

23. 4. 25

John Christie —
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CHRIST ON HIS THRONE.

O R,

Christs Church-government briefly
laid downe; and how it ought to
bee set up in all Christian Con-
gregations.

Resolved in fundry Cases of Conscience.

I E R. 6. 16.

*Thus saith the Lord; Stand ye in the wayes, and see and
aske for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk there-
in, and ye shall finde rest for your soules.*

L V K E 19. 27.

*But these mine Enemies, which would not that I should
vaigue over them, bring them hither and slay them before me.*

Printed in the yeare 1640.



MODELL

OF THE
Government of the Church under
the Gospel, by Presbyters,

Proved out of the holy Scriptures, to be that one, onely
uniform Government of the universall visible Church, and
of all Nationall, Provinciall, Classicall and Congrega-
tionall Churches : which is according to the
will and appointment of Jesus Christ.

Which may serve to stay such as are doubting,
with hope of full satisfaction, and clear demonstra-
tion of this truth, shortly to be made by the
Reverend Assembly of Divines.



Composed by a Presbyterian Minister of the City of *London*,
and approved by divers of his learned Brethren,
and at their request Published.



L O N D O N,

Printed for *Tho. Underhill*, and are to be sold at his shop
at the signe of the Bible in Woodstreet. 1646.

MEMORIAL

Presented to the Senate of the United States
in the year 1862

By
JAMES H. HARRIS, Esq.
of the State of New York

IN RESPONSE TO A RESOLUTION
PASSED BY THE SENATE
MAY 15, 1861

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To the Honourable City of London,
and all the Inhabitants thereof, who sin-
cerely seek and desire a true reformation of the
Church, according to the Word of God.



*Ive me leave, most famous and renowned
City, and ye the Right Honourable Lord
Major, the Right Worshipfull Aldermen,
and religious Common-Councell and Com-
moners, to congratulate and rejoyce with you,*

*for that honour which the Lord hath laid on you in these daies
of great confusion. You, under God, have been the guard of
this present Parliament, by which so great things have been
done for the safety and defence of three Kingdoms. Your
free contributions of your wealth and substance, have been
the sinews of this warre, undertaken for the defence of our
Religion, Laws and Liberties. Few Counties in this
Kingdom have been able to defend themselves, much lesse to
help others, except those whom you have encouraged, and set
on work by your example, and to whom you have been a bul-
wark against the enemies, who by you have been terrifed
from invading them. All the associated Counties have
cause to blesse God for the vicinity and neighbour-hood of
London. And all the rest of the Kingdom may say,
If the Lord had not helped us by the Forces, Arms, and
supplies of men and money from London, we had been*

The Epistle Dedicatory.

utterly destroyed and laid waste. But the chief glory bestowed on you by God, is your courage for the truth, and true Christian Religion; your earnest study, and constant endeavour for promoting an happy Reformation of the Church in Religion, Doctrine, Worship, and Discipline, according to the Word of God; your zeal against Sectaries, Schismatics, Hereticks, and Blasphemers, who labour cunningly to corrupt your servants, to steal away the hearts of your wives and children; to pull many fair feathers out of your wings, and to draw Disciples after them, and your standing steadfast in the old paths, and walking in that good way, Jer. 6. 16. which the Lord Christ by his Apostles hath prescribed to the Vniuersall Church; In which all the pure primitive Churches of old, and all the best reformed Churches have walked from the daies of your Fathers, untill this day. God hath inabled you wonderfully by his grace, to resist the subtile temptations of the world and the Devil. I know when you were courted with offers of greatest honours and priuiledges, to withdraw you from your purpose and resolution, of standing for the common weal of State and Church, and of supporting and upholding of the props and pillars of this Land, when it trembled, and was ready to be dissolved.

I cannot forget that sad time, full of fears and dangers, when (the chief command of your City, being in the hand and power of Malignants, who had also a strong faction, by which they attempted to overthrow you) it was the opinion and profession of some of the most faithfull Patriots, and wise members of Parliament, that unlesse God did put into your hearts a resolution to stand up for them, they had small hope of saving either the Church and Kingdom from ruine, or our Religion, Laws, Liberties, and their

own lives from destruction; and in that juncture of time the Lord did put such a spirit of courage, fortitude and holy zeal into you, who were the main body of the City, that you stood up, and appeared openly for the worthy Patrons of your Religion, Laws and Liberties, whereby they were animated to proceed vigorously in their wonted course of justice, to the terrour and astonishment of all the enemies and disturbers of our peace. After this you have been strongly assaulted by spirituall wickednesses divers waies.

First, by cunning seducers, who usurping the name and outward shew of rare Saints, have stollen away the hearts of many, and with feigned sanctity and large promises of a pure platform and modell of Church-Discipline and perfect Reformation, according to Christs own institution, have drawn them into Schisme, and separation from their own Congregations. But you, by your wisdom have quickly smelled out their fraud, and vain boasting of great things, which they can never perform and bring to passe.

Secondly, you have been tried, (when Scriptures failed them, and favoured not their modell) with bold pretences of new lights, which you have scorned, as wise men are wont to scorn, and not vouchsafe to look after those ignes fatuos, wandring lights and night fires, by which fools, who follow them in the dark, are lead into dangerous pits, boggs, ditches, and downfalls.

Thirdly, they have represented unto you Presbyterian Government as a Bugbear, and cruell monster, worse then Popery and Prelacy, unto which if you submit, you and your children are made slaves forever, to the lust of proud, peevish, tyrannicall Priests; And although many credulous

The Epistle Dedicatory.

dulous fools, and unstable souls, are hereby terrified and skared out of their wits, and run wilde after severall dangerous sects, and know not where to rest: Yet you are no such strangers to the Gospel, nor so little acquainted with the Scriptures of the New Testament, as to be moved with such skarecrowes; but rather by such rabid railing against Government of the Church by Clāssicall Presbyteries, you have been moved and stirred up (after serious consideration, and consultation had with your godly Pastours, and Teachers, diligent searching of the Scriptures, and good assurance of understanding of divinetrueth gained to your selves) to be more earnest and importunate in promoting that Presbyterian Government, besides which there is no mention of any other in all the writing of the Apostles; nor any other acknowledged or received, in any well reformed Churches in all the Christian world.

The Apostolicall Church at Jerusalem, consisting of many thousands and ten thousands of beleevvers, and so many particular Congregations, was altogether governed by the Apostles and Presbyters, Assemblies, Synods and Presbyteries, as appears, Act. 11. 30. and 15. 6. and 21. 18. The Christian Church of the Gentiles gathered unto Christ in severall Nations, Countries and Cities by Paul and Barnabas, had every one their Presbyters, ordained to have rule over them in the Lord, Acts 14. 23.

The Church of Ephesus, that great City of Asia, had also divers Presbyters, whom the Hcly Ghost had made overseers to watch in common over it, Acts 20. 17, 28. And of them S. Paul speaks, 1 Tim. 5. 17. saying, Let the Elders that rule well, be counted worthy of double

The Epistle Dedicatory.

double honour. Also S. Paul left Titus in Crete, and appointed him to ordain Presbyters in every City, and such overseers as were fit to rule the Church, Tit. 1. 5. Peter and Iohn were Presbyters, and called themselves so, as they with others governed severall Churches, 1. Pet. 5. 1. John 2. 1. and John 3. 1. Wherefore, ô London, thou that hast chosen the best part, rejoyce in the Lord thy God, who hath made his glory to rise upon thee, and his light to shine upon thy grave Senatours, thy religious Common-Councell, and all thy true hearted Citizens; and hath led them into those waies which be in Christ, which Saint Paul taught every where, and in every Church, 1 Cor. 4. 17. For the encouraging of you, worthy Citizens, in your constancy, and for the confirming of them that are weak and wavering, I have framed out of the Scriptures this brief discourse, concerning that one uniform Church-Government, which Christ by his Apostles ordained, and appointed to be set up in the whole universall Church, and to be observed in all other Churches, members of the universall. Here you have the Heavenly patern shadowed out in a small compasse, of that Government, for the establishment whereof in this City and Kingdom, you have stood up and appeared openly at severall times. If the Lord be pleased to blesse you with courage for his truth, and with constancy and perseverance till you obtain your desire, which is the desire also of all Orthodox faithfull Ministers in the Land, then shall London be called The City of the Lord, the Zion of the holy one of Israel; And they who despise her and stand up against her, to hinder the work of God in her hands, shall bow down at the soles of her feet, and her enemies.

