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A
L E T T E R
T O T H E

Bishop of B A N G O R,

Occasion'd by his Lordship's

S E R M O N

Preach'd before the

K I N G

A T

S. James's, March 31st, 1717.

B Y

A N D R E W S N A P E, D. D. Chaplain in
Ordinary to His MAJESTY.

The Third EDITION.

L O N D O N:

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A
L E T T E R

T O T H E

Bishop of Bangor, &c.

My LORD,



HIS Trouble is given your Lordship by a Person, wholly a Stranger to you, who has very little either of Capacity, Inclination, or Leisure to engage in Controversy; and who is firmly persuaded, from the general Offence, which some of your Lordship's late Writings have given, that this Cause will be undertaken, and the Mistakes in those Writings set in a clear Light, by Persons much bet-

ter qualified: But who, notwithstanding all these Dissuafives, cannot prevail with himself to fit as an unconcern'd Spectator, whilst such Principles are advanc'd, as, in his Apprehension, do manifestly tend to a Dissolution of the whole Frame and Constitution of that Church, of which he has been many Years an unworthy Minister.

I shall need no Apology for a Conduct toward your Lordship, which is warranted by your own Example. I have certainly the same Right to offer my Exceptions to a Sermon of your Lordship's, which yourself thought fit to assume, when but a Presbyter, in censuring a Discourse of a late excellent and worthy Prelate, tho' recommended to the World, by the like high Authority, to that which now graces your Lordship's Title Page.

Your Lordship is such an Enemy to Infallibility in others, that undoubtedly you will lay no Claim to it yourself; nor presume that an absolute
Power

Power of interpreting the Laws of Christ, is lodg'd in you, so as to command the Assent of others, any farther than is consistent with their own Reason. For my own particular, I have impartially consulted that scanty Portion of it, with which it has pleased God to enlighten me, in relation to the new and strange Doctrines propagated by your Lordship ; and as far as I have any Faculty of judging, they appear to me entirely destructive of all Order and Government, of all Unity, Peace and Communion in the Church, and contradictory to all those Scriptures which represent the Church as a regular and well-compacted Body or Society, and which recommend a Confederacy, Concord and Union among the Members.

I think I see the Will of God, otherwise than it is represented by your Lordship ; I think it my Duty, and your Lordship has taught me, that it is my Right to profess and publish what

I think I see: and, by reasoning upon your Lordship's Principles, I might satisfy myself, that no Power upon Earth has Authority to restrain me from expressing my Thoughts with the most unbounded Freedom in a Matter of Religion and Conscience. Notwithstanding which, I shall proceed, as with a due Regard to your Episcopal Character, so with some to my own Safety, and not presume too far, that none of the *Engines of this World* would be made Use of against me, nor the *secular Arm* be call'd upon; should I happen to break in upon those Privileges and Immunities, within which your Lordship is so conveniently entrench'd; or let fall any such unwarrantable and obnoxious Appellation, as my inward Conviction and private Belief might suggest to me.

I have the Satisfaction of agreeing with your Lordship in your introductory Remark. I readily allow, that the Meaning annex'd to certain Words

or Sounds, does undergo great Alterations by length of Time, and the same Word come, by Degrees, to stand for a Complication of Notions as distant from the original Intention of it; nay, as contradictory to it, as *Darkness is to Light*. I am so far from disputing this Point, that it was once in my Thoughts to have confirm'd your Lordship's Observation, by several other Instances of Words, that have chang'd their Original Signification, in at least as remarkable a Degree, as any of those Terms alledg'd by your Lordship.

But not to wast the little time I can spare, in such a needless Digression, let us see how your Lordship makes good the Point.

The two first Instances by which your Lordship has chose to exemplify your Observation, are these, Religion and the Worship of God. Which Words I cannot deny to have been too often misapplied (as indeed what one Word in the whole Compass of Speech has

has not?) and wrested to a Meaning very different from what they naturally import. There is no Doubt but there have been, and are too many, who lay too great a Stress on the external Circumstantials of Religion, and the Acts of publick Worship, *who have the Form of Godliness without the Power,* and yet flatter themselves, and induce others to believe, that they are truly religious Men, and sincere Worshipers of God. And if your Lordship's Reflexions look no farther than these, so far we are still agreed. And whatever farther Insinuations, I and the generality of your Readers may conceive to be couch'd under some of the Expressions us'd by your Lordship, in the Discussion of those two Points; yet, as those Expressions are capable of an Interpretation different from that, in which we believe you would have them understood, I shall let them pass as under that innocent and inoffensive Meaning, and proceed to other more obnoxious

noxious Passages, where there is no room left for any such Evasion.

