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THE
QUAKERS'S
REPLY
TO THE
COUNTRY PARSON'S
PLEA,
AGAINST

The Quakers Bill for Tythes.

But woe unto you Pharisees; for ye tythe Mint, and Rue, and all manner of Herbs, and pass over Judgment and the Love of God.
St. Luke, chap. 11, ver. 42.

Woe unto you Scribes and Pharisees, Hypocrites, for ye pay Tythe of Mint, and Anise and Cummin, and have omitted the weightier Matters of the Law, Judgment, Mercy and Faith.
St. Matth. chap. 23, ver. 23.

For they bind heavy Burdens, and grievous to be born, and lay them on Men's Shoulders, but they themselves will not move them with one of their Fingers.
St. Matth. Chap. 23, ver. 4.

L O N D O N :

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*The QUAKER'S Reply to the
PARSON'S Plea, &c.*

FOR fear the Appellation of *Friend* should rather exasperate than soften the very *unfriendly* Mind that seems to have dictated the Paper before me; and lest the Simplicity of the Gospel-Terms *Thee* and *Thou*, should prove as offensive to your Ear, as the sight of a *broad Hat* and a *short Cravat* have been to your Eye; I shall, in Compliance to your Weakness, tho' you seem so little inclined to shew the least Indulgence to mine, wave the ordinary Stile of our Fraternity in this Address, and occasionally; for once, conform to that more worldly Dialect, which, to act consistently with yourself, tho' not with your Profession,

feſſion, I know you muſt, merely for its being more worldly, prefer to any other.

I will acknowledge too, that your Paper is written with all that Spirit for which worldly Minds value their Performances; that it is ſeaſon'd with Wit, and adorn'd with a great deal of *Tytbe-Knowledge*; that you argue artfully, and urge forcibly; that throughout the whole acrimonious Work, there appear the Marks of an able Writer, as well as *the true Spirit of a Parſon*; and that the only Spirit I find wanting, is that of Charity, Benevolence and Forbearance one towards another; and, in a word, *the true Spirit of a Chriſtian*.

But, as my Caſe is juſt the reverſe, that I ſhall ſpeak as a Chriſtian, not as an Orator; as one who asks Juſtice, not one who apprehends it; as one who muſt ſolicit the Legiſlature, not dictate to it; and ſue to the Government, not menace it: ſo, under all theſe

these Difadvantages, I should certainly despair of Succes in the Cause I am going to plead, were I not of opinion, that Facts, Reason and Truth, in their plainest Dress, sufficing for my purpose; and *my Plea*, wanting neither Sophistry to gloss, Learning to puzzle, or Rhetorick to grace it; I need not lament, when the just, the discerning, and upright Parliament of *England* is to be the Judge between us, that I am neither adorn'd with the Trap-pings, aided by the Dexterity, nor arm'd with the Authority of those who fight against me. *Non enim tam auctores in disputando, quam rationis momenta quærenda sunt,* says Cicero.

And sure it is natural for me to imagine, that in a Parliament, where his Eloquence has *all* its weight, his Precepts should have *some* Influence too.

You set out, in your Paper, with two very modest Presumptions, which no body will dispute; but you will give me leave to say, I think they are

Alpha and *Omega*, that is, the *last* of that sort, in your Paper, as well as the *first*.

What you presume is, that *it is no Offence for the Meanest to offer Reasons to the greatest, nor a Reproach to any Man to have a reasonable Concern for his own Property.*

I desire to avail myself of the same *Postulata*, with a very small Variation; and hope it will be no Offence for a *mean Quaker* to offer Reasons to a *great Parson*, nor any Reproach to him to shew a reasonable Concern for his own *Conscience*.

Though whenever You speak of *Scruples of Conscience*, it is with so much Contempt and Ridicule, that I cannot help saying, I think the frank manner in which you treat *Scruples of Conscience*, is a Sincerity that does not become you: you seem to think where *Tythes* are concerned, that all *Conscience* ought to be quite out of the question. But whatever
your

your private Opinion, or your Practice may be in this case, I think a little more Hypocrisy in your publick Declarations on this head (as great an Enemy as I am to Hypocrisy in general) would have made your way of arguing more decent, with regard to your own Character, as well as to ours.

And now I desire to advance two Propositions in my turn, which I hope you, and every Man that is not intoxicated with the very Quintessence of the Spirit of Persecution, will as readily subscribe as I have done yours.

