

Renascence Editions

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The Readie & Easie Way to Establish a Free Commonwealth (1660).

John Milton

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T H E
R E A D I E & E A S I E
V V A Y
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A
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T h e i n c o n v e n i e n c e s a n d d a n g e r s o f
r e a d m i t t i n g k i n g s h i p i n t h i s n a t i o n :

The author J. M..

L O N D O N ,

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at the Crown in Popes-Head Alley. 1660.

Although since the writing of this treatise, the face of things hath had some change, writs for new elections have bin recall'd, and the members at first chosen, readmitted from exclusion, to sit again in Parliament, yet not a little rejoicing to hear declar'd, the resolutions of all those who are now in power, jointly tending to the establishment of a free Commonwealth, and to remove if it be possible, this unsound humour of returning to old bondage, instilld of late by some cunning deceivers; and nourished from bad principles and fals apprehensions among too many of the people, I thought best not to suppress what I had written, hoping it may perhaps (the Parliament now sitting more full and frequent) be now much more useful than before: yet submitting what hath reference to the state of things as they then stood, to present constitutions; and so the same end be persu'd, not insisting on this or that means to obtain it. The treatise was thus written as follows.

The Parliament of *England* assisted by a great number of the people who appeard and stuck to them faithfulest in the defence of religion and thir civil liberties, judging kingship by long experience a government burdensome, expensive, useless and dangerous, justly and magnanimously abolishd it; turning regal-bondage into a free Commonwealth, to the admiration and terror of our neighbours, and the stirring up of *France* it self, especially in *Paris* and *Bourdeaux*, to our imitation.

Nor were our actions less both at home and abroad then might become the hopes of a glorious rising Commonwealth; nor were the expressions both of the Army and of the People, whether in thir publick declarations or several writings, other then such as testifi'd a spirit in this nation no less noble and well fitted to the liberty of a Commonwealth, then in the ancient Greeks or Romans. After our liberty thus successfully fought for, gaine and many years possessd, except in those unhappie interruptions; which God hath remov'd, and wonderfully now the third time brought together our old Patriots, the first Assertours of our religious and civil rights, now that nothing remains but in all reason the certain hopes of a speedy and immediate settlement to this nation for ever in a firm and free Commonwealth, to fall back, or rather to creep back so poorly as it seems the multitude vvould, to thir once abjur'd and detested thraldom of kingship; not only argues a strange degenerate corruption suddenly spread among us, fitted and prepar'd for nevv slaverie, but vvill render us a scorn and derision to all our neighbours. And vvhat vvill they say of us, but scoffingly as of that foolish builder mentioned by our Saviour, who began to build a Tower, and was not able to finish it: where is this goodly tower of a Common-wealth which the *English* boasted they would build, to overshaddow kings and be another *Rome* in the west? The foundation indeed they laid gallantly, but fell into a worse confusion, not of tongues, but of factions, then those at the tower of *Babel*; and have left no memorial of thir work behinde them remaining, but in the common laughter of *Europ*. VVhich must needs redound the more to our shame, if we but look on our neighbours the United Provinces, to us inferior in all outward advantages: who notwithstanding, in the midst of greater difficulties, courageously, wisely, constantly went through with the same work, and are settl'd in all the happie injoiments of a potent and flourishing Republick to this day.

Besides this, if we return to kingship, and soon repent, as undoubtedly we shall, when we begin to

