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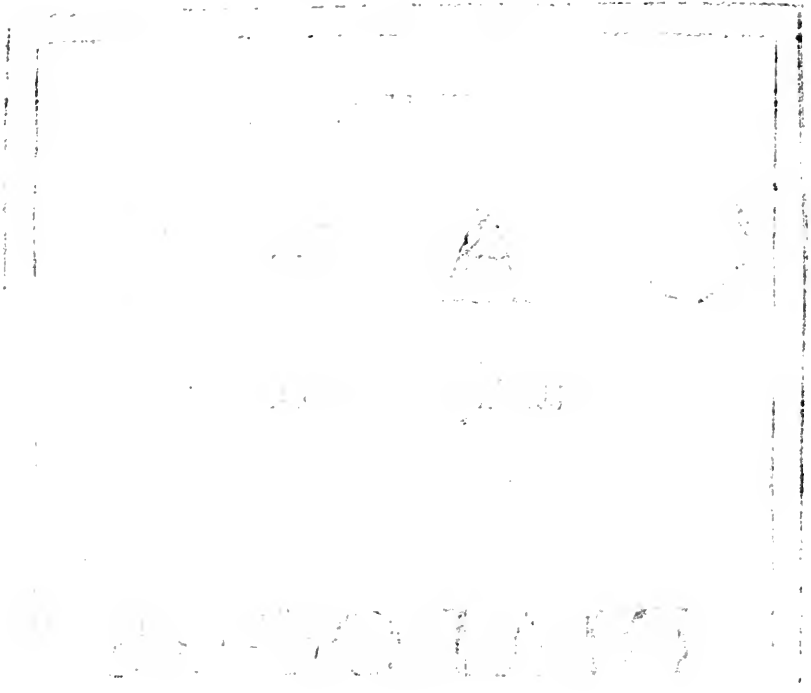
IN A
DIALOGUE

BETWEEN

Moderation and Constitution.

L O N D O N ,

Printed by *Tho. Warren* for *Thomas Bennet*, at the
Half-Moon in *St. Paul's Church-Yard*, 1702.



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TWO Neighbours equally Courteous and Friendly to each other, yet were always in contrary Interests; they went to the same Church, and for the most part, talkt much after the same rate, but were never of the same side, where the Unhappy Divisions of the Countrey they liv'd in were concern'd. One of them, here call'd Constitution, to conceal his Name, being naturally more free, and one Day after a chearful Dinner, quite off of his Guard, provoked the other here, for a Disguise nam'd Moderation, to debate several things related in this Dialogue.

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I lost the first half Hour of their Discourse, which makes the account here given of it to begin somewhat abruptly. I found it entertaining to my self, and wish it may be acceptable and useful to others.

A

DIALOGUE

B E T W I X T

Moderation and Constitution.

Moderation. **W**HEN all is said, you find your fears have been to no purpose; and that still you remain as safe as Heart could wish.

Constitution. A Man may be driven to the very brink of the Precipice, and have just cause to fear, though he doth not actually fall therein, gracious Providence hath preserved us. They that were frighted would word it another way, and say, that we were delivered. And for that, 'tis well known, and we will never forget it, that great thanks are most justly due to that number of brave and honest Gentlemen, who bore the Reproaches and Threats of that angry Party, which then had power enough to affright their Neighbours.

Moder. It was Zeal against *Popery*, and for the King's Preservation from *Jacobites* and other Enemies, that made some Men act with more heat than usually.

B

Const.

Const. Some, that know not what is *Popery* indeed, call by that odious Name whatever they like not. Pray, who were they that made a stand against *Popery*, in good earnest, when it was most powerful and pressing? And who that then address'd for repealing those Laws, made on purpose to secure the Nation from the danger of it?

If the Zeal for the King, you are pleas'd to mention, had no more reality than your Zeal against *Popery*, it might be meer Craft and Design, pretended by self-seeking Men, for to enrich themselves and oppress their Neighbours. And your calling them *Jacobites*, and treating them as publick Enemies that durst discharge their Trust and enquire after Truth, shews they were Friends to their Countrey that were made very vile, and bitterly rail'd at: And that nothing but what was very bad, could be intended by such means.

Mod. You would fain be reflecting upon the last Reign, when yet you took the Oaths, and pretended as much Loyalty as any of your Neighbours.

