

in the Scripture sense. And I desire to see it proved, that it was not a presumptuous Innovation in them whosoever they were, that after the days of the Apostles Ordained a new sort of Presbyters in the Church that should have no power of the Keys. 4. They that must use the Keys, must have Power to use them. But Parish Bishops must use them (as the nature and necessity of the work doth prove:) Therefore Parish Bishops must have the Power. If only one man in a Diocess of an hundred or two hundred Churches shall have the power of the Keys, we may know after all the talk of Discipline, what Discipline to expect.

SECT. 20. Object. Why blame you Lay-chancellors, Registers, Proctors, &c. when you set up Lay-elders? we are as well able to call Chancellors Ecclesiastical, as you can call Lay-elders so.] Answ. I never pleaded for Lay-elders: If other men erre, will it justifie your error? But I must tell you, an unordained man in a single Parish, having power only to assist the Pastor in Government, is far unlike a Lay-Court to Govern all the Churches of a Diocess.

SECT. 21. Object. Do not your Arguments against Bishops for excluding Discipline, make as much for the casting out of Ministers, of whom you complain in your Reformed Pastor for neglect of Discipline?] Ans. 1. The Nature of Prelacy as set up in England, where only one man had the Government of so many Churches, unavoidably excludeth it, if the best men were Bishops (till it be otherwise formed:) But the nature of a Parochial Episcopacy is fitted to promote it. 2. Those Presbyters that I blamed for neglecting the higher acts of Discipline, do yet keep away more prophane persons from the Lords Supper in some one Church, then ever I knew kept away in all places under the Prelates. 3. If Ministers sinfully neglect Discipline, yet as Preachers and Guides, in publick worship, &c. they are of unspeakable need and value to the Church: But few Bishops of England
preached

preached ordinarily: And 4. We are desirous that Bishops (shall continue as Preachers, but not as Diocesan excluders of Parochial Church-Discipline.

Sect. 22. *Object.* By pretending to agree with them that say there were no Presbyters in Scripture times, you would put down Presbyters, and then the Government of the Church will be such as you blame. *Ans.* It is the thing I plead for, that every Church may have such Bishops as they had in the Apostles days, and not meer (new devised Presbyters) that are of another Office and Order.

Sect. 23. *Object.* Bishops had Deacons to attend them in the Scripture times, though not Presbyters; therefore it follows not that Bishops had then but One Congregation. *Ans.* Yes beyond doubt: For Deacons could not, and did not perform the Pastoral part in the whole publick worship of any stated Churches. They did not preach (as Deacons) and pray and praise God in the publick Assemblies, and administer the Sacraments: It's not affirmed by them that are against us: therefore there were no more Churches then Bishops.

Sect. 24. *Object.* But what doth your Arguing make against the other Episcopal Divines that are not of the opinion that there were no meer Presbyters in Scripture times? *Ans.* 1. Other Arguments here are as much against them, though this be not (if they maintain that sort of Episcopacy which I oppose.) 2. They also confess the smallness of Churches in Scripture times: (as I have shewed out of Bishop Downam;) and that is it that I plead for.

Sect. 25. *Object.* But if you would have all reduced to the state that *de facto* the Church Government was in in Scripture times, you would have (as but one Church to a Bishop, so) but One Bishop to a Church; as D^r. H. Dissert. 4 c. 19, 20, 21, 22. hath proved copiously, that is,

that Scripture mentioneth no assistant Presbyters with the Bishop: and would that please you, that think a single Congregation should have a Presbyterie? You should rather as he teacheth you, c. 21. p. 237. be thankful to Ignatius, and acknowledge the dignity of your Office, *ab eo primario defensore astrui & propugnari.*]

Answ. As we make no doubt from plain Scripture to prove, (and have proved it) that single Churches had then many Presbyters (some of them at least:) So having the greatest part of Fathers and Episcopal Divines of our mind herein, (even Epiphanius himself) we need not be very solicitous about the point of Testimony or Authority. 2. We had rather of the two have but one Pastor to a Congregation, then one to a hundred or two hundred Congregations, having a Presbyter under him in each, authorized only to a part of the work. 3. Either the distinct Office of the Presbyters is of Divine Institution, to be continued in the Church, or not. If not, Bishops or some body it seems may put down the Office. If it be, then it seems all Gods Universal standing Laws (even for the species of Church Officers) are not contained in Scripture. And if not in Scripture, where then? If in the Fathers, 1. How shall we know which are they, and worthy of that name and honor? 2. And what shall we do to reconcile their contradictions? 3. And what number of them must go to be the true witnesses of a Divine Law? 4. And by what note may we know what points so to receive from them, and what not?

