

THE  
HISTORY OF THE PURITANS;

OR,

PROTESTANT NONCONFORMISTS;

FROM

THE REFORMATION IN 1517, TO THE REVOLUTION IN 1688;

COMPRISING

An Account of their Principles;

THEIR ATTEMPTS FOR A FARTHER REFORMATION IN THE CHURCH, THEIR SUFFERINGS, AND  
THE LIVES AND CHARACTERS OF THEIR MOST CONSIDERABLE DIVINES.

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A NEW EDITION, IN THREE VOLUMES.

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WITH HIS LIFE OF THE AUTHOR AND ACCOUNT OF HIS WRITINGS.

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## CHAPTER XII.

### THE STATE OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND. THE RELIGIOUS CHARACTER OF BOTH PARTIES, WITH A SUMMARY OF THE GROUNDS OF THE CIVIL WAR.

WE have already seen the unsettled state of religion upon the king's progress into Scotland, with the complaints of the royalists for want of decency and uniformity. The hierarchy had for some time been a dead weight, the springs that moved it being stopped, by the imprisonment of the bishops, and the check that was given to the spiritual courts; but now the whole fabric was taken down after a year, though when that was expired no other discipline was erected in its room; nor was the name, style, and dignity, of archbishops and bishops taken away by ordinance of parliament till September 5, 1646, that is, till the war was over, and the king a prisoner. In this interval there was properly no established form of government, the clergy being permitted to read more or less of the liturgy as they pleased,<sup>1</sup> and to govern their parishes according to their discretion. The vestments were left indifferent, some wearing them, and others, in imitation of the foreign Protestants, making use of a cloak. February 2, 1642–3, the commons ordered, that the statute of the university of Cambridge, which imposes the use of the surplice upon all students and graduates, should not be pressed, as being against the law and liberty of the subject; and three days after they made the same order for the schools of Westminster, Eton, and Winchester. Bishop Kennet says, that tithes were denied to those who read common prayer; and it is as true, that they were withheld from those that did not read it; for many, taking advantage of the confusion of the times, eased themselves of a burden for which some few pleaded conscience, and others the uncertain title of those that claimed them.

Though the parliament and Puritan clergy were averse to cathedral-worship, that is, to a variety of musical instruments, choristers, singing of prayers, anthems, &c. as unsuitable to the solemnity and simplicity of divine service, yet was it not prohibited; and though the revenues of prebendaries and deans, &c. had been voted useless, and more fit to be applied to the maintenance of preaching ministers, yet the stipends of those who did not take part with the king, were not sequestered till the latter end of the year 1645, when it was ordained, "that the deans and prebendaries of Westminster who had absented themselves, or were delinquents, or had not

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<sup>1</sup> Here, as Dr. Grey observes, is an inaccuracy. The use of the liturgy was not permitted during the whole of this interval, as appears by Mr. Neal's own account, vol. 3; for it was prohibited, and the directory established in its room, previously to the abolition of the episcopal titles and dignity, by ordinances of parliament on the 3rd of January 1644–5, and 23rd of August 1645.—ED.

taken the covenant, should be suspended from their several offices and places, except Mr. Osbaldesdon;” but the names, titles, and offices, of deans and chapters, were not abolished till after the king’s death, in the year 1649, the parliament proceeding with some caution, as long as there was any prospect of an accommodation with the king. Indeed, the beauty of the cathedrals was in some measure defaced about this time, by the ordinance for the removing crucifixes, images, pictures, and other monuments of superstition, out of churches. Many fine paintings in the windows and on the walls were broken and destroyed, without a decent repair of the damage. In Lambeth-chapel the organ was taken down [November 25]. The following summer the paintings, pictures, superstitious ornaments, and images, were defaced, or removed out of the cathedrals of Canterbury, Rochester, Chichester, Winchester, Worcester, Lincoln, Litchfield, Salisbury, Gloucester, St. Paul’s in London, the collegiate church of Westminster, &c. “But (says my author) I do not find that they then seized the revenues and estates of the cathedrals, but contented themselves with plundering and imprisoning some of the principal members, and dispersing many of the rest; and several of those places coming afterward into his majesty’s hands, the service did not wholly cease, nor were the doors of those stately fabrics finally closed at that time.”

Though the discipline of the church was at an end, there was nevertheless an uncommon spirit of devotion among people in the parliament-quarters; the Lord’s day was observed with remarkable strictness, the churches being crowded with numerous and attentive hearers three or four times in the day; the officers of the peace patrolled the streets, and shut up all public houses; there was no travelling on the road, or walking in the fields, except in cases of absolute necessity. Religious exercises were set up in private families, as reading the Scriptures, family prayer, repeating sermons, and singing of psalms, which was so universal, that you might walk through the city of London on the evening of the Lord’s day, without seeing an idle person, or hearing anything but the voice of prayer or praise from churches and private houses.

As is usual in times of public calamity, so at the breaking out of the civil war, all public diversions and recreations were laid aside. By an ordinance of September 2, 1642, it was declared, that “whereas public sports do not agree with public calamities, nor public stage-plays with the seasons of humiliation; this being an exercise of sad and pious solemnity; the other being spectacles of pleasure too commonly expressing lascivious mirth and levity; it is therefore ordained, that while these sad causes, and set times of humiliation, continue, public stage-plays shall cease and be forborne; in-

stead of which are recommended to the people of this land, the profitable duties of repentance, and making their peace with God.”<sup>1</sup>

The set times of humiliation mentioned in the ordinance refers to the monthly fast appointed by the king, at the request of the parliament [January 8, 1641], on account of the Irish insurrection and massacre, to be observed every last Wednesday in the month, as long as the calamities of that nation should require it. But when the king set up his standard at Nottingham, the two houses, apprehending that England was now to be the seat of war, published an ordinance for the more strict observation of this fast, in order to implore a divine blessing upon the consultations of parliament, and to deprecate the calamities that threatened this nation. All preachers were enjoined to give notice of it from the pulpit the preceding Lord’s day, and to exhort their hearers to a solemn and religious observation of the whole day, by a devout attendance on the service of God in some church or chapel, by abstinence, and by refraining from worldly business and diversions; all public houses were likewise forbid to sell any sorts of liquors (except in cases of necessity) till the public exercises and religious duties of the day were ended; which continued with little or no intermission from nine in the morning till four in the afternoon; during which time the people were at their devotions, and the ministers engaged in one part or other of divine worship.

But besides the monthly fast, the opening of the war gave rise to another exercise of prayer, and exhortation to repentance, for an hour every morning in the week. Most of the citizens of London having some near relation or friend in the army of the earl of Essex, so many bills were sent up to the pulpit every Lord’s day for their preservation, that the minister had neither time to read them, or to recommend their cases to God in prayer; it was therefore agreed by some London divines, to separate an hour for this purpose every morning, one half to be spent in prayer, and the other in a suitable exhortation to the people. The reverend Mr. Case, minister of St. Mary Magdalen, Milk-street, began it in his church at seven in the morning, and when it had continued there a month, it was removed by turns to other churches at a distance, for the accommodation of the several parts of the city, and was called the morning exercise. The service was performed by divers ministers, and earnest intercessions were made in the presence of a numerous and crowded audience, for the welfare of the public as well as particular cases. When the heat of the war was over, it became a casuistical lecture, and was carried on by the most learned and able divines till the restoration of king Charles II. Their sermons were afterward published in several volumes quarto, under the title of the Morning Exercises; each sermon

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<sup>1</sup> Rushworth, vol. 2. part 3. p. 1.

being the resolution of some practical case of conscience. This lecture, though in a different form, is continued among the Protestant dissenters to this day.

Some time after another morning lecture was set up in the abbey-church of Westminster, between the hours of six and eight, for the benefit of that part of the town, and especially of the members of parliament; it was carried on by Dr. Staunton, Mr. Nye, Marshal, Palmer, Herle, Whitaker, and Hill, all members of the assembly of divines. In short, there were lectures and sermons every day in the week in one church or another, which were well attended, and with great appearance of zeal and affection. Men were not backward to rise before day, and go to places of worship at a great distance, for the benefit of hearing the word of God. Such was the devotion of the city of London and parts adjacent, in these dangerous times!

Nor was the reformation of manners less remarkable; the laws against vice and profaneness were so strict, and so rigorously put in execution, that wickedness was forced to hide itself in corners. There were no gaming-houses, or houses of pleasure; no profane swearing, drunkenness, or any kind of debauchery, to be seen or heard in the streets. It is commonly said, that the religion of these times was no better than hypocrisy and dissimulation; and without all doubt, there were numbers of men who made the form of godliness a cloak to dishonesty; nay, it is probable, that hypocrisy, and other secret immoralities, might be the prevailing sins of the age, all open vices being suppressed; but still I am persuaded, that the body of the people were sincerely religious, and with all their faults, I should rejoice to see, in our days, such an appearance of religion, and all kinds of vice and profaneness so effectually discountenanced.

If we go from the city to the camp of the earl of Essex, we shall find no less probity of manners among them, most of his soldiers being men who did not fight so much for pay, as for religion and the liberties of their country. Mr. Whitelocke observes,<sup>1</sup> “that colonel Cromwell’s regiment of horse were most of them freeholders’ sons, who engaged in the war upon principles of conscience; and that being well armed within, by the satisfaction of their consciences, and without with good iron arms, they would as one man stand firmly and charge desperately.” The same author<sup>2</sup> adds, “that colonel Wilson, who was heir to an estate of £2,000. a year, and was the only son of his father, put himself at the head of a gallant regiment of citizens, who listed themselves in the parliament’s service purely upon conscience; this (says he) was the condition of many others also of like quality and fortune in those times, who had such an affection for their religion, and the rights

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<sup>1</sup> Memorials, p. 68.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. p. 72.

and liberties of their country, that *pro aris et focis* they were willing to undergo any hardships or dangers, and thought no service too much or too great for their country.” The most eminent divines served as chaplains to the several regiments; Dr. Burges and Mr. Marshal were chaplains to the earl of Essex’s regiment; Dr. Downing to lord Roberts; Mr. Sedgwick to colonel Hollis’s; Dr. Spurstow to Mr. Hampden’s; Mr. Aske to lord Brooks’s, &c. While these continued, none of the enthusiastic follies that were afterward a reproach to the army, discovered themselves. There were among them some who afterward joined the sectaries; some who were mercenaries, and (if we may believe his majesty’s declaration after the battle of Edgehill) some who were disguised Papists; but upon the whole, lord Clarendon confesses, there was an exact discipline in the army; that they neither plundered nor robbed the country; all complaints of this kind being redressed in the best manner, and the offenders punished. The reverend Mr. Baxter, who was himself in the army, gives this account of them:<sup>1</sup> “The generality of those people throughout England who went by the name of Puritans, Precisians, Presbyterians, who followed sermons, prayed in their families, read books of devotion, and were strict observers of the sabbath, being avowed enemies to swearing, drunkenness, and all kinds of profaneness, adhered to the parliament; with these were mixed some young persons of warm heads, and enthusiastical principles, who laid the foundation of those sects and divisions which afterward spread over the whole nation, and were a disgrace to the cause which the parliament had espoused. Of the clergy, those who were of the sentiments of Calvin, who were constant preachers of the word of God themselves, and encouragers of it in others; who were zealous against Popery, and wished for a reformation of the discipline of the church, were on the parliament’s side. Among these were some of the elder clergy, who were preferred before the rise of archbishop Laud; all the deprived and silenced ministers, with the whole body of lecturers and warm popular preachers both in town and country; these drew after them great numbers of the more serious and devout people, who were not capable of judging between the king and parliament, but followed their spiritual guides from a veneration they had for their integrity and piety. Many went unto the parliament, and filled up their armies afterward, merely because they heard men swear for the common prayer and bishops, and heard others pray that were against them: because they heard the king’s

