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A

LETTER

T O

Sir *W*—*m* *W*—*m*,

Upon the intended

Application to Parliament

For REPEALING the

CORPORATION

A N D

TEST ACTS.

By a MODERN TORY.

L O N D O N :

Printed for A. DODD, at the *Peacock*
without *Temple-Bar*, 1736.

Price Six-pence.

L E T T E R

T O

Sir *W—m W——m,*

U P O N

The intended Application to
Parliament for Repealing
the *Corporation* and *Test*
Acts.

S I R,

AS an Application will soon
be made to Parliament, to
explain the Incapacitating
Laws, so far as they affect Prote-
stant Dissenters from our Church;
it may not be unworthy the Con-
sideration of our Friends, what
Part it will be proper for them to
take on that Occasion. In order
to the determining them wisely
and honestly in this Affair, there
are many Things to be attended

to, in the present Conjunction: And as No One among us has confessedly greater Abilities, or a truer Judgment, than yourself; I choose to throw together my Thoughts upon this Subject, under the Form of an *Epistle* to You.

The first Thing I will suggest to your Consideration, SIR, is, the Wisdom of destroying, as far as we can, not only the Characteristical Distinctions, but the very Reality, of Parties. *Divide and Govern*, has been the old trite Maxim; and its Effect has in no Place been more sensibly felt, than in this Kingdom. Great Men, I mean Men in Great Stations, have at all times taken hold of the Zeal and Bigotry of Parties, to use such of them as they wanted, to their own bad Purposes; and Wise Men, who really desir'd the Publick Welfare, have as frequently, tho' too often

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in vain, attempted to open their Eyes, and to shew them who were their Abusers. The late ingenious Mr. TRENCHARD, whom you knew well, had observed upon Mankind as much as any One. He had consider'd the Foibles of the Populace, and the Wickedness of the Great; and attended to Publick Transactions, and the Springs of them, with an Acuteness which few Men are Masters of. Let me lay before you his Sense upon this Point, but a few Years before his Death; 'twas at a Time when he consider'd the Nation in a very bad Condition; and that the Uniting the Men of Worth and Honesty, in defence of the General Interest, was absolutely necessary to secure that Interest. Whether we have any Reason of the like Kind, to induce to such an Union now, I shall not so much as inquire. But if I may not be thought tedious, I will
 give

give you his Sentiments upon this Subject. They are in *Cato's Letters*, Vol. I. *Feb.* 11. 1720. intitled, *The Leaders of Parties, their usual Views. Advice to all Parties, to be no longer misled.* He begins with observing, in his fine Ironical Manner, That ' the
 ' wife *Sancha Pancha* desired that
 ' his Subjects in the promised I-
 ' fland might be all Blacks, be-
 ' cause he would sell them. And
 ' this seems to be the first modest,
 ' and, as I think, the only reason-
 ' able, Desire of the Leaders of
 ' all Parties ; for no Man will be
 ' at that Expence and Fatigue of
 ' Body and Conscience, which is
 ' necessary to lead a Faction, only
 ' to be disturbed and annoyed by
 ' them.

' A very great Authority *
 ' has told us, that 'tis worth no
 ' Man's Time to serve a Party,

* This was said to have been spoken by a certain Lord Chancellor of former Times.

' unless

' unless he can now and then get
 ' *Jobbs* by it. This, I can safely say,
 ' has been the constant Principle
 ' and Practice of every leading Pa-
 ' triot ever since I have been ca-
 ' pable of observing publick Trans-
 ' actions; the *primum Mobile*,
 ' the *Alpha* and *Omega* of all their
 ' Actions: They all professed to
 ' have in View only the publick
 ' Good, yet every one shewed he
 ' meant his own; and all the
 ' while the great as well as little
 ' Mob, the *procerum turba Mo-*
 ' *bilium*, contended as fiercely for
 ' their Leaders, as if their Hap-
 ' piness or Misery depended upon
 ' the Face, the Cloaths, or Title
 ' of the Persons who robbed and
 ' betrayed them. Thus the High-
 ' wayman said to the Traveller,
 ' Pray, Sir, leave your Watch
 ' and Money in my Hands, or
 ' else by G---- you will be robbed.

