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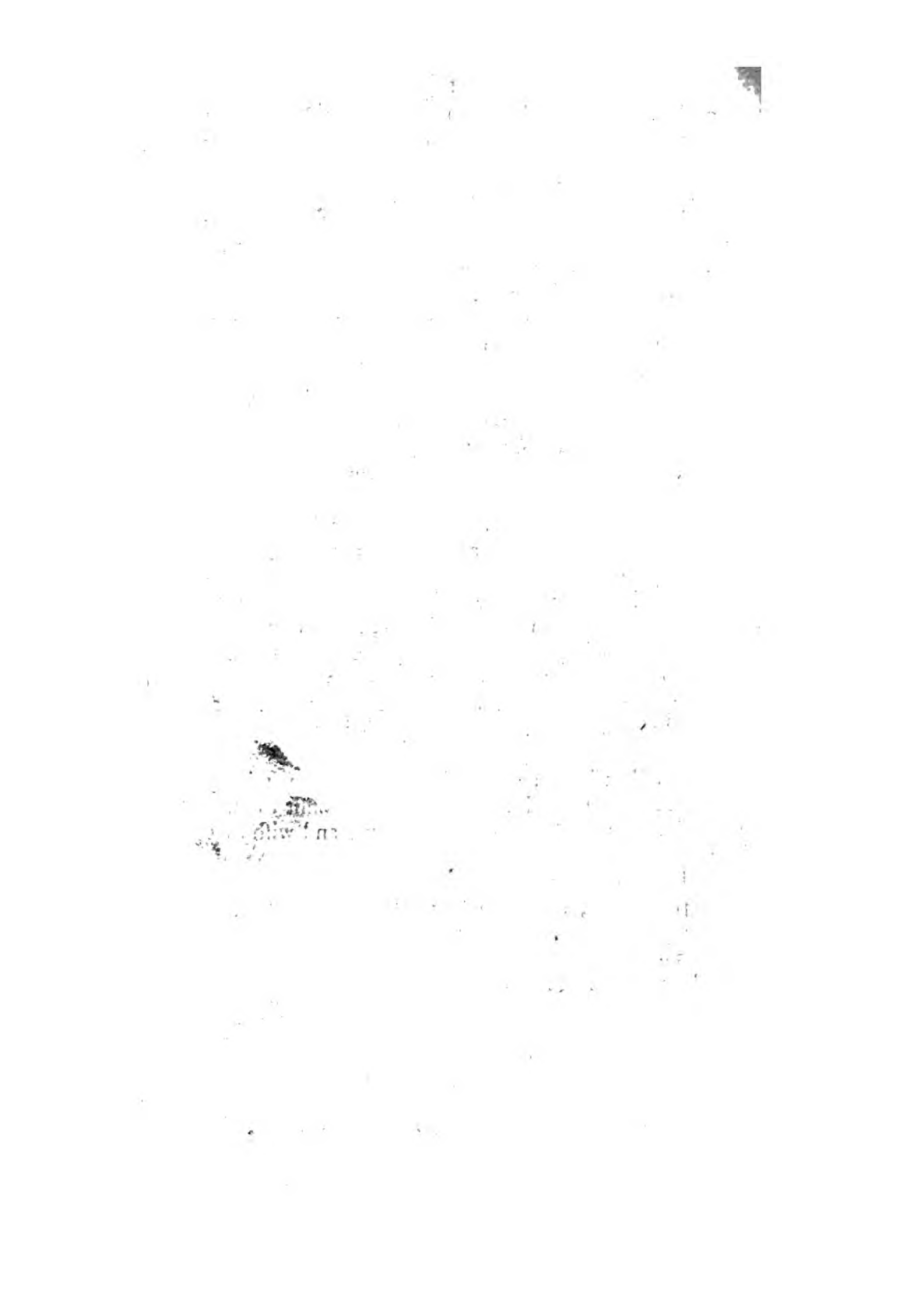
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THE
S T A T E

Preferable to the

C H U R C H ;

O R,

R E A S O N S

For making Sale of the whole present *Property* of the *Church*, in *England* and *Ireland*, for the Use of the *State*; and for rendering the *Clergy* more equal among themselves, less vexatious and onerous to the *Laity*, and more dependent on their HEAD, by subjecting them to the Exchequer for their Stipends, as practised in *Holland*.

With a View of the Self-denying Conduct of the Popish Clergy, in Exegencies of the State, and particularly of our own, under PHILIP and MARY, in their releasing, for ever, all Claim to the *Possessions* that had been taken from the Church.

In a LETTER from a COUNTRY GENTLEMAN to the REPRESENTATIVE of his COUNTY in PARLIAMENT.

L O N D O N :

Printed for M. COOPER, at the *Globe* in *Paternoster-Row*, 1748.



T H E
S T A T E

Preferable to the

C H U R C H, &c.

S I R,

W H E N the Demands of the Crown rise above the ordinary Strength of the Community, and continues so to do for a Series of Years, 'tis natural, for those weigh'd down by the Excess of their Load, to inquire whether they might not have been less burthened, if due and early Regard had been had to easing the most useful and industrious Part of the People at the Expence of the least necessary, tho' not the least luxurious and idle? The Research would well become a Free-born *Englishman* at any time, but at present, when an Increase of the Taxes is expected, and the People are ready to sink under those already imposed, it becomes not only eligible but necessary. I shall therefore, Sir, without further Apology lay my Thoughts before you, that represent my Country in Parliament, on the Means which, I think, ought to be put in Use at present, and should have been practis'd earlier, for relieving an oppressed Nation.

If the Modellers of the late glorious Revolution could have foreseen that their Country would have been harrass'd by three general expensive Wars, in little more than half a Century, in Consequence of that necessary Measure, we are not to doubt but they would have laid such a Foundation as might enable the Crown to maintain such Contests without over-clogging Trade and Industry, those genuine Sources of the Wealth and Power of their Country. But supposing the first Revolutioners could have divined what was to happen, you will ask me, where could they have found Materials for laying the Foundation I contend for? To which I answer with that Freedom and Candour so natural to a *Briton*, and Protestant, IN THE CHURCH. Yes, Sir, *in the Church*, where they may be easiest found and best spared.

I am neither ashamed or afraid to own my Opinion with regard to Church and Clergy. I think the latter no better or more useful or Pains-taking than their Brethren in *Scotland* and *Holland*, and the former, to remain the Spouse of the first Founder, need not be decked out with so great Pomp and Pageantry. In the first and purest Ages of Christianity, we read of no Pomp in Churchmen. They laboured in the Vineyard more to edify and instruct than to raise in Title and accumulate Wealth. And if our first Reformers had been at Liberty to pursue their own Plan, 'tis probable, we should have seen less Pomp and Pride, and more Godliness and Humility in the Clergy of our National Church; but Queen *Elizabeth*, great and judicious

cious in the Grofs of her Conduct, had too strong a Bias to spiritual Pageantry, for them to stem.

Yet, that which could not be effected at the Beginning of the Reformation, might have been compassed at the Revolution. And it has been a Matter of Admiration to many, that the Reformers of the Constitution, at that time, should omit reforming those who stood most in need of a Reformation. I don't mean so much a bare Reformation of Manners or Discipline, which the Clergy then, and since, stood perhaps no less in need of than others, as one with regard to the Property they enjoyed in the State on Account of their Function.

But this Omission was not the only Mistake of those Days, tho' not of the least Importance. For had the Church then been put intirely in the Power of the State, as in the *United Provinces*, or even as in *Scotland*, we should have had greater Harmony at Home, and very probably no less Success abroad, without so great a Weight of Debts and Taxes as we groan under at present.

The Revenues of the Church in *England* and in *Ireland*, where I would have the Reformation I contend for also take Place, are far more considerable than is consistent with the Purity of the reformed Religion ; and for this Reason, if there were no other, every Orthodox Member of our Church should wish for, and concur, in estalishing such an Equality among Churchmen as would render them more Useful, and less Arrogant and Domineering, than some have been.

But

But to this spiritual Motive may be added one no less Cogent, tho' simply Temporal ; and that is, the Ease of the Lait^y, who are the Support and Strength of the State. Is it not a Reproach to the Understanding of *Englishmen*, that so vast a Proportion of their Property should be left in the idlest Hands in the Nation ? Is it not a Reproach to the Reformation, that all the Pomp of Popery should be retained by our Clergy in their Equipages, Houses, and Tables, while we banish it from the Inside of our Churches. Is it not Ridiculous, that we should pay so extravagantly for what costs so little in other Protestant Countries ? And is it not a shameful Reproach to our Clergy, that they do less for a great Deal, than others do for a little ? To prove this, I shall present you with the Portrait of the Clergy in *Holland*, as drawn by an impartial Pen.

