

land. We know very well that emissaries of the Jesuits never came in such swarms as they have done since those things were set on foot. And I tell you that divers gentlemen here can bear witness with me how that they, the Jesuits, have had a Consistory abroad which rules all the affairs of things in England, from an archbishop down to the other dependents upon him. And they had fixed in England,— of which we are able to produce the particular instruments in most of the limits of their cathedrals or pretended dioceses,— an episcopal power with archdeacons, etc., and had persons authorized to exercise and distribute those things, who pervert and deceive the people. And all this, while we were in that sad, and as I said deplorable condition.

And in the meantime all endeavors possible were used to hinder the work of God in Ireland, and the progress of the work of God in Scotland; by continual intelligences and correspondences, both at home and abroad, from hence into Ireland, and from hence into Scotland. Persons were stirred up, from our divisions and discomposure of affairs, to do all they could to ferment the war in both these places. To add yet to our misery, whilst we were in this condition, we were in a foreign war. Deeply engaged in war with the Portuguese; whereby our trade ceased: the evil consequences by that war were manifest and very considerable. And not only this, but we had a war with Holland; consuming our treasure; occasioning a vast burden upon the people. A war that cost this nation full as much as the whole taxes came unto; the navy being a hundred and sixty ships, which cost this nation above 100,000*l.* a month; besides the contingencies, which would make it 120,000*l.* That very one war did engage us to so great a charge. At the same time also we were in a war with France. The advantages that were taken of the discontents

and divisions among ourselves did also ferment that war, and at least hinder us of an honorable peace; every man being confident we could not hold out long. And surely they did not calculate amiss if the Lord had not been exceedingly gracious to us! I say, at the same time we had a war with France. And besides the sufferings in respect to the trade of the nation, it is most evident that the purse of the nation could not have been able much longer to bear it, by reason of the advantages taken by other states to improve their own, and spoil our manufacture of cloth, and hinder the vent thereof; which is the great staple commodity of this nation. Such was our condition: spoiled in our trade, and we at this vast expense; thus dissettled at home, and having these engagements abroad.

Things being so,— and I am persuaded it is not hard to convince every person here they were so,— what a heap of confusions were upon these poor nations! And either things must have been left to sink into the miseries these premises would suppose, or else a remedy must be applied. A remedy hath been applied: that hath been this government; a thing I shall say little unto. The thing is open and visible to be seen and read by all men; and therefore let it speak for itself. Only let me say this,— because I can speak it with comfort and confidence before a Greater than you all: That in the intention of it, as to the approving of our hearts to God, let men judge as they please, it was calculated with our best wisdom for the interest of the people,— for the interest of the people alone, and for their good, without respect had to any other interest. And if that be not true I shall be bold to say again, Let it speak for itself. Truly I may — I hope, humbly before God, and modestly before you — say somewhat on the behalf of the government. Not that I would discourse of the particular heads of

it, but acquaint you a little with the effects it has had: and this not for ostentation's sake, but to the end I may at this time deal faithfully with you, and acquaint you with the state of things, and what proceedings have been entered into by this government, and what the state of our affairs is. This is the main end of my putting you to this trouble.

The government hath had some things in desire; and it hath done some things actually. It hath desired to reform the laws. I say to reform them: and for that end it hath called together persons — without offence be it spoken — of as great ability and as great interest as are in these nations, to consider how the laws might be made plain and short and less chargeable to the people; how to lessen expense for the good of the nation. And those things are in preparation, and bills prepared, which in due time, I make no question, will be tendered to you. In the meanwhile there hath been care taken to put the administration of the laws into the hands of just men; men of the most known integrity and ability. The Chancery hath been reformed — hath been reformed, I hope, to the satisfaction of all good men: and as for the things, or causes, depending there, which made the burden and work of the honorable persons entrusted in those services too heavy for their ability, it hath referred many of them to those places where Englishmen love to have their rights tried, the courts of law at Westminster.

This government hath, farther, endeavored to put a stop to that heady way (likewise touched of in our sermon this day) of every man making himself a minister and preacher. It hath endeavored to settle a method for the approving and sanctioning of men of piety and ability to discharge that work. And I think I may say it hath committed the business to the trust of persons, both of the Presbyterian and

Independent judgments, of as known ability, piety, and integrity as any, I believe, this nation hath. And I believe also that, in that care they have taken, they have labored to approve themselves to Christ, to the nation and to their own consciences. And indeed I think, if there be anything of quarrel against them, — though I am not here to justify the proceedings of any, — it is that they, in fact, go upon such a character as the Scripture warrants: To put men into that great employment, and to approve men for it, who are men that have "received gifts from him that ascended up on high, and gave gifts" for the work of the ministry and for the edifying of the body of Christ. The government hath also taken care, we hope, for the expulsion of all those who may be judged any way unfit for this work; who are scandalous, and the common scorn and contempt of that function.

