
A G A I N S T R E B E L L I O N.

P R O V. XVII. 26.

*Also to punish the Just is not good;
nor to strike Princes for Equity.*

TREASON and Rebellion are such horrid and loathsome Crimes, that if they should appear in their Native Visage and genuine Deformity, they could never form a Party, nor allure Men to divorce their Allegiance, and espouse a Cause whose very Look is hideous, and whose Portion is Shame and Damnation. And therefore, they always with themselves under some goodly Vizard, and insinuate into the Affections of the unwary and easily deceived Multitude, under the specious Pretences of Piety and Purity, Zeal for the Reformation of Religion, the Extirpation of Superstition and Idolatry ;

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the Security of our Liberties and Properties, the Preservation of the Kingdoms from Tyranny and Arbitrary Government: And to View, they expose no other Consequents, but glorious Days, Godliness in its Power, Christ upon his Throne, and Heaven upon Earth; and such golden Dreams, that too many of the People, in the Simplicity of their Hearts, have followed *Absalom*, and transported with the Witchcraft of Rebellion, have abominated those who are truly Loyal and Orthodox, as Enemies to the Scepter and Kingdom of Christ, secret Favourers of Popery, and open Abettors of Profaneness. When this Zeal (and I may well call it a Zeal without Knowledge) hath once turn'd their Brains, straight they receive a Commission from Heaven, *to bind their own Kings in Chains, and their Nobles in Fetters of Iron*; straight 'tis trumpeted into their Ears, that *cursed is he who goes not forth to the Help of the Lord, to the Help of the Lord against the Mighty*; that *cursed is he who withholds his Sword from Blood, and who doth this Work of the Lord negligently*. We have already seen the direful Effects of this popular Frenzy, and if we are not wilfully blind, we may well see that the same Artifices are still made Use of to the same

Ends. Wherein, as our Stupidity is gross and inexcusable, to be twice gull'd by the same Methods, twice caught by the same Bait, so is the Craft and Subtily of our factious Deceivers most conspicuous in throwing out the most taking Law that can be devised to make the rash Vulgar eagerly stoop to it. For if, once they can be but flatter'd into an Opinion, that they are the only Saints, (and indeed Man is a very silly Creature, and loves to be flatter'd into glorious Delusions) 'tis then very easy to make them believe, that 'tis their undoubted Privilege and their Birthright by Grace, to thrash Mountains, and overturn all earthly Power that may give a Check to that Spiritual Kingdom which they have modelled in their own Fancies; for such Honour have all his Saints. Perhaps some here may think me too sharp in making such a Representation: But indeed, 'tis impossible to speak of the Humours of a mad and giddy Age without seeming severe to the Infected, and he who barely shews what they have been, and what in too great a Measure they still are, is most satyrical and biting. 'Tis not my Design to offend any; but if I am accounted their Enemies for telling them the Truth, 'twas the Apostle's Lot
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before mine, and what was his Support, I hope will be mine, the Discharge of my Duty and a good Conscience. If therefore any shall think that a good and holy Cause, (as every Party is apt to think its own to be) if they shall think that Equity and Piety, Religion and Reformation, that the most precious Cause, and the most holy Designs, can justify Rebellions, or sanctify the Authors of them, I desire them, in the Name of the great God, soberly to consider that short Portion of Scripture which I have chosen for my Text, and on which my following Discourse shall be grounded. They are the Words of the wisest of Men :

Prov. 17. 26. Also to punish the Just is not good, nor to strike Princes for Equity.

'Tis true, indeed, that these Words were spoken by one who was a Prince, yea one of the greatest Princes upon Earth ; yet he spoke them by the Dictate of the King of Heaven. And therefore 'tis a most impious and profane Spirit that hath prompted some to say, that *Solomon*, in his Writings, hath pleaded his own Interest, and hath strained the Right of Kings so high, because himself

self was one. If this be not an unpardonable Sin in those who pretend to be more refined Christians than others, yet I am sure 'tis one sort of Blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, by whose immediate Direction *Solomon* wrote, and wrote for our Direction, which if they will not follow, I think the King's Loss of his Subjects Obedience is nothing near so considerable, as the Subjects Loss of their own Souls.