Const. We duly and honestly acquitted our selves of all those Engagements; and greatly abhor, not only falseness, but all disrespect to Sovereign Princes, whether dead or alive; 'twas a blemish of the late times, that some of them were treated so rudely: But 'twas not Allegiance, nor a peaceable Deportment, would then keep an innocent Subject from hard Usage and from bad Names, except he were in the Interest of that sort of People who would have engross'd the King to themselves, and have made him the Head of their Party.

Had not things been carried so far, and by degrees shew'd what they tended to, it would have been a Riddle and a Wonder, how the *Dissenters*, who were seldom known to be so fond of Crowned Heads,

Heads ; and seldom known to be in any thing united, but their opposition to the Legal Frame of our Government, should all so unanimously joyn in Raptures of Love and Admiration for a Prince, whose Reign also might be liable to some Exceptions.

They would hardly have been the *Encomiasts* and *Champions* of the Court, but that either they fancied themselves the Darlings, or designed to make others obnoxious.

Mod. I have other thoughts of the *Dissenters*, and take them to be a very well meaning People, who have no other aim than to have their Consciences free, and enjoy that Toleration which hath been granted them.

Const. I know not what aims they may have ; only thus much is known, that when they had power, they once actually destroy'd the *Constitution* ; and that their Proceedings of late, had a plain tendency to the doing the same over again. What if their Conscience doth tell them, that they are bound to bring in a *Thorough Reformation*, if it be possible : Would you have us allow that liberty ? When we have learnt by woful experience what they mean by *Reformation* ; and however it be began or carried on, what it must end in.

The freedom of their Religion, we grudge them not in any wise. I wish they were as well satisfied with the *Toleration*, as we are pleas'd it was granted, and desire it may be continued to them. We had much rather be secur'd from their Power, and their Designs against our Legal Rights, than have their *Tender Consciences* burthened with Articles of Faith or Rules of Religious Worship.

Mod. *Dissenters* are *True Protestants*, and should not be lookt upon as *Enemies*, we should rather become more Moderatè, and Unite together, for 'tis

only your *High Churchmen* that occasion all this Disturbance amongst us.

Const. As Neighbours and fellow Subjects we live with *Dissenters* as friendly and as quietly as any of you can do, be their Opinions what they will, we meddle not with that ; our difference with them is about what relates to the safety of our Establishment: And the Union you recommend, we look upon as wholly impossible.

First, Because *Protestant*, in the common Acceptation, is a word of great Latitude, and very uncertain meaning ; all that are not *Papists*, are included therein ; *Turks*, *Jews*, *Atheists* and *Infidels* of all sorts and sizes. We should be very loose indeed, in what concerns *Christianity*, very exorbitant *Latitudinarians*, could we model an Union of this kind, and bend our selves to it.

And Secondly, Because your *Dissenters*, even the most Moderate, have put it out of our power, ever to come to any terms of Agreement with them, in the state they are in. For they neither assent to any thing themselves, nor declare what it is they would have us alter. They keep themselves upon the reserve, free ever to find fault, whatever Proposals or new Models we shall devise. When they had the power, they destroy'd the establish'd Religion ; and in the room of it, Establish'd none other. No *Creeeds*, no *Lord's Prayer*, no *Ten Commandments* have they made necessary parts of their Publick Worship : It all depends upon Gifts, or present Effusions, or the Spirit, or what you please. We only know that they *Dissent* from us, but never knew what they would *Assent* to, for the Publick Service of God.

In the mind they have been in hitherto, and the mind they are in, were they at *Ausbourgh*, or at *Geneva*,

neva, in any *Lutheran* or *Calvinist* Churches, they would be *Dissenters* as they are in *England*. We might well come to terms with our Sister Churches that are *Reformed* beyond Seas; their *Liturgies* are known and fixt, and in the *Essentials* of Doctrine and Worship, agree with what we here profess: But if the *Guides* of the *Dissenters* should Establish for constant use in their Publick Worship, both *Liturgies* and *Confessions of Faith*, their People would come off from their great Aversion to us: And they well know that they keep them to themselves, by nothing more than their Ignorance, and the great Abhorrence both of *Forms* and *Impositions*, which hath been infus'd into them.

Mod. You are too partial in the Case: I love Extremities of no side; healing Principles and Moderation would do best, and let what will happen, would prove the safest course.