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enemies shall lick the dust, even lick up the dust of her feet, for they shall not be ashamed who wait for the Lord, Isa. 49. 23.

This is the prayer of your servant in

the work of the Lord, and humble

suppliant for your prosperity at

the throne of grace.

G. W.

A Modell of the Government of the
Church under the Gospel, by Presbyters, pro-
ved out of the holy Scriptures, to be that one,
onely uniform Government of the universall
visible Church, and of all Nationall, Pro-
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tionall Churches : which is ac-
cording to the will and ap-
pointment of Jesus
Christ.



He holy Scriptures of the New Testament do speak most plainly of a Church Government, and of ruling and rulers, which the Lord Jesus Christ hath appointed to be in his Church visible on earth in the times under the Gospel : the patern and platform of this Government, together with a commission to govern the universall Church in all Nations according to it, he gave to his Apostles by word of mouth in the time of his life (as the Gospel in divers passages doth testifie) and after, his passion, when he shewed himself alive unto them, and was seen of them fourty daies, speaking the things pertaining to the Kingdom of God, *Act. 1. 3.* And that the Apostles by word and writing, and by their example and practice, might infallibly instruct all Churches by them, gathered unto him in all Nations, and might deliver unto them, so as they had received from the mouth of him the supream Lord, that one uniform Government: He filled them with extraordinary gifts, and sent unto them the holy Ghost, the Comforter, to lead them into all truth, *Joh. 16. 13.* to teach them all things, and to bring all things to their remembrance, whatsoever he had said unto them, *Joh. 14. 26.* And that Government, which they partly by word and writing,

and partly by their example and practice, did prescribe uniformly in all Churches, is of divine institution : and to it all Orthodox reformed Churches in all the Christian world at this day, have submitted themselves, acknowledging it to be the onely Government Ecclesiasticall which is *jure divino*, and by the will and appointment of Jesus Christ. And yet in this unstable and wavering age and generation, and in this unsettled state, and land full of confusion ; as the giddy-headed multitude, which are like clouds without water, carried about with every winde of Doctrine, and dream of new lights beginning to appear, do call into question the saving doctrines of æternall truth, and the chief Articles of the Christian faith, firmly beleaved, constantly professed, and never doubted of by any true Christians : So also many of the wisest Statesmen, who are esteemed the pillars of the Kingdom, and the stay of the State, do doubt and make question, whether there be any Church Government *jure Divino*, and by the will and appointment of Jesus Christ ? What that Government is ? Who are the Governours ? And by what rules and laws they ought to govern ? And how farre, and in what things, matters and causes, power is given to them by Christ to rule and govern in the Church ? For the answering of all such questions, and removing of all such doubts and scruples, I will endeavour, out of love to the truth, and zeal to the honour of Christ, and the advancement of his Kingly power in his Church, to lay down some sure grounds of Doctrine, gathered out of holy Scripture, and proved by clear testimonies of Gods spirit, speaking in the infallible written word.

And first, I take this as an undeniable principle, That whatsoever Christ hath with his own mouth commanded, or by his spirit moved his Apostles to teach by writing and word, or by example and practice, concerning the well ordering and Government of his Church in any place, which is as usefull in all places, and the reason of it stands firm in all ages, and it may be practised profitably by ordinary Pastours : Also whatsoever is necessarily presupposed, or included in any thing, which Christ in the Gospel commandeth, or of necessity must follow thereupon, is *jure divino*, and by the will and appointment of Jesus Christ.

Secondly,

Secondly, because the main question which comes to be answered, upon which all the rest do depend, is, Whether there be any proper and particular Church-Government distinct from Civill Government: The answer is easy, and such as may fully satisfie any reasonable Christian. For first, in every Nation, Kingdom, and state wherein Christian Religion is publicly and generally professed, all the people are to be considered two waies. First, as men and members of a civill society or Common Wealth. Secondly, as Christian men and members of the Church, the mysticall body of Christ. As they are members of the Common-wealth, they are to be ruled by the laws of men which are there in force, and do binde them to obedience in temporall things to their Kings and Civill Magistrates, and to good order and behaviour among themselves, for the peace and safety of humane society, and of the civill State. And this Government may be among them who are *Turks*, Heathens and not Christians, for it is common to all men of all Nations, States and Kingdoms. But as they are Christians and members of the Church, Christs mysticall body, so they are to be governed by the law of Christ, which bindes them to the obedience of him in all things, which concern their spirituall estate, heavenly life, and blessednes, and to holy communion among themselves in spirituall things. These two States and Governments are so distinct and different, that either of them may stand alone without the other. There are and have been divers earthly Kingdoms well ordered, and wisely governed in all outward temporall things, in which Christ hath had no Church, neither was Christianity known or professed. And again, Christ hath had a Church well governed, and flourishing in Religion, grace, and godlines, when there was no civill Government, King, or Civill Magistrate to help or uphold it, but all set against it, to persecute, vex, and make havock of it; as it was in the daies of Christ and of his Apostles, and in divers ages after: And yet Christ was the King, and the Church was his Kingdom in which he ruled, and is called the Kingdom of God, *Matth. 12. 28.* and that Kingdom of heaven, *Matth. 3. 2. & 4. 14.* Now a Kingdom is not an Anarchy, that is, a confused multitude without Government; but a Monarchy, in which there is one King

who is supream Governour. And in the Church, which is Gods holy hill, and spirituall *Zion*, Christ alone is the King, *Psal.* 2. 6. & *Zeck.* 9. 9. *Joh.* 12. 15. and the head, and sole ruler, *Mat.* 2. 6. *Ephes.* 1. 22. and the Government is on his shoulder, *Isa.* 9. 6. He also alone is the Lord, and Law-giver, *Isa.* 33. 22. *Iam.* 4. 12. and his Word is the law and rule of Government, *Isa.* 2. 3. yea the law, and rule by which the spirit ruleth, *Rom.* 8. 2. and to which he is limited in moving and working, *Ioh.* 16. 13.

3. But that Church-Government may be more clearly and distinctly understood: we are further to distinguish between the supreme power of Government, which is onely in the hand of Christ; and the delegated power, which he hath given to his Ministers, to exercise under him a subordinate and ministeriall Government.

