Apology to James I (June 1614)

Sir Charles Cornwallis

Transcript

British Library, Additional MS 4149, ff. 204r–209v

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The Coppies of two letters w[hi]ch S[i]r Charles Cornewallis writt to the Kinge being Comitted to the Tower for Certaine wordes which hee intended to haue Spoken in the Parleament an[n]o 1614. which was soddenly dissolued w[i]t[h] out any thing inacted or at all Concluded./.

[*Left margin:* Parleament.] To the Kings most Exelent ma[jes]tie/

[*Left margin:* June.22. .1614.] Accept I humblie beseech you (most gratious Soueraigne) the true and plaine discouerie of a soule afflicted, and greeved in all extremitie, for yo[u]r ma[jes]ties displeasure sure occasioned, by some Conferrences concerninge yo[u]r Late Parleament./.

I haue no purpose to stand vpon the Iusteficac[i]on of the forme of my proceedinges but doe most humblie submitt them, and prostrate my selfe before yo[u]r ma[jes]ties royall feete, beseechinge yo[u]r gratious pardon, if therin I haue in any sort offended you. But for the matter conceaued and prouected by me to be said and moved in the Parleament: Soe cleere are my thoughtes and soe zealous, and ardent my will, that yo[u]r ma[]ties desires might haue bene offected, and my deare country cared for, and contented, as I first desired for my better servinge you, to haue bene of the howse my selfe, and went for that purpose as fare as Ipswich in my way toward Aye in Suff[olk].

where I hoped

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where I hoped to haue ben elected a Burgesse, but failinge of my hope, by reason the ellection had passed one daye before my goinge out of London./.

In confidence to haue ben prouided in that corporac[i]on I haue formorlie bestowed vpon two gentllemen recomended vnto me, by doctor Sharpes l[ett]res recomendatory from the Earle of northampton for two burgishippes. The ~~one~~ gentlemen were both vnknowne to myselfe, who Confided onlie to him [tha]t they were men of abillitie and fitnes for the service./.

In my way toward Ipeswich, I conceived and proiected in that Corporac[i]on what I would said in Parleament, I heard Continvallie in London, and out of the Country what dissonante voices, and distracted Conceiptes there were of greevances intended to be prefferred, aswell concerning imposicons as the greate nomber of Scottes that are said to recide within this kingdome. To reduce these in to some certaine pointes, for yo[u]r ma[jes]ties better service, I bestowed my Studies, Conferringe and discoueringe the same after my returne to london to doctor Sharpe (who as I remember) named mr ~~Hichco~~ Hitchcocke, one of the gentlemen for whome I had obtained, (by my lord of Southamptons meanes a burgeshippe) to bee a Fitt man for deliuery of it, to the Howse by waye

of motion

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of motion. The effecte of the same to my remembrance was in breefe as followeth viz:/.

That the eyes and acc[i]ones of all wise men are ever to be directed and Levelled at theire endes, that we should doe well to addrese all our thoughtes and speeches to the purpose for w[hi]ch his ma[jes]tie hath called vs to this parleament, that we should not spend tyme in wordes and disputes as in the tyme of the last Session of Parleament precedent, but enter presentlie into Considerac[i]on, howe his ma[jes]ties necesseties might be reliued for the present and the like prevented in tyme to come: That I held it not fitte wee should marchant w[i]th our Soueraigne, or that we should vse the termes of the formor parleament viz: of Contribuc[i]on and retribuc[i]on./.

That we should not seeke to deprive him of any of the gemes or flowers of his Crowne, nor make him soe dear~~er~~ an earner of our moneys as by deprivinge him of the rightes or privelidges of his diadem left vnto him by his Roiall progenetoures and predecessores, that to soe wise and vnderstanding an assemblie it should be vnnecessary to remember [th]e obligation of dutie and Loue that we owe to oure Soueraigne, or what care or considerac[i]on we are bounde to haue of our deare Country, for w[hi]ch wee haue the honore to bee in that howse soe absolut Fiduciaries as to haue comitted vnto vs theire Landes

