Seasonable Advice

TO ALL

Protestant People

OF

ENGLAND.

Heartily recommended by a Lover of his

COUNTREY.

LONDON,

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I Think there be few men ſo unobſerving as not to ſee, that many are much inclined to ſtand upon their guards, and by Arms (if it appear unlikely to be otherwiſe done) to ſecure themſelves, and Religion, in ſuch ſort, as may ſeem moſt for their own intereſt, and the advantages of Truth. Therefore it ſhall be the buſineſs of theſe Papers, to enquire into the Cauſes and Reaſons of ſuch a diſpoſition, together with all Motives and Encouragements thereunto.

1. Then, Some conjecture, this is the moſt probable way we can go to work our own intereſt in point of Safety, Trading and Religion.

To which I anſwer,

1. By way of conceſſion, That ſome indeed plead a foreign War may ſometimes be needful, and therefore beneficial to a Nation, if ſucceſsfully managed: becauſe it takes away many idle and Vagabond perſons; many Cheats, Thieves and ill Husbands, who, like Caterpillars, only live on the fat of the earth, and as drones, or *Lurdains*, feed on other mens labours. And alſo as it keeps up a people in the courage, and diſcipline of War. For hereby a Nation is not only eaſed of a burden both chargeable, and troubleſome; but is alſo made the more able to defend her ſelf againſt any foreign Invader. And by the ſame means other Countreys may be made the ſeat of that War, which elſe in little time might have been brought home to their own doors. For by this courſe, the many and great Evils, that Armies generally cauſe in debauching of perſons, in illegitimate offsprings, in waſting of goods, and cattel, are all avoided: the things that would have been conſumed by perſons thus employed, are ſaved; and the increaſe of ſuch evil inhabitants mightily ſtopped, which things ſoon compenſate the charges of an ordinary War.

But in a Civil War the caſe is wonderfully altered.

For then all debauches, and illegitimate increaſe, is amongſt our ſelves: then they be our own Shops and Houſes, our own Barns and Stables, that are plundered: then every Trophy is an argument of our own calamity; and all ſpoils evidence our own loſſes: and every ſlaughter is a miſchief to the whole body, from which ſo many members are cut off and periſhed. Which things neceſſarily make a Nation more poor and weak, and conſequently a more eaſie prey to ſome foreign Aſſailant.

But certainly *we*, above all others, have cauſe to dread ſuch a conteſt: by reaſon we are made up of ſo many parties,

parties, who are all acted by different Religions and interests; and amongſt whom, on every ſide animoſities are mightily heightned by former occurrences. That if once *we* fall to pieces, it is not well to be expected that any humane art, or any thing leſs than a Divine Power, is able to compoſe, and ſet us together. Beſides which, we have dangers from without, *viz.* formidable forces, alwayes ready, and watching opportunity of raiſing their own trophies on our ruines. From all which things we may juſtly fear, that as it hath been the fate of the ſtrongeſt Empires and Kingdoms, to fall by their own hands, when others could not deſtroy them; that the ſame deſtiny may attend our differences.

But in caſe this laſt evil, *viz.* of a foreign force, and total ruine, do not happen; Yet look to the end of ſuch a Conteſt, and perhaps we may find ſome reaſon to ſuſpect that the concomitant miſeries of a War, that is, ſlaughters, plunders, ruine of families, *&c.* may prove but the *beginnings of ſorrow*. For, in all probability ſuch reſiſters will be either the Conquerors, or the conquered. For ſince mens Spirits are *now* ſo heated, that a compoſure of differences is ſo difficult, even while peace continues; when the Sword is once drawn, it may poſſibly appear utterly impoſſible: as when the late King's Conceſſions were voted ſatisfactory by ſome, no Conceſſions would ſatisfie others. And let Victory incline either way, reſiſters muſt expect far greater evils than what they now lye under. For,

1. If they be overcome, reaſon will not ſuffer us to hope eſcaping the wrath of the Powers reſiſted. And ſo much the rather, becauſe ſuch will not be a ſingle offence, but a repetition of like things ſtill freſh in memory, and which Authority ſo eaſily paſſed over. And though circumſtances are ſo much different from what they were before,

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before, that it must needs go very hard on their sides, who may thus seek to secure themselves from what they fear: yet because men are much uncapable of receiving impressions from Arguments of this nature, by reason of their numbers (the very thing that emboldned the *Jews* to enter into a War with the *Roman* Empire, whereby they ensured and hastened the total ruine of their *Place* and *Nation*, that is, their *Religion* and *Properties* at once) I shall therefore (since suppositions grant nothing) suppose them more likely, than I judge they are, to be the Conquerors. And,

2. If so, they must look to be enslaved *either* by the Forces which made them Victorious; and then, as the *Romans* once were, be governed by a standing Army, which made Emperours, and ruled in all points according to their own pleasures; which, if ever it so happen, will, like a Band of Robbers, make spoil and plunder of all they like; and be sure will have good Commons, when they be their own carvers:

Or else fall under the will and power of some cunning head, that shall feed the Souldiery with the spoil of the people, that by them he may be empowered to act his will upon the Nation. By which means the wealth and treasure of the Land, shall be divided between tyrannical Usurpers, and the Forces that uphold them.

If you think this unlikely, reflect a little upon late disasters, and you will find, it was the misery of this Nation, that *Religion* and *Property*, all went to wrack for the satiating an hungry and ungovernable Army. Of which, a late *Non-conformist* in his *Iter Boreale* brings in the Nation thus sighing her complaints,

That I should sink with Justice may accord,
Who let my Pilot be thrown over board.

Yet

Yet 'twas not I, ye Righteous Heavens know,
The Souldiers in me needs would have it so.

And a little after he speaks of them, as setting up a single Person, after the Death of *O. Cr.* of whom thus,

A Legion then he rais'd of armed Sprights,
Elves, Goblins, Fairies, Quakers, and New Lights:
And with these ———
——— *he Church and State possest.*
Who, though they fill'd all Countreys, Towns, and Rooms,
(Yet, like the Fiend, that did frequent the Tombs)
Churches, and Church-ground, they haunted most,
No Chappel was at ease from some such Ghost.
The Priests, ordain'd to exorcise those Elves,
Were voted Devils, and cast out themselves.
Bible, *or* Alchoran, *all's one to them,*
Religion serves but for a stratagem.
The Holy Charms these Adders did not heed,
Churches themselves, did Sanctuary need.

Soon after they are dividing the University Lands among themselves, and in fine,

—When we have done these, we'll not be quiet,
Lordships, and Land-lords Rents shall be our dyet.

For which reasons men sorely repented, that they were ever thought to petition they might be put into a posture of defence: for by this means they became utterly unable to defend their own *Persons*, *Estates*, or *Religion*.

And do the people really think they may become victorious, and that the Army, by which they are made so, will not be proud and insulting? or that the Commanders will

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will not turn the Victory to their own advantage? Can they think men are become so honest now, to what they were of late, when all the talk of Reformation ended in the dividing Crown and Church-lands, and great mens estates amongst themselves? Can they expect better dealing than then, when the *liberty of the subject*, so much talk't of, miserably sunk into a perfect bondage? Of which the same *Non-conformist* thus,

Now broke in Egypt's *plagues all in a day,*
And one yet worse than theirs; we must not pray
To be deliver'd! There scab'd folk were free
To scratch where it did itch: so might not we.