The supreme Government which is in the hand of Christ is Monarchicall: For to him alone all power is given in heaven and in earth, *Math.* 28. 18. and he is set at Gods right hand, far above all principalitie, and power, and might and dominion, and every name that is named both in this world, and in that which is to come. And God hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be head over all things to the Church which is his body, *Ephes.* 1. 21. 22. And this power of Government is proper to him, and he reserves it to himself. But the subordinate and Ministeriall power of Government, he gave to his Apostles and to their Successours, *Mark.* 16. 15. *Joh.* 20. 21. where he said, As my father hath sent me, so send I you. Go into all the world, and preach the Gospell to every Creature. And promised to be with them alwayes to the end of the world, *Math.* 28. 20. And lest any should thinke that this rule and Government of the Church, was limited to the Apostles, and was to dye, and and to expire with them: The Scriptures do fully prove, and plainly demonstrate, that it was also by Gods appointment imparted to others in the Apostles dayes, as *1 Cor.* 12. 28. where the Apostle writes, that God hath set in his Church, not onely Apostles, Prophets and others of extraordinary gifts; but also teachers, helps, and Governments. And *Rom.* 12. 8. The Church is compared to a naturall body, and the severall members thereof, having gifts differing according to the grace that

is given them, are commanded to exercise their gifts, and to wait on their severall offices, as Prophets on prophesying; Ministers on ministering; Teachers on teaching, and he that ruleth on ruling with diligence. And *1 Thess. 5. 12.* the brethren are intreated to know them that labour among them and are over them in the Lord, and admonish them, and to esteem them very highly in love for their works sake: and *1 Tim. 5. 17.* Let the Elders that rule well (saith the Apostle) be counted worthy of double honour, especially they that labour in the word and doctrine: and *Heb. 13. 7.* He inioynes the brethren to remember them that have the rule over them: and vers. 17. to obey them and submit themselves, because they watch for their soules, as they that must give account: and vers. 24. he saith, Salute them that have the rule over you. All which Scriptures, and many others, wherein severall acts of Government are commanded to be done by Pastours and overseers of the Church, other acts of discipline commended, when they were done, and the neglect of them blamed, do prove a Ministeriall Government in the hand of Church rulers *jure divino*, and by the appointment of Christ.

4. The subordinate and Ministeriall Government which Christ hath set up in his Church, is not Monarchical, as that supreme Government is which he reserves to himself; Neither is it Civil, left to Civil Magistrates, who judge and rule over men in Civil states, and societies, and about temporal and worldly affaires of this life, such judging and dividing our Saviour disclaymed, *Luke. 12. 14.* saying, Who made me a judge or a divider over you? when a man requested him to speak to his brother to divide the inheritance with him. And he told *Pilat*, that his kingdom was not of this world. *John. 18. 36.* They who rule under him in his Church must meddle onely with spiritual things, which concerne mens spiritual estates, and eternal life and the salvation of their soules. And they are all equal in title, honour and office, even Elders, stewards and dispensers of holy things. There is no one cheif Lord above the rest in the whole Church on earth, or in any part thereof, whether National, Provinciaall or Classicall Church. But of the Apostles who were the cheif Pastours and rulers in his Church, he said, Whosoever will be great

among you, let him be your minister. *Math.* 20. 26. and *Luk.* 22. 26. And as *Peter* received this lesson from his Lord, so he gave charge to all Presbyters of the Church, fellows in the Presbytery with himself, that they must take the oversight of the flock, and not be as Lords over Gods inheritance, but as ensamples to the flock, 1 *Pet.* 5. 3. The authority and title of Lords our Saviour will have left to the Kings and Rulers of states and Kingdoms on earth, *Luk.* 22. 25.

5. The Government of the Church which is Ecclesiasticall, our Saviour gave in common to all his Apostles, who were the Pastours of the Church universall, and the first teachers of all Nations, who had a charge and Commission from Christ to gather and build up Churches in all the world, and to teach and instruct all people to observe all things whatsoever he had commanded them, as we see in the Scriptures before named, *Math.* 28. 19. 20. *Mark.* 16. 15. *John.* 20. 23. and in other places, where the exercise of the power of the Keyes of the kingdom of heaven, which was given to *Peter* as the mouth of the rest, *Math.* 16. 19. is also given in common to them all, as they were the Church representative, and stood in the place of all Pastours and Teachers to the end of the world. In so much as if any two or three of them were gathered together in his Name, he promised to be in the midst of them, *Mat.* 18. 17. 18. 20. and *Joh.* 20. 23. And as the Lord Christ gave this power to the Apostles; so they exercised it sometimes in common all together in the generall Assembly of the Disciples, Brethren and Elders, as *Act.* 1. 15. in the election of an Apostle in the place of *Indas*, and *Act.* 6. 2. about the election, and Ordination of the seven Deacons, and *Act.* 15. 6. about the deciding of a great controversy concerning Circumcision and other legall rites not to be imposed on the believing Gentiles. And sometimes two or three of them, as *Peter* and *John* when they were sent to *Samaria* to confirme the Church there, *Act.* 8. 14. And *Barnabas* and others who were sent to confirme the first Church called Christian at *Antioch*, *Act.* 11. 22. 23. And *Paul*, and *Barnabas* and *Silas* in ordaining Elders in every Church by them converted to Christ, *Act.* 14. 23. But yet they altogether, and everie one or two by themselves exercised, and commended to the Evangelists

gellists and Presbyters by them ordained, the same uniforme government, and the same way in Christ both for Doctrine and Discipline. So the great Apostle of the Gentiles plainly testifieth, *1 Cor. 4 17.* writing thus, *for this cause have I sent to you Timotheus, who is my beloved sonne and faithfull in the Lord, who shall bring you into remembrance of my waies which be in Christ, as I teach every where in every Church,* and *1 Cor. 7. 17.* *So ordain I in all Churches.* And he who had the care of all the Churches (as he saith,) *2 Cor. 11. 28.* keeps them to the same custome, as is implied, *2 Cor. 11. 16.* where speaking of new fashions for which some are ready to contend, he saith, *If any man seem to be contentious, We have no such custome, nor the Churches of God.*

6. Now this ministeriall uniforme government settled by Christ and his Apostles in all Churches, Nationall, and Provinciall, and Classicall in every Circuit, as it was in the hands of the Pastours, Presbyters and overseers, so it was Aristocraticall. But as the whole Church and multitude of believers had liberty in elections to nominate such as they found most fit to be overseers and officers, and orderly to give their approbation of the Acts of the Elderships, so it is in some part Democraticall. As we see in the election of the seven Deacons, *Act. 6.* The twelve Apostles appointed that seven men of honest report, and full of the holy Ghost should be ordained. The multitude chose them, and set them before the Apostles, who ordained them with prayer and imposition of hands. So also *Act. 15.* The Apostles and Elders came together, to consider of a matter, and to decide a Controversie brought unto them from the Church of Antioch, *vers. 6.* Peter and James debated the business, and gave the sentence, together with the Elders, and all the brethren, even the whole Church approved the sentence given by James, and thereupon a decree was framed in the name of them all, *vers. 23.* And in the ordaining of Presbyters in every Church, *Act. 14. 23.* As the Apostles Paul, and Barnabas with Silas prayed and layd on their hands, so the people holding up their hands, approved the election and ordination. These examples, and these practices of Church government in Synods and greater Presbyteries performed by men who had received instructi-

ens from Christs owne mouth, and were inspired and moved there unto by the holy Ghost, and the reason of them still standing in force ; they do shew that such Synods and acts of Church-Government are according to the will and appointment of Christ and are usefull and necessary to the end of the world. And all Churches ought to conserme unto this speciall Government.

Ob. But some do object, that the Apostles were men of extraordinary gifts and calling, and had an infallible assistance of the holy Ghost, which did lead them into all truth, and could do in their Synods and Assemblies things, which ordinarie Pastours and teachers cannot do, they could say, It seemed good to the holy Ghost and to us, and could take upon them the care and oversight of all Churches. But now it is well if one or two of the wisest Ministers can teach or rule one particular Congregation; It is too much for them to meddle with the common Government of many particular Churches. And therefore the examples of the Apostolicall Churches do not binde the Churches of these times.

