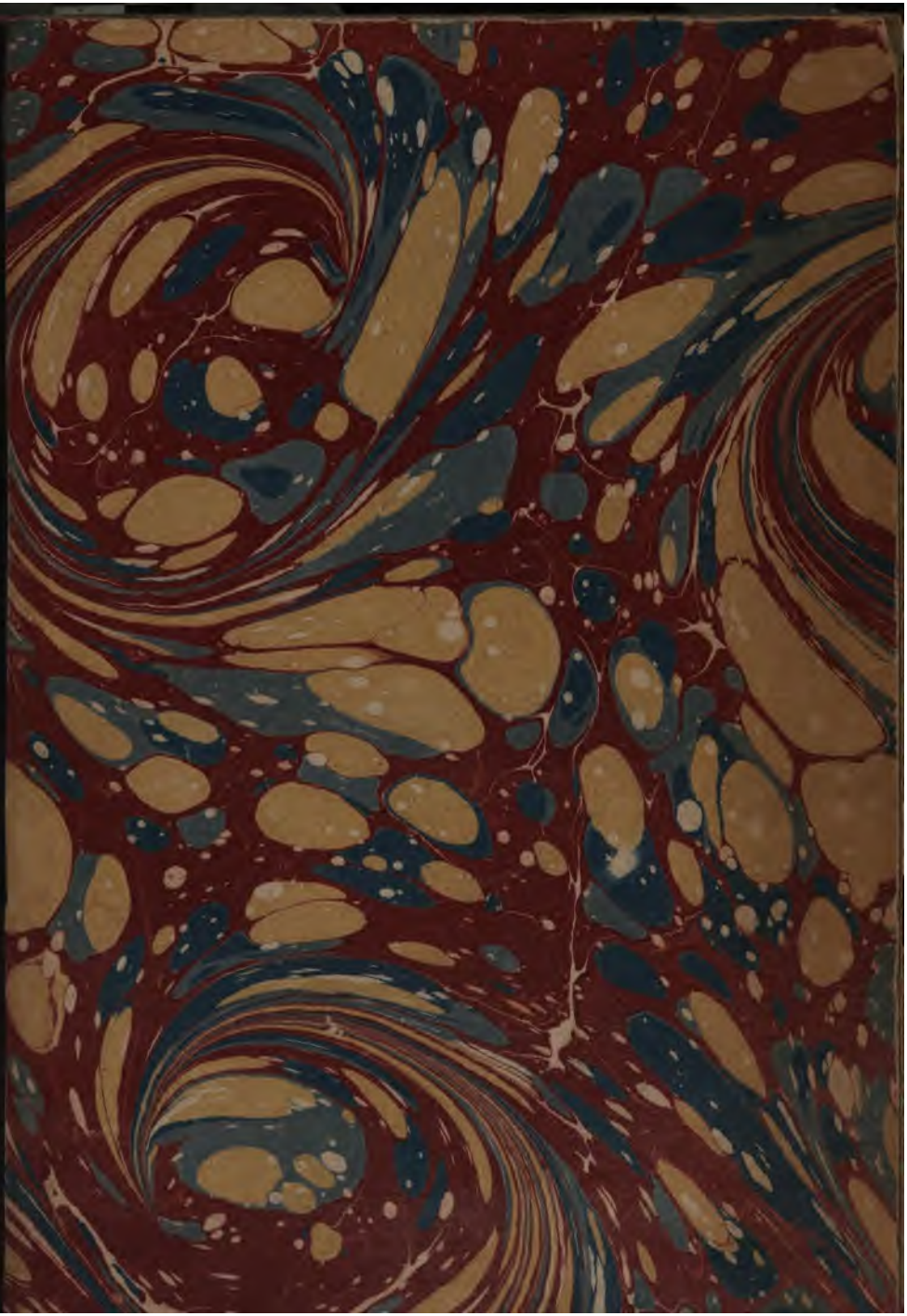

A PLEA
FOR
Congregationall Government:
OR,
A DEFENCE OF THE 15
Assemblies Petition,
AGAINST
Mr. JOHN SALTMARSH.

Wherein is
Plainly discovered, that in his *Reasons against the Divine Right of Presbytery*, under pretence of opposing the *Assemblies Petition*, he doth as much oppose the Congregationall Way, and goes about utterly to overthrow all *Church-Government*, *Ministery*, *Baptisme*, and all *Church-Ordinances* whatsoever; and wholly to subvert the Authority of the *Civill Magistrate* in all matters of Religion.

AND,

The Assemblies Petition vindicated from his Exceptions, by principles common both to the Presbyterian and the Congregationall Way; there being nothing in that Petition but what is agreeable to the Principles of both wayes.

Phil. 3. 16. *Whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same Rule, let us mind the same thing.*

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SIR,

MEeting with severall of your bookes abroad, and finding therein many things which you popose against the Presbyterians not to be so warily penned as might be wished; I cannot but wonder to see your grounds and arguments so laid, that they wound your friends of the Congregationall-way, as well as the Presbyterians whom you do oppose; and that so apparently that it can-not be dissembled: And though it may be thought not seasonable for them who (with you) plead for Liberty, to oppose you in that plea, yet you must not think that they do in their consciences joyn with you in the Arguments that you produce, but look upon them as being no lesse destructive to their way then to the way of the Presbyterians, and indeed to savour of such a spirit as is against all Church Government, Church Censures, Church Officers, Church Ordinances, even Baptism it self, and must needs think by the Arguments here produced, that you do not beleeve there is any constituted Church, or Ministry, or Ordinances in the word at all, or that any at all, either Infants, or others should ever be baptized. Give me leave therefore to examine your grounds you go on, least under pretence of opposing the Assemblies Petition, you overthrow the very Foundations, which all, both of the Congregationall & Presbyterian way, and whoever maintain a visible Church and Ministry, are equally ingaged to maintain, and do unanimously agree in, though in other things there may be differences.

You first make a furious assault upon the Ministry, that they are but *pretended Presbyters* because *ordained by Bishops*, p. 1. Because their *Ordination is personall and successive*, p. 2. Because *not gifted as the Apostles and Primitive Elders were*, p. 4. because *Elderships then were infallible*, &c. p. 5. 6. and the same things repeated, p. 15. 16. 17. And this is the maine drift of your whole book.

Sir, these are things which we must disclaim; principles

 that

that the Congregationall way can no more brook then the Presbyterian. It was a *solemn profession before God and all the world*, by the Brethren, the Authors of the Apologeticall Narration, p. 6. that *not any of them had any other thought, much lesse opinion, but that multitudes of the Assemblies and Parochiall Congregations of England were the true Churches and Body of Christ, and the Ministery thereof a true Ministery; much lesse did it ever enter into their hearts to judge them Antichristian*; and this notwithstanding *the defilements which did then cleave to the true worship of God, or the unwarranted power of Church-Governours exercised therein.* And they alwayes disclaim that Tenent as Brownisme (which upon all occasions they professe against) of holding the Presbyterian Churches, or even the Parochiall Congregations of *England*, to be no true Churches, and their Ministery no true Ministery; And therefore cannot joyn with you either in this charge, or in the grounds. And Mr. *Cotton*, in his *Way of the Churches of Christ in New-England*, p. 111. affirms the like, *We cannot but conceive*, saith he, *the Churches of England were rightly gathered, and planted according to the rule of the Gospel, &c. so that all the work now is, not to make them Churches which were none before, but to reduce and restore them to their primitive Institution.*

Your ground for it, *because they received Ordination from Bishops, or from those ordained by Bishops*, will not hold. For 1. many of the Ministers of the Congregationall way, were ordained by Bishops (and have not all of them disclaimed that Ordination, though perhaps some have) Unlesse therefore you will deny all those to be true Ministers or Presbyters, because so ordained, you cannot urge this as a sufficient argument against the others, which may, notwithstanding such an ordination, be true Ministers. And your self, I suppose, being so ordained, will not think it any hindrance but that you may yet be a *Preacher of the Gospel*, as you stile your self; and (if there be any true Presbyters at all) a *true Presbyter*. 2. If this do not Hinder but that they may be true Presbyters; though it should not be enough to make them so, yet what more have your self to make you such, then what they have, or those of the Congregationall way who are not ordained anew? For if a Minister may be a true Minister meerly by inward gifts without any outward

outward Call, what hinders, but they may be such, whom you cannot deny to be no way inferiour to your self either in gifts or graces? Or, if Election by a company of godly persons consenting to choose or accept a person (so gifted) to be a Minister to them, may serve without Ordination; no question but many godly Presbyterian Ministers, have had such Election, and generall approbation of the godly persons within their charge, to be Pastors to them.

