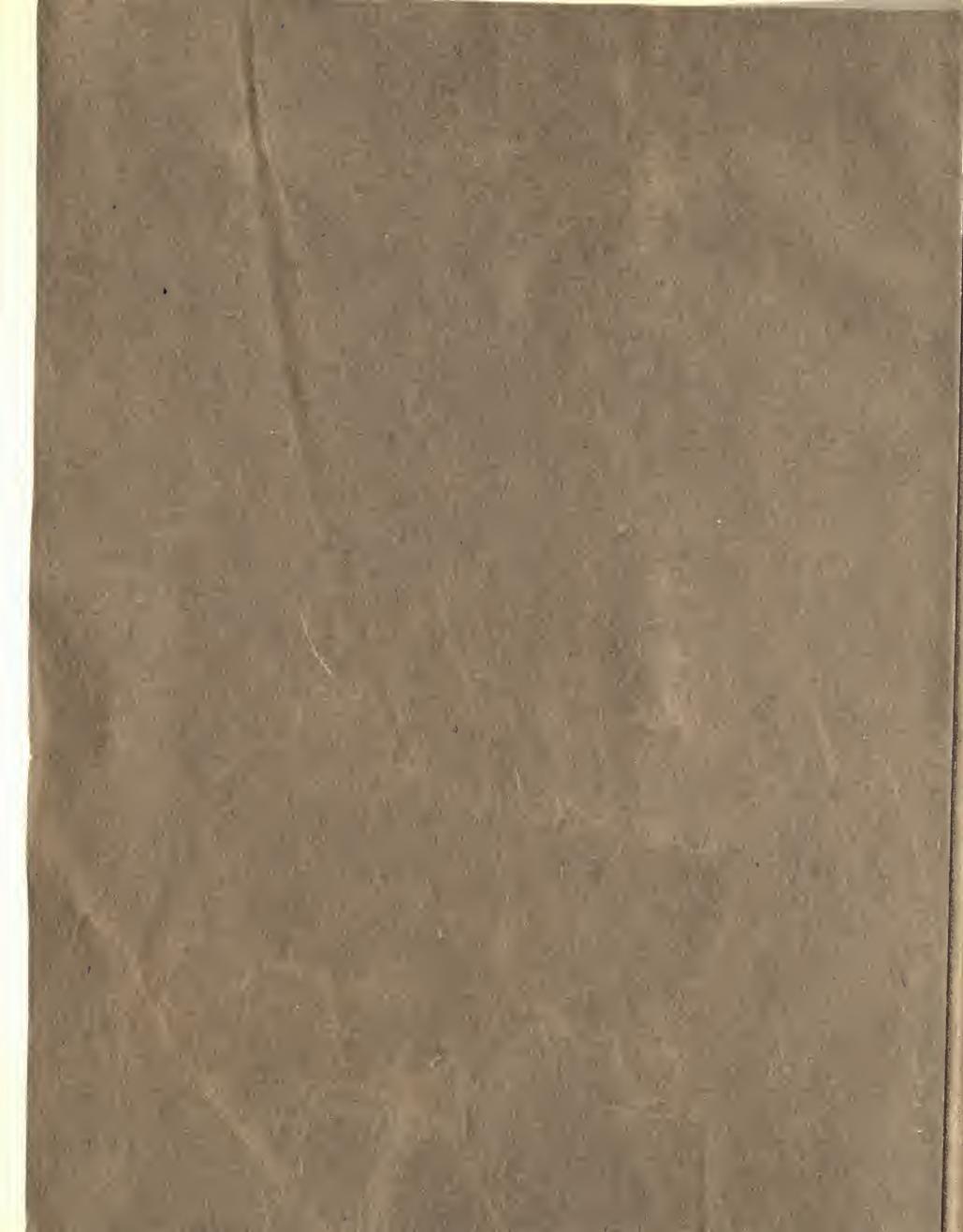


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Sr. HENRY VANE *Eighteenth*
Treatise

HIS

S P E E C H 11

In the House of Commons, at a
Committee for the Bill against

Episcopall-Government,

Mr. HIDE sitting in the
CHAIRE.