finde the old incroachments coming on by little and little upon our consciences, which must necessarily proceed from king and bishop united inseparably in one interest, we may be forc'd perhaps to fight over again all that we have fought, and spend over again all that we have spent, but are never like to attain thus far as we are now advanc'd, to the recoverie of our freedom, never likely to have it in possession, as we now have it, never to be voutsaf'd heerafter the like mercies and signal assistances from heaven in our cause, if by our ingratefull backsliding we make these fruitless to ourselves, all his gracious condescensions and answers to our once importuning praiers against the tyrannie which we then ground under to become now of no effect, by returning of our own foolish accord, nay running headlong again with full stream wilfully and obstinately into the same bondage: making vain and viler then dirt the blood of so many thousand faithfull and valiant Englishmen, who left us in this libertie, bought with thir lives; losing by a strange aftergame of folly, all the battels we have wonne, all the treasure we have spent, not that corruptible treasure only, but that far more precious of all our late miraculous deliverances; and most pittifully depriving our selves the instant fruition of that free government which we have so dearly purchasd, a free Commonwealth, not only held by wisest men in all ages the noblest, the manliest, the equallest, the justest government, the most agreeable to all due libertie and proportiond equalitie, both humane, civil and Christian, most cherishing to vertue and true religion but also (I may say it with greatest probabilitie) planely commended or rather enjoind by our Saviour himself, to all Christians, not without remarkable disallowance and the brand of *Gentilism* upon kingship. God in much displeasure gave a king to the *Israelites*, and imputed it a sin to them that they sought one: but Christ apparently forbids his disciples to admitt of any such heathenish government: *the kings of the gentiles*, saith he *exercise lordship over them; and they that exercise autoritie upon them, are call'd benefactors. But ye shall not be so: but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief as he that serveth.* The occasion of these his words, was the ambitious desire of *Zebede's* two sons to be exalted above their brethren in his kingdom, which they thought was to be ere long upon earth. That he speaks of civil government, is manifest by the former part of the comparison, which inferrs the other part to be alwaies in the same kinde. And what government comes neerer to this precept of Christ, then a free Commonwealth; wherin they who are greatest, are perpetual servants and drudges to the publick at thir own cost and charges, neglect thir own affairs; yet are not elevated above thir brethren, live soberly in thir families, walk the streets as other men, may be spoken to freely, familiarly, friendly, without adoration. Whereas a king must be ador'd like a Demigod, with a dissolute and haughtie court about him, of vast expence and luxurie, masks and revels, to the debaushing of our prime gentry both male and female; nor at his ovvn cost, but on the publick revenue; and all this to do nothing but bestovv the eating and drinking of excessive dainties, to set a pompous face upon the superficial actings of State, to pageant himself up and dovvn in progress among the perpetual bovvings and cringings of an abject people, on either side deifying and adoring him vvho for the most part deserves none of this by any good done to the people (for vvhat can he more then another man?) but even in the expression of a late court-Poet, sits only like a great cypher set to no purpose before a long rovv of other significant figures. Nay it is vvell and happy for the people if thir king be but a cypher, being oft times a mischief, a pest, a scourge of the nation, and vvhich is vvorse, not to be remov'd, not to be contrould, much less accus'd or brought to punishment, without the danger of a common ruin, without the shaking and almost subversion of the whole land. Wheras in a free Commonwealth, any governour or chief counselour offending, may be remov'd and punishd, without the least commotion. Certainly then that people must needs be madd or strangely infatuated, that build the chief hope of thir common happiness or safetie on a single person; who if he happen to be good, can do no more then another man, if to be bad, hath in his hands to do more