And for that great ado about proving a *certain perpetuall personall derivation of power* from the Apostles, and so, *through the Antichristian Church*, without which you conceive they can be no true Ministers: Sir, you do by that as much oppose all Ministry, as theirs. For if it be necessary to the essence of a Minister that there be such a successive derivation of Power, then it doth as much concern the Congregationall Ministers, and your self too, to make it out; and if it cannot be done, there can be no Ministers at all: If it be not necessarie, why is it insisted on? they may be true Ministers notwithstanding that there be no such succession.

Secondly, by the same Argument we must reject our Baptisme; for how will it appear that those who baptized us were themselves baptized, more then that these who ordained Presbyters are themselves ordained; unlesse we prove a succession of Baptisme in the Antichristian state: and if so, then must there be a *Perpetuall visibility of a Church, a truth of Church Ministery, and ordinances of Jesus Christ in the Antichristian State*, which is the great inconvenience you feared: If there be need of a perpetuall succession in the one, there is need in the other; and if it may be made out in the one, it may be made out in the other. And if your Argument be good against the one, it will be as good against the other.

But if your meaning be, that there is therefore now no Ministery, Baptisme, Ordinances, because there hath not been a perpetuall lineall succession as you suppose, and that for the same reason there can be none for the time to come, for as much as we have no Commission now for persons unbaptized to baptize others, and therefore (as you say) *if the succession be false and interrupted any where, it must needs be all false from such a*

 point

point where the first interruption was made; I say, if this be your meaning, speak it out, that the world may have a full sight of that your new light; and that they cannot be Mr. *Saltmarshes* Disciples, unlesse they will renounce, not their Ministery onely, or Episcopall Ordination, but their Baptisme also, and all Church Ordinances, and that not onely for the present, but for ever hereafter, till we have a new Christ, or at least new Apostles to restore it again.

But you adde, their Ordination is *Personall*, and therefore must be successive, and their *Power derived from a personall and lineall succession*, and your opinion is, that there must be *no personal Ordination*.

But Sir, is not Baptisme personall, as well as Ordination and therefore doth as much require a personall succession 2. Is not the Ordination of Ministers in the Congregational way as personall? yea in all wayes personall, as well as the Presbyterians, whom yet you would appear onely to oppose Must there not be *persons ordaining*, and *persons ordained?* do not the Dissenting Brethren, in the 7. Propositions given in to the Assembly, affirm, that *Church Officers must be designed to their severall offices by imposition of hands and prayer*; and this they call *Ordination*. But 3. neither do those dissenting Brethren, nor those from whom they dissent, affirm as you charge them, that their *power is derived from those that ordain them*, but from Jesus Christ, who-ever the persons be by whom they be outwardly called. But it's like your meaning is, that there should be no outward calling at all, that one is no more a Minister then another, but as more or lesse gifted; and when you speak again making a *distinction between Laity and Clergy*, you mean, *between Officers and others out of Office*. Yet your self adde by and by, that *men may be Saints, but not sent, or ministerially Saints; good men, but not good Presbyters*, p. 2. 15. which you must mean either of *Some*, or of *All*; if of *all*, then is there no Ministery in the world at all, (which I beleeve is your meaning.) If, of *some* onely, I ask what makes the difference between those that are Saints and Presbyters too, and those that are Saints but not Presbyters? And when you have told me, I am confident, that those whom you censure as *no true Presbyters* or *Ministers*, will (at least

See Assemblies Answ: to the Copy of a Remonst.

many of them) plead as good evidence even by your own Rules, as your self can.

You adde, pag. 16. *Though Christs promise is enough to ground a perpetuity of Church and Christs presence, yet not of his promise made good to such particular men:* We accept your grant, (that there shall therefore alwayes be a Church with which Christ will be present; you might have added, *in his Ordinances*; for it is such a presence Christ promiseth.) Your exception is frivolous; for if you intend, that therefore no particular men may plead that promise; you conclude as much against all Ministery and all Ordinances wheresoever or by whomsoever administred: Yea against the Covenant of grace and salvation by Christ, which is no more made to particular men, then the promises of Christs presence in his Ordinances; yet particular men (though their names be not written particularly in the Scripture) may apply the promises to themselves, and obtain (notwithstanding the Papists objections to the contrary, upon that ground which you here pretend) a certainty of salvation.

You argue further pag. 3. from the Assertions of the Assembly in their *humble advice*, as inconsistent: Because (say you) *they acknowledge the divine right to be in the Congregationall Presbitery*, That this is *the first and immediate subject of the Divine Right of Presbyterie*, that this *is onely of Divine Right*: and for this you severall times cite their *Humble Advice*, as if some such things were to be found there. But here, Sir, you must give me leave to tell you, that you do most grossely abuse the Assembly with manifest untruths; for there is no such thing to be found in their *Humble Advice*, which I have purposely perused upon this occasion. But say you, *How can these things stand together, that Divine Right is in the Congregationall Presbytery, and yet that there is a Classicall Provinciall and Nationall Presbytery?* Very well, (according to their Principles) for why may not the one be by Divine Right as well as the other? Those of the Congregationall way, or (as you call them) Independents, assert *a Divine Right in a Congregationall Presbytery*, and yet assert withall (in their writings, and discourses frequently) that *Synods are an holy Ordinance of God*; and yet do not think that they contradict themselves: Your self assert that *the Magistrate is unquestionably a power*

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of God, pag. 11. 19. and cite for it *Rom.* 13. (*The powers that are, are ordained of God*) and by *Magistrate*, I suppose you mean *both Supream and subordinate* (according to the distinction implied 1 *Pet.* 2. 13. 14.) and hold both the one and the other to be an Ordinance of God; yet will any rationall man hold it a good exception, that *if one be a power of God*, or *Ordinance of God*, therfore the other cannot be so? But say you, *THE Divine Right is in the Congregationall Presbyterie, as they acknowledge*, how then can it be any where else? And the Classical, Provincial, and National Presbyteries *are but Prudential and Humane, or mixed Judicatures.* Sir, they acknowledge neither the one nor the other; the most that they acknowledge in the congregational Presbytery is but *A Divine Right*, viz. The same that they assert likewise to be elsewhere (as by their words appears) not *the Divine Right*, as if there were all, and none elsewhere. Much lesse do they acknowledge the other to be but *Prudential or Humane &c.* But do as much assert a Divine Right in the one as in the other.

You adde, that the Congregational Presbitery *is the first and immediate Subject of the Divine Right of Presbitery, as they themselves acknowledge*: Sir, they do not acknowledge any such thing; but rather assert the contrary: Produce any words of theirs to that sense if you can. Though yet I will not deny that some Presbyterians may be of that Judgement.

