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A
DISCOURSE

Addressed to

MAGISTRATES

AND

Men in AUTHORITY.

OCCASIONED BY

The enormous License, and Irreligion
of the TIMES.

To which is added,

A REPORT from the Lords Committees for
Religion, appointed to examine into the Causes
of the present notorious Immorality and Pro-
phaneness: Made by the Earl of GRANARD,
on *Friday* the 10th of *March*, 1737.

GALLIO cared for none of those Things.
Acts, Ch. xviii. Ver. 17.

THE SECOND EDITION.

DUBLIN Printed.

LONDON: Reprinted; and sold by J. ROBERTS
in *Warwick-Lane*. 1738.





A DISCOURSE

Addressed to the MAGISTRATES, &c.

THE Pretensions and Discourse of Men, throughout these Kingdoms, would, at first View, lead one to think the Inhabitants were all Politicians ; and yet, perhaps, political Wisdom hath in no Age, or Country, been more talked of, and less understood. License is taken for the End of Government, and popular Humour for its Origin. No Reverence for the Laws, no Attachment to the Constitution, little Attention to Matters of Consequence, and great Altercation upon Trifles, such idle Projects about Religion and Government, as if the Public had Both to chuse, a general Contempt of all Authority, Divine and Human, an Indifference about the prevailing Opinions, whether they tend to produce Order, or Disorder, to promote the Empire of God or the Devil : These are the Symptoms that strongly mark the present Age ; and this could never have been the Case, if a Neglect of Religion had not made Way for it.

WHEN the Jews accused *Paul* upon religious Matters, and Points of their Law, before *Gallio*, the *Roman* Magistrate ; it is said, that *GALLIO* cared for none of those Things. And it is to be feared, there are not a few Magistrates, in this Christian Country, who think with the same Indifference on the Subject of Religion. Herein, nevertheless, they

they judge amiss, and are much wanting to their Duty. For, although it be admitted, that the Magistrate's peculiar Object, is the temporal Welfare of the State ; yet, this will by no Means exclude a proper Care about the prevailing Notions and Opinions of Religion, which influence the Lives and Actions of Men, and have therefore a mighty Effect on the Public. Men's Behaviour is the Consequence of their Principles. Hence it follows, that in order to make a State thrive and flourish, Care must be taken, that good Principles be propagated in the Minds of those who compose it.

IT would be vain, to depend on the outward Form, the Constitution, and Structure of a State ; while the Majority are ever governed by their inward Ways of thinking, which at Times will break out and shew themselves paramount to all Laws and Institutions whatsoever. It must be great Folly therefore, to overlook Notions, as Matters of small Moment to the State ; while Experience sheweth there is nothing more important ; and that a prevailing Disorder in the Principles and Opinions of its Members, is ever dangerous to Society, and capable of producing the greatest Public Evils.

MAN is an Animal, formidable both from his Passions, and his Reason ; his Passions often urging him to great Evils, and his Reason furnishing Means to atchieve them. To tame this Animal, and make him amenable to Order, to inure him with a Sense of Justice and Virtue, to withhold him from ill Courses by Fear, and encourage him in his Duty by Hopes ; in short, to fashion and model him for Society, hath been the Aim of civil and religious Institutions ; and in all Times, the Endeavour of good and wise Men. The aptest Method for attaining this End, hath been always judged a proper Education.

IF Men's Actions are an Effect of their Principles, that is, of their Notions, their Belief, their Persuasions; it must be admitted, that Principles early sown in the Mind, are the Seeds which produce Fruit and Harvest in the ripe State of Manhood. How lightly soever some Men may speak of Notions; yet, so long as the Soul governs the Body, Mens Notions must influence their Actions, more or less, as they are stronger or weaker; and to good or evil, as they are better or worse.

OUR Notions and Opinions, are a constant Check on our Appetites, and Balance to our Passions; and although they may not in every Instance controul and rule, yet they will never fail strongly to affect both the one and the other. What is it that bridles the impetuous Desires of Men? That restrains them when they are driven by the most violent Passions? In a word, what is it that renders this World habitable, but the prevailing Notions of Order, Virtue, and Duty? Some, perhaps, may imagine, that the Eye of the Magistrate alone, is sufficient to keep Mankind in Awe. But, if every Man's Heart was set to do all the Mischief his Appetite should prompt him to, as oft as Opportunity and Secresy presented themselves, there could be no living in the World.

AND although too many of those intrusted with Civil Power, in these our Days, may be said with GALLIO, to *Care for none of those Things*; and many more who would pass for Men of Judgment and Knowledge, may look on Notions early imbibed, before their Grounds and Reasons are apprehended or understood, to be but mere Prejudices; yet this will detract nothing from their Truth and Usefulness. To place this Matter in a due Light, I propose to shew, that a System of Salutory Notions, is absolutely necessary to the Support of every Civil Constitution. I shall enforce this

this Point, by the Testimony of those who are esteemed the wisest Men ; and I shall make some Remarks on the modern prevailing Spirit, and the Tendency of the Maxims of our Times.

ORDER is necessary, not only to the Well-Being, but to the very Being of a State. Now Order and Regularity in the Actions of Men, is not an Effect of Appetite or Passion, but of Judgment : And the Judgment is governed by Notions or Opinions. There must therefore, of Necessity, in a well-ordered State, be a certain System of Salutary Notions, a prevailing Set of Opinions, acquired either by private Reason and Reflection, or taught and instilled by the general Reason of the Public ; that is, by the Law of the Land. True it is, that where Men either cannot, or will not use their own Reason, think and examine for themselves ; in such Case, the Notions taught or instilled into their Minds, are embraced rather by the Memory, than the Judgment. Nor will it be any Objection to say, that these are Prejudices ; inasmuch, as they are therefore neither the less useful, nor the less true, although their Proofs may not be understood by all Men.

PREJUDICES are Notions, or Opinions, which the Mind entertains without knowing the Grounds and Reasons of them, and which are assented to without Examination. The first Notions which take Possession of the Minds of Men, with regard to Duties social, moral, and civil, may therefore be justly stiled Prejudices. The Mind of a young Creature cannot remain empty. If you do not put into it that which is good, it will be sure to receive that which is bad.