At best, it must be said that your Lordship appears very unfavourable to any thing that is external in the Service of God. To make Amends for which, one might at least have expected to meet with a very abundant Zeal, and more than ordinary Concern for that Part of Religion, which is seated in the Heart. But when, instead of that, we find you striking at the very Root of all Goodness, depreciating the solemn Duty of Prayer, by separating Devotion from it, which is the Life and Soul of it; How shocking is the Disappointment?

What, my Lord, is Piety become so predominant in the Age, that the Exorbitant Growth of it must be check'd? and is it to be check'd by such Hands? Does the *Fever* of Devotion rage so fiercely, as to stand in Need of such cooling Prescriptions?

The Word [Prayer] by the Help of Men, and voluminous Rules of Art, is come to signify Heat and Flame — in the best Disposition in the World, and yet not devout enough to pray: — Intenseness of Heat — being in a Fever: Very witty indeed! pretty Ironies in the Mouth of a Christian Bishop, on so serious and sacred a Subject! This, I am sure, is touching the very Vitals of all that is Good, and consequently, by your Lordship's own Allowance, ought, in Duty, to be resisted, with a more open and undisguised Zeal than ordinary.

Nothing sure can be more contrary to the whole Stream and Tenour of the sacred Writings, than what your Lordship has taught in this Paragraph, with reference to Prayer. You are pleas'd to call it, *A calm and undisturb'd Address to God*, and plead our Lord's Directions about it, in Justification of your Notion. But no such Direction appears in Scripture. He cautions his Followers indeed against vain Repeti-
B
tions

(II)

tions and Ostentation, when they pray ; he censures the *Pharisees* for making long Prayers only for a Shew : But where does he say, that Prayer must be calm and undisturb'd, or use any other Expression of the like Importance ? Where does he attempt to moderate or assuage the Fervour of inward Devotion, or warn his Disciples against making their Requests to the Father, with too much Vehemence ?

So far from that, that we expressly read, he spake the Parable of the Widow, and the unjust Judge, *Luk. xviii. 1. to this end, that Men ought always to pray, and not to faint ; i. e. to be urgent and importunate, and to solícite with Earnestness ;* as farther appears by the Parable of the Man that borrow'd three Loaves of his Friend at Mid-night, *Luk. xi. 5.* by that of the *Publican*, who smote upon his Breast, in a deep Compunction of Soul, and humble Sense of his own Unworthiness, when he consider'd how great a Sinner he had been :

by the Directions he gives them to ask, and seek, and knock : From none of which Circumstances can we be encourag'd to hope, that God will hear our Petitions if they are cold and lifeless.

But Prayer, you say, in that Form, which our Lord taught his Followers, was *calm and undisturb'd*. Most certainly it was not so at the Delivery, tho' it may be attended with those Properties in the Use, which depend on the Affection of him that uses it. Your Lordship may be *calm and undisturb'd*, when you say the *Lord's-Prayer* : But I hope there are those, who repeat it with Warmth, and a lively Emotion of Spirit.

But nothing can more convincingly assure us, what was our Saviour's Will in this Case, than his own Practice. And did he satisfy himself, when he pray'd, with as little Devotion as would content your Lordship? Was he quite so indolent and unmov'd, *Luk. xxii. 44.*
when

when being in an Agony he pray'd more earnestly, and his Sweat was as it were great Drops of Blood falling down to the Ground?

