character which cannot be blemished, I think myself obliged to own once more, his great merit, the service done by him to mankind, the honour to his country, and the pleasure and information which I in particular have received from his worthy labours.

It is possible, that out of detestation to principles which subvert and tear up by the roots all liberty and civil happiness, I may have used some warm expressions against those that maintain them. Such expressions therefore can be applied only to those who have been ever the avowed and active enemies of every thing lovely, valuable, or praiseworthy amongst men. But as to Dr. Pondeaux, however he is fallen into prejudice, perhaps early imbibed, and not since examined by him with his usual accuracy; or however he might intend to serve a pious cause with adventitious helps and precarious supports, which it wanted not: Certain it is, from the whole course of his excellent performance, that he had sincerely at heart the interest of true religion and liberty. A spirit of virtue, piety, good sense, and integrity, and an aversion to oppression, cruelty, and tyranny, shine through his whole history, and animate the same; and neither he nor his history can be too much commended.

But the Doctor is an eminent instance, how little any man ought to be guided by the mere authority of another; since one of the greatest and worthiest men living is capable of falling into such obvious errors. From the greatness of his name and credit alone I was led to these animadversions, and with reluctance I made them. Falcons do not prey upon flies. Other writers, whose characters add no weight to their mistakes, are safe from any censure of mine. For this reason I shall not trouble myself with the party-falsehoods, and pious ribaldry, and blunders, of a modern voluminous writer of English history. His contract and dialogue between Oliver Cromwell and the Devil, is a harmless piece of history, and as entertaining as the rest.6

T

I am, &c.

6. The reference is to Lawrence Eckard’s History of England: From the Beginning of the Reign of King Charles the First to the Restoration of King Charles the Second (London: Printed for Jacob Tonson, 1718). The dialogue between Cromwell and the Devil appears on p. 719.

¶ Liberty proved to be the unalienable Right of all Mankind.

SIR,

I intend to entertain my readers with dissertations upon liberty, in some of my succeeding letters; and shall, as a preface to that design, endeavour to prove in this, that liberty is the unalienable right of all mankind.

All governments, under whatsoever form they are administered, ought to be administered for the good of the society; when they are otherwise administered, they cease to be government, and become usurpation. This being the end of all government, even the most despotick have this limitation to their authority: In this respect, the only difference between the most absolute princes and limited magistrates, is, that in free governments there are checks and restraints appointed and expressed in the constitution itself: In despotick governments, the people submit themselves to the prudence and discretion of the prince alone: But there is still this tacit condition annexed to his power, that he must act by the unwritten laws of discretion and prudence, and employ it for the sole interest of the people, who give it to him, or suffer him to enjoy it, which they ever do for their own sakes.

Even in the most free governments, single men are often trusted with discretionary power: But they must answer for that discretion to those that trust them. Generals of armies and admirals of fleets have often unlimited commissions; and yet are they not answerable for the prudent execution of those commissions? The Council of Ten, in Venice, have absolute power over the liberty and life of every man in the state: But if they should make use of that power to slaughter, abolish, or enslave the senate; and, like

1. The advantages of liberty serve as the main topic of this and the succeeding nine letters.
the Decemviri of Rome, to set up themselves; would it not be lawful for those, who gave them that authority for other ends, to put those ten unlimited traitors to death, any way that they could? The crown of England has been for the most part entrusted with the sole disposal of the money given for the Civil List, often with the application of great sums raised for other publick uses; yet, if the lord-treasurer had applied this money to the dishonour of the King, and ruin of the people (though by the private direction of the crown itself) will any man say that he ought not to have compensated for his crime, by the loss of his head and his estate?

I have said thus much, to shew that no government can be absolute in the sense, or rather nonsense, of our modern dogmatizers, and indeed in the sense too commonly practised: No barbarous conquest; no extorted consent of miserable people, submitting to the chain to escape the sword; no repeated and hereditary acts of cruelty, though called succession, no continuation of violence, though named prescription; can alter, much less abrogate, these fundamental principles of government itself, or make the means of preservation the means of destruction, and render the condition of mankind infinitely more miserable than that of the beasts of the field, by the sole privilege of that reason which distinguishes them from the brute creation.

Force can give no title but to revenge, and to the use of force again; nor could it ever enter into the heart of any man, to give to another power over him, for any other end but to be exercised for his own advantage: And if there are any men mad or foolish enough to pretend to do otherwise, they ought to be treated as idiots or lunatics; and the reason of their conduct must be derived from their folly and frenzy.

All men are born free; liberty is a gift which they receive from God himself; nor can they alienate the same by consent, though possibly they may forfeit it by crimes. No man has power over his own life, or to dispose of his own religion; and cannot consequently transfer the power of either to any body else: Much less can he give away the lives and liberties, religion or acquired property of his posterity, who will be born as free as he himself was born, and can never be bound by his wicked and ridiculous bargain.

The right of the magistrate arises only from the right of private men to defend themselves, to repel injuries, and to punish those who commit them: That right being conveyed by the society to their publick representative, he can execute the same no further than the benefit and security of that society requires he should. When he exceeds his commission, his acts are as extrajudicial as are those of any private officer usurping an unlawful authority, that is, they are void; and every man is answerable for the wrong which he does. A power to do good can never become a warrant for doing evil.

But here arises a grand question, which has perplexed and puzzled the greatest part of mankind: Yet, I think, the answer to it is easy and obvious. The question is, who shall be judge whether the magistrate acts justly, and pursues his trust? To this it is justly said, that if those who complain of him are to judge him, then there is a settled authority above the chief magistrate, which authority must be itself the chief magistrate; which is contrary to the supposition; and the same question and difficulty will recur again upon this new magistracy. All this I own to be absurd; and I aver it to be at least as absurd to affirm, that the person accused is to be the decisive judge of his own actions, when it is certain that he will always judge and determine in his own favour; and thus the whole race of mankind will be left helpless under the heaviest injustice, oppression, and misery, that can afflict human nature.

But if neither magistrates, nor they who complain of magistrates, and are aggrieved by them, have a right to determine decisively, the one for the other; and if there be no common established power, to which both are subject; then every man interested in the success of the contest, must act according to the light and dictates of his own conscience, and inform it as well as he can. Where no judge is nor can be appointed, every man must be his own; that is, when there is no stated judge upon earth, we must

2. In 451 B.C. the Roman constitution was suspended and ten patricians were granted absolute political power while preparing a code of laws for the city. These magistrates were known as the Decemviri.

3. The allowance allotted the crown by Parliament to meet the expenses of the royal household. The first Civil List Act was passed in 1697.
have recourse to heaven, and obey the will of heaven, by declaring ourselves on that which we think the juster side.

If the Senate and people of Rome had differed irreconcilably, there could have been no common judge in the world between them; and consequently no remedy but the last: For that government consisting in the union of the nobles and the people, when they differed, no man could determine between them; and therefore every man must have been at liberty to provide for his own security, and the general good, in the best manner he was able. In that case the common judge ceasing, every one was his own: The government becoming incapable of acting, suffered a political demise: The constitution was dissolved; and there being no government in being, the people were in the state of nature again.

The same must be true, where two absolute princes, governing a country, come to quarrel, as sometimes two Caesars in partnership did, especially towards the latter end of the Roman empire; or where a sovereign council govern a country, and their votes come equally to be divided. In such a circumstance, every man must take that side which he thinks most for the publick good, or choose any proper measures for his own security: For, if I owe my allegiance to two princes agreeing, or to the majority of a council; when between these princes there is no longer any union, nor in that council any majority, no submission can be due to that which is not; and the laws of nature and self-preservation must take place, where there are no other.

