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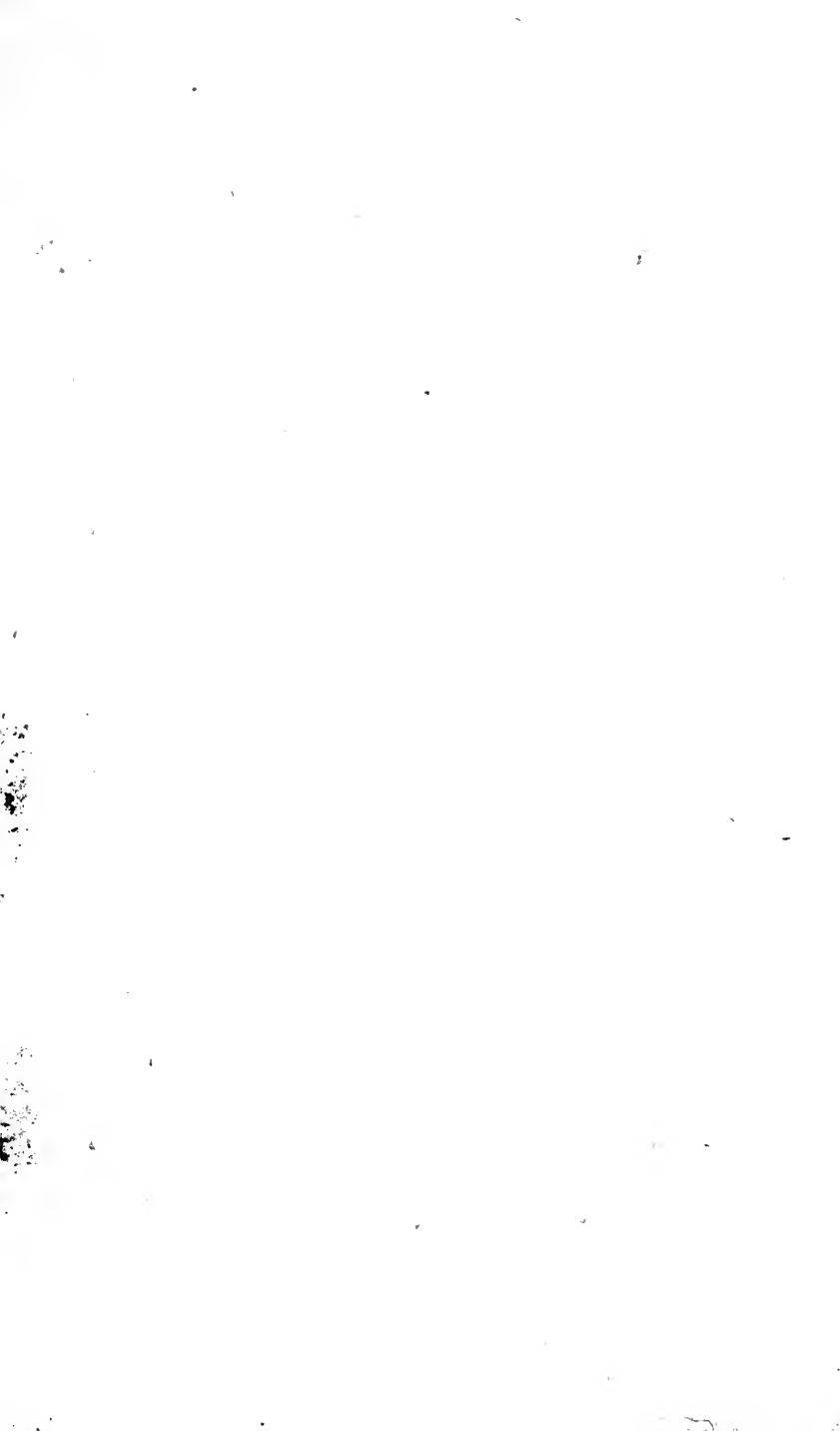
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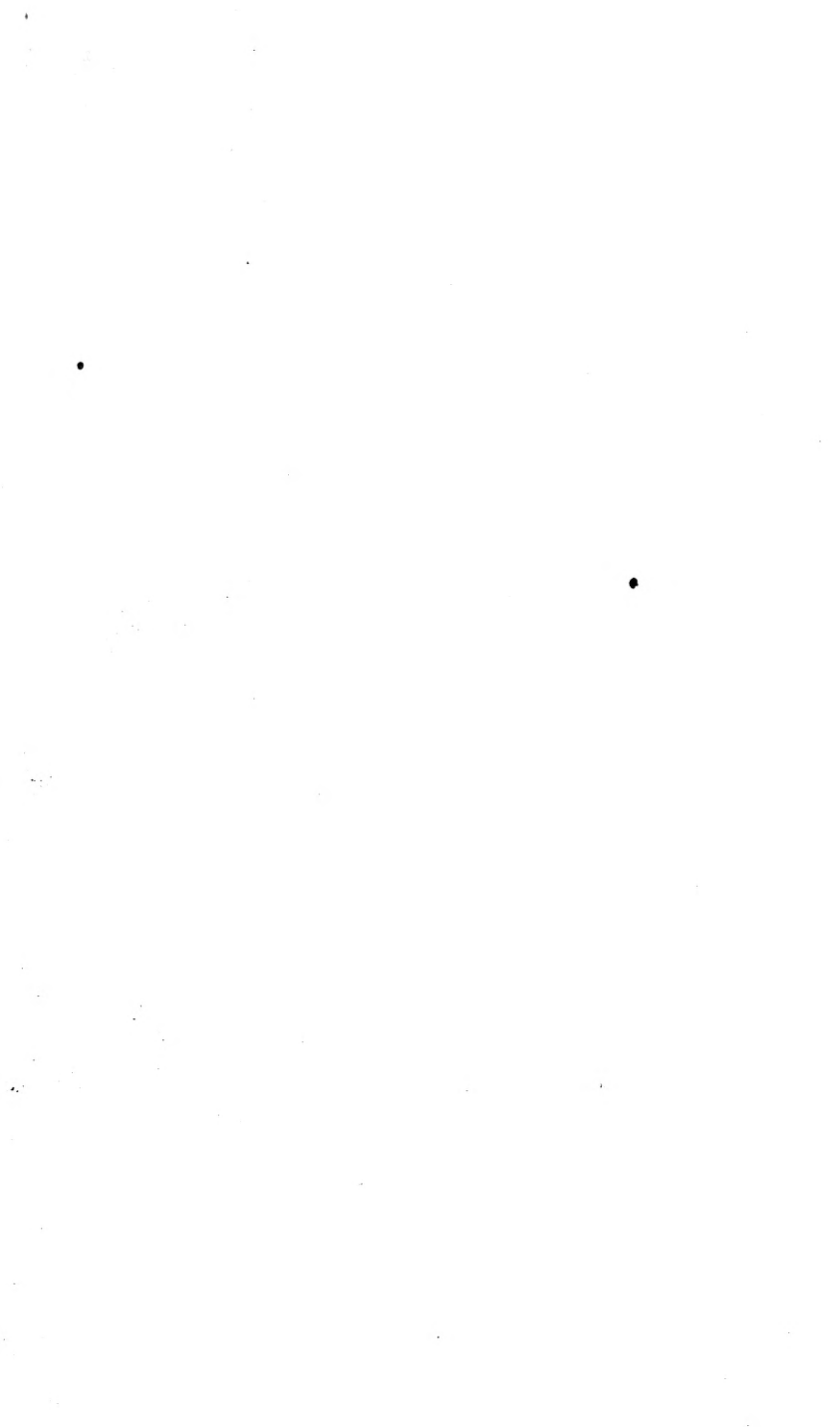
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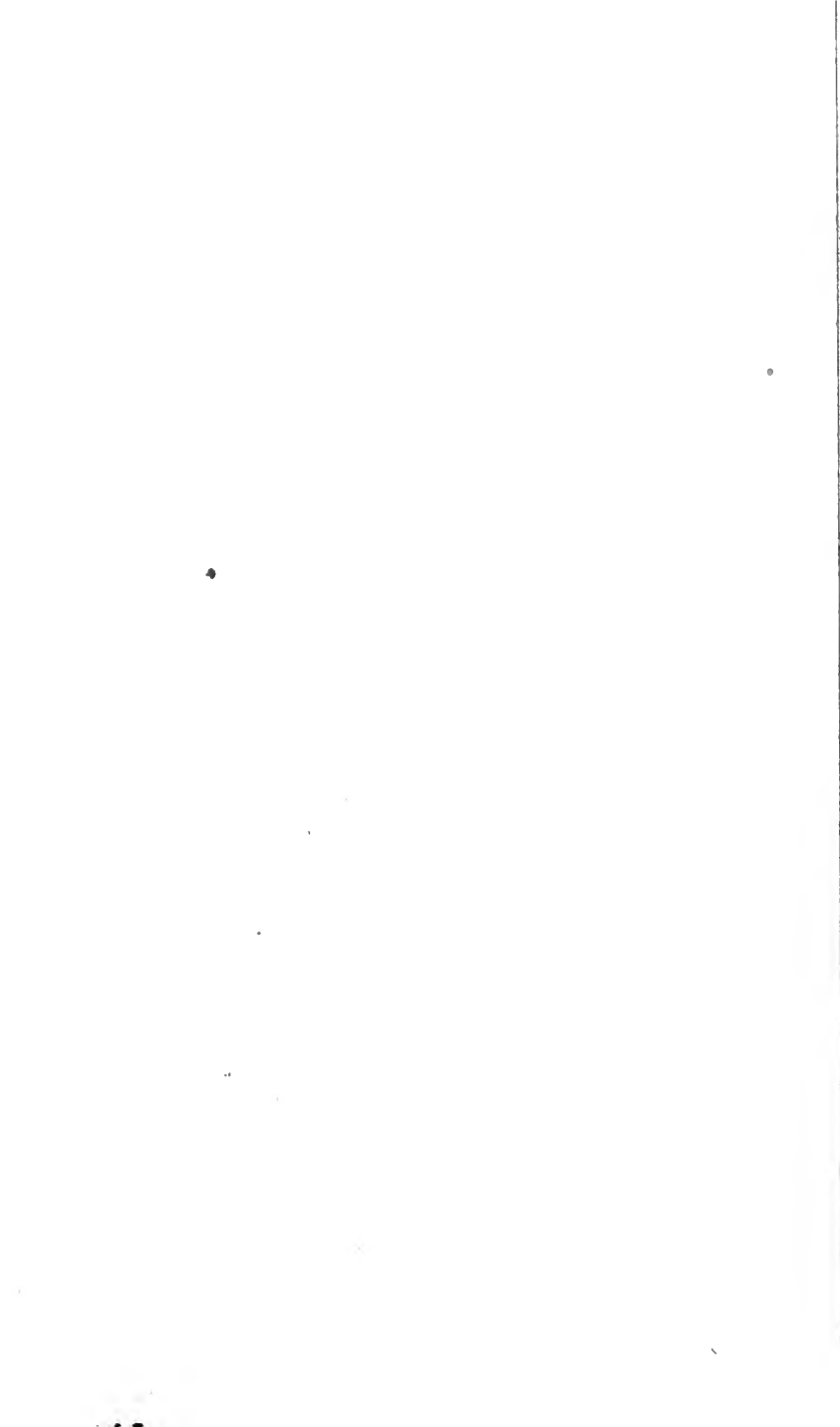
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THE
REASONABLENESS
OF
CONFORMITY
TO THE
CHURCH of ENGLAND.

IN TWO PARTS:

With the *DEFENSE* of it: And the
Persuasive to Lay Conformity.

The Fourth Edition.

To which is added,

The brief *DEFENSE* of *Episcopal*
ORDINATION.

TOGETHER WITH

The *REPLY* to the *Introduction* to the
Second Part; and a *Postscript* relating to the *Third*
Part, of Mr. *Calamy's Defense of Moderate Non-*
conformity.

By BENJAMIN HOADLY, M. A.
Rector of *St. Peter's Poor*, now Lord Bishop of *Bangor.*

LONDON, Printed for James Knapton, at the Crown
in *St. Paul's Church-yard.* MDCCXX.

Part of a donation of maps²⁴ R. h. & A. Stuart

Aug. 1854.

THE
Reasonableness of CONFORMITY
TO THE
Church of *England*,

Represented to the

Dissenting MINISTERS.

In ANSWER to the *Tenth Chapter* of
Mr. Calamy's Abridgment of Mr. Baxter's
History of his Life and Times.

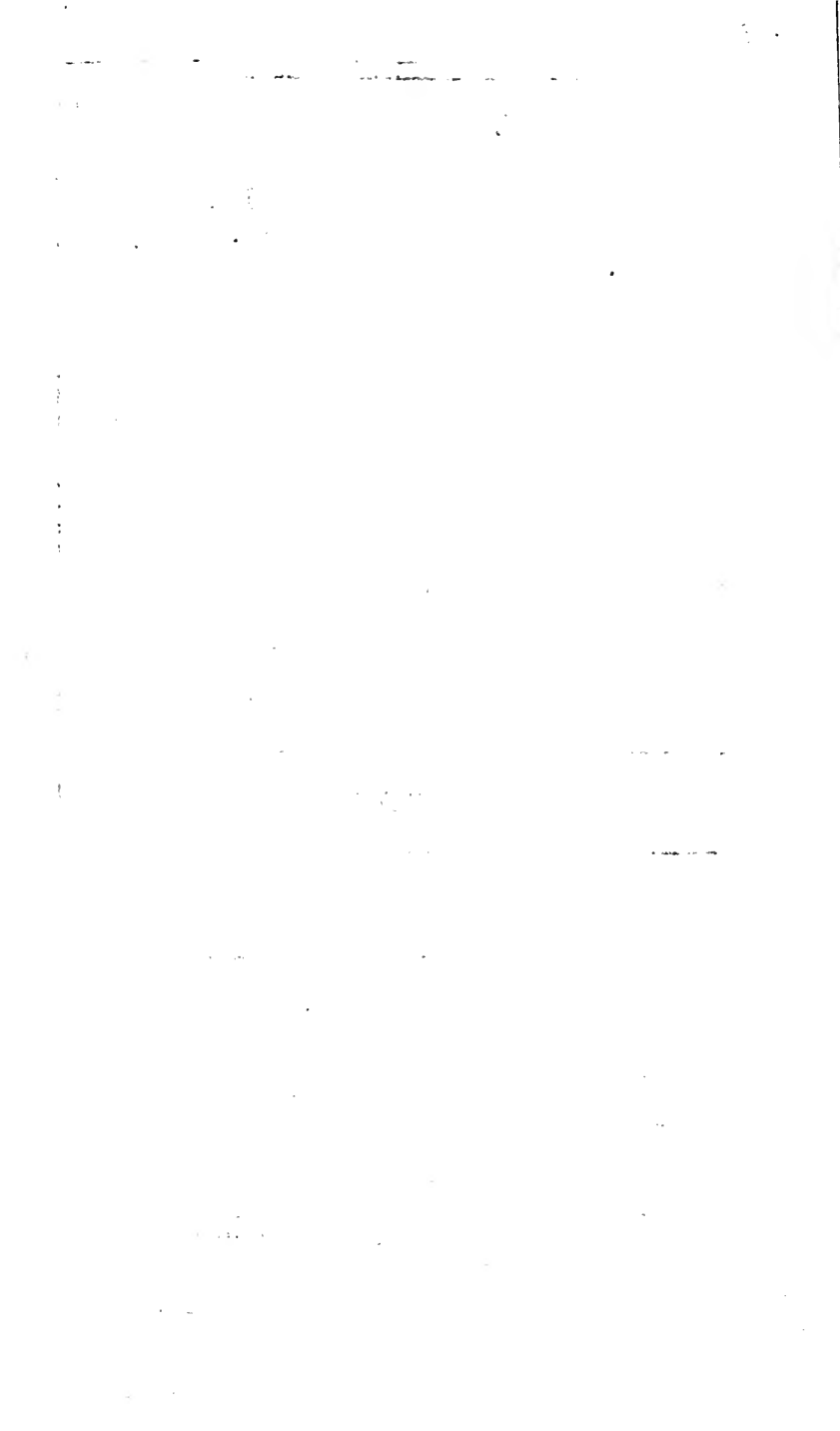
IN TWO PARTS.

The Fourth Edition, Corrected.

All this began but in *unwarrantable Separations*, and too much *aggravating the Faults of the Churches, and common People, and Common-Prayer-Book, and Ministry.* *Mr. Baxter in his Account of the Sectaries, Abridg. p. 96.*

L O N D O N :

Printed for *James Knapton*, at the *Crown* in *St Paul's*
Church-yard. MDCCXX.



THE

P R E F A C E.

W H E N I first read the Tenth Chapter of Mr. Calamy's Abridgment of the History of Mr. Baxter's Life, and Times, I confess I was not a little concerned to find such Accusations brought against Conformity to the Church of England, and especially Ministerial Conformity. This Concern led me seriously and impartially to examine whatever I found there alleged; which I thought was a Duty I owed to my self, and my own private Peace and Satisfaction. And as we are naturally apt to think that what appears very satisfactory to our selves, may possibly bring Satisfaction to the Minds of others; so I was willing to hope (but not upon my own Judgment only) that a fair Representation of those Arguments, which seemed so convincing to my self in this Cause, might prove useful to some others; and help to remove their Prejudices, and recommend Conformity to them. With this View I first drew up these Papers in this Form; and now publish them to the World for these Two Ends.

First, To vindicate the conforming Clergy, by vindicating the Terms of their Conformity to the Church of England from all false Representations, and Objections that have no just Foundation. We who seriously conform as Ministers to this Church, cannot be willing to be accounted what no Christian ought to be; and cannot be content to sit down, and suffer our Practice to be represented as a Complication of the blackest and most unpardonable Crimes. We owe something to our own Reputation as we are Men; and more as we are Ministers; as the Success of that great Charge we have undertaken depends

The P R E F A C E.

very much upon it; and as the Blemishes that are cast upon it, reflect a Dishonour upon Religion it self. If those Accusations which Mr. Calamy hath brought against Ministerial Conformity be received as built upon good Reasons, the Consequence will be, that we must be accounted guilty of as many and great Crimes as it is well possible for any Men to be guilty of. I do not say that it was this Author's Design, in reviving these Heads of Nonconformity, to lessen the Reputation, or blacken the Character, of any of his Neighbours: for I have too good an Opinion of him to think him capable of such a Design. But I say that considering the Manner in which they are represented to his Readers, and the Insinuations often drop'd in their Way, it is too probable that Multitudes will embrace them as Truth, and be led by them to judge Ministerial Conformity a Sin of a very high nature: which indeed it must be, if these Representations be reasonable. It cannot therefore be thought an unbecoming Attempt, to endeavour to convince the World that they are not reasonable; that so the Reputation of a whole Society of Men may not suffer unjustly in the tenderest Point: I mean their Honesty and Integrity.

Secondly, What I farther propose by the Publication of these Papers is, to satisfy those who still continue to dissent from us. I mean such of them as Mr. Calamy, and Those whose Cause he pleads in a peculiar manner: whose Separation, tho' not accompanied with such violence and heat; yet carries along with it more of Mystery, and is more unaccountable than the Separation of those who are at a greater distance from us. But how unaccountable soever it appear, it cannot but become us to do all we can for their Satisfaction. For if we think they are very much to blame in continuing their Separation, we cannot but heartily wish they would unite with us. And if we heartily wish this, we shall not insult or triumph over them, but endeavour to convince them; to remove what we judge to be Prejudices, and to set Things in a due Light before their Eyes. This is what I have attempted: and there is somewhat both in the Principles and Practice of these Persons, which suffers me not to think it altogether an hopeless Attempt.

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These are the Ends I propose: and this is all I have to say for the Publication of this Reply.

In it I have concerned myself only with the present Times; judging this to be the properest Method towards the healing our Breaches, to speak of things as they are now: and leaving to others the Glory of raking into the Transactions of former Times, and heaping together historical Accounts of what signifies nothing to the Cause, but tends only to exasperate Men's Minds; to open our Wounds anew, and make them bleed afresh; to raise the Passions, and cast a Cloud before the Judgment, of the Readers. I confess I could not answer to my own Conscience any such Attempt, which naturally tends to perpetuate our Divisions. Characters are easily given, both bad and good. An History in favour of any one Party is easily compiled. It is easy to pick out all the Evil that appears in Men of different Designs from our selves, and to pass by all the Good. It is easy to surmise more Evil than what appears, and to produce these Suspicions where we want better Proofs. And it is easy on all sides, to make Harangues to move the Pity and Compassion of the People. But what Wounds can we heal in this way? what Advances towards Peace can we make while we are producing what must incense us against one another? One would think it were time now to suffer the Passions of Men to cool, and to address only to their Reason and Judgment.

And it is to the Reason and Judgment of Men I here appeal: regarding nothing in Mr. Calamy's Book but the Tenth Chapter; and nothing in That but what refers to the State of the Case as it is at this time, in which only we are concern'd; nothing but what He himself, at the end of the Ninth Chapter, calls the Stable Principles upon which Nonconformity is still bottomed.

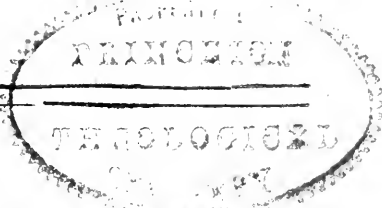
Throughout the whole I have strictly obliged myself to say nothing but what appeared to me truly fitted to the Purpose for which I produce it. And in all that I have alleged I have had

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only a regard to what appeared reasonable, and true, and apt to satisfy any Person concerned. If it be so, I am not at all solicitous about anything farther. I desire it should stand, or fall, as it agrees or disagrees with Reason, and the Gospel: and accordingly, I shall be very free to defend it, or very ready to retract it. If in some instances I seem to some not rigid enough, and to others too rigid; I desire it may be remembered, that my Business was to consider the Terms of Conformity as they are in themselves; not as this or that Person desires they should be. I have endeavoured to defend them as they are: But I have not dared to alter them upon my own Authority, either in order to make them appear more odious, or more agreeable, to the Dissenters. I could never permit myself to have any Part in setting them at a greater distance from the Church: and on the other hand, I should judge it but an odd, and very unlikely Way, to win upon them, to represent the Terms of Conformity more according to their Wishes, unless I could persuade them to believe that they were truly what I represent them to be.

What Errors there are in the Style, (for that there may be some, I am sensible) I hope are small: such as will not disturb the Sense, or hide the Force of the Argument; and therefore pardonable.

I have nothing more to add, but my Request to the Reader, that He would bring an honest Heart along with him; and my Prayers to God, that he would give a Blessing to what I have here proposed, as far as it is fitted to the promoting his Glory, and the increasing Peace and Unity amongst Christians.



THE
C O N T E N T S
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T H E

THE
REASONABLENESS
OF
CONFORMITY
TO THE
CHURCH of *ENGLAND*,

Represented to the
Dissenting Ministers, &c.

PART I.

THE Design of the following Papers is so justifiable, how mean soever they be in themselves, that I need not use many Words to engage you to receive them with all *Candour* and *Goodness*. I am one who sincerely desire a greater Union amongst *English Protestants* than we are yet arrived at: And tho' the method in which I now propose to do somewhat towards this, be perhaps not the most agreeable to your Wishes; Yet it must be acceptable to you, as You profess your selves willing to attend to any offers that are made this way; and ready to *conform*, if your *Objections* can be fairly removed.

Now the *Reasons*, on which your whole Cause is built; I find collected by Mr. Calamy in his *tenth Chapter* of the *Life of Mr. Baxter*: And they are thought to be there represented with the utmost force, and after the most convincing manner possible. The best method therefore, I can think of to pursue my Design in, will be this:

I. To answer the *Objections* there advanc'd against the *Terms of Ministerial Conformity* in our Church.

II. To shew that the Arguments there proposed, in defense of your Selves, are not sufficient to justify your *Separation*, even supposing these *Terms of Ministerial Conformity* to be *unreasonable*.

III. To consider what is there offer'd for the Vindication of the *Dissenting Laity*.

Only I desire it may be remembered that I confine myself to the present Times; and speak to those of You who continue to separate from the Church, for the *Reasons* there represented.

I. I shall consider those *Terms of Ministerial Conformity*, which are there represented as *Unreasonable*.

Now, of the *five Terms* there produc'd, there are but Three which are at present the *Terms of Ministerial Conformity* in the Church of England: And they are these.

I. They that will minister in our Church must be ordain'd by *Bishops*.

II. They must declare their *unfeigned Assent*, and *Consent*, to all and every thing contain'd, and prescrib'd, in, and by the *Book of Common-Prayer*, and administration of the *Sacraments* and other *Rites and Ceremonies* of the Church of England: together with the *Psalter*; and the *Form and manner of making, ordaining, and consecrating of Bishops, Priests and Deacons*. They must likewise make an equivalent *Subscription*.

III. They

III. They must take the Oath of *Canonical Obedience*, and Swear Subjection to their *Ordinary*, according to the *Canons* of the Church.

I. They that will *Minister* in this Church must be ordain'd by *Bishops*. The *Church of England* is indeed an *Episcopal* Church. We think we can demonstrate that in the Primitive times the administration of Ecclesiastical Affairs was in the Hands of *Bishops*, who had *Presbyters* subject to them; that as the *Apostles* maintain'd a superiority over the *Presbyters* of the Churches they constituted; so upon occasion of their absence, they settled others in this *Superiority*; that as these thus succeeding the *Apostles* had the power of *Ordination* committed to them, so their *Successors* in the following Ages claim'd this Power as their Right, and look'd upon *Ordination* to be their *Office* in the regular Course of Things. No wonder then that we require all that come into the *Ministry*, to come in at this Door, which we think open'd for that purpose by the *Apostles*. Nor do I find that any of the *Objections* You here urge against this do signify that *Ordination*, in the regular course of Things, ought to be administered without *Bishops*. But all that is objected is a difficulty arising from your having been before ordain'd without *Bishops*; which *Ordination* you cannot renounce, as you must do, in effect, if you submit to *Episcopal Ordination*. Taking it, therefore, for granted, because I find nothing alleg'd against it, that regularly *Ordination* is not to be administered without the *Bishop*, I shall

1. Give an account why this is insisted on.

2. Answer your scruples against complying with it, as I find them express'd by Mr. *Calamy*. Premising only this, that since most of You came into the *Ministry* since the restoration of *Episcopacy*, and therefore have brought this difficulty voluntarily upon your selves, refusing wittingly and considerately either to conform as *Lay-men*, or to be ordain'd by *Bishops*, it seems a wonder

to us that you should not be more willing to submit in this Point, and to make some recompense for this notorious neglect put upon the *Episcopal* Office, than to search out Objections against it. Much more do we find reason to wonder that, instead of recommending *Lay-Conformity* to Those whose Consciences could heartily approve of it, and an Education in another way, you still continue to advise, prepare, and ordain others to the Ministry; by that means laying what you account an insuperable difficulty, which would otherwise be wanting, in the way towards such an Union as you say you desire. Pardon us, if we cannot think that this practice is agreeable to that desire of Peace and Concord you express, which seems to us as if You rather desir'd to prevent it, unless it could be brought about wholly in your own way. But I return

1. To give some account why this *Re-ordination* is insisted upon, and propose some reasons why it may be submitted to. Now the reasonableness of insisting upon this appears from this one proposition, the truth of which to us is plain, acknowledg'd by Mr. *Baxter*, and not in the least called in question in any of your reasonings on

this Head, *viz. That Episcopal Ordination is the regular orderly Ordination settled in the Church of Christ.* This being so: as Mr. *Baxter* judges (in his *disputation with Mr. Johnson*) that the end why we are obliged to seek

Ordination rather from an Ecclesiastical Officer than from a Magistrate, &c. is, because God hath appointed him for order sake, and to prevent Intrusions and Abuses; so we argue, that the Reason why we are obliged to seek *Ordination* from a *Bishop*, rather than from *Presbyters* without a *Bishop*, is because God hath appointed Him for order sake, and to prevent *Intrusions* and *Abuses*; And because the going out of this settled way, though it be into another which possibly might prevent *Intrusions* and *Abuses* as well, were it the settled way, gives too much encouragement and too much room for *Intrusions* and *Abuses*.

As we think with Mr. Baxter that *Necessity only can answer for the irregularity of Ordination*; so we think that where there is no necessity, or when this necessity ceases, God gives no encouragement to such deviations; and a *Regular Ordination* is to be sought for. That, therefore, it is not the *solemnity of the work, the care taken, the fitness of the Person, the fasting and Prayer*, that can excuse the neglect of this, or be accounted sufficient without this; because this is the method deliver'd down to us from the Apostles times, and the departing from this tends to the overthrow of all Order. nor can we suppose that Almighty God supplies the want of it, when no necessity can be pleaded, because *He is the God of Order, and not of Confusion*. We judge with, Mr. Baxter, *that Persons (let them be never so well qualified) are to seek an orderly admission, and make others the Judges of their qualifications*: And imagining our method to be the orderly and settled method from the Primitive Ages, where we see it neglected, when there is no necessity, we think in Justice, we cannot acknowledge those who depart from it approved of God in setting apart themselves for the Ministry. We dare not think that He allows so great a neglect cast upon the Order settled in his Church; and we dare not in our Consciences give any encouragement to a method which has disunited a whole Nation from their *Bishops*; and such an encouragement as would be in effect, an acknowledgment that God approves of *Irregular Ordinations* upon no necessity, and would tend to introduce still more and more *Irregular Ordinations*, when ever any necessity should be pretended. This we dare not do. And taking this to be your Case; that you have neglected the way settled in the Church; and, when no necessity urged, put your selves into the Ministry in another manner; we cannot think it hard, that you should receive *Orders* in a *regular way*. This will indeed be an acknowledgment that you have been in an error: but surely this consideration will not weigh more with good Men

Ibid.

Ibid:

than the Universal good; and the service you may do by giving so publick a testimony to *Order*, and *Institution*, and so great a stop to *irregularity* and *confusion*. Upon the whole, we think that, according to Mr. *Baxter*, We may insist upon this; nay and ought, as long as we are an *Episcopal* Church. For it was his opinion (as is plain from the occasion of that Paper I have now refer'd to) that nothing but necessity can excuse those who neglect *Episcopal Ordination*; and that their *Irregular Ordination*, when there is no necessity for it, is not approv'd by *God*. I confess this argument supposes You to have no *necessity* laid upon you, which I shall now say somewhat to. You know it is an easy thing to plead *necessity*. And there is no end of *Irregularities*, if any *Necessity* be admitted but what is most apparent: for it is then only that *God* can be said plainly to require Men to go out of the Common way, or to approve their *Irregular Proceedings*. And if you can prove that any such *Necessity* was laid upon You to have recourse to irregular ways; I promise, for my part, to believe that *God* approv'd your ordination, and does approve it as long as that necessity lasts. If You cannot, We cannot believe it; and are in conscience bound not to prevaricate, and cast the greatest reflexion imaginable upon *regular Ordination*.

Let us now, therefore, consider whether *there be such an undeniable necessity for your help; whether the safety of the Church be at Stake, and the Salvation of Men's Souls; or whether there be any other reason sufficient to justify your irregular Proceeding*. And give me leave upon this to ask You these following Questions.

Are the *Terms of Ministerial Conformity* so unreasonable in the Church of *England*, that very many Conscientious, Useful, Judicious, Pious, Excellent, Laborious Men have not conform'd, and do not daily conform, as Ministers? Mr. *Baxter* acknowledg'd, and all must acknowledge, there are, and have been many such Men.

Are there any means necessary to the Peoples Salvation wanting in the *Church of England*? Is there not a
pious

pious and useful *Liturgy* to assist their publick Devotions? Are there not Chapters out of God's Word every day read to them? Is not the whole Will of God declared to them? Is there any thing in the administration of the Sacraments, contrary to the main design of the Gospel, or destructive of Salvation?

Is there any one thing, plainly declared to be the duty of a Minister in the Gospel, and such a Duty as is necessary either to the Preservation of the Church, or the Salvation of Mankind, that a Minister in the *Church of England* cannot legally do? Cannot He exhort, reprove, be instant, instruct, admonish in private and in publick, and refuse the Holy Communion to any scandalous Christians.

If there be any thing else You imagine convenient, which He cannot do; Is it so necessary, that the State of Christianity, and the Salvation of the People depend upon it; so necessary, that you are obliged to be ordain'd after an *irregular* manner to make your selves capable of performing it?

Or, Is this the reason you put your selves into the Ministry, because there are very few in the Church of *England* that take any care of Souls; and that there is great occasion for your help? If it be, why do ye officiate where there is no such occasion for you; where no want of the means of Salvation can be pretended? Or, if you say there is need every where of all that will labour in the Ministry, Consider whether this will not be a plea for the most unqualified in the world; and give occasion, whether You will or no, to the greatest *irregularities* imaginable: for where can we stop in *irregularities*, if we justify those for which there is no absolute necessity?

Supposing the Terms of *Episcopal Ordination* unreasonable; Can the good you propose to do in an *irregular* way, countervail the mischief of such *irregularities*; taking into the account, on one side, the good you could do in your private Capacities, if you remain'd *Lay-men*; and, on the other side, the dividing Principles, the Heats, the Uncharitableness, the Indecencies you encourage, and propagate, whether you design it or no? Or,

Or, Must you be ordain'd to the *Ministry* for the benefit of those amongst the People who cannot submit to the administration of the Sacraments according to the Use of *the Church of England*? And are you forc'd to this irregular way, on this account? If this were truly the reason, you would certainly press *Conformity* upon those who can submit to it; You would receive and encourage no such; you would help in the removal of those prejudices and groundless scruples, and teach them how to tolerate what they cannot amend; and, agreeably to this, you would receive none but such as had invincible objections against *Communion* with our *Church*. But not seeing a practice correspondent to this plea, we cannot think this to be the true Reason. But if it be, we desire you to consider, whether you do not by this give too much countenance to a contempt of all Ecclesiastical Authority; whether you do not give too much encouragement to those who separate from us with the rankest uncharitableness; and receive and cherish those who rail at our whole worship as *Idolatrous, Antichristian, Popish, and intolerable*; or, whether it be fit, that they who think such Prejudices groundless, should be so fond of adding life and continuance to them, as, rather than not do it, to transgress the order settled in the Church.

The Question is, what necessity is there for your Ordination in the Ministry? and when you have thought of this *necessity*, see if the same *necessity* may not be pleaded for farther irregularities; see if it might not have been pleaded in all ages of the Church; and consider whether such *unwarrantable ordinations* do not tend to the contempt of all *Institutions and Ordinances*: as we judge they do.

These *Questions*, and such like considered, and answer'd, with all the seriousness the subject requires, if they do not satisfy you, yet they will serve to give you some account why we insist upon *Episcopal Ordination*, and dare not give so open an encouragement to *Irregularity* as you seem to expect.

Episcopal Ordination (says Mr. Baxter) is to be sought for;

for; and where there is not an absolute necessity, God does not approve of *irregular Ordinations*.

You have not a necessity (as we judge) so absolute and so apparent, as will justify that neglect you have put upon the settled Order of the Church, and the irregular method you have taken;

Therefore, we dare not act as if we thought God had approv'd your *Ordination*, till you shew us this manifest and undeniable necessity; and so dare not acknowledge you Ministers without *Episcopal Ordination*.

And we judge it very hard, that *this* should be number'd amongst the unreasonable *Terms of Ministerial Conformity*; when we think the whole point is, whether the other *terms* be unreasonable, and sufficient to justify a separation, or no. For, if they be, and it can be prov'd, this will prove such a necessity as will justify *Irregular Ordinations*, and demonstrate that God approv'd your *Ordination*: But if they be not, then no such necessity was laid upon you; and it cannot be prov'd that God approv'd your *Ordination*, or that it is hard for you to submit to a *regular Ordination*.

And we desire you to consider, whether, whilst you argue against this under the general name of *Dissenters*, you do not argue for many Ignorant Mechanicks, who cannot properly be said to have had any *ordination* but a pretended inward Call; and for a great number of Men, of whom Mr. *Baxter* complain'd long ago that they made too light of *Ordination*. Abridgment, p. 117.

One thing more I am led to say upon this Subject, and that is, supposing there was a necessity of seeking *Irregular Ordinations*, such a necessity as arose only from the badness of the times, when *Bishops were put down in England*, which we are allow'd by Mr. *Calamy* to think was the case of the *ejected Ministers*: yet this necessity could justify the *Ordination* no longer than it lasted; and when they were restor'd, the *Ordination* was null, and another to be sought for in a *regular way*. This I say, supposing this truly the case, and the *irregular practice* grounded only upon

upon this reason: and this Mr. *Baxter* leads
 p. 131. me to, by the parallel instances He produces in his Paper about *regular Ordinations*. They are these. *In an assault of an Enemy, and the absence of a Commander, an experienc'd Soldier who has no commission may supply the place of a Commander.* The necessity answers for the *irregularity*, while the necessity lasts. But would He be acknowledg'd a Commander, if, when there is no necessity, He should still pretend to that office without another Commission in a regular way? *Necessity gives a Man a License to practice Physick, in an extraordinary case,* and when He can have no License in a regular way. Has He therefore a License to practice when this necessity is gone? or does that License which necessity gives last any longer than the necessity it self?

At a time when it is impossible to procure a Commission from the King, suppose any Person, upon the manifest danger of that Kingdom, should take upon Him to be *Lord Deputy of Ireland*; that necessity would make all his acts valid whilst it lasted: but when He could have a *formal Commission* from the King, and would not; is it fit He should be acknowledg'd as *Governor*? or, Is the Power, which necessity convey'd to him, after that to be obey'd? As, therefore, in these cases, *Necessity gives a Commission* to these Persons, and we allow of this necessity; as they have as much power to act upon this necessity, as if they had a Commission in the most regular way; and as they cannot be acknowledg'd to act by Commission when they may, but will not, have it in a regular way, and the necessity ceases: so let it be in the case before us. A real necessity gives you a Commission to act, and to go out of the *regular way*. This necessity makes all your acts *valid* whilst it lasts: and they remain valid because they depend entirely upon the Power you had at the time they were done, and not at all upon the Power you have afterwards. But if you refuse to take out commissions in a *regular way*, when that necessity is gone; you have no more pretense to Power and Authority, than the Persons in the Cases before-mention'd. I

I see not what can be objected here, unless it be this. Since we allow you no *Authority* in what you do now; and do not think that God approves of your *Ordination*, now you may have *Episcopal Ordination*, and refuse it; why do we not insist upon the *rebaptizing* of those who are *baptiz'd* by you, &c.? why do we allow your acts valid now we grant no necessity? to which Mr. *Baxter* furnishes us with a reply. *If the Lord-Deputy of Ireland were dead, and one should so counterfeit the King's Hand and Seal, as that the Nobles and People could not discern it, and should annex this to a grant for the Place, and shew it to the People, and claim the Power by it; if this Man continue the exercise of this Power for a Year before the deceit be discovered, all his actions must be valid as to the Benefit of the Commonwealth, tho' they are treasonable to Himself.* From which it is plain, That as the honest People ought not to suffer for the *treason* of their pretended Governor; so God will take care that the *truly honest* People shall receive no hurt for the fault of others; that, as the *King* may approve of the actions themselves, as they respect the *people*; and yet not approve of the *Person's* pretensions to his authority; so Almighty God may approve of the actions of *Ministers* as they respect the honest and well-meaning *People*; and yet not approve at all of the *Ministry* consider'd as such; that as the *Governor's* actions were valid, tho' He had really no commission; so the actions of a Minister may be *valid*, and yet his *Ordination* no proper *Ordination*; which was the thing I design'd to prove from this instance. Indeed Mr. *Baxter* seems just before, to lay it down for a truth, that *if the actions are not null, neither can the ordinations.* But, if this instance do not plainly prove the contrary, I confess I cannot understand it, *viz. that the ordination may be none at all, and yet the actions not null.* For it is the instance of one who has no commission, but is guilty of *Treason* in what he does; and yet the *People* are not to suffer for this, because it was impossible for them to discern it; and so his actions are not null: and yet he must have a real Commission from the *King*, before He can act in that post again.

again. The parallel to this *Governour* and his *People*, is the *Minister* and his *People*. As the *Governour* has no authority, and yet his acts are valid: so the *Minister* may have no authority, from God; on his part and yet his actions may be valid as to the *people*; Almighty God not permitting them to suffer for the fault of others.

This too may serve to give some account of the *blessing of Heaven attending your sacred Ministrations*, which you seem to us to speak of, too often; because if this may be allowed as an argument that God approv'd your *ordination*, all Parties in the World will claim it; and the most *irregular* will plead it, and patronize under it the greatest *irregularities* imaginable. Pray consider this, Here is a *pretended Governour* with no *Commission*: many of his actions are perhaps for the good of the *Common-wealth*; and yet this is no argument that he had a *Commission*, or that the *King* approv'd of his acting in his name. So here, The Actions of a *Minister* may be for the good of many honest Persons; and yet this is no Argument that God approves his *Irregular Ordination*. The Blessing, whenever it is, is a reward to the *Honesty* of the well-meaning *People*; and ought not to be interpreted as an approbation of the Authority of the *Minister*: as the *King's* permitting the actions of that pretended *Governour* to be valid, is due to the *Honesty* of the *People* who could not find out the deceit; but cannot be thought an approbation of the pretenses of that Person, who was guilty of *Treason*, in counterfeiting his Hand and Seal.

The result of what I have said is this. Those of you who were ordain'd by *Presbyters*, without *Bishops*, because *Episcopal Ordination* could not be had, (which Mr. Calamy gives us leave to take for the true reason,) we acknowledge to have had a *real Ordination*; and your Authority to have lasted as long as that necessity lasted; and consequently, all your Acts valid, even as to the *authority* of them; this *necessity* making them so, as effectually as if you had had *regular Ordination*. But when that necessity ceas'd, we dar'd no more acknowledge

ledge an authority founded only upon a case of necessity, without a *regular Commission*, when it might be had; than we dare acknowledge him to be truly the *King's Vicegerent*, who, because, in Case of absolute Necessity, he had the Command of a Country without a *regular Commission*, therefore when he can have this *regular Commission*, refuses to take it. Those of you who have since the Re-establishment of *Episcopacy* refus'd either to conform as *Laymen*, or to enter into the Ministry at this Door; after our most serious Consideration, we cannot but judge to have put an open and visible Neglect upon *Regular Ordination*, without an apparent Necessity; giving occasion by this means to more grievous Irregularities. And therefore, tho' we think your Actions valid, thro' the Mercy of God, to honest and well-meaning People; yet we dare not say that God approves your Ordination in a way we take to be *irregular*; nor can we consent by our Actions to give Encouragement to such Doctrines as this, *That Regularity is not to be regarded, whenever any Persons will pretend a Necessity*: for thither this tends, how little soever you design it. Consider this, and see if there be no reason why you should comply in this Point; at least, if there be no reason for us to request you not to go on to lay this unnecessary Bar in the way of others.

2. Having thus given some Account of the Reasons of what we require in this Point; I will now consider those Objections I find offer'd in your Names against it. Amongst which I do not find any taken from the Unreasonableness of *Episcopal Ordination*; or any thing said against it; but all that is objected is drawn from that unhappy Circumstance of an *Ordination* before. And this being still the Case; I shall endeavour, if what I have said before be not satisfactory, to remove these Scruples. What I find urg'd is comprehended under these Three Heads.

1. The Peace of your own Consciences. 2. The Credit of the Reform'd Churches abroad. 3. The Scruples of your own People. For, as to *nullifying your past Ordinations*, I hope I have said what is sufficient.

1. As to the *Peace of your Consciences*; we are not for persuading you to act against your Consciences; to perjure or *play with holy Things*. But, if what I have laid down before be true, that an irregular Ordination is none at all, when there is no absolute Necessity; and, supposing there was an absolute Necessity, that it lasts no longer than that Necessity lasts; here can be no *playing with holy Things*, to seek it in a *regular* way: because according to this Reasoning, you are wholly unqualify'd to act as *Ministers* without it. And we press it upon you seriously to consider, if this be not a fair and reasonable Account of the Matter.

2. As to the *Credit of the Reform'd Churches abroad*; we think it no Presumption, as we censure not them, who in a Case of Necessity went out of the ordinary Method; so to expect they will not censure us for not approving *Irregularities*, when there is no such Necessity for them. And we judge that you your selves act as you think just and reasonable, without that Regard to them here pretended; and shall judge so, till we see you remove, alter, and reform, every thing amongst you, which the Reform'd Churches abroad disprove, either in their Declarations, or their Practice. Nor do we think you would allow it a good Argument for our insisting upon this, if we could produce *Reform'd Churches* abroad of the same Opinion with us in this Point; unless you were otherwise convinc'd.

3. As to the *Scruples of your People*; we desire to know, whether you will allow it a good Argument for our insisting upon this, that, if we should admit you into the Ministry without it, this will *raise endless Scruples* in the Minds of our best and most understanding *People*; to see Men admitted, and acknowledg'd as Ministers, who have, without an absolute Necessity, as they think, departed from the settled Method of *Ordination*, and wilfully sought *irregular Ordinations*. Now since *We*, as well as *You*, have this Plea; is it not more fitting that this Plea should be laid aside, than urg'd as an Argument against *Us*? is it not more becoming, on each side, to argue

gue from the *Reasonableness* or *Unreasonableness* of the thing it self, than from the *Scruples* of the people? unless perhaps it be worth while to enquire, whether the *Scruples* on the part of *Regular Ordinations* be not to be much more regarded, than the *Scruples* on the part of *irregular Ordinations*. We desire you to consider, whether, if you your selves were satisfy'd of the *Reasonableness* of this; you have not Influence enough upon your People to persuade them against *unreasonable Scruples*. A thing, which if you had seriously undertaken, how much Good might you have done! how much Evil might you have prevented! Now, if you cannot agree to this, because the thing is unreasonable; why are the *People's Scruples* pretended? If the thing be reasonable, and yet not to be done because it would raise *Scruples* in the People; then it is a good Argument for not doing a *reasonable* thing; that it will raise *Scruples* in others. But this we hardly think to be your Opinion, because this would be laying a Necessity upon your selves very often of acting unreasonably: and also, because we conceive your *Practice* to be against this. Nothing can raise more endless *Scruples* in your People, than *Occasional Communion* with a Church, from which you have made a formal *Separation*. They have been fill'd with Amazement and Uneasiness, and have not known which way to turn themselves; and perhaps have been induc'd by it to stretch their own Consciences a little, and furnish themselves with Distinctions, against they should have Occasion for them. And the Reasons for this Conduct, if I remember right, are declar'd to be such as the *People* are hardly capable Judges of: and yet the Demonstration of your *Love and Charity to those You have separated from*, is profess'd to be, in your Opinion, of more Account than the *Scruples* of your *People*. Nay, by this Conduct you do the very thing, which you are afraid of doing, if you should submit to *Episcopal Ordination*. For by this you lead the poor *People* to think that this *Separation is not necessary*; (as you

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acknowledge your selves) and, therefore, that there was no Necessity for you to seek *Ordination* in an *irregular* way; and, therefore, that your *Ordination* is not approv'd of God, but is null; and, therefore, that your *Ministrations* are *invalid*. When you can reconcile this *Occasional Communion* with the Necessity of a *Separation*, in their Opinions; and remove their Scruples, on this Account, by plainly convincing them, that *constant Communion may be a Sin, where Occasional Communion is so far from being a Sin, that it is a Duty*; then I will undertake to remove their Scruples on the other Account; and make it as plain as the Light to them, *That your Ministrations may be valid as to them, and yet your Ordinations null*. In the mean while, we think it a reasonable Argument, If the Scruples of the People ought not to hinder you from shewing your Charity, in a way which raises Scruples in them; the Scruples of the People ought not likewise to hinder you from shewing your Regard to *Regularity* and *Order*, in a way which raises Scruples in them; and ought not, therefore, to make up one of your Reasons against *Conformity* in this Point.

Thus much may suffice for the first Head. And in all that I have said upon it, I only take this for granted, that *Episcopal Ordination is the regular Ordination*; which your Reasonings under this Head give me leave to suppose. From whence it follows, that your *Ordination is irregular*. From hence I argue that, as long as we are an *Episcopal Church*, and as long as we imagine your *Separation*, and your *irregular Ordination* unnecessary, we cannot (according to Mr. *Baxter's* Reasoning) acknowledge your *Ordination* such as God approves of; we must not, in Conscience, give any Encouragement to *unnecessary Irregularities*; and, therefore, hope we are not to blame in insisting upon *Episcopal Ordination*. To conclude this Head; As you, if you were persuaded that your *Ordination* in an *irregular* way was *unnecessary*, could not but own that God did not approve of it; and, therefore, could not but submit to a *regular* one: so we, while we think it so, cannot

not possibly but think that God disapprov'd it; and therefore, cannot but insift upon a *regular* one, before we acknowledge You truly Ordain'd.

II. The *Second* of those *Terms of Ministerial Conformity* which you cannot comply with, is this, that Ministers must *declare their unfeign'd Assent and Consent to all and every thing contain'd, and prescrib'd, in, and by, the Book, intituled the Book of Common-Prayer, and Administration of the Sacraments, and other Rites and Ceremonies of the Church; together with the Psalter or Psalms of David; and the Form or Manner of making, ordaining and consecrating of Bishops, Priests and Deacons.* And they must also (and that *ex animo*) subscribe these Words, *That the Book of Common-Prayer, and of ordaining Bishops, Priests and Deacons, containeth in it nothing contrary to the Word of God; and that it may lawfully be used: and that they themselves will use the Form in the said Books prescrib'd, in publick Prayer and Administration of the Sacrament, and no other.* That the subscribing this *ex animo*, i. e. *sincerely, and heartily*, should be esteem'd a Grievance, is, I confess, a strange Thing. But the *Church* I see, is sure to be found fault with both ways. If this Subscription had been requir'd without this; then the Answer would have been, we dare not subscribe this, because we cannot do it *ex animo*, and are afraid of *stretching our Consciences, and playing with Subscriptions and Oaths.* And yet now the Subscription is requir'd to be *ex animo*; this very thing is reckon'd amongst the Circumstances that add to the Unreasonableness of it.

The first thing I find objected that concerns my present Design, is *the Comprehensiveness of this requir'd Declaration*, aggravated with such Hardships, that I will be bold to say, If we use all other *publick Declarations* after the same manner, it is impossible to comply with any one; and yet (in my Opinion) aggravated so unhappily, as to expose and betray even your own Design in aggravating it.

For your Comment upon the Form of this Declaration is this, *Words could scarce be devis'd by the Wit of Man more full; and more significant, whereby the Ministers might testify their highest Justification, and Commendation, of every Point and Syllable, every Rite and Ceremony, every Matter and Thing contain'd in the whole Book, and in every Page and Line of it.* In which Words I verily think you effectually confute the thing which you would establish: and to these Words I appeal, and to every unprejudic'd Person who can read them, *if the Wit of Man could not have devis'd Words more full and significant of this Approbation you mean, than the Words in which our Assent and Consent is to be declar'd.* For I think you your selves have. And let any one but compare these Two Sentences together, one of which contains what the Act requires; and the other what you say it requires; and then let him judge whether they be the same. The Words of the Act are these, *You shall declare your unfeigned Assent and Consent to the Use of all things in the said Book contain'd, and prescrib'd in these Words,* I do here declare my unfeigned Assent and Consent to all and every thing contain'd and prescrib'd in and by the Book intituled &c. Your way of expressing it is this, *You shall declare, not only your Consent to the Use of this Book, but your Assent to the Truth of every Proposition contain'd in the Prefaces, Rules, Rubrics and Prayers in this Book, in these Words,* I do here testify my highest Justification and Commendation of every Point and Syllable, every Rite and Ceremony, every Matter and Thing, contain'd in the whole Book, and in every Page and Line of it. I need not ask the Reader whether there be no difference; and whether the latter be not somewhat more than an Intepretation of the former. But what follows is much worse than this.

I little thought indeed from some parts of Mr. Calamy's Book; from his severe Reflexions upon any that have treated the *Nonconformists* after the same manner; from that great Regard to *Peace, Truth, and Decency*, he every where professeth; I little thought, I say, to meet with such Stuff (quoted out of an Author selected for that purpose)

pose) as he knows in his Conscience is nothing to the Argument he is upon; and only tends to vilify and ridicule the *Common-Prayer Book*, and strengthen the unreasonable Prejudices of the Multitude against it. But how severely soever he reflect upon others; yet, he himself, in treating of *publick Declarations*, cannot *forbear* (as he expresses it) *transcribing* from one *private* and unregarded Author, a *Passage*, because it is admirable for its Peculiarity, and cannot *forbear* to talk, as if it was requir'd in the *Church of England* to believe that every *Title of the Common-Prayer Book* was dictated by the *Holy Ghost*; and as if the *poor Nonconformists* had been ejected for not having the *Spirit of discerning this*.

You cannot take it amiss if I express my self with some Heat upon such an Occasion; because these Things set us at an irreconcilable distance from one another; and it may justly be demanded of you, either to discountenance such Practices amongst your selves, or else to allow and approve them in others as well as your selves. For I leave it to you to consider if this be just. This Person (I give it you, as near as I can, in his own Words upon a like Occasion) *having met with a weak Passage of one Conforming Minister,* *Abridgment,* produces it for *Matter of Reproach*: and *having found some crude and unmeet Expressions dropp'd by a private Person, he brings them forth, esteeming him to speak as foolishly as he could desire, and only such silly Things as he knew he could easily shame. And thence he argues against approving, or being fond of the Common-Prayer Book; as if a Man should go to prove the Worship of Christians or Protestants foolish, because there are some weak Persons to be found amongst them. This Method of arguing is too much suited to the Humours of those, who not only hate the Conformists, but are Despisers, and Deriders, of all serious Worship and Devotion, who are hereby confirm'd in their Contempt and Scorn of Worship and Devotion in general. Or, if he rather chuse the Reproof of Sir Matthew Hale, than his own; he may find it in the same Page,*

and he will easily see how to apply it to himself. But to return to the Point we are now upon; I must entreat you to consider,

1. That we are commanded to confine this *Assent*, and *Consent*, to the *Use* of all Things contain'd, and prescrib'd, in this Book, by the express Words of the *Act* it self; and forbid plainly by it to refer the *Consent* to the *Use* of all Things, and the *Assent* to the *Truth* of every Proposition, as you do; as plainly forbid as we can be. For the *Act* it self applies both these Words to the *Use*, and the *Use* only; injoining the Minister to *declare his Assent and Consent both, to the Use of all Things in this Book*. Whoever, therefore, declares his *Assent* to the *Truth* of every Proposition in it, and his *Consent*, to the *Use* of every thing prescrib'd in it; tho' he do not do more than he himself may think lawful; yet he certainly does more than this *Act* requires, and must be at some Pains to reconcile it with the Intent of the *Act* plainly declar'd. You shall declare both your *Assent*, and *Consent*, to the *Use* of all Things in this Book, says the *Act* expressly. No, say some, Rather than we will do this, we will make a Difficulty here, and say that we are requir'd to *consent* to one thing, and *assent* to another. By what Authority, I pray you, can this be done? You can plead no Foundation for this in the Intent of the *Act*, as far as it is declar'd; because *that* determines *one* as well as the *other*, *Assent* as well as *Consent*, only to the *Use* of the Book. So that the *Act* does not leave you at Liberty, if you would never so fain, to make this Declaration in your hard Sense; for it requires you not to do it, but to give both *Assent* and *Consent* to one thing, even the *Use* of this Book. Now we entreat you not to persist in creating more Difficulties than there really are. And that what I have said upon this Head may have the more Effect, I shall propose to you,

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2. The Example of Dr. *Bates*, and sundry other *Nonconformists*, to the Number of *Twenty*; who took an Oath that *they would not at any*

any time endeavour any Alteration in the Government either in Church or State, as soon as ever the Lord-Keeper had declar'd openly, that by Endeavour was meant unlawful Endeavour. The Lord-Keeper then did in effect say thus to them, *You shall swear that you will not unlawfully endeavour an Alteration in Church or State, in these Words, I will not at any time endeavour any Alteration of the Government either in Church or State. And the Act of Uniformity says, You shall declare your Assent and Consent to the Use of all Things in this Book, in these Words, &c.* If, therefore upon the Authority of one single Person, they thought it reasonable to confine the Word Endeavour to unlawful Endeavour; much more must they think it reasonable, upon the Authority of that Act it self which requires this Declaration, to apply both Assent and Consent, only to the Use of this Book. In the one Case you have only the Opinion of one learned Lawyer that it was meant so; in the other you are left at no Liberty, but are absolutely determin'd by the very Parliament that made the Act, that it was meant so. But I argue further, supposing the Act it self did not determine both Assent and Consent to the Use of the Book, yet

3. The Nature, Manner, and Form of all Law-deeds, and publick Declarations, require this way of Interpretation, and condemn the other. This is drawn up according to the Manner of our Law, in which nothing so common as to gather together Words of very little or no difference in their Signification, and to apply them all to one thing. Thus, to give and to grant, tho' there be some small difference in their Signification, to renounce and abjure, and these very Words, Assent and Consent, with a Hundred other different Terms, are found to be applied to one and the same thing. And, therefore, if the Act had only said, *you shall declare that you agree to the Use of all Things in this Book, in these Words,* yet I should have thought it much more reasonable from the constant Form of expressing such Declarations, to have applied both Words to one thing; than to have argu'd the contrary

trary way, from the Use of Two different Words. And, therefore, had not the *Act* done it for us, we think it needs no *Evasion*, or *Distinction*, to determine both *Assent* and *Consent* to the Use of the *Common-Prayer Book*; to the Use of all Things contain'd in, and *prescrib'd* by it. But the *Act* has really done it for us. Supposing, therefore, that some of the first Promoters of this *Act* had evil and pernicious Designs; yet since it is a most usual thing in our *Legal Forms* to apply Two or more Words to one and the same thing; and since we are all agreed that one of these Words ought to be applied to the Use of this Book; I think we may, without the least Violence to the Words, or our own Consciences, apply them *both* to *that* only, there being nothing against it in the *Act* it self.

Having therefore, shewn that this *Declaration* may fairly and honestly be made with respect only to the Use of this Book, supposing the *Act* had not so plainly determin'd it; having prov'd from the Practice of some Eminent Men amongst your selves, that if one single Person of Authority in the *State*, determine any *Word* in an *Oath* to one certain Signification, which is not so plainly determin'd to it in the *Oath* it self, the *Oath* may be lawfully taken; having plainly demonstrated, that this *Act* it self (the greatest Authority we could have) has determin'd expressly both *Assent* and *Consent* to the Use of this Book; and is so far from making this *Declaration* respect the *Truth of every Proposition in it*, that it never mentions the thing, but says, in effect, what utterly excludes this Sense of the Words; we humbly hope, that we shall not any more hear of *stretching our Consciences* in this Point; and that *You* will not continue to maintain Prejudices against this *Act*, which it gives you not the least Occasion to take up.

As for the *Subscription* requir'd, I never heard that it was esteem'd any considerable Difficulty; nor do I see how it can be, if it be explain'd according to its Original Design; which appears plainly to be none but this, that all who *minister* in this Church should be under an
Obli-

Obligation to *use* this Book. Accordingly Three Things they are requir'd to subscribe. 1. *That the Book of Common-Prayer, and of ordering Bishops, Priests, and Deacons. containeth in it nothing contrary to the Word of God.* 2. *That it may lawfully so be used.* 3. *That they themselves will use the Form in the said Book prescrib'd, in publick Prayer, and Administration of the Sacraments; and none other.* Where it is plain, that this Book is consider'd only as a Book fram'd to direct the Behaviour of those who officiate in publick; what *Prayers* and what *Ceremonies* they are to use; without having any Regard to every particular Sentence inserted in the *Prefaces*, or *Rubrics*, which do not respect, or direct, the *Behaviour* of the *Minister*. I say not this, because I think there are any such Sentences in the *Prefaces* or *Rubrics*, which are *contrary to God's Word*; for I know of no such: but only because I am persuaded this was the Original Design of the *Subscription*. Nay, those few Sentences, not relating to the Use of the *Minister*, which you except against, cannot be thought *contrary to God's Word*, even by you who think them *not true*; for granting them *false*, I do not see how they contradict any thing in the whole *Bible*.

I have been the more concern'd upon the Matter of this *Declaration* and *Subscription*, because (tho' I be convinc'd that it is a great Crime for any one to possess his Sense of any thing in Words not consistent with it; yet, on the other hand) I am so far from thinking it a Virtue, that I cannot but account it a thing of very ill Consequence, and a piece of publick Disservice, to deal very hardly with *Declarations* and *Subscriptions*; to stretch them beyond what the Original Design of them, or the Words in which they are express'd, will fairly and honestly bear, in order to make them appear as rigid and unreasonable as possible. What I think, and hope, I have prov'd, under this Head, may be reduc'd to this: That the Declaration of *Assent* and *Consent* cannot possibly be extended to any thing but the *Use* of this Book: and that the *Subscription* concerns this Book, only as it is a Book

directing the *Minister* what *Prayers* and what *Ceremonies* to use; and has no reference to any thing in it that does not concern the *Minister* who is to use it. And from hence it follows, that whoever thinks this Book fit to be used in the Service of God, may very fairly make this *Declaration* and *Subscription*, without putting a Stretch either upon the Words, or upon his own Conscience. And I think it cannot be thought unreasonable, that all who minister in this Church be oblig'd to use this *Liturgy*, and publickly to declare they will use it.

I proceed now to examine the *Reasons*, given in your Names, why you think this *Subscription* and *Declaration* unlawful, and not to be comply'd with.

1. *This Subscription, and Declaration, would be an Approbation of the Doctrine of real Baptismal Regeneration, and certain Salvation consequent thereupon. For, it would be an Approbation of that Rubric, that it is certain by God's Word, that Baptiz'd Children dying before actual Sin, are sav'd; and it would be an Agreement to use constantly after Baptism a Thanksgiving to God, for that it hath pleas'd him to regenerate the Infant with his Holy Spirit. This is your first Reason.*

The former part of this relating to the *Rubric*, I deny; having, as I think, shewn before, that both the *Declaration* and *Subscription*, concern only your *Use* of the Book; not your *highest Justification, and Commendation, of every Point and Syllable, every Matter and Thing, contain'd in the whole Book, and in every Page and Line of it.* But I need not insist upon this. For all the Difficulty here is; that of a *real Baptismal Regeneration*; and not of *Salvation consequent thereupon.* Supposing this, it is true; and you say, the Office does suppose it. But, in my Opinion, this is undoubtedly true, as it was design'd a-part by it self for a general Proposition: nor could I ever have call'd it in question. For is it not true, and what every Body doubts not to say, that *Baptism admits Persons into a State of Favour with God?* and would any one scruple to subscribe this Truth; because there may be a Person

dipt in Water, whom God does not accept to *Baptism*? I believe not, because the Proposition speaks only of Persons *duly Baptiz'd*. And, does it not follow from hence, that if they die without having done any thing to put 'em out of this State, they shall be sav'd? You must be sensible that there is no want of Texts to prove the former; and that the latter is as plain a Consequence from it as one would wish. Pray consider if it be not very hard to deal as you do with this general Sentence. Consider that there is a great deal of difference between these Two Propositions, *Every individual Child, whom the Minister receives to Baptism, whether he is a qualify'd Subject of Baptism or not, dying after this, without actual Sin, is saved,* and, *Children which are Baptiz'd according to God's Word, dying without actual Sin, are saved:* and remember, that you can never prove the Words to be incapable of this Sense; or that any other was ever intended, or so much as thought of by those who plac'd them here. And that you your selves sometimes understand it without reference to this Church, or this Office, is plain from your suppos'd Instance which follows. And sure you cannot think, if this was said of *Baptiz'd Children* in general, without respect to the *Prescriptions* of this, or any other Church, that any Children were intended by it, but such as are *duly Baptiz'd*, and admitted into the Church according to God's Will. Indeed if you demand such a Text of Scripture for the *Salvation* of some whom, you say, our Church admits to *Baptism*, as you produce for their *Damnation*; we acknowledge, we shall never be solicitous to produce one. We *freely confess our Ignorance*; and own that we are so foolish as to think that, in the *Second Commandment*, Almighty God, neither by *Children* understood *Infants dying before actual Sin*; nor in the *Punishment* he speaks of there, had the least respect to their Condition in *another World*; nay, we judge it contrary to his Nature, and all his Declarations, to determine the future Estate of any Person by the Behaviour of another. If this be all that *might make the Matter dubious,*

I'm sure it may be as true a Proposition as ever was laid down for all this. And when you can shew that this Text ought to be understood either of such *Infants*, or of the *Punishments of another World*, I will undertake to produce as many as you can demand for the *Salvation of all Infants*. What is farther *objected* is taken from some *supposed Cases*, design'd to prove that according to this Doctrine *it is in the Power of Men to give Salvation*. We must confess that we are utterly at a loss what to say to such Objections; and utterly surpriz'd, when we meet with such distant and extraordinary Suppositions drawn in to prove the Falshood of a Proposition fram'd for a Christian Country, and relating only to Children duly Baptiz'd. But we reply, that this *Salvation* depends wholly upon *God's* accepting the Persons (which this *Rubric* obligeth us not to affirm he does, in such Cases as you here put) and that your supposed *Christian King* has no more real Power of giving Salvation to *Infants* (tho' it should be true that the *Infants* he murders are sav'd) than a *Pagan King* would have, should he conquer a Country of good Christians and kill them all immediately; and yet it may be true that *all good Christians are sav'd*: Or no more than every good Christian has the *Gift of Salvation* in his Power when he brings his Child to Baptism: nay, no more than a *Fever*, or any *Distemper* that kills them has the *Gift of Salvation* in its Power. Give me leave to tell you, that it is such unaccountable *Objections* as this; the Stress that seems to be laid upon them; and the Study with which they appear to have been sought for; that make some in the World so apt to suspect, and so forward to declare, that no Agreement can ever be hop'd for.

But I must not forget to say something to this *Baptismal Regeneration* which you object against. I am so little acquainted with the *Art of distinguishing*, that I know no difference between a *Regeneration* and a *real Regeneration*. If there be a *Regeneration*, I think it is *real*: and if there be a *real Regeneration*, it is to be ascrib'd to the *Spirit of God*.

God: And because it always appear'd to me that whoever was receiv'd into the *Christian Church* by God's Minister, with Prayers directed by the Congregation to God, and with sufficient Security for his good Education, was duly receiv'd, and according to God's Will; I never doubted but that God receiv'd such to his Favour, and heard the Prayers of his People, and approv'd of their Baptism: and because I thought they were duly made *Christians*, I could not but think the *Holy Spirit* of God resided in them, as they were now the *Temples of God*. The Scripture leads us to think thus; and, consequently, to think that they are *regenerated* (in the Scripture-notion, of that Word) as they are enter'd into this new Estate; and that, by the *Holy Ghost*, as they are intituled to all his Influences and Assistances, purchas'd by the Blood of Christ. We know not of any thing in Scripture to induce us to think otherwise; and, therefore, we do not separate what St. Paul hath join'd together, the *washing of Regeneration*, and *renewing of the Holy Ghost*, Tit. 3. 5. in speaking of the whole *Christian Church*. But we can hardly persuade our selves that you believe as you speak, when you say, your Reason for not concurring with us in this, is, *for fear of contributing to the hardning of careless Men in the Opinion that they are regenerate, and need no farther Care*. We, on the contrary, think the Point now before us a persuasive Argument to the greatest Care and Diligence. For if Men were *regenerated by the Holy Ghost*, and *made the Temples of God by Baptism*, how much does it concern them to live as such; not to defile the *Temple of God*, or drive his *Spirit* from them? And in this we flatter our selves that we imitate St. Paul, and the other Apostles, who in their Writings have said this very thing, and all the glorious Things imaginable of all profess'd Baptis'd Christians in general; and yet never thought them an Encouragement to Security, but always insisted on them as the properest Arguments to the greatest Care and diligence. And it would be worth while to enquire, whether the same Objections do not lye against

gainst what St. Paul affirms of *Baptiz'd Christians*, as do against what our Church says of them.

The only Difficulty here, as I think, is the admitting *all Comers* to Baptism, *without a Liberty of refusing the Children of Infidels, or the most scandalous Sinners, provided they have but Sponsors*, as you express it. Now this Office of our Church was certainly fram'd for a *Christian Country*; a Country where all were profess'd Christians, and respects the Children of such. And, as for those *extraordinary Cases* in which our Church is suppos'd to allow *Baptism*; where is the great Fault, and where is the ill Consequence of thinking that, if any Persons solemnly undertake the good and Christian Education of a Child, they have hereby a sufficient Right to devote him to God; that the Church hath sufficient Reason to receive the *Infant*; that God will of his infinite Mercy, in regard to their Prayers and good Designs, look favourably upon him? I say, where is the Crime of thinking this? What great Design of Christianity, what Precept of the Gospel, does this contradict? But I know not that Baptism may not, according to the *Church of England*, be deny'd to the Children of *Atheists, Jews, Infidels, &c.* For the Office supposes a *Christian Country*, and *Christian Parents*. And, as for the Children of *professed Christians*, I account the *Profession* of Christianity in their Parents sufficient to entitle them to *Baptism*; as I find, in the Apostle's Days, the *Profession* only of *Faith in Christ*, (whether sincere or not) was sufficient to entitle any to it. To proceed,

2. The *Second Objection* against this *Assent, Consent, and Subscription*, is this, that they extend to the *Use of Godfathers and Godmothers in Baptism, to the Exclusion of Parents*. But here we must complain that this is not truly and fairly represented; but express'd so as best serves to raise and increase the aversion of the People to the Church. We desire you to consider, whether the *Parents* be not to provide these *Sponsors*; whether the *Parents*, in providing what the Church thinks requisite, and offering their Children

then to Baptism, with this security for their good education, do not truly and properly themselves devote their Children by Baptism to God; whether this be not their own act and deed as much as if they had no *Sponsors*; whether any Christian may not engage himself solemnly for the good Education of another; and whether his own willingness, do not give him right sufficient to do this; whether the *Parents* own act, where there are Parents, in offering the *Child* to Baptism, and providing these *Sponsors* in order to it, be not supposed in the Office; and, consequently, whether their Faith (in all ordinary Cases) be not the supposed ground of the Child's Baptism (according to our Church) as the Country is *Christian*, and as the Parents are required to provide for their Children these *Sponsors*; and, lastly, whether the grossest abuse of an institution, which if it were but duly regarded, would be most useful, be a sufficient argument against the institution it self. Now, if *the Parents be to provide these Sponsors*, why should it be urg'd that they are not requir'd to be chosen with due Care; when this certainly will be proportionable to the care and concern the Parents themselves have for their Children; and if they have none, how will the matter be mended by admitting the Parents without the *Sponsors*? And we imagine, that if you had been as diligent in finding out useful *Canons*, as those you account so liable to exception, you would have seen One that shews, that they who require *Godfathers* and *Godmothers*, require also, that none should be admitted as such, *before they have receiv'd the holy Communion*; *Can. 29.* and, therefore, ought not to be represented as if they had taken no manner of care about this, *but opened a wide door to the profaning this Solemnity.* We confess our selves so short-sighted, that we cannot plainly discern how the method of our *Church* tends to the *Profaning this Ordinance*, more than the administering it without *Sponsors*. In the next place, *If these Parents, in providing what the Church requires; in offering their Children to Baptism, with Sponsors; do sufficiently and effectually testify their resolution*

to devote their Children to God; and this devoting them in this way be their own Act; We desire to know, with what Justice the Church is taxed with *justling Parents out of their right*; and the People incensed against it by such Phrases as these, as against an unnatural and cruel Oppressor? Again, *If the Faith of the Parents* (in all ordinary Cases) *and their providing these Sponsors themselves, and offering their Children to Baptism with these, be supposed by our Church*; and be in truth the ground of the administration of this Rite in a Christian Country; why is the Contrary maintain'd and fix'd upon the Church, as if it were the plain declaration, and profess'd doctrine of it? Again, *If it be agreeable to the Christian Religion, that a Christian may solemnly take upon him the good education of an Infant*, what need is there of a natural right, or Positive Law? And how comes the want of these to be an objection against a lawful, I may say, a commendable action? Last of all, *If the grossest abuse of an institution in it self useful* (as we take this to be) *be not a sufficient argument against the Institution*; what do you propose to your selves by arguing from the carelessness of God-fathers against the use of them at all? Were all the Ministers in the Land forgetful of their Ministerial Obligations; would it therefore follow that it was not a useful thing for them publickly to own these obligations when they were made Ministers? Did all who own their *Baptismal Covenant* in your way, prove the most careless and sinful Men afterwards; would you acknowledge the thing it self useles, or lay it aside? Yet in this case it might be said, *they were brought to avouch a great untruth in the face of God and his Church*. For you can no more prove that they are sincere, than we can that God-fathers are, at the time when they solemnly profess themselves as if they were. But above all, it is very hard that you should speak here, as if this encourag'd Parents in a carelessness about their Children; or as if the Church took off any part of their duty from them, by providing more effectually for their Children's advantage. Good Parents can never take advantage from this institution to be unnatural, and

careless

careless of their Children: *Bad Parents* may, but then they would have been as careless without it; and their Children in a much worse condition. And though we bewail the little regard many *God-fathers* have to the serious part of their Office (without thinking this an argument against the Church) yet we hope there are some so sensible of their obligations, that they omit no opportunity of doing their duty.

3. The Third, Fourth, and Fifth Reasons why you cannot conform as *Ministers*, are, because this *Assent*, *Consent*, and *Subscription*, would oblige you to deny *Baptism* to such as had not *Sponsors*, tho' they had a real right to that Ordinance; and to the Children of such as would not permit them to be sign'd with the transient sign of the *Cross*; and to deny the *Communion* to such as would not receive it *Kneeling*. I put these three together, because they come under the common Head of *Terms of Communion*, and *Impositions*, against which your zeal seems chiefly to lye; and because the argument manag'd under these Heads is not so much design'd against the things themselves, as against the making them *Terms of Communion*: the lawfulness of which I shall now consider; and so remove, if I can, the objections here brought against it. Only, because you have advanc'd something against the *use of the Cross in Baptism*, as well as against the *imposing* it; I must take some notice of that first, and then I shall come to the matter of *Impositions*.

All your Arguments against this are at last resolved into these three; that this *seemeth* to be a new Sacrament; that it *looks* as if *Baptism* were not a sufficient Bond without this; nay, at last we find it express'd thus, that though the Church hath declared this sign to be *in token the person shall not be ashamed*, &c. yet since the generality are apt to understand it, that *in virtue and power of this sign the person shall not be ashamed*, *You dare not concur in giving occasion knowingly of such a misunderstanding to the vulgar and injudicious*. But give us leave to examine what is here objected more carefully. One reason then against it, is, that *you dare not concur in giving an occasion of such a misunderstanding*

ing to the vulgar and injudicious. You dare not use the words *in token*, because *They* may be apt to think you do not mean *in token* of something signified, but *in vertue and power* of the sign it self. Now, what end of our differences can we ever hope for, if such methods be taken; if, when there is no reason against a thing, what is acknowledg'd to be *unreasonable* shall be made an objection against it, by those very persons who, in many other cases, do themselves knowingly give occasion of *mis-understanding* to persons somewhat more *judicious* than those who can understand words in a sense, which it is impossible they should be meant in? I could give many more instances, but I will mention but one. *Dare you not concur in Occasional Communion*, because some of the *Vulgar and Injudicious*, You very well know, have had *mis-understandings* about it? If you *dare*, why do you argue here, as if *You dar'd not concur* in this, for that one Reason? which we cannot believe, till we see you omit all other things which you your selves think fit or proper, for the same reason. But while you use our Service thus, we imagine you have done it some credit, by granting, as you here do, That they are *injudicious* persons who can understand by the words here us'd, that any *grace* is suppos'd by the *Church* to be wrought by this sign, or the use of it; that the words must be *misunderstood* before any such thing can be made out of them; and, consequently, that They must be *injudicious* persons that can think this a new *Sacrament*.

Another argument against the *use* of this Sign is, that *it looks as if Baptism, as Christ had appointed it, were not esteem'd a Bond sufficiently firm and strong*. Not by us, who have declared, in express and plain words, that *Baptism is compleat without it*, and the Infant a *Christian* as much before as after it. Besides, we imagine that such an objection as this; as strong, and as concluding, may be made against you, or any who use any *Prayers* at *Baptism*; or administer it with the addition of the least circumstance to the primitive institution. For all this *looks as if Baptism, as Christ had appointed it, were esteem'd not sufficient to entitle*

title the Infant to the favour of God, or to the purposes for which it was instituted. You know it is sufficient without one Prayer; and yet this is no objection to you against the use of Prayers at such a Solemnity.

Another objection against it is, that it *seemeth a new Sacrament added to Christ's*. But, if it only *seem* so; and if the words must be misunderstood before it *seem* so; (as you here grant;) then we account it very unjust for you to assist in perplexing this cause; and to advance arguments to prove what you think, your selves, they do not prove. Now what is a *Sacrament*? You say, *It is an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace &c.* Let it be so: and by this let any one judge between us. The words in the *Common-Prayer Book* I interpret thus, *We receive this Child into the Congregation of Christ's Flock*, as one who is now a Baptiz'd Christian; and, as such, *do sign him with the sign of the Cross*, to signify that, as he is a *Christian*, and consequently, a *Servant of Him who died upon the Cross*, He is obliged never to be ashamed of the *Faith of Christ crucified*; but to glory in it amidst all the scorns the profession of this Religion can expose Him to. I am not apprehensive that here is any constraint put upon the words; nay, they appear to me to be incapable of any other meaning. The things to be considered here are, not so much the *sign of the Cross* it self, as *the signing the Infant with that sign*; (for that it is that was design'd to betoken what follows;) and the thing signified by that *signing* of the Infant; which is, that, as He is a *Baptiz'd Christian*, He is obliged to profess manfully the *faith of Christ crucified*. Now, as far as I can see, Here is not the least tittle of grace attributed to the *sign of the Cross*, or to the *signing the Infant with it*. For the thing signified by this *signing the Child with the Cross*, is not, as you say, *Christ crucified with the Benefits of his Cross*; (tho' what the *Canon* says may be true, that under the name of the *Cross*, in Holy Scripture, they are often signifi'd, which is quite a distinct consideration;) but the thing signified by it is, that the Infant is a *Christian baptiz'd*, and, as such, the *disciple of a Crucified Saviour*.

Nor is the *Image of the Cross* appointed to work this grace by way of exciting signification: For no grace is attributed to it. Nor is the signing the Infant with this sign appointed to work any grace; but only to signify that the Infant, as a Christian, is obliged to confess and worship a Crucifi'd Saviour manfully and constantly. And what is here of a *New Sacrament* in your own sense of the word? Here is indeed an *outward and visible sign*; but not a *sign of an inward and spiritual grace*; not pretended to be *ordained by Christ*; not used, or in the least meant, as a *means whereby we receive any grace*, or, a *pledge to assure us thereof*. Go from the *Common-Prayer Book* to the *Canon*; explain it as rigidly as possible, so as to make it contradict it self, and the most natural meaning of the words in our *Service*; and after all, I am sure it is impossible to make out this charge. After this, I shall only ask one Question. Do you think, in your consciences, that any Reformed Divines, either of this Church, or any other, with whom you agree in your notions about a *Sacrament*, would ever have begun, or maintain'd a charge against the Church of *Rome* for making *New Sacraments*, upon such a foundation as you still continue to do it against the *Church of England*? Had they only seem'd new Sacraments; Had the *injudicious* only *misunderstood* their words, and built their reasonings upon such *mis-understandings*; Had the Romanists, by public Acts, and by all the writers that handled this subject, declared that, tho' they used an *external significant Ceremony*, yet, they attributed no *grace* to it; nothing which either they, or their adversaries attributed to a *Sacrament*; which of our *Reformers* would have continu'd to have tax'd them with this? which of them would have solicitously drawn up some obscure and almost unintelligible arguments against such proof on the contrary side? which of them would not have been glad to have drop't such a charge upon such plain proof? which of them would have argued against the use of one little part of their public service which only concerns the *Minister*, because the *injudicious* will interpret a word in a sense of which *judicious*

Men say it is uncapable? Not one, I verily believe.

And as we cannot agree with you in these Reasons against the *use of this sign*, as it is appointed in our Church; so neither do we think it a sufficient one for the total neglect of it, *that we may witness our dislike and detestation of the vanity of the Papists herein.* We imagine that *we witness our dislike and detestation of the Superstition of the Papists*, by neglecting That use of it, they plead for; by reducing it to a sober and single act; by guarding it from all possibility of *Idolatry and Superstition*; by making it wholly different from what it is amongst them. And we are unwilling to give them so great an advantage against us, as we verily think it would be, if we should, in reforming from them, not only reject and condemn the abuse of a thing, but the thing it self, merely because they use it after a superstitious manner. We are of opinion that this principle hath been the cause of great deformities, and irregularities in the Church: and when it is observ'd that we run from a Custom, or a posture, or a ceremony, not because it is likely now to be abused, but because the *Papists* have used it in a superstitious manner; not only the *Papists*, but others are apt to think, That it is *Humour*, and not *Reason*, that directs us. Nay, we esteem it more reasonably to insist upon an innocent use of something *they* have abused, lest we should encourage a principle as *superstitious* as *their* practice; and a principle that hath led so many already to neglect *useful* things without any reason; than to take away the *use* of it wholly, because they use it after an ill manner. In a word, We think that the reason why it was ever used amongst Christians, is not so wholly ceased, but that it may still be used once in this solemn act of Religion. We think that we have always testify'd our dislike of the *Papists*, in every thing in which they are departed from the Gospel, as effectually as any of our Brethren of whatsoever denomination; and much more reasonably than those who have run from the *extreme* they are in, to another. We cannot answer to our selves the condemning of a thing

merely because the *Papists* use it after another manner. We hope we have taken such care, that it is almost impossible that the use of this sign, as we retain it, should minister to *Idolatry* or *Superstition*; and, upon the whole, we see not that any of these arguments shew that it may not *lawfully* be used.

Having thus consider'd what I find offer'd against the use of *Godfathers*; and the use of the *Cross* in *Baptism*; and finding nothing alledg'd against *kneeling at the Communion*, but rather a great deal for it; I return now to that which makes up the greatest and most terrible part of your charge, and that is the *Imposition* of these things; the making them *Terms of Communion*; which you call, a *manifest encroachment upon the Kingly Power of our Saviour*; a making *New Terms of Communion*; a *contradicting Christ's appointed Terms*; a *using that power to destruction, which was given to be used to Edification*. With what justice you have so hard thoughts of the Church of *England* in this particular, I shall now freely examine; wishing you could be as impartial in considering what can be offer'd in defense of this, as you have been solicitous in drawing up this accusation against it. What I have to say on this *Subject* shall be under these following Heads.

1. That the *Bishops*, who are the *Governours of the Church*, have authority to order such things as these which you so grievously complain of.

2. That *St. Paul* says nothing against this in the *fourteenth Chapter* to the *Romans*.

2. That *Mr. Baxter's* practice, and the practice of the *Independents*, is for *Impositions*. These *Considerations* will, I think, contain a sufficient answer to all that hath been objected on this account.

1. That the *Bishops* have authority to prescribe these things which are so grievously complain'd of. This authority, we say, they have, as they received the care of the *Church* from their *Predecessors*; as they are obliged to take the most effectual methods for the preservation of
Order,

Order, and Decency, in the public worship of God; and as it results from the nature of all Societies, that the Governours of them should have a power of ordering what seems to them most for the beauty and advantage of them; that they should be the judges of what conduces to this end, and should have a title to the obedience of the people under their care, in whatever does not contradict the Laws of that Society by which they are all to be governed. Nor do I find but that you would have joined with them, in the imposing and prescribing some things. Now then, if I can shew that the very same objections may be fram'd against prescribing those things which you could have complied with, that are brought in your names against those other things which give you so much offense; this I shall account a good argument to you, that the Bishops have authority to prescribe in the one case, as well as the other. I instance in their prescriptions about Time, Place, and Liturgy. For this particular time, and place, in exclusion to all others, are not absolutely necessary; and some honest Men will pretend they are shut out from Communion by imposing them. And as for a public Liturgy, That you your selves think it unnecessary, is plain from your not using one in the Public Worship of God: And that you think it lawful to join with those Governours who impose one, is plain from your declaring your readiness to comply with our Common Prayer, were it alter'd as you would have it. And now let us consider, if this be not exactly parallel to the case before us.

Whoever will not have his Child baptiz'd with such Prayers at the time of Baptism, is as much excluded as he that scruples to have it baptiz'd, because the sign of the Cross is used after Baptism: He that refuses to communicate with us, because the Minister uses this Form of Prayer at the Communion, is as much excluded as He that refuses to communicate with us, because He must kneel. As many an honest man may scruple the one; so many an honest man may scruple the other. If an honest man may be excluded for scrupling the one; why not for

scrupling the other? If *Regularity* and *Decency* may in this case be prefer'd before the satisfaction of the scruples of ignorant, and injudicious, tho' honest men; then, why is it urged as an infallible truth, that *excluding a Man*, suppos'd to be an honest Man, for his *scruples*, is a most unpardonable, and intolerable crime in a *Church*?

But to be more particular; supposing the *Liturgy* were made according to your minds, and you should comply with this *imposition*, which you were ready to do; We desire you to consider, if they who still thought fit to remain *Nonconformists*, might not read this same *severe Lecture* against you; and give in these same reasons for their *Nonconformity*. *We dare not causelessly deprive Souls of visible Christianity for want of an humane, unnecessary, if not corrupt invention. We dare not make a Covenant to rob Christ and the Church of visible members for nothing; and consign those over to the uncovenanted mercies of God, whom He (we well know) is ready to receive as his: and so concur in setting the will and advice of Man against Christ, who said, Forbid them not, and was angry with those who forbid them to come to him. Might not one of them thus express himself, as well as one of you? Shall a Minister dare to withhold so much good from, and endeavour so much evil to, the Souls of poor Infants, in denying them their Christendom merely upon the account of some accessories, and scrupled accidents, invented and imposed by Man, and not at all of the Essence of Baptism it self? &c. p. 51c. and might not they argue as you do p. 513. We dare not consent to this, because we dare not consent to the altering the Terms of Christ's Covenant, and Sacrament; and to contradict one of his fundamental laws. Baptize, saith Christ, all that are made disciples, all that repent and believe. No, saith the Church of England, Baptize none that are propos'd, tho' they have all that is necessary to make them the Disciples of Christ, unless they, or their Parents, will submit to the use of this particular form of Prayer at the time of Baptism. This is a manifest encroachment upon the Kingly power of our Saviour, in making new Terms of Communion, which we dare not concur in; a turning the Keys upon those*

those whom Christ is ready to receive; and a positive rejecting such as He requires us to Baptize. And this (as light as the Church makes of it, and they who can join with the Church in this) is in our esteem a sin of an high nature, and so would our consenting to it too.

The same may be said with respect to a particular *Form of Prayer* at the time of the administration of the *Holy Communion*: for a Person who scruples joining in that, is as much excluded from the *Communion*, as He who scruples *Kneeling*. But I add farther, Supposing the *Governours of the Church* appoint the *Morning*, as the particular time for the receiving the *Holy Sacrament*; and some should scruple this (as it has actually happened) we desire you would consider whether the same arguments may not be used against the imposing this, (which yet you approve of,) as you here produce against complying with the Church that imposes *Kneeling*, p. 514. For may not they who should minister to these scrupulous persons thus apologize for their *Nonconformity*? *We dare not consent to this, because this is a depriving Christ's members of their right; an usurpation upon Mens consciences; and a tearing the Church by dividing engines; because this would be obliging our selves to deny the Communion to the people, on the account of their not daring to go against the institution of Christ, the practice of his Apostles, and the primitive universal Church; to deny the Communion to such as the Holy Ghost hath required us to receive to it: and because this is an imposing on the Church things antecedently unnecessary, upon the highest penalty, viz. Exclusion from Communion; a crossing that great rule of Charity, I will have Mercy and not Sacrifice; and a using that Power to Destruction, which was given to be used to Edification. Even those of us, who cannot charge the celebration of the Sacrament in the morning as sinful, are yet afraid of excluding others on such an account as that, by reason it is far from being so necessary a matter, but that the Church, and the due administration of the Sacrament may be preserv'd without it. And withal, Persons might have a very good reason to be*

Saviour instituted this Rite; and to be shy of seeming to symbolize with Idolaters, in celebrating it at that time which it is well known some have chose, out of too much Veneration to the Elements themselves; which, tho' disclaim'd by the Church of England, yet is apt to be misinterpreted. Suppose a Man should upon searching Church-History find (or fancy that he finds) that the Time of Celebrating the Communion was never determin'd to the Morning till the Doctrine of Transubstantiation was establish'd: this alone (tho' he should have nothing farther to alledge) might be a valid Reason for his being shy of that Time. But for Ministers to enter into any such Combination as to be oblig'd to tell such Men, when desiring the Communion at the Evening, Truly, while you are under this Scruple, tho' I may pity you for your Weakness, yet I can't own you for Christians, *this we think hard, and cannot comply with.* All these Things may be said against this, or any other Prescription not absolutely necessary to the being of the Church, or to the due Administration of Christ's Ordinances; and the same Accusation stands against them, and against those who should approve them.

What I observe upon this, is, that you your selves grant by this, that the Governours of the Church have Authority to impose some unnecessary Things; that it is not unlawful to prescribe Things antecedently unnecessary, under the highest Penalty; that Men, who may be call'd honest, may be dealt with after this manner on the account of their Scruples; and that these Arguments, which hold as well against those Impositions you say you could comply with, as against those you say you cannot, are not so plain, and so demonstrative, that a wise Man ought to found a Matter of such Consequence, as a Separation from a settled Church, upon them. For thus the Case seems to me to stand. You grant that the Governours of the Church may impose a Liturgy, and prescribe the Time for performing religious Offices: for you would join with them in these Prescriptions, and would not separate from the Church in order to witness against these Impositions. The Arguments you

you urge against complying with the *other* Impositions do appear to conclude as strongly against your complying with *these*. Therefore I think it follows unavoidably, that you ought to be as willing to comply with the *other* as with *these*; to acknowledge the *Power* of the *Governours* in the *other* as well as *these*; to withstand a Separation founded upon the Imposition of the *other*, as you would do one founded upon the Imposition of *these*; and not to inveigh so bitterly against what you have allow'd and approv'd of, in Cases exactly parallel, as far as your Arguments are concern'd; for it cannot be more against your Consciences to join in imposing the *other* upon the *People*, than to join in imposing *these*. These *Arguments*, if they prove any thing, prove too much; and, therefore, they prove nothing. Now since these are the only Arguments you produce against the *Impositions* in the *Church of England*; we think it ought to be a sufficient Satisfaction to your Question, *By what Authority are these Things prescrib'd?* to answer, by the same Authority by which you acknowledge the *Governours* of the *Church* may prescribe some other Things, against which the very same dreadful Objections lye: and we argue, that if, in *one* Case, the *Governours* ought not to be abus'd and inveigh'd against, for the groundless Scruples of the people; certainly in *others* also, Obedience should sometimes be preach'd to the *People*, rather than a violent Lecture constantly read against their *Pastors*; and that you ought sometimes to consider whether these Principles tend, on which this terrible *invective* against *Impositions* is founded.

Abridgment,
P. 164.

Now, whatever is thus order'd, becomes a *Term of Communion*. One particular *Time*, appointed; the *Liturgy* prescrib'd; become *Terms of Communion*; and *new Terms of Communion*, in as much as Christ made them not so; and *unnecessary Terms of Communion*, in as much as neither a *set Form* in Exclusion to *free Prayer* is so necessary, in your Opinion, but that the great *Ends* of Christianity may

may be serv'd without it; and much less the Appointment of One Hour of the Day in Exclusion to another, as agreeable to the Nature of the Sacrament. Yet these you are ready to comply with. From whence I collect that you do not esteem it so great a Sin to make *new, unnecessary Terms of Communion*, as People may be apt to think from your Writings; or to prescribe Things *antedecently unnecessary*, under the Penalty of *no Communion* without them; nay, that it is your Opinion that Obedience to the *Governours of the Church* is reasonable in such Cases; and, consequently, that a *Separation* founded upon an Abhorrence of such *Prescriptions* (call them *Impositions, or new Terms of Communion, or Terms that contradict the Terms Christ settled, or Transgressions of the Law of Charity, or what you please,*) is an ill-grounded and *unreasonable* Separation. *Hard Names* alter not the Nature of Things; and for all the *hard Names* bestow'd upon these *Prescriptions* you do not like, I cannot imagine them any more *contrary to the Will of Christ*, or the Nature of his *Religion*, than *those* which you could have approv'd of, and on which you bestow no *hard Words*.

From what hath been said I think it is plain, that those *Governours of the Church* do not sin, or *use the Power given them for Edification, to Destruction*, who do not clog the Institutions of Christ with troublesome and manifold *Impositions*; who prescribe what they esteem to be in it self reasonable and becoming; what is the greatest *Security to Religion*, and the Decencies of publick *Worship*; who have by publick *Declarations* prevented and answer'd all the *Objections* that the *Scrupulous* are apt to entertain against them. It is plain that, according to your selves, in the Case of a *Liturgy*, the *Scruples* of the Numbers that think it a Sin to join with one, are not to direct the *Governours* in their *Prescriptions*, or to overballance weightier Reasons. Here then you do not seem to think them chargeable with the ill Consequences of such a *Command*; or the *Command unlawful*, because it will exclude so many from *Church-Communion*. And yet

I verily think, that all the Arguments produced against the *other* Prescriptions lye as hard against *this*. And I doubt not but many amongst those whose common Cause you plead, are of this Opinion. But I speak to you who are not averse to such a Command; and cannot but wonder how you could possibly agree with *one unnecessary Imposition*; and yet argue from such Principles against *others*, as lye directly against *all*, as well as *some*.

Again, Those *Governours* who have order'd nothing, but what if all would seriously comply with, is certainly for the Good of the Church, have done their Duty, and cannot be charg'd with Sin. And such we esteem the Things commanded. I do not think that you can name one single ill Consequence, should all the People of the Land seriously endeavour to procure *Sponsors* for their Children; comply reverently with *Kneeling* at the Communion; and submit to have their Children sign'd with the Sign of the *Cross* after *Baptism*: and I am sure I could name a great many good ones. Certainly, that *Command* is not unlawful, which, if it be seriously obey'd by all, procures many Advantages, and brings not one Disadvantage to the Church.

Neither is that *Command unlawful* which enjoins a thing under a *disproportionable Penalty*. For if it be, then the Governours of the Church can enjoin nothing; neither *this particular Time*, nor *this particular Liturgy*. But they may do this, as you acknowledge; and yet the *Penalty* to him whose Fault is only a Scruple about joining with this *Form*, and communicating at this *Time*, is *no Communion*. Therefore you cannot think this sufficient to make a *Command unlawful*. The plain State of the Case, in this Point, appears to be this. They, to whom the *Government* of the Church is intrusted, are to *prescribe* what they judge fit in the Service of God, according to the best Light they have; leaving such Persons to *God* and their own Consciences, as say they dare not comply with these *Prescriptions*. They are oblig'd to resist *Irregularity*, *Disorder*, and an ignorant Contempt of all

Authority. If any truly honest Man be excluded *Communion* by this means; the *Penalty* is to be consider'd, not as the Punishment of the Scruples of an honest Man, (which he may have almost unavoidably;) but as a *Fence* against *Disorder*; as a Stop to such *Errors* as are against the *Peace* and *Order* of this Society; as a Check to the Designs of *wicked* and *unchristian* Men, who, under this Pretense, and in such good Company, are doing whatever they can to unhinge all, and bring Confusion and Ruine into the Church. You must be sensible from what hath been said before, that there are Cases, in which it is fit that Men, let them be never so honest, should suffer thus for their Errors, granting them to be unavoidable. But this is not to be charg'd upon the *Command*: but upon their Weakness, and the ill Consequences their *Errors* and *Mistakes* may carry along with them. I might cite *Experience*, as well as *Reason*, for this: but it is needless.

This leads us to consider how a good, and understanding Person ought to behave himself, when the Case happens that some Things are *prescrib'd* in a *Church*, which he himself thinks *lawful*, but others pretend they do not; whether he ought himself to comply with these *Prescriptions*, and endeavour to convince others that they ought to do so too; or whether it is his Duty to inveigh against the *Governors* of this *Church*, and add Life and Strength to the unreasonable Scruples of others; to patronize those who separate upon groundless Prejudices, and with gross Uncharitableness; or to plead against their unreasonable and disorderly Practices; to maintain an *Austerity* he himself acknowledges in the Church on other Occasions; or to countenance the utmost Contempt and Disgrace put upon it. This we recommend to your sober Consideration: and desire you to think how inconsistent it is, to argue against *Conformity* from the Scruples of others; and yet to pretend that you would have comply'd, if the *Terms of Conformity* had been fram'd to your Minds. I suppose you are not so weak as to think that,
if

if all your *Terms* had been accepted, there would not have been a Number of *Dissenters* in the Land, who would have scrupled to comply with them. Now, if the Scruples of these Persons would not have been a sufficient Argument against your Conformity, upon your own *Terms*; why are they pleaded as a sufficient Argument against Conformity upon other *Terms*? If they be a sufficient Argument against Conformity now; why would they not have been, supposing your own *Terms* had been accepted?

Nor do I see any Force in your Objection, that on the same Reasons the Bishops impose the Cross and Surplice upon Ministers, they might bring in abundance of Ceremonies of the Church of Rome, which we have cast out; because this will lye against the Imposition of every thing not absolutely necessary, as well as those Two: and I find you could approve of the Imposition of some such Things. We think the Behaviour, and Apparel, of the Minister who officiates, comes under the Care of the Governors of the Church; and Prescriptions about them are a Check to the Extremes, both of *Indecency* and *superstitious Pomp*. We think they have Authority to fence against these, and to impose Rules of Behaviour in order to it. But then, we think they go beyond their Authority, when they introduce vain, senseless, indecent Ceremonies; or abundance of any sort, to be a Trouble and Burthen, rather than a Grace and Beauty, to Publick Worship. When the Church of *England* doth this, then it is time to complain, and open so vehemently against the Abuse of Authority. And even then, I do not think a Separation can be justify'd: Because a Separation is of a great deal worse Consequence to both State and Church, than a Compliance with Authority in what had better not have been commanded. The Governor may transgress his Duty in commanding, and yet I may be under an Obligation to obey. And the Pretense of *witnessing against his impositions* is not of half so much force, as the *witnessing against*

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against

gainst public Disturbance and Disorder. But since the Church of England hath not burthen'd the Public Worship with the abundance of Ceremonies you speak of; and since these mention'd wholly respect the Minister; methinks an Objection should not be brought against them, the Weakness of which appears at first Sight. For how does it follow, *If the Bishops have Authority to prescribe Two Ceremonies, that they have Authority to prescribe Twenty?* or, *if they have not Authority to burthen Gods Service with Ceremonies, that they have not Authority likewise to prescribe One or Two?* The Fault lyes in the Vanity, Indecency, or Number of Things prescrib'd: and if there had been nothing to be objected against the *Romish* Ceremonies from these Topics; our Reformers would hardly have urg'd an Abuse of Authority which might be in Times to come, as an Argument against an Authority at the present Time.

Having said what appear'd to me reasonable in defense of the *Authority* by which these things were first *prescrib'd*, I shall add a Word or Two about the *retaining* them. The *Impositions* on which your heaviest Charge is founded, and which we are now treating of, are *Sponsors* at *Baptism*, *The use of the Cross* after *Baptism*, and *Kneeling* at the *Communion*. I do not see but that I have shewn that the *Governours* of the *Church* had *authority* to *prescribe* these; as much authority as they had to prescribe other things with which you could comply. So then, these things were once prescribed by a sufficient authority; an authority to which obedience in all lawful things was due. The persons who succeeded those who first prescribed these things found them order'd, as they thought, upon good grounds; they found the scruples and prejudices in the People against them to have arisen since these things were order'd; and this without reason, and without foundation; they found many Men of sober understandings who had the meanest opinion of these *impositions*, allowing them either to be such as were lawful in themselves, or such as would not justify a separation; they found that the same

arguments

arguments that were urg'd to prove it to be their duty to lay aside *these*, might be with as much strength urg'd against *others*; and would as effectually prove it their duty to part with their *Liturgy*, and any other prescriptions, upon the scruples of the People: and not being willing to acknowledge, they had no authority, or right to insist upon any scrupled thing that is not essential to the worship or being of a *Church*, they could not but think it proper to insist upon these, rather than make such an acknowledgment; they found, after all, that the advantage and union proposed by the alteration of these terms was likely to prove in the issue none at all, unless other things of greater moment, and what they dared not think of parting with, were removed also. Thus therefore they argued, *We find the removal of three impositions demanded upon these two grounds, That We have no authority to prescribe such things; and that many scruple to comply with them, and therefore cannot have communion with our Church. We have examined these pretenses, and we find that all the arguments that are used against our authority in these things, lie as strongly against it in other things, which many of the Dissenting Ministers themselves would have complied with. We think that if we have authority to prescribe what is not essential to the Christian Church, We ought not to acknowledge we have not: and we judge that if the scruples of the people, tho' never so unreasonable, be the measures of prescribing, and altering; there is as much reason, from this argument, to give up our Liturgy, and all Liturgies, as there is to give up these other prescriptions. If to retain the one, though it hinder many from Communion with us, be not unlawful; neither is it unlawful or sinful to retain the others. And by retaining them in opposition to those who argue so unreasonably, We shall assert that authority we are intrusted with; We shall testify against unwarrantable separation; We shall give what check we can to those principles which have brought such confusion and disorder into this Church and Nation; and we shall resist the Designs of evil Men, who, as we judge, make use of the ignorance of some honest Christians to overturn our whole constitution*

constitution, and, under their shelter, strike at our very root and foundation. Thus, I think, the case might be argued: and I see not what can be replied by *You*, who argue upon the principles I have been now examining. But you may now ask, *Are you then for no alterations?* Yes, I am fully persuaded there may be *alterations* made for the perfection and advantage of the *Church*. I profess, I shall always plead for *such* as are so; and that so much the more, if they be such also as are likely to reconcile any *Dissenters* to it; nay, upon this account, I shall plead for such as are *not* so, provided the *Church* receive no damage from them. But I cannot argue for *any* upon such principles as appear to me to tend to a *'surd*, and *unreasonable alterations*, as well as to those that are *reasonable*.

Having thus shewn that the *Governours* of the *Church* have authority to prescribe those things which you so highly dislike, as well as those which you could have complied with; having shewn from your selves that *New Terms of Communion* may lawfully be made; having remov'd your Objections taken from the *penalty* annex'd; and from that unbounded number of *Impositions* you fear may be brought into the *Church* upon the same grounds that *these* are; I shall now observe,

2. That *St. Paul* says nothing against this in the *14th chapter* to the *Romans*; in order to remove your objection taken from thence. I find that you urge the *1st verses* of *this chapter*, as an argument to prove that it is unlawful to enjoin *Ministers* to deny the *Communion* to those who will not receive it *Kneeling*; or, which is all one, to prescribe *Kneeling* so, as that there shall be no *Communion* without it. But,

First, It is very unfair to apply what *St. Paul* says in one case, to cases not at all parallel to it. *St. Paul* speaks of such groundless *scruples*, as were deeply rooted and fixed in the Minds of some Persons, by the *Religion* they profess'd before their *Conversion* to Christianity: *We* speak of such scruples as have been infused into many Men's minds by the *common Enemy*; as have been taken

up and hotly propagated, *since* the thing it self was commanded, and in opposition to the Authority by which it was commanded. St. Paul speaks of such groundless *scruples*, and such differences of Opinion and practice as are perfectly consistent with their joining together in one *uniform* manner of *public worship*: and it is a little hard to argue from what he says of *scruples* of this nature, to what he would say of *scruples* which are wholly inconsistent with it. He speaks of persons who, for what appears, were perfectly disposed to agree in the same *Customs*, and the same *behaviour* at the *Communion*; and what he would say of persons who are not, we cannot judge from hence: but we may guess by some other places, that he was not so e. sie, or indifferent, in the matter of *Decency*, or *Custom*, in the public worship, as you would represent him; and that it was not his judgment, that *Decency*, and *Custom*, should always yield to the weakneses of Men; but that *they* should comply with *Decency* and *Custom*. That *He* was not against *prescriptions* relating to the behaviour of Christians at the *public worship*, is plain from those *prescriptions* He himself laid down. Such as these; *That*

Women should be silent at public Assemblies, e- 1 Cor. 11-
ven in those days when the *revelation of the* 1 Cor. 13.

Spirit was common: *That Women should be veiled in the Church*: merely because these things were agreeable to the notions of *Decency*, then in the world. *That the Prophets, who had any thing revealed to them, should wait with patience, and observe a due order in their speaking,* merely to avoid any thing that looked like *confusion* in religious worship; and the like. These shew that it could not be his Design, in the *chapter* now before us, to forbid the making any such *prescriptions*; for being a *Governour of the Church*, he made some himself: and that it was his opinion that *Governours* may prescribe for *decency and order*, is plain from thence. As you therefore argue, from the example of St Paul, who, being himself a *Church Governour*, commanded not the things he here speaks of, but does in effect forbid the *Governours of the Church to command them*, to

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shew the unlawfulness of *commanding* those things; so give me leave to argue from the example of *St. Paul*, who, being himself a Church-Governour, did command things of the same nature with those we are speaking of; did himself lay down Rules for regulating the *behaviour of Christians* in *Public Assemblies*; and doth, in effect, give leave to *Church Governours* to *prescribe* according to the rules of *Decency and Order*; give me leave, I say, from hence to argue, that it is lawful (as far as *St. Paul's* example can make it so) to *prescribe* about the *behaviour of Christians* at the *solemnities of Religion*; that *He* no more thought, in this Chapter, of *scruples* relating to Men's behaviour at *public Assemblies*, than he thought of contradicting himself; and that the things *He* here speaks of, and those *We* are speaking of, are so different from one another, that his rules about them may be, and are, very different too. If therefore, the example of *St. Paul* be a good argument against the lawfulness of prescribing what Men shall eat, and that they shall not be received to Communion unless they do eat it: let the example of *St. Paul* be esteemed a tolerable argument for the lawfulness of laying down rules and *prescriptions* about the *behaviour of Christians* at *public Assemblies*. That these *prescriptions* should be laid aside, when they come to be scrupled as *unlawful*, this chapter is as far from saying as any part of the Bible. It says indeed, *You ought to receive those who are so little instructed in the Nature of Christianity, and so prejudiced by their former education and principles, as to scruple things which are lawful; such things as do not concern your customs, or behaviour at the public Assemblies.* But it says not, *You ought to receive such, tho' they scruple to join with you in your customs and behaviour at religious Worship.* It says not, *You ought to receive such as have taken up such groundless prejudices since such rules were laid down for their behaviour; such as seem to be contentious; such as refuse to comply in mere opposition; as too many do.* It says indeed, *You shall receive Men, tho' they will not conform to your prescriptions and customs in what they eat at their own houses:* But it says not, *You shall receive Men, tho' they will not conform to your prescription*

scriptions and customs in their behaviour in God's house. In fine, We may conclude from *this chapter*, that St. Paul, at that time, thought it more prudent to leave Men even to their own unreasonable humours in *eating and drinking*, than to interpose his authority to regulate *their own Tables*; but we cannot conclude from it, that he thought it a crime to use his authority to regulate their demeanour at the *Lord's Table*; that he thought it a sin for *Governours* to interpose; or a duty in them when they had interposed, to give up their *prescriptions*, when they come to be scrupled. If you would argue *justly* against *prescriptions* from *this chapter*, you must argue against prescribing something as little relating to any fundamental doctrine of Christianity, or the behaviour of Christians at *public Assemblies*, as *Meat and Drink*: and for any other sort of *prescriptions*, whatever service other arguments may do, I see not how *this chapter* can possibly be to the purpose. And this will appear more plainly to you from what I have to offer farther, and that is,

Secondly, that if *this chapter* prove the unlawfulness of *prescribing Kneeling at the Communion*, or *retaining* it when it comes to be scrupled; it proves as effectually the unlawfulness of prescribing what you your selves must acknowledge lawful, and what you could have joined with. From whence we may infer that, if it proves not the unlawfulness of *one*, neither does it prove the unlawfulness of the *other*. Some instances I shall give to make this plain. St. Paul prescribed that *Women should be silent in public Assemblies*, merely because it was decent, and becoming that state of subjection they ought to appear in. *Our Governours* prescribed *Kneeling at the Communion*, merely because it was decent, and becoming the Solemnity of that holy rite: arguing that, as we kneel to our *Prince* when we receive a Favour, a pledge of his Love, from him; so it is agreeable to all the notions and customs of *Decency* we have, that we should kneel when we receive the most inestimable pledge of Love from our great *Lord*, by the hands of his *Minister*. Suppose now some *Women* should have been so weak as to have thought it unlawful

to have obeyed that injunction of *St. Paul's*, thinking they were constrain'd by the Spirit to speak, and judging their silence to be a crime; (we have lived to see this, and many as ridiculous suppositions verified;) would you produce this *fourteenth chapter* to the *Romans*, to prove that *St. Paul* was against *prescribing*, or *retaining* any such *rule*; or that these Persons were to be *received*, and not censured? and yet their crime is *taking a lawful thing to be unlawful*. If you would not produce it against the lawfulness of prescribing *this*, tho' some should be so weak as to think it *unlawful*; how can you produce it against prescribing *Kneeling*, merely because some think it *unlawful*? Once more, suppose our *Governours* had prescribed a *Liturgy* to your Minds, and amongst others a *Form of Prayer* to be used at the *Communion*. Some, you know, and no inconsiderable number, have scrupled joining with a *Form* as unlawful. Now such as these are as effectually excluded from the *Communion* by this *prescription*, as if it were said in express terms, that none shall be admitted, who will not join in this *Form*. Yet in the *imposing* this, you were ready to join. I ask, therefore, If *this chapter* command you to *receive* all whose crime is only the *scrupling a thing lawful as unlawful*; with what conscience could you have complied with this *prescription*; which, according to you, must be *flatly sinful, and contrary to God's word*, because it doth as effectually *exclude* those whom you ought to *receive*, as any other *prescription*? If it do not, why could you not comply with *other* prescriptions, as well as *this*,? Why is it produced against *others*, and not against *this*? Is a *Form of Prayer* *necessary* to the due celebration of that religious rite? Your practice shews, you think it not so. Is a stated *Form of Prayer* not only *lawful* but *decent*? so is *Kneeling*. But I will urge no more on this Head. I cannot but think, I have shewn, both from *St. Paul's* example, and your own concessions, that *this chapter* says nothing against those prescriptions which concern the *public Worship*; and that by the *weak in faith* here is not to be understood every one who is so

weak

weak as to take a lawful thing for unlawful, unless in cases parallel to *Meat and Drink*. I shall now add,

Thirdly, That Mr. *Baxter's* Practice, and the Practice of the *Independents*, is for, and not against, such Impositions as are the Foundation of your heaviest Charge against the Church. For the *Independents*,

take Mr. *Baxter's* Word, who represents *Abridgment*,
them as *stricter about the Qualifications of* p. 118.

Church-Members, than Scripture, Reason, or the Practice of the Universal Church, will allow. And if this

be not to make *new unnecessary Terms of Communion, and to refuse those whom Christ has commanded them to receive,*

what is? Yet we observe with what Brotherly Affection you court them; with what Caution you open your

Mouths against *this in them*, and with what Heat you can inveigh against any thing like it in the *Church of*

England; with what Zeal you join with them, and with what Zeal you separate from us. But Mr. *Baxter* hath

not only given us this Account of the *Independents*; but hath left upon Record something of *himself* so like what

he censures so severely in the *Church of England*, that, with all the *Niceness* I am Master of, I cannot see any

difference between them, unless what serves to make Mr. *Baxter* much more liable to censure, than the *Church*.

We have it related for his Honour, as it seems, in his Life. A *Gentleman*, against whom he had

no Objection on any other Account, (as far *Abridgment*,
as it appears,) desired to communicate with p. 86.

him; only he desir'd to receive *Kneeling*,

and at a *distinct time* from those others, whom he thought so guilty on some account or other, that he scrupled to

join with them. Supposing this to be a Weakness; one would hardly think it consistent with Mr. *Baxter's* way

of arguing, that he should be deny'd the *Communion* for it. But let us see how Mr. *Baxter* dealt with him. *First*,

He would not give it him at all, unless *he would submit to Discipline, and take him for his Pastor*; so that his *Bap-*

tism and Profession of Christianity, it seems, were not
sufficient

sufficient to entitle him to the *Privileges* of a *Christian*, unless he would submit to what Mr. Baxter call'd *Discipline*, and take him for his *Pastor*. Perhaps the *Gentleman* was persuaded in his *Conscience* that the ejected *Bishop* was his *Pastor*; tho' Mr. Baxter had Authority to administer the *Sacrament* to him. However, what Reason was here from his scrupling this, why he should not be acknowledg'd a *Christian*? What was there in this Error, so contrary to any great Design of the *Gospel*, or the Nature of the *Sacrament*, that he might not be admitted to it? Secondly, As to the *Posture*, He would not give it him kneeling, unless He would first bear his *Reasons* against it, and then profess, after he had heard them, that he thought it a *Sin* against God to receive in any other *Posture*: both which an honest Man might scruple, and yet be fit to be admitted to the *Communion*. From hence it appears, of what Moment Mr. Baxter thought an Uniformity in the *Postures* of the *Receivers*, and how willing they ought to be to hear *Reasons* to bring them to it. But, Thirdly, As to the *Time*, He absolutely refus'd to give it him at a distinct *Time* from others, tho' he scrupled to receive it at the same time with them. Now here, If I be not mistaken, are to be found the very Crimes which are laid by you at the Door of the *Church of England*; and somewhat more. In the first place, Here is an honest *Christian* deny'd the *Communion* on the account of some *Scruples* he might have, about submitting to Mr. Baxter as his *Pastor*, and to his *Discipline*: such *Scruples* as affected not his *Christianity*, or his *Behaviour* at the *Public* *Worship*; which seems to come very near the Case determin'd by St. Paul in the *Fourteenth Chapter* to the *Romans*. In the second place, He is deny'd the *Reception* of the *Holy Sacrament* in the manner which seems best to him; unless He will bear *Reasons* against it, and profess he cannot honestly take it otherwise: That is, he is deny'd it, if he should be so weak, and prepossess'd, as to scruple what a Man might scruple out of a great *Regard* to the *Prescriptions* of his ejected *Bishop*, and yet remain

remain a good Christian. In the third place a *Prescription* is laid down, *You shall receive it at the same time with those others, tho' you esteem them schismatical, and disorderly;* and the Penalty here is *No Communion*. Now, tho' it be necessary to set some Time when the People should meet their Minister; yet we cannot say it is any more necessary that all should come at one time, than that all should receive in one Posture; nor do I see that this Difference of Time can possibly be the Occasion of greater *Breaches* and *Schisms*, than a Difference of Behaviour at the same time: nay, I believe there may be better Reasons found out for admitting Companies on some Occasions, at distinct times, than for admitting different Gestures at the same time. And, I pray, what great *Breach*, or *Schism*, can we suppose would have been made, had he admitted this Gentleman, and his Family, at one Hour, to the Communion; and the others at another? What great *Schism*, I say, more than was amongst them already? Their Opinions and Hearts were as different already as they could be; and there was no Hopes of their communicating together, without greater Occasion given to Heat and uncharitable Censures. Had Mr. *Baxter* been sure he should have set all his People in Flames; I see not how, according to his Arguings against the Church, he could with a safe Conscience, deny the Communion to this Gentleman, were his Scruples never so unreasonable, and weak. Now I have this Charge against this Carriage of Mr. *Baxter's*. Here was a thing as unnecessary as *Kneeling* enjoind; and that under the highest Penalty, *viz.* No Communion. From whence I collect that it could not be Mr. *Baxter's* Opinion that a *Command, by having a disproportionable Penalty annex'd, becomes unlawful*. Here were *new Terms of Communion* impos'd upon a Christian, and as contrary to Christ's as the Imposition of *Kneeling* can be. Christ says, as you think, Receive a Christian, tho' he be so weak as *to take things lawful for unlawful*; yet Mr. *Baxter* refus'd a Christian, whose only Crime it was to be so weak. From whence

I conclude that, when he was a Governor himself, it was not his Judgment, that it was unlawful to lay down such Prescriptions, as do indeed become *new Terms of Communion*; that it was not his Judgment that *St. Paul*, in the Fourteenth to the *Romans*, spake of such Scruples as respect the *Public Worship*; or understood by the *weak in Faith*, every Person who was so weak as to judge a lawful thing to be unlawful. For we see such a *Weakness* may be of that Consequence, in *Mr. Baxter's* Opinion, as that the Person who is so weak ought not to be receiv'd to *Communion*. Upon this I cannot help making this Reflexion, that the Dispute between *Us* and *You* is not, whether there shall be any Impositions or no, but whether they shall be such as *Ours* or *Yours*; whether the Bishops shall prescribe what they think fit, or whether every particular Minister shall be left to himself, to make what *Terms of Communion* he thinks fit; to receive, or reject whom he pleases, and on what Condition he judges proper. It is too plain, this will be the Consequence of wresting this Power out of the Bishops Hands; and that this is the Practice where-ever a separate Ministry is erected: and we leave it to all the World to judge, whether the Bishops have not as much Right to make these Terms, as every Pastor and Curate; and whether the Christian World be more likely to suffer by all Ministers acting according to *their* Prescriptions, than by their acting according to their own Humours and Opinions, Passions and Prejudices.

Thus have I carefully consider'd the Case of *Impositions*, which seems to be the great Hindrance in your way to *Conformity*; and have chosen to argue with you upon this Matter chiefly from your own Concessions, and your own Practices; which appears to me to be so convincing a Method, that I cannot but hope that you will once more review this part of your Cause; and that, in arguing against the *Impositions* of the Church of *England*, you will either shew us, that you allow no such *Impositions*, either in your Declarations, or Practice; or else
reason

reason against them from such Principles, as conclude not against all as well as some. Till you do this, we must think, either that you are not sincere in drawing up this heavy Charge against the Church, while you allow and practice the very thing you condemn; or that you are not sensible whither these Arguments tend. But I proceed.

6. A sixth Reason why you cannot conform as Ministers, is, because *this Assent, Consent, and Subscription, would be an Allowance and Approbation of that Assertion, that Bishops, Priests, and Deacons, are three distinct Orders in the Church by Divine Appointment. By Divine Appointment, you add your selves: For all that the Sentence, which you quote, says, is that these Orders have been in the Church from the Apostles Times: and all that you can shew certainly to be imply'd in any of the Prayers in the Ordination Office is, that God hath appointed divers Orders of Ministers in his Church. And you not only add this, but you wholly alter the Form of that Sentence in the Preface to the Ordination Office, on which you ground this Objection; and seem to me to misrepresent the plain Design and Intent of it. For there is some difference I think, between these Two Sentences. Bishops Priests, and Deacons, are Three distinct Orders in the Church, by Divine Appointment; and from the Apostles Time, there have been these Orders in Christ's Church, Bishops, Priests, and Deacons. The former of these is yours; and leads People to think, that the principal Intent of this Sentence you scruple, was to lay it down for an undoubted Truth, that Bishops, Priests, and Deacons, are Three distinct Orders, (in the most strict Sense of that Word, and in Opposition to those Episcopal Men, who did not approve of that Word taken in so strict a Sense,) and that by Divine Appointment. The latter is the Sentence, as it is express'd by the Church it self; and the Design of it is plainly no more, but to signify, that Bishops, Priests, and Deacons, have been in the Church, from the very beginning, distinguish'd from one another by their peculiar Offices.*

But

But if you take a Pleasure in representing, and understanding every thing, in the way which to you carries most Difficulty along with it, we cannot help it. Thus; another Difficulty is made, that these *Orders* are spoken of as *several Offices*; tho', how *Bishops, Priests, and Deacons*, if they be spoken of, either as *Three Orders*, or as *Three Degrees* in the same *Order*; how, I say, they can possibly be spoken of any otherwise than as *several Offices*, I shall never apprehend. But I have *Two Things* to answer to this Objection.

1. Neither *Affent* and *Consent*, nor *Subscription*, oblige you to agree to every individual Sentence in the *Prefaces*, and *Rubrics*, belonging to the *Offices* of the *Church*. I have before sufficiently shewn, and I here say it again, that *Affent* and *Consent* refer to nothing but the Use of these *Forms* in public *Ministrations*: and that *Subscription* cannot reasonably be extended to this *Book of Common Prayer, &c.* in any other Sense, than as it is a *Book* directing him who officiates, as to his *Behaviour*, and the *Prayers* he is to use; and doth not appear to have been intended for any thing farther. Besides, if it were design'd to extend to every particular Sentence of no relation to *Use*, it affects not the *Matter* now before us; for the Effect of it is this, that *this Book containeth nothing contrary to the Word of God*. Now I hardly think that any thing can be produced out of the *Word of God*, to which this Sentence is contrary. For there is no *Text* of *Scripture* which says *this is not evident, &c.* nor is there any thing in *Scripture* from whence it may be plainly proved, that this is a false Proposition, *Bishops, Priests, and Deacons have been in the Church from the Apostles Days*. There is no *Passage* in the *New Testament* that either forbids that there should be such *Orders*; or says that there were not. But,

2. Supposing this *Affent*, *Consent*, and *Subscription*, did extend to every such Sentence as this; yet I see nothing in your *Objections* against this, but what seems very hard and unreasonable. When it is said, *This is evident*

to all diligent Readers, can any one imagine that the Intent of this is, that it is impossible any such should ever doubt of it? or that any thing more was design'd, than to signify that it was a plain Truth? Should we deal thus with all such Expressions, what could we hear that would please us? Suppose it should be said, *It is evident to all Men diligently reading Holy Scripture, that our Saviour existed before he was born of the Virgin Mary*; would you scruple to subscribe to this, because the Socinians, who have diligently read *Holy Scripture*, say they cannot find it there, I believe, the Objection would never have enter'd into your Heads. Nothing is more usual than such *Forms* of Speech; and nothing more unreasonable, than to pass by the principal thing intended by them, and to argue against the manner of expressing them taken in a literal Sense, when it is always figurative. We must be sensible, there are many Causes why very considerable Men sometimes miss of a very plain Truth; and if we be afraid of saying, *this is a plain Truth*, because Calvin, or Beza, or Blondell, or Salmasius, or Cartwright, or Selden, or any others did not think it plain; and argue from hence against agreeing to it, we shew more Regard to great Names than is allowable. Was this Sentence design'd to cast a Reflexion upon any learned or judicious Men? You cannot think it was. Do you make any Scruple of differing often from them? You know you do not; I'm sure you ought not. Do not you run them down as Novices, and call them Fools as much, and as effectually this way, as you can do by subscribing this? Yet you do not think That a good Argument against judging as you think fit. Is not the principal Design of a Sentence to be regarded, and the Manner of Expression to be interpreted according to Use, and not according to the Letter? yet here you take the Manner of Expression quite contrary to what you do in common use; and draw Objections from this Manner of Expression so mistaken.

As to the thing intended in this Sentence; it is plainly this, that *Bishops, Priests, and Deacons, have been in the Church from the Apostles Days.* Now this Truth hath been very much clear'd since the Reformation; and the unhappy Necessity some Learned Men imagin'd themselves under, to contradict and obscure it; and the Desire they had that it should not appear of great Consequence, hath help'd mightily to the clearing it. Archbishop *Usher* may very well appear in the Head of those who have added great Evidence to this Proposition. If he differ'd from other Episcopal Men, the Difference may well be thought verbal and not real; if we consider the Service he hath done to Episcopacy, in Opposition to the *Presbyterians.* Bishop *Pearson* and others follow'd. Dr. *Hammond's* Dissertations against *Blondell* (saith Mr. *Chillingworth*, who uses not to speak unreasonably) *never were answer'd, nor never will.* Mr. *Chillingworth* himself thinks the Proof of this Truth amounts to such a Demonstration, as can never be evaded. He produces several *Presbyterians* allowing, that from the *Apostles Days* there was in every City one Person, who had Priority of Order, and Superiority of Power and Authority over other *Presbyters.* Mr. *Baxter* himself thinks it evident that in the *Primitive Church* there was a Superiority over Pastors maintain'd not only by the *Apostles* and *Evangelists*, but by other general unfix'd Church Officers; and, as to fix'd Bishops of particular Churches, superior in Degree to *Presbyters*, that the Reception of them in all Churches was early and general. He is pleas'd to add, there is nothing favouring these in Scripture. Now in the Sentence before, he acknowledgeth that it appears from Scripture that there was a Superiority of one over many Pastors; not only of the *Apostles*, but of others commision'd by them. From whence I conclude, that there is in Scripture a great deal to favour this Superiority (even according to Mr. *Baxter*) and nothing against a fix'd Superior. Now the principal part of the Question here is, whether Superior or no; not whether fix'd or unfix'd;

unfix'd; tho' I must observe, upon this part of the Question also, that this very early, and universal Reception of fixed Bishops (which Mr. *Baxter* confesses) is it self a good Argument, that there were such constituted by the Apostles themselves; and that the Constitution of such was judg'd most agreeable to their Mind. How else can we imagine that the Reception of them should be so universal, and so early, that you cannot name the Place, or Time, from the very Days of the Apostles, in which they are not found? Nor, in the Matter before us, doth it signify much, whether the *Scriptures instituted any particular Form of Church Government, in Contradiction to any other, or no*: tho', if you will follow Mr. *Baxter*, you must think they did. The Point is, whether in Fact there were in those early Days, *Bishops, Priests, and Deacons*. Mr. *Baxter* says there were. And they were sufficiently distinguish'd from one another. As *Deacons* were not *Priests*, so all *Priests* were not *Bishops*. The *Bishop* was the *Superior*, and had his *Presbyters* under him. So that, as to the peculiar Office of *Bishops*, in the main here is no difference; and an Agreement in the whole Matter deliver'd in this Proposition, that *Bishops, Priests, and Deacons*, in the Sense that we all understood those Words in, were in the Church from the very Beginning. And what if they be call'd *Orders* by others? If you acknowledge the very thing which is meant in this Sentence, why should this Word trouble you? I think it a very proper Word: but if I did not, yet if I acknowledg'd what Mr. *Baxter* does concerning *Bishops* and *Priests*, I could never answer to my self the scrupling this Sentence because they are call'd *Orders*. If any other Word had been here us'd, let it be *Degrees*, or what you please, the like Cavils exactly might have been made against it, by any who would have been at the Pains to do it.

Thus much for your principal Reasons against the *Assent and Consent, and Subscription*, requir'd in the Church of *England*. Let us now proceed to some others you propose

pose of lesser Consideration ; yet such, as seem to you sufficient to keep you from conforming, as Ministers. As,

1. *You cannot consent to pronounce all sav'd, that are buried, except the Unbaptiz'd, Excommunicate, and Self-murderers ;* as, you say, all conforming Ministers are oblig'd to do. In return to this Objection, I shall not trouble you or my self with searching out some possible sound Sense, in which some of the Passages in the Burial-Office, against which you except, may be understood. For could I shew you, that God may be said to take even a very wicked Man away in Mercy, and that we may give him Thanks for it, in a just Sense ; yet I do not love to go against the first Design of such public Forms ; and, after all, tho' those Expressions might possibly be us'd of Persons of whom we had not the least reason to hope well ; yet these Words, *As our Hope is this our Brother doth,* in the last Collect, can in no Sense be apply'd to such. It must, therefore, be own'd, and it is too plain to be deny'd, that in such Cases as you mention, of *Men cut off in the midst of notorious Sins, Drunkenness, Adultery, Murther, &c.* this Office is wholly improper : and sure, we need not doubt but that at length some Regard will be had to the repeated Desires of many of the best Defenders of the Church ; and this Ground of Objection against it wholly remov'd. In the mean while, I have somewhat farther to offer to you.