If there needed any farther Proof, I could put your Lordship in mind of S. Paul's Commendation of *Epaphras*, Col. iv. 12. who, he tells the *Colossians*, labour'd fervently for them in Prayers; and of S. James's Assertion, *Jam. v. 16.* that the effectual fervent Prayer of a righteous Man availeth much; with a multitude of other Texts, as full and apposite, as any that have been cited. And now, pray, my Lord, consider, how very different a Notion any common Capacity may form upon a Perusal of these Scriptures, from those which your Lordship labours to inculcate. 'Tis indeed amazing to me, with what possible View you could attempt to found a Doctrine, of a most pernicious Tendency in itself, on the Ruins of so many Texts of Scripture, unless it were, to give a Specimen in
your

your own Person, of the Fallibility, or something worse, of humane Interpreters.

Or your Lordship might mean perhaps, by those Sarcastical Expressions above-cited, only to reflect on some modern Books of Devotion, that recommend Fervency of Prayer. But whatever was intended by them, they do, in effect, cast a Dishonour on those Places of Holy Writ, which I have produced. And I cannot but add, that, had your Lordship's Sermon appear'd without so venerable a Name in the Front of it ; had it been publish'd by a conceal'd Author ; I should not easily have been persuaded, but that Expression, *Intenseness of Heat*, had been a design'd Burlesque on what is said of our Saviour, in his Agony, that he prayed more earnestly [or intensely] your Lordship knows how it is in the Original, *ἐντενέσεσθον προσήχητο.*

Will it be alledg'd, that what appears so Offensive in this Paragraph,
is

is moderated by those qualifying Phrases, *in such a Manner*, and *to such a Degree*, that your Lordship does not absolutely make a Jest of all *Heat and Flame* in Prayer, but only of Enthusiastick Raptures? Alas! How few of your Readers will so understand you? How many that are not aware of the Niceties of Pointing, will (as the Turn of the Period naturally inclines them) make a fuller Pause at the Word *Flame*, than the Comma directs them to do; will suppose the Sentence to be half over there, and to end, where indeed it is ended, (notwithstanding the Fallacy of a wrong Stop) with the Word *pray*?

How your Lordship manag'd in the Pronunciation, I can only guess; but I am sure that Period may be so pronounc'd, that those Clauses, *in such a Manner*, and *to such a Degree*, shall not be thought to limit, but to confirm and aggravate what went before.

Your

Your Lordship plainly opposes *Heat and Flame* to that *Calmness and Undisturbedness* with which you would have our Addresses to God accompanied: And if you had meant to allow of any the smallest Degree of Fervour, or godly Transport, that might disorder that Tranquillity, and put the Soul into any kind of Agitation; it had been fair, and sure it was highly requisite, to have told us how far your Concessions extended. Could not one Line be afforded, in a Case of so much Consequence, to guard against Mistakes, and to satisfy us, in proper and direct Terms, that you did not mean to stifle all pious Breathings of the Soul, nor totally to extinguish all Sparks of Devotion? But, in Truth, as the Matter is represented by your Lordship, there are many who so apprehend you; and who cannot conceive how, according to you Lordship's Dictates, there can be any room left, for Elevation of Thought, in
con-

contemplating the Majesty of God ; for the Acts of Shame and Abhorrence, and godly Contrition, when we are humbled with a Sense of our Guilt ; for a sprightly Joy and Exultation under the Assurance of Pardon ; for grateful Ejaculations, when we reflect on God's Mercies : Nay, not even for the Hope of everlasting Bliss, or the Fear of everlasting Misery. Our Passions must all be stupified, and every Power of our Souls lie dormant and becalm'd, for fear of discomposing that easy Serenity with which your Lordship would have us pray.

What Influence your Doctrines will have, or what Adherents you will gain over, I am not able to fore-see : but I hope the Number will not be very Large, of those, who will think it advisable to list themselves in your Lordship's new Sect of *Protestant Quietists*.

As for what you say of the *Love of God*, which is the next of those per-

verted Words your instance in: tho' your Lordship has set it as low as possible, and seem particularly careful, that Men may not offend in the Excess of this, or any thing else that is good; yet as there have been well-meaning Men, who have over-strain'd that Duty, and amus'd themselves and others with unnecessary Scruples, I shall suppose your Lordship's Reflexions to be level'd against them, and not stay to adjust the Difference between your Lordship and them.