The case is still the same, when there is any dispute about the titles of absolute princes, who govern independently on the states of a country, and call none. Here too every man must judge for himself what party he will take, to which of the titles he will adhere; and the like private judgment must guide him, whenever a question arises whether the said prince be an idiot or a lunatick, and consequently whether he be capable or incapable of government. Where there are no states, there can be no other way of judging; but by the judgment of private men the capacity of the prince must be judged, and his fate determined. Lunacy and idiosyncrasy are, I think, allowed by all to be certain disqualifications for government; indeed they are as much so, as if he were deaf, blind, and dumb, or even dead. He who can neither execute an office, nor appoint a deputy, is not fit for one.

Now I would fain know, why private men may not as well use their judgment in an instance that concerns them more; I mean that of a tyrannical government, of which they hourly feel the sad effects, and sorrowful proofs; whereas they have not by far the equal means of coming to a certainty about the natural incapacity of their governor. The persons of great princes are known but to few of their subjects, and their parts to much fewer; and several princes have, by the management of their wives, or ministers, or murderers, reigned a good while after they were dead. In truth, I think it is as much the business and right of the people to judge whether their prince be good or bad, whether a father or an enemy, as to judge whether he be dead or alive; unless it be said (as many such wise things have been said) that they may judge whether he can govern them, but not whether he does; and that it behoves them to put the administration in wiser hands, if he be a harmless fool, but it is impious to do it, if he be only a destructive tyrant; that want of speech is a disqualification, but want of humanity, none.

That subjects were not to judge of their governors, or rather for themselves in the business of government, which of all human things concerns them most, was an absurdity that never entered into the imagination of the wise and honest ancients: Who, following for their guide that everlasting reason, which is the best and only guide in human affairs, carried liberty, and human happiness, the legitimate offspring and work of liberty, to the highest pitch that they were capable of arriving at. But the above absurdity, with many others as monstrous and mischievous, were reserved for the discovery of a few wretched and dreaming Mahometans and Christian monks, who, ignorant of all things, were made, or made themselves, the directors of all things; and bewitching the world with holy lies and unaccountable ravings, dressed up in barbarous words and uncouth phrases, bent all their fairy force against common sense and common liberty and truth, and founded a pernicious, absurd, and visionary empire upon their ruins. Systems without sense, propositions without truth, religion without reason,
a rampant church without charity, severity without justice, and
government without liberty or mercy, were all the blessed handy-
works of these religious mad-men, and godly pedants; who, by
pretending to know the other world, cheated and confounded this;
Their enmity to common sense, and want of it, were their warrants
for governing the sense of all mankind: By lying, they were
thought the champions of the truth; and by their fooleries, impie-
ties, and cruelty, were esteemed the favourites and confidants of
the God of wisdom, mercy, and peace.

These were the men, who, having demolished all sense and
human judgment, first made it a principle, that people were not to
judge of their governor and government, nor to meddle with it; nor
to preserve themselves from publack destroyers, falsely calling them-
selves governors: Yet these men, who thus set up for the support
and defenders of government, without the common honesty of dis-
tinguishing the good from the bad, and protection from murder
and depredation, were at the same time themselves the constant and
avowed troublemakers of every government which they could not direct
and command; and every government, however excellent, which
did not make their reveries its own rules, and themselves alone its
peculiar care, has been honoured with their professed hatred; whilst
tyants and publack butchers, who flattered them, have been defied.
This was the poor state of Christendom before the Reformation;
and I wish I could say, of no parts of it since.

This barbarous anarchy in reasoning and politicks, has
made it necessary to prove propositions which the light of nature
had demonstrated. And, as the apostles were forced to prove to the
misled Gentiles, that they were no gods which were made with
hands; I am put to prove, that the people have a right to judge,
whether their governors were made for them, or they for their
governors? Whether their governors have necessary and natural
qualifications? Whether they have any governors or no? And
whether, when they have none, every man must not be his own? If
therefore return to instances and illustrations from facts which
cannot be denied; though propositions as true as facts may, by
those especially who are defective in point of modesty or
discernment.

In Poland, according to the constitution of that country, it
is necessary, we are told, that, in their diets, the consent of every
man present must be had to make a resolve effectual:4 And there-
fore, to prevent the cutting of people's throats, they have no rem-
edy but to cut the throats of one another; that is, they must pull
out their sabres, and force the refractory members (who are always
the minority) to submit. And amongst us in England, where a jury
cannot agree, there can be no verdict; and so they must fast till
they do, or till one of them is dead, and then the jury is dissolved.

This, from the nature of things themselves, must be the
constant case in all disputes between dominion and property.
Where the interest of the governors and that of the governed
clash, there can be no stated judge between them: To appeal to a
foreign power, is to give up the sovereignty; for either side to sub-
mitt, is to give up the question: And therefore, if they themselves
do not amicably determine the dispute between themselves,
heaven alone must. In such case, recourse must be had to the first
principles of government itself; which being a departure from the
state of nature, and a union of many families forming themselves
into a political machine for mutual protection and defence, it is
evident, that this formed relation can continue no longer than the
machine subsists and can act; and when it does not, the individuals
must return to their former state again. No constitution can pro-
vide against what will happen, when that constitution is dissolved.
Government is only an appointment of one or more persons, to do
certain actions for the good and emolument of the society; and if
the persons thus interested will not act at all, or act contrary to
their trust, their power must return of course to those who gave it.

Suppose, for example, the Grand Monarch, as he was
called, had bought a neighbouring kingdom, and all the lands in it,
from the courtiers, and the majority of the people's deputies; and
amongst the rest, the church-lands, into the bargain, with the con-
sent of their convocation or synod, or by what other name that
assembly was called; would the people and clergy have thought
themselves obliged to have made good this bargain, if they could

4. The unanimity rule, known as the liberum veto, effectively governed Polish
parliamentary practice until the Third Polish Partition in 1795.
have helped it? I dare say that neither would; but, on the contrary, that the people would have had the countenance of these reverend patriots to have told their representatives in round terms, that they were chosen to act for the interest of those that sent them, and not for their own; that their power was given them to protect and defend their country, and not to sell and enslave it.

This supposition, as wild as it seems, yet is not absolutely and universally impossible. King John actually sold the kingdom of England to his Holiness:[5] And there are people in all nations ready to sell their country at home; and such can never have any principles to withhold them from selling it abroad.

It is foolish to say, that this doctrine can be mischievous to society, at least in any proportion to the wild ruin and fatal calamities which must befall, and do befall the world, where the contrary doctrine is maintained: For, all bodies of men subsisting upon their own substance, or upon the profits of their trade and industry, find their account so much in ease and peace, and have justly such terrible apprehensions of civil disorders, which destroy every thing that they enjoy; that they always bear a thousand injuries before they return one, and stand under the burdens as long as they can bear them; as I have in another letter observed. 6

What with the force of education, and the reverence which people are taught, and have been always used to pay to princes; what with the perpetual harangues of flatterers, the gaudy pagantry and outside of power, and its gilded ensigns, always glittering in their eyes; what with the execution of the laws in the sole power of the prince; what with all the regular magistrates, pompous guards and standing troops, with the fortified towns, the artillery, and all the magazines of war, at his disposal; besides large revenues, and multitudes of followers and dependants, to support and abet all that he does: Obedience to authority is so well secured, that it is wild to imagine, that any number of men, formidable enough to disturb a settled state, can unite together and hope to

5. As part of the settlement ending his struggle with Pope Innocent III, which had resulted in an interdict being placed on England in 1209, John gave England to the Papacy and received it back as a gift.

6. See, for example, Letter No. 32 (June 10, 1721).

overturn it, till the publick grievances are so enormous, the oppression so great, and the disaffection so universal, that there can be no question remaining, whether their calamities be real or imaginary, and whether the magistrate has protected or endeavoured to destroy his people.

This was the case of Richard II, Edward II, and James II and will ever be the case under the same circumstances. No society of men will groan under oppressions longer than they know how to throw them off; whatever unnatural whims and fairy notions idle and sedentary babblers may utter from colleges and cloisters; and teach to others, for vile self-ends, doctrines, which they themselves are famous for not practising.