Ans. To this I answer, First, that it was necessary, that the Apostles and Evangelists should be extraordinarily called, inspired and assisted by the holy Ghost, that he might lead them into all truth, and call to their remembrance all things whatsoever Christ had taught them, and commanded them to be observed in all Churches to the end of the world; otherwise they could not have been the infallible penmen of the Scriptures, which are the certain rule both of Doctrine, and Discipline, Neither could their example and practice have been an heavenly paterne of Divine Authority, to all succeeding ages. But after the publishing of the Gospell by them to all the world, and their writing of the holy Scriptures, and leaving them recorded for a sure rule of teaching and ruling to all Christian Churches, there is no more need of any such extraordinary calling and gifts in their Successors, but ordinarie Pastours, and Teachers, by the ordinary light and direction of the holy Ghost, who hath made them Overseers over the Church, may be as able to exercise Discipline and censures, as to preach and propound sound and saving Doctrine in the Church, out of the holy Scri-
ptures

ptures of the Apostles, which are as plain a rule, and as certain a direction for ruling as they are for preaching. And to confirm us in this assurance, we have the promise of Christ, that he will be with his Ministers in all ages to the end of the world, as he was with his Apostles, not only in teaching and Baptizing people, but also making them observers of all things whatsoever he had commanded, *Matth. 28. 20.*

Secondly, This objection is of no more force against the imitation of the Apostles in their practice, and acts of Church Government in Synods, and greater-Presbyteries: then it is against preaching their doctrine contained in their writings. For they were men of extraordinary calling and gifts, in teaching as well as in ruling. And if that be a good reason against ruling after their example: It is so also against preaching of the same word and doctrine which they wrote and preached.

Thirdly, Although the Pastours and Teachers which succeed the Apostles, are unable to work miracles, and to write infallible Scriptures, and give unchangeable rules to all Churches, as the Apostles did, because they have not such extraordinary gifts and calling: Yet in things which are in the power of ordinary Presbyters and Pastours, as meeting many together in Synods and Presbyteriall Assemblies, to decide and determine controversies, according to the Scriptures, it is a thing as easy and ordinary for them wherein to imitate them: as for many Lords and Commons to meet in a Parliament, to remove grievances in the Common-wealth. And certainly so farre as God makes us able, we are bound to follow their practice and examples.

Fourthly, The more extraordinary gifts that the Apostles had, the lesse need they had to meet in Synods and Assemblies, either all, or divers of them together. *Paul* and *Barnabas* had an infallible spirit, and did dispute against the errour at *Antioch*, and condemned it by as infallible a sentence, as the Apostles did at *Jerusalem*. And yet for a paterne to all succeeding Churches, and to make the judgement and determination of more authority in all Churches of beleiving Jews and Gentiles, and to shew the unity of spirit and uniformity of doctrine and discipline among them all, an appeal was made to a generall

Synod, of all the Apostles and Elders at *Jerusalem*. And therefore (the necessary use and reason of such Synods and Classicall Presbyteries, being still the same in all ages; And ordinary Ministers of Christ having more need of common help and assistance, because many eies see more then one, and many heads consulting together, will better search out the truth and true sense of Scripture in doubtfull matters, and of great concernment) The objection doth make more for the confirmation of the doctrine, to wit, that the practice and examples of the Apostles in the manner of governing the Church, is of divine authority, and ought to be esteemed the will and appointment of Christ.

7. Now out of these points plainly proved by cleer texts of holy Scripture ; We may easily raise a perfect definition or description of that Government partly Ecclesiasticall, which Christ as King of his Church, hath set up therein, namely this, That it is the exercise of power and authority in matters spirituall, which concern the salvation of souls ; given by Christ to the Pastours and Elders of his Church, for the gathering, building up, and well ordering of it, and for the perfecting of the Saints, the members thereof. For the confirmation of this definition in every part and member of it, we have expresse words of holy Scripture.

First, the Commission which Christ the supream Lord gave to his Apostles, and to their successors in all ages to the end of the world, was not only by preaching the Gospel to make men Disciples, but also to open the kingdom of Heaven, and by Baptisme to admit beleivers and Disciples into it, and to teach them to observe all things, whatsoever he had commanded them, *Matth. 28. 19, 20*. But to shue out unbelievers as being under damnation, and in the kingdom of Satan, *Mark. 16. 16*. And that by this Commission not only power and authority was given them to propound the word by way of doctrine ; but also to use the rod of discipline, and to correct and censure all such as were offenders, untractable and puffed up : the Apostle *Paul* sheweth, *1 Cor. 4. 20, 21*. Where he saith, that when he cometh to *Corinth* he will know, not the speech of them that are puffed up, but the power, *For the kingdom of God is not in word, but*

in power, even to use the rod of correction, and sharp censure, as the next words shew, *viz.* What will you? Shall I come to you with a rod? or in love, and in the spirit of meeknes? And what this rod is, the next chapter immediatly declares; in which he gives them a charge, In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, to excommunicate in their solemne Assembly the incestuous person. And 2 *Cor.* 10. 8. and Chap. 13. 10. He doth plainly affirm, that to him and his fellow-Ministers, the Lord hath given power and authority even to use sharpnesse.

Secondly, That this power is not carnall, nor exercised about worldly matters: but is spirituall and mighty through God, exercised in pulling down the strong holds of sin and Satan, casting down imaginations, and every high thing which exalteth it self against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought, to the obedience of Christ; The Apostle affirms, 2 *Cor.* 10. 4, 5.

Thirdly, This power and authority is given to be exercised for edification, not for destruction, as the Apostle teacheth, 2 *Cor.* 10. 8. & 13. 10. *even for the perfecting of the Saints, and for the edifying of the body of Christ*, Ephes. 4. 12.

Fourthly, The exercise of this power and authority is uniform, and the waies of it the same in all Churches: No supreme Magistrate hath power to alter it, it is not to be usurped, nor contended for by any to whom God hath not given abilities, nor called thereunto. It belongs to the Pastours and Teachers who have a calling to expound publicly the Word and law of Christ, and to their assisting Elders who are fit to judge accordingly. For such the Apostles appointed to be their successors; and not civill Magistrates which were not known in the Church, till many years after the days of the Apostles. And to the Apostles and their successors the Lord Christ gave this power to rule his Church, and it continued in their hands in all the Apostolicall Churches: The same waies which the great Apostle of the Gentiles observed himself, he taught in every Church, every where, 1 *Cor.* 4. 17. and to be ordained in all Churches, 1 *Cor.* 7. 17. And when any swerved from the institution of Christ in the use of the ordinances, and contended for forms and fashions, differing from the common rule and custom; The Apostle reprov'd

and blamed them, as appears, 1 *Cor.* 11. 16, 17. The Pastours, Elders, and Teachers who labour in the Word and Doctrine, and watch for the souls of the people, and by the holy Ghost are made overseers over the flock, are the Governours, and rule over them in the Lord, and they ought to submit themselves to be ruled and guided by them, as being the stewards of Gods house, his Church, and dispensers of the mysteries of Christ, as these places following do shew; *Act.* 20. 28. *Take heed to your selves, and to all the flock over the which the holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the Church of God.* And 1 *Cor.* 4. 1. *Let a man so account of us, as of the Ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God.* And 1 *Thes.* 5. 12. *We beseech you, brethren, to know them that labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you: And to esteem them very highly in love for their works sake.* And 1 *Tim.* 5. 17. *Let the Elders that rule well, be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine.* And *Heb.* 13. 7. *Remember them who have the rule over you, who have spoken to you the Word of God: and vers. 17. Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit your selves, for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account.* These and divers other Scriptures do clearly shew what that Government is, which Christ hath appointed in his Church.