You adde, *And now whether do not their own principles controll that pretended Right they plead for and set up; a Presbitery of Charity and Prudence, over the Presbytery in the particular Congregation, which they say is onely of Divine Right.* If their principles and assertions were as you relate them, you might have some cause to speak as you do, and to judge the Assembly to be men of very little Reason; but if they be not so, they may as well beleeve you to be a man of very little *Truth, or Conscience*, who so boldly assert it. You tell us, The Presbytery in the particular Congregation, *They say is onely of Divine Right*: Sir, where do *they say*, that this *onely* is of Divine Right? You cite in the Margin, *See their Humble, &c. to the Parl. Manuscr. pag.* 4. Sir, I have seen their *Humble Advice*, and I have seen the 4th p. of it; but find not either in that page or in any other, that *this onely is of Divine Right.* That which they assert is this.

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It is lawfull and agreeable to the Word of God, that the Church be governed by severall sorts of Assemblies; which are Presbyteries and Synods; or Assemblies Congregationall, Classicall, and Synodicall.

The Scripture doth hold out a Presbytery in a Church, (and this Presbytery they afterwards assert may be over many Congregations. *The Scripture doth hold forth, that many particular Congregations may be under one Presbyteriall Government:* and this was asserted on this ground, because *in the Scripture we find it was so.*)

The Scripture doth also hold out another sort of Assemblies for the Government of the Church, besides Classicall and Congregationall; which we call Synodicall.

These are their assertions in this point. And now let the Reader judge thereby whether the Assembly do assert, *That the Divines is in the Congregationall Presbytery*, and that *this onely is of Divine Right*, and that others be *but Presbyteries of Charity and Prudence*, but *Prudentiall and Humane or mixed Judicatures*; or whether they do not as fully assert the Divine Right of the Classicall and Synodicall Assemblies as of the Congregationall. And thus I have answered according to their judgement whom you mis-recite.

Your next Argument, p. 3. &c. *How can that Presbytery whose constitution is so questionable, challenge such a Divine Right?* Sir, we must not grant, that nothing is of Divine Right but what to Mr. *Saltmast* is unquestionable: For I beleeve *Baptisme* to be of Divine Right; yet I beleeve Mr. *Saltmarst* doth not think it unquestionable; but rather thinks there ought to be no Baptisme at all.

Your exceptions against their Presbyters because *ordained* by Bishops, as the Bishops were Presbyters, hath been considered before: And though that Ordination should be null, yet you cannot alledge any thing which your self thinks necessary to make a man a *Preacher of the Gospel*, but that they have it.

You adde, *Their Ruling Elders* (are ordained) *by a power as questionable, viz. by a Rule or Ordinance of Parliament, &c. not by that very Apostolical Scripture Rule or institution of Jesus Christ. Ans.* The Rule and Institution of their Ruling Elders, they fetch not

from

in my hearing) not onely the *Synods are an holy Ordinance of God*, but particularly of *this Assembly*, that *they beleeve this Assembly so to be, and look upon it as such.* But if your selfe thinke that neither this, nor any other either *Synod* or *Presbytery*, may at all be accounted an Ordinance of God, or of Divine Right, because (as your next exception is) they have not Apostolicall and infallible gifts; you must not thinke that either *Presbyterians* or *Independents* can allow such Principles, as being equally destructive to both. But whether the Assembly be or be not an Ordinance of God; yet if the thing they advise be an Ordinance of God, it's never the worse for being so advised.

The next exception against these *Presbyters*, because not *immediately* and *infallibly* gifted as the *Apostles and primitive Elders were*; strikes as much against all Ministery and Ordinances in any Church-way whatever, except those of *Seekers*, a late Generation new start up, which no age before these two or three last yeares did ever know; And truely, by the description your self give of them, (in your *Smoake*, p. 16. and what Principles you here assert, I cannot judge you to be any other then one of them; yea, of the grosser sort of *Seekers*.

Therefore (say you) *these present Presbyters* (you should have added, nor any others of what Church-way soever) *cannot challenge the same Power for Church Censures*; (you may adde, or administring any Church Ordinances) *without the same Spirit gifting them, and anoynting them to such a power and Administration in the Church:* which you interpret *p.* 5. to be *certain constitutions and practises*, and not *fallible*; and p. 16. *a gift Divine and Infallible*, and againe, *ibid. They who were Elders or Presbyters in the Churches &c. were gifted by a Spirit which taught the very Infallible Word which is now written, or Scripture, and so they did constitute, advise, and counsell in the place of this written word, &c.*

If therefore there may be no *Presbytery* or Eldership now pleaded as of Divine Right, unlesse such as be as *miraculously*, and *infallibly* gifted as the Apostles were, or as the Papists pretend their Pope to be, yea, as the *Scripture it selfe*; who doth not see that this concludes against all *Presbyteries*, all Governments whatsoever, (as well as against those of the *Presbyterian*

byterian way) for none can governe so infallibly; against all Ministeriall Preaching (as well as ruling) for none can preach so infallibly; against all Baptisme (either of Infants or of grown Christians,) and all Ordinances whatsoever, for none can administer them so infallibly: (which is, I beleeve, that which you aime at:) for *no such thing can be said of any Eldership or Presbytery of men now*, as your selfe acknowledged, p. 16. Yea, against all Magistracy, *especially* intermedling in Church-affaires, as *Baptisme, Presbytery, Church-Order, &c.* from which you wholly exclude him, as having nothing to do either to injoyn, or punish, in your *Groans for Liberty, p.* 17. 19. *Consid.* 1. 4. For you there confine his power to bee onely *so farre as concernes any good, or evill either of the Law of Nature, or of Nations.* But will not allow it, or the Texts that assert it, *Rom.* 13. 4. 1. *Tim.* 2. 2. 1 *Pet.* 2. 13, 14. to extend *to a good or evill purely spiritual, and of meere Revelation in the Gospel, as things of Gospell light and Mystery, and notions of Heresie and Schisme:* and perswade him to be contented *to walk only according to those generall Rules there laid down* (and thus expounded) *not DARING to draw himself to revenge any misbeliefe of particular Scripture Mysteries; forcing either side, either for Presbytery, Independency, or Baptisme: Which the Gospell hath no where warranted him in speciall, or in any cleere consequence to do.* And not onely against their medling with Church affaires, but against their Authority in civill matters also. For the Magistrate cannot (either in Ecclesiastick or Civill affaires) act so Infallibly; and yet say you, *They that challenge a Divine Right to the power they act by* (as surely the Magistrate may, from *Rom.* 13. 4. 1 *Pet.* 2. 13, 14.) *must act by a gift as Divine and Infallible as their right and power*; But (say you) *no such thing can be affirmed of any Eldership or Presbytery* (I adde, nor of any Magistrate or Senate) *of men now.*

But I wonder you should adde that which followes, that they *ought to be content meerly with a mixed and partly prudentiall power*; especially seeing you direct it against all that plead for a *Divine Right* in any way whatsoever, and yet have not an *infallible Spirit*, which you call a *setting up of a Government for Christs which is not all Christs.* For is not this quite contrary

to what you do so frequently insist upon, against interposing the Civill Power? May not the Magistrate *command the observing of Christs Laws*, and punish the breach of them, (as in the place but now alleadged;) and yet may he now *intermixe* his own *prudence* in *making Lawes*? In your *Grones for liberty*, *Epist. to Parliament: consid.* 2. you are of opinion that *in the Kingdome of Christ no other Scepter should be lifted up but that golden one of his own, &c. no other Power should rule, no other Scepter, no other Law, &c.* and cite to that purpose in the end of the Booke, *pag.* 36. a large Testimony of Master *Ruterfords, against the Magistrates incroaching on Christs Prerogative.* And in your *Smoake* pag. 60. 61. you have a large discourse against *Prudence* and *Scripture Consequences*; *Once let Prudence open a doore, and then will more of man crowd in then the Law of God can keep out.* — *That which is not direct from Scripture is indirect and repugnant.* — *Nothing is agreable to the will of Christ, but the very will of Christ.* — *Nothing is agreable to his will but what he wills, and every thing is repugnant to his will but what wills. Christs Rule opposeth any Tradition to the Commandements of God, &c. But if any thing of Prudence is to be let in, then something of Tradition, &c.* and much there to that purpose. I wonder therefore (if you be now the same man you were then) that you should perswade them to be content with *a mixt and partly prudentiall Rule, because of the mixture of their anointing, and gifts*, that is, *because they have not infallible gifts.*

