

A

SERMON

Preached in the

PARISH-CHURCHES

OF

STOKE and NAYLAND,

IN THE

COUNTY of SUFFOLK,

On the 18th of DECEMBER, 1745.

Being the DAY appointed by

HIS MAJESTY'S Royal Proclamation

FOR A

GENERAL FAST.

By JOHN WHITE, B. D.

VICAR of Ospringe in Kent,

AND

Sometime Fellow of St. John's College in Cambridge.

LONDON,

Printed for C. DAVIS against Gray's Inn, Holbourn;

W. CREIGHTON at Ipswich;

And M. COOPER, at the Globe in Pater-Noster-Row.

MDCCLXVI.

[Price Six Pence.]

JOEL ii. v 15, 16, 17.

Blow the Trumpet in Zion, sanctify a Fast, call a solemn Assembly.

Gather the People, sanctify the Congregation; assemble the Elders, gather the Children, and those that suck the Breasts; let the Bridegroom go forth of his Chamber, and the Bride out of her Closet.

Let the Priests, the Ministers of the Lord, weep between the Porch and the Altar, and let them say, Spare thy People, O Lord, and give not thine Heritage to reproach, that the Heathen should rule over them: Wherefore should they say among the People, Where is their God?

THESÈ Words are a Call from the Prophet for a Day of general Humiliation by Fasting and Prayer; but what was the Judgment or Calamity on the Account of which it was to be ordained, the Commentators, I find, are not agreed. You shall, however, hear some of the Terms wherein the Prophet describes it, in the foregoing, and this Chapter. — He begins thus, — *Hear this, all ye old Men, and give ear, all ye Inhabitants of the Land; hath this been in your Days, or even in the Days of your Fathers. — That which the Palmer-worm has left, hath the Locust eaten; and that which the Locust hath left, hath the Canker-*

worm eaten; and that which the Canker-worm hath left, hath the Caterpillar eaten.—A Nation is come up upon my Land, strong, and without Number, whose Teeth are the Teeth of a Lion, and he hath the Cheek-Teeth of a great Lion.—He hath laid my Vine wast, and bark'd my Fig-Tree.—The new Wine is dried up, the Oil languisheth.—The Harvest of the Field is perished.—All the Trees of the Field are withered. Gird yourselves, and lament, ye Priests; lie all Night in Sackcloth, ye Ministers of my God; for the Meat-Offering and the Drink-Offering is withholden from the House of your God.—This, and more to the like Purpose, in the first Chapter.—In the second, he goes on,—Let all the Inhabitants of the Land tremble; for the Day of the Lord cometh, for it is nigh at Hand: A Day of Darkness and of Gloominess, a Day of Clouds, and of thick Darkness.—A great People and a strong, there has not been ever the like, neither shall be any more after it, even to the Tears of many Generations. A Fire devoureth before them, and behind them a Flame burneth: The Land is as the Garden of Eden before them, and behind them a desolate Wilderness, and nothing shall escape them.—Like the Noise of Chariots on the Tops of Mountains, shall they leap, like the Noise of a Flame of Fire that devoureth the Stubble, as a strong People set in Battle Array. They shall run like mighty Men, they shall climb the Wall like Men of War, and they shall march every one on his Way, and they shall not break their Ranks.—And when they fall upon the Sword, they shall not be wounded.—I have been pretty large, you see, in my Extracts from the Context, that you may better judge what was the Calamity which the Land groan'd under, at the time Joel prophesied, and for which he calls upon the Inhabitants thereof to humble themselves under the Hand of God. In
some

some Parts, you have the Language of War, with a Prospect of those Miseries that are usually caused by it. In other Parts, you see a Description of a Famine and Desolation, caused by an Irruption of Cater-pillars and Locusts, and other noxious Reptiles, over-spreading the Land, and making a perfect Riddance of all the Fruits of it. This has divided, (as I said before) the Commentators in their Judgments concerning this Calamity, some apprehending it to be a real Invasion of the Land by a hostile Army of *Assyrians*, which, like a Swarm of Locusts, had quite over-run it; others taking it to be an Inundation (if I may so speak) of real Locusts, and other venomous destroying Insects, which had gone through the Land, and laid it waste, like an Army. The most, as well as the most judicious, are of the latter Opinion, to wit, that the Desolation which had been caused by these noxious Creatures was the Judgment described by the Prophet. And to me, I own, it appears more reasonable and natural, as well as more noble, to describe innumerable Swarms of Locusts, and other venomous devouring Insects, overspreading a whole Country, consuming every thing that grows out of the Earth, and filling every Place with Annoyance, under the Figure of hostile Troops, in such Manner as is done chiefly in the second Chapter, than to describe an Irruption of hostile Troops over-running the Land, under the Figure of Cater pillars and Locusts, in such Manner as seems to be done in the first. But, as there is no need, so I take not upon me to decide in the Point.