8. The next part to be considered is, to whom Christ Jesus first committed this Government, and where he first settled it, and in what Church, from whence it is derived, propagated and communicated to all other Churches which shall be in all ages. And in this the Gospell is very clear. For it tells us, that he first and immediately committed it to his Apostles as they were to teach all Nations, and to be the Pastours of the universall visible Church. In their hands and in that Church he first settled it, for the use of all the members thereof, even all Nationall, Provinciall, Classicall and particular Churches, gathered by the Gospell preached in every Nation, Countrey, State, City, and Circuit. That the Lord Christ, having all power in Heaven, and earth given unto him, did give Authority to the Apostles to preach the Gospell to all Nations, to baptize them, and to teach them to observe all things, whatsoever he had commanded

commanded them, I have before shewed out of the Gospell, *Math.* 28.19.20. That he gave to them the keyes of the Kingdom of Heaven, and power to open and shut, to binde and lose, to remit and retaine sins, it is manifest, *Math.* 16.19. Where he said to *Peter*, (when he answered in the name, and as the mouth of all the rest, Thou art Christ the Son of the living God.) *I will give to thee the keyes of the Kingdome of Heaven, and whatsoever thou bindest on earth, shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt lose on earth shall be loosed in heaven:* and *Math.* 18.18. where he gave the same power to them all againe: and *John.* 20.23. *Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted to them, and whosoever sins ye retaine, they are retained.* And that they ordained Presbyters, Bishops, Pastours and Teachers in the name of Christ, and by the Authority which he gave them, it appeares, *Act.* 14.23. where it is written that *Paul* and *Barnabas* ordained Presbyters in every Church of the converted Gentiles: and *Act.* 20.28. where *Paul* admonisheth the Presbyters whom he had ordained in the Church of *Ephesus*, to take heed to the flock over which the holy Ghost had made them Bishops, that is overseers. And they appointed the same order and forme of Government in all Nationall and Provinciaall Churches, and in every Classis and particular Congregation, as in *Iudea* and *Ierusalem*, so in *Corinth*, *Ephesus*, *Asia*, *Galatia*, *Macedonia*, *Creet* and the rest, as divers Scriptures, (besides those before named, *1 Cor.* 4.17. and *2 Cor.* 10.8. and 13.10.) do abundantly testifie, as *Ephes.* 4.12. where Pastours and Teachers, as well as Apostles, are said to be given by Christ, for the perfecting of the Saints, for the worke of the Ministry, and for the edifying of the body of Christ: and *1 Thess.* 5.12. where he mentioneth some who laboured among them, and were over them in the Lord, and *Act.* 15.6. where we read of a generall assemblie of Apostles and Presbyters gathered to consider a great matter and to decide a controverfie, and send out their decree to all Churches, and *1 Tim.* 3.1.2. &c. where the office of a Bishop, that is a Pastour or overseer, is commended for a good worke, and the qualification and ordination of such after triall and examination is described, as also of Deacons, and *1 Tim.* 5.17. where mention is made of ruling

by Elders, and by them who labour in the Word and Doctrine: and vers. 22. of ordaining by laying on of hands : and also Chap. 4. 14. And *Tit.* 1. 5. and *1 Pet.* 5. 1. 2. and *James* 5. 14. where Elders of the Church and their worke and behaviour is prescribed. In all these places we have Church Government set forth in Presbyteries, and in the hands of Presbyters, and Presbyteriall Bishops, Pastours and Teachers lawfully called, and upon due triall ordained by imposition of hands, as being that Government appointed by Christ, and observed in all Churches. But of no other forme of Government do we read in any writings of the Apostles and Evangelists in the New Testament. For as there is but one God and Father of all, and one Lord Jesus Christ, and one faith, one Baptisme and one whole universall Church, which is but one body, moved and informed by one Spirit, *1 Cor.* 8. 5. and *Ephes.* 4. 4 5. So every member of this one body in every Nation, City and Countrey, and every Congregation of Christians, whether Jewes or Gentiles, is informed, moved and guided by that one spirit, as the Apostle testifieth, *Rom.* 12. 5. and *1 Cor.* 12. 12. 13. as Pastours and Teachers: so also governments are set in the Church by God, and the spirit distributeth gifts to them as he himselfe will, *1 Cor.* 12. 11. and 28. And there is but one law to all, which is the word of God, which is called the law of Christ, *Gal.* 6. 2. and the law of the spirit of life, *Rom.* 8. 2. because the spirit speakes to none, neither doth move or guide any Christian but by this word and law of Christ, *John.* 16. 13. 14. (as was before shewed) What Church soever doth swerve or decline in any materiall or substantiall point of Doctrine or Discipline from that one law, and rule of Christ, which is the heavenly paterne shewed to us in the Scriptures, as the Paterne of the Tabernacle was shewed to Moses in the mount, *Exod.* 25. 40. That Church comes so much short of Apostolicall perfection, and hath in it too much mixture of humane policy and infirmity. Whatsoever new light, proud, vaine, foolish and fanaticall persons may pretend: all sound and stable Christians both ought, and will look to the law, and to the testimony of Christ; and if any speake not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them, *Isa.* 8. 30. In respect of this our uniforme Government by one law the word

word of Christ, and one spirit, the soule and life of the whole visible Church, it is a body uniforme, *homogeneall and similar*. And as in all naturall uniforme bodies, every part hath the same name with the whole, as every particular part of aire is called aire, and every river, fountaine and drop of water is, water and is so called, as well as the whole element : Even so every Nationall, Provinciall, Classicall and particular congregation in every Nation, City, and circuit, is a Church and is so called, as the Church of *Judea*, *Act. 11.22.26.* the Church of *Antioch*, *Act. 13.1.* the Church of *Corinth*, *1 Cor. 1.2.* and of *Thessalonica*, *1 Thess. 1.1.* and the Churches of *Galatia*, *Gal. 1.2.* yea and the particular Congregation in the house of *Aquila*, and *Priscilla*, *Rom. 16.15.* and *1 Cor. 16.19.* and in the house of *Nymphas*, *Coloss. 4.15.* and of *Philemon*, vers. 2. are every one called the Church, as well as the universall body is called the Church, *Math. 16.18. Ephes. 1.22. Coloss. 1.24.* and *1 Tim. 3.15.*

9. The principall parts of this Government of Christ which allwayes ought to go together, and are inseparable in every well ordered and constituted Church, are two. First, Doctrine, which the Apostle calls *διδασκαλίαν*. Secondly, Discipline, which he calls *ἐλεγχον, ἐπαρεσβωσιν και παιδείαν*. *2 Tim. 3.16.* which our Saviour in allusion to other Scriptures, calls *the keyes of the Kingdome of heaven*, *Math. 16.19.* For as keyes do open and shut the doore of an house : so do both Doctrine, and Discipline open and shut the Kingdome of heaven, Christ his true Church. They open it to believers, and to humble and penitent persons ; and shut it against unbelievers, and scandalous obstinat sinners, who continue in their impenitency after conviction. And for this cause our Saviour calls Doctrine and Teaching by expounding that word and law aright, *the key of knowledge*, *Math. 23.13.* and Discipline he calls *the key of David*, *Revel. 3.7.* alluding to the words of the prophet *Isa. 22.22.* where the Lord saith, *that he will lay the key of the house of David upon the shoulder of Eliakim, so he shall open, and none shall shut, and he shall shut, and none shall open*, that is, I will commit the Government into his hands (as the words before shew) to rule the house of *Juda* as a Father. The preachers of the word by convincing Doctrine do wound the wicked, and are said to

