

AREOPAGITICA

A

SPEECH

OF

Mr. *JOHN MILTON*

For the Liberty of VNLICENC'D PRINTING,

to the PARLAMENT of *ENGLAND*

LONDON,

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τούλεύθερον δ' ἐκεῖνο: Τίς θέλει πόλει
χρηστόν τι βούλευμ' ἐς μέσον φέρειν ἔχων;
καὶ ταῦθ' ὁ χρήζων λαμπρὸς ἐσθ', ὁ μὴ θέλων
σιγᾶ. τί τούτων ἔστ' ἰσαίτερον πόλει;

*This is true Liberty when free born men
Having to advise the public may speak free,
Which he who can, and will, deferv's high praise,
Who neither can nor will, may hold his peace;
What can be juster in a State then this?*

Eurip. Hicetid. ¹

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https://milton.host.dartmouth.edu/reading_room/areopagitica/text.html

¹Εὐριπίδης / Euripides, Ἰκέτιδες / *Supplices* / *The Suppliants*.

For the Liberty of unlicenc'd Printing.

They who to States and Governours of the Commonwealth direct their Speech, High Court of Parliament, or wanting such acceffe in a private condition, write that which they foresee may advance the publick good; I suppose them as at the beginning of no meane endeavour, not a little alter'd and mov'd inwardly in their mindes: Some with doubt of what will be the successe, others with fear of what will be the censure; some with hope, others with confidence of what they have to speake. And me perhaps each of these dispositions, as the subject was whereon I enter'd, may have at other times variouly affected; and likely might in these formost expressions now also disclose which of them sway'd most, but that the very attempt of this addresse thus made, and the thought of whom it hath recourse to, hath got the power within me to a passion, farre more welcome then incidentall to a Preface. Which though I stay not to confesse ere any aske, I shall be blamelesse, if it be no other, then the joy and gratulation which it brings to all who wish and promote their Countries liberty; whereof this whole Discourse propos'd will be a certaine testimony, if not a Trophey. For this is not the liberty which wee can hope, that no grievance ever should arise in the Commonwealth, that let no man in this World expect; but when complaints are freely heard, deeply consider'd and speedily reform'd, then is the utmost bound of civill liberty attain'd, that wise men looke for. To which if I now manifest by the very found of this which I shall utter, that wee are already in good part arriv'd, and yet from such a steepe disadvantage of tyranny and superstition grounded into our principles as was beyond the manhood of a *Roman* recovery, it will bee attributed first, as is most due, to the strong assistance of God our deliverer, next to your faithfull guidance and undaunted Wisdom, Lords and Commons of *England*. Neither is it in Gods esteeme the diminution of his glory, when honourable things are spoken of good men and worthy Magistrates; which if I now first should begin to doe, after so fair a progresse of your laudable deeds, and such a long obligement upon the whole Realme to your indefatigable virtues, I might be justly reckon'd among the tardiest, and the unwillingest of them that praise yee. Neverthelesse there being three principall things, without which all praising is but Courtship and flattery, first, when that only is prais'd which is solidly worth praise: next, when greatest likelihoods are brought that such things are truly and really in those persons to whom they are ascrib'd, the other, when he who praises, by shewing that such his actuall persuasion is of whom he writes, can demonstrate that he flatters not; the former two of these I have heretofore endeavour'd, rescuing the employment from him who went about to impair your merits with a triviall and malignant *Encomium*; the latter as belonging chiefly to mine owne acquittall, that whom I so extoll'd I did not flatter, hath been reserv'd opportunely to this occasion. For he who freely magnifies what hath been nobly done, and fears not to declare as freely what might be done better, gives ye the best cov'nant of his fidelity; and that his loyallest affection and his hope waits on your proceedings. His highest praising is not flattery, and his plainest advice is a kinde of praising; for though I should affirme and hold by argument, that it would fare better with truth, with learning, and the Commonwealth, if one of

your publick Orders which I should name, were call'd in, yet at the same time it could not but much redound to the lustre of your milde and equall Government, when as private persons are hereby animated to thinke ye better pleas'd with publick advice, then other statists have been delighted heretofore with publicke flattery. And men will then see what difference there is between the magnanimity of a trienniall Parliament, and that jealous hautineffe of Prelates and cabin Counsellours that usurpt of late, when as they shall observe yee in the midd'ft of your Victories and successes more gently brooking writt'n exceptions against a voted Order, then other Courts, which had produc't nothing worth memory but the weake ostentation of wealth, would have endur'd the least signifi'd dislike at any sudden Proclamation. If I should thus farre perfume upon the meek demeanour of your civill and gentle greatnesse, Lords and Commons, as what your publick Order hath directly said, that to gainsay, I might defend my selfe with ease, if any should accuse me of being new or infolent, did they but know how much better I find ye esteem it to imitate the old and elegant humanity of Greece, then the barbarick pride of a *Hunnish* and *Norwegian* statelines. And out of those ages, to whose polite wisdom and letters we ow that we are not yet *Goths* and *Jutlanders*, I could name him who from his private house wrote that discourse to the Parliament of *Athens*, that perswades them to change the forme of *Democracy* which was then establisht. Such honour was done in those dayes to men who profess the study of wisdom and eloquence, not only in their own Country, but in other Lands, that Cities and Seniories heard them gladly, and with great respect, if they had aught in publick to admonish the State. Thus did *Dion Prusæus*, a stranger and a privat Orator counsell the *Rhodians* against a former Edict: and I abound with other like examples, which to set heer would be superfluous. But if from the industry of a life wholly dedicated to studious labours, and those naturall endowments haply not the worst for two and fifty degrees of northern latitude, so much must be derogated, as to count me not equall to any of those who had this priviledge, I would obtain to be thought not so inferior, as your selves are superior to the most of them who receiv'd their counsell: and how farre you excell them, be assur'd, Lords and Commons, there can no greater testimony appear, then when your prudent spirit acknowledges and obeyes the voice of reason from what quarter soever it be heard speaking; and renders ye as willing to repeal any Act of your own setting forth, as any set forth by your Predecessors.

If ye be thus resolv'd, as it were injury to think ye were not; I know not what should withhold me from presenting ye with fit instance wherein to shew both that love of truth which ye eminently professe, and that uprightnesse of your judgement which is not wont to be partiall to your selves; by judging over again that Order which ye have ordain'd to *regulate Printing. That no Book, pamphlet, or paper shall be henceforth Printed, unlesse the same be first approv'd and licenc'd by such*, or at least one of such as shall be thereto appointed. For that part which preserves justly every mans Copy to himselfe, or provides for the poor, I touch not, only with they be not made pretenses to abuse and persecute honest and painfull Men, who offend not in either of these particulars. But that other clause of Licencing Books, which we thought had dy'd with his brother *quadragesimal* and *matrimonial* when the Prelats expir'd, I shall now attend with such a Homily, as shall lay before ye, first the inventors of it to be those whom ye will be loath to own; next what is to be thought in generall of reading, what ever fort the Books be; and that this Order avails nothing to the suppressing of scandalous, feditious,

and libellous Books, which were mainly intended to be suppressed. Last, that it will be primely to the discouragement of all learning, and the stop of Truth, not only by exercising and blunting our abilities in what we know already, but by hindring and cropping the discovery that might be yet further made both in religious and civil Wisdom.

I deny not, but that it is of greatest concernment in the Church and Commonwealth, to have a vigilant eye how Bookes demean themselves as well as men; and thereafter to confine, imprison, and do sharpest justice on them as malefactors: For Books are not absolutely dead things, but doe contain a potencie of life in them to be as active as that soule was whose progeny they are; nay they do preserve as in a viall the purest efficacy and extraction of that living intellect that bred them. I know they are as lively, and as vigorously productive, as those fabulous Dragons teeth; and being sown up and down, may chance to spring up armed men. And yet on the other hand, unless warneffe be us'd, as good almost kill a Man as kill a good Book; who kills a Man kills a reasonable creature, Gods Image; but hee who destroys a good Booke, kills reason it selfe, kills the Image of God, as it were in the eye. Many a man lives a burden to the Earth; but a good Booke is the pretious life-blood of a masters spirit, imbalm'd and treasure'd up on purpose to a life beyond life. 'Tis true, no age can restore a life, whereof perhaps there is no great losse; and revolutions of ages do not oft recover the losse of a rejected truth, for the want of which whole Nations fare the worse. We should be wary therefore what perfection we raise against the living labours of publick men, how we spill that season'd life of man preserv'd and stor'd up in Books; since we see a kinde of homicide may be thus committed, sometimes a martyrdom, and if it extend to the whole impression, a kinde of massacre, whereof the execution ends not in the slaying of an elementall life, but strikes at that ethereall and first essence, the breath of reason it selfe, flaes an immortality rather than a life. But lest I should be condemn'd of introducing licence, while I oppose Licencing, I refuse not the paines to be so much Historically, as will serve to shew what hath been done by ancient and famous Commonwealths, against this disorder, till the very time that this project of licencing crept out of the *Inquisition*, was caught up by our Prelates, and hath caught some of our Presbyters.