For, to authorize the Application of the Words of the Prophet to ourselves, it is no way necessary to suppose a near Resemblance between our present Condition, and the particular Calamity the *Jews* laboured under, though some perhaps, which
 soever

foever of the two before mentioned was their Case, may be imagined. It is enough, that we are, *now*, under the Weight and Pressure of a most grievous Judgment, as *Judah, then*, was; and if we consider the Dangers and Calamities of our foreign Wars, how they have *devoured our Strength*, and exhausted our Wealth and Treasure, the fearful Apprehensions we are, Day and Night, under of powerful Invasions from Abroad, and our rebellious Disturbances at Home, together with the Danger we are in of losing our civil Liberties, which we have hitherto preserved, to the Envy of all our Neighbours, as of being bereft of our Holy Reformed Religion, which we have, now, some Ages, rejoiced in, it can hardly be thought that our Case is less deplorable than theirs, or that there is less reason for our *sanctifying a Fast*, and *calling a solemn Assembly*, as we have done this Day, *for gathering the Elders, the Children, and those that suck the Breast, for the Bridegroom to go forth of his Chamber, and the Bride out of her Closet, and for the Priests, the Ministers of the Lord, to weep between the Porch and the Altar, and to say, Spare thy People, O Lord, and give not thine Heritage to reproach, that the Heathen should rule over them, and that they should say among the People, Where is their God?*

Thus having given you some View of the Judgment of God upon the *Jewish Nation*, I shall go on to consider the Call of the Prophet to them, contain'd in the Text, to humble themselves before him, for the averting of it. In doing which, I shall not tie myself up to the most usual Form of these Discourses, but shall only make some brief and cursory Descants upon each Clause, in the Order it comes, most of which will give me occasion to suggest to your Minds such Considerations as,
I hope,

I hope, will promote the Ends of our meeting now together.

This Prophecy of *Joel* is deliver'd, throughout, with an unusual Pomp and Magnificence of Words; nor is the Pomp and Magnificence of the Words less in the Text, than in any other Part of the Prophecy. — *Blow, (says he) the Trumpet in Zion.* — In the Old Testament-times, one Use of the Trumpet was to give Notice of an approaching Enemy; and to this Use it is applied by the Prophet in the first Verse of the Chapter. *Blow (says he there) the Trumpet in Zion, and sound an Alarm in my holy Mountain: let all the Inhabitants of the Land tremble, for the Day of the Lord cometh, for it is nigh at hand.* As if he had said, I give you notice that God's Army (for so, in the 11th Verse, the Locusts and Cater-pillars are called, if that be the Judgment here describ'd) is drawing near, that you may prepare to meet it, and to secure your selves from it. But there was also, then, another Use of the Trumpet, to wit, Convocating solemn Assemblies for any great Purposes, such as divine Worship; and for this Use, it is commanded in the Text. We have both these Uses spoken of in the 10th Chapter of *Numbers*, where the Lord, having ordered *Moses* to cause two Trumpets to be made, speaks to him thus: *When the Congregation is to be gather'd together, you shall blow, but you shall not sound an Alarm. But if ye go to War in your Land against the Enemy that oppresseth you, then ye shall blow an Alarm with the Trumpets.* So that the Soundings, it should seem, whereby Notice was given of their Decampments, or their Marches against their Enemies, were of a different sort, and easily distinguished, from those, by which Assemblies were summoned: —But enough of this.—

It follows, *Sanctify a Fast, call a solemn Assembly.* Even Nature seems to teach the Propriety of Fasting, under the Pressure or Apprehension of any grievous Judgment or Calamity ; and we, accordingly, read of *Heathens*, who had Recourse to it, on such Occasions, as, particularly, the *Ninevites*, when the Prophet *Jonah* denounced the Judgments of God upon their City. It does not appear, nor is it likely, that they proclaim'd a Fast, by Advice or Direction of the Prophet ; but, in all Probability, having heard much of the wonderful Works which God had wrought for the *Jews*, they were inclined to hearken to a Man of that Nation pretending to come from him ; and so it came to pass, that believing the Mission and Message of the Prophet, and being conscious of all the Guilt he had charg'd them with, they did, of their own Motion, *proclaim a Fast, and put on Sackcloth from the greatest to the least of them.* And indeed, as Nature directs us to feasting, and a more free Participation of the good Things of God, upon all Occasions of extraordinary Joy and Triumph, so it directs us no less to fasting, in Times of great Danger, or when we are actually suffering under the Hand of God for the Iniquities we have committed against him. It is a natural and proper Expression of that Situation of Mind we are supposed to be in, when the Sense of our Sins, and the Judgments of God, on the Account of them, lie heavy upon us. Such a Neglect of our selves is natural at all Times of Mourning, Men little caring for the Body, nor troubling themselves about making Provision for the Flesh, when they are in Sorrow, and under deep Concern on any Account. But when they sorrow for their Sins, and for those heavy Calamities which their Sins have brought down from Heaven upon their Heads, such

such an Act of Self-denial is strongly significant of our Vileness, and our Unworthiness to partake of the divine Blessings, and will be also, perhaps, subservient to the Production of a real Sense and Conviction thereof in our own Minds. But if it does not *produce*; or is not *accompanied* with a deep Consciousness and Sense of our Unworthiness and Vileness, with an unfeigned Contrition, and Humiliation of our Souls in the Sight of God; it is not fasting unto *him*; nor will be, in the least, acceptable to him:

And from hence; by the Way, we may teach ourselves what ought to be our outward Behaviour and Deportment, in all Times of Fasting; that it ought to be such as agrees; and is not inconsistent with a contrite and sorrowful Spirit. And; therefore, as all Places of social or civil Concourse should then be avoided; so, in every Place, all Behaviour, Conversation, and Discourse, which has the least Tincture of Vanity and Levity; and does not perfectly suit with a real Compunction and Affliction of Soul; should be avoided also. The very Air of the Countenance should be composed and serious; the Garb plain; and without Ornament. Our Saviour, indeed; does give it in Caution, when we fast, *not to be of a sad Countenance, or to disfigure the Face, that we may appear unto Men to fast; but rather, when we fast, to anoint the Head, and to wash the Face*; that is; appear to Men as we; ordinarily, do at other Times. But this is plainly meant only of private and voluntary Fastings, which devout Persons shall think fit to impose upon themselves, for keeping the Body in Subjection; or for the Increase and Furtherance of their Devotion; on some particular Occasions that may require it; or when they shall be disposed to give themselves unto it, not of such publick and national Fasts as

what we are solemnizing this Day: Fasting for the Ends just now mentioned is, in the Nature of the Thing, private and solitary, what the World is supposed to know nothing of, nor has any Concern to know; and therefore is not to be publish'd by a tragical Mournfulness of Look, or Sordidness of Dress, or any other Sort of Affectation, which may seem purposely contriv'd to make it known, and to gain Applause for the Strictness and Severity of our Fast. But in all solemn and national Fasts, the Case is different. There we may *appear unto Men to fast*, nay, it would be criminal to *appear to Men* not to fast. And, when, upon such Occasions, we do fast, and use some Abstinence, on the Day of our Fast to exact all our Labours, or to find our own Pleasure, to dress and visit, to indulge Aires, to laugh and be merry, and more especially, to make one's self merry (as is too commonly done) with one's own or other's fasting, and to turn *that* into a Matter of Raillery and Pleasantness, is a most ridiculous, or rather a shocking Incongruity. A Behaviour, quite *inconsistent* with the *Power*, and not *very consistent* even with the *Form* of Godliness.

Nor are we only to mourn, when we fast, but also to pray, as the Text plainly intimates. Fasting and Prayer, as you must have observed, go often together in the holy Writings: And indeed, Fasting, without Prayer and Devotion, is but a *bodily Exercise, and profits little*. For 'tis irrational to suppose, that God, who giveth Food so liberally, both to Man and Beast, should have any Pleasure in our refraining from it, unless it were for a Season, that we may give ourselves unto Prayer; and that the chastening of our Bodies should be to him an acceptable Service, any farther than as it is an Instrument of some great good to our Souls. In itself, it is of no Value; having no Power and Fit-
ness

ness to reconcile God to us, to entitle us to Heaven, or qualify us for it. It can only do *that*, when 'tis accompanied with Prayer, and that Prayer has such Effect upon us as it will naturally have, when it is fervent, sincere, and offered up to God in Faith. Private Devotion may suffice to make any private Fast acceptable to God, and available to ourselves. But, in national Fasts and Humiliations, it is most fit to perform our Devotions, and to offer up our Supplications to God, in his holy House, where the whole People, according to the Direction of the Prophet in the Words following, are to be gather'd together, *the Congregation sanctified, the Elders assembled, the Children and those that suck the Breast*; nor may the Bridegroom himself be dispensed with from *going forth of his Chamber, or the Bride out of her Closet*, to join in, and to make Part of the publick Solemnity.

First, the *Congregation* was to be *sanctified*, that is, every Man to cleanse and purify himself from all legal and ceremonial Pollution, which rendred him unqualified to approach the Sanctuary of God. The Law had made so many Sorts of Uncleanesses of this kind, that it was very difficult to avoid falling under some of them, and therefore a Matter of no small Care and Circumspection to approach, in such Manner as they ought, the divine Presence. And this was design'd to keep up a profound Reverence for the Sanctuary, and a holy Fear of the divine Majesty, in the Minds of the People.

When they were thus *sanctified*, they were to *assemble the Elders*, either Persons in Power, such as those of the Sanhedrim, or the great Men of their several Cities, or else the older Men, in Contradistinction to the Children afterwards mention'd. It certainly lies upon such to go before, and shew good Examples to those of the meaner, or young-

er Sort, on all Occasions; but on those melancholy Occasions, when a whole People are assembling, that so they may humble themselves before God Almighty, in order to obtain Pardon of their Sins, and to move him to avert those heavy Judgments which their Sins and Provocations have deserved, there may be, perhaps, some Obligations upon *them*, that are peculiar, to shew themselves exemplary in their Humiliation and Repentance. It may be, and it is not unlikely they have most contributed to fill up the Measure of the Nation's Iniquities, for which the Judgments of God are come upon it. Great Men are apt to be lawless and dissolute; and the Aged, perhaps, have been *provoking God, Day after Day, with their unlawful Deeds, and treasuring up Wrath against the Day of Wrath*, for many Years. And both the one and the other, by the Authority and Influence of their Examples, have doubtless scandalized, and emboldened many to do wickedly, as they have done. Upon these Accounts, it is peculiarly incumbent upon *them* to take the Lead in these mournful Litanies, and to appear foremost in the common Supplication and Repentance.

