

Some REFLECTIONS upon the Humble
PETITION to the King's Most Excellent
Majesty, of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal
who Subscribed the same; Presented No-
vember 17. 1688.

That the *Peace-makers* are blessed, is a Truth our Saviour hath left recorded in the holy Scriptures, and those are truly to be honoured who can contribute any thing to so happy a Work: But that either this way of Petitioning, or the matter in it desired, is likely to produce so great a Blessing, is a Question worthy serious consideration.

I shall first therefore take notice of some of the dubious expressions in the Petition, and then lay down some few Reasons why I judge the Petition in it self unseasonable; and lastly endeavour to shew how unpracticable the summoning of a Parliament is at this present.

The expression, *That a War is now breaking forth in the Bowels of the Kingdom*, shews that their Lordships either know, or foresee, that a Civil War is fomenting; and I pray God this Petition do not, more than any thing else, occasion it; or that the *Prince of Orange* intends to carry on the War through the Bowels of the Kingdom, whereas those that wish well to the King hope it will be kept in and about the Parts where he Landed.

Secondly, As to the *disaffection of the People under their present Grievances*; it seems to many true Members of the Church of England, that it had been every whit as agreeable to your Lordships Character to have rather thank'd His Majesty for his late extraordinary and gracious Favours, than to have amus'd the Subjects at this time with the Apprehensions of *Grievances*, without any intimation what they were; for it is most manifest, that by such remonstrating of Grievances the People were infligated to that Bloody Rebellion in 1641.

As to the expression, *That your Lordships think your selves bound in Conscience of the Duty you owe to God and our holy Religion, and to His Majesty and our Country, most humbly to offer to His Majesty, That in your Opinion the ONLY visible way to preserve His Majesty and his Kingdom, would be the calling of a Parliament Regular and Free in all its Circumstances*. I hope to make out, that the summoning a Parliament now, is so far from being the *Only* way to effect these things, that it will be one of the principal causes of much Misery to the Kingdom; and I am sure both *our Duty to God and our holy Religion*, as well as to *His Majesty and our Country*, doth plainly enjoyn us to use *One* other effectual means to obviate the Miseries of a Civil or Invasive War; which is, the keeping inviolably our Allegiance to our Sovereign, and effectually joyning with him to resist all his Enemies, whether Foreign Aggressors, or Native Rebels: And it is much to be wonder'd at, that this Duty, so well known to your Lordships, should never be mention'd.

As to the *Regular and Free Parliament in all its Circumstances*, I shall now proceed to prove, that at this season all our wishes for such an one are impotent, and must be ineffectual.

First, It is a known Truth, and sadly experienced, That whenever the People are in a great ferment, and contrary Parties are bandying one against another, the giving liberty to the People to meet in great Bodies, is dangerous to the Government; and You your selves not long since were, when you oppos'd the vehement Addresses to King Charles II. for summoning a Parliament, when he judg'd it would strengthen the Faction against Him; and you very well know, when great heats were among

the Members, and unreasonable Votes were pass'd against the Lineal Succession, and other matters endangering the Government, the King was oblig'd to prorogue some Parliaments from time to time, that such separation might produce more sober Counsels: And then the great cry was, That for the Preservation of the King's Person, and our Religion, they were so earnest to have a Parliament meet.

Secondly, It is impossible there can be a Regular and Free Election, while the Electors are so violently divided; one part of them being so vehement Wishers of the success of the *Prince of Orange*, that they slight all the Miseries that unavoidably will fall on the Country thereby, upon the bare hope that he will preserve Religion and Property. Now in such a time as this, when, if we will give credit to the *Prince's Declaration*, there are so many that have invited him; can it be safe for the King to grant a Commission, even to the People, to assemble in such great Confluxes, as may afford them opportunity of Lifting themselves against him?

Thirdly, If we yield that Elections can be without outrageous Routs; yet when the Parliament is met, it is requisite by the very Constitution, that every part of that August Assembly, should be free in their Assent or Dissent to what is to be debated; and that Freedom is as fundamentally necessary in the Person of the King, as in the Members of either House; and that one of the proper and necessary Circumstances of that Convention ought to be, that all the Members, shall be present. I shall therefore shew, that at this time none of these can be practicable.

First, as to the King: While such powerful Enemies are in the Country, and so many ready to catch any opportunity to joyn with them, how can the King be absent from his Army? the providing for, cherishing, animating and ordering of which, will sufficiently employ the most indefatigable of Princes. And none can think that any Prince can watch the motions of such an Enemy, and time his opportunities of Assaulting Them, or Defending Himself; and at the same time be embarras'd with a Party in the Houses, that may as dangerously be levelling their Votes against him, as the Invaders are their Artillery.

However here can be no freedom to the King, how undaunted soever; because the impending Storm may so affright his Council, that they may advise to the yielding of some things that may be of ill consequence to the Government; for whatever lessens the King's just Prerogative, as this may do, in depriving him of exercising his Negative Voice, is at one time or other prejudicial to his Subjects.

Secondly, As to the Lords: There can be no free Convention of Them, since several of them have so far forgot their Allegiance, that they are actually in the *Prince of Orange's Army*, and many other Lords are attending the King, and their Charges, so that while these Armies are in being, they cannot meet in their House but by their Proxies; which I suppose none can expect will be allowed to the Peers that are in Rebellion, if we may be allowed to call that such which all our Laws so adjudgeth.

The like may be said for the House of Commons: All the Gentlemen of Interest in their Country by their Allegiance are bound to serve the King in his Wars at his Command,



Command, and will be few enough to keep their respective Counties in Peace. And I am confident none will think such a Parliament, as this ought to be that is desir'd, should consist of such who have been little conversant in publick Affairs, or have small Interests in their Counties.