Our Magistracy was, like Moses *Rod,*
Turn'd to a Serpent by the angry God.
Poor Citizens, when Trading would not do,
Made Brick without Straw, and were beaten too.
Struck with the Botch of Taxes, and Excise,
Servants, our very dust, were turn'd to Lice.
It was but turning Souldiers, and they need
Not work at all, but on their Masters feed.
Strange Caterpillars eat our pleasant things,
And Frogs croak'd in the Chambers of our Kings.

Lightning, Hail, Fire and Thunder Egypt *had,*
And England Guns, *Shot and Powder, that's as bad.*

And I am sure that War began with as fair and plausible pleas, as any can possible be in time to come: *viz.* only to *take away the wicked from before the King, that his Throne might be established; to bring the King to his Parliament:* and with solemn engagements to make him *a great* and *glorious Prince*: To *reform Religion*, and to ascertain the *liberty*

liberty of the Subject. Our concerns were in the hands of the Parliament, and the Army under the Command of persons we thought we might trust. But we see whither a few running heads, and the power of the Sword did carry things! Alas! even beside and beyond the intentions of the first actors, who were themselves enslaved, as well as them, they first exposed. And certainly we must expect that another War, alike prosperous in the success of the Sword, if any such shall ever be, will prove as unsuccessful in regard of the ends it first aimed at; so long as the like Policies and Lusts remain in the World. Nothing is more easie than for men to sit still, and frame fine Idea's and Chimera's of Government to themselves: but nothing more difficult, than to constitute a Government according to them, when the power is in the hands of other men.

Therefore all that the people are like to gain upon this supposal of becoming victorious in such a way, is only this, *viz.* the putting their *Persons, Estates, Liberties* and *Religion*, into the hands of fellow subjects, who, when they come to Government, are ever more proud, greedy and tyrannical, than those who are born in high places, and on whom the Government devolves by legal and expected descents.

But in case this Storm pass over, we yet see another Cloud arising, that will most certainly break down in Thunder, and Lightnings, and an horrible Tempest. For though now all Parties embody, and jointly endeavour to shake off Superstition, and every evil work; yet if they once shall be able to do this, they immediately fall to pieces among themselves, every one endeavouring to establish his own way. For it is not the ultimate end of any one Party meerly to ease himself of the burdens he now is under; this is but the means, and way to his last intention,

tion, which is, every one to eſtabliſh his own methods. Therefore after all the conteſt and buſtles, which we muſt certainly expect among our ſelves, upon the ſuppoſition of ſucceſs, which perhaps may prove deſtructive to the whole, if any one get into the Chair, all the reſt will combine to pluck him out: and if they gain this point, and any one of the reſt crouds in, all the other, together with him pulled out, will again combine to beat down that. By which means nothing but confuſions, and endleſs diſturbances, are like to follow, till all become a ruine to one another.

Theſe things *de facto* have been ſo: and that they will be ſo again, if ever matters come to that ſtate, is evident beyond all diſpute, from the very Opinions and Sentiments of all Parties now combining againſt the Church. For the *Presbyterian* is for a Government by a *Claſſis* or *Aſſembly of Divines*, inſtead of *Biſhops*, and to have all perſons and things kept ſtrict and tight to their methods. But the *Independent* is really for no Government at all, but would have every one a Biſhop, and Supream in his own Pariſh: and is againſt Epiſcopacy and Presbyterie, not as ſuch, but as they lay a reſtraint upon his own actings. The *Anabaptiſt* differs from both. The *Quaker* would have no Law, nor Rule, but the Spirit: And the *Fifth-Monarchy-man* will endure no Ruler, but King *Jeſus*. Therefore would every Party ſpeak his own ſentiments, they muſt own, they will by no means ſit contented in any way but their own. And that their embodying, and joint cryes for Liberty, are only to ſhake the preſent yoak from their neck, that they may be in a capacity of ſtrugling every one for his own way: And that they would not thus combine, were they ſure any one of them to change the preſent eſtabliſhment of Religion for any way but his own. Therefore ſhould the King be pleaſed to paſs a Com-

a Comprehenſive Bill, or grant a boundleſs Liberty to all Proteſtants, it would pleaſe none any farther, than as it layes open the Church, takes off a preſent reſtraint from the people, and gives every Party hopes at laſt to gain its own eſtabliſhment; whence the fore-mentioned Confuſions muſt neceſſarily follow, if men can ever get rid of the preſent eſtabliſhment.

But ſome may plead, All this miſchief may be prevented by this, *viz.* That one Party may become too ſtrong for all the reſt, and keep them from being able to make ſuch diſturbances. To which I anſwer,

1. That if ſo, no man can divine which Party that may be. For the *Presbyterian* was baited, and utterly beat out by other Parties. And I fear will be leſs able to ſtand than before, by reaſon *Independents* are encreaſed abundantly, and have gained more from the *Presbyterian* than men imagine; our Mr. *Crofton* in his Preface to his *Saints Care of Church-Communion*, argues, that a great body of *Presbyterians* are of late ſunk into *Independency*. Or if otherwiſe, we have little ground to expect he ſhould preſerve himſelf againſt the joint endeavours of all others. And if we ſhould ever fall under *Independency*, or a Liberty of Conſcience, can we think the change worth any little part of our pains we are, or may be at? Can we think of being contented in that condition, which of late years was the anguiſh of our ſouls? Can we make that our choice, which not long ſince was our burden? Some men indeed are apt to reach after any thing but what they have, and hope to gather Grapes of Thorns, and Figs of Thiſtles, till they try, and prick their fingers.

2. Suppoſe the *Presbyterian* ſhould be uppermoſt, this is no more than he had before, but could not keep it. For truly they are for Government; they talk't, and preach'd, and wrote all they could againſt Liberty; they decryed the

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the forsaking their Church, as an unwarrantable Schism: and would severely have bound up all to their own methods: for which cause the *Independent* spoke him worse than the *Pope*. For Mr. *Sterry* in a Sermon at *White-Hall*, *Nov.* 5. 1651. tells us, that our deliverance from *Popery* is not so great a mercy, as our deliverance *from the black plots, and bloody powers of the Northern Presbyterie*. For the same cause the *Anabaptist* disputed against, and the *Quaker* disturbed him in the Pulpit, and every Party declared more against them, than against the Church of *England*: and never rested, till they had worried and run them down. And if it should be in the power of the *Presbyterian* to give Laws to others; however as a means thereto, they may yield to Indulgence, Comprehension, Liberty, or any thing; they will then lay a sufficient restraint upon the tongues of all Sectaries, and stop the mouths of error and folly; else they lose the end and fruit of all their care, pains, dangers, prayers, tears, and whatsoever they have done for the service of truth and the Gospel. They cannot suffer that *woman* Jezabel, *which calls her self a Prophetess, to teach, and to seduce*——which was the great sin of the Church of *Thyatira*, and for which Christ said, he had *a few things against her*, Revel. 2. 20. And if ever they come to establish a Rule, and oblige all others to it, every *Sectary* will cry *persecution*, and never cease, till they have undermined the Church and the Truth, and thrown all again into utter confusions. Should any man flatter himself into expectation of better fruit, if it ever come to tryal, the issue will confute, and fool him to his face. What a crop then must we expect from the seed of Sedition and disturbance? What an harvest, when so many hands are sowing Tares among the Wheat? Surely whatever men do hope, this will be the end of all, that they that *sow the wind, shall reap the whirlwind*.