evil without check, then millions of other men. The happiness of a nation must needs be firmest and certainest in a full and free Councel of their own electing, where no single person, but reason only swayes. And what madness is it, for them vvho might manage nobly their ovvn affairs themselves, sluggishly and vweakly to devolve all on a single person; and more like boyes under age then men; to committ all to his patronage and disposal, vvho neither can perform vvhat he undertakes, and yet for undertaking it, though royally paid, vvill not be thir servant, but thir lord? hovv unmanly must it needs be, to count such a one the breath of our nostrils, to hang all our felicitie on him, all our safety, our vvell-being, for vvhich if vve vvere aught els but sluggards or babies, vve need depend on none but God and our ovvn counsels, our ovvn active vertue and industrie. *Go to the Ant, thou sluggard, saith Solomon, consider her waies, and be wise; which having no prince, ruler, or lord, provides her meat in the summer, and gathers her food in the harvest.* Which evidently shews us, that they who think the nation undon without a king, though they swell and look haughtie, have not so much true spirit and understanding in them as a Pismire. It may be well wonderd that any nation, styling themselves free, can suffer any man to pretend right over them as thir lord; whenas by acknowledging that right, they conclude themselves his servants and his vassals and so renounce thir own freedom. Which how a people can do, that hath fought so gloriously for libertie, how they can change thir noble words and actions heretofore so becoming the majestie of a free people, unto the base necessitie of court-flatteries and prostrations, is not only strange and admirable, but lamentable to think on: that a nation should be so valorous and courageous to vvinne thir libertie in the field, and vvhen they have vvonn it, should be so unvvise in thir counsels, as not to knowv hovv to value it, vvhat to do vvith it, or vvith themselves; but after ten or tvvelve years prosperous vvar and contestation vvith tyrannie, basely and besottedly to run thir necks again into the yoke vvhich they have broken, and prostrate all the fruits of thir victorie for nothing at the feet of the vanquishd, besides our loss of glorie vvill be an ignominie, if it befall us, that never yet befell any nation possessd of thir libertie; vvorthie indeed themselves, vvhosoever they be, to be forever slaves; but that part of the nation which consents not with them, as I perswade me of a great number, far worthier then by their means to be brought into the same bondage, and reservd, I trust, by Divine providence to a better end; since God hath yet his remnant, and hath not yet quenched the spirit of libertie among us. Considering these things, so plane, so rational, I cannot but yet further admire on the other side, how any man who hath the true principles of justice and religion in him, can presume or take upon him to be a king and lord over his brethren, whom he cannot but know, whether as men or Christians, to be for the most part every way equal or superiour to himself: how he can display with such vanitie and ostentation his regal splendour so supereminently above other mortal men; or, being a Christian, can assume such extraordinarie honour and worship to himself, while the kingdom of Christ, our common King and Lord, is hid to this world, and such *Gentilish* imitation forbid in express words by himself to all his disciples? All Protestants hold, that Christ in his Church hath left no viceregent of his kingly povver, but himself vvithout deputy, is the only head thereof, governing it from heaven: hovv then can any Christian man derive his kingship from Christ, but vvith vvorse usurpation then the Pope his headship over the Church, since Christ not only hath not left the least shadowv of a command for any such viceregence from him in the State, as the Pope pretends for his in the Church, but hath expressly declar'd that such regal dominion is from the gentiles, not from him, and hath strictly charg'd us, not to imitate them therein?

I doubt not but all ingenuous and knowing men will easily agree with me, that free Commonwealth without single person or house of lords, is by far the best government, if it can be had; but we have all this while, say they, bin expecting it, and cannot yet attain it. I answer, that the cause thereof may be

ascrib'd with most reason to the frequent disturbances, interruptions and dissolutions which the Parliament hath had partly from the impatient or disaffected people, partly from some ambitious leaders in the armie; much contrarie, I believe, to the minde and approbation of the Armie it self and thir other Commanders, when they were once undeceivd, or in thir own power. Neither ought the small number of those remaining in Parliament, be made a by-word of reproach to them, as it is of late by the rable, whenas rather they should be therefor honourd, as the remainder of those faithfull worthies, who at first freed us from tyrannie, and have continu'd ever since through all changes constant to thir trust; which they have declar'd, as they may most justly and truly, that no other way they can discharge, no other way secure and confirme the peoples libertie, but by settling them in a free Commonwealth. And doubtless, no Parliament will be ever able under royaltie to free the people from slavery: and when they go about it, vvill find it a laborious task; and when they have don all, they can, be forc'd to leave the contest endless between prerogative and petition of right, till only dooms-day end it: And now is the opportunitie, now the very season wherein we may obtain a free Commonwealth, and establish it forever in the land, without difficulty or much delay. The Parliament have voted to fill up their number: and if the people, laying aside prejudice and impatience, will seriously and calmly now consider thir own good, thir own libertie and the only means therof, as shall be heer laid before them, and will elect thir Knights and Burgesses able men, and according to the just and necessarie qualifications decreed in Parliament, men not addicted to a single person or house of lords, the work is don; at least the foundation is firmly laid of a free Commonwealth, and good part also erected of the main structure. For the ground and basis of every just and free government (since men have smarted so oft for committing all to one person) is a general Councel of ablest men, chosen by the people to consult of publick affairs from time to time for the common good. This Grand Council must have the forces by sea and land in thir power, must raise and mannage the Publick revenue, make lawes, as need requires, treat of commerce, peace, or war with forein nations; and for the carrying on som particular affairs of State with more secrecie and expedition, must elect, as they have already out of thir own number and others, a Councel of State. And although it may seem strange at first hearing, by reason that mens mindes are prepossessed with the conceit of successive Parlements, I affirm that the Grand or General Council being well chosen, should sit perpetual: for so their business is, and they will become thereby skilfullest, best acquainted with the people, and the people with them. The ship of the Commonwealth is alwaies undersail; they sit at the stern; and if they steer well, what need is ther to change them; it being rather dangerous? Adde to this, that the Grand Council is both foundation and main pillar of the whole State; and to move pillars and foundations, unless they be faultie, cannot be safe for the building. I see not therefore how we can be advantag'd by successive Parlements; but that they are much liklier continually to unsettle rather than to settle a free government, to breed commotions, changes, novelties and uncertainties; and serve only to satisfie the ambition of such men, as think themselves injur'd, and cannot stay till they be orderly chosen to have thir part in the government. If the ambition of such be at all to be regarded, the best expedient will be, and with least danger, that everie two or three years a hundred or some such number may go out by lot or suffrage of the rest, and the like number be chosen in thir places; (which hath bin already thought on heer, and done in other Commonwealths:) but in my opinion better nothing mov'd, unless by death or just accusation: and I shall make mention of another way to satisfie such as are reasonable, ere I end this discourse. And least this be thought my single opinion, I shall adde sufficient testimonie. Kingship it self is therefore counted the more safe and durable, because the king and for the most part, his Councel, is not changd during life: but a Commonwealth is held immortal; and therein firmest, safest and most above fortune; for that the death of a king, causeth oft-times many dangerous alterations; but