But further; It is but your supposition, (you have no proofe for it) that the *Primitive Elders* were all *infallible*; much lesse that the *Scripture or written word of God*, was but the *Institutions, forms, and Rules of these Eldership*. It's true that the Apostles in writing and dictating of the Holy Scriptures, and some other Acts that were meerely Apostolick, had an infallible assistance of the Holy Ghost; But we must not thinke that in all their Acts they were thus infallible; nay we know they did erre; *Peter* was in an errour, not only in denying his Master three times (which perhaps you will say, was before the receiving of the Holy Ghost) but long after, *Gal.* 2. (And *Barnabas* drawn in to the same dissimulation) and for that error withstood to the face by *Paul. vers.* 11, 12, 13. And *Paul* at *Antioch*

tioch, though he were in the right, in the case of Circumcision and the Law of *Moses*, *Acts* 15. yet they doe not rest in his Apostolick *Spirit*, but send to *Jerusalem* to have the Controversie adjudged; And as for other Elders who were not Apostles, we have no intimation at all of their infallibility, no more then we have of the infallibility of your self, or Ministers now: Yea, we are sure they did erre, and (some of them) fall away; for not onely *Judas* proved a Traiterous Apostle; but *Demas* afterward forsook *Paul* to imbrace the present world: And *Nicholas* the Deacon, *Acts* 6. (though ordained by laying on the Apostles hands, which you conceive to conferre an infallible gift of the holy Ghost.) Is, at least supposed to be, the Author of the *Nicolaitans* which God hates, *Rev.* 2. And others that pretended to be Apostles *Rev.* 2. 2. came under tryall and were found lyers.

Yea, *Paul* and *Barnabas* so farre differed, not onely in point of Judgement, (in which they could not both judge aright) but in matter of affection too, that upon a hot contention about a third person *John Mark*, for a former miscarriage (who it seems was not infallible) that they parted the one from the other in dislike, *Acts* 15. 39. in which carriage they could not both be in the right: which parting, you know (I beleeve) that the dissenting Brethren make their ground of *Non-Communion* of Churches, which is the highest censure they judge any Church for the greatest errour to be capable of; and therefore if these Apostles did the one Non-Communicate the other, certainly the one or the other was in an errour. And *Paul*, *Acts* 20. tells the *Elders of Ephesus*, that even *of themselves should men arise speaking perverse things*; So that these Elders of *Ephesus*, though *Primitive Elders* were not *infallible*. Yea the *Angells* of the seven Churches, *Rev.* 2. & 3. had their errors; The Angel of the Church of *Ephesus*, (the Eldership there) *had left their first love*, *Rev.* 2. 4. and are threatned with removall of the Candle-stick unlesse they repent: And the like threatned to the Angel of the Church of *Pergamus*, for having these that held the Doctrine of the *Nicolaitans*, and the Doctrine of *Balaam*: And the Angel of the Church of *Laodicea* threatned to be spued out for being neither hot nor cold;

 and

and so of the rest. By all which appeares, that neither the Elders nor the Elderships were then infallible.

And therefore, to tell us that *the word of the Gospell* was *partly in the gifts of those Eldership*, and that those Eldership *did constitute, advise, and counsell in the place of the written Word*; and that *for any to assume such a power as they did, is to sit down in the Throne of Scripture or very word of God*, and that a power of *Divine Right*, (which you say the Magistrate hath undoubtedly) *without a sure and infallible Spirit for Church-censures, or the execution of such a power, is to joyn such with the infallible word or Scripture, and to controll the pure word of Truth by an Interpretation lesse then Truth*; is little lesse then blasphemy: making the *constitutions, Advice and Councells* of the Elders and Eldership then, (for some of which Christ threatens to spue them out of his mouth, to remove the Candlestick, &c. to be equall with the Scripture and written word of God; and to have a Power to controll the pure word of Truth. For if they had not such infallibility and such a Power then, they who assume the same power which they did, do not assume this now.

As for what you adde of Ordination, that the present Presbyters are not ordained by *Christ himselfe*, by the *Apostles*, or such as immediately *received their power from the Apostles*; is but to delude the world, whom you would have to think that you onely oppose *the present Presbytery*, as you call it, but do indeed oppose *all Presbytery*, (and indeed, all Church-Government that ever was, in any of the ages of the Church since the Apostles times) for *none* are so ordained; And whereas you add, nor *by a power in the Church or Congregation, preceding such a power and accompanying such a power*; as if you would approve of such an Ordination as in some Churches of the Congregationall way, is performed by the People; is but further to delude: For I ask you seriously, whether you think such Presbyters rightly ordained, and to be of Divine Right? If so, then by your grounds, they must have *a Divine and infallible Gift*, If not rightly ordained, then do you as much oppose those of the *Congregationall way*, yea, and all of *whatever way*, as you doe those for the *present Presbytery*: For the things which you say are requisite to Presbyters by Divine Right, are not (you acknowledge

knowledge, to be said of *any Eldership or Presbytery of men now*. Yea and though you here seem to approve of such an Ordination, and such a power in the Church; yet you know it is one of your exceptions against Independency (in your *Smoak*, *pag.* 10.) *That there is not such a power radically or fundamentally in the Church to make Pastors and Elders, because there is first no such practise in the word, but rather an Apostolicall or Ministeriall Power, which made or gathered Churches first, not Churches them*: And *that which is called Ordination, was by the Apostles, and a power established in the Presbytery, not in the Church, as meer Beleevers.* So that still your drift is to oppose all things, and establish nothing.

Your last Engine of opposing a Divine Right in Presbytery, is, *a fear least all the magistracy and State power in the Kingdom and the Parliament of England may fall under their cognizance, if they assume a spirit of judging and discerning sins; and how dangerous this would be to the State, Histories will shew.* But this is but the language of those *Ezra.* 4. against the building of Jerusalem and the house of God in it, because it was *a rebellious citie, hurtfull to Kings and Provinces*, and of those against Christ, *Joh.* 19. *He that maketh himself a King speaketh against Cæsar*, though (he had told them before that *His Kingdom was not of this world.*) But you who are elsewhere so much against *carnall reason, consulting with flesh and blood, humane prudence* and the *wisdome of the flesh*; might have spared such an Argument. If (in your *Groans*) you do not think it fair for them to charge *Schisme* on you, you should not here insinuate *Sedition* in them: At least, unlesse your Histories which you speak of, could have shewed you that either the Presbiterians in *France*, though under a Popish King, or those in *Scotland*, in the *Netherlands*, in *Geneva*, or in some other places had thus imbroyled States and Countries.