But if it be from Councils that we must have the rest of the Laws of God (not contained in the Scripture.) I. Is it from all or some only? If from all, what a case are we in, as obliged to receive Contradictions and Heresies? If from some only, which are they, and how known, and why they rather then the rest? Why not the second of Ephesus as well as the first at Constantinople. But this I shall not now further

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prosecute, unless I were dealing with the Papists (to whom have said more of it, in another writing.)

4. Ignatius his Presbyters were not men of another Office, nor yet set over many Churches that had all but one Bishop: But they were all in the same Churches with the Bishop, and of the same Office, only subject to his moderation or presidency for Unity and Order sake: and this we strive not against, if limited by the general Rules of Scripture.

SECT. 26. Object. Those that you have to deal with say not, that [There were no Presbyters in the Apostles days, but only that in the Apostles writings, the word [Bishops] always signifies Bishops, and the word Elders either never or but rarely Presbyters. But it is possible for them to be in the time of those writings that are not mentioned in those writings; and the Apostles times were larger then their writings, as you are told *Vind. against the Lond. Minist. p. 106.*] Ans. 1. The words I cited (from Annot. in Act. 11.) faithfully, which you may peruse: which say that there is no evidence that in Scripture times any of the second Order were instituted.] So that it is not Scripture writings only, but Scripture times that's spoken of. And 2. If there be no evidence of it, the Church cannot believe it or affirm it; for it judgeth not of unrevealed things; and therefore to us it is no Institution that hath no evidence. 3. The Apostles were all dead save John before the end of Scripture times: So that they must be instituted by John only: And John dyed the next year after Scripture times, as the chief Chronologers judge: For as he wrote his Apocalypse about the 14th year of Domitian, so his Gospel the year before Trajan, and dyed the next year, being after the commoner reckoning, An. D. 98. and some think more. And what likelihood, or proof at least, that John did institute them the year that he dyed? when the same men tell us of his excursion into Asia to plant Elders.

Elders (before that year, it's like.) 4. And if they were not instituted in Scripture time, then no testimony from Antiquity can prove them then instituted. But indeed if we had such testimony and nothing of it in the Scripture it self, we should take it as little to our purpose. For 5. doth Antiquity say that the Institution was Divine, of Universal obligation to the Church, or only that it was but a prudential limitation of the exercise of the same Office (the like I demand of other like Testimonies in case of Diocesses, Metropolitans, &c.) If only the later, it binds us not, but proveth only the licet, and not the oportet at least, as to all the Church. And then every Countrey that finds cause, may set up another kind of government: But if it be the former that is asserted as from antiquity, then the Scripture containeth not all Gods Universal Laws; Which who ever affirmeth, must go to Fathers or Councils instead of Scripture to day, and to the infallibility of the Pope, or a Prophetical Inspiration to morrow, and next

Sect. 27. Once more to them that yet will maintain that the Apostles modelled the Ecclesiastical form to the Civil, and that as a Law to the whole Church, we take it as their Concession, that then we owe no more obedience to the Archbishop of Canterbury, then to the Civil Magistrate of Canterbury, (and especially London sure is exempted from his superiority.) And I yet know not that any Civil Magistrate of Canterbury, or York, or London, or Worcester, hath any government in this Countrey, except the Sovereign Rulers at Westminster be meant. And I hope our Itinerant course of Judges, will prove the right (to the Objectors) of Itinerant Apostolical Overseers of the Churches, for settlement at least.

Sect. 28. Object. But Parishes being not divided till long after the Apostles days, there might be then no ordinary Assemblies but in the City; and yet the whole Territory

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Territory adjacent be the Diocess.] Answ. Were there in the Territories persons enough to make many Assemblies, or only so few as might travel to, and joyn with the City Assembly? If the latter, it's it that I assert, as usual in the first age at least; If the former, then either all those in the Territories met for publick Worship and Communion, or not: If not, they sinned against the Law of God that obliged them thereto as well as Citizens: If they did, then they must have either Bishop or Presbyter with them, for the due performance of that worship.