The Office of Minister, or Pastor, is the most Arduous and least Lucrative in the whole Extent of the United Provinces. They are obliged to preach twice or three Times a Week, besides catechising Youth and performing other Pastoral Functions, such as assisting Criminals, visiting the Sick, and exhorting and confirming the Flock in pious Dispositions, particularly at the stated Seasons of Communion, which is four times in the Year ;"

----And for this so painful a Ministry how are they rewarded in this World ; as for the next, 'tis to be hoped, they may be on the Level at least with their more idle, richer, and more luxurious Brethren on this Side of the Water ? *The Stipend of the most celebrated Pastors, says the same candid Author, in the most considerable Towns, such as Amsterdam, the Hague, &c. exceeds*

exceeds not 2000 Guilders a Year, (about 200 l. Sterling) and in the lesser Towns and Country Cures, seldom above half that Sum, and often less.

Now, Sir, to compare the passive Conduct of our Pastors with that of the more active Ministry in *Holland*, how shall we be able to account, *in foro Conscientiæ*, for the indulging our Spiritual D-----s in Pluralities, Commendams, Prebendaries, and a thousand other exorbitant *Et Cæteras*, conducive in no Light to the spiritual Emolument of the Flock, or the temporal Benefit of the State? Are our People, who are guided by a Clergy enjoying the Tenth Part of their Labour, better Protestants or Christians than the *Dutch*, whose Spiritual Guides are fed only with such Crumbs as fall from the Benevolence of the State? But hence proceeds the pastoral Affiduity and general good Conduct of the *Dutch* Clergy; they are paid by the State, who, keeping a watchful Eye over them, pays or stops their Stipends in Proportion to the Regularity or Irregularity of their Conduct. If a *Dutch* Pastor neglects the Duties of his Function, preaches unsound Doctrine, meddles in the Policy of the State, presumes to arraign the Conduct of the Magistrate, or gives Scandal by any Irregularities of Life, he is sure to find the Exchequer shut against him, and so to continue till he gives Proof of his Conformity to the Intentions of the Civil Magistracy.

But is not such Policy founded on the purest Protestant Principles which puts the Civil Magistracy above the Church where-ever the Reformation has succeeded to Popery? As our Prince here in *England* is Head of our Church, so are

the States General in the *United Provinces*, and so is his *Polish* Majesty in *Saxony*, tho' of late a Papist. Well then may the Civil Magistracy that is the Chief or Head of the Church, be allowed on the Principles of the Reformation, to inspect the Conduct and restrain any Excess observable in the Practice of Churchmen. But this reasonable and necessary Power thus vested, or rather acknowledged, in the Civil Magistracy by the Reformation, can never answer those salutary Ends proposed by the first pious Reformers, while Churchmen enjoy separate and distinct Properties in the State. Therefore the *Dutch* very wisely made their Clergy wholly Dependent on their visible Head on Earth, the Civil Magistrate. They would not have acted up to the Spirit of the Reformation had they done otherwise. For take away *private Judgment* and the *Supremacy* of the Civil Magistracy from Protestants, and our holy Reformation will dwindle to a Shadow,

Thus, on the fundamental and purest principles of the Reformation, have the *Dutch* acted not only prudently but piously, in rendering their Clergy dependent on the State for their Temporalities. Thus, at once, have they cut away the Root of Animosity between the Pastor and his Flock, and of all Litigation on account of Tithes and other pastoral Demands which so amply, here in *England*, employ the Practicers in our Court of *Exchequer*, too often to the Reproach and Scandal of litigious Churchmen.

Sir *William Temple's* Observation, of the Good and Evil arising from Religion in *Holland*, is extremely just, and will be equally so wherever the Clergy

Clergy subsist solely by the Munificence of the State. *Religion*, says that great Man, *May be the Means of more good in other Countries, but, sure I am, there is none where it is productive of less Evil.* There is a certain Bias to Dominion in most Churchmen, which the Civil Magistrate cannot too cautiously guard against ; and sorry I am to be able to say, that they are too often actuated by the Spirit of Litigiousness and Vexation so condemnable in it self, and so repugnant to Charity and the divine Precepts of the Gospel.

I readily agree, and am highly pleased, that I can say, we have Churchmen among us who do not enter into Orders purely for Preferment and Conveniency, and others who think it a Duty to be upon good Terms with their respective Flocks. But, Sir, how few of these do we know in our Neighbourhood? And if I be not misinformed, which I wish I may, our County expends not more in Litigations between Pastor and Flock, or abounds more in Feud and Animosity than any other in the Kingdom. Why are the Clergy in general fallen of late into so great Contempt among even our common People, who in all Countries are most prone to venerate the Priesthood? Why, but from the Dissoluteness, the Luxury, the Indolence and Ignorance of some, and the Pride, Sordidness, Harshness, Haughtiness and Litigiousness of others?

I own my self the fast and warm Friend of the *Priesthood*, but the avowed open Enemy of *Priest-craft*. I love the Mother-Church, but am not blind to the Blemishes of her Teachers. I respect

ſpect a pious, humble, charitable, diſintereſted, painstaking Clergyman, whoſe ſecondary Views only are directed to his own private Intereſt and Eaſe, as much as I contemn a worldly, haughty, imperious, covetous, litigious, idle Paſtor, who conſiders his Cure as a Leaſe-hold for Life, of which he is to make the moſt, and his Pariſhioners as a Flock, he is to ſhear as often as he can.

How many there are among us of theſe latter I leave to the Judgment of the Publick, to explore the Means by which Harmony may be reſtored and continued between Clergy and People; the Means by which the accidental Errors and Miſtakes of Churchmen may be prevented for the future, and the Means likewise by which the War may be ſupported without burthening the more uſeful Part of the Community, or clogging Trade and Induſtry with new or greater Impoſitions.

You will naturally gueſs that my Scheme tends to veſting the whole preſent Property of the Church in *England* and *Ireland* in the Crown, not to enrich or add to its Power, but as a Truſtee for the People, who ſhould be always uppermoſt in the Conſideration of all true Lovers of their Country. As for *Scotland*, tho' *Religion may be more liable to produce Evil than in Holland*, to uſe Sir *William Temple's* Words, and that the Church there is not ſo dependent, yet as the Livings are moderate and pretty equally diſtributed, I ſhould be of Opinion to let matters remain there as they had been modelled at the Revolution.

The *Scots*, wiſer than we were in the *South*
of

of the Island, laid hold of that happy Turn in Publick Affairs, to insist on a *Modification*, as established among their Clergy with regard to Livings. But we, who bore all the Heat of the Day, who bore all the Expence of the Prince of *Orange's* glorious Expedition, were too much in Love with the Pageantry and Pomp of Popery, tho' we were at so great Pains and so immense an Expence to keep it from us; we, I say, at that time of new modelling our Constitution, never took Example by our wiser Brethren of *Scotland* to model our Church Affairs, tho' of all others the most necessary, it may be said the most useful not only to the People but the Clergy themselves. For if future Happiness be that which Churchmen have chiefly in View, which in Charity we are to suppose, they would be in a much shorter Road to it, by being supported Quarterly from the Exchequer, than by living all their Lives in a continual Round of Jangling and Contest with Parishioners.

In *Holland*, Pastors are paid by the State, in *Scotland*, by the Owners of Lands in the Country, and by the Corporations in Towns and Cities. The Landlord defrays all the Expence of the Tenant, who has nothing to do with the Minister even on Account of Marriages and Christ'nings. And thus far are the Commonality in *Scotland* on the Level with their Protestant Brethren of the *United Provinces*: And as to Emolument, the *Dutch* and *Scotch* Pastors are much in the same Circumstances. The highest Living in *Scotland* does not exceed 150 *l.* Sterling, nor the lowest fall short of 50 *l.* besides

sides Parsonages Dwellings, and some small Portion of Glebe Land in the Country. From what has been said of the Stipends in *Holland*, you will have observed the Parity.

It may be said, that there being no Dignities in *Scotland*, the Hardship was not so flagrant as it would be here in *England*, should the Stipends of our Clergy be reduced and levelled. They had their Prelates heretofore as well as other Nations, and very likely would have retained them if they had been thought essential to Religion. But suppose Bishops had been deemed essential by the *Scots*, might not they have kept them without supposing that Episcopal Pomp was necessary to Christianity ?

To be serious, is it essentially necessary that Bishops should have three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine and ten thousand Pounds a Year ? Is it necessary that an Archbishop should die worth 90,000, *l.* besides providing very honourably for his Family in Consequence of his Power and Influence ? Is it necessary that one Churchman shall enjoy a String of Benefices, while Numbers have none and starve ?