I very well know that some have perversly translated this Text, and instead of, *striking Princes for Equity*, have render'd it, *Princes striking for Equity*. 'Tis true indeed, that it is not good for Princes to strike their Subjects for Equity, since this were Tyranny and Persecution. But though this be a Truth, yet every Truth is not a true Interpretation, nor can it possibly be the Sense of this Place. *First*, because it is against the natural Order of the Words, *Lo tob le haccoth nedibin gnaI josher*; which, according to the plain Grammatical Construction, ought to be rendred as our Translation, the *Septuagint*, and the *Arabick*, have it, *it is not good to strike Princes for Equity*; or else we must make an unnatural and ungrammatical Transposition of the Words where there is no Occasion for it. And, *Secondly*, be-

cause they who do otherwise render the Words, must accuse *Solomon* of committing a Tautology in one of his short and concise Proverbs. And all Men know that it is against the Genius of Proverbial Speeches to have any insignificant Redundances: Yet if we must translate these Words, as some would have us, that *it is not good for Princes to strike for Equity*, is not this the very same Sense with what he had said before, that *it is not good to punish the Just*? For those Princes who *do strike for Equity*, do certainly *punish the Just*.

The Words therefore seem to have a double Aspect. The one respects Princes forbidding them to punish their righteous Subjects. *To punish the Just is not good*. The other respects the People forbidding them to rebel against their Princes for Equity's sake, *It is not good to strike Princes for Equity*.

First, *It is not good to punish the Just*. It is neither good in Conscience, nor good in Consequence. It is not good in Conscience, because it is the highest Piece of Injustice that can be committed to wrong those who wrong not any Law either of God or Man, and to exact a Penalty from those who are guilty of no Transgression. This is absolute Tyranny and Oppression.

It is not good in Consequence, because God will be the Avenger of all such ; and *he that doth Wrong, shall receive for the Wrong that he hath done, and there is no Respect of Persons*, as the Apostle speaks, Col. 3. 25. Persecution for the sake of Christ, as it is *an evident Token of Salvation* to those who meekly suffer it, so it is *an evident Token of Perdition* to those who inflict it, as we have it, Phil. 1. 28, 29. But because every Man's Ways seem right in his own Eyes, although they are never so crooked in the Eyes of God, therefore their Fondness for their own Sentiments, and their Zeal for their own Way, will make them account all that oppose them as Enemies to the Truth, and Persecutors of Righteousness ; and if any the least Restraint be laid upon their illegal and licentious Practices, tho' it be done with the greatest Moderation, and upon the highest Necessity of preventing the general Ruine, this they look upon as a punishing of the Just and Godly ; and I am afraid too many think their Party most grievously persecuted, only because they have not yet the Power which by all Jesuitical Artifices they are labouring to get of persecuting others. That therefore we may not be imposed on by the Exclamations

of those who arrogate to themselves to be *the only People of God*, let us not so much consider whether they be just and righteous, (I heartily wish that all who have so good an Opinion of themselves were really so) but whether they suffer for Justice, and Righteousness sake: If so, then happy and blessed are they; the Spirit of Glory, and of God, resteth upon them. But if any Man suffer for transgressing the Laws of the Magistrate, which he is not sure to be contrary to the Laws of God; if any Man suffer in the Defeat of a Conspiracy, or in carrying turbulent and seditious Designs against the Peace of the established Government; if any Man suffer as he is, a busy Promoter of any particular Faction of Christians, rather than a zealous Promoter of the general Profession of Christians; let us not think that Man suffers as a Christian, but for acting directly contrary to the express Rules of Christianity. But indeed, what Sufferings, what Punishments, were they that could exasperate their Minds to enter into that hellish and accursed Design for the Discovery and Disappointment, of which we this Day bless our great and gracious God? Did they suffer from the State, unless it were grievous in their Eyes that it was peaceful, prosperous and flour-

