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T H E
Protestant Dissenters
H O P E S

From the Present Government,
Freely Declar'd;
A N D

The *Grounds* that support them
Offer'd to the Consideration of such as
are, or should be their F R I E N D S ;
and of O T H E R S , who would have
their *Hopes* Suppress'd.

With some Account of their Sentiments,
concerning the Treatment they meet
with.

IN THREE PAPERS.

Never certainly was there a Time since the Name of Separation was heard of amongst us, in which we had greater Reason to consider of [such] a Union; or I hope, a fairer Opportunity to promise ourselves the Accomplishment of it; only let us be on all Hands as careful to improve it, as I am perswaded we have all of us, not only seem'd to desire, but have indeed earnestly long'd for it. Let us shew the Sense we have of that wonderful Deliverance GOD hath given us out of the Hand of our Enemies, by uniting ourselves in the strictest League of Friendship with one another. Dr. Wake, now Archbishop of Canterbury.

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AS 911. 1716. R67



T O

Mr. M—, —,

O F T H E

City of L O N D O N .

S I R,

AS you are a Person of considerable Figure in the *City*, and have been very active and useful on Publick Occasions; and as you have, from Principle, taken part with the more *Moderate Dissenters* from the *Establish'd Church*; So you have great Opportunities of being acquainted with the various Dispositions and Sentiments of the Citizens of *London*, and of the *Dissenters* in particular: Accordingly you observe (what I my self had also taken Notice of) that these last had been generally surpriz'd at a Proposal made in a late * Sermon before the Honourable House of Commons, for *quieting the angry*

* *Dr. Sherlock's Sermon before the Honourable House of Commons, on the 7th of June, 1716. being the Day of Publick Thanksgiving, &c.*

Spirit that is amongst us, and allaying the Fears that attend it, viz. by suppressing their Expectations and Hopes, which the Reverend Doctor is pleas'd to represent as very unreasonable.

THIS has given a new Occasion to some of them to reflect on the *Fears*, to which they think he must refer; and they cannot but conclude again, that they are as *Groundless*, as *Unreasonable*, and as *Ill-natur'd*, as ever enter'd into the Mind of Man, or as can be *pretended* to; for they seem rather to be *Pretended* than *Real Fears*: While *They* are ready to appeal to all impartial Persons, whether the *Expectation*, and *Hopes* that they entertain, deserve to be call'd *Unreasonable*, or to be *Suppress'd*. They think this cannot appear, to such as know what their *Hopes* are, and will allow themselves to consider their *Case*.

THAT the *Fears* propos'd to be allay'd by such a Method as this, are *groundless*, *unreasonable* and *ill-natur'd*, all who are acquainted with the present State of Affairs, and have any Capacity to judge of Things, must fully know. No one is ignorant what they are, who hears the Reports, or reads the Pamphlets that are so industriously spread by the Men who love to distinguish themselves as *High-Church*.

THAT the *Church* is in the uttermost Danger under his Majesty's Administration, is the Sum of their Fears. On this Account, they would have us believe, that they are seiz'd with Trembling Fits

Fits, with the greatest Horror and Dread. And sometimes we find *that* Danger proceeds from *Lutheran Enemies*; at other Times from *Atheists*, from *Deists*, from *Socinians*, whom they forbear not to intimate, the Government would advance on the Ruins of the present Establishment. — But the Truth of it is, they represent this Danger as chiefly arising from that * *Little kind of Men*, the *Dissenters*. They declare their Fears, that the Church of England-Ministers will soon be expell'd, and the Dissenting Teachers (continuing such) will supply their Places; and the Reason, on which they ground it is this, they fear the *King* himself is a *Presbyterian*, and that the *Bishops* are generally of that Perswasion. A Clergyman in *Huntingdonshire* lately inform'd his Friend, that many of his Parishioners had been so fully perswaded, that the King goes to the *Presbyterian* Meeting-Houses in *London*, and that one of their Number was lately made a *Bishop*; that tho' he had labour'd the Point, he could not convince them of the contrary.

THESE, and such as these, are the formidable things the Party gives out. These are the *Fears* that must be allay'd, by suppressing the *Hopes* of some faithful and truly deserving Subjects, if a *Little Kind of Men* can possibly be such. But these, as I said, are only *Pretended* Fears; there are others that are *Real*: But I believe the Doctor is not so much their Friend, as to desire that those might be allay'd. They

* *Vide Dr. Sherlock's Sermon, p. 27.*

fear the Interests of King *GEORGE* are like to be establish'd amongst us ; and that the Pretender's Cause will become desperate, and himself contemptible here. They are afraid those Great Men who have the Honour to attend the Throne, and have always been true to the King, will be secur'd of his Favour, by approving themselves faithful to him, and every way qualify'd for his Service. They fear that his Majesty will have Wisdom and Courage enough to keep his Enemies at a Distance from his Person, and to bid them Defiance.

AS for the *Hopes and Expectations* on the Other Side, that are represented as *very unreasonable*, let us examine a little *what* they are, and *whether* they be so.

THOSE amongst the Dissenters, who are the most Sanguine Expectants, are hoping that the Time is coming when Almighty God will diffuse such a Spirit of Love and Union amongst the better Members of the *Establish'd Church*, as shall dispose them to admit their Brethren into it, upon the Terms of Christ. When retaining what of *Human Additions* themselves shall approve of, they will cease to *impose* on These what *They* cannot comply with without *Sin*.— They *Hope* for the Glory of *GOD*, and the good of the Church, *That* may be removed that has brought them under a Necessity of Dissenting, and together with *that*, all the deplorable Effects that have follow'd upon it. They *Hope* that a due Regard will be had, to what has
been

been advanc'd by some of the greatest Men that ever adorn'd the *Church*; amongst whom I shall only mention the late Learned Bp. *Stillingfleet*, and his Grace the present Archbishop. of *Canterbury*. The * Former argues thus, ' It would ' be strange the Church should require more ' than Christ himself did, and make other Con- ' ditions of her Communion than our Saviour did ' of Discipleship. What possible Reason can be ' assign'd, or given, why such Things should not ' be sufficient for Communion with a Church, ' which are sufficient for Eternal Salvation? and ' certainly those Things are sufficient for that, ' which are laid down as the necessary Duties of ' Christianity by our Lord and Saviour, in his ' Word. What Ground can there be, why ' Christians shou'd not stand upon the same Terms ' now, which they did in the Times of Christ ' and his Apostles? Was not Religion sufficient- ' ly guarded and fenced in them? Was there ' ever more true and cordial Reverence in the ' Worship of GOD? What *Charter* hath Christ ' given the Church, to bind Men up to more ' than himself hath done? or to exclude those ' from her Society, who may be admitted into ' Heaven? Will Christ thank Men at the great ' Day, for keeping such out from Communion ' with his Church, whom he will vouchsafe ' not only Crowns of Glory to, but it may be; ' *Aureola* too, if there be any such Things there? ' The grand Commission the Apostles were sent ' out with, was only to teach what Christ had com-