They are these: *First*, That if the Parson has all that he pretends to be his due, he *ought* not to insist on having it the way that will hurt me most, without being a more secure or profitable way to him.

Secondly, If the Parson *should* insist upon it, that the Parliament of *England* would be an Accomplice in that Injustice, if it left the Means of grati-

gratifying such a Will in the hands of any haughty, cruel, vindictive, litigious Mind that could form it; and suffered any Parson to harras, worry and ruin a poor Quaker, merely for Scruples of Conscience.

Nor can it be reasonable in any Case whatever, for the Law to allow a Power of going the most vexatious and expensive way to work, if an easy and cheap Method will attain the same End; but it would be more particularly unreasonable in this Case, to allow that Power; since a long and painful Experience has made the Quakers feel, and let all the rest of Mankind see, that whilst that Option does remain, the Choice will often be made the way it should not.

You say, *you envy the Quakers no Ease the Legislature intends to give them, or can give them, provided it does not injure your Property.* And here I join Issue: I desire no Ease for the Quakers, that may injure what I
will

will suppose, or what the Civil Government will call your Property; and if any unbiassed Judge will say this Bill, modelled in the way I shall propose, renders that Property less secure, I do not desire it should pass into a Law.

But the two great Errors that run through the whole Tenour of your Plea, seem to me to be these :

First, because you conceive you should be injured by the Bill, as it is now drawn, you argue against *any* Bill; as if there was any Impracticability in altering its present Form before it passes.

In the next place, you treat all Laws whatever, relating to the Church and Tythes, be they good or bad, equitable or injurious, righteous or oppressive, with such an absolute *Median* and *Persian Noli me tangere*, that you seem to think them upon a different Foot from any other Laws subsisting in this Island, that the Le-

gislature ought to look upon them so too, and that the Parliament should hold itself obliged to leave them just in the Condition it now finds them; respecting them like *the Ark of God*, which no unconsecrated Hands have any Right to meddle with.

But if you will look into *Exodus*, you will there find, that by God's own Command, the *Mercy-seat* was to be put in the highest and most sacred Place of all, even upon *that Ark* itself; but the only Injunction of God, which seems to be follow'd with regard to *your Mercy-seat*, is the overlaying it with pure Gold. Witness that laudable Custom of *commuting*; the only way your Mercy is ever come at.

But to come to the Point; let your pompous, arrogant, elaborate, dogmatical Piece be stripp'd of all its Redundancy of Words, and reduced to real Matter and Argument, it is impossible for any Man to say, that there
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are there contain'd above two Objections to the Bill now depending, (even as it stands at present) which have any Weight, the least Appearance of Reason, or deserve any Answer.

The first of these Objections is against the Appeal to the *Quarter-Sessions*, from the Apprehension of original Partiality in the first *Justice of Peace*, and the *Quarter-Sessions* not being a sufficient Check upon such Partiality.

The other is, the Incapacity the Parson will be under, (since the Quaker's Conscience will not admit him to set out the Tythe) of receiving his Tythes in kind, if he chuses it, or of letting them to another body.

As to the first Objection, I cannot imagine why you will suppose, that the Parsons behave in such a manner in every County in *England*, that they will never be able to pick out a *Justice of Peace* to determine their

Cause, who will not set out prejudiced against them: but however, as I conclude you know the true State of this Circumstance better than I do; I will admit this to be the Case of the Parsons, will allow your Objection therefore to be a good one, and offer a Remedy to this apprehended Evil.

If I should propose, that the Appeal might be *to the Judge of Assize in a summary Way*, I know you would answer, that *the Judge of Assize* would never have time to take Cognizance of these Suits; I will be content therefore to have the Appeal, tho' much more troublesome and chargeable, yet since free from all other Exception, *to the Court of Exchequer*; and this will entirely take away the Fears of the Partiality of *the Justice of Peace* against *the Parson*, since it would be ridiculous for the Justice of Peace to expose his own Character, in judging partially; if that partial
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Judgment could have no Effect, but the exposing his own Character, as his Sentence would be over-rul'd in the Exchequer, and that Justice done to the Parson, which he had deny'd.