I am willing to suppose Episcopacy an essential Branch of the Christian System ; and therefore hold the order in all the Veneration due to it. But I cannot bring myself to think that the *Holy Ghost* delights more to abide with them in Coaches and Palaces, and in Parliament, than if they had abided by the Primitive, simple way of living practised and inculcated by the Apostles. I am no less willing, that our Prelates retain

tain their Seats in Parliament, if it shall be thought that they have been always heretofore inspired by the Spirit of Truth and Righteousness in their legislative Capacity. But admitting, as I do very willingly, that our good Lords the Bishops add a Lustre to the upper House, will they shine the less there for being placed more on the Level with each other than they are at present? The poorest of them can afford clean *Lawn* Sleeves in their present Situation; and if the two Metropolitans should be levelled to an annual Stipend of 1500 *l.* each, and their respective Suffragans to 1000 *l.* I don't see but they might keep a Coach in Parliament time, notwithstanding the Duty on Carriage Wheels, provided they reside with their Flocks the rest of the Year.

Is it necessary that the Bishopricks and other Church-Livings of *Ireland*, a cheap and plentiful Country, should exceed even those in *England*? Or is it necessary, that in the North of that Kingdom, where there are scarce ten Protestants of the Episcopal Church in a whole Parish, many of the Incumbents should possess Livings of four, six and eight hundred Pounds a Year? It is no uncommon Sight in that Country, to see a Parson preach, I should say read Prayers, Preaching being refused, to his Clerk and such of his own Family as had accompanied him from the Parsonage-House in his Coach and four.

Tho' the Value of Livings in that Kingdom be well known to our Clergy, who are never wanting to themselves in pushing their way thither,

ther, where they bask in Plenty and Ease, it would seem as if our Statesmen had acquired none or very little Knowledge of the Treasure that might be raised there by Sale of the present Possessions of the Church. . To mention but the Primacy there, it would sell, at twenty Years Purchase only, for above 200,000*l.* no contemptible Aid to a bleeding Country obliged to raise above *Ten Millions* annually, tho' already near *Fourscore* in Debt.

From this Specimen may be seen how greatly the trading and industrious Part of the People, that is, the *Laity*, might be eased if the Revenues of the Church, Tithes and all, were put to Sale, and the Purchase Money applied to the Uses of the Publick. And surely, in a Time of such Danger and Difficulty as the present, no good Subject can warrant opposing the carrying so salutary a Scheme into Execution? 'Tis probable our open Foreign, and Native secret Enemies might oppose such a healing Scheme; but, except the *French* and *Spaniards* Abroad, and our Popish Fellow-Subjects at Home, I cannot persuade myself that it would meet with the least Opposition. Our Protestant Laity would unanimously assent to it, and as for the Clergy, if their Suffrages were taken collectively, I will answer for it, the Majority would be with me.

The poor Clergy! my Heart has often bled for many of them, Men of Learning and Probity, that had sweated and starved on a Curacy of *Thirty Pounds* a Year, while the Incumbent indolently rioted on three or *four hundred*. But
by

by my Scheme Churchmen would be in the Condition allotted for them by Reason and the Gospel. They should have a Sufficiency as in *Holland* and *Scotland*, but should be shut out from that Pomp and Superfluity which have brought just Scandal on the *Romish* Clergy.

'Tis Pity, when we were reforming the Errors of the Church of *Rome*, we took not in that *Superfluity* so justly complained of by even the Papists themselves, and which has been productive of so great Diffoluteness and Excess in Churchmen. I wish I could say that *Superfluity* had not likewise been productive of Evil sometimes, even among the spiritual Sons of the Reformation.

But by my reforming Scheme all Objections, as to *Superfluity*, would be removed ; and as *Competency* and *Equality* are some of the Props that support it, I should not doubt of the Concurrence of the Majority of the Clergy themselves, who, as Matters stand at present, are unacquainted with either.

There was a time when the Church had neither *Tithes* or Lands ; and the Clergy themselves won't deny that the Church was purest in those early Days of *Competency* and *Equality*. I hope there are none of our reformed Clergy so popishly inclined, as to think that *Tithes* are of divine Right ; he, who, by the *Mosaic* Law, would introduce *Tithes* into the Christian System, introduces likewise a *Sacrifice* and an *Altar*, without which, *Tithes*, by the Law, were un sanctified and polluted.

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This is so true, that the *Jews*, ever since their Temple was destroyed, tho' they have Rabbies and Teachers of the Law, yet pay no *Tithes*, as having no proper *Levites* to whom, nor *Altars* whereupon, to hallow them; which shews, that these People themselves never looked on *Tithes* as Moral, and but purely Ceremonial.

All the Protestant Divines of Europe, except some few of our Established Church in the last Century, deny the Law of *Tithes* to be in force under the Gospel. And they built their Opinion on this, that tho' Hire to the Labourer be of moral and perpetual Right, yet that special kind of Hire, the *Tenth*, can be of no Right or Necessity but to the special Labour for which God ordained it. But that special Labour was the Levitical and ceremonial Service of the Tabernacle, which being abolished, the Right therefore of the special Hire must be abolished likewise.

The Recompence to be given to Ministers, is differently ordained by God, according to the Differences he has put between his two great Dispensations, the Law and the Gospel; under the Law he gave them *Tithes*, under the Gospel, having left all Things in his Church to Charity and Christian Freedom, he has given them only what shall be given freely and in Charity. But I am not for keeping our Clergy altogether to the hard Meat of the Gospel, intending they shall all have a *Competency* from the State, in Exchange for their present unequal Revenues.

That *Tithes* are of human Invention is evident
to

to me, because for the first three hundred Years after Christ, no Mention is made, in all Ecclesiastical History, of any such thing as *Tithes*. Churchmen lived, in those purer Days, on Free-will-Offerings; nor could the Defect of paying *Tithes* be owing to the want of a civil Magistracy to injoin it, since Christians, having Lands, might have given out of them what they pleased.

As a Proof that *Tithes* were introduced by the Craft of the Clergy of the western Church, long after Christ, we find no Traces of them among the *Eastern Churches*, even to this Day; tho' they have had from the earliest Days, both *Sacrifice* and *Altars* as the *Latin Church*. The *Greek Church*, wherever diffused, knows nothing of a right Divine to strip the industrious Poor of a *Tenth* Part of their Labour. And in the present wide *Russian Empire*, where the Clergy are said to Lord it over the Understanding of the Laity as much, or more than in Countries where the *Latin Church* prevails; there, I say, are no *Tithes* paid or exacted: An irrefragable Proof that the *Greek Church* looks not upon them as enjoined by the Gospel.

But have we not many Instances where even the *Latin Church* has dispensed with the Obligation of *Tithes*? Nor were there a few in this our own Country, long before the holy Reformation was thought of, which evidently shews that the Church of *Rome*, how tenacious soever in Matters of Popery, has a power to part with it occasionally. A flagrant and happy Instance we have of this Completion in the Reign of Queen *Mary* when our Clergy in Convocation addressed

B

Philip

Philip and Mary to intercede with *Cardinal Pool* Legate à *Latere* from the Pope, not to insist on the Restoration of Church-Lands. A glorious Instance of the Disinterestedness of the Clergy of those Times, and no unseasonable Lesson to those of our present purer Protestant Church, for whom, that they may be incited to follow so good Example the first time the Convocation is permitted to sit, I will be at the Pains of transcribing here an Address which does so much Honour to Churchmen in general, and the rather that it laid the Foundation of that firm Security which we have for our Possession of such Church and *Abbey-Lands*, as had been seized upon and alienated in the Reigns of *Henry VIII.* and *Edward VI.*

WE the Bishops and Clergy of the Province of Canterbury, assembled in Convocation, during the sitting of this Parliament according to ancient Custom, with all due Reverence and Humility do make known to your Majesties, that tho' we are appointed to take upon us the Care and Charge of all those Churches in which we are placed, as Bishops, Deans, Arch-Deacons, Priests or Vicars; as also of the Souls therein committed to us, together with all Goods, Rights, Privileges, thereunto belonging, according to the true Intent and Meaning of the Canons made in that Behalf: And that in this respect we are bound to use all lawful Means for the Recovery of those Goods, Rights, Privileges and Jurisdictions which have been lost in the late desperate and pernicious Schism, and to regain the same unto the Church as in her first and right Estate: Yet notwithstanding, having took mature Deliberation of the whole Matter
amongst

amongst ourselves, we cannot but ingenuously confess, that we know well how difficult a thing (if not impossible) it is to recover the said Goods unto their Churches in regard of the manifold unavoidable Contracts, Sales, and Alienations which have been made about the same: And that if any such thing should be attempted, it would not only redound to the Disturbance of the publick Peace; but be a Means that the Unity of the Catholick Church, which by the Goodness of your Majesties hath been so happily begun; could not obtain its desired Effect without very great Difficulty: Wherefore, preferring the Publick Good and Quiet of the Kingdom before our own private Interest, and the Salvation of so many Souls redeemed with the precious Blood of Christ, before any earthly things whatsoever, and not seeking our own but the things of JESUS CHRIST, we do most earnestly and most humbly beseech your Majesties, that you would graciously vouchsafe to intercede in our Behalf with the most Reverend Father in God, the Lord Cardinal Pool, Legate à Latere from his Holiness, that he would please to settle and confirm the said Goods of the Church either in Whole or in Part (as he thinks most fit) on the present Occupants thereof, according to the Power and Faculties committed to him. Thereby preferring the Publick Good before the Private, the Peace and Tranquillity of the Realm before Suits and Troubles, and the Salvation of Souls before earthly Treasure. And for our Parts, we do, both now and for all Times coming, consent to all and every thing which, by the said Lord Legate, shall in this Case, be finally ordained and concluded on: Humbly beseeching your Majesties to persuade the Lord Cardinal,

dinal, nor to be too strict and difficult in the Business, &c.