In *Athens* where Books and Wits were ever busier then in any other part of *Greece*, I finde but only two sorts of writings which the Magistrate car'd to take notice of; those either blasphemous and Atheisticall, or Libellous. Thus the Books of *Protagoras* were by the Judges of *Areopagus* commanded to be burnt, and himselfe banisht the territory for a discourse begun with his confessing not to know *whether there were gods, or whether not*: And against defaming, it was decreed that none should be traduc'd by name, as was the manner of *Vetus Comædia*, whereby we may gueffe how they censur'd libelling: And this course was quick enough, as *Cicero* writes, to quell both the desperate wits of other Atheists, and the open way of defaming, as the event shew'd. Of other sects and opinions, though tending to voluptuousnesse, and the denying of divine providence, they tooke no heed. Therefore we do not read that either *Epicurus*, or that libertine school of *Cyrene*, or what the *Cynick* impudence utter'd, was ever question'd by the Laws. Neither is it recorded that the writings of those old Comedians were suppressed, though the acting of them were forbid; and that *Plato* commended the reading of *Aristophanes*, the loofest of them all, to his royall scholler *Dionysius*, is commonly known, and may be excus'd, if holy *Chrysoftome*, as is reported, nightly studied so much the fame Author and had the art to cleanse

a scurrilous vehemence into the title of a rousing Sermon. That other leading city of *Greece*, *Lacedæmon*, considering that *Lycurgus* their Law-giver was so addicted to elegant learning, as to have been the first that brought out of *Ionia* the scattered works of *Homer*, and sent the poet *Thales* from *Creet* to prepare and mollify the *Spartan* furlineffe with his smooth songs and odes, the better to plant among them law and civility, it is to be wonder'd how uselesse and unbookish they were, minding nought but the feats of Warre. There needed no licencing of Books among them for they disliked all, but their owne *Laconick Apothegms*, and took a flight occasion to chase *Archilochus* out of their City, perhaps for composing in a higher strain than their own souldierly ballats and roundels could reach to: Or if it were for his broad verses, they were not therein so cautious, but they were as diffolute in their promiscuous conversing; whence *Euripides* affirms in *Andromache*, that their women were all unchaste. Thus much may give us light after what sort Bookes were prohibited among the Greeks. The Romans also for many ages train'd up only to a military roughness, resembling most the *Lacedæmonian* guise, knew of learning little but what their twelve Tables, and the *Pontifick* College with their *Augurs* and *Flamins* taught them in Religion and Law, so unacquainted with other learning, that when *Carneades* and *Critolaus*, with the *Stoick Diogenes* comming Embassadors to *Rome*, tooke thereby occasion to give the City a taste of their Philosophy, they were suspected for seducers by no lesse a man then *Cato* the Cenfor, who mov'd it in the Senat to dismisse them speedily, and to banish all such *Attick* babblers out of *Italy*. But *Scipio* and others of the noblest Senators withstood him and his old *Sabin* austerly; honour'd and admir'd the men; and the Cenfor himself at last in his old age fell to the study of that whereof before hee was so scrupulous. And yet at the same time *Nævius* and *Plautus* the first Latine comedians had fill'd the City with all the borrow'd Scenes of *Menander* and *Philemon*. Then began to be consider'd there also what was to be don to libellous books and Authors; for *Nævius* was quickly cast into prison for his unbridl'd pen, and releas'd by the *Tribunes* upon his recantation: We read also that libels were burnt, and the makers punish't by *Augustus*. The like severity no doubt was us'd if ought were impiously writt'n against their esteem'd gods. Except in these two points, how the world went in Books, the Magistrate kept no reckning. And therefore *Lucretius* without impeachment verifies his Epicurism to *Memmius*, and had the honour to be set forth the second time by *Cicero* for great a father of the Commonwealth; although himselfe disputes against that opinion in his own writings. Nor was the Satyricall sharpnesse, or naked plainnes of *Lucilius*, or *Catullus*, or *Flaccus*, by any order prohibited. And for matters of State, the story of *Titus Livius*, though it extoll'd that part which *Pompey* held, was not therefore suppress't by *Octavius Cæsar* of the other Faction. But that *Naso* was by him banisht in his old age, for the wanton Poems of his youth, was but a meer covert of State over some secret cause: and besides, the Books were neither banisht nor call'd in. From hence we shall meet with little else but tyranny in the Roman Empire, that we may not marvell, if not so often bad, as good Books were silenc't. I shall therefore deem to have bin large enough in producing what among the ancients was punish'able to write, save only which, all other arguments were free to treat on.

By this time the Emperors were become Chriftians, whose discipline in this point I doe not finde to have bin more severe then what was formerly in practice. The Books of those whom they took to be grand Hereticks were examin'd, refuted, and condemn'd in the general Councils; and not till then were prohibited, or

burnt by authority of the Emperor. As for the writings of Heathen authors, unlesse they were plaine invectives against Christianity, as those of *Porphyrius* and *Proclus*, they met with no interdict that can be cited, till about the year 400. in a *Carthaginian* Council, wherein Bishops themselves were forbid to read the Books of Gentiles, but Heresies they might read: while others long before them on the contrary scrupl'd more the Books of Hereticks, then of Gentiles. And that the primitive Councils and Bishops were wont only to declare what Books were not commendable, passing no further, but leaving it to each ones conscience to read or to lay by, till after the year 800. is observ'd already by *Padre Paolo* the great unmasker of the *Trentine* Council. After which time the Popes of *Rome*, engrossing what they pleas'd of Politicall rule into their owne hands, extended their dominion over mens eyes, as they had before over their judgements, burning and prohibiting to be read, what they fancied not; yet sparing in their censures, and the Books not many which they so dealt with: till *Martin* the 5. by his Bull not only prohibited, but was the first that excommunicated the reading of hereticall Books; for about that time *Wicklef* and *Huffe* growing terrible, were they who first drove the Papall Court to a stricter policy of prohibiting. Which cours *Leo* the 10, and his successors follow'd, untill the Council of Trent, and the Spanish Inquisition engendring together brought forth, or perfected those Catalogues, and expurging Indexes that rake through the entralls of many an old good Author, with a violation worse then any could be offer'd to his tomb. Nor did they stay in matters Hereticall, but any subject that was not to their palat, they either condemn'd in a prohibition, or had it strait into the new Purgatory of an Index. To fill up the measure of encroachment, their last invention was to ordain that no Book, pamphlet, or paper should be Printed (as if *S. Peter* had bequeath'd them the keys of the Presse also out of Paradise) unlesse it were approv'd and licenc't under the hands of 2 or 3 glutton Friers. For example:

Let the Chancellor *Cini* be pleas'd to see if in this present work be contain'd ought that may withstand the Printing.

Vincent Rabbatta Vicar of *Florence*.

I have seen this present work, and finde nothing athwart the Catholick faith and good manners: in witnesse whereof I have given, &c.

Nicolò Cini Chancellor of *Florence*.

Attending the precedent relation, it is allow'd that this present work of *Davanzati* may be Printed.

Vincent Rabbatta, &c.

It may be printed, *July* 15.

Friar *Simon Mompei d'Amelia* Chancellor of the holy office in *Florence*.

Sure they have a conceit, if he of the bottomlesse pit had not long since broke prison, that this quadruple exorcism would barre him down. I fear their next designe will be to get into their custody the licencing of that which they say *Claudius** intended, but went not through with. Voutsafe to see another of their forms the Roman stamp:

*Quo veniam daret flatum
crepitumque ventris in
convivio emittendi.
Sueton. in Claudio.

Imprimatur, If it seem good to the reverend Master of the holy Palace.

Belcastro Vicegerent.

Imprimatur

Friar *Nicolò Rodolphi* Master of the holy Palace.

Sometimes 5 *Imprimaturs* are seen together dialogue-wise in the Piazza of one Title page, complementing and ducking each to other with their shav'n reverences, whether the Author, who stands by in perplexity at the foot of his Epistle, shall to the Presse or to the sponge. These are the pretty responses, these are the dear Antiphonies, that so bewitcht of late our Prelats, and their Chaplains with the goodly Echo they made; and befotted us to the gay imitation of a lordly *Imprimatur*, one from Lambeth house, another from the West end of *Pauls*; so apishly Romanizing, that the word of command still was set downe in Latine; as if the learned Grammaticall pen that wrote it, would cast no ink without Latine: or perhaps, as they thought, because no vulgar tongue was worthy to expresse the pure conceit of an *Imprimatur*; but rather, as I hope, for that our English, the language of men ever famous, and foremost in the achievements of liberty, will not easily finde fervile letters now to spell such a dictatorie presumption in English. And thus ye have the Inventors and the originall of Book-licencing ript up and drawn as lineally as any pedigree. We have it not, that can be heard of, from any ancient State, or politie, or Church, nor by any Statute left us by our Ancestors elder or later; nor from the moderne custome of any reformed City, or Church abroad; but from the most Antichristian Council and the most tyrannous Inquisition that ever inquir'd. Till then Books were ever as freely admitted into the World as any other birth; the issue of the brain was no more stifl'd then the issue of the womb: no envious *Juno* fate cross-leg'd over the nativity of any mans intellectuall offspring; but if it prov'd a Monster, who denies, but that it was justly burnt, or sunk into the Sea. But that a Book in worse condition then a peccant fowl, should be to stand before a Jury ere it be borne to the World, and undergo yet in darknesse the judgement of *Radamanth* and his Collegues, ere it can passe the ferry backward into light, was never heard before, till that mysterious iniquity, provokt and troubl'd at the first entrance of Reformation, fought out new limbo's and new hells wherein they might include our Books also within the number of their damned. And this was the rare morfell so officiously snatched up, and so ilfavouredly imitated by our inquisitorient Bishops, and the attendant minorites their Chaplains. That ye like not now these most certain Authors of this licencing order, and that all sinister intention was farre distant from your thoughts, when ye were importun'd the passing it, all men who know the integrity of your actions, and how ye honour Truth, will clear yee readily.

But some will say, What though the inventors were bad, the thing for all that may be good? It may be; yet if that thing be no such deep invention, but obvious, and easie for any man to light on, and yet best and wisest Commonwealths through all ages, and occasions have foreborne to use it, and falsest seducers, and oppressors of men were the first who tooke it up, and to no other purpose but to obstruct and hinder the first approach of Reformation; I am of those who believe, it will be a harder alchymy then *Lullius* ever knew, to sublimate any good use out of such an invention. Yet this only is what I request to gain from this reason, that it may be held a dangerous and suspicious fruit, as certainly it deserves, for

the tree that bore it, untill I can difsect one by one the properties it has. But I have firft to finifh, as was propounded, what is to be thought in generall of reading Books, what ever fort they be, and whether be more the benefit, or the harm that thence proceeds?