As to the second Objection ; in order to enable the Parson to receive his Tythes in kind, if he chuses to have them so, and effectually to prevent all subsequent Disputes about their Value, if the Quaker was to carry them off: why may there not be such a *Tything-man* appointed by the Justice of the Peace, at the Solicitation of the Parson, as shall take an Oath to act impartially, and set out the Tythes according to the Custom of tything, in such Parishes where the Case shall happen: by which means the Parson on one hand may have his Tythes in kind, or let them to whom he pleases ; and the Quaker, on the other hand, has the same *Salvo* for his Conscience as he had before, by only submitting previously
to

to that same Power, to which consequentially he submits, as the Law now stands, and as the Case of Tythes now operates.

I know from whence your chief Reluctance to give into this Proposal will arise, you are loth to part with the Jurisdiction of your own Spiritual Courts in this Case; Courts which, as far as the Jurisdiction reaches, I will venture to affirm, and would undertake to prove, fall little short in many Points, of *One* Proverbial for its Oppressions, Cruelties, and Injustices.

But supposing the Parson should go this favourite way to work, and prosecute this conscientious Offender in the Spiritual Court, what would be the Effects of it? would the Parson get his Tythes by these means? No.—What then would be the Consequence? why it would be this: after the Quaker had been cited in the Spiritual Court in vain, the Court of
 Exchequer

Exchequer would be applied to, and the Vengeance judg'd due to *Contumacy* would fall upon the poor Quaker; whilst the Parson would only have *the Christian Satisfaction* of seizing the Person of the Quaker, fixing him in Goal for Life, and knowing he must rot there.

Nay it would be still worse; for the Parson after losing his Tythes, must add to that Loss, the Expences he had been at, in carrying on this Prosecution; and for both these Misfortunes he would have no other Equivalent or Compensation than the bare Gratification of his Revenge, and the satiating his Thirst of Persecution; the only two things in the World perhaps, for which the most enthusiastick vengeful Churchman would give up what he must relinquish in this Case to come at them.

Own fairly then, what you are conscious is the true and only Reason, why the Clergy are unwilling to
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have the Jurisdiction of the Spiritual Courts taken away in this Case.

You fear this may be a leading Card to the restraining the Power, correcting the Abuses, and preventing the Oppressions of those Courts in other Instances. Power, which you are ready to own, has been abused, and Oppressions, which you cannot deny, have been exercised, even whilst you refuse your Consent to the Abridgment of the one, and your Assistance towards the Alleviation of the other.

Is this just? is this Christian? nay, is it barely human?

And with what Face, what Decency, can you preach to your Flock to return from the Errors, Vices, and Crimes of their Lives, at the same time that you admit there are these Abuses and Injuries committed in your own Jurisdiction? and yet are so far from lending your own Hand to correct them, that you are ready to chop
off

off other People's, if they dare to meddle with them.

If People write against our Civil Governors, tho' ever so unwarrantably, the Liberty of the Press, the Liberty of the Subject, and the Liberty of this happy Constitution, is pleaded in their Behalf, and it is found much easier for Calumny to avoid Punishment, than for Innocence to escape Detraction.

But if the least thing is written against real Evils in the Ecclesiastical Government, the whole Ecclesiastical Fraternity are up in arms: Ills inflicted by Churchmen are to be as implicitly submitted to, as those inflicted by Providence: It is held a sort of *Blasphemy* to complain, and a kind of *Sacrilege* to touch, tho' to cure: which reasonable Insinuation from our Apostles, that it is not allowable to alter any thing in *Church-Government*, tho' it be to amend;

puts one a little in mind of that Doctrine of the *Jews*, mention'd in the Gospel by St. *John*, where he tells us, *Jesus* himself was reprehended for healing the sick and relieving the distressed, because he did it on the *Sabbath-Day*.

These are the Outcries against any, who dare to meddle with *the Dominion* only of the Clergy ; but if any rash, busy *Laicks* are so bold as vainly to propose, not the Retrenchment, but barely the Regulation of a *Tytbe* ; to desire the ascertaining a *Fine*, or to plead the Establishment of a *Modus*, the *Anathema's* against such profane Contenders for the Liberty of the Subject (*quatenus Parishoner*) are thunder'd out with treble Violence : *Excommunication*, had it all the Force that Bigots imagine, or Priests wish, would be thought too light a Punishment for such Crimes ; the whole Swarm of Church-Bees would be in
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an uproar, and the poor Offender, after being deafen'd with their Noise, must run the Gantlet thro' their Stings.

But if any Infidels or Atheists write only against *Christ* or *God-Almighty*, the Clergy leave them to be answer'd by the Civil Magistrate; they look upon that to be none of their Business: so much less offensive does it seem to sap the very Foundation on which *their Hive* stands, than to touch one Grain of their *Honey*.