You will observe in this Address the *Motives* which induced the Convocation to Petition so earnestly and sincerely for a Confirmation of the Alienation of their Property; they were nothing less than *the Peace and Tranquillity of the Realm and the Salvation of Souls, not seeking, said they, earthly things nor things of our own, but the things of JESUS CHRIST.* What Pity that so disinterested a Clergy should not have been illuminated with the purer Light of the Reformation! And how unjust should we be to doubt that our reformed Clergy will address for a Completion of my Scheme as soon as they shall be in a Capacity of approaching the Throne collectively? Shall a Popish Clergy exceed the Reformed in Acts of Generosity and Self-denial? Let it not be said that so indeleble a Reproach be fixt on the purer chosen Sons of the Reformation.

The Motives to the Generosity of the Popish Clergy were very little, if at all, more cogent than those which should induce our reformed Churchmen to come to the Aid of their sinking Country. As to Value, the Advantage will be found on the Side of the Petitioners to *Philip and Mary*, the Possessions they had lost being infinitely more valuable than those I would propose to take from the present Clergy: And as for the Peace and Tranquillity of the People, I am not sure but it would be as much restored
now

now by the Execution of my Scheme, as it could have been in those popish Days, by the Confirmation of Church-Lands. For there is no describing the Heart-Burnings of our inferior People on Account of Tithes and the other Dues and vexatious Exactions of the Clergy throughout all the Counties of the Kingdom.

Let it not be urged, that our Clergy have not a Power to part with their property, since their popish Ancestors, no less skilled in the Canons and Church Constitutions, have set them the Example in a manner the most Solemn that could be, and on an Occasion the most extraordinary and important.

There could not well be an Occasion more interesting to this Nation than that whereon an ample and general Release was passed; by the whole Clergy of the Kingdom to the Possessors of Church-Lands. It is in virtue of that Release, the Pope's Confirmation of it in the Person of Cardinal *Pool* his Legat, and of the Act of Parliament passed at the time of the Release, that our popish Ancestors held Church-lands without Scruple of Conscience, and that we should at this Time, if the Reformation had not succeeded, look upon the Possession of them as warranted by all Authority Human and Divine.

The Authority of Parliament, than which we Protestants neither do nor wish to go higher, we should, if we had remained Papists, call Human, and that of the See of *Rome*, we should deem Divine; and both these, that Cession of the Clergy had to render it valid and permanent. As I have

inferted the Act of Cession, let me add, that of the Confirmation too, to shew, that even in those Days of Bigotry, the possessions of the Church were transferred without Murmur or Complaint on the Side of the Loosers, or Scruple or Remorse on the Part of the Gainers.

But need it be doubted, after this Instance of the generous Resignation of an *English* Clergy in times of Popery and Idolatry, that our Clergy of the established Church, the chosen Priesthood of the Reformation and of Heaven, will part with a portion of their property to the State, in its Existency, without Complaint, or that Buyers will be found as unfeeling of Remorse as their popish Ancestors.

Cardinal *Pool's* Dispensation, after a Recital of what had been acted uncanonically in the two proceeding Reigns, and of the purport of the Act of Parliament passed in Conformity to the Address of the Convocation, goes on, saying,---
That as to ecclesiastical Goods, they were seized and possessed by divers Persons of the Kingdom, which, tho' by the Constitutions of the Canons they might be declared void, yet if they should be revoked into any other State than in which they then were, the publick Peace and Quiet of the whole Kingdom would be disturbed, and the greatest confusion would follow; especially if the possessors of the same Goods should be molested: Therefore, the Parliament have humbly supplicated their Majesties, that they would vouchsafe to intercede with the Cardinal. And whereas the Bishop and the Clergy of the Province of Canterbury, representing almost the whole Body of the Ecclesiasticks of
the

the Kingdom, to whom the Cause of those ecclesiastick Goods do mostly appertain, have declared, that these Goods cannot be recalled to the Right of the Church, but the universal peace and quiet of the Kingdom will be disturbed, and the cause of Faith and the Unity of the Church, now by the consent of all introduced into the Kingdom, shall be brought into extreme Danger, and have supplicated, &c.

Therefore we, who are sent Legat de Lateræ to your Majesties, and this most noble Kingdom, from our most holy Lord Julius III. his and the apostolick See, that we might reconcile the Kingdom (which hath so long been separated from the Unity of the Catholick-church) to God and the Church of Christ, and to his Vicar upon Earth, and should with all Study procure all those Things which appertain to the Peace and Tranquility of the Kingdom.

After by the Benignity of God, and the piety of your Majesties, by the Authority of our most holy Lord the Pope, whose Person we here represent, the Reconciliation is made.

That we may take care for the Peace and Tranquility of the said Kingdom, and the Unity of the Church, from whence the Salvation of so many Souls, redeemed by the precious Blood of Christ depends, now introduced into this Kingdom, may be strengthened and remain safe.

And whereas the Stability of either of them, consists mostly in that no Molestation be brought upon the possessors of ecclesiastical Goods, whereby they may not retain them, which so many and such grave Testimonies cause us to believe ; and the
In

Intercession of your Majesties (who have so studiously and holily laboured for restoring the Unity of the Church and the Authority of the apostollick See) may have that Authority with us that is fit, and the whole Kingdom may know and in Truth and Reality experience the motherly Indulgence of the apostollick See towards it. Absolving and judging to be absolved every one to whom these Writings may appertain, from all Excommunications, Suspensions, Interdicts, and other ecclesiastical Sentences, Censures, and Punishments, by Law or by Man, upon any Occasion or Cause whatsoever pronounced (if for the Causes aforesaid only they be inflicted.)-----And after a Repetition of the Supplications made to him, he adds-----

And to whatever Person of this Kingdom, to whose Hands ecclesiastical Goods, by whatever Contract, either lucrative or onorose they have come, or they have held or do hold them, and all the Fruits, tho' unduly received of them, in the whole, he doth remit and release, willing and decreeing, that the Possessors aforesaid of the said ecclesiastical Goods, moveable and immoveable, may not at present or for the future, by the Dispositions of general or provincial Councils, or the decretal Epistles of Roman Bishops, or any other ecclesiastick Censure be molested, disquieted or disturbed in the said Goods or the possession of them, nor that any ecclesiastick Censures or Punishment be imposed or inflicted for the Detention and Non-restitution of the same; and so by all kind of Judges and Auditors, it ought to be adjudged and defined, taking from them all kind of Faculty and Authority of judging otherwise, and decreeing it to be null and void if any thing happen to be attempted

attempted to the contrary; notwithstanding the foresaid Defects or whatever apostolick special or general Constitutions and Ordinances published in provincial and synodal Councils to the contrary.

Thus were our Popish Ancestors quieted, by a Power which they looked upon the highest on Earth, both as to their Consciences and Possessions. They owned the full Extent of their Power of the See of *Rome*, which Papists will ever own it being essential to their Faith, and saw that extensive Power vested in the highest Amplitude in the Cardinal Legat, who in Virtue of the Plenitude of his Power pronounced the Absolution and Remission. *Per auctoritatem sacratissimi Domini nostri Papæ cujus vices sustinemus*, are the Words of the Absolution. And tho' we of the present Age would sit down contented with a single clause in the Act of Parliament on the like Occasion, we are not however to wonder at the caution of our Popish Ancestors, who had so lately acquired those Abbey-Lands and were consequently the more eminently in Fear of a Resumption. And for my own part, whose whole Estate is Church-land, I look upon myself to be so signally indebted to the cautious care of my Ancestors in those Days of Zeal and Bigotry, that if the Reformation had not expunged Prayers for the Dead out of our Rule of Faith, I should think myself obliged to pray them out of their Purgatory as often as I receive my Rents.