Do what you can, there will still be a Bias from Education ; and if so, is it not better this Bias should lie towards Things laudable and useful to Society ? This Bias still operates, although

it may not always prevail. The Notions first in-
 stilled, have the earliest Influence, take the deepest
 Root, and generally are found to give a Colour
 and Complexion to the subsequent Lives of Men,
 inasmuch as they are in Truth the great Source of
 human Actions. It is not Gold, or Honour, or
 Power, that move Men to act, but the Opinions
 they entertain of those Things. Hence it follows,
 that if a Magistrate should say, or think, no
 Matter what Notions Men embrace, I will take
 Heed to their Actions ; therein he sheweth his
 Weakness, for such as are Men's Notions, such
 will be their Deeds.

FOR a Man to do as he would be done by ; to
 love his Neighbour as himself ; to honour his Su-
 periors ; to believe that God scans all his Actions,
 and will reward or punish them ; and to think, that
 he who is guilty of Falshood, or Injustice, hurts
 himself more than any one else : Are not these such
 Notions, and Principles, as every wise Governor,
 or Legislator, would covet above all Things to
 have firmly rooted in the Mind of every Individual
 under his Care. This is allowed, even by the Ene-
 mies of Religion, who would fain have it thought
 the Off-spring of State Policy, honouring its Use-
 fulness at the same time that they disparage its
 Truth. What therefore cannot be acquired by
 every Man's Reasoning, must be introduced by
 Precept, and riveted by Custom ; that is to say,
 the Bulk of Mankind must, in all civilized Socie-
 ties, have their Minds by timely Instruction well
 seasoned and furnished with proper Notions, which,
 although the Grounds or Proofs thereof be un-
 known to them, will nevertheless influence their
 Conduct, and so far render them useful Members of
 the State. But if you strip Men of these their No-
 tions, or if you will, Prejudices, with regard to
 Modesty, Decency, Justice, Charity, and the
 like ;

like; you will soon find them so many Monsters, utterly unfit for human Society.

I DESIRE it may be considered, that most Men want Leisure, Opportunity, or Faculties, to derive Conclusions from their Principles, and establish Morality on a Foundation of human Science. True it is, (as St. Paul observes) that *The invisible Things of God from the Creation of the World, are clearly seen.** And from thence the Duties of natural Religion may be discovered. But these Things are seen and discovered by those alone who open their Eyes and look narrowly for them. Now, if you look throughout the World, you shall find but few of these narrow Inspectors and Inquirers, very few who make it their Business to analyse Opinions, and pursue them to their rational Source, to examine whence Truths spring, and how they are inferred. In short, you shall find all Men full of Opinions, but Knowledge only in a few.

IT is impossible from the Nature and Circumstances of human Kind, that the Multitude should be Philosophers, or that they should know Things in their Causes. We see every Day, that the Rules, or Conclusions alone, are sufficient for the Shop-keeper to state his Accounts, the Sailor to navigate his Ship, or the Carpenter to measure his Timber; none of which understand the Theory; that is to say, the Grounds and Reasons either of Arithmetic or Geometry. Even so in moral, political, and religious Matters, it is manifest that the Rules and Opinions early imbibed at the first Dawn of Understanding, and without the least Glimpse of Science, may yet produce excellent Effects, and be very useful to the World: and that in Fact they are so, will be very visible to every one who shall observe what passeth round about him.

* Rom. ch. i. ver. 20.

him. It may not be amiss to inculcate, that the Difference between Prejudices and other Opinions doth not consist in this; that the former are false, and the latter true; but in this, that the former are taken upon Trust, and the latter acquired by Reasoning. He who hath been taught to believe the Immortality of the Soul, may be as right in his Notion, as he who hath reasoned himself into that Opinion. It will then by no means follow, that because this or that Notion is a Prejudice, it must be therefore false. The not distinguishing between Prejudices and Errors, is a prevailing Oversight among our modern Free-Thinkers.

T H E R E may be indeed certain mere Prejudices or Opinions, which, having no Reasons either assigned or assignable to support them, are nevertheless entertained by the Mind, because they intruded betimes into it. Such may be supposed false, not because they were early learned, or learned without their Reasons; but because there are in Truth no Reasons to be given for them.

C E R T A I N L Y, if a Notion may be concluded false, because it was early imbibed, or because it is with most Men an Object of Belief rather than of Knowledge, one may by the same Reasoning conclude several Propositions of *Euclid* to be false. A simple Apprehension of Conclusions as taken in themselves, without the Deductions of Science, is what falls to the Share of Mankind in general. Religious Awe, the Precepts of Parents and Masters, the Wisdom of Legislators, and the accumulated Experience of Ages, supply the Place of Proofs and Reasonings with the Vulgar of all Ranks: I would say, that Discipline, national Constitution, and Laws Human or Divine, are so many plain Land-Marks which guide them into the Paths wherein it is presumed they ought to tread.

FROM what has been premised, it plainly appears, that in the Bulk of Mankind there are, and must be Prejudices; that is, Opinions taken upon Trust; or in other Words, that there are Points of Faith among all Men whatsoever, as well as among Christians. And as it is evident, that the unthinking Part of every Age, Sex, and Condition among us, must necessarily receive Notions with the Submission of Faith; so it is very reasonable that they should submit their Faith to the greatest Authorities Human and Divine, the Law and the Gospel. But if once all Reverence for these be destroyed, our Pretenders to moral Knowledge will have no Authority to imbue the Multitude with such Notions as may controul their Appetites. From all which it follows, that the modern Schemes of our Free-Thinkers, who pretend to separate Morality from Religion, how rational soever they may seem to their Admirers, are in Truth and Effect most irrational and pernicious to civil Society.

LET any one, who thinks at all, consider the savage State of undisciplined Men, whose Minds are nurtured to no Doctrine, broke by no Instruction, governed by no Principle. Let him at the same time reflect on a Society of Persons educated in the Principles of our Church, formed betimes to fear God, to reverence their Superiors, to be grateful to their Benefactors, forgiving to their Enemies, just and charitable to all Men; and he will then be able to judge of the Merits of those who are so active to weed out the Prejudices of Education.