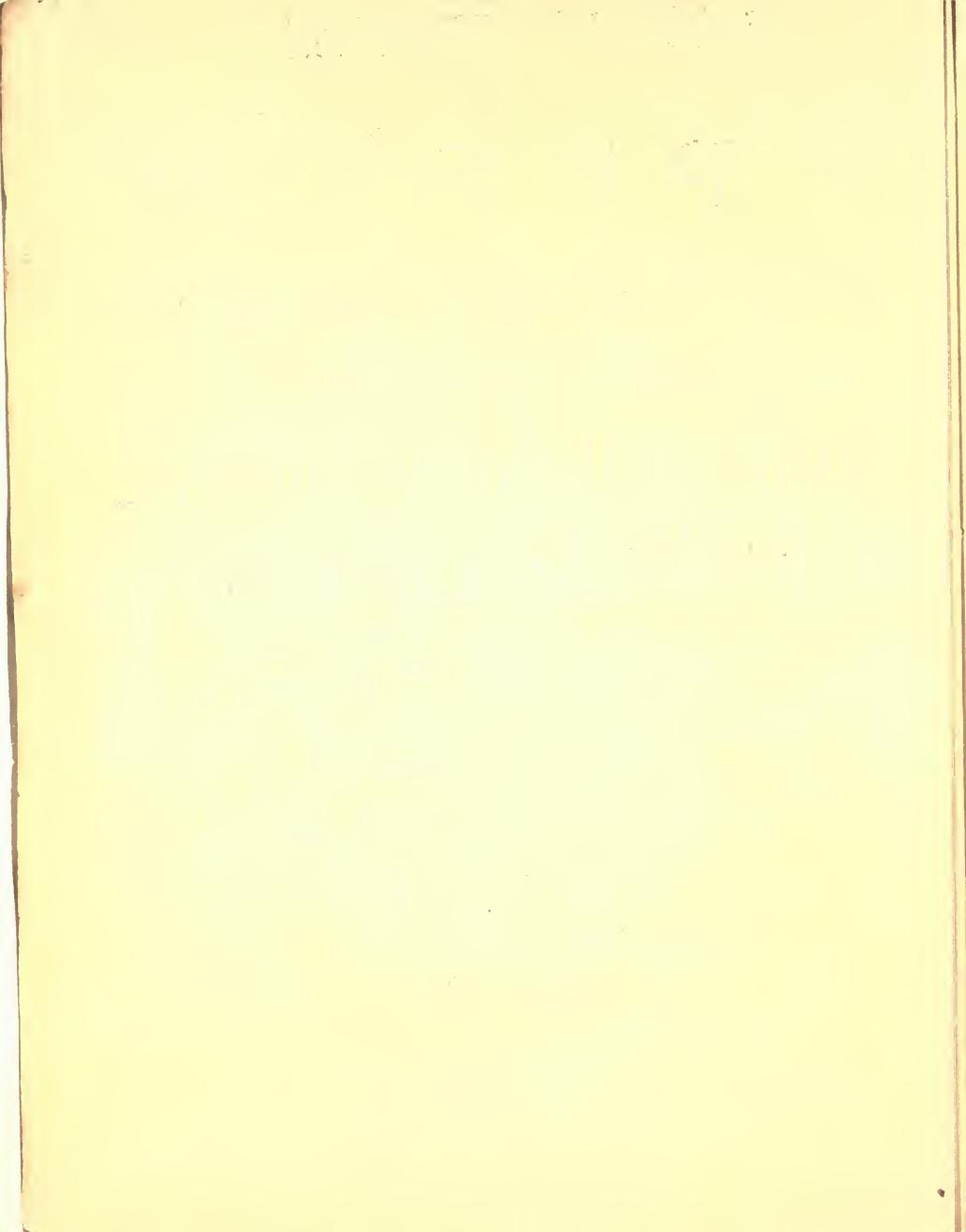
June 11. 1641.



LONDON,

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1641.





ST. HENRY VANE

HIS

SPEECH,

At a Committee for the Bill
against Episcopall Government,

June 11. 1641.

Master *Hide*,



In the debate we are now upon is,
whether the Government by
Arch-bishops, Bishops, Chancel-
lors, &c. should be taken away out
of the Church and Kingdome of
England: for the right stating wherof, we must re-
member the vote which past yesterday, not only
by this Committee, but the House, which was to
this effect: That this Government hath bin found

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by

by long experience, to be a great impediment to the perfect reformation and growth of Religion, and very prejudiciall to the civill State.