But my worthy Neighbour, setting aside their religious Errors, are not we much obliged to those that had so carefully secured those Possessions

possessions which had so lately been torn from the Church, and which, if the Reformation had not happily succeeded, might be taken from them and us without those Absolutions and Remissions obtained by them, of the See of *Rome*? So careful were those wise and prudent Ancestors of ours in securing their Possessions, that they procured the following Year a confirmation of what Cardinal *Pool* had transacted in consequence of the Power vested in him by *Julius III.*

This confirmation was had of Pope *Paul IV.* who, tho' upon no good Terms with *Spain*, would not however hesitate approving of what his Predecessor had done as warranted by the Canons, notwithstanding his Enmity to *Philip* the Consort of our Queen, and even to Cardinal *Pool*, whose Act he thus confirmed. As I have been led imperceptibly into Antiquity, I beg Leave to present you with this subsequent Act of Security from the See of *Rome*, which I insert at large for your better understanding the Stile of a court dignified by Papists with the vain Epithet of Infalible.----This Bull was obtained upon a Petition of Sir *William Petre* (the Ancestor in a direct Succession of the present Lord *Petre*, still remaining a popish Family) who, perhaps being naturally more scrupulous than any other of his communion in the Kingdom, at that Time, was willing that the late Act of the Legat *Pool* might be confirmed by the Pope personally. The caution was certainly needless, it being a Maxim in Law, that the Act of the Attorney is that of the principle to all Intents and Purposes; and such was the Opinion of all the possessors of Church-lands

lands then in the Kingdom, except Sir *William Petre*, who may have dipt too deeply into that *Over-righteousness*, which *Dr. Trapp* so justly condemns in our modern *Methodists*.

“ *Paul*, Bishop, Servant of the Servants of
“ God, to the perpetual Memory of the Fact.
“ By the accustomed Bounty of the apostolick
“ See, it becomes us freely to impart apostolick
“ Favour to those who require Quiet and Tran-
“ quillity, especially when it is humbly desired
“ from us, and reasonable causes persuade to it,
“ and that they may remain undisturbed to add
“ the stability of apostolick Sanction.

“ A Petition being lately exhibited to us on
“ the part of our beloved Son the noble Sir *Wil-*
“ *liam Petre*, Knt. and counsellor of the King,
“ of the Diocese of *Exeter*, that heretofore King
“ *Henry VIII.* of famous Memory, and several
“ other persons, (there particularly named) sold
“ to the said Sir *William Petre*, Manors, Lord-
“ ships, Advowsons, Lands, &c. belonging to
“ the Monasteries, (particularly also named) as
“ appeared by Instruments and publick Proofs.

“ And afterwards our beloved Son, Deacon
“ of St. *Mary in Cosmedon*, called Cardinal *Pool*,
“ Legat *de Latere* in *England*, of us and the
“ aforesaid See, being authorized to that Mat-
“ ter, with sufficient Power, by Letters from the
“ said See as appears in his commission.

“ And afterwards we generally, under cer-
“ tain Words expressed in Mode and Form,
“ have

“ have * *approved and confirmed the Sales, Gifts,*
 “ *and Exchanges, and Grants made to and by*
 “ *him, and added to them Strength of Assurance*
 “ *or Firmness, as in our Letter made thereupon*
 “ *is said more fully to be contained.*

“ However, as the said Petition subjoined
 “ expresseth, the same Sir *William Petre*, who
 “ desires to have all the Sales, Gifts, and Grants
 “ made to him of those Things in the said In-
 “ struments and Documents continued, for the
 “ better caution specially and expressly to be ap-
 “ proved and confirmed : And besides, hath
 “ humbly supplicated to us, that of our apo-
 “ stolical Benignity, we would vouchsafe to pro-
 “ vide for the Indemnity of him and his.

“ Therefore we, who admit to the Favour of
 “ our Audience the Prayers of those devoted to
 “ us and our foresaid See, quit the said *William*
 “ from all Excommunications, Suspensions, In-
 “ terdicts, and other Ecclesiastical Sentences,
 “ Censures and Punishments, either by Law or
 “ from any Man, upon any Occasion or Cause
 “ produced, (if he be by any of them any ways
 “ tied in consequence of any effect of these Pre-
 “ sents only) by the Tenor of these Presents ab-
 “ solving him, and judging him to be absolved.

“ Being

* This Approbation was general, and prior to this Bull to Sir *William Petre*, as may appear by these Words in the Journal of the House of Commons, of the Parliament held the second and third of *Philip and Mary*. *After which was read a Bull from the Pope's Holiness, confirming the Doings of my Lord Cardinal POOL, touching the Assurance of Abby-Lands, &c. after which the Speaker with the Commons departed to the other House.*

“ Being inclined by those Supplications, by
“ Apostolical Authority, by these Presents do
“ *perpetually* approve and confirm all the Sales,
“ Grants, and Gifts aforesaid ; likewise all the
“ Receipts and Procurements of the Possessions
“ and the retaining them ; and as they concern
“ them all and each singular other Matters in all
“ the Instruments, Documents, and other Wri-
“ tings and Things contained in the *aforesaid*
“ Letters of the said *Riginald* the Cardinal ; and
“ to them *do add the Strength of a perpetual*
“ *and inviolable Firmness, supplying all and sin-*
“ *gular Defects of Law or Fact necessary to be*
“ *expressed, if by Chance any happen to inter-*
“ *vene in them ;* and decreeing them inviolable
“ to be establihed, *without any Scruple of Con-*
“ *science ;* as also by the said *William Petre*, and
“ Bishops, Chapters, Abbots, Priors, Prior-
“ esses and Convents, and others which these
“ any way concern, or *may concern for the fu-*
“ *ture,* according to the Tenor of the Sales,
“ Grants, and other Dispositions made upon
“ them, in all things and by all Means *perpetu-*
“ *ally* to be observed ; and so be judged, and
“ ought to be defined by all Judges Eccle-
“ siastical and Secular Commissaries, enjoying
“ any Authority, taking from them, and every
“ of them, every Faculty and Authority of
“ judging and interpreting otherwise, *and*
“ *making it void and null,* if upon the Premises,
“ by any one by any Authority, knowingly or
“ ignorantly it happened to be attempted.

“ Wherefore, by Apostolick Writ, we com-
“ mand our venerable Brothers the Bishops of
“ *London, Exeter and Pisauria,* that two or one
“ of

“ of them, or by any other or others; these
 “ Presents and whatever is contained in them,
 “ when and where there is need, and so often on
 “ the Part of *William Petre* and the Heirs afore-
 “ said or any of them, it be required, solemnly
 “ to publish, and assisting them in the Premises,
 “ with Maintainance of an effectual Defence, by
 “ our Authority they perform it, to make them
 “ and every one of them peaceably; not per-
 “ mitting any of them by the Bishops, Chap-
 “ ters, Abbots, Priors, Prioressees or Convents,
 “ or any other, contrary to the Tenor of these
 “ Presents in any ways to be molested, vexed
 “ or disturbed; inflicting upon all Contradictors
 “ and Rebels, by Ecclesiastical Censures, and
 “ Money-Mulcts, at their Pleasure; punish-
 “ ments to be applied, and by other opportune
 “ Remedies quieting them; postponing all
 “ Appeals, and by repeated Instances aggrava-
 “ ting, and, if need be, calling into this Pur-
 “ pose the Aid of the *Secular Arm*.

“ Notwithstanding any heretofore sent Apo-
 “ stolick Constitutions and Ordinances of what
 “ kind soever, or by what other Firmness cor-
 “ roborated Statutes and Customs contrary there-
 “ to whatsoever; or if it be indulged from the
 “ said See, to Bishops, Abbots, Priors, Prior-
 “ essees, or by any other in common or sepa-
 “ rately, that they may not be interdicted, sus-
 “ pended, or excommunicated by Apostolical
 “ Letters, not making full and expresse men-
 “ tion Word by Word of the said Indulgence.

“ Therefore it shall not be lawful for any Man
 “ whatsoever to infringe or contradict by any
 “ rash

“ rash Attempt this Writing of ours, of Abso-
“ lution, Approbation, Adjection, Supplement,
“ and Command. If any therefore presume to
“ attempt this, let him know, that he shall in-
“ cur the Indignation of the omnipotent God,
“ and of the holy Apostles, *Peter* and *Paul*.

“ Dated at *Rome*, at *St. Peter's*, the Year of
“ the Incarnation of the Lord, 1555. the
“ 4th of the Kalends of *December*, the first
“ Year of our Pontificate, and 2. and 3.
“ *Philip* and *Mary*.”

Subsigned *B E L T R A D U S*.