AMONG the many wild Notions broached in these giddy Times, it must be owned that some of our Declaimers against Prejudice, have wrought themselves into a Sort of Esteem for Savages, as a virtuous and unprejudiced People. In Proof of which,

which, they alledge their being free from many Vices practised in civilized Nations. To which I answer, that it is very true, among Savages, there are few Instances to be found of Luxury, Avarice, or Ambition; not that the contrary Virtues take Place, but because the Opportunities and Faculties for such Vices are wanting. For the same Reason, you do not see them in Brutes.

WHAT they esteem and admire in those Creatures is not Innocence, but Ignorance; it is not Virtue, but Necessity. Give them but the Means of transgressing, and they know no Bounds. For Example: Supply the Water-drinking Savage with strong Liquor, and he shall be drunk for several Days and Nights together. Again; we admit an uneducated Savage knows not how to supplant a Rival with the refined Treachery of a Courtier; yet, if you put his Foe once in his Power, you shall soon see what a horrible Relish and Delight the Monster hath in Cruelty.

ABOVE all others, religious Notions, or if you will, Prejudices, (since this, as hath been already observed, detracts nothing from their Truth and Usefulness) have the most Influence, they are the strongest Curb from Vice, and the most effectual Spur to worthy Conduct. And indeed, whether we consider the Reason of Things, or the Practice of Men in all Times, we shall be satisfied, that nothing truly great and good can enter into the Heart of one attached to no Principles of Religion, who believes no Providence, who neither fears Hell, nor hopes for Heaven.

PUNISHMENTS and Rewards have always had, and always will have the greatest Weight with Men; and as the most considerable of both Kinds are proposed by Religion, the Duties whereof fall in with the Views of the civil Magistrate; it un-

deniably follows, that nothing can add more Strength to a good and righteous Government, than Religion. Therefore it mainly concerns Governors to keep an attentive Eye on the Religion of their Subjects. And indeed, it is one Lesson to Magistrate and People, Prince and Subject: *Keep my Commandments and live, and my Law as the Apple of thine Eye.**

ALTHOUGH it is no Consequence from what hath been said, that Men should be debarred the free Use of Reason and Inquiry; yet, surely it will follow, that without good Reason, a Man should not reject those Notions which have been instilled by the Laws and Education of his Country. And even they who think they have such Reason, have nevertheless no Right of dictating to others. It is true, a Commission from Heaven is superior to all human Prejudices, Institutions, and Regards whatsoever. And it is wise, although at the Risque of Liberty, or Life, to obey God rather than Man. But our modern Reformers of Prejudice have nothing to plead of that Kind.

THERE is no Magistrate so ignorant as not to know that Power, physical Power, resides in the People; but Authority is from Opinion, which Authority is necessary to restrain and direct the People's Power, and therefore Religion is the great Stay and Support of a State. Every Religion that inculcates Virtue, and discourageth Vice, is so far of publick Benefit. The Christian Religion doth not only do this, but further makes every legal Constitution sacred by commanding our Submission thereto. *Let every Soul be subject to the higher Powers, saith St. PAUL, for the Powers that be, are ordained of God.†* And in Effect for several Years past,

* Prov. ch. vii. ver. 3.

† Rom. ch. xiii. ver. 1.

past, while the Reverence for our Church and Religion hath been decaying and wearing off from the Minds of Men, it may be observed, that Loyalty hath in Proportion lost Ground; and now the very Word seems quite forgotten. Submission for Conscience, as well as for Wrath, was once reckoned an useful Lesson; but now, with other good Lessons, is laid aside as an obsolete Prejudice.

THAT Prince or Magistrate, however great or powerful, who thinks his own Authority sufficient to make him respected and obeyed, lies under a woful Mistake, and never fails to feel it sooner or later. Obedience to all Civil Power is rooted in the religious Fear of God: It is propagated, preserved, and nourished by Religion. This makes Men obey, not with Eye-Service, but in Sincerity of Heart. Human Regards may restrain Men from open and penal Offences; but the Fear of God is a Restraint from all Degrees of all Crimes however circumstanced. Take away this Stay and Prop of Duty, this Root of civil Authority; and all that grew from it shall soon languish. The Authority, the very Being of the Magistrate, will prove a poor and precarious Thing.

AN inward Sense of the supreme Majesty of the King of Kings, is the only Thing that can beget and preserve a true Respect for subordinate Majesty in all the Degrees of Power, the first Link of Authority being fixed at the Throne of God. But in these our Days, that *Majestas imperii*, that Sacredness of Character, which rooted in a religious Principle, was the great Guard and Security of the State, is through Want thereof become the publick Scorn. And indeed, what Hold can the Prince or Magistrate have on the Conscience of those who have no Conscience? How can he build

on the Principles of such as have no Principles? Or how can he hope for Respect where God himself is neglected?

IT is manifest, that no Prince upon Earth can hope to govern well, or even to live easy and secure, much less respected by his People, if he do not contribute by his Example and Authority, to keep up in their Minds an awful Sense of Religion. As for a moral Sense, and moral Fitness, or eternal Relations, how insufficient those Things are for establishing general and just Notions of Morality, or for keeping Men within due Bounds, is so evident from Fact and Experience, that I need not now enter into a particular Disquisition about them. *

IT must be owned, that the Claws of Rapine and Violence may in some Degree be pared and blunted by the outward Polity of a State. But should we not rather try, if possible, to pull them quite out? The evil Effects of Wickedness may be often redressed by publick Justice. But would it not be better to heal the Source; and by an inward Principle extirpate Wickedness from the Heart, rather than depend altogether on human Laws for preventing or redressing the bad Effects thereof? ' I might (said the *Chinese* Doctor *Confucius*) hear and decide Controversies as well as another: But what I would have is, that Men should be brought to abstain from Controversies, out of an inward Love and Regard for each other.' †

Too many in this Age of free Remarks, and Projects, are delighted with Republican Schemes, and imagine they might remedy whatever was amiss, and render a People great and happy, merely

* See *Alciphron*, Dial. III. and Dial. VI.

