

**REFLECTIONS ON THE FATE OF A
PETITION FOR RELIEF IN THE MATTER
OF SUBSCRIPTION, OFFERED TO THE
HONOURABLE HOUSE OF
COMMONS, FEBRUARY 6TH, 1772**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649688197

Reflections on the Fate of a Petition for Relief in the Matter of Subscription, Offered to the Honourable House of Commons, February 6th, 1772 by Josiah Tucker

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

www.triestepublishing.com

JOSIAH TUCKER

**REFLECTIONS ON THE FATE OF A
PETITION FOR RELIEF IN THE MATTER
OF SUBSCRIPTION, OFFERED TO THE
HONOURABLE HOUSE OF
COMMONS, FEBRUARY 6TH, 1772**

293.

REFLECTIONS

On the FATE of

A

P E T I T I O N

For RELIEF in the MATTER of

S U B S C R I P T I O N,

Offered to the Honourable HOUSE of COMMONS,
February 6th, 1772.

W I T H

OBSERVATIONS on the Reverend Dean TUCKER's
APOLOGY for the Present CHURCH of ENGLAND,
as by Law established.

By a Member of a Law-Society. [

Domine DECANE, vos estis iratus!

LUTHER.

L O N D O N:

Printed in the Year MDCCLXXII.

11125. d. 2

Nec gratius aliquid vel Deo Patri, vel Salvatori nostro, vel Doctrinæ Ecclesiæ Christianæ, ejusque celeberrimæ parti, Ecclesiæ Anglicanæ, facturum me esse existimo, quàm Patri cœlesti cui soli competit jus conscientiarum leges figendi, Christoque, qui unicus Ecclesiæ dux et magister est, integram illam condendi Articulos Fidei *Ἀποστολικῶν* tribuendo, quam non nisi summo Ecclesiæ et Fidei nostræ detrimento, Patribus et Conciliis adscripsit non tantùm Ecclesiæ Romana, sed ij qui Ecclesiæ Anglicanæ præ ceteris genuinos Filios, immo Antistites se esse gloriantur, tamen Articulo sexto ejusdem Ecclesiæ aut palam cum Thoradicio nostrate renunciant, aut Doctrinas *αἰρετικῶν* introducendo, de Sacerdotio, propriè sic dicto, de Precibus pro mortuis celebrandis, atque alijs ejusdem generis permultis, eidem clanculum adversantur, et reformatæ Ecclesiæ unicùm Fundamentum radicitus evellunt. Hæc diu mæstusque conspexi.

WHITBY.

A D V E R T I S E M E N T .

SEVERAL odd things in these Papers will not be approved either by the Petitioners or their Opponents. A circumstance which may serve to convince the Reader, that the Author is in no very intimate connections with either of them. They who, from a long familiarity with the said Author, think they know him best, would as soon expect he should sit down to make a Periwig, as to write upon the Affairs of the Church, as they are very sensible not only of his constant attention to matters of another nature, but of his freedom from all expectations of being benefited to the value of Sixpence, whatever alterations are, or are not made, in consequence of the present dispute.

REFLECTIONS, &c.

THE sentiments of our countrymen are so divided concerning the Petition for relief in the matter of Subscription, and the characters and views of the Petitioners, and such is the zeal and vehemence with which the advocates on each side espouse their respective parties, that he who pretends to write upon the subject without any prejudice towards one side or the other, must not expect to be believed. For my part, I cannot boast of being more disengaged from partial impressions than my neighbours, and therefore shall not affect the character of a Moderator between the litigants; intending only in this little tract to make a few plain observations on some matters of fact which have happened within my own knowledge, and on the representations which have been made of some others, retailed by common report.

As far as my conversation and intercourse with men of sense have reached, the sentiments of many on this subject have varied since the debate of the *sixth of February* 1772, when Sir W——m M——h moved to have this Petition received in the House of Commons. There were auditors admitted into the Galleries on that memorable day, who came there for mere amusement, and with the same sort of vacant curiosity (will the Petitioners forgive me for stationing myself in that number?) which would send them to any common spectacle of entertainment. Few of these had any other conception of the nature of the controversy,

A

than

than what they had picked up from coffee-house declamations, which left the real merits of the cause just as they found them: and the question was so far a moot point with the public, that, as I have been informed, policies were opened at the usual places, where the Petition was *done*, after such rates as intelligence from the knowing ones suggested to the adventurers.