Again, you are to consider that the question at present in hand, is not about the power of a Nationall Assembly, but the Congregationall Presbyterie; at least if that be true which you affirm so confidently (p. 3. and elsewere) that *they say, this is onely a Divine Right.* For if they hold this onely to be of Divine Right, then the Divine Right which they plead for must be onely the Divine Right of the Congregationall, not the Nationall, Presbyterie. But, say you, *shall not this Nationall Presbyte-*

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rie take cognizance of States, if sinning, Ecclesiastically as well as others. Sir, If by *taking cognizance*, you mean admonishing them of their duty, and shewing the danger of Gods displeasure if they fail of it; I grant that they may thus take notice of it: The Prophets did so of old in the Kingdom of Israel, and every Minister called to preach to one or both Houses of Parliament, may and ought so to do; for else were it a mocking of God and of his Ordinances, to require his servants to speak to them in his Name, if they may not deliver his message: If by *taking Cognizance*, you mean, *censuring or excommunicating*; you know 1. that the subject of the Petition, and the Divine Right there pleaded, is not about *Excommunication* at all, much lesse the *Excommunication of a State*, but about *keeping scandalous and ignorant persons* from the Sacrament of the *Lords Supper*; now States and Kingdoms, do not receive the Sacrament of the Lords Supper, but persons; and consequently States and Kingdoms are not debarred from it, but persons; and thus if a person that is member of such a State be unfit to be admitted, he may and ought to be kept away.

2. If the question had been about Excommunication (which is also of *Divine Right*, and so asserted by these Petitioners, though not in that Petition, there being no occasion to speak of it there) yet you know that the Reformed Churches do not Excommunicate Kingdoms, or Parliaments, but persons; For if they should do so, they should excommunicate the Innocent together with the Nocent, for a minor part may be wholly innocent of what by a major part is overruled: as for instance, the twelve Judges in the Chequer chamber in the case of Shipmoney, are reputed to have given Judgement for it, because the major part was for it; yet had it been injustice for that Court to have censured all (either Ecclesiastically or civilly) when some of them (though not a major part) gave judgement against it; nor did the Parliament in that case censure them all, but those onely who were offenders. Much lesse can it be imagined that a Parliament or Kingdom can be the subject of Excommunication: because they cannot be all presumed nocent; nor is the Parliament, as a Parliament, or a Magistrate as a Magistrate, a Church Member, no more then a

Magistrate

Magistrate as a Magistrate is a Church Officer, and therefore cannot as such be excommunicated. But if those persons that be Members of Parliament, be, in their personal capacity, guiltie of such crimes as may deserve excommunication, I know not that Christ hath more exempted them from it, then he hath exempted other persons. 3. And I adde withall, that this is not a Tenet of the Presbyterians onely, but of us all, whether Presbyterian, or Congregationall; For if a Member of Parliament be a Member of an Independent or Congregationall Church (as it is called) no question but they have the same power over him, that they have over the rest of the Members. (Nay further, though the Presbyterians do not excommunicate Societies, but onely persons, yet those of the Congregationall way do *Non-communicate* not onely persons, who are their own Members, but whole Societies and Churches.) And therefore that fear of *excommunicating* Parliaments and Kingdoms, which you speak of, is but a bugbear.

You conclude at last, that *when the Parliament is perswaded of no Divine Right, the Assembly of a Divine Right, and the Dissenting Brethren of another Divine Right*, (you should have added, The Anabaptists of a third Divine Right, the Seekers of a fourth, the Papists of a fifth, the Jews of a sixth, the Turks of a seventh, &c.) *the way is to let the Parliament have their liberty of Conscience to settle no Divine Right* (nor is it desired; they are desired onely to settle the thing, not to settle the Divine Right of it) *and the Assembly to use their Liberty in a Divine Right*, (but this is that will not be granted, but they are required to act thus, *and not otherwise*, which Independents can no more approve of in their Consciences then Presbyterians) *and the other Brethren as peaceably to enjoy their other Divine Right*: (you should have added, and so for all the rest, every one to enjoy their own supposed Divine Right.) But Sir, what if it be the Parliaments Conscience, that they ought not to suffer all these to enjoy and practise their supposed Divine Rights, but think themselves bound to suppresse them, or some of them; must the Parliament *in this Straight* (as you speak) *enjoy their Liberty of Conscience* to suppresse them? If not, tell us why all others must be suffered to practise according to their own Consciences, though erron-

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ous; and yet the Parliament not to practise thus if it be their Conscience?

And thus much for your *Reasons*, and the Principles extracted from them.

I Come next to examine your *Inferences* on *the last Petition of the Assembly, for Divine Right in their present Presbytery:* Sir, they did not *Petition* for a Divine Right; that which they petitioned is this, and only this, *that the severall Elderships may be sufficiently enabled to keep back all such, as are notoriously scandalous from the Sacrament of the Lords Supper:* And in this we all agree; for this is a Tenent common to *Presbyterians* and Independents, as they are called, yea more insisted upon by the latter, *That this power of keeping from the Lords Table all Ignorant, and scandalous persons doth of Divine Right, belong to the Eldership*; and this (say those of the Congregationall way) *without appeale*, much lesse can they allow of the Commissioners there provided: but do in their Consciences fully beleeve them to be unlawfull, and contrary to the word of God. And the Divine Right asserted in the Petition, (not petitioned for) is no more but what both parties do agree in.

If you object, that Independents have been great Promoters of these Commissioners, and pleaders for them; &c. I confesse some of them, many of them, have so; (But I thank God, I am not to answer for that.) This I know, that they cannot in their Congregations admit of such Commissioners to be Judges, to determine who shall, and who shall not, come to their Sacraments; But how they can consent to the setting up of what themselves judge unlawfull, I know not; nor will I undertake to give an account, let them answer for themselves; perhaps it is according to their Liberty of Conscience so to do. But I proceed.

The *Preface* of the Petition you omit, and say nothing to; wherein the Assembly shew, "*That they cannot but with joy* "*remember the marveilous goodnesse of God, in calling, and continu-* "*ing this Parliament, in the time of this Nations greatest trouble and* "*danger, and in making it singularly usefull towards the saving of*

these

"*these three Nations, from the bondage of Tyranny and Idolatry, by*
"*taking off many yokes and burdens, both in matters of Religion*
"*and of Civill Government; by laying the foundations and begin-*
"*nings of a positive Reformation; and by ingaging this Kingdome*
"*in that solemne and sacred League and Covenant, which with our*
"*hands lifted up to the most High God we have sworn.* And adde
further, That "*as they esteem themselves, alwayes bound to acknow-*
"*ledge these, and many other blessings, which the God of Heaven*
"*hath made this Honourable Parliament, his Instruments to convey*
"*unto these poore Kingdomes, with all affectionate thankfullnesse*
"*to God, and to the Honourable Houses, so they professe themselves*
"*the more obliged thereby, to shew all active readinesse to promote all*
"*the Commands of Parliament, tending to Reformation of Religi-*
"*on; and that nothing but Conscience of their duty to God, to the*
"*Parliament themselves, and the soules of the rest of their Bre-*
"*thren the People of the Lord, could excuse in them any seeming back-*
"*wardnesse, to act according to the Votes, and Ordinances of Par-*
"*liament leading thereunto.*

The next *Part* of the Petition, and that which you take notice of, contains the particulars wherein they desire redresse, as thinking themselves aggrieved in them, and being unsatisfied in their Consciences about them. *viz.* That the enumeration of Scandalls is yet defective; and the Commissioners are Officers of which they cannot approve. "*Yet are*
"*we* (say they) *to our grief constrained at this time, in all Humi-*
"*lity and Faithfulnesse, to represent to the Honourable Houses, That*
"*there is still a great defect in the enumeration of scandalous sins;*
"*very many scandalous sins ordinarily committed in all places, and*
"*formerly presented by your Petitioners, being still omitted.* Which, it's like, they added, because of that aspersion cast upon them abroad, as if they had onely desired an indefinite power of keeping away scandalous persons, and had never given instance in any particulars; or at least, that they had not instanced in any other then those enumerated in the severall Ordinances of Parliament, and that if they would have instanced in any other they should have been inserted. The next particular you repeat, "*And that the Provision of Commis-*
"*sioners to judge the scandals not enumerated, appeares to our Con-*