Not to infilt upon the examples of *Mofes*, *Daniel* & *Paul*, who were skilfull in all the learning of the *Ægyptians*, *Caldeans*, and *Greeks*, which could not probably be without reading their Books of all forts; in *Paul* efpecially, who thought it no defilement to infert into holy Scripture the fentences of three Greek Poets, and one of them a Tragedian, the queftion was, notwithstanding fometimes controverted among the Primitive Doctors, but with great odds on that fide which affirm'd it both lawfull and profitable, as was then evidently perceiv'd, when *Julian* the Apoftat, and futtleft enemy to our faith, made a decree forbidding Chriftians the ftudy of heathen learning: for, faid he, they wound us with our own weapons, and with our owne arts and fcienes they overcome us. And indeed the Chriftians were put fo to their shifts by this crafty means, and fo much in danger to decline into all ignorance, that the two *Apollinariii* were fain as a man may fay, to coin all the feven liberall Sciences out of the Bible, reducing it into divers forms of Orations, Poems, Dialogues, ev'n to the calculating of a new Chriftian grammar. But, faith the Hiftorian *Socrates*, The providence of God provided better then the induftry of *Apollinarius* and his fon, by taking away that illiterat law with the life of him who devis'd it. So great an injury they then held it to be depriv'd of *Hellenick* learning; and thought it a perfecution more undermining, and fecretly decaying the Church, then the open cruelty of *Decius* or *Dioclesian*. And perhaps it was the fame politick drift that the Divell whipt St. *Jerom* in a lenten dream, for reading *Cicero*; or elfe it was a fantaſm bred by the feaver which had then feis'd him. For had an Angel bin his difcipliner, unleffe it were for dwelling too much upon Ciceronianifms, & had chaftiz'd the reading, not the vanity, it had bin plainly partiall; firft to correct him for grave *Cicero*, and not for fcurrill *Plautus*, whom he confeffes to have bin reading not long before; next to correct him only, and let fo many more ancient Fathers wax old in thofe pleafant and florid ftudies without the lafh of fuch a tutoring apparition; infomuch that *Bafil* teaches how fome good ufe may be made of *Margites*, a ſportfull Poem, not now extant, writ by *Homer*; and why not then of *Morgante*, an Italian Romanze much to the fame purpoſe. But if it be agreed we fhall be try'd by vifions, there is a vifion recorded by *Eufebius* far ancients then this tale of *Jerom* to the Nun *Euftochium*, and befides has nothing of a feavor in it. *Dionyſius Alexandrinus* was about the year 240, a perfon of great name in the Church for piety and learning, who had wont to avail himſelf much againft hereticks by being converfant in their Books; untill a certain Presbyter laid it ſcrupulouſly to his confcience, how he durft venture himſelfe among thofe defiling volumes. The worthy man loath to give offence fell into a new debate with himſelfe what was to be thought; when fuddenly a vifion ſent from God, it is his own Epiftle that fo averrs it, confirm'd him in theſe words: Read any books what ever come to thy hands, for thou art fufficient both to judge aright, and to examine each matter. To this revelation he affented the fooner, as he confeffes, becauſe it was anfwerable to that of the Apoſtle to the Theſſalonians, Prove all things, hold faft that which is good. And he might have added another remarkable ſaying of the ſame Author; To the pure, all things are pure, not only meats and drinks, but all kinde of knowledge whether of good or evil; the knowledge cannot defile, nor confequently the books, if the will and confcience

be not defil'd. For books are as meats and viands are; some of good, some of evil substance; and yet God in that unapocryphal vision, said without exception, Rise *Peter*, kill and eat, leaving the choice to each mans discretion. Wholesome meats to a vitiated stomach differ little or nothing from unwholesome; and best books to a naughty mind are not unapplicable to occasions of evil. Bad meats will scarce breed good nourishment in the healthiest concoction; but herein the difference is of bad books, that they to a discreet and judicious Reader serve in many respects to discover, to confute, to forewarn, and to illustrate. Whereof what better witness can ye expect I should produce, than one of your own now fitting in Parliament, the chief of learned men reputed in this land, Mr. *Selden*, whose volume of naturall & national laws proves, not only by great authorities brought together, but by exquisite reasons and theorems almost mathematically demonstrative, that all opinions, yea errors, known, read, and collated, are of main service & assistance toward the speedy attainment of what is truest. I conceive therefore, that when God did enlarge the universal diet of mans body, saving ever the rules of temperance, he then also, as before, left arbitrary the dyeing and repasting of our minds; as wherein every mature man might have to exercise his own leading capacity. How great a virtue is temperance, how much of moment through the whole life of man? yet God committs the managing so great a trust, without particular Law or prescription, wholly to the demeanour of every grown man. And therefore when he himself tabl'd the Jews from heaven, that Omer which was every mans daily portion of Manna, is computed to have bin more then might have well suffic'd the heartiest feeder thrice as many meals. For those actions which enter into a man, rather then issue out of him, and therefore defile not, God uses not to captivate under a perpetual childhood of prescription, but trusts him with the gift of reason to be his own chooser; there were but little work left for preaching, if law and compulsion should grow so fast upon those things which hertofore were govern'd only by exhortation. *Salomon* informs us that much reading is a weariness to the flesh; but neither he, nor other inspir'd author tells us that such, or such reading is unlawfull: yet certainly had God thought good to limit us herein, it had bin much more expedient to have told us what was unlawfull, then what was wearisome. As for the burning of those Ephesian books by St. *Pauls* converts, tis reply'd the books were magick, the Syriack so renders them. It was a privat act, a voluntary act, and leaves us to a voluntary imitation: the men in remorse burnt those books which were their own; the Magistrate by this example is not appointed; these men practiz'd the books, another might perhaps have read them in some sort usefully. Good and evil we know in the field of this World grow up together almost inseparably; and the knowledge of good is so involv'd and interwoven with the knowledge of evil, and in so many cunning resemblances hardly to be discern'd, that those confused feeds which were impos'd on *Psyche* as an incessant labour to cull out, and sort afunder, were not more intermixt. It was from out the rinde of one apple tasted, that the knowledge of good and evil as two twins cleaving together leapt forth into the World. And perhaps this is that doom which *Adam* fell into of knowing good and evil, that is to say of knowing good by evil. As therefore the state of man now is; what wisdom can there be to choose, what continence to forbear without the knowledge of evil? He that can apprehend and consider vice with all her baits and seeming pleasures, and yet abstain, and yet distinguish, and yet prefer that which is truly better, he is the true wayfaring Christian. I cannot praise a fugitive and cloister'd virtue, unexercis'd & unbreath'd, that never fallies out

and fees her adverfary, but flinks out of the race, where that immortall garland is to be run for, not without duft and heat. Affuredly we bring not innocence into the world, we bring impurity much rather: that which purifies us is triall, and triall is by what is contrary. That vertue therefore which is but a youngling in the contemplation of evill, and knows not the utmoft that vice promifes to her followers, and rejects it, is but a blank vertue, not a pure; her whiteneffe is but an excrementall whiteneffe; Which was the reafon why our fage and ferious Poet *Spencer*, whom I dare be known to think a better teacher then *Scotus* or *Aquinas*, defcribing true temperance under the person of *Guion*, brings him in with his palmer through the cave of Mammon, and the bowr of earthly bliffe that he might fee and know, and yet abftain. Since therefore the knowledge and furvay of vice is in this world fo neceffary to the conftituting of human vertue, and the fcaning of error to the confirmation of truth, how can we more fafely, and with leffe danger fcout into the regions of fin and falſity then by reading all manner of tractats, and hearing all manner of reafon? And this is the benefit which may be had of books promifcuously read. But of the harm that may refult hence three kinds are ufually reckn'd. Firft, is fear'd the infection that may fpread; but then all human learning and controverſie in religious points muft remove out of the world, yea the Bible it ſelfe; for that oftimes relates blaſphemy not nicely, it defcribes the carnall fenſe of wicked men not unelegantly, it brings in holieft men paſſionately murmuring againft providence through all the arguments of *Epicurus*: in other great difputes it anfwers dubiouſly and darkly to the common reader: And ask a Talmudift what ails the modefty of his marginal Keri, that *Mofes* and all the Prophets cannot perfwade him to pronounce the textuall Chetiv. For theſe cauſes we all know the Bible it ſelfe put by the Papiſt into the firft rank of prohibited books. The ancienteft Fathers muft be next remov'd, as *Clement of Alexandria*, and that *Eufebian* book of Evangelick preparation, tranſmitting our ears through a hoard of heatheniſh obſcenities to receive the Goſpel. Who finds not that *Irenæus*, *Epiphanius*, *Jerom*, and others difcover more hereſies then they well confute, and that oft for hereſie which is the truer opinion. Nor boots it to fay for theſe, and all the heathen Writers of greateſt infection, if it muft be thought fo, with whom is bound up the life of human learning, that they writ in an unknown tongue, fo long as we are fure thoſe languages are known as well to the worft of men, who are both moſt able, and moſt diligent to infill the poiſon they fuck, firft into the Courts of Princes, acquainting them with the choiceſt delights, and criticifms of fin. As perhaps did that *Petronius* whom *Nero* call'd his *Arbiter*, the Maſter of his revels; and that notorious ribald of *Arezzo*, dreaded, and yet dear to the Italian Courtiers. I name not him for poſterities ſake, whom *Harry* the 8. nam'd in merriment his Vicar of hell. By which compendious way all the contagion that foreine books can infufe, will find a paſſage to the people farre eaſier and ſhorter then an Indian voyage, though it could be fail'd either by the North of *Cataio* Eaſtward, or of *Canada* Weſtward, while our Spaniſh licencing gags the Engliſh Preſſe never fo feverely. But on the other ſide that infection which is from books of controverſie in Religion, is more doubtfull and dangerous to the learned, then to the ignorant; and yet thoſe books muft be permitted untoucht by the licencer. It will be hard to inſtance where any ignorant man hath bin ever feduc't by Papiſticall book in Engliſh, unleſſe it were commended and expounded to him by ſome of that Clergy: and indeed all ſuch tractats whether falſe or true are as the Propheſie of *Iſaiah* was to the *Eunuch*, not to be *underſtood without a guide*. But of our

Priests and Doctors how many have bin corrupted by ftudying the comments of Jefuits and *Sorbonifts*, and how faft they could transfufe that corruption into the people, our experience is both late and fad. It is not forgot, fince the acute and diftinct *Arminius* was perverted meerly by the perufing of a nameleffe difcourf writt'n at *Delf*, which at firft he took in hand to confute. Seeing therefore that thofe books, & thofe in great abundance which are likeliest to taint both life and doctrine, cannot be fuppreft without the fall of learning, and of all ability in difputation, and that thefe books of either fort are moft and foonest catching to the learned, from whom to the common people whatever is hereticall or diffolute may quickly be convey'd, and that evill manners are as perfectly learnt without books a thoufand other ways which cannot be ftopt, and evill doctrine not with books can propagate, except a teacher guide, which he might alfo doe without writing, and fo beyond prohibiting, I am not able to unfold, how this cautelous enterprife of licencing can be exempted from the number of vain and impoffible attempts. And he who were pleafantly difpos'd could not well avoid to lik'n it to the exploit of that gallant man who thought to pound up the crows by fhutting his Parkgate. Befides another inconvenience, if learned men be the firft receivers out of books & difpredders both of vice and error, how fhall the licencers themfelves be confided in, unleffe we can conferr upon them, or they affume to themfelves above all others in the Land, the grace of infallibility, and uncorruptedneffe? And again if it be true, that a wife man like a good refiner can gather gold out of the droffieft volume, and that a fool will be a fool with the beft book, yea or without book, there is no reafon that we fhould deprive a wife man of any advantage to his wifdome, while we feek to refrain from a fool, that which being refrain'd will be no hindrance to his folly. For if there fhould be fo much exactneffe always us'd to keep that from him which is unfit for his reading, we fhould in the judgement of *Aristotle* not only, but of *Salomon*, and of our Saviour, not voutfafe him good precepts, and by confequence not willingly admit him to good books; as being certain that a wife man will make better ufe of an idle pamphlet, then a fool will do of facred Scripture. 'Tis next alleg'd we muft not expofe ourfelves to temptations without neceffity, and next to that, not employ our time in vain things. To both thefe objections one anfwer will ferve, out of the grounds already laid, that to all men fuch books are not temptations, nor vanities; but ufefull drugs and materialls wherewith to temper and compofe effective and ftrong med'cins, which mans life cannot want. The reft, as children and childifh men, who have not the art to qualife and prepare thefe working mineralls, well may be exhorted to forbear, but hinder'd forcibly they cannot be by all the licencing that Sainted Inquifition could ever yet contrive; which is what I promis'd to deliver next, That this order of licencing conduces nothing to the end for which it was fram'd; and hath almoft prevented me by being clear already while thus much hath bin explaining. See the ingenuity of Truth, who when fhe gets a free and willing hand, opens herfelf fafter then the pace of method and difcourf can overtake her. It was the task which I began with, To fhew that no Nation, or well inftituted State, if they valu'd books at all, did ever ufe this way of licencing; and it might be anfwer'd, that this is a piece of prudence lately difcover'd. To which I return, that as it was a thing flight and obvious to think on, fo if it had bin difficult to finde out, there wanted not among them long fince, who fuggefted fuch a cours; which they not following, leave us a pattern of their judgement, that it was not the not knowing, but the not approving, which was the caufe of their not ufing it. *Plato*, a man of