rising? Did they suffer any Thing in their own Estates, unless it were a dangerous Barrenness of Ease, Wealth and Plenty? Did they suffer in their Consciences, except it were a tormenting Regret, that they could not model the Government of the Church according to their own Fancies? Were they not permitted their own Liberty, both as to their Way of Discipline and Worship? Did the open Doors of their Meetings, and the vast Numbers within those Doors, make them look like a persecuted People? Were they a persecuted People, when 'tis sufficiently known that many joined themselves to them merely for their Interest, and their own Advantage; and in many Places, those who cleaved to the Communion of the establish'd Church suffered the Persecution of Revilings and bitter Mockings? What Sufferings then can we imagine they lay under, unless it be an insupportable Suffering to tender and generous Spirits to enjoy all this Licence merely upon Sufferance? The Laws and Statutes were against them, 'tis true; but if this be such a dreadful Persecution, surely they are Men of a very delicate Sense that can feel the Letter of a Law, when they never felt the Execution of the Penalty. In fine, let any rational Man

soberly consider the Illegality and destructive Tendency of their Ways, and then withal the great Condescensions of the Government to them, and let him impartially pronounce whether they were any otherwise *persecuted* than that they could not persecute; or any otherwise *oppress'd*, than that they were not uppermost. For this it is they struggle. And when they had not long since gotten an uncontrollable Power into their Hands, we then sadly found that the Injustice and Tyranny of those who pretended they were set up by God on Purpose to punish the Faults of others, only justified and acquitted them; so that the greatest Crimes and Miscarriages that Envy could ever object against those whom they called the ungodly and malignant Party, were Innocence and Virtue, in comparison with the enormous Villanies of those Saints who were sent to correct them.

But however, suppose all their Exclamations to be true and well grounded; suppose them, *First*, to be as just as they suppose themselves; suppose, *Secondly*, that for this their Justice and Righteousness they are most cruelly and inhumanely punish'd; the first of which I wish were as true, as the second is certainly false: Suppose, *Thirdly*, that the Magistrate is
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extremely to blame, and guilty of a great Sin before God and Man to punish such innocent and righteous Persons; yet after all this, the Question is, Whether it be lawful for such persecuted Subjects to revenge themselves upon their persecuting Rulers? Whether they may not for the sake of Piety and Religion, for the Preservation of the true Profession and Professors thereof, for the Maintenance and Administration of Justice and Equity, repel Force with Force, and *strike* at those Princes, who so injuriously *strike* at them? To this my Text answers, *No*, they may not; for though it be *not good* for Princes to punish the *Just*, neither is it *good* to *strike* Princes, no not for *Equity*. And this is that Part of my Text I intend chiefly to insist on.

And here it is necessary briefly to open the Words; wherein we have,

First, The Action condemned, which is, to *strike* Princes.

Secondly, The Cause, Motive, or Provocation to this Action, for *Equity*.

Thirdly, The Censure and Doom pass'd upon it by the wisest of Men, guided by the Spirit of the All-wise God, *It is not good*.

I shall begin with this Last, the Doom and Censure, which though it be mild in Terms, is yet very heavy and tremendous in Sense : *It is not good.* It speaks only Dislike, but means Detestation ; and by a *Meiosis* frequent in Scripture, carries the Signification much farther than the Expression, and declares that it is a Crime most impious in it self, and most odious and abominable to God. So *Prov. 16. 29. A violent Man inticeth his Neighbour, and leadeth him into a Way that is not good ;* i. e. a Way that is most baneful and pernicious. And most fully, *Ezek. 36. 31. Ye shall remember your Doings which were not good,* which he there interprets to be their Iniquities, and their Abominations.

Secondly, Let us consider the Action that is thus condemned to be *not good ;* i. e. to be extremely heinous and impious, which is, *to strike Princes.* Neither must this be understood precisely according to the literal and proper Signification of it, as if nothing else were forbidden but a rude and boisterous wounding of them. But hereby the Holy Ghost prohibits also whatsoever may be an Injury either to their Persons, or to their Authority, for both are sacred.

