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A

VINDICATION

OF

Liberty of Conscience;

OF THE

TOLERATION of Protestant Dissenters;

And of the *Present Happy Establishment:*

IN

REMARKS

ON

Dr. MIDDLETON'S

SERMON

PREACHED before the

Lord-Mayor and Aldermen

OF

LONDON,

At St. PAUL'S, on *May* the 29th, 1730.

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R E M A R K S

O N

Dr. M I D D L E T O N ' S

S E R M O N, &c.

Thus saith the Lord, concerning the Prophets that make my People err, and bite with their Teeth, and cry, Peace: He that putteth not into their Mouths, they even prepare War against him. MICAH iii. 5.



F all Offences, against God or Man, the Rights of Nature, or the Laws of Nations, none can be more odious and shocking, more pestilent and big with Destruction, than Falshood from the Pulpit, and Fraud in the Mouth of a Priest. It is a most malignant Wickedness, heinous in its Nature, baneful and deadly in its Effects. It betrays a Trust of all others the most important, it corrupts the

Hearts of Mankind. It *belies* the Voice of the God of *Truth*, and brings in the Father and Fountain of *Light*, to aid the Works of *Darkness*, usher'd in with all the Pomp of sacred Truth, and asserted in the Terms of divine Inspiration and Authority. The most infamous Errors and Absurdities are impress'd upon the Minds of Men, nay, enforc'd by the Terrors of Hell and the Pains of eternal Damnation. Whole Nations may thus be deluded into Ruin, Calamities multiply'd, and Miseries diffus'd. All Iniquities sanctify'd, all Morality perverted, and the Face of Nature an astonishing Scene of Enormity and Desolation.

To check the Progress of *Pulpit Prostitution*, to expose the Impiety of *Sermonizing Libellers*, and the horrible Designs of *Wolves in Sheeps Cloathing*, is to aid the Cause of Virtue and Morality, to assert our Right to Liberty and Happiness. It vindicates *Christianity* against those who would wickedly abuse and betray it. It rescues its Orders and Offices from general Indignation and Contempt. It defeats the unjust and dishonest Attempts of those who would delude Mankind. It brings them into deserved Abhorrence, and deters the Imitation of such odious Examples.

How admirably well did that *excellent Prelate*, who shines at the Head of this Diocese, recommend to us all this laudable Work, in the *first* of his *Pastoral Letters*. His Lordship complain'd with great Reason, how the Sins of a few were charg'd as the Offences of all; how particular Men of the Function were made a Reproach to the Order; and particular Offenders occasion'd Imputations upon the whole Body of the Clergy. He caution'd us wisely against every Mistake of this Nature, and that the Priesthood in general
might

might not be accus'd or condemn'd, on Account of any vicious or immoral Clergyman. He exhorts us earnestly to bring them to Justice wherever we found them, well knowing that those who protect and connive at the Criminals partake of their Guilt, and are Patrons of all their Iniquity.

LET us then in *Imitation*, and at the Advice of this Prelate, *zealous for good Works*; let us bring before the Judgment of Mankind a Clergyman guilty of scandalous Enormities, who has even ly'd to Heaven and Mankind, prostituted his Character to the Arts of Sedition and Faction, employ'd his Ministerial Offices to the Ends of Party and Division; nor prophan'd the Use of the Pulpit only, nor poison'd his Congregation alone, but has even appear'd from the Press with *uplifted Eyes and Hands*, declaring himself *conscious and assur'd*, that he has not *advanc'd any Notions which he ought to retract or disavow*; and that there is nothing contain'd in his Sermon, but what strictly conforms to the *Doctrines of the Church, and to the Laws of the Land*.

HE has the *Modesty* in his Dedication to inform those worthy and honourable Persons whom he is pleas'd to make his Patrons, that they, the *Lord-Mayor and Sheriffs* of this City, must be answerable for his Imperfections. If they do answer for him, I am persuaded they must give him up to publick Censure at least. I shall be sorry for the City of *London*, that his Errors and Absurdities be laid to its Charge; or that the supreme Officers of this great Metropolis should protect the most glaring Falshoods.

I SHALL not follow the Attempts of many, who have trac'd a *Parallel* thro' the *Doctōr's* Narrative of the *Restoration*; nor do I regard the *suspicious*
 I Passa-

Passages of a *standing Force in this Island to awe the Loyalists into Acquiescence; banish'd Sovereign, Right of Inheritance, &c.* If he meant them in the *worst Sense*, I despise them so much, I should only have *laugh'd* at them, had they been conceiv'd in the *plainest Expressions*.

BUT I am greatly concern'd, when he strikes at the very Being of a free and happy Nation, by invading the *Legal Toleration of Dissenters* from the *Church of England*, by accusing those great Bodies of Men with Crimes committed *before they were born*, and *visiting the Sins of the Fathers on the third and fourth Generations*; by representing them as Men who *do not deserve* the Liberty they enjoy, by stiling them *false Brethren*, and giving them Usage which neither becomes him as a *Gentleman* or *Man of Letters*, a *Christian* or a *Divine*.

WHATEVER Authority *Dr. Middleton* may think he has to arraign the Toleration of Dissenters, he himself has no more Right to his *Pulpit* than they to their *Separation*; and it deserves the severest Censure, that any Clergyman whatever should dare to asperse and abuse so many of his Majesty's good and faithful Subjects, under a Prince who resolves to be the common Father of all his People.

