best Men among us agree with me in.

I. As to the present State of our Church and Nation : I shall not seem to mistrust your Knowledge and Observation so far, as to be very minute on this Head. I shall only briefly touch on those capital Points, which ought to be frequently recall'd to our Memories ; and, if well attended to, may serve to direct our Judgment in all Occurrences.

And

And here I shall not rake into Times now almost forgotten, nor run back to the State of this Church or Nation during the Papal Usurpation over us. I shall only once for all observe, that, tho in the dark Ages of Popery the Clergy used to be look'd upon as a different Body from the Nation, and exempt from all Civil Obligations, appropriating to themselves the Stile of *The Church*, and were indeed no other than a kind of standing Force kept up within the Nation at its own voluntary Expence to maintain the Tyranny and Oppression of the *Popes*; yet, since the shaking off the usurp'd Power of the Bishops of *Rome* at the Reformation, we have been esteem'd by all wise Men, and are in the Eye of the Law, a Part of the Nation, as much as any other Society of Men within it, and as much tied by all Civil Obligations. And This has been the Judgment of all the most judicious, the best, and most esteem'd Divines and Writers among us. And whenever we have been led out of this sober way of thinking, either by the Folly and Heat of weak Men among us, or by the Craft and Ambition of ill Men, it has always ended in our Reproach, and sometimes almost in our total Ruin.

I shall then speak for the future upon this Supposition, that the true Interest of the Clergy and of the Church, of the Church and of the Nation, is but one and the same: For the Clergy are but the Instructors of the Church, and the Church is but another Word for the Nation consider'd as Christian. And therefore for one of these to endeavour the Destruction of the other, is like the Hand seeking to destroy the Foot, or the Belly the Head, or any Part of the Body conspiring against the Whole.

Now

Now what this Body, thus united in one Interest, naturally desires, and studies to preserve, are two things; Liberty and Property in their Civil Concerns, and the Privilege of following without disturbance the Dictates of their Conscience in their Religious ones: On the other hand, what they are most afraid of, and strive most against when they apprehend it to be threatenng them, is the Reverse of these; Slavery and Oppression in the State, and Persecution in the Church.

As to the State, we are happy in a Constitution, where every thing that's look'd upon as desirable by those who have thought the deepest on the Subject of Government is provided for: Wherein the Vigour and Expedition of Monarchy, the Dignity and Gravity of Aristocracy, the Content and Freedom of Democracy, seem to conspire the Happiness and Security of the Whole: And Tyranny, either in One or in More, as well as Anarchy in a disagreeing Multitude, where there are as many different Opinions and Interests as there are Faces, seem to be most effectually excluded.

As to the Church, the Papal Tyranny is abolish'd by Law. We are govern'd as to our Religious Concerns by our own Laws and our own Rules, without the expensive and painful Dependance on the Court of *Rome*. Those Corruptions of our pure and holy Religion, which were authorized and imposed upon us by that tyrannical Court, are remov'd: And we are left to our Liberty of searching the Scriptures, and following our own Conscience, without fear or molestation. And, if we find any thing wrong among us, either in our

Doctrine or in our Practice, we have full Powers at home to set it to rights again. And, if any among us think they have met with something amiss in our Establishment, of which yet they do not convince the Majority of us, we leave them full Liberty to dissent from us, without desiring to do them any injury on that account : On the contrary, we are willing to receive any new Light they can strike out to us. Thus have we in our Church, Order and Rule without Tyranny, and Liberty without Licentiousness.

And as for us of the Clergy in particular, I believe no Clergy in the Christian World are so happily provided for. We have no lazy Monks to intrude upon our Province, and to devour the Fat of the Land.

We have Wealth enough not to be depress'd and contemn'd, and yet not so much as to make us envied, and look'd upon as Plunderers of the People ; which was the Case here in the Times of Popery, and still is in the Popish Countries abroad.

We have this Wealth so divided, as to answer the different Merits of Men, to stir them up to emulate one another in real Worth and Serviceableness to their Country, and to encourage Learning, and promote Knowledge truly so call'd.

Our Prelates are rais'd to the highest Rank in the State : And from thence derive a kind of Dignity to the Inferior Clergy ; of which, if they please, they may make a very noble use towards the promoting true Piety and Vertue in the Nation, and so really deserve that Honour which the People are ready enough to pay them.

This

(II)

This is the happy Condition that both our Church and State is in at present. And this is what we mean by the Constitution when we speak of it; which is by much the best of any now in *Europe*, or perhaps in the World.

But yet this Constitution is not without its intestine Enemies, and has had them ever since it was settled on a firm Basis at the Reformation.

There has been a Party among us continually undermining it, and seeming to bear it an irreconcilable Hatred; and have drawn in numbers of weak and ignorant Persons to espouse their Cause, who I doubt never well knew what it was, but took it on their word.

This Party in Queen *Elizabeth's* Reign was no other than the Popish Party: Who were all her time framing successive Plots to dethrone her, and to set up in her room some one or other who was to have ruled by *Spanish* Counsels, and to have restored the exploded Superstition. But, in that glorious and long Reign, we were preserved from all Attempts against our Happiness, by the Crown's being really in the Interest of the Nation: And Queen *Elizabeth* reign'd as absolutely by the free Consent of her People, as if we had been under the most unlimited Monarchy, but with much greater Glory to herself, and Advantage to her People.

In King *James's* Reign that follow'd, the Beginnings seem'd to go on like the preceding one. But in the end of it the Popish Party recovered Strength by the Accession of some Protestants, who, tho not Papists, yet seem'd eager to recall some of the Fopperies and Follies of Popery: And, that they might betray as great

an Aversion to our Constitution in the State, as to that in the Church, were the main Instruments of stretching the King's Prerogative beyond all bounds of Law or Right.

This unhappy Spirit, working through all his Son King *Charles* the First's Reign, was the principal Occasion of the Troubles. This Cause was increased by a Popish Queen's Influence on her Husband's Counsels, and by the Illegal Actions which that Party encouraged the misguided King to venture upon, and which Lord *Clarendon* himself, and the best Men of that Time, were offended at, and opposed vigorously, till they found things running too fast for them.

It happened then, (as it usually does in the like Cases) that the honest and soberer Part were not able to reconcile the Dissensions, and lay the Animosities, which the hot and ill-designing on both sides push'd on. And accordingly we were thrown for near twenty Years into a State, sometimes of usurp'd Tyranny, sometimes of Anarchy, and always of Violence and Neglect of Law, till we unanimously call'd back the Royal Family.

Here properly we may take the nearest Date of our present Divisions and Parties.

The Violence of those who were Friends to Liberty, and had e'en almost thrown it quite away for fear of losing it, *i. e.* had almost established Arbitrary Power in *Cromwell* and his Family, to defend themselves against the Encroachments of the King; I say, the Violence of those People had given the Enemies of our Constitution but too fair a handle to make the name of *Liberty* and *Rights* odious to the Nation.

The

The two Brothers (King *Charles* the Second and King *James* the Second) soon cured the Nation of their Mistake in this point. Those Princes came home tainted both in their Religion and Politicks: And having seen nothing abroad but Arbitrary Sway, and the Pageantry of Popery, despised the Simplicity of our Religion, and the Sobriety of our Laws, and had learnt to esteem Laws and Parliaments insupportable Restraints for Princes. The Nation indeed was madly enough disposed in the first heat to have thrown up all their Rights and Privileges to them. But the great Earls of *Clarendon* and *Southampton* wisely and worthily stemm'd the Madness at first: And the Nation grew soon wise enough themselves, not to think of it any more.

The Court and their Party scarce made a Secret of their Intentions, tho the King could never be prevailed on to put any thing to the venture. But the Illegal Measures, that were always followed when it was thought safe to venture on them, soon raised such a Jealousy in the Nation, as never was laid again during King *Charles's* Life. And his dying a Papist gave the Key to all his other Actions and Designs. The Attempt of ordering the Writs for Elections to Parliament to be returned into Chancery, and there to have it determined who was duly elected: The King's Alliance with *France* to destroy the Protestant Interest, and the Ballance of *Europe*, and to divide *Holland*, as Robbers used to divide their Prey, between the *French* King and Himself, and to free him by the assistance of a *French* Army from the troublesome Parliaments of *England*: Together with the Declaration for tolerating Papists

sub-

subsequent to this fatal Alliance, which Declaration was afterwards voted in Parliament to be against Law: The violent and unjust Seizures, and pretended Forfeitures, of the Charters of *London*, and of several of the other Corporations in *England*: And the barbarous and illegal Trials of State-Criminals, are things you know so well, and are now so publick, that I shall not detain you with a particular Detail of them. They evidently shew'd that this King, and the Party which stood by him, were resolv'd upon depriving us of our Liberties and our Religion, as fast as they could with safety to themselves. But this Prince knew the Sweets of a Crown too well, to risque it on any account whatsoever, and so fail'd in all his Projects and Designs to enslave us.