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<sup>1</sup> Baxter’s Life, p. 26. 31. 33, &c. fol.

To the authorities quoted by Mr. Neal, bishop Warburton opposes that of Oliver Cromwell; who, in his speech to his parliament, represented the Presbyterian armies of the parliament, as chiefly made up, before the self-denying ordinance, of decayed “serving-men, broken tapsters, and men without any sense of religion; and that it was his business to inspire that spirit of religion into his troops on the reform, to oppose the principle of honour in the king’s troops, made up of gentlemen.”—ED.

soldiers with horrid oaths abuse the name of God, and saw them live in debauchery, while the parliament-soldiers flocked to sermons, talked of religion, and prayed and sung psalms together on their guards. And all the sober men that I was acquainted with, who were against the parliament (says Mr. Baxter,) used to say, the king had the better cause, but the parliament had the better men.”<sup>1</sup>

The Puritan [or parliament] clergy were zealous Calvinists, and having been prohibited for some years from preaching against the Arminians, they now pointed all their artillery against them, insisting upon little else in their sermons, but the doctrines of predestination, justification by faith alone, salvation by free grace, and the inability of man to do that which is good. The duties of the second table were too much neglected; from a strong aversion to Arminianism these divines unhappily made way for Antinomianism, verging from one extreme to another, till at length some of the weaker sort were lost in the wild mazes of enthusiastic dreams and visions, and others from false principles pretended to justify the hidden works of dishonesty. The assembly of divines did what they could to put a stop to the growth of these pernicious errors; but the great scarcity of preachers of a learned education, who took part with the parliament, left some pulpits in the country empty, and the people to be led aside in many places, by every bold pretender to inspiration.

“The generality of the stricter and more diligent sort of preachers (says Mr. Baxter) joined the parliament, and took shelter in their garrisons; but they were almost all conformable ministers; the laws and the bishops having cast out the Nonconformists long enough before, and not left above two in a county; those who made up the assembly of divines, and who through the land were the honour of the parliament-party, were almost all such as till then had conformed, and took the ceremonies to be lawful in cases of necessity, but longed to have that necessity removed.” He admits, “that the younger and less experienced ministers in the country, were against amending the bishops and liturgy, apprehending this was but gilding over their danger; but that this was not the sense of the parliament, nor of their principal divines. The matter of bishops or no bishops (says he) was not the main thing, except with the Scots, for thousands that wished for good bishops were on the parliament side. Almost all those afterward called Presbyterians, and all that learned and pious synod at Westminster, except a very few,

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had been conformists, and kept up an honourable esteem for those bishops that they thought religious; as, archbishop Usher, bishop Davenant, Hall, Moreton, &c. These would have been content with an amendment of the hierarchy, and went into the parliament, because they apprehended the interests of religion and civil liberty were on that side.”<sup>1</sup>

But the political principles of these divines gave the greatest disgust to the royalists; they encouraged the people to stand by the parliament, and preached up the lawfulness of defending their religion and liberties against the king’s evil counsellors. They were for a limited monarchy, agreeable to our present happy constitution, for which, and for what they apprehended the purity of the Protestant religion, they contended, and for nothing more; but for this they have suffered in their moral character, and have been left upon record as rebels, traitors, enemies to God and their king, &c.<sup>2</sup> His majesty, in one of his declarations, calls them “ignorant in learning, turbulent and seditious in disposition, scandalous in life, unconformable to the laws of the land, libellers, revilers both of church and state, and preachers of sedition and treason itself.” Lord Clarendon says, “that under the notion of reformation, and extirpating Popery, they infused seditious inclinations into the hearts of men against the present government of the church and state; that when the army was raised they contained themselves within no bounds, and inveighed as freely against the person of the king, as they had before against the worst malignants, profanely and blasphemously applying what had been spoken by the prophets against the most wicked and impious kings, to stir up the people against their most gracious sovereign.” His lordship adds, “that the Puritan clergy were the chief incendiaries, and had the chief influence in promoting the civil war. The kirk reformation in Scotland and in this kingdom (says his lordship) was driven on by no men so much as those of their clergy; and without doubt the archbishop of Canterbury never had such an influence over the councils at court, as Dr. Burges and Mr. Marshal had then on the houses; nor did all the bishops of Scotland together so much meddle in temporal affairs as Mr. Henderson had done.”<sup>3</sup>

Strange! when the Scots bishops were advanced to the highest posts of honour and civil trust in that kingdom; and when archbishop Laud had the direction of all public affairs in England, for twelve years together. Was not the archbishop at the head of the council-table, the star-chamber, and the court of high-commission? Was not his grace the contriver or promoter of all the monopolies and oppressions that brought on the civil war? What

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<sup>1</sup> Baxter’s Life, p. 33. 35. 37..

<sup>2</sup> Husband’s Collections, p. 514, &c.

<sup>3</sup> Vol. 1. p. 302.



could the Puritan clergy do like this? Had they any places of profit or trust under the government, or any commissions in the ecclesiastical courts? Did they amass to themselves great riches or large estates? No; they renounced all civil power and jurisdiction, as well as lordly titles and dignities; and were, for the most part, content with a very moderate share of the world. If they served the parliament-cause, it was in visiting their parishioners, and by their sermons from the pulpits: here they spent their zeal, praying and preaching as men who were in earnest for what they apprehended the cause of God and their country. But it is easy to remark, that the noble historian observes no measure with the Puritan clergy when they fall in his way.

Nor were the parliament-divines the chief incendiaries between the king and people, if we may believe Mr. Baxter, who knew the Puritans of those times much better than his lordship. "It is not true (says this divine<sup>1</sup>) that they stirred up the people to war, there was hardly one such man in a county, though they disliked the late innovations, and were glad the parliament were attempting a reformation." They might inveigh too freely in their sermons against the vices of the clergy, and the severities of the late times; but in all the fast-sermons that I have read,<sup>2</sup> for some years after the beginning of the war, I have met with no reflections upon the person of the king, but a religious observation of that political maxim, The king can do no wrong.

His lordship adds, that "they profanely and blasphemously applied what had been spoken by the prophets against the most wicked and most impious kings, to stir up the people against their most gracious sovereign." If this were really the case, yet the king's divines came not behind them in applying the absolute dominion of the kings of Judah in support of the unbounded prerogative of the kings of England, and in cursing the parliament, and pronouncing damnation upon all who died in their service. I could produce a large catalogue of shocking expressions to this purpose, but I wish such offences buried in oblivion, and we ought not to form our judgments of great bodies of men, from the excesses of a few.

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<sup>1</sup> Baxter's Life, p. 34.

<sup>2</sup> Dr. Grey, who mistakes this for the assertion of Mr. Baxter instead of Mr. Neal, opposes to it his own remark on the fast-sermons between the year 1640 and the death of the king; from which, he says, he could produce hundreds of instances for the disproof of what is said above. As a specimen, he quotes many passages from sermons of the most popular and leading men of those times. Some of these passages, it appears to me, point strongly at the king, and go to prove that royal personages are amenable for evil conduct. But, besides that they are given detached from their connexion, it is to be considered, that if Mr. Neal had read the same discourses, they would affect his mind differently from what they did Dr. Grey; who, through all his animadversions, appears to have looked on Charles as an immaculate prince, and to have been a disciple to the advocates for passive obedience and nonresistance.—ED.

We shall have an opportunity, hereafter, to compare the learning of the Puritan divines<sup>1</sup> with the royalists, when it will appear, that there were men of no less eminence for literature with the parliament than with the king, as the Seldens, the Lightfoots, the Cudworths, the Pococks, the Whichcotes, the Arrowsmiths, &c.; but as to their morals, their very adversaries will witness for them. Dr. G. Bates, an eminent royalist, in his *Elenchus*, gives them this character, “*Moribus sevens essent, in concionibus vehementes, precibus et piis officiis prompti, uno verbo ad cætera boni:*” i. e. “They were men of severe and strict morals, warm and affectionate preachers, fervent in prayer, ready to all pious offices, and in a word, otherwise [that is, abating their political principles] good men.” And yet with all their goodness they were unacquainted with the rights of conscience, and when they got the spiritual sword into their hands managed it very little better than their predecessors the bishops.

The clergy who espoused the king’s cause were, the bench of bishops, the whole body of the cathedral, and the major part of the parochial clergy, with the heads, and most of the fellows of both universities, among whom were men of the first rank for learning, politeness, piety, and probity of manners, as archbishop Usher, bishop Hall, Moreton, Westfield, Brownrigge, Prideaux, Dr. Hammond, Saunderson, &c. who joined the king, not merely for the sake of their preferments, but because they believed the unlawfulness of subjects resisting their sovereign in any case whatsoever. Among the parochial clergy were men of no less name and character. Lord Clarendon<sup>2</sup> says, “that if the sermons of those times preached at court were collected together and published, the world would receive the best bulk of orthodox divinity, profound learning, convincing reason, natural powerful eloquence, and admirable devotion, that hath been communicated in any age since the apostles’ time.” And yet, in the very same page, he adds, “There was sometimes preached there, matter very unfit for the place, and scandalous for the persons.” I submit this paragraph to the reader’s judgment; for I must confess, that after having read over several of these court-

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<sup>1</sup> Mr. Neal is here charged with contradicting what he had said p. 159, where he speaks of “the great scarcity of preachers of a learned education.” This is said, when Mr. Neal is representing the difficulty the assembly of divines had to supply the pulpits through the country. This might be the case when speaking of the kingdom at large, and yet there might be some of no less eminence for literature than any who sided with the king. Mr. Neal gives the names of such. But bishop Warburton will not allow, that they were of the parliament-party; “the most that can be said of them is (he adds), that they submitted to the power.” But their acting with the assembly of divines was, certainly, more than a submission to power; it was taking a lead in the affairs of the parliament; this, if the cause had been repugnant to their principles, they might, and as honest men would, have declined doing; as did bishop Usher, Dr. Holdsworth, and the other episcopalian divines who were also chosen to attend the assembly, but who stayed away from it; because it was not, in their opinion, a legal convocation.—ED.

<sup>2</sup> Vol. 1. p. 77.

sermons, I have not been able to discover all that learning and persuasive eloquence which his lordship admires; nor can much be said for their orthodoxy, if the thirty-nine articles be the standard. But whatever decency was observed at court, there was hardly a sermon preached by the inferior clergy within the king's quarters, wherein the parliament divines were not severely exposed and ridiculed, under the character of Puritans, Precisians, Formalists, Sabbatarians, canting hypocrites, &c. Such was the sharpness of men's spirits on both sides!

Among the country clergy there was great room for complaints, many of them being pluralists, non-residents, ignorant and illiterate, negligent of their cures, seldom or never visiting their parishioners, or discharging any more of their function than would barely satisfy the law. They took advantage of the book of sports to attend their parishioners to their wakes and revels, by which means many of them became scandalously immoral in their conversations. Even Dr. Walker admits, that there were among them men of wicked lives, and such as were a reproach and scandal to their function; the particulars of which had better have been buried than left upon record.<sup>1</sup>

The common people that filled up the king's army were of the looser sort; and even the chief officers, as lord Goring, Granville, Wilmot, and others, were men of profligate lives, and made a jest of religion; the private sentinels were soldiers of fortune, and not having their regular pay, lived for the most part upon free plunder; when they took possession of a town, they rifled the houses of all who were called Puritans, and turned their families out of doors. Mr. Baxter says, "that when he lived at Coventry after the battle of Edgehill, there were above thirty worthy ministers in that city who had fled thither for refuge from the soldiers and popular fury, as he himself also had done, though they had never meddled in the wars; among these were, the reverend Mr. Vines, Mr. Anthony Burgess, Mr. Burdal, Mr. Bromshil, Dr. Bryan, Grew, Craddock, and others. And here (says he) I must repeat the great cause of the parliament's strength, and of the king's ruin; the debauched rabble, encouraged by the gentry, and seconded by the common soldiers of his army, took all that were called Puritans for their enemies; so that if any man was noted for a strict and famous preacher, or for a man of a precise and pious life, he was plundered, abused, and put in danger of his life; if a man prayed in his family, or was heard to repeat a sermon, or sing a psalm, they presently cried out, Rebels, roundheads, and all their money and goods proved guilty, however innocent they were themselves. Upon my certain knowledge it was this that filled the armies and garrisons of the parliament with sober and pious men. Thousands had

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<sup>1</sup> Sufferings of the Clergy, p. 72.

no mind to meddle in the wars, but to live peaceably at home, if the rage of the soldiers and drunkards would have suffered them. Some stayed at home till they had been imprisoned; some till they had been plundered twice or thrice over, and had nothing left; others were quite tired out with the insolence of their neighbours; with being quartered upon, and put in continual danger of their lives, and so they sought refuge in the parliament-garrisons.”<sup>1</sup>

This was so notorious, that at length it came to the king’s ear, who, out of mere compassion to his distressed subjects, issued out a proclamation, bearing date November 25, 1642, for the better government of his army; the preamble of which sets forth, “that his majesty, having taken into his princely consideration the great misery and ruin of his subjects, by the plundering, robbing, and spoiling of their houses, and taking from them their money, plate, household-stuff, cattle, and other goods, under pretence of their being disaffected to us and our service, and these unlawful and unjust actions done by divers soldiers of our army, and others sheltering themselves under that title; his majesty, detesting such barbarous proceedings, forbids his officers and soldiers to make any such seizures for the future, without his warrant. And if they go on to plunder and spoil the people, by taking away their money, plate, household-goods, oxen, sheep, or other cattle; or any victuals, corn, hay, or other provisions, going to or from any market, without making satisfaction, his majesty orders them to be proceeded against by martial law.” This was as much as the king could do in his present circumstances; yet it had very little effect, for his majesty having neither money or stores for his army, the officers could maintain no discipline, and were forced to connive at their living at free quarter upon the people.

Thus this unhappy nation was miserably harassed, and thrown into terrible convulsions, by an unnatural civil war; the nobility and gentry, with their dependants, being chiefly with the king; the merchants, tradesmen, substantial farmers, and in general the middle ranks of people, siding with the parliament.

It is of little consequence to inquire, who began this unnatural and bloody war. None will blame them, on whose part it was just and unavoidable, for taking all necessary precautions in their defence, and making use of such advantages as Providence put into their hands to defeat the designs of the enemy, and nothing can excuse the other. His majesty professed before God to his nobles at York, that he had no intention to make war upon his parliament. And in his last speech upon the scaffold he affirms, “that he did not begin a war with the two houses of parliament, but that they began

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<sup>1</sup> Baxter’s Life, p. 44.

with him upon the point of the militia; and if anybody will look upon the dates of the commissions (says his majesty), theirs and mine, they will see clearly that they began these unhappy troubles, and not I." Yet with all due submission to so great an authority, were the dates of commissions for raising the militia the beginning of the war? Were not the crown-jewels first pawned in Holland, and arms, ammunition, and artillery sent over to the king at York? Did not his majesty summon the gentlemen and freeholders to attend him as an extraordinary guard, in his progress in the north, and appear before Hull in a warlike manner, before the raising the militia? Were not these warlike preparations? Dr. Welwood says, and I think all impartial judges must allow, that they look very much that way. Mr. Echard is surprised that "the king did not put himself into a posture of defence sooner;"<sup>1</sup> but he would have ceased to wonder, if he had remembered the words of lord Clarendon: "The reason why the king did not raise forces sooner was, because he had neither arms nor ammunition, and till these could be procured from Holland, let his provocations and sufferings be what they would, he was to submit and bear it patiently." It was therefore no want of will, but mere necessity, that hindered the king's appearing in arms sooner than he did. Father Orleans confesses, that it was agreed with the queen in the cabinet-council at Windsor, that while her majesty was negotiating in Holland, the king should retire to York and there make his first levies. He adds, "that all mankind believed that his majesty was underhand preparing for war, that the sword might cut asunder those knots he had made with his pen."

In order to excuse the unhappy king, who was sacrificed in the house of his friends, a load of guilt is with great justice laid upon the queen, who had a plenitude of power over his majesty, and could turn him about which way she pleased. Bishop Burnet says, "that by the liveliness of her discourse she made great impressions upon the king; so that to the queen's want of judgment, and the king's own temper, the sequel of all his misfortunes was owing."<sup>2</sup> Bishop Kennet adds, that "the king's match with this lady was a greater judgment upon the nation, than the plague which then raged in the land; and that the influence of a stately queen over an affectionate husband, proved very fatal both to prince and people, and laid in a vengeance for future generations." The queen was a great bigot to her religion, and was directed by her father confessor to protect the Roman Catholics, even to the hazard of the king's crown and dignity. Though his majesty usually consulted her in all affairs of state, yet she sometimes presumed to act without him, and to make use of his name without his knowledge. "It was the queen

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<sup>1</sup> Memoirs, p. 64.

<sup>2</sup> History of his Life and Times, vol. 1, p. 39, Scotch edition.

that made all the great officers of state (says lord Clarendon), no preferments were bestowed without her allowance." She was an enemy to parliaments, and pushed the king upon the most arbitrary and unpopular actions, to raise the English government to a level with the French. It was the queen that countenanced the Irish insurrection; that obliged the king to go to the house of commons and seize the five members; and that was at the head of the council at Windsor, in which it was determined to break with the parliament and prepare for war; "this (says the noble historian; viz. the king's perfect adoration of his queen, his resolution to do nothing without her), and his being inexorable as to everything he promised her, were the root and cause of all other grievances. The two houses often petitioned the king not to admit her majesty into his councils, or to follow her advice in matters of state; but he was not to be moved from his too servile regards to her dictates, even to the day of his death.

Sundry others of his majesty's privy-council had their share in bringing on the calamities of the war, though when it broke out they were either dead, dispersed, or imprisoned; as, the duke of Buckingham, earl of Strafford, archbishop Laud, Finch, Windebank, Noy, &c. These had been the most busy actors at the council-table, the star-chamber, and court of high-commission, and were at the head of all the monopolies and illegal projects that enslaved the nation for above twelve years, and might have done it for ever, had they been good husbands of the public treasure, and not brought upon themselves the armed force of a neighbouring nation. The politics of these statesmen were very unaccountable, for as long as they could subsist without a parliamentary supply, they went on with their ship-money, court and conduct money, monopolies, and such-like resources of the prerogative; as soon as the parliament sat, these were suspended, in expectation of a supply from the two houses, before they had inquired into the late inroads upon the constitution; but when they found this could not be obtained, they broke up the parliament in disgust, fined and imprisoned the members for their freedom of speech, and returned to their former methods of arbitrary government. All king Charles's parliaments had been thus dissolved, even to the present, which would undoubtedly have been treated in the same manner, had it not been for the act of continuation.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> This act has been called "a violent breach of the constitution of this government:" but the author who has cast this reproach on it, also observes, that "if this act had not been obtained, perhaps it would have been impossible to oppose the king's attempts with effect." On this ground the "act of continuation" has been called "an act of fidelity of the representatives of the people to their constituents; an instance of the expedience and righteousness of recovering the violated constitution, by means not strictly justifiable when the times are peaceable, and the curators of government just and upright." *Memoirs of Hollis*, vol. 2. p. 591.—ED.

On the other hand, a spirit of English liberty had been growing in the nation for some years, and the late oppressions, instead of extinguishing it, had only kept it under ground, till having collected more strength, it burst out with the greater violence; the patriots of the constitution watched all opportunities to recover it: yet, when they had obtained a parliament by the interposition of the Scots, they were disposed to take a severe revenge upon their late oppressors, and to enter upon too violent measures in order to prevent the return of power into those hands that had so shamefully abused it. The five members of the house of commons, and their friends who were concerned in inviting the Scots into England, saw their danger long before the king came to the house to seize them, which put them upon concerting measures not only to restore the constitution, but to lay further limitations upon the royal power for a time, that they might not be exposed to the mercy of an incensed prince, so soon as he should be delivered from the present parliament. It is true, his majesty offered a general pardon at the breaking up of the session, but these members were afraid to rely upon it, because, as was said, there was no appearance that his majesty would govern by law for the future, any more than he had done before.

The king, being made sensible of the designs and spirit of the commons, watched all opportunities to disperse them, and not being able to gain his point, resolved to leave the two houses, and act no longer in concert with them, which was in effect to determine their power; for to what purpose should they sit, if the king will pass none of their bills; and forbid his subjects to obey any of their votes or ordinances till they had received the royal assent? It was this that dismembered and broke the constitution, and reduced the parliament to this dilemma, either to return home, and leave all things in the hands of the king and queen and their late ministry; or to act by themselves, as the guardians of the people, in a time of imminent danger: had they dissolved themselves, or stood still while his majesty had garrisoned the strong fortresses of Portsmouth and Hull, and got possession of all the arms, artillery, and ammunition of the kingdom; had they suffered the fleet to fall into his majesty's hands, and gone on meekly petitioning for the militia, or for his majesty's return to his two houses of parliament, till the queen was returned with foreign recruits, or the Irish at liberty to send his majesty succours, both they and we must in all probability have been buried in the ruins of the liberties of our country. The two houses were not insensible of the risk they ran in crossing the measures of their sovereign, under whose government they thought they were to live, and who had counsellors about him who would not fail to put him upon the severest reprisals, as soon as the sword of the kingdom should return into his hands; but they apprehended that their own and the public safety was at stake; that the king was preparing to act against them, by raising extraordi-

nary guards to his person, and sending for arms and ammunition from abroad; therefore they ventured to make a stand in their own defence, and to perform such acts of sovereignty as were necessary to put it out of the power of the court, to make them a sacrifice to the resentments of their enemies.