† *Scientia Sin.* Lib. I. Fol. 12.

merely by a new Plan or Form of Government. This dangerous way of thinking and talking is grown familiar, through the foolish Freedom of the Times. But alas ! Those Men do not seem to have touched either the true Cause or Cure of publick Evils : Be the Plan ever so excellent, or the Architects ever so able, yet no Man in his Wits would undertake to build a Palace with mere Mud or Dirt of the Streets. There must be fit Materials ; and without a religious Principle, Men can never be fit Materials for any Society, much less for a Republick. Religion is the Centre which unites, and the Cement which connects the several Parts or Members of the Political Body. Such it hath been held by all wise Men, from the remotest Times, down to our ingenious Contemporaries, who, if they are in the Right, it must be admitted that all the rest of the World have been in the Wrong.

FROM the Knowledge of its being absolutely necessary to the good Government of a State, that the Hearts and Minds of the People be inwardly imbued with good Principles, *Plato* * tells us that ‘ *Jupiter*, to preserve the Race of Men
 ‘ from perishing, sent *Mercury*, with Orders to in-
 ‘ troduce Modesty and Justice among them, as
 ‘ the firmest Ties of human Society ; and with-
 ‘ out which, it could not subsist.’ And elsewhere the same Author giveth it plainly as his Sense, that
 † ‘ Concerning those great Duties which Men’s
 ‘ Appetites and Passions render difficult, it should
 ‘ seem rather the Work of God to provide, than
 ‘ of human Legislators, if it were possible to
 ‘ hope for a System of Laws framed and promul-
 ‘ gated

* *In Protagora.*

† *De legibus*, lib. viii.

‘gated by God himself.’ You see how agreeable the *Mosaic* and Christian Institutions are to the Wishes of the wisest Heathen.

MOSÉS, indeed, doth not insist on a future State, the common Basis of all political Institutions. Nor do other Lawgivers make a particular mention of all Things necessary, but suppose some Things as generally known or believed. The Belief of a future State (which it is manifest the Jews were possessed of, long before the coming of *CHRIST*) seems to have obtained among the *Hebrews* from primæval Tradition; which might render it unnecessary for *Moses* to insist on that Article. But the *Sadducees* and *Epicureans* had, in Progress of Time, gone so far towards rooting out this ancient and original Sentiment, that it was in Danger of being lost, had it not been taught and promulgated in a new Light by our blessed SAVIOUR.

BUT many among us, who would pass for Asserters of Truth and Liberty, are accustomed to rail at this, and all other established Opinions, as Prejudices which People are taught whether they will or no, and before they are able to distinguish whether they are right or wrong. These Lovers of Truth would do well to consider, that in political, moral, and religious Matters, the Opinions of the Vulgar, whether they go in Coaches, or walk on Foot, are for the most part Prejudices; and are so like to be, whatever Side of the Question they embrace; whether they follow the old Maxims of the Religion of their Country, or the modern Instructions of their new Masters. I have already observed, that a Point being useful, and inculcated betimes, can be no Argument of its Falshood, even although it should be a Prejudice; far otherwise, Utility and Truth are not to be divided;

ded ; the general Good of Mankind, being the Rule or Measure of moral Truth. *

I SHALL now add, that it is to be apprehended, many of those who are the most forward to banish Prejudices, would be the first to feel the Want of them. It is even pitiful to think, what would become of certain modern Declaimers on that Article, were Prejudice really set aside, and were all Men to be weighed in the exact Scale of Merit, and considered in Proportion only to their intrinsic Worth. Some Prejudices are grounded in Truth, Reason, and Nature. Such are the Respects which are paid to Knowledge, Learning, Age, Honesty, and Courage, in all civilized Countries. Others are purely the Effect of particular Constitutions, such as the Respects, Rights, and Preheminencies ascribed to some Men by their Fellow-Subjects, on Account of their Birth and Quality ; which in the great Empires of *Turky* and *China*, pass for nothing ; and will pass for nothing elsewhere, as soon as Men have got rid of their Prejudices, and learned to despise the Constitutions of their Country. It may behove those who are concerned, to reflect on this betimes.

G O D, comprehending within himself, the Beginning, End, and Middle of all Things and Times, exerts his Energy throughout the whole Creation. He never ceaseth to influence by Instinct, by the Light of Nature, by his declared Will. And it is the Duty of Magistrates and Lawgivers, to cultivate and encourage those divine Impressions in the Minds of all Men under their Care. We are not to think, it is the Work of God, and therefore not to be seconded by human Care. Far otherwise ; for that very Reason it claims our utmost

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most

* See *Alciphron*, Dial. I. Sect. 16.

most Care and Diligence, it being the indispensable Duty of all Men, throughout the whole Course of their Lives, to co-operate with the Designs of Providence. In Religion, as in Nature, God doth somewhat, and somewhat is to be done on the Part of Man. He causeth the Earth to bring forth Materials for Food and Raiment ; but human Industry must improve, cultivate, prepare, and properly apply both the one and the other, or Mankind may perish with Cold and Hunger. And according to this same Analogy, * the Principles of Piety and Religion, the Things that belong to our Salvation, although originally and primarily the Work of God, yet require the Protection of human Government, as well as the Furtherance and Aid of all wise and good Men.

AND if Religion in all Governments be necessary, yet it seemeth to be so more especially in Monarchies: Forasmuch as the frugal Manners, and more equal Fortunes in Republicks, do not so much inflame Men's Appetites, or afford such Power or Temptation to Mischief, as the high Estate and great Wealth of Nobles under a King. Therefore, although the Magistrate, (as was already observed) hath for his peculiar Object, the temporal Well-being of the State ; yet this will by no Means exempt him from a due Concern for the Religion of his Country.

WHAT was the Sense of our Ancestors on this Point, appears throughout the whole Constitution of these Kingdoms ; and in order to justify this Constitution, and the Wisdom of those who framed

* It will be sufficient, if such Analogy appears between the Dispensations of Grace and Nature, as may make it probable to suppose them derived from the same Author.

ed it, I shall crave Leave to make Use of some unsuspected Testimonies ancient and modern, which will shew, that the publick Care of a national Religion hath been always a most principal Point in the Esteem of wise Men, however run down by the prevailing License of our Times.