Only before I do that, I must take some Notice of Two Things which I think unreasonable in your Management of this Head of Accusation. 1. In that Sentence, *God hath taken the Soul of our departed Brother to himself,* you will interpret those Words, *to himself,* as if they certainly signify'd, *to Happiness ;* when they are capable of another Sense ; and a Sense that is justifiable

by what *Solomon* saith of Death with respect to all Men, *Then shall the Dust return to the Earth as it was : and the Spirit shall return unto God who gave it.* If the Spirit of all Men may, in a sound Sense, be said to return to God ; then it may
also

also be said, in a sound Sense, that *God takes to himself the Spirits of all Men*, when they die. The same Interpretation that we fix upon the one, we may, with equal Justice, fix upon the other; and if the one be a true Proposition, so is the other; the same Objections lying against the Manner of Expression in both.

2. You deal very hardly with this Sentence, *We commit his Body to the Ground, in sure and certain Hope of the Resurrection unto eternal Life, &c.* These are the Words in the *Common Prayer Book*; and if we Christians may not be allow'd, when we commit a Body to the Ground, even supposing it the Body of a wicked Man, to say thus, *We commit not this Body to the Earth, as Men who believe the Bodies thus laid in it shall remain there for ever; but as Persons fully persuaded that there will be a Resurrection of the Bodies of all Men at the last Day*; (which is, I am sure, the true Interpretation of those Words,) it is very hard. But here I find these Words, *a happy Resurrection*, put instead of *the Resurrection*, for what reason I cannot certainly tell: and it is affirm'd that this must necessarily refer to the dead Person, and that so as to signify a Certainty of a happy Resurrection to him; because, in one of the following Prayers, we pray that *we may rest in Christ, as our hope is this our Brother doth*. We are told, *this puts it out of doubt*. I can do nothing here but appeal to the Words, as I have transcrib'd them from the *Common-Prayer Book*, and to that Interpretation I have given of them; which indeed is so natural, that I never could frame any other to my self: and must leave the Reader to judge, whether this be a good way of reasoning; remembering that the Word *Hope* may be us'd, when we are remov'd many Degrees from Confidence, and are upon the very Borders of Fear; but that the Words, *sure and certain Hope*, cannot be us'd but in the Case of a confident Expectation, without the least Doubt or Fear in it. This is the Case. In a Prayer, at some distance from this Sentence, the Church *hopes* (which, in the lowest Sense of the Word, is far from *Certainty*) that
this

this Person *rests in Christ*. Now, how doth *this put it out of doubt*, that, in this Sentence, *committing his Body to the Ground, in sure and certain Hope of the Resurrection to Eternal Life? &c.* the Church must necessarily refer to *his* particular Resurrection only: and signify by these Words a confident Assurance of *his* happy Resurrection? The using of this Word in the last Prayer is so far from putting this out of doubt; that it does not so much as make it probable: nay, there not being other Evidence for this, it appears to me rather to prove the contrary. For if the Church, where it undoubtedly speaks of the dead Person, makes choice of a Word which may be us'd where-ever we have not certain Demonstration that he is incapable of Salvation; this leads us to think that, if Words be here us'd importing no less than the highest Assurance and most confident Expectation, they were not intended to refer to the Salvation of this particular Person; the one being applicable to a vast Number of Persons, of whom the other cannot possibly be us'd. But tho' this be utterly insufficient to put your Interpretation beyond doubt; yet I think verily I can produce something which, if you be truly willing to acknowledge it, will put it beyond doubt, that the Interpretation I have given is both agreeable to the Words, and intended by our Church; and that is, the Alteration of this Sentence as it is to be us'd at the Burial of the Dead at Sea: and I do not see how you can deny the same Sense to be intended in both. *We therefore commit his Body to the Deep, to be turn'd into Corruption, looking for the Resurrection of the Body, and the Life of the World to come, &c.* Compare the Two Forms together, and see if this do not plainly shew, that the meaning which you have so positively affix'd to the other, was never thought of by those who drew it up.

Having taken notice of these *two* things, what I have farther to offer upon this Head is this, that I do verily think that a *Minister* in the *Church of England* is under no obligation to use these *expressions*, which are the ground
of

of your objection, in such cases as you mention; over
 notorious, incorrigible, impenitent *Adulterers, Drunkards,*
Blasphemers, Murthberers, or the like: nor ever likely to
 suffer the least inconvenience for *omitting* them. I design
 not by this to teach any persons to play with what ought
 to be sacred amongst Christians; or to make light of *De-*
clarations and Subscriptions. I hope I am far from it: and
 if what I now say cannot be demonstrated to be perfectly
 consistent with all the obligations a *Conforming Minister*
 is under, I here renounce it as soon as I have said it.
 I desire then, it may be consider'd 1. That the *omission*
 of these Sentences, in such cases, is not contrary to the
 original design of the *Church* in prescribing this *form*; but
 more agreeable to it than the *using* them. I find it almost
 unanimously affirmed by as great Writers as any that
 have appeared in this cause, that this *Office* supposes such
Discipline in the *Church*, that all notorious and incorri-
 gible sinners should be *excommunicated*, and so incapable
 of this *Office.* If this be so, and yet no such *Discipline*
 exercised; to what part of his charge, to what part of his
 vow is *He* false, who either denies the *Office* to those, of
 whose acceptance with God there cannot be the *least hope*;
 or omits these *expressions* which render this *Office* so impro-
 per on such occasions? I desire it may be remembered, that
 I am not now encouraging any persons to judge hardly
 of their Neighbours; but speak only of such *cases*, where
 it is most apparent, and undeniable, that there is no
 ground for the lowest degree of *Hope.* Supposing there-
 fore a Man cut off in the midst of such sins as *Adultery,*
Blasphemy, Swearing, Drunkenness, without the least sign
 of *Repentance* or acceptance with God; were these *ex-*
pressions design'd for him? Can the *Canon* which respects
 this, be supposed to command the *use of this Form*, any
 otherwise than as it was designed by the *Church*? Do any
 of our *Governors*, or did they ever insist upon obedience
 to the *letter* of this *Canon* in such cases? Not as I know of;
 and if they did, I should venture any penalty rather than
obey: because my conscience would not let me say, I

hoped the dead person *rests in Christ*, when there cannot be the least ground for *hope*; and because I cannot reconcile such an obedience with the obligations I am under to the *Church*. But, as for *omitting* what was never intended by the *Church* for such *occasions*, I could do it with a very easy conscience: having by no *vow*, *declaration*, or *subscription*, as I apprehend, obliged my self to the use of any thing against the plain intent of that *Church*, in which I minister. And did it appear, that it was the design of this *Church*, and of the *Governours* of it, to oblige those who *minister* in it, to declare in public, that they *hope* common *Swearers*, *Drunkards*, *Adulterers*, *Murtherers*, *Blasphemers*; that such as these, I say, dying without any sign of acceptance with God, *rest in Christ*; what Man, who had the least sense of Religion, could *conform* as a *Minister*? But, 2. You tell us here of some *Conforming Ministers* who will not allow this *Office* to *Dissenters*, under the Notion of *Schismatics*. Upon the authority of these persons then, this *Office* may certainly be denied to some who are not actually *excommunicated*. For, as they deny it to some *Dissenters*, who, they think, ought to be *excommunicated*, whether they be or no: so it may reasonably, and upon the same foundation, be denied to notorious and incorrigible *Drunkards*, *Adulterers*, and the like, tho' they be not actually *excommunicated*. Nothing is plainer than that such as *these* shou'd be disown'd by all *Churches*, and not esteemed as *Christians*. This is a *Canon* of *St. Paul's*, of as long standing almost as the *Gospel* it self. And certainly, no *Church* that speaks any thing of *Excommunication*, can be supposed not to design that notorious, incorrigible *Adulterers*, *Murtherers* and the like, should be *excommunicated*, as much as it designs that any others should. If therefore this *Office* may be denied to any *others*, certainly it may to *these*: and if the *Office* may, then also those expressions in it which make it so improper.

In one word, what I esteem truly satisfactory on this Head is this: You may be *Ministers* in the *Church of England*

land without obliging your selves to use this Office over such impenitent wretches as you mention? for neither *Assent* and *Consent*, nor *Subscription*, can refer to it any otherwise than as it was design'd by the Church. You may minister in the Church of England, preach, exhort, instruct, do all imaginable good to the Souls of Men for many Years together, (for your whole lives, if you please,) without being obliged to use this Office over any, either good or bad. And I remember the ejected Ministers somewhere speak, as if they should have been contented, if they could have been Preachers only in this Church. But farther, if you should take a Cure of a Parish upon you, and perform all the Offices of a Minister in it, perhaps these cases you mention, may not happen; and if they do happen, I am persuaded you may omit these improper sentences, without being false to any part of your trust; and without suffering any inconvenience for so doing. And after this I think you cannot say, or think, with any justice, that you cannot conform as Ministers without pronouncing all who are buried, saved, let them be never so wicked, and never so void of all signs of acceptance with God. And if you can conform without this, then this objection against it is removed.

2. You cannot consent to a false Rule for finding out Easter-day. You truly say that this is but a Trifle: yet, I shall neglect nothing which I find seriously proposed as an argument against Conformity. And, in answer to this, I should not doubt to shew, that supposing this Rule false, a Man may with a very safe conscience both declare his Assent and Consent, and Subscribe; were there any necessity of making this concession. But this I omit for a better reply; which, if you find it to have truth in it, must for ever remove this reason of Non-conformity. And that is, that this is wholly founded upon a mistake of your own. The Rule neither contradicts the Table in the Common-Prayer Book, nor the common Almanacks, which agree with the Table. Only the thing is this; you judge of the Moons by the Common Almanacks, which are there set

down according to the reformation of the *Kalendar*; and the *Rule* speaks the *Moons*, as they are to be found in our own *Kalendar*, according to the *account* in use before that reformation, when this *Rule* was first settled. Now tho' the *New* and *Full Moons*, in our *Kalendar*, be not so agreeable to the *Moon* in the Heavens, as the *New* and *Full Moons* in the *Almanacks*, yet it is hard to judge of the falsity of a *Rule*, which respects the *Moons* in one account, by the *Moons* in another account. The *Rule* is true if we understand it aright. The *Table* agrees with it perfectly; for it only tells what day of the month *Easter-day* always falls, according to that *Rule*; and *Easter-day* in the *Almanacks* is the same that it is in the *Table*. And so both say nothing but what the *Rule* it self directs. I need not tell you how to find the *New* and *Full Moons* by the *Kalendar* in the *Common-Prayer Book*: nor is it worth while to say any thing more upon this Head.

3. You cannot agree to read *Apocryphal Lessons*, &c. and therefore cannot conform as *Ministers*. In answer to what you say under this Head, I shall not go against my own judgment so much as to plead for the retaining any one thing in the public service of the *Church*, that is justly suspected to be *fabulous*? Nor shall I now enquire, whether all the stories here mention'd be *fabulous* or no: but shall only at present argue thus. Is it *unlawful* to read any Books in the *Church*, in which there are very many useful and excellent things, as well as some few relations suspected to be *fabulous*? Is it *unlawful* to tell one of these stories in the *Pulpit*, or a story, the truth of which may be as much suspected as any of these? It is notorious that this hath not been scrupled by many who have scrupled the other: and yet, if this be not *unlawful*, neither is the other; and if it be not *unlawful*, it may be complied with.

I desire it may be considered also, that Our *Church* hath sufficiently, and openly, declared what a distinction she puts between these *Apocryphal* Books, and those which are *Canonical*; that no Chapter out of these Books is appointed to be read

in the *Service for Sundays*; that these Books are full of most excellent lessons and instructions; full of such instructions as it is good for the People to be acquainted with; that they have been always highly esteemed in the *Church*; and that on those days they are read in the *Church*, there are also lessons out of the *New Testament* appointed with them; and all things necessary for the public Service of God. Nor can I think, that you judge it a *Sin* to read these Books in the public Service of God, as the *Church of England* hath declared they should be read, *viz.* *for example of life, and instruction of manners, but not to establish any doctrine.* And if it may Art. 6. be done without *sin*, certainly it were much better to read a great many useful things, and amongst them a *fabulous* story, once or twice in a Year, than to divide the *Church* under this pretence.

But you argue not only against reading those parts of the *Apocrypha* which you suppose to be *fabulous*, but against what you acknowledge to be *valuable* in it also, representing these books as read *under the title and notion of Holy Scripture*; nay, *in the room of Holy Scripture*. This we account hard indeed, that our *Church* should be thus represented, when it hath been declared after the most public manner, that *in the name of the Holy Scripture we do understand those Canonical Books of the Old and New Testament, of whose authority there* Art. 6. *never was any doubt in the Church.* And in the same article the *Apocryphal Books* are number'd up, and call'd the *other Books*; and it is professed, that the *Church doth not apply them to establish any doctrine.* Now, can any one suppose after this, that this *Church* reads these Books *under the notion of Holy Scripture*? Nay, is it possible the *Church* should be so inconsistent with it self? You can produce no sentence out of all its public *offices*, or *declarations*, in which the *Apocrypha* is called the *Holy Scripture*. The *Order* which you cite for this, follows the *Order* concerning the *Psalter*, and is intituled, *The Order how the rest of Holy Scripture is appointed to be read.* And

in it there is not one word of any thing but the *Old Testament* and the *New*. The *Apocrypha* is not nam'd. I grant indeed that in the *Rubric* the *First Lesson* is said to be a *Lesson* out of the *Old Testament*, and yet some of the *First Lessons* are out of the *Apocrypha*. But, because this is thus expressed, where exact niceness was not at all necessary; must this be the foundation of an *Objection*, which you your selves know how sufficiently to answer from that *article* of our *Church* in which these *Books* are spoken of designedly, and therefore with more exactness? They must be very severe indeed, and strongly inclined to find fault, who can pass by the plain declarations of the *Church*, where it professedly speaks of the *Apocrypha*; and build such a charge as this, upon an *Order* where the *Apocryphal Books* are not so much as named; and upon a *Rubric*, in which the greatest exactness of expression was neither required nor designed.

It sounds very hard too, when you say that these *Books* are read *in the room of Holy Scripture*, and that *some Canonical Books* are omitted, *curtail'd*, *mutilated*, and the like. These are *Phrases* that leave a strong Impression upon the Minds of the People; and you need not doubt of prejudicing them against our Service with such Terms of Accusation as these. But you must be sensible this is not fair, and reasonable: For you know, that there is no Obligation to read every Chapter, from *Genesis* to the *Revelations*, in the public Worship of God; you know, that some Chapters, which are call'd *Canonical*, are such as may be improper, and unintelligible; such as are of very little Concern to the Christian People; wholly out of their reach; of little Advantage, either to the informing their Minds in any important Matter, or to the raising their Devotion; you know, that many of those *Apocryphal Lessons* are truly of more use, and more to the Edification of the People, than any of those Chapters which are omitted. And why then should this always be spoken of, as if the People were robb'd of
the

the Word of God, and fabulous Legends were impos'd upon them instead of it, to be the Rule of their Lives?

And as for your Imagination, that the People are led by this to think these Apocryphal Books of equal Authority with the Canonical Scriptures; how poor an Insinuation is this! When the Church hath declar'd, and gives Authority to all Ministers to declare, that they are not. This is a Truth you may as effectually convince the People of, in the Church of *England*, as you can do by separating from it. I mean, if they will hear Reason; and if they will not, it is no matter what they believe, or what they disbelieve. But that any one of them was ever led by the Order about reading the Lessons, to think that these Books were of equal Authority with the Canonical Books, is what, I dare say, you cannot prove. I am sure, I never knew or heard of an Instance. And till I do, I shall hardly think it so likely to come to pass as you represent it. But I proceed.

4. *You cannot consent to the Mistranslation of the Psalter: and therefore cannot conform as Ministers.* The Instance you produce is *Psalms* 105. 28. *And they were not obedient unto his Word; where the Translation in our Bible reads, and they rebelled not against his Word.* Now, *First*, How can you assent that they rebelled, and rebelled not? I answer, 1. Supposing these Two Propositions speak of the same Persons (which you take for granted) I desire to know where you are requir'd to assent that they rebelled not? to assent either to the *Truth*, or to the *Use* of that Sentence? Your *Assent* can extend no farther than to what is appointed by the *Common-Prayer Book* in the Public Service: and I know not, that the Translation of the *Psalms*, as it is in our Bibles, hath any part in it. And, 2. Supposing the Subjects of these Two Propositions to be different (as indeed they are) were your *Assent* to be extended to both, it might be given most readily and safely. For, cannot I assent that the *Egyptians* rebell'd, and that *Moses*, and *Aaron*, rebell'd not? But, *Secondly*, How can you subscribe that there is nothing in our Service

contrary to the Word of God, when this is? I answer, 1. You here take our *English* Translation of the Bible to be the Word of God; which I think it cannot assume to itself any farther than with respect to the main and substantial Parts of it. The same may be said of all Translations. Nay, it doth not appear that any Copy, either of the *Old* or *New Testament*, preserv'd to us in the *Original Languages* in which they were written, hath been so much the Care of Providence in those Parts of it which are of no great or general Concern, as that we can certainly say, this is the true reading, and the Copies that differ from this in these Points, are not to be regarded. The great Ends of Revelation may all be serv'd without this miraculous Providence: and, as they may, so we find they have been. 2. In many such Places as this, you cannot say the *Hebrew* must necessarily be interpreted thus, and no otherwise; when you consider how the most learned Commentators and Interpreters have differ'd. And tho' the Translation of our Psalter be granted, in this place, to be more conform'd to the *Septuagint*, than to the *Hebrew*, as we now have it; yet, pray, from what did the *Septuagint* translate? and to what did they conform their Translation? Can you certainly demonstrate that our *Hebrew* Copy is more uncorrupted than theirs in such Passages as this? But, 3. Supposing you were fully persuad'd that the *Hebrew* ought to be translated here, *And they rebelled not against his Word*; of whom do you understand this? Of *Moses* and *Aaron*, say the best Commentators, who render it thus. The *Septuagint* translate it, *And they were not obedient unto his Word*. Of whom do they understand it? Of *Moses* and *Aaron*? No, but of the *Egyptians*. Now how, I pray, do these Two Sentences contradict one another; *Moses and Aaron rebelled not*, and, *The Egyptians rebelled*? If you but look into the *Synopsis* of Commentators, you will find that all who render it the former way, understand it either of *Moses* and *Aaron*; or of the Signs and Prodigies: and that all who render it the latter way, understand

derstand it of the *Egyptians*. Where then is this Contradiction? To conclude this Head. The Declaration of *Affent* and *Consent* toucheth this Translation no farther than to oblige you to use it in the Public Worship. And if a Translation, tho' it be faulty, may not be us'd in our Churches; shew us a Translation that is perfect; or one that hath not greater Failings than this you have produc'd. *Subscription* obligeth you to say that there is nothing in this Translation contrary to the Word of God: and there are so many Things requir'd to the proving a Translation contrary to the Word of God in such Points as this, that I may say, it is almost impossible to do it.

5. *You cannot assent and consent to the Athanasian Creed:* and, therefore, cannot conform as *Ministers*. The Expression you scruple is this, *Which Faith except every one do keep whole and undefiled, without doubt he shall perish everlastingly.* Here you give me leave to say, that you esteem this *Creed* an excellent *Explication* of the *Doctrine* of the *Trinity*. By which you mean, to be sure, agreeable to the Word of God, and to Truth. From whence I argue; If this *Explication* be true, and agreeable to the Word of God; then, it is a good general Proposition, that *whosoever doth not believe it, shall be condemn'd at the last Day:* which is only the same thing in other Words. Now, when we express our selves thus, we do not mean to condemn those who have not plain and certain Means of coming to the Knowledge of this; but only such who have the Means of coming to it, and yet, through some Fault in themselves, refuse to believe it. And you your selves, I doubt not, understand such general Propositions in Scripture with this Restriction. You would assent to this Proposition, *Whosoever believeth not in Christ, shall be condemn'd;* and yet not look upon your selves as so far call'd to judge other Men, as to conclude all certainly damn'd for ever who did not believe in him; but such as had Means and Opportunity, and yet did not. Make the same Allowance for this Proposition which refers to an excellent *Explication* of what you acknowledge to be a great and weighty

weighty Truth, recommended to us in Scripture; and be not unwilling to find out as found a Sense for this, as you do for others: which if I thought you could not do without renouncing your Candor and Charity, I would never urge you to it. But tho' I cannot but wonder to find you always so very ready to pitch upon the worst Interpretation of every Sentence in our Service; and am fully persuaded there is nothing in this, but what may be said with a good Conscience; yet I confess, I agree with you thus far, that I cannot apprehend how the Public Service would suffer, were there no such damnable Sentence ever read in it. Nay, I am of Opinion, that the Doctrine of the Trinity would be better secur'd, and this very Account of it better receiv'd, without such Sentences, than with them.

6. You must assent and consent to this Rubric, that none shall be admitted to the Holy Communion, until such time as he be confirm'd, or be ready and desirous to be confirm'd; which you cannot do; and so cannot conform as Ministers. A great Grievance indeed! that all who are to be admitted to the Communion, should be oblig'd solemnly, before the Bishop, to own their Baptismal Covenant; and to have his Prayers, and the Prayers of the Congregation for them! Who would have thought this could ever have been scrupled by any serious Christian? But what cannot Weakness and Prejudice lead Men to? If this Confirmation be not commonly manag'd with a becoming Gravity and seriousness, as you insinuate, it is the Fault of the Bishop who officiates; for I am sure it may be manag'd most gravely and seriously, because I know it hath often been so manag'd, and with great and visible Advantage to many. And what is there in it that a Christian ought not to comply with? And why must this be call'd a *Diocesan Ceremony*, when an essential part of it is the most solemn Profession of Christianity, to be made by the Persons to be confirm'd? Besides, I have shewn before that you could have join'd in imposing some Things upon the
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People, which would have excluded many scrupulous Persons from Communion; and therefore, this cannot be an Argument to you against conforming as Ministers.

Thus have I gone over all your Reasons against the second thing requir'd of Ministers in the Church of *England*, which you think unreasonable, *viz.* *Assent* and *Consent*, and *Subscription*: and have remark'd, under every Head, whatever appear'd convincing to my self, or apt to satisfy you. I must proceed now to the Third

III. The Third Thing requir'd of Ministers in the Church of *England*, which you think unreasonable, is, *To take the Oath of Canonical Obedience; and swear Subjection to their Ordinary according to the Canons of the Church.* This you cannot do, and therefore cannot conform as Ministers. Here I must observe to you, that you are guilty of Two Mistakes in the very drawing up of this Article. 1. You here insert these Words, *according to the Canons of the Church*: for in that Form of Words to which the Persons to be ordain'd are to answer, in order to declare they will obey their *Ordinary* and their *Superiors*, there is no mention of the *Canons of the Church*; but the Words are, *following with a glad Mind, and Will, their godly Admonitions, and submitting your selves to their godly Judgments.* And it is a little hard indeed that such a Form of Words as this cannot please you. How can you say, that this is obliging your selves to an absolute Obedience to them; or, that this Declaration doth not leave you so much as a Judgment of Discretion, when the Words do not import any thing like it? when they would have been just the same, had there not been one Canon settled in this Church; and would certainly have been very different from what they are, if an unrestrained and unlimited Obedience had been thought of by those who put them into this Form? And, 2. You speak as if no one could be Ordain'd in the Church of *England*, without taking the Oath of Canonical Obedience: which is not true; for this Oath is not to be found in
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the Ordination-Office: and therefore I must observe to you, that tho' I had invincible Scruples aganſt this particular Oath, yet, if I thought my ſelf under a Neceſſity of miniſtring in ſome Church or other, I would rather miniſter in this Church as far as I could without taking it, than divide the Communion of Chriſtians on this Account: I ſay not this becauſe I think it in the leaſt unreaſonable to require all Miniſters to take this Oath (in the true Senſe of the Words) to the Biſhop of the Dioceſe in which their Charge lyes; or becauſe I think your Arguments aganſt it unanſwerable: for I ſhall now endeavour to ſhew that it is not unreaſonable, and that your Arguments aganſt it do not prove it ſo.

In order to this, let us enquire freely, and without Prejudice, into the true Meaning, and Intent of this Oath. A Perſon coming to ſettle in the Dioceſe of one particular Biſhop; to exerciſe his Office under his Eye and Inſpection; is oblig'd to declare upon Oath, that he will pay Obedience to him in theſe Words, *I ſwear that I will yield true and Canonical Obedience to the Biſhop of N-----and his Succeſſors, in all lawful and honeſt things;* which I think cannot be interpreted any otherwiſe than thus; *I ſwear that I will yield ſuch an Obedience as is due,* according to the Laws of Chriſt's Church, *from an inferior Preſbyter to his Biſhop, viz. a ſincere, ready, and ſubmiſſive Obedience, in all lawful and honeſt Things, z. e.* provided he enjoin nothing, but what I apprehend in my Conſcience to be lawful and honeſt. Here it is plain from the Reaſon of requiring this Oath, that it refers, and can refer to nothing but what this one Biſhop ſhall ſee fit to require. It is plain that the laſt Words, *in all lawful and honeſt Things,* refer to all the Injunctions of this Biſhop; and do ſuppoſe that every Injunction he lays upon you may poſſibly be unlawful, and diſhoneſt. If you ſay they do not, how do you prove it? I am ſure it is impoſſible. If they do, then they refer as well to his Injunctions in Caſes which the Canons reach to, as to Caſes which they reach not to: and this being ſo, this

Oath

Oath hinders not in the least, but that you may demur upon the one sort of Injunctions, as well as upon the other. And that you your self are Judge of the Lawfulness and Honesty of every Command is so plain, that nothing can be plainer. For what can these last Words signify unless you be? and if you be not, I pray, who is? not the Bishop, it is plain; for the Oath supposes that every thing he commands may be unlawful. So that this appears to be the Case. Here is an Oath of Obedience to one particular Bishop, as long as you remain in his Diocese: here is no reference to any thing but the Injunctions of this particular Bishop: here is no Distinction made between his Injunctions according to the Canons, and others; but all included: and this Obedience not left unrestrain'd, and loose, (as it is in other Oaths which yet you do not scruple) but determin'd only to Things which you your selves think lawful and honest. From whence I think these Two Things are plain. That this Oath can have no reference to the Canons, or any of them, but as they are Matter of this particular Bishop's Injunctions: and that, when they are the Matter of any of his Injunctions, you have a Liberty to demur upon them as well as any other of his Injunctions, any thing in this Oath notwithstanding. For they are not the Commands of this Bishop, till he hath commanded the Observation of them: and when he hath, still the Oath it self supposes that it is possible, every one of his Commands may be unlawful. One thing more I add, and that is, that this Oath can refer to none but future Commands; because it is to be taken with relation only to one particular Person who never had any Right to your Obedience till this time. You come now under his Jurisdiction and Government: and from this time he is to give you Directions in the Execution of your Office, and lay Injunctions upon you, as Occasion requires; and upon this Account only is this Oath administer'd to you. And if you would consider Things in their due Light, you must acknowledge, that

It is express'd in Words which give as much Latitude, and as much Liberty to them who take it, as the most conscientious Persons upon Earth could desire: Nay, I would gladly know in what Words you would rather chuse to promise Obedience to your Bishop; and what Form you can devise, that could imply absolute Obedience less than this doth. But I now come to your Objections against it.

And here I do not find, that you attempt to prove that the Words of the Oath do plainly signify an *absolute Obedience to every one of the Canons* not abrogated by some Public Act; or that any Public Act of the Church declares, that Ministers are understood by this Oath to swear Obedience to all Canons not so abrogated: tho' somewhat like this one might justly expect. Nor do I find that you judge thus of this Oath from the Word *Canonical*, inserted in it: for you say the same of that Promise of *Obedience to the Ordinary* requir'd of Persons to be *Ordain'd*, in which no such Word is made use of. What then are the Reasons why this Oath is not to be comply'd with?

1. The *First* is this; because *as all Obedience hath a relation to the Mandates of those who are to obey: so the Canons of the Church are the stated Laws of the Ecclesiastical Government: and therefore the Oath of Canonical Obedience which hath a reference to these Canons, carries in it a plain Obligation to comply with them, without leaving Persons at Liberty which to obey, and which to refuse, &c.* I have shewn before that this Oath cannot possibly refer to the Canons, but as they become the Injunctions of one particular Bishop: and that it not only permits, but obliges all Ministers, in effect, to refuse Obedience to any of his Injunctions, when they appear not to them to be lawful and honest. When I swear Obedience to one particular Person (as the Case is here) this *Obedience* hath no relation to the Injunctions of any Persons in the World except this one: and when I swear *Obedience* to him only in Things lawful and honest, I oblige my self to *Obedi-*
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ence in nothing but what is to me lawful and honest. Neither the Canons of the Church, nor any Things antecedently requir'd have the least relation to this Oath. Nor is the Question here, whether the Canons be without fault; but whether you will obey this particular *Bishop in all lawful and honest Things.*

Let me put a Case now which appears to me to be exactly parrallel; and which may serve to explain yet more fully the Point now before us. Supposing you were now coming into this City, to act in some *inferior Office* under the Inspection of the *Lord-Mayor* (who is one of the chief Officers under his Prince, as the Bishop is under Jesus Christ) in the Execution of which Office you might often have occasion to consult him, and he often find occasion to send his Directions and Injunctions to you. Supposing you were oblig'd upon your coming under his Jurisdiction, and within the Bounds of his Government, to take this Oath, *I swear that I will yield true and legal Obedience to the Lord Mayor, &c. in all lawful and honest Things,* I desire to know, 1. Whether this Oath can have a reference to all the stated Laws by which the *Lord-Mayor* is to govern, any farther than as they are the Matter of his Commands to you: Or, whether it can possibly refer to any thing but this particular Governour's future Commands? considering that the only Reason why you are call'd upon to take it is, because you are now coming to act under his Eye, and in an inferior Office, in which you are often to have Directions from him? 2. Whether a *Legal Obedience* to the *Lord-Mayor* can signify any thing in this Oath, but such a sincere, honest, submissive *Obedience* as the Laws require of an inferior *Officer* to his Superior, under whose Inspection he is to act? considering that the Word *Legal* is join'd with *Obedience*, as the Word *True* is, to explain what sort of *Obedience* is expected: and as for the Extent of this *Obedience*, there are other *Words* purposely added to restrain it to *lawful, and honest, Things* only. 3. Whether you might not, any thing in this *Oath* notwithstanding,

ing, refuse Obedience to any Commands of the *Lord-Mayor* that you apprehend to be unlawful, without enquiring whether these Commands be according to the Laws of the Land or no? considering that this Oath relates to nothing but the Injunctions of this Governour.

4. Whether you might not honestly take this Oath, without so much as knowing what Laws the *Lord-Mayor* himself is obliged to act by; or what Injunctions, it is probable, he will lay upon you; only resolving to yield Obedience to him, *in all lawful and honest things*? considering that the Occasion of this Oath, and the Words of it restrain this Obedience to the Directions of this particular Governour; and that it is time enough for you to judge of the lawfulness of them, when they are signified to you 5. Whether the last Words of the Oath do not plainly signify, that you your self are left sole judge of the lawfulness and honesty of the Commands, and of all as well as some of them? considering that there is no Distinction either made or implied in the Oath; that these last Words can signify nothing, and are but a *nonsensical Addition*, if you suppose that you oblige your self by this Oath blindly to obey any of the Commands of your Superiour, without *leaving your self so much as a judgment of Discretion*, whether they be lawful or not.

Now, if you apply what I have said, to the *Case* before us; and be but as willing to put a true interpretation upon the *Oath of Canonical Obedience* to the *Bishop*, as I believe you would be to put a true interpretation upon such an *Oath* to the *Lord-Mayor*, I am persuaded not a word more is necessary. But I cannot help declaring, what I constantly find hitherto to be true, that you are more willing to make *Nonsense*, *Absurdity*, and *Contradictions*, of any of those *Declarations*, or *Sentences*, upon which you found your *Objections*, than to allow them such a Construction as will make them appear less *rigid* than your *Fathers*, or you, have represented them: for fear (one would think) that the World should come at last to esteem *Ministerial Conformity* to the *Church of England* a
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very pardonable thing. If you blame me for being so free as to declare this, I can do nothing but appeal to this Chapter now before me for the proof of it. And I desire you would consider whether you give us not a just occasion of laying this to your charge in the *Case* now before us. Here is an *Oath* to be taken: and rather than it should not appear *Egregious Dissimulation* (as your words are) to take it, you do indeed put a sense upon it which neither the words, nor design, can admit of. For, to return to your *Objection*, nothing can be plainer than that an Obedience to a *Governour*, restrain'd in express terms to *things lawful*, can have no relation to any thing but *things* accounted by you to be *lawful*; yet here we have it affirmed, that such an *Obedience* hath a relation to *all the Stated Laws* by which the *Governour* is to act, though you account them *unlawful*. Nothing can be plainer, than that this *Oath* supposes that all his Commands may be *unlawful*, and leaves you to judge of *all* as well as *some*; yet here it is affirmed, that it leaves you not so much as a *judgment of Discretion*, as to *some* of them. Nothing is plainer than that the reason and design of this *Oath* restrains it to the *Future Commands of one particular Bishop*; yet we have it maintain'd that it supposes an *Obligation to comply with the things antecedently required by others*. Where, I beseech you, is this supposed? What words are here in this *Oath* that do plainly, nay, that can possibly refer to any thing *antecedently required*? Or, is this supposed in the *Reason* of the *Oath*? That, I am sure, is apparently against you. If neither in the *Reason*, nor the *Words* of it, where else can this *Obligation* be supposed? For my part, I am convinc'd that no *Arts*, or *Metaphysics*, in the World can be sufficient to make good this part of your charge. And indeed you seem to me to confute your own Accusation in this place. For after you have acknowledged that there is in the *Oath* a *Limitation* of this *Obedience* to things *lawful and honest*, you grant this *Limitation is to be extended only to Future Commands*. From whence I argue (and I recommend the Argument to your

Consideration) that the *Oath* it self can be extended to nothing but *Future Commands*. For, if these Words, *all lawful and honest things*, refer to *Future Commands* only, as you say they do; then an *Obedience* promised in *all lawful and honest things* can refer to nothing but *Future Commands*. If the *Limitation* extend only to *Future Commands*; then the *Obedience* promised with this *Limitation*, extends only to *Future Commands*. If there be any other *Obedience* sworn in these Words, besides a *limited* one, let it be plainly shewn. If there be not, let it be acknowledged, that a *Limited Obedience*, can refer to nothing, but what the *Limitation* refers to. What might have been expected, if such a *Limitation* had not been added; when, now it is added in plain Words, the *Obedience* promised with a *Limitation*, is made to extend to *Injunctions* to which the *Limitation* it self is acknowledged not to extend? Nay, besides all this, supposing this *Oath* to refer to *Obedience to the Canons* already settled; can you possibly invent a better Argument to prove that an *absolute Obedience* to every one of them not abrogated is promised in it, than the last Words will afford us that it is not? All you can say is, that *surely whatever the Church Representative requires cannot be supposed unlawful by those who profess so great a Reverence for all its dictates as some do*, which is rather Banter than Argument: but we can produce the very Words of the *Oath* supposing that every one of them may be scrupled by you unless you your self judge them *lawful and honest*: and we are not now enquiring what I, or any other private Person, think; but what this *Oath* supposes, or implies.

Now, if the account of this *Oath* which I have now laid down, be a true one, as I verily believe it is; it is plain that all your *Objections* drawn from the *Canons*, let the *Obedience* to them be never so much antecedently required, are no more *Objections* against the taking this *Oath*, than they are against taking the *Oath of Allegiance*. And, therefore, I need not trouble you, or my self with any thing particular in Defense of every *Canon* you object against;

against; though, I assure you, I could shew that you put most unreasonable Interpretations upon many of them; and represent their Sense very unfairly; and argue unjustly against them. If I have proved that this Oath cannot refer to any *absolute Obedience* to them, I have done what is sufficient to remove this *Reason* against your *conforming as Ministers*. From what hath been said it appears also, that the Case of a *Minister*, in this matter, is not the same with that of a *Justice of Peace*, as you represent it to be; unless the Oath a *Justice* takes, be an Oath of Obedience to the Future Commands of one particular Person, under whose inspection He is to execute his Office: and unless the Obedience be limited to *lawful and honest things*; and a liberty left him of demurring upon the Commands of his *Superiors*. But supposing this Oath of a *Minister* had been expressed after the same manner with that of a *Justice of Peace*; do you really think that a *Justice* binds himself to execute every particular Law of the Land not publicly abrogated when called to it? Do you think that a Gentleman might not honestly take upon him that Office, tho' He did not so much as know all the Laws He might possibly be called, one time or other, to execute; nay, tho' there were Laws, not abrogated, which He was resolved never to execute; provided they were such as His *Prince* neither at present requires Him, nor would, in all probability, require Him to execute during his whole Life? Such as were grown to be universally disused, and that disuse constantly connived at? This would be no very grateful Lesson to many of your own Friends, or indeed to any *Justice* in the whole Land. But I do not believe you think hardly of any such Gentlemen; and yet none of their Superiors would let them openly explain their meaning, and say, *These Laws I will execute, and these I will not*. They certainly act sincerely and honestly, in taking such an Oath, if they satisfy their Consciences as to those Laws which they themselves may probably, in the present State of things, be called and required to execute.

cute. Now, I say, supposing this Oath of *Ministers* to be parallel to that of *Justices*, you are obliged either to shew that a *Justice* binds himself to the Execution of every particular *Law* not abrogated, (which you cannot do,) or to make the same allowances for *Ministers* as you can do, upon occasion, for others; and not to think harder of them than you usually do of others. But,

2. *Another Capital Reason* (as you term it) why this Oath is scrupled is, *because the Episcopal Government is managed by Chancellour's Courts, where Laymen excommunicate, and absolve, &c.* I need only mention this. For I have before shewn that there is nothing promised in this Oath but an Obedience to the *Future Commands* of one particular Governour, limited only to such things as you your self judge to be lawful: and therefore need not go over all your sad and unjust Aggravations of this. Employ all your Art and Rhetorick to make this as foul as you would have it appear; Call it by what names you please; I see not how it touches the matter before us; for, let the Case be never so bad, and your Representation of it never so true; (which indeed it is not) this Oath obligeth you to no Obedience but what you your self shall think lawful. It binds you not to act *Blindfold*; or to overthrow the *Pastoral Office*; or to approve of *sacrilegious Prophaneness*; or to trust your Consciences with *Lay-men*; or to be the Instruments of *molesting, worrying, and ruining as Religious Persons as any in your Parishes*; but only to obey your *Bishop in all lawful things*. Look over these Passages again; and see with what Conscience you can thus represent either this Oath, or the promise of Obedience to the *Ordinary*; both of which can relate to nothing but the *Future Commands* of some particular Men, and are drawn up with such a *Limitation plainly expressed*, as you are forced to understand in almost every other Oath you take. I do not deny that it is possible you may suffer some Inconvenience for refusing Obedience in some Cases. But it is but possible; and I do not think you can produce any Instances of *Ministers* who have suffered any thing considerable

derable for it. But this is not the Point, what possible Inconveniencies a Minister is liable to: but what Obedience he obligeth himself to, by the Oath we are now considering: and to say that he obligeth himself to any blindfold acting, is to say what is directly contrary to the Words and Design of it. I shall only now set down the Oath before the Reader's Face, and with it the Two Interpretations; that which You have fixed upon it; and that which I apprehend to be the only one of which it is capable; that so he may the more easily judge between us. The Oath is this, *I swear that I will yield true and Canonical Obedience to the Bishop of N. in all lawful and honest things.* Your Interpretation of it is this, *I swear that I will obey every one of the Canons, (not publicly abrogated) as being antecedently obliging; and supposed to contain nothing but what is lawful and honest: and also that I will obey the Future Commands of this Bishop in all lawful and honest things.* In which you are forced to make the Oath consist of two Parts, to one of which you apply the last Words; and to the other you do not: in one of which you promise a limited Obedience to the Commands of the Bishop; in the other an absolute Obedience to something else: whereas the last Words do manifestly restrain all the Obedience promised: and the Oath refers to nothing but the Commands of one Person. The Interpretation I apprehend to be the true one, and that of which alone it is capable, is this; *I now coming to act under the Eye and Inspection of this particular Bishop, do swear, that I will yield a true Obedience to Him, and such a sincere, ready, and submissive Obedience as, by the Laws of the Church, is required of a Presbyter to his Bishop, in all things, that according to the best light I have, I can apprehend to be lawful and honest.* This is the Oath, and these are the Two Interpretations; and let any one in the World judge, which is most agreeable to the Design and words of it. From what I have said on this Head, give me leave to conclude, that it is so far from being Egregious Dissimulation to take this Oath with a Reserve to demur upon the Commands afterwards given, let them be

what they will ; that you cannot possibly take this *Oath* in the plain Sense of the Words in which it is framed, *without this reserve*, unless you make two *Oaths* of it, and make a *distinction* out of your own Heads inconsistent with the Words of it. But I have done. Only I desire it may be observed, that for all these long and tragical Exclamations upon this *Oath* to the *Bishop*, and *Promise* of *Obedience* to the *Ordinary*, we have only Mr. *Baxter*, and one of his last Books quoted ; though for the other Heads of Accusation many others are added. Not that I think that what is here said is ever the more to be rejected on this Account, if it appear reasonable ; but yet, this is a prejudice against it, and a presumption that the matter may be mistaken, and his terrible *Invective* misapplied.

But you will say, What then ? Is no *Obedience* due from a *Minister* to the *Canons* ? Yes, certainly ; but not by this *Oath*, unless as they become the *Commands* of his *Bishop* ; nor then, any *absolute Obedience*. Not by this *Oath*, I say ; and that is what we are now considering. But I add, that whoever designs to officiate as a *Minister* in any *Church*, certainly acts not fairly and honestly, if he do not first satisfy his Conscience about the lawfulness of *Obedience* to such *Rules* and *Prescriptions* as have been laid down and agreed upon by the *Governours* of this *Church*, for the regulating the Behaviour of all who minister in it ; and resolve to obey them. But then the *Rules* and *Prescriptions* he is to satisfy himself about, can be only such as concern his own Behaviour and Conduct in his Office ; And of these, only such as he is supposed by the *present Governours* of the *Church* to be obliged and ready to obey. For it is very plain, that I am concerned only in the *Present Time* ; and obliged to *Obedience* to no *Rules* but those to which *Obedience* is *now* required ; those which are *now* esteemed to be obligatory. Concerning the *Canons* therefore against which you object (those, I mean, which concern the Conduct of *Ministers*) I ask, Are they not such as are altered and repealed by any subsequent

subsequent Laws? Or, such as that Obedience to them at this time cannot be performed? Or, such as are generally disused, and that *disuse* not clandestine, but known, and connived at by all in Authority? If they be, they concern not the present *Ministers*; for *they* are obliged to obey no Law, Obedience to which is not at *present* required: and need not trouble themselves about any *Canons*, but what are at present esteemed to be obliging. If they be not, I grant that they are certainly *now* supposed to be in force; and every *Minister* supposed to be ready to comply with them, and obliged to do it. Now if you look into that Catalogue of *Canons* you have produced, and separate those of this latter sort from the others, I hope you will find upon the review, either that you are mistaken in the Sense you have put upon them; or that I have in the foregoing Discourse proposed what is sufficient to prove it very lawful both for the *Ministers* to pay Obedience to them, and for their *Governours* to require it. But, however this be, I am sure it is not reasonable, nor justifiable, for Persons to *Conform* as *Ministers* to a Church, in which there are *Laws* laid down for their Behaviour in their *Office*; and these *Laws* neither abrogated, nor disused with connivance: to *Conform*, I say, as *Ministers* to such a Church, without a Resolution of obeying these *Laws*. For this is not open and fair; it is putting a Deceit upon the *Governours*, who to be sure, doubt not but that all who offer themselves to the *Ministry*, are satisfied in their Consciences of the lawfulness of acting according to these *Prescriptions*. And it looks not sincere for Men first to offer themselves to the *Ministry* in this Church, which is in effect, to profess that they are ready to conform to such of the *Canons* as relate to their Behaviour, and are *now* in force; and afterwards to act as they think fit without regard to these *Canons*: *First*, to make a shew of Obedience to these *Laws*; and after this to act *Clandestinely* till they are found out and censured; and then to think it enough to submit to the Penalty, which they must do, whether

ther they will or no. The *Law* was certainly made to be obeyed; and the *Penalty* was not added to intimate that any might take their choice whether they would conform to the *Law*, or submit to *that*; or as it if were an indifferent thing to our *Governours* whether we chose to *obey*, or to *suffer*. It was added for the sake of Men who have no Consciences, not for the sake of those who have. This is what seemed to me proper and necessary to be said on this Occasion.

Thus have I finished one part of what I undertook; and have, with the utmost sincerity, and the greatest regard to Truth, considered those *Terms of Ministerial Conformity* which you judge to be *Unreasonable*, and endeavoured to return such answers to the *Objections* made in your Names against them, as appeared truly convincing and satisfactory: which was the *First* thing I proposed. I promised in the *Second* place to shew that the Arguments produc'd by Mr. *Calamy* in Defense of your selves, are not sufficient to justify your *Separation*, even supposing these *Terms of Ministerial Conformity* to be *Unreasonable*; And, *Thirdly*, To consider what is advanced by *Him* for the Vindication of your People. What I shall offer to you under these *two Heads* will be wholly distinct from what is said under the *First*; and the *Arguments* to be proposed under *them*, of no relation to the *Argument* founded upon *this*. So that, for this, and some other *Reasons*, I shall beg leave to reserve them for *another Part*; which I promise shall wait upon you with all convenient haste. In the mean while, permit me to leave this Argument with you.

The *Terms of Ministerial Conformity* to the *Church of England* are such as may very lawfully be complied with.

Therefore, supposing it necessary for you to *minister* in some *Church* or other, you ought to *conform* as *Ministers* to the *Church of England*.

This Consequence you acknowledge, if the former Proposition be true. And for the Truth of that, I can only appeal to what I have said in the foregoing Discourse: which I, therefore, intreat you to examine, not with the rigour of those, whose only business it is to think the worst of every thing they once disliked; but with such a temper of Mind as becomes Persons whose Duty it is most willingly to admit of all reasonable Arguments that can be offered in Defense of Conformity to the Establish'd Church.

The

*The Reasonableness of Conformity to the
Church of England, represented to the
Dissenting Ministers, &c.*

P A R T II.

One would have thought, that if their Opinions had been certainly true; and their Church-Order good; yet the Interest of Christ, and of greater Truths should have been regarded; and that they should not tear the Garment of Christ all to pieces, rather than it should want their Lace. Mr. Baxter in his *Account of the Sectaries*, Abridg. p 93.

HAVING, in the former Part of this Reply, endeavour'd to answer the Objections advanc'd by Mr. Calamy, in your Names, against the Terms of Ministerial Conformity, in the Church of *England*, and to give you all reasonable Satisfaction that they are not so unjust and unlawful as you have imagin'd and represented them to be; which was the *first* thing I propos'd: I now come to the remaining part of what I undertook, *viz.*

II. To shew that the Arguments propos'd by Mr. Calamy in Defense of your selves, are not sufficient to justify your Separation, even supposing the *Terms of Ministerial-Conformity* to be unreasonable. And,

III. To consider what is offer'd by him in Vindication of your *People*.

Indeed I cannot but hope, upon the most serious Consideration, that You Your selves are sensible how sadly the *Terms of Ministerial Conformity* have been mistaken, and misrepresented; and that I have said already what may make it needless to add any thing more upon this Subject. But this I must leave to your own Consciences; and am oblig'd to proceed, in the Method I at first propos'd, to consider all that I find alleg'd in Defense of *Nonconformity*, that so the Merits of this Cause may be fairly and thoroughly tried, and nothing be left untouch'd in a Matter of such Consequence. I shall now therefore endeavour,

II. To shew that the *Arguments* propos'd by Mr. Calamy in Defense of Your selves, are not sufficient to justify your *Behaviour*, even supposing the *Terms of Ministerial Conformity* to be *unreasonable*. By *unreasonable* here, I mean *unreasonable* in your Opinions, such as You could not with a safe Conscience comply with, such as You could not, after all your Consideration, heartily approve of, or submit to, without Sin. If you could have join'd with them without sinning, You acknowledge that You ought to have done it, and you profess that You would have done it. But not being able to *minister publicly* in the *Church of England* without acting against Your Consciences, You *minister publicly* in a *separate way*. After therefore that Mr. Calamy hath produced, in your Names, the *Reasons* why You think the *Terms of Ministerial Conformity* unreasonable, and a Compliance with them sinful; He advances the *Arguments* which induce You to *minister publicly* in a *separate way*. Accordingly, I now suppose his *Reasons* to be sufficient to prove that a Compliance with those *Terms* had been *sinful* in You; and come to examine his *Arguments* for your *Public Ministrations*. And in order to do this distinctly and clearly, I shall,

I. Consider the *Arguments* offered in Vindication of those amongst You, who were in the *Ministry* before the

Act of Uniformity, and have ever since continued the *public Exercise* of it; and examine whether they be sufficient to defend your Practice in so doing. And,

2. I shall consider how far these *Arguments* can vindicate the Practice of *those* amongst You, who have ordained others, and of *those* who have been *ordained* to the *Ministry*, since that *Act*.

Under the *former* of these, that I may the more effectually compass the End I propose, I judge it to be the properest Method, *first*, to draw up the *Arguments* I meet with fairly and honestly, in such a Form that every Body may presently see their utmost Force; and *then* to return what appears to me to be a *sufficient Answer* to them.

The *First* and *Second* are built upon the same Principle, and may be united together. The Import of them is this,

We dare not lay aside the *public Exercise* of our *Ministry*, because we cannot do it without being guilty of *perfidious breaking our Ordination Vow*, by which we oblig'd our selves to the diligent Performance of our *Ministry*; and of *Sacrilege*, in alienating Persons who have been consecrated to God.

This Reasoning, we see, is founded upon that *Vow* you had before made, and that *Dedication* by which You had solemnly given your selves up to the Service of God in the *Ministry*. Now, I confess I know not what it was that You *explicitely* promised, when You devoted Your selves to the Service of God in the *Ministry*; but I am sure nothing ought to be *implied* in such a *Vow*, and such a *Dedication*, that is contrary to the Service of that God to whom You dedicated your selves, or inconsistent with the Good of the *Christian Church*, in which You obliged your selves by *Vow* to *minister*. This, I believe, You will easily grant me, if I make You Judges in the Case, that no *Vow* to serve God in any particular way (let it be never so solemn) can be supposed to oblige, when the Performance of it will tend to the *Disservice* and *Disbo-*
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nour of God; and that no *Dedication* of your selves to the Service of the *Church of Christ* in one certain way, can bind you, when that particular way proves (in its Consequences) a *Prejudice* and *Disservice* to the *Church of Christ*. For this *Vow* and *Dedication* were founded upon the Supposal of *doing Good*, and were determin'd to one particular way, consider'd as the way in which you could do Service to the *Church*. But when the Time comes that you cannot keep in this way without *doing Hurt*, and being the Occasion of *Mischief* to the *Church of God*; this *Vow* and *Dedication* are so far from obliging you to continue in this particular way, that they do really oblige you to forsake it, as they are founded upon the general *Obligation* you, and all Men are under, of doing what is most for the *Honour* of God and *Service* of the *Church*. The *Vow* was, to promote the *Glory* of God, and *Good* of that Society to which you belong: and you had not determin'd your selves to one certain way, unless in order to these Ends. Now, if these Ends may be better promoted by you in forsaking this way, than in continuing in it, you are neither *perfidious*, nor *sacrilegious*, if you *desert* it: but rather, if you *continue* in it. For by *continuing* in it, if the Case be so, you act against the main and manifest Design of it. Remember therefore, that you may be *perfidious Breakers* of it, whilst you keep to the *Letter*, and neglect the *Intent*; and *sacrilegious Deserters*, whilst you continue the *Public Exercise* of your *Ministry*, and refuse to promote the *Honour* and *Service* of that God to whom you *dedicated* your selves, by laying it aside, and studying to do *Good* by *other Methods*. He is not *perfidious* who acts against the *literal* Sense of his *Vow*, because it is agreeable to the first and original Design of it, that he should do so: nor is he *sacrilegious*, who withdraws from the *Sacred Office* to which he had *dedicated* himself, because he can now no longer do that *Service* to the *Church* he once propos'd to himself, in this *Station*; but can do much more by betaking himself to *another*. On the contrary, this very *Imputation* will be found

found to lye heaviest upon those, who are resolved to come up to the *Letter* of their *Vow*, and to keep to the *Office* to which they have *dedicated* themselves, tho' they do *Mischief* by so doing.

As for the *Sacrilege* they are guilty of, who would *alienate* You from the *Service of God* in a *ministerial* way, which you speak of in this place; *Every Man shall bear his own Burthen*. That any Person knowingly, and willingly designed to rob the *Church* of the Labours of any *truly good* and *useful* Men, it shocks me to think. But if they did, the Faults of others are neither our Faults, nor Excuses for our Faults. And this is of no relation to the *Point* now before us.

What I have said is sufficient to shew, how little this *Vow* and *Dedication*, when You were *Ordain'd*, have to do with this *Question*, *Whether you ought to continue the Public Exercise of your Ministry, or no?* For this *Vow* can oblige you to it no farther, than as it is for the greater Good and Service of the *Christian Church*; and whether it be so, or no, depends wholly upon *other Considerations*. If upon Examination, it be found to be so, I grant indeed this *Solemn Vow* will aggravate the Guilt of those who *desert* it, because then they desert it against the *Intent* as well as the *Letter* of this *Vow*. But if it be not found so, this *Vow* is no *Argument*, as it stands by it self, for the Continuance of your *Public Ministry*, but indeed *against* it. The right way therefore must be, first to shew from other *Arguments*, that it is for the Honour and Service of *God* and his *Church*, that you should *publicly* execute the Office of *Ministers*; and then to argue from your *Vow*, to the Continuance of your *Public Ministrations*. But your *Vow* alone can never prove it to be your Duty to continue them, because it was not, in the Design of it, absolute, that you would *publicly minister* in the *Church*, whether it should be for the Good and Service of the *Church*, or no; but wholly *conditional*, and respecting the Good and Service of the *Church*. We must therefore consider what *other Reasons* there are for your
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Behaviour, and what other Arguments sufficient to vindicate your Practice, that is, sufficient to prove it your Duty to continue the *Public Exercise* of your *Ministry*. I proceed therefore to

The *Third* Argument, which is this, We cannot lay aside the *Public Exercise* of our *Ministry* without the *Sin of Unfaithfulness, Cruelty, and Unmercifulness*, and without incurring the *Guilt of ruining Souls by stopping our Mouths*.

There is another Argument to this purpose, taken from the *Necessities of the People*, which I shall have Occasion to consider presently. But *This* now before us is founded, not upon the *real Necessities of the People*, and the *real Danger* they were in without your Assistance, but upon the *Entreaties*, and importunate Requests of *some of the People*, the *Care of whose Souls you had undertaken*, and upon their declaring that they would charge you with the *Neglect of their Souls, if you forsook them*. And your being sought to for Help, is made the *Argument* for your affording your *Help* in this *public* manner. I do not doubt indeed, but that many of your People might be induced by their own Affections to you, and many by your Discourse with them, to request you still to *minister* to them. But how doth it follow from thence, that therefore you ought? Are the People fit Judges of your Duty, and Directors of your Practice? Nay, Have you acted, or do you act as if You were guided by this Consideration; as if it were your Judgment, that You contracted such a Relation to the *Flock* in which You once minister, that a *Removal* becomes unlawful, if any of them request your Stay? Did you never remove from these People, who thus entreated you? Do you never remove from one Congregation to another? Or, Are the *People* always content to part with You, when You would have them so? and, Is this Argument only good when You are succeeded by a *Minister* of the *Establish'd Church*, and not when You are succeeded by one from amongst Your selves? Are the *People* such Excellent *Discerners*, that their Judgment is brought into the Account? And have not

not You had reason Your selves to complain sometimes of their want of Judgment? Did they make this *Request* only where Your *Successors* were really insufficient? and, was it regarded by You only in such Cases? I cannot but wonder to see such insignificant Arguments advanced for so very material a Point of Practice.

It would be Presumption indeed for me to pretend to advise You; but had I been in your Circumstances, and had any of my People been so importunate with me to continue my *Public Ministry* amongst them; tho' I know not what Answer I should have given them, yet I know what, I verily think, I ought to have given them, And that is something like this. *I have indeed contracted a Relation to you, and am obliged to minister to you in holy Things as long as it is best, upon all Accounts, that I should do so: but now, since it is more for the Peace and universal Good of the Church, that I should not execute my Office publicly amongst you, I think my self obliged not to do it. Indeed if there were any Necessity for it; if there were any danger of your losing your Souls for want of my public Assistance; if your own Care, together with the legal Provision for them, and the Grace of God, were not sufficient to secure your Salvation, I would run all Hazards rather then forsake you. But I cannot think the Case is so bad. You who make this Request to me are Persons who are concerned for the Salvation of your Souls, who talk much of the Care of them; and therefore I cannot but think that you are sensible what you owe to your selves, and resolved to do your own Duties. And if you be, I must tell you that the Church of England is a Church in which there is excellent Provision for your Edification, and Increase in all truly Christian Graces. You have a good, or, at least, a tolerable Liturgy, to assist your united Devotions, and that more fit for the Solemnities of Public Worship than many of the sudden Effusions you have heretofore joined with. In this Church no part of God's Will is hid or obscured, or enervated and render'd useles; and you may be sure of hearing several Portions of his Word whenever you attend upon the Services*

Services appointed in it. And you need not doubt, whatever my Successor be, but that you may make considerable Proficiency in the Paths of the Gospel, under such a Dispensation, if you be not wanting to your selves; as I believe you will not, if I may judge by this Concern you now express for your Eternal Interest. You can hardly live under so bad a Minister, but that He will be able to teach you many a useful Lesson. But however that be, there is Excellent Food provided for you by the very Constitution of this Church, which he cannot keep from you; what will nourish you unto Eternal Life, if you hinder not the Effect of it your selves. Your Salvation depends not upon his Abilities, nor are you to entrust your selves to the Guidance of him or any Man upon Earth: but your Belief and Practice is to be built on another Foundation. The Care of your Souls lyes chiefly upon your selves, and if you do your part, and attend seriously upon the Public Service, and do not place Edification in any thing but an Improvement in true Goodness and Piety, the means of this are not wanting in the Church of England, nor will your Salvation be much endanger'd in such a Constitution. If I still live amongst you in another Capacity, I may be useful to your Souls without the Public Exercise of my Ministry. And if I do not, it is a false Notion, that your Case is desperate; and it is what I think my self oblig'd to declare to you, that the Provision made for you in the Church of England is what you ought to be very thankful to Almighty God for. Remember that you are to regard the Peace of the Church, as well as your own Humours and Fancies; and to consult it, whenever your own Salvation is not in danger: which I know none will affirm it to be, in the Establish'd Church, but the most violent and most uncharitable Separatists, of whom you ought to beware.

This, I think, is what might most justly be returned in Answer to these unreasonable Demands, and Threatnings of some of your People. This is what some of you, say, all of you with whom I am now chiefly concern'd, could with a safe Conscience have said: and what, dare say, you have not scrupled to say on other Occa-

tions. And, if this may justly be said, then the *Argument* taken from the *Requests* of some of your *People* can signify nothing to your justification. For it appears from hence, that their *Requests* might have been answered another way, and that they did not necessarily oblige you to the *Continuance* of your *Public Ministry*.

But here you speak as if the *Authority of the Magistrate*, were the only *Argument* to engage you to *Silence*, and talk of a *solemn Obligation* you were under to a higher *Authority*, to fulfil your *Ministry*, as you were able, when sought to for *Help*. For my part, I urge not the bare *Authority* of any *Earthly Power*, for indeed I have but a mean *Opinion* of the *Argument* drawn from thence, in the *Question* now before us. But I urge this, which is included in what I have already advanced. That you are under no *Obligation to God* to continue the *Public Exercise* of your *Ministry*, be you never so much sought to for *Help*, when it is more for the *Honour of God*, and the *Good of the Christian World*, that you should not; when the *Necessities* of these *People*, who have such a *Concern* for their *Souls*, as to demand your *Help*, may be serv'd without your *Public Ministrations*; when you may promote the *Peace of the World*, and *Salvation of your Neighbours* in other ways; and therefore, that this *Reasoning* signifies very little. So that your aggravating this part of your *Cause* with comparing the *Neglect* of these *Demands* of your *People*, with the neglecting to feed your *Children*, or to relieve the *Poor and Distressed*, upon the *Command* of the *Magistrate*, shews only how willing you are to say what may move the *Affections* of the *World* about you, not what may convince the *Judgments* of Men of *Thought and Consideration*. If these *Cases* be parallel, it is plain from your *Practice*, either that you judge it not to be *inhumane and barbarous* to neglect to feed your *Children*, when they are otherwise provided for, and it is expedient for you to remove from them; and to relieve the *Poor* in one particular way, when there is no danger of their starving for want of your *Relief*, and some *Considerations* make it better that you should

should not your selves relieve them in this *particular* way: I say, it is plain from your Practice, either that you judge not such *Neglects*, in such Circumstances, to be *inhumane* and *barbarous*, or that you have been, and are sometimes guilty of *Barbarity*, and *Inhumanity*. For you do not scruple to remove from one *Congregation* to another (tho' it be a Venture who shall succeed you) upon Considerations of much lesser moment than what might have induced you to lay aside the *public Exercise* of your *Ministry* some Years ago. Nay, I doubt not, but that you may have removed (at least, that you esteemed it not unlawful so to do) from these very *people*, who so importunately demanded your Stay amongst them, to exercise your *public Ministry* in some *other* Congregation, and contract a new Relation to *another* People: And yet by this *Removal* you are *ejected*, and *silenced* as far as they are concerned. And if so, where is the Force of this *Argument*, on which so great Weight seems to be laid,

Some of the People, the Care of whose Souls we had undertaken, declared, that they would charge us with the Neglect of them, unless we continu'd publicly to minister amongst them,

Therefore it is our Duty to minister publicly, not only in this place, and among these Persons, but in whatever other places, and amongst whatever other Persons, we think fit, throughout the whole Nation?

You may see from hence, how few, how very few of you who continued to *minister publicly*, this *Argument* will excuse, and that it was hardly worth your while to mention it, supposing it to have that Weight in it you imagine it to have: Much less, considering the Weakness of it in its utmost Force. I shall add but one thing more upon this *Head*, which you need not me to put you in mind of. That supposing *any bad* perish'd, and been lost, whom you were able to have assisted and instructed, you are not chargeable with this sad Consequence of your *Silence*; since this must have come to pass thro' their *Neglect*

lect of their own Souls, thro' their not regarding the *Legal Provision* made for them, their not attending upon the *public Service* of the *Church*, their not receiving the Portions of God's Word read to them, and the Instructions given, with a serious and religious Frame of Mind, and a Desire of profiting by them; in one Word, thro' *their own Fault*, not thro' *yours*. And therefore, their Souls would God have requir'd at *their own Hands*, and not at *yours*.

The *Fourth* Argument in Defense of your *Continuance* in the *ministry* after a *public* manner, is this.

We cannot lay aside the public Exercise of our ministry, without incurring the Guilt of hiding our Talent, and exposing our selves to a like Treatment with that of the unprofitable Servant in the Gospel, Matth, 25. 30. Therefore we dare not do it.

In answer to this, I deny not, but that many of *you* might have been very useful and *profitable Servants* (in the Office of the *ministry*) had you thought fit to continue in the *Establiſh'd Church*: But I deny that you would have been judg'd and condemn'd as *unprofitable Servants*, had you laid down the *public Exercise* of that *Office*, when you could not join with the *Establiſh'd Church*. And my Reason is this, Because by doing so you would have consulted the *Peace* of the *Church*, and the *Honour* of God, without putting your selves out of all Capacity of doing Service to the Souls of Men. Your *Examples* might still have continued to *shine before Men* as much as ever; your *Conversation* might have been instructive, and of great Influence upon your Neighbours; your *Writings* might have pleaded the Cause of true and serious *Religion* in the World: your *Conformity* as *Laymen* to the *Church of England*, would have given a Check to the *Spirit of violent Separation* then reigning, would have done much to the producing *Peace* and *Harmony* in the *Tempers* of Men, would have reflected no Dishonour upon the *Gospel of Jesus Christ*, nor, consequently, upon your own *Characters*, as you are *Christians*. And, under such *Considerations*,

derations, what Danger there could be of your *incurring the Guilt and Doom of the unprofitable Servant* in the Gospel, I cannot see. That *wicked and slothful Servant*, acted his Part upon a quite different Principle. He consulted not the Honour of God, regarded not the Improvement of those Abilities and Opportunities he had of doing Good, but determin'd to live idle and useles in the World. Whereas your Case, as I suppose, would have been quite otherwise. Had you laid down the *public Exercise* of your *ministry*, it would have been out of Regard to the *Honour of God*, and *Good of his Church*; out of Respect to your great *Lord and Master*; with a Resolution of doing all the Good possible to the World about you in *other Stations*, and of carrying forward the Salvation of your Neighbours in the ways of *Peace, Unity, and Concord*: And how different is this from the Case of him, who had Opportunities and Abilities of promoting the Service of God, and absolutely refused to make use of them? Nay, God knows, whether, in the Rigour of Justice, your *Practice* be not more parallel to that of this *unprofitable Servant*, than your *Silence* would have been. It will all turn upon this one Point, whether of the Two, considering all Circumstances, had been more for the *Honour of God* your *Master*, and your *Judge*. If it be found at last, that the Advantages of your *Silence*, and your hearty endeavours to do Good in a more private way, would have been greater, than the Advantages of your *public ministrations*; and that the Consequences of the *latter* have been more pernicious to the *Christian World*, than the Consequences of the *former* would have been; then it will be found that you have been *unprofitable Servants*, and incurred the same Guilt by your *Practice*, which you were so afraid of incurring by your *Silence*; that you have refused to promote the *Honour of God*, and *Good of his Church*, when it was in your Power to do it. And it is a very weighty Matter, and worthy of a most serious Consideration, whether the *Arguments* on the side of your *Practice* be

Plainly and evidently Superiour to those on the *other* side. That they are so, I hardly believe I shall ever see clearly demonstrated. And till I do, I cannot possibly think the *Argument* now before us sufficient to vindicate the *Continuance* of your *public ministrations*.

The *Fifth* Argument is this,

We judge it to be our Duty to continue the *Public Exercise* of our *Ministry*, because of the *Necessities* of the *People*; many *Ministers* in the *public Churches* having more *Souls* to look after than several would be sufficient for.

If I understand this *Argument* aright, You do not mean by it, that the *Private* care of these *Ministers* cannot be sufficient for their *People*: for though this might be an *Argument* for your *Private Assistance*, yet you could not produce it as an *Argument* for your *Public Ministrations*. But what You mean by it must be this, that there are more *People* in some *Parishes* than can possibly enjoy the *Public Care* of their *Established Minister*; than can have the opportunity of *Communion* in the *Public Assemblies*, and the *Offices* of *Religion*, and that it is for the sake of these that You continue your *public Ministrations*.

This, I say, is what must be meant by it, as it is urged in Defense of your *public* not *private Ministry*; and in answer to it, You must pardon me, if I tell You, that it is not sincere in You to allege, in Vindication of your *public Ministrations*, what, You know your selves, is not the *true Reason* of your continuing them. And tho' what You here urge may, in your Opinions, reflect upon the *Established Church*; yet supposing the matter to be true, it must a little reflect upon your selves, when it appears that such a *Practice* as yours cannot possibly be founded upon such a *Reason* as this.

Not that I grant the *Necessities* of the *People* to be so great, and preming, as You would have the World believe them to be; for the *Churches*, and other places for *Religious Assemblies* annexed to them, in which they may meet, and pray, and hear God's Word, are not so little in many of these *Parishes*, which have given occasion to
this

this *Plea*, but that they will hold many more People than ordinarily frequent them, and with no great Inconvenience. And supposing they will not, the *People* of these *Parishes* may as easily frequent the *Churches* of their *Neighbouring Parishes*, which are not so large, as many from these *Neighbouring Parishes* frequent your *Separate Assemblies*. And if so, where is this undeniable Necessity for your *Public Ministrations*? But what I now insist upon is this, that this cannot be the *true Reason* of your *Practice*, and therefore ought not to be alleged in Justification of it.

You know very well, that as considerable Persons as any amongst You make no scruple of settling in *Parishes* of as little extent as any in *London*: that those of You, who settle in the largest *Parishes*, receive without distinction, People from all quarters; as well those whose *Parish Churches* are able to contain them, as those which, You pretend, are not: That your *Congregations* are made up, not of those Persons whom their *Established Minister* is not able to take care of, but of those who will not let him take care of them; who would not come to the Worship and Service of the *Church of England*, were the *Places of Assembly* ten times more capacious than they are, and the *settled Minister* never so able and ready to instruct them. And if I should say that there is not a single Person in all your *Congregations* who applies himself to You purely because He hath no opportunity of *public Worship*, and *Attendance upon God's Ordinances*, in the *Establish'd Church*, and because it is not possible for the *Minister* of the *Parish* to take care of Him; I hardly think I should go beyond Truth. And if this be true (as I have Reason to think it is) how can You allege it as an *Argument* for your *public Practice*, that the *People* of your *Congregations* have no opportunity, in the *Established Church* of attending upon God's Worship; when none of your *People* will give this as the *Reason* of their attendance upon You? We have not the least Reason to think, that You would lay aside the *public Exercise* of your

Your *Ministry*, had all our *People* these Opportunities you speak of. We find You all generally as little scrupulous of *ministring publicly* where the *Established Ministers* are able to take care of the Souls in their *Parishes*, where the *Churches* stand very thick, and are capacious enough to hold many more than those that belong to them, as of *ministring* in the most *populous Parishes*. We see You but little concerned that the *People* should make use of the Opportunities they have in the way *Establish'd*: and not at all backward to receive and encourage any, though under no such *Necessities* as You here represent them. And while we see and observe these *Practices*, we cannot but wonder at the mention of this *Principle*; and therefore appeal to all the World, if this be not very odd reasoning,

The *People* in many *Parishes* have not the possibility of reaping any Benefit from the public Labours of their *Seled Minister*, that is, of attending upon God's *public Worship*, and of hearing his Word,

Therefore, We think it our Duty to settle our selves in these *Parishes*, to *minister in public*, not to those Persons who come to us because they have no opportunity of attendance upon God's Ordinances in the *Established Church*; but to those, who would never attend upon the worship of God in their *Parish-Church*, though they could do it with the greatest Ease; to those who come from other *Parishes* where they lie under no such Difficulties; In a word, to *all*, who will attend upon us, let the Motive be what it will. And, what is more,

Therefore, we think it our Duty not only to settle our selves in these *Parishes*, but in any others, where we think fit, as opportunity offers it self.

I hope I have not misrepresented your *Practice*, the *Reasons* for which we are now enquiring into. And to advance in Defense of it, the *Necessities of a few Parishes*, is to advance a *Ulex*, which, when we compare it with your *Practice*, we find utterly insufficient to defend those of You who have settled in these very *Parishes*; much more,

more, those of You who have not scrupled to *minister publicly*, where-ever an opportunity hath offered it self: A *Plea* utterly inconsistent with the *practice* of any amongst You, that have either encouraged *Others* who *minister* where no such *Necessities* can be pretended, or, have *ministered* there *Your selves*, and therefore, utterly insufficient to defend the *practice* of any one of You all that I ever heard of. This You must be sensible of your selves, unless You may be supposed ignorant of your own constant and professed Practice. And therefore, I say again that, how plausible soever this *Argument* seem, and how full of concern for the *People*, yet, it is not fair for You to urge it in Defense of your *Practice*, whilst it is so manifest that your *Practice* cannot be defended by it.

The *Sixth* Argument in Defense of Your *Public Ministry* is this,

We think it our Duty to continue the *public Exercise* of our *Ministry*, because *sundry* of the *Established Ministers* are *insufficient and unqualified*.

I confess I know not well what You mean in this Place by *insufficient*, and *unqualified*. But I think You cannot mean that they are *Evil* or *Wicked*; because it is your Opinion that the *Ministry* of *such* may be used *both in hearing the Word of God, and in receiving of the Sacraments*, and that with *Profit*, if the *People* be not wanting to themselves. And if their *Ministry* may be used with *Profit*; then the *Case* of the *People* under such *Ministers* is not, in your Account, so *desperate*, as to make your *public Assistance* a necessary Remedy. And if it be not necessary, it ought not to be *continued*. That this is your opinion, I conclude from your *subscribing*, amongst *others*, the *Twenty sixth* Article of our *Church*, Entituled, *Of the Unworthiness of the Ministers, which hinders not the Effect of the Sacraments*; and from your so frequent inveighing against any, whom You imagine to have *made light of*, and to have *played with, Subscriptions*.

By

By *insufficient* and *unqualified*, I think, therefore, that You must mean *Ignorant*, and unable to teach and instruct the People. And I suppose, that You do not here speak of the *insufficiency* of *Ministers*, with respect to those *private Labours* which are necessary in a Parish (because this can be no Argument for any but *Private Labours* in your selves) but with respect to their *Public Labours* and Instructions: and that what You would have us understand here, comes to this, That the *insufficiency* of *some Parish-Ministers* is so great, that the Souls of the People are endangered by their attendance upon their *public Ministrations*, and that it is necessary, on this Account, to *minister publicly* in a *separate* way. And if this be what You mean, I have *Three Things* to offer in answer to this Argument; not denying but that there may be *ministers* in the *Established Church*, in this Sense, *insufficient*. In the *first* Place, This is not a sufficient Reason for the People to join with *Ministers* of Churches *separated* from the *Church of England*; and consequently, it is not a sufficient Reason for You to continue your separate *public Ministrations* for their Advantage. *Secondly*, In the Places where this *Plea* can be urged with the best Grace, it is very great odds whether the People get any thing by going over to those *Ministers* who separate from the *Established Church*. *Thirdly*, As I told You under the last Head, so I tell You *freely* under this, That, how good a Reason soever this may be, You know that it is not the *true Reason* of your *public Ministrations*.

First, Supposing it true, that there are *sundry Ministers* in the *Established Church*, *insufficient*, that is, *ignorant*, and not able to teach and instruct their People; I say, this is not a sufficient Reason for the People to forsake the *Church of England*, and betake themselves to the helps of a *Separate Ministry*, and form themselves into *Churches* distinct from it. And if it be not a sufficient Reason for the People to do this, You ought not, in Conscience, to encourage them in doing it; and therefore, this cannot be a sufficient Justification of your *public ministrations*.

No *Church* upon Earth, in which there are some *Thousands of Ministers*, can possibly escape this Unhappiness: And it is a little hard indeed, if, upon an unhappiness wholly unavoidable, new and distinct *Churches*, with differing Modes of Worship, must be erected, for the improvement of the *Knowledge*, and the destruction of the *Love and Charity* of the *Christian People*. But if ever any Church upon Earth may be said to have taken care that the People shall not suffer considerably, or their Salvation be endangered, through this inconvenience, certainly it must be granted that the *Church of England* hath effectually done it. Were the *public Assemblies* indeed left to the sole management, and guidance of the *Minister* of the *Parish*; were the *People* to be served with nothing but what he could, and would, afford them; were they to be entertained with *Prayers* wholly according to the *Abilities*, or the present Phancy, Invention, and Disposition of their *Minister*; were He left to his Liberty, whether He would read to them any part of God's Word, or not; whether He would use the *Lord's Prayer*, the *Creed*, the *Ten Commandments*, or not; were the *poor People* in such a Case, under the provision of the *Church of England*, then, indeed, the *Ignorance* of their *Minister* might be a deplorable Misfortune to them. But God be thanked, The *Case* is not so, in the *Church of England*; though it be, in the *Churches* set up in opposition to it, and under pretense of greater Purity of Worship, and Edification of the People. But in our Church, the People have no Necessity of departing from the most *insufficient* Minister You can easily find. For the decencies, and essentials of *public Worship* are secured to them. They have *Prayers* prepared for them, serious and pious; *Prayers*, which, if a Man bring a good Heart along with Him, will be neither usefess, nor insipid; such as are fit for the public Addresses of the *Church* to God, and such as You yourselves will allow to be *tolerable*. They are sure of hearing the pure *Word of God*, in the reading of which they may join, and from which, by a serious Attention, they may

reap

reap (I hope) as much Advantage as from any Humane Composure whatever. The *Lord's Prayer*, The *Creed*, the *Ten Commandments*, are constantly part of their Entertainment on the *Lord's Day*; which are Instructions to them, what is proper for them to *ask* of God, what it is necessary for them to *believe*, what it is their Duty to *praise*, in order to Salvation. These are no small, nor contemptible Advantages. And, I believe, You could not but bestow a very good Character on that *Minister*, who should provide such wholesome Food for his *People*, as a *Minister* in the *Established Church* is under an Obligation to bring forth to his *Congregation* every *Lord's Day*; nor could you think that a *Pastour*, who should do what was Equivalent to this, in your way, was lightly to be forsaken, or the Case of his *People* to be represented as desperate. Besides, The *People* we are now speaking of, must be supposed to be Persons concerned for their Souls, and able to judge of the sufficiency of their *Minister*. If they be, they must be sensible that these Advantages are, to a serious Person, infinitely beyond the best Sermon in the World, and their Salvation not endangered under such Provision. But if they be resolved not to hear any thing from one whom they imagine to be *insufficient*, where yet is the necessity of *Your* Public Ministrations? Are none of their neighbouring *Established Ministers* sufficient *Preachers* enough for them? Can they find none that teach sound Doctrine? And, Is *Preaching* in such a desperate condition in the *Church of England*, that a *separate Ministry* must be set up, and continued, for fear the *Truth of God*, and the *Essentials of Salvation* should perish from the Earth? If it be not, and if those who complain of their *Ministers insufficiency*, can be supplied at a neighbouring *Church*, with as little pains as many are at to go to *separate Congregations*; and as much to their Advantage as at any of these *separate Congregations*; then there is no Necessity for the continuance of your *public Ministrations* on this Account. And that they may be as well supplied, is what, I believe, You *will not*,
and,

and, I am sure, You cannot reasonably, deny. Nay, I offer it to your consideration, whether it be not credible, what I have ventured to say,

Secondly, That in the *places* where this *Plea* can be urged with the best Grace, it is very great odds whether the People get any thing by forsaking their *Parish Minister*, and attending upon those *Ministers* who separate from the *Established Church*. You must be very ignorant of the State of the Nation, or very much mistaken in your Notions of true *Christian* knowledge, if You think that this *separate Ministry* which You have encouraged throughout the Nation, and now are pleading for, hath this Advantage over the *Established Ministry* You would here give it. If I judge aright, the *Country*, and the *Parishes* at the greatest distance from *London*, and other considerable Towns, are (generally speaking) the places in which the *People* are most likely to suffer under *insufficient Ministers*, and in which they can with the best Face cry out upon the *Ignorance* of their Teachers. What excellent judges the *People* in these places are, of the Knowledge and Abilities of their *Ministers*, I need not say. But however, If they be resolved to forsake their own *Minister* and not to be contented with Him, nor any other of the *Established Ministers* about them, I may appeal to your selves, whether it be probable, that they will meet with more Knowledge, and greater Abilities, in the *separate Ministry* commonly found in such places. You must be very partial to your own cause, if You think so. Were You to hear but some part of what might truly and justly be affirmed of the gross and intolerable *Ignorance* of many who are set up for *Preachers* in a *separate Way*, in the *Places* I am speaking of; such an *Ignorance* as fills their *Prayers* (as Mr. Baxter describes the performances of some in his time) with *Carnal* Abridgment, pag. 96.
Passion, Selfishness, Faction, Disorder, vain Repetitions, unsound and loathsome Expressions; and their *Doctrine* with *Errours and Confusion*; You would be sensible, that such a general Encouragement ought not to be given

given to the *People* to forsake their *Ministers*, whenever they please to think them *insufficient*. And did You but call to mind (what You know to be true) how much the most *insufficient* are followed, and before what sort of Men they are often perserr'd, You would be more sensible of this. And did You but consider (what is matter of Fact) that the most *sufficient* of the *separate Ministry* are generally found where the most *sufficient* of *Established Ministry*, are settled, and as it were opposed, and confronted to them, and that the most *insufficient* and most *ignorant* of the *separate Ministry* are found where the most *insufficient* and most *ignorant* of the *Established Ministry* are pretended to be, where there is most occasion for the able and knowing; You would blush to put us in mind of this, by urging such a *Plea* in Defense of that *separate Ministry* You have set up, and continue to plant, and encourage, throughout the Land. But I must not be so unjust to the *Established Church*, as not to observe the little likelihood of any Advantage to the *People*, in forsaking their *Parish Churches*, and frequenting *separate Congregations*; even supposing their *Established Minister*, truly *insufficient*. For, As they leave an *insufficient Minister*, so it must be remembered, that they leave a *public Service* excellently fitted for the *Worship of God* (the chief End of *public Assemblies*) and their own improvement in Knowledge and Piety. They leave a *public Service* made up of serious and devout Prayers, and Praises; Sentences and Hymns in the very Words of *Scripture*; Lessons out of the *Old and New Testament*; the *Lord's Prayer*, *Creed*, and *Ten Commandments*. But, it seems, the *People* must be encouraged to think this but a heavy, insipid Service; of little Profit, and little Edification; easily to be disregarded, and to be left upon any prejudice, and upon the least ground, tho' never so foolish, and unworthy of a Christian. Whether they be sensible what it is they leave, I know not; and I doubt, you do not care much they should be: But this I know, that they are not very likely to meet with a *public Service*, in any *Separate Congregation*,

gregation, more fitted either for the *worship* of God, or their own *Edification*; especially, in these parts of the Land, where the *insufficiency* of their *Ministers* may with most Reason be urged. But,

Thirdly, This Plea, how good soever it be in it self, yet, is not the *true* Reason for your continuing your *public* *Ministrations*. The World can easily see what your *Practice* hath been, and is; and, say what you please, will judge of your *Principles* from it. The very mention of this must reflect upon your selves, when it is so plain (as I observed before) that the most *sufficient* of *You* plant your selves where the most *sufficient* of the *Established* *Clergy* are to be found, and that the *Places* which first gave occasion to this pretense, are left to the most *insufficient*, and most unworthy of you: which looks as if more regard were had to the maintaining the Credit, and supporting the Interest of a *Party*, than to the supplying the Necessities of the People, or making up the Deficiencies of the *Established* *Ministry*. Could we but see you heartily concerned (as Mr. *Baxter* was once, if not always) that the People should attend upon the *minister*, when He is a *sufficient* Man; as much concerned for this, as you are to gain Profelytes, and increase the number of your own Followers; Were you as ready to encourage the People to keep to their *Established* *Minister* whom you know to be sufficient, as you are to receive any that leave the most *sufficient* of them all: Did you act as if you were willing that the People should separate only upon good Grounds, and not upon Phancy; that they should know what a *public* *Service* there is settled in the *Church of England*, and how sufficient for the purposes of *public* *Worship*, before they forsake it; could we see the most *able* and useful amongst you settled where you imagine there are not *able* *Ministers* already; and could we see that in all other places, you exhort and advise the People, and press it upon their Consciences as their Duty, to attend upon the *ministrations* of those who are settled amongst them by Law; were there any thing like this
apparent

apparent in your Practice, we might then begin to think that the *insufficiency of sundry Parish Ministers* was the true Reason for your *public Ministrations*. But, as things appear to us, we are sure, that were all the *Established Clergy* through the whole Land *sufficient* beyond Exception, you would, notwithstanding this, keep on foot your Separation, and continue your *public Practice*.

What I have said to this *Argument*; may be reduced to this. You say, you minister in public because of the *insufficiency of sundry of the Established Clergy*. I answer; Supposing it true, that there are some *insufficient*, We cannot think this *Plea* of force enough to excuse the *People* who separate upon it, or *You* who *minister* to them, for these Reasons: because the *public Service* of the Church is not *insufficient*; because the *People*, if they will not attend upon their own *Minister*, may find those that are *sufficient* amongst the *Established Clergy* about them; because in those Places where the most *insufficient* are to be found, the most *insufficient* also of the *Separate Ministers* are to be found; and it is a great chance if they do not go from an *insufficient* Preacher, to one *more* *Insufficient*; because, taking into the Account the whole *public Service* of the *Established Church*, they cannot mend the matter by frequenting any *separate Congregation*; and lastly, Because your Practice assures us, that this is not the true Reason for the *continuance* of your *Ministry*.

The *Seventh Argument* for the continuance of your *public ministrations* is this,

Some passages of Scripture intimate the duration of the Ministerial Office, where there is once a conveyance. The Passages you cite, are as follow, *Mat. 5. 13, 14, &c. Mat. 28. 19, 20. Eph. 4. 10, &c. 1 Tim. 4. 15, 16. Mat. 24. 45, 46, 48.*

Therefore, it is our Duty to continue the *public Exercise* of our *Ministry*.

What my thoughts are about your *Ordinations*, I have freely let you know, in the *former* part of this *Reply*, as the *Argument* obliged me to do. What I have there said,

said, is founded upon Mr. *Baxter's* Principles, and must be thought most true, and reasonable by me, as long as I think *Episcopal Ordination* the settled method in the *Christian Church*, and your *Separation* unnecessary. I shall not now repeat any thing of it, but, under the present *Argument*, shall take it for granted, that *there was once a Conveyance*, as I know there certainly was to *several* of you; and shall endeavour to shew, That there is nothing in any of these *passages*, which doth intimate this *duration of the Ministerial Office* which you are contending for: That is, in other Words, that none of these *Passages* do express, or imply, that a person who hath *Authority* once given him to *minister publicly* in a *Christian Congregation*, may not, upon some Considerations, lay aside the *public Exercise* of his *Ministry*. This is what these *Texts* must prove, if they prove any thing to our present purpose. If they do not prove such an *absolute Duration*, and an *absolute* Obligation to minister publicly, the *Argument* taken from them will signify nothing, but will wholly turn upon a very different point, *viz.* whether your *Ministration* be *necessary*. And, I suppose that if these *Texts* had not been thought to imply such an *absolute* Obligation, they would not have been produced by you, as containing in them an *Argument* sufficient, of it self, to defend your *Practice*, and distinct from those others drawn from the *Necessities* of the *People*.

Now, before I examine them, I might venture to affirm, that it is impossible, or, at least, highly improbable, that there should be any thing of this *absolute* Obligation in any passage of the *New Testament*. For it is certain, That the Case may so happen, that the *Silence* of a Person, who had once a *Commission* given him to officiate in Public, may be of much more Advantage to the *Christian Church*, than his *public Ministrations*; and that when the Case doth so happen, this *Silence* becomes his *Duty*, and is to be preferr'd before the *public Execution* of his *Office*; as he is under a general and indissoluble Obligation to behave himself always as the *Good* of

the *Christian Church*, and the Honour of God require. This I have observed under the *First Argument*, which was taken from your *Ordination-Vow*. That this *Case* hath actually happened amongst us, I cannot expect you should grant, till you are convinced that it hath. But that it may possibly happen, you cannot deny. And if it may happen, I am sure, We must fix a very great Absurdity upon the Institution of *Christ*, if we suppose, that He consulted the Peace and Advantage of his *Church*, and yet appointed some *Officers* in it, and obliged Them to execute their *Office* publicly, whether it should be for the Peace or Disturbance, for the Advantage or Disadvantage of his *Church*. This I say; I can be sure, without any farther enquiry, that He could not do: And yet this he must have done, if there be this *absolute* Obligation intimated in these *Texts*. And if there be not, there cannot be any *Argument* in Defense of your *Practice* drawn from them. But it will not be amiss to examine the design, and meaning of every one of them.

The *first* is *Mat. 5. 13. 14, &c.* The Words are these, *Ye are the Salt of the Earth: but if the Salt have lost its savour, wherewith shall it be salted? It is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of Men: Ye are the light of the World. A City that is set on a Hill cannot be hid. Neither do Men light a Candle, and put it under a Busbel, but on a Candlestick, and it giveth light unto all that are in the House. Let your light so shine before Men, that they may see your good Works, and glorify your Father which is in Heaven.* These are all the *Verses* that can possibly have the least Relation to the matter in hand: And that any one could have thought that these have the least Relation to it, I could never have imagined, unless you had here expressly said so. For what is here, like any *absolute* Obligation upon those, who once had Authority given them to *minister* in *Public*, always to do so? What is here intimated, like a *duration* of the *ministerial Office*, and the *public* Exercise of it *where there is once a Conveyance*? Or, what is there, either expressed, or implied, but

but an Obligation upon all *Christians* to be excellent in *good Works*, to be *conspicuous* amongst the rest of the World, by their difference from them in *Doctrine and Life*; as Mr. Baxter explains the Words, by their *Holiness to Gods Sobriety to themselves, and Justice and Works of Love to others*: which, he saith, are the *good Works* meant here? Indeed, if it could be proved, that your *public Ministrations* are necessary, and for the Glory of God; that his Honour, and the Credit and Interest of the Christian Cause could not be preserved without them; these *Texts* do certainly demonstrate an Obligation upon you to continue them. And so do many more, that you might produce, prove that all *Christians* must do whatever is necessary for the Glory of God, and the Honour of *Christianity*. All such *Texts* refer to your *public Ministrations* as much as these; if Mr. Baxter interpret them aright, or if I do not mistake him. But then, If it can be proved, that there is no Necessity for the continuance of your *Office*; and that the Glory of God would be more promoted by your doing good in a more private way; then, I say, these *Texts* signify nothing to your Justification and the whole Question turns upon another Point. In short, if these *Texts* do prove it to be your Duty to continue the *public Exercise* of your *Ministry*, I see not, but that they will defend, and patronize as effectually, any persons at any time, who have so good an Opinion of themselves as to think their *public Labours* useful, or for the Glory of God. For they respect all *Christians* as well as some, and are an Obligation upon all, as well as some, not to *lose the Savour*, and not to *hide their Light*. And, if they patronize all such, they will patronize all the Disorder and Confusion imaginable.

The *second passage* you direct us to, is *Mat. 28. 19, 20.* The former part of this *passage* contains in it nothing but the *Commission* of Christ to his *Apostles*, *Go ye, and teach all Nations*, that is, *Go, Teach, and Propagate my Religion* throughout the World; *make Nations my Disciples*, as

Mr. Baxter paraphrases it: *Baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.* Now, supposing this *Commission* given to you as well as to the *Apostles*, in what Sense would you have it understood? It was given to *them*, for the propagating the *Christian Faith* in unbelieving Countries, and for promoting the great Ends of the *Gospel* amongst those that did believe. Put the Case, that, in any place, their *public Preaching*, or other *Ministrations*, would have had very bad Consequences, and have reflected a dishonour, and mischief upon the *Christian Cause*; and would have been, not only not necessary, but prejudicial to the Interest of Christianity: And do You think this *Commission* obliged them to *officiate* in *public*, in such Places, and in such Circumstances? Do you think they would not have thought themselves obliged to *silence*; and have rejoiced at all opportunities of doing good in a more private way? If You do, how can You think that this *Commission* to You is absolute, and conveys an Obligation to You to exercise your *Ministry* in a *public* manner, let what will be the Consequence? This is what I understand to be your meaning, when You speak here of the *duration of the ministerial Office*. If it be not your meaning, then I confess I do not understand it. The *Latter* part of this *passage*, viz. *Lo I am with You to the End of the World*, is nothing but the Promise of *Christ*, to assist his *Apostles* and their *Successors*, in the work of converting Unbelievers, and instructing his *Church*: and no Argument can be drawn from hence to prove, that no consideration ought to prevail with any one to lay aside the *public Exercise* of his *Ministry*. For the Case may so happen, that to continue it may be against the Interest of the *Christian Church*, and consequently against the will of *Christ*. And, therefore, He cannot mean this, as an encouragement to all, in all cases, to *minister publicly*, whether the Church receive advantage, or disadvantage from it.

The *Third passage*, You cite is, *Eph. 4. 10. &c.* in which there is nothing declared, but that Christ gave some *Apostles*, and some *Prophets*, and some *Evangelists*, and some *Pastours and Teachers*, &c. i. e. that, for the Instruction and Edification of the *Christian People*, and for the good of the *Christian Church*, he hath appointed divers orders of Men, to minister to this *Church* according to their several *Offices*. But how doth it follow from hence, that these *Teachers* may not, in some *Cases* contribute more to the Edification, and building up, of his *Church*, in Love and Peace, by their *silence*, and private endeavours, than by their *public Labours*? And if they may, it is their Duty; And if it be their Duty, there is nothing in this *Text* that forbids it: but the whole Proposition, and all that *St. Paul* intended in it stands as firm, if some lay aside the *public Exercise* of their *Office*, as if every individual Person for ever continued it.

The *Fourth passage* is *1 Tim. 4. 15 16.* where *St. Paul* charges *Timothy* thus, *Meditate upon these things, give thy self wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all. Take heed unto thy self, and unto the Doctrine; continue in them; for in doing this, thou shalt both save thy self, and them that bear thee.* Which Words, it is plain, are only a direction to a *Minister of Christ*, whose labours were necessary to the very being of the *Christian Church*, in the place where He was, and highly useful to all the *Christians* there: but contain not in them the least insinuation, that whoever hath once an *Authority* given him to *minister publicly* in the *Christian Church*, is under an *Obligation* never to cease doing so, whether his *Labours* be necessary, or for the Advantage of the *Christian Church*, or no. When You will show me, that there is any thing of such an *absolute Obligation* implied in these *Injunctions* of *St. Paul* to *Timothy*, I promise, not only to review, but, wholly to give up, this part of the Cause.

The *last* place of Scripture You mention, for the *duration of the ministerial Office*, where there is once a *Conveyance*, that is, for the *public Exercise* of the *ministerial Office*

(which is the only point we are now upon) is *M t. 24. 45, 46, &c.* The Words are these, *Who then is a faithful, and wise Servant, whom his Lord hath made ruler over his Household, to give them meat in due Season? Blessed is that Servant, whom his Lord when He cometh shall find so doing, &c.* Mr. Baxter's paraphrase upon them is this, *Those that are faithful and wise Teachers, and Rulers of his Church, to give them meet, and seasonable Instruction, as food for their Souls, shall be found at their Lord's coming, Blessed Persons, and shall be abundantly gainers by their Labours and Sufferings.* They plainly signify, that *Faithful* and good *Pastours* shall be rewarded at the Day of Judgment. And the following Words declare the intolerable Punishment of those who make it their business to molest and ruine their *Fellow-servants*; and who give themselves up to *Luxury*, and *Debauchery*. But neither these, nor the following Words, do give the least *Intimation*, that there may not be, at any time, considerations sufficient to determine a very *faithful and wise Teacher*, to lay aside the *public Exercise* of his Function; or that there is an indispensable Obligation, in all circumstances, upon all who ever devoted themselves to the *Ministry*, to continue the *open* performance of their Office. They do not say, or intimate, that he is no *faithful and wise Teacher*, who, for the sake of the Peace of the Church, and the Edification of Christians in Love, leaves them to that Provision which is certainly sufficient for them; and rather submits to be *silent* in public, upon such Considerations, than to give the least Encouragement, by his Practice, to a *Separation* which must necessarily divide the Hearts of Christians from one another, and unavoidably contribute to the decrease of Charity, and the abounding of Strife, and Variance, and Emulation, and all the instances of *Uncharitableness* in the World: resolving to do all in his power, for the promoting Godliness, and true Religion, in his more private Capacity. And since these *Texts* say nothing against the Principles, or Practice of such an one, I see not how they come near the matter we are

now considering, which, I must again tell You, is nothing but this, whether there may not be Times, and Circumstances, in which the *public Labours* of very good Men may not prove a greater disadvantage to the *Christian Church*, than their *silence in public*, joined with their hearty Endeavours to serve the interest of Religion in *private*; and, if there may be such Times, and such Circumstances, whether it be not, then, the Duty of every good Man to lay aside the *public Exercise* of his *Ministry*.

If the whole matter turn upon this (as it most apparently doth) then, what signifies it to produce such *Passages* of *Scripture* as these, which import nothing but that *Christ* hath appointed *Pastours* in his Church; That there is a Duty incumbent upon them, *viz.* the feeding of his Flock; that the Reward of such as are Good and Faithful, shall be great, and the punishment of the Slothful and Faithless intolerable; or the like? Who denies all this? Or, who ever denied it? But doth it follow from hence, that a *Pastour*, for the advantage of the *Christian Church*, and when there is no *Necessity* for his *public Performances*, may not turn all his thoughts upon more *private* Ways of doing good, without incurring the guilt of *Perfidiousness*, and *Slothfulness*? Not in the least, as I see. And indeed, the very mention of this Consideration had been a sufficient return to your *Argument* taken from these *Passages* of *Scripture*. But I was willing to examine particularly into them, That the Reader might see what was in them, and be the more capable of judging whether they *intimate* such a *Duration of the ministerial Office* as you contend for, *viz.* an absolute Obligation upon *Ministers*, to exercise the Office *publicly*. I have placed the Words before his Eyes, lest He should think either that there was more, or less, in them, than there is; And so leave him to determine, whether I have dealt fairly with them, or no.

The *Eighth Argument* in Defense of your Practice, is this,

Some Passages of Scripture plead for the Necessity of Preaching even when the Magistrate forbids; as *Act.* 4. 19. 5. 28. *1 Cor.* 9. 14, 16. *Act.* 4. 29. *2 Tim.* 4. 1, 2. *1 Tim.* 6. 13, 14.

Therefore, it is our Duty to continue the public Exercise of our Ministry.

I shall not be so particular under this Argument, as I have been under the last, because there is no need of it. I know none who maintain, that the meer Command of the Magistrate is sufficient to oblige a Minister to lay aside the public Exercise of his Office. But then, I know none that think, there may not be Considerations, sufficient enough to induce a Minister of *Jesus Christ* to comply with such a Command of the Magistrate. And therefore, I see not to what purpose it is to produce such Texts as have nothing in them against this. For still we are where we were before, and the Question remains the same. Is your Practice for the Advantage of the Christian Church, all Things considered? And, Is there a Necessity for it? If there be, in God's Name let it be continued. But, as long as there appears to me no Necessity for it, and no Advantage to the Church of God, comparable to the Disadvantages of it, I cannot think it reasonable, or agreeable to the Precepts of the Gospel. Whether it be so or not, nothing can be gathered from these Passages. Your Obligations would not have been less, had there not been one of these in the whole New Testament; nor would they be, in the least degree, greater, could you produce a Thousand more to the same effect. You will hardly say, that in a Christian Country, where there is a Church, in which are all things sufficient for the People's Edification, and Salvation, and nothing destructive of them (such, if I be not mistaken, you have allowed the Church of England to be) you will hardly say, that there is the same Necessity for your public preaching in such a Country, as there was for

St.

St. Peter, and St. John, St. Paul, and Timothy, their propagating the Gospel; as there was for their preaching *Jesus Christ* to those who could never have heard of him without them, and looking after those *Churches* of converted Persons, which must have perished, and vanished without their Care. You will hardly say, that because there was a Necessity upon St. Paul, and St. Peter, to plant the Christian Religion, where it would not have been without their Preaching; therefore, there is a Necessity upon you to preach, where it is as well, and as effectually taught as you can teach it. You will hardly say, that God commands you to continue your *public Labours*, as much as he commanded those, who had immediate Revelations from him, and were assisted with a supernatural Power from above, of working Miracles, to demonstrate to all the World the Necessity they lay under. And if you will not equal your Necessity to that they lay under, you cannot think that the same Texts which shew the Necessity of their public Ministrations, will convince us of any such Necessity incumbent upon You: because what proves a Necessity in some certain Circumstances, cannot prove a Necessity in Circumstances wholly different. St. Peter, St. John, St. Paul, and Timothy, lay under a Necessity of preaching, because there could have been no such thing as *Christianity*, or a *Christian Church* in the World without it; but the Texts in which their Necessity is declared, can never prove a Necessity of your Preaching, without whose *public Labours*, *Christianity* can very well subsist, and the *Christian Church* be edify'd in Truth; nay, without whose *public Labours*, *Christians* can be more effectually edify'd in Love, and Peace, and Concord, than with them. I am sure, therefore, I do this Argument no Wrong, by neglecting any farther Examination of the Texts on which it is built.

The Ninth, and last Argument, in Defense of the Continuance of your *public Ministrations*, is taken from *Matth. 9. 38. Luke 10. 2.* and runs thus:

We find it to be our Duty to pray for the sending in of faithful Labourers into God's Vineyard, and, We judge the sending up such a Request to God a mocking of him, while such as We are cease to labour, who have been called, and qualified, owned and succeeded.

Therefore we dare not lay aside the *public Exercise* of our *Ministry*.

I have often wondered, to find that wise, and considering Men, when they are aggravating their Adversary's Cause, or defending their own, can often so far forget themselves, as to prefer the *Number* before the *Weight* of Arguments; and, instead of insisting upon what must at last support their Cause (if it be to be supported) to chuse to add to the Heap, tho' they do their Cause an Injury by it. I do not deny but that many of you were *faithful Labourers*, and sincerely endeavoured to promote the Salvation of Souls in the Execution of your Office. But supposing that upon serious Consideration, being sensible that there was good and sufficient Provision for the Souls of the People in the *Established Church*; being persuaded that the Good you could do in your private Capacities, and the peaceful Consequences of laying aside the *public Exercise* of your *Ministry*, would more than counter-balance the Advantage of your *public Ministrations*; I say, supposing You had, upon such Considerations, ceased from your *Labours* in *public*, what is there in this Petition, which You could not say without *mocking God*? Could not you beg of God to send useful and laborious *Pastors* into his Church, to *minister publicly* in it; tho' You thought it more for his Glory, and the Advantage of his Church, that You your selves should leave off to *minister publicly*? Or, if You say, that You could never be of this Opinion, I answer, then this is the Reason of the Continuance of your *public Ministrations*, because You imagine it more for the Advantage of *Christ's Church*, than the laying them aside; not because You cannot put up this Petition *without mocking God*, if You should lay them aside. *This* indeed is the Consequence

quence of the *other*. But why is not *that*, which is the only material Point, insisted upon, and clearly demonstrated? Why are we amused with so many Aggravations of the Guilt of ceasing your *public Labours*; all which Aggravations import nothing, without supposing this, that your *public Labours* are necessary, and more advantageous to the Church, than your *Silence* would be; and *this* not clearly proved, but very little done towards it? Besides, you are as sensible as any Persons whatever, that these *public Labours* are but part of the Office of a *Minister*; and not the only beneficial part. Now you know that it is about these *public Labours* we are speaking, and your Cessation from them. You may still be very beneficial in your *private Labours*; and methinks, you might be *private Labourers*, and do what Good you can, in the way most conducing to the Increase of Peace and Love, and not be said to have ceased even your *ministerial Labours* for the Salvation of Mankind; or, consequently, to *mock God*, when you pray to him to *send faithful Labourers* into his Vineyard. But I have said enough of this. If your Cause were to be supported by such *Arguments* as this, you might add a vast Number more to those you have already offered.

To conclude this Point, Having *maturely weigh'd the whole matter*, and considered every *Argument* alledged, I cannot apprehend it to be an *indispensable Duty* lying upon you as *Men and Ministers*, either by the *Obligation of God's Law of Charity*, or by the *binding Force of your own Vows at your Self-dedication to the Service of God in his House*, to continue the *public Exercise* of your *Ministry*. I grant indeed, that it is your *Duty to do your best in the Exercise of all your Talents, to seek to save People's Souls*: and it is a good general Rule, That every Person, as well as you, ought to do so. But for all this, it is as certainly true (and I believe you will acknowledge it to be so) that many a Man, who may have a good Talent at *public preaching*, and may do some Good by it, may yet be under an *Obligation not to do it*. It may be, that the

Good

Good he can do this way, will be very little more than what he can do in a more private way; it may be, that his *Silence* will be more for the Increase of universal Love and Peace amongst Christians; it may be, that the Necessities of the People may be provided for in other, and more regular ways; and the Thoughts of a *greater Good* in *another* way will certainly lay an Obligation upon him, to omit this one particular way. I have done what I can to shew, that the *Necessities of Souls* calls you not to it; which is the only thing that can defend your Practice. But if you still think fit to persist in this, I shall only ask, Do the *Necessities of Souls* call you to it, in *every* place where you have settled your selves, or in *some* only? If in *some* only, then what Pretence have you for your *public Ministrations* where the *People's Necessities* do not require them? And why are the chief of your Labours employ'd where there is least need of them? If in *every* place, then you must maintain, I think, that the *Necessities* of the People cannot be supplied in any *establish'd* way, and that there cannot be so much done towards this, but that there will be always room for more. And then the Consequence is, *Division*, and *Subdivision* without end, and no hope of Unity and Concord. There was a Time when such Arguments for a *separate Ministry* were rejected, and exploded by your selves. And, indeed, if *this* be retained, and insisted on, as reasonable, I see not, but that it must follow, that there is a good, and reasonable Ground for *Eternal Division* in the *Church of Christ*; which I hardly think there is.

Having thus considered the *Arguments* offered in Vindication of *those* amongst you, who were in the *Ministry* before the *Act of Uniformity*, and have ever since continued the *public Exercise* of it; and examined, whether they be sufficient to defend your Practice in so doing: I come now to the other Point I propos'd, of very great Concern to the Cause, as it stands at present. And that is,

2. To consider, how far these *Auguments* can vindicate the Practice of *those* amongst you, who have ordained others, and of *those* who have been ordained, to the *Ministry*, since that *Act*.

The Consideration of this will take up very little Time: And a very few Words will serve to determine this Point. No *Ordination Vow*, and *solemn Dedication* to God, can here be pretended; and so, the great Crimes of *Sacrilege*, and *Perjury*, might have been avoided without this. The *People* had never experienced the Labours of those of you, who have since taken the *Ministry* upon you; they had never contracted any Relation to you; and, therefore, it cannot be said, that they *requested* your *public Labours*, or *declared that they would charge you with the Ruine of their Souls*, if you did not take it upon you; and so, you could not do it for fear of the Guilt of *Unfaithfulness*, *Cruelty*, and *Unmercifulness to the Souls whose Care you had undertaken*. Nor do I see, that *the Curse and Doom of the unprofitable Servant* could have moved you, either to ordain others, or to be ordained to the *Ministry*. The *Passages of Scripture which* (you say) *intimate the Duration of the ministerial Office where there is once a Conveyance*, have nothing to do, where no *Conveyance* is. And *those which plead for the Necessity of preaching, even when the Magistrate forbids*, can be of little moment to this part of the Cause. The *Petition for faithful Labourers* might have been put up, with as good a Grace, and as great Sincerity, without your *new Ordinations*, as with them: And you seem your selves to apply that Argument only to such as *had been before called, and qualified, owned, and succeeded*. Granting all these Arguments their full force, and as much Strength as you your selves imagine to be in them, they will not, in the least, vindicate the Behaviour of those amongst you we are now speaking of. And thus we see, the greatest Aggravations of the Guilt of your Silence, and those which you lay most *Weight* upon, are of no Consideration in this Point of your Practice. There remain *Two* of the Arguments here

here alledged, and these only can have any relation to it: the *one*, taken from *the Insufficiency of sundry of the Parish Ministers*; and the *other*, from *the Necessities of the people in most parts of the Nation, notwithstanding the Legal Provision for them*. The latter of these I cannot but acknowledge a sufficient Ground for your Practice, if it can be fairly and clearly made out; and, I'm sure, it is the only Argument that you ought to lay any Weight upon. But then it is my Opinion, that it can never be made out; so made out, I mean, as to be a good Reason for your *separate Ministry*. Why I think that neither this *Argument*, nor the other, can do you any Service, I have given a full Account before, in the Consideration of them, as they presented themselves under the *former Head*. And the same Reasons which I produced, to prove that they were not sufficient to justify the *Continuance* of your *public ministry*, will, at least, equally prove, that they are not sufficient to justify, the other part of your Conduct, your *new Ordinations*, for the perpetuating a *separate ministry* in the Land. And to these I must refer you.

Thus have I endeavoured to satisfy you, *First*, That the *Terms of ministerial Conformity* are not so unreasonable, and unjust, as you have imagined, and represented them, to be. *Secondly*, That the *Arguments* you have alledged, upon Supposition that they are so *unreasonable*, are not sufficient to vindicate your Practice, in the Continuance of your *public ministrations*. There remains yet the *third* thing I proposed at first, which I now come to, *viz.*

III. To consider what is offered by Mr. Calamy, in Vindication of your *People*. And what I have to say under this *Head* I shall address to *You* (tho' it do not so immediately respect *You*, as the former Two) because *You*, indeed, are the chief Maintainers of the Separation; because *You* have pleaded the Cause of the *People*, and put these Arguments into their Mouths; because *You* have furnished them with their Objections against *Conformity*,
and

and kept up their Prejudices against the Church of England; because You have very great Interest with them, and a very great Authority, and Influence over them; and, consequently, as You have been their Guides, and Supports, in their Departure from us, so you may, upon maturer Consideration, prove successful, and happy Instruments in the uniting them to us again, to the Glory of God, and the Increase of Peace, and Love amongst us; and, lastly, because many of the Arguments offered for *them* belong in common to You both, and, under some of them, I shall have occasion to speak to you, and your own Practice.

I shall take the same Method under this Head, which I did in the last; and first, draw up all the Arguments I meet with, in Defense of your People, in their full Strength: and then, consider them separately, and examine into the Strength of every one of them.

The *first* is taken from the Benefit the People had found by your Labours, and is thus express'd,

Many of the People had found Benefit by the Labours of the ejected Ministers,

Therefore, *they were obliged to stick to them, and to prefer their Labours before others, &c.*

The *Second* is this,

These Ministers were cast off, without having any suitable Crime alleged against them,

Therefore, it had been *inhumane, and barbarous* in the People to desert them.

The *Third* is taken from the Cause you are engaged in, viz. *the pressing a farther Reformation in Ecclesiastical Matters*; and stands thus,

This Cause is a good and just Cause,

Therefore, it is the Duty of the People, *in their place, to espouse it, and adhere to the same Principle, &c.*

The *Fourth* is this,

It is the Duty of the *Dissenting Ministers to continue in the Exercise of their Ministry, tho' silenc'd by the Magistrate,*

There-

Therefore, the *People* are *therein* obliged to support, and encourage them.

The *Fifth* is taken from their *right* to chuse their own *Pastor*.

The *People* must often *part* with this *Right*, if they submit to the *Legal Provision* for them,

Therefore, they cannot live in Conformity to the *Church of England*. This I find a little afterwards thus expressed, in a manner somewhat differing from this,

Without submitting in many Parishes to unqualified Guides, there is no room left by the Law, for ministerial Instruction, and pastoral Help,

Therefore, it is the *Duty* of the *People* to provide for themselves in a *separate way*.

The *Sixth* is taken from the *want* of *Discipline* in the *Church*.

The *Discipline* of the *Church* is still bad, and insufficient, notwithstanding all the *Calls* for *greater Strictness* and *Care*, ever since the *Reformation* from *Popery*,

Therefore, it is the *Duty* of the *People* to seek for *better Churches* in a *separate way*.

A *Seventh* Argument is this,

Many of the Laity are afraid of sinning, in baptizing their *Children* with *Godfathers* and *Godmothers*, and the *Sign* of the *Cross*; and many of them *question* the *Lawfulness* of *kneeling* at the *Communion*,

Therefore, it is their *Duty* to *separate* from the *Church* of *England*.

The *last* Argument I find proposed (if *that* may be called an *Argument*, which is nothing but *Invective*) is this,

Some of the *Church Party* (you say) were observed to lay a *greater Stress* upon their *Ceremonies*, than upon *Knowledge*, or *Faith*, or *real Holiness*; and to make light of *Oaths*. The *ruling Clergy*, and their *Patrons*, framed several very troublesome *Acts*. The *People* found themselves wretchedly hamper'd, and ensnar'd by *Fetters* of the *Clergies* making. And they who were so fond of their own *Constitution*, had so little
Charity

Charity left for those whose Sentiments differ'd from theirs, as to question the Validity of their Ministry and Ordinances, nay, and even the Possibility of their Salvation, &c. Such Observations as these, made many of the Laity think, that there was no small Danger of encouraging them in their Rigours, and assuming Pretensions, by an Adherence and Submission to them,

Therefore, it was their Duty to separate from them into distinct Churches.

I shall not think this last *Plea* worthy of a Repetition, or a second Thought; and, therefore shall here (before I resume the Consideration of the *other Arguments*) only ask the Person who hath thought fit to load the Cause with this *Investive*, Is this an *Argument* fit to be urged in Defense of a *Separation*, or not? If it be not (as, I verily believe, he thinks it is not) Why is it produced by one that pretends to study Peace, and Reconciliation? why is it proposed as a strong and sufficient Reason? why is it urged without any Consideration, or any Reflexion upon the Weakness of it, and without any *Antidote* against the Poison of it? Is it no matter upon what Grounds the People divide into distinct Churches? Are they to be supported and carested in all their most unreasonable and foolish Prejudices? And is it laudable to multiply *Objections* against the Church, tho' at the Expence of Charity and Judgment? If this be thought a good Reason for *Nonconformity*, then I see no Hopes of ever putting an End to it, even upon the Grounds you your selves desire. For no Abatements, or Amendments in the Church, its Discipline, Government, or Liturgy, can possibly prevent, or remove such *Objections* as this. Nor can there ever be revived a Spirit of Love, and a Desire of Union amongst us, whilst little Conscience is made of putting the worst Construction upon the Actions of others, and then bringing their Persons into the Quarrel; of prejudicing Men against a Cause, by what hath no more relation to it (in Truth) than the most distant thing in Nature. Supposing these Accusations of

the *Clergy* true, and supposing the Crime as great as you please; doth it follow, because some of the *ruling Clergy* have been *rigid Task-masters*, have been Men of ill Tempers, or severe in their Attempts to bring Men to *Conformity*, therefore the *People* ought not to conform? Or, was it ever thought, that *Conformity* obliged Men to approve of the Tempers and Actions of every Man that conformed? and would not the *Conformity* of the *People* have been so far from *encouraging them in their Rigours, and assuming Pretensions* (as you say) that it would wholly have put an End to them? And were not these Persons, who were thus *hamper'd and fetter'd*, Dissenters (and resolved so to be) before these *Observations* made upon the Clergy? How then were they *Nonconformists* in Consideration of these *Rigours, and assuming Pretensions*, when, rather, it is plain, these *Rigours* were used, because they were *Nonconformists*? But I have said too much upon this *Argument*.

Would Men that write in such Causes but consider, that they write in the Presence of God, and that they are to answer for every Insinuation, and every unreasonable Aggravation; for every thing they say that may blind the Eyes, and prejudice the Understanding of their Readers; for every Hindrance that they lay in the way to Peace and Union; for every Word and Sentence that may incense the divided Parties of Christians against one another; we should not see so frequently in Books of Controversy the Marks of *Passion* and *stubborn Prejudice*, where nothing ought to be seen but *Reason* and *good Nature*, and a Disposition inclined to put the most favourable Constructions upon the Designs of *others*; where nothing ought to be seen, but what tends to the composing the unhappy Differences between Men of the same Nation, and the same Profession. We all pretend to lament our Dissensions, and to wish for a perfect Union; but, when will it be seen, that we shall study not to offend, or incense those we differ from? When shall we learn to argue without Reflexions, or Railing? When shall the

Contest

Contest between us be, not, who shall say the bitterest Things; who shall use the most severe and cutting Language; who shall vex and irritate his Adversary most; or, who shall keep up his Party most effectually: but, who shall represent Things with most Truth and Candour; who shall contribute most to the setting Things in a due Light; who shall most effectually pave the Way to Peace, and Concord, remove Mens Prejudices, sweeten their Tempers, and draw their Affections nearer to one another? But what End is there of Division and Hatred, when Men cannot be contented with the best Reasoning their Cause will bear, but are ever lurchening it with *Aggravations*, which always work more than *Arguments*, and never fail to destroy Christian Charity in the World? This Thought hath carried me a little beyond due Bounds: but it hath its use in all Controversies, and especially in this. I heartily wish it may have the same Effect upon all others, as, I hope, it will ever have upon me; and so return to these Arguments in Vindication of your People, as they lie in their Order.

The *First* is this,

Many of the People had found Benefit by the Labours of the ejected Ministers,

Therefore, they were obliged to stick to them; and, as it is expressed presently after, *They could not forbear preferring the Labours of those Ministers, the Suitableness of whose Gifts, and whose Readiness to watch for their Souls, they had experienc'd, before others that came in their places, to whom they were Strangers, and as to whom they were, at the best, in great Uncertainty.*

Of how very little Account in the Cause before us, this Consideration is, and to how little Purpose this *Argument* is produced (unless to make up the Number) is plain. For how few of the *ejected Ministers* confined themselves to the very Places whence they were *ejected*? How few of the *Dissenting Laity* make any Scruple of forsaking a *Pastor* on the Account of any little Difference, or groundless Dissatisfaction, how *suitable* soever they

they have found his *Gifts*, and how much soever they have *experienc'd his Readiness to watch for their Souls*? How few do we find, that express the least Readiness to conform to the *Church of England*, any more after the Departure, or Death of their *ejected Minister*, than before? And when do we find any of them that are not more ready, at such a time, to trust the Care of their Souls with *Dissenting Pastors; to whom they are Strangers, and as to whom they are, at best, in great Uncertainty*, than to return to the Communion of the *Establish'd Church*? This *Argument* then can be of little use to the present State of the Cause. For it is plain, the People think not themselves obliged in Conscience constantly to attend upon the Ministry of that Person, from whom they have once *received Benefit*. It is plain, that many Considerations of lesser moment than the *Peace and Unity of the Church*, do induce them to leave a *Pastor* who hath been useful to them, and attend upon one *to whom they are Strangers*. It is plain, if this *Argument* were wholly wanting, there would not be a *Dissenter* the less in *England*. It is plain therefore, that the *Argument* is weak, and of no great Account in the Judgment of your People themselves. If then they do not judge themselves obliged in Conscience never to forsake that *Teacher*, the *Benefit* of whose *Labours*, and *Suitableness of whose Gifts they have experienc'd*, they could not be obliged in Conscience *to stick* to their own *ejected ministers*. Much less are they obliged in Conscience to join themselves to others, whose Abilities are unknown to them, in Opposition to the *Church of England*. Yet this is their constant Practice, upon the Departure, or Death of their Old Pastor, or upon any Dislike of their own. Whom then of your *Laity* will this *Argument* vindicate? And, if their Practice be such, why is an *Argument* brought to defend it, which must suppose it quite otherwise, or else be acknowledged to have no Strength in it? Their *Practice* therefore is different from what you think it, and represented by you as what it should be, rather than what it really is ;
and

and your *Argument* consequently wants the Force you suppose to be in it, when you apply it to a *Practice* which is not agreeable to your Representation. And then, if any Considerations can be of Force enough to induce a Man to leave one *Pastor*, and go over to another (tho' he have profited by the *one* heretofore, and knows little of the *other*) certainly the Consideration of Peace, and Love, are of all the most forcible ; and may be supposed, more than any others, to discharge him from his great Obligation to attend for ever upon the *Ministry* of one Person who hath been useful to him. Especially considering, on the one hand, that this Person may be very useful to him still, in a more private way : and, on the other hand, that tho' he be perhaps a *Stranger* to the *Established Minister*, and in great *Uncertainty as to him* ; yet he may be secure, in his constant Attendance upon the *public Worship* in the *Establish'd Church*, (which is all we are concerned about) that he shall meet with a *Service* fitted for the Worship of God, and his own Edification, if he bring a good Heart along with him. And there is this Advantage in the *Establish'd Way*, that he need not be a *Stranger* to the main part of the *public Worship* ; nor in the least *Uncertainty as to that*. Is it not, therefore, a little unaccountable, that the great Satisfaction some People take, in their Attendance upon *public Worship*, should lie in their being *Strangers* to what they are to join with, and in great *Uncertainty* what it will be ; and yet, that these Persons should make it an *Argument* against their attending the *public Worship* in the *Establish'd Church* (where the main parts of it are settled with Piety and Judgment, and constantly the same) that they are *Strangers* to the *Minister*, and *as to him, at best, in great Uncertainty* ?

The *Second Argument* in Defense of your People, is this,

The *ejected Ministers* were cast off, without having any *suitable Crime* alleged against them.

Therefore, it had been *inhumane* and *barbarous* in the People to desert them.

It is no Pleasure to me to speak on this Subject; or to think that any good, and useful Persons were so unhappy, as not to be satisfied in their Minds about the *Terms* of *ministerial Conformity* imposed. But let us argue the Case a little, as far as the Cause of *Separation* is concerned. You your selves, with whom I am chiefly concerned, would have some *Establishment*, nay, and such an *Establishment* as would inevitably exclude some Persons, and such as you may think useful and laborious. You would then have some *Terms*, and some *Conditions* imposed, by which all who come in to the *Establishment*, should be obliged. Who shall be Judges what *Terms* are proper? Shall not the *Governours* in *Church* and *State*? Is it not their Province, and must not they give an Account to God for it? If there be some Persons, who cannot come in to the *Ministry*, or remain in the public Exercise of it, upon these *Terms*, Can this be remedied? Or, must these Persons presently begin, and encourage the Division of the Nation, and set up *Churches* against the *Establish'd Church*? Methinks this should not easily be affirmed. Thus, in the Case before us, you would at that very time, if I mistake you not, have had some *Terms* imposed upon such as should continue in their *Parish Ministry*. Supposing therefore these *Terms* had been exactly what would have contented you, you cannot imagine but that for all this many a Man would have been *ejected*, and for ought I can judge, the Number of *such* might have come but little short of what it is represented now to be. Now I would ask, whether would have been better, and more reasonable, all Things considered, that the *People* should have united with their *Parish Ministers*, or with these *ejected Persons*; whether they should have been esteemed *barbarous* and *inhumane*, if they had deserted these; and seriously attended upon the *public Worship* in their *Parish Churches*; whether it might not have been the Duty of the *People* to leave them, tho' they were *ejected*

without

without having any suitable Crime alleg'd against them. For observe, if you grant that at that time some Terms might be imposed very lawfully, nay, and such Terms as would infallibly exclude some, you must grant, that there was no Necessity then of alleging any suitable Crime against them and that they might be lawfully turn'd out, because they did not think it lawful, or proper, to come up to those Terms. Why then are the People taught to follow them, because they were cast off without the Allegation of any Crime, by you who can teach them, that such Terms might lawfully have been imposed, as would unavoidably have caused many to have been cast off, without such a Ceremony? Why is an Argument built upon this, by You who know it will not bear one? Who know this, I say; for I suppose you will give me leave to say, that had these Terms been to your Content, you would not have censured the People who conformed to the Church of England, as barbarous, and inhumane, in deserting their former Minister; but rather, have rejoiced at it, as what would have tended mightily to an entire and universal Concord. And now, methinks, tho' the Terms were not exactly what you wished them, yet since they were such as your lawful Governours then thought fit to impose, and such as many excellent, pious, and useful Men thought fit to comply with; you should not make so vast a Difference in your ways of arguing; and now, move the Compassion of the People with the Thoughts of the Inhumanity and Barbarity of deserting you: when, if you had not been of the Number of the Ejected, but had thought the Terms large enough, you would, I doubt not, have pleaded another Cause; and have argued, that such a Desertion, for the sake of the Peace and Quiet of the Church, is neither inhumane nor barbarous; and perhaps farther, that to stick to the ejected Ministers, and carry on, with them, a formal Separation from a good and sound Church, is, in its Consequences, and ill Effects upon the World, a much greater Instance of Barbarity, and Inhumanity. This is really as if you should

say, if the *Terms* had been such as to take in *us*, then the *People* might have *conformed* without *Inhumanity*, or *Barbarity*, notwithstanding the *Ejection* of many others would have been unavoidable: But since they were framed so that *We* could not come up to them, the *People* justly feared the Guilt of *Inhumanity* in *deserting* us. And, whether it be reasonable to argue at this rate, I leave you to judge.

Besides, I must observe that this *Argument* signifies very little to our present Times, unless you will say, that, whenever any Persons have prepared themselves for the *Ministry*, and cannot come up to the *Terms* of the *Establish'd Church*, it is *inhumane* and *barbarous* in the *People* not to *stick to them*, and encourage them. And perhaps you will say this. For, if this be so mighty an *Argument* in the Behalf of the *ejected Ministers*, it should be of some force in the Case of these others. *They* were actually indeed in the *Ministry*, and these have thought fit to prepare themselves for it. *They* would have come up to the *Terms* of the *Establishment*, if they could have done it without Sin, and *these* profess themselves most ready to do it, but that it is against their Consciences. *They* were *ejected* because they could not submit to these *Terms*, and *these* are kept cut on the same Account; and both *without having any suitable Crime alleged against them*. I see not, but that you may as truly tax the *People* with *Inhumanity* and *Barbarity* in not attending upon *these*, as in *deserting those*. And then, what a Foundation is here laid for constant Divisions from an *Establish'd Church*, tho' never so perfect. It is but for any Persons to pretend, that they have prepared themselves for the *Ministry*, and that they are ready to *minister* in this Church, but that they cannot with a safe Conscience submit to the *Terms* required of *Ministers* in it; and presently it shall be *inhumane* and *barbarous* in the *People* not to give Encouragement to them, and so it shall be made their Duty, to divide from the *Establish'd Church*, and to promote all the sad Consequences of such a Division. In the mean while, these

Consequences are not considered, and it is not remembered, what deplorable Effects have been caused by setting up *Church* against *Church*, and *Worship* against *Worship*; it is not remembered, what *Inhumanity* and *Barbarity* this hath already occasioned, and may again occasion in this Nation; what Prejudices, and Passion, what Emulations, and Opposition, what Hatred and Malice, what Jealousies and vile Surmises, what Disturbances, and Unhappineffes, this naturally tends to produce in the World. And now, As to this *Inhumanity* and *Barbarity*, upon the Consideration of which only this Argument is founded, let any one of common Sense judge, on which side the greater *Barbarity* lies, whether on the part of those who would *desert* the *separate Ministry*, tho' the Consequences of it must be acknowledged very prejudicial; or on the part of those, who, in Consideration of these evil Consequences, and of the Advantages and blessed Effects of a *universal Conformity*, rather chose to *desert* the *separate Ministry*, than the *Establish'd Church*.

The *Third* Argument in Vindication of your *People*, is taken from the *Cause* you are engaged in, thus,

The *Cause* in which the *Dissenting Ministers* are engaged, is a good and just *Cause*,

Therefore, it is the Duty of the *People* in their place to *esponse* it, and *adhere* to the same *Principle*, &c.

The *Cause* you are engaged in, you say, is, *the pressing a farther Reformation in Ecclesiastical Matters, as necessary in order to the more general reaching of the great Ends of Religion*. This is the *Principle* the *People* are to *adhere* to, in *Opposition* to those who reckon the *Church* so perfect as to need no *Amendments*.

This I find frequently mentioned by you, and therefore I shall endeavour, under this *Argument*, clearly and distinctly to set down my Thoughts upon this part of the *Cause*. And it will be, I conceive, a sufficient *Answer* to what is advanced upon this *Pretence*, if I can make out the following *Particulars*.

1: That

1. That *You*, and your *People*, may continue in *Communion* with the *Church of England*, without thinking it *so perfect as to need no Amendments*, and without forsaking the *Cause*, you say, you are engaged in.