But *the Children and those that suck the Breast* were to be also *assembled*. And if you should ask, what had those little ones done, or what could they do to turn away the Displeasure of God from the Nation, it may properly be answered, that they were born in Sin, if they had not actually committed any; and though they could not remove the Judgments of God by their Cries, and Tears, and Repentance, they could yet render, by their Presence, this Solemnity more awful, and more affecting to others. When the King of *Nineveh* proclaimed a Fast, *he published through Nineveh, that neither Man nor Beast, Herd nor Flock tast any thing,*

thing, that they neither feed nor drink Water. And if it was not irrational to keep the Beasts of the Field, on that Occasion, from their Food, and to make them (as it were) bear a part of the public Fasting and Humiliation, for the heightning of it, and making it more awful, it could not be unreasonable to assemble, on this, or any like, Occasion, the Children and Sucklings, for the same End and Purpose. Besides, the Presence and Sight of those little ones, over and above adding to the Awfulness of the Solemnity, may have a real Use, by working upon the Minds of their sinful Parents, and exciting in them a true Contrition for their Sins. They, perchance, may be so hardy, as to despise, for their own Persons, all the Calamities that are coming upon them; or they may imagine, they shall be at rest in their Graves, and very safe, before they light upon the Land in their full Weight. But when they look upon the Children whom God has given them, for whom, 'tis like, they have more Tenderness than for their own selves, and who, by the Course of Nature, may, probably, survive *them* many Years, and live to endure all the Vengeance which the Sins of their Parents have called down from Heaven, it may surely be hoped they will be more deeply affected, and their Hearts pricked with a much quicker Sense of their Iniquities, than they might otherwise have been.

And, lastly, the *Bridegroom* was to go forth of his Chamber, and the *Bride* out of her Closet, either come forth from their separate Apartments, to which they were supposed to have retired, to prepare themselves for the better Performance of their public Devotions, or else, to quit their nuptial Joys, Festivities, and Entertainments, that they might bear their Parts in the general Supplication. On such Occasions as Marriage, 'tis universally held not only lawful, but reasonable and decent to rejoice,

rejoice, to indulge innocent and inoffensive Mirth, by great Tables, and solemn Entertainments. But what is lawful and reasonable in itself is not always expedient. And in such times of Danger, such melancholy Seasons as the present, to be always revelling in Mirth and Jollity; to be gaming, *clapping* in the Theatres, or *expiring* in the Houses of Musick, when the Enemy is at the Gates, plainly betrays such a Degree of Sottishness and Insensibility, or such a mad Love of Pleasure, as is extremely contemptible, and a *Reproach to any People*. And if they can't, for a Season at least, deny themselves in these things, out of a Sense of their own Sins, and those of the Nation, or a Dread of the divine Judgments, and of the impending and irretrievable Ruin of their Country, or other laudable Regards of the like Sort, methinks they might do it, if it were only *to save Appearances*, and out of Respect to *common Decency*.

The *Congregation* being thus *sanctified and assembled*, it was the Part of the *Priests, the Ministers of the Lord, to weep between the Porch and the Altar*. I shall not amuse *you* with any curious Enquiries concerning the *Place between the Porch and the Altar*. Doubtless, it was a Part of the Temple, where the Priests were appointed and accusom'd to make the Atonement for Sin, and to present their Prayers and Intercessions in behalf of the People, on such Occasions; and where the People might easily hear their Litanies, and join in them. It was one Part of the Work and Office of the *Levitical Priesthood*, as it is also of the *Christian*, to make Intercession for the People. For though every one may, in his own private Prayers, intercede for others, and should do it, he may not do it publickly, and with Authority. Nor, in the reason of things, can we expect that any publick
Inter-

Intercessions will ascend so acceptably to God, as those that are made to him by one authorized and commission'd by himself for that Purpose. I can't stay now to enlarge upon this Subject; yet, as it came in my Way, and is really useful to be consider'd, I was willing to take some Notice of it, in passing on to the Form of Prayer or Supplication, which the Priests, by order, were to offer up to God. — *Spare thy People, O Lord, and give not thine Heritage to Reproach, that the Heathen should rule over them: Wherefore should they say among the People, Where is their God?*