high authority, indeed, but leaft of all for his Commonwealth, in the book of his laws, which no City ever yet receiv'd, fed his fancie with making many edicts to his ayrie Burgomasters, which they who otherwife admire him, with had bin rather buried and excus'd in the *genial* cups of an *Academick* night-fitting. By which laws he seems to tolerat no kind of learning, but by unalterable decree, confifting most of practical traditions, to the attainment whereof a Library of smaller bulk then his own dialogues would be abundant. And there also enacts that no Poet should so much as read to any privat man, what he had writt'n, untill the Judges and Law-keepers had seen it, and allow'd it: But that *Plato* meant this Law peculiarly to that Commonwealth which he had imagin'd, and to no other, is evident. Why was he not else a Law-giver to himself, but a transgressor, and to be expell'd by his own Magistrats; both for the wanton epigrams and dialogues which he made, and his perpetuall reading of *Sophron Mimus* and *Aristophanes*, books of grossest infamy, and also for commending the latter of them, though he were the malicious libeller of his chief friends, to be read by the Tyrant *Dionysius*, who had little need of such trash to spend his time on? But that he knew this licencing of Poems had reference and dependence to many other proviso's there set down in his fancied republic, which in this world could have no place: and so neither he himself, nor any Magistrat, or City ever imitated that course, which tak'n apart from those other collateral injunctions, must needs be vain and fruitlesse. For if they fell upon one kind of strictnesse, unless their care were equal to regulat all other things of like aptnes to corrupt the mind, that single endeavour they knew would be but a fond labour; to shut and fortifie one gate against corruption, and be necessitated to leave others round about wide open. If we think to regulat Printing, thereby to rectifie manners, we must regulat all recreations and pastimes, all that is delightful to man. No musick must be heard, no song be set or sung, but what is grave and *Dorick*. There must be licencing dancers, that no gesture, motion, or deportment be taught our youth but what by their allowance shall be thought honest; for such *Plato* was provided of; It will ask more then the work of twenty licensors to examin all the lutes, the violins, and the ghittars in every house; they must not be suffer'd to prattle as they doe, but must be licenc'd what they may say. And who shall silence all the airs and madrigalls, that whisper softnes in chambers? The Windows also, and the *Balcone's* must be thought on, there are shrewd books, with dangerous Frontispices set to sale; who shall prohibit them, shall twenty licensors? The villages also must have their visitors to enquire what lectures the bagpipe and the rebbeck reads ev'n to the ballatry, and the gammuth of every *municipal* fidler, for these are the Countrymans *Arcadia's* and his *Monte Mayors*. Next, what more Nationall corruption, for which England hears ill abroad, then household gluttony; who shall be the rectors of our daily rioting? and what shall be done to inhibit the multitudes that frequent those houses where drunk'nes is sold and harbour'd? Our garments also should be referr'd to the licencing of some more sober work-masters to see them cut into a lesse wanton garb. Who shall regulat all the mixt conversation of our youth, male and female together, as is the fashion of this Country, who shall still appoint what shall be discours'd, what presum'd, and no further? Lastly, who shall forbid and separat all idle resort, all evill company? These things will be, and must be; but how they shall be left hurtfull, how left enticing, herein confits the grave and governing wisdom of a State. To sequester out of the world into *Atlantick* and *Eutopian* polities which never can be drawn into use, will not mend our condition; but to ordain wisely

as in this world of evil, in the midd'ft whereof God hath plac't us unavoidably. Nor is it *Plato's* licencing of books will doe this, which neceffarily pulls along with it fo many other kinds of licencing, as will make us all both ridiculous and weary, and yet frufrat; but thofe unwritt'n, or at leaft unconfraining laws of vertuous education, religious and civill nurture, which *Plato* there mentions, as the bonds and ligaments of the Commonwealth, the pillars and the fuftainers of every writt'n Statute; thefe they be which will bear chief fway in fuch matters as thefe, when all licencing will be eafily eluded. Impunity and remiffenes, for certain are the bane of a Commonwealth, but here the great art lyes to difcern in what the law is to bid refraint and punifhment, and in what things perfwafion only is to work. If every action which is good, or evil in man at ripe years, were to be under pittance, and prefcription, and compulfion, what were vertue but a name, what praife could be then due to well-doing, what grammercy to be fober, juft or continent? many there be that complain of divin Providence for fuffering *Adam* to tranfgrefse, foolifh tongues! when God gave him reafon, he gave him freedom to choofe, for reafon is but choofing; he had bin elfe a meer artificiall *Adam*, fuch an *Adam* as he is in the motions. We our felves efteem not of that obedience, or love, or gift, which is of force: God therefore left him free, fet before him a provoking object, ever almoft in his eyes herein confited his merit, herein the right of his reward, the praife of his abftinence. Wherefore did he creat paffions within us, pleafures round about us, but that thefe rightly temper'd are the very ingredients of vertue? They are not skilfull confiderers of human things, who imagin to remove fin by removing the matter of fin; for, befides that it is a huge heap increafing under the very act of diminifhing though fome part of it may for a time be withdrawn from fome perfons, it cannot from all, in fuch a univerfall thing as books are; and when this is done, yet the fin remains entire. Though ye take from a covetous man all his treafure, he has yet one jewell left, ye cannot bereave him of his covetoufneffe. Banifh all objects of luft, fhut up all youth into the fevereft difcipline that can be exercis'd in any hermitage, ye cannot make them chafte, that came not thither fo: fuch great care and wifdom is requir'd to the right managing of this point. Suppofe we could expell fin by this means; look how much we thus expell of fin, fo much we expell of vertue: for the matter of them both is the fame; remove that, and ye remove them both alike. This juftifies the high providence of God, who though he command us temperance, juftice, continence, yet powrs out before us ev'n to a profufenes all defirable things, and gives us minds that can wander beyond all limit and fatiety. Why fhould we then affect a rigour contrary to the manner of God and of nature, by abridging or fcanting thofe means, which books freely permitted are, both to the triall of vertue and the exercife of truth. It would be better done to learn that the law muft needs be frivolous which goes to refrain things, uncertainly and yet equally working to good, and to evil. And were I the choofer, a dram of well-doing fhould be preferr'd before many times as much the forcible hindrance of evil-doing. For God fure efteems the growth and compleating of one vertuous perfon, more then the refraint of ten vitious. And albeit whatever thing we hear or fee, fitting, walking, travelling, or converfing may be fitly call'd our book, and is of the fame effect that writings are, yet grant the thing to be prohibited were only books, it appears that this order hitherto is far insufficient to the end which it intends. Do we not fee, not once or oftner, but weekly that continu'd Court-libell againft the Parliament and City, Printed, as the wet fheets can witnes, and difpers't among us, for all that licencing can doe. yet this is the

prime service a man would think, wherein this order should give proof of it self. If it were executed, you'll say. But certain, if execution be remitted or blindfold now, and in this particular, what will it be hereafter and in other books? If then the order shall not be vain and frustrate, behold a new labour, Lords and Commons, ye must repeal and proscribe all scandalous and unlicensed books already printed and divulged; after ye have drawn them up into a list, that all may know which are condemned, and which not; and ordain that no foreign books be delivered out of custody, till they have been read over. This office will require the whole time of not a few overseers, and those no vulgar men. There be also books which are partly useful and excellent, partly culpable and pernicious; this work will ask as many more officials, to make expurgations, and expunctions, that the Commonwealth of Learning be not damnified. In fine, when the multitude of books increase upon their hands, ye must be fain to catalogue all those Printers who are found frequently offending, and forbid the importation of their whole suspected *typography*. In a word, that this your order may be exact, and not deficient, ye must reform it perfectly according to the model of *Trent* and *Sevil*, which I know ye abhorre to do. Yet though ye should condescend to this, which God forbid, the order still would be but fruitless and defective to that end whereto ye meant it. If to prevent sects and schisms, who is so unread or so uncatechised in story, that hath not heard of many sects refusing books as a hindrance, and preserving their doctrine unmixed for many ages, only by unwritten traditions. The Christian faith, for that was once a schism, is not unknown to have spread all over *Asia*, ere any Gospel or Epistle was seen in writing. If the amendment of manners be aimed at, look into Italy and Spain, whether those places be one scruple the better, the sooner, the wiser, the chaster, since all the inquisitionall rigor that hath been executed upon books.