root out, to pull, and throw down, and to destroy, Jer. 1. 10. Yea and to torment the world, to smite the earth with plagues, and to shut heaven, Revel. 11. 6, 10. And by the converting word of the Gospel, and the ministry of reconciliation, to heal the broken in heart, to open the prisons, and to set captives at liberty, Isa. 61. 1. And to build and to plant, Jer. 1. 10. And to open the right way into the sheepfold, Joh. 10. 16. The key of discipline also doth by censures, which are according to the infallible Word of God, shut out ignorant and scandalous persons from Communion with the children of the Kingdom, purgeth out the old leaven, and so bindeth the obstinate, that they are bound in heaven, Math. 18. 18 & 1 Cor. 5. 7, 13. But by declaring in the name and word of Christ absolution and remission of sins to persons penitent, it opens the door of the Kingdom, and receives into Christs sheepfold such as are brought back from going astray, and loseth such as are bound, 2 Cor. 2. 10. The exercise of the power of these two keys, consists in divers publike acts done with authority, by commission from Christ. First, the main act of doctrine is preaching the Word, as the mouth of God to the people, and applying it fitly to all sorts of persons, instructing the ignorant, discovering to them the corruption of their nature by which they are Children of wrath, Eph. 2. 1, 2, 3, and so humbling them in their own eyes, driving them out of themselves, drawing them to Christ by the promises of the Gospel, wooing them, and as Ambassadors for Christ, praying them in Christs stead to be reconciled unto God, 2 Cor. 5. 20. and espousing them to Christ, 2 Cor. 11. 2. And on the other side, reproving, rebuking, and admonishing with authority, as messengers of God, all sinners and transgressours, 2 Tim. 4. 2. & Tit. 1. 13. Threatning and denouncing judgements, hell, and damnation against all that are hard hearted and impenitent, as the Apostles did, Act. 8. 23. and 13. 10. Rom. 2. 1, 2, 5. 1 Cor. 6. 9. Heb. 20. 26, 29. Jam. 5. 1. 2 Pet. 2. 13. Jude vers. 4, 11, 14, 15.

These acts of doctrine private Christians may perform mutually among themselves, and according to the measure of grace, which God hath distributed to every one, they are in brotherly duty, and in Christian zeal and charity, bound to perform them privately.

privately. But publike Ministers only, called of God, and sent to preach, can do them with power and authority, as Gods mouth, and Christs Ambassadors: and their word is to be received as the Word of God, *1 Thes. 2. 13.* and as a message from heaven, with fear, reverence, and trembling, *Isa. 66. 5.*

The acts of discipline which are to be performed by Gods Ministers also, not as preachers in the pulpit before all the Congregation, but as Presbyters in the Consistory, are divers.

First, receiving accusations before witnesses, *1 Tim. 5. 19.*

Secondly, publike admonition, and personall reproof, and rebuke of such as are convicted of offence and scandal, by two or three witnesses, *1 Tim. 5. 20. Tit. 3. 10.*

Thirdly, after admonition condemned and scorned, and the authority of the Eldership despised and slighted, these scorers are to be refused and rejected, *Tit. 3. 10.* which cannot be, if they be admitted to the holy Communion. The Apostle enjoins every faithfull Minister to withdraw himself from perverse persons of corrupt mindes, *1 Tim. 6. 5.* And he commands the brethren in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, that they withdraw themselves, from every brother that walketh disorderly, *2 Thes. 3. 6.* Certainly he is blinde, and hath the eye of his reason put out, who doth not in these forenamed places see and understand, that all scandalous, perverse and stubborn persons are by the Commandement of Christ, which is *ius divinum*, to be refused, and not admitted into holy Communion, which is *Excommunicatio minor*, that is, lesser excommunication.

The fourth act of discipline is, the censure of the greater Excommunication, which is the utmost censure of a Church member, even casting him out of Church communion for his obstinacy in his scandalous sins, and refusing to hear, and obey the Church. After this sentence given against any person, he is in our Saviours phrase to be esteemed as an heathen man, who is no member of the Church for the present, but shut out of Gods Kingdom, and in the Apostles phrase he is delivered to Satan, and taken captive by the Devil, and held in his snare, *2 Tim. 2. 26.*

This censure is according to the will, and by the appointment of Jesus Christ, *Matth. 18. 17.* Where he saith of him who will

not hear nor obey the Church. *Let him be to thee as an heathen and as a Publican.* The Apostle in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, commanded the Elders of the Church of *Corinth* by this censure, and with the power of the Lord Jesus Christ to proceed against the incestuous person, to put him away from among them, and to deliver him unto Satan *1 Cor. 5. 5, 13.* And he himself delivered unto Satan *Hymenæus* and *Alexander*, *1 Tim. 1. 20.* And these acts of discipline are not punishments of revenge, not execution of justice in a rigid sense; but Medicinall corrections of mercy, and fatherly chastisements laid on the person censured, not in hatred to hurt him, nor in rigour to satisfie the law: But in love, hope, desire, and godly zeal for a three-fold end and use.

First, For the mortification, humiliation, and repentance of the obstinate sinner, that he may be made sensible of his danger, and ashamed of his sin, and heartily sorrowfull for it, and full of contrition: this is intimated by the Apostle, where he saith, that delivering unto Satan, is for the destruction of the flesh, (that is fleshly corruption by mortification) that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus, *1 Cor. 5. 5. & 1 Tim. 1. 20.* he saith that he delivered unto Satan *Hymenæus* and *Alexander*, that they might learn not to blaspheme, and *2 Thes. 3. 14.*

Secondly, For the preserving of the body and the rest of the members from infection, for obstinate scandalous sinners will infect others: this the Apostle sheweth, *1 Cor. 5. 6, 7.* Saying, *Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? purge out therefore the old leaven.*

Thirdly, For vindicating the Church and Christian Religion from reproach and scandall, and all shew and appearance of countenancing and cherishing vile sin and wickednes, which will raise an ill report commonly, that Christian Religion is worle then Gentilisme, and tolerats sins, the names of which are loathed among civill heathen. This the Apostle implies, *1 Cor. 5. 1.* saying, *It is commonly reported, that there is fornication among you, & such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles.* And certainly the Jews who were, according to to their law, so strict in keeping from the Passeover, all such as had any uncleannes on them, might justly reproach Christians.

If they should admit scandalous sinners spiritually leprous and unclean to the Lords Supper, and into holy communion with them, and not cast them out.

There is besides those censures before named, another most dreadfull censure mentioned in Scripture, and called by the name of *Anathema Maranatha*, that is, the cursed untill the Lord cometh, *1 Cor. 16. 22*. This is a curse which the Church denounceth against desperate back-sliders, and Apostates, who after illumination, profession of love to Christ, and a taste of the good Word of God, and of the power of the world do come, do sin against the holy Ghost, and fall away into hatred and despight against the truth, of which the spirit hath convinced their consciences, into malignant persecution of all true godlines, and into an impossibility of being renewed by repentance, *Heb 6. 4*. This censure (to speak no more of it) is a sentence and judgement of the Church, declaring and pronouncing, that such persons are reprobates and desperate enemies of God, finally accursed, past hope of recovery, given up to the judgement of the last day, when the Lord shall come to render vengeance in flaming fire, to all them that hate him, and that they are to be shunned and abhorred as fire-brands of hell. Of this curse we have divers examples in Scripture, as that which God laid upon *Cain*, *Gen. 4*. That which *Enoch* denounced against the old world, of which *Jude* in his Epistle makes mention, *vers. 14*. That of *David* against *Doeg* and other enemies, and against the traitour *Judas*, *Psal. 109*. and that wherewith the Lord cursed the reprobate Jews, when he forbad the Prophet *Jeremy*, to pray for them *Jer. 7. 16. & 11. 14. & 14. 11*. For there is a sin unto death, namely the sin of Apostasy, and rebellion against the light, not to be prayed for, as *S. Iohn* saith, *1 Ioh. 5. 16*.