' Pound a Fool in a Mortar,
 ' and he comes out never the
 ' wiser;

‘ wifer ; no Experience will make
 ‘ the Bulk of Mankind fo, or put
 ‘ them upon their Guard ; they
 ‘ will be caught over and over a-
 ‘ gain by the fame Baits and stale
 ‘ Stratagems: No fooner is a Par-
 ‘ ty betrayed by one Head, but
 ‘ they rail at him, and fet up ano-
 ‘ ther ; and when this has ferved
 ‘ them in the fame manner, they
 ‘ choofe a Third ; and put full Con-
 ‘ fidence in every one of them
 ‘ fucceffively, tho’ they all make
 ‘ the fame Ufe of their Credulity ;
 ‘ that is, put a Price upon their
 ‘ Calves Heads, and fell them.

‘ I have often feen honeft *Tories*
 ‘ foolifhly defending knavifh *To-*
 ‘ *ries*, and untainted *Whigs* pro-
 ‘ tecting corrupt *Whigs*, even in
 ‘ Instances where they acted a-
 ‘ gainft the Principles of all *Whigs*,
 ‘ and by that Means depreciated
 ‘ *Whiggifm* it felf, and gave the
 ‘ ftupid Herd Occafion to believe
 ‘ that they had no Principles at
 ‘ all,

‘ all, but were only a factious
 ‘ Combination for Preferment
 ‘ and Power.

‘ It is high Time, at last, for
 ‘ the Bubbles of all Parties, for
 ‘ *Whigs* and *Tories*, for High-
 ‘ Church and Low-Church, to
 ‘ come to an *Eclaircissement*, and
 ‘ no longer suffer themselves to
 ‘ be bought and sold by their Dri-
 ‘ vers: Let them cease to be
 ‘ Calves and Sheep, and they will
 ‘ not be used like Calves and
 ‘ Sheep. If they can be persuaded
 ‘ now and then to confer Notes,
 ‘ they will find, that for the most
 ‘ part the Differences between
 ‘ them are not material; that
 ‘ they take only different Mea-
 ‘ sures to attain the same Ends;
 ‘ that they have but one com-
 ‘ mon Interest, which is the In-
 ‘ terest of their Country; and
 ‘ that is, to be freed from Op-
 ‘ pression, and to punish their
 ‘ Oppressors; whose Practice, on
 ‘ B the

‘ the contrary, will always be to
 ‘ form Parties, and blow up Fac-
 ‘ tions to mutual Animofities,
 ‘ that they may find Protection
 ‘ in thofe Animofities.”

It would be almoft impertinent to pretend to add any thing to the general Observations or Reafonings, in refpect to the Abufe of Parties, of this Great Genius ; whom, tho’ a thorough *Whig*, we ufed fecretly to efteem as much as we did any of our own Friends. But there are at prefent particular Circumftances attending us, as *Tories*, which it will not be improper to confider.

I. The *Old Tories*, who were attached to the Divine Right of Monarchy, and to that Right in a particular Family, to whom many of them had fworn ; who were for an abfolute unconditional Obedience, and againft every Degree of Refiftance, as a damnable Sin ; who were juftly ex-
 fperated

operated at the Treatment the Church-Party had met with in the Times of Confusion, and whose Re-
sentments were whetted by their Sufferings at the late *Revolution*: These, I say, are dropt off; and with them, most of the Sentiments they were so fond of. For you, *Sir*, know very well, that the *Modern Tories* are as thoroughly reconciled to the Principles of the *Revolution*, and are as sincerely in the Interests of the Protestant Settlement, as any *Whig* of them all. Nay, it may be questioned, whether we are not more so, than Many whose Spirits are particularly sharpen'd by Disgrace and Removals.

2. Not only the *Old State Tories* are generally gone; but in the *Church*, there is as great, if not greater, Alteration. Most of the Principles of the *High Church*, as they were formerly call'd, are now exploded; and those among

us of the *Clergy*, who assume the Title of the *best Churchmen*, have made such Concessions in favour of General Liberty, that the *Whigs* themselves have observed, that None of their Writers have gone farther. And the Reception that a late Attack upon a SCHEME of CHURCH-POWER, as it is call'd, has met with, is a Demonstration what Turn the *Gentlemen* of *England* at present take with respect to these Things. And as to the Generality of the People, there is so very little of the old Spirit of Bigotry among them, that the *Order* they used formerly implicitly to revere, has now no more than common Respect from them. Indeed, as to the present *Tories* in the *Church*, they even take Pains to be thought *Whigs* in the *State*, as the Distinction now is ; but as we all know their Motives of Acting, so far they are despised by us heartily.