2. Another cause or reason of mens being disposed to a resistance of the Powers, is this, that they think it is their bounden duty, as it seems to make for the glory of God, and propagation of the Gospel of Christ.

This indeed hath been the mistake and fall of many honest and well meaning men, and my self formerly have much stumbled at it. But I took the course which the ingenious *Cartesius* advises in order to the finding out any truth, which is this, to strip our selves of all former Notions and Sentiments, or rather of all Opinions and Perswasions formerly imbibed, and so, as far as is possible, to bring our selves to doubt of every thing; and then without prejudice or prepossession, to apply our selves to the consideration of the point we would understand. In this way I came to be fully satisfied, that this point of resisting lawful Governours, let them be what they will, is a grand and most dangerous mistake, and hath no foundation, or any the least colour of encouragement from the Gospel, or any Epistles, or part of the New Testament. And as every man is bound upon his Salvation, to come to the light, and use the best means he can to come to the knowledge of the truth: so I doubt not, but if any man will lay aside his prejudices, and set himself to the impartial consideration of these following heads, he will subscribe to this as an undoubted truth, That a resistance of lawful Governours, let the reasons or inducements be what they will, is no way our duty, nor by any means lawful. For,

1. There is no Precept of resistance in all the New Testament; I never heard the man, that was so hardy, as to plead there is: and if any think there is such a Text, let him find and produce it, that we may consider it. For Mat. 10. 34. *I came not to send peace, but a sword*, speaks only an accidental consequence; an evil proceeding,

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ing, not from the nature of Religion, which breathes nothing but *on earth peace*, and *good will towards men*: but only from the wickedness of the world. And therefore shews us not what ought to be, but what will be, *viz.* differences upon the account of Religion: as in V. 15. —*a man at variance against his Father, and the daughter against her Mother.* And *Luke* 22. 36.——*he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment, and buy one.* Only gave the Disciples an hint of the dangers and evils, that were now ready to overtake them: and did not in the least authorize them to make the weapons of their warfare carnal. This appears undeniably from our Saviours reproof of *Peter*, who could best expound his own meaning, when he cut off *Malchus*'s ear: of which under the next head, which

2. Shews that we have no example of resistance in all the New Testament.

For when *Peter*, *Matth.* 26. 51. took the Sword, and cut off the ear of the High Priests servant, *Jesus* heals the wound, and saith V. 52. *Put up thy sword*——*for all they that take the sword, shall perish with the sword.* Where the Margin points us to Gen. 9. 6. *Whoso sheds man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed.* Thereby asserting, that to kill any man, that comes from a lawful authority, to apprehend even the Person of Christ, is murder. Therefore to kill any sent from Authority, though (as they think) in defence of the Gospel, is murder too. Unless they make Christ's Gospel more worthy of defence, than his person, which certainly they will not do, that talk so much of *Imputative righteousness*, of the *personal excellencies of Christ*; *and the pretiousness of Christ.* But if any do so, yet still there is no example of resisting the Powers for defence of the Gospel.

Therefore this instance is an instance only of *Peter*'s weakness

weakness and error; and gave an happy occasion to let the World understand, that no Plea from the *defence of Christ*, the *propagation of the Gospel*, or *the glory of God*, can justifie a resistance, or excuse them from murder, who kill any that are in, or come from Authority, in any manner, or to any end whatever. For if *Peter*'s case was not justifiable, I am sure none is.

Now some men reject Infant Baptism for no other reason but this, *viz.* that there is expressed in the Gospel no precept or example of any one Infant baptized. And certainly a precept or example is at least as necessary in this case, as in the other. Therefore since there is none, by parity of reason a resistance upon the same grounds ought to be rejected too. For the matter comes to this point, *viz.* either Infants must be received to Baptism, though the Gospel affords no precept nor example that way: or else such resistance must be rejected, because the Gospel gives no precept nor example, this way. Else men are humorsome, and do not square their opinions and judgements by Scripture; but bend that sacred Rule to the obliquities of their own humours: or at least use, or not use it, according as it may serve, or not serve their own perswasions, or resolves.

3. The Gospel abounds in precepts of obedience to Governours simply as Governours, and not as such, and therefore to all Governours, whether good or bad. And whatever distinctions are made use of to restrain obedience only to such, or to some Governours, are

1. Groundless and unwarrantable: for God saith, *Let every soul be subject to the higher powers*: and that there be no powers, but what are *ordained of God.* What warrant then have any to gainsay the Spirit, and plead that some are not ordained of God, and that some you ought not to be subject to? God saith, *Whosoever resists shall receive to himself*

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himself damnation: what reason then have any to affirm that some resisters shall not receive damnation? We ought not to bring restrictions, and limitations, unless truth, or the nature of the thing so require: and if it doth so in this case, where have you that truth? where is it written? produce your warrant, that we may see and be instructed by it.

2. Such distinctions, or limitations are as serviceable to the *Papist*, as the *Protestant*. For, because there is no Text, that saith we may resist, much less any that set forth for what causes or reasons men may do it, and that consequently this Doctrine is gathered only from illogical inferences, sound of words, and misapplication of Phrases, therefore there is no Text, that ever was, or may be pleaded, for such resistance by one party, and for one reason, but it may as well be so pleaded by any other party, and for any other reason. For instance, why may not a *Curse ye* Meroz — *because they help not the Lord against the mighty*, be pleaded by a *Papist*, as well as any other: Since each may, as indeed each do, speak themselves the people of God, and their cause the cause of the Lord, and those they oppose the mighty, and then full cry Curse all, that do not help them against 'em?

The very reason indeed of such distinctions and limitations, must be fetched from humor, interest, or ambition, which make every party willing to be a Rebel itself, but denyes that freedom to any other.

4. All the behaviour of Christ, and his Apostles, toward Governours, are but fair lessons of obedience for us to learn and practise. Christ taught us to give unto *Cæsar* the things that are *Cæsars*, he paid Tribute and Customes himself, he was obedient before the Consistory of the Jews, before an Heathen *Herod*, and *Pilate*, and

and that even unto death. The Apostles taught obedience not only by precept, but example too: *Paul* appealed to *Cæsar*, whereby he owned that power, though Heathen, and persecuting too: they were persecuted almost in all places, scourged, imprisoned, and killed, and yet never medled with Civil Governours, or Government: never spoke evil of Authority, nor did any thing, that tended to the working in men low and cheap thoughts of them. But contrariwise, taught us to *honour the King*: and to be subject not only for wrath, or fear, but even for *Conscience sake*.