Const. No doubt of that: If things continue as they are, you are not in the wrong; and if they change, you still are in the right: he that can thus sail with all Winds, knows how to steer to perfection, and will never be at a loss. But all this while you mind only your selves, and have no regard to the Wisdom and Authority of the Laws, nor to the respect due to the Government. Betwixt two Factions, or two Men on the level, your Moderation might have place; but here you put in the Ballance, the Humours and Designs of Private Men against Publick Authority, and all Obligations to the Legal Establishment; so that they that oppose, and they that maintain and observe the Laws, are upon equal terms with you; you approve or blame them alike, as shall serve for your turn.

Well fare the *Dissenters*! We take it not amiss from them who separate from us, that they do not
labour

labour to uphold a *Constitution*, the destroying whereof would turn to good account with them. Declared Enemies are better than false Friends, and esteemed less dangerous, They that go with the Government as it is Establisht, so far as their Reputation and their Profit requires; but where they find it convenient to be on the opposite side, are as free to be there: 'Tis they we complain of, and whom we think most to be fear'd, and most to be condemn'd: Your *Moderate Men* give Support and Countenance to Parties and Proceedings that have prov'd fatal, and may so again, to our *Peace* and *Constitution*.

It was not rank *Sectaries* and *Separatists* could have Murthered King *Charles I*, had not some Men of more Credit, and more plausible Pretences, who forsooth, were only for *Discipline* and for *Reformation*, first stript and weaken'd that good Prince, and made him odious to his People: Some pursued and took him, tied his Hands, bound him to a Tree; then came the Wolves and tore him to pieces. So *Salmasius* answered the Protestations against the *Black Tribunal*, made by those that at first had excited the War.

And pray, who were they that destroyed the Church? Was it *G. Fox*, or *L. Muggleton*? Was it not the *Westminster Assembly*? *Men of Moderation*, that would only reform some things amiss, that were Ordained by Bishops, tied to the Rules of the *Constitution*; who had they been charged before, that they would change the *Government*, throw out *Articles* and *Confessions of Faith*, and abolish all *Liturgies*, would have scorned your words, and call'd you malicious Lyer.

There are Designs that must never be Nam'd: Whatever tends to such Innovations as would destroy

stroy the Peace and Settlement of a Nation, would certainly be prevented except it were disguis'd and kept very secret. A Man engag'd in such Designs, must not ask his Partner, no, not himself, Whether he would do *such a thing*? But push on, and success justifies whatever shall happen. The two Elders that attempted upon *Susannah*, might guess one another's Intent, but were ashamed to speak it.

That may be cried up for Moderation, which is rather Dissimulation and Falseness: To make it a Derision and Reproach to serve the Interest of what is Establish'd by Laws; and to joyn in the same Measures with those that would have other things set up; and yet pretend to be for the *Constitution*, looks much more like *Hypocrisie*, than like any *Christian Vertue*. But should I represent things plainly, you would tell me, I am a *High Churchman*, in your account the worst thing that can be.

Mod. I know not what I should call you; but as I think, you make as great a bustle as those you complain of; and more perhaps than wiser Men would do.

Const. I know that your Men of Prudence act with a great reserve; and tell us, we have but *one Breath*: They are afraid another *Whirl-about* should make them obnoxious to the angry Party; and things being uncertain, they manage an Interest for after Times. But I say that it might be as wise a Caution for them that wish the continuance of the now Legal Settlement; to do whatever justly may be done for its security, while this fair opportunity doth last.

As for the Bustle you speak of, 'tis forced upon us; honest Men on their side, for their own Self-preservation, must be allow'd to be active. If they that would take what you have, should represent
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the use of Doors and Locks, of Watch and Ward, and Writs, and Bayliffs, and Law Proceedings, as undecent, troublesome, needless things, you'd think them merry Wags, and hardly alter your Measures, and give over your Diligence, for fear of their Censure. We desire and labour only to keep our own, and to preserve those Laws, which whilst preserv'd, assert every Man's Right. If we meet with opposition in our Endeavours after this; 'tis the unhappines of our Times, and we ought not to be reproacht for it: 'Tis known what we would have, even the continuance of our *Peace and Legal Establishment*: They that aim at a Change, are to be suspected and fear'd; for we know not what that would be, and have reason to think it would not be for the better.

Mod. All I can say is, That there may be Faults on both sides, and that 'tis great pity we are not better united: But who shall yield to the other; every one pretends to have Reason of his side; and why should you be uppermost, and have your Will take place sooner than your Neighbours?