IF the Gentlemen of *his Cloth* had ever exerted themselves half so much, as their *Dissenting Brethren* have at all Times done for the Royal Family, and for civil Liberty, he might give himself this Air of Superiority with much more Decency and Candour. But this must be said in Behalf of the Dissenters of all Denominations. the *Quaker* and the *Jew*, against whom he is so spiteful, not excepted, that *if it had not been for their Fidelity, his mst sacred Majesty would never have sat on this Throne*.

Do we hear the Dissenters, or any of them, rise up against the *Church of England*, because the De-
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section may be charg'd on that Side? And yet it would be much more reasonable, that they should be treated with Severities, who endanger'd all our Liberties, than those Men who so worthily preserv'd both Church and State from Destruction.

Do the Dissenters claim any new Prerogatives, any Powers or Privileges, Honours or Emoluments? No: After all their Struggles for Liberty, and the happy Success of their honest Endeavours, they have desired nothing more than the common Protection of that Government *which owes its Being to their Integrity.*

I MAY let Dr. *Middleton* know, that if it had not been for these *false Brethren*, these *precious Saints*, as he very candidly stiles them, he himself would not have been *Preacher* at *St. Brides*, nor have had any *Benefice* at all *without conforming to Popery*. And if he hath *Conscience* enough to be a *Dissenter* in that Case, ought he not to have *Charity* enough to allow *Toleration* in this? *But his Faith may be shewn by his Works: Do Men gather Grapes of Thorns, or Figs of Thistles?*

By what Rule in Reason has the *Doctor* a Right to charge the present *Protestant Dissenters*, with the Actions of the *Puritans* under *Oliver Cromwel*? Would he take it well, that they should charge him and his Brethren with the Conduct of the Clergy under *Charles the First*? Did the *Presbyterians* ever persecute the Church of *England*? Who then set them the Example? Will the *Doctor* say, there were no Severities, no penal Laws or Hardships, upon Liberty of Conscience before the Year 1641? Therefore, if the *Church of England* will not be accountable for what their Ancestors were guilty of, the *Dissenters* are equally innocent in the Eyes of God and Men.

I WOULD know by what Authority he arraigns the *Legislative Power*? The three Estates of *Great Britain*, in Parliament assembled, have judg'd that the Dissenters *deserve* Toleration and Liberty of Conscience; that this Lenity is the great Security even of the *Church of England*; that it strengthens the *Protestant Interest*, and unites his Majesty's Subjects. Yet this *charitable Divine* in a most *Christian-like* Manner asks, *Do they deserve Liberty of Conscience?* Liberty of thinking and judging for themselves in what concerns only themselves? Liberty of worshipping God in their own Way? And then very modestly answers, *No, surely.* For God's Sake, who made him a Judge over Parliament and against Law? But he adds a *hypocritical Salvo*, *Nevertheless, let them in God's Name enjoy it.* *The Church of England* (*truly moderate, and never acting out of Resentment, but always by the Golden Rule of Equity*) *freely grants it to them, though she could never obtain it from them.*

THE Meaning of this Doctrine truly interpreted is this; *Do the Dissenters deserve Toleration?* *No, surely:* Nevertheless *let them in God's Name enjoy it, till it can be taken from them.* *Truly moderate, we, never acting out of Resentment, but always by the Golden Rule of Equity, freely grant them what we never would consent to, and will be sure to deny them whenever we have Opportunity; because, truly, we oppress'd them for half a Century, and they, when they got uppermost, kept us down in turn by our own worthy Examples.*

How *gracious* and *good natur'd* is this Allowance of the Doctor's, to his poor Dissenting Brethren? He freely grants them *what, he says, they certainly do not deserve.* Hence a *Salvo* to himself, and an admirable Caution to his Audience, who must be sure to understand him in the true Sense, and that they should

should deprive the Dissenters of *what they do not deserve*.

IF the *Dissenters* sought after *Riches* or *Revenues*, *Powers* or *Preferments*, this *Man of the World* might be angry. An *Encroachment* on his *Trade* might give him *Offence*, and to invade his *Function*, in such tender *Points*; might create in his *Mind* some *Uneasiness*. But while they desire so small an *Indulgence*, as to wear a *Black Cloak* instead of a *Gown*, to *pray without Book*, to *preach without Notes*, or to *stand* and *sit* instead of *kneeling*, methinks these are so easily granted; and so difficult to forget, that whilst he has the *Law* on his *Side*, and his *Dues* admit of no *Defalcations*, he may sleep in *Peace* and be never the *Worse* for his *Slumbers*.

AFTER he has so freely granted them *Liberty* of *Conscience*, which he pronounces *ex Cathedra*, that they certainly do not deserve, mark his *Sincerity* by the *Passage* that follows: ‘ Is it fit the
 ‘ *Dissenters* should be *indulged*, complimented and ca-
 ‘ ressed? Is it fit that for their Sakes the very *Name*
 ‘ of the *Church of England* should be sparingly men-
 ‘ tion’d, whilst the *Protestant Cause* is substituted
 ‘ in its *Room*; which indefinite *Phrase* means no-
 ‘ thing precisely but the *Negative* of *Popery*, and
 ‘ comprehends all other *Religions*, even those of
 ‘ the *Quaker* and the *Jew*.

‘ THIS I know is call’d *Moderation* towards
 ‘ *Dissenters*. It may perchance be *Moderation*, or
 ‘ rather *Fondness* towards those *false Brethren*; but
 ‘ in regard to our *Holy Mother* (*the Church*) it is
 ‘ *shameful Licentiousness* and *Treachery*.