So that then the Question will lie thus before us, Whether a Government, which long experience hath set so ill a Character upon, importing danger, not only to our Religion, but the civill State, should be any longer continued amongst us, or be utterly abolished? For my owne part, I am of the opinion of those, who conceive that the strength of reason already set downe, in the Preamble to this Bill, by yesterdayes vote, is a necessary decision of this Question: For one of the maine ends for which Church-government is set up, is to advance and further the perfect reformation and growth of Religion; which wee have already voted, this Government doth contradict; so that it is destructive to the very end for which it should be, and is most necessary and desireable; in which respect certainly we have cause enough to lay it aside, not onely as uselesse, in that it attaines not its end, but as dangerous, in that it destroyes and contradicts it.

In the second place, we have voted it prejudiciall to the civill State, as having so powerfull and ill an influence upon our Laws, the Prerogative of the King, and liberties of the Subject, that it is like a spreading leprosie, which leaves nothing untainted, and uninfected which it comes neere.

May

May we not therefore well say of this Government, as our Saviour in the fifth of *Mathew* speaks of salt (give me leave upon this occasion to make use of Scripture, as well as others have done in this debate) where it is said that salt is good; *but if the salt hath lost its savour, wherewith will you season it? It is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and troden under foot of men*: so Church-government, in the generall, is good, and that which is necessary, and which we all desire; but when any particular forme of it hath once lost its savour, by being destructive to its owne ends, for which it is set up, (as by our vote already passed we say this hath) then surely, Sir, we have no more to doe but to cast it out, and endeavour, the best we can, to provide ourselves a better.

But to this it hath beene said, that the Government now in question, may be so amended and reformed, that it needs not be pulled quite downe or abolished; because it is conceived, it hath no originall sinne, or evill in it: or if it have, it is said, regeneration will take that way.

Vnto which I answer, I doe consent that we should do with this Government, as we are done by in regeneration, in which all old things are to passe away, and all things are to become new, and this we must doe, if we desire a perfect reformation, and growth of our Religion, or good to our civill state. For the whole Fabrick of this

building is so rotten and corrupt, from the very foundation of it to the top, that if we pull it not down now, it will fall about the eares of all those that endeavour it, within a very few yeares.

The universall rottenesse, or corruption of this government, will most evidently appeare by a disquisition into these ensuing particulars.

First, Let us consider in what soile this root growes: Is it not in the Popes Paradise? doe not one and the same principles and grounds maintaine the Papacie, or universall Bishop, as doe our Diocesan or Metropolitan Bishops? All those authorities which have beene brought us out of the Fathers and antiquity, will they not as well, if not better, support the Popedome as the order of our Bishops? So likewise all these arguments for its agreeablenesse to Monarchy, and cure of Schisme, doe they not much more strongly hold for the acknowledgement of the Pope, then for our Bishops? and yet have Monarchies beene ever a whit the more absolute for the Popes universall Monarchy? or their Kingdomes lesse subject to schismes and seditions? whatsoever other kingdomes have beene, I am sure our Histories can tell us, this Kingdome hath not: and therefore we have cast him off long since, as hee is forraine, though we have not beene without one in our owne bowels. For the difference betweene a Metropolitan, or Diocesan, or universall Bishop, is not of kinds, but of degrees: and a Metropolitan or Diocesan Bishop is as ill
able

able to performe the duty of a Pastor to his Diocesse or Province, as the Vniverfall Bishop is able to doe it to the whole world: For the one cannot doe but by Deputies, and no more can the other; and therefore since we all confesse the grounds upon which the Papacy stands are rotten. how can we deny but these that maintain our Bishops are so too, since they are one and the same?

In the second place, let us consider by what hand this root of Episcopacy was planted, and how it came into the Church.