Another reason, whereby to make it plain that this order will miss the end it seeks, consider by the quality which ought to be in every licenser. It cannot be denied but that he who is made judge to sit upon the birth, or death of books whether they may be wafted into this world, or not, had need to be a man above the common measure, both studious, learned, and judicious; there may be else no mean mistakes in the censure of what is passable or not; which is also no mean injury. If he be of such worth as behooves him, there cannot be a more tedious and unpleasing Journey-work, a greater loss of time levied upon his head, then to be made the perpetual reader of unchosen books and pamphlets, oftentimes huge volumes. There is no book that is acceptable unless at certain seasons; but to be enjoined the reading of that at all times, and in a hand scarce legible, whereof three pages would not down at any time in the fairest Print, is an imposition I cannot believe how he that values time, and his own studies, or is but of a sensible nostrill should be able to endure. In this one thing I crave leave of the present licensers to be pardon'd for so thinking: who doubtless took this office up, looking on it through their obedience to the Parliament, whose command perhaps made all things seem easie and unlaborious to them; but that this short triall hath wearied them out already, their own expressions and excuses to them who make so many journeys to solicit their licence, are testimony enough. Seeing therefore those who now possess the employment, by all evident signs with themselves well rid of it, and that no man of worth, none that is not a plain unthrif of his own hours is ever likely to succeed them, except he mean to put himself to the salary of a Press-corrector, we may easily foresee what kind of licensers we are to expect hereafter, either ignorant, imperious, and remitted, or basely pecuniary. This is

what I had to shew, wherein this order cannot conduce to that end, whereof it bears the intention.

I lastly proceed from the no good it can do, to the manifest hurt it causes, in being first the greatest discouragement and affront, that can be offer'd to learning and to learned men. It was the complaint and lamentation of Prelats, upon every least breath of a motion to remove pluralities, and distribute more equally Church revenues, that then all learning would be for ever dashed and discourag'd. But as for that opinion, I never found cause to think that the tenth part of learning stood or fell with the Clergy: nor could I ever but hold it for a fordid and unworthy speech of any Churchman who had a competency left him. If therefore ye be loath to dishearten utterly and discontent, not the mercenary crew of false pretenders to learning, but the free and ingenuous sort of such as evidently were born to study, and love learning for it self, not for lucre, or any other end, but the service of God and of truth, and perhaps that lasting fame and perpetuity of praise which God and good men have consented shall be the reward of those whose published labours advance the good of mankind, then know, that so far to distrust the judgement & the honesty of one who hath but a common repute in learning, and never yet offended, as not to count him fit to print his mind without a tutor and examiner, lest he should drop a scism, or something of corruption, is the greatest displeasure and indignity to a free and knowing spirit that can be put upon him. What advantage is it to be a man over it is to be a boy at school, if we have only caught the ferular, to come under the fescu of an *Imprimatur*? if serious and elaborat writings, as if they were no more then the theam of a Grammar lad under his Pedagogue must not be utter'd without the curfory eyes of a temporizing and extemporizing licencer. He who is not trusted with his own actions, his drift not being known to be evill, and standing to the hazard of law and penalty, has no great argument to think himself reputed in the Commonwealth wherin he was born, for other then a fool or a foreiner. When a man writes to the world, he summons up all his reason and deliberation to assist him; he searches, meditates, is industrious, and likely consults and confers with his judicious friends; after all which done he takes himself to be inform'd in what he writes, as well as any that writ before him; if in this the most consummat act of his fidelity and ripeness, no years, no industry, no former proof of his abilities can bring him to that state of maturity, as not to be still mistrusted and suspected, unless he carry all his confiderat diligence, all his midnight watchings, and expence of *Palladian* oyl, to the hafty view of an unlearn'd licencer, perhaps much his younger, perhaps far his inferiour in judgement, perhaps one who never knew the labour of book-writing, and if he be not repulst, or flighted, must appear in Print like a punie with his guardian, and his censors hand on the back of his title to be his bayl and surety, that he is no idiot, or seducer, it cannot be but a dishonour and derogation to the author, to the book, to the privilege and dignity of Learning. And what if the author shall be one so copious of fancie, as to have many things well worth the adding, come into his mind after licencing, while the book is yet under the Presse, which not seldom happens to the best and diligentest writers; and that perhaps a dozen times in one book. The Printer dares not go beyond his licenser's copy; so often then must the author trudge to his leav-giver, that those his new inventions may be view'd; and many a jaunt will be made, ere that licencer, for it must be the same man, can either be found, or found at leisure; mean while either the Presse must stand still, which is no small damage, or the author loose his accuratest thoughts, & send the book forth

wors then he had made it, which to a diligent writer is the greateft melancholy and vexation that can befall. And how can a man teach with authority, which is the life of teaching, how can he be a Doctor in his book as he ought to be, or elfe had better be filent, whenas all he teaches, all he delivers, is but under the tuition, under the correction of his patriarchal licencer to blot or alter what precifely accords not with the hidebound humor which he calls his judgement. When every acute reader upon the firft fight of a pedantick licence, will be ready with thefe like words to ding the book a coits diftance from him, I hate a pupil teacher, I endure not an instructor that comes to me under the wardfhip of an overfeeing fift. I know nothing of the licencer, but that I have his own hand here for his arrogance; who fhall warrant me his judgement? The State Sir, replies the Stationer, but has a quick return, The State fhall be my governours, but not my criticks; they may be miftak'n in the choice of a licencer, as eafily as this licencer may be miftak'n in an author: This is fome common ftuffe: and he might adde from Sir *Francis Bacon*, That *fuch authoriz'd books are but the language of the times*. For though a licencer fhould happ'n to be judicious more then ordnary, which will be a great jeopardy of the next fuceffion, yet his very office and his commiffion enjoyns him to let paffe nothing but what is vulgarly receiv'd already. Nay, which is more lamentable, if the work of any deceafed author, though never fo famous in his life time, and even to this day, come to their hands for licence to be Printed, or Reprinted, if there be found in his book one fentence of a ventrous edge, utter'd in the height of zeal, and who knows whether it might not be the dictat of a divine Spirit, yet not fuiting with every low decrepit humor of their own, though it were *Knox* himfelf, the Reformer of a Kingdom that fpake it, they will not pardon him their dafh: the fenfe of that great man fhall to all pofterity be loft, for the fearfulneffe or the prefumptuous rafhneffe of a perfunctory licencer. And to what an author this violence hath bin lately done, and in what book of greateft confequence to be faithfully publifht, I could now inftance, but fhall forbear till a more convenient feafon. Yet if thefe things be not refented ferioufly and timely by them who have the remedy in their power, but that fuch iron moulds as thefe fhall have authority to know out the choicest periods of exquisitelt books, and to commit fuch a treacherous fraud againft the orphan remainders of worthielt men after death, the more forrow will belong to that haples race of men, whose miffortune it is to have underftanding. Henceforth let no man care to learn, or care to be more then worldly wife; for certainly in higher matters to be ignorant and flothfull, to be a common ftedfaft dunce will be the only pleafant life, and only in requeft.

And as it is a particular difteem of every knowing perfon alive, and moft injurious to the writt'n labours and monuments of the dead, fo to me it feems an undervaluing and vilifying of the whole Nation. I cannot fet fo light by all the invention, the art, the wit, the grave and folid judgement which is in England, as that it can be comprehended in any twenty capacities how good foever, much leffe that it fhould not paffe except their fuperintendence be over it, except it be fifted and ftrain'd with their ftrainers, that it fhould be uncurrant without their manuall ftamp. Truth and underftanding are not fuch wares as to be monopoliz'd and traded in by tickets and ftatutes, and ftandards. We muft not think to make a ftaple commodity of all the knowledge in the Land, to mark and licence it like our broad cloath, and our wooll packs. What is it but a fervitude like that impos'd by the Philiftims, not to be allow'd the fharpning of our own axes and coulthers, but we muft repair from all quarters to twenty licencing forges. Had any

one writt'n and divulg'd erroneous things & scandalous to honest life, misusing and forfeiting the esteem had of his reason among men, if after conviction this only censure were adjudg'd him, that he should never henceforth write, but what were first examin'd by an appointed officer, whose hand should be annexed to pass his credit for him, that now he might be safely read, it could not be apprehended less than a disgraceful punishment. Whence to include the whole Nation, and those that never yet thus offended, under such a diffident and suspectful prohibition, may plainly be understood what a disparagement it is. So much the more, when debtors and delinquents may walk abroad without a keeper, but unoffensive books must not stirre forth without a visible jailor in their title. Nor is it to the common people less than a reproach; for if we be so jealous over them, as that we dare not trust them with an English pamphlet, what do we but censure them for a giddy, vitious, and ungrounded people; in such a sick and weak estate of faith and discretion, as to be able to take nothing down but through the pipe of a licencer. That this is care or love of them, we cannot pretend, whenas in those Popish places where the Laity are most hated and despis'd the same strictness is us'd over them. Wisdom we cannot call it, because it stops but one breach of licence, nor that neither; whenas those corruptions which it seeks to prevent, break in faster at other doors which cannot be shut.

And in conclusion it reflects to the disrepute of our Ministers also, of whose labours we should hope better, and of the proficiencie which their flock reaps by them, then that after all this light of the Gospel which is, and is to be, and all this continually preaching, they should be still frequented with such an unprincipled, unedified, and laick rabble, as that the whiffe of every new pamphlet should stagger them out of their catechism, and Christian walking. This may have much reason to discourage the Ministers when such a low conceit is had of all their exhortations, and the benefiting of their hearers, as that they are not thought fit to be turn'd loose to three sheets of paper without a licencer, that all the Sermons, all the Lectures preacht, printed, vented in such numbers, and such volumes, as have now wellnigh made all other books unsalable, should not be armor enough against one single *enchiridion*, without the castle of St. *Angelo* of an *Imprimatur*.