On the other hand, numbers came with the most violent prepossessions in favour of the church, whose very existence was by them understood to be at issue. The bias of these gentlemen was not unknown to some friends of the Petition, who failed not to remark in the progress, and particularly at the end of the debate, an astonishment in these unfriendly countenances, which could only be accounted for by their surprize, that so much could be said for what they took it for granted, must be a losing cause. And indeed such was the superiority of the speakers on the side of the Petition in point of argument, that the enmity of many respectable individuals, who came to the hearing with the most hostile dispositions towards the Petitioners, was greatly abated, and, in some instances, entirely subsided.

The truth is, the zeal of the adverse party broke out a little unexpectedly, and prevented the operation of a sort of parliamentary craft, often projected by the leaders of a majority, *viz.* to suffer questions of moment, to die away in silence, with some little shew of a decent regard to the subject, and the characters of those who espouse it.

When the question has been asked, "Where would have been the *political* inconvenience of granting the prayer of this Petition?" The answer has gone upon a notion, or, if you please, a prejudice, that my Lords the Bishops have been

been for a course of years in strict *Alliance* with the conductors of our civil affairs, and have afforded them a very valuable aid in the determination of several questions, not only such as more immediately respected the general welfare of the state, but such likewise as were relative to ministerial power, and took their rise from very inferior considerations.

“An *Alliance*,” say these answerers, “gives us the idea of *covenants*, and of *reciprocal obligations*. And one cannot wonder, that, where this venerable corps imagine themselves to be interested, their *Allies* should adopt their sense of things, and employ their whole influence to accommodate to consequential a band of Auxiliaries.”

Whether this hypothesis is well founded or not, it was generally understood, that, with respect to this Petition, their Lordships were parties on the one side, and the Petitioners on the other. There are not many in the lower, or even in the middle classes of our people, who, considering the distance at which they are kept by their ecclesiastical superiors, can pretend to form any accurate judgment on the proprieties in the episcopal character. Some however there are, and a few of these procured admittance into the Gallery above mentioned, on the day of Trial. One of them, as the audience was departing, asked an anti-petitioning dignitary, with an inimitable archness of aspect, whether he thought their Lordships would subscribe to every thing their Advocates below had advanced in support of their cause?

What reply was made to this, I could not hear; but I have been since informed, that their Lordships were so little edified by some of the like modes of defence, retailed in pamphlets and news-papers, previous to these more solemn

debates, that they found themselves obliged to declare, the writers had no commission from them, and wished their zeal and their knowledge had been more equally matched.

The English have been called a nation of *Conjecturers*. Give them but one fact for a *datum*, and they will build an hundred upon it, some of them founded upon a bare possibility, among others which have a better chance to be brought into existence. The fact to be accounted for on this occasion, was, the hostility of the leading Pastors of a Protestant church to a measure which so many wise and good men have highly approved, and even demonstrated to be just and reasonable.

That class of our fellow-subjects which ministerial derision stigmatizes with the name of *patriotic*, hath more than once insinuated, that the intrigues of the cabinet have a plain tendency to arbitrary rule. On every manœuvre of that complexion, the clerical powers in *Alliance*, will of course be called upon to execute their part of the convention. Their province, upon such emergencies, will be, to keep religious enquiry within its *due* limits. "If men are left free to speculate upon the genuine principles of christianity," say the Politicians, "they may come to stumble upon maxims too favourable to their civil rights and privileges. Ye therefore *who have the Watch, make it as sure as you can.*"

To confirm this conjecture, the four last years of Queen Anne are appealed to. The politicians of that period had an object in their eye which would effectually have superseded the bill of rights, and the protestant act of settlement. The majority of the cloth, faithful to the *Alliance*, were their cordial cooperators. The part assigned them was to bend the necks of the people to the *hierarchical yoke*, by
way