

be a distinct Estate by themselves, as now the Bishops do, may be a question.

But Secondly, When we spake of three Estates in the Constitution of our *English* Government, 'tis most natural to mean and intend such a Poize in the Ballance, or such an Order or State, as hath a Negative Voice in the Legislative Power: For as the King and Commons, excluding the Lords so neither the King and Lords excluding the Commons; much less the Lords and Commons excluding the King, can make any Law; but this glorious Triplicity must be in mutual Conjunction, and then from their united Influences spring our happy Laws. But in this Sense the Lords Spiritual by themselves, have no Pretence to be a Distinct Estate: That is, they have by themselves no Negative Voice, (which I conceive the proper Characteristick or Essential Mark of each of the three Estates,) for, suppose a Bill pass the Commons, and being brought into the Lords House, all the Twenty-six Bishops should be against it, and some of the Temporal Lords; yet if the other Temporal Lords be more in Number than the Bishops, and those that side with them, the Bill shall pass as the Act of the whole House; and if his Majesty please to give it his Royal Assent, is undoubted Law. Which demonstrates the Bishops have of themselves no Negative Vote, and consequently are none of the Three Estates of this Realm.

But there are those who deny this Consequence, and affirm if they had a Negative Vote, it would have caused Emulation and Strife between them and the Temporal Lords, therefore when the Order of Bishops were by the Princes of *Christendom* first erected into a Succession of Nobility, they were not divided from the Temporal Noblemen in their great Councils, for that would have made trouble and distraction in the Affairs of Princes; and therefore it