

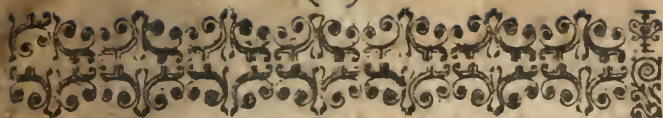


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A Healing Question propounded

and resolved upon occasion of the late publique and seasonable Call to Humiliation, in order to love and union amongst the honest party, and with a desire to apply Balsome to the wound, before it become incurable.

THE Question propounded is, What possibility doth yet remain (all things considered) of reconciling and uniting the dissenting judgments of honest men within the three Nations, who still pretend to agree in the spirit, justice, and reason of the same good cause: and what are the means to effect this?

Ans. If it be taken for granted (as on the Magistrates part, from the ground inviting the people of *England* and *Wales* to a solemn day of Fasting and Humiliation, may not be dispaired of) that all the dissenting parties agree still in the spirit and reason of the same righteous cause, the resolution seems very cleer in the affirmative; arguing not onely for a possibility, but a great probability hereof, nay a necessity daily approaching neerer and neerer to compell it, if any or all of the dissenting parties intend or desire to be safe from the danger of the common enemy, who is hot out of work, though at present much out of sight and observation.

The grounds of this are briefly these. First the cause hath still the same goodness in it as ever; and is or ought to be as much in the hearts of al good people that have adhered to it: It is not lesse to be valued now, then when neither blood nor treasure were thought too dear

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to carry it on, and hold it up from sinking; and hath the same Omnipotent God, whose great Name is concerned in it, as well as his peoples outward safety and wellfare; Who knows also how to give a revival to it, when secondary instruments and visible means fail, or prove deceitful.

Secondly, The Persons concerned and engaged in this Cause, are still the same as before; with the advantage of being more tried, more enured to danger and hardship, and more endeared to one another, by their various and great experiences, as well of their own hearts as their fellow-Brethrens. These are the same still in heart and desire after the same thing, which is, that being freed out of the hands of their enemies, they may serve the Lord without feare, in holinesse and righteousness all the daies of their life.

As they have had this great good finally in their aims (if Declarations to men, and Appeals to God signifie any thing) so, as a requisite to attain this, they did with great cheerfulness & unanimity draw out themselves to the utmost; in the maintenance of a war, when all other meanes, first essayed proved ineffectual. In the management of this war, it pleased God (the righteous Judge, who was appealed to in the controversie) to bless the Council and Forces of the persons concerned and engaged in this cause, as in the end to make them absolute and compleat Conquerors over their common Enemy. And by this meanes they had added unto the naturall right which was in them before (and so declared by their Representatives in Parliament assembled) the right of Conquest for the strengthening of their just claim to be governed by National Councils, and successive Representatives of their own election and setting up. This they once thought they had been in possession of, when it was ratified, as it were, in the blood of the last King: But of late a great interruption having happened unto them in their former expectations; and instead thereof,
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Something rising up that it seems rather accommodated to the private and selfish interest of a particular part (in comparison) then truly adequate to the common good and concern of the whole Body engaged in this Cause: Hence it is that this compacted body is now falling asunder into many dissenting parts (a thing unforeseen, nor unhop'd for by the common Enemy all along as their last relief) and if these breaches be not timely healed, and the offences (before they take too deep root) removed, they will certainly work more to the advantage of our common Enemy, then any of their own unwearied endeavours, & dangerous contrivances in foreign parts put altogether.

A serious discussion, and sober enlarging upon these grounds, will quickly give an insight into the state of the Question, and naturally tend to a plain and familiar resolution thereof.

That which is first to be opened, is the nature and goodness of the Cause; which ~~is~~ ^{is} not carried in it its own evidence, would scarce have found its way to the people of God adherers to it; within the Three Nations, contributing either their counsels, their purses, their bodily pains, or their affections and prayers, as a combined strength; without which, the military force alone would have been little available to subdue the common Enemy, and restore to this whole body their just natural Rights in civil things, and true freedom in matters of conscience.

The two last mentioned particulars, rightly stated, will evince sufficiently the nature and goodness of this Cause.

For the first of these, that is to say, the Natural right, which the whole party of Honest men adhering to this Cause, are by success of their Arms restored unto, fortified in, and may claime as their undeniable privilege, that righteously cannot be taken from them, nor

they debarred from bringing into exercise, It lies in this.