Const. That Frame of *Government* in Church and State, the Laws have fixt and determin'd, is the very *Constitution*; they that divide from it, and would alter it, are Parties, but not they that approve and endeavour to maintain it. As many as acquiesce in the Publick Authority, and observe its Decrees, are the Subjects and the Body of the Kingdom; others disturb the Peace of it, and make the Divisions: So that 'tis not yielding to us, is required of any, but yielding to the Laws; we found them in being, and think it our Duty to submit and conform to them: Had we been free, and not born under the power of this *Legal Establishment*, we might have model'd things much otherwise

wife than now they are: But 'twas never left to our choice, how Church and State, and Publick Rights and Affairs should be ordered; and therefore 'tis not our Wills that take place, but it is the Authority of the Laws that is by us reverenc'd and obey'd, and we think should be so by all.

Mod. But our Laws are not the Laws of *Medes* and *Persians*, they may be repeal'd and alter'd; and they that endeavour to send their Friends on that Errand, do, I suppose, no more than what your selves would do, if you were in their case; every Man would be glad to have his own way set up.

Conf. You are now frank, and open more than is usual; if your close and demure Friends would speak out, we would reason the case with them to some better purpose than could be done, whilst wisely to conceal their aim, they raised loud Clamours against *Jacobites* and *Papists*, and we were forc't to spend both our Breath and our Time to clear our selves from those Imputations. Now what you have said is plain, and comes to the point: *Ours are not the Unchangeable Laws of the Medes; they that are not pleas'd with them, would be glad they were taken away, and for that purpose to have their Friends Senators: And who, but would wish to have his own way set up? Very well! And no doubt but 'twould be a very fine and desirable Project, that should have the Approbation and good liking of every Man: A Law that every Man should have his own Humour, and do what he pleaseth, would make a rare Establishment: When that's found out, the Dissenters shall then be united and pleas'd.*

Mean while, we have a frame of Government which the Wisdom and Experience of Ages have modell'd, and adapted to all the Uses and Benefits of *Human Society*; wherein *Religion, Morality,* and
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every Subject's Freedom and just Rights are carefully provided for; and which is as much for the Credit and Publick good of the Nation, as the opposition to it is both shameful and mischievous.

We must not be always drawing of Schemes, but rest and acquiesce somewhere; no Community shall ever conspire into the same Desires, and the same Opinions: The publick determination of the Supreme Authority must be the Umpire, and must be submitted to; else the Claims and Contentions of Men will be undecided and endless, and there will be no Peace. If conceited and restless People must be trying to change and to overset Governments, till they have one of their own setting up, the Government which already is set up, must look to it self; and likely there will be but little of quietness and agreement amongst us, till the hopes of Novelties and Alterations in the *Legal Establishment* be removed out of the reach of every Crafty Knave, and every Giddy Fool.

Mod. I confess, if things were as they should be, 'twere fit a way might be found out, to put it out of the power of such as were not satisfied, to disturb them any more. They should not meddle in any thing that relates to the *Government*, that are no Friends to it.

Const. Things are as they should be, when the Laws and Supreme Authority have appointed them; else, if you and I, and all our Neighbours must be consulted, they will never be right: I think our *Constitution* is such, that we should be highly thankful to God that we live under it; others are of another mind. But your Expedient would no doubt greatly conduce to peace and quietness at home, and to make us more powerful and formidable abroad, could it ever be put into practice.

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Many a Man neglects his Business, disturbs himself and his Neighbours for the Service of a Party, whose Time and Industry might be much better spent in working at his Trade, and following his own Business. In such Contentions, they that fear a Change are provok't and frighted; and they that wish for one, have hitherto been deluded, and sometimes in their Heats been transported so far, as to be call'd to an account for their folly and violent forwardness.

The *Dutch Constitution* hath kept them united, and free from such Domestick Broils; there the *Calvinists* have been so wise as to keep the *Government* to themselves, whilst they permit the freedom of *Religion* and *Trade*, without distinction; and they are all gainers by it.

I am confident that our good Nature, at least equals that of the *Hollanders*; and that were the *Government* here, fixt as it is there, wholly in those that are of the *National Communion*, there would be more Industry and more Riches amongst us; and so much of generous Friendship, and of kind Forbearance as would make us all very peaceable and very happy, however differing in Matters of meer Opinion. When a *Constitution* is so safe and steady, as that no Enemies to it can hope to prevail against it, and none of its Friends fear it should be overfet, then private Men may contend, if they will, who shall serve the *Government* in this or that place; this will be of no great moment, and will occasion no great disturbance; for still the Laws remain the same, the Publick Good is cared for, and the Publick Tranquility preserved; whereas if great numbers happen to be disaffected, and are combin'd into Factions, the only way to reduce them to the *Legal Establishment*, is to put it out of their power to shake

and disturb it, and then be as gentle and kind to them as possible.