But *England* is not the only Country where Church-Lands have been alienated by Consent of the Court of *Rome*, and to the intire Repose of the Consciences of the most abstemious among the Papiſts themselves. Innumerable Instances of the Kind are to be met in *Germany* and *France*, the State of *Venice*, and indeed in all the Popish Countries of *Europe*. The present House of *Bavaria*, enjoys the Estates of several Abbies and other Religious Houses; so does the House of *Palatine*; and it may be said, that there is scarce a Sovereign House in the Empire that holds not, by Dispensation from *Rome*, some Church-Lands, or other Ecclesiastical Revenue. Pope *Clement IXth* permitted, by Bull, the Alienation of the intire Estates of two Religious Congregations in the State of *Venice*, for defraying the Charge of the Defence of the Island of *Candia*: Two thirds of the over-grown Estate of the House of *Condé* in *France*, consist of Church-Lands confirmed to them by the See Apostolick

Apostolick. But what is more applicable to my present Purpose is, that in the last Century the Court of *Rome* consented to the Dissolution of several Religious Houses in *Poland*, in order to supply the Exigency of the Crown then at War with the *Turk*.

And without drawing any invidious Parallels between the *Mahometan* Turk at War with the *Poles* in those Days, and the *most Christian* Turk at War with us at present, I believe it will be admitted that *England* stands in as much need as *Poland* ever did of Aid from the Church. In this Country we are taxed up to the Eyes, not knowing where to find any one Article, of absolute Use or Conveniency, untaxed; they scarce knew in *Poland* what Taxes were. There, they were wholly unacquainted with National Debts; here they are almost beyond the Reach of Computation. The Interest only of our Debts rises to almost double what was raised on the Nation, half a Century ago, for defraying the Civil List and all the Publick Expences besides. But above all, are we now in more imminent Danger from *France* than the *Poles* were from the *Ottoman Court*? What shall prevent the *Christian* Turk from subjecting these Kingdoms to his Yoke, after he shall have strengthened himself with the Naval Force of *Holland*? And how, but by great and uncommon Efforts on our Side, shall he be obstructed in his Views upon the *Dutch*?

I won't suppose the *Polish* Clergy warmer Patriots, more disinterested or more zealous Christians

ftians than ours of the established Church. The high Regard I bear the latter won't permit me to entertain the least Scruple on this Head. Why then should we doubt of the Alacrity of our Churchmen to co-operate with the Laity towards averting the beg Dangers that threaten their Country? Nor are these Dangers so distant but that they threaten even the Church itself, in so much that it is become the Interest of the Clergy to part with some in order to preserve the whole.

I am too zealous a Churchman to wish that the Pastors of the Church might not be able to live decently and comfortably, tho' I am an utter Enemy to spiritual Luxury. I think the Clergy in *Holland* and *Scotland* enjoy such a *Competency* as becomes the Function; and as our Church is Episcopal, I am for a suitable Provision for Bishops, but still with an Eye to *Competency*, so eligible at all Times; but of such absolute Necessity at present.

As I am never better pleased than when I find Subject for Encomium among my own Countrymen, I confess it has often given me refined Pleasure to find Cardinal *Pool*; tho' a Papist, to have been so excellent a personage as he is painted by all his cotemporary Writers. And if I had never seen any other Test of his Virtues but that of his Exhortation to the Parliament, to make commodious provision for the Pastors of the Church, it would be a Confirmation to me of the Warmth of his Piety and Depth of his Understanding. He exhorts, " that in Churches now in being it may
 " be so provided for them that have the care of
 " Souls, that their Pastors, Parsons, and Vicars
 " may commodiously, and honestly according to their
 " Qua-

“ *Quality and State, be maintained, whereby they may laudably exercise the Cure of Souls, and support the incumbent Burthens.*”---- This Exhortation is included in his Absolution and Dispensation concerning Schism and Church-lands, and dated at *Lambeth* 9th of the Kalends of *January*, the 5th of Pope *Julius III.*

It is observable that the Cardinal, who, we may presume, was not unacquainted with the Constitutions of Churchmen, required only *commodious and honest Maintenance* for the Pastors of the Church. He requires not *golden* Prebendaries, Pluralities or Commendams for the spiritual Overseers of *Christ's* Flock. *Commodious and honest Maintenance* for our Shepherds was all the good Cardinal desired, who, knowing from the Depravity of human Nature, that too great Affluence often corrupts the Morals, and debilitates and incapacitates the Body for Labour and Exercise.

Whence, but from the too great Affluence of our Church Dignitaries, always productive of Sloth, perhaps of Ignorance, has that Tide of *Infidelity* flowed, which is said to have overspread the Land within a few Years past? Man will grow wanton with Plenty; and too often, I fear, he will forget his divine Benefactor when he can enjoy not only the Conveniencies but Superfluities of Life without Pains or Labour.

I repeat it again, that we have some good Churchmen among us; but have we a Number of learned pains-taking, humble, modest, sober Clergymen sufficient to bear down, by Precept and Example, the formidable *Phalanx* of *Freebinkers* that have sprung up, I fear by the Indolence

Indolence of our Guides, within our Memories ?

If then the *Infidelity* of our countrymen be imputable to the too great Affluence of our Clergy, 'tis fit for that Reason, if there were no other, that the latter were remedied. For without taking away the cause it can't be expected the Effect will cease. Set the Clergy more on an Equality ; let them be but *commodiously and honestly provided for*, according to Cardinal Pool, and then we may expect they would employ their whole Time in battering down the high Ramparts of Infidelity, lately grown much more formidable and dangerous than even Popery.

As I propose the whole Body of pastors should be paid by the Crown, they might employ that Time in the Vineyard, which is now laid out in collecting Rents, Tithes, and other Dues, and often in plaguing their dissenting parishioners and others with frivolous and uncharitable Law-Suits. My Method would cut off at once all Solicitation at court and all Attendance at Levies, and Translations would be scarce known among our Prelates, who thereby would be amply at Leisure to combat all that Groupe of modern Errors that have crept upon us of latter Days.

But as great as my concern is for the Souls of my countrymen, I cannot help having an Eye still to their worldly Interest. Aid is wanting, and where shall we seek it but of the Church, that tender Mother always ready to bestow and indulge ? The Laity are overburthened, and on whom shall they cast part of their Load but on the Clergy, *who seek not their own profit, but the things*

Things of Jesus Christ? These were the divine Words of a Popish Clergy; and shall we not think them as applicable to a reformed Clergy?

There is not a Popish State in *Europe* but has been aided, in times of Difficulty and Expence, by the Body of its Clergy. In *Spain*, the Pope has granted Bulls for levying the *Tenth* on the Clergy, since the breaking out of the present War, and often before occasionally. In *France* the clergy make the crown an annual *Free Gift* of very great Value. But the *French* court goes further when put to Necessities, as you may perceive by the following Extract of a Letter, *Anno* 1563, from the Queen Regent of *France*, Mother of *Charles IXth*, to Pope *Pius IVth*, and the general council then convened at *Trent*.

* “ That after consultaion had been had how
 “ to pay the Debt of the crown, a Decree had
 “ passed for alienating to the Value of a hundred
 “ thousand crowns of Ecclesiastical immoveable
 “ Goods, and it was confirmed by the King’s
 “ Edict and Sentance of the Parliament.”—My
 Author goes on with the Instructions sent to the
 Ambassador of *France* who was to have delivered
 the aforesaid Letter. “ The *French* Ambassa-
 “ dor was ordered to move his Holiness to give
 “ his consent, alledging the Exhausture of the
 “ Exchequer by the late War, that the King de-
 “ signed to put his Affairs in order that he might
 “ begin, as his purpose ever was since the
 “ making of the Peace, to reunite all the King-
 “ dom to the catholick Religion; and that he
 “ might be abler to force whosoever should op-
 “ pose him, he meant to impose a Subsidy, and
 “ cause

* *Pietro, Soavo Palano’s* Histroy of the Council of *Trent*.

“ cause the clergy to contribute **their parts** to it
 “ also, whereto the Church was so **much** more
 “ bound than others, by how much **their Interests**
 “ were more in Question. That **all** being con-
 “ sidered, nothing was found to be **more easy**
 “ than to supply the Necessity with the **Aliena-**
 “ tion of some few **Ecclesiastical Revenues,**
 “ whereto he desired the consent of **his Holiness.**”

The Pope, perhaps more tenacious of the things of this World than he ought, and too like many of his cloth here among us, quibbled with the *French* court for the present, hoping by Delay to avert the Storm. But the *French* Ministers, tho' papists and owning the Supremacy, went on with the Seizure and Sale of the Church-Lands without Scruple or waiting for his Holiness's Bulls. Yet as many were scrupulous to purchase without the consent of the court of *Rome*, the Sale went on heavily.----- But as I have all along taken the Liberty to entertain you with Scraps of Antiquity, permit me to pursue this Subject from the same Author. I do it the rather that it will furnish you with clearer Ideas of the policy of the court of *Rome*, and of the high Regard paid to its Bulls and Decrees, by all that are of the *Romish* persuasion.