They are to have and enjoy the freedome (by way of dutifull compliance and condiscention from all the parts and members of this society) to set up meet persons in the place of Supreme Judicature and Authority amongst them; whereby they may have the use and benefit of the choicest light and wisdom of the Nation that they are capable to call forth, for the Rule and Government under which they will live; and through the orderly exercise of such measure of wisdom and counsel as the Lord in this way shall please to give unto them, to shape and forme all subordinate actings and administration of Rule and Government, so as shall best answer the publique welfare and safety of the whole.

This, in substance, is the right and freedome contained in the nature and good of the cause; wherein the Honest men have been engaged. For in this, all the particulars of our civill right and freedome are comprehended, conserved in and derived from their proper root; In which whilst they grow, they will ever thrive, flourish and increase: whereas on the contrary, if there be never so many fair branches of liberty planted on the root of a private and selfish interest, they will not long prosper, but must, within a little time, wither and degenerate into the nature of that whereinto they are planted. And hence indeed sprung the evil of that Government which rose in and with the *Norman Conquest*.

The root and bottome upon which it stood, was not publique interest, but the private lust and will of the Conqueror, who by force of armes did at first detain the right and freedome which was, and is, due to the whole body of the people: For whose safety and good, government it self is ordained by God, not for the particular

ticular benefit of the Rulers, as a distinct and private interest of their own; which yet, for the most part, is not only preferred before the common good, but upheld in opposition thereunto. And as at first the Conqueror did, by violence and force, deny this freedom to the people, which was their natural right and privilege; so he, and his Successors all along, lay as bars and impediments to the true National interest and publique good, in the very National Councils and Assemblies themselves; which were constituted in such a manner, as most served for the upholding of the private interest of their Families. And this being challenged by them as their Prerogative, was found by the people assembled in Parliament, most unrighteous, burdensome, and destructive to their liberty. And when they once perceived, that by this Engine all their just rights were like to be destroyed, especially (being backed, as it was, with the power of the Militia, which the late King, for that purpose, had assumed into his hands, and would not, upon the peoples application to him in Parliament, part with into the hands of that great Council, who were best to be entrusted with the Nations safety) this was the ground of the quarrell, upon a civil account, between the King and his party, and the whole body of adherents to the cause of the peoples true liberty; whereof this short touch hath been given, and shall suffice for the opening of the first Branch of this Cause.

The second branch which remaines briefly to be handled, is that which also upon the grounds of natural right is to be laid claim unto; but distinguishes it self from the former, as it respects a more heavenly and excellent object, wherein the freedom is to be exercised and enjoyed, that is to say, matters of Religion, or that concern the service and worship of God.

Unto this freedom the Nations of the World have right and title, by the purchase of Christs blood; who
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by vertue of his death and resurrection is become the
 1st Lord and Ruler in and over the conscience; for to
 this end Christ died, rose and revive^d, that he might be
 Lord both of the dead and of the living; and that every
 one might give an account of himself. in all matters of
 Gods worship, unto God and Christ alone, as their own
 Master, unto whom they stand or fall in judgement, and
 are not in these things to be oppress^d, or brought be-
 fore the Judg^{ment}-seats of men. For why shouldest
 thou set at nought thy Brother in matters of his Faith
 and conscience, and herein intrude into the proper of-
 fice of Christ, since we are all to stand before the Judg-
 ment-seat of Christ, whether Governours or governed,
 and by his decision onely are capable of being declared
 with certainty, to be in the right or in the wrong?

By vertue then of this Supream Law, sealed and con-
 firmed in the blood of Christ unto all men (whose souls
 he challenges a propriety in, to bring under his inward
 rule in the service and worship of God) it is that all
 Magistrates are to fear and forbear intermeddling with
 giving rule or imposing in those matters. They are to
 content themselves with what is plain in their com-
 mission, as ordained of God to be his Minister unto men
 for good, whilst they approve themselves the doers
 of that which is good in the sight of men, and where-
 of earthy and worldly Judicatures are capable to make
 a cleare and perfect judgement: In which case the Ma-
 gistrate is to be for praise and protection to them. In
 like manner he is to be a Minister of terrour and re-
 venge to those that doe evill in matters of outward
 practice, converse, and dealings in the things of this life
 between man and man, for the cause whereof the judi-
 catures of men are appointed and set up. But to exceed
 these limits, as it is not safe nor warrantable for the Ma-
 gistrate (in that he who is higher then the highest, re-
 gards, and will shew himself displeased at it) so nei-
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ther is it good for the people, who hereby are nourished up in a biting, devouring, wrathfull spirit one against another, and are found transgressors of that Royal law which forbids us to doe that unto another, which we would not have them do unto us, were we in their condition.