And now are we come to the last of those Words or Sounds, the Mis-use whereof has given your Lordship so much Offence: that mysterious, inexplicable Phrase, so full of inconsistent Images, *the Church of Christ*. This *Church of Christ*, according to your Lordship, *is the Kingdom of Christ*, and a Kingdom of which he is himself, not only the sole King, but the sole *lawgiver*, the sole Judge, the sole Interpreter of his own Laws; a Kingdom
in

in which he neither acts himself, nor has invested any one else with an Authority to act for him. And you are pleas'd to inferr, *Pag. 13.* by one of the oddest Consequences that ever was drawn from any Proposition, that *because* he never interposes himself, *therefore* he has left no Deputy : which if he did interpose, there would certainly be no Occasion for ; but at his Departure into Heaven, when he was no longer to govern his Church in Person, he provided for the good Government of it, by others whom he commission'd to teach and expound his Laws, to bear Rule and Authority over his Subjects, to be his Vice-gerents, to act in his Name and Stead, and to perpetuate a Succession of Mentthro' all the succeeding Ages of the World, in whom the same Powers should be lodg'd. And tho' he made none of them infallible, nor exempted them from humane Frailties, yet still he requir'd his Church to obey them, and to be guided by their

Instructions, where they were not contrary to his. The Places of Scripture that prove these Assertions, are so numerous, and so well known to your Lordship, that it is needless to transcribe them.

And indeed, had he made no Provision for the orderly and regular Government of his Subjects, either by interposing himself, or by his Spirit working in them, not by the ordinary Operations, as at present, but in as full and ample Measures, as in the Apostle's Days; or by substituting Vicegerents to act for and under him, to satisfy the Doubts of his People, and explain the Meaning of his Laws, by comparing them with one another, to restrain Offenders, and keep in Awe the Disturbers of its Peace and Unity; I say, if no Care had been taken, by some one of these Ways, to keep his Subjects in Order; the Church of Christ must have been a *Babel*, and his Kingdom a Realm of Confusion.

If

If Christ our King and Law-giver, who is All-wise, Unerring, and All-sufficient, had been pleas'd to act personally in his own Government, or had he thought fit to have conducted his Subjects by the Guidance of irresistible Grace; there would then have been no need of inferiour Magistrates. But as neither of these is the Case; in his Kingdom, as well as the Kingdoms of this World, there must be, and there is a Subordination of Ministers, who are the Judges and Guides of his People, by vertue of an Authority, that he has delegated to them.

Let us consider the Church under any other of those Images, by which it is represented in Scripture, and we shall find that they all combine to give us an Idea of it, as of an orderly and well-govern'd Society. Sometimes it is figur'd to us, under the Similitude of a natural Body: But does that consist of disjointed Members, loosely put together,

gether, and connected by no Sinews or Ligaments? no more can the Spiritual Body, without Rules and Orders, which are the Bands and Ligaments of Society. We are often said to be united in one Body under Christ our Head: *Eph. iv. 15, 16. From whom the whole Body fitly join'd together, and compacted by that, that every Joint supplieth, according to the Effectual Working, in the Measure of every Part, maketh increase of the Body, unto the edifying itself in Love. And He who is our Head, ver. 11, 12. gave some Apostles, and some Prophets, and some Evangelists, and some Pastors and Teachers, for the perfecting of the Saints, for the Work of the Ministry, for the edifying of His Body.*

Take the Church as a Building: as such it is call'd, *1 Pet. ii. 5. Eph. ii. 20. one Spiritual House, built upon the Foundation of Prophets and Apostles, Jesus Christ himself being the chief Corner-Stone. And Christians are compared to a Building fitly framed, growing to an Holy Temple in the Lord,*

Lord, Eph. ii. 21. Can a Heap of unce-
 mented Stones compose such a Building
 fitly fram'd? No more can a Number of
 Men, calling themselves Christians, but
 under no Body's Governance or Di-
 rection, compose a Spiritual Edifice.
 Can a material Fabrick be of long Du-
 ration, with no one to survey it, to
 repair its Breaches, and prevent its
 Decay? No more could the Building
 of Christ's Church. Let us look upon
 the Body of Christians, as the Mem-
 bers of a large Household or Family.
 In that there must be Stewards, and
 other governing Servants of different
 Degrees, to preserve a good OEcono-
 my. Let us consider them as Soldiers
 fighting under Christ's Banner, and
 there we shall see Occasion for General
 and Subaltern Officers. And the Case
 will be still the same, if you take a
 View of the Church, under any other
 Image. *But*