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cc *sciences to be so contrary to that way of Government, which Christ* cc *hath appointed in his Church.* And then infer from it, *That the Assembly do suppose the Parliament, and Commissioners to be far below the Ministers and Eldership, in spiritualls gifts and discerning*; and that this is, *to set up the old distinction of Laity and Clergy*; but *seeing the gifts* (of the Ministers and Magistrates) *are not so distinct*; you ask *why the Offices should be so distinct.* Sir, the Assembly do suppose, and more then suppose (and others beside the Assembly too) that Ministers and Eldership may do something, which neither the Commissioners nor Parliament may do. That the Parliament and Commissioners may not administer the Word and Sacraments, is granted by all, (what ever become of Church-Censures;) and it is as much granted, that Ministers may: It's granted by all (except Seekers) that Ministers may ordain Ministers, but I never heard that a Parliament may ordain Ministers: And yet this hath not been accounted hitherto *a setting the Minister upon a higher forme then the Magistrate*, as you now charge it: And why should it be thought more unreasonable, to say the same of Church-Censures? For those who do acknowledge Church-Censures at all, acknowledge that they are to be inflicted by Church Officers, yet do not deny the Authority of the Parliament or Civill Magistrate; to whom the Sword is committed, but not the Keys. But, what ever become of Church-Censures, yet the distinction will remain still (though not between Clergy and Laity, as you speak, yet) between Church-Officers, and other Church Members, and between Ministers and Magistrates. For else you must say, that a Magistrate by being a Magistrate is made a Minister, and a Minister by being a Minister is made a Magistrate; and you can no more say the one then the other. And if alike question to that of yours, concerning a distinction of Offices without a distinction of Gifts, (as you suppose) should be put in another case; seeing the Gifts of a Justice of Peace, or a Judge, are not so distinct from the Gifts of other men, why should there be a distinction of Office? or, seeing the gifts of Parliament men are not so distinct from the gifts of other men, why should their Office be distinct? It would easily be answered, that it is not Gifts, but

Commission,

Commission, and a lawfull Calling, that makes a Justice, a Judge, a Parliament man; And in like manner, not Gifts, but Commission from Christ, and a lawfull Call that makes a Minister.

You proceed next to their next words, "*In that it giveth a* "*Power to judge of the fitnesse of persons to come to the Sacraments,* "*unto such persons as our Lord Christ hath not given that power unto.* Against which you object, *That the Magistrate who is unquestionably the power of God, may more lawfully judge of sins, and Gospel Rules, then they who are a questionable Ministry and Eldership.* But Sir. You cannot affirme this or that Magistrate to be a Power of God, more then this or that Minister: and Ministers (indefinitely) are as much undoubtedly an ordinance of God as Magistrates. 2. Though the Magistrate be unquestionably *a Power of God, and a Judge of good and evill,* yet he is not unquestionably a *Judge of sins, and Gospel Rules*; for your self, question it, yea deny it, in the places even now alledged out of your *Groans for Liberty, p.* 17, 18, 19. where you confine the Good and evil of which he is Judge, onely to what is good or evill *of the Law of Nature or Nations,* and exclude him from medling with *a good or evill purely spirituall, and of meer revelation in the Gospel,* and amongst these you reckon *things of Gospel Light and Mystery; and Notions of Heresie and Schisme; particulars of Truth and Heresie; the severall wayes of practises in things of outward cognizance and Order, as Baptisme, Church Order, &c. Gospel Mysteries, such as Presbytery, Independency, or Baptisme,* (you might as well have added, *the Lords Supper;*) *the misbeliefe of such particular Scripture Mysteries*; and in generall *things of spirituall cognizance*: in these things you would not have him *DARE* to interpose his power, as being that *which the Gospel hath no where warranted him in speciall, or in any cleare consequence to do*; and such a *latitude of interpretation of the generall Rules in the Gospel concerning Magistracy,* (*Rom.* 13. 4. 1 *Tim.* 2. 2. 1 *Pet.* 2. 13, 14.) as to extend it to things of this nature, you cannot approve of. And in the *Epist:* you would have *no Scepter lifted up in Christs Kingdome, but that golden one of his own*: And therefore the Magistrate, according to your Principles is not in these things an *unquestionable power of God.* Nay further; if your other Principle be good (*That*

they

they who challenge a Divine Right to the power they act by, must act by a gift as Divine and infallible as their right and power,) he will not be an *unquestionable power of God* in any thing; For if in any thing he be *unquestionably a power of God*, or ordained by God, he must therein act by a gift *unquestinably Divine and infallible:* which seeing he cannot do, he must, by your Principles, disclaime any *Divine Right* at all to the power he acts by, either in Ecclesiasticall or Civill affaires, and must no longer pretend to be a *power of God*, or *Ordinance of God*, till he can attain at such *infallible Gifts*. And now how good a friend you are to the Magistrate, when you do (in termes) deny his power in all things of *Spirituall cognizance*, and (by consequence) in things of a *Civill cognizance* too; is easie to see. But, Sir, as I doubt not to allow the Magistrate a power, (which you would not have him *DARE* to take,) notwithstanding that you think it *questionable*; so neither do I doubt, but that Ministers and Eldership may in these dayes be the *Ministry and Eldership of Jesus Christ*, though it be to you *Questionable*. For if every thing must be presently *Disclaimed*, as soone as Mr. *Saltmarsh* begins to think it *Questionable*, we shall soon bring Religon to a narrow compasse.

The next words of the Petition (,, *And also layeth upon us a* ,, *necessitie of admitting some scandalous person to the Sacrament* ,, *even after conviction before the Eldership*;) you say nothing to; but proceed to repeat those that follow, ,, *And to be so differing* ,, *from all example of the best reformed Churches, and such a reall hin-* ,, *drance to the bringing the Churches of God in the three kingdoms* ,, *to the neerest conjunction and Uniformity, and in all these re-* ,, *spects so disagreeable to our Covenant, that we dare not pra-* ,, *ctise according to that provision.* And from hence you infer, *That if all do not beleeve as one beleeves, it is pretended, that all are in breach of Covenant:* No Sir, you cannot infer so much; but this you may infer, *That those who do not endeavour to bring the Churches of God in the three Kingdoms to the nearest Conjunction and Uniformity,* are in a breach of Covenant; (and this cannot be denyed, for it is the very Letter of the Covenant) and therfore they conceiving this (as they affirm) to be a *reall hinderance* to that which they had covenanted to endeavour, conceived them-