THUS *Moderation to the Dissenters* is *shameful Licentiousness* and *Treachery*. Thus the *Protestant Cause*, it seems, is a most *licentious* and *treacherous* *Phrase*; nay, his *Majesty* himself and his *Royal Father*, who so often and earnestly have recom-

mended that Interest to all good *Christians* and *Englishmen*, have thereby, according to this Reverend Zealot; been guilty of shameful *Licentiousness* and *Treachery*.

BUT to quit the *enflaming* Consequences, let us consider the Merits of those *stupid* and highly *ridiculous* Paragraphs. How is the *Church of England* betray'd by extending the *Protestant Cause*, even to the *Quaker* and *Jew*? If to support those who worship the *only true God*, as the *Jews* most undoubtedly do; if this is betraying the *Church of England*, we plead guilty to the Charge of *Licentiousness* and *Treachery*. But methinks a *Christian Clergy* should be very tender of the *Jew*, as a Sect from whom they borrowed their very Religion, and to whom they refer for the principal Evidences of this Revelation. I therefore conceive that *Judaism* deserves Toleration; for this Reason among many others, that it gives the first Light to the *Christian Religion*, and is the Basis on which it stands.

I HOPE Dr. *Middleton* will not reject this Plea for my Friends; the *Jews*. But with regard to the *Dissenters*, is it *Treachery* to the *Church of England* to unite their Interests in a common Cause, to make her the *Head* and Support of the *Protestant Religion*, and to give her so great an Advantage against the *Church of Rome*, her ancient and profess'd Enemy, by strengthening her Hands with so much Assistance, and enlisting all the Denominations of *Protestants* to maintain her *legal Establishment*?

THEN with regard to the *Quakers*, whose *Light within* he makes *old Infallibility*, I will immediately shew him the Difference. For *old Infallibility*, as he revives it, is an *authoritative* Manner of judging, not of every *Man for himself*, but of *one Man for all the rest*. This is the real Difference

rence between the *Quakers* and *Dr. Middleton*. They alledge, with *great Reason* and *good Sense*, the *Universality* of *sufficient Light* in Matters of Religion. They maintain, as all Men of Candour and Honesty ought to do, that every Man has from God Almighty competent Means to know his Will, and to serve him truly; and that no Man has a Right to prescribe to others; nor has any Light within to govern other Mens Actions, any more than he has Eyes in his Head to direct their Paths. Whereas *Dr. Middleton* asserts the contrary, and insinuates in many Places, that the *Church of England*, or the *Clergy*, have *all the Light* themselves, whilst their Brethren the Laity, are to remain in *utter uncomfortable Darknes*. And whilst this Difference holds between him and the *Quakers*, I will maintain, with the poor Abilities I have, *in Defiance of all his Divinity*, that they are by much the *best Christians*.

LET me add in Behalf of this Sect, that they seem to be the only one among us that have preserv'd their *original good Principles*. They set out in the Beginning on the Principles of *Peace* and *Charity*, they *impos'd no Creeds*, nor requir'd any *Subscriptions*. They treated their worst Enemies with Candour, and serv'd God with true Sincerity. No Persecutions could compel them to be Hypocrites, no Severities make them dispense with their Truth: And as their Morals were those of the most irreproachful Kind, their Simplicity of Manners, and their social Qualities were shining Parts of their Characters. They did not flatter King *James the Second*, like the *Clergy*. They told him plainly, That *as he was not of the Religion of the Land*, neither were they; and they expected *Toleration for their Principles*; as he claim'd it on Account of his own. Had every Sect been as sincere to that

poor *unfortunate* King, Dr. *Middleton* perhaps would not have deplor'd the Want of Establishment and Perpetuity in the Blessings procur'd by the *Restoration*. And if that Prince was one of those Blessings, as he seems to intend, we did not lose him thro' any *Ingratitude* to God, as the *Doctor* intimates; but thro' *Ecclesiastical Insincerity*, the crying Sin of those Times.

I therefore expect he will treat the *Quakers* with a little more Decency for the future. They are Men who deserve it at a better Hand than Dr. *Middleton's*. They are as faithful Subjects to his Majesty, and as sincerely affected to his Royal Family, as any he has in his Dominions. They are as honest Men, and as fair Dealers, as any the most *orthodox* Sons of the *Church*. And tho' they may not so readily pay Tythes to the Clergy, as the *Doctor* may expect; yet, perhaps, they have as much *Divinity* on their Side to warrant the Refusal, as he can have *Law* to exact them.

THIS I conceive to be common Justice to a *great* and *useful* Body of Men, who make so considerable a Part of the *British Nation*; and who have so much advanc'd the laudable Manufactures of the Kingdom, with the Liberty and Happiness of their Country, at all Hazards and on all Occasions.

I SHALL now consider Dr. *MIDDLETON's* *Politicks*, as I have here examin'd his *Religion*; and produce as shining Instances of his *Truth*, as I have already done of his *Charity*.