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Motley Characters ! endeavouring to reconcile Contradictions. Of whom I will say no more——

3. But there is another Circumstance attending us as *Tories*, the Consideration of which will very much aid us in our Determination upon the Case before us. You must have observed, SIR, what Numbers of our Friends, who used constantly to act with us, are gone over to the *Enemy*. I do not mean, the Enemy to *Toryism*. On the contrary, it might perhaps be fully shewn, that every thing that ever was really bad amongst us formerly, or that has been imputed to us, is countenanced and kept alive by the Influence to which they are gone over: for it is not to be imagined, that such as we could name, from almost every Quarter, should of a sudden, at the latter End of the Day, without any Grace, and under great Odium, become Converts

verts to any One's Interests, without what they may think a proper Equivalent. And this sort of Conversion, if I am rightly informed, is spreading itself like a Leprosy : so that you must not be surpris'd, if you should find a Desertion where you least expected it. Appearances very much support this Suspicion ; and the Dread of a late destructive Scheme has been lately seen, among a large Body of our Friends, to give Way to the all-powerful Influence hinted at. Farther,

4. There is another Point of yet greater Weight, and which ought to have the fullest Attention in fixing our Conduct, at such a Juncture as is now before us. And that is, the Consideration that our Public Writers have all of them avowed the strongest Regard for Liberty, both Civil and Religious ; that they have treated the Conduct of our Ancestors with

a Warmth that sufficiently shews their Sincerity; and that all their Historical Deductions have evinced the Folly and Absurdity of our former Behaviour. This we have generally seem'd to countenance; or at least to have been far from expressing the least Dislike of. The Writers on the other Side have indeed suggested, over and over, that all these Concessions and Avowals in Favour of Liberty, are meer Grimace; that We are still the same Men as ever, and that we hold the same abject and persecuting Principles we were formerly charged with; nay, that these Professions are made with the worst Purposes: and they bring in support of their Assertions, the Conduct of the old Cavaliers before the Time of the Restoration. Thus, these charitable Men will fix on us what Characters they please; and think they have a Right to impute to us the grossest
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Prevarication and Iniquity of former Times ; in which too all Parties in their Turn, have had their Share. It becomes us therefore to defeat all such Charges ; to prove our selves the Men we pretend to be ; and to establish a Conformity of Character to our present Pretensions, and that in a Point where of all Things perhaps they do not wish to see it. For,

If we consider further how this Affair of the Repeal has been treated by the great Favourers of these Aspersers, we shall find, They have been far from having any Merit with Those who desire it. Pretences, Delays, Absolute Denials, have been all they have been favour'd with ; and if at present there is no express Negative, (which yet perhaps is not the Case) it may be only to leave the Odium upon us of rejecting it. He that considers, **W H O** is the Great Adviser and Director in
this

this Point, must know, that whatever Obligations the Claimants have conferr'd, the Return is no Way expected to be suitable. Is it not therefore fit to take This into our own Hands? To shew ourselves Real, Generous *Englishmen*; to aid that Liberty, we have at any Time, or in any Manner, abridg'd; and to give an incontestable Evidence of our own Worthy Alteration of Sentiments?

This we can do, and this we ought to do, as Men who are truly CHURCHMEN, and who have at Heart the Honour of our Holy Religion. The Prophanation of the most sacred Rite of Christianity, the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, is a Matter of Concern to every good Clergyman; and many of them, who, as the Law now stands, are obliged to administer this Sacrament to every One who comes

to it for a Qualification, feel the greatest Uneasiness from it: Yet were they, in some Cases, to refuse it, their Ruin might be inevitable. Surely, something is due from us, as sincere Churchmen, in favour of those Clergymen, whose Assistance and Interest we find so necessary in our several Counties; as well as to manifest our real Concern for the Honour of our excellent Church and the sacred Institutions of our Religion.