THE first Testimony I shall produce, is that of *Zaleucus*, the famous Law-giver of the *Locrians*; who in the Preamble to his Laws * begins with Religion, laying it down as the Corner Stone, or Foundation of his whole Superstructure, ‘ That
 ‘ every Inhabitant, or Subject of the State, should
 ‘ be persuaded that there is a God, and divine
 ‘ Providence: That the only Way of becoming
 ‘ dear to God, is by endeavouring above all Things
 ‘ to be good, both in Deed and in Will: That a
 ‘ worthy Citizen is one that prefers Integrity to
 ‘ Wealth.’ He further admonisheth those who are
 difficult to persuade, ‘ To bethink themselves of
 ‘ God’s Providence, and the Punishments that
 ‘ await evil Doers; and in all their Actions, to
 ‘ be ever mindful of the last Day, as if it were pre-
 ‘ sent; or in Case the † Devil should tempt a
 ‘ Man to Sin, he exhorts such a one to frequent
 ‘ the Temples and Altars, worshipping and implo-
 ‘ ring the Divine Assistance.’

ARISTOTLE, ¶ discoursing of the Means to preserve a Monarchy, admonisheth the supreme Magistrate, above all Things, to shew himself zealous in religious Matters; and this particularly, for two Reasons. ‘ 1. Because the Subjects will
 ‘ have less to fear from one who fears God. 2. Be-
 ‘ cause they will be less apt to rebel against him,
 ‘ whom they take to be the Favourite of Heaven.’
 And elsewhere, the same Philosopher recom-

C 2

mends

* *Stobæus de leg. & consuet. Ser. 145.*

† *Δαιμονιαστας.*

¶ *De Republ. Lib. V.*

mends the Worship of the Gods, as the first Care of the State. *

PLATO likewise begins his Laws with the Care of religious Rites. He even maintains Religion, or divine Worship, to be the chief Aim and Scope of human Life. †

HIPPODAMUS the *Milesian*, ¶ in his Scheme of a Republick, allotted a third Part of the Land for maintaining divine Worship. §

The *Roman* Historians and Poets do so abound with Passages ascribing the Successes of their Government to Religion, and its Declension to the Want or Neglect thereof, that it may seem impertinent to enter into a Detail of what every School-Boy knows.

To come from ancient to modern Authority, *Machiavel* himself represents Religion as absolutely necessary to maintain civil Order and Government. He observes, that for many Years there was a most awful Sense of Religion in the old *Romans*; and that this did much facilitate their great Undertakings. He likewise observes, and shews by divers Instances, that the *Romans* were more afraid to break an Oath, than to transgress the Laws; and that those Things which even the Love of their Country and Constitution could not bring them to, they were brought to through a Sense of Religion. Upon the Whole, he concludes, that old *Rome* was more obliged to *Numa*, who established a national Religion, than

* *De Republ.* Lib. VII. Cap. 17.

† *De Leg.* Lib. IV. & Lib. VI.

¶ *Arist. de Republ.* Lib. II. Cap. 8.

§ The abolishing of the Christian Religion upon a frugal Principle must be bad Policy, if we may judge what will be, by what hath been in the great *Pagan* States of Antiquity, whose Religions, upon a fair Estimate, will be found to have been more expensive.

than to *Romulus* himself, the Founder of that State.*

AND here, by the Bye, I shall take Notice that some may imagine, the various Forms and Institutions of Religion ought to unsettle Men's Minds, with regard to the Truth and Certainty of any. But this Matter rightly considered, will, I think, produce a contrary Effect. It sheweth, indeed, that Men groping out their Way, by the dim Twilight of Nature, did only approach some nearer, some farther off, although all were short of the Truth. But then it sheweth likewise upon the Whole, and in General, that Religion is so natural to our Minds, so useful to Society, and of so necessary Importance to the World, as might well prove its Truth, and render it worthy of the Divine Care to propagate by Prophecies, Miracles, and the Mission of the Son of God.

PHILIP de Comines †, a wise Statesman, and honest Writer, who had great Experience in Affairs, declares it to be his Opinion, ' That
' Want of religious Faith, is the only Fountain of
' all Mischiefs.

AND that able Minister, the famous *Monfieur Colbert* †, makes it his Observation, ' That if once
' the Ecclesiastical Character, as such, is vilified,
' the civil Magistrate, even the Crown itself, will in Consequence thereof lose all Authority.'

IT would be no hard Matter, to produce a Cloud of Testimonies in behalf of a national Religion, from the most eminent of our own Writers; but I shall content myself with adding one only, and that from a very unsuspected Writer, Mr.
Harrington,

* *Discorsi*, Lib. I. Cap. 11.

† *Hist.* B. 5.

‡ *Test. Pol.* C. 8.

Harrington, Author of the *Oceana*. ‘ * A Man
 ‘ (saith he) that pleading for Liberty of Conscience,
 ‘ refuseth Liberty to the national Conscience, must
 ‘ be most absurd. *And again*: If the Conviction
 ‘ of a Man’s private Conscience produce his pri-
 ‘ vate Religion, the Conviction of the natio-
 ‘ nal Conscience must produce a national Re-
 ‘ ligion.†

ALL these Authorities are taken from think-
 ing Men, and able Politicians, none of which can
 be supposed to say what he did not really think ;
 and it had been very easy to have increased the
 Number. But, I am sorry I was obliged to men-
 tion any at all, in Proof of so plain and fundamen-
 tal a Point as that of a national Religion. It is in-
 deed a shameful Necessity we lie under, of proving
 at this Time of Day the first Elements, I will not
 say of Christianity, but even of natural Light,
 from Reasons and from Authorities. The Spi-
 rit of the Times hath render’d this unavoida-
 ble.