It is no difficult matter to finde this out; for is not the very spirit of this order, a spirit of pride, exalting it selfe in the Temple of God, over all that is called God? First, exalting it selfe above its fellow Presbiters, under the forme of a Bishop; then over its fellow Bishops, under the title of Archbishops, and so still mounting over those of its own profession, till it come to be Pope, and then it sticks not to tread upon the necks of Princes, Kings, and Emperours, and trample them under its feet. Also thus you may trace it from its first rise, and discern by what spirit this order came into the Church, and by what doore; even by the back-doores of pride and ambition, not by Christ Jesus. It is not a plant which Gods right hand hath planted, but is full of rottenesse and corruption; that mystery of iniquity, which hath wrought thus long, and so fit to be plucked up, and removed out of the way.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, Let us consider the very nature and quality of this tree, or root in its selfe, whether it be good or corrupt in its owne nature; we all know where it is laid, *A good tree cannot bring forth corrupt fruit, nor a corrupt tree good fruit: Doe men gather grapes of thornes, or figs of thistles?* By its fruit therefore we shall be sure to know it; and according as the fruits of the Government have beene amongst us, either in Church, or Common-wealth, so let it stand, or fall with us.

In the Church.

IAS it selfe came in by the back doore into the Church, and was brought in by the spirit of Antichrist, so it selfe hath been the back-doore and in-let of all superstition and corruption into the worship and doctrine of this Church, and the meanes of hastening us back againe to Rome. For prooffe of this, I appeale to all our knowledges in late yeares past, the memory whereof is so fresh, I need enter into no particulars.

A second fruit of this Government in the Church, hath beene the displacing of the most godly and Conscientious Ministers; the vexing, punishing, and banishing out of the Kingdome, the most religious of all sorts and conditions, that would not comply with their superstitious inventions and ceremonies; in one word, the turning the edge and power of their Govern-
ment,

ment against the very life and power of Godliness; and the favour and protection of it unto all prophane, scandalous, and superstitious persons that would uphold their party. Thousands of examples might be given of this, if it were not most notorious.

A third fruit hath been Scisme and Fractions within our selves, and Alienation from all the reformed Churches abroad.

And lastly, the prodigious monster of the late Canons, whereby they had designed the whole Nation to a perpetuall slavery and bondage to themselves, and their superstitious Inventions. These are the fruits of the Government in the Church. Now let us consider these in the Civil State: As:

1 The countenancing all illegall Projects and proceedings, by teaching in their pulpits the lawfulness of an arbitrary Power.

2 The overthrowing all proceffe at Common Law, that reflected never so little upon their Courts.

3 The kindling a warre betweene these two Nations, and blowing up the flame, as much as in them lay, by their Councils, Canons, and Subsidies they granted to that end.

4 The plots, practises, and Combinations during this Parliament, in all which they seeme to have beene interested more or lesse.

Thus have they not contented themselves with encroachments upon our spirituall priviledges,

but have envied us our Civill freedome, desiring to make us grind in their mill, as the *Philistims* did *Sampson*, and to put out both our eyes. O let us be avenged of these *Philistims* for our two eyes!

If then the tree bee to be knowne by its fruits, I hope you see by this time plainly the nature and quality of this tree.

In the last place, give mee leave for a close of all to present to your consideration the mischeifes, which the continuance of this Governement doth threaten us with, if by the wisdom of this Committee they be not prevented.

I The danger our Religion must ever be in, so long as it is in the hands of such Governours, as can stand firmly in nothing more than its ruine; and whose affinity with the Popish Hierarchie makes them more confident of the Papists, than the professors of the reformed Religion, for their safety and subsistence.

Secondly, the unhappy condition our civill State is in, whilst the Bishops have vote in the Lords house, being there as so many obstructions, in our body Politike, to all good and wholesome Lawes tending to salvation.

Thirdly, the improbability of settling any firme or durable peace, so long as the cause of the war yet continues, and the bellows that blow up this flame.

Lastly, and that which I will assure you goes nearest to my heart, is the check which we seem to give to Divine Providence, if we doe not at this

this time pull downe this Government. For hath not this Parliament been called, continued, preserved, and secured, by the immediate finger of God, as it were for this work? had we not else been swallowed up in many inevitable dangers, by the practises and designes of these men and their party? Hath not God left them to themselves, as well in these things, as in the evill administration of their Government, that he might lay them open unto us, and lead us, as it were, by the hand, from the finding them to be the causes of our evill, to discern that their rooting up must be our onely cure? Let us not then halt any longer between two opinions, but with one heart and resolution give glory to God, in complying with his providence, and with the good safety and peace of this Church and State, which is by passing this Bill we are now upon.

F I N I S:





