

# RESOLUTION OF THE COUNTY OF HEREFORD

1642

Whereas the Kingdom for many years past has groaned under taxes of loans, ship-money, and the like dismal effects of an arbitrary government, and a high stretched prerogative, for the cure of which distempers a Parliament was held to be the only good old way of physic to cleanse the body politic from oppressing crudities (which was heartily desired), but not by over-strong purgations to weaken it in the principal part, charging it to receive a disposition to the like distemper, or a worse disease, which instead of restoring it to its primitive vigour and health must needs drive it to a fatal period. Such is our misery, such the just judgements of God upon our sins.

This wholesome physic has not wrought in us that blessed effect as was either believed by some, or hoped for by all men, but as if God had answered our importunity for a Parliament as He did the old Israelites for a king in His anger. We drive on with much more haste than good speed to the other extreme, which portends no less symptoms of ruin and destruction than the former.

So that having maturely considered what has proved destructive to this or other Parliaments, we may the more easily avoid those rocks upon which others have split themselves; *viz.*,

1. The venting of particular ends of avarice and ambition in the public cause.
2. Private combinations or chamber-conventicles to resolve beforehand what shall be done in the House.
3. Hindering the freedom of speech by imprisonment of their persons.
4. Denying information by the humble way of petitions from the county, as that most excellent orthodox petition of our brethren of Kent, and of rejecting information of letters to our knights and burgesses.
5. The ready swallowing of informations and jealous rumours against His Majesty, styling them the malignant party and enemies to the state which were only truly and consonably his friends.
6. The private, if not public, mutinous rabble, which ill spirit was ready at all times to be raised by a whisper from any of those worthy Members, emphatically so-called, if not exclusively, as if all justice, reformation, and government were only to be expected from them.
7. The new unheard of state law and logic to style and believe that a Parliament that is divided in itself is severed from the King, the head thereof.

If they may be remedied (as we hope they are not past cure), we shall rather desire to change some of our physicians than physic, there being no better way, nor more necessary to preserve the health of a commonwealth than a well-tempered Parliament. Wherefore we, as faithful subjects to His Majesty, as freeborn Englishmen do join in an unanimous resolution to maintain (1) Protestant religion, (2) the King's just power, (3) the laws of the land, and (4) the liberty of the subject.

For the first, the Protestant religion, we cannot but with grief of heart remember how it has been assaulted in the in-works and skirts of it, the liturgy and decent ceremonies established by law; yea in the very body of it—the 39 Articles. In what a danger this Church of England has been to be over-run with Brownism and Anabaptism, let all the world judge.

For the second, the just power of the King, God knows he has been so far unable to defend that from violence, as it was God's great goodness rather than his own power which secured, or rather preserved, his person from violence. What their aim was who, to please the vulgar rabble, would uphold and not punish them for their insolencies, as we fear and imagine for the present, so we cannot but with horror and amazement doubt the consequence.

Nor can we conceal our joy of heart or thanks to His Majesty's good subjects of the County of York for endeavouring to secure his person with a guard (being of much more value than many thousands of us) and putting him in a posture of defence, which some have ignorantly or maliciously interposed by suggesting it an intrusion of war against his Parliament, whereby it is plain enough His Majesty's desires are only to secure

himself and servants from prodigious tumults and disorders as have endangered his sacred person. Nor can we blame him considering Sir John Hotham's act at Hull<sup>1</sup> and Sir Henry Ludlow's speech<sup>2</sup> in Parliament.

For the two last, the laws of the land and the liberty of the subject, which must not be separated, how have they been violated after by some of those who were chosen to be conservators of them by imprisonment of men's persons, contrary to the Petition of Right; assessing of the clergy without a body of Magna Charta ; shuffling the convocation into a synod, or an assembly or conventicle, without the choice, consent, or election of the clergy, as if they were neither the King's subjects nor God's servants.

As we conceive ourselves obliged by the law of God, the law of the land, [and] by the dictates of nature's reason to maintain all these, so by God's grace assisting us, we hope we shall not be terrified or compelled to yield any active obedience to any disjoined part of Parliament without the consent of the whole (which we heartily desire may be united) or to any uncertain debates, votes, or ordinances that are not digested into laws; nay, which seem to contradict former laws and yet are tendered to us with so much earnestness as some dare hardly deny them with safety or obey with conscience.

Nor shall we ever yield ourselves such slaves, or so betray the liberty purchased by our forefathers' blood and bequeathed unto us, as to suffer ourselves to be swayed by an arbitrary government whatsoever, nor stand with too much contention of spirit to cast off the yoke of one tyranny to endure many worse.

And seeing His Majesty is graciously pleased to maintain the true Protestant religion, his own just power, the laws of the land, the liberty of the subjects, and that these waters of reformation, having been long stirred; we want only the favour of His princely Majesty to let its in and heal us. So we do reciprocally declare that we conceive ourselves bound to maintain him in all the premises with our lives and fortunes.

John Webb, *Memorials of the Civil War Between King Charles I and the Parliament of England as it Affected Herefordshire and the Adjacent Counties* (London: Longman, Green, and Company, 1879), II:343–344.

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<sup>1</sup> John (–1645), Baronet Hotham; as pro-Parliament Governor of Hull he refused Charles I entrance to the town in April 1642.

<sup>2</sup> Henry Ludlow, M.P. for Wiltshire, on 7 May 1642 declared the King was not fit to govern.