IF it should be asked after all, How comes it
 then to pass, that the fashionable and prevailing
 Maxims among our Betters, in a neighbouring
 Nation, should run directly contrary to all such
 Reasons and Authorities? I will answer this Que-
 stion, by asking, When were our Neighbours known
 to abound to that Degree in Highwaymen, Murder-
 ers, House-breakers, Incendiaries? When did such
 Numbers lay violent Hands on themselves? When
 was there such a general and indecent Contempt of
 whatever is esteemed sacred, in the State as well as
 the Church? When were there known among them
 such publick Frauds, such open Confederacies
 in Villany, as the present Age hath produced?
 When

* P. 27. First Edit.

† Ibid.

When were they lower in the Esteem of Mankind, more divided at home, or more insulted abroad?

WE of this Land have a fatal Tendency to overlook the good Qualities, and imitate whatever is amiss in those whom we respect. This leads me to make some Remarks on the modern Spirit of Reformation, that works so strongly in both these Kingdoms.

FREEDOM of Thought is the general Plea and Cry of the Age; and we all grant, that thinking is the way to know; and the more real Knowledge there is in the Land, the more likely it will be to thrive. We are not therefore against Freedom of Thought, but we are against those unthinking, overbearing People, who, in these odd Times, under that Pretence, set up for Reformers, and new Moulders of the Constitution. We declare against those, who would seduce ignorant and unexperienced Persons from the Reverence they owe to the Laws and Religion of their Country; and under the Notion of extirpating Prejudices, would erase from their Minds all Impressions of Piety and Virtue, in order to introduce Prejudices of another kind, destructive of Society.

WE esteem it a horrible Thing to laugh at the Apprehensions of a future State, with the Author of the *Characteristics* *; or with him who wrote the *Fable of the Bees*, to maintain that *moral Virtues are the political Offspring which Flattery begot upon Pride* †; that *in Morals there is no greater Certainty, than in Fashions of Dréss* †; that, indeed, *the Doctrine of good Manners teacheth Men to speak well of all Virtues; but*

* Vol. III. Miscel. III. C. 2.

† Inquiry into the Origin of moral Virtue. *Edit. 6. P. 37.*

‡ The Author's Remarks on his Fable of the Bees. *P. 379.*

but requires no more of them in any Age or Country, than the outward Appearance of those in Fashion §. Two Authors of Infidel Systems these, who setting out upon opposite Principles, are calculated to draw all Mankind, by flattering either their Vanity, or their Passions, into one or other System. And yet, the People among whom such Books are published, wonder how it comes to pass, that the civil Magistrate daily loseth his Authority, that the Laws are trampled upon, and the Subject in constant Fear of being robbed, or murdered, or having his House burnt over his Head.

IT may be presumed, that the Science of finding Fault, which above all others is the easiest to learn, suits best with a modern Education. Too many there are of better Fortunes than Understandings, who have made the Inquiry after Truth a very small Part of their Care: These see somewhat, but not enough. It were to be wished, they knew either less or more. One Thing it is evident they do not know; to wit, that while they rail at Prejudice, they are undoing themselves: They do not comprehend, (what hath been before hinted) that their whole Figure, their political Existence, is owing to certain vulgar Prejudices, in Favour of Birth, Title, or Fortune, which add nothing of real Worth either to Mind or Body; and yet cause the most worthless Person to be respected.

FREEDOM of Thought is the Prerogative of human Kind: It is a Quality inherent in the very Nature of a thinking Being. Nothing is more evident, than that every one can think his own Way, in spite of any outward Force or Power whatsoever. It is therefore ridiculous for any Man to declaim in Defence of a Privilege, which, if he holds his
Tongue,

§ Remarks. Part II. P. 155.

Tongue, cannot be denied or taken from him: But this will not infer a boundless Freedom of Speech; an open Contempt of Laws, and a setting up of private Judgment against publick Authority, Things never born in any well order'd State; and which make the crying Distemper of our Times.

THE Constitution of these Kingdoms hath been one while over-heated by the indiscreet Zeal of one Set of Men: Again, it hath been cold and lifeless, through the Indifference of another. We have alternately felt the furious Effects of Superstition and Fanaticism; and our present impending Danger, is from the setting up of private Judgment, or that inward Light, in Opposition to human and divine Laws. Such an inward selfish Principle, always at work, and proceeding gradually and steadily, may be sufficient to dissolve any human Fabric of Polity or civil Government! To pretend to be wiser than the Laws, hath never been suffered in any wise State, saith *Aristotle* *. And indeed, what wise State would encourage or endure a Spirit of Opposition, publickly to operate against its own Decrees? Who can say to such a Spirit, *Thus far shalt thou come, and no farther?*

THE Magistrate, perhaps, may not be sufficiently aware, that those earnest Contenders for private Light, and free Thought, are in reality seditious Men, who set up themselves against national Laws and Constitutions. And yet, one would think, if Mankind might see, that the Spirit which prevails against the Church and Religion, proceeds from an Opposition rather to the Laws of the Land, than to the Gospel. Men quarrel not so vehemently against Articles of Faith themselves, as against the establishing of such Matters; which is the

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* *Rhet. Lib. I. Cap. 15.*

Effect of Law and the supreme Power. It clearly follows, the Freedom pleaded for is not so much Freedom of Thought against the Doctrines of the Gospel, as Freedom of Speech and Action against the Laws of the Land. It is strange, that those who are not blind in other Matters, should yet not see this; or, that seeing it, they should not discern the Consequences thereof.

I AM sensible, that whatever looks like a Restraint on Freedom of Inquiry, must be very disagreeable to all reasoning and inquisitive Men. But against this, I have said nothing. On the contrary, I will freely own, a judicious and impartial Search after Truth, is the most valuable Employment of the Mind. Those who have the Talents, and will be at the Pains, cannot do better than engage in that noble Pursuit: But those who are not qualified by Age or Education; those who have neither Disposition nor Leisure, nor Faculties to dig in the Mine of Truth themselves, must take it as retailed out by others. I see no Remedy. God who knows the Opportunities of every Man, requires Impossibilities from no Man. And where there is a sincere Love of Truth and Virtue; the Grace of God can easily supply the Defect of human Means.