We must not, *First*, Strike Princes with the Tongue in their Fame and Reputation, any more than with the Hand in their Persons; nor by reviling, or diminishing Whispers, Fly-blow the Ears of their Subjects; nor by little Arts, and suspicious Intimations, and sly Conveyances of Shrugs, *Aposiopeses*, and half Sentences, seek to undermine and lessen them in the Affections of their People. We have already both seen and felt the fatal Consequences of such Methods of insinuating Politick Jealousies into the Minds of Men; first by Supposition; what if such Things should be, 'till the seditious Humour growing stronger, they come to bold Affirmations that they are; and then with an affected Sadness, bidding us prepare for sadder Times, for greater Sufferings and Calamities that are yet to ensue. And so the Vulgar are possess'd with nothing but Fears and dismal Apprehensions of what Miseries are coming upon them, and what they are like to undergo from the Power and Authority of their Rulers: Which all tends to produce that Hate which naturally follows upon Fear, and so to shake the very Roots and Foundation of Government, which are firmest settled in the Love and chearful Obedience of the Subjects. We have already
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felt, I say, the sad and bitter Consequences of this Artifice, *of striking Princes with the Tongue*, which hath been but the Prologue to a sad Tragedy, and made Way to all the Extremities of Blood, Rapine, and Violence, under which these Three unhappy Kingdoms for many Years miserably groaned : And I pray God we may not again find the fatal Effects of it; for every discerning Person may evidently see that we are treading in the very same Tracts, that before lead us to Death and Ruine. Certainly, those who will draw *their Tongues* against their Prince to lessen his Authority, would, if they had Opportunity, draw *their Swords* too to cut it quite off. Such Whisperers, who make it their Business to go about with sad News, and with instructed Sighs, instill into the People groundless Reports, and false Surmises, giving out blind and ambiguous Speeches, as if they would be thought to understand much more than they dare relate, That *Religion is in Danger*, and Antichristianism will doubtless be establish'd, making the poor amused People believe, that none are *true Christians*, nor *true Protestants*, but themselves. These are the very *Bontefeu's* of the Nation, and their Breath hath blown up the Coals in one Civil War already ; and if

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the same Arts have the same Success upon the Minds of the People, I see not how we can avoid another. Indeed, God hath at this Time wonderfully blasted their wicked Counsels, and delivered us from a Ruine, which by these cunning Wiles, they had been long preparing for us; and for so great a Rescue we bless his holy Name. And, oh! that we might ever be so wise as to avoid the Entanglement of these Snares. Beware, O Christians! upon your Fidelity to God the *King of Kings*, and *Lord of Lords*; beware that you do not by Misrepresentations, or Misinterpretations, traduce the Actions of your lawful Governours, nor lend your Ears, or assent to the calumniating Suggestions of a Company of Men, whose Words though they are smother and softer than Oil, yet are they *drawn Swords*. Beware what Air you breathe, what Converse you keep; suffer none of those Leeches to fasten on you, whose very Mouths will draw Blood. The Apostle have given them their right Character, 2 Pet. 2. 20. *Presumptuous are they, self-will'd, they are not afraid to speak evil of Dignities.*

Secondly, We must not *strike Princes in their Authority*, nor the Exercise of it over us. Which is done two Ways: Either

by refusing to be subject to their Laws, or deposing them from their Dominion.