* *Irenicum, Preface.*

' *manded*, but not the least Intimation of any
 ' Power given them to urge or require any thing
 ' beyond what himself had spoken to them, or
 ' they were directed to by the immediate Gui-
 ' dance of the Spirit of GOD. — We never
 ' read the Disciples making Laws but of things
 ' suppos'd necessary. When the Council of A-
 ' postles met at *Jerusalem* for deciding a Cause
 ' that disturbed the Church's Peace, we see *they*
 ' *would lay no other Burden*, Πλὴν τῶν ἐπιναγκίαις τέ-
 ' *των*, *besides those necessary things*, Acts 15. 29.
 ' — The Apostles valued not *Indifferencies* at all,
 ' and those things, it is evident they accounted
 ' such, which whether Men did them or not,
 ' was not of Concernment to Salvation. And
 ' what Reason is there, why Men should be so
 ' strictly tied up to such Things which they
 ' may do or let alone, and yet be very good
 ' Christians still? Without all Controversy, the
 ' main Inlet of all the Distractions, Confusions
 ' and Divisions of the Christian World, hath
 ' been by adding other Conditions of Church
 ' Communion, than Christ hath done.—Would
 ' there ever be the less Peace and Unity in the
 ' Church, if a Diversity were allowed as to
 ' Practices suppos'd indifferent? Yea there would
 ' be so much more, as there was a mutual For-
 ' bearance and Condescension, as to such things.
 ' — There is nothing the Primitive Church de-
 ' serves greater Imitation by us in, than in that
 ' admirable Temper, Moderation and Conde-
 ' scension which was used in it, towards all
 ' the Members of it. It was never thought
 ' worth the while, to make any standing Laws
 ' for

for Rites and Customs, that had no other Original but Tradition, much less to suspend Men her Communion for not observing them.

Ἐυνδες γαρ καὶ μάλα δικαίως ὑπέλαβον ἔθῳ ἕνεκεν ἀλλήλων χωρίζεσθαι, ὡς τὰ καίρια τῆς θρησκείας συμφωνήσας, as * Sozomen tells us, they judged it, and that very justly, a foolish and trifling thing, for those that agree in the weighty Matters of Religion, to separate from one another's Communion, for the sake of some petty Customs and Observations. Ὅυ γὰρ τὰς αὐτὰς παραδόσεις περὶ πάντα ὁμοίαι καὶ ὑμῶδεξοι εἶεν, ἐν πίσουσιν ταῖς Ἐκκλησίαις εὐρεῖν ὄσιν. For Churches agreeing in the same Faith, often differ in their Rites and Customs. — The same *WE HOPE*

may remain as the most infallible Evidence of the Conformity of our Church of *England* to the Primitive, not so much *in using* the same Rites that were in use then, as in *not imposing* them, but leaving Men to be won by the observing the true Decency and Order of Churches, whereby those who act upon a true Principle of Christian Ingenuity, may be sooner drawn to a Compliance in all lawful Things, than by Force and rigorous Impositions, which make Men suspect the Weight of the Thing it self, when such Force is used to make it enter. In the mean Time, what Cause have we to rejoyce that Almighty God has been pleased to restore us a Prince of that excellent Prudence and Moderation, who hath so lately given Assurance to the World, of his great Indulgence towards all that have any Pretence from

* *Hist. Eccles. Lib. 7. Chap. 19.*

‘ Conscience, to differ with their Brethren? Thus that very Learned Divine.

HIS Grace, the present Archbishop of *Canterbury*, has also fully * prov’d, — ‘ That there
 ‘ may be Differences in Matters of lesser Mo-
 ‘ ment, between very good and zealous Chri-
 ‘ stians, without any just Reflection either upon
 ‘ the Men, or upon their Religion. — That
 ‘ these Differences ought not to hinder such
 ‘ Persons from agreeing together, not only in
 ‘ a *Common Charity*, but if it be possible, in a
 ‘ *Common Worship* of GOD too. — That to this
 ‘ End, it is the Duty of all *Christians*, but es-
 ‘ pecially of those who are the *strong in Faith*,
 ‘ not only to pray for such an Union, but as
 ‘ they have Opportunity, to labour themselves, and
 ‘ earnestly to stir up all others, to endeavour af-
 ‘ ter it. The Protestant Dissenters hope there
 are some great and good Men, who have now
 an Opportunity for this, and who have great
 Encouragement to stir up others. And they hope
 that will be duly consider’d, which was offer’d
 by his Grace upon the same Occasion, in the
 following Words. ‘ A too long Experience,
 ‘ that if ever we mean to accomplish that U-
 ‘ nion so much recommended to us by the A-
 ‘ postle, so advantagious to the Church at all
 ‘ Times, but especially at this Time so neces-
 ‘ sary to our Peace and our Establishment, that it
 ‘ seems to be the only Way that yet remains to

* In a Sermon before King William and Queen Mary, Anno 1689.

settle and to secure us; and upon all these Accounts so much to be desir'd by all good Men, we must seek it by that Rule which *St. Paul* propos'd to the Dissenting Christians * *We then that are strong in the Faith, ought to bear the Infirmities of the weak, and not to please our selves:* I cannot but think it (he adds) a Reflection becoming every good Christian among us, but in a more especial Manner worthy the Consideration of *such an Auditory as this*, whether somewhat may not yet be done for the Sake of Peace, and to bring Things to such a TEMPER, that both Order and Decency may still be preserv'd, and yet Conformity no longer broken? And he refers in the Margin to the *Petition of the Archbishop and Bishops to K. James*, for which they were committed to the Tower. And after proceeds to enforce this, with very weighty and important Considerations, amongst which there is somewhat so peculiarly seasonable to the *present Day*, that I cannot forbear to repeat it. ' Never certainly was there a Time since the Name of *Separation* was heard of amongst us, in which we had greater Reason to consider of [such] a *Union*; or I HOPE, a fairer Opportunity to promise ourselves the Accomplishment of it; only let us be on all Hands as careful to improve it, as I am perswaded we have all of us, not only seem'd to desire, but have indeed earnestly long'd for it.

* *Rom. 15. 1.*

‘ LET us shew the Sense we have of that wonderful *Deliverance* GOD hath given us out of
 ‘ the Hands of our Enemies, by uniting our-
 ‘ selves in the strictest League of Friendship with
 ‘ one another.

NOW such an *Union* as this, being so great a Good, the Dissenters cannot but make it the Object of their *Hopes*; especially when a Wise and Good *Prince* is on the Throne, and other Wise and Good Men in Power. And this same *Hope* we find has been entertain’d, upon Occasions somewhat less encouraging to it than the present, by Men in the Church, superior to Dr. *Sh—k* himself, without Undervalving him; and yet this, as I suggested before, is the most Sanguine of their Hopes, the very *Ακμή* to which they arise.