Upon this principle of people's judging for themselves, and resisting lawless force, stands our late happy Revolution, and with it the just and rightful title of our most excellent sovereign King George, to the scepter of these realms; a scepter which he has, and I doubt not will ever sway, to his own honour, and the honour, protection, and prosperity of us his people.

T

I am, &c.

NO. 60. SATURDAY, JANUARY 6, 1721.

All Government proved to be instituted by Men, and only to intend the general Good of Men.

SIR,

There is no government now upon earth, which owes its formation or beginning to the immediate revelation of God, or can derive its existence from such revelation: It is certain, on the contrary, that the rise and institution or variation of government, from time to time, is within the memory of men or of histories; and that every government, which we know at this day in the world, was established by the wisdom and force of mere men, and by the concurrence of means and causes evidently human. Government therefore can have no power, but such as men can give, and such as they
actually did give, or permit for their own sake: Nor can any government be in fact framed but by consent, if not of every subject, yet of as many as can compel the rest; since no man, or council of men, can have personal strength enough to govern multitudes by force, or can claim to themselves and their families any superiority, or natural sovereignty over their fellow-creatures naturally as good as them. Such strength, therefore, where-ever it is, is civil and accumulative strength, derived from the laws and constitutions of the society, of which the governors themselves are but members.

So that to know the jurisdiction of governors, and its limits, we must have recourse to the institution of government, and ascertain those limits by the measure of power, which men in the state of nature have over themselves and one another: And as no man can take from many, who are stronger than him, what they have no mind to give him; and he who has not consent must have force, which is itself the consent of the stronger; so no man can give to another either what is none of his own, or what in its own nature is inseparable from himself; as his religion particularly is.

Every man's religion is his own; nor can the religion of any man, of what nature or figure soever, be the religion of another man, unless he also chooses it; which action utterly excludes all force, power, or government. Religion can never come without conviction, nor can conviction come from civil authority; religion, which is the fear of God, cannot be subject to power, which is the fear of man. It is a relation between God and our own souls only, and consists in a disposition of mind to obey the will of our great Creator, in the manner which we think most acceptable to him. It is independent upon all human directions, and superior to them; and consequently uncontrollable by external force, which cannot reach the free faculties of the mind, or inform the understanding, much less convince it. Religion therefore, which can never be subject to the jurisdiction of another, can never be alienated to another, or put in his power.

Nor has any man in the state of nature power over his own life, or to take away the life of another, unless to defend his own, or what is as much his own, namely, his property. This power therefore, which no man has, no man can transfer to another.

Nor could any man in the state of nature, have a right to violate the property of another; that is, what another had acquired by his art or labour; or to interrupt him in his industry and enjoyments, as long as he himself was not injured by that industry and those enjoyments. No man therefore could transfer to the magistrate that right which he had not himself.

No man in his senses was ever so wild as to give an unlimited power to another to take away his life, or the means of living, according to the caprice, passion, and unreasonable pleasure of that other: But if any man restrained himself from any part of his pleasures, or parted with any portion of his acquisitions, he did it with the honest purpose of enjoying the rest with the greater security, and always in subserviency to his own happiness, which no man will or can willingly and intentionally give away to any other whatsoever.

And if any one, through his own inadvertence, or by the fraud or violence of another, can be drawn into so foolish a contract, he is relievable by the eternal laws of God and reason. No engagement that is wicked and unjust can be executed without injustice and wickedness: This is so true, that I question whether there be a constitution in the world which does not afford, or pretend to afford, a remedy for relieving ignorant, distressed, and unwary men, trepanned into such engagements by artful knaves, or frightened into them by imperious ones. So that here the laws of nature and general reason supersede the municipal and positive laws of nations; and no where oftener than in England. What else was the design, and ought to be the business, of our courts of equity? And I hope whole countries and societies are no more exempted from the privileges and protection of reason and equity, than are private particulars.

Here then is the natural limitation of the magistrate's authority: He ought not to take what no man ought to give; nor exact what no man ought to perform: All he has is given him, and those that gave it must judge of the application. In government there is no such relation as lord and slave, lawless will and blind submission; nor ought to be amongst men: But the only relation is that of father and children, patron and client, protection and alle-
giance, benefaction and gratitude, mutual affection and mutual assistance.

So that the nature of government does not alter the natural right of men to liberty, which in all political societies is alike their due: But some governments provide better than others for the security and impartial distribution of that right. There has been always such a constant and certain fund of corruption and malignity in human nature, that it has been rare to find that man, whose views and happiness did not center in the gratification of his appetites, and worst appetites, his luxury, his pride, his avarice, and lust of power; and who considered any publick trust reposed in him, with any other view, than as the means to satiate such unruly and dangerous desires! And this has been most eminently true of great men, and those who aspired to dominion. They were first made great for the sake of the publick, and afterwards at its expense. And if they had been content to have been moderate traitors, mankind would have been still moderately happy; but their ambition and treason observing no degrees, there was no degree of vileness and misery which the poor people did not often feel.

The appetites therefore of men, especially of great men, are carefully to be observed and stayed, or else they will never stay themselves. The experience of every age convinces us, that we must not judge of men by what they ought to do, but by what they will do; and all history affords but few instances of men trusted with great power without abusing it, when with security they could. The servants of society, that is to say, its magistrates, did almost universally serve it by seizing it, selling it, or plundering it; especially when they were left by the society unlimited as to their duty and wages. In that case these faithful stewards generally took all; and, being servants, made slaves of their masters.

For these reasons, and convinced by woeful and eternal experience, societies found it necessary to lay restraints upon their magistrates or publick servants, and to put checks upon those who would otherwise put chains upon them; and therefore these societies set themselves to model and form national constitutions with such wisdom and art, that the publick interest should be consulted and carried at the same time, when those entrusted with the administration of it were consulting and pursuing their own.

Hence grew the distinction between arbitrary and free governments: Not that more or less power was vested in the one than in the other; nor that either of them lay under less or more obligations, in justice, to protect their subjects, and study their ease, prosperity, and security, and to watch for the same. But the power and sovereignty of magistrates in free countries was so qualified, and so divided into different channels, and committed to the direction of so many different men, with different interests and views, that the majority of them could seldom or never find their account in betraying their trust in fundamental instances. Their emulation, envy, fear, or interest, always made them spies and checks upon one another. By all which means the people have often come at the heads of those who forfeited their heads, by betraying the people.

In despotic governments things went far otherwise; those governments having been framed otherwise; if the same could be called governments, where the rules of publick power were dictated by private and lawless lust; where folly and madness often swayed the scepter, and blind rage wielded the sword. The whole wealth of the state, with its civil or military power, being in the prince, the people could have no remedy but death and patience, while he oppressed them by the lump, and butchered them by thousands: Unless perhaps the ambition or personal resentments of some of the instruments of his tyranny procured a revolt, which rarely mended their condition.

The only secret therefore in forming a free government, is to make the interests of the governors and of the governed the same, as far as human policy can contrive. Liberty cannot be preserved any other way. Men have long found, from the weakness and depravity of themselves and one another, that most men will act for interest against duty, as often as they dare. So that to engage them to their duty, interest must be linked to the observance of it, and danger to the breach of it. Personal advantages and security, must be the rewards of duty and obedience; and disgrace, torture, and death, the punishment of treachery and corruption.

Human wisdom has yet found out but one certain expedient to effect this; and that is, to have the concerns of all directed by
all, as far as possibly can be: And where the persons interested are
taxeous, or live too distant to meet together on all emergen-
cies, they must moderate necessity by prudence, and act by deput-
ties, whose interest is the same with their own, and whose property is
so intermingled with theirs, and so engaged upon the same bot-
tom, that principals and deputies must stand and fall together.
When the deputies thus act for their own interest, by acting for
the interest of their principals; when they can make no law but what
they themselves, and their posterity, must be subject to; when they
can give no money, but what they must pay their share of; when
they can do no mischief, but what must fall upon their own heads
in common with their countrymen; their principals may then
expect good laws, little mischief, and much frugality.

Here therefore lies the great point of nicety and care in
forming the constitution, that the persons entrusted and repre-
senting, shall either never have any interest detached from the
persons entrusting and represented, or never the means to pursue
it. Now to compass this great point effectually, no other way is left,
but one of these two, or rather both; namely, to make the deputies
so numerous, that there may be no possibility of corrupting the
majority; or, by changing them so often, that there is no sufficient
time to corrupt them, and to carry the ends of that corruption.
The people may be very sure, that the major part of their deputies
being honest, will keep the rest so; and that they will all be honest,
when they have no temptations to be knaves.

We have some sketch of this policy in the constitution of
our several great companies, where the general court, composed of
all its members, constitutes the legislature, and the consent of that
court is the sanction of their laws; and where the administration
of their affairs is put under the conduct of a certain number chosen
by the whole. Here every man concerned saw the necessity of
securing part of their property, by putting the persons entrusted
under proper regulations; however remiss they may be in taking
care of the whole. And if provision had been made, that, as a third
part of the directors are to go out every year, so none should stay
in above three (as I am told was at first promised), all juggling with
courtiers, and raising great estates by confederacy, at the expense
of the company, had, in a great measure, been prevented; though
there were still wanting other limitations, which might have effec-
tually obviated all those evils.

This was the ancient constitution of England: Our kings
had neither revenues large enough, nor offices gainful and
numerous enough in their disposal, to corrupt any considerable
number of members; nor any force to frighten them. Besides, the
same Parliament seldom or never met twice: For, the serving in it
being found an office of burden, and not of profit, it was thought
reasonable that all men qualified should, in their turns, leave their
families and domestick concerns, to serve the publick; and their
bounties bore their charges. The only grievance then was, that
they were not called together often enough, to redress the griev-
ances which the people suffered from the court during their inter-
mission: And therefore a law was made in Edward III's time, that
Parliaments should be held but once a year.

But this law, like the late Queen's Peace, did not execute
itself; and therefore the court seldom convened them, but when
they wanted money, or had other purposes of their own to serve;
and sometimes raised money without them: Which arbitrary pro-
ceeding brought upon the publick numerous mischiefs; and, in the
reign of King Charles I, a long and bloody civil war. In that reign
an act was passed, that they should meet of themselves, if they
were not called according to the direction of that law; which was
worthily repealed upon the restoration of King Charles II.
And in the same kind fit, a great revenue was given him for life, and
continued to his brother. By which means these princes were enabled
to keep standing troops, to corrupt Parliaments, or to live without
them; and to commit such acts of power as brought about, and
indeed forced the people upon the late happy Revolution. Soon

1. The statute was passed in 1562 (4 Edw. III, c. 14) and was similar in nature
to one previously enacted in 1530.

2. The Peace of Utrecht, a series of treaties signed in Apr. 1713, which ended
the War of the Spanish Succession. The settlements agreed to were overturned
when Philip V of Spain, in 1717 and 1718, sent an expeditionary force that
seized Sardinia and Sicily.

3. The reference is to the Triennial Act of 1641 (16 Car. I, c. 1). It was
repealed in 1664 upon passage of a new act (16 Car. II, c. 1).
after which a new act was passed, that Parliaments should be
rechose once in three years: Which law was also repealed, upon
his Majesty's accession to the throne; that the present Parliament
might have time to rectify those abuses which we labour under,
and to make regulations proper to prevent them all for the future.
All which has since been happily effected; and, I bless God, we are
told, that the people will have the opportunity to thank them, in
another election, for their great services to their country. I shall be
always ready, on my part, to do them honour, and pay them my
acknowledgments, in the most effectual manner in my power. But
more of this in the succeeding papers.

T

I am, &c.

NO. 61. SATURDAY, JANUARY 13, 1721.

How free Governments are to be framed so as to last,
and how they differ from such as are arbitrary.

Sir,

The most reasonable meaning that can be put upon this apo-
thegm, that virtue is its own reward, is, that it seldom meets
with any other. God himself, who having made us, best knows our
natures, does not trust to the intrinsic excellence and native
beauty of holiness alone, to engage us in its interests and pursuits,
but recommends it to us by the stronger and more affecting
motives of rewards and punishments. No wise man, therefore, will
in any instance of moment trust to the mere integrity of another.
The experience of all ages may convince us, that men, when they
are above fear, grow for the most part above honesty and shame:
And this is particularly and certainly true of societies of men, when
they are numerous enough to keep one another in countenance;
for when the weight of infamy is divided amongst many, no one
sinks under his own burden.

4. 6, 7 W. & M., c. 2 (1694). In 1716, a new statute was passed (1 Gen. 1, st. 2,
c. 38), extending the life of Parliament from its previous three to seven years.

and would do their country there: What with the promises and expectations given to others, who by court-influence, and often by court-money, carried their elections: What by artful caresses, and the familiar and deceitful addresses of great men to weak men: What with luxurious dinners, and rivers of Burgundy, Champaign, and Tokay, thrown down the throats of gluttons; and what with pensions, and other personal gratifications, bestowed where wind and smoke would not pass for current coin: What with party watch-words and imaginary terrors, spread amongst the drunken squires, and the deluded and enthusiastick bigots, of dreadful designs in embryo, to blow up the Church, and the Protestant interest; and sometimes with the dread of mighty invasions just ready to break upon us from the man in the moon: I say, by all these corrupt arts, the representatives of the English people, in former reigns, have been brought to betray the people, and to join with their oppressors. So much are men governed by artful applications to their private passions and interest. And it is evident to me, that if ever we have a weak or an ambitious prince, with a ministry like him, we must find out some other resources, or acquiesce in the loss of our liberties. The course and consistancy of human affairs will not suffer us to live always under the present righteous administration.

So that I can see no means in human policy to preserve the publick liberty and a monarchical form of government together, but by the frequent fresh elections of the people's deputies: This is what the writers in politics call rotation of magistracy. Men, when they first enter into magistracy, have often their former condition before their eyes: They remember what they themselves suffered, with their fellow-subjects, from the abuse of power, and how much they blamed it; and so their first purposes are to be humble, modest, and just; and probably, for some time, they continue so. But the possession of power soon alters and vitiates their hearts, which are at the same time sure to be leavened, and puffed up to an unnatural size, by the deceitful incense of false friends, and by the prostrate submission of parasites. First, they grow indifferent to all their good designs, then drop them: Next, they lose their modera-

tion; afterwards, they renounce all measures with their old acquaintance and old principles; and seeing themselves in magnifying glasses, grow, in conceit, a different species from their fellow-subjects; and so by too sudden degrees become insolent, rapacious and tyrannical, ready to catch at all means, often the vilest and most oppressive, to raise their fortunes as high as their imaginary greatness. So that the only way to put them in mind of their former condition, and consequently of the condition of other people, is often to reduce them to it; and to let others of equal capacities share of power in their turn: This also is the only way to qualify men, and make them equally fit for dominion and subjection.

A rotation therefore, in power and magistracy, is essentially necessary to a free government: It is indeed the thing itself; and constitutes, animates, and informs it, as much as the soul constitutes the man. It is a thing sacred and inviolable, where-ever liberty is thought sacred; nor can it ever be committed to the disposal of those who are trusted with the preservation of national constitutions: For though they may have the power to model it for the publick advantage, and for the more effectual security of that right; yet they can have none to give it up, or, which is the same thing, to make it useless.

The constitution of a limited monarchy, is the joint concurrence of the crown and of the nobles (without whom it cannot subsist) and of the body of the people, to make laws for the common benefit of the subject; and where the people, through number or distance, cannot meet, they must send deputies to speak in their names, and to attend upon their interest: These deputies therefore act by, under, and in subserviency to the constitution, and have not a power above it and over it.

In Holland, and some other free countries, the states are often obliged to consult their principals; and, in some instances, our own Parliaments have declined entering upon questions of importance; till they had gone into the country, and known the sentiments of those that sent them; as in all cases they ought to consult their inclinations as well as their interest. Who will say, that the Rump, or fag-end of the Long Parliament of forty-one, had
any right to expel such members as they did not like. 2 Or to watch for their absence, that they might seize to themselves, or give up to any body else, the right of those from whose confidence and credulity they derived the authority which they acted by?

With thanks to God, I own, that we have a prince so sensible of this right, and who owes his crown so entirely to the principles laid down, and I think truly proved in these letters; that it is impossible to suspect, either from his inclinations, his interest, or his known justice, that he should ever fall into any measures to destroy that people, who have given him his crown, and supported him in it with so much generosity and expense; or that he should undermine, by that means, the ground upon which he stands. I do therefore the less regard the idle suspicions and calumnies of affected men, who would surmise, that a design is yet on foot to continue this Parliament; a reflection the most impudent and invidious that can be thrown upon his Majesty, his ministers, or his two houses; and a reflection that can come from none but professed, or at least from concealed, Jacobites.

It is no less than an insinuation, that our most excellent sovereign King George has a distrust of his faithful subjects; that he will refuse them the means of their own preservation, and the preservation of that constitution which they chose him to preserve; that he will shut his ears against their modest, just, and dutiful complaints; and that he apprehends danger from meeting them in a new and free-chosen Parliament. This is contrary to the tenor of his whole life and actions; who, as he has received three crowns from their gifts, so he lies under all the ties of generosity, gratitude, and duty, to cherish and protect them, and to make them always great, free, and happy.

It is a most scandalous calumny upon his faithful servants, to suggest that any of them, conscious of guilt and crimes, feared any thing from the most strict and rigorous inspection into their proceedings. Some of them have already stood the fiery trial, and come off triumphant with general approbation. They have,

2. In Dec. 1648, the Puritan army was ordered to forcibly exclude ninety-six Presbyterian members from the Long Parliament, which had originally convened in Nov., 1640. The remaining sixty members were henceforth known as the Rump Parliament.

besides, the advantage of his Majesty’s most gracious pardon, which they did not want, and which was not passed for their sakes. Who therefore can suspect, that patriots so uncorrupt, so prudent, and so popular, will dishonour their master, give up the constitution, ruin their country, and render themselves the objects of universal scorn, detestation, and cursing, by advising the most odious, dangerous, and destructive measures, that ever counsellors gave a prince?

It is a most ungrateful return to our illustrious representatives, to suggest, that men who have left their domestic concerns to serve their country at their own expense, and without any personal advantages, and have bestowed their labours upon the public for a much longer time than their principals had at first a right to expect from them; and have, during all that time, been rectifying the abuses which have crept into our constitution; and have assisted his Majesty in going through two very useful and necessary wars, 3 and have regulated our finances, and the expense of our guards and garrisons, and corrected many abuses in the fleet and the civil administration; and have taken effectual vengeance of all those who were concerned in promoting, procuring, aiding, or assisting the late dreadful South-Sea project: I say, after so many things done by them for the publick honour and prosperity, it is the basest ingratitude to surmise, that any of them would give up that constitution which they were chosen, and have taken so much pains, to preserve.

I do indeed confess, if any invasion were to be feared from Muscovy, Mecklenburg, Spain, or Civita Vecchia; 4 if new provinces were to be obtained abroad, new armies to be raised, or new fleets to be equipped, upon warlike expeditions; if new provision were wanting for the Civil List, and new taxes to be levied, or new companies to be erected to pay off the public debts; if the universities were to be further regulated, or any inspection were necessary into

3. Treichard is apparently referring to “The Fifteen,” the Jacobite Rebellion in Scotland, led by James Edward, the Pretender, which lasted from Sept. 1715 to Feb. 1716, and to the War of the Quadruple Alliance against Spain (1718–1720).

4. Civita Vecchia: a seaport town approximately thirty-five miles from Rome and the chief port of the Papal States.
the increase of fees and exactions of civil officers; if there were the least ground to suspect bribery or corruption in a place where it should not be; or if there were any new project on foot to banish tyrannical and popish principles far out of the land: I say, that in such a scene of affairs, I dare not be altogether so positive in my assertion, that we ought to venture, and at all events to leave to chance, that which we are in possession of already. But as we are at present in the happy state of indolence and security, at peace with all the world and our own consciences; as little more money can be raised from the people, most of it being already in hand, which, according to the rules of good policy, unite dominion and property; as our benefactors too are generous and honourable, our boroughs not insensible or ungrateful, nor the counties themselves inexorable to shining merit; So it is much to be hoped, that another Parliament may be chosen equally deserving, and as zealous for the publick interest; or, at worst, there are honest and tried measures at hand, which will undoubtedly make them so. And I offer this as a conclusive, and I think a most convincing, argument, that the kingdom will be obliged with a new election.

I am, &c.

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An Enquiry into the Nature and Extent of Liberty; with its Loveliness and Advantages, and the vile Effects of Slavery.

SIR,

I have shewn, in a late paper, wherein consists the difference between free and arbitrary governments, as to their frame and constitution; and in this and the following, I shall shew their different spirit and effects. But first I shall shew wherein liberty itself consists.

And it is as foolish to say, that government is concerned to meddle with the private thoughts and actions of men, while they injure neither the society, nor any of its members. Every man is, in nature and reason, the judge and disposer of his own domestick affairs; and, according to the rules of religion and equity, every man must carry his own conscience. So that neither has the magistrate a right to direct the private behaviour of men; nor has the magistrate, or any body else, any manner of power to model people’s speculations, no more than their dreams. Government being intended to protect men from the injuries of one another, and not to direct them in their own affairs, in which no one is interested but themselves; it is plain, that their thoughts and domestick concerns are exempted entirely from its jurisdiction: In truth, men’s thoughts are not subject to their own jurisdiction.

Idiots and lunatics indeed, who cannot take care of themselves, must be taken care of by others: But whilst men have their five senses, I cannot see what the magistrate has to do with actions by which the society cannot be affected; and where he meddles with such, he meddles impertinently or tyrannically. Must the magistrate tie up every man’s legs, because some men fall into ditches? Or, must he put out their eyes, because with them they see lying vanities? Or, would it become the wisdom and care of governors to establish a travelling society, to prevent people, by a proper confinement, from throwing themselves into wells, or over precipices; or to endow a fraternity of physicians and surgeons all over the nation, to take care of their subjects’ health, without being consulted; and to vomit, bleed, purge, and scarify them at pleasure, whether they would or no, just as these established judges of health think fit? If this were the case, what a stir and hubbub should we soon see kept about the established potions and lancets? Every man, woman, or child, though ever so healthy, must be a patient, or woe be to them! The best diet and medicines would soon grow pernicious from any other hand; and their pills alone, however ridiculous, insufficient, or distasteful, would be attended with a blessing.

Let people alone, and they will take care of themselves, and do it best; and if they do not, a sufficient punishment will follow their neglect, without the magistrate’s interposition and penalties. It is plain, that such busy care and officious intrusion into the personal affairs, or private actions, thoughts, and imaginations of men, has in it more craft than kindness; and is only a device to mislead people, and pick their pockets, under the false pretence of the publick and their private good. To quarrel with any man for his opinions, humours, or the fashion of his clothes, is an offence taken without being given. What is it to a magistrate how I wash my hands, or cut my corns; what fashion or colours I wear, or what notions I entertain, or what gestures I use, or what words I pronounce, when they please me, and do him and my neighbour no hurt? As well may he determine the colour of my hair, and control my shape and features.

True and impartial liberty is therefore the right of every man to pursue the natural, reasonable, and religious dictates of his own mind; to think what he will, and act as he thinks, provided he acts not to the prejudice of another; to spend his own money himself, and lay out the produce of his labour his own way; and to labour for his own pleasure and profit, and not for others who are idle, and would live and riot by pilaging and oppression, and those that are like him.

So that civil government is only a partial restraint put by the laws of agreement and society upon natural and absolute liberty, which might otherwise grow licentious: And tyranny is an unlimited restraint put upon natural liberty, by the will of one or a few. Magistracy, amongst a free people, is the exercise of power for the sake of the people; and tyrants abuse the people, for the sake of power. Free government is the protecting the people in their liberties by stated rules: Tyranny is a brutish struggle for unlimited liberty to one or a few, who would rob all others of their liberty, and act by no rule but lawless lust.

So much for an idea of civil liberty. I will now add a word or two, to shew how much it is the delight and passion of mankind; and then shew its advantages.

The love of liberty is an appetite so strongly implanted in the nature of all living creatures, that even the appetite of self-preservation, which is allowed to be the strongest, seems to be contained in it; since by the means of liberty they enjoy the means of
preserving themselves, and of satisfying their desires in the manner which they themselves choose and like best. Many animals can never be tamed, but feel the bitterness of restraint in the midst of the kindest usage; and rather than bear it, grieve and starve themselves to death; and some beat out their brains against their prisons.

Where liberty is lost, life grows precarious, always miserable, often intolerable. Liberty is, to live upon one's own terms; slavery is, to live at the mere mercy of another; and a life of slavery is, to those who can bear it, a continual state of uncertainty and wretchedness, often an apprehension of violence, often the lingering dread of a violent death: But by others, when no other remedy is to be had, death is reckoned a good one. And thus, to many men, and to many other creatures, as well as men, the love of liberty is beyond the love of life.

This passion for liberty in men, and their possession of it, is of that efficacy and importance, that it seems the parent of all the virtues: And therefore in free countries there seems to be another species of mankind, than is to be found under tyrants. Small armies of Greeks and Romans despised the greatest hosts of slaves; and a million of slaves have been sometimes beaten and conquered by a few thousand freemen. Insomuch that the difference seemed greater between them than between men and sheep.

It was therefore well said by Lucullus, when, being about to engage the great King Tigranes's army, he was told by some of his officers, how prodigious great the same was, consisting of between three and four hundred thousand men: “No matter,” said that brave Roman, drawing up his little army of fourteen thousand, but fourteen thousand Romans: “No matter; the lion never enquires into the number of the sheep.” And these royal troops proved no better; for the Romans had little else to do but to kill and pursue; which yet they could scarce do for laughing; so much more were they diverted than animated by the ridiculous dread and sudden flight of these imperial slaves and royal cowards.

2 The armies of Tigranes the Great, King of Armenia, were decisively defeated by a considerably smaller Roman force under Lucius Licinius Lucullus in 69 B.C. The events are recounted in Appian, Roman History, 12.85.
wickedness, is to encourage it; and that they have the least reason to bear evil and oppression from their governors, who of all men are the most obliged to do them good. They therefore detest slavery, and despise or pity slaves; and, adoring liberty alone, as they who see its beauty and feel its advantages always will, it is no wonder that they are brave for it.

Indeed liberty is the divine source of all human happiness. To possess, in security, the effects of our industry, is the most powerful and reasonable incitement to be industrious: And to be able to provide for our children, and to leave them all that we have, is the best motive to beget them. But where property is precarious, labour will languish. The privileges of thinking, saying, and doing what we please, and of growing as rich as we can, without any other restriction, than that by all this we hurt not the publick, nor one another, are the glorious privileges of liberty; and its effects, to live in freedom, plenty, and safety.

These are privileges that increase mankind, and the happiness of mankind. And therefore countries are generally peopled in proportion as they are free, and are certainly happy in that proportion: And upon the same tract of land that would maintain a hundred thousand freemen in plenty, five thousand slaves would starve. In Italy, fertile Italy, men die sometimes of hunger amongst the sheaves, and in a plentiful harvest; for what they sow and reap is none of their own; and their cruel and greedy governors, who live by the labour of their wretched vassals, do not suffer them to eat the bread of their own earning, nor to sustain their lives with their own hands.

Liberty naturally draws new people to it, as well as increases the old stock; and men as naturally run when they dare from slavery and wretchedness, whithersoever they can help themselves. Hence great cities losing their liberty become deserts, and little towns by liberty grow great cities; as will be fully proved before I have gone through this argument. I will not deny, but that there are some great cities of slaves: But such are only imperial cities, and the seats of great princes, who draw the wealth of a continent to their capital, the center of their treasure and luxury. Babylon, Antioch, Seleucia, and Alexandria, were great cities peopled by tyrants; but peopled partly by force, partly by the above reason, and partly by grants and indulgencies. Their power, great and boundless as it was, could not alone people their cities; but they were forced to soften authority by kindness; and having brought the inhabitants together by force, and by driving them captive like cattle, could not keep them together, without bestowing on them many privileges, to encourage the first inhabitants to stay, and to invite more to come.

This was a confession in those tyrants, that their power was mischievous and unjust; since they could not erect one great city, and make it flourish, without renouncing in a great measure their power over it; which, by granting it these privileges, in effect they did. These privileges were fixed laws, by which the trade and industry of the citizens were encouraged, and their lives and properties ascertained and protected, and no longer subjected to the laws of mere will and pleasure: And therefore, while these free cities, enjoying their own liberties and laws, flourished under them, the provinces were miserably harrassed, pillaged, dispeopled, and impoverished, and the inhabitants exhausted, starved, butchered, and carried away captive.

This shews that all civil happiness and prosperity is inseparable from liberty; and that tyranny cannot make men, or societies of men, happy, without departing from its nature, and giving them privileges inconsistent with tyranny. And here is an unanswerable argument, amongst a thousand others, against absolute power in a single man. Nor is there one way in the world to give happiness to communities, but by sheltering them under certain and express laws, irrevocable at any man's pleasure.

There is not, nor can be, any security for a people to trust to the mere will of one, who, while his will is his law, cannot protect them if he would. The number of sycophants and wicked counsellors, that he will always and necessarily have about him, will defeat all his good intentions, by representing things falsely, and persons maliciously; by suggesting danger where it is not, and urging necessity where there is none; by filling their own coffers, under colour of filling his, and by raising money for themselves, pretending the publick exigencies of the state; by sacrificing particular
to their own revenge, under pretence of publick security; and by engaging him and his people in dangerous and destructive wars, for their own profit or fame; by throwing publick affairs into perpetual confusion, to prevent an enquiry into their own behaviour; and by making him jealous of his people, and his people of him, on purpose to manage and mislead both sides.

By all these, and many more wicked arts, they will be constantly leading him into cruel and oppressive measures, destructive to his people, scandalous and dangerous to himself; but entirely agreeable to their own spirit and designs. Thus will they commit all wickedness by their master's authority, against his inclinations, and grow rich by the people's poverty, without his knowledge; and the royal authority will be first a warrant for oppression, afterwards a protection from the punishment due to it. For, in short, the power of princes is often little else but a walking-horse to the intrigues and ambition of their minister.

But if the disposition of such a prince be evil, what must be the forlorn condition of his people, and what door of hope can remain for common protection! The best princes have often evil counsellors, the bad have no other: And in such a case, what bounds can be set to their fury, and to the havock they will make? The instruments and advisers of tyranny and depredation always thrive best and are nearest their ends, when depredation and tyranny run highest: When most is plundered from the people, their share is greatest; we may therefore suppose every evil will befall such a people, without supposing extravagantly. No happiness, no security, but certain misery, and a vile and precarious life, are the blessed terms of such a government—a government which necessarily introduces all evils, and from the same necessity neither must nor can redress any.

The nature of his education, bred up as he ever is in perpetual flattery, makes him haughty and ignorant; and the nature of his government, which subsists by brutish severity and oppression, makes him cruel. He is inaccessible, but by his ministers, whose study and interest will be to keep him from knowing or helping the state of his miserable people. Their master's knowl-

dge in his own affairs, would break in upon their scheme and power; they are not likely to lay before him representations of grievances caused by themselves; nor, if they be the effects of his own barbarity and command, will he hear them.

Even where absolute princes are not tyrants, there ministers will be tyrants. But it is indeed impossible for an arbitrary prince to be otherwise, since oppression is absolutely necessary to his being so. Without giving his people liberty, he cannot make them happy; and by giving them liberty, he gives up his own power. So that to be and continue arbitrary, he is doomed to be a tyrant in his own defence. The oppression of the people, corruption, wicked counsellors, and pernicious maxims in the court, and every where baseness, ignorance, and chains, must support tyranny, or it cannot be supported. So that in such governments there are inevitable grievances, without possible redress; misery, without mitigation or remedy; whatever is good for the people, is bad for their governors; and what is good for the governors, is pernicious to the people.

G

I am, &c.

Civil Liberty produces all Civil Blessings, and how; with the benefic Nature of Tyranny.

Sir,

I go on with my considerations upon liberty, to shew that all civil virtue and happiness, every moral excellency, all politeness, all good arts and sciences, are produced by liberty; and that all wickedness, baseness, and misery, are immediately and necessarily produced by tyranny; which being founded upon the destruction of every thing that is valuable, desirable, and noble, must subsist upon means suitable to its nature, and remain in everlasting enmity to all goodness and every human blessing.
By the establishment of liberty, a due distribution of property and an equal distribution of justice is established and secured. As rapine is the child of oppression, justice is the offspring of liberty, and her handmaid; it is the guardian of innocence, and the terror of vice: And when fame, honour, and advantages, are rewards of virtue, she will be courted for the dover which she brings; otherwise, like beauty without wealth, she may be praised, but more probably will be calumniated, envied, and very often persecuted; while vice, when it is gainful, like rich deformity and prosperous folly, will be admired and pursued. Where virtue is all its own reward, she will be seldom thought any; and few will buy that for a great price, which will sell for none. So that virtue, to be followed, must be endowed, and her credit is best secured by her interest; that is, she must be strengthened and recommended by the publick laws, and embellished by publick encouragements, or else she will be slighted and shunned.

Now the laws which encourage and increase virtue, are the fixed laws of general and impartial liberty; laws, which being the rule of every man's actions, and the measures of every man's power, make honesty and equity their interest. Where liberty is thoroughly established, and its laws equally executed, every man will find his account in doing as he would be done unto, and no man will take from another what he would not part with himself: Honour and advantage will follow the upright, punishment overtake the oppressor. The property of the poor will be as sacred as the privileges of the prince, and the law will be the only bulwark of both. Every man's honest industry and useful talents, while they are employed for the publick, will be employed for himself; and while he serves himself, he will serve the publick: Publick and private interest will secure each other; all will cheerfully give a part to secure the whole, and be brave to defend it.

These certain laws therefore are the only certain beginnings and causes of honesty and virtue amongst men. There may be other motives, I own; but such as only sway particular men, few enough, God knows: And universal experience has shewn us, that they are not generally prevailing, and never to be depended upon. Now these laws are to be produced by liberty alone, and only by such laws can liberty be secured and increased: And to make laws certainly good, they must be made by mutual agreement, and have for their end the general interest.

But tyranny must stand upon force; and the laws of tyranny being only the fickle will and unsteady appetite of one man, which may vary every hour; there can be no settled rule of right or wrong in the variable humours and sudden passions of a tyrant, who, though he may sometimes punish crimes, perhaps more out of rage than justice, will be much more likely to persecute and oppress innocence, and to destroy thousands cruelly, for one that he protects justly. There are instances of princes, who, being out of humour with a favourite, have put to death all that spoke well of him, and afterwards all that did not: Of princes, who put some of their ministers to death, for using one or two of their barbers and buffoons ill; as they did others of their ministers, for using a whole country well: Of princes, who have destroyed, a whole people, for the crimes or virtues of one man; and who, having killed a minion in a passion, have, to revenge themselves upon those who had not provoked them, destroyed in the same unreasonable fury, a hundred of their servants who had no hand in it, as well as all that had; who yet would have been destroyed, had they not done it: Of princes, who have destroyed millions in single mad projects and expeditions: Of princes, who have given up cities and provinces to the revenge or avarice of a vile woman or eunuch, to be plundered, or massacred, or burned, as he or she thought fit to direct: Of princes, who, to gratify the ambition and rapine of a few sorry servants, have lost the hearts of their whole people, and detached themselves from their good subjects, to protect these men in their iniquity, who yet had done them no other service, but that of destroying their reputation, and shaking their throne.

Such are arbitrary princes, whose laws are nothing but sudden fury, or lasting folly and wickedness in uncertain shapes. Hopeful rules these, for the governing of mankind, and making them happy! Rules which are none, since they cannot be depended upon for a moment; and generally change for the worse, if that can be. A subject worth twenty thousand pounds today, may, by a sudden edict issued by the dark counsel of a traitor, be a beggar
tomorrow, and lose his life without forfeiting the same. The property of the whole kingdom shall be great, or little, or none, just at the mercy of a secretary’s pen, guided by a child, or a dotard, or a foolish woman, or a favourite buffoon, or a gamester, or whoever is uppermost for the day; the next day shall alter entirely the yesterday’s scheme, though not for the better; and the same men, in different humours, shall be the authors of both. Thus in arbitrary countries, a law aged two days is an old law; and no law is suffered to be a standing law, but such as are found by long experience to be so very bad, and so thoroughly destructive; that human malice, and all the arts of a tyrant’s court, cannot make them worse. A court which never ceaseth to squeeze, kill, and oppress, till it has wound up human misery so high, that it will go no further. This is so much fact, that I appeal to all history and travels, and to those that read them, whether in arbitrary countries, both in Europe and out of it, the people do not grow daily thinner, and their misery greater; and whether countries are not peopled and rich, in proportion to the liberty which they enjoy and allow.

It has been long my opinion, and is more and more so, that in slavish countries the people must either throw off their cruel and destroying government, and set up another in its room, or in some ages the race of mankind there will be extinct. Indeed, if it had not been for free states, that have repaired and prevented in many places the mischiefs done by tyrants, the earth had been long since a desert, as the finest countries in it are at this day by that means. The gardens of the world, the fruitful and lovely countries of the lower Asia, filled formerly by liberty with people, politeness, and plenty, are now gloriously peopled with owls and grasshoppers; and perhaps here and there, at vast distances, with inhabitants not more valuable, and less happy; a few dirty huts of slaves groaning, starving, and perishing, under the fatherly protection of the Sultan, a prince of the most orthodox standard.

The laws therefore of tyrants are not laws, but wild acts of will, counselled by rage or folly, and executed by dragoons. And as these laws are evil, all sorts of evil must concur to support them. While the people have common-sense left, they will easily see whether they are justly governed, and well or ill used; whether they are protected or plundered: They will know that no man ought to be the director of the affairs of all, without their consent; that no consent can give him unlimited power over their bodies and minds; and that the laws of nature can never be entirely abrogated by positive laws; but that, on the contrary, the entering into society, and becoming subject to government, is only the parting with natural liberty, in some instances, to be protected in the enjoyment of it in others.

So that for any man to have arbitrary power, he must have it without consent; or if it be unduly given at first, they who gave it soon repent when they find its effects. In truth, all those princes that have such power, by keeping up great armies in time of peace, effectually confess that they rule without consent, and dread their people, whose worst enemies they undoubtedly are. An arbitrary prince therefore must preserve and execute his power by force and terror; which yet will not do, without calling in the auxiliary aids and strict allies of tyranny, imposture, and constant oppression. Let this people be ever so low and miserable, if they be not also blind, he is not safe. He must have established deceivers to mislead them with lies, to terrify them with the wrath of God, in case they stir hand or foot, or so much as a thought, to mend their doleful condition; as if the good God was the sanctifier of all villainy, the patron of the worst of all villains! He must have a band of standing cut-throats to murder all men who would scarcely defend their own. And both his cut-throats and his deceivers must go shares with him in his tyranny.

Men will naturally see their interests, feel their condition; will quickly find that the sword, the rack, and the sponge, 1 are not government, but the height of cruelty and robbery; and will never submit to them, but by the united powers of violence and delusion: Their bodies must be chained, their minds enchanted and deceived; the sword kept constantly over their heads, and their spirits kept low with poverty, before they can be brought to be used at the wanton and brutish pleasure of the most dignified and lofty oppressor. So that God must be believed, his creatures must be fettered, frightened, deceived, and starved, and mankind made

1. Sponge: parasite.
base and undone, that one of the worst of them may live riotously and safely amongst his whores, butchers, and buffoons.

Men, therefore, must cease to be men, and in stupidity and tameness grow cattle, before they can become quiet subjects to such a government; which is a complication of all the villainies, falsehood, oppression, cruelty, and depredation, upon the face of the earth: Nor can there be a more provoking, impudent, shocking, and blasphemous position, than to assert all this group of horrors, or the author of them, to be of God’s appointment.

If such kings are by God appointed,

Satan may be the Lord’s anointed.7

And whoever scatters such doctrine, ought, by all the laws of God, reason, and self-preservation, to be put to death as a general poisoner, and advocate for publick destruction.

All men own, that it is the duty of a prince to protect his people; And some have said, that it is their duty to obey him, when he butchers them. An admirable consequence, and full of sweet consolation! His whole business and office is to defend them, and to do them good; therefore they are bound to let him destroy them. Was ever such impudence in an enlightened country? It is perfectly agreeable to the doctrines and followers of Mahomet: But shall Englishmen, who make their own laws, be told, that they have no right to the common air, to the life and fortune which God has given them, but by the permission of an officer of their own making; who is what he is only for their sakes and security, and has no more right to these blessings, nor to do evil, than one of themselves? And shall we be told this by men, who are eternally the first to violate their own doctrines? Or shall they after this have the front to teach us any doctrine, or to recommend to us any one virtue, when they have thus given up all virtue and truth, and every blessing that life affords? For there is no evil, misery, and

wickedness, which arbitrary monarchies do not produce, and must produce; nor do they, nor can they, produce any certain, general, or diffusive good.

I have shewn, in my last, that an arbitrary prince cannot protect his people if he would; and I add here, that he dares not. It would disgust the instruments of his power, and the sharers in his oppression, who will consider the property of the people as the perquisites of their office, and claim a privilege of being little tyrants, for making him a great one: So that every kindness to his subjects will be a grievance to his servants; and he must assert and exercise his tyranny to the height for their sakes, or they will do it for him. And the instances are rare, if any, of any absolute monarch’s protecting in earnest his people against the deprivations of his ministers and soldiers, but it has cost him his life; as may be shewn by many examples in the Roman history: For this the emperor Pertinax was murdered,4 and so was Galba.

Machiavel has told us, that it is impossible for such a prince to please both the people and his soldiers: The one will not be satisfied without protection, nor the other without rapine: To comply with the people, he must give up his power; to comply with his soldiers, he must give up his people. So that to continue what he is, and to preserve himself from the violence of his followers, he must countenance all their villainies and oppression, and be himself no more than an imperial thief at the head of a band of thieves; for which character he is generally well qualified by the base and cruel maxims of that sort of power, and by the vile education almost always given to such a prince by the worst and most infamous of all men, their supple and lying sycophants.

Even the Christian religion can do but little or no good in lands of tyranny, since miracles have ceased; but is made to do infinite harm, by being corrupted and perverted into a deadly engine in the hands of a tyrant and his impostors, to rivet his subjects’ chains, and to confirm them thorough wretches, slaves, and

2. The couplet appears to be Gordon’s own variation on two lines from the anonymous poem, “The Vicar of Bray”:

Kings are by God appointed,

And damned are those who dare resist,

Or touch the Lord’s Anointed.

3. Front: impudence.

4. The reference is to Publius Helvius Pertinax, Roman emperor, whose zeal for reform and strict discipline led to his assassination. He was killed by his praetorian guard in a.d. 185, after a reign of only 187 days.

5. The Prince, chap. 19.
ignorants. I cannot indeed say, that they have the Christian religion at all amongst them, but only use its amiable name to countenance abominable falsehoods, nonsense, and heavy oppression; to defend furious and implacable bigotry, which is the direct characteriskt and spirit of Mahometian, and destroys the very genius and first principles of Christianity. All this will be further shewn hereafter. I shall conclude with observing, that arbitrary monarchy is a constant war upon heaven and earth, against the souls as well as bodies and properties of men.

G

I am, &c.

NO. 64. SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 3, 1721.

Trade and Naval Power the Offspring of Civil Liberty only, and cannot subsist without it.

Sir,

I have in former letters begun to shew, by an induction of particulars, and shall hereafter more fully shew, that population, riches, true religion, virtue, magnanimity, arts, sciences, and learning, are the necessary effects and productions of liberty; and shall spend this paper in proving, that an extensive trade, navigation, and naval power, entirely flow from the same source: In this case, if natural advantage and encouragements be wanting, art, expense, and violence, are lost and thrown away. Nothing is more certain, than that trade cannot be forced; she is a coy and humorous dame, who must be won by flattery and allurements, and always flies force and power; she is not confined to nations, sects, or climates, but travels and wanders about the earth, till she fixes her residence where she finds the best welcome and kindest reception; her contexture is so nice and delicate, that she cannot breathe in a tyrannical air; will and pleasure are so opposite to her nature; that but touch her with the sword, and she dies: But if you give her gentle and kind entertainment, she is a grateful and beneficent

1. See especially Letters 59 through 63 (Dec. 50, 1721, to Jan. 27, 1721).

mistress; she will turn deserts into fruitful fields, villages into great cities, cottages into palaces, beggars into princes, convert cowards into heroes, blockheads into philosophers; will change the coverings of little worms into the richest broacades, the fleeces of harmless sheep into the pride and ornaments of kings, and by a further metamorphosis will transmute them again into armed hosts and haughty fleets.

Now it is absolutely impossible, from the nature of an arbitrary government, that she should enjoy security and protection, or indeed be free from violence, under it. There is not one man in a thousand that has the endowments and abilities necessary to govern a state, and much fewer yet that have just notions how to make trade and commerce useful and advantageous to it; and, amongst these, it is rare to find one who will forego all personal advantages, and devote himself and his labours wholly to his country's interest: But if such a phoenix should arise in any country, he will find it hard to get access to an arbitrary court, and much harder yet to grapple with and stem the raging corruptions in it, where virtue has nothing to do, and vice rides triumphant; where bribery, servile flattery, blind submission, riotous expense, and very often lust and unnatural prostitutions, are the ladders to greatness; which will certainly be supported by the same methods by which it is obtained.

What has a virtuous man to do, or what can he do, in such company? If he pity the people's calamities, he shall be called seditious; if he recommend any publick good, he shall be called preaching fool; if he should live soberly and virtuously himself, they will think him fit only to be sent to a cloister; if he do not flatter the prince and his superiors, he will be thought to envy their prosperity; if he presume to advise his prince to pursue his true interest, he will be esteemed a formidable enemy to the whole court, who will unite to destroy him: In fine, his virtues will be crimes, reproaches, and of dangerous consequence to those who have none. As jails pick up all the little pilfering rogues of a country, so such courts engross all the great ones; who have no business there but to grow rich, and to riot upon the publick calamities, to use all the means of oppression and rapine, to make hasty fortunes