The antient *Jews* were the People and *Heritage* of God, a Nation selected by him from among the rest of Mankind, put under Laws and Governors, for keeping his true Religion *pure and undefiled*, and living together in the outward Profession and Practice of it. And as they were thus *his* People, so he was *their* God, not only investing them with divers great Privileges, such as no Nation upon Earth enjoy'd besides themselves, but giving them also a sure Promise of his peculiar Favour and Protection. And this is the Ground of that Supplication which the holy Prophet prescribes to the Priests, in their publick Ministrations, on this Occasion. As if he had order'd them to say, — “ Are not we,
 “ O Lord, a Nation which thou hast set aside for
 “ thy self, out of the midst of other Nations, to
 “ call upon thy Name, a chosen Race, a separate,
 “ a holy People, a peculiar Inheritance, which
 “ thou hast purchased and acquired to thyself by
 “ *Wonders, by War, by a mighty Hand, and by a*
 “ *stretch'd out Arm,* and which thou governest
 “ and protectest so as thou dost no other People?
 “ Spare, therefore, we beseech thee, thy People;
 “ deliver us from our Miseries and Desolations,
 “ not for our Merits, which we can't plead, but
 “ for

“ for the Glory of thy Name, and lest the Hea-
 “ then, among whom we live, seeing our Weak-
 “ nefs and Inability to defend ourselves, should be
 “ encouraged to invade us; and come to rule over
 “ us, or, however, make us a By-word, the Sub-
 “ ject of their Scorn and high Derision, as if we
 “ were forsaken by thee, or thou wert not able to
 “ protect us.”— Such Supplications and Pleadings
 with God, in behalf of his People, grounded upon
 this, *that they were his People*, and that his holy
 Name would be blasphemed among the Heathen,
 if he, in his Displeasure, should *cast them out of
 his Sight*, and suffer them to perish, are very fre-
 quent among the Saints of the Old Testament.
 We find *David*, in the lxxixth Psalm, pleading with
 God the Cause of his People from this Topick;
 and that, too, in some of the same Words with
 those of the Prophet in the Text. *Help us, O God
 of our Salvation, for the Glory of thy Name; O de-
 liver us, and be merciful to our Sins, for thy Name’s
 Sake. Wherefore do the Heathen say, Where is now
 their God?* The same Argument in almost the self
 same Words you will find urged and pleaded again,
 in the xlii^d and cxvth Psalm.

If now we consider the dangerous Situation
 which the Affairs of this Nation are brought into,
 it will be very plain, that this Supplication, in
 every part of it, may be used, not improperly, by
us. We pretend not, indeed, to be the People and
 Heritage of God, in so high a Sense as the *Jews*
 antiently were; but we may, nevertheless, justly
 boast, that this Church has been the most faithful
 Depository of God’s everlasting Truth, and that
 the holy Doctrine of our Lord *Jesus* has been pre-
 served therein, and taught, in a greater Degree of
 Purity, than, perhaps, in any other Part of Chri-
 stendom. I wish to God I could say, it had been
 exem-

exemplified and practised too; for then it would not have been as it is now, with us. It has pleased God, doubtless for our Sins; and because we have held the Truth in Unrighteousness of Life, to chastise us; as he oftentimes did his People *Israel*; and *shew us great Trouble*. Our Affairs abroad seem to be in a very prosperous and untoward State: Our Enemies threaten to invade our Borders; and to *swallow us up quick*: Traiterous Insurrections of savage, lawless, thievish and murderous Men scare and dismay us; and all together threaten our happy Constitution with sudden and irrecoverable Destruction; and, upon the whole, I don't recollect, in all our History; any *Crisis* so dangerous as the present. In this low Condition of our Affairs, we have no Hope but in the Lord our God, nor in *Him* any, but upon the Account of his great Mercies, and *the Glory of his Name*: If he does now *arise, help us, and deliver us*, it must be not for our Deservings (for we are a rebellious and dissolute People) but for his own Honour; that his holy Religion; which we yet profess; may not be given to Reproach; and become the Derision of the Heathen. I shall not need; I suppose; to make any Scruple to use that Word; or offer any Apology for using it, in speaking of our Enemies; notwithstanding they call themselves *most Christian and Catholic*. For 'tis well known; and has been made appear beyond all Contradiction; that their Religion is but a Heathenish Sort of *Christianity*; made up, in a good Part, of Superstitions; Ceremonies; and Doctrines entirely Pagan in their Original; to say nothing of their inveterate Disposition with regard to us, and more than Heathenish Cruelty and Blood-thirstiness with which they pursue our Ruin.

If God, in his unsearchable Councils, should be pleased to suffer them to prevail, and to accomplish our Ruin, it's easy to imagine, what a Reproach and Bye-word *the Religion of Protestants* would soon grow to be in this Nation, and quickly after, in all the Nations of *Europe*. Oh! with what Mockery and Scorn would they, then, say of us, and to us, *Where is now your God?* Your Religion is Heresy, therefore, behold, it is brought to nought! Ours is the true Religion, and therefore, see, it prospers! Considering the ordinary Way of thinking they are in, this may be justly expected. For do we not know, that *Temporal Prosperity*, that is to say, *military Success* (for so *Bellarmino* limits and explains it) is by *them* esteem'd one of the sure Notes, Marks, and Indications of the true Church? And he accordingly assures us, that *no Catholic Prince did ever adhere to God, but he became victorious, and easily triumph'd over his Enemies*. So, if our *Catholic Adventurer*, and his *Catholic Supporters* and *Abettors*, with their *Catholic Adherents* should *not* succeed, that would be only, belike, because they did not adhere stedfastly to God; but if they should be successful in their present Enterprise, and ever come to be able to destroy our Church and Nation, that alone would be Proof that their Church is the only true Church, and by the same Weapons whereby our Bodies are subdued, our Religion would be confuted! This would be hard indeed! But the best of it is, that if they should be able with their carnal Weapons to bring our Bodies into Subjection, they must furnish themselves in Controversy, with other-guise Weapons than these, or than any, indeed, they have yet found, before they can subdue our Minds to a free Acceptance of their Faith and Religion, and Renunciation of our own. I am sure, this Note of the true