Mod. You seem to be very fond of our Laws, and talk at such a rate, as one would think a Man would never do, that were dispos'd to give them up, and to make them an humble Sacrifice to the Arbitrary Pleasure of a Sovereign Prince. I am sure what you say is not easily to be reconcil'd with your so much exalted Doctrine of *Passive Obedience*. And what will it avail to restrain the People from destroying the *Legal Constitution*, if the Court may do it, when they please, and it be not lawful to stand for its defence.

Const. Whatever the Court might design at any time, most certainly it could effect nothing, if the Subjects would but do their Duty, and appear for their Laws; and they are so far from being oblig'd to yield to violent Encroachments upon themselves, by pretence of Authority, much less to suffer and give up their Laws to be violated and destroy'd by Arbitrary Will: That they are bound to do whatever lawfully they may to assert their just Rights, and make their Laws have a free course; so that they are to be esteem'd very mischievous Men, who for the favour of the Court, or for their private Interest, would be any ways instrumental in destroying the *Government*, and enslaving of their *Country*; nay more, they are very ill Men, not only who promote and abet such *Illegal Invasions*, but even they also, who Cowardly are passive in this case, and dare not, in due time, declare for their *Country*, and the *Legal Constitution*.

Tell your Friends we say so, and say it now under a Reign when Men of our Principles might well expect to be gainers if our Sovereign were absolute; we say it now, when what lately was a Reproach,
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the being call'd an *High Churchman*, might recommend one to favour: Now when the Kingdom and the Church, by Laws Establish'd, wants not, as lately, the Courage of those Brave Gentlemen, we call'd *the Country Party*, and you the *Black List Men*: Now we speak it freely, That whenever the Legal Frame of *Government* is in any danger, every Subject in his proper place ought to appear for its defence, and at all times obey the Laws of his Country, whilst they require nothing sinful; and that the giving up those Laws to be destroyed, either by *Court* or by *Factions*, is contrary to the Obligations laid upon all Subjects, by Religion and by Nature.

Ask some of the Friends you know, whether this was profess'd by them, when they had Favour and Power, and whether 'twas the Rule of their Practice? Whether they appear'd so furly against armed Prerogative, or so zealous for the Nations liberty, as they have pretended to be? Some People call those Laws which they like not, Tyrannical, and call them Arbitrary that would maintain things on the *Legal Foundation*; but provided they themselves had the laying on of the Yoke, and could find their own advantage in the doing of it, they have plainly shew'd what Friends they would be to our *Laws and Constitution*.

Mod. You would persuade me that your *High-flown Men* have not shew'd themselves well dispos'd to Compliment the *Court* with our *Legal Rights* and our *Liberties*; and that it is rather they that joyn with the *Dissenters*, that have prevaricated in this. This I'll tell you, is very contrary to the received Opinion.

Const. Wrong Opinions are often rais'd and propagated very far, especially by them whose Interest

rest it is that they shou'd be believ'd; this representing the Members of the *Church of England* as sneaking to the *Court*, and false to their *Country*, and willing to give up the *Legal Rights* of their Fellow Subjects, hath made them obnoxious to many ill grounded Censures.

Whatever some of ours have said of *Christian Meekness*, and the *not rendering Evil for Evil*; or of due respect and submission to Superiors; or of the Mischief of those Principles which justify the Disturbances and Attempts of ambitious, restless and ungovernable Spirits; all that hath been interpreted to be the preaching up of *Passive Obedience*, and setting up the *Royal Prerogative* above all our *Laws*; great Prejudices will pervert the most innocent Truths.

I am sure there is nothing in our *Church and Established Religion*, that any ways can encourage the Prince to invade the Rights of his People, or that exhorts and obligeth the People tamely to give them up: Our Doctrine condemns and forbids nothing in relation to our Governors, but what the *Laws* of the Realm, when in force, will severely punish.

As for particular Persons, if any have transgressed in this, let them answer for it: in a *National Communion* there cannot but be great mixture; and some may have nothing to recommend them to Places, but dangerous Concessions, and large Compliments to such as have the Power to raise them; Men of this Stamp, have given up the Church it self, (as was said before) when they thought it was for their Interest. A Private Man of any *Church*, may sometime be out of the way, not only in Politicks, but even in Points of Religion: And from Topicks of this nature, that some of the People said to be of our

Communien, have said or done what they should not, our Church might as well be charged with being destructive of the whole *Ecclesiastical Settlement*, as that it any ways promotes *Arbitrary Power*, or any *Illegal Encroachments* upon the People.