One thing more this government hath done: it hath been instrumental to call a free Parliament, which, blessed be God, we see here this day! I say, a free Parliament. And that it may continue so, I hope is in the heart and spirit of every good man in England, save such discontented persons as I have formerly mentioned. It is that which, as I have desired above my life, so I shall desire to keep it above my life.

I did before mention to you the plunges we were in with respect to foreign States; by the war with Portugal, France, the Dutch, the Danes, and the little assurance we had from any of our neighbors round about. I perhaps forgot, but indeed it was a caution upon my mind, and I desire now it may be so understood, that if any good hath been done, it was the Lord, not we, his poor instruments.

I did instance the wars, which did exhaust your treasure, and put you into such a condition that you must have sunk therein if it had continued but a few months longer: this I

can affirm, if strong probability may be a fit ground. And now you have, though it be not the first in time, peace with Swede-land; an honorable peace; through the endeavors of an honorable person here present as the instrument. I say you have an honorable peace with a kingdom which, not many years since, was much a friend to France, and lately perhaps inclinable enough to the Spaniard. And I believe you expect not much good from any of your Catholic neighbors; nor yet that they would be very willing you should have a good understanding with your Protestant friends. Yet, thanks be to God, that peace is concluded; and as I said before, it is an honorable peace.

You have a peace with the Danes,—a State that lay contiguous to that part of this island which hath given us the most trouble. And certainly if your enemies abroad be able to annoy you, it is likely they will take their advantage (where it best lies) to give you trouble from that country. But you have a peace there, and an honorable one. Satisfaction to your merchants' ships; not only to their content, but to their rejoicing. I believe you will easily know it is so,—an honorable peace. You have the Sound open; which used to be obstructed. That which was and is the strength of this nation, the shipping, will now be supplied thence. And whereas you were glad to have anything of that kind at second hand, you have now all manner of commerce there, and at as much freedom as the Dutch themselves, who used to be the carriers and venders of it to us; and at the same rates and tolls; and I think, by that peace, the said rates now fixed upon cannot be raised to you in future.

You have a peace with the Dutch: a peace unto which I shall say little, seeing it is so well known in the benefit and consequences thereof. And I think it was as desirable, and as

acceptable to the spirit of this nation as any one thing that lay before us. And, as I believe nothing so much gratified our enemies as to see us at odds with that Commonwealth; so I persuade myself nothing is of more terror or trouble to them than to see us thus reconciled. Truly as a peace with the Protestant states hath much security in it, so it hath as much of honor and of assurance to the Protestant interest abroad; without which no assistance can be given thereunto. I wish it may be written upon our hearts to be zealous for that interest! For if ever it were like to come under a condition of suffering, it is now. In all the Emperor's patrimonial territories, the endeavor is to drive the Protestant part of the people out as fast as is possible; and they are necessitated to run to Protestant states to seek their bread. And by this conjunction of interests I hope you will be in a more fit capacity to help them. And it begets some reviving of their spirits that you will help them as opportunity shall serve.

You have a peace likewise with the Crown of Portugal; which peace, though it hung long in hand, yet is lately concluded. It is a peace which, your merchants make us believe, is of good concernment to their trade; the rate of insurance to that country having been higher, and so the profit which could bear such rate, than to other places. And one thing hath been obtained in this treaty which never before was since the Inquisition was set up here,—that our people which trade thither have liberty of conscience,—liberty to worship in chapels of their own.

Indeed, peace is, as you were well told to-day, desirable with all men, as far as it may be had with conscience and honor! We are upon a treaty with France. And we may say this, that if God give us honor in the eyes of the nations about us, we have reason to bless him for it, and so to own it. And I

dare say that there is not a nation in Europe but is very willing to ask a good understanding with you.

I am sorry I am thus tedious: but I did judge that it was somewhat necessary to acquaint you with these things. And things being so, I hope you will not be unwilling to hear a little again of the sharp as well as of the sweet! And I should not be faithful to you, nor to the interest of these nations which you and I serve, if I did not let you know all.

As I said before, when this government was undertaken, we were in the midst of those domestic divisions and animosities and scatterings; engaged also with those foreign enemies round about us, at such a vast charge,—120,000*l.* a month for the very fleet, which sum was the very utmost penny of your assessments. Ay; and then all your treasure was exhausted and spent when this government was undertaken: all accidental ways of bringing in treasure were, to a very inconsiderable sum, consumed,—the forfeited lands sold; the sums on hand spent; rents, fee-farms, delinquents' lands, king's, queen's, bishops', dean-and-chapters' lands, sold. These were spent when this government was undertaken. I think it is my duty to let you know so much. And that is the reason why the taxes do yet lie so heavy upon the people; — of which we have abated 30,000*l.* a month for the next three months. Truly I thought it my duty to let you know, That though God hath dealt thus bountifully with you, yet these are but entrances and doors of hope. Whereby, through the blessing of God, you may enter into rest and peace. But you are not yet entered!