This freedome then is of high concern to be had and enjoy, as well for the Magistrates sake, as for the peoples common good ; and it consists, as hath been said, in the Magistrates forbearing to put forth the power of rule and coercion in things that God hath exempted out of his Commission. So that all care requisite for the peoples obtaining this, may be exercised with great ease, if it be taken in its proper season and that this restraint be laid upon the Supreme Power before it be erected, as a fundamental Constitution among others, upon which the free consent of the people is given, to have the persons brought into the exercise of Supreme Authority over them, and on their behalf, and if besides, as a further confirmation hereunto, it be acknowledged to be the voluntary act of the ruling Power, when once brought into a capacity of acting legislatively, that herein they are bound up, and judge it their duty so to be (both in reference to God the Institutor of Magistracy, and in reference to the whole Body by whom they are entrusted) this great blessing will hereby be so well provided for, that we shall have no cause to feare, as it may be ordered

By this meanes a great part of the outward exercise of Antichristian Tyranny and bondage will be plucked up by the very roots, which till some such course be held in it, will be alwayes apt to renew and sprout out afresh, under some new forme or refined appearances, as by late yeares experience we have been taught. For since the fall of the Bishops and persecuting Prelacies, the same spirit is apt to arise in the next sort of Cler-

gy, that can get the ear of the Magistrate, and pretend to the keeping and ruling the conscience of the Governors. Although this spirit and practice hath been all along decry'd by the faithful adherents to this Cause, as a most fore oppression, and insufferable yoke of bondage, most unrighteously kept up over the consciences of the people; and therefore judged by them most needfull to be taken out of the way. And in this matter the present Governors have been willing very eminently, to give their Testimony, in their publique Declarations, however in practice there is much of grievance yet found among us, though more, in probability, from the officiousness of subordinate Ministers, than any clear purpose or designe of the chief in power.

Having thus shewed what the true freedom is, in both the Branches of it, that shines forth in the righteous Cause, wherein the good people of these Nations have so deeply engaged: It will not be improper in the next place to consider two particulars more that give still further light into the matter in question; as first The qualifications of the Persons that have adhered to this Cause. Secondly, the capacity wherein they have been found from time to time carrying it on.

As to their Qualification, they have in the general, distinguished themselves and been made known, by a forwardness to assist and own the publique welfare and good of the Nation, for the attaining and preserving the just rights and liberties thereof, asserted and witnessed unto in the true stating of this Cause, according to the two branches thereof already spoken to. They have shewed themselves, upon all occasions, desirers and lovers of true freedom, either in civils, or in spirituals, or in both. To express their value thereof, and faithfulness to the same, they have largely contributed, in one kind or other what was proper to each in his place to do; w^{ch} actions of theirs proceeding from hearts sincerely affected

affected to the cause, created in them aright to be of an Incorporation and Society by themselves, under the name of the good Party; having been from the beginning unto this day publickely and commonly so acknowledged, by way of distinction from all Neuters, close and open Enemies, and deceitfull Friends or Apostates. These, in order to the maintaining of this Cause, have stood by the Army, in defence and support thereof, against all opposition whatever, as those that, by the growing light of these times, have been taught and led forth in their experiences, to look above and beyond the letter, forme, and outward circumstances of government, into the inward reason and spirit thereof, herein only to fix and terminate, to the leaving behind all empty shadows, that would obtrude themselves in the place of true freedom.

Secondly, as to the capacity wherein these persons, thus qualified, have acted, it hath been very variable, and subject to great changes: sometimes in one form, and sometimes in another, and very seldome, if ever at all, so exactly, and in all points consonant to the rule of former Lawes and Constitutions of Government, as to be clearly and fully justified by them, any longer then the Law of Successse and Conquest did uphold them who had the inward warrant of Justice and Righteousnesse to encourage them in such their actings.