1st. We must not refuse Subjection and Obedience to their Laws, for this is a *striking*, yea, a maiming a Prince in his Authority. This is so often press'd and inculcated on us in Scripture, that scarce have we more Precepts for any one Duty to God, than we have expresse Commands for our general Subjection and Obedience to our Magistrates and Rulers; 1 Pet. 2. 13, 14. *Submit your selves to every Ordinance of Man for the Lord's sake, whether it be to the King as Supreme, or unto Governours, as unto those who are sent by him, for the Punishment of Evil Doers, and for the Praise of them that do well: For so is the Will of God.* Rom. 13. 1. *Let every Soul be subject to the Higher Powers. And, Verse 2. Whosoever resisteth the Power, resisteth the Ordinance of God, and they that resist shall receive unto themselves Damnation.* And in many other Places, too numerous to be now cited. And here we are not to chuse our Subjection, and elect what Laws we please to obey, and reject others: For this is to make our selves our Sovereigns, and to acknowledge no Validity in the Ordinances of the Magistrate till we enact them. Believe it, it is not little Inconveniences or Prejudices, or Secular Interests

terests and Advantages, that can supersede the Obligation by which I am bound to Obedience. It is not enough to say, I do not like such a Thing, and therefore I will not do it : No, God hath not left you at such Liberty. There lies a Necessity upon you in Point of Conscience, and as Matter of eternal Salvation or Damnation, if not for the Fear of the Wrath of Men, yet for Fear of the Wrath of God, to yield ready Obedience to every Law and Ordinance of Man that doth not contradict the Law and Command of God. And those who think it no great Matter to fail in their Duty towards their Governours, if so be they carefully perform their Duty to God, do grievously delude themselves ; for our Obedience to them is a great Part of our Duty to God, and he hath as strictly enjoined it under as great Penalties and severe Threatnings, as any other Duty whatsoever that immediately concerns himself : Yea, our Obedience is so absolutely required, that 'tis not left to our Liberty to chuse the Penal before the Preceptive Part of the Law, to chuse to suffer the Punishment rather than to fulfil the Precept, unless it be in one Case, which I am sure no Faction among us can with any Reason alledge, and that is, when the Laws of the

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Magistrate do contradict the exprefs Laws of God, then indeed Subjects are bound to yield Submission only to the Penal Part, and willingly to undergo the Punishment threatned in it, but by no Means to obey the Precept ; for in such Cases 'tis a stated and unvariable Rule, that we must obey God rather than Men. This therefore is the Subjection which we owe to the Supreme Authority ; and whosoever refuseth to be *actively obedient*, when nothing is required against the Law of God ; or *passively obedient* in case it should be so, he *strikes* his Prince, *wounds* him in his Authority, and takes away a Subject from him by turning him into a Rebel.

Secondly, Much less must we strike them in their Authority, so as to attempt to depose them from their Rule and Government. The Crown doth not precariously depend upon the People, to be worn, and then laid aside again as they shall please : Nor can the Dominion, with which a Sovereign Prince is invested, be abrogated by the Consent of the People, altho' it might perhaps be first given by their Consent. Because, as there was the voluntary Concurrence of both to assume it, so there must be again the voluntary Concurrence of the Prince at least to lay it down ; or else he must needs suffer Wrong
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and Injury. Indeed, it is far less Injustice to take away any private Man's Inheritance, than to deprive a Sovereign Magistrate of that Authority, which God and Man, Law and Succession, and all the Titles we can have here on Earth, have instated in him. And the Iniquity is so much the greater, inasmuch as virtually all other Rights are lost and destroyed when his is; all others being derived from his, and depending upon it.

This therefore is the *Second Particular*, *We must not strike Princes in their Authority*, either by denying Obedience unto it, or deposing them from it.

Thirdly, If this be Iniquity, then certainly it is Sacrilege to strike them in their Persons, and to offer Violence to their Liberty or Life. They are sacred as they bear the Impress of God's Similitude stamp'd upon them, which who so violates, is sacrilegious. God hath *cloathed them with Majesty and Power*; and whatsoever they are as to Virtue and Religion, though some of them may be Devils for their Morals, yet they are Gods for their Dominion. And the great God, who is their only King and Ruler, hath bestowed upon them the Fellowship of that high Name, *Psal. 82. 6. I have said ye are Gods.* And, *Verse 1. He judgeth among the Gods.*