You were told to-day of a people brought out of Egypt toward the land of Canaan; but through unbelief, murmuring, repining, and other temptations and sins wherewith God was provoked, they were fain to come back again, and linger many

years in the Wilderness before they came to the Place of Rest. We are thus far, through the mercy of God. We have cause to take notice of it that we are not brought into misery, not totally wrecked, but have, as I said before, a door of hope open. And I may say this to you: If the Lord's blessing and his presence go along with the management of affairs at this meeting, you will be enabled to put the top-stone to the work and make the nation happy. But this must be by knowing the true state of affairs! You are yet like the people under circumcision, but raw. Your peaces are but newly made. And it is a maxim not to be despised, "Though peace be made, yet it is interest that keeps peace;"—and I hope you will not trust such peace except so far as you see interest upon it. But all settlement grows stronger by mere continuance. And therefore I wish that you may go forward, and not backward; and in brief that you may have the blessing of God upon your endeavors! It is one of the great ends of calling this Parliament that the ship of the Commonwealth may be brought into a safe harbor; which, I assure you, it will not be, without your counsel and advice.

You have great works upon your hands. You have Ireland to look unto. There is not much done to the planting thereof, though some things leading and preparing for it are. It is a great business to settle the government of that nation upon fit terms, such as will bear that work through. You have had laid before you some considerations intimating your peace with several foreign States. But yet you have not made peace with all. And if they should see we do not manage our affairs with that wisdom which becomes us,—truly we may sink under disadvantages, for all that is done. And our enemies will have their eyes open, and be revived, if they see animosities amongst us; which indeed will be their great advantage.

I do therefore persuade you to a sweet, gracious, and holy understanding of one another and of your business, concerning which you had so good counsel this day; which as it rejoiced my heart to hear, so I hope the Lord will imprint it upon your spirits,— wherein you shall have my prayers.

Having said this, and perhaps omitted many other material things through the frailty of my memory, I shall exercise plainness and freeness with you; and say that I have not spoken these things as one who assumes to himself dominion over you; but as one who doth resolve to be a fellow servant with you to the interest of these great affairs and of the people of these nations. I shall trouble you no longer; but desire you to repair to your House, and to exercise your own liberty in the choice of a Speaker, that so you may lose no time in carrying on your work.

LORD DIGBY

LORD GEORGE DIGBY, son of the Earl of Bristol, was a Roman Catholic nobleman who figured in the era of the English civil war, chiefly as a fervent royalist and reactionist. He was born at Madrid, in October, 1612, when his father was English ambassador to the Court of Spain, and afterward was educated at Oxford. Later on, he entered Parliament as member for Dorset, and at the outset of his political career he seemed to take the Parliamentary side against Charles I. and was eager for the impeachment of Sir Thomas Wentworth, afterward Earl of Strafford. When the bill of attainder, condemning the latter to death as a traitor, was passed by a large majority in the House of Commons, Digby however took the minority side, saying that his conscience would not permit him to vote for the bill, though he described Strafford as "that grand apostate to the Commonwealth who must not expect to be pardoned in this world till he be despatched to the other." Presently he joined the King's party, having now a seat in the House of Lords as Baron Digby. In 1642, he was impeached for high treason, but the charge was not sustained. Throughout his life he displayed a restless, inconstant disposition, and, perpetually wavering between the two parties in the State, was consequently of real service to neither. After the Restoration, he frequently spoke in Parliament, and in 1663 brought forward a charge of high treason against Clarendon, the lord chancellor. In early life he had attacked the Roman Catholic faith in his "Letters Concerning Religion," and twenty years afterward had become a Roman Catholic, but in his last recorded speech (March 15, 1673), he spoke in favor of the Test Act, declaring he was "a Catholic of the Church of Rome, not a Catholic of the Court of Rome." He died at Chelsea, near London, March 20, 1677. Digby was a man of much ability and one of the great orators of his time. Besides his speeches and letters, he was the author of "Elvira," a comedy, 1667. Horace Walpole has said of him: "He wrote against popery, and embraced it; he was a zealous opposer of the court, and a sacrifice for it; was conscientiously converted in the midst of his prosecution of Lord Strafford, and was most unconscientiously a persecutor of Lord Clarendon. With great parts he always hurt himself and his friends."

SPEECH ON THE BILL OF ATTAINDER AGAINST THE EARL OF STRAFFORD

[Lord Digby was appointed one of the managers for the impeachment of Strafford. Into this he entered, for a time, with the utmost zeal, but at the moment of taking the final vote on the bill he came forward and abandoned his ground, denouncing the condemnation of Strafford by a bill of attainder as an act of murder. In spite of this eloquent appeal, the bill was carried the same day in the House by a vote of two hundred and four to fifty-nine.]