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selves bound to petition the removall of it. And you who (in your *Smoke, &c. p.* 24, 25, 26. In your *Argument from the Covenant for Liberty of Conscience*,) allow the Magistrate to be the Interpreter of the Covenant, in things of *Morall, Civill, or secular cognizance* only, and do exclude his interpretation in *Gospell mysteries*, in things *immediately Divine and spirituall*; and hold that *in the things of God*, in *all things of spirituall cognizance, as every Scripture Truth, or Truth in the word is*, there is no other Judge and Interpreter to each mans Conscience, but *the Lord Jesus, and the Spirit of Jesus Christ*; and that *each man standing ingaged in his own particular, and in his own proper Conscience by a Covenant recommended and imposed, each is bound to bring forth the Evidences of their Consciences in particular, concerning this to which they are covenanted*; and every one *stands bound by their owne private Consciences to reveale to the State, what their Consciences interpret, &c.* I say, you who hold thus, cannot blame the Assembly for revealing to the Parliament, that *this provision of Commissioners, &c. appeares to their Consciences, to be — a reall hinderance to the bringing of the Churches of God in the three Kingdomes to the neareſt conjunction and uniformity*. Especially when they say withall, not only that thinke it in their Conscience thus to be, but also that they dare not in Conscience hold their peace; as appeares in the following words, " *And we do evi-*
" *dently foresee, that such Commissioners will not onely be offensive to*
" *the Reformed Churches abroad, but a discouragement to those a-*
" *mongst our selves, who either are or shall be chosen Elders, and a*
" *stumbling block to very many of our best, and most conscientious peo-*
" *ple, who have long waited for Reformation, and are in danger to*
" *be cast upon the snare of separation, and no way left to reduce them,*
" *or others who are already fallen into it: Insomuch as we cannot for-*
" *beare to professe our feares of Gods sad displeasure if this should be*
" *continued; and the just imputation of sinne unto us, if we who*
" *have been held worthy by the Honourable Houses, to be called to*
" *give them advise in matters of Religion, should altogether hold our*
" *peace at this time*. But why the word *Uniformity* should so much displease, as it seemes it doth, I cannot tell; There is a Uniformity in the *Congregationall way* in *New-England*, as well as in the *Presbyteriall way* in *Scotland*; and to what you say, that

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the Uniformity in the Covenant is *the Uniformity with the word, not with one another*; That it is a Uniformity *with the word* is very true; but why not *with one another*? Surely if we must indeavour to bring all to a Uniformisy with the word, the other is included; for if all be Uniforme to the word, and the word uniforme to it selfe, there will be a Uniformity one with another. But the thing you plead for, is not that every one should be uniforme to the word, but that every one should follow their own way; telling us, that *Vnity in the Spirit makes up Vniformity in the Letter*, that *Communion in Vnity is a glorious supplement to the rent of Vniformity*, *p.* 12. 19 and thereupon like not the pressing of the Covenant for Uniformity: As if when you had taken the Covenant, you had not covenanted to *endeavour a Vniformity*, but to endeavour *something instead of Vniformity*, as a *glorious supplement* for the want of it; and this *something*, had been, *a liberty for every one to practise what they thought good:* A principle which the *Congregationall Churches* in *New-England*, disavow, as well as the *Presbyterian Churches* in *France*, *Scotland*, and the *Netherlands*.

The next words you touch at, are those in the Petitory part of the Petition, which runs thus, "*Wherefore your Petitioners in* "*discharge of their fidelity to God, to his Church, and to your Honours,* "*humbly pray, that the severall Elderships may be sufficiently enabled* "*to keep back All such as are notoriously scandalous from the Sacra-* "*ment of the Lords Supper.* Hence you inferre, *that they endeavour to raise up the interest of the Eldership, and Presbytery, into a distinct, sole, and independent body and power.* No Sir, not *a sole and Independent Power*; for that is the great question between them and the dissenting Brethren, whether the power of particular Elderships be Independent: But they plead for a *sufficiency of Power*, to keep from the Sacrament all scandalous persons; which is no more then (yea not so much as) the Protestant Churches in *France* do injoy under a Popish King; nor more then Christian Churches practised both under Christian, and Heathen Emperours: Nor more then every gathered Congregation amongst us at this day, do take to themselves without asking leave, admitting to, and keeping from their Congregations whom they think good; you should not there-

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fore under pretence of opposing the Assemblies Petition, cast dirt upon your friends, and all the godly party; who have many of them left the Churches of England, and Communion with them, meerly upon this ground, of *mixt Communion*. Yea, Sir, I wonder with what Conscience you can oppose this as an unreasonable demand; when your selfe do frequently speak so broadly against the Magistrates power, to intermeddle, or ingage his Sword in *matters of Religion*, things of *Worship*, particulars of *Scripture Truth*, *Baptisme*, *Church Order*, *&c.* which for my part, I dare not do, because I doubt not of the Magistrates power to interpose his Civill Authority: Nor do they whom you here tax for craving too much; who in expresse terms ascribe it to him: And those whom you would perhaps be thought to plead for (though indeed you plead against them) the dissenting Brethren, who in their *Apologeticall Narration*, *p.* 19. professe themselves *to give to the Civill Magistrate, as much, and (as they think) more, then the Principles of the Presbyteriall Government will suffer them to yield.* And therefore neither one nor other can approve of the Anti-Magistraticall Tenets, in denying the Magistrate not onely a power of Ecclesiasticall, but of Civill Censures too, in matters of *Gospel Truths*, and of *Spirituall cognizance*: though both the one, and the other, beleeve that to be due to the Elderships, which is here asked; and your selfe (according to your Principles) must say, the Magistrate hath nothing to do with it.

You inferre further; that *Petitioning a power from the State to compleat, and make up an Eldership, doth, either imply an Ecclesiasticall power in the State (for the State cannot give what it selfe hath not) or else 'tis a meer contradiction to pray for that from the State which it cannot give.* But your Inference will not hold: They ask not of the State an *Ecclesiasticall power*, but a *Liberty to exercise* hat Power, which (they say here) they receive from other hands, by Divine Right, and the appointment of Jesus Christ; and this is no more then the State may give, though yet they have not that themselves: the State may, and doth authorize and enable (by their Civill Authority) a Minister to preach the word, and administer the Sacraments in their Domini-

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ons; but doth not give him that Ecclesiasticall Power where by he is a Minister, but only a Liberty to exercise that power which he received in his Ordination. When your selfe, by the *Committee for plundered Ministers*, was put into the *Sequestration of Brasted*; you were by them enabled and authorized to Officiate there, and all required to permit you so to do; yet this was not an Ecclesiasticall but a Civill power which they exercised, in giving you leave, to exercise an Ecclesiasticall Power (of administring the word and Sacraments,) which Ecclesiasticall Power though they might give you leave to exercise, (supposing you then to be a Minister, for you had not then disclaimed your Ordination) yet had not power to exercise it themselves. And so when you afterwards obtained an Order from the *Committee of Examinations*, to keep a Lecture at a place neare adjoyning. A King by his *Politicall* Power may authorize and enable a Master, a Father, a Husband to exercise their respective *Domesticall* duties, which himselfe (though he may give them leave to do it) may not do. And so he may as a Magistrate give leave to another, to exercise his Ministeriall power; though yet he can neither make him a Minister, nor exercise that power himself. And if the State with us should give leave, and authorize Churches of the Congregationall way to exercise their own way, according to their own judgements, they would not refuse to accept of it; nor yet think that they did thereby make the State power to be Ecclesiasticall.

From their next words ("*Of which we must (as formerly we* "*have done) say expressely, It belongs unto them by Divine Right,* "*and by the will and appointment of Jesus Christ. Which with help* "*of superiour Assemblies in cases of Appeale, or in Mal-administrations therein, will prevent (through the blessing of God) all the* "*feared inconveniences*, You inferre, *That the Presbytery and Eldership of a Congregation is of Divine Right.* Their word was *Elderships*; and no question but the Assembly holds Elderships to be of Divine Right, and so do you too, if you be of the Congregationall way.