The utmost and last reserve therefore which they have had, in case all other failed, hath been their military capacity, not only strictly taken for the standing Army, but in the largest sense, wherein the whole party may (with the Army, and under that military constitution and conduct, which by the providence of God they shall then be found in) associate themselves in the best order they can, for the common defence and safety of the whole. As not ignorant, that when once embodied

bodied in this their Military posture, in such manner as by common consent shall be found requisite for the safety of the body, they are most irresistible, absolute, and comprehensive in their power; having that wherein the substance of all Government is contained, and under the protection whereof, and safety that may be maintained thereby, they can contrive and determine, in what manner this irresistible, absolute, and boundless power, unto which they are now arrived in this their Military capacity shall have just and due limits set unto it, and be drawn out in a meet and orderly way of exercise, for the Commonweale and safety of the whole Body, under the rule and oversight of a Supreme Judicature; unto the wisdom of whose lawes and orders, the sword is to become most entirely subject and subservient: And this without the least cause of jealousie or unsafety, either to the standing Army, or any member thereof, or unto the good people adhering to this Cause, or any one of them; since the interest of both, by this mutual-action of either, will be so combined together in one (even in that wherein before they were distinct) that all just cause of difference, fear, animosity emulation, jealousie, or the like, will be wholly abolished and removed:

For when once the whole body of the good people find that the Military interest & capacity is their own, and that into which necessity at the last may bring the whole Party (whereof of right a place is to be reserved for them) and that herein they are so far from being in subjection or slavery, that in this posture they are most properly sovereign, and possess their right of natural sovereignty, they will presently see a necessity of continuing ever one with their Army raised and maintained by them, for the promoting this Cause against the common Enemy; who in his next attempt will put for all with greater desperatenesse and rage then ever.

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Again, when once the standing Army and their Governours shall also find, that by setting and keeping up themselves in a divided interest from the rest of the Body of Honest men, they withhold from themselves those contributions in all voluntary and cheerful assistances, by the affections and prayers, by the persons and purses of the good party, to the weakening themselves thereby, as to any vigorous support from them, in the times of most imminent danger (whereof the late King had an experience, that will not suddenly be out of memory, when he undertook the war in the beginning of these troubles, against the Scots, and was, in a manner, therein deserted by all the good party in *England*) they will then find (if they stay not till it be too late) that by espousing the interest of the people, in submitting themselves with their fellow adherents to the Cause, under the rule and authority of their own Supreme Judicature, they lose not their Power or Sovereignty; but becoming one Civil or Politique Incorporation with the whole party of honest men, they doe therein keep the Sovereignty, as originally seated in themselves, and part with it only but as by deputation and representation of themselves, when it is brought into an orderly way of exercise, by being put into the hands of persons chosen and entrusted by themselves to that purpose.

By this mutual and happy transition which may be made between the party of Honest men in the Three Nations virtually in Arms, and those actually so now in power at the Head of the Army, how suddenly would the union of the whole Body be consolidated, and made so firm as it will not need to fear all the designs and attempts of the common Enemy; especially if herein they unite themselves in the first place to the Lord, as willing to follow his providence, and observe his will in the way and manner of bringing this to passe. In

which case we shall not need to fear what all the gates of hell are able to do in opposition thereunto.

It is not then the standing and being of the present Army and Military forces in the three Nations, that is lyable to exception or offence; from any dissenting judgements at this time amongst the honest well affected party. In and with them, under God, stand the welfare and outward safety of the whole body; and to be enemies to them or wish them hurt, were to do it to themselves; and by trying such conclusions to play the game of the common enemy, to the utter ruine and destruction; not only of the true freedome aymed at and contended for in the late wars, but of the very persons themselves that have been in any sort active or eminent promoters thereof.

The Army considered as it is in the hands of an honest and wise General, and sober faithfull Officers; embodied with the rest of the party of honest men; and espousing still the same cause, and acting in their primitive simplicity, humility, and trust, in reference to the welfare and safety of the whole body, is the only justifiable and most advantageous posture and capacity that the good party at present can finde themselves in, in order to the obtaining that true freedome they have fought for, and possessing of it in the establishment thereof upon the true Basis and foundation, as hath been shewed of right Government:

That wherein the offence lies, and which causes such great thoughts of heart amongst the honest party (if it may be freely expressed, as sure it may, when the Magistrate himselve professes he doth but desire and wait for conviction therein) is in short this:

That when the right and priviledge is returned, nay is restored by Conquest unto the whole Body (that forfeited not their interest therein) of freely disposing themselves in such a constitution of righteous Government,

vernment, as may best answer the ends held forth in this Cause; that neverthelesse, either through delay they should be withheld as they are, or through delign they should come at last to be utterly denied the exercise of this their right, upon pretence that they are not in capacity as yet to use it; which indeed hath some truth in it, if those that are now in power, and have the command of the Arms, doe not prepare all things requisite thereunto, as they may, and like faithful Guardians to the Commonwealth, admitted to be in its nonage, they ought.