The Wisdom that is from Above is first pure, and then peaceable. Uproar and Confusion are as little the Marks of true Religion, as Lying and Deceiving. The Work of Discord, carry'd on by a *Christian Clergyman*, is Blasphemy against the
Chri-

Christian Religion. Whoever preaches to you, whatever Habit he wears, or whatever Authority he may pretend to, *You shall know of his Doctrine, whether it be of God.* If it is Pure, then will it be Peaceable. If it is not Peaceable, it can never be Pure. A bad Heart is always the Companion of a factious Head. Turbulent Passions ever produce violent Actions, and are Foes to the Quiet of Mankind. Far different this from the Design of the Gospel, which was *Peace on Earth, and great good Will to Men.* The Swords were to be chang'd into *Plough-shares,* and the *Spears* into *Pruning-hooks.* The Lamb was to lye down with the Lyon, the Tyger was to lose his Fierceness, the whole Face of Nature was to wear the Livery of Love, and the Law of the Creation to be a *Law of Kindness.*

KIND and candid was the Saviour of Mankind. He came not to sound the Trumpet in Sion, nor to cry aloud and spare not. He was the Messenger of Peace, and the Bearer of glad Tidings. All his Blessings were bestow'd; all his Joys were promis'd to the Humble; the Meek and Peaceable. *Blessed are the Peace-Makers, Blessed are the Meek in Spirit,* said this divine Lawgiver. He used no Force in the Propagation of his Gospel. He cherish'd no Resentments against his implacable Enemies. He never *fin'd* or *imprison'd* the Men that *revil'd* and *reproach'd* him. He did not even curse the cruel Hands which deliver'd him over to Death: *Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.* He declar'd, that a Legion of Angels were ready at his Will, yet despis'd the Vengeance that was thus in his immediate Power. He would not suffer his Disciple to avenge his Cause: *Put up thy Sword,* was his Expression, *they that live by the Sword, shall perish by the Sword.* The whole Course of his Ministry was to conciliate the Minds of Men, to heal their Divisions,

visions, and unite their Affections. What else could avail his most excellent Morality, but to govern their headstrong Passions? Or what signify'd his exemplary Patience, but to teach them equal Forbearance? What also was his great and illustrious Legacy before he departed from among us, but *that Peace which the World could not give us?*

HAD Dr. *Middleton* study'd this Wisdom which is from Above, was his Doctrine either Pure or Peaceable, I should never have appear'd against him. But the Sermon before me hath given so just Cause of Offence (especially since stamp'd with their Sanction, who most of all ought to have reprov'd it) that I think it my Duty, as I know it is my Right, to paint him in those Colours, and expose him to that Odium which his Practices worthily deserve.

HE is so far from carrying on the Work of Peace, that he labours to promote the most publick Confusion. Instead of great good Will to Men, he advances Strife and intolerable Hatred. He divides the Kingdom against it self, in View that it may not stand. He stigmatizes Men as false Brethren, who differ from him in Opinion, and pronounces to the World, that they do not deserve the natural Rights of Mankind, the Liberty of judging for themselves, and worshipping God in their own Way: All which Proceedings he attempts to cloak under the Authority of Scripture, and has particular Recourse to the *Psalms*; tho' I know not wherein he hath imitated *David*, unless it be in *cursing his Enemies*.

HE proceeds to abuse the very Name of the Protestant Cause, as full of *shameful Licentiousness* and *Treachery*. He objects to it as an indefinite Phrase, that means nothing but the *Negative* of *Popery*; which only shews his Ignorance, and that he

he knows not what it means: The only true Sense of the *Protestant Religion* being confin'd to the famous *Confession of Augsburg*, from whence the very *Name* took its Rise, and by which the *Thing it self* must always be understood.

To shew himself an equal Enemy to all the Rules of *Sense* and *Speech*, as he has been to *Charity* and *Candour*, this great *Professor* of the *Unintelligible* has even converted the *Jews* into *Protestants*. The *Protestant Cause* he says comprehends all other Religions, even that of the *Jews*. He may as well say *Prestler John* is a *Papist*. Nay, he may as well make the *Mahometans* and *Hottentots*, the *Sophi* of *Persia*, or the *Great Mogul*, to be of the *Protestant Religion*. And, if another *Babel* should happen for the *Confusion* of *Languages*, I humbly conceive he will have the best Title to conduct the hopeful *Undertaking*.

No Man would imagine, from the spiteful Manner in which he mentions the *Jews*, that the *divine Institutor* of this Religion, the *Founder* of *Christianity* it self, was a *Jew* by *Descent*, by *Birth* and *Circumcision*; that he treated the *Jews* on all Occasions as his *beloved Children*, the favourite Nation, which he was to restore and raise above all the Kingdoms of the World; that the *Gentiles* were look'd on as *Intruders*, as *Dogs* that could not be admitted to eat the *Children's Bread*, and could only be allow'd the *Crumbs* that fell from the *Table*. The People of *Israel* were certainly the *Heirs* of the *Promise*; and tho' we, by an extraordinary *Stretch* of *Grace* and *Favour*, have been allow'd to share the mighty *Blessing*, have we any *Right* to *maltreat* them from thence? Are ill *Usage* and hard *Words* the best *Means* of *Conversion*? Or, because the *Jews* have long been blind to the *Light* of the *Gospel*, shall we hate them for that Reason?

Might we not as well persecute those who are blind to the Light of the Day, nor able to see the Sun in the Firmament? With what Sincerity can he pray to God for *Jews, Turks and Infidels*; yet in the same Breath reproach and revile them? With what Consistency can he reflect, that *Jesus Christ* himself, his Lord and Master, was a *Jew*, a *circumcis'd Jew*, and yet be such an *uncircumcis'd Philistine*, as to fight against the Armies of the living God?