But, what am I doing? Am I labouring to convince one of the Governors of Christ's Church, of the highest Order, that Christ has left a Power of Governing? Very sorry I am for the unhappy Necessity, but your Lordship has made it necessary for me. For either I am incapable of understanding the Meaning of Words, or your Lordship disowns the Legality of those Powers, which at the same time you continue to exercise. This you appear to me to do in many Places, but particularly in the following Passage, *Pag. 12.* *Nay, whoever hath an Authority to interpret any written, or spoken Laws; it is he, who is truly the Lawgiver, to all Intents and Purposes; and not the Person, who first wrote or spoke them.* Consequently, when your Lordship, or any other Minister, presumes to explain the Laws of Christ, he makes himself the Lawgiver, and does what you condemn thro' your whole Sermon, usurp an Authority, that belongs

to Christ alone. And if such be our Case, we have nothing more to do but to throw up our Orders, since the Church has no Need of us, since we not only do no Service, but are guilty of a criminal Usurpation.

But your Lordship may fancy you have a *Salvo* in Reserve: You may tell me that the Sentence I refer to, as well as many others in your Discourse, is guarded with the Word *absolute*. I am aware of it, my Lord; I have left a Blank for it in my Quotation, which (as I am going to prove) will signify just as much, and be as entirely available to your Lordship's Purpose, as if the Word stood there at full Length.

The plain and known Import of the Word *absolute*, is, unlimited, unconditional, not clogg'd or restrain'd by any one Exception or Reserve. And in this Sense indeed, it may truly be affirm'd, that no Power or Authority upon Earth is *absolute*. There is one Exception, and there is but one, by which our Obedience

dience to all Earthly Governors must be bounded. And that is, that their Commands be not disagreeable to the Laws of Christ. If Kings themselves enjoin things contrary to the Word of God, we are to obey God rather than Man. If the Ministers of Christ, in their personal Capacity, teach Doctrines repugnant to the Scriptures, they are not to be hearken'd to. If the Collective Body of the Clergy, legally assembled, agree upon any Determinations or Decisions, if they frame any Articles or Canons contrary to what we are taught in the Holy Scriptures; they cannot bind the Conscience. And if this had been the Saving, which your Lordship had in View, and what you had intended to provide for, wherever you have inserted the Word *absolute*; many of the offensive Passages, with which your Sermon every where abounds, might have been alleviated, tho' a great deal of Offence would still have remain'd.

But,

But, my Lord, you have cut yourself off from any Benefit of that Plea. We are sure you did not mean to make the *Unlawfulness* of human Decisions the Ground of your denying the Authority, by which they were decreed; because you have told us so yourself. That, it seems, is a Matter of small Moment, and does not weigh with your Lordship at all. For you tell us in so many Words, *Page 15.* that the Case is the same, *whether they* [who assume this Power of deciding] *happen to agree with Christ, or to differ from him.* Still, *as long as they are the Lawgivers and Judges, without any Interposition of Christ, either to guide or correct their Decisions, they are Kings of this Kingdom, and not Christ Jesus.* Nothing can be more evident, than that, whatever latent Reserve your Lordship intends by the Word *absolute*; it is not that, which alone can qualify the Grossness of your Assertions. Your *absolutely* had gone before in that very

Sentence; where it cannot be pretended to be taken in the Sense, which you in the same Breath disclaim: And one may very reasonably infer, that you meant just as much by it, wherever it occurs.

Thus, while we are taught by the Gospel, to obey the Commands both of our Spiritual and Temporal Superiors, in all things lawful; we are taught by your Lordship to receive no Commands from any Superiors, whether Spiritual or Temporal, whether in Cases lawful or unlawful, in Matters relating to Conscience.

I persuade myself, I shall not be thought, in any thing that has been said, to have put any Force upon your Lordship's Words, or misinterpreted your Meaning. I am sure, I have not done it wilfully: I have only urged what I conceive to be, and what I think must appear to others, a very natural Deduction from your own Tenets.