the death now and then of a Senatour is not felt; the main body of them still continuing unchang'd in greatest and noblest Commonwealths, and as it were eternal. Therefore among the Jews, the supream Council of seaventie, call'd the *Sanhedrim*, founded by *Moses*, in *Athens* that the *Areopagus*, in *Lacedaemon* that of the Ancients, in *Rome* the Senat, consisted of members chosen for term of life; and by that means remaind still the same to generations. In *Venice* they change indeed ofter then everie year som particular counceles of State, as that of six, or such others; but the full Senate, which upholds and sustains the government, sits immovable. So in the United Provinces, the States General, which are indeed but a Council of State delegated by the whole union, are not usually the same persons for above three or six years; but the Provincial States, in whom the true sovrantie is plac'd, are a standing Senate, without succession, and accounted chiefly in that regard the main prop of thir libertie. And why they should be so in everie well ordered Commonwealth, they who write of policie, give these reasons; "That to make the whole Senate successive, not only impairs the dignitie and lustre of the Senate, but weakens the whole Commonwealth, and brings it into manifest danger; while by this means the secrets of State are frequently divulg'd, and matters of greatest consequence committed to inexpert and novice counselors, utterly to seek in the full and intimate knowledge of affairs past. I know not therefor what should be peculiar in *England* to make successive Parlaments thought safest, or convenient heer more then in all other nations, unlesse it be the fick'lness which is attributed to us as we are Ilanders. But good education and acquise wisdom ought to correct the fluxible fault, if any such be, of our watrie situation; I suppose therefor that the people well weighing these things, would have no cause to fear or murmur, though the Parliament, abolishing that name, as originally signifying but the *parlie* of our Commons with thir *Norman* king when he pleas'd to call them, should perpetuate themselves, if thir ends be faithfull and for a free Commonwealth, under the name of a Grand or General Council: nay till this be done, I am in doubt whether our State will be ever certainlie and throughly setl'd: and say again therefor, that if the Parliament do this, these nations will have so little cause to fear or suspect them, that they will have cause rather to gratulate and thank them; nay more, if they understand thir own good rightly, will sollicit and entreat them not to throw off the great burden from thir shoulders which none are abler to bear, and to sit perpetual; never likely till then to see an end of thir troubles and continual changes, or at least never the true settlement and assurance of their libertie. And the government being novv in so many faithful and experienc'd hands, next under God, so able, especially filling up their number, as they intend, and abundantly sufficient so happily to govern us, vvhy should the nation so little knowv thir ovvn interest as to seek change, and deliver themselves up to meer titles and vanities, to persons untri'd, unknowvn, necessitous, implacable, and every vvay to be suspected: to vvhose povver vvhen vve are once made subject, not all these our Patriots nor all the vv wisdom or force of the vvell affected joind vvith them can deliver us again from most certain miserie and thraldom. To return then to this most easie, most present and only cure of our distempers, the Grand Council being thus firmly constituted to perpetuitie, and still, upon the death or default of any member, suppli'd and kept in full number, ther can be no cause alleag'd why peace, justice, plentiful trade and all prosperitie should not therupon ensue throughout the whole land; with as much assurance as can be of human things, that they shall so continue (if God favour us, and our wilfull sins provoke him not) even to the coming of our true and right full and only to be expected King, only worthy as he is our only Saviour, the Messiah, the Christ, the only heir of his eternal father, the only by him anointed and ordaind, since the work of our redemption finishd, universal Lord of all mankind. The way propounded is plain, easie and open before us; without intricases, without the mixture of inconveniencies, or any considerable objection to be made, as by some friviously, that it is not practicable: and this facilitie we shall have above our next neighbouring Commonwealth, (if we can keep