But if the bringing of true freedome into exercise amongst men; yea, so refined a party of men, be impossible; why hath this been concealed all this while? and why was it not thought on before so much blood was spilt, and treasure spent? surely, such a thing as this was judged real and practicable, not imaginary and notional.

Besides, why may it not suffice to have been thus long delayed and withheld from the whole body, at least as to its being brought by them into exercise now at last? surely the longer it is withheld, the stronger jealousies do increase; that it is intended to be assumed and ingrossed by a part only, to the leaving the rest of the body (who in all reason and justice ought to be equally participants with the other in the right and benefit of the Conquest, for as much as the war was managed at the expence and for the safety of the whole) in a condition almost as much exposed, and subject to be imposed upon, as if they had been enemies and conquered, not in any sense Conquerors.

If ever such an unrighteous, unkind and deceitful dealing with brethren should happen, although it might continue above the reach of question from humane judicature, yet can we think it possible it should
escape

escape and go unpunished by the immediate hand of the Righteous Judge of the whole World, when he ariseth out of his place to do right to the oppressed?

Nay if in stead of favouring and promoting the peoples common good and welfare, self-interest and private gain should evidently appear to be the things we have aymed at all along; if those very Tyrannical principles and Antichristian reliques, which God by us hath punished in our predecessors, should again revive, spring up afresh, and shew themselves lodged also and retained in our bosomes; rendring us of the number of those that have forgot they were purged from their old sins, and declaring us to be such as to please a covetous mind, doe withhold from destruction that which God hath designed to the curse of his vengeance: If all those great advantages of serving the Lords will and design in procuring and advancing his peoples true welfare and outward safety, which (as the fruit of his blessing upon our Armies) have so miraculously fallen into our hands, shall at last be wrested and mis-improved to the enriching and greatning of our selves: If these things should ever be found amongst us (which the Lord in mercy forbid) shall we need to look any further for the accursed thing? will not our Consciencees shew us from the light of the Word and Spirit of God, how neer a conformity these actions would hold therewith? which sin, *Josh. 7.* became a curse to the Camp, and withheld the Lord from being any more amongst them, or going out with their forces. And did the action of *Achan* import any more then these two things. First, he saved and kept from destruction the goodly Babylonish garment, which was devoted by God thereunto. Secondly, he brought not in the fruit and gain of the Conquest into the Lords Treasury, but covetously went about to convert it to his own

own proper use. To doe this, is to take of the accursed thing, which *Josh. 7.* all Israel was said to do, in the sin of *Achan*, and to have stollen and dissembled likewise, and put it amongst their own stuffe. This caused the anger the Lord to kindle against Israel, and made them unable to stand before their enemies, but their hearts melted as water. And thus far the Lord is concerned, if such an evil as this shall lye hid in the midst of us. But to return to what we were upon before.

The matter which is in question among the dissenting parts of the whole body of honest men, is not so trivial and of such small consequence, as some would make it. 'Tis in effect, the main and whole of the Cause; without which all the freedome which the people have or can have, is in comparison but shadow and in name only, and therefore can never give that peace and satisfaction to the body, which is requisite unto a durable and solid settlement. This is that which makes all sound & safe at the root, and gives the right ballance necessary to be held up between sovereignty and subjection, in the exercise of all righteous Government; applying the use of the sword to the promoting and upholding the publike safety and welfare of the whole body, in preference and if need be in opposition unto any of the parts; whilst yet by its equal and impartial administration in reference unto each, it doth withal maintain the whole Body in a most delightfull harmony, welfare, and correspondency. The sword never can, nor is it to be expected ever will doe this, while the sovereignty is admitted and placed any where else, then in the whole Body of the people that have adhered to the cause, and by them be derived unto their successive Representatives, as the most equal and impartial Judicature for the effecting hereof.

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Where there is then a righteous and good constitution of Government, there is first an orderly union of many understandings together, as the publique and common Supream Judicature or visible Sovereignty, set in a way of free and orderly exercise, for the directing and applying the use of the ruling power or the sword, to promote the interest and common welfare of the whole, without any disturbance or annoyance, from within or from without. And then secondly, there is a like union and readiness of will in all the Individuals, in their private capacities, to execute and obey (by all the power requisite, and that they are able to put forth) those sovereign Laws and Orders issued out by their own Deputies and Trustees.

