

M. P. R. Y. N. N. E. S.
L. E. T. T. E. R.
T. O. T. H. E.
G. E. N. E. R. A. L. L.

The third of January 1648. Demanding what kind of Prisoner He is? And whose Prisoner? with an appearance to his Action of false imprisonment, which he Resolves to prosecute against those who have imprisoned him, for the publick interest and freedome.

of the Members and Subjects.

My Lord,
It is now a full Moneths space since I [with other Members of the Commons house] have been forcibly apprehended and kept prisoner by some of your Officers and Marshall, against the Priviledges of Parliament, the Liberty of the Subject, the Lawes and Statutes of the Realme, and all rules of Justice, Conscience & Right reason; without the least shadow of Authority, or any cause at all yet made known to me, of which [were there any] neither God nor man, ever yet made your Lordship or your Officers Judges. I therefore desire to know from your Lordship, what kind of prisoner I am? and whose? If a *prisoner of peace*: neither your lordship nor your Officers are any Iustices of peace, or Civill Magistrates in this place, to restrain me for any civill crime, were I guilty of it, much lesse without proof or hearing, in case I were no Member: but being neither guilty, nor accused of any such crime, and a Member too, no Magistrate can, nor ought to imprison me upon any pretext, at least without the Houses licente first obtained. If a prisoner of War, which I cannot probably be, being never in Arms, and apprehended neer the Commons house door, going peaceably and unarmed thither to discharge my duty; then you, and your Officers thereby acknowledge, that you have LEVYED WARRE AGAINST THE PARLIAMENT, and it's MEMBERS; and what a *Capitall offence* this is, and what a punishment it deserves, I need not informe your Lordship, or your Councell, who have for this very crime condemned and shot some to Death, As TRAYTORS: and demanded speedy Justice and Execution for it upon THE KING HIMSELFE. I have but one thing more to trouble your Lordship with, and that is, to demand whose Prisoner I am? having yet scene no Warrant nor Order, from your selfe, or your Officers for my restraint, though I have oft demanded it of your Marshall: If your Lordships Prisoner, there appearing yet no Legall Authority, cause or warrant for my restraint, I must then crave so much Justice from your Lordship (being but a Subject, and not yet paramount all Lawes) to order your Attorney to give an Appearance for you in the K J N G S B E N C H, the first returne of the next Tearme, to an action of *false imprisonment*, for this my unjust restraint; which I intend (by Gods assistance) effectually to prosecute. If your Officers Prisoner only and not yours, which I conceive, who yet abuse your name and authority herein, though it be a rule in Law and Divinity too, *Qui non prohibet malum quod potest, tubet*; yet I shall be so just as to set the saddle upon the right horse, and commence my action only against such of your Officers, who have been most active in my imprisonment, for damage and reparations, which if there be any justice remaining under Heaven, I doubt not but I shall recover in Gods due time, in this publick cause which so highly concernes the Honour, Freedome, and Priviledges of Parliament and Subjects Liberties; for defence and maintenance whereof, as I have hitherto spent my strength, adventured my life, Body, liberty and estate, so I shall now againe engage them all, and all the friends & interests I have in Heaven and Earth, rather then they shall suffer the least diminution, prejudice or Eclipse by my stupid patience under this unjust captivity; though I can as willingly forgive and put up private Injuries, when the publike is not concerned, as any man. All which I thought meet to informe your Lordship off, whom I am heartily sorry to see so much dishonoured, abused, and misled by rash ill-advised Officers, and dangerous, destructive (& I dare say Jesuiticall) councells, to the Parliaments dissipation, the Kingdomes prejudice, Irelands losse; most good mens and ministers greif, your best freinds astonishment, your Enemies and the Papists triumph, our Religions scandall, and your own dishonor: which I beseech you as an Englishman, a Christian, a professor of piety and Religion, a Soldier, a General, to lay sadly to your heart, as the earnest request of

From my Prison at the Signe of the Kings-Head
in the Strand: 3. January 1648.

