

had been Caballing in many Parts of the Country, nay M^r Chase Rector of S^t Paul's Parish in Baltimore County scrupled not to intimate from the Pulpit to his Congregation that the State or Situation of the Protestants in this Province was at that time very little different from that of the Protestants in Ireland at the Eve of the Irish Massacre. In order to learn whether the Behaviour of the Papists or of any Negroes had given reason or afforded Room for such Reports I convened the Gent^lⁿ of the Council & by their Advice Circular Letters were sent to the Justices of the Peace in the several Parts of the Province whereby they were directed to enquire whether the Roman Catholicks in their respective Counties had misbehaved or whether there was any Foundation for the Reports which had been spread concerning them & which had made many of his Majesty's good Subjects in the Province very uneasy. The Letters which I shall herewith transmit to Your Ldp in a Packett marked N^o 1, will shew that None of the County Courts could upon the Strictest Enquiry find that any of the Papists had behaved or expressed themselves in an unbecoming manner, tho indeed the Justices of Prince Georges County (who it seems had taken extraordinary Pains to make Discoveries but in vain) were too much prejudiced to acquit them or at least to acquit their Priests of having ill Designs against the Government. When the Assembly met in April following the Lower House incited by two or three Gentlemen whose Interest & popularity were thereby promoted presented an Address to me which was calculated to inflame the People still more against the Papists & to make 'em believe that they or a few of them at least had received extraordinary Favours from myself. I cannot help thinking that Your Ldp was thoroughly satisfied by the Answer I gave the Gentⁿ the 24th of April 1756 which is printed in their Journal that the Allegations or Insinuations contained in their Address were false & groundless & indeed I am persuaded that if they had not been convinced thereof & been sensible that they had been imposed on they would not have failed to make a Reply. During the same Session the Gentⁿ of the Upper House thought proper to frame a Bill for preventing the Growth of Popery within this Province, by which the Priests were to be rendered incapable of holding any Lands, to be obliged to register their Names & give large Security for their good Behaviour, forbid to make a Proselyte under pain of the Penalty for High Treason, & it was to have been Enacted by the said Bill that no Person who should hereafter be educated at any forreign popish Seminary could be qualified to inherit any Estate or to hold Lands within this Province. There were many other Restraints to be laid on them by this Bill as Your