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THE LAWFULNESS, AND OBLIGATION OF OATHS. A sermon preach'd at the assises held at Kingston upon Thames, July 21. 1681 .

TILLOTSON, John.

Published by London printed for Brabazon Aylmer. and William Rogers, 1681

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Description:

4to, pp. 36; a superb copy in contemporary vellum, panelled in gilt, marbled endpapers. First and only edition, and clearly a large and fine paper copy. The endpaper bears the characteristic shelf mark ('Inner D2-7') of the library at Wimborne St Giles, seat of the Earls of Shaftesbury, and it is almost certain that this copy was sent by Tillotson to the first Earl, presumably as soon as it was published in the summer of 1681. Yet there would have been a political dimension to this - both to the sermon, and to the gift itself. The Oxford parliament had closed in the spring of the same year, and there was talk of rebellion against the King if he did not exclude his openly Catholic brother from succession to the throne. Tillotson's preaching that there was an obligation to take an oath (by implication one of loyalty to the throne), and having made it, to keep it, was to come back to haunt him in 1689, when he conveniently found himself able to switch sides and serve under the incoming régime of William and Mary. This was in the future, however: the political dimension to the gift was more immediate, as Shaftesbury himself had been arrested on 2 July, and had been sent to the Tower on suspicion of planning to depose the King. He was only released on 28 November - to a public celebration from his fellow-Exclusionists - and it seems clear that this sermon must have been given to him while he was actually in the Tower, and under serious threat of execution because the King was keen to make an example to cow the opposition. This book might well have been part of the furniture of his cell in the summer of 1681, as he pondered his fate and, perhaps, wondered if he was about to follow Stephen College, 'the Protestant Joiner', to the next world. (College was executed at the end of August.) A sermon from Tillotson lecturing him on the necessity of loyalty to Charles II, whose criminal duplicity would only become apparent many years later, cannot have been much comfort. Wing T1200. Bookseller Inventory # 16239

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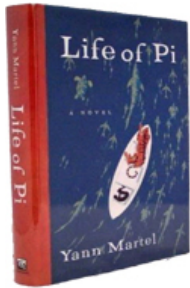
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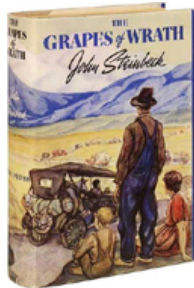
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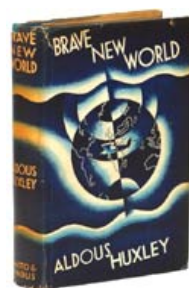
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