2. That you have not attained to *perfection*, or a greater degree of it, in the separate Churches which you have erected.

3. That to *separate* from a Church, in order to obtain a *farther Reformation*, is not reasonable, or defensible.

4. That the method you have taken, is not a likely way to make the *Church of England* one degree more *perfect* than it is already.

5. That if this be a good *Argument* for a *Separation*, there will always be a *Necessity* for one, and that your own *Amendments* would not make the *Church* so *perfect*, but that this same pretence for *Separation* would remain.

1. That *You*, and your *People*, may continue in the *Communion* of the *Church of England*, without thinking it *so perfect as to need no Amendments*, and without forsaking this *Cause* in which, you say, you are engaged. It is none of the *Terms* of *Communion* in our *Church*, as I know of, that we shall think it in ev'ry respect perfect; that nothing is wanting, to make it compleat, either in its *Government*, *Discipline*, or *Worship*: Nor is it contrary to the Principles of *Honesty* and *Sincerity*, for any one to *minister*, or *communicate* in a *Church*, tho' He think something or other in it may be made better, and more adapted to the ends of *Religion*, and the Interest of *Christianity*. Almighty God, tho' without doubt He would have his *Church* as *perfect* in all respects as possible; yet without doubt also, He would not have us upon every defect we imagine to be in it, withdraw our selves from the *Communion* of it: because at this rate we must not communicate at all, but live *Separatists* from all the Churches in the World. Peace, and Unity, are the concern of all *Christians*, and the breaches of *them*, all are answerable for; but the *Constitution* of a *National Church* is

is not the concern of every Christian, so as that He becomes answerable for the defects of it. If He can himself, with that care which every Christian ought to exercise, live in the Communion of it, *righteously, soberly, and godly*; enjoy God's Ordinances without any sinful mixtures, and be in a safe and secure way to Heaven; whence, I beseech you, can arise any Obligation upon Him to break the public Peace and Quiet of this Church? Can you imagine it sufficient for him to urge, *This Church is not perfect enough, it wants something in the Administration of its Government*; *The Discipline of it is loose and defective*; *This Expression, or this Word, in its Liturgy, is improper*? What if it be? and what if these Things be not amended, just when He calls for *Reformation*? Must he therefore disturb, and ruine the Quiet and Charity of the Nation? And will these Pretences answer for such evil Consequences, which are what He knows to be unavoidable? I think it is plain they will not. Supposing therefore, the *Church of England* to want some *Amendments*, and a *farther Reformation*, yet since it wants nothing necessary to the Edification of any serious Christian, and requires nothing in order to *Communion*, but what you acknowledge in it self lawful, what should hinder a *serious Christian* from holding Communion with it? Not his Conscience, or the danger his Soul is in, or the impossibility of his encrease in all Goodness, or the least improbability of his obtaining Salvation in it; for these are not here pleaded, nor will you allege them: But only, He does not think every thing in the Constitution so exactly well as it might be. Nor is it necessary He should do so; He may live in the Communion of it without this; He may do all possible good in the World, and dye a happy Death without it. This you know, that many as great and excellent Persons as ever belonged to this Church, have not thought it *so perfect as to need no Amendments*; have spoken, and written, and very warmly argued for *Amendments*; and yet have lived constantly in the *Communion* of it, and been most useful and honourable

ble Members of it. And tho' there be an unhappy and fatal Distinction between *Church-men*, and different *Names* framed according to this Distinction; yet I never yet heard of a Man of tolerable Sense of either sort, that would seriously say, that there is nothing in the *Church of England* belonging either to its *Government*, *Discipline*, or *Liturgy*, capable of *Amendment*, or which wants *farther Reformation*. Nay, Each sort have publicly spoken, and written for a farther *Reformation* in some one, or more of these. What hath hindered the accomplishment of it, God knows. But *they* only are to answer for this, who have resisted this Design: hinder'd the Reformation of any thing that is really amiss, and the Amendment of what it is reasonable to amend; of whatever might be more adapted to the Design of Christianity, or more fitted to promote the Honour of God. If there be any, I say, who have hinder'd this, *They* are accountable to God for it, not *You*: And you may hold constant Communion with the *Church of England*, without thinking it absolutely perfect, or without ever ceasing, by all proper methods, to endeavour the *Amendment* of any thing in it that can be made better; or the *supply* of any thing that is wanting. But,

2. I desire it may be considered, that you have not attained to *perfection*, or to a greater degree of it than what our Church may pretend to, by separating from it, and erecting Churches in opposition to it: And how incongruous is it, that you should separate from the *Church of England* because it is not *perfect*, and be yourselves, in the mean while, as *imperfect* and defective Churches, as that you have separated from? I speak the least, and therefore I hope you will give me leave to say it, That *Your* Churches are not more *perfect* than the *Establish'd Church*. What advances then have you made towards the *attaining this perfection*? And what have you gained by leaving an *imperfect* Church? It sounds but indifferently to say, We leave the *Church of England* because it is imperfect, and we communicate with Churches

ches as imperfect; we leave the *Church of England* because we are engaged in a Design of pressing a *farther Reformation*, and for fear we should contribute to the strengthening the Opinion of some that it is *perfect*, and yet we constantly communicate with Churches which we know to be imperfect; We forsake the *Established Church* in opposition to those who think it *perfect*, and we join with Churches of whose *Perfection* there is as little hope. But I pray, until this *Reformation* and *Perfection* be accomplished, Is not Communion with this *imperfect* Church as laudable as Communion with one which is no better? And supposing two Churches equally imperfect, doth not the Obligation to Communion, on many Accounts, lie manifestly on the side of the *Established Church*? Nay, doth it not manifestly lie on that side, even supposing the *separate Church* somewhat the perfecter of the two? Permit me to ask you one Question more, and that is this, If the Cause you are engaged in, the pressing *Reformations* and *Amendments*, be a good Reason for Separation, or lay an Obligation upon you to *separate*, why do you not *separate* from your own Churches, in order to bring *them* to perfection? Either your Churches are *perfect*, or you make a strange difference in your behaviour towards the *Established Church*, and towards *them*. If you say not that they are *perfect*, it must remain still unaccountable, that you should make *that* a Reason for joining together in *separate Churches*, which is as much a Reason for separating from these *separate Churches*, as it is for your separating from the *Church of England*.

If you will say, that the *Churches* you join with are *perfect*, or any thing more perfect than the *Church of England*, this I grant to be consistent with this Argument, but not with Truth: And I desire you to shew us plainly, in what it is that this *greater Perfection* is manifest. Is it in the *Government* of your *Churches*? What is that? *Presbyterian*, or *Independent*? And in what doth it exceed the *Episcopal Form*? Is it more antient, or more beneficial

cial to the Flock of Christ? You cannot shew a *Church*, before these late Times, in which *Bishops*, as Superiour to *Presbyters*, did not preside; nor can you shew any advantage to the *Church* in any other Government, which that of *Bishops* is without. Is this pre-eminence in the *Discipline* of your Churches? Where is it to be seen, and how is it exercised? I cannot say that you are without it, because I am not well enough acquainted with the present State of your Churches to be able to say it; but I cannot hear that you can boast of any *regular*, beneficial, and truly Christian *Discipline*? Or, Is this *greater Perfection* chiefly visible in your *public Worship*, and your Administration of the public Offices of Religion? Is a *stated Liturgy*, composed of *Sentences, Lessons, Psalms, and Hymns* taken out of the Scripture, and of pious and profitable Prayers, an *imperfect* and low Dispensation, when compared with the performances amongst *You*, which must wholly depend upon the Preparation, Abilities, Temper, and present Disposition of the Persons who are to Officiate? And, Is it more for the Honour of God, for the Decency of *public Worship*, for the Edification of the *Christian Church*, that a general Encouragement should be given to this, than such a *Liturgy* be joined with? The best and most complete way of determining this, would be to procure a true Copy of all the *public Prayers* used in all the *Congregations* throughout the whole Land, on any one *Lord's Day*, by those who have thrown off the *Use* of the *Liturgy*; and to compare *these*, with the *Service* in the *Common-Prayer-Book* Established. This would clearly demonstrate, which is most for the Honour of God, and the Decency of his *Worship*; which gives most occasion to improprieties, and irregularities in his *Service*; which is, universally speaking, most for the true and Christian Edification of the *People*; the *method* you have chosen and encouraged, or the *imperfect* discarded *Liturgy* of the *Church of England*. But alas! this is impracticable. However, Enough is known of the *Worship* in the *Dissenting Congregations* to make me think, that your

your selves will not affirm the *whole* of it (as made up of all the *separate Performances* throughout the Land, on any one *Lord's Day*) to be more free from Imperfections, and Indecencies, more suitable to the Nature of God, or more fit for the Instruction of his *Church*, than the *Established Liturgy*. Nay, I hardly think, that you can prefer any one single performance, in all respects, before it. But if you could, and if we should suppose (for Argument's sake) that Mr. *Baxter*, and a few more, could, in their way, express themselves very happily, and entertain the People with a *public Service* much better than the *Liturgy*; yet this would not prove that your *Churches* are more *perfect* than ours in this respect. For it is not from what this, or that particular Man can do, by the help of *Nature* and *Art*, that we must draw our Judgment in this point. But if you would prove your *Churches* more *perfect* in their *Worship*, than the *Church of England*, you must prove that, generally speaking, they are so; and that your method tends to make them so; or rather, that, upon comparison of the whole Service of every one of them in the Nation, with that of the *Church Established*, it appears, that there are fewer, and more inconsiderable *Imperfections* in it, than in that settled by the Law. How securely might we put the whole matter upon this Issue, without so much as desiring that you should be as severe, and hard, in the Constructions you put upon your own *Performances*, as you have been in those you have put upon our *Liturgy*? But I will forbear saying any more upon this *Head*, because I think it needless; there being nothing plainer, than that it is unaccountable, and inconsistent, to *separate* from an *imperfect* Church, in order to *press a farther Reformation*; and constantly to *join* with another Church as *imperfect*, and which wants *Reformation* as much.

3. I shall endeavour to shew, That to separate from a *Church*, in order to obtain a *farther Reformation*, is not in it self a reasonable, or defensible thing. This Argument, as it seems to me, supposes that the *Church* is tolerable,

terable, only that it hath some Defects, and stands in need of some Amendments. If it were *intolerable*, then *that* would be the Reason of your *Separation*, and not the prospect of *Amendment* and *Reformation*. This is the same Church with which the *Old Puritans* thought *constant Communion* to be *lawful*, and *necessary*. What therefore this Argument, as distinct from all others, intends, is, not that you cannot communicate with this Church, as the *Old Puritans* did, but, that finding no likelyhood of compassing a *farther Reformation* in it by *communicating* with it, you *separate* from it as the most likely way to obtain this *Reformation*. Now supposing this to be the likeliest Method of bringing this to effect, yet it seems to me to be a Method not allowed by Reason, or Christianity. I will not be positive in the matter, but, according to the best of my understanding, and the present view, I have of it, this is *doing evil that good may come*. Supposing a *Government* to be *tolerable*, and to require nothing but what may lawfully be complied with; tho' it have something in it which you could wish amended, yet would it not be *Rebellion*, and a sinful *Disobedience*, to rise up against it, and fill the World with confusion? Or, would it sanctify such a Practice, to say, That this is done in order to make it more complete and perfect? So likewise, supposing a *Church* to be *tolerable* (as this Argument gives us leave) and nothing to be required in order to *Communion* with it, but what may lawfully be complied with: tho' it be not so perfect as it might be, and as you wish it, yet, will it not be sinful to *separate* from it, and disunite *Christians* from one another? Will the *End* proposed sanctify an evil which hath so very pernicious, and sad consequences? And will it be sufficient to say, *We separate* in order to bring this *Church* to *greater Perfections*? When the Question is put, *Why do you divide from a Church of Christians already settled? And why are you the occasion of so much Variance and Strife in the Land?* Will it be a proper Answer, Not because we cannot join in *Communion* with it (for this we can do

as well as our *Pious Progenitors*), but because we hope by this means to bring this *Church* to a better *State*, and a greater degree of *Perfection*? Is *Separation* then so innocent, and harmless a thing, that any good proposed at a distance, shall justify it, and make it eligible? No Man hath inveigh'd more against it than you, and your Predecessors: No Man hath loaded it with more *Aggravations* than Mr. *Baxter*: And yet indeed it must be a most trifling and insignificant Matter, if such Reasons as this can change its Nature, and dissolve the Obligations Men are under to avoid it. We are obliged not to seek the *Glory of God* in all ways: And it is unlawful to endeavour or design the *Amendment*, or *Advantage* of a *Church* by all *Methods*: And therefore, to separate from a *Church* with which You can hold *Communion* in all *Christian Offices* without sinning, under pretence of bringing it to more perfection, is unlawful. If you could not join with the *Church of England* in the *Offices of Religion* without sinning against your *Consciences*, this turns *Separation* from a *Sin* into a *Virtue*, by making it a necessary *Duty*: But since you can communicate without sinning, and yet separate, I see not what can make it necessary, or excusable.

But I find that you are often endeavouring to avoid this difficulty, by saying thus, *If we should communicate constantly with the Church Established, we should not indeed in in the action it self, but in the Circumstances or Consequences of it we should.* For this *constant Communion* would be a *practical Concession* that the *Church* is perfect, and would tend to confirm many *Church-men* in their *Opinion* that it was so. This I find you frequently mentioning, and therefore give me leave to examine it thoroughly before I proceed. I have just now shewn that your *Communion* with the *Church of England* would imply in it nothing like this, and have alleged the example of great Numbers who constantly communicate with it, and are far from thinking it perfect, and these not, only of one, but of all sorts. Communicating with a *Church*

cannot be a *practical Declaration* that it is so complete *as to need no Amendments*, but can only signify that we judge it to be so perfect, that we can very well communicate with it. When you constantly keep Company with any Persons, would you have this signify that you imagine them to be absolutely without fault? And can it signify any more, but that you judge them fit for your constant Conversation? So likewise let it be in the Case before us, because it can be no otherwise; and because, if it were otherwise, there would hardly be a *constant Communicant* left in this Church; nor could there be one in any Church in the World. Is your *constant Communion* with your own Churches a *practical Declaration* that they are perfect? If not, why should it be more so, when it is exercised with the *Church of England*, than when with your own? But it will confirm some Church-men in an opinion, that the Church is perfect. None, but such as will think so, whether you communicate with it or not, and very few there are who do think so, at least, who will say so. But supposing it would settle them in the belief that *there is no need of Amendments*, there would be this advantage in it, that as they would resist Alterations which you think for the better, so they would likewise any for the worse; and you might be secure the Church would not prove worse upon your Hands thro' their means: which, considering all things, is a very happy Security. But farther, Would this consequence of your *constant Communion* (supposing it certain, whereas it is nothing but imaginary) be a reasonable and natural Interpretation of your Practice, or not? It is plain from what I have said, that your Practice cannot reasonably be so interpreted; nor is the practice of many *constant Communicants* so interpreted. If then these Church-men will so interpret it, whose fault is it? and who is to answer for it? Are you accountable for all the ill consequences of your Actions? I hope not. Are you to answer for all the unreasonable Interpretations other Men shall put upon them? You tell us, *No certainly*, when your *occasional Communion*

Communion is concerned. Then, you say, *The unreasonable Interpretations ignorant or violent Men will put upon your Practice, ought not to move you in the least.* Why then will you not be as favourable to *constant Communion*, and own, that the unreasonable Opinions, or Judgments of others ought to be of no account in this Cause also? Or, Is *occasional Communion* a much greater Duty, a greater Honour to the *Christian Cause*, and the *Protestant Religion*, more beneficial to the Nation, or more edifying to your selves, than *constant Communion* would be? And I can assure you, that your *occasional Communion* hath contributed as much to Men's thinking that you have a very good Opinion of the *Church of England*, as your *constant Communion* would do, and is to some as much a *practical Declaration* that it is *perfect*. These then are the ill Consequences of your *Conformity*; and these are, in Truth, only imaginary, and fantastick, light and inconsiderable, such as arise from the Unreasonableness of others, which you argue, ought not to influence you in another Case very like this. But the ill Consequences of a *Separation* are not imaginary, but visible. They have been seen, and felt, and are daily seen and felt. They are not light and inconsiderable, but of the highest Importance, as being utterly inconsistent with the Unity and Peace of Christians, and the Happiness of Humane Society. Division and Subdivision without end, Confusion and Disorder, Indecency in the Worship of God, Irregularity, Strife, and Emulation, Heat, and Passion, Ill-will, and Malice, are the unavoidable Consequences of such a *Separation* as you have given a general Encouragement to. And that they are unavoidable, you must know, if you understand either Humane Nature, or constant Experience. Who would not do any thing, but commit Sin, to avoid any thing like these? I take it to be a certain Rule, That of *two Evils*, it is the Duty of every Man, to choose the least. Thus in the Case before us, supposing *Conformity* to have these ill Consequences you have mention'd, and *Separation* to have those I have produced, the

Duty of a Christian is certainly to chuse that way of Action which hath the fewest and most inconsiderable Inconveniences, and the lightest ill Consequences to the Christian Church. Since therefore, he must either *communicate* with this Church, or *separate* from it, let any Persons judge whether it be worse to give Occasion to some Persons to think an imperfect Church perfect, or to give Occasion to Dissension and Uncharitableness amongst Christians; to do what may possibly (but not certainly) induce some to think *no Amendments* in this Church to be reasonable, or to do what will certainly, and unavoidably, lead to the producing all the Hatred, Strife and Violence imaginable; to do what injudicious Men only can so misinterpret, and make such an use of; or to do what will infallibly help to destroy *Christian Charity* in the World. What greater Obligation can a Christian lie under, than that by which he is bound to avoid every thing that tends to ruine the *Peace*, and *Quiet* of Society? Is his Obligation to look after the Constitution of a Church, and to see that every thing in it be as exactly and nicely order'd, as he in his private Judgment wishes it to be; I say, is this Obligation ever to take place of the other? And would he that reads the *Gospel* seriously, imagine it to be the Duty of a Christian, or worth his while, to quit his Regards to *Unity* and *Love*, in order to rectify somewhat that he thinks amiss in a Church, in which He meets with all Things necessary to his Salvation, and nothing destructive of it, and in the *Communion* of which, He knows He can live and die a good Christian? Can any *Christian* that is sensible what a Stress is laid upon *Charity*, and *Peace*, in that Law by which he is to be judg'd, induce himself to neglect the Promotion of these, even for one Day; and think it Recompence enough to his Lord, that He hath some Hopes this way of adding to the Perfection of one particular Church? What is more *edifying* to his Church than *Charity*? And what more conduceth to the Beauty and Splendor of it than the loving and peaceable Dispositions of his

his Disciples? Without Peace and Love, all the *Perfection* in the World is not lovely in his Eyes, and with *them*, Imperfection is by him accounted Perfection. They are the chief and principal Things that compose the Beauty and exact Symmetry of a Church; and in vain do we talk of making a Church *perfect*, whilst we are doing what must inevitably ruine that in which its greatest Glory must consist. I say not that all who *separate* are *uncharitable*, but I say, that they give occasion (and such an Occasion as never fails) to all the Instances of *Uncharitableness* and *Passion* amongst Persons of the differing Parties: And this, I say, all Christians are bound indispensably to avoid, and more strongly obliged to avoid it, than they are to study the Perfection of the outward Forms of *Church Government*, and *Worship*, supposing them but tolerable. And this the *Old Puritans* seem highly sensible of; and have left behind them nothing that gives us any reason to think, that it was their Opinion, that either Length of Time, and waiting for Amendments, or any faint Hopes of bringing them to pass by Separation, could dissolve the Obligation Christians are under to *preserve the Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace*.

Pardon me, if I seem a little troublesome, or tedious on this Head. I confess, my concern here transports me a little; and it grieves me to see a Church torn to pieces, its Members divided from one another, Discord triumphing upon the Ruines of Unity, and Uncharitableness reigning without Controul; and all this brought about by Men of Seriousness and Consideration, Men that profess they desire nothing more than the Edification, and Perfection of this very Church. Had you ask'd the Enemies of this Church and Nation, those whom it hath so gloriously and successfully opposed, which way you should take to ruine both Church and Nation, they would have thought of no other, but the encouraging such a *Separation*: and they may well be pleased that you think *Separation* your Duty in order to a *farther Reformation*,

formation, because this Thought will help more effectually to bring about their Wishes. You are as far from desiring that their Wishes may be accomplished as any Persons living, but you know sometimes *good Men* have given an unhappy Occasion to what hath produced Effects quite contrary to their Designs; such Effects as they would afterwards have given all the World to hinder, but could not. This hath been experienc'd in this Nation, and Experience should teach us all Wisdom.

The *Church of England* is a *Church*, with which you acknowledge *constant Communion* to be necessary in places where you have no Opportunities of *separate Congregations*. By this you acknowledge *constant Communion* with it to be lawful. If it be your Duty therefore to communicate with the *Church of England*, where no other Church can be communicated with, certainly it must be your Duty to communicate with the *Church of England*, where no other Church can be set up, or communicated with, without giving Occasion to Division, and Animosities, and Malice, and Hatred amongst Christians. And as, on the one side, you say, we cannot *communicate* with this *Church* without confirming some Men in the Opinion that it is perfect; so, on the other side, let me argue, you cannot *separate* from this Church without encouraging *Discord*, and *Passion* amongst Christians, and sowing the Seeds of *Hatred* in the Land: and let this have its due Weight with you, because I have shewn, that Communion with the Church is not a Declaration that it is perfect, and that there are very few or none who have such an Opinion, or, if they have, who will be confirmed in it by any thing you can do or say; and because I have proved that, supposing this would be the Consequence of your *constant Communion*, yet the Consequences of your Separation are far worse, and much more pernicious to the Honour, and Life of Christianity. And consequently, it is not a reasonable, or defensible thing, to *separate* from a Church in order to a farther Reformation. And as I am deeply touch'd with these Thoughts my self, so I cannot help

help beseeching God, that, if they have any Weight in them, they may likewise affect you, and forcibly move you to do somewhat towards the reviving *Christian Love* and *Unity* in the Land. What you have alleg'd, besides what I have here mentioned, concerning the Sinfulness, and ill Consequences of *constant Communion*, notwithstanding the Lawfulness and Necessity of *occasional Communion*, I shall very distinctly consider in its proper place. I proceed now in the *Argument* before us, and desire you to consider,

4. Whether the Method you have taken be a *likely way* to make the *Church of England* one Degree more perfect than it is. Under the last Head I argued upon the Supposition that it was a *likely way*. But I only *supposed* this, that you might be the more sensible of the *Unreasonableness* of Separation upon the *Principle* I am now examining. I cannot think that you your selves can judge the Methods you have taken, at all *likely* to induce, or force, the *Church of England* to a *farther Reformation*, and a greater degree of *Perfection*. And if they be not, it must be very unreasonable to make use of them as *Means* to bring about this *End*. By *Perfection*, I know, you understand such *Amendments* as you have thought reasonable: and not thinking your selves likely to obtain them by *Conformity* to the *Church*, you *separate*, in order to obtain them. Let me now ask you, Is it a *likely way* to obtain any *Amendments*, or any such *Alterations* as you desire, in the *Establish'd Form of Church-Government*, wholly to lay aside *Bishops*, and to discard the Inequality you know there ever was in the *Christian Church* between *them* and *Presbyters*? Is it a *likely way* to obtain those *Alterations* you have thought reasonable in the *Establish'd Liturgy*, to lay aside *Liturgies* wholly, and encourage such a Liberty in *public Worship*, as must very often be the Occasion of much Disorder, and Imprudence in it? Is it a *likely way* to *Union*, to run into the farthest *Extreme* possible from those with whom you desire to unite? Is it a *likely way* to compose the Heats you complain of,

and influence the Judgments and Affections of Men to the Prosecution of Love and Peace, and a mutual Agreement, to put your selves at such a distance from them, to instruct and educate the People in differing Modes of Worship, to keep up their Prejudices against the *Church*, and to load the *Cause of Conformity* with all the Aggravations, and imagined ill Consequences possible to be thought of? Do you so little understand Humane Nature, and the Strength of Passion, and Prejudice, as to think that Men love to be forc'd and heeter'd into Compliance and Condescension? Did you find your selves so willing to yield upon bad Usage, and violent Contradiction? Doth not *Opposition* always beget *Opposition*, and *Violence* produce *Violence*? And are *Two Extremes* often known to meet? To anger and incense Men, to move their Resentment, and stir up their Passions, is really, in other Words, to raise a Mist before their Eyes, and cast a Cloud before their Understanding; to hinder all the Efforts of their good Nature, and utterly to set them against all Terms of Reconciliation, and all Overtures of Peace. And in truth, you seem to me to have taken the Course effectually to indispose Men from hearing of any Proposals for Accommodation, or from thinking of an Agreement to any *Alterations* you shall think fit, by the Encouragement you have given to Churches so wholly opposite to the *Establish'd Church* in every respect, and to the Passions, and most unreasonable Prejudices of the People against it. You have separated from it, as from a Church with which *constant Communion* is not tolerable; you have drawn many a Cople from it, as you have had Opportunity; you have chosen to join, and unite with, the most irregular, and imperfect *Churches*, rather than with *this*, and to make your Interest one with theirs, rather than to be thought to prefer *this* before them; you have written for many Years with such a Concern and Heat against it that you could hardly write with more against the *Church of Rome* it self; you have blacken'd *ministerial Conformity* to it with such a Number of Aggra-

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vations, as must make it a Complication of Sins of the most horrid, and unpardonable nature; you have done what tends to alienate the Minds and Hearts of the Nation from the *Establish'd Church*, and those that *minister* in it. And you cannot think this the likeliest way to bring those from whom you differ to such a *Temper of Accommodation*, and such a *yielding Disposition*, as you wish, and as there must be before this *farther Reformation* can be accomplished. Granting therefore that some *Amendments* are highly reasonable in themselves, and that some *Alterations* which you (amongst others) have contended for, would make the *Church* more *perfect* than it is; yet, before this be done, Mens Minds must be disposed to it, and made easy and yielding. They must be void of Passion and Prejudice, for fear they should make such *Alterations* as are not reasonable, or resist and prevent such as are. Nothing of Hatred, or the least Degrees of private Resentment and Anger, must have place, where such a Design is on foot. And yet your *Method* tends to Passion and Prejudice, and Resentment; but can never have the least part in making Men pliable and easy, in disposing them to recede from any thing, to make the smallest Concessions, or give up a Point of the least Importance. It is true, that, upon the *Supposition* that the *Church* may be made more perfect, nothing will hinder considering Men from promoting such *Alterations* as will do it. No Unreasonableness, or unaccountable Behaviour, no Aggravations, or Invectives, no Violence or Heat, in any who differ from them, ought to have such an Effect upon their Minds, as to render them unwilling, or indisposed to encourage such a *farther Reformation*: because their Failings belong to themselves, and not to the Cause in hand, and can make that neither better, nor worse. If it be reasonable in it self, it will be so, whoever espouse it, or by what Methods soever they attempt it: And the *Perfection* of a *Church* is a thing of that moment, that nothing ought to divert us from pressing towards it. But then, on the other side, would any
who

who seriously desire this *Accommodation*, and wish for such Concessions, take such Methods to procure them, as, in the ordinary and constant course of things, must resist and hinder them? Would you anger and incense those whom you would have yield and comply? Would you provoke and irritate Men whom you would dispose to agree with you? Would you, in any Affair in the World, be ever inveighing against the Cause or Behaviour of Persons, with whom you desire to settle a lasting Concord, and from whom you hope for some favourable Concessions? I believe not; yet here you act after that manner. For there is hardly any thing that hath the least Tendency to obtain this desired Union, and in order to it, to soften the Hardnesses, to cool the Heats, to engage the Affections of any on whom this Concord must depend; there is hardly any thing of this nature that you have thought fit to do. But there is hardly any thing that tends to keep us at a distance from one another, and hinder this Agreement, that tends to inflame the Passions of those you differ from, to make them jealous and fearful of a closer Union with you, to render them suspicious of your Tempers and Designs, and disengage their Affections from you, but that you have thought it worth your while to practise it, in the way of your *Separation*, and in the Methods you have taken to begin, and confirm it. As if it had been your Business to do what you knew would be most grievous in their Eyes, and your Resolution to vex them as much as possible, since they would not agree with you; and as if the interchanging of such good Offices were likely to prove the readiest way to settle a good Correspondence between you, or to bring you one Step nearer to one another. In one Word, let who will believe, that can, that your *Separation*, and the Methods which have been taken to uphold it, can have any Tendency towards the procuring these *Alterations* which would make the Church perfect enough for you. Common Sense contradicts this; and the more I consider it, the more I am confirmed, that tho'

tho' it were never so lawful to use such *Means* for the Accomplishment of such an *End*, yet this *End* cannot be accomplished by such *Means*. If either Reason or Experience be to be regarded, it is certain, that from hence have produced the greatest Unwillingnesses, and strongest Aversions to such an *Agreement*. And if so, the Consideration of obtaining these *Alterations* ought not, in the nature of it, to have induced you to *begin* your *Practice*; and cannot in reason induce you to *continue* it.

Besides, were you certain that the Method you have taken is both a *lawful* and *likely* way to the procuring those *Abatements*, and *Amendments* which would content you, and supposing that the affecting them should bring in many of you, who are *Ministers*; yet God only knows, as the *Cause* hath been unhappily managed, whether this would so mightily contribute to the *universal Union* of this *Church* and *People*, as one would wish, or as some expect. For it is notorious, that these *Abatements* and *Alterations* are not the Matters which the Generality of your *People* concern themselves about; or which, in their Opinion, make up any considerable part of the Cause. No, I doubt, these would move them but little, and bring them but a very little way towards the *Church*. For the most unfortunate thing of all is, that you have settled them in a way of Worship wholly different from what ours is, and *must be*. You have refused them to *Liturgies*, and effectually taught them to esteem a *stated Form of Prayer*, as a dry, insipid, heavy Dispensation, unable to raise their Affections to a due Pitch, unqualified to raise any Transports of Devotion, or to kindle any sort of religious Passion in their Breasts; not to be compared with the meanest *extemporary Effusion*, so it be but utter'd with Vehemence and Zeal; and therefore not fit for their Entertainment in the Worship of God. You have laid aside *Episcopacy*, as an inconvenient, or useles, or, at least, as a very indifferent Form of *Church Government*, and your *People* can hardly, by this means, bear the Thoughts of a *Church* in which so much as the Name

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of *Bishops* is found. These, and the like Unhappineſſes; have neceſſarily followed from your manner of Behaviour, and therefore, if You ſhould come in your ſelves to a Church in which *Episcopacy* and a *ſtated Liturgy* are retained, (as you will do, I hope, if ever you come into *this*) let them be never ſo well regulated, and never ſo excellently framed, your *People* perhaps will rather chuſe the way you have already engaged them in, and ſooner forſake you, than thoſe Fancies in which you have eſta- bliſhed them. And if this ſhould prove ſo, what great Progreſs ſhall you have made towards the *Perfection* of a Church by this Method, when tho' it ſhould gain your Point, and help to effect theſe deſired *Alterations*, yet it hath, before this be accompliſhed, laid the Foundation of perpetual Division in the Land; hath prejudiced the *People* againſt the *Eſtabliſh'd Way*, tho' you join with it; hath taught them to reliſh, and to value beyond meaſure a way diſtinct from it, and oppoſite to it; and to be Proof againſt all Arguments taken from the univerſal Good, and Peace of the *Church* and the common Intereſt of *Proteſtants*. Indeed I would gladly hope (as I have before ſaid) that you have the Intereſt and Authority with your *People*, and that your Example and Perſuaſion, will have that Influence over them, that, if ever that happy Time ſhould come when you ſhould think fit to ſubmit to the *eſtabliſh'd Terms*, and conform to the *Church of England*, your *People* will be induced to follow you, and conform alſo. *Some*, I doubt not, *will*: But this *Se- paration* and your *Behaviour* in it, will have no part in perſuading them to it. And for the Generality of the *People*, my Fears are, that it hath eſtabliſh'd, and harden'd them in another Courſe, and ſo inured them to it, that nothing at laſt may be able to remove their Prejudices, to convince their Judgments, or draw their Affections to *Conformity*. We know not the *utmoſt Force* of Prejudices once entertained, encouraged, and ſtrengthened by many Years *Practice*: But we know the Force of them to be great, and almoſt unconquerable; and this
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ought to make us always afraid; lest for the sake of avoiding a little present Inconvenience, or the obtaining a little present Good, we should prevent a much greater Good in Times to come, and run into a much greater Inconvenience. It should make us afraid of doing any thing towards the cherishing, and strengthening such unreasonable Errors, and wrong Notions in a Multitude of People, as may, one time or other, stand in the way to Union; and be the greatest Bar to that Happiness which we our selves desire, and the very thing that hinders it, when we most wish, and most hope to effect it. This then is one great Inconvenience in your way of proceeding, that it obstructs and frustrates your own professed Design, by engaging a Multitude of People in such a Method, as they will with great Difficulty, if at all, be removed from; and so, preventing *Union* and *Conformity*, by the way in which you propose to obtain such *Alterations*, and *Amendments*, as you desire, towards your own *Union* and *Conformity*. Be it therefore so, that the Method you have taken will carry forward this *farther Reformation*, yet it will not carry forward, or very much promote, one main thing proposed by this *farther Reformation*, a more universal *Concord* and *Unity*. And therefore, it is a mysterious and unaccountable thing, that you should not rather have chosen some *other Method* of prosecuting your Design: and whatever other you had chosen, I dare affirm, it could not have produced worse Effects, or have had more ill Consequences, than *that* you have pitch'd upon, or have been more disagreeable to the main *End* proposed. And this last I prove thus. Mutual Concessions, and a yielding Spirit, are necessary to these proposed *Alterations*; and the Conformity and Unity of the People are the greatest Perfection of a *Church*, and a main *End* intended in these *Alterations*. Now the Method you have taken is not at all *likely* to produce such *Concessions*, or to incline Men to yield the most indifferent Points; but rather to make them jealous and suspicious of you, and incense them against you,
and

and is so far from being ever likely to unite the *People* to the *Church*, that it is rather to be feared, it hath laid the Scheme of perpetual Division, and a continued *Separation*, even supposing such *Alterations* in the *Church* as would content you. Therefore your *Separation*, and the Method you have taken to maintain it on foot, is as *unlikely* as possible, to effect this *farther Reformation*, or ever to bring about the Union and Agreement of the Christian People in this Land. This *Syllogism* is the Summ of what I have proposed to you under this *Head*, and I entreat you to consider, if it have not some Force in it, and do not deserve a few of your serious Thoughts.

And now, to conclude this *Head*, give me leave to invert your *Argument*, and to argue thus with you upon your own Principle. If the Consideration of obtaining these *Amendments* have been of that mighty Force with you, as to move you to venture upon a thing of such Consequence, as a *formal Separation*, and a distinct Way of *public Worship* from that *establish'd*; of how much greater Force ought this Consideration to have been, in the moving you to a quiet and peaceable *Conformity*, as far as your Consciences could give leave? My Reason is, because this would have been much the more *likely* way of accomplishing the *End* you had in view. If the Prospect of *this*, therefore, moved you to *Separation*, which will never effect it; let the Prospect of this carry you to *Conformity*, which (as it hath not so many ill Consequences, so it) hath a greater Likelihood of effecting it. As far, therefore, as this *Argument* can prevail, I think verily it must prevail on the side of *Conformity*: For I may appeal to the *Reason* and *Experience* of Mankind, and to the known Movements of Humane Nature; if it be not more likely, by Patience, and Tenderness, by Conformity to Men in all lawful Things, by Courtesy and Amity, by keeping up a Friendship, and good Correspondence, by Calmness and Temper, by Moderation and Candour, to bring them to a yielding Disposition and a compliant Humour, to incline their Affecti-

ons and their Good-Will towards us, and so to dispose them to be ready to make *Abatements*, and *Alterations*; than by *separating* from them as Persons unworthy of our *constant Communion*, by aggravating and loading their Cause with all the Evil we can invent, by putting the worst Construction upon all their Actions, by drawing the *People* from them, and encouraging their Prejudices against them, by setting up other *Forms of Church-Government* and *Worship*, at the widest distance from them. Let me ask any Person, whether of these Two is the most probable Method of attaining this *End*? It seems to be a plain Case, that the *former* is the most *probable* Method, and therefore, that the Consideration of the gaining these very *Alterations* you so much desire, should rather have engaged you to *Conformity* and *Union*, than to *Separation*, and your Behaviour in it. But it is time to leave this, and proceed. I desire you therefore to consider,

5. That if the Argument which I am now examining, be a good Argument for a *Separation*, then there will always be a Necessity for one, and always a Reason sufficient to uphold, and excuse it; which, I think, is by no means to be allowed. You, and your *People*, separate in order to *press*, and obtain, a *farther Reformation in Ecclesiastical Matters*, as necessary in order to the more general reaching of the great *Ends of Religion*; and in Opposition to those who reckon the *Church* so perfect as to need no *Amendments*. Now I may safely affirm, that neither you, nor any Men else in the World, can contrive such a Church, or lay the Scheme of such a Constitution, that a *farther Reformation* shall not be necessary in order to the more general reaching of the great *Ends of Religion*. Had such *Amendments* and *Alterations* as, we are often told, would have contented you, and brought you in, been accepted of, in the *Establish'd Church*, you cannot say that it would have wanted nothing in order to the more general reaching the great *Ends of Religion*. And yet You would have *conformed*, and have pleaded the Cause of *Conformity*. If then,

then, you should, upon such *Amendments*, have thought it your Duty to have conformed to the *Establishment*, notwithstanding the want of a *farther Reformation in order*, &c. it cannot certainly be judged by you a good Argument for a *Separation*, that a *farther Reformation is necessary in order to*, &c. If you could, upon such *Alterations*, have complied, tho' other *Alterations* in the Constitution would have been *necessary* for the *End* mentioned; then it is certainly *lawful* for you to comply, though the *Alterations* which you most wish, be not made; and therefore, it cannot be your Duty to separate because these *Alterations* are not yet obtained. For this Argument goes no farther, than the want of such *Alterations* as are *necessary to the more general reaching the great Ends of Religion*; and supposing the *Alterations* you have desired, to be such, it cannot be accounted by you necessary to separate, because these are not made; since you would have conformed, if these had been accepted, and yet others of the same sort would certainly have been then wanting. Whatever depends so much upon the Prudence, and Contrivance, of imperfect, fallible, short-sighted Creatures, as the Constitution of a *National Church* doth, must, without doubt, have some Marks of their Imperfection upon it, and cannot be devised so *perfect*, and complete, that nothing can be added to it, which may be truly said to be *necessary to the more general reaching the great End of Religion*. It can hardly be supposed, that such a *Perfection* can be attained in any Church on Earth, that it may be with Truth affirmed, that nothing *necessary* to that *End* is wanting. Much less can it be supposed, that such a *Perfection* can be attained in any *Establishment*, that many Persons shall not imagine many necessary Things to be wanting in it, and many Things in it very much out of order, and very much amiss. If this *Plea*, therefore, be admitted as sufficient to justify a *Separation*, a wide Door is opened to numberless, and endless *Separations*: for as long as *Imperfection* belongs to the Nature of Man, so long will it belong to any *Constitutions* that depend upon the Prudence,

dence, and Wisdom of Man. This should indeed be no Objection against the making nearer and nearer Approaches to *Perfection*, against making any such *Alterations*, at any time, as are apparently for the encreasing the Beauty of a *Church*, and tend to the more general reaching the great Ends of Religion: because it is certainly the Duty of every Christian, who hath it in his Power, to press towards those Ends, and to do all lawful Things towards the compassing of them, and to consult the Honour of God, and the *Christian Church*. But then, supposing these *Alterations* not made, but resisted, and rejected, this will not justify a *Separation*, unless you will lay it down as a good Principle, That *Separation* is necessary whenever a *Church* is imperfect, and will not admit of such *Amendments* as we think necessary. This I cannot think you will say, tho' this *Argument* in Defense of your Behaviour towards the *Church of England*, say it for you; because according to this, I see not how you can possibly communicate with any *Church* in the World, or what Reason you can give, why you do not separate from your own *Churches*. They are imperfect, they stand in need of *Amendments*, and *Alterations*, there is a farther Reformation of them necessary, in order to the more general reaching the great Ends of Religion; and this, I doubt not, is the Opinion of many of your selves. What Reason then is there to be given, why you should separate from the *Establish'd Church* because of the want of this farther Reformation, and join with these *Churches* which want it as much? But this I had occasion to urge under my second Answer to this *Argument*. And then, to separate in Opposition to such as think the *Church* so perfect as to stand in need of no *Amendments*, is yet more unreasonable; and, I should think, somewhat too wild to be mentioned by Persons of Thought and Seriousness, without a Mark of their Dislike upon it. It is as if we should separate, and think our selves under an Obligation so to do, because there are Men of little Judgment, and strong Passions, in the *Church of England*; because there are weak Men, and

Men guilty of Errors, that hold Communion with it. Such you think these Persons to be, and in Opposition to their *Error*, run from their *Church*, as if you were accountable for the *Errors* of other Men, and to answer to God for their Weaknesses: Yet at the same time you do the very thing you avoid, and communicate with *Churches* in which there are many who think them *so perfect as to need no Amendments*; and, by this means, confirm *them* in this Opinion, as much as you could these *Churchmen* by your *Conformity*; and hinder the *farther Reformation*, and *Perfection* of those *Churches*, as much as you could that of the *Church of England*, by your *constant Communion* with it.

For my part, it is my Opinion, that there never was, is, or will be, a *National Constitution* so perfect, but that something may be added to it, and something *necessary* to a more general reaching the great *Ends of Religion*. But yet, on the one hand, I shall never think any *Objection* strong enough against such *Additions*, or *Alterations*, as may contribute to the *farther Perfection* of it; and, on the other hand, I shall never think *Separation* so trifling, and inconsiderable a thing, as that the want of such *Alterations*, as, in my private Judgment, I think *Amendments*, can make it necessary, or justify it. I have seen, and heard too much of the Nature and evil Consequences of it, to give such an Encouragement to it as is included in this *Argument*. And tho' I differ, as well as you, from those who think the *National Establishment* so perfect as to need no *Amendments* (if there be any such) yet I should think it but an odd way of shewing my Judgment to be contrary to theirs, to depart from their *Church*; and very unreasonable to oppose them, by doing *Mischief* to the *Church* and *Nation*; and hardly worth my while to contradict and resist them, at the Expense of *Peace* and *Unity*: and should judge it a great deal more defensible to confirm *them* in an *Error* by *communicating* with them, than to confirm the *World of Christians* in mutual *Jealousies*, and *Animosities*, by *separating*

parating from them; tho' the former I have shewn to be only an *imaginary*, and *supposed evil Consequence*, and the latter, I doubt, is *too certain*, and *unavoidable an Evil*.

With what Churches, therefore, will you communicate, whilst you are engaged in this *Design of pressing a farther Reformation*? With *imperfect Churches*, or *perfect*? If with *imperfect*, why not with the *Church of England*, which, on many weighty Accounts, deserves to be considered by you in the first place? If only with *perfect* ones, or those in which there is not an *Aversion to a farther Reformation*, where will you find them? In what happy Place, in what Climate, free from Prejudice and Passion, are they seen? I only wish you would consider your own Practice, and see whether you can well reconcile it to this *Principle* we are now upon; and look into the Nature and Tendency of this *Principle*, and see if you can easily reconcile it to *Reason*, and *Christianity*. This is all I have to say to it at present; and permit me to shut it up with a Recapitulation of what I think I have proved.

Since, therefore, I have shewn, that You, and your People, may continue in the *Communion* of the *Church of England* without thinking it *so perfect as to need no Amendments*, and without forsaking the *Cause*, in which, you say, you are engaged; it appears, that there is no *Necessity* from hence, that you should *separate* from it. Since, as I have observed, you have not attained to *Perfection*, or a greater Degree of it, in the *separate Churches* you have erected, but communicate with *imperfect Churches* that stand in need of a *farther Reformation*, as well as the *Church of England*, and with *Churches* in which there are many who think them *so perfect as to need no Amendments*; it appears from hence that you think your selves under no *Necessity* of *separating* from a *Church*, either in order to *press a farther Reformation*, or in *Opposition to such as think it perfect*; and therefore, that you are under no *Necessity* on these Accounts, of *separating* from the *Church of England*, but may *communicate* with it as safely as with
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your own Churches. Since I have shewn, that to separate from this Church in order to obtain a farther Reformation, or in opposition to such as think it perfect, is not reasonable, or defensible; that it is to do Evil that Good may come, and of Two Evils to chuse the greatest; and to leave a Church because there are some in it of weak Understandings, as you think; hence it is plain, that you ought not to separate on these Accounts. Since I have proved, that the Method you have taken is not a likely way to make the Church of England one Degree more perfect than it is already, but a very likely way to prevent, and hinder those very Alterations you so much desire; it is manifest, that you ought not in Prudence to have begun it, or to continue to pursue it; and that the End, proposed can lay no Obligation upon you, to use such Means as are so far from leading to it, that they contradict, and oppose it. Lastly, since I have shewn, that if this Argument in Defense of your Separation from the Church of England, be a good one, the Consequence will be, that there will be always a Necessity for Separation, because we can have no Hopes of a Church so completely perfect, that a farther Reformation shall not be necessary to the more general reaching the great Ends of Religion; and since I have observed, that your own Amendments would not make the Church so perfect; that if some few Alterations had been made, you would have conformed, and have thought your selves obliged so to do, and yet, that still a farther Reformation would have been wanting; it appears from hence, that the want of this farther Reformation is not a sufficient Ground for a Separation; and that, in your own Accounts, you may be obliged to communicate with a Church which is not so perfect as to need no Amendments. If I have advanced, under these Heads, any thing of Reason, and Truth, let it have its due Weight with you: and, if you be convinced your selves, suffer not your People to think that the Cause you are engaged in will justify Separation either in you, or them. I mean, if there be any of your People who separate from the Church,

Church, and follow you upon this Principle. It is time now to proceed to the *Fourth* Argument, in Vindication of your *People*, which is this,

It is the Duty of the *Dissenting Ministers* to continue in the Exercise of their *Ministry*, tho' silenc'd by the *Magistrates*,

Therefore, the *People* are therein oblig'd to support, and encourage them.

But, if I have before shewn, that it is *not* the Duty of the *Dissenting Ministers* to continue in the Exercise of their *Ministry*; then it will follow, that the *People* are not therein oblig'd to support and encourage them. Whether I have or no, I must leave to others: But the Duty of the *People* seeming to depend upon the Duty of the *Ministers*, in this Argument, what I have advanced against the Necessity of their *public Ministrations*, will equally destroy the Obligation of the *People* to support and encourage them therein. Supposing therefore that this *Conclusion* is justly drawn, yet if the Proposition, on which it depends, be not true, it must certainly fall with it. And so I might fairly leave this *Argument*, with an Appeal to what hath been already discoursed.

But I cannot dismiss it without observing to you, that it appears to me to be full of *Fallacy*. For, if the *People* be not, on *other Accounts*, oblig'd to attend upon your *Ministrations*, you cannot say, that they are oblig'd to it merely to support and encourage you; nor would they ever do it for that Reason only. And if they be not oblig'd to it merely to support and encourage you, then this *Argument* signifies nothing to their Justification. Nay, you know that they do, and always did, attend upon you on *other Accounts*, and you know that they are worthy of Blame, if it were otherwise. Again, your *public Ministrations* are not absolute, but bear a Relation to the *People*; and therefore, your Obligation to them cannot be absolute. And so, you cannot prove any Necessity upon your selves to minister, but upon Supposition of the Necessities of the *People*, and their Readiness to wait upon you: Consequently, if it had so happened, that the *Peo-*

ple had thought their Necessities fully supplied in other ways, and had not been ready to attend upon you on *other* Accounts, it could not have been their Duty to have attended upon you merely on this Account, *to support you in your Duty*; because, upon this Supposition, it could not have been your Duty *to minister publicly*, even tho' we should grant it to be your Duty to be *ready to minister* if the People would attend upon you. And you might have been *ready to minister publicly*, upon this Supposition, without actually doing it; and that is all your *Ordination* You could oblige you to, no Man being obliged to *Impossibilities*, or *Absurdities*. Supposing therefore, that it is your Duty to be ready to *minister publicly*, if the People will attend upon you (which is the utmost that can be said) yet, if they attend not upon you, they hinder not you from doing what you are obliged to do; your *Readiness* to minister, in this Case, being your whole Duty.

Besides, you your selves will grant (at least, you often argue so in your own Cause) that if they think their Necessities can be better supplied by others than by you, they ought to follow those others. This your People are taught to think. From hence, therefore, it follows, that they are not obliged to attend upon you, in order to *support and encourage you in your Duty*. I entreat you to think of this, and, if you will deal fairly in this Cause, you are obliged plainly to deny the one, or the other. For, if it be the *Peoples* Duty to *support*, and *encourage* you, then it is not their Duty, nay, it is not allowable for them, to go where their Necessities can best be supplied. But, if it be their Duty, or allowable for them, to leave you, in order to have their Necessities better supplied, then it is not their Duty to *support* and *encourage* you by their Attendance upon you; because these are inconsistent one with another. Either therefore relinquish *this* Argument, or give up that *popular Plea* of Edification; and the natural, and unalienable Right of
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every Man to chuse his own *Pastor*; or shew us how to reconcile them.

Father, you cannot be so little concerned for the Nation you belong to, as not to think it would be a very considerable Happiness to it, did all the *People* seriously attend upon the *public Worship* in the *Established Church*; were they all persuaded that the Necessities of their Souls could very well be supplied in it, and all resolved to unite, and pursue their Duty in one way. You cannot say, that this would endanger their Salvation, or hinder their own private *Edification*, if they be not wanting to themselves: You cannot say, that this would not be a mighty Advantage to the *Christian Religion*, and the *Protestant Cause* in particular: or, that it would not very much conduce to the universal *Edification* of the *Church* of God in Love and Unity. Nor will you, I presume, put your own *Support* and *Encouragement* into the Ballance against so great and public a Good. Far be it from me to think, that you would not be willing to purchase such an Advantage to the *Christian Church*, such an Honour to your Lord and Saviour, such a Foundation of Happiness to your Native Country, at the dearest Price; that you would not be ready to sacrifice all your own private Fortunes to it, and to buy it at the Expence of your own Reputation, and all the *Support* and *Encouragement* you could hope for in the World. This I cannot but think you would be willing to do, (even though it were to be done by the *Peoples Conformity* to the *Church of England*) because it is certainly the Duty of every *Christian*; what every good Man ought to do; and what is but agreeable to that Sense You have frequently express'd, of the miserable Consequences of *religious Division*, and the unspeakable Advantages of *Concord* and *Unity*. And if this be so, it appears, that your private *Support* and *Encouragement*, ought not to hinder the *People* from pursuing a greater Good, the universal Advantage of the *Protestant Church*, and *English Nation*, by *Conformity* to the *Church of England*; and therefore, that this Argument cannot prove it

to be their Duty, to adhere to You in the *separate* Exercise of Your *Ministry*. I leave this to your Consideration, and proceed to

The *Fifth* Argument, in Defense of Your *People*, which is taken from their *Right to chuse their own Pastor*, as follows,

The *People* must often *part with this Right*, if they submit to the *legal Provision* for them ;

Therefore, they cannot live in *Conformity* to the *Church of England*. This I find, a little afterwards, *thus* expressed in a manner somewhat differing from this ;

Without submitting, in many Parishes, to unqualified Guides, there is no room left by the Law for Ministerial Instruction, and Pastoral Help,

Therefore, it is the Duty of the *People*, to provide for themselves in a *separate way*.

Upon this *Head* I find You copious, and pathetic : and I do not wonder at it, considering how popular a *Plea* it is ; and how much it must ingratiate You with the *People*, to plead their Cause, and defend their *Rights* and *Privileges* against Invaders and Oppressors. I shall, in answer to what you have advanced upon this Subject, endeavour to shew, that there is nothing included in this *Right*, or in all You have said concerning it, sufficient to justify a *Separation* ; which, I think, is the Point now before us. And this I hope to do, with so much Plainness, that the *People* themselves, who are most concerned, may be able to judge in this *Question*. I desire You, therefore, to consider,

1. That this *Right* to chuse their own *Pastor* doth not, according to your selves, *so* belong to the *People*, that they may not very lawfully recede from it, upon some Considerations ; nay, that they ought not in Duty to do it. *Parish Order*, we are told in the *Abridgment*,
 p. 546. Name of your *People*, bath its *Advantages*, and is to be *preferr'd* when more *weighty Reasons* do not offer. Give me leave, then, from this to infer that there may be *Reasons* sufficient to move
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the *People* to recede from this *Right*, so vehemently contended for, and to acquiesce in the *way established*. And, as this is granted to be their *Duty*, on some occasions, so we find it practised by many of those who make up your own *Congregations*, who often, for the sake of *Peace*, and *Love*, and *Order*, think it their *Duty* to acquiesce in the Person chosen by the *major part* of the *Congregation*; and yet this *Majority* hath no more right to impose a *Pastor* upon the other part of the *Congregation*, or upon any one single Person in it, than the *Magistrate*, or the *Bishop*, or any *Patron* hath. This then we see accounted by them a sufficient inducement to relinquish this *Right*, that by so doing, they shall contribute to the increase of *Love*, and *Quiet*; and consult the *Peace*, and *Order* of that *Congregation* they belong to, tho' they be not so happy as to enjoy the public Labours of the Person by whom they could edify most, and whom they would chuse before all others. From whence I think it will follow, that if they would act with respect to the *Church of England*, agreeably to their own *Maxim*, and their own *Practice* in their *separate Congregations*, they ought, in *Conscience*, readily to recede from this *Right* (though it be never so truly their *Right*) and *Conform*. For if any *Reasons* in the *World* be *weighty* enough to engage them to do this, certainly those taken from *Peace*, and *Order* are so: and this their *Behaviour* shews us to be their own opinion. And certainly, if the *Peace*, and *Order* of one particular *Congregation* be of force enough to move them to this; much more ought they to be moved to it by the *Peace*, and *Order* of a whole *National Church*, and by the consideration of *Universal Concord*, and *Unity*. Were their *Salvation* likely to be endangered by their *Conformity*; or, could they not *conform* without giving themselves up entirely to the guidance of one who would mislead them, and hazard their eternal *Happiness*, I would not argue thus; but own, that they had a *Right* to consult their own eternal *Interest* in a *separate Way*. But I have before observed, that the *Salvation* of any
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serious Person is not endanger'd by *Conformity*, and you your selves will not say that it is: and that they may *conform* without submitting themselves to their *Parish-Minister*, after the manner You speak of, I shall shew by and by. What I now say is this, That they ought to recede from this *Right*, upon weighty Considerations; that public *Peace* and *Order* are considerations weighty enough to induce them to do it; that it is plain from their *Practice*, that they often think so themselves; that, therefore, since they may do it without endangering their Salvation, they ought to *conform*, though, by this means, they recede often from this *Right*.

2. I must observe to You, that in *Parishes*, and places where the *People* chuse their own *Ministers*, there are the greatest Divisions, and Quarrels, the greatest Feuds, and Passions remarkable; as *Unqualified Ministers*, as in other places; and, perhaps it may be said also, the greatest number of *Dissenters* from the *Establiſh'd Church*. Nothing hath been the *Cause* of greater Variance and Strife, and ill-will amongst Neighbours, than this Choice, and the time of *Election* is commonly the time of Heat, and Anger; and it ends often in a *bad Choice*; and in the alienation of the Minds of many Men from their *Brethren*, and from their *Minister*, worthy, or not worthy. I would not have you think, that I argue barely from such ill consequences as these, to shew that any *Right* is to be given up; for I am sensible, at this rate, We might argue our selves out of all *Rights*, and this would be of the worst consequence imaginable. But I argue thus; These consequences of a general Enjoyment, and exercise of this *Right*, are worse than any, which will follow upon a general acquiescing in the *Way* now settled, taking this into the Account, that there is such a Provision for the Souls of Men in the *Church of England*, that they are not in the least Danger, or, under the least Necessity of seeking any farther Assistances in a *separate Way*; which, I hope, I have already proved, and shall say somewhat more to, presently. And from hence it appears, that
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this *Right* is not of such mighty Advantage to the *Christian Church*, or to the *People's Souls*, or, of such Necessity, considering the *Legal Provision* for them, that You should be so concerned to maintain the *People* in the actual exercise of it, and they be so often, and vehemently alarmed with the fear of losing it. And then, If in these *Parishes*, where the *Minister* is chosen by the *Votes* of the *People*, there be no smaller a number of *Dissenters* than in others (if so small) this doth not look as if the *People* dissented because they cannot, in the *Establish'd Way*, *Vote* for their *Minister*, but upon some other Account; and that if they were universally restored to this Privilege, this would put no stop to their *Separation*. And, if *Parish-Order* be at all to be regarded, as You say it is, this *Right of Voting* for their *Minister* is all that your *People* can possibly claim. For I observe,

3. That the *Constitution* can never be so ordered, or so happily contrived, that every particular Christian shall be under the *Ministry* of the *Person* whom He would chuse before all others. Your own *People* can acquiesce when they see fit (tho' every one cannot be pleased in the choice of a *Pastor*) upon the Motives of *Peace*, and *Unity*. If this, therefore, cannot be, and yet the *People* are presently to assert their Title to this *Right*, and not to suffer a *Pastor* to be imposed upon them by any Persons in the World but themselves, in what must this end? There must be *Divisions*, and *Schisms* numberless, and the blessed consequences of them; and the Church and Nation must be torn to Pieces. If the *People* be not obliged to assert this *Right* when the *Peace* and *Unity* of your own *Congregations* are concerned, but only in opposition to the *Church* of *England*, why do not You speak out, and say so? If there may be considerations sufficient to induce them to relinquish it, why is not this inculcated upon the *People*? If there be not considerations, on the side of the *Legal Establishment*, sufficient to do this, why is not this proved? If there be, why is it not fairly, and honestly granted?

If it be only in the Case of *Unqualified Ministers*, that this *Right* is to be asserted, why is it not said in the plainest Words? Why is not a full Account given, who are truly *Unqualified*? And why is not one very material Point proved, That a *separate way* must necessarily be set up on this Account, that is, that there are not in the *Establiſh'd Church*, within the reach of the *People*, any *Ministers qualified* to guide and instruct their Conſciences? Have You never observed how ready the generality of the *People* are to prefer the worst *Preachers* before the best, and how universally they leave the most *qualified* Guides, as well as the most *Unqualified*? And did it not pity You to observe it, and move You to think that such a general, and loose Encouragement as this, ought not to be given to that spreading Humour? No stop can ever be put to *Separation*, if it may be lawfully built upon such Foundations as this; and therefore, this *Principle* is not what Good Christians should use in Defense of their Practice. But that your *People* may not be wholly at a loss to know how the exercise of this *Right* hath been restrained upon some Occasions, and that they may be sensible how very few of themselves this *Argument* will defend, I observe,

4. That Mr. Baxter had such a Sense of *Avoidment*, the Advantages of *Parochial Communion*, that
 PAGES 573 He advised his People of *Kedderminster* to attend upon their *Parish-Minister*, and not to absent themselves from his *Ministrations*, unless in three Cases. When the *Minister* was one that was utterly insufficient; which He is careful to explain in the following Words, as not being able to teach them the *Articles of the Faith*, and *Essentials of True Religion*: Or, when the *Minister* preached any *Heresy*, or *Doctrine* which was contrary to any *Article of the Faith*, or necessary part of *Godliness*: Or, when in the *Application* He set himself against the *Ends of his Office*, to make a *Holy Life* seem odious, and to keep Men from it, and to promote the *Interest of Satan*. Nay, so solicitous is He in this matter, that He adds farther, *Tet not*
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to take every bitter Reflexion upon themselves or others, occasioned by difference of Opinion or Interest, to be a sufficient Cause to say, That the Minister preach'd against Godliness, or to withdraw themselves. So then, when the Parish Minister is not utterly insufficient; or doth not preach any thing contrary to the Faith, and Practice of Christianity; or doth not set himself to oppose serious Godliness; the People, if they will follow Mr. Baxter's Judgment, ought to attend upon Him, and ought not to assert their Right to chuse their own Pastour. Now which of your People will be judged by this Rule? And where is that single Person amongst them all, that hath acted upon these Principles, and left his Parish-Minister, and chosen another for his Pastour, only on these Accounts? Hardly to be found, I dare say, throughout the Land: For it is too manifest, that they run, without Distinction, from all as well as some; nay, that multitudes of them have never so much as endeavoured to hear their Established Minister, or to satisfy themselves whether He be qualified, or not. And so it appears, that the Practice of your People is such as cannot be defended by this Argument; and therefore, that this Argument signifies nothing to their Vindication. Especially, considering that it is their Separation, their providing for themselves in a way distinct from the Established Way, you are now defending. For I ask, Supposing that they may upon these Accounts, or any other, leave their Parish-Minister, yet where is the Necessity of leaving the Church of England? How doth this Argument prove that they ought to betake themselves to Separate Congregations, with new Modes of Worship, and new Forms of Government? Is there no Minister of the Established Church near them, to whom they can resort, sufficient, and qualified enough to instruct, and guide them? And, Is it not as easy, and as lawful, for them to go to such an one, as to one of the Separate Way? Or, Must we take your Word for it, without the least shadow of a Reason for your saying so, That without submitting in many Parishes to unqualified Guides, there is no room left by the Law for ministerial

ministerial Instruction, and pastoral Help? Which one thing if you will prove, I promise to become your Convert. But you cannot, and you know you cannot, and therefore you ought not to have said it. And if there be no *Necessity* for *Separation* on this Account, granting it true, *That sundry of the Parish-Ministers are insufficient*; then the *Practice* of your People still remains without a *Vindication*. And that *You*, and *They*, may be still more sensible, that there is no such *Necessity* on this Account, I shall observe,

5. That supposing an *unqualified Minister* settled in a *Parish*, His *Parishoners* are not presently in so desperate a condition as you represent them to be in. They are not obliged to give up themselves blindly to his Direction, and to receive whatever He Preaches, or Teaches, with an implicit Faith. This is a *Popish*, and not a *Protestant* Doctrine, nor ever yet taught, or admitted in the *Church of England*. His People (as I have had often an occasion to observe) are secure of a *Liturgy* adapted to all the purposes of *public Worship*, and of many Portions of God's Word delivered to them in it, by means of which, they may attend upon God to his Glory, and their own Edification. So that, in this Church, The great business of *Religious Assemblies* is render'd much more useful to the *People*, and much more agreeable to the Nature, and Design of them, than it can possibly be in that *Form of public Worship* which you have encouraged in the Land. And you your selves cannot pretend a defect, in this constant appointed Service, of any thing necessary to Salvation; or any thing in it destructive of it. And this is their certain Entertainment, however *insufficient* their *Ministry* be; which is a great, and unspeakable Happiness to a Land, how lightly soever you teach your People to think of it. The main Point between us relates to their constant attendance upon the *public Worship* in the *Establish'd Way*: And we see, They may constantly attend upon it without endangering their Salvation, if they be truly serious themselves: And if they may, why should they

they not? For private Helps and Assistances, none are forbidden to them, as I know of. They are not confined to the Writings, or Advice, or Directions, of any particular Man, but are at liberty to apply themselves to whom they see fit. But, if they will not be content with this, but will leave the *public Ministrations* of their own *Parish-Minister* because they think Him *unqualified*, still here is no Necessity for a *Separation*. It is one thing to leave the teaching of one particular Man, and another thing to leave the *Church* in which He ministers, and to set up other *Churches* in opposition to it. It is to be hoped, that there may be *Ministers* of the *Established Church*, within some convenient Distance from them, *qualified* to preach to them. And Mr. Calamy tells us, That *if they go to another Parish, the inconveniency is not great*; not so great, I am sure, by many Degrees, as what must follow upon their setting up *separate Churches*. Whence then arises any Necessity of a *separate Ministry*, and *separate Churches*, and distinct Modes of *public Worship*, if it be so, that the People may attend constantly upon the *Service* in the *Established Church*, and yet neither hazard their Salvation, nor submit to *unqualified Guides*? And consequently, how little doth this contribute to their Justification? I have already spoken something on this *Argument*, taken from *unqualified Ministers*, when I considered it with relation to your own *Practice*: And so, shall add no more here, but argue a little with you upon what I have now laid down.

If, then, this *Right*, we are speaking of, be a *Right* with which your People not only may, but ought in Duty to part, upon weighty Considerations, (as I have shewn from their own Practice, and your own Concessions) why ought they not to part with it, as well in the *Establish'd Way*, as in a *Separate Way*? Or, what Motives are there to induce them to it, in their *Nonconformity*, which are not more strong on the side of *Conformity*? If, where the *People* enjoy this *Right*, there are often more incon-

inconveniences seen, than can be shewn where they do not, and more mischiefs than can follow upon the not enjoying it (considering how sufficient to all the purposes of *public Worship* the *Legal Provision* for them is) then it is not worth contending for, nor ought it to be asserted at the expense of greater Matters. And if in these places there be as many *Dissenters* as in others, (if not more), it is plain, that the alteration of this would not contribute to the uniting us, and that this is not the reason of their *Non-conformity*. Both which I have shewn to be true. Again, If no Constitution can be so contrived, that every Person in a *Parish* shall live under the *Ministry* of the *Pastor* whom He himself would chuse above all others, as I have observed; then this *Principle* ought not to be insisted on, because it tends to the utter abolishing of all *Parochial Communion*, and to eternal, and infinite *Divisions*. If Mr. *Baxter's* Advice to his *People* be founded on good Reason, and contain in it the only true Grounds for leaving the *Ministrations* of their *Established Minister*; then, the *People* ought not to assert this *Right* of chusing their own *Pastors*, but upon these occasions which He mentions; and if so, your *Argument* taken from this *Right*, will not excuse any of your *People* who universally forsake all, as well as some of their *Parish-Ministers*, without ever regarding, or thinking upon their *Qualifications*. Once more, If there be no *Necessity* that the *People* should betake themselves to a *separate Way*, even supposing their own *Parish Minister* insufficient, and *unqualified*; and if they may have the best Assistance of all sorts without leaving the *Church of England*, or going to the *separate Ministry*, as I have shewn; then it follows, that this *Argument* can do nothing towards the Justification of their *Practice*, and ought not to be alleged in their *Vindication*.

From what hath been said on this *Head*, it is also very easy to satisfy the *Questions* you have proposed upon it, which I am the more willing to take notice of, because we are told, That *the insufficient answers usually returned to such*

Such *Queries* confirmed many of the *Laity* in their inclination to *Non-conformity*. A few *Observations* will effectually do this, which I recommend to you, and which you will not deny to be true. The *First* is, That there is sufficient Provision for the *People* in the *Established Church*. The *Second* is, That the *People* ought to part with this *Right*, upon some Considerations: or in other Words, That they have no *Right* to chuse whom they please for their *Pastor*, when their *Necessities* are provided for, in an *Establish'd Way*, and the Consequences of their asserting that *Right* will be much worse, than the Consequences of their acquiescing in the *Establishment*. The *Third* is, That they may have the same *Opinion* about their original *Right* to chuse their own *Pastors*, and yet most heartily conform to the *Church of England*. The *Fourth* is, That the *Question* between us is not, Who have this *Right*? And how came they by it? But the *Question* is, In such a Constitution as ours, in which this *Right* is generally settled in the Hands of a *Patron*, without regard to the *People*, and in which there is sufficient Provision made for them, what ought the *People* to do? Whether, to acquiesce in the *Established Way*, which I have shewn they may do, without endangering their own Salvation, and to the universal encrease of *Peace* and *Love*, and *Order*; or, to separate from the *Established Way*, to assert a *Right*, not to be asserted in this Method, without the Destruction of *Christian Charity*, and the Subversion of *public Peace* and *Order*? And now, Let me ask you the following *Questions*. Do you think that in a *Christian*, and *Protestant Country*, where the *Bible* lies open to all, and where there are as excellent, and useful Books for the *Edification* of the *People*, as can be; or in this *Church*, in which there is such a *public Service* appointed, and so many *able Teachers*, to whom the *People* may upon all occasions resort; Do you think, I say, that in such a *Country*, and such a *Church*, the Salvation of the *People* is hazarded by their attendance upon the *public Worship*, because their own *Parish-Minister* is not qualified (as they think)

think) to instruct them? Or, that their Souls are as much in danger from *Him*, as the Health of their Bodies from a bad *Physician*, whom they are entirely to trust, or from their *Diet*, or the like? Do you think, that they cannot find out *qualified Guides* in all the whole *Establishment*? Do you think that, supposing there were an *Establishment*, in which there were provided and settled, able *Physicians*, good *Tutors*, proper *Trades*, wholesome *Diet*, sufficient *Cloathing* for your Children, such as you your selves should judge to be so; and supposing the Consequences of *separating* from this *Establishment*, in order to take care of themselves, were as pernicious as the Consequences of *separating* from the *Established Church*; Do you think, that it would not be their Duty to recede from their *Right* to chuse for themselves, and to rest satisfied, and happy in the *public Provision*? Again, Do you think that you should not blame your *Children*, if, when you required them to attend, with you, upon the *public Service of God*, in a *Church*, in which they could not pretend there was any thing destructive of their Salvation, they should beg your Excuse, and claim a *Right* to look after themselves; and one follow one *Pastor*, and another another, and fill your Family with such quarrels, and such hatreds, as *Separation* introduces into the *Christian Church*? Would this be amiable in your Eyes? And would you judge them to be then in the way of their Duty? I am sure, you would not know how to bear with it. Now I desire you to turn to the *Questions* proposed in the Name of your People upon this *Head*, and take a review of them, and apply what I have here said to them; and then judge, if they have that mighty weight in them they are here supposed to have.

In fine, This is the *Answer* I give to your *Argument* from the People's *Right* to chuse their own *Pastors*, as I have drawn it up in Form. They may, and ought to *part* with it (be it never so much their *Right*) since they may do it without any hazard to their own Salvation, for the sake of *Peace*, and *Order*; and therefore need not
separate

separate on this Account. They may conform without submitting to unqualified Guides; nay, They may conform, and enjoy all the Assistances necessary to their Salvation, and all the best means of Edification; and therefore need not separate on this Account. And because they need not, therefore they ought not: and consequently this Argument cannot defend their Practice. I come now to

The Sixth Argument in Vindication of your People, which is taken from the want of Discipline in the Church, thus,

There is a defect in the Discipline of the Established Church, notwithstanding all the calls for greater strictness, and care, ever since the Reformation from Popery; and no ground of hope, that ever any such thing as a regular Discipline will willingly, and out of choice be brought in:

Now it is the People's Duty publicly to bear their Testimony against this fatal Neglect,

Therefore, It is their Duty to separate from this Church.

What consequence there is in this, I cannot apprehend. Because the Church ought to be, as it were, the Porch of Heaven, is therefore a Separation necessary, which cannot possibly contribute to the making it so? And which is not allowable, supposing it could effectually make it so? Because there are Prophane Persons, who profess themselves of the Established Church, (as Men of no Religion most commonly will) is it therefore necessary to depart from it, though You can live in the Communion of it without hazarding your own Salvation, or being defiled by their Wickedness; and tho' in the Churches You set up in opposition to it, there will certainly be, as You your selves know, Men of as bad Principles, and as bad Designs, carrying forward their own private Ends under the cloak of Separation, and the colour of greater Purity than they will allow their Neighbours? Would You have a National Constitution, or not? Or, would your own Amendments make it so perfect in its Discipline, that there should be none seen in it but pious and devout Per-

sons, and such as have renounced a fleshly, and sensual, a worldly and profane Life; so perfect, that none that deserve Censure should be skreen'd, and none that deserve Encouragement should be censured? Can You undertake for this? And can You undertake that your People should think so? For if they should not be so persuaded, they lie under the same Necessity of Separation still. If your own Amendments would not do this (as I dare say they will not) then You do ill; to produce that as a considerable Plea for your People, which You would not think sufficient to keep your selves from conforming to the Church of England, and thus to perpetuate the Cause of Division among us. Again, Because the People are obliged to disapprove this defect in the Church, and to bear Testimony against this fatal Neglect of some in it, which they must do if they join with the Common-Prayer-Book; are they therefore obliged to separate from this Church, when this Separation is no greater a Demonstration of their dislike (truly speaking) than what they might give, and still remain Conformists; when this Separation cannot be without sad, and unchristian Consequences, and cannot promote this Reformation? This want of Discipline, You tell us, was what the Old Puritans groan'd under; and yet they were against a Separation as long as there was any hope of Amendment. I am not perfectly read in their Writings, but must desire to know of You, whether they have left any thing behind them, from which You can fairly collect it to have been their Opinion, that, though a Separation was unlawful in their Days, yet, it would be lawful, and necessary in your Days, if an Amendment were not made; and where this is to be met with: because, if they have, they are either very much misrepresented, or notoriously inconsistent with themselves; and if they have not, they are wholly forsaken by You, who pretend to tread in their Steps, and yet oppose some of their main Principles. I think I could produce some Propositions out of them, laid down without any Restrictions, wholly irreconcilable with what You here seem to lay

to their charge; and I have too good an opinion of the best of them, to think that they could in so material a Point contradict themselves. Once more, where is this *Regular Discipline* to be found, for the sake of which, Peace, and Unity have been disregarded? Where is this Power allowed by the People to the *Pastors*, which here, in the People's Name, You claim to the *Pastors*? Give us some distinct Account of this matter, that, if You have it, we may not tax You unjustly with the want of what You have: for we are, as yet, in the dark, not knowing whether any sort of you enjoy this *regular Discipline*, and be free from the mixture of *profane*, and *wicked* Men; or which sort of You is thus happy, and which not. But then, if this Happiness be not to be found amongst You; only answer us, what mighty advantage have you obtained by *separating* from the *Church*, on this Account? And why should You not as well join with the *Established Church*, as with your own Churches? I am almost ashamed to say any more upon so weak an Argument, and shall only refer you (if any thing farther be needful) to what I have more largely discoursed upon the *Third Argument*, with which this may be joined, for it must stand, or fall with it. In *Answer to that*, I have shewn, That your People may be of the *Church of England*, and still think the *Discipline* of it *defective*, and still continue to press for a *Reformation* of it; That you live in *constant Communion* with as imperfect Churches as that *Established*; That to *separate* in order to a *farther Reformation*, is not reasonable, or allowable; That your *Separation*, and the Methods taken in it, are not likely Methods of bringing about the least of your desired *Alterations*; and that, if *Separation*, on such Accounts, be *necessary*, or *lawful*, there must be a perpetual ground for *Separation* in the *Christian Church*. And I hope you will find somewhat satisfactory on these *Heads*, and what is sufficient to shew the little force of this *Argument*.

The *Seventh Argument* in Defense of your People, stands thus,

Many of the Laity are afraid of sinning in Baptizing their Children with God-Fathers, and God-Mothers, and with the sign of the Cross; and in kneeling at the Communion; and you might have added joining with Forms of Prayer and several other Scruples, which generally go together.

Now they cannot conform without submitting to these *Impositions*,

Therefore, they are obliged to *separate*, in order to enjoy these Ordinances, &c.

This you do not advance in the name of those you call the *Moderate Non-conformists*, or *Occasional Communicants*. For you acknowledge the *Lawfulness* of these things in themselves, and have advised your People, on some occasions, to submit to them. Therefore I am the less concerned about this *Argument*, because it relates not to those Persons for whose *Conformity* I am now chiefly pleading. But I do not Design wholly to neglect it.

For the *lawfulness* of the things themselves, I recommend the People to you; and do claim it of you, as a piece of common Justice to the *Established Church*, that you be always ready, and free to declare your Minds, and to assure your People, that it is your Opinion that these things may lawfully be complied with. If you had upon all occasions been disposed to do this, many violent Prejudices, and Heats might have been prevented.

But, if there be Persons who will be persuaded by no Arguments, that a compliance with these *Terms* is in it self *lawful*, I confess, it is my opinion, That, whilst they are thus persuaded, it is as much *their Duty* to separate from us, as it is *our Duty* to separate from the *Church of Rome*. For, *They*, as much as *We*, are obliged, not to do what they judge to be unlawful: and *They*, as much as *We*, are obliged to assemble themselves together for the *Worship* of God, and the Enjoyment of his *Ordinances*. And, as long as I am persuaded that nothing

can

can excuse them from performing all the Offices of *Christian Assemblies*, so long I must think so. But then, I must leave this upon their Minds, that they are to be accountable to God for the *Errors* of their Judgments, as well as for the *Vices* of their Practice; especially for such *Errors* as carry along with them sad and pernicious Consequences, and tend to disturb Society, and destroy Christian Charity; and that, therefore, they will most certainly be punished, as Persons guilty of a *needless Separation*, if it be found at last, that Prejudice, or Passion, or Hatred, or any worldly Design hath blinded their Eyes, and hinder'd them from seeing the Truth, or attending to it, or embracing it. And I must intreat them to consider, That they ought not to sacrifice the common Peace to their own private Humours, or Fancies; that nothing can excuse them, but a Conscience that they have been most willing and ready to listen to all *Arguments* that can be offered, and to yield to them, if they appear convincing; and therefore, that, as they love the Honour of their Master, and the Peace of the Society they belong to; as they hope to answer for themselves at the great Day of Accounts, and to be acquitted before God and the World; they are most strongly obliged to seek for Conviction, to wish for Satisfaction, not to acquiesce in the Principles they have been educated in, or have once embraced, as if they were unquestionable; but to free their Minds from all Prejudice, and Passion, and candidly to receive whatever is advanced to prove a Compliance with these *Terms* to be lawful. The Effects, and Consequences of *Separation* are dismal, and horrible; the Effects of *Unity* and *Conformity*, Blessed and Glorious: And therefore it is that I say, they ought not to acquiesce in their former Judgments, tho' never so settled, and established; but to be disposed to alter them, when Reasons are offered against them. They are bound to incline to *Unity*, rather than *Division*; to *Conformity*, rather than *Separation*; and therefore, are bound never to be averse to *Conviction*, nor to be afraid of

what may induce them to alter their Minds. I cannot be of their Opinion, who think that when once a Judgment is formed and settled, the Man should not trouble himself to attend to any thing that can be advanced against it. I see not, at this rate, how *Truth* can ever prevail against *Error*: and, as to material *Errors*, such as have an influence upon the Honour of *Christianity*, and the Peace of Christians, nothing can be more for the encreasing and strengthening these, than this Principle, and nothing, therefore, of worse Consequence to the Cause of *Truth*, or *Christianity*. Nor can I see but that a Man may then most properly be said to be in the way of His Duty, when He is perfectly ready, and disposed, to attend to whatever can be offered him that respects any material Point of Practice.

I shall add two things more upon this Head. One is this, That those People who scruple the *Terms* of *Communion* here mentioned, do scruple also, generally speaking, many other things in *Conformity*, not mentioned; and you cannot name any of them who would *conform*, were these *Terms* altered, unless at the same time both *Episcopacy*, and *Liturgies* were thrown off too. And God forbid that their *Conformity* should be purchased at so dear a rate! And the *Other* is this, That you acknowledge these things to be *lawful* in themselves; and consequently, acknowledge that the *Separation* of those, who separate only because these things are *unlawful* in themselves, is founded upon a Mistake, and a false Judgment. And upon this Account you must also acknowledge that the *Established Church* is rather *unhappy* than *blameable*; because it requires nothing of the People, but what they may lawfully submit to; and because you cannot yourselves contrive any *Constitution*, but that there will be some weak Persons offended at something in it; such as will judge it *unlawful*, on some Account, or other, to *conform* to it, and will ever be forming and encreasing Parties against it, and setting up other Churches in opposition to it. But those certainly you must acknowledge

ledge to be rather *blameable* than *unhappy*, who *divide* upon a Mistake; and yet are not willing to hear one Word offered to convince them of it; who *separate* only because they judge things to be *unlawful*, which are not so; and yet are utterly averse to any Argument advanced to prove them not to be so, and cannot so much as bear the Man that endeavours to shew them the Truth. And I appeal to you, if this Temper be not commonly seen joined with these false Judgments; and if it do not remain true to this Day what Mr. *Baxter* observes of some in the *Times of Confusion*, who *thought that whatever needed Amendment required their Obstinate Separation* (tho' there be others, who have since joined with them in this part of their Practice) *and that they were allowed to make odious any thing they thought was amiss: And because it was faulty, if any Man had rebuked them for belying it, and make it far more faulty than it was, instead of confessing their Sin, they called their Reprover, a Pleader for Antichrist, or Baal.* And every Error in the Mode of the common Worship, they had no fitter name for, than *Idolatry, Popery, Anti-christianism, Superstition, Will-worship, &c.* *Abridg. pag. 96.* Be you your selves, therefore, the Judges, whether, if this Temper of Mind be the true ground of the Separation of this part of the People we are now speaking of, this Separation be justifiable before God; or, in other Words, be built upon a good Foundation. And be you your selves Judges, whether it be reasonable, and becoming for you rather to court an Union, and close Correspondence with such Persons, than with the *Established Church*. Somewhat is to be said for the *Errours* of well-meaning Persons, disposed to *Unity*, and ready to receive the *Truth* in the love of it: But God can never approve of *Errours* joined with *Rancour*, and *Uncharitableness*; or of a *Separation* founded upon a groundless *Abhorrence* of what is *Established*, and a resolute averfeness to admit of any Arguments in the *Vindication* of it.

Thus

Thus have I considered all the *Arguments* I find offered in *Vindication* of your People; and have endeavoured to shew, that they are not sufficient to prove their *Separation* from the *establish'd Church* necessary; and therefore not sufficient to prove it lawful: it being agreed on all Hands, that all *needless Divisions* amongst *Christians* are constantly and solicitously to be avoided; and that no *Separation* is *lawful*, but what is *necessary*. And thus have I gone over the *Three Heads* I propos'd at first.

But I must not be so unjust to your Cause, and to my own Design, as to pass by the *Reasons* you have offered, to prove that, tho' your *Occasional Communion* with the *Church of England*, be your *Duty*, yet *constant Communion* with it is *sinful*; because this is a main part of your *Vindication*; and because it is my Design to shew, that your *constant Communion* would not be *sinful*, and therefore, is your *Duty*. Before I do this, I shall only observe that, how expressly soever you affirm this *Occasional Communion* to be no *indifferent* Matter, but an *indispensable* Duty; we see not any such Sense of it in your *People*; nor could we collect from your Practice, that this is your Opinion. For it is manifest, and what is universally complain'd of by the *Established Ministers*, that there is hardly any *occasional Communicant* who ever comes near the *Church*, but precisely at that time when the whole *Parish* knows he must come to qualify himself for some Office; and again, that for the sake of an Office, some shall for the Space of a whole Year attend upon a *Service*, which they would not join with, perhaps once, were it not for the Consideration of *that*. This is not *unjust Censure*, but notorious Matter of Fact: And I mention it, not to make any Persons odious, but to observe to you, how little of your *occasional Communion* is founded upon the *Necessity* of *shewing your Charity* to those from whom you dissent; on which you seem to me to found it: that so you may consider, whether you do sufficiently inculcate this *great Duty* upon your *People*; or, whether your *People* do not grossly misunderstand, or carelessly disregard you.

But

But to return to the *Question* now in debate between us, which is only this, *Why will not you who can communicate occasionally with the Establish'd Church, constantly communicate with it?* By communicating occasionally with this Church, you acknowledge, that the *Terms of Communion* are not *sinful* in themselves; and you profess, that were it not for some *Circumstances* which make *constant Communion* *sinful*, you should judge it to be your *Duty*. I do not doubt, but that *Circumstances* may make *Actions* *sinful*; nor do I know any *Persons* who will deny it. But, in answer to what you have alleged to prove that there are *Circumstances* attending upon *constant Communion*, which render it *sinful*, I propose to shew,

First, That these *Circumstances* you mention, do not attend upon *constant Communion*; or, if they do attend upon it, that they do not make it *unlawful*: and that the like *Circumstances* do attend upon your *occasional Communion*, and your *Separation*. After which I shall observe,

Secondly, Supposing some inconvenient *Circumstances* do attend upon *constant Communion*, that, besides such like *Circumstances*, many sad, and terrible *Consequences* do unavoidably attend upon *Separation*; and make it much more *unlawful*, and much less *eligible*. Which *Two Things* will, I hope, contain in them a sufficient *Reply* to every *Word* you have advanced upon this *Head*, and, therefore, a sufficient *Argument* (by your own *Confession*) to induce *You*, who can *communicate occasionally*, to *communicate constantly*, with the *Church of England*; which is the *main End* I have proposed in these *Papers*.

First, That these *Circumstances* you mention, do not attend upon *constant Communion*; or, if they do attend upon it, they do not make it *unlawful*: And that the like *Circumstances* do attend upon your *occasional Communion*, and your *Separation*. Your *Sense* of this *Matter*, I shall give you in your own *Words*, and then shall beg leave

to examine into the Truth and Justness of it. Constant Communion *represents* the Worship of the Church of England, not only as *lawful*, but as *eligible*, nay, *preferable*; which is *contrary to the inward Sense of the most moderate among the Dissenters*. Constant Communion *practically betrays our Liberties, in compliance with rigorous Imposers*. Constant Communion *seems to intimate as if Divine Worship were not acceptable without such superadded Formalities, as are enjoined in the Church of England*. Constant Communion *represents Christ's own Institution as defective, and not orderly, or decent, without the Additions to Divine Worship, brought into the Church of England*. Constant Communion *is a confining our Charity to a Party, and a practical disowning, and condemning all other Worshipping Assemblies*. These are the *Circumstances* that, you say, attend upon *constant Communion*; and on the account of which, you tell us, you judge it to be *unlawful*. This is a very material Point, and therefore, I shall examine every one of these *Allegations* distinctly by it self.

1. Constant Communion *represents* the Worship of the Church of England, not only as *lawful*, but as *eligible*, nay, *preferable*; which is *contrary to the inward Sense of the most moderate among the Dissenters*. And therefore, it is *unlawful*. For my own part, I do truly believe that the *public Worship* established in the Church of England, is, in it self, *preferable* to any whatever that hath yet been set up in Opposition to it. But the *Question* here is not, what it is in it self; but what *constant Communion* represents it to be. And I do here utterly deny, that *constant Communion* doth *represent it as preferable* to all others whatsoever; if you mean *preferable* in it self, as to the Matter of it: which I suppose you do. My constant joining with the *established Worship* can prove nothing but these Two Things; that I think it *materially lawful*; and, that, upon some Considerations I think it *preferable* to *Separation*, without which I cannot join with other *Forms of Worship*. But, whether these Considerations be taken from its own *intrinsic Worth*, or from the Advantages of

Peace

Peace and Union, some other Declaration must determine. As, when you keep Company *constantly* with any Person, no one can say, unless you tell them, whether you do this, because you think his Company, in it self, *preferable*, in all respects, to that of others; or, because there are some other Considerations sufficient to determine you to it, as Interest, or Usefulness in one particular Instance, or the hope of doing Good, or the like. Nay, I argue farther, that your *occasional Communion* with the Church of England, doth represent the Worship of it as *preferable* at this particular time. But you say, *preferable*, only in order to shew your Charity. As, therefore, *occasional Communion* doth not represent it, as *preferable*, on any other Consideration, but *that*; so *constant Communion* doth not, of Necessity, represent it *preferable* on any other Considerations, but the *public Peace*, and *universal Advantage* of this Church, and Nation: Nor can you prove that it doth. Now, I hope, it cannot be any Objection against *constant Communion*, that it represents the joining with the *established Worship* as *eligible*, nay *preferable*, on the Accounts of *Peace and Concord*, and *public Advantages*. For, sure, it cannot be *contrary to the inward Sense of the most immoderate among the Dissenters*, that it is very lawful, to join constantly with a *Worship materially lawful*, for the sake of the universal Good of the Christian Church. Whenever you join with it, no Persons can conclude certainly, that you do it, on any other Account. Nay, you your selves tell us a little afterwards; under this same *Head*, that you shall always be suspected (if you do come in to the Church) as Persons who think not the *establish'd Worship* preferable to all others in it self; that *before you could insinuate your selves into any good Esteem*, you must pretend your Preference of what you think but tolerable; nay, your *Hatred and Contempt of what you think preferable*. So sensible are you, that your *constant Communion* alone, without a verbal Declaration, neither can, nor will, be interpreted as a Preference of the *established Worship*, considered in it self, to all other *Forms*: And so little

Foundation is there for your saying, that *the private Expression of a different Sense will not be a sufficient Guard against such public, and more forcible Language of continu'd Practice*, when, upon other Occasions, you allege, that this *public, and forcible Language of continued Practice* will never be sufficient to satisfy the *Church-men* of your Love to the *Church*, without such a *private Expression*, and Declaration that you *prefer* it, for its own sake, before all others. Be not, I beseech you, so violently set against all Thoughts of *Conformity*, as to argue against it, in one Page, from *one* Consideration, and in the next, from *another* absolutely inconsistent with it. But again, Let me argue with you from your own declared Resolution of conforming, and so joining *constantly* with our *Liturgy*, upon some few *Amendments*, and *Alterations*; and see whether this will not shew, that *constant Communion* implies in it no such thing, as what you here fix upon it. Is this *Form of Prayer*, amended to your own Wishes, *preferable* to that Method of *Prayer* which you have set up in Opposition to it? If it be, then I argue, that you now *constantly* use a Method in *public Worship* which you acknowledge to be less *eligible*, and worse than *another*; and therefore, that the *constant* use of, and joining with, any one way, of *public Worship*, even tho' it be upon *Choice*, doth not represent it as *preferable* to all others; and much less, when *Authority* hath commanded the *Use* of it. If it be not, then I argue, that you would join *constantly* with a *Form of public Worship* not *preferable* to all others. And therefore, that it cannot be your Opinion, that *constant Communion* implies in it any such Declaration as, that this *Form of public Worship* is absolutely, and in it self *preferable* to all others. Answer which way you please, the *Conclusion* is the same: And I will be bold to say, that you must either contradict your selves, or acknowledge, that this is no *Circumstance* of *constant Communion*; and consequently, that it can be no *Argument* against it. Besides this, I argue thus with you, Your *Separation* represents it to be your Opinion,
That

That *whatsoever stands in need of Amendment requires your Separation, which is contrary to the inward Sense of Mr. Baxter, and the moderate Dissenters.* And therefore *Separation is unlawful. Nor will the private Expression of a different Sense, be a sufficient Guard against such public, and more forcible Language of continu'd Practice.* If you say, *This is not a Circumstance of your Separation; I say, Neither would the other be a Circumstance of your constant Communion.* If you deny, that *this makes your Separation unlawful; give me leave to deny, that the other would make your constant Communion unlawful.* But,

2. *Constant Communion, you say, practically betrays your Liberty, in compliance with rigorous Imposers: and therefore, is unlawful.* I answer, No more, than such a *constant Communion* as you were ready to exercise, had the *Liturgy* been amended to your Minds. *Constant Conformity in kneeling at the Communion is no more a betraying your Liberty, than constant Conformity, in the use of a Liturgy.* Nor is *constant Conformity to the use of our Liturgy* as it is now, any more a *betraying your Liberty, than constant Conformity to it, had it been altered.* And if *constant Communion* would have been *lawful, tho' a Liturgy had been imposed; it is lawful, tho' Kneeling be imposed; and tho' a Form of Prayer be still imposed.* Either, therefore, the *constant* submitting to some *Terms of Communion, (call them Impositions, or what you please)* is not a *practical betraying your Liberty; and so, consequently, constant Communion is not: or else, it is not unlawful practically to betray your Liberty, in compliance with rigorous Imposers; and so, consequently, it is not unlawful to hold constant Communion with the Church of England.* Which soever of the Two be true, your Argument, now before us, is equally destroyed: And one of them must be true; or, you do very ill in telling us so often, how ready you have been, and still are, to comply upon some *Amendments.* *Constant Communion cannot be a practical Declaration of any thing more, than that these Impositions may lawfully be complied with, as being not materially sinful;*
and

and that you judge it better, upon some Considerations; to comply *constantly* in a *lawful* Action; than to *separate* on this Account. This may serve for an Answer, also, to that Charge of yours against *constant Communion*, to the same Effect with this, but in other Words; That it *would appear to acquit Ecclesiastical Assumers*. For, supposing that they were *Ecclesiastical Assumers*, who imposed these *Terms of Communion*, yet my *constant complying* with these *Terms* can shew nothing, but that I judge them to be *lawful* in themselves; and hath not the least relation to the Lawfulness of *imposing* them. And I add farther, That your *occasional Communion* appears to many, by your own Confession, to *acquit Ecclesiastical Assumers*. And if, notwithstanding this, *occasional Communion* be your Duty; then also, notwithstanding this, *constant Communion* may be your Duty. And again, As your *constant Communion* would (you say) *appear to acquit Ecclesiastical Assumers*, and *rigorous Imposers*; so, I say, your *Separation* appears to *acquit*, and *encourage rigid Separatists*; against whom you seem to set your selves, as much as against the others. If you *separate* from what you acknowledge to be *materially lawful*; how much more justly (they argue) may they *separate* from what they judge to be *materially unlawful*? If you thus express your Resentments against *Communion* in what you allow to be *tolerable*; how can they be too *rigid* or too *zealous*, against what they think to be *intolerable*? If then, it be *unlawful* to *appear to acquit* the *one*; why should it not be *unlawful* to *appear to acquit*, and encourage the *other*? Again, Supposing your *Liberty* to be invaded by these *Impositions*; yet since the Things required are not *unlawful*, (as you acknowledge,) it is certainly *lawful*, if not very commendable, for you to yield up your *Liberty*, in a small and lawful Instance, to the Considerations of *Peace* and *Unity*. And if it be but *lawful* for you to do this, then this Argument cannot prove your *constant Communion* to be *unlawful*. Much less; if it appear, upon Consideration, to be your *Duty* so to do. You may then, I think, be *constant Communicants*, notwithstanding

withstanding any thing in this *Argument*: Especially considering, that as there are *rigorous Imposers* in the Church of England; so, there are, and have been many, most ready and willing, to yield up some inconsiderable Points, to gain your *Conformity*. And why should you not think *your selves* as much obliged to *communicate* with this Church, for the sake of *these*, as to *separate* from it, for the sake of those *others*? But,

3. *Constant Communion*, you say, *seems to intimate, as if Divine Worship were not acceptable without such superadded Formalities* as are used in the Church of England. And, therefore, it is *unlawful*. You do well to say no more than that it *seems* so to do: For, you cannot produce one single Person of tolerable Sense in the whole Land, who constantly communicates with the Church of England with this Opinion; nor one, who ever concluded this to be the Opinion of any Person, from his *constant Communion*. But you do ill, to load the *Cause* with all the aggravating *Circumstances* you can think of, when you cannot but know them to be wholly imaginary, and without Foundation; and cannot but be sensible, that you are in this, *unjust* to a Church, which hath declared, in the most public manner, that these *superadded Formalities* are of such a nature, that they may be altered, and abolished upon Occasion; and which cannot consequently, be supposed to give the least Encouragement to any Persons to think, that *Divine Worship would not be acceptable without them*. Hence I argue, That *constant Communion* with a Church which hath declared that *Divine Worship may be acceptable without these superadded Formalities*, cannot be thought to *intimate, as if Divine Worship were not acceptable without them*: But, if it *intimate* any thing about them, it *intimates* quite the contrary. And farther; I desire to know, where is that *religious Assembly*, amongst all your own, in which *Divine Worship* is offered, without some *superadded Formalities* constantly used? And again; Doth your *constant Communion* with them, *intimate, or seem to intimate, as if Divine Worship were not*

acceptable without them? For, if it do not, then, no more doth *constant Communion* with the *Church of England*; and, if it do, then *constant Communion* is not, in your Opinion, *unlawful* on this Account. And still, your *constant Communion* with the *Church of England*, is as *lawful*, as your *constant Communion* with your own Churches; as far as this *Argument* is concerned. For this *Argument* concerns only your *constant Use* of some *superadded Formalities* in religious *Worship*; not the *Imposition* of them. I say, therefore, that if it be *lawful* for you, to use any such in your own Churches, it is *lawful* in the *Church established*. And, I add farther, That your *constant Use* of any particular *superadded Formality* in your own Churches, seems much more strongly, to intimate, as if *Divine Worship* were not acceptable without it, than such a *constant Use* of any in the *Church established* can do. For, what you use in your Churches, you pretend, you use upon *Choice*; which implies, that you imagine it to add something to the *Acceptableness* of the *Worship*: Whereas no such thing can be fairly gathered from your *constant Use* of a *superadded Formality* in the *Church of England*; because no one can possibly tell, whether you constantly use it, because you think it most conducing to the *Decency* and *Acceptableness* of *public Worship*, or, because it is enjoined by *Authority*, and you think it more for the universal Good to submit to the enjoined *Use* of it, than to break the *Peace* and *Unity* of the *Church* for the sake of it. Or, if you say, that the *constant Use* of some *Formality* in your own Churches, may also be so interpreted; I answer, then *constant Communion* with a Church, doth not intimate as if *Divine Worship* were not acceptable without the *superadded Formalities* used in it. I shall add only this, That your *Separation*, as it is accompanied with *occasional Communion*, seems to intimate, as if *Divine Worship* were not acceptable with the *constant Use* of such *superadded Formalities*, as are enjoined in the *Church of England*; which is contrary to the inward Sense of the moderate *Dissenters*. And if this circumstance do not make your *Separation* unlawful; why should

should the *Circumstances* which here you fix upon *constant Communion*, render that unlawful? Or, why should you prefer *Separation* before it? From hence, therefore, I infer, that this *Argument* cannot prove *constant Communion* with the *Church of England*, unlawful. Let us proceed.

4. *Constant Communion*, you argue, represents *Christ's own Institution as defective, and not orderly or decent, without the Additions to Divine Worship, brought into the Church of England*. And, therefore, it is *unlawful*. I need not tell you, that *Christ's own Institution*, whether you mean, of *Baptism*, or of the *Lord's Supper*, or of *public and united Prayer*, is as *perfect*, as he designed it to be, and no *perfecter*: And that you do not think, your selves, that he designed it to exclude *Additions*, and the *constant Use* of *Additions* in any of the *Acts of religious Worship*, your own *Pracice* is a clear *Demonstration*. For, you never *Baptize* without the use of somewhat which is an *Addition to Christ's Institution*; you never celebrate the *Communion*, you never meet for *public Prayer*, without the use of somewhat which is an *Addition to Christ's Institution*. The *Communion* is a main part of *public Worship*, and therefore, I shall instance in that. And I argue, as I did under the last *Head*, that *constant Communion* with your own *Churches*, or with any others in the *World*, doth as much represent *Christ's Institution to be defective, &c. as constant Communion* with the *Church of England* can do. *Christ's Institution* of the *Eucharist*, was only, *Eat this Bread, and drink this Wine, in remembrance of me*: Not in this particular *Posture*, any more than at this particular *Time*; the *Gesture* being no more a part of the *Institution*, than the *Time*. Your *constant Use* of any *Posture* (whether it be *standing*, or *sitting*) is as much a *Reflexion* upon the *Defectiveness* of *Christ's Institution*, as your *constant Use* of *Kneeling* could be; it being the *Use* of what is as much an *Addition to Christ's Institution*, as *Kneeling* is. And, therefore, if it be not *unlawful* to use any other *Posture* constantly. it is not *unlawful* to use *Kneeling* constantly. I might instance also in all the *Prayers* you make use of,

at the Celebration of the *Lord's Supper*, since our Lord appointed none in his *Institution* of it; which was only, that we should eat and drink *in remembrance* of him; and this we may do without one single Prayer. Every Prayer, therefore, that you use at this Solemnity, is a Reflexion upon our *Lord's Institution*, and represents it as defective, and not orderly, or decent without such Additions; as doth every Prayer that you use at the *Baptism* of a Child, without which it is as complete as with it, and without one Word of which *Christ* instituted it. Now, you can no more constantly communicate in the *Sacrament* with your own Churches, without the constant Use of such additional Prayers, than you can communicate with the *Church of England* without *Kneeling*; and so, your constant Communion with your own Churches as effectually represents *Christ's Institution* as defective, as your constant Communion with the *Church of England* could do. You must, therefore, acknowledge that constant Communion, on neither side, doth thus represent *Christ's Institution* defective; or, that this is not sufficient to render it unlawful; or, that you are guilty of this in your constant practice. But the Truth of the Matter is this: Neither your Practice, nor the Practice of the *Church of England*, doth represent the *Institution* of our Lord any more defective, than he designed it: For he only designed to ordain, that there should be public Assemblies of *Christians*; and that the *Holy Communion* should be celebrated in those Assemblies. All the Circumstances of these Assemblies, it is plain, he left to be determined by the *Governors* of his *Church* and *People*, according to the Notions of Decency, and the various Customs, of different Nations. And, in the Enumeration of these Circumstances, I think, I have often, in my reading, found your own Mr. *Baxter* mentioning *Gesture*, as well as *Time* and *Place*, and the like; and affirming, that it comes within the Bounds of the Authority of our *Governors*. To this Argument, therefore, I answer plainly thus? Constant Communion with the *Church of England*, represents the *Institution* of *Christ* as defective, only in such

Circumstances as he purposely neglected to determine, and left to be determined by *future Governors*. This Representation of *Christ's Institution* is not only *not unlawful*, but *necessary*, and unavoidable in all *religious Assemblies*. And, therefore, *constant Communion* with the *Church of England* is not *unlawful* on this Account. Besides, it is worth while to consider, whether your *occasional Communion* with the *Church established*, do not as truly represent *Christ's Institution as defective*, as your *constant Communion* can do; only with this difference, that the *one* represents it so, less frequently than the *other*. But still, if it be *unlawful* to do this (suppose in the Celebration of the *Communion*, which must here be meant by you) *twelve times* in a Year, it is *unlawful* to do it *once*. And if the *communicating* with our *Church once* in a Year, do not represent *Christ's Institution as defective*, I cannot see how the *communicating* with it *twelve times* in a Year can do it. But, what I have already said, together with what I have observed under the *preceding Head*, which is of the same nature with this, I judge to be a more than sufficient Answer to this *Reason* against *constant Communion*.

5. And lastly, *constant Communion*, according to you, is a *confining your Charity to a Party*; and a *practical disowning and condemning all other worshipping Assemblies*. And therefore, is *unlawful*. To this I answer,

1. *Constant Communion* is not a *confining our Charity to a Party*. For, I dare say, you cannot name any one single Instance of *Christian Charity*, due, by the *Laws of the Gospel*, to any Person, of what *Denomination* soever, which a Man that lives in *constant Communion* with the *Church of England* cannot perform as well as any of *you*, who *occasionally* communicate with it. And if you cannot name any one such Instance, then this part of your *Charge* cannot be true. *Constant Communion* breaks not in upon any one single part of *Christian Charity*: but it is the *Neglect* of *constant Communion*, that hath been the *Destruction* of *Christian Charity* in the *Land*, and the *Encouragement* to all *uncharitableness*. This is a terrible

Circumstance of the Neglect of constant Communion: but this weighs nothing with you, on one side, whilst the lightest Feathers weigh down the Scale, on the other.

Did ever any Persons say, till now, that the joining in the *external Acts of Communion*, is a necessary part of *Christian Charity*, due to all *Parties of Christians*? and therefore, not to be *confined*, without *Sin*, to any one Church? You may as well say, that the constant joining in the outward *Acts of Communion* with one *Parish Church*, is the *confining our Charity* to this particular *Parish* in Exclusion to all others; for it is only of *external Communion* we are now speaking. And, if the confining of *that* to a *Party*, be *confining our Charity to a Party*; then the confining of *that* to one *Parish* is a *confining our Charity* to this particular *Parish*: Constant *external Communion* with any one *Party of Christians* being as much *Communion* with all *Christians*, as constant *external Communion* with one *Parish Church*, is *Communion* with the whole *Church of England*; nay, as much, as occasional *external Communion* with more than one *Parish Church*, or *Congregation*, can be. And farther, if it be *unlawful* to confine our *external Communion* to one *Party*; then, it is not our *Duty*, nor lawful to give all the *Encouragement* we can, to *Peace*, and *Order*, and *Unity*; and all the *Credit* we can to a good *Establishment*: but, on the contrary, a *Duty* incumbent upon us to give *Encouragement*, and *Credit*, to all *Separations*, tho' never so unreasonable; and to all the *Consequences* of them.

2. *Constant Communion* is, I confess, a *practical disowning*, and *condemning* all other *worshipping Assemblies*; I mean, such as have *separated* from the *Church of England*. I say, it is a *practical disowning* them, thus far, that it is a *practical Declaration*, that we judge *constant Communion* with the *Church of England* to be *lawful*; and *preferable* to a *Separation*. But then, this is consistent, to a Tittle, with the *Law of God*, and the *Charity of a Christian*. It is as *lawful*, and as *charitable*, to make such a *Declaration* in our *Actions*, as it is to make it in our *Words*: and I never

ver heard yet, that it was either *unlawful*, or *uncharitable*, for any person persuaded of the Universal Advantages of *constant Communion*, and the evil Consequences, and unreasonableness of *Separation*, to declare himself so to be. Nor can I be persuaded, that it is not his Duty, his indispensable Duty, to do it. I grant, therefore, that this, as I have explained it, is a *circumstance* of *constant Communion* with the *Established Church*; but then, I maintain, that it is very *lawful*, and perfectly consistent with *Christian Charity*, and so no objection against *constant Communion*.

3. I must put You in mind again, as I have often had occasion to do, that You would have *constantly* communicated with the *Church of England*, your selves, and would do still, upon some *Alterations*. Now *constant Communion* would be *then*, as much a *confining your Charity to a Party*, and a *condemning all other separate worshipping Assemblies*, as it is now. Yet, If it be *unlawful now*, so it would be *then*. If *lawful then*, so is it *now*. As, therefore, You have declared, that You should think it not only *lawful*, but your *Duty, then*; so, acknowledge it, at least, *lawful now*, notwithstanding this *Circumstance*; lest You should accuse your selves of having resolved to do what is *unlawful*, if *this* can make *constant Communion* *unlawful*. Once more,

4. By saying this, and declaring this to be one of the Circumstances which make *constant Communion* with the *Church of England* *unlawful*, You condemn the greatest part of your *Brethren*; and your *People*; all those who never communicate *occasionally*; and all those who communicate never, but when an *Office* is concerned. Either, therefore, speak out, and let your *People* know, that they live in a continued *Sin*, whilst they keep *constantly* to You, and never *occasionally* communicate with the *Church of England*; or else, acknowledge that to *Communicate constantly* with a *Church*, is not to *confiner our Charity to a Party*, &c. or that it is not *unlawful* so to do; and

consequently, that *constant Communion* with the Church of *England* is not on this Account, *unlawful*.

But, now we are upon this subject, I must not forget one very remarkable *circumstance* of your *occasional Communion*; and that such an one, as it not imaginary, but certain, and acknowledged on all Hands; and which must, I think, according to your way of arguing against *constant Communion*, render it *unlawful*. And that is this: *Occasional Communion intimates, as if constant Communion were lawful, and therefore necessary; which is contrary to your inward Sense.* This it *intimates* more strongly than *constant Communion* intimates any of those things You have fixed upon it: and multitudes on all sides, You know, are actually persuaded that it doth so. From hence, therefore, I should think, when I read Your Reasonings against *constant Communion*, that, according to You, *occasional Communion* must be *unlawful*. But when I read your Defenses of your *occasional Communion*, I find, that this is so necessary to the demonstration of your *Charity* to the *Established Church*, that it is your indispensable *Duty*, notwithstanding this *Circumstance*. Now, How much better, and greater a demonstration of your regards to *Peace* and *Charity*, would your *constant Communion* be? And, therefore, If this *Circumstance*, ought not to hinder You from so poor a demonstration of your *Charity* as *occasional Communion*; how can You think, that such like *Circumstances* ought to hinder You from so much greater a demonstration of your Love to *Unity* and *Concord*, as Your *constant Communion* would be? Alas! Your *occasional Communion* is no better a demonstration of Your *Charity* to the Church of *England*, than a declaration, spoken, or written upon Paper, that You hold the worship of it to be *materially lawful*, and *tolerable*: nor hath it any better influence upon the public Face of Affairs, than such a *verbal Declaration* would have. Your *Separation*, accompanied with it, hath as evil Consequences, and as direful Effects, and as bad an influence upon Men's Minds, and Dispositions, as it would have,

were

were it without it. It shews it self as pernicious, and is much more unaccountable. But Your *constant* Communion would be an undeniable Demonstration, that You love *Peace* and *Concord*; and hate the Consequences, and Effects of a *Separation*. It would tend to the producing an *universal Agreement*; and give a check to the *Violence* on all sides; and probably, would have a most happy influence upon the Tempers of Men, and the Face of this divided *Church* and *Nation*. With these considerations, tell me, I beseech you, how *occasional* Communion can be a *Duty*, notwithstanding this *Circumstance* of it; and yet *constant* Communion be rendered *unlawful* by *Circumstances*, much more inconsiderable; and hardly founded upon any thing but *Imagination*.

I have one *Argument* more to offer to your Consideration, to prove, that these *Circumstances*, supposing them to attend upon constant Communion, do not make it *unlawful*; and this taken from your own Concession, that *constant* Communion was *lawful*, before You came to imagine that there were no hopes of *Amendments*; and that the *waiting* time was over, p. 563. Now, there is not one of these *Circumstances*, but what *always* belonged to it, as much as *now*. *Constant* Communion always *betrayed* your *Liberty*; always *intimated*, as if *Divine* *Worship* were not acceptable without such *superadded* *Formalities*; always *represented* *Christ's* own *Institution* as *defective*; always *appeared* to *acquit* *Ecclesiastical* *Assumers*; always was a *confining* your *Charity* to a *Party*, and *disowning* other *worshipping* *Assemblies*, as much as it is *now*. How, therefore, can you say, that these *Circumstances* are what make it *unlawful*? For, If they did not make it *unlawful* heretofore, how can they *now*? If they do *now*, how could it be *lawful* heretofore? If it were *lawful* heretofore, notwithstanding these *Circumstances*, for the sake of *expected* *Amendments* (which is nothing but a *Colour* put upon the Cause) why is it not *lawful* *now*, notwithstanding these *Circumstances*, for the sake of *Peace*, and *Concord*? which are, in my opinion, no less weighty Considerations, than

than the *Amendment* and *Reformation* of a tolerable *National Constitution*. Supposing, therefore, that you have here represented things aright (which, in Truth, You have not done) yet, if these be the Circumstances which render *constant Communion* unlawful, the Conclusion must be, either, that it was not lawful *heretofore*; or, that it is lawful *now*.

Thus have I considered every one of those *Circumstances* which, you say, render *constant Communion* unlawful to You, who hold *occasional Communion* to be lawful, and necessary; and have endeavoured to shew, as I proposed, *That these Circumstances either do not attend upon constant Communion; or, if they do attend upon it, that they do not make it unlawful*. And what I have said, in order to this, appears to me so extraordinary evident, and so very demonstrative, that I have a more than usual confidence in this Point; and cannot help taking it for granted, that You your selves are by this time convinced, that this part of your Cause hath been very much mistaken; and that these *Circumstances* either do not belong to *constant Communion*; or, do not make it *unlawful*. And, therefore, If these be truly the Reasons for your refusing to join constantly with the *Church of England*; and if these be all the Arguments You have to prove *constant Communion* any more unlawful than *occasional Communion*; I press it upon You, as your indispensable Duty, to review, with all the calmness possible, this part of your Cause; and to consider once more, whether You be not obliged, in Conscience, to *communicate constantly* with the *Church of England*. Which You must also be the more willing, and determined to do, if You will but consider, what I shall observe in the next place, *viz.*

Secondly, Supposing, some inconvenient *Circumstances* do attend upon *constant Communion*; that, besides such like *Circumstances*, much worse do unavoidably attend upon *Separation*, and make it much more *unlawful*, and much less eligible. I shall not here repeat any thing of what I have before said to this purpose, nor suppose You ignorant

ignorant of the wretched, and miserable consequences of all *Separation*, the most just, as well as the most unjust; and these so certain, and so constant Attendants upon them, that they never yet were seen in the World without them, nor ever will be, as long as *Humane Nature* is what it is, and as long as *Ignorance* and *Passion* govern the greatest part of Mankind. You know, that all our own intestine Dissentions, and Quarrels, our Hatreds and Animosities, owe their Violence, and their Edge, to our Religious Differences; and have their Foundation in our *opposite Churches*, and *distinct Communions*. You have professed your selves, in the highest Degree, sensible of these *Circumstances of Separation*; and no one hath more grievously aggravated the Cause of those who, without the utmost Necessity, have given occasion to these instances of Unchristian Behaviour, than Mr. *Baxter* hath done. This makes it unnecessary for me to be more particular on this Subject: And the thought of it makes me the more earnestly entreat You to consider, whether any *Separation* can be more *unnecessary* than the *Separation* of those, who acknowledge all things required of them to be *materially* lawful: and a *Separation* founded upon a few *Circumstances*, which, if they belong to *constant Communion* with this Church, belong to *constant Communion* with all other Churches; and, if they prove a *Separation* from this Church *necessary*, prove a *Separation* for ever, from all other Churches, to be *necessary*. Reflect, therefore, on the worst *Circumstances* that can possibly attend upon *constant Communion*, and the worst of those *Circumstances* which will certainly attend upon *Separation*; reflect upon the best consequences of your *constant Communion*, and the best consequences of your *Separation*; and, if the *circumstances* of both be to determine your Choice, I shall not doubt of your *constant Communion* with the *Church Established*.

To conclude this Head, If the *Circumstances* You have mentioned, do not make *constant Communion* sinful, as I verily think, I have shewn; then You profess, that You think,

think, You ought constantly to communicate, as You now do occasionally. And therefore, I hope, you will act agreeably to that profession. And again, The *certain* and unavoidable consequences of your Separation, are worse than the *possible* consequences of your *constant* Communion; and therefore, I hope, you will prefer *constant* Communion, supposing there be some *possible* inconveniences in it, before Separation; the inconveniences of which we all agree to be most *certain*, and most pernicious to the *Christian Cause* in general and to the *Reformed Religion* in particular. I have heartily endeavoured to set this matter in a due light, and so leave it to your own Consciences, whether your *Practice* be to be defended, or reformed.

But, if all that I have said will not move You; at least, consider, whether you do well, to proclaim to the World, so often, your readiness to *conform*; and to appeal to all Mankind, to judge how zealous you have been for *Peace* and *Unity*; when, here it stands upon Record against you, that you will not so much as do what you *lawfully*, and with a safe Conscience, may, towards the glorious End, which, you say, is always in your Eye: And, that you have been so far from being inclined to *Conformity*, that (not being able to deny it to be *materially* lawful) you have clothed it with such *Circumstances* (in order to make it appear unlawful another way) as are a contradiction to the *Principles*, and *Practice* of your *Predecessours*; a Condemnation of the present Behaviour of *your selves*, who *separate*, and yet *occasionally* communicate; a terrible charge against those numbers of your *Brethren*, and *People*, who never do; a prejudice to all the *Churches* in the World; an eternal Bar to our own *Unity* and *Concord*; and a loose Encouragement to all *Discord*, and the most groundless *Separations*. But I hope that neither your being already engaged in this *Cause*, nor any other motive in the World, can prevail with you, to neglect such considerations as these.

You

You are very free in declaring, that the whole guilt of our *Divisions* must lie upon *those* who have imposed *Terms of Communion*, and still adhere to the *Impositions* of them. But, supposing the *Impositions* of these *Terms* to be blameable, let all the World judge, whether as great a part of the guilt of our *Divisions* be not justly to be laid upon *those*, who acknowledge the things *imposed* to be, in themselves, *lawful*; and yet love not *Peace* and *Unity* so well, as to submit to them. For, As, on the one side, *they* prefer the *Injunction* of some things of less moment, before *Concord*; so, on the other side, *You* prefer *Opposition* to the *Injunction* of what is not sinful, before *Concord*. As *They* refuse to lay aside what they acknowledge to be, in it self, *unnecessary*, for the sake of a closer *Union* amongst *Protestants*; so, *You* refuse to comply with what *You* acknowledge to be, in it self, *lawful*, for the sake of that so much desired *Union*. As *they* bear their Testimony against all *Disorder*, and *unnecessary*, *Separation*, by adhering to their *Impositions*, at the expense of Love, and Peace; so *You* bear your Testimony against all *unnecessary Impositions*, by forming a *Separation*, at the expense of the same precious, and invaluable Goods. And, where is the mighty difference between your *Principles* and theirs; or, between the *Consequences*, in which *both* end; or the *Reasons* on which both are founded?

They will not unite with *you*, unless *you* will come up to *them*; and *you* will not unite with *them*, unless *they* will come down to *you*: whilst, in the mean time, *They* acknowledge it *materially lawful* to yield to *you*; and *you* acknowledge it *materially lawful* to comply with *Them*. This, then, is the professed *Principle* both of *Them*, and *You*, That it is not *reasonable* to do a thing *materially lawful*, for the sake of *public Concord*, and *Unity*. And, if there be any *guilt* in this *Principle*, you must both equally share in it.

As for the *Consequences*, in which both your *Principle* and *theirs* naturally ends, they must be the same, because the *Principle* is the same. There can be no *Union*; There
must

must be *Division*; unless this Principle be *given* up, either by *Them*, or *You*; and the only way left by which the World can be determined, whether of you have the greater regard to *Peace* and *Union*, is by observing, which of you will first recede from this *Principle*. If *They* should recede from this *Principle* to meet *You*; you have no way left, in which it is possible for you to convince the World that you desired an Agreement, as much as they did. And if *You* recede from it to join with *Them*; all the World must own, that *Your* Love and Desire of *Concord* is greater than *Theirs*. And you cannot prove this by any other Argument imaginable. And so the Contest now between you seems to be this, which of you shall most stiffly adhere to the *same Principle*; and which of you shall most obstinately resist all hopes of *Peace*, and *Unity*. Proceed in this glorious Strife; and guide your *Practice* by the *Principle* you so much hate, and condemn in *others*; and see what will be the blessed Fruits of it, and who will most rejoyce at it: But remember, that you can no more defend it in *your selves*, than you can bear with it in *others*. And consider, what a wretched Estate a *Church* and *Nation* are come to, when they that *hate* the Peace and Prosperity of them will *compass* Sea and Land, and do all *unlawful* things to disturb and ruine them; and they that pretend most to *Love*, and desire their Peace, and Prosperity, will not do all *lawful* things to purchase them, or sacrifice the least part of their own *Scheme* to them. What is Christian *Moderation*, unless it be a Temper of Mind, disposing us to yield up Matters of lesser Consideration, to the great Concerns of *Love* and *Unity*? Or, Is it only a *Word*, to be used, by *some*, when it will serve a purpose; and, after *that*, to be ridiculed, and exposed: And by *others* to amuse the World in a Disputation, and make People think them the only *Moderate* Persons: whilst neither the *one* sort, nor the *other* will yield an Inch of their ground? What a Melancholly Prospect must it afford us, to see the faint Dispositions there are, on all sides, to this *Christian Grace*; when

when we consider, that nothing but *this* can restore *Unity* and *Happiness* to a divided *Church*, and *Nation*?

And, that you may be the more ready to incline to thoughts of *Union*, and to reap the glory of such a *Compliance*, as I am now pressing upon you: I shall put you in mind, that, as the *Principle*, on which your *Separation* is founded, is the same with *that*, on which *others* found their Resolution of not yielding, in any thing, to your demands; and as the *Consequences* of it are the same; so the *Reasons* for their not yielding to *You*, are much the same with your *Reasons* for not constantly communicating with them; and are taken, not from any thing unlawful in it self, but from some *Circumstances* attending upon it, exactly answering to those *Circumstances* which you have fixed upon *constant Communion*. And this may help to make you sensible, that *They* have, at least, as much Reason to expect your *Compliance*, and *constant Communion*, as *You* have to expect their *Compliance* and *Acceptance* of your *Propositions*. For instance, As, *constant Communion*, represents the *Worship* of the *Church of England* as eligible, and preferable, which is contrary to your inward Sense; and therefore, is unlawful: so, their *Compliance* with you, would represent the *Church of England* as wanting *Reformation* in all those particulars which you insist upon, which is contrary to their inward Sense; and, therefore, is unlawful. As, *constant Communion* practically betrays your *Liberty*, in compliance with rigorous *Imposers*, and appears to acquit *Ecclesiastical Assumers*; and, therefore, is unlawful: So, their compliance with you would practically betray the *Authority* of *Governours*, in compliance with *Unreasonable Separatists*, and, would appear to acquit those that had before separated from the *Church*; and, therefore, is unlawful. As, *constant Communion* intimates, as if *Divine Worship* were not acceptable without the *Formalities* enjoyed in the *Church of England*, and, represents *Christ's own Institution* as defective, and not orderly or decent, without these *Additions*; and, therefore, is unlawful: So, their compliance with you, in the *Alterations* of these *Formalities*, and *Additions*, would intimate,

intimate, as if Divine Worship were not as acceptable with them, as without them, and, as if Christ's own Institution had received some Injury from them, and been depraved by them; which is not true; and, therefore, their Compliance is as unlawful, as your constant Communion. As constant Communion is a practical disowning, and condemning other worshipping Assemblies; and therefore, is unlawful: So their Compliance with you, in your demanded Alterations, would be a disowning, and condemning the Church of England, as it was before, and, an acquitting other worshipping Assemblies that had separated from it, as if they had had Reason on their side; and, therefore, is unlawful. And if these Circumstances, as you say, make constant Communion unlawful; though it be materially lawful, and conduce highly to our public Peace and Concord; then, you must grant, that the Circumstances which I have here reckoned up, do make such a Compliance as you require, unlawful; though it be materially lawful, and very much conduce to our Peace and Concord. And so, your constant Communion with Them, is as lawful, as their Compliance with You can be; because their Compliance with You, you see, is as unlawful, as your constant Communion with Them. That is, in Truth, Neither the one, nor the other, is any more unlawful, than the greatest Duties in the Christian Religion are. But, indeed, this Doctrine of Circumstances, when applied to a Practice of such moment as constant Communion with an Established Church, serves only to perplex, and obscure a very weighty and plain Duty; as, you see, on the other side, that this same Doctrine, when applied to a thing of such moment as a Compliance with You, only tends to confound, and render intricate, what is, in your Opinions, not only lawful, but a most useful and necessary Duty.

And now, what is there, that can hinder you from a Practice which you acknowledge to be *materially lawful*; when by it you may contribute so very much to some of the noblest, and greatest ends of Christianity? And, if you will not yet condescend to *constant Communion*, for the

the compassing these Ends, tell us, what it is that you are willing to do towards it. If you say, That the way you are now engaged in tends towards it; I have shewn, that this is not true; that it is *doing Evil, that Good may come*; and that your present *Practise* is attended with as bad *Circumstances* as any, that can possibly be fixed upon *constant Communion*, and with much worse *Consequences*; and therefore is much more *unlawful*. If you still insist, and resolve so to do, upon your own *Scheme of Amendment and Reformation*; and will not *constantly* communicate, till *that* be entirely accepted; I need not observe, that this is declaring, that you will do nothing towards it: And I have before shewn, that your *constant Communion*, even *then*, would be capable of as heinous Aggravations, as you have loaded it with *now*; and, therefore, is as lawful *now* as it would be *then*: and, much more *glorious*, because it could not *then* be the *least* Demonstration, that you had any regard to *Peace*, whereas it would be *now* the *greatest*. There remain therefore only two ways, by which you can fairly make good, what you so frequently profess, That you truly desire *Concord and Unity*. Either you must be willing to comply, and *constantly* communicate, upon the granting some part of your *Scheme*; or you must comply, as Affairs stand at present. Now, supposing some part of your Demands granted, it is easy to shew you, that the same *Circumstances* would accompany *constant Communion then*, which, you say, make it *unlawful now*; and any one may see it at first view. And yet, taking it for granted, that you would be *constant Communicants*, tho' your *Scheme* were not *entirely* accepted; I argue, that, if your *constant Communion* would be lawful *then*, it is so *now*. And from all this, I may, I think, safely conclude, Either that your *constant Communion* would not be at any time, and upon any suppositions, *lawful*; or, that it is *now* *lawful*. The *former* of these You will not allow: therefore, You ought to allow the *latter*: And if You allow the *latter*, You must *constantly* communicate

with the *Established Church* ; if it be true, that nothing, but the *Unlawfulness* of the *Practice*, hath hitherto kept you from it. At least, it is but a reasonable *Request* to you, Either leave off to lament our *Breaches*, and to exclaim against *Those*, who will not heal them, by a *Compliance* with *You*, which is *materially lawful* : or, do you *Yourself* heal them, by a *Compliance* with *Them*, which you acknowledge to be *materially lawful*.

But you often tell us, as a *Reason* for your *Separation* ; that the *waiting Time* was over, and all hopes of *Amendments* at an end. And, accordingly, you have now tried *Forty Years* Separation, to see, if this would procure any *Alterations*. And what hath your *Experience* taught you ? Do not you complain to this Day, that there is not the least inclination in the *Church-men*, to admit a *farther Reformation* ? Why then will not you try the ways of *Peace* and *Unity* once more ? Which are at least as likely to end in a *greater Perfection*, as the ways of *Separation* : And, I believe, much more so. And, if there be not yet, after all your *Trials*, any hopes appearing of what, you say, you are labouring after ; I am of opinion, that there cannot be a greater inducement to you, now to comply, than *this* is. For, if there be no hopes of other Men's *Compliance* with you, then, there are no hopes left of *Peace*, and *Unity*, without your *Compliance* with *Them*. And, therefore, if *Peace* and *Unity* be any thing more than *Words* ; the Consideration, that they are now to be purchased *only* by your *constant Communion*, ought not to set you against it, but to engage you to it ; unless it be too great an instance of *Condescension*, to sacrifice the least matters to such Considerations. But, I pray God to forgive those, who think that a *hardship* and grievance, which they ought to esteem one of the greatest *Honours* they are capable of, on this side Heaven. For, when can it be more truly *honourable* for you to *conform*, than when it is visible, that you comply with others, because *They* will not comply with *You* ; and, when you demonstrate

strate by this means, that *You* have a greater regard to *Peace*, and *Unity*, than *They* have?

And, now, after *You* have said all that is possible in the *Vindication* of your *Separation*, and after I have said all this to prove it to be *unnecessary*; it imports nothing, either for *you* to argue for *your selves*, from the *Scripture-notion* of *Schism*, and from the *Writings* of the *Fathers*; or for *Me* to turn such Arguments against *You*. For, we are both agreed, that all causeless Divisions amongst Christians are to be avoided: And the Point in Question is not, How the word *Schism* is used in Scripture; or, what the *Fathers* have said of the *Occasions*, and *Nature* of *Schism*; but only this, *Whether your Separation from the Church of England be necessary, or not?* If it be not, you acknowledge it to be *Schismatical*; and, therefore, you endeavour to shew, that it is. If it be, We acknowledge it not to be *Schismatical*; and only endeavour to shew, that it is not. But whether it be so, or not, cannot be shewn, either from the *Scripture-notion* of *Schism*, or from any Sayings of the *Fathers*.