SECT. 29. If any think all these stragling objections and advertisements here unseasonable, I render him this true account of them: This first Disputation was prepared only for our ordinarily Monthly Exercises here, and so written long ago, before the London Ministers Book, or the Answer to it, and the rest that have followed, and therefore could not take notice of much that hath since passed, and withal was not intended for publick view: But when I saw so many of the Gentry and Commonalty withdraw from the publick worship, and the ignorant and prophane had learnt to reſel their Pastors Instructions, by calling him a Layman, and saw how the new separation threarned the perdition of multitudes of the people, & especially was awakened by the Calls of Ministers in other Countries that were far more troubled with them than we, I thought meet to prefix this to the Second Disputation, which was it that was desired of me: and therefore to take notice of those things so late.

SECT. 30. And the common experience tells you that it is not a few that go the way that lately was singular even among the Episcopal; to which I may add the Testimony in Vindic. against the London Ministers, p. 104. [And though I might truly say that for those more minute considerations or conjectures, wherein this Doctor differs from some others ——— he hath the suffrages of many

many of the Learnedst men of this Church at this day
(and as far as he knows, of all that embrace the same
cause with him) &c. ———]

Sect. 31. And this at least I may expect from the
Reader, that if he think we argue weakly, he will confess
that we argue not for worldly greatness, but go against our
carnal interest. We contend against Bishopricks of the
English mode, as desiring no such Wealth or Honour. Some
of us have as good opportunities to have a part in that
kind of Greatness if it were again introduced, as they:
But I am not able alone for a Parish charge, and am loth
to have more on my hands, and my accounts; which is I
suppose the mind of my Brethren also.

Sect. 32. One more Advertisement I owe the Reader,
that this being written so long since I was made confident
by Bishop Usher, de Primordiis Eccl. Brit. that Ireland
was the Ancient Scotia where Palladius, &c. planted
the Gospel, which pag. 97. I have signified. But I should
wrong Scotland, if I should not tell thee, that I have re-
ceived such Arguments to the contrary since then, from
the Right Honourable, and my highly valued friend, the
Earl of Lawderdail, that I am forced to suspend my judge-
ment in that point, till I have leisure better to study the
point, being yet unable to answer the said arguments.

And the common expression is, that I have received such Arguments to the contrary since then, from the Right Honourable, and my highly valued friend, the Earl of Lawderdail, that I am forced to suspend my judgement in that point, till I have leisure better to study the point, being yet unable to answer the said arguments.

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Whether it be Necessary or Profitable to the right order or the Peace of the Churches of *England* that we restore the extruded Episcopacy ?

IN this Question here are these three things supposed. 1. That there are yet particular Churches of Christ in *England*: and therefore those that conclude that there hath been no Church among us since the Diocesan Bishops were laid by, are none of them that we are now disputing with: and indeed we think so gross a conceit unworthy of a Confutation.

2. It is supposed that both the right Order and the Peace of these Churches are matters highly to be valued. 3. And also that its our duty for the obtaining of it, to do that which is necessary or profitable thereto. But the doubt is, Whether the Episcopacy in question be necessary or profitable thereto?

For the decision whereof I shall briefly tell you my Judgment, in these propositions, whereof the two first are but preparatory.

Proposition I. *A Peace with the Divines of the Episcopal judgement,*

ment, is much to be desired and earnestly to be endeavoured.

Prop. 2. A certain Episcopacy may be yielded to, for the Peace (if not for the right order) of the Church.

Prop. 3. The Diocesan Episcopacy which was lately in England, and is now laid by, may not lawfully be re-assumed or re-admitted, as a means for the right Order or Peace of the Church.

1. For the first of these, I think it easie to prove that we ought to seek an Agreement in the Episcopal controversie, with those that differ from us in that point.

For, 1. They are brethren, of the same faith with us, whom we are bound to love and honour, and therefore to use all just means for peace with them. If we must as much as in us lyeth, if possible, live peaceably with all men, Rom. 12. 18. much more with Brethren of the same family and profession.