And left some should persuade ye, Lords and Commons, that these arguments of learned mens discouragement at this your order, are meer flourishes, and not reall, I could recount what I have seen and heard in other Countries, where this kind of inquisition tyrannizes; when I have sat among their learned men, for that honor I had, and bin counted happy to be born in such a place of *Philosophic* freedom, as they suppos'd England was, while themselves did nothing but bemoan the servile condition into which learning amongst them was brought; that this was it which had damp't the glory of Italian wits; that nothing had bin there writt'n now these many years but flattery and fustian. There it was that I found and visited the famous *Galileo* grown old, a prisoner to the Inquisition, for thinking in Astronomy otherwise then the Franciscan and Dominican licensors thought. And though I knew that England then was groaning loudest under the Prelatical yoke, nevertheless I took it as a pledge of future happiness, that other Nations were so persuaded of her liberty. Yet was it beyond my hope that those Worthies were then breathing in her air, who should be her leaders to such a deliverance, as shall never be forgott'n by any revolution of time that this world hath to finish. When that was once begun, it was as little in my fear, that what words of complaint I heard among learned men of other parts utter'd against the Inquisition,

the fame I should hear by as lerned men at home utterd in time of Parliament against an order of licencing; and that so generally, that when I had disclos'd my self a companion of their discontent, I might say, if without envy, that he whom an honest *quæstorship* had indear'd to the *Sicilians*, was not more by them importun'd against *Verres*, then the favourable opinion which I had among many who honour ye, and are known and respected by ye, loaded me with entreaties and persuasions, that I would not despair to lay together that which just reason should bring into my mind, toward the removal of an undeserved thraldom upon learning. That this is not therefore the disburdning of a particular fancie, but the common grievance of all those who had prepar'd their minds and studies above the vulgar pitch to advance truth in others, and from others to entertain it, thus much may satisfie. And in their name I shall for neither friend nor foe conceal what the generall murmur is; that if it come to inquisitioning again, and licencing, and that we are so timorous of our selves, and so suspicious of all men, as to fear each book, and the flaking of every leaf, before we know what the contents are, if some who but of late were little better then silenc'd from preaching, shall come now to silence us from reading, except what they please, it cannot be guess'd what is intended by them but a second tyranny over learning: and will soon put it out of controverfie that Bishops and Presbyters are the fame to us both name and thing. That those evils of Prelaty which before from five or six and twenty Sees were distributively charg'd upon the whole people, will now light wholly upon learning, is not obscure to us: whenas now the Pastor of a small unlearned Parish, on the sudden shall be exalted Archbishop over a large dioces of books, and yet not remove, but keep his other cure too, a myfticall pluralist. He who but of late cry'd down the sole ordination of every novice Batchelor of Art, and deny'd sole jurisdiction over the simplest Parishioner, shall now at home in his privat chair affume both these over worthiest and excellentest books and ablest authors that write them. This is not, Yee Covnants and Protestations that we have made, this is not to put down Prelaty, this is but to chop an Episcopacy; this is but to tranflate the Palace *Metropolitan* from one kind of dominion into another, this is but an old canonically sleight of *commuting* our penance. To startle thus betimes at a meer unlicenc'd pamphlet will after a while be afraid of every conventicle, and a while after will make a conventicle of every Christian meeting. But I am certain that a State govern'd by the rules of justice and fortitude, or a Church built and founded upon the rock of faith and true knowledge, cannot be so pusillanimous. While things are yet not constituted in Religion, that freedom of writing should be restrain'd by a discipline imitated from the Prelats, and learnt by them from the Inquisition to shut us up all again into the breast of a licencer, must needs give cause of doubt and discouragement to all learned and religious men. Who cannot but discern the finenes of this politic drift, and who are the contrivers; that while Bishops were to be baited down, then all Preffes might be open; it was the peoples birthright and priviledge in time of Parliament, it was the breaking forth of light. But now the Bishops abrogated and voided out of the Church, as if our Reformation fought no more, but to make room for others into their seats under another name, the Episcopall arts begin to bud again, the cruse of truth must run no more oyle, liberty of Printing must be enthral'd again under a Prelaticall commiffion of twenty, the privilege of the people nullify'd, and which is wors, the freedom of learning must groan again, and to her old fetters; all this the Parliament yet fitting. Although their own late arguments and defences against the Prelats might remember them that this obfructing violence meets

for the most part with an event utterly opposite to the end which it drives at: instead of suppressing sects and schisms, it raises them and invests them with a reputation: *The punishing of wits enhances their authority*, saith the Vicount St. Albans, and a *forbidd'n writing is thought to be a certain spark of truth that flies up in the faces of them who seeke to tread it out*. This order therefore may prove a nursing mother to sects, but I shall easily shew how it will be a step-dame to Truth: and first by disabling us to the maintenance of what is known already.

Well knows he who uses to consider, that our faith and knowledge thrives by exercise, as well as our limbs and complexion. Truth is compar'd in Scripture to a streaming fountain; if her waters flow not in a perpetually progression, they sicken into a muddy pool of conformity and tradition. A man may be a heretic in the truth; and if he believe things only because his Pastor says so, or the Assembly so determines, without knowing other reason, though his belief be true, yet the very truth he holds, becomes his heresy. There is not any burden that some would gladly pass off to another, then the charge and care of their Religion. There be, who know not that there be of Protestants and professors who live and dye in as arrant an implicit faith, as any lay Papist of Loretto. A wealthy man addicted to his pleasure and to his profits, finds Religion to be a traffick so entangled, and of so many piddling accounts, that of all mysteries he cannot skill to keep a stock going upon that trade. What should he do? fain he would have the name to be religious, fain he would bear up with his neighbours in that. What does he therefore, but resolve to give over toying, and to find himself out some factor, to whose care and credit he may commit the whole managing of his religious affairs; some Divine of note and estimation that must be. To him he adheres, resigns the whole ware-house of his religion, with all the locks and keys into his custody; and indeed makes the very person of that man his religion; esteems his associating with him a sufficient evidence and commendatory of his own piety. So that a man may say his religion is now no more within himself, but is become a dividually movable, and goes and comes near him, according as that good man frequents the house. He entertains him, gives him gifts, feasts him, lodges him; his religion comes home at night, praises, is liberally sump, and sumptuously laid to sleep, rises, is saluted, and after the malmsey, or some well spiced brueage, and better breakfasted then he whose morning appetite would have gladly fed on green figs between *Betheny* and *Ierusalem*, his Religion walks abroad at eight, and leaves his kind entertainer in the shop trading all day without his religion.

Another sort there be who when they hear that all things shall be order'd, all things regulated and settled, nothing writt'n but what passes through the custom-house of certain Publicans that have the tuning and the poundage of all free spoken truth, will straight give themselves up into your hands, make 'em & cut 'em out what religion ye please; there be delights, there be recreations and jolly pastimes that will fetch the day about from fun to fun, and rock the tedious year as in a delightful dream. What need they torture their heads with that which others have taken so strictly, and so unalterably into their own pouring. These are the fruits which a dull ease and cessation of our knowledge will bring forth among the people. How goodly, and how to be wished were such an obedient unanimity as this, what a fine conformity would it stretch us all into? doubtless a stanch and solid piece of frame-work, as any January could freeze together.

Nor much better will be the consequence even among the clergy themselves; it is no new thing never heard of before, for a *parochiall* Minister, who has his reward, and is at his *Hercules* pillars in a warm benefice, to be easily inclinable,

if he have nothing else that may rouse up his studies, to finish his circuit in an English concordance and a *topic folio*, the gatherings and savings of a sober graduation, a *Harmony* and a *Catena*, treading the constant round of certain common doctrinal heads, attended with their uses, motives, marks and means, out of which as out of an alphabet or fol fa by forming and transforming, joining and dis-joining variously a little book-craft, and two hours meditation might furnish him unspeakably to the performance of more than a weekly charge of sermoning: not to reckon up the infinite helps of interlinearies, breviaries, *synopses*, and other loitering gear. But as for the multitude of Sermons ready printed and piled up, on every text that is not difficult, our London trading St. *Thomas* in his vestry, and added to boot St. *Martin*, and St. *Hugh*, have not within their hallowed limits more vendible ware of all sorts ready made: so that penury he never need fear of Pulpit provision, having where to plentifully to refresh his magazin. But if his rear and flanks be not impaled, if his back do be not secured by the rigid licenser, but that a bold book may now and then issue forth, and give the assault to some of his old collections in their trenches, it will concern him then to keep waking, to stand in watch, to set good guards and sentinels about his received opinions, to walk the round and counter-round with his fellow inspectors, fearing lest any of his flock be seduced, who also then would be better instructed, better exercised and disciplined. And God send that the fear of this diligence which must then be used, do not make us affect the laziness of a licensing Church.

For if we be sure we are in the right, and do not hold the truth guiltily, which becomes not, if we our selves condemn not our own weak and frivolous teaching, and the people for an untaught and irreligious gadding rout, what can be more fair, than when a man judicious, learned, and of a conscience, for ought we know, as good as theirs that taught us what we know, shall not privily from house to house, which is more dangerous, but openly by writing publish to the world what his opinion is, what his reasons, and wherefore that which is now thought cannot be found. Christ urged it as wherewith to justify himself, that he preach in publick; yet writing is more publick than preaching; and more easie to refutation, if need be, there being so many whose business and profession merely it is, to be the champions of Truth; which if they neglect, what can be imputed but their sloth, or inability?

Thus much we are hindered and dis-inured by this course of licensing toward the true knowledge of what we seem to know. For how much it hurts and hinders the licensers themselves in the calling of their Ministry, more than any secular employment, if they will discharge that office as they ought, so that of necessity they must neglect either the one duty or the other, I insist not, because it is a particular, but leave it to their own conscience, how they will decide it there.

There is yet behind of what I purpos'd to lay open, the incredible loss, and detriment that this plot of licensing puts us to, more than if some enemy at sea should stop up all our havens and ports, and creeks, it hinders and retards the importation of our richest Marchandize, Truth: nay it was first established and put in practice by Antichristian malice and mystery on set purpose to extinguish, if it were possible, the light of Reformation, and to settle falsehood; little differing from that policie wherewith the Turk upholds his *Alcoran*, by the prohibition of Printing. 'Tis not deny'd, but gladly confessed, we are to send our thanks and vows to heaven louder than most of Nations, for that great measure of truth which we enjoy, especially in those main points between us and the Pope, with his appertinences the Prelats: but he who thinks we are to pitch our tent here,

and have attain'd the utmost prospect of reformation, that the mortall glasse wherein we contemplate, can shew us, till we come to *beatific* vision, that man by this very opinion declares, that he is yet farre short of Truth.

Truth indeed came once into the world with her divine Master, and was a perfect shape most glorious to look on: but when he ascended, and his Apostles after Him were laid asleep, then straight arose a wicked race of deceivers, who as that story goes of the *Ægyptian Typhon* with his conspirators, how they dealt with the good *Ofiris*, took the virgin Truth, hew'd her lovely form into a thousand peeces, and scatter'd them to the four winds. From that time ever since, the sad friends of Truth, such as durst appear, imitating the carefull search that *Ifis* made for the mangl'd body of *Ofiris*, went up and down gathering up limb by limb still as they could find them. We have not yet found them all, Lords and Commons, nor ever shall doe, till her Masters second coming; he shall bring together every joynt and member, and shall mould them into an immortall feature of lovelines and perfection. Suffer not these licencing prohibitions to stand at every place of opportunity forbidding and disturbing them that continue seeking, that continue to do our obsequies to the torn body of our martyr'd Saint. We boast our light; but if we look not wifely on the Sun it self, it fmites us into darknes. Who can discern those planets that are oft *Combuft*, and those stars of brightest magnitude that rise and set with the Sun, untill the opposite motion of their orbs bring them to such a place in the firmament, where they may be seen evning or morning. The light which we have gain'd, was giv'n us, not to be ever staring on, but by it to discover onward things more remote from our knowledge. It is not the unfrocking of a Priest, the unmitring of a Bishop, and the removing him from off the *Presbyterian* shoulders that will make us a happy Nation, no, if other things as great in the Church, and in the rule of life both economical and political be not lookt into and reform'd, we have lookt so long upon the blaze that *Zwinglius* and *Calvin* hath beacon'd up to us, that we are stark blind. There be who perpetually complain of schisms and sects, and make it such a calamity that any man differs from their maxims. 'Tis their own pride and ignorance which causes the disturbing, who neither will hear with meeknes, nor can convince, yet all must be suppress'd which is not found in their *Syntagma*. They are the troublers, they are the dividers of unity, who neglect and permit not others to unite those differ'd peeces which are yet wanting to the body of Truth. To be still searching what we know not, by what we know, still closing up truth to truth as we find it (for all her body is *homogeneous*, and proportionall), this is the golden rule in *Theology* as well as in Arithmetick, and makes up the best harmony in a Church; not the forc't and outward union of cold, and neutrall, and inwardly divided minds.