You allege also in your own *Vindication* the Judgment of Mr. *Hales*: And therefore, here I must take notice, that the *Reader* is very much mistaken, if He imagine, that there is any thing in his *Writings* to your purpose, or, that you can defend your selves by any thing you have transcribed from Him: though, if you could, I must put you in mind, that His Authority would signify no more when alleged for *You*, than *You* would allow it to signify, were it alleged against *You*. That great *Man* says, indeed, that the word *Schism* is often so used, That it is only a *Theological Scare-crow*: But He says also, That it is a *deadly Crime, where it is not by imputation but in deed*. He says indeed, that *where cause of Schism is necessary, there not He that separates, but He that occasions the Separation, is the Schismatic*: But He says also, in so many Words, That in *Schisms, which concern Fact, nothing can be a just Cause of refusal of Communion, but only to require the Execution of some unlawful, or suspected Act*; that is, nothing

nothing but what renders *occasional Communion* unlawful, as well as *constant Communion*. And from hence it is plain, that He never so much as dream't of a *Separation* joined with *occasional Communion*; and little thought, that *constant Communion* with a Church, which doth not require the Execution of any *Act*, which you think, or suspect to be unlawful, could be rendred *sinful*, by such *Circumstances* as you have fixed upon it. If there were any thing necessary to your *Communion* with the Church of England, which you did but suspect to be unlawful, this would hinder your *occasional Communion*, as effectually as your *constant Communion*. But you are thoroughly satisfied, That *Communion* with this Church, is *materially lawful*; and therefore, you are as much condemned by Mr. Hales, as by any one; who, tho' He excuse those who judge, or suspect it to be *materially unlawful*, yet He absolutely condemns both your Principles and Practice. He says indeed, That *when either false, or uncertain Conclusions are obtruded for Truth, and Acts either unlawful, or ministering just scruple, are required of us to be performed: In these Cases, consent were Conspiracy, and open contestation is not Faction or Schism, but due Christian Animosity: And that it is alike unlawful to make profession of known, or suspected Falshoods, as to put in practice unlawful, or suspected Actions.* But what is this to you, who allow *Communion* with our Church to be *materially lawful*; and consequently, who acknowledge, that, in order to it, you are neither required to *make profession of known, or suspected Falshoods; or to put in practice, unlawful or suspected Actions?* Another Principle I find attributed to Him, *Abridg. p. 647.* That *if things be imposed, under the notion of indifferent, which many think sinful, and a Schism follow thereupon, the Imposers are the Schismatics: which I do not find so expressed by Himself; and, if too strictly understood, I am certain, is contrary both to his Principles, and Yours.* But, granting this to be His Principle, what if things be imposed, which are not thought sinful, and a Schism follow? Will this Principle excuse the Separation of those

who

who think that the things *imposed* are *not sinful*, as you do? But I wish that, instead of picking a Sentence, or Two, out of his Writings, you would seriously consider what there is to be found in them irreconcilable to your Practice. For then, you might perhaps be sensible, That, as it is a fault in *Superiours*, not to yield, in a matter of small Concern, to the *imbecillities* of *Inferiours*; so it is, much more, in *Inferiours*, not to yield, in Points *materially lawful*, to the Authority of *Superiours*. And, sure, you could not be so fond of charging the guilt of your *Schism*, on the side of the *Imposers*, upon his Authority, when you find it to be his Opinion, that *there are Schisms, in which both Parts are the Schismatics*; and remember, that as *They* will not yield up, what they grant not to be necessary; so *You* will not practice what you grant not to be sinful; and that *You*, as well as *They* will not do what *You* acknowledge to be *materially lawful*, in order to put an end to this *Schism*.

You often insinuate, that your Separation from the *Church of England* is founded upon the same Arguments, on which the Separation of the *Church of England* from the *Church of Rome* is founded. But I wonder with what Justice this can be said by *You*, who think that nothing is required in the *Church of England*, but what is *materially lawful*. For, Did any of our *Reformers* think it *materially lawful* to join in *public Worship* with that Church? Did ever any of them *occasionally* communicate with it, and argue against *constant* Communion, not from any thing *unlawful* in the thing it self, but, from some imagined Circumstances, equally applicable to other parts of their Practice? If they did not, then *Your Separation* is not founded upon the Principles, on which *They* separated. And You ought, in Justice, either to give up such *Reasonings* as these, or, fairly to acknowledge, that the *Protestant Separation* from the *Church of Rome*, was built upon Founda-

tions wholly different from those, on which Your *Separation* from the *Church of England* is built.

But it is time for me to conclude. I had a design of adding some few Considerations more relating to some other Parts of Mr. *Calamy's* Book, and the Methods there taken for the supporting, and establishing your *Cause*. But I have already run out into a greater length, than I thought of, in speaking to what is more material to the great point between Us: and, I am sure, You will agree with me, either, that I have already said what is sufficient to recommend *Conformity* to You; or, that nothing, that I could farther allege, would signify any thing towards it. However, If there be any thing in any part of that Book, which I have not regarded; or any thing, which You can add to what hath been already alleged; on which You will say that your *Cause* doth in the least depend: I promise, that I will give it all due consideration. In the mean while, give me leave to think, that I have advanced something, in all that I have said, which may make you a little *doubtful* of the *Excellence* of your *Cause*; and incline you to think somewhat more favourably of *Conformity*, than you have hitherto appeared to do. You must, of Necessity, either *conform*, or *separate*. And, therefore, if I have said but barely enough to make it a *doubtful* point, Whether of the two you ought to chuse; consider, last of all, that there are many, and weighty Arguments to determine you to *Conformity*; and remember, that it is your own Concession, That you ought to be much more willing to attend to any Reasons that can engage you to *that*, than to find out *Evasions*, and *Arts*, for the keeping on foot our unhappy Divisions. It is in your *Power* to put a mighty stop to them; and, I pray God, it may, at length, be in your *Will*.

A

D E F E N S E

O F T H E

Reasonableness of Conformity, &c.

To Mr. C A L A M T.

S I R,

I Have here sent you my *Remarks* upon your *Defense of moderate Nonconformity*: Which I thought necessary to do, in Justice, both to my self, and to the *Cause of Truth*. And I shall not detain you from them any longer, than whilst I entreat you to examine them with such *Candour*, and *Impartiality*, as becomes a *Christian*, and a *Divine*.

C H A P. I.

Of Episcopal Ordination.

IT may be expected that I should here discourse as largely concerning *Episcopal Ordination* as you have given me occasion to do, in the *first Part* of your *Defense*. But I chuse rather to refer the complete handling of that

P 4

Subject

Subject to a distinct *Treatise*; which may quickly follow these *Papers*. And, in *that*, what I have already said with relation to the Point of *Ordination*, shall be confirm'd, and defended; and whatever you have advanced on that Head, shall be fairly, and thoroughly considered. And I may the rather be permitted to do this, because this *Subject* is of very little Concern to the Cause between *us*, how considerable soever it be in it self. For you must be sensible, (as unwilling as you are, that I should be thought by your *Readers* to state the *Question* aright) that, supposing an *Original Right* in *Presbyters* to *Ordain* be granted; and supposing all you have said against the peculiar *Right* of *Bishops* to be true: yet still the *Exercise* of this *Right* may be *indefensible* in *Tou*; and the present *Right* of *Bishops* stand unmoved, as long as you acknowledge the Lawfulness of the present Method; unless you will put the whole upon the *Necessity* of your *Separation*, and prove the *Obligation* *Tou* are under now, of claiming and exercising this *Right*. This is what the *Question* now depending (as you have stated it your self) must be resolved into, at last. For *moderate Nonconformity* can never be proved *justifiable*, but by demonstrating that *Necessity* and *Obligation*. And you must give me leave to say it again, that this *Necessity* and *Obligation* can never be demonstrated, but by demonstrating that *constant Lay-Conformity* to the *Established Church* is *circumstantially unlawful*. I might, therefore, here, only observe that whatever you have hitherto written in *Defense* of *moderate Nonconformity* toucheth not the Point: And so wait for the only *material* part of the *Controversy*, which is yet behind. For it doth not follow, that because your *Re-ordination* is a hard, and unreasonable *Term*, therefore, the *People* are obliged to *separate* from our *Church*. It doth not follow, that because *Tou* cannot comply with the other *Terms* of *Ministerial Conformity*, therefore the *Nonconformity* of your *People* is *justifiable*. But, because one *End* I proposed to my self in writing, was a *Vindication* of our own *Conformity*, who are *Ministers* in this *Church*, I therefore think
my

my self obliged to consider what you have again advanced against the *Terms of Ministerial Conformity*: But I must premise this *Advertisement*, that granting the *Truth* of all you have said against these *Terms*, you are not advanced one Step towards the Proof of the *Affirmative side* of your *Question*; and that should this *Reply* be as weak, and insignificant as you have represented my former Writings to be, it would still remain upon *You*, to justify the *Nonconformity* of your *People*, or to give up your *Cause*. It being, therefore, for our own *Vindication*, that I now consider again these *Terms of Ministerial Conformity* (and not because they belong to the *Question*, as you your self have stated it) it is sufficient for my Purpose to observe concerning the *first* of them, *viz. Episcopal Ordination*, that you your selves allow it lawful: And, therefore, in submitting to *that*, we do nothing, but what you your selves acknowledge it *lawful* to do; and what you your selves would do, were it not for some *accidental Circumstances*, not touching the *Lawfulness* of the thing it self. And so I may with the greater Liberty pass on to the other *Terms of Ministerial Conformity*, scrupled by *You*, and your *Brethren*.

C H A P. II.

Of the Declaration of Assent and Consent; and the Subscription.

Sect. I. *Of the Subscription.*

THE *first* Thing you are pleased to find fault with in my *Book*, upon this *Head*, is, that I say, that *I never heard that the Subscription was esteem'd any considerable Difficulty*. Upon which, you let the *World* know, how necessary it is to join *History* and *Argument* together, *without which, frequent Mistakes will be unavoidable in a Debate*

State of this Nature. And presently, you give us an *historical* Account of the *Subscriptions* that have been required; and of the *Scruples* of those whom you call your *Predecessors* about them: Which I venture to affirm, to be of no Concern to the *Debate* between us, but rather to tend to the reviving former *Animosities* amongst us. The *Debate* between us is, in your own Words, *whether moderate Nonconformity be justifiable.* Now supposing the *Subscription* required in 1663 hath been *esteem'd a considerable Difficulty*, it toucheth not this *Debate*: Because that will not prove either that the *Objections* against it are reasonable; or that you are obliged to follow your *Predecessors* in their *Opinions* concerning it; or, that you must, therefore, *separate* from the *Church of England*, Much less will the *History* of other *Subscriptions* required before this, prove any thing of this nature; or so much as that I am mistaken, in saying, that this last *Subscription* hath not been esteem'd any considerable *Difficulty*. But, in order to shew the World how free you are of your *historical Collections* of this nature (that may draw the Reader's Mind aside from the main Point, but can never enlighten it) I must tell you, what you your self could not but know, that I was there speaking only of the *ejected*, and present *non-conforming Ministers*; and of this *Subscription* since the Time of the Act of *Uniformity*. Now you allow your self what I say, that it hath not
P. II. p. 115. been spoken of since that Time, as any considerable *Difficulty*. And then, to what purpose was it to give us an *History* of *Rigors*, and *Scruples*, all before the Time plainly intended? Or, how can this shew that the *ejected Ministers* have since 1662 represented the *Subscription*, about which we are speaking, as a considerable *Difficulty*; unless you will say, they must be supposed to approve and practise, every thing said, and done in former Days. This *historical Account*, therefore, cannot be necessary to the *Debate* between us, nor the least Proof that I was mistaken when I supposed, that it was not ever esteem'd any considerable *Difficulty*, by the Persons

sons I was concerned with. And if you will now say in the Name of your *Brethren*, that it is at present so esteemed; yet what I said may be true: And I can easily believe you, without the *Uneasiness* of reading of *Rigors*, and *Worryings*, and *Silencings*, long since past: long enough indeed to be forgotten by all who study *Peace* and *Charity*.

But however this be, methinks you should not have wholly neglected what I offered, to shew that the *Subscription* could not reasonably be esteemed any considerable *Difficulty*, by any who thought the *Common-Prayer-Book* fit to be used in the *public Service* of God, and the *Administration* of the *Sacraments*. And I cannot imagine it should be esteemed, even by *You*, an unreasonable *Term*, or, in the least injurious, either to the *Worship* of God, or to the due *Administration* of the *Sacraments*, that all who minister in the *Established Church*, should promise to use this *Liturgy*: Since you your selves, as I shall have occasion to shew hereafter, have professed a Readiness to comply constantly with one particular *Liturgy*; and no *Form* can be so framed, as that some, or other shall not scruple it. But let us return to the *Declaration* of *Assent* and *Consent*.

SECT. 2. Of the true Interpretation of this Declaration.

IN order to shew that this *Declaration* extended only to the *Use* of the *Common-Prayer-Book*, I observed that the *Act* it self requires us to confine this *Assent* and *Consent* both, to the *Use* only of this *Book*. The *Paragraph* then refer'd to is the most considerable, and ought to be of the greatest force, in this *Debate*, of any *Paragraph* in the whole *Act*. Because it is the *Paragraph* immediately going before the *Declaration* it self, and professedly undertaking to determine the *Sense* of the *Words* required to be used upon this *Occasion*. And, that all *Persons* my judge of the *Weight* of this *Argument*, I shall here transcribe part of the *Paragraph* I speak of. And
to

to the end that Uniformity in the public Worship of God may be speedily effected (which Uniformity may certainly be effected by the use only of one Form of public Worship; from whence we may draw another Argument to establish our Sense) *Be it enacted, that every Person, &c. shall openly read the Common-Prayer, and after such reading thereof, shall openly, and publicly, declare his unfeigned Assent and Consent, (both) to the use of all Things in the said Book contained, and prescribed, in these Words, and no other.* Then follows the *Form of Words* to be used. Now, it is hardly possible to believe, that, if it had been the Design of our Legislators then assembled, that both *Assent* and *Consent* should not be confined to the *Use* of the *Common-Prayer-Book*, they themselves would have so confined them in the principal Paragraph in the whole Act, and leave their true Sense and Intention to be discovered in another, less observable, and less important Paragraph. But that this may not seem a Mistake, or Oversight in them, it is again repeated in the next Paragraph but one, that *every Person who shall hereafter be collated to any Benefice, &c. shall declare his unfeigned Assent and Consent, (both) to the Use of all Things, &c.* I know not what can be more evident than this, and yet I see you think yourself obliged still to oppose this Sense; not by denying that these Expressions are in the Act, or that they do not so confine the Declaration of *Assent* and *Consent*; for these Things are too plain to be denied: But by other Arguments. Before, therefore, I proceed to consider your Reasonings against this Sense of the Declaration, I lay down this, which you have not yet in the least endeavoured to contradict or disprove, *viz.* That the Act itself, which requires this Declaration of *Assent* and *Consent*, doth, in plain and express Words, and such as are not capable of any other Interpretation, confine this *Assent* and *Consent*, both, to the *Use* of the *Common-Prayer-Book*; and that in the Two principal Paragraphs of the whole Act, the one immediately going before the Declaration itself, and the other presently following it. Who would
not

not think that it were sufficient Satisfaction to any understanding Men to see this with their Eyes? Or, who would think it worth any Persons while to search out any Arguments against so plain a Matter? But I come now to examine of what Force your Objections are, in comparison of the Weight of this plain Proposition.

Your first Objection is, that it is scarce supposable that this Declaration was designed to respect the Use only of the Common-Prayer-Book, because the constant Use of it was required long before the Act of Uniformity was framed. But what can it avail, to argue from a Probability against express Words? Or from what we think ought to be done in any Case, to what is actually done? I will give you an Instance out of this very Act, and such an one as was never contested by you, to put it past all Doubt that this Argument of yours is of no force. Constant Conformity to the Common-Prayer-Book, was required long before this Act of Uniformity was framed; and yet one thing required of Ministers by this Act, is to subscribe this Declaration, that they will conform to the Liturgy of the Church of England, as it is now by Law established. What will you say therefore? that to conform to the Liturgy, must not respect only the Use of it, because this was required long before? Or, that the Parliament hath actually required it again, tho' it were required before? If so, then the Declaration of Assent and Consent may as well respect only the Use, notwithstanding your Argument. Nay, you tell us your self in this Book, p. 124. That a Consent is supposed to have gone before; and that the Subscription is an Engagement to use the Common-Prayer. And yet you acknowledge that this Engagement is here repeated, and required so to be in this Word Consent. Why, therefore, may it not be repeated in the Word Assent also? Or why will you argue from hence that something more must be intended, when you must own your self, that notwithstanding the Engagement by Subscription to use the Liturgy, the Parliament hath enforced it in this Act by another Subscription, and a Declaration of Conformity to it, and by Consent to it?

Is it not probable from hence, that *Assent* also may mean the same thing, (nothing being pretended from any plain Words in the *Act* to the contrary) rather than that something farther is meant by this *single* Word. But it rather seems to have been the Design of our *Legislators*, when all things had been out of Course, and Alterations were made in the *Liturgy*, to bring Men under greater and more solemn Obligations to a constant Use of it. And as long as I think the *constant Use* of it lawful, I shall be ready to promise to use it, as often, and after as different Manners, as my *Governors* are very likely to oblige me to do it. One thing more I have to offer upon this Head, that you argue from the *Subscription* required before, that this *Declaration* must intend something more than *Use*: From whence I collect, that it is your Opinion that that *Subscription* extends to nothing but the *Use* of the *Common-Prayer-Book*, and not the *Approbation* of it, as distinct from the *Use*. For if it extend to the *Approbation*, then your Argument here will extend to it likewise, and prove against your self, that the *Approbation* of the *Common-Prayer-Book*, cannot be intended in this *Declaration*, because *that was required long before the Act of Uniformity was formed*. So that, whether the *Subscription*, before required, extend to the *Use* only, or to the *Approbation* also of the *Common-Prayer-Book*, here is a plain Answer given to your *Argument* taken from thence: And so I leave you to answer for your *Reflexions* upon our *Legislators*.

Your *Second Argument* against confining *Assent* and *Consent* to the *Use* only of the *established Liturgy*, is this, that *the Legislators themselves have declared against this Sense*. My Proposition before laid down, is this, that they have, themselves, so confined them, in the Two principal Paragraphs of this very *Act*, in which chiefly we are obliged to look after their Sense. But who would not think by what you at first allege here, that they had in as public a manner revoked and repealed these *Paragraphs*, and declared, by Act of Parliament, that,

whereas

whereas they had formerly so confined this *Declaration*; they now enact the contrary, or something like this? I am sure nothing less than this can excuse me from not confining it after the manner, in which I am commanded to do it so expressly in those *Paragraphs*. But nothing like this is here pretended. For taking the whole Account as you relate it (the Truth of which I have heard much contested) all that appears from it is this, that a Majority of the House of Lords thought the very Form of Declaration capable of this Sense; and that a Majority of the House of Commons did not think fit to agree to the putting in any such Clause as that sent them by the *Lords*. But it doth not appear whether they refused this *Clause*, because they thought the *Declaration* never was designed to be so confined; or because they thought it sufficiently so confined in the *Act* it self. But neither is the Opinion of the Majority of the House of Lords, nor of the House of Commons an *Act of Parliament*; nor can it be the Duty of any Man to attend to such a *private Story* as this, more than to the express Words of the *Act* it self. Nay, even upon Supposition that a Majority of the House of Commons thought the Declaration incapable of our Sense, (which yet doth not at all appear) *this* cannot be a better Argument *against* this Sense, than the Opinion of the Majority of the House of Lords is *for* it. But I wonder how you can infer from this obscure Story, either that the Commons thought the *Declaration*, incapable of this Sense; or, supposing this, that they drew over the *Lords* to think so: When it is so evident that the *Commons* often refuse *Amendments*, the Matter of which they believe to be true, and might refuse this, only because they thought it unnecessary; and that the *Lords* often drop *Amendments*, without acknowledging the Ground of them to be false; and might drop this, because they were brought over to think it unnecessary. But supposing all that you would have, that both *Lords* and *Commons* did, in effect, declare by their passing the *Bill* mentioned without this Amendment,

ment, that it was not sufficient to take the Declaration in that Sense, I say that this cannot, without an express Clause in the *Act* it self, revoke and repeal the plain Words of another *Act*: Nor can this obscure and negative Argument disoblige any from Obedience to the positive and express Law of the *Kingdom*. Nor can this Account of the *Proceedings* of *Parliament* prove that their express Words the Year before are not to be regarded; or that they did not confine this *Declaration* to the *Use* only, when they themselves tell us, not *in effect*, but in so many Words, they did. I cannot but think it of ill Consequence, when there are such express Words to guide us, to hunt after private Stories, which no Body is obliged so much as to know; and to argue against a Sense given by the Law it self, from such Accounts as but few are capable of judging whether they be true or false. For my part, I cannot but think it my Duty to regard the *Act* it self, and if I do that, I cannot give my Assent and Consent to any thing but the *Use* of the *Common-Prayer-Book*; and can easily satisfy my *Conscience* without searching the *Journal* of the *House of Lords*. And all this being considered, my Instances of Dr. Bates P. I. p. 38. and others are so much to the purpose, that an Argument *a fortiori*, may still be taken from them. How far I have acted upon a *different Sense* from that of the *Legislators*, or persuaded others to do so, appears from the Two Paragraphs I have transcribed from the *Act* it self, which you disregard wholly, for the sake of a *private Story*, and yet pretend to follow the *Sense* of the *Legislators* who made this *Act*.

Your *Third Argument* is this, that *there is that in the Act of Uniformity it self that plainly confronts the Sense given by me*. I answer, that I have given no Sense of this *Declaration*, but what the *Act* it self commands me to give. I have transcribed the Words. The *Act* says expressly in the Two principal Paragraphs in it, that we must declare our Assent and Consent (both) to the *Use* of the *Common-Prayer-Book*. And this is all that I say; not so much

much as pretending to bring an *Interpretation* of what needs none; and what is so plain that it cannot be capable of Two Senses. Now, therefore, what must we do, supposing, in the Case of *Lecturers*, in some of the following *Paragraphs* the *Act* requires, that *they* should declare their Assent and Consent unto, and Approbation of, the *Book of Common-Prayer*? Shall we interpret Two *principal Paragraphs* of the *Act*, and those such as are incapable of your Sense, and such as concern the most considerable Persons in the Church, by other less important *Paragraphs*, more obscurely expressed, in Words of a less determinate Signification, merely because your Sense is the hardest? I do not think that *Lecturers* were designed to be *more hardly put to it*, as you express it, than *others*; but I think, that, however the difference of Expression came in, what is said of *them* ought to be interpreted by the more *principal Paragraphs* in the *Act*, rather than the *principal Paragraphs* by others. And be it so, that something besides Assent and Consent to the *Use* is required of *Lecturers*, can you give any tolerable Reason why this Assent and Consent should be so expressly confined to the *Use only*, in the *principal*, and most important *Paragraphs* of the whole *Act*? Or, if something farther be required of *Lecturers*, then *Lecturers* only must regard it; for, as for *others*, it is impossible they should interpret what the *Act* requires of them, by what you suppose it to require of *Lecturers*; it being expressly required of *every Person put into any Ecclesiastical Benefice, or Promotion, to declare his unfeigned Assent and Consent, (both) to the Use of the Book of Common-Prayer.* And, last of all, supposing the *Act* had expressly contradicted it self; if it had not been after such a manner, as expressly to repeal what had gone before, it is impossible almost for you to suppose Words, which would more plainly signify the Sense you contend for, than the Words I have now produced, signify, that we are to confine both Assent and Consent to the *Use* of the *Book*. And what must we do, supposing such a *Contradiction*; supposing that in the *principal Paragraph* we should

should be commanded to give *Assent* and *Consent* to the *Use*, and in another, less principal, to give *Consent* to the *Use* and *Assent* to something else? I should think that any sincere Person may satisfy his Conscience, though he should chuse the *softest Interpretation*; nay, tho' he should endeavour to persuade others to do so too. But this is far from being the *Case*.

As to your *Fourth Observation*, it is only this, that a Person who gives his *Assent* and *Consent* to the *Use* of this Book, must be satisfied of the *Truth* and *Warrantableness*, of what is prescribed in it; And I know no Person who contradicts this.

Thus have I examined your *Objections* against my Sense of the *Declaration*, i. e. the Sense which the *Act* it self puts upon it, in the *Paragraph* immediately going before it. But since you desire farther that the *Words in which this famous Declaration runs, may be considered*, I will follow you, to see if you can offer any thing against the *Lawfulness* of it.

I. You observe, *it must be an unfeigned Assent and Consent*; and, not content with observing this, you give us a pretty Story in the Margin, of a certain Dissenting Minister, which I will not repeat, but must be so free as to let you know, that I wonder how you can answer to your Conscience, the bringing so ludicrous and bantering piece of Wit, (if I may be pardoned for calling *that* so, which hath neither *Sense* nor *good Manners* in it) into so serious a *Controversy*; and to inform you, that I cannot think it for the Credit, either of the *Person* who was so *facetious*, or of your *Cause*, to vent what tends only to very bad Consequences. But who could think, that when we are required to give *Assent*, it should be thought a difficulty that it should be a *sincere* and *unfeigned* one? Though I know not why I should wonder at this, when I remember you represent it as a difficulty that the *Subscription* was required to be *ex animo*, i. e. *unfeigned*. This word *unfeigned* seems to you to have a *Retrospection* to former Times, and to be inserted against the *Old Puritans*

ans who complied heretofore: And it also proves, according to you, that this *Declaration* respects not the *use* only, because the guard of such a Word would not then have been needful. Now, what Fence can there possibly be against such *Comments*, and such strange *Suppositions* as this? Doth this look as if you were willing to put any Interpretation, that you think tolerable, upon the *Terms of Conformity*? However, your *Predecessors* are obliged to you, for leading People to think that they were not heretofore hearty and sincere, when they made solemn promises of *Compliance*. For if they were, then the word *unfeigned* cannot regard them. Nor indeed can it possibly be a difficulty to any Person who could declare his *Assent* and *Consent* without this Word; unless there be any who could solemnly declare them, without Sincerity, or an intention of regarding such a Declaration: And if there be any such, no *Form* of Words can hold them: But what you can mean, when you say, that the *guard* of this Word would not have been needful, had the *use* only been here intended, I am utterly at a loss to know; unless you would have People believe that it is nonsense to make an *unfeigned* Promise to *use* this Book. For the word *unfeigned* is joined to *Assent* and *Consent*: And the meaning of the *Declaration* is plainly this, I do here declare my sincere or *unfeigned* Resolution to use this *Book*. But let us see, how you argue in this place. You your self join the word *unfeigned* to *Consent*, as well as *Assent*. If, therefore, it may be joined to *Consent*, which you say regards the *Use*; then *Assent* also may regard the *Use*, tho' *unfeigned* be joined to it. You your self say the *Subscription* was an *Engagement* to use the *Common-Prayer-Book*; and yet this *Subscription* (as you observed heretofore) was required to be made *ex animo*, i. e. *unfeignedly*; notwithstanding that the *Practice* of the *Subscribers* would have betrayed them, if they had not kept their *Word*. If therefore *unfeignedly* may be joined to the word *subscribe*, when that refers to the *use*; *unfeigned* may also be joined to *Assent* and *Consent*, when they refer to the *Use*. And

why then may we not declare our *unfeigned* or *sincere* Resolution, to use the *Common-Prayer-Book*, notwithstanding that *our Practice will betray us*? If we were to make only a promise, would not this bind us? Is not a Promise always understood to be a *sincere* Promise? And is it a Crime, or a Blunder, to annex that word to it? This Argument will prove that no Declaration is required of us concerning the *Use* of the Liturgy; because there needs only an Injunction of Authority, and our Practice will betray us if we neglect it. And so the *Subscription*, the Declaration of *Consent*, and of *Conformity* to the *Liturgy*, must necessarily be interpreted of something else. But it is an amazing thing to find it here insinuated, as if it were absurd for our *Legislators* to oblige *Ministers* to declare their *sincere* Resolution of complying with a *Liturgy*, in an *Act*, the design of which is only *Uniformity* in *public Worship*: And I am sorry to find that you can think it worth your while to invent such Observations as this.

2. You observe, *There must be both an Assent and a Consent*. Now the only Point here is, whether both these Words may not fairly be applied to one thing, the *Use* only of the *Liturgy*; not what the signification of these Words is, which cannot be determined without knowing what they relate to. What I affirm here is, that they are *both* in this very *Act*, several times, applied to one thing, and particularly to the *use* of this *Liturgy*. Two Paragraphs I have produced already, in which they are *both* expressly confined to the *use* of the *Common-Prayer-Book*; and these the two most material Paragraphs in the *Act*. In this same Act, in the Paragraph which you allude to about the *Case* of *Lecturers*, the word *Assent* (about which only we dispute) is by it self applied to the *use* of all things prescribed in this *Book*. And in the Paragraph before that, *Assent* and *Consent*, both, are first applied to the *Book* it self, and then to the *use* of it. All which plainly shews; both that they may fairly be applied to *one* and the same thing; and that they are both applied

applied to the *use* of this *Book*, in this *Act* it self. Can there need any thing more to satisfy you in this Point? What if *Assent* and *Consent* differ ordinarily in their signification? This will not prove that they may not be applied both to one *thing*, or, that they ought not to be so, when the *Act* it self hath so applied them.

I must observe here, that you wholly neglect what I have before offered, concerning the Custom, in *Forms* of *Law*, of applying two or more Words, which have some difference in their Signification, to one and the same thing. And I am sure I may say, that it is much more probable, at least, from the numberless Instances of this Nature, that these two Words were designed to be applied to one thing, than it can be that they were designed for two: For I believe you would find it hard to produce any Instances, where two Words, thus joined together in a *Form* of *Law*, are applied to two differing things.

3. You observe that this *Assent* and *Consent* must be to all, and every thing, i. e. to the *Use* of every thing in the *Common-Prayer-Book*; as I have already sufficiently proved. And in this I am no farther concerned. And now from the whole let the *Reader* judge, whether I had not reason to say what I did on this *Head*. But I wonder you still go on to propagate unreasonable *Hyperboles*; such as you will not say plainly you can defend, or approve of, in a *Book* in which you undertake to give us the *Stable Principles* of *Non-conformity*; without putting any plain mark of dislike upon them, or warning your *Readers* sufficiently against them. Are you obliged in an *Abridgment* of the Reasonings of the *Ejected Ministers* to give us every thing they say, or the most unreasonable part of it? If not, why should it still stand in your *Book*, that *Words* could scarce be devised by the *Wit* of *Man* more fall and significant, &c. Or, why should you not plainly profess your self against such Aggravations? But if you look into my *Book* again, you will find that you had no Reason to find fault with me for calling this *your Comment*: For you

will see, that it is a mistake of your own, and that I speak not to you, but to the *Ejected and Dissenting-Ministers*, and mean a *Comment* made by one of them; and that when I speak of you particularly, I speak most commonly in the *third* Person.

I did blame you indeed very severely for *P. I. p. 32.* your quoting those ridiculous Passages out of *Dr. Swadlin*, a poor neglected Author; and for drawing an Argument from his Frenzy against *Assent and Consent*, to the *Common-Prayer-Book*; because such Stories so brought in, are *nothing to the Cause*, and only tend to vilify and ridicule the *Common-Prayer-Book*, and to set us at an irreconcilable distance from one another, and the like. And is it not indeed an inexcusable Fault in one, who frequently alleges in his own defense, that he was only an *Abridger* of the Sense of the *Ejected Ministers*, himself to draw in such a ridiculous Quotation out of a distracted Author; to comment upon it; to argue against the Approbation of the *Common-Prayer-Book*, from it; and to talk as if the poor *Non-conformists* had been ejected for not having the Spirit to discern the *Divine Inspiration* of the *Common-Prayer-Book*? Whoever looks into my Book will find that this was what I blamed in you. And now, without either defending or retracting, this so unjust and unbecoming a Behaviour, the same Passages are Reprinted again without any token of dislike upon them. However, two things I find said in Vindication of your self. *First*, if the Quotation be ridiculous, why was not the Author censured, and his Book suppressed? As if every extravagant, distracted Man's Writings were worth the looking after; or, as if, because the Author was not censured, and his Book suppressed, therefore it were becoming or pardonable in you to draw in these Passages in an *Abridgment* of other Men's Writings; in an Argument against *Assent and Consent*; and to plead from them against approving a Book, in which there is no such thing to be found. *Secondly*, You allege, that if extravagant Flights on all sides were more freely exposed, it would sooner bring

bring Men of Temper together, than set them more asunder. Now, who would not think from hence, that the only thing I blamed in you, was the ridiculing these Passages out of Dr. Swadlin; whereas whoever looks into my Book, will see that I say the same thing in other Words; nay, that I advise you, to ridicule and expose them as much as you please in their proper Time and Place; and that I blame you not for that (any otherwise than as it is very inopportunately introduced) but for what is utterly indefensible, your arguing from such poor Writers against Assent and Consent to the Common-Prayer-Book, and the like, as mentioned above. And therefore, you did wisely to mistake the Point, and overlook all that I said upon that Head. But surely Retraction should not be so difficult a Practice to a Christian and a Divine; and if you now understand my meaning, you cannot avoid it. Though as for the last Apology you make, You, of all Men living, have no Title to it, how frequent occasion soever you have for it. For you cannot but remember how you have joined in severely reprehending a Person, who hath little deserved it at your Hands, for endeavouring to expose some Extravagancies on your side (tho' it was his professed Design to do so) not because Men of Temper and Religion would be set more asunder by such Methods; but because the Irreligious and Prophane might be induced by them to deride serious Religion and the Worship of God. You are therefore now obliged, either to retract this publicly, or to acknowledge it to be a bar against your own making use of this Plea. You go on, after this, and cite two more Authors, who magnify the Common-Prayer-Book more than you think it deserves: The one indeed, a Person excellent for Learning and Piety; the other I know nothing of, but from the Sentences you have here quoted, which I think so much a-kin to the Passages out of Dr. Swadlin, that you might well have spared them. But what can this, and an hundred more such Instances signify, to the Declaration of Assent and Consent, about which only we are concerned? And sup-

posing you cannot have such an Opinion of the *Excellency* of the *Common-Prayer-Book*, as to think that the *Compilers* of it had the extraordinary Aid and Assistance of God; yet, methinks you might leave to others the liberty of ascribing what they esteem excellently good, to the great Fountain of all Goodness, since they require not you to think or say so: at least, you should forbear to argue from hence against approving it, and conforming to the use of it. Should I argue against esteeming or valuing the *ejected Ministers*, because it is your Opinion that they were acted by the *Divine Spirit* in the Cause they espoused; would you not easily see the *Fallacy*? And this was what I censured in you; the making the private Opinion of some particular Persons, an Argument against the *Declaration of Assent and Consent*, which includes not in it any thing of the same nature. But the *Defense* of this you wholly avoid.

Upon the whole Matter, I cannot see that I have any reason to recede from that Sense of this *Declaration of Assent and Consent*, for which I contended; or to be ashamed of having been *positive* in this Matter, as you express it. But whether you have not given me a just Occasion, to put you in mind under every Head, of sparing your Censures upon the *conforming Clergy*, I must leave to all to judge, who have ever read your *Tenth Chapter*; and your *Defense* of it, and what I have heretofore remarked of this nature out of them.

SECT. 2. Of the *Objection* against the *Declaration* and *Subscription* taken from the *Office of Baptism*, &c.

AS to the *Rubric*, at the End of the *Office of Baptism*, scrupled by you and your Brethren, I endeavoured to shew that it might fairly be understood only of such *Children* as are *duly Baptized*; upon supposition only that the *Declaration* and *Subscription* extended to this *Proposition*, which I deny that they do. I observed that you could

could not prove the Words incapable of this Sense; and that, if they were fairly capable of it, there was no need of a *Text of Scripture* to prove the Salvation of such *Infants*. All the Reply I have to this, is in the Words of Mr. *Baxter*. And all that I can collect from them, is, that Bishop *Sanderfon*, and Bishop *Gunning* did think that the *Children of Heathens* had a Title to *Baptism*, provided they had *Sponsors*. But how this proves that the *Rubric* can be interpreted of any but such Infants as are *duly Baptized*, I see not. If some Persons extended the *Rubric* to the *Children of Heathens*, it was, according to this very Account, because they were of Opinion, that *such* had a Title to *Baptism*: not because they thought that any Infants were saved, but such as were *duly Baptized*. The *Objection* taken from this Opinion of Doctor *Sanderfon's* would be the same against the Truth of the *Rubric* (about which only we are now concerned) were it expressed plainly, of *Infants duly baptized*. It may be a very true *Proposition*, that all *regenerate* Persons are saved: And yet the several Persons who subscribe this may have very different Notions about *Regeneration*, and the Persons who are truly *regenerate*. And I think it far from being evident, that I am obliged to understand by *Children Baptized*, all *Children Baptized*; or all *Children Baptized by any Minister, according to this Office*, because Bishop *Gunning* perhaps thought all such *duly Baptized*. All *Children Baptized* cannot necessarily be understood here: For Bishop *Gunning* himself, and Bishop *Sanderfon*, spoke only of *such* as are *Baptized with Sponsors*: And yet your *supposed Cases* under this Head, extend to *all*, as I observed before, tho' you take no Notice of it. Nor can I be obliged to understand it of *every individual Infant Baptized according to this Form*: For Bishop *Sanderfon*, &c. cannot be supposed to speak of any such *Infants* but what have *Sponsors* seriously undertaking for them; nay, it is plain, they included *such* in this *Rubric*, not because they thought it reached to any but such as are *duly Baptized*, but only because they thought *such* to be *duly Baptized*.

rized. But, supposing that Bishop Gunning did mean by this *Rubric*, that *all Infants* materially *Baptized*, are certainly saved by their being *Baptized*, (which is incredible,) yet there are so many, besides *him*, that joined in the *Imposition* of this *Rubric*, that we are to have some regard to *them* also : And it would be too great and fruitless a Task, to search out what was intended in this *Rubric* by a Majority of *them*. So that I gave Two Answers to your *Objection* taken from this *Rubric*. *First*, That the *Declaration* and *Subscription*, reached it not : *Secondly*, That, supposing they did, it might fairly be understood only of *Children duly Baptized* ; as we find that Bishop *Sanderfon* and *Gunning* themselves understood it only of such as were, in their Opinions, *duly Baptized*. Nor do I see that any thing is advanced against this. And to this I added, that there was no need of a *Text* of *Scripture* to prove to you, that *Children duly Baptized*, are saved. But what you here call a *piece of Wit* (a Word which you seem very fond of, when you have little else to say) is as serious, and as far removed from what you fix upon it, as any *Sentence* that you can possibly name. You cited, in the Name of the *ejected Ministers*, the *Second Commandment*, as an *Argument* that we had not a positive *Certainty*, as to all that were *Baptized*, and taken out of the *World* in their *Infancy*, that they were accepted of *God* unto *Salvation*. This is your own Account of the Purpose for which you cited it. But you are very angry with me for saying that this *Text* was produced by you, to prove the Damnation of some *Infants* received by our *Church*. The Words are those in which *God* declares, that He *punishes the Iniquities of the Fathers upon the Children unto the Third and Fourth Generation*. And if these Words be not intended by you, to refer to the Condition of *Infants* in the other *World*, they are nothing to our present Purpose. For I could not possibly suppose you to argue thus, *Almighty God punished the Children often with some Temporal Punishments for the sake of their Fathers Wickedness* ; therefore, we cannot be certain that *God* will not punish *Infants*

Infants with the Loss of Eternal Happiness, for their Father's Wickedness. I say, if your Argument from this Text be thus framed, nothing can be farther from concluding: and even then, I may very well say, that you produce it to make it probable, that God will punish *Infants* in the other World for their *Father's Crimes*. But it is plain from your own Representation, now reprinted, that this *Clause* of the *Second Commandment* was produced in order to make it appear as probable, that God would punish *Infants* (in their Eternal Concerns) for the Sins of their Fathers, as any other Text of Scripture could make their *Salvation* appear to be: And consequently, was produced by you as a probable Argument for their *Damnation*. You produce it, by your own Confession, to prove that we cannot be certain of the Salvation of the *Infants* of *wicked Parents*. And how can you suppose it to prove this, unless you suppose that it makes it probable that God will punish them in the other World, for their *Father's Wickedness*? And this *Punishment* in the other World is, in other Words, their *Damnation*. Your Words were these that follow, *Now how could they* (the ejected Ministers) *pretend to be sure by the Word of God, that all such Infants went to Heaven, when God so positively declared in the Second Commandment, that He would punish, &c?* This Text is here produced by you, as an *Argument* by it self, that God will not make eternally happy the *Infants* of wicked Parents. And though you attempt to soften the Matter now, yet this was visibly the Meaning you had fixed upon it: which makes me wonder that you should now endeavour to alter your Argument taken from it, after such a manner as to make Your Application of this Text to this purpose, appear to be without the least Ground. Your *Argument* from the *Second Commandment*, you have now thought fit to defend thus, *For if God in some Cases was so displeas'd with Posterity, for the sins of Progenitors, as not to admit them into the Congregation of his People for some Generations (as in the Case of Bastardy, Deut. 23. 2.) How doth it appear, that the Application of the outward Seal*

of

of the Covenant, would certainly have entitl'd to the *Spiritual Blessings* of it? I answer, 1. It doth not follow that, because God forbid a *Bastard* and his *Posterity*, to enter into the Congregation, therefore we cannot be certain that they shall not suffer in their *Spiritual* and *Eternal* Concerns for the Fault of others. The Certainty of that may appear from other Texts, and other Considerations, notwithstanding this; for as much as their *Eternal Happiness* doth not appear to be, in the least, affected by that Prohibition upon them, and the Cause of it, which was wholly involuntary in themselves. If they had a Title to the *outward Seal*, (which they might have had notwithstanding this Prohibition) then we may be certain, notwithstanding this, that they had a Title to the *Spiritual Blessings* of it also. And, by the way, we may observe that how much soever the *Posterity* of *wicked Jews* were threaten'd with Punishment, yet their *Infants* were never supposed to be out of the Covenant, or to have lost their *Right* to the Seal of it. 2. It may be certain that they were entitl'd to the *Spiritual Blessings* of Circumcision, because they were not prohibited from that Rite; notwithstanding that they were prohibited from coming into the Congregation; which hath nothing to do with *Spiritual* and *Eternal* Blessings. 3. The *Case* you instance in now, can never shew, that the *Second Commandment* proves any thing against the Certainty of the Salvation of the *Baptized Infants* of *wicked Parents*, which was the Point now before you. 4. This *Case* doth not appear to touch our present Purpose: for the Prohibition doth not seem to be merely on the Account of the Fathers *Wickedness*; but rather on some other Account, as in the other *Cases* which it follows. And therefore you may as well argue from that *Chapter* against our being certain that *Persons*, who had any accidental Imperfections in their Bodies, had a Title to the *Spiritual Blessings* of *God's Covenant*, as against such a Title in the *Children* of *wicked Progenitors*. I see not, therefore, how any thing here proves, either that you did not produce the *Second Commandment*,

ment, for what I said, you did; or that there is any thing in *that* to incline us to think, that *Infants* may suffer in their Eternal Concerns for the sake of the Wickedness of their *Parents*. What follows is only true, upon Supposition that the *Infants Baptized* have not a Title to *Baptism*: And I have before given my *Reasons*, why I think the *Rubric* cannot be extended to such.

The *Cases* supposed by *You*, in order to shew the Absurdity of this *Rubric*, did indeed surprize me: And that Surprize still remains, notwithstanding your Endeavour towards the *Abatement* of it. Doth it follow that the *Children of Christian Parents*, when Baptized, are not saved after Death, because then it would be in the Power of any Person to send them to Heaven, by killing them? Doth it follow that the Primitive Martyrs did not go to Heaven, upon their Dissolution, because then it would be, in some sense, in the Power of *Persecutors* to send Men to that blessed Place? But certainly, as their Title to Heaven is founded upon the Terms laid down by Almighty God; and not given them by their Persecutors: so it may be in the Case of Children. Their Title to Heaven is founded upon God's Will: And the Tyrant that kills them is only an Instrument of putting an End to their Abode here, as any Distemper is. And yet surely it would be very improper to say, that a *Fever* hath a Power of procuring Eternal Happiness; or to deny that a Child killed by a *Fever* is certainly saved, because this would be giving to that Disease a Power of Salvation. A good *Christian* (as I before put the Case) by bringing his Child to Baptism, secures its Salvation, provided it die before actual Sin. This, surely, you cannot deny, if you hold that any *Infants* have a Title to *Baptism*, or any *Benefit* from it. A good Christian, therefore, according to your way of arguing, hath the Power of Salvation in his Hands; which it is absurd to think: And consequently, such *Children* dying, are not saved, because this is giving to *Mortals* a Power of Souls. Now, if this Argument will not hold here; if, notwithstanding this,

Children

Children baptized may be saved; then it is also evident, that the Children in your supposed Cases may be also saved, notwithstanding it be so far in the Power of Men to procure them Salvation, as to be Instruments of sending them to that Happiness procured for them by *Jesus Christ*. And in this Sense, all Parents have Salvation in their Power, as they are instrumental in bringing their Children into Being; and in putting them into a Method of obtaining Happiness. Be pleased to observe, that your Argument taken from these Cases, is not founded upon any antecedent Proof, from the Will of God, that the *Infants* you suppose, have no Title to *Baptism*, or *Heaven*; but only upon some Absurdities consequent upon the contrary Doctrine. To this I answer, that it cannot destroy their Title to *Baptism*, and *Heaven*, to say, that upon Supposition of such a Title, it will be in the Power of Men to procure Salvation for *Infants*, by killing them as soon as they are *Baptized*: because you acknowledge, I think, that some *Children* have a certain Title to *Baptism*, and *Heaven*; and yet the same *Absurdities* will follow upon Supposition of *their* Title. And as strong a Proof may be drawn from them, against the Title of any Children, as against the Title of all Children. I do not say, that all Children have such a Title; but I say, that their want of it cannot be proved from such *Absurdities*. I call them *Absurdities*, according to your *Supposition* only; for, in Truth, it is no Absurdity to give such a Power to *Mortals*, as is included in these Cases; that is, to maintain, that Men may be the *Instruments* of sending *Infants* to Heaven, notwithstanding which, their Title to Heaven, may be founded entirely upon God himself, his Will, and his *Terms*. You cannot say it is impossible, in the nature of Things, that God should promise Salvation to innocent Children, for the Sake of his Son, and upon their being *baptized*: And yet these *Suppositions* will as well prove the Impossibility of this, as what they are brought for. The *Rubric* we are concerned about, is far from saying, that all Children have a Right to *Baptism*;

tism; but it says, that all Children baptized, dying before actual Sin, are saved: And this Bishop Gunning himself never understood of any but such as had a Title to Baptism, tho' he might differ from others about the Subjects of Baptism. And, therefore, I see not what it signifies for you to allege Dr. Comber's Opinion, that all Children are alike, &c. When my Wonder was not, that you should deny that (for I may deny it my self, notwithstanding this Rubric;) but that such distant and strange Suppositions should be brought in, which prove nothing against this Right in all Children; and are much less proper to be brought against an Office framed for a Christian Country, and the Children of Christian Parents. Dr. Comber, as far as I see, might be otherwise interpreted than he is by you. But I am not concerned, as I know of, so much as to know his Opinion about the Subjects of Baptism: And think it very hard that any Persons private Opinion, should be made the Standard of mine; or the Rule for my interpreting public Declarations. I cannot therefore but say, again, and that with great Concern; that such unaccountable Suppositions as these, have contributed very much to the hardning some against all Thoughts of Agreement. That there is a true Regeneration in such Infants, as have a Title to Baptism (and of such only I spoke) is what I endeavoured next to clear: And if I differ from you about the Subjects of Baptism, you have there my Reasons for it. But finding nothing here against what I alleged, but only that I am referr'd to an Exposition, which contradicts me not in the least, I have no Occasion given me for adding any more Words upon this Head: Only to vindicate my Reasoning against your Argument against this Doctrine of Regeneration at Baptism, taken from the evil Consequences it may have in contributing to the hardning of Men in Sin. Your Argument was this, *We cannot concur in thanking God for having regenerated the Infant, for fear of contributing to the hardning of careless Men in the Opinion, that they need no Care after Baptism.* I answered that the same Objection would

would lie against many Expressions in *St. Paul*, (nay, the Doctrine of Justification it self) from which many did actually take occasion to continue in Sin; And yet these Expressions were good, and fit to be used, and great Arguments to Care and Diligence in Christians. And I added, that it is rather an Argument for the greatest Care, that we are admitted by *Baptism* to glorious Privileges, and are made the Temples of God, than to the contrary. And certainly there need not many Words to prove, that it is not a sufficient Objection against the use of any Expression, that wicked Men may, abuse it to carry forward their evil Purposes, which they are resolved upon without the help of such Expressions. But, besides all this, do not you your self grant, that many are regenerate by *Baptism*; and will you not say this, for fear they should make an ill use of this, and fall away? If you will, notwithstanding this; then this *Objection* alone is of no force against the *Expression* in our *Office*. Do not you here own, that it is a *persuasive Argument to a good Life*, to let Men know the Privileges their *Baptism* entitles them to, provided they live according to that Religion they profess? And doth not our *Office*, throughout the whole, suppose, and press, the Necessity of this? Doth it not suppose that they may fall, notwithstanding this Regeneration? Are not the Prayers in it, designed to create in all who are concerned, the greatest *Care*, and *Diligence*; and all the Circumstances of it visibly framed to this End? What Ground, therefore, for this *Objection* here, where the Necessity of a constant Holiness in our future Lives, is supposed and inculcated? And how you can say, if you ever read the *Office*, that all *promiscuously, because baptized, are assured of the Blessings of Baptism*: or that there is any thing in it, which affirms, or implies, that a *real Regeneration is needless in a Person baptized*; I must leave to your own Conscience: being unwilling to say, what such a Representation justly deserves; contrary, not only to Candour, and Equity, but to express Passages in the *Office* it self. I shall only add,

add, that we are not here disputing, what Difficulties a Minister may come under, by following his own Judgment in *extraordinary Cases*; but what Obligations he brings himself under by *Declaration of Assent*, and *Consent*, and *Subscription*: and so I dismiss this Head.

Sect. 4. *Of the Objection against Assent and Consent; and Subscription; taken from the Use of Godfathers, &c.*

Godfathers were represented by You, in the Name of the *ejected Ministers*, as *justling out the Parents Right to devote their Children to God*, and the *Use of them as opening a wide Door to the profaning one of the most awful Solemnities of Religion*: and the like. To this I answered, to this effect: That the Parents themselves are to provide these Sponsors; that by providing these Sponsors, in order to dedicate their Children to God, they make the Dedication of their Children, their own Act; that the Care in chusing Godfathers, will be proportionable to the Concern of Parents for their Children, &c. Your Reply, to what I urged, I shall now examine.

First, you deny, that *the Parents do properly*, p. 161.
in this way, devote their Children to God by

Baptism. But I wonder very much at your denying so plain a Matter as this seems to be. For when a Parent provides all Things that are required, in order to the Dedication of his Child to God, and knows that it is in order to this Dedication that he doth this; is there any need of an Argument to prove, that he himself properly dedicates his Child to God? And is not the Administration of *Baptism*, to his Child, to be ultimately resolved into the Parents Resolution, that the Child shall be devoted to Almighty God? But again, You deny that this *Dedication* is as much their p. 162.
own Act and Deed, as if the Children had

no Sponsors; *i. e.* you deny, that their providing Sponsors, in order to devote their Children, is a sufficient Proof of their Desire, and Resolution so to devote them. And your

Reason for this is, that *if they had no Sponsors, a solemn explicit covenanting would be required of their Parents, &c.* To the like purpose, in the next Page. By which Reply, any one would imagine that I had said, that their providing Sponsors, was as much a *solemn explicit covenanting* for their Children, in their own Persons; as if they did *explicitly covenant*, themselves: when all that I said, was this, that their devoting their Children to God, was their own Act, tho' done by providing *Sponsors* to devote them, as truly, and properly, as if they did it without *Sponsors*. And the Truth of this is plain from hence, that a Person may very truly devote his Child to God, without an *explicit covenanting* for it, in his own Person; only by providing all Things required in order to its *Baptism*. And, as for what you add, that many provide Sponsors, who know nothing of the *covenanting* part, and as a mere piece of Ceremony; you may have full as much Liberty of making Christians sensible of their Duty in this Point in the *Established Church*, as in a *Separation* from it. Tho' I confess, I see not, how *You*, upon your new Sett of *Principles*, can impose upon *Christians*, at this Solemnity, a *solemn explicit covenanting in the Name of their Children*; or refuse *Baptism* to the Child of a *professed Christian*, for the want of it. And if you may lawfully *Baptize Children* without this, then it will be no sufficient Objection against complying with our *Office*, that this *explicit covenanting* is not there required. Nay, if it were; the *Ordinance* might easily come to be as much profaned, as it is now: if this be a Profanation of it, that many *Parents* have not a due Sense of their part in it. For I see not, but that they may, in our present Circumstances, be made as sensible of *that*; and that they might have as little Sense of it, as *Godfathers* are said to have now, were the whole to be transacted by themselves. But who would charge the Ignorance or Carelessness of *Parents*, upon the *Office* it self, which is as solemn as possible; and tends not, in the least, to such *Ignorance* or *Carelessness*? Besides that such *Stupidity* in *Parents* may as well

well be cured, in *our* way, as in *yours*. Nay, I fear, you may come, after this manner, to charge the Carelessness of Men, upon many *Texts* in the *Scripture* it self: And particularly, to charge the Institution and *Precedents* of *Baptism*, found in the *New Testament*, as not including in them explicit Vows and Cautions, sufficient to prevent Mistakes, and Carelessness, in so solemn a Matter. Again, *What you cannot understand in this Matter, is this, that any Person can have a Right, one while to personate me the Father, as dedicating my Child to God; and another while to represent my Child, believing, and engaging a sincere Obedience.* I answer, that as there is no *natural Right*, or *positive Law* pretended for this; so none ought to be required: because the Willingness of any Person to do this, is sufficient with the *Parents* Consent, which is always supposed. If any Person be willing, and receive Power from the *Father* (who can give it) to personate *him*, and to personate his *Child*, (which is your own Account of the Office of Godfathers) then surely, that Person hath a sufficient *Right* to do it. Once more, *It is not clear to you, that the Faith of the Parent is, in all ordinary Cases, the Ground of the Administration of Baptism to the Child, according to the Church: Tho' you have no reason to allege, but that you cannot reconcile this, with the Canon that says, no Parent shall be admitted to answer as Godfather for his own Child. As if you should argue, the Church requires Parents to provide Sponsors for their Children, distinct from themselves; (which very thing supposes the Parents to be Christians;) therefore it is not clear, that the Faith of the Parents is the Ground of the Baptism of their Children. But I see not any Shadow of a Consequence in this Argument. Lastly, you say, that where an Institution purely Humane, is ordinarily so managed as to interfere with what is really Divine, you ought not to comply with it. This I suppose, you must mean by the Obligation you speak of, to declare your self against it; because if you mean any thing less than this, it can be no Reason against your ministerial Conformity. But now, if*

there be no Necessity to your self, of *managing it so, as to interfere with any thing really Divine*; I think, you may safely comply with it: For you may declare, as much as you please, against the Mismanagement of others, without refusing Compliance for the sake of what you have no Concern in. If *others* should accept of *Atheists*, or *Deists*, or *Jews*, or *Mahometans*; I see not what this is to *you*, who may conform as a *Minister*, without bringing your self under any Obligation to admit of any *Godfathers*, but serious Professors of *Christianity*. I am sure the *Declaration*, and *Subscription*, which we are now considering, rather bring us under a sacred Obligation to admit none but such, than the contrary. And a *Minister* that acts by this Rule, may answer it in the Court of his own Conscience, and of his great Master; and I believe, I may say, in the *Courts* of this World also. But, if it should not be so; I cannot understand, that the possible Inconveniences that may attend a *Minister's* doing his Duty, carry with them any Argument, why he should not undertake that Office. The *Canon* I refer'd you to, shews that the *Church* took some Care about the Admission of *Godfathers*, and required all *Ministers* to do so. And supposing the Neglect of this to be universal, and connived at by all in Authority (which I very much doubt) yet the Rule which I laid down about our Obligation to observe the *Canons*, will not at all serve your Purpose here. For tho' it will follow from hence, that a *Minister* is not absolutely obliged to observe this *Canon*; yet certainly a *Minister* may observe it, if he see fit: And that with more Commendation in so useful a Point, than he can expect for the Neglect of it. That the requiring of *Sponsors* tends to the profaning of this Ordinance, I cannot yet see: because the Carelessness of the Generality of *Sponsors*, (which is the only Argument you allege) is not the least Proof of it, since this doth not follow at all, from the *Church's* requiring *Sponsors*, but from the *Parents* little Care, which is no ways encouraged by the *Church*, and need not be countenanced by any *Minister*

in it: And therefore, tho' *Guilt may be contracted by more Persons*, in this Method, than if *Sponsors* were never required; yet this cannot be charged, as any ways caused by the requiring *Sponsors*: Nor can this (of it self) be a greater Argument against requiring *Sponsors*, than the Carelessness of *Parents* themselves would be, against requiring *solemn Promises* from them, on this Occasion: for *more Guilt might be contracted* this way, than would be, were this not required. And, indeed, in this whole Matter, I find very little, but what must suppose it true, that a *Minister* in the *Established Church*, brings himself under an Obligation to admit any *Persons* for *Godfathers*, tho' never so unqualified; and tho' *known to be unlikely to set themselves to answer such Obligations*; before it can be esteemed any Argument against this *Declaration*, and *Subscription*, we are considering. And, as far as I know any thing of the *Terms* of Conformity, this *Supposition* is wholly groundless.

But you are not content to vindicate what you had advanced before, against the *Use* of *Godfathers* and *Godmothers*; But are pleased to add something new upon the *Questions*, put to them in the *Form* of *Baptism*. But I see nothing here sufficient to prove any Absurdity in these *Questions*: since it is evident from the *Church Catechism*, that the *Answers* to these *Questions*, are intended only as *Promises* of *Faith*, and *Repentance*, made in the Name of the *Infants*, by their *Surcties*; *Promises* of what they are bound to do, when they come to the use of their Reason. That of *desiring to be baptized*, seems the most improper: And yet, even that may, by a candid and equitable Person, be interpreted so, as to signify no more, than what the *Infant* ought to do, were it capable; and judged to be founded upon a good Bottom, viz. that every one ought, when he comes of Age, to be so affected, as to profess, that himself would have *desired Baptism*, had he been capable of doing it.

In short, I am no more averse, than you, to Bishop *Stillingfleet's* Distinction, of admitting some *Infants* to *Bap-*

tism, in the Right of their Parents, and others in the Right of the Church: or to a Distinction of Offices for these Two different Cases. But I think, we have Reasons good enough, to promise, and subscribe to, the Use of our Office, as it is now: And, I hope, I have said what is sufficient to satisfy, even those who are no more willing to be satisfied, in this Point, than all of us ought, in reason, to be.

Sect. 5. Of the Use of the Sign of the Cross in the Office of Baptism.

THE next thing in which I am concerned, is the Use of the Sign of the Cross. Amongst the Arguments produced by You against the Use of it, this was one, that you durst not use it, as prescribed in our Liturgy, for fear of giving the Injudicious an Occasion of Misunderstanding. about the Power, and Virtue, of the Sign of the Cross; tho' the Word Power be not in the Office, but the Infant be said to be signed, in Token only, &c. Upon which I thought I had a just Occasion of asking, what End of our Differences we could hope for, if such Methods were taken: if, when there is no Reason against a thing, what is acknowledged to be unreasonable, shall be made an Objection against it. In which I thought not to imply, that the dissenting Ministers, did not suppose that they had any Reasons against the Use of it, as you are willing to understand me; but that it is very unhappy, that such Arguments should be used against the Lawfulness of the Use of any thing, as are of force, as much in Cases where there is no absolute Reason against the thing, as in Cases where there is. That the Use of the Cross should be refused, for fear injudicious Persons should understand Words in a Sense of which they are not capable, is, I confess, to me a wonderful thing: And such an Argument, as if pursued by you, must prove the Unlawfulness of many of your own Practices. I did say, that it was impossible the Words in Token, (which must refer to what follows)

follows) should be meant, in *Virtue and Power*, (which must refer to something going before:) and I gave you afterwards my Interpretation of the Words, which you have not thought worth your while to consider. But, in answer to this Affirmation of mine, you ask, *And doth Mr. H. really think it impossible for Persons to apprehend this to be the meaning of the Words?* which is such a sort of a Reply, as I have been too much used to, to be much surprized at. Who cannot see, that there is a great deal of difference between saying, that *it is impossible, Words should be meant in this Sense*, and saying that *it is impossible for Persons to apprehend they were so meant?* For my own part, I never knew any one yet, whether learned, or unlearned, who did apprehend these Words to be so intended, as you say, some may interpret them. Your Quotations out of Mr. *Hooker*, and Dr. *Comber*, whatever they shew about their Opinion of the *Sign of the Cross* (and that is no more but what may be said about the Word *Cross*, pronounced by the Mouth, supposing the baptized Person were only pronounced to be a Disciple of the *Cross*) they shew not that they ever dreamt that these *Words* attributed any *Virtue* to the *Sign of the Cross*; any such *Virtue* as we dispute about. Besides, every Minister that uses this Office, is left at full Liberty to explain any part of it: And need not baptize any one Child, before he have endeavoured to remove such sort of groundless Scruples out of the Minds of his Audience, if he suspect any such *Conceits* to be among them. Tho', as far as I know any thing of the World, he that should go about to mention such *Conceits*, might probably be the first Occasion of raising them in the Minds of most Men: So far do I look upon it, from being probable, that the *Generality* are apt to understand *Virtue* to be here attributed to the *Sign of the Cross*. But supposing Mr. *Hooker* did attribute *Virtue* (in your Sense) to this *Sign*, what the *unhappy Consequences* of such a *Mistake* in him, were, I know not, till you discover them. The *Connexion* between this *Argument*, and that which I took

from your *occasional Communion*, you say, *is but odd*: But I look upon it to be so plain, that you cared not to say any thing farther about it. For if you practice *one* thing, notwithstanding that the *Injudicious* are apt to have Misunderstandings about it, it cannot be an Argument against the Practice of *another* thing, that the *Injudicious* are apt to have Misunderstandings about it.

The next *Objection* was, that the *Use* of the *Cross*, looks as if *Christ's Institution* were esteemed a *Bond* not sufficiently firm, and strong, &c. I answered, *The Church hath declared the contrary. The more unaccountable*, you reply, *that Ministers should be suspended for omitting the Cross*. But certainly, if you delighted not in the Remembrance of such Thing, and thought them not likely to move the People, where you have nothing else to say, you would not introduce this Subject so frequently, after so *unaccountable* a manner. For may not a *Minister* be suspended for not answering these Obligations, which he hath solemnly brought himself under; because what he omitted, is not an essential Matter? May he not be *suspended*, for wilfully neglecting to use the *Prayers* prescribed, because they are not *essential*? One would think, that you could not think this either good Reasoning, or a proper Method of putting an End to our Differences. I observed to you, upon this Head, that the Addition of *Prayers*, looked as if *Christ's Institution* were not sufficient; and yet I added, *you know, that Baptism is sufficient without one Prayer*: by which, all must know that I meant, a *regular, vocal Prayer* used by the *Minister*. And all must perceive, that my Argument was this, that if the Sufficiency of *Christ's Institution*, considered by it self be an Argument against the *Cross*; then it may be also against the *Use* of any *Prayers* at the Solemnity of *Baptism*. Here you acknowledge, your self, that *Baptism* may be sufficient without the verbal uttering of a *regular Prayer*, by the *Minister*; which is all I contended for: And yet you amuse your *Reader*, with a Discourse about the *Parents Prayer* at the Dedication of his Child; and the Expediency of *Prayer*

at this Solemnity. As if I had equalled the *Use* of the *Cross*, to the use of *Prayers*, at *Baptism*; or as if the *Argument*, which was wholly taken from the *Sufficiency* of *Christ's Institution*, required me to prove, that the *Cross* was as expedient as *Prayer*. But I must desire to be excused from asserting what I am as far from holding as your self: And think it fully sufficient, to have shewn, that your Reasoning taken from *Christ's Institution* holds against the *Use* of *Prayers* (which are highly expedient) as well as against the use of the *Cross* at this Solemnity: and therefore cannot be just. But I am concerned to find, under almost every Head, my Arguments so represented, and altered by you, as often to tempt your *Readers* to think very ill of me, and to give me frequent Occasions of renewing my Complaints of you.

Another *Argument* produced by you, against your *Compliance* with the use of the *Cross*, is to witness your *Dislike* of the *Vanity* and *Idolatry* of the *Papists*. I answered, that this, in it self, was no *Argument* against the *Use* of this, tho' an *Humane Institution*; because we use it not after their *Manner*, or for their *Purposes*. And certainly the true Reason of discarding any such thing, is, that it is abused among our selves; not that it is abused in another Country. And that it is used after an idolatrous manner by us, I do not see that you endeavour to prove. If you know any, who do abuse this *Sign*, it cannot be from any *Encouragement* the Church gives them: And the *Alteration* of this at *Baptism*, tho' it might serve other good *Purposes*, could not secure those from abusing it, who abuse it now; unless you shew, that their *Abuse* of it is founded upon our *Use* of it at that Solemnity. The *Imposition* of this belongs to another Head.

As for *kneeling* at the *Communion*; when I said, that I found rather a great deal in you for it, than any thing against it; had you any *Inclination* to understand me, you might easily have seen, that I meant this only about the *Lawfulness* of the thing it self; tho' Mr. *Baxter* (whose *Abridger* you are) hath mentioned the *Decency* of it

it also, And I suppose, what you have added here in this last Performance upon it, may serve to excuse my saying so.

Sect. 6. *Of the Objection against the Declaration and Subscription, taken from the Office of Ordination.*

THE Passage scrupled by you, and your Brethren, is this, in the *Preface to the Ordination Office*. It is evident to all Men diligently reading the *Holy Scriptures*, and ancient Authors, that from the *Apostles Times*, there have been these Orders in *Christ's Church*, *Bishops, Priests, and Deacons*: To which I observed that you, in your Representation of it, added these Words, *by Divine Appointment*; which, I still think you ought not to have done. For, in treating of the *Terms of Conformity*, the naked Proposition to which our *Assent* is required, ought to be set down, and every one left to judge for himself what is implied in it, or consequent upon it.

In answer to your *Objection* taken from this Sentence, and the *Prayers* in the *Ordination Office*, I observed, that the *Declaration of Assent and Consent*, and the *Subscription*, touched only the *Use of the Book*, and not this Sentence, in the *Preface*. And for farther Satisfaction in this, I must refer the *Reader* to what I have again said, in *Vindication of this*, against your *Objections*. I observed also, that, supposing the *Subscription* to refer to such *Sentences*; yet this could not be affected by it, because here is nothing in it *contrary to the Word of God*: And, that the *Prayers* to be used in the *Ordination Office* imply not any thing plainly, but that *God hath appointed divers Orders of Ministers in his Church*. And to these Two Observations I find no Reply, that so much as shews, that you your self think otherwise.

In the next place I observed, upon Supposition, that *Assent and Consent*, do refer to this *Sentence*, that the Intent of it is only to express, that we our selves think it an evident Truth. And this I observed, because I found

a great Stress laid upon the Dissent of some great Men, and *diligent Readers*; and the Sentence interpreted, as if the Design of it had been to say, that no *diligent Readers* could possibly doubt of the *Truth* of the *Assertion*. And here you are pleased more than once to argue with me, as if I had been persuading you to *assent* to the *Truth* of it, whilst you are *dubious* about it, or to say it is very *evident*, whilst you think all *alleged* for it to be only *Probability*, *strengthened by unproved Suppositions*; which, (you know) I am very far from doing. In order to shew how such Expressions ought to be interpreted, I instanced in the *Existence of our blessed Lord, before he was born of the Virgin Mary*; and observed, that we might declare, that *this is evident to all Men diligently reading Holy Scriptures*, notwithstanding that some learned and considering Persons have denied it. To which you reply, that *the Case is not parallel, because you hope you can prove this by better Evidence than hath ever yet been alleged for the other*. Now, I doubt very much, whether you can prove any thing, of that nature, with greater Evidence than hath been alleged for the *distinct Offices of Bishops, Priests, and Deacons, from the Apostles Days*. But let this be as it will; the *Cases* are exactly parallel: For if you can say, that *it is evident, &c.* that our Saviour existed before his Humane Birth, notwithstanding some sober, learned, and considering Persons have doubted of it; then, were you your self convinced of the *Truth* of the other *Assertion*, you might affirm it *to be evident, &c.* notwithstanding those great dissenting Names mentioned by you. And this was all I intended by this Instance; to shew how unreasonable it was, to lay so great a Stress upon the *manner of Expression* here used. And tho' you deny such a *Stress* to be laid upon the *Expression*; yet any one that will but turn to your Book, will find the greatest part of what is urged by you upon this Head, to be founded wholly upon it.

The Proposition included in this Sentence is this, that *Bishops, Priests, and Deacons, with distinct Offices, subordinate*

bordinate to one another, have been in the Church from the *Apostles* Times. Now, whodoth not know, that the main Dispute, and, I may say, the only Difficulty, here, was concerning the Superiority of *Bishops* over *Presbyters*, from the *Apostles* Days? And who doth not see, that there is no such thing implied in this Sentence, as that our *Bishops*, *Priests*, and *Deacons*, are exactly, in every respect, the same with the Primitive *Bishops*, *Priests*, and *Deacons*? What signifies it, therefore, to allege, that *Preaching Deacons* were unknown in the *Apostles* Times? Doth *Preaching* destroy the *Essentials* of a Person's *Deaconship*? If it do not, It is not at all inconsistent, that a *Deacon* should be allowed to Preach. Nor should You object this, who allow such Liberty of Preaching, to any Persons as Probationers; especially, when you consider, that He is not impowered absolutely by his *Ordination* to the *Office* of a *Deacon*, to preach, but only conditionally, if He be called thereto. But, if St. *Stephen* were a *Deacon*, in the *Apostles* Time, we read immediately after his *Ordination* by the *Apostles*, *Act. 6.* that his Enemies were not able to resist the *Wisdom* and the *Spirit* by which He spake: So that his attending upon meaner *Offices*, did not at all hinder, but that He might lawfully Preach, as occasion offered. It is not needful, for the Proof of this *Affertion* now before us, to shew, that there have been *Deacons* from the *Apostles* Days in the Church, with all the distinct Powers now assigned them among us, as you seem to demand; but it is sufficient, that there was such an *Inferior Office* in the Church from the beginning, with those distinct Powers, which have ever been esteemed amongst us to be essential to a *Deaconship*: And this I believe, can hardly be denied. But, I confess, I thought not here of any Dispute about *Deacons*; but only about the Superiority of *Bishops* over *Presbyters*, from the beginning, invested with such distinct Powers, as the Church makes essential to *Episcopacy*. And this you might have seen, had you been but willing, from every thing I alleged under this

Head.

Head. And if there have been *Bishops* over *Presbyters*, with such *distinct Offices*, as we make essential to each of them, you must acknowledge the Dispute about the Word *Order* and *Degree*, to be needless. This was what I aimed at. And I say again, that *Arch-Bishop Usher* hath added great Evidence to this Proposition, in his Writings upon this Subject. *Bishop Pearson* I also alleged, as one who had assisted mightily in the same Cause. But you say, He came not out till after the *Ministers* were silenced. Why may not I say, then, that if his Writings had been publish'd before that, they would never have been ejected for not assenting to this Proposition; as you are pleased to insinuate, that if *Mr. Chillingworth* (who declared *Dr. Hammond* unanswerable in this Point) had lived to see *Mr. Baxter's Disputations*, he would not have thought *Dr. Hammond* unanswerable? You might as well have added also, that he would have disclaimed his own Demonstration of the *Apostolical Institution* of *Episcopacy*; for at this rate, we may say any thing of the greatest Men that have gone before us. But I find not one Argument here advanced against his *Demonstration*: Perhaps you may think you have sufficiently guarded against that, in the first Part of your *Defense*. No, Sir, you thought it more worth your while here, to take up your *Reader's* Thought with another Business, and to charge me with a Crime, which I ever abhor'd. You tell your *Reader*, that I am not over fair here, in citing *Mr. Baxter*: But I think my self obliged to vindicate my Representation of *Mr. Baxter's* Opinion in this Point. I said, therefore, in the first Place, that *Mr. Baxter* himself thought it evident, that in the *Primitive Church* there was a Superiority over *Pastors*, maintain'd not only by the *Apostles* and *Evangelists*, but by other general unfixed *Church-Officers*. And can you say, that this is not truly, and fairly, his Sense? But it seems, his Words are over *Bishops* and *Pastors*, which, you say, with him were all one: And you add, that to serve my own Purpose, I leave out the Word *Bishops*,
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and mention only Pastors. Now, if you cannot give the least Shadow of a Proof, that *my Purpose is at all served* by this Omission, or that his Sense could be more intelligibly expressed, so as to be more truly understood by my *Reader*, than as I have expressed it; you must acknowledge, that you have done me an Injury in this Charge against me. I can solemnly profess, that I had no Design to serve by leaving out that Word: And it is plain I could have none, because the putting it in doth not in the least alter the Sense of the Proposition. For what was I enquiring after? Was it not a *Superiority over Pastors of particular Congregations*, and Mr. *Baxter's* Opinion concerning this? If he call these *Pastors Bishops* also, doth that alter their Nature? Or is there any need of adding that, which is only another Word for the same thing? But truly I thought that the Reader might better understand his Meaning by the Word *Pastors* only, because he uses that Word in the ordinary Sense of it; and that the Addition of the other Word might rather confound, than explain his Meaning, because he useth it in a Sense, different from that in which it is ordinarily meant. Let us suppose, therefore, that I had said a *Superiority over Bishops or Pastors*, where would have been the Alteration in the Sense? It is nothing more than a *Superiority over those we call Pastors*; tho' over *Bishops* in his Language perhaps: But they are nothing but *Pastors* in our Sense, not *Bishops*, as the Word is now constantly applied. What *Purpose*, therefore, could it *serve* to omit this Word, unless to render the Sense less liable to Mistake? And how can you answer this Charge against me, when you cannot but be sensible, that the leaving out of the Word alters not his Meaning, and that the inserting it would not add a Tittle to it? If Mr. *Baxter* call those *Bishops*, whom others call *Pastors*, and those *Arch-Bishops*, whom others call *Bishops*; then, if he acknowledge *Arch-Bishops* over his *Bishops*, he acknowledges a Superiority over Pastors. This was all that I laid to him in this Sentence, that he acknowledgeth, in the Primitive

mitive Times a Superiority over Pastors, maintain'd by general unfixed Church-Officers. Doth he acknowledge this, or not? If he do not, I confess my self mistaken: If he do, by what Law of the Gospel do you give your self this strange Liberty of accusing me? This was the *first* thing I ascribed to him. The next thing was, that as to fixed Bishops of particular Churches, Superior in degree to Presbyters, he thought the Reception of them in all Churches, was early, and general. The Words in your *Abridgment*, from whence I took this, are, *so early, and so general, that he was free to admit them, and resolved never to oppose.* But the Matter hath quite another Turn in his *Life* written by himself. And since you have been so hard upon me for leaving out a Word in representing his Sense, tho' I gave you the whole of his Opinion in the Point I was then upon; it is but fit you should be called upon, to justify your self in this Matter, for omitting a very considerable Part of his Sentence; and, by this means, defrauding the Reader of a considerable Part of his Sense. His own Words, in his *Life*, are these—— *I saw that the Reception of them in all the Churches was so timely (even in the Days of one of the Apostles* Pag. 140. *in some Churches) and so general, that I thought it a most improbable thing, that if it had been contrary to the Apostles Mind, we should never read that they themselves, or any one of their Disciples that conversed with them, nor any Christian, or Heretick in the World, should once speak, or write a Word against it, till long after it was generally settled in the Churches. This, therefore, I resolved never to oppose.* Certainly if you, by Virtue of being his *Abridger*, can leave out such material Passages as these, in favour of *Episcopacy*, without which we cannot know the whole of his Opinion; it may be very allowable in me, when I am representing his Sense, to do it in as few Words as I please, provided I defraud not the Reader of the least Tittle of it. I am sure you have put into your *Abridgment* Passages of much less Imporance than this: And upon what Grounds you thought fit to leave out
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all this, I cannot tell; and will not so much as say; that it was to serve any Purpose of your own.

But, not content with this, you desire the Reader to observe, that tho' Mr. Baxter expressly says, that there is nothing in Scripture favouring the Superiority of Bishops over Presbyters, yet he is drawn in by me in this very Passage, as asserting, that it was evident to all reading the Scriptures, that there were such Bishops and Priests, from the very Days of the Apostles. Now, if there be any thing like this in my whole Book, that Mr. Baxter asserts, that this is evident to all reading the Scriptures, (which is the thing you here lay to my Charge) I desire to forfeit my Credit for ever: But if there be not, I pray God forgive you this licentious way of handling your Adversary. I am sure, this is so far from being true, that I here expressly say, that

Reasonableness of Conformity, P. 1. p. 60. Mr. Baxter asserts, that there is nothing in Scripture favouring such Bishops: And it is very incredible, that I should so soon forget my self, and bring him in asserting, that it is evident to all reading Scripture, that there were such. And I cannot imagine from what Passage you could possibly raise this Accusation, unless it be from this (p. 60.) in which only I introduce Mr. Baxter as asserting any thing concerning Bishops. The Point is, whether in Fact there were in those early Days, (viz.) from the Apostles Times) Bishops, Priests, and Deacons. Then follows, Mr. Baxter says, there were. These are my Words. Now, concerning Deacons, I imagined no Controversy, as appears by my alleging nothing at all relating to them. So that taking it for granted, that all allowed such an Order, what I intended to build upon the Sentence of Mr. Baxter's going before, was this, that in those early Days, (viz. from the Apostles Times) there were fixed Bishops, superior to Presbyters: But not a Word do I mention of his asserting, that this was evident to all reading the Scriptures. As for what I ascribed to him in this Sentence, surely what I have now quoted at large from him, will easily justify me. For if there were Bishops superior to

Presbyters

Presbyters (and such must have had distinct Offices from ordinary *Presbyters*) in one of the *Apostles Days*; then Mr. *Baxter* says, that there were, in those early Days, *Bishops* and *Priests*: Which is the whole of what I say Mr. *Baxter* asserts. How he came to judge so, and upon what Grounds he took up this Opinion, I pretended not to examine. And now I leave you to consider of this fresh Instance of your Candor towards me: And only assure you, that it is a great Concern to me, on your Account, more than my own, that you can indulge your self in such a Liberty of fixing your own Inventions upon me, and exposing me, this way, to the Aversion and Indignation of your *Reader*.

Sect. 7. *Of the Objection against the Declaration and Subscription, taken from the Burial Office.*

THE next Reason why you cannot comply with the *Declaration and Subscription*, is, because you cannot consent to pronounce all saved that are buried, except the *Unbaptized, Excommunicate, and Self-murderers*; i. e. you cannot consent to read the *Burial Office* over those who have been notorious, profligate, unrepenting Sinners. As to the first Ground of this *Objection*, I still say, that it may be very properly said, that God takes to himself the Souls even of impenitent Sinners; which Phrase I considered by it self, because I found you did so, in your Representation of the Arguments of the *ejected Ministers*. But I acknowledge that it cannot properly be said, that he doth this of his great Mercy. And, as to the third, I acknowledged before, that we could not, in the lowest Sense of the Word, declare any Hope concerning such Sinners as you mention. But I still adhere to my Reasons, why a Minister in the *Church of England* brings not himself under an Obligation to use this *Office* in all Cases without Variation. And because you have given the World a Story about *Archbishop Sancroft*, the Truth of which I find much questioned, I will also oppose to that the

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Judgment of the same great Man; for I am credibly informed, that he gave it as his Opinion to a Minister of a Parish, who consulted him upon this Occasion, that he was left to his Discretion in such Cases, and acted not against his Obligations, when he denied any part of that Office to such as all the World agree it was never designed for. And tho' it may appear from the Story which you relate, supposing the Truth of it, that he might not have been found of a *Parish Cure*; yet it doth not at all appear from it, that it was his *settled Opinion*, that *Ministers* bring themselves under an Obligation to use that *entire Form* in all possible Cases: for he had himself subscribed and declared his *Assent* and *Consent*, which he could not have done, had he thought that it was necessarily implied in them, that this *entire Form* was fit to be used over the most notorious and *impenitent Sinners*. And this is sufficient entirely to overthrow the *Use* you make of this private Story.

But before I come to defend the *Reasons* I advanced for this, I must observe, that the *second* Ground of your Objection, taken from these Words, *in sure and certain Hope of the Resurrection, &c.* can never stand good. When you represented this, you ought certainly to have transcribed the *Words* from the Office it self, and not from any other Book; and when you resolved to defend the *Scruple* founded upon this Sentence, you ought to have considered the Interpretation I gave of the whole, and to have shewn that it was not just and fair; which you wholly neglect. Nor do you consider the *Reasons* I give, why the last *Collect* cannot interpret these Words; but only say, the Office is all of a piece, the same as to the wickedest Man living, as to the most pious, tho' certainly it was never designed for the wickedest Men. But you take notice that I omit your *first* Proof, that *these Words must refer to the foregoing Declaration*. Now I omitted this only, because it was an Argument without the least Appearance of Strength; and because I said what was sufficient

to overthrow it, tho' I mentioned it not: For any Person may see, that these *scrupled Words* are not a Continuation of that Declaration, but a Sentence plainly distinct from it; and any Person may see, that it doth not follow, that because the *interr'd Person* is spoken of at the beginning of this *Paragraph*, therefore the latter part of it may not refer to all other *interr'd Persons*. And besides, I observed, that this same *Sentence*, as it is alter'd for *Burials* at Sea, must be interpreted of the *general Resurrection*, which will prove, that it may also very fairly be so interpreted in our ordinary *Office*, notwithstanding that the *Person interr'd* is spoken of particularly just before.

But I come now to vindicate my *Reasons* for asserting that a *Minister* is under no *Obligation* to use every Word of this *Office* over such *impenitent Sinners* as you mention. The *first* is this, that the Omission of these Sentences in such Cases, is more agreeable to the Design of the *Church*, in prescribing this Form, than the using them, and therefore more agreeable to the Obligations of one who ministers in this Church. This is apparent from the Supposition of *Discipline* in the Church, and from the Opinion of all who have written on this Subject: And sometimes you build mightily upon Quotations out of private Authors, tho' here, I am afraid, you will be backward to admit them. It lies upon you, therefore, to shew, against such Testimony, that it was the Design of the Church, that this entire *Office* should be used promiscuously over all; or that a *conforming Minister* brings himself under a Promise, or Obligation, to use it so. This is a very material Point, and what I account all *conforming Ministers* very much concerned in; and therefore I shall carefully consider your Arguments to prove these Two Things.

1. You urge the *Canon*, which requires all *Ministers* to bury any Corps brought to the Church-yard, according to the Form prescribed in the *Common-Prayer-Book*, &c. In answer to this, I acknowledge, that a *Minister* is obliged to obey all such *Canons* as the present *Governors* of the

Church declare, or suppose to be in force. But in the first place, I do not think, that that strict Obedience to this *Canon*, about which we are disputing, in the Case of *impenitent Sinners*, ever was, or is now, or ever will be, insisted on, by the *Governors* of the *Church*. And I think, that where a *Canon* hath been publicly neglected, with Connivance, or Approbation, or without a plain Injunction to restore the Use of it, there it cannot be supposed to be obliging, any farther than the private Opinion of some Persons may judge it so. And that this hath been so, I can give you many, and very remarkable Instances, and those not clandestine, but approved of by our Superiors. And therefore I cannot see what it can import, to say, it is possible that our *Governors* may come to insist upon our using every Word of this *Office* over the most *profligate Sinners*. They never did yet, as I know of; and I think it time enough to consider what to do, when the *Terms of Conformity* are publicly altered. But, in the next place, I answer, that this *Canon* may oblige in the Sense intended in it, and yet not oblige in the rigorous Sense you have put upon it. It cannot be supposed, that it can oblige to the Use of this entire *Office* in Cases, in which it is manifest, the *Church* originally designed it not to be used; and the *Allowance* in it, for such exempt Cases as are mentioned in the *Rubric*, leaves the *Minister* as much Liberty as the *Office* it self supposes: And indeed, it seems to me to be designed for nothing, but to prevent the indecent Delays and Neglects which might otherwise be made in the Case of burying the Dead; at least, it may be so designed, for any thing you have shewn, or can shew, to the contrary.

2. You say, that a *Minister* who omits any of these *Sentences*, in the Cases before mentioned, acts not agreeably to his *Subscription*, and *Declaration of Assent*, and *Consent*. In Proof of this you allege, that his *Subscription*, that he will use the *Book of Common-Prayer*, is as much as this, that *he will use it without any Variation*. In which
I agree

I agree with you thus far, that it is a *Subscription* to the *Use* of it *without Variation*, in all such Cases in which the Design of the Church is answered without any Variation. But in extraordinary Cases, in which all in the Church agree, that every Tittle of it cannot be used, without acting against the original Design of the *Church*; in these Cases it cannot oblige to the *use* of every Tittle of it: and in Cases, where they who require this Subscription allow, and permit such a Latitude. Nor doth this *Omission* imply in the least, that there is any thing in the *Common-Prayer-Book* contrary to the *Word of God*, when it is used, as it was designed it should be: And sure, in interpreting any Book, we ought to consider the *Design* of those who compiled it. Now there is no Argument to prove, that they thought of using this *entire Form* over *profligate, impenitent Sinners*. And then, as for the *Declaration of Assent, and Consent*, to the *Use* of the *Common-Prayer-Book*; this certainly cannot be meant of using every Tittle in it, in Cases, for which it was not designed, but of using it honestly and sincerely in all Cases, agreeably to the original Design of the several *Offices* in it. This *Interpretation* is far from *making light of Declarations*: Nay, the rigorous Interpretation contrary to it, and the supposing that it extends to the *use* of it in Cases, for which it was not designed, is really very injurious to the Nature and Use of such *public Declarations*. Before any of these Arguments can take place, you ought to have shewn, from other Reasons, that it was the Design of the *Church*, and of the *Governours* of it, that this *Office* should be used promiscuously over all; and that the contrary to this hath never been allowed. But I find nothing like this in any thing alleged by you.

3. You argue from the Inconveniencies a *Minister* may bring upon himself, by omitting, in the Cases before mentioned, the least part of the *Form* prescribed. All I can say as to the *Fact*, is, that I know my self many Instances of such *Omission*, but not one of any Inconvenience consequent upon it. But supposing these Inconve-

nances possible, (for they are not so much as probable) this is nothing to our Purpose; for this will not prove, either that it was the Design of the *Church*, that this entire *Form* should be promiscuously used; or that a *conforming Minister* brings himself under any Obligation so to use it; and therefore it touches not the Conscience at all. If a Man conform sincerely, and suffer some Temporal Inconvenience for doing his Duty in *Conformity*, he may have as great inward Satisfaction in this, as another may have in *ministering* in a *Separation*, for fear of these *Temporal Inconveniences*.

My *other* Argument for omitting these Passages, was wholly designed to shew the Reasonableness of such Omission to some *Church-men*, upon their own Principles; and not to convince *You* any farther than as it shews, that in some *Cases* this *Office* may be denied (notwithstanding the *Canon*) upon the Principles of the greatest *Church-men* amongst us: And sometimes you seem very fond of appealing to their Opinion in this *Controversy*. This once, therefore, I hope, we agree; and so I leave the *Reader* to judge upon the whole, what just Reason you had, under this Head, to express your *Pity for those who* (in your obliging Language you say) *are in an Ecclesiastical Pound*; whom if you did truly pity, you would not have laboured so much, to have made it straiter than their *Superiors* have done.

Sect. 8. *Of the Objection taken from the Rule to find Easter-day.*

THIS Rule, rightly understood, I told you, *neither contradicts the Table in the Common-Prayer-Book, nor the common Almanacks, which agree with the Table*: And I still say the same. The Rule (as hath been known and understood for many Years past, by all *Conformists*, who thought it worth while to enquire after it) hath reference to the *first Column*, printed in many *Editions* of the *Common-Prayer-Book*, which was inserted chiefly for the sake of

of this *Rule*; and the meaning of it is manifestly this, and could be no other, *Easter-day is always the first Sunday after the first Full-Moon*, (which Full-Moon is to be found out by the *Kalendar*, in which there is a *Column* for that purpose) *which happens*, &c. I say, this is the meaning of the *Rule*, and ever was known, by Persons who understood the *Kalendar*, to be so: And this neither contradicts the *Table*, which was framed by this *Rule*: nor *Easter-day* in the *Almanacks*, which is always the same that it is in the *Table*. Now in order to prove this false, you interpret it thus: *Easter-day is always the first Sunday after the first Full-moon*, according to the Reformation of the *Kalendar*. Now, if you had no mind this *Rule* should be false, and we should endeavour to prove it so by the *Moon in the Heavens*; I doubt not you would say, this must be judged of as it was originally intended; and that it is unjust to interpret it otherwise. To say, that the *Moons* in the *Almanack* are more exact, is nothing against the *Truth* of this *Rule*. Is it not true, that this is such a Day of the Month according to the *Old Stile*, because it is not the same according to the *New Stile*? Is it not truly said, that this is such a Year of our Lord, by those who are known to go according to the *vulgar Æra*; because it is not so, perhaps, in *Truth*, and exact *Chronology*? and may it not be true, that *Easter-day* is the first Sunday after such a particular Full-Moon, according to that *Column* in our *Kalendar*; because it is not so, according to the *Full-Moons* in the Heavens, in *Truth*, and Philosophical Exactness of Speech? But, you say, it is no longer fit to be a *Rule*, because it is *unintelligible*. And again, (p. 241.) *It cannot be a Rule to find Easter for ever, because it depends upon a way of Calculation not now in use*. Now it is never (as I know of) called a *Rule to find Easter for ever*, which I suppose you took up (as your worthy Friend also hath done) from others, without looking into the *Common-Prayer-Book*. And as for its being *unintelligible*, I cannot help your Understanding; but I dare say, you could easily understand

it, did you think it worth your while : And you see, it is not so *unintelligible*, but that the *Table* was made by it, and all our *Easter-days* are observed according to it ; and any one that pleases may understand this *way of Calculation*. At present, indeed, I see plainly, that you understand it not ; for otherwise I cannot imagine, that you should undertake to present the *Reader* with an *Account* of *Seven Easter-days*, according to the *Rule* ; and at the same time represent the *Full-Moons* mentioned in the *Rule*, according to the late Reformation of the *Kalendar*, and not according to that *Kalendar*, to which the *Rule* refers. I pray, by what *Rule* was the *Table* in the *Common-Prayer-Book* drawn up ? If by this same *Rule*, then it is evident, that the *Rule* is intelligible, and doth not contradict the *Table* : And if it was drawn up according to the *Full-Moons* in the way I have now mentioned ; then it is plain also, that the *Full-Moons* mentioned in the *Rule*, are not the *Full-Moons* you have here set down from the *common Almanacks* ; but those which are to be found according to the first *Column* in our *Kalendar*. But, indeed, at your rate of arguing here, you may prove any Proposition in the World false ; for it is but resolving to take some principal Word in it, in a *Sense* different from what was intended ; and after that, it is easy to prove the Falshood of it. But how unmanly is it in *You*, after you have confessed that you *do not know whether it be true, or no*, if rightly understood, to cry out twice in the same Words, *I am for standing by the Moon in the Heavens, and let the Moon in Mr. Hoadly's Kalendar, or according to his Rule, shift for it self* : as if the *Controversy* had been, not whether the *Rule*, interpreted as it ought to be, were *true* ; but, whether the *Full-Moons* in our *Kalendar* answer'd exactly to the *Moon* in the *Heavens*. Thus have I endeavoured to set this Matter right once more : But as for your *worthy Friend*, who hath been called in to this weighty Point ; he may assure himself, whoever he be, I shall have nothing to do with him, till he learn more *Manners* (not to say *Religion*) than to ridicule and insult the *Com-*

mon-Prayer-Book; and more *Wit*, than to meddle with what he understands nothing of.

Sect. 9. *Of the Objection taken from the Apocryphal Lessons.*

Under this Head, I told you that I would not plead for retaining any thing justly suspected to be *fabulous*, in the Service of the Church: But I made some *Queries* about the *Lawfulness* of reading these *Lessons*, as they are appointed in our *Church*; which *Lawfulness* is, of it self, sufficient to make it *lawful* for any *Minister* to promise to do it. To these *Queries* you refuse to give a direct *Answer*: But instead of it, you ask me, whether it had not been more *fitting*, to have appointed none but *Lessons* out of the *Canonical Books*? for this is all I can make of your *Question*. To which I answer, that, considering all this, I think it had been better to do so. And now I have answered this, I hope you will answer mine, whether it be not *lawful* to *comply* with the present *Order*, tho' it should be our private *Opinion*, that a *better* might have been made? But you say again, the *Church*, by appointing *Apocryphal Lessons* in the same *Kalendar*, in which she appoints *Canonical*, takes a *Method* to abate that *peculiar Veneration* for the *Canonical Books*, that ought to be most carefully bightned. Now certainly, any *Minister* in the *Church of England*, may take such *Care*, that this *peculiar Veneration* shall not in the least be abated: And all in the *Church of England*, that know any thing, know the *Difference* that is made between *these Books*, and the others; and that it is expressly declared, that they are not to be applied to establish any *Doctrine*. And I say it again, that I never yet heard of an *Instance*, of any *Person* who lost any part of his *Veneration* for the *Canonical Books*, by the reading of *others* in our *Church*. The *Story* you relate of the *Man* in the late *Tempest*, that had recourse to the *Apocrypha*, under the *Notion* of *Scripture*, is nothing to this *Purpose*; unless you can assure us,

us, that he was a *Conformist*, and one in his right Senses; that he ran into this Mistake, by frequenting the *Prayers* of our *Church* on *Week-days*, when every Body knows we have few in our *Congregations*, of those who are most apt to be thus imposed upon; or that he was led to it by nicely studying our *Rubric*: For by what appears here, we know not but that he might have been a *Dissenter*, and foolishly led into this Mistake by nothing but having a *Bible*, in which both *Canonical* and *Apocryphal Books* were bound up together. But to whatever you have said upon this Head, I think it a sufficient Reply which I gave before; that if it be no *Sin* to read these *Books*, it is much better to comply^e in this, than to divide the *Church* for the sake of this *Order*. To which you answer, this of *dividing* the *Church* is a groundless Charge; for they are the *Dividers* who impose this: As if it were not plain, that what I intended was, that *Compliance* in what is not *sinful* in your own Accounts, is better than *separating* from the *Church* on this Account; and as if it were not plain, that in order to Peace in this World, it is the Duty of *Inferiors*, to comply with what they account Weakness in their *Superiors*, as well as of *Superiors* to yield to *Inferiors*: But this belongs to another Head. And I shall add here, that you might, without *separating*, take as effectual Care, that no People should confound the *Apocryphal* and *Canonical Books*, as you can do in your own Method. As for the *imposing* these *Lessons*, or retaining them, I have no hand in it; the *Compliance* in reading them is the Point: And since you cannot say, that you think that *sinful* in it self, or prove it to be so, I think you might have spared the Pains you have here been at. And for what is here said of my self, I have been so accusom'd to such sort of Usage, ever since I had any thing to do with you, that I am not now at all solicitous, what Opinions you entertain, or express, of me.

I said it was hard, that you should represent it as injurious to the People, or as unjustifiable in it self, that these *Apocryphal Lessons* in general, should be read to them;

them; and some *Canonical Books omitted, curtail'd, and mutilated*: And I gave you my Reasons for this, *viz.* that there was no Obligation to read every *Canonical Chapter*, in the *public Worship of God*; that some of the *Canonical Chapters* may be improper, unintelligible, of very little Concern to Christian People, wholly out of their reach, of little Advantage, either to the informing their Minds in any important Matter, or to the raising their *Devotions*; and that many of the *Apocryphal Lessons* are more for the Edification of the People, than any of those Chapters which are omitted. And can you say, that none of the *Canonical Chapters*, or any part of them, can be *improper* for a popular Christian Congregation; or *unintelligible*; or of little Advantage? Let any one peruse your own List of Chapters omitted (which I do not now examine any farther than to remark, that you have inserted some Chapters which are not *omitted*;) and he will find, how many concern the *Jewish Rites and Ceremonies*; how many are full of difficult Places, and hard Prophecies, not to be accounted for by the most learned Men amongst us; how many are Repetitions of the same pieces of History that have been read in other places; and will judge himself how pardonable at least it is, not to insert such into the *Public Service*, but to leave them to the private Studies of Christians. I am sure, I have said nothing, however you would represent me, to insinuate that the *Canonical Chapters omitted* were not excellent, according to what they were designed for; but only that some *Canonical Chapters* might not be proper for popular Congregations of Christians assembled for the *Worship of God*: And against this, you have not advanced one single Argument; but only endeavoured, after an unmanly manner, to expose me to your People, as one, who had insinuated, that P. 254. *there were none of all the Chapters omitted, but what were improper, unintelligible, &c.* which you know I have not done; and as one zealous for reading the *Apocryphal Lessons*, which I have not at all pleaded for, in general,

general, but as for a lawful thing. And how you can answer it to God and your own Conscience, twice under this Head, to produce out of my Book, the same Sentence, and to raise Indignation against me, without attempting to prove the *Falshood* of it, I leave you to consider. If it be not true, that *many of the Apocryphal Lessons are of more use in a public Congregation than any of the Chapters omitted*: You should have shewn it plainly by Instances; but surely, a Man of your Latitude cannot think the bare Name of *Canonical* sufficient to make a Chapter useful in a Christian Congregation. This is no more than what I think I might have said, of many modern Christian Writings, and of some of Mr. *Baxter's* practical Pieces: And if it be true, it deserves no severe Censure at all. But, not to be content with one single and fair Representation of this horrid *Tenet*

P. 256. of mine; but, in the very next Page, to introduce it again, not to confute it, but to abuse it, by leaving out the Word *many*, and so representing me as saying *that* of the *Apocryphal Lessons* in general, which I say only of *some*, and have expressly denied of *others*. Give me leave, Sir, to tell you, this is unworthy of a Man; and what, it is beyond the Power of you, and all your Friends, to reconcile, I will not say with Christian Candor, but with common Honesty: Unless you can sincerely say, you forgot that Word which you had inserted but the Page before; and shew your self ready to do me Justice in this Matter.

SECT. 10. *Of the Objection taken from the Ministration of the Psalter.*

YOUR Objection was, That the *dissenting Ministers* could not declare and *subscribe*, that the *Psalter*, appointed to be used, hath nothing in it contrary to the Word of God, because of that Passage, *Psal. 105. 28. They were not obedient to his Word*, which is contrary to the *Hebrew, They were obedient* —

In answer to this, I shewed, that these Two Sentences, manifestly understood of different Persons, contradicted not one another. This you own expressly; and yet say, that the Difficulty still remains. The Difficulty was, as you have again printed it, that this Passage in the *Psalter* was *contrary to the Word of God*; as it was contrary to the *Hebrew*. I shewed, it was not *contrary*. You acknowledge it: And how then can the Difficulty still remain, unless you point out *other* Passages which you think *contrary to the Word of God*? For if there be no others, which you think so; you may with the greatest Solemnity subscribe, or declare, that there is nothing in the *Psalter* contrary to the Word of God: Which can imply no more, but that this is your serious Judgment.

Sect. II. *Of the Objection taken from the Athanasian Creed.*

Under this Head I argued, if you acknowledge that this Explication of the Doctrine of the Trinity is true, and agreeable to the Word of God; then you ought to acknowledge it a good general Proposition, that whosoever doth not believe it, shall be condemned at the last Day. To this you reply, That you may own a great many Truths as agreeable to the Word of God, and yet not think an explicit Belief of them necessary to the Salvation of all Persons in all Capacities and Circumstances: Which I see not how you can think a sufficient Answer to one who made not an explicit Belief of this Explication necessary to any but such as had Capacities, and Opportunities, of knowing it to be agreeable to the Word of God. Thus I explained the *damnatory Sentences* in the *Creed*: And thus have all the considerable Persons in the *Church*, who have applied them to this particular Explication, interpreted them, as far as I can find. But you quite mistake me, when you think that I compared this *Matter with Faith in Christ*, in the Sense you oppose: For I only argued, that if you could say, that all who believe

not in him, shall be condemned, without including any but those who have Abilities and Opportunities of believing in him: You might also say, that they who believe not this Explication (which you own to be agreeable to the Word of God) shall be *condemned*, without including any but such as have Capacities and Opportunities of perceiving it so be. But I find not a Word against this.

Sect. 12. *Of the Objection taken from the Office of Confirmation.*

WE now come to the last of your *Objections* against the *Declaration* and *Subscription*, taken from the *Rubric* in the *Office of Confirmation*, which orders, that none be admitted to *Communion* before he be confirmed, &c. Now, in answer to this Objection I said, that it was a very becoming thing, that all Persons should in the most solemn manner take upon themselves their *Baptismal Covenant*: And surely, it cannot be an Exception against this (which you allow highly reasonable) either that this is to done in Presence of the highest Officer in the *Church*: or, that the *Person* who officiates uses a *Prayer*, in which there is an Expression which you do not like, tho' no part of what is there prayed for. Could I not free the *Form* used from all Exceptions, yet this could not be a Reason for a *Christian* to refuse to be *confirmed*, because an improper Expression is used by another in one part of the Office, unless he be either a *weak* or *prejudiced* Person: And I cannot think, that you your self can judge it a sufficient Ground of scrupling the thing it self, because the *Bishop's Prayer* hath a Passage in it you do not like. As for my saying, that you, *dissenting Ministers*, would have joined in imposing some Things upon the People, &c. as far as *Compliance* with the use of them is joining in it: that belongs to another place: And I hope it will not be said again to be an *unproved Assertion*.

C H A P. III.

Of the Oath of Canonical Obedience.

WHAT I first observed under this Head was, that in drawing up this *Article*, you say, that Ministers in the *Church of England* are required to swear *Subjection to their Ordinary, according to the Canons of the Church*; and that you speak as if no one could be ordained in the *Church of England*, without taking the *Oath of Canonical Obedience*: Whereas, the Words, *according to the Canons of the Church*, are not in that Form of Words, in which the *Ordained* promise *Subjection to their Ordinary*; and Persons may be ordained in the *Church of England*, without taking the *Oath of Canonical Obedience*. To which you answer, these Words, indeed, are not in the *Oath*, but the Word *Canonical* implies as much. Now, 1. Supposing you were never so certain of this, yet in representing the *Terms* required, you ought not to insert your *Interpretations* of them (which are controverted) as the very *Terms* required; especially in this place, before you have so much as attempted to prove yours to be the only true *Interpretation* of the *Oath of Canonical Obedience*. But, 2. I was not speaking of that *Oath*, but of the *Promise* of *Subjection to the Ordinary*, in the *Office of Ordination*; and in this there is not so much as the Word *Canonical* to excuse your *Addition*. But this *Promise*, you say, is limited to a certain *Sense* by the *Oath that came after*. So that I see, you are resolved to leave us no room to make our *Escape*: For tho' the Word *Canonical* be not here, yet it is in the *Oath* to be taken afterwards; and therefore, it is implied here, because that *Oath* was designed to explain this *Promise*. Now, I see not to what purpose it can be, to give a second *Reply* to one, who is so ready to give us any *Invention* of his own, rather than he will appear in the least mistaken. But at the same

same time you should have considered, whether you needed to have alleged the Word *Canonical* in your Defense: Since the *Reasons* against taking the *Oath*, as they are represented by you, in the Name of the *ejected Ministers*, appear to be equally strong, whether the Word *Canonical* had been inserted in the *Oath*, or not. You say farther, that you *never thought*, much less affirm'd, that *Persons were obliged to take the Oath of Canonical Obedience at the time of their Ordination*. Let any one judge of this from your *Representation* of this Matter now reprinted, in which you give this Account. *In the Form of making, ordaining, &c. this Question is required to be put to Priests and Deacons, at the time of their Ordination, Will you reverently, &c. The Answer to be returned is, I will do so, &c. An Oath also is administered to the Ordained, of this Tenour, &c.* Had not I reason from hence, to say what I did? But let us now come to the *Oath* it self, against which you say the *Objections* lie.

In order to enquire into the true Signification of this *Oath*, I first set down the Reason of its being imposed, *viz.* because a Person is now coming into the *Diocese* of one particular *Bishop*, to act under his Eye and Inspection: From whence I argue, that it can refer to nothing but the Injunctions of this particular *Bishop*. To which you answer, *This is not to be so far extended, as if it were wholly at the Bishop's Pleasure, what to require of his Clergy.* I never said, that this was wholly at the Bishop's Pleasure: But you acknowledge, that it is thus far true, that this *Oath* refers to the Injunctions of this particular

Bishop, that a Clergyman is not bound, by
 p 291. *this Oath, to observe Canons, which he himself*
dislikes, if his Bishop do not call upon him.

From whence it follows, that notwithstanding this *Oath*, a Clergyman is not obliged to observe any one of the *Canons* (if he should dislike them all) antecedently to his Bishop's Commands. If this be so, how can it be true, that this *Oath* carries in it a plain Obligation, to *comply with the Canons, and submit to them in their stated Practice,*

unless

unless a Minister have a Dispensation to the contrary? or that an Obligation to comply with the Things required by the Canons, as lawful and honest, is taken for granted in this Oath, antecedently to the future Commands of the Bishop, as it is said in your Representation? If a Clergyman be not obliged to observe Canons which he dislikes, unless commanded by his Bishop; then how can this Oath imply in it an antecedent Obligation to observe the Canons? or how can it refer to any thing but the future Commands of this particular Bishop?

After this, I proposed an Interpretation of this Oath in these Words, *I swear that I will yield such an Obedience as is due, according to the Laws of Christ's Church, from an inferior Presbyter to his Bishop, viz. a sincere, ready, and submissive Obedience, in all lawful and honest things, i. e. provided he enjoin nothing but what I apprehend in my Conscience to be lawful and honest.* Where it is plain, that I interpret the Word *Canonical*, as joined to the Word *Obedience*, after the same manner that the Word *true* is; and as signifying the Nature and Quality of the Obedience required, not the Instances in which it is to be exercised: And yet this Interpretation, you say, yields what Mr. Baxter pleaded for, unless Mr. H. mean something different from ancient and modern Ecclesiastical Canons, by the Laws of Christ's Church which he mentions. If all that Mr. Baxter contended for, were this, that a Minister promised in this Oath, a sincere and ready Obedience; such an Obedience as hath always been esteemed due from an Inferior to a Superior; and this only in such things as he himself should judge to be lawful: I am heartily glad to hear it; and not only yield that this is what the Oath obliges to, but contend, that nothing else can be meant in it. And whatever Laws or Canons of the Church you understand, it will come to the same: For I speak only of an Obedience of such a nature, so ready and sincere, as is due from a Presbyter to his Bishop. But in representing my Interpretation, you leave out, for Brevity's sake, these Words, *viz. a sincere, ready, and submissive Obedience*; by which

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means your *Readers* cannot so easily see my meaning, or judge of the difference between the Two Interpretations. If you grant that this is all intended, that I will pay a sincere and ready Obedience to my *Bishop* in all things which I think lawful; then this part of our Dispute is at an end. If you do not; then you cannot say, I have yielded all that Mr. *Baxter* pleaded for: For this is directly contrary to what Mr. *Baxter* pleaded for; who made the *Oath* to have reference to the *Canons*, and to be an Oath of Obedience to them, and not only to a particular *Bishop*. But you say, *If the Oath refer to what the Bishop shall see fit to require, 'tis merely within the Compass of the Canons.* If it be, this will not prove your former Representation of this Matter to be reasonable: for, notwithstanding this, it may not touch the *Canons*, but as they become the Injunctions of the *Bishop*; and then also the Words, *in all lawful and honest Things*, leave a sufficient Power to demur on any particular *Canon* enjoined. But who doth not know, that knows any thing of our *Church*, that there happen frequent Occasions for the *Bishop* to interpose, in Cases not touched by the *Canons*? and who would not rather think, that this *Oath* was designed with a View principally to such Cases? Again, I say, that the *last Words*, in all lawful and honest things, refer to all the Injunctions of the *Bishop*, and do suppose, that every Injunction he lays upon you, may possibly be unlawful, and dishonest: But it is hard in me to suppose this, you say, because the *Bishop* is confined to the *Canons*, &c. Now, this is the same Mistake repeated: For tho' the *Bishop* may be so confined, as that he cannot enjoin things contrary to the *Canons*; yet he is not so confined, but that he may often enjoin things not contained in the *Canons*. But supposing it true, that he is so confined; yet it may be also true, that it is supposed possible in this *Oath*, that every one of his Injunctions may be unlawful, even those that concern Things enjoined by the *Canons*. This, you say, seems to argue a Forgetfulness of what I had said a little above, viz. That in this *Oath* Men swear an Obedience according to
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the Laws of Christ's Church. But certainly, you are resolved not to understand my meaning, or to let your *Reader* see my own Words: For, all that I say is, That in this Oath Ministers swear such a ready and sincere Obedience, as the Laws of Christ's Church require from a *Presbyter* to his Bishop; but this is to be practis'd only in such Instances, as they themselves think lawful. This I have plainly and frequently expressed: And how doth this contradict what I afterwards say, that the last Words of the Oath suppose, that it is possible all the Bishop's Injunctions may be *unlawful*? Cannot I promise such a ready Obedience to him, in all lawful Things; and yet suppose that he may enjoin unlawful Things? But supposing all Ministers Judges of the Lawfulness of all the Injunctions of their Diocesans, you say, this will not reconcile you to the Oath, because the *Rules* they ordinarily go by, are *ensnaring* and *unjustifiable*, and you know no Warrant they have to require such an Oath. Now you have often acknowledged Episcopal Government to be *lawful*: and how that can be exercised without the Submission of *Presbyters*, I know not. And if Submission may be practis'd, in all *Cases* which you think *lawful*; certainly it may be *promised* in all such *Cases*. And therefore, whilst you avoid the speaking to this Point, this is all unnecessary; and tends only to make your *Reader* believe, that there are frequently such Grievances in the Church, as they that minister in it know little of. We think it sufficient to resolve to *demur*, when any thing is enjoined, which we think *unlawful*; and not dare to enter into other Paths, for fear only that such Things should ever be enjoined. I say, indeed, that this Oath can refer to nothing but the *future Commands* of one Bishop, and have proved it at large; and find not any thing advanced against it, but the same Mistake of my Interpretation of the Oath. *I have acknowledged*, you say, *that the Oath refers to Obedience, according to the Laws of Christ's Church*. I am ashamed so often to put you in mind, that my Interpretation doth in so many Words

declare, that the Intent of the Oath is to promise such a ready Obedience as the Laws of the Church require from a *Presbyter* to his Bishop, in all Things which he thinks *lawful*. And may not this ready Obedience be promised to the *future Commands* only of the Bishop? Why should you so often argue, as if you had never your self read my Interpretation? for one would think if you had, you could not make so strange an use of those Words (*according to the Laws of Christ's Church*) mentioned in it. The *parallel Case*, I proposed, I cannot but think very much to the purpose; which was only to shew, that an under Officer may take an Oath of true and *legal Obedience* to the *Lord-Mayor* in all lawful things, without concerning himself with any thing but the *future Commands* of the *Lord-Mayor*, and may demur upon any of his Injunctions, notwithstanding this Oath: And so likewise, that a *Presbyter* may lawfully swear true and Canonical Obedience to his Bishop, with the same Conditions, and upon the same *Terms*. And it is sufficient, that you acknowledge a *Submission* to Bishops lawful; without proving in this place their *Original Right* to lay any Injunctions upon *Presbyters*. Against this, as I have thus again stated it, you have alleged nothing to prove that a *Clergyman* promises, in this Oath, Obedience to any Commands, but what he himself shall judge lawful; and this is all I am concerned about. As for my charging you with *Prevarication*, I can find no such thing in my Book; and if you will point me to the place, I promise you to expunge it. My *Harangue*, as you stile it in the following Pages, had but too just a Foundation: And I appeal to more unprejudiced Judges than your selves, if your Management of this Head gave me not a fair Occasion of saying something against such hard and unjust *Interpretations*. But still you insist, that according to my own Interpretation, a *Minister* is bound to *obey* the Canons, when called upon by his Bishop: And I again answer, that, according to my Interpretation, he cannot be obliged by this Oath to obey any Injunctions, but
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what he himself thinks lawful. You still misunderstand me, and apply those Words, *according to the Laws of Christ's Church*, to the *Instances of Obedience*, which I applied only to the *nature* of it. I may promise such a ready Obedience as the Laws of the Church require from a *Presbyter* to his Bishop, in all lawful Things; and yet demur about the Lawfulness of any of his *Injunctions*, tho' they be the same with the antecedent Injunctions of the Church. I say, I may demur, notwithstanding any thing in this Oath, in which I only promise a ready Obedience in all lawful Things. But it is an unaccountable thing to me, that you should allege hardly one Consideration under this Head, but what is founded upon your own Mistake; and that you cannot understand that Obedience to the Canons, antecedently obliging, cannot be Obedience to a particular Bishop; and therefore cannot be promised in an Oath which wholly respects one particular Bishop. I have said, and still do say, that Obedience is due to those Canons, which are supposed to be in force, without this Oath; and that Obedience to the Canons is not promised in this Oath, but when they become the *Commands* of my particular Bishop: And that then no *absolute Obedience* is promised in this Oath, because the last Words give you a Liberty of judging about the Lawfulness of any of his *Injunctions*. And this is not to *say* and *unsay*, or to run *backward* and *forward*, as you would make your *Readers* believe; for these Things are perfectly reconcileable. And methinks, you, who have acknowledged, *That a Clergyman is not bound, by this Oath, to observe Canons, which himself dislikes, if his Bishop do not call upon him,* might easily acknowledge; that this is no Oath of Obedience to the *Canons*, but to a particular Bishop; and that since the *Limitation, in all lawful and honest Things*, restrains the whole Obedience promised in this Oath, it cannot but belong to every particular Injunction, of what nature soever, and give a Liberty, and a Right to demur upon any Command laid

upon us, unless we be otherwise obliged not to demur upon some particular Commands. Now, if there be any Matters of Practice to which we are otherwise obliged, the reason of our not demurring upon them, is not because they are the *Injunctions* of this particular *Bishop*; but because we are, on other Accounts, obliged not to do it. I say, therefore, that no *absolute Obedience* is promised in this Oath to the *Canons*, even when they become the *Injunctions* of the *Bishop*; because this Oath promises no Obedience, but one limited to such *Injunctions* only as we think lawful; and our Obligation to obey the *Canons* results not from this Oath any farther, than as they are enjoin'd, and as we think them *lawful Injunctions*. And it is your own Willingness to find out Contradictions where there are none, that makes these Things unintelligible to you.

But, because I acknowledge that one who designs to minister in this Church, ought first to be satisfied about such *Canons* as respect his own Behaviour, and are supposed to be now in force; and resolve to

conform to them; you say, you desire no more than what is contained in this Concession, and easily to be inferred from it: For if this will hold, then it follows, that you should not act honestly and fairly in taking this Oath; and that others who take this Oath, (which was designed to give the Church Assurance on this Behalf) before they are so satisfied, may be charged with Dissimulation; and so, every thing that you aim at. But let us a little consider this. I acknowledge, that a Minister ought, on other Accounts, to obey the *Canons* now in force, without any respect to this Oath; therefore it follows, that this Oath was designed to give the Church Assurance on this Behalf; therefore it follows, that he is obliged to obey them by this Oath; therefore it follows, that he cannot honestly promise to obey a particular *Bishop*, in all lawful Things, without being satisfied about the Lawfulness of the *Canons*. You acknowledged but now, that this Oath obliged not to the Observation of *Canons*, unless a Person be called upon by his *Bishop* to observe them;

them; and yet here you affirm that this Oath was designed to give the Church Assurance that we will obey the Canons: While your former Acknowledgment implies in it, that the Oath contains no such Assurance in it, if it should chance that our particular Bishop should not call upon us to obey them. You know, that I have all this while been contending, that this Oath respects not the Canons; and yet you will bring me in here, as yielding that it doth respect them; but it is by fixing Consequences upon me, directly contrary to what I have been pleading for, and which only help to prove, how unwilling you are to understand me once aright under this Head. And after your own egregious and palpable Mistakes, it is very pleasant to find you complaining of the Confusedness of your Adversaries, only to give your self an Opportunity of presenting to the World, an useless Account of Nothing to the Purpose: In which I shall not follow you any farther, than to shew, that, supposing the Truth of your own historical Narration, you cannot draw the Shadow of an Argument from it, to maintain your Interpretation of our Oath of Canonical Obedience to the Bishop.

In the first place, you cannot certainly think this a good Argument. Several Councils, down to the Year 675 decreed, That the Ecclesiastical Canons should be observed; therefore, it is plain, this Oath now required of Canonical Obedience to a particular Bishop, was designed, to promise, not Obedience to this Bishop only, but Obedience to the Canons. You your self have acknowledged, that this Oath refers not to the Canons, but as they become the Injunctions of this particular Bishop. Now, certainly if it had been designed, as you suppose, to back the Decrees of these Councils, the same absolute Obligation to obey the Canons, would have been plainly expressed in it.

Again, the Tenth Canon of the Eleventh Council of Toledo, required a Subscription from all to be ordained, that they would in no wise contradict the Canonical Rules; and in all Things give due Honour and Obedience to their Ecclesi-

afical Superiors. Now this, I think, makes very much against you in several Respects. 1. What is retained of this nature in our *Church*, at the Time of *Ordination*, is only a Promise of Submission to our Superiors, without any mention of the *Canonical Rules*: Which shews rather, that our Church, in retaining only one part of this, avoided the bringing Ministers under any such absolute Promise relating to the Canons. 2. The *Oath of Canonical Obedience* is required, amongst us, upon our coming to settle in the *Diocess* of one particular *Bishop*; and regards him only, without the mention of *Canonical Rules*. 3. You acknowledge your self that our *Oath* obliges not to Obedience to the *Canons*, but as they become the Injunctions of our particular *Bishop*: And, therefore, according to your self, this is vastly different from a *Subscription*, that implies an absolute Promise to obey all the *Canons*; and not to be interpreted by it. 4. Here is a plain Distinction made between *Obedience* to the *Canons*, and *Obedience* to *Ecclesiastical Superiors*. And from hence I argue, that an *Oath* in which there is promised a *Canonical Obedience* to one *Bishop* only, could not be framed in Imitation of this. Nay, that it follows rather, that the *Imposers* did not intend to require in it a Promise parallel to this; forasmuch as the express mention of *Obedience* to *Canonical Rules* is avoided, and Obedience to the *Bishop* only mentioned: Whereas it is evident that where a Promise of Obedience to the *Canons* was anciently intended, there it was expressed in so many Words; and Obedience to Superiors made a distinct Matter from it. To proceed,

After the Year 700, many Bishops took an *Oath* which made them entire Vassals to the See of *Rome*. Well; our *Oath of Canonical Obedience* to a *Bishop*, in all lawful and honest Things, can receive little Light from this piece of History. That you say, or have said, is a Promise of absolute *Subjection* to the *Canons* in force: And as far as it is a Promise of Obedience to the *future Commands* of the *Bishop*, you acknowledge it no Promise of entire *Subjection*, but limited as much as any one could desire.

Nor

Nor is it at all probable, that at the *Reformation*, our Models should be taken from *Papal Usurpations*.

Many *Canons*, in following *Councils*, ordained that *Bishops* should manage themselves according to the *Canons*: And that *Presbyters* should be subject to them, according to the *Canons*. And so it follows inevitably, that our present *Oath of Canonical Obedience* to a particular *Bishop*, in all lawful and honest Things, is a promise of absolute Obedience to the *Canons*: For that it was that was decreed in these *Councils*, if any Obedience to the *Canons* were decreed. To be subject to *Bishops according to the Canons*, is to pay them that ready Obedience, which the *Canons* say is due to them; but is a Thing distinct from Obedience to the *Canons* that concern a *Clergy-Man's* behaviour, whether the *Bishop* enforce them or not: Just as the Obedience which, you say, was promised by *Bishops* to the *Pope*, according to the *Authority of the Canons*, is such an absolute Obedience as the *Canons*, made since his usurpation, required; not an Obedience to *Canons*, concerning their own behaviour, where He did not interpose.

Bishops swear *Subjection to the Pope*, and *Obedience to the Canons*, in two distinct Forms of Words. It cannot follow from hence, surely, that this was the Pattern of our *Oath*, in which all the Obedience promis'd is express'd in one Sentence; and terminated in one Person; and limited only to *lawful Things*. You may observe, throughout all your Instances, that where Obedience to the *Canons* was intended, it was expressed plainly, and made wholly distinct from Obedience to the *Bishop*. Now all the Obedience we promise is to the *Bishop*: The other part is plainly rejected from this solemn *Oath*.

But now we come to the time of the *Reformation*. And here you say, that as in the *Roman Church*, the *Metropolitan* swears Obedience to the *Pope*; the *Bishop* to the *Metropolitan*; the *Presbyter* to the *Bishop*: So, in our Church, the *Chain is now the same as ever*, putting only the *Prince* in the room of the *Pope*, excepting the few alterations the *Laws* have made. You have not given us the *Oath* required of *Priests* in the *Church of Rome*. But these few *Alterations* are

are such as might perhaps have added more Light to this matter, than all your other Observations, if you had been pleased, or willing, a little to insist upon them. The *Bishop* in the *Church* of *Rome* promises an Obedience and Faithfulness to the *Pope*, without any limitation. In our *Church* he promises to the *Metropolitan* all due Reverence and Obedience. And the *Inferior Clergy*, do not promise, or swear, that they will absolutely obey the *Canons*; but only, that they will obey their *Bishop*; and this only, *in all lawful and honest Things*; which two things were always heretofore required as two distinct Matters, when they were both intended. So that all you can say is, that the *Archbishop* takes an Oath of Fidelity to the *King*; the *Bishop* to the *Archbishop*; and the *Presbyter* swears to yield *Canonical Obedience* to his *Bishop*, in all such Things as he himself judges to be *lawful*. And where is the Crime or *Slavery* of this, even to those who acknowledge *Episcopal Government* barely lawful? The *Conclusion* you draw from your *Historical Account* is this, If the Oath of Obedience to the *Bishop*, ever refer'd to the *Canons*, it must do so still. I deny the *Consequence*. It might once refer to the *Canons*; and yet be alter'd now, so as not to do so. And granting the *Consequence*, I deny that your *Account* hath made it, in the least, probable, that it ever refer'd to the *Canons*; but rather the contrary, that it relates to something that was ever accounted distinct from Obedience to the *Canons*. And granting that it doth refer to the *Canons*, you must make it a very insignificant Security to the *Church*, whilst you acknowledge that it refers not to *them*, unless enforced by the *Bishop*. And your *Canon of Scotland*, (p. 336.) is so far from making it evident, that this Oath ever did, or doth now, refer to the *Canons*; that it makes the contrary highly probable. By it, all *Ministers* are required to subscribe, *to be obedient to the Canons of the Church*. Now how can it be evident from hence, that a promise of *Canonical Obedience to a particular Bishop, limited only to lawful Things*, is a promise of unlimited Obedience to the *Canons*? For if it prove any thing to your purpose, it must prove this. Is it not rather

ther plain from hence, that where a Promise of *Obedience* to the *Canons* is required, it is made distinct from a promise of *Obedience* to the *Bishop*, and always enjoined to be made in plain Words, not capable of any other Interpretation? But I cannot but observe to the *Reader*, that here is an *History* pompously introduced; and styl'd in your *Contents*, *An Historical Account of this Oath, since its entrance into the Church*: And in this *History*, there is not produced so much as the *Form* of an *Oath* of *Canonical Obedience* to a particular *Bishop*, impos'd upon *Presbyters*, except that after the *Reformation*; nothing alleged but that, as *Usurpation* came on, the *Clergy* were in some Places required to subscribe to an unlimited *Obedience* to the *Canons*, and in others had it inculcated upon them; and an Affirmation at last, that the *Bishops* in the *Church* of *Rome*, do now bind their *Clergy* to them in an *Oath*, but what sort of an *Oath* we are not inform'd. Now how can any thing of all this prove, that this *Oath*, in which you must acknowledge the express mention of *Obedience* to the *Canons* is avoided, was designed to oblige to that *Obedience*; or that our *Oath* now impos'd, is the very same, and of the same purport, with that in the *Church* of *Rome*; or that an *Oath* of *Obedience* to a particular *Bishop*, limited only to *lawful Things*, is an *Oath* of *Obedience* to the *Canons*? Nay, I am ready to shew, that you your self, in your own Interpretation of it, make it entirely different from any *Precedent* alleged in this Piece of *History*: And, therefore, that it is *absurdly* called an *Historical Account* of the *Oath* now required, even upon your own *Concessions*.

In one Word, whoever will be at the pains to look into what I have heretofore, and now, written on this *Head*, will find, that you have avoided speaking to many material Observations; that you say nothing to the Objections I made against the Interpretation of the *ejected Ministers*, that the whole of what you have said, excepting your piece of *History*, is founded upon your mistaking my *Interpretation*; and that your *History*, if it prove any thing, proves the direct contrary to what you would fix upon this *Oath* of *Canonical Obedience*.

But I must consider those *Canons*, which you have here alleged to prove your Point: for, tho' I do still maintain, that the *Oath of Canonical Obedience* to the *Bishop*, doth not imply it in any *absolute Obedience*, but leaves a Liberty of demurring upon any of his Commands, of what nature soever; yet I still likewise maintain, that a *Minister* is obliged, as he professes himself a *Minister* in this *Church*, to satisfy himself about the *Canons* now in force, and to be ready to obey them, according to the true Intent of them. Now, as for the *excommunicating Canons* you mention, I say, they are not *so* in force, that it is, in the least degree, probable, that a *Minister* will be called to join in the *Execution* of them: And, therefore, are not such as a *present Minister* is concerned in. And tho', as you observe, an *Act of Toleration* can take away no *Rights* of the *Church*; yet an *Act of Toleration* can hinder the *Execution* of all such *Canons*, and remove the fear of ever being called upon to execute them. But after all, I do not plainly see, that these *Canons* did ever respect the Behaviour of *Ministers* at all, but only directed *others* about *Excommunications*: Or, that the *Minister* had ever any part in this Matter, unless it were, that he might be called upon to declare a Matter of Fact.

And to say that these *Canons* may possibly be revived, is to say nothing, in which the present *Ministers* are concerned: And you may as well say, supposing there are no obnoxious *Canons* now, yet there may be in *Times* to come.

The next *Canon* respects *Kneeling* at the *Communion*: And for the Lawfulness of Obedience to it, I refer to my *Answer* to your *Introduction*; in which, I doubt not, I shall prove the Lawfulness of it, at least, upon your *former Principles*.

The *Canon* about the *refusing Communicants coming from other Parishes*, tho' the Observation of it may be recommended for its Usefulness, on many Accounts; yet is apparently and professedly neglected, with the Knowledge and Connivance of our Superiors; and that by the most regular, and excellent Persons in their *Dioceses*. And, therefore concerns us not. For

For the Lawfulness of complying with the *Imposition* of the *Surplice*, in which Compliance only, a *Minister* is concerned, I refer to my *Answer* to your *Introduction*.

The *Canon* that requires *Ministers* to *Baptize* all *Children*, &c. doth not intend all *Children* without Exception: But ought, by all the *Rules* of *Equity* in the *World*, to be interpreted only with respect to a *Country*, in which all *Parents* are supposed to be, by *Profession*, *Christians*. And you have offered no *Argument*, as I know of, to make it so much as *probable*, that That *Profession* is not a sufficient *Title*, or that *Children* are to suffer in their *Spiritual* Concerns for the *Sins* of their *Parents*; or that it is not lawful to *Baptize* all *Children* that are, in the least, likely to be offered to *Baptism*, amongst us, upon the *Terms* required in our *Church*.