But

But to make it more fully manifest, that I have done you no Wrong, I can appeal to other Places of your Sermon, where you have advanc'd the same Notion in more undisguis'd and peremptory Terms, without mincing or palliating, without the least Guard of Caution. But particularly in the following Sentence, which we meet with at the Top of the 14th Page.

“ If any Man upon Earth have a
“ Right to add to the Sanctions of his
“ [Christ's] Laws; that is, to in-
“ crease the Number, or alter the Na-
“ ture of the Rewards and Punish-
“ ments of his Subjects, in Matters of
“ Conscience and Salvation; they are
“ so far Kings in his Stead; and reign
“ in their Own Kingdom, and not in
“ His.

A very daring Affelevation indeed!
If any Man upon Earth have such a
Right, &c. that is to say, if any King,
Parliament, State or Potentate, or any
Earthly Power whatsoever, shall en-
courage

courage Religion by any Temporal Rewards, or discourage it by any Temporal Penalties, they usurp the Dominion of Christ, and dethrone him from his Spiritual Kingdom.

This bears very hard indeed on the Acts for preventing *Occasional Conformity* and *Schism*, and let us suppose the Argument were to have its Effect towards the reversing of them: How does your Lordship know it will stop there? How can you be sure that the Enemies of our Constitution will not borrow it of you, and apply it to their own Purposes? For if it were true, that no Men upon Earth have a Power of enacting Laws with penal or promissory Sanctions in Matter of Conscience, this would equally strike at all the incapacitating Laws in Force, not only against Protestant Dissenters, but Papists too: neither the one, nor the other, it seems, are to be laid under such exclusive Forfeitures, or *negative Discouragements*. Christ's Kingdom is not of this

World,

World, and none of the *Engines of this World* are to be employ'd either for, or against his Subjects.

The very Acts that secure the Protestant Succession, and have made it impracticable for any Papist to ascend the Throne, excluding for ever all of that Persuasion from such Claim, as they might otherwise have a legal Title to, for no other Demerit, but purely for the sake of their Religion, must by this Reasoning be overthrown.

Nay, the very Act of Settlement, by vertue of which, his present Majesty possesses the Crown, would stand upon no better a Foot; wherein it is provided, as one of the Limitations, *That whosoever shall hereafter come to the Possession of this Crown, shall joyn in Communion with the Church of England, as by Law established.*

Will your Lordship deny that a Crown is a Temporal Reward? Will you say that the Loss and Forfeiture of a Crown is not a Temporal Penalty? Can you pretend that being of this or
that

that Religion is not a Matter of Conscience and Salvation? And is it not notorious that the most solemn Laws of this Realm have made the Enjoyment or Loss of a Crown the Reward or Penalty of the one, or the other Religion? What remains then? Why, either your Lordship must say, as hitherto you do, that they had no Right to annex such Temporal Sanctions to religious Concerns; (which, if you will venture to speak out, I must leave you to the Animadversion of the Higher Powers) or you will be under a Necessity of retracting that rash and dogmatical Assertion, deliver'd in such crude and general Terms, in the Passage I have lately cited.

In the mean time, let me ask your Lordship; would it not have become so zealous an Advocate for the *Revolution*, who has formerly declared, that he *lov'd the very Ground on which it stood*; to have put in one Word of Exception, in Favour of it? Was it fit for one so
highly

highly favour'd by His Majesty King George, to preach such Doctrine in his Presence, as, in its Consequences, tends to the weakning his Royal Title? Might it not have been expected from so true a *Protestant*, whatever Indulgence he had shewn to others, to have found out some Distinction, to fetch in *Papists* at least within the Reach of *Negative Discouragements*? But not a Syllable, not a Hint is there to that Purpose. Nay, I cannot help observing, that in the whole Compass of your Lordship's Sermon, there is not the least Glance, that seems to be aim'd at Popery in particular, which considering the Subject, one would think, could not well have been avoided. No, your Lordship, I must needs say, has dealt your Favours, with a very equal and undistinguishing Hand, to all Churches, and all Religions.

Such are the dangerous Consequences arising from your Lordship's Positions, that seem, to me, to affect the

E State.