A Supream Judicature thus made the Representative of the whole, is that which we say, will most naturally care, and most equally provide for the Common good and safety. Though by this it is not denied, but that the supream power, when by free consent 'tis placed in a single person or in some few persons, may be capable also to administer righteous Government; at least the Body that gives this liberty, when they need not, are to thank themselves if it prove otherwise. But when this free and natural access unto Government, is interrupted and declined, so as a liberty is taken by any particular member, or number of them, that are to be reputed but a part in comparison of the whole, to assume and engrosse the office of sovereign rule and power, and to impose themselves as the competent publique Judge of the safety and good of the whole, without their free and due consent; and to lay claim unto this, as those that find themselves possessed of the sword (and that so advantageously, as it cannot be recovered again out of their hands, without more apparent danger and damage to the whole body, then such attempts are worth)

worth) this is that Anarchy, that is the first rise and step to Tyanny; and laies the grounds of manifest confusion and disorder; exposing the ruling power to the next hand that on the next opportunity can lay hold on the sword; and so, by a kind of necessity, introduces the highest imposition and bondage upon the whole Body, in compelling all the parts, though never so much against the true publique interest, to serve and obey, as their soveraigne rule and supream Authority, the Arbitrary will and judgement of those that bring themselves into rule by the power of the sword, in the right only of a part that sets up it selfe in preference before, or at least in competition with the welfare of the whole:

And if this, which is so essential to the well being and right constitution of Government, were once obtained, the disputes about the forme would not prove so difficult, nor find such opposition, as to keep up the bone of contention and disunion, with much danger to the whole. For if as the foundation of all, the soveraignty be acknowledged to reside originally in the whole body of adherents to this Cause (whose natural and inherent right thereunto is of a far ancienter date then what is obtained by success of their arms, and so cannot be abrogated even by Conquest it selfe if that were the ease) and then if in consequence hereof, a supream Judicature be set up and orderly constituted, as naturally arising and resulting from the free choice and consent of the whole Body, taken out from among themselves, as flesh of their flesh, and bone of their bone, of the same publique spirit and nature with themselves, and the main be by this means secured; what could be propounded afterwards, as to the form of administration that would much stick?

Would a standing Council of State settled for life, in reference to the safety of the Commonwealth, and for the maintaining intercourse and commerce with Foreign States, under the inspection and oversight of the Supreme Judicature; but of the same fundamental constitution with themselves, would this be disliked? admitting their orders were binding, in the intervals of Supreme National Assemblies, so far only as consonant to the settled Lawes of the Commonwealth the vacancy of any of which by death or otherwise might be supplied by the vote of the major part of themselves: Nay would there be any just exception to be taken, if (besides both these) it should be agreed (as another part of the fundamental constitution of the Government) to place that branch of Sovereignty which chiefly respects the execution of the Lawes, in a distinct office from that of the legislative power (and yet subordinate to them and to the Lawes) capable to be entrusted in the hands of one single person, if need require, or in a greater number, as the legislative power should think fit; and for the greater strength and honour unto this Office, that the execution of all Lawes and Orders (that are binding) may go forth in his, or their name; and all disobedience thereunto, or contempt thereof, be taken as done to the peoples Sovereignty whereof he or they bear the Image or Representation, subordinate to the Legislative Power, and at their will to be kept up and continued in the hands of a single Person or more, as the experience of the future good or evil of it shall require.

Would such an office as this, thus stated, carry in it any inconsistency with a free State? nay, if it be well considered, would it not rather be found of excellent use to the well-being of Magistracy founded upon this righteous bottome, that such a Lieutenancy of the peoples sovereignty in these three Nations, may
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always reside in some one or more persons, in whose administration, that which is reward and punishment may shine forth ?

And if now it shall be objected, that (notwithstanding all these Cautions) should once the Sovereignty be acknowledged to be in the diffused body of the people (though the adherents to this Cause, not only as their natural, but as their acquired right by Conquest) they would suddenly put the use and exercise of the Legislative power into such hands, as would, through their ill-qualifiednesse to the work spoil all, by misadministration thereof, and hereby lose the cause in stead of upholding and maintaining it.