So *Exod. 22. 28. Thou shalt not revile the Gods, nor curse the Ruler of thy People.* This Prohibition respects not the Heathenish Gods, who were indeed but Devils; and no Reproach could be injurious to them; but *thou shalt not revile the Gods, who are the Rulers of thy People.* For it reflects an high Disparagement and Indignity upon the only true God to abuse his Image, and affront that Authority which is the nearest Type and Resemblance of his own. And therefore *David*, who was designed to the next Succession in the Kingdom, yet when he cut off but the Skirt of *Saul's* Garment, (who was his sworn and implacable Enemy, and sought his Destruction by all unworthy Means) though he did it without intending any Hurt to his Person, or Contempt to his Authority, but only that he might produce it as a Pledge and Evidence of his Innocence; yet it is said, that *his Heart smote him for it*, because he had approached too near to Majesty with any other Design than to serve and venerate it. What then shall we think of those, who durst cut off not only the Skirt, but the Sacred Head of a Sovereign Prince, and stretch forth their bloody Hands against the Lord's Anointed? Certainly, we never heard that their Hearts

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smote them for it; or that they ever testified the least Remorse for so horrid and impious a Crime: Yea, they died, glorying that they had done it; and seemed not only to have Peace, but to be full of Raptures and Ecstasick Joys in the Assurance of a glorious Reward for it. Which yet is so far from being a Justification of their horrid Wickedness, that we may rather think they had sinned, and were harden'd past Repentance. And as for our late Conspirators, they were altogether as bloody, though not so Ceremonial as the former. They had prepared their Instruments of Death; could out a select Number of Assassins, chosen the Place on which to take their Stand to the greatest Advantage both for Success and Secrecy. And, now nothing wanted, but that *the Breath of our Nostrils, the Anointed of the Lord, had fallen in their Snares, but only a few Days, and a favourable Providence.* But God, whose Care Sovereign Princes are, and among them Ours in a more especial and peculiar Manner, by a wonderful Providence (which his Majesty himself hath thankfully acknowledged in his Declaration) defeated their Designs, and after brought to Light their Hellish Villany. And though they were unsuccessful, yet were they not

less guilty, than if their execrable Attempt had taken the same Effect that Hell and their own wicked Hearts had desired. For whosoever designs to *strike* his Prince, whether he hit, or miss, to be sure murders his own Soul.

And thus I have shewn you how Princes are stricken; in their Reputation, by slanderous Tongues; in their Authority, by denying Subjection to it, or endeavouring to depose them from it; and lastly, in their Persons, by Violence, and Murder; and how damnable and destructive each of these Ways of striking Princes is: *It is not good to strike Princes.*

The *Third* and *Last* Branch of my Text yet remains, and that is, the Cause, Motive or Provocation to this abominable and damnable Action, and that is *Equity*: *It is not good to strike Princes for Equity.*

Now these Words may admit of a double Interpretation; for we may understand them either of the Princes, or the Subjects Equity. And to strike for either, is here censured as an heinous Crime.

First, To strike Princes for Equity, may be understood of resisting, and rebelling,
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against them for their own Equity, and the Execution of that Justice which is committed to them. When a Prince shall duly execute the righteous and known Laws of his Land, and suffer for so doing by his powerful and factious Subjects; when he shall punish any of them for doing Evil, and thereby exasperate them to take Revenge; when he shall zealously maintain God's Worship and Service in the stated and regular Way, and thereby incense the ignorant and wayward Multitude to rise against Government it self as Superstition, and to pull down Kings as Idols; this is to be stricken for Equity, for doing of that which is Just and Right. And it is a most provoking Crime in the Sight of God; for it is no less than Rebellion against him. For as resisting and wronging an inferior Officer, commission'd by the King, is virtually and interpretatively the same Disobedience, as if it were done against the King in Person; so likewise to resist and injure Kings and Supreme Magistrates in the Execution of their righteous Laws, is virtually the same Affront, as if we rose up against God, and struck immediately at him; for they receive their Commission from him, and are his Viceroys and Vicegerents on Earth.

Now though this Sense of the Words carries in it a great Truth, yet I do not think it the most proper Import of them in this Place; and that because this is the very same with *punishing the Just*, from which *striking of Princes for Equity*, seems to be made distinct.

