AN ACCOUNT

OF

THE GROUNDS AND REASONS

ON WHICH

PROTESTANT DISSENTERS

DESIRE THEIR LIBERTY.

BY

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THE GROUNDS AND REASONS ON WHICH PROTESTANT DISSENTERS DESIRE THEIR LIBERTY.

Although it be sufficiently known, both at home and abroad, among all the reformed churches, what religion we profess, by the confession of our faith, long since made and published in our own and sundry other languages, yet on this occasion of our desire of deliverance from all penal laws in matters of religion, we esteem ourselves obliged to declare, and do declare,

1. That we are Protestants, firmly adhering unto the doctrine of the Protestant religion, as declared and established by law in the nine and thirty Articles, excepting only such of them as concern rites and ceremonies, &c. and as it is explained in the publicly authorized writings of the most learned divines of this nation, in the reigns of queen Elizabeth and king James.

2. That we are ready to make the renunciation of popish principles established by law; and not only so, but, as God shall assist us, to give our testimony with our lives in opposition unto popery, and in the defence of the Protestant religion against it, with all other good Protestant subjects of the kingdom, when we shall be called thereunto.

3. Unto this resolution of a steadfast adherence unto the Protestant religion, in opposition unto popery, we have many peculiar engagements. For,

(1.) Our principles concerning church-order, rule, and worship, wherein we differ from the church of England, are not capable of a compliance with, or reconciliation unto, those of the papacy; but are contradictory unto them, and
utterly inconsistent with them. Where there is an agree-
ment in general principles, and men differ only in their ap-
plication unto some particulars, those differences are capa-
ble of a reconciliation; but where the principles themselves
are directly contradictory, as it is between us and the
Papists in this matter, they are capable of no reconciliation.

(2.) We have no interest that may be practised on by the
arts or insinuations of the Papists, for we are neither capa-
able of any advantages by ecclesiastical domination, power,
promotions, with dignities and revenues belonging thereunto,
which are the principle allurements of the papacy; nor are
engaged in any such combination, political or ecclesias-
tical, as that the contrivance of a few should draw on the
compliance of the whole party. These things being utterly
contrary unto, and inconsistent with, our principles, the Pa-
pists have no way of attempting us, but by mere force and
violence.

(3.) Our fixed judgment being the same with that of all
the first reformers, namely, that in the idolatrous apostacy
of the papal church, with bloody persecutions, the anti-
christian state foretold in the Scripture doth consist, we are
for ever excluded from all thoughts of compliance with them,
or reconciliation unto them.

(4.) Whereas our principles concerning church-order,
rule, and worship, are directly suited unto the dissolution
and ruin of the papal church-state (whence the Papists take
their warrants for all the evil contrivances which some of
them are guilty of in this kingdom), and will, so far as they
are taken out of the Scripture, at length effect it; we can
have no other expectation from the prevalency of their in-
terest in this nation, but utter extirpation and destruction.
We are therefore fully satisfied, that our interest and duty
in self-preservation consists in a firm adherence unto the
Protestant religion as established in this nation, and the de-
fence thereof, against all the attempts of the papacy.

4. We own and acknowledge the power of the king, or
supreme magistrate in this nation, as it is declared in the
thirty-seventh Article of religion, and are ready to defend
and assist in the administration of the government in all
causes, according unto the law of the land, with all other
good Protestant subjects of the kingdom.
We do therefore humbly desire,

First, That we may have an exemption from all laws and penalties, civil or ecclesiastical, for our dissent in some things from the church of England, as at present established in the rule of it; and a liberty to worship God peaceably in our own assemblies; upon our renunciation of popery, by law prescribed, and the subscription of our ministers, or public teachers, unto the Articles of religion, as before expressed.

Secondly, That as unto oaths, offices, and payment of duties, none whereof we do refuse, that we may be left unto the same laws and rules with all other Protestant subjects, that there may be the least difference remaining between us and them, and the greatest evidence of our being united in the defence of the Protestant religion, and interest of the nation.