2. They are very many; and the far greatest (though not the purest) part of the Church is of their mind: All the Greek Church, and the Ethiopian Church, and the Jacobites, Armenians, and all other parties without the verge of the Reformation from Popery here in the West, that ever I read or heard of, are all of that way, besides all the Romane Church: And, though I know that much ignorance, and imperfection, if not superstition and fouler errors may be justly charged on the Greek, Ethiopian, &c. Churches, as well as on Rome (though not Popery it self) yet I think there is scarce a good Christian that is not unwilling to cast off so great a part of the Church of Christ, as these are. Indeed, he that dares so far despise all the Churches of Christ on earth except these few that are happily reformed, as to think that it is no duty of ours, to seek unity and peace with them, by all just means, I think is no meet person for us to dispute with. It is the hainous sin of Rome, to despise and unchurch Greeks, Ethiopians, and all save themselves, which I hope Protestants will never imitate, who have justly condemned them so deeply for it. Let the Donatists shut up the Church of Christ in Africa, and call the rest *Cecilians*; and let the Papists reduce it to the subscribers to their *Trent* confession, or to them only that believe in the Popes universal Headship and Government, and call all others Hereticks: yet will all true Catholicks imitate *Augustine* and the Councils that were called against the Donatists, who still described the Catholike Church to be that which

was dispersed over the world, having begun at Jerusalem: and though to Gods praise we dare rejoicingly affirm, that the most illustrious and the soundest part of it is in Europe, among the Reformed, yet dare we not say that it is all or the greatest part here; Nay we confess that we are but a small part of Christs Church. And therefore common sobriety may tell us, that the Peace of so great a part of Christs Church as is in all the rest of the world, is highly to be valued, and fought with all our might, in righteousness.

Moreover, even among the reformed Churches there are many for some Episcopacy or Superintendency: As the Church of England and Ireland was lately for Diocesan Episcopacy: so the Churches in Denmark, Sweden, Saxonie, and other parts of Germany, Transylvania, &c. are for a lower sort of Episcopacy, called Superintendency among them.

3. And the quality of many of the Divines of that way, is such as bespeaks our greatest reverence to them, and should move us to thirst after Unity and Reconciliation with them. Many of them are men of eminent Learning and Godliness, and found in the faith.

I know that it is commonly objected, that they are generally ungodly men that are that way; and though some of them are Learned men, yet they are all, or almost all, of careless and carnal lives, or merely formal and superstitious, and therefore their Communion is not much to be desired.

To which I answer. 1. The plain undeniable truth is that it was so here with the most of them in the Bishops dayes, where ever I was acquainted: There were more Ministers in many places that would have scorned, threatned or troubled a man for a godly diligent life, then that would lead him that way by a good example. We must speak that truth that cannot be hid, who ever be displeas'd. To this day, too many of that way are careless and scandalous. But then Consider withall, 2. That it is but too common for the common sort even of Ministers as well as people, to be careless and bad, what ever opinions they are of: Especially if the times do discountenance practical Religionsness, the greater part are likely to follow the times, being that way also so strongly enclined by nature. 3. Consider also that we have had, and have men of that Judgement that have been ex-

cellent Instruments of the Churches good, and so eminent for Gods graces and gifts, that their names will be pretious whilest Christ hath in *England* a Reformed Church: were there in all *England* but one such man dissenting from us, as *Hooper, Farrar, Latimer, Cranmer, Ridley, Jewel, Abbot, Davenant, Usher, Hall, &c.* what sober Godly man would not be exceeding solicitous for a reconciliation? I am sure (besides the godliness of their lives, and painful preaching) One *Jewel*, One *Usher*, One *Davenant*, hath done so much against the Roman Usurpers, as they will never well claw it off them to the last.

Moreover who knoweth not that most of the Godly able Ministers of *England* since the Reformation, did judge Episcopacy some of them Lawful, and some of them most fit (for the Non-conformists were but few :) and that even before this late trouble and war, the most, even almost all, of those that were of the late Assembly at *Westminster*, and most through the land, did subscribe and conform to Episcopal Government, as a thing not contrary to the word of God : so that it is evident that it is very consistent with a Godly life to judge Episcopacy lawful and fit; or else we should not have had so many hundred learned and godly men of that mind.

And I am not altogether unapt to believe, that many of them yet are so far reconcilable to it (moderated,) that if it were again established, they would submit to it as they did: For I hear but of few that have made any recantation of their former conformity; but contrarily have known divers of them profess a reconcilableness as aforesaid, as *Mr. Gataker* doth in one of his books expresse his own Judgement.

If I have proved this preparatory proposition (which I think needeth but little proof,) then have I also proved 1. That they have sinned much who have hitherto forbore the use of any means for Peace, which was in their power. 2. And that we are bound our selves to desire and seek after a peace with such men: and that we cannot discharge a good conscience while we neglect such means as is within our reach, and fit for us to use.

The second Proposition is, that [*A Certain Episcopacy may be yielded to, for the peace, if not also for the right order of the Church*] In the declaration of my judgement concerning

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this, I make no doubt but I shall displease both sides; the one for yielding so much; the other for yielding no more. But *facta est alea*: I live not upon mens favour, nor the air of their applause: That truth which displeaseth at present, may tend to peace, and produce it at the last, when the angry humour is allayed, or at least, when the angry age is gone.

For the clearer determination of this and the main Question following, it is necessary that I here stay 1. To open the nature of Church-Government in general: 2. To open the sence of the word [*Episcopacy*] and the several sorts of Bishops. And then 3. I shall tell you what sort of Episcopacy it is that I could yield to for the Churches peace.

1. I must confess I think that the greatest part of the controversy by far, is in this first question, of the nature of Ecclesiastical Government, strictly so called, which is only in the hands of Christs Ministers, Bishops or whomsoever, commonly called, Clergy men. And concerning this (having written my thoughts more largely elsewhere) I shall now lay down these few Propositions.

Prop. 1. *All this power Ecclesiastical is Jure divino, given from God himself; and that either immediately, or by the mediation only of the Apostles.* I mean as to the determination in specie, what it shall be, and the constitution of that order and power in the Church, though perhaps some other causes, at least * *sine quibus non* may intervene for the reception of this power by an individual person. These therefore that plead only the Laws of the Land, or only Canons of former Bishops for their standing or authority, do say nothing that as to our controversy is regardable. What men do, they may undo, if there be reason for it, and if it depend on their authority, we must submit to their reason.

Prop. 2. *This Divine Constitution of the Species of Church-Power and Government, is to be found wholly in the written word of God, called the holy Scriptures.* This we are agreed on against the Papists, who would supply the supposed defects of Scripture by their unwritten Traditions, which they call the other part of Gods word. Church Canons and Laws of men may determine of some modes and circumstances for the better execution of the Laws of God, by the People whom they are over: but they cannot make new Church-Ordinances or Governments, nor

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* Of the difference between Election and Ordination; and that neither gives the *Jus* or Power, but Christ only. See Grovius de Imperio Sum. Pontif. c. 10. p. 269, 270.

convey a Power which God the fountain of Power did not ordain and convey: nor can they give what they themselves had not. The Church-office and Authority therefore that is not proved from the Holy Scripture, is to be taken as the fruit of humane arrogancy and presumption. Yet I deny not but that we may find much in Antiquity, in Fathers and Councils about matters of fact to help us to understand some Scriptures, and so to discern the matter of right.

Prop. 3. *The Scripture doth not Contradict, but suppose and confirm the light of Nature; nor doth it impose upon any man Natural impossibilities, nor constitute offices which cannot be executed, or which would destroy that end to which they are supposed to be Constituted.*

Prop. 4. *Ecclesiastical Authority comprehendeth not the power of the sword, nor any power of using violence to mens bodies, or laying mulcts or confiscations on their estates.* The Ecclesiastical Power which Christ ordained, was exercised for the first three hundred years without any touching of mens bodies or purses, before there were any Christian Princes.

Prop. 5. *Magistrates are not eo nomine obliged to punish men because they are Excommunicated (whether upon every just Excommunication they should punish, I will not now dispute) but they are bound to know that their penalties be deserved, before they inflict them; and therefore must themselves take Cognisance of the Cause, and as rational agents, understand before they act; and not blindly follow the Judgements of the Bishops, as if they were but as Executioners where the Bishops are Judges.*

Prop. 6. * *The Power of the highest Church-governours is but an Authority of Directing in the way to salvation: It is but Directive: but then there is no room for the common Objection, that [then it is no greater then any other man may perform;] for it is one thing to Direct Occasionally from Charity, and another thing to Direct by Authority in a standing office, as purposely appointed hereunto. † The Power of Church-Governours is but*

* I comprehend in the word Directive all that is after expressed in the following Propositions.

† *Quæ ante*

Imperatores Christianos in Synodis conscripta sunt ad ordinem aut ornatum facientia, Leges non vocantur sed Canones, habentq; aut solam Concilii vim, ut in his quæ singulos magis spectant quam universos, aut obligant per modum pacti volentes & nolentes etiam pauciores ex necessitate determinationis, ac proinde ex lege naturali, non ex humano aliquo Imperio.
Grotius de Imperio pag. 209, 210. Lege & cap. 9. per totum.