But his unhappy Brother was not of the same mind with him: He resolv'd to carry his point or loose his three Kingdoms, as he us'd frequently to express himself. And indeed he managed matters so, as to loose both. His turning out the Fellows of *Magdalen-College* in *Oxford* against Law, because they would not, contrary to their Oaths, chuse a Papist for their President: His dispensing with the Laws, and declaring himself above Law, and that his Will was the Law: The sending the Archbishop and six Bishops to the *Tower* for only offering an humble Petition to him against requiring the Clergy to read in the Churches his illegal Declaration for dispensing with the Laws: The erecting the High Commission Court: His granting Commissions and Places of Trust and Profit to Papists, contrary to an express Act of Parliament made but a few Years before: All these things concurred

to

to convince the Nation how infallibly they were undone for ever, unless they found themselves a speedy Remedy.

This general Opinion prevailing in the Nobility, in the Gentry, in the Clergy, in the Army, in the Fleet, in short among the People of all Ranks and Sorts, brought about the Glorious Revolution in that unanimous manner in which it happened, almost without a Struggle.

Popery and Slavery, (fit to be joined indeed!) which had been jointly attempting by all ways and means to fasten themselves upon us for near thirty Years, were now both cast out together. Our Disease was come to a Crisis, and happily admitted of a Cure.

And very sensible of our Recovery we were for some time. We established our Liberties for ever by driving out the Tyrant, and by a Bill of Rights, which was to be for the future a perpetual Contract between the King and the People; and secured our Religion, by excluding all Papists from the Crown, and settling it on the next Protestant Heir.

But the Party that adhered to our abdicated King, the same which had caused and counselled all our Grievances in the two foregoing Reigns, tho they were at first for a while stunn'd, yet soon recovered themselves again, through the mild and gentle Measures that the new Government observ'd; and no sooner were recovered, but returned to their old Animosity against their Country, and obstinately persisted in endeavouring to bring back again the Tyrant we had but just got rid of, and by restoring him, to restore the Tyranny.

The

The kind and merciful Usage they met with from those whom they were pursuing with the most exasperated Hatred, served only to animate them the more to work the Ruin of their Benefactors. And what was really Mercy in the Government, they maliciously and ungratefully construed to be Fear.

The first seven Years of King *William's* Reign were disturbed with successive Plots and Conspiracies, till the famous Assassination Plot. Then indeed the Firmness of the Parliament, who show'd the World that Men should not escape their deserved Punishment by contriving to elude the Law, nor avoid the Force of it by avoiding the Letter, in their attainting Sir *John Fenwick* by Bill, when by spiriting away one of the Witnesses he had got without the reach of the common Forms of the lower Courts of Justice: This Firmness, I say, in the Parliament put an end to Plotting in this Reign, and the following one of Queen *Anne*; for some little Essays that way in Queen *Anne's* time scarce deserve to be rank'd among Plots.

But this Party nevertheless, whether they entered into formal Conspiracies or not, shew'd evidently that they still retained the same Animosity against their Country. They watch'd all those Discontents and Disjoinings which are unavoidable in all Free Governments, and made their own Game out of them. They mix'd in all the most popular and free Counsels, and became the highest Patriots in the Nation. From being extravagantly lavish of the Rights of the People, they grew on the sudden most scrupulously jealous of even the necessary Precautions
which

which every Government must take to preserve itself, when it is attack'd by Plots and Conspiracies. They had put no Bounds to their Profuseness in giving Money in former Reigns, when the Money was generally wasted in the Luxury and Vice of the Court. But now they were very careful of the publick Treasure, terribly afraid of squandering it, when it was to be laid out in purchasing Liberty and Glory to their Country. They had been fond of War with the true Friends of the Nation, the *Dutch*, but were now violently against a War to defend us from the exorbitant Power of a most formidable Neighbour, and to preserve the Balance of *Europe*. And at length, after many Years of War and Victory, they so far prevail'd, that they persuaded us to cast away the Laurels we had already worn, and to drop the Fruits of a long Series of Successes, which had cost us many Millions. And, not satisfy'd with this Advantage over us, they seem'd to be urging us on to further Ruin : And were proceeding to restore the supposititious Son of our abdicated King, and bring back upon us that Slavery which we had almost undone ourselves with Debt to keep out ; shewing thereby that we retain'd the true old *English* Spirit, of esteeming Liberty invaluable, and sparing neither our Blood nor our Treasure to preserve it.

But it pleas'd God to defeat all the Projects of our Enemies, at a time when little Hope appear'd. Our present King came peaceably to the Crown, and was receiv'd with the Appearance at least of universal Joy and Approbation. But the Party, that had been always laying in wait for our Destruction, could not brook the

Disappointment. And because, by an unparallel'd Goodness in this injur'd People, they escap'd the Punishment they had deserv'd, they from thence encouraged themselves to deserve it yet more.

They soon broke out into an open Rebellion : In which, if Accidents had not prevented it, it is well known, they were to have been assist'd by a foreign *Grand Monarch*, who might indeed have restor'd the *Pretender*, but was not us'd to make Conquests for others to enjoy the Fruits of them. And, if that Rebellion had succeed'd, probably we should have remain'd a Province to an Arbitrary Monarchy, which is yet worse (if possible) than being Slaves to a Tyrant of our own.

The next Attempt against us, was, the inviting over a *Northern Prince*, who seem'd to hunt for Adventures all around him, but did not use, no more than the *Grand Monarch*, to assist others, without taking a good account of his Victories for himself : A Prince who was absolute, and not very merciful, at home ; and seem'd to be animated with a peculiar degree of Resentment against us, because we had help'd to curb his Ambition a little, and to keep him within some Bounds.

But his unexpected Death seem'd to break this Design, without its having gone very deep, or made any great Advance ; tho' we now plainly see what Hopes the Faction had conceiv'd from him.

But this present Conspiracy, which is now discover'd, crowns all, by shewing us plainly with what Impatience these Men have longed for our Ruin ; that, even tho' they seem to despair of
foreign

foreign Assistance, yet they chuse to put all to Hazard, to venture their Lives and Fortunes, rather than be forc'd to delay it a Moment longer. And tho' in one Point this last Conspiracy may seem less dangerous than the former ones, not carrying with it the Terror of a foreign Conquest, (not from any relenting in the Hearts of these desperate Men, but because they could not obtain foreign Succours by all their most assiduous Applications, no one Prince or State in *Europe* being so unjust or so rash as to assist them,) yet there are other Circumstances in it that carry greater Horror with them than any thing that has been ever yet known in this Nation

Observe the Cruelty they were to have proceeded with. Arms hid in the Ground for forty thousand Men. These to be dug up, and dispers'd among an undisciplin'd Mob, in several Parts of the Nation, but principally in *London*. It is indeed hard to conceive how such a rude Multitude should have been kept in any order, or manag'd so as to effect the main Design propos'd. But it is easy to see to what Confusion and Slaughter, what Burning and Pillaging, these execrable Men expos'd thereby their Country, and especially this great and wealthy City. There have been many Tumults among us on Publick Commotions. But never, I believe, in the Memory of Man, were any so cruel as to put military Arms in the hands of a Mob. They us'd to be left to such Weapons as their present Wrath supplied them with, which were generally such as could do no great Hurt. But here all was left open to Rapine, and Murder, and Destruction. The very Nature of *Englishmen* (which is bold and brave, but not trea-

cherous and insidious, not cruel and hard-hearted) seems to have been extinguish'd in these Traytors.