They that are for the *Invisible Pattern in the Mount*, that are led by new Lights and private Gifts, that have no Standard, no fixt Rules for Faith or for Manners, no more than for Worship; they may be bound to stand to the consequences of what single Persons among them shall advance; for they can be judg'd of, only by the Actions of those of their Party; and it cannot be known whether many or few, or all of their Party be of the same Judgment.

Whereas a Church whereof the Religion and the Government are Establish'd by Laws, and are part of the *Political Constitution*, and suitable to the *Civil Rights* of the Subjects as well as the Sovereign; such a Church is not accountable for the Defects or Excesses of any of her Members, they may go beyond her Allowance and her Rules, or may fall short of them, but still her *Doctrine* is fixt and known, and remains the same; and she no more allows those that transgress against either the People or the Prince, than those that transgress against themselves, or against their Neighbours.

Mod. Whatever weight there be in what you have said, it doth not take off the Imputation of *Passive Obedience*, which you know, I could prove to have been preach'd by many of your great Men.

Const. You should rather say, the Word hath been us'd by some little as well as great Men: But what of that?

If we should live in a Countrey the Laws whereof we could not obey without Sin, and could not remove thence; then without doubt we should chuse to suffer rather than to offend: If this be meant by *Passive Obedience*, the case is very plain, neither you nor I have authority to repeal and to change the Laws; and if we should go about to rebel and destroy the *Government*, we should put our selves in danger of the Gallows, or even of Damnation.

I confess it would have been no loss at all to our Church, had that *New Word* never been invented, or had it been dropt as soon as misunderstood, and thought prejudicial to our Freedoms and Properties; but that the import of this word, as it is now stated, should be here, by our Divines prest upon the People, I take to be against Sense and Reason. The Men of *Moderation*, and the Men of *Separation*, that approve not our *Legal Establishment*, and are not easie nor pleas'd under it, may recommend Patience and Suffering to their Friends; but that the Clergy, the true Sons of the Church, who justify, approve, and greatly magnifie the *Government* and *Laws* of this Kingdom, should exhort their fellow Subjects rather to suffer under them, than to conform to them, doth not at all appear credible.

Next time you find any Preacher (except it be in separate Meetings) exhorting his Congregation to be Passible rather than comply with the Laws, if you have him not punisht as a Knave, have him beg'd as a Fool, for the Man is to be pitied, and is ripe for *Bedlam*. Passive Graces might become *Primitive Christians*, when the *Government* and the *Laws* were against the *Gospel*: But when by the *Constitution* it is profess'd and establisht; and (as we say) not only with Freedom, but with great Purity,

rity, there can be no room for Exhortations to bear the Cross meekly and patiently, rather than resist the Rulers Authority.

If in a Family govern'd with great Prudence and Mildness, where due regard is had to the Necessities and the Welfare of every one, the Domesticks should make it their Entertainment, what Blows and Severities, and unkind usage they would bear, rather than resist or rise up against their Masters; it would be, not only very undecent, but very ungrateful also; the stating cases of this kind, implies Complaining and Hardships: As far as my Ears inform me, our Clergy preacheth *Active Obedience* to the Laws under which we live; and, as I take it, they are obliged so to do.

No Person here below can be exempt from Wrong and Violence, and human Miseries; but as far as human Power and Wisdom can extend, here is Provision made for the Safety and for the Happiness of all Orders, and of all Ranks of Men, in their several states and degrees. No Man that acts regularly in his proper station, no Man that is not very peevish and perverse, and unruly, can find fault with the *English Government*, or make Complaints of it.

Most certainly not at this time, when 'tis administered by a Sovereign, whose *Majesty*, now without Compliment, may be called, *Most Excellent*; who now eminently answers the Character of *Supream Governors*, assigned by *St. Paul*, to be *the Ministers of God for good*, to every one that lives under her Power; who is so far from encroaching upon her Subjects, that she freely gives them what is her own; whose care for the defence and welfare of her People, both by Sea and Land, reacheth to all parts

of the World ; whose Graciousness to the Inhabitants of all her Dominions, makes her the Darling of all that are good, and have any love for their Country, Laws and Government ; and whose exemplary Vertue and Piety have endear'd her to the Favour and Blessings of Heaven. Pray let us have no more to do with *Passive Obedience*, under such Laws and such a Prince, as God in mercy hath blest us with ; there Subjection is but an easie Yoke, and actual Obedience cannot be too chearful.