LET me add, that tho' Dr. *Middleton*, nor any one, can have Right to punish the Children for the Sins of the Fathers, which would be directly against an express Command of God; yet it is heroic Virtue, and the highest Strain of Generosity, to reward and bless the Children of those Fathers who have merited well at our Hands. The one Case is absolute Injustice, and cruel Inhumanity; the other is Redundancy of Kindness, and flowing good Nature. It may be further observ'd, that the *Messiah* comply'd with the *Centurion* in the Gospel, and granted his Prayer, because of this Recommendation from the *Jews*, that *he loved their Nation, and built them a Synagogue*; which I presume was something different from *shutting up their Synagogue*. And what was allow'd a Merit by *Jesus Christ* seventeen-hundred Years ago, cannot have lost its Virtue by the Force of Time or Custom.

I THEREFORE expect he will behave himself more civilly hereafter to Men, to whom it is at least his Duty to shew common Humanity.

BUT indeed he might perhaps have been easily forgiven, if he had gone no further than bitter Expressions against the *Dissenters*, the *Quakers*, and the *Jews*. Something might have been allow'd to a prepossess'd Mind, and the vulgar Prejudices of Education. For these may very possibly excuse a
little

little Want of *Decency* and *Candour*: Yet when a *Clergyman* shall go beyond all these Offences against *Morality*, shall even add *Lying* and *Deceiving* to *Envy*, *Hatred*, *Malice*, and all *Uncharitableness*; What Words can express the deserv'd Detestation? Or what Censure be adequate to such *sanctified*, *complicated* Crimes?

I AM not willing to accuse Dr. *Middleton* of *criminal* Omissions, else I might very properly aggravate his Silence of the *Protestant Succession*, his Neglect of the Duty he was call'd to by the Day, his Neglect to inculcate Obedience to a lawful Government, and to preach up that Loyalty due to the Prince on the Throne.

ON the other hand he makes it his Business to display the dreadful Nature of *Usurpations*: 'To live under them, *he tells us*, is grievous to wise and good Men: Tho' the Usurper should chance to carry on his Administration with the Appearance of Justice, and should *use the Sword for the Punishment of Evil-Doers*, and for the Praise of *them that do well*; *he says*, this would be grievous to wise and good Men; because they know the Ordinances resulting from such an assum'd Authority would be invalid, the judicious Decisions unrighteous, and the pretended legal Executions so many solemn Murders.'

THE Meaning of this is most excellent. *If an Usurper should happen to govern, tho' with proper Ability and Equity, yet his Usurpation must be grievous to wise and good Men; because they know, that when Judgment is given to a Man for a Debt due on Note, Bond, or Mortgage, the Judicial Decision is unrighteous: So if a Highway-man, or House-breaker is hang'd at Tyburn, this pretended legal Execution is certainly a solemn Murder.*

But this is nothing to what follows; the *Doctor* after having deplor'd the Usurpation, proceeds to rejoice in the Restoration; and he adds that *it is indeed to be fear'd we have not been sufficiently thankful for these inestimable Favours of Providence; at least, that our Thankfulness has not shew'd it self in proper Effects, in Obedience to God, and in LOYALTY TO HIS VICEGERENT: Because it did not please God to add Establishment and Perpetuity to the Blessings which he restored to us, when he restored our KING.*

Now, since the *then* Royal Family were these inestimable Favours, these Blessings which God restor'd to us when he restor'd our King; since it did not please God to add Establishment and Perpetuity to those Blessings; therefore Dr. *MIDDLETON* has terrify'd himself with the Fear, that it must be some strange *Disobedience to God, some dreadful Disloyalty to his Vicegerent*, by which we lost those Blessings in the Person of King *James the Second*, and brought about the Revolution.

AND I beg the Reader to consider, what a fatal destructive and damnable Error is thus impress'd on the Minds and Consciences of all unwary Men, when we are told, that we were unthankful for the Restoration, in being *disobedient to God and disloyal to his VICEGERENT*, otherwise we had not lost an *unhappy Prince*, who had almost totally enslav'd us and overturn'd our Constitution.

IN support of these *treasonable and scandalous* Insinuations, he begins to describe the *Blessings and Benefits* of the Restoration, as we experienc'd them in the *Person and Administration* of his Majesty King *CHARLES the Second*. *A Prince*, says he, *however a Change of Fortune from the lowest Distress to the Height of Grandeur might betray him into some unjustifiable*

justifiable Indulgences, yet ever tender of the Privileges of his Subjects, and studious of their Safety even whilst he neglected his own.

WHILST this pious undissembing Preacher was magnifying that Monarch's Tenderness to the Privileges of his People, methinks he should have remembered the CHARTER of LONDON: For certainly such an Audience, as a Court of *Lord-Mayor and Aldermen*, could not fit with common Patience, to hear so *notorious a Falshood* deliver'd so gravely from the Pulpit, whilst such an Invasion of all our Liberties had any Remains in their Memory. And it must be a natural Question with every one present, whether, when that Prince directed the *Quo Warranto* against their Charter, and seiz'd it into his Hands; I say, *whether he was then very tender of their Privileges, and studious of their Safety, at the same time neglecting his own.*

BUT so little was the *Doctor* afraid, that his *Falshoods* would shock his *Patrons*; he proceeds with equal Intrepidity in the same remarkable Strain.

Then did Parliaments recover their antient Reputation, and original Authority; then the HOUSE of COMMONS was compos'd of Members of distinguish'd Characters, and Fortunes, and Abilities; Members *freely and honourably* chosen by their Country; Members incapable of being *influenced* by the Throne, had the Possessor of the Throne been dispos'd to have enlarg'd the Regal Authority, and to have reduc'd the Power of Parliaments; Members *incapable of being brib'd*, had there been a designing or distress'd Ministry to have made such an Attempt upon them.