To pay *Obedience* to the *Canon* that forbids *private Fasts*, in its true and full *Intent*, you must acknowledge to be *lawful*: But, at present, there is not the least *Occasion* to enquire whether it be or no. And it is *lawful*, undoubtedly, to pay *Obedience* to that *Canon*, which enjoins the *Minister* to exhibit the *Names* of his *Parishioners*, who neglect the *Communion*. But were it not; the universal *Neglect* of it, as far as to prevent all *Probability* of your supposed evil *Consequences*, is sufficient to bear out any *Minister* in the *Established Church*.

Thus much for your *first Reason* against the *Oath* of *Canonical Obedience*, taken from your *Interpretation* of it; which makes it, not an *Oath* of *Obedience* to such *Injunctions* of a particular *Bishop*, as we think *lawful*; but an *Oath* of *Obedience* to the *Canons*. And here, I think, I have once more shewn, that it cannot be so interpreted, without contradicting the very *Design*, and *Words* of it.

Your *Second Reason* against it was taken from the *Management* of the *Episcopal Government* by *Chancellors*, &c. Which, in many *Instances*, I as heartily *lament*, as you can *expose* it. But I see not yet how it touches this *Oath*. For if I swear to pay *Obedience* to one *Person* only; and in all *lawful Things* only: this *Oath* obliges me to regard nothing but the *Will* of this particular *Person*, and
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requires me to examine all his Injunctions, whether they be *lawful* or not. And you acknowledge here, that the Oath cannot bind to Things *unlawful*: But yet, if it do but seem to bind to Things *unlawful*, you intimate that it is *unlawful*. And this more than once: which is very hard indeed, that in Things wherein we are agreed, that an Oath cannot bind, it should yet seem to bind; and that *the seeming* to bind, tho' it be certain it cannot *bind*, should be sufficient to prove it *unlawful*. But how can an Oath of Obedience to any Person, limited expressly to Things *lawful*, so much as seem to bind to Things *unlawful*?

Give me leave here to say again, that it imports little to number up the *possible Inconveniences* a Minister in the *Established Church* may suffer; for that belongs not to the *Question* about the *Lawfulness* of *Conformity*. There may be *Inconveniences* attending the doing our Duty: But, as much as you would make your *Reader* believe the contrary, they are so rare, that I profess I know not my self, in all my Acquaintance, a single Instance of them. And I suppose, you are not without your *Temporal Inconveniences* in your own way. But how it can be called *acting blindfold*, to resolve to do our Duty, and to be obedient in all *lawful Things*, tho' we meet with *Inconveniences* in our way, I cannot see. You cannot say, that a *Minister* in the *Established Church*, is absolutely bound by the *Decrees* of others: And if you mean only, that he is so bound, as to obey them, when he knows they are the *Injunctions* of his *Bishop*, and is satisfied that they are agreeable to the *Laws of Christ*; we are not ashamed of such Ties and Obligations. For this is such an *Obligation*, as no *reasonable Creature* need to be ashamed of: It is both *becoming*, and *justifiable*: It is neither *putting out*, nor *shutting our Eyes*. But I leave you, once more, to justify such *Representations* of this Matter, to *God*, and your own *Conscience*: And am very much pleased to find, upon this Re-examination of the *Terms of Ministerial Conformity*, that I have so little Reason to repent of my own *Engagements*; or to envy *your* so much boasted *Liberty*.

A
PERSUASIVE
T O

Lay-Conformity:

O R, T H E

Reasonableness of constant Communion

W I T H T H E

CHURCH of *ENGLAND*,

Represented to the

Dissenting L A I T Y.

By B E N J A M I N H O A D L Y ,
*Rector of St. Peter's Poor. Now Lord Bishop
of Bangor.*

A D V E R T I S E M E N T.

I Desire it may be observed, That the following Papers concern only such of the Dissenters as judge Conformity to the Church Established, to be, in it self, lawful. As for those amongst them, who are so little instructed in the Nature of the Gospel, as to think Communion with our Church unlawful and Antichristian; I could not hope to convince them of the contrary, in so small a Treatise as this: And therefore chuse rather to refer them to what hath been already written on this Head; and to the Judgment of the best and most learned amongst their own Teachers, who profess themselves always ready to do Justice to the Church of England, and to the Cause of Truth, by endeavouring to remove such groundless Prejudices out of the Minds of their Followers. And, whatever the Issue of these Papers may prove; it is to be hoped, that the Persons concerned will, at least, think it no Crime or Injury, that we heartily desire their constant Conformity, and endeavour to persuade them to it. I have nothing farther to add, but that I have chosen to argue with them, chiefly from the Considerations of Peace and Unity: because this Method is most easy to be understood; and most likely to move all who have any Concern left for the Honour of Christianity, or the Interest of the Protestant Cause.

A Persuasive to Lay-Conformity, &c.

I. **T**HERE is no one thing, in which all *Protestants* amongst us, as well *Dissenters* as *Conformists*, do more agree, than in this plain Proposition, *That all causeless and unnecessary Divisions and Distinctions, are most carefully and conscientiously to be avoided by Christians.* In a deep Sense of this Truth, the best *Writers* on all Sides have, with one Consent, and with one common Zeal and Concern, pressed upon the Consciences of Men, the Duty and Importance of *Peace and Concord.* and the Guilt and Mischief of *needless Distinctions and Divisions.* This being so universally acknowledg'd, and so constantly taught, I shall not here enlarge upon it, but shall only make this Use of it at present, that it is the Judgment, not only of the *conforming Divines*, but of your own *Teachers* also, that it concerns us all, as much as the *Favour of Almighty God* concerns us, to have a sacred and constant Regard to public Peace and Unity.

II. Now there are but *Two* Methods, in which our *Unity* can possibly be compassed; and a Period put to all those *Mischiefs and Evils*, which have their Foundation in the Distinction of our Churches, and the different Modes of Worship set up amongst us. For this must be done, either by the entire Compliance of the *Conformists* with you, and the Alteration of the *Established Church*, according to your Wishes; or, by your Compliance with them, and your Conformity to the *Church* already *Established.*

III. There is a *Third* Method, which perhaps some sincere Christians (who know the Goodness and Charity of

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their own Tempers) may be apt to judge fully sufficient for this *End*, without either of the former : And that is, the universal Practice of Love, and Charity, and mutual Forbearance, amidst our different Modes of Worship. And I would to God, that there were any thing in the Tempers of Men to incline us to hope for an universal Practice of such God-like Virtues. But where is there any Ground for us to expect this ? Some few, it may be, imagine themselves possessed of a true Christian Temper : But of how small Importance is this to be esteemed, when we consider the great Numbers of those who are wholly unacquainted with it ; when we daily see how much Heat and Violence is entirely owing to our religious Distinctions ; and what a Handle they give, as well to designing Men at Home, as to our professed Enemies Abroad, to inflame us against one another, and to make us the Instruments of bringing about *their* Designs ? Since, therefore, this is so very evident, and open to the Observation of all ; and since you will all agree, that it is the indispensable Duty of us all to do whatever lies in our Power towards an established *Peace* and *Unity* ; consider whether the way to accomplish this, be to look after our own Tempers only, without regarding the evil Effects our *Practice* may have upon others ; or to consult the natural Tendencies of our Actions, and to guide our Practice, in all lawful Things, as we find it most conducive to the public *Peace*, and least likely to prove the Occasion of Heat, and Discord, and Variance, to others.

This seems to me plainly recommended to all *Christians*, by the Law of Nature, and the Gospel of Jesus Christ ; tho' they could be secure of preserving their own Tempers and Passions, within the Bounds of Regularity and Decency, without this. For this results evidently from that Obligation *Christians* are under, to regard conscientiously the Good of their Neighbour, the Honour of their holy Profession, and the Interest of that Society they belong to. But indeed, were they only to consult the Happiness of their own Breasts, and had they no Concern
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with any besides themselves, this would certainly be the securest way of consulting and establishing their own Quiet, and good Temper; to avoid whatever might probably, or could possibly, tend in its Nature to taint their Hearts with Sourness, or Malice, or Passion; as all will acknowledge, that *Divisions* do, of what sort soever they be. However, I put it not upon this, at present, because some may evade this, and pretend to the greatest Security of their own *Charity*, and good *Temper*: And because I write to those, who must be sensible, that we have all of us a solemn Account to give of our Behaviour, as it respects the World about us; and that we are all severely to answer for the evil Effects of our *Practice* upon *Humane Society*, if it be found at last that we might have prevented them, and would not; or that we might have seen the way to *Peace*, and yet wilfully shut our Eyes against the Light. This, therefore, I lay down as a certain Rule to direct us all in our Conduct, *That it is our indispensable Duty to chuse that Method of Practice, which tends most to the Happiness of that Society to which we belong; provided it be consistent with that Duty we owe to God; and with our own Eternal Salvation.*

IV. This being a certain and undoubted Maxim, it follows from hence, that it is your indispensable Duty to practise *constant Conformity* to the *Established Church*, as long as you acknowledge, that nothing is required of you in it, which is sinful or unlawful: for this lies within your Province; and you cannot possibly act a better part, towards the re-uniting the divided Hearts of this Nation. You must either *conform*, or *separate*: And if your Choice be to be determined by the *Maxim* now laid down, it is impossible you should refuse to *conform*. For all the World knows, and we daily feel, the miserable Consequences of religious Distinctions and Divisions. It being therefore so evident, that your *Conformity* would tend to the removing these Evils, and to the *Unity* of this Nation, I shall not labour to prove to you, what you must be al-

ready fully convinced of. But tho' this be so very plain and open to the Capacities of all; and tho' your Obligation to *Conformity* be, on this Account, so manifest and undeniable; yet I am sensible, that there are some *Hindrances* and *Stumbling-blocks* in your way to so good a Practice; and that you appear to your selves to have Reasons on your side, sufficient to incline you against that *Conformity* which would be so great a Step to *Peace* and *Union* amongst us. My Business, therefore, at present shall be, to examine those *Reasons*, and to endeavour to remove those *Hindrances*, hoping that you will judge sincerely and impartially in a Matter of so great and universal Concern.

V. One of these *Hindrances* I take to be founded on that reason, you think, you have to expect that the *Establishment* should be altered according to your Minds. For since our Unity may be effected as well by the *Compliance* of the *Conformists* with *You*, as by your *Conformity* to the *Church* already *established*; you seem to imagine, that it is as much the Duty of the *Conformists*, to comply with *You*, as it is your Duty to comply with *them*; and that it is as reasonable for *you* to expect *their* Conformity to *you*; as it is for *them* to expect your Conformity to *them*: And so not to think your selves obliged to *Conformity* on this Account. Now in order to remove this Difficulty out of your way, I shall endeavour to shew you,

1. That it is not as reasonable for *you* to expect *their* Compliance with *you*, as for *them* to expect your Conformity to the *Established Church*. And,

2. That, supposing it were as reasonable, yet this would be no good Argument against your *Conformity*.

1. That it is not as reasonable for *you* to expect the *Compliance* of the *Conformists* with *you*, as it is for *them* to expect your *Conformity* to the *Church* already *established*. And indeed, I cannot think that you your selves can think it so: For you all seem to agree with us in the great Necessity, or at least Expediency, of some particular

lar Form of Church Government, and Worship, and of the Establishment of this by *Civil Laws*. Were it in your Power, there is no doubt but you would think your selves obliged to establish that particular Form, which to your selves should seem most agreeable to the Nature of the *Gospel*, and the End of *public Assemblies*. Now you must be sensible, that an *Establishment* can signify nothing, nor be of any use, unless it be supposed, either that it is so apparently perfect, and so suitable to the Wishes of all Persons, that none can find fault with it, or discover any thing amiss in the *Constitution* of it : Or, that there is an Obligation lying upon every Christian to have so much Regard to *public Peace and Decency*, as to conform himself to what is established, if nothing be required of him but what he acknowledges lawful.

As to the *former* of these Suppositions ; it is undeniably beyond the Power of Man to frame any Constitution, or draw up any *Form*, or *Directory* for *Worship*, that shall be agreeable to all Persons concerned, or free from Defects and Imperfections. And therefore, were the *established Form* exactly such as you could wish, there is no Argument you could urge to press *others* to *Conformity* to it, but what concludes now for the Necessity of your *Conformity* to what is now established ; nor can there be any reason for your expecting now that the *established Form* should be alter'd according to your Wishes, which would not equally encourage *others* to expect the Alteration of any other *Establishment*, had you order'd it exactly as you thought best. If, therefore, you should not think it reasonable in *others* to with-hold their *Conformity* till the *established Form* was alter'd to their Minds, provided it were such as you could wish it ; you cannot think it reasonable in your selves to expect the Alteration of what is now *established*, merely because it is not agreeable to your Desires. And as you would, in that Case, think it much more reasonable for those *others* to conform to your *Establishment*, than to require the Alteration of it to their Minds : So judge concerning your selves now, who are

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exactly in the same Circumstances; and think it much more reasonable for you to comply with what is already *Established*, than to insist upon the *Alteration* of it according to your Wishes. For, if there can be no Argument urged now for Separation, under pretence of insisting upon Alterations, that might not with equal force be urged by many others, had *You* your selves framed the *Establishment*; and if you would think it unreasonable in those *others* to expect that the *Establishment* should be new modell'd to their Minds; then certainly there can be no good Argument urged for your selves, in these Circumstances: Nor can it be so reasonable for you to expect the Compliance of the *Conformists* with you, as for them to expect your Compliance with the *Church* already *Established*. And this leads us to the other *Supposition* I made, which is apparently the Opinion of all who desire any *Establishment*, as you always seem to do, *viz.*

That there is an Obligation upon every *Christian*, to conform himself to what is *Established*; provided nothing be required of him, but what he judges to be Lawful. This is plain to all who plead for an *Establishment*: For otherwise, what can any *Establishment* signify? To what purpose should we desire or labour after it, unless such an Obligation be supposed? It is in vain to hope that any *Establishment* can be so framed, as that many Persons will not imagine some Defects and Imperfections in it: And if this Imagination be sufficient to excuse them from complying with the *Establishment*, it is wholly in vain to desire, or propose any such thing. If therefore an *Establishment* be necessary, or expedient, the Rule must be, that it is the Duty of all *Christians* to comply with it, if no sinful Terms of Communion be required of them; unless you will lay all *Establishments* open to infinite Divisions, and frustrate the very End for which alone they are designed. And if this be the *Rule* we are to go by, you cannot but think it your Duty to comply with the *Church* already *Established*. For that there ought to be an *Establishment*, is your Opinion as well as the Opinion of the

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the *Conformists*. It is plain, therefore, that it is the concern of those who are in Authority, to frame such an one, as they judge most agreeable to the Gospel of Christ, and the Ends of Religious Assemblies. And it is plain, that nothing remains for others to do, but to enquire whether they can lawfully conform to this *Establishment*, or no. And from hence it appears, that it cannot be as reasonable for you to expect the Compliance of your Superiors with you, as it is for them to expect your Conformity to what they have *Established*. For it appears, how meanly soever you may judge of their *Establishment*, that they have done their Duty, according to the best of their Judgment: And so nothing remains, but that you should do your Duty. And if an *Establishment* can serve any good purpose, it must be your Duty to comply with it, if you find nothing in it contrary to your Duty to God. But,

2. Supposing it were as reasonable for you to expect the Compliance of your Superiors with you, as it is for them to expect your Conformity to what they have *Established*: yet this would be no Argument at all against your Conformity; as long as no sinful Term of Communion is requir'd of you. For supposing that they do not behave themselves exactly as you think they ought, and will not comply, just according to your desires; I see not how this can possibly dissolve your Obligation to consult the Peace and Unity of the Church of Christ. Put the Case, that You your selves were in Authority, and had contrived and established a particular Form of Church-Government, and Worship, according to the best Light, and the truest Judgment of your own Consciences; would you think it justifiable, or tolerable, that a number of Men should separate from your *Establishment*, not because any thing is required of them which they account sinful, but because you would not comply with all their Demands, and new model it according to all their Wishes? And yet this is just the Case before us. Your Superiors have established a *Form*, as it was their Duty to do, agreeably to their best Judgment. You do not judge any thing in

their Constitution unlawful, as far as your Compliance is concerned. But you think it highly reasonable that they should act according to *your* Judgments, and make Alterations according to *your* Desires: And because they refuse to do this, therefore you will separate from them. This, I say, is what you could never excuse in your selves. This is what tends to the dissolving all *Order*, and *Decency*, in the World. For though Obedience be not supposed due to the *Persons* whom you think unreasonable; yet certainly a strict Regard is due to public *Peace* and *Unity*: And to what purpose do we talk of such an *Obligation* upon all Men? Or to what end do we take these *sacred Words* into our Mouths; if we can dispense with all regard to them, upon such Pretences as these? How *Obligation* to *Compliance* be dissolved whenever the Judgment of our Superiors is not conformable to our own, it is in vain for us to speak of an *Establishment*: And if there be never any necessity for us to regard *Peace* and *Unity*, but when the *Establishment* of our Superiors is agreeable to our Wishes, we do but profane those blessed Words, when we most pretend to exalt and magnify them. Certainly, it is the very Spirit of the Gospel, to comply even with the unreasonable demands of *others*; I mean, with what seems to us founded on no ground; rather than to give Occasion to the least degree of *Discord*, and *Hatred*, in the World. It is our Duty, to forgive the sharpest Injuries that can be offered us by our Brethren: Nor can we dispense with this Duty under pretence that it is as much *their* Duty to make us Reparation, and to treat our Pardon, as it is ours to be reconciled to them. Such Interpretations as this would effectually render vain, and useless, all the Precepts of the Gospel to this purpose. And if in the case of private Persons and Equals, we are indispensably obliged to regard *Peace* and *Concord*, even tho' they persist in their unreasonable Treatment of us; certainly much more, in the case of Superiors, are we obliged to have regard to the same great Concerns, provided nothing sinful be required of us: Because it is their

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Duty to frame an *Establishment* for us; because they must be supposed to have framed it according to the best light they enjoyed; because they design no injury to any private Person; and because there can be no *Peace* without such an Obligation upon us. Nor can *their* refusal to do what you think reasonable, any more excuse you from Compliance in all lawful things, than *your* refusal to do what *they* judge reasonable, can in your own Opinion, excuse *them* from Compliance with you.

Besides all this; if we should suppose it as reasonable for your *Superiors* to comply with you, as for you to comply with *them*; You must, on the other hand, acknowledge it as reasonable for you to comply with *them*, as for *them* to comply with you. Now this Argument, it is plain, holds as strongly against *their* Compliance with you, as against *your* Compliance with *them*. If it be good Reasoning on *your* side, it is equally good on *theirs*: And then there cannot possibly be the least ground ever to hope for an *Agreement*. But how ought such an *Argument* to be treated amongst Christians, as demonstrates the utter impossibility of *Peace* and *Unity* amongst them? But if you will not allow it to be good Reasoning on *their* part, as it is plain, from your Expectations, you will not; then you must either shew us, that it is not the same Reasoning; or you must think it no more an Argument against *your* Compliance with *them*, than it is against *their* Compliance with you. For the matter plainly comes to this; if this be a good Argument against *your* Compliance, it is equally good against the Compliance of your *Superiors*: And then you have no Reason to expect *their* Compliance with you. But if you will not allow it to be a good Argument against *their* Compliance with you, you cannot think it a good Argument against *your* Compliance with *them*: And then you have no reason from hence against *your* Compliance with *them*.

And indeed, the only reason you can have to expect the Compliance of your *Superiors*, must be this; because it is the Duty of all Men, as well those in *Authority* as in

Subjection, to consult, as much as possibly they can, the *Peace and Concord* of the *Society* to which they belong: For the intrinsic Justice of *your* demands cannot so easily appear to them as *this*: And ought not to move them any farther than it appears to them. And if this be the ground of your most reasonable Expectations, this is not particularly *their* case, but touches your selves very nearly. For if this be the Duty of all Men, it is as much *your* Duty as *theirs*: And it will be found a lamentable excuse, to plead before God at the last Day, that *you* neglected to promote *Concord and Unity* amongst Christians, because *others* neglected it; and that *you* refused to do *your* Duty, because *others* refused to do what *you* accounted to be *their* Duty.

I hope therefore, I may safely conclude, that there cannot be so great Reason for your *Superiors* Compliance with *you*, as there is for *your* Compliance with *Them*: Or, supposing the contrary, that *it is your Duty, notwithstanding, to have such a regard to Peace and Unity, as to comply with Them by conforming to the Establishment already made by them.*

VI. The *Second* Argument I shall mention, by which you defend your Practice, and satisfy your Consciences in your *Separation*, is founded on that regard you are obliged to have to your own *Edification*, in your attendance upon *Public Assemblies*. You argue, that you are indispensably obliged to consult your own spiritual Profit and Improvement; that this you cannot do so well, by conforming constantly to the *Church Established*, as by frequenting *Separate Assemblies*; and that therefore, you think your selves under an Obligation to *separate* from the *Church of England*. This I take to be an *Argument* the most universally received, and the most heartily embraced, of any that concern your *Separation*, and therefore, I shall be the more careful to examine the full force of it, And, under this Head, I hope to shew you,

1. *That there is nothing wanting in the Constitution of the Church*

Church of England, that you can suppose necessary to your private Edification.

2. That after your private Edification is so far consulted, it is your Duty to regard the public Edification of the whole Church of Christ.

3. That you cannot consult the Edification of the Church of Christ more effectually, than by promoting Peace and Concord amongst Christians.

These three Points will very much help to determine your Duty, as far as the matter of *Edification* is concerned.

1. That there is nothing wanting in the Constitution of the Church of England, that you can suppose necessary to your private Edification. The Ends of all our Public Assemblies on Religious Accounts, are completely answered, if the Constitution of our Public Services be so framed, as that we can praise Almighty God, and pray to him as we ought; and be perfectly instructed in our Duty, according to his Will. For the former of these purposes, the *Liturgy* is designed: For the latter, the *Sermons* constantly Preached, together with those *Portions* of *Scripture* that are Read to the People, in the daily *Service* of the Church.

Now, I cannot but think, that in the serious Use of this *Liturgy*, you may be more secure of offering up to God such Praises and Prayers as are acceptable to him, and fit for *Public* and *General Occasions*, than you can be in any *separate Assembly*, where the whole is left to the Discretion and Abilities of the *Minister*. There is nothing in this Service indecent; nothing unsuitable to the Majesty of him who receives it, or unbecoming the Character of those who offer it. It is composed of *Confessions*; of *Praises*, and *Thanksgivings*; of *Prayers* and *Intercessions*; and these very well adapted to the Conditions and Obligations, and Necessities of the generality of *Christians*. And what could you wish for more in a *Public Service*? Or, where can you go, where you can be certain of so good and so proper Assistances? If you say, you have been present at this *Service*, and find little entertainment in
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it; that it is dry and jejune; unapt. to move your Affections, and raise your Devotions; consider whence this must have proceeded. Have you come to it with a hearty good Will, and a sincere desire of relishing it? Have you thrown out of your Minds all Prejudices, and endeavoured to cure all that indifference to it, which a long disuse may have caused? Have you attended to it with Application and Seriousness? And, above all, have you prepared your Hearts before Hand, and endeavoured to furnish them with such Thoughts, and such Affections, as are proper to be expressed in all the several parts of *Public Worship*? This is the main Point of all: And whoever hath conscientiously done this, I am perswaded, will not lightly speak evil of the *Established Liturgy*; and will not easily be induced, either to treat it as a cold and empty Service, or to prefer such *Compositions* before it, as he must join with as soon as he hears them, and often before he can pass a true Judgment upon them. This indeed is true, that the Plainness and Simplicity of the *Liturgy*, renders it more intelligible to all Capacities, than any *Prayers* set up in opposition to it: But this Plainness is not such as can be despised by any of the greatest Sense; and is so far from being a Blemish, that it is an Excellence in it, and ought to recommend it to the Approbation and Use of all amongst us. And, on the other side, it must be acknowledged by all who have considered it, that it is so fram'd, as to be capable of expressing the devout Affections of all who bring any Devotion along with them; and of exciting, and awakening, all such Religious Passions as are necessary, or becoming, in their proper Places, and upon proper Occasions. If, therefore, you desire any *Establish'd Form of Worship*, how much greater reason have you to be thankful, that this is so well suited to the *End* of it, than to *separate* your selves from the use of it, because it is not, in every Expression, what you could wish it?

And as the *Established Church* hath thus provided for your worshipping God, as becomes *Christians*; so also it

is certain and evident, that there is no one Point of Duty and Practice, which you cannot be as secure of learning, under the *Ministry* of this *Church*, as of any other whatever; that you may be sure of hearing all the Doctrines of the Gospel honestly and compleatly delivered, and all the Motives of it fairly and affectionately proposed. The Portions of Holy Scripture that make up a constant Part of the daily Service, are of excellent Use to this purpose: And the Preaching of the *Ministers* in this *Church*, is, at least, as sufficient for this *End*, as any that is opposed to it. Nor need I use more Words upon this Head, because the Matter is too plain, and manifest, to be denied.

What is it, therefore, that can induce you to leave the *Established Church*, under pretence of *Edification*? The *Liturgy* of it is so framed, that you may praise God, and pray to him, in every respect, as becomes the best *Christians*: And if it do not seem, at first hearing, so moving, and affecting as you could wish; you ought to be willing to think, that it proceeds rather from some defect in *your selves*, than from the coldness of *that*; and to consider, that it is fully sufficient for the expressing, and exciting, all the devout Affections that are necessary to *Christians* assembled together. And the *Teaching* part is so managed, that you cannot fear the want of any necessary and useful *Instructions*. And if you can worship God, and be taught to live, in all respects, like *Christians*, as well in the *Communion* of the *Established Church*, as in any *Separate Congregation*; then, certainly, *there is nothing wanting in the Constitution of this Church that you can suppose necessary to your private Edification*. The *second* Proposition I undertook to speak to, under this Head, will not require so many Words, *viz.*

2. *That, after your private Edification is thus far consulted, it is your Duty to regard the public Edification of the whole Church of Christ.* This, I say, will not require much Illustration, because I have already touched upon it; and because all those acknowledge the Truth of it,

in other Words, who ever plead for Peace; all who argue for *Concessions*, or for *Conformity* on any Terms; all who acknowledge that *Christians* are concerned in the Good of their *Brethren*, and the Happiness of the World about them. And who is there so little acquainted with the Nature and Design of the *Christian Religion*, that doth not acknowledge this? And that is not sensible what a Stress the *Gospel* lays upon the *Social Virtues*, and with how much Affection it recommends to us the Advantage and Interest of the whole *Christian Church*? First, indeed, we are to regard our selves, so far as to secure our own Innocence, and to pay that Worship to *God*, which is due to him: But after this is secured, he that most tenderly regards the Peace of Humane Society, and the Happiness of his *Christian Brethren*, is most likely to be high in the Glory of *God*, and in the Favour of his Lord and Master. And if the Considerations of *Peace* and *Love*, be not of force enough to induce us to conform to a particular *settled*, or *established Church*, in which we can worship God acceptably, and promote our own Salvation; then certainly, *Peace* and *Love* are insignificant Trifles, and not worthy to be put in the Balance against the least Fancy, or Humour of our own. But this cannot be: And we have more reason, from almost every Page of the *New Testament*, to think, that one who frequents the *established Worship*, not because it is the most acceptable to him, or most agreeable to his present Sentiments, but only on the Account of *Peace*, and for fear of giving Encouragement to such Distinctions as may prove the Occasion of much *Enmity* and *Ill-will* amongst Christians; that this Man, I say, shall never find any reason to complain of the small and inconsiderable Defects of it, and shall be found at last, to have consulted even his own private *Edification*, much more than those who have followed other Methods, and acted upon other Principles. But I am to shew,

5. *That you cannot consult the Edification of the Church of Christ more effectually, than by promoting Peace and Concord*

cord among Christians. Knowledge, saith St. Paul, 1 Cor. 8. 1. puffeth up, but Charity edifieth. And the Consequence of this is, that every thing that can promote *Charity* and *Concord* amongst *Christians*, is to be the great Employment of their Lives; and every thing that tends to destroy those great Goods, and to promote *Strife* and *Discord*, is conscientiously to be avoided by them. No Society was ever built up, and made solid and durable, in any other Methods, but those of *Concord*; whereas the most solid and firm Societies in the World, have been disturbed and dissipated, and totally ruined by *Discord*. What then do we think will become of that *Christian Society* to which we belong, if we think much to disregard our own private Humours and Fancies for the sake of the *Public*, and go on to pursue such Methods, as have already inflamed us against one another, and daily prove the Causes of much *Ill-will* and *Hatred* amongst us? Was the Christian Church ever *edified*, or built up, by the *Strife* and *mutual Animosities* of those who composed it? Or, can we hope to deliver it down secure and unshaken to *Posterity*, by such a Behaviour? Who would think that *Christians* should not be ready to sacrifice any private Opinion to the Interest of their common *Christianity*? And yet, we live in those unhappy Times, in which *Christians* are rather labouring to find out Arts to ruine the *common Cause*, than willing to bend their own Designs and Opinions to the Support of it; and are rather studious to keep alive the miserable Distractions of the *Church of Christ*, than ready to cure and compose them, even by the easiest and most commendable Methods. Nothing adds so much Glory to the *Christian Church*, as the *Union* of *Christians*. And as nothing gives more Beauty to it, so nothing gives more Strength than this. Nothing makes it more firm, and happy, in it self; and nothing renders it more amiable in the Eyes of others, or gains more *Profelytes* to it. Nothing consequently can more consult the *Edification* of the *Christian Church*, than to promote *Peace* and *Love* amongst *Christians*; and nothing can more become you,
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than to make this the great *End* of your Actions: especially considering, that you cannot consult the *Edification* of the *Christian Church*, without consulting your own private *Edification*; and that it is impossible you *your selves* should be more effectually *edified*, than by regarding the *Public Good*, and by promoting the Practice of those peaceable and charitable Virtues, which make up so great a part of the *Gospel*.

And since it is so apparent, that your private *Edification* may be sufficiently promoted in your *Communion* with the *Established Church*; that, after that Point is secured, it is your Duty to regard the *Edification* of the *Church of Christ*; and that you cannot consult the *Edification* of the *Christian Church* more effectually, than by promoting *Peace* and *Concord* amongst *Christians*: I need not tell you what follows from hence. For if it be your indispensable Duty to promote *Peace* and *Concord* amongst *Christians*, then you are indispensably obliged to avoid whatever tends to *Uncharitableness* and *Dissention* amongst them. And, if the Method in which you are at present engaged, do manifestly give Occasion to constant Discord and Violence amongst us, remember, that you are to answer for it: And what Account will you be able to give of it, when you cannot deny, but that you might have been in a secure way to Heaven, without entering upon this Method? Judge therefore, in your selves, whether you can do any thing more worthy of the Name of *Christ*, than to help to put an End to the Misery and Shame of *this* part of the *Christian World*, by uniting with that *Church* from which you have separated. And, from all this laid together, judge in your selves, whether there be any thing in the *Argument* commonly drawn from *Edification*, sufficient to divert you from *constant Conformity* to it.

VII. But, notwithstanding what hath been hitherto urged, you may perhaps think, that the *Toleration*, allowed by the same *Laws* which have *established* the *Church of England*, hath wholly taken off your Obligation, and dissolved

dissolved all that Necessity, you might otherwise have been under, of *conforming* to the *Church of England*. Now, supposing it to be in the Power of a *Toleration* to leave you so far at Liberty, pray consider, whether the *Toleration* which you allege, was ever designed to give this Liberty to such as acknowledge *Communion* with the *Establish'd Church*, to be lawful; and consequently, whether the very Design of the *Toleration*, do not rather condemn than acquit you. But it signifies little, in our present Cause, whether this be so or no. For I argue not merely from the *Establishment* of the *Church* by *Civil Laws*: But from those Obligations to regard the *Peace*, and *Concord* of *Christians*, which are ever the same, with, and without, the Interposition of the *Civil Power*. It is ever the Duty of *Christians* to have the same sacred Regard to them; and such a Duty as can never be dispensed with, So that were the *Church of England* only the settled Church of the Place, without the *Establishment* of *Civil Laws*, your Obligations to *Conformity* would be still indispensable; because you could not consult the *Public Happiness*, and *Peace*, without it. Nor can any *Toleration* dissolve these Obligations; because no *Toleration* can dissolve your Obligations to consult the *Public Happiness*, and *Peace*, as much as you possibly can. This remains the Duty of a *Christian* for ever: Nothing can disengage him from it, but the utter Impossibility of the thing, or the Inconsistency of it with his own Innocence, and Eternal Salvation.

But when you speak of *Toleration*, the very mention of it cannot but put you in mind, that the *Church of England* hath not only *Prescription*, and a settled Possession, to plead for it self, but also an *Establishment* by *Civil Authority*, as well as *Ecclesiastical*. And, therefore, if you should fix it only upon *this*, as you often do, yet this is sufficient to condemn your Disregard to it; as long as any Regard is acknowledged to be due to the *Injunctions*, and *Prescriptions*, of *lawful Authority*. For when any particular *Church* is *established* by the *Civil Authority*

thority of a Land, *Conformity* to it is made the exprefs Command of that *Authority*, and is required of all who judge it to be lawful: And *Non-conformity* in such, becomes not only a Neglect of the *Peace* and *Happiness* of *Society*, but also an Act of *Disobedience* to lawful *Authority*. The Design of the *Establishment* could be no other, but that *all* should conform to this *Church*, who can possibly do it with a safe Conscience: And consequently, the *Toleration* cannot be supposed contrary to the very Design of the *Establishment*. But, however that be, our Obligations to consult the *Peace*, and *Concord* of *Christians*, can be dissolved by no Humane Permissions; and consequently, the *Toleration* cannot dissolve them. And from both these it follows, that the *Toleration* cannot, in the least, affect the Duty of *constant Communion* with the *Church* of *England*, or excuse you in your Neglect of it.

VIII. I come now to examine *another Reason*, too commonly urged against *constant Communion* with the *Church* of *England*: And that is founded upon a mistaken Notion of a *Catholic Spirit*, and of *Christian Moderation*. For it is said by many of you, that *constant Conformity* to this particular *Church* is utterly inconsistent with true *Moderation*, and that charitable and *Catholic Spirit* that becomes a *Christian*. Now, in reply to this, I shall endeavour to make it appear,

1. That true *Christian Moderation* is of such a nature, that it will it self incline and lead you to constant Conformity with the *Church* of *England*. And,

2. That constant Conformity is perfectly consistent with a true *Catholic Spirit*, and the most extensive *Christian Charity*.

And if these *Two Points* can be clearly made out, they will entirely remove out of the way this *Objection* against your *constant Communion* with the *Church* of *England*.

I. I shall endeavour to shew you, that true *Christian Moderation* is of such a nature, that it will, it self, incline and lead you to constant Conformity. For *Christian Moderation*,

ration, rightly stated, is a Temper of Mind, disposing us to *Peace* and *Concord*; teaching us to give up all lesser Concerns to these, and to recede from what we imagine to be due to us in Justice, or from what we might, in Strictness of Right, lawfully insist upon; to recede, I say, from this, for the sake of a great and universal Good. And the Excellence of this *Christian Grace*, in its Influence upon Humane Society, appears from hence, that it leaves not Men at Liberty, and indifferent to *Peace* and *Concord*, till they are all satisfied in their Judgments, so far as to be of one Opinion, and to think the same things just and reasonable in themselves. This would be endless: And no one could hope to see *Peace* in any one Society in the World, upon such Terms; there being little reason to hope for an universal Agreement in the same Notions. But *Moderation*, as it was sincerely designed to promote the Peace of Society, so it takes a more effectual Course than this, to accomplish its Design. For it teaches, and obliges, those that differ never so widely in their Opinions concerning lesser Matters, to unite, and agree, for the sake of something that is of more Weight and Importance. *Moderation*, it is true, doth not oblige us to alter our Judgment about the Reasonableness, or Unreasonableness; the Justice, or Injustice, of any particular Matter: But it doth what is much more likely to contribute to the Happiness of the World; for it obliges us to give up a Right, and to recede from what appears to us to be a reasonable Demand, rather than to give the least Occasion to the Disturbance, and Unhappiness of Society. So that it appears to be the great Business of *Moderation*, to induce us to practise all lawful Things for the sake of *Peace* and *Concord*, amongst Christians. And consequently, your constant Conformity to the *Established Church* being, in your own Judgments, lawful, *Christian Moderation* is so far from inclining you to refuse it, that it doth, it self, lead you to it; as it leads you to all Acts of Compliance, and Condescension, for the sake of a great, and universal Good. This I think a true Account of *Christian Moderation*, and particularly of that place in the *New*

Testament, where St. Paul prescribes to *Christians*, that their *Moderation* be known unto all Men.

But supposing this be not an exact Account of this Matter, yet I am certain that here is nothing laid down, but what is apparently the Duty of every *Christian*: And if that be so, it is of small Importance, whether he be obliged to this Duty by the Precepts of *Moderation*, or by some other Precepts of the *Gospel*. It is certain, that your Obligations to consult the *Peace* and *Happiness* of *Society*, cannot be answered, unless you are ready to give up all lesser Considerations to *these*. Nay, it is certain, that all the Precepts in the *Christian Religion*, that concern *Peace*, and *Concord*, are vain and useless, unless this Method be taken. For can you possibly hope, or expect, to see such an Agreement amongst *Christians*, as we all pretend to wish for, if we must wait till they are all persuaded of the Justice and Reasonableness of one another's Demands? till they are of the same Opinion, in those Points in which they now differ? We may as well expect a Reconciliation, and Agreement, between the most distant Things in Nature. But here is a plain and easy way to *Peace* and *Concord*; if *Christians* would be persuaded not to break the *Peace* of *Society*, for the sake of any Matter of less Importance; for the sake of what they might omit, without endangering their own Eternal Happiness. This is a *Method*, of all others, the most level to all Capacities; it being no difficult Matter to determine whether such a particular Behaviour be conducive to the public *Peace*, or contrary to it; and every Man being his own Judge of the *Lawfulness*, or *Unlawfulness* of any Practice. So that this Method ought to be acceptable to you, as it is the only probable way to come to any tolerable Degree of *Peace* amongst *Christians*.

It is a very bad Notion of *Moderation*, that is embraced by too many, who think it the business of this *Grace* to make us indifferent how we behave our selves in lesser Matters, provided we hold to the main, and fundamental Points of *Religion*. For it cannot be the design of *Moderation* to break in upon any other Precepts of the *Gospel*,

Gospel, or upon any of the Dictates of sound Reason. And since it is certain, that the *Peace*, and *Happiness* of *Society*, is most passionately recommended to the care, and regard of *Christians*; it is as certain, that *Moderation* cannot dissolve the Obligations of *Christians* to have a tender Concern for the good of the whole *Church*, or make it an indifferent Matter to them, which way of Behaviour they chuse: But, whatever the true Notion of it be, it certainly leaves them under the same Obligations to promote *Peace*, to which the Laws of their *Master* have bound them up.

But there is yet another Notion of this *Virtue*, according to which it is declared by some, to be the Nature, and Office, of *Christian Moderation*, to regulate our Opinions concerning every thing, and to teach us not to value any thing above what it deserves, and not to lay a greater weight upon any Matter, than the Nature of it requires. Now, though this cannot be a just Account of that *Moderation* we find spoken of in the *New Testament*, yet it is certain, that it is our Duty to fix just Notions of things in our Minds, and to value every thing according to its Excellence, and no farther. And if any Persons think fit to call it by the Name of *Moderation*, it is not worth while to dispute that Point. But I must then observe, that *Moderation*, in this Notion of it, hath not the least Tendency, in its Nature, to hinder your constant Conformity to the *Church of England*, or to induce you to give any Encouragement to a Separation from it. For if it be the peculiar Office of *Moderation*, to keep your Value for every thing within due Bounds; and to regulate it so, that it being not placed upon any Object in an undue Measure: It will, indeed, teach you to value every thing less than your own eternal Salvation; but it cannot teach you to undervalue the *Peace* and *Concord* of *Christians*, as Trifles of no Importance. No, the Value of *these* will be always great, next to your own everlasting Happiness; and cannot be affected, or altered, by *Christian Moderation*: Which, if it rightly settle the due place of every thing, will certainly fix *these* in a very high Degree, and make them second to nothing but *Salvation* it self. And,

If *Moderation* it self, according to this Account of it, will unavoidably lead you to this, how can you shew this Regard, that is apparently due to these Goods, whilst you refuse that *Conformity* to a lawful *Establishment*, which would mightily promote them; and give Encouragement to those Divisions, which are the greatest hindrances to them? And how can you be said, in this Conduct of your selves, to satisfy the Demands, and obey the Dictates, of that very *Moderation*, which you plead in your Defense; unless you suppose it becomes a *Christian* to have an indifferent and *Moderate* Regard, to that *Unity*, and *Peace*, which are the very Glory and Strength of *Christianity*.

Indeed, were there any thing in your *constant Communion* with our *Church*, which would necessarily oblige you to place a greater Value upon any thing in the *Constitution* of it, than it really and truly deserves; something might be urged from the Virtue of *Moderation*, in this Sense of it, to defend you in your Neglect of it. But *constant Conformity* implies not in it any thing like this. For if you have framed your Opinions so, as to think meanly of the *Public Service* of the *Established Church*, in comparison with the ways of *Worship* set up in opposition to it; (which I cannot imagine to proceed from any thing, but *Education*, or *Custom*;) *constant Communion* doth not oblige you to think, or declare the contrary: Nor doth it necessarily imply any thing in it, but that you do, upon some Considerations, prefer it before *Separation*; whether for its own sake, or the sake of the public *Peace*, and *Unity*, no one can judge from the Practice of it. And consequently, the Principles of *Moderation*, this way explained, cannot reasonably influence you against *constant Conformity*; because *constant Conformity* is the best way of expressing that Regard which is certainly due to *Peace* and *Concord*; and because it implies nothing in it, that can oblige you to place an unjust Value upon any part of our *Constitution*.

Whatsoever, therefore, be supposed to be the Nature, and Office of *Christian Moderation*, it is evident, that it
must

must rather engage you to *constant Communion* with the *Church of England*, then help to influence you against it. Having thus endeavoured to shew you, with how little Reason this excellent, and truly Christian Grace is urged against the Reasonableness of your *Conformity*; I come now to shew,

2. *That constant Conformity is perfectly consistent with a true Catholic Spirit, and most extensive Christian Charity.* And this will appear by considering what this *Catholic* and *charitable* Frame of Spirit is, to which we are obliged by the *Christian Religion*. Now, it is plain, that there is nothing in the *Gospel* of our *Saviour*, designed to lay an Obligation upon us to approve, or encourage, by Words, or by Presence, all the different Ways of *Public Worship* amongst *Christian Brethren*. This cannot be the Duty of *Christians*; because the Practice of it is impossible, without the utmost Inconvenience, and Disorder: Nor did I ever yet hear of any one, who could produce one *Text of Scripture* to shew the Necessity of this; or who thought himself obliged to give equal Encouragement to all *religious Parties* amongst *Christians*. And yet, if the Encouragement be not as equal as possible, I see not how this Obligation is satisfied; if there be such an Obligation upon us. And we find amongst those who speak most of this *Catholic Spirit*, that it extends not, in Practice, generally, to more than Two sorts of *Christians*; and this, with a very remarkable, and constant Inequality. So little do these Persons themselves seem to think themselves obliged to a just, and exact Practice, of this imagined Duty, or to tie themselves up to a rigorous Observation of it. This, therefore, cannot be included in the true Notion of that *Catholic* and *charitable* Spirit, which becomes all *Christians*; because it is a Practice nowhere plainly recommended; and, I had almost said, utterly impossible; and, in the least Degree of it, highly disorderly, and the Cause of great Indecencies, and Improprieties, in the *Church*.

And as this is a sufficient Reason for all *Christians* not to think themselves concerned in any such Duty;

So *You*, especially, to whom I now speak, are very peculiarly obliged to resist the Progress of any such Notions in the World, if the least Concern for *Public Peace*, and *Unity*, remain in your Breasts. For it is often professed in your Names, that you desire an *Establishment*; and that some *Amendments*, and *Abatements*, would entirely reconcile you to the present *Constitution*. This, the best, and greatest of your *Ministers* have declared, in their own Name, and in yours; and continue to this Day to do so. If, therefore, it be a Duty to communicate with all *Sects* of *Christians*; how can you profess your selves ready to communicate constantly with the *Church of England*, upon some Terms, and to leave off all such Encouragement, for the future, to any who separate from it? But if you sincerely desire such *Alterations* as would reconcile you, and make you *constant Conformists*; how then can you think this a necessary Duty of *Christianity*? And why do you go on to encourage such Notions as must render vain all attempts towards our *Unity*, and *Concord*? For if this Encouragement be due, according to the Laws of the *Gospel*, and the Nature of *Christianity*, to all the differing Parties of *Christians*; then what will the best *Establishment* in the World signify towards the *Ends* of an *Establishment*? No *Peace* can be this way affected; since there can be no Obligation upon Men, according to these Principles, to conform to it, were it the most perfect that could possibly be imagined. Take care, therefore, lest your present Practice oppose your professed Design; and sow not such Seeds of Dissension in the Land, as will utterly confound all Designs of *Union*, and *Agreement*, and render all *Accommodations* fruitless, and ineffectual. If you have the least Desire of such an *Establishment* as you could entirely comply with, entertain not these Principles, which strike at the Root of all *Establishments*, and prevent all the good Purposes of them, And if you have any Concern for *Peace* and *Unity* amongst us, encourage not such Notions, as are inconsistent with that Regard to *Peace* and *Unity*, which the *Christian Religion* enjoins. This is another Reason, why it cannot be the Duty of *Christi-*

ans to give such Encouragement to all the differing Ways of *Worship* amongst *Christians*; because it is the Duty of *Christians* to consult the *Peace* of the *Christian Church*. And whether this be most likely to be done by *Conformity* to a *lawful establish'd Church*, or by an indifferent Encouragement of all the several Churches, amongst us, let any one judge. Our Duty is to do all lawful Things, for the sake of *Peace*, and to promote *Love* amongst *Christians*: And yet many amongst us act, as if they thought it their Duty to do every thing possible, in order to encourage *Divisions*, and *Hatred*, in the *Christian Church*. Why else do they rather chuse to find out such *new Duties* in the *Gospel*, never heard of before in the *Christian Church*, than to practise the *old*? And why do they refuse to walk in that Path, which leads plainly, and directly, to greater Degrees of *Unity* and *Concord*? A true *Christian Spirit* cannot direct us to such a Behaviour; any more than it can direct us to disturb the *Peace* of *Society*, and to render all Designs of *Accommodation* ineffectual.

It is true, that it is our Duty to acknowledge all *Christians* to be such; to love our Neighbour as our selves; to do unto all Men, as it is reasonable for us to wish they would do unto us, were we in their Condition; to be kind and tender-hearted, one towards another; to practise all Instances of *Humanity* and *Charity*, towards our Brethren; to abhor all Thoughts of Rigour, or Inhumanity, for the sake of any religious Difference; and to do them all the Good that is in our Power, and that is consistent with the Obligations we are under to our selves, and to the rest of the World. All this, and the like, we are strictly obliged to: But this doth not at all bring us under any Necessity of giving any Encouragement to the *Errors* of our *Brethren*; especially such *Errors* as have a bad Influence upon *Human Society*, and prove the Occasion of much Unhappiness to it: But *Christian Charity* rather obliges us to the contrary; to endeavour to convince them of their *Errors*, and to put a Stop to the evil Consequences of them. But it is wonderful to hear this Divine Virtue alleged against the Reasonableness of *constant*

stant Conformity; when it is so very evident, that there is not one single Branch of it, but what may be duly and punctually performed by a *Christian* in *Communion* with the *Church of England*. Nay, I will add, that this Grace may be practised, in greater Extent, by such an one, than it can be by any who give Encouragement to *Separation* from it: because the *former* neglects no part of Charity which the *other* practises; and besides this, shews a sacred Regard to *public Peace*, by giving no Encouragement to any thing that is the Occasion of *Uncharitableness*, or *Disturbance*, amongst Christians; which seems to be one of the first, and principal Branches of *Charity*; and which the Person who thinks *constant Communion* with this particular *Church* not worthy of his Regard, cannot be said to do. And indeed, this seems to me so considerable a part of *Christian Charity*, and so necessary an Effects of a truly *Catholic Spirit*, that I cannot but think that we may draw a much better *Argument* from *these*, in Behalf of your *constant Conformity*, than any that can be urged against it. For what nobler Instance of *Christian Charity* can there be supposed, than to regard the *Peace* of the *Christian Church*? And what more genuine and natural Effect of a truly *Catholic Spirit*, than to endeavour to put some Stop to the Divisions, and consequently, the uncharitable Heats, among *Christians*? This will shew the most *Catholic Spirit*: And consequently, if an *Argument* taken from *these*, can have any Influence upon you, it must determine you to *constant Conformity*. At least, I may have leave to say, that it is evident from what hath been advanced upon this Head, that there is nothing included in *these*, that can influence you to give any Encouragement to *unnecessary Separations* from the *Church of England*; or that can be supposed inconsistent with the strictest *Communion* with it.

Having thus distinctly consider'd such of your *Reasons* against *constant Conformity* to the *Established Church*, as seem'd to me most generally, and most firmly, received among *You*; and having offer'd to your Thoughts some

Observations upon them : I shall only propose a few more *Considerations* to you, and so make an End.

IX. If you judge it unlawful for you to conform constantly, because this would be to approve, and encourage, *unnecessary Impositions* in the *Christian Church*, which you are bound to oppose, and resist : I desire you would consider, that this will equally hold against *Conformity* to all *Establishments* ; because none can be framed without *unnecessary Impositions* ; and also against our own *Establishment*, tho' it should be amended according to the Demands which have been openly made, in *your* Name, as well as the Name of your *Ministers*. You profess your selves ready to join with this *Establishment* so amended : And yet some *unnecessary Impositions* will unavoidably be left in it. How then can you urge an Argument against *Conformity* to it, as it is at present ; which concludes as strongly against *Conformity* to it, when your Demands are answered ; and you your selves are ready to comply with it. But in truth, *constant Conformity* doth not imply in it either the *Approbation*, or Encouragement, of *unnecessary Impositions*. It implies in it only, as I observed before, that you think fit to comply with the *Use* of them ; but for what Reasons, it doth not declare. And besides, supposing it doth imply in it the Encouragement of *unnecessary Impositions* upon *Christians*, which in themselves are neither good, nor bad : On the other side, *Separation* from this Church implies in it, as much, the Encouragement of such Principles, and Practices, as make all *Unity* and *Peace* impossible, and impracticable. The Burden is not so heavy yet in this *Church*, as to deserve much *Zeal*, and Heat against it : But remember, that if, on the one hand, you give occasion to the Imposition of *more Ceremonies* ; on the other hand, you give occasion to much *Violence*, and *Uncharitableness*, whether you design it or not. And which of the two can we think the more acceptable to God ; the Man who refuses *constant Conformity*, for fear he should encourage the Imposition of some indifferent Things ; or the Man who practices it, for fear he

he should encourage the *Violence* and *Uncharitableness*, that are likely to accompany all *Religious Divisions*? Certainly, it is more Praiseworthy, to submit to some *Impositions*, which had better not have been ordained, than to do any thing that tends to the disturbance of the *Christian Church*. Supposing it to be a Matter not Laudable in it self; yet certainly it is our Duty to chuse this, rather than a *greater Evil*: And it cannot be necessary for a *Christian* to resist such *Impositions*; when he cannot do it without endangering Matters of infinitely greater Moment. For the supposed, possible, Inconveniences of the *former*, are not worthy to be put into the Balance against the visible, and sensible, evil Consequences of the *latter*: Nor is there any thing to be dreaded from the *one*, comparable to that *Violence*, and *Uncharitableness*, and that *Dishonour* to *Christianity*, that is seen to follow from the *other*. And how then can you think it worth a *Christian's* while, to testify against *Impositions*, not sinful in themselves, at the expence of Public *Peace* and *Unity*?

X. Consider that *your* Case is very different from the Case of *Ministers*: And therefore, that how hard soever the *Terms* of *Ministerial Conformity* may seem, this cannot excuse *you* in your *Separation*. The *Terms* of *Lay-Conformity*, in which only *you* are concerned, are few, and lawful. I need not tell you what they are, because you know by Experience, that they are not so intolerable, but that you can sometimes comply with them. Nor need I add any more on this Head; and so shall only appeal to your *Ministers* themselves, (which I believe, I may venture to do in this Case) and entreat *you* to consult the best, and most judicious amongst them, whether *They* should have thought themselves under an Obligation to *separate* from the *Established Church*, supposing no other *Terms* had been required of *them*, but what are now required of *you*; or rather, whether *they* would not, upon such *Terms*, have judged themselves to be under an indispensable Obligation to hold *Communion* with it, and to give all Lawful Encouragement to it. Had this been the *Case*, I cannot
but

but think, if I may have leave to judge from all their Conduct, and all their Proposals, that the *Act of Uniformity* would never have been complained of by them, or any material Objections urged against the *Terms* of their *Conformity*. And if this appear to be so, supposing them in your Circumstances, this should induce you to think seriously of your Behaviour; and not to disturb the *Peace* of the *Christian Church*, for the sake of those *Terms* of *Communion*, which you acknowledge to be, in themselves, lawful.

XI. But if, after all that can be said, to persuade you to *constant Conformity*, you should be apt to think, that our *Divisions* are come to such an Height, and the Seeds of *Discord*, and *Uncharitableness*, sown so Universally thro' the Land, that your *Conformity* can do but little towards restoring *Peace* and *Charity*, amongst us; and is hardly worthy of your Concern, on this Account: Consider, that this cannot excuse you from doing what you can, towards that glorious *End*, and let this be never so little, it will be accepted by God, as the only Testimony you can give, how highly you value them. We have not done our Duties, in our particular Stations, till we have done all in our Power, to promote *Love* and *Concord* amongst *Christians*: And if every one should neglect to do this, because his Influence will reach but to a small Compass, it is impossible they should ever be restored. The fewer Occasions there be of *Strife* and *Variance*; the more likely is true *Christianity* to flourish, and the *Gospel* to be well spoken of, in the World. And since your *conformity* will remove many of these Occasions at present, and is not unlikely, thro' the Blessing of God, to lay the Foundation of a lasting *Peace*, and glorious *Concord*, amongst us, in Times to come; how can you think, that you have that Regard to these great *Goods*, which *Christians* ought to have, if you still neglect that *Conformity*, which is the greatest Demonstration you can give of your Regard to them?

XII. If therefore, the *Terms* of your *Conformity* to the *Established Church* be lawful; if you can by *this* promote *Peace*

Peace and Love, amongst *Christians*; if it be your indispensable Duty to do what you can towards this End, however others neglect it and disregard it; if you can, by your *Conformity*, highly consult the *Edification* of the whole *Christian Church*, without neglecting your own, or endangering your *Salvation*; if neither true *Christian Moderation*, nor a *Catholic and charitable Spirit*, nor *Zeal against Impositions*, include in them any thing inconsistent with *constant Conformity*: Let the Honour of that Name by which you are called; and the Sense of those Mischiefs we feel from our miserable Divisions, and Distinctions, move you to the Practice of it. Call to mind the Beauty, and Glory of a compliant Temper; and think how unbecoming you are apt to judge it in others, that they will not yield up the contested Points for the sake of Peace. Look out into the World, and see what Heat and Fury our *Religious Distinctions* add to all other Contests; how much unbecoming Passion they cause amongst your selves, and amongst others who oppose you; how fatally they turn the Edge, and Bent, of Men's Minds, from Concerns of infinite Moment, to Trifles of no Consideration; how many Opportunities they will ever give our *common Enemies*, within, and without us, to carry on their Designs; and perhaps, at last, to bring about our utter Ruine. Reflect on all this, and much more that might be added; and then consider seriously with your selves, whether it can be enough for you to follow your own Inclinations, without any Regard to the World of *Christians* about you; and whether it can become you to refuse to do any thing in order to put an End to these Miseries. Last of all, Think not your own *Eternal Salvation* unconcerned in this Matter: For the Precepts of the *Gospel* make it the indispensable Duty of every *Christian*, to follow after Peace; to avoid every Practice that may prove the Occasion of *Uncharitableness*; and to promote *Love*, and *Concord*, in the World. And certainly, there is Force enough in all these Considerations, to induce You to forsake the *Separation* you are engaged in, and to practise *constant Conformity* to the *Church of England*.

A Brief

DEFENSE

O F

Episcopal Ordination.

I N W H I C H

- I. The Arguments for it are propos'd.
 - II. The Pleas, for the Right of Presbyters to Ordain, are examin'd.
 - III. The Pleas alleged for the same Right in the Laity, are consider'd.
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To which are added,

A *REPLY* to the Introduction to the *Second Part* :
And a *POSTSCRIPT* relating to the *Third Part* of
Mr. *Calamy's* Defense of *Moderate Non-conformity*.

By **BENJAMIN HOADLY, M. A.**

*Rector of St. Peter's Poor. Now Lord Bishop
of Bangor.*

To the R E A D E R.

THE following Treatise in Defense of Episcopal Ordination, had long before this been published, had not Indisposition, and unavoidable Interruptions prevented it. Such as it is, I hope it will be acceptable to all who sincerely desire that Truth alone may prevail: and that it may be so, I am sure I have used my utmost Endeavours to render it as inoffensive, and as void of all Personal Matters as any one can expect such a Debate to be. To this I have added, a Reply to the Introduction to the Second Part of the Defense of Moderate Non-conformity, because that touched even the Lawfulness of Conformity to the Established Church; and was esteemed by many Nonconformists an unanswerable Vindication of their Proceedings. I hope I am now come to an End of my Part in this Controversy, in which every Body may see I have done more than what I was obliged to do in the Course of it; and have refus'd no pains, to set it in as clear a Light as I could. I have nothing more to add, but solemnly to assure the Reader, that in the whole of what I have written in this Cause, I have had no Design either upon our dissenting Brethren, on the one hand, but that of convincing their Judgments by such sober, and calm Reasonings, as appear'd to me too just and reasonable to be neglected; or upon the Church of England, on the other hand, but that of defending its Cause upon such Principles as alone appear'd to me sufficient to establish, and maintain it against the Reasonings of those who have separated from it. These Designs I hope are pardonable, should they be found to be joined with many Mistakes: And if these Mistakes, or any Mismanagement of mine do but excite the Zeal of some abler Pen to do Justice to that Cause which I am said by some to have injur'd; I shall think all the Pains I have taken well recompens'd by such an Event, joined with the Satisfaction I have within, that it hath been my sincere Design, in what I have written, to promote Peace, Unity, and Charity.

A Brief

D E F E N S E

O F

Episcopal Ordination.

I N T R O D U C T I O N.

THE Design of the following *Treatise* is to set the Matter of *Episcopal Ordination* in its due Light. And because in these later Ages of the Church there have been Contests rais'd, and these prosecuted even to this Day, concerning the proper *Ministers of Ordination*; some pleading in Behalf of *Presbyters*, others in Behalf of the *Laity*, for the same Right which is claim'd by *Bishops*, the best Method I can think of to pursue this Design in, is,

I. To propose the Arguments for *Episcopal Ordination*: that so we may judge on what it is, the *Claim of Bishops* to the Power of *Ordination* is founded.

II. To examine the *Pleas* that are still alleged for the *Right of Presbyters* to *Ordain*: that so it may be judged by *all*, whether their Claims have any just Foundation; and be seriously consider'd by *themselves* whether they ought to be continu'd.

III. To consider what hath been lately advanced in favour of the *Laity's* Right to appoint, and *ordain Ecclesiastical Officers* in the *Christian Church*.

Y

CHAP.

C H A P. I.

The Arguments for Episcopal Ordination propos'd.

I. **T**HE *first* thing I have undertaken to do, is to *propose* the Arguments for Episcopal Ordination ; that so we may judge on what it is the *Claim of Bishops* to the *Power of Ordination* is founded.

Sect. 1. *Argument the first*, taken from *Prescription* and the *Lawfulness* of the thing it self.

First, *Bishops* have a long, and immemorial Possession of the *Power of Ordination* to plead for themselves ; and with this the Confession of the greatest Patrons of the *Presbyterian Cause*, that such a *Confinement* of this *Power* to *them*, is in it self lawful. The most learned of them have never been able to produce any positive Proof of any Time in the *Christian Church*, since the *Apostles Days*, when it was esteem'd the Office of every *Minister* of the *Gospel* to *ordain* others to the *Ministry* ; or when this Office was not acknowledg'd by all who speak any thing of it, to belong to single Persons superior to the ordinary *Presbyters*. The utmost they pretend to, is to conjecture the Time when this *Power* was first so appropriated. The Improbability of their *Conjecture* I shall have Occasion hereafter to consider. But this it self fixeth it so as to leave *Bishops* in the Possession of this *Power* for above 1550 Years last past. By this means they have all the *Right* which *Prescription* can possibly give : And this hath always been esteem'd to give a *Right* in all Cases lawful in themselves, so far, as that it hath never been thought reasonable or just to alienate what *Prescription* hath thus confirm'd ; nor have any *After-claims* been ever thought valid in such Cases. So that the *Bishops* may well claim a *Power* which they think belongs to them by *Apostolical Institution* and which their very *Adversaries* acknowledge them

them to have been lawfully possessed of for so long a Space of Time. I only just mention this *Argument*, and so proceed to *others*, from which it will appear that they have not only such a *Right* as *Prescription* can give; but that their Claim stands upon a better Foundation.

Sect. 2. *Argument the Second*, taken from the *Instances* of *Ordination* recorded in the *New Testament*.

Secondly, it may be alleg'd in favour of *Episcopal Ordination*, that there is no Instance, in the *New Testament*, of *Ordination* perform'd by *Presbyters*; or, at least, without some *Church Officers* superior to *Presbyters*. For the Proof of this I must refer the Reader to the next *Chapter*, in which I shall examine all the *Instances* produc'd out of *Scripture* in favour of *Presbyterian Ordination*, and shew that no such *Right* in *Presbyters* to ordain, as is of late Years claim'd, can be concluded from any of them. And what I doubt not to prove is, that there is no Example of *Ordination* alleg'd in their Behalf, in which we find not some *Ecclesiastical Officer* acting, superior to the ordinary *Teachers* of those Days. And the least that can be inferr'd from hence is this, that it is more agreeable to the *Instances* of *Ordination* recorded in the *New Testament*, that it should never be perform'd without the Direction and Hands of some *Ecclesiastical Ministers* superior to the ordinary *Presbyters* and *Teachers* of later Ages, than that it should be perform'd by mere *Presbyters*, without any such superior *Officer*. Thus the *Scripture Instances* of *Ordination* will be found at last on the side of such a *Confinement* of the *Power* of *Ordination* as we plead for; and very contrary to the Method practis'd by our *dissenting Brethren*.

Sect. 3. *Argument the Third*, taken from the *Rules*, concerning *Ordination*, in the *New Testament*.

Thirdly, it may be further alleg'd from *Scripture*, in favour of *Episcopal Ordination*, that there are no Precepts

recorded there, as given in order to direct any in the Point of *Ordination*, but what are given to Persons superior to the *Presbyters*, and ordinary *Teachers* of those Days. In the next *Chapter* I propose very evidently to shew, that the Power of *Ordination* is not either express'd, or imply'd in any of those *Rules* or *Directions* given to *Presbyters* in the *New Testament*, which are produc'd to this Purpose. And here it is sufficient to observe, that the only *Rules* extant in the *New-Testament*, in which the Business of *Ordination* is expressly mentioned, are directed to *Timothy* and *Titus*, Two Persons, who by the Confession of all, were superior in *Order* to the *Presbyters*, or *Teachers*. This is, indeed, a very remarkable thing, that when there were *Presbyters* already settled at *Ephesus* and in *Crete*; and such as were without doubt as fit to manage the Business of *Ordination* as any in later Ages: That *St. Paul*, I say, should not think fit to intrust this Affair with them, and their *Presbyteries*, but should devolve it wholly upon *Timothy*, and *Titus*; and instead of sending his *Directions* to the *Teachers* already in those Places, should appoint these Two to this Office, without the least mention of any such *Right* in those *Teachers*, as they must have had according to some modern Reasonings. From this Argument the least that can be concluded is this, that it was *St. Pauls* Judgment that at that Time and in those Places, *Ordination* should be put into the Hands of Persons superior to *Presbyters*, and not left to their Management. From whence it must follow likewise that this Judgment was the same with respect to all *Presbyters* and all Places, unless it can be shewn that there was any thing peculiar with respect to the *Presbyters* of *Ephesus* and *Crete*; to determine him to except them, and to deal otherwise with them than he did with other *Presbyters*. And this Consideration ought to be of more Weight, because the *Epistles* to *Timothy*, and *Titus*, are the only Records in which we find his Will plainly express'd concerning the first *Ordination* of *Presbyters*, and *Teachers* properly so call'd; and yet nothing in them, as if he thought of any

Right

Right in Presbyters to ordain others, but on the contrary all his *Rules* directed to *superior Church Officers*. It is of small Importance, whether *Timothy* and *Titus* were *fix'd Bishops*, properly so call'd, or not. Perhaps at the first Plantation of *Churches* there was no such necessity of *fix'd Bishops* as was found afterwards; or perhaps at first the Superintendency of such Persons as *Timothy* and *Titus* was thought requisite in many different Churches, as their several Needs requir'd. If so, their Office certainly was the same in *all Churches* to which they went; and *Ordination* a Work reserv'd to such as they were, Persons superior to the settled *Presbyters*. But as to *Ephesus*, and *Crete*, it is manifest that *Timothy* and *Titus* were to stay with the *Churches* there, as long as their Presence was not more wanted at other Places: And besides, if they did leave these Churches, there was as good reason that they should return to them to perform the same Office of *Ordination* when there was again Occasion, as there was at first, why they should be sent by *St. Paul* to that purpose. Nor is there the least Footstep in all Antiquity, as far as it hath yet appear'd, of any attempt in the *Presbyters* of *Ephesus* or *Crete*, to take to themselves the *Offices* appropriated, in the foremention'd *Epistles*, to a superior Order of Men. So then, we have this Argument from Scripture in favour of *Episcopal Ordination*, that the only *Canons* and *Prescriptions* recorded there, concerning the *Ordination* of *Presbyters*, are directed to *Persons* superior to these *Presbyters*, to be executed by *Them* only, as far as appears.

Sect. 4. *Argument the Fourth*, taken from *Apostolical Institution*.

Fourthly, It may in the last place be alleg'd in favour of *Episcopal Ordination*, that the *Apostles* left the Power of Ordaining *Presbyters* in the Hands of *fix'd Bishops*. The main Point here to be prov'd is, That *Episcopacy* is of *Apostolical Institution*. For if it be shewn that *Bishops*

were settled in the *Churches of Christ* by them, I believe it will be easily granted that so considerable a Business as that of *Ordination* was so far confin'd to them, by the Will of the *Apostles*, as that it should never be perform'd without their Inspection and their Hands: The most strenuous *Advocates* of the contrary Cause not seeming to doubt that this *Confinement* was of *Apostolical Institution*, if it can be shewn that the *Order* it self was so. Now this being a Matter of Fact, past many Ages ago, the only Method by which we can come to the Knowledge of it, is the *Testimony* of *Writers* who liv'd in *that*, and the following Ages. And there is the more Reason to rely upon their Testimony in this Case, because this is a Matter of a simple, uncompounded Nature, perfectly within their Knowledge; not standing in need of any curious Niceness of Learning, or Reasoning, but level to all Capacities; a Matter in which they might very easily have been contradicted, had they represented it falsely; and a Matter in which they could not in the first Ages be byass'd by Interest. And here (waving the Argument from the *Angels* of the particular *Churches* mention'd in the *Revelations*, which certainly were single Persons who had the Care of those *Churches* and their *Teachers*, in a particular manner intrusted to them in the Days of St. *John*, and this with *his* Approbation at least: Waving this) I think I may say, that we have as Universal and as Unanimous a Testimony of all Writers, and Historians from the *Apostles* Days, as could reasonably be expected, or desired: Every one who speaks of the Government of the Church in any Place, witnessing that *Episcopacy* was the settled Form; and every one who hath occasion to speak of the Original of it, tracing it up to the *Apostles* Days, and fixing it upon their Decree; and what is very remarkable, no one contradicting this, either of the Friends or Enemies to Christianity, either of the *Orthodox*, or *Heretical*, thro' those Ages, in which only such Assertions concerning this *Matter of Fact* could well be disprov'd. The *Testimonies* on this Subject are so many, and have been so of-

ten produc'd by learned Men, that I shall not here transcribe them: Nor can this be thought any blameable Omission in this *Controversy*; because I believe it impossible to cite any thing to this purpose, which is not already to be found in many *Authors* of great Reputation, and easily to be met with; and, which is more material, because the *Patrons* of the *Presbyterian* Cause do not deny this, but seem to acknowledge that there are many, and plain Testimonies to this purpose in the *Antient Church Writers*. From which *Testimonies* I cannot but think it highly reasonable to infer, that *Episcopacy* was of *Apostolical Institution*. Were there only *Testimonies* to be produc'd, that this was the *Government* of the *Church* in all Ages, it would be but reasonable to conclude it of *Apostolical Institution*; it being so highly improbable that so material a Point should be establish'd without their Advice or Decree, when we find the *Churches* consulting them upon every Occasion, and upon Matters not of greater Importance than this. But when we find the same Persons witnessing not only that the *Government* of the *Church* was *Episcopal*, but that it was of *Apostolical Institution*, and deliver'd down from the Beginning as such, this adds Weight to the Matter, and makes it more undoubted. So that here are two Points to which they bear Witness, that this was the *Government* of the *Church* in their Days, and that it was of *Apostolical Institution*. And in these there is such a *Constancy*, and *Unanimity*, that even St. *Ferome* himself (who was born near 250 Years after the *Apostles*, and is the chief Person in all that Time whom the *Presbyterians* cite for any Purpose of theirs) traces up *Episcopacy* to the very *Apostles*, and makes it of their Institution; and in the very Place where he most exalts *Presbyters*, he excepts *Ordination* as a Work always peculiar to *Bishops*. Add to this, that there is such Evidence for *Episcopacy* in the earliest Days, that Mr. *Baxter* (who yet was very zealous for the Cause of *Presbyters*) could not but own thus much at least, that there were *fix'd Bishops* in some Churches in the Days of one of the *Apostles*; that neither the *Apostles*, nor

any one of their Disciples, nor any Christian, or Heretic in the World, spake, or wrote a Word against Episcopacy, till long after it was generally settled in the Churches. Which I cannot but think a great Argument for the *Apostolical Institution* of it in all Churches: It being highly improbable that in their Life-time it should be settled in any without their Order; there being no Reason imaginable, why they should not make the same Order for all Churches as occasion offer'd; there being no positive Testimony amongst the Antients of any Church in which it was not settled; all Writers speaking of it as universally the same; and it being hardly to be thought that such a Constitution should be settled in one Church, much less in great numbers, without a great deal of Notice taken of it, and a great many Complaints made of it, had it not been known to be an *Institution* of the *Apostles*.

So that supposing there be nothing in the *New Testament* concerning the *Superiority* of *Bishops* to *Presbyters*; and nothing of any Confinement of the Power of *Ordination* to that *superior Order*; yet there may be sufficient Evidence of *Apostolical Institution* from these Testimonies. And if there be sufficient Evidence of this, by what means soever it come to us, it ought to be received. Now that *this* ought to be accounted sufficient Evidence by our Brethren in this Case, is plain from their receiving the same Testimonies in another most important Point, which is not, and could not be plainly settled in the *Scriptures* themselves. For it is upon the Testimonies of antient Writers in all Ages, that *They*, as well as *We*, believe the Books of the *New Testament* to have been extant from the *Apostles* days; and to have been written by the *Apostles*, or by Persons approved of by them. And this indeed makes me the more solicitous to establish the Credibility of this Testimony of the *Antient Church* concerning *Episcopacy*, because I fear the *Objections* with great Zeal advanced against it, by a late *Author*, will be found at last to have a very bad influence upon all *Historical Certainty*, and to reach, farther than they were designed, to the pre-

prejudice of what is of the last importance to the *Christian Church*.

Now there being two *Methods* in which the *Adversaries* of *Episcopacy* have endeavoured to avoid the force of this *Argument*; *first* by attempting to invalidate the *Sufficiency* and *Credibility* of this *Testimony*, even supposing it universal and constant: and *secondly* by confronting, and opposing to this concurrent *Testimony*, and the *Conclusion* we build upon it, several modern *Hypotheses* and *Schemes*; I shall follow them in *both* these *Methods*, as far as my present *Subject* obliges me; and,

I. I shall endeavour to establish the *Sufficiency* and *Credibility* of the concurrent *Testimony* of those *Ancient Writers* which are now remaining, concerning *Episcopacy*.

II. I shall consider the principal *Schemes*, and *Hypotheses* which have been confronted, and opposed to this *Testimony*, and to the *Conclusion* we build upon it.

I. As to the *former* of these; the only thing necessary for the establishing the *Sufficiency* and *Credibility* of this *Testimony*, being to remove the *Objections* which have been made against it; this I shall endeavour to do by following the *Steps* of a *late Author*, who hath discovered a more than ordinary *Zeal* against this *Testimony*; and amass'd together all that can be said against it.

Obj. I. The *first Objection* I meet with, is this, *that the Church of England follows not the antient Church in many Instances of Doctrine, Discipline, and Ceremony: And from hence it is argued that it is unreasonable to lay so great a Stress upon the Fathers in one case, whom we neglect, or acknowledge to be deceived, in many other Points.*

Defense of Moderate Non-confor. P. I. P. 134.

The Answer to this is easy and evident. In Matters which depended upon their Judgment, and Reasoning, we think our selves perfectly at liberty to determine whether they were in the Right, or not: and so in some of these Cases we do not imitate them, because we think they

they judg'd amifs in them; in *others* we are hinder'd by fome accidental Circumftances of thefe latter Times, from refembling them. But fuppoſing we do not imitate them in all, doth it therefore follow that we do not well to imitate them in any? And fuppoſe we cannot or do not retain ſome things, which ſome few of them repreſent as founded upon *Apoſtolic Tradition*, doth it therefore follow that we ought not in reaſon to retain what their *Univerſal Teſtimony* conveys down to us as inſtituted by the *Apoſtles*? But the Point now before us is this, whether it be not reaſonable to believe that the *Apoſtles* inſtituted *Episcopacy*, upon the conſtant, and *Univerſal Teſtimony* of *antient Writers*? And if this Author can ſhew that there is any other as plain a Matter of Fact delivered down to us by the ſame Witneſſes, which we do not believe upon their *Teſtimony*; I grant this would be a great Advantage over us, and we might well be required either to receive, or reject their *Teſtimony* in both *Caſes*. But it cannot be juſt Reasoning to argue that we follow them not in Points of Judgment, therefore we ought not to receive their *Teſtimony* in plain Matters of Fact; that we imitate them not in many Practices which they founded upon *Apoſtolic Inſtitution*, therefore we cannot reaſonably believe upon their *Teſtimony* that any particular Matter was of *Apoſtolic Inſtitution*. It may as well be argu'd that we do not follow the *Antients* in all Things, and therefore cannot reaſonably rely upon their *Teſtimony* concerning the *Canonical Books* of the *New Teſtament*. *Hiſtorical Certainty* muſt be baniſh'd out of the World if ſuch kind of *Arguments* be once admitted; and we muſt come to that degree of *Scepticiſm* as to believe no *Matters of Fact*, but what we ſee with our own Eyes. I cannot therefore but wonder to find the fore-cited *Author* triumphing in ſuch an Argument as this, as if it were the Judgment, and Opinion of the *Fathers* we depended on in the *Caſe* of *Episcopacy*: Whereas it is only their univerſal *Teſtimony* concerning a *Matter of Fact*. If he will but answer to himſelf, how he can reaſonably receive the

Canonical Books of the New Testament upon their Testimony, whose Opinions and Practices he doth not follow in many Cases ; the Answer will be a sufficient Reply to this Objection, which he hath so largely, and triumphantly urg'd against the Episcopal Divines.

Obj. 2. It is not easy to discover the true and real Sense of the Fathers in this Debate about Or- p. 141.
ordination : And on this Account the Argument drawn from them must be very uncertain. Now we speak not concerning their Opinion in any Controversy, but about their Testimony concerning a plain Matter of Fact : In which Case it will appear very easy to discover *their true, and real Sense*, notwithstanding the Reasons here given to the contrary.

The first Reason is, *Because several of the earliest Writers have been lost, as Papias, and Hegeſippus, in whom we might have found Accounts of the Church contrary to those now extant.* But

1. Our Debate is, whether it be not reasonable to receive the Testimony of those Writers who remain, concerning a Matter of Fact: And it is strangely unaccountable to urge against this, not any contrary Testimony extant, but a mere Supposition that something contrary to this might have been extant at first, tho' now wholly lost, and the very *Memory* of it extinguished.

2. What shall become of the Testimony of all *Historians* at this rate, if this once be admitted as an Argument? For it may be said in any Case, tho' hitherto never so uncontested, that perhaps there were once extant Histories contrary to these, tho' Time and the Malice of Men have devour'd them, as we know they have numberless others.

3. It is a melancholly Consideration what an Influence such Arguments as this may have upon sacred Matters. How easily may the *Deists* at this rate argue against the *Gospel History*, that perhaps in the first Days there were Accounts publish'd concerning our *Blessed Saviour* by

by good Hands directly contrary to those in the Gospels now extant, tho' they be entirely lost, as many Books of the *Adversaries* of Christianity are known to be? And how easily may they argue against the Reasonableness of our receiving the *Books* of the *New Testament* upon the Testimony of the *Fathers*; that we know not what they all thought; that many of them are lost, who perhaps contradicted the Testimony of the remaining part? Would it not be a sufficient Reply to such Persons, that nothing can be more unreasonable than to reject the concurrent Testimony of all or most of the Writers extant, upon so groundless a Supposition as this: Nay, that it is more reasonable to think that the *Writers* not extant bore Witness to the same Things; and that if they believe any thing upon the Testimony of past Writers, they ought in reason to believe this, because the same Surmises lie against all *Historians*?

4. How unreasonable is it for the same Person to object the bare Possibility of a contrary Testimony in the lost Writings of *Papias*, and yet to blame a great Man for depending, in another Case, upon the Testimony of *Papias*, as it is extant in *Eusebius*, and to declare him to be a *Writer* of a *low Credit*, as he doth, page 171?

5. It is highly probable that were the Writings lost now extant, we should find *Testimonies* to the same purpose with those now extant: And extremely unreasonable to suppose the contrary. As for the Works of *Papias* and *Hegesippus*; *Eusebius* and many other Writers found nothing against *Episcopacy* in them, as far as appears. St. *Jerome* when he is most of all exalting the *Presbyters*, neither denies *Episcopacy* to be of *Apostolical Institution*; nor doth he claim *Ordination* as the Right of *Presbyters*; nor doth he appeal to one antient Writer, either then extant, or lost, as giving any Testimony against the *Apostolical Institution* of *Episcopacy*. Besides, in many other Cases we know by the Writers now extant, that there were Persons who differ'd from them in
such,

such, and such Particulars who were disapproved and condemned. But in this *Case* we have not the least Intimation either from the Friends of *Episcopacy*, or from those who are accounted by some to have been Enemies to it, that there was any one *early Writer* of the *Church*, who differed from the rest about *Episcopacy*, or the *Institution* of it. And upon less Grounds than these I'm sure we often believe, in many Points of *History*.

The *second Reason* given why we cannot pag. 145.
easily discover the true Sense of the Fathers, is this, because many of the Writings which go under their Names are spurious, and supposititious, either in whole or in part: So that you know not what is theirs, and what is not. But,

1. There are *Testimonies*, sufficient to support the *Cause* of *Episcopacy*, in those *Writings* which were never yet doubted to be the *Works* of those *Authors* to whom they are ascribed; or which have been demonstrated by the strongest Arguments to be *genuine*, to the entire Satisfaction of the most learned, and thinking part of the *World*. So that take only those *Parts* of their *Works* about the *Genuineness* of which there is no *Dispute*: And in these we find the plainest *Testimony* concerning this *Point*. And what then can it signify against this *Testimony*, that other *Pieces* ascribed to them are *supposititious* and *spurious*?

2. This *Author* alleged here that some have fathered *supposititious Pieces* upon the *Apostles* themselves, much more may they have made bold with the *Fathers*. But doth it follow that therefore we cannot be certain that the *Apostles* wrote those *Books* we receive in the *Church* as theirs? Doth it follow from thence that there are no *Rules* to go by, sufficient to distinguish the *genuine* from the *spurious*? If it do not, in the *Case* of the *Apostles*, why should it be alleged in the *Case* of other *Writers*? But if this must be pressed in the *Case* of the *Fathers*, let them who urge it consider, whether they do not put *Words* into the *Mouths* of *Deists* and *Infidels*, to destroy all *Certainty* about *past Matters*, which depend upon *ancient Writings*. It is not sufficient to say, that *Almighty God* is obliged

obliged in his Providence to take more Care in one Case than in the other. For it is manifest that he hath left the Writings, and Names of the *Apostles* under the common Fate of other Writers so far that *counterfeit*, and *spurious* Pieces have been actually fathered upon them; and Alterations made in their *Text* by officious Hands. It is his Pleasure to give sufficient Evidence to what he requires the World to receive: And if he gives in this Case what they accept of in other Cases, he may justly expect these Writings should be received as others are, notwithstanding the like *Objection*. And if it do not follow from hence, that the Writings now receiv'd as the Writings of the *Apostles* are not *theirs*; or that there are not Rules sufficiently certain to distinguish the *genuine* from the *spurious*: Neither will it follow from the *Suppositiousness*, or Spurioufness, of some Works, or some Sentences, in the Books ascribed to the *Fathers*, that others are not *genuine*; or that there are not very good and just Rules to distinguish the one from the other.

3. To argue from the Possibility of contriving a Cheat, so as that it shall not be able to be detected, strikes at all the Writings in the World, sacred and profane, as well as those of the *Fathers*; and tends to bring in *Scepticism* with respect to all *Authors* in the Ages before us. The bare Possibility of this is no more an Argument against the Genuineness of *Ignatius's* Epistles, than it is against *St. Paul's*. But we must discard all Pretenses to *historical Certainty*, if we do not discard such loose Principles as these. And surely it is but reasonable to receive that as genuine which hath no Mark of a *Cheat* upon it. Nay, were it possible so to contrive a *Forgery* as that it should not be possible for the Wit of Man to detect it, it is our Duty to receive it. A Cheat so contrived is no Cheat to us: And if we receive any *Writing* as *genuine*, we are obliged to receive all which have the same Marks of their *Genuineness*. Otherwise we act not agreeably to our Principles, or our Duty. Should we be deceiv'd in the most important Case possible of this nature, it cannot be supposed

posed that God can punish us for following the best Light we have after the best manner possible ; but that he rather will applaud us for acting by those *Rules* which are the only Measures we have to go by.

4. Could this *Author*, or any one else, produce any Argument against the *Genuineness* of those many *Sentences*, or *Passages* in the *Fathers*, in which their Testimony concerning *Episcopacy* is contained ; this indeed would be something of an Argument against the positive Proof we allege for it, yet of the lesser Force, and Weight, because there are no Footsteps of any other Form of *Government* in the *ancient Church*. But I believe it never yet was heard of that any Man should argue against receiving their Testimony, not from the Spuriousness, or Forgery of those parts of the Works ascribed to them, in which this *Testimony* is found, but from the Spuriousness of some other Works, or Sentences, which have been ascribed to them. What a Blow must such Reasonings give to all *historical Certainty* ; and of what sad Consequence, must that be to the whole *Christian Faith* ?

5. Some supposititious Pieces have been father'd upon St. *Jerome*. How can they, who argue from hence against the other *Fathers*, be sure that the *Passages* in which *Episcopacy* is thought to be depressed, are not of the number ? Or why do they talk of his Opinion in this Matter ? According to this Argument it is as reasonable to think that he had no such Opinion, as it is to imagine that the other *Fathers* did not give that Testimony which is ascribed to them.

6. Since some supposititious Pieces, and Sentences, have been fathered upon the *ancient Writers*, why do they appeal to their *Testimony* concerning the *Books* of the *New Testament* ? Or, why do they not rather reject it ? If it be reasonable notwithstanding this *Objection* to receive their *Testimony* in one *Case*, why not in another ? Their *Testimonies* where they are equally clear, and universal, about several Matters of *Fact*, must stand, and fall together. The more Care ought to be taken by those who, I doubt
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not, are hearty Enemies to the Cause of *Scepticism*, not to furnish and support it with such Arguments as these, which must be equally strong in all parallel Cases; and are greedily snatched at by Men inclined to do what Prejudice they can to the Cause of *Christianity*, and the *Holy Scriptures*.

The *Author* whom I am now considering, in order to shew some Ground for Suspicion of *Forgery* in those Passages of the *ancient Writers* which favour *Episcopacy*, insinuates that the Support of the *Ecclesiastical Hierarchy* might induce Men of After-Ages to make *Alterations* in the Writings of the *Fathers*. Upon which Account he is so far from wondering to find, among the Remains of *Antiquity*, so much in favour of *Prelacy*, that he rather wonders that all Passages in favour of the *Primitive Parity*, and the *Identity of Bishops and Presbyters* are not quite expung'd. It is very necessary to give a distinct Reply to this. And,

I. Supposing some Persons of later Ages have been so foolish and base as to make *Alterations* in the Works of *ancient Writers*; yet this *Author* himself believes many Sentences, and many Pages in some of them to be truly *genuine*: And he himself must acknowledge that it is not a sufficient Reason against the *Genuineness* of any Sentence, that it supports the Opinions, or Practices of many in later Ages, and therefore was probably inserted by them. No, there must be other Arguments to prove these Passages spurious besides this, or else it will go very hard with many Texts of Scripture, and with many whole Books in the *sacred Canon*. For thus the *Deists* may say, it was for the *Interest* of *Christianity* that there should be such *Testimonies* in *ancient Writers* concerning the *Four Gospels*, and their *Authors*: And from hence conclude, that these *Testimonies* were foisted in by modern *Christians*. If it be said that it was as much for the *Interest* of the *ancient Christians*; and therefore very probably these Passages are *genuine*: It may be replied, that it was as much for the *Interest* of the *ancient* as the more *modern Christians* to assert *Episcopacy* so far as is implied in the

Testimony

Testimony we speak of : For they always without doubt esteem'd it their Interest to preserve the *Church* as they thought the *Apostles* left it. Thus the *Socinians* say, it was the Prejudice of the *Orthodox* to their own Opinions, and their Interest ; which might induce them to add several Texts, and make several Alterations in the *New Testament* : And they likewise wonder they find no more there in favour of the *Orthodox Doctrines*, considering what Liberty some have taken. But we say, this is not sufficient to determine a Passage to be spurious : There must be other Reasons alleged, because at this rate no Passage can be genuine which favours any of the differing Parties in Religion. 2. I am not now concerned for any high Flights, or any Reasonings of the *Antients* ; but barely their Testimony about Matter of Fact, that *Episcopacy* was the Government of the *Church*, and of *Apostolical Institution*. And I deny that there are any Passages in the *Antients* so much in favour of the *Primitive Parity*, and Identity of *Bishops* and *Priests*, as to contradict, or oppose this in any one plain Sentence. So that if such Passages were expunged by Fraud, there must have been an universal Conspiracy, to do it so effectually as not to leave the Remembrance of any Contradiction to this Testimony concerning *Episcopacy* : which it is absurd to suppose. But if there be any such Passages left in favour of this *Primitive Parity*, this is an Argument that there was not that prodigious Liberty taken by any in altering the *Writings* of the *Antients* ; because it is incredible they would have left any remarkable Passages against themselves, when they were once engaged in such a Work. 3. But perhaps these Passages, if there be any such, were forged by *Presbyters* who affected an Equality to *Bishops*, and the Reason why there are no more in favour of *Episcopacy*, is because the *Enemies* of it took the Liberty of expunging Multitudes of Sentences to that purpose out of the *Writings* of the *Antients*. The Argument is equally good both ways, but both ways fallacious, and of dangerous Consequence. 4. Supposing a settled *Episcopacy* instituted by the *Apostles*, not

at the first Foundation of Churches, but at the latter End of their Days; how could we know this but by *Testimony* of *ancient Writers*? And considering all things, could we well expect a more universal *Testimony*, with less Contradiction, or less Opposition, than we meet with in this? Here, therefore, the Argument from *Forgery* can have no Place; because this *Testimony* is just what we must suppose it, had there been no *Forgery*. For according to all reasonable Proceedings in the like *Cases*, that ought to be received as no *Forgery*, which is exactly what we may reasonably suppose it would have been, had there been no *Forgery*. 5. It most effectually puts a Stop to such *Insinuations* as this, to observe that there is as little Ground to suspect a *Forgery* in these *Testimonies* as is well possible to be imagined. For the *Testimony* we speak of, is not concerning the *Apostolical Institution* of the *exorbitant Power* claim'd by *later Bishops*, or of any *external Ensigns* of *worldly Grandeur*, or *Riches* appropriated to them: But merely of the Institution of one Person to *ordain* and *govern Presbyters*, within such or such a *Distrikt*, and according to the Design and Rules of *Christianity*. Now this supports no *tyrannical*, and *excessive Power* in them: Nor any but what carries forward the great Ends of Religion. So that the inserting of *Passages* to this purpose, doth not answer the Design pretended in this *Insinuation*, of supporting the Pretensions and Grandeur of more modern *Bishops*: And therefore the Supposition of it must be vain and precarious. Had there been any *Forgery* in this *Case*, certainly it would have been to purpose: And frequent Declarations would have been found in the *Antients*, more for the Exaltation of the *Worldly Grandeur* of *Bishops*, than any now extant. But in these *Testimonies* as they now stand, nothing is to be found that is not agreeable to the *Christian Religion*, or that can serve the Purposes of any but a truly *Christian Episcopacy*. Besides, the chief Ground of *Forgery*, whenever it was practis'd, was *Party*, and *Contradiction*; and a Design to confute the Opinions of Opposers by supposititious *Passages*. Now we do not read

of any *Contradiction* to this Testimony concerning *Episcopacy*, of which we speak ; or any *Party* against it : Nothing considerable, granting the whole of what is produced to this Purpose. All *Churches* and *Christians*, as far as we know, seem to have been agreed in this Point, amidst all their other Differences, as universally as can well be imagined. But thus much may suffice in answer to the foregoing *Insinuation*.

The *third* Reason given why we cannot easily arrive to the true Sense of the *Fathers*, is their *Obscurity*, and the *vehement, and hyperbolical Expressions* they often made use of. p. 150.

1. I grant this to be of force with respect to many of their Opinions, and Notions : Yet even here there are *Rules, and Circumstances* to determine us often to their true Sense. But what is this to their Testimony concerning Matter of Fact? Can there be any Suspicion of *Rhetoric*, and *Figure*, in their declaring *Episcopacy* to be the *Government* of the *Church*, instituted by the *Apostles*; or in their running up *Catalogues* of *Bishops* to the *Apostles* Days; or in recording the Names of particular Persons made *Bishops* by the *Apostles*?

2. It is an easy Matter to see where any *Authors* speak as *Historians*; and where as *Rhetoricians*. Supposing any of the *ancient Church-Writers* to deduce unreasonable Consequences from the *Apostolical Institution* of *Episcopacy*; or to exceed in *Rhetorical* Flights upon that Subject: We do not build our Belief upon these Flights and Reasonings, but upon their plain *Testimony* concerning Matter of Fact: Supposing the *Acts* of the *Council of Chalcedon* call the *Emperor's Letters* $\theta\acute{\alpha}\nu\ \gamma\epsilon\acute{\alpha}\mu\mu\alpha$ in a Passage which may be easily understood to relate to them: Doth it follow from hence that when the *Fathers* speak of the *Holy Scriptures*, they mean to give them no higher Authority than they gave those *Letters*? Doth it follow from hence that when they ascribe particular *Epistles* to particular *Apostles*, they speak *rhetorically* likewise? And must all their *Testimony* about the *Canon* of the *New Testament* fall to the Ground

because in other *Cases* they sometimes speak *obscurely*, and sometimes *figuratively*?

3. This *Argument* will affect the *Apostolical Writings* themselves, in which there are *obscure*, and very *hyperbolical Expressions*. But this never was thought to prove it hard to find out their meaning in *Passages* which are not *obscure*, or *figurative*. Nay, certainly their true Sense hath been found out by many considering Persons in those very *Places*, which have been thought very *obscure* and *figurative*. This *Author* can tell us himself that there are *Circumstances*, and *Rules* to guide us to the true meaning of the *Fathers* in many of their highest *Flights*. And what then signifies all this *Discourse* about their manner of *Writing*?

4. The only thing that could have served his Purpose, would have been to have shewn that the *Passages*, upon which we build our Belief of the *Apostolical Institution of Episcopacy*, are either so *obscure*, or so *figurative*, that we cannot build any such Matter upon them: But of what Importance can it be, to shew that other *Passages* are *obscure*, and *figurative*, upon which we build nothing in this *Cause*?

5. Supposing that the *Fathers*, in opposing their *Adversaries*, as others of the best of Men have too often done, were apt to run from one Extreme to another, and to carry Things to the Height in such Opposition; this can signify very little to their *Testimonies* concerning *Episcopacy*. For when they say that it was the *Government* of the *Church* in their Days, and *instituted* by the *Apostles*; they cannot be supposed to speak *rhetorically*, or to carry Things to an undue Extremity, because otherwise there is nothing, no not their *Testimony* about the Writings of the *Apostles*, but what may be said to be given in Heat, and carried to that Extremity only in Opposition to some *Adversaries*. And in the *Case* of *Episcopacy*, it is a very material Consideration that we know of no *Adversaries* they had to tempt them to run to any *Extremity*; none that denied it to have been always the *Government* of the *Church*, and *instituted* by the *Apostles*; unless the mere

Supposition of a *modern Author* at 1600 Years distance, that there were *Christians* even in *Ignatius's* Age who look'd upon *Episcopacy* as unlawful, may pass for an *authentic* piece of *History*: An *Insinuation* which I believe cannot be parallel'd, unless it be by the *Discovery* made by other *modern Authors*, at the same distance of Time, of an *Alteration* made, after the Days of the *Apostles*, from *Presbyterian* to *Episcopal Government* in the *Church*, concerning which there is not one Word in any *antient Writer*. This is a new way indeed of writing *History* from one's own *Invention*, and not from any *Records* of past Time: And yet we have seen such mere *Conjectures* as these relied upon; and others ridiculed for relying upon the plain *Testimony* of *antient Writers* concerning the *State* of the *Church* in their own Times.

6. Supposing many very high, and figurative Expressions in the *Epistles* of *Ignatius*; (against which this *Author* doth very ill to drop his *Insinuations*, unless he had answered those Arguments which have satisfied all the learned World concerning their *Genuineness*;) let them be never so much softned, and interpreted never so favourably, the least that can follow from them is, that *Episcopacy* was settled in his Days, and was at a great Heighth, when neither worldly Advantage could make it so; nor was there Time from the *Apostles* Deaths for a gradual Increase to such a Pitch. For he lived in the *Apostles* Days, and was at farthest, the *second Bishop* of his *See*: and as much a *Mad-man* and *Blasphemer* as he may be thought by some, he died a *Martyr* for *Christianity*, and was always highly esteemed in the *Church*. And it is the most reasonable thing in the World to suppose, that he could not speak of *Episcopacy* as he doth, had he known it to have been only the *Agreement* of *Presbyters* amongst themselves; had he known it to have been an *Alteration* in the *Church* from the State in which the *Apostles* left it; as he must have done according to the *Conjecture* of some *modern Writers*. And the more highly he magnifies it, still the greater Argument it is, that he knew it to be settled by the *Apostles* in the *Churches*

of *Christ*, and that it was their Will it should be retained, and esteemed. It is impossible he should speak of it as he doth, if he knew it, and all the Church then knew it, to be a voluntary prudential Compact amongst the *Presbyters*. For what could induce him to do it? Or what Influence could his high Words have upon those who knew as well as himself that it was just then agreed upon; and had no higher an Original than the Consent of *Presbyters*? So that this wholly destroys the strange Supposition before mentioned; without which, I believe, a very reasonable Account may be given of his speaking after such a manner of *Bishops* in those Days, and in the *Circumstances* the Church was then in.

The fourth Reason why we cannot easily come to know the true Sense of the *Fathers* is this, p. 152. because some of them in their Commentaries mentioned the Opinion of others as well as their own, without any Distinction: And in their Writing against their Adversaries, some of them used dishonourable Methods. I am indeed almost ashamed to answer to such Arguments as these. For,

1. Can it follow from hence that their *Testimonies* concerning Matters of Fact in their own Days, are not their own Thoughts? That *Ignatius* and many others whose Testimonies are not in *Commentaries*, spake not their own Mind in what they say of *Episcopacy*? Or that what they say who use no base Arts against their *Adversaries*, nay, who had no *Adversaries* in this Point, ought not to be relied upon?

2. Can it follow from hence, that therefore their unexceptionable *Testimonies* concerning the Canon of the *New Testament*, cannot be relied on? If not, why may not their *Testimonies* likewise concerning *Episcopacy*?

3. If it can be shewn that the particular *Testimonies* on which we rely in these Cases, are not plainly their own Thoughts, but the Notions of others; or that they knew the contrary to what they *witnessed* in these Points: This indeed would be to the purpose. But it is absurd to allege

lege against these Testimonies, that *other* Passages are not their own Thoughts; or that some *other* Persons were not always fair *Disputants*; or that some of the Persons who give these Testimonies did not always, in *other* Points, maintain their own Opinions after the most honourable manner.

The *Fifth* Reason is, because the *Fathers* advanced gradually in Knowledge; and they often alter'd their Minds; and *who knows but that they retracted in this Matter, as they did in others?* p 153.

This indeed is of desperate Consequence with respect to all *Historical Certainty*; that the *universal Testimony* of many Ages should be rejected upon such a strange Supposition. Who knows but that they retracted their Testimony about the *Writings* of the *Apostles*, and *Evangelists*? And what will become of the *Holy Scriptures* at this rate, or of all *History*? For *who knows but that all the Historians* in the World retracted what is now come to us under their Names? And who knows at last, but that *St. Jerome*, and *Aerius* retracted all that they had said about the *Identity* of *Bishops*, and *Priests*? This is as much as to say, because they retracted some things, therefore they perhaps retracted all things: Because they retracted some Opinions and Notions, built upon former Reasonings of their own, which they found to be false, therefore they retracted their Testimony concerning a *Matter of Fact*, in which they might be as well satisfied at Forty Years of Age as at Fourscore. This was a Point that depended not upon their Judgment, and Reasoning, only concerning what was in their own Days, or what was transmitted down to them from their Predecessors: And therefore here is not room for the Supposition of an Alteration of their Minds. Nor could this be in any number of them without some notice of it: Nor is there the least ground to suppose it, because we know of none who were of a contrary Opinion in the first Days concerning the *Government* of the *Church*. I think those who reason at this rate, may as well go a little farther; and say, *perhaps*

haps there never were any such Men as these *Fathers*; and *perhaps* we are all in a Dream.

The *Sixth* Reason is, because *it is hard to discover how the Fathers held their Opinions, whether as necessary, or as probable only, &c.* But it is evident at first sight that this cannot touch their *Testimony* about the Books of the *New-Testament*, that they were extant in their Days, and that they were written by the *Apostles*: Or their *Testimony* about *Episcopacy*, that it was the Government of the Church in their Days, and instituted by the *Apostles*. However they express themselves in many of their *Notions*, and *Opinions*; we know that when they say, the *Apostles* instituted *Episcopacy*, the Words are not capable of any Sense but *one*, and cannot be misunderstood.

The *Seventh* and last Reason is, because we cannot be sure that their *Testimony* (who are now remaining) was the *general Sense* of the Church. But this is much the same with the first *Reason*, which supposes many Writers lost who perhaps contradicted this *Testimony*: To which I have given a distinct Reply. I shall only add, that there can be no *Historical Certainty* at this rate: For what shall we do, unless we will depend upon those who are extant; and acquiesce where there is no Footstep remaining of any Contradiction from good Hands? For why is it that any *Historians* are depended on, but because they are esteemed as faithful Representatives of the Sense of all those who had opportunity of knowing the Things related? But who knows but that many in their Days contradicted their Relations, tho' we have no Account of them? Who knows but that many in the Days of the *Fathers* differ'd from 'em about the *Canonical Books* of the *New Testament*? Who knows but that *many might oppose 'em, and not write; or that they may have written, and their Writings have been devoured by time, or suppressed by the contrary Party?* And who knows, last of all, but that there were many more good Writings, and Testimonies in favour of *Episcopacy* once extant, and afterwards *suppress'd* by the supposed Enemies to it? To what a degree of *Incredulity*

dulity may we come by such Steps as these? And whither will the love to a particular Cause sometimes carry Men?

Thus have I gone over all the *Reasons* alleged by a late *Author*, to prove that it is not easy to come to a knowledge of the true Sense of the *antient Church* concerning *Episcopacy*: And have, I hope, said what is sufficient to shew the little force there is in them, in the *Case* now before us. I proceed now to the next *Objection* against the *Authority* of the *Fathers* in the point of *Episcopacy*.

Obj. 2. We cannot reasonably depend on the Report of the antient Church-Writers, in this Case, p. 156. *because we find them guilty of so many Mistakes, and so often contradicting one another, concerning Apostolical Traditions.* I answer,

1. They do not contradict one another in this Point: But are as generally agreed, as it is well possible to imagine, that the *Government* of the *Church* in their Days was *Episcopal*; and that this was of *Apostolical Institution*. And I add, that their contradicting one another in *other* Points, is so far from being an Argument against their *Testimony* in *this* Case, that it adds a Strength and Force to it: It being always esteemed a good sign of a true Fact, that Persons, who are very free in contradicting one another in other Matters, consent and agree in it.

2. Supposing their contradicting one another, and their Mistakes in other Points, an Argument against their *Testimony* concerning *Episcopacy*, it is equally an Argument against their *Testimony* concerning the *Books* of the *New Testament*, and the *Authors* of them. And those who receive their *Testimony* in *one* Case, notwithstanding this Argument, ought in Justice to receive it in *another*. But to clear this Point more thoroughly, which so nearly touches the *Holy Scriptures* themselves, I observe,

3. That there is no *Case produced* by those who have laboured most to do it, in which these *antient* Writers were *mistaken*, or *contradicted* one another, *parallel* to that *Testimony* concerning *Episcopacy* we are now considering: And consequently none which can affect that Point, so as

to

to invalidate their *Testimony* concerning it, as will appear by considering particularly every *Instance* alleged.

P. 136. Papias reported the *Thousand Years bodily Reign* of

Christ upon Earth, for an *Apostolical Tradition*. But, 1. This might be merely a Mistake of his Judgment, putting a more literal Interpretation than was designed upon some obscure Saying of one of the *Apostles*; or deducing some Consequences of his own from it: For it is by these means that a *Doctrine* is more easily misreported, than a settled visible Matter of Fact. 2. Here is no Instance given of any *Testimony* that the contrary was taught by the *Apostles*: And so, for ought appears, the *Doctrine* which he might thus interpret was truly, as he said, an *Apostolical Tradition*. Thus many at this Day think this *Millennial Reign* of Christ an *Apostolical Doctrine*: And it is certain that the Words, upon which they found it, are *Apostolical*. 3. Supposing Papias had born *Testimony* concerning the *Apostolical Institution* of *Episcopacy*, I cannot see how his Mistake, supposing it one, in the other Case can invalidate his *Testimony* in this: Because that is a Point very capable of Mistake, and very probably mixt with his own *Reasoning*; and this concerns a plain, settled Matter of Fact, in which there is no room for Reasoning, or for the Mistakes of his own private Judgment. 4. If any think otherwise, I think it is but reasonable that only Papias should suffer for the Mistakes of Papias. And therefore supposing him one of the *Witnesses* for *Episcopacy*; his Mistakes can only invalidate his own *Testimony*, not the *Testimony* of others, who in great Numbers witness to the same thing. But supposing his Works were now extant, and he should be found to bear Witness to the *Apostolical Institution* of another *Form of Church Government*, according to the unreasonable Fancy of the *Author* I am now considering, the same *Author* hath here destroyed his whole Credit at one blow, and proved him a most incompetent Witness in any such Case. So that I hope the supposed, lost *Testimony* of such a Witness will be no longer of any force. But, 5. What signifies

it to use words? *Papias* is not one of the Writers upon whose Testimony *Episcopacy* relies; and therefore his Mistakes signifie nothing to their Testimony; unless it be a good Argument that one *Historian* ought not to be believed in one particular *Story*, because another *Historian* was mistaken in quite a different Matter.

The next *Instance*, and that the most famous one, p. 158. of *Mistake*, and *Contradiction* amongst the *Anti-ents* concerning *Apostolical Traditions* and *Institutions*, is the *Controversy* about the Observation of *Easter*: In which *Polycarp* pleaded that St. *John* was for one time, and *Anicetus*, that St. *Peter* was for another. And indeed this is a sad Instance of the Proneness of the best of Men, to act with an ungoverned Zeal, and to come to Extremity against one another. But I see not what Argument can be brought from hence against their *Testimony* concerning *Matter of Fact*. For 1. It doth not appear but that both these Persons were in the right, as to *Fact*. It is well known that it was the constant Custom of the *Apostles*, in all indifferent Matters, to comply very much with the Humours and Customs of the Place where they resided: Which makes it very highly probable that *Polycarp* might have known St. *John* for one time, at one Place, and *Anicetus* St. *Peter* for another time, for different Reasons, at another Place. This is agreeable to their Practice in all other like Cases: And therefore here is no *Mistake*, or *Contradiction* concerning *Fact*. 2. All the Mistake here is in Point of Judgment; arising from their not considering the prudential Maxims by which the *Apostles* guided their Practice. The very *Apostle* who had appeared zealous for one time at one Place, would without all doubt have been as zealous for another time, at another Place, where the *Circumstances* of things were different. But these Men not considering this, were so weak as to think, that in so indifferent a matter as this, all *Christians* in all Places ought to comply with what each of them knew to have an *Apostles* Example on it's side, and this only at one certain place, and amongst one particular sort of People.

People. Now this *Error* of Judgment in them, (tho' much to be lamented; because it was pursued to the great Scandal of Christianity;) can never prove them incompetent *Witnesses* concerning plain *Matter of Fact*, unless it be required that all *Witnesses* about *Facts* be infallible in their Judgment, and Reasonings. 3. Supposing that *Polycarp*, and *Anicetus*, were Persons, on whose Testimony, amongst others, we depended concerning the *Apostolical Institution* of *Episcopacy*; the difference, contradiction, and heat which was between them concerning the Observation of *Easter*, will be so far from invalidating their *consenting Testimony* in another matter, that it will mightily strengthen it: As it is generally thought that the consent of two Persons in *one* thing, whom a sharp Dispute about *another* Matter of the like nature hath irritated against one another, is of more weight, than the consent of two Friends: It being usual for such Persons, to contradict one another out of Prejudice, and in order to shew that their Adversary is liable to Mistakes in *other* Points, as well as in that concerning which their former Contest had been. 4. But these are not the Persons of whose *Testimony* we rely in the Cause of *Episcopacy*: And therefore a thousand worse Mistakes in them will signify nothing to the Point; unless it be fair, and just, that the Credit of *one* Man should be forfeited by the Misdemeanours of *another*. According to which Principle there cannot be a Person of *Credit* in the World. If *Polycarp* have failed in this Point, let him only suffer for it: And then what becomes of the *Negative Argument* drawn from his mentioning only two Orders as of any regard in the Church? Whereas if he had positively affirmed them, and them only to have been instituted by the *Apostles*, according to this Argument, no Credit had been due to him. 5. I cannot dismiss this *Instance*, before I deduce from it a strong Argument in favour of the *Apostolical Institution* of *Episcopacy*. It is acknowledged by the most learned *Adversaries* of it, that it was universally settled before the middle of the *second Century*, perhaps

haps as early as this famous *Controversy* about *Easter*. Now the Difficulty is this: If the *Churches* were constituted and left by the *Apostles* in another *Form*, how can it be supposed that they should so soon all agree to depart from it, and settle another, when we find them in so much lesser Matters, so tenacious of *Apostolical Customs*, and *Traditions*, that they proceed to the highest extremity against one another for not retaining what each Side thought of *Apostolical Institution*? How can it be supposed that their alteration of the *Form* of their *Church Government* could be made without the least Noise, or the least Notice taken of it by *Ecclesiastical Writers*, when the endeavouring an alteration in the keeping of *Easter*, raised such a Noise and Combustion; and is particularly taken notice of in the *Histories* of the *Church*? Such strange Suppositions as these ought to be accounted for, before this *Instance* of the Weakness of the *Antients* be produc'd as an Argument against the *Apostolical Institution* of *Episcopacy*.

Once more, *St. Jerome* takes a *Custom* of the *Church* in his Time for an *Apostolical Tradition*. P. 155. *St. Austin* finds another upon *Apostolical Tradition*: and *Epiphanius* another. Now, 1. *St. Austin's* supporting the giving the *Communion* to *Infants* upon that general Doctrine of the *Apostles*, that *Communicating was necessary to Salvation*, is manifestly a Point of *Judgment*, and *Reasoning*, and therefore toucheth not his *Testimony* about Matter of Fact. 2. We do not argue merely from the *Testimony* of so late Writers as these, that *Episcopacy* is of *Apostolical Institution*. We grant it doth not follow, *St. Jerome* thought so; therefore it is so. But Writers of all Ages in the *Church*, witness that this was the *Government* in their Days; that it was instituted by the *Apostles*, and delivered down as such. All that we produce *St. Jerome* for in this Case, is that it was in his time, and that he believed it to be *Apostolical*, and receiv'd it as such: But without the *Testimony* of the Ages before him, I should not esteem this a sufficient Argument that it was really so.

And the reason why I am not obliged to think that *Custom* he calls *Apostolical* to have been so really, is because we have no mention of it in more antient Writers. Were there so much Testimony to that as there is to *Episcopacy*, it ought to be believed to be *Apostolical*. So that these *Customs* here mentioned are destitute of that early and manifold Testimony, on which *Episcopacy* depends: And therefore we are at liberty, not to believe them *Apostolical*. Could the *Case* of *Episcopacy* be proved to be parallel to these, or could more early *Testimonies* be produced against it, than are produced for it; *this* likewise might be thought no more *Apostolical* than the others. But till that be done, these Instances of Mistake, if they be so, can prove nothing against it. 3. If St. *Jerome's* Testimony be not to be depended on for one *Apostolical Tradition*, why should the least Account of it be made concerning the *Primitive Parity* of *Bishops* and *Presbyters*? If he have failed, and this be a just Rule, let him only suffer for it. If he be of any force in the Cause, it ought to be, as he is a *Witness*, and a Witness of *Apostolical Institution*: And how incompetent an one must he be according to this Argument, living at so great a distance from the *Apostles*, and manifestly taking other things for *Apostolical* which were not so? Thus I might argue with those who reason after this manner against *Episcopacy*: Tho' in truth St. *Jerome's* Testimony is for, and not against the *Apostolical Institution* of it.

p 160. *Obj.* 4. *The Testimony of the Antient Writers concerning Episcopacy cannot reasonably be received; because Ecclesiastical Historians have not given us any plain, and certain Accounts of the first Plantation of Churches, or any true Catalogues of Bishops succeeding one another in them. But,*

1. Tho' *Eusebius* be the first professed *Ecclesiastical Historian*; yet he is far, in distance of time, from the first Writers, on whose *Testimony* the Cause of *Episcopacy* is founded: So that what can it signify to allege that *Eusebius*,

bis, and his *Contemporaries*; or that *Baronius*, and Dr. *Hammond*, cannot furnish out just, and full Accounts of the *Apostles* Proceedings; what can this signify, I say, to that *Testimony* of the *Ages* preceding *Eusebius*, that *Episcopacy* was the *Government* of the *Church*, and of *Apostolical Institution*, on which we rely?

2. Supposing we cannot have an exact Account of the first Settlement of particular *Churches*; of their *Founders*, and of the *Line of Bishops* succeeding in them; this will no more prove that there were no *Bishops* in them, than the *Disputes*, and *Differences* about the *Succession*, and *Years* of reigning, of the *Kings* of any Country, will prove that there were no *Kings* in those *Countries*. Nay, this will no more prove that there were no *Bishops* in those *Churches*, than that there were no *Presbyters* in them. For if this Argument prove any thing, it will unhappily prove too much; *viz.* that no *Churches* of *Christians* were settled any where: It being certainly as conclusive to say, *Historians* are obscure, and uncertain in their Accounts of the *Travels* of the *Apostles*, and the Settlement of particular *Churches*; therefore there were no *Churches* settled by them; as it is to say, they are very uncertain in their Accounts of the *Succession* of *Bishops* in particular *Churches*, therefore there were none. But what wonder is it that *Historians* at some *Hundred Years* distance, should not be able to furnish out exact Accounts of the particular Circumstances of these Things? Or what Argument can this be in either of these Cases, when it is so certain from other *Writers* before them, that there were *Churches* planted by the *Apostles*, and *Bishops* settled in these *Churches*. And if, notwithstanding this *Objection*, we depend upon the *Testimony* of the more antient *Writers* in the *one* Case; so likewise may we in the *other*.

3. The Appeal of the more antient *Writers* (in their *Disputes* with *heretical* Persons) to the *Doctrine* of the *Bishops*, whom they affirmed to have succeeded one another from the *Apostles*; and this not contradicted by their very *Adversaries*, but, as far as appears, acknowledged by all

in those Days when the *Falshood* of it might easily have been detected; this *Appeal*, I say, tho' it do not support the absolute Necessity of an uninterrupted *Succession*; yet it proves that in those early Days it was known and believed, without Opposition, or Contradiction, that there was such a *Succession* of *Bishops* up to the *Apostles*. And this is a very great Argument for *Episcopacy*, tho' later *Writers* have not been able to furnish out complete *Catalogues* of *Bishops*.

p. 161.

4. The same *Author* who alleges this Obscurity of *Historians* against *Episcopacy*, saith that *Bishop Stillingfleet* hath given us good Reason to believe that the *Apostles* did not take the same Method in all Places; i. e. that in some *Churches* they instituted *Episcopacy*, and in others not. The Truth of this I shall by and by examine. But in the mean while there is this use to be made of this Concession, that notwithstanding the Obscurity of *Eusebius* and others about the *Succession* of *Bishops*, it is reasonable to believe that the *Apostles* instituted *Episcopacy* in some *Churches*. From whence I infer, that this *Uncertainty* concerning the *Line* of *Bishops*, is no more an Argument against the *Apostolical Institution* of *Episcopacy* in all other *Churches*, than it is in those *Churches* in which it is acknowledged to have been settled. Thus have I sufficiently answered this *Author's* long Discourse about the *Uncertainty* of the *Tables* of *Succession*, and shewn that it can have no force in the present Debate, against the *Apostolical Institution* of *Episcopacy*. Much less can it signify in this Cause, to expose the peculiar Notions of some modern learned Men upon which no Stress is laid, or to break Jest upon any Trifles which have no reference to the Point in hand.

Obj. 5. The Fathers, especially after Constantine's Time, often condemned Men unjustly, and without reason; and therefore their representing Aerius as an Heretick, for questioning the Difference between a Bishop and a Presbyter, ought not to weigh with considering Persons. Now,

1. Our

1. Our *Argument* for *Episcopacy* is not that the *Fathers* of *later Ages* condemned those who would level it with *Presbytery* as *Heretics*; but that the *Fathers* and *Writers* of *all Ages* bear *Testimony* to it, as the *Government* always settled in the *Church*, and settled by the *Apostles*. Now this *Testimony* cannot be weakned by any such *Allegation* as this.

2. The only true Reason for rejecting *Aerius's* Opinion, would be the Unreasonableness of it, or the Contradiction of it to the *Testimony* of those who were better Judges how the Churches were left by the *Apostles*, than he: Not that *Epiphanius* condemns him, which I acknowledge to be no *Argument* considered by it self.

3. It doth not follow that because the later *Fathers* often condemned Men unjustly, therefore they *always* did so: But the Merits of the Cause are to be judged of from other Reasons.

4. All that I build upon this *Condemnation* of *Aerius*, is that the *Superiority* of *Bishops* over *Presbyters*, was in that Age universally acknowledged; and a Contradiction to it, in any sort, a new thing, and esteemed of very bad Consequence. From whence I infer that they were not, in that Age, the first Witnesses to the Original of *Episcopacy*; nor did they think it a *novel Constitution*; nor could they esteem it less, than as transmitted down to them for an *Apostolical Institution*. But for the whole Proof of this we depend likewise upon the *Testimony* of former Ages.

5. This *Testimony* can no more be invalidated by such Reasonings as this, than the *universal Testimony* upon which we receive the Books of the *New Testament*. For it may be urged by some after the same manner against that, to find some of the *Fathers* representing the questioning any of these Books as *Heresy*, will signify little to such as consider how unjustly they often condemned Men as *heretical*. The Answer is plain, This will shew that such Books were transmitted down to them as *Apostolical*, and the *Testimony* of former Ages joined to this will be of Weight, notwithstanding

standing any such *Objection* as this. And the *Answer* is the same in the *other* Case as in *this*.

Thus have I cleared the *Testimony* of the *Antient Church-Writers* in the *Case* of *Episcopacy*, from the *Objections* alleged against the force of it. Some of them, I grant, hold strongly against a blind Submission to their *Authority* in Matters of *Reasoning* and *Judgment*; and some of them against building much upon what may be called *Apostolical* by single Persons and onght the *later* sort of them. Let us use our own Understandings in Points in which we are capable of judging as well as *they*. Let us never depend on any of them in Matters of which they are not competent Judges. But let us not under pretense of *Freedom* and *Impartiality*, cast off their universal concurrent *Testimony* about a *Matter* of *Fact*, of which they are the only proper Judges, lest we destroy all *Historical Certainty*, and forfeit the Credit even of the most *Sacred Writings* now extant.

And this *Testimony* standing firm, I may now infer from hence that *Episcopacy* is of *Apostolical Institution*; and likewise that the *Business* of *Ordination* was a peculiar Office of the *Bishops* by that *Apostolical Institution*. This is but reasonable to suppose, that as *Ordination* in the *Scripture-Times* was not left to the *Presbyters* of *Crete* and *Ephesus*; but *Timothy* and *Titus* were sent with Commissions to perform that *Office* in those *Churches*; so when the *Churches* were more universally settled, and *Bishops* settled in them, a *Business* of such consequence as *Ordination* must have been entrusted to their peculiar *Care*; or at least so confin'd to them as never to be perform'd without their Consent, and their Hands. And this Conclusion ought the rather to be allowed, because none of the *antient* Opposers of *Episcopacy*, as far as appears, denied this. *Aerius*, above 200 Years after the *Apostles*, out of a private Resentment, began to level *Bishops* with *Presbyters*. This he did, not by pretending to allege any authentic Testimonies that the *Apostles* did at their Deaths leave the *Government* of all *Churches*, and the *Ordination* of

New Presbyters in the Hands of *Presbyteries*; but by arguing from some Passages in their *Epistles*, that *Presbyters* were equal to *Bishops* in the first Design of the *Apostles*; which Passages shall be distinctly considered in the next Chapter. But we never read, I think, that he did expressly pretend to the Right of *Ordination*. And St. *Jerome*, near 300 Years after the *Apostles*, in the place where he most exalts *Presbyters*, expressly yields that *Ordination* is not theirs, but the peculiar Office of the *Bishops*. And for the *Modern Adversaries* of *Episcopacy*, *Blondel*, the greatest of them, thinks it highly reasonable to affirm, that as soon as ever there was a *supereminence* of one over many *Presbyters* in the *Church*, (which himself affirms his *Prime-Presbyters* to have had in the Days of some of the *Apostles*;) the Care of the *Church*, and of *Ordination* particularly, belonged in a peculiar manner to that one Person.

Apol. p.
157.

But because many things are still alleged against the *Apostolical Institution* of *Episcopal Government*, and *Episcopal Ordination*, I shall endeavour, as I proposed, to give farther Satisfaction in this matter,

II. By examining those *Hypotheses*, and *Schemes* of learned *Modern Writers* which have been confronted, and opposed to the concurrent *Testimony* of *antient Writers* in favour of *Episcopacy*, and the *Conclusion* we build upon it. And,

First, It is supposed by some that the *Apostles* used different Methods in different *Churches*, and in some instituted *Bishops* superior to *Presbyters*, in others not. And the *Author* I am now considering, seems sometimes to be of this Opinion; tho' at other times, he affirms the *Apostles* to have left all *Presbyters* in an equality. But the unreasonableness of opposing *Episcopacy* with this Conjecture, will appear from the following Considerations.

1. From hence it appears that the *Testimonies* for *Episcopacy* are so many, and so Authentic, that learned Men who have been wholly indifferent to the Cause of *Episcopacy*,

conacy, have thought themselves obliged to own that the *Apostles* instituted it in some *Churches*.

2. Tho' there may, in many other Cases, be good Reasons given for the different Conduct, and Behaviour of the *Apostles*, as in the Case of the *Celebration of Easter*, and other Points of that indifferent Nature; yet in this Case of the Government of the Churches, when once the number of *Christians*, and of *Presbyters* came to be considerable, no Reason can be thought of why their Orders and *Institutions* should be different in different Places: And therefore it is not reasonable to suppose it without plain Proof from the *antient Writers*.

3. None of the *Antients*, as far as appears, know any thing of this difference: But all who speak professedly of *Episcopacy*, speak of it as of the Government univversally settled in all *Churches*, where-ever there was a number of *Christians*, and *Presbyters*. Nay, St. *Ferome*, the chief Patron of *Presbyters* amongst the *Antients* positively affirms, that whenever the *Institution of Episcopacy* was, it was all over the *Christian World* at the same time; and that before that all *Churches* were alike governed by *Presbyters*. So that, as our Author not unjustly saith, with respect to Dr. *Hammond's* Notion of two *Bishops* in one Church at the same time, that had there been any such thing, it is impossible that the discovery of it should have been left to the *Moderns*; it may in the same manner be said of this *Conjecture*, that had there been any such Variety in the *Apostles* Settlement of different *Churches*, the discovery of it would not have been left to Persons at 1600 Years distance, but the *antient Writers* must have taken some Notice of so remarkable a Thing.

4. The chief Patron of this Opinion is Bishop *Stillingfleet* in his *Irenicum*, p. 325. &c. where he endeavours to shew that in *small Churches*, where there was no great probability of increase, there was at first only a *Pastor* settled, with *Deacons*; and in larger Churches a College of *Presbyters* to govern by their joint Counsels. As to the former of these Positions; here is nothing alleged to shew, either that these

these *Pastors* had any right to ordain others; or that they were not under the Inspection first of the *Apostles*, and such *Church Officers* as *Timothy* and *Titus*; and afterwards of *fixed Bishops*. Make the most of it, this doth not prove in the least against the *Apostolical Institution* of *Episcopacy* where there was a number of *Christians*, and *Presbyters*: Which is all I desire. As to the *latter*, that *learned Writer* alleges nothing in the Proof of it, against the fixed Superiority of *one Person* during *Life* over these *Presbyters*, and his particular Concern in *Ordinations*, and every thing relating to these *Churches*; and consequently nothing to prove that these very *Churches* were without *fixed Bishops*. I am sure, some of the *Authors* he quotes for this purpose, are the most noted *Patrons* amongst the *Antients* of the *Episcopal Power*, and only mention these *Colleges* of *Presbyters* as assisting the *Bishop* by their *Counsels*, in his *Government* of the *Church*. But,

5. If it be still supposed that the *Apostles* instituted only *Presbyters* for the *Government* of *some Churches*, tho' they might appoint *Bishops* in *others*; how came the former, so very soon, and without any Noise, or the least Disturbance, to be so little fond of *Apostolical Institution*, as to conform to the Model of the *Episcopal Churches*, and not to insist in the least upon the Compliance of the *Episcopal Churches* with them? We see in a lesser matter, the *Celebration* of *Easter*, they press'd after *Uniformity*, but yet would not recede one step from what each side knew to have been *Apostolical Practice* in different *Churches*: And of this Quarrel we have a large Account in *Historians*. Is it credible, therefore, that we should have no Account of this Alteration in so material a Point as the *Government* of the *Churches*; no Disputes raised upon that Head: But a meek Compliance of the *Presbyterian Churches* with the *Episcopal*, and an Alteration of their *Churches*, which they knew to stand upon the same Foot of *Apostolical Institution* with the *others*, so silently brought about, that

the very Memory of it should be wholly extinct? But of this I shall have occasion to speak again by and by. At present I shall only say, that either there was no such Alteration made in the first Government of the *Churches*; or else that it must have been made entirely upon very apparent Evidence, that it was the *Apostles* Will, that at least all larger *Churches* should comply with the *Episcopal Form of Government*.

6. If the *Apostles* instituted *Episcopacy* in some Churches (as this *Conjecture* grants) I desire to know whether the *Right* and Management of *Ordination*, were not in the Bishops of those Churches. Nay, can it be supposed that the ordinary *Teachers* and *Freshyters* in those Churches were designed for that Office by the *Apostles*? And not being designed for it, can it be supposed that there was any thing in the *Commission* given to them, to empower them to perform it? If not, then here were *Presbyters* by *Apostolical Institution* without a *Right of Ordination*. Consequently the Arguments alleged for this *Right* in *Presbyters* must fall, because they prove this *Right* to have been in the *Presbyters* of these Churches as strongly as in any others.

Secondly, Some other Learned Men see such manifest Footsteps in the highest Antiquity of the Supereminency of one Person in the Churches, that they are obliged to own it: But then they say that at first this was only a *Prime-Presbyter*, a *President* in the Meetings of the *Presbyters*, not invested with any Authority properly so called over them in their *Cures*, but voluntarily chosen by them for the better management of their *Assemblies*, &c. This hath been said by the learned *Blondel*, and others. But I fear this will be found only an *Evasion*, in order to avoid his acknowledging such *Bishops* in the very first Years after the *Apostles* as he confesses to have been universally settled in less than Forty Years after them. For,

1. The *Instances* in *Antiquity* which he acknowledges to prove this, do indeed prove a great deal more. The

Angels

Angels of the Churches in the Revelations, are Persons to whom the Care of those Churches was in a particular manner committed; and of whom an Account of the Mis-carriages and Defects in them, is in a particular manner required. These, he saith, were *Prime-Presbyters*, not *Bishops*: Tho' it will be hard to give a Reason, unless he will draw an Argument from hence, that all Parts of the *Episcopal Office* are not here expressly attributed to them. And it will be likewise hard to shew how a *Prime-Presbyter*, by being only chosen *President* of the College of *Presbyters* for the more orderly management of their joint-Counsels, should become chargeable with the Faults of their Churches, with which, according to this Supposition, he had nothing to do. For it is manifest he could be no more accountable for any *Congregation* but his own, than any of the other *Presbyters*, had he not the Care of *others* committed to him in some peculiar manner. And this he could not have, if he were only *Prime-Presbyter* in the College. For as such he was only responsible for his own Failings in his Duty in that Post: And as for other Faults, an Account of them should rather have been demanded of those *Presbyters* who were the *Teachers*, and *Governours* of the particular Congregations. But if a *Prime-Presbyter* were one whose Duty it was to inspect and take care of those Churches in which there were *Presbyters* also fixed, as according to *Blondel*, he must have been; then it is evident that this *Prime-Presbyter* was in truth a *Bishop* with Subject *Presbyters* under him. And since he * freely grants that these *Prime-Presbyters* had this Superintendency over many Churches or Congregations with their *Presbyters*; and was after such a manner responsible for them; and this by the Constitution of the *Apostles*, or their *Disciples* before the death of them all; what is this but to give them the Dominion of a *Bishop* over their *Brethren*? And what reason can be given why it should not be acknowledged that *Episcopacy* was settled in the Churches in those

* *Apolog.*
p. 35 53.
& *Prelat.*
p. 6.

early Days? Especially considering that this *Prime-Presbyter* remained in his Office during his Life.