“ The Pope, says the Author (Page 667.) an-
 “ swered, that the Demand was painted forth with
 “ a fair pretence of defending the Church, but it
 “ was the only way to ruin it; for the avoiding
 “ whereof, his surest was not to consent to it;
 “ and he was of Opinion, that the *French* would
 “ not proceed to the Execution of it without
 “ him, and he thought without his consent none
 “ would adventure Money upon them, because
 “ a time might come that the Ecclesiasticks
 “ would

“ *would resume their Rents and not restore the*
 “ *Price.* And he proposed the Business to the
 “ *Consistory* and resolved not to consent, but
 “ *by divers Excuses to shew it was impossible to*
 “ *obtain that Demand at his Hands.*”

You will easily distinguish in this Answer the Subtilty of the Court of *Rome* on one Hand, and on the other, its Reliance on the Implicite-ness of the Veneration in which its Decrees are held by *Papists*. --- The Pope refuses or rather delays his consent, *being of Opinion the French would not proceed to Execution without him*; and believing, *that no Purchaser would hazard his Money without his Consent*. And he does not stop here neither, but gives the Reason why the Purchaser could not think it safe to part with his Money without his consent. *Because a time might come that the Ecclesiasticks might resume their Lands and not return the Purchase Money.*

Hence arise various Speculations in regard to Church-Lands, well worth the Attention of all *Papists* that are in Possession of such Estates. In the first Place, 'tis evident that the Bishop of *Rome* claims a Right to dispense with the Alienation of the Possessions of the Church, which has never been disputed with him, but on the contrary allowed by the general consent of those in communion with that See; and in the next, *that without the Dispensation of the Pope, Ecclesiasticks may resume their Possessions without returning the Purchase Money.*

The more attentively I reflect on these considerations, the more I admire the wise circumspection of our Ancestors, in the Reign of *Queen Mary*

Mary, for having sought with so great Earnestness the consent or Bull of Dispensation of the Court of *Rome*, for their purchase of those Lands that had been taken from the Church in the preceding Reigns. With us Protestants, an Act of Parliament would answer every Purpose of Security we could propose to ourselves; but to a Nation of papists, as the whole People then were, and proposed to remain such, it was thought necessary to procure the further Security of a Dispensation from the See of *Rome*, without which it might be possible for Ecclesiasticks, in the Reign of some future Church-ridden Prince to resume their Possessions without refunding the Purchase Money. But by obtaining the consent of *Julius III.* by his Legat, Cardinal *Pool*, and the confirmation of *Paul IV.* by his Bull in Favour of Sir *William Petre*, wherein he expressly confirms what had been done by *Pool*, our Ancestors shut out irreversibly all future Claimants to their Possession of Church-Lands.

The Act of Parliament, it is true, was in itself an ample Security, because it could not be presumed that a Court, however influenced by Churchmen or skilled in the iniquitous Mystery of Corruption, could prevail on a Majority of *English* Legislators, at all times no less tenacious of their *Interests* than Liberties, to repeal a Law which confirmed to them and their Friends and Relations, the Possession of at least one third of the Lands of the Kingdom. But our cautious Fathers, willing to guard against the most distant Dangers, secured the Possession of their Church and Abbey-Lands for ever against those who alone could have any colour of Right to dispute their Titles.

As

As for Temporal Security, or that of the *Legislature*, it was obtain'd in the amplest Manner possible, as may be seen by the Act at large, and particularly by that clause of it, which subjects Aggressors to the Penalties incur'd by being guilty of a *Præmunire*. The cautious clause is as follows.

“ And that it may be in like manner Enacted,
 “ by the Authority aforesaid, that whosoever
 “ shall by any Process, obtained out of any *Ec-*
 “ *clesiastical Court*, within this Realm, or *with-*
 “ *out*, or by Pretence of any *Spiritual Jurisdiction*
 “ or otherwise, contrary to the *Laws of this*
 “ *Realm*, inquiet or molest any Person or Per-
 “ sons, or Body Politick, for any Manors,
 “ Lands, Tenements, Hereditaments, or things
 “ above specified, contrary to the Words, Sen-
 “ tences, and Meaning of this Act; shall incur
 “ the Danger of the Act of *Præmunire*, made
 “ the 16th Year of King *Richard II.* and shall
 “ suffer and incur the Forfeitures and Pains con-
 “ tinued in the same.”

The Spiritual Security must necessarily come from the Clergy, as being those only who could possibly assert any such Right. But as they, by their Vows and the Constitution of their Church, are to pay implicate Obedience to the Court of *Rome*, our Ancestors took care, by obtaining the aforesaid *Dispensations*, to seclude them for ever from even an Assertion of any such pretended Right. And to carry their Precautions all the Lengths that could possibly be suggested by the most consummate Prudence, our Forefathers ordered Matters so as that the Clergy themselves should not only *release* all Rights or Privileges

Claims they might have, but be *Petitioners* for that *Bull* or *Dispensation* from the See of *Rome*, which took away every Shadow of Right which either they or their Successors could claim to the Possessions, confirmed to the Laity by such Bulls and the Act of Parliament. In so much that if we had continued Papists to this Hour, we should not have the least room for apprehending a Resumption of Church-Lands. On the contrary, the Point would be so much the clearer and more favourable on the Side of the present Possessors, that by the Constitutions of Papists, such of the Clergy as should dare attempt asserting any such pretended Right, in Contravention to the aforesaid *Bulls*, would be severely punished and loaded with all the Inconveniencies attending the *Excommunicatio Major*.

But that the Wisdom of our Ancestors, their great Exactness, and prudential Care for Posterity may appear the more conspicuously, and for a Lesson to those who dole away our Millions unattentive to the Consequences, I will produce the powers by Vertue of which Cardinal *Pool* granted his Dispensation to the possessors of Abbey-Lands. The pope's first Brief to the Cardinal was dated the 8th of *March*, 1554, and was as follows, which, for your Ease, I give you in *English*, and for my own, as I have all my other Quotations, in that *old English*, which I find ready prepared to my Hand by ancient Writers of best Repute and Authority.

“ Altho' we have impowered thee with many,
 “ and those most ample Faculties by divers of
 “ our Letters, as well made under *Led* as in the
 “ Form of Briefs, which, while thou residest
 “ in *Flanders*, thou mayest use, as well to the
 “ persons as Affairs of *England*, as it is more
 D fully

“ fully contained in them. But by Reason of
 “ the Schifms and other Errors with which the
 “ said Kingdom hath been long infected, many
 “ Cafes may happen which may need provifi-
 “ ons to be made by the said See, and being,
 “ as it were, infinite and not to be before thought
 “ of, cannot be comprehended under the said
 “ Faculties, and likewise it is doubted by some,
 “ *whether thou be impowered by the same Facul-*
 “ *ties, &c.* We in the Lord well confiding in thy
 “ Faith, Piety, Religion, Learning and Pru-
 “ dence, *and willing to cut off all Cause of doubt-*
 “ *ing in the Premises* to thy Circumspection
 “ wherever thou art, &c. during this thy Le-
 “ gation, *give thee Power to use by thyself, or any*
 “ *other,* according to the Contents and Tenor
 “ of the said Faculties, all and singular the same
 “ already granted to thee, or to be granted to
 “ thee, for the persons and affairs of the King-
 “ dom, and the Isles and Dominions of the
 “ same, and to *pronounce, do, execute, and pro-*
 “ *secute, all and singular things* which, for the
 “ Honour of Almighty God and ours and the
 “ said See, as also for the Reduction of the said
 “ Kingdom, Isles, and Dominions to the Com-
 “ munion of the holy Church, and the Health
 “ of the Soul of the persons living in the same,
 “ *thou shalt think expedient, altho’ they fall not*
 “ *within the general Command and Faculties other-*
 “ *wise granted to thee, but require special Expression*
 “ *and Command, and by Apostolical Authority, by*
 “ *the Tenure of these Presents, we grant and in-*
 “ *dulge, and extend to all these the foresaid Faculties*
 “ *granted to thee, &c.*

This Brief may be supposed to have been
 granted to quiet the Minds of the Serupulous in
 regard to the Ampleness of the powers deligated
 to

to Cardinal *Pool* by those prior *Faculties* mentioned therein: And yet so far did our Fathers carry their Precaution, that even this Brief, tho' as ample and general as possible, did not, it seems, give intire Content to the over-righteous of those Days. But to quiet for ever the Minds of the Possessors of *Church-Lands*, and to cut away all Hopes from the Clergy of resuming the Possessions lately taken from them, the following Brief was sent to the Legate dated the 28th of *June*, 1554.