Therefore all the arguments for resistance drawn from the Glory of God, and propagation of the Gospel, are false, and unchristian. For,

1. Practices contrary to the commands of God, and example of Christ, and his Apostles, cannot be for the glory of God. Nor can sins against the Gospel tend to the propagation of the Gospel. But they that teach such things, are like those in Rom. 2. 23. *who make their boast of the Law, but through breaking the Law, dishonour God.*

2. Such things are against the very nature of Christian Religion, which is peaceable, and quiet: therefore the Prophet *Esa.* 7. 6, 7, 8, 9. tells us that under the Gospel the *Wolf shall dwell with the Lamb, and the Leopard lye down with the Kid: the Cow and the Bear shall feed — and the Lyon eat straw like an Ox: they shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain.* By which is meant, all the bestial qualities of men, whereby they devour, and destroy one another, should be changed into meek and gentle tempers. Therefore those, that are not thus transformed from evil to good, from rough and cruel, to kind and gentle, are no true subjects of Christ Kingdom here, they are nominal, but no real Christians.

 Therefore

Therefore *Lactantius* obſerved that while all the precepts of Philoſophy had but little influence on the minds of men, wherever the Goſpel was really received by any, it made ſuch viſible alterations, as of luſtful it made them chaſt and continent; of covetous, kind, and liberal, *&c.* that they were hardly known to be the ſame perſons. This is to become indeed a new Creature: and where men are not ſo, but remain quarrelſome, ungovernable, and upon diſtaſte, and croſs Providences fly to the Pike and Muſquet, it is plain that the Goſpel of peace hath not had its work and effect upon them.

And we find our Saviour taught us rather to ſuffer wrong, than to right our ſelves by much noiſe and diſturbance: Matt. 5. 39, 40, 41. *Reſiſt not evil: but whoſoever ſhall ſmite thee on the right cheek, turn to him the other alſo. If any man ſue thee at the Law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak alſo. And whoſoever ſhall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain.* And *John* 13. 35. *By this ſhall all men know that ye are my Diſciples, if ye love one another.* Theſe were the ancient marks of Chriſtianity, and not Drums, and weapons of War: Chriſtians then gave one another a kiſs of charity, and not reproofs on the point of the Sword. It was ſaid by the Gentiles in the time of *Tertullian*, See how the Chriſtians love one another! Not, as in theſe dayes, Behold how they ſlaughter and deſtroy! Therefore though our Saviour's rules, and precepts, are ſo admirably ſuited to the prophecies of the Goſpel State, yet the Jews ſeeing ſo much of diviſion, enmity, evil ſpeaking, cenſoriouſneſs, unruliness, oppoſitions, wars, and murders, among them that are called Chriſtians, are mightily prejudiced, and hardned in their unbelief, looking for a Meſſias, who ſhall bring into the World ſuch times of peace and love, that *Swords ſhall be beaten into Plowſhares,*

ſhares, and Spears into pruning hooks. Nor will conſiderate Chriſtians believe, that the ſpirit of meekneſs, patience, faith, *&c.* delights in Alarms of War Therefore though the Devil carries on many great actions as an Angel of light, hiding ſin under the gilt of religious pretences, as revenge under colours of Juſtice, cruelty under zeal, rebellion for propagation of the Goſpel, and ruining of Families and Countries for the Glory of God: yet nothing is a greater diſhonour to God, reproach to Chriſtians, or hindrance to the Goſpel; nothing makes more Atheiſts, infidels, and looſe profeſſors, than for the ſtrickeſt pretenders, and mighty zealots, who would be thought the only Chriſtians, to act contrary to the very nature and deſign of the Goſpel, as this is one, To kill, inſtead of loving one another. To reſiſt, inſtead of ſubmitting to the powers. To contemn and act in deſpight of, inſtead of ſubmitting to, every Ordinance of man. To make Songs, Libels, and invent all manner of evil on, and againſt, inſtead of not ſpeaking evil of our Rulers. It was anciently obſerved that the glory of God was more advanced, the Goſpel more propagated, and the number of believers more increaſed by ſufferings, than Arms: whence that ancient, and common ſaying, The blood of the Martyrs is the ſeed of the Church. It was three hundred years after Chriſt before the Chriſtians uſed any Armes, unleſs in the ſervice of the Emperour, who was, throughout thoſe three Centuries, a Gentile, unleſs charity will allow a plea for *Philip.* But all that while the Sword of the Lord was not in the hand of *Gideon*, but in the mouths of his Prophets; and yet then the Church enlarged herſelf, and gained upon the Gentile World in ſuch wonderful meaſures, that ſome perſecutions were raiſed purpoſely to ſtop its farther progreſs, leſt of a ſuddain the whole World ſhould become Chriſtian. But when the *Spaniards*

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ards cut a way for the Gospel into *America* with the sword, and seeking to conquer Soul and body at once, taught them by the mouth both of their Priest, and the Cannon, though they boast of the numbers baptized, yet I fear, scarce one became Christian any farther than in name; since they presently flew off, and would endure neither the persons that acted, nor the Religion that suffered, such slaughters amongst them. The soft breathings, and whispers of the Spirit, are soon drowned by the thundrings of Drums.

Later ages have experienced the same truth, for the patient sufferings of the *Protestants* under Queen *Mary*, increased the number of *Protestants*; and God soon removed the rod, and rewarded the Faith and patience of the Church with more outward prosperity, and greater glory of the Gospel, than ever was in this Nation before, or since. But when in the time of K. *Charles* the I. men made the Pike and Musquet the weapons of their warfare, instead of the Sword of the Spirit, and the Shield of Faith; when they pleaded they had more wit than to burn in *Smithfield*, calling the Martyrs Fools, as some have done *Abraham*, because, when called of God, he left his own Country, not knowing whither he went; the *Protestant* Religion immediately suffered her decayes, and that glorious body, which drew the eyes of all Christendom upon it, hath ever since been in the wane, till now it is almost lost in the Fogs and mist of opinion and disputes. And the *Protestant* Church of *England* is become like another *Babel*, wherein there be almost as many Tongues as men, who, instead of brick and Lime to raise the work, bring axes and hammers to beat it down.

Which together with mens falling from one error to another, and dancing all the rounds of opinion, and sinking at last into levelling principles, to own no governour but

but King Jesus; that dominion is founded in grace, and that therefore the Sts. shall rule the earth, and take to themselves the spoils of the wicked: which are tenents destructive of all Government, both in Church and State: we may judge a curse upon the new methods, that men have taken, whereby to secure Religion amongst them.

The Pope was the first that ever preached this doctrine of non-allegiance of Subjects, it was therefore from *Rome* that some Protestants took these measures: and consequently this is more truly Popery, than a Cross in Baptism, and such other things that have not like the other any intrinsick evil in them, and were in the Church long before the Bishop of *Rome* claimed the title of *Universal*. We may therefore say of such, while they damn the *Papists* for plots, and evil intendments on Governours and Government, as St. *Paul* Rom. 2. 3. *Thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest those that do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God?*

Search into all Religions in the World, and perhaps you shall find no other but the Alchoran, that seeks its propagation by the Sword. For which very thing as well as others, it hath been condemned by all honest and judicious men. And doubtless without being censorious, we may say it is *self*, and *not the things of God*, that is sought in such wayes.