Secondly, Therefore *striking of Princes for Equity*, may be understood of striking them for their Subjects Equity; that is, it is a great Iniquity to strike Princes upon any Pretences of Equity and Justice in so doing. Never yet was there any Insurrection against the lawful Magistrate, but what was prefaced with glorious Pretences; the Honour of God, the Liberty of the Subject, a due Freedom for tender Consciences, the thorough Reformation of Abuses in Church and State, the Establishing of the Ordinances of Jesus Christ in Power and Purity; which indeed are all of them as excellent Things as any Design of Man can reach, and we can never too much prosecute them, while we do it in a lawful and allowed Manner. But what! must we therefore level Kings and Kingdoms to the Ground, and cast down, by Right or Wrong, whatsoever we fancy stands in our Way to these blessed Ends? No; God forbid. For tho' our End may be Equity and Truth, and Justice,

Justice, and Holiness, yet it is Iniquity to *strike Princes for Equity*. A good Purpose can never justify a wicked Action ; and God abhors that our Sins should be made the Means of his Glory : Yet certainly there is no one Topick that doth more prevail upon weak Minds, than this. Perswade them once to believe, that they are like to be wronged in the dearest of all their Concerns, their Religion, or their Property ; that Popery will overthrow the one, and Arbitrary Government the other ; and there needs no other Ferment to make them work over into Sedition and Tumults, to shake, and, if they can, overthrow the Establish'd Government, which indeed is the surest Defence against both.

Arbitrary Government is, in Truth, a hard Word, and a much harder Thing : And I am verily perswaded, that many Men have learn'd to speak it by rote, who understand nothing at all what it signifies ; and it may mean Classcal, or Synodal, for ought they know, and I am sure with much better Correspondence than as they usually apply it. In short, Arbitrary Government is a Government managed by the sole Will and Pleasure of the Ruler, without the Direction and Prescript of Laws. But have they any Reason to fear this ? Was there ever any

Prince, that in all his publick Transactions, hath kept himself more precisely to the Rules of the establish'd and known Laws, than ours hath done? Hath he ever sought, by Force and Violence, to push on his Designs, or to redress those intolerable Affronts and Injuries that have been done him by some of his petulant Subjects, by any other Means than Recourse to the Laws? Yea, and in those just and mild Proceedings, he hath met with such hard and perverse Measures, that he had Reason to complain, (as 'tis said he once did) That none within his Dominions were denied Justice, but himself. So that this Pretence of Arbitrary Power, and Arbitrary Government, is nothing but a Bugbear, invented to fright the People first from their Wits, and then from their Allegiance. And let me add, that of all Men in the World, those who by such wicked Arts, and bloody Enterprizes, sought the Subversion of the Government, ought least of all to have objected this: For as their vile Attempts were utterly against Law; so, had they succeeded in them, no doubt their Sway, and Management of their usurped Power, would have been most arbitrary, and squared by no other Law than their own Will and Pleasure.

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And for the Coming in of Popery, I must confess, I dread it as much as they, and, I think, upon better Grounds : For I not only know the restless Industry, the crafty Artifices, the formidable Power and Interest of that Antichristian Party, who have with the greatest Application endeavoured, in one continued Series, to reduce that rotten Religion again into these Nations, ever since it was first expell'd out of them ; but that which gives me the most troublesome Apprehension is, the Helping-hand which those lend to bring it back again, who yet seem to cry out loudest, That it is coming in. Are these Men fit to keep out Popery, who do what they can by their Factions, Schisms, Seditions and Conspiracies, to make Protestantism odious ? And act so as if it were their Design to demonstrate to the World, that we must be either Papists, or Rebels ? Nay, as if it were their Design to baffle all Popish Plots, and detestable Treasons, by striving to outdo them ? What shall I say ? It is a Lamentation, and it shall be for a Lamentation, that these Men who pretend to be at the greatest Distance from Popery, and who are ready to call all others Papists but themselves ; yet do their Work for them more effectually than all the Emissaries of