IT seems this venerable Assembly, that thus recover'd the Reputation and Authority of Parliaments, was the *long Parliament* return'd in 1661, which continued *seventeen Years*. The whole World is sensible, that this was the PENSION PARLIAMENT, and a *standing Pool of Corruption*. Every one knows, that Sir *Stephen Fox* nam'd in the House a great Number of Members, who received large Sums of Money every Year from the Crown; and even the Books, where these Pensions were enter'd, had been produc'd to the House, if the King had not sent the *Lord Chamberlain* with Orders, that none should be carry'd from the Offices. These are Facts of the greatest Notoriety; and that Parliament has therefore been ever since popularly odious. I remember a Person of very great Distinction among the Tories, I mean Mr. *Sh--pp--n* himself, who call'd them an *infamous Parliament* in a *printed Speech*: Yet this is the Parliament which Dr. *Middleton* has canoniz'd, this is the Parliament which he pronounces *incapable of being brib'd*, had a Ministry been ever so designing or distress'd. And after this, I presume, the *Doct̄or* expects we should pay a singular Deference to his *Veracity*, when we have even convicted him of *Lyes at the Altar*, and of *wilful Falshoods* pronounc'd in the *presence of God*.

HE that can be guilty of *Wickedness* so horrible as this, what is he not capable of? There is no Iniquity but he can practise, no Falshood but what he will assert.

WITH equal Truth and Honesty does he proceed to establish his Reputation.

' THEN, says he, was the Current of Justice
' turn'd into its right Channel, where it ran pure
' and unpolluted; the *venerable Fathers of the Law*
' administering Judgment according to the Merits of
' the

‘ the Cause before them, not according to *previous Instructions*, or the *political Characters* of the Persons concerned.’

THESE venerable Fathers, it seems, were *Scroggs* and *Jefferies*, &c. And these administered the Law with great Sufficiency and Impartiality indeed. To their eternal Infamy it must be said, that there never was so much *Rapine*, *Corruption*, and *Inhumanity* in *Westminster-Hall*, never such *oppressive Practices* since the Nation had a Being. Under these venerable Fathers of the Law *Lord Russel* lost his Life, and *Colonel Sidney* also suffer’d. Under them *Scribere est agere* was declar’d the Law. Under them were *Colledge*, *Cornish*, and the best Friends of the Constitution butcher’d. Under them were the Charters of every Corporation overthrown, the dispensing Power assum’d, and, what was more, they gave it Sanction.

AND yet these Judges, *these venerable Fathers*, that never decided a Cause according to *previous Instructions*, own’d themselves after the Revolution, that *Lord Chancellor Jefferies* gave them Direction from the King, pursuant to which they impos’d a Fine of 30,000*l.* on the Earl of *Devonshire*, then under a *Court Prosecution*.

INTO such right Channels was the Current of Justice turn’d, where its Stream run so pure, and its Waters thus unpolluted.

LASTLY, we are inform’d, the *Church* was committed to *faithful Hands*, not to *Timeservers*, nor to *Party Scriblers*. And yet we have this Testimony of so considerable a Man as the late *Mr. Locke*, that the *Bishops* were then the *dead Weight* of the *House of Peers*, that they voted in a *Herd always for the Court*; and, what is still more remarkable, they had the *Christian Charity*, every Man of them, to

vote against the Repeal, and for the Continuance of that most merciful Writ *de Heretico Comburendo*. If those venerable Fathers of the Church were any Thing better than *Timeservers*, then Dr. Middleton shall have my Voice on his Side, that *he is no Party Scribler*.

Now, after having avouch'd all these flagrant Falshoods, he solemnly demands our hearty Thanks to God for these wonderful Vouchsafements, *i. e.* for *Members of Parliament, who never were capable of Bribery; Judges of the Law, who never were Court Instruments; and Bishops, who never were Timeservers.* Whereas the Truth of History is directly against him; and it is most assuredly Fact, that the first were *Pensioners*, the next were *Prostitutes*, and the last were *Parasites and Slaves*.

‘ AND although, says he, we have since smart-
 ‘ ed and may still smart, [*I suppose he means by the*
 ‘ *Revolution, described as God’s chastening Dispen-*
 ‘ *sation*] yet we may assure ourselves from the To-
 ‘ kens of his Love, manifested in the Work of the
 ‘ GLORIOUS RESTORATION, that if we
 ‘ will turn to him and to our Duty, which must be
 ‘ the Duty from whence we departed when we lost
 ‘ the Blessings of the Restoration, and which Duty,
 ‘ it seems, was *Obedience to God and Loyalty to his*
 ‘ *Vicegerent* : Then, when we return to these, GOD
 ‘ will also turn from his fierce Anger, that we pe-
 ‘ rish not. He will in due time grant us the Re-
 ‘ quest of our Lips (*I presume another Restoration*)
 ‘ and once more make our *Jerusalem* a Praise on
 ‘ the Earth.’

I have thus pursued the *Doct̄or*, as I promis’d in my last. I must own he is a new Instance of *Sedition* and *Faction* from the Pulpit. I always thought the Clergy of this great Diocese so well regulated, by
 the

the Care of their *admirable Prelate*, that we had not any thing of this kind to fear. And I am both sorry and surpriz'd, that, equally regardless of his Lordship's Example and Authority, the *Preacher* before us should launch out into such *Licentiousness*, that he even borders on HIGH-TREASON.