Now if interest cannot perswade, nor the Gospel teach, I am sure our Laws cannot allow such a resistance, which is the

3. Thing, some may think to justifie such practices by. For our Laws make all resistance a capital crime; without any limits, or exception; if it be not so, let any one produce, but any one single Act, or any clause therein, tha allows such proceedings. And whereas some plead wt

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ought to be governed in ſuch and ſuch wayes, that Kings are not abſolute by the conſtitution of our Government, theſe pleas do not reach the point. For in caſe Governours do not rule according to Law, but beſide or againſt them, Governours are accountable to God only, but not to their Subjects, who are taught only to obey, or ſuffer. And I preſume that no man is ſo daring, and wicked in his argumentation, as to undertake to make out, that in the firſt conſtitution Subjects have any power of reſiſtance upon any account whatſoever. And I doubt not but that the wiſdom and loyalty of Parliaments will evidence the ſame ſentiments themſelves

I would fain know, whether ſuch reachings, and diſputes of reſtleſs and unbridled Nature, do not drive at the ſame thing, that our Saviour charged as a very heinous ſin upon the Phariſees, *Mark* 7. 13. that they *made the commands of God of none effect by their traditions.* The word is ἀκυροῦντες, which properly ſignifies to weaken or ſpoil of its authority, or obligatory power: which is done by pleading any humane conſtitution, tradition, or cuſtom, againſt the Laws and Commands of God: by which means the matter is brought to this point, *whom ſhall we obey, God or man?* The thing is clear in the inſtance our Saviour gives. The Phariſees by their *Corban*, which was an Invention, and Doctrine of ſubtile and covetous Hypocrites, abſolved children from honouring their indigent Parents with neceſſary ſupplies of food and ſuſtenance: ſo ſuch men by ſuch pleadings of our Laws, would acquit ſubjects from the great obligation of honouring their Father (by which, even *Presbyterian* Writers, Mr. *Dod* in particular, underſtand not only natural Parents, but Kings) with the natural and indiſpenſable duties of *tribute, cuſtom, fear* and *honour*, *Rom.* 13. 7. We may yet further obſerve, that the *Jewes* had really ſuch a Tradition, which our

our Saviour there overthrows: but we have no ſuch Law, therefore theſe Pleas run upon a falſe preſumption, and have no foundation, and therefore are falſe in themſelves, and need not the authority of a Divine command to the contrary, to put them to ſhame and ſilence.

I wiſh ſuch men would conſider that by ſuch corrupt diſcourſes, they utterly deſtroy that argument, which themſelves are ready enough to uſe, in order to the perſwading Princes to beat out Popery, and to eſtabliſh the Proteſtant Religion in their Dominions, drawn from their own ſafety among Proteſtants, and dangers among Popiſh ſubjects; ſince reſiſtance is favoured, juſtified and practiſed by both. Where was the ſafety of King *Charles* the Firſt among Proteſtants? What is the difference between an Ax and Poiſon, or a Piſtol? What is the difference between the Popes abſolving ſome Subjects from their Allegeance, and your teaching, that no Allegeance or duty is owing to ſome Princes? What difference between the Popes diſpoſing of Crowns, and your ſetting up an Uſurper? Here is no room for any, unleſs a School diſtinction, which is ſometimes ſo nice, that the difference is not to be found. But you will ſay, that Princes are ſecure enough among *Proteſtants*, when they rule well: but I pray who muſt be Judge of that? Even your own ſelves: and then the meaning is, they are ſafe, while they rule according to your own minds, but not otherwiſe: and ſo much ſafety there is for them amongſt the worſt *Papiſts* in the World. Therefore reſiſters utterly deſtroy this argument, and loſe the great advantage they might otherwiſe have made of it.

It is then neither our intereſt, nor duty, nor the privilege of our Laws, to make reſiſtance againſt Authority.

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But

But there are doubtless divers motives and considerations yet remaining, from which the fondness of some men, and the subtilty of others, raise a fancied necessity of such proceedings, else they think they are all undone, Horse and Foot; Soul and body: for else say they, *Popery* will come in; for nothing is now likely to keep it out, but the Sword.

To which I answer.

1. When the Heathen Emperours commanded the Christians to deliver up their Bibles, and by confiscation of Goods, imprisonments, deaths, and all possible artifices, and cruelties, endeavoured to root the name of Christians out of the World; might not they have said, nothing but standing on our guards can save us? Yet in the time of *Tertullian*, they told the Emperour, that they had Christians in his Armies, in every Town and City, that they wanted not Arms, men nor courage, to defend themselves from persecuting hands, yet they dare do no such thing, because their Lord and Master Christ Jesus had left them no other weapons but prayers and tears. And what was the issue? God carried them through all those fiery Tryals, and increased them, as he did the Israelites of old, under the very means used for their extirpation. It is God that rules over all, and his providence extends to the meanest creatures, not a sparrow falls to the ground without his will: be sure then that his Church shall not be left to the will of his enemies, any further than serves the wise ends of his providence. The Jews when few and weak, were preserved in the midst of a world of enemies: the Christian Church upheld in the bosome of an Heathen Empire; who patiently submitted to all severities, and waited milder providences, till he pleased *to bring them forth to the light, and shew them his righteousness*, *Mic.* 7. 9. These all trusted in God, and were delivered.

Why

Why then should we be faithless, as if the *Lords arm were shortned, that he cannot help us*? This in *Rev.* 13. 10. is called the *Faith* and *Patience of the Saints*, that they suffered, and would not resist persecuting Governours. And indeed such resistance most plainly evidences the want of Faith, and Patience both: for men first doubt God will not deal well by them, and then resolve, right or wrong, to carve for themselves. And for this reason God is more glorified, and Religion more advanced in unjust sufferings, than in unjust resistance, because in such sufferings men shew their *Faith*, their *Hope*, their *Patience*, *Fortitude*, and other graces, which evidence the excellency of the Christian Religion, by which they wearied and overcame their fiercest persecutors: and moreover the wisdom, goodness, and power of God is more clearly seen in their preservation and deliverance, when men *sit still and see the Salvation of God*, than when they seek by humane policy and strength to save themselves: for this speaks both their weakness, and derives a reproach upon the Religion they profess, and also disposes themselves and others, to attribute what safety they have, not so much to God as to themselves.

2. The doing evil that good may come on it, never ends well. Where I pray, is all the fruit and gain of the last Civil War? What is the Protestant Religion the better, or *Protestants* the safer thereby? Nay what have not both suffered since then, and (as we may undoubtedly affirm) for that very cause? For are not the confusions of our Religion, and the danger of us all (both occasioned by our present differences, and these differences occasioned by that resistance, and the lawless liberty it took to it self) greater now than ever? God commonly paves men in their own Coyn. Thus upon the Babylonish captivity God told the remains of the people, *Jer.* 42. that in case they would continue in their own Land, *he would build*,