of the same nature as is the Power of a Physitian over his Patients, or of a School-master over his Schollers, supposing he had not the power of the rod or actual force, but such a power as the Professors of Philosophy or other sciences had in their several schools upon the adult (nor all so great neither ; because the Laws by which we must rule, are made to our hands, as to the substantials.) Hence therefore it is plain, that as we can bind or force no man to believe us, or to understand the truth, and to be Christians, but by the power of demonstrated Evidence, and by the light which we let in (through Gods grace) into their Consciences, so neither can we cause any to execute our sentences against offenders further than by light we convince them that it is their duty : so that if all the Bishops or Presbyteries in the land should judge such or such an opinion to be heresie, and should Excommunicate those that own it as hereticks, in this case if the Church do believe as the Pastors believe, they will consent and avoid the Excommunicate person ; but if they take it to be Gods truth which the Pastors call heresie, they will not take themselves bound by that sentence to avoid him : nor will the Offender himself any further be sensible of a penalty in the sentence, then he shall be convinced that he hath erred ; and if the Church avoid him, he will justifie himself, and judge that they do it wrongfully, and will glory in his suffering : so that it is on the Conscience that Church-Governors can work, and no otherwise on the outward man, but *mediante Conscientiâ*.

Prop. 7. *The ground of this is partly because no Church Governours can bind any man contrary to Gods word : Clave errance, &c. ita apparenre, if the people know that he erreth, they are not to obey him against God.* Yet in the bare inconvenient determination of some Circumstantials, by which the duty is not destroyed, but less conveniently performed, the people are bound to obey their Governours, because it is not against Gods determination, and because he erreth but in an undermined point of which God appointed him to be the orderly determiner. But if God have once determined, no mans contrary determination can oblige ; nor yet if they go beyond the sphere of their own work, and determine of an aliene subject, which God did never commit to their determination : esse a Minister, or Bishop, might oblige every Taylor how to cut his garment, and every Shoo-maker how to

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cut his shoe, so that they should sin if they did disobey, which is ridiculous to imagine : and if they go about to introduce new stated Ordinances or Symbols in the Church which they have nothing to do with, or in any other work shall assume to themselves a power which God never gave them, it doth no more oblige then in the former case.

Prop. 8. Another reason of the sixth Proposition, is, because *The People have a Judgement of discerning, whether the Governors do go according to Gods word or not : else they should be led blindfold, and be obliged by God to go against Gods word, whensoever their Governors shall go against it. It is not bruits or Infants, but rational men that we must rule.*

Prop. 9. *The three things which Church-power doth consist in, are (in conformity to the three parts of Christs own office)*
 1. *About matter of Faith, 2. About matter of Worship, 3. About matter of Practise in other cases.*

1. Church-Governors about Doctrine or Matters of Faith, are the Peoples Teachers, but cannot *oblige* them to *Err*, or to believe any thing against God, nor make that to be truth or error that is not so before.

2. In matter of Worship, Church-guides are as Gods Priests, and are to go before the people, and stand between God and them, and present their prayers and prayes to God, and administer his holy mysteries, and bless them in his name.

3. The *Commanding* Power of Pastors is in two things : 1. In *Commanding* them in the name of Christ to obey the Laws which he hath made them already. And this is the principal. 2. To give them *new Directions* of our own, which as is said, 1. Must not be against Gods Directions. 2. Nor about any matter which is not the object of our own office, but is without the verge of it. 3. But it is only in the making of *under laws*, for the better execution of the laws of Christ ; and those *under-laws* must be only the *Determination of Circumstances* about Gods service which Scripture hath made *necessary in genere*, but left to the Governors determination *in specie* ; and they are such as are alterable in several ages, countries, &c. so that it had been unfit for Christ to have determined them in his word, because his word is an *universal* Law for all ages and countries ; and these Circumstances will not bear an universal determination : else why could not
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Christ have done it? nay how is his Law perfect else that doth omit it? For example, God hath commanded us to read the word, preach, hear, sing, which must necessarily be done in some time, place, gesture, number of words, &c. But he hath not commanded us on what day of the week our Lecture shall be, or at what hour of the day, nor what Chapter I shall read, nor how many at once, nor what Text I shall preach on, nor what Psalm I shall sing, nor in what words I shall pray, whether imposed by others, or not, whether with a book, or foreconceived form, or not; nor whether I shall read with spectacles or without, or whether I shall discern how the time passeth by an hour-glass, or by the clock, or by conjecture without them. These therefore and other such like, must humane Prudence determine of. But with these Cautions.