THEY are not ashamed to acknowledge, that they *hope* for the *Repealing* a Law for which they cannot but fear that GOD has a Controversie with the Land; while they consider that one of the most sacred Institutions of our Religion, is prostituted to a mean, and a secular Purpose, and proves the Occasion (such as might be removed) of many great and provoking Sins; as may more fully appear from the following Paper.

THEY cannot but *hope* that they shall be deliver’d from some *Unnatural Grievances*, that were brought upon them for their Faithful Adherence to the *Protestant Succession*, and the present Government, which they are sure was no
 mis-

mistaken * *Party Zeal*: Which Grievances were imposed on them by those who appear now to have had no good Designs either to *Church* or *State*; some of whom have been in *actual Rebellion* for the sake of a *bigotted Popish Pretender* to the *Throne*.

THEY hope they shall be restored to the *Privilege* and *Right* of bringing up their Children according to their own Sentiments: And that having approv'd themselves true to the Interest of the Nation, in the worst of Times, and suffer'd in no small Degree on that Account, they shall again have a *Legal Capacity* to serve the King whom they love, and their Country whose Welfare they seek. They hope that † *Divisions* of a less kind, such as may arise, and too often have done so, amongst those who live under the same Government, and equally agree in their Obligations to submit to and support it, shall not prevent any truly deserving Persons, and fit to be entrusted with and employ'd in the *Publick Affairs*, from being capable in Law, of being so entrusted and employ'd.

NOW some of the *Grounds* that support these *Hopes*, are contain'd in the following Papers; some of which and others also, have been propos'd by the greatest Lights in the *Church* it self, in this and in the preceeding Age; with the Recital of which I might swell a Volume.

* See Dr. Sh—k's Sermon, p. 27.

† Vide Archbishop of Canterbury's Sermon before the King, on the 30th of Jan. last.

AND

AND can it be thought a reasonable Thing, that *These Hopes* should be *suppress'd*, for the allaying such *Fears* as were mention'd above? or that a People who in *one Reign* had every Thing to *fear*, for their firm Adherence to the *Protestant Succession*, should have no particular Favour to *Hope* for under it? And *How* are these *Hopes* to be *suppress'd*? Were one inclin'd to be ill-natur'd, such an Enquiry as that would give Abundant Scope, and further evince the *Doctor's* Proposal to be very uncharitable, very unchristian. But it is not my Design to set it in such a View as a *Dissenter* might be provok'd to do. I'll only observe, That when the Times are never so bad, never so little favourable to them, the *Dissenters* will be *hoping* for better, and pursuing such lawful Measures as they apprehend have a Tendency to promote and hasten them. I am not for ent'ring into an angry Debate with the Reverend and Worthy Author of the Sermon I mention'd before, perhaps he will reconsider what he has *said to such an Auditory*, and since *published to the World*; and upon Consideration may find, that he has not treated as a Gentleman, a Christian and a Divine ought to do, a whole Body of Men, who have no way deserv'd such Treatment at his Hands, and with whom if he was better acquainted, he would have known them to be somewhat more considerable than he has represented them. I am sure it would be taken very ill from the *Dissenters*, should they suggest, that it were a reasonable thing that some Mens *Hopes* of Bishopricks, and other Church-Preferments, were

were suppress'd, whilst they discover themselves to be Enemies to *some of* the heartiest Friends the King and Government has. That the Dissenters were so, They found to their Sorrow, who oppos'd them the most in the last Reign, and who loaded them with grievous Oppressions, by way of Revenge for it. That they are so still, is known to the Government, and all who are Friends to it. And their Enemies continue to treat them in a most insolent and brutish Manner on that Account. The *Persons* of many of them have been abused, and their *Lives* greatly endanger'd, their *Goods* have been spoiled, their *Meeting-Houses* demolish'd, and their *Dwellings* sometimes assaulted in such a Manner, as left them Room to expect no other but that they would be pull'd down on their Heads. Their *Ministers* are continually reproach'd and abused in the Publick Streets, and whole Volleys of Curses discharged on them; and what has been some Satisfaction in the midst of this, they have heard themselves cursed under the Character of *GEORGE's* Friends; whereas did they wear *Black Gowns*, they could not be distinguish'd as such. When their necessary Affairs have call'd them abroad on the Days of Publick Rejoycings, yea even on a Thanksgiving Day, they have some of them gone in Jeopardy of their Lives. Now * *they have not been only taught to think these and their Abettors, their Enemies; but by Arguments which only require a Capacity of Feeling, have been fully convinced that they are so, for it seems*

* Dr. Sh—k's Sermon, p. 27.

there are such * Arguments. And what have they done to provoke such a Spirit as this against them? Why only let the World know, as Opportunities offer'd, that they were, at all Times Friends to King GEORGE and his Family, and that in such Instances as sufficiently distinguish it from a *Party-Zeal*.

NOR have they only suffer'd from *Mobs* and from the *Beasts* of the People, but Men of *Exalted Stations* in *Church and State*, have been glad to lay hold on any Pretences, and even to *make Occasions* to reproach and worry them: One remarkable Instance of this, may be seen in a late Pamphlet, entituled, *The Insolence of the Dissenters against the Establish'd Church, exemplified in a Memorial given in to the Lords Justices of Ireland, by his Grace the Lord Primate, and the Lord Bishop of Down and Connor.*

YOU know Sir, that they now generally apprehend their Enemies take Encouragement to insult and abuse them thus, from that Neglect with which they have been treated, by those whom they once thought their Friends. Nay, they conclude, that they who hate 'em take Heart in continuing these Measures, as apprehending, that tho' it should serve no other End, yet it intimidates the Government from attempting any thing in Favour of them; and they have grown very uneasy under that View of the Matter. I hope this is merely Suspicion,

* *Dr. Sh—k's Sermon*, p. 12.

and that they are mistaken in this Apprehension: But yet much might be said to show, how greatly it might be to the Disadvantage of the Publick, that its Enemies should think thus; or, that those who would serve it, should be discourag'd, by a Perswasion that the Matter is so. But what, I pray, has the Government to fear from *the Faction*? They have already done, and they continue to do the very worst they are capable of. Would they not have * murder'd the King and his *Royal Family* before this; Would they not have brought in *Popery and Slavery* long ago, had they been able to do it? Did our Superiors see fit to satisfy those reasonable Expectations and HOPES, that are mention'd above, could their Enemies blow up a higher Degree of *Enmity* to them, than rages already in their Breasts? Could they talk in a viler or a more scurrilous Manner against them; or can they oppose them with greater Resolution and *Vigour*, than they have hitherto done? Let any Man judge. — But if the *Dissenters* must be deserted, and their HOPES suppress'd, they indeed have learnt better than to suffer *Nature* to rebel against Principle, even under such a Temptation to it, as that might prove. But I heard from you, Sir, who are so well acquainted with the most active and considerable Men of that Denomination, that They are now generally disgusted and sour'd, upon finding themselves so long, and so far neglected by Some; and by the unkind Suggesti-