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and not pull them down, v. 10. But if they would go into *Egypt* for fear of the Sword and Famine, which they afterwards did do, then v. 16. *The Sword which you feared, shall overtake you there in the Land of* Egypt, *and the Famine whereof ye were afraid, shall follow close after you in* Egypt, *and there shall ye dye.* Divine Justice overtakes men in their own wayes, and snares them in the works of their own hands: making those very courses whereby they would keep off judgments, to prove their ruine. I am sure the Jews found it so, for *John* 11. 48. they plead the necessity of crucifying our Saviour in order to the preservation of themselves, and their Religion. *If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him, and the Romans will come and take away our place and Nation*: and for that very sin God brought the Romans upon them, who indeed took away their *Place* and *Nation* too. And if these things are written for our example upon whom the ends of the World are come, we cannot in any reason think we may run into those great sins of Rebellion and murther, which are a breach of so many Gospel precepts, and so contrary to the example of Christ, and all his Apostles, out of a design to secure our Religion, but we must expect a curse upon our proceedings. Did men but seriously consider, that the last war which was pretended purposely to keep out *Popery*, proved so mighty and suddain an inlet to it, that it had almost overtaken us, and the reasons of men cannot think of any thing, which in those circumstances was like to have kept it off, but his Majesties restoration; they must needs see the finger of God in that judgment: and own it exactly parallel with the two instances just before us, unless in this only, that it did not proceed to an utter ruine. And if men shall use the same methods, not only condemning things for *Popery* which are not so, as the Church of *England*, and Church men, who have done an hundred fold more to confute, and bar out *Popery* than all the

the parties in *England* besides can pretend to; but shall actually oppose the Powers too, which were the two instances of the madness and error of the late times, I shall expect the sin shall breed and bring forth that judgment which they fear, and which shall destroy the Actors of it. Truth needs not our lie, but abhors it: nor will Religion be supported by the hand of sin, any more than the *wrath of man can work the righteousness of God.*

2. Some are further confirmed in the perswasion that nothing but resistance can save us, from hence, that they see but little execution of Laws upon Papists.

I answer,

That it cannot be denyed but that some *Protestants* have abundantly outdone the *Papists*, even in those very things, for which the *Papists* are condemned. For did the *Papists* design the murther of the King, and alteration of the Laws and Religion established? and I pray, did not some *Protestants* actually do all this in the memory of thousands amongst us, and that in the most open and daring methods the world hath ever heard? Yet I can find but ten executed for all those Murthers and Usurpations, and (which is the complement of all) for the murther of the late King, beyond the example of all ages, and the banishment of this. Look back to *May* 1679. when the Scots most barbarously butchered Dr. *Sharp*, their Arch-Bishop; and to the Rebellion, (which it seems uses to begin with the Bishops) that broke out in the same month, and their standing a Battle with the Kings Forces; of all whom, and for all which wickedness, which is death by the Law, as well as any thing charged upon the *Papists*, I could never understand that above two suffered. Whereas about twenty of the *Papists* have suffered within two years, and three Months last past. Therefore we may with more truth and reason affirm the procedure of the Laws more slow against *Protestant*, than against

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Popish offenders. What reason then have some *Protestants* to complain of the slow paces of Laws in judgment and execution, when themselves are the greatest sharers in the mercy? And if from hence a party should increase, and their sentiments advance the faster, the advantage is more their own, than those mens whom they complain of. Nor have any among us any cause from thence to conclude the inclination of the Powers, either this way or that, but must impute it to clemency, and mercy, which hath ever been accounted an admirable qualification of persons in Authority; and ought to oblige all honest, and ingenuous men, to a more free and hearty love, and obedience.

And that the Lords in the Tower are not yet tryed, is very unjustly made a reflection on the King. For there is no man, that knows and considers things, but must, if truth and honesty may speak, own that the cause is not in him. For no Prince in the World would have left them more freely to justice, than the King hath done, especially to the Parliament that sat in *October* 1680. For that part of the Speech, which relates to them, seems somewhat pressing in this particular: when the Lord *Stafford* was tryed, and Sentenced to death, he quickly suffered; and that no more of them were tryed at or about the same time, was not in any thing that his Majesty hindred. Therefore, though I do not blame that Parliament, who best knew the reasons of their own Actings, yet I must in justice, and for the cause of truth, as well as the better satisfaction of the people, argue against every evil surmise and imputation, that in this affair is cast upon the King. Men are very ready to shoot their bolts, and make every thing they fancy a miscarriage, to be the *Kings evil*, but when men are told, and their reasons pressed upon these considerations, I cannot hear any one so unjust to his own faculties, as to maintain the charge against his Majesty. But indeed we that are subjects, should

should study to be quiet, and mind our own business, and not meddle with persons and things above us.

Though I must needs confess that some reasons we have no more of settlement yet, is rather from the crys and vogue of the people, than from the Policies of the King: For when men will not hear of the Tryal of the Lords in the *Tower*, unless they first see the Bishops routed: When they desire not to see Popery excluded, unless they may first see the Protestant Religion laid open by a Liberty, a Toleration of all Sects, persons and things: When men would not the King should have four penny-worth of Taxes, till he shall give away eight penny-worth of Prerogatives: When they would not have *Targier*, and the Trade of the Nation secured, till the King leave himself and friends indefensible: When they would not have the Papists beat down, unless they may be made capable of setting up themselves: When every man must be a Church-Papist, or a Field-Meeter, which is in plain English, a bold Rebel; It is no wonder there be rubs in the way, and a great distance between ourselves, and that security and settlement, we long since expected. And that the blame is still laid upon the King, is but the old way to *blacken* his Majesty, whereby to make men, that have more faith than reason, more honesty than wit or knowledge, to become his enemies.

It was indeed the sad fate of the late King, that he was mis-represented by some, and mis-understood by others of his Subjects, as a favourer of Popery: but now all men, that will see and acknowledge the truth, place him in the rank of true Protestants, and the best of Kings. And I doubt not, but the Ages to come will acquit his present Majesty from any such imputation, since the designs upon his Person from the Popish Party have been so many, and so desperate: since he hath so constantly declared for the *Protestant Religion, as it is established by Law*: and since he hath done so much for the security and preservation of the same;

ſame; and ſince he hath condeſcended to offer any ſafe and reaſonable expedient for the ſecurity of the ſame under a Popiſh Succeſſor, in caſe any ſuch ſhall be. But it is the unhappineſs of moſt men, that they ſee perſons the leaſt, when neareſt them; and underſtand them beſt at farther removes. Which muſt be imputed partly to this, that few know the reaſons of other mens actings, eſpecially while masked and clouded in a multiplicity of affairs and things ariſing from different parties, principles and deſigns; therefore, in ſuch circumſtances, if men judge alwayes according to outward appearance, they muſt needs ſometimes judge amiſs. For the wheels of Government ſometimes neceſſarily run in the deep, and by many oblique motions, windings, and circumferences, come at laſt to the point they firſt aimed at. Therefore when men alwayes conclude, that their Governours deſign what their faces are at any time ſet towards, they muſt unavoidably fall into error of judgement, and trouble themſelves with needleſs ſuſpicions and fears. And ſometimes the miſtake is founded on want of good information, due conſideration, ſound judgement, and an over-eaſineſs to be inclined by the unſteady meaſures of fame, which repreſents perſons and things, not according to their own natures, but according to the raſhneſs, ignorance, ill-will, ſuſpicions, and other unreaſonable humours of men. Theſe indeed are the bitter fountains, from whence our preſent, as well as late fears, jealouſies and unſettlements do ſpring.

3. Many are affrighted into a dreadful expectation of ſome ſevere viſitation by Prodigies; and therefore think it very requiſite to be upon their watch or guard, that they may be ready to receive the ſhock, or rather to ſtave the evil off.