Forty Gentlemen (as they call them) were appointed to execute all Orders; well paid out of the Fund; the military Chest kept by a Prelate. I remember it was the same Number that was agreed upon for the assassinating King *William*. And no doubt these were to have been employ'd in the same sort of Gentleman-like Service. So we that see plainly every Crime that could be devis'd, every Evil that could be imagin'd, was to have taken its Part in this Conspiracy. The Religion of the Clergy that were concern'd in it, the Honour of the Nobility and Gentry, the plain Honesty and Good-Nature of the *English* Commonalty was, by mutual Consent of all Parties, to have been equally resign'd. But I need say no more of it: For if the thing itself does not move you with Horror and Indignation, I am sure Words will not do it. The Criminals are paying the Nation some small Satisfaction for their Crimes: Small, I say, for such is the Clemency of this abus'd People, that they will not punish them to the extent of their Guilt, but are satisfy'd with disabling them from doing them any further Harm. We chuse rather to leave to others who may be tempted to follow their Example, the Encouragement of seeing that the utmost they have to fear from entering into a Conspiracy to ruin us (if they are but moderately cautious in it) is Banishment, or perpetual Imprisonment. But tho' this may seem to others abroad Fool-hardiness instead of Courage, I own I cannot but rejoice in it, as a manifest Proof both of the Intrepidity and Hu-
ma-

manity of our Nation. Tho' I would not have our Enemies always trust to this Temper in us. I would have them remember, that nothing grows so terrible as the best Nature provok'd to the utmost, where it finds all its Tenderness turn'd into an Encouragement to injure it the more.

There is another thing I must own I rejoice in likewise: It is, that whatever Punishment is inflicted on these Criminals, however small it may be, and unproportion'd to their Crimes, it is by Bill. I say, I think this is a peculiar Happiness to us, because it will shew every body, that tho' we are merciful, yet we will not be sported with, nor suffer Laws to be so grossly perverted as to protect the Guilty, and expose the Innocent: The Guilty, who, I think, instead of alleviating, aggravate their Criminousness, by adding to the Crime itself the Proof of its being most deliberate, since they have taken so much time to find out a way of committing it without incurring the Penalties of the Law; and likewise by injuring those Laws, which they break, still further, in pointing out to others a way of eluding the Law, and rendring it insufficient.

The Evidence of their being guilty of the Crimes they are charg'd with is so unquestionable, that I believe no one of any Side can in his Heart doubt of the Truth of what is charg'd upon them. All that they say for them, is, that there is not legal Evidence. They would have People have fair Warning before-hand what Crimes they may commit with Impunity. But for my part, it is firmly my own Opinion, (and I believe no one of common Sense can really disagree with me in it, whatever Men may allow themselves to say for the Interest of a Party,) That

That it is always reasonable that the Magistrate, especially the supreme Magistrate, the Legislative Power, should be allow'd to know and understand that which no one private Man in his right Senses can make any question about. And it ought, I think, to be a Maxim in Government, That however inferior Courts of Justice are to be limited, and restrain'd to a certain kind of Evidence, such as is the most usual, and the most frequently to be met with, for fear too unbounded a Trust might tempt them to go astray; yet the Legislative Power should never be afraid to take the Freedom of judging according to the Rules of Reason without regard to Form, nor to proceed upon such Evidence as satisfies their own Consciences, and leaves them as little room to doubt as the most formal and legal Proof could do. Nay, I may add, it may happen to be more satisfactory, and that this Evidence may be the strongest of any: Because Witnesses, which is the common legal Evidence the Law prescribes in these Cases, may be suborn'd, or may perjure themselves out of Malice or Revenge: But for a Concurrence of many different Circumstances to be falsly fram'd, so as to agree exactly to the same Times, Places, and Things, is morally impossible. And such a strong Concurrence, you may see by looking into the Reports of the Lords and Commons, is the main Evidence of this Plot. Nay, the remarkable Letter, which was taken from the Bishop of *Rochester's* Servant in the *Tower*, and was plainly writ in the Bishop's own Hand, and seal'd with his own private Seal; which he always carried about him, the same with which he seal'd his Letter to the Pretender, (you may read it in the Appendix to the Commons Report

D. 52.) does not so much as once pretend his Innocence, or deny the Facts charg'd against him, which one would naturally think a guiltless Man could scarce have forgot, knowing that no Defence can be so strong as real Innocence: Nay, he does not once desire the Friend he writes to, to deny the Truth of what he was charg'd with, but only to take Advantage from the Defectiveness of the Evidence: He does not once reflect upon the Falsehood of the Charge, but only on the Difficulty of making it good in Law: And takes no care to wipe away the Imputation of so black a Crime as he was accus'd of, but only to evade the Punishment, and to make use of the Precautions he appear'd to have taken only against a legal Conviction, and which he had, no doubt, before prepar'd against such an Emergent. Who will believe that a Bishop, and not one of the meekest of Men, would have thus sat tamely by, not expressing even his Indignation, and have left Himself and his Character cover'd with so much Ignominy, from which he could easily have clear'd himself, had he not been guilty? This plain Confession in Him, who appears to have been the first Mover and great Spring of all this Conspiracy, puts it beyond the Possibility of suspecting the Evidence. Nay, if you will look into the single Assertion which the Bishop makes in this Letter, you'll find it proves it yet more strongly upon him: It is only, that he never knew *Neyno*, *Sample*, or *Layer*, nor heard their Names *till the Plot broke out*; (his very Words:) But he does not once pretend to deny that he knew *Kelly*, and *Carte*, and *Plunket*, who were those he is charg'd as principally concern'd with, the two former of whom he is said to have employ'd himself. And yet he cannot

not be suppos'd to have been ignorant at the time when he writ this Letter, which was *February* the 26th, that these last Men were nam'd as well as the former in the Report of the Secret Committee ; which he shows in the same Letter he was well appriz'd of, and which had been then printed and publish'd some time. This ready Profession of Ignorance and Innocence as to the former Persons, and Silence as to the others, plainly, I think, betrays where the true Guilt did lie.

Upon the whole, I believe no one is so lost to all Shame, as to pretend to defend the Crimes these Men are accus'd of : They only would be very sure of the Fact, before they consent to any new kind of Punishment. And they are to be commended for their Scrupulosity. But the Evidence is so clear, the Circumstances so numerous, and so concurring in the same Times, Places, and Things, that a Man, who will take the pains to look into them, must have a great Strength of Mind the wrong way, that is, to keep out Conviction, if he can disbelieve it ; or must have a very harden'd Heart, if he can believe it, and yet defend such Men against his Country by a feign'd Incredulity.

And now, my Reverend Brethren, I have laid before you, as briefly as I could, the true State of the Nation, and of the Party that seems to have taken up an inexorable and irreclaimable Enmity to it ; whom Gentleness encourages instead of gaining, and a due Severity exasperates instead of correcting.

I am satisfy'd I need add no Arguments to convince you, that the Preservation of the Liberty, the Laws, the Religion, the Glory, and the

the Wealth of this Nation wholly depends on maintaining the Revolution, and the Protestant Succession, consequent to it, which now takes place; and that every Plot to bring the Pretender to reign over us, is really an Attempt to rob us of all these Blessings, which we at present enjoy, and to render this Great and Happy Country a Scene of Slavery, Persecution, Misery, Poverty, Violence, and Cruelty.

II. **BUT** it is fit you should likewise see who are your Friends, and who your Enemies; who have been those who have always betray'd you basely under the colour of the warmest Affection, and have play'd you off only to advance themselves, without taking any Concern in what was to befall you when their own ambitious Views had once succeeded.

And therefore, having hitherto spoken to you of the State of Things among us, I shall now turn to the Conduct of Persons. And this I shall do, not to overload or insult the Guilty, or to add to their Punishment, but to warn you of being ensnar'd for the future, as you will find upon Consideration you have been heretofore.

But I must here make a Distinction, of those who appear always to have intended to sacrifice You and your true Interests to their own lawless and boundless Desires; and of those who have indeed often misled you, but who (I verily believe) misled you only out of the weak and deluded Sincerity of their Hearts, having been first misled and imposed upon themselves.

The former ought to be detested by you, as the Instigators of the greatest Iniquities, cloak'd

under the Sanctity of your Character. The others deserve your Pardon and Pity, but not to be follow'd by you again, and trusted to as Guides. They may be honest, but they certainly have not been wise.

In speaking of both these sorts of Men, I shall, as much as possible, avoid pointing at particular Persons; tho' you cannot but see by the Actions I bring before you, whom I must principally intend. But indeed of the first sort there is One who must appear in the strongest Light, whose Crimes are too flagrant to be conceal'd, and who ought not to be allow'd to disperse the Guilt, that lies in a great measure on his single Head, among a Crowd who have but a small Share in it in comparison of him. And therefore I shall consider this Party as acting chiefly under this Man's Influence, and by his Instigation, as I believe every one will acknowledge they have done for now more than twenty Years.