Lords and Commons of England, consider what Nation it is whereof ye are, and whereof ye are the governours: a Nation not slow and dull, but of a quick, ingenious, and piercing spirit, acute to invent, futtle and finewy to discours, not beneath the reach of any point the highest that human capacity can soar to. Therefore the studies of learning in her deepest Sciences have bin so ancient, and so eminent among us, that Writers of good antiquity, and ablest judgement have bin perswaded that ev'n the school of *Pythagoras*, and the *Perfian* wisdom took beginning from the old Philofophy of this Iland. And that wife and civill Roman, *Julius Agricola*, who govern'd once here for *Cæsar*, prefer'd the naturall wits of Britain, before the labour'd studies of the French. Nor is it for nothing that the grave and frugal *Transylvanian* sends out yearly from as farre as the

mountainous borders of *Ruffia*, and beyond the *Hercynian* wildernesses, not their youth, but their stay'd men, to learn our language, and our *theologic* arts. Yet that which is above all this, the favour and the love of heav'n we have great argument to think in a peculiar manner propitious and propending towards us. Why else was this Nation chos'n before any other, that out of her as out of *Sion* should be proclam'd and founded forth the first tidings and trumpet of Reformation to all *Europ*. And had it not bin the obstinat perversenes of our Prelats against the divine and admirable spirit of *Wicklef*, to suppress him as a schismatic and *innovator*, perhaps neither the *Bohemian Huffle* and *Jerom*, nor the name of *Luther*, or of *Calvin* had bin ever known: the glory of reforming all our neighbours had bin compleatly ours. But now, as our obdurate Clergy have with violence demean'd the matter, we are become hitherto the latest and backwardest Schollers, of whom God offer'd to have made us the teachers. Now once again by all concurrence of signs, and by the generall instinct of holy and devout men, as they daily and solemnly expresse their thoughts, God is decreeing to begin some new and great period in his Church, ev'n to the reforming of Reformation it self: what does he then but reveal Himself to his servants, and as his manner is, first to his English-men; I say as his manner is, first to us, though we mark not the method of his counsels, and are unworthy. Behold now this vast City: a City of refuge, the mansion house of liberty, encompassed and surrounded with his protection; the shop of warre hath not there more anvils and hammers waking, to fashion out the plates and instruments of armed Justice in defence of beleaguer'd Truth, then there be pens and heads there, fitting by their studious lamps, musing, searching, revolving new notions and ideas wherewith to present, as with their homage and their fealty the approaching Reformation: others as fast reading, trying all things, assenting to the force of reason and conviction. What could a man require more from a Nation so pliant and so prone to seek after knowledge. What wants there to such a towardly and pregnant soil, but wife and faithful labourers, to make a knowing people, a Nation of Prophets, of Sages, and of Worthies. We reckon more then five months yet to harvest; there need not be five weeks, had we but eyes to lift up, the fields are white already. Where there is much desire to learn, there of necessity will be much arguing, much writing, many opinions; for opinion in good men is but knowledge in the making. Under these fantastick terrors of sect and schism, we wrong the earnest and zealous thirst after knowledge and understanding which God hath stirr'd up in this city. What some lament of, we rather should rejoyce at, should rather praise this pious forwardnes among men, to reassume the ill deputed care of their Religion into their own hands again. A little generous prudence, a little forbearance of one another, and some grain of charity might win all these diligences to joyn, and unite into one generall and brotherly search after Truth; could we but forgoe this Prelaticall tradition of crowding free consciences and Christian liberties into canons and precepts of men. I doubt not, if some great and worthy stranger should come among us, wife to discern the mould and temper of a people, and how to govern it, observing the high hopes and aims, the diligent alacrity of our extended thoughts and reasonings in the pursuit of truth and freedom, but that he would cry out as *Pirrhus* did, admiring the Roman docility and courage, if such were my *Epirots*, I would not despair the greatest design that could be attempted to make a Church or Kingdom happy. Yet these are the men cry'd out against for schismatics and sectaries; as if, while the Temple of the Lord was building, some cutting, some squaring the marble, others hewing the cedars,

there should be a sort of irrationall men who could not consider there must be many schisms and many diffections made in the quarry and in the timber, ere the house of God can be built. And when every stone is laid artfully together, it cannot be united into a continuity, it can but be contiguous in this world; neither can every peece of the building be of one form; nay rather the perfection consists in this, that out of many moderat varieties and brotherly diffimilitudes that are not vastly disproportionall arises the goodly and the gracefull fymmetry that commends the whole pile and fstructure. Let us therefore be more considerat builders, more wise in spirituall architecture, when great reformation is expected. For now the time seems come, wherein *Moses* the great Prophet may fit in heav'n rejoicing to see that memorable and glorious wifh of his fulfill'd, when not only our sev'nty Elders, but all the Lords people are become Prophets. No marvell then though some men, and some good men too perhaps, but young in goodnesse, as *Joshua* then was, envy them. They fret, and out of their own weaknes are in agony, lest these divisions and subdivisions will undoe us. The adverfarie again applauds, and waits the hour, when they have brancht themselves out, faith he, small enough into parties and partitions, then will be our time. Fool! he sees not the firm root, out of which we all grow, though into branches: nor will he ware untill he see our small divided maniples cutting through at every angle of his ill united and unweildy brigade. And that we are to hope better of all these supposed sects and schisms, and that we shall not need that sollicitude honest perhaps though over timorous of them that vex in this behalf, but shall laugh in the end, at those malicious applauders of our differences, I have these reasons to perswade me.

First, when a City shall be as it were besieg'd and blockt about, her navigable river infected, invades and incursions round, defiance and battell oft rumour'd to be marching up ev'n to her walls, and suburbs trenches, that then the people, or the greater part, more then at other times, wholly tak'n up with the study of highest and most important matters to be reform'd, should be disputing, reasoning, reading, inventing, discourfing, ev'n to a rarity, and admiration, things not before discourft or writt'n of, argues first a singular good will, contentednesse and confidence in your prudent foresight, and safe government, Lords and Commons; and from thence derives it self to a gallant bravery and well grounded contempt of their enemies, as if there were no small number of as great spirits among us, as his was, who when Rome was nigh besieg'd by *Hanibal*, being in the City, bought that peece of ground at no cheap rate, whereon *Hanibal* himself encampt his own regiment. Next it is a lively and cherfull preface of our happy succeffe and victory. For as in a body, when the blood is fresh, the spirits pure and vigorous, not only to vital, but to ratiounall faculties, and those in the acuteft, and the pertest operations of wit and futtlety, it argues in what good plight and constitution the body is, so when the cherfulness of the people is so sprightly up, as that it has not only wherewith to guard well its own freedom and safety, but to spare, and to bestow upon the solideft and sublimest points of controverfie, and new invention, it betok'ns us not degenerated, nor drooping to a fatall decay, but casting off the old and wrincl'd skin of corruption to outlive these pangs and wax young again, entering the glorious waies of Truth and prosperous vertue destin'd to become great and honourable in these latter ages. Methinks I see in my mind a noble and puiffant Nation rousing herself like a strong man after sleep, and shaking her invincible locks: Methinks I see her as an Eagle muing her mighty youth, and kindling her undazl'd eyes at the full midday beam; purging

and unscaling her long abused light at the fountain it self of heav'nly radiance; while the whole noise of timorous and flocking birds, with those also that love the twilight, flutter about, amaz'd at what she means, and in their envious gabble would prognosticat a year of sects and schisms.

What would ye doe then, should ye suppress all this flowry crop of knowledge and new light sprung up and yet springing daily in this City, should ye set an *Oligarchy* of twenty ingroffers over it, to bring a famine upon our minds again, when we shall know nothing but what is measured to us by their bushel? Believe it, Lords and Commons, they who counsel ye to such a suppressing, doe as good as bid ye suppress your selves; and I will soon shew how. If it be desired to know the immediate cause of all this free writing and free speaking, there cannot be assigned a truer then your own mild, and free, and human government; it is the liberty, Lords and Commons, which your own valorous and happy counsels have purchased us, liberty which is the nurse of all great wits; this is that which hath rarified and enlightened our spirits like the influence of heav'n; this is that which hath enfranchised, enlarged and lifted up our apprehensions degrees above themselves. Ye cannot make us now less capable, less knowing, less eagerly pursuing of the truth, unless ye first make your selves, that made us so, less the lovers, less the founders of our true liberty. We can grow ignorant again, brutish, formal, and slavish, as ye found us; but you then must first become that which ye cannot be, oppressive, arbitrary, and tyrannous, as they were from whom ye have freed us. That our hearts are now more capacious, our thoughts more erected to the search and expectation of greatest and exactest things, is the issue of your own virtue propagated in us; ye cannot suppress that unless ye reinforce an abrogated and merciful law, that fathers may dispatch at will their own children. And who shall then stick closest to ye, and excite others? not he who takes up arms for cote and conduct, and his four nobles of Danegelt. Although I dispraise not the defence of just immunities, yet love my peace better, if that were all. Give me the liberty to know, to utter, and to argue freely according to conscience, above all liberties.