* See his Majesty's Proclamation for the Thanksgiving.

ons of Others, pretending to be *moderate Churchmen*. I wish that you, and others of like Abilities with your self, would perswade them at least to defer a little longer, the taking up such a Resolution as *that* you were speaking of, and which I found you, who are generally cool and sedate, were just ready to enter into, *viz.* to leave the *Low-Church* Party, to try what they can do by themselves for the future, in those Cases wherein the *Dissenters* were wont to unite them with all their Force. You truly observe, that every Body has seen the *High-Church* uniting with *Papists* to serve the opposite Cause; and how much they have given into each others Interests, to secure a mutual Friendship: While the other Set of Men, who now come under not only the same common Denomination of Whigs, but of Schismatics too, and whose Interest it must be to have the *Dissenters* their Friends, expect to find them so, however they trifle with and misuse them. You tell me, that tho' they shall always heartily love King *GEORGE*, and wish well to his Person, his Government, and the whole Royal Family; yet in a way consistent with this, *as you say*, they are like to have many Opportunities to let some Men know, that their Difficulties will be greater than they have been as yet, by means of their (*the Dissenters*) standing *Neutral* on some Occasions; And you seem to be satisfied that there will be nothing unrighteous, or faulty, in such a Conduct as this, whereby their Despisers may come to know how considerable they are, by the Want of their Assistance and Help.

But,

But, Sir, I beseech you again to perswade your Friends, not to give up their *Hopes* as yet; *Hopes* supported by all those strenuous Arguments that they have to offer in Defence of their Cause, and those others which lie against the unreasonable Grievances they labour under. You know many Volumes have been written on these Points, and would our Enemies condescend to read and consider them, we flatter ourselves that they would think better of us than they seem to do. But a Sheet may possibly be read by those who will not look into a larger Defence of our Cause, and therefore being my self greatly pleased with perusing the two following Papers, I thought it might be of Use to reprint them in this Manner. The first was written in 1689 by a great Man, and of great Moderation towards the Establish'd Church; and I think as reasonable now, as when it first appear'd; for it contains some substantial Reasons for those *Hopes* which the Dissenters are now entertaining. The other was printed in the last * *Occasional Paper*, from which I take it, and is a Letter to the *Unknown Author* of it, who deserves to be honour'd, for the Solidity, the Impartiality, and great Ingenuity of his Writings. I know, Sir, you have already perus'd both these Papers, and that we agree in our Opinion of them: But you will not think you loose your Time, if you read them once more. And if by this means they are put into the Hands of some who have not seen them be-

* *Number 8.*

fore,

fore, it is hoped that *They* will not be offended, who pay a small Matter for *that*, the best Part of which they had by them already: With this Hope I Republish these Papers, and am,

S I R,

July, 12. 1716.

Your Obedient

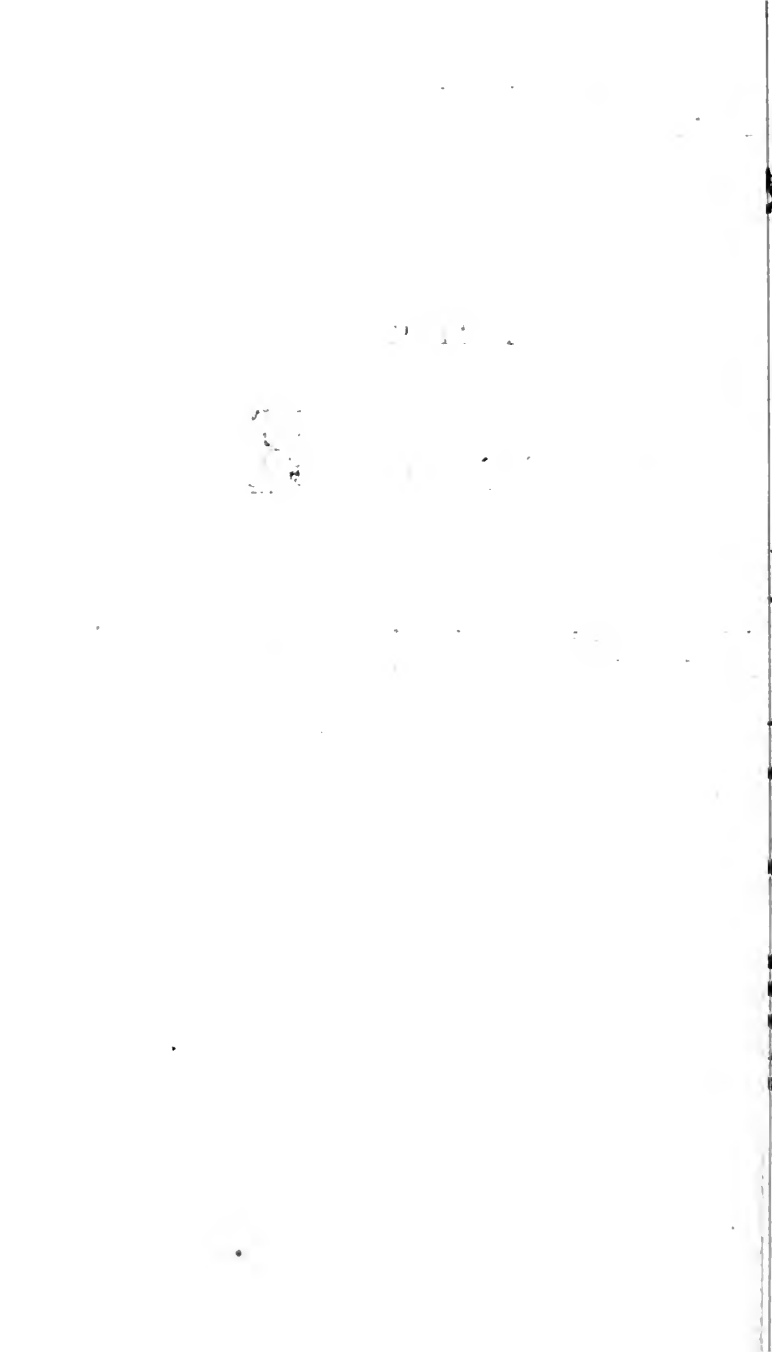
Humble Servants, &c.

T H E



T H E
C A S E
O F T H E
Protestant Dissenters,
R E P R E S E N T E D a n d A R G U E D .







THE
CASE
OF THE
Protestant *Dissenters*,
REPRESENTED and ARGUED.

THEY are under one common Obligation with the rest of Mankind, by the Universal Law of Nature, to Worship GOD in Assemblies.