It must be first remembred, because it unravels their true Character, that this Man and his associate Party were most zealous against Popery in King *James* the II'd's Time, writ some of the Pieces that were not the most contemptible against that Religion, and one would have thought had been almost ready to have been Martyrs for *Protestantism*. But, after the happy Turn was effected, when they found not (not soon enough, I mean, for their impatient Greediness) those Mountains which their ambitious Spirits had promis'd them as a Reward for their Zeal, they turned round again, tried to recall the abdicated Tyrant, and did all that in them lay to over-

overturn the new Government, which they themselves had just contributed to set up. They invented Accusations without Ground, and aggravated every the least Errour or Miscarriage into a Crime.

But, what was most unworthy in them, they abus'd the Clergy, who seem'd to put great Confidence in them on the account of their firm Opposition to Popery in the foregoing Reign. They persuaded them, that there were now ill Designs set on foot with regard to the Church: And they laid hold on some wild and disregarded Discourses of loose Men, (such as always were, and I doubt always will be, till a general Reformation prevails) to blacken the Administration, as if they had intended the Overthrow of all Religion among us, because they could not prevent this Licentiousness. They vilify'd and aspers'd, with the most groundless Calumnies, perhaps some of the greatest and best Men we ever had in the Church. And when any of their Slanders were detected, they shew'd no Shame nor Remorse, nor would make any Reparation, or condescend to recall the Scandal they had sent abroad; but left those, whom they had so cruelly injur'd, to the slow and ill-receiv'd Defence of an Apology. They studied to infect (and I fear with too much Success) the Universities, our Seats of Education, with Disloyalty and Disaffection; and, which seem'd something unaccountable, under the Appearance of the most submissive and slavish Principles. The turn they gave it, was, That they were for resisting the present Government, which they call'd Usurpation; and reckon'd Resistance to it was the greater Fidelity and Loyalty to the former abdi-

cated Tyrant, whom they now pretended to look upon as still cloath'd with the legal Authority, tho' they themselves had resisted him, or (according to their now chang'd Language) rebell'd against him. And all this while, to shew how conscientiously they acted, they took down every Oath to the present Government, that was offer'd them, with as little Scruple, as they discover'd afterwards in breaking them again.

They succeeded the better in these Projects, because the Government having a great War to carry on, continual Plots to watch against, a constant Opposition to all publick Measures to struggle with, did not attend to the insinuating Venom which these Men were dispersing amongst all Orders and Degrees in the Nation, till it was gone almost beyond remedy.

The ill Humour which these sort of Men appear'd to have infus'd into the Clergy, first discover'd itself in the refusing to treat or hear of a Comprehension.

In the End of the foregoing Reign, the Leaders of the Clergy had engag'd to the Dissenters, to endeavour to amend some of the Things complain'd of by them, and to procure a Comprehension. The Bishops had mention'd this in their Petition to King *James*, for which they were tried. And the Prince of *Orange* had made it an Article in his Declaration. And the eight Bishops, who refus'd the Oaths in *K. William's* Reign, before they left the House of Lords, mov'd for two Bills: One for Toleration, and another for Comprehension. But those, who were afterwards branded as the Enemies of the Clergy, were then the Men who prevented the Bill for Comprehension from passing in Parliament,

ment, till the Advice of the Clergy should be first ask'd in Convocation. But when the Convocation met in 1689, they would not stir a step, but seem'd full of unreasonable Jealousies and Fears. And indeed it brought no small Censure on our whole Body, that they so soon forgot the good Temper they had seem'd to be in, and the Promises they had so frankly made to the Dissenters, when they had wanted their Assistance in the former Reign.

The Convocation did not sit to do Business for more than ten Years after this : But this Party of the discontented ambitious Men did not for that lie idle. They still work'd on to the same end, and were for these ten Years of interval every where raising grievous Outcries, as if some Mischief was intended to the Church, because the Convocation was not allow'd to act ; tho' it had appear'd, when they did meet, that they would enter into no Business that was propos'd to them in the regular way from the Crown, and this by the Contrivance and Management of some of the very Men who were now the loudest Complainers.

But when in 1701 the Convocation was allow'd to sit, after it had been long clamour'd for, instead of entering into Business, they seem'd to think of nothing but usurping Rights they had no kind of pretence to, stirr'd up by a most shameless Book written by the great Incendiary of the Party for that Purpose. The Book was shewn by many, (but principally by our present learned Metropolitan) to be full, not of Errors which may be pardon'd to any Man, but of Assertions which were not only false, but had not enough ground to lead any
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Man into a Mistake about them. Yet the Author had so little Shame as to persist in the Falshoods he had advanc'd, tho' every body else gave them up, and own'd he was in the wrong. And the whole Business of the lower House of Convocation for many Years was to fight with the Bishops for Independance, which the Book had asserted to belong to them. Those, who had always pretended to the highest Opinion of the Episcopal Government of the Church, now flew in the Face of their own Doctrine, only to annoy those whom they personally hated; and whom they seem'd to hate for no better reason that ever I could hear of, but that they had receiv'd from many of them personal Obligations, which they were unwilling to repay, and thought to obliterate by Ingratitude.

The Use these worthy Gentlemen made of this empty Controversy, was to raise a Flame in the Clergy against the Revolution Bishops, and to possess the Nation against them, and the Government that took their part: But their Characters were too bright to be easily sullied.

These People had at length an opportunity themselves of discovering that all this Clamour was not rais'd out of any desire to do good, but only to enflame Men's Spirits against the Revolution: For when afterwards again, in the end of Queen *Anne's* Reign, the Convocation met, and had a Licence to enter upon Business, these Men, who had rais'd the highest Outcries, had nothing of any consequence to propose. And the Convocation met, and separated again, without any of the Effects that were expected from them, and that the World had been so long prepar'd for.

Another Artifice set on foot by these Men to seduce you, chiefly during the late Queen's time, was, To condemn all Resistance to the Government in any case whatsoever, without any Exception. This was pretended to be only a Compliment to the then present Reign, but was, in effect, condemning the Revolution, and the Oaths which these very Men, who maintain'd this Doctrin, were daily taking in consequence of it. Yet on this head what a Flame was every where rais'd? And how cruelly were those Worthy Men traduced, who stood up in Defence of the Revolution Principles; and justified, both by Reason and Scripture, that glorious Action, in which both Clergy and People had had their Share, and which for some time they all equally rejoyc'd in, even these very Men who now abus'd and revil'd it. But now it was to be condemn'd as Rebellion. However, Common Sense prevail'd over noisy Clamour. The People could not be prevailed on to undo what they had once so wisely done. And on the Queen's Death the Protestant Succession in the House of *Hanover* quietly took place; and gave the finishing Stroke to the Revolution, which had been till then but an imperfect Work.

But here your false Friends took another turn. Some few of them, who had taken the Oaths to the late Queen, and abjured the Pretender, refus'd to take them to our present King; tho' if this Government be not the rightful one, neither was the late Queen's, who reign'd, as much as this King can be said to do, in Bar of the Pretender's Right, if he had any. Others scrupled not the Oaths: But took them, almost avowedly, with the Intention of breaking them; and

and endeavoured to propagate an Opinion, That it was lawful to take an Oath to an Usurper, as to a Highwayman, and to break it again as soon as there was an Opportunity of doing it safely. This vile and impious Doctrine had they the Face to put upon you : An Opinion which would soon extinguish all Faith and Trust among Men ! And I could never hear of any Text they brought to support it, unless it were the famous Couplet of *Hudibras* :

*He that imposes an Oath breaks it,
Not he that for Convenience takes it.*

A Sentiment which that ludicrous Author bestows upon one whom he always takes care to expose for an abandon'd Villain, conceal'd under the sanctified Cloak of Religion. And this noble Sentence he puts in his mouth, as the absurdest Piece of Sophistry he could contrive for him. And this is the great Authority upon which alone, for ought that I can find, this infamous Doctrine is built.

These Men indeed prudently left off declaiming for Passive Obedience, because they felt the Argument might now be turned too strongly on themselves. Nor could they have drawn any Advantage to their seditious Designs, had they become Profelytes to the Doctrine of Resistance : For they had not now so much as a Pretence to say, that any Law was violated, any Right abridg'd, any thing done contrary to the strictest Sense in which the Coronation Oath, or the Bills of Right, or of Settiement, could be construed, to give them the least Provocation to resist.

The Pretence, with which these false Friends now endeavour'd to blind you, and draw you in

to assist in their Designs, was the Danger of the Church. This had been the Cry ever since the Revolution, and had been always applied as occasion offer'd. There was no kind of Ground ever pretended for it, but the Toleration which was establish'd, and the Comprehension which had been propos'd : For I believe they scarce had the Impudence to give for an Argument of the Church's Danger the Struggle between the Upper and Lower House of Convocation ; which was in effect no other, than whether the Constitution of our Church-Government should remain Episcopal, or become in some degree Presbyterian.