What would be best advised then, if it be found so hurtful and so unequal to suppress opinions for the newnes, or the unfutableness to a customary acceptance, will not be my task to say; I only shall repeat what I have learnt from one of your own honourable number, a right noble and pious Lord, who had he not sacrificed his life and fortunes to the Church and Commonwealth, we had not now mist and bewailed a worthy and undoubted patron of this argument. Ye know him I am sure; yet I for honours sake, and may it be eternal to him, shall name him, the Lord *Brook*. He writing of Episcopacy, and by the way treating of sects and schisms, left Ye his vote, or rather now the last words of his dying charge, which I know will ever be of dear and honour'd regard with Ye, so full of meekness and breathing charity, that next to his last testament, who bequeathed love and peace to his Disciples, I cannot call to mind where I have read or heard words more mild and peaceful. He there exhorts us to hear with patience and humility those, however they be miscalled, that desire to live purely, in such a use of Gods Ordinances, as the best guidance of their conscience gives them, and to tolerate them, though in some difformity to our selves. The book itself will tell us more at large being published to the world, and dedicated to the Parliament by him who both for his life and for his death deserves, that what advice he left be not laid by without perusal.

And now the time in speciall is, by priviledge to write and speak what may

help to the further discussing of matters in agitation. The temple of *Janus* with his two *controversial* faces might now not unobtrusively be set open. And though all the winds of doctrine were let loose to play upon the earth, for Truth be in the field, we do injuriously, by licensing and prohibiting to mislead her strength. Let her and Falseness grapple; who ever knew Truth put to the worse, in a free and open encounter. Her confuting is the best and surest suppressing. He who hears what praying there is for light and clearer knowledge to be sent down among us, would think of other matters to be constituted beyond the discipline of *Geneva*, framed and fabricated already to our hands. Yet when the new light which we beg for shines in upon us, there be who envy, and oppose, if it come not first in at their chambers. What a collusion is this, whenas we are exhorted by the wise man to use diligence, *to seek for wisdom as for hid'd treasures* early and late, that another order shall enjoy us to know nothing but by statute. When a man hath been labouring the hardest labour in the deep mines of knowledge, hath furnished out his findings in all their equipage, drawn forth his reasons as it were a battell ranged, scattered and defeated all objections in his way, calls out his adversary into the plain, offers him the advantage of wind and sun, if he please; only that he may try the matter by dint of argument, for his opponents then to sculk, to lay ambushments, to keep a narrow bridge of licensing where the challenger should pass, though it be valour enough in soldiership, is but weakness and cowardice in the wars of Truth. For who knows not that Truth is strong next to the Almighty; she needs no policies, nor stratagems, nor licencings to make her victorious, those are the shifts and the defences that error uses against her power: give her but room, & do not bind her when she sleeps, for then she speaks not true, as the old *Proteus* did, who spoke oracles only when he was caught & bound, but then rather she turns herself into all shapes, except her own, and perhaps tunes her voice according to the time, as *Micaiah* did before Ahab, until she be adjured into her own likeness. Yet is it not impossible that she may have more shapes than one. What else is all that rank of things indifferent, wherein Truth may be on this side, or on the other, without being unlike herself. What but a vain shadow else is the abolition of *those ordinances, that hand writing say'd to the cross*, what great purchase is this Christian liberty which *Paul* so often boasts of. His doctrine is, that he who eats or eats not, regards a day, or regards it not, may do either to the Lord. How many other things might be tolerated in peace, and left to conscience, had we but charity, and were it not the chief strong hold of our hypocrisy to be ever judging one another. I fear yet this iron yoke of outward conformity hath left a slavish print upon our necks; the ghost of a linnen decency yet haunts us. We stumble and are impatient at the least dividing of one visible congregation from another, though it be not in fundamentals; and through our forwardness to suppress, and our backwardness to recover any enthral'd piece of truth out of the gripe of custom, we care not to keep truth separated from truth, which is the fiercest rent and division of all. We do not see that while we still affect by all means a rigid external formality, we may as soon fall again into a gross conforming stupidity, a stark and dead congealment of *wood and hay and stubble* forced and frozen together, which is more to the sudden degenerating of a Church than many *subdichotomies* of petty schisms. Not that I can think well of every light separation, or that all in a Church is to be expected *gold and silver and precious stones*: it is not possible for man to sever the wheat from the tares, the good fish from the other fish; that must be the Angels Ministry at the end of mortal things. Yet if all cannot be of one mind, as who looks they should be?

this doubtles is more wholfome, more prudent, and more Chriftian that many be tolerated, rather then all compell'd. I mean not tolerated Popery, and open fuperftition, which as it extirpats all religions and civill fupremacies, fo it felf fhould be extirpat, provided firft that all charitable and compaffionat means be us'd to win and regain the weak and the mifled: that alfo which is impious or evil abfolutely either againft faith or maners no law can poffibly permit, that intends not to unlaw it felf: but thofe neighboring differences, or rather indifferences, are what I fpeak of, whether in fome point of doctrine or of difcipline, which though they may be many, yet need not interrupt *the unity of Spirit*, if we could but find among us the *bond of peace*. In the mean while if any one would write, and bring his helpfull hand to the flow-moving Reformation which we labour under, if Truth have spok'n to him before others, or but feem'd at leaft to fpeak, who hath fo bejefuited us that we fhould trouble that man with asking licence to doe fo worthy a deed? and not confider this, that if it come to prohibiting, there is not ought more likely to be prohibited then truth it felf; whofe firft appearance to our eyes blear'd and dimm'd with prejudice and cuftom, is more unfightly and unplaufible then many errors, ev'n as the perfon is of many a great man flight and contemptible to fee to. And what doe they tell us vainly of new opinions, when this very opinion of theirs, that none muft be heard, but whom they like, is the worft and neweft opinion of all others; and is the chief caufe why fects and fchifms doe fo much abound, and true knowledge is kept at diftance from us; befides yet a greater danger which is in it. For when God shakes a Kingdome with ftrong and healthfull commotions to a generall reforming, 'tis not untrue that many fectaries and falfe teachers are then buieft in feducing; but yet more true it is, that God then raifes to his own work men of rare abilities, and more then common induftry not only to look back and revife what hath bin taught heretofore, but to gain furder and goe on, fome new enlighten'd fteps in the difcovery of truth. For fuch is the order of Gods enlightning his Church, to difpenfe and deal out by degrees his beam, fo as our earthly eyes may beft fustain it. Neither is God appointed and confin'd, where and out of what place thefe his chofen fhall be firft heard to fpeak; for he fees not as man fees, choofes not as man choofes, left we fhould devote our felves again to fet places, and affemblies, and outward callings of men; planting our faith one while in the old Convocation houfe, and another while in the Chapell at Weftminfter; when all the faith and religion that fhall be there canoniz'd, is not fufficient without plain convincement, and the charity of patient inftruction to fupple the leaft bruife of confcience, to edifie the meaneft Chriftian, who defires to walk in the Spirit, and not in the letter of human truft, for all the number of voices that can be there made; no though *Harry* the 7. himfelf there, with all his leige tombs about him, fhould lend them voices from the dead, to fwell their number. And if the men be erroneus who appear to be the leading fchifmaticks, what witholds us but our floth, our felf-will, and diftruft in the right caufe, that we doe not give them gentle meeting and gentle difmiffions, that we debate not and examin the matter throughly with liberall and frequent audience; if not for their fakes, yet for our own? feeing no man who hath tafted learning, but will confeffe the many waies of profiting by thofe who not contented with ftale receipts are able to manage, and fet forth new pofitions to the world. And were they but as the duft and cinders of our feet, fo long as in that notion they may yet ferve to polifh and brighten the armoury of Truth, ev'n for that refpect they were not utterly to be caft away. But if they be of thofe whom God hath fitted for the fpeciall ufe

of these times with eminent and ample gifts, and those perhaps neither among the Priests, nor among the Pharisees, and we in the haught of a precipitant zeal shall make no distinction, but resolve to stop their mouths, because we fear they come with new and dangerous opinions, as we commonly forejudge them ere we understand them, no less then woe to us, while thinking thus to defend the Gospel, we are found the persecutors.

There have bin not a few since the beginning of this Parliament, both of the Presbytery and others who by their unlicen't books to the contempt of an *Imprimatur* first broke that triple ice clung about our hearts, and taught the people to see day: I hope that none of those were the persuaders to renew upon us this bondage which they themselves have wrought so much good by contemning. But if neither the check that *Moses* gave to young *Joshua*, nor the countermand which our Saviour gave to young *John*, who was so ready to prohibit those whom he thought unlicenc't, be not enough to admonish our Elders how unacceptable to God their tefty mood of prohibiting is, if neither their own remembrance what evill hath abounded in the Church by this lett of licencing, and what good they themselves have begun by transgressing it, be not enough, but that they will persuade, and execute the most *Dominican* part of the Inquisition over us, and are already with one foot in the stirrup so active at suppressing, it would be no unequal distribution in the first place to suppress the suppressors themselves; whom the change of their condition hath puffed up, more then their late experience of harder times hath made wise.

And as for regulating the Presse, let no man think to have the honour of advising ye better then your selves have done in that Order published next before this, that no book be Printed, unlesse the Printers and the Authors name, or at least the Printers be register'd. Those which otherwise come forth, if they be found mischievous and libellous, the fire and the executioner will be the timeliest and the most effectually remedy, that mans prevention can use. For this *authentic* Spanish policy of licencing books, if I have said aught, will prove the most unlicenc't book it self within a short while; and was the immediat image of a Star-chamber decree to that purpose made in those very times when that Court did the rest of those her pious works, for which she is now fall'n from the Starres with *Lucifer*. Whereby ye may gueffe what kinde of State prudence, what love of the people, what care of Religion, or good manners there was at the contriving, although with singular hypocrisie it pretended to bind books to their good behaviour. And how it got the upper hand of your precedent Order so well constituted before, if we may believe those men whose profession gives them cause to enquire most, it may be doubted there was in it the fraud of some old *patentees* and *monopolizers* in the trade of book-selling; who under pretence of the poor in their Company not to be defrauded, and the just retaining of each man his severall copy, which God forbid should be gainesaid, brought divers glosing colours to the House, which were indeed but colours, and serving to no end except it be to exercise a superiority over their neighbours, men who doe not therefore labour in an honest profession to which learning is indetted, that they should be made other mens vassalls. Another end is thought was aym'd at by some of them in procuring by petition this Order, that having power in their hands, malignant books might the easier scape abroad, as the event shews. But of these *Sophisms* and *Elenchs* of marchandize I skill not: This I know, that errors in a good government and in a bad are equally almost incident; for what Magistrate may not be mis-inform'd, and much the sooner, if liberty of Printing be reduc't into the

power of a few; but to redresse willingly and speedily what hath bin err'd, and in highest authority to esteem a plain advertifement more then others have done a sumptuous bribe, is a vertue (honour'd Lords and Commons) answerable to Your highest actions, and whereof none can participat but greatest and wisest men.

The End.