1. These are mostly matters that require a various determination in several places according to the great variety of Circumstances; and therefore it is for the most part fitter for the particular Pastor of that Church, who is upon the place, and seeth the case, to determine them *pro re nata*, * then for Synods, or distant Prelates, to do it by general Laws or Canons binding all.
2. Though upon a small misdetermination of such a Circumstance, the people must obey, yet if it be so grossly misdetermined as to destroy the duty it self Circumstantiated, or to be notoriously against the end which it is pretended for, then they are not to obey it. As if a Pastor would appoint the People to hear in the night only, or at such unseasonable times that they cannot come, or in many the like cases.

* That Synods are not absolutely necessary (and he thinks not of Scripture Institution but Natural direction) see *Grot. de Imperio Cap. 7. per totum.*

Note also that it is one thing to prescribe these matters in a direct Regimental Respect, and that belongeth to *him upon the Place*; and its another thing to prescribe them for *common Union or Concord* among many Churches, and that belongs to a *Synod*, (of which anon.)

And it is most certain by sad experience, that scarce any thing hath broken the unity and peace of the Church more, then unnecessary determinations pretended to be for its unity and peace. Could men have been content to have made Gods Laws the center and touchstone of the Churches Unity, all had been well: but when they must make Canons for this Vesture, and that Gesture, and the other Ceremony, and determine in what words

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all men shall pray, and how many words he shall say, or how long he shall be, and so make standing Laws upon mutable circumstances, and this without any necessity at all, but meerly to domineer, as if they had been themselves ordained and entrusted with Gods worship and mens souls; such sottish Presbyters, that know not how to speak or do any thing but as it is prescribed them, nor how to carry themselves soberly or reverently without being obliged which way to bow, and when and how oft, with the like. Unnecessary things made Necessary have destroyed the Churches Peace; and so blind are the Authors of it, that yet they will not see their error, though the cries, and groans, and blood of the Churches have proclaimed it so long. The Church Historie of these one thousand and three hundred years at least doth tell us that it is the Church Governours by their too much business and overdoing in such wayes, even by too bold and busie determinations about doctrines or Ceremonies, that have broken all in peices and caused that confusion, dissention and seemingly remediless divisions in the Church.

Prop. 10. *In cases which are beyond the present understanding of the people, they are bound as Learners, to submit to the judgement of their Guides: If they see no sufficient cause, either in the matter to cause them to suspect that their Teachers are mistaken, or in their Teachers to cause them to suspect them to be seducers, they owe them so much credit and respect as their Guides, as to believe them *sive humana*, or to suppose that they are likelier to be in the right then themselves; and therefore in matters of Doctrine not to contradict them, but to submit to learn of them, till by learning they come to that ripeness of understanding, as to be capable of discerning the errors of their Guides, and so to contradict them groundedly, if indeed they err: so also in the order of variable Circumstantials about the service of God; though the people ought not to obey their Governours, if under that pretence they should command them things sinful; yet when they are not able to see any certain evil in the thing commanded, nor so strong a probability of evil as should cause them to suspend obedience while they take better advice, in such a case it is their Duty to obey the guides of the Church. For they are certain that they are commanded to obey them that*

rule

rule over them, and watch for their souls, Heb. 13. 17. but they are not certain that in such a case it is an evil that is prescribed by them, nor is it supposed to be much probable; therefore a certain evil of disobedience must be avoided before an uncertain and improbable evil. This the very office of Church Governours doth plainly import.

Object. *Then if the Minister mistake, all the people that understand not the grounds of the matter, must err for company.*

Ans. If by *Must*, you speak of their Duty, I deny the consequence: For their Duty is to be men of understanding, and to see the truth in its own evidence, and so not to err; But if by *Must*, you only express a Necessity of Infirmity which they have sinfully contracted themselves, then I yield all: but I say, that it is a greater sin to disobey their guides, without known reason, and consequently never to obey them in any case beyond the present knowledge of the people, then it is to follow them *sive humana* in such mistakes as we have no sufficient means at present to discover. For the former will overthrow almost all Ministration and Church-government.

Obj. *Then it is no sin for an Ignorant man to Err with his Teacher for company.* Ans. I deny that Consequence: for it is his sin to be an Ignorant man: and consequently to have any Error. But supposing him already Ignorant by his own sinfulness, and that the Ministers of the Gospel come to heal it, we may well say that it is his greater sin to disbelieve and disobey them without apparent cause, then to mistake with them where he is not able to discern the mistake.