But the Toleration and Comprehension were more plausible Topicks. They conceal'd from you, that both those things of such dreadful Sound were first propos'd in the House of Lords by the eight Nonjuring Bishops, who moved for Bills to establish Toleration and Comprehension, without so much as mentioning the consulting the Convocation about it. The Toleration indeed past, being look'd upon as a Right of Mankind, and what therefore fell directly under the Cognizance of the Legislature. The Comprehension was reserv'd till the Opinion of the Convocation was ask'd. And, they not approving it, it was laid wholly aside. So great a Regard was there paid to the Clergy, at the very time, that the Government was traduced as designing to oppress them. And this Design of Comprehension, for which the best Men of our Church have always express'd a most ardent Desire, was represented to you by these artificial Men as certain Destruction to the Church ; as if it had been a Reproach to a Pro-

testant Church to own they had some things among 'em that might be better order'd, or had been Ruin to them to alter any thing. And Toleration, tho' agreeable to Reason, and to the Spirit of our Holy Religion, and the only Way to extinguish those Animosities and Heats, which have once overturn'd, and may again overturn our Church, has been shewn to you in such a Light as to persuade you that the Intention of it was only to undermine the Church, which it was chiefly meant to preserve. And this these Men have had the Assurance to affirm, notwithstanding that it is most visible to all the World, that the Church has had greater quiet since this Bill pass'd than ever it had before: And that every Attempt to break in upon it, (such as the Bills against Occasional Conformity, and against Schism, that pass'd in the end of the late Queen's Reign) has only serv'd to raise a new Flame against the Church, and to fortify the Dissenting Party.

But, if you will but recollect at what times they were most assiduous in spreading such Jealousies among you, you will easily discern with what Design they spread them. The Church, if you remember, was ever most in Danger, when the Nation was most glorious by Victories abroad, when its Liberty was most likely to be settled on a lasting Foot, when the Succession of the Crown was fix'd in a Protestant Line, when we were to be for ever secur'd from all the Attempts of the Popish Interest, and when the late King of *France*, the Head of that Interest, was so humbled, that he was forc'd to sue to us for Peace. In short, when the Nation was glorious and safe, when the Protestant Religion was secur'd and strengthen'd,

then'd, then the Church was in the greatest Peril. On the other hand, when we squander'd away the Fruits of our Victories, when we became contemptible abroad, and feeble at home, when there was a visible Danger of the Pretender's intruding himself into the Throne, and of being well supported in his Attempts, then the Church was flourishing and secure. That is, when Popery was coming just upon us, our Protestant Church was most likely to be happy.

These are the things which these modest Men have been all along imposing upon you.

I could not have believ'd indeed, if this present Conspiracy had not undeniably prov'd it to me, that these Men really meant, or could even have born the thoughts of restoring Popery. I should have thought it Weakness or Heedlessness that made them exert themselves against all the Principles of Protestantism, and study to exasperate you against those who maintain'd and defended consistently those Principles, and to propagate the worst of the Doctrines of the Church of *Rome*, which tend the most to the enslaving *the Souls of Men* : Or I should have thought it perhaps an Ambition in them to possess some such Power here at home, as they saw enjoy'd by the Popish Clergy abroad : But never, that they should resolve on Popery itself, if I had not seen in what Designs they have engaged themselves, to restore a Bigot, govern'd by the Jesuits, who will not even pay the Tribute of Hypocrisy to our Religion. The Honester Man indeed he may be, for ought I know : But the more dangerous, if he should succeed. For

what is more to be fear'd than Sincerity and Firmness in such Principles, as are destructive, not only of all true Religion, but even of common Humanity, as well as of common Sense ?

Yet this is the Man these treacherous Friends would bring us, a Free Protestant People, under. And to this end it appears, that all their Artifices have been directed : To prepare the way for Him, and his Religion : To soften the Aversion of the People to Popery, by making them believe the Doctrines of our Church are not so very distant from it as is imagin'd : And to sow the Seeds of an Aversion to the Protestant Religion, by first disfiguring it, and then abusing it, and exposing it to Contempt : In short, by persuading the People that Protestantism and Popery are so near to one another, that the Step from the one to the other, when it was to be required, would be imperceptible.

This is the Precipice to which these infamous Men have been for near thirty Years studying to draw you. This is the End for which they have put in practice every Art of Deceit ; for which they have forsworn themselves, and tried to prevail on you to follow them in their Perjury ; for which all their specious Zeal for the Church has been lighted up ; and for which they have been always imposing on you with vain Hopes, and deceiving you with lying Stories : To persuade you to suffer yourselves to be tamely bound, and blinded, and then deliver'd up as Victims at the Altars of Superstition

stitution and Cruelty, where you would have been more despised for your Credulity, than pitied for your Misery.

These are the Men who have call'd themselves, and, which is worse, have prevail'd on you to call them, your Friends ; but who, while they have talk'd most loudly of You, and of Your Interests, it's now plain, have all the while meant only themselves, and have been trying to satisfy their own insatiable Ambition.

BUT I will turn your View to a much better kind of Men, who have always, I verily believe, been your sincere Friends, and meant to serve you most faithfully ; but who have unhappily been mis-led and deceiv'd by these treacherous Men, as well as they have been the undesigning Instruments of promoting their Ends for them.

I would willingly draw a Vail over the Conduct of these honest Men, and forgive the ill Effects of their Errors to the Innocence of their Intentions, if I could do it without concealing from you what may be useful for your Information, and may help to direct you better for the future.

And I must observe to you, that the Poison which has been most industriously spread among you, could never have insinuated itself, if it had not come with the advantage of the unblameable Characters of these Men, who were made the Instruments of dispersing it, without
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knowing themselves (I am persuaded) what use others were making of them, or what Ends were promoted by the things that they were doing with a quite different view.

The mischief which has been done by their means, has been chiefly by their being themselves possess'd with, and propagating among those whom they had Credit with, these four things : A Zeal against Toleration, against Comprehension, an Opinion of the Danger of the Church, and of the Unlawfulness of Resistance in any case or on any account whatsoever. By these Sentiments have they help'd to enflame this Nation, and almost to consume it.

I hope they have been deceiv'd in these things themselves. For I am not willing to let myself even suspect, that they have ever gone further than their Conviction; or that they have submitted themselves to be made Tools of, in order to retain that Popularity, which they could not think of parting with, and yet could not retain without going along with the common Prejudice, which ran too strong to be safely withstood. But whatever was the Cause that misled them, whether an Easiness to be imposed upon, or too fond a Desire of being the Favourites of the People, I am sure in either case they are not fit to be follow'd by you any longer as Guides in these matters. Nay, I have that Confidence in their Candour and Sincerity, that I am persuaded they are so sensible of their past Errors, that they will disclaim any such Pretence, and desire you not to trust them

them blindfold again, as you have done heretofore. This would be the Behaviour of truly worthy Men on such an occasion. And I can't doubt but it will be theirs.

BUT there is a Third Sort of Men, who have been the Objects of your Jealousy, who have been generally traduced as Betrayers of the Church, and of your Interests; but who have always forewarn'd you of what you see has at last come to pass, who saw through the Disguise of your Enemies, and who upon that very account have been long the Butt of their most inveterate Malice. And yet these Men prove at length your truest Friends, and your wisest Advisers. They have not flatter'd you, nor sought to please you at your own cost. They have, like faithful Friends, prefer'd your Interest to your Friendship: Nay, have been labouring to preserve you, while they were reviled and abused for their pains. They have been always for Gentleness to Dissenters, for yielding up Trifles, and amending what was wrong, that we might be a Church without blemish. They have been for preserving Religion, in the true way in which only it will be preserv'd, by Strength of Argument and Exemplariness of Life, and for maintaining Liberty, which is the single way to keep out Licentiousness. (This may seem a Paradox. But look round the World, and observe wherever Liberty is driven out, whether Licentiousness and Libertinism does not rise up, and take its place.) These Gentlemen, as they have always preserved the Church by being themselves the

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Ornament of it, and serving to cover whatever might otherwise expose it to Disgrace, so likewise would they excite You to such a Conduct, as would effectually remove all Disgrace from it, and render it lovely in the eyes of all the World. They would persuade you, if you would listen to their Advice, to be both Preachers and Practisers of Peace and Good-Nature, of Vertue and Piety, of Prudence and Moderation; and would for ever silence and discountenance those rude Clamours which disturb the ears of all good and wise Men.