Church

Church will fit other Churches, as well as theirs, and prove each of them the true; and particularly, our own, considering the *Felicities* of that glorious Princess Queen *Elizabeth* (under whom the Reformation was perfected and establish'd) and her continual Triumphs over her Popish Enemies. Nay, it would fit too, the Church of *Mahomet*, (if that Expression may be pardon'd) God having given him *Power to make War with the Saints, and to overcome them*, and to bring into Subjection under his Feet no inconsiderable Part of *Christendom*. I could say a great deal more to shew the Vanity and Falsity of this Mark of the true Church; but there is no need. Alas! we are at no Loss how to resist and repel their Arguments: Would to God their *Fires* and *Faggots*, their *Massacres* and their *Inquisitions*, were but as easily resisted.

We, I say, despise their *Arguments*, having already, once and twice, more than triumphed over them. But their *Power*, I say, their *Power* and *Dominion*, is the thing most to be dreaded. And if we are so unhappy as to fall under *that*, there (I venture to say) will be an End; at once, of all our Liberties, and of every thing else that is dear and valuable to *Englishmen*. Then, *the mighty shall be humbled, and the mean Man brought down to a Degree of Meanness that is really pitiable*. I mention the *mean Man* upon this Occasion, because I would have none of you imagine, you are too mean and low in the World, to be at all interested in the great Changes and Revolutions of Government, and, particularly, in the present Struggle, or that it will be *to you*, indifferent who is your King and Governour. Oh! my Friends, take heed and beware of all such Delusions, and be perfectly assured the Case is far otherwise. You are, perchance, poor, and like to be so, whoever reigns;

but you are, yet, free : The little you have is your own, and not liable to be wrested from you by the Power of any, not of the King himself. But if the threatned Change were to take Place, you must be *yet poorer*, and, withal, *Slaves*. *Slaves* you *must* be, if ever you come under a Popish Government, *Popery and Slavery* being almost naturally connected, and, in Fact, going commonly together ; especially, if you come under the Government of one, brought up in the highest Notions of lawless and arbitrary Power, and, doubtless, thoroughly instructed in all the Maxims of *French* Policy ; one who plainly appears to consider himself not as your *King and Father*, but your *absolute Proprietor and Lord*, who now claims you, and, without all Question, will afterwards treat you, as *his own*, whom he may do with whatsoever pleaseth him. — And how, too, can you be other than poorer, and more miserable, in case the Nation comes to be involved in long Civil Wars, as it certainly will be, if this rebellious Attempt should be attended with any great Degree of Success. Or suppose the Person now pretending to rule over you were in quiet Possession, what Plenty, what Happiness, or Peace, so long as your new Viceroy (for he would be no better) must be poorly subservient to all the Measures and Interests of *France* (for the most part diametrically opposite to our own) and if he be not disposed of himself, will be, doubtless, obliged to give up the most valuable Branches, or strongest Securities of our Trade and Commerce (the Source of all our Plenty) to our Enemies, to make them Satisfaction for the Expence and Trouble they have been at, as well, heretofore, in fostering and nursing up, as in helping him, now, to subdue and enslave us. I shall not need, I hope, to put you in mind of the Hazard

ward, or rather the certain Loss of your Religion, the Preservation of which you are interested in no less than the Rich and Noble, or than any Sort of Men in the Nation.—The meanest of you all, ye see, have, in the present Contest, very important Interests at Stake, important enough, as any one would think, to rouse the most phlegmatick out of their Coldness and Indifference about the Issue of it, too important to be tamely or timidly resign'd, and not contended for, if there be Occasion, even unto Blood.

Nor let us flatter ourselves, that the King now threatened to be set over us, however it may please him to bestow upon us civil Words, and whatsoever Promises for the Security of our Religion he may think fit to make us at this Distance, would have any Regard to them, were he to reign over us. All the World knows, what are the Promises of *Roman Catholic* Princes to their *Protestant* Subjects, in Reference to Religion, and how little to be depended upon. If *Honour* should happen to call upon them to keep their Faith, *Catholicism* and *Bigotry* will reclaim, and those who have the keeping of their Consciences will hardly fail to protest against it, and, from the Decisions of their Councils and Casuists, soon make them sensible, how wicked a thing it is to keep it with Hereticks. I took notice to you not long ago, but it can't be repeated too often, after what manner the two Popish Princes we have had since the Nation was Protestant kept theirs. Both began their Reigns with the most solemn Promises, that *they would take care of, defend and support the Church of England, as then establish'd by Law.* And these were given in such a manner, and with such Circumstances, as might well deceive those who were not thoroughly acquainted with the Principles and Spirit of that Church,