However, I am oblig'd to remember the Justice and Integrity of the Court of ALDERMEN. I do therefore return them the most humble Thanks of great Numbers of his Majesty's best Subjects, for the *Negative of Thanks* which they worthily gave to a Sermon wherein the *Toleration* was *impeach'd*, the *Revolution* arraign'd, and the *wretched Pretensions* of a *Popish Impostor* were countenanc'd as far as was safe and convenient.

I CANNOT help being of Opinion, that they who could approve such *Doctrines*, or warrant such LYES as are shewn to be in this Sermon, could neither be true to their Country, nor faithful to the Rights of the City of *London*; especially the Case of their *Charter* consider'd. And I congratulate the Court of *Aldermen*, that they have wisely avoided that fatal Imputation, which must have created a general Suspicion and Distrust of their Characters in all the Members of this populous Community.

AND as the Court of *Aldermen* have thought fit to shew their Displeasure against this *Seditious Preacher*, so it may be very reasonably expected he will also be censur'd by those who have a Right to controul the *unwarrantable License in the Pulpit*; especially in those who, having only a *common Permission*, abuse the Indulgence they are allow'd, and add *Ingratitude to Prostitution*.

I M U S T

I'M UST own I am not for Penalties or Censures to check the Progress of Truth, to multiply Discouragements in the Way of Enquiry, or to prosecute its Friends and Advocates. For this Reason, tho' I am assur'd the Sermon before me would be adjudg'd *seditious* and *libellous* in the Courts of Judicature, yet I would be the last to make it cognizable there. I am not for Restraints on the Liberty of Writing: But *Preaching* is certainly a different Exercise. It is a *laudable* Method of haranguing the Populace, without Fear of *Contradiction*, or *Reply*. It is of the most dangerous Consequence, because it is not the Subject of *free Examination*, unless the Discourse should be publish'd from the Press: And even then, too many who heard it are not likely to attend the Controversy. Few read printed Sermons, tho Numbers hear them preach'd. And those *unwary* Multitudes, that, sway'd by the Authority of the Priesthood, attend the Preacher with too much Credulity; these are impos'd on by his Frauds and Falshoods, these are deciev'd by his religious Lyes, beyond all Opportunities of discovering the Error, because they want regular Means of Information.

IT is therefore of the utmost Consequence to civil Society, for the Happiness of Mankind is greatly affected in this very momentous Affair. It is a most important Concern that the Pulpits of this Kingdom should be under due Regulations; that unjustifiable Excursions into Politicks, and seditious Attempts on the People, should be censur'd and restrain'd, lest the People should be poison'd, and the Publick should suffer thro' these dangerous *un-christian* Practices.

THERE is no Man who remembers the *four last Years* of the Reign of the late Queen *Anne*, but

can very well account for the unhappy Disaffection which shew'd it self on our late Sovereign's Accession. The Clergy of this Kingdom had notoriously practis'd on the Passions of the Populace, in the manner Dr. *Middleton* revives; they blacken'd the *happy Revolution* with false and odious Colours, they preach'd up *hereditary Right*, and *unlimited Obedience*, with other pernicious and pestilent *Doctrines*. Hence the Spirit that shew'd it self in all the Elections of the Kingdom; hence the Bitterness and Hatred of the Rabble against all the Protestant Dissenters; and hence too the fatal *Epidemical Phrenzy*, which prevail'd in Behalf of the *Popish Pretender*, and ended in the *Preston Rebellion*.

I HOPE I shall never see any such Arts recurr'd to by the *present Clergy*. I am persuaded they are better and more reasonable Men. They know their Duty, and the Interest of their Country. And, as their reverend Order has been highly distinguish'd by the Favour and Protection of the present Royal *Family*, undoubtedly they will make the due Returns of Gratitude by Loyalty to their *lawful Prince*, and Zeal for a *free Constitution*.

BUT if ever they desert the Duties incumbent upon them, if ever they depart from the Functions of their Office in preaching the Gospel of *Christ*, and enforcing those Virtues in his Name which adorn the *Christian Life*; if instead of this they interfere with a Province that does not belong to them, I mean the Policies of civil Government, and Affairs of a temporal Nature: I do expect the Effects of this will be a total Dissolution of civil Right, a general Disaffection to the Royal Family, and the greatest Danger to all our Liberties. Experience will justify my Fears; what has been may be again,

and ought to be terrible even in its first Appearances.

REASONABLE Men cannot find the least Excuse to justify such an Attempt at this Time. His Majesty's Reign has conform'd to the Example of his Royal Father; and neither the King or his Ministers have us'd *Pulpit Declamation* among the Arts of Government. They have not encourag'd the Clergy, or any of them, to harangue for the Administration, to practise on the Passions of the People in behalf of *their* Schemes, or to preach up the prevailing Politicks, as was done in former Times. I hope Dr. *Middleton* nor any of his Stamp have not listed themselves on one Side, because none will retain them on the other: But one thing I am sure of, I mean, that it is most unfair those Weapons should be drawn against the Government, which were never us'd in it's Defence; and which would occasion high Disatisfaction, should the Government employ them even to defend it self.

It is however a great Consolation to me and to all his Majesty's Friends, that the late *Pulpit Invektives* against his Government are as *foolish* as they are *wicked*, and as *artless* as they are *ill designed*. When I consider the Magick of Words, and the Power of Eloquence, what an amazing Force a fine Imagination is possess'd of, and what mighty Effects it must have on Mankind; I tremble for the Interests of *Liberty*, lest such masterly Persuasion should aid the Cause of Faction, and seditious Preachers advance their Schemes by the Assistance of Genius or Abilities.