I do not wonder you should suspect, in case you made the Payment of Tythes too easy to Quakers, that such a Temptation might induce some of your Flock to renounce *their* Faith, profess *ours*, and put on *broad-brim'd Hats* and *short Cravats*; since I dare say, you know of no one Shepherd belonging to any of those Flocks, who put on a broad Beaver and a Band,

for any other reason than to receive, what you imagine these would wear broad Hats to evade giving.

But I would avoid having our Flock contaminated with any Converts, who become Converts from such interested Motives, as much as you ; we desire no Profelytes of that sort: it is well known that *we* act on different Principles, and that the *Holy Ghost* that calls *us*, is of a different Nature : that we practice what we preach, and live up to what we profess: that we none of us assert *Christ's Kingdom* not to be of this World, at the time that no one of us will officiate as his Embassador, without the most worldly Appointments.

We take no temporal Hire for doing our spiritual Duty, no pecuniary Reward for any Christian Office ; and no more think we are not obliged to do good, though we are *not* paid for it, than we imagine we should be

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excused doing ill, though we *have* paid for it.

We hold no Markets for Sins, nor hope to evade its Punishments by *commuting* and compounding with any Persons, who assume the Characters of God's Proxy's, in order to dispense Absolutions, Indulgencies, or Exemptions from Punishments, according to the Sums received in a Spiritual Court, and not according to the degree of Penitence and Humiliation of the Criminal before the Court of Heaven.

As to our Morals, and the blameless Purity of our Lives, there is no Example to be found of any Quaker ever convicted of Theft, Robbery, Rape, Coining, Murder, Treason, or any other Capital Crime. Can any Set of Men in the Kingdom, can even your own immaculate Body (as you would be thought) say as much?

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As to the Benefit we are of to the Publick, many of the Quakers are great Traders, and whatever we get by foreign Trade, considering the People as a Nation, is so much got for the People in general; whereas, whatever you get by your Trade (however well you may earn it) is certainly so much got *from* the People.

Thus the rich Quakers enrich the Country, and all our Poor, if they are Burdens, are Burdens only to ourselves, as they are all maintained merely by ourselves.

Their is another very essential Difference between us and you, with regard to the Government too; for whilst the Quakers, barely tolerated in some points, and oppressed in others, are as quiet, as loyal, and dutiful Subjects to the Government, as any Class or Denomination of Men who live under it. The Clergy, supported in many instances beyond what they

they ought to be, and rewarded in many more beyond what they deserve, are as unquiet if every thing is not done just to their Mind, as if nothing was so, and by a Turbulency common to the Priesthood in all Religions, are perpetually giving Trouble to the Government, which protects them in Ease ; and weakening the Interest of those very Governors who espouse and secure theirs.

If any Credit be to be given to common Report, I need not go far for Examples to prove what I here assert, or to convict you of Crimes alledged in this Charge ; the Combinations and Cabals every body has heard of, and every body talks of, tending to awe the Deliberations and impede the Determinations of Parliament ; the Circular Letters to alarm and inflame the Country, and to sow Apprehensions in weak Minds, of Attacks and Injuries, that were known
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at the same time, even by those who beat this ecclesiastical Drum; to be neither meditated nor intended. The Ingratitude to the Government, in endeavouring to do those concerned in the Government these ill Offices, at a time, when you were just loaded with the undeserved Benefits of recent Favour shewn to you in the Case of the Dissenters, are all so many accumulated Testimonies, that every Favour you receive endangers your Benefactors, and that none can give you their *Cloak*, but your insatiable Thirst for Profit and Dominion; will make you ask their *Coat* also.

But if I may be allowed to borrow a Metaphor, and make an Allusion to a ludicrous Representation I have seen of some great Personages, I would add on this occasion, that when *certain People* are rowing a Race of Popularity among their own Fraternity and Profession, they care
not

not what Veffel they run foul of, not even tho' it fhould prove the very Boat that has been towing them againft Wind and Tide, to the Point they aim at, when, without that towing, they would never have got into that Channel where they are now proudly failing with fuch prosperous Gales, and in fo much Splendor and Triumph.

When you talk of the great Intereft of *the Quakers* in Elections, and the Infignificancy of the *poor Parfon's*, it is with fo much Modesty with regard to your own Influence, and a Refpect to ours, fo little our due, that I fuppose you cannot expect that Paragraph in your Paper to be ferioufly answer'd, or even ferioufly read.