Mod. Sure you'll talk your self out of breath ; and when you have said all, 'tis taken for granted, that the *Nonjurants* chose rather to quit their Stations, than their adherence to the Notion of *Passive Obedience*.

Const. In great and violent Changes, where human Passions and crafty Designs intermix, and many things are done that appear very hard, and not very justifiable, some Men may take offence so far as even to condemn what was innocent and unavoidable ; 'Tis very difficult clearly to state Matters of this nature, wherein so many Causes and Considerations, and Accidents do concur ; and which may be lookt upon on so many sides, and in so different Lights. All I can assert in the point, is this, That in such surprizing Changes and Confusions, (as long as the Laws of the Realm are believ'd to be just) the keeping close to them, and not acting beyond their Allowance, is the best.

But I see not what *Passive Obedience* hath to do in cases of this kind ; all that can be said seems to be, that if things return to settle upon the ancient Foundation, and the Laws to resume their former Authority, then chusing or refusing to acquiesce in the *New Settlement*, must be left to each one's judgment :

ment: And good Men, in such junctures, may differ in their judgment; and there may be good Men on either side.

As for the *Nonjurants*, among whom were many very great and good Men, we pity their Sufferings, and regret their recess from us, being very sensible that it was a weakning of our *Constitution*; but are not without hope, that under a Sovereign, whose Reign is so Equitable and Glorious, and whose *Counsels* and *Parliaments* are so successful in advancing the Prosperity of these Kingdoms, and the Honour of Religion, things will be so settled, as to make them all that had been estranged from us, desirous to partake of the common Blessings, by professing themselves affectionate Subjects.

Mod. Flatter your selves with what hopes you shall please, Breaches are more like to grow wide, than to be closed up; observe in *the Convocation*, how many of the *Clergy* stand in defiance against the *Bishops*: I assure you that it gives great offence, and many People will not know what to believe about *Religion*, when the Preachers of it agree so little among themselves. At this rate it is more likely we should have new *Separations*, than that the old ones should return to an *Union*.

Const. I know some People are very ready to cavil against *Religion*, and to charge heavily the Ministers of it; but I should rather think that Differences of this nature are an Argument to confirm the undoubted truth of *Religion*. If the *Clergy* have Quarrels among themselves, and yet the Body of them agree in those great Truths establish'd and profess among us, it shews that it is not by packt and Confederacy that they hold the same *Creeeds* and the same *Articles*; but that rather, it is plain Evidence

and Conviction that makes them in this so unanimous, when in other Matters they are, you say, so quarrellsome and ready to fall out.

Rights and Privileges, and Matters of ancient usage, are not always so clear, but that wise and good Men may have different apprehensions about them: What is hard, and seems malicious in this, is to represent them as disaffected to *Bishops*, who protest and practice to the quite contrary, and are most regular and affectionate to the *Church*, as it is now by *Law Established*. But the state of things which occasion'd this Debate, being now chang'd for the better, most likely the *Piety and Learning of the Lower House of Convocation*, will for the advancement of *Vertue and Religion*, receive for the future all necessary Encouragements, and have the Countenance as well of the *Civil*, as of the *Ecclesiastical Government*.

Mod. If things should happen as you dream, and as you seem to wish, your *High Churchmen* would be very rampant; and a worse thing can't befall the Nation than to be *Priest-ridden*: But there are those that will take care so to poise all Parties, as to prevent your overtopping your Neighbours, that are of other Perswasions.

Const. Their care would be much better bestow'd in making all *Parties* and all *Perswasions* submit to the *Laws*, if so be they esteem them to be just and beneficial to us all. As for the *Riding of the Priests*, our *Laws* have taken care of that, if you'll but make *them* to conform. *Nolentem regit*, was said of old, of the *Princes Power*; *Volentem regit* of the *Priest's*. You need not fear they should force you to be *Vertuous and Religious*, 'tis out of their power.