But though in a just and necessary war, it is of little moment to inquire who began it, it is nevertheless of great consequence to consider on which side the justice of it lies. Let us therefore take a short view of the arguments on the king's side, with the parliament's reply.

1. It was argued by the royalists, "that all grievances both real and imaginary were removed by the king's giving up ship-money, by his abolishing the court of honour, the star-chamber, and high-commission, and by his giving up the bishops' votes in parliament."<sup>1</sup>

The parliament writers own these to be very important concessions, though far from comprehending all the real grievances of the nation. The queen was still at the head of his majesty's councils, without whose approbation no considerable affairs of government were transacted. None of the authors of the late oppressions had been brought to justice, except the earl of Strafford; and it is more than probable, if the parliament had been dissolved, they would not only have been pardoned, but restored to favour. Though bishops were deprived of their seats in parliament, yet the defects in the public service, of which the Puritans complained, were almost untouched, nor were any effectual measures taken to prevent the growth of Popery, which threatened the ruin of the Protestant religion.

2. It was argued farther, "that the king had provided against any future oppressions of the subjects by consenting to the act for triennial parliaments."

To this it was replied, that the triennial act, in the present situation of the court, was not a sufficient security of our laws and liberties; for suppose at the end of three years, when the king was in full possession of the regal power, having all the forts and garrisons, arms and ammunition, of the kingdom at his disposal, with his old ministry about him, the council should declare, that the necessity of his majesty's affairs obliged him to dispense with the triennial act, what sheriff of a county, or other officer, would venture to put it in execution? Besides, had not the king, from this very principle, suspended and broke through the laws of the land for twelve years together before the meeting of this parliament? And did not his majesty yield to the new laws with a manifest reluctance? Did he not affect to call them acts of grace, and not of justice? Were not some of them extorted from him by such arguments as these: "that his consent to them being forced, they

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<sup>1</sup> Clarendon, vol. 1. p. 262.



were in themselves invalid, and might be avoided in better times?” Lord Clarendon says,<sup>1</sup> he had reason to believe this; and if his lordship believed it, I cannot see how it can reasonably be called in question. Bishop Burnet is of the same mind, and declares, in the history of his life and times, “that his majesty never came into his concessions seasonably, nor with a good grace; all appeared to be extorted from him: and there were grounds to believe, that he intended not to stand to them any longer than he lay under that force that visibly drew them upon him, contrary to his own inclinations.” To all which we may add the words of father Orleans the Jesuit, who says, “that all mankind believed at that time, that the king did not grant so much but in order to revoke all.”<sup>2</sup>

3. It was said, “that the king had seen his mistake, and had since vowed and protested, in the most solemn manner, that for the future he would govern according to law.”

To this it was replied, that if the petition of right so solemnly ratified from the throne, in presence of both houses of parliament, was so quickly broke through, what dependence could be had upon the royal promise? For though the king himself might be a prince of virtue and honour, yet his speeches, says Mr. Rapin, were full of ambiguities and secret reserves, that left room for different interpretations; besides, many things were transacted without his knowledge, and therefore so long as the queen was at the head of his councils, they looked upon his royal word only as the promise of a minor, or of a man under superior direction; which was the most favourable interpretation that could be made of the many violations of it in the course of fifteen years. “The queen, who was directed by Popish counsels (says bishop Burnet), could, by her sovereign power, make the king do whatsoever she pleased.”

4. It was farther urged, “that the parliament had invaded the royal prerogative, and usurped the legislative power, without his majesty’s consent, by claiming the militia, and the approbation of the chief officers both civil and military, and by requiring obedience to their votes and ordinances.”

This the two houses admitted, and insisted upon it as their right, in cases of necessity and extreme danger; of which necessity and danger, they, as the guardians of the nation, and two parts in three of legislature, were the proper judges: “The question is not (say they) whether the king be the fountain of justice and protection, or whether the execution of the laws belongs primarily to him? But if the king shall refuse to discharge that duty and trust, and shall desert his parliament, and in a manner abdicate the government, whether there be not a power in the two houses to provide for the

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<sup>1</sup> Clarendon, vol. 1. p. 430.

<sup>2</sup> History of his Own Times, vol. 1. p. 40. Edinburgh.

safety and peace of the kingdom? or, if there be no parliament sitting, whether the nation does not return to a state of nature, and is not at liberty to provide for its own defence by extraordinary methods?" This seems to have been the case in the late glorious revolution of king William and queen Mary, when the constitution being broken, a convention of the nobility and commonalty was summoned without the king's writ, to restore the religion and liberties of the people, and place the crown upon another head.

5. The king on his part maintained, that "there was no danger from him, but that all the danger was from a malignant party in the parliament, who were subverting the constitution in church and state. His majesty averred, that God and the laws had intrusted him with the guardianship and protection of his people, and that he would take such care of them as he should be capable of answering for it to God."