I will now enquire, What Objections may be supposed by any of our Friends to lie against this Conduct. And these must all arise, either from Political Views, or a Real Fear of Danger to our Establish'd Church. I shall consider what occurs to me upon both these Points. And as the Security of our Excellent Church is of the greatest Moment, I shall first examine how That will be affected.

affected, by the Repeal of the Laws desired.

As the Law now stands, Any Man, tho' the most implacable Enemy to the Doctrine and Discipline of the Church of *England*, may, by an Occasional Conformity for a Qualification, enjoy any Post of Honour and Profit, that he can procure or be favoured with. And is it to be thought, that any such will refuse Conformity for such Purposes? Or rather, does not Experience fully shew the contrary? Look round the Kingdom, nay, to the most *Northern* Part; and where do you see Men refuse such a Compliance, who have the proper Temptation? Those of the Dissenters, who refuse Complying with the Terms of the Acts, are generally such, as either thro' a mistaken Conscience cannot conform to our Manner of Celebration of the Eucharist, or such as, tho' they could readily

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comply with us both as Christians and Men of Sense, yet think it Mean and Unmanly to prostitute themselves, as well as the Holy Ordinance itself, to the Low Purposes of this World.

In this Light, SIR, which upon Examination you will find to be the true One, this Affair stands. And where, in such Case, can be the Danger to our Established Church? Cannot All now, who are wicked enough to have Purposes of subverting it, conform; and be in every Capacity to injure us they will be in afterwards? No One will believe, such Mens Consciences will prevent that Compliance: And are they not so much the more dangerous, as they are thereby so much the less suspected? On the contrary, When Men are openly and publickly known to Dissent from us, the least Attempt in them, that really tends to subvert our Establishment,

blishment, will be perceived ; as Men will have their Eyes particularly on them, distinguished as they then will be by a total Separation from us.

You see, SIR, I argue here, as if Men among them could be Wild enough to attempt such a Change. Whereas, whoever considers into how many different Classes *Protestant Dissenters* are ranged, (*Presbyterians, Independents, Baptists, Quakers,*) and the Great Numbers there are of each Body, will think such an Apprehension of their Conduct as chimerical as can possibly enter into any One's Head. Have not they had the fullest Experience formerly, of their own thorough Incapacity to settle a Church-Government to their mutual good Liking ? Did they not feel the Weight of Each Other's unerring Decisions ? Nay, Did they not feel it so sensibly, as to induce them to
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fly to the former Church-Settlement, and to use their utmost Efforts to bring about the Restoration? Nor is there a thing better known, than that for a long Time past, they have consider'd the Church of *England* as the best Establishment they can live under. Indeed, when these Incapacitating Acts are removed, What is there that should induce them to make this dreaded Attempt upon the Establishment? Men are now too wise, to think particular Forms of such Divine Origin, as to overturn the World, in order to introduce any Sett of them; and upon any Supposition of a Preference to particular Schemes, they profess to agree, that All (and consequently, Church of *England*-men as well as others) have an equal Right, to a full Enjoyment of their own Judgments and Public Worship. What then, I say, can be supposed, upon their being

ing Restored to their Natural Rights, to induce them so much as to Wish, much less to Attempt, the Subversion of the Church Established? The whole Difference that will then lie between them and the Members of the Establishment will be, The particular Payment of their Dissenting Ministers, and the providing for their Poor. These are such inconsiderable Peculiarities, that few Men of Sense among them will call them Grievances: especially if it be considered, that Both are voluntary Acts; and that their Poor, if Parishioners, are provided for, every where, equally with the poor Members of our Own Church.

I cannot but own to You, SIR, that All that is insinuated of Danger to the National Church, seems to me an Art of Some Leading Men, whose Views and Practices we have been long acquainted

quainted with, to keep open the Enmity they have made use of so much to their own Advantage. They know, that should the Opinion generally obtain among the Dissenters, that the *Modern Tories* have really abandoned the Old persecuting Principles of their Ancestors; and that Churchmen in general no longer consider *Dissenters* as their Enemies: but that Each, pleas'd with their own Situation, should esteem themselves as *Englishmen*, and have their Hearts united for the General Welfare: They know, I say, in such a State of Things, Appearances could not be imposed for Realities; and that Every Political Scheme and Publick Transaction would be fairly and generally canvass'd; and that no Bad Measure would at any time find its Security in our Divisions. A State of Things, rather to be wish'd for, than expected to be brought

brought about by the greatest Industry of the Worthiest Men of all Parties and Denominations.