Prop. 11. *He that disobeyeth the Word of God in the mouth of a Minister or Church-governor, committeth a double sin, in comparison of him that disobeyeth the same word in the mouth of a private man: for beside the sin which he first committeth, he breaketh also the fifth Commandment, and despiseth Christ in his Messenger: As a man that shall refuse to worship God, to use his name reverently, &c. when a private man telleth him that it is his duty, doth sin by that refusal: but if he refuse it when his own Father or Mother, or Minister command him, he also breaks the fifth Commandment besides the rest. Ministerial Authority therefore doth aggravate the sins of persons that are disobedient.*

Prop. 12. *Yet for all this, one private man that evinceth out*

of Scripture a sin or a duty contrary to the doctrine or commands of our Guides, must be regarded in that before them; and the evidence and divine verity which he bringeth must not be refused, because Church-Governors are against it. Otherwise we should make Gods Officers to be greater then himself; and the Promulgators and Preachers of his Law, to have power to null or frustrate the known Law which they should proclaim, and that the means is to be preferred before the end, and when it destroyes the end, and so ceaseth it self to be a means, which are things not to be imagined.

Prop. 13. *Yet is it a great sin for any men lightly and rashly to suspect their Teachers and Rulers, and much more Councils or the whole Church; and too easily to credit the singular opinions of any private man or dissenting Pastor.* But we should be very suspicious of the private man rather, and of the singular man; and therefore should search well, and see good reason for it before we credit them, though we may not refuse any truth which they shall bring.

Prop. 14. *The uses of Synods or Councils, is not directly to be superiour Governours of particular Pastors and Churches; but it is Directly* 1. *For the Information and Edification of the Pastors themselves by the collation of their reasons and mutual advice;* 2. *For the Union and Communion of the said Pastors, and of the particular Churches by them:* that they may agree in one, and go hand in hand to do Gods work, and so may avoid the crossing and hindering of each other, and one may not receive those to communion without satisfaction, who are excommunicated by others, and so that by this concord of Pastors they may be strengthened to a more successfull performance of their duties.

But then, these *Direct* ends of Synods being presupposed, *Indirectly* they may truly be said to be for Government; Because God in general having commanded us to carry on his work as much as we can in Unity and Peace, and it being the proper work of Councils to agree upon wayes of Unity, it followeth that for Unity sake it becomes our duty to submit to their just Agreements, and so that the forming of such Agreements or Canons, is consequently or Indirectly a part of Government, though Directly it is but for Unity and Concord. Pastors in Synods have the same power over their people as they have *our*: and therefore what Canons they make justly for the Government of the people,

as *Pastors*, are *Directly* acts of Government : but as *Assembled Pastors*, and also as to the *Canons* by which they bind each other, they act but by consent or contract in order to concord and communion, and not by a superiour Ruling power. So that Synods as Synods are *Directly* only *Gratiâ Unitatis & Communionis*, and not *Gratia Regiminis*; but *Indirectly* and by consequence from the first use, they are *after a sort Regimental*.

To conclude this about the Nature of Church-Government, in the two former similitudes it is somewhat apparent : For Christ calls himself the Physitian that comes to heal diseased souls : and his Church is also a School, and his people are all Schollars or Disciples, and Ministers his Ushers or under-Schoolmasters. Now the Physitian may prescribe to his Patient the times, the quantities of taking Medicines, and what diet to use, and what exercise in order to his health ; and also Physitians may make a Colledge, and frequently meet for mutual Edification, and Agree what Patients to meddle with, and what not, and that they will not receive those Patients that run from one to another to their own hurt, and that they will use none but such and such approved Medicaments, with divers the like circumstances. But yet no Physitian can either compell men to be their Patients ; nor compell them (any otherwise then by perswasion) to take their Medicines, when they are their Patients ; nor can they corporally punish them for any disobedience to their directions : But this they may do : they may tell them first that if they will not be ruled, they shall be without the Physitians help, and then their deseafe will certainly kill them or endanger them ; and if the Patient continue so disobedient as to frustrate the means of cure, the Physitian may give him over, and be his Physitian no more ; and this is the Power of a Church Guide, and this is his way of punishing : Only he may further acquaint them with a Divine Commission, then a Physician can do to his Patient, (at least gradually) and so press obedience more effectually on their consciences.

So a Schoolmaster may make orders for the right circumstantiating of matters in his School (supposing one Grammer enjoyned by superiour Authority,) and he may order what Authors shall be read, and at what hours, and how much at a time, and dispose of the seats and orders of his Schollars : But yet if