With regard to dangers and fears, the parliament appealed to the whole world, whether there were not just grounds for them, after his majesty had violated the petition of right, and attempted to break up the present parliament, by bringing his army to London; after he had entered their house with an armed force, to seize five of their members; after he had deserted his parliament, and resolved to act no longer in concert with them; after his majesty had begun to raise forces under pretence of an extraordinary guard to his person, and endeavoured to get the forts and ammunition of the kingdom into his possession, against the time when he should receive supplies from abroad; after they had seen the dreadful effects of a bloody and unparalleled insurrection and massacre of the Protestants in Ireland, and were continually alarmed with the increase and insolent behaviour of the Papists at home; and lastly, after they had found it impracticable, by their most humble petitions and remonstrances, to remove the queen and her cabal of Papists from the direction of the king's councils; after all these things (say they) "we must maintain the grounds of our fears to be of that moment, that we cannot discharge the trust and duty which lie upon us, unless we do apply ourselves to the use of those means, which God and the laws have put into our hands, for the necessary defence and safety of the kingdom."<sup>1</sup>

There were certainly strong and perhaps unreasonable jealousies and apprehensions of danger on both sides. The king complained that he was driven from Whitehall by popular tumults, where neither his person nor family could remain in safety. He was jealous (as he said) for the laws and liberties of his people, and was apprehensive that his parliament intended to change the constitution, and wrest the sceptre and sword out of his royal hands. On the other side, the two houses had their fears and distrusts of their own and the public safety; they were apprehensive, that if they put the

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<sup>1</sup> Rapin, p. 468.

forts and garrisons and all the strength of the kingdom into his majesty's power, as soon as they were dissolved, he, by the influence of his queen and his old counsellors, would return to his maxims of arbitrary government, and never call another parliament; that he would take a severe revenge upon those members who had exposed his measures, and disgraced his ministers; and in a word, that he would break through the late laws, as having been extorted from him by force or violence; but it was very much in the king's power, even at the treaty of Uxbridge in 1644–5, to have removed these distrusts, and thereby have saved both himself, the church, and the nation; for, as the noble historian observes, "the parliament took none of the points of controversy less to heart, or were less united in anything, than in what concerned the church."<sup>1</sup> And with regard to the state, that "many of them were for peace, provided they might have indemnity for what was past, and security for time to come." Why then were not this indemnity and security offered? which must necessarily have divided the parliamentarians, and obliged the most rigorous and violent to recede from their high and exorbitant demands; and by consequence have restored the king to the peaceable possession of his throne.

Upon the whole, if we believe with the noble historian, and the writers on his side, "that the king was driven by violence from his palace at Whitehall, and could not return with safety; that all real and imaginary grievances of church and state were redressed; and that the kingdom was sufficiently secured from all future inroads of Popery and arbitrary power by the laws in being;" then the justice and equity of the war were most certainly with the king. Whereas, if we believe "that the king voluntarily deserted his parliament, and that it was owing alone to his majesty's own peremptory resolution, that he would not return (as lord Clarendon admits).—If by this means the constitution was broken, and the ordinary courts of justice necessarily interrupted.—If there were sundry grievances still to be redressed, and the king resolved to shelter himself under the laws in being, and to make no farther concessions. If there were just reasons to fear," with bishop Burnet and father Orleans, that the king "would abide by the late laws no longer than he was under that force that brought them upon him." In a word, "if in the judgment of the majority of lords and commons, the kingdom was in imminent danger of the return of Popery, and arbitrary power, and his majesty would not condescend so much as to a temporary security for their satisfaction;" then we must conclude, that the cause of the parliament at the commencement of the war, and for some years after, was not only justifiable, but commendable and glorious; especially if we believe

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<sup>1</sup> Vol. 2. p. 581. 594.

their own most solemn protestation,<sup>1</sup> in the presence of Almighty God, to the kingdom and to the world; “that no private passion or respect, no evil intention to his majesty’s person, no designs to the prejudice of his just honour or authority, had engaged them to raise forces, and take up arms against the authors of this war in which the kingdom is inflamed.”<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Rushworth, vol. 2. part 3. p. 26.

<sup>2</sup> Bishop Warburton grants, that “Charles was a man of ill faith:” from whence arose the question, “whether he was to be trusted? Here (he adds) we must begin to distinguish. It was one thing, whether those particulars, who had personally offended the king, in the manner by which they extorted this amends from him; and another, whether the public, on all principles of civil government, ought not to have sat down satisfied. I think particulars could not safely take his word; and that the public could not honestly refuse it. You will say then, the leaders in parliament were justified in their mistrust. Here, again, we must distinguish. Had they been private men, we should not dispute it. But they bore another character; they were representatives of the public, and should therefore have acted in that capacity.” Some will consider these distinctions, set up by his lordship, as savouring more of chicanery than solid reasoning. The simple question is, Was Charles worthy to be trusted? No! His lordship grants, that he was a man of ill faith. How then could the representatives of the people honestly commit the national interest to a man, whose duplicity and insincerity had repeatedly deceived them: and in deceiving them had deceived the public? If they could not safely take his word for themselves; how could they do it for their constituents? In all their negotiations with him, they had been acting not for themselves only, but for the nation. It was inconsistent with the trust invested in them to sacrifice or risk the national welfare by easy credulity; a credulity, which in their private concerns wisdom and prudence would have condemned. Besides, the insincerity of Charles had been so notorious, they had no ground to suppose that the public could or would take his word: much less that the public would expect or approve of their doing it; to whom the proofs of his insincerity offered themselves immediately and with all their force.—ED.