MEN of all Sorts of Religions that have ever obtain'd in the World, Jews, Pagans, Mahometans, Christians, have in their Practice acknowledg'd this Obligation. Nor can it be understood how such a Practice should be so Universal, otherwise than from the Dictate and Impression of the Universal Law.

Where-

WHEREAS the Religion profest in *England*, is that of Reformed Christianity; some things are annexed to the allowed Publick Worship, which are acknowledg'd to be no Parts thereof, nor in themselves necessary; but which the **Dissenters** judge to be in some part Sinful.

THEY cannot therefore with good Conscience towards **GOD**, attend wholly and solely upon the Publick Worship which the Laws do appoint.

THE same Laws do strictly forbid their **A**ssembling to worship **GOD** otherwise.

WHICH is in Effect the same thing, as if they who made, or shall continue such Laws, should plainly say, If you will not consent with us in our superadded Rites and Modes, against your Consciences, you shall not Worship GOD: Or if you will not accept of our Additions to the Christian Religion, you shall not be Christians; and manifestly tends to reduce to Paganism a great Part of a Christian Nation.

THEY have been wont therefore to meet however in distinct Assemblies, and to worship **GOD** in a way which their Consciences could approve; and have many Years continu'd so to do, otherwise than as they have been hindred by Violence.

IT is therefore upon the whole fit to enquire,

Q. 1. **WHETHER** the **Dissenters** are to be blamed, for their holding distinct Meetings for the **Worship** of **GOD**?

For

FOR Answer to this, It cannot be expected that all the Controversies should be here determined, which have been agitated about the Lawfulness of each of those Things which have been added to the Christian Religion and Worship, by the present Constitution of the Church of *England*.

BUT supposing they were none of them simply unlawful, while yet the misinformed Minds of the Dissenters could not judge them lawful, tho' they have made it their Business to enquire and search; being urg'd also by very severe Sufferings, which thorough a long Tract of time they have undergone, Not to refuse any Means that might tend to their Satisfaction; they could have nothing else left them to do, but to Meet, and worship distinctly as they have.

FOR they could not but esteem the Obligation of the *Universal, Natural, Divine Law*, by which they were bound solemnly to worship GOD, less questionable than *that* of a *Law*, which was only *positive, Topical* and *Humane*, requiring such and such Additaments to their Worship, and prohibiting their Worship without them.

THE Church of *England* (as that Part affects to be call'd) distinguisht from the rest by those additions to Christian Religion (pretended to be different, and so, contest unnecessary) hath not only sought to Engross to it self the *Ordinances of Divine Worship*, but *all Civil Power*. So that the Priviledges that belong either to *Christian* or *Humane Society*, are inclosed, and made peculiar

to such, as are distinguish'd by Things that in themselves can signifie nothing to the making of Persons either better Christians, or better Men.

Q. 2. WHETHER the Laws enjoying such Additions to our Religion, as the exclusive Terms of Christian Worship and Communion, ought to have been made; when it is acknowledged on all Hands, the things to be added, were before not necessary; and when it is known, a great Number judge them sinful, and must thereby be restrained from worshipping the True and Living GOD?

A. THE Question to any of Common Sense, answers it self. For it is not put concerning such as dissent from any Part of the Substance of Worship which GOD hath commanded; but concerning such Additions as he never commanded. And there are sufficient Tests to distinguish such *Dissenters*, from those that deny any substantial Part of Religion, or assert any Thing contrary thereto. Wherefore to forbid such to worship that God that made them, because they cannot receive your devised Additions, is to exclude *that which is necessary*, for the *meer Want* of that which is *unnecessary*.

A N D where is that Man that will adventure to stand forth, and avow the hindering of such Persons from paying their Homage to the GOD that made them? If we thus Expostulate the matter on GOD's Behalf and their own; Will you cut off from GOD *his Right* in the *Creatures*

ures he hath made? Will you cut off from *them* the means of their Salvation, *upon these Terms?* What Reply can the matter admit?

'TIS commonly alledg'd, That great deference is to be paid to the Laws; and that we ought not to have forborn our Assemblies, 'till the publick Authority recall'd the Laws against them. And we will say the same thing, when it is well proved, that they who made such Laws, made the World too.

AND by whose Authority were such Laws made? Is there any, that is not from GOD? And hath GOD given any Men Authority to make Laws against himself, and to deprive him of his *just Rights* from his own Creatures?

NOR if the matter be well search'd into, could there be so much as a Pretence of Authority derived for such Purposes from the People, whom every one now acknowledges the *first Receptacle* of derived Governing Power. GOD can, 'tis true, lay indisputable Obligation by his known Laws, upon every Conscience of Man about Religion, or any Thing else. And such as represent any People, can according to the Constitution of the Government, make Laws for them about the Things they entrust them with. But if the People of *England* be askt Man by Man, will they say, they did entrust to their *Representatives*, their *Religion* and their *Consciences*, to do with them what they please? When it is your own Turn to be represented by others, is this

Part of the *Trust* you commit? What Dr. *Sherlock* worthily says, concerning a *Bishop*, he might (and particularly, after, doth) say, concerning every other *Man*, * *He can be no more represented in a Council, than at the Day of Judgment; every Man's Soul and Conscience must be in his own keeping, and can be represented by no Man.*

IT ought to be consider'd, That *Christianity*, wherein it superadds to the *Law of Nature*, is all *Matter of Revelation*. And 'tis well known, that even among *Pagans*, in the settling *Rites and Institutes of Religion* †, *Revelation* was pretended at least, upon an implied *Principle*, that in such *Matters* humane *Power* could not oblige the *People's Consciences*.

WE must be excused therefore, if we have in our *Practice* exprest less *Reverence* for *Laws* made by no *Authority* received either from *GOD* or *Man*.

WE are therefore injuriously reflected on, when it is imputed to us, That we have by the use of our *Liberty*, acknowledg'd an illegal *Dispensing Power*. We have done no other thing herein, than we did when no *Dispensation* was given or pretended, in *Conscience* of *Duty* to him that

* *Vindication of some Protestant Principles, &c. p. 52.*

† As by *Numa*, from his *Egeria*. And their *Priests* to whom the *Regulation* of such *Matters* was left, were generally believ'd to be inspir'd.

gave us Breath. Nor did therefore Practice otherwise, because we thought those Laws dispens'd with, but because we thought them not Laws.

WHEREUPON little need remains of enquiring further,

Q. 3. WHETHER such Laws should be continued?

AGAINST which, besides what may be collected from that which hath been said, it is to be considered, that what is most principally grievous to us, was enacted by that Parliament, that as we have too much Reason to believe, suffered itself to be dealt with, to enslave the Nation in other Respects, as well as this; and which (to his Immortal Honour) the Noble E. of Danby procur'd to be Dissolv'd, as the first Step towards our National Deliverance.