State. Let me beg your Lordship's Patience, while I mention some that concern the Church ; I solemnly profess that the whole Drift of your Argument appears, to my View, to be level'd not against any one particular Branch of our Establishment, but against the whole Frame and System of it at once : Nay, not only against the Polity of the *Church of England*, but against all Ecclesiastical Polity whatever. If your Lordship's Reasonings are right, there never was any Part of the Catholick Church, either in the Days of the Apostles, or at any time since, in any Nation of the World, that has not, as a Church, acted in direct Opposition to the Will of our Blessed Saviour, and usurp'd an Authority, that he had never delegated. All who have been interpreting his Laws, have been making Laws for him. All impos'd Terms of Communion, according to your Lordship, are sinful ; nor can any Number of
wise

wise and good Men, agreeing together in the same Notions, and assembled by legal Authority, in due Subordination to the Civil Magistrate, tho' with the most unanimous Consent, establish any Rules, or ordain any Method of Church-Government, that shall be binding, even for Peace and Quiet's sake, to any others.

Thus all Articles and Creeds are destroy'd at once, which were settled by Men so assembled. All Acts of General Councils were void and null from the Beginning. Nay, even the Decrees of the Council at *Jerusalem*, held by the Apostles themselves, were never of any Force; they sat there as Usurpers, they never had a Right to make any Laws, which belongs solely and peculiarly to their KING *Christ Jesus*. All, without Exception, who have ever gather'd themselves together in a Synodical Meeting, to join in the framing such Canons, Rules or Ordinances, as have been thought

proper to oblige others to a Unity of Profession, are, in your Lordship's Notion, no better than Invaders of Christ's Kingdoms, Erectors of an illegal Tribunal, and Exercisers of an Authority, that was never committed to them.

Upon these Principles, I do not see how your Lordship can offer to take your Place in the Provincial Synod: How you can require Subscriptions or Declarations of those whom you Ordain, or exercise almost any Act of Episcopal Jurisdiction.

The Church was bid to prepare for a State of Persecution, and such a one it severely smarted under: But it was to have a flourishing Estate likewise; Kings, in due time, were to be its Nursing Fathers, and Queens its Nursing Mothers. And are the Rulers of the Earth now to be told, that it is Criminal in them to defend the Church? That to support it by any Temporal Encouragements, or to restrain the Enemies of it by any Temporal

poral Penalties, is acting out of their Sphere, and affecting a Dominion in Christ's Spiritual Kingdom?

Your Lordship, Page 29. speaks of some *Pretensions*, which would have prevented all Reformation, where it hath been, and will for ever prevent it, where it is not already. May we not say, that your Lordship's Scheme has a natural Tendency, to destroy all Reformation, where it is already, and for ever to prevent a second Return of it? For suppose that *glorious Confusion* should take Effect, which your Lordship seems to have an Eye to: suppose the Influence of Earthly Powers to be withdrawn, the Fences of the Church thrown down, no religious Qualifications any longer insisted on; but Persons of every Denomination, equally capable of all Promotions; What do you imagine the Consequence might be? According to this Project, every Sort of Men might have their Turn of being uppermost, and *Papists* as well

as others ; and if once it came to that, Does your Lordship know them so little ? Can you be so unacquainted with their Zeal and Polity, as not to foresee, that it would not be long before they would set up new Fences exclusive of us ? With all Honour and Respect to the happy Reformation I speak it ; the Preachers, who first began it, argu'd most convincingly ; the Martyrs suffer'd gloriously ; but the desirable Work was not completed, till the Earthly Rulers, being themselves converted, establish'd and confirm'd it by Temporal Sanctions.

I am prevented, by a very necessary Avocation, from offering some other Matters to your Lordship's Consideration, and particularly from comparing your present Doctrines with what you have formerly taught. But I shall stay to offer your Lordship one Piece of Advice ; that in the next Impression of your Sermon, you would not suffer your Bookseller to expose you, by advertizing

vertising your *Reasonableness of Conformity* at the Back of it. If your Lordship thinks fit to stand to your new Principles, you have Reason to be asham'd of that Book, and in all good Policy should labour to suppress it, which contains Doctrines as opposite to those you now teach, as *Light is to Darkness*: Nay, as opposite as your Lordship's present Practice is to your former resisting Doctrines. I am,

My LORD,

Your Lordship's, &c.



F I N I S.

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