Indeed there was one prodigious appearance in the face of Heaven in the latter end of *December*, or beginning of

of *January* laſt. Things of which nature have formerly been held to be Exhalations kindled in the air; and were believed to be even operative cauſes of evil: as ſometimes of Famines, the Earth being beggered by ſuch vaſt quantities of ſuch matter drawn from it: ſometimes of Peſtilence, the Air being poiſon'd by noxious matter ariſing from Fens, Bogs, Ditches, Sinks, and other unwholſome places: and ſometimes of War, mens minds being inflamed by I know not what influence from thence, and ſo diſpoſed to quarrels and fighting. But theſe fancies have long ſince been hiſſed off from the Stage. For now moſt men hold, they are no cauſes, but only ſigns and tokens of ſome approaching evils. But theſe conceits have no foundation in Scripture: for though our Saviour foretold ſome notable appearances, that ſhould precede the deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, yet this doth not reach our caſe: For,

1. That was a calamity, that admitted no parallel; it was a Type of the deſtruction of the world, and was to carry with it ſome ſenſible evidences of Divine diſpleaſure, not only againſt that people, but their worſhip, which was at firſt eſtabliſhed by mighty Signs and Wonders.

2. As we are not to expect any like Viſitation, ſo we have no warrant to expect any like prodigies.

3. St. *John* in the *Revelations* threatning a ruine to ſo many Churches, never mentioned any ſuch Sign that ſhould precede that ruine, nor do we elſewhere read of any ſuch thing obſerved to have preceded the ſame; nor doth any Text in the New Teſtament mention any thing of this nature, unleſs in thoſe two caſes, *viz.* of *Jeruſalem*, and the end of the world.

4. There were, doubtleſs, ſuch appearances in the ſeveral Ages of the *Jewiſh* Church, and are thought to be mentioned under the terms of *pillars of fire* and *ſmoak*, yet we no where read, that they ever looked upon them as Signs of the times, as ſome now take it. The *Romans* indeed, and

and other Nations had very ſacred regards to theſe things long before Chriſt, therefore they ſeem as much of *Gentile* Original, as the *May-poll*, or any thing elſe, that is arraigned and condemned by ſome amongſt us.

And if Scripture cannot juſtifie, I am ſure Reaſon hath no plea for any ſuch matter. For the only inducement to ſuch a perſwaſion, is the common obſervation, that they are uſually fore-runners of ſome very ſore viſitation or revolution. To which we anſwer,

1. Sometimes they are owned to be tokens of good, as the birth of Princes, *&c.*

2. Many notable changes, and heavy judgements have been in the world, when men have not been alarmed by any Prodigy.

3. Come when they will, ſomething remarkable muſt be expected to follow, becauſe there is little in the world but inſtances of the frailty of nature, and uncertainty of humane affairs.

4. They do not remain fixed, like the Sword over *Jeruſalem*; nor do they hover about one Countrey only, as the Armies in the Air about *Judea*, but paſs over great part of the world. Therefore from theſe heads it undeniably follows, that men cannot ſay whether the Prodigy portends

1. Good, or
2. Evil, or
3. Neither: that is, whether any thing, or nothing.

But ſuppoſe it bodes ſome evil, yet no man can tell, whether it be

1. To us, or
2. To the Dutch, German, French, Italian, or any other, to whom it hath been as viſible, as here.

But ſuppoſe it portends ſome evil to us, yet none can gueſs what evil, whether

1. Any thing from a *Popiſh* hand, or

2. Whether

2. Whether it may not be an evil, that ſome men are diſpoſed to run into, in order to keeping out ſome other evil they may fear.

There is no certain conjecture then from things of this nature; but they have been often abuſed to vanity, or wicked purpoſes: for while they take off mens minds from the more ſteady rules of Scripture, and reaſon, which ſhew men what they muſt expect from the works that they have done; they have uſually been made an incouragement to men of all ſides, parties, and cauſes: And have oftentimes affrighted ſome, and incouraged others to thoſe diſturbances, and other evils, they had not elſe been likely to have run into. Therefore it hath been the policy of wiſe men of old, obſerving that no good, and many times great evils befel a Society from attendance to, and conjectures from ſuch appearances, to uſe all prudent means they could to take off men from ſuch Vanities. There is as much foundation in reaſon for *Palmiſtry*, *Augury*, and ſuch other Ethnick cuſtomes, as for preſages from monſtrous births, and generations on the Earth, or in the Heavens. And as the *Egyptians*, and at laſt the *Romans*, with other Heathen people, were the great obſervers of ſuch things; ſo it was the Nations that lived without God in the world, who gave the firſt being to theſe conceits; for which reaſon we may plead, as our Saviour in another caſe, *after theſe things do the Gentiles ſeek*: which would be argument enough againſt it, were it an inſtitution, or rite of the Church of *England*. But admit they are ſome general Alarms to mankind, yet that we of this Nation ſhould draw from them certain concluſions of evil upon us, when they paſs over ſo great a part of the World, is an humour like that of the late times, which would have the prophecies of *Daniel* and the *Revelations* to be accompliſhed in *England* only.

But

But other Prodigies so much talked of, and still believed by many, there is no truth in them. For the Saddles said to rise out of the Earth, are now as confidently said to come to nothing. And all the groanings of men, and shrieks and cries of women and children, as if under some bitter torments, said by a weekly Intelligence about 17. Months since, to have been heard at *Edgehil* in *Warwickshire*, are notoriously false. What is become of the Army, and the audible reports of Guns, said to have been seen and heard at *Hatfield*, some time this winter? Where are the Armies reported to have been seen in the air in *Leicestershire*? Where is the blazing Star, said to have been visible several nights to people about *Warwickshire*, and elsewhere? I might give in a long relation of Prodigies, that have had no being, but only the fears, fancies, and mouths of the people. I find a whole heap of such stuff raked up together, in a book printed *An. Dom.* 1662, or 61. wherein we are told of a Drum beating at certain times in a well in *Oundle* in *Northamptonshire*, and of the waters turned to blood at the time the said Drum was heard, which continued by fits such a space, that people came many miles, and were frequent witnesses to those things; but when my self some time after inquired of the truth of this relation, I found the inhabitants of the place wholly strangers to any such matters. And divers other very monstrous relations, from which nothing can be learned, but the vanity, falshood, and religious frenzies of some great zealots. By which wild extravagancies they would perswade men to believe that even Heaven it self gives approbation to their cause, that the Stars fight in their courses for them, that even Nature goes out of her common paths to make way for *them*: that all the Elements, and whole Juries of the creatures, give in their verdicts for them: whence it must needs be concluded that they are

Chara

Chara Dei Soboles ——— the *people of God*, and the offspring of Heaven. Though I know no greater evidences of an overgrown hypocrisie, and pride; yet it is strange how wonderfully those devices take with the people: for whilst every party are of so different interests and Religions, yet they all receive these things with such religious regards, that they will undertake to spell out of them the fall of Princes, the revolution of Government, and the advance every one of his own party, though as inconsistent together, as the present establishment, and themselves.

Now whilst it is made a very heavy charge upon the Church of *Rome*, that they uphold their Religion by *officious lies*, and *pious frauds*; all parties amongst us do the very same thing. For by these stratagems men gather, keep and increase their parties; for poor well-meaning people seldom question the truth of such pretended Prodigies, but receive them as signs from Heaven sent to condemn what they dislike, and approve what themselves espouse, and as assurances that in little time God will appear for them. Whereas would men speak truth, all those spreading parties would soon shrivel to a little substance.