So, that upon the whole, I cannot see how any Free Parliament can Meet, unless it be such a Convention as the Saxons obtained of the Britains on Salisbury Plains; where the eminentest of both People were to meet unarmed, and there amicably adjust matters in difference; but it is well known, that the Saxons under their long Coats had their Weapons, wherewith they slew the Flower of the British Nobility, and thereby rendred their Conquest more easie.

It is true, such a Stratagem is not now like to take effect, but the King and those that wish well to the Succession of the Monarchy, and the preservation of their Country, must needs fear, that there will be as dangerous contests within the Houses as may be in the open Fields; and thereby little can be expected from such a Parliament, which can redound to the publick good of the Kingdom.

Fourthly, Those Spiritual and Temporal Lords, that have Signed this Petition, either have not, or they have consulted the Prince of Orange, before they propos'd this Advice.

If they have not consulted him, they ought to satisfie the King how they can warrant a Cessation, of Arms on the Princes side, or how they can hinder him from advancing further to awe Debates in the Houses, or what assurance they can give, that he will acquiesce in the free Decision of the matters propos'd, or that he will peaceably depart out of the Land, when things are settled, and will not pretend a stay here, till the vast Sums be pay'd him, that he hath expended on this occasion; or lastly, will not find new occasions of questioning the security of performance of any Agreement to be made.

If they have consulted the Prince, they ought to shew his Commission, Authorizing them to make Proposals, or shew the heads of those Grievances he demands to be redress'd; for some they urge in their Petition there are, which distract the people; but I suppose they are more careful of their Heads, than to own any such correspondence.

If these Noble Persons would have effectually sav'd Effusion of Blood, they should rather have us'd all their Interest to have kept the Prince of Orange in his own Country, tho' with his Army and Fleet in readiness, and have obtained his sending his demands, and have waited like Dutiful Subjects till the King had Conven'd his Parliament, and have try'd how Gracious the King would have been in redressing Grievances and securing Religion and Property, and after the Kings refusal there might have been some colour for his Invasion; but none upon any pretence whatsoever to have Invited him to it.

Fifthly, Those who will not openly, and with a bare face justify the Prince of Oranges Pretensions, cannot think it consistent with the Honor of the King to stoop so low as to Summon a Parliament at the direction of an Invader, who can never be conceived to desire it with that eagerness, if he did not Judge it very much conduceable to his Interest, for which very reason the King ought to be Jealous of such Councils.

And I humbly conceive those Peers have not sufficiently considered how prejudicial this sort of Address may be to the Kings Affairs, and how much it will conduce to the further Alienating of the affections of the Subjects from the King, when they shall hear of his denial to comply at

present with this expedient, and never hear the reasons thereof; since they have not divulg'd his Majesties Gracious Answer, together with their Petition, and I am sure, at this time the putting the King upon such a *Dilemma*, is the greatest dis-service can be done him, and very little Inferior to joyning with his Enemies.

I might add many more Arguments to prove, that the King cannot in Honor yield to this Advice, without quitting that undeniable Prerogative the Laws give him, of making War or Concluding Peace, if those matters should be submitted to the Arbitriment of the two Houses; or owning that the Allegiance of his Subjects did not bind them to Assist him in the defence of his Crown and Dominions without the Votes of a Parliament. But I shall conclude with some few considerations I humbly offer to those Right Reverend, and Noble Lords, and all those who are of the same Judgment with them, to reflect upon.

First then, I desire them to consider, whether it will not be more glorious, and agreeable to the Principles of our Religion, effectually to Assist our undoubted Lawful Sovereign, then to suffer him to be dethroned solely because he is a *Roman Catholick*; since the Papists themselves, tho' they neither take the Oath of Allegiance or Supremacy, yet do, and ever have declared, that if any *Roman Catholick* Prince, yea the Pope himself in Person, should Invade any King of England, tho' a Protestant, yet that they are bound to defend such a King, against them, as much as if they were *Turks*.

Secondly, Whether since the True and Original Cause of this Invasion, and consequently of all the Blood-shed these Lords so earnestly desire to prevent, hath not been the denying to concur with the King in Establishing of Liberty of Conscience, even with such security to the Protestant Religion, and Church of England, as could be desired; and whether in all Human probability, that would not be more conduceable to Establish the publick Tranquillity of the Kingdom, and it's encrease in Wealth and People, and consequently the most efficacious means to reduce the *Dutch* to be just and tractable Allies and Neighbours, rather than any thing can be effected by this Invasion, or the Truckling to such avowed Enemies to our Country, our Religion, and our King.

Thirdly, Whether the Kings entire Trust in the Fidelity of his own Subjects for his defence, and not admitting of Foreign Aids that were unsought for proffered, do not oblige all that have any sense of Gratitude or Duty, to aid him to the very utmost against such Foreigners as so unnaturally and so unjustly Invade him; and when it hath pleas'd God to give Success to the Kings just Arms, we are not to doubt, but the King, according to his Solemn promise in his late Royal Declaration will speedily call a Parliament, and in it redress all such Grievances as his People can justly complain of, with a Full and Ample security to the Church of England and all his Protestant Subjects; which it will much more be our Interest to have in a truly Harmonious, and Free Parliamentary-way at that time Established, than at this present in a Tumultuary and Precipitate haste so patched up, as will not be durable; and the more earnestly we desire to see this good work to be set upon, the more haste the Nobility and Gentry should make to Expel those who hindred the Convention of that Parliament, which was much more likely to have settled matters to the content of the King and his People, than this Invasion can ever hope to effect.

WITH ALLOWANCE.

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