

For the Governor of Edinburgh Castle: These.

Edinburgh, 12th September, 1650.

SIR,

Because I am at some reasonable good leisure, I cannot let such gross mistakes and inconsequential reasonings pass without some notice taken of them.

And first, their ingenuity in relation to the Covenant, for which they commend themselves, doth no more justify their want of ingenuity in answer to Colonel Whalley's Christian offer, concerning which my Letter charged them with guiltiness 'and' deficiency, than their bearing witness to themselves of their adhering to their first principles, and ingenuity in prosecuting the ends of the Covenant, justifies them so to have done merely because they say so. They must give more leave henceforwards; for Christ will have it so, nill they, will they. And they must have patience to have the truth of their doctrines and sayings tried by the sure touchstone of the Word of God. And if there be a liberty and duty of trial, there is a liberty of judgment also for them that may and ought to try: which being so, they must give others leave to say and think that they can appeal to equal judges, Who have been the truest fulfillers of the most real and equitable ends of the Covenant?

But if these Gentlemen do assume to themselves to be the infallible expositors of the Covenant, as they do too much to their auditories 'to be the infallible expositors' of the Scriptures 'also,' counting a different sense and judgement from theirs Breach of Covenant and Heresy,-no marvel they judge of others so authoritatively and severely. But we have not so learned Christ. We look at Ministers as helpers of, not lords over, God's people. I appeal to their consciences, whether any 'person' trying their doctrines, and dissenting, shall not incur the censure of Sectary? And what is this but to deny Christians their liberty, and assume the Infallible Chair? What doth he whom we would not be likened unto do more than this?

In the second place, it is affirmed that the Ministers of the Gospel have been "imprisoned, deprived of their benefices, sequestered, forced to fly from their dwellings, and bitterly threatened, for their faithful declaring of the will of God;" that they have been limited that they might not speak against the "sins and enormities of the Civil Powers;" that to impose the name of railing upon such faithful freedom was the old practice of Malignants against the Preachers of the Gospel, &c.-'Now,' if the Civil Authority, or that part of it which continued faithful to their trust, 'and' true to the ends of the Covenant, did, in answer to their consciences, turn out a Tyrant, in a way which the Christians in aftertimes will mention with honour, and all Tyrants in the world look at with fear; and 'if' while many thousands of saints in England rejoice to think of it, and have received from the hand of God a liberty from the fear of like usurpations, and have cast off him who trod in his Father's steps, doing mischief as far as he was able (whom you have received like fire into your bosom,-of which God will, I trust, in time make you sensible): if, 'I say,'

Ministers railing at the Civil Power, and calling them murderers and the like for doing these things, have been dealt with as you mention,-will this be found a "personal persecution?" Or is sin so, because they say so? They that acted this great Business have given a reason of their faith in the action; and some here are ready further to do it against all gainsayers.

But it will be found that these reprovers do not only make themselves the judges and determiners of sin, that so they may reprove; but they also took liberty to stir up the people to blood and arms; and would have brought a war upon England, as hath been upon Scotland, had not God prevented it. And if such severity as hath been expressed towards them be worthy of the name of "personal persecution," let all uninterested men judge, 'and' whether the calling of the practice "railing" be to be paralleled with the Malignants' imputation upon the Ministers for speaking against the Popish Innovations in the Prelates' times, and the 'other' tyrannical and wicked practices then on foot! The Roman Emperors, in Christ's and his Apostles' times, were usurpers and intruders upon the Jewish State: yet what footsteps have ye either of our blessed Saviour's so much as willingness to the diving of an inheritance, or their 'ever' meddling in that kind? This was not practised by the Church since our Saviour's time, till Antichrist, assuming the Infallible Chair, and all that he called Church to be under him, practised this authoritatively over Civil Governors. The way to fulfil your Ministry with joy is to preach the Gospel; which I wish some who take pleasure in reproofs at a venture, do not forget too much to do!

Thirdly, you say, You have just cause to regret that men of Civil employments should usurp the calling and employment of the Ministry; to the scandal of the Reformed Kirks.-Are you troubled that Christ is preached? Is preaching so exclusively your function? Doth it scandalise the Reformed Kirks, and Scotland in particular? Is it against the Covenant? Away with the Covenant, if this be so! I thought, the Covenant and these 'professors of it' could have been willing that any should speak good of the name of Christ: if not, it is no Covenant of God's approving; nor are these Kirks you mention in so much the Spouse of Christ. Where do you find in the Scripture a ground to warrant such an assertion, That Preaching is exclusively your function? Though an Approbation from men hath order in it, and may do well; yet he that hath no better warrant than that, hath none at all. I hope He that ascended up on high may give His gifts to whom He pleases: and if those gifts be the seal of Mission, be not, 'you envious though Eldad and Medad prophesy. You know who bids us covet earnestly the best gifts, but chiefly that we may prophesy; which the Apostle explains there to be a speaking to instruction and edification and comfort,-which speaking the instructed, the edified and comforted can best tell the energy and effect of, 'and say whether it is genuine.' If such evidence be, I say again, Take heed you envy not for your own sakes; lest you be guilty of a greater fault than Moses reproved in Joshua for envying for his sake.

Indeed you err through mistaking of the Scriptures. Approbation is an act of conveniency in respect of order; not of necessity, to give faculty to preach the Gospel. Your pretended fear lest Error should step in, is like the man who

would keep all the wine out the country lest men should be drunk. It will be found an unjust and unwise jealousy, to deprive a man of his natural liberty upon a supposition he may abuse it. When he doth abuse it, judge. If a man speak foolishly, ye suffer him gladly because ye are wise; if erroneously, the truth more appears by your conviction 'of him.' Stop such a man's mouth by sound words which cannot be gainsayed. If he speak blasphemously, or to the disturbance of the public peace, let the Civil Magistrate punish him: if truly, rejoice in the truth. And if you will call our speakings together since we came into Scotland, -to provoke one another to love and good works, to faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, and repentance from dead works; 'and' to charity and love towards you, to pray and mourn for you, and for your bitter returns to 'our love of you,' and your incredulity of our professions of love to you, of the truth of which we have made our solemn and humble appeals to the Lord our God, which He hath heard and borne witness to: if you will call things scandalous to the Kirk, and against the Covenant, because done by men of Civil callings, -we rejoice in them, notwithstanding what you say.

For a conclusion: In answer to the witness of God upon our solemn Appeal, you say you have not so learned Christ 'as' to hang the equity of your Cause upon events. We, 'for our part,' could wish blindness have not been upon your eyes to all those marvellous dispensations which God hath lately wrought in England. But did not you solemnly appeal and pray? Did not we do so too? And ought not you and we to think, with fear and trembling, of the hand of the Great God in this mighty and strange appearance of His; instead of slightly calling in an "event!" Were not both your and our expectations renewed from time to time, whilst we waited upon God, to see which way He would manifest Himself upon our appeals? And shall we, after all these our prayers, fastings, tears, expectations and solemn appeals, call these bare "events?" The Lord pity you.

Surely we, 'for our part,' fear; because it hath been a merciful and gracious deliverance to us. I beseech you in the bowels of Christ, search after the mind of the Lord in it towards you; and we shall help you by our prayers; that you may find it out: for yet (if we know our hearts at all) our bowels do, in Christ Jesus, yearn after the Godly in Scotland. We know there are stumbling-blocks which hinder you: the personal prejudices you have taken up against us and our ways, wherein we cannot but think some occasion has been given, and for which we mourn: the apprehension you have that we have hindered the glorious Reformation you think you were upon: -I am persuaded these and such like bind you up from an understanding, and yielding to, the mind of God, in this great day of His power and visitation. And, if I be rightly informed, the late Blow you received is attributed to profane counsels and conduct, and mixtures in your Army, and such like. The natural man will not find out the cause. Look up to the Lord, that He may tell it you. Which that He would do, shall be the fervent prayer of

Your loving friend and servant,  
OLIVER CROMWELL.