us from the fond conceit of something like a duke of *Venice*, put lately into many mens heads, by som one or other suttly driving on under that prettie notion his own ambitious ends to a crown) that our liberty shall not be hamperd or hoverd over by any ingag'ment to such a potent family as the house of *Nassaw*, of whom to stand in perpetual doubt and suspicion, but we shall live the cleerest and absolutest free nation in the world. On the contrarie, if ther be a king, which the inconsiderate multitude are now so madd upon, marke how far short we are like to com of all those happineses, which in a free State we shall immediately be possessd of. First, the Grand Council, which, as I said before, is both the basis and main pillar in everie government, and should sit perpetually, (unless thir leisure give them now and then some intermissions or vacations easilie manageable by the Council of State left sitting) shall be call'd, by the kings good will and utmost endeavour, as seldome as maybe; and then for his own ends: for it will soon return to that, let no man hope otherwise, whatever law or provision be made to the contrarie. For it is only the kings right, he will say, to call a Parliament; and this he will do most commonly about his own affairs rather than the kingdom's, as will appear planely so soon as they are call'd. For what will thir business then be and the chief expence of thir time, but an endless tugging between right of subject and royal prerogative, especially about the negative voice, militia, or subsidies, demanded and oft-times extorted without reasonable cause appearing to the Commons, who are the only true representatives of the people; but vvill be then mingl'd vvith a court-faction; besides vvwhich, vvithin thir ovvn vvalls, the sincere part of them vvho stand faithful to the people, vvill again have do deal with two troublesome counter-vvorking adversaries from vvithout, meer creatures of the king, temporal and spiritual lords, [made] up into one house, and nothing concernd vvith the peoples libertie. If these prevail not in what they please, though never so much against the peoples interest, the Parliament shall be soon dissolv'd, or sit and do nothing; not sufferd to remedie the least greevance, or enact aught advantageous to the people. Next, the Council of State shall not be chosen by the Parliament, but by the king, still his own creatures, courtiers and favorites; who will be sure in all thir counsels to set thir maister's grandure and absolute power, in what they are able, far above the peoples libertie. I denie not but that ther may be such a king, who may regard the common good before his own, may have no vitious favorite, may hearken only to the wisest and incorruptest of his Parliament; but this rarely happ'ns in a monarchie not elective; and it behoves not a wise nation to commit the summ of thir wellbeing, the whole state of thir safetie to fortune. And admitt, that monarchy of it self may be convenient to som nations, yet to us who have thrown it out, received back again, it cannot but prove pernicious. For the kings to com, never forgetting thir former ejection, will be sure to fortifie and arme themselves sufficiently for the future against all such attempts heerafter from the people: who shall be then so narrowly watch'd and kept so low, as that besides the loss of all thir blood, and treasure spent to no purpose, though they would never so sain and at the same rate , they never shall be able to regain what they now have purchasd and may enjoy, or to free themselves from any yoke impos'd upon them. Besides this, a new royal-revenue must be found; which being wholly dissipated or bought by private persons, or assing'd for service don, and especially to the Armie, cannot be recovered without a general confusion to men's estates, or a heavy imposition on all men's purses. Not to speak of revenges and offences that will be rememberd and returnd, not only by the chief person, but by all his adherents; accounts and reparations that will be requir'd, suites and inditements, who knows against whom, or how many, though perhaps neuters, if not to utmost infliction, yet to imprisonment, fines, banishment; or if not these, yet disfavour, discountnace, disregard and contempt on all but the known royalist, or whom he favours, will be plentious; whatever conditions be contriv'd or trusted on.