But I shall say no more of these Persons; because I think it of much more consequence to warn you against being seduced by ill Guides, than to recommend you to good ones: For, as you are yourselves the Guides of the People, so I see no reason why you should give up your Judgments into any one's keeping, and should not rather boldly judge righteous Judgment yourselves. I proceed,

III. TO LET you know the Charge that is laid against us.

And because this is to me a most unacceptable Work, I shall go over it as fast as I can, without either concealing from you any material thing that is said against you, where there has been any sort of colour for it, or aggravating the Charge, by mentioning needlessly any Accusations that have had no ground at all given for them, but have been only malicious Slanders against you.

1. In the first place, we are charg'd as Enemies to the Liberty of our Country, and as the Preachers up of slavish and tyrannical Doctrines. This Consequence is drawn from some among us preaching up Passive-Obedience, and the Unlawfulness of Resistance in any case whatsoever ; and from the Ill Humour many of us have express'd at the Revolution, which all the World must see was to this Nation the Preservation of Liberty, and of every thing valuable in Life. The Easiness which I fear too many of us have shewn to catch at and spread every foolish or slanderous Story, every malicious Insinuation to blacken the present King, and to shake the Protestant Succession, has confirm'd the World in this Opinion of us ; and made that the Truth of this Charge seems to be now almost taken for granted by every body.

2. It's said, we are Enemies to Toleration, and look always with an evil Eye on the Acts of Parliament which secure it. This is a heavy Charge, representing us very unlike our Master Christ Jesus, who was the mildest of Men, who told his Disciples that they should be persecuted, but never that they should persecute ; So far from it, that they were not even to revenge Injuries done them, but to reward Evil with Good : Much less were they to injure others, who give them no other Provocation than the differing from them in Opinion, which perhaps they cannot help. So many of us declaring ourselves with violence against this Toleration, and too frequently exclaiming that the Church

is in danger as long as this Act is in force, binds this Charge too close upon us, for it to be shaken off by us any other way than by openly disclaiming it in all our Discourses.

3. We are said likewise to be averse from any Comprehension, or amending any thing that may be amiss among us, or may offend others. It is infer'd from this, that we cannot be much in earnest about Religion; since, if we were, we could never think, say they, that every thing was perfect among us, and incapable of receiving any Alteration for the better, or at least of being chang'd without any damage. This does not look like a Zeal that is according to the Knowledge we are presum'd to have; and therefore breeds Suspicions I am unwilling to repeat again to you.

4. We are accused of being turbulent and seditious. This Charge is founded on the daily Accounts sent up from all quarters of the Nation of the violent Sermons preach'd against the present Government. The Pulpit seems to be grown a perfect *Rostrum*, from which the People are not now instructed in their Religion, but only inflamed in their Politicks; and, instead of learning from thence Peace and Brotherly Love, hear too often nothing but Incitives to hate and devour one another.

5. It is laid to our door that we are insupportable. The extravagant things that have been said of our Authority, and of the Dignity of our Character and Office, and have been entertain'd
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by some weak and vain Men among us with a kind of pleasure, has given rise to this Charge : Such as calling the Bishops Spiritual Princes, saying God was bound by our Censures, that we could absolve Mens Sins or retain them as we pleas'd, and many other wild Notions of the same stamp, which are the Wounds of a Friend, and the most dangerous of any. These things, which have been borrow'd from some figurative and innocent Expressions of the antient Church-Writers, being strain'd to a Sense they never were meant in, have both prevented the settling such true and primitive Church-Discipline among us, as is to be wish'd for by all good Men ; and has made the World suspicious of us, as if we were attempting once more to make ourselves Lords and Masters of the Souls and Bodies of Men : Which is a Yoke, you may be sure, those who can look back upon the great Tribulations that the true Christians suffer'd from an elated Clergy in the Ages of Popery, from about the eighth to the sixteenth Century, will never patiently suffer to be again impos'd upon their Necks. And there is nothing can make us so odious to the Nation, as the Apprehension that we have any such Designs in our heads.

6. We are accused as having either no Concern about Religion, or as being ready and willing to embrace Popery. The Ground of this Charge is the Affection which some of our number visibly and openly express for the Pretender. The natural Construction of this, (if it be true,) I must needs confess, is, that we either

care not what Changes are made in Religion, or that we are desirous again to return to Popery. We are not, and cannot be believ'd so stupid or so ignorant, as not to know that a Popish Prince can never be tied by any Oaths or Promises to preserve a Protestant Church. We have the fresh Instance in all our Memories of the late King *James*, who scrupled not to take the Coronation-Oath, which required him to preserve the Laws and Liberties of his People, yet never express'd the least Scruple at breaking it, but rather seem'd to scruple the keeping it, and was going on as fast as he could to force Popery upon us in defiance of it. And, it is well known, this very Pretender, who aspires to our Throne, is himself a most determin'd Bigot: So much, that, when he was last in *Scotland*, his Advisers and Counsellors could not prevail on him, by all the Arguments of Prudence, to show but the least countenance to the Protestant Religion. Whether this be real Superstition in him, or only that he reckons his surest Dependence is on the Popish Powers abroad, I won't pretend to determine. But whichever is the reason, they must prove equally fatal to the Protestant Religion among us, if for our Sins he should ever come to the Throne of this Kingdom: (Which God forbid he ever should!) And our declaring for him can bear no other Sense to any rational Man, than that we are ready to be, or already are in our hearts, Papists: For it will not easily be believed, that we have a mind to suffer Persecution for our Faith, and are so immoderately zealous to bring upon ourselves what we must know will be immediate

diate and certain Misery, if we are firmly resolv'd not to forsake our Religion.

7. The last Charge upon us that I shall mention, is, That we have no regard to Oaths; but teach Men, and encourage them by our Example, to take them, in order, and with a design to break them. This indeed is the heaviest Charge of all; and would represent us as the most abandon'd of Men. But I for my part cannot believe any of us can be in any degree guilty of it, or at least but very few: Tho' I wish our Silence on this head had not given too much ground to make the World think we approv'd of this detestable Doctrine, or at least were glad to let it pass unopposed. In Us, who are the Preachers of Truth, not to withstand such horrid Opinions, is to establish them. It is certainly true Doctrine, That a Man who has unhappily taken an Oath to do an Evil Thing, is not only not obliged to do that Evil, but is on the contrary obliged not to do it. But then he who takes an Oath, and at the same time knows he does not intend to keep it, or that it is unlawful for him to keep it, is guilty of a most horrible Profanation of God's holy Name. I shall not enquire, if this be properly Perjury: For that is but a Question about Words. It is of little consequence by what name you call the Crime, if it is own'd to be a Crime. But then in our Case, where an Oath carries a double Obligation in it; first, not to oppose, and then to assist our Sovereign to whom we swear Allegiance, (as it is in the Oaths that we take:) Tho' we may think it un-

unlawful to assist one whom we reckon an Usurper, sure it can't be call'd by any one a Sin not to oppose him. I believe no Casuist in the world ever taught, that it was the Duty of Subjects to rise in Arms to acquire to a Prince his Right to a Crown, suppose it ever so just; or that it was unlawful to submit to another Prince, let him be ever so much an Usurper. Neither the Laws of God nor Man say this. Then surely, if our Oath imports that we shall submit to, as well as that we shall assist the Person to whom we swear Fealty; tho' it be allow'd, that we ought not to observe that part of our Oath which requires us to assist that Person, provided we in our Conscience think it unjust to do it, yet we certainly ought to observe that part of our Oath, which requires us to submit to him, and not to plot or rebel against him: For this Forbearance is by no Law Divine or Human prohibited, let him to whom we swear be ever so much an Usurper, and have ever so bad a Title: Because this Obligation remains entirely untouch'd: And consequently here the Oath we have taken must bind us: An Oath always obliging, as far as it can be observ'd without doing what is in itself unlawful.

This, Gentlemen, is the Charge against us. And it is a Charge, which, if it be made good against us, I am afraid will sink our Credit entirely in the Nation. For tho' we see a great deal of Zeal (of popular Fury, I should rather call it) stirring in our favour, I hope we are wiser than to trust to it: For all People, but most of any the People of this Island, we know,
are

are very fickle ; and, when they change, grow as violent one way, as they were the other. And things will have their natural Effect. Wickedness and Perfidy will, at the long run, fall into Disrepute. When all Men come to speak Evil of us, if it be *falsely*, our Innocence will be our Support : But if it be *truly*, we shall sink under the Load of Guilt. And even the good Men among us will suffer in the Crowd. Therefore all our true Friends, those who sincerely wish us well, and wish well to Religion, of which we are the Professors and Teachers, hope that we will take the Alarm in time, and guard against the Danger, not by Clamour or Force, (for that will not defend us long,) but by effectually convincing the World, That, if we have seem'd to favour those vile Designs which are laid to our charge, it has been thro' the Delusion of those whom we have listen'd to, and our Ignorance of their true Intentions ; and likewise by exerting ourselves vigorously against them for the future, now that they are become so open, that we cannot but perceive them.

