

(1711)

R. Ferguſſon's APOLOGY,

For his Tranſactions theſe laſt Ten Years, both in
England and Foreign Parts.

SINCE through Prejudice, Miſapprehenſion, or other Weakneſs (ſometime or other the Fate of all Mankind) I have incurr'd the Cenſure of many; tis but reaſon I ſhould let them know, that my more Enlightned Underſtanding, has ſufficiently convinced me of my over-haſty and prejudicial cenſure of the *Diſcipline of the Church of England*, as it ſtands now by Law Eſtabliſhed; and ſince of late by many worthy Champions for the *Proteſtant Religion*, the *Church of England* has been ſufficiently vindicated from the leaſt Aſperſion, her malicious Adverſaries the *Romaniſts*, eſpecially the *Prieſts*, could againſt her Reputation ſuggeſt: So I my Self (for ſome time paſt) have not to my poor Ability been wanting in my care and endeavours to ſupport Her Honour and Credit, and to free Her from the leaſt Imputation of ill whatſoever: And though my Miſfortune meeting with an unhappy Juncture of Times, may have rendred me Obnoxious to the Cenſure even of ſome good men; yet ſince the Effects of thoſe Deſigns, which *England* has by ſad Experience ſeen levelled againſt even the Foundation of the *Proteſtant Intereſt*, have been both Publick and Answerable to the Conjectures of every wiſe man, that at that time took any Obſervation of them; I have no reaſon to Deſpair now at laſt of Reconciling my Self again to their good Opinion. And truly, though I am ſufficiently ſatisfied of my Error (or my Crime) in adhering to a Party, or Perſon (whoſe Title to the Office he then took upon him was every way Queſtionable) yet they that will without prejudice conſider the great Dangers at that time threatening the *Proteſtant Churches* and State of this Kingdom, will I believe, be eaſily induced to lay aſide all Animofities conceived againſt me, and conclude, that I rather miſtook the manner and method of Curing, than that I was any ways Ignorant of the malignity of the Diſtemper; however, His Royal Highneſs the *Prince of Orange* has already diſſipated all our Fears as to this Point, who as he ſeems by a peculiar Providence: to have been mark'd out for the Work he has now Undertaken, ſo beſides the Juſtice of his Claim to the *Protection of our Religion and Laws*; has by all the Actions of his Life, demonſtrated that Pity and Piety, Religion and Juſtice, more than any other Conſideration whatſoever, has prompted him to *this glorious undertaking*; and though the Glory of the beſt and greateſt Action in the World, like the Sun, may meet with ſome cloudy Obſtruction and Interpretation, in the Hearts of ſome



few prejudic'd, I will not say ignorant men; yet the general Joy that has, and does yet fill the Hearts of the Nobility, and Commons of these Kingdoms, does evidently demonstrate, that all his Royal Highnesses proceedings, before, and since his Arrival, tend to no other thing, nor in the least point deviate from fulfilling the utmost expectation and desires of this Nation: We are not now (having by woful Experience, bought out Knowledge) ignorant of the crafty Divices, and Arts of the Romish Priests, to divide and disturb the Hearts of the People of England; by insinuating and suggesting to them his Royal Highnesses inclination, to alter or restrain any part of the Service of the Church of England, as by Law Established; but as the objection to any that have the Honour, to know the Prince is frivolous and groundless; so a very little time will expose these false Dreamers, to the unavoidable necessity of being found in a Lye: and though it has been the Opinion of many Pious and Zealous Assertors of the Interest of the Church of England, as it now stands, Establish that with all submission, some Regulations in the Divine Service, might be offer'd for the better Accommodating and Uniting some small differences; which by the malicious Fomentations of our common Adversaries have prov'd fatal to this Nation. Yet it has ever been his Royal Highnesses Resolution, to leave them to the open Consideration, and final Determination of a Free Parliament; 'tis rather likely than impossible, that this Innocent, though Hearts Vindication of mySelf; (for he must be over-grown with prejudice that can misdoubt the rest) may meet with a reception very unsuitable to the design it is writ with, for such is our vitious Nature, that we much rather strive to lash past miscarriages, than encourage good Resolutions; but as I can appeal to the Natural, and consequently necessary infirmities of all Human Nature, for Favour, if not Pardon for my past Errors; so my Experience of the Fatigue and Vanity of all Worldly business, with the assistance of God, which I heartily pray for; has reduced me to fix my Resolution of setting my self a part, wholly for the Service of God; before whose Altar I shall by his Grace endeavour, to present my self an Holy, Pure, and Unspotted Sacrifice for ever.

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