Having thus far shevvn vvith vvhat ease vve may novv obtain a free Commonwealth, and by it with as

much ease all the freedom, peace, justice, plentie that we can desire, on the otherside, the difficulties, troubles, uncertainties nay rather impossibilities to enjoy these things constantly under a monarch, I vvill novv proceed to shevv more particularly vvherein our freedom and flourishing condition vvill be more ample and secure to us under a free Commonvvealth then under kingship.

The whole freedom of man consists either in spiritual or civil libertie. As for spiritual, who can be at rest, who can enjoy any thing in this world vvith contentment, vvho hath not libertie to serve God and to save his own soul, according to the best light which God hath planted in him to that purpose, by the reading of his reveal'd will and the guidance of his holy spirit? That this is best pleasing to God, and that the vvhole Protestant Church allows no supream judge or rule in matters of religion, but the scriptures, and these to be interpreted by the scriptures themselves, vvch necessarily inferrs liberty of conscience, hath bin heertofore prov'd at large in other treatises, and might yet further by the publick declarations, confessions, and admonitions of whole Churches and States, obvious in all historie, since the Reformation. He who cannot be content with this libertie to himself, but seeks violently to impose what he will have to be the only religion, upon other men's consciences, let him know, bears a minde not only unchristian and irreligious, but inhuman also and barbarous. And in my judgement civil States would do much better, and remove the cause of much hindrance and disturbance in publick affairs, much ambition, much hypocrisie and contention among the people, if they would not meddle at all with Ecclesiastical matters, which are both of a quite different nature from their cognisance, and have thir proper laws fully and compleatly with such coercive power as belongs to them, ordaind by Christ himself and his apostles. If ther were no meddling with Church matters in State counsels, ther would not be such faction in chusing members of Parlament, while every one strives to chuse him whom he takes to be of his religion; and everie faction hath the plea of Gods cause. Ambitious leaders of armies would then have no hypocritical pretences so ready at hand to contest with Parlements, yea to dissolve them and make way to thir own tyrannical designs: in summ, I verily suppose ther would be then no more pretending to a fifth monarchie of the saints: but much peace and tranquillitie would follow; as the United Netherlands have found by experience: who while they persecuted the *Arminians*, were in much disquiet among themselves, and in danger to have broke asunder into a civil war; since they have left off persecuting, they have livd in much more concord and prosperitie. And I have heard from *Zoland*ers themselves, that they never enjoid more peace, then when religion was most at libertie among them; that then first began thir trouble, vvhen that king by instigation of the Jesuites began to force the *Cossaks* in matters of religion. This libertie of conscience, which above all other things ought to be to all men dearest and most precious, no government more inclinable not only to favour but to protect, then a free Commonwealth; as being most magnanimous, most fearless and confident of its own fair proceedings. Wheras kingship, though looking big, yet indeed most pusillanimous, full of fears, full of jealousies, startl'd at everie umbrage, as it hath bin observd of old to have ever suspected most and mistrusted them who vvere in most esteem for vertue and generositie of minde, so it is now knovvn to have most in doubt and suspicion them vvho are most reputed to be religious. Q. *Elizabeth* though herself accounted so good a Protestant, so moderate, so confident of her subjects love, vvould never give vvay so much as to Presbyterian reformation in this land, though once and again besought, as *Cambden* relates, but imprisond and persecuted the verie proposers therof, alleaging it as her minde and maxim unalterable, that such reformation would diminish regal authoritie. What libertie of conscience can we then expect from others far worse principld from the cradle, traind up and governd by Popish and *Spanish* counsels, and on such depending hitherto for subsistence. For they hear the Gospel speaking much of libertie, a word which monarchie and her bishops both fear and hate; but a free Commonwealth both favours and promotes; and not the word only,

but the thing it self.