The Answer unto this is, First that God by his providence hath eased our minds much of this solicitude, by the course he hath already taken to fit and prepare a choice and selected number of the people unto this work, that are tried and refined by their inward and outward experiences in this great quarrell, and the many changes they have passed through : In respect whereof well qualified persons are to be found, if due care be but taken in the choice of them. And if herein the people of the Lord shall be waiting upon him for his guidance and presence with them, we may have grounds to hope that God (whose name hath all along been called upon in the managing of this Cause) will pour out so abundantly of his spirit upon his people attending on him in righteous wayes, and will also so move their hearts to choose persons bearing his Image into the Magistracy, that a more glorious product may spring up out of this then at first we can expect, to the setting up of the Lord himselfe as chiefe Judge and Lawgiver amongst us. And unto this the wisdom and honesty of the persons now in power may have an opportunity eminently to come into discovery. For in this case, and upon the grounds already

dy layed, the very persons now in power are they unto whose lot it would fall to set about this preparatory work; and by their orders and directions to dispose the whole Body, and bring them into the meekest capacity to effect the same. The most natural way for which would seem to be by a General Council, or Convention of faithful, honest, and discerning men, chosen for that purpose by the free consent of the whole Body of adherents to this Cause in the several parts of the Nations, and observing the time and place of meeting appointed to them (with other circumstances concerning their Election) by order from the present Ruling Power, but considered as General of the Army.

Which Convention is not properly to exercise the Legislative Power, but only to debate freely, and agree upon the particulars, that by way of fundamental Constitutions shall be laid and inviolably observed; as the conditions upon which the whole body so represented, doth consent to cast it self into a Civil and Politique Incorporation, and under the visible forme and administration of Government therein declared, and to be by each individual member of the Body subscribed in testimony of his or their particular consent given thereunto. Which conditions so agreed (and amongst them an Act of Oblivion for one) will be without danger of being broken or departed from; considering of what it is they are the conditions, and the nature of the Convention wherein they are made; which is of the people represented in their highest state of Sovereignty, as they have the sword in their hands unsubjected unto the rules of Civil Government, but what themselves orderly assembled for that purpose, doe think fit to make. And the sword upon these conditions subjecting it self to the Supreme Judicature, thus to be set up; how suddenly might harmony

harmony, righteousness, love, peace, and safety unto the whole Body follow hereupon, as the happy fruit of such a settlement, if the Lord have yet any delight to be amongst us ?

And this once put in a way, and declared for by the General and Army (as that which they are clearly convinced in the sight of God is their duty to bring about, and which they engage accordingly to see done ;) How firmly and freely would this oblige the hearts and persons, the counsels & purses, the affections and prayers, with all that is in the power of this whole party to do, in way of assistance and strengthening the hands of those now in power, whatever straights and difficulties they may meet with in the maintenance of the publique safety and peace ?

This then being the state of our present affairs and differences, let it be acknowledged on all hands, and let all be convinced that are concerned, that there is not only a possibility, but a probability, yea a compelling necessity of a firm union in this great Body, the setting of which in joynt and tune againe, by a spirit of meekness and feare of the Lord, is the work of the present day, and will prove the onely remedy, under God, to uphold and carry on this blessed cause and worke of the Lord in the three Nations, that is already come thus far onwards in its progresse to its desired and expected end of bringing in Christ, the Desire of all Nations, as the chiefe Ruler amongst us.

Now unto this re-uniting work let there be a readinesse in all the dissenting parts from the highest to the lowest, by cheerfully coming forth to one another in a spirit of self-denial and love in stead of war and wrath, and to cast down themselves before the Lord, who is the Father of all their spirits, in self-abasement and humiliation, for the mutual offence they have been
in

in for some time past, one unto another, and great pro-
vocation unto God, and reproach unto his most glori-
ous name, who expected to have been served by them
with reverence and godly fear; for our God is a con-
suming fire.

And, as an inducement unto this, Let us assure our
selves, the meanes of effecting it will not prove so dif-
ficult as other things that have been brought about in
the late war, if the minds and spirits of all concerned
were once well and duely prepared hereunto, by a
kindly work of self-denial and self-abasement, set
home by the spirit of the Lord upon their consciences;
which if he please, he may doe we know not how soon.
Nay if we shall behold with a discerning eye the in-
side of that work which God hath been doing amongst
us the three years last past, it would seem chiefly to
have been his aime, to bring his people into such a frame
as this is. For in this tract of time, there hath
been (as we may say) a great silence in Heaven, as
if God were pleased to stand still and be as a looker
on, to see what his people would be in their latter end,
and what work they would make of it, if left to their
own wisdom and Politick contrivances. And as
God hath had the silent part; so men, and that good
men too, have had the active and busie part, and
have like themselves made a great sound and noise,
like the shout of a King in a mighty Hoast; which
whilst it hath been a sound onely and no more, hath
not done much hurt as yet; but the feare and jealou-
sie thereby caused, hath put the whole Body out of
frame, and made them apt to fall into great confusions
and disorder.