The

The *Craft* and the *Riding* of Priests were words invented to the same purpose, to countenance Looseness and Profaneness among those that are unwilling to be under the awe of any *Religion*; but if *Riding* must be the word, I say, let *Westminster-Hall ride*, and forcibly controul those that would be lawless. As for the *Church*, her Power is of another nature, it reacheth none but those that are *willing*, and it cannot dispose of the Affairs of this World; except by the *Church* you understand all that make profession of the *Religion here Established*, and then it takes in Magistrates also, both *Supream* and *Subordinate*, forty *Lay*, to one *Clergyman*: In this sense the *Church* must be uppermost, except we were under *Heathen Governors*: And this is the proper meaning of the *Church of England*, which considers the Subjects of this Kingdom, as professing *Christianity* according to our *Laws*; and which leaves the Government under the Sovereign, in the hands of Judges, Justices, and other *Lay Persons* duly Authorized:

Let the *Government* then make to your *Parties* what Concessions shall be thought fit; but let it not be a doubtful and perpetual struggle which shall have most power, the *Laws of the Constitution*, or they that oppose them; that's a mischievous Bone of Contention, which amuseth some Fools at home, and weakens us all abroad: Whereas things being settl'd upon a *Legal Foundation*, no power to shake it lodg'd in suspect and disaffected hands, no sort of exemption or privilege given your *High Churchmen*, (whether *Priests* or *Laymen*) to oppress their Neighbours, or to alter things at pleasure; the *Law's* only *Supream*, binding in all cases, and forcing all to be subject: then there is no *Uppermost*,

permiss, no *Riding*, the *Legal Government* only is Master, and hath power to enforce Obedience, and we are all quiet, and upon the level.

And now, I would fain know of some of your Friends, who glory that they never saw the inside of a *Meeting*, and pretend as high for the *Church*, as any of us can do, whether in earnest they believe that the *Establisht Religion* professed in this *Church*, promotes the happiness of Mankind, both here and hereafter? And if so, whether it were not Pious and Prudent to use the most effectual means we can use without sin, both to maintain it in our Days, and transmit it to our Posterity? We altogether acknowledge our *Church* to be as pure and primitive, as any upon this Earth; we profess to love it, each better than other, and to be true Members of it, and all this while let it shift for it self, or even it may be joyn with its Enemies: Sure these Professions are but Jest, or else they that make them would do most gladly, whatever lawfully they may, and all that in them lies, to secure this *Church* for ever, from the Attempts of such as would alter or destroy it. But as all Priests are alike to some People, so no doubt are all *Churches* and all *Religions*; and I should think that they that are sincere, in what amongst *Christians* is accounted most important and serious, should so act as to justify their words, where they can serve that Interest they profess to maintain.

Mod. Have a care you don't go too far; besides that many People would not have this *Church* so settled and so flourishing as to be able to give check to looseness of Manners: There may be many others, who as much dread the restraining a Latitude of Opinions; so that, if by favour, *as things are*, the *Church* can stand its ground, 'tis as much as they

they should desire, that are Zealous for it, and more than they had reason to expect, *as things have been before.*

Const. Your words (*my good Neighbour*) imply, we were deeply infected, and have been very near to the brink of Ruine: I would give offence to no Man, but can't but think that the fencing and strengthening of the *Constitution* both in *Church* and *State*, should be oppos'd by none but the Factors for *Pepery*, or for *Irreligion*. I do not say there can be no difference about the manner how, but for the thing it self, that none should oppose it that are truly well affected to our *Establishment*.

When in the *Court* and the *Senate*, *Religion* is countenanced so much beyond what hath been known; and, as a Reward to this Honour, paid to the great Monarch of the World, the Kingdom is blest, both by Sea and Land, with unusual prosperity. When the Jealousies are ceased, which have been long betwixt *Court* and *Countrey*, the Sovereign now being a most kind Patron to the People, and the best Patriots most faithful Servants to the Prince: What *Church of England* Man (is there, *high* or *low*, if but true and sincere, and a *Christian* indeed) in so propitious a juncture, but would endeavour his utmost to make the *Establishment* of our Peace both firm and unmoveable.

I assure you, my Friend, that as we would gladly be safe, so we wish harm to no Persons nor Parties; neither do we desire to molest our Neighbours, or retaliate unkind usage. Let but our *Legal Rights* and the *Constitution* be safe, and as much as may be, out of the reach of such as are *given to change*, and are discontented with the present *Establishment*, and we are satisfied.

Mod

Mod. Well, I perceive you are weary and preparing to go; I thank you for your Company, and ought not to offer to detain you longer: You have put thoughts into my Head, and I shall consider further of some things you have said, and be glad to talk with you again: So farewell for this time.

F I N I S

A D V E R T I S E M E N T.

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