Besides these acts of Government before named, we read of three others.

The first is, Ordination of Ministers, which properly belongs to the preaching Presbyters, who are to examine them, try their gifts, and inquire into their lives first, and after proof made of their abilities, and godly conversation, to ordain them with praier and imposition of hands: of this we read, *Act. 13. 2, 3. 1 Tim. 3. 2, 3, 4. &c. & 1 Tim. 4. 14. & 5. 22. Tit. 1. 5*.

The second is, Choosing and appointing of Church Officers, this is the common act of the whole Eldership, together with the people, as appears, *Act. 6. 3, 5. & Act. 14. 23.*

The third is, Setting of things in good order, and appointing that all things be done decently and in order in the Church: this *Paul* enjoined the Elders of *Corinth* to do, *1 Cor. 14. 40.* and he promised to assist them therein, *1 Cor. 11. 34.* and laid this charge on *Titus*, *Tit. 1. 5.*

From this discourse framed out of the infallible Word of God, and expresse testimonies of holy Scriptures, divers Corollaries and necessary conclusions do issue, which remove the doubts, and answer the questions, which doubting scrupulous persons shall propound concerning Church-Government, whether it be in whole, or part *Jure divino*, and by the will and appointment of Jesus Christ.

1. *Conclus.* That there is one uniform Government in the whole universall Church, and in every part thereof *Jure divino*, and by the will and appointment of Jesus Christ, which ought to be observed in all National, Provinciaall, Classicall and Congregationall Churches, as they are parts and members of the Church universall, which is the mysticall body of Christ. Proved, *Section 3. and 5. and 6. and 8.*

2. As there is but one law to all Christians, even the Word of God, which is the perfect rule of Government in all Orthodox, and well constituted Churches: So ought the Government to be one, and the same in them all among themselves, and in every particular Congregation. Proved *Sect. 8.*

3. The supream Magistracy in every Nation, Countrey, and State, being Christians, is in duty bound to be as a nursing father to the Church of Christ, to set up and maintain Preachers, who may by preaching the Gospel, gather their people and subjects into Congregations, and set up Elders in every one according to the Word of God; And parochiall, or particular Congregations so gathered, and Elderships set up in them by the dictate and direction of Christ are *Jure divino*: The appointment of the Civill Magistrate is onely a civill sanction, it doth not make them to be *Jure divino*. Proved *Sect. 3. and 4.*

4. Though all Nationall Churches rightly constituted, and
formed

formed according to the Scriptures, are of equall authority, not any one superiour to another ; and likewise all Provinciall, Classicall and Parochiall Churches alike well formed, are equall : No Provinciall superiour to another Provinciall : Nor any Classicall Eldership to another Classicall ; Yet the deciding of a controversy in point of Doctrine, or any sentence, or censure issuing out, and published from a greater Assembly or Eldership, as from a Nationall, Provinciall, or Classicall, is generally of more authority, and more to be respected in all Churches, then the same sentence and determination proceeding from the Eldership of a lesser or particular Congregation, as we see, *Act. 15.* Where the decree of the Apostles and Elders in a Nationall, or rather Oecumenicall Synod at *Ierusalem*, was of more authority in all Christian Churches, then if it had proceeded from the Eldership of *Antioch*, in which were *Paul* and *Barnabas*, the two great Apostles of the Gentiles, who were able to decree infallibly the same things, and appealed to *Ierusalem*, not to learn, but to make their doctrine of more authority, as appears, *Gal. 2.*

2.6. Proved *Seet. 5.* 6.

5. All Elderships consisting of preaching Presbyters and other Elders who do rule well, and all the members of such Elderships are *jure Divino*, and by the will and appointment of Jesus Christ, *1 Tim. 5. 17.* and the acts of Government done by assisting Elders, together with preaching Presbyters, who by their office and calling have authority and ability to expound the word and law, the infallible rule of Government, are certainly according to the will and appointment of Christ, and being conformed to the rule, are ratified in heaven.

Math. 18. 18.

6. All superiour Elderships and greater Assemblies, whether Nationall, Provinciall or Classicall, consisting of preaching Presbyters, successors of the Apostles and Evangelists, and of other assisting Church Elders, who are chosen members of the universall Church, unto the common Pastours, whereof the Apostles, Christ immediatly committed the Government of the whole Church, and by them to the Presbyters, who do succeed them in severall Nations, Provinces, Cities and circuits, are by the superiour Assemblies and Synods held by the Apostles and

Elders gathered together at Jerusalem about matter of greater concernment *Act. 6.2. and 15.6. and 21.18.* warranted, and declared to be *Iure Divino*, and by the will and appointment of Jesus Christ. Proved Sect. 8.

7. The Appeals from Congregationall Elderships to Classicall, and from Classicall to Provinciaall and Nationall, are by the Appeal of the Church Presbyters, and the two great Apostles *Paul* and *Barnabas* at *Antioch* to the high Synod at *Ierusalem*, warranted and demonstrated to be *Iure Divino*, and by the will and appointment of Jesus Christ; and their powers also.

8. Occumenicall or universall Assemblies, consisting of Pastours and Elders chosen out of all true Orthodox Christian Churches, and sent as delegates from every Nationall Church, are warranted by that Synod at *Ierusalem*, *Act. 15.* In which the Apostles there residing together with the two great Pastours of all the Churches of the *Gentiles*, *Paul* and *Barnabas*, and the Elders in *Ierusalem*, and delegates from *Antiochia*, *Syria*, and *Cilicia*, were assembled to decide a Controversie; which concerned the universall Church of Christ; And cannot with any good reason be denied to be *Iure Divino*, and by the will and appointment of Jesus Christ.

9. Though notorious scandalous offences, for which persons thereof guilty, are to be kept from the Sacrament of the Lords supper, untill they professe repentance, and promise amendment, are easie to be discerned, and noted by the generall multitude, who may privatly judge them to be such: Yet the Lord Christ in his word, gives power and authority to none, by vertue of their office and calling, to judge, and declare by publike sentence, what scandalous offences are worthy of such a censure, and to keepe persons guilty of them from the holy Communion; But onely Elderships Congregationall, Classicall or others meerely Ecclesiasticall, in which there are preaching Presbyters, who are able, and have a publike calling from Christ, to expound the word of God, which is the law and rule by which scandalous sinnes must be judged, and censures given and executed. For on their persons, and consciences, the scandall, and guilt will lye heavy, if they profane the holy Sacrament

ment by giving it wittingly to such as will eat and drinke unworthily, and be guilty of the body and blood of Christ. *1 Cor. 11. 17.* Proved sect. 3. and 5.

10. There are certain particular rules (as the Scriptures cited in this foregoing discourse, and divers others do shew) some openly expressed in the word of God; others by necessary consequence from thence diducted, which sufficiently direct all Elderships, and all persons, who are Elders in them, in the exercise of the power Ecclesiasticall before mentioned, and in performing all necessary acts of Church Government, as receiving accusations, publike admonition, reproofe, rebuke, refusing to communicate with, or to admit to the holy Communion sinners convicted of scandalous sins, and persisting therein without repentance, Excommunication, and casting out of the Church them who refuse to be ashamed and reclaimed by the former meanes used; and continue in contumacie, disobedience, scorne and contempt of the Churches iudgement, and proceeding with them in the Name, and by the Power of the Lord Jesus Christ. Proved Sect. 9.