2. As the Instances he produced for these *Prime-Presbyters* prove very favourable to *Episcopacy*, so those Arguments against the Antiquity of *Bishops* which are deduced from some of the antient Writers not mentioning *Bishops* in some Churches as well as *Presbyters* and *Deacons*, hold equally against these *Prime-Presbyters*, whom he acknowledgeth to have been at that time in those Churches. And this Observation is of more weight, because it is acknowledged that even in St. *John's* Days the Office of these *Prime-Presbyters* was of such Consideration, that an Account was justly required of them of the Miscarriages in several Churches under them. And therefore since their Eminence was such, it cannot be supposed that St. *Clemens* would any more have pass'd by such an Officer in his Letter to the *Corinthians*, if there had been such an one, than a *Bishop*. And if his Silence be an Argument against the being of such an Officer as a *Bishop*; so likewise will it prove that there were no such Officers as *Prime-Presbyters*. But if it be thought that he might be included in the general Word of *Presbyters*, or *Bishops*, so likewise the *Bishop* so called in a peculiar sense might be, according to the Language of those earliest Days, and considering there was no necessity for a more accurate Distinction between them.

3. *Ignatius's Epistles* sufficiently confute this Supposition, leaving it beyond doubt that in his Time, within Ten Years after the Death of the *Apostles*, the *Bishop* of a Church was much more than a *Prime-Presbyter*; sufficiently distinguished from other *Presbyters*, and considerably exalted above them: And likewise that it was not a Fancy of his own, or a *Novel Constitution* contrived just then by the *Presbyters*. And these *Epistles* have been demonstrated to be Genuine by such Arguments as all reasonable Persons receive other Writings upon: And no one hath advanced any thing against them worthy of regard.

4. *Blondel* thinks it but highly reasonable to own, that the *Affair of Ordination* belonged to these *Prime-Presbyters*, at least so far that it was not perform'd (nor ought it to have been) by any of the other *Presbyters*, without their bearing the principal part in the Solemnity. And *Bishops* in all Ages being at least *Prime Presbyters*, there can be no Argument drawn from the intrinsic *Right* in *Presbyters*, in favour of their separate *Ordinations* in later Ages, any more than might have been in those early Ages. But they must be defended from other *Topics*.

Thirdly, Some learned Men amongst the *Moderns* affirm, in opposition to the *Testimonies* of the *Antients* on which the *Apostolical Institution* of *Episcopacy* relies, that the *Apostles* left the *Churches* under the joynt-Government of *Presbyters*; but that they did all after their Deaths voluntarily Consent and Agree to alter this Form of Government, and to establish *fixed Bishops* for the Government of the *Churches*, and of the *Presbyters* belonging to them. Nay, some Men of great Reading have attempted to conjecture about what Time this great Change was made, *viz.* about Forty Years after the Death of the *Apostles*. And this sometimes seems to be the Opinion of the *Author* I am now particularly considering. But I desire the following particulars may be duly weigh'd.

I. It may reasonably be expected that for the Proof of a *Change* so great, and so universal, some plain and evident *Testimonies* of antient *Writers* who lived at the very time when this Change is supposed to be made, should be produced: And that we should not in so notorious a Matter of Fact, be put off either with mere Conjectures drawn by *Modern Authors* from obscure Passages of some of the *Antients*; or with the Affirmation of those who were not capable of being *Witnesses* in this Point; or with such Reasoning as cannot prove the Matter here affirmed. It is incredible that so great and remarkable a Change should be brought about without being known to the Persons of that Age in which it was made: And it is as incredible that none of them should ever expressly give any Account
of

of such a Matter of Fact. I appeal to the Persons themselves, who in these modern Times speak as confidently of this Change, as if they themselves had been concerned in the making of it, whether they can instance in any one so material and notorious Matter of Fact as this, relating to the State of the *Primitive Church*, which they themselves believe without the *Testimony*, I say, the *plain and express* Testimony of good and competent *Witnesses*. It is a *Change* in the *Church* as considerable, according to themselves, as a *Change* in a State from a mere *Republick* to a mix'd *Monarchy*. And is it propable in the least degree, that such a Matter should pass without the express Notice of any *Writers* in the Age in which it came to pass, tho' they must necessarily be supposed to be concerned to justify it to the World, and to set forth the great Reasons of such an Alteration? Is it probable that no *Writer* of the following Age should fix the Time, or give an express Account of it? Is it probable that the *Ecclesiastical Historians* afterwards, whose professed Business it was to relate such Matters of Fact, and who do actually give very prolix Accounts of much smaller Affairs, should give no Account, and take no notice of so remarkable a thing, as a *Change*, which if it had been, must certainly have alarmed the whole *Christian World*? Again, it is a *Change*, according to this *Hypothesis*, of an *Apostolical Institution* concerning the Government of the *Church*, a thing which in the smallest Points raised the greatest Jealousies and Combustions amongst the *Primitive Christians*: And is it possible that it should silently pass, and without any Persons bearing Witness against it? It is a *Change* which the *adverse Party* most certainly would for ever have objected to the *Orthodox*, in all their Disputes, and by objecting it might have hoped to have drawn more People to their Side than by any one thing imaginable. And is it probable, in the lowest Degree of Probability, that such a *Change* of the *Apostles Institution* should not once be found to be objected by any *Heretick*, or any Person whatsoever, against the *Orthodox*? Let those believe all this,

this, who are willing to believe every thing which seems to make for their own *Cause* : As for all others, I think they cannot avoid arguing after the following manner. A Change of an *Apostolical Institution*, relating to the Government of the *Church*, is a Matter of Fact very remarkable, of great Importance, such an one as must have been known and very much spoken of by the *Primitive Church* ; as must have been objected against the *Orthodox* by all their *Adversaries* ; and as must have been particularly recorded and accounted for, by the Writers of the Age in which it was made, and by the professed *Historians* of following Ages. But we find no *Testimony* of any such Change made after the *Apostles Days* ; no Notice of any *Contest* and *Disturbance* in the *Church* on any such Account, tho' we do upon much less ; and no Objection concerning any such *Change*, alleged by any of the *Primitive Writers* against their *Adversaries*, or by any of the *first Hereticks* against the *Orthodox*. And therefore cannot but conclude, that there was no such *Change* made in the *State* of the *Church* ; not being able to think that so considerable a Matter of Fact would have been left to the Discovery of the *Moderns*, or that the Belief of it can be rationally built upon their *Conjectures*.

2. There being no express *Testimony* of competent *Witnesses* in any Age of the *Church*, concerning such a *Change* made after the Days of the *Apostles*, it may with Security be argued, from the Improbability of the thing it self, that there could be none. Let any one but consider the Regards of the *first Christians* towards Things of the smallest Importance, which they imagined to be of *Apostolical Institution* ; that they proceeded so far as to excommunicate one another for the sake of a supposed Neglect in so insignificant a Matter as the *Time* for the *Observation* of *Easter* : Nay, that they were ready to die rather than voluntarily, and designedly to depart from any thing *Apostolical* ; and then judge whether any Considerations could induce either *Presbyters*, or *People*, to carry forward, and acquiesce in, such a material Alteration ; or ever to believe

lieve that the *Form of Government*, in which the *Apostles* left the *Churches*, was not as good, and as capable of preventing all Things evil amongst *Christians*, as any other that could possibly be thought of by any *after-Ages*. I grant that many Matters of small Importance, which might plead *Apostolical Custom*, or *Prescription*, might be dropp'd and disus'd by Degrees in *after-Ages*: But that the almost immediate *Successors* of the *Apostles* should professedly meet to alter what they knew to be the *Institution* of the *Apostles*, in such a Matter as the *Government* of the *Church*, is incredible. Again, let any one consider the Account and Reasons of this *Change* given by *St. Jerome*, the first *Author* who undertakes to give any *Reason* for it, and then judge whether this *Change* could be made at the Time fixed by those who argue upon his *Authority*, in favour of *Presbyterian Government* in the *Church* or at any time after the *Apostles*. *St. Jerome* saith, as a Reason and Ground of this *Change*, that the *Laiety* had multiplied Divisions amongst themselves, by calling themselves the *Disciples* of particular *Presbyters* (to be sure of those who baptized them) rather than of *Christ*; and that the *Presbyters* were so fond of this, that every one of them esteem'd those Persons whom they had baptized to be their own *Disciples*, in such Sense to be sure as to make too little Account of their common Master *Christ*: And that upon this Occasion it was decreed all over the *Christian World*, that *Episcopacy* should be brought into the *Churches*. The Conclusion drawn from this by the *Moderns*, is, That about *Forty Years* after the *Apostles*, the *Presbyters* of all *Churches* consented together in the fixing of single Persons in a Superiority over themselves; and that the *Laiety* universally acquiesced in this great *Alteration*, for the remedying the aforesaid Evils: which is as much as to say, that the *Presbyters* were universally grown extremely fond of making *Disciples* to themselves rather than to *Christ*; and the *Laiety* of calling themselves by the Names of those who had baptized them; that the *Presbyters* whilst they were thus fond of raising their own Names, met together

in order to remedy this which *they* themselves were fond of, and did unanimously agree upon a Method to remedy it; and that the *Laiety*, whilst they were thus addicted to particular *Presbyters*, did quietly, and without any Opposition, acquiesce in what was prescribed for the remedying an Evil which they did not desire should be remedied. A Matter too absurd, one would think, to be believed by any, who know any thing of Humane Nature. I grant that a Majority of *Presbyters* might agree to rectify the Miscarriages, and to put an End to the Projects, of a smaller Number: But this Supposition is not agreeable to the forementioned Account of this Matter, which makes the Argument universal. And then again it is to be considered that this lesser Number cannot be supposed to have quietly, and without Reluctance, acquiesced in a Determination, of those who had no proper Authority over them, by which they were not only prevented from prosecuting their own Designs, but also (according to modern *Authors*) restrained from the Exercise of *Powers*, in the Possession of which (according to the present *Hypothesis*) they were left by the *Apostles* themselves; nay, to the careful and conscientious Exercise of which they are animated, and commanded to attend in the *Apostolical* Writings. So likewise it may be supposed, that some of the best of the *Laiety* might acquiesce in a Determination by which the dividing Tempers of others might be restrained and curbed: But it is not supposable that these *others* should, without the least Opposition, agree to the putting a Stop to what themselves were fond of. Especially when there lay before their Eyes so visible a *Plea* against the Method by which this was to be done, *viz.* that it was a Deviation from the Institution of the *Apostles*: A *Plea* sufficient to have dashed the most useful Determinations at that time, and the rather because the Truth of it could not be denied. Never was any thing known in *History* like this, that such a *Change* should be made by Men against their own Designs: or acquiesced in by Multitudes both of *Presbyters* and *Laiety* without making one *Objection*,

on, when the fairest and most unanswerable *Plea* in the World lay against it. Never, I say, was any Matter of *Fact* parallel to this known in *History*, unless it be that there are many Persons of *later Ages*, who can greedily believe such an improbable *Conjecture* as certain *Truth*, without one competent express Testimony to support it. Let us put any of these Persons themselves into the Place of the *Primitive Presbyters*, governing the *Churches* by their common Counsels; knowing that they were left in this Office, and directed how to perform it by the *Apostles* themselves; affecting to have *Disciples* called by their own Name: And we may make themselves Judges whether they would voluntarily, and professedly have met together with a Design of remedying their own Vanity; whether they would have done this by divesting themselves of the *Exercise* of Powers to which they had been called by the *Apostles* themselves, or their *Disciples*: Nay, whether if they had been out-voted in this Matter, they would have silently yielded, without so much as alleging for themselves the just *Plea* they would have had against such an *Alteration*, or making the least Opposition upon this Account. Add to this the Improbability that the succeeding *Presbyters* should agree to remedy an Evil which I shall shew by and by to have been in the *Apostles* Days; and this by a *Method* which (according to this *Hypothesis*) the *Apostles* refused to prescribe for this End, and by Alteration of that particular Method which they left, without doubt, as the best and properest they could think of for the remedying this *Evil*, as well as others, which they knew to be in the Church. This would have been directly to have opposed their Wisdom, and Prudence, to that of the *Apostles* themselves; (which I cannot believe concerning them) and must have furnished all their *Contemporaries* with an unanswerable Argument against their Proceedings. And now, to recapitulate what hath been said under this Head, That the *Successors* of the *Apostles*, and the *Christian* People should so soon, designedly, universally, and without any Reluctance, depart
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from what they knew to be an *Apostolical Institution*, is extreme strange; that they should do this in order to remedy an Evil which the *Apostles* knew to be in their own Days, and thought not proper to remedy in this Method; that the *Presbyters* by doing this, should voluntarily and universally agree to restrain themselves from the Exercise of that *Power*, and *Authority*, to which the *Apostles* themselves declare them to be called, and ordained; these are Suppositions still stranger: But that this great Alteration should be contrived and effected, and universally submitted to, by the very Persons whose Designs, and Humours, and vain Affectation it was ordained to remedy, and put a Stop to, is the strangest, and most unaccountable thing imaginable. And yet all these *Suppositions* must be admitted as true, and certain, if the *Opinion* I am now considering be admitted. But these *Suppositions* are absurd, and impossible. Therefore, so is the *Opinion* founded upon them.

The only Reply given by a late Author to the Argument drawn from the Improbability that the *antient Church* should so generally have fallen in with *Episcopacy*, if it had not had its Rise from the *Apostles*, is this, that *this Notion being once started, the Fathers may be easily supposed to have taken it from one another as they did the Chiliastical Opinion*. I have before shewn the great Difference between their *Testimonies*, as to Matter of Fact, and their *Opinions* founded in great part upon their own *Reasonings*, and so refer the Reader to what hath been before said. I shall now add, 1. That supposing the *Fathers* ready to deliver any Point down as *Apostolical*, this gives no Account how it may be supposed that the whole Body of *Christians*, all over the World, should so soon fall in with *Episcopacy*, which was the Matter here undertaken to be accounted for. 2. The Agreement of some of the *Fathers* about the *Chiliastical Opinion*, shews only how fond they were of any thing they had any reason to think *Apostolical*,

Defence of Moderate Nonconformity, P. I. p. 180.

cal, tho' mixed with their own Reasoning; and so is an Argument in favour of the *Apostolical Institution of Episcopacy*. For if there were such a Sense in the *antient Church*, concerning any thing they thought *Apostolical*, let us consider that according to this *Author*, the whole *Christian Church* could not but know that the *Apostles* instituted the *Presbyterian Form of Government*, and then see if this can give us any Account of their easiness to forsake what they all knew to be *Apostolical*. Had they known the *Doctrine* contrary to the *Millennial Notion* to have been *Apostolical*; and universally departed from it whilst they knew this, something might be urged from hence. But at present here is no *Parallel*. For supposing them to be easy to admit a *Doctrine* of no great Moment as *Apostolical* (upon some *Testimony*) the contrary to which they could not directly prove; this will not shew that they were easy to admit a Change in that *Government* which they knew to be *Apostolical*, but rather the contrary, that they would with the greatest Zeal have adhered to it. 3. How unworthy is it in this *Author* to talk of Designs of gaining and supporting a *Grandeur*, when according to our *Brethren* themselves, *Episcopacy* was fixed in as great an Heighth as can be reasonably wished, at a time when all the *Grandeur* of a *Bishop* was to be *first* in *Labours*, and *first* in *Martyrdom*? I find any *Contradictions* can be urged rather than some *Truths* admitted. But to return.

3. Add to this, that there are particular, and express *Testimonies* to the contrary; not only of *St. Jerome* himself, on whom it is unjustly founded, who traces up *Bishops*, in the Sense in which the Word was used in his own Days, to the Times of the *Apostles* themselves; not only of professed *Church Historians*, who all agree in the immediate Succession of *Bishops* to the *Apostles* themselves in the *Government* of the *Church*; but of *Writers* in that very intermediate Space, in which this Parity of *Presbyters* is asserted to have been in the *Church*. I shall mention but Two; but those such as may justly be stiled uncontrollable

lable. The *first* is of St. *John*, the last of the *Apostles*, in whose latter Days we may well imagine the Affairs of the *Church* began to be in such Hands as the *Apostles* were most willing they should continue in after their Deaths. The *Angels* of the *Churches* to whom he writes in the *Revelations*, are allowed by *Blondel* himself (the chief *Patron* of the Opinion now before us) to have been particular Persons to whom the *Care* of the *Churches* was in such peculiar Sense committed, that they were accountable for the Defects in their *Churches*. That these could not be particular *Presbyters*, without any others in any Sense inferior to them, he likewise allows; I suppose because it is a great Absurdity to suppose but one *Presbyter* in each of those *Churches* there spoken of. And that they could not be merely *prime Presbyters* (as he would willingly make them) is as evident, because it could not be the Part of a *prime Presbyter* (according to himself) to be accountable for the Faults of those *Flocks* over which other *Presbyters* were appointed. It remains, therefore, that they were in Reality, tho' not in Name, *Bishops*, with *Presbyters* subject to them; and consequently that the *Churches* were not universally govern'd by *Presbyters* without *Bishops*, before the Year of our Lord 140; and consequently that the *Establishment* of *Bishops* was not made at that time, but before the Death of all the *Apostles*, as Mr. *Baxter* thought himself obliged to acknowledge, with respect to some *Churches*. The other *Testimony* I mean to allege is that of *Ignatius* (not Ten Years after the *Death* of the *Apostles*) who in many places of his *Epistles*, makes as manifest a Distinction between *Bishops* and *Presbyters* as hath been usual in the Ages after him; and carries the *Episcopal* Dignity to a very great Height. Now because he speaks very highly of *Bishops*, who in those Days were the chief Supports and Ornaments of the *Christian Cause*, as well as Governors in the *Church*, a late Author is pleas'd to drop Insinuations against the Genuineness of these *Epistles* without alleging

Defense of Moderate Nonconformity, P. I. p. 152.

any single Consideration against what hath been written by Bishop *Pearson* in that Cause, so entirely to the Satisfaction of impartial Judges : which surely I may venture to say is a Proceeding not very worthy of one concerned for Truth. Or if they be genuine, he doth, in effect, pay the Writer of them the civil Complement of being out of *his Wits*, or a *Blasphemer*; tho' no one had more Honours given him by the *Primitive Church* than this Martyr. I say, he pays him this Complement, unless *his Way*, or some other like it, be taken to soften some of his *Expressions*. The Way he proposeth is this, That *Ignatius* might perhaps magnify the Power of a *Bishop* above that of a *Presbyter* as Divine, in Opposition to those who might perhaps represent any such Difference in Degree, fix'd by *Humane Prudence* to promote Peace and Order, as unlawful. That is, That *Ignatius* magnified the Power of a *Bishop* as Divine, which he knew to be an *Institution* merely *Humane*; that he magnified it to this degree many Years before it was heard of in the *Church*, unless this *Author* will recede from the Opinion of *Blondel*, and bring up the Decree for the Institution of *Episcopacy* to the very Borders of the *Apostolical* Age; and that he did this in Opposition to a sort of Men who never were heard of in the *Christian Church* till these last Years, either amongst the *Hereticks*, or *Orthodox*. Behold to what unaccountable Suppositions *Prejudice* and *Resolution* will carry Men : Whereas I desire to infer nothing from these *Epistles* but this, that *Ignatius* knew it to be agreeable to the Mind of the *Apostles* that there should be *Bishops* superior to *Presbyters*; that this was no new, or strange thing even in his Days; and that therefore the settled *Government* of the *Church* was *Episcopal* long before the Time fix'd by *Blondel*, and not first introduced by the Consent of the *Presbyters* of that Age, or indeed of any other. This, I confess, I cannot but think a *Demonstration* against the *Hypothesis* of that *Learned Man* : And it ought to have great Weight, because there is nothing throughout his long, and very
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obscure *Apology* of any force to invalidate this single Testimony against him.

4. Last of all, Because I have here alleged against the *Opinion* I am now considering, that there is no *express Testimony* of any *competent Witnesses* to support it, which in all reason may be expected in the *Case* of an *important*, and very remarkable *Matter of Fact*; it is but just that I should consider those *antient Authors*, whom the *Patrons* of this *Opinion* profess to follow in it; and impartially examine the *Passages* cited out of them, that so it may be seen how well they can bear that *Conclusion* which is built upon them, or how effectually they prove against the *Apostolical Institution* of *Episcopacy*.

I. The *first* who is produced as expressly opposing the Superiority of *Bishops* over *Presbyters* is *Aerius*. This he was led to do out of private *Resentment*. But of how little Account he ought to be in the *Case* before us will appear from the few following *Considerations*: that he lived near Two Hundred Years after this *Alteration* in the *State* of the *Church* is pretended to have been made; that he pretends not to attest any such *Matter of Fact*; to produce *Witnesses* for it, or to settle the *Time* when it was made; that he affirms not there was ever any *Time*, after the *Apostles*, in which there was not such a *Superiority*; that all he pretends to is to reason from some *Expressions* used by the *Apostles*; that their first *Design* was to make no such difference in *Ecclesiastical Officers*, which *Reasonings* shall be examined in their due place; and that he doth not so much as affirm that they themselves did not afterwards find *Occasion* to alter their first *Design*; that his *Opinion* was condemned, and accounted extremely strange, and wholly new, and himself had no *Followers*; and last of all, that amongst all his *Pretenses*, and *Reasonings*, in favour of *Presbyters*, he doth not lay *Claim* to the *Right of Ordination*; and that in the midst of all his *Resentments* he did not attempt to exercise that *Right*, which ought to be of great force in the *Cause* I am now particularly concerned in. Let any one, therefore,

judge from all this, whether any thing of Moment can be alleged from *Aerius*, as an authentick Testimony in favour of this great *Alteration* in the *Church* so much contended for by the modern *Adversaries* of *Episcopacy*; or in contradiction to the concurrent Testimony of *antient Writers* concerning the *Right* of *Bishops* to govern, and ordain.

II. The chief *Patron*, amongst the *Antients*, of this supposed *Alteration* in the *Church*, on whom the *Moderns* build much, is *St. Jerome*, with whom those few other *antient Writers*, who speak any thing after the same manner, must stand, or fall. Let us, therefore, see of what Weight the Passages alleged from this *Father* are in the present Debate.

I. We must call to mind that the *Alteration* we are now speaking of is a remarkable Matter of Fact, to which we may justly require the Testimony of competent Witnesses, concerning the Time and Manner of doing it. Now *St. Jerome* was not so much as born till Two Hundred Years after this Change is pretended to be made: So that what might be expected from him is that he should not only affirm this; (which signifieth nothing, because of himself he can be no sufficient Witness to it;) but that he should allege the express Testimony of those who were Witnesses to it. This he doth not attempt to do; and therefore cannot be a Witness to the Matter of Fact, but only (if the most be granted) one of the same Opinion with the *modern Authors* I am now considering.

II. It being only the Opinion and Judgment of *St. Jerome*, which can be drawn from the Passages alleged out of him; and this manifestly founded upon his own Reasonings from some Passages in the Writings of the *Apostles*, it is not agreeable to the Principles of those who follow him in it, that we should receive it merely on his Authority, but that we should strictly examine the Reasons on which he founds it; which shall be done in the next *Chapter*, when I come to consider the *Pleas* in favour of the *Rights* of *Presbyters* urged from the *New Testament*.

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But in the mean while that we may see how far this *Father* patronizes the Opinion of those *Moderns* who affirm an Alteration to have been made in the equality of all *Presbyters* about Forty Years after the Death of the *Apostles*, and pretend to be his Followers in this, it is fit we should examine as carefully as possible what the Judgment of this *Father* was, by carefully considering what it is he affirms, and by what Arguments he attempts to prove the Truth of what he maintains.

He doth indeed deliver it as his Judgment, that according to the original Design of the *Apostles* the *Churches* were once govern'd by the common Councils of *Presbyters*, and that there was afterwards, upon a just Occasion, an Alteration made in this, and another sort of Government settled in all *Churches*. But to those very *Presbyters*, to whose Government the *Churches* were once left, he never ascribes the power of Ordaining others, but denies it to all *Presbyters*. And again, he neither affirms nor implies it to be his Opinion, that this Alteration was made after the Death of the *Apostles*, or that it was made by the *Presbyters* themselves met in Consultation. So that these things are entirely new, and manifest Additions to what *St. Jerome* says, nor to be deduc'd by any Rules of reasoning from his Words. How then can the Modern *Patrons* of *Presbyters* father this their best, and most esteem'd *Scheme* upon an Author in whom no such things are to be found. On the contrary, that *St. Jerome* either had no settled and determined Judgment in this matter, or meant to signify that the *Alteration* he speaks of was made in the Days of the *Apostles* themselves, and by their Authority, or with their Approbation, is to me manifest from the following Observations, which I desire may be regarded.

I. I have observ'd already that he doth not say this *Alteration* was made by the *Presbyters* after the Death of the *Apostles*, and the Settlement of the *Churches* according to their Minds. This ought to have its weight, because it would have been very much to the purpose he had then

in view: And that it is incredible that he should have been of this Opinion, and not have alleged it when he was pleading for an original Equality of *Bishops* and *Presbyters*. I appeal to his Followers, who never have thought it sufficient to that purpose to affirm such an Alteration to have been made, without affirming it likewise to have been made by Men after the *Apostles* Deaths. His Design manifestly was to say all that he thought true against the distinction between *Bishops* and *Presbyters*: And it is often observ'd, (and especially by the last Advocate for the Rights of *Presbyters*) how easy the *Fathers* found it to run things to an extremity in any Cause they undertook. And yet St. *Ferome* in all his Zeal against this *Distinction* saith only that there was a Time when this *Distinction* was not in being: But never intimates that it was not made and settled in the Days of the *Apostles* themselves; or that the *Presbyters* of After-ages alter'd the Design of the *Apostles* after their Deaths: Which single Thing, if he could have said with any Truth, must have done his Cause more service than all he hath alleged; and therefore, I conclude, he would certainly have said it, and endeavoured to prove it, if he had thought it true. But that he did not think this true. but rather that the *Apostles* themselves made the Alterations he speaks of, I have not only this *Negative*, but other *positive* Arguments to urge.

2. I argue from his alleging only some Expressions in the Writings of the *Apostles* and not any Words, or Testimonies of any Writer after them. For supposing his Reasonings from these Expressions just (which indeed they are not) they will not prove that the *Alteration* spoken of was not made by the *Apostles* themselves after the time in which they wrote the Passages cited by him: Nor will his alleging them shew that it was his Design to prove this. And again, if his Design had been to prove that this *Alteration* was made some time after the Death of the *Apostles*, his Business must have been to shew, not only that

that there was a time during the Lives of the *Apostles*, but also that there was an intermediate Space in which there was no distinction between *Bishops* and *Presbyters*: And this from *Passages* of some *Writers*, or *Records* of some *Churches*, in that intermediate Space. But this he doth not so much as attempt to do: And from hence I conclude that it was not his Design to affirm, or intimate any such thing.

3. I argue from his reckoning up *Bishops* in the *Church* of *Alexandria* to the time of the *Apostles* themselves, who, after they were chosen by the *Presbyters*, must have been, according to himself, *Bishops* in the sense in which that Word was us'd in his own Days. These *Bishops* must according to St. *Ferome* have been the *Governors* of the *Church*, and of the *Presbyters* themselves: For He makes all the *Care* and *Solicitude* concerning *Ecclesiastical Affairs* to be devolv'd upon them as soon as they were constituted. They must be the *Ordainers* of other *Presbyters*, even according to *Blondel* himself, unless he deny to them what he grants to his *Prime-Presbyters* in each *Church*. So that here are *Bishops* with distinct Powers, after their *Election*, from those of their *Electors* (as distinct as the Powers of a *General* from those of the *Army* which chuses him, which is one of the *Similitudes* by which he illustrates this matter;) immediately succeeding St. *Mark* in the *Church* of *Alexandria*: And consequently the like in other *Churches*, according to St. *Ferome*, who makes all *Churches* uniform, and the reception of *Episcopacy*, whenever it was received, to be universal at the same time. From whence I argue, that the *Alteration* spoken of by him from *Presbyterian* to *Episcopal Government* was thought by him to have been made before the Death of the *Apostles*. For the *Alteration* he speaks of is the chusing one out of the *Presbyters* to be set over them, instead of remaining in their original *Equality*. This is the *Alteration*, I say, he speaks of; and this He affirms to have been in the *Church* of *Alexandria* without any interruption,

from St. *Mark's* Days, in whose Place these *Bishops* are, without doubt, spoken of by St. *Jerome*, as succeeding in a much more eminent sense than the Body of the *Presbyters*. For all he here saith in favour of these *Presbyters* is that they chose these *Bishops*: But after that Choice he manifestly makes as great a Distinction between these *Bishops*, and the *Electors*, the *Presbyters*, as was between the *Bishops*, and *Presbyters* of his own Age. So that it is manifest that St. *Jerome* was of Opinion, that there were *Bishops*, in the eminent sense of the Word, in the Church of *Alexandria* from the time of St. *Mark*. 1. From his using the Word *Episcopus*, which he never intimates to have been used for a *Prime-Presbyter*, or any other *Officer* but a *Bishop* eminently so call'd. 2. From his saying that this Word was appropriated to this *Officer*, even from St. *Mark's* Days: For as the confus'd use of this Word is his Argument against the original *Distinction* of *Bishops* and *Presbyters*, so the Appropriation of this Word to one *Officer*, infers a *Distinction* of his *Office* from that of *Presbyters*. However, here is an Argument for the Appropriation of the Word, even in the Days of some of the *Apostles*, contrary to *Blondel*, and others who pretend to follow him. 3. From his making this *Bishop* to answer to the *General* of an *Army*, whose *Powers* after he is chosen are vastly distinct from the *Powers* of the *Army* which chose him. 4. From his own Account of the introducing *Episcopacy*, viz. The choosing one from among the *Presbyters* to whom the *Care* of all things should in a peculiar sense belong. If therefore at *Alexandria* one such *Officer* was chosen, then at *Alexandria* there were, according to St. *Jerome*, *Bishops*, in the eminent sense of the Word, from St. *Mark's* Days.

5. There is no reason against this Interpretation, but his saying that the *Presbyters* chose this *Bishop*, which is no Argument against the *Superiority* of his *Office*, even by the Will of the *Apostles*, and particularly as to *Ordination*, after such Choice was made; any more than an *Army's* choosing their *General* is an Argument against the *Superiority*

ority of his Office, and his Right to grant all Commissions under himself, after such Choice.

4. I argue from the Absurdity, which I would not suppose him to maintain, since he doth not say any thing like it, that the *Presbyters* should immediately alter the *Apostolical Settlement* of their Churches, and voluntarily, and unanimously agree to reform the Abuses, themselves were fond of, and to restrain the Exercise of those Rights, in which they knew the *Apostles* had left them. But of this, and the like Absurdities in that *Hypothesis* which some would willingly fix upon St. *Jerome*, I have before sufficiently spoken.

5. I argue from the Expression St. *Jerome* useth in the Account he gives of the Settlement of *Episcopacy* in the Church, viz. *Toto orbe decretum*: Which are not Words of voluntary Compact, and Consent, amongst *Presbyters* who were to be restrained, and whose Abuses were to be reform'd by this Decree. And there being, according to the present *Hypothesis*, no Authority before this Decree, superior to *Presbyters*, unless that of the *Apostles* themselves, or some particular extraordinary Church-Officers appointed by the *Apostles*; this Decree for the Establishment of *Episcopacy* must be understood by St. *Jerome* to have been in the Age of the *Apostles* themselves.

6. I argue from the same St. *Jerome's* affirming *James* to have been made *Bishop* of *Jerusalem* by the *Apostles*, *Timothy* of *Ephesus*, *Titus* of *Crete*, *Polycarp* of *Smyrna*. This is sufficient to prove that he himself thought that, whatever the original Design of the *Apostles* was with respect to the Powers of *Presbyters*, an End was put to it by the *Apostles* themselves, who did in these several Churches not only themselves govern, but appointed others to govern, and to Ordain. For what room, I pray, is here for the Joint-counsels of *Presbyters*, consider'd by themselves, when once these Persons were appointed to a superior Office in these several Churches? If any say that these were only *Itinerant* Extraordinary Church-Officers, not design'd to continue in the Church, on the other hand,

I desire to know how they can prove that the *Apostles* design'd *those* for the governing of the *Churches*, and the ordaining of other *Presbyters*, whom themselves immediately restrain'd from these Offices. But that is not the Point here. St. *Jerome's* Opinion is what we are now enquiring after : And it is manifest He speaks of them as of *Bishops* in the eminent sense of the Word, and consequently that his Judgment was that the *Apostles* themselves made the Decree concerning *Episcopacy* which he speaks of.

7. I argue from those Marks he gives of that time in which he affirms the *Alteration* he speaks of to have been made. That the *Laity* began to forget their great Master *Christ*, and one to say, *I am of Paul* ; another, *I am of Apollos* ; another, *I am of Cephas* : And that the *Presbyters* began to claim those whom they baptized, as their own *Disciples* : These two things he saith were the occasion of the *Alteration* he speaks of. Now these two Marks, we know, do agree exactly to the time of the *Apostles*, from St. *Paul's* first *Epistle* to the *Corinthians*, in the first *Chapter* of which he laments the *Dissensions* of the *Laity*, v. 12. and likewise intimates the other Humour to have been too much amongst those who baptized the *Laity*, v. 14, 15. in which he thanks God he baptized but one *Family* amongst them, lest any should tax him with that foolish *Vanity* of endeavouring to obtain many *Disciples*, as it were to himself, by baptizing. Indeed it is not necessary to suppose that St. *Jerome* thought, that immediately upon this Disorder in the *Church* of *Corinth* this *Alteration* was made, but rather when it appear'd that this Humour was not so check'd by St. *Paul's* Exhortations, but that it crept into other *Churches* likewise. What I would say therefore is this, that we are assured that these Marks agree to the Age of the *Apostles* ; and that it is extremely probable that they would not leave it to succeeding *Presbyters* to provide Remedies for the Evils which they knew to be in their own Times ; that we have no such Marks belonging peculiarly to the Age
after

after them, and therefore have reason to think that the *Alteration* (if at all) was made before the Death of the *Apostles*. I appeal to our *Adversaries* themselves, whether they would not esteem such an Argument as this a Demonstration of their own *Scheme*, could they find these Marks expressly fixed upon the Age after the *Apostles*, which the *Apostles* themselves witness to have belonged to their own Age: And I appeal to every impartial Person, whether it be not a good Argument that St. *Jerome* understood this *Alteration* to have been made in the Age of the *Apostles*, that he gives such Marks of this *Time*, when he thought it made, as peculiarly agree to *that* Age. Or, if these Marks can agree to the following *Age*, can any one believe that the Presbyters then living should pretend to prescribe a *Remedy* for an *Evil*, which they knew the *Apostles* had refus'd to prescribe for the same *Evil*, unless it be supposed they had Directions given down from the very *Apostles* for the prescribing it, upon the increase of that *Evil*, which will amount to an *Apostolical Institution*, and as effectually restrain all *Presbyters* from all Exercise of their supposed original Rights, unless what is founded upon apparent Necessity.

8. I argue from his calling *Episcopacy* one of the *Traditions Apostolical*, which he doth in one of the places in which he zealously pleads against the original Distinction between *Bishops* and *Presbyters*. An Argument which was never answered either by *Blondel* or *Salmasius*, tho' it was thought requisite to promise an Answer to it. The only Reply that hath been made by any to it is, that St. *Jerome* in other places speaks of things which were purely *Customs Ecclesiastical* as *Apostolical Traditions*, from whence they would collect that he meant only *Ecclesiastical Customs* in this place. But they produce no Passage at all parallel to this to prove the Justness of this Reply. For it is one thing for a *Writer* to say, that for the sake of the Peace, and Good of the *Church*, People should look upon, and observe, good and innocent *Customs* as if they were *Apostolical Traditions*; and another to call any thing absolutely

folutely an *Apostolical Tradition*. And again, it is very just to call any matter of Practice both an *Ecclesiastical Custom*, and an *Apostolical Tradition*, without meaning the same thing by both these Terms. None of their Instances therefore prove that St. *Ferome* did not here intend to call *Episcopacy* an *Apostolical Tradition* in the literal sense of the Words. In one place indeed he seems to be most of all resolved to depress the Eminence of *Bishops*, and to put it upon *Ecclesiastical Custom*. But he manifestly avoids opposing that to *Apostolical Institution*, and is contented only to deny that our Lord himself made the Distinction: Artfully, one would think, at that time avoiding either to affirm, or deny that the *Apostles* instituted this Difference amongst *Church-Officers*.

9. I argue from St. *Ferome's* not granting to *Presbyters* the *Right of Ordination*, amidst all his Pretensions in their Names. It is very remarkable, that tho' in order to equal them to *Bishops* he gives the *Government* of the first *Churches* into their Hands, he doth not mention the *Affair of Ordination*: Which certainly he would have done had he at the same time thought it had ever belonged to them. For it had been as much to his purpose, (and he had equal Reasons for it) to have affirmed that they *originally* were entrusted with the *Right of Ordination*, as it was to affirm that they at first governed the Churches: Nor can there be any *Reason* thought of why he should not expressly have affirmed the *one* as well as the *other*, had he thought them both true. On the contrary, what is more remarkable, he doth at the same time himself deny to them this *Right of Ordination*. *This Right*, I say: For of that his Words must be understood, when he asks, in order to carry their Cause as high as he could, *Quid enim, excepta Ordinatione, facit Episcopus, quod Presbyter non faciat?* A *Bishop* in his Days had many other Powers to which *Presbyters* did not pretend, besides that of *Ordination*: And therefore the *Question* was not at all to his purpose, unless he meant to signify by it, as his Opinion, that the *Presbyters* were never entrusted with the
Affair

Affair of *Ordination*, tho' they were with that of the *Government* of the *Churches of Christ* by their joint *Councils*: by which means he leaves an uninterrupted *Succession* to *Church-Officers* superior in *this* to *Presbyters*, and so destroys the *Supposition* of *Blondel* and others, of their continuing in the *Exercise* of *this Right* till near the middle of the *Second Century*. Add to this, that if *St. Jerome* had designed, as *Blondel* and others pretend, to affirm in this Place that even in his own Age *Presbyters* did every thing, except *Ordination*, which *Bishops* did, he would rather have said, *Quid facit Episcopus, excepta Ordinatione, quod Presbyter non facit?* I say, his Design would have oblig'd him to express himself in the *Indicative Mood* rather than the *Subjunctive*: The use of which is a *Grammatical Demonstration* that he intended by this *Question* to ask, not what the *Bishops* of his Age did, except *Ordination*, which the *Presbyters* likewise did not, but what the *Bishops* did which the *Presbyters* might not likewise do, lawfully, and according to their *Original Right*, excepting *Ordination*. And that this was his meaning is plain likewise from *St. Chrysostom*, who follows him in his *Opinion* of the *Original Rights* of *Presbyters*, and owns expressly, that *Bishops* are superior to *them* in *Point of Ordination*, tho' in that *only*: And this when he is examining their *Original Rights*, and not the *State* they were in, in his Days, in which he knew that *Bishops* were, in other *Respects*, superior to *Presbyters*. At least this may be said, that no one can urge that *St. Jerome* did ever expressly patronize the *Pretensions* of any *Presbyters* to this *Right*; but that he rather disclaims it in their Names.

10. I could allege many more noted *Passages* and *Expressions* out of this *Father*, which do, I think, manifestly shew that, tho' he might think that there was a *Time* in the Days of the *Apostles*, in which *Presbyters* in a *joint Assembly* governed the *Churches*, to be sure under the *Inspection*, as much as could be, of the *Apostles* and other extraordinary *Church-Officers*, yet he never thought this with respect to any *Time after the Apostles*, but was of

Opinion

Opinion that the *Decree* concerning *fixed Episcopacy* was made in their Days. But if any should think to oppose to all that I have said, any Passages in the Writings of this *Father*, I answer, that it must be granted, either that he was not constant in his Judgment concerning this Matter, or that his true Sense must be judged of from the *Number*, and Clearness of the Passages alleged on both Sides. If the former be granted, his *Authority* is not worth contending for : if the *latter*, it must certainly be yielded to be on the side of the *Apostolical Institution of Episcopacy*.

III. If to *Aerius*, and St. *Ferome*, any other *Authors* amongst the *Antient*, can be added in favour of the Original Parity of *Ecclesiastical Officers*, this must be allow'd, that what they allege is either taken up from *these*, or founded upon Reasonings of their own from some Expressions in the *New Testament* : That none of them all affirm the *Institution of Episcopacy* to have been owing to the Consent and Compact of *Presbyters* of succeeding *Times*; or that it was not the Work of the *Apostles* themselves; or that there ever was a Time, after the Death of the *Apostles*, in which there were not *Bishops*, properly so call'd, in the Church.

From all this laid together, therefore, let impartial *Readers* judge what *authentick Testimony* our *Brethren* have to produce for so notorious a Matter of Fact as, the Alteration of the Government of the Church near the middle of the *Second Century*; or how justly the *Patrons* of this *Hypothesis* set up St. *Ferome* as their mighty Advocate : since we see not one express *Testimony* produc'd for it, and St. *Ferome* in many Passages of his *Writings* absolutely contradicting their Opinion. Thus much I thought fit to say in answer to that *Scheme*, to which the principal, and most *learned Advocates* of the *Rights of Presbyters* seem most fondly to adhere : And I hope what I have said may be thought satisfactory by the best and most equal Judges.

Thus

Thus have I endeavoured to establish the *Apostolical Institution of Episcopacy*, on which the *Right of Bishops to Ordain* is founded, as well by answering the *Objections* which have been advanced against the Sufficiency of the concurrent *Testimony of antient Church-Writers* concerning it, as by shewing the Weakness and Unjustifiableness of those *Schemes and Hypotheses*, which have been by *learned modern Writers* confronted to this *Testimony*, and to the *Conclusion* we build upon it. I proceed now to examine the *Pleas*, and *Arguments* advanced in Behalf of the *Right of Presbyters to ordain*. This is the *Subject* of the next *Chapter*, which I hope, will end in the full Confirmation of what hath been already said in *this*.

C H A P. II.

The Pleas alleged for the Right of Presbyters to Ordain, proposed and examined.

II. **T**H E *second* Thing which I have undertaken to do, is to examine impartially the *Pleas* that are still alleged for the *Right of Presbyters to Ordain*; that so it may be judged by *all*, whether their *Claims* have any just *Foundation*; and be seriously considered by *themselves*, whether they ought to be continued.

Sect. I. *The first Plea, taken from the Identity of Bishops and Presbyters, examined.*

The *first Plea* is taken from the *Identity of Bishops and Presbyters*: which, if it can be proved in the *Sense* contended against by *Episcopal Writers*, I grant, doth certainly demonstrate an *Original Right* in *Presbyters to ordain*. A late *Author*, in stating this Point, saith that, *To make good the Plea Two Things are to be cleared, 1. That Presbyters are by Divine Right the same as Bishops.*

Defense of Moderate Nonconformity, P. I. p. 70. Ibid. p. 71.

shops. And, 2. *That it thence follows that Presbyters may warrantably ordain other Persons Presbyters.* The true meaning of the *first* of these Positions, if he designs it should be of any Service in his Cause, must be this, That those who are now in a peculiar Sense called *Presbyters*, have originally by *Divine Right*, (that is, according to his Proof of it, by the Will of the *Apostles*;) the same Office in the *Church* with those who are now in a peculiar Sense called *Bishops*. This is the only *Sense* of that *Position* which can be of any Service to his Cause: And now let us examine the Proof he brings for it.

It appears, he saith, from hence, that such as were solemnly set apart to the Sacred Ministry, and entrusted with the Keys of the Kingdom of God, and authorized to administer all Ordinances, in the Church, to the Faithful committed to their Care, are in Scripture stiled Bishops, and Elders, or Presbyters, without any Mark of Distinction. In answer to this, I freely grant that such as were set apart to the Office of *Presbyters*, and entrusted with the *Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven* (in the Sense in which *Presbyters* were ever entrusted with them) and authorized to administer the Ordinances of *Baptism*, and the *Lord's Supper*, and to preach, instruct, and take Care of the Faithful committed to them, are called in the New Testament, ἑπισκοποι *Overseers, Inspectors, and Curates* of the Flock of Christ, as the Word *Bishops* signifieth. But we are not advanced one Step farther by all this. For this will not prove that these very Persons were not always subject to other *Church-Officers*, and at this very time to such as *Timothy* and *Titus*, as well as to the *Apostles* themselves; this will not prove them to be the same in their Office, with those who were afterwards called ἑπισκοποι in an eminent Sense; this will prove nothing but that *Presbyters* are invested with all those Powers which belonged to those who were called ἑπισκοποι in the *New Testament*. But what those Powers were cannot be concluded from hence. Indeed if our *Argument* stood thus, that *Bishops*, now peculiarly so called, inherit the Office of those who were some-

Sometimes called *Bishops* in the *New Testament*, the present *Plea* would certainly be good, that they who are now peculiarly called *Presbyters* have the same *Offices* of Right, belonging to them, which are claimed by those peculiarly called *Bishops*, because they are the *Officers* called *Bishops* in the *New Testament*. But when our Assertion is, that *Bishops*, eminently so called, answer, *not* to those who are sometimes called so in the *New Testament*, but to those superior *Church-Officers*, whose Office we find there to have been to *govern* and *ordain*; and that *Presbyters* have no Right originally to exercise some of those Functions which were exercised by such *Ecclesiastical Officers* as *Timothy* and *Titus*: I say, when these are our Positions, it can signify nothing to allege that *Presbyters* are the *Officers* who were called *Bishops* in the *New Testament*, because this will entitle them only to the Office of those who there called *Bishops*, not to that of those who were acknowledged to be *superior* to those there called *Bishops*. To allege this can signify nothing, unless it be included in the Signification of the Word *ἑπίσκοποι*, that all who were ever called so, were entituled to *ordain* and *govern*, as well as to *teach*, instruct and guide their Flocks into all necessary *Truth*. But that this is included in the Word, was never so much as pretended. It being therefore, a sufficient Ground of the *Presbyters* being called *Bishops*, that they are in a very proper Sense, Overseers, and have the *Care* of Souls entrusted to them, which is all that is implied in the Word; it doth not follow from their being called so, that they had other *Powers* which are not necessarily included in that Word. If they have Powers sufficient to make that Name proper to their Office, this, I say, was a sufficient Ground why that Name was given them, before there was any Design of fixing peculiar Names to all *Ecclesiastical Officers*. But they have *Powers* which are a sufficient Ground for that Name, without supposing them empowered to *ordain* others: Therefore it cannot follow from their being called *ἐπίσκοποι* in the *New Testament*, that they are entrusted with the *Right* of *Ordination*: or

that they are called to all the *Offices* claimed by *Bishops* eminently so styled in modern Times.

The fixing the *Name* of *Bishops* upon those who are in an eminent Sense *Overseers*, and *Curators* of the *Church*, was a Matter purely arbitrary, and now founded merely upon *Custom*: and it is not from the difference of *Names* we argue to the difference of the *Offices*; and therefore cannot think it of any Importance, on the other side, to argue from the *Identity* of *Names* heretofore to the *Identity* of *Offices*. Had there been no difference of *Names* settled, but had both *Bishops* and *Presbyters* been called by one common Name to this Day, whether *Bishops*, or *Presbyters*, all the Arguments had still stood as firm for *Episcopacy*. If it could be shewn that there ought to be a *Distinction* in the *Offices* of those called by that common Name; that there always had been in the *Church* Officers superior to the *Teachers* of particular *Congregations*; that these *Teachers* had not the *Exercise* of the *Power* of *Ordination* ever left to them; and were always under the Inspection of some other *superior Officers*; the Cause of *Episcopacy* must have stood firm. And yet it is from this *difference* of *Names* now settled, that this *Argument* now drawn from the *Identity* of *Names* in the *New Testament* took its Rise. Let us suppose, therefore, that this difference of *Names* were removed, and it were now usual to call both *Bishops* and *Presbyters* by one common Name, this *Identity* of *Name* would never prove that there was no difference in their *Offices* even at that time when there was no *Distinction* in their *Names*. Much less can it prove that *Presbyters* have the same *Rights* which are claimed by those now called *Bishops*, to allege that they were once called *Bishops*; unless it can be shewn that those who were so called in the *Apostles* Age, had actually then all the *Ecclesiastical Power* of those who have been called so, in a peculiar Sense, in after Ages.

The *Argument* founded upon this *Plex*, if stated truly, can amount to no more than this; *Presbyters* are called likewise *Bishops*, or *Overseers* in the *New Testament*: There-

Therefore, certainly they must justly claim all the *Rights* belonging to those who are there called *Bishops*. This I heartily acknowledge. But what those *Rights* are we are still as much at a loss to know as ever. That this *Argument* will not of it self prove Ordination to be one of them is very evident, because that can be done only by producing such Texts as declare this to be one of the *Rights* and *Privileges* belonging to those then called by that *Name*. Whereas this *Plea* pretends to nothing but that *Presbyters* are called *Bishops* in the *New Testament*; from whence it can never follow that they are entituled to the *Powers* of those who have been, since that Time, called in a peculiar Sense, *Bishops*. On the contrary, I have this *Argument* to urge. *Presbyters* have a Title to those *Rights* only which were enjoyed by those *Church-Officers* who are called *Bishops*, or *Overseers*, in the *New Testament*. But the Power of Ordination was never allowed to, or claimed by those who are there called *Bishops*. Therefore, it is not one of those *Rights* to which *Presbyters* have a Title. The Force of this *Argument* the *Author* I am now considering is so sensible of, that after all that he hath said on this Head, he thinks himself obliged to yield, p. 86. that it is not sufficient to shew that the same Persons were called *Presbyters* and *Bishops* at first; and that, if it can be made out that a *Superiority*, like to that of *Timothy* and *Titus*, was by *Divine Appointment* (I suppose he means by the Will of the *Apostles*) to continue in the *Church*; or that the Power of Ordination was not conveyed to those who were at first called *Bishops*, the *Identity asserted will not support the Inference drawn from it*. The former of these I hope I have not in vain attempted to prove in the foregoing *Chapter*, as well as to say something sufficient to make the latter appear much more probable than the contrary. But I must here remind this *Author* of *Three Things*, 1. That the *Proof* ought to lie on their side, who have gone out of a long *established Course*, and pretended to exercise an *Original Right*, unheard of in former Ages of the *Church*. 2. That this *Identity of Names* will signify nothing, even

supposing we could not prove this *Negative*, that the *Power of Ordination* was *not* in the *Commission* of the first *Presbyters*; which it is very unreasonable to require at our Hands. For unless, on the other side, the *positive* part can be proved that the *Power of Ordination* was actually in the *Commission* of those *Presbyters* who are likewise called *Bishops* in the *New Testament*, all this *Plea* must necessarily fall to the Ground. And whether *St. Paul* dealt with the *Presbyters* of *Ephesus*, and *Crete*, as if he knew any thing of such a *Commission*, let any one judge. 3. Supposing such an *Original Right* granted them by their *Commission*, it doth not follow that *modern private Presbyters* can be justified in the *Exercise* of it, when by a solemn *Act* of their own, and upon just Reasons, their *Predecessors* throughout the Christian World unanimously consented to debar themselves of the *Exercise* of it, if we will believe the most learned and zealous *Advocates* for the *Presbyterian Cause*.

For my own part, therefore, I grant to this *Author* all that he contends for, when he sums up the *Premises* from which he draws his *Conclusion*, p. 87. I grant that the *Names* of *Bishop* and *Presbyter* are used so promiscuously in the *New Testament* as to leave no *Distinction* of *Office*. I know not how it should be otherwise, when *Presbyters* were called *Bishops*. I grant to him that there are as many *Bishops* in the first Sense of the Word as *Presbyters* in the most early *Churches*: For every *Presbyter* was called *Bishop*, or *Overseer*. I grant that we can find in the *New Testament* no *Presbyter* who was not a *Bishop*, *i. e.* called by that Name. I grant that we read not there of any *Consecration* of an *Ecclesiastical Officer* called a *Bishop*, different from the *Ordination* of a *Presbyter*, *i. e.* we read not of any *Ordination* of *Presbyters* different from the *Ordination* of those who were then called *Bishops*, *i. e.* *Presbyters*. I grant the *Duties* and *Qualifications* of those call'd *Bishops* in the *New Testament*, and of those called *Presbyters*, are the same, because they are the *Duties* and *Qualifications* of the same *Church-Officer* called by both those

Names.

Names. I grant to him all these things, that is, indeed only one single Point thus variously expressed, viz. that *Presbyters* are those *Church-Officers* who are called *Bishops* in the *New Testament*. For any after all this to say that they who are called *Bishops*, and they who are called *Presbyters* in the *New Testament*, differed originally in the *Power of Ordination*, or indeed in any single Circumstance, is in Truth not only not to derive their *Notions* from *Scripture*, as this *Author* saith, but to speak absurdly, and inconsistently: For it is to say that the same Persons differed from themselves. But tho' I have granted to him all this, yet I hope I may without Absurdity maintain, that the *Powers* of those who were called *Bishops* in the *New Testament*, were not the same with the *Powers* of those who were called so afterwards in an eminent Sense; or in other Words, that those *Church-Officers* who are stiled *Bishops* in the *New Testament* have never received, or exercised the *Right* of ordaining others; but that this *Right* was always in the Hands of Officers superior to them.

To conclude this Head, let us consider once more the *Plea* here advanced, and what is to be replied to it. The *Argument*, so much applauded by the aforesaid *Author*, is this, *Presbyters* are by *Divine Right* the same as *Bishops*; therefore they may warrantably ordain other *Presbyters*. His *Proof* of the former part of this Reasoning is drawn from hence, that *Presbyters* are the same with *Bishops* in the *New Testament*. So that the *Argument* is indeed this, *Presbyters* were called likewise *Bishops* in the first Days; therefore they may warrantably claim the *Right* of *Ordination*, which is acknowledged to be the *Right* of those who have been called *Bishops*, in a peculiar Sense, in later Ages. The Answer is, that this will entitle them to no *Rights* but such as were enjoyed by those who are called *Bishops* in the *New Testament*. And again, supposing this *Right* of *Ordination* to belong originally to those who were called *Bishops* in the *Apostles* Time, this will not prove that *modern Presbyters* may warrantably exercise this *Right*, which according to themselves was universal-

ly, many Hundred Years ago, given up to another Rank of Men on good Grounds, and for just Reasons. So that here is a double Defect in this *Argument*: For granting that Presbyters were called Bishops by the *Apostles*, this will not entitle them to any *Rights* but what were enjoyed by those who were *then* called so: And granting to them an *Original Right* to ordain, this *Original Right*, considered by it self, will not warrant them in the *Exercise* of it, when it hath once been universally, and upon wise Reasons given up.

This *Author* must excuse me if I wholly pass over his Authorities, that is, if I do not receive his Reasoning, because it is the same with that of many great Men. If he could produce Thousands of greater Names than he mentions, I see not of what Importance he himself could allow this to be, who hath, even in the *Case* of a Matter of *Fact*, rejected with Contempt the *Testimony* of the most competent *Witnesses* we can have, and hath said what is enough to teach any one not to be born down by great Names, in a Matter which is in them purely Opinion, and depending upon their own Reasoning. The main *Argument* made use of by all that have appeared in the same *Cause*, is taken from the *Identity* of Names, which I have now examined, and have, I hope, evidently shewn, that there is nothing to be concluded from thence in favour of *Presbyterian Ordination*.

But tho' I have owned the main Point for which this *Author* produceth several Texts of the *New Testament*, viz. That Presbyters are there called Bishops, or Overseers; still denying that it follows from thence, that they had the Powers of those who were afterwards called Bishops in an eminent Sense, or, which is all one, of such *Church-Officers* as *Timothy* and *Titus* in those very Days: It is fit I should particularly consider the Texts themselves, because he doth at large reason from them to his own Purpose, and some may think it a blamable Neglect to pass them over.

1. St. Paul writes to the *Saints at Philippi, with the Bishops and Deacons*. I have no Dispute with him here: But freely own that the *Officers* called *Bishops* here, were *Presbyters* and *Teachers*; which is all he here expressly contends for. I shall only remind him, that his Business under this Head should not have been to confute the odd Notions of Dr. *Hammond*, who is hardly followed in them by one *Episcopal Divine* of any Consideration, but to have shewn, against *others* who acknowledge that *Presbyters* are the *Officers* here meant, that it follows from their being then called *Overseers* that they had the Powers of *Ordination*, &c. entrusted to them. Nothing can follow from hence, but that they had the Powers of those who were then called *Bishops*.

2. It is urged that the same St. Paul in his first *Epistle to Timothy* layeth down the *Duties and Qualifications of Bishops and Deacons, without saying a Word of Presbyters*. I grant the Conclusion he draws from hence, that *Presbyters* are the *Officers* in the Church whom he there calls *Bishops*; and that there were no *Bishops*, (that is, none called *Bishops*,) then distinct from *Presbyters*. But I deny the Point in dispute, viz. That these, whom St. Paul here calls *Bishops*, had the Power of *Ordination* entrusted to them. The Name *Bishop*, or *Overseer* will not prove it: And there is a great deal against it to be collected from this *Epistle*. As, 1. This *Author* here acknowledgeth that the *Duties* of those then called *Bishops*, are here laid down by St. Paul, amongst which we do not find the least mention of *Ordination*; too material to have been omitted, if it had been their Province: From whence it may be probably collected that there was no such Power belonging to them. For tho' *Duties*, or *Powers* of less importance than those mentioned, might be omitted; yet it is not to be suppos'd, that *Powers*, or *Duties* of an higher sort should be disregarded. 2. It is not only said, that those who are here called *Bishops* are entrusted with the Power of *Ordination*, but this very Power is, in this very *Epistle*, lodg'd in other Hands, and entrusted to *Of-*
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ficers who are acknowledged to be superior to those here called *Bishops*. What can be the reason of this? It must be, either because those *Presbyters* here called *Bishops* were never designed for this *Office*; or that *these* at *Ephesus* particularly were unfit for it. The *latter* of these Two Suppositions cannot be true, as I know of: Therefore the *former* must be acknowledged. That the *Apostles* should *ordain* whom they please in all *Churches* is not strange: But that supposing they designed the *Presbyters* so ordained for the *ordaining* of others in times to come, they should not only keep the *Affair of Ordination* in their own Hands for their *Life-time*, but send other *Church-Officers* into Places full of *Presbyters* already, as fit for that Work as *ever* they were likely to be, on purpose to *ordain* others, is incredible; and not to be believed, unless there were a plain Declaration that after such a *Time* these *Presbyters* were to re-assume the *Exercise* of their *Right*. Nay, had these *Presbyters* been ever designed for the *Business of Ordination*, the *End* of *Timothy's* being sent amongst them had most certainly been rather to direct them how to perform this *Office*, (as he was in other *Cases* to do,) than to take it out of their Hands, and manage it, as far as appears, wholly *Himself*: For we find not the least Hint in *St. Paul's* Directions to him on this Head, that *Presbyters* were to have the least Hand in it, but sufficient Evidence that he was to be *absolute*, and *uncontroul'd* in this Matter. 3. This answers the *Difficulty* here proposed by this *Author*, that supposing the *Officer* called *Bishop* here to be a *Presbyter*, then is the proper *Episcopal Function* wholly overlooked in this *Apostolical Directory*: Which is scarcely supposable, if it be so very needful in the *Church* as some have represented it. For, 1. If he mean that amongst the *Duties* and *Qualifications* of those here called *Bishops*, nothing is here mentioned by the *Apostle* which is properly *Episcopal* in our sense of the Word, I grant it to be true: But this will, according to his way of reasoning, only prove against himself, that no such were thought by the *Apostle* to belong to such as are

are here called *Bishops*. If he mean that nothing of the proper *Episcopal Function* is mentioned, in this *Epistle*, I deny it. But indeed it is mentioned, which is very much to the disadvantage of his *Cause*, as belonging to *Officers* superior to the *fixed Presbyters*. The *Trust* of *Ordination*, and the *Directions* about it are given to *Timothy*, without any intimation of any such *Office* belonging to those *Presbyters* to whom he was sent to reside amongst them as long as his *Presence* was not more wanted in some other *Church*. Now it is to the *Office* of *Timothy* (whether fixed at *Ephesus* during *Life*, or not) that the *Episcopal Function*, for which we contend, answers. And therefore concerning the proper *Episcopal Function*, here is a great deal said in this *Apostolical Directory*. For it is not essential to a *Bishop*, that he should be fixed at one *Place* during *Life*; but that he manage the *Affair of Ordination*, and *Government*, over whatsoever *Church* he is placed, and for whatsoever space of *Time*. So that here is very good *Proof* from this very *Epistle*, that the *Affair of Ordination* was always managed by *Persons* superior to *Presbyters*; and that *Presbyters* were not designed by the *Apostles* for that *Office*, notwithstanding that they are in it called *Bishops*, or *Overseers*. It is not therefore true, that *Two* sorts of *Officers* only are mentioned in this *Epistle*. For *Timothy* is of the third sort, and he is mentioned; and as particular *Directions* given to *him* to behave himself in his *Office*, as are given concerning *Presbyters* and *Deacons*.

3. It is alleged that the same *St. Paul* in his *Epistle to Titus*, calls *Presbyters* by the Name of *Bishops*: Which I readily grant, as likewise the *Conclusion* drawn from it by this *Author*, that *Bishops*, i. e. the *Officers* there so called, were not superior to *Presbyters*, because they were the *Presbyters* themselves. But still I am at a loss how this settles the Powers of those who were then called *Bishops*. I do not allege here merely a Community of Names. *Titus*, who answers in *Office* to our *Bishops*, is not called a *Bishop* here. It seems to be a Name pretty

pretty much at that time appropriated to those who were afterwards called *Presbyters*: And certainly those who were called by it at that time, were entitled to all the *Offices* belonging to those who were then called by it, *i. e.* to themselves. I grant the same *Character* is given of all to whom that *Name* then belonged; and the same *Qualifications* required. Nay, to go on in the Words of this *Writer*, *All Episcopal Characters were required in them; All Episcopal Work required of them*; that is, All the *Characters* and all the *Work* belonging to those who are there called *Bishops*. For the *Argument* can prove no more. It can no more prove that they were called to the *Office* of those who were afterwards called *Bishops* in a peculiar sense, than it can be proved they were entitled to all the *Rights* now challenged by the *Bishops* of *Rome*. What those *Characters*, and what that *Work* is, must be judged from other *Arguments*. If we go to this *Epistle*, we find no intimation about their *Right* to *Ordain* others; but on the contrary, a *superior Officer* sent to *Crete*, notwithstanding that there were a sufficient number of well qualified *Presbyters* there, on purpose to preside amongst them, and to *ordain* others to the *Work* of the *Ministry*. I need say no more on this *Head*, but refer the *Reader* to what I have just now said under the last. Only I can't help observing how free this *Author* is in calling for *plain* and *positive* Proof on the side of *Episcopal Ordination*, whilst he cannot produce one single *plain*, or *positive* Proof, that *Presbyters* were designed by the *Apostles* to *Ordain*; unless he will esteem this a good *Argument*, those who have been called *Bishops*, since the *Apostles* Days, have the *Power* of *Ordination*: Therefore those who were called *Bishops* in their Days had it, notwithstanding they were hindered from the *Exercise* of it; and others were sent amongst them, to do that *Office*, by the *Apostles* themselves.

4. This *Author* farther allegeth that *Text*, *Act.* 20. 28. in which *St. Paul* exhorteth the *Presbyters* of the *Ephesian Church* in these Words, *Take heed unto your selves, and to all the Flock of God, over which the Holy Ghost hath made*

you *Overseers, or Bishops*. I acknowledge that the Persons here spoken to were Presbyters, now peculiarly so called; and that St. Paul here calls them Bishops, or Overseers: Which Word is far from deserving *Censure* in our *Translation*, that it had been happy if it had been always used in other Texts instead of the Word Bishop, which is the very *Greek* Word, and therefore can't be called an *Interpretation* of it; and then, having been appropriated since to the *Highest Ecclesiastical Officer*, tis apt to raise a false *Idea* in the Minds of most Men, who are more led by Words, than by the Reality of Things. But what are we to collect from hence? 1. Suppose these *Presbyters* at *Ephesus* answered exactly to the *Presbyters* in our Days, St. Paul might justly have said the same things to them which we find here said; and exhorted them to take all possible Care of themselves, and their *Charges over which the Holy Ghost had made them Overseers*; in which Exhortation they must be very quick-sighted who can discover any thing of *Ordination*. And therefore it cannot be shewn from these Words, that they were thought to have the Power of *Ordination*, any more than the Presbyters of the *Established Church* are thought to have it.' 2. There is not only nothing in this *Text* to prove these Presbyters to have had the Power of *Ordination*, and the whole management of their *Churches* entrusted to them; but something in the manner of St. Paul's applying himself to them, which rather supposeth, and implies the contrary. For the *Flock* which these Persons were here exhorted to feed, was that in which the Holy Ghost had already made them Overseers, or Bishops: And this *Flock*, was the *Company of Lay-Christians*, not the *Shepherds* themselves: And to feed the *Flock*, or the *Church*, was the *Office* of these particular Persons here concerned, which Expression is not used concerning Ordaining other Presbyters, but guiding and instructing *Lay-Christians* in the Way to Heaven. This, therefore is St. Paul's Advice to these Presbyters, that they should take heed to themselves, to their own Example and Behaviour in their *Office*, and to the *Flock*, that

that is, to every *Congregation* of *Lay-Christians*, the Care of which had already been committed to any of them, &c. Now, I argue, that if these Persons had been designed for the highest Governours in the *Church*, and for the ordaining of others, the *Charge* given to them had not ended without Directions, and Instructions, and Exhortations agreeable to these important Parts of their *Office*. But if *St. Paul*, when he thought he was taking final Leave of them, mentions no such *Offices* belonging to them, it is a very probable Argument that he knew of none such to which they were called. What was committed to them, he plainly tells them, *viz.* The instructing and guiding the *Lay-Christians* in their Way to Heaven; not the *ordaining* other Men to their own *Office*, which, being a very great Trust, would not have been passed over by him, had he thought it belonged to these Presbyters. When he gives his Charge to *Timothy*, it is in plain Words, that he is to govern, and ordain Presbyters: When he gives his Charge to these Presbyters, it is to feed the Flock of *Lay-Christians*. Let any one observe the *Difference*, and judge whether these Presbyters were ever designed for the same *Offices* for which *Timothy* had been set over them. 3. That the Business of *Government* and *Ordination* were not at this time committed to these Presbyters, it is not only plain from the Expression used of *feeding the Flock*, which signifieth quite another thing, but also from hence that *Timothy* did both *before* and *after* this, *govern*, and *ordain*, as his own peculiar Business, in this *Church*. That he governed, and ordained Presbyters there *before* this, this *Author* acknowledgeth, p. 81. where he saith it is evidently proved, that the *first Epistle* to *Timothy* was written before this meeting at *Miletus*. That *Timothy* was present at this time, he likewise thinks very probable p. 79. From whence I argue that *St. Paul* having once, by that *Epistle* put *them* under his *Governance*, and the *Affair* of *Ordination* into his Hands, if it had been *his* Intent here to have committed all to the Care of these Presbyters, it had been highly necessary for him

him to have said so plainly; and to have declared to them, that whereas he had indeed confined them from the *Exercise* of their *Right of Ordination*, he now inflated them in the full *Exercise* of that and all other Matters of *Church-Government*. But having before restrained them in these Points, and now not expressly releasing them from that Restraint, it seems far from probable that he commits the *Care* of the *Church* to them in any other sense but that in which *they* had it before, during the acknowledged *Residency* of *Timothy* amongst them. That *Timothy* did, after this, govern and ordain at *Ephesus*, and not these *Presbyters*, is plain from *St. Paul's second Epistle* to him: In which he is supposed in the same *Office* as in the first; and the like *Injunctions*, tho' in more general Terms, repeated concerning his Behaviour in it. From whence I think it evident beyond all *Contradiction*, that *St. Paul* did not at this time once think of leaving the whole *Government*, and the Matter of *Ordination*, in the Hands of these *Presbyters*. For if that were here his Design, and solemn Act in this *Charge*, what Occasion, or what Foundation could there be for him afterwards to take these *Rights* away again? And how various must his Judgment, and how unbecoming his *Behaviour* appear, to be perpetually thus changing, first giving to *Presbyters* the *Right of Ordination*, then immediately restraining it; then solemnly restoring to them the *Exercise* of it, when he was taking his final Leave, and afterwards putting the same Restraint upon them again. This is incredible: And yet this must be supposed, if there be any thing implied in the *Text* now before us, to the purpose of the *Presbyterian* Cause.

But a great Difficulty is here started, and a great Argument drawn from *Timothy's* Presence at this time, and from *St. Paul's* not solemnly now making him their fixed *Bishop*, and giving him the *Care* of the *Church*, and recommending Obedience to him as such. Now, 1. The Business of this *Author* is not to prove that *Timothy* was not a fixed *Bishop* of *Ephesus*, but that the

Presbyters of Ephesus had the *Right of Ordination* entrusted to them. Supposing *Timothy* were not now made fixed Bishop, it will not follow that this *Right* belonged to the *Ephesian Presbyters*: 2. Supposing *Timothy* left them upon several Occasions, as he did now to accompany *St. Paul* to *Rome*, this did not necessarily dissolve his Relation to them, whenever he should think fit to return. *St. Paul* had other, and sufficient Opportunities of declaring his Mind to *Timothy*: And the *Presbyters* knew his Will too well concerning him, to neglect him whenever he should come amongst them. *Timothy's* accompanying *St. Paul* to *Rome*, made it very necessary for him to direct his Discourse to the *Presbyters*, to engage them to regard their Office of feeding their Flock in his Absence. It is highly probable that it was *St. Paul's* Design, at this time, that he should return to them again, because we find he did; and as probable that both *he*, and *they* knew this. So that his being absent from them at Times, as the Occasions of the Church required, did not dissolve his Relation to them. They seem, even after this, to have been his particular Care, whenever he could be with them, tho' *St. Paul's* Occasions, and the Necessities of other Churches, might often call for his Help elsewhere. Had not the Labours, and Assurances of such worthy Persons been wanted at different Places, it is very probable they had been properly speaking fixed Bishops. But their not being fixed, is no Argument on the side of *Presbyters*, to entitle them to the *Right of Ordination*. Here, therefore is a sufficient Account given of *St. Paul's* taking no express Notice of *Timothy* at this Meeting, because his Design in sending for the *Presbyters* was only to move them, as it were by his last Words, to a due Care in that Office of feeding the Flock that had been entrusted to them; especially because *Timothy* was now leaving them for some time. But we see that it doth not follow from hence that he gave the Office which *Timothy* formerly had into their Hands; (for he afterwards exercised the same amongst them;) any more than it is true that they were

empowered to *ordain* by Words which imply no such thing in them.

In fine, the *Presbyters* of *Ephesus* would have argued with less Reason than any others, that they were called by *St. Paul* to the whole *Care* of the *Church*, and the *ordaining* others, from his giving them the Name of *Bishops*, or *Overseers*; because they could not but know that they were called by that Name, when a *superior Officer* was actually set over them to *govern* and *ordain*. They were neither to *govern* nor *ordain*, when *Timothy* was set over them to those Purposes; yet they were then called *Bishops*, and that by *St. Paul*. Neither, therefore, doth it follow that they are here declared by *St. Paul* to be entrusted with these *Rights*, from their being here declared by him to be *Bishops*, or *Overseers* of the *Flock* of *Christ*. From all which laid together it appears how void of all Foundation the Assertion of this *Author*, that *St. Paul* doth in these Words, leave it to the *Presbyters* of *Ephesus*, to manage Ecclesiastical Affairs, and Ordination amongst the rest, as occasion should offer, by common Concert amongst themselves, &c. Whereas he exhorts them to nothing but the faithful Execution of the Office of those called *Presbyters* in a peculiar Sense; and useth no Words that imply in them either the *Right* of *Ordination*, or of that *Government* which is claimed by *Bishops* so called in an eminent Sense. p. 80.

5. It is alleged that *St. Peter* writing to the *Presbyters* styles himself their *Fellow Presbyter*, (as *St. John* also doth) and exhorts them to feed the *Flock* of *Christ*, taking the Oversight thereof willingly, 1 Pet. 5. 1, 2. But, 1. What follows from the former part of this I cannot see, unless this *Author* have a mind to prove that the *Apostles* by their Love and Humility in calling themselves *Fellow-Labourers* with those who were under them, intended to equal those *Presbyters* in all *Powers* and *Rights* to themselves. If it prove any thing to the purpose of this *Author*, it must prove *Presbyters* to have been *Apostles*, even whilst the *Apostles* were living, and ruled them. But it cannot prove this.

this. Neither therefore can it prove them to have enjoyed any *Powers* but what *modern Presbyters* enjoy : to whom *St. Peter* might in Condescension have used the same Words he useth to the *Primitive-Presbyters*. 2. As to the latter part of it, that he exhorts the *Presbyters*, ἐπισκοποι to do the *Office of Bishops*, that is, of those then called *Bishops*, or *Overseers*, I grant : But to say that it thence follows that he commands them to *ordain*, and *govern*, which are parts of the Duty of those since that Time called *Bishops* in a peculiar Sense, is manifestly to beg the *Question*. For the *Question* is not whether *Presbyters* were not called *Overseers* in those early Days : but what the *Business* of those, who were then called *Overseers*, was. So that the *Argument* is no better than this, *St. Peter* commands *Presbyters* to do the *Office* of those who were in his Days called *Bishops*, or *Overseers* ; therefore he commands them to do the *Office* of those who were afterwards called so in an eminent Sense. Whereas the Point now in debate is, whether those *Officers*, who were then called *Bishops*, were called to the *Office* of *Ordaining*, &c.

3. What the *Office* of those was to whom *St. Peter* writes this, is plainly enough here expressed, *viz. to feed the Flock* in that place where they were placed, *overseeing*, or looking after it, not as if they were driven to it by force, but willingly, and gladly, &c. Now if any one else had discovered in these Words the Power of ordaining *Presbyters*, what *Triumphs* might we have expected from this *Author* ? The *Flock of Christ* is the *Company of Lay-Christians* distinct from the *Shepherds* ; therefore this *Direction*, which wholly respects this *Flock*, can signify nothing but that it was the Duty of *Presbyters*, *i. e.* of those then called *Overseers*, to guide and instruct their *Congregations* with all Diligence and Faithfulness in the Way to Happiness : Nor can it possibly be implied in this, that they had the *Power of Ordination*, which respects the constituting of *Shepherds* over other *Flocks*, not the feeding that *Flock* over which they were themselves placed. Nay, the contrary is rather implied, because *St. Peter* when he is giving

giving them Advice to perform their *Office* as becomes them, mentions only the *feeding* of that *Flock* which they were, before this, called to *oversee*, and take Care of. From all which it is evident that nothing can be collected from this *Passage* in favour of *Presbyterian Ordination*.

6. It is once more alleged that *St. Paul* writing to *Timothy* gives him this Charge, p. 82.
Neglect not the Gift that is in thee, which was given thee by Prophecy, with the laying on of the Hands of the Presbytery, 1 Tim. I. 14. I pass over *St. Paul's* mentioning in another place the Imposition of his own Hands only on *Timothy*, 2 Tim. I. 6. If the *Gift* in the latter place may signify the *Holy Ghost*, why not in the former? As indeed any one would judge that this Word rather imports the *extraordinary Qualifications* given to *Timothy* from above for the better execution of his *Office*, than the *Office* it self, to which it doth not seem probable to me that he was appointed by any besides *St. Paul* himself. So that my first Answer is, that the *Ordination* of *Timothy*, or the Appointment of *him* to his peculiar *Office*, is not the thing here spoken of; and consequently nothing can be collected from hence in favour of *Presbyterian Ordination*. But let it be granted, at present, that the Word signifieth the *Office* to which he was called; tho' it do not sound to that purpose. Let it be granted that an *Assembly* (if this *Author* pleaseth) of such as were in those Days called *πρεσβύτεροι* made up the *πρεσβυτέριον* here spoken of. I assure him, if, instead of this Word, the Word *Episcopate* had been used, I should have been so far from triumphing (as he suspects) that I should have thought it something more to his purpose, than the Word here used. For, I. The very *highest Church-Officers* called themselves *πρεσβύτεροι* in those Days, as he himself hath proved in the *Page* before; and therefore a *Company* of the *highest Ecclesiastical Officers* may be here called *πρεσβυτέριον*, as he himself seems sensible, p. 83. Whereas I do not find that the most eminent and supreme *Church Governors* were ever call'd *πρεσβυτέριον* in those Days, but the Word was generally given to a lower Degree.

What he can collect from the *highest Church-Officers* acting as a *Presbytery*, (*i. e.* as a *Company* met together for this solemn Purpose) in favour of a *lower Order of Ministers*, since peculiarly call'd *Presbyters*. I cannot see. For it is impossible to argue, that some of the *Apostles* or *Evangelists* acted as a *Presbytery*, *i. e.* as a *Company* in the setting apart *Timothy* to his Office; therefore those whom *Timothy* was sent to govern had a *Right* to meet, and act as a *Presbytery* in ordaining others. 2. If this *Text* prove any thing in favour of such a *Right*, it equally proves that *Presbyters* had a *Right* to set apart not only *Presbyters* to their Office, but even *Evangelists*, or such *Church-Officers* as *Timothy* was, to their Office: which is absurd. 3. Let any one (judge whether it be in it self credible, that *Presbyters*, so called in a peculiar Sense, should join in setting apart *Timothy* to his Office, which was to govern, and ordain Persons of the same Rank with themselves. 4. Supposing *Presbyters* peculiarly so call'd were in this *Company*, (which doth not appear at all) and this were properly an *Ordination*, it will only follow from hence that they may assist (with Officers superior to themselves) at an *Ordination*; not that they may without any such Officers manage this *Affair*: which will be but of small Advantage to the *Cause* this *Author* hath undertaken. 5. The same may be said with respect to that *Passage*, *Act*, 13. 1, 2, 3. if any should be so weak as to urge it, to prove that *Ordination* was part of the *Business* of the *ordinary Teachers* or *Presbyters* in the *Church*. For if this were the *Ordination* of *St. Paul*, it will follow from hence, not only that *Presbyters* have a *Right* of ordaining *Presbyters*; but also that their Office was to ordain even *Apostles* themselves, and to give them the *Authority* which they had in the *Church*: which is too absurd to need any *Contutation*. If it were not an *Ordination* properly so called, but only a joining in *Prayer* for the *Grace* of *God* to accompany *St. Paul* and *Barnabas* in the particular *Work* they were going about, as this *Author* seems in another place to think, and as it is manifest from the *Context*, then he doth not well to

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urge this as an Instance of *Presbyterian Ordination*, as he seems to do, p. 111. or. (as he doth, p. 85.) to prove that the *Presbyters* might join in *ordaining Timothy* to the Office of an *Evangelist*, and *Governor* in the Church of *Ephesus*, or other Churches. For it will only follow from that Instance (*Act. 13. 1.*) that *Presbyters* might join in invoking the *Grace of God* in a particular Case, in which even an *Apostle* was to exercise an Office which he already had; not that they were ever called upon to join in the setting apart a *superior Church-Officer* to an Office which he had not before. I doubt, if such *Arguments* as this be admitted in the Case of *Ordinations* properly so called, the like may be found for the *Right of the Christian Laity* to *ordain*, since the *Brother, whose praise is in the Gospel* is said to be χειροτονηθείς ἐπὶ τῆ ἐκκλησιῶν, to a peculiar Work, in which Words the *Laity* must needs be included, tho' not solely here meant. The Truth of the Matter is, that not only *Presbyters*, but all *Christians* may very well join in praying, and setting apart Persons to one peculiar Work for which they had sufficient *Powers*, and *Authority* before; and yet have no *Right* to confer the first *Authority* on these very Persons. So that if *Timothy* were an *Evangelist* before, the *Parallel* holds: If not, the *Instance* alleged cannot prove any thing. And if he were, then this was not his *Ordination*; nor can any thing be inferred from it in favour of the *Right of Presbyters* to *ordain*. But what need of any more Words, when this *Author* himself hath acknowledged that χειροτονία may signify a *Company* of the highest *Church-Officers*? How then can this be esteemed any plain, or positive Proof (which this *Writer* so often speaks of in this Cause) of the *Right of Presbyters* to *ordain*? If *Mr. Daille* could discover in this *Text* the whole Method of *Presbyterian Ordination*, according to this *Author's* Quotation, I think he might have spared his *Satyr* upon *Dr. Hammond's* Quick-sightedness, and have kept the *Glory of Prejudice*, and great *Discoveries* to himself.

Thus have I considered all the *Texts* alleged by this *Author* under his first *Plea* for the *Right of Presbyters* to *or-*

dain: and have, I hope, effectually shewn that there is not *one* of them which proves, either that they who were in the *New Testament* called *Bishops*, or *Overseers*, were called to the Office of *ordaining* others, or that any *Church-Officers* which answered to those since peculiarly called *Presbyters*, ever so much as assisted at an *Ordination*; much less, were the sole *Managers* of that *Affair*. It appears to have been always in the *Hands* of Officers superior to those called at that time *Ἐπίσκοποι*.

In answer therefore to his *first Plea*, I have shewn these Two Things, 1. That supposing *Presbyters* to be the Officers in the *New Testament* called *Bishops*, which is the *Foundation* of this first *Plea*, it doth not at all follow that they were invested with this *Right*, because it doth not at all appear that those who are there called *Bishops*, were ever thought to have any thing to do with it. And, 2. That supposing the Officers there called *Bishops* were empowered to *ordain*, this alone will not justify a few particular *Presbyters* in their actual *Execution* of that *Power*, after it hath by *universal Consent* been given up, upon good *Reasons*, to other Persons; and settled by long and immemorial *Custom* in other *Hands*; which I hope, may be thought sufficient in answer to this first *Plea*.

SECT. 2. *The Plea taken from the Commission given to Presbyters, examined.*

The *Second Plea* made use of, by the *Author* I am now considering, in favour of the *Right* of *Presbyters* to *ordain*, is taken from their *Commission*: And the *Argument* founded upon this, is thus drawn up by himself, p. 91. *Presbyters are by virtue of their Office empowered to ordain: and therefore their Ordinations, when managed piously, and prudently, cannot be null, or invalid, or unacceptable to God.*

The *Connexion* here, he saith, cannot be contested: For if the *Power* of *Ordination* belong to the Office of a *Presbyter*, the *Exercise* of that *Power* cannot be called in question as a *Nullity*. But, with Submission, I think the *Connexion*

on many very justly be contested, even upon his own Principles. For supposing all *Presbyters* to have been originally empowered to *ordain*; yet if they were left with a liberty either of exercising this *Right* themselves, or of fixing it in the Hands of single Persons appointed to preside, and govern amongst them, (as this *Author* acknowledgeth) and they themselves have thought best, and most for the good of the *Church*, to introduce this *fixt Presidency* amongst themselves; and to confine the *Exercise* of this *Power* of *Ordination* to the *fixed Presidents* by *Universal Consent*; then, I say, it will not be a sufficient Justification of the *Ordinations* of any particular *Presbyters* to allege, that they *have originally the Right to ordain*: For that will not prove, in this *Case*, that they may, acceptably to God, exercise it whenever they see fit. There must be other Reasons to justify this, drawn from the *Exigencies* and *Necessities* of the *Church*: By which alone this can be defended. Just as it is in the *Case* of *Civil Government*. Supposing every *Member* of the *Senate* in a mere *Common-wealth* had *originally* the *Power* of granting *Commissions* to some sort of *Officers*: But should all agree to devolve this *Power* upon one single *Person*, whether called *King*, or *Protector*, or *Stadtholder*; from this time all *Commissions* must be given in his *Name*; and it must be unjustifiable in any *Members* of this *Senate* to act in opposition to *him*, and give *Commissions* in their own *Right*, notwithstanding that *original Right* which they might pretend to. Supposing therefore, that he can prove the *original Right* of *Presbyters* to *ordain*, yet we see the *Exercise* of it may be *invalid*, and *unacceptable* to *God*. But as we find his *Conclusion* far from *certain*, and indisputable, even granting the *Truth* of his *Premises*; so we shall, I am persuaded, upon Examination, find the *Affertions* upon which he builds this *Conclusion*, void of all such *Evidence* and *Proof* as he would gladly suppose it to have.

In proof of the *original Right* of *Presbyters* to *ordain*, this *Author* appeals to the grand *Ministerial Commission*,

Matth. 28. 19, 20. *Go ye, and teach all Nations, Baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you. And lo, I am with you always to the End of the World.* From hence he argues thus. *Either this Commission doth empower the Apostles to ordain Successors in the Sacred Ministry, or it doth not. If it do not, it is an imperfect Commission, and insufficient for the Continuation of a Gospel-Ministry to the End of the World, according to the Promise annext. If it did empower the Apostles to Ordain, (as without doubt it must) then the Ordaining Power must be comprehended under Discipling, and Baptizing, and Teaching to observe whatever he had commanded. And the same Power must be convey'd together with the Ministerial-Office, to all whom they invested in this Office by virtue of this Commission. Again, So that if this Commission warranted the Apostles to ordain others to succeed them in the standing Work of the Ministry; and warrants Bishops to ordain other Ministers, it warrants Presbyters also by virtue of their Office to do the like, p. 92, 93.* This is the Summ of his Argument in his own Words, the Force of which I shall now endeavour to examine: Premising only, that I hope he will not expect that I should be led by Authorities of Modern Authors, (when he himself hath so often declared against it) in a matter of Mere Judgment, and Reasoning; or yield to Great Names, without considering the Grounds upon which their Assertions are built. To the Argument now proposed, I have many things to reply which seem worthy of Consideration.

1. Supposing, what this Author contends for, that this was the Commission by which the Apostles were empower'd to ordain others to succeed them in their Ministry; it will not follow that all whom they appointed to an Ecclesiastical Office, were appointed to all the Offices which he supposeth to be included in the Words here used. The utmost of what he can contend to be meant here is, that our Saviour commissioned his Apostles to go forth into the World, to endeavour, by themselves, and others whom they

they should appoint, to convince Men that *He* was the *Messiah* sent of *God*; to *baptize* those who should believe in him as such; and then to teach all such Persons fully, and completely, the Conditions of his *Institution*: And the utmost of what can be included in this *Commission* is this, that the *Apostles* were required to take Care both by themselves, and others whom they were to appoint, that the Will of *Christ* should be performed in these several Instances. Well then, what can be collected from hence? Is it not fairly left to the *Apostles* themselves (who were afterwards to be endowed with the *Holy Ghost* from above) to call Persons to which of these Offices they should see fit? Might not they completely answer this their Trust, supposing they appointed some Persons to *baptize*, and not to *teach*; others to *teach*, and not to *ordain*; others to *ordain*, and *teach*? And is it not evident that the *Commission* of others was to be judged of by what the *Apostles* thought fit to entrust to them, not by what our *Saviour* thought fit to entrust to the *Apostles*, themselves? The first Answer therefore, is this, that supposing this the full *Commission* of the *Apostles*, it appears they might fulfil it, and all the Ends of it might be answered, by their appointing different *Orders* for different *Offices* in the *Church*; and therefore that it doth not follow that they must have given the same Powers to all whom they *ordained*, which *Christ* gave to them in these Words: Nor doth it follow that this is the *Commission* of *Presbyters* in such sense as that they are empowered by it to *ordain* others, because the *Apostles* were. And indeed this is the *Point* which this *Author*, instead of proving, takes for granted, *viz.* That this is a *Commission* to *Presbyters* to *ordain*, because it was so to the *Apostles*: Whereas there is no Consequence in this *Argument*. This may be the *original Commission* by which *Christ* declared to the *Apostles*, that it was his Will that *Disciples* should be *made*, *baptized* and *instructed*, and consequently that there should be *Officers* in the *Church* for all these purposes: But it doth not at all follow from hence that it was his Will

that every one who should be appointed to *teach*, should likewise be empowered to appoint others to *teach*: Nor is it in the least imply'd in these Words. This is the thing to be prov'd, that this is in such sense the *Commission* of all *Teachers*, as to *commission* them to be *Ordainers* of others likewise. Granting therefore that the *Apostles* by this *Commission* were empowered to *ordain* Persons to the several *Offices* here mentioned; I see not the *Justness* of the *Inference* this *Writer* draws from hence, *viz.* That they also whom by virtue of this *Commission* they fix in the *Ministry*, were by the same *Commission* empowered to *ordain* others also: Because by virtue of this very *Commission* the *Apostles* might have appointed some Persons only to *teach*, without any other Powers; and others to *baptize*; and others to *ordain*; and so have as fully answered the Intent of it, as if they had appointed one sort of *Officers* to do every one of these *Offices*. And surely this Author will not say, that it was absolutely necessary to the fulfilling this *Commission*, that the *Apostles* should give the Power of *ordaining* to all to whom they gave *Commission* to *teach*. Nor can it be said, that the *Office* of *ordaining* doth so belong to that of *teaching*, as to be inseparable from it, any more than the *Privilege* of being free from the Government of *superior Officers*. If therefore, it do not result from the Nature of the Thing, or the Words here used, that the *Apostles* were oblig'd to give to all *Teachers* the Power of *Ordination*; then must we enquire into the future Behaviour of the *Apostles*, to know what *Officers* they constituted, and what Powers they granted to them: And I have sufficiently proved, in the Answer to the foregoing *Plea*, that there is no reason from any *Rule* laid down, or any *Example* mention'd in the *New Testament*, to think that the Power of *Ordination* was given to those *Officers* (called *Bishops*, or *Overseers* there) which answered to our *Presbyters*, notwithstanding that they were called to *teach* Christians, and to feed the *Flock* of Christ. It is of small Importance to urge (as this Author doth) that as for those *Offices* that were to continue to the End of the World, this *Commission* makes no

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difference; and that whomsoever it empowers to baptize, and teach, it equally empowers to discharge all other Parts of the Ministerial Function which were designed to continue in the Church. I say, this is of small Importance, since this Commission, as I have already said, did not oblige the Apostles to grant all Powers to all Teachers in the Church; and since he hath advanced no Proof, that this is the Commission of Presbyters in any other sense, than as it is the original Declaration of Christ that there should be Teachers in the Church; or as the Apostles were certainly commanded and empowered by it, to see that there should be Officers for these Purposes in the Church: But tho' the Apostles were thus empowered, it doth not follow that every Officer they appointed in the Church was thus empower'd. And again, tho' this Commission makes no express Difference, that is, tho' it doth not say, that he who is called to teach in the Church, shall not be called to ordain likewise; yet it doth not follow that every one who is called to teach, is therefore called to ordain. Notwithstanding that no difference of Officers is here made in Words, the Apostles were left to their own Judgments, and the Guidance of the Holy Spirit, whether there should be a distinction of Officers in the Church, or not: And consequently whether one sort, or more, were appointed by them for the Offices designed to continue in the Church, must be collected from their succeeding Behaviour. Again, It may as well be proved from hence, that all Ecclesiastical Teachers had in the first Age the Powers of Apostles, as that they have since the Powers of Bishops properly so called. For here is no difference made as to Offices at all: And therefore if this be the Commission both of the Apostles, and of the Presbyters whom they ordained, in the same sense; then had those Presbyters the same Powers which the Apostles had. If not in the same sense, then the Power of Ordination may be excepted as well as any other Power, for any thing that here appears to the contrary. If this be not the full Commission of the Apostles, then might they, notwithstanding this, have another Commission, together with the guidance of the Holy Ghost, for the assigning, or

not assigning *distinct Officers* to *distinct Works* in the *Christian Church*, as should seem best. The result of what I have contended for under this first *Reply* is, that this may be the *Commission* to the *Apostles* to *ordain Successors* in the *Sacred Ministry*, and yet not oblige them to ordain *all* to *all Offices*: and consequently that they might afterwards make a distinction of *Officers* notwithstanding this *Commission*: That this might be a *sufficient Commission* for the *Continuation of a Gospel Ministry to the End of the World*, and yet that *distinct Officers* might be appointed for the *distinct Offices* here mentioned: That *Ordination* might be comprehended under *Disciplining*, and *Baptizing*, and *Teaching*, *i. e.* that the *Apostles* might be commissioned in these Words to take Care that there should be *Officers* in the *Church* to *ordain* Persons to all these *Offices*, and yet it need not be imply'd in these Words, that all *Officers* whom *they* should call to *teach*, should be called likewise to *ordain* others to *teach*. In one Word, granting his *Premises*, I can see no *Foundation* for the *Conclusion* he draws from them: Nor hath he himself advanced any thing but his own *Affirmations* in proof of it.

2. That this was a *Commission* given to the *Apostles*, and designed to signify what their main *Business* in the *World* was to be, I freely grant: But that it was designed either as their *full Commission*, or as a *full Declaration* of the *Methods* they were to take in the *Execution* of their *Commission*, I see not the least *Ground* to think. During our *Lord's* *Life* they were instructed by *Himself* how to behave themselves in the *Office* to which he had called them. When he was going to be taken from them, he tells them indeed what their main *Business* was to be in the *World*: But he not only doth this, but gives them a *Promise* of sending the *Holy Ghost* to guide and direct them in the management of their great *Office*. This *Commission* therefore may be a *Declaration*, in general, what their *Business* was to be: But not so particular as that they might not afterwards have fuller *Declarations* concerning the same: And this *Commission* it self not confining them to any one particular *Method* of executing it, they

they might afterwards be directed in their Choice of the best Method, since they are not commanded in this either to make, or not to make, a distinction in *Ecclesiastical Officers*. So that it is no such Absurdity as this *Author* would represent it, to suppose that this *Commission* was not properly their full and perfect *Commission*; since they might have full and sufficient *Commissions* from the *Holy Spirit* afterwards, without any Reflexion upon our *Lord*, who sent this *Spirit* to supply his own Place: or to affirm, that the *Apostles* themselves were not directed in these Words to *ordain* others; since they might have afterwards sufficient, and express *Directions* for this purpose from the *Holy Ghost*. The Words, therefore, now before us may be fully sufficient to the purpose intended by our *Lord*, viz. the Declaration of the Nature of their *Office* in general; and yet their particular *Direction*, and *Commission* to *ordain* other *Ministers* might be given them afterwards by the *Holy Spirit*. Particularly I do not see how this could be the *Commission* by which *St. Paul* ordained *Presbyters*: Nor consequently how the *Presbyters* whom he ordained could plead this *Commission* for their *Right* to *ordain*. If therefore it be not at all necessary to suppose that this is the *Commission* even of the *Apostles* themselves to *ordain*; (which is the only Ground of the present *Plea*;) this at once destroys the *Argument* for *Presbyterian Ordination* taken from this *Commission*.

3. Either the *Apostles* might afterwards make a distinction in *Ecclesiastical Officers*, notwithstanding this *Commission*, or not. If they might, then this *Commission* signifieth nothing to prove that all who are called to *teach*, are called likewise to *ordain*; and consequently, if this be granted to be the *Commission* of all *Presbyters*, it may be a *Commission* to them only to *teach*, and *baptize*, and not likewise to *ordain*. If they might not; then neither was it left to them to bebar the first *Presbyters* from *Ordination*, or to appoint *Timothy*, and such *superior Officers* to that Work. For if it was our *Lord's* declared Will (as this *Author* contends) that the same *Persons* that should
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be called to *teach*, should also be called to *ordain*; how could the *Apostles* justify their debarring those whom they called to *teach*, from *Ordination*; or what *Reasons* can possibly be found out for such a Procedure? But it is manifest that they did debar the first *Presbyters* from *Ordination*, and appoint other *Officers* for that *Office*. From whence it appears to me to follow that they might notwithstanding this *Commission*, appoint that some *Officers* should be called, in future *Ages*, to *teach* in the *Church*; and *others*, distinct from these, to *ordain*, as well as to *teach*. So that granting this to be a *Commission* both with respect to *teaching* and *ordaining* in the *Church*, yet it may be a *Commission* to some to *teach*; and to *others*, distinct from these, to *ordain* as well as *teach*. But,

4. Supposing it to be a *Commission* by which the same Persons were invested with the *Right* both of *teaching* and *ordaining*, yet if the *Apostles* afterwards thought fit to restrain the Exercise of this latter *Right*, and to signify their Will that the *ordinary Presbyters* and *Teachers* should not put it in Execution; it cannot justify any *Presbyters* in their *Ordinations* to allege this *Commission*: As this *Author* grants in another Place, *p.* 86. where he in effect acknowledges that if it can be proved that the *Superiority* of such *Officers* as *Timothy* and *Titus* was designed to continue, this will be sufficient for the *distinction* of *Officers* now contended for. I see not the least Reason indeed from any thing in the *New-Testament*, to think that any such *Right* was ever supposed by the *Apostles* originally to belong to *Presbyters*, or to Persons there called *Bishops*. I appeal to any one, whether the best Judgment we can pass in this *Case*, ought not to be founded upon their manifest Behaviour, when there were *Numbers* both of *Laity* and *Presbyters* in the *Church*; and whether it be not a good Argument that *St. Paul* knew nothing of such a *Right* belonging to *Presbyters*, that he appointed *superior Officers* to *ordain* in Places where there was a *Number* of *Presbyters* already settled. But if any chuse rather to say, that the appointing such *Officers* was only a *Suspension* of the
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Exercise of that *Right* in *Presbyters*; not a denying them the *Right* it self; I only desire to know of what Significance this *Commission* is to empower *Presbyters* to *ordain*, if the *Apostles* immediately debarred them from the *Exercise* of their Power, and might have bebarred them from it, (as this *Author* in effect acknowledgeth, and no one can deny) thro' all Ages of the *Church*. For this will amount to the same thing, as if our *Lord* had given them, in these Words, no *Right* at all to this Office. Either therefore this *Commission* gives to *Presbyters* an *uncontrollable Right* to *ordain*, or only a *Right*, the *Exercise* whereof might afterwards be controlled and restrained. Not an *uncontrollable Right*, because we find the *Apostles* did immediately controll, and restrain the *Exercise* of it by appointing a *superior* sort of *Church-Officers* to manage the *Affair of Ordination* in Places where there were already a sufficient Number of *Presbyters*. And if only a *Right*, the *Exercise* whereof might be controlled and restrained; this will be of no more Importance than *no Right* at all. For then our only *Enquiry* will be, whether the *Apostles* thought fit that *Presbyters* should ever exercise this *Right* or not; and if it appear they did not, this *original Right* will, by their own Acknowledgment, signify no more than if they had had no such *Right* at all. So that they must have recourse to other *Arguments*, distinct from this *Commission*, to justify themselves, *viz.* to such as prove that it was the *Apostles* Will that the *Presbyters* of succeeding Ages should exercise this Power of *Ordination*, tho' it be manifest beyond all Contradiction that they denied it to great Numbers of *Presbyters* of their own Age, and very probable from thence that they did so to all of the same Order. But if any should say, that the *Exercise* of this Power might be restrained by the *Apostles* for a Time, notwithstanding this *Commission*, tho' it could not *for ever*; it is natural to enquire on what Grounds this is said; since it is manifest that there is nothing in this *Commission* which gives a License to the *Apostles* to restrain *Presbyters* from *ordaining* for a Time, any more than *for ever*; and that there

there could be no peculiar *Reason* for them to refrain the Presbyters of their own Age from it, unless it be that they were certainly fitter for the Work than the Presbyters of many of the succeeding Ages were like to be. So that granting this to be a *Commission* empowering Presbyters not only to *teach*, but to *ordain*; yet it being given with such *Limitations* that the *Apostles* might afterwards debar them from the *Exercise* of their *Power of Ordination*; this *Commission* it self can signify nothing, unless it be likewise shewn that it was the *Apostles* Will afterwards that *Presbyters* should exercise this Right. All the *Scripture-proof* for this hath been fairly examined under the former *Plea*; and no *Intimation* of any such *Will* of the *Apostles* found in their *Writings*, but a great deal to the contrary: as in the former *Chapter* several *Arguments* have been advanced to the contrary, and defended from the *Objections* made against them.

5. The *Commission* of *Presbyters* is sufficiently known from the Will of the *Apostles* declared about them, without having recourse to the Declaration made by *Christ* himself concerning the Business of the *Apostles*, and *Church-Officers* in general, thro' all Ages of the *Church*: as the full *Commission* of the *Apostles* themselves was made known to them by the *Holy Ghost*, and immediate *Inspiration*, after our *Lord's* Death. It was not in the least necessary that our *Lord* should declare his whole Will in these Points, since the *Holy Ghost* was afterwards to be sent, in order to give his *Apostles* all necessary Directions: And it is in every respect as much for the Good of the *Christian Church*, that the *Apostles* should declare the *Commission* of *Presbyters*, as that our *Lord* himself should. And if we have recourse to the *Apostolical Writings*, all that we can find positively declared concerning them is, that their *Commission* is to *teach* the *Christian Church*, or to *feed the Flock of Christ*; and we can draw a *negative Argument* from the no mention of any such part of their *Office*, and from the Appointment of other *Officers* for that

that Work, that the *Right of Ordination* was not in their *Commission*.

6. It peculiarly becomes this *Author*, who hath so often spoken of *plain*, and *positive Proof* from *Scripture*, to consider whether this *Commission* to which he appeals, comes up to that *Character*, or not. The Word *Ordination* is not mentioned in it: Nor is this given to the *Apostles* as a *Commission* to be given to all *Teachers*: Nor is it either said or implied in it, that all who are called to *teach*, or *baptize*, are likewise called to *ordain* others to those *Offices*. That a greater Number of modern *Divines* have taken this for the only *Commission* by which *Presbyters* act their Part in the *Church*, is no *Argument* that it is truly so; and supposing it to be so, it doth not follow that *Ordination* is part of their Office, because this may be their *Commission* to *teach* without commissioning them to *ordain*: And yet these Two Things are the main Supports of this present *Plea*.

7. I hope this *Author* will excuse me from regarding what he alleges from the *Jewish Church*, whilst he himself puts the whole upon the Authority of the *New Testament*; whilst he himself at the same time discards the like Arguments, when used against an Opinion of his own; and neglects the Affirmation of St. *Jerome* himself, the great *Patron* of *Presbyters*, who in the same *Epistle* in which he maintains their *Cause*, stiles the *Distinction* between *Bishops* and *Presbyters* (peculiarly so called) an *Apostolical Tradition*; and affirms it to have been taken from the *Old Testament*, and to answer to the *Distinction* between *Aaron* and his *Sons*: as he doth likewise in another place. This, I suppose, will not be allowed of: And yet if the first *Founders* of the *Christian Religion* thought fit to make any thing in their *Religion*, or the *Appendage*: of it, to correspond to some Things in the *Jewish*, I appeal to all Persons, whether it be not most *probable* in it self, that they should order this Correspondence to relate to those Circumstances of it which were appointed by *God*, and recorded in the *Old Testament*, than
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to such as were determined by *Humane Prudence* afterwards. However true the Matter here affirmed by this *Author* may be, of the Justness of which I do not here make my self a *Judge*; this is certain, that it no more results from a Person's being *ordained* himself to *teach*, that he is empowered to *ordain* others to the same *Office*, than it doth from a Person's being empowered to act the part of a *Justice of Peace*, that he is thereby empowered not only to do the Office of a *Justice* himself, but also to give the same *Commission* to others; no more than it results from a Person's being *baptized*, that he is empowered thereby to *baptize* others. And, therefore, supposing that the *Jewish Teachers* were always allowed to *ordain* others to the Office of a *Teacher*, it doth not in the least follow that it must be so in the *Christian Church*, because it is at least full as much for the Interest, and Honour of the *Christian Institution*, that *Ordination* should be in Hands distinct from the *ordinary Teachers* of the *Church*. Nay, I will add, more so, as appears from the Behaviour of the whole *Body* of *antient Presbyters*, who found themselves (according to the greatest modern Patrons of their *Cause*) obliged in Prudence to restrain their own *Exercise* of this *Right of Ordination*, and to lodge it in the Hands of a *superior Degree* of *Church-Officers*. Besides, the way by which any Light hath been given by such *Arguments* as this, hath not been by saying that there was such a *Custom*, or such an *Office* in the *Jewish Church*, therefore there must be something answering to this in the *Christian Church*: but by shewing that there are actually in the *New-Testament* Expressions about *Customs* or *Officers*, which may very well be explained so as to correspond to such or such particular parts of the *Jewish Constitution*. Whereas under this, and the foregoing *Plea*, I have shewn that there is none amongst all the Passages alleged in favour of *Presbyterian Ordination*, which implies in it any such *Right* in *Teachers*, but several which do the contrary; and therefore this *Argument* can have no force; because there is no *Power* in the *Christian Presbyters*, spoken of in the *New-Testament*,

flament, which can correspond to the Power he here supposeth to have been in the Jewish Teachers.

8. If our Lord himself, in the Words we are now considering, empowers Presbyters to ordain, some Questions naturally offer themselves.

1. How came they, in several Churches, to be restrained by the Apostles themselves; and denied the Exercise of this Right immediately after their Commission was given them: and this without any Apology for so doing; without any Acknowledgment that this Right did originally belong to them; without any Declaration that it was only for present Expediency, and for prudent Considerations suspended for a Season; but that the Exercise of it should be restored again to them very soon? Why do we meet with nothing like this? And why do we find the first Presbyters dealt with by St. Paul, exactly as he would have dealt with them, had they not had originally the Right of Ordination? To this Question I find no Answer attempted: nor can I think of any that can be returned.

2. If this Restraint were designed to be taken off, after the Death of the Apostles, and such Officers as Timothy, and Titus; how comes it that in all the Accounts of the Primitive Church we read of single Persons succeeding them in their Stations, and Offices? How comes it that immediately upon their Deaths, we find the same Restraint, and the same Distinction spoken of with so much Zeal in Ignatius's Epistles?

3. If this Restraint were designed to be taken off after the Death of the Apostles; and accordingly removed; (as our Adversaries contend;) how, and when was it imposed again upon them? Which is the intermediate Time in which they did exercise this Right of Ordination? Which is the Time when the Restraint was laid upon them again? And how comes it that their Ordinations were always disapproved, and condemned, and their Right to this Work always denied?

This last Question this Author seems so much aware of as to be willing to add something under this Head sufficient,

cient, either to prevent, or answer it: which I must therefore consider, because it is almost the whole of what he pretends to allege for his Cause out of the *Records of Ecclesiastical Antiquity*.

First, he saith, that *in some Parts of the Christian Church it is not very difficult to fix the Time of this Restraint upon Presbyters*. The only Instance he produceth is that of the Church of *Alexandria*, in which he saith *St. Jerome tells us that for above Two Hundred Years the Presbyters chose and set apart their Bishop*. From whence he argues, that *if Presbyters in this Church of Alexandria invested, and conferred Power and Authority on their Bishop, and the Validity of this Act of theirs remained unquestionable, much more might they confer Orders on Presbyters*. And, lest there should not appear Reason enough in the Argument it self, he adds, that this *Argument Mr. Baxter often tells us was esteemed unanswerable by as great a Man as Archbishop Usher, p, 100*. I have often told this *Author* how little I am moved with *great Names* in Matters of Judgment; nor will he, I well know, yield to the Force of every *Argument* (in other Points) which *Archbishop Usher* thought unanswerable: And therefore I hope he will give me leave freely to examine the Force of this *Argument*. For I am so far from thinking it *unanswerable*, that I cannot help thinking it will be found to prove the very contrary to the Design of this *Author* in alleging it. For,

1. Either this *Bishop* whom the *Presbyters of Alexandria* constituted from the very Time of *St. Mark the Evangelist*, to the Time of *Heraclas* and *Dionysius*, was no more than a *Prime-Presbyter*, or *President* of the Council of *Presbyters*; or he was a *Bishop* in the peculiar Sense of the Word. If he were no more than a *Prime-Presbyter*, it will not follow that because they chose their own *President*, therefore *much more they might ordain other Presbyters*, which is the Argument here used. For it is a much less thing for Persons of the same Office met together to chuse one of themselves to *preside* amongst themselves, for the better Management of their *Joint Counsels*, than to call other *Persons*

sons to their own Office, in which they had no part before. But if he were a *Bishop* in the peculiar Sense of the Word (as I doubt not St. *Jerome* meant, and this *Argument* supposeth) then here is Demonstration of the *Distinction* between *Bishops* and *Presbyters* from the very Days of the *Apostles*.

2. This very chusing themselves a *Bishop* is so far from proving that they were not under *Restraint* in the Point of *Ordination*, that it is the very putting themselves under that *Restraint*: as a *Peoples* chusing any Person, from amongst themselves, to be their *King*, *restrains* that *Right*, which was originally in them, of granting *Commissions* of lesser Importance; and is designed to devolve the Power of doing this upon this single Person; so far is it from proving that they themselves continue to exercise it. And, according to St. *Jerome*, the *Presbyters* chusing and setting a *Bishop* over themselves, is the thing which put a Period to their *ruling* the *Churches* in common, and with a proper *Equality*: And from the very Time of their doing this, they must, according to him, be under *Restraints*. So that instead of arguing, the *Presbyters* chose their *Bishop*, a superior Officer; therefore much more *ordained Presbyters*: I argue, the *Presbyters* of *Alexandria* chose to themselves *Bishops* from the very Time of the *Apostles*; therefore from that Time they were restrained from *ordaining* other *Presbyters*, supposing they had an *original Right* to that Work. For what, I pray, is that *Restraint* which *Blondel*, and this *Author* contend that the *Presbyters* voluntarily put themselves under, near the middle of the *Second Century*; but what resulted from their chusing, from amongst themselves, *Governors* whom they called *Bishops*? And what is that *Restraint* which St. *Jerome* speaks of, but the very *Order* that one should be chosen from among the *Presbyters*, to whom the *Care* of the *Church* should be in a peculiar Sense committed? Nay, supposing this Person, chosen by them, to have been only a *Prime-Presbyter*, what I am saying is so evident, that *Blondel* himself acknowledges such a *Restraint* upon the *Presbyters* by their Choice

of a *Prime-Presbyter*, as that nothing was afterwards to be done, in which he was not to bear a principal part. And *St. Jerome's* only Design being to point out the Occasion of that Distinction between *Bishops* and *Presbyters*, which prevailed in his Days, and on which the Restraint put upon *Presbyters*, according to him, was settled in the *Church*; to be sure he could mean nothing in these Words less than to prove that this *Restraint* was in the *Church of Alexandria* from the Time of *St. Mark*, by shewing that from that Time the *Presbyters* of that *Church* had chosen *Bishops*, and placed them over themselves. For the Sentence going before is to this purpose, that tho' in his Opinion the Original Design was that *Presbyters* should govern by their *Presbyteries*; yet that afterwards one was chosen from amongst them to be set over the rest; and that this was designed for the preventing some *Abuses* and *Schisms*. To prove this, he appeals to the *Church of Alexandria*, in which he saith the *Presbyters*, even from the Time of *St. Mark*, had chosen one from amongst themselves, whom they called peculiarly by the Name of *Bishop*, to be sure for the Purpose above mentioned, *in remedium schismatis*. If therefore the Distinction in his Days between the Offices of *Bishops* and *Priests* was *in remedium schismatis*, it follows that this *Election* of a *Bishop* (which he here speaks of) was for the same End. For no one can say but that *St. Jerome* is here speaking of that *Choice* of a *Bishop* which restrained the *Exercise* of the Powers of *Presbyters*, whatever he supposed them to be.

3. It doth not in the least follow from the *Presbyters* choosing their own *Bishops*, that they pretended to *ordain* *Presbyters*: and yet the whole of this Argument is founded upon their *choosing* their own *Bishops*. Suppose it be said of any Company of Men, that they met together, and chose one from amongst themselves, and having placed him by that means in an higher Station, they called him *King*: doth it follow that because they thus made him *King*, therefore to be sure they did what is of lesser Importance; that therefore any of them, or all of them
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after this gave *Commissions* to other *Officers* under this *King*? No, From the time of that *Election* he is, by the Will of God, and the Law of *Nature*, invested with all due Authority; and it is his *Business* to give *Commissions* to all *Inferior Officers*. Just so it is in the Case before us. Let it be granted that those *Presbyters* chose one out of their Number, and that having by that means placed him in an higher Station, they called him *Bishop*; which is all that *St. Jerome* saith, it will not follow from hence that after this *Election*, they assumed to themselves to give *Commissions* to *Inferior Ecclesiastical Officers*: But rather that from this time, this was one of his peculiar *Businesses*; as I have just now been observing.

4. As there is no *Consequence* in the *Argument* drawn from hence: So neither doth *St. Jerome* give the least colour to such an *Argument*, but in the same place useth such Expressions as absolutely overthrow it. He doth not say that these *Presbyters* conferr'd Power, and Authority upon their *Bishop*: Nor doth it follow from what he saith, any more than it follows from a *Prince's* nominating a *Person* to a *Bishoprick*, that such *Nomination* is the sole Authority by which he acts in *Ecclesiastical Matters*. He may, notwithstanding this, derive his Authority from the Will of God, tho' the instant of the *Election* be the Time from whence the *Will of God* concerning his Authority must be supposed to take Place. And therefore this *Author* doth not well to add such Expressions as these to those in *St. Jerome*, to embellish his *Argument*, which at last must rest wholly upon that *Father*. Again, he useth the Word *Episcopus*, in a peculiar sense, as signifying an *Officer* distinct from *Presbyters*. The same Word he useth in the very next Sentence in the same sense, and denies to *Presbyters* the *Right of Ordination*, as I have shewn before, which he here appropriates to *Bishops*. But what is very remarkable, he illustrates the *Presbyters* chusing their *Bishop* by the similitude of an *Army's* chusing their *General*. Now from hence it follows, that as the *Army*, after such *Election*, pretended not to the granting

Inferior Commissions in it, but did indeed by means of this *Election* devolve this upon the Person chosen *General*; so neither did the *Presbyters*, after the *Election* of their *Bishop*, pretend to the granting *Commissions* to *Inferior Presbyters*: And that for a very good Reason, *viz.* because they had by this *Election* devolved this Business upon the Person chosen *Bishop*, as they had the *Care* of the *Church* in all Cases, in a very peculiar manner. But, as I pass, I cannot forbear asking, if this Account of the *Alexandrian Presbyters* chusing their own *Bishops*, be true, what becomes of that *unalienable Right* of the *Laitie* in *Elections*, of which this Author upon another occasion speaks?

Thus have we seen of how little Force this *Argument*, from these *Presbyters* chusing their own *Bishop*, is, to prove that they did all that time *exercise* their supposed *Right of Ordination*: And how little Satisfaction this gives us in our Enquiry, *how*, and *when* the *Exercise* of this *Right* came to be *restrained* in the *Church*. From hence I likewise draw an *Argument* that it was the same (in *St. Jerome's* Opinion) in all *Churches*, as in the *Church* of *Alexandria*, because he makes the *Government* of *Churches* to be always the same in all Places: And the *Decree* on which he founds the *Restraint* put upon *Presbyters*, to be universal, and at the same time. Consequently, therefore, if it was in pursuance of this *Decree* that the *Alexandrian Church* chose *Bishops*, and that by this Choice the *Presbyters* were *restrained* in the *Exercise* of their *original Rights*, this *Restraint* must likewise be as early, according to *St. Jerome*, in all other *Churches*, that is, from the very *Days* of the *Apostles*. Consequently, likewise, if the learned *Blondel* be indeed the *Defender*, and *Follower* of *St. Jerome*, he cannot pretend to fix the time of this *Restraint* in any of the *Churches* later than this: Much less can he, consistently with *himself*, first fix the time of this *Restraint* (which *St. Jerome* represents as at the same time *Universal*;) to the middle of the *Second Century*; and afterwards argue from *St. Jerome* himself, that it could not be in the *Church* of *Alexandria* till the *End* of the *Third Century*.

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However this may be palliated; having examin'd the so much boasted *Instance* of the *Alexandrian Presbyters*, and found it so mistaken, and so misapply'd; I shall not trouble my self to search that dark *Author* for any other less material *Instances*: But content my self with having consider'd what is principally urged, and depended on, by those who have given the latest *Occasion* to the present *Debate*.

Secondly, This *Author* adds (p. 101.) that even after *Presbyters* and *Bishops* were generally distinguish'd in the Church, it was yet no uncommon thing for mere *Presbyters* to ordain *Persons* into the Office of the Ministry: And likewise (p. 102.) that there are *Instances* of Ordinations by *Presbyters* acknowledged valid, after *Episcopal Government* was settled in the Church. Now,

I. St. *Ferome*, St. *Chrysofome*, and the greatest Favourers of *Presbyters* amongst the *Antients*, do absolutely deny to *Presbyters* this *Privilege*. The latter, whilst he gives them a part in the *Government* of Churches, as their *Right*, expressly affirms *Bishop* to be superior to them in the Point of *Ordination*: And this in the place in which he is proving their *original Rights*, and not their *Practice*: Nor doth he intimate that ever any *Presbyters* so much as pretended to exercise such a *Right*. The like doth St. *Ferome*, as I have already shewn. Nay, the Sense which *Blondel*, and his Followers labour hard to put upon his Words, *Quid facit Episcopus*, &c. amounts to this at least, that in his time no *Presbyters* did, or were allow'd to ordain. Nor did *Aerius* ever pretend to it. Here then are express *Testimonies* of the *Advocates* of *Presbyters*, plainly sufficient to prove that there was no such thing attempted by *Presbyters*, or allow'd to them, in the Times of these Writers, nor known to have ever been allow'd to them in former Times. To oppose to these; and the like *Testimonies* which might be produced out of an *Age* in which to be sure *Episcopacy* was come to its full height, two obscure *Canons*, which want a great deal of *Critical Learning*, to settle their true Reading, and then

their true Meaning, cannot appear of any great force in this Cause, in which we are seeking for plain Evidence.

2. Supposing these *Canons* to be such as they are here represented, it doth not follow from *City-Presbyters* and *Chor.episcopi* being restrained by them, that therefore it was usual before for such to *ordain* as they saw fit. No, I appeal to any Observer of Things, if it be not more probable that such *Canons* might be made, because some *Chor.episcopi* (from their Name) and some *Presbyters* (from other false Reasonings) might at that Time have been induced to *innovate* in that matter: As Dr. Maurice hath shewn that the *Canons* against multitudes of Bishops (here likewise mentioned) were occasioned by *Heretical Innovators* for their own Ends often multiplying Bishops. And, therefore, these *Canons* do rather shew that the Pretenses of *Presbyters* to *ordain* were look'd upon as Innovations not heard of before, and so resisted, than the contrary. And if it should be allow'd that *Presbyters* might *ordain* with the Command of the Bishop, or in his Name, this can at all prove the Right, or justify the Exercise of it, in opposition to *Bishops*. Still here is manifest Proof from these very *Canons*, that the *Bishop* was at this Time accounted at least the Fountain of all *ordaining* Power, and his Consent necessary in all considerable Acts of the Clergy.

3. I cannot see how this Argument drawn from these *Canons* or *Instances* of *Presbyterian Ordination* allow'd, is consistent with the Scheme of *Blouzel*, which likewise seems to be espoused by the *Autor* now before me. According to him, *Prime-Presbyters* were in, and from the Days of the *Apostles*, settled in the Churches: And by his own Confession *Ordination*, or any thing material, could not be perform'd without their bearing a principal Part. After this he fixeth the *Establishment* of *Episcopacy*, properly so call'd, sooner than the middle of the *Second Century*. If by this the *Presbyters* gave not up the Exercise of their *ordaining-Office*, what is the *Restraint* which it is so often said they brought upon themselves? If they did,
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here is no room left for the allowance of any of their *Ordinations*; no Possibility of defending them upon their own Principles; no Probability that they ever could be acknowledged as good, and valid, by the Ages following, when *Custom* had been added to their own *Compact*. Or, will not these Writers give to the Bishops (when once settled) as great Powers as they allow even their *Prime-Presbyters*? Certainly greater: And if so, must not *Ordination* rest in their Hands? And doth not the whole *Current of History* assure us plainly that it did so? Besides, this *Author* observes in other places how fond the *Ecclesiastical Writers* are of confining this Power, and of calling that *Consent* on which he supposeth it to have been founded, by the Name of *Apostolical Institution*: What place is there then left for their allowance of *Ordination* by *Presbyters*, who are so great Enemies to it? The like may be said concerning that *Canon* of the *Second Council of Sevil* which this *Author* produceth in another place, (p. 180.) as if something might be built upon that in favour of his *Cause*. Whereas upon his own Principles, and supposing the meaning of the *Canon* to be what he would have it, no *Canon* of so late an Age as that (*viz.* about the Year of *Christ* 617.) can be of any force in this *Debate*. Nay if it be true, as *Blondel* and others affirm, that *Episcopacy* was settled generally about Forty, or Fifty Years after the *Apostles*, (by which means the Confinement of the Power of *Ordination* must likewise be introduced) it is impossible that a *Canon* made above Four Hundred Years afterwards should call this a *Novel Constitution*; Nor is it to be allowed, that any *Persons* of so late an Age should be admitted as *Good Witnesses* in this *Case*, unless they produce their *Vouchers*, and their *Testimonies*, which alone can prove the *Novel Constitution* of *Episcopacy*; whereas their bare Affirmations signify nothing at all to such a *Matter of Fact* as this. As for *Instances* of this, we are sent to *Blondel*, without the naming of any *Particulars* by which this *Author* is willing it should be tried: And in him I can find not one, plain,
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and uncontested. The Principal is that of the *Alexandrian Presbyters*, which I have already shewn to be of no force at all in this Cause. That great Man had Reading enough to make any thing obscure and intricate, but not clearness of Head sufficient to set any Cause in its due Light. It is a Toil, and Labour, even to know his Meaning : And having done what is sufficient already to vindicate the Cause I have undertaken, and what if it be just, no Modern *Instances* can invalidate, I may the more reasonably refuse the trouble of doing things wholly unnecessary. But if any Person have a mind to see more particularly what can be said on the Subject of these *Canons*, and *Instances*, or indeed any other Piece of *Antiquity*, I refer him to the *Brief Account of Antient Church-Government*, particularly to p. 223. where he will find these things consider'd : Remarking likewise that what *Blondel*, and others have alleged from the *Antient Church of Scotland* hath been answered, beyond all exception, (tho' no notice be taken of it by this *Author*) by the most *Learned* the present *Lord Bishop of Worcester* in his *Historical Account of Church-Government in Great-Britain and Ireland*, &c.

4. I shall only add, that if any *Instances* can be given of *Ordination* by *Presbyters* not rescinded, or disapprov'd by the *Church*; (which yet I find not) this will not at all prove that they ought not to have been condemned and rescinded. For the very *Restraint* which, according to the *Patrons* of their Cause, they solemnly and for good *Reasons* brought upon themselves, is a sufficient Ground of such a *Condemnation*. It will not indeed prove that they were not originally empower'd to *ordain*; but it will prove that their *Ordinations* are of no Account after they have solemnly devolved the *Exercise* of this *Right* upon another *Person* : And particularly the *Ordinations* performed by any Particular single *Presbyter* must be looked on as of no *Validity*. Nothing can justify them but *Necessity*, which is above all *Law* : But *Original Right* of it self signifieth no more than *No Original Right*, when
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the *Exercise* of it hath been given up, and suspended; especially if this hath been confirmed by continued, and settled *Custom*. So that if they ever were allowed of, *Necessity* alone could be the just Reason for such allowance: And unless that were evidently in the *Case*, they ought to have been rescinded, upon the *Principles* of *Blondel*, and his *Followers*. Nor doth the not *rescinding* them prove any acknowledgment in the *Primitive Church* of such a *Right* in *Presbyters*, supposing them not *rescinded*; since it might proceed from other *Reasons* very different from such an *Acknowledgment*.

To this *second Plea*, therefore, taken from the *Commission* given to *Ecclesiastical Ministers*, Mat. 28. 19, 29. I have answered, and proved at large, 1. That there is no such *Right* in all who are called to the *Office* of *Teachers* in the *Church*, as that of *Ordination*, either express'd, or imply'd in those Words: And 2. That supposing such an *Original Right*, we find the *Exercise* of it restrained by the *Apostles* themselves; and, if ever resumed again, yet within *Forty Years* after *their Deaths* restrained (according to their greatest *Patrons*) by their own *Consent*, and *Compact*; and this *Restraint* confirmed by long immemorial *Custom*: And that this *Original Right* is not of itself sufficient to justify the *Exercise* of it after it hath been thus given up; nor any other *Reason* but what will equally justify even *Those* who have no *Original Right* to plead, viz. *Absolute Necessity*.

SECT. 3. *The Third Plea, taken from Presbyters keeping to the Rule of Scripture, considered.*

The *Third Plea* made use of by this *Author* is this. *Our Ordainers keep to the Rule the Scripture gives: And therefore their Ordinations cannot justly be styl'd Irregular*, p. 106. &c. But since he himself hath acknowledged that their *Ordinations* are *Irregular*, and disagreeable to the *Scripture Rule*, unless *They* be the *Officers* to whom this *Work* is committed in the *New Testament*: And since the *Truth*
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of this wholly depends upon what he hath said under the *two* foregoing *Pleas*, this is not an *Argument* so distinct from them, but that it must stand or fall entirely with them. So that there need not any more Words about this; for I grant that, if they be the *Officers* called in *Scripture* to *ordain* others, their *Ordinations* are not disagreeable to the *Scripture-Rule* concerning *Ordinations*, tho', as I have already said, this alone will not prove them *regular*, or agreeable to the Will of God: And, on the other Hand, he cannot but grant that if they be not the *Officers* empowered to *ordain* in the *New Testament*, this will be sufficient to prove their *Ordinations* *irregular*, not only as they are contrary to *Ecclesiastical Canons*, but as they are disagreeable to the *Rule* laid down in *Scripture*. And so the whole Dispute here resolves it self into what hath been said on both Sides, under the *two* foregoing *Pleas*; to which, therefore, I refer the *Reader*.

Sect. 4. *The Fourth Plea, taken from the Ends of Ordination, consider'd.*

The *Fourth Plea*, in favour of *Presbyterian Ordination*, is founded upon this, *That all the Ends of Ordination are as effectually answer'd, where senior Presbyters ordain, as where Diocesan Bishops are the Persons that officiate*, p. 117. Now,

1. The former *Arguments* of this *Author* are of as much force for *Ordination* by *junior Presbyters*, nay, by every single *Presbyter*, according to his own Judgment and Will, as by *senior Presbyters*: And must we now have the *Exercise* of this *Right*, all on a sudden, confined to the *senior*? If it may be thus confined, and by this means a *Restraint* put upon many *Presbyters*, then it is evident there may be a *Restraint* justly put upon *Presbyters*, notwithstanding his former *Arguments*: And therefore, why not the *Restraint* introduced by *Episcopacy*, as well as that introduced by *Presbyteries*?

[2. It is possible that the *Ends* of *Ordination* may be as well

well answered by understanding serious and judicious *Laymen*, as by *senior Presbyters*; supposing *Lay-Ordinations* the *settled Method*: Therefore, if this *Argument* prove any thing concerning the *Right* of *Presbyters* to *ordain*, it equally proves the *Right* of *Lay-Christians* to *ordain*; which I suppose this Writer will not contend for. But indeed when all acknowledge that there should be one *Method* of *Ordination* settled, if for no other, at least for *Prudential Reasons*; no Departure from this one settled Method can answer the *Ends* of *Ordination* so well as they might be answered, were there no other set up in Opposition to it.