The other part of our freedom consists in the civil rights and advanc'ments of every person according to his merit: the enjoiment of those never more certain, and the access to these never more open, then in a free Commonwealth. And both in my opinion may be best and soonest obtaind, if every county in the land were made a little commonwealth, and thir chief town a city, if it be not so call'd alreadie; where the nobilitie and chief gentry may build, houses or palaces, befitting their qualitie, may bear part in the government, make their own judicial lawes, and execute them by their own elected judicatures, without appeal, in all things of civil government between man and man. So they shall have justice in thir own hands, and none to blame but themselves, if it be not well administer'd. In these imployments they may exercise and fit themselves till their lot fall to be chosen into the Grand Council, according as their worth and merit shall be taken notice of by the people. As for controversies that shall happen between men of several counties, they may repair, as they do now, to the capital citie. They should have heer also schools and academies at thir own choice, wherin their children may be bred up in thir own sight to all learning and noble education, not in grammar only, but in all liberal arts and exercises. This would soon spread much more knowledge and civilitie, yea religion, through all parts of the land: this would soon make the whole nation more industrious, more ingenuous at home, more potent, more honourable abroad.

To this a free Commonwealth will easily assent; (nay the Parlament hath had alreadie som such thing in designe) for of all governments a Commonwealth aims most to make the people flourishing, vertuous, noble and high spirited. Monarchs will never permitt: whose aim is to make the people, wealthy indeed perhaps and wel-fleec't for thir own shearing, and for the supply of regal prodigalitie; but otherwise softest, basest, vitioussest, servilest, easiest to be kept under; and not only in fleecce, but in mind also sheepishest; and will have all the benches of judicature annexd to the throne, as a gift of royal grace that we have justice don us; whenas nothing can be more essential to the freedom of a people, then to have the administration of justice and all publick ornaments in thir own election and within thir own bounds, without long traveling or depending on remote places to obtain thir right or any civil accomplishment; so it be not supream, but subordinate to the general power and union of the whole Republick. In which happie firmness as in the particular above mentioned, we shall also far exceed the United Provinces, by having, not many sovranities in one Commonwealth, but many Commonwealths under one sovranitie.

I have no more to say at present: few words will save us, well considerd; few and easie things, now seasonably don. But if the people be so affected, as to prostitute religion and libertie to the vain and groundless apprehension, that nothing but kingship can restore trade, not remembering the frequent plagues and pestilences that then wasted this cite, such as through God's mercie, we never have left since, and that trade flourishes no where more, then in the free Commonwealths of *Italie*, *Germanie* and the Low Countreys, before thir eyes at this day, yet if trade be grown so craving and importunate through the profuse living of tradsmen that nothing can support it, but the luxurious expences of a nation upon trifles or superfluties, so as if the people generally should betake themselves to frugalitie, it might prove a dangerous matter, least tradesmen should mutinie for want of trading, and that therefor we must forgo, and set to sale religion, libertie, honour, safetie, all concernments divine or human to keep up trading, if lastly, after all this light among us, the same reason shall pass for current to put our necks again under kingship, as vvas made use of by the *Jews* to return back to *Egypt* and to the vvorship of thir idol queen, because they falsly imagind that they then livd in more plenty and prosperitie, our condition is not sound but rotten, both in religion and all civil prudence; and vvill bring us soon, the vvay vve are marching, to

those calamities vvhich attend alvvaies and unavoidably on luxurie, that is to say all national judgments under forein or domestic slaverie: so far we shall be from mending our condition by monarchizing our government; what ever new conceit now possesses us. However with all hazard I have ventur'd what I thought my dutie, to speak in season, & to forewarn my country in time: wherin I doubt not but there be many wise men in all places and degrees but am sorrie the effects of wisdom are so little seen among us. Many circumstances and particulars I could have added in those things whereof I have spoken; but a few main matters now put speedily into execution, will suffice to recover us, and set all right: and ther will want at no time who are good at circumstances, but men who set thir mindes on main matters and sufficiently urge them, in these most difficult times I finde not many. What I have spoken, is the language of the good old cause: if it seem strange to any, it vvill not seem more strange, I hope, then convincing to backsliders. Thus much I should perhaps have said, though I were sure I should have spoken only to trees and stones, and had none to cry to, but vvith the Prophet, *O earth, earth, earth* to tell the verie soil it self what God hath determined of *Coniah* and his seed for ever. But I trust, I shall have spoken perswasion to abundance of sensible and ingenuous men; to som perhaps, whom God may raise of these stones, to become children of libertie; and may enable and unite in thir noble resolutions to give a stay to these our ruinous proceedings and to this general defection of the misguided and abus'd multitude.

The End.



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