11. Although the Scriptures give great power to Christian Kings, and Supreme Magistrates over the Church of God in their dominions, and the civill Government thereof is in their hands. And all Christians, and Ecclesiasticall persons of all orders, and degrees are bound in Civill matters to be subject to them, *and to obey and honour them. Rom. 13. 1. Tit. 3. 1. and Per. 2. 13.* And as nursing fathers to the Church, *Isai. 49. 23.* they have the power which *David, Solomon, Asa, Iehoshaphat, Hezekiah, and Iosiah* exercised in purging and reforming the Church, in commanding Ministers of the word, and Church officers to execute their offices faithfully; in punishing with Civill censures, and deposing such as are scandalous and incorrigible; in providing maintenance and setting up able Ministers to teach, and instruct their subjects, and allotting Gods portion to maintain his worship, and service in his Church; in granting liberty to all to profess true Christian religion, and to make lawes for the punishing and restraining of wicked profane persons from disturbing their people in the holy service of God: Yet seeing the exercise of Government meerly Ecclesiastically

astlicall, and the administration of holy ordinances is by Christ committed to the Apostles, and their successors, Pastours, Teachers, and Church officers, with promise to be with them to the end of the world: And the office and authority of expounding the word, which is the law and rule of Ecclesiasticall Government, is left in their hands, without mention of Civill magistracie, which neither then was Christian, nor for many ages after, and yet the Church was well Governed, encreased mightily and flourished in all piety, religion and godlinesse. Therefore the supreme Magistracie is not allowed, nor warranted by Scripture, but excluded from intruding into the administration of holy Church ordinances, and must leave the power of judging and determining of all things which concerne the publike worship and service of God to the infallible word of Christ, the holy Scriptures, and to those who are by God set apart, and furnished with gifts, and abilities, and ordained according to Christs institution unto the office of expounding the word and ministering in all holy things in the Church the house of God, of which they are stewards, officers and Ministers, Proved Sect. 3. and 5.

12. Church Discipline without sound Doctrine is a body without a soule. The key of Doctrine is the soul, life, guid, and direction of Discipline, and those two keys of the Kingdome of Heaven are inseparably tyed together, and committed by Christ to the same hands. Discipline hath no power, nor authority over the conscience, but from the word rightly applyed. They who are bound and loosed on earth, according to the infallible word, are also bound and loosed in heaven: And Censures erring from the word are void in heaven. Sect. 9.

13. Civill Magistrates, & other grave, godly, wise and discreet men, are not excluded, but may be chosen assisting Church Elders, and together with preaching Presbyters may rule and Govern in those Elderships, whereof they are Elders, and have power and authority by the word of God to judge and determine in the Presbytery together with the Pastours (and not otherwise) who are scandalous offenders, unworthy for the present to be admitted to the Lords table. For the word expounded by Ministers thereunto lawfully called, is the law and perfect rule

rule of all acts of Church Government and Censures.

14. Provision of Commissioners who are no Church Elders, and who are authorised onely by the Civill Magistracy to judge who are scandalous offenders, not fit to receive the holy Sacrament, is in the judgement of the best Divines of the reformed Churches, and appears by Scriptures before alledged, to be a meere invention of humane policie, which hath no example or warrant in Gods word, and a manifest usurpation, and giving of that power to others, which Christ hath appropriated to the Apostles and Presbyters of his Church, and so is contrary to the will and appointment of Jesus Christ. Godly ministers generally are of this judgement, that their approving and yeelding to the practice thereof, is a breach of the Nationall league and Covenant. King *Uzziah* was plagued by God with an incurable leprosie, for meddling in the administration of holy ordinances, and in so doing his heart was lifted up to his destruction, and he transgressed against the Lord his God 2 *Chren.* 26.16. In many men, who highly applaud, extol, and vehemently urge this new device and practice, it savours too much of scorne, contempt, envy and a most uncharitable opinion conceived against the godly, learned, faithfull Ministers of Christ, and watchfull Pastours of his Church, and brands both them and all those who are to be set up hereafter in all places of the land, (if the godly reformation desired, be really intended, and sincerely prosecuted) with insufficiency, and want of grace to do the worke unto which God hath called them. It seemes to call in question the faithfullnesse of Christ, who hath promised to be with them allwayes even unto the end of the world, *Math.* 28.20. Many wise and godly people hold it a perverse imagination, and a thing unreasonable to thinke, that wise, discreet and godly men, being chosen Elders of the Church, and joyned in Elderships with learned and faithfull Ministers, who can expound the word, and give them the true sense of the law of Christ, shall or will not be more able to judge of scandalls, and what persons are fit or unfit to be admitted to the Lords Supper, then the same persons being commissioners by themselves. As if Christ were not able, ready, and willing to give grace and assistance to them which are his chosen servants, and ministers of his Church in things spiritu-

the sole power thereof into the hands of those who commonly hated true godlines, and either carelessly, or corruptly, and of purpose admitted vile unworthy persons into the holy calling of the Ministry, who were either unlearned and not gifted; or if learned, and men of parts, were vicious, men of corrupt minde, prone and strong to do mischief?

Thirdly, the supreme Magistracy by robbing the greatest part of parish Churches, and selling away all impropriat Benefices to the Nobility and Gentrie, and they covetously retaining them in their possession, have made the Churches and Ministry base, contemptible, and beggerly. And

Lastly it seemes to reflect upon the supreme Magistracy in these dayes, That there is such a scarcity of profitable preachers, and that many Congregations are wholly unprovided, and others are out of necessity forced to content themselves with soule-starving shepherds, and many young men, of learning, and of hopefull gifts, finding no lawfull way of entering into the Ministry, and terrified with the intolerable taxes, and other great grievances, and discouragements under which many Ministers of great worth do lye groaning, are moved to withdraw their mindes from the study of Divinity, and betake themselves to other callings. This certainly is not the fault of the learned Presbyters of this time, who earnestly desire, and have petitioned for liberty by the civill sanction, to joyne together in Classicall Presbyteries, and to ordaine Ministers, according to the advice of the Reverend Assembly, and the rules by them gathered out of Gods holy word. It remaines therefore, that they and all the godly in the land, do cry mightily unto God in daily prayer, that he would pour out his spirit upon the high Court of Parliament, and incline the heart of the supreme Magistracy to yeeld to the petitions and importunity of the City, of the Assembly, and of the Ministers of the Countrey; and to be intreated in so necessary, pious, profitable and religious a request, so easily granted, to satisfie the longing desires, and hungring, and thirsting soules of all godly people, that they and we may rejoyce together in the Lord, and may blasse his holy name, for the abundance of peace extended to us like a river, and the Lord Christ may be our King, and his Name one in all the three Kingdomes.

*we will hear thee again of this matter. Howbeit certain men
clave unto him, and believed, &c. We doubt not but
there are many within the Province; whose hearts the
Lord will open, to attend to what is here said. Our desire is
to do good unto all, even unto those that are our grea-
test adversaries; and not to be overcome of evil, but to over-
come evil with good. If they mock at us (as they did at
Paul) yet surely, Our Judgment is with the Lord, and our
work with our God; He that is filthy, let him be filthy still;
and he that is unjust, let him be unjust still: But we hope
better things of you, that have submitted to the Pres-
byterian-Government. For whom we pray; That the
God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Je-
sus Christ, that great Shepherd of his sheep, through the
bloud of the everlasting Covenant, would make you perfect
in every good work, to do his Will; working in you, that
which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ;
to whom be glory for ever and ever, Amen.*

Isa. 49. 4.

Heb. 13. 19, 20.

Subscribed in the Name, and by the Appointment of
the Assembly,

George Walker, Moderator.
Arthur Jackson, } *Assessors.*
Edmund Calamy,

Roger Drakes, Scriba.
Eliad Blackwell, Scriba.

FINIS.

R Eader, be pleased to read unwilling to the
let every one, in these things, and
advise, why ancient men and
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John Christie

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