3. If this *Argument* signify nothing without supposing the Force of the Two first, I answer that it signifieth nothing at all in this place, either for the proving the *Right* of *Presbyters* to *ordain*, or the Reasonableness of exercising that *Right*. And that it doth signify nothing without that *Supposition* this *Author* himself must acknowledge. For what if the *Ends* of *Ordination* may be served by *Presbyters* *ordaining*? unless they be the *Persons* empowered in the *New Testament* to do this Work, he must confess this is of no Importance at all. What if the *Ends* of *Ordination* might be served by a *Bench* of *Justices*? Would this entitle them to the *Office*? If not, then it is plain this *Argument* signifieth nothing to the Justification of any Persons in their *Ordinations*; and consequently nothing to the Justification of *Presbyters* in their performing that *Office*. So that it appears that tho' this *Author* would willingly seem to make use of *Four Arguments*, on this Subject; yet in truth he hath produced but *Two*: the *Two* last being of no manner of Force considered by themselves, but depending so on the *Two first* as that they must stand or fall with them.

Thus have I considered the Force of those *Pleas* which are revived by this *late Author*; and shewn, as I hope, that they are not, either separately or unitedly considered, sufficient to prove the *Right* of *Ordination* to belong to *Presbyters* originally; or, supposing them to have such a *Right*, that their *Exercise* of it, at this time, is justifiable. I shall only

only add, that this *Author* having appealed to the *New Testament*, as the only *Foundation* upon which he desires to be thought to build this *Right*, and the Justifiableness of the *Exercise* of it; and having desired so often that his *Cause* should be tried by *plain* and *positive* Proofs from *Scripture*; I have followed him thro' every Passage which he hath alleged from thence: And therefore I hope he will not say that I have avoided the Point in debate, or artfully dissembled in the handling it, merely because I have not likewise followed *Blondel* thro' that *Labyrinth* of *Antiquity* in which he hath left this *Cause* perplexed indeed, but not illustrated, or established. However, I have alleged what is sufficient to shew the Invalidity of the most material Things, even of those which are urged by *him* in favour of *Ordination* by *Presbyters*: and so have fully answered the Design of this *Chapter*.

C H A P: III.

The Pleas, lately advanced, in favour of the Laity's Right to Ordain, considered.

FROM all that is before said it most manifestly appears that it was the Will of the *Apostles* that the *Affair* of *Ordination* should be managed by *Persons* already ordained; and that, amongst these, *Bishops*, as distinguished from *Presbyters*, and other *Pastors*, have the fairest *Plea*. But because there have been lately attempts to revive the Pretensions not only of *Presbyters*, but also of the *Laity* to this *Office*, it is fit I should consider what hath been urged, on their Part, by a late celebrated *Author*, who must be supposed to have neglected nothing which can be advanced, with any Shew of Probability, in this *Cause*. And what he hath said on this *Head*, tho' often very obscurely expressed, and scattered into several parts of his Work, I shall endeavour to collect into *Two distinct Arguments*,

gments, and shall consider the Force of them as impartially, and as briefly as possible.

Sect. 1. Argument *the first, taken from the Natural Right of the Laity.*

The *first* Argument, in favour of the *Right* of the *Laity* to *ordain*, is taken from their *Natural Right* to appoint to themselves the Persons who are to officiate in holy Things. Now here, Rights of the Christian Church, p. 80. on the one side, I freely grant that were the World left entirely to the *Light of Nature*, and *Reason*, without any *revealed Religion*, this would hold true, that each Congregation meeting for the *Worship of God* hath an *Original Right* to appoint whom they see fit to be their *Minister* in their *Assemblies*: And, on the other side, this *Author* must likewise grant, that where there is an extraordinary *Revelation from God*, and *Rites and Institutions* in this of a positive Nature, it depends upon his Will what sort of Persons shall be *Ministers* in this *Dispensation*; by what Methods they shall be made such; and who shall be the *Judges* of their Qualifications; and that if by any means his Will appears to the contrary, there can be no Force in the *Argument* drawn from the *Natural Right* of the *Laity*. Now altho' *Jesus Christ* himself did not settle all Things relating to the *Order*, and *Regularity* of his *Kingdom on Earth*, yet he manifestly commission'd his *Apostles* to do what they saw fit: and by that *Commission*, their *Rules, Advices, and Institutions*, in the Business now under Consideration, ought to be of great Force. For whether their Appointments, in Matters of *Order*, and *Regularity*, were the Directions of that *Holy Spirit* with which they were endowed in all Cases that required it; or the Results of their own *Prudence*; they were such as the Wisdom of God thought best they should be: otherwise he would not have ordered, or permitted them to have been what they are. Consequently they are to be regarded as highly, as any Matters of *Order*, and *Regularity*

larity ought to be. But I must observe, that it is very hard, and unreasonable for this *Author* to require a *positive depriving Law* in this *Case* reaching to all *Lay-Christians* in all *Ages*. This is indeed to suppose *Matters of Order* and *Regularity* to be *Matters of Essence*, and *absolute Necessity*. Nay, I question whether such a *Law* could have been so plainly enacted, and so clearly expressed, but that *Arts* might have been found out to evade or obscure the *Force* of it. But it will be always sufficient to all ingenious and good *Minds*, in *Points of Order*, to know what the *Will* of the *Apostles* was; and it will be always their *Desire* to conform themselves to it as near as possible. And what the *Will* of the *Apostles* was, when once the *Christians* multiplied, and the *Order* and *Regularity* of the *Churches* was to be regarded; I leave to any one to judge from the *first Chapter* of this *Treatise*, in which I have shewn both from the *Instances* of *Ordination*, and *Rules* concerning it, recorded in the *New Testament*, and from the acknowledged *Testimony*, and *Practice* of the *first Ages*, that the *Persons* manifestly designed by the *Apostles* for this *Work*, were *Ecclesiastical Officers*, superior to *Presbyters*, and distinct from the *Laity*. Nay, it is manifest, that had it been the *Will* of the *Apostles* that the *Laity* should be left to the *Exercise* of this *Right*, *St. Paul* would have given, or sent *Orders* to *Ephesus* that every *Congregation* of *Christians*, when it was formed, should chuse one from amongst themselves for the *Performance* of *religious Offices*; and not have appointed *Timothy* to that *Work*: the very constituting of *him* to ordain *Presbyters*, being a *Confutation* of the *Opinion* of this *Author*. But because this *Author* hath something concerning the *Power* of *Lay-Christians* in this *Affair*, which appears to contradict this *Restraint* of their *Natural Right* by the *Apostles*, I proceed to consider what is alleged to this *Purpose*.

Sect. 2. Argument the Second, taken from the Laity's Privileges in the Times of the Apostles.

The *Second Argument*, urged by this *Author*, is taken from the *Laity's* being allowed to exercise this *Right* in the Days of the *Apostles*. Thus, p. 158. he argues that all *Church Power was in the People*, from the *Directions* given to them in the *New Testament*; and from their *Practice*, in the Days of the *Apostles*. To which I answer,

1. The right way of proceeding in this Case is to consider what was the Will of the *Apostles*, when once *Believers* came to multiply, and there was Occasion and Opportunity of settling what belonged to the *Order*, and *Regularity*, as well as to the *Essence* of the *Churches of Christ*: for this could not be done at first. So that supposing the *Laity* did exercise the *Right* we are now considering at the very beginning, before the *Churches* could be brought into any Form, this will not shew that it was the Will of the *Apostles* they should do so afterwards; nor will this avail any thing against a *Confinement* in this Matter, if it can be made appear that the *Apostles* afterwards sufficiently declared their Minds in favour of such a *Confinement*, for the better promoting of *Order*, and *Regularity* in the *Church*. I say not this, as if I granted that the *Laity* did ever exercise this *Right*, even at the first Foundation of the *Church*: But supposing they did, I argue, that this of it self will not justify their future Exercise of it. For,

2. There is not any thing produced by this *Author* from which it follows that the *Laity* did ever exercise the *Right* of *Ordination* in the Days of the *Apostles*; or may do it, agreeably to their Will, in these *After-ages*: as will appear by examining particularly what is alleged to this Purpose.

First, It is urged that St. Paul directs the *Corinthians* to put away, or excommunicate the *incestuous Person*; and not to keep Company with a wicked Brother; the *Galatians* to restore any one taken in a Fault; the *Thessalonians* to warn the

Unruly, and to see that no Man render Evil for Evil; the Romans, to mark those who cause Offences, and to avoid them, p. 157. and the Colossians to say to Archippus, Take heed to thy Ministry, to fulfil it, p. 133. Now, 1. There are but Two of all these Directions which have the Face of any thing like what this Author calls Church-Power, and Authority in the People; and which might not have been given to them in the same Words, had they not had the least Authority in Ecclesiastical Affairs. For doth it imply any thing of Authority, or Power, that Christians were directed to avoid, and fly from, Persons of evil, and dividing Tempers, and of scandalous Lives? And are not all Lay-Christians obliged and directed to do the same, in all Countries, to this Day, without having any Authority in Affairs merely Ecclesiastical? Doth it imply any thing of Church-Power, properly so called, that all Christians are directed to do one another all the real Service they can, by Admonitions, and Reproofs, when they are necessary? The Direction to see that no Man render Evil for Evil, is certainly to be interpreted that every one should look to himself in that Point, and not to others; and what is this more than an Exhortation to any other Virtue would have been? The Direction concerning Archippus was nothing but a Message from St. Paul himself, to be delivered by the People, because at that time he had no occasion to write himself particularly to him: and implies no Authority in them to say any thing in public to their Pastor any more than the like would do now, should a Bishop have occasion to write to a Company of Christians, and at the End of his Letter desire them to deliver a Message, and Direction of his to their Pastor. Had such Arguments as these been produced in favour of any Authority in the Clergy, how would they have been ridiculed by this Author? 2. The Two Passages which only can pretend to serve his Purpose, are those which concern the putting away a wicked Person, and restoring one taken in a Fault. The latter of these, Gal. 6. 1. is confined to the Persons called spiritual, and so is not the Office of the whole Christian Laity: Besides,

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it is not at all necessary to suppose any *public Act* of the *Church* here intended; or any thing more than that good *Christians* should pity a Person fallen into any Sin, and endeavour by all proper Methods to bring him to himself again; or to make him sound and whole again as the Word imports, which is no *Act of Authority*, but at this Day a Duty which may be exercised by all good *Christians* who have it in their Power. So that neither is this Passage any thing to the purpose. As for the *other*, in which the *Corinthians* are required to put away the *wicked Person*, it may be granted that this was properly *Excommunication*: and that the *Assembly of Christians*, nay, and all the *Christians* of those Parts, from whom he was to be separated for some Time, should unanimously join in this *Act*, I think highly reasonable, and particularly agreeable to the State of the *Church* at that Time. But to infer from hence, that the *Apostles* could not have exercised this *Power* without these *People*; or that the *Pastors* and *Ministers* in their *Congregations* were excepted by St. *Paul*, and their *Consent*, and *Concurrence* not supposed, or desired, is very weak, and wholly groundless. So that no *Powers* can from hence be proved to belong to the *Laiety*, considered as distinct, and separated from the *Clergy*: and consequently no great Service be done to the *Cause* undertaken by this *Author*. For my own part, I wish all *Congregations* would join in shewing their *public Abhorrence* of *notorious*, and *scandalous* Sinners, till they shew some Marks of *true Repentance*, and *Reformation*. I freely grant them *Authority* enough to do that: but see not how it follows from hence that *Lay-Christians* either did in the Days of the *Apostles*, or may now, agreeably to their Will, exercise the *Right of ordaining Pastors* in the *Church of God*. Besides, this was such a Matter as must have been very ineffectual to the Purposes intended, unless all the *Congregations* of *Lay-Christians* had joined in it: For what doth any *Excommunication* signify, if the *Person* be not, in the *Apostle's* Phrase, *put away*; or be cherished, and encouraged by Numbers of other *Christians*? So that there was

more reason for St. Paul's putting this Office upon the *Lay Christians* of those Days, than what can be alleged concerning any Office, or Authority of another nature. Add to this, that, according to this *Author* himself, this *Excommunication* was proper only in that *State* of the Church in which extraordinary and miraculous Consequences were seen to follow upon it. He himself will not allow this same Power to the *Laity* in the ordinary State of the Church: Let him not therefore argue from hence for other Powers in the *Laity*, in the present Condition of the Church; and these such as are of a very different nature, and depend not at all on this. For, 3. Supposing all these Directions here alleged by him, did truly prove, as this one doth, that the *Laity* had some Powers entrusted to them, in the *Apostolical Age*; this will not at all prove that they were allowed, or called to, the Exercise of others wholly distinct, and vastly different from these: especially when it may be manifestly proved, that these other sort of Powers were entrusted with a peculiar sort of Ecclesiastical Officers. This Consideration alone is a sufficient Reply to all these Allegations of this *Writer*.

How unworthy a Proceeding is it, therefore, in this *Author* to infer from such Passages as these, that it is plain, by the general Epistles, that all Church Power was in the People, as he doth, p. 158. when we see the utmost that can follow from them is, that in one particular Instance of Church Power they had a considerable Part, but this such an Instance as infers not their Concern in any other: when at the same time he entirely overlooks the particular Epistles to *Timothy*, and *Titus*, in which, he cannot but know in his Conscience, that there is as manifest a Confinement of the Power of Ordination, to a superior sort of Church-Officers; and as plain Declarations of the Mind of St. Paul in this Point, as could well be expected in a Matter of Order, and Regularity. For if he, when Occasion offered for the ordering this Matter, thought it best to overlook not only the *Presbyters*, but all the particular Congregations of *Lay Christians*, already settled at *Ephesus*,
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and in *Crete*; and to entrust the Business of *Ordination* with *Timothy*, and *Titus*, so entirely as not to make any Consent of the *Laity* necessary; this is such a *Confinement*, as that if this *Author* could find the like in favour of *Lay Ordinations*, I will promise him to become his *Proselyte* in this part of his *Controversy*. But in the mean while, that he should, by neglecting to mention it, lead his *Reader* to think that no such *Argument* could be urged for *Episcopal Ordination*, I cannot reconcile to that *Freedom*, and *Impartiality* he every where pretends.

Agreeably to what goes before, it is urged, p. 159. that our *Saviour himself* places the *Dernier Resort* in the Church, which in *Scripture* always signifies the *People*: And so I suppose from hence it follows that all *Church-Power* is in them. Now, 1. I deny that the *Church* signifieth the *People*, separately consider'd, in this very place, or indeed in any place but where such a *Distinction* between the *Church*, and the *Pastors* of it is made, as this *Author* is not willing to allow between the *Clergy*, and *Laity*: Much less any such Sense as to cast such a *Reflexion* upon the *Pastors* of it as this *Writer* labours to deduce from hence. I say it doth not here signify the *People* distinctly consider'd, because it is not to be supposed that our *Lord* would debar his very *Apostles*, or *Pastors* appointed by them in the several *Churches*, from all Concern, or so much as a *Vote* in their *Congregation* about the Matter spoken of. Nay, I cannot think but that this *Author* himself would allow an *Apostle* a single *Vote* in a *Congregation* upon such an Occasion. But, 2. Let it be so; Let the *Dernier Resort* in the Case mention'd, *Mat.* 18. 17. be to the *People* distinctly considered: *i. e.* Let the private Offences of one Man against another be brought before the *Congregation* of *Lay-Christians* to which they belong, after other more private Methods have been tried in vain: And let an *Exhortation*, and *Discourse* be made, in their Names, to the *Injurious* Person. I say, let this be allow'd, what will follow from hence? Certainly no *Power* but for this one Business: No Powers wholly dif-

ferent from this, and wholly independent on it: And what then doth the *Dernier Resort* in this one Matter signify? Or how can this *Text* serve the purpose here intended by this *Author*? Unless it follows, that because the *last Resort* is to be made to the *People* in case an injurious Person be not brought to temper by other Methods; therefore the *1st Resort* is to be made to them in *all Cases*: Which this *Author* will not surely say. Or if it do follow from thence that the *last Resort* is to be made to the *Church*, in this sense of the Word, then let it follow likewise that the *first Resort* is not to be made to the *People* in any Case; (which as undoubtedly follows from this Passage of *Scripture*;) and then let it be considered what the *Cause* of this *Author* will gain by such an *Argument*.

Secondly, It is urged that the Practice both of the *Apostles*, and of the first *Lay-Christians*, proves the Exercise of the *Right of Ordination* to have been allowed to the *People* in the very Days of the *Apostles*: That they voted in the Election of *Deacons*, *Act. 6. 15.* that when a Person was chosen to the *Apostleship*, it was determined by their *Suffrages*, *Act. 1. 26.* that they sent forth *Barnabas*, *Act. 11. 22.* and appointed *Companions and Assistants* for *St. Paul* in his *Travels*, *2 Cor. 8. 19.* and consequently chose the more ordinary *Church-Officers*, tho' the *Apostles*, as chief *Directors* are said to ordain; that the *Brethren* as well as the *Apostles*, and *Elders* were concerned in the *Council of Jerusalem*, *Act. 15. 23.* and that the *Apostles* thought it their *Duty* to give an *Account* of their *Actions* to the *People*, as *St. Peter* did, *Act. 11. 4. p. 158, 159.* These Instances must be particularly considered. And,

I. The *Apostles* did indeed, in the *Case* of an *Office* which they thought too different from the main *End* of their *Apostleship* for themselves to attend to, put it upon the *People* to nominate the Persons whom they thought proper to be *Deacons*. But in the *first* place it doth not appear that they accounted this any *Privilege* of the *People*; or that they thought themselves under any necessity of doing this: But rather the contrary, because the
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People claimed no such Right, and pleaded no such Privilege, but were bid to do this by the *Apostles*, without their thinking any thing of it : And in the next place, they confined the *People* to the Number *Seven*, and after they had put the *Nomination* of the Persons upon the *People*, they reserv'd the *Right* of appointing them to that Office to themselves, Act. 6. 3. Look YE out among you seven Men of honest report, whom WE may appoint over this business ; which accordingly they did, v. 6. not accounting the *Nomination* of the *People* sufficient, when they were present themselves to do something farther. I suppose this *Author* will grant that the *Apostles* might have excepted against any of the Persons named ; and then certainly the *People* must have nominated another. So that here is an Instance and Proof which this *Author* sometimes calls for, how the *Nomination* may be in one, tho' not so absolutely but Exceptions may be made ; and yet the *Appointment* and *Ordination* to an Office in the Power of another so far that the *Nomination* shall not be of force without it. And if so, what Service will the *Nomination* of these *Deacons* do to his Cause ? Especially considering farther, that it doth not follow because the *Apostles* allow'd this in the Case of an *Inferior Office* therefore it was their Will that it should be so likewise in another. And again, if this *Instance* prove any thing of their Will with respect to this lowest Office, the *Instances* of *Timothy*, and *Titus*, and the Management of *Ordinations* at *Ephesus*, and in *Crete*, will as effectually prove that they thought not fit to give to the *Laitie* so much as the *Privilege* of the *Nomination* of the Persons to be *Ordained* to the higher Office of *Presbyters* ; much less, the *Privilege* of the sole *Appointment* of them to that Office. For if this shew the Will of the *Apostles* concerning the Office of *Deacons* ; the *Epistles* to *Timothy* and *Titus* may well be allowed to shew their Will concerning the *Ordination* of *Presbyters*, and what Concern the *People* have in it.

2. It is said that when a Person was chosen into the *Apostleship*, it was determined by the *Suffrages* of the *People*,

Act. i. 26. Now, 1. When the *Church* was very small, in Number, and as many as could, or dared, kept constantly together, as it were in a *Body*, nothing could be more natural, or fitting, than that the *Apostles*, who were always with them, and waiting for the *Lord's* Promise, should do nothing in any Case without first proposing it to this constant *Assembly*: But this not out of any necessity from the thing itself, but only out of prudent Considerations, fitted to the *State* of the *Church* at that time. Nor could their joining the *People* with themselves in this first Act, preclude them from establishing, or following any other Method afterwards in the appointment of *Church-Officers*. So that supposing that an *Apostle* himself had been chosen, at this time by the *Votes* of the *People*, it will not follow that it was the Will of the *Apostles*, after the Descent of the *Holy Ghost*, and when the *Churches* came to increase, and to be settled; that the Appointment even of the *lowest Order* of *Church-Officers* should be left to the Suffrages of the *People*.

2. Be it so, that the *People* did chuse an *Apostle* by their *Votes*, still here were, besides the *Laity*, the other *Eleven Apostles*, who first proposed, and directed this Affair. So that nothing can be urged from hence for any *Ordinations* by the *Laity* without any *Church-Officers* in conjunction with them: Which will be very little to this *Writer's* Purpose. But 3. The Truth is, that according to the Account of this Matter in the place cited, it is impossible that any such thing should be here intended as the chusing the *Apostle Matthias* by the *Suffrages* of the *Laity*. For the Matter is recorded thus, that St. *Peter* stood up in the midst of the *Disciples* (amongst which are mention'd several *Women* in the Verse before;) and spake to this effect, (probably to the other *Apostles* peculiarly; for the *Appellation* used agrees not to all in the whole *Assembly*;) that it was fit another *Apostle* should be chosen upon the Death of *Judas*; that in pursuance of this, *They* (probably the *Apostles* only, for the Reason before given;) consented to name, not *one* Person, but *two*, and these, according to St. *Peter's* Direction, only out

out of those who had been with *Jesus* from the beginning of his *public Ministry*; that an Appeal was then made to *God Almighty*, and a *Prayer* to him to interpose in a peculiar manner to shew which of the two he would have to be an *Apostle*; that after this *Prayer* they drew *Lots* (the manner of which *Grotius* describes) and the *Apostleship* fell by *Lot* upon *Matthias*: And that after this he was *numbred with the Eleven Apostles*, or accounted one of that Supreme Order, *i. e.* immediately upon *God's* having in effect declared it by ordering the *Lot* to fall upon him. This is the natural meaning of this Passage: In which we see it is not plainly expressed, nor so much as probably imply'd, that the *People* bore any Part, unless as *Witnesses* to this *Transaction*. But supposing they did bear a Part in it; that it was not by way of *Voting*, (as is argued from the *Word* here translated *Numbred*, because it sometimes signifieth one chosen by *Suffrages*, or *Votes*;) may appear from the following Remarks. 1. It is manifest here was no thought of *voting* an *Apostle* into his Office, because there can be no place for *Lots* upon that Supposition; and the *Prayer* used is not at all proper, had this Matter been to have been carried by a majority of *Votes*. For to appeal to one *who knows the Hearts of Men* perfectly, is as much opposed to putting a Matter to the *Votes* of those who know *not* the *Hearts of Men* as any thing can be; and doth as much exclude all *Suffrage*, and *Voting*, as any Method can do. So that the Choice of this Method is a Demonstration that the *Apostles* thought not fit to trust their own Judgment, or to put this Matter in the Power of *Human Determination*. 2. The proper Place for *voting* had been before the *Lots* were cast: And it is very strange to talk of *voting*, after *God Almighty* himself had been invoked, and was understood to have interposed in a peculiar manner to determine the *Lot* to *Matthias*. For how absurdly doth it look, first to draw *Lots* in the solemn Presence of *Almighty God*, and pray to him to shew whom *he* hath chosen of the two: and after *God* hath discovered his Will in favour of *Matthias*, then to

to put it to the *Vote* whether he shall be the Man, or no? Was *he* an *Apostle* as soon as *God* had determined the *Lot* to *him*, or not? If not, then *that* which is here called *God's* shewing that he had *chosen* him, was not sufficient to make him an *Apostle*, which no one surely will say: If he was an *Apostle* immediately upon *God's* having determined the *Lot* to *him*, then what place could there be for the *Votes* of any *Mortals* upon *Earth*? They might as well have pretended to have put it to the *Vote*, whether the other *Eleven* should be *Apostles*, as whether *Matthias* should, after the *Lot* had fallen upon him, by *Almighty God's* special Determination. 3. It is highly reasonable to think that the *Apostles* would not put such a *Matter* as this upon *Humane Votes*, but make an appeal as immediately as they could to *God* himself, that the *Person* chosen into the *Apostleship* might not come behind themselves, or want that *Characteristic* of an *Apostle*, the being chosen by the peculiar *Interposition*, and *Designation* of their great *Master*. 4. I see not how it can agree with the *Principles* of this *Author* himself to suppose it possible that the *Election* of a *Person* to the *Apostleship* should be in the *People*. For, 1. The utmost that he contends for in the *Name* of the *Laitie*, is a *Right* in every *Congregation* to appoint or *ordain* their own *Minister*: But his *Argument* drawn from this place of *Scripture*, if it prove this *Right* for which it is alleged, it will likewise prove a *Right* in one *Congregation* to chuse and appoint the *Person* who shall *govern* and *teach*, in any other, as he himself shall think fit, all over the *Christian World*; for such a *Power* belonged to an *Apostle*: And consequently, 2. This *Right* of *Electing* so often ascrib'd to every *Congregation* by this *Author*, is absolutely overturned by this *Argument*, which pleads for a *Right* in the *Laitie* assembled with the *Apostles* at *Jerusalem* to impose a *Governor* and *Teacher* upon all other *Christians* which then were, or should afterwards be: Who had as much right to *vote* in the succeeding *Days* whether *Matthias* should be an *Apostle*, as that single *Congregation* had to do

do it at that time, being as much concern'd in his *Apostleship* as *They* were. 3. It is an Absurdity, upon this *Author's* own Principles, to think that an *Apostle* could be chosen even by all the *Congregations* of *Lay-Christians* that were afterwards, put together. For their Power, according to himself, can extend no farther than themselves, and the appointing any one to govern, or teach, themselves. Whereas the *Commission* of an *Apostle* reached farther than these already converted: And his Business was to be a *Witness* of *Christ's Resurrection*, as *St. Peter* expresseth it in the place now before us, and to preach his *Gospel* to those who had never before heard of it. And what *Right* can any *Congregation* be supposed to have to grant a *Commission* to such an *Officer* as this? 5. I add that the very Word here used, upon which the *Argument* is founded, cannot, as it stands here, be interpreted of *Election* by *Suffrages*, by any *Rules* of *Grammar*. For it is compounded with the Proposition $\sigma\omega\iota$, which signifieth *with*, and the Words $\mu\epsilon\lambda\iota\alpha\ \tau\omega\upsilon\ \epsilon\upsilon\delta\epsilon\kappa\alpha\ \alpha\ \pi\omicron\sigma\iota\omicron\lambda\omega\upsilon$ are immediately connected to it. Now this may very well be rendred, *he was numbred together with the Eleven Apostles*; but it cannot be rendred, *he was chosen by Suffrages together with the Eleven Apostles*, unless it be thought fit likewise to assert that at the same time the *People* voted the other *Eleven* also into the *Apostleship*, which I hope this *Author* will not do.

3. It is alleged that the *People* sent forth *Barnabas*, *Act. 11. 22.* Now, 1. Supposing this to have been done by the *People*, the same Word might have been used (where perfect Accuracy was not designed, and at a time when there was no need of it) had they only recommended it to him peculiarly as the fittest Person, to go and preach *Jesus Christ* amongst a particular sort of *People*. But, 2. This conferred no *Authority* upon *Barnabas* which he had not before: For he might have gone himself upon this very *Errand*, without the Formality of being sent by them, had he thought fit to do so; being every way qualified, and commissioned to do it before this. And there-

therefore this is no Instance of the *Laity's* *Electing*, or *calling*, or *appointing* any *Ecclesiastical Officer* to an *Office*, which he was not before commissioned to execute: And consequently is not to the purpose of this *Author*. 3. By this *Argument* the *Laity* in a *Congregation* have not only a *Right* to appoint their own *Ministers*, but *Preachers* in other *Congregations* likewise, which is contrary to the *Principles* of this *Author*. 4. The *Text* saith that the *Church* at *Jerusalem* sent him forth. Now in that *Church* there were certainly *Apostles*, *Prophets*, *Teachers*, very *Extraordinary Ecclesiastical Officers*, as well as *Lay-Men*: And why will not this *Author* suppose that *these* were the *Persons* who sent him forth? If he will but give himself the trouble of looking into the *Thirteenth Chapter* of this same *History* of the *Acts* of the *Apostles*, he will find something which may give light in this *Matter*. We read there, *v. 1.* that there were at *Antioch*, either *in* or *about* the *Church*, *Prophets* and *Teachers*: And of them particularly *Paul*, and *Barnabas*, and *three* others are named; *v. 2.* that whilst these were ministering to God, and fasting, the *Holy Ghost* said, separate me *Paul*, and *Barnabas* to the particular *Work* to which I now design them; and *v. 3.* that they, *i. e.* manifestly, the other *Ecclesiastical Persons* named before, *fasted*, and *prayed*, and *laid their Hands* upon them, &c. Now, 1. If the *Words* import that these *Prophets* and *Teachers* were in the *Church*, then the *Word Church* doth not always signify the *Laity* distinct from the *Clergy*. 2. If the *Words* import only that they were *about* the *Church*, then the *Word Church* doth indeed here signify the *Company* of *Lay-Christians*: But this not only not excluding, as I hope, the *Apostles* and *Prophets* from being *Christians*, but manifestly implying such a distinction between *Teachers*, and *People* as this *Author* is not willing to admit. 3. If the *Ecclesiastical Officers* here mentioned, were distinct from the *Church* here mentioned, and this *Church* was only the *Laity*, hence ariseth a plain *Observation*, that when *Paul* and *Barnabas* were now to be sent upon a particular, considerable *Business*,

ness, the *Holy Ghost* himself overlooked the *Church*, in this *Author's* Sense of the Word, and called upon these *Ecclesiastical Officers*, the *Teachers* of this *Church*, as the most proper Persons to set apart *Paul*, and *Barnabas* to the particular Business then in View. I think it much better and safer to observe from this plain Passage, what Method the *Holy Ghost* thought fit to take in such a Case as this, than to argue from an obscure, or ambiguous Word used in a Passage, in which it is plain the *Writer* did not design to set down the particular Circumstances of the *Fact*. From all which it may appear how unreasonable it is to argue from the sending forth of *Barnabas*, Acts 11. 22. that the *People* (distinctly considered) exercised the *Right of Ordination* in the Days of the *Apostles*.

4. It is urged, that the *Laity* appointed *Companions*, and *Assistants* for *St. Paul* in his *Travels*, whom he calls the *Apostles* of the *Churches*, and the *Glory of Christ*, 2 Cor. 8. 19. Now, 1. I wonder this *Author* doth not argue that *St. Paul* was the *Apostle* of the *People likewise*, for it is manifest they sent their *Charity* by him, to the *Brethren in Judea*, Act. 11. 30. as *St. Luke* in short expresseth it: tho' *St. Paul* himself saith, they beseeched him with great Importunity to take upon him that *Affair*, 2 Cor. 8. 4. in which he was as truly the *Apostle* of the *Churches*, or one sent by the *Churches* on that Business, as the *others* here spoken of. Perhaps therefore, the *others* were likewise beseeched, and importuned to accompany him. 2. The Truth of the Matter is this, The *Churches*, (*Prophets*, and *Apostles*, and *Teachers*, as well as *Brethren* without doubt) thought good that such and such Persons should accompany *St. Paul*: and they themselves likewise thought good that it should be so: and *St. Paul* himself thought it good; otherwise he was under no Obligation to accept of these *Companions*. But what is this to the *Peoples* sole appointing any Person to an Office merely *Ecclesiastical*? 3. Supposing this done only by the *Laity*, that they appointed the *Brother* whose Praise is in the *Gospel*, 2 Cor. 8. 19. and others to join with *St. Paul*; this was in a Business

ness relating to their own *charitable Contributions*, and what is this to their appointing a Person not already called to it, to an *Office* merely *Ecclesiastical* concerning which only our Debate is? This conferred no *Ecclesiastical Office* upon any Person sent with *St. Paul*, nor confirmed any. If they were *Ecclesiastical Officers* before this, they remained in all respects the same, without any Addition: If they were *Laymen*, they received no *Ecclesiastical Commission*, but remained perfect *Laymen*, notwithstanding they were thus sent by the *People* to accompany *St. Paul*. So that this *Instance* is so little to the Purpose, that I cannot but wonder to find it alleged. 4. If the *People* must needs be understood in the place cited, by this *Author* to have sent, or appointed *Ecclesiastical Officers* who were not so before (and nothing less than this can serve his Purpose) then it follows that the *People* of one Church appointed them for other Churches: which is according to him, *Tyranny*, and *Imposition*, and therefore destroys his own Principles. As for their being called the *Apostles of the Churches*, he knows the Word can't be meant in the Sense in which *St. Paul* was an *Apostle*, but that they only signify Persons sent by the Churches upon their Business: And as for their being called the *Glory of Christ*; so is every good Man who is a *Credit* to *Christianity*, whether he be an *Ecclesiastic*, or *Layman*.

5. From the Three foregoing Instances, *viz.* the chusing an *Apostle*; sending forth *Barnabas*; and appointing *Companions* to *St. Paul* in his *Travels*, this *Author* argues, that if they were thus concerned in chusing extraordinary *Ministers*, it can't be thought but that they exercised the same Power in chusing the ordinary. In answer to this, 1. I have shewn that they did not chuse an *Apostle*; that they conferred not the least part of the *Ecclesiastical Office* upon *Barnabas*, nor used any *Authority* over him; and that their chusing Persons to accompany *St. Paul* hath not the least relation either to the appointing any one to an *Ecclesiastical Office* who was not in it before; or so much as to the determining any one, who is already an *Ecclesiastick*,

to exercise his *Ecclesiastical Function* after such a peculiar manner, or in such a particular place. And therefore I conclude that since such *Instances* do not shew that the *Laity* were concerned in appointing any Persons to an *Ecclesiastical Office*, the *Conclusion* he draws from them necessarily falls to the Ground. 2. Supposing the *People* did chuse the *extraordinary* and supreme *Church-Officers*, it is so far from following from hence that they chose the *ordinary*, and *inferior* likewise, that the contrary follows from this very thing. For just as we see that the *People* by the electing a *King* do utterly preclude themselves from giving *Commissions*, and *Authority* to the *inferior Officers*, who are to act under *him*, and devolve this Matter upon the Person chosen *King*; so likewise supposing they chose the *supreme Church-Officers*, the *Apostles* themselves, it is manifest they did by this *Choice* give them the Power of granting *Commissions* to the *inferior Clergy* who were to act under their *Care*, and *Inspection*. 3. That the *Apostles* did take upon them to grant these *Commissions*, or *ordain* Presbyters, as *chief Directors*, this *Author* owns in the following Words, tho' he adds it was with the *Consent* of the *People*. So that here is an Acknowledgment that the *People* did not ordain *inferior Church-Officers* without the *Apostles*; from whence I argue that he must acknowledge something more necessary to *Ordination*, in the Days of the *Apostles*, than the *Appointment* or *Choice* of a *Congregation* of *Laymen*, which destroys his *Argument*, p. 80. And, on the other hand, that the *Apostles* did ordain *Presbyters* without consulting the *Laity*, or without thinking it necessary so to do, I appeal to *Acts* 14. 23. where no mention is made of the *Peoples* Concern in this *Affair*; and to the *Epistles* to *Timothy* and *Titus*, written with a peculiar Eye to this Matter, in which the Management of it is given into the Hands of those Two *Ecclesiastical Officers*, commissioned by *St. Paul* himself to that purpose, without a Word in them of any Necessity of the *Peoples* Concurrence with them, much less of any *Right* in them to execute that *Office* by themselves, without any *Ecclesiastical Officer*,

cer, which this *Author* contends for. As for the *Epistles* to *Timothy*, and *Titus*, the Matter is plain, because it cannot be supposed that the *Words* used there concerning this Matter have any relation to the *chusing* by *lifting up the Hands*; and no Direction is there given concerning any part the *Laity* were to bear in it: which certainly had been done, if *St. Paul* had thought fit to make them the *Ordainers* of their own *Presbyters*. Which may satisfy us likewise that *St. Paul's* other *Ordinations*, (particularly this, *Acts* 14. 23. now mentioned) were not managed after a different manner: tho' this *Author* is pleased to argue from the Word $\chiειροθιτις$ here used, that the *Apostles* ordained them by the Consent of the *People* expressed by *lifting up their Hands*, p. 358. To which I answer, 1. Tho' this might be the *first* Signification of this Word, yet it is very frequently, and most commonly used for any sort of *Appointment*, or *Ordination*, or *Election*, as this *Author* knows, and in *Cases* in which the *Appointer*, or *Chuser* is one single Person; and therefore at least it cannot be shewn certainly that the Word is here used in its *first* Signification. 2. The Interpretation of this *Author* is impossible in this place. For granting the Word to have the Signification he contends for, yet there can be no Instance of the use of it for any Persons constituting, or appointing any *Officers* by the *Suffrages* of *others*. It is here said of the *Apostles* that *they* did $\chiειροτοειν$, which must mean, according to his own Signification of the Word, that they appointed *Presbyters* by the *lifting up of their own Hands*, not by the *lifting up* of the *Hands* of *others*. For when this Word is used of the *People*, is it not meant of their electing by the holding up *their own Hands*? And can this *Author* give any Instance where it is used of any particular Persons electing, and yet understood of the *lifting up* the *Hands* of other Persons, and not of those who are said $\chiειροτοειν$? If he cannot, then here it must be understood solely of the *Apostles*; for of them it is affirmed that *they*, not the *People* did $\chiειροτοειν$. 3. Add to this, that the Word is not here used absolutely, or alone, but it is said that

that the *Apostles* did ordain *Presbyters* for them, i. e. the *People*. Now this *Author* cannot, I believe, produce one Instance where this Word is used for appointing *Officers* for others, and yet understood not of those Persons who are said to appoint them, but of those for whom they are said to be appointed.

6. It is alleged that the Brethren, as well as the *Apostles*, and *Elders*, (these Three Orders) were concerned in the Council of Jerusalem, *Acts* 15. 23. from whence I infer, with this *Author's* Leave, that there was at least some small Distinction of Office between these *Elders*, and these *Brethren*, whom he himself here makes to be Two different, and distinct Orders. But to reply to this, 1. A great Difficulty being raised at *Antioch*, concerning the converted *Heathens*, whether they were obliged to observe the Law of *Moses*, it was agreed that *St. Paul*, and *Barnabas*, with some others, should go up to *Jerusalem*: and it is manifest that there was no Thought in them that sent them, of their consulting the *Brethren*, or *Laity*, at *Jerusalem*, because, v. 2. it is said that they should go to the *Apostles*, and *Elders*, concerning this Question, without any mention of the *Laity*: who would certainly have been named, had there been any Thought of consulting them. Nay, agreeably to this, it is said, v. 6. that in pursuance of this Commission, the *Apostles*, and *Elders*, without any mention of the *Brethren*, or *Laity*, met together: which is sufficient to shew that the whole of this Matter was to be determined by their Authority. 2. The whole Church is indeed mentioned, v. 22. and the *Brethren*, v. 23. as joining in the Resolution taken by the *Apostles*, and *Elders*: but the former Observation sheweth that this is not to be supposed to imply any equal, or joint Authority in them, because upon this Supposition *Paul*, and *Barnabas* would have been at first directed to them; and any one may see there is no need of understanding it so. For all that can be fairly collected from hence is, that the *Christian People*, as far as could be known, acquiesced in, and were well satisfied with, this Determination of the

Apostles and *Elders*: and that accordingly in the *Letters* written, the *Brethren* were joined with the *Apostles*, and *Elders*, because it would be a great Satisfaction to the *Churches* to which it was sent, to know that there was an universal Agreement of the *Christians* at *Jerusalem* in this Decision of the *Apostles*. This is Reason sufficient for their being joined with the *Apostles*, and *Elders*, in this Affair: and therefore it cannot be shewn from hence that they pretended to any *Authority* in it. 3. The *Laity* at *Jerusalem* were as much in need of the Directions, and Guidance of the *Apostles*, as the *Laity* of other *Churches*: and cannot be supposed to be at all qualified to decide *Controversies*, and nice *Questions*. 4. The joining them with the *Apostles*, as this *Author* doth, destroys his own *Scheme*, and overthrows his own *Principles*: for it gives the *Laity* of one *Church* that Power of laying Impositions on their *Brethren*, and sending *Decrees* to the *Laity* of other *Churches*, which this *Author* hath utterly denied, and zealously opposed: and consequently cannot be reasonable, even in his own Judgment. 5. As to the Point of *Ordination*, nothing can be collected from hence: and it is manifest from the *Epistles* to *Timothy*, and *Titus*, that the *Apostles* made no Scruple of giving their *Orders* concerning the Management of that, without consulting, or advising with the *Laity*, or using their Names to give any additional Authority to what they thought fit to be done.

7. It is pleaded, that the *Apostles* thought it their Duty to give an Account of their Actions to the People, as *St. Peter* did, *Acts* 11. 4. I am indeed ashamed, and astonished, to read such Expressions concerning the *Apostles*. For, 1. This *Author* might as well say that the People who were to be guided, instructed, and directed by the *Apostles* in the nature of *Christianity*, and their own Duty were the Judges of the *Apostles* themselves, and might call them to an Account for their Management of themselves in their Office, to which they were called, and in which they were directed, by *God* himself: a Business which the People were not at all qualified for, and of which they never thought.

thought. 2. If it was the *Duty* of the *Apostles* to give an Account of themselves to the *People*, it was their *Duty* equally all over the *Christian World*: for their *Relation* extended it self to *all Churches*. But it is absurd to put such an impossible Task as this upon them: and therefore this could be no part of their *Duty*. 3. The Behaviour of the *Apostles* towards the *Laity*, was never out of *Duty*, in such Sense as if the *Laity* were the *Judges* of their *Actions*, and could demand an *Account* from them (which is the only *Sense* that can serve the Purpose of this *Author*) tho' it may be said to be out of *Duty*, as it is the *Duty* of all *Superiors*, to condescend to the Weaknesses and Prejudices of their *Inferiors*, and to endeavour to give them Ease, and Satisfaction, in Points which they had otherwise no Obligation to lay before them. The *Apostles* might think it their *Duty*, in this Sense, frequently to justify themselves from those Imputations, which *evil*, or *weak* Men laid upon them; and which would, otherwise, have rendered them the less capable of doing Service in the *Church*. But this Sense of the *Expression* here used serves not the Purpose of this *Author*. 4. If any one please to turn to the place here cited by him, *Acts* 11. he will find that *St. Peter* was so far from thinking himself obliged to give an Account of his *Actions* to the *People*, that he did not do it to the whole *Church*; nor as from any Obligation, as he ought to have done, according to this *Author*; nor ever thought of doing it at all till he was taxed by a particular *Seet* of them, as if he had done an unjustifiable thing, *v.* 2, 3. that upon this Accusation he willingly endeavoured to give these prejudiced Persons Satisfaction; which he doth by a bare Relation of the Matter of Fact, *v.* 4. and without any Acknowledgment of their *Authority* to call him to Account. And what there is in this Procedure more than a Willingness that all should be satisfied, and easy, and no Offences continued in the Way of the *Gospel*, let any one judge. 5. I am sure it may as well be argued that the *Apostles* thought it their *Duty* to give the *Heathens*, or *unbelieving Jews* an Account of their

Actions, because when they were taxed by them of making a Disturbance, and Alteration in the World, they thought fit to give them an *Account* of their Proceedings, and to lay before them the great Reasons they had to preach the *Gospel of Christ*. 6. Granting that the *Apostles* thought it their *Duty* to give an *Account* of their *Behaviour* in some Points, it is manifest from the *Epistles to Timothy and Titus*, that they did not think it their *Duty* to do so in the *Affair of Ordination of Presbyters, and Pastors* in the *Churches of Christians*.

Thirdly, It is alleged by this *Author*, in favour of the *Church-Power* of the *Laity*, that in the *Days of the Apostles* the *Office of Preaching was in common*, p. 132, 133. and the *Laity baptized*, p. 135, 136. and from hence, likewise, he would lead People to think that there is no *Office* claimed by the *Clergy* which the *Laity* have not a *Right* to perform. To this I answer in general, that I would not have the *Reader* imagine from hence that it is this *Author's* constant Opinion that there was no *Distinction of Offices* in those *Days*: for he himself, as I have observed before, makes the *Apostles, Elders, and Brethren* in the *Council of Jerusalem*, to be *Three Orders*: and if *Three Orders*, then there was a *Distinction* and settled *Difference* in the *Offices* of *Elders, and Laity*: and consequently some *Offices* appropriated to the *former*, which the *latter* did not pretend to perform. Or if he will not allow this, I hope the *Reader* will, notwithstanding *his* Affirmations, consider that *St. Paul* hath made a *Difference* between the *Presbyters* of *Ephesus*, and the *Flocks* over which they were placed, *Acts* 20. 28. and in his *Epistles to Timothy*. But it is necessary to be more particular, and to examine every *Passage* here alleged by this *Author*. As to the *Passages*, therefore, cited for the *Laity's* *Preaching*, as this *Author* is pleased to call it, the *Reader* will find upon Examination,

1. That some of them are nothing but such *Exhortations* to the *Laity*, as would be very proper at this *Day*, when there is no such *Custom* pretended as their *preaching in public Assemblies*. Thus, *Heb.* 3. 13. the *Christians*

Christians in a State of Persecution are called upon to *exhort one another, while it is called to Day, &c. i. e.* to encourage one another to a constant, and couragious Confession of the Faith of *Christ*, and this for fear any of them should be over-power'd by *Persecution* so far as to be brought to deny their *Master*. Now what is this to the *preaching* publicly in the *Congregation*? Or, who ever deny'd such *Exhortation*, and mutual Admonition to be even the *Duty* of all *Christians*, whether *Clergy*, or *Laity*? Thus again, *Heb. 10. 24 25.* the *Laity* are indeed exhorted to consider one another to the *exciting*, and *quickning* their *Love*, and *good Works*; *not to forsake the assembling of themselves together* (merely out of fear of their *Persecutors*) *but to exhort one another*, i. e. as I understand it, in connexion with what goes before, and what follows, to encourage one another to meet together for *Religious Offices*, notwithstanding the *Persecution* of their *Adversaries*. For it is *opposed* to the forsaking their *Religious Assemblies*: Which *Opposition* is not preserved if the Words be interpreted thus; *Not forsaking the assembling of your selves together, but exhorting one another when you are assembled*. On the contrary it is very well preserved, if they be interpreted thus, *Not forsaking the assembling of your selves together, but encouraging one another to this assembling as an open acknowledgment of your Master by meeting for his Service, and Honour, for joint Prayer, and the Celebration of the Lord's Supper*. And that this neglect of *assembling* themselves together is, at least, one sort, or degree of that *Apostacy* and *Sin* he speaks of in the following Verses is, I think, very probable from his connecting his terrifying Reasons against wilful *Apostacy* immediately to this Injunction *not to forsake the assembling themselves together*, as *Reasons* against the *Neglect* of *assembling* themselves just now mention'd; and from his describing this *Apostacy*, *v. 29.* to be *the accounting the Blood of the Covenant* (as the *Wine* in the *Lord's Supper* is peculiarly called in the *Gospel*) a *Common, or Unholy Thing*: i. e. the avoiding and flying from the Participation of it,

as if they had a mind to make their *Adversaries* believe, it was a thing they no more valued, or regarded, than their *Adversaries* themselves. And the Practice of some who had thus out of fear denied *Christ* by refusing to meet as his *Disciples*, to worship, and remember their *Lord*, might justly give occasion to the *Apostle* to be zealous in his *Injunctions* upon this Head; and is a sufficient Reason why he should press them to *exhort* one another to so necessary an Acknowledgment of *Christ*; and urge it upon them by shewing the Guilt, and Sin of those who wilfully refused out of fear, to meet their *Fellow-Christians*, for the *Worship* of their *Master*, and the Religious Remembrance of him in the *Lord's-Supper*. 1. Therefore, if this *Interpretation* be just, here is not the least intimation of any such thing as *preaching* in the *Assemblies* of *Christians*, allow'd in, or required of the *Laity*: And that it is just, I appeal to the *Reasons* here given. I add that they who favour the *Interpretation* of this *Author* can say nothing for it; but that it is a *possible* Meaning of the Words; not that it is plainly, and manifestly the *Sense* of them: which alone is a sufficient Reason against building such a Point as this upon them, even tho' nothing more could be said of the *Interpretation* I have given, but that it is likewise *possible*. 2. Supposing the *Interpretation* of this *Author* to be just, no more can be inferr'd from it but that the *Apostle* did advise the *Lay-Christians*, in Times of Persecution, when they were met together for *Religious Worship*, to speak to one another, and to encourage one another against *Apostacy*, and the *Fear* of Men. Now this is very consistent with the *Presbyters* having an appropriated Office in these very *Assemblies*: And I see not, for Instance, why the persecuted *Protestants* in *France* might not, even in their *Religious Assemblies*, have made it one part of their Business, to speak comfortably to one another, and to encourage one another to Perseverance, without ever supposing themselves possess'd of the same Office which their *Pastors*, and *Preachers* exercised. 3. And that this *Injunction* of the *Apostles* did not in the least

least derogate from the *appropriated Office* of the *Pastors* of these very *Christians*, even in his own Opinion, is manifest from this very *Epistle*, in which these same *Christians* who are here called upon to *exhort* one another, are called upon, *Ch. 13. v. 7.* to remember, or have regard to, those who were their *Leaders*, and *Directors*, and *spoke to them the Word of God*, i. e. their *Preachers*; and, *v. 17.* to be in some sort of *Subjection*, and to pay all reasonable *Deference* to their *Spiritual Leaders*: Whose peculiar Business is here declared, *viz. to watch over the Souls* of the *Laity* here spoken of, as *Persons that must give an Account*. So that in this very *Church* there were *Preachers*, and *Guides* distinct from the *Laity*, to whom the *Laity* were here required to attend; and to be advised, and *persuaded* by them according to this *Author* himself. (*p. 161.*) From whence I argue that it is highly improbable that the same *Apostle* should in another place stir up these same *Lay-Christians* to *preach* to one another in their *public Assemblies*.

Again, It is in the same place alleged that this *Duty of Teaching and Admonishing one another* in their *Assemblies* is required of the *Laity* on the highest *Motives*, such as, *that the Word of God may dwell in you in all Wisdom*, *Col. 3. 16.* and *that you may comfort and edify one another*, *1 Thes. 5. 11.* Now, 1. Neither of these *Texts* is by *St. Paul* intended as a *Motive* to any thing at all, as any one may see by turning to them: And therefore not a *Motive* to the *Laity*, to *preach* in *public Assemblies*. The former of them is an *Injunction* by itself, independent on what goes before, *that the Word of God should dwell richly in the Corinthians in all Wisdom*: And the latter is likewise a *Command* to the *Laity* distinct, and of a larger extent than that of *exhorting* one another, which goes before it, and makes it their *Duty* to *edify*, and profit one another by all *Methods* agreeable to their several *Stations*, and to the *Christian Religion*: And therefore is not a *Motive* to the *Practice* of the foregoing *Injunction*, but a new *Injunction* added to it. The *Motive* to both these *Duties* is

taken from *Christ's Love* to us expressed in the Verses before. But 2. Neither of these *Texts* can with any colour of *Argument* be apply'd to any thing but the private Behaviour of *Christians*, distinct from that in more *public Assemblies*. What the *Apostle* recommends to the *Colossians* in the former is that the *Word of God* may dwell in them, which can bear no Relation to their *preaching the Word of God* in *public Assemblies*, but rather implies that they have heard it at those Places preached by others. He advises them farther in the same *Verse*, to *teach*, and *instruct* themselves; which I wonder this *Author* did not allege. But how is it? By *Psalms* and *Hymns*, and *Spiritual Songs*; to keep up a sense of Religion in their Minds by this Method. The same he recommends to the *Ephesians*, *Eph.* 5. 19. where he expresseth it by *speaking to themselves in Psalms, and Hymns, &c.* In the latter he exhorts the *Thessalonian Christians* to *edify* one another, to do one another all true and real Service, which certainly they may be exhorted to do without supposing them *Preachers* in *Public Assemblies*, unless this *Author's* Notion of *Edification* be framed according to the Mistake of some Modern *Christians*, and not to the *Scriptures* themselves. 3. These *Injunctions* are in the midst of others, all of a private Nature, and not concerning any thing relating to *public Worship*: And therefore it is unreasonable to apply these to that Matter, abruptly, and without any the least Indication in the *Texts* themselves to that purpose. 4. In both these *Epistles* there is a manifest Distinction made between the *Laity*, and their *Pastors*, and *public Teachers*: and therefore no reason for *St. Paul* so zealously to enjoin the *Laity* to *teach* in *public Assemblies*, as this *Author* supposeth he doth. He himself, tho' for another End, makes mention of *Archippus* amongst the *Colossians*, to whom *St. Paul* sends a *Message* in this *Epistle* (just as he doth *Salutations* to others) that *He should take heed to the Ministry he had received, to fulfil it.* From whence it is evident that he had an Office, and Duty incumbent on him, distinct from those of the *Laity*. And in the *Epistle* to the

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Theſſalonians now cited, in the very next Words following thoſe quoted by this *Author*, St. Paul beſeecheth them to take notice of thoſe who labour amongſt them, and are over them in the Lord, and inſtruſt them; and to eſteem them, exceedingly, in love, for their works ſake: Words, which, I think, ſufficiently imply an appropriated Office of *Paſtors* and *Teachers* in thoſe Days. Theſe *Paſſages*, therefore, cited by this *Author* for the *Laity's* preaching in the Days of the *Apoſtles*, concern only private *Exhortations*, and *Admonitions*; and ſo are nothing to his Purpose.

2. Others of them will be found to be only Directions how thoſe *Perſons* ſhould manage themſelves in the *public Aſſemblies*, who had extraordinary, and miraculous Gifts, and particularly *Revelations* from the Spirit of God in thoſe firſt Days: And ſuch as cannot be of any Concern in theſe Days, when there are no ſuch *Revelations*. Thus if we examine *1 Cor. 14.* we ſhall find that the only Reason for ſo many ſpeaking in the *public Aſſemblies* was that it pleaſed God to give to many of them *miraculous Gifts*, and *extraordinary Revelations*, *Chap. 12. 8, 9, 10.* which is a ſufficient ground for any one to ſpeak in *Public* to ſuch as acknowledge the Divine Inſpiration of what they have to ſay. And when he exhorts them, *v. 12.* to labour to excel for the edifying of the Church (which this *Author* allegeth) this is his way of doing it, ſince you are ſo much for the extraordinary Gifts of the Spirit, deſire and labour after ſuch, and after ſuch an uſe of them, as may be moſt for the common Benefit of you all. And what is this to any other *Church*, or *Time*, in the *World*, in which there are not ſuch *Gifts*, and *Revelations*? When other *Churches*, are like the *Church* at *Corinth* at this time, let their *public Aſſemblies* be managed according to this *Chapter*. So if we look into the other *Text* alleged, *viz. 1 Pet. 4. 10.* and compare it with the Verſe foregoing, we ſhall find either, 1. That it is a Direction to thoſe who were peculiarly called to the Office of ſpeaking in public, as it may be thought from its being join'd with the Office of *Miniſtring* in the ſame Verſe: And if ſo, let
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who will be the Persons called to this Office, this very Passage proves a *Confinement* of this Office. For it is plainly St. Peter's Design, v. 9. to exhort all amongst them to perform their several Duties, and exercise their several Gifts, for the common Good of the Church: And v. 10. to direct those whose Office it was to *Speak*, to do it as the *Oracles of God*. From whence I argue against the Design for which this Text is produced by this Author, that it appears from this very Text, that the Office of *Preaching*, or *Speaking* in public *Assemblies*, was not a common Office, but confined to some particular Persons. Or, 2. We shall find that the Words are spoken of a particular extraordinary Gift of the *Holy Spirit* given in those Days; yet so as to require the prudent Management of the Person who had received it, for the Good of the Church. This seems probable from its being called by the Name of *χαρισμα* in the Verse before. And if so, they have no Place in the present State of the Church: Nor can any thing be argued from them.

Add to this, that in these very *Epistles* out of which these Passages are quoted, there is a manifest Distinction made of *Ecclesiastical Officers* from the *Laity*, and a manifest Confinement of the Office of *Teaching*, or *Preaching* in our sense of the Word. St. Paul in the first *Epistle* to the *Corinthians*, when he is speaking of the wonderful Gifts in this Church, (which was the only Ground for the speaking of so many in their *Assemblies*) himself makes a Difference of Gifts bestow'd upon different Persons, Ch. 12. 8, 9, 10. and a Distinction of Offices to which different Persons were called, v. 5. 28, 29, 30. by which means he effectually sets Limits to the Offices here mention'd; and provides that even of those Persons who had extraordinary Gifts none should speak in public but such whose Gifts, or Revelations, peculiarly fitted them for it. So that there is included in his Account of the several Gifts and Offices then in that Church a Confinement of these several Gifts and Offices to particular Persons. But to put it beyond all doubt, this same *Apostle* who is here
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introduced as a *Patron* of the whole *Laity's* preaching, doth himself ask, *ch. 12. v. 20.* Are all *Apostles*? Are all *Prophets*? Are all *Teachers*? The *Apostle* answers himself, *No*, by asking the *Question*, and also asserts in the same *Chapter* that God hath appointed some to one *Office*, and some to another. Are all *Teachers*? *Yes*, this *Author* answers in exprefs contradiction to *St. Paul* in this *Chapter*, all were *Teachers* in those *Days*: But the *Reader*, I hope, will consider whether he had not better believe *St. Paul* about the State of the *Church* at that *Time*, than this *Writer*. In the *first Epistle* of *St. Peter*, out of which the other *Passage* is quoted, there is likewise a most manifest *Distinction* made between the *Presbyters*, and their *Flock*, *ch. 5. v. 1, 2, 3. i. e.* between *Clergy*, and *Laity*: The former of which are called upon as *Shepherds* to feed the latter; and the latter are styl'd the *Flock* committed to the *Care* of the former: And how every one of the *Flock* can have the *Office* of the *Shepherd* of the *Flock*, I leave to this *Author* to judge.

3. If we examine the remaining *Instances* this *Author* produceth of the *preaching* of the *Laity*, we shall find that these likewise are of no importance in the present *Debate*, as they only concern the *preaching* of the *Gospel* where it never was heard of, or the endeavouring to convince *Infidels* of the *Truth* and *Reasonableness* of the *Christian Religion*. For, 1. Supposing that all they were *Laymen* who were scattered abroad upon the *Persecution* raised on *St. Stephen's* Account, *Act. 8. 4.* it is manifest that they were scatter'd into *Countries* where there were none to preach the *Gospel* to *Infidels* but themselves: And it is manifest that they had the *Power* of working *Miracles* to justify themselves to any who should ask them by what *Authority* they preached a new *Doctrine*, and set themselves to alter the *Faith*, and *Practice* of the *World* about them. I say it is manifest they had this *Power* of *Miracles*, if we may judge of the rest by *Philip, v. 6.* and by the *Success* they had, *ch. 11. 21.* and by the constant attendance of *Miracles* upon those who were the first *Preachers*

ers of the *Gospel*; and by the Expression used concerning them, that *the hand of the Lord was with them*. Let therefore those *Laymen* who would argue from hence put themselves into the Condition of these *Brethren*. Let the *Providence of God* cast them into *Countries of Infidels* who have no other Opportunity of hearing of *Christ* but by them; and this it self in my Opinion, will give them a *Commission*, if there be any hope of Success, to endeavour to convert as many as they can, to the *faith of Jesus Christ*: And if they have the same power of working *Miracles*, they need not doubt of the same success. But what is this to the *Case of Christians* already converted? And what doth this towards the discovery of the Practice of the *Laity* in the *Assemblies* of the *first Christians* when the *Churches* came to be in a more settled condition? For it cannot be right to argue, *Lay-men* preached the *Gospel* in Places where there were no others to *preach* it, and in order to convert *Unbelievers* were enabled to work *Miracles*: Therefore *Lay-men*, who have no such Power to shew, may teach publicly in the more regular *Congregations* of *Christians*, in which there are others whose Office it is to do it. But, 2. Why must it be supposed that these Persons scatter'd abroad were all *Lay-men*, when v. 1. of this *Chapter* it is represented that the *Persecution* was so great that all were scatter'd abroad, *except the Apostles*. If all except the *Apostles*, then many of those scatter'd abroad must needs have been Persons peculiarly set apart for the Office of *Teaching* and *Preaching*. And why must it be supposed that Men of such Qualifications as *Philip*, by being made *Deacons*, were kept from any Office of more Consequence in the *Church*, and not rather that they were authorized by the *Apostles* to *Preach*, and *Baptize*? 3. To make it highly probable that many of these were before this authorized to be *Preachers*, I allege the Testimony of *Clemens Romanus*, a *Writer* contemporary with the *Apostles*, and who hath the Happiness to be much regarded by this *Author*. He knew those Times as well as any one: And he assures us that the *Apostles* constituted
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the very first Fruits of the converted Persons to be Bishops (or Presbyters) and Deacons; and consequently many were appropriated immediately to Ecclesiastical Offices, *Ep. ad Cor. p. 99. Ed. Lond.* But, 4. Let these Preachers be what this Author pleaseth, he ought to remember that after they had converted a good Number at *Antioch* to the Christian Faith, *Barnabas* was sent from *Jerusalem* to establish, and settle them: and he, and *Paul* taught there a whole Year, *Acts 11. 22, 26.* and that some Time after they returned again to *Antioch*, and themselves appointed Presbyters in every Church, *Acts 14. 23.* from whence it appears that all Things which the Apostles thought fit could not be done at first; that something more was necessary than the Election of the Laity to constitute any one a Presbyter; and that there is such an appropriated Office as that of a Presbyter by the Will of the Apostles; contrary to many of this Author's Positions. And now if he could prove that after this Appointment of Presbyters by the Apostles the Laity of their Congregations exercised the Functions which it was their proper Business to exercise, this would do his Cause some Service: but nothing less than this can be of any use to it.

The like Account likewise may be given of the Brethren mentioned, *Phil. 1. 14.* who spake the Word with Boldness, and preached Christ. For, 1. The Brethren in the Lord were probably authorized Preachers, called to that Office, and commissioned to execute it, at least, those of them who preached Christ out of good Will, *v. 15.* for the preaching of the others *St. Paul* doth not seem to approve of, tho' he rejoiceth at the Conversion of any Unbelievers by means of it, *v. 16.* Nay, these very Persons might have been authorized, tho' they now exercised their Office from no very good Principles. Here is no Argument to prove these Preachers to have been Lay-men but the calling them Brethren, which is no Argument at all: for so is *Timothy* called, *Heb. 13. 23.* *Tychicus*, *Eph. 6. 21.* *St. Luke*, or some other Ecclesiastic, *2 Cor. 8. 18.* and, not to name any more, *Epaphroditus* in this very Epistle, *ch. 2. 25.* With what Reason therefore can this Author argue from hence, when it

is not at all probable that the Persons here spoken of were *Laymen*. 2. Supposing them to have been *Laymen*, they only endeavoured to convert those *Infidels* they had Opportunity to speak with, to the *Christian Faith*, and who had no other way of hearing of the *Gospel* but by them. What is this to their performing the Office of *Presbyters*, and *Pastors* in *Congregations* of *Christians* already established; about which only the present *Debate* is? 3. The first Verse of this very *Epistle* proves a Distinction of Offices, and the Settlement of *Presbyters*, and *Deacons* in all *Churches*, as soon as the Numbers of *Christians* increased, and there was an Opportunity of doing it, which helps to overthrow the Principles of this *Author*.

From all that hath been here said it appears that all these *Passages* (which I have particularly considered) prove nothing to his Purpose; and that it unhappily falls out, that those very Writings of the *Apostles* out of which he hath collected these *Texts*, afford us sufficient Demonstration of that *Distinction* between the *Clergy* and *Laity* (as soon as it could possibly be fixed) against which this *Author* hath shewn so much prejudiced, and partial Zeal. And for a farther Demonstration of it I must refer the *Reader* to the former *Chapters*.

I come now to those *Instances* given by this *Author* of the *Laity's* *Baptizing* in the Days of the *Apostles*, that we may judge what Service these can be supposed to do his *Cause*. But before he comes to his *Instances*, he observes that the *Command* given to the *Apostles* to make *Disciples*, and baptize, *Matt.* 28. 19. doth not exclude the *Laity*, p. 135. To which I answer, that I do not find the *Exclusion* of the *Laity* from any *Offices* upon this *Command*, but upon the Will of the *Apostles*, sufficiently declared afterwards, as I have explained this Matter in the foregoing *Chapter*. The *Question* is whether the *Apostles* did not think fit for *Order's* sake to set apart a particular Order of Men, for the Performance of these *Offices*: for if they did, this is an *Exclusion* of *others* from the Performance of them. I have shewn that none of the *Instances* produced by this *Author*

thor prove that it was the Office of the *Laity* to preach in the public Congregations in the Days of the *Apostles*: And as to baptizing, I proceed to consider what he hath here produced.

1. *Cornelius*, and his Household were baptized by the Brethren which accompanied St. *Peter*, Acts 10. 23, 48. Now, 1. Here were many Persons gathered together, as it is expressed, v. 27, all now to be baptized, which was a just Occasion for St. *Peter* to put the Work upon others. 2. These others, whoever they were, never thought themselves qualified for the Work, nor did they go about to do it, till St. *Peter* commanded it to be done: And consequently this was as effectually St. *Peter's* own Act, as if he had commanded his own Hands to bear a part in it. 3. St. *Peter's* Commission to these Persons, at this Time, bears them out in the baptizing these Persons, but here is nothing that implies that either they looked upon this as their Office, or ever did the like either before, or after, without the like occasional Commission. 4. This Instance, therefore, can bear out no *Laymen* who baptize any, unless such as do it on a like extraordinary Occasion, and by Order of such an Ecclesiastical Officer as undoubtedly hath Authority to give such an Order. For these Persons baptizing at St. *Peter's* Request, as this *Author* expresseth it, is so far from serving his Purpose, that it overthrowes it, as it shews that they did not think of doing it without his Order. 5. Much less can this Instance shew that the *Apostles* did not, when the Churches came to be in a more settled Estate, and it was time to establish Matters of Order and Regularity, themselves confine this Office to that Order of Ecclesiastical Officers which they appointed in the Church: and therefore it cannot be of the least Service to this *Author*. Let *Laymen* baptize in the like Case, I know nothing to hinder, or forbid them.

2. Great Numbers were baptized in *Samaria*, upon the Preaching of *Philip*, Acts 8. 12. which must be done by the *Laity*, because there were none but *Laymen* here: or *Deacons*, in whose Commission there was nothing contained but

but the Business of *looking after the Poor*, p. 136. But 1. It is a great Presumption in this *Author* to affirm that there were none in the *Church* at that Time, except the *Apostles*, peculiarly appointed to particular *Ecclesiastical Offices*. 2. *Philip* himself might have been authorized by them to the Office of *Preaching*, and *Baptizing*, and several others of like Qualifications. 3. I have shewn before from *Clemens Romanus*, that the *Apostles* appointed and ordained many of the very first converted Persons to *Ecclesiastical Offices*. 4. Supposing the Persons who *baptized* not to have been peculiarly set apart to that Office, the Miracles wrought by *Philip* were a sufficient Justification of what he should think fitting to be done on such an extraordinary Occasion as this. 5. If there were none but *Lay-men* present, then there were no others at this Time to *baptize* the Numbers here spoken of. And so they performed this necessary Work, because there was no Body to perform it but themselves. 6. Let *Lay-men* therefore convert *Infidels*, and *baptize* upon the like Occasion; and, I may add, let Miracles be wrought to shew they come not without being sent by *God*, and I will undertake this Instance will bear them out. 7. If the *Apostles* did, after this, appropriate this Office to a particular sort of Men, this is a sufficient Direction to all serious Persons in all ordinary Cases, and to all who are concerned for *Order* and *Regularity* in the *Church* of *Christ*.

3. *Ananias* baptized *St. Paul* himself. But it is fit to consider that what was done in this Case was done by the particular Command, and extraordinary Direction of *God* himself: and therefore nothing can be argued from it to ordinary Cases; nothing against the Appointment of the *Apostles* when the Affairs of the *Church* came to be settled. Let any *Lay-man* baptize, when he hath the Commission *Ananias* here had from Heaven: and this will bear him out. But otherwise he must seek for other Arguments to justify him.

4. Three Thousand were baptized at once, *Acts* 2. 41. which could not be done by the *Apostles* alone. Now, 1. This
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was done by the Direction of the *Apostles* at that very Time; and therefore nothing can be argued from hence in favour of any *Laymen* who should do the same, without the same Direction; without which none of the *Laymen* here concerned would have thought of doing it. 2. If the *Apostles* alone could not have done this, without hindring something of greater Consequence, then, according to this *Author* himself, this is an Instance of the *Laity's* baptizing only in *Case* of *Necessity*, and this by the Direction of the *Apostles*: And what can be argued from hence for *Baptism* by *Laymen*, unless in the like *Circumstances*, in which I heartily allow of it? 3. What the *Apostles* ordered in so extraordinary a *Case*, in the very first beginning of the *Church*, doth not at all shew what their Will was, about the Office of Baptizing, when it was due Time to settle such Points.

5. *St. Paul* declareth he was not sent to baptize, but to preach. Our Saviour baptized not, but his Disciples: and from hence this *Author* thinks it probable that the *servile Office of washing the Filth of the Flesh* was left to the *meanest and lowest*. Now, 1. The only Reason why *St. Paul*, and the *Highest* in the *Church* did it not, was because they would not be hindred in their great Work of *converting Unbelievers*, and because they had those about them, whom they appointed to this Business, not because they thought it a *servile Work*. 2. This *Author* unwarily by this way of arguing proves the *Laity* to have been the *lowest and meanest* in the *Church*, by shewing that they baptized; and affirming that to baptize was a *servile Work, left to the meanest, and lowest*: and so contradicts his own *Principles*, and *Affertions* in other places, in which he hath laboured to place them even above the *Apostles* themselves: so much hath his *Zeal*, and *Indignation* against some particular Men transported him beyond himself. Otherwise he would have contended that this *Office* belonged to the *Clergy* peculiarly, or at least he would not have envied them the Execution of it, since he hath shewn that it was a *servile Work*, and left to the *meanest, and lowest* in the *Church*. For,

3. He hath furnished me with this unanswerable Argument against himself, *Baptism was left to the lowest and meanest in the Church.* But the Clergy are, according to himself, the *lowest and meanest* Persons in the Church. Therefore *Baptism is their Work* peculiarly.

To conclude this *Head.* All his *Instances* of *Lay-Baptisms* in the Days of the *Apostles* are taken from the very first unsettled Condition of the *Church* before the *Apostles* could have Opportunity to establish any thing of *Order* in it; and from *Cases* of *Necessity*, or very extraordinary, from which nothing can follow to the Advantage of his *Cause*; or any thing against the *Confinement* of this *Office* to a particular *Order* of Men by the *Apostles* themselves.

Fourthly, To confirm what he hath alleged for the Practice of the *Laitie* in the Days of the *Apostles*, he likewise appeals to *Two Authors* amongst the *Antients*.

One of these he calls *Pseudo-Ambrose*, p. 135. but how *antient* he was, *i. e.* how capable of being a Witness of what was done in those Days, he doth not let his *Readers* know; for fear, probably, that they should have Sense enough to judge that a Man who was not born till above *Two Hundred Years* after the Death of all the *Apostles*, did not deserve the Name of a *very antient Author*, and could not justly be cited as a *Witness* of what was done near *Three Hundred Years* before his own Time. Supposing therefore that he saith, that *all at first taught and baptized*,

1. It is manifest that he cannot say this as a *Witness* of what was done in the first Days of the *Church*, because he lived at so great a distance from them, that his *Testimony*, considered as a *Testimony*, cannot be admitted by any *Laws* of *Equity* in the World.
2. It is as manifest that he only collected this from those *Instances* alleged by this very *Author* out of the *New Testament*: the Force of which I have now examined: and so his saying this, as his own Judgment, signifieth no more than this *Author's* saying it himself; and so adds not the least Weight to the *Argument*, even granting that *he* was of the same Opinion with this *Author* in the *Consequences* he draws from hence.

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But, 3. It is manifest from the *same*, and other parallel Sentences of this *antient Writer*, that he intended not to infer any thing, from these *Instances* of what was done in the very first unsettled Condition of the *Church*, against the *Apostolical Confinement* of Ordination particularly to a peculiar Order of Men: But doth himself in effect acknowledge, and plead for such a *Confinement*: As this *Author* cannot but know, because he must have seen his Words often cited by the *Advocates* for the Cause of *Presbyters*.

The *other* of these is *Clemens Romanus*, a very *antient Writer* indeed, pompously cited by this *Author*, p. 157. as if he were perfectly of his own Principles, under the Title of an Author *antienter than some of the Writings even of the New Testament*, and read with them publicly in the Churches, &c. Let us see, therefore, what is alleged from him, because all must grant that it ought to be of importance in this Cause.

1. This *Author* saith, that this *antient Writer* calls the *Censures* of the *Church*, the *Commands* of the *People*. The only *Passage* he can mean (for he hath not quoted the *Page*) is that p. 125. *Ed. Lond.* in which this good Man is proposing a Method of healing that *Schism*, and *Contention* which was come to a great height amongst the *Corinthians*; And his Advice is this. *Is there any amongst you of a truly generous and charitable Spirit, thoroughly moved with a desire of healing this Quarrel? Let him say thus, If these Heats, and Contentions are on my Account, I am ready to depart, and be gone, or to do any thing in order to heal them, that the rest of my Brethren shall think fit to order: (they follow immediately these Words) only let the Flock of Christ, together with the Presbyters set over it live in Peace.* And he adds, *Whoever hath the Christian Spirit to make such an Offer as this, will gain to himself an extraordinary Degree of Glory with God: And every Place will be glad to receive a Person of so peaceable and excellent a Disposition.* Now, 1. I say, this Advice might be given supposing the *People* to have no more *Ecclesiastical Authority* than

what they enjoy at this *Day*; for they themselves are the only Judges of what will make themselves easy, and quiet; and if an End cannot be put to a Quarrel amongst *Fellow Christians* without the *Departure* of such, and such particular Persons, they themselves are the only Persons fit to declare this. 2. This *Author* himself cannot suppose that here is any *Authority* at all lodged in the *People* in these Words, because if there be any, it is an *Authority* to send away a Neighbour, and Fellow-Christian from his usual Habitation (*i. e.* in some Cases, to ruine him and his Family) whenever they shall please to be so humourfome as not to be able to live peaceably by him: Nay, to send away the very best, and most charitable Persons amongst them; for to such as these the *Departure* here spoken of is proposed. Now I ask this *Author*, whether he will be the *Patron* of such a pernicious *Authority* as this, in any *Congregation*, or Neighbourhood of *Lay-Christians*. If he would; then is he, notwithstanding all his Pretenses, the *Patron* of *Tyranny*. If he would not; then cannot he plead from these Words for any *Authority* at all in the *People*, because if they give them any *Authority*, it is the *Authority* before-mentioned. 3. Had *St. Clement* meant to signify that any such *Authority* was of *right* in the *People*, the proper way for him to have expressed himself was to say, that the *People* had a right to meet, and to command the *Departure* of any Person at whom they were uneasy; and this Person was obliged in Conscience to obey their Commands: But he saith no such thing; and therefore it is probable knew of no such Method of putting an End to *Quarrels* and *Divisions*. 4. It is manifest that it was not his Design to propose this as an usual Method, or to intimate any such *Authority* originally in the *People*: But to recommend to the best disposed Persons amongst them an extraordinary Method, to which they were not obliged in strictness of *Right*, or rigour of *Justice*, *viz.* to shew their great regard to *Peace* by making this voluntary Offer to the *People*, *If our Presence be the occasion of perpetuating Unchristian Heats,*

Heats, and Dissensions, we are ready to depart, or do any thing you shall think fit to command in order to heal this great Quarrel, and Division. Before this Offer, it is plain he did not think the People had any right to order any such thing, because if he did, there was not the least occasion for his advising that such an Offer should be made: And if after it they had any Power, it was only in this particular Instance, and over these particular Persons, who voluntarily were to make the Offer, and to give this Power; and consequently it is no more Power than any Congregation, or Neighbourhood of Christians hath at this Day, if any of their Fellow-Christians think fit to put themselves under their disposal upon the like occasion.

5. We see in this very Sentence (which this Author thought not for his Purpose to quote at length, but rather chose to take out of it a Word or two which depend entirely upon the rest) a manifest *Distinction* in those very early Days between the *Flock of Christ*, i. e. the *Laity*, and the *Presbyters* their *Pastors*: And a superiority (in some sense) of the latter over the former then acknowledged, and professed.

2. St. *Clemens Romanus* is quoted again by this Author, p. 158. as saying that the *Apostles* ordained with the Consent of the whole Church, expressed, as he saith, by holding up the Hands of the People. Now, 1. This antient Writer doth not say that the *Apostles* ordained any with the Consent of the Church: But connects the Consent of the Church to the Ordination of *Presbyters* by other excellent Men after the first Ordinations by the *Apostles*. Nay, 2. In another place where he speaks of the Ordination of *Presbyters* by the *Apostles*, he is so far from saying that they ordained *Ecclesiastical Officers* not without the Consent of the Church, that he declares that they ordained Persons, the very First-fruits of the Converts to *Ecclesiastical Offices* for the sake of those who should believe afterwards. Neither 3. doth he speak of any Consent of the People as a thing necessary in those first Ordinations, but only useth it as an Argument to the *Corinthians* that

those *Persons* would not be forcibly cast out of the Exercise of their Office, who had been ordained either by the *Apostles*, or other excellent *Persons*, and of whose Ordination the whole *Church* had at that time expressed a very good liking; and had often since born Testimony to them, and who had carry'd themselves unblameably in their Office. *Blondel* indeed (p. 379.) doth strangely, and with a surprizing Freedom alter this Sentence, changing the *Accusative Case* into the *Nominative*, and making it part of the foregoing Sentence, against all *Rules of Grammar*, in order, I suppose, to connect the *Consent* of the *Church* here mentioned to the *Apostolical Order* mentioned before. But as it is, the most that can be collected from it is, that when it could be, *Ordinations* were performed in the Presence of the *People*, and a Liberty all w^old them to give in their Testimonies concerning the Behaviour of the *Persons* to be *ordained* if they had lived amongst them. This is done in our own *Church* at this time, and I am fully of opinion that it is very well it is so; and might be very well likewise, if a more open, and timely Appeal were made to the *Testimony* of all who may be supposed to know the *Persons* concerned. But this is not at all to this *Author's* Purpose. This makes not them the *Judges* of their *Qualifications*, nor the *Givers* of the *Autority* which *Presbyters* have to minister in *God's Church*. For in the *first Epistle to Timothy*, when *St. Paul* had a fair Opportunity of declaring his Mind in this Matter, tho' he required that the *Persons* ordained should be *Persons* of good Reputation, and so made it necessary for *Timothy* to enquire out their Characters even amongst the *Heathens* themselves; yet he left the final Determination, and the giving the *Commission* entirely to *Timothy*. Nay, It will as well follow that the *Heathens* had the *Right* here pleaded for, in *Ordinations*, as that the *Christian Laity* had it: seeing *their* Testimony also is spoken of by *St. Paul*. 4. It is here acknowledged by this *Author*, that the *Apostles* are said to *ordain as chief Directors*. This is a Favour indeed; and the more because it shews
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that, according to himself, something more was in their Days requisite than the *Peoples* appointing a Person to officiate amongst them. If the *Apostles* were the *Chief Directors*, then I am apt to think they found out, and nominated the Persons they thought fit to be ordained *Presbyters*, and judged of their *Qualifications*; and that their Commission was so necessary that the *Appointment* of the *People* signified nothing without it. The *Peoples* Concern, or *Authority* in this Matter, was at most no more, than it would be, if a *King* should resolve generally to grant no *Commission* for the Office of *Justice of Peace*, unless to Persons of good Reputation amongst their *Neighbours*, and accordingly grant his *Commissions* in an *Assembly* of the *People*, and give them the liberty of giving in their *Testimonies* concerning the *Character* of the *Persons* designed by him for that *Office*. But all must see that this gives not to the *People* the Power of so much as *nominating* the *Persons*; much less doth it imply that an *Officer* so constituted acts by *Authority* at that time derived from them. Nay, 5. Granting all that this *Author* can think to be imply'd in this Expression of *St. Clement*; the *Right* which this *Author* hath contended for, in the Name of the *Laitv*, viz. that of appointing and ordaining *Presbyters* in the *Church*, without the interposition of any *Ecclesiastical Officer*, can by no means follow from it. For the *Ordination* of the *Apostles*, and of other excellent Persons, is named in the very Words before it, as something equally necessary at least. 6. I must observe that *St. Clement* himself is so express in his *Testimony* concerning the Distinction of *Clergy*, and *Laitv*, and the *Office* of *Ordination*, in the very first Days, that I fear this *Author* will not be determined in this *Controversy* by him, as he hath not shewn himself willing that his *Reader* should know what that very *antient Writer* saith on this *Subject*.

1. In the Sentence I had occasion just now to lay before the *Reader*, he mentions the *Flock* of *Christ*, and the *Presbyters* set over it. 2. In the Sentence now before us, he makes these very *Presbyters* constituted not by the *Flock* it

self, (*i. e.* the *Laity*;) but either by the *Apostles*, or by other choice excellent Persons, such as *Timothy*, and *Titus*. 3. In the *Sentence* before that, he affirms that the *Apostles* order'd that there should always be a particular *Order* of Men succeeding to the *Office* of those whom *they* ordained upon their Deaths. 4. In another place, *p.* 132. he beseecheth the *Laity* to be *subject* to the *Presbyters*, appointed by the Persons before spoken of, to be their *Pastors*, and *Teachers*. 5. In another place, *p.* 98. he distinguisheth the *Presbyters* and *Deacons* made at the very beginning of the Preaching of the *Apostles*, from the believing *Laity*. 6. In another, *p.* 96. he distinguisheth in the *Christian Church* manifestly, the *Station* and *Offices* of *Higb-Priest*, *Priest*, and *Levite*, from that of *Laics*, who he saith are within Bounds: And so goes on to exhort the *Corinthian Laics* to keep within the Bounds prescribed to them. Now who would think that these and the like *Passages*, and *Expressions* in this *Apostolical Author* should be wholly past over by this *Impartial Author*, and every little Word caught at, and rigorously interpreted, that it may bear hard upon a whole *Order* of Men, and expose them to those who have neither Ability, nor Leisure to search into the Primitive Constitution of *Ecclesiastical Affairs*?

After I have taken so much Pains to consider particularly every thing he hath alleged from the *Writings* of the *Apostles*, and their *Contemporaries*, I shall not think myself obliged to consider at large all St. *Cyprian's* high *Complements* to the *Laity*. For, 1. This *Author* himself knows that the *Laity* neither did then, nor do now, deserve such *Epithets*, and *Encomiums* as he gives them, without making great Abatements in the *Interpretation* of them. 2. He produceth nothing out of him concerning *Ordination*, but that he was resolved not to act in it *clandestinely*, but in the Face of the *People*, that they might have the more *Satisfaction*: Nothing to take from himself the *Authority* of *Ordaining*, or to give it to them. 3. Supposing they chose him *Bishop*, and in some other *Churches* chose their *Bishops*, this will not prove that they ordained one single *Presbyter*,

or that every particular *Congregation* appointed their own *Pastor* and *Teacher*, any more than the *Peoples* chusing a *King* proves that, after that *Choice*, they *commission* all *Justices of Peace*, and *Officers* who are to act under *him*. 4. This *Author* himself will not be determined by *St. Cyprian* concerning the *Authority* of a *Bishop*, or any other *Ecclesiastical* Matters, but just make use of some particular Sentences in him as he judges may best serve his own Purpose.

From all that hath been said under this *Head* it appears, that none of the *Instances* alleged by this *Author* of the *Laity's* *Preaching*, and *Baptizing* are of any force in the *Cause* he hath undertaken; and likewise, which happens very unluckily, that every one of those *Books*, and *Writings*, out of which he hath chosen these *Instances*, bear abundant Evidence of a settled Distinction between *Clergy*, and *Laity*, in the very first, and earliest Days of the *Church*, and in all *Churches* as soon as it was possible. And from all that hath been said in answer to the *Argument* drawn by this *Author* from the *Powers*, and *Practice* of the *Laity* in the Days of the *Apostles*, it is manifest that all *Church-Power* was not in the *people*; and particularly, that they were restrained by the *Apostles* themselves from *Ordination*, and the Management of that lodged, and left by them in the Hands of *Ecclesiastical Officers*, distinct from the *Laity*. In fine, I am as much against *Ecclesiastical Tyranny* as this *Author* himself can be. I plead not for any *Exorbitant Powers* in *Bishops*, nor any *Authority* in any of the *Clergy*, but what is necessary at all times for the carrying forward the great Ends of the *Gospel*, and the better securing the Profession of *Christianity* in the World. I have past over all his *Witticisms*, and his unseasonable *Jests*, and confin'd my self wholly to his *Reasonings* on the Point of *Ordination*; to which it hath been my only Business to give a clear and sufficient Reply: Which I now recommend to his serious Consideration, hoping that it may help to convince him that this Part of the *Cause* is not so evident as he would willingly believe it to be.

CONCLUSION.

AND now to conclude the whole. Having shewn in the *first Chapter* from all the *Scripture Instances*, and *Rules*, relating to *Ordination*, that this *Affair* was manag'd, in the *Days of the Apostles* by *Officers* superior to *Presbyters*, and this by the *Appointment of the Apostles* themselves: Having vindicated the *Validity of that concurrent Testimony of Antiquity* which bears *Witness* to the *Apostles* fixing this *Superiority* in the *Church*, and traces it up to their *Days*: Having shewn the *Insufficiency*, and *Inconsistency* of those *Schemes*, concerning the fixing *Episcopacy* in the *Church*, which have been oppos'd to this: Nay, having shewn that even *St. Jerome* himself, to whom the great *Patrons of the Presbyterian Cause* appeal, (if he had any determinate *Judgment* concerning it) was of *Opinion* that it was established in the *Days of the Apostles*, and that the *Right of Ordination* was annexed to it: Having shewn in the *Second Chapter* that no *Instance*, or *Rule* alleged either from the *New Testament*, or *Ecclesiastical Antiquity*, in favour of *Presbyterian Ordination*, is sufficient to establish the *Right of Presbyters* to that *Office*: And having shewn the like in the *third Chapter*, concerning what is alleged in favour of the *Laity's Right* to the same *Office*; I think I may very safely conclude, that a settled *Distinction* between the *Clergy* and *Laity*; and, amongst those of the former *Order*, between the *Offices of Bishops* (peculiarly so called) and *Presbyters*, is founded upon the *Will of the Apostles*: particularly that the *Right of Ordination*, by *their Will*, belongs to *Bishops*; and was never designed by them to be entrusted to *Presbyters*; or allowed to be exercised by the *Christian Laity*.

What *Consequences* follow from what hath been said, I leave to all to determine for themselves: only I think it necessary to add, on the *one hand*, that for my own part I cannot argue that *Episcopacy* is *essential* to a *Christian Church*

Church because it is of *Apostolical Institution*: And on the *other* hand, I do argue that we are obliged, to the utmost of our Knowledge, to conform our selves to the *Apostolical Model* in all *Cases*, unless in such where the *Imitation* is *unpracticable*, or would manifestly do more Hurt, than Good, to the *Church of Christ*; neither of which can possibly be affirmed, in the ordinary State of the *Church*, concerning the *Point* now before us, as far as the *Essentials* of *Episcopacy* are concerned. Far be it from me to think otherwise till it can be shewn either that the *Apostles* did not institute *Episcopacy* with a Design of its Continuance in the *Church*: or that they instituted it, not as a Matter of *Order*, but of such Necessity as *others* contend for. In fine, I have heartily endeavoured, in the foregoing *Treatise*, to convince some mistaken Persons of their *Errors*: but having done this, I dare not presume to judge *them* by *my* Notions; but must leave them entirely to *God*, and their own *Consciences*.

A N

A P P E N D I X.

ALTHO' I have in the foregoing Pages said what is sufficient to justify all that I advanced concerning *Episcopal Ordination* in the *First Part* of the *Reasonableness of Conformity*, notwithstanding the *Objections*, and *Questions* proposed against it by Mr. *Calamy* in the *First Part* of his *Defense*; yet lest I should be thought by some Persons designedly to pass by any thing material in this *Controversy*, I shall here very briefly,

First, Consider the *Objections* raised by *him* against my way of arguing on this Head: And,

Secondly, Answer the *Questions* he hath seen fit to propose to me upon it.

As to the *first* of these, I argued that *Episcopal Ordination* was the *settled, regular Ordination* in the *Church*; and therefore that it may justly be expected that all who minister in the *Church* should be ordained by *Bishops*; and that none who refuse the *settled Method*, and without a Necessity depart from it, and take another, (which by Consequence must be *irregular*, because it is not the *settled Method*) ought to be acknowledged as approved of God in this *irregular Separation* of themselves to the *Ministry*. Now this is just Reasoning, supposing *Episcopacy* to have been founded only on the *Compact of Presbyters*; and the *Confinement of Ordination to Bishops*, merely a lawful *Confinement*, which *Blondel* and our *Adversaries* have often acknowledged it to be. For from hence it will follow

1. That it is the only *regular Ordination* settled in the *Church* by such *Compact*, and that, as it is a Matter of as much Consequence as any Point of *Order* can be, God cannot

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approve of any unnecessary Departure from it : which is not to lay a Stress upon it as a Matter of *indispensable Necessity*, but of *Decency*, and *Regularity*. And certainly there needs no Argument to prove, that even supposing any other Method lawful, and agreeable to Scripture, yet if another equally lawful be *settled* in the Church, it must be a Breach of *Order*, and *Regularity* to depart from it, and not to be justified but by *Necessity*. This is the *Sum* of what I have formerly advanced : And this is both just in it self ; and, as I likewise said, agreeable to the Principles, and Reasoning of Mr. *Baxter*. Both which Things are denied by the *Author* now before me.

1. He allegeth, p. 54. that *Episcopal Ordination* may be the *regular Ordination*, and yet not the *only regular Ordination* : And that *Ordination* by *Presbyters* may likewise be *regular*, as it is justify'd by the *Scripture* it self, p. 57. I answer, 1. I have shewn before that there is no Instance in the *New Testament* of *Ordination* by *Presbyters*, nor any thing to prove that this *Right* was ever entrusted to them : So that *Ordinations* by them are not *regular* even in his own Sense. 2. Supposing *Ordination* left at large to them in *Scripture*, and afterwards confined by themselves to a superior *Officer* (which this *Author* acknowledges both lawful, and actually to have been done) from the Time of this *Confinement*, and the general *Establishment* of it, no other *Method* can be *regular*, nor justify'd by any thing but *Necessity* : as after the Choice of a *King*, no *Commission* can regularly come from any but that *King*. 3. When out of Two Methods, suppos'd to be lawful, *one* is chosen, and established, both by Consent, and Custom of many Ages ; the *other*, set up again in the same place where the former is used, and in Opposition to it, cannot be called *regular* in any tolerable Sense, in which that Word was ever used, tho' it should be granted to have been equally good, and proper, before such *Settlement*.

2. He goes on in the same place to argue, that supposing *Ordination* by *Presbyters* irregular, this is no Reason for *their* submitting to *Episcopal Ordination* who have been

ordained by *Presbyters*, because this is the acknowledging their former *Ordination* to be *null*, and *void*: which doth not follow from its being *irregular*. I answer, it doth not follow indeed that it is *null*, and *void*, in such Sense, as that *Presbyters* had not originally a *Right* to *ordain*; but it follows that it is so far *null*, and *void*, that God did not approve of the *Exercise* of that *Right* in Opposition to a lawful settled Method, which is a sufficient Ground of submitting to that *established Method*. As, in a parallel Case, whatever *Original Right* there may be in a *People* to constitute lesser sort of *Officers*, or in those *Officers* to constitute others of the same sort, after the Choice of a *King*, all *Exercise* of this *Right*, unless in *Cases* of the highest Necessity, is in such Sense *null*, and *void*, that none can expect to be acknowledged duly authorized to the Offices they pretend to, before they have taken their *Commissions* from the *King* himself.

3. He represents my Argument thus, *You grant our Orders to be regular, which we deny of yours: therefore it is safest to fall in with us*: and so explodes it, in Archbishop Tillotson's Words, as parallel with that foolish Argument of the *Papists*, *You acknowledge that we may be saved, which we deny concerning you; therefore it is your safest way to come over to us*, p. 56. an *Argument*, according to his usual manner, of his own inventing; for I have nothing like it. My *Reasoning* was never designed, as I know of, to touch the *Salvation* of any Man; nor can it be in the least Degree, uncharitable to say that Almighty God cannot approve the unnecessary Neglect of *Order*, and *Regularity*, which is all I have said. The *Argument* of the *Romanists* is, *You acknowledge, a Possibility of Salvation in our Church, i. e. that invincible Ignorance joined with true Sincerity may be an Apology for the Errors of many in it: which we do not acknowledge concerning yours. But who doth not see that this is no Argument, why those who know the Errors and Superstitions of that Church should go over to it? Because there is no Acknowledgment, in this, of the Possibility of Salvation to such Persons as these.*

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My *Argument* is this, You acknowledge *Episcopal Ordination* lawful, and your own Compliance with this, considered by it self, to be not only safe, and secure, but to be chosen before any other, as being the *settled Method*. Therefore, you ought to submit to it, unless *Necessity* forbid: And therefore, to deviate from this, without such *Necessity*, cannot be acceptable to *Almighty God*. Let any one judge what *Affinity* there is between these Two *Arguments*, and with what *Equity* the *Parallel* is here drawn by this *Author*.

4. After all this, he hath Four Reasons against admitting my way of arguing, p. 57. As, 1. *Because it is so like the Reasoning of the Papists against the Protestants*. Now, 1. This *Author* must know that such a Reason as this, is in Truth, no Reason at all, because it will be hard to say that every thing like any Reasoning of *Papists* is false. 2. Suppose the *Papists* say to us, Your *Ordainers* wanted *Authority*, doth it follow from hence that this can justly be said to no Persons, because they apply it wrong? May it not be said that *Laymen* have no *Authority* to ordain? And would not this *Author* himself say it to some *Protestants*, notwithstanding that it is like the Reasoning of the *Papists*? 3. Just such an Argument as this I find brought against the *Lawfulness* of *Resistance* to the *Civil Powers* in some Cases, viz. That the *Papists* hold the same: and doth it follow from thence that it may not be maintained by a *Protestant*? 4. That *Regularity* is not to be neglected without a great *Necessity*, is my Principle: and this *Author* hath said the same himself over and over again. 2. *My Reasoning reflects upon many suffering Witnesses of Christ, and on most of the Reformed Churches abroad*. I answer, 1. As much as any other Difference of Opinion doth: and I hope this *Author* will not oblige, even himself, to be of the same Judgment in all Things with all the *suffering Witnesses of Christ*. 2. He himself, before he is aware, furnisheth me with a sufficient *Reply* to this, in what he saith on the like Occasion, *Part II. p. 262. I can't tell how to think it a part of the Honour due to Martyrs to think them infallible*. And yet

yet it seems it must be a Crime in me not to think them so. Nor doth his own Neglect of *Episcopacy* reflect less upon other *suffering Witnesses of Christ*. 3. The thinking *Reformed Churches* in an *Error* is no Crime: and I doubt not he himself doth so, in many Instances. Nor was the preserving, or defending *Episcopacy* in this *Nation* ever accounted by themselves any Reflexion, or Dishonour upon them: If it were, their not retaining it is as great a Reflexion upon us. Besides, many eminent Members of them have applauded the retaining it amongst us, and condemned those who have here refused to submit to it, always accounting the *Cases* very different, of themselves, and those who have here separated from the *Episcopal Church*. But if my *Reasoning* reflects only upon *most* of the *Reformed Churches*, then the *Reasoning* of this *Author* contrary to it, reflects upon *others* of them: and so we are both equally guilty of this heinous Crime: and both equally in an Error. 4. The Point is, whether the *Reasoning* be in it self just, or unjust: not whether it reflects on any Persons, or not. 3. My *Reasoning* lays greater Strefs upon a *Nicety*, than upon the main Substance: and therefore is false. Now, in one Word, this is downright false Accusation without any Ground: for I have laid no Strefs upon *Episcopal Ordination* but as upon a Matter of Order, and Regularity, and as such he himself must own it ought not to be neglected without a *Necessity*; which is all I have said. Under this same Head he acknowledges that *the most eminent Abilities won't presently render a Man an authorized Minister*. Doth he, therefore, lay greater Strefs upon the *Hands* of any *Ecclesiastical Ministers*, than upon the *most eminent Abilities*? If he will not be contented to have this fixed upon *himself*, with what Justice can he tax me with this, upon no greater Grounds than this? But I find him ready, at all Adventures, to raise a Cry against me, even tho' he *himself* must necessarily be involved in the same Guilt. 4. My *Reasoning* is such, as would not be born, if retorted: and therefore to be used with Caution. Now, 1. Supposing this true, it is not sufficient to prove my *Reasoning* false, or unjust.

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But, 2. I promise him to bear it, when the *same* is *retorted*: tho' I suppose he will not expect that I should admit what is not truly the *same*. So that here are *Four* Reasons given against my way of arguing, all of which, in the first place, are not true; and in the next place, granting them true, *three* of them are of no Force at all. For an *Argument* may be just, and yet bear some Resemblance to that the *Romanists* say on some Occasions. An *Argument* may be *just*, tho' it imply in it that all *Martyrs*, or all the *Reformed Churches*, are not infallible. An *Argument* may be *just*, and yet Men may be so partial to themselves, as not well to bear it when it is retorted.

Having shewn the *Justness* of my way of arguing, notwithstanding his *Objections*, I must now add a Word or two concerning its Agreement with Mr. *Baxter's* Principles, and Manner of arguing in his *Disputation* with Mr. *Johnson*, to be found in the *Abridgment* of his *Life* by the *Author* now before me, p. 129. Concerning this there are *Two* Things which I have said, 1. That upon Mr. *Baxter's* Principles, and his way of arguing in that *Disputation*, my *Reasoning* must be allowed of: for the Truth of which I appeal to what I have written in the first Part of the *Reasonableness* of *Conformity* on this Head, and against which I find no *Objection* in this *Author*. 2. That it was Mr. *Baxter's* Opinion (as is plain from the Occasion of the *Disputation* now mentioned) that nothing but *Necessity* can excuse those who neglect *Episcopal Ordination*. This is denied, and I am taxed with *Misrepresentation* upon this *Head*, by the *Author* I am now considering, p. 199. Now I can here only appeal to the *Abridgment* of Mr. *Baxter's* Life composed by this very *Author*: And if I should be mistaken in this, I hope *he*, of all Men, will pardon me, if it appear that he himself led me into the Mistake. I say then, that the *Account* of that *Disputation* given by this *Author* himself justifieth every Word I here say. The *Account* is this in his own Words, *Abridg.* p. 125. *Mr. Johnson wrote to Mr. Baxter about the Necessity of Episcopal Ordination. He in answer to him maintained, that there was*

no absolute Necessity; that a Man might be a true Minister who was ordained by Presbyters; and that, in Cases of Necessity, it was a Duty to take Ordination from them. All which is agreeable to what I have said, and implieth as strongly as Words can imply any thing, that it was his Opinion that *Episcopal Ordination* is the regular Ordination, to be sought after, unless in Cases of Necessity. If this be a *Misrepresentation*, I must leave this *Author* to answer for it, for it is owing to himself. Nay, I will add, I think it agreeable even to the Principles of this *Author* himself, as well as all the best of the *dissenting Writers*: who allow the Confinement of Ordination to *Bishops* lawful, and sometimes useful; and themselves, whenever they speak of their Neglect of *Episcopal Ordination*, speak of their being forced to it, and always draw their chief Apology from the Necessity they found themselves under to have recourse to other Methods. And is it not very hard that I should be thus used by this *licentious Pen*, for saying only what all their own Reasonings allow, that Necessity only can justify their Separation, and Neglect of the established Method of Ordination? But I have learned by Experience to expect nothing from this *Author* of that Candor, and Equity with which I once hoped this Controversy might be managed. Thus much for the Justification of my Reasoning on the Point of *Episcopal Ordination* in a former Treatise.

Secondly, I come now to the Questions he hath thought fit to propose to me on this Head, p. 229. concerning which, the fairest Proposal I can make is, that the Reader should turn to them, as he himself hath expressed them, that I may not be said to alter any thing in my Representation of them.

To the *First*, I answer, *Yes*: but cannot think how I am at all concerned in it.

To the *Second*, I answer, that the same way of Reasoning will justify all those who take the Public Administration of God's Word, and Sacraments upon them without any ministerial Investiture; without Ordination by any Ecclesiastical Officers at all. Now such as these I need not be afraid to say,

say, that *Christ* cannot approve in this their *Neglect*, because this *Author* himself goes so far as to say, p. 199. that *he*, and his Brethren, as backward as they are to encourage an Ecclesiastical Pound, have yet so little Fondness for a wild Common, that they should readily join in declaring their Dislike of any Ordinations that can from Scripture be proved to be irregular. Now amongst the *Scripture Requisites* he himself reckons the Approbation, and Hands of a *Presbyter*, or *Teacher*. Let this *Question* therefore be answered by himself, with respect to well qualified Persons who neglect all Ordination by any *Ecclesiastical Minister*: and the same Answer will serve me. But I add, that I never made any Ordination necessary to the *Validity* of *Christ's Ordinances*, tho' this *Author* himself hath, and speaks in this place, as if I had. On the contrary, I have shewn that *God's Blessing* will ever attend honest and sincere *Christians*, whether *he* that ministers amongst them be duly authorized to his Office, or not. In one word, Persons who neglect all Ordination by *Ministers*, may have very great Abilities; may be very well qualified; may preach *Christ* out of good Will; the honest, tho' mistaken People, who follow them, may be blessed by *Almighty God*: What therefore will he say to them? Doth *Christ* approve them? How then can *he* disapprove them, or to what purpose doth he so often desire that none may be approved that have not the *Scripture Requisites* he mentions? But if, notwithstanding these *Qualifications*, he is ready to express his Dislike of such Persons, as he saith himself, then I may be allow'd to do the like, notwithstanding any thing in this *Question* which concerns only the *Qualifications*, and *Abilities* of the Persons who take upon them the Office of *public Teachers* in the Church. *St. Paul* rejoiced, this *Author* often urgeth, that *Christ* was preached, tho' it was out of *Envy*: that is, he rejoiced that many sincere Persons, who had not Opportunity of hearing the *Gospel* otherwise, were so far blessed by *God*, as to be brought, by the Preaching of Men, of no very good Principles, to the Knowledge of *Jesus Christ*. But notwithstanding their bad Temper in one respect, the Persons who preached might be authorized

to that Office. And if so, this saying of St. Paul's doth not patronize any Irregularity. If they were not *authorized*, this Instance proves that the Benefit received by the *People* is no Argument for approving the *Ministers* by whose means that Benefit comes, or any Reason for thinking them *authorized* by God, for the Office of *public Ministers*. Accordingly I heartily rejoyce that any Person is by any means converted either to the *Faith*, or *Practice* of the *Gospel*: But I cannot think it just to argue from hence that the *Person* by whose means this Change was made, is therefore duly *authorized* to be a *public Minister*.

To the *Third*, I answer, 1. That *David* did not go out against *Goliath* without first having his *Commission* from *Saul*; and therefore it is not a parallel Case. 2. Supposing he did, it was a *Case of Necessity*, and so justifiable. 3. Why is this *Author* himself ready to express his *Dislike* of those who set up for *Ministers* without the formality of a *Ministerial Investiture*? His Answer to this, will answer his own *Question*. 4. There are other ways of contributing to the *throwing down of the Kingdom, and Power of Satan* besides *public Preaching, and administering the Sacraments*.

To the *Fourth* I answer, as this *Author* often doth on other occasions, let *Reason, not Authority*, be Judge. It is of small Importance to consider *who* saith, but *what* is said. Many things have been injudiciously urged against the *Papists*: Nor must every thing be reputed just, because it hath been alleged against *them*. The *Reasons* for what I have said, I have given at large in the *foregoing Treatise*, as well as in other of my Writings: And in the same have answer'd much more important Difficulties than what are proposed under this *Question*. I should be glad of the help of any Good, and Judicious Persons in carrying forward the great Ends of the *Gospel*; but see not that it is therefore necessary to approve of any Persons setting up distinct *Assemblies*, and distinct methods of Worship, in opposition to an *Establishment*: From whence so many fatal *Effects* have been seen to follow.

To the *Fifth*, I answer, many of the best and most learned of the *French Protestant Refugees* have thought it very fit to submit to *Episcopal Ordination*: But if any have made this a Condition of their partaking of our *Charity*, I disapprove it as much as this *Author*, tho' I do not believe it upon his Intimation. How I am concerned in this I can't tell.

To the *Sixth*, I answer, that I am always against being hardest upon those who come nearest to us: Nor is it any sign of being hard upon them, that I have on one hand, endeavoured to persuade themselves to come quite over to us by no other Method but that of Reasoning; or on the other hand, pleaded their *Cause* publicly against the Violence of others. But still I cannot but think it more unaccountable that Persons should separate from an *Ecclesiastical Government*, and *Worship*, which they acknowledge to be *materially lawful*, than that *others* should separate from what they account *Unlawful*, and *Unchristian*. But I think it may justly be complained of, that this *Author* himself hath chosen to represent those *Church-men* who have gone to the greatest Extremities against the *Dissenters*, as the *True*, and *Honest Church-men*; and to be so hard upon *others* who have labour'd to bring our *Differences* to an *Accommodation*, as to drop frequent Insinuations even against their *Honesty*, and *Sincerity* in *Conformity* to the *Church of England*.

To the *Seventh*, I answer, that the same may be said with respect to such *Teachers* as have neglected all *Ministerial Ordination*: Whom yet, notwithstanding their Seriousness, or the *Call* of any *People*, this *Author* is ready to declare his dislike of; as they have neglected what he saith the *Scripture* requires of them, before they can be esteemed authorized *Ministers*. So likewise I may, notwithstanding any force in this *Question*, be obliged not to think a Person an *authorized Minister*, tho' never so serious, and never so much invited by *People* to come amongst them: Because, according to himself, something more than this is requisite to the making him such.

To the *Eighth*, I answer, 1. I have no concern in it,

having never laid near so much stress upon an *Irregularity*, as upon the *Vices* here mentioned; and being always ready to acknowledge such *Faults* of the most pernicious consequence to *Religion*. 2. The greater *Faults* of *some* are no *Excuses* for the *Neglects* of *others*. 3. This *Author* will acknowledge that the *Vices* here mentioned are of more dangerous Consequence than the *Neglect* of all *Ministerial Ordination*: And yet he condemns that *Neglect*; and according to his own Principles, cannot approve those as *authorized Ministers*, who are guilty of it; from whence he may judge that such a *Question* is of small Importance, as to the business of *authorized Ministers*, it being certain, in his Opinion, that something more is necessary to their *Authority*, than the best *Qualifications* imaginable, and it being evident that this *Question* equally defends the *Authority* of all *understanding*, and *sober* Persons, who set themselves up for *Ministers*.

To the *Ninth*, I answer, the same *Benefit* may come from any *Deist*, or *Ignorant Mechanic's* setting up a Meeting in a *Parish* merely out of worldly Interest: And yet this *Author* will not justify the *Authority* of such *Administrators* of God's *Word* and *Sacraments*.

To the *Tenth*, I answer, 1. That I put no Man's *Account*, or *Condemnation* at the Great Day, upon any thing but his *Sincerity*, or *Insincerity* throughout his Behaviour in this World. 2. Many a Man will then be condemned for his Personal *Vices*, who hath been an *authorized Minister* in this World: And many a one may be justified who hath thought himself one, tho' he hath not truly been one. 3. A Person may be condemned at the last Day, tho' he hath been an Instrument of converting many by his *Ministerial Labours*. 4. This *Question* equally justifies those who neglect all *Ministerial Investiture*; whom yet this *Author* cannot justify any more than I can those who neglect *Episcopal Ordination*: And consequently is of no force. 5. Tho' God hath declared that *Moral Duties* are to be preferr'd before *Positive Institutions*, or matters of *Order*, and *Decency*; yet he expects that *both* should be regarded, when they can, and it is only *Necessity*

sity that can justify the Neglect of the latter. 6. It being the *Success* only, or the *Benefit* reap'd by others, which is the Argument here why God will own some Persons for his *authorized Ministers*, and this being often spoken of by this *Author*, I must add some Remarks upon this Head. Now, 1. This *Success*, he cannot deny, may be granted purely on account of the *Honesty* of the *People*: and therefore is not necessarily an Argument of any thing else but those good Dispositions in them, which God thinks fit to bless. 2. It may be granted in the *Case* of the greatest *Hypocrites*, who have no Sense of *Religion*, but only minister for worldly Ends, and without being called to it by any in *Authority*: and therefore cannot be an Argument of their being *authorized Ministers*. 3. It was granted to those who preached *Christ* out of *Envy* in *St. Paul's* Time: but was no Argument to him of the *Divine Commission* of those *Preachers*. 4. Our *Debate* about the Force of this *Argument* was occasioned chiefly by the *Case* of those who have no other Argument but that from *Success* to urge in their own Behalf, having neglected all *ministerial Ordination*. Such as these, this *Author* in one place saith he dares not *censure*, because of this *Success*: yet in another, he is ready to declare his Dislike of such as have neglected any of the *Scripture Requisites*, amongst which himself reckons *ministerial Ordination*. This is a strange way of proceeding; especially when he saith, p. 220. that he himself is not for taking *Success* alone, but in *Conjunction* with other *Things*. Upon which I desire to know why *this* should hinder him from censuring those, who have nothing else to urge for themselves; or why he should give himself such Liberties on this Head against one who hath only denied it to be an Argument of it self, sufficient to prove the *Divine Commission* of any one to *minister* publicly in the *Church*: when he himself reckons up several other *Things* requisite, before and besides this *Success*, to prove any one an *authorized Minister*, according to the *Scriptures* themselves. 5. In answer to what he urgeth, p. 219. I desire it may be considered, that when any *Prophets* came to the *Jews* promising and foretelling happy Events, and

worldly good Things to come, and were not sent of God to do this, it is certain that all their Promises and Prophecies could not profit the People, for this very Reason, because they were not commissioned by God to prophesy good Things to them: and likewise because the People might have seen by several Tokens, had they sincerely done their Duty, that they were not sent of God on such an Errand, contrary to the Message brought to them by other undoubted Prophets. But how doth it follow from hence that since Christians, who heartily endeavour to know the Truth, but yet are mistaken concerning the Divine Commission of some particular Persons, may not profit in Virtue, and Goodness by the Moral Instructions, and Arguments proposed to them by such Persons? And as for St. Paul's calling the Corinthian Christians the Seal of his Apostleship, this Author himself will acknowledge that Success alone no more proved St. Paul's Divine Commission, than it did the Divine Commission of those who preached Christ out of Envy and Ill-will, for the good Effects brought out of which evil Design of theirs St. Paul rejoices: and consequently there is nothing in this against me. Nay, it is manifest that a Seal alone by it self is no Proof of any Commission: and that the Commission must go before the Seal, and be proved by other Arguments, and other Circumstances. Besides, it was very fit that St. Paul should mention the good Effects of his Preaching amongst them, that they might not be drawn away from him by any Pretenses of others to the same Purpose: and this is an Argument why they of all Christians should acknowledge his Apostleship, because he had as great Success amongst them, as any one else could pretend to. But it cannot follow from hence that he appealed to his Success amongst them as, absolutely speaking, an Argument of his being sent by God. For he was completely an Apostle sent of God before this; and would have been so had he not converted one single Person at Corinth to the Christian Religion. When he sets himself to prove his Divine Commission, he appeals to other Arguments; viz. the wonderful Manner of his being called to the Ministry, and the Miracles which he wrought in Proof

of it. These are the *Topics* he insists upon : and by these he could prove himself an *Apostle* to those amongst whom he had never preached at all. These and many other Things being considered, it will appear evident that *Success*, considered by it self, is no Argument of the *Divine Commission* of any *Minister*, or *Preacher*.

To the *Eleventh Question* this *Author* himself answers in other Places, that let a Person have never so excellent *Qualifications*, he must make *others* the Judges of them, and cannot be justified in his Neglect of *ministerial Ordination* : yet doth this *Question* equally justify all Neglects of that Nature.

To the *Twelfth*, I answer, 1. That amongst all the *Primitive Irregularities* we read not of any Persons taking the Work of *Ordination* to themselves out of the Hands of *Bishops*. And 2. Supposing any had done this ; as this *Author* and his *Brethren* would not now submit to *Episcopal Ordination* merely because others had done so in the *Primitive Church* after *Presbyterian Ordination* ; so I cannot think it a good Argument against insisting upon *Episcopal Ordination*, that some of the *Antients* did not do it. 3. This *Author* himself is ever representing the *Antients* as speaking too hotly, and too highly in favour of *Episcopal Ordination*.

To the *Thirteenth*, I answer, that I think not an *uninterrupted Line* of *Succession* of regularly ordained *Bishops* necessary : And likewise, on the other hand, that the *Personal Vices* of any *Bishops* are no Argument against their being the proper *Ministers* of *Ordination*. If they were, there could be no Security in this Point, because all may possibly be either secretly, or openly vicious. And the same may be said supposing the *Right* of *Presbyters* themselves to *ordain*.

To the *Fourteenth*, I answer, that my Reasoning on this Head hath been rejected by this *Author*, because it bears some Resemblance to that of the *Romanists* ; and yet now an Argument is drawn against it, because it is not agreeable to their Proceedings. How can he argue from the Practice of the *Church of Rome*, when it is so often accounted by *him* a Prejudice against any Matter, that it is like

to something amongst them? But indeed the *Cases* here mentioned are not parallel to the *Case* before us: and if they were, the true Rule is to consider what is reasonable to be done, not what the *Church of Rome* doth in any *Case*.

To the *Fifteenth*, the like Answer will serve.

To the *Sixteenth*, 1. I answer the same, (and so saith this *Author* often) that we are to proceed by *Reason*, and not by *Example*. 2. *Presbyterians* cannot possibly call in question the *Orders* of those who received them from a *Bishop*; (in whom they acknowledge a *Right* to *ordain* as he is a *Presbyter* only by *Divine Appointment*) but it doth not follow from hence that *Ordinations* by *Presbyters* must be acknowledged *valid* by those who think that they never were entrusted with that *Affair*, and have no *Right* to claim the *Management* of it.

To the *Last*, I answer, that all Men certainly ought to receive *Truth*; but that the preaching of *Truth* is not sufficient to prove any one *authorized* to be a *public Minister*. This is so far from being pleaded by all *Parties*, that I know of none who say it; and this *Author* himself expressly contradicts it, and declares it not to be sufficient to prove any Person an *authorized Minister*, by reckoning up many other *Scripture Requisites*, and by his Readiness to disown the *Divine Commission* of all who have them not. What can be the meaning therefore of his desiring the Benefit of such an *Argument* as this, which equally defends the *public Ministry* of those who neglect all *Ordination*, whom yet in other places, he hath declared he would not be thought to justify?

Thus having considered the *Queries*, proposed by him, with all the *Seriousness* the *Subject* requires; and having returned Answers to every one of them, I appeal to every impartial *Reader* whether there be any thing contained in them sufficient to justify the *Neglect* of *Episcopal Ordination*, but what is sufficient likewise to justify the *Neglect* of all *Ordination*; and consequently whether they signify any thing to the Purpose for which they are intended by this *Author*.

A
R E P L Y
 T O T H E
I N T R O D U C T I O N
 T O T H E
S E C O N D P A R T
 O F
 M r . C A L A M Y ' s D e f e n s e o f
Moderate Nonconformity.

I Perceive Mr. Calamy would very willingly have his *Readers* believe, that the *Introduction* to the *Second Part* of his *Defense of Moderate Nonconformity* contains in it the very *Heart* of the *Controversy* between us. And I, for my part, am so ready to put the *whole* of our Dispute upon any one Point he can name, that I lay hold of this Opportunity of examining, whether it contain any thing in it, sufficient to justify what he calls *Moderate Nonconformity*; which is the Point, he often tells us, he proposes to himself. But because there is so very small a part of that *Introduction*, which so much as attempts to demonstrate the *Unlawfulness* of Compliance with the *Impositions* in

in the *Church of England*; and so great a part of it employed upon *Topics* very distant from this; I think myself obliged to go thro' the whole of it, as far as I, or the *Cause* I have undertaken, can be supposed to be concern'd in it: lest any who read it should be so misled, as to think there is more *Truth*, and *Reason* in it, than I can find; or be diverted by the many *personal*, and *foreign* Matters in it, from the main, and only material *Question* between us. And for this End, in order to proceed as distinctly as possible, in this *Enquiry*,

I. I shall consider all the *Objections* there alleged against what I have formerly advanced upon the *Head of Ecclesiastical Impositions*.

II. I shall make some *Reflexions* upon the *Scheme* of *Liberty*, there proposed by Mr. Calamy.

III. I shall endeavour to shew, that there is nothing there advanced, sufficient to prove a *Compliance* with our *Impositions* unlawful; and therefore, nothing against the *Lawfulness* of *constant Communion* with the *Church of England*; and consequently, nothing sufficient to *justify moderate Nonconformity*.

I. I am obliged to consider all the *Objections* there alleged against what I have formerly advanced upon the *Head of Ecclesiastical Impositions*.

The *Impositions* concerning which our Debate hath been, are *Three*, viz. *Kneeling* at the *Communion*; the use of *Sponsors* in the *Baptism* of *Infants*; and the use of the *Cross* after *Baptism*. What I have said concerning these may be seen in the *First Part* of the *Reasonableness* of *Conformity*, p. 66, &c. But because my Sense in this part of the *Controversy* hath not been represented as I could wish, and as I might justly have expected, I think it but reasonable to endeavour once more to set it in a fair Light, especially now I am going to defend it from the *Objections* made against it.

I. Therefore I laid down, as what was my own Opinion, that the *Bishops* have Authority to prescribe for the better and more decent Administration of the Offices of Religion;

Religion; for the Beauty and Advantage of that *Christian Society* in which they preside. This is a matter fit, and worthy to be lock'd after by *Governors*; and if done after an unexceptionable manner, all will, I believe, acknowledge it for the good of the *Church of Christ* in general, and for the honour of the Worship of God, and the Offices of Religion. And this Power I lodged in the hands of the *Bishops*, because in the *first Ages* of the *Gospel*, no Power in any Affairs relating to the Church could be in any hands but those of *Ecclesiastical Officers*, all *Civil Magistrates* being professed Enemies to the *Christian Name*: and because they are at present, by the *Providence of God*, the *Ecclesiastical Governours* of this part of the *Christian Church*: And however it came so to be, whether from the original Appointment of the *Apostles*, or from the Compact of *Presbyters*, or from the Decrees of the *Civil Powers*; our *Adversaries* acknowledge it a *lawful Constitution*, and the Care of these *Churches* intrusted to them. But this I do not go on to urge, but proceed, as may be seen in Page 67.

2. To argue with the *Dissenting Ministers*, not absolutely from this *Authority*, but from their own Professions, and Principles. And here I endeavour to shew that the same *Objections* lie against their *Compliance* with the *Prescription of Time*, or *Place*, or *Liturgy* for public Worship, with which they have professed themselves ready to comply; and therefore that they may lawfully conform to the *scrupled Impositions*, and as well acknowledge an *Authority* in the Prescription of *them* (as far as *Compliance* contains in it such an Acknowledgment) as for *these*. And this I there urge at full length. This is the Summ of what I say in behalf of the *First Prescribers* of these *Impositions*; to which I might have added, that considering this *Church* as reformed from *Popery*, there were wise and good Reasons for the prescribing these as well as some other things which might at the same time recommend it to the Affections of those about it, and also be decent *Ceremonies* in its own Services: and these Reasons, I believe,

were

were such as would have moved some of the wisest and best of our Modern *Dissenters* to have joined in the *Prescription*, had they lived at that time, and been consulted upon that occasion. Whether this *Reason* be now ceased, or whether there be not stronger Reasons now for leaving the scrupled *Impositions* indifferent, I do not at this time debate. But this is sufficient to shew, that the First Prescribers used the Power they had for the Good and Edification of the Church, and agreeably to the Will of God.

3. As to those who have, notwithstanding the Scruples of so many *Protestants*, retained, and insisted rigorously upon the scrupled *Prescriptions*, I have said something in their Name, and with respect only to the way of arguing the *Dissenting Writers* have used in their Zeal against these *Impositions*. And,

4. To declare my own Thoughts freely, I added at the end of this, that I should ever be ready in my place and station, to promote any such Alterations in things indifferent in themselves, as might reconcile sober *Dissenters* to the *Church*, and procure us a greater and stricter Union amongst our selves. And this I think very consistently with what I had before declared concerning the *Authority of Bishops*. For as it belongs to the Office of the *Supreme Civil Powers* to order what seems to them conducive to the good of the *Civil Society*; and yet notwithstanding this, it may be a very honourable part of their Duty, when they find in the execution of their *Laws* a greater Damage than Advantage to the Common-wealth, to abolish, and repeal them: so likewise it may belong to the Office of Ecclesiastical Governours to make *Prescriptions* for the more decent Celebration of the Public Worship, &c. and yet notwithstanding this it may be their Duty, to alter, or abolish these *Prescriptions*, when Experience hath taught them, (contrary to their own Expectations, or the design of those who first ordained them,) that the Disadvantages arising from them to the *Church of Christ* are, in the whole, greater than the Advantages of

of them. But this I never can be induced to urge so as to forget the Duty of *Inferiors*. For the Considerations of Public Good, and Peace, and Charity, are to guide and influence the whole World of *Christians*: and my *Scheme*, in this matter, is very short, and easy to be understood; viz. that both *Governors*, and *Governed* in the *Church* ought to have the same common End in their Eye: that the former ought not always to insist upon their mere *Authority* even against unreasonable Opposers, but to wave *that* whenever by so doing they can promote the public Interest; and that the *latter* ought not to insist merely upon their *Christian Liberty*, even against unreasonable *Governours*, but gladly to wave *that* in indifferent matters of small Importance, whenever by so doing they can consult the Peace of the *Christian Church*, and remove any occasions of Uncharitableness. These are my Sentiments concerning our *Impositions*: and I have laid them before the *Reader* once more, that he may take my Opinion from my own Words, and not from those of an *Adversary*, who hath always hitherto framed such *Schemes* for me concerning this Point, as I cannot own. And having thus represented my Thoughts to the *Reader*, I proceed to consider the *Objections* advanced against them in this *Introduction*.

Obj. 1. 'Tis query'd, *How came the Bishops by this Authority?* I had before spoken plainly enough, had this *Author* been willing to understand me, that as they did, by the Providence of God, succeed in the Government of the *Church*, it belonged to their Province to take the most effectual Methods for the Advantage of the Church, and the Decency of the Office of Religion. And any Prescriptions that do truly promote these, I doubt not, are agreeable to the Will of God, and not out of the *Province* of any who have it in their Power to ordain them. This Answer holds good, supposing the *Bishops* merely lawful *Governours* in possession of Power in the *Church*. But this did not serve this *Author's* Purposes: and therefore he makes another himself for me, after his usual method;

and such an one as might give him a better opportunity of triumphing concerning the *Succession* of the *Bishops* to the Authority of the *Apostles*, which yet in as great a degree even the most moderate of the *Dissenting Ministers*, have pretended to, whenever they have had it in their power to constitute and settle the *Church* according to their own Model. And surely it must be true that the present *Governours* of the *Church* succeed the *Apostles* in all that Power which is at present necessary to the well-being of it: and that it is ever agreeable to *God's* Will, whether declared in an express Text of *Scripture* or not, that such things should be ordered and complied with as are truly for the interest of Religion, and the decent Celebration of the Offices of Religion. And I appeal to this *Author* himself, whether if he, and every other Christian in the Land were sensible that our *Prescriptions* were truly conducive to the Honour of God, and the better Performance of Religious Worship; whether, I say; upon this Supposition, He would not acknowledge the *Prescription* of them, and *Compliance* with them agreeable to the Will of God.

Obj. 2. It is farther urged, that tho' the Supreme *Civil Magistrate* may have this Authority in *Civil* Affairs, yet the *Bishops* may not have it in Ecclesiastical Matters, because they are not Supreme, but *Christ* is the Head of the *Church*, and *Subordinate* Officers have no Authority but what he gives them. I answer, that the Highest *Civil Power* on Earth is subordinate to *God*, as well as the Ecclesiastical Governours to *Christ*: that as it is always the Will of God that the *Civil Governours* should ordain what is truly for the Public Interest; so it is alway agreeable to the Will of *Christ* that those who have the Power in his *Church* should use it for the promoting the great Ends of Religion, and likewise of *Order*, and *Decency* in the Office of it: that as this Authority in the *Civil Magistrate* doth not destroy, or take away the right of judging in the *People*, and of refusing Obedience whenever his Commands are apparently contrary to the Public Good; so nei-
ther

ther doth this Authority in the *Bishops* rob the Christian People of their right to judge of the Nature of their *Prescriptions*, and to refuse Compliance whenever they are disagreeable to the Nature of true Religion, or the fundamental Laws of the *Christian Society*. I add this, because this *Author* seems in this place to think that *Authority* in *Governours* here below, takes away all liberty of judging from *Inferiors*, which is the very Doctrine of *Absolute Passive Obedience*. Whereas it is manifest even in Case of *Parents* and *Children*, both that *Parents* have *Authority* over them, and that they are likewise oblig'd to consider and judge concerning their Commands, whether they be agreeable to the Will of God or no.

Obj. 3. This *Author* seems to speak as if he thought our Lord himself had expressly ordained every thing expedient for the well-being of his *Church* in all future Ages, and all Circumstances of *God's* Worship: and consequently, as if He cannot be supposed to have left any Power to this purpose in the hands of *Church-Governours*. But this doth not appear to have been our Lord's Design. It is fully sufficient that He hath established the *Essentials* of his *Institution*, and provided all things necessary for the being of his *Church*: and fully agreeable to his Will, as far as appears, that those who have it in their Power should consult and prescribe for the *well-being* of it, and for the greater decency of its *Public Offices*. There is no intimation in Scripture either that the *External Circumstances* of Worship are there to be search'd for, or that they may not be prescribed by any in *After-ages*, provided that general Rule be observ'd of consulting Order, and Edification. Nay, the *use* of any Custom in Worship not commanded by our Saviour, is as great a *Reflexion* upon the Defectiveness of our Saviour's *Institution*, as the *Prescription* of it is. Yet is there no Performance of the most solemn Offices of Religion without some such, even amongst our *Dissenters* themselves; and it is as void of all Authority from *Scripture* as the *enjoining* of it, if it be a sufficient Argument against this to say, that it belongs only to *Christ* himself to determine the Circumstances of all

the Offices of his Religion. It is manifest, I think, that this was not his Intention, and as manifest that it may be done by future *Governours* agreeably to his Will, because it is possible it may be done to the Satisfaction of all sober *Christians*, and to the more orderly and decent Performance of the solemn Offices of Religion.