And tho' you often profefs, on this Occafion, that you defire nothing but your Due, yet the great Fondnefs with which you mention the Statute of *Edward VI.* and the Cordiality

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with

with which you speak of that favourable Exposition of it, that gives you double Damages in one Case, and treble the Value of the Tythes disputed in another, looks as if you should have no great Objection, to having a way still left open, through which, something more than your original Due might be come at.

To secure Property, you say, is one main end of Government: I admit it: To prevent the weakest from being oppress'd by the strongest, I maintain, is another Principle in establishing Society, equally fundamental: and, as the way in which I have propos'd the Bill now depending should be form'd, will not hurt the first of these Principles; and that way you would be allowed to get at your Tythes, is, by Experience, manifested to be subversive of the other, the Conclusion is so obvious, that I need not put it into Words.

It would be so tedious to enter into a minute arithmetical Detail, to expose the fallacious manner in which you have stated the Computation of those *Quakers*, who have been ruin'd by the Laws, with regard to Tythes as they now stand, that I will rather suppose your Calculation, (false as it is) to be a true one, and only reduce the Inference you draw from it into short and plain *English*, thus:

You think it an extream frivolous and impertinent Complaint in the *Quakers* to talk of the Hardships of the Law, or the Cruelty of the Parsons in consequence of the Acts of the 7th and 8th of K. *William*, when it is evident, you say, even from their own account, that, at a Medium, the Law has not *roasted*, nor the Parsons *eat*, above 14 *Quakers per annum* since those Acts took place.

But, notwithstanding the delicious Morfel a *roasted Quaker* may be thought

thought to a Parson's Palate, I fancy you will not find many Men in either House of Parliament, that will not look upon it as a Dish that may very reasonably be retrench'd from a Parson's Table.

I have in a very crude, unmethodical, indigested, hasty manner, run thro' most of the Points contain'd in your *Plea*, that appear'd to me falsely stated, sophistically argued, or unjustly insisted upon. Had I more time, I would have enter'd into more parts of it, and been more particular in answering these.

But even now I cannot conclude without saying a little to the two last Paragraphs in your Paper.

In the *Penultima*, you say, that as the Law now stands, every *wise Clergymen*, for his own sake, and every *good Clergyman*, for his Neighbour's, will take the easy and cheap Method prescribed by the Acts of the

7th and 8th of K. *William*, for the Recovery of his Due, preferably to the other.

But, as Laws are made with a View not to *wise* and *good* Men, but to direct and restrain those who are not so, and, as I hope, I may say without Offence, that even among *Parsons* some may be found who are not *wise*, some who are not *good*, and some, perhaps, who are *neither*; so, on account of such, (if such there are,) I would most humbly, and, I think, not unreasonably, intreat that the Bill now depending may pass into a Law, and that all *Parsons* may be compell'd to do that which, according to your own Confession, all wise and good Parsons would do, and ought to do if they were not compell'd.

As to your last Declaration, with which you clinch this Church-nail, *That you had rather lose your Tithes, than your Tithes and your People*

too: You will, I hope, forgive my suspending my Belief of that Assertion, till you have been so kind to produce some one single Example at least, since Ordination existed, of a Parson who took any People under his Care, without *Tythes*, or something of the same persuasive Nature to induce him.

It is true, I did once hear of one, who design'd to abdicate his Church-Emoluments, in order to propagate the Gospel among a yet unlighten'd People; but, I remember too, all the rest of you said the poor zealous good Men was mad; and he himself was in a short time so thoroughly cured, and so thoroughly convinced of his former Conduct being Madness, that he quickly quitted his Missionary-Calling, and instead of relinquishing former Profits, solicited and obtained new Benefices and better Preferments.

Upon the whole, I think, abstracted from Personal Views and Interest,
that

that the Foundation of this Bill is so conformable to the Doctrine of Christ, the Principals of Toleration, the Nature of this Constitution, and the Genius of our Government; so consonant to Good-nature and good Sense, that in this Shape, and modell'd in the Manner I have mention'd, I can never believe it possible for a *Christian Clergy* to oppose it, or an *English Parliament* to reject it.

I shall therefore couclude this Paper with part of the form of your own Prayers, and say—

From Pride, Vain-Glory, and Hypocrisy, from Envy, Hatred, and Malice, and all Uncharitableness—

GOOD PARLIAMENT deliver us.

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