Rome, or of Hell, could have done. And yet, I hope, our God hath not utterly abandoned the small Remains of his true reformed Church among us; and notwithstanding all the Advantages that these Men have given to the common Adversaries, not only to reproach, but to persuade and prevail, he will yet in his infinite Mercy find out Expedients to preserve his true Religion free, both from *Romish* Idolatry, and Fanatical Confusion. In the which Hope, I am the more encouraged by the wonderful Preservation of his Majesty from the two Hellish Conspiracies, both of Popish, and Antimonarchical Plotters; as also, by his pious Care of Settling the Succession of his Crown upon Princes of Protestant Families, and Profession: Which whosoever shall seriously consider, can never be induced to believe otherwise, than that the sincere Intention and earnest Desire of his Majesty, and of the Government, is to maintain the true Orthodox Protestant Religion, as it is at present establish'd. But if God should, for our great Sins, and among them our carnal Distrust and Jealousy, Fears of Dangers, and wicked Arts to prevent them, set open the Mouth of the Bottomless Pit, so that the Locusts and Smoak thereof should again over-
spread

spread these Lands, what have we else to do, but patiently give up our Lives as a Testimony for Jesus Christ, who gave his Life a Ransom for us. In this Case, it is better to die Martyrs than Malefactors, and far more like Christians to breath our last at a Stake, than on a Block. If Princes will be so ill advised as to punish the Just, yet must not we *strike them again for Equity*. Believe it, Sirs, whatsoever Doctrine is contrary to this, is Antichristian, contrary to the Spirit of the Gospel, and to the constant Practice of the holy Martyrs in the first and purest Ages of the Church. But as I said before, so now I say again, that the greatest Danger I yet see of the Irruption of Popery, is from the Scandal given by the Seditious and Rebellious of those who call themselves Protestants, upon a Pretence of keeping it out. But certainly, whatsoever in Truth they be, Protestants they are not: For both their Doctrine and Practices are directly contrary to this great fundamental Article of the Protestant Doctrine, That Kings are supreme to all under God, and accountable to none but him; that in all Things, Subjects ought to submit themselves to their Rule and Government; in all lawful Things, by a chearful Obedience; and in all other, by a contented Suffering.

fering. But they who would set up the Sovereign People, or the Sovereign Church and Synod; above the King, and invest them with Power to call him to an Account for his Actions, to censure, to controul, and punish him, are not Protestants; but, take it how they please, are in this Point as rank Papists as the Pope himself, or any in his Conclave. And if either Sort of Papists prevail, either they who are for one Pope, or they that are for a great many, on both Parts the Royal Sovereignty is lost, and the Imperial Crown must vail either to the Mitre, or the Black Cap.

If the bloody Designs of either Party had succeeded, what horrid Confusions had we seen before this Day? We had either been wetsring in our own Blood, or wading through the Blood of others: But blessed be God, who hath delivered us; and will, we hope and pray, still deliver us. Blessed be the Lord, who hath not given us as a Prey to their Teeth: *Our Soul is escaped as a Bird out of the Snare of the Fowler; the Snare is broken, and we are escaped.* Blessed be the Lord, who giveth Salvation unto Kings, who hath delivered David his Servant from the hurtful Sword. The Mercy we this Day commemorate, deserves the Praises due for the Mercies we hope

hope to receive during our whole Lives ; for they all depend upon this Day : And therefore let us not celebrate it with a carnal, rude, and profane Joy. But as you would approve your selves loyal Subjects, beware that you do nothing this Day that may cause God to repent he hath bestowed so great a Mercy upon you. You cannot shew your selves greater Enemies to the King than by Riot and Excess, Ranting and Quaffing ; which are the too frequent Practices of those who, when they should render Thanks unto God for his Mercies, do what they may to provoke his Judgments. But let it be our Employment, soberly and spiritually to admire, and to bless God for all those gracious Expressions of his Care and watchful Providence over our Church and Kingdoms ; and not to drink, but to pray, Health and Happiness to our King.
