

### Piii13 What! shall I say now George is dead

*Notes.* Like several poems, this defence of Buckingham invokes the dictates of charity and refutes the credibility of “Common fame”. More interestingly, perhaps, the poet also invokes memories of Buckingham’s short-lived reputation in the mid-1620s as an anti-Spanish hero.

“A charitable censure on the death of the D. of B.”

What! shall I say now George is dead

That hee’s in hell? Charitie forbidd.

What though hee’s damn’d by Common fame,

Yet God’s Eyes may behold noe staine.

What though hee was infect with sinne!

5

What Man on earth lives not therein?

Shall wee therefore limitt Gods power?

His Mercie’s seen at the last houre.

If to the Kingdome hee did harme,

Yet thy tongue still thou oughtst to charme.

10

Great Charles in him beheld not it,

For thee to taxe him ’tis not fitt.

Envie cease, and give him his due,

Speake of him what thou know’st is true,

And for one good deed let him meritt

15

To have his badd silence inherit:

Call but to minde that deed in Spaine,

For which thou once didst live<sup>1</sup> his name,

If all were badd, yet that alone

Should make thee now his death bemoane.<sup>2</sup>

20

Then Felton, sure thou art too blame,

By whose strong hand our George was slaine.

**Other known sources.** Bodleian MS Malone 23, p. 139

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<sup>1</sup> *live*: probable scribal error; “love” (Bodleian MS Malone 23) is a preferable reading.

<sup>2</sup> *And for one...his death bemoane*: these lines refer to Buckingham’s supposed efforts to extricate Prince Charles from Spain (and from a widely feared marriage to the Spanish Infanta) in 1623. In the year or so after Charles and Buckingham’s return from Spain, the favourite was hailed as an anti-Spanish hero (see Sections N and O).