“ Whereas in the late Months by-past, Hope
 “ was given us by God's Mercy, and the great
 “ Religion and Piety of our dearest Daughter in
 “ Christ, *Mary*, Queen of *England*, which very
 “ long by the Impiety of some was torn from
 “ the Body of the rest of the Catholick Church,
 “ would be reduced to the Union of the said Ca-
 “ tholick and universal Church, without which
 “ Salvation can be to none; therefore we destine
 “ thee to the said Queen *Mary*, and *all that*
 “ *Kingdom*, as Legate à *Latere* of us and the
 “ Apostolick See, as an Angel of Peace and
 “ Concord, by the Council and unanimous As-
 “ sent of our venerable Brethren the Cardinals
 “ of the holy *Roman* Church; and have impow-
 “ ered thee with all the *Faculties* which we have
 “ thought necessary to the effecting so great a
 “ Business, or are any way seasonable for it; and
 “ among other Things have given thee Authority
 “ and Faculty to thy Circumspection, to accord,
 “ and transact with the Possessors of Ecclesiastical*
 “ Goods; concerning all the *Fruits* unjustly re-
 “ ceived, and the moveable Goods wasted, and
 “ them to free and acquit, when it can be done,

* *Bona*, in the Canon Law implicet as well *immoveables* as moveables.

“ as in our Letters thereupon made, is more
 “ fully contained.

“ Whereas for these Beginnings, which by
 “ the Industry and Diligence, and Right and
 “ constant Mind to God of the said *Mary*, and
 “ in that Matter by thy co-operating Study and
 “ Counfel, the foresaid Work of Reduction in
 “ the said Kingdom to this Day hath, and the
 “ Perfection of the said famous Work is daily
 “ more to be hoped; and the Matter may be
 “ known, thereby to have more easy Progress,
 “ so much the more as we shew Hope of Apo-
 “ stolical Benignity and Indulgence, *in the Pos-*
 “ *sessions of Ecclesiastical Goods occupied by the*
 “ *Men in that Kingdom, in the Confusion of the*
 “ *late Times.* We not only willingly for any
 “ earthly Respect *to hinder such a Recovery of a*
 “ Nation, the most beloved of us in Christ, af-
 “ ter the Custom of an holy Father towards Sons
 “ of us and the holy Catholick Church, after a
 “ long time of dangerous travel Abroad, meet-
 “ ing them that look back and return with a
 “ wished Embrace: In whose excellent Virtue,
 “ singular Piety, Learning, Wisdom, and Dex-
 “ terity, we having in the Lord full trust, at
 “ thy own *Arbitrement by our Authority*, give
 “ thee full Power of treating, agreeing, trans-
 “ acting, and compounding with whatever
 “ *Possessors or Detainers of Ecclesiastical Goods, as*
 “ *well moveable as immoveable in the said King-*
 “ *dom;* for whom the said most serene Queen
 “ *Mary* shall intercede, *and give thee full Power*
 “ *and Authority by the Tenor of these Presents, and*
 “ *of certain Knowledge to dispense with them, that*
 “ *they may retain the said Goods without any Scru-*
 “ *ple for the Future,* and of concluding and do-
 “ ing all and singular other things, which in
 “ these are any ways necessary and seasonable,
 “ &c.”

This

This Brief, as none could be apter or ampler, gave such universal Satisfaction, that, after the Cardinal had confirmed the Possession of Church-Lands to the Laity, there was not a Scruple or Doubt throughout the whole Nation concerning the Legality of their Title to these Possessions: And it would be the same to this Time, had we continued our Obedience to the See of *Rome*; it being a Fundamental with Papists, to be strictly observant of the Decretals of that awful Tribunal.

There are many and various Instances wherein Papists had acknowledged the dispensing Power of the Bishops of *Rome* in regard to the Alienation of the Church-Lands, and their acquiescing implicitly with the Tenor of their Bulls, long before the Reformation. All the Countries in *Europe* abound with such Instances, and our own particularly. But not to overburthen you with Quotations, I shall mention but a few. Pope *Clement V.* by his Bull or Brief of the 10th of the Kalends of *December*, 1307, Ordered the seizing the *Knights Templars* here, in one Night (according to the Example of the *French King* who had obtained the like Brief) and gave the Custody of their Lands and Goods to King *Edward II.*

Pope *Clement VII.* granted his Brief to Cardinal *Wolfey*, the 4th of the Nones of *November*, 1528, for dissolving and suppressing such Monasteries as maintained but six or three Monks, to the value of 8000 Ducats of Gold of yearly Rent, &c. And as in this Brief or Bull are the fullest Recitals of the Pope's dispensing Power in regard to the Alienation of Church Possessions, I would quote it in the Original, if I had not already made too free with your Patience. But should your Curiosity prompt you, it may be easily satisfied by Doctor *Fiddes*, or *Rhymer*. By
another

another Brief in the same Year, dated the Day before the Kalends of *June*, and directed to *Wolsey*, he was authorized to suppress several religious Houses, for the building and endowing of *Christ-Church* College in *Oxford*. And likewise a Brief the following Year, from the same Pope, of the Nones of *February*, for a Dissolution of religious Houses, and applying their several Revenues to the endowing the Cardinal's College at *Ipswich*, where he was born.

But not to dwell on this Part of my Subject, which you will have observed to be introduced to shew you, that since the more tenacious Popish Clergy have voluntarily released, for ever, vast Possessions for the Ease and Tranquility of the State, and that the Laity possessed those Lands without Scruple or Remorse, we are not to suppose, that our present Clergy will prove more lukewarm Patriots, or that our Laity will prove more scrupulous Buyers. I hope one may safely answer for the *Self-denial* of our Churchmen in a Juncture so extremely Critical as the Present, but I will take upon me to answer for the Laity, that they will most willingly purchase all the Lands, Tithes and Dues now possessed by the Church, whenever they come to Market, and not perhaps so much for the Lucre of a gainful Bargain, as to get fairly rid of a Generation that are look'd upon by very many, to have sought more the *Things of this World*, than those *Things of Jesus Christ*, for the obtaining of which, their *Romish* Predecessors, under *Philip* and *Mary*, had spontaneously released all Claim to those *Things of this World* that had been taken from them.

But, Sir, before I take leave of You, permit me to make an Observation which arises from the Subject I have been treating of. I have shewn,

shewn, that if we had continued Papists, the Dispensations of *Rome* would have intirely quieted our Consciencs as to our Possession of Church-Lands, and our Minds, as to any Claim the Clergy might vainly set up hereafter to such Possessions : And I have endeavour'd to shew likewise the moral Impossibility of an *English* Legislature's repealing that solemn Act passed the second of *Philip* and *Mary*, to confirm the Rights of those Possessors so dispensed with by the Court of *Rome*.

We should have found all these Precautions necessary if we had remained in Communion with the See of *Rome* ; and should our present *Infidelity* ever throw us back into that misterious Communion, which many good Protestants apprehend may one Day be the Consequence of the present Depravity of both Pastors and Flock, we shall find these wise Precautions of our Fathers so many impeneurable Bulwarks, behind which our Possession of *Church-Lands* rests as firm and secure as the Throne itself ; as in *Saxony*, where, tho' the Prince and his family be *Papists*, his *Protestant* Subjects are, and think themselves for ever, secure in the Possession of their *Church-Lands*.

The Protestant Possessors likewise of Church-Lands in the *Palatinate*, the Dutchies of *Wirtemberg*, *Baden*, and several other States of *Germany*, are no less secure in their Possession of such Lands, tho' their respective Sovereigns be returned to the *Roman* Communion. All are tranquil, all are safe and secure in the Empire with regard to Church-Lands, nor is there any the least colourable Pretext for our being otherwise here in *England*, even tho' our Sovereigns, like some in *Germany*, should swerve from the Orthodoxy of the Reformation.

And

And, Sir, the Observation I would make before I conclude, is this, that as we have the Pleasure to find and think our Possession of *Church-Lands* to be secure at all Events, under any King, and of what Religion soever he may be, so have we likewise the Satisfaction to look upon our Properties in the *Funds* to be equally solid and secure. I admit that Corruption has taken deep and dangerous Root among us of late Years. But, Sir, as it was seldom known that a Man would be corrupted to his own undoing, nay to the undoing of his Friends, Relations, in short, of all that he holds dear; how can we suppose that an *English* Legislature will or can be corrupted to wipe of any of our Property in the *Funds* with a Parliamentary Sponge; and sure I am that no Prince, ever so little versed in our Annals and acquainted with our Tempers, will venture to lessen that Property without Consent of Parliament?

As I take such a Violation to be morally impossible, I should be extremely easy as to the Disposition and Religion of our future Rulers, even if the Prospect before us had been less flattering than it is. The Royal Progeny in View, promise all the good we can hope for; but my Comfort shall be always this, that let who will be King, the People will have the Power, and I am sure, they never can want the *Will*, to secure their Properties in the *Funds* and *Church-Lands*.

I am too well acquainted, Sir, with the Purity of your Patriotism to doubt of your Pardon for addressing to you such Reasons as occur'd to me in Defence of my Proposal for weakening the Church, or rather the *Clergy*, in order to strengthen the drooping, o'er-burthen'd *State*.

I am, &c.