AND let the Tenour be considered of that horrid Law, by which our *Magna Charta* was torn in Pieces; the worst and most infamous of Mankind, at our own Expence, hired to accuse us; multitudes of Perjuries committed; Convictions made without a Jury, and without any Hearing of the Persons accused; Penalties inflicted; Goods rifled; Estates seiz'd and imbezeld; Houses broken up; Families disturb'd often at most unseasonable Hours of the Night, without any Cause, or Shadow of a Cause, if only a malicious Villain would pretend to suspect

pect a Meeting there. No Law in any other Case like this ; as if to worship GOD without those Additions, which were confessed unnecessary, were a greater Crime than Theft, Felony, Murder, or Treason ! Is it for our Reputation to Posterity, that the Memory of such a Law should be continued ?

AND are we not yet awaken'd, and our Eyes open'd enough, to see, that the making and Execution of the Laws, by which we have suffer'd so deeply for many by-past Years, was only, That Protestants might destroy Protestants, and the easier Work be made for the Introduction of the Popery that was to destroy the Residue ?

NOR can any Malice deny, or Ignorance of observing *Englishmen* overlook this plain matter of Fact : After the Dissolution of that before-mention'd Parliament, Dissenters were much caress'd, and endeavour'd to be drawn into a Subserviency to the Court-Designs, especially in the Election of after Parliaments. Notwithstanding which, they every where so entirely and unanimously fell in with the sober Part of the Nation in the choice of such Persons for the three Parliaments that next succeeded (two held at *Westminster*, and that at *Oxford*) as it was known would, and who did most generously assert the Liberties of the Nation, and the Protestant Religion. Which alone (and not our meer dissent from the Church of *England* in Matters of Religion, wherein *Charles II.* was sufficiently known to be a Prince of great Indifferency) drew upon us, soon after
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the Dissolution of the last of those Parliaments, that dreadful Storm of Persecution that destroy'd not a small Number of Lives in Goals, and ruin'd Multitudes of Families.

LET *English* Freemen remember, what they cannot but know, That it was for our firm adherence to the Civil Interests of the Nation (not for our different Modes of Religion from the legal way, tho' the Laws gave that Advantage gainst us, which they did not against others) that we endur'd the Calamities of so many Years.

WHEN, by the late King, some Relaxation was given us, what Arts and Insinuations have been us'd with us, to draw us into a Concurrence to Designs tending to the Prejudice of the Nation? and with how little effect upon the generality of us, it must be great Ignorance not to know, and great Injustice to deny.

BUT he that knows all Things, knows, that tho', in such Circumstances, there was no Opportunity for our receiving publick and authoriz'd Promises, when we were all under the Eye of watchful Jealousy; yet as great Assurances as were possible, were given us by some that we shou'd now remember it, of a future establish'd Security from our former Pressures. We were told over and over, when the Excellent *Heer Agell's* Letter came to be privately communicat'd from hand to hand, how easily better things could be had for us, than *that* encourag'd *Pa-*
pists

pists to expect, if ever that happy Change should be brought about, which none have now beheld with greater Joy than we.

WE are loth to injure those who have made us hope for better, by admitting a Suspicion that we shall now be disappointed and deceived, (as we have formerly been, and we know by whom) or that we shall suffer from them a *Religious Slavery*, for whose sakes we have suffer'd so grievous things, rather than do the least thing that might tend to the bringing upon *them* a *Civil Slavery*.

WE cannot but expect from *Englishmen*, that they be just and true. We hope not to be the only Instances, whereby the *Anglica fides*, and the *Punica*, shall be thought all one.

BUT if we who have constantly desired, and, as we have had Opportunity, endeavour'd the saving of the Nation, must however be ruin'd, not to greaten (one hair) the Wealth and Dignity, but only to gratify the Humour of them who would yet destroy it; we, who are competently inured to Sufferings, shall through GOD's Mercy be again enabled to endure. But he that sits in the Heavens will, in his own Time, judge our Cause, and we will wait his Pleasure; and, we hope, suffer all that can be inflicted, rather than betray the Cause of Reformed Christianity in the World.

BUT

BUT our Affairs are in the Hands of Men of Worth and Honour, who apprehend how little grateful a Name they should leave to Posterity, or obtain now with Good Men of any Persuasion, if under a Pretence of Kindness to us, they should now repeat the Arts of ill Men in an ill Time. Great Minds will think it beneath them; to sport themselves with their own Cunning in deceiving other Men, which were really in the present Case too thin not to be seen thro', and may be the easie Attainment of any Man, that hath enough of Opportunity, and Integrity little enough, for such Purposes. And 'tis as much too gross to endeavour to abuse the Authority of a Nation, by going about to make that stoop to so mean a Thing, as to make a Shew of intending what they resolve to their uttermost shall never be.

BUT Some may think by Concessions to us, the Church of *England* will be ruin'd, and a great Advantage be given to the bringing in of Popery.

TO which we say, the Generality of the Dissenters differ from the Church of *England*, in no Substantials of Doctrine or Worship, no nor of Government, provided it be so manag'd, as to attain its true acknowledg'd End; the favouring of us therefore will as much ruin the Church, as its Enlargement and Additional Strength will signify to its Ruin.

AND

AND doth not the World know, that wherein we differ from them, we differ from the *Papists* too? And that for the most Part, wherein they differ from us, they seem to agree with them?

WE acknowledge their Strong, Brave and Prosperous Opposition to Popery: But they have oppos'd it by the Things wherein they agree with us; *their Differences from us* are no more a Fence against Popery, than an Inclosure of Straw is against a Flame of Fire.

BUT 'tis wont to be said, we agree not among ourselves, and know not what we would have.

AND do all that go under the Name of the Church of *England* agree among themselves? We can shew more considerable Disagreements among them, than any can between the most of us, and a very considerable Part of them. They all agree 'tis true in Conformity: And we all agree in Nonconformity: And is not this meerly accidental to Christianity and Protestantism? And herein is it not well known, that far the greater Part of Reformed Christendom, do more agree with us?

AN arbitrary Line of Uniformity, in some little Accidents, severs a small Part of the Christian World from all the rest: How unreasonably is it expected, that therefore all the rest must in every Thing else agree among themselves?

elves? Suppose any imaginary Line to cut off a little Segment from any Part of the Terrestrial Globe, 'tis as justly expected that all the rest of the World should be of one Mind. If one Part of *England* be Taylors, they might as well expect that all the People besides should agree to be of one Profession.

PERHAPS some imagine it dishonourable to such as have gone before them in the same Ecclesiastical Stations and Dignities, if now any Thing should be alter'd, which their Judgments, did before approve and think fit.

BUT we hope that Temptation will not prove invincible, *viz.* of so excessive a Modesty as to be afraid of seeming Wiser or better Natur'd, or of a more Christian Temper than their Predecessors.

BUT the most of us do agree not only with one another, but in the great Things above mention'd with the Church of *England* too: And in short, that that Reproach may cease for ever with those that count it one; they will find with us, when they please to try, a very extensive Agreement on the Terms of King *Charles II* his Declaration about Ecclesiastical Affairs, *Anno* 1660.