and theire

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and theire lives and all other their fortunes. That there is betweene kinges and theire Subiectes soe naturall a relac[i]on as the one cannot subsist w[i]thout the other, and therefore prouiding for the one, the other is to be cared for in a due proporc[i]on, that the greatest vnhappines, and miserie wherevnto the fortunes of kinges and others of Supreame Authoritie are subiecte, is, that in the Crowde of flattery that invirones theire Thrones, they cannot discerne the faces of true freindes from those of false and feigned, and that they see and heare by the eyes and eares of others, who more often speake vnto them *Placentia* then *Vtilia*, that for this cause is monarchies: ~~where~~ Parleamentes were instituted wherein that generall assemblie and greate Councell of the kingedome men might freelie deliuer theire thoughtes and advices in whatsoeuer they ~~shall~~ should finde Errore of gouernement in the comon welth, as those that are not to be thought to speake theire owne wordes, but those of theire Country neither to be possessed w[i]th any passion or private interest, but w[i]th what concernes the Countrie and kingdom, and the particuler Countries and Corporacons that they are put in trust for, That it is trulie said, That all men neuer deceived one, nor one man all, and therefore that generall voice both of more credite and more force then those of any

particuler who

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perticuler, who doe comonlie either want hardines to speake or operative powere to worke w[i]th their Soueraigne what theire selues and the Com[m]on welth desireth, my humble moc[i]on there fore ~~is~~ should be [tha]t wee might all vnitelie w[i]th one harte and voice cast our selues at his ma[jes]ties feete offering vnto him what soeuer this kingdom cane possiblie yeild for the relieve of his necesseties and reparac[i]on of his Estate, & w[i]th all our humble desires that he would be pleased to take into Considerac[i]on some thinges of greate Consequence vnto him selfe, and of most Contentement to his Svbiectes,./.

To begine first w[i]th the cause of god, w[hi]ch of all other deserves the primacie and princepall respecte; we are to expose ^{vn}to his ma[jes]tie the greate greefe generallie conceaved for the inexpected increase of Papistes and recusantes since the tyme of the Gonpouder Treason, in detestac[i]on whereof all men were moued to thinke that they would rather vtterlie extinguished: The occasions are supposed to be the silencinge of soemany watchefull and dilligent ministers, the ordinarie covrse of Composic[i]ons for theire disobediences, and the diverse treaties, that his ma[jes]tie hath beene said to have entertayned for the marriage of the late Prince deceased and of this that Liveth, (whome god almightie blesse) w[i]th daughters of Princes of Romish Religeon w[hi]ch is thought to be a much incouragment to those

of that affection.

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of that affection, and as great dishartening to those of true religeon ./.

Concerninge this perticuler w[hi]ch is now said to be in treatie w[i]th Fraunce, it is true, there is no place left in Evrope (that and Spaine excepted) where his ma[jes]tie Cane make allyance, suitable w[i]th his Royall dignetie, howbeit I am of opinion, that although for some dissignes of Estate, w[hi]ch it becometh not vs his humble subiectes to dive into, his ma[jes]tie hath bene pleased to entertayne those ouertures of Princes of the Romish religeon, yet such is his owne pious and Christian hearte as he leaveth not vnconsidered, that to marrie w[i]th a Child of god, and for god his greater honor and gives hope of a greater blessinge, then to marrie w[i]th a Childe of man, be the dignetie, place ~~and~~ or Proc[i]on neuer so greate in the eies of men. Hereof to his owne imortall honour and the perpetuall obligac[i]on of his subiectes, his ma[jes]tie hath bene pleased, to make a good demonstrac[i]on in the marryage of his onlie daughter where he founde a soundnes and conformetie in Religeon, whome had he measured by the yeard wand of the world, he might haue perhappes bestowed her vpon one of the greatest monarches in ~~the w~~ Christendome/.

Besides such is the ~~{*gap: illegible*}~~ nearenes of Fraunce vnto vs, as he should a daughter of that kingdome be brought hither, such and so many would be the visittes and wee

should euery

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should euery moneth, be enforced to entertayne a new mounseiur, w[hi]ch to a prince of soe magnificent and liberall disposition, as is his ma[jes]tie would breed noe litle trouble, and a greate deale of Expence and Charge./.