Church, and did actually deceive many, into a real Opinion of their good Faith: And yet both of them (he, as well as the other, who had gain'd, it seems, among many the Character of *just* and *faithful Performer of all his Promises*) no sooner fancy'd themselves securely seated upon the Throne, but they set themselves to compass the Destruction of that Church which they had thus solemnly plighted their Faith to protect and maintain; one by *Violence*, and the most *bloody Persecution*, the other rather by *Policy*, by taking upon himself to *dispense* with all our Laws that stood in his Way, and beating down the Fences that had been set up to preserve the Constitution. And why should we expect from him who now requires us to submit ourselves to him a better Performance of *his Promises*, if he should condescend (for it may justly be doubted whether he would or not, if he were once come so far as to the Steps of the Throne, and found himself, from Abroad, powerfully supported in the mounting it) if (I say) he should, then, condescend to make us any. For we are well assured he is not only thoroughly devoted to the *Catholic Religion* (as he calls it) but has been educated in a particular Aversion to the *Protestant*, which, you may be sure, has not been much softned by the Sense of what he thinks he has suffered, in having been an Exile from his Cradle, a Fugitive in the Earth almost sixty Years, chiefly on the Account, and for the Safety, of the *Protestant Religion*. If he returns, it will certainly be with such Resentment and Rage, that, in all Likelihood, we should have been in a better Condition, had there been no Revolution, and *James the Second* had lived, and reigned, and wrought his Will, and died among us, and this Man peaceably succeeded. Our Case seems to be described appositely enough in that Similitude of

our

Our Saviour in the xiith Chapter of St. *Matthew*—
When the unclean Spirit is gone out of a Man, he walketh through dry Places, seeking rest, and findeth none, then he saith, I will return into my House from whence I came out, and when he is come, he findeth it empty, swept, and garnished. Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other Spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in, and dwell there; and the last State of that Man is worse than the first, even so shall it be, unless God be merciful, to this Generation.

It would be a weak Thing, should we amuse ourselves, as I fear some do, with the Thoughts, that he has now seen how impracticable it is to introduce Popery into these Kingdoms, and that the Fate of an unfortunate Prince, whom he pretends to be sprung from, will be a Warning to him from ever attempting it. For why should we think he will be deterr'd, by the Misfortunes of that Prince, from such Attempts, more than that Prince was by the Misfortunes of others before *him*, and by those *wise* and wholesome *Instructions* he had received from others, as well as *sensible Experiences* he himself had had of the extreme Danger of all such Enterprises. Did not he know, that the *bare Suspicion* of *only favouring* Popery too much, which some had entertain'd, help'd to bring to the Block his own Royal Father, altho' truly and zealously Protestant? ^a Had not he seen a Queen, upon her embracing the *Romish* Religion, resigning her Crown, to avoid being forcibly deprived of it? Had he not been admonish'd by his Royal Brother, *not to think of introducing the Romish Religion into England, as being a Thing both dangerous and impracticable*? Nay, it is affirm'd, he had been

^a See *Wellwood's* Memoirs.

warn'd, by the Sovereign Pontiff himself, against *pushing Matters too far, which might do both himself and the Catholic Church the greatest Prejudice; by attempting that which he was well assured from long Experience could not succeed.* And just as much as *he* profited by these Advices and Examples, we may suppose this Man will profit by *his*. Indeed, it is not in the Nature of great and powerful Princes to accomplish all they desire, and are rather emboldned in their Pursuits, than discouraged, by observing the Defeats and Misfortunes of those who have gone before them; imagining in themselves; that, by the Advantage of seeing the Rock *they* split upon, they shall know how to avoid it, and steer safe. Tho' indeed he who would now rule over us, will, most probably, scorn to proceed with such Wariness and Caution in this Attempt, promising himself, that the Powers who are now, by Force; for the Sake of spreading their Religion, and some ambitious Ends of their own, *imposing* him upon us, will *support* him, and keep him here by Force, as they certainly will, so long as he answers those Ends. When all this is consider'd, there can be no doubt, but, were he our King, the old Design of restoring Popery would be resumed, and vigorously prosecuted, and not much doubt; but it would succeed. And were there no greater Hopes of keeping him *out*, than there appear to be of keeping Popery *out*, if he were *in*, alas, for this Church and Nation! we might, then, give them up as lost and undone for ever!