Obj. 4. It is farther here alleged, that there can be no Authority in any *Governours* to make Prescriptions, because this is to make new additional *Terms* of *Communion*. And yet this same Author pleads for a right in every Congregation, that is, the Majority of it, to determine the Circumstantials of their own Worship: which is in effect to make *Terms* of *Communion* for their Neighbours; to declare that they shall not communicate with them but upon such Conditions; and to debar the scrupulous from all Communion, as they are now debarr'd by the *Establish'd Church*. Whereas if the Crime lie merely in making *Terms* of *Communion*, not enjoined in *Scripture*, it is impossible the Right to this should be in the *Congregation*, any more than in the *Governours* of the Church. Now according to my Judgment concerning the making any Prescriptions *Terms* of *Communion*, no one ill Consequence can be supposed to follow from it, supposing them not disagreeable to the Nature of *Christianity*, ordered upon wise and prudent Motives, and not scrupled by any serious *Christians*: which I take to have been the *Case* of our *Prescriptions* at first. I believe truly that those who first ordained them little thought of the consequent Scruples of any good Protestants; and were so far from designing them as Instruments of *Exclusion* to any *Christians*, that they purposely chose them on prudential Motives in hopes of inviting, and bringing many Persons into the Church by their means; and therefore I think acted like good and wise *Governours*, and may be well defended in their Conduct, since something *better* may be said of these things, when they were first prescribed, than that they were *indifferent*, *viz.* there were good and wise Reasons for the Prescription, antecedently to it. As to the insisting on them to the *exclusion* of numbers of *scrupulous Christians* from

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Communion, I have not argued from it, but only upon the Professions and Principles of the *Moderate Dissenters* themselves, in order to induce them to comply with *all*, as well as with *some* of those few Prescriptions which are in the *Church*.

As to the Method in which this *Power* of framing Prescriptions is to be exercised, and concerning which *Difficulties* are here raised, I think it belongs to the Office of those in *Power* to take any lawful Method put into their hands by Providence, of consulting the Advantage of the *Church* committed to their Care. I do not see how the accidental Inconveniences attending the exercise of this *Power* in any particular method, prove any thing against the Reasonableness of the Power it self; or to what purpose this *Author* urges the unhappy Differences in our late *Convocations* on this Head. He might remember that the *Presbyterian* and *Congregational* Brethren themselves have hitherto found *Union*, and *Agreement* in their joint-Consultations very difficult to be attained, and very easy to be broken. And yet I presume this will not be allow'd a good Argument against the Expediency of their acting as an united Body, according to *Regulations* fixed by their mutual Consent.

Obj. 5. But a great *Objection* is here drawn from the *Power* of the *Civil Magistrate*; and the Inconsistency of this *Power* in our *Ecclesiastical Superiors* with it. I answer that this *Power* in *Ecclesiastical Governours* can in no circumstances of the *Church* be so far independent on the *Civil Magistrate*, but that he shall have a right to interpose, so far as to hinder the *Church* from usurping his *Province*, or to defend any good and honest Subjects from suffering in their Temporal Concerns on any account merely *Ecclesiastical*. But the Impositions we are now considering are ordered by the *Bishops* in conjunction with the *Civil Powers*; nor is there any the least likelihood of having any thing in our Nation ordered by the *one* in contradiction to the *other*: and therefore the Difficulty taken from hence can have no place here. And yet, methinks, of all Men, this *Author* need not be at a Loss for an Answer to this Difficulty, who hath utterly precluded the *Ma-*

gistrate from any Right to interpose in Cases purely Ecclesiastical, and lodged the Power of decreeing the Circumstantials of public Worship in every single Congregation. For when he answers this Question, Suppose the Congregation should resolve upon one particular Time for the Celebration of the Communion, and the Civil Magistrate should declare that he will not have his Subjects disturbed by such unnecessary Impositions; as they must be who scruple that Time, and are thereby forced to seek out for other Congregations more to their Mind, perhaps at a great and inconvenient Distance. Which must here carry it? When I say, he answers this Objection against his own Scheme, others need not despair of finding an Answer for their Purpose likewise. If the Congregation may insist upon this as their Right, then here is *imperium in imperio*, the very thing, as this Author saith, that is so much dreaded, and which threatens endless Feuds. If the Magistrate must be listened to, then what becomes of the Right in every Congregation of Christians to appoint the Circumstantials of their own Worship? But I need not have taken any Notice of this Difficulty which cannot touch the Churches of this Nation, any more than of the other he mentions, viz.

Obj. 6. The possible Difference between Bishops of several Dioceses, by which means a total Uniformity must be hindered. For this likewise can have no place in our Church, in which nothing is prescribed, nor in all likelihood ever can be, but by the Consent of all the Bishops, as well as of the Civil Powers. But however I shall add, that tho' upon this Author's Supposition there could not indeed be a National Uniformity, yet there might be an Uniformity in the Churches of the same Diocese, which would be much better than none at all. For I take the Case to stand thus. Uniformity indeed is not absolutely necessary, nay, in it self it is nothing, but only as it promotes Order and Peace in the Church of Christ; and as such it ought not to be ridiculed, or exploded by any who have a Value for the Honour of God's Worship, or a Desire to see Charity flourish amongst Christians. Could this be compassed, the Advantages of it would be unspeakable

ble in the Removal of those Occasions of Quarrel, and Uncharitableness, which have arisen visibly from the want of it in these Nations particularly. Nor could it possibly itself occasion any Mischief; tho' the too rigorous enforcing of it may have done so. We must take the World as we find it, and in all things have Regard to the Tempers of Mankind. It is a Scandal indeed to the Christian Name, that Brethren should not exercise the heartiest *Christian Love* towards one another, notwithstanding their different Modes of Worship: and yet such is the Weakness of some, and such are the Passions of others, that nothing hath occasioned greater Animosities, and more scandalous Breaches in the great Law of *Charity*, than this Difference in the Way of Worship. So that tho' *Uniformity* be not of it self a thing necessary, or of much Importance; yet it is manifestly so in a *secondary Degree*, considering the unreasonable Tempers of many Men, and how many Instances of *Uncharitableness* may be prevented by it. Would it not be happy for all *Christians*, were there no Necessity laid upon *some* of differing from others in their Way of Worship? Have not the *dissenting Ministers* themselves often in the Name of their People, lamented it as an Unhappiness, full of evil Consequences, that they were necessarily obliged to set up different Ways of *public Worship*? Doth not this very *Author* think the *Uniformity* of a *Neighbourhood*, and their perfect Agreement in one Form of Worship, an Happiness, and such an Happiness as he would labour to bring about by all due Means? And is not this a manifest Acknowledgment that *Uniformity* is a Happiness, as it removes some Occasions of *Uncharitableness* amongst *Christians*? I wish therefore that some Persons would be content, in the Management of their *Arguments*, to speak the Truth of *Things* not absolutely necessary; and that, whilst they are arguing against the *Extremes* of others, they would not run into the contrary *Extreme* themselves, of villifying, and depressing those Things as of no use, which certainly have their good Consequences in the *Christian Church*.

But tho' I have said thus much in Defense of that Power

er which I had lodged in the Hands of our *Ecclesiastical Superiors* against what is here advanced, yet I must inform the *Reader*, that it was not the *Authority* of the *Bishops* in making *Prescriptions* which I undertook in the *Book* before-mentioned fully to defend, or from which I argued for *Compliance* in our *dissenting Brethren*; but from their own *Professions* and *Concessions*, as any one who consults it may see: and therefore it is time now to consider what Mr. *Calamy* here objects against this part of my Argument, in which I still hope to find a greater Strength than he would have his *Reader* believe. I shall only observe, upon the *Review*, how unaccountable it is that he should amuse the World with *Objections* against the Power of *Bishops* to prescribe, drawn from such Difficulties as cannot have place in our Cause: that he should urge the Differences in *Convocation* between the *Bishops*, and *Presbyters*; the Danger of a Power in the *Church* independent on the *Civil Powers*; the possible Disagreement between *Bishops* of several *Dioceses*; when our *Prescriptions* are, and must always be, such as both *Bishops* and *Presbyters* have agreed on; such as the *Civil Power* joins in commanding; and such as are consented to by all the *Bishops* of the Land.

After having made his *Objections* against what in few words I declared concerning the *Authority* of *Ecclesiastical Governours*, this *Author* proceeds to examine what I urge upon the *Principles* and *Professions* of the *Dissenting Ministers* themselves. And here he represents me to his *Reader* as arguing thus; The *Dissenting Ministers*, in their Arguments against this Power in *Bishops*, neither agree with themselves, nor with one another: therefore the *Bishops* have this Power, p. 44. And again, p. 48. He states my Argument thus, The *Ejected Ministers* would have joined with the *Bishops* in imposing some things; therefore they had Authority to impose some things. Nay, p. 49. He pretends to give his *Reader* my Argument, as I myself stated it; Part I. p. 68. thus; If the *Bishops* have Authority to prescribe in one Case, then in another; as if I had argued from their Authority in one Case to their Authority to prescribe in every Case they pleased. Whereas I have nothing to this purpose in the *Page* quoted, but something very different

from it, viz. that *If I could shew that the very same Objections lie against prescribing what the Dissenting Ministers would have complied with, which were brought in their Names against the scrupled Prescriptions, this I should account a good Argument to them, that the Bishops bid Authority to prescribe in the one Case, as well as the other: i e. in the Case of the three Prescriptions, they scrupled, as well as in the Case of the Prescriptions they were ready to comply with; which Compliance, according to themselves, was an Acknowledgment of the Authority of the Prescribers.* I desire therefore, all to take notice that I have no such Arguments as he would fix upon me. It hath been his constant course to take this liberty with me: and so I can the more easily bear it. But I am not, as I hope, capable of imposing upon my Reader with any such false Reasoning: tho' I may think it not only justifiable, but the best way of arguing with any Persons to do it upon their own Professions, and Concessions. Accordingly my Argument was to this effect, You have professed your Readiness to comply with some *Prescriptions*, which you sometimes say is an Acknowledgment of the *Authority* of the *Prescribers*; therefore you may likewise acknowledge their *Authority* in other *Prescriptions*, as far as your *Compliance* contains in it such an Acknowledgment. The thing to be proved was not absolutely that *Bishops* have such an *Authority*, but that the *Dissenting Ministers* might, consistently with some of their own *Professions*, acknowledge such an *Authority*, by complying with it. This is very different from the former *Representations*; and however I may have been mistaken as to matter of Fact, the way of Reasoning is good, and just, tho' that which this *Author* would fix upon me, is false and ridiculous. I built it upon his own repeated Words, that the *Dissenting Ministers* could not comply with the *Prescriptions*, because the *Prescribers* had no *Authority*, from whence I concluded that they judged *Compliance* to be an Acknowledgment of their *Authority*: otherwise there can be no force in the *Argument*. Notwithstanding this, I found it related by the same *Author* that they were ready to comply in the use of some *Prescriptions*.

Upon which I argued, that they who by Compliance acknowledge the *Authority* of *Prescribers* in *one* Case, may acknowledge it *another*, as far as *Compliance* implies such an acknowledgment: and I instanced in the *Prescriptions* about *Time*, *Place*, and *Liturgy*, as what the *Dissenting Ministers* had professed a readiness to comply with. Let us now see what is replv'd to this.

1. This *Author* (supposing I had in my Eye the *Managers* of the *Conference* at the *Savoy*) saith, that *supposing they went too far, and were at times overseen, it doth not follow that they are herein to be imitated*. I grant it. No Persons are to be follow'd in their *Errors*. But, I pray, from whence can we possibly collect the Judgment, and Principles of the *Dissenting Ministers*, unless from those who write, and transact in their Names, and are esteem'd as the greatest, and most excellent Men amongst them? I should think they might have as many Followers amongst their *Brethren*, as Mr. *Calamy*, or any other Person who had gone off from their Principles: and judge it as much to my purpose to argue from *their* Professions, and Principles, as from those of any amongst them. But this *Author* may assure himself, that I was not so weak as to intend my Arguments drawn from their Professions for the use of any Persons but such as are of the same mind with *them*, and I hope it may be allowed proper upon some occasions to argue with Men upon their own Principles. But least any one should think them so utterly forsaken by their *Brethren* and *Followers* in their readiness to comply in those Instances, at that time, I can assure him upon the Testimony of this *Author* himself, if he were the *Author* of the *Abridgment* of Mr. *Baxter's* Life, that there was the same readiness in the *Dissenting Ministers* as well as *People*, to comply in those Instances, in the Beginning of the *late* Reign. I will transcribe his own Words from that *Abridgment*, p. 655. where he is speaking of the *Alterations* then design'd. Thus much I shall venture to say, that such Amendments as those were, with such an allowance in the point of Orders for Ordination by Presbyters as is made, 13 *Eliz. cap. 12.* would in all probability have brought in two thirds of the Dissenters in England. I confess I thought that upon so good an Authority

I might have ventured to say what I did, especially in a *Debate* with *Himself*. But now I begin to think it impossible for me to judge, even from his own words, either what his own *Principles* are, or what the *Principles* of those whose Cause he maintains. There cannot be a more positive Declaration than this, which yet, it seems, imports no such thing as I have fix'd upon it.

2. It is reply'd, That the *Managers* of the *Dissenting Cause* at the *Savoy Conference* were so far from owning the *Authority* of *Bishops* to prescribe, that it is manifest to all who will peruse the *Papers* relating to that Affair, that they positively disown'd all such *Authority*. I answer, that it is as manifest to all who will peruse my *Book* without the prejudices of this *Author*, that I tax them not with owning any such *Authority* in words, but only with a readiness to join, and comply in some Prescriptions, which they themselves judged an acknowledgment of *Authority* in the *Prescribers*; and consequently that this *Author* mistakes and misrepresents me when he would fix any other meaning upon my Words.

2. It is reply'd, that the *Managers* of that *Conference* are misrepresented by me, for as much as they never were ready to comply with the constant Use of the *Liturgy*, but always declared against it, if it should be too rigorously imposed; and also that he himself could not comply with the *constant* Use of it, tho' amended to his Mind; or with the Prescription of one certain *Time* for the *Communion*, in Exclusion to all other. To which I answer,

1. His *Declarations* concerning himself are of small importance in a Cause, in which I must consider the generally receiv'd Principles of the *Dissenting Ministers*, and not the Peculiarities of any particular Man. But if they be true, I infer from hence that he is not of the Number of those in whose Name he made the foregoing Declaration, concerning a readiness to comply, upon the *Amendments* lately design'd. For I never heard but that the Use of the *Liturgy* so amended was to have been as *constant* as it is now.

2. Neither can he Himself, nor the *Managers* of the *Savoy-Conference*, even according to his present *Representation*,
possibly

possibly evade the force of my Argument. As for the *Managers* of that *Conference*, he doth not pretend but that they were ready to comply with the *Prescription* of one particular *Time* for the *Celebration* of the *Communion*: which is sufficient for my present purpose, as appears from this *Author's* declaring against it as an *unnecessary Term* of *Communion*. And as for both *them* and *himself*, he acknowledges, even in this *Introduction*, a readiness to comply with the *Prescription* of the *ordinary Use* of a *Liturgy*, and of one particular *Time* for the *Celebration* of the *Holy Sacrament*. And what need I desire any more? For the *Liturgy* prescribed for *ordinary Use* is still a *Prescription*, and in his own Account, an *unnecessary Prescription*: And they who can comply with such a *Prescription*, and by that means (as themselves interpret such a *Compliance*) acknowledge the Authority of the *Prescriber*, may as well comply with the *scrupled Prescriptions*, notwithstanding any force in that *Question* so often put, *by what Authority are they enjoin'd?* To comply *ordinarily* with *Terms* which *ordinarily* exclude scrupulous *Christians* from *Communion*, is no more lawful, than to comply with such *Terms* as always exclude them. Nor have the *Bishops* any more *Authority* to prescribe *Circumstantials* for the *ordinary* use of the *Church*, than they have to prescribe to the *constant* use of it. And therefore I argue still after the like manner, If *Compliance* be an acknowledgment of the *Authority* of the *Prescriber*, how can it be justified to be ready to comply *ordinarily* with those things, which no one hath *Authority* *ordinarily* to prescribe; and at the same time to refuse *Compliance* with what is *constantly* prescribed, merely for want of *Authority* in the *Prescribers*? And again, If the *Authority* of the *Prescribers* may be owned (as far as *Compliance* owns it) in the one Case, why not in the other? So that we see, the *Bishops* having no more *Authority* in the one Case than in the other, the Argument drawn from their want of *Authority* doth conclude against *Compliance* in the one Case as well as in the other; and that the *Dissenting Ministers* may, agreeably to their own *Professions* (even as they are represented in this *Introduction*) own their

their *Authority* in both Cases, as far as by *Compliance* they can be interpreted to own it. But,

3. Whatever Mr. *Calamy* may please to say in this *Introduction*, I still insist upon it that the *dissenting Ministers* have been ready to comply with the *Use* of the *Common-Prayer-Book*, amended, as constantly prescribed as it is now. I did not apprehend my self obliged to confine my Argument to the *Managers* of the *Savoy Conference*, tho' this *Author* hath thought it for his Purpose to do it for me: but judged it proper to consider not only their Professions at that time, but what hath been since declared in the Name of the *dissenting Ministers*. And I thought my self secure in what I fixed upon them, having built it upon the above-mentioned Declaration of this *Author* himself. And I therefore still insist upon it. Either those *Amendments* designed at the beginning of the *late Reign* with an *Allowance* for *Ordination* by *Presbyters* would have brought in Two Thirds of the *Dissenters*, or not. If not, then Mr. *Calamy* hath misinformed the World. If they would, then it is certain that the *dissenting Ministers*, the most judicious of them, were then ready to comply with the constant use of the *Common-Prayer-Book* so amended; and consequently that what I affirm of them is true, and the Argument built upon this *Profession* of theirs, just and good: as this *Author* indeed seems to own by endeavouring to avoid the Force of it after such a manner. If the *dissenting Ministers* were thus disposed to a *Compliance*, I hope it is no Crime to argue with them upon the acknowledged Lawfulness of that *Compliance*. If they were not, the only fair Way that this *Author* can take to answer what I alleged, is to own that he misrepresented them, and not tax me with what I took entirely upon his Word. I am persuaded that he himself was of the Number of those in whose Name he made the fore-mentioned *Declaration*: And I am heartily sorry that I have had any hand in driving him from so good a Disposition. I wish he had found out some better way of dealing with my Arguments than to represent *himself*, and his *Bretbren* at a greater distance from all Tendency to a *Compliance* than they ever yet

yet professed themselves. But it seems, rather than any of my Reasonings shall appear to have any Weight, he will unwarily reject even his own Testimony, and put any Advantage into the Hands of those, who will be sure to use it upon all Occasions, to the Prejudice of that *Body* of Men, whose *Cause* he undertakes to maintain. From what I have said in *Vindication* of this *Argument* taken from the *Principles* and *Professions* of the *dissenting Ministers* it manifestly follows, not indeed that *Bishops* have *Authority* to *prescribe* Things *antecedently unnecessary* under the Penalty of *no Communion*, which, absolutely considered, was not the Point I undertook: but that the *dissenting Ministers* have owned their *Authority* in the *Prescription* of some Things *antecedently unnecessary*, as far as *Compliance* owns it; and consequently may lawfully acknowledge it in the *scrupled Prescriptions* as far as *Compliance* is an Acknowledgment of it. Or thus, That as *they* were ready to comply with some *Prescriptions*, notwithstanding the want of *Authority* in the *Prescribers*, so they may as reasonably *comply* with the *scrupled Prescriptions*, notwithstanding the *Objection* taken from the want of *Authority* in the *Prescribers*. And thus much may suffice to shew how the *Reply* of this *Author* on this *Head* is founded upon his own *Mistake*, and *Misrepresentation*.

One Argument I used in favour of the *first Prescribers* was, That they had ordered nothing but what if all would seriously comply with, is certainly for the Good of the Church: by which I chiefly meant, that the Things prescribed are of that nature, that an *universal Compliance* with them, supposing them not *scrupled* by any, would not be the Cause of any ill Consequence, but of many good ones. To which this *Author* replies, *As if it would justify an Usurper that his Administration was managed for the Good of the Community*. I answer, 1. There may be a Duty incumbent upon an *Usurper* when he is in Possession: and tho' the Benefit of his Administration to the Community will not justify him in the unjust acquiring of his Power, yet will it justify the Manner of his Administration of it: which is the Point now before us. But, 2. I cannot understand upon what Principles he calls those *Usurpers*, whom in
other

other places he acknowledgeth to be *lawful Governours*. This *Reply* supposeth them to use their *Power* for the Good of the *Church*, and yet it seems they are no better than *Usurpers*; and be the Exercise of it never so much for the Advantage of the *Church*, it must according to this *Reply* be disown'd, and opposed. And is this too agreeable to the Professions that have been made in the Name of the *dissenting Ministers*, to declare against *Compliance* with the *Episcopal Power*, even tho' the *Bishops* had never extended it to any Commands but what are for the Good of the *Church*? It was but just now that this *Author* declared a Readiness to comply with the ordinary *Prescription* of a *Liturgy*; from whence it follows, I should think, that he judges our *Ecclesiastical Governours* may be justified in the *Prescription* of the ordinary use of that; and consequently I should have been apt to have fixed it upon him, as his Principle, that the *Bishops* might be justified in the prescribing what is truly for the Good of the *Church*, did not I now know by Experience how dangerous it is to tax him even with his own Acknowledgments, which can as easily be contradicted as made. Why are you ready to comply with the *Prescription* of the ordinary use of a *Liturgy*? It must be either because the *Bishops* have a Right to *prescribe* it; or because it is for the general Good of the *Church*. If because they have *Authority* to prescribe it, then you acknowledge they have Authority to prescribe a thing *antecedently unnecessary*, which will *ordinarily* exclude *scrupulous Christians* from *Communion*. If merely because it is for the Good of the *Church*, then *Compliance* may be practised, notwithstanding the want of *Authority* in the *Prescribers*. But my Business here was not to prove that the *Bishops* had a Right to the *Power* they possess, but that they had exercised their *Power* well, supposing they had prescribed nothing but what, if universally complied with, is for the Good of the *Christian Church*: and consequently, this *Author*, after his usual manner, hath here likewise mistaken me.

After this I proceed to argue with the *dissenting Ministers* concerning their *Objection* taken from the *Disproportion* of
the

the *Penalty*. And I reason upon their own Principles ; if this be sufficient to make a *Command unlawful*, this will make the *Prescription* of a *Liturgy*, or a particular *Time* for *Worship* unlawful, which yet they have professed a Readiness to *comply* with. This *Author* replies that this Readiness to a constant Compliance in these Instances is *particularly denied*. I answer, There was a *Time* when it was *particularly*, and solemnly owned even by *himself* ; as I have proved from his own Words, in which he professeth a Readiness in the greatest part of the *Dissenters* to comply with the *Liturgy* amended, in which there was to be a particular *Office* for the *Celebration* of the *Communion*, and a particular *Time* for it, as *constantly* to be observed, and as much *exclusive* of all others, as the *present*. Nay, if I were not now better acquainted with the Person I am arguing with, I should have ventur'd to affirm that, when the *dissenting Ministers*, as he here affirms, p. 46. professed a Readiness to be determined by the Civil Magistrate in such Things, as being merely *circumstantial*, are common to *Humane Actions, and Societies*, they never thought of excepting out of this Number, a particular *Time* for *Worship* exclusive of all other. But, however that be, I will take *him*, and his *Brethren* in their present Disposition, before he hath thought himself obliged to revoke what he last said. And I desire him to consider whether the *prescribing* the *ordinary* use of the *Liturgy* (whatever indeterminate Idea he may have to that Word) be not the enjoining an unnecessary *Circumstance* of *Worship* under a *disproportionate Penalty*. For how that can be done without the *ordinary Exclusion* of many *scrupulous Christians*, I am not able to think. And whether this *Penalty* for their *Non-compliance* be not *disproportionable*, I leave to this *Author* to consider. Indeed, I wish I could tell exactly what he means by the *ordinary* use of a *Liturgy*, which he saith he could comply with. If he mean that he would not so oblige himself to this, but that he would leave himself the *Liberty* of taking another Method, and leaving the *Church* *Established* whenever he shall judge it in his Conscience more for the Glory of God, and more agreeable to his Will ; as he seems to

mean in the beginning of p. 50. I know no one in the Church at present who obligeth himself to the Use of the Liturgy, or to Conformity on any other Terms. If he mean that he cannot consent to be so tied up, as not to have the Liberty likewise of praying as he seeth fit, upon particular Occasions, in public; as he seems to do, p. 49, and 53. he knows that this Liberty is both allowed, and taken in the Church at present. If he mean that he will not be so tied up to the Use of a Form at the Communion, as that he will not administer it without one to those who scruple a Form; as he seems to do, p. 50. I desire to know whether there is any Ground to suppose that any such scrupulous Persons will think of chusing him for their Pastor who ordinarily useth a set Form of Prayer in the Public Worship; whether any such Persons will ever desire to join with him in the Celebration of the Communion; whether if they do, it may not be as reasonable a Proceeding in this Case, as he seems to think it in the Case of his own Scheme of independent Congregations, p. 51. first to endeavour to remove their Scruples, and if that be found impossible, then to refer them to a Congregation suited to their own Scruples. But here I must put him in mind that he is as much obliged ordinarily to receive such scrupulous Persons to Communion, as he is ever to receive them: and therefore if he means by this Profession, that he is ready at one time of the Day to comply with the ordinary Use of a Form of Prayer at the Celebration of the Communion, provided he may likewise at another Hour of the Day celebrate it without a Form; that is, that he would willingly officiate in a conforming Congregation, provided he might likewise minister in a dissenting Congregation; this is indeed a very particular sort of Conformity to an Establish'd Church, being much the same with Nonconformity it self.

But because I have found it a very precarious, and uncertain way of arguing with this Author from the Professions of himself, and his Brethren, I am willing upon this Head to try another Method, and argue from his, and their universal Practice. And here I desire to know, by what Authority the Civil Powers require the Subscription of all

all dissenting Ministers to 36 Articles under the Penalty of being hindered from preaching the Gospel. If they have no Authority to do this, (as it will be hard to prove they have upon Mr. Calamy's new Scheme) Submission ought no more to be paid to them in their Impositions than to the Bishops. If this be a disproportionable Penalty which is here annexed to their Scruples, this Command is as unlawful as the scrupled Commands of the Bishops: and Compliance with it as unjustifiable. Nor will it be a sufficient Reply to this to find out some different Circumstances between this Imposition, and those of the Church. The Question here is, whether the Magistrate have Authority to enjoin this Subscription, and whether it be not imposed under a disproportionable Penalty; which I leave to this Author to consider, and then to answer, how it comes to pass that the want of Authority, or the annexing a disproportionable Penalty, should render Compliance unreasonable, and a Command unlawful in one Case, and not in another. And by this time surely, the Reader may understand that it was my Design under this Head to argue with the dissenting Ministers upon their own Professions, and Principles; that I had a just Foundation so to do; and might with reason put the like way of arguing upon their own Principles into the Mouths of others, in order to shew them the Unreasonableness, and Unconclusiveness of it.

I come now to their Objection taken from Rom. 14. which I fully considered in my First Book, p. 88, &c. where I endeavour to shew, that this Chapter cannot be proved to relate to Prescriptions concerning God's Worship, 1. Because it cannot be proved to extend to all Scruples concerning Matters in themselves indifferent. 2. Because St. Paul himself made such Prescriptions. 3. Because they who urge it have, notwithstanding this Chapter, professed their Readiness to comply in some Prescriptions by which several scrupulous Persons must unavoidably be excluded from Communion. To the first of these this Author replies, that St. Paul doth not appear to make any Difference in the Scruples of weak Persons concerning Things in themselves not necessary. And I answer, that

that for any thing that appears in this *Chapter*, he might make a Difference : it being no Contradiction at all for him to command that Persons who scrupled particular *Meats* and *Drinks* should be loved as *Brethren*, and be received to *Church-Communion* ; and at the same time not to intend by this that such as scrupled the *settled Customs* received or enjoined in the *religious Worship* in any *Church* should be notwithstanding this, received to *Communion* in that *Church*. There may be other *Reasons* for it : but I say this *Chapter* doth not necessarily imply it. And therefore at least, it cannot be demonstrated to be a Duty from this *Chapter*. Mr. *Calamy* hath advanced nothing here to prove it, but Affirmations that it is so. That it was no Contradiction in *St. Paul* to command the *one*, and not to intend the *other*, is an Argument that he might command the *one*, and yet not intend the *other*. That he thought it no Contradiction is evident from his own Practice, which was another thing I observed. For he who commanded the one sort of *scrupulous Persons* to be receiv'd, did himself, by positive Prescription, in effect, command another sort of *scrupulous Persons* to be rejected. He made *Prescriptions* himself about Matters, antecedently unnecessary, relating to religious Worship ; and by these excluded, in effect, such as should scruple Compliance with them. The *former* of these I urged for the Lawfulness of some *Prescriptions* : and chiefly as an Argument to those, who I found had argued from *St. Paul's* not making *Prescriptions* against the Lawfulness of it in other *Church-Governors*. But this our *Author* hath thought fit carefully to suppress : which makes it the more necessary for me here to repeat it. An Argument was drawn from *St. Paul's* not interposing in the *Cases* mentioned in this *Chapter* against any *Church-Governors* interposing. To which it was very proper to answer by another Argument drawn from his making some *Prescriptions* : it being implied in the Argument, that if *St. Paul* himself had interposed with any *Prescriptions*, this might have been at least a Pre-*tence* for other *Governors* to interpose in the like *Cases*. I now argue farther upon this *Argument* of theirs, after the

following manner. The *Cases* here intended by *St. Paul* can be only those in which he did not himself think fit to interpose. But he himself thought fit to interpose in the Case of *Christians Behaviour in religious Assemblies*. Therefore this *Case* could not be in this *Chapter* intended by him. And again, if it had been *St. Paul's Intention*, as it hath always hitherto been represented, to lay it down as his *Judgment* that no *Prescriptions* about the *Circumstances* of *Worship* in themselves unnecessary, should be made; and that weak Persons who scruple such *Prescriptions* should notwithstanding their *Scruples*, be received to *Communion*: If, I say, this had been his *Intention* in this *Chapter*, it had been a *Contradiction* to this, even for himself afterwards to have made any such *Prescriptions*, which must have excluded any Persons supposed to be *scrupulous*, as this *Author* acknowledgeth they must; and consequently I justly observed that *St. Paul* no more intended this in this *Chapter*, than he means to contradict himself. This was a sufficient *Reply* to the *Argument* as it hath hitherto been urged from this *Chapter*: and how could I know beforehand that this *Author* would have recourse to an Interpretation of it wholly new? But if there had been no other way but this of defending the *Objection* drawn from it; yet he ought, I think, to have let his *Reader* know, that I had answered the *Objection* as it had been formerly urged, tho' he himself had now another Interpretation of this *Chapter* to allege to the same purpose. And if I understand him aright, he would now represent *St. Paul* in this *Chapter*, designing only to forbid other *Church-Governors*, who had not his Measure of the *Spirit*, to make any *Prescriptions* about unnecessary *Circumstances* of *Worship*; but to reserve to himself the Power of doing it: to order that Persons who scrupled such *Prescriptions* of others, should notwithstanding be received to *Communion*, tho' those who should scruple any such *Prescriptions* of his own, should not: which is such a Representation of the *Apostle's* Meaning, as I confess I cannot but wonder at. For it is manifest to any who attentively read this *Chapter*, and the beginning of the next, that if he deliver any thing in
this

this place in order to preclude any Persons from making Prescriptions in the *Cases* here intended, he declares himself at the same time precluded from it; that whatever Scruples he here intends, he orders that they should be born with, without having regard to his own Prescriptions any more than to others; that if *Christians* be to be received to *Communion* notwithstanding the *Scruples* here intended, so it must be universally, and without Exception; and that the Rules of Behaviour here laid down oblige all *Christians*, from the highest *Apostle* to the meanest *Laic*. The Importance of the whole is manifestly this, that it is the Duty of *Christians* to bear with such Infirmities of one another as are there intended; to love, and receive one another notwithstanding such Weaknesses, and Scruples as are there intended; to bear one another's Burthen; not to condemn one another in their different Apprehensions and Behaviour with relation to the Things there intended; to seek the Good of others more than their own private Satisfaction, in the Conduct of themselves in the Points there designed; for all which he useth such Arguments as oblige himself as strongly as the *Christian Laity* he wrote to. And that no one may think he layeth down Rules for others, and not for himself, he concludes the whole in his own Person, as well as that of others, *We then that are strong ought to bear the Infirmities of the Weak, &c.* I therefore argue thus: whatever in this place he forbids to other *Christians*, he declares equally forbidden to himself: whatever he enjoins other *Christians*, he declares equally incumbent upon himself. If therefore he here forbid to any other *Christians* the making *Prescriptions* about the Behaviour of their *Brethren* in God's Worship, he declares it equally forbidden to himself. If he here enjoin the receiving to *Communion* any who should scruple such *Prescriptions* of others, he here enjoins the same with respect to his own. But it is manifest from his own Behaviour that he thought it proper to make such *Prescriptions*; therefore it follows that the *Rules* here laid down cannot be extended to the forbidding such *Prescriptions*; or to the receiving such to actual and external *Communion*

in a particular Church, as scruple such *Prescriptions*. Let it be observed, that I do not here say that there may not be other *Reasons* for this: but I say there is nothing in this *Chapter* to this purpose. Those Two Evangelical Precepts, *Judge not*, and, *Love one another*, are in my Opinion an *Epitome* of this *Chapter*; and may as well be urged against any *Ecclesiastical Prescriptions* as what is alleged from hence. Thus have I again clear'd this Matter, and shewn from St. Paul's Practice that there is nothing in this *Chapter* against the *Power* of *Church-Governors* to *prescribe*, in answer to this new Account of St. Paul's Design in this place.

As for any Argument from St. Paul's Example to justify the *Prescriptions* of later *Church-Governors*, I urged not any such as *absolutely* concluding, but with respect to *others*, in whose way of reasoning it was implied that his Example would be of some *Consideration* in this Case. But I acknowledge a great Difference between the *Direction*, and consequently the *Authority* of the *one*, and of the *other*: notwithstanding which there may be other Arguments for a sufficient *Authority* in later *Church-Governors* to prescribe what is as truly for the Decency of God's Worship, as his *Prescriptions* were. But I can't but think it a little, and poor Exception which is here made against my way of Expression: as if it were not all one to say, St. Paul prescribed such a Custom merely because it was decent; and to say, St. Paul prescribed it on that and another Account also, because he was directed to do it: since he ought never to be supposed exempt from the Direction of the Holy Spirit; and was directed to this by the Holy Spirit merely for the Decency of God's Worship. It is said likewise, p. 59. that St. Paul's *Prescriptions* were about things not properly *indifferent*; that they were *expedient*, and founded upon moral *Reasons*. I grant it as far as Decency, and Order make Things so. And in this Sense, *kneeling* at the *Communion* is not properly *indifferent*, but *expedient*, and founded upon moral *Reasons*. And the serious *Use* of God's *athens* is *expedient* in an higher Sense, as it might be of great Usefulness in the *Christian Church*: So likewise is the *Use* of a good *Liturgy* in the *Public Worship*. But this Obser-

vation doth not shew at all that St. Paul did not prescribe some Things not antecedently necessary in the Sense in which those Words have been used in this *Controversy* about the *Prescriptions* in our Church.

There was another way of arguing I made use of to shew that St. Paul designed not any thing in the 14th Chapter to the *Romans* against the Power of *Church-Governors* to prescribe, built upon the Concessions, and Declarations of the *dissenting Ministers* themselves. This Mr. Calamy hath thought fit wholly to omit: and I therefore now insist upon it with some Additions.

1. If the Design of this Chapter were to forbid future *Church-Governors* to make any Prescriptions by which any scrupulous Christians may be excluded from external Communion with their Brethren, then it forbids the Prescription of the constant Use of a *Liturgy*; which yet this Author in his *Abridgment* declares the greatest part of the *Dissenters* ready to comply with, as I have before shewn. And I argue, if they can comply with that, notwithstanding any thing in this Chapter, they may likewise with other Prescriptions notwithstanding the Rules here laid down by St. Paul.

2. If the Design of this Chapter be what this Author represents it to be, it likewise as much forbids the Prescription of the ordinary Use of a *Liturgy*, as it doth any other; because by this it cannot be but that many scrupulous Christians must be excluded; and whatsoever this Chapter commands or forbids, it commands or forbids ordinarily as well as constantly. Notwithstanding this, Mr. Calamy assures us in this *Introduction*, not only that other dissenting Ministers have declared a Willingness, but that even he himself is willing to comply with the Prescription of the ordinary Use of a *Liturgy*. From whence I conclude that he may likewise comply with other Prescriptions, notwithstanding any thing in this Chapter.

3. I desire it may be considered whether this Chapter, according to the Account given of it by some, do not likewise forbid the making unnecessary Prescriptions concerning Ministers, which must exclude the Scrupulous from

the *Ministry*; the requiring of them, for instance, the *Subscription* of thirty six *Articles* in order to their *Ministration*: for why should not this *Chapter* be likewise interpreted to this effect, that Persons being duly qualify'd for *Ministers*, ought to be receiv'd, and protected as such, tho' they should chance to differ from others in *one* or *more* of those numerous Points treated of, and imply'd in these *Articles*? And if notwithstanding this, such an *unnecessary Prescription* as this can readily be comply'd with by the *Dissenting Ministers*, I see not how this *Chapter* can hinder them from complying with *others*.

4. If this *Chapter* take from all any right of making choice of such *Circumstantial*s of *Worship*, as exclude *scrupulous Christians* from *Communion*; then doth it likewise from every one of the *Independent Congregations* in Mr. Calamy's new *Scheme*. According to this *Interpretation* of it, it will not be lawful for the Majority of any one of them to agree upon the *constant*, or *ordinary* use of a *Liturgy*, tho' they should think their *Edification* never so much promoted by it: which is very hard in a *Scheme* that pretends to so much Liberty. For by this means many *scrupulous Christians* will be either *constantly*, or *ordinarily* excluded: and according to this *Interpretation*, it is the Duty of this *Congregation*, not to refer the *scrupulous* Persons to other *Congregations*, (a method this *Author* on the like occasion recommends,) but it self to receive them to *Communion* without any attempt to send them to more distant *Congregations*, in which no *Liturgy* is used. For how otherwise the *Rules* laid down in this *Chapter*, according to his *Interpretation* can be observed I see not. Nay, I see not but that according to him, *St. Paul* must be supposed in this *Chapter* to prescribe *Impossibilities*. For if he here prescribe any thing concerning receiving to *Church-Communion*, it must be understood of receiving the *scrupulous* here intended to a joint-participation of *Christ's Ordinances*, at the same *time*, and the same *place*. But suppose the Majority of a particular *Congregation* agreed upon a particular *Time*, and a particular *Form of Prayer*, for the Celebration of the *Lord's Supper*; and suppose these two *Particulars* scrupled by some honest

honest *Christians*; I desire to know what must be done. It is impoſſible they ſhould be received to a common and joint-celebration of this Solemnity: and for the *Minister* to admit them to *Communion* at a diſtinct time by themſelves, no more answers the intent of this *Chapter*, than the abſolute reſuſal of them. For if it reſpect *Church-Communion* at all, it muſt have a reſpect to the receiving all at the ſame time: And beſides, being directed to the *Chriſtian Laity*, and not peculiarly to the *Clergy*, it cannot otherwiſe be comply'd with, but by receiving the *ſcrupulous* there ſpoken of at the ſame time at which themſelves communicate. For how, I pray, can *they* be ſaid to receive one another to *Communion*, who communicate unavoidably at diſtinct *Times*? This, I think, is a Demonſtration that *St. Paul* could not in this *Chapter* ſpeak with reſpect to ſuch *Scruples* as we are concerned about; unleſs he can be ſuppos'd to enjoin *Impoſſibilities*, and *Contradiſions*: and this I hope, no one will fix upon him. At leaſt it is a Demonſtration that ſuch *Scruples* are not here intended, as are inconfiſtent with *Chriſtians* communicating with one another at the ſame time; and conſequently that *St. Paul* muſt not be ſuppos'd here to ſpeak of all ſorts of *Scruples*: and this is enough to overthrow the Interpretation of this *Author*.

Theſe and the like Conſiderations make me think that *St. Paul* could not intend in this *Chapter*, to lay down *Rules* to any other purpoſe but this, that *Chriſtians* ſhould love one another, and do all good Offices to one another, notwithstanding their ſmaller Differences; that they ſhould not be free to condemn one another for the ſake of ſuch indifferent matters, as *Eating*, or not *Eating* ſuch particular ſort of Food; that the *ſtrong*, i. e. Perſons of Judgment and Underſtanding, ſhould in all ſuch Caſes bear with the Infirmities, and Miſtakes of the *weak*: all which *Rules*, I am perſuaded, may be obſerv'd without admitting *honest ſcrupulous Chriſtians* of all ſorts to the external Celebration of the *Offices* of Religion in every particular *Church*. But however this be, I hope *Mr. Calamy* will conſider with himſelf how to reconcile this *Chapter* with

his own *Professions*, and his own *Scheme*, as well as how to object it to *others*.

After I had answer'd the *Objection* of the *Dissenting Ministers* taken from the 14th Chap. to the *Romans*, I proceeded to shew that *themselves* were not free from what they call *Unnecessary Impositions*: *Reas. of Confor.* P. I. p. 96. and I instanced in the Practice of Mr. *Baxter*, than whom no Man hath more Followers amongst them; and of the *Independents*, a numerous part of them; laying nothing to their charge but what I found said of them by this *Author* himself. The *Summ* of the Answer is, that this will not prove *Unscriptural Impositions* lawful. Nor was I so weak as to produce it for that Purpose. But I hope it may be a good Argument to the Followers of Mr. *Baxter*, and the *Independents*, that it is not justifiable to separate from the *Establish'd Church* in order to witness against *Impositions*; and at the same time to practise the same thing so much complain'd of, and to comply with it in their own *Churches*.

Thus have I endeavour'd to answer all the *Objections* of this *Author* against what I have formerly advanced concerning *Ecclesiastical Impositions* in the *Establish'd Church*. The *second* thing I undertook in answer to this *Introduction*, was,

II. To consider that *Scheme* of *Liberty* which is here proposed by Mr. *Calamy*, in opposition to the *Established Method*: that so we may see whether *that* be free from the same, or the like *Objections* to those he hath made to the *Established Method*. For if it do not appear at last to be so, this will I think furnish a great Argument for an universal Compliance with the *Establishment*: it being a just ground for our adhering to *that*, rather than separating from it, that those who have most oppos'd it, and given themselves most Liberty to invent *Methods* and *Schemes* to set up against it, have not been able to propose *one* to the World but what is liable to many of those *Objections*, and *Inconveniencies* which have been chiefly insisted on by this very *Author*, and his *Brethren* in their *Writings* against the *Cause* of *Conformity*. Now,

First, I see not any Advantage to the *Scrupulous* in this *Scheme*, which they are not as certain of enjoying under that to which I am pressing *Conformity*. For I am not ashamed to own it as my Judgment, that together with the most perfect *Establishment* that can be framed by Man, there ought always to be a *Toleration* and protection for such weak and honest Christians as are good and peaceable Subjects to the *Civil Constitution*: and no other force used towards such but the force of sober, and good Reasoning. And I observe this the rather, because Mr. Calamy hath been pleased in many places to drop such Expressions as naturally lead his *Reader* to think that all who plead for *Conformity* to the *Church of England*, are as zealous against the *Toleration* of *Dissenters* as they are for their *Compliance* with the *Establishment*. So that as to this he hath no Advantage in his *Scheme* which I have not in mine.

Again, He will allow it an advantage in his own *Scheme*, that all near *Neighbours* should join in the same Form of *Worship*; and would think it not only a lawful, but friendly Office to endeavour to remove the *Scruples* of those who otherwise would differ from their *Neighbours*: I desire likewise that a more extended *Uniformity* may be thought an advantage to a *Christian Nation*; and that it may not be judg'd an unchristian or unfriendly Office to endeavour to promote it in the way of fair, and serious Reasoning. However, this I am sure of, that as all that he can pretend to in his own way, with respect to scrupulous *Neighbours*, is first to endeavour to remove their *Scruples* by sober Discourse, and if that prove unsuccessful, afterwards to refer them to other more distant *Congregations*; which is the Method he proposes on this Occasion; so likewise may the same sort of Persons be dealt with in the way already establish'd after the same manner, viz. if their *Scruples* be incurable by the only Christian method of serious *Argument*, they must be left to the use of that *Liberty* which is allow'd them. But if this *Author* should ask, What if the *Civil Magistrate* should debar them of all such *Liberty*? I reply by asking the same Question, if his

Scheme

Scheme of Independent Congregation were universally receiv'd, What if the *Magistrate* should require all within such a District to join with such a particular *Congregation*? I think it full as likely that in such an *Establishment*, as he hath invented, the *Magistrate* should press, and command the *Uniformity* of a *Neighbourhood*, as that in any other sort of *Establishment*, he should press and command the *Uniformity* of a *Nation*. And if he reply that the contrary Supposition is one part of that *Scheme* which he proposeth; I answer, the like Supposition is part of my *Scheme* likewise, and what I shall always contend for under the present *Establish'd Scheme* as zealously as he can do for it under any other *Scheme* he can think of.

Secondly, I see not but that this new *Scheme* must be attended with Circumstances, and Consequences as bad, if not worse than what are seen to belong to the present *Establishment*. For,

1. The same sort of evil Consequences will be found to follow upon the multitude of different modes of Worship set up upon the *Scheme* now before us, that are seen to follow upon those differences of Worship now amongst us; and these in greater number, proportionable to that greater variety of *Modes*, which must this way be introduc'd into our *Churches*. I must beg leave here to suppose that Mankind will have much the same Passions, and the same Tempers, even when this *Scheme* is established, that they have now. And can any one imagine, that a number of *Neighbours* will not be disgusted that they must either conform to what they do not like, or else be sent to some distant place for an opportunity of Worship? Can any one think that there will not be upon such occasions, frequent, and zealous efforts for gathering *Churches* out of *Churches*, and Violences amongst *Neighbours* to as great a degree as ever yet hath been known? We see this practice in some places amongst the *Dissenters* themselves at present, and made the occasion of great Heats, and Uncharitableness amongst themselves, even whilst the contrary is so much their peculiar Interest: and may we not expect the like, or infinitely worse, when there will be no such

such thing as a *Common Cause*, and a *Common Interest*, but every *Preacher* will have a peculiar Interest of his own to bias him, and every *Congregation* particular Notions, and *Schemes* of their own, of which I doubt not to say they will be generally as tenacious, as if they knew them to be of *Apostolical Institution*? All will endeavour, (or at least so profess,) to agree upon nothing but what they are directed to by the Will and Example of *Christ*, and his *Apostles*; and so the Forms established in every particular *Congregation* being all esteem'd to be *Jure Divino*, or *Jure Apostolico*, the Zeal of Men will run high for their own Constitutions, and infinite must be the Disputations, and remarkable the Heat, and Zeal which will be occasion'd by these means. For nothing warms Mens Heads like any Question that concerns their own Form of Worship, especially when they themselves have had the ordering of all that relates to it.

2. Supposing all in *one* Parish unanimous, and to consent and acquiesce in the same Form of Worship, the Inconveniences, and evil Consequences must be still much greater than they would be, supposing all in *all* Parishes to consent, and acquiesce in the Form already establish'd. For by such an universal *Uniformity* all those occasions of Disputation and Violence which are administred by the Differences in Religious Worship, are wholly removed: whereas a *Parochial Uniformity* may be maintained, and yet it may remain too probable that numberless instances of Heat, and Violence, and Uncharitableness will proceed from the distinct ways of Worship agreed upon in every distinct *Neighbourhood*.

3. As these, and the like Consequences would too probably be seen even after the Settlement of each particular *Congregation* in their several Forms of Worship; so I fear the like, and much greater may be expected at the *Time* when such Settlement is making. For then every Man will come prepared with his own Opinion, and many with an Expectation that their particular Judgment should be regarded; and all the Follies and Heats that are generally seen on all Occasions when any Point is to be carry'd

ried by Majority of Voices, will be found in the Management *before*, and *at* the Time of these Determinations: only perhaps with this difference, that they may be the greater on this Occasion, because of the Importance Men are naturally apt to judge to belong to every thing which themselves think becoming the Worship of God. Whether this *Author* allows to *Women* any Right of voting in this *Case*, (as I am informed somewhat equivalent to this is granted them in many of our separate Congregations) I know not. If not, I think they may justly complain of their being deprived of that *Right*, which according to his way of arguing must belong to all Creatures capable of religious Worship, and be as contented to be concluded in such Matters by their *public Governours*, as by the *Votes* of their *Neighbours*, and *Relations*. But if this Liberty be allowed to *them* likewise, some new *Questions*, and *Difficulties* may be started.

It is an easy Matter to answer to all this, that these Inconveniencies, and evil Consequences *ought* not to happen; that it is the Duty of Men to bear with one another's Differences in religious Worship; and the like. But alas! this is not the *Question*; but whether it be not likely thus to be. In *Theory* it signifieth little what a Man saith. He may make what *Ecclesiastical Utopia's* he pleaseth, and indulge his own peculiar Genius, and Judgment to the utmost. But in all Proposals, and Schemes which we draw up in order to be reduced to Practice, we must suppose the World what it *is*, not what it *ought* to be; the same Ignorance, the same Superstition, the same Zeal, the same Resentments, the same Bigotry, the same every thing which we have found hitherto amongst *Christians*: and we must propose (like good *Physicians*) not merely what is absolutely good in it self, but what is so with respect to the Prejudices, Tempers, and Constitutions, we know, and are sure to be amongst us. And the want of this piece of *Prudence* is alone sufficient to overthrow any *Scheme*, tho' never so good, never so perfect in it self.

Thirdly, I must observe, that as this *Scheme* hath no Advantage (with respect to the *Scrupulous*) which the present

Establishment hath not as just a Title to ; and is likely to be accompanied with Circumstances, and Consequences as bad, if not much worse than what are seen to belong to *that* ; so likewise is it liable to some of the chief, and most terrible of those *Objections* which have been with the greatest Zeal urged against the present *Establishment*. Let us put the Case, that the *major* part of a *Neighbourhood* agree upon the Use of a *Liturgy* at the Time of the Celebration of the *Lord's Supper* : a Privilege which I suppose this *Author* will not deny to any of his Congregations, at least for their *ordinary* Way of Worship, because he is ready to comply with *this*, should it be prescribed even by the *Bishops*.

Now, 1. The same *Invective* may be made against this, which hath been made against such a Power in *Bishops*. For I see not but that this is as manifestly making exclusive *Terms of Communion* ; as manifestly an Encroachment upon *Christ's* Regal Power ; as manifestly a Confinement of that which *Christ* hath left free, as what is complained of in the present *Establishment*. This doth as effectually exclude the *Scrupulous* from communicating in that Congregation in which they have as great a Right to communicate as their *Neighbours* ; and consequently is as much a confining to *one-sort* of *Christians* what their common Master hath left open to all : it is as truly an Addition to *Christ's* Institution, who left it without such an Incumbrance, and consequently is equally an Usurpation, and Invasion of that Authority which he only is said to enjoy. To say that the *Scrupulous* may go to another Congregation more to their Mind, is to say nothing that removes the present Difficulty. For according to this *Author* himself, they have a Right to be admitted in this very Congregation upon the naked *Terms* of *Christ* himself : and why should they either put themselves to great Inconveniences by hunting after other Congregations more agreeable to themselves ; or by giving up their own Right encourage an imposing Spirit, and *Ecclesiastical Tyranny* in those who have no Authority for what they do ? To do this for the sake of the Good of the Church, and the Peace of the *Neighbourhood*, I confess I should think glorious, according to
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the Notion of Glory, and Honour laid down in the *Gospel*. But this *Author* hath utterly precluded the *Scrupulous* from this Method of proceeding : which leads me to observe,

2. That as the same *Objections* lie against this Power which he hath lodged in his *Congregations*, which have been made against the like in *Bishops*; so the same Arguments prove it unlawful to comply with the Prescription of the *major* part of a *Congregation*, or *Neighbourhood*, which have been used against *Compliance* with the present *Establishment*. I have observed already that whilst the *Scruples* of the Persons above-mentioned remain, they ought to insist upon their *Right* to be admitted into that particular *Congregation* which hath out-voted them, upon the *Terms* of the *Gospel* : and not to give it up to an imposing, and usurping Spirit. I now add, that should their *Scruples* be removed, with respect to the material Lawfulness of the *Liturgy* agreed upon, they are still obliged by this *Author's* Principles not to comply so far as to use constantly the *Form* agreed upon by others. For how do they know how many other *Impositions* they may bring upon themselves, and Neighbours at this rate? How can they answer the giving Countenance to the least Additions to Christ's Institutions? Their *Compliance* would be an Acknowledgment of *Authority* in the major part of this *Congregation* to make such an Agreement : and how could they acknowledge this without giving up all *Right* in themselves to be admitted upon other *Terms*? Shall they give up this *Right* for the sake of *Peace*? No. *Peace* is indeed a good thing ; but such a *Compliance* tends to *Slavery*, and to the Encouragement of *Church-Tyranny*, and *Peace* is not to be purchased at so dear a Price. Thus, I say, might this Cause be argued upon this *Author's* Principles, and the same *Objections* brought against *Compliance* under his *Scheme* which he hath brought against *Compliance* with the *Established Method*; and so a perpetual Foundation laid of Quarrels, and Animosities amongst *Neighbours*.

Add to this, 3. That the same *Objection* may be drawn from *Rom. 14.* against this Method of proceeding with *scrupulous*

pulous Persons, which hath been alleged against the *Established Church*. For what is it that, according to this *Author*, that *Chapter* enjoins? Is it not that the *Scrupulous* shall be received to *Communion*? And shall any *Minister*, or any of these *independent Congregations* dare to refuse the receiving any Christian to *Communion*? And instead of receiving those whom *St. Paul* orders to be received, send them away to other distant *Congregations*? How doth this answer his Intention, which was to assert the *Right* of such Persons to be admitted in this particular *Congregation*? But I have before spoken of this; and shall not at present urge it any farther.: And what shall we now say if those very *Objections* which have been urged by this *Author*, with so much Vehemence, and peculiar Zeal, against the *established Method*, are found to lie against that *Scheme* which he is setting up in Opposition to it? We must conclude either that there cannot be any particular *Scheme* invented which will be wholly free from what this *Author* calls *unscriptural Additions*; or that till such a *Scheme* be found, we may very well adhere to the *Established Church*: and also that it doth not become Men to object *unscriptural Additions* to the *Church*, and at the same time advance a new *Scheme*, in which they must, as far as appears, necessarily admit them.

Fourthly, I must observe that this new *Scheme* is an entire Departure from the *Principles*, and Professions of those *dissenting Ministers*, whose Cause in a peculiar manner this *Author* hath undertaken to defend; as far as we can judge from the public Declarations hitherto made in their Names. That they were for an *Establishment* of a very different nature from that of this *Author* is very evident. That they judged the Right of determining Ceremonies in Worship to be in the *Civil Magistrate*, this very Person in this *Introduction* contends, p. 46. when citing their Words, in which they declare, that as to *Ceremonies* they were willing to be determined by Authority, he adds, *i. e.* the *Civil Authority*, as appears from all their Papers. So that they acknowledged the Authority of the *Civil Magistrate* in determining some *Circumstantials* of religious Worship: which

which single Point makes an essential Difference between their *Scheme*, and this new one, which is wholly founded on the *Right* of every particular *Congregation* to determine its own *Circumstantials*; and on the *Denial* of any *Right* in any sort of *Governours* to do it for them. I mention this not as if I thought it a good *Argument* absolutely considered against the *Justness* and *Goodness* of this *Scheme*; but in order to shew the *Reader* the peculiar *Abilities* of this *Writer*, at once to defend the *Cause* of the *Ejected Ministers*, and to propose such a *Scheme* as is as little agreeable to their main *Cause* as to that of the *Established Church*. Nay, I think there is reason to judge that the *best* of them would sooner have chosen the *Continuance* of the *present Establishment* than the *Alteration* of it into such an one as is here contrived. For tho' this *Author* may say that their main *Point* was to destroy all *Impositions*, and *unscriptural Additions*; yet I think it manifest that their main *Point* was to procure an *Establishment* much more different from his *Scheme*, than from the *present Constitution*.

Lastly, I shall only observe farther the *Fruitlessness* of proposing such *Schemes* as this to a *Nation* in which there is an *Establishment* of many *Years* *Continuance*, quietly submitted to by the major part of it, without any *Apprehensions* of their own *Ecclesiastical Slavery*, above that of their *dissenting Brethren*. To propose the *Amendment* of some *Particulars* in the *present Establishment*, in order to the making it more perfect, is what cannot well be complained of. But to propose a *Scheme* which cannot be admitted without the entire *Destruction*, and total *Abolition* of the whole *present Constitution*, can end in no *Good*, as I know of: unless it be a good to the *Christian Church*, that the *Brains* of its *Members* should be perpetually distracted with new *Projects*; and they tempted to destroy a good, and tolerable *Constitution* without the least *Likelihood* of establishing a better in the room of it, or of effecting any thing but the *Confusion*, and *Disorder* of the whole *Nation*: for that certainly would be the *End* of any *Endeavours* to establish such a *Scheme* as this *Author* hath contrived. Is it proposed in order to any *Attempt*

to the introducing it into the Nation? I fear the *Protestant Religion*, and all that is good amongst us, would feel the fatal Effects of such an Attempt. Is it proposed with ut any Hope of ever seeing it settled? For what End then are Mens Heads disturbed with such *Schemes*, and these proposed after such a manner as if *Compliance* with any other Metho's were not to be justified? How happy would it be, if the *Consequences* of such Proposals were duly considered before they were after such a manner offered to the World? But I shall not now add any more on this Subject, but proceed to the *Third* general Head I proposed in answer to Mr. Calamy's *Introduction*, viz.

III. To endeavour to shew that there is nothing advanced in this *Introduction* sufficient to prove a *Compliance* with the *Impositions* in the *Church* unlawful; and therefore nothing against the Lawfulness of *constant Communion* with the *Church of England*; and consequently nothing sufficient to justify moderate *Nonconformity*.

I must here observe to the *Reader*, that if this one thing can be proved, this *Introduction*, were it never so perfect in other respects, is of no Importance in the *Cause* between this *Author* and my self. For the main Point to be considered is not whether the *Bishops* have *Authority* properly so called to make those *Prescriptions* which we are now considering; nor whether a more perfect *Scheme* than that *established* may not be found out; but whether a *Compliance* with the present *Establishment* be, in any Respect, or on any Account unlawful, or unworthy of a *Christian*. How far *Persons* are obliged to a *Compliance* in such Things as are not sinful, for the sake of *Peace*, this *Author* himself acknowledges to be a *material Enquiry*. It is so indeed; for it is upon the Resolution of this *Question* entirely that our *Cause* depends: it being impossible to justify those whose *Cause* he pleads, if it be found at last that they are obliged to comply with the *established Prescriptions* for the sake of *Peace*. This Point is discoursed from p. 73, to p. 81. of this *Introduction*, in which without doubt we may hope to meet with all the best, and strongest Reasons against such a *Compliance*: and therefore I shall endeavour

closely to follow this *Writer* in this principal Part of our *Controversy*.

Before I come to the main Point, I must observe that he complains that the *Regard to Peace should be thought to belong to one side only* : in which Complaint I am not at all concerned, who have frequently declared that the *Regard to Peace* belongs to all, both high, and low, in the *Christian-Church* : and particularly in the divided Estate we are in, that Condescension and Compliance is the Duty of *Superiors*, as well as *Inferiors*. But I think he himself is very much concerned in it, who hath not proceeded one Step towards a *Compliance* in this Cause, having ever insisted on the Abatements of *Superiors*, and never once pressed the *Compliance* of *Inferiors*. It is my Opinion that there is a Duty incumbent upon *both* in this Case: and that the Neglect of the *one* part cannot disengage the *other* from their Obligation to regard the common Good of the *Christian World*. So that it is this *Author*, (and not I) who hath acted such a Part, as if all the Obligation to regard the *Peace* of the *Church* were on *one* side only. At what follows I cannot but wonder, *viz.* his declaring that *to recommend Peace so warmly to the injured Parties, whom our Saviour hath exempted from needless Impositions, (whilst Superiors, will make no Condescensions towards it) favours more of the Politician than the Christian* : unless he means only this, that it must look like Design in such *Governors* as will not make one Step towards it themselves, to press *Peace* vehemently upon others. For supposing the *Dissenters* the *injured Parties*, certainly nothing can be more agreeable to the Mind of our *Lord* himself than this is: who hath given no Man Authority to injure another, and so hath exempted all from Injuries, and yet himself vehemently and warmly recommends *Peace* to the *injured Persons*, and makes it their indispensable Duty to be ready to condescend, and comply, and recede from the Rigour of Justice for the sake of *Peace*, and Reconciliation, whether the *Injurious* do their Duty, or no. Besides, I think it hath been usually esteemed the Part of the *Politician* to keep up *Parties* in the World, and to this End not

to preach to the *Injured* concerning the Necessity of *Forgiveness*, and *Compliance*, but rather to preserve in their Minds a quick Sense of the *Injuries* they have received; and on the contrary the Part of a *Christian* in all *Quarrels* and *Dissentions* to persuade the *Injured*, as well as the *Injurious*, not to insist upon the Terms they themselves think rigorously just, but to yield, and comply for the sake of *Peace*. Nay, this *Author* himself grants in the very next Sentence, that *every Christian is bound to regard Peace, whether the Church or the State hath that Regard to it which it ought to have, yea or no*: and therefore I hope it may be a *Christian Office to recommend it warmly to those whose Duty it is to regard it*; and that the more *warmly* so necessary a thing is recommended, the more like *Christian* will the Recommendation be. But as *warmly* as I have recommended *Peace* to this *Author*, and those whom he defends, I assure him I never did it with any *Design of robbing them of their Purity*, which he is pleased, in his Excess of *Christian Charity*, to charge upon me: but will easily agree with him in what he here saith, that *Purity*, and *Holiness* are first to be regarded; and that no *Compliance*, which is either *materially*, or *circumstantially* unlawful, can be the Duty of a *Christian* for the sake of *Peace*, or of any other good thing.

Again, I find it alleged that *it hath a most absurd Appearance to have the Peace of the Church represented as depending upon Things unprofitable*, p. 74. and as it is express'd, p. 76 *upon a Concurrence in the same Opinions, and an uniform Practice, as to Niceties and Formalities*. Now,

1. If the Peace of the Church do truly, and that very frequently, depend upon Things small, inconsiderable, and unprofitable in themselves, the Representation of this cannot be *absurd*, because it answers to the Truth, and Reality of the thing represented: but the contrary Representation would indeed be absurd, because contrary to Truth. I confess it a Scandal to Christians that their mutual Love, and Charity should depend upon their Agreement in any Matters of small moment. But if I find it to do so, I am obliged to give as few Occasions as possible to *Uncharitableness*, by *Compliance* and *Conformity* in small Matters, as

far as Conscience gives me leave: and the only *Question* here is, whether it be not true in *Fact* that a Difference in Modes, and Circumstances of Worship, or in Things even of less Consideration than these, hath been the Occasion in all Ages, of great Uncharitableness and Animosities among Men of weak Heads and strong Passions.

2. That this is true in *Fact* I may appeal to the History of the Church in all Ages, and to our own Experience in these later Times. In *St. Paul's* Time the *Peace*, and *Interest* of the *Church* depended on the mutual Compliances of *Christians* in eating or not eating particular sorts of Food, in which, considered in it self there was nothing acceptable to God, but only consequentially, as it might prevent many Disorders, and many Instances of Sin amongst *Christians*. This the *Apostle* thought of such Concern that he himself represented the Interest of *Christianity* as depending upon *Christians* complying with one another's Weaknesses in so trivial a Matter as this, and abridging themselves of their *Liberty* for the sake of the Opinions of others, or of the Behaviour they might occasion in others, if they did not thus regulate themselves. Supposing any one should have alleged, that it had an absurd Appearance to represent the Interest of *Christianity* depending on so unprofitable Matters; I am apt to think that the *Apostle* would have reminded such a Person (as indeed he doth all who will take any notice of it) that it is the Duty of *Christians* to regard not only what Things are in themselves, but what Consequences they are like to have; that they are to answer for the use of that *Liberty* they enjoy; and that a good *Christian* will not insist upon that in considerable Matters, when it may prove the Occasion of Sin in others; but will abridge himself of it, if he can by this means have any Likelihood of preventing any unchristian Behaviour in any of his *Brethren*. I need not give more Instances of this. It is manifest from the Accounts we have of all Ages. And accordingly we have found that the Differences of Men in *Church-Government*, *Discipline*, and *Worship*, have given the keenest Edge to all the Contentions amongst our selves. And therefore however unprofitable

Ue this *Author* may think Matters of this nature to be in themselves, yet it is not absurd to represent the *Peace* of the *Church* as depending on an Agreement in these things, because it is Matter of Fact that *Christians* have been animated against one another with a barbarous Zeal, by their Differences in these small Matters. Nay,

3. The Writers of all Sides have acknowledged this; that it is a great Unhappiness to *Christians* to differ in these Things, because so ill an Use is made by some of this Difference. The *chief Managers* of the *dissenting Cause* have from the beginning spoken of it with Concern that they were forced to differ in small Matters, and set up different Modes of Worship. And what is this but to own that a great deal depends upon an Agreement in Matters small and unprofitable in themselves; nay, upon an uniform Practice as to what this *Author* calls *Niceties*, and *Formalities*. All wise Men have been sensible of this, that *the smallest Spark may kindle the greatest Fire*: and therefore I am not ashamed that I have represented the *Peace* of the *Church* as depending upon Matters in themselves of small Importance; because I have *Experience* on my side, and the Observation of all considering Men to bear me out. Thus much may suffice in answer to what this *Author* alleges concerning the *Absurdity* of supposing the *Peace* of the *Church* to depend upon small and inconsiderable Matters.

I shall here beg leave to observe farther, that by *consulting the Peace of the Church*, neither I, nor any serious Person that ever mention'd it, intended merely *the not putting some Conformists out of humour by refusing to do what they require to be done*, as this *Author* slightly represents it, p. 78. contrary to the gravest of his own *Predecessors*, as well as to Truth; but the not giving occasion (as far as in us lies) to Passions, Hatred, Animosities, and grievous Sins, amongst the *weak*, and *violent* of all Parties, which are seen to follow upon *different Forms* of Worship set up in opposition to one another. This is a Matter which deserves to be seriously spoken of: and since this *Author* himself acknowledges that the *Peace* of the *Church*, whatever it be, ought of necessity to be regarded next to a good *Conscience*

by all *Christians*, methinks it might have expected a more civil, and serious Treatment than it hath sometimes met with at his hands.

These things being premised, let us now consider what he alleges against a *Compliance* with the *Prescriptions* of the *Established Church*, supposing the *Peace* of the *Church* to depend upon such a *Compliance*; which is the main Point between us: and the whole Force of what I find to this purpose dispers'd through this *Introduction*, I shall comprize in *four Arguments*.

First, I shall mention the *Argument* he seems to use, p. 76. to this purpose, *We are not bound to rise and go to Bed, to eat and drink just at the same time, and in the same manner with our Neighbours, in order to live peaceably by them. We are not bound to laugh, and frown, to change garb and posture with the Master of the Family, in order to live peaceably in a Family.* So likewise, *We are not bound to be of a Mind with the Public, in every Punctilio, to shew our peaceable Temper.* I confess I cannot but be amazed at such Representations as this; and cannot but pity the Man who is come to such a pitch of *Prejudice*, as to write after this manner in this Cause. For,

I. This is just as if he should argue, We are not oblig'd to comply with the ridiculous Humours of all Men, in all things, therefore *Christianity* obligeth us to comply in *no* indifferent matters for the sake of the Peace, and Good of the Christian Church. Or thus, We are not oblig'd to be of a mind with the Public in *every Punctilio*; therefore we are not oblig'd to comply in *any indifferent Practice* for the sake of Peace: for this Argument supposeth the things in debate to be in themselves lawful. There may be many Reasons against *Compliance* in the *Instances* he mentions, as the Impossibility of it, the perpetual Uneasiness of it, the Inconsistency of it with our Health, or with our Duty to our selves in other respects, the mispence of the Time spent in them, which it is our Duty to employ better. But how can these be apply'd to such a *Compliance* as we are speaking of, supposing the Matters requir'd to be lawful? What Relation between *these*, and *Kneeling* at the Commu-

nion once a Month, or procuring *Sponsors*, and permitting a Child to be sign'd with the sign of the Cross once perhaps in many Years? What such *Relation* between these two sorts of Instances, that *Compliance* may not be a Duty in the *former*, and yet be a Duty in the *latter*? For since it may be true that *Christianity* may oblige us to a *Compliance* with what we imagine to be *Weakness* in others, in *some* Instances, notwithstanding that it do not so oblige us in all, it cannot be a good Argument, to say, We are not obliged to comply in *all* things, therefore not in *any* thing: but the only Point is to consider whether the *Instances* of which we are now speaking, be of the number of those in which we are not oblig'd to comply: which cannot be prov'd from the present Argument, without shewing that *they* are exactly parallel to the other Instances here produc'd; without shewing, for Instance, that it is as absurd, and unreasonable; as impracticable, and uneasy; as inconsistent with the spending our Time well, to *kneel at the Communion* in *Compliance* with others; as it is to dress and undress, to eat and drink, to laugh and frown, and to regulate all such sort of Actions according to the Mod, and Custom of the most humourfome of Men. 'Till this be shewn, it is in all respects as good an Argument as this to say, We are not oblig'd to sing, and dance, and fiddle, and hunt, and dig; and run, and stand, as long, and as often as our *Humourfome Neighbours*: therefore we are obliged to comply in *nothing* for the sake of the *Peace*, and *Quiet* of the *Neighbourhood*: the *Weakness* of which I need not stand to demonstrate. But,

2 In order to come nearer to the *Case* before us, Suppose I liv'd in a *Family*, in which once a Week the *Master* of it requir'd all to come to *Prayer*, and to use the posture of *Kneeling at Prayer*. Supposing it my Opinion that he had no right to prescribe me what posture to use in that *Duty*; nay, supposing I did in my Judgment prefer *Standing*; yet when I should consider that I can lawfully kneel, and that my not *Kneeling* may probably be the occasion of an *Unchristian* Passion, and Resentment, and Quarrel, I should think my self oblig'd to comply for the sake of

Peace, and might justly be esteem'd to have little regard to the quiet of the *Family*, if I did not. Nor would it be any Excuse for my Behaviour or my little regard to Peace, to allege that the *Master* of the *Family* hath as little, in making it to depend on so indifferent a matter: it being a poor alleviation of the Crime of *one* Person to say *another* is guilty of the same. Nor doth it alter the *Case* with respect to me, whether the *Master* barely recommend this *Posture*, or require it after such a manner as that I shall be excluded from *Family-Prayer*, if I do not comply. I am still obliged to prevent the aforesaid evil Consequence by my *Compliance*, since *that* doth not imply in it any acknowledgment of his *Authority* to prescribe me a *Posture* in *Prayer*. Nor would it in this *Case* be sufficient for me to say to him, I am ready to shew my Good-will by praying with you once or twice a Year in this posture. For this only shews that I think the thing lawful, as a Declaration in Words would do: but removes not the occasion of mutual Quarrels; and serves to make *others* think *me* as unreasonably humourfome in *one* way, as I think *Him* in another.

3. St. *Paul* thought himself oblig'd to comply with the weakness of other *Christians* so far as to confine himself to a particular Diet, rather than that the using his *Liberty* should prove the occasion of any Sin in them thro' their own Mistakes, and Prejudices, 1 *Cor.* 8. 13. Now by the Argument used by this *Author* he might, I think, have excus'd himself from so uneasy a thing; and have urged in his own Justification, that he was under no Obligation to conform himself to the Humours of others in such a Point. But he had another notion of *Christian Liberty*, and never pleaded that to exempt himself from regarding the Consequences of his *Actions*. The only *Debate* with him in such *Cases* was, Whether this or that particular Behaviour were for the Good of the *Christian Church*, or not, all things consider'd. Upon the same Principle, viz. the Interest, and good of the *Christian Church* he shews the Reasonableness of *standing fast* in that *Liberty* in which Christ hath left his Disciples in *one Case*; and the Reasonableness of abridging, and receding from it in *others*. Up-
on

on the same Principle he opposeth the reception of *Circumcision* amongst the *Gentiles* universally; and gives up his own Liberty in the Case of eating *Flesh*, for the sake of others. What I would remark from hence is, that it is the Duty of all *Christians* to consider not what Liberty, absolutely speaking, *Christ* hath left to his Disciples; nor what Authority *they* have who pretend to prescribe to others: but merely, whether our Compliance or Non-compliance in any particular lawful Instance be more for the common Good; the Peace, and Interest of God's Church, and the preventing the Sins, and unchristian Behaviour of other professed *Christians*. The Debate between us must be entirely determin'd by this. For neither can the want of Authority on the one part, nor the Right to Liberty on the other, prove against any Compliance, without demonstrating it prejudicial to the Church of *Christ*; and supposing this Demonstration, there is no need of seeking for one single Argument more to condemn it. Into how small a Compass therefore might our Controversy be reduc'd, were this regarded? For then it would come to this single Question, Whether Compliance or Non-compliance to the *Establish'd Prescriptions* be attended by the worst evil Consequences, and the most to be guarded against by *Christians*? And this is what I have been hitherto labouring to bring it to.

4. If the Argument I am now considering be of any force, it must prove the unlawfulness of such a Compliance as this Author allows, as well as of that Compliance which he condemns. For if this Liberty here pleaded exempt *Christians* from all obligation to Kneel at the Communion for the sake of the good of the *Christian-Church*, why not likewise from all obligation to use a Liturgy ordinarily prescribed, which yet this Author in his greatest Latitude declares a readiness to do? Why not likewise from all obligation to subscribe *Thirty Six* Articles upon the Injunction of the Civil Power? And if notwithstanding this Argument these Impositions can be submitted to, I desire a Reason why others may not, notwithstanding any thing contained in this Argument; since they are enjoined by as competent an Authority, and Compliance to them would have at least

as happy an Effect upon the Good and Interest of the *Christian Church*.

Add to all this, that the same *Power* which hath established one Form of Worship, doth not so rigorously require a *Compliance*, but that *Liberty*, and *Protection* are granted to all *scrupulous Consciences*, as they have been for many Years, and are now (blessed be God) likely to be continued to all Posterity. This, I should think, according to what is here said, to be a great Encouragement to Men, who think the Matters themselves lawful, to *study Compliance*; and an Inducement to them to give up the *Liberty* so much talked of to the *Peace*, and common Good of the *Church*, and Nation. But I hope there need no more Words under this Head to shew the Unreasonableness of arguing, that we are not obliged to comply in all indifferent Things for the sake of *Peace*, and therefore not in the *scrupled Prescriptions*: for since in some Things, (tho' not in *all*) we are obliged to *comply* for the sake of such a Good; the *Establish'd Prescriptions* may be of the number of those things, notwithstanding any thing implied in this *Argument* to the contrary.

The *Second Argument* is that which I find here used, p. 77, 78. that some of the *Impositions* in the *Establish'd Church* are *pure Innovations upon divine Worship*, as the *Scripture* hath settled it, plain *Additions to one of Christ's Sacraments*, which alter the *Institution*: and to comply in these for the sake of *Peace* is to renounce the *Purity of the Ordinances that Christ hath fixed in his Church for the sake of Peace*. The *Instances* particularly named are the *Use of the Sign of the Cross* after *Baptism*; and the *Use of Sponsors* at that *Solemnity*: the *Compliance* with which is here insinuated to be *unlawful*; and so not to be submitted to for the sake of *Peace*. Now,

1. This alters the *Question* proposed in this part of the *Introduction* entirely: which is, How far we ought to comply with things *lawful* for the sake of the *Public Good*; not whether we ought to comply with any thing *unlawful* on that account, which I know not to have been affirmed by any *Writer of the Establish'd Church*; and therefore cannot imagine why this *Argument* is here made use of, unless it were

were left otherwise what this *Author* had to say against *Compliance* might be thought to lie within too narrow a Compass. He hath spent his Zeal sufficiently against the things themselves in debate, in other parts of his Work: and sufficient *Replies* have been made to what he hath alleged. But however that be, the *Reader* might be left to judge of all Matters in their proper places: the only *Debate* here is concerning *Compliance* with things suppos'd in themselves to be *justifiable* and *lawful*. It would therefore be the best way to refer the *Reader* to what hath been said, in its proper place in Justification of the things here mention'd. But lest this should seem only an *Evasion*, and so prejudice the *Cause* I am maintaining, I shall here add something, in a very few Words, sufficient to counter-balance what is here urged. Let it therefore be consider'd,

2. That whatever is agreeable to the nature, and design of any *Institution* of our Lord's, may be used at the solemn Celebration of that *Institution* without the imputation of *Adding to Christ's Institution* in any sense unlawful, or displeasing to *God*; especially when it is declar'd by all who use it that it is not, and ought not to be understood to belong to the *Essence*, and *Validity* of the *Institution* it self. Thus for *Instance*, The use of *Vocal Prayer* at the Celebration of *Baptism* is not so necessary but that *Baptism in the Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost*, is sufficient without it; and sometimes in latter times necessarily administr'd without it; as it probably was in the very *First Days* of *Christianity*, especially when great Numbers were baptiz'd at a time; for we read in the *Acts* of the *Apostles* nothing to make us suspect the use of any additional *Circumstances*. Yet the use of *Vocal Prayer* at that solemnity is practis'd by the *Non-conforming*, as well as *Conforming Ministers*, because it is esteem'd to be agreeable to the *Nature* of that *Institution*; but not because it is necessary to the *Validity*, or *Essence* of it. This shews, therefore, that it is not unlawful to use what is, strictly speaking, an *Addition to Christ's Institution*. For tho' this *Author* is pleas'd in another place to urge that *Injunction* of *St. Paul's*, *Pray without ceasing*, upon this Head; yet I cannot conceive how that toucheth this
Point

Point so far as not to make *Vocal Prayer* an addition to the *Institution of Baptism*. For neither doth the *Apostle* in that Passage speak peculiarly of *Public Prayer* in a *Christian Congregation*, but probably of *Private Prayer*: nor doth he speak particularly of *Vocal and Audible Prayer*: nor can he be supposed to imply by this Precept that the *Administration of Baptism* necessarily requires *Vocal Prayer*: which if it do not imply, it cannot be to this *Writer's Purpose*. This *Author* likewise allows the Addition of some sort of *Sponsors*: which yet equally comes under the Imputation of being such an Addition to the *Institution of Christ*, as he left it, as is not necessary to the Validity of it; and equally seems to reflect upon the *Imperfection* of his *Institution*. What I would infer from hence is, that it is not a sufficient *Objection* against the *Use* of any thing at that Solemnity that it is an Addition to *Christ's Institution*, or that it is not necessary; which yet this *Author* seems to think sufficient; but that it is an *Addition* of such a Nature as is not agreeable to the design of the *Institution*, and takes off from the acceptableness of the *Office* to God. This is a very distinct Point from the other; and in order to shew that this cannot be prov'd of the *Prescriptions* here mention'd, I have the *two* following Observations to propose. I. It is proper, and agreeable to the nature, and design of *Infant-Baptism* that there should be something in the *Office* appropriated to that purpose, by which the *Infants* should know when they are come to Years of Discretion that they are oblig'd, by the *Covenant* made in their Names at *Baptism*, themselves to believe in *Jesus Christ*, and to live suitable to such a Faith; or otherwise not to expect any Benefit from their *Baptism*. Now whatever small Impropriety there may be in some Expressions used, yet since this is declared to be all intended in that part of the *Office* of *Sponsors* so much cavil'd at, both by the *Church* in the *Public Catechism*, and by the *Principal Defenders* of the *Cause of Conformity*, it is extremely unaccountable that any Persons should rather resolve to fix a stranger and harder Interpretation of their own upon this, than acquiesce in such *Declarations*. At least there is fair Leave given to all to interpret this Matter thus; and consequently nothing in this

impos'd upon them to *use*, or to permit to be used, but what is agreeable to the *Christian Religion*, and to the *end of Infant Baptism*. 2. Nor is it improper, or disagreeable to the nature of this *Institution*, after the Person is *Baptiz'd*, to declare him a *Christian*, and under the Obligations of a *Christian*, whether this be done by *Words* only, or by other sort of *Signs* only, or by *Words*, and *Signs* whose Intention is declar'd sufficiently by *Words* join'd to them at the same time. Accordingly after the *Baptism* is compleatly over, it is agreeable to the *Institution* to declare the Person so baptiz'd to be a *Christian*. and as such to be under all the Obligations of the *Christian Profession*, by *signing him with the sign of the Cross*, and declaring at the same time that the using that *Ceremony* is to this Purpose, and to *this* only. This is all that is, or ever was intended by the use of this *Ceremony*, before which the *Baptism* of the Person is declar'd by the *Public Acts* of the *Church* to be sufficient and valid. To say therefore that this looks as if *Baptism* were not compleat without it, when both those who conform, and those who dissent universally believe and acknowledge it to be so, is strangely unreasonable. To reject it on this account, or because it is an unnecessary Addition to the *Institution*, is to cast the same Reflexion upon any *Prayer*, or *Thanksgiving*, which is equally an Addition, and equally implies that the *Baptism* already perform'd is not valid without it. And to say that it is an *Addition* so disagreeable to the nature of this *Institution*, as that it cannot fitly be used in it, is to say something wholly distinct from the present *Objection*, and what I verily believe cannot be prov'd without putting such an *Interpretation* upon it as those who *prescribe* and *use* it do utterly disclaim: a Practice indeed which hath been very much us'd in this *Controversy*, but I think not very agreeable to Minds dispos'd to *Unity* and *Agreement*. Let it not therefore be again said by this zealous *Author*, that to persuade Christians to submit to the *use* of *Sponsors*, and of the *Cross*, in the *Celebration* of *Baptism*, is to persuade them to renounce the *Purity* of *Christ's Ordinance*, till he can prove that the *use* of these *Two Prescriptions* destroys the

Purity of the Ordinance; a Point which I should think it would better become him not to insist upon, as for the sake of the *Protestant Church* established amongst us, so for the sake of *those* whom he sometimes glories to follow. In the mean while it is some Satisfaction that when such sort of *Charges* are to be brought as prove a *single Compliance* as unlawful as a *constant* one, Recourse is had to this *Office*; and no such Charge brought against the *ordinary Offices* of our *Church*, on which our *Controversy* chiefly turns, and in which all *Christians* amongst us are concerned. In *these* I hope I may say he himself acknowledges that there are no *Additions destructive of the Purity of Christ's Institution*, unless he would be supposed to hold it lawful ever to renounce that *Purity* by complying with what destroys it: which would effectually take away all Force from that *Objection* of his which I have been now considering. But then he makes use of other *Arguments* against a *constant Compliance* even in the *ordinary Offices* of our *Church*, which I must now proceed to examine.

The *Third Argument* of those which I can discover in this *Introduction* against such a *Compliance* as I have been pressing is this, which is very frequently in the Mouth of this *Author*, and particularly insisted on, p. 74. *If a Compliance with some Things be requisite for the sake of Peace, who can say, where we shall stop? Must we comply with all Things not sinful for Peace sake? What if Ministers were obliged to preach with an Helmet on, to read always with Spectacles, to come to Church on Crutches? What if the Romish Ceremonies in Baptism, in solemn Festivals, in Consecration of Churches, in Exorcising, &c. should be insisted on? Must all who will not comply be thought unpeaceable? Or if the Obligation reacheth to some Things only, it is hard to fix Limits, and to give Reasons for them when we have done.*

I. The first *Answer* I shall make to this wild *Reasoning* shall be only to draw it up in the *Form* of a *Syllogism*, in which the Force of it will the more plainly appear. *The Obligation to regard the Peace of the Church doth not extend to all possible Instances in which Governors may require our Compliance: therefore it extends to no Instances at all.* If this
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be the *Conclusion* this *Writer* would draw, I desire to know what means his own Acknowledgment, that all *Christians* are obliged to regard it next to their own Purity; since this again destroys all such Obligation. If this be not the *Conclusion* he intends, all this *Argument* signifieth nothing to the purpose. For if notwithstanding this there lies an Obligation upon *Christians* to comply in *some* Things, the scrupled *Prescriptions* may be of *that* Number for ought any thing here said to the contrary. Again, *It is hard to fix the just Limits of this* Obligation; or to point out plainly to what *Bounds* it extends: therefore what? Therefore there is no such *Obligation* at all to comply in any Instances. This must be his *Inference*, if he design any thing by this *Argument* against *Compliance*. And I appeal to all the World of *Christians* if all the *Duties* of the *Gospel* may not be argued away after the same manner. For instance, it is hard to determine exactly what a Proportion of my Estate I am obliged to bestow in Charity; therefore I am not obliged to bestow any part of it. It is hard to fix the exact Bounds of our Obligation to *Temperance*; therefore there is no such Obligation. It is hard to fix the exact Measures of *Justice* in all manner of *Trade*, and *Commerce*; therefore there is no Obligation to it in any Instances. It is hard to fix the Bounds of *mutual Condescension* amongst *Christians*; therefore there is no such Duty. But if this *Author* disclaim the *Conclusion* I have fixed upon his *Reasoning* as I hope he doth, then it is visible to Persons of the lowest Capacity that there is nothing in it against the Lawfulness or Becomingness of submitting to the *established Prescriptions* for the sake of *Peace*. For if it do not follow from it that *Compliance* in all indifferent Instances is unlawful, it may be true, notwithstanding any thing here alleged, that *Compliance* in the *disputed Instances* is both lawful, and our Duty. It may be true that I am not obliged to submit to an *Hundred* Ceremonies for the sake of *Peace*; yet may be obliged, notwithstanding this, to submit to *Three*. It may be true that I am not obliged to submit to a Number of indecent, and ridiculous Observances; yet I may be obliged, notwithstanding this, to submit to *Three* which are not so. But,

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2. The same *Argument* will equally conclude against the *Compliance* of this *Author* and his *Brethren* with the *Subscription* required of them by the *Civil Power*. For they are no more obliged to subscribe all *Articles* which may be imposed, than they are to comply with all *Ceremonies* which may be imposed: and it is as hard to settle the exact Number of *Articles* they are obliged to *subscribe*, as it is the exact Number of *Ceremonies* they are obliged to *comply* with: and consequently, according to this *Argument*, they are not obliged to *subscribe* any *Articles*; since the *Magistrate* hath no Authority, according to this *Author*, to interpose in this *Case*. If, therefore, notwithstanding this *Objection*, they think it reasonable to comply so far as to subscribe 36 *Articles*; it may likewise be reasonable to comply so far as to submit to *Three Ceremonies*. The same may be said with respect to other Instances of *Compliance*, which have been proposed in the Name of the *dissenting Ministers*: but the Application is so easy that I need not insist upon it.

3. With the Leave, therefore, of this *Author* I must say it again, that it is sufficient Satisfaction to this *Question*, Where must we stop in this *Compliance* in indifferent Circumstances of *Worship* for the sake of *Peace*? To answer, *When our Imposers prescribe vain, senseless, indecent, ridiculous Ceremonies; or a troublesome Number of any sort to burthen the Public Worship.* This *Author* replies in his facetious way, *A pleasant Fancy! As if any Imposers of common Sense would own the Ceremonies they introduce to be vain, or indecent, &c!* I am the less surprized at this, because I have found him so often using the same artful way of making his *Adversary* ridiculous, *viz.* first fixing a Sense upon my Words which he thinks he can easily put out of Countenance; and then making himself pleasant with it. This I have reason to complain of here: for I know it's impossible for him to have been led by any of my Words to think me so *void of common Sense* as to make the *Imposers* Judges in this *Case*. When I say that we are obliged not to comply when any thing *sinful* is imposed, would not any fair *Disputant* understand this of things which *we* our selves (not the *Imposers*)

posers) think *sinful*. So when I say that when *ridiculous*, and *burthensome Ceremonies* are imposed, we may then with reason complain of *Governors* going beyond their Authority; would not any one who was willing to understand me, interpret this of *Ceremonies* which *we* our selves, not the *Imposers*, think so? Or would any one, who is sincerely disposed to set Things in the best Light, invent another Sense which cannot without the greatest Absurdity have been intended? I confess, tho' this *Author* hath taken no particular Notice of it, that with respect to the Point of *Compliance with imposed Ceremonies*, I have not expressed my self so clearly in that *Page* (P. I. p. 83.) to which he here refers, as I could wish. For I there use such Words as may be understood by some to signify that *Compliance* may be a Duty, let never so many and odd *Ceremonies* (not unlawful in themselves) be imposed: tho' indeed a *candid Reader* will see from my very Words that I speak this only of *Ceremonies* of which the worst that can be said is, that *they had better not have been commanded*. But I take this Opportunity to declare it to be my Judgment, that there may be such a *Complication of Circumstances*, and *Ceremonies in Worship* (which cannot be said to be in themselves *sinful*) so destructive of the *Simplicity of Christian Devotion*; so repugnant to the End of the several *Offices* of it, as that it may not be fitting for *Christians* to comply with them on that Account. I wish indeed it were in my Power to determine exactly the due Number, and Quality of *Ceremonies* to be complied with, so as to satisfy every Body concerned. But this is not the only *Case* in which we are forced to come short. The like cannot be done with respect to any other of the most momentous Points of *Evangelical Obedience*. We can do no more than lay down a *general Rule*, which we must leave to the *Consciences* of Men, as in the Sight of *God*, to apply to themselves in *particular Instances*. For thus it hath pleased *God*, even in the most material Points, to leave something to the Judgments and Consciences of Men to determine for *themselves*, that he may judge them according to their Behaviour in such Determinations, as it is truly and tho-

roughly *sincere*, and upright, or drawn aside by Passion, or Interest, or any worldly or carnal Motive. It appears therefore that I make the *People* themselves Judges concerning the Things imposed upon them: which wholly destroys all the *Sarcasms* of this *Author*, and returns them upon his own weak and groundless Mistake. I shall only add that it is impossible, by the *Rule* I have now laid down, for any to judge *Compliance* with the *established Prescriptions* for the sake of *Peace* to be unbecoming a *Christian*. *Kneeling at the Communion* is the only *Ceremony* in which all *Christians* are concerned: and no one can think this, supposing it lawful, to be either *indecent*, or *burthensome*. Nor can the *Two* other disputed *Impositions*, in which generally *they* only are concerned who have *Children*, add to the Number so as to make it *intolerable*. The *first* of these I am chiefly concerned about, because it belongs to that part of *Worship* in which all *Christians* ought to bear a part: but if any of these *Characters* can be fixed upon that *Ceremony*, it will be proved unfit *ever* to comply with it, as well as *always*. For upon this Supposition it is as unbecoming a *Christian* to comply with it *once a Year* for the sake of *Charity*, as once a *Month*; whereas the Persons I am concerned with will not contend against it thus far. The Result of what I have said is this, that the true way of arguing against a *Compliance* with our *Prescriptions* relating to the *Worship* of God is not, to say, we may as well be required to comply with numberless, vain, indecent *Ceremonies*, as with the *present*, which is false; or that it is hard to fix the exact Measures of *Compliance*, which yet cannot dissolve our Obligation to it in some Instances; but to prove that the particular Instances in which we are called upon to *comply*, are such as it is unbecoming a *Christian* to comply with, either for their *Number* or *Quality*. Nothing but this can take off our Obligation to the great Duty of *Condescension*, and *Compliance*: and therefore the Argument I am now considering is of no force for that Purpose.

Fourthly, The *Argument* against *Compliance* which seems to weigh most with this *Author*, to be most frequently in
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his Mouth, and to be thought most sufficient of it self to defend his Cause, is taken from that *Encouragement Compliance would give to Men of imposing Spirits to add more and more Impositions*, and from the Unlawfulness of giving such an *Encouragement*. This single *evil* Consequence of *Compliance* he thinks sufficient to counterbalance all the good Consequences of it, and as such proposeth it, p. 52. and again insists upon it, p. 77. and agreeably to this, p. 79. alleges that *Separation is necessary, as it is a disowning that Power which is unwarrantably pretended to, nay, flatly sinful, when it is exercised in the making unnecessary Prescriptions; and as it is the only way of disowning it which can be of any Significancy*. This way of arguing deserves seriously to be considered: and that the Tendency of it may be fully seen, I offer these following Observations.

1. Supposing a *Compliance* to encourage an *imposing Temper* in some Men, this is not a sufficient Reason against it. Our Saviour hath made *Compliance* and *Condescension*, *Placability* and *Forgiveness*, the Duty of *Christians*, tho' these Virtues may be said to encourage some Men in their prosecuting the Innocent with *Injuries*: nor did he think it enough to forbid any Man to be injurious to his Neighbour; but likewise lays it upon the injured Person, not always to insist upon his own Right, but to be ready to yield, comply, and forgive, for the sake of the *Peace*, and *Quiet* of *Humane Society*. *Compliance* in the ordinary Use of a *Liturgy*, to which this *Author* still professes a Readiness, encourage an *imposing Spirit*: for according to himself no one hath Right to prescribe even that *ordinary Use* of one: yet he thinks this lawful, and expedient; otherwise surely he would not declare his Inclination to comply with it. *Compliance* in the subscribing 36 *Articles*, upon the Injunction of the *Civil Magistrate*, who hath not, according to this *Author*, Authority to enjoin this, is an *Encouragement* of an *imposing Spirit*: and as this *Author* loves to argue sometimes, how doth he know but that this *Compliance* may tempt those in Power to impose 300 *Articles* upon him and his Brethren? Yet is this accounted lawful, and fitting to be submitted to, notwithstanding that the want

of *Authority* in the *Imposers*, and the *Fear* of more *Impositions*, plead as strongly against *Compliance* in this *Case*, as in the *scrupled Instances*. It is manifest, that in the *Case* of this *Subscription* they determine themselves merely by the nature of the *Propositions* to be *subscribed* to, and very easily swallow all the *Difficulties* they urge in other *Cases*, of the *Danger* and *Unlawfulness* of giving any *Encouragement* to the *Encroachments* of an *imposing Power*: which methinks should make them the more ready to own that the true *Reasons* for *Non-compliance* in the *Case* before us, must not be taken from the *want of Authority* in *Imposers*, or from the *Fear of encouraging an imposing Spirit*, which will equally conclude against all *Compliance*, but merely from the nature of the *Ceremonies* actually prescribed. But to refuse *Compliance* in one *Case* against which these *Objections* lie, and to practise it without *Reluctance* in another against which they equally lie, is not consistent, but strangely unaccountable: and overthrows the whole *Force* of these *Objections*, by shewing that *Compliance* may be lawful, and honourable, tho' the *Imposers* have no *Authority*, and should be encouraged by it to proceed in their *imposing Humour*; and that it is Time enough to think of *Non-compliance* when the *Impositions* themselves are such either in *Quality*, or *Number*, or both, as cannot fitly be complied with by *Christians*: which is the *Point* I am labouring to bring our *Controversy* to. I can easily apprehend that a *Compliance* may be unlawful, when every one of the *Instances* in which it is required may be said to be such as is not in it self, as to the *Matter* of it, sinful: and therefore am not concerned in what this *Author* urges for the *Proof* of this. But then I think there can be no *Proof* of this as to the *Case* before us, but by proving the *Impositions* established such as destroy the *End*, or corrupt the *Simplicity*, or by their *Number* intolerably burthen the *Celebration* of *God's* *Worship*; not by arguing from such *Topics* as we see equally destroy the *Lawfulness* of *Compliance* in those *Instances* in which this *Author* and his *Followers* are willing to practise it themselves. Last of all, Supposing that a *Compliance* would give *Encouragement*

to some *imposing Tempers*, I appeal to the whole World of *Christians*, if it be not a greater Evil to have any hand in giving Occasion to that *unchristian* Behaviour which is founded upon our *religious Differences*, than to practise a *Compliance*, and *Condescension*, from which some may take Occasion to do their Parts towards the prescribing more *Ceremonies* in the *Church*. The bad Consequences of the *former Method* are present, and apparent: the bad Consequences of the *latter* are not to come till those Persons have carried their Point: nor are they to be equalled to what we have seen to follow from the *former*, upon any probable Supposition. And again, I appeal to all who understand the *Gospel*, whether it be not much more agreeable to the Genius of it, to practise *Forbearance*, and *Compliance* till the very Time comes, when we find Men so encouraged by it as actually to impose *Ceremonies* inconsistent with the End, or nature of *Religion*, and *God's* Worship, and then to refuse a farther *Compliance*: whether this, I say, be not much more agreeable to the Genius of the *Gospel*, than to refuse *Compliance* at present, not because the *Ceremonies*, now imposed, are not fit to be complied with; (for this *Argument* supposeth the contrary) but because our *Compliance* may occasion the introducing such *Ceremonies* and *Forms* in Times to come, as it may not be fit for *Christians* to comply with. One thing I am sure of, that in this Method there can be no such thing as *mutual Compliance* in the most indifferent Matters for the sake of *Peace*, because this *Objection* lies equally against every *Instance* of it, that the receding from our supposed *Right* in one *Case* (tho' never so trivial) will influence those in Power to invade it in *others*, in which it will not be fit for us to recede from it: a way of Reasoning rather becoming the *Resentments* of the *Children of this World*, than the meek Dispositions of the *Children of Light*, and the *Subjects* of the *Prince of Peace*.

2. All that I have said hitherto hath been upon Supposition that *Compliance* with the *scrupled Impositions* might give Encouragement to some Men to attempt the introducing more and more into *God's* Worship; but now I

must observe that it is rather probable that *Compliance* would have a greater Force to prevent this, than *Non-compliance* hath. By *Compliance* here I do not mean a servile *Submission* to every thing that can be imposed, but a *Compliance* joined with the free Use of our own Judgments, and a modest and peaceable Representation concerning any thing which we apprehend may in Process of Time be of evil Consequence to the *Christian Church*. Such a *Compliance*, I say, would very probably have a better Effect to the preventing the Burthen of more *Impositions*, than such an *Opposition* as hath been made on the Part of those who have run into open *Separation*. In the *first* place they would by remaining in the *Church* have a greater Opportunity, and Capacity of preventing what they so much fear, than they can have whilst they are *out* of it. In the *next* place, this Method would certainly have much less of *Provocation*, and *Offence* in it, than which nothing hath more hindred all *Accommodation*: for *Opposition*, and *Non-compliance* on one side, more generally beget a zealous *Opposition*, and *Non-compliance* on the *other*, than *Condescension*, and a yielding *Temper*, when it is manifested to be free from *Baseness*, and *Servility*. And in my Judgment, this is the fundamental Reason for the general Rule of *Compliance* laid down in the *Gospel*, because it doth, generally speaking, tend more effectually to break the *Violences*, and quell the *Passions* of *others*, as well as to prevent our *own*, than the contrary Practice would do. Besides, it is observable that even at the *Restoration*, when it was much more in the *Will*, and *Power* of *Church-Men* than ever it is likely to be again, there was not one single *Ceremony* added to the *Church-Worship*: which Observation as it is very much to their Honour, so it is sufficient to silence this mighty Fear of more *Ceremonies*. It is not what one Man, or a few have said in their *Passion*, that is to determine the Reasonableness of this Fear; but what is in the *Will*, and *Power* of a *Majority* of *ruling Clergy*. And as *Experience* hath shewn that they have not hitherto once publicly attempted to introduce more *Ceremonies*, so is it much more unlikely than ever that such an Attempt should be successful,

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either in the present, or future Times: and is not this sufficient to take away the Force of the present *Objection*, wholly founded upon the Fear of encouraging the Imposition of more *Ceremonies*? For if even as things stand at present there doth not appear to be *Will*, and *Power* enough to do it: much less will there be when a Number of Men comply who will be *against* all such Attempts. I shall only add, that the Remains of any Degree of what is here called the *imposing Spirit*, as far as I can judge, is wholly kept alive, and vigorous by the Method some have taken to oppose it: and would in all Probability have been made much less zealous than it is by such a *Compliance* as I have been speaking of.

3. To the *latter* part of the *Argument* now before me I reply, that supposing it *flatly sinful* in *Governors* to exercise their Power in making what you call *unnecessary Prescriptions*; it may, notwithstanding this, be as *flatly sinful* in others to refuse *Compliance* in such *Prescriptions* as cannot be said to destroy the End, or Acceptableness of *Divine Worship*: as it may be *flatly sinful* in any Man to invade my *Right* in a Matter of no great Importance; and may likewise be *flatly sinful* in me not to recede from this *Right* for the sake of *Peace*, and the *Public Good*. Nor will it be any Excuse for my Sin, that another is likewise guilty of Sin. Let it be therefore that *Governors* sin in making *unnecessary Prescriptions*; it may be equally true, that others sin in not complying with them: because the *Duty* of *Inferiors* doth not merely respect their *Governors*; but they are bound to regard the Good of the whole *Church of Christ*, and to take that lawful Method which most conduceth to the Increase of *Peace* and *Charity*, whether their *Governors* have done their Duty, or no: and may be obliged to give up their *Right* for the sake of the *Public Good*, tho' not for the sake of their *Governors*.

4. Last of all, I offer this to *Consideration*, that *Compliance* in the *Case* we are now considering is perfectly consistent with the disowning the Authority of those who impose these *Ceremonies* in this *Imposition*, and therefore not

necessary to that Purpose. As the receding from a *Right* invaded by an injurious *Neighbour* doth not imply in it an Acknowledgment of his *Right* to invade it: As the *constant*, or *ordinary* Use of a *Liturgy*, (one of which this *Author* and his *Brethren* are ready to comply with) doth not, according to themselves, imply in it an Acknowledgment of any *Authority* in *Church-Governors* to impose it: As their *subscribing* 36 *Articles* (which to some judicious Persons seems a greater Grievance than the using 36 Ceremonies in Worship) doth not imply in it an Acknowledgment of the *Authority* of the *Civil Power* to impose this upon them; so neither doth *Compliance* with the *established Prescriptions* imply in it an Acknowledgment of the *Authority* of any in *Power* to fix and appoint them. The *Clergy* themselves are not obliged to assent to such an *Authority* in that Sense in which it hath been opposed, or in any other but that which I have mentioned in the beginning of this *Reply*. As for the *Laity*, there is not the least Obligation upon them in this Point: which is fully sufficient for the present Purpose. And how the *Stiffness* of some *Conformists* can alter this Matter, is as hard to understand as it is to apprehend that a *Neighbour's* persisting to injure me, can render my Forgiveness an Acknowledgment of his *Right*, and *Authority* to injure me. But notwithstanding this, it seems the *Cause* must not be deserted, because *Separation* is the *only way of disowning this Authority which can be of any Significancy*. It is, I acknowledge, the most flagrant way of disowning it; but as I have shewn already, not so effectual to prevent the Evil feared; nor so free from such evil Consequences as a good *Christian* would rejoice to prevent, as the other Method I have proposed; and consequently not of so much *Significancy* in the Account of the *Gospel*, or of the *Law of Prudence*.

Thus have I impartially considered every *Objection* I can find in this *Introduction* against the Lawfulness of *Compliance* with the present *Ecclesiastical Establishment*; and this chiefly with respect to the *Laity*; because if there be nothing here said sufficient to keep *them* from *Compliance*,

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this is fully sufficient to my present Purpose, the Justification of *constant Conformity* to the Church of England.

But I find something here added (p. 82, 83.) concerning *Occasional* and *Constant Communion*, which I must take a little notice of, if I may be so bold without being represented again by this artful Writer as running into the common Cry upon these *Topics*. He knows very well that I never charg'd the Practice of *Occasional Conformity* as *Hypocrisy*, but have publicly vindicated it from that Imputation: and therefore I am not at all concern'd in what he saith on this Head. Nor do I argue that we must of necessity do all such things for Peace sake *always*, which we may lawfully do *sometimes*. Nor do I draw any Argument from an *Occasional Compliance* with our *Impositions*, but what I should equally draw from a verbal Concession that *Compliance* is *materially lawful*. And what I say is, that the *Impositions* in our Church are of that Nature, and so little burthensome, that they may honourably be constantly comply'd with for the sake of *Public Good* by all those *Christians* who think them, in the matter of them, *lawful*. Now there is a very good reason why *Occasional Communion* is not the only thing which may be expected from such Persons in this Case, because that prevents none of the evil Consequences of *Separation*, and removes not the occasion of the *Unchristian Behaviour* amongst us. The only End propos'd by it is to testify *Charity*, i. e. that they who practise it believe what they comply with to be in it self *lawful*, which cures no more Evils, and remedies no more Inconveniences, than a verbal Declaration to that purpose would do; and by the Confession of this *Author* himself heretofore, hath added Fuel to the Heat of many on all sides who cannot understand it. Whereas the chief *End Christians* ought to have in their eye, after their own Salvation is secur'd, is to prevent all *unchristian Behaviour* in others, and to lessen as much as in them lies the occasions of *Hatred*, and *Malice*, or any other Sin amongst Men. It is not enough to be free our selves from these Vices: It is not enough to be persuaded that there is no *just*

occasion given for the Mistakes and *Violences* of others: but we must, in Instances of no great Consideration, recede from our own *Right*, and retrench our own *Liberty* for the sake even of a single *Christian*, much more of a great Number; even for *fear* of giving occasion to their ill Behaviour, much more when we are assured by *Experience* that we do so. But (it is here added) for any to say that if I am with them at all I must be with them always, is as if a Man should tell me that if I can once, to shew myself sociable, and to shew that I don't count the Food poisonous, eat of a certain Dish of Meat which some are extremely fond of, I must have it at every Meal, or I shall shew myself an unpeaceable and disorderly Man. So likewise (p. 80.) a Man may lawfully bear a weak Preacher: but to oblige himself to bear no other would be sinfully to ensnare himself. A Child may comply with his Parents in taking some Diversion: but to spend the greatest part of his time in it cannot be excusable on any Pre-*ence*. St. Paul comply'd with Circumcision in a particular instance: but had he done it always, he had subverted the Gospel.

I have already said what is sufficient to shew the little force of such arguing in the Case before us. But because I would not seem to overlook any thing in this *Introduction* (on which I am as willing as the *Author* of it that the Issue of our Controversy should be put) I have the following Observations to offer.

1. If this *Author* would not, for the sake of preventing the *unchristian Behaviour* of others, be confin'd in his eating; I must tell him that he is not so good-natur'd and compliant, as St. Paul was, who declared something very contrary to this, and often ventured the health of his Body for the sake of his *weak Brethren*. Indeed the only *Rule*, as I have already observed, which he went by in such Cases as this, was the Interest of the *Church*, and the Good of his *Fellow Christians*. And therefore before he be brought in as an Instance against *Compliance*, it must be proved that *Compliance* is not so much for the honour of the *Gospel*, and the good of other *Christians*, as *Non-compliance* is. Otherwise, his *Example* can signify nothing.

For

For if *Compliance* tends more to the good of the Church than *Non-compliance*, he would himself certainly practice it, were he now alive. He therefore that would prove any thing from St. Paul's Example against *Compliance*, must first prove the contrary to this: and then there needs not his Example against it: for he never was against any *Compliance* but what was against the *Interest* of *Christianity*, and against such a *Compliance* we are all oblig'd to declare both in Words and Practice.

2. The Instances here given by this *Author* are not at all parallel to the *Case* in debate; and therefore cannot prove any thing against *Compliance* with the *Establish'd Prescriptions*. To eat of the same Dish always is a much more wearisome and burthenfome thing, than to Kneel once a Month at the *Communion*, or to permit a Child to be baptiz'd after the *Establish'd* manner once in many Years perhaps. Now tho' he who should refuse to eat of the same Food every day for the sake of *Peace*, might possibly escape the censure of unpeaceableness; yet he who would not comply so far as to eat of the same Dish (which he acknowledges *wholesome*) once a Month, or once a Year, for the sake of preventing any *unchristian Behaviour* in his Brethren, seems to me to have but little sense of that *Charity* which fired St. Paul's Breast, and govern'd his Actions. So that tho' a Man be not oblig'd in *one* Case, it doth not follow but that he may be oblig'd in *another* very different from it. Nor is there any thing in the *Compliance* we are speaking of which answers to the being confin'd always to the bearing of a weak Preacher: tho', supposing there were, I must confess it to be my Opinion that a *Christian* who submits to this Inconvenience merely out of a *Charitable Principle*, for fear of being the occasion of any thing prejudicial to the *Christian-Church*, shall not lose his Reward for such a *Condescension*. That he *sinfully ensnares himself* is not true, or that he endangers his own Salvation by it; for there is otherwise Provision enough for *that*, and he is not under the least Obligation to be influenced by the *Preacher* any farther than as he appears to speak *Truth*, of which he is here

here suppos'd a capable Judge. Much less is there any thing in *Conformity* which bears any relation to a *Child's* complying so far with his *Parents* as to spend the greatest part of his time in Idle Diversions: for this is in such sense so *sinful* as that no *Circumstances* can make it otherwise. *Almighty God* hath made the contrary the Duty of every Man: but he hath not forbid *Kneeling* at the *Communion* once a Month, or submitting to such Prescriptions as hinder not the regard to our own Salvation, or break not in upon our *Duty* in any respect. A *Child* cannot lawfully mispend his Time, upon the Command of a *Parent*, any more than he can lawfully Swear, or Steal upon the Command of his *Parent*, and how therefore can this come up to the Point before us? I should have a very mean Opinion of the *Dutifulness*, or *good Temper* of a *Child*, who should not oblige his Father so far as at his Command to spend such a portion of Time in recreating himself, as cannot hinder his Duty, or necessary regard to his own *Salvation*, tho' he should suppose this matter not to come within the verge of *Paternal Authority*: and yet this may be much more *troublesome* than the Case before us. Least of all is *St. Paul's Noncompliance* in things which, in their Consequences, would have subverted the *Christian-Church*, an Argument against *Compliance* in matters which would have no such effect; but we have reason to think the quite contrary in the opinion of the same *Apostle*, who esteems the removing the occasions of *Uncharitable*, and *Unchristian Behaviour* amongst *Christians* a glorious way of edifying, and building up the *Church of Christ*. To summ up what hath been said: It may not be the Duty of a *Christian* to comply so far as to eat of the same Dish *always*: but yet it may be his Duty to comply so far as to eat of it *once* a Week, when all the *Neighbourhood* meet to enjoy one another's Company, and when the refusal of such a *Compliance* may be the occasion of great Breaches, and Hatred amongst those he accounts *weak Brethren*. A Man may not perhaps be oblig'd to comply so far as to engage himself to hear none but a *weak Preacher*; yet may be oblig'd so far to comply as to do things which bear no proportion to such an

Inconvenience as this. A Child may not sin against God under pretense of *Compliance* with a *Parent*, or do that which he thinks unlawful, and inconsistent with his own Salvation: but yet a Christian may be obliged to comply with others in what is not in it self unlawful, and inconsistent with his own Salvation. In this *Instance* it is the *thing* itself, whether commanded by the *Parent* or no, which is unlawful for the *Child* to chuse to do. In the *Case* before us, we are speaking of the *Compliance* with *Impositions*, which are suppos'd in the present Debate to be in themselves of that Nature that a *Christian* might lawfully chuse them, and practise them, were they not *impos'd*. But,

3. What need there any more Words, when it is so evident that if these *Instances* prove any thing against *Compliance*, they touch those very *Instances* in which this *Author* and his *Brethren* allow *Compliance* to be lawful, and worthy of a *Christian*? For instance, If they prove against the necessity of *Compliance* with the present *Establishment*, they must likewise prove the same with respect to *Compliance* in the *constant* use of an *Imposed Liturgy*; nay in the *ordinary* use of it: to the *former* of which a *Compliance* hath been heretofore offered in the name of two Thirds of the *Dissenters* in *England*, and to the *latter* is even now promis'd in the *Introduction* before us. Whereas if the *Arguments* before-mentioned signify any thing, they must lie harder against *Compliance* in this *Case*, then in *Kneeling* once a Month, or permitting the Sign of the *Cross* to be used after *Baptism*. Nay, How hard will these *Arguments* lie against *Compliance* in all *Instances* which are necessary to the joining in all parts of *Public Worship* (concerning which our main Dispute is) against such a *Compliance*, I say, for the space of a whole Year, which yet hath been allow'd of, if not advised, by some of the greatest of this *Author's Brethren*? For if these *Arguments* prove a more extended *Compliance* to be either inconsistent with the Duty of a *Christian* to himself, or so intolerably burthensome as not to be supported, or a sinful ensnaring of himself, or a *Subversion* of the *Christian Church*; I fear it will be hard to exempt an *annual Compliance* from the same Guilt, or to make

make it eligible to a *Christian* on any account. But if they do not, they prove nothing against a *constant Compliance* with the *Establish'd Prescriptions*: but leave it still true, that they may honourably be comply'd with by all *Christians* for the sake of the *Public Good*, and the *Peace and Interest* of the *Christian-Church*. This particular Instance of *Compliance*, allow'd by great Men of the *Separation*, I the rather mention, that I may shew this *Author* how indifferent a matter some very considerable Men of his own side have thought a *Compliance* little differing from that against which he hath open'd as violently as if it would be the scandal of *Christianity*, and the ruin of the *Gospel*; and that I may move him to consider whether more modest Accusations would not better become him in a *Cause* in which so great a *Latitude* hath been allow'd of by his *Brethren*.

I have one thing more to offer peculiar to this *Author* himself, and that is, that if these *Instances* prove any thing against *Compliance* with the *Establish'd Church*, they will leave no room for the *Constant Compliance* of any Persons for the sake of the *Peace* of the *Neighbourhood*, were his own *Scheme* reduc'd to *Practice*. For I cannot see how any *Compliance* can be honourable upon this *Author's* Principles, but such an one as is indeed no *Compliance* at all; a submitting to what we do in all respects approve of our selves, *i. e.* a doing nothing for the sake of any Body but of our selves.

It remains only now that some notice be taken of the *Motion* this *Author* makes, p. 91. at the *End* of this *Introduction*. To which I have this to reply in general, that were all the things he mentions capable of a strict *Demonstration* as true as any in the *Mathematics*, it would be a very great *Aburdity* to put so important a *Cause* upon this *Issue*, because so few of those many *Christians* whose *Concern* it is, are capable of understanding such a *Demonstration* of many of these *Points*. But to free the *Reader* from the *Cloud* that this *Conclusion* of the *Introduction* may draw over his *Mind*, I shall be more particular.

1. It is plain, therefore, from what hath been already said in this *Reply*, that there is no need of proving that an Authority was left by Christ to any Persons to make unnecessary Prescriptions: because *Compliance* may be worthy of a Christian, notwithstanding the *Imposers* have no Authority. This I have prov'd as well from the *Concessions* and *Practices* of this *Author* and his *Brethren*, as from the *Reason* of the *Thing* itself: so that, God be thanked; it is not so bad with the *Christian-Church* that we are oblig'd in *Conscience* to wait for *Peace* and *Unity* till all that vast variety of Opinions concerning the extent of the *Authority* left, and the *Persons* to whom it is left, be reduc'd to one common, and universal Judgment. This is the Subject of the 91, and 92 Pages.

2. It is demanded how far *Compliance* is to go, and where to stop. I have already shewn that it is no Argument against *Compliance* in any particular Case that we cannot fix the exact Bounds of it, any more than it is against the Practice of any other *Christian Virtue*. That it doth not extend to all possible Instances in themselves lawful I agree with this *Author*. But I think it very certain that there is no such Virtue as *Compliance* in the Case now before us, if it be not to extend itself to all such *Instances* as are consistent with the *Ends* of Religion, and the nature of God's Worship: and together with this I remark that there is but one Ceremony, viz. *Kneeling* at the *Communion*, which is annexed to the *Public Worship* of our *Church* in which the *Laitie* are concern'd, and this a posture very agreeable to *Prayer* which is then always used. I extend it therefore to such things as are not only lawful, but of that Nature that *Compliance* with them is more worthy of a *Christian*, all things consider'd, than the refusal of it; which I take to answer to what the *Apostle* meant by *Expedient* in that *Text* here quoted, *All things are lawful for me, but all Things are not expedient*: which words, if they can be supposed of any concern to our present Cause, may justly be interpreted to signify amongst other things that a Christian is oblig'd to restrain the *Liberty* which he sup-

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poseth

poseth *Christ* to have left him, consider'd absolutely by himself, and to give it up in many Instances when the good of the *Church* requires it.

3. As for the Judgment what is so lawful, as to be fit to be submitted to, it must lie entirely in the breast of the Persons who are to practice *Compliance*. They are under no Obligation as I know of, but to take the greatest Care possible to judge rightly : Nor do I attempt any thing in what I have written but to assist them in that Judgment, by removing some Prejudices out of their way. If they judge that they have more reasons to think any thing *prescribed* unlawful, than to think it lawful ; it is my Opinion that no Command of others, nor any other Consideration can bear them out in complying with it. But I am not now concerned with any who doubt of this, but only with such as think all the *Circumstances* of the ordinary Parts of *Public Worship* such, as that Compliance with them is sometimes both *lawful*, and *expedient*.

4. As for the *Argument* I use for such a *Compliance* as I am pressing, I think it founded on the Will of God, and the most affecting possible to a *Christian* Heart next to that taken from our own Innocence, *viz.* that it would remove some of the Occasions of *Uncharitableness*, and *unchristian Behaviour* from amongst our *Brethren* : and therefore is more worthy of a *Christian* than the contrary, which increaseth the Occasion of Sin amongst *Christians*. This sad Consequence all on all Sides must answer for, who do not their Parts towards the preventing it. The chief Arguments against a *Compliance* are *consequential* : and therefore I wonder this *Author* should seem to find fault with such. Those which he hath alleged I have impartially considered ; and so I hope have answered his Demands on this Head.

Last of all, I must remind this *Author* that the Point between us is not whether a more perfect *Scheme* may not be invented than the *established* one ; or whether that which he hath favoured the World with, be not more eligible. I hope he himself would not venture the overturning the present Settlement, upon a Prospect of settling his peculiar

Form :

Form : and if he do not intend this by promising it, as I have too much *Charity* for him to think he doth, it is plain the only *Question* is, Whether *Compliance* with the present *Established Church* be worthy of a *Christian* or no. I will not put so great a *Task* upon *him*, as he is willing to put upon *us* : and tho' I might with equal *Grace* put it upon him to demonstrate so clearly as to convince all *Persons* concerned, that all the *Claims* here pointed at, as on the side of the *Church*, have no *Ground* ; and that his *Scheme* only is founded on *Reason*, and *Scripture* ; yet in return to all the *Particulars* he hath mentioned, I desire but one thing to be clearly made out on *his Side*, and that is that, taking the *World* as it is, *Nonconformity* is more for the *Honour of God*, and of *Christianity* ; more for the *Edification* of the *Church* ; more worthy, on any *Account*, of a *Disciple of Jesus Christ*, than *Conformity* to the *Established Church*. Let this *one* thing be cleared, there is no need of having *Recourse* to other *Arguments* ; I may venture to promise in the *Name* of many others, as well as my own, that we will heartily join with *him* in the *Prosecution* of the same *Cause*.

Thus have I honestly, and impartially considered what is alleged in this *Introduction* ; not omitting any *Particular* in which I, or the *Cause* I have undertaken, can possibly be supposed to be concerned. I have fairly declared that I put the whole *Cause* upon this, agreeably to what *Mr. Calamy* seems to expect of me. I have here at the *End* pointed out the one single *Point* on which our *Debate* doth so entirely depend, that all others are superfluous, and insignificant : and on this I fix. If he see fit to reply seriously to what I have said upon *this Head*, without doubt what he advanceth will have its due *Weight* : but if he have recourse to any other *Topics*, and wander from *this*, I think such a *Behaviour* may justly be looked upon as a designed avoiding of the only main *Point* between us, and accordingly be neglected, without any *Crime*.

POSTSCRIPT.

*Relating to the Third Part of Mr. Calamy's
Defense of Moderate Nonconformity.*

I Have in *this Treatise*, and in a *former Defense* impartially considered, and particularly answered to, every thing material alleged by Mr. Calamy in the *First*, and *Second Parts* of his *Defense of Moderate Nonconformity*. There remains still the *Third Part* of his *Defense*, to which it may be thought necessary to reply : concerning which I have the following Observations to make.

1. It is so full of Abuses, and palpable Mistakes, and Misrepresentations, that I would desire nothing of any Reader but that he would be so just as to lay before him, at the Time he reads it, what I have written in the *Second Part* of the *Reasonableness of Conformity*, to which it is designed as an Answer : and then I should not fear the evil Effect either of his unworthy *Reflexions*, or of his strange *Misrepresentations*. It is on the Account of *these* that I cannot return him the *Complement* he is pleased to make me, that if he write again he will *bring the Art of Chicanerie to Perfection*, (which is an *innocent Art*) but must needs say, that if he go on as he hath begun, he is in danger of bringing a much worse *Art to Perfection*, *viz.* that of *Misrepresentation*, and *unjust Insinuation*.

2. This *Author* himself hath now put the whole of our *Cause* upon what he hath advanced in the *Introduction* to the *Second Part* of his *Defense*, to which I have made a distinct Reply in the foregoing Papers ; and am willing to

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have

have the whole Matter brought to the same Point. Upon this Account, neither *he*, nor any one else can blame me if I avoid a long, and tedious Diversion to what must be chiefly *Personal*: since all that concerns the *Causes* of *Conformity*, and *Nonconformity* in their present State, he himself professeth to have comprised in that *Introduction*.

3. That I may not be thought wholly without Reason to overlook this *Third Part* of his *Defense*, I observe that the *Second Part* of the *Reasonableness* of *Conformity*, to which *this* professeth to reply, is digested under *Two Heads*: the *former* of which undertakes to answer those *Arguments* which were brought by this *Author* for the *ejected Ministers* continuing their *public Ministry*; and the *Second* to consider the *Arguments* proposed by *him* in Justification of the *Nonconformity* of the *Laity*.

As to the *former* of these I went over every *Argument* particularly by it self, and endeavoured to shew that none of them were of any Force, without supposing it more for the Glory of *God*, and the Benefit of his *Church*, all things considered, that their *public Ministrations* should be continued, than the contrary: that this was the Point to be proved, which, if it can be proved, I acknowledge for my part, makes these and all other *Arguments* unnecessary, and needless, being alone sufficient to justify them. And now what *Answer* do we here meet with to this? Can this be denied, or not? No, on the contrary it is acknowledged, and sometimes it is declared to be supposed under every *Argument*, and I am taxed with a Fault in not taking it always into the Account. Upon which I take the Liberty to say, that this is a plain *Alteration* of the *State* of every *Argument* from what it was at first: and that what I have said is true, that all these *Arguments*, either *without*, or *with* the Proof of this one Point are *insignificant*, and *useless*; and consequently that this is the *sole Point* to be insisted on in order to justify the Continuation of the *public Ministrations* either of the *past*, or *present* dissenting Teachers. And whether this *one Point* be made out, or not, must, according to this *Author* himself, be determined

ned by what is alleged in the fore-mentioned *Introduction*, and in my *Reply* to it: and so there cannot be supposed any Necessity of multiplying Words in this place.

Under the *Second* principal *Head* of the *Second Part* of the *Reasonableness* of *Conformity*, I went over every *Argument* by it self, which had been alleged by this *Writer* in *Justification* of the *Nonconformity* of the *Laiety*: and endeavoured to shew that they were not sufficient for the Purpose intended. Now he himself hath comprised the whole of what is sufficient for their *Justification* in his *Introduction*, and desires it may depend upon what is there said: for which Reason I have chosen to make a very particular *Answer* to that, desiring that the *Cause* I have undertaken may stand or fall with what I have advanced in this Answer. And on this Account every one must acknowledge it wholly needless for me to tire the *Reader* with *Repetitions*, and Matters purely *personal*, in order to *vindicate* my own former *Reasonings*: concerning which I freely leave the *Reader* to judge, provided he will be so just as to take my Sense from my own *Book*, and not from this *Author*, against the *Justness* of whose *Representations* I think myself obliged to give public Notice.

After I have gone over all the *Arguments* in *Defense* of the *dissenting Laiety*, I come to consider the *Circumstances* which, according to this *Author*, make *constant Communion* with the *Church Established* to be unlawful: and this I do at some Length from p. 186. to p. 204. This Part of the *Controversy* likewise is thrown by himself into his *Introduction*, in which he insists upon those *Circumstances* which make *constant Compliance* with our *Impositions* unlawful: and accordingly I have followed him in my *Reply* to it; so that there is no need in *this* place of repeating what is, at his own Desire, transferred to *another*.

After this follows, in the fore-mentioned *Book*, p. 205. a *Parallel* between the Arguings of the *Dissenters* on one side; and some *Church-men* on the *other*, against their *Compliance* with one another. This is not a Matter of absolute Importance in our *Cause*: and was designed to make
all

all Persons, on all Sides, sensible of the Weakness of some sort of Arguings against *mutual Compliance*. What is said to this Purpose I must particularly desire the *Reader* to read in my own Words, because this *Author* hath left out *many*, I may say, *all* the most material Passages in the *Representation* he pretends to give of this Matter. I cannot express myself better, or more clearly, than I have in this Point: and therefore can only appeal to the *Reader* whether my *Representation* of it have been fairly answered, or no.

Thus have I given some Account why no more particular Notice is taken of the *Third Part* of his *Defense*: and think it fully sufficient to say that I follow his own Desire in putting the whole *Issue* of the *Cause*, handled in this *Third Part*, on my *Reply* to his *Introduction*.

4. If any *Persons* be resolved to think otherwise, I chuse rather to suffer in their Opinion, than to weary out myself, and others with needless *Repetitions*. Yet, for their Satisfaction if they will, either in private *Conversation*, or by *Letter*, or any more *public* way, point out any particular Matter, which they judge of Importance, in *this*, or any other part of Mr. *Calamy's* Defense, passed over by me; I promise that I will impartially consider it, and sincerely give them my Thoughts upon it: tho' I am not sensible that I have overlooked one single Point, which he himself, or any of his *Friends* can think *material* in this *Cause*. Nay, tho' I have resolved to trouble the World no more with Matters purely *personal*, relating to this *Controversy*; yet I am ready to give Satisfaction to any who want it, concerning any incidental Point in the whole of what I have written: particularly as to this *Author's* accusing me of misrepresenting Mr. *Baxter's* Concessions in favour of *Episcopacy* (which he hath, against plain, and positive Proof, and without the least Foundation, continued to do in his *Third Part*, p. 200.) I doubt not to prove to any one, except himself, that the *Mistake*, and *Misrepresentation* lieth wholly on his Side.

5. Last of all, Let any one but consider what Mr. *Olyffe* hath had Occasion to observe concerning his Behaviour

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to him; let any one but read his Performance, and see with what Insolence and Contempt he often treats his *Adversaries*; with what Artifice he rather chuses to make such a false Representation of them and their Principles as may render them odious to his *Readers*, than to state their Arguments fairly, or answer them candidly; let any one but call to mind the frequent Occasions I have found to complain of his laying such Things, and such Principles to my Charge as never once entered into my Thoughts; let any one but review his whole Behaviour from the very first beginning of this *Controversy* to the last Word he hath written in it: and I dare say, I cannot be blamed if I have so much Regard to my own *Quiet* as to lay aside all Thoughts of having any thing to do with so *unaccountable* a *Writer* for the future; at the same time heartily forgiving him every injurious *Word*, and *Representation*, whether designed, or not designed. Were I a Well-wisher to his *Cause*, I would entreat him to alter his Method of handling it: but if he be determined to go on as he hath begun, he must not wonder if he should at length raise himself up an *Adversary*, who may handle him as he deserves. For my own part, I wish *him* well, and so take Leave.

E I N I S.

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