Your Lordships faithfull Friend and Monitor
WILLIAM PRYNNE.

To the Honourable Thomas Lord Fairfax, GENERALLE of the Present Army, these present.

An Additionall POSTSCRIPT.

WE read Luke 2. 24. That when the Soldiers demanded of Iohn Baptist saying; And what shall we do: he said unto them; DOE VIOLENCE TO NO MAN [or put no man in feares] NEITHER ACCUSE ANY FALSELY; and be content with your allowance; not imprison depose or murder Kings, pull downe Parliaments, imprison, violently shut out and drive away Parliament men, and then lay all false accusations and scandalls upon them, to colour your violence, subvert kingdomes, alter States; break all bonds of Lawes, Oathes, covenants, obligations, engagements to God and men; usurpe all civill, military and Ecclesiasticall power, and the Kings Royall Pallaces into your own hands, as supream Lords and Kings; raise what new forces, and leavie what new Taxes you please, take up what Freequarters and houses, seiz & plunder what publik Treasuries and monies you please, without Commission or Authoritie, obey neither God nor Man, neither Parl. nor Magistrate; & be content with nothing, but alter & subvert all things. These are St. Petrus new Doctrines and Revelations, to our Officers and Soldiers now, & those Jesuits who lurk amongst them, not Iohn the Bapt. whose Canonically advise is now rejected as Apochryphall even among the army Sts. who prefer everie ignis fatuus, though from Doway or Rome it selfe, before this burning & shining old light, & are guided only by a new minted law, of pretended providence, or necessity, of their owne forging, and not by the Revealed will and law of God, the sacred light whereof their present works of Darknesse dare not approach, least they should be reprov'd and condemned by them. But some 43 actions of false imprisonment by the imprisoned, and 150. actions of the Case by the secluded Members, brought against these dominerung lawlesse Officers and Grandees of the Army, where in good Damages will be recovered, and some 12. Indictments of High Treason against them, for laying violent hands upon the Kings Person, & the Members, & levying Warre against the Parliament, will teach them more Obedience, Humility, and Modesty, then either Iohn Baptist, Saint Paul, Saint Peter, or Saint Peters will do; and be like Giddeon thorns & briars of discipline to these men of Succoth, with whom no fair means will prevail: who might have learned so much law and justice from an Heathen Souldier and Governour Festus Acts 25. 27. it seemeth unto me UNREASONABLE to send, (much more to commit) a prisoner, as I not withall to signify THE CRIMES LAYD AGAINST HIM; And come short of that ingenuity of the Heathenish CHEIFE Captain, who seized upon Paul, thereby to appease the tumult at Hierusalem, Acts 22, 27. 29. who as soon as ever Paul told him, he was a Roman, and FREE BORN, then straightway they departed from him who should have examined him; and THE CHEIFE CAPTAIN ALSO WAS AFFRAID, after he knew that he was a ROMAN, AND BECAUSE HE HAD BOVND HIM. And should not the false imprisoning of a Parliament man, and Freeborne English Man, be as formidable to our cheif Captains (being a christian, I say sworn and vowed to defend the Houses Priviledges and Members persons) as the imprisoning of a Roman was to this Chief Captaine, and they as ingenious and just as he, who shall rise up in Iudgement against them and condemn them at the last. I shall close up all with this observation: That as the most glorious Angels in Heaven, when they fell [through pride and ambition, as most conceive] became the very foulest Devils, in Hell; so the most resplendent seeming hypocriticall Saints when they fall through the like finnes, and have power in their hands, become the most incarnat Devills, and Monsters of Treachery and Tyranny upon earth, exceeding Turks and Pagans therein, of which we have now sad experience, in our Army-Saints, who every day aggravate, and yet justify their impieties and exorbitances. 2. Cron. 28. 11. Now heare me therefore, and DELIVER THE CAPTIVES AGAINE, which yee have taken Captives of your Brethren: for the feirce wrath of God is upon you.

F I N I S.