Quest. 4. WHETHER it be reasonable to exclude, all that in every Thing conform not to the Church of *England*, from any Part or Share of the Civil Power?

THE difference, or Nonconformity of many is so minute, that it would be as reasonable, to exclude all whose Hair is not of this or that Colour.

AND what if we shou'd make a Distinction, by the Decision this way or that, of any other disputed Question, that may be of as small Concernment to Religion? Suppose it be that of eating Blood; for the Decision whereof, one way, there is more Pretence from GOD's Word, than for any part of the disputed Conformity. Would it not be a wise Constitution, that *who-soever thinks it lawful to eat Black-Pudding, shall be capable of no Office, &c.*?

BUT we tremble to think of the *exclusive Sacramental Test*, brought down as low as to the Keeper of an Alehouse! Are all fit to approach that Sacred Table, whom the Fear of Ruin, or Hope of Gain may bring thither? We cannot but often remember with Horror, what happened three or four Years ago: A Man that led an ill Life, but frequented the Church, was observ'd not to come to the Sacrament, and prest by the Officers to come; he yet declin'd, knowing himself unfit; at length, being threatened, and terrified came: But said to some present at the solemn Action, That he came only to avoid being undone; and took them to Witness, that what he there receiv'd, he took only as common Bread and Wine, not daring to receive them as the Body and Blood of Christ. 'Tis amazing, that among Christians, so venerable

rable an Institution should be prostituted to so mean Purposes, and so foreign to its true end! And that doing it after the manner of the Church of *England*, must be the Qualification! as if *England* were another Christendom; or it were a greater Thing to conform in every Punctilio to the Rules of this Church, than of Christ himself!

BUT we would fain know whose is that Holy Table? Is it the Table of this or that Party, or the Lord's Table? If the Lord's; are not Persons to be admitted, or excluded upon his Terms? Never can there be Union or Peace in the Christian World, 'till we take down our arbitrary Inclosures, and content our selves with those which our common Lord hath set. If he falls under a Curse that alters Mens Landmarks, to alter God's is not likely to infer a Blessing.

THE matter is clear as the Light of the Sun, that as many Persons of excellent Worth, Sobriety, and Godliness, are entirely in the Communion of the Church of *England*; so that there are too many of a worse Character, that are of it too; and divers Prudent, Pious, and sober-minded Persons, that are not of it. Let Common Reason be consulted in this Case; Suppose the Tables turn'd, and that the Rule were to be made the contrary way, viz. That to do this Thing, but not by any means after the Manner of the Church of *England*, were to be the Qualification; and now suppose one of meaner Endowments as a Man and a Christian, do what is required, and not
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in the way of the Church of *England*; another that is of much better, do the same thing, in that Way; were it suitable to Prudence or Justice, that because it is done after the Way of the Church of *England*, a fitter Man should be reckon'd unqualified? and one of less Value be taken for qualified, because he does it a different way? Then is all that solid weight of Wisdom, Diligence, Sobriety and Goodness, to be weighed down by a Feather.

IT must surely be thought the Prudence of any Government, to comprehend as many useful Persons as it can, and no more to deprive it self of the Service of such, for any thing less considerable than those Qualifications are, by which they are useful, than a Man would tear off from himself the Limbs of his Body, for a Spot upon the Skin.

AND really, if in our Circumstances, we thus narrow our Interest, all the rest of the World will say, That they who would destroy us, do yet find a Way to be our Instructors, and our common Enemies do teach us our Politicks.

POSTSCRIPT.

THE Names of Mr. Hale of Eaton-College, and of a later most renowned Bishop of the Church of England, who asserted this Principle [That if things be impos'd under the Notion of indifferent, which many think sinful, and a Schism follow thereupon, the Imposers are the Schismaticks] will be great in England, as long as their Writings shall live, and good Sense can be understood in it. **A**



A

LETTER

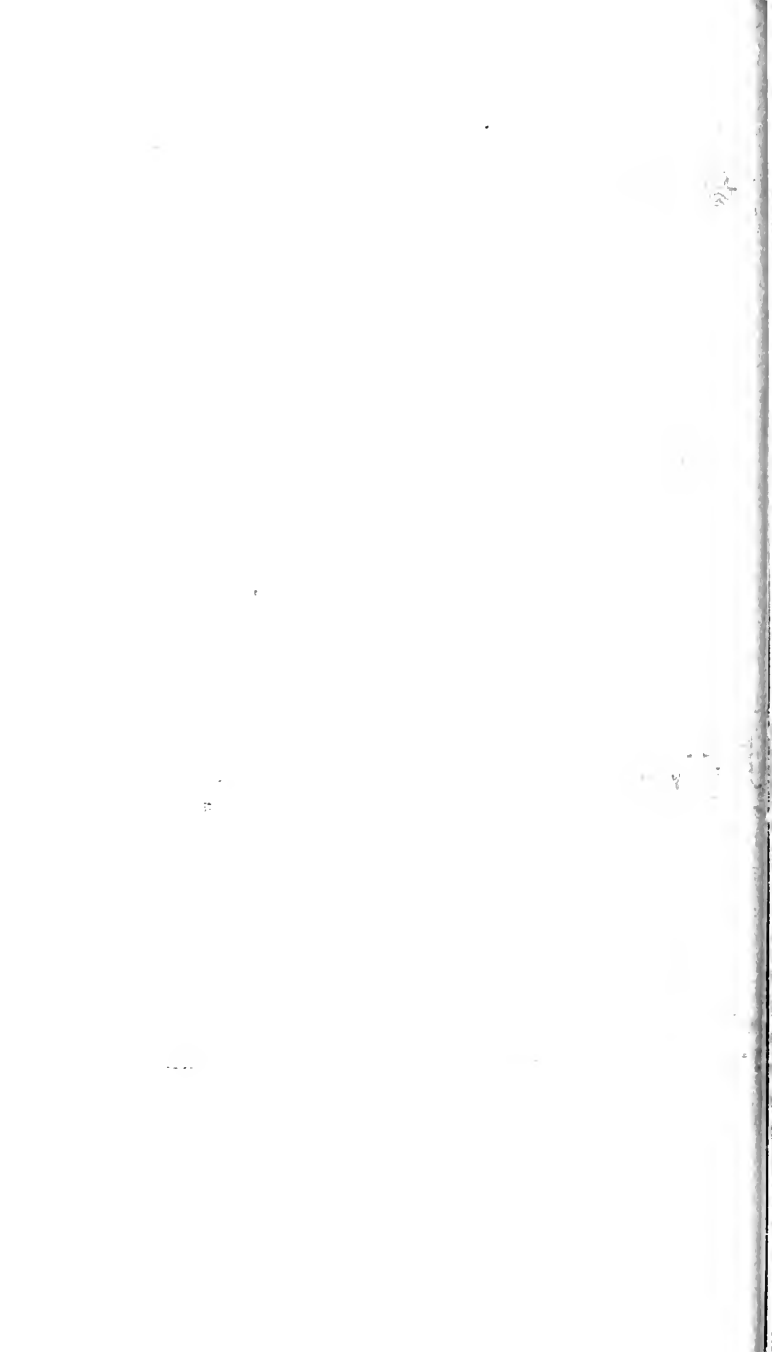
TO THE

AUTHOR

OF THE

Occasional Paper.