But you inferre further, That this *Divine Right is perfected and compleated, by that which is not of as pure Divine Right as itselfe,*

selfe, viz. Superiour Assemblies. What you mean by *perfected and compleated*, I cannot tell; but that they may *receive help* from Superiour Assemblies, (which is all the Petition asserts) is without Controversie in the Judgement, both of Presbyterians and Independents: who both agree, that *Synods are an Ordinance of God*; and that they may afford much help to inferiour Presbyteries or Elderships. See Mr. *Cottons Keys of the Kingdome of Heaven, chap. 6. per totum:* and the Epistle to it, by Mr. *Th: Goodwin*, and Mr. *Nye*, Witnesse also the *Apologet. Narrat: p. 21. That it is a most abhorrid Maxime, that any Religion hath ever made profession of, and therefore of all other the most contradictory, and dishonourable unto that of Christianity, that a single and particular society of men, professing the name of Christ, and pretending to be endowed with a power from Christ to judge them that are of the same body and Society with themselves, should further arrogate unto themselves an exemption from giving Account, or being Censurable by any other, either Christian Magistrate above them, or neighbour Churches about them.* And whosoever shall peruse the severall Uses of *Synods* mentioned by Mr. *Cotton* in his *Keyes of the Kingdome of Heaven*, and published by two of those Brethren the Apologists; cannot doubt, but that in their Opinions, Synods may be very helpfull to Elderships: And when both by Mr. *Cotton*, and by the Dissenting Brethren, Synods are owned and asserted to be *an Ordinance of God*, I know no reason why you should not judge them of *as pure Divine Right* as the other. For though they do not beleeve, that *a Synod may excommunicate*, yet they never make question, but that a *Synod is an holy Ordinance of God.* Nor do I well understand your meaning in those words; that the Synod *is not of as pure Divine Right* as the Eldership: You cannot assert it as *your own Judgement*, for, I beleeve, you do not hold either of them to be of Divine Right: Nor can you mean it of the *Assemblies Judgement*, for they affirm, that both are of Divine Right. And therefore, what will become of of this Inference I cannot tell.

You proceed to repeat their next words, "*And the Magi-*
"*strate, to whom we professe the Church to be accountable for their*
"*proceedings in all their Elderships, and Church Assemblies, and*
"*punishable by him with Civill Censures for their miscarriages, may*

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"be so abundantly satisfied of the righteousnesse and equity thereof; "as we still hope God will inspire the Honourable Houses with such "wisdome and zeal, as by their Authority to strengthen the hands of "his Officers in their duties herein, and even to command them to "act zealously and faithfully therein. And your Petitioners, &c. Hence you inferre, *That the Magistrate is neither over the Presbytery, for Commissioners are contrary to the word, nor under the Presbytery, for the Presbytery is accountable to him: and where to place him by this Petition you cannot tell.* But surely Sir, you are not so ignorant in this matter, as you would seeme to make your selfe. You know that both the *Presbyterian*, and the *Congregationall* Principles deny the Magistrate to be a *Church Officer*, or to have Power to administer the *Word*, or *Sacraments*, or *Church-Censures*, and for this reason cannot approve of the Commissioners; But do not deny him, as a *Civill Officer*, a power to exercise *Civill Censures*, upon *Ecclesiasticall Persons* as well as others, even for their miscarriages in their *Ecclesiasticall Imployments*: And this is that the Petition asserts. Your self, it's true, deny both, and allow the Magistrate *in Gospell Truths, and things of Spirituall Cognizance*, no power at all, either of Ecclesiasticall or Civill Censure: but those you oppose, though they cannot grant to the Magistrate the exercise of the *Keys*, yet they never denyed him the power of the *Sword*.

But you urge again, *p.21* (for you had said it at least five or six times in substance before) that they are but *pretended Officers, Ministers Elders*, that it is not *a Church in Gospel-Order*, that they *must prove the truth both of their very Church, Ministry, and Eldership*, that *the Magistrate may more lawfully rule then any other pretended Officer, Minister, or Elder*, that *they cannot exclude the Civill Power from governing with them according to the unsound Constitution of their Churches, &c.* It seems then, that if their Churches were soundly constituted, you allow an excluding of the Civill Power. 2. I aske whether you think, that the Magistrates exercising Church Censures, do make the Church to be of a more sound Constitution? and, if so, I aske by what Scripture you prove, that this is necessary to their sound Constitution. 3. Your opinion is (if you remember what you have said

said formerly) that, be the Constitution sound or unsound, the Magistrate is not to meddle at all with matters of *Spiritu-all cognizance*, with *particulars of Truth and Heresie*, with *Baptisme*, *Church Order*, *&c.* as before is shewed. 4. They do not deny but that *the Magistrate may rule amongst them*, they do not *exclude the Civill power from governing*, nay, they positively affirme it in this Petition; onely they say, he should do it by *Civill Censures*, not by *Church Censures*; but your selfe (as you may remember) deny both the one and the other. 5. If you had said, that because the Constitution of the Church is unsound, therefore there should be no administring of the word, the Sacraments or Church-Censures at all, you had said something, and spoken like your selfe; but how doth it appeare that the Magistrate must do it? That the Magistrate may punish with civill Censures is very true; but that he may do be their Constitution sound or unsound; but how comes it to passe that he hath thereby a power of *Church Censure* more then he had before? Hath Christ hath said that the Keys shall be used in a sound Church by the Ministers and Eldership, but in an unsound Church by the Magistrate? that the word or Sacraments shall be administred in a sound Church by the Ministers, in an unsound Church by the Magistrate? That in a sound Church the Church Officers shall excommunicate, but in an unsound Church the Magistrate shall do it? If he have said it, pray tell us the place, that we may know where, he hath said it. But, doubtlesse the Parliament of *England* doth not proceed upon this Principle, That because the Churches of *England* are no true Churches, and the Ministry of *England* no true Ministry, therefore they may not be trusted with Church Censures: And therefore if you have no other ground to goe upon, you do not plead their cause, nor will they own that Principle under what disguise soever. And for the thing it selfe, whether they be true Churches or no; you must bring a better Argument to overthrow them, then what at present you insist upon (*That they have not an infallible Spirit*) unlesse you mean at once to deny all Churches, Ministers, Ordinances, that either are, or have been in the world since the Apostles time. And if that be your meaning, you may do well

to speak it out, that the world may know what you are.

What you insinuate in your Epistle, As if the Assembly had intrenched upon the Priviledges of the Parliament, or at least gone beyond their owne bounds; I have nothing to say to. I am no Judge of the Assemblies Bounds, or the Parliaments Priviledges: neither do I undertake to defend it against the *Parliament*, but against Mr. *Saltmarsh*; and that I think is sufficiently done. But what you complaine of afterwards, that *since Truth hath had its lot in the world to live upon Voyces in Assemblies, and Synods, where that is only Truth which is voted so; and not in its own glory and evidence, where that is only Truth that is so; the Mystery of Iniquity hath been more advanced then the Mystery of Godlinesse*; is no complaint of the Assemblies Exorbitancy, but of the being of Assemblies: and (by consequence) against the being of Senates or civill Judicatures: For I shall not wonder to see the same pen say as much of the Parliament, (for there will be the same reason for both) especially if they shall do that which he would not have them *DARE* to do, that is, meddle with *Gospel Truths, particulars of Truth and Heresie, Baptisme, Church-Order, &c.* or such other things as he hath exempted not only from their *Ecclesiasticall*, but from their *Civill* Cognizance too For the Parliaments voting a thing to be Truth, will no more make it a truth, if it be not so in it self, then the Assemblies voting it so to be. And perhaps he may in time, (for he doth not reveale all his light at once) say as much of *Justice*, as he doth now of *Truth*: that *since* Justice *hath had its Lot in the world to live upon Voyces in Assemblies and* Senates, *where that is only* Equity *which is voted so; and not in its own glory and evidence, where that is only* Equity *which is so: the Mystery of* Iniquity *hath been advanced, &c.* For, that latent Principle (*because the major part of men are naughi*) will serve him in as good stead for the one as the other.

And thus I have done with that other part of your Book, in examining what you say against the Assemblies Petition. Of which Petition I must adde this for a close, that there is nothing that I can find in it, but is fully conformant to the Principles both of the Presbyterian, and the Congregationall way: and what you alledge against it, is equally destructive to both.

FINIS.