IV. I shall therefore under my last Head, as I told you, offer you such Advice, as I have been able to gather from the Sentiments of the wisest and best Men among us ; who, I dare say, have no other view than your Honour and true Interest, as it is joined with the Honour and Interests of Religion.

I shall not pretend to offer you such Advice as relates to your private Life and Conversation, or to the doing the Duty of your Functions faithfully :
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in your several Cures: (Tho' I must say this much, that these are the main Grounds on which your Credit and Respect in the Nation must be establish'd, every other Bottom, that it may seem to rest on, being but a sandy Foundation, unable to bear it up long:) But I shall not offer you any Advice in these Points, I say; because I presume you are already dispos'd to do what becomes you on that Head, without wanting any one to excite you to it. I shall only speak to you on those Actions of yours, which regard the publick Peace and Safety.

You see the People are dispos'd enough to pay us Respect, even where there is no great Merit to call for it. Our very Habit and Character they are willing to reverence. But how much greater would that Regard be, if we behav'd ourselves in such a manner as to deserve it, nay to have it forc'd upon us whether we would or no, which would certainly be the Case if we did what we ought to do?

This is the only solid Respect. The other is but empty Froth, which, e'er you are aware, will melt away from you, you know not how. Now to obtain this solid Esteem and Regard, you must, besides your private Vertues,

1. Show to all the World, that you are Friends to the Liberty and the Happiness of your Country: For, if you are thought not to be so, you must not wonder, if those who are zealous for the Interest of their Country become your Enemies, and grow jealous of every thing you do. The way

way to convince the World of this, is to be no longer sullen and silent upon the Head of the Revolution, and yet much less to be zealous and warm against it. The slavish Conduct of the Clergy during King *Charles* the Second's Reign had infallibly prov'd their Ruin at the Revolution, if the bright Characters of some, who had stood firm in the Day of Trial, had not preserv'd them. This is the Nature of Things. And this Event may be look'd for on all great Com-motions and Changes that happen in the State. And therefore if you are not careful to satisfy the Nation that you are really for maintaining the Revolution, and the present Settlement which is the Consequence of it, you may expect to meet with this Fate sooner or later. Can you hope to enjoy plentiful Incomes and Revenues, and to possess such a large Share in the Property of the Nation, and this not your own, or what you were born to, but given you freely by the Publick, and yet to be known of a Disposition ready to betray your Country that has been so generous to you, and to sell it into the hands of Arbitrary Power? This Patient People may bear with such a Conduct for a while. But depend upon it, their Rage will break out but the fiercer for it, when once it kindles. This Fidelity to your Country is expected from you, and will be look'd on as a Token that you are Lovers of Mankind, and not only of Yourselves: True Shepherds, and not Wolves.

2. Show a Christian Spirit to all that differ from you in Opinion, and a Readiness to be better inform'd yourselves. There is nothing that gives a

worse Impression of any one, than to be fierce and intractable in his Opinions, and to allow to no one else the Freedom which he takes to himself. And it appears yet the worse in Us, because it is most contrary to that Gentleness and Candor which we are continually preaching to the People on all other Occasions. Will any one be so impos'd upon, as to believe that it can be Religion which inspires us with a Temper so opposite to the End of Religion, and to the plainest Doctrines of it? No certainly.—

But, if we would gain the Esteem of wise and good Men, we should shew that calm and sedate Temper which becomes the Teachers and Professors of Truth; and such Tenderness and Compassion for those whom we apprehend to be in fatal Mistakes, as may plainly appear a Concern for Them, and not the Pride and Impatience of our own Hearts, which is not at all a likely way to reclaim those who are in the wrong. And as for those who differ from us only in Matters of small Importance, we should maintain such Moderation, as may put them in the wrong, if they are violent against That, which we show ourselves too wise to be violent for. Heat and Passion may hurt ourselves, both in spoiling the Temper of our own Minds, and in exposing us to the Contempt or Resentment of others, but never will have any good Effect towards reclaiming those who oppose us wrongfully; on the contrary, will sharpen the Edge of their Opposition. Whereas Mildness, and Patience, and Condescension for others, carries a Superiority in it, which must always turn to our Advantage, even tho' we were in the wrong.

wrong. You should likewise show a readiness to hear Reason, to weigh what is said against you. For to declare before-hand you will hear nothing, shews either that you are conscious you have a bad Cause that will not bear to be sifted, or that, if you have a good one, you don't know that it is so. I do not say this, that I would have you be always changing and altering things, as every new Fancy would prescribe. I know there could be no end of that. The Itch of Novelty is as dangerous as the blind Veneration for Antiquity. Certainly the Advantage, at first sight, lies on the side of Antiquity. And, without very cogent Reasons, old Customs ought not to be chang'd; because the People are always apt to be offended at it, and to think that what is alter'd is of greater Consequence than perhaps really it is. But then will any one have so little regard to Truth or his own Character, as to affirm that any human Constitution is *without Spot or Wrinkle*? It is indeed the End of the Christian Religion, to render Mankind a Body *without Spot or Wrinkle*, fit to be presented to Almighty God. But I doubt we shall not find, upon examination, that this End has ever yet been compleated. And I am sure it is not to be brought about by declaring before-hand, that every thing is perfect, and incapable of Amendment. I may apply here what *Quintilian* (if I remember right) says of Oratory: *Credo quam plurimos ad veram scientiam perventuros, nisi se jam pervenisse credidissent.* "Many Churches, I may say, would probably have arrived at Purity and Perfection, if they had not thought they were already perfect."

3. Don't grasp at more Power than is allow'd you by the Laws: But use what you have wisely, and to edification. There is nothing that Mankind is more averse to than Usurpation. And perhaps the Sense of the insupportable Usurpations of the Clergy in the Times of Popery has made the People in Protestant Countries too jealous of their Clergy, so as not even to allow them to exercise those Powers which were practis'd in the first and purest Ages of Christianity, and which seem requisite to the maintaining outward Order and Decency in the Church. I shall not descend to Particulars. You cannot be ignorant of what I mean. But even here you ought to give way to this (I cannot but say in some measure just) Apprehension of the People. Use the Power you have left you by our Laws wisely and discreetly. And that is the way to have more entrusted with you : I mean by *more*, as much as is for the Edification of the Church that you should have ; for more than That I never wish (and I hope you never wish) to see entrusted with you. But the way to have this Power ventur'd in your keeping is not to seem impatient under the want of it. For it is a Maxim that pretty generally obtains, and I believe very justly, That no one is fit to be invested with Power who seems to desire it. For, to one who intends to make a good Use of it, Power is really but a Burden : And to one who does not, it ought not to be committed.

4. Take

4. Take great care that you do not let Party-Zeal prevail upon you to slacken the Principles of Vertue and Religion. It has much weakened the Regard of the People for their Clergy, that it has been imputed to their Behaviour, that Seditions and Tumults have been rais'd under the colour of Zeal for the Church ; and that Men have been encourag'd, nay animated, to go beyond all Bounds of human and divine Laws, to injure those who differ'd from them in any the smallest Points of Religion. Sure there cannot be a heavier Imputation than this, that the Preachers of the Gospel teach Men to break the Rules of it. It should be your particular Care therefore, if you desire to recover the Credit you seem to have lost, to clear yourselves from this Imputation, and to be very assiduous in preaching up Peace and Friendliness and good Neighbourhood, and to exhort your People earnestly to be quiet, and to mind their own Business. But there is another Point of Morality which you are believ'd to have lessen'd Men's Regard to: I mean, the Sacredness of Oaths. This is the great Tie of human Society. And when this comes to be loosen'd, I know not what will be left to keep Men together by. Life, Property, the Security of every thing a Man has, or has a right to, depends, in a great measure, on a most religious Veneration for an Oath. And if this Veneration is to be remov'd by nice Distinctions, fetch'd from Schoolmen's Cobwebs, Society and Government by Law is gone : And you will be arraign'd as the Subverters of it. You may
guess

guess what Revenges they who will first suffer by it will be apt to take upon you, when they come to be sensible of the Loss, and lay it at your door. You should therefore have a singular Care to preach up to your Flocks the strict Obligation of Oaths, upon the Consideration of your worldly Interest, as well as of your Duty, that this Accusation (which I would feign be enabled to affirm was a mere Aspersion) may be wholly remov'd; and that even your Silence on this Head may not be construed into a Consent, or even an Acquiescence, in that horrid and abominable Doctrine.