IT hath been before observed, and shewed at large, that the Bulk of Mankind must have their Minds betimes imbued with good and wholesome Notions or Principles by their Parents, Pastors, and Tutors, or else bad Notions, hurtful to themselves and others, will undoubtedly take Possession thereof. Such bad Notions have, for several Years past, been propagated with uncommon Industry in these Kingdoms: They now bring forth Fruit every Day more and more abundant. It is to be feared, that what hath been long ripening, is now
near

near ripe. Many are the Signs and Tokens. He that runs, may read.

BUT there cannot be a higher, or more flagrant Symptom of the Madness of our Times, than that execrable Fraternity of Blasphemers, lately set up within this City of *Dublin*. Blasphemy against GOD, is a great Crime against the State. But that a Set of Men should, in open Contempt of the Laws, make this very Crime their Profession, distinguish themselves by a peculiar Name,* and form a distinct Society, whereof the proper and avowed Business shall be, to shock all serious Christians by the most impious and horrid Blasphemies, uttered in the most publick Manner: This surely must alarm all thinking Men. It is a new Thing under the Sun, reserved for our worthy Times and Country.

IT is no common Blasphemy I speak of: It is not simple Cursing and Swearing: It is not the Effect either of Habit or Surprize; but a Train of studied, deliberate Indignities against the Divine Majesty; and those of so black and hellish a Kind, as the Tongues alone which uttered them, can duly characterise and express. This is no speculative Heresy, no remote or doubtful Inference from an Author's Tenets. It is a direct and open Attack on GOD himself. It is such a calm premeditated Insult upon Religion, Law, and the very Light of Nature, that there is no Sect or Nation of Men, whether Christians, Jews, Mahometans, or even civilized Heathens, that would not be struck with Horror and Amazement at the Thought of it, and that would not animadvert on its Authors with the utmost Severity.

DELIBERATE, atheistical Blasphemy, is of all Crimes most dangerous to the Public, inasmuch as

* *Blasters.*

it opens the Door to all other Crimes, and virtually contains them all. A religious Awe and Fear of GOD, being (as we have already observed) the Centre that unites, and the Cement that connects all human Society, he who makes it his Business to lessen or root out from the Minds of Men this Principle, doth in Effect, endeavour to fill his Country with Highwaymen, House-breakers, Murderers, fraudulent Dealers, perjured Witnesses, and every other Pest of Society. Therefore, it would be the greatest Cruelty to our Children, Neighbours, and Country, to connive at such a Crime; a Crime! which has no natural Passion or Temptation to plead for it, but is the pure Effect of an abandoned Impudence in Wickedness; and, perhaps, of a mistaken Hope, that the Laws and Magistrates are asleep.

THE Question is not now, whether Religion shall be established by Law: The Thing is already done, (and done with good Reason, as appeareth from the Premises) but whether a Reverence for the Laws shall be preserved. Religion considered as a System of saving Truths, hath its Sanction from Heaven; its Rewards and Penalties are Divine. But Religion, as useful and necessary to Society, hath been wisely established by Law; and so established, and wrought into the very Frame and Principles of our Government, is become a main Part of the civil Constitution.

OUR Laws are the Laws of a Christian Country: Our Government hath been constituted, and modelled by Christians; and is still administered and maintained by Men professing Belief in CHRIST. Can it then be supposed, that impious Men shall with Impunity, invent and publickly utter the most horrid Blasphemies; and at the same Time, the whole Constitution not be endangered?

gered? Or can it be supposed, that Magistrates, or Men invested with Power, should look on, and see the most sacred Part of our Constitution trampled under Foot, and yet imagine their own Dignity and Authority to be secure, which rest entirely thereupon?

I WILL venture to say, that whoever is a wise Man, and a Lover of his Country, will not only be solicitous to preserve the Honour of God sacred and entire; he will even discourage that prevailing Prejudice against the Dispensers of G O D's Word, the Teachers of those Salutary Doctrines, without which the Public cannot thrive or subsist. He will be no Contemner, not even of those Rites and Ordinances enjoined by Law, as necessary to imprint and retain a Sense of Religion in the Minds of Men. He will extend his Care to the Outworks, as knowing that when these are gone, it may be difficult to preserve the rest.

NOTWITHSTANDING the vain Assertion of those Men, who would justify the present, by saying *all Times are alike*, it is most evident, that the Magistrates, the Laws, the very Constitution of these Realms, have lost no small Share of their Authority and Reverence, since this great Growth and spreading of impious Principles. Whatsoever be the Cause, the Effect is apparent. Whether we ascribe it to the natural Course of Things, or to a just Judgment upon those who having been careless to preserve a due Sense of the divine Authority, have seen and shall see their own despised.

D A R I U S, a Heathen Prince, made a Decree, that in every Dominion of his Kingdom, Men should tremble and fear before G O D. * *Nebuchadnezzar*

* *Dan. ch. VI. ver. 26.*

nezzar likewise, another Heathen, made a Decree, that every People, Nation, and Language which spoke any Thing amiss against GOD, should be cut in Pieces, and their Houses made a Dunghill. † And if these Things were done in *Persia* and *Babylon*, surely it may be expected, that impious Blasphemers against GOD, and his Worship, should at least be discouraged and put out of Countenance, in these Christian Countries. Now, a constant Course of disfavour from Men in Authority, would prove a most effectual Check to all such Miscreants. When therefore they are public and bold in their Blasphemies, this is no small Reflection on those who might check them if they would.

IT is not so much the Execution of the Laws, as the Countenance of those in Authority, that is wanting to the Maintenance of Religion. If Men of Rank and Power, who have a Share in distributing Justice, and a Voice in the publick Councils, shall be observed to neglect divine Worship themselves, it must needs be a great Temptation for others to do the same. But if they, and their Families, should set a good Example, it may be presumed, that Men of less Figure would be disposed to follow it. Fashions are always observed to descend, and People are generally fond of being in the Fashion; whence one would be apt to suspect the prevailing Contempt of GOD's Word, and Estrangement from his House, to a Degree that was never known in any Christian Country, must take its Rise from the Irreligion and bad Example of those who are stiled *the better Sort*.

OFFENCES

† *Djn.* Ch. III. Ver. 29.