But Thanks be to God, and blessed be his holy Name, that our Case is not yet desperate; but as there are Fears and Dangers, so there are Hopes too, even comfortable Hopes, that we shall be able to *turn* the Invader *back by the Way by which he came*, and baffle all his Designs against us. There
are

are divers Things which may justly, (I think) raise in us this humble Confidence. It affords an encouraging Omen to see both Houses of the Legislature so dutifully, and so affectionately united to their Sovereign. And so it does, to consider the Sense of the whole People of *England* in regard to Popery. Few or none among us have now any Thoughts in the least favourable to it. On the contrary, there never was a Time, since the Reformation, when that Superstition was more universally dreaded and detested. It would be well, if I could say, this Aversion to Popery proceeded, in all of us, from a sincere Love of pure and uncorrupt Religion, and not rather, as it too plainly does in some, from a Fondness they have for an unbounded Liberty of both thinking and acting in all religious Matters, which Popery, they know, will not allow them, or from the Fears and Terrors of an Inquisition. But let their Aversion to Popery proceed from what it will, there is an Aversion to it, *wherein I rejoice, yea, and will rejoice*, as it may be a great Means of our Security.—Then again, there never appeared such a Zeal and Unanimity in all Orders of Men, and such a Concurrence and Co-operation of all Parties in Defence of their Laws, their Liberties, and Religion, as there does at present, no, not at the Revolution. And if a Prince, then in actual and peaceable Possession of the Throne, not unknown to us, who, by living among us many Years presumptive Heir of the Crown, and wearing it some, had had Opportunities to oblige and attach to himself great Numbers, and was really esteem'd, for some good Qualities he was supposed to have, by many others, could not *keep* Possession of his Throne, against the general Sense and Inclination of the People, it may surely be hoped, that

one whom we know not, will hardly be able, in spite of the whole People, to *take Possession* of it.

These things administer Reflections of a comfortable and encouraging Nature; yet, after all, it must be remembered, and born constantly in Mind, that all our Advantages, and all the natural Means of our Safety must be ineffectual and unavailing, unless God shall vouchsafe to speed and give them his Blessing, unless he guide and preside in our Councils, and go forth with our Fleets and Armies, and that this is only to be obtained by our Prayers, and Tears, and by a timely national Repentance.

Let us then, Brethren, *Sanctify ourselves, cleanse our Hands, and purify our Hearts, and break off our Sins by Righteousness.* Peradventure the Lord will be jealous for his Land, and pity his People, will remove far from us the northern Army, and will drive him into a Land barren and desolate, and his Stink shall come up, and his ill Savour shall come up, although he has done great things, and made such Waste and Desolation among us. It may be, the Lord, whose noble Works our Fathers have declared unto us, will now also save and deliver us. And though our Enemies, who *have purposed to defile his Sanctuary, and to cast down with Sword the Horn of his Altar, who have devised cruel things against his Covenant, and his hallow'd House, and against the House of the Possession of his Children,* though (I say) our Enemies are *multiplied in their Power, and glory in the Strength of their Footmen, and trust in their Shield and Spear,* yet we will not despair but that *the God of our Fathers will throw down their Strength, will smite the Servant with the Prince, and the Prince with the Servant, and make every Nation and Tribe to acknowledge, that he*

*he is the . . . all Power and Might, and that
there is no . . . that protecteth Israel, but He.*

And let all our People, together with the Priests, cry mightily unto him, and incessantly pray, that he would give us Power to prevail thus over all our Enemies, Foreign and Domestic, and then shew us the Blessing of Peace; of such a Peace as that the Crown of *Great Britain*, instead of being brought under the Feet of its Enemies, may preserve its Dignity, and the Rank it has hitherto held among the Nations, and that *the Heritage of the Lord*, this Protestant Church, so much spoken of and famed throughout the whole World, instead of being *trodden down*, and *given to reproach*, may continue to be, and become more and more, *a Praise in the Earth*.

F I N I S.

ADVERTISEMENT.

Page 16. Line 33. read Depository for Depository.

In Page 24. some Lines happened to be overlook'd in the Printing, and the Sentence beginning in the 7th Line should have run thus —

Indeed, it is not in the Nature of great and powerful Princes to be frighted, by the Miscarriages and Misfortunes of others, from pursuing any thing which they have set their Hearts much upon. They are apt to be presumptuous, and vainly to fancy they have Power enough to accomplish all they desire, and are rather emboldned &c.

BOOKS Printed for C. DAVIS.

A LETTER to a Gentlemen Dissenting from the Church of *England*, concerning the Lives of Churchmen and Dissenters. Wherein Dr. *Watts's* Book, entitled *An humble Attempt towards the Revival of Practical Religion among Christians*, so far as relates to this Subject, is largely examined; and the popular Argument (or Prejudice) arising from the *supposed* or *real* better Lives of DISSENTERS, in favour of their Churches, is fully considered. The second Edition.

A SECOND LETTER to a Gentleman dissenting from the Church of *England*; wherein the great and popular Pleas of Dissenters against Communion with the Church are refuted, and reflected back upon themselves. By JOHN WHITE, B. D. Sometime Fellow of *St. John's College, Cambridge*. The Second Edition.

A VINDICATION of the Government, Doctrine, and Worship of the Church of *England*, establish'd in the Reign of *Queen Elizabeth*, against the injurious Reflections of Mr. *Ncal*, in his late History of the Puritans. Together with a Detection of many false Quotations and Mistakes in that Performance. By the Right Rev. Father in God ISAAC, Lord Bishop of *Worcester*. Octavo.