5. Meddle in publick Affairs no further than your Function calls you naturally to do, which is to teach your People their Duty to their King and Country. I know, it is impossible at some times for you to discharge your Duty faithfully, without seeming to enter into State Affairs: I mean, where the Question is, in what manner an honest Man, and a good Christian, is to act on any Emergency. It is your Business to recommend Peace, and Fidelity, and the Observance of Laws, and all publick Vertues; which are things of a mix'd nature, partly Religious, and partly Political. And, I own to you, I think it is the best Service any Man can do his Country, to contribute towards rendering the Magistrate more just and vigilant, the People more faithful and obedient to their lawful Commands, and all Men more immovable in the Love of their Country, and more zealous to do their Duty to it in their respective Stations. But then, to make the Pulpit
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the Place of News, of Sedition, of inflammatory Discourses, of widening instead of healing Breaches, is far different from this. The one is the Office of a good Pastor, who looks to all the Concerns of his Flock : The other of a Thief and a Robber, who climbs into the Fold only to destroy and to commit ravage. This you ought to be particularly careful of : For the World, as it now stands, will never long bear with a Clergy that depart from their own proper Office, and become Trumpeters of Sedition instead of Heralds of Peace. They may be pleas'd with them for a while, whose Ends and Purposes are carried on by them. But depend upon it, that, either when those Ends are obtain'd, or if they fail, the Contempt you will have been all the while gathering by making yourselves their Tools will not fail, but will sooner or later break over your Heads : And those very People, whom you have been serving in that unbecoming way, will be as ready as any to cast the Blame on you, and join in running you down for it. And they will have this Reason for so doing, that they must expect, that, when they have no further occasion for your Service themselves, they must either become your perpetual Slaves and Drudges, or that you will be playing the same Game for others against them, that before you play'd for them against others. So that on all Hands, by this kind of Conduct, you run the risque of falling at length under a general Contempt and Hatred. Observe only the Conduct of those great Men of our Body, who before the Revolution withstood Popery. They did not use Clamours and seditious Outcries.

They

They preach'd, as became them, against the Corruptions of Popery; and exhorted their Hearers to be firm to the Truth, whatever Sufferings might threaten them. But they said nothing to revile Magistrates. They spoke with Modesty and Decency, and left things to work out themselves. And even when it became visible, that we were forc'd to the Dilemma, of either rising up in Arms to defend our Religious and Civil Rights, or casting them away and giving them up for ever; they had, I say, even then such a regard to the Decency of their Characters, that they rather consented to what was done, than were themselves the first Movers and Exciters of it. This brave, and at the same time modest, Conduct of the wiser Men among the Clergy, preserv'd the whole Body from those Resentments which the indiscreet and unchristian Zeal of others of them, in favour of Arbitrary and Popish Designs in the former Reigns, would otherwise very probably have drawn down upon them. But, when a People enjoy all the Liberty and Happiness their Hearts can desire, as we visibly do at present, for a Clergy to be found Promoters of Rebellions and Conspiracies, no one can imagine for what reason, must end in drawing on them such Revenges, as it is natural for a People provok'd and incens'd to the uttermost to take, when they come to perceive to what a Slaughter-house their Pastors have been leading them.

6. The only way by which you can wipe away the Charge of favouring Popery, of being ready to change your Religion, and indeed of having

having no regard to true Religion at all, but only to your worldly Interest and Advantage, is to show yourselves zealous for the present Government. For think what you please, you will never persuade People, by any Colours you can lay on, to believe that true Protestants can be for having a Popish King to reign over them. They may not, in times of Heat and Confusion, perceive the Contradiction. But when those Times cease, and Men come to themselves, and have leisure to consider, they will soon discern the Absurdity, and will hold you in the utmost Contempt and Aversion if you are guilty of it. I do not mean by giving you this Advice, that you should be always flattering and crying up the Administration. This is no more our Business, than to cry it down: For I doubt we are not always inform'd of State Matters well enough to be very proper Judges in them. And to speak of any thing without Knowledge, always exposes the Speakers to Derision. Indeed I should think it inexcusable in any Clergyman to preach (as they call it) for the Government, and say such things as they have been forc'd to say sometimes in favour of those at the Helm, if it were not for the virulent Discourses against them, by which the People have been almost weekly stirr'd up to Rebellion somewhere or other: Which has made it in a manner necessary for honest Men, who were really concern'd for their Country, in opposition to such Movers of Sedition, to speak in a way that they can't but wish there was no occasion for, and to meddle with things that lie without their proper Sphere. But all that

I mean by offering you this Advice, is, That you should, on proper Occasions, make the People sensible of the Ease and Happiness they enjoy at present, and perhaps think nothing of, because they enjoy it without Interruption ; make them observe that we are govern'd by Laws, that every Law is made (as by our Constitution it ought to be) by the proper Legislative Power in King, Lords, and Commons ; that every one enjoys peaceably the Share our Law and Constitution gives him in the Legislature, and is represented according to his Proportion ; that every Subject possesses his Property and all his Rights without the least Disturbance, and has his Remedy open at Law, if in any thing he thinks himself aggriev'd. You should make them remember, that before the happy Revolution it was quite otherwise ; that our Princes, for about 30 Years, had been in a constant Struggle with their People to abridge them of their Rights and Privileges, had shewn no regard to Parliaments when they did not immediately want them to raise Money, nor to the Laws, which ought to have been their Rule ; nay, had taken upon them to dispense with our Laws by their own Authority, without the Consent of the Parliament, which was really annulling the Law, and declaring themselves Absolute ; that we must have been entirely Slaves, if the Prince of *Orange* had not come and rescued us ; and must have been devour'd by the cruel and sanguinary Church of *Rome*, if King *James* had much longer retain'd the Power he had usurp'd over the Law : And that our Preservation could not
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have lasted, if the Crown had not been settled in the Protestant Line as it is, but had been suffer'd to revert to any of the Popish Heirs. And that, if the Pretender should ever come to the Throne, we may expect the same Dangers over again, but not the same Deliverance. This way of talking will satisfy the World that you were unjustly stigmatized as Favourers of Popery. I do not desire you to express yourselves in wrathful and opprobrious Terms of Popery or Papists: (That way of speaking I can never think becomes Christians, not even to their cruellest Persecutors :) But that you would make your People often reflect on the monstrous Corruptions of Popery, and their cruel and barbarous Methods of forcing those Corruptions on Mankind, that so they may be always on their guard against a most active and bitter Adversary. This will be the part of good Men, and of vigilant Pastors.

7. The last Advice, which I shall close with, is, That you would always take care to go upon good Information in whatever you say or do, and not give yourselves up blindfold to a few arrogant Men, who pretend to be your Leaders, to receive a Cry from them, and echo it round the Nation. There is nothing can render you more despicable to all Men of Sense, than to see you made Tools of by artful and designing Men, to set about what perhaps they dare not, or are ashamed to vent themselves. This, however innocent of ill Designs you may be in reality, lays you open to the Censures that are pass'd upon the Intrigues

which you are ignorantly, nay perhaps contrary to your own Sense of things, made subservient to. For Men will not be so gentle and equitable to you, as to suppose you are impos'd upon. And indeed if you are, it does not wholly excuse you; because you need not, nay you ought not to propagate what you are not well inform'd and satisfy'd about yourselves. You, who pretend to teach and instruct others, must think it a great Reproach to you to be bubbled and deceiv'd yourselves, and to take up Opinions, and to believe Stories, and spread them again, without being at the trouble of making any sort of enquiry into them. Who will depend upon you in any thing, when they see you so careless in choosing the Grounds you go upon? You ought to be too wise be led blindfold by others, if you are wise enough to lead others. And where you cannot come to any Light to conduct you, your prudentest Method, I should think, would be to stand still, and hold your peace.

AND thus I have taken the liberty to speak my Mind very fully and very freely to you. I do not add my Name to what I say, because I think it of no Weight, even tho' it were a Name much more considerable than I'm sure mine is. And tho' my sincere Concern for your true Interest, and the Interest of that Religion which you are concern'd and oblig'd to promote, will not allow me any longer to hold my peace, yet the Shame I should have to own that I take upon me to give Advice to so great and so learned a Body of Men, forces me to be