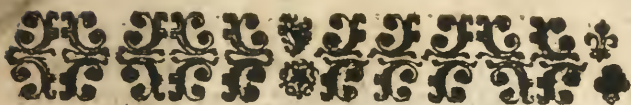
And if there be thus arisen a general dissent and
disagreement of parts (which is not, nor ought to be
accounted the lesse considerable, because it lies hid
and kept in under a patient silence) why should there
not

not be as general a confession and acknowledgement of what each may find themselves overtaken in, and cannot but judge themselves faulty for? This kinde of vent being much better then to have it break out in flames of a forward and untimely wrathful spirit, which never works the righteousness of God. Especially since what hath been done amongst us, may probably have been more the effect of temptation then the product of any malicious designe; and this sort of temptation is very common and incident to men in power (how good soever they may be) to be overtaken in; and thereupon doe sudden and unadvised actions, which the Lord pardons and over rules for the best: evidently making appear that it is the work of the weak and fleshy part, which his own people carry about with them too much unsubdued. And therefore the Lord thinks fit by this meanes, to shew them the need of being beholding to their spiritual part, to restore them again; and bring them into their right temper and healthful constitution.

And thus whilst each dissenting part is aggravating upon it selfe faultinesse and blame, and none excusing, but all confessing they deserve, in one sort or other, reproof, if not before men, yet to Gods sight: Who knowes how soon it may please God to come into this broken, contrite, and self denying frame of Spirit in the good people within the three Nations, and own them thus truly humbled and abased, for his Temple and the place of his habitation and rest, wherein he will abide for ever? of whom it may be said God is in the Midst of her, she shall not be moved; God shall help her and that right early, or with his morning appearance. At which time he will sit silent no longer, but Heaven will speak again, and become active and powerful in the spirits and hearts of Honest men; and in the works
of

of his providences, when either they goe out to fight
 by Sea or by Land, or remaine in counsel and de-
 bates at home for the publique Weale, and againe
 heare the prayers of his people, and visibly own them
 as a flock of holy men, as *Jerusalem* in her solemn
 Feasts. *I will yet for this be enquired of by the House of*
Israel, saith the Lord, to doe it for them: And then
 they shall know that I the Lord their God
 am with them, and that they are my people,
 and that ye my flock the flock of my pa-
 sture, are men that have skewered your
 selves weak sinful men, and I am
 your God that have declared
 my self an all-wise and pow-
 erful God, saith the
 Lord God.

Postscript



Postscript.

Reader,

UPon the perusal of this Discourse thou wilt quickly perceive that these two things are principally aimed at in it by the Author. First to answer in some measure that which is called for by those in power, when they publickly professe they desire nothing more then conviction, and to find out the hidden provocations which either have or yet may bring forth the Lord against these Nations, in the way which at present they are in.

Secondly, To remove out of the minds and spirits of the honest partie, that still agree in the reason and justice of the good Old Cause, all things of a private Nature and selfish Concern (the tendency whereof serves but to foment and strengthen wrath and divisions amongst them) and in Place thereof to set before them that common and publique interest, which (if with sinceritie embraced) may be the meanes of not only procuring a firm union amongst them, but also of conserving them herein.

In order to this, the Author hath not been wil-
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ling much to declare his own Opinion, or deliver any Positive Conclusions; as to discusse the busines by way of question and answer, and thereby make as near a conjecture as he can, of that, wherein the severall dissenting parts may with better satisfaction meet together, and agree upon a safe and righteous bottome, then to re.aine at the distance they doe, to the apparent advantage of the Common Enemy, the approaching ruine of themselves, and needlesse hazard (if not losse) of the Cause they have been so deeply engaged in. Especially considering that when once they shall be found beginning to come forth in a more open and a condiscending self-denying spirit, clearing off the stain of hypocrisie and deceit, they may be well assured that light will spring up amongst them more and more unto a perfect day; and then those things which at present we have next in view, will prove as shadows ready to flee away before the morning brightnesse of Christs Heavenly Appearance and second coming; through which they will be heightened and improved to their full maturitie, to the bringing in that Kingdome of his that shall never be moved.

And because an Essay hath been already made, in a private way to obtain the first thing, that is to say, Conviction; which chiefly is in the hand of the Lord to give; the same obligation lies upon the Author, with respect to the second, for