In the seconde place, we are to become most humble Petic[i]oners that he would be pleased to his Chamber, and other places of retreate, to graunte vnto vs (as it were) *mediatem lingua* viz. that those of our nac[i]on might haue a motive in them, as this Comiserative kingdome hath alwaies given to Aliens in Case of triall in Causes Crimenall, by the Iudgment of our Savioure himselfe, The breade properlie belongeth vnto the Children of the kingdome And therefore wee are to beseech his ma[jes]tie to be gratiouslie pleased to stoppe the Currant of future Commers of the Scottish nac[i]on to reside w[i]thin this kingdome other then such as shalbe necessarie for his ma[jes]ties especiall service, for theire his ma[jes]tie him selfe shalbe lesse troubled, charged, and importuned, his estate more enabled to reward those of that Country that are here alreadie in his service and those that shall soe offer or desire to come to theire

owne good forewarned, that through vncertaine hopes of getting, here they spend not what they are alreadie possessed of in certainty in theire owne Country as is reported that many haue alreadie done to the great detrement

of theire owne

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of their owne estates, and infeeblinge the Auntient Nobillitie and gentry of that kingdome./.

This was deare Soueraigne, to my remembrance the effecte, and substance of what I had conceaved to Speake in Parleament, wherein if any thinge shall appeare vnto ~~you~~ yo[u]r ma[jes]tie distastefull, pardon it. I most Humblie vpon my knees beseech you, and consider that to worke vpon a bodie that had formorlie shewed soe litle disposic[i]on were necessary drugges both of strength and different temperature, especiallie my purpose beinge to drawe from it matter of soe great consequence as the payment of your debttes, the prouidinge of you a Treasure in *omnes euentus*, and the estableshinge the estate of yo[u]r Revenewe, fitt to supporte you, in that royall luster that hitherto you haue lived in./.

This beinge Com[m]vnicated to doctor Sharpe (and mr Hitchecocke failinge to performe the moc[i]on) it seemes that he gate by some meanes Corespondency w[i]th mr Hoskins who made (as I haue heard) a speech in Parleament concerninge the Scottes, but such as neither agreed w[i]th myne in forme or matter. Yet is the doctore content (one of his owne apprehentions) soe farre to forgett him selfe as to affirme that I should promise in regarde of mr Hoskines Losse of his practise in [th]e Terme to give him .20.li w[hi]ch I proteste vnto yo[u]r ma[jes]tie before almightie God I neuer did nor intended: He

moued me

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moued me (I confesse) and perswaded w[i]th example of others, that he said would give, but did neither name nor in any such sort pointe at any, as either in honestie or Christianitie I cane Iustlie name nay one w[i]thout perrill to charge an Innocent, w[hi]ch I knowe your owne royall and pious hearte would Condemne then allowe in mee./.

For Manifestac[i]on of the truth of all other thinges w[hi]ch it pleased yo[u]r ma[jes]tie I should be examyned of, I haue plainelie Answered before mr Secretary and mr Solicetore, and doe eftsoons cast my selfe at yo[u]r ma[jes]ties feete, Protestinge even as I shall answere at the dreadfull daye of Godes Iudgment, that in noe conference held by me concerninge yo[u]r parleament, there was any other thinge propounded or intended, but what my hearte and sowle thought to haue bene for yo[u]r ma[jes]ties speciall vtillitie and service, for the securetie of yo[u]r estate, and the setlinge and Contentment of these yo[u]r kingdomes and gouernement, w[hi]ch God lett me noe longer live, then I shall desire as much as any man that Lyves vpon the Earth, as hee that soe longe w[i]th all the affectes of his soule hath served you, and not in paper onlie, but in hearte and will, desires not ten dayes to be added to his Lyfe, If yo[u]r ma[jes]tie: shall not be gratiouslie pleased to restore him to yo[u]r favour and to recken and receive him in the nvmber of./.

Yo[u]r most humble faithfull affectionat Servant./.

Ch: Cornewallis./

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> To the Kinges most Exelent Ma[jes]tie./.