OFFENCES must come, but Woe be to him by whom the Offence cometh. A Man who is intrusted with Power and Influence in his Country, hath much to answer for, if Religion and Virtue suffer through want of his Authority and Countenance. But in Case he should, by the Vanity of his Discourse, his Favour to wicked Men, or his own apparent Neglect of all religious Duties, countenance what he ought to condemn, and authorize by his own Example, what he ought to punish; such a one, whatever he may pretend, is, in Fact, a bad Patriot, a bad Citizen, and a bad Subject, as well as a bad Christian.

OUR Prospect is very terrible, and the Symptoms grow stronger every Day. The Morals of a People are in this like their Fortunes; when they feel a national Shock, the worst doth not shew itself immediately. Things make a Shift to subsist for a Time, on the Credit of old Notions and dying Opinions. But the Youth born and brought up in wicked Times, without any Biass to good from early Principle, or instilled Opinion, when they grow ripe must be Monsters indeed. And it is to be feared that Age of Monsters is not far off.

WHENCE this Impiety springs, by what Means it gains Ground, among us, and how it may be remedied, are Matters that deserve the Attention of all those who have Power and Will to serve their Country. And although many Things look like a Prelude to some general Ruin; although it is much to be apprehended, we shall be worse before we are better; yet who knows what may ensue, if all Persons in Power, from the supreme Executor of the Law, down to a petty Constable, would in their several Stations behave themselves like Men, truly conscious and mindful, that the Authority

thority they are cloathed with, is but a derivative Ray from the supreme Authority of Heaven? This may not a little contribute to stem that Torrent, which from small Beginnings, and under specious Pretences, hath grown to such a Head, and daily gathers Force more and more to that Degree, as threatens a general Inundation and Destruction of these Realms.

F I N I S.





A REPORT from the Lords Committees for Religion, appointed to examine into the Causes of the present notorious Immorality and Profaneness: Made by the Earl of GRANARD, on *Friday* the 10th of *March*, 1737.

My LORDS,

THE Lords Committees for Religion, appointed to examine into the Causes of the present notorious Immorality and Profaneness, beg Leave, before they Report to your Lordships what Progress they have made in that Enquiry, to observe, that an uncommon Scene of Impiety and Blasphemy appeared before them, wherein several Persons must have been concerned: But by reason of their meeting late in the Session, they have not been able to prepare a full and satisfactory Account thereof for your Lordships; however, they think it their Duty to lay it before your Lordships as it hath appeared to them: That before the Conclusion of the Session, some Measures may be taken to put a Stop to the spreading of these Impieties, which it is to be hoped in the next Session of Parliament, your Lordships will be able, by proper

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Laws and Remedies, wholly to extinguish and prevent for the future.

THE Lords Committees have sufficient Grounds to believe, (though no direct Proof thereof upon Oath hath yet been laid before them) that several loose and disorderly Persons have of late erected themselves into a Society or Club, under the Name of *Blasters*; and have used Means to draw into this impious Society, several of the Youth of this Kingdom.

WHAT the Practices of this Society are, (besides the general Fame spread through the whole Kingdom) appears by the Examinations of several Persons, taken upon Oath before the Lord Mayor of this City, in relation to *Peter Lens*, Painter, lately come into this Kingdom, who professes himself a *Blaster*.

BY these Examinations it appears, that the said *Peter Lens* professes himself to be a Votary of the Devil; that he hath offered up Prayers to him, and publicly drank to the Devil's Health; that he hath at several times uttered the most daring and execrable Blasphemies against the Sacred Name and Majesty of God; and often made use of such obscene, blasphemous, and before unheard-of Expressions, as the Lords Committees think they cannot even mention to your Lordships, and therefore chuse to pass over in Silence.

As Impieties and Blasphemies of this Kind were utterly unknown to our Ancestors, the Lords Committees observe, that the Laws framed by them must be unequal to such enormous Crimes; and, that a new Law is wanting more effectually to restrain and punish Blasphemies of this Kind.

THE Lords Committees cannot take upon them to assign the immediate Causes of such monstrous Impieties ; but they beg Leave to observe, that of late Years there hath appeared a greater Neglect of Religion, and all things sacred, than was ever before known in this Kingdom ; a great Neglect of Divine Worship, both publick and private, and of the due Observance of the Lord's Day ; a Want of Reverence to the Laws and Magistrates, and of a due Subordination in the several Ranks and Degrees in the Community ; and an Abuse of Liberty, under our mild and happy Constitution ; a great Neglect in Education ; and a Want of Care in Parents and Masters of Families, in training up their Children in Reverence and Awe ; and keeping their Servants in Discipline and good Order, and instructing them in moral and religious Duties ; a great Increase of Idleness, Luxury, and excessive Gaming, and an Excess in the Use of spirituous and intoxicating Liquors.

WHEREFORE the Lords Committees are come to the following Resolutions, *viz.*

Resolved, That it is the Opinion of this Committee, that his Majesty's Attorney-General be ordered to prosecute *Peter Lens* with the utmost Severity of the Law.

Resolved, That it is the Opinion of this Committee, that an humble Address be presented to his Grace the Lord Lieutenant, that he would be pleased to order, that a Proclamation may issue, with a Reward for apprehending the said *Peter Lens* ; and that he would be further pleased, to give it in Direction to the Judges in their several Circuits, to charge the Magistrates to put the Laws in Execution

tion against Immorality, and profane Cursing and Swearing, and Gaming, and to enquire into atheistical and blasphemous Clubs.

Resolved, That it is the Opinion of this Committee, that the Bishops be desired at their Visitations, to give it in particular Charge to their Clergy, to exhort their People to a more frequent and constant Attendance on Divine Service.

Resolved, That it is the Opinion of this Committee, that the Visitors of the University, and of all Schools, do exhort and require the Fellows and Masters, carefully to instruct the Youth, committed to their Care, in the Principles of Religion and Morality, and to inculcate a due Reverence to the Laws and Religion of their Country.

To which Report and Resolutions, the Question being severally put, the House did agree.

EN. STERN,
Cler. Parliamentor.