And that we may not be overtaken with the error of the times, and the strong delusions the Scripture mentions; we should be careful not to make Prodigies the touchstone, whereby to try the truth of a Religion, the lawfulness of a Government, or the goodness of a cause. Nor should we receive the reports of any Prodigies, till we see sufficient confirmation, and good reason to do so. By which means we shall exclude many of those fears, that otherwise may terrifie and discompose us. For as peoples attendance to such things is the greatest evidence of unsetled minds, and reaching after some new thing; so it is the ready course to hurry men into rash Counsels, and those precipitant actions, they may afterwards have all the rea-

son

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ſon in the world to repent. But we ſhould bottom our ſelves upon the beſt foundation, which is a good life, and a clear conſcience from all forbidden things and works of darkneſs, and then we need not be much concerned what colours may be hung out from the battlements of Heaven, but may compoſe our ſelves into a faith and confidence that whatever comes, it ſhall be well with us, and therefore not *fear though the Earth be removed, and the mountains caſt into the ſea.*

4. Many men are mightily moved to ſuch ſentiments, *viz.* of the neceſſity of a reſiſtance, by evil reports raiſed on Governours. For while we ſhould *not revile the Gods, nor curſe the Ruler of the people, Exod.* 22. 28. it is become the humor of the times to blaſt their names, and beſpatter all their Actions. Were they never ſo vile, this can be no part of our Religion, but is the work of him, who is an accuſer of the brethren: and therefore is called the Devil, from διαβάλλω to calumniate, or ſlander. But we may obſerve that all the Actions of Governours are backwards and forwards turned to evil. For while any part of the Army raiſed for *Flanders* were in Arms, they are ſaid to be kept up to ſecure our ruine: when they are all disbanded, the deſign muſt needs be to leave us naked, and expoſed to ſlaughters. This time was two year, there was no Fleet out, the reaſon of which was ſaid to be, that we might lye open to Forreign Invaſions: when the King would have ſet out a Fleet in *April* 1679. the deſign muſt then be to impoveriſh the Nation. Theſe two inſtances may mind the Reader of many others of like nature, from which it is moſt palpably plain, that a Spirit of jealouſie in ſome men, and evil intendments in others, make dangers where they cannot find them; and where there is no Bear nor Lyon in the way, will affright fools with their own ſhadows. But where men know no more than what is told them; and eaſily receive whatever is offered,

offered, it is no wonder that the *ignis fatuus* of pretended Prodigies, and the black repreſentations of Governours and Government, bring them to their wits end; and make them think there is no ſafety left, when the greateſt dangers may be of their own making. It is from hence, that (as I have often obſerved) the ſame times have two faces, the one blear-ey'd and alwayes weeping, the other more fair and comely. For go amongſt the common people of the Town, hear their ſtories, and you will think the world is at an end: for you ſhall ſee nothing but Signs in the Sun, and in the Moon, and on earth Goblins and Furies, diſtreſs of Nations, mens hearts failing them for fear, and for looking for the things that are coming on the world; but diſcourſe with men that are more wiſe and obſerving, who fetch their knowledge from the things themſelves, not from the reports and ſentiments of others, and we find a place ſtill left for hope, and a comfortable enjoyment of our ſelves: and what evil circumſtances we are in, we there ſee not only the evil it ſelf, but the true Origin, or cauſe, and therefore can the better compoſe and quiet our ſelves; than under the monſtrous ſhapes and falſe accounts that are given to men in the dark. Therefore men muſt of neceſſity either better inform themſelves, or not be over-credulous in believing others; elſe they ſhall never clear themſelves from this evil, but ſhall alwayes lye harraſſed under falſe fears, and be in danger of taking wrong methods for their own ſafety.

Before we diſmiſs this Head, it will not be impertinent to obſerve, that though men matter not what they ſay of Authority among men of their own perſwaſion, yet ſome are ſo wary, that when they would impoyſon others, and are not willing their own tongues ſhould paint the King in thoſe ugly colours they would repreſent him in, they have a cunning device of doing it by the tongues of others, *viz.* by little ſtories, as one between the King and the Cobler,

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Cobler, being this, That the heel of the King's Shooe coming off, he steps *incognito* to a Cobler to set it on, which done, the Cobler is paid so well, that he sends for Ale to make his Master drink: the King drinks the Duke of *York*'s health, which the Cobler refuses for this reason, that *he is a Papist*: then his Majesty drinks the King's health, which the Cobler refuses too, for, saith he, *the King is little better*; which in their canting, looks like a *Meiosis*, whereby more is understood, than exprest. Now because themselves dare not say too openly that the King is a Papist, therefore the Cobler is made to do it, and that not as from himself, but as speaking the common sentiments of the people: which is the most wicked way of slandering in the world, because the voice of the people makes a much deeper impression, than a single opinion. The story thus ended, it is pretty to observe, that this Cobler is made to follow the King where ever he goes. At first this was done at *Westminster*, then *Windsor*, sometimes in the way between both, and anon about *Newmarket*; and now at last at *Woodstock*. Nor are the places more, than the times in which it hath been said to be done: For I heard it first about two years since, yet now it is told afresh, as if done this *March*, when the Court was at *Oxford*. The story, it seems, is like the Cuckow, that comes once in the year, sings a while till she is hoarse, and the story stale, then lyes scab'd a while in a corner, and of a suddain comes flush't abroad, sings brisk, and gains the peoples ear, as if it were some new tale she tells.

These are the great disturbers of our peace, and the Thieves that rob us of our our best Jewels, in a quiet and a setled mind. And whilst they talk of want of Trade, themselves by such courses hinder it: it being the common way of men, first to make an evil, and then charge it upon Authority; *Kings* and *Judges* being made the *Scape-goats*, to bear the peoples sins.

As

As there would not be many Thieves, were there no Receivers: so the mouth of wickedness would not be so open, were mens ears stopt against their evil whispers. Therefore the best expedient both to compose our minds, and to check this spreading leprosie, is to follow *Solomon*'s advice, Prov. 24. 21. *My son, fear thou the Lord, and the King: and meddle not with them that are given to change.*

In fine, men of hot heads, or desperate fortunes, or such as have fed on Crown and Church-lands (the sin truly lying in those estates, not in the persons) may reach this way. But the people under a resistance, are like to prove the miserable hands, that shall only minister to the ambition and interest of others. For what gains can you expect, but hard marches, hungry bellies, field-quarters, frequent alarms, bloody battels, wounds, and death?

Hæc spolia nostra!

If you come off with life, loss of limbs, scars, pains, aches and poverty, are like to be all your trophies! For when the Parliament Army broke up, the main Body being by Arms put out of a way to live, some returned Shabs to their own Countreys, others sought for death in foreign Service, and some turning Robbers, took up their last Quarters at the Gallows. Therefore though you may hear fine stories of *Liberty* and *Reformation*, which are alwayes the Pleas of Rebellion, 'twas so in the matter of *Corah*, 'twas so lately with us, and so with *Mahomet*, who in the end only purchased a Kingdom by his Souldiers blood; yet it is good for men to consult their own safety, *and not run out of Gods blessing into the warm Sun.*

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