[*Left margin:* .1614.] Give me leave (most gratious Soueraigne) I humbly beseech you once againe, to cast my selfe at yo[u]r feete, and pray yo[u]r pardon for myne vnfortunat transgressyon. It was my greate folly and faulte, I Confesse beinge yo[u]r servant to enter into a matter so much concerninge yo[u]r ma[jes]tie w[i]th out first acquintinge you: But since the same proceeded~~y~~ out of errore in Iudgment, not out of want in dutie and humble affection to yo[u]r Royall person or out of mallice or malevolence to any other, I cannot but soemuch hoppe of yo[u]r ma[jes]t[ie]s accustomed clemencie, w[hi]ch hath bred you soe much fame abroad, and hartie loue w[i]th in yo[u]r owne subiectes at home, as vpon my vnfained repentance and humble suite, you will be pleased to passe yo[u]r Royall eye and give beleefe to this paper inclosed Contayninge the plaine truth of myne intenc[i]ons in that matter of the Parleament, wherein to myne vnspeakeable greefe I haue offended yo[u]r ma[jes]tie/.

In yo[u]r Regall power, yo[u]r ma[jes]tie hath the honour to be vpon earth a fivure of the almightie God; & more fame and true Loue you can by nothing worldly winne, then by representinge him in yo[u]r mercie: If god should Chastice euery offence, w[i]th the Rigoure of his Iustice, well knoweth yo[u]r ~~ma[jes]tie~~ most

Christian and

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Christian and vnderstandinge harte, how misserable were mans Condicon: yo[u]r ma[jes]tie cannot haue a Subiecte and servant that is more hartely sorow for his falte, I appeall to Nothinge earthelie, but yo[u]r grace and faovure, deme it not (draid soueraigne) to one that soe long and faithfully hathe served you, neither permitte that in yo[u]r Royall thoughtes or the ballance of yo[u]r kinglie ~~Iudgment~~ Iustice, one offence should cansell or ouer weigh all the Considerac[i]ons of soe many preceadent services ./.

Dauid transgressed more then once, and that in an high nature, yet was god pleased, by his owne divine mouth to pronounce him a man accordinge to his owne hearte. I neuer offended yo[u]r ma[jes]tie (to my knowlidge) but in this one perticuler, I haue served you in many./.

I will not trouble yo[u]r ma[jes]tie w[i]th more of my wordes, but will Conclude w[i]th that w[hi]ch was davides praier vnto god almightie, Chastice me (deare Soueraigne) but not in yo[u]r heavie displeasure. In this place of Restrainte and darkenes, I can doe you noe service. yo[u]r ma[jes]tie beinge graciouslie pleased to graunte him libertie, w[i]th in this fewe weekes, you shall I hope fynde by proofe that I both can and will serve you in what shall tende to yo[u]r honore and profyt, and that last in no litle measure. I most humbly

prostrate my

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prostrate my selfe at yo[u]r Royall feete, either w[i]th ioye to receave the Comfort of yo[u]r gratious remission or w[i]th patience to attend yo[u]r pleasvre in this wofull place, where god knoweth I night and day doe heartellie praye for you, as he that desires nothinge earthlie somuch, as to be receaued in to yo[u]r gratiovs favoure, and to be rekoned in the nvmber of./.

Yo[u]r most humble dutifull and faithefull servantes./.

Cha: Cornewallis./.

Other manuscript witnesses

- British Library, Additional MS 39853, ff. 19r–20v
- British Library, Additional MS 44848, ff. 73v–80r [check]
- British Library, Cotton MS Titus C VII, ff. 115r–v
- British Library, Harley MS 677, ff. 62r–67v
- British Library, Harley MS 1221, ff. 96v–99r
- Beinecke Library, Osborn File 3723
- Bodleian Library, MS Ashmole 781, ff. 108–111
- Bodleian Library, MS Rawlinson B 151, ff. 6r–7v
- Bodleian Library, MS Rawlinson C 929, ff. 19r–21v
- Cambridge University Library, MS Ee.5.23, pp412–416
- Gonville & Caius College, MS 143/193, ff. 169–176
- Huntington Library, HM 1554, pp5–6
- Inner Temple Library, Petyt MS 538/18, ff. 244v–250r
- Nottingham University Library, Cl LP 20
- Nottingham University Library, Pw V 2, pp60–66

Modern print exemplars

- *Collectanea Curiosa* (Oxford, 1781), vol. 1, pp. 161–169

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https://mpese.ac.uk/t/CornwallisApology1614.html