TO THE
AUTHOR
 OF THE
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S I R,

THANK you for the Monthly Entertainment of your Papers; but must acknowledge my self one of those that want you to *speake* more plainly upon several Things which you have hinted at. Some People imagine you are *Dissenter*; but really if you are so, you are *sneaking* one, to *speake* of 'em as you have done. And if you are of the Party call'd *Low Church*, I think you need not be either ashamed or afraid to appear a downright Advocate for those, who have maintain'd such a steady Regard to our Interests, even under the greatest Discouragements. If you are in Sincerity what you promise to be, in the *Advertisement* of your first Pa-
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pers, you cannot avoid drawing Consequences from many Things you have advanc'd, which will be supported by none but Dissenters. For tho' the *Free-Thinkers* (as the Men of *no Religion* affect to call themselves) may fall in with you in some Things; and tho' in other Things you may talk in the same Strain with those who are now leaving the Common Faith of Christians, and seeking to propagate their particular Opinions; yet, I will venture to say, that none will so thoroughly and heartily follow you in those large and generous Sentiments, for which you seem to have a Fondness, as the leading Party of the Dissenters would do.

PROVE your self then, the *unprejudiced, disinterested Man* you pretend to be, in daring to be just and grateful to a Body of Men, who have done more for the Good of their Country, perhaps, than any Set of People ever did, under such Treatment as they have met with. Many of them have been turn'd out of those Places, which they were employ'd in so long, as to be incapable of turning themselves to any thing else for the Support of themselves and Families. They have been driven from the Universities, and from many Advantages as to Learning; and then that is made a reason for despising them; tho' many of 'em thro' Industry and the Blessing of GOD, are as considerable as those who have had their Education at *Oxford* or *Cambridge*.

THEY have been made incapable of serving the Publick in Corporations, Commissions of Peace,
&c.

c. and then are represented as a People that are insignificant, and of little Importance to the Government. But we know the Character, and the End too, of those, who when the Straw was taken away, yet requir'd the Tale of Bricks, as when it was allow'd.

AND yet notwithstanding these Discouragements, together with the Insults and Abuses, that Popish, or Popishly affected, Rabble, have everywhere been spirited up to throw upon them; they have faithfully adher'd to the Interest of the *House of Hanover*, and the moderate Church-party. He must be wilfully blind, that does not see how much the late Ministry labour'd to get the Dissenters out of their Way: Being sensible, that they could not so effectually carry on their Designs, whilst a *Dissenter* had any Interest left in his Country. And 'tis demonstrable, that the Integrity of the *Dissenters*, and their prevailing Concern for the *Protestant* Religion, has had that Effect upon Multitudes that were ready to have join'd the lately suppress'd Rebels, that they durst not do what otherwise they would have done, for fear of such Men (even where they were fewest) being Spies upon them.

FOR this Reason, many of 'em were wretchedly abused in their Persons; others suffered in their Goods; they were threatned up and down, that their Throats should be cut; in short, Matters were come to that pass, that no Methods could have been stuck at to get them out of the Way. They knew all this, and they knew how

to value their Safety and Interest, and Birth-
rights, as well as others; and yet they hazarded
all to serve those — who now are asham'd to
say or do a kind Thing for them.

SIR! If you dare publish the Thoughts of a
thorough *Dissenter*, you should tell them who are
in Power, of some of their Publick Speeches, and
their often declared Sentiments, which it is now
expected should direct their Conduct. You
should tell 'em, what the Religion of Christians
and *Protestants* demands from them; and tell
'em, that their Credit for the Future with some
of their best Friends, depends upon what they
now do. Nay, you may tell 'em, their Ene-
mies expect they should show a Concern for a
Set of Men that have been so closely attach'd to
them. For it must be acknowledg'd, That the
Tories are always so generous, as to take care of
their own Friends, tho' sometimes it be to their
own Disadvantage; as 'tis manifest their incor-
porating with the *Papists* has now been. And
withal, I would tell some present Ministers
of State, That they will find it a very diffe-
rent Thing to have a Divine Providence, and a
number of Men set against them, for their Inju-
stice and Ingratitude; to what their present Case
is, The having a Company of Rebels to Religi-
on, and their Country, only, rising up against
them.

I KNOW the common way of putting by all
this, is to tell us, that it is not yet a Time to show
any Favour to the *Dissenters*; which some inter-
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pret, that it is not yet a matter of *Necessity*; and till it is so it will not be a Time to be *just* and *grateful*. For if they should suggest, that they are not now *able* to do any thing for us, I would gladly know, when they propose to be better able? If their Strength and Power to accomplish what They and all honest Men profess to wish for, be now thought insufficient; what is it like to be, when all those Measures are pursued that must lessen the Number, and weaken the Force and Interest, of those that would now hazard their All, to put Matters upon a better foot? And how will those Men answer it, I do not say to Almighty GOD, but even to themselves and to Posterity; that are now the Occasions or Instruments of destroying those small Remains of Sincerity and Honesty, that are left among us? If our present Physicians should be so devoted to their own particular Humours, or Prescriptions, as to differ with one another, whilst the Patient languishes under their Hands; we are sure of this, that tho' *one* may possibly secure a Point of *Honour*, and *another* may multiply his *Fees*, yet the poor Patient after all his Expectation, and the spending of his Substance, is left at last to expire and perish.

I KNOW 'tis often a Time for GOD to appear, when his Interest is sunk to the *lowest*; but that is not a Time for *human Politicks* to own a People in. If ever a restless Night, or an uneasy Mind (like that of *Abasuerus*) should be appointed to our Prince, and he should enquire *what has been done* for those that have been faithful to him,

him, when others rebell'd against him; and it should be answered, *nothing is done for them*; then perhaps some Regard may be shewn to 'em: But otherwise, if such a Juncture as this be let slip; I shall conclude, that those who wait for a more *convenient Season*, intend it in the Sense that *Felix* did, when after two Years conversing with *St. Paul*, He yet *left him bound*.

THIS Sir! Is the manner in which a *Dissenter* would write upon the present State of Affairs: And this is what a Moderate Churchman would not think unworthy his Notice. But if you have not a Heart to publish any thing of this Nature from your own Observation and Sense of Things; let this be inserted, as from one that Glories, even in the present Reproaches and Afflictions of a People, that deserve better Treatment.

A. B.

F I N I S.