There is One Thing I must farther mention to you, upon this Point of Danger to our Church-Establishment from the Removal of these Incapacitating Laws; because I would sift this Argument to the Bottom, as I suppose it will be the chief Thing we shall think ourselves concerned to obviate; and what will be artfully thrown about to embarrass us, if we should think fit to countenance this Affair. What I mean is, that These Laws themselves, if there were any such Design, are far from a Security against it: because, as I have shewn, they not only do not shut out any One who pleases *occasionally* to conform; but, they require no such Conformity from

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any Member of Either House, where, if any where, such Designs must receive their real Force and Vigour. In this Case, the Members of Both Houses are left at full Liberty ; and tho' from them only any Alteration can possibly take its Rise, agreeably to our Constitution, yet no such Test is required from them of their Conformity to Our National Worship ; nor are they, as Members of Parliament, under any Incapacity on Account of their Dissenting from it. If Enmity and Danger to our Church are suppos'd necessarily to result from a different Judgment about Points of Doctrine or Discipline, Here certainly ought to be the Guard. But you know, *Sir*, in the Times when we carry'd these Matters highest, and spread the greatest Fears of Danger, Nothing of this Kind was so much as attempted. 1

I will have done with this Part of the Argument; which I believe I need not have dwelt so long upon; as all Wise Men now see plainly, that Diversity of Opinions is a necessary Consequence of Free Intelligence in Beings framed like us; and that the Dread and Terror which has been supposed to arise from thence, and which has been cultivated from Time to Time, has been owing to the Arts and Industry of Men, who found their own Account in propagating such Apprehensions.

I might now conclude the Trouble I have given you; but I choose just to hint to your Consideration, what I have heard more than once question'd, Whether We as *Tories* ought *Politically* to give our Aid to these Men, to remove from them what in itself appears fit and right to be remov'd. Here,

Here, indeed, I own, lies the greatest Objection. Their Conduct has been such in general, as cuts off in great Measure the Force of Apology. Such fervile Compliances; such a total Resignation of themselves to particular Gentlemen; such an abject Following of Leaders, who had their Cue, and perhaps Reasons too for their Conduct too low to mention; that were One to appear as their Advocate on that particular Occasion, Shame and Confusion would silence every Sentiment.

But, SIR, when You attend to the worthy Behaviour of many of them on Another Important Affair; that warm Zeal that discover'd itself for the Liberties of their Fellow-Subjects, and the open Opposition that Many of their most considerable Men shew'd on that Point; you will find there is much in their Fa-
 your

your to be thrown on the other Side of the Account. Did not many of them (I have my Eye on several) in that Case break with their Old Friends, out of Regard to the General Interest? Many of them to this Day have not had that Piece of Conduct forgiven; and Others have felt the strongest Resentment. And in the Case objected to, Might not the Fears of Our old persecuting Principles determine their Behaviour against Any of Our Friends who appeared Candidates for their Interest? ----- Indeed, there is little to be said for the Part they took with respect to known *Whigs* who differ'd from the A-----n; much less, when they prefer'd our Apostate Friends to such *Whigs*. That was Compliance indeed! ----- Of which I will say no more.

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As to Our selves, Let us remove All Apprehensions of our Enmity to, or Mistakes about, the Rights of Men in general to All the Benefits of Nature, and to All the Advantages of Society ; and let us convince the World, by our Conduct on this Occasion, that no Resentments, no secret Reserves, keep us from acting a Part suitable to the Professions of our Greatest, Wisest and Best Writers. Then we shall have a Claim in future Times to a different Conduct from those we shall so honestly serve ; and shew them the Groundlessness of their late Fears. By this Means, it will be impossible for Any Art to lead them so simply, as they are generally led, against their own and the Common Interest.

You will forgive my turning the Public Eye on you upon this Important Occasion. Your Great
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Character and High Merit claim'd
this Address; in which a Concern
for the Interest and Honour of
our Friends has no small Share.

I am, SIR,

Your, &c.