I AM therefore exceedingly comforted when I look on Dr. *Middleton's* Sermon, which is meerly the *Flatus* of *Party*. It has neither *Sense* or *Language* to recommend it; and as the Sentiments are
 .most

most of them trifling, many absurd, and not a few monstrously wicked; so the Strain in which he has conceiv'd them is a wretched insipid Rhapsody, wanting even the Beauties of tunable Periods, nor distinguish'd by any fine Turns, any Shew of the great or pathetick; but full of false Ornament and tinsel Expression, poor, low, affected Conceits, with miserable Blunders and Absurdities of Style.

THIS Reverend Zealot, with others of the same Class, have, by Wire-drawing out the everlasting Topick of *Bribery, Corruption, and Male-Administration*, imagin'd they should win the Subjects of this Kingdom, and seduce them to the *Jacobite Interest*. But they must be most stupidly ignorant of Human Nature, to conceive they can attain this difficult End by *Elogiums* on the Reign of King *Charles the Second*: since, whilst they decry the present Government for *suppos'd Crimes*, they openly applaud a former that was guilty of *notorious Male-practices*; whilst they declaim against the *Influence* pretended to be practis'd on the present Parliament, they adore a former, allow'd to have been a *standing Pool of Corruption*; and whilst they would alienate the popular Affection from a Prince, the *Father of all his People*, they canoniz'd a Predecessor, distinguish'd by those *shining Marks*, we have mention'd, of his *Care for their Rights and Liberties*. These are the Arts by which they would introduce a Creature, whom they would enthrone without *Merit*, and obey without *Reason*; whom they would bring in *against Law*, and acknowledge *above Law*; to whose Person they would pay *undeserv'd Reverence*, and to his Will *unlimited Obedience*. Such is their blessed and laudable Scheme to establish a *Kingdom of Absurdities*.

YET, what is more wonderful than any thing else, these Men are continually *preaching* up our Rights and Liberties, whilst they are incessantly *betraying* them. You find in their Discourse, the most passionate Fears for the Safety and Security of the Constitution, whilst themselves are its greatest Danger. They are ever alarming us with its Hazards and Perils, whilst they themselves are plotting its Ruin. At the Head of a Free Government, a *Monarchy deriv'd of the People*, they would place a *King by Jure Divino*; and, with equal good Sense, the *Pope* should be *supreme* at the Head of a *Protestant Church*.

IT is for these Reasons that they hate the *Dissenters*, and persecute the *Quakers*, because of their Fidelity to the present Establishment. And when we name this as the *Merit* that entitles those Sects to our Favour and Protection, there's the Curse and Confusion of all. The Merit we alledge in their Behalf is thought sufficient Reason to justify even their Destruction.

IT is much to be hop'd that the *People of England* have tasted the Sweets, and enjoy'd the Fruits of their generous Freedom so long, that they are not now to be *juggled* out of their Happiness, nor deluded into Disaffection. The Toil and Struggle of forty Years for what we so largely possess, the Millions of Men that were slain, and the Treasures that were spent in this glorious Contention, ought ever to be dear in our Consideration. And whilst we reflect on what we have done to procure the present Establishment, I trust that no Deceit or fraudulent Arts will ever persuade us to betray it.

IF therefore we meet with any *factious intemperate* Preachers, who would make us discontented or uneasy with our present Situation, who would divide

our Affections from his Majesty's Person, or enflame us against his Administration, let us be sure to set a Mark upon such Men. Let us remember that they are not the *Sons* of Peace, and let us discourage all the Workers of Strife and Sedition. We are not without Means of proper Enquiry. We are not without Liberty of free Debate in the great Affairs and Interests of our Constitution. The more we enquire into it, the better shall we understand it; and the better we are acquainted with the present Establishment, the more shall we value and esteem it. Therefore let us beware of those who would deceive us, nor repose an *implicit Belief* in any Ecclesiastick whatever, however assuming or dictatorial, however dignify'd or distinguish'd.

I SHALL conclude in the following remarkable Words.

* ' THE great *Licentiousness* of the *Press*, in
 ' censuring and reflecting upon all Parts of Govern-
 ' ment, hath of late given too just Cause of Offence.
 ' Yet when only *Pamphlets* and *Common Libels* are
 ' Matters of Complaint, when none but *mercenary*
 ' *Scriblers* and the *Hackney-Pens* of a *discontented*
 ' Party are employ'd to vent their Malice, 'tis fit to
 ' leave them to the common Course of the Law,
 ' or rather to general Contempt. But when the
 ' *Trumpet* is sounded in *Sion*, when the Cause of our
 ' *Enemies* is call'd the Cause of *GOD* and of the
 ' Church, when this bitter and poisonous Pill is
 ' gilded over with the specious Name of *Loyalty*,
 ' and the People are taught for their Souls and their
 ' Consciences Sake to swallow these pernicious
 ' Doctrines; when, instead of *sound Religion*, *Di-*
 ' vinity and Morality, *Faction* and seditious Dis-

* See Dr. Sacheverell's *Trial*, p. 61. Folio Edition of 1710.

courses are become the constant Entertainment of
 some Congregations, it is high Time to put a
 stop to this growing Evil ; and for the Authority
 of a *PARLIAMENT* to interpose and exert
 itself in Defence of the *Revolution*, the *present Go-*
vernment, and *Protestant Succession*.

F I N I S.

